

# NAPUŠTENA UTOPIJA

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*O modernističkim arhitektonskim  
eksperimentima na području Istočne Europe*



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*On Modernist architectural experiments  
in the territory of Eastern Europe*

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**DESERTED UTOPIA**

„Napuštena utopija“ je umjetnički projekt koji promišlja primjere iz arhitekture i urbanizma čija je genetika označila emancipaciju nekog modernog socijalističkog društva, ali danas predstavljaju neku „neodređenu prošlost“ s kojom se postsocijalistička teorija nastoji uhvatiti u koštac. Projekt dokumentira i primjenu ideološkog urbanizma i prostornih karakteristika koje su se pojavile u kolektivnim sredinama „socijalističkoga grada“. Zgrade koje se razmatraju smatraju se prostorno artikuliranim strukturama, brutalnima prema svome okolišu, koje se na introvertiran način oslanjaju na vlastitu monumentalnost. To su autentični eksperimenti koji odražavaju ono što je trebalo biti novi društveni poredak; zgrade koje su imale i još imaju snažan psihološki učinak na svoju okolinu, i zbog toga se danas često percipiraju kao spomenici distopiji.

Projekt se smješta unutar diskursa o izgrađenoj baštini naslijeđenoj iz razdoblja socijalizma u Istočnome bloku, i to u razdoblju od 1953. godine, kada je umro Staljin, do 1989., kada je pao Berlinski zid, u različitim režimima Istočne Europe. Nastoje se interpretirati fizički ostaci te prošlosti, za koje neki kritičari vjeruju da ih se postsocijalističko društvo odriče ili ih želi ukloniti iz sjećanja (ideja Borisa Groysa o „drugom brisanju“) u potrazi za nekom „novom“ funkcijom. To razdoblje često se smatra zajedničkom osnovom niza zemalja koje

nikada nisu djelovale kao jedinstven entitet, nego su češće drugdje, naime onkraj Željezne zavjese, tražile nadahnuće za svoje avangardne i modernističke tendencije. Pod utjecajem ruskih konstruktivista i Bauhauusa pojedinačni avangardni pokreti pronašli su niše za vlastiti izraz i stoga je, promatrao li razmjenu među zemljama Istočnoga bloka, unatoč sličnim političkim okolnostima ta atmosfera prije djelovala izolacijski nego što bi to područje povezivala u cjelinu.

Između urbanog okoliša kao labirinta ljudskih aspiracija, želja, iluzija, sjećanja, misli i ideologija, s jedne strane, i stvarnosti, s druge, često postoji jaz. Idejni fokus ovog projekta *upravo je taj jaz, odnosno trenutak kada se iluzije suoče sa stvarnošću*. Moglo bi se reći da su racionalnost i iracionalnost često djelovale u neposrednoj bliskosti. Zbog toga su te fantazije ostavile iza sebe tragove upisane u predmete, prekrivajući ih slojevima koji umanjuju njihovu čitljivost, budući da društvo mijenja objektiv kojim ih promatra. Čitanje tako postaje dešifriranje te se, baš kao u arheologiji, uvelike oslanja na interpretaciju.

Osim toga, fenomenološki pristup tim jedinstvenim zgradama možda obuhvaća ono što je stvorilo nevjerovatno supostojanje načela modernističkog projekta i komunističkih ideala tijekom toga jedinstvenog razdoblja europske povijesti. Kako oblik i tektonika neke zgrade odražavaju ideju socijalističkog

‘Deserted Utopia’ is an art project that reflects on examples in architecture and urban planning whose genetics was the emancipation of a modern socialist society, but which today represents an ‘uncertain past’, one that post-socialist society is trying to come to terms with. Further, the project documents the implementation of ideological urban planning and spatial characteristics that arose in collective environments of the ‘socialist city’. The buildings considered are physically-articulated structures, brutal to their context, who rely in an introverted manner on their monumentality: they are authentic experiments that reflect what was to be a new order in society; they are buildings that have had a strong psychological impact on the image of their surrounding, and as a result are now often perceived as monuments to dystopia.

