Artist as Audience: Talks Among the Audience

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HOW TO APPROACH ART SIDEWAYS?

Boba Mirjana Stojadinović
“The first edition of the The Spectator cost me numerous letters filled with sympathy, interest, and curiosity. One of them ends with words: ‘Yet, I regret you have exclusively dedicated yourself to the role of the spectator.’

Urgently I need to set at peace this distant friend and mark but a segment of what I understand under the term Spectator. The wholeness of thoughts concealed behind that word can only be unreeled throughout the life of the work itself.

Go back to your once known tranquillity, my distant friend who wrote me and who – bless you! – are not quite indifferent to what I do or, by any chance, I do not do: life in Spain, whether we wish it or not, obliges us to political action. The near future, time of social turmoil, all the more will oblige us to it. That is exactly the reason I feel the need to set apart a part of my being and dedicate it to deep thinking. Because what happens to me, happens to everyone.

[...] when politics reigns the consciousness and starts managing our entire spiritual life, it grows into serious illness. The reason is clear. While we accept the useful merely as useful, we cannot be declared wrong. But if this obsession with usefulness becomes the basic habit of our personality, when we search for truth we will tend to mix it with usefulness. And making the truth out of usefulness is a definition of a lie. The empire of politics is therefore an empire of lies.

[...] In order to shape up his work, the writer needs the audience, just like the liquor needs a glass to be poured into. Therefore The Spectator is a shattering appeal dedicated to the audience consisting of ‘lovers of observation’, readers who would be interested in things regardless the consequences, including the moral ones. [...] The readers who would not demand to be persuaded, but at the same time would be willing to experience rebirth at any moment, leaving behind an established credo and accepting another one, an unusual one.”

José Ortega y Gasset, El Espectador (The Spectator, 1916–1934).
This quote is taken from a selection of essays published by CLIO, Belgrade, 1998.
The production of contemporary visual art in Belgrade is very diverse and rich. Who is its audience: who sees it and in which way? Do contemporary visual artworks offer ‘food for thought’ and to whom? What subjects do these works deal with and in which way? Can an artwork change something in everyday life? What are the dynamics of inter-relations: artist–artwork–audience–general public?

The project *Artist as Audience* (AaA) deals with these questions, among others. It is a forum where the audience brings forward questions, opinions and attitudes about artworks by young and mid-career artists, whose production in the first decade of this century up to today (2000–2014) has been in the focus of the professional public in the best of the cases, but remained without articulated reverberation among the general audience. How come?

Since 2010 more than thirty discussions have been produced in cooperation with artists coming from different generations, sensibilities, backgrounds, etc. The choice of the artist was my own, and each artist was chosen for very different reason: their works are critical and/or constructive; the artists were sometimes chosen for one or more works that were later discussed, and sometimes not; because of interesting or provocative attitudes the artist expresses; because of an exhibition running at the time; curious problematizing of social issues; likeness or discord in relation to some of the works previously discussed, etc.

My own role in the AaA project has been omnipresent, though I hope it has not been imposing – I was the author of the project, its main producer and coordinator, as well as the moderator of the discussions.

Intentionally excluding the artist, these discussions were going on only among the audience with the help of the moderator: the thoughts on chosen contemporary artworks were expressed and mutually questioned by whoever wanted to join. The artist him/herself remained a listener till the very end, when s/he could engage in direct conversation with the audience.

The intention of these discussions was not to have the artist explain or defend his/her work, but to create an active communication among the artwork and the audience – from first impressions and possible implications of the artwork to gaining insights and considerations of the everyday context of the actual art practices in the Belgrade art scene. Art professionals were invited to join the talks; however, a particular emphasis was put on the participation of the general audience. The talks were not conducted in a strictly professional language and the approach to the themes was such as not to give an advantage to a professional way of expressing opinions and attitudes. The discussions rather gave an opportunity to ‘think out loud’, to confront thoughts without the pretention that there is only one correct answer or a singular view on art. Hence, the discussions served as a context in which one could question the value and meaning of the individual within the wider cultural and social framework.

Most of the discussions were conducted in the Cultural Centre Rex, but the place and time of each discussion was individually agreed upon, depending if there was a place that would enrich the discussion: an on-going (solo) exhibition, a particular place relevant for the artwork, etc.
Together with the general invitation to take part in the discussions, the audience received information on the work to be talked about and a set of questions the artist posed. This set of questions was the guiding star of the course of the discussions and in themselves they were often highly provoking.

The content of each discussion was unique as well as its dynamics. The artist and the work itself were two key points that set the pace of the discussions: whether or not the artist was open to AaA ‘experiment’, in what way the artist had been part of the local community, if s/he had been present in the media; and then again if the work itself was communicative, stimulating, entertaining, thoughtful, philosophical...

The multitude of audience members was not a guarantee of an exciting interchange. Sometimes the curiosity and questioning of a singular person was enough to make the whole discussion seem like it had made a difference in the public discourse and to set the ‘butterfly effect’ in motion. Sometimes it happened that the starting point of the discussion was a work that turned out to be self-sufficient and gave nothing in return and the participants of the discussion had to look for other topic inspiration, like artist’s previous works. At other times the subject of the work might have seemed almost banal, but throughout the discussion deep cultural, spiritual or emotional layers would unveil. These previous examples are only a rough charting of the ‘territory’, yet there are no rules: each time a similar scenario produces very different situations in space and time.

Some of the more general questions the project poses are:

– Who are the artists? What is the position of the artist (in Belgrade/Serbia/Balkans)?
– In what way does the artist enter the focus of public and/or professional sphere and stay there? What are the criterions and references for valuing artworks? How and where is an artwork constituted?
– Who attends the discussions? What is the position of the visual art audience (in Belgrade/Serbia)?
– In what ways different audiences react and inscribe themselves into the subjects of the works or generally communicate with them? Does art exist regardless the audiences? How do artists respond to the reactions of the audience?
– Which topics are provoked by the artworks?
– In which ways do artworks stimulate intellectual transactions and the exchange of experiences?
– How to understand what others produce? How to understand and value what I – the artist or simply a citizen – create?
– How to communicate with other people via art?

