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Skanderbeg, Tirana. A Section Full of Nothing (Static Shot)
Urtzi Grau Magaña
Guillermo Fernández-Abascal
Christina Deluchi

Belgian photographer Maxime Delvaux's images of Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, completed in 2017 by Belgian architectural office 51N4E and Albanian artist Anri Sala, have at least three different readings. Their content allows us access to the complex history of the project by revealing the connections between design decisions, urban transformation policies, the city's leaders, and, in some cases, the political imagination of Albania vis-à-vis the European Union. Their format, a combination of traditional photographs and still frame videos, helps us to understand not only how 51N4E explains their projects, but also the reorganisation of their office and their design processes. Lastly, examining the images as architectural photographs reveals the effects that the eruption of digital imaging processes has had on the documentation of architectural projects.
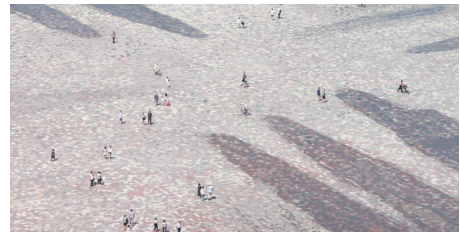
In 2008, the Belgian architectural office 51N4E and Albanian artist Anri Sala won the project for the plan of Skanderbeg Square in Tirana[1]. The hyperbolic title of the competition, 'call for help', implied both the urgent need for an intervention and the ambitions of its organiser, Mayor Edi Rama, currently the country's prime minister. Rama, leader and champion of Albania's reconciliation with the European Union, has been immersed in an urban transformation campaign recognised globally for repainting the city's facades with brightly coloured murals. The shift from this project's vertical surfaces, to the horizontality of the square, was not free of trouble. The enormous 40,000 sqm surface of the square in the centre of the capital had to be negotiated. While it seemed like an empty space, the square contained the remnants of Tirana's multiple pasts that the Balkan country, and by extension Europe, had traversed throughout the 20th century.

Skanderbeg Square was opened in 1917, five years after Albania's independence from the Ottoman Empire during the Austro-Hungarian occupation of World War I. It was born of the impetus to become a space for institutional representation for the future capital, but it would not become such until 1920. Resulting from successive renovations, the historic bazaar and the Mahmud Muhsin Bey Stërmasi mosque that surrounded the square would disappear by 1959 when Nikita Khrushchev – the first secretary

of the Soviet Union's Communist Party – laid the first stone of Tirana's Palace of Culture (Pallati i Kulturës). A second mosque, the Hajji Et'hem Bey (1821), survived the city's successive reforms and political changes and reopened in 1991 after the end of the Communist regime. Opposite the surviving mosque, the Orthodox Cathedral of the Resurrection (Katedralja Orthodhokse 'Ngjallja e Krishtit') rose in 2012, completing the representation of religious buildings that surround the square, and the balance of worship after the Balkan wars of the 1990s. Secular buildings such as the 1822 clock tower, the National Library (present since Tirana was instituted as the capital of Albania), the Opera House and the National Museum of History (Muzeu Historik Kombëta) represent the Communist regime's socialist cultural policies. These buildings contrast with the headquarters of the National Bank of Albania (Banka e Shqipërisë) responsible for the country's monetary policy; the Tirana International Hotel (Pesëmbëdhjetëkatëshi) built in 1975 as a symbol of Soviet modernity and meeting place for the Politburo, and remodelled in 2001 to adapt to corporate needs; and the new Hotel Plaza, a symbol for the country's European opening, also completed by 51N4E a year prior to the square. Lastly, the City Hall of Tirana (Bashkia Tiranë) and the headquarters of the Ministries of Infrastructure, Economy, and Energy, complete the square's elevations, covering in a seemingly educational way the nation's history and its modes of governance. All culminates in the equestrian statue of the figure after whom the square is named, the 15th-century Albanian hero, George Kastrioti Skanderbeg.

