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modelling public space(s) in culture

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**Rethinking Institutional Practices in Culture
and Historical (Dis)continuities**

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Pioneer City in Belgrade

Legitimate Oblivion or Non-Culture of Remembering

—Milica Božić Marojević

—Marija Stanković

Introduction

How do you manage youth social life in a proactive, positive way; how do you organize children's free time; how do you enrich the cultural offer and educate kids from poor families; how do you help them overcome health issues; how do you teach them to be responsible citizens; how do you disguise social differences and is such a comprehensive project economically viable? An answer to these questions was given through an example of similar practice in former Yugoslavia, through a specific and complex project named Pioneer City in Belgrade, built in the last century. Yet, a response to the query why it was essential to have such a project is even more complicat-

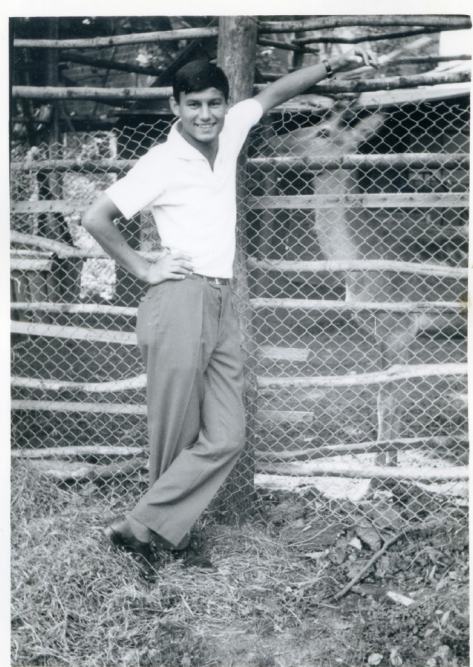


Figure 1 —
Private archive, 1966. Property of Miloš Jurišić.

ed and really hard to explain to the present generations of youngsters.

Pioneer City used to be Belgrade's independent educational institution where primary school children from the city and other parts of the country would spend their free time. An active vacation in Pioneer City aimed at filling pioneers' free time with educational, cultural and entertaining contents so that children would not stray from the right way but rather choose the path of developing (communist) consciousness. The goal, as in every organization in charge of upbringing, was directed towards successful development/cultivation and life in accordance with social norms (Duda 2015:12-22).

In the communist state, ideology was a factor of integration. Ideology, or a system of ideas, beliefs and practices, was also a mechanism for interpretation, adaption and transformation of reality as well as instigating individual identifications and orientations in that reality (Doknić 2013:10-11). Members of the new society were linked by the events from the immediate past. The joint experience of war, the anti-fascist struggle and the revolutionary aspirations for life in a better, different world, were spread throughout all levels of society, from the youngest to the oldest (Duda 2015). How did it affect children who matured in such an environment? How did that affect those children who had no memory of the war and the revolution?

The first pioneers grew up in the militant, partisan and guerilla context that glorified the partisan war in which the mythologization of children-fighters was pro-

filed. This childhood awareness was filled with a communist collective memory, at the expense of the child's subjective memories (Todić 2015:129-134). Pioneers were taught to use rifles and bombs and became fighters, scouts, bombers and couriers. In the first days of the uprising and revolution, a number of pioneers were proclaimed national heroes for their merits in the struggle, binding them to defend their homeland with their life if necessary (Duda 2015:62). All of this was an important context in which Pioneer City was formed, leading to the conclusion that Pioneer City served as an "important component of social goals and objectives of education" (Program rada 1970:8).

Although the demands of the new educational policy had its place within the school system, they also reached to other organizations such as the Union of Pioneers. New revolutionary institutions, as well as the school system/educational system, helped maintain that ideal by fostering a memory of the National Liberation Battles and Partisans. All of the children learned to recite and sing revolutionary and partisan songs, to march and participate in long and boring spectacles for adults, organized in honor of public holidays (Todić 2005). The idea of fraternity and unity along with strong bond to the party and Tito, created specific emotional relationship among people and made them believe in utopian image of the world. By connecting honesty, sincerity, perseverance, diligence, good behavior, respect for advanced ideas, love for the country, its political doctrine, and the willingness to work for it, a desired set of qualities created the figure of the pioneer (Todić 2005:59).

Focusing on the significance of children refers us to one intention, and that is the building of a new man, so that on the day of becoming a pioneer one entered a process of becoming a new socialist man – a man who will serve as the foundations for a new state (Duda 2015:61). Successful shaping of the youth, among other things, required placing them into the new, separated, safe places which would function as the spaces of utopia (Duda 2015:26). Pioneer City was imagined as a utopian city, with the purpose of "creating better conditions and possibilities for a more complete fulfilment of the social goals pertaining to the upbringing and education of the youngest" (Program rada 1970:8).

The discordant existence of Pioneer City in the contemporary age is the result of the disinterest of the ones responsible as well as the inability of those interested in preserving it. Preserving something means it is valuable not only due to its original merit but also because one can recognize the potential for using that value in the present/The value in preserving something is not always in its original merit, rather it is in the potential that value has in the present.

After 70 years and several transformations of its usages, from housing for refugees to a recording studio for reality shows, today, this complex with rich but unrecognized inheritances is underused, largely devastated, and has lost not only

its former glory but also its primary role in society. Moreover, potential future users of this public property are still unknown. Assuming that remembrance and memories from the past are an inseparable part of each of us and that in this sense they shape and create our identity in the present as a pledge for the future, in collaboration with the Foundation “Jelena Šantić” we have done a research on Pioneer City in order to recognize and transmit its values in a larger socio-political and cultural context today. Additionally, we investigated how this space could be reaffirmed through cultural and artistic initiatives (among others). Since that process should include both preserving memory layers as well as citizens’ participation, we organized a workshop and conference to examine relations, tensions and possible alliances between activists, artists, scholars and institutional representatives.

