

The Figurative Body in Igor Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*

by Brandi Kulakowski

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of requirements for the degree of Master of Art

Department of Art History, Theory & Criticism
Department of Arts Administration and Policy

The School of the Art Institute of Chicago
2012

Abstract

Contemporary Bosnian artist Igor Bošnjak's video, *The Anatomy Lesson* (2010), uses Rembrandt van Rijn's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* (1632) as its base image, but with a new twist. Bošnjak superimposes animated faces and sound clips of politicians from countries of the former Yugoslavia. Bošnjak's *Anatomy Lesson* utilizes Rembrandt's oil painting and Yugoslavian anti-nationalist author Danilo Kiš's book *The Anatomy Lesson* (1978) to critique the social and political environment of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina via his new media work *The Anatomy Lesson*. This thesis employs Craig Owens's notion of allegory to read both Rembrandt and Kiš's versions of *The Anatomy Lesson* as layers of Bošnjak's allegorical video and to single out the body as a metaphor for both the population and land of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first chapter details the importance of Rembrandt's 1632 *The Anatomy Lesson* in which he shifted the focus of the anatomy lesson tradition from the anatomists to the body. This chapter considers the iconography of Rembrandt's oil painting significant to the politician's placement, the identification of the body at its center as a corpse, and the importance of the anatomy atlas in Bošnjak's work. The second chapter discusses Bošnjak's use of illegal software to argue that this theft of his own medium is a critique of media production by the Bosnian state and links the representation of the dead body to the land and the body's lack of voice with Bošnjak's video *Contemporary Cemeteries* (2010). Bošnjak's piracy and his collage technique in the creation of *The Anatomy Lesson* reflect the fragmentation of Bosnia in both literal and metaphorical ways, and is theorized by employing deliberations on map- and nation-making by Irit Rogoff and Tongchai Winichakul in the third chapter, to say that the borders of present-day Bosnia and Herzegovina fragment its land and population. Here, a discussion on Bošnjak's land artwork *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (2010) ties together the metaphor of land and body as well as Josip Broz Tito's position as Dr. Tulp. Overall, the analyses of *Contemporary Cemeteries* and *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* attempt to clarify the importance of Rembrandt's van Rijn's painting and Danilo Kiš's anti-nationalist literature as they manifest in Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*. Ultimately, this thesis argues that Igor Bošnjak utilizes new and old media and the image of the body to suggest that the nation has become an anatomical theater.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to my three wonderful readers who guided me through this thesis. Many thanks to Iara Boubnova, who encouraged me to consider visual language of media produced in the Balkan region and Eastern Europe. I would like to thank my second reader Rachel Weiss, for her continued interest in my research in Bosnia and help in restructuring this thesis. Finally, I am grateful for Delinda Collier's support of my interest in contemporary Bosnian art throughout my three years at SAIC, her encouragement to reconsider cultural production in Bosnia and Herzegovina in new ways, and her guidance in unraveling the politics embedded within the artworks discussed in this thesis.

My heartfelt thanks go to my incredibly supportive group of colleagues, Celina Guerrero, Laura Caroline Johnson, Becca Schlossberg, and Rachel Wolff for their intelligent responses and constructive criticism during our weekly thesis discussions, and overwhelming support throughout our three years together at SAIC.

I am deeply indebted to Branislav Goranović for his support throughout my time at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, for our ongoing discussions on art in Bosnia and Herzegovina, for acting as my translator during artist interviews, and most importantly, for carrying the countless number of books I acquired amidst my research—the number of which accumulated with each city—across the Balkan mountains.

Table of Contents

Prologue	1
Introduction	10
Chapter 1	15
Chapter 2	24
Chapter 3	36
Conclusion	48
Images	50
Bibliography	59

Prologue

Igor Bošnjak's video *The Anatomy Lesson* (Image 1) responds to the political and social atmospheres in which Bošnjak has lived in throughout his life. This is consistent with much art production in Yugoslavia's history. That being said, a brief outline of art production in Yugoslavia and a short rundown of the six-republic country's political disintegration¹ will offer a better understanding of the lineage of art produced in the former Yugoslavia and its relationship with politics from which Bošnjak's video emerges. After a period of social realist art production in Yugoslavia, artists from the 1950s onward responded primarily to their own generation of artists, often rebuking the previous generations' style. The rise of activist art practices that critiqued society and politics arose from the countries surrounding Bosnia, most notably the New Art Practice movement and Belgrade's TV Gallery and Student Cultural Center. While Bosnia and Herzegovina saw an increase in its cultural production in the 1980s, the Bosnian War sparked an eruption of art creation. Bosnian art historian Nermina Zildžo finds that the most crucial influence on Bosnia's cultural production was the war.² Since then, artists have responded to former Yugoslav leader Josip Broz Tito's never-ceasing influence on Bosnian society and politics.

A figure that is of great influence to Igor Bošnjak's work I discuss in this thesis is prominent Yugoslavian author Danilo Kiš (February 22, 1935–October 15, 1989). During the latter half of Kiš's life Serbia, Croatia, and Slovenia dominated artwork production in

¹ The Socialist Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Slovenia. The Socialist Autonomous Provinces of Kosovo-Metohija and Vojvodina also existed within the Socialist Republic of Serbia's borders.

² Nermina Zildžo, "Burying the Past and Exhuming Mass Graves," *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe* (London: Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design University of the Arts, 2006), 141.

Yugoslavia. The avant-garde and neo-avant-garde was quite lively; these artists utilized various approaches and formed from groups of artists based in major cultural centers in republic capitals. In the 1950s, Bosnia's art scene broke from social realism to a visual language of flatness and geometry. In 1972 the Sarajevo Fine Arts Academy was established and its first generation of artists created performances, installations, and conceptual art. With only minimal growth in the Bosnian art scene, its neighboring countries' cultural scenes were blossoming. Novi Sad and Belgrade in Serbia, Zagreb in Croatia, and Ljubljana in Slovenia were tremendous cultural centers during this time.

Overall, there was a major lack in cultural production in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the nearly fifty years that Yugoslavia took part in the Venice Biennale, Bosnia was represented only twice, by Ismet Mujezinović in 1950 and Braco Dimitrijević³ in 1976. Dimitrijević was part of the New Art Practice, a major art movement that dominated the major cultural hubs of Yugoslavia in the late 1960s and 1970s, which challenged the art system and the artist's role in society and shifted art practice into the city streets. New Art Practice critiqued all forms of conformism, including the art market, state institutions, and institutional bureaucracy. Joining Dimitrijević were Goran Trbuljak, Sanja Iveković, Mladen Stilinović, and Vlado Martek. Protests and social critique were a stimulus for art production in Student Cultural Centers across Yugoslavia, state-funded cultural institutions that offered experimentation and political activism. The 1970s also saw groundbreaking work emerge from the Student Cultural Center⁴ in Belgrade, headed by

³ Despite his birth in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dimitrijević moved to Paris early in his career, making that his permanent home.

⁴ Marina Abramović started her artistic career here and worked closely with Dunja Blažević.

present director of the Sarajevo Contemporary Center for Art (SCCA),⁵ Dunja Blažević. The Student Cultural Center in Belgrade is characteristic of cultural production in Yugoslavia after 1968, a year of heavy protest of the 1965 social, national, and political reforms that had mostly failed. These reforms largely attempted to redistribute power from the central government of Yugoslavia to the six republics. The Student Cultural Center of Belgrade's avant-garde experimentation included performance and new media. Its initiator, Dunja Blažević, is now a mainstay of the Bosnian art scene. The early 1970s saw tremendous growth in the use of video in artmaking, particularly in the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade, and its TV Gallery set a precedent in the region. What started out as a collaboration with Television Belgrade on programs on contemporary art, *Another Art* and *Fridays at 22*, Dunja Blažević turned these programs into a monthly series that came to be called TV Gallery that was broadcast on the Yugoslavian TV network until 1991. Connected to New Art Practice in that it moved away from traditional art making, it was an attempt to democratize art in the region. Blažević explains, "our reaction was against the empty phases about the democratization of culture and art..."⁶ Bošnjak's place in this new-media lineage is significant, as today art academies in Bosnia and Herzegovina do not offer courses in photography, film, video, or any other type of new media.

The 1980s finally saw healthy cultural production in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Young artists included Jusuf Hadžifejzović, Radoslav Tadić, Jadran Adamović, and

⁵ The SCCA started as one of the Soros Centers for Contemporary Art.

⁶ WHW, "Dunja Blažević: Author of TV Gallery," Political Practices of (post-) Yugoslav Art: RETROSPECTIVE 01, exh. cat. (Belgrade: Akademija, 2010), 156.

Živko Gera Grozdanić. The Zvono Group, named after the Zvono café in Sarajevo⁷ was made up of Kemal Hadžić, Biljana Gavranović, Sadko Hadžihasanović, Sejo Čizmić, Narcis Kantardžić, and Aleksandar Saša Bukvić. Together, they represented the most radical art production in Bosnia in the 1980s. Active throughout the former Yugoslavia, the group exhibited and created work in significant public spaces of Sarajevo. The Zvono Group formed in response to the 1970s New Art Practice movement happening in Belgrade and Zagreb. One of Zvono's best-known works was *Sports and Arts* (1986), a performance in which the group ran out onto the field during the half time of a soccer game dressed in the opposing team's colors with easels and canvases to paint in front of the crowd (Image 2). The Zvono artists used the resources at hand, creating from virtually nothing, and attempted to persuade the non-art public to appreciate new forms of art.

Conceptual art was a “late phenomenon”⁸ in Sarajevo, and young artists started out creating analytical paintings before shifting to painting pop art-like allegories.⁹ Overall, artists in Sarajevo were creating work with a “nod to conceptual art, neo-Dada, pop art, arte povera, neoexpressionist German painting, Italian transavanguardia, and the neo-conceptual erasing of borders between high and popular art.”¹⁰ Following the Sarajevo Winter Olympics in 1984, the cultural circle known as the Sarajevo New Primitiv surfaced. The phrase “new primitives” referred primarily to music bands, but infiltrated cultural production from visual arts to music, theater, and literature, and

⁷ The Zvono café became another type of student art center that verged away from the traditional nature of the Art Academy.

⁸ Miško Šuvaković, “Conceptual Art,” *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, eds. Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003), 243.

⁹ Ibid., 242.

¹⁰ Ibid, 242–3.

pointed to the shedding of the “provincial/periphery complex” that was said to plague cultural producers in Sarajevo. New Primitivism was characterized by humor, irony, and cynical distance, stemming from the “backwardness,” implied with one’s upbringing in a rural community, and the boisterous Bosnian about which many made jokes.¹¹ The backwardness represented by Bosnia and Herzegovina shaped the view of art produced until the Winter Olympic Games took place in Sarajevo in 1984.¹²

Soon after those Olympic Games, the Bosnian War acted as a turning point for Bosnia and Herzegovina. While the war was quite complex, at its base it was an ethno-religious war between the Christian Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Bosniak Muslims that was driven by the politicians who fueled these religious/nationalist tensions. It has been said that Tito controlled long-standing ethnic tensions with his Socialist-leaning Communism and iron fist. The capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo, was under siege from 1992 to 1995. During this time, 300 exhibitions took place in the city.¹³ A prominent series of exhibitions titled *Witnesses of Existence* took place in the ruins of the Obala Art Center, and the artists¹⁴ involved in *Witnesses of Existence* utilized the charred and broken remains from the destruction of their city. The broken pieces and ruins of Sarajevo began to mimic the geographical landscape of Yugoslavia, which by

¹¹ Maja Bobar, “Sanjin Jukić,” *ARTEFACTS*, 105.

