Southern Constellations: Other Histories, Other Modernities

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Cultural and artistic production in Yugoslavia between 1945 and 1991 is usually interpreted and contextualized within the Eastern European art historical narrative. This narrative was largely constructed after 1989, and it was only then the international art world started to become interested in it. If we take, for example, the 1989 exhibition *Magiciens de la Terre* in Paris, which was one of the first exhibitions in the West to exhibit "global art" on an alleged "equal footing", we see that the number of artists represented from Eastern Europe[1] was quite small. It was only some years later that Eastern European artists, curators and theoreticians started developing their own locally-rooted narratives and histories; or in other words, they started to reflect[2] on the specific context of art in Eastern Europe. This way they also changed the prevailing image of the typical Eastern European artist, who was no longer seen as an "incompletely developed Westerner". But the difference between Western and Eastern European art was not a matter of different styles and canons. This difference (besides the different political and economic ideologies) was related primarily to the art system, to the conditions of art production and access to official (art) histories. However, the distance between East and West was actually smaller than the difference "between modernism, as a provincial (and exceptional) European conceit, and the art of every other place in the world, especially former colonies".[3]

As for socialist Yugoslavia, there existed another "story" (even though it became largely forgotten after the 1990s), one that was different from that of Eastern Europe – a network that was politically propagated on the basis of Yugoslavia's foreign relations with the Third World. Yugoslavia was a specific case in socialist Europe. The political machinery realized already in the 1950s that balancing the two opposing Cold War blocs would be a better guarantor of security than would membership in one of the blocs. Subsequently, the policy of peaceful co-existence became a new international orientation, and Yugoslavia started to align itself predominately with Third World countries or the Global South. With Yugoslav membership in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the alliance's first conference in 1961 staged in Belgrade, the concept of non-alignment came to constitute the main component of the country's foreign policy.

Yugoslavia used its specific geopolitical position extensively in the economic sphere, as well as in culture. A special committee was established after the Second World War called the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, which arranged exhibitions outside Yugoslavia's borders and was chaired by the surrealist writer and artist Marko Ristić. Cultural conventions and programs of cultural cooperation[4] included not only Western and Eastern Europe, but also non-aligned countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. These exchanges touched on all levels of cultural production. However, architecture, urban planning and industrial design had a special, somehow different status, and were considered state-sponsored

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1 Marina Abramović, Erik Bulatov, Braco Dimitrijević, Ilya Kabakov, Karel Malich, Krzysztof Wodiczko.

2 See Boris Groys, "Back from the Future", *Third Text*, Vol. 17, no. 4 (2003). Groys says that those who refuse to contextualize themselves will be implanted into context by someone else and will then run the risk of no longer recognizing themselves.

3 Katy Siegel, "Art, World, History", in: *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* (Munich: Haus der Kunst & Prestel, 2017), p. 49. (Catalogue).

4 See Teja Merhar's study »Mednarodno kulturno sodelovanje Jugoslavije z državami članicami gibanja neuvrščenih« in this catalogue.

vehicles of the new modernist tendencies that were compatible with the idea of creating a new socialist society.

These ideas were also in line with similar issues that the non-aligned countries frequently addressed, like the question of cultural imperialism, which consequently saw cultural equality come to form one of the important principles of the NAM. Seen and interpreted from today's point of view this quest also envisioned new kinds of historicization, rewriting historical narratives or even writing history anew; in other words, real emphasis was put on questioning epistemic colonialism and cultural dependency. However, this was not really the case in socialist Yugoslavia; after the Second World War the main orientation in arts and culture largely followed the Western epistemic canon. So, the point of departure for us is this: how did those contacts with other modernities, those "cross-fertilizations"[5] affect the cultural landscape in Yugoslavia, and what seeds remain from such encounters?

Dipesh Chakrabarty suggests Europe appears different when seen from (within) the experience of colonization.[6] Perhaps these contacts between the formerly colonized and the new post-war Yugoslavia, unaffected by colonialism, had the potential to produce different histories (different modernisms, arts, narratives etc.) that could extend beyond the Eurocentric ones. But in order to do so they would have to "think with a difference", a difference that would destabilize universalist idioms, historicize the context and pluralize the experiences of modernity.[7] Was that really so?

