



EDITORS

Milica Pekić &
Katarina Pavić

EXITEUROPE

— New Geographies of Culture

clulture

Publisher: Clulture Network
Svačićev trg 1, Zagreb

Editors in Chief: Katarina Pavić and Milica Pekić

Collaborates: Iskra Geshoska (Macedonia), Davor Mišković (Croatia), Katarina Pavić (Croatia), Katja Praznik (Slovenia), Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević (Serbia), Marko Tomaš (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Emina Višnić (Croatia)

Translations: Jele Dominis (Croatia), Hana Dvornik (Croatia), Kathryn Opal Hampton (Bosnia and Herzegovina), Maja Lovrenov (Slovenia), Jasna Vrteva Soptrajanova (Macedonia), Aleksandar Vasiljević, Nenad Župac (Serbia)

Proof readings: Ana Lovrenčić (Croatia), Inge Panos (Slovenia)

Proof reading in English: Nenad Župac (Serbia)

Design: Ruta

Print: Tiskara Zelina d.d.

Printed in 500 copies

ISBN 978-953-95994-2-1

ISBN 978-86-84977-07-8

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the National and University Library in Zagreb under 776817.



“Publishing of this publication was made possible by the financial support provided by the National Foundation for Civil Society Development in accordance with Contract number 421-02/07-PP-6/11-2. Opinions stated in this publication are authors' opinions and do not necessarily represent opinions of the National Foundation for Civil Society Development.



National Foundation for Civil Society Development,
Croatia
<http://zaklada.civilnodrustvo.hr>”



Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia



City of Zagreb – City office for Culture, Education and Sports

Zagreb / Belgrade 2011

This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Croatia License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/hr/>





EXITEUROPE

— New Geographies of Culture

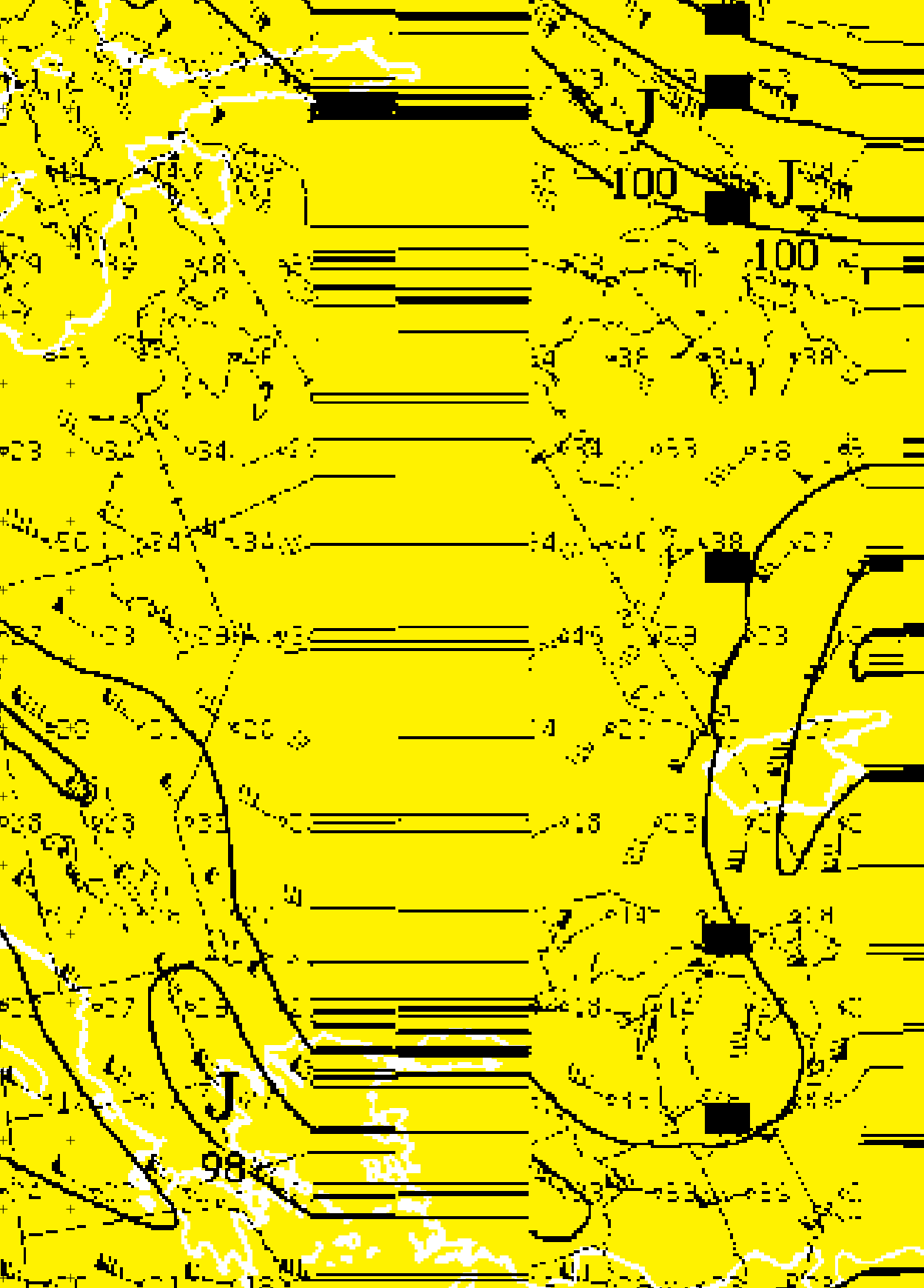
EDITORS

Milica Pekić & Katarina Pavić

Zagreb / Belgrade 2011

clubture

Clulture Network





Contents

- 8 Instead of introduction
Milica Pekić, Katarina Pavić
- 16 The Clulture Network's Regional Initiative – a platform for cultural cooperation and exchange in the independent scene
Katarina Pavić
- 48 Utopia or Light at the End of the Tunnel, A sketch of a portrait of independent culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina
Marko Tomaš
- 58 Living Cultural Policy
Davor Mišković
- 74 Weaving an Invisible Network
Iskra Geshoska
- 86 At the Crossroads of the Slovenian Independent Cultural Scene
Katja Praznik
- 104 Independent Scene in Serbia
Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević
- 120 The Survival of Culture is a Global Issue, Whose Solution Must Lie in Local Engagement
Conversation with **Emina Višnić**
- 128 **EXIT EUROPE** – New geographies of culture
POSITION PAPER



EXITEUROPE

— New Geographies of Culture

Instead of introduction

Introductory conversation is a result of
co-editors' type chat via Skype platform.
This conversation started November 9,
2010 at 14:10h.

Instead of introduction

Introductory conversation is a
co-editors' type chat via Skype
This conversation started Nov

2010 at 14:10h

Milica Pekić: You have been coordinating Clubture Network for two years; can you compare its activities on the national and regional levels? Is it more difficult to act in the region, to advocate in wider sense of the word?

Katarina Pavić: As for Clubture, it's certain that with activities in the region, network expands in every sense, I mean in quality and quantity. The biggest difference is that in Croatia, Clubture has already been active for more than eight years and it's recognized as a national network of independent cultural organizations, primarily as a platform for direct program cooperation between organizations, development of which was a premise of our work, and then it took us on other levels of acting, therefore internationally, as well.

As for advocating for positive changes in the cultural policymaking, I can say that the biggest difference, that is, an obstacle, is in the fact that there is no visible and clear framework for advocacy in the region. That is, there are frameworks of particular local communities and national levels on which we can advocate, but there is a vacuum between these levels and the level of European bureaucracy. Presence of this vacuum, along with other circumstances were incentives for developing Exit Europe project.

Milica Pekić: Can you emphasize on something particular as the biggest result on the national level? And after that on the level of region?

Katarina Pavić: In Croatia – Clubture is established as a national network of organizations active in the field of independent culture – connecting organizations in direct program collaborations, but in mutual advocacy actions, as well. These results can be quantified and thoroughly elaborated, so I could spend the afternoon listing them, but the most important result on the national level is in Clubture's role as indispensable actor in the field, that has evolved a highly developed model of collaboration, known outside Croatia.

Considering situation in the region, success is contained in the fact that we have survived and that we continue to develop, despite of series of unfavorable conditions that equally concern lack of funds, lack of clear and visible institutional framework on the regional level, as well differences in development and diversification of particular independent cultural scenes throughout the region. As a recent achievement, I would like to stress on our activities aimed at European scene, directed towards decision makers and towards partnership building with various different EU partners.

Katarina Pavić: We've met at the end of 2008 in Zagreb, at the Clubture's Regional Initiative meeting, organized as a part of The Neoliberal Frontline Conference...can you share some thoughts on joint actions (the two of us, in particular) – and more general?

Milica Pekić: My experiences are really valuable, personally and professionally.

Katarina Pavić: :)

Milica Pekić: First of all, I think that the independent cultural scene in the region gained multiple benefits through Clubture's initiative. As a platform through which many of the actors first met and shared experiences, then through number of concrete cooperative projects and partnerships that have emerged through this initiative, which is in my opinion, one of the major aspects of platforms such as this one. Also, I think, that through Clubture's encouragement, local scenes in the region became more active in advocacy. For instance, in Serbia, a platform has been formed and it gathers most of the actors in the independent scene; recently a joint declaration has been presented to the media. I think that Clubture's Regional Initiative contributed a lot in sense of inspiring these kinds of initiatives in the neighboring countries of the region.

Katarina Pavić: Yeah, I think that's superb... especially considering Serbian organizations. I think recent achievements of Serbian independent scene call for a special emphasis, since it's so great that this big potential that's present in Serbia has been mobilized, and that our joint efforts finally showed concrete results.

Milica Pekić: As for our cooperation on this publication, I think it's important to gather in one place a review of situations present in particular independent scenes, and as well to review the development of Regional Initiative. It seems like it's a necessary framework for presentation of Exit Europe Recommendations, which are a central part of this publication. Personally, it's been a pleasure to work on this project, with you and with all the colleagues that have been incredibly dedicated.

Katarina Pavić: Yeah, it's been a pleasure for me, as well. It was the first time I worked on something like this, kind of a shot in the dark :-), but I am truly happy about Clubture Network having the opportunity to realize the idea of publishing a book such as this one, after we wanted to do for several years now.

Milica Pekić: What is really priceless is a number of people who contributed to this publication with their texts, comments and photos. Usually it's fairly complicated to work with a great number of collaborates, but in this case everyone was filled with enthusiasm and showed responsibility towards working on texts and towards the publication as a total, not to forget people who have been giving directions, advices, comments. Like Emina Višnić.

Katarina Pavić: We should thank them individually. Yes, Emina gave a huge contribution, not only to this publication, but also in general to the development of Regional Initiative. As well as many others who aren't included in this process directly; yet it's hard to imagine that anything would have happened without them.

Milica Pekić: There is always an individual energy, which is strong and determined enough to move others as well, and then it becomes really possible to make change happen. I think that Emina in great part represented that unstoppable driving force.

Milica Pekić: What are your experiences in enabling cooperation and partnership in the region? What are the advantages, and what are the usual problems you're facing with? How do you see our collaboration on this publication?

Katarina Pavić: Experiences are extremely positive. My perception of the region has been changed a lot through my engagement in this story. During my school time in the 1990s, the region was a taboo, together with the context connected to the region. As for cooperation and partnership building, all countries in the region showed excellence: in human qualities, readiness for mutual actions and understanding principle of togetherness. It's always a + that is created (or fails to become created) in situations such as this one, the untouchable reciprocity of relations, social capital :-)

As for problems, for instance, cell-phone bills for roaming can become a problem :-) But, seriously, the biggest problem in the region is how the region is perceived, it's a structural issue, based on a socio-political foundation, that has its reflections on all other respected areas.

Milica Pekić: Well, yes, the definition of the region is being changed once in every ten years, or even more frequently. Is it South-East Europe? Balkan? Western Balkan? What was known as Western Balkan the day before, becomes something else the day after, and so on. That's why I think it's necessary to be really flexible in understanding the concept of the region.

Milica Pekić: But, the important fact is that former Yugoslav countries share important history and that history is a strong common denominator. Although these countries are no longer a part of definition of Western Balkan, they have been present in Clubture's Regional Initiative since the very beginnings.

Katarina Pavić: That's correct. It's a natural connection that has developed from context, but it has a need to change the context.

Milica Pekić: Of course, Slovenia has already joined the EU. Albania was never part of Yugoslavia, but collaborates a lot in the region. Although Club-ture's Regional Initiative is all about ex-YU countries.

Katarina Pavić: It is crucial to stress that this initiative is an attempt to create new practices in former Yugoslav space, founded on principles of cooperation and mutual decision-making.

Milica Pekić: On the other hand, I think it's a natural human process. People associate, first with neighbors, then further, because of mutual interests, growth of capacities, cooperation and exchange. As the independent scene, we resist the political and other influences, it's normal that these processes become visible in concrete activities.

Katarina Pavić: Yes, we already typed enough on ex-Yu region, but through working on this project, we have met many times in almost all countries of the region.

Milica Pekić: Yes.

Katarina Pavić: Yeah, Belgrade, Maribor, Ohrid, Zagreb.

Milica Pekić: It's an advantage of the region, wherever you go, you feel good (ha)!

Katarina Pavić: Yeah, nice food :)

Milica Pekić: Let's not go that far.....
In which direction do you think that the further regional activities will evolve? How do you see the future of the independent scene in the region?

Katarina Pavić: The future?

Milica Pekić: Well, yes!

Katarina Pavić: It seems certain that all countries in the region will be integrated into wider European space.

Milica Pekić: Nothing is certain here, but go on...

Katarina Pavić: :)

Well, yeah...the future is conditioned by many factors, but what's really important, what I can predict, is that the independent cultural scenes in all, or most countries in the region will become indispensable actors in the field of cultural policy-making.

Milica Pekić: Yeah, I do believe that this development is unavoidable. I think that the independent scenes in most of the countries have developed strong capacities.

Katarina Pavić: As for the European story, we had a good moment of congruence. Since EU agenda for culture was adopted in 2007 and for the first time reduced the subsidiary principle in cultural policy-making. That means that this area has been shifted from the exclusive domain of member states into the common European space. The same thing happened when culture emerged as an important part of European international relations, so I think we are headed for mutual European future, although I cannot say what kind of Europe...

Milica Pekić: I believe that the experiences of the independent scene, in sense of creating programs on national and international levels, as well as experiences in cooperation building, networking and mutual acting are of huge importance for further development of international cooperation.

Katarina Pavić: Yes, I think we're still in the eye of the typhoon, we're not able to look objectively, so the conclusions on achievements will be possible in many years from now.

Milica Pekić: I can tell for sure that all people active in the independent scene work non-stop, and I am an optimist who believes that dedication, engagement and knowledge will give results.

Katarina Pavić: That is evident, it only matters who will prosper from the results. But, I am an optimist as well, I think that our role is mostly expressed where cultural engagement becomes a socially tangible change.

Milica Pekić: As for results, I hope that the next generation will be in somewhat different situation, and that is the most important thing.

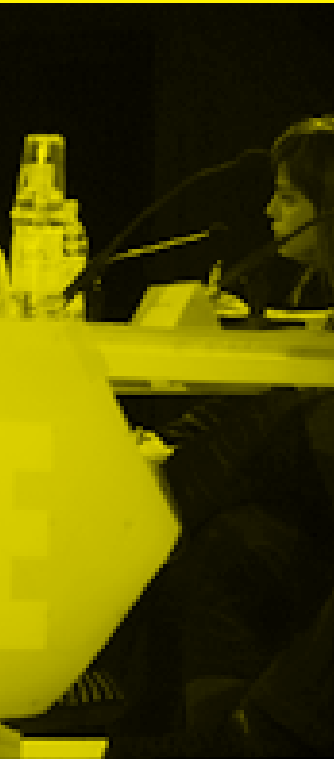
Katarina Pavić: Ok, will you meet me at Skype in 10 years, so we can see for ourselves...

Milica Pekić: Only 10, why not 20.....
I'm kidding, a skeptic and an optimist, not the best combination.

Katarina Pavić: Eh, seems to me that we have a subscription for this kind of dualism.

Conversation ended November 9, 2010 at 15:19 h.





Katarina Pavić

**The Clubture Network's
Regional Initiative
– a platform for cultural
cooperation and
exchange in the
independent scene**

Katarina Pavić

**The Clubture Net
Regional Initiative
– a platform for c
cooperation and
exchange in the
independent scene**


01 The word “Region” is used in the title in the sense of supranational regions, defined by the territories of the ex-Yugoslavian countries mentioned below.

02 The Clubture Network was founded in 2002, in order to connect independent culture scene organisations in Croatia. From its very beginning, it has functioned as a cooperative platform through which they jointly realise programmes. The aims of the Clubture Network are: decentralisation of cultural production, permanent cooperation among organisations, based on joint implementation of projects, increasing public visibility of the independent cultural scene, as well as increasing its influence on cultural politics at the national level, as well as on local levels. For more information, see: *Clubture – Culture as the Process of Exchange 2002–2007* (Kultura kao proces razmjene 2002.–2007.) (ed. Vidović et al.) and www.clubture.org.

In late 2004, the Clubture Network started to bring together independent culture organisations from the ex-Yugoslavian region. These organisations had originally initiated a joint pilot-project, which was followed by a long-term programme called *Clubture’s Regional⁰¹ Initiative*. This initiative has connected more than a hundred organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia through the various formats of conferences, joint work and programme exchanges.

In the course of preparing and realising cooperative pilot-projects from 2005 until 2007, these organisations have formed a cooperative platform based on the same principles that served as the foundation for the Clubture Network⁰² in Croatia. 19 organisations were involved in the pilot stage, through 8 various cooperative projects, within which 33 public events in all the countries concerned were realised. This network has initiated the process of connecting the independent cultural scenes throughout the entire region – remaining from that time up until today the sole organisation in the region of ex-Yugoslavia that systematically brings independent cultural organisations together within an informal cooperative platform. In implementing the pilot stage of the programme exchange, for the first time following the breakup of the erstwhile state, the independent cultural organisations are invited, and in a certain way also challenged, to construct something new in culture; a different and innovative type of action woven from the principles of cooperation and joint work and decision making. Successfully implemented cooperation didn’t merely programmatically link the organisations; it has also established the groundwork for gathering around important cultural-political issues, such as the development of cultural cooperation within the region and with the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, despite the enthusiasm of those involved, it was impossible to sustain programme exchange and cooperation for a longer period due to the international and domestic obstacles to providing financial means. Since 2008, the focus of the Network has evolved towards joint operation directed at decision makers, in order to advocate for positive changes and the development of sustainable models of cooperation in the independent cultural scene within the region and towards the EU.

In more than five years of operation, *Clubture’s Regional Initiative* has travelled a long way and thus completed one developmental cycle – from the initial efforts on increasing the number of actors involved, followed by direct programme exchange and work on joint projects by organisations, all the way to defining recommendations for cultural policy institutions (from local ones, to the



03 On the second session of the AVNOJ (Anti-Fascist Council of the People's Liberation of Yugoslavia), on the 29th November 1943, the establishment of the Democratic Federal Yugoslavia was pronounced; in 1945, the Constitutional Congress has declared its name: the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia; in the constitutional changes from 1963, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was declared.

04 A geopolitical category that comprises the South-Eastern European countries that aren't EU members; this term has lately been used with less frequency.

05 The name given to the area occupied by the Balkan countries, and the name of the programme of strengthening strategic issue partnerships between 16 different countries, among which, beside the ex-Yugoslavian countries, are: Albania, Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, Slovakia and some regions of Italy and Ukraine.

06 Ever since the Economist published an article in 2009, titled "Entering the Yugosphere" (<http://www.economist.com/node/14258861>), which was republished by all the biggest selling / most visited regional media, the term "Yugosphere" has started to infiltrate the everyday discourse used to define the geographical and political area of the former Yugoslavia.

07 With special mention reserved for police and other judicial bodies of the states in the region.

European level). The evolutionary route the development of this regional platform has taken has been equally defined by the internal changes within the independent scene in the region, but also by a whole series of circumstances arising from the social and political dynamics within the ex-Yugoslavian territories, marked by the transition and the consolidation of post-socialist societies, as well as by the expansion of the European Union into the region.

The framework of the regional cultural cooperation

The break-up of the community of peoples that had existed since 1918 until 2003 in various shapes and forms, the best-known of which is the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia⁰³, provides a specific explanation of the emergence of the independent cultural scene and, indirectly, also of the work of *Clubture's Regional Initiative*.

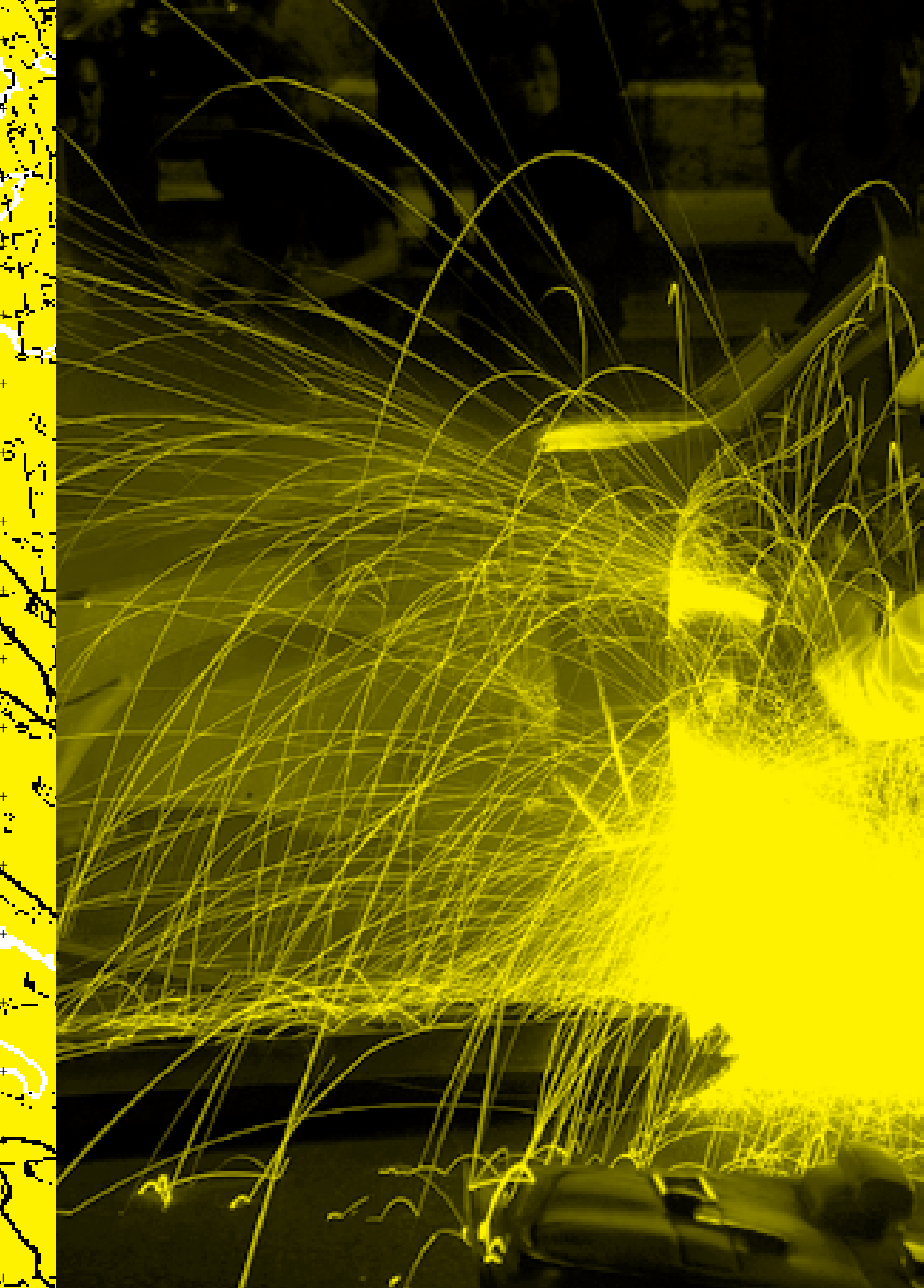
Twenty years after the break-up of the Yugoslavian community, its territory is still characterised by simultaneous attempts at integration and disintegration. This paradox can also be seen in the efforts to define the geopolitical area that these states occupy. Thus, in the past ten or so years, a number of names was in use, such as *the Western Balkans*⁰⁴, or *South-East Europe*⁰⁵, which had met with disapproval by the wider public in the countries of the region. Lately, the informal term *the Yugosphere*⁰⁶ has stood out among them. This name illustrates the roots of the regional, primarily economic cooperation in the shared past, but also in segments of contemporary cultural life in the widest sense, such as similar languages, shared tastes in gastronomy and music and similar. We can read almost daily about various forms of re-establishing cooperation in the area of the erstwhile common state. Cooperation between these republics was thus successfully re-established across many spheres, such as commerce, between various kinds of state institutions⁰⁷, by establishing regular terrestrial passenger transport lines along all significant routes⁰⁸, as well as by the reintegration of the SHS network of freight railways⁰⁹, and similar instances of the re-establishment of regional cooperation in various spheres. Among these, the regional distribution of entertainment television programming¹⁰, as well as frequent visits by all kinds of popular musicians, are particularly interesting. Popular musicians from all ex-Yugoslavian countries regularly perform region-wide, even though in the Nineties and their immediate aftermath some of them had sided with conflicting camps, resolutely rejecting the possibility of performing in the countries from the opposite side of the divide¹¹.

