

A large, billowing white cumulus cloud dominates the left and center of the frame, set against a deep blue sky. The cloud's texture is highly detailed, showing various shades of white and light blue. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

Daria Shkeleva

Project Cloudy Tyrants
videomapping, installation
and sculpture

George Orwell, "1984"

Do you realize that the past, starting from yesterday, has been actually abolished? If it survives anywhere but only in a few solid objects with no words attached to them....I know of course that the past is falsified, but it would never be possible for me to prove it, even I did the falsification myself. After the thing is done, no evidence ever remains. The only evidence is inside my own mind, and I don't know with any certainty that any other human being shares my memories."

The author of this project, referring to complex and ambiguous heroes in history and literary works, served as the basis for the great utopias of twentieth century. The artist finds her way to answer the question how, through contemporary art, she can reflect the clash of the great ideas of the past and their consequences, overestimate their importance and release the burden of psychological projections.

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We see an isolated small space with white walls and "object" in the center - the human face is being projected. Musical accompaniment is Heinrich Schutz "Symphoniae Sacrae III, Op.12 -Saul, Saul. The cloudy sky is projected on the "object", at some point the clouds gather in a 3-D image of the face of a dictators. The image floats and object takes the form of a bust of the leader (bust represents the most familiar to us making human form in people's memory). Then clouds scatter again and run away in a blue sky, taking a form of another dictator. Part of the project are the paintings with images of dictators, consisting of clouds; and the sculpture - concrete cube with lighting from inside, where some books are mounted in the walls: the greatest utopias (Charter of Komsomol, Mein Kampf and etc.) on which most of the tyrannies were ideologically based.

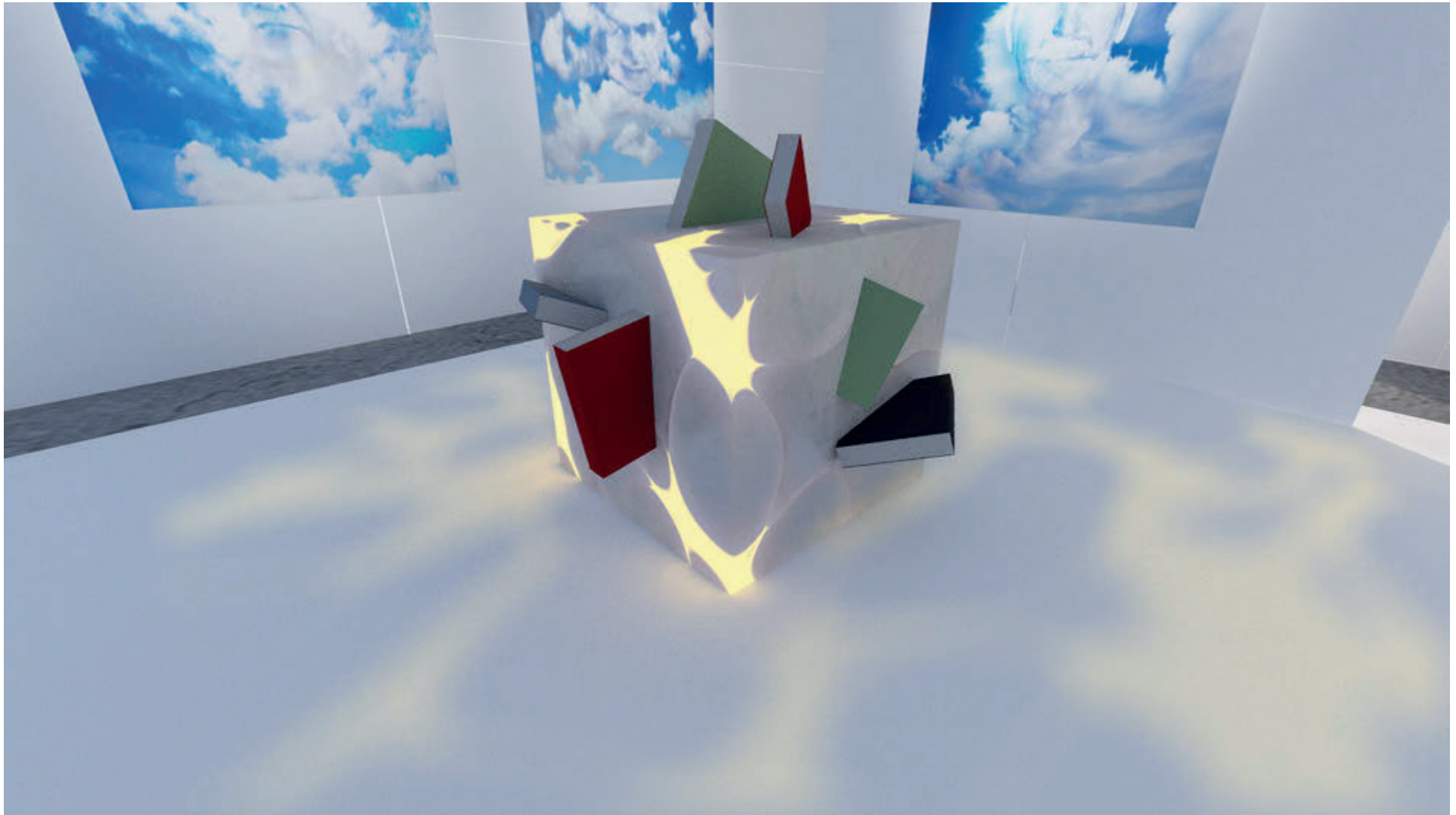
These books were sort of the foundation of some ideologies, taken by followers into service they caused tremendous damage and harm to humanity. "Soaring into the clouds" of these ideas, the followers turn them into reality with completely different methods. That's why there's a gallery of cloudy portraits. The more we deviate from reality and flow of life, the less we are connected with it.