The square's construction process began in 2010, replicating the social, political, and urban contrasts and fragmented histories present on the site and its surrounds. After the first year of construction, changes to the municipal government following elections (2011) led to the suspension of the project. The new Mayor, Lulzim Basha of the Democratic Party of Albania and oriented toward the European right wing and centre right, cancelled the project. Instead, Basha built a large temporary roundabout and returned road traffic to the public square, reproducing the persistent ideological European position that cars should be present in urban centres. Four years later, after 2016's municipal elections, the Socialist Party regained the Mayor's office and Erion Veliaj restarted 51N4E's project with the addition of an underground carpark and increased garden area. The project would take two more years to complete. Finally, nine years after the competition process began, the square opened to the public in 2017[2]. The following year, true to the original convener's European fervour, the square went on to win the 2018 European Prize for Public Space, and would become one of the five finalists for the 2019 European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture (Mies van der Rohe Award).

Possibly the most widely recognised image of Skanderbeg Square is the one appearing on the cover of 51N4E's book, *Skanderbeg Square, Tirana* (Ruby Press, 2017). Taken by the Belgian photographer Filip Dujardin, a zoom from a distance surely taken from the top of the Pesëmbëdhjetëkatëshi, the photograph's vanishing points are distant and parallel causing it to look like an axonometric projection. The image shows the square's paving, a grid of red-toned pastel stones rotated at 30 degrees, with the public passing over it. Some parabolic stains on the surface mark the places where water flows toward the out-of-image perimeter of the square, changing the colour of the pavers along the way. The level of abstraction due to the lack of vanishing points is amplified by the disappearance of the pavement's limits, which seem to extend into infinity, effectively introducing a 'strangeness' to the image. The square is separated from its urban context, and from the many stories that construct it. In contrast with Dujardin's surreal landscape, Albanian photographer Blerta Kambo captures the intimacy of the square via zooms of everyday life. One of her iconic photos portrays three women sitting on green chairs in an unconventional position while they chat, possibly the alter ego of Dujardin's image. Focused on the users of the square,

Kambo accurately captures their daily lives, overlooking the urban design decisions that make them possible.

Perhaps trying to synthesise both Dujardin and Kambo, 51N4E commissioned the Belgian photographer Maxime Delvaux to document the project for their website[3]. Delvaux, born in the 1980s, easily combines the approach of two antagonistic figures of the previous generation of architectural photographers: Dutch photographer Iwan Baan, who at the beginning of the 21st century reintroduced figures, context, and aerial perspectives back into architectural photography, and Dutch photographer Bas Princen, who constructs his images with an excessive formal tension that emphasises the autonomy of the objects portrayed. Delvaux's commission resulted in a series of 16 images, which are not so different from those that preceded them, some practically identical. His displacement of the camera's lens toward the context and the occupation of public space – which is Kambo's interest – results in images framed similarly to those of Dujardin. But Delvaux's new images allow us to see another square, one that combines heroism and intimacy. This square is in continuous tension with the narratives of national identity inscribed in the site, the pragmatism that a public work of such scale requires, and its own capacity to foster new collective conditions.

But what project has Delvaux portrayed? What kind of public space can aspire to transform the global image of the city? What kind of photographs can explain the Albanian realpolitik in Europe? How are they constructed? The excessive ambition of these questions is not accidental: they are of the same importance as those raised alongside the competition's winning proposal.

Nevertheless, 51N4E proposed to build, among Tirana's institutional buildings, a pyramid of similar dimensions to its Egyptian relatives. The pyramid's symbolic inversion – to fill a public void surrounded by architectures of power in their most authoritative and primal form – is as disruptive as it is contextual. It also replicates another pyramid that already exists in Tirana, the Pyramid of Tirana (Piramida), which has similar dimensions and is located two blocks south of the plaza. If the accelerated history of Piramida is trashing its marble cladding and turning its sloping walls into improvised public spaces, then Skanderbeg's pyramid recovers this stone materiality and brutally reduces its height. The Piramida reaches 21 m in height. The top of the plaza's pyramid only rises to 2.3 m above its edges, or, more exactly, to the same height as the plinth of the Pallati i Kulturës. The centre of the square is therefore an exceptionally accessible viewpoint that inverts the direction of the gaze. Its peak is the furthest point from the buildings that surround it; the pyramid exists in opposition to them as public activity unfolds across slopes of 4% in a much less vertiginous way than the ruins of its communist counterpart[4].

