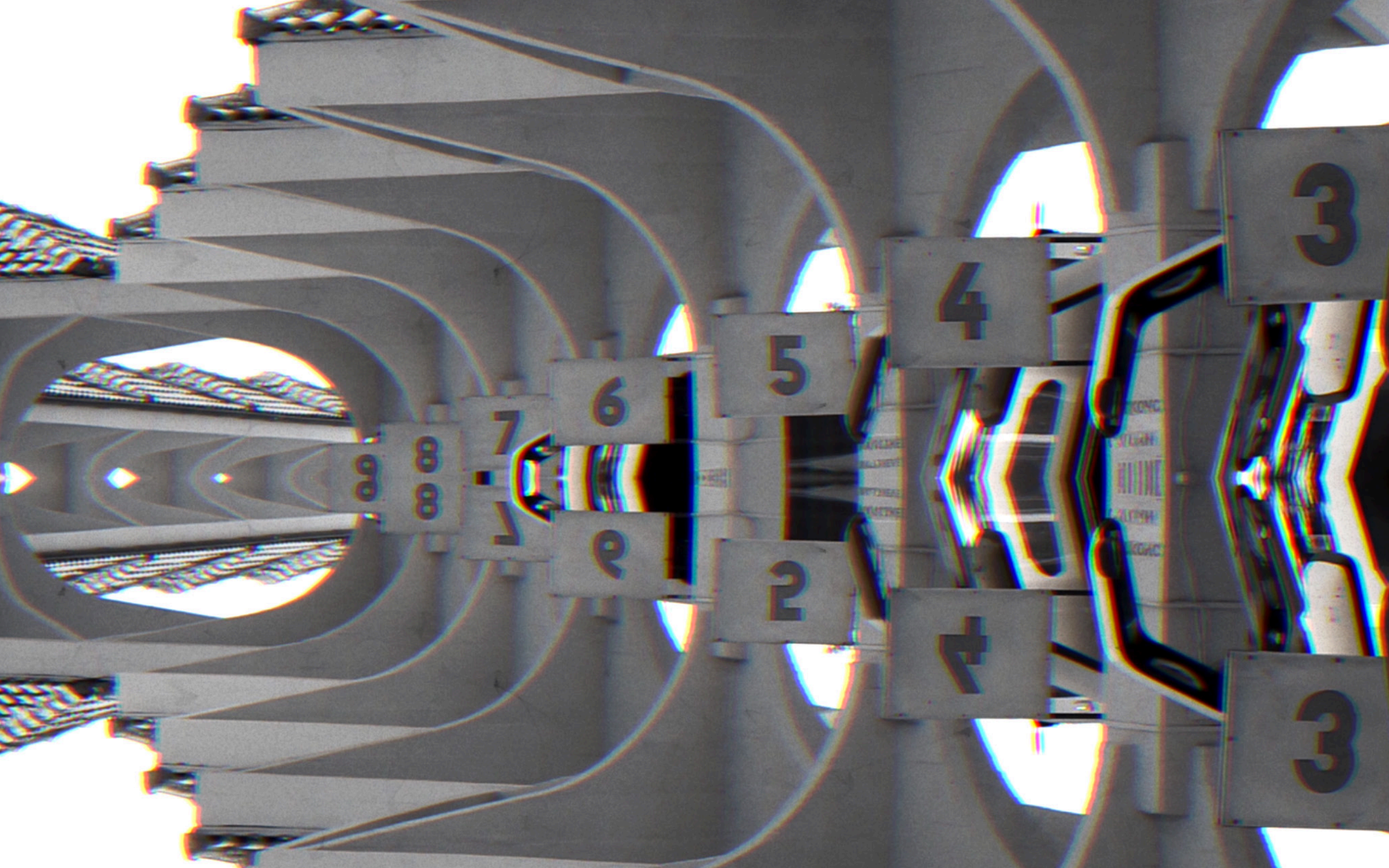
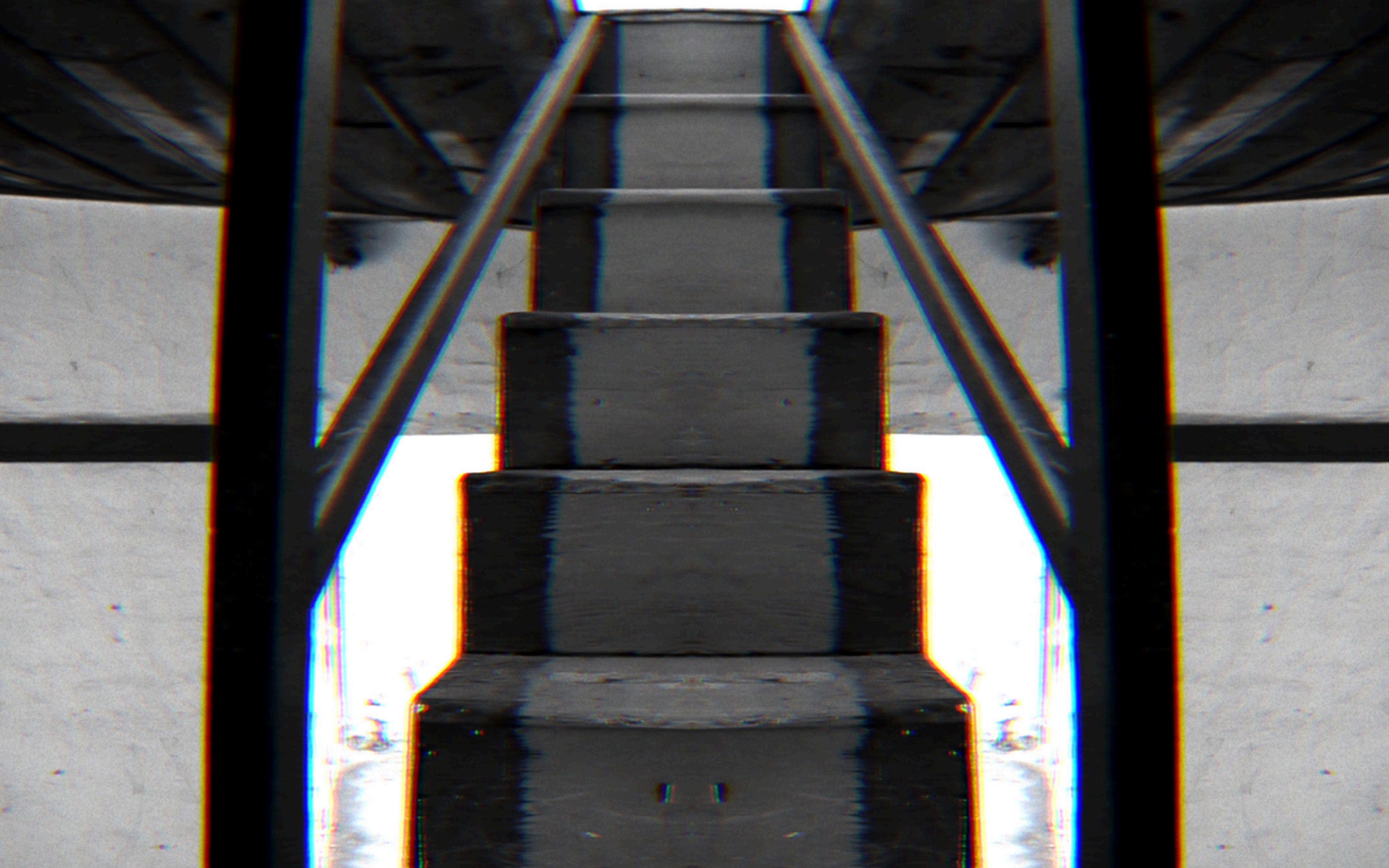


AUTOSTRADA BIENNALE: THE COMMON BOOK



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Autostrada Biennale / Concept

Autostrada Biennale was established with the mission to enhance culture and revitalize its community. It is envisioned as an innovative highway connecting the Istanbul, Venice and Prizren Biennales. The spaces will be in the alleyways and the Lumbardhi river in Prizren, Kosovo. The biennale is inspired by today's changing world and was initiated in order to take advantage of and expand upon the increased artistic exchange and practice currently happening.

Through a spirit of cooperation we will seek to awaken creative energy in Kosovo, the Western Balkans region and beyond. Collaboration between different artistic fields and questioning the problems and difficulties of the contemporary world is a groundbreaking of aspect of art today. It challenges and exchanges collaboration.

This shift in the relationship between artist, studio and museum was signaled in Harald Szeemann's summary of the show's content: "The obvious opposition to form; the high degree of personal and emotional engagement; the pronouncement that certain objects are art, although they have not previously been defined as such; the shift of interest away from the result towards the artistic process; the use of mundane objects; the interaction of work and material; Mother Earth as medium, workplace, the desert as concept."

Autostrada Biennale is a utopian factory and workplace in the best sense of the meaning. It aims to highlight social, political, economic and aesthetic conditions, which also influence everyday life beyond the art world: to make the city itself a museum itself, a site of contemporaneity. A place in where local experiences of time subvert the unity of embracing and inventing its own time.

First Chapter

The First Edition

The International Biennial of Contemporary Art - Autostrada Biennale organized its first international exhibition with performances, art events and an informal education program related to the theme of the biennial “The Future of Borders”, which was chosen by chief curator Manray Hsu.

From the 19th of August to the 23rd of September 2017, notions of visible and invisible boundaries were courageously addressed in the name of a more viable society to live in.

The main goals of the first edition were the re-functionalization of cultural heritage sites; the creation of an informal education program through contemporary art and increasing the level of cooperation within the local, regional and broader contemporary art scene through debate and critical thinking.

Considering that the city of Prizren lacks a contemporary art gallery, the biennial, together with the local residents, managed to create its identity by turning the city into an open museum, thereby giving citizens an opportunity to be exposed to art and the reality expressed through artistic works.

Autostrada Biennale was an initiative which advocated for the use of alternative spaces, most of them forgotten from collective memory; for organizing various events within the framework of contemporary art; and lastly promoting public spaces and historic buildings which carry values of cultural heritage and collective memory.

The biennial managed to raise civic awareness on the importance of preserving and valuing cultural heritage, by functionalizing private and public buildings that belong to different ethnic communities.

In the following section, you can find out more about the curatorial concept, the artistic works and other details of the first edition.

Chief Curator

Manray Hsu: an independent curator and art critic based in Taipei, Manray was the chief curator of the first edition of Autostrada Biennale.

Manray is co-founder and former director (2010-2012) of the Taipei Contemporary Art Center and editor-in-chief of ArtCo Magazine Mainland China edition (2013-2014). He teaches in art academies in Taiwan and abroad. Living and working in Berlin in the early 2000s, Manray has worked with contemporary artists in Europe, including those from the former East.

Among various exhibitions, Manray has curated the 2000 Taipei Biennial (with Jerome Sans), “Wayward Economy” (2004, Main Trend Gallery, Taipei), “Naked Life” (2006, MOCA Taipei), the 2006 Liverpool Biennial (with Gerardo Mosquera), the 2008 Taipei Biennial (with Vasif Kortun), Biennale Cuvee in 2009 (the OK Center for Contemporary Art, Linz), and the Forum Biennial of Taiwanese Contemporary Art in 2010 (Taipei Contemporary Art Center).

Manray has also served as a juror for the Venice Biennale (2001), the Istanbul Biennial (2001), the Hermes Art Award for Korean Contemporary Art (2007), and the Hugo Boss Asian Art Award (2012), among others.

The main focus of Manray’s work is on the politics of mobility, borders in different forms, urban conditions in the age of globalisation, flows of capital, and activism-related art. His recent research has included looking into interdisciplinary art practices related to environmental issues, and multi-species interactions in urban and rural scenarios, with a special interest in viewing the anthropocene from the perspective of Chinese Daoist philosophy.

Curatorial Concept

The Future of Borders

Just three decades ago when current globalisation continuously pulled down the walls of regulation and made all boundaries porous, the answer to this question was clearly and definitely that the future is of a borderless world. Today, the world seems to be going in the opposite direction and borders are coming back. The issues of refugees, migrant workers, transnational corporations, environmental disasters, national and ethnic identities, and so on, bring attention to borders of various forms, which bears on justice, human and nonhuman rights, democracy, and politics per se. The future of borders has come to the centre-stage of our present.

Insofar as contemporary art is related to this process, it is the proliferation of biennials and their spread to different corners, often marginal regions, of the world, making themselves part of a large platform on which not only art from the periphery can be seen but issues of global and local concerns can be shared, discussed, and debated. It was under these circumstances that Autostrada Biennale was created. And at the hinge of its time, its first edition focused on various border problems.

The exhibition, along with its discursive and pedagogic events, looked at: How nation-states and their system function to politicise (or depoliticise) cultural identities, to territorialize natural, cultural, and economic zones under capitalist competition and profit generating. How local and regional resistances cope with geopolitical strategies of the state system. And how the citizen movement use different means, artistic and otherwise, to tackle border problems, to construct local identities and cross-border coalition.

In modernity, the city has developed along the culture-nature dividing line, establishing borders between urban and rural areas, between human and non-human environments. The city is rich in gender borders, ethnic borders, borders between the youth and the elderly, between outsiders and locals, between human and other species. While most of these borders in the city are invisible, overlapping and interconnected, their functioning constitutes the kernel of contemporary urban life. Artists, urbanists, activists and educators, were invited to reflect on these borders, particularly those in the city of Prizren which resulted in site-specific interventions, public works, and workshops on urban design and activism.

The first edition of Autostrada Biennale used Prizren's opulent historic sites in accordance with the themes and forms developed in the artworks. The Bus Station and its vicinity focused on issues of mobility, migration, national and ethnic borders. Spread out in the city center were works related to city life, its history and cultural diversity.

Across the Lumbardhi River in the Marash area, on the hillsides, and in the Castle were found works related to ruins, human-natural environments, and the time-space beyond human borders. While the diverse positions of the artists could hardly be confined to simple spatial deployment in the city, they were there to also help redefine Prizren's topography through their interaction with the visitors.

Manray HSU



First Edition Venues

The first edition of Autostrada Biennale made use of Prizren's opulent historic sites in accordance with the themes and works of art of the Biennale. They were divided into spaces for the international exhibition, and those for the informal education program and collaborative program.

The works in the bus station and its vicinity focused on issues of mobility, migration, and national and ethnic borders. Artistic interventions were carried out in the old houses of the city with the utmost respect to the cultural heritage and well-preserved traditional practices of Prizren's citizens.

These works were exhibited in some of the oldest houses in Prizren, including Shtëpia e Kaltër (the Blue House), the House of Nafis Llokvic and the Saraj. This also served as a way to re-examine the meaning of cultural heritage

Other works related to the city's history and cultural diversity were spread out across the city center. Works related to historic ruins, socio-natural environments and the timespan across human borders were placed in Marash along the Lumbardhi river, as well as the surrounding hills and fortress. The diverse locations in which artists picked to show their works can hardly be confined only to their spatial distribution in the city; they also helped redefine Prizren's topography through their interaction with the visitors. Prizren's centuries-old custom of hospitality appeared once again to welcome new values openly and unhesitatingly. Beneath the roofs of the old houses, alongside the city's heritage, many works of modern art were born.

(BS) The Bus Station

The foundations of the current bus station were laid in 1978, and in 1981 it opened to the public. The Bus Station also had a wedding hall where different weddings and events were organized. During the trends of privatization in the post-Yugoslav period, the bus station was excluded from the list of privatization and to this day remains in use as a public facility.

In Autostrade Biennale’s first edition, the bus station was used as a meeting spot for artists, whose work dealt with the politics of mobility, refugees, dislocated minorities, migration, cultural exchange, the limitless nature of the imagination, war, gender borders, as well as visible and invisible borders of the contemporary public space.

From the 19th of August to the 23rd of September, these artworks were exhibited in the station’s foyer, cafés, offices, facades, its outdoor space, as well as inside its old legendary wedding hall. The opening ceremony of Autostrada Biennale was also held at the Bus Station.



(AM) The Archaeological Museum

The Archaeological Museum is part of the hammam, built in 1498. The founder of the hammam is assumed to be Shemsudin Ahmed Bey. Lacking written sources, it is not known until when exactly the hammam was used as a public bath, however, it is known that by the mid-19th century a clock tower was built by Eshref Pasha Rrotulli over the hammam’s hot area, meaning that the hammam must have stopped being used as a bath since then.

The archaeological research carried out in 2003 on the southern side of the building, found remains of the cold area (entrance part) of the hammam on which a residential building was built. Based on this, it may be concluded that the hammam was partly ruined since the nineteenth century. The building was neglected and used by the surrounding residents as a storehouse until 1972, when restorative and conservation works began. On the 17th of November 1975, the facility was solemnly inaugurated, but with a new designation, turning the hammam into an Archaeological Museum.

The Museum features archaeological materials from sites of the Prizren region, namely from the municipalities of Prizren, Dragash, Rahovec and Suhareka. The Archaeological Museum has tremendous value as it presents a unique building with two typologies. In addition to the architectural and artistic value it possesses, the museum features many exhibits of high historical and scientific value.



(S) Saraj

Currently inhabited by the Kadriaj family, where once the Mijic family resided, the Saraj is located on the right bank of the river. The house is located in the Historic Center of Prizren, on the corner in-between two streets within the neighborhood of Old Saraj, by the Bujar Godeni side road. The building is also close to the house of Shehzade, as well as other representative houses which to this day are inhabited by the families Bilurdagu and Grazhda. According to oral history, the house was built by a Prizrenian Beylerbey for administrative and residential purposes. The house belongs to the traditional civic architecture of the 18th and 19th centuries.

Architecturally speaking, the house belongs to the typology of locked-carrel houses, with a bay window above the hayat, the upper part of the entrance. It is worth mentioning the ornamental beam of the time, located in the upper part of the hayat. The house has rectangular and symmetrical floor plans. The ground floor consists of the hayat which enables access to the home, the two main living rooms, another room, the kitchen and the sanitary spaces which were built later during the latest restoration in 2010-2012. The existing concrete staircase is not authentic, but is an exact replica made with concrete. Inside we find the preserved interior elements such as the ceilings, small cupboards, shelves and stoves, and the ornamental beam above the hayat. The house has its own yard, which is enclosed on both sides with thick stone walls covered in stucco. Worth mentioning are the window openings on the wall facing the Bujar Godeni Street. The current owner restored the house in 2011-2012, while preserving its authentic image. The house is currently uninhabited.



(LH) Lokvica's House

The Lokvica family house is a monument of special historical and architectural importance, located at number 17 Vatrata Shqiptare Street, within the Marash neighborhood in Prizren. Being located right next to the Lumbardhi River and the Fortress in the eastern part of the city, the house has a very convenient position in terms of Prizren's urban context.

Built close to the street and within the Marash Complex in Prizren, the house has both urban and architectural values alike. According to the owners and based on the building's typology, the house is thought to have been built 200-220 years ago, during the 18th or 19th century. It is one of the most representative houses of its time, within the Marashi Complex and the wider city of Prizren.



(BH) The Blue House

The Blue House (Shtëpia e Kaltër) dates back to the 19th century. It is located between the fortress and the city center, within the individual housing area under the fortress known as Varosh. The walls of the house were reconstructed with present day materials, but it's authentic adobe look has been preserved. Meanwhile, the walls of the exterior facade are colored blue, which makes the house one of its kind. The blue color in local culture is seen as autochthonous and it manages to awaken the collective memory of cultural heritage among the citizens of Prizren. The house continues to be inhabitable to date, with the Kadriaj family currently residing there.



(R) Ruins / Houses under the castle

Between 1848-1850, Mehmet Pasha Rrotulla (Rrotulla being the ruling family in Prizren), the governor of Prizren at the time, decided to restore the Fortress and make it habitable. At that time, various masters from from Greece came for construction works, and most of them settled in this area. In Prizren they were known as Cincar (Vlach). Being the distinguished masters that they were, they also built their own church, which still stands next to the church of Christ the Savior, built in the 14th century. The Cincar had their own language and culture, but were later assimilated with the arrival of the Slavs, who settled in the same area under the fortress. Some of them preserved their language by speaking it amongst themselves, but most of them became Slavs. Today most of them are considered Serbian, however their origins are Vlach.



(K) The Castle

The Prizren Castle bears an important part of the ancient history of the city. Its strategic topographical position which dominates over the city, as well as its attractive natural landscape, together with the architectural composition, make it a landmark with indisputable environmental, scientific, historic and touristic value. It is located in the eastern part of the city, over a conical hill. Its fortifying walls follow the configuration of the terrain, forming an egg-shaped contour that extends towards the north-south axis. The oldest known documentation of the fortress is found on “De aedificiis” (“On Construction”), written by the Byzantine chronicler Procopius of Cesar. Among other fortifications in Dardania, the source mentions the Fortress of Petrizen, which is the name that Prizren bears today. A more thorough study was made in 1969, when an architectural documentation of the fortress was made alongside archaeological excavations. The research found evidence dating from 16th to 19th centuries.

Archaeological excavations made in 1969 and 2004 discovered the infrastructure of the fortress, which consisted of ramparts which were reinforced with towers, casemates, labyrinths, warehouses and a range of buildings within. Later archaeological works in 2004 and 2009/2011, discovered a prehistoric settlement dating from the Bronze Age to the early Iron Age, which apparently was one of the very first inhabited zones in the area. Also, for the first time, these excavations provided architectural evidence and materials dating from the Roman Period and Late Antiquity. In terms of construction, the fortress is divided into three separate complexes: the Upper Town, the Lower Town and the Southern City. Whereas the fortification is affiliated with different periods throughout centuries: Antiquity, the Byzantine Empire, the Nemanjic Dynasty and the Ottoman Empire. The Prizren fortress fulfilled its primary function until 1912. From then on, the site was left neglected, thereby allowing for its degradation. Since 2013, restoration and conservation works have started, and continue to-date.