¹² In fact, in an interview with artist Jusuf Hadžifejzović, he spoke highly of the Olympics as a turning point of Bosnia. In fact, his own version of pop-up galleries and a depot of sorts, Galerija Čarlama, a series of over 30 storefront-turned-exhibition spaces in the Skenderija mall in Sarajevo, as well as the temporary building for the Aers Aevi is located in Skenderija mall, built specifically for the Olympic Games. Unfortunately, the Center’s ragged appearance signals the decimation of the golden 80’s that once were.

¹³ Zildžo, “Burying the Past and Exhuming Mass Graves,” 141.

¹⁴ Artists that participated in *Witnesses of Existence* include Petar Waldegg, Edin Numankadić, Mustafa Skopljak, Radoslav Tadić, and Nusret Pašić, Zoran Bogdanović, and Sanjin Jukić.

then had become six independent states. Bosnia and Herzegovina itself was split into two political entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, divided by the Inter-Entity Boundary Line as drafted into the Dayton Peace Accords by the international community and signed by the three ethnic representatives of then-Yugoslavia. The Dayton Peace Accords still govern Bosnia and Herzegovina. This disintegration of Yugoslavia and the division of Bosnia's land is a major theme in the production of art produced in Bosnia, and lends tremendous significance to much of the work created after the war.

One artist who continually reacts to the environment in which he finds himself is Jusuf Hadžifejzović, who remained in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the war.¹⁵ Although he started out as a minimalist painter, the two modes he continues to work in most are installation and performance, and he frequently uses the materials that surround the space in which his artwork would be displayed. In his early years, Hadžifejzović often set up cafes in exhibition halls of Sarajevo galleries that acted as extensions of the urban environment and also critiqued the authoritative space.¹⁶ He continues to develop his system of installation, the depot. In his depots, Hadžifejzović¹⁷ uses found objects from a specific location to create a site-specific installation to play with the meaning and memory of the site.

¹⁵ He was a student at the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade (1976–80) and then at the Staatliche Kunstakademie in Dusseldorf (1980–82), and returned to Sarajevo in 1984.

¹⁶ Nermina Zildžo, "Burying the Past and Exhuming Mass Graves," 147.

¹⁷ Hadžifejzović was one of the main forces behind the 1987 and 1989 Yugoslav Dokumentas, an exhibition created in response to the mega-exhibition documenta and way to connect Yugoslavia to the international art production. He again attempted this as the initiator of Bosnia and Herzegovina's *Time Machine* biennial held in Tito's atomic shelter in Konjic.

Directly following the war, artists made direct responses to the war and their identification as Bosnian in particular. One token work that can be found in any art history book on East European art is Nebojša Šerić-Shoba's (b. 1968) work *Untitled (Sarajevo Monte Carlo)* (1998), a compilation of two photographs of the artist. In one, he stands in a war trench suited in his camouflage gear. In the other, he stands in the very same pose—his knee up, his right hand resting on his knee—standing at a dock, presumably post-war (Image 3). Although Šerić-Shoba's photographic work depicts both the physical and non-visible transitions of the artist following combat, a more poignant work is his *Monument to the International Community by the grateful citizens of Sarajevo* (2007) (Image 4), a public sculpture of canned food that Sarajevans received as international aid during the war. An inscription on the can's pedestal reads "Monument to the International Community from the Grateful Citizens of Sarajevo." Sarajevans remember this food as an often-expired sustenance that neither cats nor dogs would eat. The sculpture is a critique of the degraded international aid that Sarajevans received during the war. The fact that the work was completed twelve years following the end of the war speaks to the international aid's continual presence in Sarajevo.

Of the same generation is Maja Bajević (b. 1967). In her early works, Bajević often used her own body as a tool through performance. Bosnian art historian and professor Asja Mandić writes of Bajević's use of her body: "[s]he projects the problems of a wide spectrum of existential anxieties related to war trauma, destruction, and the manipulation of truth."¹⁸ Her first performance, *Dressed Up* (1999), projects these

¹⁸ Asja Mandić, "Maja Bajević," *ARTEFACTS: Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 1993–2003*, exh. cat., ed. Asja Mandić (Sarajevo: Ars Aevi muzej savremene umjetnosti, 2007), p. 159.

existential anxieties over six hours in which Bajević cut fabric that had been printed with a map of Yugoslavia, tailored and sewed it to fit her own body before donning the dress (Images 5 and 6). Bajević's cutting and tailoring are a metaphor for the carving of both the former Yugoslavia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the seams represent the scars in the land and on the skin of its population. The placement of the stitched map/dress onto her body creates a direct link of the nation or its land to her body and alludes to the fact that politics affect the personal.¹⁹

Igor Bošnjak is part of a generation in transition; this generation knows nothing of the world their parents speak about, only knowing that its recent past—the disintegration and Yugoslavia and the war—continually affects their present. Artists of this generation, like those Bosnian and Yugoslavian artists before them, continue to respond to the social and political atmosphere that shapes their world and identity. Like Bajević, the theme of the body winds in and out of Mladen Miljanović's (b. 1981) practice, often referencing the body's physical transformation through war. For his project *Occupational Therapy*, Miljanović created the audio-visual installation *Emptiness of Execution* (2008) from balloons that resemble human bodies (Images 7 and 8). The balloons are arranged row by row to represent the mass graves that made up each of the three wars²⁰ in Bosnia and Herzegovina's recent history. The balloons are attached to pipes with motion-activated air compressors strategically placed below each balloon. As a person passes by the

¹⁹ Lana Čmajčanin offers a sarcastic take on the tailoring and sewing of the map of Bosnia and Herzegovina in *Bosnia and Herzegovina – Tailoring and Sewing* (2011). Produced in digital prints of various sizes for billboards, magazine advertisements, postcards, and posters, Čmajčanin offered patterns of Bosnian cantons to create one's ideal Bosnia according to desire, need, national identity, ethnicity, or political or religious affiliation.

²⁰ The Bosnian War of the 1990s, World War II, and World War I.

balloons, each transforms from flat, pressed to the ground to full and erect. The air is audible as it rushes into the balloons as they inflate and spews out as they deflate, mimicking the sound of the breath as it rushes into a body full of life or leaves it as the body's last breath. The viewer activates the air compressors and becomes implicated as the body's giver or taker of life. Other artists deal more directly with the war as in the case of Radenko Milak (b. 1980), who creates series of conceptual paintings such as *And What Else Could You See? I Couldn't See Everything* (2009), a direct answer to the manipulation of media. The oil on canvas series copies American photographer Ron Haviv's photographs that depict a paramilitary soldier during the war just as he has cocked back his leg to kick a woman who lies on a sidewalk in Bijeljina, in northwestern Bosnia and Herzegovina (Image 9). At least, that is what it seems at first. In an interview, a paramilitary soldier asserts that he was merely touching her with his foot to find out whether or not she was alive, and recounts that no one would get close to a person lying on the street because one never knew what weapon one may have in their possession. Of this photo by Ron Haviv, Susan Sontag writes, "In fact, the photograph tells us very little—except that war is hell, and that graceful young men with guns are capable of kicking in the head overweight older women lying helpless, or already killed."²¹ Milak, like Bošnjak, reveals the role of often-manipulated media in our lives.

²¹ Susan Sontag, "Looking at War: Photography's View of Devastation and Death," *The New Yorker* (December 9, 2002), 95.

Introduction

Igor Bošnjak (b. 1981), a young artist from Bosnia and Herzegovina, created a video titled *The Anatomy Lesson* (2010), the base image being Rembrandt van Rijn's (1606–69) *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* from 1632 (Image 10), but with a new twist. Bošnjak superimposes the image with animated faces of politicians from countries of former the Yugoslavia, the most prominent substitution being the visage of longtime leader of Yugoslavia Josip Broz Tito as Dr. Tulp. The politicians hover over the corpse to learn from the “great” Josip Broz Tito who has slit the skin of the cadaver's arm through which he has pulled tendons. Josip Broz Tito, creator of the second Yugoslavia and its president until he died in 1980, lectures to Boris Tadić, the former Serbian President; Stjepan “Stipe” Mesić, the final Yugoslavian President and former Croatian President; Haris Silajdžić, former chairman of Bosnia's state presidency; Milorad Dodik, Prime Minister of the Republika Srpska; and Sulejman Tihić, a leading member of the Party of Democratic Action in Bosnia and Herzegovina.²² Speeches from each of the politicians comprise the audio of the Baroque painting-cum-animation, borrowed from TV shows, the nightly news, and You Tube. This collage technique is blatant in Bošnjak's work and illuminates the manipulation of media by the Bosnian state. While words are clearly spoken in the sound bites, the speeches as a whole are incoherent. This incoherency is Bošnjak's point. The politicians reflect on banal aspects of society and make false promises that leave their words empty and meaningless. That being so, my reading of the cadaver on Tito's exam table is that the image is an allegory that allows

²² I will detail the role of these politicians and their significance in *The Anatomy Lesson* in the first chapter.

shifts in metaphor that reflect the current social and political atmosphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As a framework for this thesis I use Craig Owen's notion of allegory as detailed in his "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism" to allow for the body's shifts in significance I read in Bošnjak's work. Owens writes about the differences in the two languages of allegory—literal and figurative. Considering my focus on the body in Bošnjak's work, the figurative language is operative, as I read Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* and anti-nationalist Yugoslavian author Danilo Kiš's (1935–89) 1978 book *The Anatomy Lesson* as layers of the video. Functioning in multifarious ways for the viewer, I argue that Bošnjak's mute, dissected cadaver on Tito's exam table ultimately becomes a metaphor for the fragmented land of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the division of its population.

The stable background of Bošnjak's work is Rembrandt's Baroque painting, namely the body at its center, the base from which to read this allegory. "In allegorical structure, then, one text is read through another, however fragmentary, intermittent, or chaotic their relationship may be; the paradigm for the allegorical work is thus the palimpsest,"²³ Owens asserts. One layer of Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson* is its reference to the aforementioned book of the same name by Danilo Kiš. The book is Kiš's book-length response to criticism of his previous book, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976), in which he details his literary influences, his writing techniques and concepts, and explains the reasons for writing the book. Kiš's anti-nationalism reveals itself overwhelmingly in

²³ Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, ed. Scott Bryson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 54.

A Tomb for Boris Davidovich, a series of seven “fictional histories” detailing the fate of characters that perished during Joseph Stalin’s Great Terror of the 1930s.²⁴ Set outside of then-Yugoslavia, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* received heavy criticism from the Belgrade literary scene that deemed it plagiarized from various books. Kiš saw the criticism as an anti-Semitic attack, as most of the characters were Jewish, as was their author. *The Anatomy Lesson* predicted the conservative nationalism that would tear apart Yugoslavia in the 1990s, an amazing feat considering it was written in 1978, more than a decade before the war in Yugoslavia.

