



Uncovering HERstory: Regional Feminist Touristic Guide

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Introduction

The tourist guide “Uncovering HERstory” opens new perspectives for understanding cultural heritage through the stories, contributions, and creative work connected to women who have left a significant impact on society. Throughout history, many of these stories have remained at the margins of official narratives, even though their importance is essential to social, cultural, and political processes themselves. This guide aims to make these individuals, places, and events visible, recognizing them as an integral part of the shared cultural heritage of these regions.

Through a process of research, learning, and collaboration, young people, under the mentorship of experts from North Macedonia, Serbia, and Albania, worked on mapping and documenting locations connected to women’s movements, cultural production, and social change. These locations are part of the past, yet we see them as living spaces of memory that enable a deeper understanding of the role and significance of women in shaping communities and society itself. In this way, through a youth-led process, young people explored their own history and critically engaged with dominant historical narratives. For this reason, this guide represents a tourist resource and at the same time, an educational tool, for preserving and promoting feminist cultural heritage, and for fostering a more inclusive and gender-sensitive understanding of history.

The guide was developed within the framework of the project “Uncovering HERstory: Empowering Youth and Preserving Feminist Heritage,” implemented by HERA – Health Education and Research Association, the Center for Population Policies and Sustainable Development – IPPF Serbia, and ACPD Albania, with the support of ALDA – European Association for Local Democracy, under the BOOST programme. The project aims to empower young people as active researchers and promoters of cultural heritage, contributing to greater visibility of women’s stories and their place in public and cultural spaces.

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The Museum of Natural Sciences “Sabiha Kasimati”



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: 76 Petro Nini Luarasi Street

The Museum of Natural Sciences in Tirana is one of Albania's most important scientific and cultural institutions, preserving an extraordinary collection of the country's biodiversity. It exhibits around 3,000 specimens, including unique species of Albanian fauna, and hosts a scientific collection of over 100,000 samples, making it a key reference point for natural sciences in Albania.

The museum was founded in 1948 as part of the former Institute of Sciences by Sabiha Kasimati, Albania's first female scientist. Educated at the University of Turin, she conducted pioneering research on Albania's ichthyofauna and strongly advocated for the freedom of scientific research. She was executed by the communist regime, while her scientific work was published under the names of male colleagues. Since 2018, the museum bears her name, honoring her legacy and contributions.

The museum stands as a powerful symbol of women's contribution to science and the historical silencing of feminist voices under authoritarian regimes.



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<https://www.visit-tirana.com/news/the-museum-of-natural-sciences-in-tirana/>

Queen Mother Institute



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: Tirana Technical Economic School 7R9F+F27

The Queen Mother Institute was an educational institution dedicated to the education of girls, established in Tirana in 1930. The building, today a cultural monument, currently houses the Economics High School. Between 1933 and 1945, it functioned as a mono-educational school for girls, playing a crucial role in shaping women's education in Albania.

After World War II, the institution was transformed into the Pedagogical High School "17 Nëntori," educating both girls and boys. It is considered one

of the institutions with the greatest impact on the education of women and the development of feminist thought in Albania. Many prominent feminist and intellectual figures studied here, including Bedi Pipa, Musine Kokalari, Nevrez Këlliçi, and Safo Marko. Teaching staff included influential women such as Androniqi Zengo, Marie Kraja, and Ollga Nikolla. Androniqi Zengo, born in 1913, was the first woman painter and the first lecturer of figurative arts in Albania, educating the first generations of modern Albanian painters and sculptors.



The Queen Mother Institute represents a cornerstone of women's education in Albania and a formative space for the country's early feminist and intellectual movements.



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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Instituti_femnuer_Nana_Mbretneshe.jpg



Villa of the Formerly Politically Persecuted



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: 8RGG+F2R George W. Bush Street

Located on George W. Bush Street, the Villa of the Formerly Politically Persecuted is one of Tirana's important historical landmarks. Built in the 1920s in an eclectic architectural style combining Oriental elements with Art Nouveau, the building has served multiple institutional functions over time. It initially housed the Italian State Embassy in Albania, later accommodating the Archaeological-Ethnographic Museum from 1948, and in the 1980s the headquarters of the War Veterans.

Following the fall of the communist regime, the villa became the

headquarters of the Institute of the Formerly Politically Persecuted, symbolizing a shift from state-controlled narratives to remembrance and recognition of past injustices. The site is closely connected to the memory of Bedrie Pipa (pen name Bedi Pipa), a writer and educator born in Shkodër in 1928. Author of *"Ditar Intim"*, published posthumously by her family, she is regarded as one of the earliest feminist voices in Albanian literature. Her writings explore inner life and personal reflection, shaped by persecution and severe health challenges under the communist regime.



The villa stands as a space of remembrance, linking architectural heritage with the personal histories of women whose voices and lives were shaped by political persecution.



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ACPD Albania archive

House of Leaves Museum



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: Ibrahim Rugova Street 12

The House of Leaves is one of Tirana's most significant museums, reflecting the country's complex political past. The building was originally constructed in 1931 as Albania's first private obstetrics clinic. During World War II, under German occupation, it was used by the Gestapo, and from 1945 to 1991 it served as the headquarters for surveillance and interception by the communist regime's secret police, Sigurimi.

Since 2017, the building has housed the National Museum of Secret Surveillance. Spread across

approximately 30 rooms, the museum documents the regime's extensive monitoring of citizens and political opponents, displaying surveillance tools and interrogation methods. Among the figures connected to this history is Musine Kokalari, a writer, activist, and politician born in 1917. Educated at La Sapienza University in Rome, she wrote extensively on women's suffering in a patriarchal society and founded both the Social Democratic Party of Albania and the newspaper *Zëri i Lirisë*. Arrested in 1946 for her anti-communist views, she continued writing until her death in 1983.



The House of Leaves reveals how surveillance and repression shaped individual lives, including women who resisted authoritarian power through writing and political action.



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<https://bigsee.eu/the-house-of-leaves-by-studio-terragni-architetti-albania/>

The Old Parliament



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: 8RG9+W2V, Çamëria Street

One of the oldest buildings in Tirana's city center, today known as the Puppet Theatre, was built in 1917 as the Military Club. Located in Skanderbeg Square, it later housed the first Albanian Parliament in 1928 and served as the main venue for parliamentary sessions until the late 1940s. In the 1950s, it functioned as the Soviet Club, and in 1961 it was converted into the Children's Puppet Theatre.

This building played a central role in Albania's political life. Among the influential figures associated with the period was Ollga Plumbi, born in Përmet in 1898. A feminist activist and writer, she published extensively on women's rights in *Bota e Re* and *Gruaja Shqiptare*. She later became head of the Women's Antifascist Council of Albania and, in 1945, was elected deputy to the People's Parliament. Despite being later sidelined as a political threat, she remained an advocate for gender equality throughout her career.



The former Parliament building reflects Albania's political transformations and the role of women who shaped public life and feminist thought.