Biography of the Space

Why do some spaces and places slip into oblivion while some others become common? When, how and why should we reactivate them? Are there any ways to use their socio-political and cultural significance? Is that a matter of public interest? What are the advantages of exploring innovative cultural management practices? Can we motivate citizens to participate in these processes? Can EU policies help us? Which obstacles and contradictions emerge in this process?

Pioneer City was founded 70 years ago on one of the highest points in Belgrade within the Košutnjak area where the sanatorium for children was situated during the 19th century. At the time, it was a place where children used to come to recover and improve their overall health. Dense forests and the ‘air spa’ effect of Košutnjak provided ideal conditions for recovery, hence, it was an attractive location for construction of summerhouses. During the reign of Prince Milos Obrenović, Košutnjak was used as a royal hunting ground. The layered history of Belgrade in the slopes of Košutnjak goes in support with the fact that during World War II Košutnjak was used as the location for German military headquarters in Southeast Europe. After the war, Pioneer City was built with the voluntary work of ‘youth work brigades’ in 1947. During the Czechoslovak crisis in 1968, parts of the Yugoslav National Army (YNA) units were relocated in this area. It is possible that the existing shelters that could be found nearby were built at the time in question.¹

¹ — More on its history can be found on the Pioneer City official website: <http://www.pionirskigrad.org.rs/>; Dušan Jović’s Project Proposal (internal document available upon request); the Archives of Yugoslavia: <http://www.arhivyu.gov.rs/> the Museum of Yugoslavia: <http://www.muzej-jugoslavije.org/>

The construction of Pioneer City was entrusted to the architect Rajko Tatić, which was quite expected having in mind his studious approach to the resolving of the project task as well as his previous experience in modelling specialized institutions intended for children. His architectural contribution covers five decades of work in different socio-political and cultural environments. He spent most of his career working for the government, while at the end of 1930s he became a counselor and architect at the court of Queen Marija Karađorđević. His work for the queen represents the testimony of his architectural upbringing which reflects an architect's approach towards nurturing local tradition in construction. This approach tends to fulfil the functional needs of the object's purpose while recognizing the needs of the contractor. After World War II, his work focused on elaborating and spreading new architectural ideas about economical constructions in residential and standard buildings. The most significant works in the post-war years are Pioneer City at Košutnjak, the Summer stage at Topčider and the City Hospital at Bežanijska Kosa. His work on design and planning was equally focused on aesthetical aspects as well as on functionality, whilst keeping in mind the broader vision of the future building (Mihajlov 2007:124).

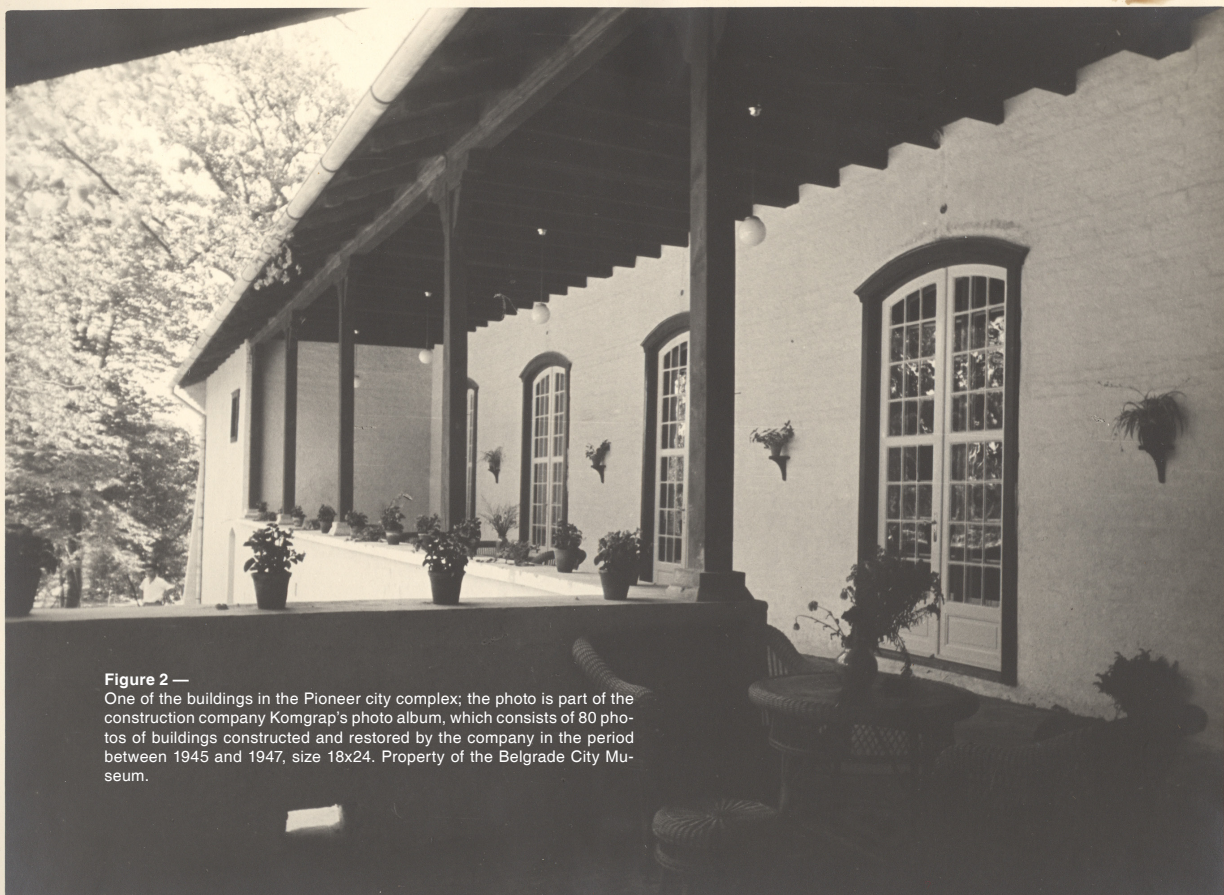


Figure 2 —

One of the buildings in the Pioneer city complex; the photo is part of the construction company Komgrap's photo album, which consists of 80 photos of buildings constructed and restored by the company in the period between 1945 and 1947, size 18x24. Property of the Belgrade City Museum.