Completing the proposal, a series of water features is hidden underneath the 24,000 m[2] of inclined tiles, transforming the plaza into a large, accessible public fountain with a belt of vegetation that separates the pyramid from the centre's existing buildings. The extended paved surface made it unnecessary to limit wet areas. Invisible except for when active, the only traces of the fountain's existence are the patinas of slowly sliding water. In the competition entry's collages by 51N4E and Anri Sala, the water forms shapeless mirrors. The collages are reminiscent of Jean Arp's paintings surrounded by Henri Rousseau vegetation, and then situated within a work by René Magritte[5]. The references are not accidental, but point toward the artistic interests of the authors and, more importantly, the jury's 'European' ambitions[6]. In the end, the prize was awarded to a public space combining exoticised French realism, German Dadaism, and Belgian surrealism: perhaps several of the most pertinent artistic renditions of the European Union's origins.

Despite the delay in the project's execution, the plaza maintains its main competition elements: a green ring surrounding the water-stained stone pyramid. In fact, the only notable change to

the project is not visible: the underground carpark. One of Delvaux's images best allows us to understand the project. It is taken from the porch of the Pallati i Kulturës, camera pointed toward the west of the square, from the only perspective where the green belt's trees disappear to allow access to the Opera House. The image is a diptych, divided into two almost perfect squares by one of the pillars of the Opera House's colonnade. The right one frames the foreshortening of the Muzeu Historik Kombëtar, which flanks the northern edge of the square. On the left, the Banka e Shqipërisë's facade is shown behind the pyramid. It is a theatrical and didactic image. It reveals an organised sequence of plans that present the layers of the project framed by the existing architecture. In the background, the green belt that separates the plaza from the rest of Tirana fails to hide the city's new skyscrapers. Following its incorporation into the development phase of the project, the Belgian landscaping office Plant en Houtgoed designed and specified the 12 perimeter gardens that comprise the green belt. Its width is variable. Constructed of grass, shade, benches, trees, insects, and birds, it reappears at the margins of the image's foreground as a reminder that it completely surrounds the plaza.

Unlike the informal activities that populate the competition's images, in the built project, the elements that allow the public to occupy the vegetal perimeter are carefully designed. Delvaux's images explain how. In the foreground, sheltered from the sun on a likely hot summer's day in Tirana, four people watch passers-by crossing the square. They sit on chairs that 51N4E designed especially for the project. Mobile, like the 1923 *Sénat* chairs in the Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris (also known as the Luxembourg chairs), and obviously inspired by the geometry and green colour of the *Palissade* outdoor furniture collection by the Rowan brothers and Erwan Bouroullec for HAY (2015), the distortion of their proportions radically transforms their use. Their 80 cm width makes them too big for one person, and too small for two. So, as the picture shows, they can be used in two ways, forcing users to take a position on how rest is shared around the square. The chairs do not seek comfort; instead they encourage their users to decide how to manage interpersonal distances themselves. They are a piece of the project that most clearly illustrates how 51N4E's interest in participation and negotiation plays out in their architecture, and not by chance, and they reinforce the idea that the new square has ancestry in the classic public spaces of the European Union.

On the right-hand side of the image appears the other item of furniture 51N4E designed for the project. It is a robust terrazzo bench, solid and immobile, reversing the lightness of the green chairs. But, as different as their ambitions might seem, both seating types are similar in terms of their origin and use. The bench's geometry is clumsy; it is too robust for its discreet size. The bench is divided in two by a triangular prism, cancelling its horizontality that would make it closer to the continuous benches that populate the empty squares of high modernity. Instead, they converse with the robust Soviet modernity of the Pallati i Kulturës and the Muzeu Historik Kombëtar. Each side of the bench is wide enough to seat two people comfortably, but the triangular piece can also be used as a backrest, transforming it into a double chaise lounge that forces the user to place their legs on the bench to the exclusion of others. The ambivalence of use is reproduced in its materiality that alludes to Milan or Brussels and, at the same time, is tautologically contextual. The terrazzo was made using debris from the pre-existing constructions on site. Therefore, the benches reference the history of the square and, likewise, the facade of the Plaza Hotel that was built with the same materials a year before the square's completion: another icon of the European renaissance built by 51N4E and sponsored by Rama.