Projection (Latin Projectio- throwing forward) - psychological process related to the mechanisms of psychological defense which causes the wrong way of perception: we take an internal as coming from the outside. Man ascribes to someone or something his own thoughts, feelings, motives, traits, assuming that he took it from outside, not from inside himself. It was first described by Sigmund Freud. Our psychological projection relates to eternity. The blue sky is the eternal symbol of the Absolute. Dictators are temporary, but imposed as a guide of modern society. We project the tyrants not on ourselves but on a pedestal - the simplest form and a way of perpetuating. The old guides take off the psychological projection of the viewer and allow to get rid of the burden, to overestimate their importance. The brutal masterminds and arbiters disappear in the eternal flow of time, leaving no traces.

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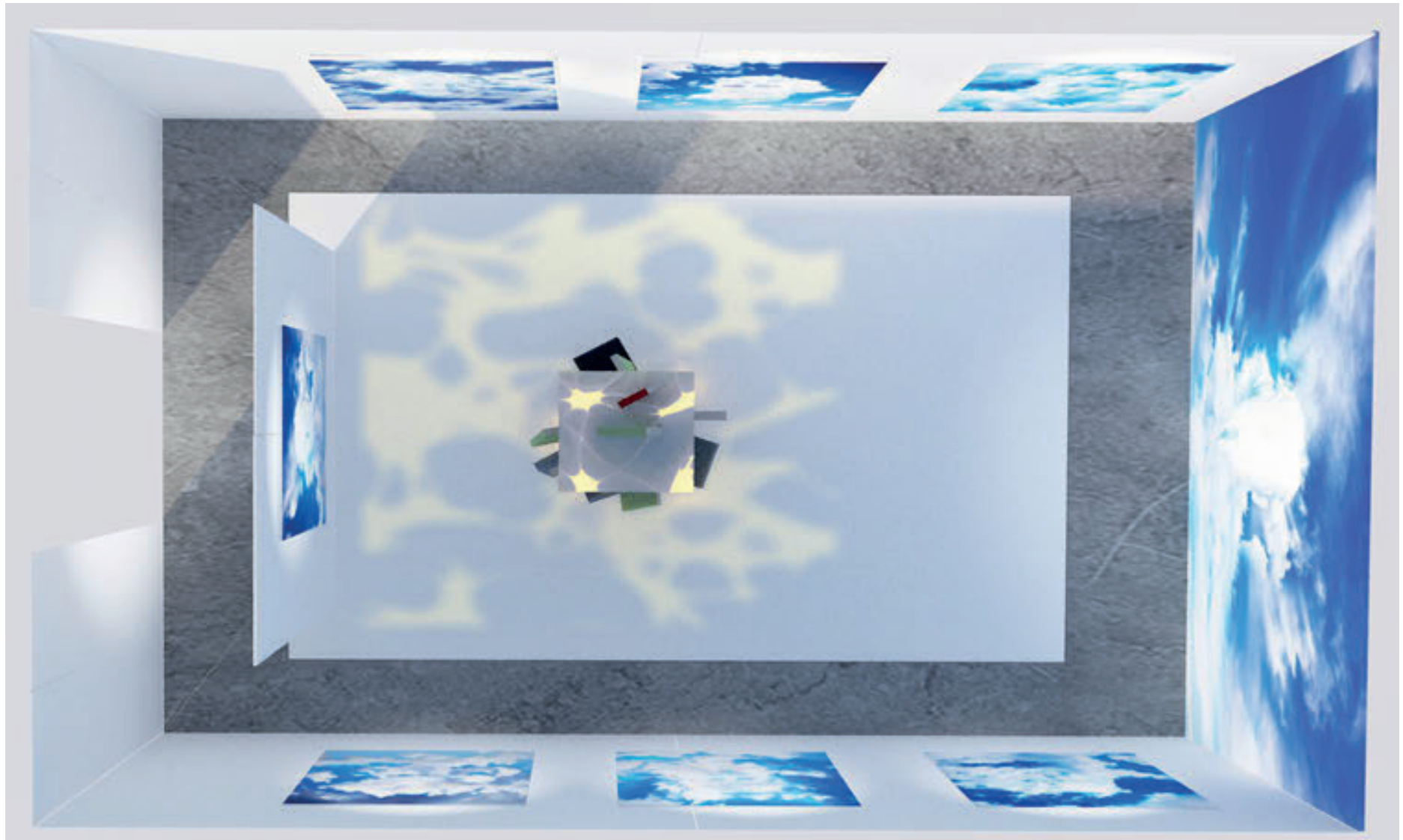
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Enver Halil Hoxha was the communist leader of Albania from 1944 until his death in 1985, as the First Secretary of the Party of Labour of Albania. He was chairman of the Democratic Front of Albania and commander-in-chief of the armed forces from 1944 until his death. He served as Prime Minister of Albania from 1944 to 1954 and at various times served as foreign minister and defence minister as well. The 40-year period of Hoxha's rule was characterized by the elimination of the opposition, prolific use of the death penalty or long prison terms for his political opponents and evictions of their families from their homes to remote villages that were strictly controlled by police and the secret police (Sigurimi). His rule was also characterized by Stalinist methods to destroy his associates who threatened his own power.