- 08** The establishment of the long-promised airline connecting Zagreb and Belgrade is still pending, and, according to media stories that surface in the public every once in a while, air-line connection between Croatia and Serbia should be re-established in June 2011, after 19 years.
- 09** The railway network of freight lines that comprises the infrastructure in Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia, which started regular service in October 2010, and whose name was derived from the name of the State of Slovenes, Croats and Serbs, formed in 1918, and the precursor to all forms of common states of the Southern Slavs.
- 10** In October 2004, the parallel airing of TV soap opera *Villa Maria* started in Croatia and Serbia. Since then, joint projects in the production of television entertainment formats have become commonplace. Especially popular among them are various reality programmes, such as *Big Brother* or talent show-type productions.
- 11** This has to do with the phenomenon of the growing popularity of turbo-folk music in Croatia and Slovenia, despite the negative attitude the wider public in these countries harbour towards it, especially in Croatia.
- 12** A relatively new example which testifies to Slovenia's engagement in the sphere of international cultural cooperation is the introduction of the regional contact-point, the BIFC, established in 2010 with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, through the Platform for

The patterns of cultural production that is more or less directed towards strengthening individual national identities still dominate cultural politics and the so-called representative culture. However, at the same time, a space for the revitalization of cultural cooperation has been opened up, following a similar principle as in the other cases. This is especially evident in the various forms of popular and audio-visual culture, but also in independent cultural production projects, although they mainly appear sporadically and don't last very long. Concerning cultural exchange in the domain of public institutions, it is still a marginal phenomenon, which primarily boils down to occasional visits, that is, basic exchange of contents. Regional cooperation in the sphere of cultural politics still hasn't gained any greater significance, which is corroborated by the lack of cooperative enterprises by the very institutions that shape and implement the policies – relevant ministries and regional or local administrative bodies. The exception here is Slovenia, where international cooperation in the region has become established as an essential political issue, which has to do with the specific position of Slovenia – so far the sole European Union member-state from the region¹². In Croatia, whose Ministry of Culture has used financial support to encourage international cooperation, regional cooperation isn't among the priorities¹³, nor is it in any of the other countries in the region¹⁴, while regional cooperation is often realised by means of implementing projects within the Culture 2007-2013 programme¹⁵. Cooperation programmes are also realised using EU pre-accession assistance funds¹⁶, as well as other programmes, such as the Europe for Citizens programme¹⁷, or the lifelong learning programme¹⁸. Although the horizon of possibilities for realising cooperation expands as the countries of the region draw nearer to the EU, these possibilities still aren't realised in the number, complexity and permanence that would be possible and desirable.

The fact that in the countries of the region there are similar frameworks for the regulation of cultural policies, as well as parts of the infrastructure that have survived despite the wars and cooling relations, gives credence to the idea that strong potentials for the development of a significant number of long-term and structurally complex cooperative projects in the cultural sphere do exist.

The obvious gap left by the simultaneous striving towards the integration and disintegration of the post-Yugoslavian territory is part of the context reaching deep into Yugoslavia's past, that is, into the foundations of the internal justice and political order, especially following the adoption of the 1974 Constitution¹⁹, which the wider public has accepted as the institutional basis of the





Performans Zid Buke, festival Media Mediterranea, Pula



South East Europe, which is coordinated by Asociacija (<http://www.asociacija.si>), a Slovenian network of independent cultural organisations, initiatives and artists. The BIFC – *Balkan Incentive Fund for Culture* was founded in 2006, on the initiative of the European Cultural Foundation and partners, HIVOS and the Open Society Institute. Today, apart from the EC, the Open Society Institute, the Soros Foundation on Kosovo, in Macedonia and Serbia, as well as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia support the work of the BIFC. More on: <http://www.bifchub.eu/>

13 The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia's funding for the field of international cooperation in the region in years 2009 and 2010 has accounted for a mere 10-11% of the total funds allocated for international cooperation.

14 According to the statements by Darka Radosavljević in her text in this publication, there is no support in Serbia that might allow the security and development of the capacities of organisations in the independent cultural sector, which would encourage more frequent international cooperation. According to Marko Tomaš, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, funds for culture are primarily earmarked for the financing of megalomaniacal (mostly politically sponsored) festivals, while Iskra Geshoska says of the situation in Macedonia that art and culture have been used as means of manipulation in dirty political games.

15 Culture 2007-2013 is a European Union programme of support for cooperation in the cultural sector, whose basic aims are: furthering artists', producers', managers' and other cultural workers' cross-border mobility, fostering transnational circulation of cultural and artistic products, as well as fostering intercultural dialogue. Ever since the beginning of 2011, nearly all the countries of the region (except Kosovo) have been allowed to participate in the implementation of the Culture programme. On the 21st of December 2010, Bosnia and Herzegovina has signed the Memorandum of Understanding. See more on: http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-programmes-and-actions/doc411_en.htm

16 The IPA – a pre-accession instrument of the EU – combines a series of various programmes that, among other things, enable the implementation of cooperative cultural projects. Cross-border and inter-regional cooperation are the most common forms of cultural cooperation through the IPA. In 2010, the Directorate-General for Enlargement has issued a call for applications of projects fostering cooperation by cultural organisations within the region and other countries-beneficiaries of IPA funds, as well as cooperation with EU organisations. Ten regional projects have been financed in this way: <http://sites.google.com/site/ipa129799/home>

17 http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.php

18 http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc78_en.htm and <http://www.mobilnost.hr/>

19 It would be worthwhile to read the book by Dejan Jović: *Yugoslavia, the State that Withered Away (Jugoslavija, država koja je odumrla)*, Prometej, Zagreb, 2003, regarding the issues that have greatly determined the break-up of Yugoslavia. The author has critically examined the principles upon which the Yugoslavia of Kardelj is constituted, and analysed the final period of Yugoslavian statehood (1974-1991).

20 The perspective of EU membership was widely accepted in a consensus of the political elites of all the countries in the region. The first to join the EU was Slovenia, as part of the wave of the last great expansion, along with nine other countries, two of which are former Eastern Bloc countries, and the other two (Cyprus and Malta) Mediterranean islands. Following the expansion of the Union to include Bulgaria and Romania in 2007, the territory of ex-Yugoslavia remained surrounded by the EU. Croatia finalized pre-accession negotiations, started in 2005, while Macedonia too has the status of official candidate, but hasn't yet started pre-accession negotiations. The status of the other states in the region is that of potential candidates.

21 It is essential to remark here that this emancipation was nevertheless more or less state-controlled, that is, it was a framework within, but not

outside which relatively free activity was allowed, but which was still conditioned by the existing institutions of the system.


22 In her text published here, Katja Praznik quotes Vesna Čopič, who writes about how the cultural institutions have so far retained their forms of provincial institutions, conceived during the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, their characteristics remaining much the same under the Yugoslavian forms of common state up to today. Darka Radosavljević-Vasiljević writes about the cultural decision makers in Serbia, whose priorities lie with the cumbersome and slow institutions with apathetic staffs.

23 Pogon – Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth is a mixed/hybrid cultural institution founded on the basis of civil and public partnership. It was established by the Zagreb platform, which brings together independent culture and youth organisations, the Alliance Operation City (<http://savezzaacentar.wordpress.com/>) and the City of Zagreb. Pogon provides basic services and infrastructure management for cultural and youth programmes. Any association, arts organisation and informal group may use the resources of the Centre for programmes in the sphere of contemporary art and culture, as well as for various youth activities. The spaces, equipment and temporary office can be used for free for all non-profit activities. More on www.upogoni.org.

break-up. The gap is also largely defined by the wartime events in the Nineties, in which many innocents in these areas have perished. In the period that followed direct conflicts as well, the political elites of the ex-Yugoslavian countries have pursued policies based mainly on isolationism, while the turn of the decade was marked by the beginning of the normalisation of relations between these countries. However, in spite of peace and normalisation, the expansion of the European Union has brought dividing lines into the region, as the dynamics of accession vary among the countries within it²⁰. Today we may ponder the essential steps in the mutual rapprochement of these countries, but any news on this subject are in the majority of cases disregarded, or presented to the public in a sensationalist manner.

We can conclude with full certainty that the ex-Yugoslavian territory is an area whose integration is conditional – simultaneously marked by a common past and numerous other similarities in socio-cultural characteristics, but also by a multitude of challenges brought by the post-conflict and post-transitional period. It is important to mention that, as part of the wider social changes in the ex-Yugoslavian countries since as early as the late 60's, and especially since the late 70's and on, cultural production has displayed a great impetus for emancipation from then-dominant cultural patterns²¹ (as can best be seen in the cultural production of the 80's, which were the final, and most decadent, Yugoslavian decade), thus becoming far freer, more democratic and critical than would have been possible in any other country with a single-party system of a Marxist type. The moments of liberalisation and emancipation of culture from the dominant pattern are the preconditions that set the basis for the creation of independent cultural scenes in the countries of the region that we know today.

Cultural politics that were pursued in Yugoslavia, as in all successor-states of the Yugoslavian federation following its demise, were based on servicing the many public cultural institutions²². In the past twenty years, slow and not especially visible changes have been taking place within these systems, among them one which is very important from our perspective: the financing of independent organisations' programmes. For this reason, new ideas and demands for reforms and introducing concrete measures of cultural politics have started to emerge in some countries of the region. On very rare occasions, these demands arise from the system itself, and the main protagonists advocating for changes are most frequently precisely the organisations and individuals who are active in the independent culture scene. Apart from the wider and deeper extent of the demands, which are largely very difficult to realise, the independent scene often in-



24 The Kultura Nova foundation was created on the initiative of, and several years of advocacy by organisations of the independent cultural scene in order to further the standing of civil society organisations in contemporary culture and arts, and to provide professional and financial support for their programmes. A proposal for an Act on the Kultura Nova Foundation was adopted on the late May 2011 session of the Croatian Parliament: <http://www.sabor.hr/Default.aspx?art=39119> It has been submitted for final procedure.

25 The war in Slovenia (1991), the war in Croatia (1991-1995), the war in BiH (1992-1995), the war on Kosovo and NATO's bombing of Serbian territories (1998-1999).

26 Siniša Malešević, author of the book *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State (Ideologija, legitimnost i nova država)*, describes the influence of the dominant ideology on the creation of Croatian culture and nation, citing examples from HDZ's (Croatian Democratic Union) 1993 programme, according to which Croatia's cultural politics "should be based on our thirteen-century-long civilisational heritage with roots in the Christian-Mediterranean-West-European cultural circle". The position of Croatian culture arising from, in Malešević's words, a universal condition, shows the attempts to erase links to the Yugoslavian republics' past, as well as to return to ancient history, in search of a cultural identity. For more, see: S. Malešević, *Ideology, Legitimacy and the New State*,

initiates measures for bridging the gap between independent production and production within the system of public institutions. For example, in Croatia, it is precisely these organisations that have initiated the founding of hybrid institutions that provide basic spatial resources for the realisation of programmes (PO-GON²³), the establishment of funds intended for the development of civil society organisations operating in the field of contemporary arts and culture (the Kultura Nova foundation²⁴) and founded a network that has been successfully accomplishing the decentralisation of cultural provision (the Clubture Network).

The results of the implementation of cultural politics in the final decades of the Yugoslavian community, as well as the absence of institutional reforms during the Nineties, have greatly inhibited the development of culture in the countries of the region. Because of this, culture has so far remained relatively sheltered from the impact of the global neoliberal trends of instrumentalisation and commercialisation of common goods, which set in with the transition, and from the turn towards the dominant paradigm of a declaratively open, yet in fact controlled market.

The Nineties: Official Culture in the Service of Nationalism and the Emergence of Alternatives

The break-up of the common state, which had culminated in a series of wars fought between 1991 and 1999²⁵, and the difficult period of wartime and post-war reality characterised by economic collapse, the growth of authoritarian tendencies and other symptoms of the transition, has put the cultural-artistic production in the region into hibernation. Considering the fact that in the Nineties, deep fissures have appeared in the post-Yugoslavian societies, and new dominant cultural patterns emerged, founded upon the principles of establishing national identities, it is very difficult to speak of any forms of cooperation in the cultural field between the countries of the region in that period.

The cultural disintegration was carried out by revitalising symbols that were deeply connected with the articulation of individual national identities. These symbols were extracted from ancient history in order to offer an affirmation of the mythology, followed by the systematic erasure of all elements of a cultural past common to the Yugoslavian peoples²⁶. In these conditions, culture was abused in the region as an extreme function of instrumentalism, although not as we would think about it today²⁷, but in the way that its primary function was bringing national identities to awareness and strengthening them, to the detriment of directly

Yugoslavia, Serbia and Croatia (Jesenski i Turk / Fabrika knjiga, 2004).

27 According to Jim McGuigan, instrumentalism in cultural policy places the logic of economy (generation of profit) above any other argument, followed by the social rationale (the production of social values) – within these categories, culture is based on foundations that are beyond the cultural field; its intrinsic values are neglected or secondary. See, J. McGuigan, *Rethinking Cultural Policy*, Open University Press, 2004.

28 According to the text by K. Praznik, in Slovenia, which didn't experience the kind of collapse that most other countries of the region went through in the Nineties, finding a national identity has remained the Slovenians' basic conceptual problem, which has in turn shaped the development of cultural politics from the Nineties on. At the other end of the region, in Macedonia, the models of cultural politics were, as stated by I. Geshoska, the direct product of monopolisation, that is, the elitisation and ghettoisation of culture, directed at strengthening the ethnic-nationalist concept.

29 In a text published on these pages, Davor Mišković reflects on the self-determination of the field of independent culture. More detail on the issue can be found in the previous publications by the Clulture Network: *Clulture – Culture as a Process of Exchange 2002-2007 (Kultura kao proces razmjene)* (ed. Vidović et al.); *Cultural Politics from Bottom Up*,

opposed, other and forcedly different identities in the region – within and outside the borders of individual states. Such a situation exists in all the countries of the region, and is also manifest in those countries that weren't caught up in the most severe form of wartime destruction, as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were²⁸.

However, with encouraging successes in the organisation of civil society, by the late Nineties a wave of democratisation has started to sweep through the entire region. This is when a large number of initiatives experimenting with various forms of cultural agency have emerged – within the framework of not-for-profit organisations, most often founded as citizens' associations. In the majority of cases, it is equally a case of the engagement of individuals and organisations resuming previously initiated activities, but also of completely new actors, who had become active in the new circumstances, emerging from the antiwar and antinationalist positions, and in the waves of democratisation of entire systems. These organisations operate across all contemporary cultural-artistic disciplines, such as music, performing arts, visual arts, video and film, architecture and design, literature, comics and various new media. In most cases, their approach is interdisciplinary and experimental. In these organisations' activities, one encounters contemporary art, popular culture, new technologies and new media, theory and social engagement. Many of them aspire towards forms of self-organising through collective work and decision-making; they are flexible and dynamic. In many communities, their proactive approach towards the local community makes them an essential component of living culture²⁹.


The advent of international foundations, which have enabled the initial steps in bringing together independent cultural scenes in the countries of the region, has been essential in the development of civil society, and thus of independent culture³⁰. We can generally conclude that this stage was fundamentally determined by the notion of an alternative to the dominant social and cultural values. As Davor Mišković states in this publication: "Alternative as a term was expanded to the extent that it denoted the aesthetics, taste and values that emerged from the resistance to dominant values, while events were interpreted in relation to the amount of resistance expressed³¹."

The exit from a terminological determination of alternative cultural production into the sphere of self-determination, defined above all formally and structurally by the term independent culture³², marks a milestone in the development of the cultural scene. Mišković states: "...the key change that occurred at the turn of the millennium wasn't in the larger number of events, the





Mladi grade Centar, Cvjetni trg, Zagreb, 2009 / photo by Tomislav Medak



Independent Culture and New Cooperative Practices in Croatia (Kulturne politike odozdo, Nezavisna kultura i nove suradničke prakse u Hrvatskoj), ed. Višnić, Policies for Culture, Amsterdam / Bucharest / Zagreb, 2008; Design and Independent Culture (Dizajn i nezavisna kultura), p. 20-21, ed. Vidović, Mrduljaš, SU Klubbura, UPI-2m, Kurziv, Zagreb, 2010.

30 A special role in this context was played by the American financier and philanthropist George Soros, whose foundations were established in the early Nineties in all countries of the region. Beside Soros' Open Society Institute, which has lately returned to the region with its so-called Crisis Fund, a whole series of international institutions that have financially aided the development of the independent cultural sector have emerged. According to statements by Mark Tomaš in a text in this publication, the majority of associations established after the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina were involved exclusively in cultural production.

31 According to Andreja Zlatar-Violčić, the most frequent use of the term alternative culture is the result of an estimation of its 'aesthetic attributes, degree of innovativeness, introduction of different artistic practices, etc.', *Culture and Transition: From Strategy of Cultural Development to Management in Culture (Kultura i tranzicija: Od strategije kulturnog razvitka do menadžmenta u kulturi)*, Sarajevske sveske, no. 27-28 (Sarajevo: Mediacentar Sarajevo, 2010).

emergence of new spaces, organisations and programmes; the key change was in the language concerning the events, a change in discourse, a change from alternative to independent culture. This change doesn't mean changing brands, labels, but a change in the attitude towards one's own production, values, audience. This change didn't arrive by accident, it was a substantial consequence of inhabiting the cultural-political discourse." The direct entry of independent actors into the cultural-political field and their engagement on redefining the cultural system is an important factor defining the independent cultural scene.

The path to change – from bottom up

At the start of the new decade, the number of organisations in the field of independent culture has grown in all countries of the region, thus expanding the independent cultural scene in the sense of diversifying cultural-artistic practice and in the sense of forms of organising. With the development of various kinds of cultural and artistic content and rising number of organisations, the need for permanent cooperation keeps increasing. The principle of networking, which aims to establish a joint model of operation according to the framework of cultural politics, is being developed in Zagreb³³ and has spread with the establishment of the Clubbura Network, whose activities today are still guided by the same principles of conceiving and practising participatory models of cultural politics by networking independent cultural organisations and by their positioning as relevant actors on the cultural/political map.

The Clubbura Network was the result of the association of independent cultural organisations in Croatia. It is developing a model of programme exchange and cooperation based on a horizontal, participatory mode of decision making, which is the foundation of its activity and existence. With time, Clubbura has developed a series of other programmes, focused on building organisations' capacity (through educational and residential programmes³⁴) and on increasing their presence in the public (through media projects³⁵). Besides, the network has implemented a series of advocacy activities with the aim of advancing cultural policy³⁶. The basic role of the Clubbura Network in Croatia is to bring independent organisations together in a stabile cooperative platform.

The logic of connecting cultural organisations into a live programmatic structure has borne permanent results in Croatia, and subsequently allowed the opening of a regional perspective. The step Clubbura has taken towards operating at a regional level is a natural path for the network to take, considering the fact that in

- 32** It is especially important to emphasise the initiation of the Multimedia Institute [mi2] in Zagreb in 1999. It was created when the Open Society Institute Croatia was separated from the programmes that were initiated within its framework. The Multimedia Institute is the initiator of numerous projects on the Croatian and regional scene, and so in 2002, the Clubture Network too was created at the initiative of this organisation. Further reading on [mi2] can be found in the interview that Dea Vidović has conducted for the Kulturpunkt portal with the president of [mi2], Tomislav Medak, at: <http://www.kulturpunkt.hr/i/kulturosop/397/>
- 33** POLICY-FORUM, Clubture and Zagreb – Cultural Capital of Europe 3000 are the first platforms for organisations developing the groundwork for collaborative models, and have been exceptionally active in the past ten years. For more, see: *A Bottom Up Approach to Cultural Policy-making*, ed. Višnić, Policies for Culture, Amsterdam / Bucharest / Zagreb, 2008.
- 34** Since 2005, Clubture Network has implemented a number of educational programmes for developing organisations' capacities, among which are: *Organisational Development and Strategic Planning in Non-profit Cultural Organisations* (2005); *Project Planning and Fundraising* (2006); *Building Independent Cultural Capacities for the EU Accession Process* (2007). In 2005, the *Organisers in Residence* programme was started, which made it possible for

recent years, scenes with similar characteristics have developed in all the countries of the region. The regional initiative of the Clubture Network has for the first time enabled independent production programme exchange between various organisations, in various environments in the region, and opened the door for the principle of active participation in the framework of influencing cultural politics to spread.

In mid-October 2004, the initial meeting of the Clubture Network and the regional partners was held, gathering more than forty organisations from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia. The goal of the meeting was to map the conditions in the region, as well as to detect any need for cooperation, and to envisage possible frameworks for its implementation. This meeting started the process of assembling a network, from which Clubture's Regional Initiative was to evolve. The initiative was founded with the aim of building an independent network within the region and a collaborative platform based on programme exchange and cooperation. During 2005, all preparations were carried out, in terms of mapping and initial association between the organisations, working out specific details of the models of cooperation, invitations for propositions and providing funds for the implementation of collaborative projects; in 2006, the realisation of the programme had begun. Thus, as early as in the first phase of development, the Regional Initiative has brought together nineteen organisations around an informal cooperative platform, and a mixed composition Work Group³⁷ was formed, comprising representatives from all the countries of the region that were involved in the process, which monitored the realisation of the cooperative programmes and established strategic guidelines for its future development.

The first phase of Clubture's Regional Initiative was marked by a strong enthusiasm of all who participated in the initial stages of the realisation of programmatic collaboration. The fact that at that time, cultural cooperation within the region was still a rare occurrence may by no means be disregarded. At that time, many organisations still hadn't acquired a considerable number of relevant contacts, nor did they have the opportunity to seek information regarding contemporaneous events in other cities and countries. Besides, following several years of developing programme cooperation within Croatia, expanding to the regional level represented a significant organisational stride forward for the Clubture Network. Although the model of programme exchange and cooperation in the region was based on an already-developed model, developed for the Clubture-HR programme exchange, it has evolved specifically with regards to the particularities of regional cooperation.

Pilot-programme of programme exchange and cooperation (2006-2007)

representatives of various organisations to directly transfer concrete knowledge and experiences, through a simple model of residencies within organisations.

- 35 04 – Reality Hacking Magazine (2004-2007) and the www.kulturpunkt.hr portal (launched in 2005) are the Clulture Network's media projects.
- 36 The Clulture Network has implemented the Kultura Aktiva 2005-2007 programme, within which a series of activities in various parts of Croatia were realised, with the aim of building local actors' capacities for creating and monitoring the implementation of cultural and other, related public policies, such as urban politics, youth politics etc. Aside from programme activities, the Network has carried out a series of other advocacy activities, thus taking up an active stance towards the existing frameworks of cultural politics.
- 37 Representatives of the following organisations have participated in the activities of the Work Group from 2006-2008: Action (Sarajevo, BiH); NGO Tochka and Multimedia (Skopje, Macedonia); Multimedia Institute [mi2] (Zagreb, Hrvatska); REX Cultural Centre / B92 Fund, Belgrade Yard Sound System – BYSS and TkH – the Walking Theory (Belgrade, Serbia).

The regional programme has achieved significant results in the sphere of connecting organisations, distribution of cultural-artistic content across different environments and for different audiences. Thus, in the pilot-stage that lasted from 2006-2007, eight different collaborative programmes have been carried out through the platform: *Explicit Music Session*, an experimental music programme that was jointly carried out by the *Multimedia Institute [mi2]* from Zagreb and *Chinch* from Belgrade; *Device Art*, promoting art inspired by new technologies, which was jointly carried out by *KONTEJNER – Bureau of Contemporary Art Practice from Zagreb*, *O3ONE* from Belgrade and *Galerija Kapelica* from Ljubljana. *The Fama* programme was based on contemporary practice in performing arts, and was carried out by the *Centre for Drama Art – CDU* from Zagreb, *Maska* from Ljubljana and the *Walking Theory (Teorija koja hoda) – TkH* from Belgrade. *Stolen Idea (Ukradena ideja)*, a programme promoting collaboration between Croatian and Serbian visual artists, was jointly organised by the *Močvara Gallery / Association for Development of Culture – URK*, Zagreb and *Remont* from Belgrade. The *Electronic.Pact.2005.Tour*, promoting electronic music, was carried out by *[mamatronic] – Multimedia Institute [mi2]* from Zagreb with partners: *KUD Kataman* from Ljubljana and the *Belgradeyard Soundsystem / Dis-patch* initiative from Belgrade. The *Coalition of Youth Associations – KUM* from Split, with partners, the *New Sarajevo International Centre for Children and Youth* from Sarajevo and *KUD Mreža* from Ljubljana, have carried out a programme titled S—S, which has mainly served to connect the independent cultural scenes of Split and Sarajevo. The *Information Agency – AGI*, from Osijek and *Digital Culture* from Subotica have jointly carried out the *Renaissance Platform – Step 2 (Platforma Renesansa – Korak 2)* programme, within which they organised various activities in the spheres of ecological activism, and enabled independent scene exchange between the towns Subotica and Osijek. The *Human Rights Film Festival – Regional Platform* was jointly carried out by the *Association for Development of Culture – URK*, *Multimedia Institute [mi2]* from Zagreb and the *Free Zone (Slobodna Zona) / B92* from Belgrade. Aside from the aforementioned partners, other organisations in many cities have also participated as programme hosts. Public events have taken place in nine different cities in the countries of the region: Zagreb, Valpovo, Dubrovnik, Split (Croatia); Belgrade, Subotica (Serbia); Sarajevo, Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and Ljubljana (Slovenia).

The Clubture Network's regional programme is a valuable step forward in promoting cultural cooperation within the region. Its implementation has taken in a wide and varied field of various subject matters, forms of organising and geographic definitions. The organisations that have been involved by joint operation within the platform have developed cooperative potentials or furthered existing collaboration. In this way, the values and principles of programmatic networking were transferred, coming to life in practice for the first time within organisations from a number of countries. By exchange of information, knowledge and specific skills, as well as refreshing own ideas through contributions from various other environments, *Clubture's Regional Initiative* has encouraged many to take a proactive stance in their local environments, and inspired other individuals or cultural organisations to convene into networks or platforms.

