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BUNKER  
DIVAGATIONS

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*"Projekti Bunkerizimit , or "bunkerization"  
project, in which tens of thousands of reinforced concrete  
bunkers were placed throughout the country to protect soldiers  
and citizens alike from attack by outside forces"*

*(Payne, 2014)*



1.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

In 1912, after five centuries of occupation Albania finally gained independence. However, till the September 1912, Ottoman government was keeping Albanians divided within four heterogeneous vilayets to prevent national unification.



II.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

Time of independence ended for that country with the beginning of WWII. In 1939 Albania was overtaken by Italian invasion, existing now on as a protectorate of the Mussolini's Italy.



III.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

The new history for this country began in 1944 with The Congress of Përmet. During that meeting of the Albanian communist leaders, the Provisional Government was elected and lasted until Communist collective held the election by the end of 1945.



IV.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

In 1945 Enver Hoxha, first secretary of the communist Party of Labour Central Committee and political commissar of the Army of National Liberation, as a single candidate, became prime minister and declared Albania to be a People's Republic.



V.  
*("Enver Hoxha Denouncing the Soviet Revisionists", Guri Madhi, 1979)*

Enver Hoxha denounced the Warsaw Pact in 1968, thereby becoming the only member country withdrawing from the alliance before 1990. Since then, with no allies, country started military self-defence program.





VI.

*"Long live the eternal and unbreakable friendship in battle between the peoples of China and Albania!",  
(author unknown, December 1969)*

The process of country's separation from allies has been completed with China's rupture of trade relations with Albania.



VII.

*"Long live the friendship of the parties of China and Albania!",  
(author unknown, June 1969)*

This split fully isolated country and ended the informal alliance, which existed between those two communist countries.



VIII.  
*(title unknown original photograph taken by Niko Xhufka  
then retouched by communist officials, 1970's)*

*A massive portrait of Enver Hoxha decorates the main entrance to the Palace of Culture  
in Scanderberg Square, Tirana, early 1970's.*

Hoxha's portrait, placed in public places was promoting and taming his image.



IX.  
*(title unknown, Michel Setboun, 1980)*

Country's former trauma provided the new communist state the narrative of fear which served the purpose of strengthening Hoxha's status of father of the state. His image, visible in everyday surrounding, was part of a communist propaganda spread in the country.



X.  
(*"In Your Vein"*, Enkelejd Zonja, 2011)

Enver portrayed as a resurrected Jesus, lets the unbelieving Thomas put his finger in his heart. Hoxha, elevated to the level of religious status, in his perfection, resembles a character from propaganda posters.  
*"As much as man can become a god, Enver has become a god for us"* - Enkelejd Zonja





**A bunker is a concrete shelter,**



**half above ground,**



**half under the ground.**



XI.

*(scenes from "Kolonel Bunker", directed by Kujtim Çashku, 1996)*

'Projekti Bunkerizimit' was a self-defence program introduced by Enver Hoxha in 1970's. After breaking all alliances, throughout almost 20 years, Albanian landscape gained over 700 000 military defence structures.



XII.  
(title unknown, author unknown)

'QZ' - bunkers in small size were designed for one person. Located along coast and borders of country, on the front line, were used by soldiers to defend the country.



XIII.  
("Three bunkers on a beach", Ake Dahllof and Emma Holmbro, 2010)

Some of 'QZ' bunkers were connected by concrete corridors, creating groups of three. However, looking from the fortification perspective, those bunkers were not fully respecting fortification principles. According to them the soldier, fighting at the front, should never be alone, therefore bunkers shouldn't be built as a single units.