In the introduction to Danilo Kiš’s English translation of *The Anatomy Lesson*, Susan Sontag writes that Kiš’s “mixed origin” made him “very much a Yugoslav.”²⁵ It is that ‘mixed’ origin that Josip Broz Tito prided himself on in the creation of Yugoslavia. While there are over a dozen ethnicities, the three ethnic majorities are Catholics (Croats), Muslims (now known as Bosniaks), and Orthodox Christians (Serbs), who lived together peacefully under Tito’s reign. Bosnia and Herzegovina is now a microcosm of what Yugoslavia once was, housing ethnic Bosniaks, Croats, and Serbs. In the introduction to Kiš’s *Homo Poeticus*²⁶ Sontag also writes, “As secular, multi-ethnic Bosnia—Yugoslavia’s Yugoslavia—is crushed under the new imperative of one ethnicity/one state, Kiš is more present than ever.”²⁷ Although Sontag wrote her

²⁴ Also known as the Great Purges, Stalin had all of the “enemies of the people” killed, as he believed a military coup was being planned. He purged the part of the military that could overthrow him, amounting to approximately 70,000 men, as well as civilians who had been arrested.

²⁵ Susan Sontag, “Introduction,” *Homo Poeticus*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), viii.

²⁶ The English translation of selections of *The Anatomy Lesson* and series of interviews and Sontag’s selected writings by Kiš.

²⁷ Susan Sontag, “Introduction,” xii-xiii.

introduction in 1995, Kiš's sentiments are overwhelming seventeen years later. The multi-ethnic makeup of both Kiš and Bosnia and Herzegovina is important in considering that the war ended with the creation of the Dayton Peace Accords in 1995. The Accords created Bosnia and Herzegovina's external and internal borders, and remain the current constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Intended as a peaceful solution for Bosnian citizens, the Dayton Peace Accords created the Inter-Entity Boundary Line that separates Bosnia's two political entities, the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. I will discuss the cut on the corpse of Aris Kindt's body as a metaphor for the creation of the map of Bosnia and Herzegovina as related to cultural historian Thongchai Winichakul's concept of the geo-body, in that territory comes to represent the values and practices of its population.

Kiš writes of the fragmentation of his Yugoslavia in a discussion of Rembrandt van Rijn's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* as the visual metaphor of an anatomical incision into his cause, a multi-ethnic Yugoslavia.²⁸ In a lengthy discussion Kiš explains why he conjures Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* as the metaphor in his response to the criticism he received for his series of short stories, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1976). He details the painting's soulless body, crafted from bundles of nerves and flesh in his reaction to the nationalism that he saw aimed at *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. Igor Bošnjak views that incision into the moral and political heart of his country and its citizens and politics. These multifarious layers of Bošnjak's work—from Rembrandt to Kiš to the politicians he has inserted, and the tension between Rembrandt's static corpse and the animated politicians that surround it, is illuminated by

²⁸ Danilo Kiš, *Homo Poeticus*, ed. Susan Sontag (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995), 11.

Bošnjak's manipulation of multiple media within this one work, the still image and the digital animation. In his explanation of allegory, Craig Owens explains that allegory occurs when one text is doubled by another, and explains that the Old Testament becomes allegorical when read as a prefiguration of the New Testament.²⁹ Bošnjak's work is a literal doubling, adding new meaning to Rembrandt's image, and doubling Kiš's use of the image as a metaphor.

Bošnjak's oeuvre is overwhelmed with new media despite his academic training as a painter and Bosnia and Herzegovina's lack of new media academic programs. This language that Bošnjak uses—the way his politicians speak—echoes the visual language of the commercials aired on Bosnian television. The advertisements are filmed in one language while the country's native language is dubbed over the original words spoken. Manipulation of media by the Bosnian state is also highlighted by another video by the artist, *Contemporary Cemeteries* (2010). Both works reveal the silence of the body politic due to the visible lifelessness of the body in Rembrandt's painting and those invisible bodies in *Contemporary Cemeteries*—dead and unable to speak. Those with a voice, like the politicians in *The Anatomy Lesson*, simply do not address the war waged on the country's body politic. Although Craig Owens weighs heavily in my read of Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*, I would like to stress that Bošnjak's medium emanates from the turbulent cultural and economic atmosphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bošnjak's place in it, rather than simply representing the conditions of contemporary Bosnia.

²⁹ Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse," 53.

Chapter 1

Rembrandt's canonical oil painting stabilizes Igor Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*. Seventeenth century anatomy lesson paintings were traditionally group portraits of its commissioners, and the anatomy lesson itself was generally an after thought until Rembrandt's 1632 *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*. Bošnjak's work takes on the significance of Rembrandt's placement of the body, but he posterizes its richly colored Baroque hues. On the one hand, this color scheme could represent the atrocities committed during the war when nothing was black and white. On the other hand, Bošnjak's gray scale makes the work his own. Argentinean artist Carlos Alonso renders his own version of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* that responds to the political and social atmosphere in Argentina during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Both Alonso and Bošnjak use Rembrandt's non-political anatomy lesson to comment on their respective political atmospheres. The use of the body in their work is steeped within their contemporaneous political, economic, and social atmospheres that are characterized by conflict.

The original composition and use of iconography in Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* is a stabilizer for the meaning of Bošnjak's contemporary video. As Francis Barker notes of Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson*, "Aesthetically and ideologically the painting is a palimpsest, layering one set of encratic signs upon another."³⁰ The baroque painter has been credited for changing the composition of the anatomy lesson genre, popular works often commissioned by guilds and civic guards in 17th century Amsterdam, from a group portrait to one in which the corpse is front and

³⁰ Francis Barker, "Into the Vault," *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays On Subjection* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995), 68.

center. More importantly, *this* painting instigated a shift in the position of the corpse itself, shifting the importance from the anatomists to the body.³¹ Art historian Bob Haak writes that Rembrandt adds:

...new form and content to the subject with an ingenuity never before displayed in the history of the group portrait. Rembrandt painted a group of surgeons that deviated in every respect from standard practice. By placing the corpse on an angle, he efficiently and asymmetrically builds up the group of 'students' at the head of the table, while the lecturer, Dr. Tulp, stands in his full dignity and importance, facing them naturally.³²

Dr. Nicolaes Tulp was a surgeon and anatomist as well as a representative of civil authority and held office in the government of Amsterdam. With Bošnjak's placement of Tito as Dr. Tulp, Bošnjak likens the position of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp to that of long-time president of Yugoslavia, Josip Broz Tito. Following World War II, Tito constructed Yugoslavia and kept it united until he died. While each country of the former Yugoslavia holds different views on Tito, the general population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is nostalgic for the time period in which Tito governed their country despite his rule with an iron fist.³³ It is said that Tito kept ethnic tensions under wraps due to his frequent murder and expulsions of extremists. It is thus only fitting that Bošnjak ironically depicts Tito "in his full dignity and importance" to signify him as an intellectual. In addition to Bošnjak's placement of Tito as Dr. Tulp, the iconography of Rembrandt's painting grounds Tito's importance. The chair in which Dr. Tulp sits was said to be placed at the seat of an

³¹ Bob Haak, *The Golden Age: Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*, trans. and ed. Elizabeth Willems-Treeman (New York, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984), 113–14.

³² Ibid.

³³ This is very much a generalization. After many conversations with people living in Bosnia-Herzegovina the nostalgia became extremely prevalent. However, the community of artists there has a more cynical view of Tito's role in their country's history.

ancient king's throne.³⁴ Tito's placement on a throne lends more significance to Tito's lead role in Yugoslavia in an explanation of his presence within Bosnia and Herzegovina today despite his death over twenty years ago.

Rembrandt's positioning of the surgeons in his *Anatomy Lesson* is important to note. The eyes of the third, fourth, and fifth surgeons from the right, Mathys Kalkoen, Jacob de Witt, and Jacob Blok are not focused on the corpse of Aris Kindt, but rather, on the anatomical text, or anatomy atlas, that sits at the lower right of the painting. As historian Francis Barker asserts, their line of sight "only further emphasizes the extraordinary historical contortion by which the body on display has become in an important sense invisible."³⁵ Bošnjak takes the sightline of Rembrandt's anatomists one step further. Each of the politicians—not surgeons—gazes at the viewer and does not look at the body or the anatomical text. The surgeons in Rembrandt's work have become more concerned with the anatomy atlas—a map of the body—rather than the person. The politicians do not look at the body *or* the anatomical text. Rather, the politicians' gazes indicate their unwillingness to listen to their political predecessor and, more importantly, to ignore the body politic.

Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson* is one of the first versions in which the dissection of the body is central to the topic of the painting. Art historian Bob Haak notes, "He also brought to the central theme, the anatomy lesson itself, its first real significance."³⁶ I read Rembrandt's emphasis on the corpse and Bošnjak's refusal to obscure the body as representative of the Bosnian politic and identity. Where Rembrandt's *The Anatomy*

³⁴ Barker, "Into the Vault," *The Tremulous Private Body*, 68.

³⁵ Ibid., 70.

³⁶ Haak, *The Golden Age*, 114.

Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp encourages the viewer to take note of the corpse, Bošnjak demands the viewer to recognize the invisible Bosnian population. Dr. Tulp's anatomical object is the criminal Aris Kindt, who was convicted of armed robbery and hung at the gallows less than thirty-six hours prior to the anatomy lesson. Kindt was hung at the gallows because he committed the crime of theft. Criminals in 17th century Amsterdam were traditionally used for an anatomy lesson in order to "give back" to the society that they stole from. This raises two issues for Bosnia and Herzegovina as evident in Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*, a work in which the body is also obviated. That the dead body of Aris Kindt is a criminal implies that the body politic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is criminal, a stereotype held by many in Western Europe and the United States.³⁷ This stereotype emerges from Bosnia and Herzegovina's corrupt government officials, war criminals, and its black market, and its citizens and the wider Balkan region often internalize this stereotype. The word "Balkan" derives from the mountains of the same name. However, it has come to signify the fragmentation of a society or nation, and the subsequent internationalization of that division within the population's psyche. The internalization is clear in Bosnian artist Bojana Tamindžija's installation *Here. There. Elsewhere. re-examination of presence in necessity and isolation* (2009). *Here. There.* is a commentary on the difficulties in identifying with the state both personally and collectively. Conceptually, the work is in dialogue with Bošnjak's use of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* and the identification of Aris Kindt as a criminal. In her installation, Tamindžija covers the floor with a thin white cloth, under

³⁷ Igor Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson* is also part of his *Balkanization* series, to link literature, recent art production and historic events to which his work responds. The work in this series attempts to explain nationalism as a basic fear.

which lie photographs of events and scenes from the war. A sign on the wall reads “Die Verantwortung,” or “Responsibility” in German. The artist intends for the viewer to contemplate their own responsibility in regards to the atrocities committed during the war. These atrocities lend to the trauma of being identified with and simultaneously governed and divided by the state. Tamindžija’s work centers around the idea that, “The position of victim/criminal is inherited for generations by the mere fact of belonging to a certain collectivity. Any attempt to create a distance towards a uniform national being and its ‘state-forming’ values complicates itself when we understand that, by taking up a critical position, we have fallen into the same trap of identification and a tacit agreement that the greatest legitimacy is granted to the critical speech about crimes and injustices perpetrated by ‘one’s own’ nation.”³⁸ This stereotype of the criminal has been inherited by the body politic from its leaders, as asserted by Tamindžija’s work. In an art historical context, Bošnjak shows that inheritance by using Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* in which a criminal’s body is its base.

