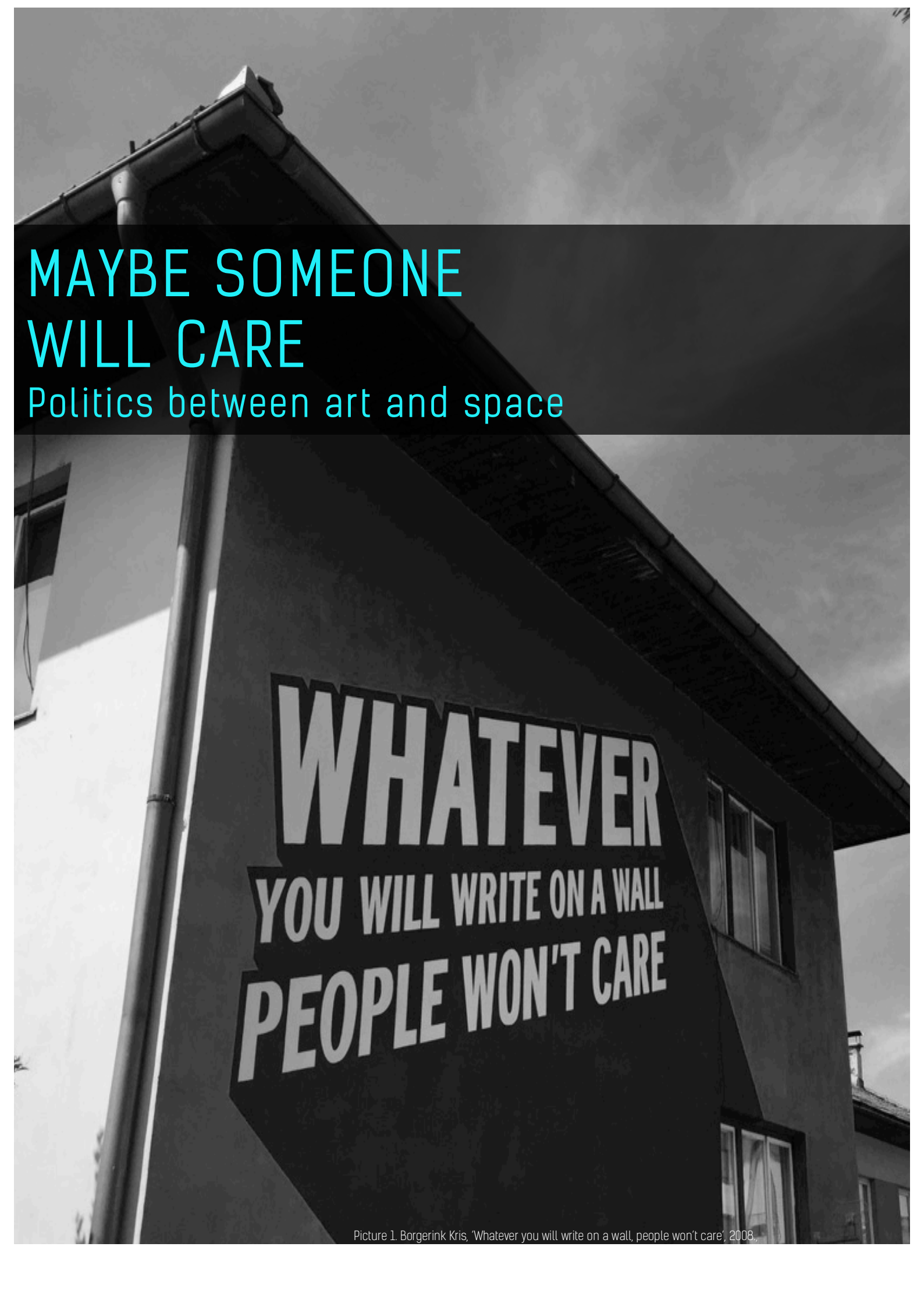


# MAYBE SOMEONE WILL CARE

Politics between art and space



**WHATEVER  
YOU WILL WRITE ON A WALL  
PEOPLE WON'T CARE**

**Maybe someone will care**  
Politics between art and space

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## A space open and available to all

Public space is the space available to all. Local authorities rule the public space as a public good that includes: parks, streets, libraries, government institutions and the nature that surrounds us. It is the backbone of the identity of a city but, since ancient times, it represents the space for public discourse about everything that the citizens recognized as a political, economic or social problem. The ancient idea of public space as the arena for political liberation and participation as the foundation of democracy today is in conflict with the fact that public spaces are becoming places that are shaped by capital, which then creates means of perception and communication, thus creating more of a scenography, but also a place of potential resistance.

Public space and public debate are using and forming signs, symbols and images to create what Lefevbre (1991) defines as representational space. Art, as a practice that, when presented in the public space, primarily deals with representation, can create a framework for political action. We have seen in many examples, such as the artworks of Banksy, Shepard Fairey, Alexandra Clotfelter and many others, how art uses the public space as the platform for a different politics, and how it turns out to be a sort of «public art».

In Sarajevo, since the official end of the war (i.e. after 1995) few artistic or cultural projects have been realized in the public space. In the city in which important public institutions of culture and art are closed, and public space is daily narrowed down by new capital projects, it seems important to think about art as an urban practice that uses public space of emancipation for those less visible or invisible, for the oppressed and afflicted. Through interviews with several artists and curators directly involved with some of these projects, and analysis of several artworks, I will examine the politics between/beyond art and space. I am interested in several questions: *Why work in the public space and what are the topics tackled through art? What role have political thinking and political ideas had in specific projects realized in the City of Sarajevo? What reactions have these art works caused, and how did they integrate into the public space of the city of Sarajevo? What are the challenges and benefits of working in the public space? Can art create commons and open up space for political commentary or analysis as an act of common action?*

In conversations I have had with artists and curators, broader issues have also been discussed related to the issues of: space and resources for art production and promotion, meeting places and places for exchange, as well as questions of art programmes and content offered by the institutions working in the field of culture and the arts. The complexities of these questions certainly require a deeper analysis, beginning with the economic and continuing with the social and political. These considerations I leave aside, primarily to deal with the relationship of artists and curators towards the city spaces, and to try to highlight both some of the layers of political stratification and the specificities of its expression in the public space that art is confronted with.