(HA) The Gazi Mehmed Pasha Hammam

The Gazi Mehmed Pasha Hammam (Turkish Bath) is located in the city centre, near the Kukli-Mehmet Bey and Emin Pasha Mosques. It was built between 1563-1574, by Gazi Mehmet Pasha, who was the Sanjak-bey of Shkodra between 1573-1574. An inscription plate over the main gate (1833) reveals when the restoration was completed by Tahir and Mehmed Pashe Rrotulli. The Turkish Bath is part of the architectural ensemble established by Gazi Mehmet Pasha, which also includes the Bayrakli Mosque, the Primary School (Meytep), Secondary School (Madrassa), the Library, and the Mausoleum (Türbe). The hammam is a double bath type, which means that it was used by both genders at the same time. The hammam consists of all the usual spaces of its typology, from the entrance area (waiting and drinking area), the cloakroom, the central bathing room, sauna, and entertainment area, as well as the furnace located in the southern part of the facility.

The bath is constructed in various stones, combined with bricks. The walls are around 90 cm thick, plastered on the inside. The roofing of the facility consists of two domes upon drums (in the cold area – reception), and nine smaller domes over the hot part of the bath. The cloakroom and furnace area are covered with vaults. The cold areas are covered with roof tiles, whereas other areas are covered in lead tiles. Until 1964, the Hamam area was surrounded by commercial buildings, which were demolished when the restoration and conservation works began. In the 1970s, several renovation works were initiated, but did not last for long, and the facility was left abandoned. Since 2000, the cold part of the Hamam has been used as a gallery for various cultural, artistic and educational activities.



(MP) Meeting Point

Part of the International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Prizren, Autostrada Biennale (AB), was the public performance for the use of green spaces and the riverbed of Lumbardhi.

This space was used as an informative meeting point for visitors to the biennial, where they had the opportunity to experience the river and the natural green spaces around it, as well as purchase products from the Autostrada Biennale shop.

During the entire biennial, residents and visitors to Prizren alike visited this meeting point, where they also had the unique opportunity to try on the so-called “nalle” sandals, which are a part of the cultural heritage of Prizren and which were re-designed as part of the Autostrada Biennale brand.

Further, as part of the performance along the promenade of the Lumbardhi river, stairs were built to allow descent into the river, as well as connecting paths which allowed movement in the green spaces by the river bed.



International Exhibition

The order of the art works was made based on the exhibition spaces. Each artwork at the beginning has a code that shows where it is located. Starting from works of art that are located at the Bus Station (encoded with BS1, BS2,...) to works that are in Public Spaces (encoded with PS1, PS2,...) you can find them all in this chapter.



Artworks placed in the Bus Station

BS1

Libia Castro & Ólafur Ólafsson

Title: Your Country Doesn't Exist

Medium: Public intervention / Installation

Material: Billboard

Courtesy: The Artists

Year: 2017



“Your Country Doesn’t Exist” is an ongoing campaign from Libia Castro and Ólafur Ólafsson, which started in 2003 in Istanbul. The beginning of that year was marked by the largest global anti war protests until today, held against the invasion of Iraq by the U.S. and its allies. Since then, the project has travelled the world spreading the sentence, “Your country doesn’t exist” in different languages, intervening in public spaces indoors and outdoors, and including different media and formats, such as: billboards, posters, TV and radio advertisements, post-stamps, newspaper ads, magazine covers, T-shirts, videos, musical performances, drinks cans, wall-drawings and neon graffiti, among others. “Your Country Doesn’t Exist” was launched for the first time with the artist’s exhibition “20 Minus Minutes” at Platform Garanti CAC Istanbul in 2003.

BS2

Valentina Bonizzi

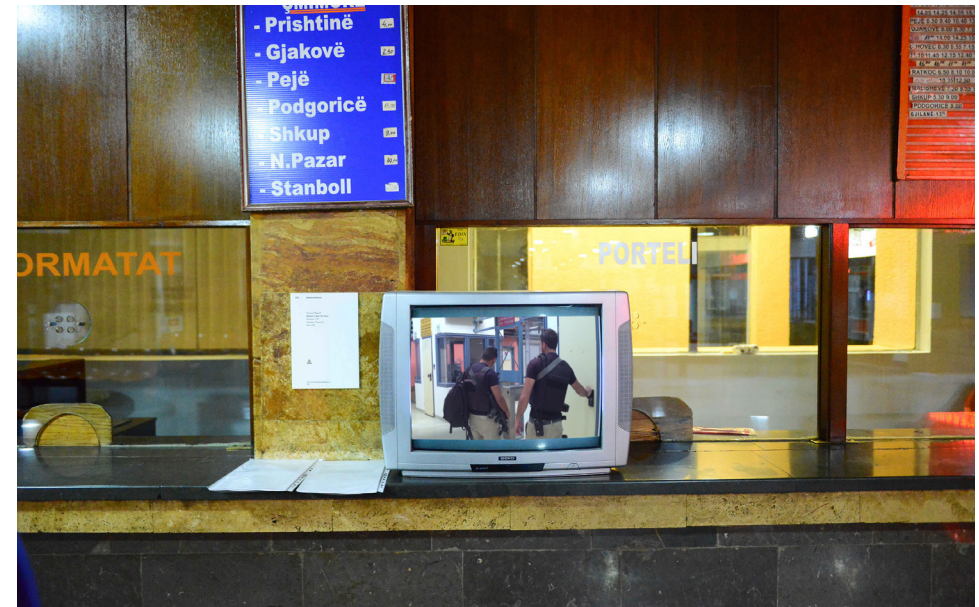
Title: Is It Yours?

Medium: Video/HD/Sound

Duration: 2’19”

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2014



“Is it Yours?” is a short film that watchfully follows a small bird caught in a border patrol facility at the checkpoint between Israel and Palestine. The film is a study in what it means to be a human being, allowing the viewer to become any of the characters within: to be both equipped to subdue others, including other humans, and to be ignorant of the strategies that will improve the circumstances of these people; to be helpless, beating against a structure one finds oneself enclosed within, with no clear route of escape; and to be the witness who wants to guide the protagonists’ actions so that life can be preserved.

BS3
IRWIN
Title: NSK State-in-Time
Medium: Performance
Duration: Variable
Courtesy: IRWIN
Year: 2017

BS4
IRWIN
Title: NSK Passport Holders
2007-2008
Medium: 4 DVD projections
Duration: Variable
Courtesy: IRWIN
Year: 2007-2008



The NSK State in Time was founded in the early 1990s. We started issuing passports straight away; their manufacture and quality meet the required standards for this type of product. To date, a great number of people have applied for and received our passports, becoming citizens of the NSK State in Time. Needless to say, they have kept their principal citizenship as well.

Most applicants are people from the art scene, that is, either artists or people who regularly follow art events. This group of NSK passport holders come for the most part from the developed countries of Western Europe and North America, and are members of a relatively prosperous strata of society. Thus, we can say that a majority of the citizens of the NSK State in Time come from the so-called First World. Their reasons for taking NSK citizenship are mainly to do with their understanding of and involvement in contemporary art.

Although numerous, these NSK passport holders are not the only big social group among the citizens of the NSK State in Time. At the time we first started issuing NSK passports, new countries were being formed in our part of Europe, and the territory of the former Yugoslavia was still being ravaged by war. There was a great deal of interest in our passports in this area, particularly in Sarajevo.

There, most of the passports were also issued to people closely associated with the art world; their interest, however, was more than merely artistic. The citizens of Bosnia-Herzegovina often faced difficulties when traveling abroad at that time. There are a number of stories about cases in which an NSK passport was used to cross a border after a passport of Bosnia-Herzegovina had failed.

More frequently, NSK passports were used as supplementary documents. During that period of time, the interpretation and use of an NSK passport differed radically for people from the so-called Second World from the usual understanding of it as an artifact. Despite the awareness that an NSK passport is not a replacement for a bona fide document to be used when crossing a state border, a number of people took a risk and used it as a functional surrogate for the passport of their country.

The two groups of NSK passport holders presented above have close links with the sphere of art. Although the individual holders' reasons for having an NSK passport vary with their position and status, they can nonetheless all be said to understand the NSK passport as an artifact (which in a pinch can perform other functions as well).

But in recent years, applications have begun to arrive from Africa, more specifically, from Nigeria. Just a handful at first, then their number began to grow. Since all the applicants are from the same town, we presume the information is passed on from person to person. The sum the applicants are required to pay is small, but probably not negligible for the inhabitants of the so-called Third World. I do not think we are mistaken in our deduction that the Nigerian applicants' interest is unrelated to art. It seems more likely that in the Third World, the NSK State in Time passport has ceased to be merely an artifact and become a viable document.

How can light be thrown on such a close encounter between two mutually exclusive worlds: the complex, highly sophisticated, and abstract sphere of contemporary art, and the politically, culturally, and economically profoundly destabilized Third World, where bare survival is frequently an issue and whence people decide to emigrate en masse to find a better life? (With Europe the coveted destination, the media report on worse shipwreck disasters every year, and the growing numbers of casualties as people set off on expensive and dangerous illegal crossings.) Two worlds so far apart that their meeting can only be understood as a consequence of modern-day technologies, specifically the Internet enabling the propagation of information where it was not possible before.

Four documentary videos made in the last two years were shown at the exhibition, as well as a coded archive of the numerous letters of application for the NSK passport:

"NSK Citizens from Nigeria," IRWIN, 2007

"NSK Citizens Sarajevo," IRWIN, 2007

"NSK Citizens Vienna and Berlin," IRWIN, 2007/8

"NSK Citizens Taipei," IRWIN, 2007

"Words from Africa," IRWIN in association with NSK citizens (NSKSTATE.COM), 2007

You will see and hear how views on the NSK passport have changed in Sarajevo since the time the city was under siege; what Taiwan and the NSK State in Time have in common and how the Taiwanese understand the NSK passport; and how a symbolic object, after having been on sale for fifteen years in the First World market, where it was predominantly recognized – despite or perhaps due to its ambivalence – as an art object, became a functional document in the Third World. In short, how the word turned to flesh.

BS5

Alban Muja

Title: Catch Me

Medium: Photography

Photo by: Kiriko Shirobayashi

Dimension: 180 x 120 cm

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2007



"Catch me" shows the physical action of the artist of jumping over the American-Mexican border. The artist himself came from a place where freedom of movement from one country to another is just a dream for most people — more or less similar to Mexicans when they want to cross the border with the USA.

BS6
Sašo Sedlaček
Title: Beggar Robot
Medium: Installation
Material: Various waste electronics
Courtesy: Technical requirements
Year: 2006



“Beggar Robot” is a robot for the materially deprived, and is constructed entirely from old computer hardware and a few spare parts that were obtained at no cost. As a low-tech, friendly device, it advocates three main ideas in contemporary activism. It is a surrogate agency created for a world in which the marginalized; such as impoverished individuals and families, refugees and asylum seekers, elderly people, disabled people, and those hidden from the public view, will never step onto the street to beg, except in the most dire of circumstances.

The robot has access to areas normally off-limits to beggars, such as shopping malls and community events, where the richer members of society more often frequent. The hypothesis is that this part of society is only able to show some sympathy towards the marginalized if they communicate from a safe distance and via a technological interface.

The project tests and exploits the advantages of robotic interfaces by bringing his “Beggar Robot” to public spaces in different countries and adapting it to the local context and local language, to beg in the name of the poor. The project is both a social experiment and a low-key, humorous charity action, which raises public awareness of invisible deprivation and possible remedies.

As a machine built out of computer parts recycled from the ever-growing electronic junk yards, the robot also bears an environmental consciousness for a world dominated by the ideology of endless development. Moreover, the robot advocates the concepts of open source and do-it-yourself tactics and their consequences for social action, by allowing people to freely make their own copy of the robot. Anyone interested in obtaining instructions on how to build their own replica of the robot can leave their contact details with the robot, or go to the artist’s website.

BS7

Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić

Title: The Housing Question

Medium: Installation with construction from wood and cardboard, drawings and videos, Digital prints on paper and textile, banner and flag,

Material: Construction from wood and cardboard

Courtesy: Rädle & Jeremić

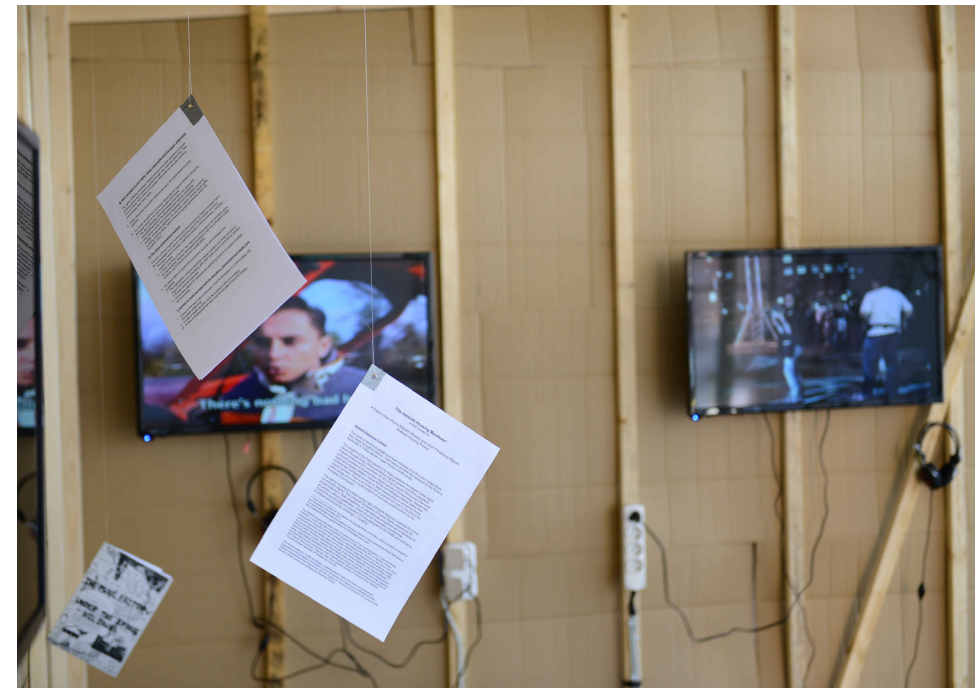
Year: 2012-2017



The installation “The Housing Question” depicts the reality of Roma and other precarious migrant workers through three case studies in different European cities: Belgrade, Helsinki and Rome. It critically reflects on the issue of accumulation of capital achieved through expropriation of land, and exposes the connection of these processes to racism. Two videos that are integrated into the installation, “Belleville” and “Gazela”, emerged from the protest of Romani families following their forced eviction and demolition of their houses by the city government and for the sake of construction works related to the sports manifestation Universiade 2009 in Belgrade.

After a similar forced resettling and demolition of a Romani settlement in Helsinki in 2011, Rädle & Jeremić invited activists, politicians and theorists to participate in a public discussion about the possibility of building a trans-urban network of ‘hotels for precarious workers’ in European cities, as well as a series of proposals for the establishment of general principles for local housing solutions which would be realized in Helsinki and elsewhere in Europe. The video “The Housing Agenda” presents the main principles regarding the given issue.

In order to unmask the models of market-oriented welfare and the commercialization of public services, Rädle & Jeremić point to the perfidious system developed in the city of Rome, where Roma are housed in ghettoized container settlements and monitored by security guards. The video “The Housing Question” emphasizes the continuity of racist policies towards Roma, situating their speech in the familiar historical setting of the city and places in Rome such as Casilina 700 and 900, where settlements have been demolished and their inhabitants relocated to containers.



BS8
Oliver Ressler
Title: Emergency Turned Upside-Down
Medium: Film
Duration: 16'
Courtesy: The Artist
Year: 2016



This film was shaped by the “summer of migration” of 2015, when the Schengen system was suspended for several weeks and wealthy European states temporarily opened borders for refugees from Syria and the wider war-zone world. But it soon became obvious that the “welcoming culture” of a few European states would not last long. Some EU states responded to the movement of refugees by reinstating borders; all joined in an abject contest to look like the least desirable destination.

“Emergency Turned Upside-Down” confronts the cynical and inhuman discourse that calls refugees’ presence in Europe an “emergency” when that word should be applied to the war, terror and the economic strangulation that forced people to move. This latest migration wave is the emigrants’ rational response to the wars waged in Asia (the “Middle East” and beyond) and Africa by western powers willing to prop up or shoot down local proxies – kill “Arab Springs” or command them – as opportunist interest dictates.

“Emergency Turned Upside-Down” is set within the tension that runs through social life right now: on one hand the vast imaginative potential of a borderless world, and on the other the petty prison of nationality and all the external, internal and social borders it entails. The film discusses borders performing their everyday function: managing, calibrating and governing global passages of people; dividing and “zoning” into different types of migrants and non-migrants, who depend on the trickle of income squeezed from endless work. Borders configure the world, ensuring a supply of people “willing” to do any sort of work if the conditions are coercive enough. What no amount of razor wire promises is that those people will forgive or forget.

The narration text is set in dialogue with drawn animations in black and white, in which overlapping lines form an abstract pattern evoking, among other things, borderlines, migration routes, outlines of states, life-lines and human heart rates.

Director and producer: Oliver Ressler

Narration text: Oliver Ressler & Matthew Hyland

Animation: Studio Orlander Krinkel

Music: Vinzenz Schwab

Special thanks to: Edit András, Birgit Lurz, Ilona Németh, Wolfgang Schlag, Matthew Hyland, Adnan Popović, Richard Bruzek, Gerald Raunig; and Sandro Mezzadra & Brett Neilson for their inspiring book *Border as Method, Or, the Multiplication of Labor* (2013).

The film was commissioned by Into the City 2016.

BS9

Alban Muja

Title: Borders without Borders

Medium: Photographs

Photo by: Emanuel Gjokaj

Dimension: 40 x 30 cm/12

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2016-2017



The project “Borders without Borders” include 26 photos of 26 border buildings in 26 EU and Schengen member states. Today, these buildings remain “abandoned,” similarly to how border divisions among EU states have ceased to exist. Nevertheless, as they continue their physical presence, reminding us of a past separation that no longer exists, these buildings also raise questions as to what other function they can have or play in the future.

The artist himself comes from a place where functional border buildings still exist, and freedom of movement is restricted. The artist has chosen to photograph the abandoned border buildings in EU member states, and trigger questions about the veracity of the existence or nonexistence of borders between these states — the majority of which share a past, often a conflictual one, but today enjoy freedom of movement with one another.

On one hand, a border building is still functional when entering from a non-Schengen to a Schengen state. On the other hand, within the Schengen area itself, such border buildings have ceased to serve any purpose. For those people that are restricted from freedom of movement, such buildings represent much more than just a physical presence — they might bring back memories of rejection, hardship and pain, and many today choose to take the illegal route to cross the border division. They do so in a search of and belief in a better life, mainly coming from war zones or post-war societies.

As the artist comes from a place, and a region, that has undergone such experiences and where freedom of movement continues to be restricted, such stories and narratives are resemblant. Borders were a cause of war; some became reasons to separate families for decades. Such was the case between the former Socialist Federation of Yugoslavia and communist Albania, where borders were being reinforced at a time when the EU was already in a process of opening them up.

However, today it seems that reinforcing borders is emerging again as a topic of conflicting debates. And when it comes to these abandoned border buildings within the EU, should there be a platform for discussion as to whether these buildings can serve a cultural function? How should they be commemorated today? Should they serve as a reminder of what their past meaning was, while moving towards a more open future?

The shared past between EU member states can be also read and recorded through the architecture of such border structures. That is why they will be documented, shot and showcased through a publication with photography, while also putting into question the potential to change the purpose of these buildings today.

BS10

Alketa Xhafa Mripa

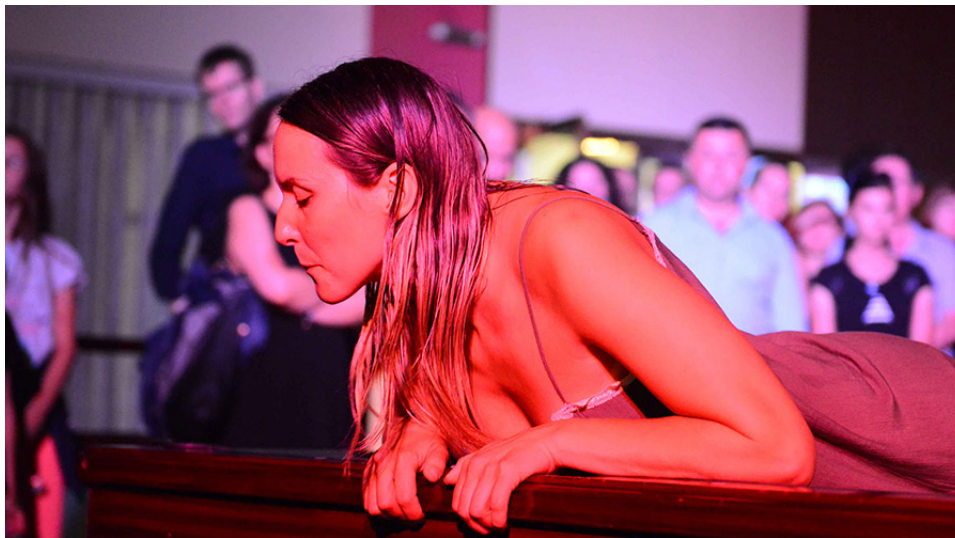
Title: Waterfalls

Medium: Performance / Documentation

Material: Pool Table

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2017



In her performance *Waterfalls*, created and presented for Autostrada Biennale, London-based artist Alketa Xhafa-Mripa contextualizes the past, present and future of borders. At the centre of an enclosed room inside the Prizren bus station, there is a pool table, surrounded by people. One by one, the artist and four other women slowly emerge from the crowd and lay down their bodies over the table and spit many times in different directions. They spit violently, as if to say: “Be damned with your borders and the rules you created for us.”

