RECOUNTING SKOPJE

Symbolic and Citizens’ Narratives

Skopje 2014

Ivana Sidjimovska
PhD Thesis

RECOUNTING SKOPJE
Symbolic and Citizens' Narratives

by

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# CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Chapter/Section</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>SETTING THE CONTEXT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theoretical Context: Where is Macedonia and Where is Paris?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Case Study: SKOPJE 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>Methodology of Artistic Research: Seeing, Listening, Walking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>133</td>
<td>RECOUNTING SKOPJE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>AN AUDIO GUIDED TOUR THROUGH THE CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>136</td>
<td>Notes on the Audio Guided Tour ‘Recounting Skopje’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140</td>
<td>Track One: THE MODERNIST CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>170</td>
<td>Track Two: THE FEMALE CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>188</td>
<td>Track Three: THE MEMORY CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>208</td>
<td>Track Four: THE POST-COMMUNIST CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>232</td>
<td>Track Five: THE TOURIST CITY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>EPILOGUE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>264</td>
<td>Spaces of Representation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>268</td>
<td>Audio-walking as Medium and Significance of the Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>270</td>
<td>CONCLUSION</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>279</td>
<td>Appendices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>280</td>
<td>APPENDIX 1: Glossary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>286</td>
<td>APPENDIX 2: Tabular Analyses of Interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>298</td>
<td>APPENDIX 3: Audio Guided Tour – Transcript</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>318</td>
<td>APPENDIX 4: Photo Documentation of the Audio Guided Tour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>330</td>
<td>APPENDIX 5: List of illustrations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>343</td>
<td>Publication Bibliography</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>353</td>
<td>Curriculum Vitae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>359</td>
<td>Declaration on Honour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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“An understanding of this city depends on the ability to decipher the dreamlike images it generates... its contradictions and contrasts, its toughness, its openness, its juxtapositions and simultaneity, its lustre.”

Siegfrid Kracauer, 1987, p.4

“The city as we imagine it, (then) the soft city of illusion, myth, aspiration, nightmare, is as real, maybe more real, than the hard city one can locate in maps and statistics, in monographs on urban sociology and demography and architecture.”

Jonathan Raban, 1974, pp. 9-10
To tell the story of a city is certainly not an easy task. For how are we to grasp, capture, imagine and comprehend all the various aspects, histories, processes, interactions, moments, experiences, people, objects and built structures that comprise city life? In the broadest sense the city is a process, a movement, in flux, and so are its stories. The stories of cities are complex, because they are made of simultaneous and diverse trajectories, encounters, relations and connections, constantly reproduced as people go about their everyday lives. Yet regardless of the complexity of approaching the urban, city stories are everywhere – in books, blueprints, postcards, city guides, cinematography, media images, photographs we took years ago and those we took minutes ago. They are told by many different narrators: explorers, travellers, literary writers, historians, ethnographers, geographers, urban planners, researchers, politicians, artists, citizens, and so on.

Nowadays in particular there is an increased interest in cities and the stories they can tell. One thing that makes a city’s stories so important is that they help to create and pass on the meanings of places. As Jason Farman (Farman 2015, pp. 1-2) writes: “[s]torytelling is important for the production and practice of space because the meaning of space is typically communicated through the stories attached to those spaces. [...] These stories are often the narratives of a particular place or places, a site or group of locations that are meaningful to a community. Imagining such a meaningful location without a story is impossible; stories, spaces and communities are intimately tied together.”

The cultural geographer Tim Cresswell (Cresswell 2004) defines ‘place’ as a meaningful location to which people are connected in different ways. This is in contrast to space which is understood as more abstract. If we think of the city as a place, or better as a collection of places to which people are attached, then the city is a carrier of meanings. For instance, city meanings and their stories can be related to some significant past events (i.e. the fall of the Berlin Wall or the attacks on the World Trade Centre in lower Manhattan) and to memories of those events; but they can also be related to quotidian experiences and engagements with the urban (i.e. going to work, taking a walk, buying groceries) repeated over a long period of time. They can also be related to mediated images (i.e. in films, in city advertisements) and imaginations of places, including those places one has never been to.

In this sense, no city is empty of meanings. Nevertheless, as places have different meanings to different people, conflicts arise and often there is no consent on what the meanings of places are or should be. A city can mean many different things to various people, and in a city, as Robert A. Beauregard (Beauregard 2005, p.39) notes, a “multitude of stories compete for attention, and do so with conflicting interpretations and story lines.” So, the city cannot be defined by a single story, each story is no more true or false than any other. It is rather the sum of city stories that make up the meanings of that place, themselves fleeting and in permanent flux. This is also the departing notion upon which I expand my research.

Furthermore, a story or a narrative can be understood as a mode of representation, or as Finnegan (Finnegan 1998, p.9) writes: a “presentation of events or experiences which is told, typically through written or spoken words.” Related to this, the stories of places, and consequently their meanings, substantially depend upon the angle of the narration, that is, on who tells the story. The narratives of cities, embedded in the built environment, for example, through landmark buildings, plaques, statues etc., help tell the ‘grand narratives’ of nations and those in power. On the other hand, ephemeral, micro-narratives, embedded in socially produced spaces, tell the stories of the urban dwellers. They can be subjective, related to personal biographies, or they can be shared, based on collective experiences of living in the city.
It is important to note that the lived experiences of urban dwellers and the stories they produce should not be considered as isolated from and independent of the material reality of the city. On the contrary, they are significantly influenced by the material aspects of the urban. As Kathrin Wildner (Wildner 2012, p.217) notes: “Space is constituted by the overlaying interdependencies of material, social and discursive layers. At the same time the material structure of places influences the perception and activities of people.” As such, this PhD relies upon theories on social production of space (Lefebvre 1991), which are further elaborated below.

Moreover, in terms of the selection of events and experiences which are highlighted in stories of urban places, it is also important to look at how stories are constructed. For instance, narratives can be intentionally constructed, from above (top-down), by urban planners, politicians, marketers, or they can be created organically, from below (bottom-up), by the inhabitants who use and experience the city on a daily basis. Based on different narrative constructions Robert A. Beauregard (Beauregard 2005, p.40) makes a distinction between a site and a place: “A site is a social construct, a representation of space. It is conceived apart from the complexity of human relations, in effect, a site is a place that has been denatured, formalised and colonised, its meanings made compatible with the relations of production, state imperatives, and the order that both imply. Opposed to the site is a representational space - what I have termed place - and its complex symbolism, grounded in lived experience. The former emanates from professionals and technocrats, the latter from human encounters in dwellings, churches, sidewalks, plazas, markets, and the workplaces of the city.”

It is this interaction, often also a tension, between the planned city and the lived city, between how we conceive and how we practice the city, that ensures that city stories and urban spaces are constantly revised, renegotiated and produced anew. As Elke Krasny and Irene Niehans (Krasny, Niehans 2008, p.10) write: “The city cannot be thought by means of modernity’s demand for a uniform territory for the modern state. Rather it has to be investigated as a diverse and contradictory, compact, heterogeneous and paradoxical texture of spaces, that are not simply polarized on the one hand by political and managerial strategies and on the other by citizens, but which dynamically and mutually penetrate each other.” Or, as Ash Amin and Nigel Thrift (Amin, Thrift 2000, p.30) write: “Places are best thought not so much as enduring sites, but as variable encounters, not so much as presents, fixed in space and time, but as variable events, twists and fluxes of interaction.”

In addition, everyone produces the city. Everyone experiences and imagines the public places in their own subjective ways. Public space is the space in which we lead a public social life, encounter other people, mostly strangers, share experiences and happenings with them. It is the space of many; public places and their identities are defined not by singularity and coherence but by multiplicity and ambiguity. Sharon Zukin (Zukin 1995, pp. 10-11) points out that public culture and public space are socially constructed on a micro-level: “[public space] is produced by the many social encounters that make up daily life in the streets, shops, and parks - the spaces in which we experience public life in the cities. The right to be in these spaces to use them in certain ways, to invest them with a sense of ourselves and our communities - to claim them as ours and to be claimed in turn by them - make up a constantly changing public culture.” Narrating the personal experiences, feelings, memories, images and ideas about the city is therefore substantial, as through them people make the claim for the inclusion of different perspectives and voices as an integral part of the city space and its identities.

In a post-industrial, globalized world, the way in which we understand the urban environment has certainly changed in a remarkable manner. Under the pressure of the neoliberal market economy, cities, or their elites, have increasingly sought to redefine and re-imagine the city meanings in ways which allow them to compete in the global marketplace. These reinventions, often done through symbolic reconstructions, are substantially related to the urban, which following a market logic becomes increasingly treated as a commodity. And it is often the case that re-imaginings of cities include radical changes and interventions in urban space, with the aim of creating brand new urban narratives divorced of any reference to previous ones. Such symbolic urban reconstructions have a major influence on the recreation and recounting of city’s stories and meanings.

The focus of this artistic-based PhD research is on the recent government-funded makeover of the Macedonian capital, Skopje, dubbed “Skopje 2014”. During its long and winding history Skopje experienced severe ruptures in its urban development and it has been repeatedly destroyed by natural hazards and man-made catastrophes. The most recent occasion when the city was forced to reinvent itself was following the devastating earthquake of 1963, an event that caused substantial population losses and serious damages to the built environment. Under Yugoslavian leadership and with the help of worldwide solidarity, Skopje embraced heroic urban visions and obtained a wholly new look. However, almost fifty years later it seems that Skopje’s modern urban reconstructions have to be revised again.
Unlike many important European cities that developed into monumental national capitals thanks to industrialisation and national emancipation in the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries (see Janev, Kriznik 2008), Skopje has tended to lag behind and it was only in 2014 that the city sought to become a major national capital. “Skopje 2014”, the (still ongoing) urban renewal project was announced at a press conference in 2010, organized by the Municipality Centre of Skopje and government officials, who proudly informed the Macedonian public the capital was to receive a makeover. The future look of the city was revealed in a CGI video, released under the title “Visualization of the Skopje Centre in 2014”, which depicted the new blueprint of the city in a very realistic and precise manner.

“Skopje 2014” (henceforth “the Project”) was presented as a cultural project embracing Macedonian history and cultural heritage. Proposing radical changes in the built environment, in styles and aesthetics atypical for Macedonia’s socialist past, the urban plan failed to persuade many people that it would actually come to fruition. While the public took the presentation as a bad joke, over the past seven years and at an astonishingly rapid pace, the city’s appearance has been changed in a remarkable manner and as a result Skopje now has a very peculiar appeal.

To be more specific, “Skopje 2014” involves the following: thirty four monuments now has a very peculiar appeal.

Since “Skopje 2014” was announced an immense amount of criticism has opposed the renewal plans. Ideologically, the criticism pertains to claims of a direct Antique-Macedonian line of descent rather than the hitherto widely-accepted Slavic origins of the nation. Aesthetically, critics deem that the capital has been turned into a theme park, hosting anachronistic counterfeits of European styles and symbols. Economically, criticism has focused on the massive spending of public money in a country with a high rate of unemployment and poverty – according to the Balkan Investigative Report Network (BIRN), from the initially announced €80 million, the cost of giving the Macedonian capital a facelift has risen to €560 million. Ecologically criticism has been directed at the reconstruction project’s vast destruction of greenery.

This PhD research draws upon the work of urban social theorists, and embraces the views that the social production of space is substantially related to aspects of cultural, political, social and economic characteristics of societal organization (see Gottdiener 2005). That is, the research understands space as a correlation between form, action and mode of thought, thus relying upon Henri Lefebvre’s spatial triangulation (Lefebvre 1991). The focus is therefore on spaces of representation (lived space and social space), considered as a correlation between representations of space (conceived, mental) and spatial practice (perceived, physical space). In addition, urban theories of globalization (Massey 1994, Zukin 1995, Harvey 1989, 1996, 2005) are also considered, in order to situate Macedonia’s urban renewal processes within the broader urban, economic and political discourses of neoliberalism and global movements of capital, rather than considering them as isolated phenomena.

Embracing the criticism put forward in the political, cultural and social debates that have spun around Skopje’s reconstruction, my artistic-based research is concerned with the effects that the urban renewal has on the creation of public space. In other words, the research seeks to find out whether and how the urban renewal project has changed the ways in which citizens experience and talk about the city’s public space. To do this it researches the meanings of the city following the urban renewal. The main research questions are: In relation to “Skopje 2014”, what are the citizens’ narratives of the Skopje city center following the reconstruction? Have these changed since the reconstruction, and if so, in what way?: What city meanings has the urban renewal preserved, altered or destroyed?: What social space does “Skopje 2014” produce?, or What spaces of representation does “Skopje 2014” allow and encourage to develop and what others does it stifle?

The aim of the PhD research is firstly to analyze the symbolic narratives of “Skopje 2014”; secondly to map out and conceive vernacular and civic narratives of Skopje; and thirdly, based on these narratives, to develop artistic strategies for reevaluating the newly created social space in the city and its meanings. The first part of the research was conducted with the help of a wide array of primary and secondary literature, analyses of local and international press releases about Skopje, interviews with experts and NGOs regarding
criticism of “Skopje 2014”, and field research in Skopje. The second part, involving mostly field research in Skopje, is designed around three research methodologies: observation and documentation of the environment, elicitation and collection of inhabitants’ stories of the city, and walking as a form of urban experience. Most of the field research in Skopje was done on foot while walking through the city center and involved recording, interrogating, relating and interpreting what was seen. The third part of the research, the presentation of the research findings, took the form of an audio guided tour in Skopje.

In other words, informed by citizens’ subjective stories, imaginarios (see Wildner, Huffschmid 2013) and experiences of the urban, and becoming the subject of translation, transformation, experimentation and rearrangement with artistic means, the research findings form the content of a database for recounted narratives of Skopje. That is, analyzed for its discursive structures and combined with various visual and sonic observations, recorded in a binaural manner, the original interviews with citizens are re-enacted in the form of an interactive sonic walk or audio guided tour through the city. By inviting the audience to take part in an intimate walk, and by audio prompts to re-experience the urban environment in a performative manner, the audio guide presents ideas for re-evaluating, reframing and reinterpretting the urban reconstruction.

The thesis is organized in three chapters, preceded by an INTRODUCTION and followed by a CONCLUSION. CHAPTER ONE sets theoretical context by reviewing literature on social urban space (Lefebvre 1991, Soja 1996), the political, cultural, and symbolic economy of spaces (Harvey 1996), as well as urban sociology literature regarding spatial production in times of increased globalization (Massey 1994). That is, the Project is contextualized within theoretical concepts of neoliberal symbolic urban reconstructions. Regarding the “accumulation of capital through urbanization” (Harvey 1996, 2005) through symbolic urban reconstructions, such as place-marketing and the selling of places through culture (Kearns, Philo 1993), the urban renewal project is related to what scholars have termed “Disneyfication” (Sorkin 1992) or the “homogenization of cities through diversification” (Harvey 2005). Furthermore, theories about the symbolic economy of cities, which understand them as vital for the production of space and the production of symbols (Zukin 1995), are also considered in order to re-evaluate the visual representation of the urban renewal project as a way of framing public space.

The case study “Skopje 2014” is also presented in this chapter, including an overview of Skopje’s urban history and the political history of the country. After presenting the content of the urban renewal program in detail, the critique related to it is presented. The chapter also explains and discusses the research design and the field research methodology of triangulation, related to theories of walking (Solnit 2005, Debord 1958, De Certeau 1984), mobile methods of research (Pinder 2005) and soundwalking (McCartney 2014). The chapter also includes notions on practice-based artistic research (Haarman 2007, Ziemer 2009, Bush 2009, Klein 2010) and shows how my research is related to this field. The chapter concludes with detailed information on and a description of the whole field-research period – from February 2013 to September 2016 – presenting a timeline of the different methodologies of research and explanations of why these were found most appropriate for a particular object of study.

Although it is difficult to determine the exact beginning and end of “Skopje 2014”, it could be said that reconstructions began in 2010 and roughly 80% of the plan was finished by 2014. The research methodology was organized in the following way: The field research work in Skopje was done between February 2013 and August 2016, involving a total of eight research trips. The field research in February and September 2013 was a preparatory phase of research and focused on getting acquainted with the research area - Skopje’s centre following the reconstruction, preliminary documentation and observation of the field, mapping and defining the exact area of research, informal conversations with experts and citizens, the collection of written and visual material about Skopje (press releases, old and new postcards, tourist guides, etc.), as well as numerous walks through the city.

The main part of the research was conducted during the visits in April and September 2014. The work focused on preparing and conducting interviews with citizens, that is, finding interview partners, arranging meetings with them, conducting and recording the interviews, i.e. talking and listening to their stories and experiences of the city while walking. In addition, I did numerous walks on my own, in order to collect additional observational information, revise and re-examine the stories gathered from interview partners, and document and acoustically and visually record the newly constructed urban environment in Skopje. This was followed by the phase of analysing the research findings.

Subsequent field work done in September 2015 involved updating the documentation regarding additional constructions, observing and re-experiencing the city centre based on the analysed material, daily walks in order to experiment with and determine the final audio guided tour, i.e. finalizing the field research in Skopje. This research visit was followed by a
phase of post-production work on the audio guided tour, which was in turn followed by three further visits to Skopje, in May, June and August 2016. These last three visits involved the gathering of audio material needed to complete the audio tour, and testing the audio drafts to determine the final form it would take. The audio guided tour was presented as part of the fifth “Curatorial Exchanges: The Institutional As Public” symposium, which was organized by the Press2Exit project-space and which took place in September 2016 in Skopje. It was further presented in April 2018, as part of the exhibition of nominees for the DENES YVAA (Young Visual Artist Award) in MKC Gallery Skopje, organized by CAC (Contemporary Arts Centre) and FRU (Faculty of Things that can’t be Learned).

The audio guided tour and the research findings are presented in CHAPTER TWO. This chapter is about the empirical work and the artistic project. The technical elements and the composition of the audio content, the script and the scenography of the curated movement are explained as an introduction to the audio guided tour. Furthermore, the research analyses are divided into five discourses, presented in five subchapters, which are also the tracks of the audio guided tour. Each subchapter includes theoretical notions that help explain certain aspects of the symbolic narrative of “Skopje 2014”, which is then related to the narratives of Skopje’s citizens.

The text is interwoven with relevant excerpts from the audio guided tour, which can be listened to by scanning the QR codes provided. As the audio material referring to human voice narration is mostly in Macedonian, it is accompanied by a translation with English subtitles. In a way, the text combines a reading text and a listening text, and guides the reader in a manner similar to the listener of the audio guided tour in Skopje. Each subchapter (audio track) also provides background information about the locations in which the audio content is listened to, about the time to which the narration refers, as well as the actual duration of the walking from/to the locations involved. The type of the walking route is also presented in a narrative and visual manner. Each stop also contains a list of sounds which are included in the track, and information on the people interviewed.

The five subchapters or tracks are organized around the following topics:

The first track is an introduction to and contextualisation of the urban renewal, revolving around the event of the earthquake, and referring to the subsequent modernist renewals in Skopje. Theories of modernisation and modernist urbanisation (Harvey 1989) are considered here, before giving detailed information on the 1963 earthquake in Skopje and the actual outcome of the Master Plan for Skopje’s reconstruction, conceived by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange. While acknowledging that the implementation of Tange’s plan in Skopje was a failure, the importance of the post-earthquake planning of Skopje for the development of Macedonian modernist architecture is emphasised. Relevant discourses in this subchapter are related to the city’s modernist identity and the identifications of the citizens with the spaces of the post-earthquake reconstructions. This track is about THE MODERNIST CITY.

The second track is about how “Skopje 2014” treats different social groups and their identities, more precisely, the female spaces in the city. It is located in a park that commemorates female freedom fighters in the anti-fascist war that is now filled with numerous oversized monuments of male national heroes. The research discourses deal with feminist theories related to the urban (Krasny 2008). The relation between biographies and places is also discussed, including the discussion of symbolic appropriations of the park and their relation to female biographies. Additional discussion considers the use of over-scaled, megalomaniac monuments in urban spaces, a monolithic symbolic logic that overwrites the diversity of social public spaces. The second subchapter refers to THE FEMALE CITY.

The third track deals with memory images and time, thereby focusing on the time spent living in the city. More precisely, this subchapter draws upon notions on collective memory (Halbwachs 1992) and “memory versus history” or the theoretical concept of ‘milieux de mémoire’ and ‘lieux de mémoire’ (Nora 1989). Taking the event of “Skopje 2014” as a point in time from which one can speak of a ‘before and after’, the citizens shared memories of the city and their replacement with places of commemoration is presented. Additionally, the importance of memories, in terms of nostalgia for the lost city, is discussed in relation to the city’s present and its appropriation. This is THE MEMORY CITY.

The fourth track is about the “before and after” images of Skopje. Executed in the spirit of postmodernism, the architectural style and aesthetic of “Skopje 2014” involves direct quotation of the style of nineteenth century European capitals. Furthermore, theoretical notions of post-communism (Groys 2005), related to the task of imagining the future – the “progressive” time – through the past, are introduced to explain the context and motivation behind “Skopje 2014” in terms of Macedonian independence from Yugoslavia. Instances of “Skopje 2014” are compared to Berlin’s reconstruction following the fall of the wall (Huyssen 2003, Cohrane, Jonas 1999). In this sense, this subchapter is about the TRANSITIONAL CITY or THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY.

Lastly, the fifth track deals with the changes of the users of the main city square – the replacement of local citizens by tourists, and the touristic ambience in the city centre. Theories of nationalism and “imagined communities” (Anderson
2006) are elaborated here, along with theories of commodifying culture for the purpose of selling and marketing places of tourism (Kearns, Philo 1993). Conclusions regarding citizens’ feelings and perceptions of the city center are drawn. In other words, the final track is about THE TOURIST CITY.

CHAPTER THREE, the EPILOGUE, is the final discussion of the research project, in which several meta-conclusions are drawn. I argue that “Skopje 2014” is bad cultural translation of Western European nineteenth-century symbolic architecture, that does not embrace and represent Skopje’s zeitgeist and the citizens’ spaces in the city. As a result of this, Skopje’s social space became much more a “representation of space”, rather than a “space of representation”. The final point is that as such, its biggest failure is that it does not create any meaning among Skopjean citizens. In this concluding section, the medium of the artistic project and its relevance for the presentation of research findings and the generation of knowledge are also discussed. In addition, the significance of the artistic action, the audience’s feedback and the final remarks on the artistic work are included. The chapter ends with explanations about the limitations of the research and suggestions for possible further research.

Finally, the text also includes five APPENDICES: A Glossary with important keywords and terms, Tabular Analyses of the Citizens’ Interviews, Transcript of the Audio Guided Tour (in English), Photo Documentation of the Audio Guided Tour in Skopje, and List of Illustrations in the text.
Before you start reading the following text, please have the following items ready in front of you:

1. your mobile phone
2. a set of headphones.

Then please download the free application:

3. “QR-Code-Scanner” (or any other application for scanning QR codes).

Scan the QR codes and listen to the audio content (excerpts from the audio guided tour), which is interwoven into the text.
SETTING THE CONTEXT
Theoretical Context
Where is Macedonia and Where is Paris?

Case Study
Skopje 2014

Artistic Research Methodology
Seeing, Listening, Talking
Theoretical Context

Where is Macedonia and Where is Paris?

“Capitalism has to urbanize to reproduce itself.”

David Harvey, 1985, p. 277

For the general public, there may not seem to be a great or even any difference of meaning between the words ‘space’ and ‘place’, but the two terms and the distinction between them have long featured prominently in discussions in urban studies. More precisely, space is understood as more abstract, having area and volume, or in Euclidean terms, a geometry, while place is more concrete. The latter is defined by three aspects: location (fixed objective coordinates on the Earth’s surface), locale (the material settings for social relations – the actual shape of a place) and the sense of place (the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place) (see Agnew 1987). It is this last aspect that definitively distinguishes space and place. As Tim Cresswell (Cresswell 2004, p.10) writes: “When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is one such way) it becomes a place.”

The sense of place is perhaps the most difficult to formulate and express as it refers to the fleeting emotions, perceptions and associations that places evoke. The human geographer Yi Fu Tuan (Tuan 1974) called the affective bond between people and place “topophilia”. He used the idea of “the range of experience” as the most important perspective with which to develop the discourse of place. According to Tuan, at the most general level experience means the various modes through which a person knows and constructs reality. They can range from more direct and passive senses of smell, taste, and touch, to active visual perception and the indirect mode of symbolization. Experience can be direct and intimate, or it can be indirect and conceptual, mediated by symbols.

Furthermore, he explains, experience is also a compound of feeling and thought. Although it is common to regard feeling and thought as opposed, the one registering subjective states, the other reporting an objective reality, Tuan implies that they each lie near to the two ends of an experiential continuum, and that both are ways of knowing. He writes (Tuan 1977, p.9): “the given cannot be known in itself. What can be known is a reality that is a construct of experience, a creation of feeling and thought.”

He goes on to argue that an object or a place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind (Tuan 1977, p.183): “Abstract knowledge about a place can be acquired in short order if one is diligent. The visual quality of an environment is quickly tallied if one has the artist’s eye. But the ‘feel’ of a place takes longer to acquire. It is made up of experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years.” Similarly, Lucy R. Lippard (Lippard 1997, p.7) writes about the “lure of the local” as a concept of place, that is, “a portion of land/town/cityscape seen from the inside, the resonance of a specific location that is known and familiar.” In short, the sense of place presupposes an intimate and subjective relation of people to places, developed over a long period of time and grounded in an experience of the urban.

The idea that space becomes a place when it is used and lived and that experience is at the heart of what place means, is central to the idea of social or socially-produced space as conceived by the Marxist urban theorist Henri Lefebvre. The socio-spatial approach to urban analyses challenged the hitherto dominant human ecology perspective, typical for the members of the Chicago School, who adopted a Darwinist way of understanding city life. More precisely, the human ecological perspective “grounded the relationship between social and spatial processes in a biologically based metaphor borrowed from the plant and animal kingdom, [thus emphasizing] an adjustment process to the environment that is organic and adaptive rather than being the product of class, race and gender-based social relations streaming from a complex mode of social organization” (Gotttdiener, Budd 2005, p. 140).

4. The Chicago School refers to the University of Chicago. It produced the first major works specialized in urban sociology during the 1920’s and 1930’s.
In contrast to this perspective, the socio-spatial approach embraces the view “that important and key spatial patterns which define the spatial organisation of society are associated with specific aspects of the cultural, political, social and economic features of the correlated mode of societal organization” (Gottdiener, Budd 2005, p.140). In this approach, every society produces its own social space. As Jorg Dünee and Stephan Günzel (Dünne, Günzel 2012, pp. 330-331) write: “Every society (ie. each specific mode of production, within the particular societies of which the concept of society can be recognized at all) produces its own space.”

Furthermore, Lefebvre’s theory of the social production of space distinguishes three types of space: perceived, physical (first) space; conceived, mental (second) space; and lived, social (third) space. Perceived (first) space, or spatial praxis, is the materiality of space. “It relates to the production and reproduction of certain places and spaces that are particular to every social formation, and assures continuity and cohesion” (Lefebvre 1974, in Dünee, Günzel 2012, pp. 333-335). In perceived space, ‘espace perçu’, spatial praxis links everyday reality (die Zeitplan) and urban reality (paths, infrastructural networks connecting places of work, living and leisure, etc.) closely to one another. Lefebvre notes that this is a surprising link, because it consists of the strictest separation of the spaces that it connects and that a spatial praxis must possess a certain cohesion, but which does not necessarily amount to coherence (see Lefebvre 1974, in Dünee, Günzel 2012, p. 335).

Then there is conceived (second) space, or representations of space, which involves the ways in which space is planned and represented. “It is linked to the relations of production, to the ‘order’ that these imply, and consequently also to notions, signs, codes and ‘frontal’ relations” (Lefebvre 1974, in Dünee, Günzel 2012, p. 336). This space, ‘espace conçu’, is the space of scientists, urban planners, and technocrats, i.e those bound to the scientific paradigm and who identify the lived and perceived with the conceived, notes Lefebvre. This is also the dominant space in society (considered as a mode of production).

Lastly, lived (third) space, or the spaces of representation, refers to the emotional experience of space that develops through the imaginary and through the lived experience of the first two spaces. “They point out complex symbolizations [coded or not], they are connected to the hidden and underground aspect of social life, but also with art, which one could conceive not as a spatial code, but as a code of spaces of representation.” (Lefebvre 1974, in Dünee, Günzel 2012, p. 336). Lived space, espace vécu, is mediated through the images and symbols that accompany it; it is the space of residents, of users, but also certain artists who believe strongly in description, like writers and philosophers, writes Lefebvre. “It is the controlled, sustained space, that searches for the strength of imagination to change and appropriate” (Lefebvre 1974, in Dünee, Günzel 2012, p. 336).

Influenced by Lefebvre’s idea of social space, the political geographer and urban planner Edward Soja has expanded upon his notion of the triangulation of spatiality, that challenges the binaries of objectivity/subjectivity, material/mental, real/imagined and space/place, etc. Similarly, Soja differs three spaces: firstspace, the space of spatial practice or physical space; secondspace, representations of space or mental space; and thirdspace, the space of representation or social space. Soja’s thirdspace, notes Cresswell (Cresswell 2004, p. 38) “is practiced and lived rather than simply being material (conceived) and mental (perceived).” In this sense, space is constructed by the overlaying and mutual interaction of all three aspects of the urban: the material, social and discursive layers.
Furthermore, as mentioned above, as it was incapable of comprehending the urban world as it stands after de-industrialisation and the globalisation of the capitalist world order, the human ecological perspective was succeeded by a new paradigm that is much more related to the economic mode of organisation. According to this socio-spatial approach, “the stages of urban development are directly related to changes in the political economy of society.” (Gottdiener, Budd 2005, p. 140). That is, the basic postulates of this Marxist perspective are directly linked to social transformations brought about by the drive for capital accumulation and the class struggle emerging from this economic mode. The focus is thus on how the everyday life is influenced by the political economy of urban life, and its analysis of the urban environment involves the aspects of profit, investment, rent, class exploitation, and so on, which are all believed to be materialized in space.

Especially since the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970’s, places and their built environments, and so also the city, became extremely important for the accumulation of capital due to its uneven geographical distribution. According to David Harvey (Harvey 2005, p.1), the years at the end of the 70’s, when neoliberal and neconservative governments (Margaret Thatcher, Paul Volcker, Deng Xiaoping, Ronald Reagan) took power in the Western world are considered a “revolutionary turning point in the world’s social and economic history”. Related to these post-industrial changes and subsequently global movements of peoples, commodities and capital, place can be explained by what Harvey terms the ‘spatial fix’, ie. the opportunities that the built environment and urbanisation offer for absorbing capital surplus. In Harvey’s approach, place is a form of fixed capital which is in tension with mobile capital, so that investment and disinvestment in places creates uneven development in the world (see Cresswell 2004).

“Capitalism is necessarily growth oriented, technologically dynamic, and crisis prone. One of the ways it can temporarily and in part surmount the crisis of over-accumulation of capital (idle productive capacity plus unemployed labour power) is through geographical expansion. This is what I call the “spatial-fix” to capitalism’s contradictions. [...] The geographical landscape which results is not evenly developed but strongly differentiated. “Difference” and “otherness” are produced in space through the simple logic of uneven capital investment, a proliferating geographical division of labour, an increasing segmentation of reproductive activities and the rise of spatially ordered (often segregated) social distinction” (Harvey 1996, p. 295).

In this sense, space became much more important, and this shift away from the typical nineteenth-century focus on time, as well as epochs and hierarchical history, to the characteristically postmodern focus on space involves a more flexible mode of thinking that attempts to grasp the simultaneity, hybridity and overlapping of different places, phenomena and movements, for which the coinage ‘spatial turn’ emerged. For example, Edward Soja (Edward W. Soja, in Döring, Thielmann (Ed) 2008, p.9) notes: “Contemporary critical studies have experienced a significant spatial turn. In what may be seen as one of the most important intellectual and political developments in the late twentieth century, scholars have begun to interpret space and the spatiality of human life with the same critical insight and emphasis that has traditionally been given to time and history on the one hand, and to social relations and society on the other.”

Although it is very difficult to define and agree on what exactly this ‘spatial turn’ means - and this is often related to other turns (narrative, cultural, linguistic, pictorial) and not a single turn - many scholars would agree on one component of this paradigm shift, namely what Harvey and others call ‘time-space compression’, or what Karl Marx called the ‘annihilation of space by time’. ‘Time-space compression’ refers to the increased mobility and rapid circulation of capital around the globe, consequently speeding up social life while simultaneously reducing the significance of place. Or as Doreen Massey (Massey, 1994, p.147) notes, “’time-space compression’ refers to movement and communication across space, to the geographical stretching out of social relations, and to our experience of all this. The usual interpretation is that it results overwhelmingly from the actions of capital, and from its currently increasing internationalization.”

In this manner, place can be also understood as a temporality, a particular stretch of time in which surplus capital is capable of being absorbed. In Harvey’s (Harvey 1996, p.261) words: “entities achieve relative stability in both their bounding and their internal ordering of processes creating space, for a time. Such permanencies come to occupy a piece of space in an exclusive way (for a time) and thereby define a place - their place - (for a time). The process of place formation is a process of carving out “permanencies” from the flow of processes creating spatio-temporality. But the “permanencies” - no matter how solid they seem - are not eternal but always subject to time as “perpetual perishing”. They are contingent on processes of creation, sustenance and dissolution.”

Within a market economy then, the permanence of place and mobility of capital are in perpetual tension and places are forced to compete to get a share of mobile capital. In accordance with the logic of marketing, cities must present their uniqueness and differentiate themselves from other cities, offering one-of-a-kind possibilities, experiences and qualities of life in order to be able to compete for a share of global capital. Cities must symbolically reconstruct themselves if they are to be eligible to compete in the global marketplace.
This is often accompanied by the creation of strategic images and branding discourses by which symbolic contents are publicly mediated. As Tim Hall (Hall 1998, pp. 117-118) notes: “the processes of place promotion are not incidental to those of urbanization. As image assumes ever greater importance in the post-industrial economy it is becoming clearer that the actual production of urban landscapes reflects the necessity for cities to present positive images of themselves and that economic development is driven by programs of place promotion.”

The symbolic dimension of place can be understood as an imagined (rather than physical) content that allows for one physical place to attain a commonly known and accepted or contested position in a discourse (see Altrock et al. 2010). Furthermore, the creation of symbolic places may refer to the construction of an identity for a whole city (e.g. Berlin after reunification), particular urban districts (e.g. SoHo in Manhattan) and can include large-scale urban renewals (e.g. “Skopje 2014”) or the construction of a single monumental structure (e.g. the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao) that will re-map the city. Similarly, as Cresswell (Cresswell 2004) notes, large cultural events such as World’s Fairs, the Olympic Games and the World Cup are used to sell places to a global audience. In this approach, symbolic places are created by discursive re-contextualisation and the formation of new narratives, whether wanted or needed, thus contributing to the development of a city story, which will ideally market the place globally.

Selling places can be also defined as a practice involving a wide range of economic and social activities or policies, through which cities, or their elites, strive to develop an image of symbolic identity so as to attract investment and tourists. Urbanization is crucial for this symbolic reconstruction. During this process, places become commodified, promoted, advertised and marketed like any other capitalist product. “Investment in consumption spectacles, the process, places become commodified, promoted, advertised and marketed to that place, it is also quite important to consider the symbolic political power that this process has internally, as regards the local population and their resistance to the global capitalist forces. Harvey (Harvey 1996, p. 297) argues that nowadays places achieve much more relevance and people care much more about the security of their place and about its distinction: “Those who reside in a place [...] become acutely aware that they are in competition with other places for highly mobile capital [...] Residents worry about what package can they offer which will bring development while satisfying their own wants and needs. People in places therefore try to differentiate their place from other places and become more competitive (and perhaps antagonistic and exclusionary with respect to each other) in order to capture or retain capital investment.”

In connection with this, selling places often involves the appropriation of both culture and history, i.e. precisely those aspects of a place that are believed to be locally rooted. “Manipulation of culture depends upon promoting traditions, lifestyles and arts that are supposed to be locally rooted, and in this respect the selling of place has what the human geographers might call an ‘authentic’ quality spawned by the cultural life of the places themselves” (Relph 1976 in Kearns, Philo 1993, p.3). What is more, the culture of a place is intimately related to its history, and the level of interest that it might provoke, and in this regard, the selling of place is also “an attempt to tap historical resources, whether these be ‘relic’ features in a landscape such as a castle or associations with an ‘historic’ event such as the beheading of a queen, in the course of marketing the image of place both externally and internally” (Kearns, Philo 1993, p.5).

Moreover, Kearns and Philo note that the manipulation of ‘authenticity’ for the purpose of gaining profit can be related to three instances: “when local authorities and entrepreneurs self-consciously draw upon the economic and social history of a particular place as a source of pride and inspiration for the present; [...] the use of ‘heroic’ imagery surrounding specific historical processes as a lever for money making and persuasion in the present; and [...] planned adoption of all manner of historical references, particularly architectural references, in the fabric of the built environment, so as to foster the ‘cosy’ ambience of a place that is basically familiar – unlike the constructions of modernism that allegedly ignore history, culture and place and thereby alienate people from their surroundings – and which is likely as a result to encourage inward investment from enterprises and tourists whilst also securing the loyalty of local residents” (Kearns, Philo 1993, p.6).

Similarly, Harvey notes that creating symbolic images of places often takes the form of ‘heritage’, whereby the sense of rootedness is linked to the past and materialized in place and served as a commodity to both locals and tourists. Images of places serve to establish an identity for the place market, relying heavily on tradition, heritage and (a certain kind of) history. “The contemporary necessity for place reconstruction has created dilemmas for spatial practices...
as well as for the way places get represented and become representations. It is in such a context that the febrile attempt to reconstruct places in terms of imagined communities, replete, even, with the building of places of representation (the new monumentalities of spectacle and consumerism, for example) or the forging of imagined communities as a defence against the new material and social practices of capitalist accumulation becomes more understandable’ (Harvey 1996, pp. 323–324).

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The Cambridge English Dictionary defines culture as “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group at a particular time.” Among other, Steven Miles and Malcom Miles (Miles, Miles 2004) write about two more categories in which to think about culture – as arts and as a form of national identity. In terms of city marketing and capital accumulation, what connects them in a postmodern world is the fact that they can be rendered into a product or image to be consumed. For instance, it is well known that when artists move in to certain areas in large numbers, infuse them with a certain lifestyle, make them lively with the social and art spaces they create, it is the first step of the gentrification of that place. Similarly, distant and ‘exotic’ ways of life (to the Western observer) and authentic experiences of the culture of the ‘other’ are consumed as part of tourist leisure activities. It is similar with flagship museums or landmark buildings that purport to house and disseminate national cultures and that are consumed as tourist attractions.

The use of culture as means for the economic regeneration of cities is a widespread practice in post-industrial economies. This approach is related to what scholars have termed the ‘symbolic economy of cities’. For example, Miles and Miles (Miles, Miles 2004, pp.51-52) write: “The concept of symbolic economy is related to (this) culturally coded form of consumption [...] While the purchase of cultural goods denotes a self-image on the part of the purchaser, so too does the construction of a city’s image as hub of fashion, film, art, or music.” Furthermore, as Sharon Zukin notes (Zukin 1995, p.1-2): “[C]onflicts do frequently arise because the manipulation of culture and history by the place marketers runs against the understandings of local culture and history built into the daily encounters with city spaces of the city’s other people.” Similarly, Zukin (Zukin 1995, pp. 19-20) notes: “[C]ultural public culture to commercial cultures has important implications for social identity and social control. [...] On one level, there is a loss of authenticity, that is compensated for by a re-created historical narrative and a commodification of images; on another; men and women are simply displaced from public spaces they once considered theirs.”

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Culture thus plays a substantial role in shaping, creating and defining public space. As such it is also a powerful tool for controlling city space. On the one hand it offers the possibility of capital accumulation while on the other it allows for different social groups to be represented in city space and so to construct different ‘place identities’. Zukin (Zukin 1998, p.33) continues: “city space is not only a medium and object of economic accumulation and political competition, it is also a discursive element of the public sphere. It offers the possibility of representation, negotiation (in a sociological sense) and altering of interests of different groups.

The streets, the parks, the playgrounds, museums and neighborhoods of one city are furthermore not only an arena of microsociological representations and conflicts, but also microsociological production of citizen’s rights. Groups find their ‘place’ in the public sphere of a city parallel with the development of a ‘place-identity’ in city space.”

But it nonetheless seems that the ways city elites use culture for shaping public spaces are much more focused on capital accumulation than on supporting the social identities of citizens and their needs. Keams and Philo (Keams, Philo 1993, p. 25) explain that “[c]onflicts do frequently arise because the manipulation of culture and history by the place marketers runs against the understandings of local culture and history built into the daily encounters with city spaces of the city’s other people.” Similarly, Zukin (Zukin 1995, pp. 19-20) notes: “[C]ultural public culture to commercial cultures has important implications for social identity and social control. [...] On one level, there is a loss of authenticity, that is compensated for by a re-created historical narrative and a commodification of images; on another; men and women are simply displaced from public spaces they once considered theirs.”