Similarly, the control of the anatomists over the body of Aris Kindt as it lies on the operating table reverberates in Bošnjak’s version of *The Anatomy Lesson*. This conjures Michel Foucault’s notion of biopower in that the politicians hovering over the corpse manage an entire population of people. Francis Barker touches on the control evident in Rembrandt’s painting. She writes, “The scene of dissection is thus the exercise of a jurisdiction over the body of Aris Kindt, an act of penal and sovereign domination which is exemplary and substantive, symbolic and material, at one and the same time. It searches out in dramatic and public fashion, and then realizes, corporal meanings which

³⁸ *Exposures*. SpaPort International Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Art, exh. cat. (Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Center for Visual Communications, 2010), 59.

belong to a disposition of power that is fully committed to the wholly present body of the old regime of signification.”³⁹ Barker’s analysis of Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* is significant for this thesis in that the body is owned by the state. The “old regime of signification,”—the art historical iconography of Rembrandt’s painting—is one layer to read Tito’s jurisdiction over Yugoslavia. Each politician in Dr. Tito’s anatomy lesson fights for power over their citizen’s body, yet in its death, the corpse resists the dominance of the state. Akin to the public speeches Bošnjak pulls from YouTube, negotiations of power are aired publicly via media. Bošnjak’s use of the same populist media is apropos considering the role of the media by the Bosnian state, and allows him to comment on the state’s use of video, film, and photographs as propaganda.

The public gathering for the execution and dismemberment of Aris Kindt points to the corpse’s representation of its larger body politic in Bošnjak’s video. Through Rembrandt, Bošnjak’s *The Anatomy Lesson* projects the public dissection of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s land and population. While there are over a dozen ethnicities, the three ethnic majorities are Catholic (Croat), Muslim (now known as Bosniak), and Orthodox Christian (Serb). Today each ethnicity generally lives in its designated region—Serbs in the Republika Srpska, Bosniaks in the Bosnia province of the Federation, and Croats in the Herzegovinian part of the Federation. The division of these ethnicities that were split by the Inter-Entity Boundary Line is represented by Aris Kindt’s corpse in Bošnjak’s *The Anatomy Lesson*.

Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* inspires another *Anatomy Lesson* in which the body is representative of the body politic. Argentinean artist Carlos

³⁹ Francis Barker, “Into the Vault,” 66-7.

Alonso (b. 1929) created four versions of his *Leccion de anatomía*, one in 1969 and three in 1970. Each depicts the body of Ernesto Che Guevara. The first from 1969 is a direct reference to Rembrandt's Baroque painting. A mixed media work of ink, wash, graphite, and collage, only the body of Che Guevara and hands of "Dr. Tulp" appear realistic. Che Guevara's body lies on the table—alive in this version—and Dr. Tulp, complete with his token hat, peers at the viewer. Three other surgeons watch as Dr. Tulp performs the anatomy lesson on the hip of the alive, yet restrained, Guevara (Image 11). Art historian Alejandro Anreus points out that many scholars have discussed various works of Che Guevara's dead body as "christic" and of religious aura, but Che Guevara's body in Alonso's 1969 *Leccion de anatomía* is instead representative of the population. Che's hands even attempt to remove the surgeon's hands from his body. Anreus writes that Che Guevara's dead body, "is not just an indictment of the reasons for his death; it is also the 'political body' of Latin American revolutions, laid out, dismembered and read as betrayed and failed."⁴⁰ The body is, likewise, the only stable part of the work in Alonso's 1969 *Leccion* in that photographs were collaged onto this particular location of the work. Here, Alonso places Dr. Tulp's forceps within Guevara's torso. This *Leccion de anatomía*, like Rembrandt's, indicates a shift from the group portrait of prominent surgeons to the focus on the body of Che Guevara. Alonso's *Anatomy Lesson* from 1970, acrylic on canvas, portrays Guevara dead with his skin splayed open, his ribs exposed, and blood oozes from his body (Image 12). Anreus suggests that here Che's identity transforms from a revolutionary to that of a carcass. Anreus writes that this artwork

⁴⁰ Alejandro Anreus, "Carlos Alonso's Anatomy Lesson," *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art & Culture*, 24, no. 3 (May 2010), 358.

brings to mind another Rembrandt painting, *The Slaughtered Ox* (1655) (Image 13).⁴¹

Anreus's reference to Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* echoes Danilo Kiš's own writing concerning the *Slaughtered Ox* in his book, *The Anatomy Lesson*. The painting depicts an ox carcass that hangs upside down with its flanks spread apart and roped to a thick wooden dowel that hangs from a ceiling out of the painting's plane. Kiš writes that Rembrandt's ox reveals that the body, "apart from its spiritual functions, apart from the soul and the ethical component—is nothing but a digestion machine, a gut bucket, a bundle of intestines and nerves, a mass of veins and flesh, like the skinned ox (in the Louvre) that Rembrandt painted some twenty-three years later: a great hunk of meat hung upside down."⁴² Both references to Rembrandt's *Slaughtered Ox* allude to the objectification of Aris Kindt's body that is transferred from the gallows to the operating table. Like the ox, the objectification of the Bosnian population, as read through theories like Maria Todorova's take on Balkanization⁴³, is perpetuated by the international community governing it as well as those very politicians surrounding the operating table in Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*. The choice to use Rembrandt's *Anatomy Lesson* implies that the nation's politics have been written onto the body of the citizen. For Rembrandt, the identity of the corpse was merely criminal, whereas, through time Aris Kindt's body has become an allegory for the body politic of a nation.

Like Argentinian artist Carlos Alonso, author Danilo Kiš understood Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* as a political metaphor. Igor Bošnjak recognizes Kiš's argument as one that has survived the disintegration of Yugoslavia, and

⁴¹ Ibid., 355.

⁴² Kiš, *Homo Poeticus*, 13.

⁴³ See *Imagining the Balkans* and *Balkan Identity: Nation and Memory* by Maria Todorova.

he utilizes the symbolism and significance of Rembrandt's painting to comment on the current socio-political atmosphere of Bosnia and Herzegovina with his *The Anatomy Lesson*. The identification of the corpse at the center of both works of Aris Kindt as criminal is significant considering Bosnia and Herzegovina's identity as backwards and fragmented. I read Bošnjak's choice to leave the corpse of Rembrandt's painting untouched as intentional. Bošnjak takes Rembrandt's gesture—the shift of the body from periphery to center—to say an anatomy lesson is currently underway.

Chapter 2

In his creation of *The Anatomy Lesson*, Igor Bošnjak pieces together various media—images of politicians, audio clips from their past speeches, and Rembrandt’s painting—to comment on the use of media by politicians throughout the history of Yugoslavia. The pirated software Bošnjak used to create *The Anatomy Lesson* reveals the economy of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the conditions under which its artists work. The intentional disruptions Bošnjak creates during the politicians’ speeches reflect the fragmentation of both the land and the body politic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Bošnjak’s work *Contemporary Cemeteries* (2010), also utilizes media to remark on its use by the state and its silencing of the body politic. Those with a voice, like the politicians in *The Anatomy Lesson*, simply do not address the war waged on the country’s population.

The Anatomy Lesson

Igor Bošnjak’s *The Anatomy Lesson* starts with audible yet incoherent chatter that positions the viewer within a large crowd of people. The image of Rembrandt’s *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* appears, but with a new twist—the faces of the region’s politicians, Josip Broz Tito, Boris Tadić, Stjepan Mesić, Haris Silajdžić, Milorad Dodik, and Sulejman Tihić. Tito was notorious for paving his own way in the world. He was a crony to the West and to Joseph Stalin in Russia before their political fallout, after which he created the Non-Aligned Movement. With a furrowing brow and blinking eyes, Tito speaks.⁴⁴ He says, “And those in the east and the west, they all should be clear with this, that we are not out of the way to our own foreign policy which we paved for

⁴⁴ This voice is recorded in Serbo-Croatian. All translations are the author’s.

ourselves. Which is, we have our own way, to boldly always say what is fair on this side and what is not and what is proper on that side and what is not. It should be clear to anyone that we cannot be anyone's pendant for no one's politics, that we have our own views, that we know to assess what is right and what is not." Despite his death in 1980, Tito's ghost is very much alive in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and surely Bošnjak's motivation for assigning Tito the position of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp, or the professor. Unlike Dr. Tulp, Tito gazes outward at the viewer as if ensuring the viewer of his control. Like the corpse, Tulp's "teaching hat" casts the shadow of umbra mortis onto Tito's face indicating not only the corpse's death, but his own. Tito instructs his fellow politicians how to rule both the citizen and the land. Yugoslavia was, overall, uninfluenced from the USSR and the United States during the height of the Cold War. Tito's politics—the significance of his position as the instructor Dr. Tulp—led to his independency in governing Yugoslavia.

Music from a violin, as if to signal the speech's end, precedes former Serbian president Boris Tadić's speech. Tadić walks a thin line in his political relationships with other countries of the former Yugoslavia. He plays his politics well, apologizing for ethnic cleansings while attending significant memorials. Yet he wants to ensure that although he apologizes for previous crimes committed by Serbs in the name of nationalism, he maintains he would not sell Serbian pride. As he begins to speak, the music becomes faint and the incessant chatter increases in volume. Tadić speaks over the music: "Serbia, where I am president, should have responsibility for our people wherever they live. Serbia is not responsible only for the citizens of Serbia; Serbia is responsible for all the people who wear our country's name and therefore my great pleasure that

Serbia, where I am the President, participates in the construction of this school, and I want to say that Serbia will do everything possible to raise the educational infrastructure wherever our people live,” he says, speaking out the left side of his mouth, as his nostrils flare and his eyes close into small slits. It is clear he feels responsible for all Serbs bearing the country’s name. His reiteration of the word “Serbia” positions himself as the national leader of all the Serbs in the region, including those in the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Swaying his head back and forth, Stjepan Mesić, last Yugoslavian President and former Croatian President from 2001 to 2010, suggests that the international community should grant sovereignty to Bosnia and Herzegovina. Desiring the equality of citizens in both entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he is notorious for speaking the words Bošnjak has selected: “The world will recognize it, if and only if, someone takes the principles of sovereignty and the inviolability of borders of all three constituent peoples in Bosnia and Herzegovina, if someone wants a policy of equal citizens in all parts of Bosnia.” Mesić abruptly stops talking three seconds after violin music indicates his time is up.

Throughout his political career, Mesić has served in left wing, right wing, and liberal political parties. Once denounced by Tito for attempting to construct Yugoslavia’s first private factory, Mesić joined the Croatian Spring movement that called for equality for Croats within Yugoslavia and was sentenced to twenty years in jail for being a member of a Croatian terrorist group. Despite his history, the sound bite Bošnjak assigns to him indicates that Mesić believes Croatia should end its involvement in shaping Bosnia and Herzegovina’s policies.

