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# Narrating Ars Aevi

## Re-envisioning and Re-shaping the Contemporary Art Museum of Sarajevo in the Urban Space

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## Foreword

The idea of disseminating the existing Ars Aevi Collection through the urban tissue of Sarajevo has been present since the beginning of my study. The attempt is that of hypothesizing the alternative reformulation of a longstanding museum project which is finding it difficult to achieve an enduring realization.

Being awarded with the Venice International University Scholarship for Research Internships and Worldwide Mobility I spent a three-month-long period in Sarajevo, where I carried out my research at the offices of the *International Cultural Project - Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo - ARS AEVI*. Even before my journey in the heart of the Balkans – to be precise, when my knowledge on the case was still extremely superficial – that idea had been already considered and outlined as an interesting starting point for both the reconstruction and the interpretation of the case. In this vein, I tried to tell the 24-year-old history of the Ars Aevi museum project born under the siege of Sarajevo, by constantly searching for details and clues on scattered practices.

The idea of reshaping Ars Aevi as a spread activity in the urban space with the consequent dissemination of its (existing) collection brought me to reflect upon the concept of museum form and typology. In this way I then discovered – going further inside into Ars Aevi developments – that the museum project itself has been re-envisioned and reshaped more times over the years, since 1992 up to the present. Even though the Ars Aevi history is commonly linked with the museum building designed by Renzo Piano in the early 2000s, what emerged by researching on field is the story of a different and more articulated phenomenology of museum ‘shaping - re-envisioning - reshaping’. I came across other museum forms and typologies, therefore other ways to conceive Ars Aevi, which over the years have been formulated, changed, re-envisaged and reshaped, in the founders’ minds and visions.

The everyday contact with the Project staff and their stories, as well as the study of the several Ars Aevi exhibition catalogues, curatorial statements, unpublished sources and documents (at my disposal at the Ars Aevi head office) made an in-depth insight into the Project dynamics possible. They thus directed my research towards the

understanding of the case through ‘forms’, in other words, considering the sequence of museum typologies that from time to time have been imagined and re-thought for Ars Aevi. The typologies themselves then became the starting point to narrate and analyze the case.

By dividing the narration according to the (re-envisioned and reshaped) museum typologies, I identified corresponding phases where contexts, social actors, and even historical, geopolitical shifts could be narrated by means of the museum typologies themselves. The highly interdisciplinary narration that has resulted is due to the mixture of approaches employed. Museological and museographical practices and models; literature on cultural activities; social, political and international sciences; curatorial statements, art catalogues and art publications. Their joint action enabled the emphasis of narratives, contents, symbolic charges that the envisioned museum typologies have from time to time expressed and communicated.

The aspect of physical dissemination is incorporated into the narration. It is a recurring element in the analysis of the (re)envisaged Ars Aevi typologies, for instance we can find it in the formulation of a complex of pavilions twisting and turning through the urban tissue – as illustrated in Chapter 4 – or in the meanings of the Ars Aevi Bridge, the first and only realized component of the complex. At the same time, the narration also includes the story of the Ars Aevi Project, namely, of the cultural organization that has operated in the last two decades offering a wide range of exhibitions and cultural activities, despite the lack/wait of a purpose-built ‘museum-container’. Envisioned museum typologies and development of the Project intertwine in the narration.

Chapter 1 anticipates history and developments of the Ars Aevi museum project, and it outlines the historical background and the city profile of Sarajevo. It introduces Bosnia-Herzegovina as a consociational confederation established by the Dayton Agreements – namely, the agreement for peace in Bosnia, reached on November 21, 1995 – and the cultural policies that are undertaken in the country. The Chapter ends illustrating the adopted methodology and working hypothesis, which start from the most evident issue characterizing the case, the absence of a concrete museum and the presence of a priceless art collection. Could the Ars Aevi Museum be reshaped as an unconventional museum, scattered through the urban tissue of Sarajevo?

In Chapter 2 the theoretical reference models underpinning the case-study build the discourse “the museum barriers are getting weak”. Boundaries are here intended as metaphorical barriers and tangible fences that in museums often correspond with one another. In this vein, the museum that crosses its own walls to expand outside is analyzed in relation to the revolutions and paradigms of our times, needs and issues such as the relationship between identity and globalization, mobility, migrations, ‘multicultural’ societies. The vulnerability (and relativity) of boundaries brings about the creation of museographical models that – affirming the role of museums in the urban space – are increasingly meeting the needs of inclusion, participation, engagement with publics and communities – also as part of commercialization and communication policies of museums.

The case-study is narrated in Chapters 3, 4 and 5. As mentioned, each chapter corresponds to an envisioned museum typology. Contexts, social actors, narratives and meanings emerge through the process of transformation-envisioning-reshaping of the typologies. During that narration the element of spatial dissemination is incorporated, in order to emphasize and unearth characters of dissemination both in the envisaged museum forms as well as in the multiple cultural activities that the Project has organized over the years, acting as a cultural organization, usually defined a ‘virtual’ museum.

The study here outlined is well represented with a framework illustrated at the beginning of Chapter 6. The evaluation of the working hypothesis takes into account the whole narration and the emerged aspects of dissemination, as well as the current scenario where ‘Ars Aevi, re-envisioned and reshaped as a scattered activity’ should find its place in the urban space. The title ‘Re-envisioning and Re-shaping the Contemporary Art Museum in the urban space’ thus refers both to the method of narration employed in the work as well as to the working hypothesis.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Museogenesis

Sarajevo, April 1992: within the precariousness of the besieged city under constant shelling, a group of Bosnian artists and intellectuals activated the process of *museogenesis*, namely, the adoption of a museological framework. They thus conceived a contemporary art museum for the devastated and wounded city. A museum that – according to the founder’s words – represented a civil revenge with the “peaceful weapon of culture”, a place where well-renowned contemporary artists were being invited to express their protest against the siege and the general abandonment of the city. Hence, a grassroots initiative born in the context of community bounding and cultural resistance, with the aim of safeguarding the endangered identity of Sarajevo, here intended as a cultural and artistic capital.

Even though the Ars Aevi Museum has never been realized, the longstanding, fluid and open-ended museum project has survived over years. The museum typology has been thus reimagined and reshaped in the founders’ minds and influenced by the different contexts in which the Project operated, or by those social actors who interacted and cooperated. The Project itself has assumed different narratives and aspired to diverse purposes from time to time, and renovated many times its strategies and plans.

In more than two decades of activities, the Project has assembled a valuable art collection through a donation-based partnership with European art museums and institutions. The hundreds of artworks forming the collection are still kept inside a ‘temporary’ purpose-built exhibition space, in Sarajevo.



## 1.2 Sarajevo: Historical Background & City Profile

By way of introduction, Sarajevo is the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) [Fig. 1]. It is situated in the heart of Western Balkans and it lays along a *strong east-west linear spine*<sup>1</sup>, following for ten kilometers the rush of Miljacka River, [Fig. 2] from the Old Ottoman market, named Baščaršija, to the western district of Ilidža. In Sarajevo live 291,422 citizens; the urban structure of the capital is the product of the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and Yugoslav past, as well as it is the result of the recent years, from the evidence of the 1992-95 War, to the recent skyline transformations with the raising of ultramodern business and commercial centers.

The city of Sarajevo was founded in the mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century when the current BiH had been included in the Ottoman Empire between 1463 and 1483. The toponym comes from the Slavic contraction of the Turkish words “saray”, which means “court” and “ovasi”, field. Sarajevo, with its thriving central market district Baščaršija, that is nowadays the city’s touristic core, became an important trade and administrative city, in order to increase the strategic interests of the Empire and spread the Ottoman Islamic culture. The Ottomans brought various transformations to the ethno-cultural and confessional profile of BiH. Many inhabitants converted to Islam and still today the Slavic-speaking Muslim community – the Bosniak community – is the largest in the country. Under the Empire, the BiH territory became a melting-pot for different religious groups: Catholic Croats, Turks, Bosniaks, Orthodox Serbs and also Sephardic Jews fleeing the Spanish Inquisition.

In the aftermath of the Ottoman-Russian War, and according to the Treaty of Berlin (1878), BiH fell under Austro-Hungarian administration. During this period, the Baščaršija district was expanded towards the west, with the raising of neo-classical architecture, and the city was turned into a “showcase” for important infrastructures and new monumental buildings: the central electricity grid, rail and tramway systems, banks, schools, the Catholic Cathedral, a theatre and a public park. Among these, the pseudo-Moorish style City Hall (Vijećnica) and the National Museum (Zemaljski Muzej), which was founded in order to build a “Bosnian” – multiethnic but “European” – identity; it was based on the indigenous cultural heritage – functioning as an

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<sup>1</sup>Gül M. & Dee J. (2015) *Sarajevo – A City profile*. In: *Cities*, 43, 152-166, p. 164.

instrument to reduce Serbian and Croatian cultural, political and territorial claims and interests.<sup>2</sup>

The First World War, which started in Sarajevo with the assassination of the heir presumptive to the throne by the pro-Yugoslav Black Hand movement, ended with the establishment of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenians, later named Kingdom of Yugoslavia, in 1929; throughout this period Sarajevo suffered from an economic stagnation, given that the main urban centers of the reign were Belgrade, Zagreb and Ljubljana.

In April 1941 the Kingdom was attacked by Nazi German forces and BiH became part of the Independent State of Croatia, i.e. a puppet state of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, which was governed by the Croatian nationalist group of Ustashas. Ustashas persecuted the Serb ethnic group, Jews and Roma with the purpose of creating a Croatian ethnically pure state.

After four years the occupation ended with the country's liberation by Marshal Josip Broz Tito's partisans. He had been the leader of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia until his death occurred in 1980, and BiH one of the six Socialist Federal Republics together with Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Slovenia. In the forty years of Socialism, in Sarajevo – capital of the Socialist Republic of BiH – large-scale transformations have been undertaken, continuing with the westerly expansion inaugurated by the Austro-Hungarians, but also developing a new urban area in the North; both expansions are still ongoing today. Following the modernist architectural principles, the city has been provided with new infrastructures, high-rises for residential accommodation and roads, facilities for recreation, sport and education. Among these, the sporting facilities built in occasion of the Winter Olympics in 1984, and the Museum of National Liberation – Historical Museum nowadays – founded in 1945 as a powerful instrument to legitimize Titoism and develop the Yugoslav identity based on brotherhood and unity.

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<sup>2</sup>Donia R. *The New Masters of Memory: Libraries, Archives, and Museums in Postcommunist Bosnia-Herzegovina*. In: Blouin F. X. & Rosenberg W. G. (eds.) *Archives, Documentation, and Institutions of Social Memory: Essays from the Sawyer Seminar*, University of Michigan Press, 2006, p. 394. Lozic V. (2011) *National Museum in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia: A Story of Making 'Us*. In: Aronsson P. & Elgenius G. (eds.) *Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010*, Conference proceedings from *EuNaMus, European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen*, Bologna 2011, p. 76.

In the same historical context of USSR's openness and later break-up, in the late 80's problems related to the economic and ideological differences between republics, as well as ethnic issues, have escalated and led to the parliamentary and constitutional crises and multi-party elections. Independentist parties were elected in each republic, with the exception of Serbia, where the new-elected president Slobodan Milošević opposed the break-up of the Yugoslav Federation. In 1991 Slovenia and Croatia declared their independence from Yugoslavia. In 1991 a ten-day long conflict between Slovenian army and Yugoslav forces took place in Slovenia, seeing the defeat of the Yugoslav forces. Between 1991 and 1995 Croatian army fought against Croatian Serbs<sup>3</sup> supported by Yugoslavia within Croatian territories. In 1992 also BiH – led by the new-elected president Alija Izetbegović, exponent of the Muslim party SDA – declared its independence; this caused the wars within the country, where BiH was intended to be divided between Milosevic's Yugoslavia and Franjo Tuđman's Croatia, which respectively supported the separatist forces of BiH-Serbs<sup>4</sup> and BiH-Croats.<sup>5</sup> Bosniaks and BiH-Croats defended the country's independence, fighting against BiH-Serbs hetero-directed by Yugoslavia, which besieged Sarajevo for 1425 days. At the same time the war between Bosniaks and BiH-Croats – hetero-directed by Croatia – was taking place in other regions of the country. The international community intervened in 1995, after 4 years during which the world witnessed the most violent conflict within European borders after the Second World War. In that occasion BiH's destiny was established in Dayton, Ohio, with the Peace Agreement signed by the three presidents of Yugoslavia,<sup>6</sup> Croatia and BiH. BiH territory was separated in two entities according to ethnic principles, largely maintaining the war's divisions.

Even today Sarajevo bears the physical and psychological pains of the conflict, **[Fig. 3]** representing an *important case of a city in transition with its post 1995 reconstruction and renewal process intermingled with building remnants scattered across the city landscape as silent reminders of the war.*<sup>7</sup> The downtown area presents a multitude of lively cafes and restaurants, offices, shopping malls and apartments; during

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<sup>3</sup>The term 'Croatian Serbs' indicates the Orthodox people of Croatia.

<sup>4</sup>The term 'BiH-Serbs' indicates the Orthodox people of BiH.

<sup>5</sup>The term 'BiH-Croats' indicates the Catholic people of BiH.

<sup>6</sup>The name Yugoslavia indicating the territories of Serbia and Montenegro will remain until 2003, when it will be officially renamed 'Serbia and Montenegro'. In June 2006 Montenegro will become an independent country.

<sup>7</sup>Gül M. & Dee J., *Sarajevo – A City profile*, op. cit. p. 152.

the whole year, Sarajevo – which has been defined the “Capital of Festivals” –is continuously enlivened by a number of festivals attracting foreign public.<sup>8</sup> However, below the surface the story is different; the political and economic issues are ingrained in the Sarajevans’ daily lives, in terms of unemployment, corruption, poor public sector performance and low standards of living.<sup>9</sup>

### 1.3 Culture in Post-Dayton BiH

The Ars Aevi Museum has not been built yet and its realization is continuously postponed because of the intertwining of external issues and internal which, in the last ten years, have led to the Project’s decline in terms of enthusiasm and therefore feasibility.

Before the description of the current state of the Project, it is necessary to comprehend, throughout a brief excursus, the context in which Ars Aevi is now inserted, and in which, once arrived in Sarajevo (in 1999), it has evolved. In order to analyze the current cultural situation of the country, it is fundamental to begin with a consideration on the Peace Agreements – the General Framework Agreement for Peace – that brought the war in BiH to an end and that was signed and internationally mediated in the US Air Force Base in Dayton, Ohio; and especially on the Annex IV of the Agreements, namely, the BiH Constitution, which intended the country as a sovereign and independent republic.

In Dayton a state based on consociated power-sharing has been created; this state organization is considered the most effective method for the regulation of the conflict in

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<sup>8</sup>The Sarajevo Film Festival represents one of the most attractive cultural events in BiH. The other festivals which cover the whole year, are good examples of functioning cooperation between organizing associations and private sponsorship. They often gain public support through public grants or partnership and the most of them are officially supported by diplomatic offices (international embassies, foundations, endowments) operating in BiH. An important and institutional festival such as MESS Festival with a long-lasting tradition is financed by the Canton of Sarajevo (Ministry of Sport and Culture), Federation and State Ministry of Civil Affair and other private companies, foundations and institutions. A smaller organization such as Pravo Ljudski Film Festival is instead supported by US Embassy in BiH, Swiss Embassy in BiH, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, Institut Francais and other cultural foundations, companies and media partners.

<sup>9</sup>Gül M. & Dee J., *Sarajevo – A City profile*, op. cit. p. 163.

deeply divided societies, but it does not represent the long term solution to safeguard the BiH's institutional future.

It stopped the bloodshed with immediate effect, guaranteeing internal security and a modest level of economic growth, facilitating a widespread return of refugees and displaced persons; it therefore created the conditions for life to return to a "surface" normality.<sup>10</sup>

Indeed, BiH presents a state system that is commonly recognized as inefficient and paralyzed by ethnocentric criteria, which are still causing a conflict on institutional basis, maintaining the perception of division. The Agreements only shelved the war existing factions, splitting up the country among the only three mentioned "Constituent Peoples" into two entities: the Republic of Srpska, the ethnically quasi-homogeneous territory inhabited by the Orthodox community of BiH-Serbs, with capital Banja Luka; and the Federation of BiH (FBiH) where the Muslim community of Bosniaks, together with the Catholic community of BiH-Croats live, with capital Sarajevo [Fig. 4]. They constitute two deeply inhomogeneous entities, and each of them is provided with an high autonomy level: the Republic of Srpska, which is the 49% of BiH's territory is made up of 63 municipalities; the FBiH is instead the 51% of BiH's territory and it is composed of 10 cantons. Each canton is administrated by its own government with ministries, and every canton is in turn divided into municipalities. For example, Sarajevo is administrated by the City of Sarajevo (Stari Grad), the local self-governance unit within the Sarajevo Canton, and it consists of four municipalities (općine): Center (Centar), New City (Novi Grad), New Sarajevo (Novo Sarajevo) and Old City (Stari Grad). Sarajevo, as well as its Canton, is a "border land", and some of its districts are already under the administration of the Republic of Srpska [Figs. 5, 6].

The state structure that has been created seems therefore based on enduring and unchanging barriers between ethnic groups, and on the separated development of mutually exclusive communities, where the ethno national rhetoric is directly promoted by the majority parties which rule the country. Although each entity is provided with its own government and ministries, BiH as a whole country is represented by a tripartite presidency: according to the V Article of BiH Constitution, *the Presidency of Bosnia*

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<sup>10</sup>McMahon P. C. & Western J. (2009) *The Death of Dayton, How to Stop Bosnia From Falling Apart*. In: Foreign Affairs, available at <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/bosnia-herzegovina/2009-08-17/death-dayton> (Accessed 28/01/16).

*and Herzegovina shall consist of three Members: one Bosniak and one Croat, each directly elected from the territory of the Federation, and one Serb directly elected from the territory of the Republika Srpska.*<sup>11</sup> In order to supervise all government activities, therefore oversee the civilian implementation of the Peace Treaty, the Office of the High Representative of the international community has been established in Dayton.

Within the Dayton framework, culture is only mentioned in the Annex VIII – with reference to the preservation of BiH cultural heritage – which establishes the National Commission for the Protection and Preservation of National Monuments, nominated by the state and made up of an ethnically balanced staff, with a representative for each of the three ethnic groups.

Culture (still) does not have its own ministry at the state level, it is therefore left outside from the central administration, and it has become one of the several areas of jurisdiction of the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs since its establishment in 2003.<sup>12</sup> According to the article 16 of the Law on Ministries and Other Bodies of Administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Civil Affairs performs culture in terms of *basic principles of coordination of activities, harmonization of plans of the entity bodies of government and defining strategies on the international level*. Indeed, cultural issues are managed independently and separately by the two entities: the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republic of Srpska, which has relatively broad powers, and the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sport, which has mainly a coordinative role of its 10 cantons: mirroring the whole general situation of the FBiH structure, this Ministry *has no significant impact, normatively and financially weakened and oppressed, and cantons and cantonal governments are those that have a key role and practically sole and full responsibility for the management of culture in this part of Bosnia.*<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>The constitution is available at the BiH Constitutional Court website:

[http://www.ccbh.ba/public/download/USTAV\\_BOSNE\\_I\\_HERCEGOVINE\\_engl.pdf](http://www.ccbh.ba/public/download/USTAV_BOSNE_I_HERCEGOVINE_engl.pdf) (accessed: 31/01/16).

<sup>12</sup>By the Law on Ministries and other administrative bodies of BiH (2003) the Ministry of Civil Affairs was established along with other state ministries: Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Transport and Communications, Finance and Treasury, Human Rights and Refugees, Justice, Security, Defense.

<sup>13</sup>Begagić H., Mikić H. & Rikalo M., *Art Market in Bosnia and Herzegovina: State, Problems and Prospects*. In: Rikalović G. (eds.) *Western Balkans: regional art market, and not a fiction?* Anonymous said, Belgrade 2012, p. 28.

If on one hand it is commonly argued that the cultural sector is significantly marginalized, given that socio-economical circumstances require active measures in the most urgent social sphere,<sup>14</sup> on the other hand it is essential to consider that, in a divided country as BiH is, the decentralized decision-making in cultural policies means the substantial difference between cultures, which are left to manage culture on their own. This issue has particularly emerged in the recent years with the deep crisis and consequent closure – due to the lack of funds – of the seven “national” cultural institutions legacy<sup>15</sup> of the Socialist Republic of BiH, all situated in Sarajevo: the National Museum of BiH, the Art Gallery of BiH, the Historical Museum of BiH, the National Film Archive, the Museum of Literature and Theatre, the National and University Library of BiH and the National Library for the Visually Impaired. This dramatic situation is a consequence of the ambiguous legal and constitutional structure of BiH, which has never explicitly determined their legal status: the central government does not possess any formal obligation for their financing; regarding FBiH and Sarajevo Canton, there are no instructions for their funding; lastly, Republic of Srpska does not have any formal responsibility to finance cultural institutions situated outside its territory of entity. The FBiH, which together with the Sarajevo Canton had financed the seven institutions until 2002, recognizes its own lack of jurisdiction and affirms that these institutions should be financed at the state level in order to preserve and safeguard the common history against continuing Serb attempts to divide the country. On its part, the Republic of Srpska, which does not have any obligation within its public expenditure to finance the cultural institutions situated in the FBiH, affirms that every ethnic group must take on the responsibility of its own heritage within the territory of its own entity, hence the funding of monuments in Sarajevo would be up to the FBiH or the Canton. Both the entities remain entrenched behind their own mutually exclusive positions, protecting their own prerogatives and demonstrating their reluctance to overhaul the financing agreements for the cultural institutions.<sup>16</sup>

In post-Dayton BiH a central Ministry of Culture was indeed not established, because this kind of operation would have a very strong symbolic implication. It would cause

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>They were all funded by the Socialist Republic of BiH.

<sup>16</sup>Fontana G. (2013) *War by Other Means: Cultural Policy and the Politics of Corporate Consociation in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 19, 4, 447-466.

the reallocation of funds for culture between the two entities and recognize the existence of a common culture, thus undermining the mechanism of the corporate consociation. Indeed, according to Fontana, the corporate consociation fails in promoting inclusive national identity and it also brings – denying resources and legitimacy to cultural institutions symbol of a shared past – to the amnesia about past coexistence and to the consequent proliferation and legality of mutually exclusive and polarized narratives of BiH's history and people.<sup>17</sup>

These narratives are enshrined in and propagated by the same cultural institutions, which contribute to the enclavization of culture. As Fontana puts it, the Republic of Srpska insists on the artificial nature of BiH, refusing the narrative of a multiethnic and hybrid past, highlighting that often this syncretism has been emphasized in order to conceal attempts of ethnic repression and assimilation.<sup>18</sup> Hence, after the 1992-95 War the Museum of Banja Luka turned its name into “Museum of Republic of Srpska”, and it was founded as an institution to preserve the Serb identity. In the Museum *invented national traditions*<sup>19</sup> have been institutionalized, and *the history of Bosniaks and Islam, and of the history of BiH as an independent and unified State has been omitted*.<sup>20</sup>

The narratives in Sarajevo's cultural institutions refer to BiH as an independent and “multicultural” state – as an example of the fragmented memory landscape of the country<sup>21</sup> – and the Republic of Srpska is here perceived as the entity “born of genocide”, it is indeed blamed by the FBiH for failure to allocate state-level funding to the cultural institutions.<sup>22</sup> This narrative is perceivable e.g. visiting the above-mentioned Historical Museum of BiH, founded during the Socialist epoch as the Museum of

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid. p. 449.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. pp. 456-457.

<sup>19</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo*. In: Ostow R. (eds.) *(Re)Visualizing National History: Museums and National Identities in Europe in the New Millennium*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto 2008, p. 109.

<sup>20</sup>Lozić V. (2015) *(Re)shaping History in Bosnian and Herzegovinian Museums*. In: *Culture Unbound, Journal of Current Cultural Research*, vol. 7, 307-329, p. 319.

<sup>21</sup>Nicolas Moll points out the different existing memory narratives and policies and the competition between them in the public sphere, and he analyzes the conflicting memory narratives as a central part of the highly disputed political identity construction processes in post-war BiH. As the scholar illustrates, narratives of the 1992–1995 war, the WWII, Tito's Yugoslavia, and earlier historical periods form highly disputed patterns in a memory competition involving representatives of the three “constituent peoples” of BiH – Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks – but also non-nationalist actors within the country, as well as the international community. Moll N. (2013) *Fragmented memories in a fragmented country: memory competition and political identity-building in today's Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In: *Nationalities Papers*, 41, 6, 910-935.

<sup>22</sup>Fontana G., *War by other means* op.cit., p. 457.



National Liberation, which nowadays functions as a memorial space for the most recent war and struggle for the independence – as founding myths for modern BiH – and as a place which therefore strives to construct a BiH-unitary identity while still reawakening the images of the communist past.<sup>23</sup> Thus, this version of historical facts automatically excludes those who fought against the BiH's independence and unity – following ethnocentric interpretations of facts and exhibition choices in which Lozic sees one of the reasons of the lack of support by the Republic of Srpska. Hence, according to the scholar, *there is hardly any room for a universal national narrative and an all-inclusive national heritage supported by both political entities*, therefore the museums of them both select *what to highlight and what not to say, and they choose their themes and interpretations of the past*.<sup>24</sup>

The widespread attempt to partition and enclavize culture and heritage in the form of new institutions for the preservation of an artificially pure heritage for each community, can be found also in Mostar. Among the biggest urban centers of the Herzegovina region, Mostar is a city within the FBiH and it is well-known for the bridge spanning the River Neretva, which was destroyed by the Croat army in 1993. In the city were indeed deployed BiH-Croats with Croat army – fighting for the annexation to Croatia – and Bosniak forces, defending Mostar as a city of independent BiH. Today the city is still divided, and within the Croatian section, a Croat National Library has been established as an attempt to rival the National Library in Sarajevo.

As already mentioned, among the recurring narratives in postwar Sarajevo, there are the discourses of “multiculturalism” and religious tolerance. According to Hajdarpašić, the city's image as a crossroads of faiths and different civilizations and as a meeting place of East and West, where synagogues, mosques, Orthodox churches and Catholic cathedrals are located within the range of one hundred meters, is an image continuously sponsored at international level; it also appears exasperated, considering the still present discrimination within the FBiH's territory, e.g. in the city of Mostar.

This mosaic-like image has been intensely publicized and supported by international organizations such as UNDMBIH (the UN Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina), OSCE

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<sup>23</sup>Lozic V., *(Re)shaping History* op.cit., p. 323; Idem, *National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op. cit., p. 85; Fontana G., *War by Other Means* op.cit., p. 452.

<sup>24</sup>Lozic V., *(Re)shaping History* op. cit., pp. 323, 325.

and OHR (the Office of High Representative) in the period of peacebuilding and reconstruction. These and other international and diplomatic organizations have limited their reconstructing and restoration action of postwar society to focusing their attention to those buildings and objects unequivocally related to cult and religions of the three BiH's ethnic groups, rigorously in the name of "multiculturalism" and "multiethnicity". In this way, a reductionist understanding of culture has been promoted, where multiculturalism becomes equivalent to multiconfessionalism according to the equation: culture=religion=ethnicity=identity.<sup>25</sup> Instead of undermining the internal partitions and divisions, this kind of reconstructing policy has emphasized them, sustaining and uncritically accepting *the nationalists' insistence on the centrality of religious difference in the postwar remaking of culture and politics.*<sup>26</sup> It does not seem strange, considering that – as above described – the international community itself mediated the Dayton Agreements, bringing to the constitution of the corporate consociation of BiH, which is underpinned by the divisions themselves.

Therefore, this can be a further element to clarify why the seven cultural institutions in Sarajevo – functioning and active part of the city before the 1992-95 War and impossible to be categorized in confessional terms<sup>27</sup> –are being overlooked both by nationalist and internationalist agendas<sup>28</sup> in post-Dayton BiH.

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<sup>25</sup>Baumann G., *The Multicultural Riddle: Rethinking National, Ethnic and Religious Identities*, Routledge, New York 1999, pp. 19-27; Lozic V., *National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op.cit, p. 79.

<sup>26</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op.cit., pp. 109-110.

<sup>27</sup>Only the National Museum of BiH was included among the ephemeral internationally-aided reconstruction plans of Sarajevo as a 'multicultural' and 'multiethnic' city. Cfr. 4.2 and 5.1.3 of the present thesis.

<sup>28</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op.cit., pp. 128-130.

## 1.4 Re-imagining & Reshaping the Museum

### 1.4.1 Three typologies, three phases

The interpretation I chose for the reconstruction of the Project's history and development focuses on how the museum has been thought, re-thought and reshaped over the years and therefore continuously projected into the future. In other words, through the identification of the different museum typologies that have been considered throughout the two decades.

That reading permitted to illustrate all the museum typologies, comparing them to the theoretical reference models, hence to highlight their narrative details, their symbolic charge, and when possible even technical and managerial aspects. It will be clear that each museum typology reflects a specific phase, determined by historical and geopolitical aspects which in turn emerge in the process of choosing/reshaping the given museum typology. Likewise, that process reveals the international museum trends' influence but also biographical events of the Project's founder, whose personal choices have often determined its destiny.

The first typology is the museum and art media center inspired by the Pompidou in Paris, or, more generally, by the model of a **museum-forum**. That museum would have been obtained through the **conversion of the old army headquarters in Sarajevo**, according to a strong symbolic operation here referred to as art's victory over destruction.

During this phase the process of *museogenesis* is identified, namely, the activation of the museological framework within the particular context of the siege. Analyzing that phenomenon, some factors are considered fundamental: firstly, the artistic and cultural experiences of the 80's such as the Winter Olympics in 1984 and the Yugoslav Documents (1984-1989) that established in the city an atmosphere of experimentalism and cosmopolitanism; secondly, the peculiar cultural resistance under the siege, namely, the series of concerts, performances and exhibitions that took place on ruins, and that contributed to strengthening the processes of gathering and socialization based on solidarity and community bounding; thirdly, the context of the siege and more generally of the war, characterized by the targeting and destruction of cultural and religious symbols, and of the everyday life spaces of living together.

These are the factors that led to the activation of a museological discourse – at that time supported by the political authorities of the independent BiH –formulated as an instrument for the safeguard of the endangered identity of Sarajevo, its being a cosmopolitan center of art and culture.

The Project's founder, Enver Hadžiomerspahić then continued the initiative in Italy, where sought refuge with his family during the war. Here, the contact with Italian political and cultural institutions proved to be fundamental. With their help the Project's direction has been defined, being resolved in creating an artworks donation-based partnership with several museums, foundations and contemporary art centers in Italy and then in Europe. From 1994 to 1999 art directors of these centers organized five "founding-exhibitions" in order to assemble, in cooperation with the artists, a new contemporary art collection for Sarajevo. The first show took place in Milan at Centro Spazio Umano/Human Space, and the others in Prato (Museo Luigi Pecci, 1996), Ljubljana (Moderna Galerija, 1996), Venice (Fondazione Querini Stampalia and Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, 1997) and Vienna (Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 1998). These exhibitions could therefore be interpreted as acts of solidarity towards the besieged and abandoned city, but also as *reflections on our bad conscience*<sup>29</sup> and thus *chances to redeem it*,<sup>30</sup> according to respected voices. The future museum was here envisioned as a tool for reconciliation, and for symbolic and tangible reconstruction of the city.

The arrival of the Project in Sarajevo (1999), in the context of post-Dayton BiH, represented a watershed in the development of the museum formulation. The Project was included in the internationally-aided and (multi)cultural reconstruction plans of the country, under the auspices of international organisms such as UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Commission, with the sponsorship by UNHCR and resources from Italian government. In these years of expansion, growth, international consensus, and general favorable dynamics, the Project became an active institution of the Bosnian capital – for its several cultural and artistic programs – and at the same time the museum idea had been rethought and reshaped. The typology was that of a **complex of purpose-**

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<sup>29</sup>Cacciari M., *Our Dreams*. In: Bertola C. (eds.) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale museo d'arte contemporanea Sarajevo 2000*, Arsenale Editrice, Venezia 1997, p. 12.

<sup>30</sup>Cortese M., *For the New Museum of Sarajevo*. In: Bertola C. (eds.) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale* op. cit. p. 19.

**built pavilions** twisting and turning through the urban space, each of them designed by a world-renowned architect, therefore a *showpiece for global contemporary architecture*<sup>31</sup> – in line with the culture-led regeneration of world and European cities, by means of iconic urban design and emblematic new museums.

The last phase – corresponding to the last ten years – represents the most critical period in the Project’s whole history because of the combination of external and internal reasons. Among them: on one hand the general decrease of international mediation and support since the emergency in the Balkans was considered concluded and the gradual lack of dialogue between the Project and local institutions; on the other hand, managerial and organizational issues. The ambitious pavilions’ project has been gradually abandoned and the efforts have been increasingly focused on the only one planned and designed pavilion – **Renzo Piano’s building**. The newfangled edifice would be situated on the core of Sarajevo’s urban tissue, the Marijin Dvor area – an extremely heterogeneous and massively capitalized urban zone – and, more precisely, within the fragile ecosystem of the ‘**Sarajevo museum district**’.

#### 1.4.2 Still pending the museum

In the aftermath of the 1992-95 War, a number of funds have been addressed to the devastated BiH, but once the emergency in the Balkans was considered concluded, a general decrease in funds has been registered, as well as the missions in BiH have aroused their interest in other crises around the globe. This happened also in the scope of art and culture.

Among the most interesting projects in which Sarajevo was involved, the network of the Soros Centers of Contemporary Art has to be mentioned: it was established all around the postwar former Yugoslavia by the American patron and philanthropist George Soros. With the beginning of the new millennium, the network funding has been dismissed, and the motivation given by Soros himself is paradigmatic of the context: *if the local actors cared about culture, then they should finally assume the responsibility for the vitality of contemporary art, [...]because from the 90s until that moment, there had been enough time in all the countries of transition to establish new structures*

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<sup>31</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Loving the Differences, The Journey of Ars Aevi from Utopia to Infinity*. In: *Michelangelo Pistoletto exhibition: La Porta dello Specchio*, Ars Aevi Book, Sarajevo 2001, p. 31.

*capable of assuming the care and responsibility for social-economic development.*<sup>32</sup> An explanation which, according to Dunja Blažević – director of the Soros Center in Sarajevo – did not consider BiH as a special case.<sup>33</sup>

Ars Aevi is also in a similar situation. Since 2001 and for about five years, the Project has received international funds by which the young and capable team running the Project has contributed to making Sarajevo one of the liveliest capital of contemporary art, organizing international seminars and exhibitions. These resources have also been employed in renovating one of the wings of the Skenderija Olympic Center, in order to obtain from it an exposition space for the Collection – the ‘Art Depot’ – as a temporary solution pending the new museum.

From 2000 to 2005 Ars Aevi has not been equipped with its own “artworks box”, nevertheless that period is remembered as the most intense, when the Project has been one of the reference points for contemporary art within the city.

Today Ars Aevi attempts to survive within the BiH’s administrative system complexity, where the actors rapidly come in succession, making any productive and enduring cooperation unrealistic. Furthermore, as already pointed out, the general support to the cultural sector in BiH has been declining in the last decade; as a consequence of this overall situation, and of additional internal dynamics such as personal variables and divergent viewpoints, the enthusiasm towards and within the Project has been gradually fading. Due to these circumstances, the Project has not been able to reinvent itself and to search for alternative managerial and promotional solutions. As a matter of fact it has gradually stopped developing – lying in a stagnant condition especially with the recent closure to visitors of Art Depot for a few years – and today it is currently understaffed. Even though since 2014 Ars Aevi has been reopened, nowadays it does not represent an attraction for Sarajevo and neither it is the contemporary local and international art reference point that it used to be more than ten years ago.

Entering the Art Depot in Skenderija, the visitor comes across the explanatory panels about the history of Ars Aevi and then he can have a look at the selected part of the Collection displayed in the two-storey space, whereas the other part is kept in the

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<sup>32</sup>Blažević D., *SCCA-s – STILL ALIVE/CASE STUDY*. In: Blackwood J., *Introduction to Contemporary Art in B&H*, Duplex100m2, Sarajevo 2015, pp. 75-76.

<sup>33</sup>Ivi.

warehouse. It is a Collection of utmost value – the most important contemporary art collection within South-East Europe as commonly known – which is often exposed to danger and risk because of low security and maintenance.

#### 1.4.3 Working Hypothesis

As aforementioned, that interpretation focuses on the formal transformations and on the shifts of significance that have characterized the museum project over the years. That reading provides the different points of view to understand the not-realization of the museum and the current situation of the Project. In the second instance it facilitates the discussion of the working hypothesis on which the present thesis stands: may the Ars Aevi Museum be rethought and reshaped once again?

Starting from the most evident issue characterizing the case – the absence of a concrete museum – that hypothesis considers both the Project history and its development taking into account:

- the strengths;
- those aspects that have never been changed and that represent the core and the spirit of the Project, regardless of the museum typology and shape to express them; these aspects will be emphasized in the hypothetical reformulation of the museum.

The identified strength is represented by the existing and priceless art collection, as already observed, recognized among the most important of the Balkans. The unaltered aspect is instead recognized in the creation of a museum, which would be closely bound to the city and whose artworks would belong to all the citizens. The artworks are indeed gifts that artists realized and voluntarily donated to Sarajevo.

Hence, starting from these considerations, the present thesis is underpinned by the following working hypothesis: could the Ars Aevi Museum be reshaped as an unconventional museum scattered through the urban tissue of Sarajevo? This hypothesis requires the evaluation of alternatives: the idea of Ars Aevi as a “collection box” – the typologies then discussed – and the city as the ideal place to enshrine and value the collection – the scattered option.

#### 1.4.4 Methodology

The present work is the result of a research that I conducted in part on the field as a Venice International University (VIU) visiting student. Being awarded with the VIU Scholarship for Research Internships and Worldwide Mobility I spent the Fall Semester 2015 carrying out research at the offices of the *International Cultural Project - Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo - ARS Aevi*, in Sarajevo. The three-month-long period in Sarajevo gave me an in-depth insight into the Project's dynamics.

The set of exhibition catalogues realized by the Project, but also unpublished texts and documents were put at my disposal. The reading of the catalogues' curatorial statements made possible the identification and then the reconstruction of the three development phases of the museum project, thus their symbolic charge, the hopes in them enshrined, the plurality of voices from all those curators who have been active participants in the Project.

Through their disposition in chronological order I comprehended the course of the Project's development, identifying the more positive periods and the critical ones.

I closely worked with the people involved into the Project, first of all its founder Enver Hadžiomerspahić, who guided me into the Project's history, during a number of long interviews – then recorded and transcribed – and in more informal conversations. I have been informed of other Project's aspects by Anur Hadžiomerspahić, Amila Ramović, Ašja Mandić, Senka Ibrisimbegović, Ilaria Ragnoni.

Other interviews and conversations were carried out with cultural operators, artists, activists and curators based in Sarajevo, in order to have a first impact with the cultural and political dynamics of the city and in general of BiH. Hence, the theoretical literature on sociological, political museographical and museological topics has strengthened the choice of dividing the narration into 'typologies/museum shapes', thus facilitating the discussion of the hypothesis.





**Fig. 1.** Sarajevo, panorama.



**Fig. 2.** Sarajevo, Miljacka River. Photo: Silvia M. Carolo, October 2015.

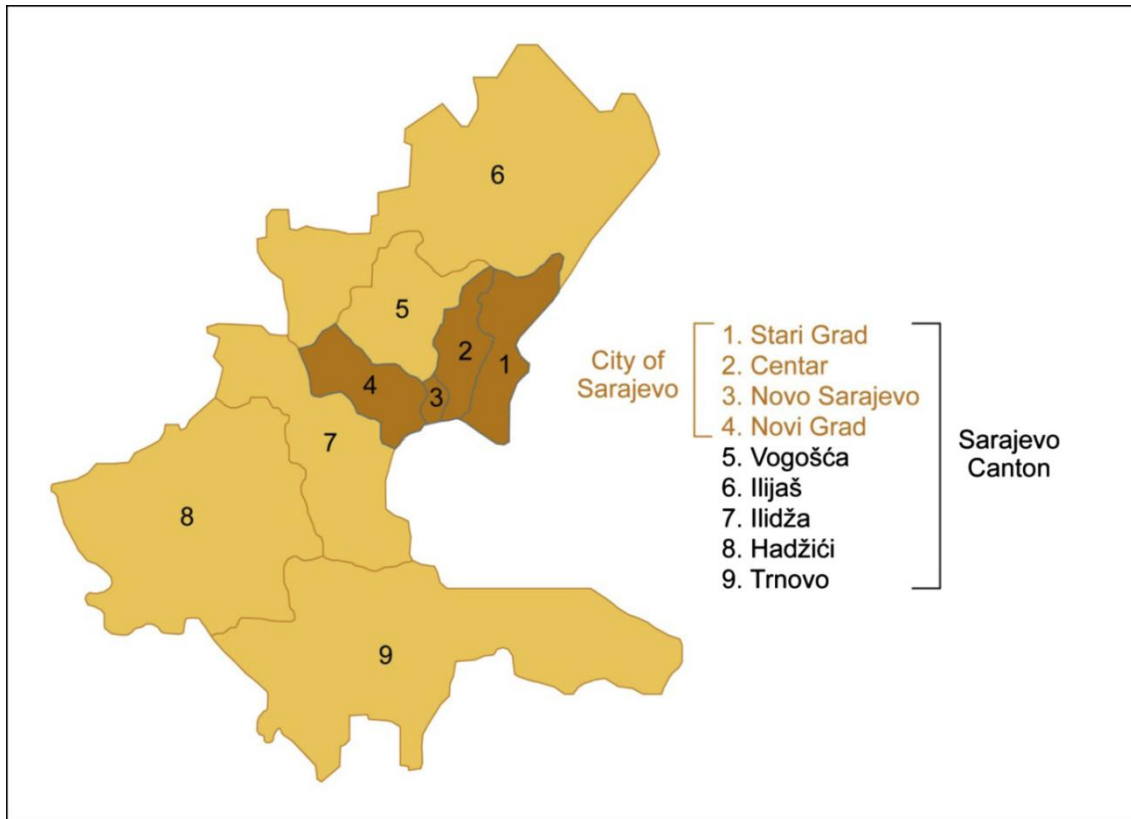


**Fig. 3.** Sarajevo, Grbavica neighborhood. Photo: Silvia M. Carolo, December 2015.



**Fig. 4.** Republic of Srpska and Federation of BiH. Source: Gül M. & Dee J., *Sarajevo – A City profile*.





**Fig. 5.** Sarajevo Canton and municipalities. *Source:* Gül M. & Dee J., *Sarajevo – A City profile*.



**Fig. 6.** Districts of Sarajevo. *Source:* Gül M. & Dee J., *Sarajevo – A City profile* (2015).

## Chapter 2: Museum boundaries are getting weak: towards the physical dissemination

### 2.1 Boundaries in museums: metaphors and tangible fences

#### 2.1.1 Introduction

The present Chapter shows that ‘barriers’ in contemporary museum are increasingly becoming fragile and unstable elements. Purpose of the thesis, as seen, is reasoning on a possible museum spread in the city, therefore a museum that is not entangled in traditional barriers; however that physical and tangible way of intending the museum barriers needs also other interpretations.

Barriers are here intended also in a metaphorical way, as ‘fences’ inside which a specific community identifies itself, according to a concept of identity which refers to bounded communities and cultures, often ethnocentric, that for long time the museum institution represented – and in some cases, it represents still today.

Other metaphorical barriers were those that were placed between contents and publics, contributing to make the museum an elitist and bourgeois place – well represented by the architectonic typology of the XIX century rotunda – then became a criticized subject in the student protests of ’68. Exactly in these turbulent years the shift from the XIX century elitist museum and a more open and democratic museum took place – we could say towards the museum-forum, to mention Duncan Cameron’s successful essay of 1971.<sup>34</sup>

The museum was thus revolutionized in a process of transformation that was, first of all, towards the democratization. The institutional museum opened itself to wider audiences (in a top-down approach), while museums were established in specific areas as instruments enhancing the community empowerment (usually as bottom-up initiatives). In the same period ecomuseums, community museums and neighborhood museums were for the first time experimented. The Pompidou Museum in Paris is instead from the museographical point of view, the first museum-forum in history, a

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<sup>34</sup>The essay *The museum: a temple or the forum?* by American museologist Duncan Cameron is a reference for museology.

museum that is characterized by aspects of flexibility and fluidity and oriented to the democratic accessibility, and in close contact with the territory and the city.