Yugoslavia and the Third World

To better understand the relations between Yugoslavia and the Third World we have to go back in time almost 100 years. There was a growing fascination among Yugoslavia's cultural circles with faraway places already in the late 1920s. However, few Yugoslavs travelled to exotic places, largely because Yugoslavia was not a colonial[8] country and as such had no colonial experience. In this regard it shared an anti-colonial consciousness with African and Asian countries. It is interesting, however, to note that there were Yugoslavs studying in France that showed a particular interest in Africa; many of them belonged to the surrealist circles, including Rastko Petrović, an avant-garde writer, poet and diplomat who travelled to Western Africa in 1929. His book *Africa*[9] is a record of that journey. The book was in some ways a typical product of the era, written from the perspective of a white European male, based on pre-conceived colonial knowledge and stereotypes about Africa. Petrović nevertheless attempted to answer the question what it meant to be a "European Other" in Africa; or to put it in a somewhat larger frame, what it meant at the time to be a European "from a margin of European modernity".

Another important Paris encounter unfolded in 1934, when Petar Guberina, a PhD student of linguistics at the Sorbonne, met Aimé Césaire. Guberina invited Césaire to his native Šibenik that same year, and it was there that Césaire started writing his famous epic poem "Notebook

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5 Leopold Sedar Senghor, *Prose and Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), pp. 53–55. In addition to "other modernities", this includes also the Western one.
6 Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), p. 16.
7 Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar, "On Alternative Modernities", in: Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (ed.), *Alternative Modernities* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2001), p. 14.
8 "Colonial paradigm" is actually problematic, as Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, the Balkans etc. cannot really be treated as colonies. See for example Maria Todorova's argument in her article "Balkanism and Post-Colonialism, or On the Beauty of the Airplane View", *Zgodovinsksi časopis (Historical Review)* (Ljubljana) no. 61 (2007), pp. 141–155.
9 Rastko Petrović, *Afrika* (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1955).

of a Return to the Native Land", which was one of the first expressions of the concept of negritude. Not surprisingly, the preface was written by Guberina. Another figure in that circle was Léopold Senghor, who later became President of Senegal and travelled to Yugoslavia on an official state visit in 1975. Senghor was known for his more revolutionary approach to culture than his fellow writers. In his speech at the First International Congress of Black Writers in Paris in 1956[10] he pointed out: "Cultural liberation is the condition sine qua non of political liberation". A few years later Guberina published a book *Following the Black African Culture*, in which many of Césaire's and Senghor's thoughts on culture resonated. In what sounded much like Senghor's Paris speech he wrote: "Black cultural workers, although there were few, have manifested a multifaceted function of culture and used it as a powerful weapon against colonization. Cultural workers have become political workers and vice versa."[11] At the time, the writings of many political theoreticians and philosophers from former colonies in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Yugoslavia shared the common notion that culture was a form of resistance to domination. Sékou Touré (Guinea) presented a paper at the Second Congress of Black Writers and Artists in Rome in 1959 in which he offered: "It is not enough to write a revolutionary hymn to be part of the African revolution; one has to join with the people to make this revolution".[12] This "combative culture" was also visibly in the foreground at the Pan-African Festival of Algiers in 1969 with the slogan: "African culture will be revolutionary or will not be!" There Frantz Fanon's ideas were cited widely. Amílcar Cabral (Guinea-Bissau) wrote that people are only able to create and develop the liberation movement because they keep their culture alive, despite the continual and organized repression of their cultural life and because they continue to resist culturally, even when their political and military resistance is destroyed.[13] A similar manifestation of revolutionary ideas put into practice was Partisan art, a specific type of cultural production in Yugoslavia during the Second World War. Partisan art broke with prevailing art practices and began something different, something new. Not only did it involve "the masses" in the process of artistic creation; art was an essential part of the resistance movement and the social revolution.