The project situates itself within a discourse about the built legacy inherited from the Socialist period in the Eastern Bloc, from 1953, marked by Stalin’s death, to 1989, marked by the fall of the Berlin Wall, in different regimes within Eastern Europe. It attempts to interpret the physical remains of this past, which some critics believe post-socialist society denies, or negates, from memory (Boris Groys’ notion of second erasure), as it searches for a ‘new’ function. This period is often considered the common ground for a group of countries

that never operated as a single entity; who more often than not sought inspiration and knowledge elsewhere to fuel their avant-garde and modernist tendencies, namely beyond the Iron Curtain. Under the influences of the Russian Constructivists and the Bauhaus, individual avant-garde movements found niches of expression and, in so inspection of the exchange between countries in the Eastern Bloc, due to common political conditions, this atmosphere served to isolate, rather than coalesce the territory into a whole.

The urban environment as a labyrinth of human projections, desires, illusions, fantasies, recollections, thoughts and ideologies often leaves a gap with reality. The conceptual focus of this project is *precisely this gap, or a moment when illusions meet reality*. It might be said that rationality and irrationality often operated in close proximity with one another. In their wake, these fantasies left behind clues written in objects, covering them in layers that diminish their legibility as society changes the lens through which it observes them. Reading becomes deciphering, and, as in archeology, it relies heavily on interpretation.

Furthermore, a phenomenological approach to these singular buildings perhaps captures what the unlikely juxtaposition of the principles of the modern project with communist ideals

usmjerenja društva u širem smislu riječi? Kako se taj oblik destilira pomoću reprezentacijskog kodiranja? I naposljetku, kako je društvo koristilo i nastanjivalo svoje nove i moderne sredine? Odlučili smo se baviti tim pitanjima na primjerima tipičnih javnih zgrada koje je financirala država, a izgrađene su upravo kako bi bile reprezentativne za društvo.

Također se bavimo pitanjem koje je to opće mjesto koje „sadrži“ sve te zgrade. Udubimo li se donekle u to pitanje, nećemo naići na otvoren sustav, nego prije na izolirane otoke na zemljovidu Istočne Europe; može li se onda uopće predložiti takva klasifikacija? U predgovoru knjizi „Red stvari“ Michel Foucault se poziva na ulomak iz Jorgea Luisa Borgesa, gdje neka zamišljena kineska enciklopedija klasificira životinje u „nemoguće“ kategorije:

*„Životinje se dijele na (a) one koje pripadaju Caru, (b) balzamirane, (c) pripitomljene, (d) odojke, (e) sirene, (f) fantastične, (g) pse na slobodi, (h) one koje su uključene u ovu klasifikaciju, (i) koje se bacaju kao lude, (j) bezbrojne, (k) nacrtane iznimno finim kistom od devine dlake, (l) et caetera, (m) koje su upravo razbile vrč, (n) koje izdaleka izgledaju kao muhe.“*

Možda se sve te zgrade, kako bi se na bilo koji način „klasificirale“, trebaju smjestiti na neko drugo mjesto, u *utopiju*, jer to je zapravo ono mjesto prema kojemu su one

projicirale društvo. Njihov zajednički teritorij, kako ćemo shvatiti, ondje je gdje su one trebale postojati, mjesto koje nikada zapravo nije nastalo. Sagledamo li zajedno te „usamljene“ eksperimente, to će nas zapravo odvesti izvan stvarnosti – nekamo između ideje društva i nemogućnosti približavanja toj ideji.

Apstraktna ideja komunizma nudi još jedan sloj interpretacije te skupine projekata. Uzmemo li u obzir da je novi društveni poredak nešto što je bilo traženo i očekivano, ali ne i primijenjeno, moglo bi se reći da i sam komunizam predstavlja određenu vrstu utopije, koja je danas napuštena. Izlažemo se inherentnoj nelagodi interpretiramo li pogrešno komunizam kao bilo što drugo do onoga što je zapravo bio, naime ideal.

Ovaj projekt nastoji ponuditi psihološko i fenomenološko čitanje, konstrukciju jedne slike, u nadi da će time potaknuti daljnji proces razmišljanja. U tome nas vodi vjerovanje da je slika nekog predmeta jednako stvarna kao i stvarnost tog predmeta. A budući da je u naravi taksonomije da izmiče svakoj klasifikaciji, ta se čitanja predlažu kao opcije stvarnosti, a ne kao istine.

Naposljetku bismo željeli napomenuti da je možda ključno pitanje koje projekt postavlja sljedeće: što čini te zgrade, ili način na koji se ljudi ponašaju u njima i oko njih, isključivo

created during this unique period in European history. How do the form and tectonics of a building reflect the idea of a social direction in wider society? How is this form distilled with representational coding? In the end, how did society use and inhabit its new and modern environments? We chose to address these questions through emblematic public buildings funded by the state, built for the very purpose of representing society.