Haris Silajdžić, former foreign minister from 1990 to 1993 and Prime Minister of Bosnia's state presidency from 1993 to 1996, seemingly finishes Mesić's sentence. He turns to the eastern world for its support and blames those involved for the recent war. He says, "...or investments... We did that and met with representatives of almost all of the Eastern Gulf countries, where of course there are many resources...because of the mood towards Bosnia and Herzegovina.... and here, by the end of October we will start the business dialogue with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, with Qatar, Emirates, and so on. One very important activity that is currently going on in Paris as we speak is the liberalization of the visa regime, and I hope it will be a success. In any case, in New York we have tried to say the following. The Dayton Agreement cannot be an umbrella under which Milosević's project is carried out. It must stop and we must say it. We all want Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a democratic country and not ethnocratic." The chatter ceases while Silajdžić speaks. Haris Silajdžić's political career is peppered with voicing the injustice towards Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats, namely the alleged ethnic cleansing committed by Serbs. Although he was involved in the development of the Dayton Accords, Silajdžić believes the Accords hinder Bosnia and Herzegovina's success as a contributor to the global dialogue. Likewise, the Accords stand in the way of Silajdžić's goals to dissolve the Republika Srpska. Bošnjak's use of this particular sound bite—"We all want Bosnia and Herzegovina to be a democratic country and not ethnocratic," is important for Silajdžić, as the Dayton Peace Accords have implemented the physical separation of ethnicities in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Likewise, he speaks of Slobodan Milosević's⁴⁵ "project." Here he refers to Milosević's alleged plan to transform the

⁴⁵ Former President of Serbia and former President of the Federal Republic of

former Yugoslavia into a Serb state. Rather than attempting to change the future of the relationship between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Silajdžić continues to focus on the past by calling out those who started the Bosnian War.

Slowly, violin music begins to escalate again. Silajdžić stops speaking and Milorad Dodik, Republika Srpska's Prime Minister, delivers his speech. He is outspoken in his belief that Bosnia and Herzegovina is a failed international experiment and that the Republika Srpska should remain an autonomous region. Dodik says, "I just want to tell you that I permanently remain grateful to Mr. Silajdžić as he crashed the April Package. This was an attempt in an atmosphere in which if he, Mr. Silajdžić, did not appear to beat it, we all would now look completely naïve politically. So I am deeply grateful no matter who thinks what about cooperation with Silajdžić. He crashed the package and opened a different perspective in the regulation of Bosnia and Herzegovina." Dodik stands in direct confrontation with Silajdžić. Silajdžić was the single party leader to reject the constitutional amendments that would reduce the powers of the three-prong presidency known as the April Package. Dodik looks up, gazing at Tito as if nodding to his expertise in governing the country. In many respects, Dodik wants to mimic Tito's politics and enable the Republika Srpska to remain autonomous and uninfluenced by the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Sulejman Tihić, a Bosniak politician and leading member of the Bosnian Muslim Party of Democratic Action, toggles his head and begins to speak. Described as a moderate Bosniak politician who was one of the first to honor Serb victims of the Bosnian war, he is still unable to come to terms with the politician who used to be a

Yugoslavia.

favorite in the West, Dodik. Tihić confronts Dodik; he does not agree with his ideas of how the country should be led. He says, “We do not have these attitudes, we have some sort of undefined state, but last night we had a very difficult statement in an interview, from Mr. Dodik, in which he denied all, the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, its laws and institutions, the constitution, and all those reforms that are implemented and to be carried out, in a series of lump-sum (average) estimations on the various events of the past, so I really do not see any sense to discuss important issues. I don’t see a general atmosphere for agreement and compromise.” Tihić’s confrontational statements are indicative of the beginnings of the war in Yugoslavia in that politicians were unable to agree. The words that conclude Bošnjak’s video truly represent the political and social circumstances in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. The disagreement within these sound bites represents an accurate portrayal of the difficulty in governing the Bosnian state. It seems only Tito could govern these ethnicities with success—hence Bošnjak utilizes his still-singular presence to lead the other politicians through an anatomy lesson.

The breaks and disruptions that Bošnjak inserts into and between the politician’s speeches affect the message for the viewer. These disruptions—purposeful acts by the artist—work to break up the message of each speech. Each was a segment of a speech spoken in reality, but pieced together the words become incomprehensible. These voices constitute only the audible layer of Bošnjak’s work. Literal language, like the politician’s sound bites Bošnjak use in his work, is rhetorical.⁴⁶ The rhetorical nature of the politician’s speeches allows me to read the body as an allegory in this take on the *Anatomy Lesson* vis-à-vis Craig Owens. Paul de Man writes, “here the figural reading,

⁴⁶ Owens, “The Allegorical Impulse Part 2,” 63.

which assumes the question to be rhetorical, is perhaps naïve, whereas the literal reading leads to greater complication of themes and statement,” however important to consider, “This hint should suffice to suggest that two entirely coherent but incompatible readings can be made to hinge on one line...”⁴⁷ That line, I argue, is the body. The works I will address in this chapter deal both with the figurative—the body—and with the rhetorical—speech, or the lack of it. Bošnjak offers us various layers with which to read *The Anatomy Lesson*, from Rembrandt’s Baroque painting to his avatars to the audio assigned to the avatars.

Bošnjak’s Techniques

The Anatomy Lesson is a Frankensteinian work, and Bošnjak’s collage technique is intentional. To create *The Anatomy Lesson*, Bošnjak selects iconic portraits of each politician that he has found online. He imports each jpeg into Adobe Photoshop to correct the color, de-saturate, and then posterize each portrait. This gray scale, also executed on Rembrandt’s painting, points to the obscurity of the political and social situations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, of which nothing is black and white. After Bošnjak digitally re-composites each of the images, he inserts them into his pirated version of Reallusion CrazyTalk Avatar Creator, a basic voice-recognition software that creates avatars. In Reallusion CrazyTalk Avatar Creator, Bošnjak places tracking points on the faces and mouths of each politician so that they open their lips and move their faces when the software recognizes sound. These avatars embody the personifications of each of these politicians. Bošnjak’s representations of the politicians are at once realistic and unnatural. Tito appears just as alive as the other politicians, as if eerily brought back to life. As the

⁴⁷ Paul de Man, *Allegories of Reading* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 11–12.

only politician of Bošnjak's group that could control the power of other politicians and negotiate with both the East and the West, even in his death Tito teaches his pupils how to do the same. The rest of the politicians are, as Bošnjak says, "trying to be like Tito, a 'great president.' They *want to be like Dr. Tulp*."⁴⁸ Once tracking points have been positioned on the faces of the politicians, Bošnjak composites all aspects of the work—Rembrandt's reproduction, the movement of each politician's face, sounds, and other effects—into the movie-editing software Adobe Premiere to edit. After he renders each of the effects, the video becomes an animation. Despite Bošnjak's composition of all moving aspects, voices, and background music, the body in Rembrandt's painting remains static, the only nonmoving entity that is left in its original state.

Each software program that Bošnjak utilizes is an illegal copy, downloaded from torrents or purchased at an extremely low price from a piracy dealer. This bootleg style reflects the poor economy that artists in Bosnia and Herzegovina are working in, an economy that the politicians of *The Anatomy Lesson* do not address. It is the theft of his own medium that allows Bošnjak to comment on issues of national media production and propaganda. The piracy as well as Bošnjak's collaging of various audio pieces and images found on the Internet reflect the fragmentation of the political and social atmosphere in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Bošnjak's process of creating the politician's avatars, they transform from photographic representations to less real. This transformation echoes the visual language of commercials for products aired on national television stations in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These commercials are meant to sell

⁴⁸ Igor Bošnjak, in an email interview to the author, November 7, 2011. More so than the rest of former Yugoslavia, the general population of Bosnia and Herzegovina is the most nostalgic for Tito. His birthday and his death are celebrated annually, and "Tito we love you" is written atop a mountain in Mostar in the Herzegovina region.

products from Tide laundry detergent to Nivea skin care products. Like Bošnjak's politicians, the actors' voices in these commercials are dubbed. The audio is visibly mismatched to the words that are formed as the actors' lips open and close. Uncanny, the visual language of the dubbed commercials is evident in Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*. Bošnjak clearly references these commercials with his use of dubbed and incoherent speeches and creation of avatars in *The Anatomy Lesson*, and the politicians' words then appear as phony rather than realistic. In turn, Bošnjak references both the fragmentation of reality by propaganda in its inaccuracies in portraying the war as well as the viewer's belief (or disbelief) in that media.

Unlike the politicians in Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*, the corpse of Aris Kindt is both silent and forgotten. More important, it is the only body in Rembrandt's painting that remains untouched. It does not have a discourse and is also absent from the politicians' discourse in *The Anatomy Lesson*. Francis Barker writes, "Neither wholly present, nor wholly absent, the body is confined, ignored, exscribed from discourse and yet remains at the edge of visibility, troubling the space from which it has been banished."⁴⁹ Each of the sound bites Bošnjak inserts into *The Anatomy Lesson* concerns the subscription of the forgotten body. The corpse, like the body politic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is unable to air its own voice concerning the politics written onto its body. It is where the violence takes over that language fails us. As Barker notes, "The condition under which the divided body has been distanced from the plane of discourse to return only as a symptomatic disturbance on the one hand, and an objectified brutality on the

⁴⁹ Barker, "A Challenged Spectacle," *The Tremulous Private Body*, 57.

other.”⁵⁰ The non-speaking cadaver is likened solely to the insides of a citizen “apart from its spiritual functions, apart from the soul and the ethical component,”⁵¹ as Danilo Kiš writes, without a voice.

Contemporary Cemeteries

Like *The Anatomy Lesson*, Bošnjak’s video *Contemporary Cemeteries* comments directly on the government’s manipulation of Bosnian mass media. In *Contemporary Cemeteries*, Bošnjak films headstones onto which television monitors with static screens have been digitally inserted (Image 14). Throughout the video one group of headstones is revealed before transitioning to another group of Muslim, Orthodox, and Catholic graves. The static television screens have replaced the portraits engraved onto many headstones in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These static screens flicker; a few screens flash green and multicolored bars run vertically across the monitor of others, laden with the sound of an audio test. The static may represent the individuals buried under each tombstone and the white noise eerily evokes ghosts. Some TV monitors are grouped together on headstones near each other; others are spread disparately across the cemetery, though none are front and center. Fresh flowers sit at the foot of headstones indicating the recent visits of loved ones to the deceased. Like *The Anatomy Lesson*, Bošnjak uses background noise to set the landscape this cemetery is situated in. The sound of passing cars reveals this cemetery’s central location in its anonymous town. In the last shot there are no evident TV monitors, only the sound of static. On one headstone, a cross eerily comes onto the TV monitor. On another, the engraved portraits emerge from the static. At the end of the

⁵⁰ Barker, “Into the Vault,” *The Tremulous Private Body*, 67.

⁵¹ Kiš, *Homo Poeticus*, 12–13.

video white typography in the form of a vertical headstone reads, “Around 97,000 people died in the war in Bosnia & Herzegovina” before it fades into darkness.

This work speaks to the media’s silence on the 97,000 victims of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This cemetery scene set by Bošnjak with static screens rather than the deceased’s image represent those thousands of unidentified corpses from important periods of Yugoslav history—the unmarked graves during World War I and II, those murdered by Tito’s power, and the war in the 1990s.⁵² “Contemporary” indicates its recent place in history, but “Cemeteries” ultimately refers to the memory of those people that lie in the cemetery. I have used the term static in my discussion of *The Anatomy Lesson* to allude to the fact that the corpse is the only static, or stable, image of the video. It only appears when the frequency that transmits media goes awry. The dead find peace in the ground but their ghosts haunt the mental landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina with memories of the war dominating its politics.