According to Massimo Negri,<sup>35</sup> the couple in & out is a constant with the contemporary museum way of being. The museum is increasingly becoming a magnet, an urban icon, a spectacular attractor able to create a strongly recognizable and symbolical image for itself and for the territory in which it operates.

With the end of the XX century the metaphorical and mental barriers of museums became even weaker. Regionalisms, ethnonationalisms, migrations, mobility, technology and multiculturalisms are global phenomena that challenged and still today challenge the museums. For instance in Europe, the collapse of USSR and the creation of new states brought to redesign new borders inside museums, through the graphical representation of territories, for example. The same occurred in Yugoslavia, with the creation of ethnically-oriented enclaves where borders are redrawn, fostering the representation of bounded identities and communities, thus erecting new barriers. At the same time, in the most globalized localities, museums which had previously represented bounded communities and identities, they have recently started to accept the challenges of those global phenomena that brought about the development of new identities, the so-called fluid, post-national and trans-cultural identities.<sup>36</sup>

Old barriers are being canceled and new activities oriented to participation and to the inclusion of wider audiences are encouraged. This trend reflects both the institutional goals of museums – mainly related to the cultural and knowledge diffusion – and also the audience developments logics and commercialization policies.

The museographical typologies disseminated through the territory and the city respond to these needs, they are tools of communication and cultural diffusion which cross the museum walls looking for new audience, or better to say, they expand the museum itself, involving everyday spaces and turning them into exhibition venues. They even transform themselves into ‘mobile museums’ in order to reach people and new places, thus mirroring the mobility which characterizes our lives and our society.

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<sup>35</sup>Negri M., *La grande rivoluzione dei musei europei. Museum Proms*, Marsilio Editori, Venezia 2016, p. 77.

<sup>36</sup>Macdonald S. (2003) *Museums, national, postnational and transcultural identities*. In: *Museum and Society*, 1 (1): 1-16.

Francesca Rapisarda analyzes the ‘museum outside the museum’,<sup>37</sup> considering its expansion towards unusual spaces as a surplus for museums, a possibility which does not replace the ‘concentrated’ building. However, the museographical model explained by Rapisarda perhaps epitomizes the closer example to the models here proposed for *Ars Aevi*, which means a museum completely spread through the territory, as briefly described in the working hypothesis.

Furthermore, it connects museums to the final part of the present Chapter, which considers a series of other cultural activities – characterized by both fruition and dissemination throughout a territory – that for their very nature disseminate contents across the external space, be it the city or the territory. In this vein, the weak boundaries of museums can be intended also as those among museums and other cultural practices and activities, which are bringing about an increasingly contamination of disciplines and sectors.

### 2.1.2 Times of revolution

The museum has undertaken a process of openness since the 1960s of last century. The years of the student protests of '68 brought about the rethinking and a sort of decolonization of museums, starting a process of transformation that nowadays cannot be considered definitely concluded.

Openness – which combines both physical and metaphorical features – has been expressed in different ways, employing notions and concepts new and radical such as democratization, empowerment, and participation. Concepts which had a great symbolic charge if considered within the epoch and the geographic and sociopolitical context of reference; we will see how ‘openness’ – initially originated by a strong revolutionary potential – will be then determined also by logics of cultural consumption.

Everything began when protests targeted and attacked the museum intended as the elitist and bourgeois institution, the temple of knowledge, well represented by the XIX century typology of rotunda. In 1966 Pierre Bourdieu, Alain Darbel and Dominique Schnapper published *The love of art: European art museums and their public*, a sociological research – covering 21 French art museums and 15 European art museums

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<sup>37</sup>Rapisarda F. (2007) *Il museo “fuori di sé”*. *Nuove spazialità dell’espore museografico*. In: *Museologia Scientifica*, 1, 70-80.

and conducted on the basis of visitors' interviews, questionnaires and direct observation – which showed that the entrance to the world of art was a privilege of the educated classes.

In May 1968, students demanded the suppression of all museums and the scattering of their collections across common daily places: “La Joconde au métro” was their slogan. At the same time museum professionals came together in Paris to object to museums, while in the US some artists united to reject art and institutions, and to claim alternative spaces such as empty warehouses for their artistic activities.<sup>38</sup> Between 1965 and 1970 bold museologists of the world announced the death of the museum – namely, of that instrument consecrated by tradition. Openness and democratization, as mentioned, had a strong revolutionary potential. A deep renovation process thus started.

### 2.1.3 Towards democratization

Strong personalities and inspirational figures helped germinate new concepts whose aim was to decolonize the museum and turn it into a development tool for grassroots communities, rather than a prestigious institution used to bolster the elite.<sup>39</sup> New typologies came into being, such as ecomuseums, community museums, neighborhood museums.

Effects of the museum revolution reached also the institutionalized museums, in terms of openness and democratization. Even the contemporary art museum became subject of deep transformations in the same years. In 1966 art historian Pierre Gaudibert initiated the ARC program – acronym of Animation, Recherche, Confrontation – inside the Musée d'art modern de la Ville de Paris. This state-funded organism aimed at launching a program of experimental activities, such as round tables and debates with artists and critics, in order to transform the museum into a lively space.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Duarte A., “Ecomuseum”: one of the many components of the New Museology, ECOMUSEUMS 2012, Proceedings of the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference of Ecomuseums, Community Museums and Living Communities, Seixal (Portugal), eds. by Lira S., Amoeda R., Pinheiro C., Davis P., Stefano M., Corsane G., 2012, p. 85.

<sup>39</sup>De Varine H., *Decolonising Museology*, ICOM News n.3, 2005, available at: [http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdf/ICOM\\_News/2005-3/ENG/p3\\_2005-3.pdf](http://icom.museum/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/ICOM_News/2005-3/ENG/p3_2005-3.pdf) (accessed: 08.08.2016)

<sup>40</sup>Ribaldi C., *Il Nuovo Museo. Origini e Percorsi*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 2005, pp. 29-30

Reflections on the museum nature became fundamental staples of the daily museum practice, the institution partly left behind its previous authority, towards an increasing **transparency, reliability and democratization**. In that period, following the student protests of '68, the utmost case of democratization in museums was represented by the establishment of the Centre George Pompidou in Paris. Shaken by the events of '68, when the student protests were about to overthrow the state, President of France George Pompidou attempted to direct part of the anarchical energy into institutional molds, and in early 70s he announced the project for a cultural center to be realized in a rough area of downtown Paris.

Architects Renzo Piano and Richard Rogers won the competition and realized the building in accordance with President's guidelines. The idea was to build an authentic interdisciplinary laboratory, emphasizing the democratic and experimental spirit of the place. One of the requirements was **the facility access without obstacles**; passers-by must feel free of entering the building through every side and not only through one specific entrance, and visitors must be tempted to go everywhere. Everything would be based on ease and visitors' freedom of participating in the Center initiatives, thus **flexibility and adaptability were core elements**.<sup>41</sup>

In presenting the project, Richard Rogers expanded the discourse of movement and openness, thus evoking a place dedicated to information, live entertainment – “like a cross between Times Square and the British Museum” – and eventually a more limp definition of culture. A similar conception aimed at broadening the museum's space, thus to engage a completely new audience. Piano's and Rogers' architectural innovations encountered revolutionary curatorial choices, inspired by the pan-European dialogue and the processes of interdisciplinary fecundation.<sup>42</sup>

Far from being an elitist and exclusive museum, the Pompidou was indeed conceived as an **agora open to the exchange of experiences and cultures**. It combined the features of 'temple' (the permanent collection) and 'forum' (the complex of different activities), it represented the new prototype of the cultural consumption of the society, therefore a place for studying, meeting up, shopping, eating, listening to debates, strolling around. According to Ritchie, it represented a dramatic shift in museum design

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<sup>41</sup>Schubert K., *Museo. Storia di un'idea. Dalla Rivoluzione Francese a oggi*, Il Saggiatore, Milano 2000, pp. 69-70

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.* p. 71.



and the image of museums in contemporary cultural life. Conceived as a technically and spatially flexible container for art, books, research and exploration, it provided, on an enormous scale, the opportunity for virtually any cultural content to be housed, including small objects, paintings, sculptures, site happenings, music etc.<sup>43</sup>

The Center activities included library, national museum of modern art and industrial design center, experimental gallery of contemporary art, documentation center, cinema, music research center, laboratory for children. The museum became a powerful communication machine within the urban space.

**Its architecture made it an urban and territorial landmark and a social catalyst, strengthening its relationship with the city.**<sup>44</sup>

The very nature of its entrance and its celebratory escalators look away the ‘from steps’ to high culture. It was, in its very essence, populist and freely accessible, and the strength of the public piazza in front of the building gave additional emphasis to the informality of the concept. There was no longer any notion of having to be ‘educated’ to participate in culture.<sup>45</sup>

## 2.2 New heritages, new expansions

### 2.2.1 An expanding patrimonialization

The time span between WWII and the present day is characterized by the proliferation of museums in Europe. In that phenomenon Massimo Negri recognizes two determinant factors that are identity and patrimonial issues. According to the author, there is an ongoing process of ‘expanding patrimonialization’, whereby new categories of cultural assets come to be institutionalized and become part of museum collections.<sup>46</sup>

Musealization is indeed a process by which a museum turns an object into an item of cultural heritage, transforming the status of the object into a museum object. It is a form of patrimonialization when an object of any

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<sup>43</sup>Ritchie I., *Architect's view*. In: Roger Miles & Lauro Zavala (eds.) *Towards the Museum of the Future, New European Perspectives*, Routledge, London & New York, 1994, p. 7.

<sup>44</sup>Ribaldi C., *Il Nuovo Museo* op. cit. pp. 29-30.

<sup>45</sup>Ritchie I., *Architect's view* op. cit. p. 7.

<sup>46</sup>Negri M., *La grande rivoluzione* op. cit. p. 14.

nature becomes part of the heritage. The musealized artwork becomes the bearer of a meaning with identifiable values. These identifiable values are, in terms of modern and contemporary art, stretched between the national and international contexts.<sup>47</sup>

We should first consider that patrimonialization – and as a consequence, musealization – involves dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, it is actually a process of selection. According to Alessandro Testa, it is a complex phenomenon, through which a specific “thing” is chosen, defined, studied, valorized and turned into a “property”. Around that property, a multitude of collective imaginations, passions, social and political claims, as well as a shared historic memory are constituted and constructed. Hence, everything that is able to mobilize psychological mechanisms through which a group of individuals, a human group, a region or a locality consider themselves (and are considered) as a community.

It can be argued that the paradigm of participation and bottom-up approaches in heritage matters, are also factors that determine that enlargement.

Heritages are increasingly intended as belonging to communities and as parts of those cultural processes in which social life is being produced and transformed. The group of social actors dealing with heritage is thus broadened, as well as its field of actions. All those aspects brought to a deeply transformation of the notion of cultural heritage.<sup>48</sup>

Massimo Negri<sup>49</sup> puts in relation **the enlargement of the family of cultural heritage with the couple in & out in museums** that, as abovementioned, is a constant with the contemporary museum way of being. The author refers to the relationship between museum as a physically delimited place and one or more portions of territory to whom the museum is connected. In order to comprehend that territory, the museum goes beyond its physical boundaries and expands outside, making entire portions of territory functioning according to museum rules and communicating with visitors as well. Especially for what regards those heritages that are difficult to be musealized according to conventional criteria, due to their dimensions, as in the case of wildlife and naturalistic heritages, which are pertinence of scientific and naturalistic museums and

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<sup>47</sup>Szekely M. (2014)*Contemporary Art Museums in Central Europe. Between International Discourse and (Re)building Strategies*, Études du CEFRES N° 17, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup>Tamma M., *Diritti culturali, patrimonializzazione, sostenibilità*. In: Zagato L. &Vecco M., *Citizens of Europe. Culture e diritti*, Edizioni Cà Foscari, Venezia 2015, p. 481.

<sup>49</sup>Negri M., *La grande rivoluzione* op. cit. p. 14.

centers. Also, the widespread in-situ conservation of archeological finds and sites raises the same question to archeological museums, which are increasingly becoming an articulate system of nuclei scattered in the urban tissue, where the museum acts as an interpretation center, assembling together the several pieces and offering an overall narration. We will see the case of city museums, another category that deals with dimensional issues, as the main object they show and interpret is the city itself.

The industrial archeology represents a new category of heritage whose musealization according to unconventional criteria began in UK during the 50s. The musealization of canals, railroad lines, mines was conceived as an attraction for visitors and as an engine for local development. Following the second museum revolution of the late 60s, in France the ecomuseum was established as a museum device that corresponds to a community and not to a limited territory, a museum with no visitors but with inhabitants.

### 2.2.2 Ecomuseums

Considering the relation in & out, the ecomuseum is even more radical, because it proposes a model of museum without boundaries, to live rather than to visit. It represents a museum-mirror of local population and which places man in his natural environment. It is a territorial museum, where 'items' are articulated places like a region, a coastline, a mountain, an oral tradition (patrimonialization and musealization of new typologies of heritage, such as the intangible, here return) so what remains of the museum-building is an interpretation center.

Museums and heritages have been increasingly intended as tools for the empowerment of communities, instruments for the education and the development of communities and in the hands of communities. In this sense, museums shifted from being institutions to being processes of change, able to create interactions between people and cultural heritage. In this vein, items do not have an intrinsic value, but the population must attribute importance and roles to them, in order to make their identification, conservation, collection and usage possible. Conservation, for instance, is relative; an item or a monument is not preserved for scientific, historical and aesthetical reasons attributed by specialists, but for the importance attributed by the community, the population or a part of it, due to its being a resource for the future and the

development. Heritage, both natural and cultural, is thus a common good, and the responsibility for its conservation and use cannot be delegated only to politicians and professionals, this responsibility must be shared, and felt by everyone.<sup>50</sup>

The studies of Brazilian educator Paulo Freire on libertarian education methods brought contemporary museologists to consider and apply to museums' practices his concept of 'conscientization' – i.e. the process of developing a critical awareness of one's social reality through reflection and action, where the action is intended as the process of changing the reality<sup>51</sup> – and then to elaborate the 'museology of liberation', namely an approach that can help communities find within themselves and from outside the strength and the means to live and act as the agents of their own futures.<sup>52</sup> The English translation of 'conscientization' is the commonly used 'empowerment', which refers to a given community's rights, responsibilities, roles and even powers towards its own present, future and environment.

The plural nature of ecomuseums—as community-based organizations, which are primarily concerned with caring for local heritage, while also being a vehicle for social, economic and environmental sustainable development—means that some sort of partnership governance is common.<sup>53</sup>

As observed, patrimonialization stands in the hands of community. If we consider ecomuseums from another perspective, and we reflect upon the sociological phenomenology which leads a specific community to undertake such a grassroots initiative, we can note that the community members share a condition in society rather than an experience<sup>54</sup> – and they identify with a 'resistance identity'.<sup>55</sup> That community formulates a museological framework, as a form of mobilization against threats to cultural or natural heritages in tension areas, and for the protection of the community

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<sup>50</sup>De Varine H., *Le radici del futuro, Il patrimonio culturale al servizio dello sviluppo locale*, CLUEB, Bologna 2005, pp. 282-284.

<sup>51</sup><http://www.freire.org/paulo-freire/concepts-used-by-paulo-freire> (Accessed: 04/08/2016)

<sup>52</sup>De Varine H., *Decolonising* op. cit.

<sup>53</sup>Bowden A. & Ciesielska M. (2016) *Ecomuseums as cross-sector partnerships: governance, strategy and leadership*. In: *Public Money & Management*, 36:1, 23-30, p. 23.

<sup>54</sup>Assunção dos Santos P. (2010) *Introduction: to understand New Museology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. In: *Cadernos de Sociomuseologia – Sociomuseology III*, n. 37, 5-11, p. 8.

<sup>55</sup>Giménez-Cassina E. (2010) *Who am I? An identity crisis. Identity in the new museologies and the role of the museum professional*. In: *Cadernos op. cit.*, 25-42, p. 28.

‘sense of belonging’. From this point of view, we can define museums as defense mechanism:

What are the fundamental frustrations that create museums? The fear of disappearance, the death, the oblivion as the most obvious death of anything that is not physical. In the dramatic change we are exposed to, the success is paid by insecurity, instability, fragility we feel as individuals, as groups, as communities, cultures... [...] To assure continuity and survival, we create museums, among other defense mechanisms.<sup>56</sup>

### 2.2.3 City museums

As it has been recently argued, also city museums, namely those institutions historically in charge of representing the city, recording its developments and safeguarding its memory and history,<sup>57</sup> defined as ‘museums about and in the city’, thus connected with both the strategy of the city and with its citizens,<sup>58</sup> are nowadays changing. They are leaving behind their past form of mere documents of local history and they are increasingly transforming into a cultural infrastructure for the direct experimentation of life and of urban paths.<sup>59</sup>

In other words, they are promoting the idea that their role should go beyond the mere collection and display of the city history, towards a more active involvement in society and in the current urban issues.<sup>60</sup> It means that the relationship between the museum and the city is being changed and renovated, museum spaces are opening themselves toward the city, intertwining with urban public spaces, while the city, at its turn, is entering into

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<sup>56</sup>Sola T., “The Innovation of Ecomuseums”, available at: [https://www.academia.edu/20040838/The\\_Innovation\\_of\\_Ecomuseums](https://www.academia.edu/20040838/The_Innovation_of_Ecomuseums) published as a chapter of his book: *Essays On Museums And Their Theory: towards the cybernetic museum*, Helsinki, Finnish Museums Association, 1997.

<sup>57</sup>Lanz F., “Placing the City within its Museum”: *The Relationship between heritage, people and territory in the Italian tradition of civic museums*. In: Whitehead C., Mason R., Eckersley S. (eds.) “Placing” *Europe in the museum, People(s), places, identities*, Mela Books 08, Politecnico di Milano, Milano 2013, 95-112, p. 96.

<sup>58</sup>Kistemaker R., *City Museums as Centres of Civic Dialogue?*, Amsterdam Historical Museum, Amsterdam 2006, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup>Negri M., *La grande rivoluzione* op. cit. p. 85.

<sup>60</sup>Lanz F., *Placing the city* op. cit. p. 96.

the museum. A spatial interaction resulting in a mutual enrichment and in the redefinition of their reciprocal significance, living practices and possibilities.<sup>61</sup>

The case of *museo diffuso* is an Italian category and perhaps the most radical in terms of relationship between the city and the museum. It is an Italian term which is impossible to translate into English, but similar approaches can be found in city museums abroad. The *museo diffuso* is a type of museum that aggregates different places such as a group of museums, local cultural services, libraries and universities, archeological and historical sites and any kind of local cultural resource which is evidence of the culture and identity of the territory.<sup>62</sup>

According to Daniele Jalla, the *museo diffuso* does not have the function of representing and narrating the city reality through a collection that needs to be acquired, conserved or promoted, as its unique item is indeed the city itself. The city is here referred to as a great open air museum, in its total dimension to traverse, observe and comprehend, and it is defined as a living collection and an evolving palimpsest, where the museum acts as an interpretation center, with the mission of promoting a context or a theme, namely, to offer interpretations.<sup>63</sup> The center serves as a sort of ante-room, an introduction, a special means or catalyst via which visitors are sent out into the city, intended as the real museum or field of exploration.<sup>64</sup>

According to Daniele Jalla, the *museo diffuso* is an extroverted and centrifugal system – also in consideration of its functions of active safeguarding of the heritage situated within the context – while the interpretation center corresponds to the museum heart and brain, and to the gateway to the city, as well.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Lanz F. & Bassanelli M., *The museum with-in the city. An overview of museographical practices in and out the museum*, paper presented at the CAMOC 2016 ANNUAL CONFERENCE - ICOM 24TH GENERAL CONFERENCE: MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES, July 2016. Available at: Academia.edu.

<sup>62</sup>Lanz F., *Placing the city* op. cit. p. 100.

<sup>63</sup>Jalla D., *Il museo della città. I modelli del passato, le esigenze del presente*. In: Gennaro E. (eds.) *Il museo, la città e gli uomini. La ricerca antropologica al servizio dell'educazione museale*, Provincia di Ravenna, Ravenna 2009, 11-16, pp. 13-14.

<sup>64</sup>Collins A. M., *The city is the museum!* In: *City Museums*, Museum International, n. 187, vol. 47, n. 3, 1995, pp.30-34.

<sup>65</sup>Jalla D., *Il museo della città* op. cit. pp. 13-14.

#### 2.2.4 Participation

Towards the end of the 90s, many forces contributed to the opening of a new chapter on participation in museum affairs.<sup>66</sup> The notion of participation in the museum context can be defined as the attention of the public, today increasingly in the arena of leisure and education, both as a part of museum general policies – in accordance with its statute of democratic institution – and also as part of commercialization policies.<sup>67</sup> According to Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt and Runnel this is an effect of first of all the ongoing democratic revolution, intensified by the end of the cold war, the breakup of the Soviet Union and the consequent reshaping of Europe.<sup>68</sup> That democratization of society is increasing the need for transparency and accountability that in turn has directed public engagement to the attention of the museum.<sup>69</sup>

Even though in the present work new communication technologies and virtual fruition are not considered in the discussion of dissemination in museums and cultural activities, it is important to mention how ‘interactivity’ has been served to revitalize the museum and bring it closer to its audiences. More precisely, the new age of transformations in museum and the emerging of the paradigm of participation – as the core element of the third museum revolution – was determined by social inclusion policies in UK, the strengthening of emancipation movements (such as the indigenous movements in North America) and the **growing multiculturalism in Europe**. The new paradigm began to focus on the relations between museums and multiple – some new – stakeholders. Dealing with stakeholders implies negotiation, influence and sharing of ownership.<sup>70</sup>

#### 2.2.5 Museum & Identity: old and new barriers

As argued by Sharon Macdonald contemporary museums, especially those in intensely globalized localities – which are often entangled in old (extremely bounded and ethnocentric) forms of identity as legacies of other epochs – meet the challenges of

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<sup>66</sup>Assunção dos Santos P., *Introduction* op. cit. p. 6.

<sup>67</sup>Pruulmann-Vengerfeldt P. & Runnel P. (2011) *When the museum becomes the message for participating audiences*. In: *Communication Management Quarterly: Časopis za upravljanje komuniciranjem*, 21, 157–178, p. 157.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid. p. 158.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid. p. 157.

<sup>70</sup>Assunção dos Santos P., *Introduction* op. cit. p. 7.

current global phenomena such as migrations and mobility.<sup>71</sup> For instance, old national museums were European inventions, established to define and stabilize knowledge and national identities in a continent possessing a rich history of expansion, innovation, migration and territorial conflict.<sup>72</sup>

Built to consolidate national identities in the dawn of nation-states in Europe, these museums should be able nowadays to offer narrations, exhibition systems and outreach activities no longer representing bounded cultures and identities, but post-national, trans-cultural identities, which are, in Macdonald's words, multiple and fluid.<sup>73</sup>

The multicultural representation based on the understanding of the notions of culture in ethnic, religious or national terms – the 'bounded identities' filtered through the privileged, dominant and prevailing eye of the so-called 'tolerant societies' – has the risk of representing and crystallizing discrete and distinct communities in line with these essentialist criteria.

As the scholar argues,<sup>74</sup> not all the museums are seeking for the representation of fluidity with the attempt to demolish old (and new) barriers. We have seen, for instance, the case of ecomuseums and community museums, which are typologies in which a specific community reflects itself and develops a sense of belonging around a common heritage intensely related to the local dimension. We have even observed as these museums often function as defense mechanisms, in order to safeguard a type of 'cultural diversity', generally against the 'global threats'. In particular, grassroots initiatives are undertaken by communities that share a common condition in society and who see their heritage endangered, as in the case of minorities.

It is interesting to recall here that 'cultural heritage', the very outcome of a process of patrimonialization, is an intellectual construct (both in terms of institutions and collective imagery) of the industrialized and globalized West, which seeks for cultural identities, authenticity, rhetoric of belonging.<sup>75</sup>

As anthropologist Ugo Fabietti argues, many non-western countries have also undertaken processes of patrimonialization, also as effects of the action of transnational

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<sup>71</sup>Macdonald S., *Museums* op. cit.

<sup>72</sup>Aronsson P. & Knell S. (eds) *National Museums making Histories in a Diverse Europe*, EuNaMus Report n. 7, Linköping University Electronic Press, Linköping, Sweden, 2012 p. 7.

<sup>73</sup>Macdonald S., *Museums* op. cit.

<sup>74</sup>Ivi.

<sup>75</sup>Testa A. (2012) *The Cultural Heritage. Anthropological Observations*. In: *Annali di Museologia Scientifica e Naturalistica dell'Università di Ferrara*, pp. 76-79 p. 79.



agencies such as UNESCO and UN. Those countries, even if they do not share with Europe the same sensibility towards their own past and history, they adopt practices of patrimonialization in order to access material and symbolical resources. Material resources can be bestowed by international organizations, and symbolic resources can legitimate the unity of countries born and built on the formal model of the European nation-state.<sup>76</sup>

The debate on patrimonialization is rather hot,<sup>77</sup> since scholars usually point out that patrimonialization, even if it is considered a defense mechanism protecting cultural diversities and counteracting globalizing pressures, is itself a global and homologating instrument<sup>78</sup> and in some cases, it even changes the relationship of people to what they do:

They [heritage interventions] change how people understand their culture and themselves. They change the fundamental conditions for cultural production and reproduction. Change is intrinsic to culture, and measures intended to preserve, conserve, safeguard, and sustain particular cultural practices are caught between freezing the practice and addressing the inherently processual nature of culture.<sup>79</sup>

Probably, comparing a range of museums situated within a specific territory, identity and geographical barriers represented and promoted by those museums themselves would result, on the whole, in something ambiguous and contradictory, problematic and critical.

Unitary, ‘universal’ narrations are difficult to reach, especially if we consider those societies that are divided by ethno-national dynamics, where cultural institutions like museums are employed as strong political instruments, for the reinforcement of some identities and the omission of some others. For instance, political and ethnic claims among states and regions of Eastern Europe are perceptible in the geographical

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<sup>76</sup>Fabietti U., *Beni Culturali e Patrimonio Culturale*, available at:

<http://www.cresm.unimib.it/files/uploadredazione10/Fabietti.pdf> (Accessed: 06/10/2016)

<sup>77</sup>Cfr. Fabietti, *Beni Culturali* op. cit.; cfr. Palumbo B., *L'Unesco e il campanile*, *Antropologia, politica e beni culturali in Sicilia orientale*, Meltemi editore, Roma 2003.

<sup>78</sup>Grillo M.T., *Note per una riflessione critica sulla patrimonializzazione*. In: *Il lavoro culturale*, March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Available at: <http://www.lavoroculturale.org/note-per-una-riflessione-critica-sulla-patrimonializzazione/> (Accessed: 04/10/2016)

<sup>79</sup>Kirshenblatt-Gimblett B. (2004) *Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production*. In: *Museum International*, n. 221-222, Vol. 56, n. 1-2, 52-65, pp. 58-59.

representation of national borders arranged by some national museums.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, the territorial expansion of the European Union towards east, thus the access of countries of the former Soviet bloc is another point of observation. Most of these countries have left behind the communist past and developed the rhetoric of the ‘return to Europe’, undertaken both in public and museum discourses.<sup>81</sup>

It means that historical, social changes, geopolitical shifts, ethnonationalisms and regionalisms have continuously challenged the role of museums as identity producers, their narratives and behavior.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Yugoslavia, that brought about the formation of new emerging states, are points of observation of the utmost importance to analyze the couple museum-identity barriers. Still today museums are employed in the **formation of new emerging states**, according to a process of conscious state-building, being thus deployed **in the articulation of bounded national identities**.<sup>82</sup> On the other hand, museums could be even used by sub-state groups in order to build counter-state nationalisms, in accordance with ethnic identifications promoted for political purposes.<sup>83</sup>

## 2.3 Museums in the urban space

### 2.3.1 Physical dissemination and mobility in contemporary museographical practices

As argued by Francesca Rapisarda,<sup>84</sup> all the phenomena so far mentioned have challenged museographical practices, which today are increasingly reflecting museums’ needs of accessibility, participation, engagement, and needs of enlarging its audience.

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<sup>80</sup>Huma A. R. (2012) *Contested borders. Representing boundaries within Moldovan museums*. In: Whitehead C., Mason R., Eckersley S. (eds.) *“Placing” Europe* op. cit. 45-60, p. 47.

<sup>81</sup>Cadot C. (2012) *Europe’s History Museums: Houses of Doom?* In: Whitehead C., Mason R., Eckersley S. (eds.) *“Placing” Europe* op. cit. 35-44.

<sup>82</sup>Cfr. Fontana G. (2013) *War by Other Means: Cultural Policy and the Politics of Corporate Consociation in Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In: *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, 19:4, 447-466.

<sup>83</sup>Ivi.

<sup>84</sup>Rapisarda F., *Il museo “fuori di sé”* op. cit.

The author analyzes the expansion of museums outside their traditional boundaries, thus towards new spaces in other parts of the town, directly in contact with the urban context. The author reflects upon the typical condition of contemporary exhibition practices.

The contemporary museographical approach comprehends both the traditional one, as well as the 'spread museography', which does not replace the former, but represents a surplus, a possibility for museums. As a surplus, the museum experiences in public space do not undermine the traditional types, but on the contrary, they reinforce and integrate them.

The spread museography identifies a different configuration of the museum, which is thus widened and expanded into the urban realm, incorporating alternative and unusual context where showing and communicating parts of its contents. The spaces of contemporary museography are indeed different from those traditional, and they overcome the conventional architectural limits of the institution. The museum exhibiting mode now involves new spaces and expands towards the external, sometimes in those parts of the cities which had been intended for other purposes such as railway stations, airports, subways, shops, streets and squares.

The present expansion towards the external as an attempt to experiment new and renovated relationships with publics and contexts, is a trend which corresponds to the characters of the contemporary, which is dominated by mass communication, the dynamicity of life and an artistic production oriented to a more direct contact with the public (just to name a few examples, land art, site-specific, relational art, art which is produced in/for the public space). Even if contaminations between museum and its surrounding world exist since ever, the influence of commercial practices, technologies, socio-cultural aspects and the just mentioned contemporary art practices are today more evident. Hence, the museum is influenced by the external world or seeks for contributes and inspirations from it.

As we observed, today the museum is living a period of deep transformations, and it is increasingly demolishing its boundaries and opening up new possibilities. From the elitist institution for the educated social class, since the half of last century it has been increasingly turned into an institution for the mass, visited by crowds with different education and social status. The museographical forms here discussed try to rethink the

institution and its exhibition spaces, thus its presence and shape within the city: the new museum configuration, which incorporates unusual venues, is more integrated into the urban context, and perhaps closer to citizens and their everyday places, and it expresses a “more democratic and social idea of self”. Projecting the ‘dissemination’ in public space is thus a recent challenge to bring about a **broader cultural diffusion**.

The new exhibition venues are occasions for museums to reach their publics, facilitating the contact with the artworks. By expanding in the city, the museum appropriates all the possible spaces, and in some cases it even tries to incorporate the aspect of ‘mobility’, peculiar characteristic of the contemporary epoch. It indeed adopts **communication strategies** typical of our present age and it becomes a ‘mobile’ museum, which disseminates contents in movement. It moves around, in order to reach its audience, it can be dismantled and reassembled, it even identifies with transports such as trains and buses. It can assume different spatial configurations depending on the context in which it can be inserted.

Expanding contents and bringing them to places of people’s everyday life could encourage a more familiar reception of the work of art, but also curiosity and interest also among those people who usually do not frequent museums – and which can become now potential visitors. The museum institution opens itself to a different relationship with the city, which is directly involved in the exposition, and inside which the museum results as more integrated. Furthermore, the city can be enriched by the valorization of unknown or degraded places, and according to the author,<sup>85</sup> even people’s life and the place general quality can result as improved.

### 2.3.2 The museum in/is the urban space: iconic buildings, museum clusters

Ways for expanding contents into the external environment can involve also the immediate proximity of a museum, through the collocation of artworks in its surrounding space, creating a visual continuity between inside and outside. But the building itself is increasingly turning into a tool for the communication with the external environment, by means of the spectacularization of its surface, thus of its architectural shape.

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<sup>85</sup>ibid. pp. 79-80.

New museum architectures are conceived as artworks themselves. Well-renowned is for instance the case of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao where architecture as well as urban aspects – it is said – are more interesting than the content inside. Museum forms, especially in the case of newfangled edifices, can perform exhibition functions, recalling with their shapes the contents enshrined inside – according to Liisa Uusitalo and Sofia Pusa new modern or postmodern museum buildings use architecture as metaphors for the contemporary art forms they show and thus building the museum's identity.<sup>86</sup>

The phenomenon of iconic museums can be analyzed taking in consideration both the museum branding and also the city branding as an approach of culture-led regeneration. Pusa and Uusitalo argue that creating a strong brand is of the utmost importance for art museums, in order to differentiate themselves from the competition and to attract non-expert audiences.<sup>87</sup> In other words, marketing and branding are seen as necessary tools for museums to maintain their position among other valued cultural institutions in society. As abovementioned, the typology based on iconic architecture becomes a 'symbolic' element for the creation of museum identity in terms of brand, namely, how the organization defines itself and what it strives for. When the meanings associated with brand become widely accepted, the brand can be said to turn into an icon or symbol, hence representing something beyond itself: visual imagery, metaphors, the museum name, the heritage.<sup>88</sup> As museums provide several intangible, symbolic benefits for communities, *the museum building and its architecture may also become a symbol for the brand and serve as a source of national or local pride.*<sup>89</sup>

From the perspective of cities, museums and the contests that emanate from their forms – increasingly those of iconic buildings – represent a tool employed by culture-led regeneration policies that are being implemented to re-image the city. In 1994, Ian Ritchie wrote that external appearance, image, of the museum, was an active ingredient in the 'battle of the cities' that was already being waged throughout Europe at that time.<sup>90</sup> It is rather clear that the reference context is the new global economic scenario

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<sup>86</sup>Uusitalo L. &Pusa S. (2014) *Creating Brand Identities in Art Museums: A Case Study*. In: International Journal of Arts Management, vol. 17, n. 1, 18-30.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid. p. 22.

<sup>89</sup>Ivi.

<sup>90</sup>Ritchie I., *Architect's view* op. cit. p. 12.

that has driven cities towards urban entrepreneurialism and holistic marketing approaches.<sup>91</sup> Cities need an image and a brand to position themselves in the chosen target market, to communicate their values, the assets that make them unique and better than their competitors.

The aspect of re-imagining the city is of the utmost importance in these processes. Second-tier cities or cities which suffered from a negative image seek for international star architects<sup>92</sup> to see their image recovered and perceived as upgraded and regenerated. As Evans mentions, the term regeneration – or better to say, ‘site-based regeneration’ – has been defined as the transformation of a place – residential, commercial or open space – that has displayed the symptoms of physical, social and/or economic decline breathing new life and vitality into an ailing community, industry and area [bringing] sustainable, long term improvements to local quality of life, including **economic, social and environmental needs**.<sup>93</sup>

Cultural activity could be therefore a driver, a catalyst or at the very least a ‘key player’ in the regeneration process. When it represents the catalyst and the engine of it, we can talk of culture-led regeneration. The profile of that cultural activity is recognized in those **cultural flagship projects or complexes** and all those activities that are likely to have a high-public profile.<sup>94</sup>

According to Grodach<sup>95</sup> cultural flagship developments are those large-scale, iconic museums and art centers that are intended to enhance the city image while catalyzing private sector investments and attracting tourists to the surrounding area. The concept of flagship cultural development is rather fluid and it represents a typology that can be very different, depending on cases and contexts.<sup>96</sup>

Investigating the relationship between museums and the urban space, we can observe that museums physically occupy a privileged and representative place in the city, but the

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<sup>91</sup>Sainz M. A. (2012) *(Re)Building an Image for a City: Is a Landmark Enough? Bilbao and the Guggenheim Museum, 10 Years Together*. In: Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 42, 1, 100-132.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid. p. 114.

<sup>93</sup>LGA (LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION), *A change of scene: the challenge of tourism in regeneration*, LGA/DCMS, London 2000, p. 3. Cited by Evans G. (2005) *Measure for Measure: Evaluating the Evidence of Culture's Contribution to Regeneration*. In: Urban Studies, vol. 42, 5/6, 959-983, p. 967.

<sup>94</sup>Evans G., *Measure for Measure* op. cit. p. 968.

<sup>95</sup>Grodach C. (2008) Museums as urban catalysts: the role of urban design in flagship cultural development. In: Journal of urban design, 13, 2, 195-212, p. 195.

<sup>96</sup>Comunian R. & Mould O. (2014) *The weakest link: creative industries, flagship cultural projects and regeneration*. In: City, Culture and Society, vol. 5, 2, 65-74, p. 67.

museum itself also creates the place, defines it and gives it meanings; that place is the museum cluster, where 95% of the most visited and influential art museums in the world already stand, forming physical concentrations.<sup>97</sup> It is inside the cluster that museums establish themselves as strong symbols of the connection between architecture, urbanism and tourism – in other words, of the ‘(to)urbanistic’ aspect,<sup>98</sup> namely, the museum place and relationship with the city and the citizens, both permanent or temporary – as well as architecture manifestos and icons of postmodern culture.<sup>99</sup> According to Nikolic,

With the enormous growth of the number, size and importance of the museums, in recent decades it has increased also the number, size and, above all, the visibility and the impact of the agglomerations they form. These clusters are a multidimensional phenomenon: cultural, public and urban, but also social, symbolic, political, economic and touristic, a factor of urban and even national regeneration, branding and repositioning. At the same time, with the diversification of cultural and touristic forms, with the increased mobility and multiple visits, the tourist is being converted into a temporary citizen with a personal relationship with the city, demanding new content, quality and complexity from the urban spaces and offer.<sup>100</sup>

Agglomerated into clusters, museums are enriched by other meanings and their urban aspect becomes crucial. Within the cluster, the museum illustrates its transfer into the public space, where its urban dimension acquires the primary importance as the very process of grouping, as the coming-out of the museum into the city and as the coming-in of the city into the museum:

[...] in the cluster, out of which it becomes almost impossible to contemplate the museum, the museum is changing too; the meanings and its basic aspects are changing. I argue that in the museum project the (to)urbanistic aspect [...] takes precedence over its museographic and architectonic aspect. The content – collection and display – and the architecture of the museum merge into the cultural density and touristic

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<sup>97</sup>Nikolić M. (2012) *City of Museums: Museum Cluster as a Manifesto of the (To)Urbanistic Paradigm Shift*. Proceedings of the 6th Conference of the International Forum on Urbanism TOURbanISM-toURBANISM, January 25th-27th, 2012 in Barcelona. Barcelona: Escola Tècnica Superior d'Arquitectura de Barcelona - UPC, IFOU, 2012, pp. 1-10, p. 2.

<sup>98</sup>Ivi.

<sup>99</sup>Ivi.

<sup>100</sup>Ivi.

offer of the cluster, highlighting the place and urbanism of the museum in the foreground.<sup>101</sup>

The urban form represents a key component of the identity of the museum cluster and even its brand, able to promote cultural, urban and touristic references. Groups of museums conquer the whole urban morphology, assemble themselves in blocks, streets, squares, neighborhoods, parks, hills, islands and banks, hence they obtain legibility and qualities of urban places integrated into the life and structure of the city.

Important cities of the world have developed more museum clusters and connected them in a whole by means of infrastructures with entirely new proportions and potentials. The result is often that of spectacular urban gestures, known as the “city of museums” as a cultural, educational and tourist landscape in the new scale of the city.<sup>102</sup> The “city of museums” orders the museums of the city in an urban museum system and integrates the most emblematic urban spaces in the museum routes. It accentuates, reactivates and connects in a whole urban, green and water elements, confirming itself as a generator of identity, structure and coherence of the city and renovating the (to)urban aspect of the museum.

## 2.4 What is going on in the urban space?

In conclusion, two other cultural activities are considered, as they are characterized both by fruition and dissemination of contents in the urban space: outdoor cultural life and public art. Considering these activities is crucial: we can indeed recognize some features and concepts we already came across to discussing of museums; and then argue that similar needs and trends in contemporary society lead to similar solutions. They are both employed as flagship developments related to culture-led regeneration, thus to improve the city/territory image and to build its branding and marketing policies, they are characterized by the revitalization of places, the making culture in unconventional,

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<sup>101</sup>Ivi.

<sup>102</sup>Nikolić M. (2012) *Culture and Ideology in the City Structure. From Cultural Acropolis to City of Knowledge*. In: Mako V., Blagojević M. R. & Vukotić Lazar M. (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Conference ARCHITECTURE AND IDEOLOGY*, September 28<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> 2012 in Belgrade, Serbia, AF UB, ULUPUDS, 772-781, p. 779.



unusual or unknown places and the consequent regaining possession of the ‘urban realm’ by citizens, and even by audience/community participation.

#### 2.4.1 Public Art

First of all, the concept of public art here intended is what some authors defined through a negation definition: public art is not merely art placed outside.<sup>103</sup> It is art that has as its goal a desire to engage with its audiences and to create spaces – whether material, virtual or imagined – within which people can identify themselves, perhaps by creating a renewed reflection on community, on the uses of public spaces or on our behavior within them.<sup>104</sup> It is an artistic activity that takes place in the public space and it is motivated, projected, realized and perceived as a function of its public nature.<sup>105</sup>

**In terms of perception of public art,**<sup>106</sup> the public represents the purpose of the artwork, being both creator and integral part of contents and meanings (along with the site of production) through the experience and the perception of artworks installed in a specific site.<sup>107</sup> As reported by Zebracki, public art in its spaces of production writes on the symbolic landscape of cities, while it is read and rewritten by its publics in particularly situated and articulated spaces and times. Audiences of public art are usually undirected observers in the open urban field, in sharp contrast with the “directed”, specific, audiences that voluntarily choose to visit culture and arts venues.

**In terms of artistic (and relational) process,** it is interesting to underline social and economical implications of public art, as a challenge to urban regeneration and as an inclusive practice, for its collaborative nature, which poses the challenge of negotiating social differences.<sup>108</sup>

For a long time, as argued by Sacco, public art was mainly an exercise of celebrative rhetoric, be it the traditional and conventional monument, the nostalgic citation, the

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<sup>103</sup>Sharp J., Pollock V. & Paddison R. (2005) *Just Art for a Just City: Public Art and Social Inclusion in Urban Regeneration*. In: *Urban Studies*, vol. 42, 5/6, 1001-1023, pp. 1003-1004.

<sup>104</sup>Ivi.

<sup>105</sup>Sacco P. L. (2006) *Arte Pubblica e Sviluppo Locale: Utopia o Realtà Possibile?* In: *Economia della Cultura*, XVI, 3, 285-294, p. 286.

<sup>106</sup>Cfr. Hoet J., *Chambres d’Amis: a museumventures out*, in *Chambres d’Amis, exhibition catalogue*, Museum van Hedendaagse Kunst, Ghent 1986, p. 347.

<sup>107</sup>Cfr. Zebracki M. (2013) *Beyond public artopia: public art as perceived by its publics*, *GeoJournal*, 78, 303-317.

<sup>108</sup>Massey D. & Rose G. (2003) *Personal views: Public Art research project*. Milton Keynes, The Open University. Cited by Zebracki M., *Beyond public artopia* op. cit. p. 305.

eclectic postmodern production or even a sort of vested right of local artists.<sup>109</sup> Drawing a micro-history of the metamorphosis of the concept, Sacco argues that public art from the idea of monument, has increasingly expanded towards the concepts of ornament/decoration, street furniture, tool for urban regeneration, identity symbol, relational space, relational process, medial sculpture, relational narrative. Hence, a progressive, ineluctable evolution towards more abstract and more intangible forms of intervention,<sup>110</sup> whose very origins can be recognized during the 60s of the last century, when artists' motto was 'we won't never finish inside a museum'.<sup>111</sup>

As mentioned, public art schemes are often employed as culture-led regeneration policies.<sup>112</sup> From this perspective Sacco<sup>113</sup> argues that it can have an important role in the accumulation of intangible and essential assets on which a local system needs to develop. In terms of human and informative capital, public art can play a role of paramount importance in stimulating the collective disposition in apprehending and reflecting. Especially if it is conceived, proposed and managed through actions of preparation, involvement and elaboration engaging different groups of social actors.