Generally speaking, Yugoslavia fit well into the discourse of the Third World and the non-alignment scheme. Socialist anti-imperial revolutions had a lot in common with anti-colonial ones, which made the Yugoslav case of emancipation in the context of socialism particularly significant. It was no coincidence then that the Yugoslav delegation was invited to attend the first Asian socialist conference in Rangoon (Burma) in 1953.

The 1960s also saw the rebirth of a specific travel literature about "exotic places", the most prominent example of which was the work of Oskar Davičo – not surprisingly another surrealist writer and politician who visited Western Africa on the occasion of the preparations for a meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement. He wrote a book about the journey called *Black on White,* in which he analyzed African post-colonial societies of the time. Davičo, a very different observer than Petrović, did not want to be seen as a white man in Africa; what is more, he was even ashamed of his whiteness, saying that if he could change the color of his skin he would have done so without regret: "Yes, I am white, that is all the passers-by see. If only I could wear my country's history digest on my lapel!"[14]

10 Co-organized by Guberina.
11 "Tragom afričke crnačke culture", *Polja* (Novi Sad) no. 55 (September 1961), p. 16.
12 Cited in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), p. 145.
13 "Return to the Source: Selected Speeches by Amilcar Cabral" (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1983), p. 60.
14 Oskar Davičo, *Črno na belem, Potopis po Zahodni Afriki* (Ljubljana: Prešernova družba, 1963), p. 6.

A number of books on colonialism were written in Yugoslavia, such as Vera Nikolova's *Colonies Then and Now* in 1954. Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* was translated into Slovene as early as 1963, only two years after it was originally published in France. There are many such instances, too many to mention within the scope of this text. However, the most significant component in the relationship between Yugoslavia and the Third World was without a doubt Yugoslavia's identification with and support of anti-colonial struggles globally, and its membership in the NAM, which also became an important part of the Yugoslav Constitution.[15]

Unlike the many colonial narratives, as Ana Sladojević[16] pointed out, Yugoslavia had never asserted itself as a nation or culture that worked to "civilize" others (which basically consists in the notion that colonization brings civilization and culture to those who are still in the pre-modern stage). Instead, it cultivated and maintained the notion of itself as the culture/nation that aimed to help others establish a position in a role that had yet to be created and clearly defined (the "older brother" paradigm, which is also problematic from today's perspective).

Non-Aligned Internationalism

Yugoslav membership in the NAM[17] was initially distinctly political; it represented a quest for alternative political alliances, for "alternative mondialization".[18] On the other hand it also had and pursued a pragmatic agenda. The movement soon acquired an economic dimension and created new spheres of interest and exchange between Yugoslavia and the non-aligned countries. In the early stages, intense economic collaboration saw Yugoslav construction companies[19] working on projects in Africa and the Middle East, companies that had sprung up as a consequence of Yugoslavia's rapid urbanization following the Second World War. Some younger generation architecture scholars have looked into the development of this brand of modernity from a new perspective. Dubravka Sekulić has done research on the ways Yugoslavia and the decolonized countries in Africa became unexpected allies in the process of trying to articulate how one could be modern by one's own rules, i.e. how to direct one's own modernization process. Examples of such a process include the above-mentioned architecture and urban-planning projects in various non-aligned African and Arab countries, where the architects combined a specific Yugoslav modernism with "tropical" and international modernisms that observed and respected local contexts. Such ideas and practices were eagerly accepted in the newly-independent non-aligned countries. It is also worth mentioning that in 1975 Yugoslavia established a Solidarity Fund for the developing non-aligned countries, designed to provide them with significant financial aid.

But what did the Third World actually mean, what did it represent? According to First World Western interpretations, the Third World was a group of economically under- or undeveloped countries from the peripheries, many of them former colonies. On the other hand, the Third World was also understood as a political project and carried a significant emancipatory

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15 Yugoslav Constitution 1974.

16 Ana Sladojević, *Slike o Africi / Images of Africa* (Belgrade: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 2015), p. XV.