Although results were favourable, the implementation phase of the pilot-programmes has allowed an insight into the issues that have created permanent barriers to finding a stable and sustainable model of financing the platform. Following the initial withdrawal of the majority of international actors who had, in the early 2000s, supported the development of various civil and cultural initiatives in the region, the regional independent cultural scene faced the challenge of providing financial resources for the maintenance and development of exchange and cooperation programmes. Despite the efforts of the independent cultural scene to address the institutions of public administration to endorse the values of programme exchange, it didn't attain a stronghold in the shape of relevant financial support. The lack of real political will, along with the ill-evolved instruments of cultural politics, have had influence on the direction followed by the Regional Initiative, which is going to divert its operations after the pilot programme of exchange and cooperation has been implemented to advocacy for reforms and creating a favourable environment for the development of regional cooperation in the independent cultural scene. Thus, by late 2007, the network had organised a series of meetings for regional partners, who had continuously maintained mutual communication in order to uncover common standpoints and methods of advocacy which would open up the path towards the development of a sustainable and stable model of cooperation within the region, as well as the path towards the inclusion of independent culture organisations into the current processes in the cultural-political scene of the European Union.





38 Of course, this doesn't wholly pertain to Slovenia, which has already been integrated into the EU. However, due to the historic context it shares with the other countries of the region, as well as because of the fact that it is a new member of the Union, Slovenia is in a specific position, which means it is simultaneously at the fore front of integration processes, while its cultural-political system retains many features characteristic of the systems of the other countries of the region.

39 The Culture 2000 programme was created by combining three previous EU programmes: "Raphaël", "Kaleidoscope" and "Ariane". Its basic aim was to develop a common cultural area by promoting cultural dialogue, knowledge of the history, creation and dissemination of culture, the mobility of artists and their works, European cultural heritage, new forms of cultural expression and the socio-economic role of culture. Culture 2000 has also supported international projects which involved artists, cultural professionals and cultural institutions.
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/culture/l29006_en.htm

40 The principle of subsidiarity is a fundamental principle of EU law, established in 1992 in the Treaty of Maastricht, which allows the Union to act (through legal acts and other instruments) only in circumstances where action by individual member states or lower administrative levels is insufficient in terms of shaping and implementing public policy.

The new stage in the development of the regional platform is determined by external circumstances related to the accession of the countries of the region to the EU, as well as processes taking place within the framework of shaping and implementing cultural politics at the level of the economic and political community. The fact is that the region, unlike those countries that are already part of the EU, is a kind of no man's land, determined by the promise of integration³⁸. This promise raises the hope of realising potentials for stronger mutual connection, as well as of reintegration into the wider European context; however, in reality it creates new divisions in terms of status of these countries' accession processes. In this phase, the number of individual collaborations of organisations from the region with various EU and other European partners has increased, and these collaborations have largely been implemented through participation in the Culture Programme³⁹. The European Culture Agenda, adopted in May 2007, opens the path to changes in the creation and implementation of cultural politics at the EU level. It partly reduces the principle of subsidiarity, the first time such a reduction has occurred in the cultural field in the EU countries⁴⁰, and its adoption was a direct attempt at cultural integration of the territory of the Union, burdened by various problematic aspects of the expansion process, as well as by other aggravating circumstances⁴¹. Besides, it is an expression of instrumentalism in the processes of shaping and implementing cultural policies, which is particularly relevant to the parts of the Agenda that are to do with cultural industries, that is, those that underscore the role of the culture in furthering European economic competitiveness.

There are a further two aspects that characterise the Agenda other than this dualism; one is the strengthening of the role of culture in international relations within the Union, and the other is the establishment of Structural Dialogue with the civil society as well as the cultural sector in general, with the aim of implementing the goals of the Agenda itself. In theory, the application of the Structural Dialogue, a mechanism for functioning within the Union, is a positive step in terms of the construction of a participative approach to shaping cultural policies, whereas in practice, there is often an illusion of participation which leaves very few tangible opportunities for the cultural sector to influence the creation and implementation of policies. Thus, structural dialogue was the means through which platforms for collaboration with the civil society were activated: the Access to Culture platform, the Potential of Culture and the Creative Industries platform⁴²,

41 The title itself: *European Agenda for Culture in a Globalising World* speaks of the efforts to consolidate the European project on the foundations of building cultural dialogue and furthering cultural diversity. Following the last waves of expansion, the European Union was saddled with so-called enlargement fatigue, as well as numerous other socio-economic factors creating a need for intervention, such as destabilising the monetary union, general loss of economic competitiveness against the fast-growing Asian tigers, ageing European population, etc. Details on the shaping of cultural politics at the EU level are available on the official pages of the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture http://ec.europa.eu/culture/index_en.htm

42 http://ec.europa.eu/culture/our-policy-development/doc1199_en.htm

43 The Platform for Intercultural Dialogue was initiated in 2006 by the ECF and the CAE. In 2008, the Platform drafted a policy document titled the *Rainbow Paper*, containing an analysis of the needs of contemporary Europe on issues of cultural diversity. More on the Platform for Intercultural Europe on: <http://www.intercultural-europe.org/>


44 The European economic growth strategy for the next decade: http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/index_en.htm

45 Various instances of platforms and association exist in other countries as well, such as the afore-

and somewhat later also the Platform for Intercultural Dialogue – now the Platform for Intercultural Europe⁴³. Of the three platforms, only the Platform for Intercultural Europe was initiated “from bottom up”, on the initiative of the civil society, while the other two platforms were initiated by the European Commission within the process of application and selection.

In the period that followed the Agenda, the European Union has contemplated the role of culture within the Europe 2020 strategy⁴⁴ and further steps in the implementation of cultural politics, simultaneously expanding into the region. As the countries of the region are mostly in the stages of preparing for accession to the Union, most of them are implementing reforms as part of these processes. However, although the stages of accession, reform interventions and their effects vary across states, common denominators can be found in the insufficient speed and absence of political will.

On the other hand, in spite of the difficult conditions, many independent cultural organisations in the region have undergone significant development in their programme and organisation, achieving visible results while relying in a large number of cases on their own capacities and volunteer engagement. Significant results were realised thanks to the efforts of the Zagreb organisations, which have been pursuing a long-term process aiming to foster reforms and the establishment of new models of managing public cultural resources. Simultaneously, in partnership with youth organisations, and also with other civil society organisations, they have initiated a broad civic advocacy platform demanding the protection of public space as a public good and responsible management of public resources in the wider social field⁴⁵. Since 2005, the Zagreb scene, gathered around the Alliance Operation City⁴⁶, has employed various activities to advocate for the establishment of the institution – POGON – Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth. The Centre was established at the very end of 2008, as a hybrid, mixed type public institution, founded by the Operation City and the City of Zagreb. The models for managing the centre and coordinating the programmes are examples of the Zagreb scene's engagement on managing public infrastructure that is open to programmes by the independent scene, a model which is not only applicable elsewhere in the country, but also within similar systems region-wide⁴⁷. Besides, the Zagreb scene has had a great deal of parallel engagement in the wider field where cultural politics meet the politics of space, having started the Right to the City initiative⁴⁸ with other partners in mid-2006. In the preceding period, the Right to the City and the Green Action – Zelena akcija⁴⁹, with which it has jointly cooperat-



mentioned Asociacija in Slovenia, the Druga Scena platform from Belgrade: <http://www.drugascena.org/>, the Initiative for Cultural Politics from Novi Sad: <http://www.zakulturnepolitike.net/>, the Plošćad Sloboda initiative from Skopje, as well as other more or less structured initiatives used by independent culture organisations region-wide to advocate for changes within the cultural-political framework.

46 The Clulture Network is one of the founding members of the Zagreb Alliance Operation City (the former Alliance for the Centre for Independent Culture and Youth), which gathers organisations from Zagreb around a platform for cooperation and advocacy. More on the Alliance on: <http://savezzacentar.wordpress.com/>

47 POGON is an example of public-civil partnership, one of the few such systems within European frameworks. More on: <http://www.upogoni.org>

48 <http://pravonagrad.org/>

49 The Green Action is the largest environmental protection association in Croatia, founded in 1990. More at: <http://zelenaakcija.hr>

50 The Network has initiated the process in cooperation with the advocacy platform Alliance Operation City, from Zagreb, the regional partners: Kontra-punkt, Skopje, Macedonia; organisations SCCA/pro.ba and Action (Akcija), Sarajevo, BiH, and other organisations gathered around the Regional Initiative. In cooperation with the Clulture Network, the

ed, have brought together many activists and citizens to protect public resources from the association of corrupt government and large capital. Right to the City is one of the most visible civic initiatives in the past few years in Croatia (but also in the wider region), which has made a name for itself with numerous actions, organising protests, as well as with other forms of public activity.

Despite the development and increasing presence of independent culture in the public, public authorities still do not give it enough attention or support, which strongly reflects on the field of regional cooperation, especially on building a network which would enable permanent and stable implementation of collaborative projects. As has already been mentioned, the scarcity of opportunities to secure support from other sources, caused by the absence of international organisations whose activity had previously supported the scene, creates barriers to its progress, as well as to building capacities for the implementation of collaborative programmes.

The Clulture Network strives to be proactive and to advocate for positive changes. For this reason, it has initiated the *Exit Europe Process*. Apart from organisations, it also involves numerous experts in various fields who are active in the cultural politics of the countries of the region and the rest of Europe, as well as the wider public. An important aspect of the implementation of the process is affiliation with partner organisations⁵⁰, among which the *Culture Action Europe* – the European umbrella advocacy network in the cultural field – plays a significant role⁵¹. Its role in the process was to connect the organisations from the countries of the region with the EU context and the specific measures being implemented within the framework of European cultural policies. The CAE has contributed as a partner to the collection of important documents, participated in the preparation of programmes and selection of speakers at the *Exit Europe* international conference, as well as the drafting of the Position Paper with policy recommendations.

In December 2008, a meeting of Clulture's Regional Initiative and partner organisations, on which the strategic guidelines of the *Exit Europe Process* were defined, was held in Zagreb, as part of the international Neoliberal Frontline⁵² conference. On that occasion, many new organisations from the region have joined the initiative, while the number of actors involved in the process grew as various activities were organised. Thus, a core team of associates from various countries interested in developing a strategy was created, gathered in the Regional Policy Group⁵³.

The international conference *Exit Europe* – New Geographies of Culture⁵⁴, held in Zagreb in November 2009, was the central

regional partners have conceived the programmes for the pre-conference events in Skopje and Sarajevo, and organised them in their cities. The partners from Zagreb have also jointly conceived and organised the programme for the Exit Europe conference.

51 Culture Action Europe – the erstwhile EFAH (European Forum for the Arts and Heritage) is the umbrella advocacy and lobbying network of cultural organisations, based in Brussels. The network was founded in 1992, and brings together more than 100 member-organisations from various fields and disciplines of cultural activity and artistic creation. The Clubture Network has been a member of CAE since 2007, and Emina Višnić, the long-standing president and coordinator of the Clubture Network, now member of the board of directors, is a member of the Executive Committee of this organisation. More on: <http://www.cultureactioneurope.org/>

52 A conference that was jointly organised by partner organisations (Multimedia Institute – [mi2], Platform 9.81 – Institute for Architectural Research, Blok – Local Base for Culture Refreshment, Alliance Operation City and the Clubture Network) in late 2008 in Zagreb, which dealt through various formats with the issue of the struggle for public resources in the circumstances of galloping privatisation of the public and dispossessing the public of public goods.

53 The regional policy group comprised the representatives from ten organisa-

event within the process. It was preceded by two pre-conference events organised in Sarajevo and Skopje in October the same year. On a broad discussion that was held as part of these events, a critical eye was cast on the parallel processes of defining European cultural politics and the expansion of the Union into the region from the perspective of the independent cultural scene. More than seventy independent culture organisations from the region were gathered, as well as representatives of various cultural institutions and other forms of cultural organising, decision-makers at the local and national levels from various countries, and representatives of the EU administration. Experts, theoreticians, artists and different kinds of activists from various countries have greatly contributed to the success of the conference and the pre-conference events, as their engagement in lectures, round tables and panel discussions has attracted many citizens and provided insight into the wider social, political and cultural context that surrounds the *Exit Europe Process*. A series of consultative meetings of the project partners' core team were held, as well as more general meetings⁵⁵, on which further steps in the implementation of the process were established. The most significant product of the joint effort concerns the drafting of, and advocacy for, the Position Paper of policy recommendations⁵⁶, directed at the cultural decision-makers at the EU, national and local levels. With the recommendations, the independent cultural scene has brought to attention the need to adopt measures for fostering cultural development in the countries of the region, and furthering their reintegration into the common European territory. Likewise, the recommendations offer a series of concrete suggestions whose implementation would enable the development of independent culture and encourage the realisation of collaborative projects, as well as permanent partnerships between organisations within the region, but also with partners from the rest of Europe.

The recommendations make up the first wider coordinated initiative carried out by regional cultural organisations and EU partners that is directed at the European cultural institutions. Thus, the independent culture organisations have shown readiness to be proactive in dealings with the new determining factors of cultural politics that are necessary for the entry of the countries of the region into the context of the EU. The recommendations were promoted in October 2010 in Brussels, as part of the *The Time is Now* conference⁵⁷, which had kickstarted the *Culture Action Europe* network's *We Are More* campaign⁵⁸, which focuses on significant issues, such as the creation of new guidelines for the next edition of the Culture Programme (2014-2020), funding for culture as part of the common EU budget, as well as funding for culture within the EU structural funds⁵⁹.



tions from the region: SCCA/bro.ba, Sarajevo, BH; the Kulturtreger Association for the Promotion of Culture, the Clubture Network, Zagreb, Croatia; the NGO Kontrapunkt, Skopje, Macedonia; the Alkatraz Gallery, Ljubljana; the Kibla Multimedia Centre, the Pekarna Magdalenske Mreže, Maribor, Slovenia; Kiosk – Platform for Contemporary Arts, Cultural Centre REX / B92 Fund, TkH – the Walking Theory, Belgrade, Serbia.

54 <http://exiteurope.net/>

55 In the past two years, meetings and many consultations were held in Sarajevo (BH); Maribor and Ljubljana (Slovenia); Zagreb (Croatia); Belgrade (Serbia); Ohrid, Skopje (Macedonia); Bruxelles (Belgium), as well as through various online instruments (mailing lists, social networking services, etc.).

56 The Position Paper – policy recommendations are a part of this publication, and were also issued as a standalone document. The phase in which they are to be defined in detail and finalised has seen intense involvement from Asociacija, the Slovenian network of independent cultural organisations, initiatives and artists, with which the Clubture Network has evolved a partnership that spans numerous other joint activities.

57 <http://www.cultureactioneuropeconference.eu/>

58 <http://www.wearemore.eu>

59 Structural funds are instruments by means of which the EU implements the basic aims of

The perspectives for regional cooperation in independent culture

By initiating the process that took place in parallel in the countries of the region and in the EU, the Clubture Network has developed its own potentials for bringing together and connecting the countries of the region, and opened a new chapter in the development of advocacy work. However, the complexity of the European project, which still seems distant and very abstract from the regional perspective, means that new challenges emerge as the field of operation expands. There are numerous obstacles that the countries of the region meet in their accession to the Union, one of which is the low level of acquaintance of their citizens with the functioning of EU institutions and the procedures of shaping politics.

A large number of cultural workers still are not well enough acquainted either with the frameworks of the functioning of the EU, or with the specifics of implementing cultural policies. Furthermore, the mechanisms used by the EU to foster participation by the cultural sector in decision-making frequently leave the impression of formality, instead of enabling the realisation of tangible influence. The European Union is encumbered by forceful internal turmoil, which has been additionally compounded by the arrival of the global recession and crisis. The Union is currently in the final stages of adopting a full package of measures in the field of economic administration, whose goal is to foster competitiveness, employment and to secure sustainable public finances in the EU. These measures contain restrictive provisions concerning the necessity of reducing state deficits and public debt by member states of the Union by, among other things, the flexibilisation of social policies⁶⁰. The introduction of these measures has already reflected very negatively on the budgets for culture in many member states, which flies in the face of the argumentation wherein culture is nominally treated as an irreplaceable factor of economic growth and social cohesion. Negotiations about the following period of implementation of the Culture programme, that is, the budget that is to be available in the framework of the programme in the future, are currently ongoing as part of the process of adopting the total EU budget for the period 2014-2020. The Commission has published its budget proposal at the very end of June 2011, demanding that the total Union budget increases by 4.8% in relation to the previous period. The budget is primarily directed towards realising the aims of the Europe 2020 strategy, that is, towards fostering sustainable economic growth and growth in employment. The envisaged growth of funds to be invested in edu-


the regional policy: reducing economic and social differences among the twenty-seven member states, comprising around 500 million citizens. The aims are reached by investments by three funds: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Cohesion Fund (ECF). The field of regional politics is one of the vital areas of EU functioning. More on the functioning of EU regional politics on: http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/index_en.htm

60 The package of EU measures for preserving financial stability and the package for stimulating competitiveness are steps taken by the EU to intervene in the most important internal policies of member states, motivated by the shocks to the Eurozone in the recent months, as well as by the worrying state of finances in some member states. More on the measures from the European Council Spring Summit, held in late March 2011 on: <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/home-page/highlights/deal-on-reinforced-economic-governance.aspx?lang=en>

cation and culture is contained within the total growth, with the caveat that the method of distributing funds isn't yet evident, since detailed budgets still haven't been drafted – nor have the respective strategic priorities for individual programmes. What can be expected at the moment is that the Culture and Media programme will be merged into the Creative Europe programme, which would function as a single unit with separate programme schemes and sources of financing – but with the same goals. The strengthened position of culture within European budget lines will face many challenges during the period to come. Apart from the fact that the proposed budget increase will inevitably meet with resistance from the member states, it will also be necessary to invest additional effort to support those cultural activities whose primary function isn't to foster economic growth, in addition to cultural industries, whose growth is directly linked to the aims of the EU 2020 strategy. In addition to this, defining the future role of culture within the Structural Funds, primarily the European Social Fund, where it should be recognised as an element of the development of various environments, will also be of great importance in the following period.

With the approach and impending accession of the countries of the region to the EU, there will need to be caution when approaching the challenges caused by the crisis, as well as the interventions the Union has undertaken with the aim of recovery, which make up the guidelines for EU policies in a perspective that goes beyond several months or years.

The crisis has also had negative effects on almost all the countries of the region, having endangered programme activities and stability of many independent culture organisations, especially in individual local surroundings. In the countries of the region, it has compounded the permanent deficiencies in the cultural-political systems needing change. All the while, priorities must lay in positive transformations that would spur the development of co-operation and partnership between all the significant cultural actors within the region. These transformations should also affect the decision-makers and cultural institutions themselves, as well as various other forms of organising in arts and culture. From the perspective independent culture, there is a pronounced need for stabilisation and continuing strengthening of the organisations themselves and independent cultural scenes in each of the countries. Likewise, furthering cooperation and partnership between organisations, as well as the need for establishing a network that would enable stable and permanent programme exchange and co-operation remain the greatest challenges to the independent cultural scene at the level of the region.



⁶¹ Max Weber, "The Profession and Vocation of Politics," in *Political Writings*, ed. Peter Lassmann and Ronald Spiers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 369.

In times of crises, unique opportunities emerge to carry out reforms that would be impossible in times of prosperity. A crisis carries great potential for emancipation, applicable to all bureaucratised structures, and so also to the cultural systems of each of the countries of the region. However, during a period of crisis, reform should be carefully pursued in order to preserve its foundations. It is necessary to implement innovative and sustainable solutions that open the paths towards overcoming challenges, whether permanent, embedded phenomena or effects of the impact of global crisis, into the frameworks of cultural policies in the region. We should also stress that any reform, even in the cultural field, demands financial investment in order to be successful and to allow better artistic, cultural, social, as well as financial results in the future. Independent culture organisations offer models of organising whose desired and continued results can permanently contribute to the cultural development of individual communities, but also of the region as a whole, as well as to aid the strengthening of its role in the European context.

For this reason, the *Exit Europe Process* has also contributed to cultural development, and its potentials extend beyond the independent scene itself. The models of joint operation in forms of cultural-artistic practice, as well as the kinds of initiatives in the field of cultural politics these organisations have created can be applied to other plans in the region, especially regarding the cooperation among civil society organisations of different profiles. Naturally, it will be necessary to invest additional efforts in order for this process to continue to be successful, having in mind that, like all political enterprises, this process is "a slow and strong boring of hard boards – It takes both passion and perspective⁶¹."

The framework for its future will be defined by a series of elements that are evolving at a number of levels, such as the internal dynamics of organisations and scenes in individual countries, and changes within those countries' cultural systems. The remaining elements that will influence the future development of the process are the circumstances of the region's countries' integration in the EU, as well as the frameworks of policies that the Union is to define for the coming cycle from 2014-2020. One thing is certain, the *Exit Europe Process* will continue to contribute to the participation of the independent cultural scene in the cultural politics of local and national actors, as well as of those operating at the international level.

Organizations involved in the activities of Clubture Network's Regional Initiative

Academica - Akademska grupa, Beograd, Srbija
Academica Group, Belgrade, Serbia

Agencija za informiranje – AGI, Osijek, Hrvatska
Information Agency – AGI, Osijek, Croatia

Akcija - Agencija za kulturni razvoj, Sarajevo, BiH
Action - Agency for Culture Development, Sarajevo, B&H

AKTO - фестивал за современи уметности, Bitola, Makedonija
Akto Festival for Contemporary Arts, Bitola, Macedonia

Alter Art, Travnik, B&H

Kulturno udruženje AMBROSIA, Sarajevo, BiH
Cultural Association AMBROSIA, Sarajevo, B&H

Art radionica Lazareti – ARL, Dubrovnik, Hrvatska
Art Workshop Lazareti – ARL, Dubrovnik, Croatia

ArtKlinika, Novi Sad, Srbija
Art Clinic, Novi Sad, Serbia

Asociacija - Društvo nevladinih organizacij in samostojnih ustvarjalcev na področju umetnosti in kulture, Ljubljana, Slovenija
Asociacija - Association of Arts and Culture NGOs and Freelancers, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Asocijacija za demokratske inicijative – ADI, Sarajevo, BiH
Association for Democratic Initiatives – ADI, Sarajevo, B&H

Udruga Attack!, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Association Attack!, Zagreb, Croatia

Autonomni centar Čakovec – ACT, Čakovec, Hrvatska
Autonomus Center – ACT, Čakovec, Croatia

Autonomni kulturni center Metelkova mesto - AKC Metelkova, Ljubljana, Slovenija
Autonomus Cultural Center Metelkova mesto, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Udruga Bacači sjenki, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Association Shadowcasters, Zagreb, Croatia

BADco, Zagreb, Croatia

Belgrade Yard Sound System – BYSS, Belgrade, Serbia

Blok - Lokalna baza za osvježavanje kulture, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Blok - Local Base for Culture Refreshment, Zagreb, Croatia

Bunker / Stara Elektrarna, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Centar za dramsku umjetnost – CDU, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Center for Drama Arts – CDU, Zagreb, Croatia

Centar za mlade Novo Sarajevo, Sarajevo, BiH
Youth Center Novo Sarajevo, Sarajevo, B&H

Centar za savremenu umetnost, SCCA Beograd, Beograd, Srbija
Contemporary Art Center, Belgrade, Serbia

Centar za savremenu umetnost, SCCA Sarajevo, Sarajevo, BiH
Center for Contemporary Art Sarajevo, Sarajevo, B&H

Centar za savremeni umetnosti, SCCA Skopje, Skopje, Makedonija
Contemporary Art Center, Skopje, Macedonia

Centre for Balkan Cooperation Loja, Tetovo, Makedonija
Centre for Balkan Cooperation Loja, Tetovo, Macedonia

ЦЕНТАР ЗА ДРАМСКИ УМЕТНОСТИ Т-ХАУС, Skopje, Makedonija
Center for Drama Arts T-HOUSE, Skopje, Macedonia

Community Art, Zagreb, Croatia

Udruženje ČINČ - Inicijativa za istraživanje i produkciju savremene muzike, Beograd, Srbija
CHINCH - Initiative for research and production of contemporary music and "live" arts, Belgrade, Serbia

Dispatch, Belgrade, Serbia

Domaći - Udruga za kreativni razvoj,
Karlovac, Hrvatska
Domaći - Association for Creative Development,
Karlovac, Croatia

Udruga Domino, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Association Domino, Zagreb, Croatia

Udruga Drugo more, Rijeka, Hrvatska
Association The Other Sea, Rijeka, Croatia

Druga Scena, Beograd, Srbija
Other Scene, Belgrade, Serbia

Evropski Centar za Kulturu i Debatu GRAD
/ **Kulturni front**, Beograd, Srbija
European Center for Culture and Debate GRAD /
Cultural Front, Belgrade, Serbia

Fondacija za razvoj zajednica Mozaik,
Sarajevo, BiH
Community Development Foundation Mozaik,
Sarajevo, B&H

ФРИК - Формација за Развој на Иницијативи во
Културата, Skopje, Makedonija
F.R.I.K. - Cultural Initiatives Development
Formation, Skopje, Macedonia

Galerija Alkatraz, Ljubljana, Slovenija
Alkatraz Gallery, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Galerija ElektriKa Kulturnog centra, Pančevo,
Srbia
ElektriKa Gallery / Cultural Center, Pančevo, Serbia

Galerija Kapelica / Zavod K 6/4, Ljubljana,
Slovenija
Kapelica Gallery / Institute K 6/4, Ljubljana,
Slovenia

Galerija Kontekst, Beograd, Srbija
Kontekst Gallery, Belgrade, Serbia

Gradsko pozorište Jazavac, Banja Luka, BiH
City theater Jazavac, Banja Luka, B&H

Hrvatska glazbena mladež, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Jeunesses Musical Croatia, Zagreb, Croatia