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<https://eu4culture.al/site/national-puppet-theatre/>



Women's Museum



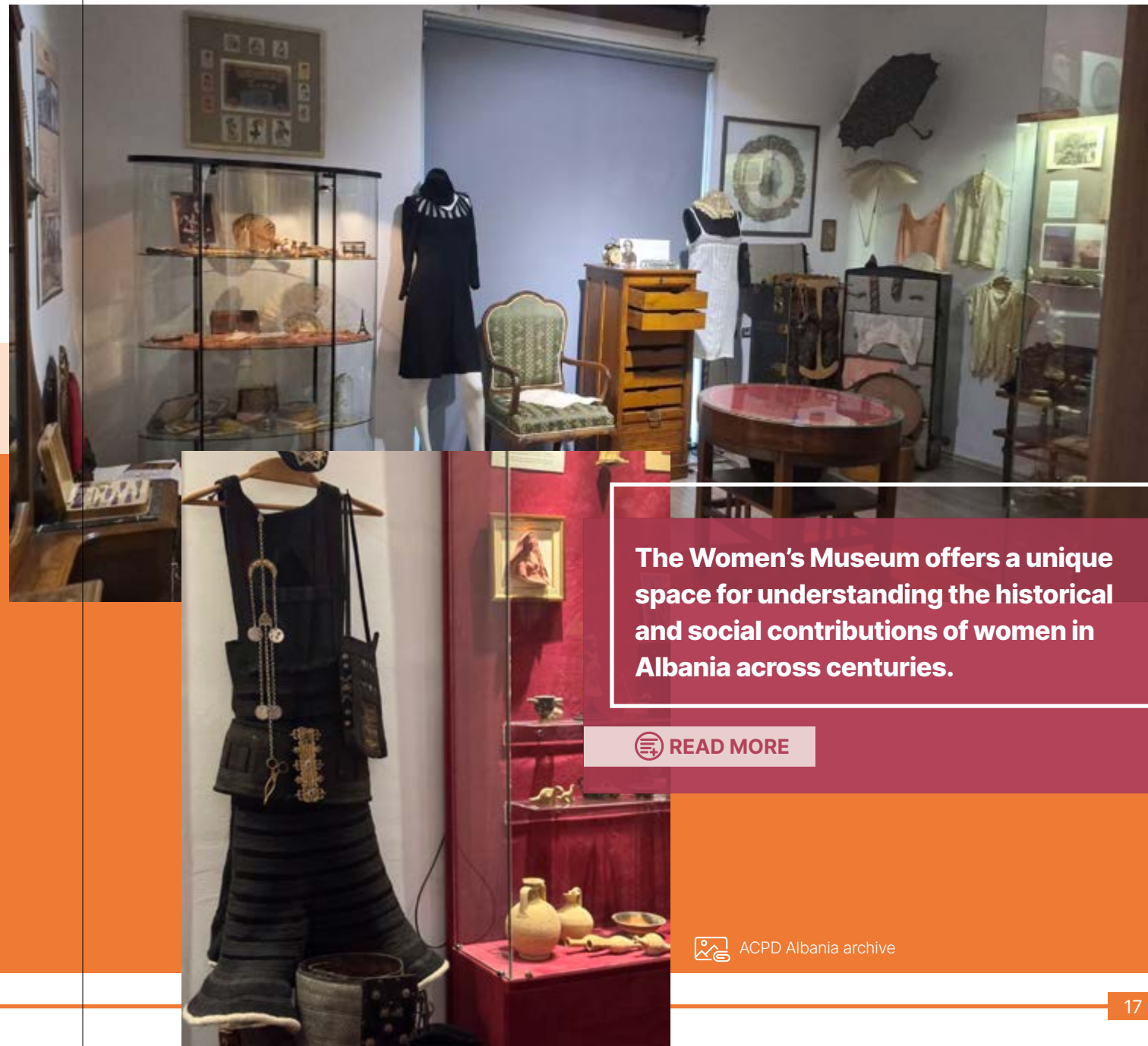
Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: Myslym Shyri Street 44

The Women's Museum in Tirana is the only museum of its kind in Albania. Located in a 1960s residential building on Myslym Shyri Street, the museum is dedicated to documenting and presenting the role of women throughout Albanian history. Its collection spans from antiquity to modern times, offering a chronological exploration of women's lives, identities, and social positions.

Through artifacts, narratives, and archival materials, the museum

examines women's dialogue with their inner selves and their perception within society. One of the most notable sections is dedicated to Praksithe Plumbi, born in Korça and educated in Odessa. An early supporter of the feminist movement, she taught girls in Albanian communities in Corfu, Istanbul, and Sofia, and later in Korça. Her writings focused on women's rights, education, early-age marriages, and conservative traditions that limited women's emancipation. She passed away in 1958.



The Women's Museum offers a unique space for understanding the historical and social contributions of women in Albania across centuries.



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The Castle of Tirana

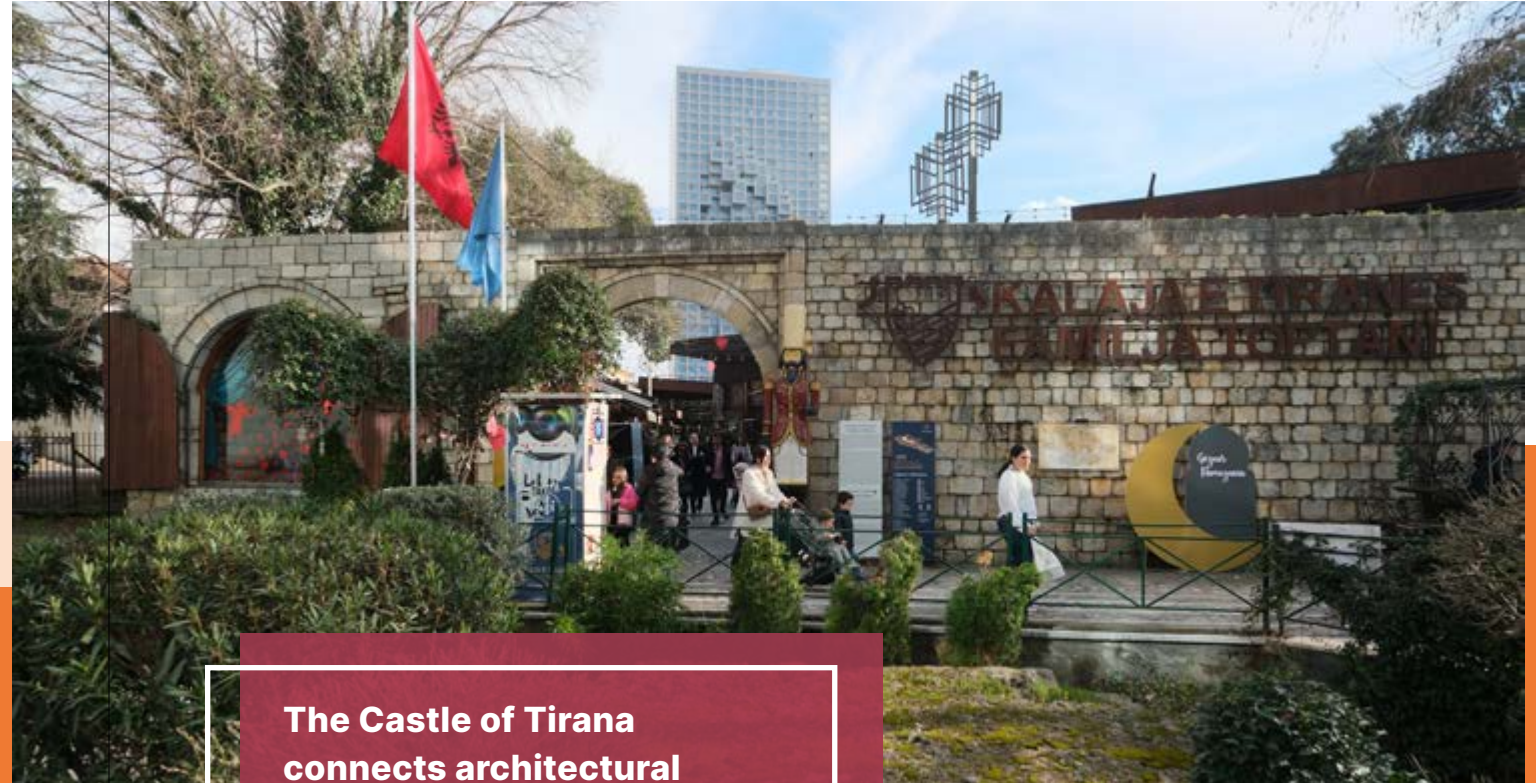


Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: Murat Toptani Pedestrian Walkway

The Castle of Tirana, a remnant of the Byzantine period dating back to the 6th century, is one of the city's most significant historical monuments. Originally built with a square plan, the fortress was rebuilt and expanded over the centuries, particularly in the 18th century to accommodate the town's growth. In 1798, it came under the ownership of the Toptani family and continued to serve defensive purposes until 1832.