The discussions have indirectly dealt with these questions while discussing particular artworks. Each participant gave his/her own perspective and directly participated in shaping the general attitude and opinion of the work on the spot, as fragile, insecure and impermanent these beliefs were at that moment. The discussions do not have the pretences for absolute opinions; they are rather making the effort of negotiations of the ways in which an artwork may stimulate thinking and perception. As a result, the artist received first-hand reactions to the work – how much is the work...
approachable and articulated, how much do the artist's idea and the perception of the audience overlap, and what is the possible range of understanding the work. In this constellation of cracking up the work, the work becomes very real; it effectively takes inter-human space, a space among the visitors, the audience – by talking about it it becomes a medium for communication.

Language imperfections are not only a linguistic problem, they are also mirrored in visual art: just as visual artists make the effort to mediate certain sensations, thoughts, attitudes or their substratum to the audience, so does the audience make the effort to intercept the artworks with its presence and response. The response of the audience is to shape its thoughts and experiences into words as to bring the artist to enter the role of the audience. Generally, the relation between the artist and the audience is like the relation between the storyteller (the artist) and the listener (the audience), but it happens, on occasions like AaA, for these roles to switch.

The revered position of the artist has been destabilized through the discussions. Some artists perceived the discussions mainly as a critique. I would rather prefer to perceive them as critical reflections, which are not necessarily a critique. Whether the discussion has any implication on the work is mainly up to the artist: the attitudes expressed throughout the discussions reflect momentary thoughts of the participants rather than invincible authoritative attitudes. All the more so as some people from the audience advanced their statements during the discussions; this is something I consider particularly precious. (Some of the participants were eager to provoke, so you are advised to read the discussion as a flow of exchange, not as individual statements.)

The discussions on the works by foreign artists were of particular importance, works like Tales of Protest. A Necessity. (2009) by Nina Höchtl included in this booklet: these artists produced works in relation to the local context and in the local conditions in Serbia. It was inspiring to see how the artists transferred and inscribed their experiences from Serbia – a foreign environment, distant and not easily comprehensible – into what they find close to themselves, understandable and sharable with their peers. Both Bik Van der Pol and Nina Höchtl posed a question about what it means when an artist works in an environment that is not his/her home.

The AaA started as a forum oriented towards particulars of the perception of art within the wider context of a particular country and a city, Serbia and Belgrade respectively. It always strongly encouraged the participants to express their specific views on things, and to articulate them as much as possible. However, the translation of the discussion to English brings forward many questions relating the local context – Belgrade/Serbia/Balkan, and the wider one – particularly Europe. It seems that the discussion on these questions reflected many dilemmas and characteristics of the Serbian cultural climate, not only in relation to foreign artists, but also in the way personal and communal Serbian cultural identity is externalized.

In an extensive book Artist as Audience: Talks among the Audience (2013) published in Serbian all the discussions have been presented with the integral material. The book also contained fifteen transcripts, including the discussions on works by Bik Van der Pol
and Nina Höchtl. The booklet in your hands was a fortunate opportunity to have the discussion on *Tales of Protest. A Necessity.* available in English.

I wonder whether the linguistic translation is also capable of translating how a certain community reverberates. Can the individual endeavours be translated in a slightly different context from the one they originated from – here I have in mind the endeavours as much as by Nina Höchtl as by the workers from Jugoremedija factory in Zrenjanin, with whom Nina worked with for her art piece? The back-side of this issue is: What do we take as self-understood within a community? The discussions repeatedly question all what seems to be self-understood by the artist, by the moderator, by each member of the discussion. Translation to another language is perhaps the most direct way of detecting what a certain community (of art professionals, factory workers, citizens, etc.) do not communicate, but take as self-understood, as something that does not need explanation, that is clear to all involved in the conversation. AaA starts at the point when all of that (self-understood) is challenged and examined.

The notion of the *audience* contains the illusion of the passivity of a present social and political state of urban life as well as a position of the *spectator*, to paraphrase the aforementioned book by José Ortega y Gasset. What I understand as audience is a heterogeneous group of people brought down to the lowest common denominator in relation to an artwork, someone with whom the author of a body of work can share the outcomes, but also the questions surrounding that piece of art – someone who is literally an interlocutor. The notion of an audience incorporates a human multitude defined by culture as well as by a geo-political location. The gaze of the artist and the gaze of the audience are irreconcilable; they are two very different, sometimes even mutually exclusive, subjectivities.

I approach the project AaA as an artist and an author of the provisional social structure who builds and questions the relations. Who produces what and for whom? What is the quality of relations among those who produce art and those who perceive it? Through questioning the established relations among the audience and the artists, my role was mainly to enable and create a framework, a platform for something to happen (which fortunately always does), and I see AaA as an expression of my creative endeavour. Perhaps the only possible expression of my own rich experience of the project has been producing a book on it, particularly working on the transcripts as much as the circumstances allowed.

The book on AaA represents something completely different than the discussions themselves, namely a trace of a specific time and geography in which the discussions took place. The book is a collective interview of all present among themselves enabling mutual questioning, support and enrichment, the performance of their own qualities, potentials and abilities. Sometimes I think that the book in Serbian, as well as this much shorter version in English, is a time capsule. I do not know how the time we live in will look like when this time capsule opens after, who knows, fifty years – as a time of collapse or purge, as social deviations or a search for an exit out of the heritage that wasn’t relevant anymore? If anyone ever wonders how people thought about art and everyday life back in time, then this booklet might give a little insight.
TALES OF PROTEST. A NECESSITY.

Details on the work and questions for the audience
This five-channel video installation combines the stories of five fictionalized characters (Milenka, Bogdan, Nina, Zolt, Zoran) with fragments from Sergei Eisenstein’s 1925 silent film “Strike”. In this movie Eisenstein depicted a complex re-enactment of the developments that took place in a factory in pre-revolutionary Russia of 1912. The actors of the Proletkult Theatre (Theatre of the People, 1917–1927) re-enacted the strike. In this project, my interest lies in the scenes that portray collectivism and stand in contrast to the individual position of each tale.