The volume of design decisions made in the green perimeter contrasts the apparently empty but symbolically swollen surface of the pyramid it frames. Since the production of the competition's images, the colour of the square's stone surface has shifted from grey to a tonal yellow tiled blanket: a barely visible mosaic similar to one of Gerhard Richter's *Farben* rugs. In actuality, there are 129,600 stone tiles of 30 different types taken from the country's different regions to form the square's multicoloured collage. The symbolic function of this gesture sees the biographies of the authors and clients intertwined, as is the history of the relations between art and power in Tirana. This is a story that might begin with the square's other mosaic titled *The Albanians* that presides over the square from the facade of the Muzeu Historik Kombëtar, it also appears on the right of Delvaux's image. Completed in 1981, the 400 m² mosaic presents, in the pure style of socialist realism, 13 of Albania's historical figures advancing toward the culmination of history. Rama, an artist and academic before becoming a politician, and son of Kristaq Rama (one of the most prominent representatives of Albanian socialist realism), is intimately familiar with how large murals function. Upon arrival at the Mayor's office, Rama began to have Tirana's building facades covered with colourful murals. Rama has explained exhaustively the social function of these seemingly superficial urban transformation operations. International recognition of the projects came with the video *Dammi i Colori* made by Anri Sala, one of Rama's art school alumni[7]. Five years later it would be Sala, in collaboration with 51N4E, in charge of proposing the country's largest mural – Skanderbeg Square's tiled surface – closing the collection of historical representations of national identity in Tirana's centre. Just as the restoration of *The Albanians* removed the red star from the Albanian flag and the volume of the *Communist Manifesto* from the hands of one of its protagonists, the design of the square constructs a new national representation via abstraction and land art strategies like those used in public memorials since Maya Lin's *Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (1982). The mosaic of the pavement eliminates the figuration that personifies national values. Rather, it links to Albanian identity in an infinite multiplication of individualities transfigured in the 40 x 45 cm tiles, which are literally made of the materials that make up the country: its rocks. This crude metaphor, a pyramid in the centre of the capital built with the nation's rocks, is negotiated by the domestic banality of the tiles' size. The stone carpet that draws a geological map of the country seems immeasurable due to its dimension, but, in reality, it is illegible due to the fact it is permanently covered in dust.

The dirt, typical of public pavements, the pollution of the city, and the dryness of summer, is not coincidental. It hides the surface of the pyramid and the fountains reveal it. Delvaux's image shows how the jets from the competition images have disappeared, instead replaced by runoff emerging from the pavement. The water runs its course, reducing the temperature of the stones and, by evaporation, the general temperature of the atmosphere. In the image, the distant pools of water function as mirrors where the urban landscape and fragments of the sky are reflected. The closest ones, due to the different viewing angles and their ability to remove surface dirt, allow us to see the fragments of Albanian geology that lie below the water's surface. Water, therefore, operates as the pyramid does: it is a balance between the legibility of populist narratives on national identity, a large-scale public operation's economy of means, and the poetic autonomy that characterises aesthetic decisions. The water stains also reference the lakes of Albania, which allow us to discover their geology, and they refresh the square with pictures of the sky drawn across the pyramid's surface[8].

Delvaux's representational strategy made of layers that explain sections of the project is not by chance. It appears continuously in his images as seen in the image taken from the porch of the Pallati i Kulturës, but this time the image is south facing. This image is not built as a theatrical elevation, rather as a section that reveals the backstage of the previous one. On the left we see the dome and minaret of the Hajji Et'hem Bey Mosque, and on the right is the headquarters of the Ministry of Agriculture with the

Albanian national flag flying out front. The base of the pyramid to the right of the image sits several metres below the observer and has ceased to be a pixelated pink mosaic, instead becoming a grey plane crossed by a sheet of water. The centre of the image is occupied by vegetation, defining the negotiations occurring at the project's change of levels. The trees are supported by windbreaks, but still precarious, and completed by a layer of tall and short shrubs, and perennial plants closer to the ground. Species include *Salvia argentea*, *Euphorbia dendroides*, *Phlomia fruticosa*, *Asphodeline lutea*, and other native varieties that are in some cases locally extinct but have been recovered in other parts of Europe. The vegetal collage connects with the network of green spaces in Tirana, giving continuity to the disconnected architectures of the past that represent apparent antagonistic governmental systems. At the same time, like a medieval moat, the vegetation separates them from the tiled pavement, defending the pyramid's autonomy. From the square, the vegetation blurs the presence of the surrounding institutional buildings, hiding them behind a green curtain. The image shows how the Pallati i Kulturës preserves a part of its ceremonial stairs, but they no longer reach the square; instead they abruptly end in the garden area. Thanks to the garden, it is impossible to observe the square from the colonnade of the Pallati i Kulturës; the tree tops prevent it. To enjoy the view, it is necessary to descend the stairs. Moving toward the trees, the terrazzo benches beneath them allow for observation of the square from a privileged position. On the other side of the vegetation, on the square's tiles, are some pieces of urban furniture shaped like barges, revealing how the life of the square has continued, disregarding the original project design.