Women with various societal roles climb over the table. The first woman, Alketa Xhafa-Mripa, represents female creatives. The next wears a transparent dress, alluring and sexual. The third is pregnant, representing mothers. The fourth represents the female members of the LGBT community. The last one that appears, the youngest, represents the woman of the future; she is still naive, but aware of her fate. She loves life but is painfully aware of the limitations she faces. This last woman spits more softly, creating the allusion that she has not been confronted with these themes for long.

The pool table as a symbol for entertainment is now converted into a platform from which the women protest. Instead of entertaining, these women are discontented by contemporary life and they spit over the borders and rules created through the centuries and that are being created still. The establishment of such physical and psychological borders is supported through the politics and society in which they exist. Instead of hoping to live in a world where arcane borders and rules increasingly disappear, they are confronted with more and more each day.

Pool is a male-dominated game where they have the cues in hand to control and shoot the balls in the ‘right direction,’ an allusion to the fact that men take decisions in contemporary society. They shoot the balls into the pockets, score points against each other – they take into their hands decisions for the future of men, women, and the whole society. The work of Alketa Xhafa-Mripa is also a protest against the male decision-makers, who ‘play games’ with human lives.

The women represented within this installation have had enough of such decisions. They protest by spitting against these borders, created for the different communities within a society, or to stop immigration. They protest the limitations and controls for foreigners, the LGBT community, mothers, women, young girls with their life ahead of them, for the rules and orders that are created against their will all over the world, but which they must abide by. They protest against the borders and rules created by society for female artists.

Alketa Xhafa-Mripa globalises the issues that tether all women around the world by demonstrating points of views based on fact. The shape of the pool table echoes the symbolism that these women are demonstrating in all four corners of the world. The five women in sequence climb and spit repetitively. The audience gets the message that despite the protest, the same act is never ending.

Waterfalls are being created by their spit. The audience becomes restless. In the pause between the women’s actions, the visitor wonders whether the performance is over. This is what the artist provokes, and makes us aware that this is still happening. Although women all over the world were confronted many times with such limitations and discriminations, and they have protested many times, it happens again. And again. They must continue protesting if they want change. A kind of meditation occurs through the darkened light, the silence (except for the noise of spitting), and the repeatedness of the actions... Is this a never-ending story? How will it end? How could it end? Additional questions the artist provokes with this performance.

© Dr. Penesta Dika, Art historian / Founder of SciTechArt in Vienna.

BS11

Ella Raidel

Title: Double Happiness

Medium: Documentary film

Duration: 74'

Distributor: Sixpackfilm Vienna

Year: 2014



Telling the story of the Austrian village Hallstatt which has been being copied in Boluo, China, as a high-end real estate project, Double Happiness (2014, 75 Min.) has blurred the boundaries between truth, fiction, performance and interviews with experts, to reveal the workings of image-making in the global world.

Shot in the fashion of a (docu-) musical where singing and dancing become the predominant narration, the film references *The Sound of Music* (1965), the Hollywood production of a fantasized Austrian culture. The musical performances in an idyllic landscape remind us of the politics of cultural identity in the global system and how fantasy traverses the ideal living in encountering cultures through media society. China's Hallstatt in Boluo was planned as a residential area and turned into a contemporary theme park within only one year.

The protagonists, whether in the wedding pictures or in culture tourism, turn themselves into actors and actresses, playing the roles given by the pre-written cultural script. The tourist, dressed up in local dresses, posing for photos, resembles the performer singing the songs in the film.

The film scenes, woven by the urbanist and architect, TV talk shows and real estate advertisements, karaoke singing and wedding picture posing, are intertextually presented to a visioning apparatus of the film. Altogether, these performative aspects of the film are supposed to witness the contemporary cultural situation that we all live in, where media itself diffuses the economy of collective desires.

The title, Double Happiness, means the happiness that increases twofold in marriage. The written character (happiness, xi) is doubled. In other words, Double Happiness is happiness that simulates each other. The etymology of the Chinese word is taken as the leitmotif of cultural translation in fusing different traditions and histories into the romance of our times. Double Happiness, rather than condemning the immoral aspect of the copy, marks the power of the copy, which becomes our cultural tour de force.

This meta-aesthetic dimension can only be disclosed in a reflexive mode that synchronizes the genre of documentary and fiction. The Hallstatt in China is as illusory as, or as real as the original one, which is full of touristy consumerism and cultural fantasy from Asia, and the mating of both in 'the double happiness' is an epitomic moment of our cultures in a globalized world.

Ella Raidel, 2017

BS12
Chien-Chi Chang
Title: The War That Never Was
Medium: Video
Duration: 15'40"
Courtesy: The Artist
Year: 2017



I have been invited to produce a video on Taiwan and Cold War for an exhibition. So out of curiosity, the other day, I asked my mother if she knew what the Cold War was and she replied: “who was that?”

My mother, born in 1938, in a poverty-stricken mountainous region in central Taiwan received little education and worked her entire life before and after she was married to my father. Taiwan’s longest martial law in history (1949-1987) had little effect on her. Her whole life was merely to work for a meager survival. She told me that back then, there was no electricity in our village and she, after working the whole day on the rice paddy, used to ride an old bicycle to the nearest town to charge a battery for the household electricity. She lost track of how many times she ran into the dirt creek in the dark when coming back with a charged battery and me in the backseat.

This interview-based video is centered on my mother. I am the interviewer and my mother the interviewee. All the questions are about her life from a rural, poor and uneducated girl to a wife and a mother of five children, working in scorching rice field, later a washer-woman and a domestic cleaner until the mid 2000s, less than ten years ago.

The questions about her life juxtapose with the years when the historical events took place during the Cold War. The latter is done with historical images, from the Iron Curtain Museum in Hungary and Magnum Photos archives intertwined with the interview with my mother, who has never heard of the Cold War.



BS13

Ettore Favini

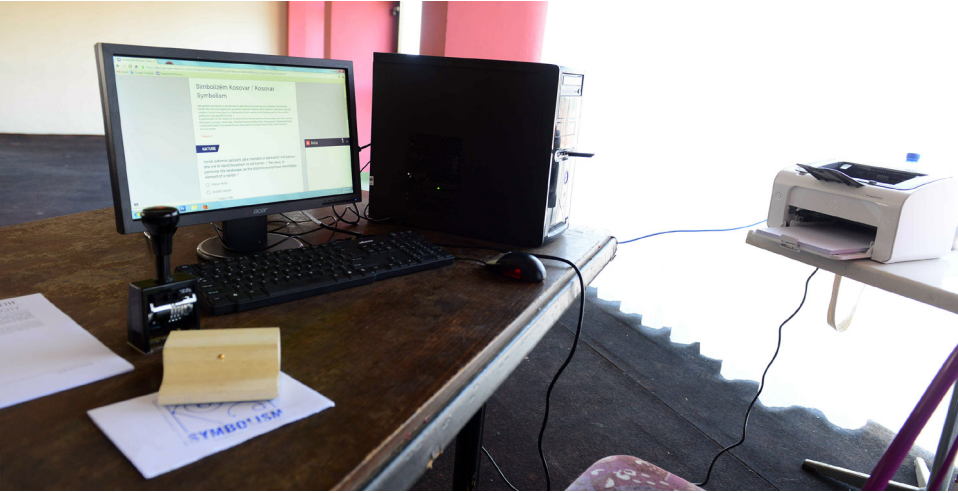
Title: Kosovar Symbolism

Medium: Action

Dimension: Variable

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2017



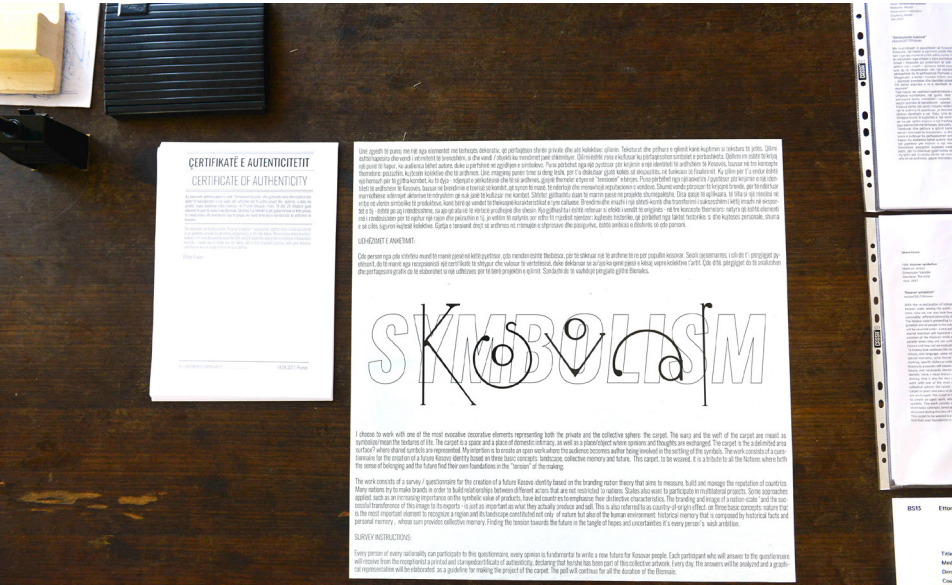
With the re-declaration of independence and the foundation of Kosovo on February 17, 2008, some public opinion has begun to circulate the idea that since Kosovo has become a state, now we can also look forward to the Kosovar nation, because every state should have its own nationality.

However, is the creation of Kosovo's multi-ethnic, political nation possible? Do national identity and state identity exist in parallel when they are not unified? What is the new identity aspiration of the people of Kosovo, and how can we evaluate this aspiration?

“A history that pursues the continuity of the great ancestors, a series of heroes as models of national virtues, one language, some cultural monuments, a folklore, historical places and a typical landscape, some formal representations – a hymn and flag - and some scenic identifying features - clothing, specific dishes or local fauna and flora.”

Kosovo is a country still closed within its own undefined borders. Kosovo has an uncertain history, and an unwritten future, not necessarily shared with neighbours and occupants. The population is looking for its own identity. Here, I mean Nation as an individual space, like a House. A house can be meant as a place for sharing, a community whose aim is to create a common cultural heritage. Therefore, I chose to work with one of the most evocative decorative elements, representing both the private and the collective sphere: the carpet. The warp and the weft of the carpet are meant as the textures of life. The carpet is the space and place of domestic intimacy, as well as the place where opinions and thoughts are exchanged. The carpet is the delimited area where shared symbols are represented. My intention was to create an open work involving the audience as an author in the settling of the symbols. For Autostrada Biennale, inside the Bus Station spaces, through an IT platform, I submitted to the visitors a survey whose answers correspond to a system of shapes and colors. All participants are given a certificate stating their collaboration with the project. The outcome of the entire process of research and data collection is a work realized with the community reflecting on its own history and political identity.

The design of this carpet is a tribute to all nations. The shared process of making is the common ground for a future political identity and a strong awareness of belonging.



BS14

Stefano Romano

Title: Study for a Monument

Medium: Performance / Photographic documentation

Material: Digital photograph on adhesive paper

Dimension: 30x50cm

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2014 (series, ongoing)



“Study for a Monument” is born from a series of questions: How has the idea of a monument changed today? Is it still possible to conceive of the monument in terms of a base and a figure above it that communicates something important to the rest of the people? It seems to me that today the idea of the monument is closer to an empty pedestal, first of all because of the difficulty of identifying a figure capable of supporting the weight of being a monument, and secondly because the values to be transmitted to the people change at the same velocity with which our society absorbs the present.

This means, in my view, that the monument should represent values with the same speed, and then leave the pedestal empty again, waiting to host a new person who wishes to transmit their values to the world for a few moments. The photographs of the performances each represent a precise idea, and then as a whole they represent a kind of study of the concept of the monument: of the form, the colors, and all the aesthetic values that are part of the monument.

The base that I have chosen is a common object, a stepladder, to allow people to get up just enough to be visible to everyone, and then to focus, to transmit their thoughts to the world, and finally to get down again and be among the people continuing on with their lives. The stepladder is an object easily transportable from one place to another, and potentially anyone with a message to share with others can stand upon it to become a monument. The monument is a temporal and social object.

During the first week of Autostrada Biennale I was in Prizren asking people to participate in the project, performing their own idea of a monument. They had to choose the topic to perform, where to perform it and the title of their “sculpture.” At the end of my stay I shot 24 photos of as many performances realized by the people of Prizren and tourists that I met by chance in my walks through the city. All the photos were printed and installed at the city bus station.

Artworks placed in the Archaeological Museum (AM)

AM1

Haveit (Alketa Sylaj, Hana Qena, Vesa Qena, Arbërore Sylaj)

Title: When Father Wept, Mother Washed My Eyes

Medium: Video installation / 4 channels / Color / No Sound

Duration: 10'

Courtesy: Haveit

Year: 2014



“Even if you are going to confess to me all the pain you have passed through, I am not going to cry. I am a man, a strong one, and I won’t drop a tear. Cry, you cry, your eyes will become beautiful after. While you were weeping, my mother washed my eyes”

AM2

Haveit (Alketa Sylaj, Hana Qena, Vesa Qena, Arbërore Sylaj)

Title: Shaving Patriarchy

Medium: Performance

Courtesy: Haveit

Year: 2014



The “Shaving Patriarchy” performance took place on Albania’s Independence Day. The performance was also given to Hamam in Prizren. Video and performance were carried out as a revolt against the public expression of patriarchal behavior. By connecting the men’s beard with honor, loyalty, and strength, people believe that the longer the beard, the better a person, a man.

Artworks placed in Saraj (S)

S1

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: Museum of Conversation

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimension: 133x210 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2015



“Even if you are going to confess to me all the pain you have passed through, I am not going to cry. I am a man, a strong one, and I won’t drop a tear. Cry, you cry, your eyes will become beautiful after. While you were weeping, my mother washed my eyes”

S2

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: Podium

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimension: 150x207cm

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2014



The Romani language has resisted for centuries without being written, and it has been transmitted from one generation to another only orally. A moment from a Legend that my father says: There was a time where all nations went to get the letters to the kingdom.

S3

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: Territorial symphony

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimension: 150x207 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2014



The sound of a bulldozer, the sound of the police stepping in the house, and the sound of the roof that is falling down, turns into my music. The music that is composed for me. The territorial symphony is the symphony that follows the forced eviction of the Romani people in Europe.

S4

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: Zhamballa

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimension: 150x207 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2015



Zhamballa, a special game that goes around up and down is a symbol of celebration of Herdelezi (Saint George's Day) in the Romani neighborhood of the village of Baltez in Fier. The name Zhamballa, etymologically comes from the word 'zham,' or 'dzam' in the Romani language, which means blessing. Zhamba is also the name for (the frog), the sound that the wood makes when it comes around, sounds like the songs of the frogs in the summer.

S5

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: I am Maria

Medium: Oil on Canvas

Dimension: 80x90 cm

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2013



I am Maria. I am the white Romani girl from a Bulgarian mother who gave me up for adoption to a Roma family in Greece. I become famous when the police found me in the Roma neighborhood, where I was living with my new family.

S6

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: A choice to be made, a price to be paid

Medium: Video performance

Duration: 14'59"

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2015



The Romani people have never identified themselves with a territory. Although they come from India they have never fought for it, but fought for life with life. As Diana Muir emphasizes “the Romani people, as unique among peoples, have no tradition of an ancient and distant homeland from which their ancestors migrated, nor do they claim the right to national sovereignty in any of the lands where they reside. Rather, Romani identity is bound up with the ideal of freedom expressed, in part, in having no ties to a homeland.”

Because of the absence of a traditional land concept, the “Romani phuv”, Romani land is a “controversial issue that implies different prices to be paid when decision have to be made” - Nicolae Gheorghe. The “Romani phuv” is still a dream for many Roma despite the events of life and history. This “land” is alive and continues to live in the hearts of the Roma.

Bringing this performance into today’s situation where the roma are “located” and “dislocated” for political, economic, or social reasons, this video performance is made as a need to open a discussion, and provoke people’s perception about them and their relation with the land and territory.

In this performance I take the role of a chef who prepares a meal with shishik (a kind of soil, that Roma use to wash themselves, and the pregnant woman used to eat during her pregnancy) and the bureaucrat who represent the intellectual Romani persons who through their work, effort, negotiations and discussions can make choices in order to make this dream to live longer and end the game of location and dislocation.

S7

Artan Hajrullahu

Title: Nostalgia

Medium: Series of drawings / Pencil on paper

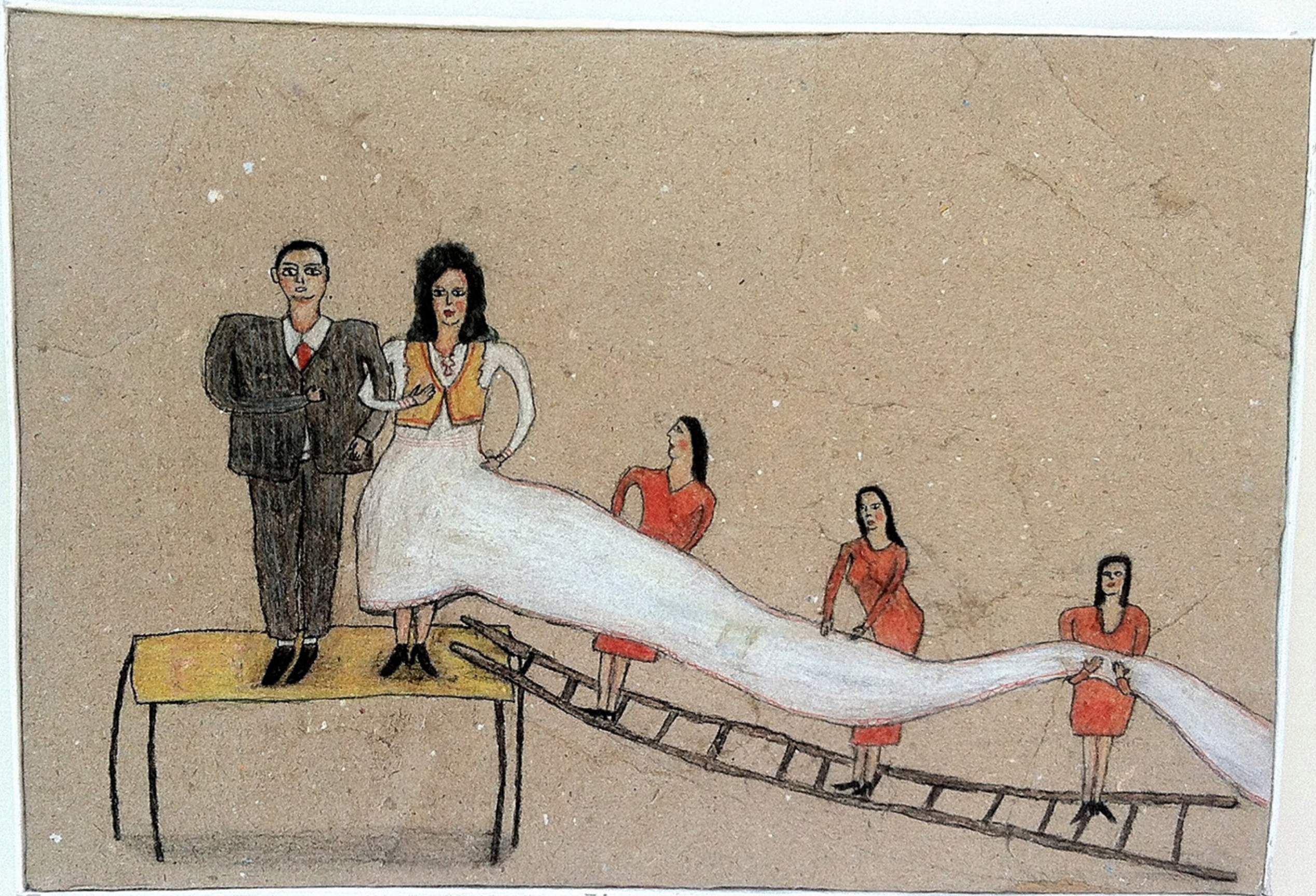
Dimension: 25x17 cm / 30 pieces

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2015-2017



His artistic work is preoccupied by themes of everyday life and nostalgia. His drawings depict quotidian scenes and memories of the artist’s childhood, where the relationship between human beings and household objects tell poetic stories.



Artworks placed in the Lokvica House (LH)

LH1

Li Binyuan

Title: Freedom Farming

Medium: Video/ Installation

Duration: 5'02"

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2014



In Chinese peasant villages, land is a severe issue. Each piece of land has its own destiny and character, in the background of which is the life of humans. My father accidentally passed away in 1999, and as a result, the pieces of land he used to farm became my inheritance. This made me at a loss, not knowing what to do with them. I had tried to avoid it. Feeling ashamed to face the reality, I rarely went home. However, the problem is not resolved because of my alienation. My sense of belonging and identity has hence gradually disappeared.

It is not until 2014 that I decided to do a performance on one of the land properties, to use my own body to reexamine and retouch my birth place which has become strange and close to my heart at the same time. I jumped up and fell back to the ground continuously until I stopped out of exhaustion, finally coming to terms with it. The title “Freedom Farming” comes from the land ownership certificate given by the Committee of Villagers. I see this process as a measure of self-salvation.