## Art in the public space

The usage of public space for artistic interventions is a growing practice aiming mainly to share art with anyone and everyone, not choosing the audience already interested in arts, but literally placing it in the space of the public. Interventions in public spaces are also interesting for the

fact that they are usually not long-term projects and their duration is often not predetermined. The theoretician of architecture Miwon Kwon (1997) in her essay "One Place After Another: Notes on Site Specificity" distinguishes three phases of public art: the stage of public art in the form of outdoor sculpture that "enriches" urban areas; the phase of the idea of art as a public space that seeks to integrate art, architecture and the environment and, finally, the stage of arts in the public interest (or public art new genre - New Genre Public Art), which is strongly concerned with social issues and worked to raise political awareness in society.

So art intervenes in a "more or less coherent system of non-verbal symbols and signs" (Lefebvre, 1991: 39), of the representational space established and marked with symbols and signs of those who run the collective experience and create the dominant images and narratives. In such a space it is difficult to present works whose content and messages create places of discomfort or comfort, places of strife, places of conflict and to escape established frameworks.

Art enters the public space in different forms, such as an installation, sculpture and urban intervention, street art, public art and so forth. Art in the public interest, as Kwon suggests, alludes to, produces an ever-changing space of the city: a space for change and emancipation that creates new meanings. In this sense, the task of art is to create a space of sociality and engage within this, ie. to position, responding to the needs of those who use the space, and to employ art as one of the tools of a struggle for the public interest. At the end, questions about what is and what is not public art, how we understand art and what significance it has, were not only present during the discussions I lead, but are also questions that seem to have more than one answer.

As suggested by Nate Thompson (2012), it seems very strange that our "civilization reached the point where we have to use a phrase such as *public art*", which implies questions about the way in which art also became private, inaccessible, or available in controlled ways, and in which ways it has been involved in the public discourse. However, he also suggests that we can think of two definitions of public art. First, the art that leaves galleries and museums behind, and then the practices we use to re-value, stage differently and politicize the public space. As Thompson says, "Maybe we could even say that public art is a way to create politics with the help of, or by using, the public space." In the broadest sense, according to Thompson, public art could be understood "as every elaborated tactic to create meaning. Every intellectual and emotional connection with other people"(Thompson, 2012)<sup>1</sup>.

## Entering the public space

The reason for trying to draw a connection between art and politics lies in the statement that art in today's society is only an entertainment for the rich and the weird; it is a commodity, that is almost useless, and most certainly, very unattractive within the ocean of basic needs. Under such circumstances, there is no place for those who trust in the fact that art is what they essentially need. Those who believe that *"Art is not a mirror to reflect reality, but a hammer with which to shape it"*<sup>2</sup> or, that *"Only through art can we emerge from ourselves and know what another person sees."*<sup>3</sup> can easily be characterized as zealots. In both cases the question that remains is whether the art is done/made in the public interest or just a fad of those being cared for and the privileged. One thing is certain: to work in a public space means to believe in the

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<sup>1</sup> My translation from the interview by Govedić Nataša, *Stvaranje politike pomoću javnog prostora*, with Nate Thompsonom, Zarez,

<sup>2</sup> Bertolt Brecht

<sup>3</sup> Marcel Proust, "Only through art can we emerge from ourselves and know what another person sees."

idea of public space. The aim of this idea is: "to maintain or to create physical places, that will welcome all social groups to adopt it physically and symbolically, and will be able to serve as a stage for performing identity and self-presentation, a place for learning in the face of the unknown and for forming opinions."<sup>4</sup>

Space is an issue that in many ways, very directly, even crucially, concerns art. There is an obvious lack of "space for art" or spaces for presentation or performance, but moreover, what is often forgotten, spaces for the production of art. Hence the exit of art into the public space is in itself political, especially because public space is there to resonate all the problematics of today's politics. Consequently, to work in the public space means to disrupt stability, to open questions, criticize and call for criticism, and finally to problematize important political issues, and so much more.

To select technically inadequate spaces, for which we need official licenses and extreme patience with the city and municipal bureaucracies means to select with the intention to share our work, so it is accessible to all. When artwork is placed in the public space it not only enables a wider reception and openness to public comment, but also educates about what art is all about.

The consensus amongst everyone I spoke with was that work in the public space is, on so many different levels, different from that in the gallery. Lala Raščić says:

When you display work in the public space, the first thing that comes to your mind is the interaction with other people. You are leaving something on the street, yourself, as you leave a person there. I think utterly differently about work in a public space and work in a gallery. The gallery space is a controlled environment. Micro focus is for example on the object or a video, in which, and from some position of power, an artwork, carries out its performance. Everything is in the interaction in the city, you calculate on it, and you also consider the unfavourable interaction and ever-changing environment. You count on these situations.