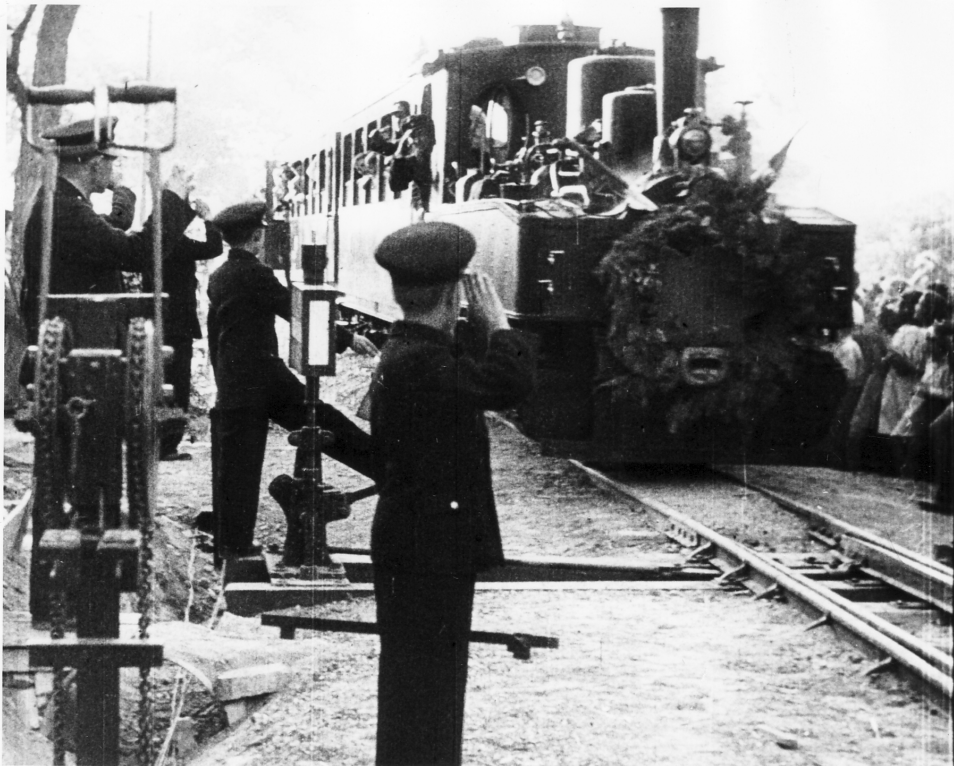


Figure 3 —
Official opening of the Pioneer Railway at Košutnjak,
21. IX 1947. Property of the Museum of Yugoslavia.

Pioneer City was built as a children's colony of a pavilion type, with the interspaces in the form of a park, with sports terrains, children's playgrounds and a summer stage. The complex consisted of a main building, central pavilion (with a theatre and a dining room), nine ground residential pavilions built in a mountain-lodge style, which matches the milieu of Košutnjak forest, a summer exhibition pavilion, museum, sports' facilities, telephone exchange and a post office.²

Originally built on a small area, Pioneer City covered around 9 hectares. It expanded to almost 19ha in 1961, for the occasion of The World Championship in Athletics when the adaptation of residential pavilions took place. Another two pavilions were built, in addition to the existing nine; some of the old ones were replaced by the new, architecturally shaped in the same manner as the original ones. The next adaptation occurred in 1969, when the board of Pioneer City made the decision to connect all the layers of construction into a single meaningful whole, in accordance with the general concept of the original project.³

² — See in Mihajlović, Saša. 2013. *Rajko M. Tatić: 1900-1979*. Beograd: Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Beograda.

³ — See in Mihajlović, Saša. 2013. *Rajko M. Tatić: 1900-1979*. Beograd: Zavod za zaštitu spomenika kulture grada Beograda.

The fact that Pioneer City included even a railway indicates that the project was ambitious and ahead of its time. The railway started from the foot of Košutnjak and spanned to the present neighbourhood called Kijevo. The children's railway had three stations: Kosmaj, Sutjeska, and Jastrebac. The train consisted of a locomotive with three cars, while the whole process was managed by specially trained pioneers. These children railroaders were also present at the train stations. Unfortunately, due to lack of maintenance as well as the large expenses in the sixties, and also because of the unrealistic ambitions to make children deal with these complex and heavy jobs, this railway stopped working. Its remains can still be seen. However, it is interesting that a similar railway existed in Russia, Hungary etc. and that several examples of the Children's Railways are still working today and are a tourist attraction.⁴

Pioneer City, although ambitiously conceived, never got to be fully realized with all of its projected facilities and activities. At the time when a new central building was built, the plan also included the following:

- Community Centre – a central building, facilities for pioneers (i.e. radio station, post office, souvenir shop), a large square for celebrations;
- Residential area – a pavilion with a capacity of 400 beds;
- Playgrounds - turf, green ground, tracks for scooters and skates;
- Sports Centre – a football field with stands, running tracks, tennis courts, gymnasium, swimming pool, autodrome for traffic - technical education etc;
- Nature Centre – a natural history museum in the central part of Pioneer City, with an orchard, flower garden, vegetable garden, summer classroom, forest stage, bridges, fountains; the ambiance was supposed to be complemented with an artificial lake with two creeks and a zoo;
- Technical Centre – a building with a planetarium and observatory, a space exhibit of different models of rockets, interplanetary spacecraft, aircraft and other facilities;
- Fun/attractions zone – a small castle, amusement park, maze, Robinson playground, a historical village (old Slavs, an Indian settlement...);
- Entertainment - cultural part – a summer theatre stage (with 800 seats and all of the necessary facilities);
- Pioneer Railway.