“Freedom Farming” is a work of my dialogue between myself, my parents’ generation, and my reality, through which I attempt to find a balance between the three. Perhaps to resurrect some things, and at the same time to reconfirm my own belonging. Each jump is a departure, and falling back is a homecoming. Between departures and returns, something definitely is missing.

LH2
Yang Shun Fa
Title: The Submerged Beauty of Formosa
Medium: Photographs
Dimension: Variable
Courtesy: The artist
Year: 2015-2017



The coastal areas in Yunlin, Chiayi, and Tainan suffer the worst land subsidence in Taiwan. Every time the artist visited these places, he saw official residences of salt farms and military blockhouses submerged in water. These abandoned buildings seemed to tell their stories to the artist. In his mind, he could almost see the bustling scenes of the past with the shouting of salt workers, the noise of machines, and the military cadence cried out by soldiers. Today, these abandoned buildings filled with history are underwater due to land subsidence, with no one paying attention to them! As the world faces climate change and global warming, scientists predict that the sea level will rise by one meter a century later. How about now? Climate change has led to a change in the direction of the wind, which occurs more and more frequently and with higher intensity. Everything is changing, except our thinking. We do not take Mother Nature's warnings seriously and still believe that humankind will triumph over nature.



Artworks placed in the Public Spaces (P)

P1

OPA (OBSESSIVE POSSESSIVE AGGRESSION)

Title: Think Big!

Medium: Intervention in public space

Material: Various materials

Courtesy: OPA

Year: 2017

“Think Big!” is a monument to the new type of leader. It is placed in the center of Prizren, on a site where three different levels of meaning intersect. Architectural remains as evidence of three distant eras, cultures and ideologies overlap with each other, while sharing mutual territories: The archaeological findings from the Roman classical period (2nd & 3rd Century); the minaret of what was once the Arasta Mosque, built in the 16th century and destroyed in 1963 on the pretext of modernizing Prizren; and, the modernist buildings constructed in the 1960s in place of the Arasta Mosque.

Coincidentally, all of these fall together on the spot of Prizren’s newest monument, erected in honor of the 45th President of the United States, Donald Trump. As a “boundary stone” marking the border of the already-mentioned three “territories”, it is placed on the remains of a neglected monument to anti-fascist heroes, consisting of six bronze portraits, all of which have disappeared. A long forgotten place, hence, becomes a delightful spot once again! This incredible new image: a symbol of the future, is set up for public scrutiny, and for the collection of digital likes!



P2

Sead Kazanxhiu

Title: I Don't Have Borders to Protect

Medium: Public intervention

Material: Balloon letters

Courtesy: The artist

Year: 2017

In our Romani Language we do not have a word for “border.” It does not exist. When we want to speak about a border we use the word border in other languages, not in the Romani language because it does not exist, neither as a word nor as a concept. This sentence is written with golden balloons and installed in different locations in the City of Prizren as a form of irony in celebrating the future of borders. It is continued with a performance where I invite people to sit in a chair and repeat for one minute the sentence “I don't have borders to protect” in their language.



Artworks placed in the Blue House (BH)

BH1

Stefano Romano

Title: Poems (Haiku)

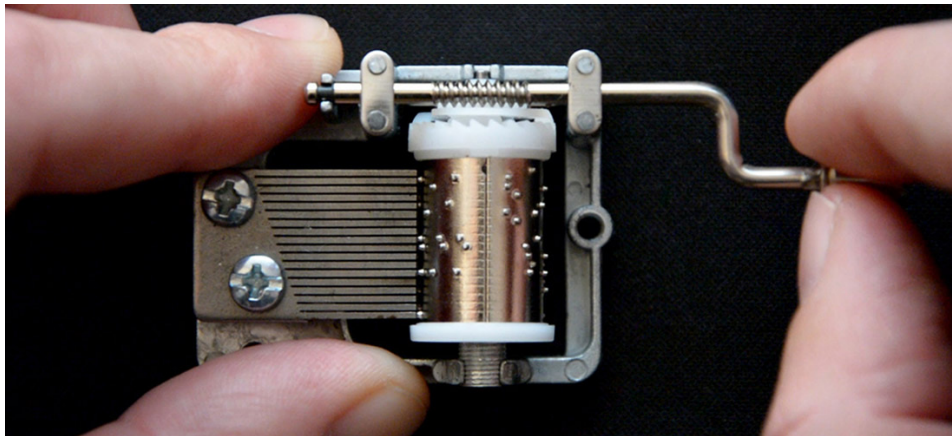
Medium: HD video, colour, sound

Sound of the videos by Guido Affini – Doshin Studio.

Duration: Various running time

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2016 (series, ongoing)



The “Poems” series consists of short videos that investigate gestures or minimal situations, “peripheral” to our daily lives and that refer to different places and times. The videos are micro narrations built according to the compositional structure of the Haiku Japanese poems, they are composed of three scenes - like the haiku are composed of three verses - shot in different moments and places, often distant from each other in time, that Romano juxtaposes according to visual or conceptual similarities and in which one of the scenes subverts the whole. The videos are associated with Haikus written by the artist in a process of retrospective literary transposition of the images.

Morgan Hoaus

Artworks placed in the Ruins (R)

R

Doruntina Kastrati

Title: The Long Walk

Medium: Installation

Material: Organic materials, metal, fabric, adhesives

Dimension: Variable

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2017

The world is motion, everything moves. Even art is not a mirror but motion. I understood this myself when I felt that my work as a graphic artist, which I studied for, was not giving me answers and the right satisfaction. That is why for three years of research, I didn't get enough from flat visions but was intrigued and seduced by motions and plastic visions. This inner motion of mine was also conditioned with existential concerns which I experienced every day as I was observing the tragic news on the refugees: long lines that wandered from the Orient toward Europe conjointly, with the overcrowded ships with sorrowed people crossing the Mediterranean. I recalled similar confessions of the evicted Kosovars, that long walk of my parents' generation, in 1999...

The question I was asking “What's this Long Walk?” that was transforming everything around me into red: the water, flowers, everybody, it even made you and me feel scared and intimidated?! I understood that the question was universal and posed the enigma of daily strolling by every creature, every individual. From our birth until the end of our life cycle, we almost persistently move from the known and experienced toward the unknown and inexperienced. Is it inevitable that by searching for peace, happiness and a better life, so many defeats of forced and violent journeys happen?

I bled long for a metamorphosis viewpoint that would give way to dualism, the power of survival. It seemed to me that intuitively that I was in search of goats' legs or the flock of goats that survive even in the most extreme conditions of existence — on steep cliffs with a few bushes on which they feed. Goats, as I know, are not born with the inherited instinct of climbing cliffs but develop this ability from the need of survival.

In my project, I made 10 sculptures with organic materials, thus 10 goats, where the focus was concentrated on their legs, this survival weapon.



Artworks placed in the Castle (K)

K1
Valentina Bonizzi
Title: Cartographers
Medium: Video / Sound
Duration: 22’
Courtesy: The artist
Year: 2015



At the outburst of WWII, people who were living in, or migrants originating from, around the region of Molise in Italy, had to deal with different consequences which were related to the same cause: their Italian nationality.

The practice of cartography, or map making, has to do with developing a stable, that is, dependable account of a landscape in terms of both its physical aspects, such as the topography and flora, and the abstract, such as political borders.

Yet when the tools typically employed to survey physical landscapes are used to attempt to pinpoint the individual, Cartographers demonstrates that they are awkward instruments for such a task.

K2		
Oliver Ressler		Oliver Ressler
Title: Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart: COP21	Title: Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart: Ende Gelände	
Medium: Film		Medium: Film
Duration: 16’		Duration: 12’
Courtesy: The Artist		Courtesy: The Artist
Year: 2017		Year: 2016



Not too long ago, global warming was science fiction. Now it has become hard science, and a reality we already live in. The latest reports from the sober, intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) suggest that the planet may be approaching multiple thresholds of irreversible damage faster than was ever anticipated. The title “Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart” refers to a situation in which all the technology needed to end the age of fossil fuel already exists. Whether the present ecological, social and economic crisis will be overcome is primarily a question of political power. The climate movement is now stronger than ever. It obstructed pipeline projects such as the Keystone XL tar sands pipeline. It stopped Arctic drilling and blocked fracking all over the globe. Coal-fired power plants were shut down by resistance, and the divestment movement that pressures institutions to unload their stocks from fossil fuel corporations has had successes.

The story of this ongoing film project may turn out to be a story of the beginning of the climate revolution, the moment when popular resistance began to reconfigure the world. The project follows the climate movement in its struggles to dismantle an economic system heavily dependent on fossil fuels. It records key events for the climate movement, bringing together many situations, contexts, voices and experiences.

The first two events – there is one film for each – are the action during the COP21 summit in Paris in December 2015, and a blockade of a fossil fuel extraction site in Germany in May 2016. In the first film (17 min., 2016), activists contest the UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, a city then under a state of emergency.

Like twenty failed annual climate conferences before it, COP21 in Paris proved the incapacity of governments to commit themselves to any binding agreement that would curtail global warming through a definite strategy for the end of fossil fuel use. The resulting Climate Agreement avoids anything that would harm the economic interests of corporations. The governments now pretending that non-binding agreements can hold back climate change are the same ones whose binding free trade pacts make dead letter of local environmental and climate legislation. The film on the Ende Gelände (end of the road) action (12 min., 2016) shifts the focus to a massive civil disobedience action at the Lusatia lignite coal fields (near Berlin). Four thousand activists entered an open-cast mine, blocking the loading station and the rail connection to a coal-fired power plant. The blockades disrupted the coal supply and forced the Swedish proprietor Vattenfall to shut the power station down. The action was part of an international “global escalation” against the fossil fuel industry, calling on the world to “Break Free from Fossil Fuels” and putting that imperative directly into practice.

Despite the efforts of government and corporate PR to convince us otherwise, whether and when fossil fuels are abandoned will be determined above all by social movements and the degree of pressure they exert on institutions. Powerful structures force us into lives that destroy our livelihood. It is these structures that must be changed, and nothing but our action in common can change them. This new work as a 2-channel video installation was presented first as part of Oliver Ressler’s solo exhibition, “Property is Theft,” at MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest. The project will continue with further episodes to be added as the struggle against a fossil fuel-dependent economy continues.

Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart: COP21

Director and producer: Oliver Ressler

Cinematography, audio recording: Oliver Ressler

Narration text: Oliver Ressler & Matthew Hyland

Editing: Oliver Ressler

Narrator: Renée Gadsden

Color correction: Rudolf Gottsberger

Sound design and music: Vinzenz Schwab

The project was commissioned by MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest for Oliver Ressler’s solo exhibition “Property is Theft” and received support from the ERSTE Foundation, BKA – Kunst and Otto Mauer Fonds.

Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart: Ende Gelände

Director and producer: Oliver Ressler

Cinematography, audio recording: Thomas Parb

Narration text: Oliver Ressler & Matthew Hyland

Editing: Oliver Ressler

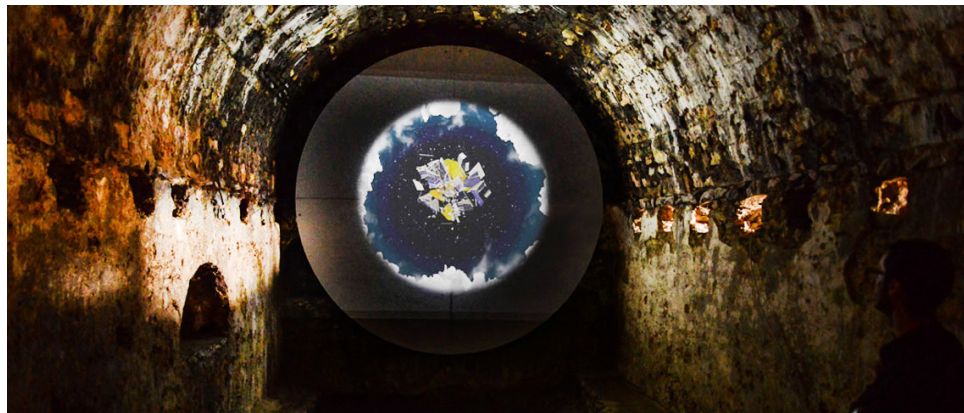
Narrator: Renée Gadsden

Color correction and finishing: Rudolf Gottsberger

Sound design and music: Vinzenz Schwab

The project was commissioned by MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art in Bucharest for Oliver Ressler’s solo exhibition “Property is Theft” and received support from the ERSTE Foundation, BKA – Kunst and Otto Mauer Fonds.

K3
Sašo Sedlaček
Title: Sky in Ruins
Medium: Video projection
Duration: 16'
Courtesy: The Artist
Year: 2014



“Sky in Ruins” is an illusionistic video projection that alludes to the tradition of Renaissance ceiling painting and its illusionistic depictions of limitless space. The projection is a window into the nearby cosmos, where there is far more space trash than satellites. It is an illusion that provides a dystopian view of space in our vicinity. A series of close-ups of collisions between satellites and space trash is projected onto the space dumping ground opening up in front of us.

The 3D animation is a homemade visual illusion, made with Blender open source software, with realistically fashioned models of satellites, and is accompanied by recordings of actual space sounds. The main purpose of the work, however, is not so much to portray a real situation in nearby space as it is to point out that the universe, despite its vastness, is not so unlimited that we could go on simply moving our bad habits from Earth out into space.

K4
Yannick Dauby
Title: How Corals Think?
Medium: Sound Installation
Courtesy: n/a
Year: 2017



For the last twelve years, I have been visiting the Penghu archipelago, collecting the soundscapes of the islands. Being strongly attracted to the Sea, I have been witness to dramatic changes in the underwater environment. In 2008, a cold stream lowered the temperature of the sea, killing a huge part of the coral reefs. Since 2013, every two years with Wan-Shuen Tsai (with whom I founded Atelier Hui-Kan), we have developed local projects about the environment and education, creating artworks and publishing them as vinyl records and showing them during exhibitions. I regularly settle my own sound studio, devoted to field recordings and electroacoustic compositions. In Spring 2017, I started a sound project about the underwater environment. I collaborated with local NGOs and biologists from Penghu and Academia Sinica. I initiated a series of recording sessions that constituted the basis for a sound archive, allowing acoustic monitoring of coral reefs and providing sound materials for education and conservation purpose.

For Autostrada Biennale, a sound installation based on my field recordings, allowed the visitors to immerse into the sounds of a coral reef. It was accompanied with a series of short texts describing this specific habitat and weaving concepts coming from anthropology and ecology.

K5
Hsu Chia-Wei
Title: Spirit-writing
Medium: 3 channel video
Duration: 9'45"
Courtesy: The Artist
Year: 2016



Video installation “Spirit-Writing” presents an unusual dialogue between artist Chia-Wei Hsu and the frog god Marshal Tie Jia who, allegedly, was born in a small pond more than 1,400 years ago in Jiangxi, China. It is said that his temple in the Wuyi Mountains was destroyed during the Cultural Revolution, so he has since been taking shelter on Matsu Island.

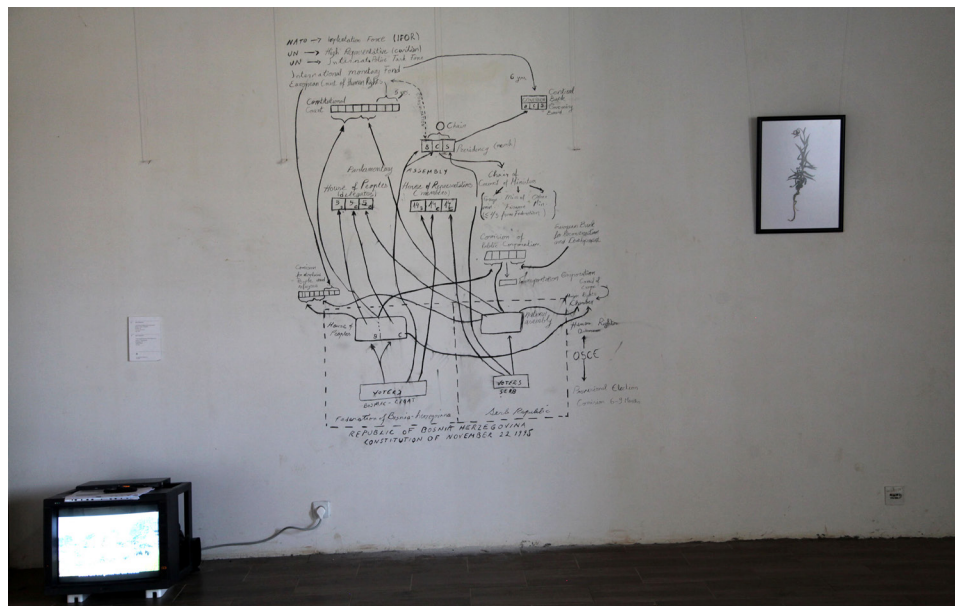
The local villagers communicate with Marshal Tie Jia through a unique divination chair ritual, during which, the divination chair shakes violently under divine orders and proceeds to hit against the altar table and write down commands decreed by the divine power. Sometimes, legible words are written down, but there are also times when the writing needs to be deciphered through further gestures of pounding or making of noises. The villagers use this ritual to help them make decisions on many things in life.



Marshal Tie-Jia was invited by Chia-Wei Hsu to come to a film studio, where the divination chair ritual was performed to ask the frog god about the original conditions of his temple in the Wuyi Mountains. Hsu also reported to the Marshal about the approach and concept behind this art project. The process was made into a documentary, with an animation presented at the same time.

Motion capture technology was applied in the film studio to document the movements of the divination char which was post-produced into a 3D animation. A 3D temple is also constructed according to the fragmented clues provided by Marshal Tia-Jia. This two-channel video installation showcases the dialogue between the artist and the frog god, integrating contemporary art and folk belief, the digital world and the realm of the divine.

K6
Ibro Hasanović
Title: Project Proposal (Lilium Bosniacum)
Medium: Video/Installation
Duration: 16'
Courtesy: The Artist
Year: 2017



The Dayton Peace Agreement was reached in November 1995 at a U.S. Air Force Base near Dayton (Ohio), and was formally signed on December 14, 1995 in Paris. It brought peace to the country torn up by a war which started on the 6th of April 1992. Today, this peace agreement, which also serves as the Bosnian constitution, has become a political nightmare. Its complex structure makes any kind of progress in Bosnia and Herzegovina seem impossible.

Lilium Bosniacum (a.k.a. the golden lily or the Bosnian lily) is a lily native to Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Lilium Bosniacum*, together with *Lilium Albanicum* and *Lilium Jankae* have always been treated as varieties of *Lilium Carneolicum*. However, extensive DNA-analyses have shown that this group is polyphyletic, and have been treated as separate species since 2005.



The Bosnian Lily is a symbol that has been used in Bosnia since the middle ages. It became especially popular during the rule of Bosnian king Tvrtko I Kotromanić, when Bosnia was one of the most powerful countries in the Balkans. With the invasion of the Ottomans into the region and the fall of the Kotromanić Dynasty, the symbol went out of use.

On the 1st of March 1992, when Bosnia and Herzegovina gained independence from Yugoslavia, lilies were brought back on to the Bosnian flag. In 1998, after the protests of political representatives of the former Herceg-Bosna and Republika Srpska, the flag of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina was replaced.

The idea of the project is to try and create a set of rules and genetically modify the Bosnian Lily in order that it complies with the complex structure of Dayton Peace Agreement. In collaboration with scientists (e.g. botanists), I would like to conduct experiments in order to see if this specific “constitutional law” can be translated, one way or another, into “natural law”. All of the process would be documented in photographs and on video, in order to produce an illustrated scientific book/ herbarium and a short video documentary. Finally the goal would be to register this “hybrid lily”, if successful, to the EU database of registered plant varieties.

K7

Jelena Tomasevic

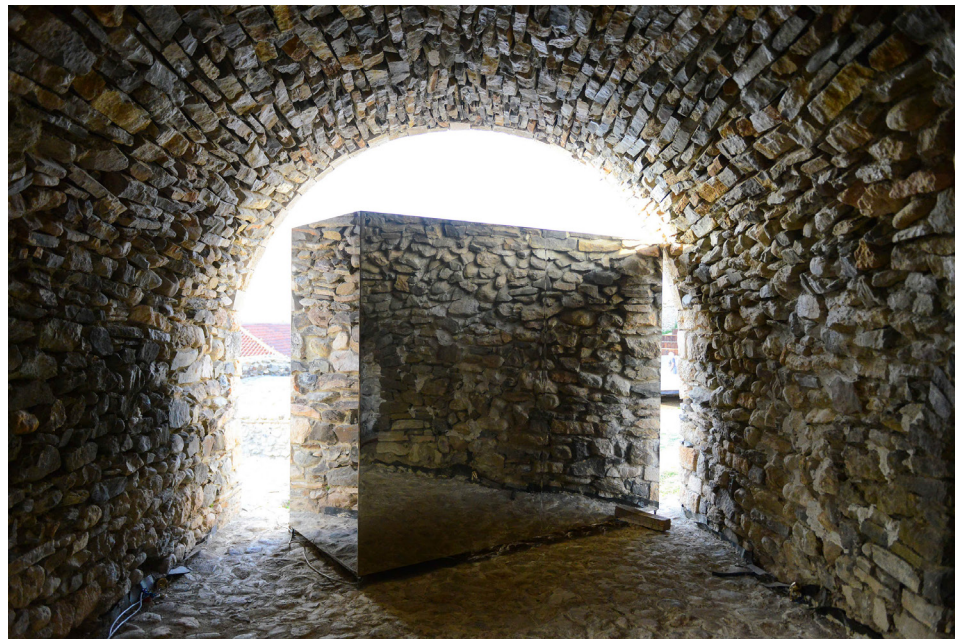
Title: Burden of Proof

Medium: Installation

Material: A glossy stainless steel/Inox

Courtesy: The Artist

Year: 2017



A glossy stainless steel object that resembles a guards house, or soldiers house, or police border object. The object has a proper door, that can be open and closed or the spectator. Inside of the steel object, a table and chair were installed, and a small sink. Outside of the object, a trained German Shepherd was tied to the box.