While static represents the identification of a dead body in *Contemporary Cemeteries*, the corpse in *The Anatomy Lesson* is the only static component of Bošnjak’s video. Kindt’s body had recently been removed from the gallows, still warm and in the beginning stages of rigor mortis as depicted by Rembrandt. This transitional state as seen in *The Anatomy Lesson* and *Contemporary Cemeteries* is a metaphor for the transitional state of the country of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Like any transition, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s is one with fits and starts. Although the living being has become an object

⁵² The war in the 1990s is particularly pertinent to this work. Once returning to their homes—if they ever did so—families would move the bodies of their kin and their neighbors outside, often lining bodies of their loved ones in large piles and long rows. The stench from those decaying bodies filled the air and was a sight powerful for all senses.

that resists referentiality, Rembrandt's body references a person, the identity of the soul that left the body. In turn, the transition of the soul as alluded to in both of Bošnjak's works signify the current political transition of the country. Rembrandt's corpse remains untouched in Bošnjak's video. It is important to recall Rembrandt's gesture to replace the body in the center of the painting so that the viewer gazes at it and not the commissioning anatomists. Since 2009 the state's larger discussion has been concerned with how to terminate the international supervision presiding over Bosnia. In early 2012 the government took new form in attempts to become a fully independent governing body, and are starting the road to joining the European Union.⁵³ The memories that constitute the landscape of Bosnia and Herzegovina in effect govern the political decisions made today.

Those 97,000 dead do not have a voice in the political outcome of their politician's debates and still, the media remains silent on those thousands dead. Bošnjak utilizes the visual language and medium of the state in his collage technique, fragmented speeches, and avatars of *The Anatomy Lesson*. The silence of the corpse at front in center of Rembrandt and Bošnjak's artwork, and those buried in *Contemporary Cemeteries*, signifies the lack of voice concerning the state's jurisdiction over its body. Each work refers to the silence of the body. All of these works can be read through, and deal directly with, Craig Owens's figurative and rhetorical aspects of allegory. Bošnjak exploits the politician's empty promises and lack of serious political discourse with their own words.⁵⁴

⁵³ Obvious international supervision that comes with those interventions, despite the weaning of Bosnia and Herzegovina's protectorate status.

⁵⁴ Igor Bošnjak, in an email interview to the author, November 7, 2011.

Chapter 3

The first two chapters of this thesis detail the significance of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp* and the Frankensteinian compilation of Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*. Like *The Anatomy Lesson* and *Contemporary Cemeteries*, Bošnjak's land-based artwork *A Tomb For Boris Davidovich* (2009) continues the trope of the dead body (Image 15). To continue the progression of my discussion on Bošnjak's works from the corpse as a metaphor for the body politic, this chapter discusses the body politic as a metaphor for land as alluded to by *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. The body has long been a metaphor for land since men sailed to new continents and commented on its rolling hills. Like the stable, static body in *The Anatomy Lesson*, Bošnjak's sole land art piece, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, literally grounds his work within the soil of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Dayton Peace Accords

That soil was divided with the creation of the Dayton Peace Accords. The Dayton Peace Accords, finalized in 1995, created Bosnia and Herzegovina's current borders and still presides as Bosnia and Herzegovina's current constitution. Today the Inter-Entity Boundary Line divides the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the division of Bosnia and Herzegovina's land, the road to the Dayton Peace Accords was a lengthy one that spanned 21 days. Five plans were drafted before all three ethnic representatives agreed on an appropriate amount of territory and legal rights for each of Bosnia and Herzegovina's majority ethnic groups. The first was the Cutileiro

Plan⁵⁵ that proposed the cantonization of Bosnia divided into three territorial units, governed by the three majority ethnic groups.⁵⁶ The Cutileiro Plan and each subsequent plan were similar in that they all agreed to the partition of Bosnia and Herzegovina to end the war. The Vance-Owen Peace Plan (VOPP) would cantonize Bosnia into ten autonomous provinces with a restricted decentralized state under international supervision. Four of the provinces would be under Serbian control while Muslims and Croats would govern six. Again, this territorial division was reflected in the separation of three ethnicities, a violent separation of former neighbors. Next came the Constitutional Agreement of the Union of Republics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or the Owen-Stoltenberg Plan, the European Union Action Plan, and the Contact Group Plan. The latter two plans both constituted a restriction of the central government and separate constitutions and armies for each entity. These eventually led to the Dayton Peace Accords, decided upon on November 22, 1995 at Wright Patterson Air Force base in Dayton, Ohio, signed by Alija Izetbegović of Bosnia, Franjo Tuđman of Croatia, and Slobodan Milošević of Serbia in Paris on December 14. It created the two administrative units that we know today, split on the basis of a 49% (Republika Srpska) to 51% territorial divide (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina) with the “neutral district,” Brčko. The consequences of the negotiations between the international community and the three ethnic representatives created a map of Bosnia and Herzegovina divided by and subsequently split by ethnicity. The map resulted in a homogenization of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s cantons.

⁵⁵ Named after Portuguese Foreign Minister and Secretary General of the European Union, José Cutileiro who led the European Community at the time.

⁵⁶ Ana S. Trbovich, “Changing Borders By Force,” *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia’s Disintegration* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 315.

Danilo Kiš writes in his *Anatomy Lesson* that Dr. Tulp, “has used his forceps to separate the muscle fibers of the open wound in the left forearm and is showing his pupils the skein of muscles and tendons, arteries and veins through which blood has ceased to flow, showing it all with the calm and composure of a man who knows that the human body...is nothing but a digestion machine...”⁵⁷ He separated Yugoslavia into semi-autonomous republics based on religion. Tito created internal boundaries of Yugoslavia in 1943 to pacify nationalists.⁵⁸ With his separation of the muscle fibers, Tito likewise instructs the politicians surrounding the “body.” Kiš’s metaphorical description discloses Tito’s familiarity with the cadaver and the body politic as merely flesh and muscle fibers to be divided, or the land to be split apart, in following the metaphor of the body as land. Ana S. Trbovich notes the importance of Tito in the renegotiations to determine Bosnia and Herzegovina’s outer boundaries during the negotiations leading up to the Dayton Peace Accords, reinforcing the importance of Tito at the helm in Bošnjak’s *The Anatomy Lesson*. Trbovich states that the, “Government of Serbia professed to be accepting ‘Tito’s boundaries among the republics of his Socialist Yugoslavia as the official international borders between Yugoslavia and its neighboring countries,’ further stating ‘that it has no territorial claims on any of its neighbors.’”⁵⁹ Tito teaches his “students” that the world should not take Bosnia and Herzegovina as merely a piece of meat to be dissected. In the metaphor of land as body, Bosnia and Herzegovina, via the corpse of Aris Kindt in

⁵⁷ Danilo Kiš, *Homo Poeticus*, 12-13.

⁵⁸ These borders were finalized in 1945.

⁵⁹ Ana S. Trbovich, “Changing Borders By Force,” 297. Quotes a letter from the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Milan Panic, addressed to the President of the Security Council, August 17, 1992, U.N. Doc A/46/90—S/24454, Annex.

Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*, is simply an example for Tito's pupils to learn how to dissect.

Engineering a Nation

Following the implementation of the Dayton Peace Accords, Bosnia and Herzegovina saw a mass movement of its population based on the borders that had been drawn. Borders are always formed from territory lost, whether through a battle, conquest, or occupation. Villages that were majority Croat before the war saw a shift to a majority population of Serbs, and vice versa (see Images 16 and 17 for maps displaying the ethnic majorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina before and after the war). The violent cause of this movement echoes the engineering of maps and territories. The international community heavily influenced the creation of Bosnia's borders. Sumatra Bose writes of "Dayton Bosnia" as an example of, "internationally sponsored political engineering on a remarkable scale. This endeavor seeks to utterly transform a society that was at war with itself for forty-three months, which emerged from the fighting with its territory effectively partitioned into three national(ist) statelets, and whose population continues to be deeply divided on fundamental issues of identity and allegiance."⁶⁰ As cultural historian Thongchai Winichakul notes, mapping creates hegemony, and this is certainly the case in transforming a state into three nationalist statelets.⁶¹ In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, physical land has come to represent an ethno-national territory.

Designed by the international community, the Dayton Peace Accords are inaccessible to many Bosnian citizens. Never published in the official language(s) of

⁶⁰ Sumatra Bose, *Bosnia After Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 3.

⁶¹ Winichakul, 128.

Bosnia and Herzegovina, the laws that governed their body or their land were not privy to the average citizen. Bošnjak responds directly to this oversight with his performance *Signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement* (2011) in which he simulated the official signing of the agreement at the Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska in Banja Luka. Bošnjak translated the document into Bosnian, Croatian, and Serbian, signed each copy of the Accords, and shook hands with the visitors at the museum before handing each person a copy. Bošnjak speculates that the original Dayton Peace Accords were lost or never sent to the Presidents⁶² of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁶³ The performance was filmed on CCTV cameras throughout the museum, alluding to surveillance by the international community and the Bosnian state. At once a poignant statement against politicians regionally and internationally, Bošnjak's works continue to create dialogue on the issues of his home country.

The state's creation of borders, or marks, on the physical land of Bosnia and Herzegovina is reflected in the etymology of the word "land." The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers this definition of the word "land:" "A part of the earth's surface marked off by natural or political boundaries or considered as an integral section of the globe; a country, territory. Also put for the people of a country," while in German *länder* means "a semi-autonomous unit of local government in Germany and Austria."⁶⁴ The territorial divide in Bosnia and Herzegovina results in a homogenization of its body politic, another

⁶² According the Dayton Peace Accords the Presidency consists of three members—one Croat and one Bosniak from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one Serb from the Republika Srpska—that together serve a four-year term.

⁶³ Igor Bošnjak, "Signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement," http://igorbosnjak.com/index_files/Page314.htm (accessed 9 January 2012).

⁶⁴ "Land, n.2," *Oxford English Dictionary* <http://www.oed.com/viewdictionaryentry/Entry/105433> (accessed 5 January 2012).

double moniker linking the body to land. The Bosnians call this “blood and soil nationalism,” exemplified by the double meaning of the Serbo-Croatian word *zemlja*, meaning both state and land. The earth’s surface is represented like the human body and becomes a part of but also resists the governmental state in its transition to death vis-à-vis Aris Kindt. Thongchai Winichakul states, “A nation becomes a natural component of the earth’s surface like the *terra firma* and the oceans.”⁶⁵ Be it the definition of land as “the people of a country,” or a semi-autonomous state, the words land and state have become interchangeable.

The progress towards nationhood—the claiming of land for the state—starts with the demarcation of the territoriality of nationhood, or its geo-body, as Winichakul details in his *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of Siam* (1994). The soil gains a new relationship with its geo-body as new nations form.⁶⁶ “The geo-body supplies the new objectification for the beloved motherland or common soil and, reciprocally, acquires the human loyalty originally given by the soil.”⁶⁷ This demarcation that has been made onto the geo-body corresponds to the fragmentation of Bosnia and Herzegovina’s population. Land shifts ever so slowly with the movement of its tectonic plates, and the growth of nations take on the land’s shifting form. Although nations often use natural markers for their own boundaries, we still learn of nations in terms of geography. One example is Herzegovina, part of both the Republika Srpska and the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, split by the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. Herzegovina has been named as such since the early Middle Ages, a stark contrast to the nation that claims the same

⁶⁵ Thongchai Winichakul, “Geo-Body,” *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), 132.

⁶⁶ Winichakul describes the geo-body as the territory and its related values and practices.