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Examples of such instances are manifold and are found all over the globe. In relation to the competition of cities to produce unique characteristics images of urban growth. Zukin (Zukin 1995, pp. 23-24) believes that public space and the symbolic economy are related to two production systems, both crucial to a city’s material life: “the production of space, with its synergy of capital investment and cultural meanings, and the production of symbols, which constructs both a currency of commercial exchange and a language of social identity. Every effort to rearrange space in the city is also an attempt at visual re-presentation. [...] Creating a public culture involves both shaping public space for social interaction and constructing a visual representation of the city.”

and images, one of the discourses common in scholarly debates is about the authenticity of urban places. More precisely, an exhausting amount of research claims that in an attempt to differentiate a place from other places, the outcome is quite the opposite: cities tend to become ever more homogenized. As Harvey (Harvey 1989, p. 295) writes: “Heightened inter-place competition should lead to the production of more variegated spaces within the increasing homogeneity of international exchange. But to the degree that this competition opens cities to systems of accumulation, it ends up producing what Boyer (1988) calls a ‘recursive’ and ‘serial’ monotony, ‘producing from already known patterns or moulds places almost identical in ambience from city to city.”

I will elaborate this with the help of the following example.

To answer the simple question ‘where is Macedonia?’, which a street performer playing Louis VI on the streets of Paris asked me, one could use several straightforward answers. For example: Macedonia’s location is at 41.608635 and 21.745274999999992 on the Global Positioning System. While this information is more or less accurate, the numbers do not tell us much about Macedonia except its exact location in abstract space. Then, according to Google’s Quick Facts: “Macedonia is a landlocked Balkan nation of mountains, lakes and ancient towns with Ottoman and European architecture.” This information does give us some idea about Macedonia - that it is located in the Balkans, that it does not have a sea coast, and that it contains some material structures of Ottoman and European origin. But if one has never heard of the Balkans, this information will not be of much use either. Further answers could continue offering explanations about where Macedonia is: Macedonia is a former Yugoslavian Republic, located in Southern Europe, between Greece, Albania, Serbia, Kosovo and Bulgaria, and so on and so on, and eventually, one would get some vague idea about where Macedonia is, as one hears names of familiar places somehow related to it.

It could be argued that for the general public Macedonia is not linked to any particular meanings and is not especially well-known, as it is not visited by a vast number of tourists on a daily basis and is not represented in the media (travel advertisements, literature, news, etc.) much either. By contrast, one would assume that, Paris being a world city, no one, or very few people, would ask ‘where is Paris?’ Nevertheless, I suggest we take a look at the following picture.

Excerpt of a random conversation with a street performer playing Louis VI, whom I met while wandering through the streets of Paris.
Although the symbol of Paris, the Eiffel Tower, can be immediately recognized, one quickly doubts that this image is of Paris. At the most obvious level, the hundreds of thousands of tourists that visit the Eiffel Tower every day are missing. The image is actually a representation of Paris, located 5500 miles away from the one in France, in the ghost town of Tiantucheng in Zhejiang, China. Replicating Paris and imagined as a luxurious gated community, the construction of Tiantucheng began in 2007. Besides the 108 meters high replica of the Eiffel Tower, other monuments and buildings have been recreated as well. The intention behind the construction of this city was to house 100,000 people from rural areas; but at present the number of inhabitants is roughly 2000.11

One might legitimately ask how or why someone would possibly arrive at the idea of building a replica of Paris in China? As ‘The Urbanist’ writes: “It may seem odd to build a replica of a famous city in a different country, but the developers were working on the idea that Paris was seen as a romantic destination. They felt that Chinese people would want to live in this faux-European environment with its stately townhouses and wide-open courtyards.”12 And Paris is only one example of European cities being imitated in China, others include Florentina Village, Thames Town, etc.

In this approach, instead of producing culturally diverse places, we end up with what Harvey calls ‘homogenisation through diversification’. The homogenization of cities involves reproducing and simulating the same images of cities across the globe. Jean Baudrillard writes that simulation is characterized by the blending of reality and representation and erasing the border between them. He notes that the simulacrum is not a copy of the real, but becomes a truth in its own right, like the hyperreal. It belongs to the fourth step of representation, which is no longer of the order of appearance and which has no relation to any reality whatsoever. “Representation”, he writes, “stems from the principle of the equivalence of the sign and of the real. Simulation, on the contrary, stems from the radical negation of the sign as value, from the sign as the reversion and death sentence of every reference. Whereas representation attempts to absorb simulation by interpreting it as a false representation, simulation envelops the whole edifice of representation itself as a simulacrum” (Baudrillard 1994, p.6).

Such is the case of Disneyland, for example, which presents itself as imaginary so we believe everything else is real. Related to this, scholars often speak about the ‘Disneyfication of cities’ (Sorkin 1992, Zukin 1995, Roost 2000), where a theme park model (Disneyland) is imitated in many cities, thereby stripping the organic characteristic of real places, and replacing them with idealized, “more pleasant”, tourist-friendly appearances. This is often accompanied by imposing a certain idea on a place, offering possibilities for multiple consumption goods in that place, having employees, besides the service they offer, provide entrainment for customers, and so on.

“In the Disney utopia”, Michael Sorkin (Sorkin 1992, pp. 231-232) writes, “we all become involuntary flaneurs and flaneuses, global drifters, holding high our lamps as we look everywhere for an honest image. The search will get tougher and tougher for the fanned-out millions as the recombinant landscape crops up around the globe [...] Disneyzone – Toon Town in real stucco and metal – is a cartoon utopia, an urbanism for the electronic age. Like television, it is a machine for the continuous transformation of what exists (a panoply of images drawn from life) into what doesn’t (an ever-increasing number of weird juxtapositions). [...] The only way to consume this narrative is to keep moving, keep changing channels, keep walking, get on another jet, pass through another airport, stay in another Ramada Inn. The only logic is the faint buzz of memories of something more or less similar ... but so long ago, perhaps even yesterday.”

Along these lines, Paris is not only in France, but also in China, and perhaps in Macedonia as well. Or the symbolic economy of Paris is no longer only French or located in France, it is also translated into and visually represented in a Chinese context, internationally, and this for the very same reasons as locally – for gaining profit. And as the symbolic images of famous world cities are replicated around the globe, cities become more and more alike. As Kearns and Philo (Kearns, Philo 1993, p.20) note: “Places harness their surface differences in order to make themselves in a very real sense nothing but the ‘same’: to give themselves basically the same sort of attractive image – the same pleasant ensemble of motifs (cultural, historical, environmental, aesthetic) drained of anything controversial – with basically the same ambitions of sucking in capital so as to make the place in question ‘richer’ than the rest.”

So, can we speak of a local character and an authentic local culture of anywhere at all in a time of radically expanding globalization? If places are becoming more alike, what is it that makes one place different to another? Discussing ‘time-space compression’ Massey (Massey 1994, p.321) argues that “what gives a place its specificity is not some long-internalized history but the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus. [...] It is indeed, a meeting place. Instead of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understanding, but where a larger proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings
are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region or even a continent."

That is, Massey argues first that place is not static but should be rather seen as a process, second that boundaries are not necessary for the conceptualization of place itself and third that places do not have single, unique ‘identities’, but are full of internal conflicts. In this sense, she also believes that places are unique and specific, but she doesn’t see this specificity deriving from a long place-bound local history. Instead she writes (Massey 1994, p.323) that “[t] is a sense of place, an understanding of ‘its character’, which can only be constructed by linking that place to places beyond. A progressive sense of place would recognize that, without being threatened by it. What we need, it seems to me, is a global sense of the local, a global sense of place.”

Furthermore, Stuart Hall claims that there is a dialectical relation between globalization and the fragmentation of culture, or how group structures affect the identity of one person. Regarding Western consumer culture, he notes (Hall 1992, p.302 in Wildner 1994, p.60): “Cultural flows and global consumerism between nations create the possibilities of ‘shared identities’ as ‘customers’ for the same good, ‘clients’ for the same services, ‘audience’ for the same messages and images – between people who are far removed from one another in time and space.” He speaks about the homogenization of a global culture which is nonetheless conflictual. The dialectical relation between the global and the local, between homogenous and diverse, is that on the one hand similar needs, ideals, norms and values are developed through the international exchange of goods and information, while on the other the differences between regions, between centre and periphery, is intensified through the uneven distribution of resources or their levels of accessibility (see Wildner 1994, p.61).

The attempt of the peripheral, less-known cities to attract global capital flows, easily circulating in the centre, i.e. in the global capitals, is thus closely related to the symbolic economy. It is often additionally related to cultural identity politics, and the development of a distinctive cultural (national) identity. Boris Buden (Buden 2003) writes: “what we have to deal with in the new postmodern space is an endless political play of different identities, which are almost entirely culturally defined.” Quoting Rastko Mocnik, Buden (Buden 2010) also notes: “[an identity] is the ambiguous privilege of those doomed to remain local, particular, peripheral: it is a euphemism for the incapacity to attain the serene firmament of universality.” Being a marginal country on the periphery of Europe, “Skopje 2014” aims, as government officials assert, to embrace and present the cultural heritage and national history by marketing the country and the city globally and thereby attracting tourists and investors.

It is in the context of neoliberal symbolic urban reconstructions, I suggest, that the urban reconstructions in Skopje need to be understood. More precisely, the attempt to market a Macedonian cultural identity through Skopje’s makeover, as will be shown in the following chapter, is motivated and instigated by local politicians’ responses to international economic and political changes. It is impossible to understand the incentive behind “Skopje 2014” and the space it has created without looking at these global processes. As I argue below, by imitating European styles and symbols, Skopje’s public spaces are now deemed to resemble theme parks or Disneyland, they simulate the appearance of a city that arguably resembles many other places around the globe.

But, as Massey argues, the specificity of places is defined by a particular constellation of social relations, experiences and understanding, which give the city its ‘unique characteristics’, which are possible only when related to other places. The authenticity or originality of Skopje is linked to the daily social encounters of the practitioners of the city, to their experiences of the public spaces, to their imaginaries of the city. The internal conflicts of Skopje regarding its meanings, prompted by the urban renewal project, carve out a series of city identities that are opposed to one another. This was evident in the heavy criticism the former government’s conception and representation of public spaces in the city received from city residents. The correlation between how the former government planned the city, and how the citizens practice and live the city, is arguably broken. Instead of bringing Skopje closer to a European metropolis, as former government officials intended, the public believe that the city has been turned into a dystopian metropolanka.13

Regarding social urban space, the present study aims to investigate the impacts of symbolic urban reconstructions on the production of public space. I research the ‘sense of place’ and the lived experience of residents, in light of the third of Lefebvre’s categories of space. I consider how city’s meanings and how the way citizens perceive and relate to symbolic places, public space identities, etc., are changed in the wake of symbolic reconstructions. Krasny and Nierhaus (Krasny, Nierhaus 2008, pp. 7-8) argue that “the city is produced through urban actions. Representations of cities and individual and collective perceptions of the urban produce and reproduce the city as an experiential space.”14

Regarding these theoretical notions, this PhD researches the different perspectives of experiential spaces, the various “articulations” of social spaces, the manifold personal and collective spaces that form and produce the city on a daily basis.

13. Palanka means province in colloquial Macedonian.

This is highly important and needs to be taken into consideration in urban planning, as it allows for a bottom-up production of urban space that embraces heterogeneity and the inclusion of city narratives, and therefore a diversity of city meanings. As Frank Eckardt notes (Eckardt 2013, p.10): “planning needs to be understood as a more personalized, emotion sensitive, body oriented field of communication which seeks tools for enabling experiences of connectivity, for learning from individuals on how to move in the city, and integrate the various narratives into one single lifetime that follows its own pattern of sense making. A new agenda for planning interrupts the competition of narratives as it includes this form of knowledge from everyday life in the unknown city of knowledge. The knowledge on how to plan the city is “out there” and not part of any kind of selective new form of telling about the city.”

In sum, this PhD adopts the view that space is constructed by overlaying and reciprocation of three aspects of the urban: the material, social and discursive layers. The research focuses on the social space production following the urban renewal “Skopje 2014” and is mainly based on citizens’ narratives of Skopje. Regarding the homogenization of places, the research deals with the relation between the meanings people ascribe to and derive from places and the capitalist forces that influence and alter those meanings. Assuming that the commercialisation of culture that “Skopje 2014” promotes has negative impacts on the social identity of individuals and groups and their spaces of representation, the urban renewal is to be re-evaluated.
Macedonia is recognized as a republic as part of the Yugoslavian Federation.

Disastrous earthquake hits Skopje.

1963

Kenzo Tange wins UN competition for Skopje’s reconstruction.

1965

Macedonia proclaims its independence.

1991

Macedonia obtains the name FYROM (name dispute with Greece).

1995

“Skopje 2014” is announced.

2006

Greece vetoes Macedonia’s entry into NATO at the Bucharest Summit.

2008

Nationalist conservative party VMRO-DPMNE takes power.

2010
“So Skopje is a city that has existed for several millennia, but it is difficult to prove 
this. We have to trust those who claim to offer a truthful history, as there is little 
material evidence available. The city builds this old and long story by the principle 
of auto-fabulation, meaning that the story is transferred but is not physically 
obvious. The city has unfortunately suffered several dramatic political and natural 
disasters - starting with Piccolomini who burned it down. It was renewed in a 
time when the power of the Ottoman Empire had waned and presumably did 
not carry the same qualities. Then came floods, wars and the new epochs, which 
sought to destroy what was there and start anew. And this is the problem with 
constructing identities. The identity is hidden and illegal, and sometimes one 
surprised that it even exists. In 1914 there was a new European baroque planning, 
in 1945 there is the brave new world of sun, air, greenery and freedom and then 
in 1963 the city is destroyed. And Tange’s approach is not related to what can be 
fixed and re-developed - no. A completely new city was built. And lastly is 
the tradition which says, ‘all of this so far is not valid, we will return to something 
that perhaps the city had in the antique period’, with the aim of turning this into 
the city’s identity. I have written about this: The only continuity of Skopje is its 
discontinuity. That is Skopje’s identity.”

Prof. Jasmina Siljanovska,
(Interview excerpt conducted by the author on 24 September 2013)

Skimming through the history of Skopje’s urban development, one can 
see that it is characterized by a series of ruptures: the city has been destroyed 
due to imperial conquests (it was under Ottoman rule for 500 years, during 
the Balkan Wars it was under Serbian rule, and in World War II it was occupied 
by Bulgarian fascists) and natural disasters (it was struck by an earthquake in 
518, set on fire by the Austrian General Piccolomini in 1689, flooded in 1962, 
etc.). Despite enduring various hardships Skupi (Roman), Üskup (Ottoman), 
Skopje (Yugoslavian), Skopie (Bulgarian) or Skopje (Republic of 
Macedonia) kept on reviving itself and inscribing new stories in its 
urban palimpsest. The constant reinvention of the city thus forms part 
of its identity, even though this reinvention was more often than not 
forced upon it, rather than something that emerged organically in the 
process of urban development.

Under Ottoman rule (from the late fourteenth century till 1912) Skopje 
gained a large Muslim population and an Orientalist architectural spin 
(Old Bazaar, mosques, hammams, etc.). The Ottoman city, revolving 
around the Old Bazaar, mainly occupied the left bank of the Vardar 
river, and while this was the social, economic and trading centre, the 
right bank was a predominantly residential area consisting of small, 
traditional settlements (Maalo). A turning point in Skopje’s urban history 
was the construction of the railway Thessaloniki-Skopje-Kosovska 
Mitrovica in 1873, which positioned the city as an important trading 
hub and prompted the start of modernisation and expansion on the 
right river bank.

Nevertheless, as no official urban plans from the Ottoman period exist, 
this is considered a non-planned period in terms of urbanisation. One 
can only speak of a planned urban development after the liberation 
from Ottoman rule, or more precisely after the Balkan Wars (1912 and 
1913), when Skopje first become province of the Kingdom of Serbia 
(in 1914), then of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians (SCS)
(in 1918) and finally of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (in 1929). According to Siljanoska's periodisation (see Pencic 2011) of Skopje’s urban development and based upon the existing urban plans (from 1914, 1929, 1948, 1965 and 1985) two developmental phases can be distinguished. Firstly, a period of de- Ottomanization and Europeanisation, lasting from 1914 till 1948, and secondly a period of modernisation from 1948 until Macedonia’s independence in 1991, concluding with the plan from 1985.

The first urban plan of Skopje was devised in 1914 by Dimitrije T. Leko, and although not implemented because of the outbreak of World War I, it is an important document as it reveals how early urbanisation tendencies were to follow the reconstruction models of late nineteenth or early twentieth century European cities. The plan was strongly influenced by academism, replacing traditional (Eastern) Ottoman urban planning with (Western) European artistic city design. Between the wars (1918-1941) the city underwent intensive modernisation and Europeanization and began transforming its identity. Upon becoming the capital, and thus military and administrative centre, of the Vardar Province in the Yugoslavian Kingdom in 1929, Skopje obtained for the first time an official General Regulatory Plan by Josif Mihaylovich. The plan introduced a division of the city’s areas by function: trading, administrative, intellectual and industrial and urged the introduction of the first modernist buildings in Skopje.

The interwar period, especially the late 20’s and early 30’s, is marked by the construction of the most significant architectural objects of pre-earthquake Skopje, namely the National Theatre, the Officers House, the National Bank, and the Ristic Palace, which will later become symbols of the so-called “Old Skopje” and the nostalgia attached to it (see Nikolovski 2012). The architectural style of these buildings is characterised by academism, eclecticism and classicism and is related to the emergence of the Serbian bourgeoisie and the national awakening and enlightenment. Under Western influence and following the example of grand manner, or the City Beautiful Movement (see Pencic 2011), of French and English urban models, the city slowly obtained the look of a contemporary European city, thus expanding upon traditional Ottoman and vernacular Balkan style architecture.

As Macedonia became one of the six republics of the Yugoslavian Federation after World War II, Skopje became capital of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia on 29 November 1945. During this time, the city experienced major industrial development and turned into a regional administrative, trade, industrial and cultural centre. Rapid industrialisation necessitated a second urban plan, which was designed by the Czech architect Ludýek Kubesh in 1948. The plan, a radical one for Skopje, was influenced by functionalism, the International Congress of Modern Architecture – CIAM’s 1933 Athens Charter, and Le Corbusier’s doctrine of La Ville Radieuse. It envisioned linear city expansion, in contrast to the previous radial city matrix and divided the city into urban zones of working, recreation, circulation and living. In this manner, the city finally broke up the relation with traditional urban morphology and became a modern capital, although it was soon to experience yet another rupture in its development.

The devastating earthquake of 1963 left the city nearly a ‘tabula rasa’. In a formidable response to its calls for help, Skopje’s tragedy was soon turned into “the greatest rescue operation in modern times”16, as the United Nations (UN) together with Yugoslav authorities mobilized remarkable world support that helped the city rise from its ashes. The new urban design and redevelopment plan of 1965, conceived by international team of architects led by the Japanese architect Kenzo Tange, was progressive in its approach and complied with socialist and modernist urban planning schemes. Following the socialist ideology of breaking ties with the past, Skopje preserved only a handful of traces of previous urban periods and therefore obtained a brand-new look. However, despite the rapid redevelopment and Skopje’s revival, the final master plan for reconstruction of Skopje’s centre was never fully finished.

The unfinished modernisation of Skopje left the city with a lot of voids, especially in the area around the main city square and the left river bank. In addition, as socialist urbanism sought to cut ties with the past, most historical landmarks dating from pre-earthquake Skopje were not reconstructed and were thus lost forever. This loss and the city’s voids in turn left the city little resembling a capital, an issue which emerged particularly following independence in 1991 and which was often pointed out as grounds for the urban renaissance plan “Skopje 2014”.

Moreover, Macedonia is the only Yugoslavian republic to have seceded non-violently from the Federation, and ethnic Macedonians and other ethnic groups, including Albanians17, Serbs, Turks, and Roma, have for the most part peacefully co-existed. However, a 1997 law forbidding official use of Albanian language and flag, led to an incident that evolved into an Albanian insurgency and armed conflict in 2001. The uprising ended with the Ohrid Agreement, signed the same year, which granted Albanians improved rights, including the recognition of Albanian as a second official language at the municipal level. To achieve the required minority quota and thus to be eligible for official bilingualism required that changes be made to the city’s municipal divisions. The changes

16. The Daily Mail, 19 April 1965, p.2
17. The Albanian minority is the biggest ethnic minority in Macedonian, reported 22.7% in 1994 and 25.2% of the population in 2002.
included annexing Albanian rural areas to the city of Skopje and rearranging existing municipal boundaries so that Albanian municipalities could bring part of the city centre under their jurisdiction. A new urban space was formed that not only advocated spatial segregation, but also a politics of representation and distinction. For instance, in 2002 a Millennium Cross was erected on Vodno Mountain on Skopje's south side; this was followed by the erection of a monument to the Albanian freedom fighter Skenderbeg in the Old Bazaar a few years later.

In addition to internal conflicts the country has also problems with its neighbouring states, best indicated in the name dispute with Greece. Following Macedonia's independence Greece refused to acknowledge the country's constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia. The problem with identifying ‘Macedonia’ with the republic relates to the Greek province of Macedonia. Greece claims that use of the name Macedonia by the Macedonian state would not only cause confusion of territorial reference, but also it that implies ambitions over Greek territory and heritage.

The ban on the official use of Macedonia as the Republic's name was first imposed by the UN Security Council in 1993 and was followed by an Interim Agreement between the Hellenic Republic and the Republic of Macedonia in 1995, when Macedonia obtained the name - “Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – FYROM’ (see Kolozova et Al. 2013). After twenty-five years of negotiations between Macedonia and Greece, during which several name variations were proposed by the mediator Matthew Niemitz, a solution to the name issue has not yet been found. This conflict is ongoing and Macedonia's internationally recognized name remains FYROM. Moreover, Greece vetoed Macedonia's entry into NATO at the Alliance's Summit in Bucharest in 2008, although this was against the statements made in Article 11 of the Interim Agreement. The official summit declaration urged immediate negotiations regarding the name issue as a precondition for starting negotiations regarding entry. This caused major frustration and public disappointment, especially since Macedonia has been an EU candidate country since 2005 and has received many positive reports and recommendations for beginning negotiations from the EU Commission since then (see Kolozova et Al. 2013).

But while Macedonia’s bid to join the EU and the name dispute remain ongoing, the former Macedonian government has not remained indifferent to what took place at the Bucharest NATO Summit. Since the nationalist right-wing party IMRO-DPMNU (Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization – Democratic Party for Macedonian Unity, VMRO-DPMNE in Macedonian) took power in 2006 and was re-elected in 2008, 2011 and 2014, it started emphasizing Skopje’s importance as the Macedonian capital as well as its centrality to the country’s national character and history. The fact that Skopje’s unfinished urbanisation left the city little resembling a capital of Macedonia did not fit with the emerging nationalism promoted by the former Government. Thus, government officials made efforts to find “strong distinguishing points that will give uniqueness and greatness to the city”, as Nikola Nikolovski writes (Nikolovski 2012, p.54). Apart from installing Hellenic sculptures and stone inscriptions in front of government offices, renaming airports, highways, streets, stadiums and squares, the increased presence of national flags in public spaces also formed part of the government’s strategy. For example, Skopje International Airport is now called “Alexander the Great”, a motorway which is part of the trans-European transport corridor is also named “Alexander of Macedon”, the football stadium “Philip II of Macedon”, etc.
In a move that has upset the Greeks, Alexander the Great has made a huge comeback in Macedonia. A giant statue bearing an uncanny resemblance to the warrior king – although, officially, no one dares call it that – has been erected in the heart of Skopje, Macedonia’s capital. Seated upon his favourite steed, the classical hero surveys the capital from the vantage point of Plostad Makedonija.” (Smith 2011)

At a press-conference organized by the Municipality Centre of Skopje on 4 February 2010, government officials proudly informed the Macedonian public that the capital was to be given a new image. By releasing a CGI video, called ‘Visualization of the Skopje Centre in 2014’ and depicting in a very realistic and precise manner the new blueprint of the city, “Skopje 2014” (henceforth “the Project”) was announced. The Project, which was supposed to be finished by 2014 (hence its name), was presented as cultural project embracing Macedonian history and cultural heritage. As the former Minister of Culture explained, with this project a metropolis rich in landmarks, personalities and buildings, which would help Macedonian identity to flourish, is to be created.

When the CGI video presenting the brand-new look of the city was released, few believed the plan would come to fruition. But while the public took the presentation as a bad joke, during the past seven years and at an astonishingly rapid pace the city’s appearance has been changed in a remarkable manner, in accordance with the announcements made at the press-conference, and Skopje has obtained a very peculiar, if not dubious, artistic appeal. In fact, the city was given even more statues, buildings and other monumental objects than were presented in the video.

An anonymous 25 meter bronze equestrian statue, officially titled ‘Warrior on a horse’, but widely recognized to represent Alexander the Great on his horse Bucephalus, now stands in Macedonia Square, thus becoming the new country’s landmark. The statue itself is 14.5 meters high and is placed on a 10 meter column, consisting of three rows of reliefs, eight statues representing Ancient Macedonian soldiers and concluding with a fountain surrounded by eight 2.5 meter high lions. Furthermore, the statue of Alexander the Great is aligned with fountain sculptures, titled ‘Warrior’ and ‘Fountain of Mothers of Macedonia’ placed on the opposite side of the Vardar river.

Like the mysterious representation of Alexander the Great, these statues are widely recognized as Philip II of Macedon, Alexander’s father, and
his mother Olympias of Epirus. The statue of Philip II is 13 meters tall and elevated on a 16 meter high pedestal, decorated with reliefs and sculptures of four ancient soldiers, two lions guarding a man, a woman and a young child, and ending with a fountain. Set on the same axis and between the statues of Philip II and Alexander is Olympia’s statue, represented by three stages of motherhood: as a pregnant woman, a breast-feeding woman, and a woman with a small child. Additionally, in the immediate surroundings, two sets of fountains, consisting of four lions and four horses, adorn the new square, named ‘Philip II’ or ‘Karposhovo Vostanie’.

On the left and right side of Karposhovo Vostanie Square and directly on the river bank, a line of public buildings, built in neo-classical and neo-baroque style, includes: (from left to right) the National Theatre; the Museum of the Macedonian Fight for Independence or as the official name reads - ‘Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Sovereignty and Independence’; Museum of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO) - Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime; the Macedonian Archaeological Museum, the Constitutional Court, and the Macedonian State Archive (all under the one roof); the Office of Public Prosecution; the Agency for Electronic Communication; an 8 meter Roman-style column, named ‘Independent Macedonia’; and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, with around 40 sculptures of historical foreign state officials (including Winston Churchill for instance) placed on its rooftop.

The Philharmonic building, built in a rather contemporary architectural style is placed back behind the Agency for Electronic Communication. Additionally, two new faux-baroque bridges: ‘Eye Bridge’ and ‘Art Bridge’, containing thirty, respectively, twenty-eight, 2 meter bronze statues of Macedonian rulers and notable modern artists, serve as pedestrian connections between the south bank of the river and the new buildings.

The ‘Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Statehood and Independence’ consists of two museums: the ‘Museum of IMRO’ and the ‘Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime’. It presents 109 wax figures, 16 portraits of famous Macedonian personalities, revolutionaries and intellectuals, 80 paintings by Russian and Ukrainian painters depicting massive scenes of important events in Macedonia’s revolutionary past, models, maps, original documents and objects (photographs, newspapers, albums, weapons), etc. The ‘Museum of the IMRO’ depicts the history of Macedonian revolutionary struggles from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, from its beginnings to the dissolution of its activity. The Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime’ on the other hand, represents the continuation of the idea and the fight of Macedonian peoples for an independent and democratic Macedonian state, the ideals and aims of the IMRO regarding an independent Macedonia that have persisted since the formation of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia as a federal unit of the Yugoslavian Federation.

The Museum’s official website reads: “The Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Statehood and Independence [...] symbolizes the fundamental aspiration and longing of the Macedonians for their freedom – the collective defiance and the strong revolutionary drive embedded in the creation of an independent, sovereign and democratic state [...] the museum exhibits are records of the anguish suffered by the Macedonian patriots for their uncompromising disapproval of the partial solution of the Macedonian issue within communist Yugoslavia”.

It is worth noting that unaccompanied visits to the museum are not allowed, instead a well-prepared tour through Macedonian history is recited by experts. In this sense, no subjective interpretation of the museum’s content is possible, instead officially-sanctioned state history is supposed to be taken as the literal and sole truth.

On the other side of the Stone Bridge, opposite of the ‘Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Statehood and Independence’, the Archaeological Museum was built, including also in the same building a State Archive and a Constitutional Court. The museum is housed on seven floors that are only 15 meters wide. It hosts 6000 objects and artefacts of Macedonian cultural heritage, some of them discovered during archaeological research funded by the former government. Among the objects on view are 15 wax figures of important personalities from Macedonian history, such as Philip II, Alexander III, Perseus, Justinian, Tzar Samuil, etc., placed accordingly in the ancient, i.e. Middle Ages section. One of the most attractive exhibitions is a copy of Alexander of Macedon’s sarcophagus (the original is exhibited in the Archaeology Museum in Istanbul) and the original marble sculpture of Venus Pudica from the second century A.D. Besides the objects, and with the goal of achieving a more authentic atmosphere, interactive LED floors and screens, as well as ambient music are used to convey a sense of Macedonia’s rich cultural heritage. According to the former Minister of Culture Kanceska-Milevska, with this museum the country received a monumental object that is an important investment for Macedonia from historic, cultural and touristic perspectives.
Furthermore, near the main square a Triumphal Arch, named ‘Gate Macedonia’ and placed on the new Pela Square, with motifs glorifying Macedonian history, was built to celebrate twenty years of Macedonia’s independence. The gate is 21 meters high, its façade embellished with 30 marble reliefs depicting scenes from Macedonian history. Alexander the Great and Philip II with the Macedonian phalanx, Justinian I, Tzar Samuel, Krale Marko, the Karposh rebellion, are represented among others. Reliefs depicting important historical events such as the Ilinden Uprising23, ASNOM24 and the declaration of Macedonian Independence in 1991 are also included. On the left and right sides of the Gate, two sculpturest of nineteenth century Macedonian intellectuals, Hristo Tatarcev and Pavel Satev, are placed seated. The official inauguration of Gate Macedonia was timed to coincide with the celebration of 20 years of Macedonian independence and was attended by many former government officials. The then PM Nikola Gruevski announced in his speech (Smith 2014): “All these exhibits […] are of priceless value for our country and represent a part of our cultural heritage.”

Scattered all around the city centre, but mostly on the main square, statues built as part of “Skopje 2014” also commemorate (in an exclusively figurative manner): notable people of early Christianity (Saint Cyril, Saint Methodius, Saint Clement, Saint Naum); emperors from the Byzantine period (Emperor Justinian I and Tzar Samuel); freedom fighters who fought for the Macedonian independence (Goce Delcev, Dame Gruev, Hristijan Todorovski Karpos, Dimitar Pop Berovski, Dimitar Chupovski, Metodija Andonov Cento, the Thessaloniki Assassins, etc.).

The Macedonian parliament building was also rebuilt with an extra floor and three glass-domes, and an equestrian statue of the Republic’s first president Nikola Karev was placed at the Parliament’s entrance. Additionally, numerous monuments of male national heroes and freedom fighters (including the Defenders of Macedonia, the ASNOM, the Founders of IMRO, the Fallen Macedonian Heroes, etc.), have been placed in the Park of Women Freedom Fighters opposite the parliament building. The sculpture of the Fallen Macedonian Heroes is the largest of the group, represented by a fountain and the mythical sculpture of Prometheus in the middle, a Quadriga mounted on a gate consisting of four columns and a rotunda, with the sculpture of the Roman goddess Victoria in the middle, mounted on a column.

Facade reconstructions were likewise carried out on all buildings around the main city square and in the square’s surrounding streets, including all residential buildings, the MEPSO (Electricity Transmission System Operator of Macedonia) building, the Ministry of Transport and Communication, the Ministry of Justice and the government house. The government house was modified by sticking a new, quasi-neoclassical façade over the original modernist building, which is probably the most absurd instance of façade renovation ever. In fact, all new façades involve “baroque/neoclassical style” representations being historically adjusted to new neoclassical buildings. The traffic bridges on the Vardar river have been given new decorative fences, also in baroque style.

The City Trade Centre, an important modernist symbol of Skopje, was slated to have its façade re-done, after the first and only referendum concerning “Skopje 2014”, conducted because of massive opposition by architects, urbanists, other experts and citizens, failed to gather majority of votes against the plan. Additionally, several pre-earthquake buildings, including the old National Theatre, the Officers Home (which was to be turned into a City Hall), and a new business centre resembling the old National Bank, were also re-developed as part of the urban revamp.

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23. The Ilinden Uprising was an organized revolt against the Ottoman Empire, prepared and carried out by the IMRO.

LEFT: 9. Photograph of ‘Warrior’, Karposhovo Vostanie Square
RIGHT: 10. Photograph of ‘Warrior on a horse’, Macedonia Square
11. Photograph of the ‘Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Statehood and Independence’

12. Photograph of ‘Mothers of Macedonia’, Karposhovo Vostanie Square
13. Photograph of the Macedonian National Theatre
14. Photograph of the Office of Public Prosecution
UPPER LEFT: 15. Photograph of the Archaeological Museum of Macedonia
UPPER RIGHT: 16. Photograph of the Agency for Electronic Communication
BOTTOM LEFT: 17. Photograph of the ‘Art Bridge’
BOTTOM RIGHT: 18. Photograph of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
UPPER LEFT: 30. Photograph of the Defenders of Macedonia monument
UPPER RIGHT: 31. Photograph of the Nikola Karev monument
BOTTOM LEFT: 32. Photograph of the Pitu Guli monument
BOTTOM MIDDLE: 33. Photograph of the Founders of VMRO monument
BOTTOM RIGHT: 34. Photograph of the ASNOM monument
35. Photograph of the Fallen Macedonian Heroes monument
UPPER LEFT: 40. Photograph of the old façade of the City Gallery
BOTTOM LEFT: 41. Photograph of the new façade of the City Gallery
UPPER RIGHT: 42. Photograph of the old Officer’s Home, source Wikimedia Commons (Photo: Unknown, Skopje, razglednica so Oficerski dom, 1928, marked as public domain)
BOTTOM RIGHT: 43. Photograph of the new Officer’s Home
44. LEFT: Photograph of the old façade of the Government House, source Wikimedia Commons
(Photo: wikcom, Government-Macedonia-free, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons)

45. RIGHT: Photograph of the new façade of the Government House
“Skopje 2014 was a much-needed, necessary project, by which the city centre was ennobled and acquired a new urban architectural aesthetic. After almost fifty years the centre has moved on from being a dead zone and is now regaining its authenticity”. Former Minister of Culture, Kancheska-Milevska

“With the visualization of this project, a metropolis will be created that is rich in landmarks, personalities and buildings, through which the Macedonian identity is expressed.” Former Minister of Culture Kancheska-Milevska

“Skopje should have a new face. From being city with a grey social-realist style let’s turn it into something with an aesthetic nature. Let’s change Skopje’s centre and complete it, turn it into an architectural and urban whole, that will give the city an artistic appeal.” Former Mayor of Skopje, Todorovic

Former government spokespersons insist on pointing out a number of important advantages to the urban reconstruction. They cite the fact that the central area of the city will be finally organised into a single urban composite, with the integration of the left and right banks of the Vardar river. They also say that state institutions will finally obtain their own spaces, instead of paying enormous amounts of money in rents. They also aim to use the renewal project to attract foreign investment, as well as an increased number of tourists and visitors, which should in turn help restaurants and other tourist businesses in the city’s centre to flourish. The renewal also involves the creation of many new office spaces, which should improve the country’s poor socio-economic atmosphere.

The project’s supporters offer numerous other reasons as to why “Skopje 2014” should be realized. They place considerable emphasis on the positive aesthetic, cultural and educative achievements the Project will bring to Macedonia. It is believed that Skopje’s aesthetic renaissance, a synonym for perceptual beauty, will make for a new symbolic recognition of the Macedonian capital throughout the world. That is, the renewal project enriches the nation’s cultural heritage, which is indispensable for Macedonia’s competition in the global market for cultural capital. Besides lending more aesthetic and artistic appeal to the city, the Project will fill a void in Macedonia’s cultural, architectural and planning history (i.e. the absence of buildings typical of a certain historical phase of urban European civilisation) and so the city will finally obtain the desired physiognomy of a real European capital.

It is also believed that the commemoration of important political and cultural personalities brings a positive perception of and identification with the nation among the populace. “Skopje 2014” supposedly raises up the national spirit through the aesthetic, cultural and social attributes that it embodies. This in turn strengthens the connection between the citizen and the state and increases the representability of state institutions. “Skopje 2014” facilitates an educational perception of Skopje’s centre as well, and by representations of numerous historic personalities and events, younger generations can continually learn about the origins and development of the nation.

For a young country, one going on 27 years of independence, the chance to express its national identity through works of art is undoubtedly a huge challenge. However, instead of proudly embracing the urban reconstruction project and contrary to the statements of the former Government, “Skopje 2014” caused serious controversy among the Macedonian public, which had little time to reflect on the major urban changes it entailed in the time between the announcement of the Project and its actual realisation. Remaining deaf to public and expert opinion the government nevertheless pushed the Project through. The substantial opposition to the renewal plan is mostly related to the undemocratic, non-transparent, top-down and nepotistic fashion in which the Project has been carried out.

46. Adaptation of Edward Munch’s “The Scream” © Matej Bogdanovski
More precisely, the economic perspective of the critique is directed towards massive spending of public money. The critique points out how the ideas behind the creation of the national capital city by erecting a complete Macedonian history in monumental architecture, were designed to attract money, tourists, new residents, and to satisfy the desires of local elites. “Skopje 2014” funds were provided by the Ministry of Culture, the city’s centre’s municipal government, the City of Skopje, and the Procurement Bureau, as well as other municipalities and joint stock companies with state shares. Whereas most funds for cultural buildings (the New Theatre, the Museum of Macedonian Struggle, the interior and museum artefacts of Archaeological Museum, Philharmonic Orchestra Hall, etc.) as well as cultural monuments (i.e. Gate Macedonia), were provided by the Ministry of Culture, the most monumental statue, ‘Warrior on a Horse’, was built on the initiative of the Municipality of Centre (with funds provided by the Government). In addition, the Procurement Bureau provided funding for building the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Constitutional Court and Finance Police, the Archaeological Museum and the State Archive of Macedonia.

Pressed by the opposition’s accusations of non-transparency regarding the Project’s costs, and speculation that they exceeded €500 million instead of initially allocated €80 million, a review of the amount spent on “Skopje 2014” was conducted in April 2013. The total costs of the objects completed thus far were first presented at a press conference held on 22 of April 2013, by the then Minister of Culture Kanceska Milevska, who announced that the costs amounted to €207,872,492. However, a research carried out by the Balkan Investigative Report Network - BIRN, conducted in 2016, asserts that from the initially announced price tag of €80 million, the cost of giving the Macedonian capital a new/old look has risen to €560 million. BIRN’s investigation draws on data gathered through the Access to Public Information Act, the official web page of the Public Procurement Bureau, the “Skopje 2014” audit and a joint report by the Government, the Skopje city centre municipal government, and the Ministry of Culture, presented after the local 2013 elections.

The database refers to more than 130 objects, whose construction was entrusted to several companies: Beton (earning one third of the money spent on reconstruction, that is, €163 million), Granit, Strabag, Beton-Stip and Bauer BG. The most expensive buildings were the Constitutional Court and the Archaeological Museum and the State Archive, which cost over €42 million. The most highly remunerated artist involved in the Project was the sculptor of ‘Warrior on a Horse’, the ‘Warrior’ and the surrounding complex of statues and fountains, Valentina Stefanovska, who was paid €3 million. Most of the façade reconstructions, e.g. of the City Trade Centre, the Government Building (being the most expensive one at €15 million), the headquarters of the Skopje Waterworks, were designed by the company Arhitektonika, which received half a million Euros for their services. From the aesthetic point of view the plastic-fantastic look of the buildings and façade has been deemed anachronistic in both its planning approach and its appearance as a mix of pseudo-styles glorifying Classical Antiquity. Moreover, the artistic tendencies of the Project are considered to thoughtlessly imitate figurative sculptures and historic architectural styles (neo-romanticism, neo-classicism, neo-baroque). Some experts and citizens who had welcomed the idea of commemorating important historic personalities relevant and essential to defining Macedonian nation state have nonetheless been highly critical of the Project’s technical realisation, done, according to them, in a very bad and even shameful manner. Criticism has been directed at its basic aesthetic postulates, such as proportions, composition and harmony with the existing surroundings. Also, the experts’ critique is addressed towards very unprofessional reconstruction of façades and inauthentic reconstruction of pre-earthquake buildings.
Ideologically, criticism has been directed at claims of a direct Antique-Macedonian line of descent rather than the (thus far) widely-accepted Slavic origins of the nation. More precisely, the critique refers to the erection of the statues of Alexander the Great, his father Philip II, and the Gate Macedonia. Critics argue the symbolic message that these objects aim to convey is “a narrative of ethnic Macedonian identity that roots national distinctiveness in its inheritance from ancient Macedonia” (Graan 2013, p.170). They have also noted that claiming descent from the ancient hero is an important instance of the discourse of ‘Antiquisation’, a post-Yugoslavian ideology pursued by the former government that relates contemporary Macedonians to ancient Macedonians rather than Slavs.