Since the object is made of glossy stainless steel, a spectator could see his own distorted reflection on the outer walls. Entering the object, the spectator could feel the anxiety of the work itself and borders of any kind.



The Wind Shifts

This is how the wind shifts:
Like the thoughts of an old human,
Who still thinks eagerly
And despairingly.
The wind shifts like this:
Like a human without illusions,
Who still feels irrational things within her.
The wind shifts like this:
Like humans approaching proudly,
Like humans approaching angrily.
This is how the wind shifts:
Like a human, heavy and heavy,
Who does not care.

Wallace Stevens

International Conference “The Future of Borders”



Session I: Borders & Justice 20.08.2017

Borders – what are they? When are they needed? What makes them useful? What makes them harmful? How do they affect society?

Insofar as today's border issues related to refugees, immigrants, the stateless and the marginalized are in the political central stage, justice of and for the Other has become a central part of democracy. Aside from claims of human rights, how can justice be addressed, unless it addresses its multifaceted borders? While national borders intersect with cultural diversity, social justice is loaded with an excess of historically and geographically uncanny stories. How then to make justice seeking coincide with the formation of subjectivity, for example, by means of protest and storytelling? When masses migrate across borders, how can modern democratic states cope with the imminent crisis of social systems? Why do people migrate after all? Is there an economics of border politics connected to it and if so, how is society affected by it? These were some of the questions and issues that were raised during the discussion at the first session with the guests:



Opening remarks:

Manray Hsu (Tai) curator of this edition of Autostrada Biennale

Frank Hantke (Ger) Friedrich Ebert Stiftung - FES Prishtina, Country Director

Key note address by

Veton Surroi (Kos) A former editor of Koha Daily, publicist and political analyst

Questions and Answers / Open discussion

Moderator: Eva Ellereit (Ger), FES Prishtina

Performance by HAVEIT

Presentation of Artists related to Session One: Rena Rädle and Vladan Jeremić (Serbia); Libia Castro (Spain), Sead Kazanxhiu (Tirana, Albania).

Moderator: Manray Hsu

Session II: City & Borders 21.08.2017

Gender, urban-rural, public-private, developed-underdeveloped, religious borders, inter-ethnic.

The city, being a place of people with differences, is full of borders visible and invisible. People of different ethnicity, religion, color, gender, age, political and economic allegiances, live or travel in the city; each individual and group brings their own stories to the contact zone called the city. Moreover, the city, being a human-made environment, is created and maintained by borders of culture/nature. In modernity, large scale urbanisation has produced a new type of humanity that experiences nature as an absolute other. Can human beings live peacefully with other species? Where are the city's borders when ruins, environmental disasters (with their dislocated populations), and other natural forces continuously demonstrate the finitude of humanity? These were some of the issues that were discussed during the second session with the guests:



Opening Remarks

Manray Hsu and Eliza Hoxha (Kos)

Keynote address by
Yehuda Safran (USA)

Keynote address by
Edi Muka (Albania)

Panel Discussion: City borders - Human borders and beyond / Speakers: Andrew Russell - UN Development Coordinator, Bernhard Soland - Swiss Development and Cooperation Office, Edmond Hajrizi - UBT, Hajrullah Ceku - EcMaNdryshe
Moderator: Eliza Hoxha

Presentation of Artists related to Session Two: Stefano Romano (Italy), Saso Sedlacek (Slovenia); Yannick Dauby (France).

Session III: Contemporary Art's Undefined Borders 22.08.2017

On the third and last day of the international biennale conference themes directly related to contemporary art were in focus.

Modern and contemporary art has always claimed to be borderless, in the names of internationalism, the global avant-garde, the cosmopolitan, or the nomadic. And yet borders in art exist everywhere in terms of art's social, political, or economic settings. While seeking to contextualize artworks of various strands, contemporary art seems to perpetuate undefined borders. How then does it come to terms with the trends of border-seeking in contemporary society? Or, could it be the return of borders that makes contemporary art even more challenging, compelling, or problematic?



Keynote address by

Sezgin Boynik (Finland)

Presentation of Artists related to Session Three: Valentina Bonizzi (Italy), Alban Muja (Kosova)

Closing Panel: Sislej Xhafa (USA), Miran Mohar (Slovenia), Yehuda Safran (USA)

Moderator: Manray Hsu

Artists

VALENTINA BONIZZI, CHANG
CHIEN-CHI, LIBIA CASTRO &
OLAFUR OLAFSSON,
YANNICK DAUBY, JORE
FAVINI, ARTAM, ZLAHU,
IBRO HASANOVIC, HAVEIT,
HSIAO WEI, IRWIN,
DORU, KASTRATI, SEAD
KAZANXHIU, LI BINYUAN,
ALBAN MUJA, ELLA RAIDEL,
OLIVER RESSLER, EFANO
ROMANO, OPA, POSSESSIVE
POSSESSIVE, REPRESSION,
REMY & VLADAN
JEREM, ELENA TOMASEVIC,
SASO SEDLACEK, YANG
SHUN-FA, ALKETA XHAFA.

VALENTINA BONIZZI (Italy)

Was born in Milan 1982 and lives between Tirana and Glasgow. Digging into archives and communities, Valentina Bonizzi's work highlights issues of social justice while it uncovers the potentialities of democratization that lay in the artistic re-definition of cartographic practices. Her work explores the role of the image in all its expanded forms considering the politics of time in relation to hybridity, migration and the environment. Some of her works respond to scientific methods of defining citizenship, by carefully presenting the individual within collective history. Valentina works with a variety of media such as film, photography, the archive, sound, radio and performative intervention with music and dialogues.



Valentina Bonizzi / "Is it yours?" 2'19 Video (2014), (BS2); "Cartographer," video (2015), (K1).

CHIEN-CHI CHANG (Taiwan)

Was born in Taichung, Taiwan in 1961. Chang earned his BA from Soochow University in 1984 and an MA from Indiana University in 1990. In 1995, Chang was elected to join Magnum Photos and became a Full Member in 2001. In his work, Chien-Chi Chang makes manifest the abstract concepts of alienation and connection. Chang's investigation of the ties that bind one person to another was drawn on his own deeply divided immigrant experience in the United States. He was the recipient of the W. Eugene Smith Fund in 1999. Chang lives in Graz, Austria.



CHANG Chien-Chi / "The War That Never Was" (2017), 15'40" Video, (BS).

LIBIA CASTRO (Spain) ÓLAFUR ÓLAFSSON (Iceland)

Live in Rotterdam and Berlin, and started their collaboration in the Netherlands in 1997 during their MFA studies. Their work is often realized together with groups and individuals of different professions, activists, decision makers and people of all walks of life. They work with a variety of media, such as video, photography, text, audio/music, sculpture, multi-media installations, and performance. At times they engage in generating open processes or ongoing long term projects, at others they engage themselves with specific social, historical and political contexts to portray and/or intervene in a specific moment, taking part in a larger sociopolitical process, and exploring the possibilities of art's agency.

In their works they critically and playfully focus on everyday life and how it is shaped or affected by ideological, socioeconomic, cultural and political factors. Asymmetry is a guiding principle in their multimedia and interventionist work, which often addresses injustice, inequalities and emancipation, portraying the oppressed and the authoritative subject as well as the emancipating one. Among their works are the ongoing campaign projects Your Country Doesn't Exist (2003-ongoing) and ThE riGHt tO RighT/WrOnG (2012-ongoing).



Libia Castro (Spain) and Olafur Olafsson (Iceland) / "Your Country Doesn't Exist," (2003-2017), (BS1).

YANNICK DAUBY (France)

(b. 1974, France/Taiwan) — is a sound Artist with a background in musique concrète and improvisation, using found objects, electroacoustic devices and phonographies. As a field recordist, he has particular interest for animals or nature sounds as well as urban situations and unusual acoustic phenomena. Excursions are pretext to a sonic gathering, and often leads to the realisation of phonographic collages. He often collaborates with other musicians, visual artists and dancers, producing audio-visual performances or installations, and makes sound design for films.



Yannick Dauby / "How Corals Think" (2017), sound installation, (K4).

His work has been presented by various international festivals, record labels and biennale exhibitions. He has been based in Taiwan since 2007, and is interested in the field of anthropology and ecology, exploring the island's soundscape through artistic research, developing art projects in local communities and documenting the fauna and its environment, creating art & science projects in collaborations with biologists.

Projects : www.kalene.net

Personal : www.yannickdauby.net

ETTORE FAVINI (Italy)

Was born in Cremona, Italy in 1974. He taps into the experience of listening to “minor” narratives to fuel works that map the relationship between people and their environment. Memory, both individual and collective, is often at the center of a path that moves from autobiographical sources of inspiration toward universal themes like time and existence. His works, which tend to be site-specific, are developed through a long growth process that renders them a living organism, never truly finished: open-ended devices of vision in which the work partakes in life and the viewer becomes an active participant.

Awarded the Artegirovane prize from the Milan and Turin Chambers of Commerce (2005) and the prestigious Premio New York from Columbia University (2007), Favini has also been shortlisted for the Castello di Rivoli prize (2009), shared the 48th Premio Suzzara (2013) with Antonio Rovaldi and in 2017 won the ninth edition of NCTM and arts.



Ettore Favini / “Kosovar Symbolism,” (2017), action, (BS)

ARTAN HAJRULLAHU (Kosovo)

Born in 1979 in Gjilan, Kosovo he studied painting at the Academy of Arts in the University of Prishtina and teaches painting at the Visual Arts High School in Gjilan. His artistic work is dominated by themes of everyday life and nostalgia. His drawings fuse quotidian scenes with the artists’ childhood memories, whereby poetic history is expressed in the relationship between the inhabitants and household objects.

His solo exhibitions have been held at the National Museum of History in Tirana, (in 2006); The Kosovo National Art Gallery, (in 2010); at Tetris, (in 2011); as part of International Studio & Curatorial Programs ISCP in New York, (in 2014); and at the Tulla Culture Center in Tirana, (in 2015).



Artan Hajrullahu / “Nostalgia,” Series of drawings, pencil on paper, (S2).

In 2013 he was awarded the Kosovo Artist of Tomorrow prize and the Artist of the Year in Gjilan. He has also exhibited in group shows at the International Biennial of Drawing in Prishtina, 2010; at the ‘Varg e Vi’ Contemporary Art Center in Gjilan, 2010; National Gallery of Macedonia “Mala Stanica”, 2014; Collectif Denface in Rouen, France, 2015, G12HUB Art Gallery in Belgrade, 2015; “UNERASABLE” Lumbardhi Cinema-Prizren, 2015; “This Is Not a Palm Tree” Neurotitan Gallery (Berlin), 2015; Center Sodobnih Umetnosti, Celje, Slovenia, 2016; “Face face”, Imago Mundi project, Bosnia Center of Culture in Sarajevo, BIH, 2017; and Autostrada Biennale, Prizren, 2017.

IBRO HASANOVIĆ (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Is a Bosnian/French artist born 1981 in Ljubovija, Yugoslavia. He studied product design at the Academy of Fine Arts in Sarajevo and contemporary art and cinema at Le Fresnoy – Studio National des Arts Contemporains in France. His works – films, videos, photographs and installations are formed in the relationship between the political and the poetic, touching upon the issues of oral and individual histories, collective memory and personal archives.

Selected solo exhibitions include: “Impossible Encounters,” at the Apoteka - Space for Contemporary Art in Vodnjan (2015), “Hasanović-Cvijanović,” at the Tirana Art Lab in Tirana, Albania (2014). “Letters,” at the Tobačna Cultural Center in Ljubljana (2013); “Artists’ Cinema: Ibro Hasanović,” at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb (2013); “A Short Story,” at the Turku Art Museum, Finland (2012); and “Stories, Galleria A+A (Slovenian Exhibition Centre),” at the Venice Biennale (2011). Ibro Hasanović currently lives and works in Brussels, Belgium.



Ibro Hasanovic / “Lilium Bosniacum” (2017), video, texts & pictures, (K6).

HAVEIT (Kosovo)

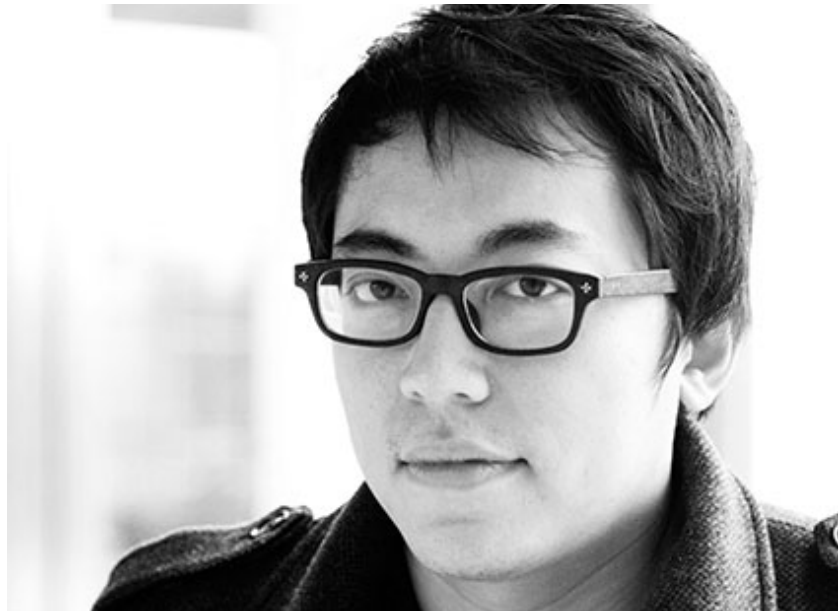
HAVEIT (Alketa Sylaj, Hana Qena, Vesa Qena, Arbërore Sylaj) is a collective whose work strives to overcome the platitudes of conventional indulgence and outdated moral templates. They aim to delineate our common history as it is. The group was established in 2011, in Prishtina.



Haveit / “When father wept, mother washed my eyes,” (2016), Video installation, (AM).

HSU CHIA-WEI (Taiwan)

Was born in 1983 in Taichung, Taiwan. He lives and works in Taipei, Taiwan. Hsu is interested in the forgotten histories of the Cold War in Asia. His works develop a keen sensitivity that weaves together reality and illusion, history and the present by building a circuit of events in the hors-champ of people and places off the screen of history. He has been continuously trying to merge the languages of contemporary art and film to originate his works, in concern of how to step into reality through film creation, fabricating a mythical narrative which lingers between fiction and reality. He maintains a critical attitude toward filming, and through the power of film creation, he strives to move art to locations outside museums and to develop his political practice. His artworks had been presented in many exhibitions in museums, biennials and film festivals.



HSU Chia-Wei / "Spirit-Writing," (2016), video, (K5).

IRWIN (Slovenia)

The IRWIN group was founded in Ljubljana (Slovenia). Its members are Dusan Mandic, Miran Mohar, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek and Borut Vogeltnik. IRWIN, along with the music group "Laibach" (1980), the theatre group "Gledalisce Sester Scipion Nasice" (1983), later known as the "Kozmokinetični Kabinet Noordung," and the design department "Novi Kolektivizam", comprises one of the core groups within the artists' collective "Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK)," established in 1984 in the Slovenian republic of the Federal Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. IRWIN is committed to the so-called 'retro-principle' which is "not a style or an art trend but a principle of thought, a way of behaving and acting"(IRWIN). In its artistic projects the group IRWIN has been involving itself extensively with the art history of Europe, in particular with the ambivalent inheritance of the historical avant-gardes and its totalitarian successors, and thus with the dialectic of avant-garde and totalitarianism.



Irwin / "NSK State-in-Time," Passport office, (BS3);
"NSK Passport Holders 2007- 2008," video, (BS4).

Following the creation of a specific visual language in their predominantly painterly projects of the 1980s, the group has been concentrating since the 1990s on a critical examination of the art history of "Western Modernism," countering it with the "retro-avant-garde" of a fictive "Eastern Modernism" which, in its own obvious artificiality, points to the artificiality of Western art historical structures that continue to exclude contemporary Eastern European art to this day. With their artistic practice they have actively and concretely intervened in social and historical activities in the decade that redefined the status of art in Eastern Europe (Kapital, NSK Embassy Moscow, Transnacional, East Art Map projects).

DORUNTINA KASTRATI (Kosovo)

Was born in Prizren in 1991, and graduated in Graphic Design in the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Fine Arts. Doruntina lives and works between Prizren and Prishtina. She won the Artists of Tomorrow award in 2014 with her work titled “Along With You Flowers Are Dying Too”, at the National Gallery of Kosovo. Throughout January-March of 2015 she attended an artistic residence at the International Studio and Curatorial Program (ISCP) in New York. In January of 2016 Doruntina also won the first edition of the #Hajdex6! program of the “Hajde” Foundation, which was founded by artist Petrit Halilaj. In February of 2017 she opened her first personal exhibition “Red Landscape”, curated by Vala Osmani at Stacion - Center for Contemporary Art.



Doruntina Kastrati / “The Long Walk,” (2017), Installation, (R).

SEAD KAZANXHIU (Albania)

Is a visual artist born in 1987 in Fier, South-West Albania, and has been based in Tirana since 2012. He studied painting at the University of Arts in Tirana (2006 – 2010), where he obtained his bachelor degree. Following his studies, he continued to work primarily with painting, whereas more recently his practice has expanded into sculpture, installation, video, and public space interventions.

Kazanxhiu was raised in an ethnic minority-Roma family. This fact has profoundly shaped his childhood years in Baltez, a village nearby Fier, where he was raised in an environment sensitive to social and cultural inequalities. In such a community, well aware of hierarchical structures and un-privileged positions within the nation-state, the very condition of being an Albanian Roma citizen turned out to be a determining factor for Kazanxhiu’s status as an artist as well as for his overall work so far.



Sead Kazanxhiu / “Museum of Conversation,” painting series, (S1);
“I don’t have borders to protect,” installation, (P).

LI BINYUAN (China)

Was born in Yongzhou, Hunan Province (China), in 1985. He graduated from the Sculpture Department at the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 2011. He currently lives and works in Beijing. Li Binyuan works with his close environment and the events happening around him, he uses surrounding materials and improvises with them. Each of his action aims to create a new form of relationship with the environment, and in his performances the way of acting is uninterrupted with the surrounding space. It jumps out of the structure of individual integration of emotion and experience. His work highlights the refinement of the individual, the body and its multiple behaviors. Li Binyuan place life itself in the center of his work, but also sometimes brings us beyond that.



Li Binyuan / "Freedom Farming," (2014), 5'02" video, (LH1).

ALBAN MUJA (Kosovo)

Is a Kosovo based visual artist and filmmaker born in 1980 in Mitrovica. He completed his BA and MA at the Academy of Fine Arts at the University of Prishtina. Mostly influenced by social, political and economic transformative processes in the region, he investigates and connects the history and socio-political themes with his own situation in present-day Kosovo. His work deals with a wide range of media including video installations, short films, documentary films, drawing, painting, photography and performance art. His work has been displayed in various festivals, art fairs, as well as in both group and solo exhibitions. He has attended various residencies and is the recipient of a number of fellowships. He lives and works in Prishtina.



Alban Muja / "Borders Without Borders," photo series x12 (BS9);
"Catch me," Photography, (BS5).

ELLA RAIDEL (Austria)

(b.1970) is a filmmaker, artist and researcher from Austria, living and working in Taipei. Raidel focuses in her work on the sociocultural impact of globalization. Presenting as video, art installation, and films, she has investigated different cultural fields. Her works have been part of international biennials and film festivals, and the feature-length film *Double Happiness* (75 Min., 2014) has been shown worldwide in over 30 International film festivals. Her writings include the book *Subversive Realitäten: Die Filme von Tsai Ming Liang* (Schüren, 2011) and essays on film aesthetics. Currently she is a senior postdoctoral researcher at Art University Linz, Austria. She has attended various residencies and received number of awards.



Ella Raidel / “Double Happiness,” (2014), 74’ film, (BS11).

OLIVER RESSLER (Austria)

Is an artist and filmmaker who produces installations, projects in public space, and films on issues such as economics, democracy, global warming, forms of resistance and social alternatives. Ressler has had solo exhibitions at Berkeley Art Museum, USA; Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade; Centro Cultural Conde Duque, Madrid; Alexandria Contemporary Arts Forum, Egypt; The Cube Project Space, Taipei and survey solo exhibitions in Wyspa Institute of Art, Gdansk; Lentos Kunstmuseum, Linz; Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporaneo – CAAC, Seville; SALT Galata, Istanbul; and MNAC – National Museum of Contemporary Art, Bucharest. Ressler has participated in more than 300 group exhibitions, including Museo Reina Sofia, Madrid; Van Abbe Museum, Eindhoven; MASSMoCA, North Adams, USA; Centre Pompidou, Paris; the biennials in Seville (2006), Moscow (2007), Taipei (2008), Lyon (2009), Gyumri (2012), Venice (2013), Athens (2013, 2015), Quebec (2014), Jeju (2017) and at Documenta 14, Kassel, 2017 (as part of an exhibition organized by EMST).