XIV.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

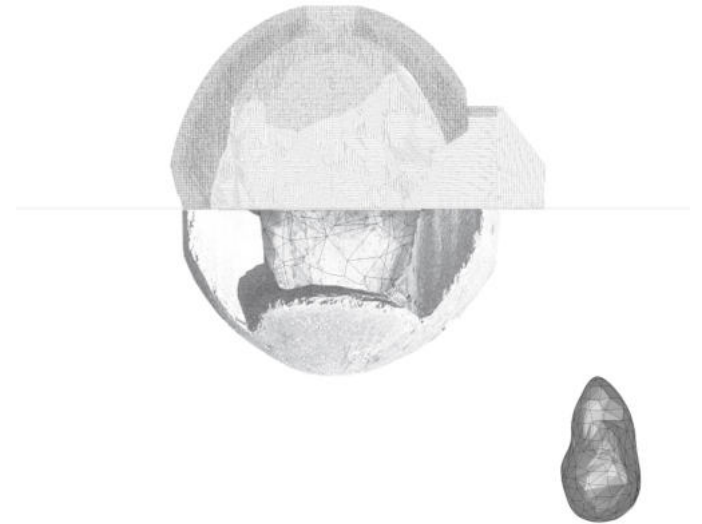
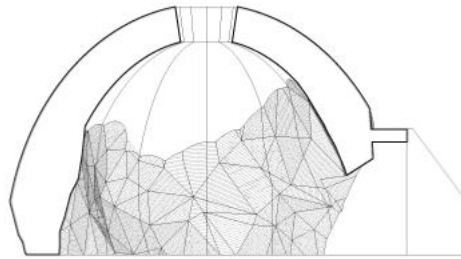
'PZ' - the purpose of medium sized bunkers was to host small group of people or artillery. Located throughout the Albania,

'PZ' bunker were used as a place of protection but also had a storage function.



XV.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

'Special structures' - the biggest of all the Albanian bunker types, built for politic-leading figures and the storage function. As the only Albanian bunkers, 'special structures' were equipped with anti-atomic tunnels.



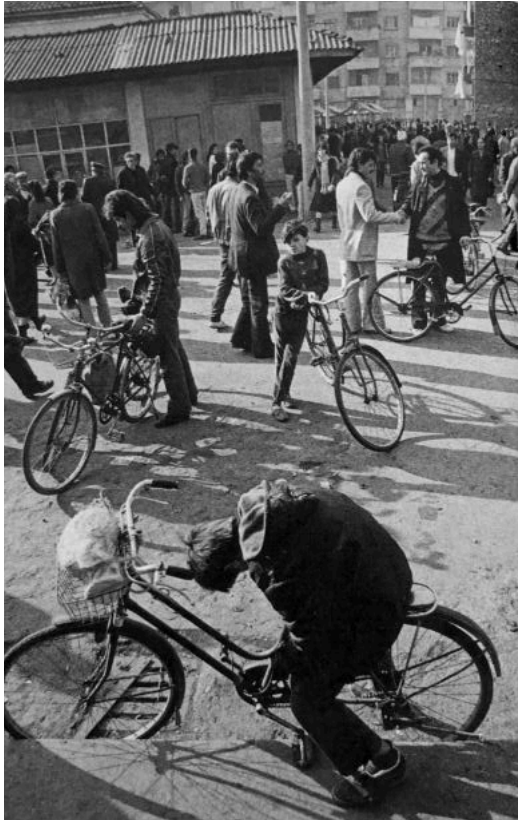
XVI.

("Bunkers+Asteroids", Jason Payne)

*"Similar to these bunkers, asteroids are objects that litter space. This project begins to challenge techniques of representation and to reimagine bunkers and asteroids." - Jason Payne*

Scattered over Albania's landscape, never-used bunkers, create new form of spatiality. Dissolving in the surrounding, 'concrete mushrooms' derive from different elements of nature, at the same time, with its construction, 'littering' the space.





XVII.  
(title unknown, Nikos Economopoulos)

"In 1960 there were 1900 passenger cars on Albanian roads, in the 80's this number increased to about 6-7 thousand."

Money, that could have been spent on stabilising internal situation of the country, was pumped into tones of concrete and steel...



XVIII.  
("Albanians living in Greece", Nikos Economopoulos, 1990)

"People searching for food in the city dump. Albania, Tirana."

...thus driving the country into extreme ends of poverty.



