

A man with a beard, wearing a red hoodie and dark pants, sits on a yellow rectangular block of a colorful architectural structure. Two women are also present: one in a blue hoodie sits on a higher block behind him, and another in a pink shirt and blue pants is crouching on a white block in the foreground. The structure is composed of various colored blocks (yellow, orange, grey, white, teal) and has some faint graffiti on the yellow block. The background shows green trees under a clear blue sky.

MARKO LULIĆ
FUTUROLOGY

Wilfried Kuehn
and
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Wilfried Kuehn Architecture plays an important role in your work. The Haludovo Hotel complex in Krk and its opening in collaboration with Penthouse founder Bob Guccione in 1972 became the starting point for your piece *Hard and Soft* (2002), and a whole host of themes literally stand in the space alongside the buildings: commission and the conflict of East and West, class relations and body politics; above all your engagement with *competing modernisms*. In Tito's Yugoslavia, a new form of society, which contrasted with both the Soviet and Western post-war social orders, arose thanks to the successful resistance to National Socialism. Its form of collectivism was not based on state centralisation but on self-management, and defined the relationships between the Yugoslav republics. In the same way, the country did not belong to the Warsaw Pact, which was directed by Moscow, but situated itself as a founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, as part of a global but decentralised federation.

The question of how this kind of socialism translates into constructed space was a subject of debate from the outset. For the occasion of your exhibition *Modernity in YU* (2002) in the Museum for Contemporary Art in Belgrade, Ljilijana Blagojevic wrote in the catalogue: 'Being theoretically grounded on an unstable foundation of negative reference framework of rejecting both Functionalism and Constructivism as products of late capitalism, and the Soviet practice of *formalist eclecticism*, the Yugoslav socialist project in architecture ended up as an under-developed and unfinished modernism.'

Marko Lulić I have always been concerned with space. Out of this fascination or focus, my other interests and themes developed essentially organically. I per-

haps would not have formulated it that way in the early days of my practice, but in hindsight, it seems to be that way. Even before the projects you mentioned, there were works and exhibitions in which I dealt with spatial and politico-spatial aspects. *Disco Wilhelm Reich, Sunset and Surroundings* or *Unterhaltungsarchitektur (Entertainment Architecture)* all had to do with space beyond the physical definition of space: cultural space, space of memory, space of history, space and economy etc. From this, I began to work with Modernism, especially Yugoslav modernism, which as you rightly say, would be unthinkable and incomprehensible without non-alignment. Even the Haludovo Hotel complex which you mentioned at the beginning of the interview is a sort of model of non-alignment. It is clear that such a project – a joint venture with an American soft-porn millionaire – was only possible in a communist country that wasn't a part of the eastern bloc but was non-aligned. In the Eastern Bloc, it would have been discredited as co-operation with the class enemy. Another significant difference from other communist states of this era was the freedom to travel, which influenced artistic output in Yugoslavia and enabled certain artistic practices.

With my remakes of fragments of the architecture of the Haludovo Complex, as well as the *Improved Partisan Monuments in Modernity in YU* and other exhibitions, it was always about the form and more specifically the relationship between political ideology and form. 'Grasping' is probably the word which best describes the working process that I used for *Improved Partisan Monuments*. The word 'grasp' is used in its literal sense here; of touching and feeling which in addition to taste is the first method of understanding that we learn. As with all my work, there is a certain distance between the examined object and the thematic field, and a dose of irony. Nevertheless, I do not work from a completely distanced position. It's not a purely analytic description or an objective commentary – not at all. It's contradictory: here analysis, criticism and fascination with the examined object are all combined. Sometimes I called the *Improved Partisan Monuments* 'cover versions', albeit recorded with an intentionally false instrumentation.