Today, layers of history remain visible, including preserved sections of Ottoman-era walls accessible to visitors. The site is closely associated with Qevser Murat Toptani, born in 1892 and educated in Rome, a prominent philanthropist and intellectual figure. Known for supporting poor families, raising orphans, and financing the education of young girls often sending them abroad Qevser Toptani became a symbol of women's emancipation in Albania until her death in 1953.



The Castle of Tirana connects architectural heritage with the legacy of women who shaped social responsibility and female emancipation in the city.



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<https://albanify.com/en/visit/kalaja-e-tiranes/>

Tirana International Hotel

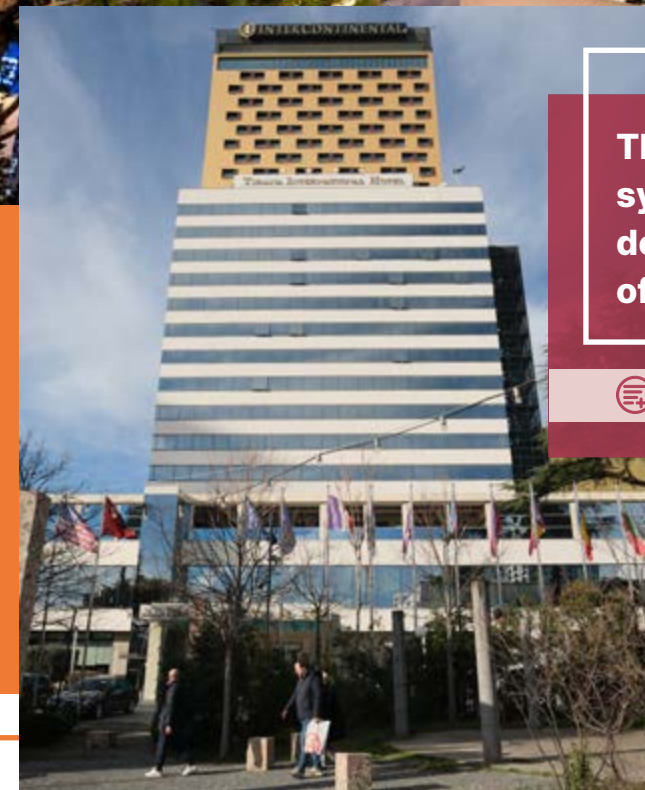
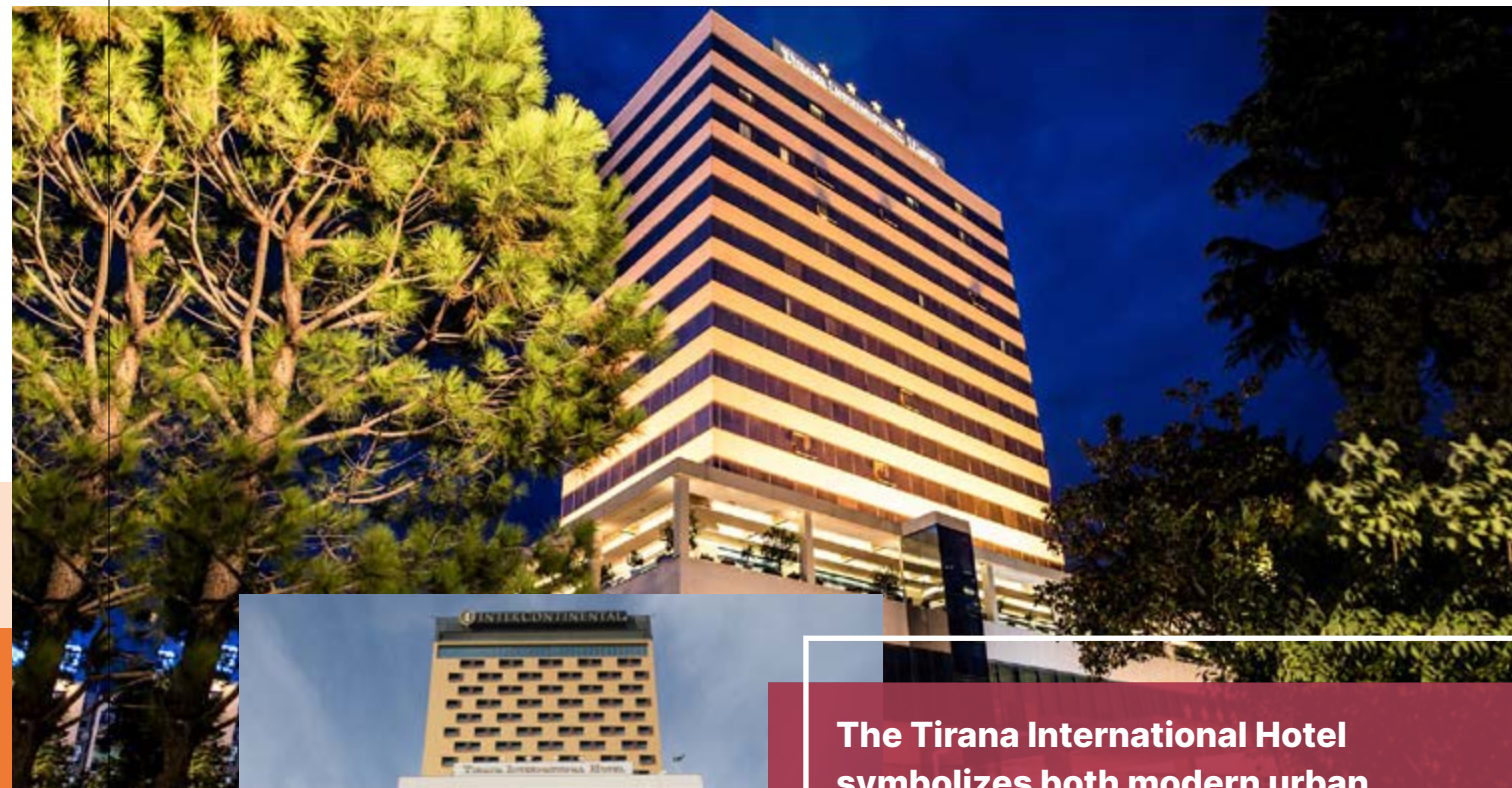


Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: Skanderbeg Square Street 8

The Tirana International Hotel is one of the most recognizable landmarks of the capital, located in the heart of Skanderbeg Square. Originally named Hotel Tirana and popularly known as “15 katshi” (the 15-floor building), it was for many years the tallest building in Albania. Designed in a functionalist architectural style, its construction began in 1978 and was completed in 1979 as one of the most ambitious government projects of the socialist period.

As was common at the time, the hotel was designed by a team of architects led by Valentina Pistoli. Born in Korça in 1928 and educated in Sofia, she became the first female architect in Albania. Through her work, she contributed significantly to shaping Tirana’s urban landscape and advocated for women’s inclusion in architecture and design, a field dominated by men.



The Tirana International Hotel symbolizes both modern urban development and the pioneering role of women in Albanian architecture.

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The Institute of Sciences



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: 8RGF+G48, Murat Toptani Pedestrian Walkway

Located next to the Castle of Tirana, the building that today houses the Academy of Sciences dates back to the 19th century and is a monument of cultural heritage. Organized over two floors, it reflects strong influences of local vernacular architecture. Over time, it has served multiple institutional roles, including as the headquarters of the Albanian Government in the 1920s and as the Royal Palace in the 1930s, later becoming the Presidium of the People's Parliament.

Since the 1960s, the building has housed the Institute of Sciences, today known as the Academy of Sciences. The Art Department was established by Viktori Puzanova, an art historian and painter born in Rostov in 1893 and educated in Saint Petersburg. Arriving in Albania before the end of World War II, she pioneered the study and documentation of medieval art, founding the fields of Byzantine Studies, Medieval Art Studies, and Art History in Albania, while advocating for women's inclusion in these academic disciplines.



The Institute of Sciences marks the foundation of Albania's academic and art historical research, shaped significantly by women scholars and pioneers.