4 — From the documentation of the Railway Museum in Belgrade, available upon request.

From the above listed ambitious plans intended primarily for children and youth, today the Sports Centre Pioneer City includes:

- An amphitheatre hall with a capacity of 400 places for theatre performances, film screenings, seminars, lectures, promotions, various celebrations;
- A restaurant with 500 seats, used for various occasions such as celebrations, cocktail parties, family celebrations etc;
- A disco club - closed type, with a capacity of 300 students, mostly used for children's New Year's celebrations, birthday parties, graduations, promotions etc;
- A club - used for workshops (for younger pupils) and social games such as chess, dominoes etc. It used to provide provided refreshments and a variety of snacks for different occasions including birthday parties;
- Computer cabinet - 15 computers;
- Fitness centre – a specific space with equipment designed for recreational training and remedial gymnastics. When fully functional, the Centre had the capacity of approximately 25 users under the professional supervision and instruction related to physical activities;
- A sports hall the size of 250m² containing ten tables for table tennis, opened for children, young people and all other recreation enthusiasts who wanted to play table tennis every day in a very pleasant environment and excellent conditions;
- An outdoor football field, one handball, two basketball courts and a volleyball court. One ground used to be covered with artificial grass, while other courts had an asphalt surface. There was a circular paved track suitable for driving scooters and roller skates with length of 333m; athletics track of 110m; cross - track of 800m;
- An indoor football field with artificial grass and other outdoor football fields and tennis courts with artificial grass;
- A "Skvošlend" - three squash courts;
- A 'Fun Zone' equipped with seesaws, swings, climbers, a central mansion with obstacles for climbing, pulling, slides, leisure activities for children.

Košutnjak, well-situated and surrounded by traffic routes providing good communication with the entire city, nowadays represents one of the favourite excursion sites for people from Belgrade.

Pioneer cities also existed in other parts of Yugoslavia. However, Zagreb and Belgrade had a special status. All of the Pioneer Cities, made with the same purpose, were similarly planned and constructed. The Pioneer City in Zagreb is the first implemented project of the architect Ivan Vitić, whose heritage in this publication is represented by Motel Trogir. Other Yugoslav republics, as well as Serbian cities, also had Children Railways, whose fate was not much different from the fate of the one in Belgrade.

Previous Researches, Obstacles and Dilemmas

Pioneer City has not been explored as a phenomenon yet. There is no record of a monographic, historiographic or any other type of publications regarding Pioneer City. Considering that Pioneer City is still a viable, existing institution, its documentation is not stored in the archives. The institution itself does not possess its own archive and since Pioneer City changed its purpose several times, lots of data was lost during that process. Even when we discovered that several institutions (now mainly in private ownership) have some interesting information, the high prices quoted for the insight into the documentation were another difficulty for our research. Finally, the biggest problem was the inconsistently entitled documents' title - materials referring to Pioneer City in the documentation of other institutions are often of quite impoverished content or kept under a wrong name. Namely, within the little material that was available, often two terms interfered, i.e. two existing spatial papers with similar title - Pioneer Park (a real park in the heart of the city centre) and Pioneer City. In fact, it often occurred as if certain events and activities were taking place in Pioneer City, but in reality we were misled by the name Pioneer Park and vice versa. Moreover, even citizens and participants in our research were confused and they would provide the wrong name to actually identify this place of memory. All of this points to a condition of lethargy within the culture, in this case depicted in the 'status' of Pioneer City that is under no protection as (cultural) heritage of any kind, even though Košutnjak as a complex is. That is to say, no institution for protection of cultural monuments has undertaken the responsibility to preserve Pioneer City.

Many topics nonetheless remained partially handled, for example concerning the comparative analysis of the pioneer cities in the region and their former cultural policies. The reason for that was the impossibility to establish comprehensive regional cooperation at the moment, which led to the lack of adequate materials for future research.

Methodology and Research Processes

The Foundation "Jelena Šantić" started the preliminary research within the project Dissonant (Co)Spaces in September 2016. During our examina-

tion, several different perspectives were introduced. One assumed a historical context focused on memory view, revisionism and why and how we remember Pioneer City, the other was from the perspective of the decisions makers and current employees who are supposed to manage the space. We included an artistic point of view and artists as potential users, then tourism and trade with a broader economic standpoint and finally we considered heritage practices, narratives and their role in the current cultural context seeking to identify, understand and valorise common heritage within EU policies. With the idea to motivate the economic empowerment of this institution, we created several suggestions for its better usage that should help its connection with the interested public and different stakeholders.

We carried out fieldwork as well as desktop research. We collected materials from public institutions, museums, libraries, archives etc., in addition to conducting interviews with focus groups and stakeholders. A particular challenge was represented by the fact that it was a completely unexplored area and therefore the material was ungraded and rarely available. The research process, in the first phase, involved preparatory work, a construction plan and research methodology. In the second phase we identified the institutions as well as individuals who would be able to obtain the relevant material. The third phase consisted of exhibit research. There were photos, documents, videos, manuals, pioneer newspapers. During the fourth phase, researchers worked in the field and special attention was paid to the monumental heritage as part of Pioneer City. At that stage, the Foundation “Jelena Šantić” included several students of MA Heritage studies at the Faculty of Philosophy at University of Belgrade. One of them dealt with the historical and artistic analysis of the Pioneer monuments in Pioneer city. Moreover, she wrote her final master’s thesis on the topic of a certain photo album from the Museum of Yugoslav History (today Museum of Yugoslavia). The fifth stage of our research marked the discussions with stakeholders and individuals. And finally, the last phase was the aggregation and processing of collected findings that were presented later during the project, at the workshop, conference, blog and social networks.