Wilfried Kuehn The starting point for the *Improved Partisan Monuments* are often Yugoslav monuments, which blend figuration and abstraction in a unique way. Their abstraction is counteracted by classical principles of composition such as symmetry and symbolic form. This could be a result of 'unfinished modernism', if it only represented a reaction to the Eastern and Western powers. On the other hand, it could be an expression of an autonomic position, corresponding to Yugoslavia's political autonomy. In this context, it is interesting to me to consider the relationship with Italian post-war architecture. I am thinking of *Monumento ai caduti nei campi di concentramento*, which was erected by the architects BBPR in Milan in 1946 – a partner of the firm, Gian Luigi Banfi, died in Gusen concentration camp a year before. Also of the *Monumento ai Partigiani* created by Aldo Rossi in Segrate in 1965, a year before his influential monograph *L'architettura della città* was published. This manifesto was written from the viewpoint of the 'Operaisti' surrounding Antonio Negri and their conception of autonomy, and it radically questions the western European optimism of modernity during the post-war period in relation to urban spaces and their form. The *Improved Partisan Monuments* raise the question of our relationship to a history, which ended neither in 1945 nor 1989, as the return of nationalist populism in Yugoslavia in the 1990s has shown.

Marko Lulić You are completely right that it is about a history that hasn't ended. For that reason, I gave the work the title *Improved Partisan Monuments*. It is about difference. A shift is taking place here, of course in form and material, because these are not exact imitations, but also on the level of meaning. The *Improved Partisan Monument* does not just look different to the original monument to which it refers, but it *is* something different. My work – aside from the materials and colours, which already have a demonumentalising effect – is produced in a different time, and is presented in a different time and in a completely different place. It is about a shift in context: another time, another space – physical and ideological. That means that in this series of works the focus was not solely on the non-aligned communist Yugoslavia, but on a specific way of working which I developed for myself. With the project I created a template, a tool which one can lay over specific temporal or geopolitical spaces – be that the former Yugoslavia and its modernism, or, as we have come to term them, one of the many other modernisms. In this respect, it is not irrelevant to mention that my first two long stays in the U.S., in 1997 and 1998, had a significant influence on my work and on the *Improved Partisan Monuments*. Both times, I lived in Los Angeles. For the first year, I was a smuggled-in student at the Arts Center, where I studied under Chris Williams, Mike Kelley, Stephen Prina and Mayo Thompson. My second stay was as an artist in residence of the Schindler Programme at the MAK Center for Art and Architecture. I studied with artists whose strongly referential practice had already interested me from afar in Vienna. I lived in a modern house designed by Rudolf Schindler and I learned a lot about Californian mid-century Modernism at close quarters. However one doesn't just learn new things from the foreign or strange, one also perceives things that have been lived and known up until that point in a new way through this change of perspective. Therefore, I realised that, growing up in Vienna, I was plagued by a yearning for modernism, even if I wouldn't have called it that as a child. Aside from the Californian architects, in the U.S. I began to engage with representatives of Bauhaus, with their method, how it changed through their emigration to the U.S.

Wilfried Kuehn A series of partisan memorials are the work of architects such as Bogdan Bogdanović. There's a direct parallel to the Bauhaus and Walter Gropius' *Memorial for the Victims of the Kapp Putsch* which was erected in Weimar in 1921 as the *Memorial to the March Fallen* and which was destroyed by the Nazis in 1933. The lightning form of the poured concrete does not stand in direct relation to Gropius' architectural work. The unusual character of the memorial could be an expression of the unusual nature of the commission, but it seems to be about more than that. In its abstraction and lack of base, it is a memorial without precedent and situates the monumental within Weimar modernism. In the history of this memorial is not only reflected the history of the Bauhaus, founded by Gropius in Weimar in 1919 and closed by the Nazis in Berlin in 1933, but also the split history of the first German republic which was not done away with in 1933 by the Nazis, but from the very beginning was co-determined by them. Interestingly, the title 'Memorial to the March Fallen' is an explicit reference to the failed civil revolution of March 1848. The repeated failure of democracy seems to be already present in this pact between the bourgeoisie and the working class, because the pact was merely a pact. They had nothing in common politically. Gropius was already in cahoots with Alma Mahler, who in following her own reactionary ideology tried to bring him away from 'politicisation' – an open battlefield, which turned the modernism of the bourgeois social democrat Gropius into a symptom

of a paradox. In your work *Walter*, which is an estranged update of the 1921 memorial, I see a renewed question of the relationship between the artist and power. The unique title leads back to the architect and to the question of what the name of a monument actually signifies.