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Adolf Hitler was an Austrian-born German politician who was the leader of the Nazi Party (NSDAP), Chancellor of Germany from 1933 to 1945, and Führer ("leader") of Nazi Germany from 1934 to 1945. He was effectively dictator of Nazi Germany, and was at the centre of World War II in Europe and the Holocaust. Under Hitler's leadership and racially motivated ideology, the Nazi regime was responsible for the genocide of at least 5.5 million Jews and millions of other victims whom he and his followers deemed Untermenschen ("sub-humans") and socially undesirable. Hitler and the Nazi regime were also responsible for the killing of an estimated 19.3 million civilians and prisoners of war. In addition, 29 million soldiers and civilians died as a result of military action in the European Theatre of World War II. The number of civilians killed during the Second World War was unprecedented in warfare, and constitutes the deadliest conflict in human history.

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Augusto José Ramón Pinochet Ugarte, more commonly known as Augusto was dictator of Chile between 1973 and 1990 and Commander-in-Chief of the Chilean Army from 1973 to 1998. He was also president of the Government Junta of Chile between 1973 and 1981. From its beginning, the new military government implemented harsh measures against its perceived opponents. Various reports and investigations claim that between 1,200 and 3,200 people were killed, up to 80,000 people were interned and as many as 30,000 were tortured during the time Pinochet was in government. As of 2011, the official number of deaths and forced disappearances stands at 3,065

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Nicolae was a Romanian Communist politician. He was General Secretary of the Romanian Communist Party from 1965 to 1989, and as such was the country's second and last Communist leader. He was also the country's head of state from 1967 to 1989.

A member of the Romanian Communist youth movement, Ceaușescu rose up through the ranks of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej's Socialist government and, upon the death of Gheorghiu-Dej in 1965, he succeeded to the leadership of Romania's Communist Party as General Secretary. After a brief period of relatively moderate rule, Ceaușescu's regime became increasingly brutal and repressive. By some accounts, his rule was the most rigidly Stalinist in the Soviet bloc. He maintained controls over speech and the media that were very strict even by Soviet-bloc standards, and internal dissent was not tolerated. His secret police, the Securitate, was one of the most ubiquitous and brutal secret police forces in the world. In 1982, with the goal of paying off Romania's large foreign debt, Ceaușescu ordered the export of much of the country's agricultural and industrial production. The resulting extreme shortages of food, fuel, energy, medicines, and other basic necessities drastically lowered living standards and intensified unrest. Ceaușescu's regime was also marked by an extensive and ubiquitous cult of personality, nationalism, a continuing deterioration in foreign relations even with the Soviet Union, and nepotism.