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<https://www.qmksh.al/en/5-prill-1947-u-hap-ne-tirane-instituti-i-shkencave/>

New Albania Film Studio (Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re”)



Location: Tirana, Albania

Address: Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re”, 8RVV+CJ8

Built between 1950 and 1952 in a neoclassical architectural style by a team of Soviet architects, Kinostudio “Shqipëria e Re” became one of Tirana’s most important cultural landmarks, giving its name to the surrounding neighborhood. The statues on its rooftop draw inspiration from Albanian folklore and heritage. During the communist period, it served as the state film studio where the majority of Albanian films were produced.

Today, the building houses the Ministry of Culture, Tourism, and Sports. Closely associated with its legacy is Xhanfize Keko, born in 1928 and educated in the USSR. A beloved film director, she is considered one of the most important female voices in Albanian cinematography. Through her films, she emphasized the educational role of cinema and paved the way for women directors in a male-dominated field.



Kinostudio represents the foundation of Albanian cinema and the emergence of women as influential voices in film and cultural production.



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<https://albaniantimes.al/72-years-of-kinostudio-shqiperia-e-re-a-historical-and-architectural-landmark/>

Skopje

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- > Museum of Macedonia
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“Lotus” Fountain, City Park, Skopje

Location: City Park (Debar Maalo), Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
Address: “Ilindenska” St., no number

The “Lotus” Fountain, one of the most representative fountains in the country, was put into operation on May 3, 1971. The inspiration for its form was found by its designer, architect Mirjana Milanović-Voliniec (1938–1982), in the lotus flower, as a symbolic preservation of the “spirit of the place” (genius loci), connected to the white lotus flowers that once grew on the site before the fountain was built. It features a composition of water jets emerging from three spheres, so that the “water cloud” becomes an integral part of the architecture. At the time, it was also technologically advanced: the project for the water-supply installations was produced by the Italian company “Alpina” from Ferrara.

The fountain itself functions as a decorative element through which the public space is carefully designed: it

is placed eccentrically in relation to the axis of a plateau, raised by steps from the access street and arranged with organically curved benches and planters made of exposed concrete, enriched with wood. Its restrained color palette stands in strong contrast to the lush greenery of the park. The soft, circular forms of the fountain—with a basin diameter of 10 meters—as well as the surrounding ground-level elements, subtly evoke a feminine principle in the aesthetic shaping of public space.

From its construction to the present day, the plateau around the “Lotus” Fountain—besides serving as a focal point at the entrance to Skopje’s City Park—has been a place for socializing and an informal gathering spot for various groups that make up Skopje’s subculture, including its artistic and creative avant-garde.



The “Lotus” Fountain (1971), designed by architect Mirjana Milanović-Voliniec, is a symbol of late modernism expressed through a feminine artistic sensibility, and it has become one of the most important meeting points and places of togetherness for many generations of Skopje residents.

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 <https://www.porta3.mk/arhitektonski-medaljon-na-vlezot-vo-gradskiot-park/>

Vera Jocić Memorial Park and Monument



Location: Centar, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Address: “Jordan Hadži Konstantinov – Džinot” St., no. (n/a)

The memorial park and monument dedicated to Olivera “Vera” Jocić (1923–1944) commemorate the life and revolutionary path of one of the most significant women in the Macedonian and Yugoslav anti-fascist struggle, active in many roles as a political organizer, fighter, and educator. At only 21 years of age, Vera Jocić was killed in fierce combat against the fascist occupier. In 1951, she was proclaimed the first female People’s Hero from Macedonia. In her honor, streets and institutions across the country have been named after her, and her bravery and selfless

sacrifice have been celebrated in contemporary Macedonian poetry.

The monument of Vera Jocić, created by her sister, the renowned sculptor Vida Jocić, is not only a place of remembrance but also a testament to the active role of women in the struggle for freedom, equality, and resistance to oppression during the Second World War. Through Vera’s figure, the memorial highlights women’s courage and political engagement, often marginalized in official historical narratives, and serves as an educational point on the anti-fascist movement and feminist values.



https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vera_Joci%C4%87_monument_02.JPG



The monument of Vera Jocić is a lasting symbol of women’s courage and resistance to fascism, reminding us that freedom and equality were also won by women who paid the highest price for them.



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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Vera_Joci%C4%87.jpg

The Paeonian Priestess



Location: Center, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
Pedestrian Bridge “Eye” and the Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia

Archaeological excavations at the “Lisichin Dol” necropolis near Isar–Marvinci (Gevgelija) uncovered a complex layer of Paeonian Iron Age culture (7th–6th century BCE), with rich finds associated with a woman of high social status, known as the “Paeonian Priestess.” The grave inventory, which includes numerous bronze cult objects, indicates the presence of women in ritual practices within Paeonian society, expanding the historical picture in which women’s roles in the public and religious spheres have often been marginalized. The discovered artifacts, arranged in an exhibition setting that reconstructs the original grave layout, are today displayed in the Archaeological Museum of the Republic of North Macedonia.

In addition to the museum display, the Paeonian Priestess is also represented through a monumental bronze sculpture placed on the pedestrian bridge “Eye” in the center of Skopje, creating a symbolic link between the cultural heritage preserved in the Archaeological Museum and the city’s contemporary cultural memory. The sculpture is a visual interpretation that affirms women’s role in the past and brings it into the public space. From a feminist perspective, it functions as an act of restoring women’s visibility in history and as an impetus for critically rethinking gender relations, memory, and the symbolic power of cultural heritage.



<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=3032745133477222&set=a.563668945365366>



The Paeonian Priestess represents a rare example of female religious power in an Iron Age society, and its contemporary presentation in public space confirms women’s history as an active part of cultural memory, serving as an act of renewing the visibility of women from the past.

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Маја Јаневска Илиевска

Women Warrior Park



Location: Center, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia, the corner between “11th October” St. and “Philip II of Macedon” St., situated between the City Trade Center, the Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia, and Porta Macedonia.

Women Warrior Park, covering an area of 9,000 m², was designed as part of Skopje’s post-1963 earthquake urban planning. Because the city center lacked greenery, the park was envisioned as a green oasis and an accessible promenade. Beyond that function, the park is also a memorial space marking women’s participation in the National Liberation Struggle (1941–1945). The concept for the park is credited to Mira Halambek Wenzler, a landscape architect from Zagreb, Croatia. The park was officially opened on March 8, 1970, with the unveiling of the “Women Warrior” monument by sculptor Boro Mitrićski—an abstract white marble sculpture. Of great significance within the park is also the memorial dedicated

to Nevena Georgieva–Dunja, who at sixteen years old was the youngest partisan in the First Skopje Partisan Detachment and the first woman warrior in the partisan units of Macedonia.

With the “Skopje 2014” project, the park’s appearance was significantly altered through a series of sculptural interventions that “overshadow” the main monument. Nevertheless, its role as a symbol of activist spirit and defiance persists. Women Warrior Park continues to serve as a gathering point for numerous contemporary protest actions, especially those related to women’s rights, emancipation, social rights, trade union struggles, and the fight for gender equality.

Women Warrior Park is distinguished by great historical, political, and symbolic value. Beyond its role as a symbol of women’s participation in the National Liberation Struggle, the park’s feminist values are also visible in the fact that its design was entrusted to a woman architect, as well as in its role within the activist movements of the 21st century.



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=29960700>



<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=53511989>



Albanian Theatre in Skopje (Theatre of Nationalities)



Location: Old Bazaar (Bit-Pazar), Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Address: 41 "Nikola Martinovski" St.

The Albanian Theatre in Skopje, also known as the "Theatre of Nationalities," was founded in 1950 on the initiative of the People's Council of the City of Skopje. It initially operated as the "Minority's Theatre," with two drama ensembles, Albanian and Turkish. Over time, the institution changed its name and structure, adapting to political, cultural, and social circumstances. Since 2004, it has officially functioned as the National Institution Albanian Theatre Skopje.

The building, opened in 1974, covers approximately 4,500 m² and includes a 350-seat auditorium, a stage, dressing rooms, and administrative offices. Designed by architects Vera Kjosovska and Ljubinka Malenkova in a late modernist style, it is a rare

and significant example of women's authorship in public architecture of that period. Since 2014, the Theatre has been undergoing reconstruction and modernization to align with contemporary technical standards, continuing to serve as a space of inclusivity and multicultural dialogue.