Further, what is the commonplace that ‘contains’ all of these buildings? If, after stepping a bit into the matter, one does not witness an open system but rather isolated islands in the Eastern geography of Europe; can such a classification be proposed? Michel Foucault, in his preface to ‘The Order of Things’ references a passage written by Jorge Luis Borges, where an imaginary Chinese Encyclopedia categorizes animals into ‘impossible’ categories:

*“ In its distant pages it is written that animals are divided into (a) those that belong to the emperor; (b) embalmed ones; (c) those that are trained; (d) suckling pigs; (e) mermaids; (f) fabulous ones; (g) stray dogs; (h) those that are included in this classification; (i) those that tremble as if they were mad; (j) innumerable ones; (k) those drawn with a very fine camel’s-hair brush; (l) etcetera; (m) those that have just broken the flower vase; (n) those that at a distance resemble flies.”*

Perhaps all of these buildings, in order to be ‘classified’ in any manner, need to be situated in another place, in *utopia*, actually in the place that they were projecting society toward. Their common ground, we find, is in where they were meant to exist, a place that never quite came into being. Placing together these ‘stand alone’ experiments actually places us outside of reality - somewhere between the idea of society and the failure to come close enough to this idea.

The abstract idea of communism offers another layer of reading of this grouping of projects. If we consider that the new social order was something that was sought for and awaited, not implemented, one could say that communism in itself constitutes a utopia, now deserted. We arrive to an inherent uneasiness when we misinterpret communism for anything other than what it was, an ideal.

This project attempts to offer a psychological and phenomenological reading: the construction of an image in the hope that it perpetuates a process of reflection. Guiding this is the belief that the image of an object is as real as the reality of that object. And, as is in the nature of a taxonomy that escapes classification, readings are proposed as options of reality, not as truths.

On a final note, perhaps a crucial question that the project brings up is what makes these buildings, or how people behave in and around them, solely Eastern (if indeed anything does)? The link to

istočnima (ako uopće postoji nešto takvoga)? Poveznica s „izvanjskim svijetom“ bila je svakako opipljiva, osobito zamislivo li pokraj njih neke od primjera brutalizma ili internacionalnog stila. Srž modernizma bila je u odbacivanju tradicionalnih aksioma i njihovo pažljivo izučavanje, vjera u moć arhitekture da emancipira moderni život. Želja za dolaskom modernog društva bila je ono što je stvorilo tu ekspresivnost, a ta je želja potaknula i Hladni rat na objema stranama. Energija da se stvori nešto novo i moderno bila je svakako prisutna i ostavila je područje Istočne Europe krcato objektima i kompleksima koji su snažno evokativan i jedinstven izraz arhitektonskog opusa Europe 20. stoljeća. Trebali bismo s radoznalošću preispitati okolnosti koje su do njih dovele, ali još je važnije ono što se u kulturnom smislu može dobiti njihovom reinterpretacijom.

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O MODERNISTIČKIM  
ARHITEKTONSKIM  
EKSPERIMENTIMA NA  
PODRUČJU ISTOČNE  
EUROPE