Many believe that this is what has exacerbated the political conflict with Greece, as it threatens Greece’s exclusive claims over antiquity. At the same time, the Macedonian narrative excludes ethnic minorities (i.e. Albanians), and is highly mono-gendered, for no female freedom-fighters and important women have been commemorated. The sole exceptions to this are the representations of women-mothers (Alexander’s mother) and women-saints (Mother Theresa). In general, the overall concept of the Project is deemed highly problematic as it delivers confusing messages evoked by reviving pre-earthquake buildings and styles of monuments linked to the Serbian bourgeois aesthetic legacy, and at the same time negating and erasing almost 50 years of socialism.

Furthermore, amidst booming construction in Skopje the research project “Skopje 2014 Project and its Effects on the Perception of Macedonian Identity Among the Citizens of Skopje”, conducted by the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities Skopje (ISSHS), sought to investigate whether the Project’s intentions, assuming that “Skopje 2014 intends to affirm, strengthen and ensure the perseverance of a historical truth about the Macedonian identity as the only truth” (Kolozova et al. 2013) are successful. Arguing that the Project aims to convey a truth of an uninterrupted historical continuity of the ‘Macedonian self’ from Antiquity via the Slavic period of the Middle Ages to the early 20th century Macedonian national struggle against Ottoman rule and the concomitant project of establishing an independent state, the study aimed to compare the State’s narrative and Skopje’s citizens’ own narratives about Macedonian identity, to find out how much they differ. The qualitative research carried out by the ISSHS involved a combination of models: focus groups, interviews and a (closed) expert focus group, comprising 56 participants; to this a quantitative research approach was later added, involving a survey of a representative sample of 1240 respondents.

The results from the quantitative research have showed that the most valuable markers of Macedonian culture were not related to “Skopje 2014”, but were rather to be found in immaterial culture, such as traditional music, food, language and lifestyle linked to Orthodox Christian values, etc. Additionally, the historical period considered to most strongly define Macedonian identity was the “komiti” period, i.e., the 19th-20th century period of struggle for an independent state led by IMRO/TMORO, the period of the so-called enlightenment (intellectual national awakening preceding or coinciding with the “komiti period”), and finally the partisans (the communist fighters of the Yugoslav Communist party).

The respondents expressed neither a sense of opposition nor indifference to the period of Antiquity, which in turn speaks of “blatant discrepancies” (Kolozova et Al. 2013) between the ordinary citizen’s perception of the ‘true Macedonian identity’ and that imposed by the State. Moreover, experts are of the opinion that Macedonia never had the chance to build its own identity as a state and/or nation, and that the recent quest to build a new national identity is related to ‘de-ottomanization’ and ‘de-yugoslavisation’. Additionally, all experts shared a negative view about the Project, which “does not have any aesthetic value, not even political effects” and its main purpose is “spending money and the quick building of objects and sculptures that reflects a totalitarian approach” (Kolozova et al. 2013).

Besides academic criticism, “Skopje 2014” was also strongly criticized by the non-government sector. Worth mentioning are some of the organisations comprised mostly of young citizens that have organized themselves in publicly criticising the Project. The first organised group who publicly expressed their opposition to the Project and demanded that construction be stopped was a group of architects and architecture students united under the name PAB (First Architecture Brigade). Following the announcement to build a church on the main city square in 2008, the group held a demonstration against this decision. The outcome was that the church was to be relocated from the square to the nearby Street Macedonia. Another group of activists, named Raspeani Skopjani (Singing Skopjeans), a choir, emerged afterwards as well. Showing up at different public spaces without any prior announcement they sing songs to express their views regarding government urban plans among other things. Members of the aforementioned group also
formed a third organisation named Plostad Sloboda (Freedom Square), whose activities vary.

In 2013 a relatively better organized criticism concerning the Project started to emerge. Related to the plans for a new ‘baroque’ façade for the City Trade Centre, a massive symbolic action, titled ‘I love GTC’ was organized by PAB members. The performative event involved ‘hugging the City Trade Centre’, i.e. opponents of the project held hands together and surrounded the City Trade Centre. By this action and by holding various public speeches about the importance of the object, citizens, experts, professors and students sought to defend the work of prominent Macedonian architects and Skopje’s modernist legacy. The event was organized several times, hosting numerous guests, speeches and discussions. With the change of government in 2017, and the biggest opposition party SDSM (Social Democratic Union of Macedonia) assuming power, the plans for replacing the City Trade Centre’s façade were finally completely abandoned.

It should also be noted that during the massive public protests in 2016, which were dubbed ‘the colourful revolution’ and which aimed to force the former Government to resign, many monuments and buildings from the “Skopje 2014” project were the targets of symbolic appropriation. Regarded as representations of authoritarian rule, they were massively paint-balled along with a number of other official government objects. This symbolic action was to point out the demise of the ruling party and with almost all “Skopje 2014” objects being a subject of this kind of repainting, the city was given ‘a fresh and colourful appeal’. Ironic slogans related to local historical events and rulers, were also written on numerous monuments commemorating Macedonian history.

The criticism levelled at “Skopje 2014” calls for a serious re-evaluation of the renewal Project. While embracing this criticism and despite the fact that this was repeated in many interviews I have conducted with Skopjean citizens, the focus of research is nevertheless on the actual effects of the reconstruction on the public space in the city and the precise problem of pushing a Project of such scale forward, despite substantial public opposition. In the following subchapter, the research design and methodology will be presented in detail, with references to artistic-based research, and the differences between this and purely theoretical forms of research.

28. The abbreviation GTC in Macedonian stands for City Trade Centre

48. Photograph of monument tagged by the Colorful Revolution

49. Photograph of monument colored with paint balls by the Colorful Revolution
Artistic Research Methodology
Seeing, Listening, Talking

There are numerous academic discussions about and definitions of artistic research, especially as it entered academia as a separate field or program of study, such as the artistic-based PhD. The approaches to artistic or practice-based research are many and various, and it is not my intention to provide an overview of them all. Nevertheless, I would like to mention a few of the various considerations of artistic research, in order to provide a brief explanation of the ways in which it has been used for the present study. In general, research implies that something, which is a subject of interest, is not yet known. In the case of artistic research the aim is not necessarily to create a final research product, or a result, it is rather the process of research itself that matters. As Anke Haarmann notes, the artistic practice involved is not about the final work produced, or an “aesthetics of the work”\(^\text{29}\); it is much more the praxis and the strategies deployed during the artistic production that matter, or an “aesthetics of production”\(^\text{30}\). It is the process of production that is focused on, and this is done by artistic means (see Haarmaann 2007).

Furthermore, Haarmann points out that aesthetic criteria alone are not sufficient when doing artistic research, it is much more about the process of understanding, or understanding differently, with and through images, sounds, objects, etc. In relation to this, she (Haarmann 2007, p.3) writes: “The term artistic research designates any art form that formulates questions of content or that treats societal problems and that thereby understands the artwork as a form of artistic productive research, carried out, depending on the questions posed, with various media.”\(^\text{31}\) In this sense, art no longer primarily deals with media and techniques, but rather with content, which is not separated from daily political, social and scientific topics. But this in no way implies that the artistic practices, media and techniques are irrelevant: they are in relation with the topics they deal with.

In addition, making a comparison between scientific and artistic research Gesa Ziemer argues that the difference between the two is that, for example in economics, solutions to problems are sought, whereas the main objective of the arts is not to find solutions, but to raise new questions. On this view, art develops or catalyses various ideas that in turn provoke numerous questions. “Good art works when it provides no answers”\(^\text{32}\), she writes (Ziemer 2009, p.2). Instead, she argues, art works with already existing elements of our world, e.g. texts, bodies, sounds, techniques, spaces, and thoughts, rearranging them to create something different. Through different perspectives, different realities are created as well (see Ziemer 2009).

Kathrin Busch notes that there are at least three distinguished categories of the relation between arts and research: there is art with research, that is the practice of using scientific, or theoretical, knowledge to develop artistic work (“for example, the reference to psychoanalysis in surrealist painting, to phenomenology in minimal art, or to linguistics in conceptual art” (Busch 2009, p.2)). Then, there is art about research, including works “that focus thematically on research and its genuine procedures and conclusions, such as when scientific experiments or medical interventions are [the] subject of art”, as Kathrin Busch (Busch 2009, p.2) writes. And there is art as research, “in that scientific process or conclusions become the instrument of art and are used in the artworks”, notes Busch (Busch 2009, p.3).

As a possible form of artistic research, art as research can be understood as a form “whereby research is considered a part of the artistic process and carried out by the artist herself. It becomes the site of knowledge production and does not restrict itself to integrating previously known concepts [...] so as to use artistic means to analyse the present day and its social conditions and their structures”, Busch notes (Busch 2009,
In this sense, the artistic work makes no claim to produce a work in the classic sense of the term, but rather a kind of (critical) knowledge, acquired by analysing present social conditions with artistic means. Busch also argues that the aesthetic dimension of scientific knowledge is closely related to diverse forms of presentation, such as visual representation. Drawing on Foucault, she argues that “it is the specific form of knowledge that enables us to refer to that which cannot be presented or narrated with a historic structure of knowledge” (Busch 2009, p.4), and thus that the creation of objects of knowledge cannot be separated from their representation, for visualization or the construction of models inherently imply a knowledge-generating significance.

Similarly, Julian Klein (Klein 2010, p.6) argues that artistic knowledge “has to be acquired through sensory and emotional perception, precisely through artistic experience, from which it cannot be separated. [...] Whether silent or verbal, declarative or procedural, implicit or explicit, artistic knowledge is always sensual and physical, “embodied knowledge.” In other words, the fact that aesthetic experience is also a form of reflection also means that the knowledge that artistic research enables is, in Klein’s words, “a felt knowledge” (see Klein 2010). In this regard, Klein also argues that the arts are able to produce a specific kind of knowledge that could not be obtained otherwise.

Lastly, in his manifesto on artistic research Florian Dombois provides 10 criteria that need to be fulfilled if an art work is to obtain the character of research. Among other things he points out the following: artistic research has to involve a striving for knowledge – i.e. it has to deal with “epistemological things”; this knowledge has to then be presented to a public and has to be evaluated by other artistic experts, or peer-reviewers; the research is the work of many, and the networks created through artistic research matter as well, and also the knowledge the artistic research produces has to be formulated in terms of many, and the networks created through artistic research matter as well, and also the knowledge the artistic research produces has to be formulated through its artistic presentation, for it is “through the presentation [that] the knowledge is generated” (Dombois 2006, pp.23-28).

As noted above, my artistic-based research is concerned with the effects that urban renewal has on the creation of social public space, thereby focusing on citizen’s stories of Skopje. It seeks to find out whether and how the urban renewal has changed the way citizens experience and talk about the public space in the city. Consequently, the investigation focused on whether the meanings of the city following the urban renewal have changed and in what ways. The main research questions are: In relation to “Skopje 2014”, what are the citizens’ narratives of Skopje (the city center) following the reconstruction? Have these changed after the reconstruction, and if so, in what ways? What are...
include the Old Bazaar, built in the Ottoman period, this was left out of the research area, as its reconstruction was not part of the “Skopje 2014” plan. More precisely, the research area involved only those parts of the central area that were subject to reconstructions, and which are geographically bound by the boulevard encircling the city core, known as the “Small Ring”.

The collection and analysis of a wide array of data in written form constituted a substantial part of analysing “Skopje 2014”’s symbolic narratives. Apart from archival and academic sources, different types of material were collected in Skopje, such as tourist guides and other travel media, articles in magazines, journals, and newspapers, literary publications, etc. In addition, the research used various non-written material sources (planning documents, photos, maps, videos, etc.) related to Skopje’s redevelopment following the earthquake, subsequent urban development discourses about Skopje, photographic material from different historic periods and other relevant data, including daily media (newspapers and local TV) reportage related to the recent development projects in Skopje.

Qualitative interviews with experts and NGO workers were also conducted. Expert interviewees were architects and planners, prominent artists, university professors, NGO workers, etc. These included, for example, notable Macedonian architects who had worked with Kenzo Tange on the post-earthquake reconstructions, the designers of important modernist buildings in Skopje, renowned professors from the Faculty of Architecture in Skopje, etc. The whole preparatory phase of research also involved walking through the city centre in order to reflect upon, compare and re-experience the materials gathered.

The main part of field research in Skopje was done while walking through Skopje’s city centre. Walking, seeing (or observing) and listening (to the environment and the interview partners) were the methodologies deployed during the main part of field research in Skopje. Walking as urban exploration and as a mobile method of research plays a vital role in my research process. Krasny and Nierhaus (Krasny, Nierhaus 2008, pp. 11-12) argue that “through
walking the city is produced as everyday experience. Between here and now, and then and over there our paths connect the city in a network of time and space. In this way, these paths are axes of experience in an urban art of production.\(^{33}\)

The methodology of walking in Skopje served the purpose of registering, interrogating, relating and interpreting what is seen. It involved solitary walks but also all of the interviews were conducted on foot, that is, during the interviews I was walking with the interviewee and exploring the research area with them. As stories were unfolding, personal spaces and biographies were mapped, memories about the city were evoked, feelings about and identifications with the city spaces crystalized, paths and routes through the city were formed, and lived experiences, meanings and places were related one to another.

The walks I undertook with the interviewees in the city are important elements of an individual and collective understanding of urban social production. By walking through the public space, we also produce it anew. Through everyday practices of walking personal areas and territories are built in which memories and experiences are situated and located. By walking through, articulating and narrating (unspoken) personal space, biographies are localized in urban space and one's own, subjective city is produced. Walking alongside them allowed me to walk their path and experience the city centre through their eyes (see Krasny 2008). In this way I could experience situations on the spot, or create images of the city with their help, which experiences were later transformed into the final guided tour.

Urban walks are also related to experiencing, examining and devising of paths and routes, and thus of the connections between certain places. As the whole central area in Skopje was rebuilt, many existing paths, especially those used for taking short-cuts between buildings or different areas, either vanished or became non-walkable due to the ongoing reconstructions. But many new connections and walking paths were also created, such as the connections that sprang up between the two new bridges over the Vardar river, new paths that had to be taken to walk around the new buildings and monuments. Similarly, large areas that were formerly vacant were now filled in with objects, and many existing buildings could no longer be approached in the same way.

Many interviewees found these newly constructed paths very unfamiliar and many of them noted that they were walking them for the first time. This, as well as those no longer walkable, provoked much comment and discussion on a variety of related topics during the interview conversations and walks. We were often unsure where to go and how to continue on our path, how to exit or enter a certain area. And many interviewees deliberately refused to go into certain areas with a high concentration of monuments and buildings, which also influenced the walking route considerably.

All walking paths were recorded with a GPS tracking app during the interviews. The GPS tracks were translated into a number of maps that were then merged into a single one at the end. From this, the most common routes and passages could be discerned, which, combined with the interview data, assisted in determining the route of the final audio guided tour. Moreover, the GPS tracking was quite helpful when measuring the exact time needed to get from point A to point B. This was important as the whole guided tour was accompanied by footsteps and because the narration covers the whole walking time, thereby also calculating the stops and sitting breaks. In general, the GPS tracking app allowed me to gather many data which were necessary for mapping Skopje's central space, and which could later be analysed and combined with the narrative content of the audio tour.
I also went on a number of official and commercial tours, by bus and on foot, in order to compare what they had to say about central Skopje with the informal walks and subjective experiences of my interviewees. This gave me an insight in the content of the new tour guides following the reconstruction. Unlike the linear and pre-prepared narrative of the official tour guides, the multifaceted stories of citizens were elicited from their direct experience and from the spontaneous development of their subjective narratives.

The experience of being present in Skopje’s public spaces was essential for me as a researcher, the interview partners, and the participants in the audio guided tour. The subjective perceptions and experiences of the city centre had to be instigated, experienced and re-enacted on site, while being in and moving around the public space. Moreover, the site-specific character of the artistic research and work was essential for obtaining an understanding of the social processes relevant to the urban space, the subjective meanings that the public space has for citizens, their identification with the centre of the city, social relations, changes in the urban environment, atmospheres, images and soundscapes. It started with an initial, general observation, and as research material was obtained, the observations became more focused and selective. In other words, the observational study and the images of the city centre.

Furthermore, the method of observation aimed to create a detailed register of the landmarks of a specific place, social relations, changes in the urban environment, atmospheres, images and soundscapes. It started with an initial, general observation, and as research material was obtained, the observations became more focused and selective. In other words, the observational study involves scanning Skopje’s central public space and mapping and documenting places of importance, i.e. places where different historic layers can be found, places that incorporate different city functions, users and social interactions, the immediate surrounding of “Skopje 2014” objects, etc. By observing the city on foot, I mapped many local behaviours and situations typical of daily life in the city, which together formed an important bank of evidence of everyday social interactions and activities. These included, for example, locals’ leisure activities in parks, tourist activities in the main square, locating street vendors, street musicians, street beggars, etc., research material which, as explained below, proved highly valuable.

As walks were undertaken daily, at different hours of the day, and during all research visits, I was able to familiarise myself with the daily rhythm of the area, to observe typical relations and uses of the central city area at different times. Observing both day and night allowed me to obtain another experience of “Skopje 2014” objects due to their illumination, especially the statue of Alexander the Great and the buildings along the Vardar Quay. These observations were also helpful when analysing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014.”

In addition, the mobile character of field research allowed to gather and register many phenomena, which would not be possible if this was done from a fixed position. Macedonia Square, for instance, was a location that I frequented and walked through multiple times. This was done to examine and observe the different entrances (the area is a meeting point of eight streets and thoroughfares) and angles of view, to closely observe the different social groups of users (i.e. Roma children, retired people, tourists), to experience the tourist attractions and activities (horse carriages, tourist groups visiting the square), and so on. Also, while moving through the city, the succession of occurrences and situations found on the way were connected, thus also bringing up new discourses. Many situations, moods and encounters occurred on the way, and this material also became part of the audio guided tour.

The documentation of my research was mainly done in the form of short written observation notes, a sort of a field-research diary, and an extensive amount of recorded material in photo, video and acoustic form. While walking I would record various city sounds and examine the soundscape of particular locations. This included especially the acoustics of “Skopje 2014” objects, such as the music of ‘Warrior on a horse’ fountain which could be heard during the whole day at half-hour intervals. The movement of the fountain’s waters are synchronized with the melody of famous pieces of classical music (e.g. Richard Wagner’s Ride of the Valkyries) and local traditional songs, playing from speakers installed on the square. The same kind of music also plays from speakers installed in the reconstructed area around the Macedonian Opera and Ballet. Special aural attention was also paid to the locations where illegal Roma street vendors and musicians are or used to be found, which also resulted in audio recordings.

Besides audio, photo and video documentation of the newly constructed objects and areas was also produced. Apart from assisting the systematization and registration of the “Skopje 2014” objects, the photo documentation allowed for many occurrences not noticed at the time to be analysed afterwards. The visual documentation also included several photographic experiments, as much of my documentation focused on the before and after of the reconstruction and on changes noticed in terms of social interaction with new objects and buildings. Based on photo and tourist material (tourist guides, postcards, old personal photographs) various images, views and angles of certain places were compared, revisited and documented.
53. Map of notes regarding the music and sounds

54. Map of notes regarding the observation notes
The material obtained through the observation and documentation of the centre of Skopje was very important when defining the interview questions and topics of conversation, when choosing the visual material to accompany the final walk, when analysing the discourses related to “Skopje 2014” and the public space in the city, as well as when documentation material was needed. The regular registering of changes in the urban environment and capturing pertinent places and situations assisted a great deal in the process of conceiving and composing the final audio walk. For example, when this visual material was compared and combined with the interview statements, new ideas and topics emerged, which substantially helped to shape the content of the audio walk.

Unlike the questionnaire framework, where detailed questions are formulated ahead of time, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a relatively open framework which allowed for focused yet conversational, two-way communication. The approach was based on the premise that each interview is unique and that the quality of approach lies precisely in its narrative character. So, although topics of interest were mentioned in the interview guide, at the same time the interviews remained open and gave enough freedom to the interviewee to talk freely, reveal their views and bring up other topics relevant to the research. The qualitative interviews took two forms: experts’ interviews and citizens’ interviews. The former were used to discuss the critique and symbolic analyses of the Project, and the latter to elicit and understand subjective narratives and experiences related to the influence that “Skopje 2014” has had on Skopje’s central space.

The citizens interviewed were artists, cultural workers, activists and others. They were chosen partly according to demographic statistics (age range from 25 to 65 years, Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma ethnic backgrounds, and female and male gender); partly according for their ‘eligibility’ to tell a story about Skopje’s centre, i.e. people who live or work in the centre, people who deal professionally with Skopje’s urban space, or use it on daily basis; and partly with the help of a snowball method, i.e. interviewees were asked to recommend further participants. In total, 35 interviews with “Experts of the Everyday” (see Dreyss, Malzacher 2007) were conducted. Their names are coded, so they will remain anonymous.

The interviewees were my guides through the city. All interview walks began with a meeting at Macedonia Square, which was the point of departure. After the area of research and the intention behind the research was explained, the interview and the walk could begin. The interviews revolved around the following questions: ‘Could you take me on a walk and show me places where you mostly go or like to go in Skopje’s centre?’, ‘Could you describe these certain places and explain why are they relevant for you?’, ‘Have your chosen places or Skopje’s centre changed with relation to “Skopje 2014” and if so how?’ and ‘What is your relation to the city centre after the reconstruction?’ The interview conversation had an open framework, and besides some brief clarifying questions, the interviewees were not interrupted while narrating. Furthermore, interviewees were asked to take a photo if they found something relevant for documentation, or this was done by me, according to what they said.
In other words, we explored the city together. As we were walking, stories were unfolding. We discovered specific memories tied to certain places. These may well not have been part of the conversation had we not been moving. Personal and collective past experiences of places (i.e. shops, restaurants, cafes), that do not exist anymore and that were specific for a certain generation, were located. In fact, the choice of having interviewees from different generations proved very fruitful, for it allowed me to map different historical layers and periods of the city. Moreover, the interviewees’ narrations were grounded in the subjective description of the place where we were at that moment and the place where we headed to. While at a location, I was shown many places or details that were connected to the interviewee’s biography or personal relations to that place.

Regarding the analyses of collected data, the research relied on qualitative content analyses, in which emphasis is put on allowing categories and discourses to emerge out of data and on the role of the investigator in the search for underlying themes and the construction of meaning. After the field research in September 2014, the overall research data, including a wide range of audio, visual, spoken and written material, was subjected to analysis. This included analyses of the interview research findings for discursive structures, devising a database of citizens’ narratives of Skopje, analysing the walks recorded by the GPS tracking device, the preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour and analysing and processing the photo and video materials.

The field work done in September 2015 in Skopje involved updating the visual documentation of additional constructions related to “Skopje 2014”, observing and re-experiencing the city centre based on the material analysed, i.e. finalizing the field research in Skopje. Additional photographic and video material was produced, which recorded the changes in the urban environment since the last field-research trip. This mainly referred to reconstruction work carried out on the left bank of the Vardar river and numerous new façades in the centre of the city. These alterations were not only documented but also considered when shaping and creating the artistic project, in terms of both content and aesthetics.

After this visit, the next eight months were devoted to the production of the audio guided tour. Issues related to experimentation, translation, and the recounting, assembling and presentation of research findings with artistic means, form the body and methodology of this process. That is, the citizens’ subjective stories, imaginarios and experiences
Map of notes for the audio guided tour
of the urban, analysed for their discursive structures and combined with various visual and sonic observations (binaural recordings) were recounted and re-enacted in the form of an audio guided tour in Skopje. In short, this phase of research included conceptualizing and developing the scenario and the scenography, selecting excerpts from interviews, determining the walking route, selecting visual material to accompany the walk, etc. The audio guided tour went through a number of drafts in the course of its development.

The last three visits in Skopje, done in May, June and August 2016, were about finalizing and completing the production of the artistic work. The research trip in May 2016 mainly involved listening to the selected interviews in specific locations to determine the exact follow up and place of their re-enactment in the final audio guided tour. I re-walked the parts of the tours and re-listened to the parts of the interviews on the locations where they were spoken. This was an important part of the artistic transformation of the material into the final guided tour, as it allowed me to re-experience the walks, reflect upon them anew and also to further conceptualize the audio guided tour. For this, daily walks in the city centre and in different arrangements (locations, time of day) were undertaken, thereby also re-examining and observing again particular public spaces. Additionally, substantial activities during the research visit in May included additional audio observations and recordings of certain public spaces in Skopje, which became an important element and content of the final work. In other words, much of the audio material that was needed for the completion of the research work was elicited and gathered. These included daily atmospheres and soundscapes of certain locations, i.e. on the main square: tourists and horse carriages during busy tourist visits, sounds of construction work, etc.

All research materials and experiments were carefully recorded and processed after each walk, to find out the best form and content of the interview statements and link them to a specific place in the city. This helped to determine the exact departure and arrival points of the routes that make up the audio guided tour, as well as the exact duration of the audio tracks included in the final artistic work. In this manner, not only the route and locations were set and resolved, but this method also allowed for expanded identification and recognition of sensitive occurrences, situations, atmospheres and social settings in public spaces in Skopje, which in turn were reflected upon and implemented in the final guided walk.

The material gathered in May 2016 was followed by a period of intense work. Research material was again systematised, analysed and processed with artistic means, which also implied changes to the script and scenario for the audio guided tour. New plots and scenes were implemented in the walking tour based on the new research data. In this manner, the final draft version of the audio guide was designed, which then needed to be tested on location. For this the research visit in June 2016 was made. The test drive of the audio guide was conducted several times before being finalised. More importantly, the duration of the exact route of the walking tour was precisely measured so that the final work can function technically as well as possible. In addition, the footsteps of the entire route were audio recorded and this material was also included in the final work. Other lacking audio materials were recorded on location in Skopje as well.

When all research about the final walk was completed, partners from the cultural NGO sector were contacted and meetings regarding the final presentation in Skopje were organized. I met with the artistic directors Yane Calovski and Hristina Ivanoska of the Press2Exit project space, an established and important cultural NGO in Skopje. After presenting my work to them I received an invitation to present the audio guided tour as a public action in the frameworks of the symposium “Curatorial Exchanges – The Institutional as Public”, taking place at the end of September 2016 in Skopje and including lectures, workshops and presentations by renowned international artists, professors and curators.

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34. Binaural relates to sound recorded using two microphones and usually transmitted separately to the two ears of the listener, thus creating a 3-D stereo sound sensation.
With this, the whole production of the audio guided tour as well as the organisation of the final presentation was completed and the postproduction of the audio guided tour followed. This involved the editing of all audio materials recorded on site as well as studio recordings of the narrator, who links up the original interviews to form a single conceptual unit. Post-production lasted for a month and half in total and the project was ready to be presented to the public at the end of September 2016. Prior to the last visit in August 2016, all interviewees were contacted, shown the selection of their interview statements, and invited to participate in an internal (i.e. for research participants only) audio guided tour at the end of August 2016.

The final presentation of the audio guided tour took place as part of the fifth ‘Curatorial Exchanges’ symposium, entitled ‘The Institutional as Public’ and held between 22 September and 1 October 2016. Besides the audio guided tour, the symposium involved lectures and workshops by Elke Krasny and Beti Zerovc. The audio guided tour was presented to the public on 30 September 2016 in Skopje and repeated in five time-slots, to allow for more possibilities for the audience to take part. Twenty-five participants in total did the audio guided tour, which lasted for about one hour and twenty minutes. It was organized in such a way that the participants received mp3 players with the content of the audio walk and headphones, as well as a walking kit (consisting in three photos and maps, to be used only if necessary) to accompany the walk. The headphones were semi-closed, to allow for an intimate listening experience but also to allow the listener to hear what was going on around them. The meeting point was the Museum of the City of Skopje. The tour was constructed so that participants simply had to follow narrator’s instructions in order to complete the walk. The tracks followed automatically one after another, but could be paused at any point and re-started afterwards. At the end of the tour the participants were asked to return the mp3 players and the walking kit at the initial meeting place.

The information text for the event read: “Curating Exchange is an annual symposium addressing local and regional need for an insightful and qualitative exchange of experience and knowledge in theoretical and artistic research, curatorial practice and education. The fifth edition is titled “The Institutional as Public’ and welcomes Slovenian art historian and art theorist Beti Zerovc, Austrian curator, cultural theorist, urban researcher and writer Elke Krasny, and Macedonian Berlin-based visual artist and urban researcher Ivana Sidzimovska, who contribute a variety of discursive presentations and projects that question to what extent the institution, the public, and the artistic activity correspond to the ever-evolving concept of critical curating. The role and the increasing influence of the curator in the context of cultural production in general, as well as the conditionality within and outside the institutional frame in particular, will be subjected to critical rethinking and analysis with each presentation and workshop session. The symposium will thus try to address the variety of methodologies and conditions that define the curatorial practice as a channel for social and political criticism and a practice expressed as a logical continuum in the processes of instigating cultural as well as socio-political change in contemporary society. The symposium is curated, organized and managed by art historian and curator Jovanka Popova, and artists and co-founders of press to exit project space, Hristina Ivanoska and Yane Calovski.”

The audio guided tour was presented again in April 2018 as part of the exhibition of the nominees for the ‘DENES’ YVAA (Young Visual Artist Award) at the MKC Gallery in Skopje. The artist award, named after a Macedonian artist group that was active between 1953-1955, includes a two month stay at the Residency Unlimited in New York City. It was initiated in 2002 by the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Skopje in a collaboration with the Open Society Foundation New York. Members of the jury included writer and curator Laura Raicovich, former director of the Queens Museum in New York; Valentina Koca, founder and director of ZETA Gallery in Tirana, Albania; Maja Cankulovska Mihajlovska, critic, researcher and curator at the National Gallery of Macedonia in Skopje; Slavica Janeshlieva, visual artist and professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje; and Zorica Zafirovska, visual artist from Macedonia.

The exhibition ‘Recounting Skopje’ contained material about the audio walk. For instance, graphic material concerning the analyses and the composition of the audio tracks, the photo material and the map of the walking tour, which are contained in a walking kit, video teaser for the audio walk as well as a QR code that directs the audience to a download link for the complete audio guided tour. By publishing the download link on the website: http://ivanasidzimovska.com/projects/recounting-skopje/, the audio walk is shared with Macedonian and foreign audiences for free, thus enabling them to do the audio walk individually, independently from the artist or an institution and at any time in the present or the future.

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Graphic of stages of research

- **SEPTEMBER 2013**
  - Defining research area

- **APRIL 2014**
  - Collecting material for analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”
  - Interviewing experts and NGOs
  - Walking
  - Interviewing citizens

- **SEPTEMBER 2014**
  - Analyzing interviews
  - Selecting excerpts of interviews
  - Selecting visual material to accompany the walk
  - Analyzing the walking routes
  - Conceptualizing and developing the scenario and the scenography of the audio walk
  - Recording missing audio material
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording (in written, visual, audio form)
  - Documenting
  - Interviewing and processing audio and visual material
  - Analyzing and processing audio and visual material
  - Analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”

- **FEBRUARY 2013**
  - Collecting material for analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”
  - Interviewing experts and NGOs
  - Walking
  - Interviewing citizens

- **SEPTEMBER 2015**
  - Analyzing
  - Selecting excerpts of interviews
  - Selecting visual material to accompany the walk
  - Analyzing the walking routes
  - Conceptualizing and developing the scenario and the scenography of the audio walk
  - Recording missing audio material
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording (in written, visual, audio form)
  - Documenting
  - Interviewing and processing audio and visual material
  - Analyzing and processing audio and visual material
  - Analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”

- **OCTOBER 2016**
  - Audio guided walk in Skopje
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
  - Re-experiencing the space based on research material
  - Preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour
  - Drafting the audio guided tour
  - Testing draft versions
  - Updating documentation
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording exact time of walking
  - Measuring exact time of walking

- **SEPTEMBER 2016**
  - Updating documentation
  - Drafting the audio guided tour
  - Testing draft versions
  - Updating documentation
  - Preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
  - Re-experiencing the space based on research material
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing

- **AUGUST 2016**
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
  - Re-experiencing the space based on research material
  - Preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour
  - Drafting the audio guided tour
  - Testing draft versions
  - Updating documentation
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording exact time of walking
  - Measuring exact time of walking

- **MAY 2016**
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
  - Re-experiencing the space based on research material
  - Preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour
  - Drafting the audio guided tour
  - Testing draft versions
  - Updating documentation
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording exact time of walking
  - Measuring exact time of walking

- **JUNE 2016**
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
  - Re-experiencing the space based on research material
  - Preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour
  - Drafting the audio guided tour
  - Testing draft versions
  - Updating documentation
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording exact time of walking
  - Measuring exact time of walking

- **SEPTEMBER 2015**
  - Audio guided walk in Skopje
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
  - Re-experiencing the space based on research material
  - Preliminary drafting of the audio guided tour
  - Drafting the audio guided tour
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- **SEPTEMBER 2014**
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- **SEPTEMBER 2013**
  - Defining research area

- **FEBRUARY 2013**
  - Collecting material for analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”
  - Interviewing experts and NGOs
  - Walking
  - Interviewing citizens

- **SEPTEMBER 2014**
  - Analyzing interviews
  - Selecting excerpts of interviews
  - Selecting visual material to accompany the walk
  - Analyzing the walking routes
  - Conceptualizing and developing the scenario and the scenography of the audio walk
  - Recording missing audio material
  - Recording footsteps
  - Recording (in written, visual, audio form)
  - Documenting
  - Interviewing and processing audio and visual material
  - Analyzing and processing audio and visual material
  - Analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”

- **OCTOBER 2016**
  - Audio guided walk in Skopje
  - Studio recordings of narrator’s voice
  - Sound-editing
  - Re-listening interviews and sounds
  - Re-walking routes
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- **SEPTEMBER 2013**
  - Defining research area

- **FEBRUARY 2013**
  - Collecting material for analyzing the symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”
  - Interviewing experts and NGOs
  - Walking
  - Interviewing citizens
The artistic research deployed in my work can be understood as art as research. The research methods I have used are by no means limited to art: interviews, systematic observation and documentation, as well as walking as urban experience (perception walks) are well-known and established methods of scientific, sociological, urban and ethnographic research. Furthermore, the artistic research has at least the following characteristics and criteria: first, it deals with a socially and politically pertinent topic and its content cannot be separated from this context. Second, it is a participatory work, both in the research process (interviews) and the final presentation (participation in an audio walk). Third, the work does not aim to provide a final answer to the research question, but rather to provide a different and subjective understanding of the reconstructed city centre of Skopje, which has an open character and leads to further questions and topics of research. Fourth, it does not aim to provide a solution, in the sense of proposing a different urban plan that would create a better social public space – rather, the artistic research is experimental, experiential and performative in its mode of presentation.

Finally, the work is also process based and its nature is not determined in advance, rather, the form of presentation and the presentation of the research results is determined with and through the research process. In other words, my research methodology – walking, observing and listening to the environment, and walking along the interviewees and enquiring and listening to their stories – was part of the artistic process and its presentation. It was re-enacted in the audio guided tour. Moreover, presenting the research findings in the form of public space action and inviting the audience to participate in audio guided walks allowed for a very intimate and sensitive experience of public space in the city. It was different to attending a lecture or reading the written thesis for example: the audience was confronted not only cognitively but also sensually with the research work, while being in and moving through the city center. This 'felt' knowledge of the urban cannot be acquired only through theoretical discourses (rational knowledge), for it is embedded in urban experience itself. Through the aesthetic experience, ‘felt’ knowledge provides another understanding of the urban.

In the following, I provide a short overview on the various ways in which walking and audio walking has been used as a theoretical and artistic practice.

Walking is intrinsically related to public space and to the social. It has a long tradition as a method of urban exploration, a way of developing critical thought and as an artistic practice. Walking can be related to many phenomena: leisure walking (rambling, hiking), religious walking (pilgrimages), walking for political causes (marches, protests, revolutions), and walking for travel and tourism.

Writing about “Wanderlust” Rebeca Solnit notes: “the subject of walking is, in some sense, about how we invest universal acts with particular meanings. [...] It is a bodily labour that produces nothing but thoughts, experiences, arrivals” (Solnit 2014, pp.3-5). Walking in the city is one of the best ways to get to know and to discuss urban space. Moving through the city allows us to be part of the public and street life, it allows us to observe the city in movement, to discover it while moving, to encounter and connect with people, places and objects, to experience different things by participating in various situations, to establish relations and connections between places, to produce images of public space by practicing it. In this sense, walking is also closely related to thinking, which have been practiced together since ancient times. For example, in Aristoteles’ Peripatetic School, or the Athens’ Lyceum, Aristoteles lectured and the pupils learned while walking. Peripatetic means “one who walks habitually and extensively”, writes Solnit (Solnit 2014, p.15).

There are many different ways and styles of walking. One might be following a previously defined route or creating a new one. One can follow designed streets and paths or simply transverse boundaries, take shortcuts and create one’s own connections. By walking through
places, one connects them to each other. In any case, when following a road or a path it can never all be experienced at once: the experience of walking is always a process of unfolding. Solnit (Solnit 2014, p.72) compares following a road to reading and following a story: “Part of what makes roads, trails, and paths so unique as built structures is that they cannot be perceived as a whole, all at once by a sedentary onlooker. They unfold in time as one travels among them, just as a story does as one listens or reads, and a hairpin turn is like a plot twist, a steep ascent a building of suspense to view at the summit, a fork in the road an introduction of a new storyline, arrival at the end of the story. Just as writing allows one to read the words of someone who is absent, so roads make it possible trace the route of the absent.”

Walking is also related to memory and imagination. We remember certain places because we have memories of them, because we have experienced something there. In this sense, our memories and imagination are assigned a specific location. “Memory, like the mind in time, is unimaginable without physical dimensions; to imagine it as a physical place is to make it into a landscape in which its contents are located, and what has location can be approached”, writes Solnit (Solnit 2014, p.77). She also notes how we become linked to places through memories of the experiences we have had in them: “When you give yourself to places, they give you yourself back, the more one comes to know them, the more one seeds them with the invisible crop of memories and associations that will be waiting for you when you come back, while new places offer up new thoughts, new possibilities” (Solnit 2014, p.13).

The nineteenth century is marked by an increased interest in urban landscapes due to the Industrial Revolution and the modernisation of cities, which led to the appearance of the great urban centres in Europe. In the 1860s, amid the rebuilding of Paris under Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann, the literary figure of the flâneur was created by Charles Baudelaire. In the second, 1861 edition of Les Fleurs du Mal, Baudelaire included a section called “Tableaux Parisiens”, in which he criticises nineteenth century French modernity. The flâneur was a stroller or boulevardier, an anonymous drifter distanced from the masses who played a key role in understanding, participating in and portraying the modern city. Containing eighteen poems dealing with alienation from the newly modernized city, Baudelaire expressed his observations of Paris through the figure of the flâneur.

Walter Benjamin appropriated and further developed the figure of the flâneur, not only relating it to the analytical perspective of an urban observer, but also to the adoption of a particular lifestyle that would itself be a kind of social reflection on urban transformations (see Pinder, 2005). Benjamin described the flâneur as a phenomenon of the modern metropolis who in a sense preceded the tourist, and he believed that the demise of the flâneur was due to consumer capitalism. He discusses this in the posthumously published Arcades Project, on the covered glass passages with shops in Paris built at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The flâneur was later appropriated by a group of avant-garde artists, intellectuals and political theorists who made a major contribution to methods of exploring and critically engaging with urban space by walking. The Situationist International (SI), was also highly critical of the results of Haussmann’s modernization, which entailed the eviction of the working class from its traditional quarters in the centre of the city. The group was active in Europe from 1957 until its dissolution in 1972. Their forerunners were the Letterist International, which was based in Paris and which coined the term dérive (drift) as a method of exploring the city on foot. Guy Debord, one of the most prominent members of the SI, made an important contribution to this method of transforming urbanism, architecture and the city. The SI (Internationale Situationniste 1958) described the dérive as “(a) mode of experimental behaviour linked to the condition of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances.”38 As Denis Wood writes, the SI used the term “ambiance” to refer to the feeling or mood associated with a place, to its character, tone, or to the effect or appeal it might have; but they also used it to refer to the place itself, especially to the small, neighbourhood-sized chunks of the city they called unities of ambiance, parts of the city with an especially powerful urban atmosphere” (Wood 2010, p.187).

Charles Baudelaire, 1868

Paris change! mais rien dans ma mélancolie
N’a bougé! palais neufs, échafaudages, blocs,
Vieux faubourgs, tout pour moi devient allégorie,
Et mes chers souvenirs sont plus lourds que des rocs.37

37. English translation
Paris has changed, but in my grief no change.
New palaces, scaffolding, piles of stone,
Old neighbourhoods, everything has become allegory for me.
And my dear memories are heavier than stones.

In 1957, Debord published a strange map of Paris entitled ‘The Naked City’. The psychogeographic map is composed of 18 fragments of the Paris’s map, which are linked by red arrows. Each fragment is defined by a different ‘unity of atmosphere’, and the arrows show the spontaneous movements of the walker, rather than the official, planned connections between these units of ambience. ‘The Naked City’ is a sort of appropriation of the official map, or the official representation of urban space in Paris. As McDonough writes: “[It] subverts the structure of the Plan de Paris [and] the habitual patterns through which residents negotiate the city [and asserts that] the city is only experienced in time by a concrete, situated subject, as a passage from one “unity of atmosphere” to another, not as the object of a totalized perception” (McDonough, 1994, pp.62-64).