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Pol Pot born **Saloth Sar**, was a Cambodian revolutionary who led the Khmer Rouge from 1963 until 1997. From 1963 to 1981, he served as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea. As such, he became the leader of Cambodia on 17 April 1975, when his forces captured Phnom Penh. From 1976 to 1979, he also served as the prime minister of Democratic Kampuchea.

He presided over a totalitarian dictatorship, in which his government made urban dwellers move to the countryside to work in collective farms and on forced labour projects. The combined effects of executions, strenuous working conditions, malnutrition and poor medical care caused the deaths of approximately 25 percent of the Cambodian population. In all, an estimated 1 to 3 million people (out of a population of slightly over 8 million) died due to the policies of his four-year premiership.

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Mengistu Haile Mariam is an Ethiopian politician who was the most prominent officer of the Derg, the Communist military junta that governed Ethiopia from 1974 to 1987, and the President of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia from 1987 to 1991. Mengistu has ethnic Konso ancestry from his mother side and Amhara ancestry from his father. Effectively a dictator, he oversaw the Ethiopian Red Terror of 1977–1978, a campaign of repression against the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Party and other anti-Derg factions. Mengistu fled to Zimbabwe in 1991 at the conclusion of the Ethiopian Civil War and remains there despite an Ethiopian court verdict finding him guilty in absentia of genocide. Estimates of the number of deaths for which he was responsible range from 500,000 to over 2,000,000.

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Joseph Stalin was the leader of the Soviet Union from the mid-1920s until his death in 1953. Holding the post of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, he was effectively the dictator of the state. Under Stalin's rule, the concept of "Socialism in One Country" became a central tenet of Soviet society, contrary to Leon Trotsky's view that socialism must be spread through continuous international revolutions. He replaced the New Economic Policy introduced by Lenin in the early 1920s with a highly centralised command economy, launching a period of industrialization and collectivization that resulted in the rapid transformation of the USSR from an agrarian society into an industrial power. However, the economic changes coincided with the imprisonment of millions of people in Gulag labour camps. The initial upheaval in agriculture disrupted food production and contributed to the catastrophic Soviet famine of 1932–33, known as the Holodomor in Ukraine. Between 1934 and 1939 he organized and led a massive purge (known as "Great Purge") of the party, government, armed forces and intelligentsia, in which millions of so-called "enemies of the working class" were imprisoned, exiled or executed, often without due process. Major figures in the Communist Party and government, and many Red Army high commanders, were killed after being convicted of treason in show trials.

Stalin remains a controversial figure today, with many regarding him as a dictators. The exact number of deaths caused by Stalin's regime is still a subject of debate.

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Benito Amilcare Andrea Mussolini was an Italian politician, journalist, and leader of the National Fascist Party, ruling the country as Prime Minister from 1922 until his ousting in 1943. He ruled constitutionally until 1925, when he dropped all pretense of democracy and set up a legal dictatorship. Known as Il Duce ("the leader"), Mussolini was the founder of fascism.

Mussolini's foremost priority was the subjugation of the minds of the Italian people and the use of propaganda to do so. A lavish cult of personality centered on the figure of Mussolini was promoted by the regime.

Mussolini pretended to incarnate the new fascist *Übermensch*, promoting an aesthetics of exasperated machism and a cult of personality that attributed to him quasi-divine capacities. At various times after 1922, Mussolini personally took over the ministries of the interior, foreign affairs, colonies, corporations, defense, and public works. Sometimes he held as many as seven departments simultaneously, as well as the premiership. He was also head of the all-powerful Fascist Party and the armed local fascist militia, the MVSN or "Blackshirts", who terrorized incipient resistances in the cities and provinces. He would later form the OVRA, an institutionalized secret police that carried official state support. In this way he succeeded in keeping power in his own hands and preventing the emergence of any rival.

Unable to draw the outline a coherent program, fascism evolved into a new political and economic system that combined totalitarianism, nationalism, anti-communism, anti-capitalism and anti-liberalism in the country, designed to bring together all classes under the corporate system ("Third Way"). It was a new system in which the state seized control of the organization of vital areas. Under the banners of nationalism and state power, Fascism seemed to synthesize a magnificent Roman past with a futuristic utopia.

From 1927 to 1943, to the Special Tribunal State Security received political charges against about 21,000 people; 15381 of them were acquitted by the investigation, 5584 (including 162 women) were under court (988 persons acquitted). 4596 people (mostly communists, but also socialists, anarchists, etc.) were sentenced to a total of 28,116 years in prison.