XIX.  
*(title unknown, Nikos Economopoulos)*

Enver Hoxha's monument, erected in 1988 in Gjirokastra, city of his birth. As a act of rebellion and sealing the fall of the communist regime, in February 1991 the figure was demolished by Albanian workers.



XX.  
*(title unknown, author unknown)*

"In February 1991, hundreds of Albanians pushed over the bronze statue of Hoxha in Tirana's central square."

This act symbolises of the fall of the communist regime.

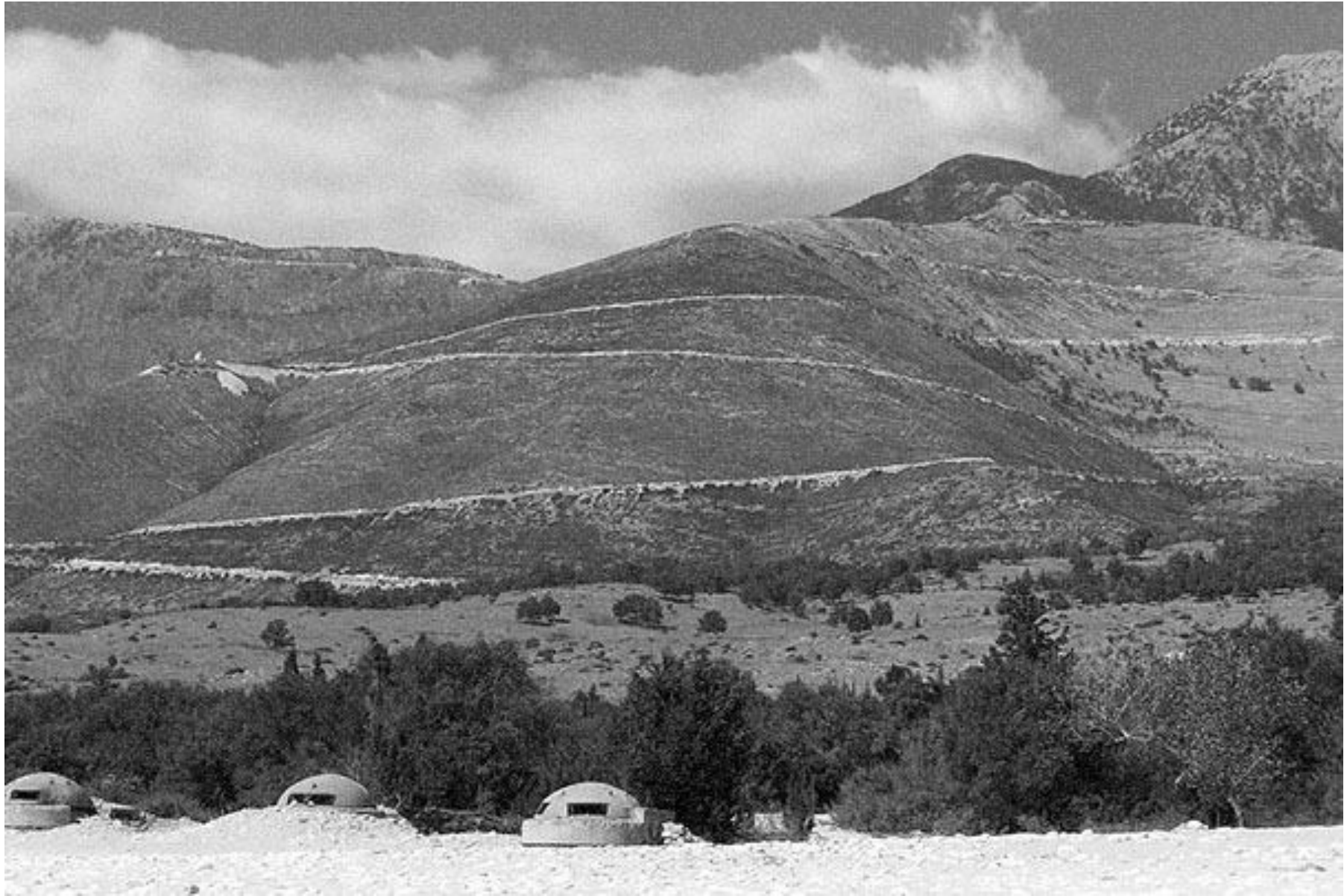
After first anti-communists protest, in 1991 the the first election of the Party of Labour took place. That was a final end of a communist regime in Albania.