In this sense, drifting was quite different to flâneurering. Whereas the flâneur was seen as the one symbolizing the privileged (unemployed) dandy, who only observes but never interacts, the dériveur, using a method originating in military tactics, aimed at subverting the post-war capitalist system. “Through psychogeography,” Pinder notes, “the letterists and situationists combined playful-constructive behaviour with a conscious and politically driven analysis of urban ambiances and relationships between cities and behaviour. But they also sought out a better city, one that was more intense, more open and more liberating. This led to reimaginings and remappings of urban space, where cities were mapped according to paths, movements, desires and sense of ambiance” (Pinder 2005, p.389). The practice of dérive and the theory of psychogeography are important contributions for critically exploring the urban, as they penetrate the realms of the experiential, the sensual, the emotional, and the imaginative city, and bring new elements into the process of exploring and rethinking the city.

Another substantial contribution to theories of walking is the work of Michel de Certeau. De Certeau (see De Certeau 1984) describes the act of walking as an enunciation, a speech act for the urban system, and as Pinder writes (Pinder 2005, p. 401): “he emphasises the endless creativity of ordinary users and walkers in the city, their tactical operations and errant movements on foot.” That is, he compares speech, the way one talks and uses phrases, to walking, the pedestrian movement and composition of paths, which create and express spaces.

In a sense, De Certeau’s walker replaces the voyeur, the observer, with people walking. His theory also praises the partial instead of totalizing perspective and view on the city, which is only possible when walking through the city, thereby also recognizing the multiplicity of stories which it is impossible to know from only one perspective.

He writes (De Certeau 1984, p. 93): “The panorama-city is a ‘theoretical’ (that is, visual) simulacrum, in short a picture, whose condition of possibility is an oblivion and a misunderstanding of practices […] The ordinary practitioners of the city live ‘down below’, below the thresholds at which visibility begins. They walk – an elementary form of this experience of the city; they are walkers, Wandersmänner, whose bodies follow the thicks and thins of an urban ‘text’, they write without being able to read it. […] The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.”

Using the metaphor of the elevated view from the 110th floor of the World Trade Centre onto the streets below, De Certeau describes the principles and discourses of Western culture – worldview and overview, distance, power and control. Opposed to this is the multifaceted, multi-perspective, segmented view obtained from walking on the street. Ralph Fischer (Fischer 2011, pp.96-97) notes: “The absolute, static and central-perspective space, which is ordered significantly according to optic principles, is counter posed to the haptic, performative, multizentrischen Wahrnehmungs- und Erfahrungsraum entgegengestellt. […] Unten zu sein bedeutet, den Überblick zu verlieren.”
In the latter half of the twentieth century walking has become widely adopted as an artistic practice by numerous contemporary artists, as Andrea Philips (Philips 2005, p. 508) notes: “[I]n contemporary debates about the ethics of public art and ‘social engagement’ (i.e. what public art should be seen to do and not do for its audience), walking-as-art has been proposed as a radical method of reconceptualising the way in which images in and of public space are produced.” In Walking Artists: Die Entdeckung des Gehens in die Performative Künste, Fischer (Fischer 2011, p.171) writes: “The genesis of labelling the types like Walking Art, Pedestrian Dance and Walking Performance illustrates the central position of pedestrian practices in the aesthetic discourses of the sixties.”

This pedestrian aesthetic is also closely related to performance art, which Erika Fischer-Lichte defines by the basic categories of “corporeality”, “spatiality”, “soundability” and “temporality” (see Fischer-Lichte 2004). Moreover, walking produces a network of movements, relations, acts and interactions. Fischer (Fischer 2011, p.124) writes that this ability is appropriate to the postmodern era: “This alternating rhythm of the feet structures a passing-on in the network of movements, acts and interactions. The walker enters multi-centred-performative spatial structures: The relational space of the postmodern. And this space has no materiality prior to its own performative processes and makings: The subject creates this performative experiential space as it enters it.”

The artists working with the act of walking deal with different aspects of pedestrian and performative aesthetics. To mention a few examples: Vito Acconci’s Following piece (1969) – which deals with the language of bodies and intimacy between people in the modern world; Richard Long’s A line made by walking (1967) – concerned with impermanence and motion by physically intervening in the landscape while walking; Marina Abramovic and Ulay’s The Lovers: Great Wall walk (1988) – when the artist couple symbolically walked the length of the Great Wall of China from opposite ends in order to meet in the middle and separate; Krzysztof Wodiczko’s Alien staff (1992) – in which the artist confronts passers-by on the street with storytelling devices about immigrants; Christian Philipp Muller’s Green Border (1993) – enacted by the artist and recording sound while walking also existed earlier (see McCartney 2014). Murray Schafer defined ‘soundscapes’ as “a total social concept to describe the field of sounds (and possibilities for sound) in a particular place, or an entire culture, a total appreciation of the sonic environment”, writes Sterne (Sterne 2013, p. 182). In connection with this, Sterne notes that the terms ‘acoustic ecology’ or ‘soundscape’ refer to the relationship between humans and their environment as mediated through sound, that is, a soundscape here is considered as the “entire sonic field of humankind as it exists in dynamic relationship with nature” (Sterne 2013, p.186).

Regarding soundwalks in general, McCartney notes: “[s]oundwalks take the everyday action of walking, and everyday sounds, and bring the attention of the audience to these often-ignored events, practices, and processes. [...] Decisions about the location, style, content and montage of sound in a soundwalk have political, sociological and ecological consequences. Soundwalks take place in urban, rural, wilderness, and multiply mediated locations. A soundwalk can be done individually or in a group. It can be recorded or not. It can be resituated in the same location or translated into other media forms with a little or a great deal of sound processing. Soundwalk artists maintain differing attitudes toward the place in question, sounds recorded, processes used, audience of the walk itself, and the audiences of interpretive places based on soundwalks. Their intentions may be aesthetic, didactic, ecological, political, communicative, or some combination of these” (McCartney 2014, pp.212-214).

The audio guided tour that I have produced is related to the field of soundwalks in the sense that the intention behind the work is to create a directed and multi-layered narrative by using the elements of the audio composition, the focus of attention being the voices, sounds and their narrative flows. Listened to while walking, the audio content is linked to the places the listener moves through, pointing out certain situations, moments, memories, and imaginations. Accompanying the whole walk, the audio content and its narrative structures connect the places and create new relations between them, by guiding the listeners’ movements. Sensing and experiencing the urban materiality from a street level and with the sonic intervention of the audio guide, a new and critical knowledge about the city is produced while moving through it.

The works most influential for this PhD are Janet Cardiff’s and George Bures Miller’s numerous audio walks: Forest walk (1991), Münster walk (1997), Wanas walk (1998), MoMA walk (1999), Waterside walk (1999), The missing voice: Case Study B (1999), Jena walk (2006), etc., and Rimini Protokoll’s Remote
City (2013), Radioortung – 10 kilometres of files Dresden (2013), 50 kilometres of files (2011), and so on. The specifics of these works and the medium of audio walks (to be explained in CHAPTER THREE) is mostly related to the individual, intimate and participatory character of this art form, provided by wearing headphones while walking – that is participating in an audio walk, and thereby also being physically present at a specific location. The interplay between real and virtual (sounds and/or narrations) plays an important role as well, in terms of creating heterotopic and heterochronic, or in-between spaces (also elaborated in CHAPTER THREE).

The research findings, transformed into the audio guided tour, are presented in the following chapter. In light of the transdisciplinary, artistic-scientific work, they will be introduced as a blend of theoretical text and excerpts from the audio guided tour. That is, parts of the audio guided tour – presented as QR codes⁴⁴ – are woven into the theory, combining the act of reading with the act of listening. The content of the audio guided tour unfolds along with the theoretical discourses of research. The audio guided tour consists of five tracks, which are the subchapters of the following part of the thesis. They are conceptualized and named as five different aspects of the city: THE MODERNIST CITY, THE FEMALE CITY, THE MEMORY CITY, THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY and THE TOURIST CITY, according to the discourses related to these tracks. The audio guided tour is introduced with a subchapter on the elements comprising the body of the audio material.

⁴⁴. The QR codes provide links to audio excerpts, which due to the original Macedonian language, are translated into video form - black screen with English subtitles.
Look at it please.

Sit on this bench please.

Stop here for a moment please.

Sit on this cube please.

Sit on this bench please.
RECOUNTING SKOPJE
AN AUDIO GUIDED TOUR THROUGH THE CITY
Notes on the audio guided tour ‘Recounting Skopje’

Track One
The Modernist City

Track Two
The Female City

Track Three
The Memory City

Track Four
The Postcommunist City

Track Five
The Tourist City
Notes on the audio guided tour ‘Recounting Skopje’

The audio content consists in the following elements: a narrator’s voice giving instructions of where to move and narrating various texts, written by me and borrowed from other authors; excerpts from original interviews with citizens; spontaneous and intentionally recorded conversations with strangers and foreigners related to the topic; archived audio material; sounds and sound effects recorded on location or found online; music, also recorded on location or found online; and footsteps, that follow the audience throughout the whole walk and that were recorded on location.

The bulk of the audio guide is taken up by the narrator’s voice and excerpts from the original interviews with citizens. The interventions of the narrator’s voice into the citizens stories helps connect them in shared narratives about the city. The narrator’s voice appears in two forms: directional and conversational. On the one hand, the narrator’s voice gives the listener instructions on where to go and what to do – either by encouraging them to explore the environment, directing attention to particular visual features with her suggestions and questions, or, at times, by provoking the listener and suggesting that they engage in certain activities.

On the other hand, the narrator’s voice engages in communication with the listener by describing everyday events that occurred previously at that location, commenting on the interview contents, or by suggesting lines of thought by narrating a certain text, written by me or quoting other authors. In fact, the narrator’s voice was used to encourage the listener to imagine certain things, to put them in a certain situation, as well as to suggest thoughts and alter the perception of the urban environment. When not giving instructions for movement or making comments on the narrative content, the narrator remains in the background as the stories about the meanings of places recounted by residents unfold.

Excerpts from the original interviews with citizens, bound to specific locations, were used for different purposes and in different ways. For example, subjective memories were used to point out a certain shared social time and time lived in the city. Locating these memories and biographies was important as the relation between place, time and social groups could thereby be shown. In addition, locating citizens’ memories was important for showing how meanings are ascribed to places, or how places acquire different symbolic meanings as people’s biographies develop. The interview excerpts were composed in the form of a dialogue. In this way, a kind of public discussion between the citizens was created in which their opinions, feelings and experiences were highlighted in a repetitive manner – thus also pointing out shared lived experiences common to many interviewees. These were combined with each other and with my comments and follow-up questions during the interviews, thereby showing the documentary intention behind the work.
Several other conversations were also included in the audio content. That is, coincidental street conversations as well as imagined, fictitious stories were woven into the documentary narration, thus also creating a more open framework of experiencing and interpreting the narrative content. These include a conversation with a street performer, playing Louis VI, which took place on the streets of Paris and a conversation with Daniel Miller, a writer of fiction whose work is concerned with devising a utopian urban plan of Skopje, entitled New Alexandria, in which to project ideas about a revived Alexandrian Empire.

The archival material included local Macedonian radio news, specifically the last local radio broadcast prior to the earthquake. Combined with various sound effects (the arrival of a train, the sound of the earthquake striking, music from the radio) different time layers were added to the location of listening. Moreover, including music, sounds and sound effects in the audio content served a variety of purposes in the creation of sonic environments. As all sounds and effects were recorded binaurally, the possibility this technique offers (three-dimensional sound) was used to overlay the existing sound environment with pre-recorded sounds, and thus create a shift in perception.

In other words, sound effects and pre-recorded sounds were infused into the real sound environments with the intention of blurring the border between the real and the imagined, overlapping the narration and the present moments and creating a disjunct between what is being heard and what is being seen. For example, the use of sound environments of people and sounds that are absent from the listening location (and which used to be found there prior to the reconstruction) put the listener in an ambivalent state, as they obtained a very realistic, three-dimensional sound of the past of whatever location they were at. Music, sounds and sound effects were also used to create soundspaces that reflect upon and re-stage the social reality in the city, and an enhanced sonic experience of the location.

The sound of footsteps following the listener during the whole audio guided tour was used on the one hand to accompany the listener, thereby giving the feeling that someone was accompanying them, and on the other to give the sense that someone had walked the same route before them. This proved to be of an extreme technical importance in the end, because it helped the listener to better organize the time of their movements and breaks during the final walk, as following the footsteps was signalling when to walk and for how long, and when to stop and for how long.

Furthermore, a Walking Kit was produced to ensure better organisation of and as a visual addition to the audio guided tour. This consisted of a city map depicting the walking route and designating the starting, end and stopping off points of the audio tracks in the guide, and three photographs, used at specific moments during the guided tour. The first one shows a detail of Kenzo Tange’s model for Skopje’s 1963 post-earthquake reconstructions, the second, a photograph taken before the earthquake, was found in a private family album, and the third was made by merging photographs of the square before and after “Skopje 2014”, thus producing a hologram image.

As previously noted, the content of the guided tour was divided in five chapters or tracks, so called stations, organized around the following topics: THE MODERNIST CITY; THE FEMALE CITY; THE MEMORY CITY; THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY; and THE TOURIST CITY. The following five subchapters refer to each track or discourse. They contain theoretical notions that relate the symbolic narrative of the Project and the citizens’ narratives of Skopje. Relevant excerpts from the audio guided tour are interwoven into the text and can be listened to by scanning the QR codes containing this content (in video form with English subtitles). Each subchapter begins with background information about the locations at which the audio content is listened to, about the time to which the narration refers, as well as the actual duration of the walk to the locations involved. The type of the walking route is also presented in a narrative and visual manner. Each station also contains a list of sounds which are included in the track, and information on the people interviewed, whose excerpt of narration can be listened to there.

The following QR code (on the right) is the introduction of the audio guided tour.
background information on the MGS:
The Museum of the City of Skopje is located in the former railway station building, partly destroyed in the 1963 earthquake. The railway, running from Thessaloniki, via Skopje, to Kosovska Mitrovica, was opened in 1873, when Skopje was still part of the Ottoman Empire. The construction of the railway was a turning point in Skopje's urban history, as it positioned the city as an important trading hub and encouraged the beginning of its modernisation and expansion on the right bank of the Vardar River. The Museum of the City of Skopje was founded in 1949, under the name ‘The People’s Museum of the City of Skopje’ during the time of Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Lacking a permanent home and a proper archival space, the museum was relocated several times, until finally adopting parts of the former railway station building in 1970. The museum's activity is related to areas of archaeology, history, ethnology, history of art and arts. It owns 21,950 museum objects and it has an exhibition space of 2,283m².

observational notes on the MGS:
The space behind the museum building, where the railway used to pass, is in a state of neglect. But you can still recognize the ruins of the platforms and the passengers’ waiting area. During the field research in Skopje the use of this area was modified into temporary settlements for seasonal Roma migrants. Afterwards, when construction activities in the very backyard of the Museum began, the Roma inhabitants were expelled and the space was sealed off from the public. It is here that we begin our walk.

background information on the Macedonia Street:
The Macedonia Street is a main thoroughfare in the centre of Skopje, that is, at the entrance door leading to the former railway platforms, located behind the museum’s building. The platforms are inaccessible, so the audience has to listen behind the museum’s building. The platforms are inaccessible, so the audience has to listen on the entrance door (STAND 2.32”). The walking actually begins when instructions are given to encircle the building and cross the street (FOOTSTEPS 120°), to stand opposite the Museum’s entrance (STAND 0.46”).

observational notes on the Macedonia Street:
The street is a busy at any time of the day due to the numerous shops and cafes. With the urban renewal, the street obtained a new church named ‘St. Konstantin and Elena’ (previously envisioned to be built on the Macedonia Square) and a memorial house to Mother Theresa, an Albanian Roman catholic nun and missionary, born in Skopje. Because of these objects the street is also frequented by many tourists.

background information on the City Wall:
The City Wall is an architectural concept developed by Kenzo Tange, who won the UN international competition to rebuild Skopje after the earthquake. The master plan for Skopje’s reconstruction was based on the metaphor of medieval cities, imagining the main urban concepts of Skopje to be the City Wall, comprised of residential buildings encircling the centre of the city, a City Core – the centre of the city, and the City Gate – the main gateway to the city, incorporating different sorts of transportation networks, also known as a megastructure.

observational notes on the City Wall:
A passage through one building of this complex is used to enter the backyard of these buildings. That is, the location is an exit, a sort of detour or deviation outside of the city centre circle. The construction of socialist buildings, being rectangular and open, following the modernist principle of form, light, air and greenery (unlike the perimeter atrium type of buildings in traditional planning), allows for different social interactions and activities. These spaces are taken as representations of the everyday life of local residents.

narrative description for the MGS route:
The walk starts in front of the Museum of the City of Skopje, that is, at the entrance door leading to the former railway platforms, located behind the museum’s building. The platforms are inaccessible, so the audience has to listen on the entrance door (STAND 2.32”). The walking actually begins when instructions are given to encircle the building and cross the street (FOOTSTEPS 120°), to stand opposite the Museum’s entrance (STAND 0.46”).

ground at the Macedonia Street:
New granite tiles.

narrative description for the Macedonia Street route:
After listening to the audio content there, the walk continues straight down Macedonia Street (“FOOTSTEPS 156°”), taking a turn to the right (FOOTSTEPS 3.40°), and continuing in a curved line along the City Wall.

ground at the City Wall:
Older stone tiles.
The time is the event of the devastating earthquake that hit Skopje in the early hours of 26 July 1963. It destroyed 80% of its built fabric and caused a substantial physical, natural and human damage. A symbolic remnant of this cataclysmic event is the clock on the façade of the building, that stopped ticking at the time when the earthquake hit - 5:17am. The time is interrupted and discontinuous.

The time is the post-earthquake time. Of a brave new world, heroic visions, compromises and negotiations.

This time is local and international at the same time, it is modernist, heroic, utopian, but also every day. It is promising and disappointing, nevertheless vernacular.

**SOUND**

**MUSEUM OF THE CITY OF SKOPJE (MGS)**
- narrator’s voice: instructions of movement
- sound effects: clock ticking
- archival footage: Radio Skopje - last local news report on the eve of 26 July 1963
- music: Charles Aznavour – ‘Vivre avec toi’

**MACEDONIA STREET**
- sound effects: footsteps
- excerpt from interview: with Ana

**CITY WALL**
- narrator’s voice: narration
- sound effects: footsteps
- excerpt from interview: with Sofija

**INTERVIEWS**

**ANA**
- age 70+ / female / French / Professor of French / used to work in the city centre / interviewed on 18 April 2014

**PETAR & SOFIJA & IGOR**
- age 85+ / male / Macedonian / Director of ITPA / involved in Skopje’s post-earthquake reconstruction / interviewed on 29 September 2013

**Sofija**
- age 55+ / female / Macedonian / Professor of Architecture / urban planner / interviewed on 24 September 2013

**Igor**
- age 25+ / M / Macedonian / Architect / uses the city centre daily / interviewed on 9 September 2014
As previously noted, the starting point of the audio guided tour is the Museum of the City of Skopje, housed in the former Railway Station. The narration begins with a citizen describing their first impressions of arriving in Skopje. This location was chosen for the symbolic significance of the railway station, a structure that incorporates movements, relations, and connections. On the other hand, it was chosen for the symbolic significance of the Museum of the City of Skopje, a monumental building left half-destroyed by the earthquake, and preserving the original clock on its façade, which stopped ticking at 5:17 am when the earthquake struck the city. To approach “Skopje 2014” we would have to revisit the event of the 1963 earthquake and the modernist urban planning spirit in which post-earthquake Skopje was rebuilt, for they played a significant role in the creation of the city’s identity.

While it is extremely difficult to precisely define modernism, there are several basic notions that help approach this subject. Its origins dating back to the eighteenth century, modernism is linked to the intellectual attitudes of the Enlightenment, its striving to incorporate objective, scientific and universal knowledge, morality, law and rationality into daily life, freed from, as Harvey notes: (Harvey 1989, p. 12) “the irrationalities of myth, religion, superstition, release[d] from the arbitrary use of power as well as from the dark side of our human natures.” Referring especially to the latter, and having in mind the horrors of the twentieth century, such as the two world wars and the rise of fascism, death camps, nuclear bombs, etc., the modernist project was determined to break its ties with the past, preferring to see the world as a tabula rasa on which a new and heroic version of humanity could be reborn.

On the most obvious level it can be concluded that modernity was very much future-oriented, praising progress, which also relates to a progressive notion of time, disconnecting the past and the future via the (modernist) present. The Industrial Revolution was certainly an instigator and important part of the modernist process, enabling rapid movement and communication through infrastructural networks and urbanisation, such as railways and the rise of great urban centres, telecommunication systems, radio and telephone, the printing press and of course the mass-consumption of factory produced commodities. The acceleration of daily life at the hands of these processes resulted in time-space compression, the radical diminishing of experienced distance.

Due to the Industrial Revolution and the modernisation of cities, along with the development of the greatest urban centres in Europe, an increased interest in urban landscapes emerged during the nineteenth century. Between 1853 and 1890 the urban landscape was shaped by the guiding principles of urban renewal, which were aimed at improving the living conditions of the urban population. The emphasis on the utilitarian aspects of urban design resulted in the creation of functional and efficient urban spaces, which were often characterized by a lack of aesthetic considerations.

“A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress.” Walter Benjamin, 1969, p. 247-248
and 1879, under Napoléon III, Paris – which Benjamin calls ‘the capital of the 19th century’, experienced major reconstructions directed by Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann. The haussmanization of Paris included all aspects of urban planning: improving the street system and the building of boulevards and new traffic networks for faster communication, thus replacing the narrow streets of the traditional, medieval town form; building a sewage system under these new streets, which improved the overall hygiene in the city; creating more green areas and parks in the city; constructing and reconstructing public squares; markets; train stations; bridges and cultural buildings. Vast areas of workers’ neighbourhoods and historic buildings in the centre of Paris had to be demolished to make way for these much-needed improvements, by which Paris sought to demonstrate its greatness and monumental appeal.

The grounds of the modernist architectural practice, with a strong emphasis on functionalism and structuring and dividing urban space into clearly designated zones of different social activities, were laid down at the Congress of International Modern Architecture (CIAM) and summarized in the Athens Charter of 1933, later published by Le Corbusier. It was this aesthetic representation and form in which the debris of the post-war cities was transformed into and revitalized, for the rebuilding of post-war cities saw the erection of massive working-class social housing projects. More precisely, it was the machine and mechanical reproduction that was celebrated and represented aesthetically. As Harvey (Harvey 1989, p. 32) notes: “houses and cities could be openly conceived of as ‘machines for living in’.”

Skopje’s post-war development was brutally interrupted by a quick, severe and very harmful earthquake, that struck the city in the early hours of 26 July 1963, while most of the population was still asleep. The catastrophe destroyed 80% of the urban fabric, left 1200 dead, 3500 injured and made 150 000 people homeless. The Yugoslavian government immediately mobilized the army to set up temporary hospitals and tents and president Josip Broz Tito and other government officials visited the city in ruins the following day. The charismatic national leader promised that Yugoslavia, with world-wide help, would build a more beautiful and more joyful Skopje: “Skopje has endured a terrible catastrophe, but Skopje will be rebuilt with the help of the whole of society, it will become a symbol of brotherhood and unity, of Yugoslav and world-wide solidarity” (Josip Broz Tito, 27 July 1963 in UNDP 1970, p. 31). In a formidable response to Tito’s international
Photograph of The Museum of City Skopje
appeal, financial and technical ‘multi-polar’ aid (see Lozanovska 2012) from 77 countries started to pour into Skopje and paved the way for its resurrection.

A few of months later the UN passed a resolution in which all members were asked to help Skopje. Signed by 143 countries, a petition was delivered to the General Assembly of the UN and the organization decided to assist and advise the local Yugoslavian authorities at all stages of the complex task of rebuilding the city. Yugoslavia was a non-aligned country, legitimate for bridging Western and Eastern blocs in the Cold War period, and was therefore well regarded by the international community. The earthquake happening amidst the Cold War was used as an opportunity to bring Western and Eastern bloc countries together to respond with solidarity and humanitarian action. In other words, the UN recognized an excellent opportunity to manifest a “monumental role in coordination of international collaboration” (Lozanovska 2012, p.438) and in this manner, Skopje’s tragedy put the city in the international spotlight.

To manage and coordinate the international assistance, an International Board of Consultants (IBC) was formed under the UN Special Fund’s Urban Planning Program, with the Yugoslav architect Ernest Weissmann, then Director of the UN Sector for Housing, Building and Planning, appointed as its chairman. At the IBC meeting in Belgrade in March 1964 a decision was passed to urgently prepare a regional plan for Skopje, estimate the costs of alternative development and organize an international competition for devising Skopje’s city centre. Additionally, in 1964, an Institute of Town Planning and Architecture (ITPA) was formed in Macedonia for the first time. By the end of the year the UN had officially commissioned two planning companies, Doxiadis Associates from Athens and the Polservis agency from Poland, to work on preparations for a new urban plan for Skopje in collaboration with the ITPA.

Nonetheless this plan excluded the central area of the city, for this was to be the subject of a more detailed study and an international competition. The competition call asked four local teams: ‘Makedonija Proekt’ from Skopje (Slavko Brezovski), the Croatian Institute of Town Planning from Zagreb (Radovan Miscevic and Fiodor Wenzler), ‘Studio Revolution Square’, Ljubljana (Eduard Ravnikar) and the Institute of Town Planning from Belgrade (Aleksandar Djorgjevic) and four foreign teams: Van den Broek and Bakema from Rotterdam, Luigi Piccinato with Studio Scimemi from Rome, Maurice Rotival from Maurice Rotival and Associates from New York and Kenzo Tange from Tokyo, to propose a Master Plan for Skopje’s city centre.

The jury decided to announce no single winner, rather the competition price was divided 60:40 between the Japanese modernist architect Kenzo Tange, because of “the high-quality of its over-all design and detailed ensemble layouts”, and the Croatian team of architects Miscvic and Wenzler, whose proposal “made such a valuable contribution to the efficient and practical realization of the programme” (UNDP 1970, p.301). In a joint effort, the ITPA and a team involving local and international architects, and considering positive judgments regarding the other Master Plan proposals, devised the final blueprint for Skopje’s city centre. The master plan was put on public display in the form of a town-planning exhibition, visited by president Tito, other government officials and the broader public.
Tange’s bold vision for Skopje developed it into an “architectural mega-object”, and sought to create “new architecture for a new revolutionary society”\(^45\). However, for Skopje, his first project in the West, Tange had a more sophisticated approach to history and local conditions, for the plan was proposed for actual implementation, rather than being a theoretical project like Tokyo Bay. Complying with Metabolist ideas of the ‘open city’ or the ‘city as process’, Tange approached Skopje as a total image around which a devastated city could be resurrected, and through metaphors of a city with traditional constituents his plan conveyed meaning beyond the level of physical form. Tange was the first to fuse modernism and tradition, creating a Japanese modernism that assimilates traditional design and translates it into symbolical form. In this manner, the Master Plan for Skopje imagined the whole structure of the city to be bound by symbolic concepts of City Gate and City Wall encircling the City Core.

The City Wall was to frame the historic areas, but also to embrace the old and the new and unify them in one organic entity – central City Core. It was to consist of high-density dwellings in vertical slab blocks, punctuated by cylindrical shafts and standing on trapezoidal bases (for earthquake resistance). The river banks were supposed to be the nucleus of the City Core, a distinct zone enhanced with numerous public functions and dominated by two central squares spreading out on both sides of the river. The Vardar River was to be given a more dominant role as the backbone of new development along the east-west axis of pedestrian movement, placing social and political institutions of regional significance on the left bank, while using the right bank primarily for civic administration, commerce, shopping, entertainment and social and economic institutions.

The City Gate was the capital’s entry hub, comprising all transportation systems and giving structure to the new east-west axis. In the middle of this stretch was a gigantic gateway structure resembling incoming traffic from regional highways. The City Gate established a new linear axis, along which clusters of buildings including many office towers, a library, banks, exhibition halls, cinemas, hotels, shops and restaurants, all connected to the railway and bus terminals with elevated motorways, were concentrated. In architectural terms, the City Gate is a ‘megastructure’ – an important concept in Metabolism, which was widely used and further developed by other architects in the 1960s, particularly the architectural projects by Team X members, such as Kurotawa (the group form), Alison and Peter Smithson (Ron
The Japanese team around Kenzo Tange holds similar views. In an interview published in ‘Project Japan: Metabolism Talks’, Arata Isozaki, Tange’s associate who also worked on Skopje’s reconstruction, states that the Skopje Project “basically died or was killed” (Koolhaas et Al. 2011, p.45) and that nothing was left that resembled Tange’s plan. The Macedonian architects who worked on Skopje’s reconstruction have made the same claim.

On the other hand, although the plan was only partly realized, Kenzo Tange’s work in Skopje was of huge importance. It undoubtedly prompted Skopje’s modernist identity and facilitated the emergence of contemporary Macedonian architecture. Built in a late modernist style reflecting the international zeitgeist, the newly designed buildings in Skopje introduced Brutalist architectural style (béton brut). Prominent examples include the Goce Delčev Student Complex, the City Archive, the Central Skopje Post Office, the University Campus (whose style can be compared to that of Louis Kahn), the National Bank, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the National library, the Museum of Macedonia, the national TV and Radio building, etc. In addition, the Government building, the City Trade Centre, and the Macedonian Opera and Ballet, represent some of the most successful Macedonian architectural projects.

In October 1965, the jury and the board of consultants, satisfied with the competition results, decided that a definite city-centre plan should be devised based on all valuable ideas in the competition entries as well as suggestions from the jury. In contrast to Yugoslavian and UN propaganda politics, the local urban planners of ITPA, aware of real economic possibilities of Macedonia and afraid that Tange’s project was too ambitious, pleaded for a more modest city plan. Although the final ‘Ninth Project’ for Skopje’s reconstruction was based mainly upon Tange’s master plan and maintained the symbolic metaphors, in being translated into the local context it underwent many alterations and was made much less impressive. For example, the dimensions and configurations of the City Wall were diminished and changed into smaller linear residential blocks. The gigantic City Gate Interchange was replaced only with a few buildings: an intercity city bus-station, post office and customs office, etc.

Furthermore, due to the economic decline of Yugoslavia in the 1980s most construction activities were reduced to a minimum or stopped, which resulted in many building complexes being left unfinished or unrealized. Arguably, the initial and heroic vision for Skopje’s revival could be hardly recognized after the reconstruction and as Ines Tolic (Tolic 2010, p.114) notes, the master plan for Skopje’s city centre “was an ultimate compromise between hopes and fears, politics and planning, ambitions and real possibilities.”
Skopje’s plight was arguably used by the UN to conduct a unique operation in the history of urban planning, a symbolic act of extraordinary humanitarian and heroic action of a politically unified world. This suited not only the UN, but the Yugoslavian governments as well, whose visions of a bright new future were embodied in a brand-new capital. Tolic (Tolic 2010, p.114) writes of this that there are two Skopjes: “the first is the tangible artefact, a city made of bricks and men. Almost without a doubt, the media were never interested in it, except when it was in ruins! The second is the virtual city, an image of a heroic capital of the much-prized non-aligned Yugoslavia, that has been constructed by the media and that ultimately found its virtual representation in Tange’s project.”

The brand-new capital remained a city only in the imagination – a modernist myth of the future city. It was a city-blueprint that had very little to do with the local legacy and reality of pre-earthquake Skopje. In addition, public participation in devising the plan was non-existent, rather the architect-planners worked only with state officials. Thus, the plan is also deemed to be a top-down experiment (see van Iersel, 2011) that did not take local people’s wishes and needs into consideration. It was a plan that treated the city from a holistic perspective, rather than seeing it from below, from the street level. On the other hand, although Skopje’s post-earthquake reconstruction can be deemed a huge disappointment and a utopian failure, the post-earthquake reconstructions have undoubtedly given a new (modernist) identity to Skopje around which everyday life in the city developed.

The MODERNIST CITY of Skopje is a translation of the heroic visions of a brave new city that never came to fruition, into an everyday context. Downscaled and adapted for local needs it created urban spaces which de-facto became Skopje’s identity. In most of the interview conversations, the modern landmarks of Skopje were mentioned as places to which many subjective lived experiences were related. What is more, this architectural and symbolic style was considered the ‘true’ and ‘authentic’ identity of the city, which is the opposite of what the “Skopje 2014” reconstructions promote. This was made particularly clear by the refaçadization of all modernist buildings in the city centre, the most absurd instance being the Government building. As the new faux neoclassical facades were just pasted on the old modernist ones, these were seen as mere set dressing.

The quasi-neoclassical architectural style applied to many buildings was criticized and disputed by the interviewees with arguments related to the fact that these facades do not derive from the form of the buildings, rather they are just pasted onto the old buildings. Most of the interior spaces of the buildings were in a bad state and in a desperate need of renovation, however they remain the same while the outside narrative, no matter how shallow, serves as part of the set for a new scenography. In this sense, the old modernist buildings are treated as a billboard on which new architectural metaphors are applied for providing visual effects on a surface that has nothing to do with the form on which it appears.
The fact that only the front façades of the buildings were reconstructed and the rear ones left unchanged makes the tension even more marked. While the front face of the buildings is brand new, the rear remains dilapidated and neglected. The rear of the socialist buildings is something like the flip side of the coin. However, exactly this characteristic of Skopje, regarded as ‘unwanted’ or even ‘shameful’ by the former government, was pointed out as representative of social reality and public culture. THE MODERNIST CITY became embedded in the everyday present of its inhabitants.

In addition, the rear sides of the socialist buildings are micro-spaces of representation and identification that serve as one example of the local culture and the identity of social spaces in Skopje. For instance, the socialist blocks of residential buildings, around which big green spaces were planned, are important elements and markers of the local units and mini-universes in residential areas - maalos (which can be compared to Berliner Kiezkultur). In these public spaces, a portion of social everyday time is spent - time for gathering with friends and neighbours, playing children’s games, buying groceries from local mini-markets, etc. In contrast to the semi-public, capitalist spaces of restaurants and cafes, these spaces can be used by every generation and social class of residents. The absence of these kinds of socially produced spaces, and their masking, in the visual representation of “Skopje 2014”, has created a dissonance in the lived experience of residents.

The walking route along the City Wall is interrupted by a detour, an exit through one passage, and leads to the backyards of the residential buildings. The narrator describes the space around the listener, which is accompanied by three-dimensional sounds. What is listened to is very realistic, but can’t be seen, unless there is a coincidence of situations and acts. The dissonance of the “Skopje 2014” representation and the urban experience of the citizens is thus emphasised. The narrator’s voice is followed by an excerpt from an interview in which the above argument is presented by a citizen.
To summarize, the post-earthquake reconstructions in Skopje are very important in terms of Macedonian contemporary architecture and the development of everyday public spaces in the city. When Macedonia gained independence in 1991, and especially since the former right-wing government took power in 2006, the cultural legacy of Yugoslavia’s socialist period has been annihilated as a historical artefact and neglected as valuable cultural heritage. Regarded as characterless, grey, béton brut expressions of the socialist regime, the modernist buildings in Skopje are considered a communist approach that depersonalized the city and left it with a lack of distinctiveness.

And as history in general shows – one requirement of establishing a new regime of state power being replacing old representations with new ones – the architectural and aesthetic language of “Skopje 2014” on the one hand creates city representations that distinguish it from the socialist period, and on the other, by refaçading all modernist buildings in the city centre, erases the representations related to the previous political system. This discourse reappears in the following sub-chapters as well (FEMINIST CITY, MEMORY CITY, POSTCOMMUNIST CITY). The radical erasure of Skopje’s modernist identity is closely related to the absence of representations of social groups, biographies, memories and identifications in, of and with public space in the city.
THE FEMALE CITY
Track TWO
97. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track Two)
As the name implies, the park commemorates the women soldiers (Partizanki) who fought in the National Liberation War against the fascist (Bulgarian) occupation, during WWII in Macedonia. The Partizanki are related to the Women’s Antifascist Front, a World War II feminist movement in Macedonia formed in 1942 and linked to other such fronts in Yugoslavia. The main goal of the organization was to improve schooling for women and increase their literacy rate, as at the time the majority of illiterate people were women.

Prior to the “Skopje 2014” reconstructions the park had two monuments dedicated to the women partisans: one monument, in the expressionist modernist style, commemorating women freedom-fighters in general, and one modernist monument to Nevena Georgieva Dunja, the first partisan woman. Today, the park hosts an additional six monuments, dedicated to male freedom-fighters and Macedonian heroes from the 19th century onward.

The park is not that large and is located opposite the Parliament building, in the very centre of Skopje. It is often frequented by retired people, mostly men, who spend time in the park on a daily basis, chatting or playing chess. Passers-by, people who work in the city centre, or people who visit the nearby City Trade Centre are also to be found in the park, taking a rest on one of the benches.

The walk starts in front of the ‘Women Freedom-fighters’ monument (FOOTSTEPS 1:48”) and the audience is invited to sit on a nearby bench (SIT 2:14”). Two interview excerpts are listened to.

New granite tiles.

Using a short-cut through the park, the route continues to the Nevena Georgieva Dunja monument (FOOTSTEPS 1:28”).

Grass.

The route ends with listening while seated on the stones surrounding the monument (SIT 1:13”). Then, instructions are given to explain the way to the next station (FOOTSTEPS 2:03”).

Asphalt pavement, old stone tiles.
The Yugoslav period, a time of historical changes, unfolds from this moment on. The time is socialist, and it is female, related, as noted, to the recognition of women’s rights and their contribution to the establishment of the Macedonian state. It is also the time of childhood, as childhood memories evoked at this place during two interview conversations are related to the period of socialist Yugoslavia.

The time is the present, the time is male and megalomaniac.

**TIME**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>LOCATION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
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<tr>
<td>4:12&quot;</td>
<td>The ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Monument</td>
<td>Due to the participation of the Macedonian Partisans in the National Liberation War in Macedonia, at the first ASNOM (Antifascist Assembly for the National Liberation of Macedonia) plenary session (2 August 1944), the Macedonian nation-state of ethnic Macedonians was proclaimed as part of the Yugoslavian Federation, and the Macedonian language was proclaimed as the official language of the Macedonian state.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:28&quot;</td>
<td>The ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Park</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1:13&quot;</td>
<td>The ‘Nevena Georgieva Dunja’ Monument</td>
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**SOUND**

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<th>DOCUMENTARY</th>
<th>ATMOSPHERIC</th>
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<tr>
<td>The ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Monument</td>
<td>The ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Park</td>
<td>The ‘Nevena Georgieva Dunja’ Monument</td>
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**INTERVIEWS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MARIJA &amp; NADICA</th>
<th>MARIJA</th>
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<tr>
<td>The ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Monument</td>
<td>The ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ‘Nevena Georgieva Dunja’ Monument</td>
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**MARIJA**

- Age 30+ / Female / Macedonian / Designer / Feminist critic of “Skopje 2014” / Interviewed on 15 April 2014

**NADICA**

- Age 30+ / Female / Macedonian / Architect / NGO critic of “Skopje 2014” / Interviewed on 21 April 2014

**SOUNDS**

- Narrator’s voice: instructions of movement
- Sound effects: footsteps
- Music: “Every Sperm is Sacred” by Raspeani Skopjani chorus
- Archival
- Sound
- Music
- Footsteps

**INTerviews**

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<th>TRACK TWO</th>
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<td>00:04:00</td>
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<td>00:08:00</td>
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**Interviews listened to at the ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ monument:**

- Nadica
  - Age 30+ / Female / Macedonian / Architect / NGO critic of “Skopje 2014” / Interviewed on 21 April 2014

**Interviews listened to at the ‘Nevena Georgieva Dunja’ monument:**

- Marija
  - Age 30+ / Female / Macedonian / Designer / Feminist critic of “Skopje 2014” / Interviewed on 15 April 2014
A famous quote by Virginia Woolf (Woolf, 2004) says: “A woman must have money and room of her own if she is to write.” Pretty much the same can be applied when it comes to female places in public spaces: A woman must have spaces of representation in the city, if she is to create a FEMALE CITY. If we pay attention to the naming of streets and squares in most of the cities around the world, and Skopje is no exception, they are far more likely to bear the names of famous men, be they national heroes, politicians, scientists, writers, musicians, etc. The lack of women’s names of public spaces, and thus also the lacking commemoration of women and representation of their spaces not only results in a male-washing of national history, or history in general, but also in the forgetting of women’s biographies, women’s personal spaces and women’s ways of using and inhabiting the city.

Regarding the project ‘Stadt und Frauen. Eine andere Topographie von Wien’, Krasny (see Krasny 2008) writes that the private is political and vice versa, and that we have to deal with a history of mentality if we are to better understand the present and its structures. By walking with twenty women in Vienna, Krasny discovers the female city history together with them. Around 300 historical and present-day figures, women who used to live, work and walk around the city of Vienna are thus illuminated. Based on her research, Krasny (Krasny 2008, p.10) develops two theses: “The female city history is everywhere.” And “The female city history is nowhere, for it still hasn’t found its place.”