DESERTED UTOPIA, KNJIGA,  
AUTORICE TANJA DEMAN I VESNA JOVANOVIĆ, 2010

DESERTED UTOPIA, A BOOK BY  
TANJA DEMAN AND VESNA JOVANOVIĆ, 2010

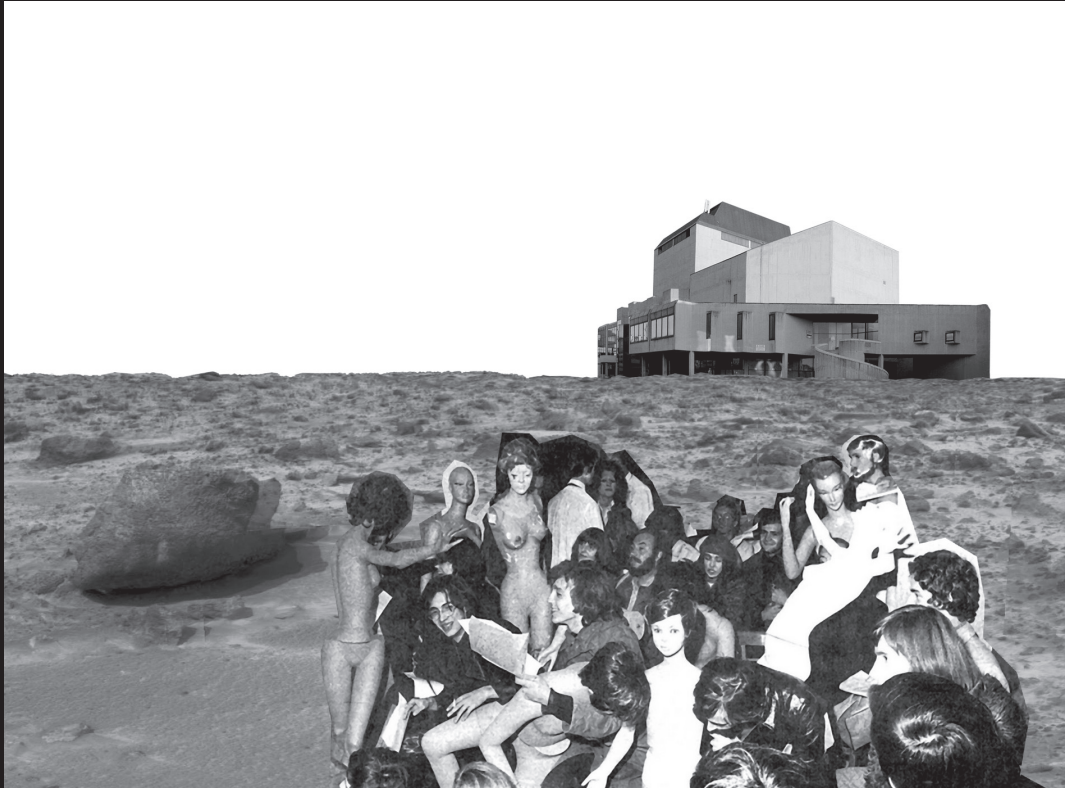
DESERTED UTOPIA  
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ARCHITECTURAL  
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the 'outside' was most certainly tangible, especially if we conjure in our minds next to them some examples of brutalism, or of the International Style. An essence of modernity is the rejection of traditional axioms and their scrutinizing, a belief in the power of architecture to emancipate modern life.

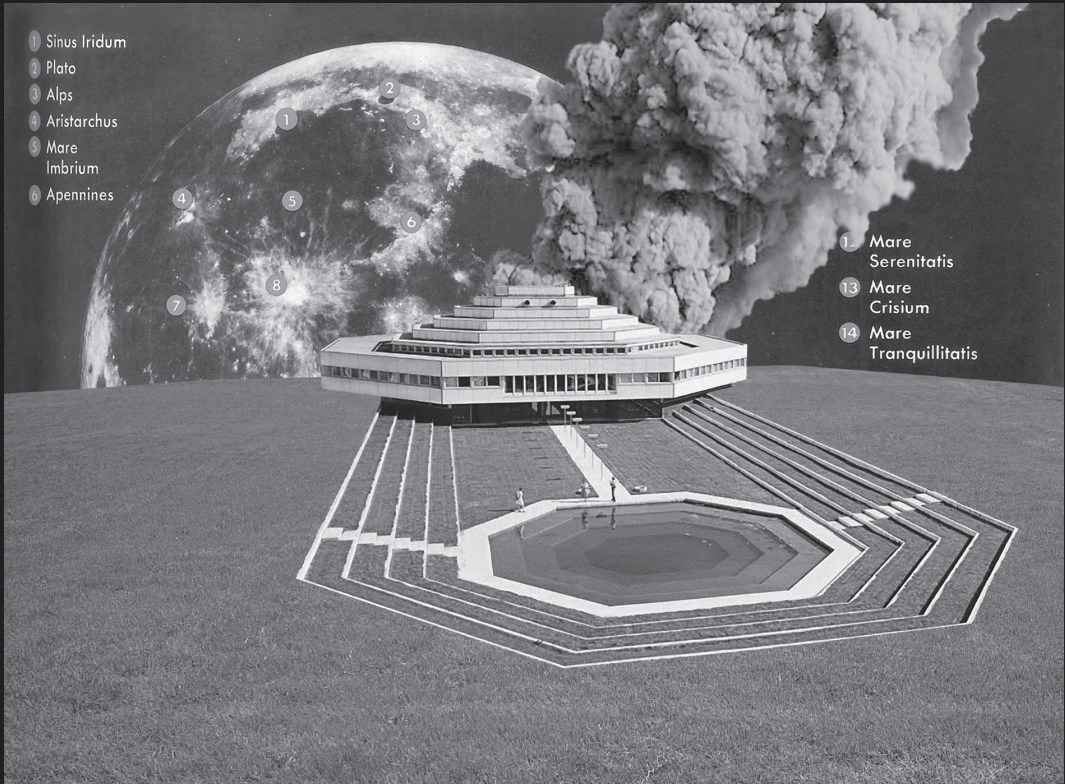
A wanting for the arrival of modern society created this expressiveness, and this wanting was fuel for the Cold War on both East and West. The energy to bring about the new and the modern was certainly present, and it left the territory of Eastern Europe abundant with objects and ensembles that are highly evocative and singular expressions of Europe's 20th century architectural opus. One should become curious as to the circumstance that brought them about, but more importantly what cultural gain there might be from their re-interpretation.