XXI.

*(title unknown, Martchan / Shutter-stock, original in colour)*

"Abandoned bunkers sit in a defensive line dug across a field in Albania."  
The politic regime collapse, leaving the country with new layer of the  
landscape.



XXII.

*("Bunkers on the Albanian Riviera", wstuppert, 2007, original in colour)*

Over many years of not being used, bunkers overgrown and dissolved in the surrounding.





XXIII.

(title unknown, Baci / Shutter-stock)

"An old bunker, partly covered with stones, sits high in Albania's Bjeshkët e Nemuna mountains."

The 'Projekti Bunkerizimit' has spread its roots not only in the tactic locations of the coastline, but even in the agricultural fields and mountainous areas.





XXIV.  
*("Concrete Mushrooms", Alicja Dobrucka, Albania, 2011)*

*"...they (bunkers) are also found submerged in the water and overgrown with ocean greenery or ranged in jetties and sea walls"  
- D. Pike, Cabinet Magazine*



XXV.  
*("Concrete Mushrooms", Alicja Dobrucka, Albania, 2011)*

*"An old bunker, partly covered with stones, sits high in Albania's Bjeshkët e Nemuna mountains."*

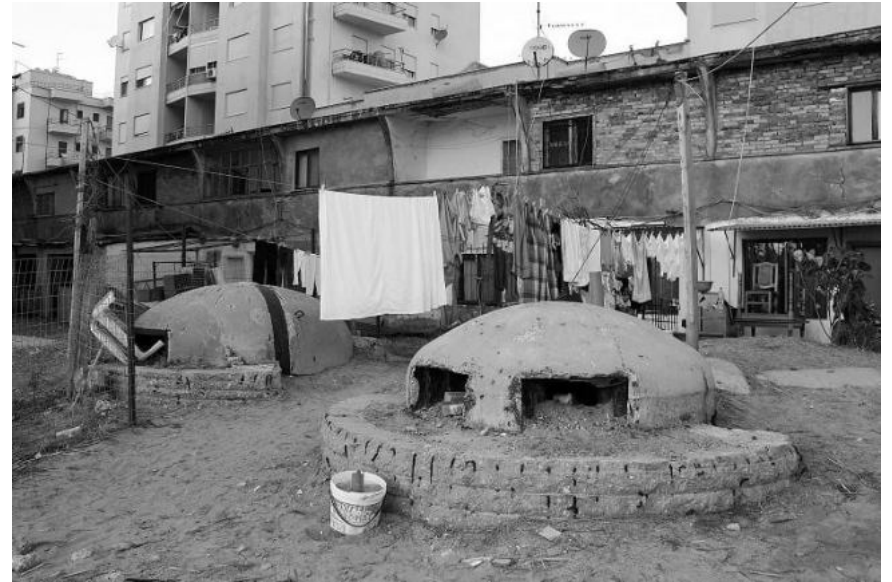
Despite being enclosed forms, mushroom structures allow different aspects of life to live within, overgrow, coexist, thus becoming a new, obscure layer of landscape.



XXVI.

*("Bunker and Housing Estate", Wayne Barrar, Tirana, Albania, 2011, original in colour)*

After many years of degeneration, bunkers became a new spatial layer, found also in urbanised areas. Layer, juxtaposing the landscape of history with the current realities of the country.



XXVII.

*(title unknown, Edal Anton Lefterov / Wikimedia Commons)*

*Bunkers near the residential area are a common sight in Albania*

Embraced by Albanians, bunkers started to be a part of their everyday life. Often used for different purposes, bunkers have acquired new, useful functions.