As Krasny notes, projects of this kind are important not only because they alter our awareness of history, but also how we perceive the present. To have no place in the city, means to be underrepresented, marginalized. Those who have no place in the city cannot produce their spaces, consequently they cannot leave a legacy of such spaces. Histories not commemorated in city space become invisible and forgotten. In turn, biographies and places are intrinsically connected, and the meanings we give to places are also related to the people who resided or spent time in them. These meanings are important as they are open to appropriation and re-appropriation in symbolic ways by other generations as well.
This track deals with the commemoration of women in the city, or rather the lack of it. As noted above, the ‘Female-fighters’ Park was dedicated to the women heroines who fought in the National Liberation War of Macedonia against the fascist Bulgarian occupation. As such it is an important instance of urban space, not only for its symbolic meaning – commemorating heroines, but also for connecting female histories and the ways in which women of different generations practice this space. The narration in the audio track begins by connecting two statements by women interviewees related to their childhood memories about the park, when their grandparents took them there. The interviewees being of a similar age, their grandparents belonged to the generation that witnessed WWII and the Yugoslavian socialist era. In this sense, the historic legacy of the heroines, the grandmothers who took the women interviewees there as children, and the present experience of the interviewees with the park, all become interrelated and situated in the park.

So, for example, one of the interviewees linked her activist experience as a feminist to the park and her narration included the story about recent demonstrations organized by feminist groups there, to protest against the passing of an Anti-Abortion Law by the former government. In this approach, the park is symbolically appropriated and used continually as a female space – as a place commemorating the beginnings of the Macedonian feminist movement, women’s struggles not only against fascism, but also for rights to education and participation in public and political life, to the rights of reproductive choice, representation in the public sphere, and so on, which, alas, are still ongoing. Hence, the park and its symbolic content are important for linking women’s biographies and their spaces of representation. Its overwriting with male biographies evicts these contents and deletes the existence of the FEMALE CITY, both its history and its present.

The audio tour, connecting the first location – in front of the ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ monument and the newly erected ‘Fallen Heroes of Macedonia’ monument, via a short-cut through the park’s green area, guides the audience to two other monuments. The short-cut is used to make a detour from the pathways in the park, as on these locations mostly retired men are found in large groups on a daily basis. When the walker enters the green area following a path made by walking, the song ‘Every Sperm is Sacred’, a musical sketch from the film ‘Monty Python’s The Meaning of Life’, is heard, in a cover version by the activist choir Raspeani Skopjani.

As previously mentioned, with the “Skopje 2014” reconstructions, the park now hosts an additional six figurative monuments of male freedom-fighters and other important male personas for the Macedonian history, in addition to the two previous, abstract modernist monuments to women. An exception is the figure of Veselinka Malinska, a national heroine and participant in the ASNOM who is represented in the ASNOM monument, and the mythological figure of Victoria, the Roman goddess of victory, represented as an angel. In this sense, the reconstruction in the ‘Women Freedom-fighters’ Park, being only one of many others in the “Skopje 2014” plan, shows a blatant disregard for different social, gender or ethnic groups and their role in both the nation’s history and present and the city’s history and present. It pushes out and overwrites the FEMALE CITY, and neglects its legacy.

When city representations are selective and favour one social group or ethnicity over others, they constrain the influences that the unrepresented groups (in Skopje’s case, for example: ethnic minorities, women, etc.) have on the production of space and the diversity of experiential spaces. City spaces become homogenous and monolithic. And it is not only that the male monuments outnumber those dedicated to women, but also that they have all been built in a figurative manner and on an exaggerated scale, in stark contrast to the abstraction of the modernist ones. Thus, they are distinguished from their predecessors not only by their aesthetic representation, but also by their form, which is of enormous scale. For example, the ‘Fallen Heroes of Macedonia’ monument, which represents an agora with a statue of the Greek
The citizens featured in this part of the audio tour related this instance to the former government’s megalomaniac desire to impose a new male national narrative and thus also to demonstrate its great power. Assigning megalomaniac proportions to urban reconstructions for the purpose of demonstrating power is by no means an innovation. Although unrealized, Adolf Hitler’s plan for the Welthauptstadt Germania, which sought to completely reconstruct Berlin and change the scale of its streets, halls, monuments, etc., is just one example. Stalin’s likewise unrealized Palace of Soviets is another. If built, it would have become the tallest structure of its time, replacing the Cathedral of Christ the Savior which was demolished by the soviet rulers.

Besides being a symbol of dictatorial power, thus also affecting and limiting the personal freedom of inhabiting and moving through public spaces in the city, monuments and buildings on such scales also bring about a shrinking of public spaces. Many citizens stated that due to the enormous proportions of the “Skopje 2014” monuments, the public space in which they move and socially interact is condensed and scaled down. This refers to all “Skopje 2014” objects, for the heights of these monuments and buildings are not in proportion to the relatively small areas on which they are built, or they are proportional but only for the expression of power structures, which in the course of history were and today remain overwhelmingly male.
Photograph of the monuments of Nevena Georgievna Dunja (left) and Pitu Guli (right)
The situation in the ‘Women Freedom-fighters’ Park is the following. The park, being one place of the FEMALE CITY, does not resemble the space before the reconstruction in any way, neither in its physical nor symbolic appearance. Instead of respecting the greenery as a place for leisure and relaxation, and the park as a place where women’s histories are commemorated, it has now been overfilled with representations of male power. This issue reoccurs in many other places in the city as well, and many interviewees were highly critical of the oversized proportions of the monuments and their dominant mode of expression, that they felt left a monolithic imprint on the city.

The monolithic and megalomaniac symbolic content of “Skopje 2014”’s interventions in urban space in turn reduces the diversity of the experiential urban spaces left as historic legacy and reproduced in the present. As Krasny (Krasny 2008, p.10) writes: “The city is a huge repository of memory, personal experiences and city history meet, metaphorically and literally, on our paths through the city. Where we walk today, others have walked before us, they have traversed these paths separated by time.” Symbolically altering the female spaces, or the FEMALE CITY, with other representations breaks the continuity of histories and the meanings that places have, and consequently the production of the urban. It also changes the everyday experience of places, which are tied to past and present biographies and individual and collective memories, as in the example of the ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Park.

In this regard, dominating and excessively-scaled city representations also substantially encourage the forgetting of certain things or discourage their being remembered, and they seek to determine what aspects of the urban may be experienced and reproduced. In terms of collective memory, similar discourses appear in the next track, the MEMORY CITY. Bound to particular places, collective memories are located, revisited and reframed. Past and present images of the city are related to places of commemoration, and theories on milieux de mémoire and lieux de mémoire (Nora, 1989) are considered. The walk continues to the nearby City Trade Centre, a renowned modernist object of the city, whose refacadization was abandoned as the former ruling party, the IMRO-DPMNU, was succeeded by the Social Democratic Union of Macedonia (SDUM).
Stop here for a moment please.

Sit on this cube please.

Sit on this bench please.

Sit on this bench please.

Sit on this bench please.

106. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track Three)
background information on the City Trade Centre:
The City Trade Centre (GTC) is part of Skopje’s post-earthquake reconstructions, built in 1973 by the renowned Macedonian architect and professor of architecture Zivko Popovski. The object follows the east-west axis of Kenzo Tange’s Master Plan, which means it respects the local context of the previous buildings which were incorporated into and connected to the Trade Centre. Seventy percent of the object is an open structure, allowing for free movement through the Trade Centre, thus also connecting all sides around the building, namely the ‘Women Freedom-fighters’ Park; the Quay of the Vardar river, Macedonia Square and the Holiday Inn Hotel. Architects claim that this openness is one of the building’s main advantages, and in making it a closed structure by the proposed refacadization, one of the main arterials in the city centre will be blocked.

observational notes on the City Trade Centre:
Compared to the significance of the City Trade Centre in the 1970s and the 1980s – when it was one of the few centers containing shopping stores, it could be said that with the transition from socialism to capitalism, and the opening of multiple shopping centers, the City Trade Centre lost its function as a prime shopping destination. But because of its open structure, which makes no clear boundary between it and its surroundings, the City Trade Centre is much more than a shopping centre – it is a structure that has the function of a main thoroughfare in the city centre. Furthermore, because it is an open yet covered space, many homeless people, street vendors and musicians of predominantly Roma ethnicity, congregate there.

background information on the ‘13 November’ Quay of the Vardar River:
The Quay of the Vardar River is the only riverside thoroughfare that stretches through the whole length of the city. The river is a natural border that divides the city’s north and south. The north side is where the traditional Old Bazaar is located, whereas the south side is the modern, business centre of Skopje. The quay of the north bank was blocked by reconstructions of the Stone Bridge for many years, and this part was mostly unused and non-walkable. But the south bank has always been used by many citizens. In the pre-earthquake era the Vardar beaches as well as the famous ‘koroj’ (a form of socializing involving walking on the square and along the quay at night) were located on the south side. Before “Skopje 2014” the banks of the river were connected by three main bridges: Stone Bridge, Revolution Bridge and Goce Delcev Bridge. With the reconstruction two additional bridges, Art Bridge and Eye Bridge, were erected in the vicinity.

observational notes on the ‘13 November’ Quay of the Vardar River:
With construction lasting for years, and with numerous cafes extending their terraces to the river’s edge, the south bank of the river, where the City Trade Centre is located, gradually lost its function as a public thoroughfare. It became a much more privatized space, reserved for exclusive use by the citizens who can afford it. On the other hand, whereas the north bank was reconstructed and put back in use, this space also remains unused, mostly due to the high concentration of numerous new objects, built directly on the riverbank. Additionally, four ships with restaurants and cafés were placed directly on the river, thus changing this area and the view of the riverbanks completely and further reducing the available public space.

narrative description on the City Trade Centre route:
The route starts by climbing spiral stairs in order to get to the first floor of the City Trade Centre (FOOTSTEPS 0:46") followed by interview narration (STAND 2:11“). It continues along the south side of the object (FOOTSTEPS 2:14“) before turning into a passage. That is, the listener enters inside the City Trade Centre and traverses it lengthwise.

ground at the City Trade Centre:
Marble tiles.

narrative description on the ‘13 November’ Quay of the Vardar River:
Following a stop (STAND 2:58") in front of the showroom of the IKO watch shop, the walk continues straight to the other side of the City Trade Centre, (FOOTSTEPS 2:20") on the ‘13 November’ Quay on the Vardar River (FOOTSTEPS 1:46“). Following a stop at the beginning of the ‘Art Bridge’ (STAND 1:46“), the route ends on the other side of the Vardar River, by crossing the ‘Art Bridge’ (WALK 1:20“).

ground at the ‘13 November’ Quay of the Vardar River:
Granite tiles.
The City Trade Centre was opened for the public on 27 April 1973. Almost 42 years after, on 26 April 2015, following massive performative actions and public speeches against the refacading of the City Trade Centre, the Skopjean citizens gave their vote on the referendum about whether the City Trade Centre should be covered with a baroque façade or not. The referendum failed to support the decision to preserve the modernist look of the object. But with the change of government in 2017, plans to refacade the City Shopping Mall were completely abandoned. The time is continuous, from the opening of the City Trade Centre until present day.

Time at the ‘13 November’ Quay of the Vardar River location:
Taking “Skopje 2014” as an event which allows us to speak of a before city and an after city, the time is of then and now. It is also a historical linear time and a selective time of memory.

Sounds:
- Narrator's voice: instructions of movement
- Sound effects: footsteps climbing stairs
- Narrator's voice: instructions of movement
- Sound effects: Vardar River
- Music: child singing a famous Roma song
- Narrator's voice: narration
- Sound effects: footsteps

Interviews:
- Martin
  age 50+ / male / Macedonian / Professor of at the Academy for Fine Arts / works in the city centre / interviewed on 17 April 2014
- Liljana
  age 50+ / female / Macedonian / Lawyer / works in the city centre / interviewed on 4 September 2014
- Aneta
  age 25+ / female / Macedonian / IT worker / lives in the city centre / interviewed on 5 September 2014
- David
  age 35+ / male / Macedonian / Musician / spends a lot of time in the city centre / interviewed on 17 April 2014
- Nadica
  age 30+ / female / Macedonian / Architect / NGO critic of “Skopje 2014” / interviewed on 21 April 2014
The discourses that feature in this track focus on the relation between collective memory and memory images, and places of commemoration, or in Pierre Nora’s words ‘milieux de mémoire’ and ‘lieux de mémoire’. The space at the entrance of the City Trade Centre evokes citizens’ memories of important social landmarks of the city, i.e. those well-known as social gathering places. They date back to the 1970s and 1980s, and in this audio track they are linked to a small burger shop called Cicko Stoilkio and the Vanilla pastry shop, which served as community anchors, in front of which young people would socialize. Neither place exists anymore, and the habit of gathering around these places is long gone. But they remain as local denotations, that is, the sites where they were located are still colloquially known by the names of the two shops. These two places were mentioned in many interviews, and although these social landmarks no longer exist, and although they have never experienced them, they were still referred to by the younger generation of interviewees as well. To highlight this reiteration of statements, the interview excerpts referring to these places were composed in a repetitive manner.
Writing on ‘Photography’, Siegfried Kracauer notes: “Memory encompasses neither the entire spatial appearance of a state of affairs nor its entire temporal course. [...] Memory does not pay much attention to dates – it skips years or stretches temporal distance. [...] The selection may have been made this way rather than another because dispositions and purposes required the repression, falsification and emphasis of certain parts of the object; a virtually endless number of reasons determines the remains to be filtered” (Kracauer 1993, p.425). In this sense memory, and the time it captures, is selective. But besides being related to a selected moment in the past, memory is also very much place related. Steiger and Steiner (Steiger, Steiner (Ed.) 2009, p.1) note that “Even if memory is most often perceived as a temporal phenomenon, an intimate connection between place and memory can thus be suggested. Memory not only ‘needs places’, however, but arguably creates them: memory ‘tends towards spatialization’ as Jan Assmann puts it.” In other words, places and memories are closely related, places evoke memories.

We also develop attachments to places that are significant to us for some reason. The arrangement and physical properties of these places help us recall a way of life common to many. Maurice Halbwachs (see Halbwachs 1992) calls this collective memory. As Steiger and Steiner (Steiger, Steiner (Ed.) 2009, p.5) note: “[Halbwachs] aimed to show that the notions people create of themselves and the past are necessarily shaped by their participation in different societal contexts and the status they assume therein: ‘it is individuals as group members who remember’. Consequently, personal memory is reciprocally bound up with what he calls collective memory. This is not to be confused with history, which Halbwachs considers a rationalized framework recording long-term changes. Collective memory, by contrast, provides a group with uniqueness and continuity by marking out a common normative horizon of expectations and experience, and by creating what Assmann would later call a ‘connective structure’ between past and present.”

Furthermore, Halbwachs notes that the permanence of a place provides a comforting image of group’s continuity and the identity it develops (i.e. of a family living in a home together): “The group’s image of its external milieu and its stable relationship with this environment become paramount in the idea it forms of itself, permeating every element of its consciousness, moderating and governing its evolution. This image of surrounding objects shares their inertia. It is the group, not the isolated individual but the individual as group member, that is subject in this manner to material nature and shares its fixity” (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 168). In this sense, the act of remembering not only links past experiences to the present, but it is also quite important for creating a coherent and continuous narrative of identity and selfhood (see Steiger, Steiner (Ed.) 2009).

Thus, Halbwachs writes that spatial images play an important role in the collective memory of groups: “The place a group occupies is not like a blackboard where one may write and erase figures at will. No image of a blackboard can recall what was once written there. The board could not care less what has been written on it before, and new figures may be freely added. But place and group have each received an imprint of the other. Therefore, every phase of the group can be translated into spatial terms, and its residence is but the juncture of all these terms. Each aspect, each detail, of this place has meaning intelligent only to members of the group, for each portion of its space corresponds to various and different aspects of the structure and life of their society, at least of what is most stable in it” (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 168).

The citizen’s memories related to the places mentioned in this track represent substantial instances of shared collective memories about the city and the time in which these places were experienced. Concerning the relationship between people and the lived social time in the city, the listener was instructed to stop in front of the showroom window of the IKO watch shop, where, as one would expect, many watches were on display, some working, others not, some showing a correct time and others not. Talking about time, the narrator’s voice was used to instil some thoughts about what time is and what lived time in the city means in relation to the changing urban environment. The narrator’s voice used different intonations to refer to different usages and expressions of time in everyday spoken language.
The collection of expressions referring to time in colloquial language highlights just how difficult it is to understand what time means, rather than giving us a more precise idea. If we think of memory as fragments of time, then memory selects only the times that were important to us. Memories linked to places are the times that are related to significant experiences in these places. These times of experiences do not necessarily stand in a linear order, rather the places that remain unchanged allow us to relate to the memories of these places. The collection of our memories is what helps us connect the past to the present and it also provides us with a sense of continuity and stability.

On the contrary, when a place radically changes, we experience a discontinuity of time, therefore also a discontinuity in our own identity. “The city is a prime site in which the negotiation of collective memory can take place and where it can be studied. Given the importance of the city as a shared topography, changes made to the urban fabric – in the name of preservation and redevelopment, or as the consequences of man-made or natural disasters – may have an impact on the self-understanding and sense of continuity of the inhabitants”, Steiger and Steiner write (Steiger, Steiner (Ed.) 2009, p.6).

In addition, many scholars acknowledge that when significant places are destroyed or rapidly altered, they acquire an even greater significance and clarity for the group, and as a result the invoking of memories of these places is intensified. Skopje's rapid reconstruction is certainly an important catalyst for citizens to think about places that used to be significant to them, and thus recall their city of memories. To stir up memories and revive THE MEMORY CITY in the imagination of the listener, stories about old public scenes and Roma street musicians, who were relocated and so cannot be heard anymore, are listened to while walking through the City Trade Centre.

Furthermore, although the social landmarks mentioned in the interviews ceased to exist a long time before “Skopje 2014” reconstructions began, the event marks a temporal point according to which citizens talked about ‘before and after’ images of the city. In this regard, many citizens’ statements were related to what used to be at a particular place but no longer is, and how their memories and images of the city have changed. This was also related to feelings of discontinuity in terms of identifications with the urban space. Exiting the City Trade Centre, the listener is directed to walk along the ‘13 November’ Quay on the Vardar River. The following interview excerpt is heard.
Undoubtedly, mentioning places that no longer exist is related to nostalgia – positive images about past experiences – in this case the time of youth, when people are young, careless, maybe falling in love for the first time. Rather than praising some nostalgic recollections, the discourse that is important here is that when shared memories of the city are erased, so are the meanings attached to these places. And whereas it is normal and actually positive for a city to develop and change, the problem is that radical changes in the urban environment, conducted at an extremely rapid pace, brutally strip familiar places of the meanings people make of them. Skopje is treated as a tabula rasa on which new contents can be inscribed. The new images of the city have nothing in common with the old, collective images of the citizens, which slowly start to fade. Their memories being gradually erased, the citizens felt that they are losing their memories, losing their MEMORY CITY.

What has replaced the memory images, bearing the social landmarks and the social time spent in the city, are the newly created spaces intended to materialize the long view of Macedonia’s national history and to commemorate important historical events and personalities. Pierre Nora calls these spaces of commemoration ‘lieux de mémoire’, in English translation – realms of memory, which are contrasted with ‘milieux de mémoire’ – the living environments of memory. He argues that they have started to appear because the spontaneous, social, collective memory no longer exists. Instead we have “memory transformed by its passage through history,” Nora notes, “which is practically the opposite: willful and deliberate, experienced as a duty rather than as spontaneous; psychological, individual and subjective, rather than social collective and all embracing” (Nora 1989, p.13).

Victor Burgin (Burgin in Steiger, Steiner 2009, p.20) notes that “[w]hat Nora calls a ‘milieux de mémoire’ circumscribes the collective memory that results from generations of habitation of a particular place. As these milieux disappear from today’s developed societies such things as the monument and the museum, the commemorative service and annual celebration, the guidebook and the history lesson, provide various disparate sites for the concentration of memory.” Thus, as Nora (Nora 1989, p.12) argues: “we must create archives, mark anniversaries, organize celebrations, pronounce eulogies and authenticate documents, because such things no longer happen as a matter of course.”

Nora links this emergence to the inability to anticipate the future, and thus also to the inability to prepare for it and preserve what is needed from the past. Because of the rapid change, the unity of historical time has also been shattered and the linearity that bound the present and the future to the past has been broken. This has in turn changed the notion of the present, crucial to our identity and for understanding our lives. It no longer serves as a link between the present and the future, but instead only imposes, Nora argues, a “duty to remember”. He (Nora 2002) continues: “[w]hat we today call ‘memory’ – a form of memory that is itself a reconstruction – is simply what was called ‘history’ in the past. [...] ‘Memory’ has taken on a meaning so broad and all-inclusive that it tends to be used purely and simply as a substitute for ‘history’ and to put the study of history at the service of memory.”

Moreover, Nora (Nora 1989, p.8) relates the difference between our true memory and the memory of history to the fact that the latter is no longer a social practice, but “memory without a past that ceaselessly reinvents tradition, linking the history of its ancestors to the undifferentiated times of heroes, origins and myth.” In this sense, he argues that memory and history are in opposition – memory being life, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, and history being the problematic reconstruction of what is no longer. As modern memory relies entirely on the materiality of the trace, we end up with a material stockpile of our consolidated heritage, such as archives, libraries, museums, commemorations, celebrations, monuments, monumental objects, etc. In terms of the symbolic element of these lieux de mémoire, Nora argues, these are dominant sites, spectacular and triumphant, imposed from above, by a national authority for example, and levelling any particularity and signs of distinction and group membership in a society.
Monuments, monumental buildings, museums and archives are erected on the sites where citizens’ shared memories are located and anchored. These material structures are built in order to commemorate that which is no longer, and thus secure its remembrance. However, they have no relation to the true memories of citizens about these places where they have been erected. On the very site of citizens’ collective memories (or milieux de mémoire), lieux de mémoire are created. The preservation of the images of the city is important to residents, because it contributes to the preservation of a continuous city identity, and therefore also of the group’s own social identity too. The reconstructed quay of the Vardar River, with its numerous museums and monuments, is an imposed memory that has no previous connection to the citizens’ memories of the space where it is placed.

On the other hand, it is impossible to hold memories and images still, and it is impossible to fix the meanings that places have for us. They are in flux, in a constantly changing state of creation, destruction and recreation. THE MEMORY CITY changes as the city space develops. Standing on the Quay of the Vardar River, the listener is instructed to take a look at Image Two. It is an old black and white photograph, taken from a family album. The listener is positioned so that their view is similar to the photographer’s perspective. The narrator’s voice is heard.

(Please take a look at Image Two shown on the next page.)
Questioning the meaning of nostalgia, Elisabeth Wilson (Wilson in Westwood, Williams (Ed.) 1997, p. 138) writes: “Perhaps the real secret pleasure of nostalgia is that it allows us, as we look back at the past bathed in a rosy glow of melancholy beauty, at those lost corners of the old city, at the same time to measure the distance we have come – not in the sense necessarily of progress or improvement, but simply in the sense of experiencing the reality of change, the passage of time, and the existence of that great hinterland of ‘lost time’ that yet somehow is still with us. It is the subtle pleasure of imaginatively experiencing the past from the detached point of the present. More seriously and perhaps more valuably, it is the Proustian understanding, not of the remembrance of things past, but of the retrieval of the past, a movement whereby we re-appropriate the present by acknowledging and understanding that past. [...] Only by engaging in this way with the changing fabric of the city, and by acknowledging change as both lost and enrichment, can we adequately approach the experience of living in urban space. [...] For it is only by embracing both the past and the future of our cities that we can fulfill their potential in the present, using the awareness that nostalgia brings in order to move beyond it into an acceptance of and an active engagement in change.”

Along these lines, perhaps we can use the memory of the past city not as a lament, but to make a connection between the city’s past and present, and thus to secure an ‘uninterrupted’ production of urban environments. THE MEMORY CITY is important for re-appropriating the city of the present, and so are the urban changes and the city of the future. Both need to be accepted, so new urban spaces can be produced. The city ‘before’ the reconstruction will never return, and nor will the time spent in it. The city ‘after’ the reconstruction, however, remains to be lived, and the memories about it are yet to be created. Both the loss of the past city and the possibility of change that the new city offers need to be embraced and recognized as important for the present city and its creation.

In the next subchapter, THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY, the ‘before and after’ (“Skopje 2014”) images of Skopje are discussed in a more detailed manner. Taking a closer look at the aesthetics and style in which the new buildings and objects are erected, neoclassicism, the phenomenon of imagining a future via a distant past, as well as the ‘event’ that has prompted this instance will be elaborated.
Track FOUR

THE POST COMMUNIST CITY
background information on the ‘Art Bridge’:
The Art Bridge was newly constructed as part of the “Skopje 2014” project, and opened to the public in 2013. Together with the Eye Bridge (on its left) it is an additional passage linking the south and north banks of the Vardar River, connecting the City Trade Centre with the newly constructed Office of Public Prosecution. Twenty-nine sculptures of famous Macedonian artists, actors, writers, visual artists and musicians have been placed along the bridge.

observational notes on the ‘Art Bridge’:
The Art Bridge is an uncommon route for citizens to take; they avoid taking it due to its kitschy aesthetic. Many interviewees used the bridge for the first time during the interview walks.

background information on the left bank of the Vardar River:
The Macedonian Opera and Ballet House is a symbolic modernist building, designed in constructivist style and built by the Slovenian group Buro 77 as part of post-earthquake reconstructions. The building is the most progressive and original design ever to be introduced into Skopje.

Karpashovo Vostanie Square, also known as Philip II Square, is one of the completely reconstructed squares from the “Skopje 2014” plan. It connects the Old Bazaar with the city centre via the Stone Bridge. It has four complexes of fountains. Most notable are the fountain representing Olympia, Alexander’s mother in four stages of motherhood, and the fountain, which at 28 meters is also the largest, involving the statue of Philip II raised on a column.

observational notes on the left bank of the Vardar River:
Due to its unique design, a white geometrical cluster of shapes, the MNT object was mentioned in most of the interviews with admiration. Citizens were attached to it due to numerous experiences happening on the vast terraced open square in front of the building.

The Karpashovo Vostanie Square was formerly the site of a temporary intercity bus station, which nevertheless remained there for over 20 years. The whole structure of the bus station, including many illegal taxis, small kiosk shops and small fast-food restaurants was incredibly neglected and dirty during this time. It was a busy, chaotic and unappealing place. Nowadays, the area is much better organized, with benches and small green areas, around which people sit and relax.

background information on the ‘Stone Bridge’:
The Stone Bridge was built on Roman foundations under the patronage of Sultan Mehmed II the Conqueror, between 1451 and 1468. The last reconstruction of the bridge began in 1994. The mihrab-shaped watchtower was rebuilt in 2008. The bridge is a symbol of Skopje and is depicted on the city’s coat of arms. It connects Macedonia Square to the Old Bazar and is the most important pedestrian bridge over the Vardar River.

observational notes on the ‘Stone Bridge’:
Although two new bridges have been erected in its vicinity, the Stone Bridge remains the main crossing between the southern and northern parts of the city. It is very busy at almost all hours of the day, and it is also visited by many tourists.

narrative description on the ‘Art Bridge’ route:
For many interviewees, the newly constructed paths were unfamiliar and many of them noted that they were walking along them for the first time. We were often unsure how to proceed and where to go, how to exit or enter a certain area. This influenced the walking route considerably, leading to the creation of new passages through the completely reconstructed area on the left bank of the river. The route passes the Vardar River twice, from the right bank to the left via the ‘Art Bridge’ (FOOTSTEPS 2:56”) and from the left bank to the right via the ‘Stone Bridge’.

ground at the ‘Art Bridge’:
New granite tiles.

narrative description on the left bank of the Vardar River:
The route goes through the reconstructed terraced open square in front of the Macedonia Opera and Ballet (FOOTSTEPS 1:02”), and after a short stop at one bench (SIT 2:08”) it continues through the recently created short-cuts in between the newly constructed buildings (FOOTSTEPS 2:17”).

ground at the left bank of the Vardar River:
New granite tiles, stone tiles, marble tiles.

narrative description of the ‘Stone Bridge’ route:
It then leads to the reconstructed Philip II Square (PACE 1:33”) and back to the other side of the Vardar River, via the Stone Bridge (FOOTSTEPS 4:20”).

ground at the ‘Stone Bridge’:
New granite tiles.
time at the Left Bank of the Vardar River:
The empty spaces on the left bank of the river, where this track is listened to, were an important catalyst for “Skopje 2014”. They became especially emergent after Macedonia’s independence from Yugoslavia (8 September 1991) and are related to the country’s so-called transitional period from socialism to parliamentary democracy. In this sense, the time is transitional and post-communist.

sound listened to on the ‘Art Bridge’:
narrator’s voice: instructions of movement
music: contemporary instrumental composition
sound effects: footsteps

sound listened to via the Left Bank of the Vardar River:
narrator’s voice: instructions of movement
sound effects: construction sounds
excerpt from interview: with Kristijan
excerpt from interview: with David
excerpt from interview: with Liljana and Tijana
sound effects: church bells
narrator’s voice: instructions of movement

INTerviews

KrisTijan & DAVid & LiLjana & TiJana

‘ART BRIDGE’ Left Bank of the Vardar River

Kristijan
40+ / M / Macedonian / Artist / lives and works in the city centre / interviewed on 14 April 2014

David
35+ / M / Macedonian / Musician / spends a lot of time in the city centre / interviewed on 17 April 2014

Liljana
50+ / F / Macedonian / Lawyer / works in the city centre / interviewed on 18 September 2014

Tijana
50+ / F / Macedonian / Doctor / works and lives in the city centre / interviewed on 18 September 2014

Delfina & Aneta

‘STONE BRIDGE’

Delfina
50+ / F / Macedonian / Artist / lives and works in the city centre / interviewed on 21 September 2014

Aneta
25+ / F / Macedonian / IT worker / lives in the city centre / interviewed on 5 September 2014

sound listened to on the ‘Stone Bridge’:
excerpt from interview: with Delfina
excerpt from interview: with Aneta
sound effects: footsteps
“Every photograph is the trace of a previous state of the world, a vestige of how things were. The sum of all photographs is the ruin of the world”, writes Victor Burgin (Burgin in Steiger, Steiner (Ed.) 2009, p.22). During the field research in Skopje, as part of the observational study, I did a series of ‘before-and-after photo experiments. They were produced by first gathering old tourist postcards of Skopje, or personal photographs of people and places that I found in antique shops. I then located the sites in the city that they depict and took new photographs from the same vantage as the original photographer. At the most obvious level, these before-and-after images of Skopje show how the rather empty urban space of modernist ‘ruins’ has been completely transformed into a postmodernist and spectacular space. A positive ‘after’ to the dreary modernist ‘before’ is recorded. But if we take a closer look at the aesthetic language of the new buildings, they are clearly not related to contemporary corporate architecture; instead they take inspiration from classical Antiquity.

Writing about before-and-after images, Eyal and Ines Weizman (Weizman, Weizman 2015, pp. 6-72) note: “History is increasingly presented as a series of catastrophes. The most common mode of this presentation is the before-and-after image – a juxtaposition of two photographs of the same place, at different times, before and after an event has taken its toll. Buildings seen intact in a ‘before’ photograph have been destroyed in the one ‘after’. [...] The juxtaposition inherent in before-and-after photographs communicates not a slow process of transformation over time but, rather, a sudden or radical change. [...] But more commonly before-and-after photographs are used to privilege a direct line of causality between a singular action and a unique effect. In before-and-after photographs, the event – whether natural, man-made or an entanglement of them both – is missing. Instead, it is captured in the transformation of space, thus calling for an architectural analysis. This spatial interpretation is called upon to fill the gap between the two images with a narrative, but that job is never straightforward.”

So, what was it that prompted this regression of architectural style in Skopje?

Broadly speaking, in the period referred to as postmodernism, the modernist aspiration to build a new, radical and progressive future was abandoned. Quite the contrary, returning to the past and taking whatever was needed was celebrated. Charles Jencks notes that the symbolic end of modernism occurred
on the 15th of July 1972, at 3:32pm, when the Pruitt Igoe housing development in St Louis (a prize-winning version of Le Courbusier’s ‘machine for living’) was dynamited, as it was considered uninhabitable for the low-income people it housed. Much of the postmodernist architecture that followed was the result of a shift in the architectural paradigm. For example, instead of the mass production of styles, a ‘collage’ of styles and the spectacular use of heritage was embraced (see Harvey 1989). In this reaction against the principles of modernism, architecture and urban planning celebrated ornament, the imitation of traditional medieval squares, custom-designed housing, in short pluralism, assemblage and diversity, in opposition to uniformity and universality.

In economic terms, postmodernism embraces the following changes: the managerial redistribution of resources for social purposes is replaced by entrepreneurial use of resources to lure mobile international capital and investment. The production-based economy is replaced by service-sector based, globalized finance, a shift that spread world-wide at the eve of the 1990s as communism fell and the transition from a socialist to a free-market economy took place in former communist countries. At this time Francis Fukuyama wrote an essay titled ‘The End of History?’ in which he proclaims “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government” (Fukuyama 1989, p.3). But if we observe what actually happened in Eastern European countries, we note, as David McCrone has done, that in fact history was only just beginning (McCrone 1998, p.149): “territories were rediscoversing their histories and connecting them into their futures, often determined to go separate ways.” This is noticeable in the mostly peaceful dissolution of many postcommunist states, such as the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, and the not at all peaceful dissolution of Yugoslavia.

In the wake of the Yugoslavian break up, Macedonia was the only republic that managed to secede non-violently from the Federation, on 8 September 1991. The first years of Macedonia’s independence were marked by a slow post-socialist transition and prime focus on introducing liberal democracy and a market economy. The need for a new urbanisation plan did not occur before 1997 when a competition was held for a new city centre design, more precisely the area within the small ring. The winning design (by Korobar, Grcev, Pencik) developed the concept of the 1992 competition entry for the area around the Stone Bridge, and was postmodernist in its approach, based on traditional block morphologies – Western perimeter and oriental atrium types. It sought to fill in the empty spaces from the 1965 reconstruction, but these plans were never realized. So instead of a well-conceptualized urbanism, adequate to a new capital city, a wild phase of construction driven by a capitalist logic took over Skopje’s development. This was characterized by private investors massively demolishing the oldest and most authentic houses for the purpose of building shopping malls and multi-story buildings without any particular urban plan.

Concerning the look of the city in the transitional years, many citizens were critical about how Skopje’s space used to be before “Skopje 2014”. In this regard, some of the interviewees welcomed the idea of Skopje’s renaissance and expressed admiration because something had changed in the city. Describing the ‘before’ city as empty, grey, chaotic and neglected, thereby referring to the transitional backwater, they could point out some of “Skopje 2014”’s advantages, in the sense that the space became better organized and finally something new had been built.
In a way, it could be said that the new Macedonian capital was erected on the ruins of the transitional city. But the intention behind this was not only to create a better and more beautiful space; it was rather to create space that represents the nation, to materialize its cultural heritage in the city’s built environment and thus to provide the city with a new national narrative. For the first time the city now has two museums (The Archaeological Museum of Macedonia and The Museum of the Victims of the Communist Regime) that tell the cultural and the historic narrative of Macedonia. In other words, the motives for Skopje’s makeover are intimately connected to the Macedonian struggle to form its post-communist identity.

Boris Groys calls this emergence a postnational society model. His postcommunist theories, for example, suggest seeing communism as an interruption, a pause, a delay in country’s normal development, referring of course to the Western capitalist order. Groys (Groys 2005, p. 39) notes that it was, for the first time, during the Cold War that the Western capitalist system was “seen not only as a place of economic prosperity, but at the same time as the embodiment of human rights, social solidarity, individual creative freedom and the highest moral probity.”48 In this sense Eastern European countries have remained backwards in comparison to Western Europe and thus have to make up for the lost time. In other words, the East had to reinvent and re-contextualize itself and acquire such an identity that better fits Western European norms, that is, to get rid of the communist past.

This so-called ‘belated modernism’, what Jürgen Habermas (see Habermas 1990) terms “the catching up revolution”, urges the implementation of Western postulates – democracy, economic prosperity and cultural excellence, a value package that has a universal legitimacy and can and should be exported not only to the backwards East, but worldwide. Groys notes that this package construction or model stems from communism, which in fact did create the first postnational model of society, which could also be exported and imported by nation states. The adjective postnational is used because, Groys explains, these models can be released from the national context and exchanged internationally on the political market, which constitutes a break in national history. In the postcommunist situation particular nations have to embody certain values as a whole in order to be able to offer themselves on the international political market. These nations are therefore not to be considered as historically developed and singular, but rather as artificial constructions, as is the case in communist or European society.

Furthermore, Groys argues that every event happens as part of history, and to tell a story one needs protagonists. In a world of nation-states, the writing of history can function only as a narrative whose protagonists are the nation and the nation-state. Because human history is presented as sum of national stories, an event can only become historical when it is told as part of a national history. That is why a communism that cannot be related to a single nation or nation-state cannot be taken as a part of history, and thus the subject that could take responsibility for the communist past is missing. And that is why the postcommunist subject has a regressive tendency, not from the past into the future, but a return to the historical time of nationalisms, the 19th century, from the end of history, from the future back into the past, explains Groys.

If one was to think of ascribing a geographical location to the most symbolic act of the end of communism, this would undoubtedly be Berlin. With the fall of the Berlin Wall on the evening of 9 November in 1989, Berlin became the capital of a united Germany. Under these radical changes Berlin also had to be reinvented. Organising itself around new economic bases, as Allan Cochrane and Andrew Jonas write, Berlin’s reimagination was working on three levels: as a world city (e.g. the rebuilding of the Potsdamer Platz); as the national capital (involving the transfer of the Reichstag from Bonn to Berlin and the rebuilding of the Museeninsel); and as a normal city (e.g. the redevelopment of the suburbs) (see Cochrane, Jonas, 1999, pp. 145-164).
Deemed a wannabe-city, or ‘always to come but never to be’ (see Scheffler 1910), Berlin’s reconstruction and identity-making was certainly a very complex process. Transferring the Reichstag (the German parliament) to Berlin involved the reconstruction of the historical centre around it – i.e. Brandenburg Gate and Paris Square, Museum Island, as well as the rebuilding of facades and the erection of equestrian sculptures and busts of Prussian Kings along Unter den Linden, etc. Rebuilding Museum Island, a nineteenth century museum complex, included: the Pergamon Museum; the reopening of the German Historical Museum with the mission of understanding and explaining German history; the demolition of the Palast der Republik, a modernist building hosting the cultural centre of GDR, and the reconstruction of the Hohenzolner Palast, or widely known as the Berliner Stadtschloß, in its place.

The baroque palace of the Hohenzollern dynasty was built during the Prussian Kingdom. Since the eighteenth century it has been the site of many significant events in Berlin, such as the 1848 demonstrations and the 1918/19 revolutions: in 1918 Karl Liebknecht proclaimed the Free Socialist Republic of Germany from one of the palace’s balconies. The Berliner Stadtschloß was heavily damaged during World War II before being demolished by the GDR government in 1950. The site remained unused for 20 years until a new modernist Palace of the Republic (Palast der Republik) was built there in 1976, which served as the GDR People’s Parliament and as a place for cultural events.

In 1991, following German reunification, the building’s fate was debated and the new German government decided to demolish it in 1993, citing the fact that it contained asbestos. In parallel with debates about its demolition, discussions for rebuilding the Stadtschloß began, and in 2002 the Bundestag decided that the Berliner Stadtschloß would be rebuilt in its place. This decision was disputed by significant number of citizens and experts and was accompanied by numerous protests and actions. Nevertheless, in 2009, the German Government finally voted in favour of the immediate reconstruction of the Berliner Stadtschloß, to scale and covered in three reconstructions of the original façade. Construction was postponed until 2013, and is set to be completed by 2019.

The debate about rebuilding the Stadtschloß not only had an aesthetic dimension, it was also heavily politically laden. In terms of historical continuity and urban and architectural identity, the years at the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of the Weimar Republic are considered a mythical golden era in which Berlin was a world city representing an economically, politically and culturally strong and united Germany (see Colomb 2006). In contrast, the history of the GDR represents a divided post-war nation at odds with the new German identity. With the reconstruction of the Stadtschloß emphasis is put on the traditional Prussian history of Germany and at the same time the GDR past is occluded, with the aim of providing historical continuity for the German nation and its culture.

The same logic can be followed in the reconstruction of the eighteenth century baroque cathedral in Dresden (die Frauenkirche): after being severely damaged during WWII bombings, it was left as a war memorial during the GDR period only to be fully reconstructed after Germany’s reunification. The surrounding Neumarkt Square, with its many baroque buildings was also reconstructed in
A further example is the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow, on the northern bank of the Moskva River, not far from the Kremlin. The original cathedral was built in the nineteenth century and destroyed in 1931 by soviet leader Joseph Stalin, who had plans to build a Palace of the Soviets. The Palace was never finished, as construction was interrupted by the German invasion in 1941. Under Nikita Khruschev the construction site was transformed into the world’s largest swimming pool, called Moskva Pool. Following the dissolution of the Soviet Union the cathedral was rebuilt on the site, with construction lasting from 1995 till 2000.

The whole reconstruction of Berlin was based on erasing the undesired German pasts from the German future: the Nazi past, the Weimar avant-garde past, and the GDR past. In their place either pre-1914 or the new symbolic and global architecture was to stand. Similar instances can be observed in Skopje too. With the 1963 earthquake and rebuilding of Skopje in a progressive modernist manner, not only was the city’s urban identity lost, it was also denied the possibility of telling its history. The revival of nostalgic images of pre-earthquake Skopje, the reconstruction of the three most important landmarks of this period: The Old National Theatre, The Officers Home and The National Bank, was already present in public discourse in the 1990s. The previous two would finally be rebuilt as part of “Skopje 2014”.