"You should be ready for complete ignorance," says Adela Jušić. However, what work in a public space brings to you is a completely different relationship between the art and the audience. The audience "in this case does not belong to that small number of people who usually visit exhibitions," and the real challenge of public work is "to start a conversation, find ways to attract attention and enable the passer-by to feel invited to participate in the exchange of views, in criticism, and so forth."<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes, working in a public space can be very costly, regardless of the artistic motives behind the selection of the specific street, building or square as a space to display your work. Artist Bojan Stojčić mentioned that when he was a young graffiti artist he was continually paying fines for the graffiti he drew on the walls. "I paid to write and draw around the city. I did it because I wanted to leave part of me there, so when I'm not there, I am there again. I had to be present." says Bojan, revealing a little about the motives behind the art that directly uses the public space as a place and an object of artistic pursuit.

When it comes to the entrance of art into public space a significant step forward in this regard was made by the Sarajevo Center for Contemporary Art (SCCA). Immediately after the last war, under the directorship of Dunja Blažević, SCCA helped in the production of a series of works and

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<sup>4</sup> My translation from Georga Glasze, *Baština, mi i svijet 22.lipnja 2013*. (interview). Snješka Knežević for HRT radio, available at <http://radio.hrt.hr/clanak/bastina-mi-i-svijet-22lipnja-2013/19738/>

<sup>5</sup> From the interview with Adela Jušić, August 2015

exhibitions in public spaces of Sarajevo. Annual Exhibitions of SCCA Meeting Point (1997), Behind the Mirror (1998) and "Under construction" (1999)<sup>6</sup> presented some of the most important works in the public space of the city of Sarajevo. As Dunja Blažević said: "after years and years spent in the cellars, this was an instantaneous response to the need to go public, to do and say something important." The main intention was to ask questions, provoke, react to social or political situations, but not to "decorate the public space."

Art duo Kurt & Plasto think the same and say that their intention was not to create beautiful art, but to bring forward some questions and some politics. "Our focus was also on the preservation of memory, revitalization of our anti-fascist history and monuments." The question that occupied them was that of constructing statehood, independent of history.<sup>7</sup>

Here we find, as pointed out by Blažević, "a good distinction between art in the public space, that we are now talking about, and the public art commissioned by big companies, who place shiny sculptures of major artists as decorations in front of their institutions or corporations" She also emphasized:

My decision to work in a public space was a political decision; it was made in relation to time, context and the people I worked with. It seemed to me that we have to go out with all these matters and again start creating a public space in which art is accessible to everyone. The authors of works were also not afraid of the urban space, or the problems with space of sociality at that time, but were concerned with the need to affirm sociability of the artistic act, rather than with the predetermined social functions of art, per se. Correspondingly we made this exit into the city to publicly criticize new types of post-war, re-established art and politics and practices of exhibiting art.<sup>8</sup>

Setting up artworks in a new context, along with the transition from a place of art to a living place that constantly changes, offered, for a particular period, the possibility for an audience who never entered into any gallery space to meet with the art and artists. "People became accustomed to go to Čulhan<sup>9</sup> to see the artworks. People from the neighbourhood came in often to find out what new was going on. What we in SCCA insisted on was a dialogue with museums and galleries and their policies, because spaces for production and representations were poor." What SCCA enabled was the ability to systematically and continuously invest funds, that would otherwise stay unavailable, for the production of bolder or politically provocative artistic actions. "Some of these artworks are today well known around the world" and they managed "not only to move forward an entire generation of new artists, but also posed important public questions crucial for the city population and offered new tactics for thinking art."

In this way, states Dunja Blažević in the "Meeting Point" exhibition text, the authors looked beyond the ruling conventions of art using new ways in relation to new contexts because the art-historical context is no longer sufficient; the reference-system has changed. As a result a field for action has widened and correspondingly opened new fields of meaning, that require different reading/understanding of these works<sup>10</sup>. (Blažević, 2003)

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<sup>6</sup> SCCA organized three annual ("Meeting Point", summer garden Čulhan, 1997.; "Iza ogledala", different locations in the city, 1998.; "Oprez, radovil", facade of The National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1999.) and realized and supported production of numerous group and individual projects, exhibitions and actions, More information on [www.scca.ba](http://www.scca.ba)

<sup>7</sup> From the interview with Samir Plasto, August 2015

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Dunja Blažević, September 2015

<sup>9</sup> summer garden in the Sarajevo old town

<sup>10</sup> Available at [http://www.c3.hu/ican.artnet.org/ican/text6d8b.html?id\\_text=58](http://www.c3.hu/ican.artnet.org/ican/text6d8b.html?id_text=58)

## What kind of art is it?

The political dimension of art in the public space, as a space of politics, will consist of questions, disturbance of stability, reaction, comments or any other forms that an artwork displays as a public matter and in relation to certain audiences. One of the pioneers of this period Nebojša Šerić Shoba in his work titled *Under All Those Flags* (1999), he placed translucent nylon flags on the poles along the Obala Kulina Bana in Sarajevo, which is where flags are usually placed, But on the opening day of the exhibition, the Prime Minister of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mustafa Mujazinović, ordered the flags to be removed. Censorship of this work, as a radical response to the work dealing with national symbols and, as Shoba says, "with their transparency" showed not only that there is a power that can remove art (defining and considering it as radical) from the public space, but also can make these decisions summarily and without consulting public interest.<sup>11</sup> This act remains today as a reminder of the repressive system that limits freedom of action and re/institutes standards that must be subjected to criticism and re-action.