Artists choose streets, squares instead of galleries and museums, in order to reach a wider public, which is made up of participants rather than spectators. Artists should be thus geared to express others by means of themselves, and have a special sensibility to work in shared spaces and on wide-ranging themes.<sup>114</sup> Artists who work in public places should know and meet citizens, the histories of the place and narrations, as the public work should take the city as nourishment, and be able to tell to citizens about themselves.<sup>115</sup>

In terms of social capital, public art can stimulate social cohesion within specific groups or between groups, acting as a bridge. Considering the symbolic and identity charge, it can offer to the local community a powerful channel of self-representation and awareness, able to call into question the more consolidated identity stereotypes.

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<sup>109</sup>Sacco P. L., *Arte pubblica e sviluppo locale* op. cit. p. 285.

<sup>110</sup>Ivi.

<sup>111</sup>Cfr. Hers F., *L'avventura di Nouveaux Commanditaires*. In: Pietromarchi B. (eds.) *Il luogo [non] comune. Arte, spazio pubblico ed estetica urbana in Europa*, Actar, Barcelona 2005, 82-87, p. 86.

<sup>112</sup>Evans G., *Measure for Measure* op. cit.

<sup>113</sup>Sacco P. L., *Arte pubblica e sviluppo locale* op. cit. p. 288.

<sup>114</sup>Scardi G. (2006) *L'Arte Pubblica in Italia: alcune esperienze significative*. In: *Economia della Cultura*, XVI, 3, 295-302, p. 295.

<sup>115</sup>Seminar with Alberto Garutti – *Riserve Urbane: Arte Pubblica e Rigenerazione*, Marostica (Vicenza, Italy), April 22, 2016.

The scholar, concluding the discussion on the relationship between public art and territory, recognizes three phases in the life cycle of public art.<sup>116</sup> The first is indeed the already seen flagship development, when the image and the perception of the city are emphasized. The second phase is integration, with the increasing of economical and social value of public space. The third phase is that of culturalization, when the public space becomes a real platform for relationality and the construction of social relations, awareness of local critical situations, to struggle degradation, for the re-appropriation of historical memory, for experimentations and innovation on various fields. In other words, residents access to the new opportunities offered by the (inclusive and democratic) cultural development of the city,<sup>117</sup> which becomes occasion for self-determination, empowerment, creation of capabilities.<sup>118</sup>

#### 2.4.2 Outdoor cultural life

Within that definition, Pilotti includes all those forms of outdoor experiences of participation such as street theaters, festivals, one-off events. In those forms, the author identifies shared experiences by both artists and communities of users, whose interaction becomes a source of knowledge and the channel through which the experience can be transmitted. In these experiences, the territory plays an increasing active function: the inclusive logics are improved by scattering the artistic activities across the territory, bringing about an increased level of participation and exposure to art.<sup>119</sup>

Both the physical context of the venue and the territory at large are important and interrelated dimensions for the content creation and the dynamics of the experience.

As seen, the territory represents a catalyst for participation and inclusion, due to the proximity of people with the venues. According to Augusto, the main characteristic of festival is their being aesthetical experiences far from places designated for culture, and taking place in open spaces or unusual environments such as squares and streets. When cultural activities are organized in unusual places, in peripheral areas, or in rooms

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<sup>116</sup>Sacco P. L., *Arte pubblica e sviluppo locale* op. cit. pp. 291-294.

<sup>117</sup>See also: Evans G., *Measure for Measure* op. cit.; Sharp J., Pollock V. & Paddison R., *Just Art* op. cit.

<sup>118</sup>Sacco P. L., *Arte pubblica e sviluppo locale* op. cit. p. 291.

<sup>119</sup>Pilotti L., *Linee ecologiche del valore nei rapporti tra territorio e management della cultura*. In: Sibilio Parri B. (eds.) *Creare e valorizzare i distretti museali*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2004, 41-70, pp. 54-55.

intended for other functions, a process of “re-appropriation” of the territory could take place, which means for citizens to discover edifices or urban areas in some cases never known before,<sup>120</sup> that which are in turn enriched (and ‘regenerated’) with new meanings. The physical context and its intrinsic qualities – alongside with the aspect of interaction – is thus an essential ingredient for the experiential dimension and the contents formation.<sup>121</sup>

Drawing the distinctive features of festivals and cultural events, Solima mentions the rootedness in the territory, which means in terms of mutual coherence between local development and the event organization, but also in terms of artistic and cultural contents of the event, whose *raison d’être* can be found in the expression of tangible and intangible values which characterize a given local context. Hence, according to a representation of the territory which takes account of both material and immaterial assets.<sup>122</sup> The second aspect is the spectacular dimension, which can improve a specific area in terms of attractiveness, image and visibility, therefore it can have positive effects on the territory/city repositioning.<sup>123</sup> The relationship between festival and territory is thus bidirectional: the festival benefits from the territory (theater of the event) and the territory, in most of the cases, reaches distinctive features deriving from the event itself.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>120</sup>Solima L., *Eventi culturali e creazione di valore per il territorio*, Paiola M. & Grandinetti R. (eds.) *Città in Festival. Nuove esperienze di marketing territoriale*, Franco Angeli, Milano 2009, 38-54, p. 41.

<sup>121</sup>Grandinetti R. & Paiola M., *Festival di approfondimento culturale e città italiane di media dimensione: un binomio che merita di essere indagato*. In: Paiola M. & Grandinetti R. (eds.) *Città in Festival* op. cit. 19-37, p. 21.

<sup>122</sup>Solima L., *Eventi culturali* op. cit. pp. 39-40.

<sup>123</sup>Ivi.

<sup>124</sup>Agosto G. (2008) *I festival tra impatto sul territorio e luogo di espressione per l’immaginario collettivo*. In: *Tafer Journal*, 2, 1-6.

## Chapter 3: Case-study – Part I

### 3.1 “SARAJEVO 2000”: Museum & Art Media Center in the army headquarters as a symbol of art’s victory over destruction

#### 3.1.1 Introduction

Paragraph 3.1 illustrates the birth of ‘Sarajevo 2000’ Project (then become ‘Ars Aevi’ in 1996), its actors, sources of inspiration, features and chronological order of facts. In the second instance, Sarajevo 2000 will be analyzed as the activation of a museological framework within the context of Sarajevo’s siege and Bosnian War, starting from its founding myth interpretation.

Frequently, the Project’s events are intimately interwoven with Enver Hadžiomerspahić’s biography, its creator and still now its general director, who recognizes its conception phase in April 1992, precisely when a “strange, bright red dawn” illuminated the night: the flames of a grenade were burning the Olympic Museum, dissolving collective and personal memories. In his career as organizer of cultural events, Enver Hadžiomerspahić (hereinafter referred to as EH) was also director of opening and closing ceremonies of the 1984 Winter Olympics in Sarajevo – one of the main events held in Sarajevo during the 80s – afterwards he became coordinator of ZOI ’84 network, organizing and planning cultural events in halls and facilities of Olympic heritage, especially in Zetra and Skenderija centers.

According to EH’s narrative, in that night – perceived in his words as a cultural massacre – he began conceiving the “revenge”, but a civil revenge with the “peaceful weapon of culture”, namely, the building of an *even bigger and better museum*.<sup>125</sup> He also told me in a personal interview, that during the same night, he wrote down the following lines: “Sarajevo invites the main and well-renowned contemporary artists, whose representative artworks will form a collection for the future contemporary art museum in Sarajevo, in order to express their protest against injustice of the siege and its consequent abandon”.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Facts, Sketches for the Story of Ars Aevi, Volume 1*, Sarajevo 2005, p. 44.

<sup>126</sup>Interview with Enver Hadžiomerspahić, Sarajevo, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

### 3.1.2 Premises<sup>127</sup>

During the first months of siege, the Sarajevo 2000 Project is thus formulated and – as suggested by the title appeared in the earliest promotional material – it will consist of a threefold program for Sarajevo to be realized after the end of the War, by the year 2000. The Project will include a Modern Art Museum for Sarajevo, the continuation of Sarajevo Biennial, and also a number of exhibitions in Sarajevo and in European cities, which will create the museum's collection. It is now necessary to briefly recall the chronological phases of Sarajevo 2000, which are its premises, first developments, involved actors. First of all, this section concerns the plan for the Sarajevo Biennial and its continuation. Which Biennial?

In 1984, artists Jusuf Hadžifeizović, Radoslav Tadić and Aleksandar Bukvić organized a series of solo-shows inviting those artists who were representative of avant-garde and 'real contemporary' art<sup>128</sup> – compared to official social realism – coming from the main centers of Yugoslav republics and provinces. These exhibitions, named Yugoslav Documents (*Jugoslovenska Dokumenta*), took place in Collegium Artisticum Club within Skenderija Center, at that time one of the best representative spaces for cultural and political events in the city. The succession of exhibitions continued from May 1984 until May 1987, when the enthusiastic amateurism of the three young artists developed into a major event: an impressive exhibition featuring all artists of the previous editions took place in the huge halls of Skenderija Center, and the Zoi '84 network – of which EH was a director – made the spaces available.

It was the first Yugoslav Documents Biennial, while in the second edition of 1989, the organizing artists – Jusuf Hadžifeizović and Radoslav Tadić – chose an artistic director for each socialist republic of Yugoslavia, and every director selected the artists in turn. With the second edition – become 'Sarajevo Biennial' and held in Skenderija Center as well as in other six galleries located in downtown Sarajevo – the experience of Yugoslav Documents was turning into a real institution, EH became its organizing director and Ilija Šimić – Director of the Public Fund for Culture of the Republic of BiH – its President. In the 1989 edition, Italian art critic Enrico Comi, founder of Milan-

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<sup>127</sup> Interview with Enver Hadžiomerspahić, Sarajevo, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2015; interview with Jusuf Hadžifeizović, Sarajevo, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015. Cfr. *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '87: Sarajevo, 11-26. Maj 1987*, Olimpijski Centar Skenderija, Sarajevo, 1987; *Jugoslovenska Dokumenta '89: Sarajevo, 1. Juli – 1. Avgust 1989*, Olimpijski Centar Skenderija, Sarajevo, 1989.

<sup>128</sup> Interview with Jusuf Hadžifeizović, Sarajevo, December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

based 'Spazio Umano' journal-book, participated as a special guest, and was then designated as art director and selector for 1991 Biennial edition, whose preparation was suddenly interrupted due to the war outbreak.

The Biennial experience has not been carried out, however, it has been incorporated into the museum Project itself. As explained in the following paragraphs, the typical model of great art expositions such as the art biennials – based on a national curator inviting and selecting artists – will become a staple for creating the future museum's collection.

### 3.1.3 SARAJEVO 2000

The Sarajevo 2000 Project has been arranged in the years 1992-1994. EH's original idea is sustained by a group of Sarajevan friends, artists, intellectuals; they all together agree upon its next development, and their ideas are then publicly presented on the occasion of the 'Forum of artists and intellectuals' held in Sarajevo in July 1992. The Project is later officialized by city and governmental authorities under siege, i.e. the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of BiH, the City Assembly of Sarajevo and the Public Fund for Culture of the Republic of BiH. These authorities are even directly involved in the newly created committee, divided into three working groups:

- Project Council<sup>129</sup> – with the Mayor of Sarajevo, ministers, politicians and professors of Sarajevo Fine Arts Academy;
- Project Head Office<sup>130</sup> – with EH in the role of Head-Manager and Enrico Comi as Project Art-Manager;
- Project Managing Board<sup>131</sup> – presided over by Ilija Simic.

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<sup>129</sup>Project Council: Zlatko Lagumdžija (Vice-Prime Minister in the Government of the Republic of BiH), Nikola Kovač (Minister for Culture of the Republic of BiH), Muhamed Kreševljaković (Mayor, President of the City Assembly; in 1994 he will be appointed Consul of the Republic of BiH in Milan, Italy), Juraj Martinović (President of the Cultural and Educational Association of the Republic of BiH), Muhamed Karamehmedović (Professor of Art History at the Academy of Fine Arts), Zoran Bogdanović (Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts, sculptor and member of the Witnesses of Existence), Ademir Kenović (Professor at the Academy of Drama).

<sup>130</sup>Project Head Office: Enver Hadžiomerspahić (Project Head-Manager), Enrico R. Comi (Project Art-Manager), Aleksandar Kravljajača (Project Commercial Manager; Commercial Manager of the Center Skenderija; also member of the Project Managing Board), Radoslav Tadić (Project Art Editor; artist, one of the founders of Yugoslav Documents and member of the Witnesses of Existence), Sanjin Jukić (Project Secretary-general and Promotion Editor).

<sup>131</sup>Project Managing Board: Ilija Šimić (Director of the Public Fund for Culture of the Republic of BiH; he was President of the Organizing Committee of Yugoslav Documents in 1989), Fehim Spaho (Vice-

Most of these personalities and members stayed in Sarajevo during the whole conflict, whereas EH carried out the Project once he reached Italy. He indeed obtained permission from political authorities to leave the country and promote Sarajevo 2000 at international level, aided by its art director, Enrico Comi.

Referring to this permission, a 1993 document reports that: Ilija Šimić (Director of the Public Fund for Culture of the Republic of BiH), Muhamed Kreševljaković (Mayor of the City of Sarajevo) and Nikola Kovač (Minister of Culture of the Republic of BiH) “authorized Mr. Enrico Comi (Project Artistic Director), Mr. Enver Hadžiomerspahić (Project Director) and Mr. Aleksandar Kravljaca (Project Commercial Manager) to represent the interests of the Republic of BiH and the City of Sarajevo in international contacts and arrangements, regarding the initiatives and programs of the International cultural project Sarajevo 2000”. Paragraph 3.2, illustrates that this authorization will permit them to organize the first international promotion of Sarajevo 2000 during the 45<sup>th</sup> edition of Venice Biennale in 1993.

Preparing this international campaign, a promotional catalogue is printed in March 1993, where Sarajevo 2000’s concepts and definitions – developed in the years 1992-1993 between BiH and Italy – have been collected. During my stay in Sarajevo (October, November, December 2015), I had the chance of holding this catalogue in my hands, a true, authentic and precious item, printed under incessant shelling, in the cellar of devastated Bosnian newspaper’s headquarters, *Oslobodjenje*. **[Fig.7]** As first Project’s testimony, that issue collects all names of involved people and their points of view on the threefold Project, **[Fig. 8]** it also drafts original ideas for its organizational development, considering both resources and spaces.

An old army head office is identified as adequate location to be converted into the future museum. Built by the Austro-Hungarian government in 1902 and situated on a park of the Old Town, its spaces – according to this first catalogue – will be reshaped from 1993 to 2003 in order to host respectable authors from the world artistic scene. Architects Tanja and Stjepan Roš, in charge of planning the museum halls within the

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President of Project Managing Board; Minister for Culture in Sarajevo City Assembly), Sadik Hasanbegović (General Manager of the Center Skenderija), Edin Numankadić (Artist and member of the Witnesses of Existence).



barrack, formulate a **‘museum of modern art’ also defined ‘Art Media Center’ presenting ‘modern, functional, transparent and flexible’ features.**<sup>132</sup>

The future museum is inspired by those post-modern values that had transformed the variously defined ‘temple of art’, ‘treasure box’, ‘former abstract symbol’ in a ‘public place for the birth of new cultural forms and new social relations’ (cfr. Paragraph 2.1). Architects themselves define it ‘a temple without religion, refuge for all the artists, cultural institutions, and citizens of all classes, opened for events, animation, education, and information’, therefore ‘a culture-producing machine’.<sup>133</sup> All these aspects can be found observing the four sections which compose the center: Art, Media, Info and Flux.

**[Fig. 9]**

The Art section will host the museum of modern art, architecture and design, conceived as ‘symbolic place of hope for the art forms, acts of individuals as well as that of contemporary civilization.’ The Media section is instead conceived as a place ‘for creation and animation of a new culture, where human views are expanded and spiritual needs and activities are met’; it will have gallery rooms, cultural centers of foreign countries, film library, video and sound archives, auditorium and club. The Info section, provided with ‘all infrastructures for the exchange of ideas and works by which the man’s need for knowledge’ will have documentation centre, research institute and library. The Flux Space is instead conceived as ‘the place of flux of events, unforeseeable game of pleasure, whereby innovations in creation and in the way of life are encouraged’, and it will be made up of agora, forum, street gallery and park, bookshop and art boutiques.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>The reference model is here the Pompidou Center in Paris (cfr. Paragraph 2.1.3 of the present thesis). Talking of Central and Eastern countries, Szekely explains that in this region the boom in contemporary art museums began after the new millennium, once the first phase of political, economic and social transition had ended and most of the countries had acceded to the European Union (p. 13). The Pompidou Centre (during the 70s) initiated the revolution in museum architecture, introducing the concept of ‘postmuseum’, thus reflecting the aesthetic, semiotic, urban and museological needs of contemporary art. But the spatial shift in museum architecture and urbanism is still lacking in the region of Central and Eastern Europe (p. 8). Central Europe and its museums seem to have stepped back from this process (with the sole exceptions of the ms2 in Łódź and the MSU Zagreb, two cities which were the very first places of avant-garde practice in the region, in the 1930s and in the 1950s respectively). With the only new building of the MSU Zagreb, the work of the young Croatian architect Igor Franić, the dynamic of new museum architecture lags far behind the local boom in founding museums that the region is experiencing nowadays (p. 9). Szekely M. *Contemporary Art Museums in Central Europe* op. cit.

<sup>133</sup>Roš T. & Roš S., *Museum of Modern Art or Art Media Centre*. In: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue*, OKO, Sarajevo 1993, pp. 29-30.

<sup>134</sup>Ibid. p. 30.

Regarding the necessary resources to realize the museum, an external, international support in terms of funding – immediately appeared a suitable and possible means – is generally outlined in this promotional catalogue. As Ilija Šimić puts it, *we shall have to rely on the Ministries and Funds of Culture of European Countries and on other powerful sponsors” in financing and directly managing spaces and collections.*<sup>135</sup> Each participating country will have at its disposal a dedicated exhibition space and will be then in charge of its long-term management:

the Countries founders of the Museum of Modern Art in Sarajevo will participate financially in the remodeling of the building, in proportion to the size of exhibition space put at their disposal. The founding Countries will also bear the costs of purchase, transport and setting up of the works (exhibits) of their artists in the Museum of Sarajevo. The maintenance of the Museum, once it has been formed and opened, will be denounced from rental fees for the space planned for offices and programs of cultural and information centers of the most developed countries of the world, as well as from the funds of the Republic of BiH and from the income of the Museum itself.<sup>136</sup>

#### 3.1.4 Towards the museological framework

The following section illustrates how some specific contexts, characteristics, intertwined and simultaneous dynamics of Bosnian War and siege of Sarajevo have variously affected the formation of a museological framework. It is explained – among the factors – that war conditions of vital and cultural oppression brought about the formation of a community of resistance, which was living in the precariousness of the besieged city, among ruins. The same community of resistance felt the need to preserve the endangered collective identities, putting in place a grassroots initiative, therefore adopting the museological framework.

It is clear that this complex of dynamics – turned into metaphor –are enshrined in the few lines with which EH, the Project’s founder, still now describes the founding myth of Sarajevo 2000. The above-mentioned myth, refers to the war episode of the destruction of the Winter Olympics Museum, in the aftermath of a night shelling in April 1992. The same dramatic event – perceived as a cultural massacre – brings EH to conceive his civilian and peaceful ‘cultural revenge’, namely, the building of the ‘even

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<sup>135</sup> *Word From the Director of the Fund, Ilija Šimić.* In: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* op. cit. p. 11.

<sup>136</sup> Hadžiomerspahić E., *General Concept.* In: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* op. cit. p. 19.

bigger and better museum’,<sup>137</sup> where invited world-renowned living artists with their representative artworks will form a collection, in order to express their protest against injustice of the siege and consequent abandonment of the city.

It is necessary to give an overview of the war general context in BiH, where cultural heritage as well as those common places and spaces – symbol of past sharing and living together – have been gradually deleted. According to András J. Riedlmayer, from the beginning, the hostilities within the Balkans region are characterized by two elements that have little to do with legitimate military aims: ethnic cleansing and the *systematic and deliberate targeting and destruction of cultural, religious, and historic landmarks, including libraries and manuscript collections, archives, and houses of worship*.<sup>138</sup> Riedlmayer mentions the destiny of the Bosnian cities of Janja, Stolac, Mostar and Sarajevo, for the specific connection between community removal through massacre or expulsion, and destruction of its communal memory by Serb and Croat nationalist forces.<sup>139</sup> In Sarajevo occurs what is referred to as the largest single incident of deliberate book-burning in modern history, in august 1992, with the attack of Bosnian National and University Library. **[Figs. 11, 12]** Before the attack, the Library held an estimated two million items, such as manuscripts, rare books, archives, special collections and research results of the University of Sarajevo.

The cleansing consists in erasing not only religious symbols and places of worship – mosques, catholic churches and orthodox cathedrals have been destroyed throughout the country – but the very aim of ethnic cleansers is the removal of past coexistence and hybridity. The destruction of the well-known Mostar Bridge by Croat troops – then rebuilt as a facsimile in 2004 – is thus to be considered in this sense. Not only the mere destruction of a monument of Ottoman origins, but a symbol – as well as the Museum of Winter Olympics in Sarajevo – of the *everyday fact of living together, of a shared cultural space, an idea representing an anathema to exclusive nationalists, wedded to an elusive ideal of ethnic purity and apartheid*. Riedlmayer concludes reminding that for

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<sup>137</sup>Cfr. 3.1.1.

<sup>138</sup>Riedlmayer A. J. (2007) *Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace: Destruction of Libraries during and after the Balkan Wars of the 1990s*. In: LIBRARYTRENDS, vol. 56, 1, 107-132, p. 108.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid. p. 110.

many, the removal of this bridge *brought home the reality of the cultural and human catastrophe that had overtaken BiH and the region.*<sup>140</sup>

Keeping in mind the words pronounced by EH, it is now possible to comprehend the symbolic value of the destruction of the Sarajevo Museum of Winter Olympics. The episode signifies the elimination of an evidence of past coexistence and living together, of an heritage which was able to proudly tell about Sarajevo as the Olympic city of 1984<sup>141</sup> and as the capital of a unified country, when being a “multicultural paradise” was symbol of the cultural blending of modern Yugoslavia.<sup>142</sup> The Olympic Museum was an evidence of the Yugoslav past, a site where Yugoslav culture and identity – founded on ideals of ‘brotherhood and unity’ now endangered by war – were preserved and defended. It therefore evokes the past of unified BiH and at the same time the present of self-proclaimed independence from the “Serb” Milosević’s Yugoslavia, the independence that besieged Sarajevo is defending from the Serb forces deployed in the surrounding mountains.

The motif of Winter Olympics will be continuously evoked by EH himself throughout the years. After 24 years, on the occasion of an exhibition in 2008,<sup>143</sup> EH still refers to Ars Aevi Project in terms of “Olympic results” and “goals of the Ars Aevi Project in the positive spiritual environment of an Olympic Sarajevo”, comparing development, strategies and effects of Ars Aevi to the process of preparing and organizing the 1984 Sarajevo Olympics – whose opening and closing ceremonies were also directed by him.

In order to better understand the birth of Sarajevo 2000 it is necessary to focus on what is happening within the besieged city, that huge and isolated concentration camp, under continuous attack. In spite of this dramatic situation, (before the war Sarajevo had 350,000 inhabitants, with the siege 12,000 are killed and 50,000 injured)<sup>144</sup> the

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<sup>140</sup>ibid. p. 120.

<sup>141</sup>Nicholas Moll mentions the ‘importance of the 1984 Olympic Games for the town of Sarajevo’ as an example of ‘local specificities of memory narratives’ in BiH. Cfr. Moll N. *Fragmented memories* op. cit. p. 914.

<sup>142</sup>dell’Agnese E., *Making and Remaking Sarajevo’s Image*, available at: [https://boa.unimib.it/retrieve/handle/10281/7165/8323/making\\_and\\_re-making.pdf](https://boa.unimib.it/retrieve/handle/10281/7165/8323/making_and_re-making.pdf) (accessed: 25.03.2016).

<sup>143</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Ars Aevi Collection – A Unique Meeting of the Highest Artistic and Moral Values*. In: *Neighbors in Dialogue, Istanbul Collection for Ars Aevi*, Project Ars Aevi, Sarajevo 2008, pp. 19-21. Cfr. ‘Ars Aevi – the New Sarajevo Olympics’.

<sup>144</sup>Riedlmayer A. J., *Crimes of War* op. cit., p. 110.

population is used to get together and nestle in a number of gathering places and moments. In these contexts, some spontaneous artistic practices –hereinafter briefly described – have a peculiar role in creating authentic places of gathering and socialization based on solidarity and community bounding. As already mentioned in Chapter 1, the cultural life during the siege is incredibly more intense than ever. Local cultural operators, together with citizens, carry out their initiatives despite the dramatic conditions of the devastated city. Several film projections, concerts, operas, ballets, theater performances, publications of books and reviews, personal productions of diaries and poems take place in the urban body remains. The siege of Sarajevo – characterized by cinematographic elements – continuously enters in our living rooms through TV news and series, documentaries, and it even attracts a number of international artists and intellectuals who, once in the city, transform it into an artistic subject – for instance, with the performance of *Waiting for Godot* by Susan Sontag, or the Mozart's *Requiem* conducted by Zubin Mehta in the charred shell of the National Library.

According to Asja Mandić, in particular those exhibition-related practices which take the site of destruction as an exhibition space, play a crucial role in the formation of a culture of critical resistance, determined by the experience of the exhibition itself and therefore given by the simultaneity of the following processes: the artist's creative process, the symbolic charge of the ruin and the energy of all those who are present.<sup>145</sup> As she puts it:

Participants at the exhibitions in the Sutjeska cinema ruin and in the space around the burnt Post Office Building were consciously placing themselves in danger and yet persisting in their desire to comment on the inhumane living conditions imposed upon them, while also demonstrating the victory of human spirit, hope and optimism. So it is the presence of the artist and the audience that became the aesthetic as well as the ethical and sociopolitical aspect of their work. Besieged, trapped, imprisoned in the Sarajevo ghetto, this was the only way for citizens to resist the imposed modes of repression and control. In this context, to conceive, install and visit art exhibitions can be perceived as a form of critical practice.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Mandić A. (2011) *The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo*. In: *Third Text*, 25, 6, 725-735, p. 734.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 735.

These exhibitions are characterized by being conceived and installed in the sites of destruction, among fragments of the urban body, and realized with materials of war everyday life – strongly communicative and deeply meaningful for people – such as spent bullets, fragments of stained glass windows, dust, debris, shells of burnt cars. While evoking familiar daily excerpts, placing the works in a (‘sacred’) exhibition space, makes it correspond only to spiritual categories.<sup>147</sup> Sites of destruction and debris – symbolizing the shared war experience as homogenizing denominator – contribute in strengthening the processes of gathering and socialization based on solidarity and community bounding, therefore in *making the personal collective and the collective political*.<sup>148</sup> The peculiar arisen interaction between artist/site/audience made these exhibitions space-referenced, context-specific, and audience-specific, in a process which consisted of the *circulation of artists, visitors, casual passers-by during the opening events, and their shared moments and experiences where the ‘phenomenology of presence, of spectatorship that unfolded in real time and space’ became the social and political aspect of the exhibition’s function*.<sup>149</sup>

As the scholar concludes, these experiences in the ruins – arisen from the deep need to transform trauma, danger and death through art, and to turn art exhibitions into scenes of cultural struggle and resistance – can be seen within the community-based practices of 90s public art, with its changing role shifting from that of urban aesthetics to that of improving society, where the audience plays an active part as co-producer of a critical space.<sup>150</sup> Hereinafter some examples.

In November 1992, the artists Zoran Bogdanović, Ante Jurić and the photographer Predrag Čančar reach the recently destroyed Post Office in order to collect and rescue what is left of the entire architectural complex. They bring its remains into the devastated Saint Vincent Church, where they set up the exhibition “Spirituality and Destruction”. Their need is to preserve whatever could be preserved, that cultural heritage and those places symbolizing the past coexistence that are being destroyed by the ethnic cleansers. The artists’ actions and works refer primarily to memory – which

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<sup>147</sup> Udovičić I., *Petar Waldegg*. In: Mandić A. (eds.), *Artefacts, Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 1993-2003*, Ars Aevi Book, Sarajevo 2007, p. 77.

<sup>148</sup> Mandić A. (2011) *The Formation of a Culture* op. cit., p. 734.

<sup>149</sup> Mayer J., *The Functional Site or the Transformation of Site Specificity*. In: Suderburg E., *Space, Site, Intervention: Situating Installation Art*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2000, p. 26; cited by Mandić A., *The Formation of a Culture* op. cit., p. 734.

<sup>150</sup> Mandić A., *The Formation of a Culture* op. cit., p. 735.

seems, in that moment, to be strong and indestructible – the memory of the city, its architecture, its remains, its mementos; the exhibition at the Church is an ‘aesthetic and ethical act’ demonstrating the ‘victory of spirituality over destruction’.<sup>151</sup>

In 1992, the artist Nusret Pašić inaugurates his solo show “Witnesses of Existence” within the destroyed Sutjeska Cinema. Since that moment, the “Witnesses of Existence” initiative has become a wider project directed by the Obala Art Center Gallery and other seven artists have been involved in presenting their solo shows throughout the Sutjeska spaces: Zoran Bogdanović, Ante Jurić, Petar Waldegg, Mustafa Skopljak, Edin Numankadić, Sanjin Jukić, Radoslav Tadić. In April 1993 all the eight artists gather together for a collective exhibition, then turning into an authentic, inseparable art crew under the name of “Witnesses of Existence”. [Figs. 13, 14]

In the same year, the BiH’s government declares “Witnesses of Existence” official representative of the country at the 45<sup>th</sup> edition of Venice Biennale, hence the group receives official invitation by that year art director, Achille Bonito Oliva. Although artists with their works could not obtain the permission to leave the city under siege, the ‘Witnesses’ have been represented in Venice through video documentaries, promotional materials and presentation by Izeta Gradević, curator of Obala Gallery and their main international promoter. Thus the group has constituted the first representation of BiH as “independent” country at the Venice Biennale. On the occasion of Venice’s event, the curator Azra Begić writes a text entitled ‘Between Heaven and Earth’, whereby she replies to that year Biennale’s title “Punti Cardinali dell’Arte”. Its incipit results to be emblematic of the context and of the perception of conflict within and outside the theater of war:

It is no accident that the ruins of the cosmopolitan Sarajevo are the birthplace of the art of witnessing [...]; for the past seventeen months, each and every direction from this city led to the same place: to a hoop of heavy artillery which, like a mythic dragon, daily spouts fire and inflammable projectiles, which massacre, murder and destroy all that stands in their path. So if neither East, West, North nor South in Sarajevo can be “Punti Cardinali dell’Arte”, the artist is offered two directions: one that leads downwards and another that leads upwards. Towards mother Earth and father Heaven. With the power of his spirit, the Sarajevo artist can rise to the sky, the metaphysical home of man in which context our suffering and

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<sup>151</sup>Bobar M., *Ante Jurić*. In: Mandić A. (eds.), *Artefacts* op. cit., p. 67.

resistance take on an universal meaning: the battle between Man and Beast, Good and Evil, Light and Darkness.<sup>152</sup>

In reference to these last words by Azra Begić: ‘the battle between Man and Beast (the mythic dragon spouting fire and projectiles), Good and Evil, Light and Darkness’ it is interesting to observe here the phenomenology of cultural resistance in Sarajevo from another point of view. Elena dell’Agnese analyzes it as a contrast between tolerance/culture and violence/ignorance which, arisen in anthropological and literary fields, then becomes an interpretative tool used by political and media propaganda:

The city’s cultural life, which before the war had been animated by people such as Kusturica, Kenović and Goran Bregović, during the war became more diversified than ever. Periodicals continued to appear, the Winter Festival of the Arts continued, theater flourished and art exhibitions became in themselves a form of resistance (Jordanova, 2001). It was as if the city had decided to respond to the “armed, toothless and ill-washed primitives” on the hills (as the Sarajevan architect Ivan Straus described the Serbian fighters besieging the town) by becoming more of a “city” (in the sense of *civitas*) than ever. This self-representation of Sarajevo was blatantly in debt to the “cultural types” identified by Cvijić and Tomasić (which was revived in the early nineties by some Croatian publications, which explained the Serbian aggression against Croatia as an aggression of the power-hungry mountain peoples against the cosmopolitan towns, Bougarel, 1999). The contrast between civilized towns and barbarous countryside was also cultivated by Bosnian intellectuals,[...] the destruction of cities being conceptualized through the new notion of “urbicide” – that is, deliberately “killing the urban” because of its distinguishing feature of urbanity and heterogeneity. It also became a staple of Muslim nationalism, whose crystallization went hand in hand with the emergence of analyses interpreting this war as a confrontation between the “urban civilization” of the Muslims and the “barbarous and tribal mind” of the Serbs. From this perspective, Sarajevo was not just a city under siege. It became the city under siege – a symbol of tolerance and culture under attack by violence and ignorance. For this reason, international grants started flooding into the city. As Jordanova (2001) suggests, if Sarajevo was not a focal point for cultural events before the war, it definitely became a cosmopolitan place because of it.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup>Begić A., *Between Heaven and Earth*. In: Purivatra M. (eds.), *Witnesses of Existence*, Obala Gallery Sarajevo, Sarajevo 1993.

<sup>153</sup>dell’Agnese E., *Making and Remaking Sarajevo’s Image* op. cit.; the author refers to the “regional psycho-geographical profiles” of Balkan Peninsula elaborated by the Serbian geographer Jovan Cvijić (*La peninsula balkanique*, 1918). Cvijić described the principles of high morality, military values and profound national traditions of Serbian tribes in the mountain regions; in opposition to what was happening within “cultural polluted” cities and flatlands, where the Muslim population was an inferior



The Sarajevo 2000 Project is precisely a ‘cultural revenge’ conceived in the same gathering places of ‘cultural resistance’. The community under siege, aware of its condition of social, vital and cultural oppression, acts towards a ‘museogenesis’ process, thus activating a museological discourse, in order to preserve its own identity. In the city under siege, the identity to preserve is exactly that of the city, expressed as a ‘resistance identity’ into which all the other endangered identities come together – Yugoslav, Muslim, Bosnian.

The museological framework represents a powerful tool for community and identity empowerment, the case of eco-museums is here emblematic and it can be argued that the birth of Sarajevo 2000 Project is comparable to the process of eco-museums’ emergence in some specific areas. Eco-museum is thus a museum typology which tends to have an origin in tension areas, producing mobilization against threats to cultural or natural heritages, often with an underlying intention geared towards the protection of the community’s “sense of belonging”.<sup>154</sup>

Sarajevo 2000 is clearly formulated as a grass-root initiative in order to preserve the Sarajevo identity, and for this reason the future Art Media Center is described as *the museum of our local identity, a “palace” of pleasure, imagination, play, cultural identity, and the link with the roots of the city.*<sup>155</sup> In the epoch where *museums are revived by the ideology of nomadism, localism and patriotism* the new museum looks at the future but is based on the past, as an efficient mechanism which influences collective memory, able to *convince a modern community that it is possible to construct the future on the foundations of the past.*<sup>156</sup> The aim is the preservation of Sarajevo as a cultural and artistic center, generated by the encounter of cultures:

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and servile class. The Croatian sociologist Dinko Tomasić (*The Tribal Culture and its Contemporary Remains*, 1936) reiterated these stereotypes (which were continuously transformed into emblems of national identity for some and terms of abuse for others) but in the opposite sense, describing the Dinaric tribes as conquerors of urban centers, while people living in the plains and in multicultural towns (such as Sarajevo), were peaceful and enjoyed harmonious interpersonal relations. The author mentions also the works by Bougarel X. (*Yugoslav Wars: ‘The revenge of the countryside’ between sociological reality and nationalist myth*, 1999) and Iordanova D. (*Cinema of Flames. Balkan Film, Culture and the Media*, 2001).

<sup>154</sup>Giménez-Cassina E., *Who am I?* op. cit. p. 27.

<sup>155</sup>Roš T. & Roš S., *Museum of Modern Art* op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>156</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

Sarajevo, the world-famous city for its cherishing of cultures of the East and West, which are ultimately interwoven in this traditional crossroads, is trying even now, in the moments of its most terrible suffering, to preserve its sense and love of art. It is, therefore, no wonder that this city of the former Yugoslavia has been the centre of film art, of music, poetry, drama, painting... Its status of the center of visual arts was confirmed by two exhibitions of the Biennial, held in 1987 and 1989 [...] It is obvious that, despite all the horrors of aggression the cultural workers of Sarajevo have decided to preserve the tradition of Sarajevo as a cultural center.<sup>157</sup>

This tradition directly connects the past centuries of Ottoman Empire's expansion and Islamization of the Balkan Peninsula<sup>158</sup> – which made Sarajevo a crossroads of faiths and cultures in terms of flourishing of arts and architectures – to the 1980s, when the Yugoslav city, capital of unified BiH, hosted the Winter Olympics and the Art Biennials, confirming its nature of 'meeting city', and yet to the present of war, where Sarajevo is defending its cultural and artistic core – therefore its identity – through cultural resistance.

The museological framework is thus employed in order to objectify this identity, to make it universal, accessible, enduring and durable over years and in memories. As argued by EH, the best way to safeguard this identity of artistic center is in preserving the Sarajevo Biennial as well as in building the new Museum/Art Media Center<sup>159</sup> –

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<sup>157</sup>Word From the Mayor, Muhamed Kreševljaković. In: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>158</sup>It is interesting to quote the museum birth as seen by the author of the blog 'Rehmat's World' (who defines himself as: "an Engineer, Historian and general carer of what Muslims are facing today, and exposing non-Muslim lies about Islam and Muslims") who defines it a 'Muslim response' to ethnic cleansing, thus to only preserve Muslim identity: *In July 1992 – When the city of Sarajevo was bombed by the Serbian forces and hundreds of thousands of Muslim men, women and children were butchered to death and tens of thousands of Muslim women and young girls were raped by the Serbian and Croatian Christians all over Bosnia-Herzegovina – a group of concerned intellectuals decided to create a Museum of Contemporary Art (sort of Israel's Holocaust Museums) to remember the city as the hub of religious and ethnic diversity and tolerance under Muslim rule for several centuries in the past.* Available at: <https://rehmat1.com/2010/06/17/sarajevo-ars-aevi-and-the-grand-mufti/> (accessed: 29.03.2016). However, it is more interesting to highlight and understand the relationship between those 'multicultural' discourses which were already present within the 1993 Promotional Catalogue (introduced by the politicians involved), and the politically-promoted multiculturalism of independentist BiH in the context of the War. As Cynthia Simmons puts it, *in early 1992, the "three m's" (trim), which denoted a multicultural, multiethnic, and multiconfessional Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), became the rallying cry against the forces of disintegration, or more accurately, of partition.* Simmons C. (2002) *A MULTICULTURAL, MULTIETHNIC, AND MULTICONFESSONAL BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA: MYTH AND REALITY.* In: *Nationalities Papers*, vol. 30, n. 4, 623-638, p. 623. Multicultural discourses within the first catalogue could be considered anticipations of what will happen in the postwar scenario with the (inter)nationalist reconstruction of the country (cfr. Paragraph 4.2 of the present thesis).

<sup>159</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *General Concept* op. cit., pp. 17-21.

sanctuary of contemporary world and *only testimony of the dignity of man's creative being*<sup>160</sup> – where diverse artists of different countries can meet and build again, as in past years and centuries, that **'encounter generating art'**, *as Sarajevo itself is art.*<sup>161</sup>

Choosing a former Army Headquarters as location for the future museum is what really and tangibly reveals the victory of art, namely, Sarajevo's identity, over brutality of ethnic cleansers, destroyers of this same identity. It is therefore a metaphor which refers to the contrast between Good (civilization, encounter, art & culture) and Evil (ignorance, brutality, destruction, ethnic cleansing) within the specific context of cultural resistance under siege, therefore between Army Headquarters, a building symbolizing the source of destruction, and Sarajevo 2000 Museum, expression of *faith in the universal predominance of art, the most subtle creation of human spirit over destruction.*<sup>162</sup>

### 3.2 En route: founding-exhibitions around Italy & Europe

The present section tells about salient features of years 1993-1999. Since the Project has reached Italy, its vicissitudes have been characterized for being closely tied to autobiographical events of its two main representatives, EH and his son Anur. A very spontaneous cooperation based on friendship with the first supporters had begun until the crucial year of 1999, when the Project returned to Sarajevo and the network of supporters and founders was then expanded and formalized with important acknowledgments. Some anticipations of the Project's development after 1999 are also outlined.

The idea of continuing the Sarajevo Biennial had been still present in the years passed in Italy, and constantly mentioned in the different catalogues of the founding-exhibitions, it was then abandoned at the end of the 1990s, in order to focus attention and energies on the Project's present and on the Museum's future. As the present section explains, despite the abandon of the Biennial project, the typical model of big

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<sup>160</sup> *Word From the Minister of Culture, Nikola Kovač.* In: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>161</sup> *Word From the Mayor, Muhamed Kreševljaković.* In: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* op. cit., p. 10.

<sup>162</sup> *Hadžiomerspahić E., General Concept* op. cit., p. 19.

art expositions – presenting a national curator selecting and inviting artists – will be incorporated into the method of collecting artworks.

After having obtained the authorization of the city’s authorities to promote Sarajevo 2000 at international level, EH could board the UNHCR flight from Sarajevo to Ancona, Italy. Then he reached Milan, where his family had settled and his collaborator Enrico Comi – appointed Artistic Director of the Project by Sarajevo’s authorities – lived.

The first period in Italy – which I would define **‘From Sarajevo to Milan, passing through Venice’** – proved to be difficult in terms of launching the Project. The first step was its promotion at the 45<sup>th</sup> edition of Venice Biennale in 1993 – the same edition of the Witnesses of Existence’s distance presentation<sup>163</sup> – where EH arrived *as a rare and strange “live specimen”*<sup>164</sup> in order to *invite the artists and cultural workers all over the world, and ministries of culture and friendly cities and countries, to join the family of founders of the International cultural project “Sarajevo 2000”*.<sup>165</sup> Exactly on this occasion EH presented that promotional publication – printed in the basements of the devastated Oslobodjenje headquarters – whose contents have been previously illustrated (cfr. Paragraphs 3.1.3 and 3.1.4). Object of promotion was the Art Media Center within the Army Headquarters, he therefore appealed for a cooperation – still generic and described with few details – between political-administrative and cultural-artistic apparatuses of ‘World and European cities and Countries’, in establishing the new museum and continuing the Sarajevo Biennial experience. According to EH’s words, the call for cooperation was unsuccessful:

our first promotion during the vernissage of the 1993 Venice Biennale encouraged us, but unexpected disappointments soon ensued. Meeting and letters in vain. Not a single positive response. Silence and indifference. Few encouraged me to continue: members of my closest family, my wife Jasminka, architect and urban planner, and my son Anur, at the time a

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<sup>163</sup>Cfr. 3.1.4.

<sup>164</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Facts* op. cit., p. 48. This promotional campaign at Venice Biennale was possible thanks to the Project’s network of friends and supporters: *Enrico Comi, with his advice and inspirational participation at the promotional conference; Laura Formenti, with her Italian translations; Nava Web S.p.A., by printing a synthesized publication; the ArciMilano Association and its chairman Flavio Mongelli, with organizational support in organizing the trip to Venice. In the years to come, Flavio would take on the role of founder and director of the Ars Aevi Association in Italy.* (Hadžiomerspahić E., *Facts* op. cit., p. 50).