Vera Kjosovska (1929–2024), educated in Belgrade, carried out her professional work in North Macedonia and made an important contribution to the reconstruction of Skopje after the 1963 earthquake. Ljubinka Malenkova (b. 1927), who graduated in 1951, belongs to the first generation of Macedonian women architects and urban planners, with an influence on the city's broader development policies.



From 1950 to the present day, the Albanian Theatre has been one of the city's most important scenes, housed in a 1974 modernist building designed by architects Vera Kjosovska and Ljubinka Malenkova. It represents a convergence of architectural heritage, women's creative authorship, and cultural togetherness in Skopje.



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<https://www.facebook.com/photo/?fbid=1061983519264584&set=a.500296618766613>

The Great Mother



Location: Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
Tumba-Madzari archaeological site, between the neighborhoods of “Chento” and “Madzari”

“The Great Mother” is a Neolithic anthropomorphic terracotta figurine discovered, together with a number of other artifacts, at the Tumba-Madzari archaeological site in Skopje. It is dated to the Middle Neolithic, approximately the 6th millennium BCE, and based on its stylistic features it belongs to the “Anzabegovo–Vrshnik” cultural group. It stands about 39 cm tall and is depicted as an elongated, cylindrical, stylized female figure that “emerges” from a pedestal shaped like a house. The figurine has a plastically modeled face, a complex hairstyle, subtly formed breasts and navel, and arms resting on the house. This unusual fusion of deity and home is not merely an artistic choice, but a

powerful message about the spiritual worldview of Neolithic people.

The figure is interpreted as a Mother Goddess, a symbol of fertility, life, the home, and the protection of the family. Archaeological traces suggest that the figurine was hung above the hearth, and that incense or dried herbs were burned in the base beneath it, linking it to rituals of blessing and security within the household community. Although it is a local discovery, “The Great Mother” fits into the broader European context of Neolithic female-deity traditions, while retaining a clear local distinctiveness through its emphasized connection between mother and home as an inseparable whole.



“The Great Mother” from Tumba-Madzari, a Neolithic anthropomorphic terracotta female figure emerging from a house-shaped pedestal, symbolizes fertility, life, and the protection of the home, and stands as evidence of a highly developed spiritual life in the Skopje region as far back as around 8,000 years ago.

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https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Golemata_Majka.jpg



Danica Ruchigaj



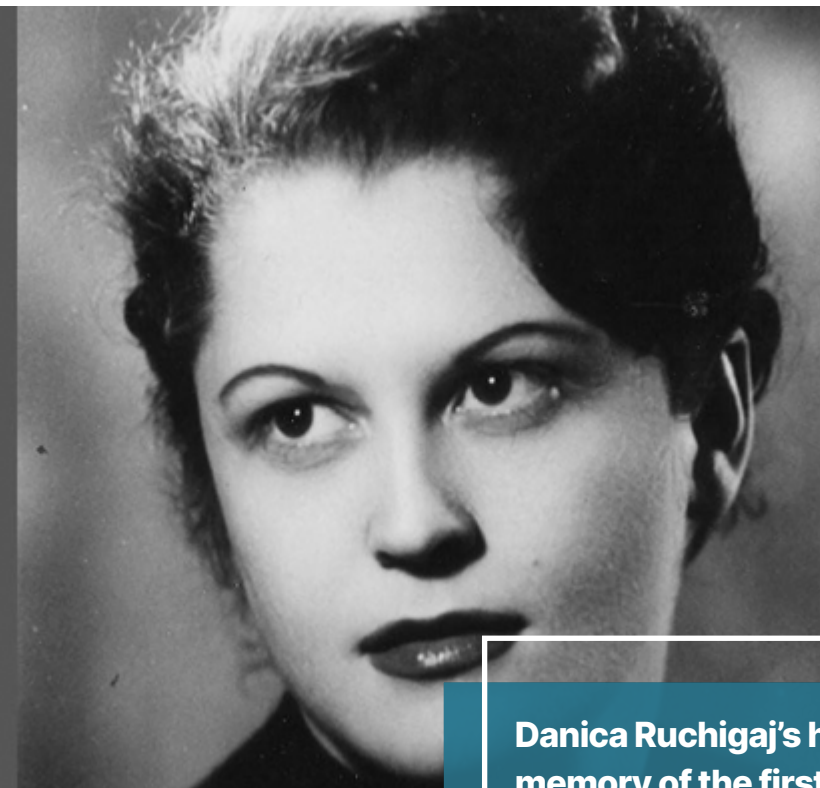
Location: Centar, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Address: "Vodnjanska" St. (today "Mother Teresa" Blvd.) No. 40

The family home at 40 "Vodnjanska" Street in Skopje is a place connected to the life, work, and tragic death of the **first Macedonian poet, Danica Ruchigaj** (1934–1963). It was here that she wrote her poems and shaped her poetic voice at a time when women's authorship rarely received space or visibility. Her poetry, quiet yet unmistakably clear, speaks of love, personal experience, and the inner world of a young woman who consciously entered the literary scene of her era.

After the 1963 earthquake, in which Danica tragically lost her life, the home gained additional significance because

her final poems were found in its ruins and were published posthumously as her second poetry collection. Today, the site is recognized as part of Skopje's cultural memory and as an important point in the feminist history of Macedonian literature, reminding us of the need for women's creative traces to remain visible, preserved, and told. This space is not a museum, yet it carries strong symbolic value: it bears witness to the everyday life of a young woman creating literature in a time of limited opportunities. As such, the place functions both as remembrance and as a reminder that a city also remembers through its invisible women's stories.



Danica Ruchigaj's home preserves the memory of the first Macedonian poet and of the moment when a woman's voice, quiet yet certain, entered the literary history of Skopje and North Macedonia.



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The Ruben Family House



Location: Centar, City Park (Debar Maalo), Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Address: Corner of "Ilindenska" Blvd. and "Naum Naumovski – Borce" St.

The Ruben family house is located in the heart of Debar Maalo and represents an important part of Skopje's urban and cultural history. Built in 1927 by the renowned architect Ivan Artemushkin, it is one of the city's most emblematic examples of eclectic architecture typical of the interwar period, with an elegantly articulated volume and plastically modeled façades.

The building was originally owned by the Jewish Ruben family, who lived there until the Second World War. After the war, part of the house was nationalized and became home to several families, among them

Ljupka Arsova-Dzundeva (1934–2018), one of the most awarded film and theatre actresses and a leading figure in Macedonian dramatic art.

This may have contributed to the decision to film some scenes of one of the first Macedonian feature-length films, *Mirno Leto* (1961), directed by Dimitrie Osmanli, in which Ljupka Dzundeva played the lead role, precisely in this building. The film captured the atmosphere of life in what was once a mansion, later inhabited by many different residents. The house's appearance in the cult comedy further strengthened its cultural value and symbolism within Skopje's urban fabric.



The Ruben family house is a rare example of Skopje's urban residential architecture that connects private family history, cultural life, and the city's cinematic memory through the legacy of actress Ljupka Arsova-Dzundeva, leaving a lasting mark on Skopje's collective cultural space.

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Ljupka Dzundeva in a scene from the cult film "Peaceful Summer" (1961).

Monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Matka)

Location: Matka, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

The Monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Matka was founded in the 14th century on a site where an early Christian church from the 6th century once stood. As a building, it is an immovable cultural heritage monument, and as a living religious center it also carries intangible value through centuries of spiritual tradition. The monastery was renovated in 1337 by Boško, a feudal lord of the region. After the Ottoman conquest it fell into disrepair and was restored again in 1497 with the support of Metropolitan Athanasios and the **ktitor Milica** together with her son Nikola, making it one of the rarer examples of female patrons in the Orthodox world.

