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Remembering as Resistance

The need for a memorial to Srebrenica in Belgrade holds profound significance, particularly in the context of collective memory and reconciliation. However, nationalist sentiments, denialism, and political agendas have created an environment where erecting a monument in a public space is fraught with controversy. The political tension surrounding a Srebrenica memorial in Belgrade reflects unresolved divisions within the country and broader regional tensions in the Balkans. Many groups in Serbian society either contest the genocide's narrative or reject calls for public acknowledgement, making an official monument nearly impossible.

In response, alternative forms of commemoration have emerged, particularly in virtual and conceptual realms. Virtual memorials and artistic projects offer ways to bypass political and ideological barriers, serving as spaces for reflection and remembrance in a decentralised digital environment where they cannot be controlled or destroyed. The initiatives 'Forest' (Šuma) by Mia David and Antonio Grgić and 'Life is What the Dead Dream Of' (Život je ono što sanjaju mrtvi) by Mia David represent crucial opportunities to address the absence of a memorial to the victims of the Srebrenica genocide in Serbia.

'Forest' is a participatory project aimed at societal healing, where individuals can donate trees to create a collective forest as a living memorial. 'Life is What the Dead Dream Of' conceptually explores remembrance beyond physical monuments. These creative approaches push the boundaries of how we think about monuments and memory. They invite the public to engage with history in innovative ways, fostering personal reflection and offering new perspectives on how a nation can come to terms with its past, even when the physical terrain is hostile to such efforts.

Mia David (Belgrade, 1974) is an architect, curator and set designer. Her main fields of work are contemporary visual art, performing arts, education, and cultural management. She graduated from the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade and received her master's and doctoral degrees from the Scene Design group at the University of Arts in Belgrade. She was a partner in architectural studios DSZ and Blok, the founder and editor-in-chief of Kvart magazine, and one of the founders of the non-governmental organisation Blokovi. She worked as a lecturer at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade. From 2010 to 2014, she worked as the acting director of the Cultural Centre of Belgrade. She is a member of the Serbian Chamber of Engineers, the Association of Architects of Belgrade, the Association of Architects of Novi Sad, NUNS, OISTAT and IKT. Mia is the author of many projects in the fields of architecture, design, set design, and art, as well as newspaper articles published in various media. Berlin, New York, Vienna, Paris, Rennes, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Frankfurt, Moscow, Trieste, Rome, Venice, and Prague are some of the cities in which she has exhibited. She is the curator of numerous exhibitions. She is the winner of many awards and recognitions, including the Biennial of Scene Design Award (2007), Joakim Vujić Award (2007), October Salon Special Award (2014) and the Gold Medal for Provoking a Dialogue (Prague Quadrennial 2015). She is the author of radio shows like Life as Such (Radio B92), Life is Where We Are (Remarker Media) and the web show Spaces of Freedom (Remarker Media). She has been running the Navigator gallery from 2016 to 2024. Since 2024, she has been the art director and curator at Novembar gallery. She works as a full professor at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Novi Sad.

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