<sup>165</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *General Concept* op. cit., p. 21.

student of the Fine Arts Academy and European Institute for Design in Milan, offered their immeasurable cooperation on practical, expert and spiritual levels; Flavio Mongelli, President of ARCI Milano was a friend who helped and provided logistical support [...] and Enrico Comi believed my idea had a future.<sup>166</sup>

Enrico Comi, in his role of Sarajevo 2000's Artistic Director, also presented financial requests for the Project to the twelve Ministries of Culture of the EU countries and to various public administrations of that period (1992-1993), but he did not get any answer.<sup>167</sup>

In a personal conversation with Anur Hadžiomerspahić, he told me about the difficulties of the first period in Italy, characterized by the continuous struggle for the Project's understanding and support among the exclusive spheres of Italian contemporary art – critics, artists, curators – and even among political levels:

At the beginning we started from scratch, we can say, 'under zero' [...] we were refugees, depending on other people, and we were working on such a utopian project! [...] It was very hard, because, as you know, being admitted to those high level groups of artists and art critics is extremely difficult for everyone, it was almost impossible for us, in our status, in that period. So, even though my father had permissions and authorizations from our country to carry out the Project, this was not important when talking to such important people like Italian politicians of every level..

The struggle consisted of defending the Project, from both the general skepticism of interlocutors, and the possible exploitation for promotional and economic purposes:

I remember we had hundreds and hundreds of meetings, all around Italy [...] it has been like a real struggle, since the beginning. Many people tried to exploit our Project, attempting to use it for their own ends, to gain money, visibility and make self-promotion. These attempts were not only made by people involved in the art market, but.. I am talking of political levels, privates, international organizations, media agencies [...]. Even though some meetings were positive, the museum seemed to remain a complex and

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<sup>166</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Ars Aevi – Network of International Collective Will, Concept, Strategies, Realizations of the Ars Aevi Museum/Centre of World Contemporary Art in Sarajevo*. In: Hadžiomerspahić E. (eds.) *Catalogue Ars Aevi Collection 1992/2006*, Sarajevo 2006, p. 19.

<sup>167</sup>Comi E., *The Contemporary Art Centre "Spazio Umano/Human Space"... when the impossible becomes possible...* In: Comi E., *International Magazine Book of Arts and Cultures Human Space*, January 2015, p. 26.

ambitious idea, people were skeptical and did not believe the museum could be realized.<sup>168</sup>

Things started to change when Enrico Comi decided to improve the Project in terms of growing its reliability and feasibility, therefore building the basis for the desired cooperation with Italian and European museums and public institutions. In doing this, he temporarily renounced to publish his Magazine Book “Spazio Umano / Human Space” and as *an act of love that was stronger than consequences* he founded the Contemporary Art Centre “Spazio Umano / Human Space” in Milan, in order to *actually start alone* – with EH’s full consent and support – the activities of Sarajevo 2000.<sup>169</sup> Hereinafter some lines describing this first important step for the Project:

So with my conceiving and direction of interdisciplinary and multimedia artistic and cultural events – created in the context of one-man exhibitions of International artists to whom I asked to donate a work for the Permanent Collection of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Sarajevo – where made the First Steps for the Sarajevo Project “2000” / ARS AEVI.

The first event “The Door of the Mirror” – which actually marks the beginning of the activity of the Museum of Contemporary Art of Sarajevo and of its Permanent Collection – was made up of:

a one-man exhibition of Michelangelo Pistoletto who donated the first work for the Collection;

a seminar where students and professors of the art and cultural institutions of Milan took part and that was also open to the general public for the entire period of the exhibition;

an evening with a theatre-music-dance performance;

a poetry reading by seven poets.<sup>170</sup>

Michelangelo Pistoletto’s solo show held from October 27 to December 3, 1994, inaugurated a series of solo-exhibitions which, continuing over the following years until 1999, constituted the so-called ‘Milan nucleus’ of the collection for the Sarajevo museum.<sup>171</sup> [Fig. 15] As the curator stated some years later, individual exhibitions of

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<sup>168</sup>Interview with Anur Hadžiomerspahić, Sarajevo, November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>169</sup>Comi E., *The Contemporary Art Centre “Spazio Umano/Human Space”... op cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>170</sup>Ivi.

<sup>171</sup>The invited artists (who donated one of their representative works to Sarajevo) were: the group Inspection “Medical Hermeneutics” (1994-1995), Franz West (1995), Carla Accardi (1995), Hidetoshi Nagasawa (1995), Bizhan Bassiri (1996), Alfredo Pirri (1996), Tony Cragg (1997), Dimitris Kozaris (1998), Juan Muñoz (1998), Goran Petercol (1998), Dmitri Prigov (1998), Dubravka Rakoci (1998), Ettore Spalletti (1999).

International artists enabled the “non-existent” museum to live daily the poetics of a very special, everyday occurrence.<sup>172</sup>

This first step was fundamental for the following development’s phase of the Project, i.e. that phase hereinafter referred to as the ‘**Tuscan period**’ – described by EH as a period of infinite sadness, for the untimely loss of his wife Jasminka, but at the same time a period of ‘wonderful human relations’.<sup>173</sup> Sarajevo 2000 did not obtain the (desired) support by *Comune di Milano* and *Provincia di Milano*, however a strong network of friends and people concerned which was growing around the Project, led EH to a first encounter with Italian public institutions. Certain municipalities of *Regione Toscana* demonstrated interest and solidarity towards the Project, and for some years offered their hospitality to EH along with his family, consequently the formerly Milan-based Project found there its new headquarters. Through Anna Bruna Fanni, *assessore alla cultura* of Scandicci, the family could move to Greve in Chianti, a small town of Florence’s hinterland, where citizens and commercial activities organized a solidarity system in order to ensure the family’s well-being and create favorable conditions for the Project’s continuation.

In this period the friendship and solidarity network expanded involving a number of associations and stakeholders such as A.N.C.I. Toscana (Associazione Nazionale Comuni Italiani), Confindustria Firenze, Giunti publishing group, municipalities of Chianti, *Provincia di Firenze* and *Regione Toscana*. Furthermore, local influential personalities such as the Lucchesi family, in particular Silvia – Anna Bruna Fanni’s colleague in charge of contemporary art activities within *Comune di Scandicci* (Florence) – and her father Antonio Lucchesi, industrialist and vice president of Pecci Contemporary Art Museum in Prato.

In the meanwhile, in January 1995 the international conference of mayors took place in Sarajevo on the occasion of the thousandth day of siege, where promotional messages and invitations regarding Sarajevo 2000 Project were once again launched and addressed to the participating mayors which had reached the city still under siege. The then mayor of Prato Claudio Martini was among these participating mayors.

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<sup>172</sup>Comi E., *The first steps of the Ars Aevi Project*. In: *Michelangelo Pistoletto exhibition: La Porta dello Specchio*, Ars Aevi Book, Sarajevo 2001, p. 39.

<sup>173</sup>Interview with Enver Hadžiomerspahić, Sarajevo, October 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

As a consequence of this favorable situation, in the first months of 1995 *Comune di Prato* along with Bruno Corà, director of Luigi Pecci Museum of Prato, accepted to become the first Municipality joining the Sarajevo 2000 Project and the first museum organizing a founding-exhibition for the Sarajevo's collection. The exhibition curated by Bruno Corà and held in Prato from July 26<sup>th</sup> to September 8<sup>th</sup> 1996 was entitled 'ARS AEVI 2000 – Dieci artisti internazionali per il costituendo museo d'arte contemporanea di Sarajevo'.<sup>174</sup>

**The name 'Sarajevo 2000' had been used to indicate the Project until 2000. Since Prato's exhibition in 1996, and until 2000, the future museum had adopted the title invented by Bruno Corà: 'Ars Aevi 2000' – anagram of 'Sarajevo 2000' and 'art of the epoch 2000' in Latin. Since 2000, both the Project and the future museum have been referred to as 'Ars Aevi'.**

### 3.3 The growing collection – Anticipations

The strategy of forming the collection, established on the occasion of Prato's founding-exhibition and applied to other exhibitions to come, abides by EH's indications:

The museum's collection will be formed by way of exhibitions/donations to be finalized during the period ranging from 1996 to 2000. These exhibitions can be organized in some European cities boasting a grand cultural tradition and in others designated the cultural capitals of Europe. A proposal which in this phase is considered optimal is to accomplish two exhibitions/donations per year. Every city with its own museum or center for contemporary art would take on the role of organizing and financing the respective exhibition. In order to respect the international character of the Project the exhibitions will each present ten artists: three from the country organizing the exhibition, four from other European countries and three from non-European nations. The cities which take part in the creation of the Sarajevo 2000 Museum must commit themselves to conserve the works of the collection in suitable places until their transfer to Sarajevo. It would be desirable that the city which organizes each exhibition exhibits the works donated as part of the collection of the Sarajevo 2000 – Ars Aevi Museum

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<sup>174</sup>The 10 participating artists were: Stephan Balkenhol, Daniel Buren, Enrico Castellani, Jan Dibbets, Jannis Kounellis, Sol LeWitt, Eliseo Mattiacci, Roman Opalka, Panamarenko, Jaume Plensa.



of Contemporary Art in a permanent fashion, in accordance with agreements to be stipulated with the General Direction of the Project. The agreements for the participation of a city as a founding member of the Sarajevo 2000 Project will be underwritten by way of a protocol of agreement between the participating parties: the Mayor of Sarajevo, the Mayor of the contributive founding city, the general director of the Sarajevo 2000 Project, the director of the founding Museum or Center for Contemporary Art, the Ambassador or the Consul of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina in the contributive founding country and the Ambassador or Consul of the contributive founding country in the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.<sup>175</sup>

Developments and vicissitudes occurred during the Tuscan period leads first of all to a substantial change, namely, the multiplication of the artistic direction. Enrico Comi remains the artistic director of his 'Milan nucleus' of collection, but not anymore the one and only artistic director of the Project.

The strategy of forming the museum collection's nuclei can be thus summarized:

1. every collection's nucleus is made up of those works featured in a founding-exhibition;
2. founding-exhibitions are organized in European cities renowned for their cultural tradition; these cities can formally participate to the Sarajevo 2000 Project underwriting a protocol of agreement;
3. every founding-exhibition is based on agreements regarding its financing and organization between municipality and museum/center of contemporary art within the municipal area;
4. the curator/director of the museum/center of contemporary art is the person in charge of selecting and inviting to the founding-exhibition a range of artists from different geographical areas: one third from the country organizing the exhibition, one third from other European countries and one third from non-European nations; in this way the selection respects the "international character of the Project";
5. through the founding-exhibition, invited artists donate to Sarajevo one of their representative artworks;

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<sup>175</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *General Concept of the International Cultural Project Sarajevo 2000*. In: Corà B. (eds.) *ARS AEVI 2000, Dieci artisti internazionali per il costituendo museo d'arte contemporanea di Sarajevo*, Skira, Milano 1996, p. 17; Hadžiomerspahić E., *International Cultural Project Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 2000* In: Bertola C. (eds.) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale museo d'arte contemporanea Sarajevo 2000*, Arsenale Editrice, Venezia 1997, pp. 15-17; Promotional material published on the occasion of Ljubljana founding-exhibition (1996).

6. the founding-exhibition does not require additional expenses for the museum/center of contemporary art, it is indeed included within the museum/center's annual budget, in accordance with the planned number of annual exhibitions.

In these years the Project has definitely increased its reliability, thanks to the exhibitions in Milan and Prato, therefore to those actors of cultural and political world supporting events' organization, and to the several artists that have honored the Project with their internationally-recognized names: Michelangelo Pistoletto, Franz West, Carla Accardi, Daniel Buren, Jannis Kounellis, Sol LeWitt, Roman Opalka and so forth.

The visibility achieved by these first successes led to a major expansion of the network of cities and cultural institutions taking part in the Project. To this contributed a series of favorable situations: the town twinning agreements underwritten by Sarajevo and Venice in May 1994 that activated friendly exchanges and cooperation in cultural, artistic, scientific sectors between the two cities;<sup>176</sup> the appointment of Mayor of besieged Sarajevo Muhamed Kreševljaković – one of the members of Sarajevo 2000's Project Council<sup>177</sup> – as Consul of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Milan; the second promotion of Sarajevo 2000 at the 46<sup>th</sup> Venice Biennale in 1995.

In 1995 the then mayor of Venice, Massimo Cacciari, announced the municipality's participation in Sarajevo 2000 and thus the involvement of one of the city's most influential art foundation, Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa. The founding-exhibition in Venice was planned for summer 1997, as a collateral event of the 47<sup>th</sup> edition of Venice Biennale of Art. The artists selection was carried out by the curator Chiara Bertola,<sup>178</sup> at that time President of Fondazione Bevilacqua La Masa, and the exhibition was held in June 1997 within Fondazione Querini Stampalia – that gratuitously placed its rooms at disposal of it.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>176</sup>On May 15th, 1994, Sarajevo and Venice became sister cities, with the commitment of activating friendly exchanges and developing collaborations between the two cities in the sector of culture, art, technology, economics, tourism, administrative and urban management. Protocol of town twinning agreement available at:

<http://www.comune.venezia.it/flex/cm/pages/ServeBLOB.php/L/IT/IDPagina/2243>

(accessed: 14.04.2016)

<sup>177</sup>Cfr. 3.1.3 of the present thesis.

<sup>178</sup>The founding exhibition in Venice was entitled: *Artisti per Sarajevo* and was held in the venue of Fondazione Querini Stampalia from June 13<sup>th</sup> to September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1997. Artists invited by Chiara Bertola were: Alighiero Boetti, Nan Goldin, Ilya Kabakov, Joseph Kosuth, Julian Opie, Mimmo Paladino, Remo Salvadori, Cindy Sherman, Rosemarie Trockel.

<sup>179</sup>The exhibition in Venice was realized thanks to free offers made by citizens and collected in the account Comune di Venezia – Progetto Solidarietà con Sarajevo and with the contributions of BNC

In the meantime, the municipality of Ljubljana joined the partnership and in September 1996 the Moderna Galerija directed by Zdenka Badovinac organized a founding-exhibition in the Slovenian capital, thus establishing the ‘Ljubljana nucleus’ for Sarajevo.<sup>180</sup>

In 1998 also the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig of Vienna inaugurated its exhibition for the future museum, enriching the collection with 46 artists of the younger and middle-aged generation.<sup>181</sup>

Once arrived in Sarajevo in 1999, the five nuclei from Milan, Prato, Venice, Ljubljana and Vienna were combined with the ‘Sarajevo nucleus’, collected through a series of five solo-exhibitions – including members of the Witnesses of Existence – that had taken place between 1994 and 1997 and organized by the Obala Art Center curator Izeta Gradević.<sup>182</sup>

The 1999 exhibition in Sarajevo where the five ‘foreign’ nuclei were displayed and presented to the public, was an important moment for the Project, marking its arrival and return to Sarajevo, where seven years before it had been conceived.

The Ars Aevi collection has then grown with new nuclei in the following years, through other founding-exhibitions organized by cultural centers and museums. Following chronological order, in 2003 Il Clavicembalo – Istituto d’Intercomunicazione Culturale of Bolognano (Pescara, Italy), directed by art collector and curator Lucrezia De Domizio Durini, donated to Ars Aevi a nucleus made up of six works, among them,

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Assicurazioni, Moschino, Poste Italiane, San Paolo Vita, Sodalìa and thanks to the Querini Stampalia Foundation that gratuitously placed its rooms at disposal of the exhibition.

<sup>180</sup>The exhibition *Za Muzej Sodobne Umetnosti Sarajevo 2000/For the Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 2000* was held at the Moderna Galerija, Ljubljana, from September 24<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup>, 1996. The curator Zdenka Badovinac invited the following artists: Marina Abramović, IRWIN, Evgeny Asse + Vadim Fishkin + Dimitri Gutoff + Viktor Misiano, Miroslav Baška, Günter Brus, Sophie Calle, Richard Deacon, Anish Kapoor, Marjetica Potrč, Thomas Schütte, Andres Serrano, Bill Viola, V.S.S.D.

<sup>181</sup>The exhibition *SARAJEVO 2000, Schenkungen von Künstlern für ein neues Museum in Sarajevo* took place at the Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Palais Liechtenstein, from October 27<sup>th</sup>, 1998, to January 10<sup>th</sup>, 1999. The curator Lóránd Hegyi invited the following artists: Polly Apfelbaum, Nora Aslan, Txomin Badiola, Domenico Bianchi, Pedro Cabrita Reis, Maurizio Cannavacciuolo, Eugenio Cano, Andrés Gaston Compagnucci, Gianni Dessi, Braco Dimitrijević, Orshi Drozdik, Gloria Friedmann, Bernard Frize, Gideon Gechtmann, Han Myong-ok, Alex Hartley, Mona Hatoum, Dean Jkanović-Toumin, Birgit Jürgenssen, Massimo Kaufmann, Herwig Kempinger, Kim Soun-gui, Komar & Melamid, Svetlana Kopystiansky, Brigitte Kowanz, Robert Kushner, Bertrand Lavier, Lee Bul, Lee Ufan, Daniela Leupold-Löwenthal, Felice Levini, Lena Liv, László Mulasics, Markus Muntean + Adi Rosenblum, Richard Nonas, Dennis Oppenheim, Cornelia Parker, Pascal Pinaud, Sándor Pinczehelyi, David Salle, Sean Scully, Nebojša Šerić-Šoba, Martin Walde, Lois Weinberger, Lawrence Weiner, Yoon Young-seok.

<sup>182</sup>Artists of “Sarajevo nucleus” are: Christian Boltanski (1994), Edin Numankadić (1996), Danica Dakić (1996), Nusret Pašić (1997), Mustafa Skopljak (1997).

the precious Joseph Beuys *Olflasche* realized in 1984 within his project “Difesa della Natura”.<sup>183</sup>

Between 2007 and 2008 the Beral Madra Contemporary Art Center of Istanbul established the ‘Istanbul nucleus’ by means of the founding-exhibition entitled ‘Neighbours in Dialogue’, held in Istanbul in 2007 and later in Sarajevo, in 2008.<sup>184</sup>

The last nucleus came from the Centar Savremene Umjetnosti Crne Gore (Center of Contemporary Art of Montenegro) of Podgorica, which realized ‘Fluiditeti’, a founding-exhibition occurred on the occasion of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Ars Aevi Project, in 2012.<sup>185</sup> **[Fig. 16]**

The Ars Aevi Collection has also assembled, throughout its more intense years (1999-2005), those artworks displayed in Ars Aevi exhibitions, i.e. all those initiatives organized and curated by the Project itself, in its acting as an authentic ‘virtual museum’ adaptable to the city places, and supported by diverse sponsors and donors. For instance, the Open Space Collection as an outcome of nine solo exhibitions that have taken place in Sarajevo between 1998 and 2006, as well as the Rendez-Vouz Collection, originated by a series of group shows held in 2001. Furthermore, two exhibitions both curated by Ars Aevi curator Asja Mandić – ‘Searching for Identity’ (2002) and ‘Between – Art Camp’ (2003) –enriched the Collection with works by young Bosnian artists.

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<sup>183</sup>Artists of “Bolognano nucleus”, selected by Lucrezia De Domizio Durini are: Marco Bagnoli, Joseph Beuys, Ingeborg Lüscher, Emanuel Dimas de Melo Pimenta, Mirsad Šehić and Renzo Tieri.

<sup>184</sup>Curated by Beral Madra, the exhibition *Susjedi u Dijalogu (Neighbours in Dialogue) - Istanbul Collection for Ars Aevi* took place in Istanbul at Feshane-i Amire from March 10<sup>th</sup> to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007, and later in Sarajevo, at Galerija Collegium Artisticum, from October 10<sup>th</sup> to October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2008. Invited artists were: Steve Sabella (Jerusalem), Wafaa Yasin (Galilee), Sanan Aleskerov (Baku), Lamia Joreige (Beirut), Vahram Aghasyan (Yerevan), Khaled Hafez (Cairo), Shelva Khakhanashvili (Tbilisi-Paris), Farhad Moshiri (Teheran), Dilek Winchester (Istanbul), Xurban Collective (Istanbul), Andrej Đerković (BiH).

<sup>185</sup>The exhibition *Fluiditeti* was curated by Petar Ćuković (Center’s artistic director) who invited the following artists: Ilija Šoškić, Jelena Tomašević, Milija Pavićević, Natalija Vujošević, Oleg Kulik, Plavi Nosevi, Raša Todosijević, Vlado Martek. It took place in Sarajevo, at the Art Gallery of BiH, from December 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2012, to January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2013.

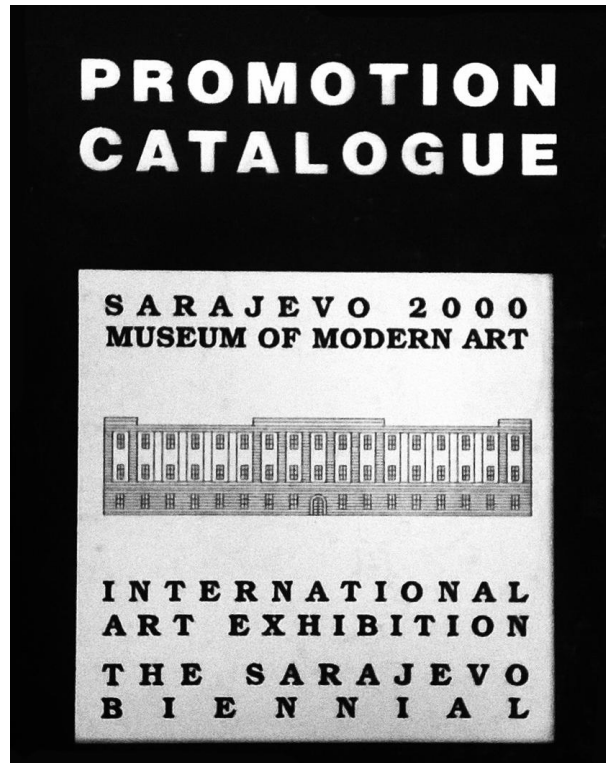
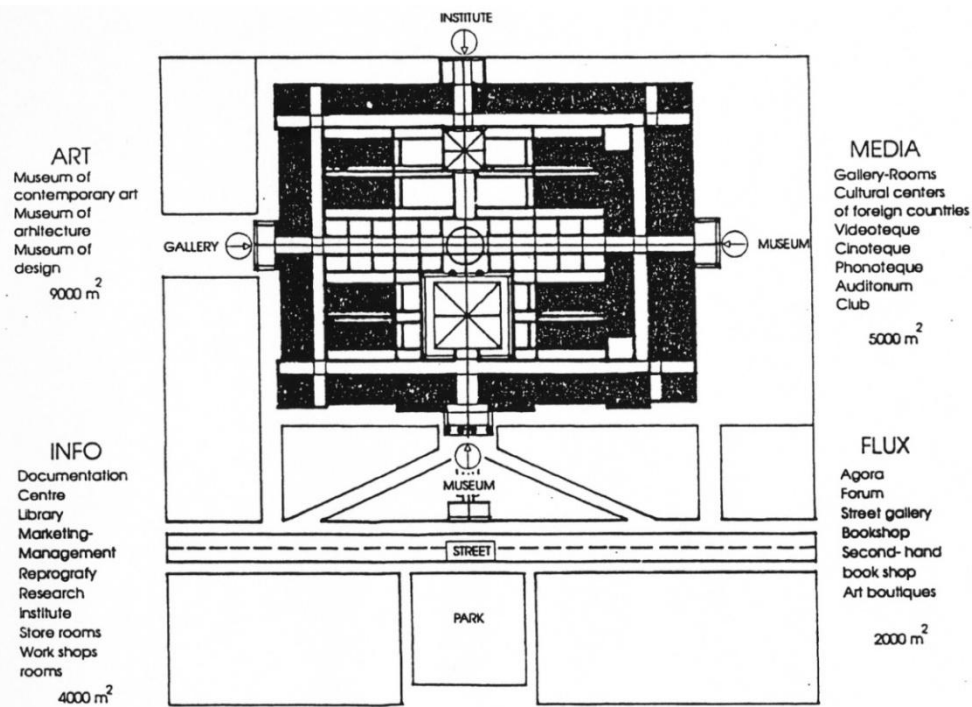


Fig. 7. Cover of *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* (Sarajevo, 1993) with the army head office.

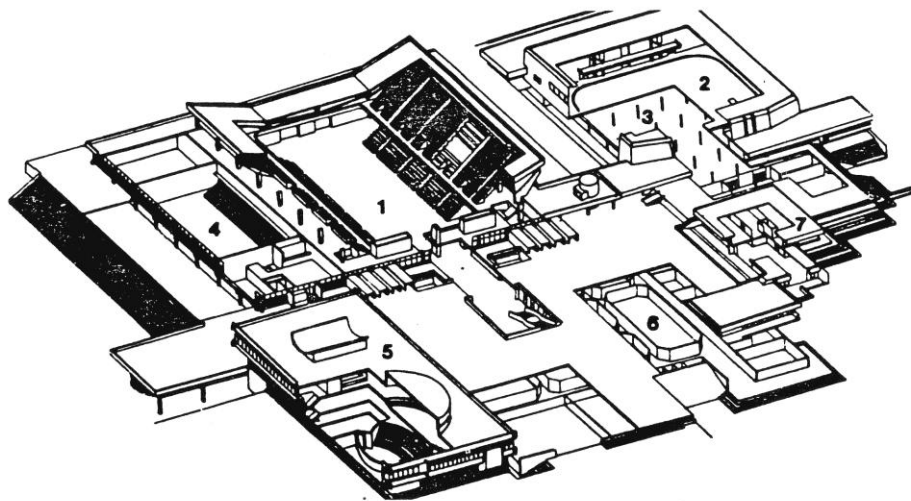
Proposed programme	Exhibitions/donations in European cities	Biennial Exhibitions of Contemporary Art and exhibitions/donations in Sarajevo	Exhibitions/donations in European cities
1995	Exhibition	*	Exhibition
1996	Exhibition	Exhibition	Exhibition
1997	Exhibition	Biennial	Exhibition
1998	Exhibition	Exhibition	Exhibition
1999	Exhibition	Biennial	Exhibition
2000	MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART IN SARAJEVO		

Fig. 8. The *Sarajevo 2000* threefold plan: exhibitions in Europe & Sarajevo, Biennials and Contemporary Art Museum. Source: *Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue* (1993).



**Fig. 9.** Art Media Center within the army headquarters, four sections: Art, Media, Info, Flux. *Source: Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue (Sarajevo, 1993).*

GROUND PLAN OF THE SKENDERIJA CENTRE

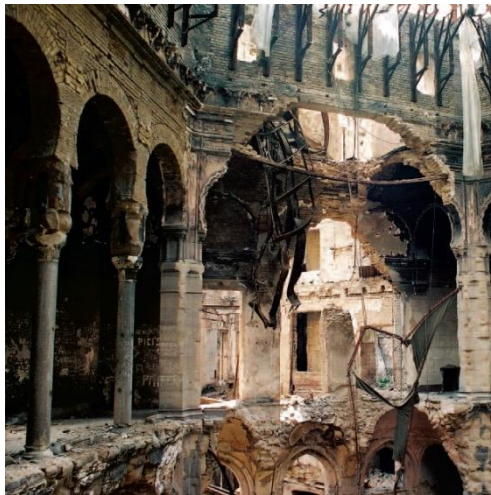


- |                   |                        |
|-------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Sarajevo Hall   | 5 Youth Centre         |
| 2 Ice Rink        | 6 Commercial Centre    |
| 3 Exhibition Hall | 7 Restaurant           |
| 4 Sports Hall     | 8 Collegium Artisticum |

**Fig. 10.** Skenderija Center. *Source: Sarajevo 2000 Promotion Catalogue (Sarajevo, 1993).*



**Fig. 11.** Sarajevo National and University Library up in flames, August 26, 1992. *Source:* Riedlmayer A. J., *Crimes of War, Crimes of Peace*.



**Fig. 12.** Sarajevo National and University Library before the reconstruction completed in 2014. *Source:* *The Reconstruction of the City Hall*, City of Sarajevo Editor, 2012.



**Fig. 13.** Opening of the exhibition Witnesses of Existence, Sutjeska Cinema, 1993. *Source: Mandić A., The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo.*

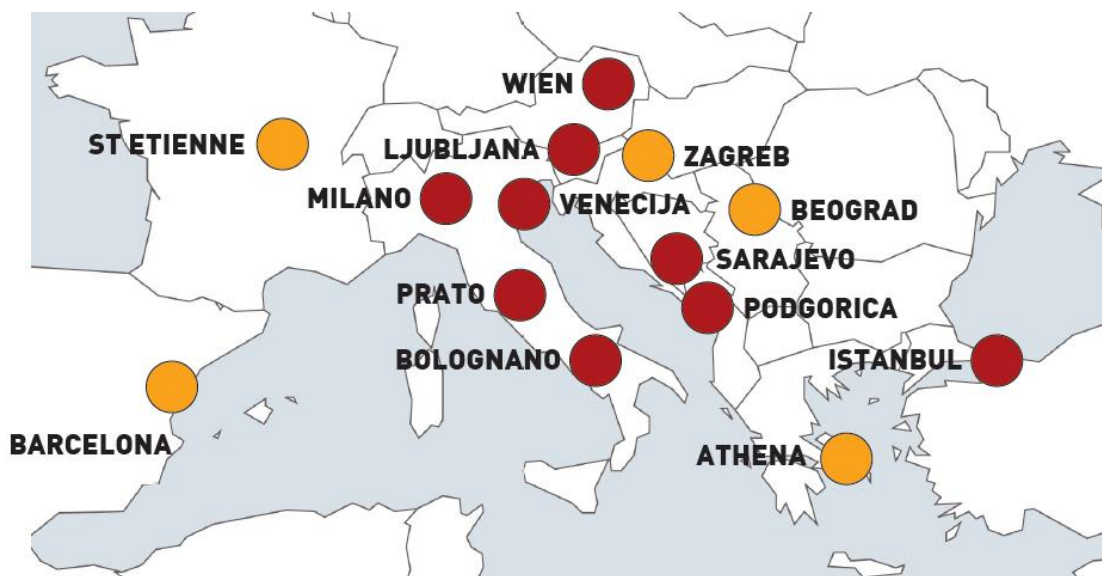


**Fig. 14.** Mustafa Skopljak, SARAJEVO, 90919293, 1992-1993, Sarajevo, Sutjeska Cinema, 1993. *Source: Mandić A., The Formation of a Culture of Critical Resistance in Sarajevo.*





**Fig. 15.** Michelangelo Pistoletto, 'La Porta dello Specchio'. Milano Collection for Ars Aevi 1994-1999. *Source:* Ars Aevi materials and publications.



**Fig. 16.** Cities which hosted Ars Aevi founding-exhibitions (in red) and a plan for future founding-exhibitions (in yellow). *Source:* Ars Aevi materials and publications.

## Chapter 4: Case-study – Part II

### 4.1 The Complex of Pavilions scattered through the urban tissue as ‘Expression of International Collective Will’

#### 4.1.1 Introduction

The present Chapter illustrates that Project’s phase that I personally define the Complex of Pavilions scattered through the urban tissue as ‘Expression of International Collective Will’. The origin of this phase can be already recognized in the period of development and realization of those founding-exhibitions that had taken place in Italy, Austria and Slovenia between 1994 and 1998, finding its peak with its arrival in Sarajevo (1999) and in the early 2000s. In the first phase of the Project, in Chapter 3, we have already seen that Sarajevo 2000 has had an international vocation since its very beginning, according to the then staff’s words contained in the 1993 promotional catalogue.

In this second phase, the international character of the Project – renamed ‘Ars Aevi’ – assumes a fundamental value; the international dimension – often intended as synonymous of “multiculturalism” – is indeed recognizable within the Project, with its several curators, artists, mayors and politicians which over years have concretized the original concept, i.e. realizing an international and continuously expanding project. The international/multicultural features are also recognizable in the methods of collecting artworks, as well as in those exhibitions and seminars that have taken place in the early 2000s, both in Sarajevo’s public spaces and abroad, such as on the occasion of Venice Biennale.

“International growth” and effective increase of the Project are closely linked to its inclusion among the internationally-aided reconstruction plans of the country, through patronage by international organisms such as UNESCO, Council of Europe, European Commission, and sponsorship by UNHCR (United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees) as well as through resources from Italian government.

The motif of the ‘encounter generating art’ – staple of local cultural identity – will be reshaped, and the most common narratives will mention the concepts of ‘international network’, ‘reconciliation and reconstruction’, ‘international solidarity’, ‘European

dimension' and 'multicultural values'. This international and solidarity network – mirroring the postwar Bosnian context – is well represented by the urban/architectural typology of the pavilions. The idea of the Art Media Center within the army headquarters has been abandoned, however the general idea of the museum's management by countries and international supporters still remains: no longer barracks' rooms, but specific and purpose-built pavilions, dispersed through the urban tissue of Sarajevo.

This so-called “ARS AEVI Millennium Complex” is here described as a future projection, considering its peculiar sense and meaning within the postwar context. Neither feasibility studies nor other in-depth studies have been carried out to prepare the basis of such an ambitious and manifold project. In the same years the Project has acquired a legal status and, since then, – despite the lack of an ad hoc museum building – has succeeded in becoming an important cultural institution of the Bosnian capital, for its several cultural and artistic programs. Reading the following paragraphs will lead to an initial comprehension of that internationally based mechanism which has been necessary to start up the Project in the first years, but that has later proved its unsustainability in the long-term.

#### 4.1.2 Reshaping the museum: from barracks to ARS AEVI Millennium Complex

One of the elements characterizing the founding-exhibitions (cfr. 3.2), is certainly the multiplicity of perspectives. As usually occurred with big international art expositions, every artistic director contributes in a different manner to the mosaic-like event, through personal 'interpretations' and artistic selections. Each artistic director has his own motivations to participate, his own message to convey; the act of participating is a symbol and therefore a message itself that is rich of consequences. This message can totally satisfy the organizers' expectations, conversely, it can even assume a critical position, generating subject of reflection and discussion.

As further down illustrated, (cfr. 4.2) this multiplicity of visions towards Ars Aevi Project, and the resulting deviation from the arranged course, has actually blurred its 'boundaries', reshaping some of its rigid aspects.

The motivations which led politicians, curators and artists to join the partnership through the founding-exhibitions, can be generally interpreted as acts of solidarity towards the besieged city. Hence a reply to the organizers' requests and the Project's general conception, *based upon the conviction that today's artists are fully aware of the injustice undergone by the city, on the cities' good will in confirming their friendship, therefore their contribution so that Sarajevo returns to be a free, open and beautiful city through a collection which intends to represent a moment of reflection regarding the most important instances of European and World contemporary art at the close of the second millennium.*<sup>186</sup>

What emerges from reading the curators' words is a museum envisioned as a tool for reconciliation, symbolic and tangible reconstruction of the city. Bruno Corà wrote that *art could set the first milestone towards a recovery of civil and cultural life made up of new authentic will by its citizens and express our close bond with their reality.*<sup>187</sup> The artworks for the future museum thus express shared values: *the example that art sets out is that of a free and liberal community, intent towards linguistic formulation to nominate, through forms, the most advanced level of shared values in the present reality.*<sup>188</sup> The artworks do not want to comment on the tragic facts of war and siege, they do not assume circumstantial tone and do not adopt *symbolic plated gold or of suggestive relation*; instead, they assume the responsibility of a *high intellectual and sensitive presence to which each person is called upon.*<sup>189</sup>

In the dramatic situation of Dayton's immediate aftermath, the founding-exhibitions are reflections on *our bad conscience, as regard to the tragedy in Bosnia, of which we are all responsible somehow or other due to the culpable slowness with which Europe and the rest of the world decided to intervene in the conflict.*<sup>190</sup> According to Marino Cortese, at that time President of Fondazione Querini Stampalia, the founding-exhibitions represent chances to redeem this bad conscience, thus *leaving to Art a*

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<sup>186</sup> Hadžiomerspahić E., *General Concept of the International Cultural Project Sarajevo 2000*. In: Corà B. (eds), *ARS AEVI 2000, Dieci artisti internazionali* op. cit. p. 16.

<sup>187</sup> Corà B., *ARS AEVI 2000*. In: Corà B. (eds), *ARS AEVI 2000, Dieci artisti internazionali* op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

<sup>189</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>190</sup> Cacciari M., *Our Dreams*, in Bertola C. (eds) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale* op. cit., p. 12.

*message of hope for a different and better humanity to find a place in that city and to determine the future of Sarajevo.*<sup>191</sup>

Symbolic and rich of meanings was Bruno Corà's initiative of an exhibition preview, installing works of art across indoor and outdoor spaces of Fortezza da Basso in Florence, the place where the European Heads of State Summit was held. On that occasion, artist Daniel Buren would have installed one of his typical field of flags, but he made up in an alternate strip fabric of black and white bands, evoking mourning for what happened in Sarajevo and Bosnia, exactly putting them up in those public spaces where the political delegations would go through. Meaningful in that specific exposition context was also the installation by Jannis Kounellis, who declared that *the walls of the Fortezza da Basso of Florence are the perimeter of a political town with a very short life, the sculptures are exhibited for a batter of an eyelid and we need to draw very rapidly feelings, abjections, fear and drama, addressed naturally to the European politicians that represent us.*<sup>192</sup> Likewise the works by Eliseo Mattiacci – whose great led blade contained inside hollow cut circles and elliptical orbits that evoked cosmic order and harmony, necessary for commemorating – and Panamarenko, whose submarine simulated the craft of a powerful military force that the artist's ludicrous imagination reduced to childish play, disarming that machine of any aggressiveness.<sup>193</sup>

The title 'Ars Aevi 2000', besides being anagram of Sarajevo 2000, referred to the qualitative critical indication for present art, therefore the art's role in facing *crucial events of our time*<sup>194</sup> and, considering this specific case, in being a visible and necessary message within the political theater of the Summit, thus addressed to minds of those who discuss needs, resources and people's destinies.<sup>195</sup>

Ars Aevi Project has been first of all the story of a journey. The journey of a family fleeing from besieged Sarajevo, then travelling through Italian towns and cities. It has then become a small, spontaneous network based on solidarity and friendship during the war dramatic years, and overcoming difficulties; it has later tenaciously expanded with the involvement of individuals, personalities, Italian cultural and political institutions.

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<sup>191</sup>Cortese M., *For the New Museum of Sarajevo*. In: Bertola C. (eds) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale* op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>192</sup>Corà B., *ARS AEVI 2000*. In: Corà B. (eds), *ARS AEVI 2000, Dieci artisti internazionali* op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>193</sup>Ivi.

<sup>194</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>195</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

Ars Aevi Project has grown up over the years, becoming a store of experiences and successes thanks to the founding-exhibitions and the gathered collection, hence it has kept traveling, towards Slovenia and Austria, progressively expanding and growing. Then it all arrived to Sarajevo, in the post-Dayton context of partitions, where the international community was leading operations of peacemaking, reforming, political mediation and was thus financing the urban, political, social and (multi)cultural reconstruction.

In the aftermath of the 1992-95 War, to give an example, a number of funds have been addressed to the devastated BiH; since 1996, a total of \$ 14 billion of International aid flooded into the country by 17 foreign governments, 18 UN agencies, 27 international organizations and around 200 NGOs.<sup>196</sup>

In this context, Ars Aevi carried out the spontaneously born cooperation with Italian organizations and associations, with curators and directors of museums and founding-exhibitions, therefore with that network of ‘positive energies’ and human relations that EH remembers with enthusiasm still today. In the early 2000s the opportunity to cooperate with them in a range of different activities – exhibitions, contemporary art seminars, annual forums.. – has been possible not only for their solidarity towards the Project – as none of the guests or participants in the programs (artists, curators, artistic directors..) ever received or requested remuneration for their participation at exhibitions and promotional sessions.<sup>197</sup>

The intense activity of years 2000-2005 has been effectively possible because Ars Aevi Project, in its status of ‘virtual museum’ – was definitively included within the programs of BiH’s cultural reconstruction. Things have started changing since the impressive exhibition held in Vienna in 1998, which opened up the way for the Project towards the UNESCO General Direction, and *definitely affirmed Ars Aevi as an inevitable, respected and culturally-, artistically-, politically- and globally-relevant fact.*<sup>198</sup> The UNESCO patronage conferred to the Project in 1998 by the then Director-General Federico Mayor was later followed by Council of Europe (1999) and European Commission (2000) patronages. Following these important international acknowledgments, the Project obtained significant resources and international support.

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<sup>196</sup> McMahan P. C. & Western J., *The Death of Dayton* op. cit.

<sup>197</sup> Hadžiomerspahić E., *Facts* op. cit., p. 68.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

[fig. 17] In 2001, for instance, the General Direction for Cooperation and Development of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs – *Direzione Generale per la Cooperazione e lo Sviluppo, Ministero degli Affari Esteri* – by means of an agreement, allocated 1,000,000 \$ via UNESCO to fund the Project.

In the postwar scenario, where the welfare of cultural institutions did not represent an urgent matter for different administrative levels, Ars Aevi Project seemed to stand on the free ground created by international community, the only safe and fertile terrain where growing.

Before observing these phases, it is important to comprehend that since the late 1990s – years of expansion, growth, international consensus – the Ars Aevi Museum (formerly Art Media Center) has been rethought and reshaped. Therefore how all these favorable dynamics have remodeled the museum structure's idea, defining a kind of 'utopian museum' characterized by being in continuous expansion, both as regards the collection's nuclei – adopting a donation-based acquisition system through founding-exhibitions – and the architectural structure.

The idea of converting the army headquarters into the museum – an idea still present in the catalogues of exhibitions held in Prato and Venice – remained until 1997, but in the catalogue of 1998 Vienna exhibition, for the first time, the 'Pavilions Project' has been mentioned and described by EH as a **showpiece for global contemporary architecture**:

It takes several years to set up a new museum, even in the richest of nations. The Sarajevo initiative is even more complex as we do not intend to construct a single building. The idea is to choose ten different sites for the future pavilions for the permanent collection. The pavilions, which will be designed by ten world-famous architects, will create a special route through the centre of the city and become a showpiece for global contemporary architecture at the end of the second millennium. In this way, our new collaborators – the architects – will be able, with their enthusiasm and creativity, to make a specific contribution to the rebuilding of the city from an architectural and planning point of view.<sup>199</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Hadžiomerspahić E., *The International Cultural Project ARS AEVI – Museum of Contemporary Art – Sarajevo*. In: Hegyi L. (eds.), *SARAJEVO 2000, Schenkungen von Künstlern für ein neues Museum in Sarajevo*, exhibition catalogue, Wien 1998, p.38.

The project was envisioned as a complex twisting and turning through the urban space, in open order connecting the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian historical center to the new districts. The military headquarters along with the Art Media Center have been abandoned in order to rethink the museum as a spectacular complex, a kind of double project consisting of a contemporary art museum and a contemporary architecture museum simultaneously, but always *fitting the measure of man*, as EH pointed out.<sup>200</sup>

As above described (Cfr. 3.1) the barrack's rooms would have been shared out among participating countries, and each of them would have had its own space to arrange and manage. This idea remains in the pavilions complex – still characterized, as a whole, by the ‘multiplicity of perspectives’ – where every module, an ad hoc building of 4000-6000 sqm, hosts a collection and therefore becomes a cultural center for the country that has financed its formation and construction.

The founding country here fulfills the task of directly managing in the long-term: within every single pavilion the space is thus split into exhibition facilities and commercial functions to finance activities.<sup>201</sup>

An ambitious project – involving internationally renowned architects – which mirrors a complex of emerging dynamics and principles: the solidarity of countries towards Sarajevo and the will of collectively participate in its reconstruction, the current pivotal role of international community and especially Europe – invited to engage in the Project and also provided with decisional and tangible spaces for culture.

A project which is thus increasingly oriented to Europe and continuously in search for Europe in terms of goals, resources and therefore narratives, where the museum complex is itself described as the symbol of ‘New Europe’. Following the patronage by Council of Europe, the Project appeals to all the member countries of the Council. As reported by a 1999 Carnet de Bord,<sup>202</sup> *a proposition with regards to the necessary financing for the construction of the ten exhibition halls, will be made to the Member States of the Council of Europe, as well as to other countries which might be interested.*

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<sup>200</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Loving the Differences* op. cit. p. 31.

<sup>201</sup>Bertola C., *Ars Aevi: un nuovo concetto di museo*. In: De Luca M., Gennari Santori F., Pietromarchi B., Trimarchi M., *Creazione Contemporanea, Arte, società e territorio tra pubblico e privato*, Rome 2004, p. 185.