Marko Lulić My method is also about models and exemplariness. My *Improved Partisan Monuments* are “models which follow”, as Thomas Trummer wrote in the catalogue for *Modernity in YU*. Versions of something that already exists but in different dimensions, a different material and a different colour are created to give emphasis to certain aspects and to make them understandable; to put it another way, in order to make something that already exists easier to grasp. The works *Walter* and *Entertainment Center Mies* were conceived in similar ways. In both cases, the monuments that were referred to were destroyed but nevertheless in these cases my pieces are ‘models which follow’. The fact that these were politically ‘red’ monuments, which were destroyed by the Nazis, interested me. In the case of Mies van der Rohe there was the added aspect that I wanted to know how he dealt with the monument to the Left (the Memorial to Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht) that he had created in Germany. There is a certain point after which hardly any photos of it are published. For decades, he definitely had no interest in publishing photos of another work which he finished just before his emigration to the USA in 1938. These were photographs of his plans for a modernist pavilion, on the right and left of which huge flagpoles bore Swastika flags. America and the rest of the world were not meant to see that.

Wilfried Kuehn How Mies developed the Liebknecht-Luxemburg memorial is not so clear. Only one design of the front elevation remains and only three sides of the memorial were photographically documented – of the rear there remains no trace. Since the Nazis razed it in 1935, the monument is like a Potemkin village, disembodied and spaceless. Since then, it has been reduced to being no more than an image: Mies exhibited it in 1947 in New York in his monographic exhibition in MoMA as a large format photo wall together with the Barcelona pavilion and his unexecuted high-rise projects, replete with hammer and sickle which weren’t removed despite McCarthyism. The blocks of brick pushed and lying together which create the monument create a volumetric structure which can be seen in relation to the architectural plans Mies was making at the time, such as the Stuttgart Weissenhof settlement and for private villas like House Esters and House Lange in Krefeld. It is harder to argue about the architect’s relationship to the content and to his commissioners than with Gropius. In this case, was Mies’ aggressive formalism, which understood freedom as freedom of content, just pure architectural version here? The fact that three years after you first exhibited the *Improved Partisan Monuments* your remake of both Bauhaus memorials were installed in the Viennese exhibition *die neue linie (Ich war die Putzfrau am Bauhaus) (the new line [I was the Cleaning Lady at the Bauhaus])* in 2004 appears to me as an important step in the examination of the relationship between politics and form in modernism.

Marko Lulić Yes, I’ve always had a general spatial interest. It is certainly true that with this group of works and others that I displayed between the two gallery exhibitions at Gabriele Senn I managed to condense this spatial interest into a work method that focuses on the questioning of modernism. There were several factors, which were crucial to it, in particular the time I spent in California, which I already mentioned, and

the relationship of most people to modernist architecture at that time. The Californians were ahead of us in the rediscovery of modernist architecture and modernist design. The houses of Neutra, Schindler, Elwood, Koenig and others cost a fraction of their current price and the furniture of Eames and Nelson could be picked up cheap second-hand. Most people were not interested in aesthetics at that time, but there was at least a growing minority of people who were. If a piece of modernist architecture was not to be torn down, it had to be worth its salt. The building was then usually used for a different purpose, as a hotel, as a club, as a gallery, or in the case of the Pirelli building by Marcel Breuer in New Haven, as an Ikea.

My title *Entertainment Center Mies* for the remake of the *Memorial for Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg* was very consciously chosen. I did not exhibit a memorial, but an object in a gallery space. Without the red stars and the flagpole with a red flag, that is to say without its ideological insignia, the object is pure form – or rather it poses the question of whether form can be pure.

Wilfried Kuehn Both memorials by Gropius and Mies belong to a broader group of architectures, which, whether fully realised or not, make up a central narrative of modernism. I would describe this type of architecture as demonstration versions, and designs such as Vladimir Tatlin's *Tower for the Third International*, Friedrich Kiesler's *Raumstadt* and Le Corbusier's *Pavillon de l'Esprit Nouveau*, which were all created between 1919 and 1925 belong to it. From this perspective, the political content of the memorials appears under different auspices. As demonstrations of a new kind of architecture, these models are something different: during the *Exposition des Arts Décoratifs* 1925 in Paris Kiesler's model was both the *Austrian Theatre Exhibition design and Idea for a Floating Town*, Le Corbusier's pavilion was both a model dwelling and a plan for the *Ville Radieuse*; Tatlin's tower a revolutionary memorial and a design for a highrise building. From this viewpoint, Gropius and Mies' monuments are also models for buildings. In these models from the 1920s, architecture does not stand alone. It is an expression of a relationship between the individual and society, which is articulated by the use of space and can be actively altered by the use of architecture. Primarily, these models are spatial models, in which questions of scale in relation to bodily experience are important. They articulate space as a subjective experience, not as a geometric shell. Demonstration models always have a double function as expositions. Retrospectively it is clear that, for their creators, they were always exhibitions.