The church is designed as a compact inscribed cross with a central dome set on an octagonal drum, solidly built of brick and stone, incorporating stone decorative elements from the earlier church. The monastery preserves evidence of monastic life, including the tombstone of the servant of God Maria Velislava from 1372, as well as a revered icon of the Virgin Mary. From the 15th century onward, the monastery developed literary and educational activity. The revival-era educator Kiril Pejčinović also lived here; it was in Matka, as abbot of the monastery, around 1801, that he wrote his renowned work *Ogledalo* (published in 1816). Today, it functions as an active women's monastery.

The Monastery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Matka is a spiritual and cultural center dating to the 14th century, restored in the 15th century through the patronage of a female ktitor, and distinguished by its unique architecture and a living tradition preserved to this day through its active role in women's monastic life.

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 [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manastir_Matka_\(7\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Manastir_Matka_(7).jpg)



 https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Манастир_Успение_на_Пресвета_Богородица_-_Матка_2015.jpg



Museum of Macedonia



Location: Old Skopje Bazaar, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia

Address: 7 "Josif Mihajlović" St.

The Museum of Macedonia (1971–1976) was built as part of Skopje's post-earthquake reconstruction, based on a design by **architects Mimoza Nestorova-Tomikj and Kiril Muratovski**. As the home of the History and Ethnology Museum, it tells the story of Macedonia's cultural and social development.

The sensitivity of its site, on sloping terrain between the Mustafa Pasha Mosque and Kurshumli An, is skillfully addressed through its fragmented modular structure and pavilion-like composition, organized around an open public space (a plateau). In this way, it translates the oriental context of the Old Skopje Bazaar into a refined, modern architectural form. Although

the area around it is quiet today, the Museum of Macedonia remains one of the country's most valuable cultural and architectural landmarks.

The lead designer, architect Mimoza Nestorova-Tomikj, played an important role in advancing the visibility of women in architecture, approaching it as a cultural narrative rather than only a technical discipline. Over her prolific career (among other works, she authored the urban planning project for the Old Skopje Bazaar, the "Skopjanka" department store, the "Menada" café, and the "City Gate" complex), she received the "Andreja Damjanov" Lifetime Achievement Award in 2011, the country's highest state recognition for contributions to architecture.



The Museum of Macedonia is one of the key works of Skopje's post-earthquake reconstruction and an important public building designed by a woman architect. Through its modernist architectural language, it shapes public space while establishing a dialogue with the historic atmosphere of the Old Skopje Bazaar.



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Mimoza Nestorova-Tomikj (Photo: K. Popov)

National Bank of the Republic of North Macedonia

Location: Centar, Skopje, Republic of North Macedonia
Address: 1 "Kuzman Josifovski – Pitu" Blvd.

The National Bank building (constructed between 1971 and 1975) is one of the most emblematic examples of modernist architecture in post-earthquake Skopje. It forms part of the "City Gate" urban plan by the Japanese urban planner Kenzo Tange. Key features of this landmark include clear geometric forms, robust volumes, and striking reinforced-concrete structural elements set in contrast to large glass surfaces. The building is characterized by functional, user-oriented design, an identifiable trait of modern architecture in general, and also a defining feature of the stylistic approach of its designers, **architects Olga Papesh and Radomir Lalovikj**.

The building also carries a strong feminist message, affirming women's presence in shaping major public institutions through the role of its author, architect Olga Papesh. As a physical testament to gender representation, professional visibility, and the lasting influence of women in architecture, it stands as both a symbol and an inspiration for future generations. Through it, a woman's architectural voice becomes permanently embedded in the city's contemporary urban fabric as cultural heritage and as a recognizable part of Skopje's cultural identity.



As post-earthquake Skopje was rebuilt and the city took on a new face, architecture shaped its future and the work of Olga Papesh stands out as a quiet yet powerful symbol of the visibility of women's creative and professional strength in a predominantly male architectural world.

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 <https://womenarchitects.mk/authors/>

Belgrade

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- > Sculpture of Nadežda Petrović



Center for Women's Studies



Location: Belgrade, Serbia

Address: Jove Ilića 165

The Center for Women's Studies was founded in 1992, during the Yugoslav wars, as a vital space for feminist thought in a public sphere dominated by nationalism, censorship, militarization and patriarchal politics. As one of the earliest independent feminist academic institutions in Southeast Europe, it created an alternative intellectual environment for critical inquiry, anti-war dialogue and feminist resistance beyond dominant state narratives.

The Center developed an autonomous and interdisciplinary educational model, offering lectures, seminars and long-term programs in feminist theory,

gender and queer studies, philosophy and political thought—often before these fields entered formal academia. Its library and archive preserve around 8,000 publications and extensive documentation of feminist and anti-war activism since the 1990s. A major milestone came in 2003, when its long-standing initiatives contributed to the establishment of Gender Studies at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade. Today, it remains a vibrant site of feminist knowledge production, intergenerational exchange and cultural memory, representing a central point of feminist heritage in the wider Balkan region.

A living archive and feminist space, the Center for Women's studies preserves the memory of resistance while continuously generating new knowledge, solidarity and feminist political imagination for future generations and public engagement across the region today.



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<https://fpn.unibl.org/sr/konkurs-za-upis-studenta-u-drugom-upisnom-roku/>



<https://www.zenskестудие.edu.rs>

Bust of Draga Ljočić



Location: Belgrade, Serbia, plateau in front of the Faculty of Medicine

Address: Dr Subotića Starijeg 8

Draga Ljočić (1855–1926) was the first woman physician in Serbia and a pioneer in a time when women were not allowed to practice medicine. After studying medicine in Zurich, one of the few universities that admitted women, she returned to Serbia, where her diploma was initially rejected solely because of her gender. Only after additional exams and persistent effort did she gain the right to work, setting a historic precedent and opening the medical profession to women. During the Serbian–Turkish and Balkan Wars, she actively served in medical units, providing care to wounded soldiers at the front and uniting her medical vocation with humanity and courage.

At the same time, Draga Ljočić was one of the key figures of the first wave of feminism in Serbia, participating in women's associations and publicly advocating for girls' education, professional equality, and a greater role for women in society. In memory of her contribution, a public bust was erected in front of the Faculty of Medicine in Belgrade. Today, Draga Ljočić symbolizes women's professional emancipation, medical ethics, and early feminist resistance, and her legacy holds an important place in the history of women's rights in Serbia.

Draga Ljočić is a symbol of professional emancipation and the first wave of feminism in Serbia. As the first woman physician and an activist, she united medicine, humanity and the struggle for equality, opening space for women in the profession, public life and social responsibility.



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<https://www.istorijskizabavnik.rs/blog/draga-ljocic-prva-srpska-doktorka>



<https://www.danas.rs/zivot/draga-ljocic-prva-srpska-lekarka/>

First Girls' Gimnasium



Location: Belgrade, Serbia
Address: Ilije Garašanina 24

The First Women's Gymnasium in Belgrade, founded in 1905, was the first secondary school in Serbia dedicated exclusively to the education of girls and marked a revolutionary breakthrough in a society where women's formal education was limited and socially discouraged. From 1909, it operated as an independent State First Women's Gymnasium, with a curriculum fully equal to that of male gymnasiums, enabling girls, for the first time, to gain systematic and equal access to university education and academic professions.

Through wars, political changes, and profound social upheavals,

the school endured as a space of intellectual development, solidarity, and civic engagement, shaping generations of women who later assumed significant roles in science, culture, education, and public life. After merging with the Second Male Gymnasium in 1953/1954, it became the Fifth Belgrade Gymnasium, yet its historical legacy remains a lasting symbol of the struggle for educational equality, women's emancipation, and the modernization of Serbian society, preserved today through the building, archives, publications, and public memory as a reminder of women's long fight for knowledge, autonomy, and public participation.



<https://beogradskevesti.info/zgrada-pete-beogradske-gimnazije-prva-zenska-realna-gimnazija/>



The First Girl's Gymnasium in Belgrade, founded in 1905, was a pioneering institution of women's education in Serbia. It enabled equal access to knowledge, universities and public life, becoming a foundation of women's emancipation and social modernization.