<sup>202</sup>*Council of Europe - Groupe de rapporteurs sur l'éducation, la culture et le sport - Carnet de Bord*, 12 mai 1999. Available at: <https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=090000168051a6b8> (accessed 16.03.2016)



Differently from the first years of war, when an international aid appeared impossible to achieve, Ars Aevi stands now in a completely different situation, within a favorable context of international visibility and acknowledgment, where European countries along with their international organisms seem to guarantee long-term involvement and commitment to the Project.

According to EH, *the goal of the pavilions museum is to diminish the distances between the “centers” and “peripheries”, to join the European nations and other interested ones to finance the construction and maintenance of the ARS AEVI Millennium Complex in Sarajevo and to construct in Sarajevo an attractive “beacon” of the New Europe.* Therefore a museum/center of contemporary art that will contribute to the city rebuilding over the years, creating also an *atmosphere that will have an extraordinary power to stimulate the processes of artistic, cultural, social and economic development*, not only in Sarajevo but in the whole Balkan Region and Southeastern Europe.<sup>203</sup>

It is ultimately interesting to focus on the idea of diminishing the distances between ‘centers’ and ‘peripheries’, therefore to place the spectacular architectural project of Ars Aevi Millennium Complex in the context of those new museums that exactly in the same years were being built in Europe and worldwide.

According to Alessandra Mottola Molfino,<sup>204</sup> the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century seemed to announce the future development of an ‘awe-inspiring urban culture’ and of the ‘sensational event in architecture’, thus a period punctuated by those spectacular events of the new museums’ architecture: from Bilbao to Basel, from London to Berlin (cfr. 2.3.2).

Within the broader context of urban strategies at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the museums – stable cultural institutions that contribute to the value creation in cities – were identified as collective and symbolic instruments functional to the urban regeneration, namely, the regeneration of city outskirts. The utmost museum-event of all the 90s, was the opening of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, in 1997: the whole city was subjected to a widespread policy of urban regeneration that aimed at the internationalization, through the building of newfangled edifices in old industrial sites

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<sup>203</sup> Hadžiomerspahić E., *Loving the Differences* op. cit., p. 31.

<sup>204</sup> Mottola Molfino A., *L’Etica dei Musei*, Umberto Allemandi & C., Torino 2004, p. 57.

and former harbors, such as the Euskalduna Conference Centre and Concert Hall, the regeneration of the Abandoibarra area conducted by César Pelli and the Metro Bilbao designed by Norman Foster. The transformation of the city from a symbol of the Basque conflict into the renowned site, where the iconic museum designed by Frank Gehry stands, is commonly known.

Following the Bilbao's renaissance and the idea that its success could be replicated elsewhere, European cities attempted to gain their own spectacular cultural architecture and, exactly one year later, the idea of Ars Aevi Museum Complex was indeed conceived.

Countless are the cases of urban regeneration across the globe:<sup>205</sup> SoHo and Chelsea in New York, contemporary art museums MACBA and CCCB in Barcelona (1994-1995); the new museums in Manchester – Imperial War Museum, Urbis and the expansion of the Manchester Art Gallery – had the mission of steering the industrial city, target of IRA attacks in 1996, towards the rebirth; interesting the case of the Groninger Museum (Groningen, Netherlands) that reopened in 1994 becoming the new strength of the entire region. As stated in the museum's website, right from the outset, it was certain that the new Groninger Museum would be designed by several architects. Head architect Alessandro Mendini chose designers and architects for this purpose: Philippe Starck, Michele de Lucchi and Coop Himmelb(l)au.<sup>206</sup> As in the case of the Ars Aevi Millennium Complex, also the Groninger Museum was thus conceived and realized by assembling a group of pavilions, designed by acclaimed world architects.

In 1999 the Italian *starchitect* Renzo Piano, in the role of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, was invited by EH to design the first Ars Aevi pavilion. In accepting the task and defining Ars Aevi Project as an 'expression of international collective will' he thus became the first architect offering his collaboration. In summer 2000 he presented preliminary sketches for the first Ars Aevi building; his design, many times revised in the years to come, will be described in Paragraph 5.1.2.

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<sup>205</sup> Cfr. *Ibid.* pp. 58-90

<sup>206</sup> Cfr. <http://www.groningermuseum.nl/en/museum-building> (accessed: 28.04.2016)

## 4.2 ARS AEVI Millennium Complex within the (multi)cultural rebuilding context

The International supporters, exercising influence and providing resources, have made Ars Aevi a well functioning ‘virtual museum’, which can now afford to realize a number of activities animating city places, galleries and unconventional spaces. However, what was above defined the ‘only safe and fertile terrain’ created by international supporters, turned out to be something different.

Many times the virtual Ars Aevi Museum had to confront political issues concerning the public places where its activities were temporarily hosted; in this case the international presence proved to be helpful in immediately solving and alleviating the situations. But over the years the emergency in the Balkan has dwindled and the new projects have been gradually left to local actors – as in the aforementioned case of Soros Center of Contemporary Art<sup>207</sup> – thus the direct international intervention has proven to aim *not for a lasting, fundamental transformation of BiH’s disastrous framework, but for a series of short-term, superficial improvements symbolizing multiculturalism and religious tolerance.*<sup>208</sup>

It is here necessary to generally introduce the policies of cultural reconstruction based on multiculturalism promoted in BiH at international level and, following Edin Hajdarpašić’s discourse, Ars Aevi’s position is then examined.

As above explained, the same international community which mediated the peace agreements in Dayton, also assumed a key role for what concerned social, institutional and cultural reconstruction in postwar BiH. The aim of Dayton Agreements and therefore of Bosnian Constitution, was the creation of a ‘multicultural’ state able to maintain reconciliation among the three ethnic groups: Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Attempting to restore the prewar ‘multiethnic and multicultural’ BiH, that country of ‘religious tolerance’ as it was before the 1990s, the international community in BiH started to promote policies of cultural reconstruction in the name of ‘multiculturalism’. The concept of ‘culture’ that was continuously promoted, was indeed assimilated to that of ‘religious confession’, where the term ‘multicultural’ automatically assumed the value of ‘multiethnic and multi-confessional’. Hence, this interpretation of

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<sup>207</sup>Cfr. 1.4.2 of the present thesis.

<sup>208</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit. p. 115.

multiculturalism has actually sustained and emphasized the differences existing in BiH, whose premises have been fossilized in Dayton constitution with territorial and political division into entities according to ethno-confessional principles.

The policies of multicultural reconstruction were thus based on the discriminating element of religious difference, revealing to be a support for partition – on which the country is based and that actually undermines the grounds for a possible inclusive development of the three constituent peoples – albeit in the name of ‘multi-ethnicity’.

It was in fact an (inter)nationalist cultural policy. Sponsorships and massive resources earmarked for this kind of ‘multicultural’ program by the international community – international organisms, UN offices, NGOs, foreign governments – have indeed uncritically accepted the nationalists’ insistence on the centrality of religious difference in the postwar remaking of culture and politics.<sup>209</sup> Referring to the international multiculturalist approach and its politics of recognizing difference, Vanessa Pupavac argues that

concessions are contained within the logic of the multiculturalist’s valorization of difference. So, although the multiculturalist road is paved with good intentions for ethnic coexistence, multiculturalist policies have helped institutionalize difference and inhibit the overcoming of ethnic divisions. The imperative to contain ethnic divisions and promote non-nationalist politics has led international officials to resort to decree and encroach upon the exercise of civil and democratic rights.<sup>210</sup>

The concept of multiculturalism in the reductionist terms of multi-ethnicity and multi-confessionalism – reflecting and underscoring differences – led to the rapid and primary resurrection, restoration and reconstruction of religious symbols and buildings for every group. In Sarajevo new mosques were founded and built by the governments of Indonesia, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The restoration of preexisting mosques and churches was financed through the joint sponsorship of individual countries such as Italy, Turkey, Greece, as well as through restoration programs of EU and UN. Everywhere throughout the country religious schools and faith-based NGOs were established. This general program of rebuilding has thus created a tangible

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<sup>209</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

<sup>210</sup> Pupavac V., *Multiculturalism and its discontents in SFR Yugoslavia and Bosnia: A Critique of the Multiculturalist Rights Model*. In: White N. & Klaasen D., *The UN, Human Rights and Post-Conflict Situations*, Manchester University Press, Manchester 2005, pp. 213-238.

representation both of the nationalist imaginary dimension, and the mosaic-like image of multicultural BiH, strongly demanded by international community.

In order to prove the dominance of the ethno-confessional principle within (inter)nationalist policies of reconstruction, Hajdarpašić illustrates the emblematic case of the Jewish Haggadah, whose complex history has been reduced to a politically convenient symbol to promote multiculturalism. Haggadah is a Jewish codex from 14<sup>th</sup> century northern Spain that found its way to Sarajevo with the Sephardic Jews who were expelled during the Inquisition in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was then acquired in 1894 by the National Museum of BiH from the Kohen family. The precious item, that throughout 20th century did not represent the museum's primary attraction, survived both the Holocaust and the siege of the 1990s; exactly since the years of 1992-95 War its history has started to assume new meanings. Since its rescue during the siege 'thanks to people of different faiths', the item has become a symbol of enduring religious coexistence and solidarity between Bosnian religious communities, a symbol of hope in that specific historical moment when nationalist extremist groups – creators of ethnically pure spaces and destroyers of cultural, public heritage – were deleting the evidence of past living together.

The symbolism of Haggadah formulated within the familiar terms of religious coexistence, has been included into the wider nationalist discourse based on the religious difference, therefore on the mutually exclusion of ethno-confessional communities of BiH. Since the beginning of war, the President Izetbegović along with other leaders of the Muslim Party SDA – that after the war preferred to sharpen its profile as a Bosnian 'Muslim' Party – have often promoted the Jewish prayer book as a symbol of tolerance and openness,<sup>211</sup> in order to demonstrate their political commitment towards these values, therefore religious coexistence.

At the same moment and within the same postwar context, this symbolism appeared to the institutions of international community – such as OHR and other offices of UN in BiH – a congenial tool for promoting the new values of multiculturalism and multi-ethnicity of the Bosnian society. Choosing the Haggadah meant in fact promoting

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<sup>211</sup>Cfr. 3.1.4 of the present thesis. According to Elena dell'Agnese the character of Sarajevo's urban civilization (and its phenomenon of cultural resistance) has been incorporated into the discourse of Muslim nationalism, as the reverse of the "barbarous and tribal minds" of the Serbs. See also: Simmons C., *A MULTICULTURAL, MULTIETHNIC, AND MULTICONFESSIONAL BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA* op. cit.

multiculturalism in religious terms albeit not favoring any one of the three confessions of the country: the promoted item was indeed an object of worship emblem of a community, the small Bosnian Jewish community, that was not one of the ‘sides’ that had waged war – and neither one of the constituent peoples of BiH.

In 2002, the UN Mission in BiH (UNMIBH) promoted the Haggadah’s restoration and the setting up of a secure, climate-controlled room within the National Museum. On the occasion of its inauguration, the chief of UNMIBH Paul Klein – whose mission in BiH finished just a few weeks later – promoted the values of multiculturalism describing Sarajevo as “beacon of tolerance in Europe”, and the vicissitudes of the survived prayer book as an happy ending, “thanks to the courage and determination of people of all faiths”.<sup>212</sup>

Within the policies of postwar rebuilding, both governments and global, regional organizations promoted, with the promise of huge resources, a number of programs for renovating the country’s cultural institutions, adopting the ethno-confessional premises on which the postwar partition was based, but in the name of multiculturalism. The insistence on multiculturalism as the highest ideal in BiH gradually led to the proliferation of these terms in several local institutions that started to define their own projects as ‘multiethnic’ and ‘multicultural’. The rapidly widespread new discourse begun by these institutions was in part an attempt to attract the favor of international donors, but became also an authentic mantra, a trite and necessary ‘label’ for every kind of cultural initiative in postwar Sarajevo. Even though this narrative could be found in every sort of activity not characterized by extreme nationalism such as parks, events, festivals and so forth, intending the dominant adjective of ‘multicultural’ for ‘multi-confessional’ has continuously and tacitly referred to the country’s partition.

As already mentioned, since Ars Aevi in the late 1990s arrived to Sarajevo and came into contact with international organisms, its nature has been profoundly changed. Whilst its intrinsic international vocation, the small collaborative initiative involving Italian municipalities and museums, has evolved into a large scale activity increasingly oriented towards UNESCO, therefore has been included within the internationally promoted programs for BiH’s cultural reconstruction. According to Hajdarpašić, Ars

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<sup>212</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit., pp. 114-115.

Aevi's success of these years with international donors – in terms of consensus and resources – can be exactly explained as a result of Ars Aevi's strategic adoption of multiculturalist discourses.<sup>213</sup>

According to the scholar, the engagement of international organizations in Ars Aevi's sponsorship is so much strictly interwoven with the multiculturalist references' adoption that the two processes could be hardly distinguished. They in fact together constituted that crucial postwar dynamic consisting in the flourishing of multiculturalist narratives in times of triumphant nationalist division.

On the occasion of 1998 exhibition in Vienna, the Ars Aevi collection was defined *a new, international and multicultural collection of contemporary art, created by artists from all continents, from various societies and cultures, who take part in the enormous task of building up a new, global, and tolerant society preserving highly different lifestyles and habits of all the minorities living there and accepting the right to think and behave differently.*<sup>214</sup> Yet, the Project was even defined a “multiethnic cultural space”<sup>215</sup> where its aim is to create an international multicultural center and a worldwide contemporary art museum in Sarajevo, a city where ethnic groups and different cultures from East and West have met and pacifically cooperated for centuries. *Ars Aevi Center and Museum will represent a permanent and visible symbol of the possibility of international and cultural dialogue, exchange, encounter.*<sup>216</sup>

**The ‘encounter generating art’ – motif of collective identity that during the siege originated the Sarajevo 2000 Project – has gradually been objectified and reified into a strategic and necessary frame within the context of (inter)nationalist rebuilding. It was thus reformulated following the multiculturalist convention in ethno-confessional terms, and, going against the (monocultural) nationalism, became a strategic mechanism where the concept of the ‘ethnically balanced’ sanctioned in Dayton emerged, then influencing the collection formation and Ars Aevi activities.**

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<sup>213</sup>Ivi.

<sup>214</sup>Hegy L., *SARAJEVO – the Challenge of a Site, to Overcome the Discrepancy Between Centers and Peripheries*. In: Hegyi L. (eds.), *SARAJEVO 2000, Schenkungen von Künstlern für ein neues Museum in Sarajevo* op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>215</sup>*Museum of Contemporary Art Museum In Progress – Sarajevo, Elaborati Grafici e Documenti*, by Edilvenezia, April 2005, p. 14. Accessed: Ars Aevi Project Offices, Sarajevo, December 2015.

<sup>216</sup>Ibid. p. 5.

Already in the first exhibitions, as observed, “the Project’s international character”<sup>217</sup> was preserved by the balanced presence, within each nucleus, of artists coming from the country organizing the exhibition, from other European countries and from non-European nations. The “international character” then gave way to the “multicultural character” of the same collection, which would be preserved through a specific method of selection whereby none of artists’ cultures or countries of origin could be predominantly represented in a founding-exhibition. Symbolic is the case of the founding-exhibition originally planned in Barcelona<sup>218</sup> – whereby the MACBA artistic director selected ten Catalan and Spanish artists – but which was refused, finding it impossible to accept donations representative of “artists coming from a prevailing geopolitical area”.<sup>219</sup> Such a motivation could be referred to the – already explained – strategic use of that frame, but it is important to highlight how such an obsessive care in avoiding any “cultural majority” has been a true necessity from the postwar years onwards. Multiculturalism has in fact become an imperative, the democratic model that institutions must follow, with the institutionalization of a complex system of ethnic representation at all levels of public institutions, and with a multiculturalist understanding of rights, under the Dayton agreement.<sup>220</sup>

The series of exhibitions held in Sarajevo in 2001 and entitled “Rendez-Vouz” has recalled the original motif of ‘encounter generating art’. Every exhibition was indeed curated by one of the artistic curators of those founding-exhibitions realized until that moment: Enrico Comi, Lóránd Hegyi, Bruno Corà, Chiara Bertola, Zdenka Badovinac and Lucrezia De Domizio Durini. The encounter consisted in the method of artists’ selection: the choice was based on the difference of origins, hence each curator invited one artist from Sarajevo, one from the “East” and one from the “West”.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>217</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *General Concept of the International Cultural Project Sarajevo 2000*. In Corà B. (eds.), *ARS AEFI 2000, Dieci artisti internazionali* op. cit., p. 17; Hadžiomerspahić E., *International Cultural Project Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo 2000*, in Bertola C. (eds.) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale* op. cit., pp. 15-17; Promotional material published on occasion of Ljubljana founding exhibition (1996).

<sup>218</sup>Cfr. Bertola C. (eds.) *SARAJEVO progetto culturale internazionale* op. cit.

<sup>219</sup>Interview with Enver Hadžiomerspahić in Ticca E., *Ars Aevi. Arte e Economia dello sviluppo a Sarajevo*, available at <http://www.artribune.com/2013/08/ars-aevi-arte-e-economia-dello-sviluppo-a-sarajevo/> (accessed 20.03.2016). Translation from Italian “artisti di un’area geopolitica maggioritaria”.

<sup>220</sup>Pupavac V., *Multiculturalism and its discontents* op. cit.

<sup>221</sup>Hadžiomerspahić E., *Facts* op. cit., p. 58.



Yet, during a personal conversation with EH, I was informed that even the choice of the countries organizing founding-exhibitions was going towards that direction. Most of the first collection nuclei, assembled from 1994 to 2003, came – casually – from countries of the Catholic world: Italy, Austria and Slovenia. Both the founding-exhibitions held in Istanbul in 2008 and in Podgorica in 2012 do not represent only a natural expansion of the Ars Aevi network thanks to old contacts and friendships – with Beral Madra, active participant of Ars Aevi’s events and Petar Ćuković, friend since the time of Yugoslav Documents. It is even a strategic collection enlargement including a capital of Islamic world and a capital of Orthodox world, in order to render – avoiding any favoritism or exclusions – the portrait of “Sarajevo Multicultural Capital”.<sup>222</sup>

If initially – in the immediate postwar period – the participation of museums and institutions to Ars Aevi Project was seen as an international action of solidarity towards the besieged city, then, following the increase of the still present multiculturalist narratives, a new motivation has been gradually affirmed, whereby their participation would be explained in having recognized in Sarajevo the symbolic city where “the three religions which establish Europe’s destiny, embrace”.<sup>223</sup>

It could be argued that in the post-Dayton context, Ars Aevi Project has adopted an “ethnographic approach” to collecting contemporary art, following the criterion for selection on the basis of a given artist’s origin. Drawing a parallel between a contemporary art museum such as Ars Aevi, and what nowadays happens to the European ethnographic museums, seems to be as interesting as paradoxical. If in the past ethnographic museums<sup>224</sup> contributed to creating the notion of ‘otherness’, collecting, classifying, arranging and re-arranging ‘the other’ looking at the world through the lens of ethnicity and religious identity,<sup>225</sup> today they are experiencing an

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<sup>222</sup>Manifesto Ars Aevi.

<sup>223</sup>Interview with Enver Hadžiomerspahić, Sarajevo, October 27<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>224</sup>Ethnographic museums and collections were born in colonial epoch, their core business and structure were therefore based on essentialism, presenting a division into distinct geographical regions, each with its own permanent exhibition space, collection and curator. A sort of museum where the world interpretation was based on the division between ‘us’ and ‘them’, one half observes and owns, while the other is observed and owned. Cfr. Shatanawi M., *Contemporary Art in Ethnographic Museums*. In: Belting H. & Buddensieg A. (eds.) *The Global Art World. Audiences, Markets, and Museums*, Ostfildern 2009, pp. 368-384.

<sup>225</sup>Shatanawi M. (2012) *Engaging Islam: Working with Muslim Communities in a Multicultural Society*. In: *The Museum Journal*, 55, 1, 65-79, p. 77.

identity crisis, dealing with challenges and risks of globalized and ‘multicultural’ contemporary society.<sup>226</sup>

Contemporary (global) art is exactly one of these critical elements; as argued by the curator and anthropologist Mirjam Shatanawi, more recently, the globalization of the art world has exposed the growing divide between the discursive boundaries around which the ethnographic museum is built and the universalist claims of contemporary art:<sup>227</sup>

At a rudimentary level, the universalist claims of contemporary art run counter to the conventional lines of reasoning and organizational models on which the ethnographic museum is built. What was formerly referred to as non-Western art, today often functions within a global system comprising galleries and dealers, art institutions and criticism (which does not necessarily imply that art is deprived of local significance, but rather that it assumes various meanings according to geographic location). Its subject may or may not refer to local cultural contexts. *documenta 12*, for instance, featured a Malian artist educated in Cuba. His work was a reflection on the conflict between Israel and Palestine and drew on West African textile traditions as well as Conceptualism, a domain formerly seen as exclusively Western. Such a blurring of categories is highly confusing for the ethnographic museum, which derives its *raison d'être* from the compartmentalization of cultures—each culture in its own pigeonhole—and to such an extent that the inclusion of contemporary art might challenge its very existence.<sup>228</sup>

Within *Ars Aevi*, a similar paradoxical coexistence of discursive boundaries and universalist claims of contemporary art seems to emerge. Concerning this, it is interesting to provide a close-up insight into those concepts and reasons underpinning the nucleus from ‘Islamic’ Istanbul, which, indeed, has gathered artists from South Caucasus, Middle East and Turkey. The curator herself warns visitors against interpreting such an exhibition as expression of essentialist collective identities. In doing so, she embraces the broadly widespread critiques of European multicultural policies – which through support and promotion to ethnic, religious minorities of Western societies, oppose both contemporary racism and ethnic nationalism, but de

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<sup>226</sup>In the context of recent processes of globalization and migration, the ethnographic museum’s identity is called into question. The museum struggles with the burden of its colonial past and post-colonial critiques of ethnographic methods of representing other cultures. Cfr. Shatanawi M., *Contemporary Art in Ethnographic Museums* op. cit. pp. 368-384.

<sup>227</sup>Shatanawi M., *Contemporary Art in Ethnographic Museums* op. cit., p. 368.

<sup>228</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 370.

facto share their key assumptions in terms of culturalist understanding of society and validation of difference:<sup>229</sup> “Multiculturalism has brought the natives home in the post-imperial countries”.<sup>230</sup> The “Neighbors in Dialogue”<sup>231</sup> are artists from those countries of former Ottoman Empire, that in the aftermath of its collapse have gradually lost every contact, and that today are dealing with comparable and similar social, cultural, political phenomena. It is therefore a thematic approach that has nothing to do with those ‘oriental features’ – basis for a possible ‘ethnic marketing’. As argued by Beral Madra:

Clearly, one of the reasons why particularly the works of Turkish and Middle Eastern artists were so admired in “multi-cultural” EU exhibitions was the desire of Christian-originated Western art production and systems to confront the culture of their minority Muslim communities. The key processes of EU’s desire to confront and settle accounts with the culture of its Muslim minorities took place in these contemporary exhibitions. [...] the Neighbors in Dialogue exhibition is the outcome of an attempt to develop an independent communication network without being a part of this formation. Even though it is not openly expressed, it is evident that the attending artists have a common past, a common history shared within the Ottoman Empire. The political formulations following the collapse of the Empire broke off Turkey’s relation with these countries. Almost no real contact was re-built until the 90s. Taking their common past into account, one should not make generalizations on the features and similarities of the exhibited works. In other words, there is no reason to conclude that these works have an “oriental” characteristic.<sup>232</sup>

But already in 1996 Bruno Corà, curator of Prato’s exhibition, in affirming the core value of being international and contemporary for the future museum – the art of the epoch, the ‘ars’ of the ‘aevi’ – he somehow contrasted the rigid criterion of “origin country” for selecting the artists, he therefore wrote in the catalogue that:

the works of every artist, which, besides expressing hardship and an individual identity, reflect above all an emblematic figure of the epoch we are living in; this zeitgeist, in spite of coming from different places and

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<sup>229</sup>Pupavac V., *Multiculturalism and its discontents* op. cit.

<sup>230</sup>Shatanawi M. *Engaging Islam* op. cit. p. 65.

<sup>231</sup>Title of the Istanbul founding exhibition. Cfr. *Neighbors in Dialogue, Istanbul Collection for Ars Aevi* op. cit.

<sup>232</sup>Madra B., *Neighbours in Istanbul*. In: *Neighbors in Dialogue, Istanbul Collection for Ars Aevi* op. cit. p. 24.

bearing its influence, surpasses because of congenital inclination every territorial border, and, it is this that reveals the fundament of international art.<sup>233</sup>

The use of multicultural conventions/frames within *Ars Aevi*, could be included among those operations of reification, patrimonialization, objectification of cultural qualities, identities and facts – through processes of classifications operated by contemporary nation-states and transnational-global agents and forces – but which are invoked and enacted in order to gain access to material and symbolic resources.<sup>234</sup> The main risk is the homologation in the name of peculiarity and, as the anthropologist Berardino Palumbo observes, the creation of a ‘legitimate aseptic and temporal space’ where those ‘iridescent points generating tensions and conflicts’ inside which ‘social poetics of real persons are evident and tangible’ are thus relegated to second place.<sup>235</sup>

More precisely, *Ars Aevi*’s focusing on religious elements in order to express the concept of ‘encounter generating art’ relates to multicultural policies – dangerous, because differences could be “fixed” or “museumized” by the identification of discrete communities and traditions<sup>236</sup> – within the specific political context of Sarajevo and BiH, where the entire society is institutionally based on well separated and reified forms of cultural difference. Hence, the rigidity of this artificial frame/mechanism risks to stem the Project’s energy, in an attempt to conform it to the complex, suffocating context contingencies of postwar BiH.

Nevertheless, tension between rigid frames and fluid contents is continuously perceived throughout the whole history of the Project, often emerging in the shape of paradoxical aspects and situations. It is here important to highlight those fluid aspects – in other words, Palumbo’s ‘iridescent points’ – which come into being through a multiplicity of visions built by **artists and curators who – leaving the predetermined path – find in *Ars Aevi* an occasion to actually ‘encounter, generating art’**. It can be

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<sup>233</sup>Corà B., *ARS AEVI 2000*, in Corà B. (eds), *ARS AEVI 2000, Dieci artisti internazionali* op. cit. pp. 22-23. In the original curatorial statement, the Italian expression used by Bruno Corà is: ‘fondamento internazionalista dell’arte’, the English translation should be ‘fundament of internationalist art’.

<sup>234</sup>Palumbo B., *L’Unesco e il campanile* op. cit. pp. 15, 19-20.

<sup>235</sup>Palumbo B. (2006) *Il vento del Sud-Est. Regionalismo, neosicilianismo e politiche del patrimonio nella Sicilia di inizio millennio*. In: *Antropologia*, n. 7, 43-91, p. 52. “[...] spazio ufficiale asettico e temporale, nel quale tendono a essere messi in secondo piano quei punti iridescenti che producono tensioni e conflitti e nei quali, invece, più evidenti e concrete si fanno le poetiche sociali messe in atto da persone reali.”

<sup>236</sup>Cfr. Macdonald S. J. (2003) *Museums* op. cit. p. 7.

argued that Ars Aevi has been, during the first postwar decade, a true and authentic gathering place for politically engaged cultural movements and artists, presenting provocative and innovative works and acting as a marginal, in-between space where to practice art's political function.

Hajdarpašić, in defining Ars Aevi as *one of the few institutions to bring together artists who articulate far-reaching criticisms of the nationalist political order*, writes:

Even though the project has partly complied with these conformist codes, Ars Aevi's substantive contributions have nonetheless created a small but significant institutional setting for contemporary art and incisive political critiques. Among the many pieces in the collection that open up questions about art, culture and politics, the works by Maja Bajević and Jusuf Hadžifejzović present perhaps the most direct and most trenchant commentaries on the postwar situation in Bosnia. In *Double-Bubble*, a video work, Maja Bajević nonchalantly recites phrases describing different religious practices and horrific expressions of violence; in this vein, she presents *TECHNO* and *TURBO*, two new forms of religion fittingly captured by statements and acts such as 'I go to church; I rape women'. Contemporary creeds also constitute some of the subtexts of Jusuf Hadžifejzović opus, in particular one of the pieces from his *Cetinje-Sarajevo Depot*. Working with found objects (as he has for most of his career), Hadžifejzović displays several wrapped – or veiled – Barbie dolls whose torsos, tightly enveloped by white gauze, are stuck in intricately engraved bullet casings, popular postwar souvenirs made by artisans in the old quarter of Sarajevo. The works by Bajević and Hadžifejzović, both parts of the Ars Aevi collection, exemplify the kinds of artistic engagement that not only address contemporary social problems, but also confront the very structures – such as those of religion, gender, and nation – that reproduce injustice and violence.<sup>237</sup>

Among founding-exhibitions, 'Neighbors in Dialogue' has been instead the first in presenting artworks characterized by an explicit political significance, such as *Missing* by Andrej Đerković, in memory of Srebrenica genocide, as well as the work by Shalva Khakhanashvili, who interpreted the tension of waiting during the process of attaining EU-membership and the reluctance of the EU. [fig. 18]

Interesting is the case of 'Between – Art Camp', a review of young Bosnian artists curated by Asja Mandić in 2003, set up within tents, made available by UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) which sustained the exhibition realization, and

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<sup>237</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit. pp. 127-128.

mounted on the lot designated for the future Renzo Piano's museum-pavilion. [Fig. 19] In the exhibition, provocative parallels have been drawn between the contemporary art museum and the refugee camp in the postwar context – which are blurred and complicated by the presence of International organizations, particularly UN programs such as UNESCO and UNHCR, across those spaces.<sup>238</sup> The following fragment of Mandić's text offers an insight into artists' works, and becomes symbolic in closing the present Paragraph:

Young artists are striving to communicate at the level of Western European art, to become part of the wider world communications field, but are impeded by our general social privation and constraints on their movements because of the country they come from [...] and the attitude of the West to the Other of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Torn between political entities, nationally divided academies, and media manipulation, they feel more acutely than ever that they exist in a kind of interspace, on the periphery, the margin, in isolation. [...] The works are inspired, defined or prompted by the social context, by the overall socio-political situation of International isolation, destitution, spiritual and physical deracination, the post-colonialist attitude of the West towards Bosnia and Herzegovina, by being torn between different geographical, political and cultural sphere, by the feeling of existing in a space in-between. Some of participants have consciously confronted the reality of the day and offer a very personal contact with reality. Their works are steeped in ironic comments on the psychological, social and cultural environment defined by the artificial Dayton borders and partition. They are the first-person speech of the artist, the speech of freedom through which there runs, without explicit theorizing, an acute social critique. The works reflect an atmosphere of sadness, alienation, frustration, a sense of isolation and abandonment, as well as the quest for a lost identity, undermined by the feeling of affiliation which oscillates between the locations where the artist lived and in which he found himself. The artistic inspiration also focuses on the theme of disorientation, manipulation and the tension of the artist torn between centers of power. Artists with a particular sensitivity deeply feel the existence in-between, in which Bosnia and Herzegovina is suspended, so that through their works one can feel their intolerance for provincialization, marginalization and Balkanization, and the need to react critically to Western perceptions of our art as the art of the Other – savage, different, exotic.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>238</sup> Ivi.

<sup>239</sup> Mandić A., *Between*. In: *Between – Art Camp*, catalogue of the exhibition, Ars Aevi, Sarajevo 2003, pp. 9-11.

### 4.3 Ars Aevi: the cultural organization

#### 4.3.1 Project, Foundation, Associations

The present section offers an up-close insight into Ars Aevi's legal status, or even how this status was conceived and arranged. Since its arrival in Italy, the status of 'Project' (as it was legally authorized by Sarajevo's authorities under siege; formerly 'Sarajevo 2000 Project' later renamed 'Ars Aevi Project')<sup>240</sup> has been associated with another sort of legal status, in order to carry out its activities and interact with Italian public or private institutions and municipalities.

In 1993 ArciMilano's President Flavio Mongelli founded and directed 'Associazione Sarajevo 2000 - Italia', based in Milan; then, in the Tuscan period, it changed headquarters and administration. At first it had been hosted at Antonio Lucchesi's home, industrialist and vice-president of Museo Pecci di Prato, but in 1998 the renamed 'Associazione Ars Aevi Italia' was reestablished and had its own offices in Florence. President of A.N.C.I. Toscana, Marcello Bucci, made available part of his working spaces in downtown Florence to the Association and accepted the role of President, and Flavio Mongelli became its Director. Among the founders: Antonio Lucchesi, Paolo Saturnini (Mayor of Greve in Chianti) and Martino Montanarini (general director of publishing group Giunti Editore S.p.A.).

Following the Project's move to Sarajevo, the Association of Citizens 'Ars Aevi – Sarajevo' was established by that group of the Project first supporters who had been members of 'Sarajevo 2000 Managing Board' since 1992. In wartime the Board has had its headquarters within Skenderija Center. In 2001, Project's founder EH along with former Board's members, registered the 'Ars Aevi Association - Sarajevo', whereby President and vice-President of the Board have maintained the same roles within the newborn association; at the meanwhile, new sustainers and collaborators have been involved. The President, Ilija Simić, was Director of the Public Fund for Culture of the Republic of BiH until war's end; the vice-President, Sadik Hasanbegović, was instead General Manager of Skenderija Center; they both have appeared in the present narration since the time of Yugoslav Documents.

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<sup>240</sup>The term 'Project' is still today utilized, and EH (who under siege was appointed 'director of Sarajevo 2000' by the city authorities) defines himself as the Director of Ars Aevi Project.

On the occasion of 2002 Ars Aevi Annual Forum – an initiative that for some years has gathered in Sarajevo founders, friends, and protagonists of Ars Aevi Project, including Italian municipalities of Venice, Rome, Milan, Florence.. – the group of supporters attempted to start practical steps for the fundraising campaign necessary to build the museum complex. They formed a Council of Promoters, aiming to establish a Foundation – which would be founded according to local laws but based on the working model of Italian foundations – and therefore to primarily launch an international fundraising campaign for both the museum building and other Project’s activities.

On June 22, Council of Promoters’ members signed the Official Protocol on the Launching of the Ars Aevi World Campaign, thus the Council of Promoters was made official on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, through the constitution of the ‘Ars Aevi Foundation’. The Foundation’s constitutive contract was drawn up in Sarajevo on June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002, by its Founders, i.e. Sarajevo Canton, City of Sarajevo, Associazione Ars Aevi - Italia, and Ars Aevi Association - Sarajevo (Ars Aevi Foundation Statute, IV/5).<sup>241</sup> Federation of BiH, State of BiH - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNESCO and other sustainers are mentioned as possible Cofounders who could join the contract (V/6).

Purposes of the Foundation are the following (VI/7):

- Guaranteeing means for the building of Ars Aevi Complex in Sarajevo, and the Complex building itself;
- Promoting the Ars Aevi International Campaign, through which necessary means for the Complex building will be provided;
- Conducting international promotional activities of contemporary art;
- Organizing cultural programs;
- Conducting activities aimed at the formation, conservation, care and presentation of the Ars Aevi Collection;
- Conducting activities aimed at realizing international programs of support, and at collecting other sort of means;

The Foundation assets (VII/8) are composed of Founders’ contributes: Sarajevo Canton, City of Sarajevo and Associazione Ars Aevi – Italia allocate an amount of 10,000,00

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<sup>241</sup>Ars Aevi Foundation Statute, Sarajevo, June 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2002. Accessed: Ars Aevi Project Offices, Sarajevo, October 2015.



KM<sup>242</sup> each; whereas Ars Aevi Association - Sarajevo assigns, to the Foundation property, the Ars Aevi Collection, which is worth approximately 10,000,000,00 KM.

The Ars Aevi International Campaign is the first among the mentioned fundraising methods: such as revenues from Foundation activities; investments by BiH, Federation of BiH, Sarajevo Canton, City of Sarajevo and other potential sponsors at state/canton/city level; international programs; sales of audiovisual material, publications and Ars Aevi gadgets; donations and legacies and so forth (VIII/9).

Hence, Ars Aevi International Campaign – representing the primary reason which led to the Foundation establishment – is conceived to function as a campaign for acquiring stocks or donations, under the slogan: “Ars Aevi, property of all the World”. The proposal consisted in parceling the budget into several units, purchasable by public or private subjects through stocks or donations. Participants would be then honored with the title of ‘Builder’ of Ars Aevi Complex (VIII/10), and distinguished as ‘Ars Aevi Builder of First Grade’ (donations between 1,000,000/9,000,000 \$), ‘Ars Aevi Builder of Second Grade’ (100,000/900,000 \$), ‘Ars Aevi Builder of Third Grade’ (10,000/90,000 \$), ‘Ars Aevi Builder of Fourth Grade’ (1,000/9,000 \$), and ‘Ars Aevi Builder of Fifth Grade’ (100/900 \$).<sup>243</sup>

Outcomes of this International Campaign would be divided among the following activities (VIII/11):

- 70% to the execution of Ars Aevi Complex building works;
- 30% to promotional activities (promotion of contemporary art, promotion of the International Campaign) and to the Foundation functioning and operations.

The organs of the Foundation are (IX/13):

**a) General Direction.** Provided with two headquarters, in Sarajevo and in Florence, it is headed by the General Director (EH).

**b) Council of Trustees.** It constitutes the directive organ and is composed by President, General Director and 11 members who are elected/dismissed by the founding bodies: 2 representatives from Sarajevo Canton, 2 from City of Sarajevo, 2 from Associazione Ars Aevi - Italia, 2 from Ars Aevi Association - Sarajevo, 2 from Council of Promoters of Ars Aevi International Campaign, 2 from Council of Participants. In 2002, Ilija Simić

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<sup>242</sup>The Convertible Mark (*Konvertibilna marka - KM*) is the currency of BiH; the rate exchange is approximately 1 KM = 0,50 €.

<sup>243</sup>Bertola C., *Ars Aevi: un nuovo concetto di museo* op. cit. pp. 188-190.

(President of Ars Aevi Association - Sarajevo) was appointed President of the Council of Trustees. The City elected as members Mayor and Deputy-Mayor of Sarajevo; the Canton elected President and vice-President of Sarajevo Canton; Ars Aevi Association - Sarajevo elected (besides Ilija Simić) its vice-President Sadik Hasanbegović; Associazione Ars Aevi – Italia elected its President Marcello Bucci and its Director Flavio Mongelli.

**c) Executive Board.** Headed by a President and Executive Director. The Executive Board would be comprised of figures who had worked to secure the preconditions for the construction and speedy development of Ars Aevi in the past years: the Minister of Urban Planning and Environment Protection of the FBiH, the Minister of Urban Planning and Environment Protection of the Sarajevo Canton, the Advisor to the Mayor of Sarajevo for Urban Planning, and Nedžad Kurto, architect and Ars Aevi advisor for Urban Planning and Architecture.

**d) Council of Promoters of Ars Aevi International Campaign.** Based in Florence, it is composed by 2 representatives for each of the following institutions/associations: *Regione Toscana*; Municipalities of Venice, Rome, Florence, Milan; Luigi Pecci Museum of Prato; Legacoop (Rome); Associazione Ars Aevi - Italia; Arci. Among promoters – with a special role – also Renzo Piano, Michelangelo Pistoletto and Massimo Cacciari. Since 2002, year of the Foundation establishment, the *Regione Toscana* has presided over the Council of Promoters, and the Region's President, Claudio Martini, became the Council President. The municipalities have been instead represented by: Paolo Costa (mayor of Venice), Walter Veltroni (mayor of Rome), Leonardo Domenici (mayor of Florence) and Gabriele Albertini (mayor of Milan).<sup>244</sup>

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<sup>244</sup>In April 2005 EH named the new members of the Council of Promoters, updating the list: *Today, the executive core of this body [n.d.r. the Council of Promoters] is made up of the following: Minister Marco Baccin, Adviser to the Mayor of Rome for International Relations; Armando Peres, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Venice; Salvatore Carrubba, Minister of Culture and International Relations of Milan; Vincenzo Tassinari, President of CoopItalia; Massimo Toschi, Adviser to the President of the Tuscany Region for International Relations; Piera Moscato, Adviser to Minister Simone Siliana for Culture and International Relations in Florence. This executive body is also joined by Andrea Del Mercato, Head of the Central Direction for International Relations and Policies of the City of Venice, and Marco Grandi, who is charged with the Office for International Cooperation of the City of Milan. Honorary members of the Council of Promoters of the Ars Aevi Foundation are: Massimo Cacciari, Marino Cortese, President of the Querini Stampalia Foundation, Ivano Barberini, President of the International Cooperative Alliance and the curator Bruno Corà. The architect Renzo Piano, Emanuela Baglietto, partner in charge on behalf of the Renzo Piano Building Workshop and Michelangelo Pistoletto, artists and one of the first founders of*

e) **Council of Participants of Ars Aevi Foundation.** It is made up of two representatives of ‘Builders’ for each area: Northern Europe, Southern Europe, Western Europe, Eastern Europe, Central Europe, North America, South America, Middle-East, East. As advisory organ of Ars Aevi founder-countries, the Council will supervise the Foundation activities, the fulfillment of general concept and strategies, their effects at international level.

#### 4.3.2 From ‘virtual museum’ to Ars Aevi Art Depot

The Ars Aevi Project, at this stage, would deal with the idea of building the museum complex, as well as that of continuing its own activities – in its double role of association and foundation – pending the first pavilion building. It would thus maintain its status of ‘virtual museum’ – as it had been in Italy, Austria and Slovenia – by expanding into Sarajevo’s urban tissue. Without its own purpose-built space, the Project would pursue its exhibition-related activities by cooperating with (and being hosted by) a number of city spaces and galleries, even unusual urban places, sometimes including the private sponsorship in supporting the individual exhibitions realization. Even though the lack of a permanent venue, Ars Aevi is indeed an open and flexible Project, open to its collection’s continuous expansion and to activities’ versatility.

This situation has begun in 1999, crucial and turning point for the Project, with the first exhibition in Sarajevo. Until that year, all the collected nuclei had been kept into the founder-museums. In 1999 all the collections from Milan, Venice, Prato, Ljubljana and Vienna arrived to Sarajevo, and an impressive exhibition was set up through the Skenderija halls where all artworks were introduced to the city for the first time.

As already mentioned, in postwar years, cultural institutions were living a critical situation, their welfare did not represent an urgent matter – from both the political and economic point of view – for any administrative level. Nevertheless, with the inclusion into the country’s rebuilding programs, Ars Aevi seemed to stand on the fertile and safe terrain created by international organizations: they really alleviated the Project critical situations and proved to be a fundamental aid for its struggle for existence. But, on the

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*the Ars Aevi Collection, have a special role in the Council of Promoters of the Ars Aevi Foundation. (Hadžiomerspahić E., Facts op. cit. p. 82).*

other hand, international influence and support actually failed in changing and improving the ruinous political framework against which Ars Aevi and other cultural institutions have struggled during the first postwar decade.<sup>245</sup>

The international community mediation contributed to tangibly and symbolically alleviate those critical issues arisen from administrations' unfulfilled promises, and concerning public spaces where Ars Aevi's activities were housed. UNESCO, for instance, had a crucial role in 2003, when following the agreements made between the City of Venice, the UNESCO Office in Venice, the Biennale of Venice and the Ars Aevi Project, the State of BiH took part in the 50<sup>th</sup> Biennale for the first time with its own National Pavilion. The pavilion of BiH was placed at the Zorzi Palace, offered by the ROSTE-UNESCO<sup>246</sup> Headquarter in Venice and was curated by Ars Aevi and inaugurated on June 13, 2003. According to Hajdarpašić the first participation of a Bosnian National Pavilion was a remarkable political fact that risked to overshadow both qualities and messages of the four artists selected by the pavilion curator Asja Mandić. These artists offered a provocative comment on various issues, rather than posing as 'authentic Bosnian artists'.<sup>247</sup> Furthermore, the scholar adds that:

For most ministers and other officials in Sarajevo, Bosnia's debut at the Biennale was an opportunity to make yet more public appearances and speeches about the importance of nurturing culture, education, and the arts. Among the many declarations was the pledge by the cantonal and federal authorities to provide funding and land for a future Ars Aevi Museum. Needless to say, not one of these promises bore fruit, and no ground was broken for the new museum. More strikingly, the government's assurances of support often turned into serious obstacles for the functioning of cultural institutions. For instance, the state authorities, who had previously agreed to commission the Biennale exhibit in the first place, later forgot their promises and covered only a small part of the costs incurred by Ars Aevi for the organization of the event. This lack of concern among the state institutions for the welfare of cultural organizations, even when they represented the state at major international events, meant that some basic conditions – such as regular salaries and working telephone lines – were not secured for the Ars Aevi's work at the Biennale.<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit.