This installation is based on a research I conducted during two residency periods in Belgrade, Serbia. In winter 2008, I started to delve into the struggle of the workers of the pharmaceutical factory Jugoremedija in Zrenjanin. From 2004 to 2006, the workers had fought against the privatization of their workplace. Throughout their struggle they partly lived in the factory, squatted the city hall for four months, protested three days and nights in front of the Agency for Privatization in Belgrade, got beaten up, injured and imprisoned by the police and the private security. During these two years the workers did not earn and many were disowned by their families. In 2006, Jugoremedija became the first factory amongst the “transition” countries in Eastern Europe undergoing neo-liberal privatization to be recovered and controlled by its workers.

In summer 2009, I came back to Serbia to research further into the subject. I soon found out that during the month of August alone, there were around forty different protests per day taking place all over Serbia. Based on this research and interviews with the workers I developed “Tales of protest. A necessity”. The conversations with the workers as much as witnessing their protest in front of the Privatization agency and the governmental building in Belgrade triggered me to question my own position as an artist and framer of the workers’ struggle: What am I fighting for? Do I let anything be done to myself?

Nina Höchtl
Tales of Protest. A Necessity.

A 5-channel video installation (each video 5'57”)
Serbian with Serbian Cyrillic script and English subtitles
2009

Concept, sound recording and editing: Nina Höchtl
Audio recording performed by: Gordana Tasić (Milenka), Nenad Gvozdenović (Bogdan), Iva Marković (Nina), Slavoljub Novaković (Zolt), Ivan Nikolić (Zoran)
Footage: Stachka (1924) by Sergei M. Eisenstein
Translation to Serbian: Tamara Naunović
Proof editing of English: Nenad Jovanović
Thanks to Marko Miletić, Rajko Petrović, Milan Srećković, Milenko Srećković, Boba Mirjana Stojadinović, Szabolcs Tolnai, Nataša Pavlović, Ivan Zlatić www.freedomfight.net,
Galerija KONTEKST, <rotor> Margarethe Makovec, Anton Lederer
Special thanks to the workers of Jugoremedija in Zrenjanin – without them this project would not have been possible.
Supported by the Austrian Cultural Forum – Belgrade.

More about the project and background information can also be found on:
http://www.meta-don.org/newborder/?page_id=1254
http://www.all4all.org/2006/07/2645.shtml
http://eipcp.net/transversal/0208/buden/en
What does protesting and participating in strikes mean?

Does each tale of protest expand one’s insights on the subject?

How do you feel about the use of the Cyrillic script? Which implications does it have on the work?

Do you feel that the text and the footage from Sergei Eisenstein’s “Strike” add something to the content of each tale?

This project started out with an invitation from Galerija Kontekst to do an Artist-in-Residence in Belgrade. What do you think about artists from abroad reflecting on site-specific situations? Do you think an outside view can open up new perspectives? Do you think outsiders can learn anything from site-specific contexts or is their research necessarily superficial?

How do you feel about the decision to place myself within the work?

Is the video installation able to grant access to another insight, a sense of urgency, or of necessity?

Does this project make you reflect on the role and the position of protesting? What do you think about workers’ self-management? Do you consider it an alternative to an owner or supervisor telling workers where, how and what to do?

Can you share your thoughts on recent and current protests in your city? How do you feel about them? Do you protest? What for?
TALES OF PROTEST. A NECESSITY
Transcript of the discussion on the work by Nina Höchtl

29. 10. 2011
Kontekst at the Local Community Centre

The discussion took place in Serbian and was simultaneously interpreted into English by Ljubica Gavanski.

Transcript from the audio recording: Boba Mirjana Stojadinović
Translation into English: Zoran Lojanica and Frekvencija
MARKO MILETIĆ: For those of you who do not know and in order to avoid confusion, the venue currently holds an exhibition by Vladimir Miladinović¹ that we opened last Tuesday. We did it knowing the topic of Nina’s work. Next Tuesday we will host a talk with the representatives of the Union Unity², so in practice we conceived this as a week of discussing the worker’s struggle or the workers’ issue. All of this – the discussion and exhibition and the talk with union’s representatives – takes place within the “Self-Powered”³ festival by the Belgrade Independent Culture Scene.

In the conversation we already started, we began with the technical details, explaining that the piece was not supposed to be played on laptops⁴. We should be a bit better equipped to get the effect Nina wanted, but we concluded that, in fact, even presented like this, it probably gets the effect Nina wanted – the impression of a multitude.

FEMALE VOICE: Unfortunately I cannot read Cyrillic script.

BOBA MIRJANA STOJADINOVIC: In her work, Nina of course uses English and Serbian, and in Serbian the Cyrillic script more specifically.

MARIJA SKOKO: I have to admit I did not notice this as a specific element; it is so omnipresent that I didn’t...

FEMALE VOICE: It is not Cyrillic, this is Latin script.

FEMALE VOICE: Serbian is in Cyrillic.

FEMALE VOICE: I have a question for you – why?

ANETA STOJNIC: Because it is the official alphabet.

MALE VOICE: ...of the Republic of Serbia, the official alphabet...

SAŠA BUDIMLIJA: I haven’t even noticed anything unusual.

MARIJA SKOKO: I do not know if it is normal, but we stopped noticing it as an alien factor.

FEMALE VOICE: I think it is us who do not notice it, but those who do not understand Serbian surely have noticed it and perhaps it was something they felt was good or bad. I believe that the fact it was noticed at all is important because of a, not to call it ethnological, but, yes – cultural stamp, even though the story itself transcends that framework.

FEMALE VOICE: This is a contemporary art event, so having this only in Cyrillic script – I have to say, you may not notice that but I do – this has never happened to me before here in Belgrade. I do not know if that constitutes success, I do not know if it is some sort of normalisation – perhaps. But I am really surprised; I have never seen a catalogue or an announcement...