17 For more on the NAM and Yugoslavia, see recent texts by Zoran Erić, Tvrtko Jakovina, Gal Kirn, Nataša Mišković, Maroje Mrduljaš, Bojana Piškur, Srećko Pulig, Dubravka Sekulić, Ana Sladojević, Ljubica Spaskovska, Dejan Sretenović, Vladimir Jerić & Jelena Vesić.

18 Srećko Pulig, https://www.portalnovosti.com/kako-su-se-kalili-nesvrstani, accessed on 25. 9. 2018.

19 See Dubravka Sekulić's project at the exhibition *Southern Constellations: the Poetics of the Non-Aligned*.

message – it "enabled the powerless to hold a dialogue with the powerful".[20] The reasons for the decline of the Third World, which go all the way to the 1970s, are well known, with the world's superpowers playing a pivotal role, as did the IMF-driven globalization. Nor is it any coincidence that the demise of the Third World also coincided with the crisis in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, which resulted in war and the dissolution of the country in 1991.

Culture was accorded particular importance in the NAM, despite the fact that it never took center-stage at summits and conferences. NAM's cultural politics strongly condemned cultural imperialism[21] and encouraged cultural diversity and cultural hybridity. Western (European) cultural heritage was to be understood in terms of "juxtaposition"[22]; this heritage would be interwoven with and into the living culture of the colonized, and would not simply be repeated under new (political) circumstances. For this reason a "cross-national appreciation for cultural heritages" and a local-to-local approach was extremely important. Here we could well paraphrase Achille Mbembe, in that it was important not only to generate one's own cultural forms, institutions etc., but also to translate, fragment and disrupt realities and imaginaries originating elsewhere, and in the process place those forms in the service of one's own making.[23]

Subsequently in the West, "non-Western"[24] cultural expressions were almost always either interpreted as traditional, ethnographic and pre-modern or as something that had yet "to catch up with" the Western art canon. Césaire was quite direct in his writings on the consequences of colonialism on the cultural heritage of the colonized people. The colonial project was not only economic-military in nature, but also affected the colonized via apparatuses of knowledge, and in this way diminished the significance of their culture and cultural production. Vijay Prashad has comprehensively analyzed the way the regimes in the new nations adopted the Enlightenment's scientific heritage without any discussions of its cultural implications.[25] This was problematic, he asserts, as the "machine was not neutral". It could also be added that this was not only the case with the scientific heritage, but applied equally to the artistic heritage as well.

At the AICA (International Association of Art Critics) General Assembly of 1973 in Yugoslavia (Zagreb, Ljubljana, Belgrade, Dubrovnik), art critic Célestin Badibanga from Kinshasa very clearly asserted that AICA had to move beyond the Eurocentric tendencies in art. His demand for decolonization in art was to be understood in the light of a Zaïrean doctrine of the time called *L'authenticité*.[26] Many NAM countries, especially in Africa, used art as a political instrument, as we have seen above. UNESCO also produced a number of cultural policy studies written by experts from Third World countries around the idea of developing their own cultural models. *L'authenticité* was probably one of the most extreme of them. But the point behind all these discussions and cultural policies was to acknowledge

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20 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations. A People's History of the Third World* (New York, London: The New Press, 2007), p. xviii.
21 Speech by President Tito at the 6th Conference of the Non-Aligned Countries in Havana, Cuba, in 1979, where he spoke of the "resolute struggle for decolonization in the field of culture." At the 5th Conference in Colombo in 1976, Libya introduced a draft resolution where it introduced facts of how the country was deprived of its "human cultural heritage" as a result of colonialism.
22 See Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, p. 82.
23 See Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, 'Introduction', in: Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall (eds.), *Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis* (Durham N.C.: Duke University Press, 2008).
24 "Non-Western" is a term constructed in the West; nowadays the euphemism "art of the world" is frequently used
25 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, p. 90. Machine as one of the instruments of cultural transformation that was brought to a space whose own cultural history had not prepared them for this new device.
26 L'authenticité was a doctrine that aimed to erase all traces of Belgian colonialism in art and culture in Zaire.