<sup>246</sup> ROSTE/BRESCE is the Venice-based UNESCO Regional Office for Science and Technology for Europe.

<sup>247</sup> Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit. p. 123.

<sup>248</sup> Ivi.

A significant aid arrived from Italian government in the early 2000s, when the spontaneous cooperation between EH and Italian municipalities, museums and institutions, turned into the official collaboration with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2001, the General Direction for Cooperation and Development (DGCS) of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated an amount of 1,000,000 \$ in order to sustain the Ars Aevi Project. The resources were addressed to Ars Aevi via UNESCO, its General Direction in Paris and the Cultural Policies Division, which approved the programs and controlled the proper expenditure of funds.

The funds were intended for two projects: in the first place, 600,000 \$ were employed for the programs of Ars Aevi Open International University, a program of exhibitions, seminars, workshops which took place between 2001 and 2002. As EH writes, the Ars Aevi team and UNESCO representatives *made Sarajevo the meeting place for the most important figures from International and local contemporary art every two months in 2001 and in 2002. Over these two years, we became accustomed to Sarajevo being visited by great artists such as Pistoletto, Kosuth and Buren, directors of the world's most significant exhibitions and museums of contemporary art – Szeemann, Pacquement and Corà – distinguished art critics Millet, Meyrick-Hughes and Chambert, and many others.*<sup>249</sup> [Fig. 20]

The cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs has further developed in the following years, for instance when the General Direction for Promotion and Cultural Cooperation (DCPCC) sustained in 2004 the exhibition 'Kounellis in Sarajevo – The Doors', a great site-specific installed at the devastated – and under restoration – National Library and City Hall, Vijećnica. The artist chose for his work the numerous entry halls, which, from the ambulatorium, converge on the huge central hexagonal atrium. Taking the tragic building history as a starting point, Kounellis conceived a secular cycle of plastic structures standing in those doors whose chorus-like unity was destined *to leave an imprint of its epic evocation of such a dramatic situation on the imagination of the populace – thus responding to the unique idiomorphic fashioning of barriers over door thresholds by means of a quantity of variously shaped objects selected and juxtaposed to one another in an archaic dry stone wall.*<sup>250</sup> [Fig. 21]

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<sup>249</sup> Hadžiomerspahić E., *Facts op. cit.* p. 66.

<sup>250</sup> Corà B., *Sarajevo: The Doors by Jannis Kounellis*. In: Corà B. (eds.) *Jannis Kounellis, Sarajevo: Le Porte*, Sace, Pescara 2004, p. 27.

The remaining 400,000 \$ - approved in the years 2001-2002 – were allocated to the building of an Art Depot for the nuclei of Ars Aevi's collection arrived in 1999 and that were pending the building of the new museum. For a few years, since 1999, Ars Aevi collection had been housed inside the Historical Museum, but was forced to move when in 2002 the Federal Ministry of Culture served an eviction note to the collection because 'no one was paying the rent for the space' occupied by Ars Aevi. The Ministry – previously among Ars Aevi sponsors – was obliged to this kind of operation as poorly financed and under the pressure of international organizations to streamline its operations. The Culture Ministry repeatedly reduced funding for the Historical Museum and demanded payment for the use of some spaces.<sup>251</sup>

In the first moment, the idea was indeed of renovating the internal and external spaces of the Historical Museum, which in that period was housing the collection, but after eviction, another solution was thought. The resources were thus allocated to the rescue of one of Skenderija's wings and to make a new 'Art Depot' out of it: the Olympic Center, targeted for bombing in wartime, represented a symbolic place for Ars Aevi, as it was venue for Winter Olympics in 1984 and then Yugoslav Documents, since the war it had also housed the Sarajevo 2000 Managing Board (turned into Ars Aevi Association – Sarajevo in 2001), and in 1999 the first Ars Aevi exhibition in Sarajevo was held exactly there. [Fig. 22]

The Art Depot, whose inauguration occurred in spring 2007<sup>252</sup>, consists in a two-story space designed by architect Amir Vuk, who realized a wood-lined exhibition space conceived as an enormous crate. Also artworks are leaned against the wall or their own containers; the most voluminous of them remain instead disassembled within their packing cases: the whole Art Depot seems ready to be sent... or just arrived from a journey. [Figs. 23, 24]

Due to the limited space of Art Depot and the high number of artworks, still today the collection cannot be totally displayed and only some of funding-exhibitions find

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<sup>251</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit. p. 122.

<sup>252</sup>At the inauguration of the Ars Aevi Collection Exhibition in the Ars Aevi Art Depot (April, 27<sup>th</sup>, 2007): Patrizia Santinelli (Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy for International Cooperation), Luana Zanella (*assessore comunale*, International and Communitarian Relations), Marie Paule Roudil (Director of the Department for Culture of the UNESCO BRESCE Office), Marco Baccin (Head of the Cabinet for the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy), Massimo Toschi (*consigliere regionale*, International Cooperation and Relations, Tuscany Region), Flavia Donati (International Cooperation, Tuscany Region), Alessandro Fallavollita (Ambassador of Italy in BiH), Samir Silajdžić (Premier of Sarajevo Canton).

their space within it. On the ground floor visitors come across the nuclei of Milan, Prato, Sarajevo, Bolognano, Ljubljana, Venice; the entire first floor is instead dedicated to the Vienna nucleus. Nuclei from Istanbul and Podgorica, as well as other collections such as ‘Rendez-Vouz’, ‘Between’, ‘Searching for Identity’ are kept in the storages.

In 2005 a financing agreement was signed by the City of Sarajevo, Sarajevo Canton and the Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH, in order to maintain and care for the collection – ‘donated by artists to the city of Sarajevo’ as EH usually highlights – thus to guarantee the rent of Skenderija Center, salaries and other operations.<sup>253</sup>

In the specific context where international funds and influence have then gradually decreased, handing over the reins to local actors has proved to be increasingly difficult: once again both the promises regarding Art Depot’s maintaining and the beginning of the museum works have not been respected over years. Ars Aevi Project has thus reduced its activities, resulting increasingly understaffed, and more times the Art Depot has been shut down, due to the lack of necessary funds for its operations, members’ remunerations, collection maintenance and security.

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<sup>253</sup>The Federation of BiH rejected to sign the agreement.



**Fig. 17.** Federico Mayor (UNESCO General-Director) inaugurating the first Ars Aevi exhibition in Sarajevo, 1999. Ars Aevi photo.



**Fig. 18.** Steve Sabella, *Mentalopia*, photo installation, 2007. Exhibition view, 'Neighbours in Dialogue – Istanbul Collection for Ars Aevi', Istanbul 2008. Ars Aevi Photo.

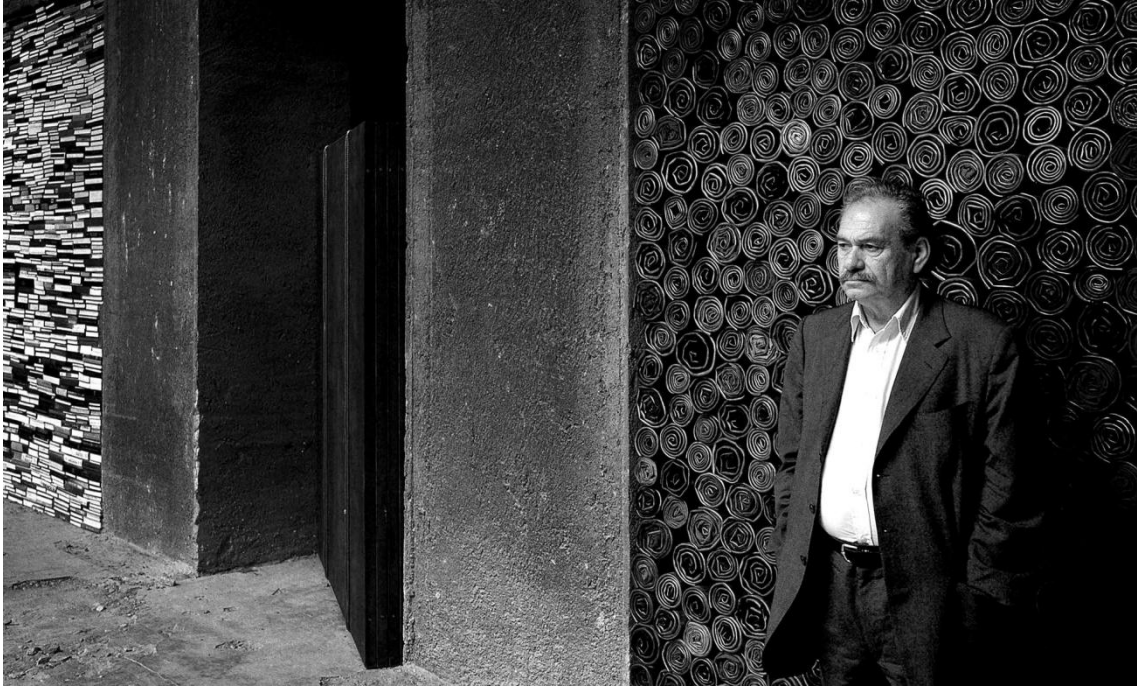




**Fig. 19.** 'Between - Art Camp' exhibition, 2003. The exhibition was set up within refugees tents mounted on the lot designated for the future Renzo Piano's building. Ars Aevi photo.



**Fig. 20.** Renzo Piano walking through *La Place de drapeaux* by Daniel Buren. The work was installed on the Ars Aevi ground on the occasion of Daniel Buren solo-exhibition curated by Bruno Corà, Sarajevo 2001. Ars Aevi photo.



**Fig. 21.** Jannis Kounellis and *The Doors*, Vijećnica, Sarajevo, 2004. Photo: Almin Zrno.



**Fig. 22.** Skenderija Center and entrance of Ars Aevi Art Depot. Photo: Silvia M. Carolo, October 2015.





Fig. 23. Ars Aevi Art Depot, main entrance. Ars Aevi photo.



Fig. 24. Ars Aevi Art Depot, Skenderija Center, Sarajevo. Ars Aevi photo.

## Chapter 5: Case-study – Part III

### 5.1 Ars Aevi today: the museum district as a development driver?

#### 5.1.1 Introduction

During the last decade the Ars Aevi Project along with its museum plans have been transformed again. The present Chapter (5) aims at reconstructing what has happened and the current situation.

Firstly, Paragraph 5.1 focuses on the museum form which today is suggested and promoted, that of a purpose-built new museum designed by Renzo Piano, within an existent museum cluster. This phase indeed corresponds to the most critical period in Ars Aevi's whole story, due to several internal and external reasons that, needless to say, are impossible to be reduced to a single explanation. The ambitious pavilions project has been gradually abandoned and the efforts have been increasingly focused to the only one planned and designed pavilion – Renzo Piano's building. About the pavilions complex, Amila Ramović in 2011 puts it:

The long-term concept of Ars Aevi is something that we do not talk about a lot because it still sounds very utopian. However, approximately five years after building this [Renzo Piano's] museum we intend to start working on putting up another building by another renowned architect, with another renowned sponsor perhaps or even with a state that may be interested in joining us. And, on that path, in fifty years time Sarajevo may be able to have something that we would call the Ars Aevi Museum Complex, which would consist of several pavilions displaying the Ars Aevi Collection. We hesitate to announce this because we do not have any firm assurances that this could be feasible. [...] So another the reason why Renzo Piano's Ars Aevi Museum is of a more modest size is because we want to make sure that we can run it properly, but also because we want it to be the initial seed of something that will become a larger structure.<sup>254</sup>

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<sup>254</sup>Ramovic A., *Understanding Local Contexts VI – Ars Aevi Art Depot*. In: Watson J. (eds.) CIMAM 2011 Annual Conference 'Museums and the City' 14 –17 November, 2011 – Moderna Galerija Ljubljana, Muzej Suvremene Umjetnosti MSU Zagreb and Ars Aevi, Museum of Contemporary Art Sarajevo – Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina, p. 156.

The critical period did not allow the building realization, which is still on paper, and its construction, continuously postponed over years, is closely related to the project course itself, and for many it seems an impracticable and utopian plan even today.

Some of the issues have political nature, it can be generally argued that one of the main problems that Ars Aevi – along with other Sarajevo's and BiH's cultural institutions – constantly faces is the progressive lack of interest by the public administrations – both local and national –, especially since the international community influence has faded in the last decade.

Following the general decrease of international mediation and support, as well as the gradual lack of dialogue between Ars Aevi and local institutions, the Project activities are today sporadic and the enthusiasm around the Project is almost completely vanished. Today the Project is understaffed, characterized by an unclear legal and financial status – the Ars Aevi Foundation itself functioned only for a short period – and these circumstances have paralyzed every possible development. The Ars Aevi staff is indeed constituted by a small number of people who – almost exclusively on a volunteer basis – are in charge of different tasks, from the daily management – such as ensuring opening and maintenance of Art Depot, applying to calls and competitions in order to obtain funding – to future-oriented activities, therefore continuing the museum project.

However, in recent years and since 2013 another international body has come to support the Project once again: the diplomatic mission of Italy in BiH, therefore the Italian *Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale*. As further described below (Paragraph 5.2), the Italian aid is seeking to re-launch the Project as a driver of economic development, directing it towards the feasibility and European discourses.

### 5.1.2 'Ars Aevi in progress'

The current critical situation of the Sarajevo's museums, i.e. those former national institutions that had been under the administration of the Socialist Republic of BiH until the War, was already mentioned in Paragraph 1.3. The Dayton Constitution along with other legal frameworks, have never defined these institutions' legal status. Since then, these museums have been starved of necessary funds for their functioning and left in a situation commonly referred to as “cultural siege”.

Renzo Piano's museum would stand exactly within that tract of land whose bounds are marked by History Museum, National Museum and Miljacka river.

The eviction of Ars Aevi Collection from the History Museum in the early 2000s, as well as the following realization with Italian funding of the Art Depot inside Skenderija Center, thus the financing agreement among City, Canton and Ministry of Civil Affairs of BiH for the collection maintenance, were already discussed in the previous paragraphs.

Within the context of general decrease of international mediation and the parallel emergence of internal issues – personal matters contributed to the situation of being understaffed, lacking energies and inventiveness necessary to figure out other solutions and face circumstances – the financing agreement was not respected from the parts and the Project was forced to shut down the Depot's doors for long periods between 2010 and 2014.

Considering the specific differences, it can be argued that as well as the seven cultural institution legacy of Yugoslav BiH, also Ars Aevi does not present a legal status, and still today the answer to the question "Who is the Ars Aevi collection's owner?" appears unclear.

In 2002 both Ars Aevi Association and Foundation were registered, and the Foundation was exactly established in order to provide an instrument ensuring the collection care, acting on behalf of its true owners, Sarajevo's citizens. However, the Foundation, as well as the crowdfunding launched within the Ars Aevi International Campaign, has lasted for a very short period of time, its constituent bodies have never been established, and nowadays only the Association is surviving.<sup>255</sup> Lack of legal status, distance from public local authorities and absence of a team of professionals seem to explain why the museum project results hard to imagine as a possible and viable endeavor.

The fact of not being sustained by local administrations seems to have political implications; public authorities would not take responsibility on establishing such an ambitious and expensive public work, also a new museum does not appear an urgent issue for the city.

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<sup>255</sup> Interview with Ilaria Ragnoni (Second Secretary of Italian Embassy in BiH), Embassy of the Republic of Italy in BiH, Sarajevo, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2015.

From another point of view, I have been told that a cultural place with gathering functions represents something far from the ruling political parties interests, therefore something which is not profitable and not even ethnically oriented – in this specific case, a project of ‘multicultural values’.

The bureaucratic, legal and administrative system must not be overlooked: likewise a knot hard to untie, it presents an overlapping of competences and laws, thus a challenging environment where a new museum should be established.<sup>256</sup> Not least, the continuous, rapid succession of politicians and administrations over years does not allow to undertake the museum project within a context of political stability.<sup>257</sup> These circumstances partly explain also the unresolved property issues regarding the land where the museum should be erected. The area was identified in 1999 –Renzo Piano’s architectural designs are all based on it – but, as further described below (in Paragraph 5.1.3), this patch of land is situated within an extremely heterogeneous and vulnerable urban zone. This zone is characterized by a sort of frenetic privatization and massive capitalization, where modern buildings symbol of the new transition economy find their place as the city’s newest landmarks, and where foreign tycoons are increasingly investing their capitals. As described in Paragraph 5.2, it seems that since 2013 the museum project has nevertheless found a new source of energy in the intervention of the Italian Embassy in BiH.

The narration hereafter continues with the description of the architectural structure of the building designed by Renzo Piano since the years 1999-2000 until the last modifications of 2012, and considering the new building integration within that peculiar urban area assigned to it. As already mentioned in Paragraph 4.1.2, the collaboration

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<sup>256</sup>ivi.

<sup>257</sup>A favorable – and brief – political conjuncture occurred for instance in the years 2010 and 2011. Positive conditions necessary to the museum construction seemed to be reached, thanks to the political conjuncture characterized by the election of Alijia Behmen as Mayor of Sarajevo (spokesman of SDP, Social Democratic Party, and supporter of the Project since its beginning, when he inaugurated – as Prime Minister of Federation – the Ars Aevi Bridge in 2002) and the victory of SDP also at Cantonal level. Ambassador of EU in BiH, Dimitris Kourkoulas, formally confirmed the EU’s cooperation in the building phase.

Source:<http://www.radiosarajevo.ba/novost/40414/projekat-ars-aevi-predstavljen-predstavnicima-eu> (accessed: 26.04.2016). Requirements for EU would have been the establishment of the ‘Ars Aevi public institution’ as basis for the project’s legal status, as well as stable conditions necessary for a functioning Ars Aevi professional team. During that period, property issues regarding the land seemed to be solved, even contacts with Renzo Piano were reestablished: in 2012 the architect revised his design, taking into account the changed circumstances. One more time the project was then interrupted.

with Renzo Piano began in 1999 with the great exhibition in Skenderija Center. On that occasion, the Mayor of Sarajevo and the Ministers of the Canton identified the plot of land reserved for the new museum and the architect Renzo Piano, acting in the role of UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador, was involved and he then accepted to design the future museum, falling in love with the city and the idea of a new museum. During a symbolic ceremony, the Italian architect planted the pegs marking the perimeter of the designated portion of land.<sup>258</sup> [Fig. 25]

The public area assigned to the museum building is a short step from the National Museum of BiH and included within the area of the Historical Museum of BiH – partly destroyed, empty and thus reconstructed in the early 2000s. It represents a central area, a short way also from both government buildings and university, within the district of Marijin Dvor: the Zmaja od Bosne Alley – one of the main arterial roads of the city, also known as ‘Sniper Alley’ during the siege – delimits the area on the north and runs parallel to Miljacka river, which circumscribes the area on the South. [Fig. 27] In 2012, Renzo Piano affirmed: *the idea for the project came from the configuration of the site, a linear strip between the Miljacka river that cuts the city in two and the heavy trafficked avenue Zmaja od Bosne. The necessity of the connection of the urban area south of the river and the street that leads to the historical center of the city was evident.*<sup>259</sup>

The museum, according to the architect, ‘will reflect the culture of the place, its genius loci. In my opinion and considering the social and cultural point of view, the museum should rise up exactly on that point where outskirts transform into city. An important cultural structure such as a museum should be realized where the city expands and transforms, contributing to its peculiarity and its being livable’.<sup>260</sup>

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<sup>258</sup>As an American pioneer of the Far West, Renzo Piano marked the museum’s perimeter, in order to instantly disclose and express its living presence: *mi piacerebbe fare come i pionieri nel Far West quando tutti assieme picchettavano il loro territorio. Vorrei subito perimetrare la zona del museo per testimoniare fin d’ora la presenza, rendendone già viva la fabbrica.* Piano R., *La responsabilità dell’architetto, Conversazione con Renzo Cassigoli*, Passigli Editori, Firenze-Antella 2000, pp. 82-83.

<sup>259</sup>Renzo Piano, ‘Ars Aevi Contemporary Art Museum concept design by RPBW’, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors Annual Meeting, Paris, 16 October 2012. Accessed: Ars Aevi Project Offices, Sarajevo, December 2015.

<sup>260</sup>Personal translation from Italian. Piano R. *La responsabilità dell’architetto* op. cit., p. 82.



**The building is thus conceived by Piano as a bridge. Hence, a bridge which ‘connects ethnic groups and cultures’, symbolizing ‘dialogue and contamination’ and even ‘connection with the international community’.**<sup>261</sup>

The building is thus conceived by Piano as a bridge: ‘it will indeed rise up on the Miljacka, the river that passes through Sarajevo and that during the war marked the Serbs’ line of fire. I like the will of symbolism contained in that choice, in that idea: a building with the function of a bridge, both physically, connecting the separated river’s shores, and metaphorically, bringing together those distinct sides of the city that snipers and war kept divided’.<sup>262</sup> Hence, the works started with the building of a real bridge, that Piano himself designed and donated<sup>263</sup> to the city of Sarajevo, ‘a bridge which connects the two shores of the Miljacka, exactly where today [2000] there is no possible way to cross’.<sup>264</sup> The Ars Aevi Bridge, built in 2002, represents the first and only one realized element of the Ars Aevi complex. **[Fig. 26]** The bridge is a pedestrian structure – a sewing element on the river – which connects the residential district of Grbavica with the ground of the future museum, integrating the neighborhood into the cultural area – characterized by museums and university – and facilitating its access to Zmaja od Bosne alley.<sup>265</sup>

The preliminary project for the Ars Aevi Museum was developed in 2005<sup>266</sup> and realized in cooperation between RPBW-Renzo Piano Building Workshop (in charge of the architectural project) and other Italian partners: Favero & Milan Ingegneria (for the structural project), Manens Intertecnica (for the plant design), and Edilvenezia S.p.A. (coordinator of this preliminary design phase).

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<sup>261</sup>Martini A., *Sfogliando i Musei, Architetture e politiche culturali*, Allemandi, Torino & Londra 2010, p. 146 (published in: Martini A., *Renzo Piano Ambasciatore dell’Unesco*. In: *Il Giornale dell’Arte*, 213, 2002, p. 38). Personal translation from Italian.

<sup>262</sup>Personal translation from Italian. Piano R., *La responsabilità dell’architetto* op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>263</sup>The Ars Aevi Bridge was realized in June 2002 thanks to Favero & Milan, the engineering office (based in Venice) in charge of structural concept, detailed and final design, site supervision; and to other Italian and foreign companies (Garboli-Conicos, Intergroup, Imprefond, Eurholz) <http://www.fm-ingegneria.com/project-detail.php?id=294> (accessed: 26.04.2016). All these firms donated materials and then gratuitously realized the bridge, which had a great success in the urban habits of the citizens. Its realization was possible also thanks to the support of local authorities, the Municipality of Novo Sarajevo and the Canton, that provided necessary building permissions.

<sup>264</sup>Personal translation from Italian. Piano R., *La responsabilità dell’architetto* op. cit., p. 82.

<sup>265</sup>Renzo Piano, ‘Ars Aevi Contemporary Art Museum concept design by RPBW’, UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors Annual Meeting, Paris, 16 October 2012. Accessed: Ars Aevi Project Offices, Sarajevo, December 2015.

<sup>266</sup>The project was a cooperation between the Urban Technology Network II Program of the European Union and the City of Venice.

In 2004 the Municipality of Venice gave Edilvenezia S.p.A. the responsibility of drafting the museum preliminary project, the company thus undertook an environmental feasibility study in order to verify the necessary conditions for the territory improvement in terms of environmental and landscape quality.<sup>267</sup> The 2005 project thus verified the work compatibility, i.e. the relation of the project with landscape, territorial and urban plan requirements, in this case with the Urban Regulation Marijin Dvor. According to this regulation plan, the museum area was intended as ‘business zone’, within a broader context of ‘housing-business zone’ and strengthening of traffic facilities. The detailed plan defined the intended uses of both new and existing volumes, the buildings locations and heights, the structure of street furniture, pedestrian zones and green areas, and the maintenance of the pre-existing Historical Museum. According to the same plan, Ars Aevi Museum would be located within an area of 5,453 square meters and would measure a maximum height of 25 meters above ground level. The surrounding parcels were intended as embassies, offices, green areas, and a tree-lined street along the Miljacka. Renzo Piano designed a building with sediment of 2,650 square meters – corresponding to the 48% of the building lot – while the remaining area would be covered by a shady lawn.<sup>268</sup>

Among the effects of the implementation of the intervention on the territory, the study executed in 2005 still reported the visible presence of the recent conflict signs, and described the site configuration as ‘chaotic, fragmented, characterized by low environmental value’.<sup>269</sup> The museum project is thus characterized by a strong focus on the environmental context and would constitute the first step for the overall reorganization and regeneration of the surrounding area, in line with the programmatic choices of the plans. In 2005, the spirit of the initiative is to begin the project implementation into phases, without having found the funds required for the overall intervention – hence the definition of the architectural project as ‘in progress museum’.

Hereafter, the architectural complex is explained in detail. **[Fig. 28]** At first, those sketches made by Piano in the years 2000-2001 imagined to incorporate the pre-existing

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<sup>267</sup> On December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2004.

<sup>268</sup> A sediment covering up to the 70% of the building lot corresponded to the limit allowed by the regulation plan. The insertion of the new urban fabric (corresponding to the 48% of the building lot) could be therefore estimated as a high quality operation. Source: *Museum of Contemporary Art Museum In Progress – Sarajevo, Elaborati Grafici e Documenti*, by Edilvenezia, April 2005, p. 14. Accessed: Ars Aevi Project Offices, Sarajevo, December 2015.

<sup>269</sup> Ivi.

Historical Museum into the brand new edifice of the contemporary art museum. As above mentioned, the Historical Museum in early 2000s has acted as a sort of exhibit space and deposit for the artworks donated to Ars Aevi up to that time. They were thus located into the rooms of the Historical Museum in order to make the whole collection accessible to the public as well as to accustom it to the presence of contemporary art in this peculiar urban area of the city. The project was afterwards rethought, thus leaving the Historical Museum integrity and putting the new structure beside it: the idea was to create a well-structured museum center able to revitalize the pre-existing modernist edifice.

The museum designed in 2005 would run parallel to the Historical Museum and be organized on three levels:<sup>270</sup>

- basement including auditorium space seating 300 people, entry foyer, laboratories for artists, offices and deposits;
- ground floor for public and social functions;
- first floor dedicated to the exhibition spaces in order to allow a more intimate and silent relationship with art.

According to the architectural design, the body of the building stretches along a 300 meters long urban pedestrian street that originates from a square located in the middle of the Grbavica residential area, it then crosses the Miljacka through the pedestrian Ars Aevi Bridge, it enters the museum ground crossing the huge meadow – future park of sculpture – and it eventually runs parallel to the museum ground floor. The glazed structure of the ground floor – connecting the outdoors with the internal spaces – is hence destined to social and public functions such as bars, restaurants, bookshop, activities related to the nearby University. The same street hence turns into the ramp leading to the platform on which the edifice rests, therefore to its entrance.

The outdoors is predominantly green spaces; pre-existing trees are maintained and a double row of trees acts as a barrier protecting the museum against the traffic noise pollution. The materials are wood, glass and limestone – which evokes the adjacent Historical Museum pedestal.

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<sup>270</sup>The three levels measure an area of about 4,875 square meters.

The 2005 project was officially presented in Sarajevo at the Conference of Ministers of Culture from South East Europe organized by the Government of Italy and UNESCO, and was even officially presented in Venice, in November 2005.<sup>271</sup>

Seven years later, on October 16, 2012, Renzo Piano displayed at the UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors Annual meeting the updated project for Ars Aevi Contemporary Art Museum. As the architect wrote: *the preliminary project developed in 2005, was for a building on two levels plus a small basement with a total surface of 4,875 square meters, but it has been impossible during the past years to find the monetary support for the construction of the building.* For this reason the Renzo Piano Building Workshop simplified the concept of the project by making it modular, buildable by adding sections overtime, following the possible fund scenarios with the idea of a first step of 2,000 square meters. [Fig. 29]

### 5.1.3 Renzo Piano's museum within the museum cluster in Marijin Dvor, Sarajevo

In the present section, the Ars Aevi Museum designed by Renzo Piano is observed from two contextual levels. The first level is the city neighborhood where the new museum should be built, the vibrant and multilayered Marijin Dvor area.<sup>272</sup> Within it, the second level is then identified: the museum cluster composed of the National Museum of BiH, the Historical Museum of BiH and the Ars Aevi Bridge spanning the Miljacka – the only one architectural endeavor of the whole complex realized – along with the ground still pending the construction of the Ars Aevi Museum.

Stating that the museum cluster represents an urbanistic and ideological manifesto, expressing the most elevated strivings in the construction of the city and of the image which a society wants to display about itself,<sup>273</sup> it will clearly appear that also the Sarajevo-Marijin Dvor museum cluster epitomizes this global phenomenon, i.e. the physical concentration of museum institutions, architectures and contents, both in the past and in the present. It is indeed the place where cultural edifices, the spirit of the city, time and knowledge concentrate; where the future, the museums' development

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<sup>271</sup>At UNESCO ROSTE/BRESCE Office in Venice.

<sup>272</sup>Piplas H., *Marijin Dvor, Learning lessons from a multi-layered historical laboratory and its dynamic urbanism in the heart of "Europe's Jerusalem"*. In: MIRUS Magazine, 2, 2015, available at <http://mirusmag.com/magazine-issue-2#page-43> (Accessed: 20/04/2016)

<sup>273</sup>Nikolic M., *Culture and ideology in the city structure* op. cit. p. 772.

potentials and even the city history, the social changes and the shifts of political and urban ideologies all together lie.<sup>274</sup>

Situated on the core of Sarajevo's urban tissue, the Marijin Dvor area – literally, Maria's Yard<sup>275</sup> – is a mélange of architectural typologies, from Ottoman urban forms to Austrian neoclassical bourgeois villas, to Olympic socialist infrastructures and contemporary urban phenomena, such as semi-anarchistic incremental design of a young democracy and capitalist economy, as well as alternative bottom-up initiatives that look at the social scales.<sup>276</sup>

It can be argued that Marijin Dvor is a place of changes and continuous transformations: *it offers three sides to every story, allowing citizens to time travel across the city and it contains the remains of what has been, what is and what will be, creating a very unique experience when visiting.*<sup>277</sup> In the 50s it was envisioned as a 'city of the future', therefore new core of the socialist city, with the utopian plans by Le Corbusier's assistant Juraj Neidhardt<sup>278</sup> who designed the vertical building of the National Assembly. During the 1992-95 War, the area of Marijin Dvor was borderland between besiegers and those who were under siege, therefore it was targeted and deeply damaged.

Today it still represents a sort of frontier, but in another sense. Marijin Dvor works indeed as a joint, a natural link between the historic center and the modern city zone, between the old and the new.<sup>279</sup> It is therefore a space of physical transition and connection between the two far ends of the city. A contact zone characterized by its complexity and cryptic role, which contains invisible tensions that young architects and urban planners are attempting to control and re-direct with their interventions.<sup>280</sup>

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<sup>275</sup>Marijin Dvor was the name of the former brickyard designed by Austrian architect August Braun (19<sup>th</sup> Century) representing his love for his wife Maria.

<sup>276</sup>Piplas H., *Marijin Dvor* op. cit.

<sup>277</sup>Fabuel J., *Raising awareness of neglected sites. A report on new functions for old structures, formats and ambitious utopias.* In: MIRUS Magazine, 2, 2015, available at <http://mirusmag.com/magazine-issue-2#page-49> (Accessed: 20/04/2015)

<sup>278</sup>Juraj Neidhardt (Zagreb, 1901 – Sarajevo, 1979) was a Croat architect, urban planner, professor.

<sup>279</sup>Ugljen-Ademovic N., Turkusic E., Ibrimbegovic S. (2014) *The Process of Redefining Cultural Identities in Societies in Transition, Case Study: Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.* In: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual International Conference on Architecture and Civil Engineering (ACE 2014), 365-371, p. 368.

<sup>280</sup>Fabuel J., *Raising awareness of neglected sites* op. cit. Among bottom-up initiatives mentioned by Fabuel and Piplas, the social and multifunctional space 'Mucha Lucha', realized inside an old building completely destroyed during the last conflict. According to Fabuel, it represents a space that will be

As illustrated in the previous section, Renzo Piano himself chose exactly this urban area for the future museum, an area where ‘outskirts turn into city’, ‘where the city expands and transforms and the museum contributes to its peculiarity and its being livable’, and even representing ‘a war frontier that kept separated in two the city itself’.

Nowadays Marijin Dvor is still an urban laboratory, a city zone open to intruders and locals that here strive, battle, rise and fall, as proof of *how political and social systems establish and vanish, how identities and urban artifacts are being suddenly eradicated and created, how construction and deconstruction all happen in a breathtaking velocity*.<sup>281</sup> Hereafter, an overview by Haris Piplas:

Juraj Neidhardt’s masterpiece and the vertical trademark of Marijin Dvor, the National Assembly and its spacious square became the most first-row witnesses of the aftermath of the Iron Curtain’s fall. It became Yugoslavia’s *Tahrir Square* announcing an almost decade-long period of armed conflicts with ethnic, religious and nationalistic background that led to the disintegration of the Socialist Federation. After the fall of the communist regime, a complete restructurization of the economies and political systems took place. Capitalism brought a shift from planned and centralized industrial production to a more service-based economy. Services for the new neoliberal economy rather aggressively materialized in form of shopping centers and other office and high-end residential buildings. The density rose, as parks and public spaces of the mono-functional socialist housing estates were replaced or sealed. These spaces represented symbols of commonly-shared spaces providing sufficient for «equality» and «proletariat». The named challenges give Marijin Dvor today a status of a unique *urban laboratory* housing a wide array of city development stakeholders: investors from Texas and the Arab Peninsula to local community initiatives that work with the existing context.<sup>282</sup>

In this context of massive capitalization and urban development, the quarter of Marijin Dvor is evolving into a place of newly built embassies, banks, businesses, shopping malls and other objects of the Bosnian/Balkan transition economy and

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probably destroyed for the massive capitalization and the urban development of the district. The collective LIFT is instead reorganizing the garden by August Braun inside of the brickyard, without any help from local institutions. LIFT and other groups are indeed revitalizing abandoned spaces in the city. Another re-generation project – still on paper – comes from the academic world, and presents a reactivation plan for the Historical Museum. It will be further below discussed.

<sup>281</sup>Piplas H., *Marijin Dvor* op. cit.

<sup>282</sup>Ivi.

architecture.<sup>283</sup> [Fig. 30] According to Elma Hašimbegović, director of the Historical Museum of BiH, *with no urban planning of the area, the district lost its potential of becoming the museum/cultural district with the History Museum and National Museum next door to each other along with plans for building the [Ars Aevi] contemporary art museum in their vicinity.*<sup>284</sup>

However, the museum cluster of Sarajevo-Marijin Dvor could be related to the definition of ‘museum cluster’ by Mila Nikolic – an *urbanistic and ideological manifesto of the city and of its image*, where its vicissitudes are *marked and defined by the key moments in the histories of the society and the museum, by the changes of regimes, ideologies and comprehensions of culture*<sup>285</sup> – and despite the current circumstances, this process is still ongoing today, mirroring that image which the current society wants to display about itself.

The National Museum of BiH and the Historical Museum of BiH were established as part of two different, larger, state-building projects and their creation had a clear political function: conveying specific myth-symbol complexes to the population.<sup>286</sup> Cultural institutions are indeed one of the many instruments employed to convey and propagate particular systems of reference, markers of identity, or myth-symbol complexes to citizens.<sup>287</sup> Both their establishments were paradigmatic of the political functions of the cultural institutions in newly established states.

The National Museum of BiH [Figs. 31, 32] was founded in 1888, precisely ten years after the Congress of Berlin (1878) when the Austro-Hungarian Empire obtained the administration of BiH, and it represents the most ancient cultural and scientific institution of this type in the country. Founded by the Austro-Hungarians with the name of Zemaljski Muzej, translation of the German *Landesmuseum*, therefore meaning ‘Provincial’ or ‘Regional’ Museum, it had acted indeed as a provincial/regional museum until the 90s of the last century, when it turned into the National Museum of the newly-formed state of BiH. The term ‘zemaljski’ pointed to *the Habsburg view of BiH as a single region, a territorial, social, and historical whole that could be analyzed,*

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<sup>283</sup> Hašimbegović E., *Meet the Neighbours: Open Space at the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina*. In: *Meet See (Critically) Do*, Conference Proceedings, Museum of Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 15-17 April 2015, pp. 28-29.

<sup>284</sup> Ivi.

<sup>285</sup> Nikolic M., *Culture and ideology* op. cit., p. 773.

<sup>286</sup> Fontana G. (2013) *War by Other Means* op. cit. p. 450.

<sup>287</sup> Ivi.

*classified and displayed in proper scientific and educational institutions.*<sup>288</sup> As historian Robert J. Donia explains, the museum had a tripartite role from the Austro-Hungarian perspective. In general, it was included in the Western civilizing mission, promoter of scientific research and learning, diffusion of literacy and mass education. Secondly, pursuing geopolitical interests on the region, the monarchy proved to increase and disseminate knowledge in its newly acquired territory. Thirdly, this cultural policy was also oriented to promote a 'Bosnian' identity – the *bosnjastvo* – and the distinctiveness of BiH and its people, in order to deny and oppose Serb and Croat territorial claims. Serbia and Croatia were constantly attempting to obtain political influence over BiH, and for this reason, the efforts of the Empire's representatives were towards the creation of a common Bosnian consciousness for all three ethnic groups.<sup>289</sup>

The foundation of Zemaljski Muzej in Sarajevo occurred exactly in that historical period characterized by the spread of museums throughout Europe, as consequence and solidification of the 19<sup>th</sup>-Century nation-state identities. The principles of 'égalité, fraternité et liberté' which led the French Revolution – key moment in the dawn of nation-states in Western Europe – and the more horizontal and democratic conception of collectivity, brought about the opening of private collections to the public, first of all, of the Louvre. The opening of the Louvre – a moment of culturing the public, for bringing (high) 'culture' to the masses and for attempting to constitute a public – was a model then exported to Europe and spread throughout the globe. It was therefore reshaped within more local histories, politics and aesthetics; leading to a global localization, or 'glocalization', and producing heterogeneity of the museum form and public culture across space.<sup>290</sup>

From the architectural and scientific point of view, the Zemaljski Muzej was organized in four pavilions in classical design – a style implying age and continuity through time<sup>291</sup> – around a central botanic garden, and it was inspired by the Court Museum in Vienna and the Hungarian National Museum in Budapest especially considering its division into two sections, one for the natural sciences and the other for

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<sup>288</sup> Hajdarpasić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit. p. 110.

<sup>289</sup> Donia R. J., *Sarajevo: A Biography*, Hurst & Co., London 2006, pp. 88-91.

<sup>290</sup> Macdonald S. J. (2003) *Museums* op. cit. p. 2.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.* p. 3.



humanities.<sup>292</sup> The materiality of the museums as edifices – in this case the neoclassical building – as well as the materiality of the museum collections – in this case those of archeology, natural sciences, ethnography and library – are important elements if considered within the Richard Handler's theory of the 'objectification' of culture; according to him, the objectification occurs through the turning of culture and identity into a thing, naturalizing them and making them seem mere matters of fact.<sup>293</sup> The museums, purposely established as sites to bring together culturally significant objects, were hence appropriated as 'national' expressions of identity: 'having a story' was the collective equivalent of the personal memory, *just having a museum was itself a performative utterance of having an identity.*<sup>294</sup>

The political and administrative transformation occurred with the First Yugoslavia – the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1941) – brought about a shift in ideological and identification-making focus of museums. At the same time, museums re-oriented towards trans-Yugoslav and monarchical identities, with Belgrade as the main political centre, and maintained their regional profiles.<sup>295</sup> After World War I, Zemaljski Muzej thus functioned as a regional museum of the newly formed Kingdom of Yugoslavia. During that time, the cultural institutions belonging to the Kingdom's three main nationalities of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes were privileged, whereas public institutions of marginalized regions such as BiH, suffered lack of support.<sup>296</sup>

The boom of new museums during the epoch of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1992) was focused on reinterpreting the contemporary past in accordance with guidelines of the communist regime. Museums which were established and reshaped during the socialist period, played hence an important role on the construction of the trans-Yugoslav communist identity, adopting the ideal of 'brotherhood and unity', but at the same time, maintaining distinct regional features.<sup>297</sup> All of Yugoslav republics and citizens deserved equal standing, each republic was thus

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<sup>292</sup>Donia R. J., *Sarajevo* op. cit. pp. 88-91.

<sup>293</sup>Handler R., *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison 1988. Quoted by Macdonald S. J., *Museums* op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>294</sup>Macdonald S. J., *Museums* op. cit. p. 3.

<sup>295</sup>Lozic V., *National Museum in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op. cit. p. 69-70.

<sup>296</sup>*Ibid.* p. 76

<sup>297</sup>*Ibid.* p. 77.

provided of its own educational and cultural institutions: regional identities and Yugoslav identity were both promoted.<sup>298</sup>

As an agent of Yugoslav-identity creation, the Zemaljski Muzej produced several exhibitions – between the years 1945 and 1992 – where the term ‘Yugoslavia’ constantly appeared. At the same time it organized other exhibitions, focusing on the presumed authenticity of culture and nature of BiH,<sup>299</sup> proving to be agent of a specific Bosnian and Herzegovinian-identity production. Needless to say, with the advent of socialism, the Zemaljski Muzej received funds and was appointed as institution of utmost importance.

The Museum of National Liberation was established in 1945, then renamed Museum of Revolution in 1967 and Historical Museum of BiH in 1993. Its collection was arranged in a purpose-built edifice nearby the Zemaljski Muzej in 1963, a ‘white cube’ designed by the Croat architects Boris Magaš, Edo Šmidihen and Radovan Horvat, at the beginning of their careers.

The cultural nucleus of postwar cities and expanding metropolis – in this case Marijin Dvor as the ‘city of future’ and core of the socialist city – became scenario for new ideologies, above all, ideologies and aesthetics of ‘modernity’ with the museum as icon of modernity but also of the growing political polarization.<sup>300</sup> White stone-lined cube, erected on a pedestal and with a modular grid of glasses at the entrance level:<sup>301</sup> the new museum-concept became the factory, one of the paradigms of the modern architecture, *dissolving the traditional exhibition space and abstracting their enfilades in the “white box”, open and fluid space of the ideology of flexibility, transparency and neutrality.*<sup>302</sup>

The Museum of National Liberation was established in order to *collect, preserve and display all documents related to course and development of the national liberation fight and its achievements, to collect, study and reveal to public all source materials which relate to history of national liberation war, and to preserve and cherish remembrance to national heroes and victims of fascism, to heroism and devotion of our peoples in the*

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<sup>298</sup>Ivi.

<sup>299</sup>Ivi.

<sup>300</sup>Nikolic M., *Culture and ideology* op. cit., p. 776.

<sup>301</sup>Ugljen-Ademovic N., Turkusic E., Ibrimbegovic S. *The Process of Redefining Cultural Identities*, op. cit. p. 369.

<sup>302</sup>Nikolic M., *Culture and ideology* op. cit., p. 776.