¹ Vladimir Miladinović, visual artist, graduated at the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade, currently a PhD candidate at Belgrade University of Art, at the Theory of Arts and Media department. His current occupations are socially and politically engaged stories.

The exhibition referred to is ‘Worker in Protest’ opened in 2011 at Kontekst in the Local Community Centre. [http://www.vladimirmiladinovic.blogspot.com/](http://www.vladimirmiladinovic.blogspot.com/)


³ SELF-POWERED, Belgrade Independent Culture, ten-day independent-culture scene public programme in Belgrade presenting 77 programmes taking place 25.10–5.11.2011. Association Independent Culture Scene Serbia (ICSS, [www.nezavisnakultura.net](http://www.nezavisnakultura.net)) initiated and coordinated the programme.

⁴ The piece was originally played on five gallery TV sets, but due to the circumstances of the Artist as Audience programme, it was presented on five laptop computers.
Dragana Žarevac: Well it is not true...

Danilo Prnjat: I have to admit I share your impression; I was also surprised by the Cyrillic script. I have an impression I have not seen this for a very long time, related to art...

Female voice: I cannot agree with this, most of the catalogues printed in art institutions, starting with Knez Mihailova and all the largest official ones are in Cyrillic. It is nothing exceptional.

Sasa Budišlija: Street names are in Cyrillic script.

Female voice: I am not saying anything in favour of Cyrillic script; I am only saying it is nothing unusual for it to be in Cyrillic.

Danilo Prnjat: I just have the impression that in art venues, alternative so to speak, Latin alphabet is more represented.

Sasa Budišlija: Cyrillic is definitely a scarce occurrence.

Boja: Then Cyrillic is the alternative one.

Female voice: You know what, if someone comes from Croatia, they will have the same problem I do. Plus I know more about Cyrillic than most foreigners.

Female voice: I agree that street names in Cyrillic script are a major problem; it is really against common sense.

Marko Miletić: I would not get involved in the discussion about Cyrillic and Latin script...

Boja: It is relevant to the piece; we simply need to focus on Nina’s work.

Marko Miletić: If we are talking about her artwork, yes, but you started from art venues and institutions, it seems to me it does not have much to do with the piece.

Aneta Stojnić: It can be related in terms of connecting the issue of Cyrillic with the issue of populism, and the issue of populism to the issue of workers’ movements or protests, and in that sense we can create some sort of...

Female voice: When we speak of Cyrillic script, of course, then the issue of institutions is relevant, as is this reaction we have now, and the fact that Latin script prevails in art venues also says something about Cyrillic.

Marko Miletić: Kontekst is one of the producers of Nina’s artwork and we never use Cyrillic. The piece contains Cyrillic and that is certainly Nina’s decision, not ours, but I can only speculate as to why she used it. I believe it has something to do with her wanting to relate to official communication that workers repeatedly dealt with during their struggles, protests, efforts, etc. There was even a dilemma: because it was happening in Zrenjanin where not everybody is Serbian and Cyrillic script is not everyone’s mother tongue alphabet...7

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5 The reference probably relates to the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts and the ULUS gallery located in Knez Mihailova Street in the old Belgrade centre.

6 Serbian and Croatian, also referred as Serbo-Croatian and Croatian-Serbian language in former Yugoslavia (in schools children would study Serbo-Croatian in Serbia and Croatian-Serbian in Croatia as their mother tongue), are as similar as German language in Austria and Germany. However, Serbian uses both Cyrillic and Latin scripts, and Croatian only Latin script.

7 Serbian language has Cyrillic as the official alphabet and Latin has the status of second-equal. Alongside Serbian, various parts of Serbia have other languages in official usage due to national minorities.
MARIJA SKOKO: I do not see the connection at all, I do not know why that would be a national issue when workers’ struggle is not a national issue.

FEMALE VOICE: But there is an issue, when speaking of class struggles, of collectiveness. Cyrillic also draws the issue of a collective. If we speak about Zrenjanin, yes, in Zrenjanin there are Romanians as well, but an issue of that undefined community of workers is the one that is at stake.

MARIJA SKOKO: Is it also a question of the relation between English and Serbian language or is it a separate issue of Cyrillic versus Latin script? Is it a parallel or a separate issue of Cyrillic, I do not understand.

FEMALE VOICE: I think it is separate, especially in Vojvodina, since in Vojvodina we have two official alphabets, Latin and Cyrillic. You also have several languages that are all administrative languages.

MARIJA SKOKO: It is not just the issue of understanding the script, but the issue of understanding the language. Is it the same distinction?

BOBA: Perhaps the further question would be who this artwork speaks to?

MARIJA SKOKO: Someone looking at this piece abroad – I see it was also shown in Salzburg – they do not care if they are watching Cyrillic or Latin, they do not understand Serbian anyhow. It is immediately clear to them that it is a language they do not understand; it is not even an issue whether or not it is Cyrillic.

ANETA STOJNIC: Perhaps that is the key – it is interesting what you have just said, that this is a language they do not understand. Perhaps in that we can read the artist’s intention.

MARIJA SKOKO: This question is closely related to Cyrillic, and I am not sure how to read the questions.

DANilo PRNJAT: I think it would be good if Aneta elaborated it a little more, because the thought also crossed my mind – in fact, if they do not understand Serbian or Cyrillic, how do they understand the piece in terms of a visual work of art?

ANETA STOJNIC: I would think in terms of a local context, a specification of something that is a particular local context that moreover has another alphabet, which is not only unintelligible, but also unrecognizable for someone watching it elsewhere.

FEMALE VOICE: But the piece also runs English subtitles in parallel.

FEMALE VOICE: I find it interesting – the perception of people who not only do not understand Serbian but are completely new to Cyrillic. There is an association perhaps to Russia and the East and the entire Communist bloc and workers’ movements and someone connecting it all. Perhaps it emphasizes the Eastern framework.

FEMALE VOICE: And former Yugoslavia as well.

In Zrenjanin other official languages include Hungarian, Slovak and Romanian. All four languages are legitimate in businesses, state offices, institutions and organizations, all public signs (settlements, lakes, urban signage, etc.), public announcements, etc.