XXVIII.  
(title unknown, Jeroenrp, 2001)

*A bunker on a city street in Shkodër.*

Visible structures, at the same time, because of their amount and presence in everyday surrounding, bunkers became imperceptible.



XXIX.  
(Front Yard Bunker/Car, Wayne Barrar, Durrës Albania, 2011 )

Embodied in private domestic spaces, bunkers gained new functions.





XXX.

*(title unknown, Arben Celi / Reuters, November 2009)*

*"A man fishes from atop a bunker at a lagoon in Patok, near Tirana"*

Bunkers taking part in Albanians everyday life, became part of their identity.



XXXI.

*("A bunker in a cemetery", Elian Stefa, Gylter Mydyti, original in colour)*

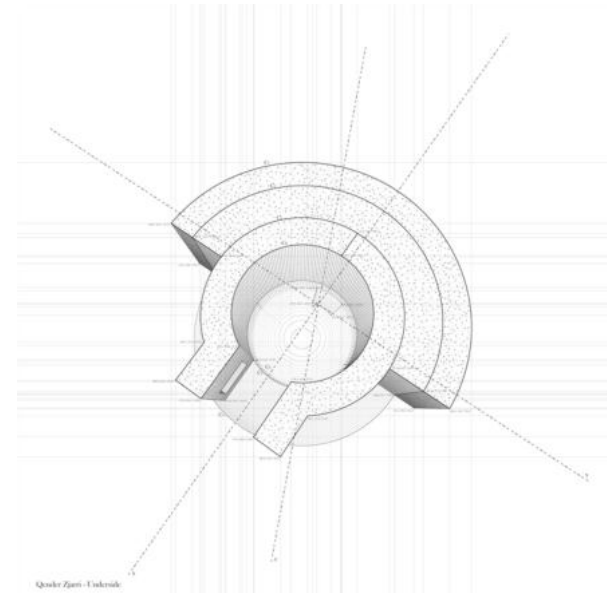
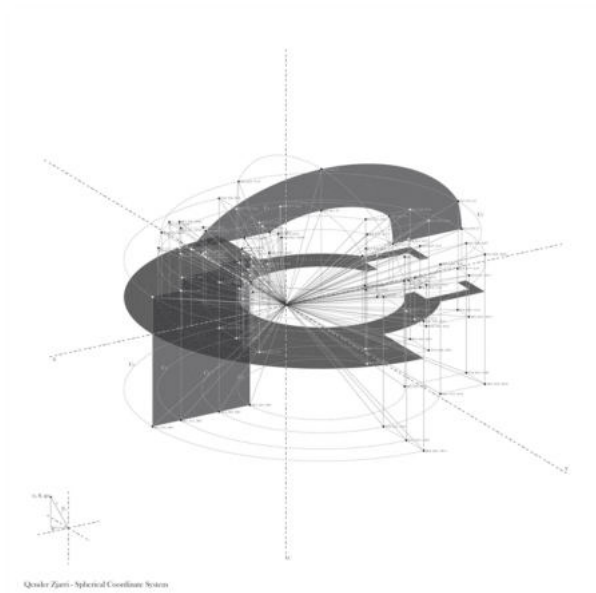
Over the years, bunkers have been found in many unusual locations.  
One such place are cemeteries - heterotopian spaces.



XXXII.

*(title unknown, Marjolein Helena van Der Boon)*

*"Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality.  
Because these places are absolutely different from all the sites that they reflect and speak about, I shall call  
them, by way of contrast to utopias, heterotopias." - Michel Foucault*



XXXIII.  
 ("Projekti Bunkerizimit", Jason Payne, 2014)

*"A series of diptych drawings were created to document the existing bunkers as well as the design of a doppelganger, a new bunker that expresses the hidden intelligence of these peculiar forms"*

The case of Albanian 'Projekti Bunkerizimit' became an example of spatial layer, fulfilling its function on intangible, psychological level. Hyper-reality became embodied in a form of a bunker. Existing independently from its physical translation, intangible layer of bunker gave the illusion of safety and sense of independence.



XXXIV.