Picture 2. Under all these flags, Nebojša Šerić Shoba, 1999

Shoba believes that it was necessary "to throw these things into people's faces and impose certain topics". A number of his street performances: a musical performance on the guitar without strings performed with soundless singing titled *No lyrics, No Music, No country, ... Nothing* (1996) or his performance of cleaning garbage in front of the embassies *Cleaning the garbage in front of the EU Embassies after visa applicants*, (1999), as well as his famous sculpture of Ikar<sup>12</sup> - *Monument to the International Community by the grateful citizens of Sarajevo* (2007) which was positioned on the plateau behind the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina (after the refusal of the authorities to place it opposite the Presidency building and hence blunt the artist's edge) were just an attempt to directly impose certain topics. As Shoba says, the

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<sup>11</sup> Interview with Nebojša Shoba Šeriće, October 2015. More at: <http://www.shobaart.com/>

<sup>12</sup> Ikar - a can of beef meat that Sarajevans received via humanitarian aid during the siege from 1992 – 1995. It was the worst possible meat remembered by people of Sarajevo with disgust who often claim that even cats and dogs refused to eat it.



monument, "was supposed to be a reminder to politicians that this Ikar is 'is our fate'. In some way we are still getting it. This should never again happen to us, to live out of other people's humanitarian aid."

Another interesting case concerns the work of the artistic duo Kurt & Plasto *By the Commission Decision: everyone to his place* (2001). Toying with the motif of Annex Seven of the Dayton Peace Accord<sup>13</sup> (everyone to his place) this work commented on the process of erasing and forgetting our own heritage.<sup>14</sup> The artwork was concerned with busts of writers that were removed from the *Oslobođenje trg* at the beginning of the war and stored in the basement of Dom Pisaca (House of Writers) for seven years. To draw public attention to this issue and start discussing the possibility of returning the real busts of writers to their original positions, Kurt&Plasto placed their own busts on the empty pedestals in the park i.e. the Almir Kurt bust and that of Samir Plasto. Eight busts were illegally placed there on the night of the 24<sup>th</sup> of November 2001, but during the night one was pulled down. However, someone reported the case to the police and the policeman on duty spent a whole night guarding the false bust in the snow and cold.



Picture 3. *By the Commission Decision: everyone to his place*, Kurt&Plasto, 2001

Finally, a few days later and without permission from the authorities, the real busts were returned to their place, and the authors say they do not know whether the City Assembly ever made a decision about returning these busts to the former Oslobođenje square. With the support of journalists, intellectuals, SCCA and others, writers Ivo Andrić, Branko Ćopić, Meša Selimović, Mak Dizdar, Rodoljub Ćolaković, Isak Samokovlija, Skender Kulenović were returned to their places, but not the bust of the questionable Veselin Masleša<sup>15</sup>. The shareholders of the "Svjetlost" company asked the Minister of Culture, Gradimir Gojer, in a letter to relocate the bust of Veselin Masleša, because they decided to replace it with a bust of Abdullah Jasenković (the late director of the Svjetlost company) in his place. After a series of actions in 2011 the bust of Veselin Masleša was returned.<sup>16</sup>

Other works of the duo also tend to critically comment on political realities, such as the work developed in the framework of the second annual exhibition of SCCA, *500 meters is half a kilometre* (1998), artwork placed in the bed of the river Miljacka, between the two bridges Skenderija and Ćobanija, distance amounting to 500 metres. Here the authors attempted to

<sup>13</sup> Dayton Peace Agreement, Annex 7: Agreement on Refugees and Displaced Persons, 1995

<sup>14</sup> My translation from the text: Burić Ahmet Andrić nikad nije ovako izgledao, Dani br.234, 30.11.2001, Available at: <https://www.bhdani.ba/portal/arhiva-67-281/234/opservatorij.shtml>

<sup>15</sup> all were famous Yugoslav revolutionary writers and anti-fascists

<sup>16</sup> My translation from text: Vratio se Veselin Masleša, Radiosarajevo.ba, Available at: <http://radiosarajevo.ba/novost/55737/vratio-se-veselin-maslesa>



provoke the ruling structures with a sarcastic commentary on the process of reconstruction and rebuilding in Bosnia-Herzegovina.



Picture 4. 500 meters is half a kilometer, Kurt&Plasto, 1998

Similarly, with the installation *Žene i djeca prvo/Women and children first* (1999), placing lifeboats on the facade of the B&H Art Gallery, at that time covered with scaffolding, the authors depicted an uncertain future as a ship (B&H Art Gallery) sailing through turbulent waters.



Picture 5.  
Women and children first,  
Kurt&Plasto, 1999

A number of other artists also sited their artworks in public spaces, such as the installation of Maja Bajević *Women at work – under construction* (1999)<sup>17</sup> and that of Zlatan Filipović, *Ekspres preporučeno / special delivery* (2000) dealing with the restoration and opening of the The National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo. In this work Zlatan first “wrapped” the building of the The National Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina and then “opened it as a present” at the opening.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, Braco Dimitrijević also sets one of his famous works „*Under this stone there is a monument to the victims of war and Cold War* (2005).” in front of the the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Maja Bajević, <http://majabajevic.com/works/women-at-work-under-construction/>

<sup>18</sup> Zlatan Filipović <http://www.zfilipovic.com/>

<sup>19</sup> It is a big stone block with the dimensions of 150x150x300 cm, in which the words “under this stone is a monument to victims of the war and the Cold War” are engraved in four languages, on all four sides. The monument is placed immediately in front of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina and today looks as if it has been standing there for a long long time, turned into a sign and a signpost leading to another monument. Thus losing its monumentality, today it still stands as a reminder of the fundamental question of the meaning and significance of monuments in general.

In August 2000, at the famous Sarajevo's open marketplace Markale, the artist Alma Suljević, sold the soil from the minefields on the sixth anniversary of the Markale massacre<sup>20</sup>. The work 4ENTITY (2000) was produced independently; by Alma herself and she donated the money collected from the "sale" of the soil for demining actions. As she said, she would first demine the land, then bring it with her, sell it, return to the minefields and re-invest the money in demining, thus creating a cycle or an ontological circle.