cultural diversity without placing art and culture on a hierarchical scale of civilization[27] and instead open up a “conversation across differences”. So we can suggest that this was actually a case of specific internationalism, a cross-cultural experience of “provincialized modernisms”.[28] Despite the fact that NAM countries were highly culturally diverse, the newly established contacts and exchanges provided fertile ground for debates on the relationship between the globally dominant Western culture and other cultures.[29] To name but a few, in 1985 the Gallery for the Art of the Non-Aligned Countries in Titograd, Yugoslavia organized a symposium entitled “Art and Development”, where more than 40 representatives from 21 NAM countries took part. They discussed “strengthening cooperation, the dissemination of knowledge, mutual rapprochement and better acquaintance of art and culture of the non-aligned and developing countries”.[30] Ten years later in Jakarta, on the occasion of the exhibition *Non-Aligned Nations Contemporary Art Exhibition*, the seminar “Unity in Diversity”[31] was organized, where the presentations and debates were very different from those in Titograd, tackling concepts such as southern perspectives in art and the South as a place of change and solidarity. The question of the contemporary art of the NAM countries (an “alternative view on how to understand contemporary art”) was discussed, and the idea of a universalist modernism and linear development in art was rejected. The seminar pointed out some important directions. For example, it emphasized that local conditions and socio-cultural backgrounds had caused modernism to take on different forms in different places,[32] as well as the idea that the contemporary art of the South was a sign of the liberation of Third World art. Among the participants at the seminar were Geeta Kapur, Mary Jane Jacob, David Elliott, Nada Beroš, T.K. Sabapathy, Jim Supangkat, Kuroda Raiji, Apinan Poshyananda and others.

Cultural Manifestations in the Non-Aligned World

From the late 1950s onward, exchanges of all sorts were happening in arts and education in Yugoslavia (students from non-aligned countries came to study in Yugoslavia; according to some records, as many as 40,000 students[33] at the university in Belgrade alone). Museums acquired various artifacts – the Museum of African Art opened in Belgrade in 1977 as a result of the prevailing ideological and political climate. Not only were ethnographic museums created and developed, but also museums of history, such as the former Museum of the Revolution of the Yugoslav Nations,[34] which became the steward of a large number of artifacts – gifts President Tito received on his travels in the non-aligned countries or that were given to him by foreign politicians. In the visual arts, the International Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana had already become internationally recognized back in the 1950s as a manifestation that exhibited “basically everything, the whole world”, especially after the first

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27 Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Legacies of Bandung: Decolonization and the Politics of Culture”, in: *Postwar: Art Between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945–1965* (Munich: Haus der Kunst, Prestel, 2017), p. xx. (Catalogue).

28 See Okwui Enwezor's notion in “Questionnaire: Enwezor”, *October* 139 (Fall 2009), p. 36.

29 For a more thorough analysis of this relationship, see Rasheed Araeen, “Our Bauhaus Others’ Mudhouse”, *Third Text* Vol. 3, no. 6 (Spring 1989).

30 Galerija umjetnosti nesvrstanih zemalja, “Osnovna dokumentacija”, Titograd, 17.12.1981, spiral bound.

31 The transcripts of some of the discussions of the seminar are accessible at: Geeta Kapur and Vivan Sundaram Archive at Asia Art Archive: https://aaa.org.hk/en/collection/search/archive/another-life-the-digitised-personal-archive-of-geeta-kapur-and-vivan-sundaram-geeta-kapur-manuscripts-of-essays-and-lectures/object/the-recent-developments-of-southern-contemporary-art-avant-garde-art-practice-in-the-emerging-context .

32 Jim Supangkat, “Contemporary Art of the South”, in: *Contemporary Art of the Non-Aligned Countries: Unity in Diversity in International Art. Post-Event Catalogue*, (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka, Project for the Development of Cultural Media, Directorate General for Culture, Department of Education and Culture, 1997/1998), p. 26.