⁶⁷ Winichakul, “Geo-Body,” 132.

land.⁶⁸ Despite no official boundaries, its borders are Croatia to the west, Montenegro to the east, and the Neretva canton to the north. Herzegovina's *terra firma* was named long before Bosnia and Herzegovina became a country. The name Herzegovina has been assigned to the land for centuries and has become embedded within the name of a new state. Maps make property, Irit Rogoff asserts, a signifier of the law that is inevitably written onto the citizen's body.⁶⁹ In Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson* that lifeless corpse remains voiceless at the hands of the region's politicians.

From this creation of ethnic fragmentation emerges a map, the signifier for this relatively new nation. As Roland Barthes writes, the map of a nation becomes a metasign, carrying the values and traditions of the nation's population.⁷⁰ The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina has come to signify Bosniaks, Herzegovina the Catholics, and Republika Srpska now represents Serbs. Territorial issues were at hand in the development of the Peace Accords, and the Accords were derived using the highly-classified imaging system "PowerScene" that filmed the land of Bosnia and Herzegovina in three dimensions, accurate up to two yards. The use of such high technology stresses the land's importance. In fact, "Territorial issues nearly derailed the talks, but the Bosnian Muslims finally gained control of a corridor five miles (eight kilometers) wide, known as the Posavina corridor, to link Sarajevo and Goražde,⁷¹ while Bosnian Serbs kept Žepa

⁶⁸ The town has a shifted in ownership between the Slavs, Turks, Romans, and Illyrians since then. It houses the Catholic Cathedral of the Birth of Mary despite existing within the Republika Srpska, and the Cyrillic language dominates the town.

⁶⁹ Rogoff, 75.

⁷⁰ Winichakul, 138.

⁷¹ In his graphic novel *Safe Area Goražde* Joe Sacco details such engineering when they were determining the corridor that would link the town of Goražde to the rest of the Federation depicting Milošević, Bosnian Prime Minister Haris Silajždić haggling over the

and Srebrenica. Rebel Serbs in Croatia agreed to return the region of Eastern Slavonia to the Croatian Government,” journalist Steven Erlanger describes.⁷² The *creation of* division amidst ethnic groups was negotiated into territory that now belongs to one or another entity. This use of “PowerScene” is the connection between Bošnjak’s use of new media and the post-national state that is Bosnia and Herzegovina. It conditions both the medium and the content of Bošnjak’s work and his implications concerning the body as subjected by technology. Maps, like the one constructed by the Dayton Peace Accords, ensure that specific laws govern those on one side or another. As Irit Rogoff points out, parallels emerge between moving borders and shifting identities. In the creation of maps, “declarations of subjectivity replace pretenses of objectivity within these maps defying the traditional view of cartography as the manifestation of increasing human control over the world through knowledge, skill, and articulation.”⁷³ Tito’s knowledge and skill are disseminated to the other politicians in Bošnjak’s video as they draw maps over the body politic in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Like the cut on Kindt’s forearm, the Inter-Entity Boundary Line separates the Republika Srpska from the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Igor Bošnjak’s *Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, another work from his *Balkanication* series, alludes to Kiš’s collection of seven short stories entitled *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* (1978) set during Stalin’s Great Terror. The commonality among the characters is their fate, having been killed by others settling old scores due to the killer’s

width of the corridor on napkins while boozing on scotch. This image reduces such significant work with not-so-diligent politicians.

⁷² Steven Erlanger, “The Dayton Accords: A Status Report,” *The New York Times On the Web* (June 10, 1996) accessed 8 January 2012.

<http://www.nytimes.com/specials/bosnia/context/dayton.html#land>

⁷³ Rogoff, 100.

prejudice of the victim's ethnicity, religion, or race. Bošnjak's *Tomb* is a land art work in the shape of a bed made from natural materials—stone, wood, and soil. At once tomb and bed, the headboard is filled with gravel whereas the “mattress” consists of soil. Short tree trunks surround the bed—those at the headstone are taller than those that outline the tomb. For Bošnjak, this is a place for all of those persecuted to rest. The artist writes, “People who survived the Holocaust, mass persecutions, and terrors by any ideological or totalitarian regimes such as fascism, Stalinism, Khmer Rouge movement, apartheid, etc. can, in a way, ‘hardly’ wait to lie down, fall asleep, and to ‘rest’ from omnipotent civilization evil... This is a bed for all of them.”⁷⁴ This work reflects the formlessness of the dead body in Bošnjak's *The Anatomy Lesson*, to be free of the jurisdiction of the politicians that stand over it. Bošnjak uses the land of Bosnia and Herzegovina to create this work where its persecuted can rest. His use of soil as a medium for this work links the Bosnian body to its land.

Tito's prominent position in *The Anatomy Lesson* with scalpel in hand makes it apparent he *still* tills the land. Tito's knowledge becomes evident when we consider Kiš's *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. Bošnjak inserts himself into Kiš's role by creating work that responds to his contemporaneous political structure.⁷⁵ Bošnjak's positioning of Tito as the instructor clearly draws from Kiš's *Anatomy Lesson*. Yet, the inspiration for Kiš's *Anatomy Lesson* is the criticism aimed at his series of short historical fictions, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*.⁷⁶ Given Bošnjak's familiarity with Kiš's literature, it is fair to believe

⁷⁴ Igor Bošnjak, “A Tomb For Boris Davidovich” *Balkanication* exh. cat. (Sarajevo: Duplex Gallery, Sarajevo), 30.

⁷⁵ Igor Bošnjak mentioned this in an email interview with the author, November 7, 2011.

⁷⁶ There is much written on Kiš's “novels,” but Kiš would balk at that word. Kiš admits that he does not believe in novels and instead he writes “fictional histories.”

Bošnjak has read “The Knife with the Rosewood Handle,” a short story in *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* that tells the story of Miksha who murders Hannah Kryzewska, a young woman who flees from Poland. Miksha stabs Kryzewska twenty seven times with a knife topped with a rosewood handle before removing her entrails so that she will not float to the surface upon throwing her in a river. The police report details Miksha’s familiarity with human anatomy. It states, “One of the articles described the way in which the body had been relieved of its abdominal organs, whence the likelihood that the perpetrator of the crime was an individual with ‘indubitable knowledge of anatomy.’”⁷⁷ From beginning to end, this tale tracks the extremely calculated murder that concludes with the removal of the corpse’s entrails. Here, Miksha’s anatomical knowledge in “The Knife with the Rosewood Handle” remains an allegory of Tito’s own familiarity with the intricacies of the human body. Tito slices right through the skin of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina; it is an incision that physically opens its population and land. So as not to deal with a bloody mess, a preparator would have prepared the subcutaneous openings for Dr. Tulp—certainly a metaphor for the actions that Tito initiated while keeping his hands clean of any blood. With Bošnjak’s knowledge of Kiš’s *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* it is clear that he places Tito in the position of Dr. Tulp to reveal not Tito’s knowledge of anatomy, but how to make precise anatomical incisions to govern his country. Tito’s knowledge is cutting the land of Yugoslavia, which in this case fragments the land of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the body politic within it. Danilo Kiš’s literature deepens Bošnjak’s *The Anatomy Lesson* work as an allegory.

⁷⁷ Danilo Kiš, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, trans. Duška Mikić-Mitchell (London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2001), 12.

Rogoff responds to Derrida's discussion of an ox that tills the land in a poignant analysis that also links Danilo Kiš's discussion about Rembrandt's ox as an objectified dangling piece of meat in his *Anatomy Lesson*. The importance of the ox, as Rogoff explains, is that it "writes," as it drags the plow left to right and back again through a field. Doing this, Jacques Derrida writes in *Of Grammatology*, the body inscribes itself within the land. In response to *Of Grammatology*, Rogoff writes, "The order of the body and soil refers to a law before any positive law. The imprints that bodies leave in the soil mark the unique, the authentic according to the discourse that considers agriculture as a physical and even a spatial inscription of 'the own.'"⁷⁸ Due to the Dayton Peace Accords, the body *and* land are split and also become the territory of the state. Rather than an ox, however, it is the international community that demarcates the soil of Bosnia and Herzegovina in its sway back and forth over the land. Further, politicians represent the ethnic majorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and display their ownership of the land. They become a signifier on a map that represents an ethnicity.

Through Danilo Kiš's writing and Igor Bošnjak's *Tomb of Boris Davidovich* then, land becomes a metaphor for the body—Aris Kindt's body. Irit Rogoff affirms that the marking in the soil is in effect, the creation of laws of ownership and territoriality as created by the state in her discussion of the relationship of *jus terrundum* (the law of the land) to *jus scriptum* (the written law).⁷⁹ "The body plays an important role for legitimation of a *jus terrundum* (as opposed to a *jus scriptum*). The body, which marks the soil, is evidence of the human power executed in the land. And that is exactly what

⁷⁸ Rogoff, 135.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 134.

functions as legitimation—the evidence of body in the soil.”⁸⁰ This body, however, is not our corpse; it is the legal body of the state. The marks upon the land were negotiated without a say from Bosnian people and literally off of their land, in the United States. In each of the discussions leading up to the Dayton Peace Accords, the population had no voice. Since then, the body has become a battleground between *jus terrendum*, the law of the land and *jus scriptum*, the written law. In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, ethnicity becomes the basis for territory, and territory comes to represent ethnicity.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 135.

Conclusion

Igor Bošnjak's video *The Anatomy Lesson* is, in a sense, a manifesto digitally transcribed for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Craig Owens writes, "...allegories are frequently exhortative, addressed to the reader in an attempt to manipulate him or to modify his behavior."⁸¹ Bošnjak's allegory emanates from his own feeling of manipulation of the Bosnia and Herzegovinian state. In an attempt to move his population, Bošnjak utilizes the visual media displayed by Bosnian television stations and newscasts. The tools he uses, Adobe Premiere and Reallusion CrazyTalk Avatar Creator, represent the shadow economy Bošnjak works within. In his theft of the medium and the content of his work Bošnjak resists the state.

The formlessness the corpse evokes with its death enables it to resist the Bosnian state. It is through this death that the body is finally able to rest, as Bošnjak's land art work *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* illuminates. The 97,000 killed during the Bosnian war are spotlighted in the video, *Contemporary Cemeteries*, the work that I first link the body both to the ground and explicitly to media. That very war was ended with the creation of the borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the use of the international community's highly-classified imaging system, PowerScene. This highly accurate technology serves as the crux of my argument in that the politicians' use of it mirrors the surgeons of Rembrandt's *The Anatomy Lesson* as they peer at the anatomy atlas in the lower right hand corner of the painting. Likewise, PowerScene serves as a connection between the new media and the post-national state that conditions both the medium and the content of Bošnjak's work.

⁸¹ Craig Owens, "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism Part 2," *October* vol. 13 (Summer 1980), 67.