8 Entsprechend PREKÄR, Galerie 5020, Salzburg/Austria, 2010, Nina Höchtl’s solo exhibition.
Female voice: Yes, everything related to organised labour, socialism, communism and all that. When it is about Cyrillic, one can see in the foreigners’ glance literally an equals sign with Russian Cyrillic alphabet.

Male voice: Do not let the Macedonians hear you.

Boba: Then it is a Slavic issue...

Female voice: Yugoslav in fact, because the piece deals with workers’ struggle caused by transition. That same transition ensued after the demise of Yugoslavia, and after the demise of Yugoslavia these language barriers emerged, so much so that new terms have been introduced and the whole Cyrillic/Latin issue came into focus. Cyrillic and Latin were equally taught in all ex-Yugoslav republics. I first learned Latin script, but then Yugoslavia collapsed and when we were supposed to learn Cyrillic in third grade we did not do so in Croatia, so it was kicked out along the way. Today’s generations growing up after the demise of Yugoslavia do not know Cyrillic script, it is foreign to them. I believe there is a connection there.

Boba: It seems to me an important concern is how we perceive things. We are now speculating how someone coming from elsewhere can see things, but I also think it is an important issue how, right now, right here, we perceive English that nobody takes notice of. We are here and we speak a certain language⁹, and we have an input from a different language, culture, perhaps a semantics input, and we are not reacting to it at all. We are reacting to what Cyrillic is in Serbia.

Female voice: English is a part of, let me be blunt, globalisation; if you do not know English you are illiterate, it was imposed as neo-colonial.

Dragana Žarevac: The entire time an aspect, the simplest philological aspect is missing: if you understand Serbian it is necessary that you know Cyrillic alphabet i.e. if you aspire to know Serbian then you should know Cyrillic script as well. It is pure philology.

Female voice: Is that a dogma?

Dragana Žarevac: No, it is not dogma. If you aspire to know Serbian language, then you should know Cyrillic alphabet. It is philology, it is a philological postulate, and I simply do not know where the problem is.

Marija Skoko: That is not the question here.

Dragana Žarevac: Then I do not understand why the question is not asked from that aspect.

Male voice: It is a school standard.

Dragana Žarevac: Yes, it is a school standard. If you are learning the Serbian language, it is necessary that you know the Cyrillic alphabet. If you are learning English, it is necessary to know the Latin alphabet.

Female voice: We are not talking about people learning Serbian here, but we are speaking about why a certain font was selected.

Dragana Žarevac: No, a certain font was not selected, but a certain script. It is probable that some font was selected in both English and Serbian, but a script was selected and that is alright.

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⁹ The discussion was led in Serbian, apart from the very end of the discussion when everyone was speaking English with Nina.
Set-up of the TALES OF PROTEST. A NECESSITY at Kontekst at the Local Community Centre. Photograph: Boba Mirjana Stojadinović
FEMALE VOICE: It is completely OK to me, Greek also has its own script. It is not a problem; the problem is imposing the Cyrillic script...

DRAGANA ŽAREVAC: That is something else and I believe it is not directly related to this artwork.

FEMALE VOICE: No, but we are discussing it and perhaps it could be one of the aspects.

FEMALE VOICE: We started from this text\textsuperscript{10}, we didn’t even start from the piece.

SAŠA BUDIMLIJA: I believe it is far from an imposition – Cyrillic is such a rare occurrence nowadays that it is silly to discuss it at all, it is almost extinct now. I was born in 1977 and at school I first learned the Cyrillic alphabet, we primarily used Cyrillic. Latin script was something introduced sideways, but the Cyrillic alphabet was the base. The younger generations I hang out with now can read Cyrillic, but cannot write it.

FEMALE VOICE: This is why I started this topic – I said I related Latin script to contemporary art. Just as well, English language is nowadays closely related to contemporary art, meaning somebody who does not speak English cannot produce contemporary art. The contemporary art phenomenon is a phenomenon that retains international exchange, meaning contemporary art is something that only originates in an international setting and that is my claim. That is the kind of international art I am talking about.

Where do I see some sort of connection with the topic the artist deals with here? It is the aspect of communication among different groups – communication and shared ideas. Hence, if I wish an idea to communicate, I should use a medium, or in this case it would be a type of script, which is comprehensible to as many people as possible. If people want to organise themselves, they also establish a certain standard, a certain language that is the best medium to communicate. In that respect I believe that, for example, having a pamphlet in Serbian that would be important for Croatian students to read, I believe it would be normal for it to be written in Latin script.

DEJAN VASIĆ: Who is the one to say what is and what is not normal?

FEMALE VOICE: Normal is the wrong word, I meant an intention – I can read an intention if a person uses English or not, which means that they want as many people as possible to find out about the issue in question, therefore they do not write it in some dialect.

BOBA: Can you then understand that, say, somebody who does not speak Serbian (because we all more or less speak both Serbian and English), somebody looking at it abroad, they think that something completely different is written in Serbian, in this script?

FEMALE VOICE: No, that was completely not my point. My point was that there is some kind of choice for everyone whether they will communicate in a way that allows as many people as possible to participate in it.

DRAGANA ŽAREVAC: I find this thesis very interesting. It is in fact something that would be very interesting for me otherwise, and also concerning this piece; this thesis is

\textsuperscript{10} The reference relates to the text presented to the public in advance of the Artist as Audience discussion on Nina’s artwork, which was printed in Cyrillic script. This text, along with all the other ones, can be found on the project website \url{http://razgovori.wordpress.com}
relevant only if we all agree that language in the linguistic sense, in the narrowest linguistic sense, is something necessary to understand contemporary art and any artwork in general. Since I exhibit more in non-Serbian areas than in Serbia, I intentionally make pieces that contain as little language in the linguistic sense as possible and as much visual language as I can muster. I believe that is something that I sorely miss here in this art scene. I miss that sort of dimension – an art-piece that communicates through something which is not language in linguistic terms and through some form of aesthetics.