33 Ana Sladojević, *Slike o Africi*, p. 18. This number most likely refers to the period of Yugoslav membership in the NAM, between 1961 and 1991.

34 Today Museum of Yugoslavia.

conference of the non-aligned countries in 1961. More than 43 countries participated (10 from the NAM) at the 1963 biennial, and over 60 countries (25 from the NAM) took part in the 14th biennial in 1981.

The basis of all manifestations, exchanges, exhibitions and other events was the cultural conventions and programs[35] that Yugoslavia signed with other non-aligned countries. As Teja Merhar shows in her research, these exchanges were numerous, and even though comparatively little is known about them today, they were not insignificant. Yugoslav artists regularly exhibited at the biennial in Alexandria, at the São Paulo Biennial, at Triennale India in New Delhi, while artists from the NAM countries exhibited at the International Biennial of Graphic Arts in Ljubljana, in the Josip Broz Tito Gallery for the Art of the Non-Aligned Countries, at the international exhibitions (in 1966, 1975, 1979 and 1985) organized under the auspices of the United Nations at the Art Gallery in Slovenj Gradec,[36] as well as at many smaller venues and events around the country.

However, in spite of all these exchanges and events, only one art institution was established directly under the auspices of the NAM. The Josip Broz Tito Gallery for the Art of the Non-Aligned Countries was inaugurated in Titograd, Yugoslavia[37] in 1984, with the aim of collecting, preserving and presenting the arts and cultures of the non-aligned and developing countries. The document was adopted at the 8th summit in Harare, Zimbabwe a couple of years later, where the gallery was to become a common institution for all of the NAM countries. The activities of the gallery were many: alongside collecting works from the NAM countries they also organized exhibitions, symposia and residencies, and produced publications and documentary films. Works from the collection were also shown in Harare, Lusaka, Dar es Salaam, Delhi, Cairo and elsewhere.[38] Unfortunately, their aim to create a Triennial of Art from the NAM countries was never realized owing to the wars in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.

According to the Yugoslav press[39] the collection was primarily considered a “heritage of other cultures”, and “one of a kind in the world”. Raif Dizdarević, the Yugoslav Federal Secretary of Foreign Affairs stressed in the catalogue’s introduction[40] that artificial divisions into “major” and “minor” cultures, into “metropolitan” and “peripheral” cultures, as well as arbitrary hierarchies of values imposed by certain cultural models should be overcome. It appears there was something of a lack of understanding of such “provincialized modernisms” in Yugoslavia at the time, and an especial lack of firmer positions regarding other cultures in relation to (Western) modernism. Some prominent Yugoslav art historians[41] saw the collection as comprised of works of “not affirmed artists from faraway exotic places”, as “works from authoritarian states that support official art”.

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35 Yugoslavia signed cultural conventions and/or programs with the following non-aligned members and observers: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Cambodia, North Korea, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Syria, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Guyana, Jamaica, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Costa Rica, Paraguay, Mexico, Colombia, Uruguay, Venezuela, Salvador, Egypt, Sudan, Guinea, Ghana, Tunisia, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mali, Senegal, Nigeria, Algeria, Congo, Kenya, Uganda, Morocco, Libya, Angola, Mauretania, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Zambia, Zaire.

36 Today Koroška galerija likovnih umetnosti (The Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art Koroška).

37 Today Podgorica, Montenegro. The collection has been part of the Contemporary Art Centre of Montenegro since 1995.

38 For more information about the collection see *Umjetničke zbirke Centra savremene umjetnosti Crne Gore* (Podgorica: Centar savremene umetnosti Crne Gorte, 2010), (an introduction in English).

39 See Galerija umjetnosti nesvrstanih zemalja, “Osnovna dokumentacija”, Titograd, 17. 12. 1981, spiral bound.

40 Raif Dizdarević, in: *The Josip Broz Tito Art Gallery of the Non-Aligned Countries* (Titograd: undated), p. 2. (Catalogue).

41 “Nesvrstano ludilo”, a newspaper clipping with a statement by Ješa Denegri, a photocopy in the “Osnovna dokumentacija”, Titograd, spiral bound, undated.