Bošnjak's work suggests that the Bosnian state subjects its land to its politics. Bosnian politics are grounded in ethnicity, and its politicians have subjected the country's *terra firma* to their own subjective division. Their difficulty in governing the country of mixed nationalisms lends particular importance to Kiš, the ethnically mixed "Yugoslavia's Yugoslav," as well as to Bosnia and Herzegovina's identity as a microcosm of Yugoslavia. Bošnjak utilizes Danilo Kiš's narratives and the manic murderers in *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* through which we read Tito's role as Dr. Tulp to consider his creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's borders. These issues of land, divided into what became territory vis-à-vis the Dayton Peace Accords, represent the ultimately fragmented body. The body politic has been divided by the *state of mind* of the politicians that govern them, and their maps have come to represent ethnicities rather than the *terra firma* it stands on. That *terra firma*, the soil, is the literal base for Bošnjak's work, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. With it and his inspiration from Kiš, he offers those affected a bed to rest as he echoes Kiš nearly forty years later. Igor Bošnjak utilizes new and old media and the image of the body to suggest that Bosnia and Herzegovina has become the anatomical theater of the 21st century.

Images



Image 1. Igor Bošnjak, *The Anatomy Lesson* (video still), 2010.

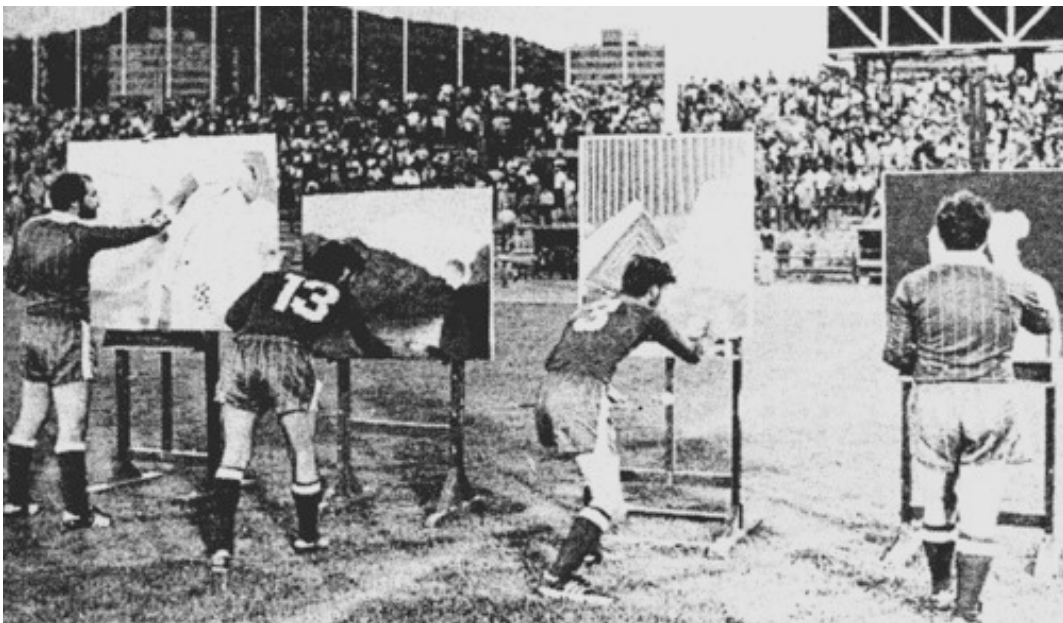


Image 2. Grupa Zvono, *Sports and Arts* (photograph of performance), 1986.

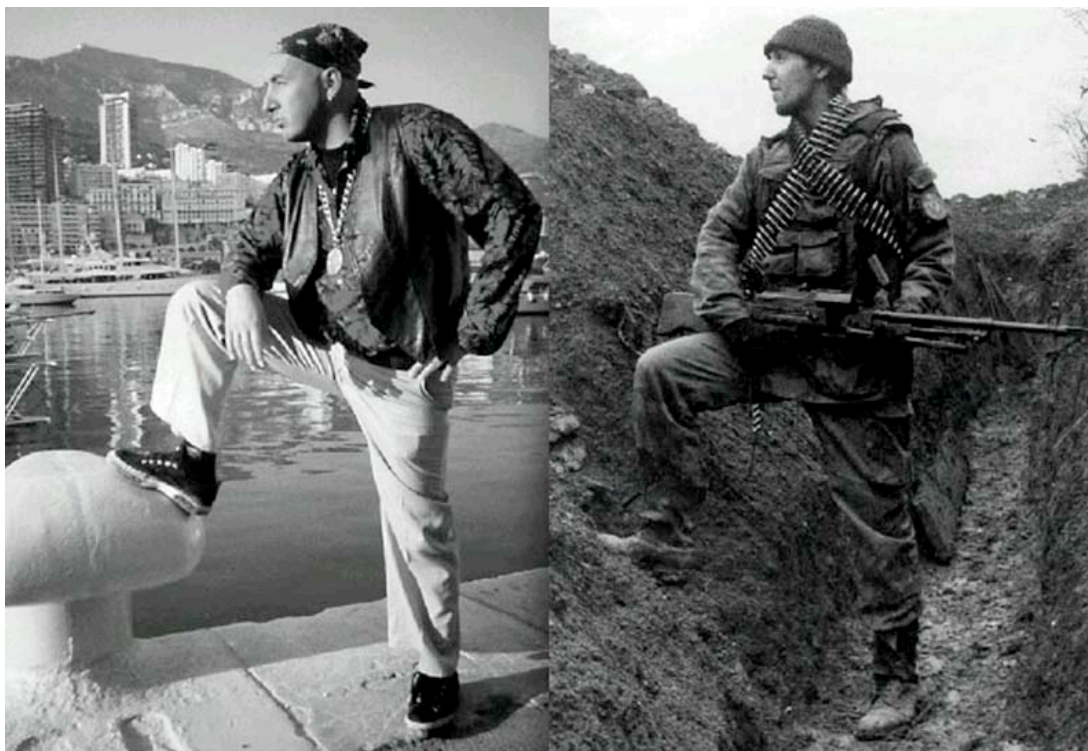


Image 3. Nebojša Šerić-Shoba *Untitled (Sarajevo Monte Carlo)*, 1998.



Image 4. Nebojša Šerić-Shoba, *Monument to the International Community from the Grateful Citizens of Sarajevo*, 2007.



Image 5. Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999.



Image 6. Maja Bajević, *Dressed Up*, 1999.



Image 7. Mladen Miljanović, *Emptiness of Execution*, from the *Occupational Therapy* series, 2008.



Image 8. Mladen Miljanović, *Emptiness of Execution*, from the *Occupational Therapy* series, 2008.



Image 9. Radenko Milak, *And What Else Did You See? – I Couldn't See Everything!* series, 2010–11.



Image 10. Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632.



Image 11. Carlos Alonso, *Lección de anatomía*, 1969.



Image 12. Carlos Alonso, *Lección de anatomía*, 1970.



Image 13. Rembrandt van Rijn, *Slaughtered Ox*, 1655.



Image 14. Igor Bošnjak, *Contemporary Cemeteries* (video still), 2010.



Image 15. Igor Bošnjak, *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, 2009.



Image 16. A 1991 map of ethnic majorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina



Image 17. A 1998 map of ethnic majorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bibliography

- Anreus, Alejandro. "Carlos Alonso's Anatomy Lesson." *Third Text* 24, no. 3 (May 2010): 353–60.
- Barker, Francis. *The Tremulous Private Body: Essays on Subjection*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1995.
- Bose, Sumantra. *Bosnia After Dayton: Nationalist Partition and International Intervention*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
- Bošnjak, Igor. *The Anatomy Lesson*. 4:22 minutes, 2010. Video.
- . *Contemporary Cemeteries*. 3:58 minutes, 2010. Video.
- Čihorić, Dragan. "Balkanication." *Balkanication*. Translated by Nina Bošnjak. Trebinje, Bosnia and Herzegovina: Print Shop, 2010. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at Duplex Gallery, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*. Translated by Peggy Kamuf. New York: Routledge, 1994.
- Dimitrovova, Bohdana. "Bosniak or Muslim? Dilemma of One Nation with Two Names." *Southeast European Politics*, II, no. 2 (October 2001): 94–108.
- Erlanger, Steven. "The Dayton Accords: A Status Report." *The New York Times On the Web* (June 10, 1996): <http://www.nytimes.com/specials/bosnia/context/dayton.html#land> (accessed 8 January 2012).
- Exposures*. SpaPort International Annual Exhibition of Contemporary Art. Banja Luka: Center for Visual Communications, Bosnia 2010. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art Republika Srpska, Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- Foucault, Michel. "Society Must Be Defended." *Lectures at the College de France, 1975–76*. Edited by Mauro Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, translated by David Macey. New York: Picador, 2003.
- Goldsworthy, Vesna. "Invention and In(ter)vention: The Rhetoric of Balkanization." In *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, edited by Dušan I. Blelić and Obrad Savić, 25–38. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.
- Haak, Bob. *The Golden Age: Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century*. Translated and edited by Elizabeth Willems-Treeman. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1984.

Holbrooke, Richard. *To End a War*. New York: Random House, 1998.

Marinković, Ljiljana Labović, ed. *Igor Bošnjak: Image/Time*. Translated by Svetlana Mitić and Nina Bošnjak. Banja Luka: Museum of Contemporary Art Republika Srpska, 2011. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at the Museum of Contemporary Art Republika Srpska.

Kiossev, Alexander. "The Dark Intimacy: Maps, Identities, Acts of Identifications." In *Balkan as Metaphor: Between Globalization and Fragmentation*, edited by Dušan I. Blelić and Obrad Savić, 165–190. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

Kiš, Danilo. *Homo Poeticus*. Edited by Susan Sontag. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995.

———. "On Nationalism." In *Why Bosnia? Writings on the Balkan War*, edited by Rabia Ali and Lawrence Lifschultz, 126–28. Stony Creek: The Pamphleteer's Press, Inc., 1993.

———. *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*. Translated by Duška Mikić-Mitchell. London: Dalkey Archive Press, 2001.

De Man, Paul. *Allegories of Reading*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979.

Mandić, Asja, ed. *ARTEFACTS: Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Venice Biennale 1993–2003*. Sarajevo: Ars Aevi muzej savremene umjetnosti, 2007.

Owens, Craig. "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism." In *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power, and Culture*, edited by Scott Bryson, 53–69. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.

———. "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism Part 2." *October* 13 (Summer 1980): 58–80.

Rogoff, Irit. *Terra Infirma Geography's Visual Culture*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Sacco, Joe. *Safe Area Goražde: The War in Eastern Bosnia, 1992–1995*. Seattle: Fantagraphics Books, 2000.

Susan Sontag, "Looking at War: Photography's View of Devastation and Death," *The New Yorker*, December 9, 2002, 82–98.

Stokstad, Marilyn. "Baroque Art in Europe and North America," *Art History* rev. 2nd ed. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education, Inc., 1995.

- Šuvaković, Miško. "Conceptual Art." In *Impossible Histories: Historical Avant-gardes, Neo-avant-gardes, and Post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918–1991*, edited by Dubravka Djurić and Miško Šuvaković, 210–245. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2003.
- Todorova, Maria. *Imagining the Balkans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Trbovich, Ana S. *A Legal Geography of Yugoslavia's Disintegration*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- WHW, "Dunja Blažević: Author of TV Gallery," *Political Practices of (post-) Yugoslav Art: RETROSPECTIVE 01*. Belgrade: Akademija, 2010. Published in conjunction with the exhibition of the same name, shown at the Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, Serbia.
- Winichakul, Thongchai. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.
- Zildžo, Nermina. "Burying the Past and Exhuming Mass Graves." In *East Art Map: Contemporary Art and Eastern Europe*, edited by IRWIN, 141–152. London: Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design University of the Arts, 2006.