Picture 6. Alma Suljević, 4ENTITY, 2000

*The soil is a symbol in itself, maybe I wanted to remind the people that we've all come from soil, it's an eternity we are facing and the short life we all live. Perhaps we should spend it differently; maybe we should all live better lives.*

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<sup>20</sup> The Markale massacres, targeting civilians during the Siege of Sarajevo (1992-1996). This marketplace is located in the historic core of Sarajevo. During the first massacre on 5 February 1994; 68 people were killed and 144 more were wounded and during the second on 28 August 1995 five mortar shells killed 43 people and wounded 75 others. This latter attack was the stated reason for NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb forces that would eventually lead to the Dayton Peace Accords and the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.



One of her first works, *Knjiga utisaka/Book of impressions* (1998), Lala Raščić placed in public spaces of Sarajevo, Zagreb and Ljubljana. Here is what she says about this work:

*In each city I left ten empty notebooks with the inscription Knjiga utisaka (Book of impressions). The books were placed in various urban, public places such as markets, squares, streets, bars, public toilets, clubs and phone booths. The books were designed to be a place, a space where anyone could leave, write or draw their impression of anything. I was interested in the introduction of an unspecified stimulant in a public space, usually overcrowded with consumer content. I wanted to introduce the ordinary passer-by to the art project without marking this action as an artistic act. The content in the books is actually the real content of the project. (Raščić, 1998).<sup>21</sup>*

The project was presented in Sarajevo as part of the annual exhibition of SCCA, *Behind the Mirror (1998)*, which I previously mentioned. Books were placed in different locations to enable a diversity of reactions or absolute indifference, participation or non-participation. As Lala points out, her wish was to allow "her art to be present and available to everyone, and that there is an interaction with individuals through these micro collectors of impressions. The performativity of this work, which I later continued in my other works, was in this interaction that I could not control." Today, only one book of the Sarajevo impressions is preserved. Lala also said that she has no interest in gallery spaces today. , "The gallery space is too neutral", she claims and adds that she prefers multi-purpose halls and spaces that are not used by galleries. "I want my work to resonate, this is why I've always loved performing in spaces such as Zvono gallery."<sup>22</sup>



Picture 7. Lala Raščić, *Book of impressions*, 1998

<sup>21</sup> Raščić Lala, *from the artist statement Knjiga utisaka*, 1998, artist archive, 2015

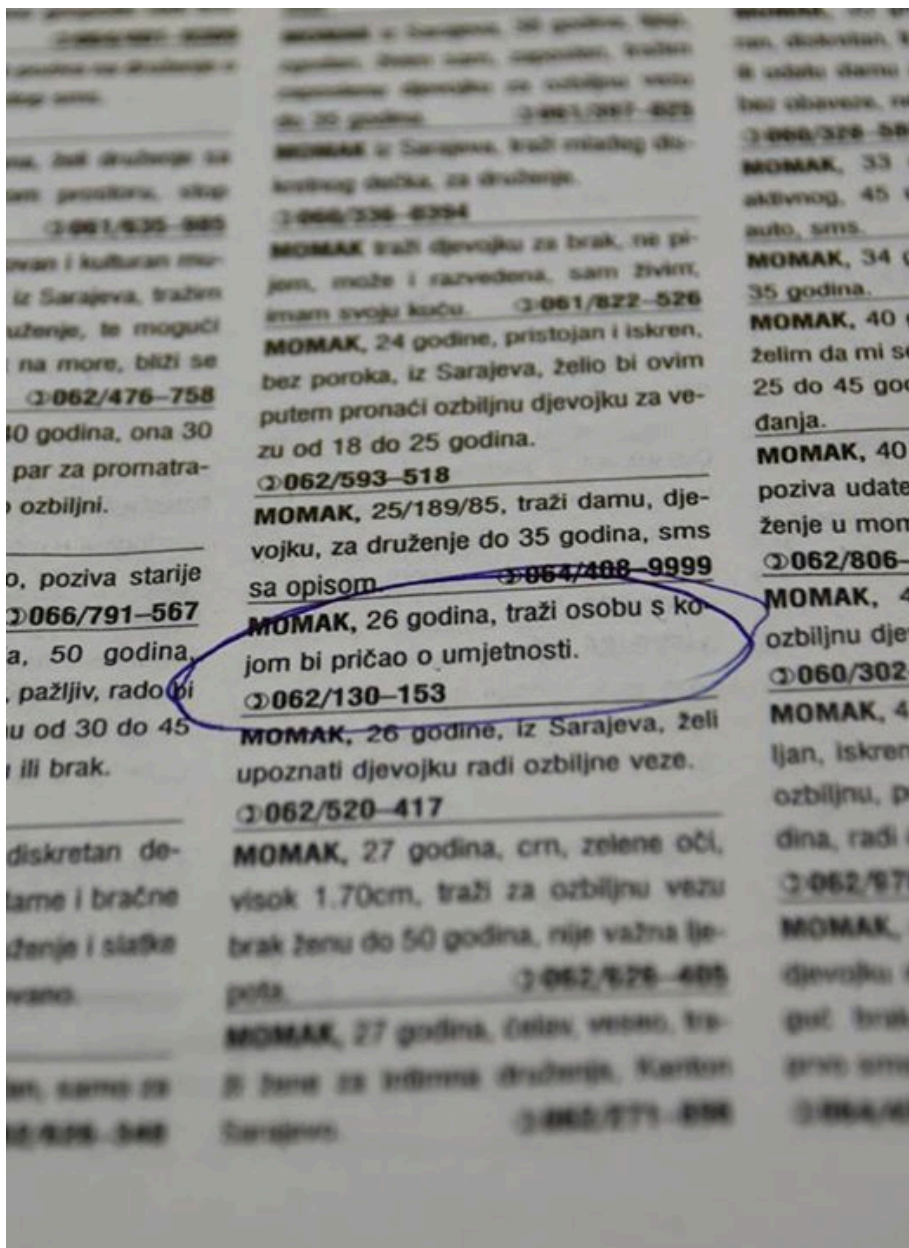
<sup>22</sup> About Zvono gallery and their work <https://www.facebook.com/galerijazvono>

Bojan Stojičić often chooses public space as a place for his work, and most often these are *in situ* artworks, directly connected to a chosen location. As he underlines, "I do not want to bring the finished work there, but rather to respond to the politics of a certain time and space. I am part of this space; it forms the landscape of my existence and constructs my life. This ruin is my life. It reacts to me and I react to it."