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<https://www.011info.com/upoznai-beograd/peta-beogradska-gimnazija-prva-skola-u-cije-klupe-su-sele-zenskinje>

House of Isidora Sekulic

 **Location:** Belgrade, Serbia, Topčider

The House of Isidora Sekulić in Topčider is one of the most significant sites of women's and literary cultural heritage in Serbia. In this space, during the final decades of her life, Isidora created mature essays, literary criticism, and travel writing that profoundly shaped Serbian modernist prose, aesthetics, and twentieth-century cultural thought. Today, the house represents not only an architectural trace of her life, but also a symbol of women's intellectual authority in a period when female voices were frequently marginalized.

Isidora Sekulić (1877–1958) was born in Mošorin and educated in

Budapest, later continuing her studies at universities in Berlin, London, and Paris. She spoke several languages, worked as a translator, traveled extensively, and maintained rich intellectual correspondence across Europe. Her literary expression combined lyrical sensitivity with analytical depth, positioning her among the key authors of Serbian modernism. As the first woman elected a full member of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, she broke major institutional gender barriers. Her house in Topčider, preserved as both a personal and working space, remains a rare testament to women's intellectual history.



The House of Isidora Sekulić in Topčider is a symbol of women's authority and literary modernism in Serbia—a space where works were created that, despite gender barriers, permanently shaped twentieth-century Serbian culture and opened paths for women's creativity.

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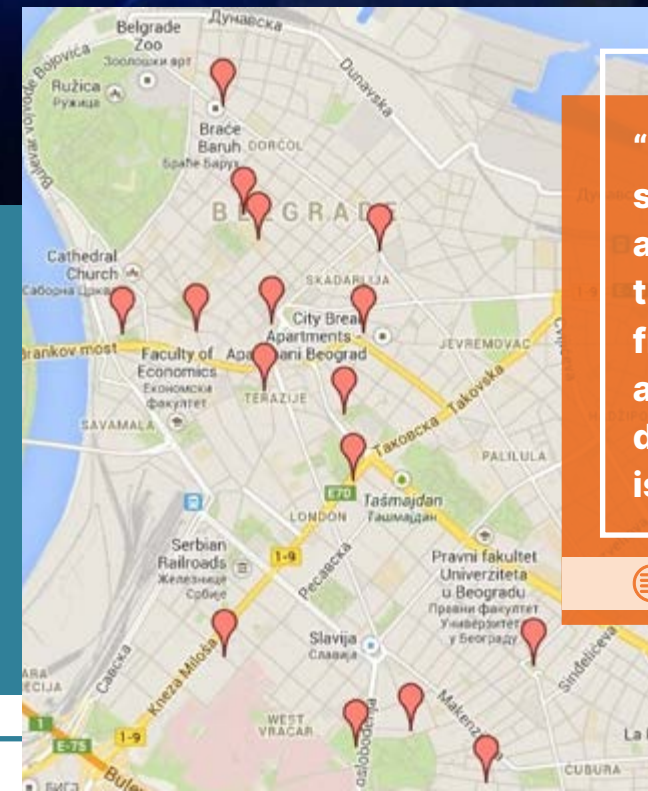
Kissing Area

 **Location:** Belgrade, multiple locations in the city center

“Kissing Spot” is a public art action that emerged in Belgrade as a playful yet politically powerful intervention in everyday urban space. These markings—often shaped like hearts or stylized to resemble official city signs—indicate places where couples are symbolically invited to kiss. Though subtle and humorous in appearance, they carry a clear feminist and queer message: the right to visibility of love, intimacy, and tenderness in public space.

“Kissing Spots” most often appear in locations where public expressions of affection, especially between same-

sex partners, are met with judgment or hostility. By declaring these points “kiss zones,” activists create spaces of acceptance within the city and directly challenge heteronormative and patriarchal norms that push queer love into the private sphere. Over time, these spots have become informal landmarks during Pride events, feminist walks, youth actions, and public-space performances. As a form of street activism, “Kissing Spot” demonstrates how small artistic interventions can generate visibility, spark dialogue, and build solidarity in contemporary society.



“Kissing Spot” transforms public space into a zone of inclusion, joy and feminist resistance. It challenges the exclusion of queer relationships from the public sphere and creates a symbolic space of freedom, dialogue and visibility of love that is often stigmatized.

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March 8 Protest Route



Location: Belgrade, Serbia

Route: Republic Square → Knez Mihailova → Terazije → National Assembly

The March 8 protest route in Belgrade is one of the most recognizable and longest-standing traditions of feminist resistance in Serbia. It is not merely a physical route, but a living historical corridor of women's struggle, through which city streets each year become spaces of collective resistance, visibility and solidarity. The march traditionally begins at Republic Square, continues through Knez Mihailova and Terazije and ends in front of the National Assembly, where demands are directed toward institutions of power.

This route has been marched for more than 3 decades. During the 1990s, a period marked by wars, nationalism and

deep social crisis, feminist organizations reclaimed March 8 as a day of political protest rather than symbolic celebration. In the following decades, the march became connected with struggles for labor and social rights, LGBTQ+ equality, resistance to violence and femicide, environmental justice and bodily autonomy. Today, the march gathers thousands of people of different generations and identities. Chants, drums and symbols such as purple scarves and the names of femicide victims transform the city into a space of remembrance. The March 8 route remains a ritual of feminist citizenship and a reminder of the ongoing struggle for justice, equality and women's dignity.



https://balkaninsight.com/2019/03/08/women-march-for-rights-across-balkans/?utm_source=chatgpt.com



The March 8 protest route in Belgrade represents a living space of feminist resistance, memory and solidarity. By moving through the city, it reclaims public space for women, connects generations, articulates demands and affirms the enduring struggle for justice, equality and dignity.



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Milena Pavlović Barili Gallery

Location: Požarevac, Serbia
Address: Voje Dulića 14

Milena Pavlović Barili is one of the most significant and innovative artists of Serbian, Yugoslav, and European modernist art. Born in Požarevac into a Serbian–Italian family, she grew up in a cosmopolitan and culturally rich environment that strongly shaped her artistic sensibility. She studied in Belgrade and Munich and further developed her practice through extended stays in Rome, Paris, Madrid, and London, where she formed a distinctive artistic expression influenced by Symbolism, Expressionism, Metaphysical painting and early Surrealism.

Her artistic oeuvre includes more than 300 paintings, and women in her works are portrayed as strong, autonomous, and symbolic figures, which is why her work is often interpreted as a subtle feminist critique. Despite gender barriers, Milena built an international career, exhibited widely across Europe, and worked as a fashion illustrator in New York. Although she died at the age of 35, her body of work is now recognized as an important part of European modernism and women's artistic heritage. The Milena Pavlović Barili Gallery in Požarevac preserves and presents her legacy, while contemporary exhibitions contribute to new interpretations of her work in the 21st century.

The artistic path of Milena Pavlović Barili testifies the power of women's creativity that defied gender constraints. As a modernist artist, Milena claimed an international stage and today stands as a key figure in feminist art history and Serbia's cultural heritage.

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 <https://www.politika.rs/sr/clanak/582203/na-danasnji-dan-rodjena-je-milena-pavlovic-barili>



 <https://togp.rs/galerija-milene-pavlovic-barilli/>

House of Mileva Marić Einstein

 **Location:** Novi Sad, Serbia
Address: Kisačka street no.20

Mileva Marić Einstein (1875–1948) was one of the most gifted women scientists of her generation, originally from Serbia, at a time when women's access to higher scientific education was extremely rare. Born in Titel and raised in Novi Sad, she showed exceptional talent for mathematics and physics from an early age. In 1896, she became one of the first women admitted to the Zurich Polytechnic Institute (ETH Zurich), within an almost entirely male academic environment, where she developed a close intellectual partnership with Albert Einstein based on joint analyses and the exchange of ideas.