**BOBA:** Can you relate it to this particular artwork?

**DRAGANA ŽAREVAC:** If we started talking about language, alphabet etc, in this piece, and we could also talk about the set-up and about our reception, we could really go into many different directions, but this is certainly a very important topic. I would be very interested to hear what you think about it, because my impression, especially since – among other things – I deal with language as I actively translate and it is incredibly important to me, is that there is too much language in visual art.

**MARIJA SKOKO:** I believe this question is directly related to question number five: What do you think about artists from abroad reflecting on site-specific situations? I suppose she cannot read it as it is in Cyrillic script...

**FEMALE VOICE:** I can, I just like to pretend...

**MARIJA SKOKO:** I think the entire story about this communication is an intention by somebody coming from the outside trying to understand the local context which is obviously Cyrillic.

**MIRJANA DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ:** I would like to comment on your talk about communication. Since the artwork deals with worker’s protest and you mentioned the noise, the multitude of voices, perhaps we could talk about the level of articulation. Last night at the Faculty of Philosophy\(^{11}\) we talked about articulation of protests or articulation of demands from people who are protesting against something. Perhaps the discussion could move in that direction as well – how a community articulates what it wants to say or demand.

**MARIJA SKOKO:** In relation to the specific demands behind the protest in Nina’s work, I believe they were aimed at local institutions (perhaps they could have been aimed at some international community, but in this case they were not), and so it seems to me that their articulation in Latin or Cyrillic, Serbian or English is not as problematic. In the context of this piece, aimed at the international audience, I believe it is more of an issue of her decision than the decision by the workers and protest articulation.

**MIRJANA DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ:** That reverts us to that one question: What do you think about artists from abroad reflecting on site-specific situations? Do you think an outside view can open up new perspectives? Do you think outsiders can learn anything from site-specifics or is their research necessarily superficial?

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\(^{11}\) The protest on the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade lasted over one year during 2012–2013 and it was set in motion as a reaction to the extremely high tuition fees that keep raising each year. Part of the protest, besides blocking the Faculty for a while, was to set up a Student Plenum – the central organ of student decision making at the occupied faculty.
Male voice: That question should not be asked at all. Of course it is better that they come, to convey something; it is the question what context they work in...

Mirjana Dragosavljević: ...how they perceive it, and we have the Cyrillic as the local script.

Male voice: I am now speaking globally. It depends on what they do, it depends in which way they came, what is their goal.

Marija Skoko: First drop by the Information Bureau and then we can go out into the field... First we should ask Nina how she got here, with what intentions...

Aneta Stojnić: It is very different if someone acts from a colonizing or, conditionally speaking, imperialist viewpoint, and if they are conducting a proper research, trying to find out about things internally and then provide some insider view from the standpoint of someone coming from outside, and in a certain way integrate their own position within this situation. I believe these are completely different approaches and it varies from one case to the other, just as there are many reversed cases when artists go to imperilled zones and take photographs of the hungry children of Africa...

Danilo Prnjat: I am more drawn to some other things in this artwork. This is one kind of representation of the protest and one way of working with the protest, even though it never appears directly – she did not take any direct documentary footage. I am curious about the artists’ position in terms of articulation and representation of these protests. Firstly, a completely dispersive perception of the protest is coming from these video screens, you do not know what is going on and the situation is confusing. Secondly, there is a reference to film as the first mass media (reminiscence of Eisenstein). Thirdly, the media of today also carpet bomb the viewers’ perception with these things and I am intrigued, in terms of resistance or change, what the artist’s position within this is and where she stands in relation to the dominant social trend. It is a general and problematic issue – who is the enemy you are fighting? For instance, if one takes into account the students’ protest, fighting for some rights at a micro-level can be legitimate; or if I wanted to establish my position at a certain place, with certain institutions etc. Of course the project would be of much higher quality if someone said: “I am only questioning the position of knowledge I am getting, the knowledge situated here and there, at a place where some power was already structured, I am questioning how I am getting it, how it is shared.” Then that someone seeks or aims at some power structures that are positioning that knowledge as such.

I am intrigued by this now; perhaps someone can say more about it, where the artist’s position is in relation to the articulation and representation of the protest. The protest is an extremely concrete thing, and here we see some sort of its fictionalisation, and we already get fictionalisation via media.

Male voice: A protest is not a strike. A strike is something else.

Danilo Prnjat: I am intrigued – why yet another fictionalisation and why as it is?

Male voice: And why Eisenstein? It is a bit of a distraction into a completely different story, Eisenstein is from another context. It even seems to me that if you put Jugoremedija and Eisenstein together, it is like putting them together in a formal manner; one doesn’t have much to do with the other.
MARIJA SKOKO: Perhaps the only connection is the Cyrillic alphabet.

MALE VOICE: Yes, but how far removed is that...

ANETA STOJNIC: Could it be that Eisenstein is there because of the reenactment? That is indeed Nina’s last question, how something is presented in the media and whether something that looks like documentary footage can be reenactment and how do we access that visual material?

MALE VOICE: Eisenstein also has the film *October*\(^\text{12}\), it would be like putting 5 October\(^\text{13}\) and playing the Eisenstein film under it.

MARKO MILETIĆ: Although the piece came about as a result of research and interviews with Jugoremedija workers, it ultimately does not represent a specific protest or a specific strike. Perhaps it can be a problem in the piece, in terms that the protest and all these voices have nowhere been articulated; it poses the question but there is no articulated protest or demand, as you were saying in relation to the students. That demand is not articulated. Those questions or those statements, they remained on the universalist level and so the piece, with or without Serbian, all the same, can be seen anywhere. Workers probably ask similar questions everywhere, in Austria and Mexico alike.

MARIJA SKOKO: I am also unclear as to why interviews and talks were conducted with these workers and a specific protest related to a specific factory is being mentioned here and then it all blends into fictional articulation performed by actors who have very dramatic pronunciations; it is entirely reduced to a very general level. Why is it not about protest as such, rather than specifically the one at Jugoremedija?