Hrvatsko kulturno društvo Napredak,
Sarajevo, BiH
Croatian Cultural Society Napredak, Sarajevo, B&H

Institut za međunarodne odnose, Zagreb,
Hrvatska
Institute for International Relations, Zagreb,
Croatia

Institut za sociološki i političko-pravni
istraživanja, Skopje, Makedonija
Institute for Sociological and Political Research,
Skopje, Macedonia

Kiberpipa, Ljubljana, Slovenija
Cyberpipe, Ljubljana, Slovenia

KIOSK - platforma za savremenu umetnost,
Beograd, Srbija
KIOSK - Platform for Contemporary Art, Belgrade,
Serbia

Koalicija udruga mladih – KUM, Split,
Hrvatska
Coalition of Youth Associations – KUM, Split,
Croatia

Udruga Komikaze, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Association Komikaze, Zagreb, Croatia

Kontejner - Biro suvremene umjetničke
prakse, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Kontejner - Bureau of Contemporary Art Praxis,
Zagreb, Croatia

NGO Kontrapunkt, Skopje, Makedonija
NGO Kontrapunkt, Skopje, Macedonia

KUD Kataman, Ljubljana, Slovenija
Cultural and Artistic Association Kataman,
Ljubljana, Slovenia

KUD Mreža, Ljubljana, Slovenija
Cultural and Artistic Association Mreža, Ljubljana,
Slovenia

Kulturen centar – CK, Skopje, Makedonija
Culture centre – CK, Skopje, Macedonia

Kulturen centar Media Artes, Ohrid,
Makedonija
Cultural Center Media Artes, Ohrid, Macedonia

Kulturni centar REX / FOND B92, Beograd,
Srbija
REX Culture Center / FUND B92, Belgrade, Serbia

Udruga za promicanje kulture Kulturtreger,
Zagreb, Hrvatska
Association for Culture Development Kulturtreger,
Zagreb, Croatia

Udruženje za promociju vizuelne kulture KULT zona, Sarajevo, BiH
Association for Promotion of Visual Culture KULT zone, Sarajevo, B&H

Labin Art Express – LAE, Labin, Hrvatska
Labin Art Express – LAE, Labin, Croatia

Line Initiative and Movement, Skopje, Macedonia

Lokomotiva - Centar za Novi Inicijativi vo Umetnosta i Kulturata, Skopje, Makedonija
Lokomotiva - Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture, Skopje, Macedonia

MASSO, Skopje, Makedonija
MASSO, Skopje, Macedonia

Mediacentar, Sarajevo, BiH
Mediacycenter, Sarajevo, B&H

Udruga Metamedij, Pula, Hrvatska
Association Metamedia, Pula, Croatia

Mirovni inštitut - Inštitut za sodobne družbene in političke studije, Ljubljana, Slovenija
The Peace Institute - Institute for Contemporary social and political studies, Ljubljana, Slovenia

Mladinski center Brežice, Brežice, Slovenija
Youth Center Brežice, Brežice, Slovenia

Mladinski center Podlaga, Sežana, Slovenija
Youth Center Podlaga, Sežana, Slovenia

Mladinski informativni in kulturni klub - MIKK, Murska Sobota, Slovenija
Youth Info & Culture Club – MIKK, Murska Sobota, Slovenia

Udruga Moj Kvart, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Association Moj Kvart, Zagreb, Croatia

Udruga Monteparadiso, Pula, Hrvatska
Association Monteparadiso, Pula, Croatia

Multimedijalni institut - mi2, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Multimedia Institute – mi2, Zagreb, Croatia

Multimedijski center KIBLA, Maribor, Slovenia
Multimedia Centre KIBLA, Maribor, Slovenia

Muzej istorije Jugoslavije, Beograd, Srbija
Museum of Yugoslav History, Belgrade, Serbia

Neformalna grupa Švenk, Tuzla, BiH
Informal Group Švenk, Tuzla, B&H

NVO pokret Novi Optimizam, Zrenjanin, Srbija
NGO Movement New Optimism, Zrenjanin, Serbia

UG Novi Put, Bihać, BiH
NVO Novi put, Bihać, B&H

Odbor za građansku inicijativu – OGI, Niš, Srbija
Committee for Civic Initiative – OGI, Niš, Serbia

Omladinska organizacija Kvart, Kraljevo, Srbija
Youth Association Kvart, Kraljevo, Serbia

Omladinski centar Crna kuća 13 - CK 13, Novi Sad, Srbija
Youth Center Crna kuća 13 - CK 13, Novi Sad, Serbia

Omladinski kulturni centar Abrašević - OKC Abrašević, Mostar, BiH
Youth Cultural Centre Abrašević - OKC Abrašević, Mostar, B&H

Otvoreni univerzitet, Subotica, Srbija
Open University, Subotica, Serbia

Ozone Art Space - o3one, Beograd, Srbija
Ozone Art Space - o3one, Belgrade, Serbia

Partnerski omladinski pokret – POP, Banja Luka, BiH
Youth Partnership Movement – POP, Banja Luka, B&H

Pekarna Magdalenske mreže, Maribor, Slovenia

Performing Arts Center Multimedia - PAC Multimedia, Skopje, Makedonija
Performing Arts Center Multimedia - PAC Multimedia, Skopje, Macedonia

Platforma 9.81 – Institut za istraživanja u arhitekturi, Zagreb, Hrvatska
Platforma 9.81 – Institute for Research in Architecture, Zagreb, Croatia

UG Pravo ljudski, Sarajevo, BiH
Association Pravo ljudski, Sarajevo, B&H

Prelom kolektiv, Beograd, Srbija
Prelom Collective, Belgrade, Serbia

Press to Exit Project Space, Skopje, Macedonia

Protok - centar za vizuelnu komunikaciju,
Banja Luka, BiH
Centre for Visual Communication Protok, Banja
Luka, B&H

Public ROOM, Skopje, Macedonia

Remont - Nezavisna umetnička asocijacija,
Beograd, Srbija
Remont - Independent Art Association, Belgrade,
Serbia

Udruga Romb, Split, Hrvatska
Association Rhomb, Split, Croatia

Savez udruga Molekula, Rijeka, Hrvatska
Association of NGOs Molekula, Rijeka, Croatia

Savjet mladih Srebrenice, Srebrenica, BiH
Youth Council Srebrenica, Srebrenica, B&H

SeeCult portal, Belgrade, Serbia

Shoqata e Botuesve Shqiptarë, Skopje,
Makedonija
Association of Albanian Publishers in Macedonia,
Skopje, Macedonia

Association Slobodna kultura, Beograd, Srbija
Association Free Culture, Belgrade, Serbia

Udruga građana Spirit, Rijeka, Hrvatska
Citizens' Association Spirit, Rijeka, Croatia

Stanica - Servis za savremeni ples, Beograd,
Srbija
Station - Service for Contemporary Dance,
Belgrade, Serbia

Što, kako i za koga? - WHW, Zagreb, Hrvatska
What, Where and for Whom - WHW, Zagreb,
Croatia

**Studentska asocijacija Fakulteta tehničkih
nauka**, Novi Sad, Srbija
Student Association of Technical Science Faculty,
Novi Sad, Serbia

Teatri i pavarur ODA, Priština, Kosovo
The Independent ODA Theatre, Priština, Kosovo

Tehne, Beograd, Srbija
Tehne, Belgrade, Serbia

Teorija koja hoda - TkH, Beograd, Srbija
Walking Theory - TkH, Belgrade, Serbia

Tetar Videlo, Skopje, Makedonija
Theater center Videlo, Skopje, Macedonia

Udruženje za razvoj kulture - URK, Zagreb,
Hrvatska
Association for Culture Development - URK,
Zagreb, Croatia

**ÚJ21 - Novosadska urbanistička
laboratorija**, Novi Sad, Srbija
ÚJ21 - Urbanistic Laboratory, Novi Sad, Serbia

Zavod EXODOS, Ljubljana, Slovenija
EXODOS Center, Ljubljana, Slovenia

**Inicijativa Za kulturne politike - politika
kulture**, Novi Sad, Srbija
Initiative for Cultural Policies - Politics of Culture,
Novi Sad, Serbia

Zavod za proučavanje kulturnog razvitka,
Beograd, Srbija
Center for Study in Cultural Development, Belgrade,
Serbia



Stvarnja svih tradicionalnih vrednosti
 u prvih vrednosti, konvencija i shvatanja
 u. Njihov umetnički vrednosti
 što tražiti nove putne društvenosti,
 naši umetnici, naš društveni projekat
 projekat za koji smo se zalagali, štiti su
 im. Tada shvatim, tako stvarim. Stvaraj je
 njeno mesto na koje postavlja vrednosti
 razni, kao kao autonomni, stvarajući
 za koji se estetikom naših same implikacija

Dunja Matković

PARADOKS

U ovom delu knjige se istražuje umetnički koncept i to je tradicionalni koncept
 Beograd, jer je to naša najpoznatija umetnička tradicija i jedna od najpoznatijih umetničkih
 tradicija u svetu. U ovom delu se istražuje umetnički koncept i to je tradicionalni koncept
 Beograd, jer je to naša najpoznatija umetnička tradicija i jedna od najpoznatijih umetničkih
 tradicija u svetu.

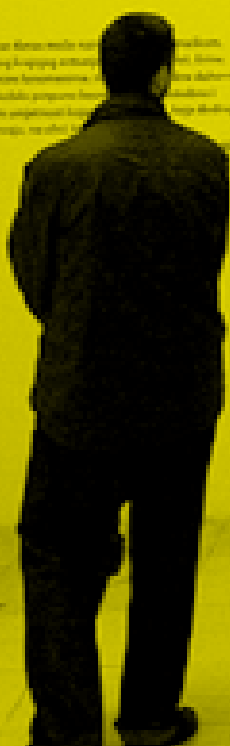
Kata...

Kanalizacija i elektrifikacija ne rješavaju problem arhitekture.

Josip Perić

Arhitekti govore o tome da su materijali,
 Pred nama stoji jedna od tih stvari.
 Tu smo i od toga možda čitaj
 Po ovom umetničkom konceptu i konceptu umetničkog
 i konceptu (kao koncept)
 Sada možda smo od
 a Sada možda smo od
 u ovom delu se istražuje umetnički koncept i to je tradicionalni koncept
 Beograd, jer je to naša najpoznatija umetnička tradicija i jedna od najpoznatijih umetničkih
 tradicija u svetu.

U ovom delu se istražuje umetnički koncept i to je tradicionalni koncept
 Beograd, jer je to naša najpoznatija umetnička tradicija i jedna od najpoznatijih umetničkih
 tradicija u svetu.



Marko Tomaš


Utopia or Light at the End of the Tunnel, A sketch of a portrait of independent culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina

In the given circumstances, sometimes engagement in culture seems completely pointless. On the other hand, as much as it sounds fatalistic or pathetic, it is difficult to ignore the dark everyday Bosnian-Herzegovinian reality. In this sense, perspectives of independent culture are quite foggy and the one thing which can bring clarity is regional cooperation. This cooperation, above all, can reduce the sense of claustrophobia and feeling of alienation from the rest of the world as well as giving new purpose to the toils of the BH cultural activist, as all post-war enthusiasm has been exhausted in the labor of creating some sort of platform on which the future scene can be built.

The roots of independent culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina reach into the second half of the eighties in the last century, and are closely tied at the time with underground music and fanzine scene of the former Yugoslavia. This refers, mainly, to informal art groups, above all musical and theater groups, which were operating outside of the established mainstream of official culture at the time. In Mostar and Sarajevo these initiatives were gathered around HC and experimental bands, “Ženevski dekret” and “SCH”, and in Tuzla around the band “Rupa u Zidu”. Mostar Youth Theater and Mostar Puppet Theater in those years were operating outside of the standard norms of theater and in their work can be felt the inception of independent culture in BH. Artists and performers such as Jusuf Hadžifejzović with their work during the eighties paved the road to future initiatives, which we can place in the framework of independent culture.

This “scene” perhaps cannot be spoken of as a scene at all, because it involved just a few author and artistic initiatives and it did not have a natural development, the reason for which we can direct connect with the war, which completely destroyed Bosnia-Herzegovina in the period from 1992 to 1995. The renewal of culture and cultural infrastructure began after the end of the war, and with this renewal the first independent cultural initiatives began to shyly raise their heads, initiatives which did not directly rely on the inheritance from the eighties. Many of the artists, which were recognized in post-war BH as bearers of the independent art and culture scene (Nebojša Šerić Šoba, Jusuf Hadžifejzović, Milomir Kovačević Strašni, Isidora Bjelica, etc.) had become domestic figures during the war, some wandering into agitprop aggressive state politics, and a great number of them settling all over the globe, ceasing to create artistic works. Since they did not have a firm and clear tie with the pre-war art scene, artists and cultural activists in post-war BH relied much more on the general arenas of global pop culture. Also, the absence of any givens opened a huge space to work in complete freedom, without any limits. The system, in every sense, had to be created from the very beginning. The mitigating circumstance for independent culture was the non-existence of the state and official culture, which was also raised from the ashes like independent culture, in the first years after the war, and was perceived by the public in almost exactly the same way as the official culture.

During the war in Sarajevo and Mostar, artistic work was makeshift, in basements, and therefore literally underground, the music and theater scene emerging from a basic need for the survival of a grain of healthy reason. Of course, it was not clearly conceptualized and it was, quite naturally, deeply buried in the reality of war.



Folk dance and nationalism are the two recorded dominant official cultures in post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina. These sorts of culture seek their roots deep in the past, in fabricated traditions and mythomania. It attempts to be completely separated from the common past of all Bosnian-Herzegovinian peoples and searching for its own identity totters through history searching the wildernesses of great empires. The foundation of their own natural culture, Bosnian-Herzegovinian Croats see the Austro-Hungarian monarchy and Independent State of Croatia (NDH), the Serbs in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Bosnians in the Ottoman empire. Of course, one of the main records of these cultures is a deep connection with the official religions, which compose the main difference among the three BH peoples and as such are often placed in front view. Everything which occurs in post-war BH culture outside of this context we can classify as independent culture.

A great number of international foundations and organizations (Open Society Fund, Schueler Helfen Leben, Pro Helvetia, CCF - French Cultural Centers), which began to work in Bosnia-Herzegovina after the war, contributed, above all, to the development of the NGO sector. The development of independent culture in BH is directly tied to the development of the NGO sector. Further, the majority of non-governmental organizations founded after the war were exclusively engaged in cultural production. However, constant changes of direction and inconsistency in the strategy of international policies in BH turned post-war cultural activists into NGO bureaucrats, the core of those whose work changed from year to year depending on the directives of international foundations. The majority of organizations and NGO activists have long ago made the move to involvement in political activism and engage in political and democratic consciousness-raising in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The framework of that which we might be able to call the independent cultural scene in BH since the war till now, has mainly consisted of a small number of the same enthusiasts. They can be found around the organization GETO in Banja Luka, Alter Art in Travnik, SCCA and Media Center in Sarajevo and OKC Abrašević in Mostar. The other organizations, if they have not changed their activities, either have disappeared from the face of the earth or have commercialized their works to the point that they now function as private companies. It is interesting that the level of cooperation between the aforementioned organizations was on net much greater just after the war than today. One part of the reason lies in the diverse profiles of the individual organizations. On the other hand, the impossibility of financing specific projects (Adolescent Days in Travnik, Mostar Intercultural Festival, Futura in Sarajevo), which were places of

contact and made up the core cooperation between these organizations, led to the reduced level of cooperation.

Music and alternative / new media

In general, activities of these organizations are connected with the organization of various music festivals and concerts, which also nourished a sort of “alternative” music scene. Organizations which frequently cooperated in organizing music and cultural festivals during the post-war years were Akcija from Sarajevo (electronic music festival FUTURA), Alternative Institute from Mostar (Mostar Intercultural Festival and BETON), Alter Art from Travnik (Adolescent Days) and GETO from Banja Luka (Ex YU Rocks). People who started these organizations and organized these events are also prominent artists and cultural activists today such as Ljiljana Predragović and Dragana Vuković (*Geto, BL*), Nedim Čišić (*Alternativni institut, Mostar*), Darko Saračević (*Alter Art, Travnik; Darko is also extremely important as a mentor who raised several generations of Travnik musicians and is one of the main reasons why a town like Travnik has the most active music scene in Bosnia-Herzegovina.*) as well as Aida Kalender and Adi Sarajlić (*Akcija, Sarajevo*).


Along with music, the main preoccupation of cultural activists in BH is the development of alternative/new media. On that field of project work the Media Center in Sarajevo and OKC Abrašević in Mostar made significant steps. The Sarajevo Media Center organized a series of seminars and lectures on the theme of new media and completed a project of digitalizing the archives of the legendary Split political weekly Feral Tribune. AbrašMedia center in OKC Abrašević in Mostar began a socially engaged news portal abrasmedia.info and the first internet radio in BH, and currently works on the establishment of independent video production, L-Ab. These programs are supported by various cultural foundations and foreign embassies in Bosnia-Herzegovina. (*A brilliant example of local cooperation is reflected in the work of establishing an independent video production between LDA (Local Democratic Agency) and OKC Abrašević in Mostar, which with the support of Italian region Venezia - Friuli began a school of video journalism and founded this production.*) People to credit with the development of this program are Aida Kalender and Boro Kontić from Media Center, along with Robert Jandrić, Husein Oručević and Kathryn Hampton from AbrašMedia center. Of course, the organization of various cultural programs is one of the main preoccupations of these organizations. Much attention is devoted to the development of contemporary visual and performance art as well as



SOUS CETTE PIERRE
IL Y A UN MONUMENT AUX VICTIMES
DE LA GUERRE ET DE LA GUERRE FROIDE

MONTROUILLON
RUE LA FONTAINE
7 DE MONTROUILLON





literature. An excellent example connected with this segment is the project “Individual Utopias” by Sarajevo’s SCCA, which developed the project from the performance of artists Lala Raščić, which in addition to a performance, exhibit, video and audio installation included also the production of the literary fanzine KOLAPS and continues to develop as its own sort of “work in progress” in which artists of various types are included. Also, the art production AbArt from Mostar created a brilliant multi-media project “Art in divided cities”. This program was developed in cooperation with informal art groups and associations from Beirut, Kosovska Mitrovica and Berlin. For the realization of these initiatives we have mainly to thank the cultural activists and historians of art from Sarajevo and Mostar, Dunja Blažević, Asja Hafner, Amila Puzić, Anja Bogojević and Mela Žuljević.

Festivals for bleary eyes

It is difficult to evaluate how much independent culture impacts Bosnian-Herzegovinian society. The presence of independent culture in the media is at quite a high level, however the question is to which extent that fact brings the influence of independent culture to BH society. Of course the circle of consumers with the arrival of new generations widens from year to year. However, still stands the fact that it is more and more difficult to survive financially. The bulk of resources from city, canton and state budgets allocated for culture, which would by the nature of things be assumed to co-finance independent culture with a part of that sum, has left to organize megalomaniac (mainly politically sponsored) festivals, which also drain the resources of potential commercial sponsors. The festivalization of culture in BH speaks to the non-existence of any kind of cultural policy or strategy, because festivals are the common people’s perception of culture, something with which to blear the eyes of potential consumers of culture. Similarly, we can confirm that independent culture in BH is working spontaneously and without a clear strategy of development. Still, it vividly testifies to the existence of a fourth side to Bosnian-Herzegovinian political and social reality. The fourth side finds its own space outside of nationalist politics and cultural patterns and that is the only proof of the existence of this sort of civil society in BH. However, it is difficult to speak about the existence of an independent cultural scene in BH. The only thing we can say with certainty is that there are a few oases, small islands of independent culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina. That, at any rate, does not make up a scene. We can justify this situation with the inade-

quacy, above all, of human resources, because the whole story rests on the shoulders of just a few people, who are trying to cover various areas of work and in doing so exhaust their own capacities. In that kind of situation it is difficult to create a clear strategy and concept of the development of independent culture.

Foggy perspective: regional cooperation

BH is burdened with political and economic problems. The heavy inheritance of war never let up, the country is sinking more and more into division, the largest BH cities live in a completely different reality and in many things the situation in BH can be described as running in place, if not even taking a step backwards. These problems affect also the development of independent culture. The question is: who in BH cares about culture at all, apart from cultural workers and activists? Any kind of engagement in culture, here today, we can call a Sisyphustic task. In the given circumstances, sometimes engagement in culture seems completely pointless. On the other hand, as much as it sounds fatalistic or pathetic, it is difficult to ignore the dark everyday Bosnian-Herzegovinian reality. In this sense, perspectives of independent culture are quite foggy and the one thing which can bring clarity is regional cooperation. This cooperation, above all, can reduce the sense of claustrophobia and feeling of alienation from the rest of the world as well as giving new purpose to the toils of the BH cultural activist, as all post-war enthusiasm has been exhausted in the labor of creating some sort of platform on which the future scene can be built. Regional cooperation will take shape just in the next year. One of the reasons is of course the programs of foreign foundations (ECF, the Swiss Fund for Culture, etc.), which want to sponsor networking as well as exchange and cooperation between actors of the independent scene in the region. Till now the possibilities have been talked over and all current initiatives of this sort we can now describe as field research. The opinion itself that in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in spite of all the abovementioned difficulties, exists a useable potential for establishing quality cultural exchange and cooperation. The concrete projects are still in conception. With intelligent regional networking and a clear strategy the possibilities are infinite. *(Above all, it is important to avoid megalomania inspired by beginners enthusiasm as actors, and to create the network and develop the program step by step, with some logical order, that the potential and enthusiasm will not be exhausted in the very conception and as well at the end, that it would not come to the point where only a few people bear the whole burden.)* It remains for us to see what will come to bear from all of this.



Marko Tomaš was born in Ljubljana in 1978. He is one of the founders and editors of the Kolaps magazine, as well as titles published in Kolaps edition. He published in newspapers and magazines such as: BH Dani, Glas Istre, Feral Tribune. Currently works as a journalist for news portal zurnal.info. His writings, poetry and fiction were published in various periodicals in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia. His poems are published in Italian, Polish, German and English. He lived and worked in Sarajevo, Zagreb and Split. Currently lives in Mostar, and works as a spokesperson and a manager for OKC Abrašević.

Appendix: The story of OKC Abrašević

On the local level, we find a brilliant example of networking and cooperation in the roots of Mostar's OKC Abrašević, which began as an association of organizations and informal art groups. Ten years after the first initiatives to obtain an autonomous cultural space for youth, OKC Abrašević grew to be a cultural center with great potential. From the days when it was a squat in the ruins of the former Workers Cultural-Artistic Society (RKUD) Abrašević till today, it created a crowd of different platforms which find their home in Abrašević. A part of the building is renovated and used as a multi-purpose hall.

Today, Abrašević organizes regular monthly musical, literary, dramatic, film and contemporary art programming. A media center was established in which an internet radio station and news portal are active. Independent video production is in its founding phase. Art production AbArt, after the program "Art in Divided Cities", continues to develop other artistic programs connected, for now with urbanism as a form through which to view the social content in everyday life.

However, for all of this to materialize, it took many years of engagement, dependent mostly on the enthusiasm of Mostar's cultural activists. It was also necessary to be politically engaged and to organize pressure on the local government in order that the space of RKUD Abrašević be ceded to the association of NGOs and informal groups. In the political segment, institutions of the international community of BH played a major role, above all the Office of the High Representative and the French, American, Spanish and Germany embassies.

In the moment of its founding, OKC Abrašević was composed of the groups ŠkartArt Mostar, Alternative Institute, Mladi Most, a number of young artists and cultural activists and the international association of organizations MIFOC, which was involved in organizing the Mostar Intercultural Festival. Individuals and various organizations from Mostar and from the French cities of Grenoble and Toulouse, Drugi Most and Guernica ADPE, composed the MIFOC association.

Abrašević today represent the only center of its kind in Bosnia-Herzegovina. After 5 years of activities in its own space, Abrašević received a clear outline of what this sort of space should develop into: a place with a strong technical and media infrastructure open to different artists and the initiatives of all young people.