Although their correspondence testifies to a collaboration that shaped Einstein's early scientific thinking, Mileva's own scientific path was constrained by systemic gender discrimination, institutional barriers, and strong social pressures of the time. After separating from Einstein, she lived in material hardship while caring for her children, yet she is remembered as a woman of remarkable intelligence, discipline, and dignity. Today, Mileva Marić Einstein is increasingly recognized as a symbol of the invisible labor of women in science and a lasting reminder of deep structural injustices in the history of knowledge.

Mileva Marić Einstein was an exceptionally gifted scientist from Serbia and symbol of the invisible contributions of women in science. Her life story exposes gender barriers in academia and recalls achievements that were systematically suppressed for decades.

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 <https://aplusme.me/u-novosadskom-muzeju-izlozbon-predstavljen-zivot-i-rad-mileve-maric-ajnstajn/>

Mural of Mitra Mitrovic



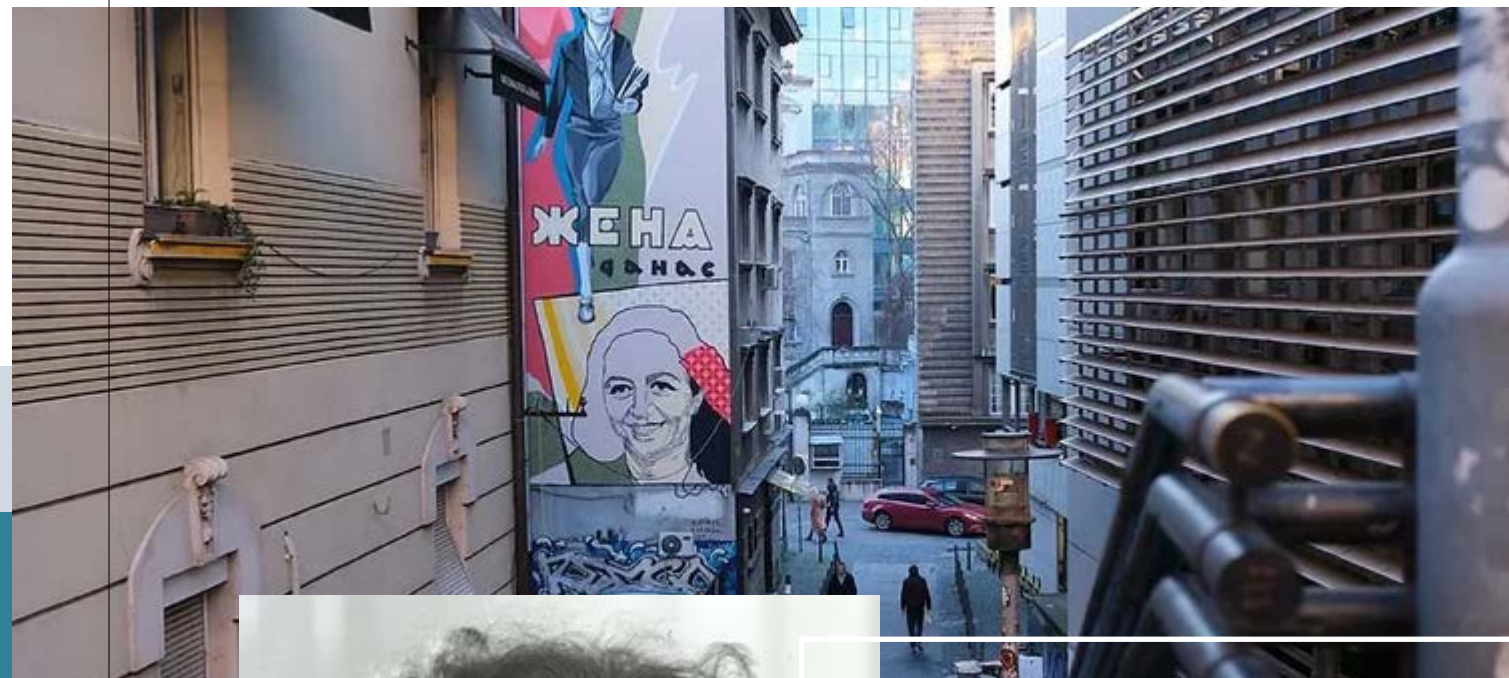
Location: Beograd, Srbija

Address: Marsala Birjuzova street

Mitra Mitrović (1912–2001) was a Serbian politician, writer, feminist, and anti-fascist activist whose work significantly shaped women's participation in public and political life in Yugoslavia. She graduated in literature from the University of Belgrade, where she became deeply involved in left-wing and women's movements and was one of the founders of the feminist journal *Žena danas* (*Woman Today*), advocating for women's emancipation, education, labor rights, and cultural participation. During the Second World War, Mitra was arrested and imprisoned in the Banjica concentration camp. After surviving imprisonment, she

joined the Partisan resistance, an experience that profoundly shaped her lifelong commitment to social justice and equality.

After the war, she became the first woman to serve as Minister of Education in post-war Serbia and later as President of the Council for Education and Culture, breaking gender barriers in political leadership. The mural dedicated to Mitra Mitrović in Belgrade, created as part of the feminist street-art initiative Women You (Won't) See in Textbooks, functions as an accessible public monument, a corrective to historical erasure, and a symbol of feminist struggle.



Mitra Mitrović symbolizes the intersection of feminist struggle, anti-fascist resistance and political responsibility. As a pioneer of women's participation in governance and culture, her legacy reminds us that women actively shaped social change despite repression and historical invisibility.



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https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/87/Mitra_Mitrovic.jpg



<https://www.masina.rs/mitra-mitrovic-se-vratila-na-ulice-beograda/>

Monument to Milunka Savić

 **Location:** Belgrade, Serbia,
public space (corner of Meštrovićeva Street and Brće Jerković Street)

Monument to Milunka Savić in Voždovac pays tribute to one of the bravest women in Serbian history. Milunka Savić born in the village of Koprivnica near Raška, came from a poor rural family and had limited formal education. At the outbreak of the First Balkan War, she cut her hair, disguised herself as a man, and enlisted in the army in place of her brother. When her gender was discovered, she refused transfer to medical service and insisted on remaining on the front line. She fought in the Balkan Wars and on the most dangerous fronts of the First World War, was wounded multiple times and became the most decorated

woman soldier in modern warfare. After the war, she lived modestly and was long forgotten.

The monument represents an act of correcting historical injustice by restoring a woman hero to public space and collective memory. Located in urban setting, it functions as a living site of learning, remembrance and feminist reflection. Depicted without pathos or a pedestal, Milunka stands among people, conveying that bravery is not an exception, but proof that the gender boundaries of heroism were historically misconstrued.



Monument to Milunka Savić returns the woman warrior to public space and collective memory, correcting historical injustice. It bears witness to courage that defied gender boundaries and reminds us that women were active participants and carriers of history and feminist devotion.

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 <https://www.info-vizija.com/milunka-savic-prica-o-najodlikovanijoj-zeni-u-istoriji-ratovanja/>



Sculpture of Nadežda Petrović



Location: Belgrade, Serbia, Pionirski Park

The sculpture of Nadežda Petrović in Pionirski Park is located in one of the most significant political and urban spaces of Belgrade, opposite the City Assembly building and surrounded by institutions and memorial sites largely dedicated to male historical figures. For this reason, its location carries strong symbolic meaning: a woman artist placed at the center of state memory, correcting the historical invisibility of women in public space. The sculpture presents Nadežda's determined stance, reflecting her artistic and activist spirit and her rejection of the academic constraints of the time.

Born in Čačak in 1873, she was educated in Munich, exhibited widely across Europe, and became one of the key figures of Serbian modernism. During the Balkan Wars and the First World War, she worked as a volunteer nurse, where she died in 1915. Today, the monument functions as layered heritage: an artistic memorial, a feminist marker, and a reminder of women's participation in cultural and wartime history. As such, it raises questions of collective memory, representation, and women's visibility, affirming that public space can and must be continually rewritten through women's contributions.



The sculpture of Nadežda Petrović restores a woman artist to the heart of public space and state memory. It highlights her modernist and humanitarian legacy, challenges male dominance in historical narratives, and affirms women's right to visibility, remembrance and cultural heritage today.



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