Marko Lulić Bodies have always played an important role for me in how I conceive objects and installations; the relationship of the body to the exhibited object and the relationship between the body and the monument or architecture that this reflects, which is what I concentrate on in the current works. With the installations that are usable or which physically dominate the space that is immediately obvious. However, with the *Improved Partisan Monuments* this tension between human dimensions and the monumental played a role. Not only insofar as they are translations from the monumental into dimensions that are manageable and demonumentalising, but also through the placing of these objects. The smaller *Improved Partisan Monuments* are usually presented in groups, and in this way, the character of them being models was redoubled: the objects themselves are models and the presentation as a compact grouping can be read

as a small model for a sculpture park full of monuments. The bigger *Improved Partisan Monuments* along with other modernist remakes, *Entertainment Center Mies* for example, were often installed in a way that entirely filled the gallery space or sometimes as a physical obstacle, so that people had to go over or under them – a literal dialogue between body and object.

The transition from ‘grasping’ modernist architecture and monuments through sculptural reproductions to scrutinising objects and history through direct movement was a smooth one. Since I always saw the relationship between body and object as a fundamental one in these monuments, direct action on the sculpture followed as a logical consequence. However, it was the case that the first work which performatively examined the monuments – *Reactivation (Circulation in Space)*, recorded in the sculpture garden of the Museum for Contemporary Art in Belgrade with Vojin Bakic’s sculpture *Cirkulacije u Prosturu I (Circulations in Space I)* – was only exhibited years after it had been shot. Artistic practice developed in that direction, but *Reactivation (Circulation in Space)* was in the most literal sense of the word a forerunner. My engagement with Wilhelm Reich and Nikola Tesla on other projects before and during the time that I was working on the remakes of modernist monuments also certainly played a role. Because performative aspects were important in these exhibitions of videos and books, one can say in hindsight that they influenced the later productions and brought into play the element of physical motion. All videos I have made since 2009 in which I request dancers in a closed room – a training room or a hall – to create a dialogue with a monument that is situated elsewhere, or in other cases ask dancers in a sculpture park or sculpture grouping to react to the works lead back to these earlier performative videos and photo sets.

Wilfried Kuehn *Reactivation (Circulation in Space)* was part of your exhibition *Denkmalpflege und Body Work (Monument Conservation and Body Work)* in 2007. In the paradoxical use of monument conservation, questions of historicization and actualisation appear in a new light. As opposed to the distanced handling of the partisan monuments and the Bauhaus monuments, here the object is handled directly. The sculpture by Vojin Bakić is alienated, in that it is used as a piece of gymnastics equipment. A misappropriation such as Martin Kippenberger makes of Gerhard Richter’s painting in his work *Modell Interconti*. Museums are troubled when sculptures are used as gymnastics equipment. On the other hand, this also releases some potential in the museum. You collect political displays: after the partisan monuments and the Bauhaus models, the museum itself comes into focus. It functions as a frame, which places a perspective on reality. The 20er Haus Wien followed the Museum for Contemporary Art in Belgrade, on whose extension building by Adolf Krischanitz you placed the inscription MUSEUM OF REVOLUTION in 2010. You pull the museum from its conservative distance into reality, you use it as material and you act upon it. Here ‘collect’ does not mean store up, but deploy and play with. The museum model is the starting point for interventions, which make it a sort of factory of reality. *Lulic House No. 1 (Weekend Utopia)* was an installation during the time of your exhibition in Kunsthaus Bregenz, which copied Albert Frey’s *House 1* in Palm Springs. The exhibition was an excuse to build a holiday home from pre-fabricated parts in order to exhibit it in the open landscape of Istria after it had been in the museum. The inversion of museum as the posterior place to the anterior place made it into a place of production, in which not only symbolic capital is made.