Findings

- During the research we discovered that the documents, found in the possession of private individuals and various institutions, have to be systematized and digitized. This documentation should be submitted to Pioneer City and possibly published on the occasion of the jubilee;

- This public enterprise should deal with the preservation, communication, interpretation and presentation of all dissonant memory and history layers within the site and not just the desirable ones;
 - Greater investment in infrastructure is necessary because the buildings are in poor condition. The same applies to the monuments located in the park and not listed or even properly labelled;
 - There is a need to submit a proposal for the inclusion of Pioneer City in the register of cultural goods of the Republic of Serbia;
 - There is a need to further think about ‘restoring’ this space to young people, and in this regard to think about organizing daily care, additional educational, cultural, sport and other extracurricular activities, summer and winter camps etc. that could be free of charge;
 - Pioneer City could function as a cultural hub for young people who have ideas but do not have the space or technical capabilities to implement them elsewhere;
 - All of this is important in order to preserve the memory of Pioneer City, its reinterpretation and contemporary usage accordingly.

Existing Initiatives and Ideas for Pioneer City’s Revival

Even though Pioneer City has lost its previous glory, some of its employees still consider its reaffirmation. They have had several ideas and have written suggestions in that direction. Some of them include initiating international cooperation and creating pavilions dedicated to different countries and cultures while others consider establishing scientific centres etc. In October 2016, one of the employees, Mr. Dušan Jović, who has been active as a Programme Coordinator at Pioneer City for more than twenty years now, made a proposal for its revitalization. Why Pioneer City deserves that and what the advantages of its development would be, Mr. Jović (2016) stated in the mentioned document the following:

The future of Pioneer city can only be seen through the return of Pioneer City to its original purpose, which is the accommodation of children. Of course, this definition implies that it must be in line with today’s and future needs of the child. This means that accommodation must be harmonized with today’s quality accommodation standards, which means that there must be facilities and programs that will meet

the needs of today's children. Why Pioneer City? It has a very good infrastructure, position and natural environment that can be rarely found in large city environments. It is recognized by the older generation as an original brand. It has a large number of sports fields, the greatest tradition and experience in working with children. It is equipped for various program contents and has suitable spaces for it. All listed is in functional state, but requires reconstruction in a technical sense so it could be in line with today's world trends and in line with the needs and demands of today's child.⁵

Mr. Jović's idea is based on the ambitious reconstruction of the space and does not imply its legal or cultural protection in the context of heritage preservation. It is a kind of practical approach that does not emphasize the importance of preserving all memory layers from the rich history on which this area reflects.

Nevertheless, Mr. Jović suggests the creation of new accommodation capacities concentrated in one narrow zone that could be called a Residential Zone. The Residential Zone would extend in the surroundings of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th pavilion. The area where the 6th, 7th and 10th pavilion would be demolished. The capacity of the accommodation should include 400 beds for children. Within one of the pavilions, an ambulance should also be designed. Moreover, one of the pavilions (built on the site of the 7th pavilion) would require higher standards, a type of studio or a four-bed apartment that would be suitable for accommodating youth groups, study tours, youth athletes etc. In addition to the newly built pavilions, the third and fourth pavilions are intended for various daily and evening activities for children. The fourth is meant to be used for workshops, and the third is seen as a possible space for a museum of science. Construction of a new sports hall, gym, pool, several teaching cabinets, adventure park, mystery room, summer classrooms, but also a memorial room, restaurant, gift shop etc. it is also predicted.⁶

In his proposal, Mr. Jović underlines focus on teaching in nature, multi-day excursions for children from all over Serbia and from the surrounding areas. In the summer period, during the summer vacations, Pioneer City would be ideal for training junior athletes. At the same time, various camps can be realized, and family daily visits too.⁷

⁵ — From Dušan Jović's Project Proposal *The Pioneer City – Place to Collect Best Memories for Lifetime*, Belgrade, October 2016.

⁶ — From Dušan Jović's Project Proposal *The Pioneer City – Place to Collect Best Memories for Lifetime*, Belgrade, October 2016.

⁷ — From Dušan Jović's Project Proposal *The Pioneer City – Place to Collect Best Memories for Lifetime*, Belgrade, October 2016.

Mr. Jović's propositions are based on his huge experience in working with children and also on research of similar practices in the world. The suggestions are certainly a good base, but they have to be set into the larger socio-cultural context. Larger expert and public debate has to be conducted in order to overcome the potential flaws that could be created by non-taking into account multidisciplinary approaches and professional opinions.

Contribution of the Research

During this research process, several important findings occurred. The participation of one MA student in the project Dissonant (Co) Spaces as a result had the creation of a seminar paper about the sculptures of Pioneer City in Košutnjak, Belgrade, as well as a master paper about the photo-album of the pioneers from the above-mentioned Pioneer City, which was a gift to Jovanka Broz from the collection of photo-albums of the Museum of Yugoslavia. This section is going to be a textual space that will attempt to encompass thematic and temporal fragments which were crucial for this research.

The beginning of the research about the sculptures of Pioneer City is marked with unsuccessful attempts to identify the silent sculptures whose neglected appearance seems not to have deserved the attention of both the 'locals' of the Pioneer City and the leading experts in the field of sculpture. That should not be surprising considering the fact that Pioneer City itself has not been thoroughly examined as a phenomenon. Thanks to certain professors from the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade, as well as the curators from the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, we have succeeded, for start, in finding the book (Šarenac 1995) which has served as a map for further research of the sculptures.

After the Second World War, sculpture was, like any other artistic medium, a depiction of a new ideology, conditioned by the political and social factors of the new society. In the 1950s, there comes about a new period in aesthetic, cultural and political sense whose characteristics permeate sculpture as well (Protić 1975:9). One of the peculiarities of sculpture could be "the time which acts as space, where sculpture, due to the movement of light and shadow across its surface, acts as a sundial measuring the passages of time" (Protić 1975:9).

The sculptures of Pioneer City in Belgrade depict the thematic and sculptural tendencies of its time. Along the main path there are sculptures *A Boy and a Girl with a Book* by Milan Besarabić, *A Game of the Pioneers* by Jelena Jovanović, *A Boy with a Pot* and *A Buffalo* by Matija Vuković, as well as the undiscovered *Bull* by Milorad Stupovski and *A Choir* by Mira Sandić.