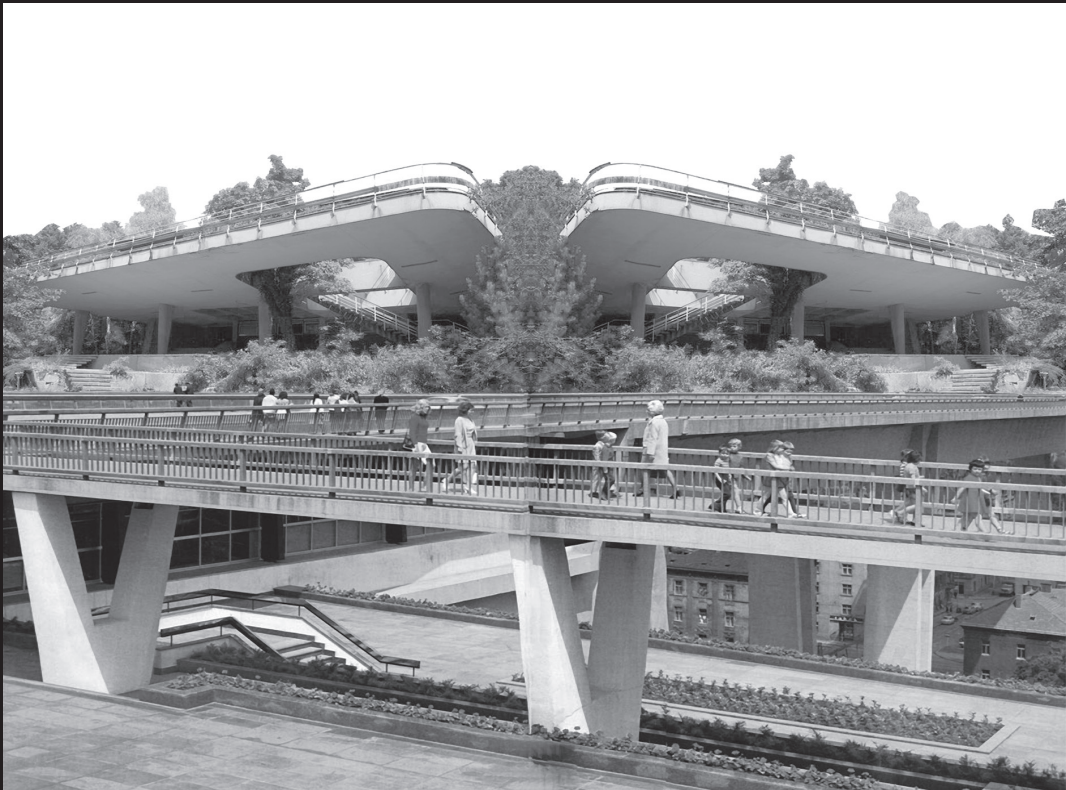
SVI KOLAŽI DJELO SU TANJE DEMAN; *DESERTED UTOPIA*, 2010.  
ALL COLLAGES ARE MADE BY TANJA DEMAN; *DESERTED UTOPIA*, 2010  
UVODNI TEKST / INTRODUCTION BY VESNA JOVANOVIĆ