Projekat INDIVIDUALNE UTOPIJE NEKAD I SAD
Centar za savremenu umjetnost / pro.ba, Sarajevo
 The project INDIVIDUAL UTOPIAS NOW AND THEN
 Center for Contemporary Art / pro.ba, Sarajevo
www.pro.ba/utopije

Mediacentar, Sarajevo
www.media.ba

Omladinski kulturni centar ABRAŠEVIĆ, Mostar
 Youth Cultural Center ABRAŠEVIĆ, Mostar
www.okcabrasевич.org

Abraš Media Radio, Mostar
<http://radio.abrasmedia.info>

Abrašević Media centar, Mostar
 Abrašević Media Center, Mostar
www.abrasmedia.info

U.G. Alternativni Institut, Mostar
 Association Alternative Institute Mostar
 Kolaps Production
www.kolaps.org

Festival umjetnosti u podijeljenim gradovima
 Festival of arts in divided cities
www.artindicities.org

UNS GETO
www.myspace.com/unsgeto

Ženevski Dekret
 Geneve Decree
www.myspace.com/genevedecree

SCCA, Centar za savremenu umjetnost, Sarajevo
 SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts, Sarajevo
<http://www.scca.ba/>

Agencija Lokalne Demokratije (LDA), Mostar
 Agency for Local Democracy (LDA), Mostar
<http://www.ldamostar.org/>

Davor Mišković

Living Cultural Policy



Davor Mišković

Living Cultural Po

The most significant change at the turn of the new millennium was not a greater number of events, or new spaces, organisations or programmes, but the change of discourse on these events - the change from alternative to independent culture. This change signifies a change in the perception of one's own production, values and audience. This change was not accidental; it was the result of living the cultural and political discourse.



policy

The most sign
millennium wa
spaces, organi

Izložba "Nacistički teror nad homoseksualcima od 1933-1945" HDLU 2008, Queer Zagreb



nificant change at the turn of
was not a greater number of ev
nisations or programmes, but

- 01** Mišković, D. (2006.) *Nezavisna kulturna scena u Rijeci* in Molekula, Drugo more, Rijeka.
- 02** See Vidović, D. (2007.) *Razvoj hrvatske nezavisne kulturne scene (1990. – 2002.) ili što sve prethodi mreži Clubture u Clubture – Kultura kao proces razmjene 2002 – 2007, Savez udruga Klubtura, Zagreb* and Višnić, E. (2008.) *Kulturne politike odozdo – Nezavisna kultura i nove suradničke prakse u Hrvatskoj, Policies for cultures, Amsterdam/ Bukurešt/Zagreb.*
- 03** McGuigan, J. (2004.) *Rethinking Cultural Policy*, Open University Press, London.
- 04** Foucault, M. (1971./1994.) *Poredak diskursa in Znanje i moć*, Globus, Zagreb.
- 05** Foucault, M. (1976./1994.) *Volja za znanjem in Znanje i moć*, Globus, Zagreb.
- 06** Many actors who were active in Antiratna kampanja Hrvatska (the Anti-War Campaign or ARK) and ATTACK or were based around the Institute Open Society are today still active partakers in the field of independent culture

A

Almost all texts that address the independent cultural scene begin by trying to define what the independent cultural scene is. For example, the aide-mémoire Molekula⁰¹ defines independent culture according to its values (respecting minority rights, ecology standards, evaluating creativity and individualism, supporting models of participation in decision-making), methods of work (co-operation models, interdisciplinary), topics (that reflect the social reality), and according to its relation to time (contemporary social and cultural context). These four elements are the backbone of the programme and discourse of independent culture in Croatia⁰². They demonstrate that independent culture is well situated in the cultural-political discourse, in other words independent culture sees itself as part of the cultural policy.

Because the definition of culture itself is quite ambiguous, cultural policy is a very ambiguous concept as well. Although it often includes policies aimed at the media and communication in general, cultural policy in practice is defined as something we might call artistic policy. This is because its objects belong to the field of aesthetics, affection, taste and symbolic value⁰³. If we accept that discourse defines the space of cultural policy, then we must keep in mind that discourse is defined by inner and outer procedures⁰⁴, which uphold it and which limit the space of cultural policy, just as Wittgenstein's language defines the borders of our world. These procedures reflect the power that is not necessarily found in unique focal points (the Ministry of culture), because institutions and structures do not generate discourse, but a particular situation in our society does. This particular situation is maintained by the power that can often be found in points in the periphery. All imaginable points in the cultural policy area maintain that hierarchy or resist it⁰⁵. In that sense, the field of cultural policy is defined as a classification system within which particular events take place. The meaning of these events is in turn defined according to the status they hold within the system itself. Society relates to this field as a unique area - culture and art - that has its unique rules and laws.

The development of the independent cultural scene today is the result of work and affinities of the actors of the civil society scene⁰⁶ in the 1990s in Zagreb. Their interests decisively influenced the field of work of numerous organizations that constitute the independent cultural scene in the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. These interests include an aesthetic-social fusion of diverse music and art orientations, philosophical and political concepts and forms of action. While the civil society scene

the new
vents, or new
the change of

07 The term new media culture covers new media art, active interaction of social and cultural activities in the contemporary cultural context (contra culture, subculture, networking, inter-sector cooperation) as well as interdisciplinary and intermedia cultural production. The Council for new media culture broadly defined the term in an attempt to cover the activities of the independent cultural scene.

08 The first Act on Cultural Councils in 2001 did not envisage the founding of cultural councils at the level of local self-government. The amendments in 2004 provisioned the founding of Cultural Councils in all cities with a population over 30000. These amendments stirred many controversies. Among the many reasons for them one is important for this text - the amendments provisioned the abolishment of the Council for new media culture, but organized actions on the independent cultural scene managed to prevent this.

of the 1990s developed a resistance to the chauvinist government and affirmation of the values of civil society, the independent cultural scene is engaged in creating conditions for collective action in the cultural field and in the affirmation of an aesthetic dimension that dissolves the nationalist culture that is still a dominating cultural model. The nationalist culture of the 1990s was significantly transformed by the general trivialisation of culture in Croatia. The actual organization of the cultural system put independent culture in a paradoxical situation in which it is at the same time faced with the *ideological government machinery* represented in theatres and museums, and with the neoliberal concept of civil society as a *service* sector. Although the independent cultural scene offers project organisation and private partnership as a model for a cultural system instead of the institutional model, it does not advocate the dismissal of institutions. On the contrary, it calls for the redefinition of the whole organisation of the cultural sector. This redefinition has not yet happened; nevertheless, an area within the cultural sector is open for organisations that are labelled as the independent cultural scene.

The fact that independent culture has found its place in the cultural field of activity has certain consequences. The most important is the fact that institutions and other actors within this field of activity have a certain reference to the activities of independent culture. The activities of these independent culture organisations are perceived on the level of events and not on the principle of classification. This means that they are not perceived in general as a separate category, but as separate events that are classified in relation to the existing system of classification. Independent culture managed to place into this existing system a category that relates primarily to the independent culture itself. This category is the new media culture, also known - mainly in Zagreb, as urban culture. Although the activities of the independent culture were at first mainly related to youth culture, in time they received their legitimacy as a separate field that is not specifically connected to external criteria in relation to culture. The new media culture⁰⁷ is now a field that has its own cultural council⁰⁸ at the Ministry of Culture and in a few cities and municipalities. It also has members in cultural councils of larger cities.

As a separate category within the field of cultural policy new media culture is an interesting phenomenon. Semantically it is tied to media and technology, but as a category it encompasses events that have little to do with (new) media and technology. To exemplify - imagine if in zoology we had a class of bipeds that mostly comprised quadrupeds. The reason for this confusion with the new media culture category lies in the fact that species within


09 Alexander, V. D. (2003.): *Sociology of the Arts – Exploring Fine and Popular Forms*, Blackwell Publishing.

10 There are other possible criteria for the classification of culture. The dominating criteria in the cultural field, as well as in other fields, was for a long time social status - in that sense there once existed royal and popular theatres.

the classification system are above all in relation to one another. The system is the construction that enables us to understand the reality, but it does not reflect that reality. The classification in the field of cultural activities is based on production or reception, in a word, the method of production of cultural events or works, or the way in which we perceive and interpret these works⁰⁹. In the existing system of classification that comprises performing, visual and music arts the starting point is a combination of the above-mentioned criteria. Let's look at visual arts, they are generally defined by reception, but in the next subcategory - painting, sculpture, and graphics - they are defined by the method of production. Therefore the system of classification is based on different criteria that are not necessarily coordinated/synchronized. New media culture is a category created upon these two fundamental criteria - production and reception¹⁰, that dominate the field of cultural activity, and therefore conforms to the general scheme of classification. What will comprise this class specifically is a different problem - a problem of interpretation and elaboration, of associating specific events with a specific class.

Individuals and organizations partaking in the independent culture became prominent actors in the creation of discourse on cultural policy, and are therefore the key reason for the establishment of the new media culture as a class that mainly comprises independent culture. By participating in the production of such a discourse, these individuals and organisations shifted the system in a new direction in which the cultural field of activities encompasses their own activities. Consequently, the values they represent become values of the whole system, which accepts their methods of work and the topics they address as legitimate in the cultural field. Active participation in cultural policy enables active work in the cultural field. If we take into account all the constraints (financial, organisational and professional) that organizations on the independent cultural scene are faced with, their accomplishments are remarkable. This is even more remarkable because they continually participate in maintaining the cultural-political discourse, with special focus on elaboration of contents of the new media culture. They connect specific events (art works, manifestations) and structures (clubs, media, organisation) with the whole scope of cultural activities, and place them in corresponding classes within the existing classification system, although this is not their primary activity. Their activities primarily include the production of programmes and contents.

Affiliation to the cultural field of activities in itself implies equating the status one holds with other cultural activities within the relevant field, although it does not necessarily imply all the



11 The term status has different implications. In this text status is used to refer to the relative position of a particular actor on an accepted scale of social values.

12 Croatian patriotic song, written and composed in 1866 by Ivan Zajc, who was the director and conductor of the Croatian Opera in Zagreb.

benefits such a status would be entitled to. A good example of this can be found in Croatia. Queer Festival Zagreb and the club *Mama* are undoubtedly part of the cultural field, but they do not enjoy the same benefits as some other corresponding actors do. Why? Again, the answer is in the criteria. Specifically, the classification system that dominates the cultural field of activities is not the origin of the social status¹¹ of cultural organisations. As a result we have a classification system which determines what is in the cultural field and how it is incorporated in the cultural field of activities, and yet the system is not the basis for determining social status of actors in culture. Although it seems contradictory, this situation is quite common because the basis for social ranking is the dominant set of values, a common social model. This model determines the value of the entire field of activities, and often directly determines the value of individual actors without regard to the classification system valid for that field. This means that an institution, the Croatian National Theatre for example, can have a very low social status within its field because of poor production, and at the same time have a high social status in the society because it echoes *U boj, u boj* ("To the battle, to the battle")¹² fit in perfectly with the dominant model that encourages national identity.

Social status in Croatia is a remote basis for the organisation of the cultural field of activities which are in turn organised as a civil service. The hierarchical model of organisation of the cultural sector today, implies a bureaucratic system with clearly defined roles for all actors in the system, and people within the system have the status of civil servants. In this hierarchical model the role or function of each actor is crucial, because it relates him to all other actors. For example, in the organisation of the museum system there is a clearly defined field of activity (its structure, contents and the field of research) for each particular museum. These functions are defined based on particular needs. The problem is that the independent culture does not correspond with this hierarchical model, and is not a part of the hierarchical organisation of the cultural field of activity. Although it is not excluded from the system of cultural policy, since the system, besides hierarchy/state, also includes the market and civil society. Looking from an organisational perspective, all models of organisation of social relations can be reduced to two basic models - markets and hierarchies, but Powell introduces a third model - networks. Civil society organisations, from an organisational perspective, are in no way distinct. They are voluntary civic/social organisations, whose members are the owners of the organisation. The normative basis for their business is contracts, they are independent in

13 This independence is the origin of the term independent culture. Contrary to the common view, independent culture is not independent politically or financially. It is independent in its choice or preferences on the contents. This independence is indirectly conditioned (in an absolute sense) by aesthetic, taste and values, unlike the actors within the hierarchies whose role directly conditions their independence.

14 Powell, W. W. (1990./2003.): *Neither Market nor Hierarchy – Network Forms Of Organization* in *The Sociology of Organizations*, Sage Publications.

their choices or preferences¹³, and the form of their activities is repeated transactions. Mostly, they are very flexible. Almost identical features have actors on the market, with two distinct differences. Their means of communication are primarily prices, and the level of commitment among the members of the organisation is low. In civil society organisations the means of communication are routines (as are in hierarchies) and the level of commitment among the members of the organisation is high. The actors in hierarchies have diverse features in relation to networks. The normative basis of their activities is employment relationship, their preferences depend on the whole (hierarchy), and the climate in these organisations is formal and bureaucratic. The level of commitment among the members of the organisation is medium to high¹⁴. Hence organisations are distinct depending on the organisational model of the whole system.

The independent culture mostly comprises associations or art organizations on a voluntary basis. The existing cultural policy




15 Šuvaković, M. (2005.): *Pojmovnik suvremene umjetnosti*, Horetzky, Zagreb.

regulates in different ways different activities within the cultural field - the audiovisual activities are regulated differently from visual and performing arts. These differences are the result of the evaluation of the best model of regulation for particular activities depending on the needs of the citizens and society. The independent culture is self-made, created in the past ten years, although some of those involved have a much longer history. This history is exactly what is crucial for understanding the present status of independent culture. In the past, events that today would be labelled as independent culture would have been labelled as alternative culture. Alternative culture had two sources: the first are art alternatives - art based on critique, subversion, destruction and satirizing dominant art, culture and ideology¹⁵. The second source are political alternatives based on critique and subversion of the dominant political system. The term alternative in its broadest sense signified aesthetic; taste and values that were created in resistance against dominant values, and events were interpreted



in relation to the amount of expressed resistance. Alternative culture had its place in the classification system, but not as a separate class, but as object procedures for maintaining the existing discourse - as something that the dominant discourse excludes or absorbs within the existing classification system. In this sense the term alternative culture is very different from what we today call independent culture, although there are similarities. Alternative culture was much closer to the dominant discourse because it did not question the classification system, but it did question the values upon which the system was based. Alternative culture questioned values, not form. The independent culture, on the contrary, is much more concerned with the form, the system itself. It is also concerned with values - not to the extent of conflict with dominant values, but in creating its own set of values. Alternative culture aimed to change relations within the whole system through resistance; the independent culture makes changes by freeing the area of dominant values and instead creating its own





16 The Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia establishes new Culture Foundation in order to respond to the needs of the independent cultural scene. Its goal is to increase the capacities and ensure quality conditions for the activities of the independent scene. The Foundation is concerned with programmes, not structures.

17 POGON is a cultural institution based on a new model of public-civil partnership. It is co-founded and co-governed by local network of cultural and youth NGOs, The Alliance Operation City, and by the City of Zagreb. It is a hybrid institution, unique in Croatia, and it fall under the hierarchical system of organisation, while maintaining independence in preferences of activities. The institution was founded in 2008, so it is still too early to evaluate their work. But from the outset it was obvious that Pogon will be included in the hierarchies as are other institutions. This was the primary intention of one of the founders - the City of Zagreb. This of course implies that it has to follow hierarchical procedures, regulations and micro-regulations that hold the physical power.

18 Bourdieu, P. (1979./1984.): *Distinction – A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press.

system. Cultural policies had no reason to reorganize the system while the meta-language of cultural events was alternative, because all conflicts occur at the level of ideas. Now, when the meta-language of these same events is independent culture, the reorganization of the system is the primary demand because without it there will be no room for developing ideas.

The most significant change at the turn of the new millennium was not a greater number of events, or new spaces, organisations or programmes, but the change of discourse on these events - the change from alternative to independent culture. This change signifies a change in the perception of one's own production, values and audience. This change was not accidental; it was the result of living the cultural and political discourse. Insights into cultural policy dictated the need to redefine our own activities and demand the establishment of a new class into the cultural policy classification system. Following this line we are now working on status recognition and inclusion in the organisational system of the cultural field. This inclusion is a major challenge for cultural policy because it usually regulates the cultural field of activities through hierarchies and markets. The Ministry of Culture as well as some cities already accepted the specificities of the independent culture by accepting non-programme expenses of particular projects. But this is not enough for the survival of the independent culture. Its organisations are trying to achieve the status of institutions, with all the material benefits this entails, while at the same time trying to maintain their independence. To succeed, it is necessary to introduce new practices into cultural policy - an example would be the new Act on New Culture Foundation¹⁶ and the establishment of POGON – Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth¹⁷.

Social markers¹⁸, that is, the associative set tied to independent culture in society is dependent on a set of factors that can only be changed in the field of cultural policy. The Croatian independent culture is specific in that it has found this space and settled well in it.

Davor Mišković is a cultural operator from Rijeka (Croatia). He works for a non-profit organization *Drugo More (Other Sea)*, where his work ranges from program selection to executive production, including fundraising and PR. He is also working as a researcher of the cultural sector, actively participating in the creation of cultural policies and the management of cultural institutions and networks. A sociologist, currently undertaking PhD studies at the University of Zagreb. He was a lecturer at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in Rijeka, holding courses in cultural management and organization theory. He has worked for the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia for seven years and was a part-time associate in a number of cultural associations, market research agencies, daily papers and magazines.

Savez udruga Klubtura / Mreža Clubture, Zagreb
Clubture Network, Zagreb
www.clubture.org

Savez udruga Operacija Grad, Zagreb
Alliance Operation city, Zagreb
<http://savezacentar.wordpress.com/>

Autonomni centar - ACT, Čakovec
Autonomus center - ACT, Čakovec
<http://actnow.hr>

Art radionica Lazareti - ARL, Dubrovnik
Art workshop Lazareti - ARL, Dubrovnik
<http://www.arl.hr>

Udruga Attack!, Zagreb
Association Attack!, Zagreb
<http://www.attack.hr>

Autonomni kulturni centar Medika, Zagreb
Autonomous cultural center Medika, Zagreb
<http://www.pierottijeva11.org>

Autonomna Tvornica Kulture - ATK, Zagreb
Autonomous Cultural Factory - ATK, Zagreb
<http://www.jedinstvo.hr/pmwiki/pmwiki.php>

Udruga Bacači sjenki, Zagreb
Association Shadowcasters, Zagreb
<http://shadowcasters.blogspot.com>

BADco., Zagreb
BADco., Zagreb
<http://badco.hr>

Centar za dramsku umjetnost - CDU, Zagreb
Center for Drama Arts - CDU, Zagreb
<http://www.cdu.hr/news/index.php>

DeLVe - Institut za trajanje, mjesto i varijable, Zagreb
DeLVe - Institute for duration, places and variables, Zagreb
<http://www.delve.hr>

Domaći - Udruga za kreativni razvoj / Centar za mlade na Gazi, Karlovac
Domaći - Association for creative development / Youth center on Gaza, Karlovac
<http://www.domachi.hr>

Udruga Domino, Zagreb
Association Domino, Zagreb

Queer Zagreb Festival
<http://www.queerzagreb.org>

Perforacije - tjedan izvedbenih umjetnosti
Perforacije - Week of Live Art
<http://www.perforacije.org>

Udruga Drugo More, Rijeka
Association Other Sea, Rijeka
<http://www.drugo-more.hr/wordpress/>

Društveni centar Kino Mosor, Zagreb
Community center Cinema Mosor, Zagreb
<http://kino-mosor.org/>

Udruga Far, Zagreb
Association Far, Zagreb
Amateur Film Revue
<http://www.revijaamaterskogfilma.hr/>

Fantastično Dobra Institucija – FADE iN, Zagreb
Fantastically Good Institution - FADE iN, Zagreb
<http://www.fadein.hr/>

Građanska organizacija za kulturu – Gokul, Zabok
Civil organization for Culture - Gokul, Zabok
Tabor Film Festival
<http://www.taborfilmfestival.com>

JAZZart – Udruga za promicanje jazz glazbe i kulture, Zagreb
JAZZart – Association for Promotion of Jazz Music and Culture, Zagreb
<http://www.jazzart.hr>

Udruga Komikaze, Zagreb
Association Komikaze, Zagreb
<http://www.komikaze.hr/>

Konfuzija – udruga za promicanje audio-vizualnih umjetnosti, Zagreb
Confusion – Association for Promotion of Audio - Visual Arts, Zagreb
<http://www.illectricity.com/>

KONTEJNER | biro suvremene umjetničke prakse, Zagreb
KONTEJNER | bureau of contemporary art praxis, Zagreb
<http://www.kontejner.org>

Kurziv - Platforma za pitanja kulture, medija i društva, Zagreb
Kurziv - Platform for questions of culture, media and society, Zagreb
Portal Kulturpunkt
<http://kulturpunkt.hr>

Udruga K.V.A.R.K., Križevci
Association K.V.A.R.K., Križevci
<http://www.udruga-kvark.hr>

Klub kulture Križevci
Culture Club, Križevci
<http://www.klubkulture.org/>

Udruga za promicanje kulture – Kulturtreger, Zagreb
Association for Promotion of Culture - Kulturtreger, Zagreb
Klub Booksa
Club Booksa
www.booksa.hr

Udruga Labin Art Express, Labin
Association Labin Art Express, Labin
<http://www.lae.hr/>

[BLOK]- Lokalna baza za osvježavanje kulture, Zagreb
[BLOK]- Local Base for Culture Refreshment, Zagreb
<http://www.urbanfestival.hr>

Mala performerska scena, Zagreb
Little Performing Scene, Zagreb
<http://www.cirkus.hr/>

[mi2] - Multimedijalni institut, Zagreb
[mi2] - Multimedia institute, Zagreb
<http://www.mi2.hr>

Nemeza – Udruga za razvoj neprofitnih medija, Zagreb
Nemeza – Association for Development of Non-profit media, Zagreb
<http://www.nemeza.hr>

Platforma 9.81 - Institut za istraživanja u arhitekturi
Platforma 9.81 - Institute for Research in Architecture
P.P. 630, 10000 Zagreb
e: sancanin@platforma981.hr
e: dinko@platforma981.hr

Test! – Teater studentima, Zagreb
Test! – International Festival of Student Theatre & Multimedia, Zagreb
<http://www.test.hr/>

Udruga Restart, Zagreb
Association Restart, Zagreb
<http://www.restarted.hr/>

Udruga Filmaktiv, Rijeka
Association Filmaktiv, Rijeka
<http://www.filmaktiv.org/>

Udruga Spirit, Rijeka
Association Spirit, Rijeka
<http://www.spirit-ri.hr/>

Udruga Metamedij, Pula
Association Metamedij, Pula
<http://metamedia.hr/>

Mladi:Akcija:Kultura - Udruga za promicanje kultura i prava mladih, Varaždin
Youth:Action:Culture – Association for Promotion of Youth Rights and Culture, Varaždin
<http://mladiakcijakultura.hr/>

Udruga mladih Orlando, Dubrovnik
Youth Association Orlando, Dubrovnik
<http://www.klub-orlando.com/>

Udruga Monte Paradiso, Pula
Association Monte Paradiso, Pula
<http://www.myspace.com/monteparadisopula>

Udruga Otopotom, Zagreb
Association Otopotom, Zagreb
Bogišićeva 18, 10000 Zagreb
e: slave.lukarov@gmail.com

Prostor rodne i medijske kulture - K-Zona, Zagreb
Space for Gender and Media Culture -- K-Zona, Zagreb
<http://www.voxfeminae.net/>

Udruženje za razvoj kulture - URK, Zagreb
Association for Culture Development - URK, Zagreb
Klub Močvara
Club Mochvara
<http://mochvara.hr/>

Zagrebački centar za nezavisnu kulturu i mlade - Pogon, Zagreb
Center for Independent Culture and Youth - Pogon
<http://www.upogoni.org>

Studio Artless, Zagreb
<http://www.studio-artless.hr/>

Studio za suvremeni ples, Zagreb
Studio – Contemporary Dance Company
<http://www.ssp.hr/>

Udruga UKE - Urbana kultura i edukacija, Križevci
Association UKE – Urban Culture and Education, Križevci
<http://www.uke.hr/>

Što, kako i za koga - WHW, Zagreb
What, how and for Whom - WHW, Zagreb
<http://www.whw.hr/>

Plesni centar Tala, Zagreb
Centre for Dance Tala, Zagreb
<http://www.tala.hr/>

Udruga Zadar snova, Zadar
Association Zadar snova, Zadar
<http://www.zadarsnova.hr/>

Udruga Krlja ustvari, Zagreb
Association Krlja ustvari, Zagreb
<http://www.ususur.org/>

Udruga Manifest, Zagreb
Association Manifest, Zagreb
<http://manifest.blog.hr>

Udruga za promicanje kulture i umjetnosti - Kurs, Split
Association for Promotion of Culture and Arts - Kurs, Split
<http://www.kurs.hr>

Udruga Katapult, Rijeka
Association Katapult, Rijeka
<http://www.katapult.com.hr>

Udruga mladih Poluga, Karlovac
Youth Association Poluga, Karlovac
<http://poluga.hr>

Vrbovečka udruga mladih, Vrbovec
Youth Association, Vrbovec
<http://www.vum.hr>

Dani otvorenog performancea u Splitu - Dopust
Days of Open Performance in Split - Dopust
<http://dopust.blogspot.com/>





International Working Group
 No. 1

WORKSHOP

1. THE WORKING GROUP

2. THE WORKING GROUP

3. THE WORKING GROUP

4. THE WORKING GROUP

5. THE WORKING GROUP

6. THE WORKING GROUP

7. THE WORKING GROUP

8. THE WORKING GROUP

9. THE WORKING GROUP

10. THE WORKING GROUP

11. THE WORKING GROUP

12. THE WORKING GROUP

13. THE WORKING GROUP

14. THE WORKING GROUP

15. THE WORKING GROUP

16. THE WORKING GROUP

17. THE WORKING GROUP

18. THE WORKING GROUP

19. THE WORKING GROUP

20. THE WORKING GROUP

21. THE WORKING GROUP

22. THE WORKING GROUP

23. THE WORKING GROUP

24. THE WORKING GROUP

25. THE WORKING GROUP

26. THE WORKING GROUP

27. THE WORKING GROUP

28. THE WORKING GROUP

29. THE WORKING GROUP

30. THE WORKING GROUP

31. THE WORKING GROUP

32. THE WORKING GROUP

33. THE WORKING GROUP

34. THE WORKING GROUP

35. THE WORKING GROUP

36. THE WORKING GROUP

37. THE WORKING GROUP

38. THE WORKING GROUP

39. THE WORKING GROUP

40. THE WORKING GROUP

41. THE WORKING GROUP

42. THE WORKING GROUP

43. THE WORKING GROUP

44. THE WORKING GROUP

45. THE WORKING GROUP

46. THE WORKING GROUP

47. THE WORKING GROUP

48. THE WORKING GROUP

49. THE WORKING GROUP

50. THE WORKING GROUP

51. THE WORKING GROUP

52. THE WORKING GROUP

53. THE WORKING GROUP

54. THE WORKING GROUP

55. THE WORKING GROUP

56. THE WORKING GROUP

57. THE WORKING GROUP

58. THE WORKING GROUP

59. THE WORKING GROUP

60. THE WORKING GROUP

61. THE WORKING GROUP

62. THE WORKING GROUP

63. THE WORKING GROUP

64. THE WORKING GROUP

65. THE WORKING GROUP

66. THE WORKING GROUP

67. THE WORKING GROUP

68. THE WORKING GROUP

69. THE WORKING GROUP

70. THE WORKING GROUP

71. THE WORKING GROUP

72. THE WORKING GROUP

73. THE WORKING GROUP

74. THE WORKING GROUP

75. THE WORKING GROUP

76. THE WORKING GROUP

77. THE WORKING GROUP

78. THE WORKING GROUP

79. THE WORKING GROUP

80. THE WORKING GROUP

81. THE WORKING GROUP

82. THE WORKING GROUP

83. THE WORKING GROUP

84. THE WORKING GROUP

85. THE WORKING GROUP

86. THE WORKING GROUP

87. THE WORKING GROUP

88. THE WORKING GROUP

89. THE WORKING GROUP

90. THE WORKING GROUP

91. THE WORKING GROUP

92. THE WORKING GROUP

93. THE WORKING GROUP

94. THE WORKING GROUP

95. THE WORKING GROUP

96. THE WORKING GROUP

97. THE WORKING GROUP

98. THE WORKING GROUP

99. THE WORKING GROUP

100. THE WORKING GROUP

Flaka Haliti: Als ich ein Kind war, wollte ich Künstlerin werden, installation view, press to exit project space, 2010; photo by Lepa Georgievska
 photo courtesy: press to exit project space.