A Boy and a Girl with a Book by Milan Besarabić is a sculptural depiction of a couple absorbed in reading and discussing in passing the book which the boy is holding in his hands. Darko Šarenac, author of the above-mentioned book, states that the sculpture was made in 1948. The figures are shaped in the spirit of poetic realism, with emphasis on the lyric temper which has a moral and didactic function. The sculptures have their role in conveying the ideas of diligence and learning, in defining the pioneer identity as a symbol of “the ethical child” (Duda 2015:42). The figural depiction of *A Boy and a Girl* by Milan Besarabić does not refer to the visual identity of pioneers, as opposed to the sculpture *A Game of the Pioneers* by Jelena Jovanović. Šarenac (1995:120) characterized this sculpture as a “dynamic composition in harmonic stylization,” and added that this work speaks of the goal of education as a shaping of character. The compactness of the mass and the fighting rhythm of the pioneer game can bring us back to the initial ideal which is to be found behind the appropriated utopian image of childhood. Idyllic childhood entailed the idea that one fights and dies for the fatherland, that alongside the development of the qualities such as sincerity, honesty, diligence, chastity, and persistence, one should nourish patriotism as a form of life’s totality and communal spirit, whereby childhood is to be shaped according to the tenets of socialism (Duda 2015:59-62).

A Boy with a Pot and *A Buffalo* are the works of Matija Vuković. *A Boy with a Pot* is an idealized sculptural depiction, made before 1962. The sculptor highly esteemed the great artistic achievements of ancient Greece and the Renaissance, which explains the supple, outstretched, and muscular body of the boy (Stanković 1986:38). The body of the *Buffalo* exerts tremendous inner tension which spreads through the form and emerges from its pedestal. The sculpture is made of rock. It dates from 1969. There is yet another sculpture of a buffalo, made of bronze which is to be found in New Belgrade (Vranić 1986).

The undiscovered sculpture of *A Bull* by Milorad Stupovski is one more depiction of an animal in the children’s city. It is a subject typical of this sculptor, who, unlike other artists of his generation, devoted himself to this subject, even though its formal solution differs from his usual formal shaping.

The sculptural depiction of *A Choir* from 1974 is considered the most monumental composition from the opus of Mira Sandić. This sculptural composition consists of eleven figures of children. In the upper part there are the heads of the children looking up, with a slightly archaic form, led by a conductor invisible to us. The subject of choir used to be a very rare topic in art, but nevertheless it certainly did not wind up into Pioneer City by mere accident. Choirs were an intrinsic part of school’s music sections, as well as an indispensable part of school performances, which were often held in Pioneer City. The distinctiveness of a choir reflects in a multitude led by a conductor, which could serve as a metaphor of the Yugoslav state

apparatus where the state is in fact a unanimously harmonized composition. “The foundation of every state is the education of the youth,” Darko Šarenac notes by the sketch of this sculpture. This sentence makes one ponder upon the sculptural composition of the choir as a formation that with its pedestal metaphorically directs one towards the foundation of the state which is in the hands of the children. The future of every organized state relies on the youngest future members, in which case children are “the symbols of society’s hope for better future” (Duda 2015:12).

It should be emphasized that none of these sculptures are in any way marked or identified. Even though they have coalesced with the environment, they possess their own identity, their own past, inseparable from the time of their origin. Taking into consideration the traces of time (in the form of negligence and youthful rebellious interventions), we wonder if the condition of these sculptures, and Pioneer City itself, is merely a reflection of a silent present or the recognition of capitalist unprofitability of the heritage from the past?

* * *

While doing research in the Museum of Yugoslavia (at the time Museum of Yugoslav History), we discovered one photo album which served as the subject matter of a master paper, defended recently at the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. It is originally titled *From Photo Album to Museum Object: The Photo Album of Pioneers’ Lives from the Museum of Yugoslavia’s archives* and written by Marija Stanković.

The master paper consists of two parts that describe the album and its role from two perspectives. The first one follows the coming into being of the photo album as a collection of photographic reality, whereas the second deals with the photo album as a museum object, approaching it as a heterotopia on the one hand, and as a space of memory on the other. Asking ourselves who the ones that (apart from former pioneers) remember Pioneer City today are, we are led to reconsider nostalgia as a phenomenon present in post-Yugoslav society, a phenomenon which is, in this case, interpreted as a driving force with a critical potential for the interpretation and transformation not only of the past, but the present and the future as well.

In perceiving the photo album as a collection of photographs, we encounter the collector as the first in line of those who gave the meaning to the photo album. In the essence of conscious collecting of objects, in this case photographs, there is a desire for envisaging a permanent system against oblivion (Elsner and Cardinal 1994:1-2). The process of selection itself depicts an inner tendency towards a certain world order that would follow the collector’s own logic. When someone is a collector, he is, above all, a collector of his own identity. In his essay, *The System of*



Figure 4 —
Visit of the Mexican President Matheos: Jovanka Broz and Eva Samano de Lopez Matheos in the Pioneer City, 30.03.1963. Josip Broz Tito Archive, property of the Museum of Yugoslavia.

Collecting, Jean Baudrillard (1994:7-24) views an object (a part of a collection) as an object of a passion. An object can have two functions, “to be put to use and to be possessed.” Inasmuch as these two functions are mutually exclusive, possessing is viewed as a passionate abstraction of an object from the world of utilitarian values into the mental vastness of the collector on whom depends the meaning of the object deprived of a function.

The collector chooses and collects the objects which, according to their own features, belong to a whole that must be meaningful. A collection is not merely a set of randomly accumulated objects, since those objects have mutually intertwined qualities, gathered with a specific purpose (Bulatović and Lukić 2015:178). Considering that what we have in mind was a gift to Jovanka Broz, who, despite never having an official political function or being a part of the political oligarchy, was nonetheless a significant part of the communist establishment as the wife of Josip Broz Tito, this present was certainly not thoughtless since any gift bears with it a feedback and it is a giving followed by expecting (Douglas 2002:x-xi).