DOM MLADIH SPLIT / YOUTH CENTRE SPLIT

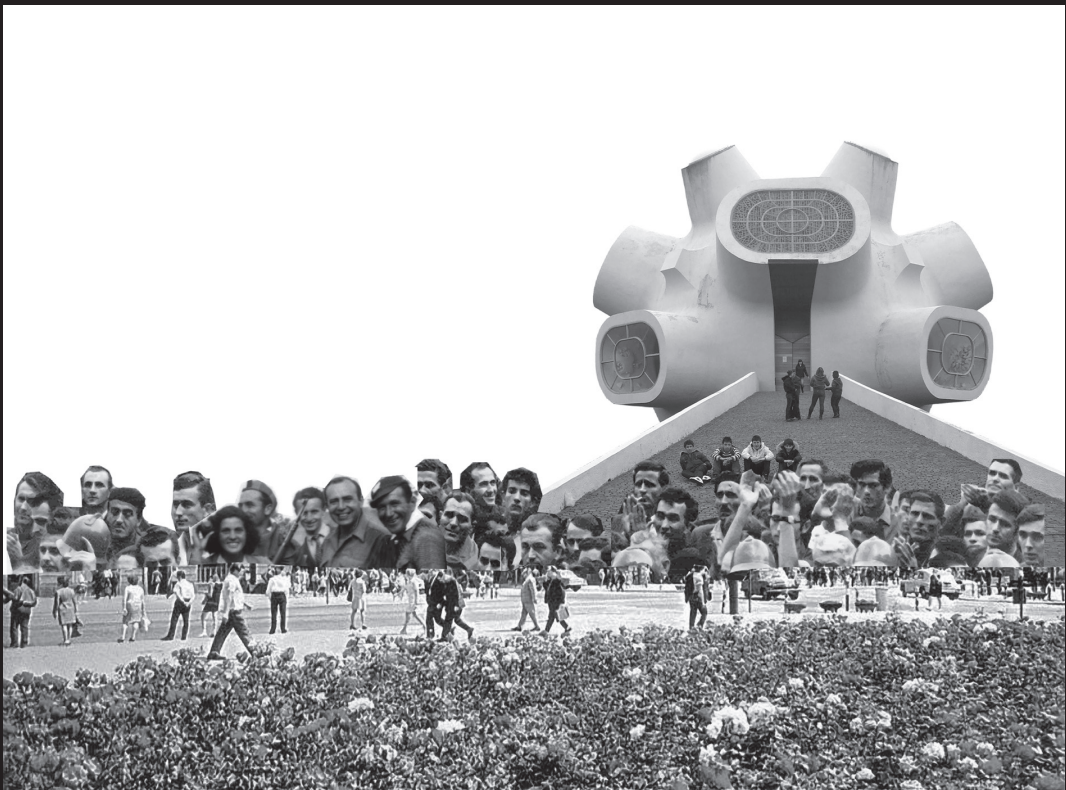
KEK (COLLECTIVE CONSTRUCTION BUREAU FOR KOLKHOZES IN SOVIET ESTONIA)