Marko Lulić Both concepts that you introduce here, display and production, are naturally very important for me and my engagement with space, especially with institutional space and museums. When my work *Museum of Revolution* was displayed on Krischanitz's tower, a former student of mine thought – simultaneously funnily and very precisely – that the concrete tower had been built as a pedestal for my work. Actually, it was a very productive misunderstanding, because it gave rise to questions about the role of the artist and of the museum.

Alongside the questions about display and the relationships between object and space, in this project, *Museum of Revolution*, the question of representation interested me: what a museum is nowadays and what it wants to be. The meaning of the hackneyed and marketed to death concept of revolution is also questioned by the work. It is certainly the case that the works you mention, but also *Zollverein* and *Sitespecific*, question and re-charge the spaces and institutions in which they were exhibited. You could say these two aspects of my method are the fundamental process of both the modernist remakes and the projects which are installed in institutional or public spaces and were conceived specifically for them. Therefore it's a way of working which is a thread through all of my artistic practice and which holds it together, although the works are formally very heterogeneous. For this reason, the way I display my works has always been an inherent part of my concept and production.

Wilfried Kuehn The political display of the exhibition can be read as an urban model: urban movement and connection of places become the course of the exhibition, urban spaces are displayed. This is the logic followed by El Lissitzky's *Wolkenbügel* plan for Moscow, and with Constant's *New Babylon* and Guy Debord's *Dérive*, the course of the exhibition leads back to the subject. In contrast to station routes and ritual urban processions, our movement through urban spaces is not choreographed, it is subjective. This means we experience urban spaces as an unplanned sequence of perception, step by step with our own body. As in the concrete experience of an exhibition, the physical element of an urban space is not primarily a geometric problem, but a synaesthetic experience. You quoted Debord's *Psychogeography* in the Vienna exhibition in 2013. Debord's claim that architecture should be thought of from the eye-level perspective of the flaneur and not from the bird's eye perspective of the general has consequences. Architecture then is less about strategic planning and more about a precise interaction with situations, in which the body stands as a locus. From this perspective, all your work is architecture. It resists the idea of novelty and invention, in that it gives an object the function of inverting itself, as in a reversal, into a context that makes its surroundings different from the usual. On the one hand that's the definition of ready-made, on the other hand the definition of urban architecture.

Marko Lulić The urban space as a theme sprang partly from intensive engagement with modernism and the body; on the other hand, it was always there and has perhaps been in some form a part of all the works we have discussed since 2000. Recent works such as *Clearance and The Stuff that Dreams are Made of*, which originated as art in public space in dialogue with local residents, comprehended and incorporated the social and urban conditions. *Tower* and *Architectural Model Postrevolutionary Playground* evoke the theme of the urban space as a physical and political element, even if they are artworks in the classical sense. Even *Model for a Monument to Migration in Perušić* and *Psychogeography* link the

place-specific and the biographical. In *Psychogeography* movement in an urban space becomes a theme. This work is not just about pure strolling about. I obviously borrowed the title *Psychogeography* from Guy Debord, but used it falsely, with a strong emphasis on psycho. It is about discovering one's own biography on foot, of the houses in different parts of Vienna in which you have lived up to this point. In a performative act, I made rubbings of the walls of houses in Vienna on paper. The choice of the somewhat archaic technique of rubbing was intentional, another modernist reference with all the baggage of abstraction and sub-consciousness. Although it is a different medium, one can draw parallels to the videos *Abbazia* and *Sunset and Surroundings* from the late nineties. Here too, urban space is experienced through movement – in one case, Vienna on foot and on the light railway, later the U6, in the second instance Los Angeles by car. These works were about exploration and understanding through movement, and they had the same conceptual method as the dance videos. Since these works are about grasping and feeling, if not with the body then with a camera and its movement, one could say that it is an anticipation of the feeling of modernism in the replicas. Feeling is a means of grasping, the combination of title and its execution in a specific medium engender the shift in meaning and context, a new way of interpretation.