Nevertheless, unlike the Berliner Stadtschloß or Moscow’s Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, the symbolic content of these buildings is not related to a grandiose national past. They are related to the interwar period, when the country was part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croatians and Slovenians and later the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. Although related to European national awakening, for Macedonians this period was not at all in favour of the creation of a national state, as the Yugoslavian Kingdom had a policy of assimilation towards the ethnic Macedonians. But this period is related to the emergence of the bourgeoisie, and its architectural style was similar to Western eclecticism, which gives the city a sense of history and duration. In addition, the resurrection of pre-earthquake symbols of Skopje fulfils the task of erasing the modernist ones from the socialist period. And whereas this reconstruction explains Macedonia’s process of postcommunist identity formation, they are only part of the story and are certainly insufficient to persuade the general public that the nation had a glorious historical past.

The Macedonian narrative goes way back before the Kingdom of Yugoslavia – it bridges the gaps between Antiquity and the present, thereby positing a long and continuous Macedonian culture and history. Lacking other architectural examples representing the national past, the “Skopje 2014” plan involved constructing many buildings with historical appeal, mostly by mimicking neoclassicism. The complex of buildings stretching along the north bank of the Vardar River and on the right side of the Stone Bridge, that is, the Archaeologic Museum of Macedonia, the Agency for Electronic Communications, the Independent Macedonia Column, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, are some examples.

Most of these buildings are built in a faux neoclassical style, one that was never typical in the urban history of the city. “Skopje 2014” critics labelled this Antiquisation, “referring to the term coined by the historians to explain the Renaissance practice of giving a city the appearance of ancient Rome.
or Athens (a phenomenon visible in and after the 15th century in Italy and all over Europe). However, Antiquisation as a label was meant to be more than an explanation of the country’s sudden love for classical poetics, rather, it was meant as a pointer to nationalistic myth-building”, writes Jasna Koteska (Koteska 2011) Drawing inspiration from classical Antiquity, “Skopje 2014” assumes the task of materializing a grand national narrative through aesthetic language similar to nineteenth century European national capitals. The aim is to symbolically link Macedonia to Western European culture and legitimatize it as a European metropolis by referencing the Greek city-polis.

En route to the creation of a new national narrative, the socialist past and its modernist legacy are deliberately left out of the story: they do not fit the nationalist paradigm. That is, the need for an aesthetic representation that would distinguish Skopje from its socialist past led “Skopje 2014” to cite the kinds of Western bourgeois architecture that have epic and monumental appeal. This new urban layer, supposedly providing a unique Macedonian history, is additionally grounded in the hope that it will help enable the country to compete on the international political and economic market. In this sense, the Project is driven by a neoliberal logic: selling Macedonian cultural heritage and history as a national brand.

As Florian Bieber (Bieber 2014) rightly points out: “This sheds light on a broader social dilemma: what is the urban and social project in post-Socialism that can structure public spaces other than nation-building. The main other project is that of an uncontrolled market economy and the privatization of public space into malls and shopping centres, devoid of any local meaning [...]. Thus, the inability to provide for an alternative urban project to shape the public space (such as the one Skopje had after the earthquake) made the current urban plan possible.”

The result however, is that Skopje is now deemed a bad copy of Athens, Paris, Berlin, etc., thus making its identity even more hybrid, heterogeneous, and extremely confusing. This is what many citizens have strongly objected to. As many of the new buildings resemble renowned symbols of European metropolises, they are considered counterfeits of European aesthetics, styles and symbols, and have become a “laughing stock” (Gillet 2015) to the world. In this sense, the new city look is seen by many citizens as a copycat. The buildings on the river bank in particular were criticized for not complying with urbanist parameters, being non-functional, set-design representations, vainly attempting to cover over the modernist objects from post-earthquake Skopje, i.e. the late modernist Macedonian Opera and Ballet building. In general, the whole reconstruction project is considered inauthentic, the architectural style of the new buildings as uncommon for that area, giving a fake appeal to the city.
Hardly anyone is convinced by the highly unprofessional style, design and form of the new buildings. But, no matter how fake the “Skopje 2014” reconstructions are considered to be, the renewal created a media image of a city that can be marketed and sold to investors and tourists. Regarding this, and writing about Berlin, Huyssen (Huyssen 2003, p.60) writes: “In the move from the city as regional or national centre of production to the city as international centre of communications, media and services, the very image of the city itself becomes central to its success in a globally competitive world. [...] Not surprisingly then, the major concern with developing and rebuilding key sites in the heart of Berlin seems to be the image rather than usage, attractiveness for tourists and official visitors rather than heterogeneous living space for Berlin’s inhabitants, erasure of memory rather than its imaginative preservation.” The same instance of creating a city image, rather than a city for usage can be observed in the “Skopje 2014” case as well, as shown in the next subchapter THE TOURIST CITY.
132. Photograph of the left bank of the river Vardar before and after Skopje 2014
Track FIVE

THE TOURIST CITY
background information on the ‘Macedonia Square’:

Macedonia Square is Skopje’s main square and, with a total of 18,500m², also Macedonia’s largest. It is located in the centre of the city and has always served as the site of important social, cultural, political and other events. The square is at the meeting point of five streets: 11 October Street, Dimitar Vlahov Street, Nikola Vapcarov Street, Orce Nikolov Street and Maksim Gorki Street, which radially enter and merge into the square. The main landmarks of the square in the pre-earthquake era were Ristic Palace, Pelister Café, NAMA warehouse, the Old Officers Home and the National Bank.

As part of the “Skopje 2014” project the square was reconstructed many times and numerous new buildings and monuments have been installed on it. Most notable is the ‘Warrior on a Horse’ fountain, with the statue of Alexander the Great, and the new buildings on the square, such as the Hotel Marriott and the reconstructed Officers Home. Enormous changes to the square were also caused by the façade reconstruction of all buildings surrounding the square and the complete reconstruction of its pavement.

observational notes on the ‘Macedonia Square’:

With the reconstructions, the layout and atmosphere of the square was drastically changed. The size of the space shrank due to the enormity of the Alexander the Great fountain, numerous other new monuments, and an additional ground-floor fountain built next to it in the waters of which many children play on hot summer days. In addition, an increased number of tourists and tourist groups now visit the square, which was not the case before the reconstruction. Souvenir shops, horse-drawn carriages, a merry-go-round and other things designed to create an entertaining atmosphere have been installed on the square, giving it a fun-fair look.

ground at ‘Macedonia Square’:

New stone tiles.

narrative description on the ‘Macedonia Square’ entrance route:

The last instructions for movement are given at the beginning of this track (STAND 3:20”), leading the listener towards the fountain of Alexander the Great (FOOTSTEPS 3:00”) and instructing them to take a seat there (SIT 3:42”). Afterwards the narrator asks the audience to walk around the square (PACE 3:54”), without giving concrete instructions for direction. This is the first time that the movement is free and unguided, the footsteps are also not to be heard anymore. In this sense, the listener can determine their own movement.

ground at ‘Macedonia Square’:

New stone tiles.

narrative description on the ‘Macedonia Square’ exit route:

At the end of the track the listener is instructed to exit the square through a street of their choice.
TIME

3:20”
‘MACEDONIA SQUARE’

8:28”
‘MACEDONIA SQUARE’

1:58”
‘MACEDONIA SQUARE’

time at the ‘Macedonia Square’ entrance:
The time is nationalist, stretching from the beginnings of the new Macedonian narrative, the ancient times of the great warrior Alexander the Great, until the present day.

time at the ‘Macedonia Square’ exit:
The time is now, the time is revolutionary.

SOUND

sounds listened to at the ‘Macedonia Square’ entrance:
narrator’s voice: instructions of movement
narrator’s voice: narration
sound effects: clicking photo cameras
sound effects: soundscape of the square
sound effects: Chinese tourists chatting
sound effects: horses gallop
sound effects: fireworks
sound effects: child’s voice of admiration
music: Antique music
voice: Daniel Miller

sounds listened to at the ‘Macedonia Square’ exit:
soundscape: demonstrations of the ‘Colorful Revolution’ - slogan ‘No justice, no peace’ (in Macedonian ‘Nema Pravda Nema Mir’)
excerpt from interview with Kristijan
narrator’s voice: instructions of movement

sounds listened to via the ‘Macedonia Square’:
music: Summer Time – Disneyland Music
narrator’s voice: instructions of movement
excerpt from interview with Ivan
excerpt from interview with Jana
excerpt from interview with Marija

INTERVIEWS

JANA & ANETA & MARIJA

Ivan
age 50+ / male / Macedonian / German language teacher / lives in the city centre / interviewed on 27 April 2014

Jana
age 40+ / female / Macedonian / Artist / lives and works in the city centre / interviewed on 30 April 2014

Marija
age 30+ / female / Macedonian / Designer / feminist critic of “Skopje 2014” / interviewed on 14 April 2014

Kristijan
age 40+ / male / Macedonian / Artist / lives and works in the city centre / interviewed on 14 April 2014

Aneta
age 25+ / female / Macedonian / IT worker / interviewed on 5 September 2014

track five

00:12:56
00:00:00
00:04:00
00:08:00
00:12:00

narrator

interviews

archival

sound

music

footsteps
“What makes the site of Acropolis so interesting, for example, is that not only are there competing claims based on class, national sentiments, and locales, but also competing claims of outside powers (such as those of Germany, Britain, and the United States) who appropriate the Acropolis as symbol of the origins of western civilization rather than respect it as a living monument embedded in the history of Greek geopolitical and political-economic struggles. The burden that the Acropolis bears is that it simultaneously “belongs” to radically divergent imagined communities. And the question as to whom it “truly” belongs has no direct theoretical answer: it is determined through political contestation and struggle and, hence, is a relatively unstable determination.”

David Harvey 1996, pp. 309–310

As previously noted, “Skopje 2014” reconstructions brought many new monuments to Macedonia Square, doubtlessly the most notable of them being the 28 meter equestrian statue of Alexander the Great. Besides this grand statue, the square now also hosts monuments of Tsar Samuil and the Byzantine Tsar Justinian; the nineteenth century freedom fighters Goce Delcev and Pitu Gill; and other important personas of Macedonian history such as Dimitar Cupovski, Dimitar Pop Berovski, Metodija Andonov Cento. Scattered all around the main square they support the new Macedonian national narrative, now set in stone and cast in bronze. Stretching from Antiquity via the Slavic period and medieval times to the early twentieth century and the Macedonian national struggle against the Ottoman rule, Macedonian national history ends with the creation of an independent state.

The audio track begins by instructing the listener to take a look at Image Three, a hologram image consisting of two images of the square, before and after the reconstruction. The gap in time between images allows us to fill it with various imagined histories and narratives, as Weizman and Weizman note (see Weizman, Weizman 2015). A fictional narrative about a reimagined Macedonian Empire, a New Alexandria, follows. The imagined narrative, unfolding as the listener enters the square and approaches the fountain of Alexander the Great, merges with the square’s fun-fair look and entertaining atmosphere, where an increasing number of tourists (mostly Chinese visitors) and various tourist structures, can be found.

(Please scan the QR code on the left and take a look at Image Three.)
The approach of constructing the Macedonian national narrative is not a surprising one and certainly not a new one. Every nation, whether constructed in the recent or distant past, makes a claim to a long-lasting history, when possible rooted in and dating back to the remotest antiquity, as well as to a naturally-developed human community. At least this is what every ruler, be it a monarch or a democratically elected party, would have us believe, mostly for the purpose of gaining and sustaining power. Michel Foucault (Foucault 1998, p. 423) writes that “until the nineteenth century the primary aim of historical analyses was to reconstruct the past of the great national ensembles by which industrial capitalist society was divided up or tied together. From the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries onward, industrial capitalist society established itself in Europe and the world according to the schema of the great nationalities. History had the function, within bourgeois ideology, of showing how these great national units, which capitalism needed, came from far back in time and had asserted and maintained their unity through various revolutions.”

One of the most widespread definitions of a nation is the one referring to the term ‘imagined community’, coined by Benedict Anderson (Anderson 2006, pp. 6-7): “I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign. [The nation is imagined because] the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. [The nation is imagined as limited] because even the largest of them, encompassing perhaps a billion living human beings, has finite, elastic, boundaries, beyond which lie other nations. [It is imagined as sovereign] because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm. [And it is imagined as a community] because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings.”

Furthermore, Anderson (Anderson 2006, p.43) asserts that the origins of national consciousness are closely tied to three factors, or the interaction between: “a system of production and productive relations (capitalism), a technology of communication (print), and the fatality of human linguistic diversity.” He believes that capitalism and the widespread use of print as commodity in the sixteenth century mechanically created the print languages that could be disseminated through the market. Moreover, he states that these print-languages are the cause of the rise in national consciousness, related mainly to the ‘dethroning’ of the Latin language as lingua franca on the account of the vernacular languages, which became the print language.

He (Anderson 2006, p.44) writes: “Speakers of the huge variety of Frenches, Englishes, or Spanishes, who might find it difficult or even impossible to understand one another in conversation, became capable of comprehending one another via print and paper. In the process, they gradually became aware of the hundreds of thousands, even millions, of people in their language-field, and at the same time that only those hundreds of thousands, or millions, so belonged.” These fellow-readers, in fact, formed the idea of a nation, a national group or in Anderson’s words ‘the imagined community’.

Appropriating the figure of Alexander the Great as the father of the nation certainly helps tell the story of a great ‘imagined community’, which intensified the conflict between Macedonia and Greece, as the controversy of who ‘owns’ him is still an ongoing one. It also helps strengthen and manifest the nation’s existence, which is suddenly not 26, but over 2000 years old (see Buden 2005). But most importantly, this reinvention of the nation helped to place the country on the tourist market. So, for example, Alexander the Great is to be found on many postcards of Skopje, in the form of souvenirs in tourist shops, on the cover of guidebooks, in the new school books for pupils, in children’s comics, etc. The figure became the new brand of the country, which in turn is exploited by city marketers, political and business elites to sell an attractive image of a capital of yet another great nation to tourists and investors.
And indeed, one cannot ignore the increased number of tourists, who are strangely enough mostly of Chinese origin, found on the main city square every day. Never before has Macedonia Square been so popular – full of tourists equipped with cameras, horse carriages waiting for another round of customers, street performers dressed like Antique Macedonian soldiers offering a photo to the tourists with them, a marry-go-round for children’s entertainment, small souvenir shops and stands with all sorts of snacks and refreshments for visitors. To enhance the whole atmosphere, city officials have also selected a music program to play in a synchronized manner with the water springs from Alexander’s fountain. And on top of that, a huge screen for advertisements is placed on the façade of the City Gallery shopping mall, to the right of the fountain.

While this might be entertaining for the masses of tourists and visitors, many citizens find this atmosphere annoying and kitschy. The everyday places where generations of citizens used to socialize are now used by tourists and replaced by tourist activities. Besides the lack of space for movement on the square, due to the proximity of the locations of the new monuments, citizens also no longer use Skopje’s center square as a place for public social gatherings, because of the influx of foreigners and tourists. Instead they believe that the city center has been turned into a theme park or Disneyland, serving more as a space for tourist entertainment and spectacle. They described the central space as a tourist area, where people from other Macedonian cities and foreigners were more likely to be found than local Skopjeans.
Furthermore, due to the brand new and alien look, which has completely replaced the modernist face of the city, citizens also feel like foreigners in their own city, as absolutely nothing from the previous look of Skopje was preserved. The symbols that marked Skopje could not be found and recognized anymore due to the enormity and monumentality of the new objects. The square was now more “a public exhibition of sculptures”49 rather than a social place for gatherings. So, citizens have the impression that the city has been turned into a completely new and foreign city, one that has nothing to do with the one they remembered and lived in, as if this wasn’t the place where they grew up. This means that they feel no different to the tourists who are visiting Skopje for the first time.

Lastly, the above-mentioned instances of imposing a new identity on the city lead to citizens’ alienation from the city center in terms of identification and feelings of belonging. This also created anger, annoyance, feelings of repression and being expelled, feelings of shame and unpleasantness, which in turn results in complete avoidance when it comes to using or passing through Skopje’s center. Citizens said that they were either explicitly avoiding this space, and so searching for new short-cuts and pathways of reaching desired locations, or this area was used exclusively as a transit zone and only when necessary.
Susan Fainstein (see Fainstein 2007) identifies three types of tourist cities: the resort city, created expressly for consumption by visitors, i.e. Las Vegas; the converted city, which has built a tourist infrastructure (such as convention centers, sport stadiums, hotels, shopping malls) for the purpose of attracting visitors; and the tourist-historic city, which does not have to build tourist attractions because it already has unique sites of interest, i.e. Venice, Rome, Barcelona. Concerning the last of these, Fainstein writes (Fainstein 2007, p.7): “These are places that have genuine historical monuments. They feature sites and uses that are built into the fabric of the city which have long existed. This means that you get less uneven development because, in fact, you have a mix of residents and tourists. Since the historic sites were not necessarily put all in one place, visitors move around the city. These tend to be compact cities, and the consequence is that you get a mixture of visitors.”

This is clearly not the case with Skopje. The tourist-historic city did not exist before “Skopje 2014”. It did not develop gradually, spreading through the whole urban area. It was created on purpose for attracting tourists and capital, as well as for telling a grand national narrative, and it is concentrated only in the very central area of the city. So there is no longer a mixture of residents and tourists in the square. Rather, residents have been pushed out of the square to make way for the new tourist attractions. And with this, residents’ urban culture, their everyday production of space, is disturbed. Macedonia Square is no longer a real place, it is not a space of representation of city life, but a “frozen image”, a “tourist gaze” (see Urry 2002), a postcard, a guidebook.

In a quest to provide material evidence of a long-lasting Macedonian national history, rather than showing an exclusive past and unique cultural features, the public space of Skopje has been turned into a tourist spectacle. THE TOURIST CITY, which “Skopje 2014” created through the commodification of the nation’s cultural heritage and history, replaces the public culture of the city, embedded in its daily social life. THE TOURIST CITY of Skopje is not meant for the everyday flaneur, but for the tourist who, excited to see the differences of the world’s cultures, ends up in the same neo-colonial spaces of capitalism and consumerism.

Finally, “[t]he word citizen has to do with cities, and the ideal city is organized around citizenship – around participation in public life”, writes Solnit (Solnit 2005, p. 176). With regards to “Skopje 2014” the case is rather the opposite. The citizens are precisely the ones who are excluded from the process of planning the city’s public space. The Project was carried out in a top-down manner, rather than developed organically from below. Disregarding the social (lived) urban environment and citizens’ everyday ways of inhabiting the city, the Project seems to be much more politically and economically driven, rather than socially constructed. In this vein, “Skopje 2014” imposes an authoritarian narrative that does not leave room for citizens’ alternative narratives, and thus creates alienation among the citizens in terms of identification with public spaces.
In other words, in an attempt to create a representational space of an ‘imagined community’, “Skopje 2014” destroys the space that the community builds and produces on a daily basis. The space that “Skopje 2014” created is an imposed space, divorced of any everyday reality, practice or citizens’ identification with public space. It is therefore extremely difficult for them to accept and engage with this completely new space. With an interview statement, accompanied by audio recordings from the demonstrations of the ‘Colourful Revolution’ – a culmination of citizens’ dissatisfaction with the rule of the former Government, who was behind “Skopje 2014” – the audio guided tour ends.
EPILOGUE
Spaces of Representation?

Audio Guided Walking as Medium and Significance of the Tour

Limitations of the Research and Possible Further Research
Spaces of Representation?

The attempt to visually represent and materialize a unique and distinctive national and cultural identity in the urban space of Skopje actually resulted in making its identity extremely confusing. Overwriting the modernist identity of the city, considered as most representative city look, by pasting faux neo-classicist facades onto post-earthquake buildings resulted in citizens having dissonant experiences of the urban landscape. Replacing place-identities tied to personal biographies, and heterogeneous urban spaces of different ethnic and social groups (i.e. female, Albanian, Roma), with megalomaniac nationalist and chauvinist monuments created homogenous, monolithic urban representations, divorced from the inclusive potential of urban narratives.

The rapid erection of monuments and museums commemorating a long and continuous national history and cultural heritage, brutally stripped the previous meanings from these places and the citizens’ memories attached to them. Quoting the aesthetics of the grand nineteenth-century European national capitals, which are very different to Skopje’s previous symbolic landscape. Replacing place-identities tied to personal biographies, and heterogeneous urban spaces of different ethnic and social groups (i.e. female, Albanian, Roma), with megalomaniac nationalist and chauvinist monuments created homogenous, monolithic urban representations, divorced from the inclusive potential of urban narratives.

Skopje is now deemed a European counterfeit and a Disney theme park. Its citizens are ashamed of the current city look, while foreigners see it as a laughing stock. What has been materialized in Skopje’s urban space are actually pastiches of Western cultural symbols and representations designed to support the story of a distinctive national culture and identity. As a ‘backward’ former socialist Eastern European country, Macedonia’s struggle for recognition has created a cultural identity which, as Buden (referring to the Balkans) notes (Buden 2010): “[i]s] determined by [its] cultural particularity, which only makes sense in relation to the West, which is supposed to be universal.”

Buden (2016) notes: “The problem in Eastern Europe extends much further than an absence of modernity. This concept of “arrested development” is a classic neo-colonial concept; the colonial “other” is both distant and backward. Though many anthropologists would deny it today, this questionable colonial-anthropological idea constructed its “object of research” as not only in another space (another culture, in Africa, or Asia for example), but always in another time too. The consequence of viewing Eastern Europe as “belated” is the implication that the populations of Western and Eastern Europe don’t share the same history, the same temporality.” He goes on to say that in this approach the Balkans (or in our case Macedonia) is seen as the “Other of the West”, which is also a cultural concept of exclusion and suppression. As such, in order to be included, it undergoes a cultural translation on the model of the West’s supposed cultural universality.

However, in terms of translation, he highlights that this does not refer to a traditional concept of translation based on the primacy of an original text. Rather, Buden notes (Buden 2010, p.9): “[T]he notion of translation I am thinking of here provides a model for forging a certain type of cultural generality or universality. Concretely this means that as the figure of previously excluded cultural identity, precisely by way of cultural translation, the Balkans successfully become part of – and thereby ultimately change – the concept of cultural universality. The Balkans don’t simply become the West, as in the sense of cloning, instead they influence and transform the West. In short, including the Balkans also means that the West, or more precisely its concept of universality, is changed too. Translation is a repetition that produces differences both in the translation as well as in the so-called original.”

In this sense, under the global forces of capitalism, the ‘original’ Western cultural (national) symbols became translated and subverted worldwide – as image and as commodity. Groys argues that our belief that nowadays cities look more and more alike, that they are homogenized and that no matter where we go time and again we see the same representations, is false. Instead he proposes that the local cultural particularities, identities and differences have
not disappeared in the process of globalization, but that they are travelling 
and reproducing and multiplying themselves around the world (Groys 2004). 
We have seen the symbolic economy of “Skopje 2014” in Berlin, Tianducheng, 
Moscow, Istanbul, etc. already. The peculiar architectural and artistic expression 
of Skopje is yet another material witness to this global emergence, succumbing 
to the neoliberal market logic and dynamics.

In this respect, “Skopje 2014” is not a copy of the ‘original’, but a translation 
that is a truth in its own right. In an attempt to get closer to and catch up with 
Western Europe it seems that not only a trans-spatial (Western-Eastern) but 
also a trans-temporal (nineteenth – twenty-first century) European cultural 
translation is taking place in the urban space of the Macedonian capital. But as 
Walter Benjamin writes, a translation can never fully render the meaning of the 
original (Benjamin 1997). Referring to Benjamin’s ideas on translation Buden 
(Buden 2009) notes: “A translation for Benjamin does not refer to an original 
text, it has nothing to do with communication, its purpose is not to carry 
meaning, etc. He illustrates the relation between the so-called original and 
translation by using the metaphor of a tangent: translation is like a tangent, 
which touches the circle (i.e. the original) in one single point only to follow 
thereafter its own way. Neither the original nor the translation, neither the 
language of the original nor the language of the translation are fixed and 
persisting categories. They don’t have an essential quality and are constantly 
transformed in space and time.”

That is, Benjamin notes that translation does not have any significance for the 
original, rather it represents its relationship to the original, the relationship 
among languages (in Skopje’s case the relationship between the Western 
space and architectural language and the Eastern space). Benjamin (Benjamin 
1997, p.153) writes: “It is clear that a translation, no matter how good, cannot 
have any significance for the original. Nevertheless, it stands in the closest 
connection with the original by virtue of latter’s translatability. Indeed, this 
connection is all the more intimate because it no longer has any significance 
for the original itself. It can be called a natural connection, and more precisely a 
vital connection. Just as expressions of life are connected in the most intimate 
manner with the living being without having any significance to the latter, a 
translation proceeds not so much from the life of the original as from its 
“afterlife” or “survival” (Überleben). The translation is nevertheless later than 
the original, and in the case of the most significant works, which never find 
their chosen translators in the era in which they are produced, it indicates that 
they have reached the stage of their continuing life (Fortleben).”

Benjamin also asserts that a translation can also never fully render the meaning 
of the original (Benjamin 1977, pp.160-162): “[T]ranslation, instead of making 

itself resemble the meaning of the original, must lovingly, and in detail, fashion 
in its own language a counterpart to the original’s mode of intention, in order 
to make both of them recognisable as fragments of a vessel, as fragments 
of a greater language. [...] On the other hand, the translation’s language can, 
indeed must free itself from bondage to meaning, to allow its own mode of 
intent to resound, not as the intent to reproduce, but rather as harmony, as 
a complement to its language in which language communicates itself [...] 
To set free in his own language the pure language spellbound in the foreign 
language, to liberate the language imprisoned in the work by rewriting it, is the 
translator’s task”.

So, the problem is not that “Skopje 2014” is a bad copy and an inauthentic 
realization, as asserted in many interview statements, but that “Skopje 2014” 
is a bad translation. Instead of becoming a representative national capital of 
Macedonia, following the example of other European metropolises, it turned 
itself into a dystopian metropolanka. Had the “Skopje 2014” objects been better 
copied, done in a more ‘original’ or more professional manner, would the 
city look have been more authentic? I believe not. For how can the ‘original’, 
Western (‘progressive’) time, be copied into ‘belated’ Eastern time? How can 
Western European nineteenth-century nationalism be copied into Macedonian 
twenty-first century nationalism? How can Western European nineteenth-
century architecture be erected in Skopje in 2014? It cannot. What has been 
copied and materialized in Skopje’s urban space is the time of capitalism, the 
instrument of neo-colonialism, that creates reproducible commodities to be 
exported and imported from one nation state to another.

“Skopje 2014” is a bad translation because it failed to free itself from the 
meaning of the ‘original’ and, as Benjamin (Benjamin 1977, pp.160-162) wrote, 
to “lovingly, and in detail, fashion in its own language a counterpart to the 
original’s mode of intention”. It failed to translate, in its own language, with 
its own syntax, and in its own style, an urban representation of Skopje’s zeitgeist, 
which would nourish the everyday social spaces in the city, and reflect citizens’ 
identifications and meanings with and of the public spaces of Skopje. In an 
attempt to reproduce the ‘original’ Western symbolic urban spaces, “Skopje 
2014” failed to create a counterpart urban space, which complements not only 
its own urban space language, but that of the ‘original’ as well.

And the problem is that Skopje’s public space has now become a representational 
space rather than a space of representation. Instead of embracing and assisting 
the process of shaping a social public space, and supporting the culture of the 
city, city elites have used the public space in Skopje as a medium for the mere 
visual representation of a grand national culture and history, that will hopefully 
bring tourists and investments to the country. In addition, a huge drawback
of “Skopje 2014” is not only the lack of, but the actual destruction of the existing ‘spaces of representation’, or social public space: the place identities and the citizen's identifications with the public space in the city; the spaces representing different social and ethnic groups; the places in which citizens’ collective narratives and memories of the city are embedded; the places of social interaction, the way they are used and the way a shared public life is practiced, in short, the culture of the city.

The ignorance, suppression and the exclusion of the multiple cities that make up Skopje, which in turn allow for different city identities and meanings to flourish, bring about the opposite outcome – an imposed and alien symbolic city, a lack of identification with public spaces and feelings of non-belonging. Because of this, citizens feel that the public space in Skopje has been occupied and de-familiarized, overwritten with new symbols and ideological myths containing a mishmash of confusing historical information, expressed in quasi-European aesthetic styles. They feel ashamed of the retrograde styles and figurative representations that are no more than entertaining for crowds and tourists and as a result they feel like foreigners in their own city, which has become unrecognizable. This alien space is explicitly avoided or now serves only as a transit zone. The social urban space of Skopje was brutally taken away from the citizens, denatured, deconstructed and filled in with new symbolic contents.

“Skopje 2014” persuades hardly anyone that it has achieved its own stated goals. It fails to provide its own meaning, and accordingly to create its own space. The symbolic narrative of “Skopje 2014” does not support the citizens’ narratives of the city; instead it excludes and contradicts them. It does not pass on the meanings that the city had for the residents and further extend them, rather these are being forcefully replaced by symbolic meanings which citizens cannot relate to. The symbolic narrative of “Skopje 2014” is thus largely meaningless for Skopje’s citizens. It is a narrative with a plastic-fantastic surface, which while it might succeed in covering over the material traces of previous and multiple cities, nonetheless fails in communicating a meaningful story about the city as it is actually lived, produced and reproduced by its residents. The most significant failure of “Skopje 2014” is its inability to create valuable meanings among Skopje’s citizens.
Audio Guided Walking as Medium and Significance of the Tour

The specificity of the medium of an audio guided walk offers the possibility of multilayering various narratives on a single site and the possibility of interaction and collaboration between the ‘real’, the physical materiality of the built environment (what is seen) and the ‘virtual’, the imagined, experienced and perceived (what is heard). As Farman (Farman 2015, p.7) notes: “Projects that highlight this experience of multiplicity are the ones that connect with what it means to be embodied in this era of digital culture. Mobile media are less about producing digital simulations that replace the material world and are instead more interested in producing ways that the virtual and the material interact in meaningful, embodied ways.” In this sense, it is not to be understood that the virtual is more real than the real, or that the citizens’ narratives are truer than the symbolic narratives embedded in the built environment, instead they overlap and are experienced simultaneously, thus creating a subverted and ambivalent experience of the urban. The audio guide allows for an augmentation of the physical by offering experiences that alter our perception of the ‘real’.

More precisely, the heavy material and visual presence of the multiple monuments and objects of “Skopje 2014” is linked to the invisible acoustic narratives of the citizens. The ‘soft’ cities, existing in subjective imaginarios, images, memories, relations to and experiences of the urban are interwoven into the ‘hard’ materiality of the “Skopje 2014” objects and monuments. The audio guide reasserts the multiple aspects of the city, THE MODERNIST CITY, THE FEMALE CITY, THE MEMORY CITY, THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY and THE TOURIST CITY, in the aesthetic experience of the listener. The audio guided tour then explores ways of making citizens’ stories of places visible, and allows for them to be presented, even if the places mentioned no longer exist. The durability of the stories contained in the physical environment of places are linked with the ephemeral narratives of citizens about what that place means.

Farman (Farman 2015, p.6) writes that “ephemeral narratives stand in contrast to [these] durable stories; they are the stories of the moment, often told by those on the margins with little ability to tell their story with durable media. Ephemeral narratives insinuate themselves into the grand narratives of place.” In other words, the ephemeral narratives of citizens, recounted with the help of mobile media (the audio guide), often contradict the grand narratives about the meaning of a given place. By overlaying different and conflicting narratives on one place, instead of a single story, a polyvocality is given to the site. The audio guide allows for many voices to be heard and places become defined by multiple stories and conflicting ideas of the truth of their meanings.

On the other hand, while voices are central to telling narratives about the city, pre-recorded binaural environmental sounds and sound effects are included in the soundtracks as well, making the location on which they are listened even more densely layered. They are used to merge the seemingly real, three-dimensional sounds (heard but not seen) and architectural features into one narrative, drawing on that place, blurring the limits between the imagined and the real, and creating a dissonance in the experience of the urban. Often the pre-recorded three-dimensional sounds are followed by an audio break, during which sounds from the real environment enter, thus bridging the imagined and the real. In doing so a shift in perception and an ambivalent experience of urban space is produced both by the citizens’ voices and the sound material.

Citizens’ stories allow not only for the layering of many voices, but also for the layering of different times – the time to which the narration refers, the time of the narration, the time of the reconstruction, and the time at the moment of listening. The possibility of listening to the audio guided tour again at a later stage or multiple times, when the landscape changes further, enables the listener to sense the temporal layering and to experience different landscapes in one spot, related to different periods of the city (i.e. pre-earthquake, post-earthquake, the transitional period, the present). In this way, although with limited duration, the audio guided tour, besides embracing different perspectives and different meanings of a place, is also polytemporal - connecting the different times of one place.
The intimacy provided by individual listening through headphones is also very important, for it allows the listener to develop an individual understanding of the city’s narratives, which while fragments of urban experiences, at the same time create a collective experience of and knowledge about the urban space. The citizens’ voices, heard directly through headphones, accompany the movement of the listener and thus create a feeling that one is not walking alone. Listening to the urban experiences of others, the place is re-experienced on one’s own as well, thus connecting the shared lived experiences of the urban. As Krasny (Krasny 2008, p.36) notes: “By listening to the paths taken by another, a way of seeing the city through their eyes develops. On a micro-political level this listening lends a closeness and tangibility to the experience of the urban and thus resists alienation.”

The mobility offered by the medium of audio guided walks was important for curating the narrative structures of the audio guide into walking pathways, determining the paths, the rhythm and the duration of the walking route and its breaks, thus connecting the different stories, helping them unfold, relate to one another and to the place of listening. Re-experiencing the city on the move also allows unplanned occurrences, serendipitous situations and encounters to happen and to be created, so it provides an open framework for different and unique experiences to emerge that could not have been planned in advance nor repeated afterward.

Moreover, the site-specificity of the project required that the audience be physically present and move through certain locations in the center, which creates new relations to these spaces. Many participants noted that they were moving through a certain part of the city for the first time since the reconstruction. So, through the everyday practice of walking and listening to an audio recording on a familiar device (an mp3 player), the audience’s experience of space is altered. By the guided movements and the performative acts, new interactions and relations between the audience and the places develop, and in this aesthetic experience not only new meanings of places emerge, but also new kinds of social space are produced.

In describing her research methodology (walking along and listening to interview partners) Krasny writes: “We walk the path together. So a situation is created that privileges the everyday as a production of knowledge. […] The path is the narration, it carries it forward. […] The focus is on the course of the narration and on listening, my listening, as an act of production. […] Its meandering course, the personal aspect of the narration-path shows how it, as a private kind of perception, is connected with the public. […] While they discuss the way, their walking becomes an act” (Krasny 2008, pp.28-33). Similarly, by walking over the curated paths and listening to the audio content in Skopje the listener re-experiences and reproduces the city as well.

Besides some technical remarks, i.e. the long duration of certain parts, the audience was generally very positive about the experience of taking the guided audio tour. More precisely, they considered the work as a valuable participative archive of oral testimonies about the city, or a collective diary of citizens’ lived experiences and memories of public space in the city, prior to and following the urban reconstruction. The audience also positively evaluated the intimate character of the work, that is, the intimate relation that each participant had with the work. The narration, which brought together different positions and memories about the city, was also regarded as well constructed, and the synthesis of interview statements, text and space on many locations worked very well. Some remarks were also related to the idea that such projects can serve as an example of how urban planning should be devised and done. The additional visual material was also regarded as well-chosen and appropriate, in the sense that it connects different times and meanings of the city.
Limitations of the Research and Possible Further Research

The main constraint or limitation of the research was that it was conducted while the urban reconstruction was ongoing and was completed at more or less the same time as it. Because of this, there was a lack of emotional distance on the part of the interviewees, important for reflecting on the complex urban processes involved, as well as time to gather more lived experience of the newly created city space. In this sense, it could be said that the interview statements and the research material deriving from their analyses is marked by the rapidity of the changes to the urban environment, the shock and the revolt they caused. Harsh criticism of the Project was almost unanimous. The trauma of the sudden loss of the city as it was prior to the reconstruction is also strongly reflected in much of the research findings. As a result, when presenting the research as a work in progress on numerous occasions it tended to be read as nostalgic and sentimental about the city’s past.

With the change of the government in 2017, many new discourses and possibilities regarding the urban reconstruction emerged. For example, it was seen as an opportunity to correct the approach to the symbolical reconstruction of the city by removing or relocating all objects of “Skopje 2014”. Public opinion on this act is divided, nevertheless questions on what to do with the city and how to develop it further are emerging and ongoing. Many experts and critics believe that “Skopje 2014” is something from which a lot of lessons can be learned, and therefore that it should not be simply destroyed, but kept as a situation from which further urban planning and social production of space can develop.

In this sense, further research on the topic in five, ten, or more years would be relevant and necessary to study the long-term effects of the urban reconstruction on public space. Had the effects of the modernist post-earthquake reconstructions of Skopje been researched upon its immediate implementation, the research findings and interpretations would undoubtedly have been different to the knowledge and the understanding now. When enough time passes for citizens to develop new lived experiences of the reconstructed city, it would be quite interesting and relevant to see what social public spaces develop.

But besides the above-mentioned limitations, doing the PhD work at this point in time is definitely valuable, for it provides an understanding of events surrounding the renewal as it is unfolding and it captures the experience and perceptions of urban space at this crucial time. The research can be seen as an artistic archive of present-day ideas, experiences, images and imaginations of Skopje, a database on the intersection between documentary and fiction that can and should be revisited in future, and that can be used not only to produce further knowledge, but also for subsequently re-experiencing the city and producing urban social space and new meanings for Skopje.

It is also important because it shows the immediate implications of such decisions, which are relevant for the direction in which the city subsequently develops. The city is an ongoing process of becoming and being, and the research done in this PhD can help avoid repeating further urban interventions that lead to negative outcomes on the spaces we socially produce. Consequently, it could help to bring us closer to the kinds of city-creations we want to live in, in which we can practice and express the plurality of identities, images and experiences that are our own and that we create by living the city.

Lastly, the transdisciplinary character of the research project, being practice-based and artistic, can also serve as an example for developing new and creative ways of dealing with and thinking about urban reconstructions, for conducting research on the intersection between urban studies and art, as well as for developing artistic works in public spaces in other cities, whether the context is similar or different. The significance of the audio guided tour, which to my knowledge is the only one of its kind in Macedonia, is precisely related to its character and mode of presentation, which helps spread dialogues outside academia and intellectual circles and supports the dissemination of critical knowledge about the urban.
CONCLUSION

This PhD research deals with urban space production through storytelling as a crucial way of creating and communicating meanings about places (Farman 2015). It is concerned with the urban narratives of Skopje in relation to the huge urban reconstruction project known as “Skopje 2014”. Conducted roughly between 2010 and 2016 (it had no clear beginning or end), “Skopje 2014” made substantial interventions into the city’s urban environment, completely changing its public space and appearance.

The PhD research draws upon Lefebvre’s spatial trialectics, and the notion that space is a correlation between perceived space (spatial praxis) or the materiality of space, conceived space (representations of space), the ways in which space is planned and represented, and lived space (spaces of representation), the emotional experience of space that develops through the imaginary and through the lived experience of the first two spaces (Lefebvre 1991). Consequently, the PhD research argues that the meanings people ascribe to places and the stories produced in and about them are not isolated and independent from the physical materiality of the city and the changes it undergoes, but on the contrary that they are interdependent and reciprocal.

More precisely, the research seeks to discover whether and in what way citizens’ stories about Skopje have changed following the urban renewal. Based upon theoretical ideas that city space is produced by the everyday social acts of its many inhabitants, and that the city has multiple meanings and is therefore inherently a heterogenous site of conflict and constantly in the process of creation and recreation (Krasny 2008, Beauregard 2004, Zukin 1995), the research is based on two types of narratives – a symbolic one, promulgated by the urban renewal project, and citizens’ own narratives of the city, based on their everyday subjective experiences of and in it.

The research deals with the interaction between the planned city and the lived city, between how the city is conceived and how it is lived, with the relation between the city meanings that “Skopje 2014” produces and the meanings that citizens ascribe to places. That is, the PhD research seeks to relate and analyze these two types of narratives and locate overlapping, divergent, complementary or conflictual aspects of their respective narrative structures. The focus of research is thereby on spaces of representation (lived space) and whether these are considered, reflected and embraced by the Macedonian city elites when planning the urban reconstruction of Skopje.

The research on the symbolic narratives of “Skopje 2014” was conducted with the help of theoretical literature, analyses of local and international press-releases about “Skopje 2014”, interviews with experts and critics and field research in Skopje. I contextualize “Skopje 2014” as a neoliberal symbolic urban reconstruction (Harvey 1996), related to the attraction of globally circulating capital via place-marketing, a view which shows how the potential of symbolic economy of cities is vitally exploited in the production of space and production of symbols (Zukin 1995). In other words, by visually representing and materializing a grand national and cultural narrative in the urban space of Skopje, and by selling this brand to tourists and investors, the city is marketed just like any other capitalist product (Kearns, Philo 1995). The PhD further argues that the outcome of the urban renewal is related to what scholars have termed the “Disneyfication of cities” (Sorkin 1992) or the “homogenization of cities through their diversification” (Harvey 2005, Zukin 1995), that is, the phenomenon of exporting and importing symbolic cultural representations and places of consumerism from one place to another, which thereby acquire a similar appearance and urban structure.