Iskra Geshoska

Weaving an Invisible Network

What are the capacities of the independent cultural scene? Is there a clearly defined “kingdom” where it could re-examine and take as its own responsibility the development strategies and retrograde disruptions? Does it have a clear strategy? Is there a risk of it falling into the lobotomized position of a victim? Is there a serious partner *vis-à-vis* whom it will place itself in a dialogue, and act? And it is precisely all these questions, dilemmas and notions that make me ask myself, what is the dream of the independent cultural scene, what is its position in the political context within it needs to act?

Iskra Gešoska

Weaving an Invisible Network

01 "I have not art to reckon
my groans: but that
I love thee best, O most
best, believe it. Adieu.
"Thine evermore most
dear lady, whilst
this machine is to him"
Hamlet, William Shake-
speare, Act II.


I'm trying to find the right words to describe, in all its constructiveness, the unrest that is an implication of practicing power in a post-transition country such as Macedonia, but I could not draw a parallel between what the independent cultural scene should signify, and what

Hamlet carries within as a Sign. He is the one who with his tireless and unique has need to ask questions, to investigate and react to what has been observed, established, given; with his knowledge that's behind the fervent and, already, historically banal craving for power, he is actually hiding the powerlessness to realize the longing after some new, multi-layered stability; he points out that revolution is "an illusion of politics" which, in turn, seems real thanks to the illusion of history. But Hamlet, unlike our "princes" and "princesses", knew that in his chest, instead of a heart, there was a machine beating⁰¹, and had no illusion that he could rule without dealing away with the "history of phantoms" and without switching on the vacuum-cleaner, which will take in all ghosts and under whose cloak the facts about the possible downfall of the "rotten kingdom" are hidden. Hamlet is able to make a courageous vivisection of the moment and to deconstruct it constructively, making the rot into fertile soil for a brave reform. He is not afraid to die. To perish. Because he knows that his death is actually called – a birth – by dying he gives birth to conscientiousness and responsibility towards life, towards the political, collective and individual interaction with the reality of the "kingdom".

Contradictions and significance

The significance of the independent cultural scene is complex, and, in a sense, contradictory. Therefore, in countries like Macedonia, it will surely become either just an object of important historical and theoretical discussions, or will assume certain semantic position which needs to produce some significant, critical values. The visibility and importance of this process in Macedonia is in the very inception, and it takes place without a strategically established dynamics, although organized groups, individuals, non-governmental organizations, associations, throughout the period between 1993 and today, are trying to practice self-organized format and formations of action and transform the readings of culture. It is not about a complete change of contents, but a certain impulsive reactive restructuring of models and practices of culture as a political discourse. When we use the linguistic composite "independent cultural scene", in the social, political and discursive

ble



sive cultural context in which Macedonia is tossing and turning in the past 19 years of independence, we can say that it is still more of a theoretical construct, then a real political and social factor.

A sketch of a landscape

One of the key traps that is slyly lingering in independent Macedonia is the monopolization, not only of political and economic resources, but of the cultural ones, as well. This presupposes closing of culture, its getoization and elitization. The public cultural space is considered a luxury, escapism, state monopoly or an area just for the privileged, an expression of someone's class awareness or a product of cultural industries only. We are witnesses of a strong centralization, whereby the Ministry of Culture is assuming the role of the main arbiter and financier. There is no real decentralization of power and distribution of funds. The independent cultural scene is not treated in any layer of the administrative corpus, as a core in which it should be invested and established a strategic partnership.

In our country, art and culture increasingly become just a means of manipulation in the dirty political games of the even dirtier competing teams in politics. We found ourselves in the jaws of the political hunger for narcissism and robbery. With the false manners and tastelessness of thought, we acquired acceleration in the spot, acting out scenarios already played, images that reproduce the lethal indifference not only of the concrete protagonist and authors of speeches, but also of the consumers. The state, the heritage, the fatherland do not exist in themselves and by themselves. The collective narrative is composed of fractals of individual, small stories. Having this in mind, I think that Macedonia became a country of exceptional semantic layers, which in a way confusedly, but also pragmatically is searching for its reference points, persistently practicing the mentality of discord and disunion. An exciting, but exhausting journey. Our history indicates that the State is a symbolic practice, and not only societal heritage. This is something that we in Macedonia know very well, through centuries. And it precisely what keeps us in constant friction, tension and fight. The key question for me is how in this all-encompassing sclerosis and amnesia of transition society, one could establish and practice "anarchic responsibility" towards what we chose to be our own identity.

The key feature of the culture in Macedonia is its heterogeneity by national, ethnic grounds, but also by artistic, ideological position. It is precisely where the independent cultural scene must have the responsible role of semantic opening, especially when it comes to a multi-cultural society. Therefore, it must never be a fixed identity. It must be a factory that will constantly produce new meanings, signs and values, and which will constantly re-examine and redefine the existing ones. It is expected to create a political legitimacy of the broader community, and not only of the dominant narrative of the ruling group. The independent cultural scene is a text woven of diverse threads. That text depicts various histories. Terry Eagleton⁰² suggests that it might be best to select such different “grapevine” well and courageously, to classify them, to assess responsibly what is worthy, and which cane is rotten and to never merge them into some large narration, valid for all. What is expected inside the scene and within the need of the context, is to create its own models of communication, own models of socialization of the creative workforce.


In Macedonia, the forms of independent action and association are generally questionable. The freedom and sovereignty can be a bit more than the effort to be together. The key dilemma in the attempts for cooperation, association, united solidary action of the actors of independent cultural scene, which is fragmented and inconsistent around its aims and models of action, is whether we need an organic unity or strategic partnership. The experiences thus far brought about a phobia from any type of consolidation. That can be justified, too – because the most powerful model of joint action is, it seems, the party one, which is, at the same time, a paradigm for totalitarian and authoritarian narration. This model is reflected from the top to the bottom. In circumstances of decorative, but not functional visibility of the independent cultural scene, we can conclude that there is a vast empty space in which its actors should maneuver in order to become a societal relevant political factor.

One of the greatest burdens for the independent cultural scene is that, instead of being operational, it must in addition deal with demystification and critique of the dominant political discourse. In addition to production, among its priorities it must place the creation of cultural policies that will raise awareness of some different cultural practices.

The organizations that act in the space of independent engagement in society and culture, which are not many, have a really complex task. In addition to everyone developing the specifics of







their interests, the actors of the independent cultural scene have the mission to deal with and to provide a broader acceptable environment for action. The independent cores in the area of culture are those who have, over the past years, created narratives through which the urban phenomena are “read”, the phenomenon of culture understood as a channel through which the new living dialogue-conducive communication values of the society are processed, and through which cultural needs are developed. The actors who tried to act through the formation called Independent Cultural Scene have promoted culture as dynamic, heterogeneous, changeable something that does not exist as an isolated area, isolated in terms of the dynamics of the societal, psychological, economic, emotional and imaginative/imaginary life of people. They are trying to react to the thing of the moment, to follow the events, processes, to react to various societal themes, to point out that homogenization, standardization and unification of culture are impossible.

Despite almost complete negation (of course, not by the audience, but by the centers of power), it was shown that the independent cultural scene, non-networked, with a small capacity for mutual cooperation, made primarily of individuals with vision and enthusiasm, is not only an utopian escapist immanency of some groups and citizens. On the contrary, it becomes more certain that it is much more than a dream, it is something that constantly and quietly starts a new battle whenever there is a sense of betrayal of the previous battle. What is under the common denominator “independent cultural scene”, including its immanent civil-society sign, might be one of the rare societal formations that explicitly stand against the invasion of neo-liberalism – of course, not negating it as “modus vivendi”, but redefining its prefixes.

Questions

What are the capacities of the independent cultural scene? Is there a clearly defined “kingdom” where it could re-examine and take as its own responsibility the development strategies and retrograde disruptions? Does it have a clear strategy? Is there a risk of it falling into the lobotomized position of a victim? Is there a serious partner *vis-à-vis* whom it will place itself in a dialogue, and act? And it is precisely all these questions, dilemmas and notions that make me ask myself, what is the dream of the independent cultural scene, what is its position in the political context within it needs to act? What is important is the moment of refraction within a given order, when the old directions of thinking are disrupted,

when the old constellations lose their meaning, and the elements, old and new, are organized around different themes and premises. And what are those themes and premises? Within the current social and political changes, the independent cultural scene must significantly change the nature of asking questions, and the nature of formats in which those questions are asked, as well as the way in which they could be answered appropriately. And I think that in Macedonia, where the “actions” take place on the margins of the social relevance, where no center of power is thinking, or at least not formally, the future life of independent initiatives are on the back of ten or so organizations who are constantly vigilant/watchful regarding the hierarchy of themes, “genres” and forms of social expression, and in small doses, but it seems properly, articulate the urge for “utopian”, experimental, intermedial, excess. Especially in the past ten years, the independent cultural scene contributed towards the development of a critical social climate. It was the firestarter that opened very important issues, not only regarding culture, but also beyond, regarding the public space, and helped in processes of clarifying social, political and cultural phenomena and directions of development. The actions of independent cultural scene must make themselves relevant, so that through them there could be narratives created, to give different interpretations of the social phenomena and circumstances.

Influences

It is clear that the consolidation of the independent cultural scene and articulation of the needs and strategic objectives of the collective are necessary and urgent. Additional self-organization is needed for that. But what is important is also the experience of the others. The analysis of the models are already promoted, but the practices, at the level of content and form of action, are also important. It means that what we need is the insight and the perspective of the others, in which we will reflect our own, true colours and measures of action, appropriate for the space and time. What we need are communication codes in which we will recognize the acceptable systems of constructive action. The opportunity for such reflections is given through the opening of various programmes for cooperation and support, by the Western-European reception and, primarily, through the strong regional closeness and connections. Are these chances used, and how? Insufficiently. Unfortunately, we are slow learners, slow to accept and even slower to adapt. Still, regional cooperation is the key to the birth of the “own model”.



Iskra Geshoska is executive director of NGO Kontrapunkt (Cultural center Tochka). She has been working in the field of cultural policy since 1999, especially concerning the issue of independent cultural scene. She was consultant in the Ministry of Culture of Macedonia in the period of 2002-2006. She is publishing essays and theoretical overviews concerning cultural studies and performing arts. At the moment she is running the three year regional project Deschooling Classroom in partnership with TkH, Belgrade.

Network

In circumstances of decorative, but not also functional visibility of the independent cultural scene, we can conclude that there is a vast empty space in which its actors must maneuver to become a societal relevant political factor.

The independent cultural scene in Macedonia exists like an invisible network, spider web that spreads as a rhizome, through various relations with the society and with its friends. We can say that it is still on the level of symbolic reference point, which in a given space and time is under no-ones ownership, belongs to everyone who wishes to (de)construct it, but it is also our institutional reality. Still, clearly and bravely it is trying to indicate the necessity of epistemological anarchism, of openness, which means deletion of borders between any binary opposition, painting margins of certain different models of action which presuppose a big stake (investment), courage and vigilance. One of the most important traces it will make is, I hope, that it shows some new perspectives in the “reading” of culture. What was happening, fragmentary, incidental, but powerful within the frameworks of the independent initiatives, managed to save the context from carnivalisation and devastation. The independent cultural scene is the segment of society which should play the role of Hamlet on the political scene.

Локомотива – центар за нови иницијативи во уметноста и културата, Скопје
Lokomotiva - Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture, Skopje
www.lokomotiva.org.mk

Line Initiative and Movement, Skopje
www.l-i-n-e.org

Press to exit project space, Skopje
web: www.prestoexit.org.mk

Установа Центар за современи уметности Скопје
Contemporary Art Center Skopje
www.scca.org.mk

Stotrojka - Zdruzenie na grajani za kulturna inicijativa, Skopje
Channel 103 Association of citizens for culture, Skopje
www.kanal103.com.mk

Формација за развој на иницијативи во културата Ф. Р. И. К., Скопје
Cultural Initiatives Development Formation F.R.I.K., Skopje
www.frik.mk

Уметничка установа, Културен центар Медиа Артеc, Охрид
Artists' Association Cultural Centre Media Artes, Ohrid
<http://www.mediaartes.info>

АКТО Фестивал за современа уметност
AKTO Festival for contemporary arts
www.aktofestival.com

Forum Skopje
www.forumskopje.com

Здружение на граѓани Јунона, Скопје
Association of citizens Junona, Skopje
www.culture.in.mk,
www.culture.org.mk

Здружение на граѓани Плоштад слобода, Скопје
Association of citizens Freedom Square, Skopje
www.plostadsloboda.org

Центар За Драмски Уметности Т-Хаус (Културен Центар Цк), Скопје
Center For Drama Arts T-House (Cultural Center CK), Skopje
www.odathouse.org.mk

Center for Balkan Cooperation LOJA, Tetovo
Ilinden 18 A, 1200 Tetovo, Republic of Macedonia
Phone: +389 (0) 44 352 970 +389 (0) 44 352 970
Fax: +389 (0) 44 351 971

Центар за изведувачки уметности Мултимедија, Скопје
Performing Arts Center MULTIMEDIA, Skopje
www.multimedia.org.mk

Младински културен центар, Битола
Youth Cultural Centre, Bitola
www.mkcbt.org.mk

Buden Teatar
Naroden front 25 / 63
1000 Skopje, Macedonia

Здружение на граѓани Контрапункт (Културен центар Точка), Скопје
Association of citizens Kontrapunkt (Cultural Center Tochka), Skopje
www.kontrapunkt-mk.org
www.ngo-kontrapunkt.blogspot.com





Time for a new state.
Some say you can find happiness there

Katja Praznik

At the Crossroads of the Slovenian Independent Cultural Scene

The independent scene will have to reach a consensus and agree on a coordinated operation, for this will be crucial for the achievement and acknowledgement of the legitimacy of independent art and cultural production in the systemic, financial and legal sense as well as at the level of cultural politics. The independent scene thus certainly confronts the challenge of defining a common vision and mission and the ways of realizing them.

Katja Praznik

At the Crossroads Slovenian Independent Cultural Scene

01 In the text, I shall alternately and synonymously use the following terms: independent cultural scene; independent art production; non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the field of art and culture; and non-governmental sector.

02 Eda Čufer, "Naša stvar [Our Cause]", in: *Sodobne sceneke umetnosti [Contemporary Performing Arts]*, Bojana Kunst, Petra Pogorevc (ed.), Maska Ljubljana (Transformacije series, Ljubljana 2006, pp. 18–35, p. 32.)

03 Vesna Čopič, "Talitev zamrznjenega. Kulturna politika – 20 let po osamosvojitvi [The Thawing of the Frozen: Cultural Politics – 20 Years after Gaining Independence]", *Sobotna priloga, Delo*, 13 February 2010, pp. 18–19, p. 18.

The independent cultural scene⁰¹ in Slovenia today is a sort of unusual, but above all heterogeneous, ensemble of organisations and people that can be described by a few general characteristics.

One thing is certain, those who are responsible for and create our national cultural policies underestimate the role and significance of the independent art production and culture, the non-governmental sector in this field, which is why they consequently invest too little in its development and systematisation. Or, as Eda Čufer wrote, "in the local framework, the independent cultural production is today pushed aside and considered to be a *reservation* of weirdoes without much serious influence on the goings-on in society, while it is not institutionally or professionally equipped in any way suitable to become more seriously established in the European and world framework⁰²." On the one hand, the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals working in this sector are the generators of contemporary trends in Slovenian art and culture, the bearers of the recognizability of Slovenian art production on the international scene, and the bearers of critical reflection and theoretical discourse on contemporary art. This sector typically includes smaller, flexible organisations, which are therefore more responsive to current social events. On the other hand, independent culture also has its "internal" problems. Many of these are doubtlessly connected to its non-formalized systemic position in the framework of cultural politics and to its inappropriate funding due to which the NGOs are constantly threatened by organisational instability. In other words, in Slovenia, NGO management is, as a rule, crisis management. As Vesna Čopič explains, "the reproduction of rights and positions has necessarily contributed to the fact, that the so-called independent culture remained completely excluded from the regular system of public funding. A whole series of cultural organisations that in the last twenty years succeeded in becoming internationalised, in assuming new production models and acquiring new business knowledge and skills have remained a foreign body in the system. Instead of structural funding that would ensure the survival of structures necessary for any sustainable operation, the programme call has degenerated into multi-project funding⁰³." In addition, NGOs are in a competitive position, since they apply for the same funds within an unsuitable systemic framework. This is why a distrust in joint initiatives predominates in this sector, while interconnection is weak. What is especially characteristic of the Slovenian scene is that partnerships between organizations are the exception rather than the rule, especially at the national level.

s of the
ndent

04 Vesna Čopič, "Talitev zamrznjenega. Kulturna politika – 20 let po osamosvojitvi [The Thawing of the Frozen: Cultural Politics – 20 Years after Gaining Independence]", *Sobotna priloga, Delo*, 13 February 2010, pp. 18–19, p. 19.

05 Ibid., p. 34.

06 Katarina Pejović, "New Structures of Curiosity: A Conversation with Dragan Klaić", <http://www.bifc-hub.eu/interview/intervju-1> (17 August 2010).

Independent culture on the margins of cultural policies

The second problem, related to the fact that art production is for the most part financed through the calls by the Ministry of Culture, is the centralization of production, which is concentrated in Ljubljana, whereas the periphery remains less developed. In Ljubljana, the NGOs also get financial support from the City of Ljubljana, whereas other municipalities in Slovenia earmark substantially less funds for independent art production. Most of the municipal budget is earmarked for municipal public institutions as being the ones ensuring the implementation of the public interest in culture, while the NGOs are more of a fifth wheel and are not strategically included in the development of the cultural landscape at the local level. As Vesna Čopič notes, "the misfortune of culture lies also in the reform of local self-government. The appetites of the local big shots and the politically abused polarisation of Slovenia between the urban and the rural have led to an atomisation into 210 municipalities, more than half of which are materially and operationally incompetent to provide their inhabitants public services. Municipalities as such can also be a danger to culture and cannot represent an opportunity⁰⁴." The cultural policy and decision makers and the actors on the independent scene thus still have an antagonistic relationship, although in some areas this situation is gradually improving. Thus last year, a special working group for the systemic regulation of the position of NGOs in culture was founded at the national level. It was initiated by the Asociacija Association upon their strong protest against the publication of one of the calls for multi-year programmes in art production. This working group represents the entrance point for establishing a constructive dialogue between the policy and decision makers and the actors on the independent scene. A similar body was also re-established for the City of Ljubljana. Nevertheless, the key problem is still the fact that "Slovenia's cultural politics has not reformed its own vertical system, that is, the general ideological parameters and the rules of the game *from above* that would determine the criteria of evaluating particularities and thus enable the establishment of new cultural dynamics in horizontal systems *from below*⁰⁵." Dragan Klaić, a connoisseur of cultural policies and theoretician, has also noticed this trend: "In general, in the Balkans as well as in all Eastern and Central European post-Communist countries, there has not been a major, radical, thorough, systematic overhaul of cultural systems and policies – which means that all changes have by and large been cosmetic in nature⁰⁶."

With an exceptional increase in the cultural output and the number of NGOs working on contemporary art production, a certain lack of knowledge is becoming increasingly more evident in

07 Ibid.

08 Vesna Čopič, "Talitev zamrznjenega. Kulturna politika – 20 let po osamosvojitvi [The Thawing of the Frozen: Cultural Politics – 20 Years after Gaining Independence]", *Sobotna priloga, Delo*, 13 February 2010, pp. 18–19, p. 18.

the non-governmental sector (as well as in the public cultural institutions) – for example, in the fields of developing new audiences, public relations, marketing, fundraising, human resources management, etc. These deficiencies are partly alleviated by occasional workshops, but it is clear that a cultural management study programme is seriously needed in Slovenia. The internal problems of the independent scene lie also, as Klaić emphasizes, in not all NGOs having the same integrity: "There is some kind of built-in opportunism in the world of NGOs that comes from their own fragility and limitations of functioning in their own context. And there is a great deal of dependence on a very small number of steady and re-occurring funders. That is why cultural NGOs are often acting as clients rather than as autonomous protagonists or cultural actors. Within many of these NGOs, their own governance issues have not been articulated. Also, many of them have been created by strong individuals who continue to run them, making them more of a private turf than a civic factor⁰⁷."

Transnational perspective

If we look at the matter from an affirmative perspective, the NGOs in the field of art and culture are the ones that actually produce innovations, are in general exceptionally active and propulsive and to a large extent establish a critical stance towards contemporary social reality. In view of the network of international contacts and collaborations, they represent Slovenian contemporary art in the international contexts, especially the European one. The key problem is that the independent scene constantly fights for a different model of cultural and art production, especially in relation to the public cultural institutions, which have not been restructured or updated ever since Slovenia gained its independence and have therefore remained at the level of conservative bourgeois frameworks and are, as regards cultural politics, often still bound to the concept of preserving national identity. "Despite Slovenia's independence and the introduction of democracy, the public networks in the field of theatre, museums, galleries, etc., have remained untouched or even *untouchable*. /.../ Cultural institutions have remained at the level of the provincial institution as conceived in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and tolerated in Yugoslavia⁰⁸."

Even though the independent scene is ideologically heterogeneous, one can still sense in it a transnational universalistic perspective in which art and culture do not function as machines for affirming national identity and nationhood, but are understood as a transversal crossing various social fields and geopolitical contexts. The characteristic of independent art production and cul-





Maja Delak, Expensive Darlings, EMANAT 2007, photo by Nada Žgank

09 Primož Kozak, *Peter Klepec v Ameriki* [Peter Klepec in America], Mladinska Knjiga, Ljubljana 2006, p. 9.

10 Eda Čufer, "Naša stvar [Our Cause]", in: *Sodobne scenske umetnosti [Contemporary Performing Arts]*, Bojana Kunst, Petra Pogorevc (ed.), Maska Ljubljana (Transformacije series, Ljubljana 2006, pp. 18–35, p. 33.)


ture ever since its historical conception has been a struggle to free itself from nationalistic, nationhood-affirming elements and an endeavour to establish different models of production in art and culture.

In the beginning was the word

The difficulty that the independent art production in Slovenia has been facing since its very beginnings originates in the fact that Slovenian nationhood and national identity had been established through culture even before the existence of the state and the nation. This is why Slovenian culture has traditionally been closely connected to politics although it has always been in an antagonistic relationship with it. This is something that an important Slovenian intellectual and cultural worker, Primož Kozak, had already observed in 1971 while attempting to ascertain why there had always been a struggle between culture and politics in Slovenia. Regardless of social changes, industrialization and the rise in the standard of living, Kozak ascertained that Slovenians "nevertheless remain Slovenians, that is, a national community without a real governance and therefore political tradition, a nation formed by cultural consciousness and maintained by the awareness of culturality that swears by its prophets. In the beginning was the word⁰⁹." It is precisely the Slovenian word as the foundation of the nation and its existence that has remained the always-revered idol that often curbs different artistic expressions or concepts that go over and beyond nationalistic trends or art practices bound to language. Thus, "the basic conceptual problem of Slovenians in the 21st century" still remains the "redefinition of their identity"¹⁰, says Eda Čufer. And it indeed seems that the fundamental problem of the culture which we today call independent is precisely that it embraces universalism; that is, that it wants to articulate local subjectivities and include them in transnational registers.