In Bojan's works the public space includes media space as well. His work *Tražim osobu / I'm looking for the person (2015)* is an anonymous newspaper ad in which a guy looks for a person with whom to talk about art.<sup>23</sup> Although the work was originally created in the street and was stuck to a phone booth, it then continued to live through the media space. All the layers of this work, its different meanings and messages, were evident through different reactions of the public. "When the media understood it as "*an ad that saddened the region*" and shared it and published it everywhere I could not affect how the work will be understood," said Bojan. The reception for this work was exceptional, and my main intention to communicate with the public was satisfied through long conversations, laughter or exchange.

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<sup>23</sup> Translation of the add *A guy, 26, is looking for a person to talk about art, tel: 062/130-153*



Picture 8.  
Bojan Stojčić, I'm looking for the person, 2015

(Translation of the ad: Guy, 26 years old, seeking for a person with whom to talk about art)

When working in a public space, a space that is neither a museum nor a gallery, we inevitably raise questions about the institutions we are accustomed to go to in a search of art. The role of these institutions would be, as Bojan says, to "educate, record and classify, so art can become a historical fact." At the same time what he says about art is that "the moment it enters into the museum, it becomes dead. On the other hand, what is happening on the street, it's alive, it's human. Everything is alive on the street; it reproduces itself and allows various readings.

Some works deal very directly with specific spaces, such as an art project of Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin *SUBDOCUMENTARY* (2011)<sup>24</sup>. It examines the status and the question of the use of complex Skenderija, and raises questions about public space and collective memory, but also the role of art in a society in transition (Meran, 2011).<sup>25</sup> Today, Skenderija is one of the few shopping centres that are still in public ownership. Skenderija has long been the location and a

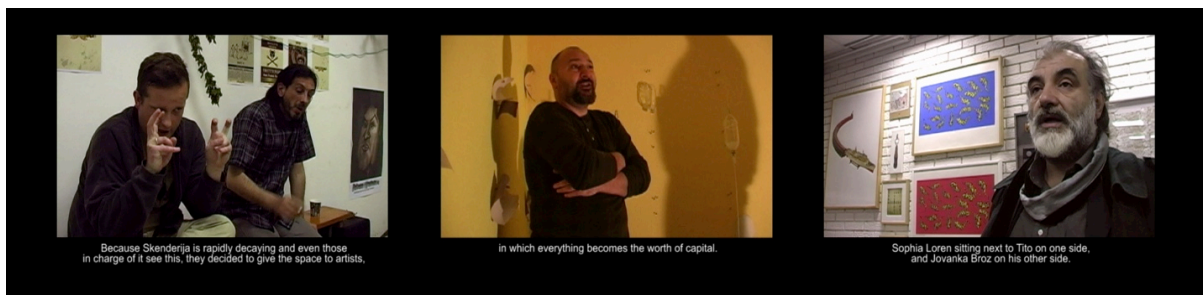
<sup>24</sup> More about the work <https://adelajusic.wordpress.com/works/subdocumentary/>

<sup>25</sup> Exhibition text by Eva Meran, *Be realistic – demand the impossible!*, curated by Lejla Hodžić, Karin Lernbeiß, Margarethe Makovec, Eva Meran, Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rotor, Graz, 2012



home of a remarkable collection of the *Charlama depo* gallery<sup>26</sup> run by Jusuf Hadžifežović and, for a short period of time, a large number of small shops in Skenderija were transformed into art studios.

Through conversations with owners and shopkeepers, employees and artists who had temporary studios there, we had an opportunity to see the personal, but also collective utopias based on beliefs and dreams. Possibilities for the revitalization of this space, having been an important place for rest and sociality in socialist times, were investigated and discussed and further raised issues of transition, personal life situations, past, present and future. This multi-channel video installation with an archive is perhaps the only living monument connected to the past and future of this place.<sup>27</sup>



Picture 9. Adela Jušić and Lana Čmajčanin, SUBDOCUMENTARY, 2011

Another work from recent history, i.e. 2014, "provoked" the authorities and its exhibition was prohibited (at least in the originally planned space). This time it was the exhibition *"The challenges and the achievements"* which was set up in the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Sabina Ćudić as a selector chose works that, among other things, problematize, the decisions made in this very Parliament. The artwork of Lana Čmajčanin, *Bosna i Hercegovina – krojenje i šivanje/Bosnia and Herzegovina – tailoring and sowing (2014)*<sup>28</sup> was, along with the artworks of Šejla Kamerić<sup>29</sup>, Sandra Dukić<sup>30</sup>, Borjana Mrđa<sup>31</sup> and Adela Jušić<sup>32</sup>, supposed to be part of an exhibition in the atrium of the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina.<sup>33</sup> However, given that the work satirically comments on the "Dayton division" of Bosnia and Herzegovina and plays with the constituent elements of statehood (third entity, counties) as well as offering the possibility of DIY "retailoring" of the state based on your own personal needs, it was decided that the work could not be displayed within, as Lana Čmajčanin says, the "walls" of the state apparatus.