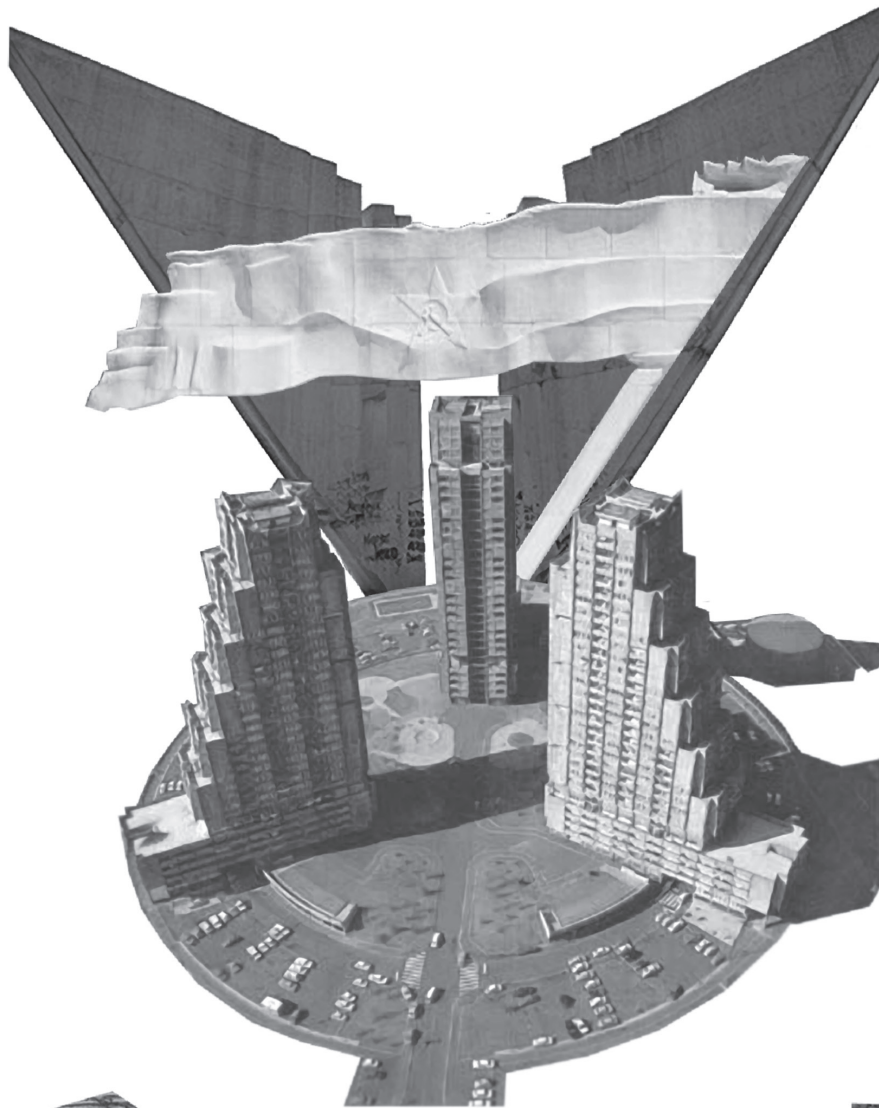




HOTEL PLITVICE

KRUŠEVO





ISTOCNA KAPLIJA BEOGRAD / THE EASTERN GATE IN BELGRADE



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PETROVA GORA

MINISTARSTVO TRANSPORTA GRUZIJA / GEORGIAN MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