The narrative and compositional mechanisms are so explicit that they can blind us. Reading the project through Delvaux's images, we must not forget what we are looking at: a series of images that can be accessed, in most cases, only via digital devices. As a series of documents, they lack the physical substrate of analogue photographs; they are a set of light emissions that our retina reads as a unitary whole: a collection of representations that move when our fingers touch the screen of our cell phones. Without taking this material into consideration, the images' operation cannot be understood. If the role of photography as a medium and mediator has caused modern architecture to massively spread – visually and discursively – the advent of digital photography has dramatically increased its reach, causing representations of architecture to transform into a commodity consumed at an unprecedented scale. The velocity of circulation affects Delvaux's images. Of the 16 images in the series, six literally move: some of their elements are never still. They are not photographs, but six videos treated as static shots like Andy Warhol's *Empire*, but with a fleeting duration. The frames of the videos do not vary, as the action is limited to the minor elements in the image. The wind moving the grass, a subtle affectionate gesture shared between a couple sitting on a bench, or a moving car behind the vegetation record the events of daily life that take place across the square. Like the monotonous shots of his compatriot Chantal Akerman, but perhaps with a more optimistic twist, Delvaux's static images force the viewer to be patient with the slow pace of everyday life and to appreciate the relationship between the passing of time and the space it occupies.

It is not the first time Delvaux has used this image technique. Since 2014, similar videos have been a part of his collaboration with the Belgian architectural firm BAUKUNST and the French digital imaging company Artefactorylab[9]. The encounter between the three disciplines is necessary to the creation of these digital images, not only to add movement, but to also dismantle the traditional forms of authorship[10]. But the static shots of Skanderbeg do not call into question their authorship. Instead, they point to a collaboration that, embedded within a professional commission, is possible thanks to the short static shots and their forms of distribution. The images, not limited to the square project, are commissioned for the 51N4E website designed by the London graphic design studio OK-RM. The website presents similar videos of other projects and the participatory processes that have generated them, alongside the creative and organisational changes of the practice itself[11]. Delvaux's static shot videos have become the virtual image of 51N4E. Each of the sections of their website opens with one of his videos in full screen. Their ability to capture the relationships between architecture and its occupants make it possible to argue for the former's social capabilities. Their short duration is adjusted for the attention deficit regime that defines the consumption of digital images. And their stylised realism causes them to transcend the professional commission by validating the projects they document as separate visual exercises. In this sense, the static shot videos seem to carry, in their logic, the tension between marketing, pragmatism, and high culture that is so well captured by Skanderbeg Square.

In any case, the adaptation of the images for 51N4E's commissions does not do justice to Delvaux's static shots. Their power lies elsewhere. Delvaux's ability to represent the square fits the historical readings that evaluate images for their capacity to present reality. But they go even further. There is something in the images that annuls the reality–representation duality. The subtle movement introduced to what looks like a photograph dismantles our relationship with it; it tears it apart, as Andrea Soto Calderón has argued when discussing the work of Argentine filmmaker Lucrecia Martel[12]. For Martel, duration and changes in rhythm alter the perception of time: this is Delvaux's method of working. Slowing down, constructing images that produce a lapse in time, seems to be the ultimate project of his static shots. It must be remembered that in his photographic work, Delvaux refuses to use digital cameras as he considers the slowness of large-format analogue development a blockage to the speed of the production and consumption of today's images. It is not surprising that these short videos perhaps learn from Belgian artist David Claerbout: they are static shots filled with almost nothing.