<sup>26</sup> More about Charlama <https://cekacharlama.wordpress.com/>

<sup>27</sup> "Spaceship Yugoslavia/The suspension of time", Catalog, Argbooks, Berlin, 2011

<sup>28</sup> More about Lana Čmajčanin <http://www.lanacmajcanin.com/>

<sup>29</sup> More about Šejla Kamerić <http://sejlaameric.com/>

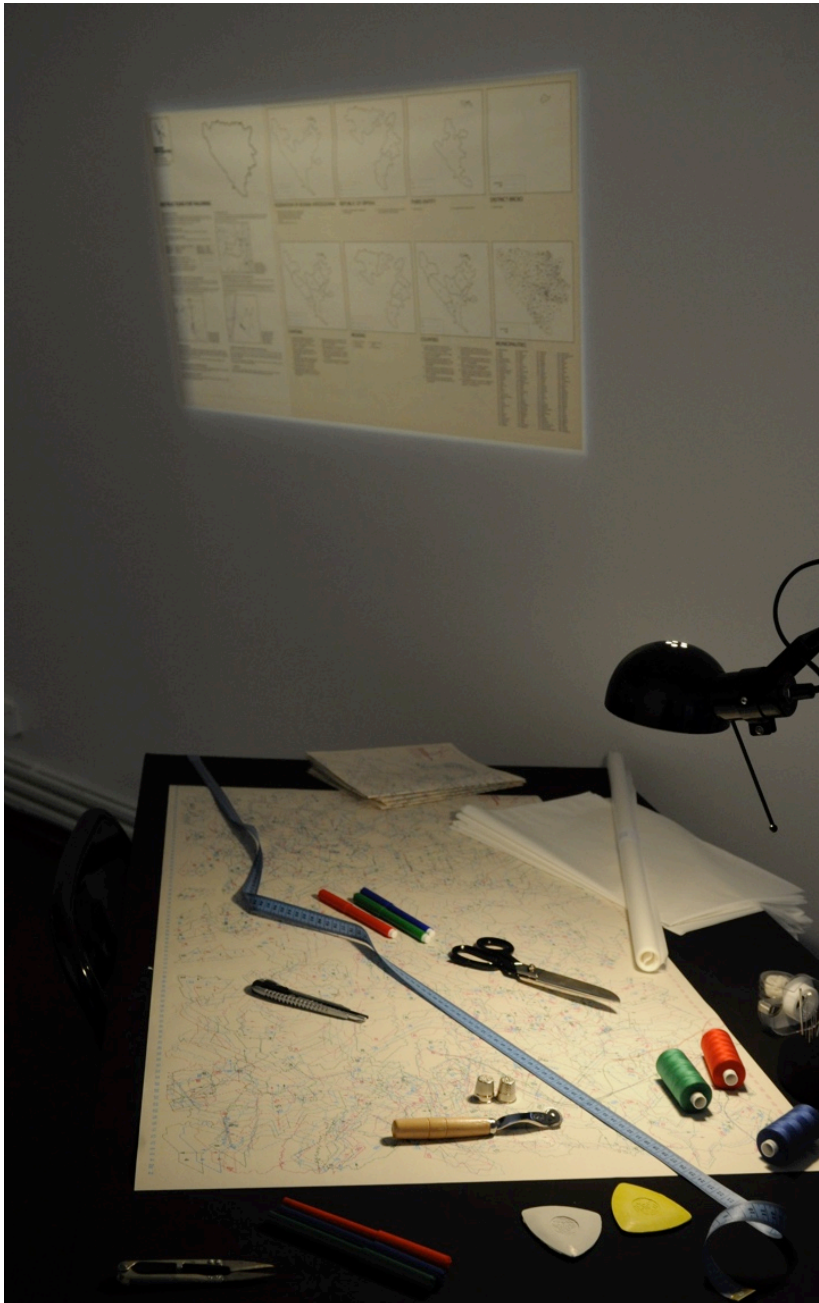
<sup>30</sup> More about Sandra Dukić [http://www.scca.ba/zvono/2007/sandra\\_dukic.php?lang=bh](http://www.scca.ba/zvono/2007/sandra_dukic.php?lang=bh)

<sup>31</sup> More about Borjana Mrđe <http://borjanamrdja.info/>

<sup>32</sup> More about Adela Jušić <https://adelajusic.wordpress.com/>

<sup>33</sup> More about the exhibiton <http://arsbih.gov.ba/1734/>





Picture 10.  
Lana Čmajčanin,  
Bosnia and  
Herzegovina –  
tailoring and sewing,  
2014

This work was later produced and exhibited in Sarajevo as part of the collective exhibition *My house is your house too*<sup>34</sup>. Few other works addressing the status and role of women, women's bodies and women's work were produced as part of this exhibition and placed in the public space while also using the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a surface on which to intervene.

An artwork by Emina Kujundžić in form of a stencil on the wall titled *Svila i kadifa/Silk and Velvet* (2014), also produced for this exhibition, displays figures of nine different women from Emina's past. Their garments indicate how they walked the roads of liberation, emancipation and rebellion in the last hundred years.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Exhibition was realized in production of the Association for Culture and Art CRVENA, in cooperation with Sarajevo open center. Artists exhibiting were as follows: Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić, Emina Kujundžić, Lana Čmajčanin and Sandra Dukić, as well as screening of the Krešo Golik film; see more at: <http://www.radiosarajevo.ba/mobile/novost/167186> , <http://www.crvena.ba/izlozba-moja-kuca-je-i-tvoja-kuca/>

<sup>35</sup> More about Emina Kujundžić <https://emina.ba>



Picture 11. Emina Kujundžić, Silk and Velvet, 2014

*Labor of love (2014)* also part of the exhibition, is a collaborative work of Adele Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić, sited on the outer wall of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This black and white print, measuring about 45 square metres, was a surface onto which the artists intervened with sprays and acrylic colours as kind of a street performance prior to the exhibition. The work deals, in a didactic manner, with the denaturalization of household work, and is inspired by the works of Mariarosa Dalla Costa, Selma James, Silvia Federici and the movement "wages for housework". This is what the authors say about the experience of setting up and preparing the work:

It was very interesting during these three days as we were setting up the work said Jušić and Dugandžić, because we were faced with a variety of reactions. Of course we counted in advance on this communication with the passers-by, and we were ready for talks, debates, criticism and support. We ran into a lot of support and people's willingness to talk. Women would, coming home from work, stop to look at the work and start conversations with us from which we learned that most of them really miss someone to come forward with what they already know, feel, think or suffer from.