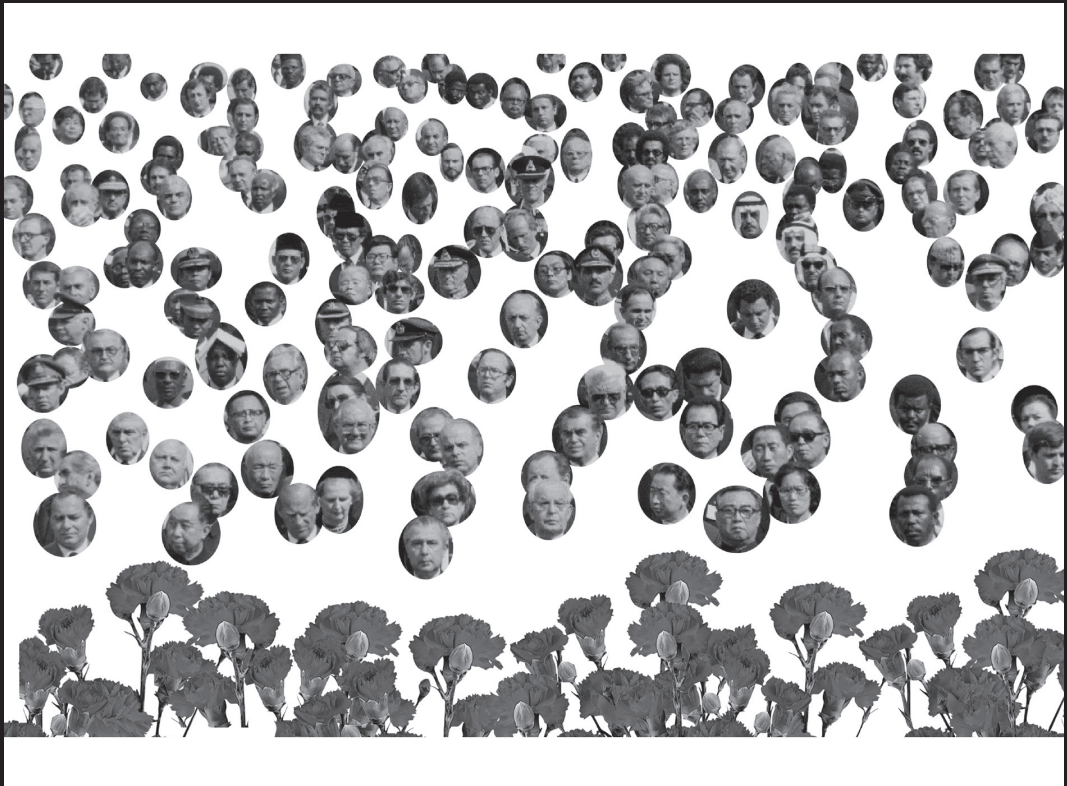


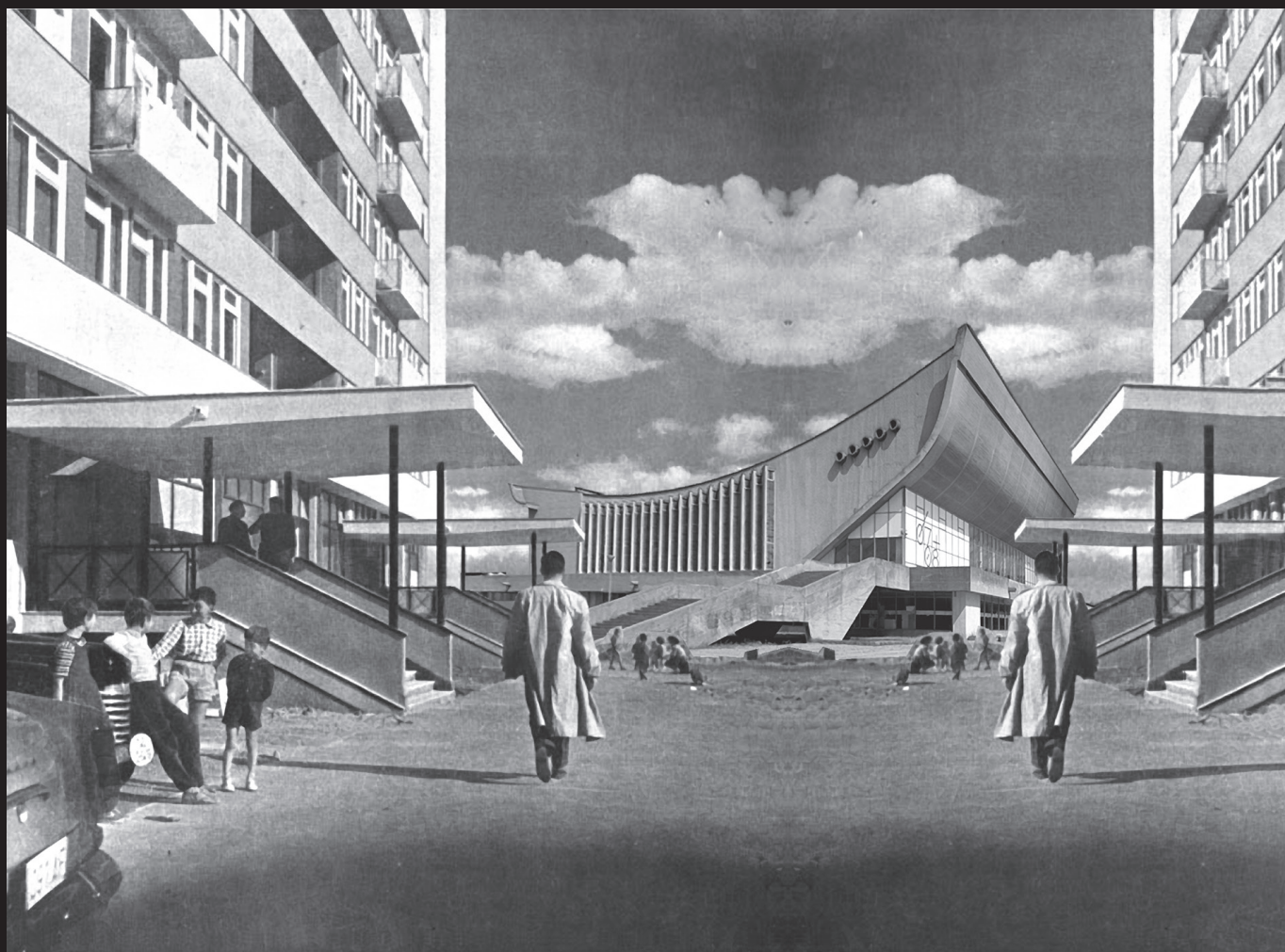




8. MAJ, TITOV POGREB I / MAY 8, TITO'S FUNERAL I

8. MAJ, TITOV POGREB II / MAY 8, TITO'S FUNERAL II





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KONCERTNA I SPORTSKA HALA VILNIUS / CONCERT AND SPORTS HALL VILNIUS