The research on the citizens’ narratives of Skopje aims to elicit, locate and analyze citizens’ subjective narratives of the urban. This was done on multiple field research visits to Skopje, and was conducted by a triangulation of techniques and methods, including observation and documentation of the urban environment, qualitative interviews with citizens and walking as a method of urban exploration. Relevant interview questions were concerned with the effects the urban renewal has had on the production of social public space,
whether this has changed how citizens talk about, experience and live in the city's public space and what kind of new city meanings the renewal created. Besides many solo walks in Skopje, all interviews were also conducted on foot.

The research findings were presented and artistically transmitted in the form of an audio guided tour through the city, inviting the listener to performatively re-experience Skopje's urban space. More precisely, after having been analyzed for their discursive structures and combined with various visual and sonic observations (recorded in a binaural manner), the research findings were processed, translated and re-enacted as an interactive sonic walk or audio guided tour through the city. The sonic walk was presented as part of the fifth symposium ‘Curatorial Exchanges: The Institutional As Public’, organized by the Press2Exit project space which took place in September 2016 in Skopje. It was further presented in April 2018, as part of the exhibition of nominees for the DENES YVAA (Young Visual Artist Award) in MKC Gallery Skopje, organized by CAC (Contemporary Arts Centre) and FRU (Faculty of Things that can’t be Learned).

The content of the guided tour was divided into five chapters or so-called stations, organized around the main research themes. In the written form of the PhD, they are presented as five sub-chapters. Given the transdisciplinary, artistic-scientific nature of the work, they are presented as a blend of theoretical text and excerpts from the audio guided tour (linked to by QR codes), combining the reading of the text and listening to the audio excerpts as the content of the audio guided tour unfolds. Each subchapter includes background information about the locations at which the audio content is listened to during the tour, about the time period to which the narration refers, the actual duration of the walking to and from the locations, the type of the walking route, a list of sounds included in the audio track, and information on the people interviewed.

The following themes featured in the research: the modernist urban planning of post-earthquake Skopje; female urban spaces; memories about the city prior to the urban reconstruction; the derivative representational style of “Skopje 2014”; and the touristicification of the city centre, the respective sub-chapters being named THE MODERNIST CITY, THE FEMALE CITY, THE MEMORY CITY, THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY, and THE TOURIST CITY. In each sub-chapter the symbolic narrative of “Skopje 2014” and citizens’ narratives were analysed and related to one another. The theoretical discourses that assisted me in the process of analyzing the narratives include theories of modernism and postmodernism (Harvey 1989); feminist theories of the urban (Krasny 2008); collective memories (Halbwachs 1992) and milieux de memoire and lieux de memoire (Nora 1989); postcommunism (Groys 2005); nationalism (Anderson 2006) and place-marketing (Kearns, Philo 1993).

The main research findings were the following:

In relation to the 1963 earthquake, although the Master Plan for Skopje disregarded the city’s prior legacy, and besides the fact that it was not fully implemented and was changed to the point of non-recognition, the modernist spirit (adapted for the local context) in which the city was reconstructed created a city identity which was considered to be authentic to Skopje among the citizens. I locate THE MODERNIST CITY of Skopje in the everyday microspaces of representation and identification, taken as examples of the local culture and identity of Skopje around which everyday city life takes place. Altering the look and the form of these spaces amounted to the annihilation of historical artefacts and the neglect of the city’s valuable modernist heritage. In addition, the absence of these socially produced spaces, and their masking, in the visual representation of “Skopje 2014”, has created a dissonance in residents’ lived experience. Moreover, re-façading all modernist buildings in the city center was a political approach that erases existing city representations, replacing them with façades specifically designed to differentiate the city’s look from the socialist period.

The numerous, megalomaniac and oversized representations of bearded male figures from Macedonia’s history and its struggle for independence are a monolithic symbolic intervention in the urban that reduces the heterogeneity of the experiential (female) urban spaces. The symbolic altering of city spaces that used to commemorate heroines, by adding representations exclusively commemorating male national heroes, breaks the continuity of women’s histories and the connection of their biographies to the present. It also changes the everyday experiences and meanings such places have, not only for women but for citizens in general, and in doing so it changes the production of THE FEMALE CITY. This approach of representing national history in urban space also dictates what is forgotten and what is remembered, and what aspects of the urban are allowed to be experienced and re-produced. “Skopje 2014” fosters exclusive and selective representations, favouring only certain types of histories and social groups.

Citizens’ collective memories about city places are linked to times of significant experiences. Assuming that when places radically change, the inhabitants’ sense of continuity in their social identity is broken, the PhD research shows that instances of the erasure of memory about places in the city leads to citizens feeling like they don’t belong in the city in which they live. The PhD argues that along with the erasure of shared memories of the city, the meanings attached to these places have been swept away as well. The replacement of organically
created collective memories (milieux de mémoire) with imposed memories of national histories and events (lieux de mémoire) obliterated THE MEMORY CITY. Rather than supporting the revival of nostalgic images, I highlight the importance of the city of memory for appropriating both the present city and the current urban changes, as well as the future city.

Taking a closer look at the aesthetics and style in which the new buildings and objects are built – neoclassicism – allowed for the creation of THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY. In line with theories of post-communist national development, the symbolic narrative of the renewal is related to the creation of the independent Macedonian state, that is the transition from a socialist to a democratic state. In terms of the discourse of ‘Antiquisation’ (aesthetic representations in city space that take inspiration from Classical Antiquity), I argue that the phenomenon of imagining a future via a distant past resulted in the attempt to replicate epic European aesthetics, styles and symbols in the urban space of Skopje. Highly atypical of the city until now, these representations were intensely disputed by citizens, who could not identify with the city’s new symbolism.

The attempt to produce a grand national narrative in the urban space of Skopje is linked to the attempt to create a spectacular rather than a usable city. Because of the completely new and foreign city look, and the increased number of visitors in the city centre, citizens reported feeling alienated from THE TOURIST CITY, and they avoided interacting with it as much as possible. Everyday places in which different generations of citizens used to socialize and gather have now been replaced by tourists, tourist activities and tourist infrastructure. Regarding this, according to citizens, the city centre has been turned into a theme park or Disneyland, serving more as a touristic entertainment, spectacle, and a public exhibition of sculptures, than a lived social space. A consumer city, built to represent a long national history, replaced the socially-produced city.

To sum up, the city centre has become an imposed image, divorced of any everyday reality, practice or citizens’ identification with public space. Citizens feel that the public space in Skopje has been overwritten with new symbols and ideological myths containing a mish-mash of confusing historical information, expressed in quasi-European aesthetic styles. Due to the rapid and extreme reconstruction of the city centre, citizens claim that their personal memories and images of the city are being erased and are slowly vanishing. They believe that the modernist cultural legacy was neglected and that the modernist architectural style typical of post-earthquake Skopje has been replaced with an architectural style uncommon for that area. They feel ashamed of the retrograde styles and figurative representations that are no more than entertainment for crowds and tourists. Because of this they feel like foreigners in their own city and have the impression that the city has been turned into a completely new, foreign and alien place.

Based on the overall research findings the following meta-conclusions were drawn:

“Skopje 2014” is not a bad copy and an inauthentic realization, as asserted in many interview statements, but a bad translation. Instead of becoming a representative national capital of Macedonia, following the example of other European metropolises, it turned into a dystopian metropalanka. “Skopje 2014” is a bad translation because it failed to translate, in its own language, with its own syntax, and in its own style, an urban representation of Skopje’s zeitgeist, which would nourish the everyday social spaces in the city, and reflect the citizens’ identifications and meanings with and of the public spaces of Skopje. In an attempt to reproduce the ‘original’ Western symbolic urban spaces and cultural representations, “Skopje 2014” failed to create a counterpart urban space, which complements not only its own urban space language, but that of the ‘original’ as well.

Furthermore, the commercialisation of culture, which “Skopje 2014” promotes, has negative consequences for the social identity of individuals and groups and their spaces of representation. The potential that visual representations have for the shaping of social public space – for fostering a plurality of visions and urban experiences and facilitating multiple and various city identities and meanings – was levelled with the potential that neoliberal symbolic urban reconstructions allow for acquiring capital surplus. Instead of embracing and assisting the process of shaping a social public space, and supporting the vernacular culture of the city, city elites have used the public space in Skopje as a medium for the mere visual representation of a grand national culture and history, that will hopefully bring tourists and investments to the country. Skopje’s public space became much more a representational space rather than a space of representation.

In addition, a huge drawback of “Skopje 2014” is its destruction of already-existing social public space. Instead of supporting and fostering the creation of spaces of representation, which allow for different city identities and meanings to flourish, “Skopje 2014” actively suppresses them. Disregarding the social (lived) urban environment, everyday ways of inhabiting the city and citizens’ urban experiences, the Project seems to be much more politically and economically driven, rather than socially constructed. In this sense, “Skopje 2014” imposes an authoritarian symbolic narrative which creates alienation among the citizens in terms of identifying with and living in public spaces.
“Skopje 2014” therefore persuades hardly anyone that it has achieved its stated goal. The symbolic narrative of “Skopje 2014” does not support the citizens’ narratives about the city, instead it contradicts them. It does not pass on the meanings that the city had for its residents, instead these are being forcefully replaced by symbolic meanings that citizens do not relate to. It is a narrative with a plastic-fantastic surface, which while it might succeed in covering up the material traces of previous and multiple cities, still fails on its own terms to communicate a meaningful story about the city that is lived, produced and reproduced by its residents. Hence, the symbolic narrative of “Skopje 2014” is meaningless for the Skopjean citizens and the biggest failure of “Skopje 2014” is its inability to create valuable meaning among the Skopjean citizens.

The audio guide reasserts the multiple aspects of the city: THE MODERNIST CITY, THE FEMALE CITY, THE MEMORY CITY, THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY and THE TOURIST CITY in the aesthetic experience of the listener. By overlaying different and conflictual narratives of and in the one place, instead of a single story, a polyvocality is given to the site. The audio guide allows for many voices to be heard and for places to become defined by multiple stories and conflicting accounts of their significance. By transmitting these aspects of the city acoustically, various subjective experiences of the urban, and different times of experiencing the urban are interwoven into the physical environment of Skopje. This produces a shift in perception and an ambivalent experience of urban space.

In doing so, the audio guided tour shows up the discrepancy between the civic narratives of the city and those embedded in the renewal plan. Most importantly, this is related to the destruction of everyday social relations and activities, previously common for the city center, and their replacement with symbolic tourist landmarks, activities and places of spectacle, that is, the replacement of social public spaces with symbolic places. Because the narration is site-specific – the citizens’ narratives and subjective urban experiences being linked to the exact place of listening – the physical presence of the listener allows for this discrepancy to be re-experienced. In this sense, reenacting the citizens’ lived experiences in the audio guided tour enables a reevaluation and reinterpretation of the urban renewal project.

Through the guided movements and the performatory acts, new interactions and relations between the audience and the places develop. In turn, through this aesthetic experience, not only new meanings of places emerge, but also new social space is produced. By having citizens participate in the PhD research and by having listeners re-experience and reproduce the urban through the audio guided tour, a ‘felt’ knowledge about the urban is disseminated which is a valuable artistic archive of contemporary ideas, experiences, images and imaginations of Skopje, a database on the intersection between documentary and fiction, that can and should be revisited in future, and that can be used not only to produce further knowledge, but also for subsequently re-experiencing the city and producing urban social space and new meanings for Skopje.
Glossary (Index)

AFZ    women’s antifascist front

Alienation   the state or experience of being isolated from a group or an activity to which one should belong or in which one should be involved/loss or lack of sympathy; estrangement (Oxford Dictionary)

Ambiguity   the quality of being open to more than one interpretation/inexactness (Oxford Dictionary)

Antiquisation   a term coined by historians to explain the Renaissance practice of giving a city the appearance of ancient Rome or Athens (Koteska 2011), p.229

Artistic research   any art that formulates questions about its content or treats societal problems and thereby understands itself as artistic productive research (Haarmann 2007), p.98

Athens Charter   a document in which the grounds of the modernist architectural practice were laid by Le Corbusier in 1933

Berliner Stadtschloß   (Berlin City Palace) a baroque palace of the Hohenzollern dynasty built in Berlin during the Prussian Kingdom

Blueprint   a design plan or other technical drawing (Oxford Dictionary)

Binaural   relating to sound recorded using two microphones and usually transmitted separately to the two ears of the listener, thus creating a 3-D stereo sound sensation

Capital   wealth in the form of money or other assets owned by a person or organization or available for a purpose such as starting a company or investing (Oxford Dictionary)

City Core   Kenzo Tange’s architectural concept referring to the city centre of Skopje

City Gate   Kenzo Tange’s architectural concept referring to the hub of entry into the capital and comprising all transportation systems

CIAM   Congress of International Modern Architecture

City Wall   Kenzo Tange’s architectural concept referring to high-density dwellings in vertical slab blocks, encircling the city centre of Skopje

Collective memory   the memory of a group of people, passed from one generation to the next (Halbwachs 1992), p.200

Commodification   the action or process of treating something as a mere commodity (Oxford Dictionary)

Conceived space   the representations of space, the ways in which space is planned and represented (Lefebvre 1991), p.32

Culture   the attitudes and behaviour characteristic of a particular social group (Oxford Dictionary)

Derive   a mode of experimental behaviour linked to the condition of urban society: a technique of transient passage through varied ambiances (Debord 1958), p.125

Disneyfication   when a theme park model (Disneyland) is imitated in cities, thereby stripping the organic characteristic of real places, and replacing them with idealized, tourist-friendly appearances (Sorkin 1992, Zukin 1995, Roost 200), p. 42

Disneyland   a place of fantasy or make-believe (Oxford Dictionary)
Dissonance: a tension or clash resulting from the combination of two disharmonious or unsuitable elements (Oxford Dictionary).

Diversification: the action of making or becoming more diverse or varied (Oxford Dictionary).

Earthquake: a sudden and violent shaking of the ground, sometimes causing great destruction, as a result of movements within the earth's crust or volcanic action (Oxford Dictionary).

Event: a thing that happens, especially one of importance (Oxford Dictionary).

ETA: estimated time of arrival.

Façade: the face of a building, especially the principal front that looks onto a street or open space; an outward appearance that is maintained to conceal a less pleasant or creditable reality (Oxford Dictionary).

Flâneur: a stroller or boulevardier, an anonymous drifter distant from the masses who played a key role in understanding, participating in and portraying the modern city (Baudelaire 1857), p.124.

Footsteps: a step taken by a person in walking (Oxford Dictionary).

Gait: a person's manner of walking or running (Oxford Dictionary).

Global: relating to the whole world, worldwide (Oxford Dictionary).

GPS Tracking: the tracking of movement in space with the Global Positioning System.

Haussmannization: the modernization of Paris in the 1860s planned by Napoleon III and Baron Haussmann, p.152.

Homogenisation: the process of making things uniform or similar (Oxford Dictionary).

Human ecology: the relationship between social and spatial processes is an organic and adaptive process of adjustment to the environment (Gottdiener, Budd 2005), p.31.


Listening: give one's attention to a sound/take a notice of and act on what someone says (Oxford Dictionary).

Lived space: the spaces of representation, the emotional experience of space that develops through the imaginary and through the lived experience of the first two spaces (Lefebvre 1991), p.32.

Local: belonging or relating to a particular area or neighbourhood, typically exclusively so (Oxford Dictionary).

Mapping: recording in detail the spatial distribution of (something) (Oxford Dictionary).

Megastructure: a multi-use architectural complex comprised of various units and functions.

Memory: the mind regarded as a store of things remembered/something remembered from the past; a recollection (Oxford Dictionary).

Milleux de mémoire: the living environment of memory (Nora 1989), p.204.

Narrative: presentation of events or experiences which is told, typically through written or spoken words (Finnegan 1995), p.13.

Observing: to notice or perceive (something) and register it as being significant/watch (someone or something) carefully and attentively (Oxford Dictionary).

Partizanki: women partisans, freedom-fighters against fascism.

Perceived space: spatial praxis, the materiality of space (Lefebvre 1991), p.32.

Peripatetic: late Middle English (denoting an Aristotelian philosopher) - from Old French peripatetique, via Latin from Greek peripatētikos 'walking up and down', from the verb peripatein (Oxford Dictionary).

Place: fixed, defined by location, locale and sense of place (Agnew 1987), p.30.

Political economy: analysis of the urban environment which involves the aspects of profit, investment, rent, class exploitation (Gottdiener 2005), p.34.
**Postcommunism**
the cultural or political situation following or resulting from a period of communist government, now especially that of Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and early 1990s (Groys 2005), p.222

**Psychogeography**
the study of the effects of the geographic environment on the emotions and behaviour of individuals (Situationist International 1958), p.126

**Rhythm**
a strong, regular, repeated pattern of movement or sound (Oxford Dictionary)

**Selling places**
a wide range of economic and social activities or policies, through which city elites strive to develop and present a symbolic identity of a place in order to attract investment and tourists (Kearns, Philo 1993), p.36

**Sfx**
sound effects

**Simulacrum**
not a copy of the real, but truth in its own right, hyperreal (Baudrillard 1994), p.42

**Situationist International**
a group of avant-garde artists, intellectuals and political theorists who made a big contribution to exploring and critically engaging with urban space by walking (Pinder 2005), p.125

**Space**
abstract, having area and volume (Cresswell 2004), p. 30

**Spatial fix**
the opportunity that the built environment and urbanisation offer for absorbing capital surplus (Harvey 1996), p.34

**Social space**
constructed by three aspects of the urban: the material, social and discursive layers (Lefebvre 1991), p.32

**Socio-spatial**
spatial organisation associated with cultural, political, social and economic features of the correlated mode of societal organization (Gottdiener 2005), p.32

**Sonic**
denoting, relating to, or of the nature of sound or sound waves (Oxford Dictionary)

**Soundwalking**
listening while walking (Schafer 1970), p.129

**Soundscapes**
the entire sonic field of humankind as it exists in dynamic relationship with nature (Sterne 2013), p.129

**Symbolic**
imagined rather than physical content (Altrock 2010), p.36

**Symbolic economy**
related to two production systems – the production of space and the production of symbols (Zukin 1995), p.38

**Time**
the indefinite continued progress of existence and events in the past, present, and future regarded as a whole (Oxford Dictionary)

**Team X**
a group of architects formed in 1953 and gathered around criticism to CIAM

**Timeline**
a graphic representation of the passage of time as a line (Oxford Dictionary)

**Time-space compression**
movement and communication across space, the geographical stretching out of social relations, our experience of all this (Massey 1994), p.35

**The Chicago School**
A group of scholars at the University of Chicago, who produced the first major works specializing in urban sociology in the 1920s and 1930s

**Topophilia**
an affective bond between people and place (Tuan 1974), p.30

**Transitional**
relating to or characteristic of a process or period of transition (Oxford Dictionary)

**Walking**
moving at a regular pace by lifting and setting down each foot in turn, never having both feet off the ground at once (Oxford Dictionary)

**Yugoslavia**
a former federal socialist republic (Social Federal Republic of Yugoslavia)
THE MODERNIST CITY

**DISCOURSE**

**NEGATING THE PREVIOUS SOCIALIST PAST, HISTORY AND MODERNIST URBAN AESTHETICS**

"And I think everything that is built is built in a dominant manner to cover another architecture."

"And this is the new postcard of the city. The new identity. Also, the traces of the modernism of post-earthquake Skopje are not important anymore. Everything is built in a new style and is very confusing."

"The public space should represent the city and show how the people are. We are in this situation now. Like here, not like the square. They put all that marble to show the culture from that time. But we are like this: old roofs, it leaks, there are peppers on the balconies, the air condition systems on the outer façades. We can’t change that by putting something else on top. Because that makes the public space.”

**FAÇADE-ORIENTED**

“That was an incomplete, not well researched project. So now additional resources are being wasted to accommodate this new architecture to the old one. They can’t destroy the old one so they need to cover it with new façades.”

“If there is one main symbol of this process of redesigning the city, it’s the façade. The façade is playing an important role because it is very much façade-oriented.”

“And you can’t experience the buildings, because when we look at them you don’t experience them as public space, you can’t experience them from inside, you just listen to stories but you experience them as façades.”

**THE FEMALE CITY**

**DISCOURSE**

**PERSONAL BIOGRAPHY AND FEMALE SPACES**

“I brought you here because the ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Park was one of my favorite parks as a child. My grandmother lived there behind ‘Red Cross’, in the buildings opposite, and every time I spent my weekends at her place she took me to Zena Park. She would buy me a sandwich from Cicko Stoilkov and we would sit by the fountain. That is a nice memory. Nothing specific happened but it reminds me of my grandmother and of a nice childhood.”

**OVERWRITING FEMALE SPACES WITH MASCULINIST REPRESENTATIONS**

“Today I choose ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ Park because it is ironic that it has only sculptures of men. That is not by chance, we live in a patriarchal masculinist society and that is obviously the discourse that this government sets. We also saw that with the prohibition, actually the limitation, of one of the most significant civic accomplishments of women: the right to abortion. This is where we protested when the law was passed.”

**EXAGGERATED, OVERSIZED PROPORTIONS OF NEW MONUMENTS**

“For me, all of this is overwhelming. If there were far fewer things, maybe I would like it. Regarding the proportions, I think they’re oversized, too high. And there was no need for that. [...] The Macedonians in their history haven’t seen a donkey and not a horse. They’ve put everybody on a horse, that bothers me personally, and because they’re numerous, on a very small area, they’re too much.”

“I’m bothered that on every five meters there is a bridge. And on every bridge, you see so many sculptures, you don’t even know who they represent.”

“Yes, this is the monument of Nevena Georgieva Dunja and here is the monument of Pitu Guli which is ten times bigger than her. For me this says a lot about the attitude of our government towards our history, especially towards women’s history. It has to be obvious what is dominant. As I see it the idea is to erase the trace of women’s history. It is systematically neglected. Not just here but all over the world, there are attempts to erase it. That’s why I chose ‘Zena Park’.”

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**CITIZEN STATEMENT**

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**THE FEMALE CITY**

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Tabular analyses of citizens’ interviews
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DISCOURSE</th>
<th>CITIZEN STATEMENT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Erasure of personal memories</strong></td>
<td>“There is one look that is imposed and which, I don’t know, I am not familiar with it, and there is an identity given to the space now that is also not familiar to me, that doesn’t fit my memories of the place.”</td>
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<td>“I feel like I don’t know where I belong. Where am I?”</td>
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<td>“I don’t know, simply the images of the city, everywhere where there is a change and you think how it used to be before and you won’t remember the image I feel scared. I feel scared I’ll forget the place, that I’ll forget my own city. I forget the image that I used to have of the city. It doesn’t matter if this is a beautiful image or the previous one was better, but simply I lose my memory. That’s what bothers me.”</td>
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<td>“That’s what it means for me, the deleting of memory. And it’s not necessary. It’s ok to build, but not to build everything completely new.”</td>
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<td>“Even if there was something here before, they would build something on top of it, and you wouldn’t have been able to remember how it used to be. That’s it. I can’t remember so many things. And I live here. I feel like a foreigner.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collective memories</strong></td>
<td>“In order to enter GTC (City Shopping Mall) through ‘Vanilla’ because that was the place of happenings in my time when we were growing up in Skopje. Back then there were massive gatherings of young people here. At the end of the 70s, beginning of the 80s, it was a point, a place. And the people sat here next to Stolića, next to Vanilla, they would buy something to eat and drink and would hang out there.”</td>
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<td>“And in my time, when I was a girl, we would gather in the Shopping Mall, in front of Vanilla, there was the pasty shop Vanilla, one, there weren’t so many back then as now, and if you were passing by Vanilla, you would be the coolest girl.”</td>
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<td>“I was passing through this tunnel here and I was looking left and right and I saw the building fence of the sandwich shops and on the right this old, abandoned green space they used to call – ‘in front of Vanilla’. And for my generation this doesn’t mean anything, but my parents met here and it means something to them. They were living in another culture of going out, when my mother had to be home by 9pm and she would stay till 9:15pm and she would be very cool.”</td>
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Displacement of street vendors and musicians

“But when I was a child I remember there was a fountain where all the Roma children would jump in, but regardless of that, people could sit here, they would buy something to eat and you would sit here, and that is very normal for the city center.”

“There were street vendors on Stone Bridge before and as you can see they were removed also.”

“What is also interesting for me is, that on this side of GTC, and this part of the city, there were more Roma kids and begging women. And in recent times these spaces have been transformed, and you can see two young people on violins and some other instrument are doing a performance, and with that they are earning money... and that is allowed. And suddenly, these spaces are becoming elitist in this way, in terms of who can be here, and what they are allowed to do. I am not saying this is wrong, these young people, these young artists, also deserve to have this space, they could have also claimed it earlier. I am angry at them because of why they are doing it just now. It is not at all bad to see them, but it is bad to know that their presence here is acceptable, instead of the Roma women and kids that used to be here before.”

Nostalgia

“But it is pathetic to discuss it from a nostalgic position, because always, and these children today, who will witness this bijouterized City Mall next, they will also have memories of how it is. In that sense, I don’t know if it’s very smart to connect to personal nostalgic feelings and to evoke memories.”

The Postcommunist City

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<th>DISCOURSE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Criticism of the transitional backwater</td>
<td>“But, I say, all of this was very empty.”</td>
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<td>“I have to be restrained now about the space where the styrofoam theatre and the VMRO Museum are, because I think, as I told you earlier, this space used to smell like burned plastic mixed with meat balls from the kiosks, there was mud up to your knees, it was literally how my childhood there was. That is why I can’t be anything but cynical in saying things about what used to be there before, so in that sense, whatever is there now is better than what used to be there earlier. For 30 years, I was praying and wondering every day when will somebody decide to do something about this and how the people in power then were not ashamed of it.”</td>
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<td>“That used to be ruins, I didn’t want to pass by there, there was an intercity station and with the streets and cars around it, it was a mess. With all the small cafes, it was like a village, it was horrible.”</td>
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<td>“It was hardly a sustainable design; all of those stairs were broken and the vegetation was eating the concrete. At one point there was a tree growing from the roof. I don’t know what to say, but we weren’t aware of what we have, and a lot of time passed in that non-caring and non-culture, we destroyed a lot of things after the earthquake and so on and from there these architectural creatures come also. And it is not only a question of politics, it is a culture that is developed through generations and we cannot be naïve we all bear responsibility for that, we can’t be naïve.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advantages of “Skopje 2014”</td>
<td>“Skopje is, to tell you the truth, no matter the look, I like it because the city has been changed. After returning from every vacation, or a trip, I felt like the city is asleep, its history already gone, nothing had changed. When you cross the bridge over there, you could’ve just see the five white buildings. And that’s it. It was the same for years, for so many years I didn’t see anything else.”</td>
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<td>“I don’t know when they were putting them in, and I was happy that something was happening and that the look of the city was being changed.”</td>
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<td>“I like them. When they started to put them in, I was watching in amazement, because we go to other cities and you see the same.”</td>
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Imposing a new national identity and architectural aesthetic style

“I said I don’t feel it as part of my history, because Macedonia has nothing to do with the baroque and neoclassicism. It was never a part of our identity. At least that’s what I’ve learned as part of history. And if I learned false history, then I think falsely. And I don’t think I learned false history and that is why I can’t identify with it.”

“I’m bothered by the lie that these sculptures look like they’re made in the 18th century. If they’re making sculptures, they should be appropriate to the 21st century. Why is it like this to bring me back to the 18th? End of the 17th, then it was built in baroque style, if I’m correct. Why?”

“So, we don’t recognize the identity so far. Are we afraid or do we think that our capital city is not renowned enough in the world? And now with neoclassicism and baroque we will draw attention and people will be amazed thinking we are someone with a long history, as if Skopje had not had long history before.”

“I don’t know. It’s very stupid to impose something that doesn’t mean anything to anybody, only for the sake of it. Only because someone thought that it would look better like that.”

“And when this whole circle around it was made, it was useless, because nobody listens to what the people want. I don’t know. I think there are two tendencies behind this project, the first one is to impose this government’s rule and mark its ruling time, and the other is to make Skopje more attractive to tourists. That’s so stupid, because it’s artificial. It’s like I want to walk like this and you want to dress me into something more attractive, because it should be like that. And I don’t feel good in it. The same goes for Skopje, the people are circulating here and they move and use these public resources every day and the most important thing is how they feel, but obviously not.”

“This is somehow imposed, I can’t find myself here. I don’t see history here, this is an invented history.”

“National identity cannot be imposed in this way. When you put pressure on someone and when it’s unpleasant they don’t want it, it only creates apathy among the people who accepted that space as such and who felt nice there.”

Counterfeit of European architectural styles and symbols

“I don’t want to be reminded that I’m in Athens, for example, with that building of the Archaeological Museum. I mean, I have nothing against Athens, still every city should have something characteristic. I think this city used to have it.”

“OK, in front of us now we are looking at the bridge and across the Vardar, and we see a lot of objects as part of “Skopje 2014”: The Archaeological museum, the new theatre, some government buildings and other things, that remind me, for example, of when I visited Paris, or Prague. And they saw that there are objects by the rivers there. They were probably built 100, 200, 300 years ago and now also in Macedonia in 2014, and they impose some quasi-history again.”

THE TOURIST CITY

DISCOURSE

Theme park or Disneyland, touristic entertainment, spectacle and public exhibition of sculptures

“OK, in front of us now we are looking at the bridge and across the Vardar, and we see a lot of objects as part of “Skopje 2014”: The Archaeological museum, the new theatre, some government buildings and other things, that remind me, for example, of when I visited Paris, or Prague. And they saw that there are objects by the rivers there. They were probably built 100, 200, 300 years ago and now also in Macedonia in 2014, and they impose some quasi-history again.”

“I think that it is a failure and I don’t know what will be done later with this city that is like Disneyland now. Why? It is a surface, they decide to build it fast, it has no past and no future.”

“It changed in the sense that I and my circle of friends now avoid going to this part of the city. The public spaces which were not rationally used and were abandoned, could’ve been used in a more creative way, in a way that will be beneficial for the citizens and not for attracting tourists and making a show.”

“I used to cross through and go to the center, but I don’t go there anymore. The City Mall, the square, these were the places I used to go. And now this is kitsch. In 21st century they are building in baroque style.”

“I avoid the center on purpose, because it is a theme park.”

“The city square didn’t look all monotonous like it does today – full of fountains and sculptures. It was a city square with a lot of different events – concerts, gatherings – sometimes political. Now it literally looks like a sculpture exhibition.”

“At first, I felt bitter, then I became indifferent, which is scarier. Then I said: I’m not going here if I don’t need to or if I don’t need to meet somebody here. I want to break the cameras of the people. The whole road from the square to the Old Bazaar became weird. Suddenly it became popular. There are people here, foreigners, they take pictures, they ride in carriages. I don’t understand what are they thinking and I want to ask them why they find this beautiful.”

CITIZEN STATEMENT

“It’s unpleasant. First the people you see are unpleasant. Then, along the quay, everything is almost with cafes and construction sites, you can’t really take a walk, it’s occupied. There is also a marry-go-round. And the square, it has a really fun-fair atmosphere, like a theme park. There is the monument, the big media-screen, there are donuts, there is a horse-driven carriage, it’s provincial. Earlier it was different, I used to meet people on the square, but now….. It is true that some people are happy about it, they take photos – it is unclear whether they are ironic or serious, but they do take photos. And it’s true that there are more people. It’s a fun fair-and people like it. When people come from the other provinces, they like it there.”

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“National identity cannot be imposed in this way. When you put pressure on someone and when it’s unpleasant they don’t want it, it only creates apathy among the people who accepted that space as such and who felt nice there.”
“Previously on this square, different from today, it seems it was a square that in some way connected the citizens in public space, especially the young people. I think that aspect distinguishes the ‘Macedonia Square of 2014 from the same square in 2000, when I was a teenager. I remember that on the place where Alexander the Great is now, there was something we called ‘Krugche’, that was a meeting point for all young people and for all subcultures in Skopje. There were punks, rappers, techno people, all young people gathered and spent time here. If I compare that to today, this Alexander will not serve as a place where we will meet and exchange ideas and experience, it will be more like a spectacle. That is how I would historically compare the two squares.”

“This is no longer a space where people pass time. That is my impression. This space is now a transit zone. I want to come to the City Mall from some other point in the city, I will pass by the square but I can say from my experience and that of those I hang out with, mostly people who are against Skopje 2014, that we mostly avoid this space. I make out alternative routes so that I don’t have to pass by here. I don’t think that’s bad because that makes, at least in my head, space for new places and new public spaces that we can use. That is my impression. I don’t know if that is so, but my impression is that this is a transit zone and a spectacle. Tourists come here, people from other cities, but it is not a place where people socialize and exchange.”

“People say that because of the monuments that became the mark of the city, many more people visit the centre of Skopje and those are usually, as is immediately obvious here, groups of tourists, people from the province to see this, tourists, and I think that earlier you could’ve see the old Skopjeans walking in the square, retired people chatting and so on, but now they’re gone and I think that the old Skopjeans are irritated from this all and maybe that is one of the reasons why they are gone.”

“So basically, it could be said that the profile of the people who visit the square has changed. It has changed in the sense, I often pass by, I often see tourists with guides, it also became popular for people to take wedding photos in front of the fountain, etc., there are far more people who are not from Skopje than there are Skopjeans who come to sit here and spend time.”

“Yes, it had. It was known after many things, if nothing else, for the Stone Bridge. Now you have to search for it to find it. There are three more bridges around it, Skopje’s coat of arms is the Stone Bridge and the Fortress. Now it does not exist anymore.”

“Here, only the high-rise towers have remained that were everywhere on all postcards of Skopje – the bridge and these white towers. The rest (laughs) is all new. They made some new city.”

“I experience it as a completely new center, completely new look, new architecture, actually everything is new. As if I enter a square from some foreign city, where I didn’t grow up.”

“And now I feel foreign, like a tourist who comes here and takes photos in front of the fountains. And all the time there are some tourists here who find this good and we don’t, we are very revolted by all of this. I also didn’t know that it is illuminated like this, in yellow and red, I didn’t know, it’s awful, if its baroque the baroque was for sure not illuminated like this. I’m speechless, it makes no sense.”

“Yes, but it should’ve been solved in another way. Now I feel like I’m in a completely different city. That is not my city, the one I grew up in.”

“The space has diminished and a new space is created that is foreign to everybody. And it’s sad because nobody likes it, but that’s how it is.”

“The only thing that reminds me of the old city, there are several points, but due to the big proportions and the monumentality of everything what was built those points got completely lost. And when you pass by them because of the size of what is there now, that little that reminds of the old square is gone.”

“As you see now, all these big fountains, hotels, the most important buildings that are characteristic for the center, are gone. And with that you feel that you are on a completely new square.”
Avoiding using or passing through Skopje's center

“And that is the reason why I don’t come here anymore. And I would love to, because my most beautiful memories are related to this area.”

“I don’t use anything in the square anymore. I just go when I have to, but as my intimate place, no.”

“I avoid walking through, if I go out for a walk I just pass by to go along the quay [...] when I go through the square I have an unpleasant feeling.”

“I used to cross through and go to the center, but I don’t go there anymore.”

“And now there are so many places where I turn my head around and I don’t want to see what is there.”

“You know, this is no longer a space where people spend time. That is my impression. This space is now a transit zone. I want to come to the City Mall from some other point in the city, I will pass by the square but I can say from my experience and that of those I hang out with, mostly people who are against Skopje 2014, that we mostly avoid this space. I take alternative routes so that I don’t have to pass by here. I don’t think that’s bad because that makes, at least in my head, space for new places and new public spaces that we can use. That is my impression. I don’t know if that is so, but my impression is that this is a transit zone and a spectacle. Tourists come here, people from other cities, but it is not a place where people socialize and exchange.”

Disregard for citizens participation in planning the city

“For me it is the paradigm of losing not only the identity, but also my personal freedom in the city.”

“The space is closed and conquered without even thinking how that public space is supposed to function in accordance with Skopje citizens. And this is not only an exhibition that will be here for two months or one year. It is something you have to live with.”

“There is no public debate and it’s disrespectful for the voice of the citizens. It is hard to love Skopje now and when the history and personal stories come back it only adds to that sadness, and why it is not like in the past, that then it was better. How fast we grew old, how fast everything changed, how fast Skopje turned from a progressive, cultural city with a feeling for solidarity and responsibility into a city where the fight is between people with different political and economic, imaginary interests. The benefit goes only to a small group of people. This is not for everyone, but only to a small group of people.”

“What is good for the city is to preserve that basic culture, to give the people to sense that they live together, make decisions together and participate in decision-making. The people are marginalized, they don’t participate in important talks and don’t get to make decisions about how to build this together. How to think together about the city. It is difficult to love Skopje now. It is difficult.”

New and foreign city, alienation from the city in terms of identification and feelings of belonging

“So, I experience it as completely new space, completely. The cobblestone is removed and I’m not bothered by that because it’s much more comfortable for moving and that they put Alex here, and these statues changed my city a lot. Earlier it was more people-friendly and more hospitable and we would meet here and it was more ours and I felt it like ours. And now I feel foreign, like the tourists who come here and take photos in front of the fountains. And all the time there are tourists who find this good and we don’t, we are revolted by all of this.”

“I chose it because I have memories of this square before it became Skopje 2014, before it was rebranded. Previously on this square, unlike today, it seems it was a square that in some way connected the citizens in public space, especially the young people. I think that aspect distinguishes the Macedonia Square of 2014 from the same square in 2000, when I was a teenager. I remember that on the place where Alexander the Great is now, there was something we called ‘Krugche’, that was a meeting point for all young people and for all subcultures in Skopje. There were punks, rappers, techno people, all young people gathered and spent time here. If I compare that to today, this Alexander will not serve as a place where we will meet and exchange ideas and experience, it will be more like a spectacle.”

“Earlier there was a circle with flowers and here they put the Christmas Tree and that was the square. The cobblestone was removed and I’m not bothered by that because it’s much more comfortable for moving and that they put Alex here, and these statues changed my city a lot. Earlier it was more people-friendly and more hospitable and we would meet here and it was more ours and I felt it like ours. And now I feel foreign, like the tourists who come here and take photos in front of the fountains. And all the time there are tourists who find this good and we don’t, we are revolted by all of this.”
Recounting Skopje
Transcription of the audio guided tour in Skopje

Hello and welcome to this audio guided walk through Skopje. In the next hour, I would like you to walk with me and let my voice guide you. While walking I would like you to listen to some stories and yet remain sensitive to what is taking place around you. Step by step, our walk will connect moments and memories, thoughts and atmospheres, situations and imaginations into a single journey.

It is not my intention to provide an exact account of what I have been permitted to experience by walking in this city. I shall limit myself to recounting certain events, memories, images, feelings and ideas about this city, some of which are my own and some of which were entrusted to me by others, helping me to shape and lead this particular walk. I shall discuss these intimate paths and spaces without a linear order and according to the mood and meaning of a certain place.

You will receive instructions on what to do and where to move, please stick to my instructions. I will take you to different places and we will also make several stops and breaks. You will have plenty of time and options to choose when you wish to stop or continue. You'll be wearing headphones so please be extra careful when crossing the streets. If you are not sure if you are in the right spot, there is a map in the walking kit. Use it only if necessary. There are also some photographs inside the kit. Please don't look at them now, but only when I ask you to.

Our point of departure is the old train station. Please enter the building now and when inside play track one.
THE MODERNIST CITY

Train station
L’Orient Express passenger train from Paris is arriving on platform one. (Train announcement)

Train arrival
So, I first came in 1963 at the beginning of July. Yes. Yes. When I arrived in Skopje, I arrived on a train called L’Orient Express. It was very picturesque. We slept for two nights, comment c’est dit, deux nuits, two nights. We slept upstairs where you put the luggage and we saw France, then Italy. The people were joyful. We stopped in Italy, in Venice. What a beauty, we spent three days in Venice and then took the train again to the Yugoslavian border. Suddenly everything changed, we had very strict border control. Peasants and other people boarded the train. They were very pleasant, asking questions. [...] It was crowded, people were sleeping on the floor outside the carriages. It was very picturesque, that peasant atmosphere. But it was very pleasant. When I arrived in Skopje the station was still there.

Let’s get out of the station before the clock ticks 5:17. Exit the building and cross the street using the pedestrian crossing. Be careful while crossing. Stop when you reach the other side of the street and turn to face the station. Then take a look at the clock on the facade.

Radio Interference
Yesterday in Moscow an agreement banning nuclear experiments was signed between the USSR, the USA and Great Britain. The 10th film festival in Pula opens tomorrow. At the Koco Racin Cultural Centre the Bulgarian circus ‘Sofia’ is performing at 8pm daily. Today is the hottest day of the year. Vardar beach was full of bathers but also mosquitos thanks to employees of the Hygiene Institute, who seem to be immune to their bites. The program for the 26th of July: We begin at 5am with some music on vinyl. You will listen to ‘Vivre avec Toi’ by Charles Aznavour. Tomorrow’s weather: warm and sunny. Dear listeners, we wish you a good night.

Charles Aznavour ‘Vivre avec Toi’

Footsteps
Let’s start walking now. Walk down the street on your right and then turn right at the first corner. Walk straight on this street, then turn right again on the next corner and continue to walk along the wall of buildings. Follow the sound of my footsteps so we can stay together.