It is true that the gallery was a political project from the beginning, and the acquired works were not always the most representative works of a particular artist.[42] But on the other hand, the collection's potential to challenge the ways the Western art operates and produces hegemonic narratives/canons was not particularly well understood, either. Unlike Western colonial museums of the past, the gallery in Titograd acquired "art of the world" solely in the form of gifts and donations, while attempting to develop its own cultural networks and frameworks of knowledge and to combine this with experiences from other parts of the non-aligned world. It is only in the past decade that the collection has started to gain more visibility, especially in the context of post-Yugoslav and post-colonial studies.

Instead of Conclusion

Today, the Non-Aligned Movement is politically speaking considered more or less something of an anachronism. The fate of this unique constellation is probably one of the least understood phenomena of our times, but it is certain that its disappearance from the world's political stage is directly linked to the rise and triumph of neoliberalism, especially after 1989.

Despite the fact that the movement's aims were progressive from the beginning – it envisioned forms of politics that took as their starting point the life of peoples and societies that had been forcibly relegated to the margins of the global economic, political and cultural system – there were many states in the NAM that were in actual fact quite far from embodying and practicing the principles the movement represented. President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania said at the Havana summit in 1979 that "NAM was a progressive movement, but it was not a movement of progressive states."[43] Additionally, the concepts of nation states, identitarian politics, and exclusive national cultures that once carried emancipatory potential are also problematic from today's perspective. Most of the refugees coming to Europe in recent years are from the NAM countries, countries that are currently at war or involved in some kind of armed conflict. The reason for this is NAM's inability to prevent the new global powers from interfering in the territorial and economic integrity of the NAM countries. The question is, then: What has happened with the movement's original principles of peaceful co-existence, respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, non-aggression, non-interference in domestic affairs, equality and mutual benefit?

The exhibition *Southern Constellations: the Poetics of the Non-Aligned* that this catalogue accompanies proposes that the heritage of non-alignment should be given another chance. The works, 26 "cases" from around the world presented in the exhibition deal not only with the past (contextualizing/researching/interpreting various historical constellations such as organizations, events, exhibitions, cultural exchanges, cultural policies) but also look into and examine the present time: Could there be a non-aligned contemporaneity? And if so, what would it be like? Some cases even go – in the utopian spirit – beyond time, such as the project by the Solidarity Museum in Santiago, Chile. Their proposal adopts "the form of invocations of an unfinished past and the possibility of a future that did not take place in history".[44]

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42 The collection includes 1025 works from over 50 non-aligned countries, including many prominent artists, such as Rafikun Nabi, Hussein M. Elgebali, Gazbia Sirry, Saleh Reda, Edsel Moscoso, Roberto Valcarel, Humberto Castro, Suresh Sharma.

43 Vijay Prashad, *The Darker Nations*, p. 113.

44 See the text "No Containment. MSSA, the Museum as Spore" by Daniela Berger, Federico Brega and María Victoria Martínez in this catalogue.

We can then draw a conclusion: The Non-Aligned Movement was a transnational political project with an agenda to "provincialize"[45] universal history. As a result, art and culture in the NAM were largely about politics and history, or to put it differently, they were a way of staking a *claim* to history. It seems the movement was somehow aware of the fact that this was the only way it could enter the world's (cultural) space on an equal footing. There obviously existed a heterogeneous artistic production, a variety of cultural politics and extensive cultural networks which enriched the cultural landscape of the NAM and enabled discussions about the meaning of art outside the Western canon. But in spite of all these substantial expressions there were no specific NAM- related modernisms, no common tissue that could create a new international narrative in art. NAM-inspired Internationalism nevertheless had a significant force, which probably represented one of the movement's greatest potentials, one that is largely forgotten today.

[45] See Dipesh Chakrabarty's argument about "provincializing Europe", especially about writing history. For Chakrabarty, history has always been the history of modern Europe and North America, which is not a universal history, but a provincial history. Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe, Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).