When we come to the question of independent culture and its beginnings, there are – in view of the fact that this scene never systematically and structurally took care of its own history – probably a few possible beginnings. The first could be found in the time before WWII, when there emerged the avant-garde movements (Avgust Černigoj, Katja and Ferdo Delak, Anton Podbevšek) whose ideological position was established in resistance towards the (pet-it) bourgeois tradition as well as conservative nationalistic and clerical ideologies. This avant-garde was brutally rejected, although the nerves and the core of these ideas still exist today. In its absolutely utopian demand for autonomy, regarding both its politicalness and its aesthetics, it remains a concept that is diffi-

cult to stomach for any system, be it the communist, clero-conservative or the neoliberal, capitalist one. The next trends in independent culture did not reappear until after WWII, which represented a big incision into the European social history, the consequences of which have an effect even today. The 1960s and 70s represent the new beginning of independent culture, or rather the continuation of its establishment, since it emerged partly from the context of the earlier avant-garde ideas and not just from the *Zeitgeist* of the 60s and 70s. There appeared, let us call them, neo-avantgarde currents (OHO, the Celje Alternative, Glej Experimental Theatre, Pekarna, etc.) that set into motion a trend of establishing their own context of expression and the struggle for their own space within the cultural field and society. The next stage of establishing independent culture is related to the 1980s, to the emergence of the concepts of alternative culture (established, among others, by ŠKUC, FV, Laibach, Ana Monro Theatre, Podjetje za proizvodnjo fikcije [Fiction Production Company], Ljubljana Dance Theatre and Ksenija Hribar, and KUD France Prešeren Arts and Culture Association) and the specific forms of institutional critique (NSK, Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre, IRWIN) connected to the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the all-pervading ideas of liberating civil society from the rigid social bonds and the communist and bourgeois elites. The trend continued into the 1990s when a lot of new NGOs were established (to name only a few, EN-KNAP, Bunker, SCCA, Maska, Projekt Atol Institute, Forum Ljubljana, Plesna izba – Maribor Dance Room, Kibla Maribor, AKC Metelkova Autonomous Cultural Centre, Exodos, Kapelica Gallery or K6/4 Institute, City of Women Association for Promotion of Women in Culture, B 51, Druga godba, etc.) and the heterogeneity of ideas that is still characteristic of NGOs today. Some NGOs arose also as a consequence of opening the Slovenian geopolitical space to various colonizing ideas that, in addition to positive, had also their negative effects. I am talking especially about the interventions and the support of various foreign national centres and international foundations that, on the one hand, provided temporary support to the establishing systems of independent culture and NGOs, but on the other hand, contributed to an increasing proliferation of neoliberal trends, which intersected with local provinciality. The effects of globalised proliferation of international art systems and cultural models “in a very short period of time dismantled the relatively democratic organizational, production and ethical structures of the former so-called ‘alternative’ art and culture, developed in the last years of socialism. The international art system that invaded these territories was not the ally this culture of socialist transition hoped to find. Instead, it merely distributed new scenarios and roles, oftentimes alien or even ethically unac-



11 Eda Čufer, "Feelings and Territories: Introduction to Territory 1995, 2006–09", *Maska* (Art, Society and Feelings), nos. 125–126, vol. XXIV, autumn 2009, pp. 14–41.

12 Vesna Čopič, "Talitev zamrznjenega. Kulturna politika – 20 let po osamosvojitvi [The Thawing of the Frozen: Cultural Politics – 20 Years after Gaining Independence]", *Sobotna priloga, Delo*, 13 February 2010, pp. 18–19, p. 18.

ceptable with regards to that culture's previous strategies of democratization and liberalization¹¹."

Cultural politics is still a matter of blind forces and inertia


But, whichever historical impulse we consider to be the real, the first or the most relevant one, cultural practices of independent production have been marked throughout by a struggle for a different model of production as well as a different position of culture in society and for their inclusion in transnational, global frameworks that allow the individualism of a contemporary subject. The recent history of the independent scene has been very rich, of course, since major changes have occurred in this period, first related to Slovenia gaining its independence and the ensuing war in (former) Yugoslavia, and then to Slovenia joining the EU. Regardless of all these changes, the fundamental problem of Slovenian culture remains the absence of cultural politics – cultural politics is still a matter of blind forces and inertia without any serious strategic visions. There are National Programmes for Culture, which gives the impression "that Slovenia has a cultural strategy. But it does not because it – deliberately or by taking the path of least resistance – renounced the setting of priorities, the hierarchy of goals and the determination of indicators that would gauge the efficiency and successfulness of national cultural politics. Such a state implies that the analytic and strategic component of cultural politics is worse than it was in 1989."¹² Consequently, the independent scene and the NGOs in the field of art and culture are also left to blind forces. The 1990s especially were the years of fighting for the domination and the establishment of certain ideas, but also of constant generational conflicts, which in Slovenia are characterised by competitiveness instead of synergy and by the oppression of new, upcoming generations. The ones who got established first were the ones that were – to use a euphemism – flexible, rather than visionary, strategically thinking individuals. In the 1990s' chaos of the disintegration of the former political system and the establishment of a new one, what got tossed aside were to a large extent the model of transnationality and the individualism of people who can exist equally in a society of differently minded subjects. The struggle for the establishment of the independent art production ended, above all, in favour of rigid national(istic) institutions that today mostly drown in irrationalities and are on the edge of functionality. "In short, the public institutes in culture have accepted the fact that they have remained the prisoners of outdated production patterns and a for-

- 13 Vesna Čopič, "Talitev zamrznjenega. Kulturna politika – 20 let po osamosvojitvi [The Thawing of the Frozen: Cultural Politics – 20 Years after Gaining Independence]", *Sobotna priloga, Delo*, 13 February 2010, pp. 18–19, p. 18.
- 14 Katarina Pejović, "New Structures of Curiosity: A Conversation with Dražan Klaić", <http://www.bifc-hub.eu/interview/intervju-1> (17 August 2010).

truss shielding the social rights of the public servants they employ."¹³ Lacking a cultural politics with a vision for contemporaneity, and in view of the abstractly defined common interests and the lack of agreement on the ways to achieve them, the independent scene today has stagnated. The players are poorly interconnected; they join forces only when faced with the worst threat – that is, when the authorities want to cut their funding. The other, perhaps more positive change that has occurred as a result of Slovenia joining the EU, can be seen in the programmes supporting the development of civil society. What is important for the Slovenian context here is that, at the ideological level, European programmes support the development of civil society and the non-governmental sector, which now includes the independent art production and culture as well. As Klaić underlines: "When we talk about European integration, it also means certain standards of operation, transparency, governance and managerial integrity¹⁴." The positive effects of programmes supporting the development of civil society and the non-governmental sector can be seen in the fact that, at the national level, they are funding those organisations that operate by networking horizontally, regionally and according to their field of interest. With a good measure of patience, but especially with clearly defined demands for competent and transparent operation, these European systems help set up the structures that will encourage the NGOs to raise their level of professionalism and competence and to develop a structured dialogue and the channels for the participation in and the co-creation of public cultural policies.

Forming the social context

The problems in establishing a common advocacy platform of independent art and cultural production can perhaps also be seen today in the fact that independent art production and cultural players do not have a unified view on forming the social context. Similarly to the cultural politics, or as its mirror or the mirror of society in general, the independent scene is not yet ready to dialogically and consensually posit clear visions and goals of its development. The formation of the social context, which nevertheless does take place in the non-governmental sector, is therefore not a consequence of worked-out strategies, but is often dependent on financial initiatives and priorities coming from different sources (Ministry of Culture, city municipalities, European Commission, international foundations, etc.). This is why the programmes are very heterogeneous and even sometimes inconsistent on the level of ideas. But, above all, the main way the inde-



15 Vesna Čopič, "Talitev zamrznjenega. Kulturna politika – 20 let po osamosvojitvi [The Thawing of the Frozen: Cultural Politics – 20 Years after Gaining Independence]", *Sobotna priloga, Delo*, 13 February 2010, pp. 18–19, p. 19.

pendent cultural scene takes part in forming the social context in Slovenia is through art production, which only in rare cases intervenes into other spheres and sectors. When it does, it is mostly interested in politics and the people in power, but its ideas about art as politics are quite naive and simple, and they circulate within more or less closed circles and among elites – although this idea about art as politics has in recent years made the scene part of the global trend in political art. The supporters of independent cultural production and the consumers of this production are mostly actors on the scene itself and also to a degree the younger generations as well as a smaller segment of the circle of intellectuals who have for the most part an underestimating attitude towards art and culture or observe them from a cynical distance.

Relations with west and southeast

In view of what has been said, the Slovenian independent scene has a lot in common with the regional context of the former Yugoslavia and the geopolitical context of Eastern Europe; however, the connections with these contexts are at present utilized only partially. The Slovenian scene had a leading role in the production of certain art practices, particularly in the 1980s, with the work of the NSK collective, Pankrti, Borghesija, etc., being especially influential. In the 1990s, with the outbreak of war, numerous constructive connections with the space of the former Yugoslavia were broken and contacts became difficult. The position of the Slovenian independent scene is different, on the one hand, because Slovenia did not experience brutal social upheavals in the form of war and ethnic conflicts, and on the other hand, because it joined the EU relatively early, which strengthened its connections with the Western European space and where numerous partnerships have been established as well due to the funding instruments. Collaborations that have arisen in the last few years and which testify to the trend of reviving the connections among the countries of the former Yugoslavia have been made possible by programmes such as Culture, an Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance, and the support of private foundations, while an interest in collaboration has been inherent all the time and could be seen in individual initiatives in the 1990s as well. Last but not least, it should be mentioned that the Republic of Slovenia (mostly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture) has also invested financial means towards the development of cultural and other collaborations between the countries of the former Yugoslavia. It should by no means be disregarded that Slovenian culture is akin to the South Slavic ones, with which it shares a

Katja Praznik, MA in Sociology of Culture, works as a theorist, writer and dramaturge in the field of arts and culture. Currently, she is managing various projects at *Asociacija, Association of Arts and Culture NGOs and Freelancers* in Ljubljana and is pursuing her PhD “Intellectual Domination: Contemporary Art Between the East and the West”.

common history. At an informal level, there is also an important mixing of cultures at the level of economic migration.

The function of arts and culture in new social reality

If we are optimists, we can conclude that, despite everything, Slovenian art production and culture do have a good outlook in the current social reality, since the global economic crisis provides an opportunity to finally discuss the future of Slovenian social reality and thereby the function art and culture are supposed to play in it. As Vesna Čopič says, “what follows is a shock therapy in which two things can happen. Either culture will become politicised and only the ones that are well connected with the power structures will survive – or the cultural space will nevertheless take a look at its own entrails, relinquish its daily partial interests, forget personal advantages and resentments and finally achieve what it already should have achieved over the last twenty years¹⁵.” For this to happen, the independent scene will have to reach a consensus and agree on a coordinated operation, for this will be crucial for the achievement and acknowledgement of the legitimacy of independent art and cultural production in the systemic, financial and legal sense as well as at the level of cultural politics. The independent scene thus certainly confronts the challenge of defining a common vision and mission and the ways of realizing them. At this moment in Slovenia, certain processes are taking place making it possible for public cultural institutions to reform, but without the equal inclusion of the experiences and visions of independent culture, this initiative will not have a synergetic and broader social effect. If the state system has insisted on a strict division between the public sector and independent culture for fifteen years, then in order to achieve a progressive development, this conflict will have to be resolved, especially by according, legalising and systemically regulating a permanent support for independent culture. In this sense, the Slovenian independent scene is embarking on a similar process that is taking place throughout the lands of the former Yugoslavia and it is precisely at this neuralgic point that connections exist. Such connections can have extremely positive effects since the space of the former Yugoslavia has at its disposal numerous idiosyncratic examples of good practices of interconnection that do not take place the way the decision and policy makers in the EU see them, but have their own political and cultural history that should be kept in mind in this region’s EU accession process. With common initiatives, the independent scenes of the countries of the former Yugoslavia can become an active political actor in forming EU cultural policies since, judging by the trends, the space of the former Yugoslavia can still offer an exceptionally propulsive art production, the production of ideas, that the European context craves.

Asociacija, društvo nevladnih organizacij in samostojnih ustvarjalcev na področju kulture in umetnosti, Ljubljana

Asociacija, Association of Arts and Culture NGOs and Freelancers, Ljubljana
<http://www.asociacija.si>

Glej, Gledališče, Ljubljana

Glej, Theatre, Ljubljana
<http://www.glej.si>

Pekarna magdalenske mreže, Maribor

<http://www.pekarna.org>

Društvo ŠKUC, Ljubljana

Association ŠKUC, Ljubljana
<http://www.skuc.org>

Akadska in raziskovalna mreža Slovenije, Ljubljana

Academic and Research Network of Slovenia, Ljubljana
<http://www2.arnes.si>

Laibach

<http://www.laibach.nsk.si>

Društvo gledališče Ane Moro, Ljubljana

Association Theater Ana Moro, Ljubljana
<http://www.anamonro.org>

Plesni teater Ljubljana

Dance Theatre Ljubljana
<http://pti.si/wsw/>

KUD France Prešern, Ljubljana

Culture and Art Association France Prešern, Ljubljana
http://www.kud.si/index.php/Glavna_stran

NKS State

<http://www.nskstate.com/>

Zavod EN-KNAP, Ljubljana

EN-KNAP Productions, Ljubljana
<http://www.en-knap.com/>

Neprofitni zavod za izvedbo in organizacijo kulturnih prireditev – Bunker, Ljubljana

Non-profit organization for realization and organization of cultural events – Bunker, Ljubljana
<http://www.bunker.si>

SCCA, Zavod za sodobno umetnost, Ljubljana

SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts, Ljubljana
<http://www.scca-ljubljana.si/>

Maska, zavod za založništvo, kulturno in producentsko dejavnost, Ljubljana

Maska, Institute for Publishing, Production and Education, Ljubljana
<http://www.maska.si>

Zavod Projekt Atol, Ljubljana

Association Project Atol, Ljubljana
<http://makrolab.ljudmila.org/atol/>

Forum Ljubljana

<http://www.ljudmila.org/forum/>

Kulturno društvo Plesna izba, Maribor

Cultural Association Maribor Dance Room, Maribor
<http://www.plesnaizba.si/sl/>

Kulturno izobraževalno društvo KIBLA, Maribor

Association for Culture and Education KIBLA, Maribor
<http://www.kibla.org/>

Avtonomni kulturni center Metelkova mesto, Ljubljana

Autonomous Cultural Center Mesto, Ljubljana
http://www.metelkovamesto.org/?lang=txt_eng&

Zavod Exodos, Ljubljana

Exodos Institute, Ljubljana
<http://www.exodos.si/festival/09/>

Zavod K6/4, Ljubljana

Association K6/4, Ljubljana
<http://www.k6-4.org/>

Mesto žensk - Društvo za promocijo žensk v kulturi, Ljubljana

City of Women – Association for the promotion of women in culture, Ljubljana
<http://www.cityofwomen.org/>

Kulturno društvo B-51, Ljubljana

B-51 Cultural Society, Ljubljana
<http://exponto.net>

Zavod za organizacijo in izvedbo kulturnih prireditev Druga Godba, Ljubljana

Association for organization of cultural events Druga Godba, Ljubljana
<http://www.drugagodba.si/>





Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević

Independent Scene in Serbia

It is an unquestionable fact that the strength of Serbian independent cultural initiatives lies in a number of creative and experienced NGO's, independent artistic associations, informal groups and individuals, many of them being organisers and/or participants in a large number of international, regional and local programmes. On the other hand, their weakness is their disunity and self-isolation. The self-isolation is best reflected in the fact that the local independent initiatives are atomized, i.e. most of the organisations act on their own.

Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević

**Independent Scene
Serbia**

Civil sector is a fundamental marker of citizens' real needs and demands a special care. In the domain of culture, actions taken in the civil sector are mainly initiated by younger population, or independent artists and other similar professionals. Its significance lies in its ability to create a space for realisation of creative capacities and make possibilities of improvement and further professional development. Also, the civil/independent sector is usually the first to implement new standards to be eventually adopted by formal institutions.

Development of civil society (in its contemporary sense) in the West Balkans was delayed for a decade or so and the delay is still present, especially in the field of culture.

This region is so burdened with conflicts that it could as well be characterised as the rule of *anxiocracy*, *i.e.* media and political induction of anxiety over everything and everyone. Although such anxiety is not present in the artistic community, which provides a basis for a free cultural activity, the general situation has provoked a number of direct and indirect consequences. In our societies, NGO is still a tag that arouses suspicion and negative connotations. For the general public and politicians, independent sector in culture is perceived as a marginal phenomenon, gathering an insignificant (yet highly demanding) part of the society, whose requests seem rather inappropriate in the time of crisis. Furthermore, independent culture is marginalised even by NGO's operating in other domains, which have mostly developed better interconnections and adapted to the present situation more skilfully.

Today, there are about eighty (both formal and informal) associations dealing with cultural production and promotion in Serbia. They are mainly concentrated in Belgrade (~37%) and Novi Sad (~16%), while the rest are scattered around the rest of the country.

Putting the noticeable crisis (which is due to fatigue and the lack of feedback) aside, there is an interesting fact that NGO representatives still form a vast majority among the participants of international and local conferences, debates and other meetings on culture, use more European funds, they are also much better informed about European cultural trends in culture. They even adopt higher professional standards than their colleagues working in the official framework. Nevertheless, those who make decisions priorities large and inert institutions with indolent staff.

In the turbulent times of Serbian recent history, NGO's in the field of cultural production and promotion were founded in waves. In the early 1990's a couple of still operating groups were formed. Informal cultural groups with clear missions and aims first appeared within performing arts (Mimart www.teatarmimart.org.rs, Dah Theatre www.dahteatarcentar.com, Blue Theatre www.plavopozoriste.com, etc.). During the mid 1990's, these groups (along with other artistic associations) usually performed at CZKD www.czkd.org (Center for Cultural Decontamination) and Cinema Rex www.rex.b92.net, also newly formed independent cultural spaces that served as rare oases of free thought at the time.

During the late 1990's all of the mentioned above formally became NGO's and some of the new names also emerged: CENPI (Centre for New Theatre and Dance), CSUB (Centre for Contemporary Arts - Beograd), CSM (Centre for Youth Creativity), Low-Fi Video, BalkanKult www.balkankult.org, Remont - Independent Artistic Association www.remont.net, (Beograd), Milenijum www.millennium.org.rs (Kragujevac), etc. BalkanKult, Milenijum and Remont apart, none of these NGO's that popped up in the late 90's are operating, since their leading people mostly took over the positions in the official sector, mainly as directors of existing cultural institutions.

Along with the social and political changes in the 2000, there came the third wave of NGO's - Kulturni Front www.cultural-front.net (Cultural Front, currently led by European Center for Culture and Debate GRAD www.gradbeograd.eu), Bura, Punkt, TKH www.tkh-generator.net (Beograd), ART Klinika www.ledart.org.rs, Vojvođanka www.vivisectfest.org (Novi Sad), followed by Kuda.org www.kuda.org, IZBA www.izba.org.rs (Novi Sad), Kolektiv www.kolektiv.org.rs (Šabac), Kwart www.kwart.weebly.com (Kraljevo), Krug (Čačak) in 2001.

The next wave happened in 2005/06, with the foundation of a number of currently influential organisations: Dezorg <http://dezorgbgd.wordpress.com>, Prelom www.prelomkolektiv.org, Biro Beograd www.birobeograd.info, Proart.org www.proartorg.com (Beograd), Napon www.napon.org (Novi Sad), Novi optimizam www.novioptimizam.rs (Zrenjanin).

There are only a few recent initiatives to be mentioned as worthwhile - Novi Radio Beograd www.nrbg.rs (operating as the Internet radio) and Treći Beograd <http://trecibeograd.com> (an independent cultural centre dealing with visual arts). This fact is rather disturbing and points to a significant social fatigue and stagnation. Also, a majority of the existing NGO's avoid restruc-

turing and are not strong enough to enter the contemporary concepts and partnerships, so most of them (especially outside Beograd and Novi Sad) act locally and sporadically.

Types, Importance, Important Projects

Profiles of independent organisations and groups cover almost every field of the creative expression: performing arts (theatre, contemporary dance, artistic performances...), visual arts, publishing, comics, film and video, web portals, debates, organisation of small- and large-scale festivals, music events, educational activities...

There is a significant lack of public awareness of the fact that a large number of important international festivals, multimedia projects, cultural education programmes, surveys and international conferences are initiated and/or organised by the independent sector. For example, Kulturni Front is the initiator/organiser/supporter of: *Refract Festival*, *Cross Radio radio show*, *The Hats Theatre*, *conferences Belgrade Forum* and *A Soul of Europe*, as well as a cult cultural space – *European Center for Culture and Debate GRAD*; Belgrade Yard Sound System is the initiator and organiser of *Dis-Patch Festival* www.dis-patch.com; NKA (Independent Cultural Association) -*Real Presence*; The Night of Museums - *The Night of Museums* www.real-presence.org; Stanica www.dance-station.org maintains *Nomad Dance Academy*; OGI www.ogi.org.rs leads the *Gold Mine Project* (building the capacities for local activists in South-western Serbia) and *Zalet* www.zalet.org - *Zalet Festival* in Zaječar; Seecult - the most important cultural web portal in the region (www.seecult.org); Biro Beograd www.biro-beograd.info - the *2nd Roma Pavilion (Call the Witness)*, accompanying programme of the Venice Biennial 2011...

Variety of cultural programmes, education, capability, mobility, active international communication, planning skills and other positive features of the independent cultural sector are in contrast to the amount of its visibility, presence in media and overall support by the official cultural policy. There are many reasons for this, such as underdevelopment and economic instability of our society, domination of the cultural model oriented towards mass consumption in the form of reality shows and finally – disunity within the independent sector devoted to promotion of a different cultural identity close to the European standards, which disables its potential for a change of its status.



СРБИЈА



Remont galerija /zložba Ivane Smiljanić

Exit Europe / New Geographies of Culture

Situation

The research project **Non-institutional Actors of Cultural Politics in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia** has detected the existence of a lot of problems confronting the independent scene, although some of them proved not to be as acute as presumed. For instance, in the lack of systematic social support many have leaned on their own capacities and organised their basic working conditions, so almost a third of interviewed organisations have their office and public spaces. Some of these spaces are rented, others are obtained through partnership deals with the existing institutions. There are only a few examples of local authorities' support in this instance (e.g. CK-13 – Novi Sad, Maržik – Kraljevo, European Center for Culture and Debate GRAD – Beograd). An example of an unsuccessful attempt can be found in the case of Magacin in Beograd. Beograd City authorities intended this space to be used by cultural NGO's, however it is still used almost exclusively by Dom omladine Beograd (Beograd Youth Centre), a state institution who governs it.

Anyway, the problems are still exists.

Organisations are financially unstable. In Serbia, there are no public contests dedicated to this sector, neither on the republic, nor on local level. The competitions are aimed either at cultural projects in general (including state institutions, NGO's and individuals), or at NGO's in general (disregarding their field of interest). In the latter case, social and ecological projects are of course highly preferred. Absence of strategy and action plan is immanent in the whole field of culture and the budgets available to individual independent cultural projects (disregarding their durations and size) are approximately 5000€ per year. Long term support of cultural NGO sector, which would ensure its stability and improvement of its capacities for larger-scale projects, is out of the focus of those who make decisions.

The majority of important projects are mainly financed through international foundations. At this moment, major donors are developing new strategies and either retreating from this region, or imposing new game rules, which seem to be too hard for our underdeveloped scene to follow. This will have a major impact on small local organisations, whose role in the decentralisation of society is very important. Newly introduced funds (EU and IPA) could diminish the problem if their creators would consider the local situation.

It is an unquestionable fact that **the strength** of Serbian independent cultural initiatives lies in a number of creative and experienced NGO's, independent artistic associations, informal

groups and individuals, many of them being organisers and/or participants in a large number of international, regional and local programmes. On the other hand, **their weakness** is their disunity and self-isolation. The self-isolation is best reflected in the fact that the local independent initiatives are atomized, i.e. most of the organisations act on their own.

The most absurd thing is that the key actors know each other personally, yet rarely collaborate.

A recent example of gathering around common problems took place in Novi Sad. Various artistic and cultural associations, artists, individuals working in the field of culture, independent researchers and representatives of third sector of Novi sad, all highly dissatisfied with being neglected and ignored by the city authorities, gathered around a common platform entitled For Cultural Politics – Politics of Culture (ZKP – www.zakulturnepolitike.net) in June 2009. This consolidation of independent cultural and artistic scene was triggered by an inappropriate statement given by the Mayor of Novi Sad that flattened out and disparaged their work, considering it unimportant for the cultural identity of the city. After intensive activities during the rest of the year, the project slowed down a bit in 2010, yet occasional press conferences are given. Although the problems of transparency of the cultural politics are not solved, according to the results of both Province and City competitions in 2010, the action has been partially successful and significantly larger funds were given to the third sector.

Until now there were no strong initiatives for the improvement of networks and collaborative actions in a wider context. Druga scena (Other scene - www.drugascena.org), initiated in 2006, is a platform gathering some twenty organisations and individuals from Belgrade. However, except for their highly dynamic electronic mailing list and website activities along with sporadic public announcements, they haven't succeeded in making any influence on the position of the independent sector. One of the reasons is that many of the influential organisations from Beograd (Cinema Rex, CZKD, Kulturni Front, Kiosk, Remont, Dah teatar, Anonymous said:, BalkanKult, etc.) are excluded from membership, with no signs of enlarging the members list with Serbian organisations.

What's next?

According to the research, all interviewed (71 of them) expressed the need and will to unite in achieving the common goals.

ГРАЂАНИ ЗРЕЊА



АНИНА СА УМЕТНИЦИМ



The first National Conference of Independent Cultural Initiatives took place in Beograd in late June 2010. The meeting was attended by more than fifty representatives of formal and informal associations, most of them from Serbian provinces. The participants were informed about the preliminary results of the research entitled **Non-institutional Actors of Cultural Politics in Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia**, which are both encouraging and alerting:

- annual production of programmes is between 1200 and 1500;
- independent cultural sector is the most educated one – 72% have a faculty degree and 17% are MA, MSc or PhD;
- 2500 individuals are actively involved in the independent cultural sector in Serbia, 60 of them are employed;
- projects are mostly co-financed by international foundations, along with the Serbian state budget and foundations launched by large corporations, yet the real partnership projects with the business sector are extremely rare;
- most of Serbian organisations and initiatives have partnerships with similar structures in ex-Yugoslav countries.

Analysis of the development of capacities shows that two weakest links are social (contacts with state institutions, business...) and managerial resources, so there is a lot of space for improvement.

Project coordinator Predrag Cvetičanin (OGI/Niš) stated that the liberal period in the development of NGO sector in Serbia is finished and the process of monopolisation has begun. This means that the small organisations are facing extinction. While this direction is positive in the case of political organisations, it is surely dangerous in the case of NGO's, which are intended to be much closer to the citizens. About 15% of interviewed organisations can be marked as „developed“, but the same number is about to disappear.