Perceiving a collection as a narrative (Bal 1994:100-101), we deal with certain facts and personal views. The order of events is presented subjectively, which leads us to conclude that a collection does not represent itself but above all the narrator, although it is shaped by the language of the one to whom it speaks. However, "when an individual finds something important and valuable, he inescapably calls for an existing system of values, so that, through the individual activity of the collector, collective values and a tendency to preserve them by collecting objects which testify about them are reaffirmed" (Bulatović and Lukić 2015:180). Though Baudrillard (1994:12) speaks about the fact that a collection is always devoted to itself (it is invariably oneself that one collects), narratives are never exclusively personal but also inseparably linked with wider historical, cultural, and social contexts, so that the collector, by telling his story, always speaks of a multitude of phenomena pertaining to its history, society, and culture. It tells us that collecting should be approached as "an intricate epistemological problem which is at the same time a political hybrid, complex, since we cannot negate it as ethically insignificant and politically irrelevant" (Radić 2012).

In the narrative of coming into being of this photo album as a collection of photographic reality, the photographs gain a specific and quite different meaning, their nature is redefined, and the process of redefining becomes "an event where the collector, by developing a narrative, transforms objects into signs" (Radić 2005:203). The photographs of the pioneers are, above all, photographs of playful children in very pleasant surroundings dominated by a cheerful atmosphere. It could be said that the photographs created a utopian world of Pioneer City in the photo album. However, "the naturalness of the world apparently revealed in front of a camera is a mere delusion since objects in front of camera have already been used in the creation of meaning, and the photograph has no choice, it must deal with those meanings" (Burgin [1982] 2016:53).

A photograph is still a certain statement, it either carries a message or it is one (Sekula 2016:90). Photographs gain authority with their supposed truthfulness, and hence are considered to be testimonies, irrefutable evidence that something did happen, but, photographic patronage over reality being just a slide of fragments of (captured) reality, a photograph would, in that sense, represent a fragmentary testimony (Sontag [1977] 1982:73).

In perceiving the photo album as a reflection of Pioneer City, we encounter problems in defining these two equally real and, at the same time, equally unreal spaces. On the one hand, Pioneer City is a concrete place where the past has its own embodied utopia, whereas the photo album, as its reflection, though being a material, a photographically justified testimony, it is in fact a space which is "completely other compared to all the arrangements which it reflects and speaks

of” (Foucault [1967] 2005:31). Approaching “places within space as places within time” (Božić Marojević 2015:44), Pioneer city is interpreted as a concrete place with visible remnants of the past, inseparable from “human fate, experiences, and memories,” whilst the photo album of the pioneers is a space which can be “remeasured and remodelled, a space which contains a potential of planning the future” (Božić Marojević 2015:45). The intertwining of temporal and spatial elements in the Photo album could be explained with a concept of heterotopia found in the essay *Of Other Spaces* by Michel Foucault ([1967] 2005). The other space or heterotopia can be understood as a place out of place, but whose location can still be really determined (Foucault [1967] 2005:31). It could be stated that the photo album showcases Pioneer city from 1963, but being its reflection, it is in fact much more than that.

Thinking about the memory, the potential of ‘our’ photo album is based on the research of Jan and Aleida Assmann. Acknowledging the social dimension of memory by Maurice Halbwachs⁸, Jan Assmann nevertheless emphasizes that the individual is the one who is endowed with memory. Communities have no memory but they define it for their members, who cannot reach it without knowing it (J. Assmann [2005] 2011:33-35). Individual and collective memory is always intertwined in a man (A. Assmann [2006] 2011:20-21). In our case, we can discuss the memory of pioneers as a sort of a generational memory whose horizon spans within the generation and is consolidated through interaction. Essentially, generational/social memory can circulate for three generation at most, as long as the bearers of memory live (A. Assmann [2006] 2011:25-30). Although this kind of memory relies on mediums such as photo albums, Aleida Assmann ([2006] 2011) considers this kind of medium “unable to expand the range of living memory.” It most likely is not, but what happens with the memory span of a photo album when it *finds itself* in an institution (of public memory) which guarantees its continuance and enables its communication? In that case, a photo album, as a model of memory, becomes a *symbolic medium*, a material representation of cultural memory whose firmness and permanence is enabled by a museum.

From today’s point of view, when photography is omnipresent, dominant and doesn’t represent a special or rare kind of gift, the justified question is why did we give this study so much space? Well, immediately after the war, the function of society’s transformers originally had an apparatus for agitation and propaganda founded by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The tasks of the newly established institution were diverse, but from the perspective of ideology kind of uniformed. From the organization of cultural life in cities and villages, through the control of work at the university, to the planning of the repertoire in the theater - the essence was the same

8 — Maurice Halbwachs was a French philosopher and sociologist known for developing the concept of collective memory.

- to propagate communism with all means of mass culture. In that world, photography, as a language of visual communications, gained a prominent position (Todić 2005:23-26). Utopian tendencies in the representation of the ideal society were accompanied by numerous celebrations and events held in honor of important dates, i.e. milestones towards a revolutionary society. Photography, as the faithful notary of these events, was suitable for selecting images, for manipulating reality (Todić 2005:35). However, photographic testimony can never identify events because there can be no evidence of an event until the event itself is named and characterized. What constitutes an event is determined by ideology (Sontag [1977] 1982:27-28). Events in Pioneer City can be interpreted as one kind of communist consciousness. Participation in events leads to the development of communist consciousness in children, that is, the identification of the world view according to the communist matrix. Bearing in mind that this is a monolithic ideology, the totalitarian regime was creating a picture of itself, embodied in the cult of Communist leader Josip Broz Tito, i.e. they were creating an image/pattern for all layers of society.