Urtzi Grau Magaña
Is an architect, an academic in the School of Architecture at the University of Technology Sydney, and founder of Fake Industries. He uses replicas —both as literal reproductions of pre-existing works and, in a sense denoted in Romance languages, as responses to previous statements— to produce architecture.
Affiliation: Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
E-Mail: urtzi.grau@uts.edu.au
ORCID iD: 0000-0003w1906-1615

Guillermo Fernández-Abascal
Is a practitioner, a Practice Fellow at the University of Sydney, and founding partner of the office GFA2. Based in Sydney, Australia, and Santander, Spain, his recent work destabilises the dichotomy between research and buildings, and includes diagrams, stories, exhibitions, films, prototypes, housing, and public buildings across the globe. His collaborative projects include the books Learning to live together: cars, humans, and kerbs in solidarity; Regional bureaucracy; Better together: (33) documents of contemporary Australian architecture and their associated short stories; Documents of their time; Folk costumes; and Indo-Pacific Air; the diagram the Global Architectural Political Compass, the exhibition Analogue Images, the research project The Future of Living, the Enaire Foundation building in Santander, and the masterplan for the Machine Khana in Kabul, Afghanistan. He is currently working on residential projects in Spain, Schools in NSW, Australia, and the Can Trinxet adaptive re-use in Barcelona.
Affiliation: Practice Fellow, School of Architecture, Design, and Planning, The University of Sydney
E-Mail: guillermo.fernandez-abascal@sydney.edu.au
ORCID iD: 0000-0002-0334-3290

Christina Deluchi
Is a lecturer at the School of Architecture at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and is currently completing a PhD at the University of Melbourne. Her current research examines the relationship between architecture, politics, and images to explore how they partake in the production of urban identities. Christina has recently published a book chapter titled "The political construction of Medellín's global image: Strategies of replacement, erasure and disconnection via urban and architectural interventions" in The Routledge handbook of architecture, urban space and politics, 2022. She has also published in academic journals such as Interstices, idea journal, and Interiority, and has exhibited her work at the Chicago Biennial, the Taubman College of Architecture, and UTS Gallery.
Affiliation: Lecturer, School of Architecture, University of Technology Sydney (UTS)
E-Mail: Christina.Deluchi@uts.edu.au
ORCID iD: 0000-0003-2413-3927

Notes

01. The competition and the work was financed by Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait. The development and construction phase, the team of 51N4E and Anri Sala was expanded to include landscape architects Plant en Houtgoed, and the Albanian architectural practice iRI. The proposal by the Dutch firm MVRDV and German landscape architects TOPOTEK received second place, and in third place was Spanish firm MAP Arquitectos. The heterogenous guestlist for the competition included the French firm Architecture-Studio, the US-based architect Daniel Libeskind, and the Italian firm Atena Studio & Partners.

02. Prior to 2016, when the project had stopped, 51N4E worked on other projects in Albania. No longer tourists, they became regulars in the city. They gained experience in small-scale urban interventions ranging from a scenic gas station (Europetrol, 2006), to a railing for a bridge (Lana Bridge, 2008), and the remodelled interior for the Center for Opening and Dialogue (COD, 2015). Lastly, the tower of the Hotel Plaza —a competition won by 51N4E in 2004 and completed in 2016— rises a few metres above the square. 51N4E's new housing and office tower (Book Building), also on the edge of the square, is currently under construction.

03. Not all the images have reached www.51n4e.com; the webpage is a perpetual work in progress. The complete series of 16 images can be found on Delvaux's website, and includes the portraits of the occupants of the square that was part of exhibition The Things Around Us:51N4E and Rural Urban Framework at the Canadian Center for Architecture (CCA). https://maximedelvaux.com/51n4e-skanderbeg-square-tirana

04. Since its opening in 1988, Piramida has been a museum dedicated to the leader of communist Albania, Enver Hoxha; a palace of congress after the end of the communist regime; the NATO headquarters during the Balkan war; the headquarters for Top Channel and Top Albania Radio; and, after a failed attempt to convert it into an opera house, an abandoned ruin partly used as a bus station. Dorina Pllumbi has been one of the most critical voices on the Dutch office MDRDV's project for the Piramida that is currently under construction. The project will transform it into a technological hub, adding stairs to the facade due to its inability to previously recognise the value of its public spaces. Oliver Wainwright, architecture critic for the Guardian, has also criticised MVRDV's activity in the Albanian capital, which has expanded to works beyond the pyramid —the result of the friendship between Winny Mas and Edi Rama. PLLUMBI, Dorina, "Outrage: the unwilding of the Pyramid of Tirana", The Architecture Review, 19 May 2021. https://www.architectural-review.com/essays/outrage/outrage-the-unwilding-of-the-pyramid-of -tyrant. WAINWRIGHT, Oliver, "What the Marble Arch Mound architects did next: a skyscraper shaped like Albania's national hero", Guardian, 15 Aug 2022. https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2022/aug/15/mvrdv-albania-tirana-skanderbeg-skyscraper-marble-arch-mound