DANILO PRNJAT: And especially now, in the present moment when you have protests all over the world. Secondly, the example from Russian art and culture was taken, and today you have protests in America, workers’ protests are almost everywhere...

MARKO MILETIĆ: Wait, this piece was made in 2009.

DANILO PRNJAT: Yes, but this reference is of a 1928 film when there were larger workers’ protests, you could have taken from, for instance, an example from American history, they had union protests, only before 1950... I am interested in the artist’s position, not her personal position but the position of her work of course, how it relates...

MARKO MILETIĆ: She brought herself in as a part of the multitude with her questions, one of the roles is also Nina, the artist who asks similar questions from her field and her position or who has reached the same questions through that protest.

BOBA: Perhaps she asks these questions regardless of the fact that her protest is not a workers’ protest or not in the proletariat-labour sense, but still it carries the same questions.

FEMALE VOICE: In the piece we can observe some sort of universalisation of the topic; the artist tried – of course this can only be an assumption from my part – even in the linguistic sense by using Cyrillic, Latin script, English, Russia, Serbia, then using that workers’ protest. I believe it is all making the effort to hint that this can take on much

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\(^{12}\) *October (Ten Days That Shook the World)*, Sergei Eisenstein, 1928

\(^{13}\) Days of demonstrations culminated on 5 October 2000 in Belgrade when Slobodan Milošević accepted defeat at the direct election for President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 2000.
I'm Milenka - Protesting.

We fought in the frontline. I could have been the mother of any of the security guards.

I'm Bogdan - Fighting.

Thoughts. Words. Actions.

I'm Nina - Demanding.

He дозволавам да ми б

dozvolavam da mi b

selling the factory. But we are fighting.

With you we lost our pride, job, money and became the biggest proposals and ag

The protest is alive!

A warning to beware of going on strike... of marching in demonstrations, protesting, of my work. I should be the are there who can live a

However, the more directly they seek to let us speak for ourselves,

Your system has trapped panic. one sma
Video stills of the five screens that video-work TALES OF PROTEST. A NECESSITY consists of.

Image: courtesy of the artist
wider contours, that we can reach for the question of universal protest as individuals, as artists for instance, as individuals in the society – clash with institutions, the state, with norms of behaviour, rules in public spaces, all conceivable conflicts an individual can experience in the society. It may be a matter of impulse, why Serbia and why this individual factory – perhaps something was there that meant something, something local, something very miniature that stirred some difficult questions in the artist, questions that are much more global and more personal, and then they spread out.

**Danilo Prnjat:** If she is doing things in a universal way that is highly problematic. In general, that is the case with any work with generalisations.

**Male voice:** Then it must be a Hollywood movie.

**Female voice:** The case here is as much about the reduction of the universal to the individual as it is about the expansion of the individual to the universal, the exchange goes both ways.

**Danilo Prnjat:** You cannot say: “Now we need to resist everything equally…” There are political practices that are more considerate, some are less considerate – one articulates oneself differently to different things... It all depends. Universalisation is very troublesome as a position, if it is a position at all.

**Boba:** I would like to ask Dragana, since we touched upon Eisenstein and you mentioned the visual language: does that speak to you, as a language that is entirely visual? We touched upon it in conversation as something that has a reference, but a visual one, not the linguistic one.

**Dragana Žarevac:** I do not have a special answer to that. Anything similar could have been used in the piece and then it would have again developed its own set of meanings. As it was said, protests from America in such and such moment, any sort of similar visual element introduced into the piece would develop its own set of interpretations.

What always confuses me and what I do not understand is why do artists go to some third environment and create a piece in this third environment without ever living there. I find that rather inconsiderate. You go to a slum in Brazil and then you take photos from the Jeep and you make a piece out of that – this is beyond low. Of course I also created many pieces in third environments, but simply living there.

**Female voice:** I would like to go back to the level of visual. I think it is rather important and I believe I will remember it; for me it dominates and various levels of the personal, film quotes, probably something is from Zrenjanin too, everything is sort of levelled by it, it annuls all of that and puts it in a single film-frame of the past, into a film-frame of a fictional – since these are film footages – reenacted situation and thereby reduces the potential of the presented individual perspectives. I feel it is pretty dominant, the visual plane.

**Dragana Žarevac:** I cannot look at this artwork, right now and right here, without seeing this painting of Mišković above it and without knowing that I am in this Local

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14 Miroslav Mišković, controversial businessman and one of the wealthiest people in Serbia, depicted on the painting by Vladimir Miladinović standing behind the computer projections.
Community Centre which is above the supermarket where I buy my bread and next to the library where you could have borrowed books once, and now God knows what can you borrow, if it works at all – there is no way I can detach it from the work. It is all incredibly important to me within the story; however I have the impression that this was placed in such a way that we are asked to lose awareness of it for a moment and address only this piece. I really cannot do that.

**BOBA:** It seems that two opposite things have been said. On the one hand, why does an artist who came from elsewhere get into a sort of dialogue with the local community at all, and on the other – if she distances herself from it in terms of her own position as an outsider, why does she take upon herself that position?

Would it be comprehensible that the artist came from elsewhere and that she recognised something that is an everyday occurrence to us we do not deal with? I think it is a certain quality brought forth by all people who come from elsewhere and we too, when we go somewhere, see things that are a blind spot to the people living there, they simply do not see it.

**DRAGANA ŽAREVAC:** There is another example. Noa\(^{15}\) who goes to a village and says: “Man, I will secure the sales of your goat cheese for the next ten years continuously, but make me a ton every month and make each of the same quality and in the same packaging”, to which the guy replies: “Not a chance.” And she makes a piece out of it and this makes sense to me, because she really is in this situation. She lives and makes a piece from what she really submerges herself into. I have nothing against someone painting on the side and making a work of art out of it, perhaps it can even become a good work of art, but it is rather questionable.