Communicating the potential of the photo album is within the hands of the Museum of Yugoslavia but it can also be a part of future Pioneer City's heritological development. In that sense, nostalgia could be a relevant precondition for the potential communication of the photo album. Nostalgia is personal and collective, an intricate and changeable story with an emotional charge, an ephemeral and fluctuating form of social awareness which oscillates in time and space among various generations (Sontag [1977] 1982:34). When we speak of nostalgia, we are not talking solely about the intimate grief for the irrevocable loss of the past, inasmuch as that past, yearned for by nostalgic people, never truly existed as such. It is "a longing for something that never was, a dream of bygone dreams" (Velikonja [2008] 2010:173). A question which poses itself is whether dreams about dreams are dreamt in museums, or "if a life can be seen, certainly a former one, in a museum, or its antonym – a simulacrum is in fact the legitimate one?" (Bulatović 2014:641).

That nostalgia has latent motivational force of reevaluating not just our case study, but the whole society, since via its active and affective practice social emotions can be understood as "embodied semiotics which stem from dealing with the past" (Bulatović 2014:641). In this manner, by critically evaluating the past, and by understanding the subversive strength of nostalgia, it becomes active in the present as well as a process which faces the future (Boym 2001).

Concluding Remarks and Future Perspectives

As a part of our project activities, a very constructive workshop⁹ was held in Belgrade, in April 2017. The workshop began by defining goals and non-goals, i.e. what we really want to do within Pioneer City, what the possible future of this space is and what the things we would like to prevent from happening are. Around 20 participants from various fields set the distinct goals in the following way:

- 1 — Valorisation of Pioneer City as a cultural heritage;
- 2 — Space activation by introducing potentially new contents;
- 3 — Networking with the local community.

As far as the non – goals, we pointed out:

- 1 — Monopoly of some public enterprises that are currently situated in the main building;
- 2 — Possible privatization of the Pioneer City complex;
- 3 — Non-transparency in the decision-making on the future of the complex.

This workshop also helped us recognize the competent institutions: the Government of the City of Belgrade, the Secretariat for Youth and Sport; the existing Pioneer City recreational centre; the City Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments and the Republic Institute for the Protection of Cultural Monuments. In addition, we realized that some of them are also partner institutions that could help in the realization of our initiative, such as Pioneer City; the Centre for the Promotion of Science; the Ministry of Education; the Ministry of Culture; the Secretariat for Culture, Čukarica Municipality, the Faculty of Sport and Physical Education Belgrade, the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade; the Department of Art History at the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade and the Faculty of Forestry; while potential partner organizations could be: the Centre for Museology and Heritology, Docomomo, Evropa Nostra, the Serbian Scout Association, the Belgrade Flower Festival etc. A lot of people could benefit if Pioneer City is brought back to life, like the local community, pre-school kids, primary school children and their parents. Considering content, we

⁹ — The workshop was moderated by Iva Čukić, PhD, an architect by vocation and experienced professional in the field of advocacy of public spaces.

had many ideas and some of them included contemporary cultural-art practice, use of space for art residences, workshops for old crafts, sport-recreational activities, eco schools etc. Additionally, we underlined the following activities as important: further scientific research concerning the valorisation of complexes, walking tours as promotional activities, bicycle tours from the city centre to Pioneer City, public debate on the future of the complex - including expert co-operation. What participants particularly emphasized as an advantage in the coming period are the elections for the City Hall of Belgrade because of the opportunity to meet and negotiate with prospective future leaders since they could be interested in gathering political points before the announced 2018 elections. Another benefit would be a celebration or simple annotation of the 70th anniversary of Pioneer City and the opportunity to organize events in partnership with the mentioned institutions, organizations and users to reaffirm the potential of this complex.

As it was already been pointed out, Košutnjak is a place with many identities. Due to its effect of an 'air spa' in the nineteenth century there used to be a sanatorium for children which served as a place for recovery and general health improvement. It also served as the court hunting grounds in the time of Duke Miloš Obrenović. During the Second World War, German military headquarters for South-Eastern Europe were situated in Košutnjak. Then there was a socialist utopian children's city. In the 1990s it became an abandoned and partly functional facility which refugees used as shelter. Today it is a sports-recreational centre with a functional space for children's activities, though it should be emphasized that within the complex there is a kindergarten, parking service public enterprise, cafes and a multitude of unused, derelict pavilions, as well as an unmarked monumental heritage i.e. sculptures.

Pioneer City needs to be (re)branded. Therefore, our suggestion relies on the common need to use and transform the potential Pioneer City contains, by treasuring, at the same time, all the identity layers of the place. The transformation should be a process of adapting the space into contemporary context, respecting the very core values that it has created in the past. In observing Pioneer City as a social, political, and architectural fact of an era, it is vital to examine the gap which came into being in the meantime so that we could understand its quietness in the present and try to change its status of a forgotten city.

Although its original utility has been lost, Pioneer City has a vast potential which could be used creatively. It should become an activated space of communication with a (desirable) reconstruction and revalorization, above all, as a place of memory. At the same time, this gigantic space, thanks to the significance it bears from the period of the former Yugoslavia, could be a part of the Belgrade tourist offer. Moreover, Pioneer City, could offer, among other things, a model for organization of children's lives. Possible sustainable models could be different forms of educational

platforms for schools, like ecological gardens, that could include a lot of participants from various targeted groups. Likewise, it could serve as a platform for the creation of new artistic spaces that could become a part of a network for contemporary cultural events, and thus be used as a meeting point for various occasions according to what the society needs at any given moment. All of these models emphasize the ideas and arguments directed at enriching the quality of community life, which does not necessarily include arguments facing the economic aspect.

In the times to come, we are hoping that researchers, experts and decision makers are going to be inspired by our work to further develop potential models of sustainable maintenance as well as fruitful initiatives able to bring Pioneer City back to life.

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MODELLING PUBLIC SPACES IN CULTURE

Rethinking Institutional Practices in Culture
and Historical (Dis)Continuities

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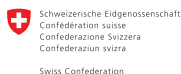
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