*liberation war*.<sup>303</sup> Implicitly, the Museum aimed at legitimating the communist rule through the emphasis on the importance of partisan movements for the liberation of peoples of BiH and Yugoslavia (People's Liberation Army); the remembrance of peoples' suffering during the war; the threat of ideologies such as fascism and nationalism; the representation of Titoism and socialism as progressive and modernist ideologies. The war of national liberation was indeed employed as symbol of unity of the different ethnic groups of both the territories of Yugoslavia and BiH.<sup>304</sup> During the four decades of socialism – the most flourishing period in the Museum's history – the geographical horizon was both Bosnian and Yugoslav, while the ideological perspective was communist.<sup>305</sup> Between 1945 and 1992, both Zemaljski Muzej and Museum of Revolution followed a common narrative path to tell the national history – according to Peter Aronsson, a peculiar characteristic of the new emerging nation-states and of their short history.<sup>306</sup>

Despite the 25-year-old nation-state of post-Dayton BiH, the discourse is in this case completely different: whereas museums can be used by states in a conscious nation-building process, they can be also used by sub-state groups in order to build counter-state nationalisms, in accordance with ethnic identifications promoted for political purposes.<sup>307</sup>

With the breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 90s, the museums mutated their ideological, political and identification-making perspective.<sup>308</sup> Following the proclamation of BiH's independence, and then in the years of the 1992-95 War, both the museums came under the control of independent BiH – therefore of the government ruling from the besieged capital – and they began to present BiH as an independent and unified entity, following a pronounced national and sovereign perspective, emphasizing the BiH's peculiarity and independent existence over years. For instance, in June 1993

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<sup>303</sup>Kanjanac M., *Historijski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovina: Sezdeset i Pet Godina Historijskog Muzeja Bosne i Hercegovina*, Historijski Muzej Bosne i Hercegovine, Sarajevo 2010, p. 7. Quoted by Lozic V., *National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op. cit., p. 83.

<sup>304</sup>Lozic V., *National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op. cit., pp. 83-85.

<sup>305</sup>Ivi.

<sup>306</sup>Aronsson P. (2011) *Explaining national museums: Exploring comparative approaches to the national museums*. In: Knell S., Aronsson P., Bugge Amundsen A., Barnes A. J., Burch S. & Gosselin V. (eds.), *National Museums: New studies from around the World*, Abingdon, Routledge, 29-54. Quoted by Lozic V., *(Re)Shaping History in Bosnian and Herzegovinian Museums* op. cit. p. 317.

<sup>307</sup>Fontana G., *War by Other Means* op. cit., p. 451.

<sup>308</sup>Lozic V., *National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op. cit., p. 70.

the Museum of Revolution was renamed 'Historical Museum of BiH' by the government of independent BiH, thus implicating a change of perspective, making it a scientific and educational arena, oriented to research, collection, and classification of those items considered interesting for the history of unified and independent BiH.<sup>309</sup> The museum expanded its time span, no longer limited to the years of Yugoslav socialism; however it rather encompassed all the epochs from the arrival of the Slavs in the Balkans, until the last war, thus the modern and independent BiH, its military history and Titoism, the communist age and a variety of items produced during the whole existence of BiH. The geographical scope was instead limited to the territory of BiH, and Yugoslavia as a framework was almost eliminated from the narratives;<sup>310</sup> its breakup and the violent struggle for the new independent states were conceived and presented as BiH's foundation myths in a series of exhibitions held between 1992 and 1996.

If in the socialist age ethnic and religious differences were minimized, and within museums both Bosnian and Yugoslav identities were promoted with an almost total absence of religious references, this changed with the proclamation of the BiH's independence.

During the 1992-95 War, the Zemaljski Muzej – hereafter, National Museum of BiH – was deeply damaged, and since 1995 it has begun to reflect the – above described – multicultural reconstruction sponsored by (inter)nationalist agents. Similarly to what happened to Ars Aevi – project of 'multicultural values' – in the early postwar period the National Museum of BiH was indeed sustained by international donors, as an effect of the reputation of the Museum, for instance defined by Cultural Heritage Without Borders (2005) the "BiH's only museum with a National profile for all the different ethnic groups in the country"; and as an action in accordance with the Dayton Agreements' indications concerning preservation and restoration of 'national monuments'.

According to Vanja Lozic the effects of multicultural policies brought the National Museum to describe BiH as a country encompassing both Eastern and Western cultures, to undertake multicultural narratives and discourses, thus emphasizing the country's

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<sup>309</sup>ibid. p. 84.

<sup>310</sup>ibid. pp. 83-85; Id., *(Re)shaping History* op. cit., p. 323.

multi-religious, multiethnic, multicultural nature and its values of coexistence. Considering the Museum activity –exhibitions in cooperation with the Catholic Church in Sarajevo and the Catholic Parish of the Holy Trinity in Sarajevo, the exhibition “Bosnia and Islamic culture in Europe”, the already mentioned setting up of a secure, climate-controlled room for the Jewish Haggadah – we can observe its efforts towards emphasizing the features of Sarajevo and BiH as ‘melting pots’ of cultures and religions, through the exposition of objects belonging to all the ethnic groups of the country and not only to the three constituent peoples.

Hence, it can be argued that both the museums during the 90s have adopted a new public discourse emphasizing the BiH’s independence from Yugoslavia and the unity of BiH’s different communities.

Lozic, in his study concerning national museums in BiH and Slovenia,<sup>311</sup> recognizes four periods during which the two analyzed museums and other cultural institutions have been created, or even reshaped as parts of the consolidation of political power, construction and (re)negotiation of regional, National or other identities. The four phases are:

- the period under Austro-Hungarian Empire (1867-1918) with the establishment of first regional museums across the region, in this case Zemaljski Muzej;
- the period of First Yugoslavia (1918-1941) and museum contribution in stabilization and universalization of the South Slavs union;
- the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1992) and museological emphasis on socialist culture, politics of ‘brotherhood and unity’ and regional differences, with the foundation of the Museum of National Liberation, then Museum of Revolution;
- the proclamation of independence of former Yugoslav republics and the museological focus on the narratives about the struggle for independence and national history of the newborn states.

Another point could be added – as an extension of the final one – and would represent the present of the emerging state of BiH, i.e. the corporate consociational confederation established in Dayton with the creation of the two entities, connected by a weak central

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<sup>311</sup>Lozic V., *National Museums in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Slovenia* op. cit., p. 69.

government. Such a state system is based on the fragile balance of two contrasting pillars: on one hand multiculturalism and inclusive development, on the other, the legitimately mutually exclusive development of the three constituent peoples of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs within their territorial enclaves. Hence, a political context where state narratives scarcely emerge and where the predominant assumption is that a peaceful future for BiH needs to be ensured through the maximal autonomy of three mutually exclusive and antagonistic ethnic groups.<sup>312</sup>

The dynamics involved in understanding the current critical situation of these museums, and of other institutions legacy of the socialism, are extremely multilayered, in my opinion it is therefore necessary to introduce different points of view in order to get a general overview. Giuditta Fontana, in analyzing the state system of BiH as corporate consociational confederation, argues that such a state organization, made up of two separated and independent entities also in the management of culture – lacking a central ministry for culture – could lead to the amnesia of a past of living together; thus this would deny funds and legitimacy to all those institutions representing that past – the seven cultural institutions situated in Sarajevo<sup>313</sup> – and it would increase a sort of corporate culture with the mutually exclusive development on the field of cultural policies, as consequences. It means the lack of unitary, state narratives and at the same time the enclavization of ethnic communities, the proliferation of institutions preserving artificially pure heritages and fragmented memories aimed at the empowerment of belligerent identities which, on the cultural-institutional level, are still fighting *a war by other means*.<sup>314</sup> According to Giuditta Fontana, the omission of legitimacy and funds to the ‘national museums’, therefore their frequent shutdown, does reflect the triumph of a new vision of BiH, *in fact, cultural policy in BiH points at the emergence of a new myth-symbol complex, of a new definition of identities in which a pluralist but unitary state-building project is being sidelined in favor of counterstate, ethnically specific narratives*.<sup>315</sup>

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<sup>312</sup>Fontana G., *War by Other Means* op. cit., p. 462

<sup>313</sup>Cfr. 1.3 of the present thesis. The 7 cultural institutions are: the National Museum of BiH, the National and University Library of BiH, the Art Gallery of BiH, the Historical Museum of BiH, the National Film Archive, the Museum of Literature and Theatre, the National Library for the Visually Impaired.

<sup>314</sup>Fontana G., *War by Other Means* op. cit., p. 459.

<sup>315</sup>Ibid., p. 457.

According to Giuditta Fontana and Vanja Lozic, finding a common language to tell the past, and especially the last war seems to be very difficult within this context,<sup>316</sup> given the particular scenario created by the war itself and the political implications contained in the cultural institutions' narratives. As already explained, National Museum and Historical Museum were proclaimed properties of independent BiH – the same ruling power which approved and recognized 'Sarajevo 2000' in 1992 – and at the beginning of the war they both adopted a clear, defined exhibition policy within the besieged Sarajevo and the context of resistance against Yugoslavia's forces.

According to Fontana, in the aftermath of the war, the two museums in post-Dayton BiH adapted to the emerging discourses of multiculturalism, coexistence, unification and independence. The National Museum continued discourses of multiculturalism and hybridity, thus sustaining principles of religious coexistence – promoted within the general (inter)nationalist reconstruction. Hence, a kind of narrative representing the entirety of the state of BiH, its multicultural profile officially recognized by the Dayton Agreements and then crystallized into quota-system methods. As observed, in the immediate postwar years the (inter)nationalist efforts were focused on the National Museum in order to promote multiculturalism,<sup>317</sup> and on Ars Aevi Project, as well to support its multicultural narratives; but both the institutions – precisely because of their multicultural principles – were then overlooked and put in second place within a political context of increasingly less pluralist, and more ethnically polarized, narratives. Considering also the following decrease of international support, multicultural values promoted by the National Museum turned out to be something undermining the political system of BiH, based on barriers and mutually exclusive development of groups.

The National Museum thus continues discourses on cultural hybridity of BiH while the Historical Museum focuses on BiH's independence and unification – in fact and paradoxically excluding from the narratives the point of view of all those who fought against unification and coexistence!<sup>318</sup> The Historical Museum – for many considered *the true bearer of cultural memory and constructive creator of Bosnian National and*

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<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 455-459; Lozic V., *(Re)shaping History* op. cit., p. 323.

<sup>317</sup> Cfr. Section 4.2 of the present thesis and the vicissitudes of the Haggadah in Hajdarpašić E., *Museums* op. cit., pp. 110-120.

<sup>318</sup> Fontana G., *War by Other Means* op. cit., p. 452.

*cultural identity*<sup>319</sup>—still today struggles to build a unitary identity of BiH, evoking images of the communist past.<sup>320</sup> The last war is here narrated as a foundation myth for the emerging, independent and unified state of BiH, and the museum itself appears as a sort of memorial space of the war, with its permanent exhibition displaying pictures, things of everyday usage made by the citizens under siege. Furthermore, according to Edin Hajdarpašić, the Historical Museum and other cultural institutions of the city – that before the war had represented a living and functional part of the city life – after the war and in the multicultural climate, emerged as impossible to be categorized within religious terms, hence, their activities have not been supported by both nationalists and internationals.<sup>321</sup> [Figs. 34, 35]

The ‘brand new’ Ars Aevi Project – recognized by independent BiH in 1992 – although not a Yugoslav legacy collecting objects of the past, shares the multicultural principles with the National Museum, and the fact of having as foundation myths the war and the siege of Sarajevo with the Historical Museum. These narratives present today a very strong political stance, sanctioning an extremely peculiar side of the war facts, and emerging as fragments of memories in the context of a fragmented country.<sup>322</sup> Despite these institutions preserve items belonging to shared past and destinies, and their edifices were built when the country was a unified territory – first a dominated region ruled by foreign dominion, then a socialist republic – since the last war all this legacy has become something difficult to display and narrate.

According to Lozic, the conditions necessary to maintain cultural institutions at the state level – i.e. a cohesive vision of the future, sustainable financial resources and stable government – seem to be lacking in contemporary corporate consociational confederation of BiH.<sup>323</sup> Once again, cultural institutions *stand as important symbols and loci for the creation, preservation, reproduction, or even demise of particular forms of self-identification based on a sanctioned version of the past*<sup>324</sup> and the Sarajevo-Marijin Dvor museum cluster – with National Museum, [Fig. 36] the still damaged

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<sup>319</sup>Ugljen-Ademovic N., Turkusic E., Ibrimbegovic S., *The Process of Redefining Cultural Identities*, op. cit p. 368.

<sup>320</sup>Lozic V., *(Re)shaping History* op. cit., p. 323.

<sup>321</sup>Hajdarpašić E., *Museums* op. cit., pp. 128-130.

<sup>322</sup>Cfr. Moll N., *Fragmented memories in a fragmented country* op. cit.

<sup>323</sup>Lozic V., *(Re)shaping History* op. cit., p. 323.

<sup>324</sup>Fontana G., *War by Other Means* op. cit., p. 450.



Historical Museum and the empty ground pending the Ars Aevi building – seems to be a clear image that the society, in political terms, wants to show about itself.

#### 5.1.4 Glimmers. New perspectives

What is going on today? In winter 2012, responding to the crisis and closure of several of BiH's most renowned cultural institutions as painful results of the 'failure of the country's complex administrative apparatus to ensure operations through the design of adequate funding mechanisms', the open civic platform CULTURESHUTDOWN.NET was founded by a group of international academicians, artists, librarians and other cultural activists living in BiH and in other countries in the Balkans, US, Canada and Europe. 'In response to this intolerable impasse' the initiative:

[..] intends to contribute to resolve it through the cultivation of a debate on the place and mission of cultural institutions in the life of the country on the theoretical as well as practical levels. Unconnected to a government or political party, this initiative intends to raise worldwide awareness about the problem through a variety of instruments and media, ranging from the provision of real-time information, and historical and theoretical contextualization, to art projects and the drafting of cultural policy recommendations. It seeks not to monopolize or dominate this debate but to provide an international platform for addressing this crisis in Bosnia's cultural heritage, and by displaying a variety of projects that represent a wide spectrum of ideas and opinions.<sup>325</sup>

The platform launched an international cultural awareness campaign calling on museums and galleries worldwide to demonstrate their solidarity with threatened BiH's cultural institutions by symbolically "erasing" one precious artwork or artifact, rendering it inaccessible for the 'Day of Museum Solidarity', on March 4, 2013. On that day –marking the beginning of the sixth month since the National Museum of BiH had been closed to public– all the participating museums and galleries placed the yellow barricade tape featuring the CULTURESHUTDOWN logo in front of/enveloping the chosen item; then pictures of 'crossed-out' artworks were posted on the platform

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<sup>325</sup> Cfr. <http://www.cultureshutdown.net/about/> (Accessed: 17/07/2016)

website offering a sort of virtual exhibition ‘showing documentation of institutions’ solidarity acts across the globe’.<sup>326</sup>

The civil society action ‘Ja Sam Muzej’ (“I am the museum”) was instead initiated by the NGO Akcija in 2015,

to remind the public in Bosnia and Herzegovina and internationally of the fact that the biggest and most important institution in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been closed for almost three years, and to influence those in charge to resolve this problem as soon as possible. [...] Even though the [National] Museum has for years managed to survive with the help of grants for the upkeep of collections, due to sudden budget cuts it now receives barely one fifth of the budget necessary for an institution such as this one to function properly. Because of this, and because of the fact that the people working at the Museum have not received 30 salaries and benefits, the management and the collective of the National Museum decided to close the Museum to the public in 2012. Pictures of the Museum door nailed shut went around the world. In spite of this, the Museum has kept on working; for three years at this point, the employees come to work every day and in inhuman conditions guard the valuable collections at this institution.<sup>327</sup>

In the last two years, the ‘Ja sam Muzej’ action has aimed at changing the public image of the National Museum, focusing on the existential situation of its few employees, strengthening its capacities and the public understanding of its value, organizing philanthropic actions, occupying its spaces with cultural events like exhibitions, concerts, performances, debates and fundraising events; most importantly, it has aimed at bringing back the issue of saving the Museum to the top of the agenda of the political decision-makers.<sup>328</sup> The civil action had its effects: the Museum reopened in September 2015 with a guarantee of public funding for two years, and in May 2016, both employees and activists of the National Museum were awarded with the European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage / Europa Nostra Awards, for the category ‘Dedicated Service by Individuals or Organizations’.<sup>329</sup>

The National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo is home to over 4 million artifacts making it one of the most important museum collections in South East Europe. Deprived of public funding and support,

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<sup>326</sup> Cfr. <http://www.cultureshutdown.net/public-call-day-of-museum-solidarity/> (Accessed: 17/07/2016)

<sup>327</sup> Cfr. <http://jasam.zemaljskimuzej.ba/about-us> (Accessed: 17/07/2016)

<sup>328</sup> Ivi.

<sup>329</sup> Cfr. <http://www.europanostra.org/heritage-awards/> (Accessed: 17/07/2016)

the Museum shut its doors in 2012. However, despite the closure, the employees continued to come to work every day over the following three years without pay. They guarded the Museum night and day in poor conditions and cared for the artifacts as best they could. “Their commitment to their vocations, which was publicly articulated through the large-scale civic campaign conducted by the independent cultural NGO AKCIJA, mobilized massive support from the public and the media in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond. Finally, it influenced policy at a state level,” stated the jury. The Museum reopened in September 2015 with a guarantee of public funding until 2018.<sup>330</sup>

In conclusion, I would briefly describe the new vision of the Marijin Dvor museum cluster imagined by a group of international designers, architects and urban planners, who in the last years have been carrying out a proposal of urban reactivation for Sarajevo, and whose recent outcomes have been presented at the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of Biennale of Architecture in Venice, 2016.

‘Reactivate Sarajevo’ is the name of the project launched by Urban-Think Tank (U-TT), a Zurich-based ‘interdisciplinary design practice dedicated to projects that focus on social architecture and informal development’, that works ‘in global contexts by creating bridges between first world industry and third world, informal urban areas’, focusing ‘on the education and development of a new generation of professionals, who will transform cities in the 21st century’.<sup>331</sup>

These research outcomes were thus presented at the Biennale collateral exhibition: ‘Sarajevo Now: the People’s Museum’<sup>332</sup> where the Historical Museum of BiH played a central role within the urban regeneration plan and was analyzed as a force for change in the BiH’s capital. According to the curatorial statement, the still damaged Historical Museum ‘stands as a heroic icon of active resistance and resilience’, therefore

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<sup>330</sup>Cfr. <http://www.europanostra.org/news/769/> (Accessed: 17/07/2016)

<sup>331</sup>Cfr. <http://www.u-tt.com/about/> (Accessed: 10/07/2016)

<sup>332</sup>The present narration comes from the in-depth knowledge I acquired directly through the working experience at the exhibition ‘Sarajevo Now: the People’s Museum’ in the months of April, May and June, 2016. ‘Reactivate Sarajevo’ is a project by Urban-Think Tank, and the exhibition in Venice – curated by Haris Piplas – was realized in cooperation with Baier Bischofberger Architects, commissioned by Matica of Bosnia and Herzegovina (the Association of Bosnian refugees in Switzerland), in partnership with the Historical Museum of BiH. The exhibition took place in Arsenale Nord - Tesa 99, Venice, from May 25<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> 2016.

conceived as ‘a new kind of urban frontier’<sup>333</sup> within a destructed and neglected city ‘held hostage in a situation of ongoing political paralysis with no end in sight’.<sup>334</sup>

Today, a building that once embodied the era’s utopian socialist dreams has become a ruin. Situated one hundred meters from the siege frontline, exterior traces of shelling and grenade blasts are now a surface level hint of deeper challenges within. Unpaid museum staff shiver through freezing winters without heating, while the state withholds resources that would stem the flow of water leaking through the roof. Starved of funds and abandoned by government, citizens have been invited to activate the structure in new and unexpected ways, reclaiming the museum as a vital civic space of dialogue, culture, and education.<sup>335</sup>

‘Inspired by demonstrations of solidarity and popular ownership’, the exhibition creators redefined the Museum ‘not as an elitist institution dedicated to the display of objects, but as a catalytic urban space’ therefore as a living space with no difference between its collection and public functions:

A temporary strategy of adaptive reuse can compel a new reading of the site and its surroundings. Sheathing the museum in a transparent vinyl skin leaves the decay and patina of the original building intact, while juxtaposing the old and new. The overall effect is a *détournement*, with the design projecting an oppositional message. The historic structure itself is enclosed as an uncanny artifact, subverting conventional notions of a museum as sterile container. Wrapping the existing museum is a potent act imbued with both symbolism and function. Suspended on scaffolding, the skin represents a first move towards stabilization of the degrading structure and a no-budget base for future repairs. It seals the site against the weather, and allows for simple heating. But the intervention also gestures to something more profound. The museum is in a process of opening itself up to the city. It operates fluidly in the face of frozen politics. It is playful though bearing the weight of a painful past. Covering the current structure will create new spaces of engagement and interaction, while drawing in the people of Sarajevo as a new center of possibility.<sup>336</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Both the past and the present history of the Museum – accidentally on the frontline during the siege and currently living an everyday ‘cultural siege’ – unequivocally evokes the title of the 15<sup>th</sup> Biennale of Architecture: ‘Reporting from the front’.

<sup>334</sup> Cfr. <http://www.reactivate-sarajevo.com/> (Accessed: 10/07/2016)

<sup>335</sup> |vi.

<sup>336</sup> |vi.

The museum cluster is here envisioned as a place for the creation of new relations and sociality – as illustrated in the map [Fig. 37a] the museum area would include sport facilities, urban gardens, picnic areas, open air cinemas [Figs. 37b, 37c] – according to Urban-Think Tank philosophy, as a space where bottom-up initiatives encounter top-down approaches producing mutual influence and cooperation. The ambitious project would indeed face the complicated political circumstances of the country, operating into the massively capitalized and heterogeneous setting of Marijin Dvor, within that small patch of green, where the Historical Museum precariously stands as ‘Modernist island of calm’: ‘if it deteriorates further, then a demolition debate is no doubt round the corner..’<sup>337</sup>

## 5.2 The role of the Embassy of Italy in BiH: towards the rebirth?

In the last three years, and precisely since August 2013, with the assignment of the new diplomatic mission of Italy in BiH, the situation of Ars Aevi seems to have gained a new lease of life, and even the Renzo Piano’s museum seems now about to be built.

The following reconstruction about past and future achievements in the activity of supporting Ars Aevi Project is obtained from information taken by Bosnian and Italian newspapers articles and by a personal interview with Mrs. Ilaria Ragnoni, Second Secretary of Italian Embassy in BiH.<sup>338</sup>

Ambassador Ruggero Corrias is indeed recognized for having brought Ars Aevi back to public attention,<sup>339</sup> and thanks to his commitment, ‘for the first time Ars Aevi today presents a clear perspective’.<sup>340</sup> Three are the reasons motivating Corrias’ involvement into the ‘dead knot’ between art and politics in BiH, and in an interview<sup>341</sup> he points out

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<sup>337</sup>Eidner F., *Alliance of Enthusiasts*. In: Stylepark, 7 June 2016, available at:

<http://www.stylepark.com/en/news/alliance-of-enthusiasts/367460> (Accessed: 10/07/2016).

<sup>338</sup>Interview with Ilaria Ragnoni (Second Secretary of Italian Embassy in BiH), Embassy of the Republic of Italy in BiH, Sarajevo, December 2nd, 2015.

<sup>339</sup>From ‘Dnevni Avaz’ Newspaper, February 25, 2014.

<sup>340</sup>From ‘Oslobodjenje’ (Cultural Dossier); ‘Razgovor Ruggero Corrias, ambasador Republike Italije u BiH. Od Sarajeva možemo napraviti novi Bilbao’ by Nisad Selimovic, February 13, 2014, p. 30.

<sup>341</sup>Ivi.

the Italian presence throughout the entire Project history as the main motivation. First of all, Italian presence among the collection artists and among museums, all institutions which have strongly supported the Project over years; secondly, because in early 2000s the Italian Government has financed Skenderija's rescue and the building of Art Depot, earmarking a million US Dollars for it; thirdly, for the involvement of 'the best Italian architect in the world, Renzo Piano.'

During the last three years, the Embassy has been attempting to create those conditions necessary to make Ars Aevi a concrete and viable project again. First of all, media interest has been channeled into the Project, for instance in several interviews of local – but also Italian – newspapers, Corrias constantly compares Sarajevo to Bilbao, therefore the benefits that Ars Aevi could bring to Sarajevo – described as a 'new capital of contemporary art' – to the positive effects generated, in the last two decades, by the icon-museum across the Basque region.

According to him:

the museum will not solve problems, but if it transforms Sarajevo into the 'new Bilbao', thus into a new capital of contemporary art, then an increment of economic standards will be possible, in terms of tourism, new jobs and better atmosphere. It is a dream that came true in Bilbao, where the Guggenheim changed things. In BiH tendencies are pessimistic and – it is Europe's opinion – the country still finds difficulties in approaching Europe. A dose of negativity, pessimism and inefficiency. But from Sarajevo a positive message was sent and addressed to Europe. It is up to us, to local institutions, to the Foundation and to our little contribution to nurture and make that message stronger.<sup>342</sup>

Secondly, on February 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014, the Italian Embassy facilitated the Art Depot's reopening to the public after some years of being closed; it thus encouraged a new financing agreement between the local authorities of Canton and City in order to ensure the Depot maintenance. In the same month the Project was introduced to a first private partner, the Italian company illycaffè, on the initiative of the Embassy itself, that directly contacted the artistic director of illy, Carlo Bach.

illy business policy is in fact characterized by a remarkable sensibility towards the art world, the renowned artist-designed cups forming the illy Art Collection are an

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<sup>342</sup>ivi.

example: *small works of art, taking ceramic cup as medium, transforming the simple pleasure of drinking an espresso into an experience that fully engages the senses and the mind.*<sup>343</sup> ‘Taking cup as muse’, more than 100 of the world’s foremost artists have created limited edition collections, among them even artists from Ars Aevi Collection such as Marina Abramovic and Michelangelo Pistoletto: a cooperation between the Trieste-based coffeemaker and Ars Aevi Project appeared thus coherent and spontaneous. The selected artist Dean Jokanovic Toumin elaborated a cup design inspired by his artwork *If you are looking for hell...* – realized in 1993 and donated to Ars Aevi in 1998 as part of ‘Vienna nucleus’ – a huge light box covered by the quotation – then become a motto for Ars Aevi itself – from the 18<sup>th</sup> century writer Avigador Pawsner: *If you are looking for hell, ask the artist where it is. If you don’t find the artist, then you are already in hell.* The sponsorship thus consists in the realization of a batch of limited edition cups, and then proceeds from their sales are directly transferred to Ars Aevi Project. **[Fig. 38]**

Following the reopening of Art Depot and illy sponsorship, recent steps of the Embassy are two initiatives both launched in 2015:

**1) Establishing relations with the European Union.** In a personal interview Mrs. Ilaria Ragnoni<sup>344</sup> explained that: ‘we [the Embassy of Italy in BiH] have supported Enver’s idea of involving the European Union, it seems to us that, given also the Bosnian politics’ issues, a “European backing” for the Project would certainly guarantee at least feasibility and sustainability in the long term. European Union established to allocate 200,000 € to a feasibility study including the museum working plan, which has never been done before’. The feasibility study consists of three parts:

- a) estimation of construction costs, bill of quantities. The costs of construction estimated in 2005 evaluate Italian costs of realization and not local costs. The study will first of all update that estimation;
- b) estimation of operational costs of the functioning museum (with all its departments);
- c) establishment of the future museum governance i.e. reconstituting the Ars Aevi Foundation – that has never actually worked – and update of its statute. In Ragnoni’s

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<sup>343</sup> Cfr. <http://www.illy.com/wps/wcm/connect/en/art/coffee-cups-illy-art-collection>  
(Accessed: 12/07/2016)

<sup>344</sup> Interview with Ilaria Ragnoni cit. Personal translation from Italian.

words, the current legal and financial situation is indeed not optimal to carry out a project of such great importance:<sup>345</sup>

We think to connect Ars Aevi to local institutions (Canton, City, Federation) and they would be responsible for controlling and monitoring; the idea of an ‘international foundation’ could also be considered: were all those Countries that contributed to the Project development, could have a crucial role, thus ensuring an external supervision in case of instability or failure of the local support. Once all these aspects are clarified, it is to be hoped that the Project will be relaunched with private and international donors too. We have already noticed Italian private investors showing interest in the Project, but first of all it is necessary to clarify its legal status; at present it is not clear who is the owner of Ars Aevi artworks and there is no guarantee for the hypothetical investor. The partnership with illycaffè was a short-term collaboration therefore not a kind of structural sponsorship that could be reached with a bank, for instance.<sup>346</sup>

The team carrying out the feasibility study includes engineers but also legal experts, who will investigate and define Ars Aevi’s legal personality. As observed, the Project today survives with subsidies from public institutions – in accordance with the financial agreement of 2014 – and by searching other funding opportunities such as public calls and grants.

Even the normative framework is highly complicated, especially in Federation where federal, cantonal and municipal laws often overlap; in order to unravel the problem it is necessary to understand – in accordance with the laws in force – the most appropriate legal arrangement for Ars Aevi, whether a Foundation or not.<sup>347</sup>

**2) Inclusion of Ars Aevi into Italy-BiH bilateral agenda**, consequently, directing the Project towards a program of Italian funding. In this regard, in the last three years several political delegations have already visited Ars Aevi, expressing their support and encouraging local authorities.<sup>348</sup> **[Fig. 39]** As explained by Ilaria Ragnoni:

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<sup>345</sup>Ivi.

<sup>346</sup>Ivi. Personal translation from Italian.

<sup>347</sup>Ivi. Personal translation from Italian.

<sup>348</sup>Italian and International politicians and other influential people have officially visited the Art Depot during the last years, as initiatives of the Italian Embassy in BiH. Among them: Benedetto Della Vedova (April 2014), Federica Mogherini (July 2014, February 2015), Pietro Grasso (April 2015), Adele Gambaro



in the last years the Italian commitment was not of financial nature, but it consisted in ensuring political and institutional support, and in lobbying towards local institutions. I think that Italy purposely avoided investing in funds, in view of the situation here, where the Project, at one point of time, seemed to be not viable, not sustainable, having no dialogue with local institutions..there have been some problems. Our commitment in the last two years has been towards the recreation of the conditions necessary to relaunch the Project and possibly return to subsidies, as we are doing now with the new project of *Cooperazione Italiana*.<sup>349</sup>

The last piece of Italian commitment is indeed the project “Capacity Building della Fondazione Ars Aevi” approved by *Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale* on November 19, 2015, and the following day announced by Italian Minister of Culture – Dario Franceschini – during his official visit in Sarajevo.

The official document – available online<sup>350</sup> – states that the initiative named “Capacity Building della Fondazione Ars Aevi”, amounting to € 129,780,00, aims at strengthening Ars Aevi capabilities through a double program of activities:

- a) training courses on cultural heritage management, with a pilot project to catalogue, archive and collect biographical data and documents of the collection artworks;
- b) training courses on multimedia communication and promotion.

The document goes on to confirm the initiative coherence with EU actions regarding the feasibility study, as well as the initiative contribution to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goal<sup>351</sup> O8, T5.<sup>352</sup>

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(May 2015), Laura Boldrini (July 2015), Paolo Gentiloni (July 2015), Dario Franceschini (November 2015), President of the Italian Republic, Sergio Mattarella (May 2016).

<sup>349</sup>Interview with Ilaria Ragnoni cit. Personal translation from Italian.

<sup>350</sup>Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Comitato Direzionale per la Cooperazione allo Sviluppo, *Comitato Direzionale del 19 Novembre 2015, Elenco iniziative approvate non ripartibili geograficamente*. Cfr. ‘Capacity Building della Fondazione Ars Aevi’, Delibera n. 171, pp. 52-53. Available at:

[http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo.esteri.it/pdgcs/Documentazione/Numerazione\\_Atti\\_CD\\_19-11-15\\_revisionato.pdf](http://www.cooperazioneallosviluppo.esteri.it/pdgcs/Documentazione/Numerazione_Atti_CD_19-11-15_revisionato.pdf) (Accessed: 04/05/2016)

<sup>351</sup>At the Millennium Summit in September 2000 the largest gathering of world leaders in history adopted the UN Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets, with a deadline of 2015, that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the world's time-bound and quantified targets for addressing extreme poverty in its many dimensions-income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, and exclusion-while promoting gender equality, education, and environmental sustainability. They are also basic human rights - the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter, and security. Source: <http://www.unmillenniumproject.org/goals/index.htm> (Accessed: 26/04/2016).

The aim is to strengthen Ars Aevi staff skills in terms of both collection management and marketing strategies, consequently to set up a web platform including Ars Aevi website and social networks. Hence, in Ragnoni's words, 'to provide those aspects which have been lacking in the past, improve capabilities directly here through the involvement of Italian experts, where the current members of Ars Aevi staff will be recipient of this program.'<sup>353</sup>

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<sup>352</sup>Goal O8: *Develop a global partnership for development*; Target 5: *In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications technologies*. Source: <http://www.un.org/en/mdg/summit2010/pdf/List%20of%20MDGs%20English.pdf> (Accessed: 04/05/2016).

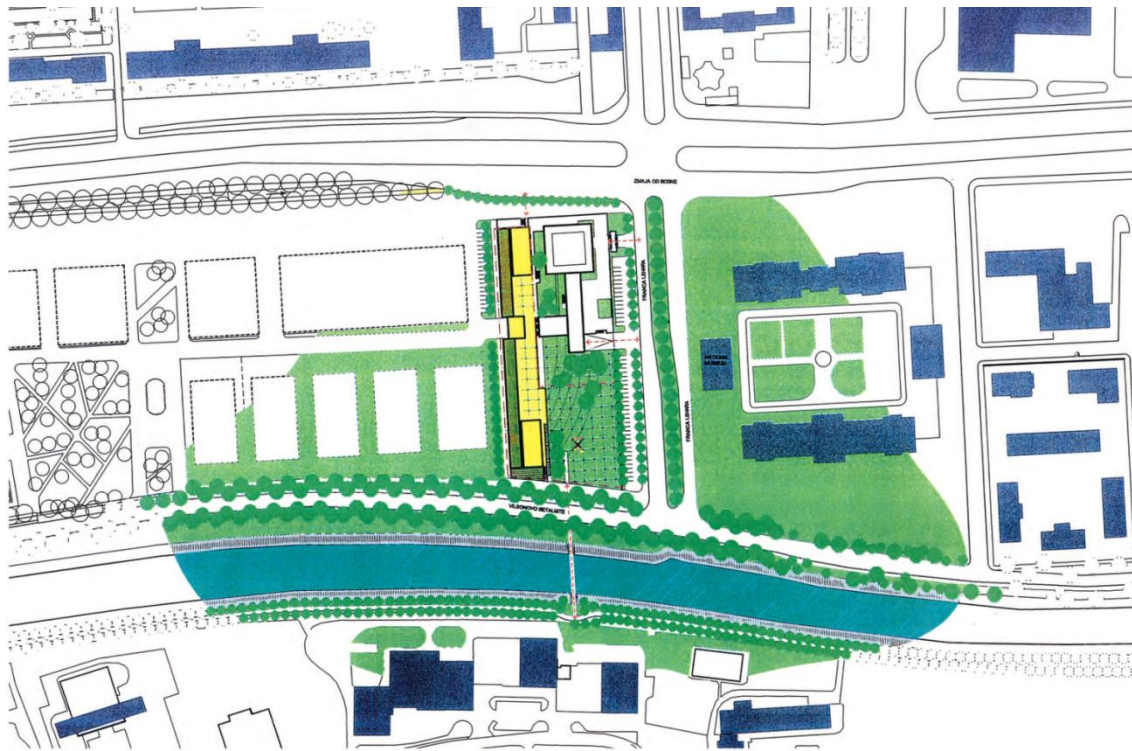
<sup>353</sup>Interview with Ilaria Ragnoni cit. Personal translation from Italian.



**Fig. 25.** As an American pioneer, Italian architect Renzo Piano plants the pegs marking the perimeter of the ground intended for the Ars Aevi Museum, Sarajevo, 1999. Ars Aevi Photo.

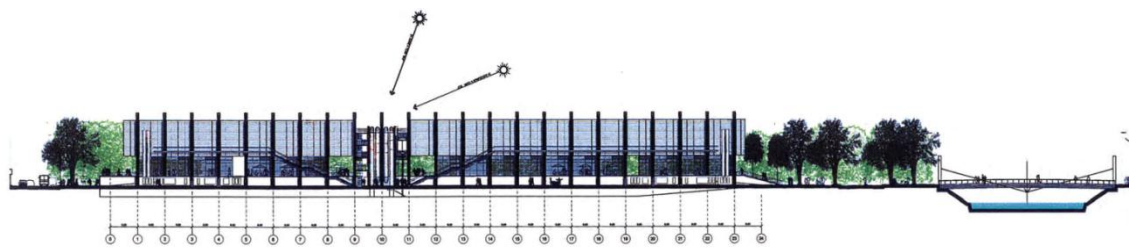
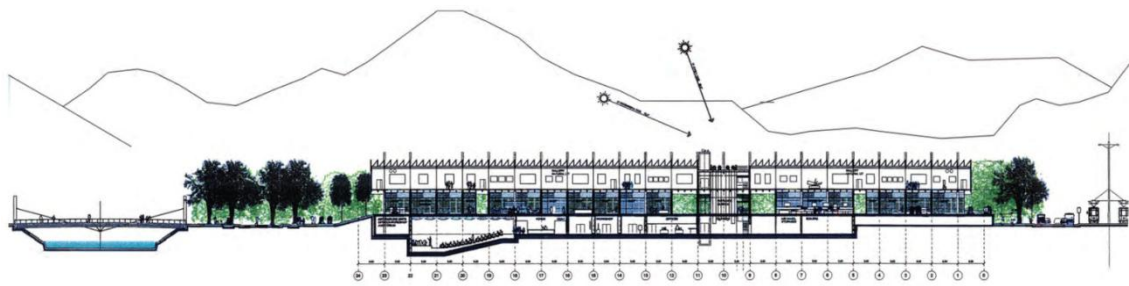


**Fig. 26.** Enver Hadžiomerspahić posing in front of Ars Aevi Bridge in October 2015. The Ars Aevi Bridge, built in 2002, represents the first and only one realized element of the Ars Aevi complex. Photo: Marta Vidal.

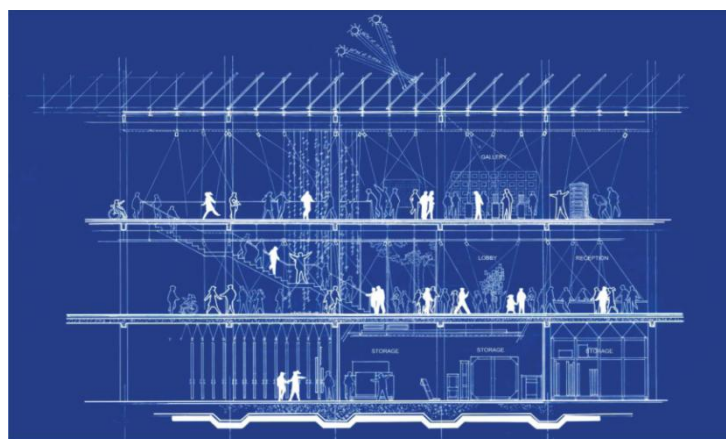
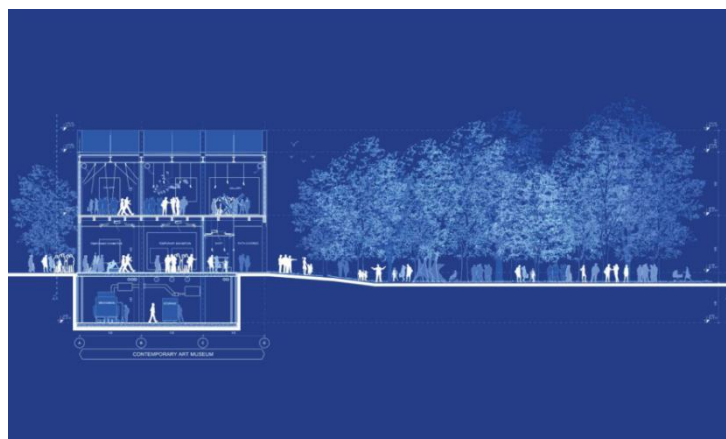
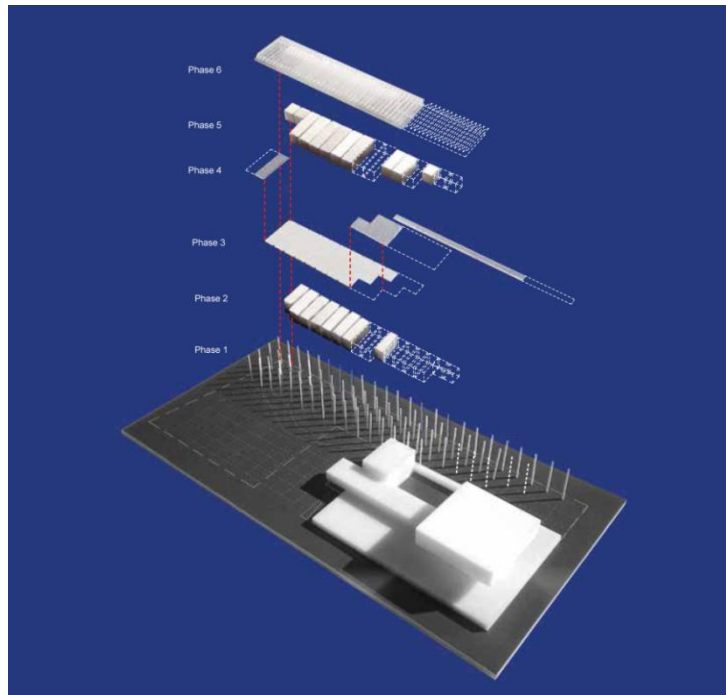


**Fig. 27.** The public area assigned to the museum's building (in yellow) is a short step from the National Museum of BiH and included within the area of the Historical Museum of BiH. Zmaja od Bosne Alley delimits the area on the north and runs parallel to Miljacka river, which circumscribes the area on the south. *Source:* Ars Aevi materials.





**Figs. 28a, 28b, 28c.** Sections of Ars Aevi Museum, designed by Renzo Piano in early 2000s. *Source:* Ars Aevi materials.

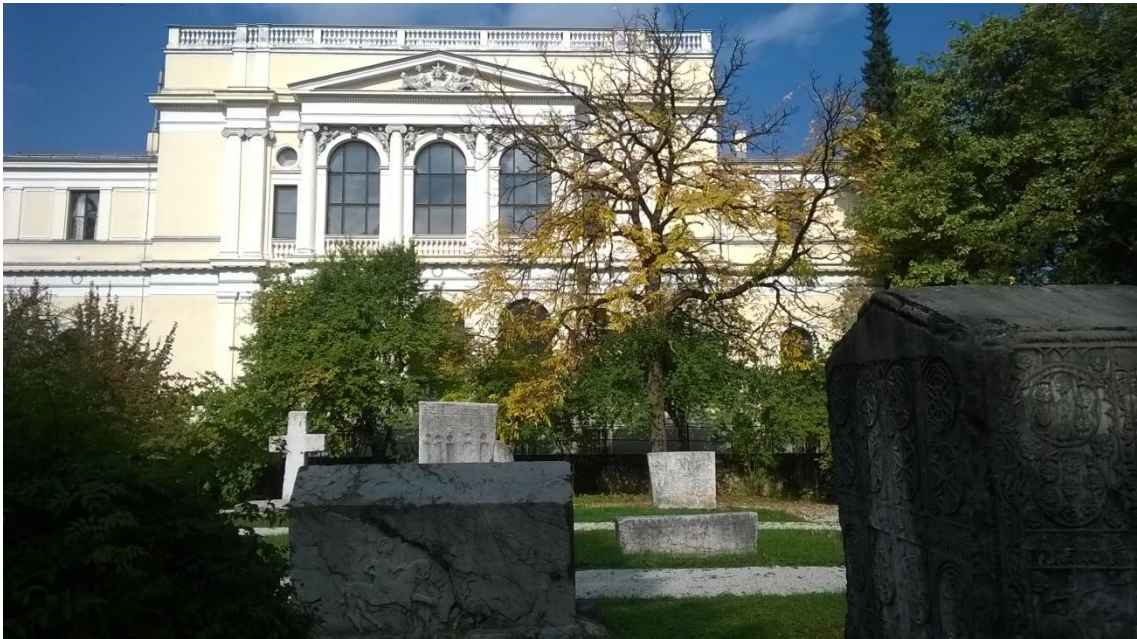


**Fig. 29a, 29b, 29c.** In 2012, Renzo Piano Building Workshop simplified the concept of the project by making it modular, buildable by adding sections overtime. *Source:* 'Ars Aevi Contemporary Art Museum concept design by RPBW', UNESCO Goodwill Ambassadors Annual Meeting, Paris, 16 October 2012.