Picture 12. Adela Jušić and Andreja Dugandžić, Labour of love, 2014

The story about the role of cultural institutions may best be finished with one public intervention. In her work, *Pazi muzej/Watch out Museum* (2015), Nardina Zubanović draws parallels with the time when the city was destroyed by weapons<sup>36</sup> and the current situation in which it is destroyed by other means. As Nardina says, the work is "my personal protest against the current situation in which the citizens, cultural institutions e.g. the National and Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the artists are." This work is also a statement that culturocide and the destruction of society have not stopped with the war but still lurk over the future of culture like phantoms.



Picture 13. Nardina Zubanović, Watch out Museum, 2015

<sup>36</sup> Reminder to war-made boards with a "watch out sniper» inscription

## Towards the place of commons and conclusion

It seems that the post-war period was extremely productive, at least when it comes to art in the public space. The reasons for this lay partly in a state of general enthusiasm with the war's end and the possibility of free use of the city spaces, as well as in the new city vibe after the war. A significant impulse for artworks produced in this period was the one coming from SCCA, particularly with annual exhibitions and projects such as, eg. *Deconstruction of Monuments*. It is also apparent that with fewer investments in art production, the number of interventions in the public space dropped and this form of art production, unfortunately, has become sporadic.

Like a red thread, the idea of the potentiality of art is not only to create places of commons, unusual, debatable, charged with questions and answers, but also to open places for new knowledge, developed through all the conversations with artists and curators, as well as through artworks depicted here. Furthermore, these aforementioned artworks help us realize in which fashion art leads to political action, and vice versa, but also in what way political action evokes art.

Art in the public space will understandably be under the watchful eye of those who, by the law, have priority in the designing of the public space, running under the 'flag' of public interest. Manipulation in this regard is, as underlined by some of the interviewees, partly possible because there is no official counterpart, providing resistance to these retrograde policies. However, I must add here, that it exists in all these cases that I previously mentioned, but also in those in other works I missed in this article, but were significant. The nature of public space, its temporality and as well as its spaciousness give special value to all of these works, not only because of the fact that they cause cognitive reactions, but because they constantly question not only representation, but also meaning.

Due to art in public space, politics becomes performative and, within a given time and context, usurps the place where policies on public matters are being developed. Lastly, art enters into this dialogue with the politic/politics, thus transcending oneself, and its future, says Lefebvre, *is not artistic, but urban*<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> Lefebvre, 1991 : *The Production of Space*, Henri Lefebvre, Blackwell Publishing, 1991.  
*The art of living in the city as a work of art. In other words, the future of art is not artistic, but urban.*

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## Personal interviews

Personal interview, Lala Raščić, September 2015, Sarajevo  
Personal interview, Dunja Blažević, Oktober 2015, online  
Personal interview, Adela Jušić, August 2015, Sarajevo  
Personal interview, Lana Čmajčanin, August 2015, Sarajevo  
Personal interview, Alma Suljević, September, Sarajevo  
Personal interview, Samir Plasto, August, Sarajevo  
Personal interview, Nebojša Shoba Šerić, September, online  
Personal interview, Zlatan Filipović, August 2015, Sarajevo  
Personal interview, Bojan Stojčić, August 2015, Sarajevo

## Other resources

Adela Jušić <https://adelajusic.wordpress.com/>  
Bojan Stojčić [www.bojanstojcic.com](http://www.bojanstojcic.com)  
Borjana Mrđa <http://borjanamrdja.info/>  
Charlama <https://cekacharlama.wordpress.com/>  
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## Pictures

1. Picture 1 Borgerink Kris, 'Whatever you will write on a wall, people won't care', 2008., photo Zlatan Filipović
2. Picture 2 Ispod svih tih zastava, Nebojša Šerić Shoba, 1999., courtesy of the artist
3. Picture 3 Odlukom komisije: svak na svoje, Kurt&Plasto, 2001., courtesy of the artist
4. Picture 4 500 metara je pola kilometra, Kurt&Plasto, 1998., courtesy of the artist
5. Picture 5 Žene i djeca prvo, Kurt&Plasto, 1999., courtesy of the artist
6. Picture 6 Alma Suljević, 4ENTITY, 2000., courtesy of the artist
7. Picture 7 Lala Raščić, Knjiga utisaka, 1998., courtesy of the artist
8. Picture 8 Bojan Stojčić, Tražim osobu, 2015., courtesy of the artist
9. Picture 9 Adela Jušić i Lana Čmajčanin, SUBDOCUMENTARY, 2011., courtesy of the artists (collage)
10. Picture 10 Lana Čmajčanin, Bosna i Hercegovina – krojenje i šivanje, 2014. courtesy of the artist
11. Picture 11 Emina Kujundžić, Svila i kadifa, 2014., photo by Danijela Dugandžić
12. Picture 12 Adela Jušić i Andreja Dugandžić, Rad ljubavi, 2014., courtesy of the artists
13. Picture 13 Nardina Zubanović, Pazi muzej, 2015., photo by Nikola Blagojević