Oliver Ressler / “Emergency Turned Upside-Down,” (2016), film (BS8);
“Everything’s coming together while everything’s falling apart” (2016), 2-channel video installation. (K2).
www.ressler.at

STEFANO ROMANO (Italy)

(Italy, 1975), lives and works between Albania and Italy. He graduated at “G.Carrara” Academy of Fine Arts in Bergamo, where he also worked as an assistant of several artists and then as a professor. He has worked for more than a decade in Albania where he conceived several projects as artist as well as curator. In 2012 he co-founded DyZeroTre (DZT) and MAPS – Mobile Archive on Public Space. Romano works in a processual field, through temporary actions, performances, installations, video and photographic works. He realizes ephemeral, diasporic actions built according to a rigid grammatical structure capable of always generating unexpected situations, making the artist the first spectator of himself. His work focuses on the contradictions of social reality, always investigated through a light look, capable of creating transitory and unexpected images.



Stefano Romano / “Study for a Monument,” ongoing performance, (P); “Poems (Haiku)” ongoing video series, (BH).

OPA (OBSESSIVE POSSESSIVE AGGRESSION) (Macedonia)

OPA is a collaboration founded in 2001 by the visual artists Slobodanka Stevceska (1971, Macedonia) and Denis Saraginovski (1971, Macedonia). Both of them studied at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje and are working on the borderline of art, media and performance. OPA focuses on researching the social, cultural and everyday issues, as well as ways of looking, thinking and behaving of certain communities in the shifting social and political conditions. OPA reacts to actual situations conceptualizing them into an art form by meta- situations/positions/narratives. Thus their activities include actions, context-specific projects, video, TV screenings, mockumentaries, etc.



OPA (Obsessive Possessive Aggression) / “Think Big!” Public installation, 2017, (P1).

Their projects are often related to the societal life of the artist and the art system, deconstructing the artwork and its units. OPA has had solo exhibitions in Macedonia, Estonia, Croatia, Slovenia, France, Germany, USA and the Netherlands and has exhibited widely in group exhibitions and festivals such as Transmediale, Berlin; Rencontres Internationales Paris/Berlin; Biennale of Contemporary Art, Moscow; Transeuropa - European Theatre- and Performance Festival, Hildesheim; Freewaves’ Biennial of New Media Arts, Los Angeles; I Had a Dream, Kunstraum Baden, Switzerland; Victory Obsessed, Zamek Culture Centre, Poznan; etc. OPA received residency fellowships in Estonia, France, Germany, Switzerland and the Netherlands, TheDragisa Nanevski Award at AKTO Festival of Contemporary Arts, Bitola (2010) and The Young Visual Artists Annual Award DENES (2004). OPA is co-founding member of Kooperacija Initiative (2012-2015).

RENA RÄDLE (Germany) VLADAN JEREMIĆ (Serbia)

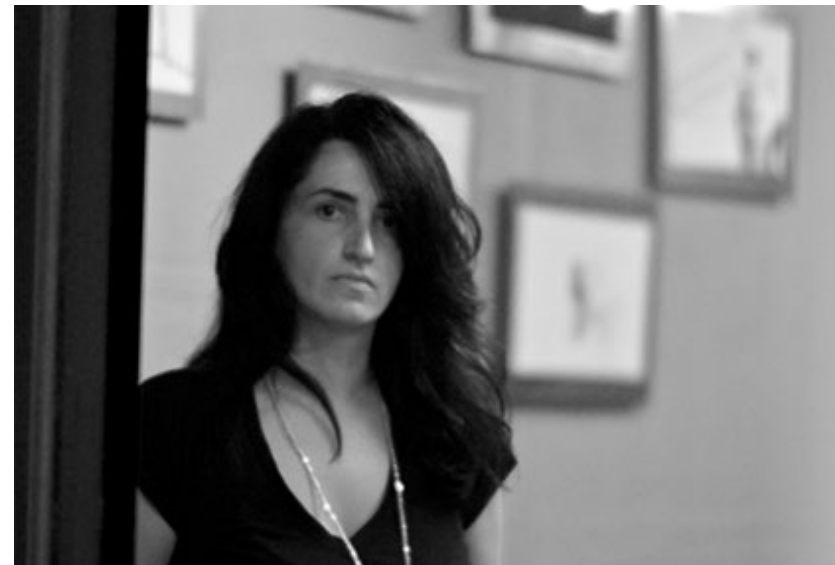
Are artists whose artistic practice comprises drawing, text, photography, installation and video. Rädle and Jeremić live and work in Belgrade, Serbia. Since 2002 they have been developing a joint artistic practice that explores the overlapping space between art and politics. In their artistic work they focus on the contradictions that exist in society today and research with artistic means emancipatory potentials. Their projects include artistic interventions and engagement in current public debates and struggles, cross-disciplinary collaboration and dissemination through different media. Rädle & Jeremić have worked with groups such as Chto Delat?, ArtLeaks, Perpetuum Mobil, SIZ, ZIP group, LevArt, The Unbribables and other collectives. Rädle & Jeremić's works are in the collections of the Thessaloniki State Museum of Contemporary Art, the October Salon Collection and the Perpetuum Mobile Commons Collection.



Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić / "The Housing Question," Installation (BS7).

JELENA TOMASEVIC (Montenegro)

Born in 1974 in Podgorica, Montenegro, Jelena lives and works in Montenegro. She received an MFA in Academy of Fine Arts, Cetinje in 2004. She works on installations, paintings, video works. Selected exhibitions: "Burden of Proof," Galerie Perpetuel, Frankfurt; "Object of Punishment," Galerie Perpetuel; "Life Interest," Handel Street London; "Apparent Servitude," IT; "Just Kidding," Thrust Projects, NY; "Joy of Life," Thrust Projects, NY; "Now That We Have Gone As Far As We Can Go," Conrad's Gallery, Dusseldorf; "Recycling Religion," White Box Gallery, "Intimate Transgressions," White Box Gallery, NYC, "Wo das Gras grüner ist," Kunstmuseum Liechtenstein. "Just Kidding," IT; "Buero.DC," Cologne; "The Rise and Fall of Excess Culture," Stux Gallery NY; "Gender Check," MUMOC, Vienna; "Farmers Market," NY; "Collapsible Monuments," Thrust Projects, Pavilion of Serbia & Montenegro, 51st Venice Biennale, Kunsthalle Fridericianum Museum Kassel.



Jelena Tomasevic / "Burden of proof," (2017), installation, (K7).

SAŠO SEDLAČEK (Slovenia)

(1974, Ljubljana, Slovenia). Graduated in Sculpture and Video at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, 2000. He is a Ljubljana-based artist whose primary interest seems to be things that people overlook and the ways in which they can be made useful once again. His work is generally defined by theories of disposal and the use and reuse of cheap technologies, open source software and waste materials. His practical and humorous works result from a subversive recycling of scientific, legal, technological facts and by employing DIY (do-it-yourself) and collaborative methods. He attended various residencies and received a number of awards, among others the 26th Alexandria biennale award, Alexandria, Egypt, 2014; the TREND AWARD for exceptional achievements in visual culture, Ljubljana, Slovenija, 2012; Artist of the month, from Siement Art Lab, Vienna, Austria, 2009; VIDA 11, Fundación Telefónica, Madrid, Spain, 2008.



Saso Sedlacek / “Beggar Robot,” interactive robot, (BS6);
“Sky in Ruins,” (2014), Video projection, (K3).

YANG SHUN-FA (Taiwan)

Born in 1964, Shan-hua, Tainan City, is a blue collar worker in the China Steel Co. of Taiwan. He started photography upon his entry to China Steel, and has practiced and exhibited as a photographer ever since. Yang's photography uses staging and acting subjects to create a setting that verges on the real and the fictional. Over years, Yang developed different series of seascape photographs touching on the evolution of Tainan City, the historical events, human interventions, and natural transformations in the city and its vicinity. Due to the subsidence of land, human interventions – the built environment, farms, and roads are returning to their natural state. Yang chose traditional Chinese aesthetics of soft-touching on the picture surface. His photography is a critique of modernity and a reconsideration of traditional philosophy.



YANG Shun-fa / “The Submerged Beauty of Formosa,” photo series, (LH2).

ALKETA XHAFA MRIPA (Kosovo - England)

Is a Kosovo born conceptual artist and activist. After spending her childhood in Kosovo where she completed her primary and secondary education, Alketa moved to London in 1997 to study Fine Art at Central Saint Martins, before going on to study History of Art at the Tate Modern, London. Arriving as a student, Alketa became a refugee when the 1998-1999 Kosovo war broke out. Since then she has displayed her multifaceted work in exhibitions across Europe including Berlin, London, Italy, Portugal and her native Kosovo, where she gained wider recognition for her art installation 'Thinking of You.' In 'Thinking of You', Alketa used a Kosovar football stadium as her canvas, which she painted with thousands of donated dresses in a powerful tribute to survivors of sexual violence, aiming to pierce the silence surrounding wartime rape.

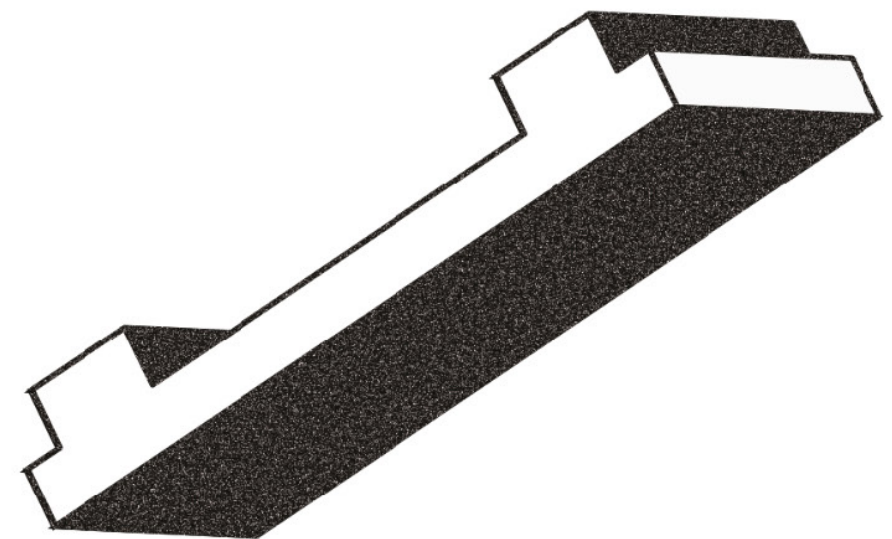
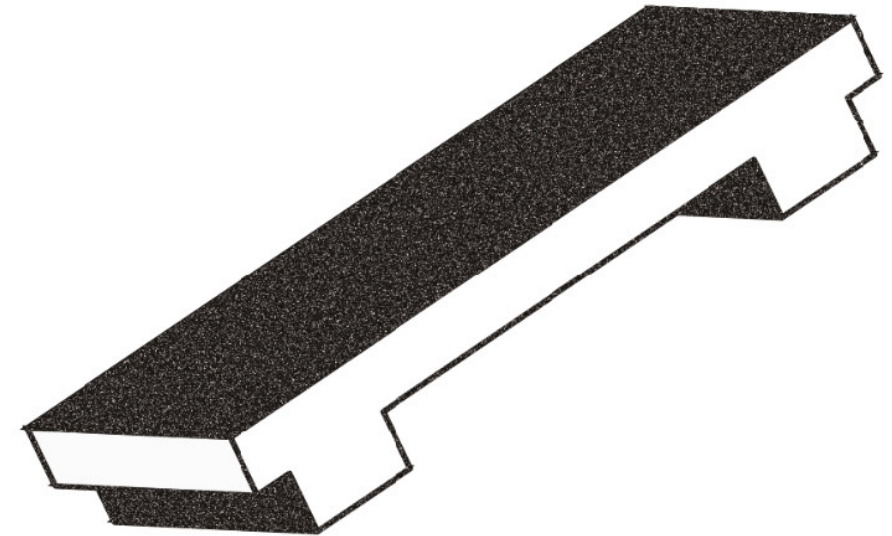


Alketa Xhafa / "Pooltable," performance and documentation, 2017, (BS10).

AUTOSTRADA BIENNALE
PRIZREN

INTERNATIONAL CONTEMPORARY
ART BIENNALE

19 AUG – 23 SEP 2017



Second Chapter Our Common Journey



The informal education program and collaborations

Autostrada Biennale is not simply a road. It is a journey that unites people.

Autostrada Biennale established the city and its citizens as a very important part of its organized events, by including them regardless of their nationality, religion or cultural backgrounds. This was the very purpose of the biennial, namely breaking up and wiping out borders and taboos of our society.

Together with our citizens and strategic partners, we created new spaces for art exhibitions, informal education, as well as for discussions and reflections. We facilitated this platform in the name of freedom of expression, cultural exchange and critical thinking, with the purpose of maintaining inter-cultural and inter-ethnic tolerance, promoting democratic thought, preserving the environment, and appreciating cultural heritage.

Autostrada Biennale consists of three main programs: the International Contemporary Art Exhibition, the Informal Education Program and Collaborative Projects.

The role of art has always been to investigate and shed light on historical, political and cultural issues, through a provocative lens that is especially found in contemporary art. Since biennials are known to take a broader perspective, we strived to create new spaces where various artists, curators, art theorists, and other important cultural figures could foster long-term cooperation. Undoubtedly, the biennial managed to attract art enthusiasts, and consequently generate revenue for the city through cultural tourism.

In the past year, contemporary art managed to become one of the best forms of communicating messages of peace from Kosovo, and proved to be a factual implementation of cultural diplomacy for the state of Kosovo.

The biennial featured performances, video projections, sculptures, art installations, paintings, drawings, lectures, workshops, regional conferences and many other educational activities.

Furthermore, many students from primary and secondary schools, as well as universities visited the exhibitions which were spread out all around the city. The children, pupils and students had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss various topics about the city, the concept of boundaries, and the future.

The AB informal education program strives to educate young generations in the spirit of contemporary art through critical thinking, by following the principle of inclusivity, that is making the program open to everyone. All activities were led by field experts and were provided free of charge to all.

Autostrada Biennale also provided an opportunity for students to become part of the biennial staff and gain a very unique experience.

The AB staff was also committed to training volunteers who contributed in different operational departments of the biennial. By attending the many lectures, debates and master classes, the biennial served as a starting point for students to create new contacts, and even possibly collaborate with the various curators and international artists.

The lectures and workshops in particular exposed them to a considerable amount of information related to the environment, arts and culture. Moreover, they helped in increasing the quality of informal education. The biennial encouraged a lot of debates and movement aimed at using art as a form of expression and articulation for social debates. This also increased the influence of the biennial as an extensive social tool for emancipation and education.

Above all, the biennial is a platform which advocates for human rights, environmental protection, cultural heritage and breaking taboos. Through cultural diplomacy and exchange projects, it intends to build solid bridges between the Balkan nations and the rest of the world. In the following section you can find the various collaborations and impressions of our collaborators regarding our joint projects.



Moving towards a new artistic highway

The international conference “Contemporary Past, Historic Future,” held on the 23rd and 24th of July in Prizren, brought together artists, educators, curators and potential partners, to reflect upon the importance of the Biennale of contemporary art within the region and beyond.

Through four sessions held in the 16th century hammam, the panelists discussed initiatives to consolidate the partnerships between public and private art institutions and artists and informal groups. It also gave the possibility to share experiences and ideas, with the intention to create new opportunities for expanding and revitalising the artistic community.

In the spirit of cooperation, Autostrada Biennale declared itself an innovative highway between the Istanbul, Venice and Prizren art Biennales. Feeling provoked to act, the Biennale questioned present-day struggles by illustrating the social, economic, political and aesthetic actualities in the region and beyond. The conference was exceptional, especially considering the Kosovar context. Firstly because it was organized one year before the first edition of the Biennale (of which the curator and theme had yet to be chosen) and secondly in undertaking the role of its title as regional highway, thereby using its geographic position as a crossroads between east and west.

It also did not neglect the grueling period of developmental processes after the war. It took into account that a new state is being formed; a small state, with a fragile economy and weak educational system and with restrictions on freedom of movement, but at the same time a state which is open to cultural and intellectual exchange, and one that wishes to revitalize the local and regional artistic community, and activate its cities and citizens.

Autostrada Biennale utilized present-day local dynamics, the vitality of its characteristic youth, local knowledge, as well as regional and global partnerships to self-organize and position itself in the global cultural map. Through this, the international conference unified artists, curators, and heads of cultural institutions to discuss cultural issues through different perspectives.

The first panel, titled “Art and Undefined Creative Territories” was moderated by Stefano Romano, and dealt with artistic relations and global artistic movements. Its panelists were: Iara Boubnova (Curator / Bulgaria), Sezgin Boynik (Theoretician / Finland), Sislej Xhafa (Artist / USA), Yehuda Safran (Art Critic / USA) and Miran Mohar (Artist / Slovenia).



The second panel, titled “A City With No Art Gallery, But With an Art Biennale,” was moderated by Eliza Hoxha, and its panelists were: Anna Smolak (Curator / Poland), Gëzim Paçarizi (Architect / Switzerland), Klod Dedja (Curator / Albania), Nikolett Eröss (Curator / Hungary) and Petrit Halilaj (Artist / Germany). This panel dealt with the future structure and content of the biennale, and the possibility of organizing a contemporary art biennale in a city with no art gallery.

The panel titled “Shared Goals / Art, Investors and the Public,” moderated by Hajrulla Çeku, dealt with the question of whether artistic concepts need to be filtered through political and economic lenses in order to find support; and with the possibility for investments in art and culture to affect the local economy. The panelists were: Edmond Hajrizi (Dean, UBT / Kosovo), Gregor Podnar (Gallery owner / Germany) and Osman Arayici (Architect / Turkey) who also gave a video presentation.

The last panel “The Contemporary Art Biennale / Its Impact On The State And Region” was moderated by Rubin Beqo. Its panelists were: Ana Frangovska (Curator / Macedonia), Olson Lamaj (Artist / Albania), Shkelzen Maliqi (Art Critic / Kosovo) and Zdenka Badovinac (Director of Moderna Galerija / Slovenia). The panelists discussed the development of biennales throughout the years and their improvements, as well as sharing their experiences on how to establish a sustainable biennale.

The conference “Contemporary Past, Historic Future“ was the first step in the creation of “Autostrada Biennale”, the first contemporary art biennale in Kosovo.



Invisible Gender Borders in the City

Autostrada Biennale chose the title “The Future of Borders” for its first edition, to boldly address notions of visible and invisible borders. Apart from the visible borders in the city, invisible borders indirectly affect our ideas and our perspective on life.

The city is filled with gender borders, and most of them are invisible. That is why the debate “Invisible Gender Borders in the City” between Autostrada Biennale and FEMaktiv was held with the intention of tackling problems of gender discrimination in our city, which are constantly overlooked.

The city is rife with gender barriers, which define our behavior, role, and choice of location and the time we are allowed to be at a chosen location. These borders are invisible due to the fact they’ve been transformed into social norm. This debate was therefore organized in order to discuss a potential future beyond visible and invisible gender borders.



A performance on the river, as a call for the creation of more green spaces

As part of the International Biennial of Contemporary Art in Prizren, Autostrada Biennale, a public performance for the use of green spaces and the riverbed of Lumbardhi was organized in partnership with EC Ma Ndryshe. As part of this activity, this space was used as a meeting point for visitors to the Biennale, where they had the opportunity to experience the river up close as well as the natural green spaces around it. This space served as a meeting point where visitors could be informed of the activities of the biennial, as well as purchase products sold by Autostrada Biennale. During the entire biennial, residents and visitors to Prizren alike visited this meeting point, where they also had the unique opportunity to try on the so-called “nalle” sandals, which are a part of the cultural heritage of Prizren and which were re-designed as part of the Autostrada Biennale brand. This activity intended to highlight the issue of the lack of green spaces and vast amount of unused public spaces in Prizren, with the aim of encouraging local and central authorities to take appropriate action in this regard. Further, as part of the performance along the promenade of the Lumbardhi river, stairs were built to allow descent into the river, as well as connecting paths which allowed movement into the green spaces by the river bed. In an analysis done by EC, we come to understand that only 3 percent of the public spaces inside the Historical Center of Prizren are green spaces. This percentage is very low compared to global standards for city centers. Also, measurements reveal that about 45 percent of public spaces within the Historic Center of Prizren are either unused or inaccessible to the public.