**Fig. 30.** Marijin Dvor. In the foreground: Zmaja od Bosne Alley; from left to right: the National Museum; the green patch including the Historical Museum and Ars Aevi's ground; new-fangled high-raises, shopping malls and international offices epitomizing the new Balkan/Bosnian transition economy and architecture. Photo: Daniel Schwartz.



**Fig. 31.** The National Museum of BiH, internal garden. Photo: Silvia M. Carolo, October 2015.





**Fig. 32.** The National Museum of BiH, archeological section. Photo: Silvia M. Carolo, October 2015.



**Fig. 33.** The Historical Museum of BiH. Photo: Daniel Schwartz.





**Figs. 34a, 34b.** The Historical Museum of BiH, today. The current shell of the edifice with the bullet riddled façade.

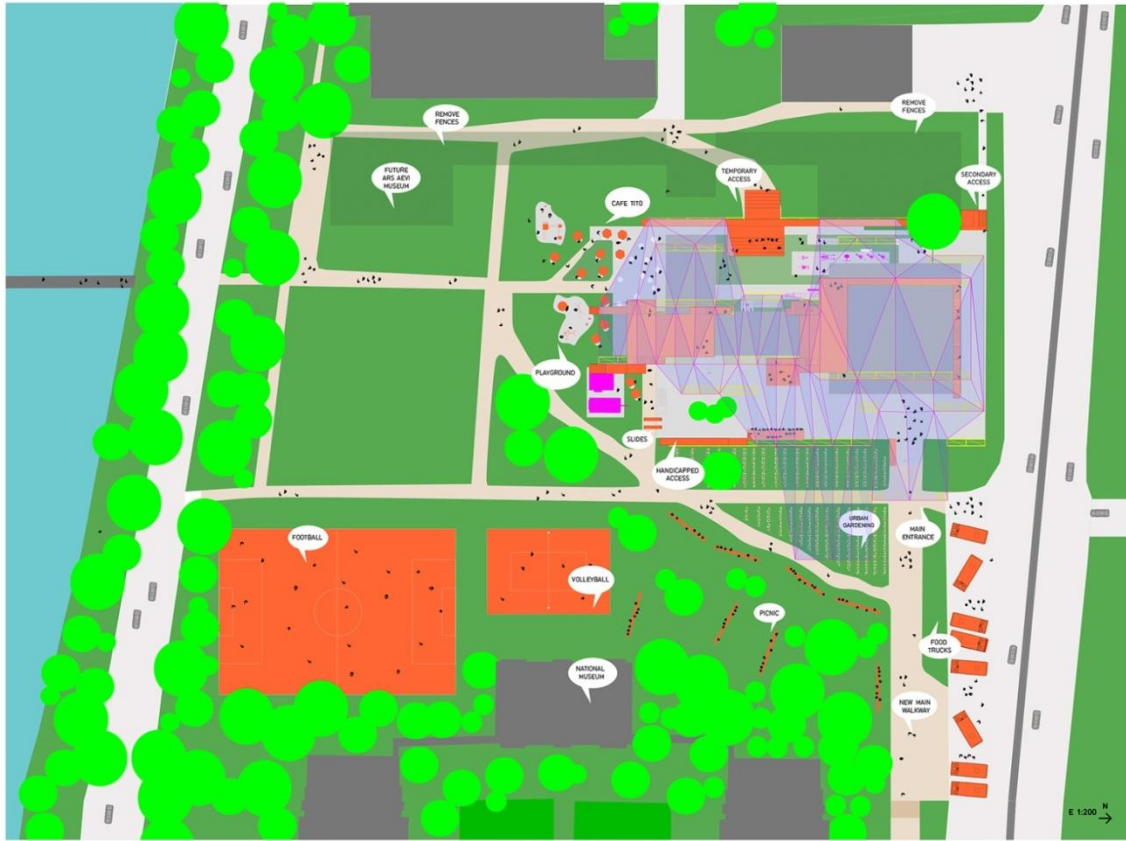


**Figs. 35.** The Historical Museum of BiH. The exhibition on the siege which is focusing on the daily life of the citizens in Sarajevo between 1992 and 1995. Photo: Daniel Schwartz.



**Fig. 36.** MUZEJ JE ZATVOREN/THE MUSEUM IS CLOSED. The National Museum of BiH between 2012 and 2015. Photo: Sophie Thibault.





**Figs. 37a, 37b, 37c.** Designs and proposals by Urban-Think Tank and Baier Bischofberger Architects. The Historical Museum of Sarajevo and its surroundings are envisioned as places for the creation of new relations and sociality: the area would include sport facilities, urban gardens, picnic areas, open air cinemas. *Source:* Urban-Think Tank and Baier Bischofberger Architects.



**Fig. 38.** Illy Art Collection for Ars Aevi: the cup designed by artist Dean Jokanovic Toumin, inspired by his artwork *If you are looking for hell, ask the artist where it is. If you don't find the artist, then you are already in hell.*



**Fig. 39.** Dario Franceschini (Italian Minister of Culture) officially visits Art Depot in November 2015. Ars Aevi photo.

## Chapter 6: Conclusive considerations

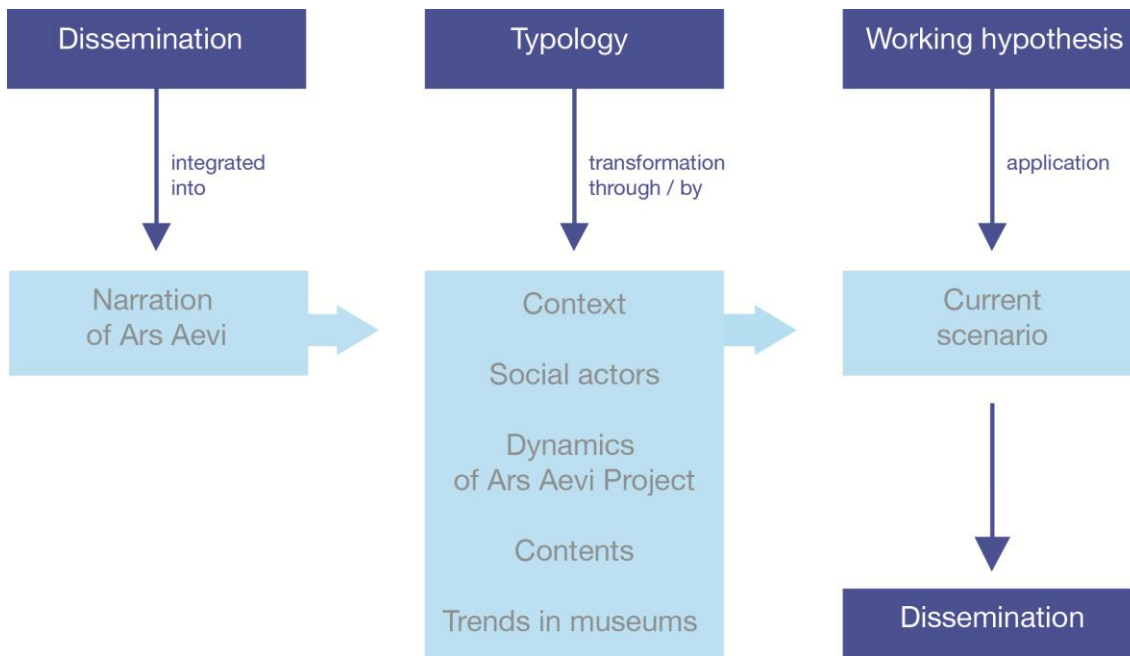
### 6.1 The framework

‘Re-envisioning and reshaping Ars Aevi through the urban tissue’ refers to the narration of facts and developments that have continuously transformed the museum idea into different museum forms/typologies within the city. At the same time, the chosen title expresses the working hypothesis on which the present thesis stands, thus the hypothesis of further rethinking and remaking the still unrealized Ars Aevi Museum. Might the Contemporary Art Museum of Sarajevo be re-envisioned and reshaped once again? And how could it be rethought in the urban space?

The models of dissemination through the urban tissue were chosen in the moment of formulating the working hypothesis. They have been thus employed as ‘working models’ within the whole thesis and in this last Chapter their possible application to the case will be analyzed.

The models refer to those cultural activities that are physically spread across the external space. That physical dispersion implies an unconventional fruition – visitors are not concentrated in a single venue but scattered throughout the external space – and it is characterized by the resulting dissemination of contents into that space. As already specified in Chapter 1, the choice of those models belongs to the most evident factors characterizing the case: the presence of an invaluable art collection – made up of hundreds of works – entirely donated to the citizens of Sarajevo and which is still temporarily housed; the absence of a museum.

**The element of ‘dissemination’ has been thus embedded within the whole narration as an interpretative model**, a magnet able to attract and unearth the characters of dispersion and dissemination. Also, it has been integrated in order to point out **how** that dispersion of contents into the urban space has occurred or, in other cases, **how** it has been only envisioned. Hence, by underlining the presence (or the absence) of those aspects in Ars Aevi’s history and developments, some considerations could be drawn, hence, if that model might be applied to the case.



The framework shows the schematic organization and the journey of the present study. As just argued, we find the concept of **dissemination** from the beginning – on the top left – as embedded into the ‘narration of Ars Aevi’. We then find it in the final hypothesis, where it formulates the proposal of rethinking the museum project. The rightwards arrow originating from ‘narration of Ars Aevi’ points to some interrelated factors which have for many times triggered the ‘process of re-envisioning and reshaping’ the **typology** of the future Ars Aevi Museum. Those factors have been illustrated in the three chapters of the case-study, and their combined action in the moment of the typology formulation have been emphasized. The factors are:

- ‘Context’, namely, the historical, geographical, sociopolitical, geopolitical context in which the Project operates (e.g. the immediate postwar period in Sarajevo).
- ‘Social actors’ are people, organizations, political and international actors that participate in the Ars Aevi Project, or that, less directly, exert influence on it.
- ‘Dynamics of Ars Aevi Project’. In addition to the museum plans, the Ars Aevi Project represents a cultural organization. It offers programs of cultural activities, first of all, the management of the existing Ars Aevi Collection. Activities are addressed to an audience and sustainability strategies are adopted

in order to organize activities and to guarantee the survival of the Project over years.<sup>354</sup> The functioning of the Project as a cultural organization is thus a factor to consider in the process of the typology transformation.

- ‘Contents’ refers to narratives and meanings to be expressed through the typology.
- ‘Trends in museums’, namely, the influences of the international trend in terms of museum practices. They represent a sort of archetypical model that from time to time constitutes the genetic heritage of the envisioned Ars Aevi typology, connecting the future museum to a ‘family’ of museum typologies (e.g. the family of museum-forum, the family of spectacular museum etc.). Those museum typologies, here intended as abstract models, present some (supposed and hoped) intrinsic factors that would lead to specific effects, for instance urban regeneration, growth of tourism, accessibility etc...

The narration of Ars Aevi has thus analyzed the museum typologies that from time to time have been re-envisioned and reshaped, as effects of the combined action of the five factors. At the same time, the narration has incorporated and thus emphasized the element of ‘dissemination’ from the very beginning.

Hence, the discussion of the **working hypothesis** proceeds from the **current scenario** – the end point of the narration – therefore, **the present circumstances, the museum typology that nowadays seems about to be built, once again molded and transformed by the joint action of the factors.**

Starting from that current scenario, the idea of dissemination will be projected and applied, and the Ars Aevi Museum will be thus re-envisioned and reshaped as a spread museum through the urban tissue.

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<sup>354</sup>Cfr. The strategic problem of cultural organizations and its threefold dimension: Tamma M. & Curtolo A., *Lo sviluppo strategico delle organizzazioni di produzione culturale: commitments, risorse, prodotti*. In: Brunetti G., Rispoli M. (eds.), *Economia e management delle aziende di produzione culturale*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2009.



## 6.2 The current scenario

The present work has frequently focused the attention on the role of the international community in Ars Aevi, from the late 90s – with its inclusion into the postwar, internationally-aided reconstruction policies – to the current involvement of the Embassy of Italy in BiH. As illustrated in Chapter 4, following that first inclusion, the narratives of the Project started to change, resources and international support encouraged the Project to have new ambitions, for instance to rethink the future museum as a spectacular complex. The international community made the growth of the Ars Aevi Project possible. From the late 90s to the early 2000s Ars Aevi became one of the city attractions, funds were earmarked for a program of cultural activities and exhibitions of the utmost importance and the building of the pavilions was about to start, with the realization of the first edifice by Renzo Piano.

In Chapter 4, some issues concerning that policy were introduced. First of all, in terms of sustainability. Once the funds were reduced,<sup>355</sup> the Project has been left to local actors and to the critical environment of Bosnian cultural policies. It can be argued that the Project entered into a ‘survival mechanism’ made of international funds (and choices). Secondly, Ars Aevi had to modify its own narratives in order to be included into the official programs of (multi)cultural reconstruction of the country. In reference to those issues, it is interesting to mention Stefanie Kappler and her study on everyday legitimacy and illegitimacy in spaces of post-conflict BiH.<sup>356</sup>

About the role played by international actors in terms of supporting and financing some Bosnian cultural organizations, the author argues that in order to get access to funding, organizations/associations have to transform in terms of professionalizing according to the preferences of their donors.<sup>357</sup> The scholar illustrates the failure of some policies of international support which were addressed to cultural organizations and initiatives, she points out the ‘patronizing approach’ of those policies, which did not

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<sup>355</sup>Talking about the Ars Aevi exhibitions of the early 2000s, Asja Mandić pointed out that already in that period Ars Aevi depended on Italian funds and even on the trend of Italian politics. For instance some funds which had been previously promised to the Project were then cut in the phase of change following the elections of 2001, when Silvio Berlusconi was elected *Presidente del Consiglio dei Ministri*. Interview with Asja Mandić, Sarajevo, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

<sup>356</sup>Kappler S. (2013) *Everyday legitimacy in post-conflict spaces: The creation of social legitimacy in Bosnia-Herzegovina's cultural arenas*. In: *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 7, 1, 11-28.

<sup>357</sup>Ibid. p. 19.



take into consideration the local conditions and dynamics.<sup>358</sup> She also reports the experience of the founder of Alter Art, Darko Saračević, who deplored the loss of a ‘project’s spirit’ when he had to turn his cultural organization into a funding application, and transform it according the associated donor requirements.<sup>359</sup>

As the author concludes, it seems that, as soon as an actor is empowered, they lose touch with the everyday experience and play the game of the public realm, which is one of illegitimacy from the local perspective rather than connection with their everyday, their needs and agencies.<sup>360</sup> The international community has indeed a reputation of being distant from the everyday, not actually experiencing the day-to-day problems of the country of deployment.<sup>361</sup> More precisely, Kappler analyzes the disconnection between public sphere – occupied by domestic and international elites – and what people perceive as their everyday experience and space. She thus reflects upon the concepts of ‘peace’, ‘legitimacy’ and ‘illegitimacy’ in relation to the two disconnected spheres:

- The internationally imposed and political-elite implemented version of peace is unable to account for the private and fails to connect the private to the public sphere.<sup>362</sup> People are unsatisfied with the formal political life and the public **realm is perceived as a space of illegitimacy**. The sense of dissatisfaction and illegitimacy is very related to cynicism about the works of international actors such as the OHR and the EU, which have long been involved in BiH but without much visible improvement of people’s life.<sup>363</sup> For instance, in the years 2000-2005 (the phase of “transition to EU’s Ownership”) the EU had served as an institution on which hopes for more legitimacy in the internationally created public realm could emerge.<sup>364</sup> Conversely, that perception of EU declined since people realized that changes promoted by EU were not actually promoting their lives. That disappointment was one of the factors which brought about the feeling of frustration with public sphere, perceived as dysfunctional in relation

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<sup>358</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>359</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>360</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>361</sup> *Ivi.*

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.* 26.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.* 12.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.* p. 21.

to people's everyday experience.<sup>365</sup> The public realm in BiH is increasingly becoming an ethnically divided space and – as in many other countries – it is increasingly privatized by business and political elites, which are taking advantage of the postwar peace-building for their own benefits, and by corruption.<sup>366</sup>

- Legitimacy has been moved from the public space to semi-public spaces, that the author defines '**microcosms of legitimization**', closely connected to people's everyday lives and needs. More precisely to local cultural arenas where we find a mutual penetration of the public and the private or the everyday, where the latter makes sense in the former and vice versa,<sup>367</sup> and where hopes emerging in people's everyday life are projected onto alternative visions of peace and a corresponding social contract. Those spaces are microcosms where different visions of peace can be negotiated, tested, developed and modified.<sup>368</sup> The author mentions Cornwall, who defined the 'invited spaces', namely, places which bring together heterogeneous actors shaped by different status, 'who might relate very differently if they meet in other settings'.<sup>369</sup> They are spaces where people can gather – something of impossible in the public sphere, which is shaken by the power of the powerful elites and by ethnic divisions – and where the dynamics of social relations can change, and a feeling of ownership and a sense of belonging can be created. The feeling of ownership is due to the sense of proximity of the cultural arenas to people's everyday experiences, the legitimacy is linked to feelings of trust and participation and to the connection to the everyday, that makes people believe that there is a potential in arts to bring about social and political changes.<sup>370</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

<sup>366</sup> According to Kappler (pp. 15-16) subjects as the ethnicized, the elites, the rich have been empowered by the international peacebuilding community, while actors beyond those categories have been rendered powerless in public space.

<sup>367</sup> Kappler S., *Everyday Legitimacy* op. cit. p. 20.

<sup>368</sup> Ibid. p. 25.

<sup>369</sup> Cornwall, A., *Spaces for transformation? Reflections on issues of power and difference in participation in development*. In: Hickey, S. & Mohan, G. (eds.) *Participation. From Tyranny to Transformation?*, Zed Books, London 2004, p. 76. Cfr. Kappler S., *Everyday Legitimacy* op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>370</sup> Kappler S., *Everyday Legitimacy*, op. cit., p. 24.

The author examines theaters, concerts, galleries and festivals as places where relationships occur in alternative ways and beyond the formal frame. They are places where attention is directed towards the private and the everyday, where a sense of belonging and ownership of the space is increased by both the creators and by the public of that space.<sup>371</sup>

The author points out the ability of cultural arenas in making processes, as well as in emotionalizing and personalizing the ‘political’, which is then resituated into a personalized sphere. Cultural arenas are thus creating a sort of ‘parallel world’ to the public sphere, but they are also connectors between spheres, as the political is present, but expressed through personalized forms. For instance, festivals are cultural events where public and private experiences interact with everyday and political issues, and at the same time addressing wide audience.<sup>372</sup>

In Mostar “Art in Divided Cities” *produces a series of exhibitions, site specific performances, and roundtables in the hope of creating new spaces of encounter. The festival occupies streets and squares to claim the necessity of regaining possession of public spaces as places in which voices of alterity could be made visible. It therefore sought to encourage citizens to become active political voices and to become visible by acting in public spaces.*<sup>373</sup>

Pravo Ljudski Festival in Sarajevo aims at creating an open space for people, a platform for discussion. In order to create peace, people need a common space where they can debate and agree on the foundations of their social life.<sup>374</sup>

Duplex100m2 Gallery, run by the French artist and curator Pierre Courtin, represents another vibrant arena. The gallery is one of the rare organizations aimed at creating an art market in BiH, and a place where artists randomly assemble to discuss about social and political issues in BiH and problems in the everyday lives.

Going back to Ars Aevi, it is interesting to recall the contents of Paragraph 4.2. As already mentioned at the beginning of the present paragraph, Ars Aevi was included into the internationally-aided programs of cultural reconstruction of the country and

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<sup>371</sup>ibid. p. 24.

<sup>372</sup>ibid. p. 23.

<sup>373</sup>Carabelli G., *Introduction to (Re)Collecting Mostar*, Abart eds., Mostar 2013, p. 1. Cfr. Carabelli G., *Rubbers, pens and crayons, Rebuilding Mostar through art interventions*. In: Ó Ciardha É., Vojvoda G., (eds.) *Politics of Identity in Post-Conflict States: the Bosnian and Irish Experience*, Routledge, 2016.

<sup>374</sup>Kappler S., *Everyday Legitimacy* op. cit., p. 25.

since then, the Project has adopted the multicultural frame. Nevertheless, Ars Aevi became a true gathering place for politically engaged cultural movements and artists, presenting provocative works<sup>375</sup> and acting as a marginal space, very similar to the cultural arenas described by Kappler, where the political is emotionalized and resituated into the personal sphere.

As seen, international funds and mediation fell in intensity, as a consequence, employees and cultural activities went diminishing. Even the Art Depot had been closed to the public, until the Embassy of Italy undertook a program for the Project's re-launching. Firstly, the Embassy made efforts at developing a media interest towards Ars Aevi, it then encouraged both the sponsorship with illycaffé and the new financial agreement with the local authorities for the maintenance of Art Depot. Since 2015 the Italian commitment has been further strengthened, with the inclusion of Ars Aevi into the Italy-BiH bilateral agenda – that means directing the Project towards a program of Italian funding – and with the feasibility study on the Renzo Piano's edifice.

Compared to other cultural organizations and museums, the Ars Aevi Project still appears as an internationally supported subject: it randomly receives media interest, international funding and even awards, for its past developments and its original concept of utopian museum, symbol of peace and solidarity.<sup>376</sup> Even though the recent Italian aid, the Project is still in the same condition, understaffed and it does not offer activities to engage with citizens. It seems to be immobilized and stretched between external (and probably perceived as uncertain) opportunities and its own needs and opinions about the strategies to undertake and the visions of its future development.

Probably, while I am writing (September, 2016) the feasibility study – whose outcomes will be crucial for the future of Ars Aevi – is almost arrived to an end. I cannot make previsions, but I consider it necessary to reflect upon the future of the museum, if the Renzo Piano's building – analyzed in Chapter 5 – will be realized.

First of all, considering the just mentioned current situation of Ars Aevi, which actors will take the control of the future museum? Who will definitely determine its destiny, through a definitive process of reshaping? And what about an internationally-

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<sup>375</sup> Hajdarpašić E., *Museums, Multiculturalism, and the Remaking of Postwar Sarajevo* op. cit. pp. 127-128.

<sup>376</sup> For instance in 2007 Ars Aevi was granted with the Prinz Claus Fund for Culture and Development.

led foundation, taking into consideration what argued by Kappler in terms of spaces of legitimacy/illegitimacy?

Secondly, I would reflect upon the place where the museum should be built. Ars Aevi would become part of the museum cluster of Sarajevo, where the other elements – the National Museum and the Historical Museum – are in critical conditions, living every day the risk of being shut down (or even demolished) due to legal deadlocks.<sup>377</sup> So, a new and functioning museum, probably headed by international actors, beside those preexisting museums, would immediately evoke a scenario of inequality and imbalance.

In my opinion, the Renzo Piano's building will likely find a compromise, in order to gain more consensus from the local political and commercial elites, and then to find its own place within the Marijin Dvor urban area. In that possible scenario, nature and functions of Ars Aevi will be again, but definitely, reformulated and reshaped in relation to its surroundings. As explained in Chapter 5, banks, shopping malls, embassies, international offices, newfangled buildings are rising all around Marijin Dvor, symbol of the Bosnian/Balkan transition economy and architecture, area of massive capitalization and privatization.

### 6.3 Re-envisioning and re-shaping Ars Aevi in the urban space

I here propose to scatter the Ars Aevi Collection through the urban space as a way to make it closer to the citizens, its real owners. As observed, the cultural arenas analyzed by Kappler are perceived by people as spaces of social legitimacy, where alternative versions of peace close to peoples' needs are negotiated. Intertwining people's public and private experiences, the cultural arenas are extremely closed to their everyday experiences. In this vein, the dissemination of the collection through people's everyday spaces seems to be an interesting model to consider and elaborate, especially if considering the current situation of the Project, as it has been described. Scattering Ars Aevi would not be a mere physical dispersion. The dissemination would have a strong symbolic charge, and the museum itself would be enriched with new meanings.

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<sup>377</sup>Eidner F., *Alliance of Enthusiasts* op. cit.

Through the incorporation of the element of dispersion into the whole narration, some considerations have emerged and they could prove the working hypothesis.

The first consideration that I would emphasize is that elements of mobility, dispersion, dissemination – presented in Chapter 2 – are rather frequent within the narration of the case. It can be observed that the *Ars Aevi* Project, as a cultural organization, has itself developed and assumed a specific form, in relation to the collection management and concept, and to the several artistic and cultural programs that have been organized. That form is very similar to the models of dissemination analyzed in Chapter 2, *Ars Aevi* is indeed usually referred to as ‘virtual museum’,<sup>378</sup> ‘unconventional museum’, the ‘not-existent museum’.

For some aspects – and especially in the years of greater development – it can be even argued that the *Ars Aevi* Project has operated as a mobile and spread activity. The lack and the consequent necessity of a container have led the Project to develop a peculiar ability to adapt to the urban spaces of Sarajevo – animating city places, galleries, unconventional venues – and even to travel around Europe, acting as a ‘mobile museum’, in order to widespread its history and expand its network. As already observed, that of dissemination has been an interpretative model embedded into the whole narration. Therefore a tool which has allowed the comprehension of the case-study through the dissemination itself, which means underlining elements and processes of dissemination. Assembling those elements, we can finally observe that the ***Ars Aevi* Project, for some aspects, has acted as a disseminated activity, through the urban tissue but even beyond.**

As observed in Chapter 2, museums expand towards external spaces in the attempt to experiment a new and renovated relationship with publics and contexts. According to Rapisarda, the new forms of spatiality in museums are trying to rethink the museum institution and its spaces, thus its presence and shape within the city. That new museum configuration, which incorporates unusual spaces, is thus more integrated into its context, probably closer to the places of everyday life, and it expresses a “more democratic and social idea of self”.<sup>379</sup> The dissemination of contents through spaces of everyday life could be thus of facilitating the perception of the artwork as something of

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<sup>378</sup>Comi E., *The first steps of the Ars Aevi Project* op. cit. p. 39.

<sup>379</sup>Rapisarda F., *Il museo “fuori di sé”* op. cit.

familiar and not something stranger any longer.<sup>380</sup> It can stimulate curiosity and overcome the ‘fear’ of the artworks. More generally, planning the dissemination in the public space is a recent challenge which aims at **bringing about a more widespread cultural diffusion.**<sup>381</sup>

Going beyond the museum borders, demolishing its barriers (cfr. Chapter 2), has an extremely symbolic and metaphorical charge. In that choice, the whole history of the modern and contemporary museum stands, from the temple of knowledge that has increasingly become a social catalyst, forum, living place, space of participation and socialization. The idea of a direct and familiar contact can be a radical choice which tries to challenge the institution once again. But at the same time, in a way which maintains the contact with the place and the ‘corporeality’ of the fruition, aspects which are increasingly lacking with those possibilities offered by the new technologies.

When the museum expands, involving new external city spaces, it has the potential of transforming urban contexts employed for other purposes – streets, squares, stations – into places where to stay, enriched by new values and meanings, where the museum contents are communicated and anticipated. The Ars Aevi Bridge is for instance an anticipation of Ars Aevi contents and it represents itself a content, as an element of connection between divided urban areas, envisioned by Renzo Piano as a component ‘connecting ethnic groups and cultures’, symbolizing both the ‘dialogue and contamination’ and even ‘connection with the international community’.<sup>382</sup>

We have also observed, when cultural activities are organized in unusual places, in peripheral areas, or in rooms intended for other functions, a process of ‘re-appropriation’ of the territory could take place, which means for citizens to discover edifices or urban areas in some cases never known before.<sup>383</sup>

By expanding in the city, the museum appropriates all the possible spaces, and in some cases it even moves around, in order to meet people, becoming a ‘mobile museum’ which disseminates contents in movement. Museums incorporate the characters of mobility of our contemporary epoch, they assume different shapes, they realize their parts with materials that can be dismantled and reassembled, and they even

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<sup>380</sup> Ibid. p. 78.

<sup>381</sup> Ibid. p. 71.

<sup>382</sup> Martini A., *Sfogliando i Musei* op. cit. p. 146.

<sup>383</sup> Solima L., *Eventi culturali e creazione di valore per il territorio* op. cit. p. 41.

identify with transports such as trains and buses. We find an interesting example also in Ars Aevi, during the one-man show by Bizhan Bassiri in 2002, when a part of the exhibition was organized inside a truck, parked in front of the National Theater of Sarajevo.

We observed that the aspect of mobility in Ars Aevi has been strictly connected with a strong sense of necessity, which means the necessity of telling and disseminating its own history, of gaining consensus and enlarging its network of ‘human relations’, as the founder usually tells.

One of the latest initiatives abroad was the program *Arte, Visioni, Messaggi da Sarajevo*, which took place in Reggio nell’Emilia, Italy, in 2009. That initiative could be described as a form of ‘dispersion into dispersion’: Ars Aevi and some of its artists gave life to a number of activities and art installations spread through the urban tissue.<sup>384</sup> In that occasion, Anur installed his thought-provoking exhibition ‘Human Condition’ inside the COOP supermarket of Reggio Emilia, then re-installed in another supermarket in Venice, during the six months of Venice Biennale.<sup>385</sup> The Ars Aevi Collection was then presented on other occasions in Venice and Milan between 2013 and 2014.

Sometimes the use of ‘mobile’ and disseminated methods has instead emphasized the lack of the museum/container, thus incorporating a critical message. The exhibition “In Between – Art Camp” realized into refugee tents planted on the Ars Aevi ground is emblematic, because it underlines the necessity beyond that choice.

Mobility and dissemination seem to be aspects that Ars Aevi incorporated in the past and that, in peculiar ways, it wants to keep for the future of the collection. Many times founders and members of the Project have sustained other visions for the collection arrangement, especially with the attempt to find other new and feasible solutions to make the existing artworks open to the public, as explained by EH in a personal interview.<sup>386</sup> As argued by Amila Ramovic ‘the museum project is just a part of Ars

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<sup>384</sup> <http://www.spaziogerra.it/2009/02/11/bih-arte-visioni-messaggi-da-sarajevo/>  
(Accessed: 30/09/2016)

<sup>385</sup> The exhibition “Human Condition” had been previously presented in BiH, in a street exhibition in Sarajevo (2005) and inside big shopping centers in Sarajevo and Konjic (both in 2005). Anur uses the medium of advertising to send socially relevant messages, which are then exhibited in the urban spaces as well as in everyday places.

<sup>386</sup> Personal interview with Enver Hadžiomerspahić, Sarajevo, October 23th, 2015.



Aevi activities’.<sup>387</sup> She was instead referring to the project ‘Art of the World in Sarajevo’, conceived in 2010 and still in progress, which promotes ‘Sarajevo as an open gallery’: **[Fig. 40]**

With the future Ars Aevi Museum of Contemporary Art [...] and the restored City Hall [...] as focal points, the art of leading world artists should be distributed in the center of the Sarajevo urban zone. Some of these works are already installed and need to be restored, some are prepared and created but not installed and some are to be envisaged, but none of them have sufficient visibility and positive promotion that they deserve.<sup>388</sup>

For instance, among the artworks that need to be restored there is *La Place des drapeaux* by Daniel Buren, which is still installed (but without flags) in the Ars Aevi ground, and *La Bestia* by Bizhan Bassiri, installed in the Ars Aevi location as well.<sup>389</sup> A process of returning of *Le Porte* by Jannis Kounellis into the City Hall has been also envisaged, even if the historical landmark is completely restored. Other works by Ars Aevi artists (Joseph Kosuth, Irwin, Michelangelo Pistoletto, Jusuf Hadžifejzović, Maja Bajević, Braco Dimitrijević, Dean Jokanović Toumin, Edin Numankadić, Remo Salvadori) should be thus installed both in cultural institutions and museums and also in unconventional venues such as the railway station, the building of Radio and Television of BiH, the airport, the little fortress on the hill.

In conclusion, Amila Ramovic depicts Ars Aevi as a sort of mobile museum, where the collection, autonomously, moves around and narrates its own history:

We don’t want it [Ars Aevi] to be a one-way process – we want it to be an exchange and we hope that in future the network will not only spread to many other cities, but that we shall also be able to present the collection in different parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in our founding centers abroad. Our intention is to form a mobile display of the works as part of our permanent collection. In this way, the Ars Aevi Collection will not only be accommodated in Sarajevo, but will be present in a number of different museums in many different places.<sup>390</sup> **[Fig. 41]**

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<sup>387</sup> Ramovic A., *Understanding Local Contexts VI* op. cit. p. 163.

<sup>388</sup> *Art of the World in Sarajevo – Concept – January 2010*. Accessed: Ars Aevi Project Offices, October 2015.

<sup>389</sup> Both the artworks were installed on the occasion of artists’ solo exhibitions organized by Ars Aevi in the early 2000s. *La Place des drapeaux* was installed in 2001 and *La Bestia* 2002.

<sup>390</sup> Ramovic A., *Understanding Local Context VI* op. cit. p. 163.

The hypothetical spatial dissemination of Ars Aevi seems to be something that is already in the nature of the Project.

As I explained at the beginning of the thesis, the hypothesis of scattering the Collection would be an attempt to rethink the museum also from the point of view of sustainability (whose technical aspects were not the core of the thesis). The absence of a realized museum was the aspect that triggered the formulation of the working hypothesis, taking into account the existing Collection as a strength of the Project. Doubts still remain on the sustainability of that option, especially in terms of conservative and security issues in the long-term. However, the planning of a scattered museum seems to be the most feasible solution and a way of functioning that would be different from the ‘survival mechanism’ made of international mediation and funds.

From the perspective of meanings and perception, rethinking Ars Aevi as a spread museum within the city would define a sort of itinerary, an experience in the urban space. As in the case of the Italian typology of *museo diffuso*, the museographical project of the museum plays an important role, combining objects, museum spaces and city places in an organic way, enhancing and respecting them, through creating a single stirring itinerary, making the visit a real “emotional experience”.<sup>391</sup>

By drawing a museum map integrated into/corresponding to the urban tissue, that museum typology employs streets as corridors and buildings as rooms. Hence, a museum concept that, going beyond traditional borders, broadening its cultural horizons even incorporating people and places, transforms citizens into museum users, making life and fruition two overlapping aspects.

Realizing a museum where museum map and city map coincide can also mean dealing with the criticalities of the urban space. In the case of the polarized urban environment of Sarajevo, extending or not the museum map beyond the invisible border that divides the city – taking into account the origins and the symbolic charge of the Ars Aevi Collection – could produce extremely diverse meanings, messages and contents.

Contents, I would argue, are made highly personalized, due to the unconventional and everyday nature of the venues. As in the case of public art, where the public represents the purpose of the artwork, being both creator and integral part of contents and meanings (along with the site of production) through the experience and the

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<sup>391</sup>Lanz F., “*Placing the City within its Museum*” op. cit. p. 103.

perception of artworks installed in a specific site. Public art in its spaces of production writes on the symbolic landscape of cities,<sup>392</sup> while it is read and rewritten by its publics in particularly situated and articulated spaces and times.<sup>393</sup>

Audiences of public art are usually undirected observers in the open urban field, in sharp contrast with the ‘directed’, specific, audiences that voluntarily choose to visit culture and arts venues.<sup>394</sup> From the visitor’s perspective, it means ‘living’ the artwork in a context that evokes his/her lived experience, be it personal or collective, and which influences the reception.

The museum, in that way, could be thus intended as a map of lived experiences which brings about the proliferation of meanings, while the urban space could be enriched by new values and open to all those multiple meanings arising from the people’s personal experience.<sup>395</sup>

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<sup>392</sup>Cosgrove, D. & Daniels S. (eds.) *The iconography of landscape. Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1988; mentioned by Zebracki M. (2013) *Beyond public artopia* op. cit. p. 304.

<sup>393</sup>Haraway D., *Simians, cyborgs, and women: The reinvention of women*, Routledge, New York 1991; mentioned by Zebracki M., *Beyond public artopia* op. cit. p. 304.

<sup>394</sup>Zebracki M., *Beyond public artopia* op. cit. pp. 304-305.

<sup>395</sup>Lanz F., “*Placing the city*” op. cit. p. 107.



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**ARS AEVI PROJECT**  
 2007 PRINCE CLAUS AWARD  
 In recognition of exceptional achievements  
 in the field of Culture and Development

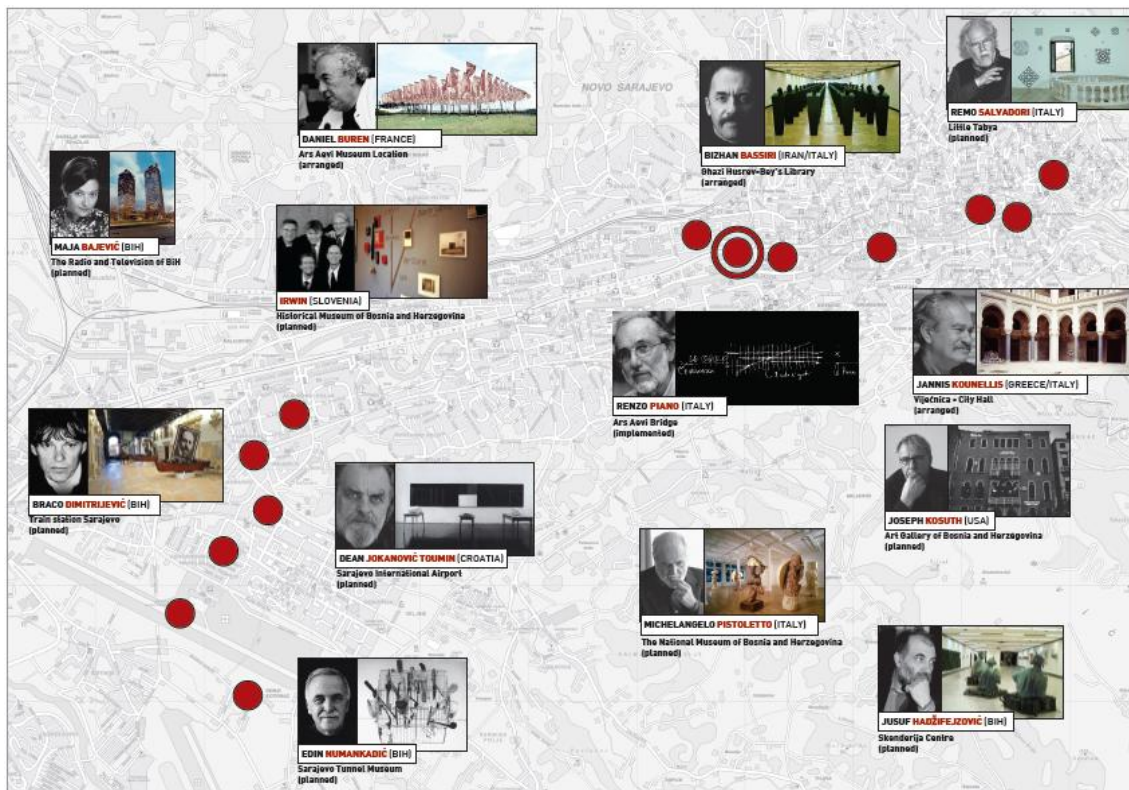
## ARS AEVI 2001 - 2015 → 2018 Ars Aevi Project in Progress ART OF THE WORLD IN SARAJEVO

PERMANENT EXHIBITIONS OF WORKS  
 OF ACCLAIMED WORLD AND BIH ARTISTS IN URBAN AREAS OF SARAJEVO  
 Period of realization 2001-2015→2018

**MICHELANGELO PISTOLETTO**  
**DANIEL BUREN**  
**JOSEPH KOSUTH**  
**BIZHAN BASSIRI**  
**JANNIS KOUNELLIS**  
**IRWIN**  
**JUSUF HADŽIFEJZović**  
**MAJA BAJEVIĆ**  
**DEAN JOKANOVIĆ TOUMIN**  
**EDIN NUMANKADIĆ**  
**BRACO DIMITRIJEVIĆ**  
**REMO SALVADORI**  
**&**  
**RENZO PIANO**



02062015



**Figs. 40a, 40b.** Concept of the project “Art of the World in Sarajevo”. *Source:* Ars Aevi materials.



**Figs. 41a, 41b.** *Our intention is to form a mobile display of the works as part of our permanent collection. In this way, the Ars Aevi Collection will not only be accommodated in Sarajevo, but will be present in a number of different museums in many different places (Amila Ramović, 2011).*

## **APPENDIX – INTERVIEWS**

### **Interviews with Enver Hadžiomerspahić**

(Founder of Ars Aevi Project and Ars Aevi Director)

October 13, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Art Depot, 00:36:26

October 14, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Art Depot, 01:26:15

October 20, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Art Depot, 01:09:39

October 22, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Art Depot, 00:45:41

October 23, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Art Depot, 00:01:20

October 26, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 01:26:48

October 27, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 01:33:00

October 28, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:50:44

November 23, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:25

December 3, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 02:43:00

December 4, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:17:19

December 8, 2015. Sarajevo, walk around the city (Inat Kuća, Baščaršija, downtown, Ars Aevi Offices) 2:20:00

December 9, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 01:04:00

December 10, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:49:38

December 13, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 01:54:07

December 17, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:42:53

### **Interview with Amila Ramović**

(Ars Aevi Director, professor of theory of contemporary music at the Sarajevo Music Academy, executive director of the Sarajevo Chamber Music Festival)

December 1, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:43:33

### **Interviews with Anur Hadžiomerspahić**

(Co-founder of Ars Aevi Project, co-founder of Ideologija<sup>396</sup> and artist)

November 30, 2015. Sarajevo, Ideologija Offices, 01:50:00

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<sup>396</sup> Ideologija is an advertising agency supporting Ars Aevi activities.

December 18, 2015. Sarajevo, Ideologija Offices, 01:35:00

**Interview with Almir Abaz**

(Co-founder of Ideologija, visual communication)

December 15, 2015. Sarajevo, Ideologija Offices, 00:40:44

**Interview with Tarik Zahirović**

(Co-founder of Ideologija, visual communication)

December 18, 2015. Sarajevo, Ideologija Offices, 00:14:13

**Interviews with Asja Mandić**

(Ars Aevi curator 2001-2006, art historian and faculty member at the University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy)

October 22, 2015. Sarajevo, downtown, 01:04:53

December 11, 2015. Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Philosophy, 01:06:53

**Interview with Jusuf Hadžifejzović**

(artist, co-founder of Yugoslav Documents in the 1980s, founder of the art space Charlama Gallery in Sarajevo)

December 17, 2015. Sarajevo, private house, 01:08:48

**Conversations at Duplex100m2, Sarajevo**

Conversation with Pierre Courtin, French curator, artist and founder of the 12-year-old gallery and art space Duplex100m2. November 28, 2015. Sarajevo, Duplex100m2, 01:56:43

Conversation with Pierre Courtin and young artists Mak Hubjer (student at the Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo and founder of the brand new 'Brodac Gallery', in Sarajevo) and Bojan Stojčić (artist, graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts of Sarajevo), December 12, 2015. Sarajevo, Duplex100m2, 01:06:24

**Interview with Bojan Stojčić**

December 10, 2015. Sarajevo, downtown area, 00:53:50

### **Interview with Ines Tanović**

(activist, AKCIJA Sarajevo - Jasammuzej)

December 15, 2015. Sarajevo, downtown area, 01:10:15

### **Interview with Ilaria Ragnoni**

(Second Secretary of Italian Embassy in BiH, since 2013)

December 2, 2015. Sarajevo, Embassy of the Republic of Italy in Bosnia-Herzegovina,  
00:51:33

### **Interviews with Senka Ibrisimbegović**

(Consulting architect for Ars Aevi and team member. Senior teaching assistant,  
University of Sarajevo, Architecture Department)

November 10, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:30

November 11, 2015. Sarajevo, University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Architecture, 1:30:00

December 19, 2015. Sarajevo, Ars Aevi Offices, 00:35:00

### **Interview with Haris Piplas**

(landscape architect and urban design researcher at ETH Zürich. His PhD thesis focuses  
on urban transformations of ex-Yugoslavian urban design. Curator of the exhibition  
“Sarajevo Now: the People’s Museum”, Venice 2016)

June 10, 2016. Venice, Arsenale, 00:46:00



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