Footsteps
I have this image of a city. I will try to describe it to you. It portrays a city not densely built but with a decent amount of greenery along a long river bank. There is a huge complex of buildings in the middle front, but it is unclear what it is. It could be a government institution, or a business centre, for the central part is very well linked to the neighbouring sites. There is a huge road passing right across its middle, turning into a line of buildings gradually disappearing at the horizon. In the background, behind the massive structure, there are many smaller buildings organised around a circular line. They look like a block of residential buildings scattered on both the left and right side of the river bank. A big road encircles them; however, the road is void of cars and pedestrians. In fact, the whole city is like this: major infrastructure but no traces of its inhabitants can be found.

Can you imagine this city?

Now take a look at IMAGE 1 and see if you can recognize that city.

PAUSE

Kenzo Tange is an important figure, modest, nice and quiet, smart, constructive a visionary who knew how to take criticism on board. For example, he imagined the city wall with residential blocks and residential high-rise buildings. I told him already then that Skopje has hot summers and there is a high concentration of cars and there was, like a rule, around six o’clock at the evening a light wind would have come down from the Vodno hill to the city. He, as a very reasonable man, took my advice and re-planned the buildings to be lifted on shafts so there could be movement of people and air. However, the praxis turned different and they have decided to fill in the areas under the buildings with shops. And here, Tange’s plan has been determined. Today, these architects mention Tange in public and his big oeuvre, which was big and still is, but it is abandoned. The
City Wall is not on shafts anymore. The city core has absolutely no air. The City Gate, that buildings on platforms, above the ground floor, there were envisioned shops at the ground floor, all the way until the amphitheatric squares, next to the Grand Hotel Skopje, it is called Holiday Inn, was not built and abandoned. And that is why this is happening today.

You know, that was a vision, but it was a utopian one. Because it was a plan that imagines something without taking existing surroundings as its starting point. It is a brave, bright new world, but it derives from one place, a non-place, right. The plan is made like that, everything is demolished and a new city is proposed. It is difficult to accept those changes. Why it didn’t succeed? There are many reasons: economic, financial, lack of experts, the long duration, those are the reasons, but also this one.

Do you see that kiosk over there? M Kiosk it is called. Turn right into the passage after it so we can take a look behind the buildings. You will see a bench on your left once you exit on the other side of the passage. Sit there and take a look at your surroundings.

Next to us, on the bench to the left there are two lovers. Behind us, in front of the Green Market, a group of retired people sit and chat.

One man looking old and tired, with a plastic bottle of Pelisterka in one and a piece of cardboard in the other is passing by. An old lady pushes a supermarket carriage and goes in the opposite direction. Other women carry plastic bags from the market.

The shoe man Dile is fixing old shoes. Hairdresser Ance is spreading wet towels in front of her shop. The weather is finally sunny. The flowers on the balcony at the fifth floor on the left are blossoming.

Children are playing on the plateau in front of us.

A woman on the second floor is calling her child now.

Public space should represent the city and show how the people are. We are in this situation now. Like here, not like the square. They put all that marble to show the culture from that time. But we are like this: old leaky roofs, there are peppers on the balconies, the air conditioning systems are on the outer facade. We can’t change that by putting something else on top.

Stand up please, we are going to ‘Zena Park’ now. Exit the passage and go towards the front side of the buildings where we came from. Turn right after the passage. When you reach the cross road, cross on the other side of the boulevard and again, on your left, in order to enter ‘Zena Park’. When you reach the side of the park play track two.
In front of you, on your right you will see a big monument made of white marble stone. Start walking towards it and turn left between the marble benches and the stairs, in order to encircle them. On your left, you will see a significantly smaller monument of white marble also. It is surrounded by flowers and brown benches. I would like you to sit on one of the benches. I will meet you there soon.

I took you here because ‘Zena Park’ was one of my favourite parks as a child. My grandmother lived there behind ‘Red Cross’, in the buildings opposite, and every time I spent my weekends at her place she took me to ‘Zena Park’. She would buy me a sandwich from Cicko Stoilko and we would sit by the fountain. That is a nice memory. Nothing specific happened but it reminds me of my grandmother and of a nice childhood.

I fell into this hole when I was a small child.

This is my favourite place. I have very happy memories attached to this place. My grandfather used to take me there. I used to go through this hole and lay there. A lot of children used to play here. I was there every day and even now I remember how the monument feels like, what kind of interaction I had with that place.

Today I choose ‘Zena Park’ because it is ironic that it has only sculptures of men. That is not by chance, we live in a patriarchal masculinist society, and that is obviously the discourse that this government sets. We also saw that with the prohibition, actually the limitation of one of the most important civic accomplishments for women: the right to abortion. We protested here when the law was passed.

That is the monument of Nevena Georgieva Dunja, which is in a miserable state. Do you have a camera? I think you should take a picture of this, because... I’ll tell you know... Yes, this is the monument of Nevena Georgieva Dunja and here is the monument of Pitu Guli which is ten times bigger than her. For me this says a lot about the attitude of our government towards our history, especially towards women’s history. It has to be obvious what is dominant. As I see it the idea is to erase the trace of women’s history. It is systematically neglected. Not just here but all over the world, there are attempts to erase it. That’s why I chose ‘Zena Park’.

Get up please and start walking along the street towards Macedonia Gate. Be careful when crossing the street. When you pass under the Gate turn right immediately and walk towards the curly stairs in front of you, in order to enter the City Shopping Mall. When you reach the stairs stop for a moment and play track number three.

THE FEMALE CITY

ETA 1:20”

nvo Start walking towards the street in the direction of Parliament. On your right you will see a small short-cut made by walking through the grass. Go along it and then turn right towards the monuments in front of you. When you pass the monument of Pitu Guli you will see small cubes made of stone. Sit on one of them.

sfx Footsteps

m ‘Every Sperm Is Sacred’ (Raspeani Skopjani)

PAUSE / SIT

Marija That is the monument of Nevena Georgieva Dunja, which is in a miserable state...

nvo ... Do you have a camera? I think you should take a picture of this, because... I’ll tell you know... Yes, this is the monument of Nevena Georgieva Dunja and here is the monument of Pitu Guli which is ten times bigger than her. For me this says a lot about the attitude of our government towards our history, especially towards women’s history. It has to be obvious what is dominant. As I see it the idea is to erase the trace of women’s history. It is systematically neglected. Not just here but all over the world, there are attempts to erase it. That’s why I chose ‘Zena Park’.

sfx Footsteps fading
THE MEMORY CITY

Martin
I wanted to enter GTC (City Shopping Mall) through Vanilla because that was the place of happenings when we were growing up in Skopje. Back then there were massive gatherings of young people here. At the end of the 70s, start of the 80s, it was a point, a place. And the people sat here next to Stoilko next to Vanilla, they would buy something to eat and drink and would hang out there.

nvo
Do you see the curly stairs in front of you? Start climbing them in order to get on the first floor. Then stop for a second right next to the stairs and face Macedonia Gate.

sfx
Footsteps climbing stairs

ETA
PAUSE / STAND

Liljana
And in my time, when I was a girl, we would meet at the Shopping Mall, in front of the Vanilla pastry shop. There weren’t so many back then as now, and if you were passing by Vanilla, you would be the coolest girl.

Aneta
I was passing through this tunnel here and I was looking left and right and I saw the building fence of the sandwich shops and on the right this old, abandoned green space they used to call ‘in front of Vanilla’. It doesn’t mean anything for my generation, but my parents met here and it means something to them. They were living in another culture of going out, when my mother had to be home by 9pm and she would stay till 9:15pm and she would be very cool.

But when I was a child I remember there was a fountain where the Roma children were jumping in, but regardless of that, people could sit here, they would buy something to eat and sit here, and that is very normal for the city centre.

nvo
Come on, let’s go further. Walk straight along the length of the Shopping Mall on the terraces facing the side of Zena Park. When you pass the bicycle entrance turn left on the corner. Stop in front of the third shop, the show window of Casovnicar Iko.

sfx
Footsteps

ETA
PAUSE-STAND

ETA
1:15"

m
Roma child singing

nvo
“Footsteps”

sfx
Clock ticking

nvo
“Look at the clock hand. Watch it moving around in circles and ticking the next second.

nvo
“Roma child singing”

sfx
“Footsteps”

ETA
3:30"

nvo
“Footsteps”

ETA
PAUSE-STAND

David
Because this is place in which I spent every day, first in primary school, I finished in ‘Braka Ribar’, which is diagonal from the City Mall and because all of the images I have, mental images are related to this space. When it is about the centre of this city, the first thing that is inscribed in my memory and that comes to surface is exactly this City Mall. And I consider it to be a wonderful building, just because it is open to every side, which is very rare, at least I think so, that does not look like a Mall and it’s not even a shopping centre, but it is exactly something more than that. Maybe I am biased.
But it is pathetic to discuss it from a nostalgic position, because always, and these children today, who will witness this bijouterized City Mall next, they will also have memories of how it is. In that sense, I don't know if it's very smart to connect to personal nostalgic feelings and to evoke memories.

If you are on the 13 November Quay already go towards the Vardar River. Start walking towards the Art Bridge and stop at its beginning while still remaining on the right side of the Vardar River.

A certain look is being imposed that is unfamiliar to me. And an identity is given to the space, which is also not familiar to me. It does not correspond to some memories, my memories, that I have of the place. That is very sad for me and actually very frightening. Because I don't feel like home. If you think how it used to be before and you don't remember the image, I feel scared. I feel scared that I forget the place, I forget the city. I forget the image I had of the city.

This whole part in front of the Conservatory, towards the Opera, when you pass by here, Stone Bridge let's say, these things didn't exist here. Somehow ... I don't know I was entering another place. And that memory is kept, so I have something old, some old picture, it was a nice time for me - when I was little, when I ran here, when it was open. Now it's somehow different. Different and unfamiliar, simply unfamiliar.

Some strange views. It's the same as walking in some city where I haven't been before, as a tourist.

If you are at the beginning of the Art Bridge, stop for a moment and look in the direction of the Old Officers Home. Then, take a look at IMAGE 2. What are you thinking while looking at it?

"The usual conflict comes about. Spread out behind the rod of duty we see the whole breadth of the Vardar River – long, mourning, peaceful. And we see it through the eyes of somebody who is leaning over the embankment on a winter's day, without a care in the world. [...] Let us go in search of this person – and soon it becomes apparent that this person is ourselves. For if we could stand there where we stood 60 years ago, should we not be again as we were then – calm, aloof, content? Let us try then. But the river is rough and greyer than we remembered. [...] The sights we see and the sounds we hear now have none of the quality of the past; nor have we any share of the serenity of the person who, 60 years ago, stood precisely where we stand now." (Woolf 2009, pp. 3-8)
THE POSTCOMMUNIST CITY

If you are on the other side of the river, at the end of the bridge, turn left. Pass the colonnade on your right so you enter the plateau in front of the Macedonian Opera and Ballet. On your left, you should see two benches and small red flowers in a jardinière behind them. I’d like you to sit there with me.

Footsteps

PAUSE - STAND / SIT

Building constructions

Wow look at it. Wow. Wow. Wow. There is no space anymore. Wow. I haven’t seen this. Yes. Yes. Yes. Unbelievable. These are the modern wounds. It was a hardly a sustainable design; all of those plateaus and stairs were broken and the vegetation was eating the concrete. At one point, there was also a tree that was growing from the roof. I don’t know what to say, but we weren’t aware of what we had, and a lot of time passed in carelessness and non-culture, we destroyed a lot of things after the earthquake and so on and from there these architectural creatures come. It is not only a question of politics, it is a culture that is developed over generations and we cannot be naïve, we all bear the responsibility for that, we can’t be naïve.

Come on, let’s walk again. We will go in between the building of the Archaeological Museum, Archive and the Constitutional Court and the residential building with colourful marble tiles, and further towards Karposhovo Vostanie Square.

3:30’’

You’ve told me how ugly that space was, that it smelled like pickles and …

It used to smell of burned plastic mixed with meat balls from the kiosks and there was mud up to your knees, it was literally how my childhood there was. For 30 years I was praying and wondering every day when will somebody decide to do something about this and why the people in power then weren’t ashamed. […] Just think of the scene in ‘Before the Rain’, of ‘Bit Pazar’, that was Skopje in the 90’s.

And not to forget of course, that is what I forgot, and that is the ‘frog-lake’ that was near the Macedonian Academy of Arts and Sciences, in Pajko Maalo. When it rained, like today, it had a small basin, and thousands of frogs would gather there. So one had to take a detour, around Mavrovka, to walk, for example, from the SOK Banks to the Music Academy. That also didn’t bother anyone for more than two decades. In this sense, I can say shortly, that this city was witness to an extreme cynicism, and at the same time extreme provincialism.

That used to be in ruins, I didn’t want to pass by there, there was an intercity station and with the streets around it, although they were paved, you know how it is, full of people and cars, it, it was a mess.

Ok, they could have arranged that. But they did not have to put all those sculptures there.

With all these small cafes, like in a village, it was horrible.

Ok, the bus station was extremely dirty.

Yes, when the intercity station was here, it did not look good. Those busses, lined like trains, crowds of people, you could not pass from one side to the other.

Ok, it was like that for that time. You know, it is easy to criticise something after thirty years.

That’s why I say I like it, slowly it has changed. And this space here now it’s very nice.

Church bells

It’s getting late and my feet are starting to feel very tired. Let’s cross the river again and go take a look at the main square over there. Can you see the street vendors with their cardboard boxes selling cheap objects at the beginning of the Stone Bridge?

Pass by them and continue straight across the Stone Bridge to cross on the other side of the river.

Can you recognize something from, let’s say, your Skopje?
Delfina  Here only the high-rise towers that were everywhere, on all postcards of Skopje, the bridge and these white towers. The rest is all new. They made some new city.

I don’t know. It should have been solved differently. Now I feel like I am in a completely different city. That is not my city, the one I grew up in.

I don’t want to be reminded that I’m in Athens, for example, with that building of the Archaeological Museum. I mean, I have nothing against Athens, still every city should have something characteristic. I think this city used to have it.

Aneta  OK, in front of us now we are looking at the bridge and across the Vardar, and we see a lot of objects as part of “Skopje 2014”: The Archaeological museum, the new theatre, some government buildings and other things, that remind me, for example, of when I visited Paris, or Prague. And they saw that there are objects by the rivers there. They were probably built 100, 200, 300 years ago and now also in Macedonia in 2014, and they impose some quasi-history again.

rvo  When you reach the end of the bridge, position yourself between the monuments of Goce Delcev and Dame Gruev and play track number five please.
I would like you to consider IMAGE 3 now. Hold it up and move it back and forth so you can see two separate images that depict a radical change. One is taken in the early 2000s and the other quite recently. Which image you see depends on the angle of observation. And whereas you are able to notice the changes made in the built environment, the very event that brought about these changes seems to remain invisible. “The time lag between the images therefore, allows us to fill it with various narratives of imagined histories and sceneries of possible images” (Weizman, Weizman, 2015, p. 20)

We realised that it was necessary to make Skopje into a metropolis so we had to conceive of a reason why that would happen. New Alexandria is the first city of the West. Basically, it’s a gateway to the West. So, it’s about, first of all, rediscovering the composite reality of this area, this historical area which was always the meeting point for East and West. A huge area spanning three continents, which was really where Western civilisation began. [...] Well, New Alexandria is like a metropolis conceived after the ideas of Alexander the Great. And I think especially probably the ideas which are announced by him in letter he wrote to Aristotle on the Secretum Secretorum, which was one the great texts of pseudo-Aristotle’s to be more specific, but in which Alexander is advised to create a cosmopolitan world empire. And in fact, he did things of this nature, for example like the mass marriages in Susa, when he married half of his army to the Persian army and the legendary character of Alexander the Great himself. He was a legend in the middle ages, for example. And people thought he did things like … I mean I told you this already, you know all of this, like he did stuff like, he went to the moon and to the bottom of the sea, or to meet the Queen of the Amazons. Yes. So, there is a lot of fictional possibilities which are contained there.

New Alexandria is like Alexander’s capital. It’s the capital of a reborn Macedonian Empire, which would almost be a spiritual empire in a similar way to the empire, the fifth empire conceived by Fernando Pessoa. It would be an empire of cosmopolitanism but also of sexual perversity. He was sexually perverse himself. I mean by the standards of his time, certainly. I mean he was bisexual, he was an inspiration to all of us. He was like the David Bowie of his time.

People say that the structure, because of the monuments that became the mark of the city, they say that far fewer people visit the centre of Skopje now, and those who do are usually, as you can see here now, groups of tourists, people from the provinces who have come to see this, tourists. And I think that we Skopjeans, who… OK I haven’t been to the square so much, but earlier you could’ve seen the old Skopjeans that walking in the square, retired people chatting and so on, but now they’re gone and I think that the old Skopjeans are irritated by all this and maybe that is one of the reasons why they are gone. So basically, it could be said that the make-up of the people who visit the square has changed.

I experience it as a completely new centre, actually everything is new. As if I am entering a square in some foreign city, where I didn’t grow up. The only thing that reminds me, there are several points that despite the size and the monumentality of everything what was built those points were completely lost. And when you pass by them because of the size of what is there now, that little that reminds of the old square is already gone.

We are at the Plostad Makedonija, the city square. We are currently between Dal Met Fu, known by its new name Pelister, and the Kultura bookstore, that is luckily still here, as part of the Ristic Palace. A bookstore that reminds me of the late 90s. [...] The city square didn’t look at all like it does today – full of fountains and sculptures. It was really simple with its traditional ‘kocka’ and a green area that had a Christmas tree during the new years’ eve holidays. It was a city square with a lot of different events – concerts, gatherings – sometimes political. Now it looks literally as an exhibition of sculptures.

Raise your head and look at the real place now. You should see a big monument ending with a fountain in front of you now. Find a place to sit around the big fountain so you are positioned facing the direction of the bridge.
This is just not Skopje. I sometimes say that we may sound like the old Skopjans that suffered after Skopje after the earthquake: ‘What happened to the city’? They will never see Skopje as they have known it from their childhood or adulthood. I think my generation is going to go through the same thing. It will suffer after losing the Skopje that wasn't beautiful but was ours. It was an interesting mix of modern architecture and some older buildings. I don't know but that was my Skopje. Now I share this Skopje with tourists that are attracted by this new architecture and style.

Aneta
That they put Alex here, and these statues changed my city a lot. Earlier it was more people-friendly and more hospitable and we were meeting here and it was more ours and I felt it as ours. And now I feel it as foreign, as tourists who come here and they take photos in front of the fountains, etc. And all the time there are some tourists who find this good and we don’t, we are revolted by all of this.

Marija
I chose it because I have memories of this square before it became “Skopje 2014”, before it was rebranded. Previously on this square, unlike today, it seems it was a square that in some way connected the citizens in public space, especially the young people. I think in that aspect Makedonija Square today differs from the same square in 2000, when I was a teenager. If I compare that to today, this Alexander will not serve as a meeting point where we will meet and exchange ideas and experiences, but it will be more like a spectacle.

You know, this is no longer a space where people spend time. That is my impression. This space is now some kind of transit zone. I don’t know if that is so, but I think that this is a transit zone and a spectacle. Tourists come here, people from other cities, but it is not a place where people socialize and exchange.

Kristijan
What is good for the city is to preserve that basic culture, the people to have the idea that they live together, make decisions together and participate in decisions. The people are put aside and they don’t participate in any important talks and decisions about how to build this together. How to think together about the city. It is difficult to love Skopje now. It is difficult.

sndscp
Demonstrations (“Nema Pravda Nema Mir”)

nvo
We have to go now. Exit the square please at a street of your choice.
Photographic Documentation of the Audio Guided Tour in Skopje

148. LEFT: Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author’s own
149. RIGHT: Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author’s own
Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own
LEFT: Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author’s own
UPPER RIGHT: Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author’s own
MIDDLE RIGHT: Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author’s own
BOTTOM RIGHT: Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author’s own
166. Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (exhibition view) – author’s own

167. LEFT: Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (details) – author’s own

168. RIGHT: Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (details) – author’s own

169. LEFT: Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (details) – author’s own

170. RIGHT: Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (details) – author’s own
List of illustrations

1. Illustration of Henri Lefebvre's spatial triangulation – author's own
2. QR code of an audio excerpt of a conversation with the street performer "Louis VI"; photograph of the street performer in Paris - author's own (taken in April 2014)
3. Photograph of Tianducheng, China – source Wikimedia Commons
   MNXANL, 201806 La tour Eiffel at Tianducheng, CC BY-SA 4.0
   [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:201806_La_tour_Eiffel_at_Tianducheng.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:201806_La_tour_Eiffel_at_Tianducheng.jpg) [1.11.2017]
4. Timeline of short Macedonian history and Skopje urbanism - design by Jasna Dimitrovska
5. Photograph of the Old Bazaar – author's own (taken in April 2014)
6. Photograph of Macedonia Square in 1990s – source Wikimedia Commons
   Raki_Man, Macedonia Square- Skopje - panoramio, CC BY 3.0
   [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macedonia_Square-_Skopje_-_panoramio.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Macedonia_Square-_Skopje_-_panoramio.jpg) [1.11.2017]
7. Photograph of the sign for ‘Alexander the Great’ airport – author's own
   (taken in September 2015)
11. Photograph of the Museum of the Macedonian Struggle for Statehood and Independence - author's own (taken in April 2014)
12. Photograph of ‘Mothers of Macedonia’, Karposhovo Vostanie Square – author's own
    (taken in April 2014)
13. Photograph of the Macedonian National Theatre – author's own (taken in September 2014)
14. Photograph of the Office of Public Prosecution – author's own (taken in April 2014)
15. Photograph of Archaeological Museum of Macedonia – author's own (taken in April 2014)
16. Photograph of the Agency for Electronic Communication – author's own
    (taken in September 2015)
17. Photograph of the Art Bridge – author's own (taken in April 2014)
18. Photograph of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs – author's own (taken in September 2015)
19. Photograph of the Macedonia Gate - author's own (taken in April 2014)
20. Photograph of the Hristo Tatarcev monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
21. Photograph of the Pavel Satev monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
22. Photograph of the Tzar Justinian monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
23. Photograph of the Goce Delcev monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
24. Photograph of the Tzar Samoil monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
25. Photograph of the St. Cyril and St. Methodius monuments - author's own
    (taken in April 2014)
26. Photograph of the Metodija Andonov Cento monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
27. Photograph of the Hristijan Todorovski Karposh monument – author's own
    (taken in April 2014)
28. Photograph of the Gemidziite monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
30. Photograph of the Defenders of Macedonia monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
31. Photograph of the Nikola Karev monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
32. Photograph of the Pitu Guli monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
33. Photograph of the Founders of the VMRO monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
34. Photograph of the ASNOM monument – author's own (taken in April 2014)
35. Photograph of the Fallen Macedonian Heroes monument – author's own
    (taken in April 2014)
36. Photograph of the old façades on St. Nikola Vapcarov – author's own
    (taken in February 2013)
37. Photograph of the new façade on St. Nikola Vapcarov – author’s own (taken in May 2016)
38. Photograph of the old façade of the Ministry of Justice – author’s own (taken in February 2013)
39. Photograph of the new façade of the Ministry of Justice – author’s own (taken in May 2016)
40. Photograph of the old façade of the City Gallery – author’s own (taken in April 2014)
41. Photograph of the new façade of the City Gallery – author’s own (taken in May 2016)
42. Photograph of the old Officer’s Home – source Wikimedia Commons Unknown, Skopje, razglednica so Oficerski dom, 1928, marked as public domain <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Skopje_razglednica_so_Oficerski_dom_1928.jpg> [1.11.2017]
43. Photograph of the new Officer’s Home – author’s own (taken in May 2016)
44. Photograph of the old façade of the Government House – source Wikimedia Commons wikcom, Government-Macedonia-free, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Government-Macedonia-free.JPG> [1.11.2017]
46. Adaptation of Edward Munch’s ‘The Scream’ by Matej Bogdanovski © Matej Bogdanovski
48. Photograph of monument tagged by the Colorful Revolution – author’s own (taken in May 2016)
49. Photograph of monuments colored with paint balls by the Colorful Revolution – author’s own (taken in May 2016)
50. Map of the research area ‘Small Ring’ – design by Jasna Dimitrovska
51. Map of the research area ‘Small Ring’ with “Skopje 2014” – design by Jasna Dimitrovska
52. Final Map of GPS tracking of walking routes – design by Jasna Dimitrovska
53. Map of notes regarding the music and sounds – author’s own
54. Map of notes regarding the observation notes – author’s own
55. Map of notes regarding the interview contents – author’s own
56. Photograph of interview partner – author’s own (taken in April 2014)
57. Photograph of interview partner – author’s own (taken in April 2014)
58. Photograph of interview partner – author’s own (taken in April 2014)
59. Map of notes for the audio guided tour – author’s own
60. Photograph of Making of (Studio Sound Recording) – author’s own (taken in July 2016)
61. Graphic of Stages of Research - design by Jasna Dimitrovska
62. Photograph of Raphael’s fresco ‘The School of Athens’ (1509 - 1511) – source Wikimedia Commons Raphael creator QS:P170,Q5597, Raphael School of Athens, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Raphael_School_of_Athens.jpg> [1.11.2017]
63. Photograph of the map Naked City by Guy Debord – source Wikimedia Commons Guy Debord, The Naked City, marked as public domain <https://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:The_Naked_City.jpg> [1.11.2017]
64. Poster for the ‘Curating Exchange’ Symposium © Press To Exit Project Space
65. Poster for the ‘DENES’ Exhibition © Filip Jovanovski
66. Final map of the audio guided tour – design by Jasna Dimitrovska
67. Sound editing timeline – design author’s own
68. QR code of an audio excerpt of narrator’s voice
69. QR code of an audio excerpt of archival footage
70. QR code of an audio excerpt of music
71. QR code of an audio excerpt of sound effects
72. QR code of an audio excerpt of footsteps
73. QR code of an audio excerpt of the introduction to audio guided tour
74. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track One) – design by Jasna Dimitrovska
75. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Ana; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in August 2016)
76. Photograph of Angelus Novus, Paul Klee, 1920 – source Wikimedia Commons Paul Klaa ff artist QS:P170,Q44007, Klee, Angelus novus, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Klee__Angelus_novus.png> [1.11.2017]
77. Photograph of the demolition of the Avenue de l’Opera, Paris – source Wikimedia Commons
Charles Marville artist QS:P170,Q329387, Avenue de l’Opera - demolition, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Avenue_de_l%27Op%C3%A9ra_-_demolition.jpg> [1.11.2017]

78. Photograph of the Avenue de l’Opera in 2014, Paris – author’s own (taken in April 2014)

79. QR code of an audio excerpt of sound effects of earthquake; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in August 2016)

80. Photograph of Museum of City Skopje – author’s own (taken in April 2014)

81. Photograph of the Model of Tange’s Master Plan for Skopje (detail) – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

82. Photograph of the Model of Tange’s Master Plan for Skopje (detail) – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

83. Photograph of the Model of Tange’s Master Plan for Skopje (detail) – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

84. Photograph of the Model of Miscevic’s and Wrenzler’s Master Plan for Skopje (detail) – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

85. Photograph of the Model of Miscevic’s and Wrenzler’s Master Plan for Skopje (detail) – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

86. QR code of an audio excerpt of narrator’s voice; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in April 2018)

87. Photograph of the Model of The City Gate (Image One) – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

88. Photograph of the view when the QR excerpt is listened to - author’s own (taken in June 2016)

89. QR code of an audio excerpt of interviews with Petar and Sofija; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in August 2016)

90. Photograph of part of the City Wall, Skopje – author’s own (taken in September 2013)

91. Photograph of Skopje’s Train Station – author’s own (taken in September 2013)

92. Photograph of the University Campus by Georgi Konstantinovski - author’s own (taken in September 2013)

93. Photograph of the City Trade Centre by Zivko Popovski – author’s own (taken in September 2015)

94. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Igor; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in April 2018)

95. Photograph of the Beton Brut style facade of the Macedonian Post Office by Jane Konstantinovski - author’s own (taken in September 2015)

96. Photograph of Macedonian Opera and Ballet by Buro 77 – author’s own (taken in September 2013)

97. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track Two) – design by Jasna Dimitrovska

98. QR code of an audio excerpt of interviews with Marija and Nadica; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in August 2016)

99. Photograph of ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ monument – author’s own (taken in April 2018)

100. QR code of an audio excerpt of the song ‘Every Sperm is Sacred’; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in August 2016)

101. Photograph of ‘Fallen Heroes of Macedonia’ monument (front right) and the ‘Women Freedom-Fighters’ monument (rear left) - author’s own (taken in May 2016)

102. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Marija; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own (taken in April 2018)

103. Photograph of the Nevena Georgive Dunja (left) and Pitu Guli (right) monuments – author’s own (taken in April 2014)

105. Photograph of the model for Palace of Soviets – source Wikimedia Commons
   FOTO:FORTEPAN / Berkó Pál, Budapest X., A Moszkvába tervezett, de soha el nem készült
   Szovjetek Palotájának makettje a szovjet pavilonban. Fortepan 79472, CC BY-SA 3.0
   <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Budapest_X._A_Moszkvába_tervezett_de_soha_el_nem_készült_Szovjetek_Palotájának_makettje_a_szovjet_pavilonban.__Fortepan_79472.jpg> [1.11.2017]

106. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track Three) – design by Jasna Dimitrovska

107. Photograph of the Cicko Stoilko burger shop before “Skopje 2014” – author’s own
   (taken in April 2014)

108. Photograph of the Cicko Stoilko burger shop, relocated after “Skopje 2014” – author’s own
   (taken in September 2014)

109. QR code of an audio excerpt of interviews with Martin, Liljana and Aneta; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in August 2016)

110. QR code of an audio excerpt of narrator’s voice; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in August 2016)

111. QR code of an audio excerpt of child singing a song; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in April 2018)

112. QR code of an audio excerpt of child singing a song; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in April 2018)

113. Photograph of ‘lieux de memoire’ on the 13 November Quay of the Vardar River - author’s own
   (taken in September 2015)

114. Photograph of the view when Image Two is looked at - author’s own
   (taken in January 2018)

115. Family album photograph (Image Two) (taken before 1963)

116. QR code of an audio excerpt of narrator’s voice; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in April 2018)

117. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track Four) – design by Jasna Dimitrovska

118. Photographs of Karposhovo Vostanie Square before the reconstruction – author’s own
   (taken in September 2009)

119. Photographs of Karposhovo Vostanie Square after the reconstruction – author’s own
   (taken in April 2014)

120. Photograph of the demolition of the Pruitt Igoe housing development in St Louis – online source
   U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Pruitt-igoe collapse-series, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons

121. QR code of an audio excerpt of interviews with Kristijan, David, Liljana and Tijana; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in April 2018)

122. Photograph of the Alte Nationalgalerie – Museum Island, Berlin – author’s own
   (taken in May 2015)

123. Photograph of the Potsdamer Platz, Berlin – author’s own (taken in May 2014)

124. Photograph of the old Berlin City Palace (Das Berliner Stadtschloß) – source Wikimedia Commons
   (PD-US), Berlin Stadtschloss 1920er, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons

125. Photograph of the reconstruction of the new Berlin City Palace – author’s own
   (taken in May 2015)

126. Photograph of the old Macedonian National Theatre - source Wikimedia Commons
   Unknown, Skopsko Kale, stara, marked as public domain, more details on Wikimedia Commons

127. Photograph of the new Macedonian National Theatre - author’s own (taken in April 2014)

128. Photograph of the Archaeological Museum in Skopje - author’s own (taken in January 2018)

129. Photograph of the Academy of Athens in Athens - author’s own (taken in September 2014)

130. Photograph of the Parthenon at the Acropolis in Athens - author’s own
   (taken in August 2016)

131. QR code of an audio excerpt of interviews with Delfina and Aneta; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author’s own
   (taken in April 2108)

132. Photograph of the left bank of the river Vardar before and after Skopje 2014 (taken in September 2009 and in August 2016)
133. Map excerpt of the audio guided tour (Track Five) – design by Jasna Dimitrovska

134. QR code of Image Three

135. Photograph from the view from where Image Three is looked at - author's own (taken in September 2015)

136. QR code of an audio excerpt of narrator’s voice; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in August 2016)

137. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with DC Miller; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in June 2016)

138. Photograph of the statue of Alexander the Great in Thessaloniki, Greece – author's own (taken in September 2014)

139. Photograph of the statue of Alexander the Great in Skopje, Macedonia – author's own (taken in January 2018)

140. Photograph of tourist activities on Macedonia Square – author's own (taken in September 2014)

141. Photograph of tourist stands on Macedonia Square – author's own (taken in September 2014)

142. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Ivan; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in August 2016)

143. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Jana; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in August 2016)

144. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Aneta; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in April 2018)

145. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Marija; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in August 2016)

146. QR code of an audio excerpt of interview with Kristijan; photographic documentation of the audio walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in January 2018)

147. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – © Press To Exit Project Space (taken in September 2016)

148. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

149. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

150. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in April 2018)

151. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

152. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

153. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

154. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

155. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

156. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

157. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

158. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

159. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

160. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

161. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in August 2016)

162. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje – author's own (taken in April 2018)
163. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in April 2018)
164. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in August 2016)
165. Photographic documentation of the audio guided walk in Skopje - author's own (taken in April 2018)
166. Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (exhibition view) - author's own (taken in April 2018)
167. Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (detail) - author's own (taken in April 2018)
168. Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (detail) - author's own (taken in April 2018)
169. Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (detail) - author's own (taken in April 2018)
170. Photographic documentation of the DENES exhibition in Skopje (detail) - author's own (taken in April 2018)
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Tuan, Yi-Fu (1977) Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience. Minnesota: Minnesota University Press


Curriculum Vitae
IVANA SIDZIMOVSKA

born 1982 in Skopje, Macedonia
since 2008 based in Berlin, Germany

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UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

2012 - 2019  Bauhaus University Weimar, Faculty of Design and Media - Weimar, DE
PhD Studies in Fine Arts (Doctor of Philosophy)

2008 - 2011  Art School Berlin Weißensee - Berlin, Germany
Master of Art Studies - Space Strategies

2001 - 2006  University Kiril and Metodij, Faculty of Arts - Skopje, Macedonia
Bachelor of Art Studies - Painting and Art Pegagogy

ART SHOWS

2019, Aug - Sep.  “SOMEBWHERE ANYWHERE” - Exhibition (two-channel video installation)
‘In Between States’ Exhibition,
Museum of City Skopje - Skopje, North Macedonia

2019, June - July  “SOMEBWHERE ANYWHERE” - Exhibition (two-channel video installation)
‘In Between States’ Exhibition,
Peacock Visual Centre for Contemporary Arts, W or M - Aberdeen, Scotland

2018, Nov. - Dec.  LIMINAL STATES - Exhibition (multi-channel sound / video installation)
o.T. Projekttraum - Berlin, Deutschland

2018, April  RECOUNTING SKOPJE - Exhibition and Audio Guided Tour
Nominees for ‘Denes’ Young Visual Artist Award” Exhibition,
MKC Gallery - Skopje, Macedonia

2016, September  RECOUNTING SKOPJE - Audio Guided Tour
‘Curatorial Exchanges: The Institutional as Public’ Symposium,
Press2Exit Projectspace - Skopje, Macedonia

2015, July  BEFORE / AFTER - Exhibition
25 Years Art Acker House’ Exhibition,
Acker Gallery - Berlin, Germany

2015, June  EMBODIED GESTURES (with Jasna Dimitrovska) - Performance
‘Floating Gestures’ Performance Evening,
o.T. Projectspace - Berlin, Germany

2015, June  THE EXPELLED MUST BE CREATIVE IF HE DOES NOT WANT TO GO TO
THE DOGS - Exhibition
‘Nationless’ Exhibition,
Museum of Yugoslav History - Belgrade, Serbia

2014, June  TRANSIENT AMBIANCES - Audio Walk
‘Dislocations 2014’ Exhibition,
C.A.R. Contemporary Art Ruhr - Essen, Germany

2014, March  TRANSIENT AMBIANCES - Audio Walk
‘Dislocations 2014’ Exhibition,
Museo Crudo - San Sperate, Italy

2013, September  NOTES ON SKOPJE - Performance
‘The Vanished Backyard’ Public Art Event,
JADRO - Skopje, Macedonia

SCHOLARSHIPS / GRANTS / ART AWARDS

2018  NOMINEE FOR DENES YVAA (YOUNG VISUAL ARTIST AWARD)
CAC - Skopje, Macedonia and Residency Unlimited - New York City, NY

2018  PROJECT GRANT ‘LIMINAL MOVEMENTS’
Municipality of Neukölln, Department of Culture - Berlin, Germany

2016  ARTISTS’ CONTACTS GRANT
Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen - Stuttgart, Germany

2016  STIBET TEACHING ASSISTANCESHIP GRANT
DAAD - Weimar, Germany

2015  PHD TRAVEL GRANT
IPID4all, Bauhaus University Weimar - Weimar, Germany

2015  PHD RESEARCH GRANT
Open Society Foundations - London, UK

2012 - 2016  PHD SCHOLARSHIP
Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung - Berlin, Germany
### ART RESIDENCIES / RESEARCH PROJECTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>SOMEWHERE ANYWHERE, Research project (with Bozho Gagovski)</td>
<td>London, UK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>LIMINAL STATES, Research project (with Bozho Gagovski)</td>
<td>Tabanovce, Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>LIMINAL STATES, Research project (with Bozho Gagovski)</td>
<td>Tangier, Morocco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>MIGRATION ART ACADEMIES - DISLOCATIONS 2014, Artist residency</td>
<td>Noarte Paese Museo and Paidia Institute Cologne - San Sperate, Italy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### TEACHING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Course/Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>SOUNDSCAPES OF SPANDAU - Course</td>
<td>Department for Cultural Education - Harri-Reinert-Volkshochshule Spandau - Berlin, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>ARTISTIC RESEARCH AND THE CITY - Lecture und Artist Talk</td>
<td>Prosjektskolen: Masterclassprogramm and Exhibition, Feldfünf Metropolenhaus, Berlin, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>MY HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE - Exhibition</td>
<td>Bauhaus University Weimar, Faculty of Architecture - Department of Social Urban Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015/2016</td>
<td>MY HOUSE IS YOUR HOUSE - Seminar</td>
<td>Bauhaus University Weimar, Faculty of Architecture - Department of Social Urban Research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>In:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>Ivana Sidjimovska</td>
<td>Skopje 2014’s Afterlife.</td>
<td>The Calvert Journal, Sam Goff (Ed.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>Frank Eckardt; Ivana Sidzimovska</td>
<td>Creativity for Integration: Contested Integration of refugees and the art Project “My house is your house!” in Gera, Germany.</td>
<td>INCLUSIVE/EXCLUSIVE CITIES, Ognen Marina, Alessandro Armando (Eds.)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### ART PUBLICATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>In:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>‘Brexit means Brexit’</td>
<td>IN BETWEEN STATES - exhibition catalog, Jon Blackwood (Ed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018</td>
<td>‘Recounting Skopje’</td>
<td>DENES' Young Visual Artist Award Catalogue, Contemporary Art Centre, Skopje, Macedonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>‘Where is Macedonia and Where is Paris?’</td>
<td>SURFACE AND SUPERFICIALITY, Diego Castro, Eva May (Ed), Gitte Bohr, Berlin, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>‘Transient Ambiances’</td>
<td>IN DISPLACE, Mindaugas Gapscvicius ed, Vilnius Academy of Arts Press, Vilnius, Lithuania</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### CONFERENCE SPEAKER/ARTIST TALKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>IN BETWEEN STATES - Artist Talk (with Karolina Bachanek)</td>
<td>Belmont Cinema - Aberdeen, Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
<td>IN BETWEEN STATES - Artist Talk (moderated by Jon Blackwood)</td>
<td>Peacock Visual Centre for Contemporary Arts - W or M - Aberdeen, Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>IMAGES OF (CULTURAL) VALUES - Conference speaker</td>
<td>University of Innsbruck - Istanbul, Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>VISIBILITY/INVISIBILITY IN THE CITY - Conference organizer</td>
<td>13th Meeting of the Young Academic Network: City Space Architecture - Weimar, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>REINVENTING EASTERN EUROPE - Conference speaker</td>
<td>4th EUROACADEMIA Conference - Krakow, Poland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>STADTKOLLOQUIUM 6th Annual Conference - Conference speaker</td>
<td>University College London, UrbanLab Geography Department - London, GB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>BETWEEN DEMOCRACIES 1989-2014 - Conference speaker</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts Design and Architecture - Johannesburg, South Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>SURFACE AND SUPERFICIALITY - Artist Talk</td>
<td>Gitte Bohr Club for Art and Political Thought - Berlin, Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>THE SOCIAL IN URBAN CONTEXT - Conference speaker</td>
<td>13th Meeting of the Young Academic Network: City Space Architecture - University of Applied Sciences and Arts - Lucerne, Switzerland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ehrenwörtliche Erklärung


Die Arbeit wurde bisher weder im In- noch im Ausland in gleicher oder ähnlicher Form einer anderen Prüfungsbehörde vorgelegt. Ich versichere ehrenwörtlich, dass ich nach bestem Wissen die reine Wahrheit gesagt und nichts verschwiegen habe.

Berlin, 31.05.2018

Ivana Sidzimovska
The PhD studies (April 2013 - January 2017), the production of the audio guided tour (2016) and the printing of the PhD thesis (2019) have been kindly supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung.

Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung

The research trip to Skopje (September 2015) has been supported by the Bauhaus University Weimar.

Bauhaus-Universität Weimar
Faculty of Art and Design

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