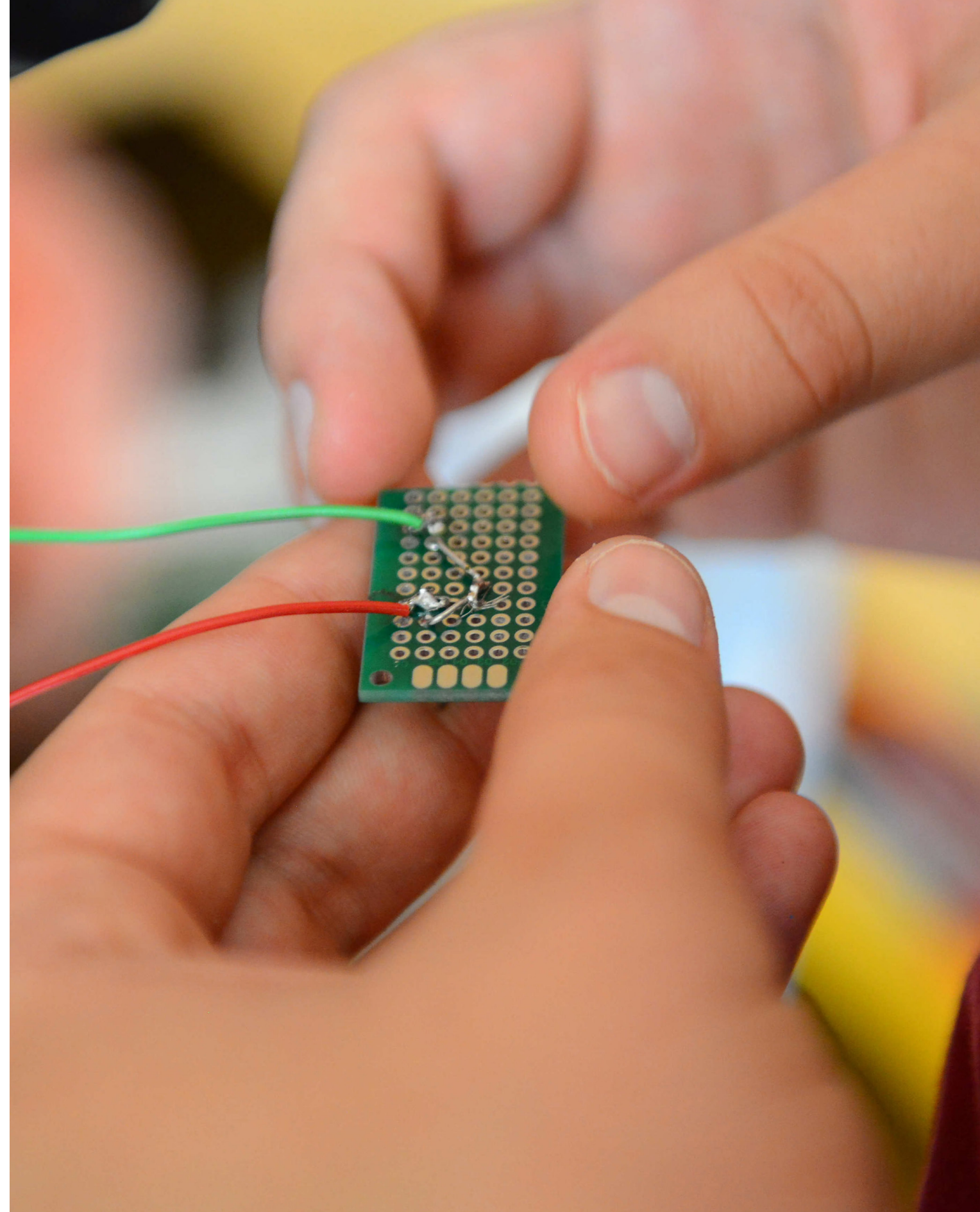




The Workshop in collaboration with the University of Business and Technology UBT

Students of architecture, design, journalism and mechatronic engineering attending the University of Business and Technology (UBT) have come together to enrich the first edition of AB by bringing an innovative and groundbreaking approach for art enthusiasts in Kosovo. The UBT staff and volunteer students helped out with the management of art spaces, production, coordination, media coverage and stage set-ups. However, what will remain as the highlight for the audience of the first edition of AB is the project of Sašo Sedlaček, called “Beggar Robot”, in which students Kenan Alija, Kushtrim Ajvazaj and Nart Gashi from Mechatronics helped set-up under the guidance of UBT lecturer Valmir Hoxha. Not only did the robot impress the visitors of AB, but the inventor of the robot, Sašo Sedlaček, even claimed that the robot built from the Kosovar students was superior to the one he built in Japan.

Beggar Robot is a surrogate agency created for a world in which the marginalized, such as impoverished individuals and families, refugees and asylum seekers, elderly people, disabled people, and those hidden from the public view, will never step onto the street to beg, except in the most dire of circumstances. Beggar Robot is constructed entirely from old computer hardware and a few spare parts that were obtained at no cost. UBT rector Edmond Hajrizi was very pleased with the volunteers who contributed in manifold ways to such an important artistic manifestation in Kosovo such as the Autostrada Biennale, which amongst other things brought countless international tourists to the country.



Workshop on building the archive of photography by Nafis Lokvica and Interview

Due to the lack of galleries in the city of Prizren, the first edition of Autostrada Biennale, with the topic “The Future of Borders”, was held in different places, transforming them into galleries and thus opening a discussion about the problem of the lack of galleries in the city.

The solution was for every potential point of the city to be transformed into an exhibition space. Some of the spaces used for the exhibition were historic buildings, museums, public places, while the rest of the spaces were private houses inhabited by people. Some of the most distinctive features of these houses are: sustainability over the centuries, nostalgia and various other experiences, as well as the cultural heritage of the city of Prizren. Hospitable people who had no connection to the Autostrada Biennale, opened their doors to the exhibition and in this way met modern art with everyday life in the same sphere. These two different concepts, which seem to be too far apart, are integrated under the theme of “The Future of Borders” or in Albanian “E Ardhmja e Kufijve.”

Such a case of a man who loves art and has lived an entire life with it, is Nafis Lokvica, who turned his home into one of the key points, and also a reference for visitors of Autostrada Biennale. In two large rooms on the last floor of his house, were placed pictures of the establishment of an industrial area and photos of a region under water in Taiwan. This idea was born in a parallel with the floods that happened in 1979 in Prizren, which affected Lokvica’s house. On the upper floor of the house in the third room, a film was projected, the purpose of which was to attract attention to problems of land ownership in China. For many people and families in the city, the problem of land assets has parallels with the distribution of old houses and old lands in Prizren. The artist’s intention to introduce a new idea pushed his work out of his boundaries, while using the space and the integrating art structure of contemporary art in this regard.

Interview with Nafis Lokvica:

Citizens of Prizren proudly say that while Prishtina is the capital city of Kosovo, Prizren is the cultural capital of Kosovo. The whole culture starts from Prizren, that’s why it’s called an open museum. There is no gallery in Prizren, nowhere. This city, with over 200,000 inhabitants, has no gallery. We only have the hammam, which is used occasionally and we have no other gallery.

One day a friend of mine called, and told me that he wanted me to turn my house into a museum because it is old. I told him I had not lived in that house for more than five years. The house is in bad shape, we have to clean it. He said it was not a problem and we agreed to set it for a certain date. I gladly gave the house and after it was cleaned, my house returned to a museum.

I think it was a very successful biennial because there were a lot of visitors. Maybe after the biennial I will turn this place into a gallery. I will invite artists from different places in Kosovo to open beautiful exhibitions and continue to beautify these walls. This house is available for this kind of art, there are the walls, the yard, we have everything, it can be done. Another thing that honored me is the fact that my archive over the years has been exhibited. They set up a private room for me and exposed my work. On the other hand, I can say that the creation of the archive started as a hobby and later became a phobia, because I did not want to miss a moment. I wanted to record, film, photograph everything, I felt the need to keep it all because I know that all of these things will one day become history.

All these recordings were in my shop. I had a photo store, where I showed all my work. After I closed the shop, I moved to a new house. Here is just one part of my work, because I have moved from here the most important tapes and the most valuable movies, since there is no place in the living room. There are pictures from 1988, and we have some footage even earlier. The first camera I had is also here.





Visual identity and Prizren City Branding

The two day workshop “Prizren City Branding” was held on the 7th and 8th of December 2017 in the old Town Hall building (Beledije) in Prizren. The workshop presented concepts for city branding, held inclusive discussions on the elements for branding the city of Prizren, as well as helped draft the branding action plan for the Historic Center Management Plan of Prizren.

This workshop was organized by Autostrada Biennale (AB) and the Network of Cultural Organizations (RrOK) of Prizren, funded through CHwB Kosovo and the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports. This chapter deals with the workshop in Prizren, which gathered many participants to discuss the opportunity and need for branding Prizren, its importance and how to organize such an undertaking if it takes place.

The program and fundamental concepts of branding were presented on the first day of the workshop. Leutrim Fisheqiku from AB and Enes Toska from RrOK Prizren led the presentation on the purpose of the project, and the need to brand Prizren both as a historical zone, as well as a cultural heritage landmark with historic and contemporary values alike.

To further develop the branding concept, Eliza Hoxha discussed branding as a product and as a process within different layers and contexts. She further discussed the difference between branding and marketing, and where one should be careful in understanding the trustworthiness of a brand and how to attain a proper representation.

We discussed different levels of branding, beginning with the branding of public space, city, nation, and region.

Later, the workshop focused on the factors that influence branding - the strong ones that deal with infrastructure and services, as well as the soft factors with their emotional aspect, and the sense of belonging and identity with the place. Another important factor is the matter of managing the resources that create a brand, as well as increase the representation and identification with the place. Nora Arapi further presented the values which have determined the vision and objectives for the development and management of Prizren’s historical zone.

The group work component of the workshop aimed to bring about as many ideas on the material and immaterial values which distinguish the city of Prizren and its surroundings. Jeton Jagxhiu led the group dealing with the immaterial aspects, while Yll Rugova’s group dealt with the city’s tangible elements.

The second day began with Tahar Almedar’s VR rooms presentation, which included a simulation of how Prizren might be branded with the keyword that best distinguishes the city such as #prizrening, and featuring its inner and outer determining factors. By this time, the first days’ discussions had already taken shape as a potential product for the branding of the city.

Berin Hasi then went into the details of the representative elements of design and their use in documents, emblems and other identifying elements of the city. The roundup of the entire discussion was made with a skype call from international expert Rand Eppich, who shared his views of Prizren by comparing it with cases of different cities and who further emphasized many things that had previously been discussed in the workshop. It was fascinating to see him drawing parallels with the discussions of the local group with whom he had no previous interaction.



The Specifics of Prizren's Branding

The primary purpose of branding is to identify the potential of the city and to highlight its importance for the local community and targeted visitors. The brand must be credible, measurable and tangible in order to enhance Prizren's unique identifying elements in relation to other cities in the region and beyond. So in the case of Prizren: what would be the main specifics of its branding process?

In terms of the spatial aspect, there are three layers upon which we could create the narrative / brand for Prizren: 1. The Historical Zone, 2. The City / Municipality and 3. The Region of Prizren. This can constitute all the layered physical and environmental characteristics of the zone, such as the highlands (mountain landscape), the role of water in shaping the city, the windmills, springs, as well as the cult of the Mother of Water. Furthermore, we can include other physical elements such as the Prizren Fortress, the cultural objects and many houses which over time have created the layered urban landscape we see today.

On the other hand, another important element is the spiritual heritage and collective memory of the citizens, as Prizren represents religious harmony, coexistence and tolerance. Other "soft" elements such as music (Zambaku i Prizrenit), clothing (especially tanning) and specific cuisine (lamb, sharr mountain cheese, hashlama) play an important part as well. Beyond the powerful inherited identifying elements, the city brand may also be built upon new elements that have begun to leave a mark and that put Prizren on the very important map of global communication, such as the first Biennale of Contemporary Art in Kosovo and the only one of its kind in the region - Autostrada Biennale.

From this vast assortment of signifiers over time, which could be the primary attributes that dominate Prizren's brand, and which may be assessed to be its supporting elements? This also depends on our approach of either branding the city for its citizens, by pointing to the shaping and growth of its collective pride, or branding it for a wider audience by basing it on the principles of cultural tourism and what Prizren can offer within its urban area and in the region as a whole.

This is the first workshop to open a public debate on the importance of branding Prizren, and one where the final report on its outcomes was attached to the Plan for Managing the Historical Center of Prizren.





Thoughts of Partners



Distinguished admirers of culture and art,

Establishing a new paradigm for a multicultural society is not an easy task. Arts and culture strategies contribute to social values and identity, as well as in shaping the physical and social context of a community. As a far-reaching project, Autostrada Biennale (AB) proves that Kosovo, and particularly the city of Prizren, is willing to take advantage of the cultural exchange and practices which focus on societal reconstruction.

The city of Prizren is considered the ideal place for this event, as its ethnic diversity and mix of tradition with a contemporary way of life reflects the intermingling of cultures and overcoming of boundaries. Welcoming representatives of art and culture from all over the world serves to enrich our knowledge and experience, and through this, our art is seeping through and becoming acknowledged worldwide.

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports (MCYS) has readily supported this initiative, which aims to provide a platform that brings art to the lay-people, in spaces that are familiar to the city's inhabitants. 'Autostrada Biennale' has brought recognition to the the city and its citizens, by becoming part of an innovative highway running through the Istanbul, Venice and Prizren Biennales. It is our common interest and duty to promote our culture throughout the world.

The MCYS is committed to building future highways, which connect nations and contribute to an increase in regional and global collaboration. As Art and artists always find a way to work together, we are here to help them pave the way.

Yours,
Kujtim Gashi
Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports



Art is linked to creativity, creativity to innovation, thus all the development and progress of humankind over the centuries is based on innovation, in art. So art, creativity is the main push for mankind. Paradoxically, most of today's human problems, such as global warming as a result of industrial revolution, unemployment and poverty as a result of automation, are also a consequence of creativity and art. Just as creative and artistic thought was the main driver of development as well as modern problems, art and creativity will also be the solution to our problems.

Solving the current problems of humankind, but also of our specific society, can only be achieved by going out of the framework of thought that is responsible for creating these problems, and, in this aspect, art is what allows us to think differently, to think outside of the frames, to think out of the box. Artists push the limits of thinking but also the boundaries that separate people. Art is a unifier because it is universal. Beauty has no limits, so art is the first to erase the boundaries and unite people, in this aspect investment in arts is an investment in solutions, an investment in the future, an investment in unbound humanity.

By appreciating artistic creativity, the Municipality of Prizren will continue to support the Autostrada Biennale, because Prizren has always been a creative, innovative city and one that has broken down the boundaries and has brought people together in appreciating the beauty. I thank all those who have made Prizren a contemporary city that breaks down the boundaries of the present into unlimited human creativity.

Thank you!
Mytaher Haskuka
Mayor of Prizren



It's wonderful to be in Prizren to see the Autostrada Biennale, the first biennale in Prizren.

We are really proud and excited to be sponsors of this project and we think that the education element and bringing children to see art and to experience the old city in the new way is extremely important and invigorating for Prizren and Kosovo.

We are really impressed by the arranging artists, the artworks that they brought here are very high quality and the venues are spectacular.

Colleen Hyland
Deputy Chief of Mission / U.S. Embassy in Prishtina



There are few places in Europe better suited for bringing together art and activism than Prizren. The city’s celebrated history, a rich culture, and a strong tradition of community building and civic engagement created an ideal setting for Autostrada Biennale 2017.

The event and its related conference on “The Future of Borders” provided Kosovo with multiple opportunities to experience how art and artists can contribute ideas and stimulate dialogue and debate around social, political, economic and aesthetic issues. For the UN Kosovo Team, it was a honour to support the event and to participate in its activities, as it provided us with a unique opportunity to engage directly with both artists and concerned citizens.

Events like the Biennale also allow the United Nations to raise awareness about the global change agenda — the Sustainable Development Goals — as they help to place these universal aspirations for peace, inclusion, and equality within specific spatial, artistic and intellectual contexts. Most importantly, Autostrade Biennale 2017 reminded all of us of the unique role artists can and must play in creating more positive futures for all humankind.

Andrew Russell

UN Development Coordinator in Kosovo from October 2013 to March 2018



The first edition of Autostrada Biennale had an ambitious goal: Bringing art to the common people and creating, in shared urban spaces, an environment conducive to confrontation with visible and invisible boundaries. Prizren presented itself as an ideal place in Kosovo to give an opportunity to people, young and old, women, men and children from different backgrounds to be exposed to questions relating to borders — geopolitical, economic or social — and identify challenges through different artistic media.

Switzerland is very supportive of initiatives such as Autostrada Biennale as it brilliantly succeeded in setting the stage for views, exchanges and inspiration. It offered an alternative forum to strengthen the young democracy in Kosovo by bringing people together and fostering the dialogue between communities, genders and generations through hosting exhibitions, workshops and conferences from international, regional and local artists. In our view, cultural events allow building bridges across real and perceived borders and offer ways of addressing commonly shared concerns in an inclusive manner.

We are looking forward to the next edition of Autostrada Biennale in the hope that it will again provide a platform for creative expression on popular and relevant topics, contributing innovatively to the construction of a democratic society in Kosovo and regional stability.

Bernhard Soland

Deputy Director / Swiss Cooperation Office



Kosovo Foundation for Open Society is pleased to have supported innovative artistic initiatives such as Autostrada Biennale, providing a platform for the engagement of art to examine and transcend boundaries both real and imagined.

As the first edition of the Biennale was mainly situated in the beautiful city of Prizren, the organizers pointed out that the shrinking public spaces could also transform into an engaging array of creative imaginings. Bringing together community members and artists across the globe, it helped assemble creative visions for the future of neighborhoods and open up discussions that contest constraints and make hope more tangible.

Luan Shllaku

Executive Director / Kosovo Foundation for Open Society



First off, I would like to register my support for the title of the project. “Autostrada” means a road, this means movement and – most hopefully – also a direction. Especially in the recent situation where too many people cruise in a circle, such a visionary project gives motivation and enthusiasm and demands creativity and the readiness to assume risk. My thanks and congratulations for this!

You made a great project this year with a lot of magnificent ideas and realizations. This is even more remarkable in a country which is still looking to satisfy its elementary needs like social welfare and justice. Is an exhibition, are arts expositions necessary in such a time? Of course!

As a political training foundation, the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) doesn’t seem likely to be one of the first to be asked for partnership. But this is wrong since we have to ask where the border between politics and arts really is. This question already is a good one and needs to be discussed a bit more than in this little article. But if we would reduce the needs of humans to elementary issues we would - in the same moment - destroy the richness of human kind. Let’s even turn the question round. This richness of arts is sometimes food for getting hope, for loving life and the people around – arts connect very different people. What else does policy – or what else should policy do? In many cases arts can be a bridge between people where policy fails - and we should use it. Even more: we must use it especially in hard times!

These are some reasons for FES to be part of this great puzzle of organizers, activists and creative “screwballs” of this autostrada. It doesn’t let us forget to remember who we are, who we were and who we want to be – with our families, friends, neighbors, but also together with strangers all over Europe. For me my participation was a “jump over the borderline” – which always opens new perspectives. This is exactly the aim of “autostrada” and deserves all support!

Frank Hantke

Director / Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Prishtina



Raiffeisen Bank in Kosovo is committed to engaging and helping the artistic community in Kosovo, by sponsoring different cultural activities throughout the country. And one of the main impacts that we want to achieve with these sponsorship activities is the education of youth in culture and art.

This is also the reason why our Bank has supported Autostrada Biennale, which is a hub for contemporary artists, that connects well established local and international artists with the young contemporary artists of Kosovo. This brings the community closer by sharing their knowledge and through their exhibition awakens creative energy in Kosovo, region and beyond.

As a Bank we are committed to being an engaged corporate citizen by actively supporting and promoting activities in health, social, culture, education and sports.

Robert Wright

Director / Raiffeisen Bank Kosovo



Sincere beginnings

I always considered that Autostrada's task was difficult, especially in an environment where contemporary art is a rare luxury. They earned my profound respect immediately, firstly because they had the courage to take this step, to start with the first contemporary art biennale in Kosovo, without hesitation and fear of failure. From the first day, they saw it as a necessity that needs to happen, a natural flow of events that led to the first edition of AB. Secondly, because of the title they chose for the biennale, as it was SINCERELY conceptual in its meaning and left no room for doubt in their decisiveness to succeed. And indeed they did succeed. After choosing an appealing title and after strengthening their core with an advisory board of great importance, their third smart move was the curator, Mr. Manray Hsu.

The job that he did with the first edition of Autostrada Biennale was truly outstanding. The choice of artists showed that none of them was recklessly chosen and each artist had their own role to play in the setting. The artists represented, especially the local ones showed that the curator had seriously worked and researched to find the ideal artist for the ideal spot on his highway map installation. As a visitor, the most outstanding attribute of the "Future of Borders" for me was the strategic distribution of exhibitions across Prizren's most important sites. Their importance had different natures, and that is what made it one of the most interesting exhibitions to see in 2017: the bus station is important because of mobility; a house on the hill because of heritage; another house because it belonged to one of Prizren's personalities that created its new history. All of this and much more was achieved simply by being sincere from the beginning in their intentions, to create a center for new art in an old town, a town they love. The National Gallery of Kosovo (NGK) became a partner of this amazing team, despite the fact that a public institution in Kosovo does not usually do this. We also felt it was a natural merge of experiences, as modest as our support was. Within our possibilities we supported the first edition of Autostrada with an artist database, technical equipment and our technical team expertise. NGK will continue to be a partner of Autostrada Biennale in its future editions and support it whichever way possible, in a common quest for sincere, new, groundbreaking communication of contemporary art in Kosovo. I am sure that everyone is anxious to see Autostrada grow even beyond the future of our borders.

Arta Agani

Director / National Gallery of Kosovo



Cultural heritage serves as important testimony to our past; but furthermore it is a resource for developing our urban and rural environment. Over 1,500 cultural heritage monuments in Kosovo are included in the List of Cultural Heritage, but most of them have lost their initial use and occupancy, and remain abandoned. These monuments must return to the service of society by fulfilling a new purpose.

The worldview that archeological grounds and old buildings are an obstacle to urban regeneration, does not hold any longer. On the contrary, worldwide, we are witnessing an increase of awareness for how such places may be transformed, by offering great opportunities for development. Experience has shown that the integration of cultural heritage in urban regeneration creates attractive urban environments, in which people may live, work or enjoy leisure time.

Autostrada Biennale is an experimental and innovative concept for researching the new role cultural heritage may play. This concept transcends the conventional approach to space, by giving it an artistic meaning or by altogether transforming it into an artistic space. Through this process, cultural heritage is not only re-conceptualized, but also re-established in a new social and cultural dimension, which is not often seen in Kosovo. Without a doubt, this is a challenging process for the cultural and economic context of our country.

Sali Shoshi

Executive Director / Cultural Heritage without Borders



Bringing culture into the ruins of a former family home? An art exhibition in a bus station? When the concept for Autostrada Biennale was introduced, we were skeptical, and at the same time very curious: the idea to repurpose a whole city and turn it into an art museum or into a platform for culture and education was very intriguing. Of course we were also well aware how difficult this would be and what obstacles the organizers would have to overcome.