*("Historic Kulla, blood revenge tower at Thethi/Theth" Theth, Albania, Egmont Strigl)*

A fortified tower (kullë) used as a safe space for men involved in gjakmarja - *"the social obligation to commit murder in order to salvage honour questioned by an earlier violation of any of the many core morals of Albanian culture"*



XXXV.

*("Albanians living in Greece", Nikos Economopoulos, Vela Village, Albania)*

*"The males of the family live hidden in the house because they 'own' blood which makes them possible victims in the vendetta."*

Domestic spaces of Albanians gained defensive features, changing the usual understanding a house as a shelter.





XXXVI.  
(title unknown, Francesco Cito, Albania, 2001)

"Lagaj Lan and his family barricade themselves in their home to escape the revenge of the rival Kanun clan, after the double murder executed by his son over a smuggling issue."



XXXVII.  
(title unknown, Nikos Economopoulos, 1999)

"Refugee camp for Doctors without Borders. Young member of the Kosovo Liberation Army. "

Safe space can take many forms and dimension.  
Even during the war, the most fragile and temporary space can turn out to be the safest.



XXXVII.  
(postcard Kosovar Refugees Shelter From a Storm, Magnum Phaidon, Kukes Albania)

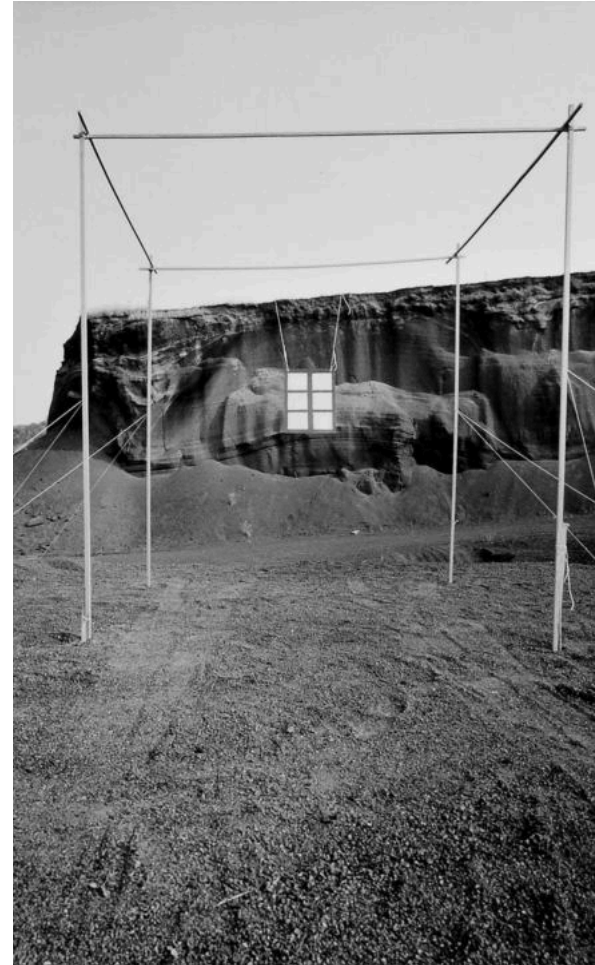
Due to many external factors, the best known form of a shelter - an architectural space, can cause more danger than the aspects it is suppose to protect from. If the shelter, in its best known material form- form of the building, is failing and the idea of close, separated space is provided by temporary solutions.



XXXIX.  
*(title unknown, Ferdinando Scinna/Magnum Photos)*

A shelter can take on the different forms  
and dimensions.

In case of Albania, the safe space was provided in  
the most pure and basic form, which turned out to be  
not the most appropriate and needed.



XL.  
*("Architettura virtuale", Ettore Sottsass Jr., 1973)*

*"He starts leaving discrete signs in the landscape, almost invisible  
traces, he continues building real architectures or metaphors of the  
architectural profession. " - Barbara Radice*

**What is the usual understanding of the role of architecture?  
What the concept of the shelter means to us?**

## PICTURE SOURCES:

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