The participants agreed that there is a need for a common web portal in order to provide a better communication and exchange of programmes. Also, the basic common problems were defined and they served as a basis for the Declaration on the Development of the Independent Sector in Culture.

The draft of the Declaration suggests the reorganisation of state budget lines in cultural sector by dividing the competitions for the independent sector from those aimed at the public institutions, as well as opening separate competitions for the independent sector on the local level. Establishment of separate competitions for a long-term institutional support (2-3 years) on all levels is also suggested. One segment of the Declaration is dedicated to

Darka Radosavljević Vasiljević, art historian, leader of Remont – independent artistic association (www.remont.net) since 1999. She started her career in SKC Beograd (1985) and later became the editor of art section in Beorama magazine (1987-89). From 1990-99 she ran the Sketchbook radio show at the Radio B92. From 1992-99 she worked as the editor of the Radio B92 cultural department. In 1994 she started Cinema REX (founded by B92) and worked as its art director until 1999. She is the author of many cultural projects, curator and art director of several international cultural happenings, *e.g.* October Salon (2005), BELEF (2007).

public competitions for usage of offices and other facilities in the public domain, and a separate segment deals with tax exemptions. The Declaration also covers the topics of media coverage (especially by Radio Television of Serbia, as a national broadcaster) and inclusion of NGO projects in official programmes dedicated to the international promotion of Serbian culture.

The global atmosphere and a lively discussion during the conference raised the hope that the majority in the independent scene realised the importance of individual effort and mutual tolerance in achieving the common goal – a change in working conditions and overall position of this sector. Having in mind the general absence of unified actions until now, the fact that the conference took place can be looked upon as a very important thing in itself.

Teatar Mimart, Beograd
Theater Mimart, Belgrade
www.teatarmimart.org.rs

DAH TEATAR – centar za pozorišna istraživanja, Beograd
DAH Theatre Research Center, Belgrade
www.dahteatarcentar.com

Plavo pozorište – pozorišna laboratorija, Beograd
Theatre Laboratory Plavo pozorište, Belgrade
www.plavopozoriste.com

Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju, Paviljon Veljković, Beograd
Center for Cultural Decontamination, Paviljon Veljković, Belgrade
www.czkd.org

REX kulturni centar, Beograd
REX cultural center, Belgrade
www.rex.b92.net

REMONT – nezavisna umetnička asocijacija, Beograd
Remont - Independent Art Association, Belgrade
www.remont.net

Balkankult fondacija, Beograd
Balkankult foundation, Belgrade
www.balkankult.org

Evropski Centar za Kulturu i Debatu GRAD, Beograd
European Center for Culture and Debate GRAD, Belgrade
www.gradbeograd.eu

TkH: Teorija koja Hoda, Beograd
TkH: Walking Theory, Belgrade
www.tkh-generator.net

ART KLINIKA, Novi Sad
ART CLINIC, Novi Sad
www.ledart.org.rs

Centar za nove medije_kuda.org, Novi Sad
New media center_kuda.org, Novi Sad
www.kuda.org

Umetnička asocijacija DEZ ORG, Beograd
Artist association DEZ ORG, Belgrade
<http://dezorgbgd.wordpress.com>

PRELOM časopis, Beograd
PRELOM magazine, Belgrade
www.prelomkolektiv.org

ProArtOrg (Professional Artists Organization), Belgrade
www.proartorg.com

Napon – Institut za fleksibilne kulture i tehnologije, Novi Sad
Napon – Institute for Flexible Cultures and Technologies, Novi Sad
www.napon.org

Novi radio Beograd
New radio Belgrade
www.nrbg.rs

Treći Beograd – slobodna umetnička zadruga
The Third Belgrade – Free Artistic Cooperative
<http://trecibeograd.com>

Dis-patch Festival of Cutting-edge Music & Related Art, Belgrade
www.dis-patch.com

Real presence – Workshop for emerging generations of artists, Belgrade
www.real-presence.org

Noć Muzeja
Museum Night
www.nocmuzeja.rs

STANICA servis za savremeni ples, Beograd
STANICA service for contemporary dance, Belgrade
www.dancestation.org

Odbor za građansku inicijativu, Niš
Committee for civic initiative, Niš
www.ogi.org.rs

See cult portal za kulturu jugoistočne Evrope, Beograd
See cult portal for Culture in Southeastern Europe, Belgrade
www.seecult.org

Biro za kulturu i komunikaciju, Beograd
Bureau for Culture and Communication, Belgrade
www.birobeograd.info

CK13 omladinski centar, Novi Sad
CK13 youth center, Novi Sad
<http://ck13.org>

Udruženje likovnih umetnika Vladislav Maržik, Kraljevo
Association of Visual Artists Vladislav Maržik,
Kraljevo
www.galerijamarzik.com

Inicijativa Za kulturne politike – politika kulture, Novi Sad
Initiative for Cultural Policies – Politics of Culture,
Novi Sad
www.zakulturnepolitike.net

Druga scena, Beograd
Other Scene, Belgrade
www.drugascena.org

Anonymous said, Beograd
Anonymous said, Belgrade
www.anonymoussaid.org

KIOSK platforma za savremenu umetnost,
Beograd
KIOSK Platform for Contemporary Art, Belgrade
www.kioskngo.org





HRFF: Pravo na grad / photo by Suncica Ostoić

Conversation with
Emina Višnić

The Survival of Culture is a Global Issue, Whose Solution Must Lie in Local Engagement


Emina Višnić is the director of the cultural institution called Pogon - Zagreb Centre for Independent Culture and Youth, jointly founded by the Alliance Operation City and the City of Zagreb. She has been the initiator and an active member of many networking initiatives in the independent cultural scene in Zagreb and beyond. In the period between 2002 and 2009, she managed the Clulture network and its regional programme. She is currently a member of the Clulture network Board. This conversation with Emina Višnić gives us a summary of the development of the regional platform from its beginning until today, with special regard to the existing circumstances and processes in the field of culture, as well as in the wider social field. Both of these are similarly characterised by a tendency towards sweeping neo-liberalisation, as well as by calls from the independent scene demanding the necessary reform interventions within the entire cultural and political system.

Katarina Pavić: **The models of cooperation in the nonprofit cultural field are a precedent-setting example of organising for the whole of Europe, and their development has begun in Zagreb. I would like to know what is the idea that forms the basis for such organising? What kind of scene emerged in this city, and how did it develop the potentials and this kind of functioning in the field of culture?**

Emina Višnić: This is difficult to establish unequivocally, or especially to interpret from a position in which you are part of the process. But what I see as the difference – especially from the perspective of the region and the rest of Europe – the key factor was the existence of the organisation and individuals that formed the nucleus of the entire process. This is essential at the level of rethinking the general state of affairs in the society, and, by consequence, in culture, as well as on the level of conceptualisation, that is, production of the models themselves. Just like in all processes that mark a certain social change, it was based on a wider and more long-term consideration that bypassed the primary, that is, the basic interests of an individual person or an individual organisation.

There were people who devoted themselves to this process, who gathered funds needed for it; they didn't pocket them, kept them to themselves. They invested their time and energy in communicating with others. One of the elements essential for the success of these processes is that the actors never claimed the right to be considered representative of them – not since the very beginning, and not later on. They didn't fall for the classical manipulation with the idea of representing a sector, as it exists in the foundations of the development of representative democracy, or in trade union gatherings. Focus was instead on linking organisations that operate in a similar field, which are tied by common interests, and in this I do not only mean material interests, but also thematic and social interests, that were constructed cooperatively. As there was no drive to become representative, there was no megalomania in the construction of the idea, that is, it wasn't conceived as a far-reaching gathering, but developed gradually, by the so-called concentric circle method. Therefore, this is about gathering around a certain basis, which branches out by those on the inside inviting others to enter. All these platforms were open, but not absolutely and immediately, but developed gradually. The third element is the fact that the principles and fields of work were conceived at the very beginning, as were very clear practical and operative rules, procedures, modes of decision making, manners of distributing funds etc., all the things which frequently cause other joint enterprises, such as networks or projects, to fall apart. Here, in a few words, is an account of the internal dynam-

ulture
Whose
in



ics and external circumstances and dangers that made it possible for this thing to take place: above all, in the early 2000's, when the Croatian scene was going through an initial phase of forming organisations, independent functioning, inward focus – forming identity through producing programmes etc., there appeared the need for connecting at the local and national level, since such connections didn't exist, because many things were concentrated in Zagreb, as is the case today. It is very good that this initiative had set off from Zagreb, in the sense that it knew how to use this situation of “enlargement” at the local level, and, through the Clubture network, connected larger and smaller organisations from all parts of Croatia. In the same way in which they had come together within the platforms Zagreb – Cultural Capital of Europe 3000 and, later on, the Alliance Operation City, where organisations connected through the Cultural Capital on a specific project that would encompass a whole array of activities of exchanging knowledge, advocacy etc., all the way to a wider gathering of the independent scene and the youth scene around very concrete advocacy activities. From the very beginning, all these platforms had a twofold objective. One objective was a generic gathering of the scene, connecting people and organisations, and the other was mobilising around concrete projects and programmes. We avoided meetings for meetings' sake, assembling for the purpose of basic representation, exchange of information, etc. Instead, membership of the network, which can especially be seen in the example of the Clubture network, is tied to activities, and activities are joint implementation of programmes. The third element was always the awareness of, and action directed at, the situation regarding the sector, that is, its position in the local community, national framework of cultural politics and other related politics, which became tied to various activities of advocacy, or in the sense of building internal capacities, whether classically managerial, such as strategic planning, or those related to collective action in advocacy.

K.P.: **Davor Mišković speaks about how the greatest change that arrived with the new decade wasn't founded on aesthetics, but on a change of discourse and the positioning of the independent cultural sector as an actor in the cultural-political field. Can we take these premises as a take-off point towards the creation of a regional platform? How did this natural way come about, how did these scenes find their common denominator? Can you tell me more about this atmosphere, which resulted in the creation of the regional platform from your experience?**

E.V.: First of all, I have to say is that there was no common denominator, there was no occasion, event or motive. The genealogy of the process is very simple. Following several years of developing basic activities of the Clubture network, it turned out that, for independent culture organisations in Croatia, the field of operation, as well as the diversity of contents, is relatively narrow, especially regarding the exchange of more complex programmes. Let us use the example of concerts, or some other type of event that had an audience in Zagreb, but not so much in Split, the second largest city in Croatia. That is a type of very specific and pragmatic needs, which were primarily developed by Croatian organisations gathered in the Clubture network that stepped into what is considered an area of close interest. We can look into the proximity of an area from the manner in which we defined the concept of region. The regional network wasn't created because of the existence of an opportunity in the shape of a fund, or because of the novelty of geopolitical divisions, but had expanded anew in concentric circles. Croatian organisations invited those that they had known and with whom they had periodically cooperated, from areas considered close for cultural and historic reasons, since they are the ex-Yugoslavian countries. Considering the fact that we couldn't fit ourselves into the category of the Western Balkans, we jokingly defined our area of operation as Western Balkans + Slovenia – Albania. In late 2004 and during 2005, the gathering of these organisations was characterised by a powerful common energy, while the development of scenes simultaneously had similar dynamics in all the countries. Naturally, there were differences regarding the level of development, availability of public resources and possibilities of financing programmes, which mirrored what once were the differences within the former Yugoslavia, where, in terms of quantity, cultural exchange mostly developed along the route Ljubljana – Zagreb – Belgrade. However, this notwithstanding, the platform never saw an atmosphere in which things would have revolved along these faultlines, since both Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were involved only to a lesser extent. The reasons for this are the very complex economic and political conditions, which are currently very hard for us to completely grasp, such as the insufficient representation in the Clubture network of organisations from the area of Slavonia and Lika, that is, all areas that are considered areas of special state concern, that has been the case from its very beginning. Under conditions of social and economic deprivation, we cannot expect an explosion of independent cultural production, which also applies to the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Macedonia.

K.P.: It is clear that actors in Croatia, especially in Zagreb, have themselves defined the independent cultural field. Did the organisations gathered around the Clubture network transmit this type of discourse on to other organisations in the region, or are we talking about the occurrence of a moment of synergy? In what way did this story get going?

E.V.: There was certainly no one-way transfer. For something to be transferred, there must be a pre-existing fertile ground. Certainly, there is an extremely strong programme network in Croatia. Associations in other countries tend more to develop along a representative model, i.e. in Slovenia. The model that was developed in Croatia could be transferred to organisations from the region, which recognised its effectiveness. We all concurred at that moment, believing that it can also be done at the regional level. Considering the fact that, according to our definition, there is no such thing as a region, nor are there any schemes for financing, it was very difficult, even impossible to maintain such a platform, for a number of reasons: national ministries didn't wish to invest the relevant means, international actors, that is, the ECF as the single international actor, also didn't want to invest significant means, and there were no other funds. There is likewise no framework for any kind of joint advocacy at the regional level. These obstacles also had positive effects, in terms of the transfer of advocacy knowledge and skills the Zagreb scene possessed on to scenes in other countries, which will remain a longlasting asset in the region. This is not a direct consequence of the emergence of such models in Zagreb; nevertheless there had to be a moment of synergy. What occurred was a transfer of discourse, of modes of positioning, methods of work, advocacy. The impossibility of sustainability of such a network lead to it never having become totally functional in the desired sense, that is, as a programme platform. These were the premises from which the Exit Europe process was initiated, which was executed fairly well; however, the development of this process is difficult – we could compare the attempt to establish political agency despite the absence of a political framework and in the absence of real political interest, both in these countries and in international politics, with charging at windmills. Ever since the war has come to an end, the region has become fairly inconsequential in the international framework.

K.P.: On the recently organised Open Institutions conference⁰¹, which dealt with issues of reform of the cultural institutional sphere, interesting conclusions could be heard regarding the need for the institutionalisation of the independent cultural scene, for it to become a legit-


imate part of the system, to nestle in it. Do you agree with these theses, and what have you to say about it, in a nutshell?

E.V.: Depends on what institutionalisation means. The independent sector does need institutionalising, but it is also essential that the cultural public sector becomes aware that it is indispensable. The decisionmakers' perception is very interesting, as they consider it a hobby or an alternative, which is completely wrong. We have already made some progress in Croatia, but it is necessary to recognise the professionalism of the sector, aside from arguments concerning effectiveness, but from the perspective of the production of public cultural goods. From this perspective, it is necessary that the sector be institutionalised. Institutionalisation doesn't mean ossification, doesn't mean that non-governmental organisations suddenly become institutions established under public law, but that it is necessary to provide stability, professionalisation and growth to organisations, which have capacities and produce programmes.

K.P.: **Thinking about the Exit Europe process – how it was initiated and managed, it is clear that we are talking about the first larger focused initiative of organisations from the region aimed at the scene in the European Union. This is the first time that something similar has happened, and this advent represents a complete novelty in approach and modes of operation of these organisations. In organisational and professional terms, what this means for us as a network is the expansion into a very abstract and not entirely clear political space. Can you say anything regarding the challenges that have opened up in this area and regarding our advocacy position towards the EU?**

E.V.: The EU has a political problem of strong institutions that aren't politically representative, with a system of strong nation states that are still the ones making the most important decisions. The second problem linked to the EU is that it is still primarily an economic community, which can clearly be seen in its budget. The EU is a very neo-liberal concept, as much as it attempts to involve the civic, cultural and other dimensions. These dimensions are thus naturally oriented towards economic goals. Although culture is edging into European politics, the fact is that there is no common European public sphere. The reason for this lies in the fact

01 The conference is part of the Open Institutions project, jointly organised by the Zagreb Platform, Alliance Operation City, Pogon Centre, the Slovenian network Asociacija and Kontrapunkt, from Macedonia.
<http://zagreb.openinstitutions.net/>



that decisions are made on a very distant and abstract level, and the parliament is the sole body bearing a representative role, which, in reality – in the very process of decision-making, is minimal. It is normal that people should feel distanced from these processes. In terms of perspectives, one should be very pragmatic – the campaign lead by the CAE revolving around maintaining and increasing the EU budget for culture, as well as the mainstreaming of culture into other policies, here lies the opportunity to express the regional standpoints. However, although region doesn't exist as a political fact, it is important to point out that there is an independent cultural sector in this area, and to continue to transmit information regarding its state. A large number of our colleagues from the Western countries don't really comprehend what we are talking about when we emphasise the standpoints of independent culture. Although the process is oriented to Brussels, it would be very important to us to turn to Eastern Europe, of which we don't know much, but whose institutional heritage we share. Someone who is from Poland will much sooner grasp what we are talking about regarding public cultural institutions than someone from Britain. Luckily, the expectations of the regional scene from the EU are decreasing. More and more organisations from the area of the region realise that local problems cannot be resolved at the level of a region that has no political frameworks, or at the EU level, because these issues do not fall under the decision-making domain, even if the *acquis* did involve adaptation provisions centered around culture.

The key is in operating locally, as hard as it may sound, and returning to ourselves. A return to oneself concerns the gathering of local actors in political advocacy that goes beyond the autistic perspective of culture. Autism is a problem at the level of the EU, as well as other levels. People within the sector must comprehend that the problems of culture are part of a prevailing wider ideological problem, that is, the so-called neo-liberal paradigm in the ideological sense, which is especially manifest in pragmatic political pursuits. What is going on at the educational level, especially in higher education, and at the level of privatisation of health care, is something that hasn't yet started to take place in culture, but will inevitably occur. In a way, the independent scene would wish to see the public system disintegrate and hopes for the redirection of resources into the independent sector to disappear. Such a scenario is impossible. The collapse of the public sector in culture will drag independent production with it, and only those kinds of production that are viable in the market will remain. To return to ourselves, to advocate cultural needs among the wider needs of the society within the local community, is the only hope for the sustainable development of independent culture as an active element of social development.

EXIT E
– New g

POSIT



EXIT EUROPE

– New geographies of culture

POSITION PAPER



Countries in the region of former Yugoslavia, despite all differences, share a common cultural space. A cultural space that has been broken and deeply divided, that saw the break out of war, and the establishment of new nation states. A cultural space divided even further by international politics, along the lines of EU membership negotiations and other international associations. Regardless of its position in the heart of the continent, this region is rarely perceived as an inherent part of Europe, not only because of the torn relationship between its countries, but also due to the distended links between the region and the rest of Europe.

At the level of cultural policymaking, the region sees a strong presence of cultural policies (and politics) that are still largely based on an obsolete system of public institutions, leaving independent cultural actors in an unprivileged position. Decision makers in culture are yet to initiate much needed reforms in means of developing strategic orientation, transparency of activities, and openness for a number of actors active on the cultural map.

Former and present efforts of international institutions and organisations aimed at promoting the social and economic development of the region - and its integration in the European Union - made no or little impact on the cultural landscape. Cultural co-operation in the region and internationally still faces many challenges and needs to receive appropriate support, especially to counter traditional views associating cultural and symbolic production with the representation of national identity. Today the strong potential of cultural production and co-operation in processes of communities re-building, reconciliation, economic development, and social change has to be formally acknowledged and converted into concrete actions.

Despite extremely challenging social and political environments all countries of former Yugoslavia have developed vibrant, dynamic and socially engaged independent cultural and art scenes. This development was made possible during the 1990s thanks to the support of a number of international actors. After their withdrawal, however, and national governments' promises often not followed by concrete actions, the independent scene was left with very limited resources. In the last years, the financial crisis and its economic and social consequences have dramatically worsened the situation for all cultural actors in the region, as in the rest of Europe.

The EU's enlargement process has offered new perspectives and opportunities to the countries of the region - in particular by using the pre-accession funds, or by participating directly in the

Culture programme and other EU programmes. Accession dynamics are however different for every country, and this has created imbalances and further lines of divide. Slovenia is already an EU member; Croatia should conclude the negotiations in the forthcoming period; Macedonia is also an official candidate to EU accession; Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia are potential candidates; and Kosovo, the youngest country in the region, still needs to achieve full international recognition. Despite all the EU efforts to integrate this geographical space, the European Union remains a distant and complicated project to engage with for cultural operators, as for regular citizens of the region.

At the same time, cultural policy instruments in the countries of ex Yugoslavia remain insufficiently developed to foster structural changes. Such changes are yet urgently needed to enable a long-term and sustainable development of both public sector in culture, as well as the independent sector, and provide means for stable, strategically developed cultural cooperation and exchange, both in the region but also between the region and 'Western Europe'.

Clubture Network and its regional partners have been active since 2004; connecting regional independent cultural organisations and aiming to play an active role in the cultural policy making processes both in the region and internationally.

A consultative process on these issues started in 2006, including a number of activities such as regional meetings and conferences in Zagreb (2006, 2008), Belgrade (2008), Skopje (2007) and Maribor (2009).

Since the beginning of the process, more than 70 different organisations active in the fields of contemporary arts and theory, urban culture, youth culture, interdisciplinary artistic and cultural projects, activist and socially engaged programmes from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia and Slovenia took part in the activities.

In November 2009, together with partners - Culture Action Europe and the Alliance Operation City - Clubture Network organised an international conference in Zagreb entitled "Exit Europe". This conference concentrated on the general topic of European cultural policies, with a particular focus on new cultural practices in the former Yugoslav countries, and a critical reassessment of the EU enlargement process from the perspective of the independent cultural operators. The conference was accompanied by two pre-conference events organised in Skopje and Sarajevo in October 2009.

The following recommendations are the product of the discussions held during those activities, followed by consultative processes between partners.

- The region has to be recognised as an integral part of Europe, and as a key building block of the European integration project.
- EU institutions have to acknowledge the intensity of the independent cultural production and co-operation, and therefore the role of civil society organisations in the development of the region.
- The EU should integrate in its policies and programmes an understanding of the social and political environments within which independent cultural organisations operate, specific for each country of the region, as well as the independent cultural sector's specificity in the overarching cultural landscape.
- The EU has to recognise the potential of the independent cultural scene in helping the integration of the region in the European political project because of its impact on individuals, communities, and civic debates, and therefore its participation in the development of a European citizenship.
- The EU should recognise cultural civil society as one of the most valuable resources for defining needs and policy priorities, as they operate on the ground and have direct insight in the functioning of political institutions and in the everyday life of the people of the region. These organisations should be regularly consulted during policymaking processes, the definition of strategies and programmes, and all political initiatives that concern cultural and social development.
- The EU has to acknowledge that independent cultural organisations in the region are currently operating in very difficult conditions (i.e. lack of infrastructures, scarce financial resources, no long-term support, etc.) compared to their "Western" peers. Their capacity to access funding in EU programmes, such as the Culture Programme, is therefore often limited. In this respect, the EU should:
 - develop, within the existing programmes, specific grant schemes to support cultural operators in the region;
 - acknowledge the limited financial capacities of those actors and set up specific measures to facilitate their access to funding (for instance, render the rules concerning the number of partners or the provision of matching funds more flexible);
 - develop, in parallel to those exceptional and transitory measures, capacity building schemes to support the structural and stable development of the independent cultural organisations of the region and of their operating environment.

- The EU should continue to mainstream culture in all its policies and political initiatives in the region. It should do so by initially ensuring a quality implementation of the pre-accession funds in order to open the way in the future to more structural supports, addressed already in the political accession negotiations.
- Through pre-accession instruments and specific Community programs, the EU should continuously provide:
 - long-term financial support for programme exchange, co-operation and co-production in the region, with a special emphasis on the intercultural dimension of those initiatives;
 - small-grants for initiating innovative projects and testing out new partnerships;
 - more accessible and flexible short-term (ad-hoc) funds for mobility, both in the region and between the region and the rest of Europe (for ex. small grants for meetings, conferences, residencies programmes, internships, as well as for networks, organisations and individuals);
 - long-term, structural, and operational support to existing advocacy initiatives and for the establishment of new frameworks operating both at national and regional levels;
 - support to various actions aimed at structural changes in public policy making and institutional reforms in the region (such as inclusive, participative cultural policymaking; transparent cultural strategies; legislative changes; new models of organisation and management in the cultural sector; research on cultural policies etc.);
 - long-term, structural, and operational support for networks and cooperation platforms, both on national and regional level (artists and cultural organisations networks, functioning on bottom-up and participatory principles, and that enable genuine, direct and productive co-operations between their members);
 - capacity building schemes, enabling know-how transfer and information sharing within the region and between the region and the rest of Europe (on topics such as network development, advocacy, management, etc.) responding to needs assessed “on the ground”;
 - support for the development and maintenance of regional on-line information tools that would provide accurate and relevant information about the cultural landscape of the region (organisations, advocacy initiatives, expertise, funding, etc.) and facilitate cultural co-operation both within the region and between the region and the rest of Europe;

- investments in new cultural infrastructures for independent sector, and development of new models of governance (such as partnerships between the public sector, civil society and businesses).
- The EU should support capacity building and vocational training in public administrations of the region, to improve the dialogue with civil society organisations, as well as to enhance transparency and effectiveness in public institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS

- Support the long-term development of the independent cultural sector in the region (operational grants, infrastructures, capacity building schemes, etc.) and also provide support that corresponds with the policies and initiatives of the EU and of other international organisations.
- Develop national and local cultural strategies based on consultations and active participation of all stakeholders.
- Include cultural co-operation as a priority action in all overarching funding schemes for international collaborations.
- Participate in know-how transfers and exchanges of best practices in the field of cultural policy with their peers in the region.
- Provide adequate matching funds for projects financed by the EU, and pay all instalments in due time in order to allow these projects to resume without obstacles.
- Provide clear and transparent procedures for open calls.
- Support multiannual cultural programs and cooperation between organisations.
- Support the participation of independent cultural actors in European networks and projects (travel grants, exchange programmes, etc.).