The Austrian Embassy decided to support the project and we are proud and happy that it turned out to be such a huge success. The organizers managed to create a very balanced mixture of formal and informal settings, facilitating cultural dialogue between artists, staff and visitors from many different backgrounds and nations and — as a very positive side effect — drawing attention to Prizren’s architectural heritage. By incorporating public spaces, private houses and buildings which belong to different ethnic, cultural and religious communities, the importance of preserving this heritage was underlined in an excellent manner.

The topic of Autostrada Biennale 2017 was “The Future of Borders”, which, given the developments in Europe at that time, definitely hit a nerve. Borders, migration, travel restrictions, and all the social and cultural implications that come with these topics were looked at from different angles. We hope that Autostrada Biennale will be able to stay on the pulse of time for future editions also.

We are also happy that in the last few years, the city of Prizren gained an international reputation as a “cultural focal point” and as a great destination for cultural tourism in the region. We hope that Autostrada Biennale will also be part of that in the future!

Gernot Pfandler

Austrian Ambassador to Kosovo



When I first met Leutrim and heard about the plans for Autostrada Biennale, I was immediately enthusiastic about the project and the idea to make the city itself a museum. I had however no idea how amazing it would be; from the quality and variety of the artists, the locations all over Prizren, the atmosphere especially when visiting during early evening hours, the discussions, the artistic events, the cross-cutting issues like gender equality and inclusion of minorities, to the perfect logo.

The Luxembourg embassy is very proud to have supported this first edition and is already looking forward to the next one. Autostrada Biennale is definitely putting Kosovo on the map as a destination for contemporary art and will become an event not to be missed by anyone in the region and far beyond.

Anne Dostert
Luxembourg Ambassador to Kosovo



It is a privilege to offer my greatest support and congratulations to such a distinct organization as Autostrada Biennale for their incredible contribution to the overall artistic community in Kosovo and the enrichment of cultural life in Prizren, in particular. The first edition of the most unique artistic festival in Kosovo, set the foundations of the contemporary art in Prizren by levitating new means of cultural heritage and environmental values through a peculiar artistic perspective.

Protection of cultural heritage values and advocacy for a sustainable living environment were the two common focal points of Autostrada Biennale and EC Ma Ndryshe (EC). EC is a nongovernmental grassroots organization which deals with cultural heritage and urban planning through a participatory and inclusive methodology.

The first edition of Biennale was taking place in the heart of the old city of Prizren, which aimed the promotion of its cultural heritage values and advocating against the destruction of the monuments and the mismanagement of its public spaces, through a very unique and artistic manner. The engagement of the Biennale's first edition in these crucial issues of the city intersected our working domains which naturally made our cooperation inevitable. We had the pleasure to cooperate with Autostrada Biennale for the implementation of the artistic performance for the protection of the environment and against the destruction of the natural heritage values of Prizren. The purpose of this cooperation consisted on the destruction of the most important natural heritage asset of Prizren such as the Lumbardhi River and the lack of green public spaces within the Historic Center of Prizren. The project aimed to raise public awareness for the destruction of these values by converting natural green areas within Lumbardhi's river bed into a usable public green space which also served as a meeting point for the Biennale's visitors. EC had the opportunity to experience a very unique and memorable cooperation with Autostrada Biennale, by working with the most distinguished and creative artists from the artistic community in Kosovo and the Balkan region, which also helped to shape our view on cultural heritage and protection of the environment. I can undoubtedly say that Autostrada Biennale has a luminous future and will continue to shape our public opinion in various social and artistic domains which will directly impact our living environment.

Edon Mullafetahu
Executive Director / EC Ma Ndryshe



It was a pleasure to be a part of the first Autostrada Biennale experience in Prizren. It was yet another demonstration of the potential this city possesses in hosting creative arts programmes, and the Autostrada Biennale was particularly unique in terms of the interaction between exhibitions and various sites of the historic centre of Prizren.

The wide variety of contributors and artistic expressions from all over the world added an international flavour to the event and drew a diverse audience to Prizren for a unique experience, one that highlighted Prizren's historic and cultural values as well as the artistic potential of its local artists and civic activists. Various locations in the town were used for exhibitions which were reflective of the many eras this city represents, eras that serve as reminders of the past which deserve to be preserved and celebrated.

I commend the organizers of Autostrada Biennale for the dedication and time they invested in its organization, and look forward to more such events in the near future as Prizren's citizens exploit their city's potential and open their doors to send a positive message to the world about their heritage. They demonstrated innovative creativity for which they deserve widespread support.

Rick Spruyt
Religious and Cultural Heritage Advisor till June 2018 / EU Office in Kosovo



We were delighted to visit and be a part of Autostrada Biennale (AB) for the first time. We found it to be an exceptional overall experience.

Our response to the first contemporary art exhibition in Prizren was very positive. It was a unique opportunity for our community to encounter and learn the language of contemporary art.

Every encounter with art imparts information and intelligence. We are overjoyed to have added a valuable experience of AB to our art education program.

AB is one of the most important events in Prizren that has created a real platform for inter-communication between different communities focusing on social issues. It is clear that the message that is being conveyed in this edition of "The Future of Borders" is to make us understand over and over again that "We belong to each other."

Mimoza Çeku Rogova
Down Syndrome Kosova



Me and our Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian students were really impressed by Autostrada Biennale as a very unique event of its kind.

It was the first time we took part in such an event. The students were very impressed by the work of the Albanian artist Sead Kazanxhiu, who managed to communicate the importance of our community and the social problems we face every day.

The contribution of Autostrade Biennale was extraordinary in all aspects, and especially in the way it approached various social issues, including ones about our community.

This year's theme "The Future of Borders" also highlighted the problem of the isolation of Kosovars and their inability to move freely due to the lack of visa liberalization.

We hope to see the Biennale continue in the future, to which we would be willing to contribute as well.

Sylejman Elshani
Roma Versitas Kosovo



In Prizren, the city where I grew up, I was very pleased with the biennial venues and exhibits we visited with our retired friends. The use of different places in the city for the festival, and the exhibition being created based on that, influenced me in terms of taste. Unfortunately, in Prizren, which is a beautiful city, cultural and artistic activities have been reduced to such a degree as to be absent recently. I believe that the artistic and cultural interaction with my city will recreate thanks to the contemporary art festival which is called with the name Autostrada Biennale.

Places used for the events affected me and my other friends the most when we visit exhibition spaces. Especially the old Prizren houses and their experiences influenced nostalgic talks in our group. Some of the houses we visited belonged to our friends or familiars. Many of us had memories in those houses or streets where those houses were. Thanks to the trip, we were able to see innovations in the field of contemporary art as well as our memories. Within the scope of the festival, after seeing the exhibition of a young artist from Prizren at castle path, I started to believe that the biennale will give opportunities to young artists and enthusiastic getting together and carrying Kosovo artists to the world art stage. It should be remembered that festivals are time-consuming occurrences, and I think that over time the Autostrada Biennial will grow even bigger and raise more social problems.

The collective contribution of Autostrada Biennale in my opinion is bringing people together and making able the exchange of ideas. Without going too far, the trip we made with our retired friends who had not seen each other for a long time came together. The venues used in the exhibition and the experiences in those places came to light. It allowed us to have a fun day.

It is very meaningful that the first edition of Biennale called "the future of borders" is made in Kosovo, which has changed the borders of Europe. When we look at the last thirty years in the geography where we live, the border changes remind us that we should rethink about the boundaries. The most surprising point for me is that border issues have been a part of our lives as a constant political problem from the past to the present day, and the biennale team has tried to show a tendency for the border problem with the way of contemporary art and I think it is very interesting.

With all respect,
Fevzi Karamuço
Visitor from the group of retirees



Autostrada Biennale was the first experience of this kind for me and before becoming part of, I didn't even know what to expect from such an event. Since art was a field I did not know much about, tracking events and contacting the participating artists was a challenge and at the same time a pleasure to me and ultimately created the impression that in reality art is deeper and there are many ways of understanding it. The participation and contribution given for the Autostrada Biennale event was more than just a unique experience. This event made together many passionate people for art, media, architecture, design, etc., and each contributed in its own field, completing and giving even more color to this major event of art, which was the first of its kind in our country. Being part of the first edition of Autostrada Biennale gave me the feeling that I was part of a success story, which in the future, probably will help Kosovo become recognized in the world by it. Such an amazing experience will be also many, many of hours of work, cooperation with staff and other volunteers, and the bond of friendship we created with them. Undoubtedly, Autostrada Biennale will remain unforgettable and also a desirable experience in the upcoming editions.

Autostrada Biennale was an opportunity for each participant to receive information on art types, ways of expressing it, giving art criticism of the negative phenomena in our society, and above all, many of the artists gave participants the opportunity to become part of their artistic works. It is important that the deep roots of social constructs, which in various ways affect our daily lives, are embedded in these works, especially when they are ethnically-based barriers, and then also the inability to free movement, the war against social and gender inequality, etc. This event served as a peaceful protest against all the phenomena that make life more difficult. Autostrada Biennale proved that even in our country people began to appreciate the art more and allowed themselves to express what they think through artistic work.

Fatbardhe Kiqina
Volunteer at Media Department



Third Chapter

NGO Autostrada Biennale

Autostrada Biennale was established as a non-governmental organization (NGO) with the mission of expanding culture and revitalizing its community. It operates through three main programs: the International Contemporary Art Exhibition, which is organized every two years and is the first biennial for contemporary art in Kosovo, the Informal Education Program and Cooperation Projects.

The organization was founded by a team of young people including artists, pedagogues and sociologists who, after the establishment of Autostrada Biennale as an NGO, created an International Advisory Board, staffed with significant artistic figures who live and work in different parts of the world.

The Biennale Autostrada International Advisory Board consists of artists, curators, architects, art critics and sociologists, who are all proven on the international scene, as well as active and committed to the Biennale Autostrada achieving success as a global contemporary art project.

Through its collaborative and informal education program, the Autostrada Biennale has established close partnerships with other local and international organizations. Meanwhile, both domestic and international financial supporters have made it possible for this to become a reality.

Team

Autostrada Biennale was founded by a team of young people, including artists, pedagogues and sociologists, united by a mission to expand culture in Kosovo.

The Autostrada Biennale team leads a utopian factory, with its mission to transform the city simultaneously into both a museum and a centre of the contemporary, marking new spaces of experimentation onto the centuries-old history of Prizren. The Autostrada Biennale team plans to bring art outside the white box, undertaking the challenge to expand contemporary art systems in the Balkans and beyond.

Thoughts of the team

Sometimes traveling as a process in itself may be more important than the goal or the place we reach. For some, an Autostrada is getting along the road, but in our case it is a journey that unites people by turning the city into an open museum, creating an identity.

Autostrada Biennale is not an exclusive project, it is an inclusive project. Its focus is on rebuilding society by using art as a tool to create a community and network. Our main goal was, and is, not just about art lovers. It is to bring art to ordinary people, who can question themselves through the city. By using ordinary spaces that belong to all of us, like the bus station — our meeting point — as well as old houses and gardens, we want to bring art to people, not people to art. There's a big difference between the two.

For us, it was also very important to create a platform where artists from different countries of the world could 'breathe,' talk with people and understand the city, and consequently reflect on their work.

We also want this to be an opportunity for Kosovar and regional artists to show their work abroad. Traveling, visiting other countries and meeting other cultures will surely be a source of enrichment for them.

Our advisory board is made up of high-profile professional people. They were very active and committed to Autostrada Biennale succeeding as a unique contemporary art project in the world. We are grateful that from the beginning of the project we had close partners and supporters, without whom it would not be possible to realize this dream.

Together with our partners we not only aim to strengthen the critical thinking of the cultural sector through the international exhibition and the informal education program, but also to create a special platform for cooperation between the people of the Balkans and beyond, one which reflects on the development of the different social, economic and political fields.

Leutrim Fishekqiu



Leutrim Fishekqiu is a visual artist and industrial designer. His education started in Sweden, and continued in Kosovo and Turkey. During his work, he has organized various cultural events, and is the author of several artworks (installations), mainly in public spaces. His work is focused on conceptual designs, industrial design and interior design, including sculpture, art installation, and painting. In his work he deals with social and cultural topics mainly focused on environmental issues. He is also artistic director of Alarm Design Studio, a company which operates in the field of art production, interior and industrial design. He has recently become a board member of the Prizren network of cultural organizations.

Autostrada Biennale aims to get over, to be on the road, to feed with the mystery of the road. It is in pursuit of the unknown, wishing to witness unforeseen situations and to involve its audience in this common view. From the day it was founded, it has aimed to demolish the understanding of stereotypical 'art', and to oppose the perception of established art by acting with many different people and mediums.

It aims to spread into the veins of the city in which it is organized; to show a tendency toward cultural impasses, associations, conflicts, prejudices that are trapped between layers, and to react to these stereotypes with different forms and persons.

The idea of the biennial, which was born in the intellectual phase and formed as a result of different discussion groups, aims to bypass the festival label and go beyond the exhibition and projection.

It is dragged in the pursuit of meaning rather than visible faces of the images. It tries to use the interrogative identity of contemporary art and think of the given elements differently. By avoiding everyday mediocrity; it seeks to explore itself first, then the society in which it was born, and finally the world into which it was thrown.

Bariş Karamuço



Bariş Karamuço graduated with both a bachelor's and master's degree in photography and cinema from the Istanbul Mimar Sinan University, where he is currently doing a PhD in Sociology and Philosophy. He also works as a documentary photographer. In his artistic works, he deals with various topics, mainly on Kosovo's past, and continues to work to protect local values and cultural elements, which have unfortunately been forgotten. His works are focused on the theory of cinema, stories and video documentaries. Currently he teaches photography and cinema at the University for Business and Technology (UBT) in Prishtina.

Autostrada Biennale is an alternative approach to art and education, to the way these things should be in the service of social emancipation. It has had an impact on the creation of space for the use of art as a form of expression on important social and cultural developments.

Based on these principles, we established the “Informal Education Program” within Autostrada Biennale. Its main purpose is the education of younger generations in the spirit of contemporary art, while encouraging critical thinking.

The Program’s main principle is inclusiveness, which means a program that is for everyone. The entire education program was inspired by the topic of the first edition: “The Future of Borders,” chosen by curator Manray Hsu.

As well as holding lectures, debates and master classes, exchanging opinions and capturing new ideas, participants found the opportunity to create new contacts through Autostrada Biennale; new collaborations with curators and various local and international artists.

Autostrada Biennale encouraged many debates and moves aimed at using art as a form of expression, and articulation of debates on topics of social and cultural relevance. By addressing various social topics at the biennial, we will achieve our long-term goals: Holding Autostrada Biennale at a professional level and creating a network of internationally proven people from the world of contemporary art.

Vatra Abrashi



Vatra Abrashi is a pedagogue. She graduated from the University of Prishtina’s Faculty of Philosophy with both a bachelor’s and master’s degree in pedagogy. She is almost in the end of her studies on bachelor degree in Speech and Language Therapy at Heimerer College in Prishtina. She worked for 4 years in the Council for Defense of Human Rights and Freedoms as a leader of various projects working toward the protection of minority rights, gender equality and children’s rights. During that period she completed the School for European Integration (KCSF) and School of Politics (PIPS). She has organized various educational programs and has recently been licensed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in the provision of social and family services in Kosovo. Since 2013 she works as a pedagogue in the Counseling Center at SOS Children’s Villages Kosovo and from this year at her new company in Prishtina, “Kolibri”.

International Advisory Board



IARA BOUBNOVA / Advisory Board member since 2016

Iara Boubnova, curator of contemporary art and art critic from Sofia, was born in Moscow, Russia, where she graduated from the Department of Art History and Theory of the Moscow State University. Since 1985 she has worked at the National Gallery for Foreign Art in Sofia as a Curator of the Department of East European Art and in the fall of 2013 was appointed Director i.a. by the Ministry of Culture. Since January 2015 she has also been the Deputy Director of the newly established National Gallery in Sofia and is responsible for the International collection of the institution. She is also the Founding Director of the Institute of Contemporary Art – Sofia, which was established in 1995.



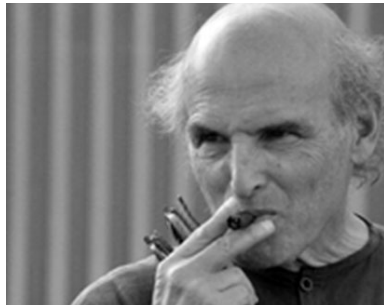
SEZGIN BOYNIK / Advisory Board member since 2016

Sezgin Boynik (1977), lives and works in Helsinki. He completed his PhD on the “Cultural Politics of Black Wave in Yugoslavia from 1963 to 1972” at Jyväskylä University’s Social Science department . He has been published on numerous topics, including punk, the relation between aesthetics and politics, cultural nationalism, Situationist International and Yugoslav cinema. He is editor of Rab-Rab: Journal for Political and Formal Inquiries in Art (www.rabrab.fi).



JUAN A. GAITÁN / Advisory Board member since 2016

Juan A. Gaitán (Canada/Colombia, b. 1973) is a writer and curator, based in Mexico City and Berlin. He was curator at the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art (2009–10), and Adjunct Professor in the Curatorial Practice Program at California College of the Arts, San Francisco (2011–12). From 2006–08 he was on the Board of Directors of the Western Front Society, and worked as an external curator at the Morris and Helen Belkin Art Gallery in Vancouver. Gaitán writes for several journals, including Afterall, The Exhibitionist, Fillip, and Mousse. He is a member of the acquisitions committee at FRAC Nord-Pas de Calais in Dunkerque and was the Curator of the 8th Berlin Biennale for Contemporary Art in 2014.



YEHUDA E. SAFRAN / Advisory Board member since 2016

Yehuda Safran, lives and works in New York, teaching at the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation at Columbia University and Pratt Institute and also was a Visiting Professor at the Graduate Institute of Architecture at Nanjing University, and Shanghai University, Graduate School China. He is the editor and director of Potlatch, a journal of inquiry into Art and Architecture as a gift. He is a consultant to Steven Holl Architects in NY.



SISLEJ XHAFI / Advisory Board member since 2016

Born in Peja, Kosovo in 1970, artist Sislej Xhafa is based in New York. He is known for his artistic investigations into the social, economical and political realities associated with the various complexities of modern society. Over the years, Xhafa has highlighted his artistic work with economic and social themes, political realities, as they interact with the protean variety of modern society. His investigations, for example, into the phenomena of tourism or forced illegality use a minimal language and they are at the same time ironic and subversive, practicing indifferently a wide range of media, from sculpture to drawing, from performance to photography.



MANRAY HSU / Advisory Board member since 2018

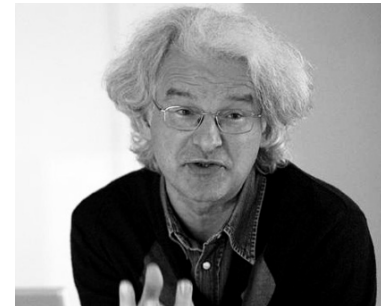
Manray was the first curator of Autostrada Biennale, a co-founder and director (2010-2012) of the Taipei Contemporary Art Center and editor-in-chief of ArtCo Magazine Mainland China edition (2013-2014). He teaches in art academies both in Taiwan and abroad. Living and working in Berlin in early 2000s, Manray has worked with contemporary artists in Europe, including those from the former East.

The main focus of Manray's work is on politics of mobility, borders of different forms, urban conditions in the age of globalisation, flows of capital, and activism-related art. His recent research includes interdisciplinary art practices related to environmental issues, and multi-species interactions in urban and rural scenarios, with a special interest in viewing the anthropocene from the perspective of Chinese Daoist philosophy.



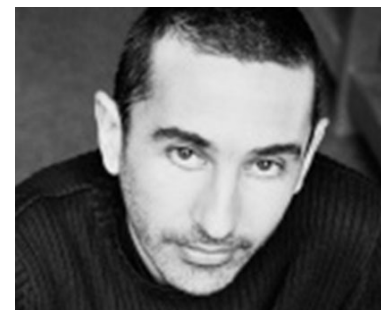
MIRAN MOHAR / Advisory Board member from 2016-2018.

Miran Mohar (born 1958 in Novo Mesto, Slovenia) is an artist based in Ljubljana. He is a member of the Irwin artists group and a co-founder of the Neue Slowenische Kunst art collective, the graphic design studio New Collectivism and the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre. Together with four other members of Irwin (Dušan Mandič, Andrej Savski, Roman Uranjek and Borut Vogeltnik), he has participated in all of Irwin's projects and exhibitions since 1984. Since 2008 he has also been an associate professor and vice-dean at AVA, the Academy of Visual Arts in Ljubljana. He is also a tutor at the SCCA World of Art curatorial school.



BORUT VOGELNIK / Advisory Board member from 2016-2017.

Borut Vogeltnik, born 1958 is an artist based in Ljubljana. He is co-founder of artists group Irwin and of the art collective Neue Slowenische Kunst. He is also an assistant professor at Academy for visual art in Ljubljana. The Irwin group was founded in Ljubljana in 1983 and consists of Dušan Mandič, born 1954, Miran Mohar, born 1958, Andrej Savski, born 1961, Roman Uranjek, born 1961 and Borut Vogeltnik 1959.



EDI MUKA / Advisory Board member since 2016

Edi Muka (1969, Albania) is an art critic and curator. He is co-director of the Tirana International Contemporary Art Biennale (T.I.C.A.B.), a co-founder and curator of the Tirana Institute of Contemporary Art (TICA), and curator and artistic director (together with Joa Ljungberg) of Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art.

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Throughout our work we promote also Sustainable Development Goals and Agenda 2030 for our country.