05. A wider selection of images for the competition proposal can be found in 51N4E's monograph, Skanderbeg Square (Ruby Press, Berlin, 2017), and in an article on e-architect.com titled "Skanderbeg Square Tirana Renewal Design". On the occasion of the 2011 elections, 51N4E and Anri Sala produced a revised version of the image series for Edi Rama's electoral video campaign, irremediably linking the future of the project to the political future of the mayor. Images from the competition also appear in the book Double or nothing (AA Publications, London, 2011), and in the book How things meet (Art Paper Editions, Ghent, 2016) that summarises some of the project failures, trying to find a narrative for their endless Albanian projects. "51N4E and Anri Sala: Winning proposal for the redesign of Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, Albania", 2008. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cpg3jll5CmQ.

06. The jury was made up of Andreas Ruby, Arben Kumbaro, Edi Rama, Elia Zenghelis, Ismail Khudhr Al-Shatti, Maks Velo, Marco Casamonti, Marin Biçoku, Valerio Olgiati, Vedran Mimica, and Xaveer de Geyter.
https://www.skyscrapercity.com/threads/sheshi-sk%C3%ABnderbej-arkivuar-skanderbeg-square-archived.600696/page-3

07. The awareness that the success of urban transformation operations falls as much on local narratives as on global perception has led Edi Rama to explain the *Tirana Facades* project in multiple forums, both professional and popular. His TED talk in Thessaloniki in 2012 is perhaps one of the best documented examples. The video *Dammi i Colori* (2003) by Anri Sala has been part of the TATE collection since 2003. RAMA, Ed., Take back your city with paint, TEDxThessaloniki. https://www.ted.com/talks/edi_rama_take_back_your_city_with_paint
https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/sala-dammi-i-colori-t11813

08. The importance of water is obvious in the project's credits, which always acknowledge the technical solutions in a similar way to the collaboration with the landscaping office. The Belgian fountain office Aquafontal, and the British Gatic, are listed as fountain authors.

09. BAUKUNST, Delvaux and ArtefactoryLab have produced images and videos since 2014 for competitions such as Hôtel de Biolley in Verbiers (2014), Watersportbaan in Ghent (2015) and The Bastion in Geneva (2016). This work was prior to the images produced for two major competitions won in collaboration with Bruther. BAUKUNST further discussed the role of images in their practice at a recent lecture at the University of Technology Sydney's School of Architecture. VERSCHUERE, Adrien, Architecture as a Language, 23 September 2020.

10. In 2017, BAUKUNST, Delvaux, ArtefactoryLab, and French architecture firm Bruther shared the credit for the competition images for Life Sciences in Lausanne and the Maison des Media in Brussels. Guillermo Fernández-Abascal and Urtzi Grau have analysed this case and others in their discussion of the logic of authorship in architectural imagery in their book *"A long list" better together: (33) documents of contemporary Australian architecture & their associated short stories*. FERNÁNDEZ-ABASCAL, G., and GRAU, U., *"A long list" better together: (33) documents of contemporary Australian architecture & their associated short stories*, URO, Melbourne, 2022.

11. Delvaux was commissioned for the video series on the transformation of Zurich for the Chair at the ETH of Freek Persyn —one of 51N4E's partners— and similarly filmed 51N4E's work in the Office Complex in Northern Brussels where the firm was temporarily installed as part of the urban transformation process of the district. This moment also served as a laboratory for the reorganisation of the office. The collaboration has also continued in the systematic portrayal of 51N4E's buildings users —not unlike the portraits Delvaux took of Skanderbeg Square's citizens.

12. SOTO CALDERON, Andrea, *La performatividad de las imágenes*, Ediciones Metales Pesados, Santiago de Chile, 2020, p. 50.

Images

01. (corresponds to the image that opens the article) Untitled digital video still by Maxime Delvaux of the centre of Skanderbeg Square, Tirana (2019).

02. Untitled digital video still by Maxime Delvaux of west Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, seen from the porch of the Pallati i Kulturës (2019).

03. Untitled digital video still by Maxime Delvaux of south Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, seen from the porch of the Pallati i Kulturës (2019).

04. Untitled digital video still by Maxime Delvaux of the green belt of Skanderbeg Square, Tirana, taken from the website of the project's authors, Belgian architectural firm 51N4E (2019).