**DIANILO PRNJAT:** I think it is not very considerate to Nina, she did spend time there with the workers.

**DRAGANA ŽAREVAC:** I do not know that and cannot see it from the work.

**DIANILO PRNJAT:** She did spend some time, she got familiar with the people there. Secondly, she did a residence here, returned once again, and she spent some time in Zrenjanin. Her attention was probably caught by things she was personally fascinated with or moved by in some way. I believe it is completely legitimate; we cannot all share the same positions... I am only interested to see what her position is in the piece. It is in there, even personally, as one of these fictional characters, but again it is not fictional, it is real and there is a real story behind how she came to that piece. In what way is the representation of that protest being exerted?

**ANETA STOJNJIĆ:** If I understand well, none of the characters are fictional, these are real dialogues, and only the actors are fictional...

**MARIJA SKOKO:** It is completely fictional.

**ANETA STOJNJIĆ:** Are the texts fictional as well?

**MARIJA SKOKO:** She did talk to the workers, but the actual texts here were not based on anything specific...

**MALE VOICE:** So she did not record interviews and take the lines out of them...

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\(^{15}\) Noa Treister, Israeli artist who has been living in Belgrade since 2008.
TALES OF PROTEST: A NECESSITY at Unexpected Encounters exhibition at Camera Austria, 2013

Photograph: Christine Winkler

Photograph: Joana Theurer
**Boba:** I think she did.

**Aneta Stojnić:** It is a very important distinction in order to understand her position.

**Marko Miletić:** We did the interviews with the workers; however, these are not entirely the words the people said.

**Boba:** Not under those names, it is not factual, she manipulated, extracted from the interviews...

**Aneta Stojnić:** Then this is not documentarian, this is like a radio drama, there is dramaturgy here. This is not documentary material, that is what I wanted to say. I thought it was perhaps confronting the footage – which is a film, a reenactment, with something that is a documentary text, but if this is not the case then it completely changes everything.

**Marko Miletić:** When you say it is strange or dishonest, I do not know how you said it, that the artist deals with something she has not lived through...

**Dragana Žarevac:** I would now say that perhaps a good work of art can come out of it, but it always causes me to doubt. What does it mean when an artist goes into an unknown environment because it is provocative at some point?

**Marko Miletić:** It is always a big question how much experience one needs to acquire in order to gain legitimacy. It is of course always a far-fetched question, but I wanted to clarify Nina’s position in a way.

**Danilo Prnjat:** That position should be readable from the piece.

**Marko Miletić:** Boba mentioned that sometimes when people come from elsewhere and want to deal with our daily lives, perhaps they can point something out for us. Precisely that happened with Nina – inviting Nina to come for that residence – because of all the received applications Nina was the only one with a concrete proposition that we at Kontekst were completely unfamiliar with, therefore we didn’t know at the time that the workers in Jugoremedija fought the factory in order for it to be managed by workers again. Nina presented that topic to us and that is why we decided we should invite her and subsequently go into the production of this piece. She brought this topic to Kontekst and upon this introduction we had several programmes dealing with worker issues later on. It is not that we did not think about workers at all, but we did not have that specific topic in focus. Her portfolio arrived from Mexico – from a removed standpoint she had the right information and presented it to us.

**Mirjana Dragosavljević:** She has no aspirations to represent that protest with one hundred percent accuracy, she offers that removed standpoint view.

**Dragana Žarevac:** The relation to the environment, the situation etc. treated in the piece needed to be visible in the piece.

**Danilo Prnjat:** Of course, had she come and taken a photo from a Jeep, and this photo related to the issue in a high quality manner and if it was articulated in the right way within the alarm raised on a particular problem...

**Marija Skoko:** Who is the universal judge who is going to say whether something is legitimate and whether it was done in the right way?

**Danilo Prnjat:** Some sort of ethics exists, though that can be discussed.
Dragana Žarevac: Every “I” is the one who is going to say it. How much longer of “nothing is known” and “everything can be done”?

Marija Skoko: I am pro freedom of speech. If someone creates a good piece, everyone can decide for themselves whether it is good or not, but nobody should decide whether someone has the right to do something or not.

Dragana Žarevac: Of course, that is true.

Marija Skoko: Everyone has the right to try. Someone can spend fifty years in a certain environment and do nothing.

Dragana Žarevac: Yes, but I can say: “Man, this is bullshit.” I also have the right to do it.

BoBa: But then everyone has the right to tell you the same.

Dragana Žarevac: Absolutely, sure.

BoBa: I find the issue of the workers also important, on the one hand, and let’s say that by workers I would imply the topic of – specifically speaking – the protests Nina deals with directly, in the text if nothing else, she defines that pretty clearly; and on the other hand – art. In what way is this kind of topic art and is it only a topic then or perhaps something more?

Female voice: That is what I wanted to mention, the issue of engagement. We assess and ask the question how engaged something is, somewhat from our personal perspective, in the way we ask questions ourselves and in the way we answer the questions. Someone might consider as socially committed an artwork which very specifically asks the question and offers an answer. It is socially engaged because it will explicitly help the social environment. But something can also be committed only at the level of suggestiveness, to perceive a problem and present it and then simply transfer it into the viewer who will try to experience it.

Aneta Stojnić: I think the crucial question would be – if we speak about social engagement – what does this piece do for those workers? What does this piece do in the social reality? That is committed.

Female voice: Not necessarily always.

Aneta Stojnić: I would not agree with you that you can take pictures from a Jeep and make it a great photo, because if we want to do engaged political work, the procedure is also political, not only the result. That poses the question what the procedure is.

Danilo Prnjat: The question is what does one do with that photograph, how they articulate it, what change do they cause with it, whether or not they are in a Jeep or not is completely irrelevant because we are different as individuals, we all have a different approach to some issues, different relations; someone can spot the essence of an issue in a single second, someone needs a couple of months living with this African tribe in order to understand things.

Aneta Stojnić: ...or not to understand them. I am not saying this cannot be, but I am saying that the procedure must be taken into account and that the procedure is also a part of the politicality of the artwork and that the photo taken from the Jeep is a kind of procedure; three seconds is one procedure, three months is another. I am not saying that one is more valid than the other, but they are integral to the piece, if we
speak about a piece that aspires to be committed, i.e. political. I think that is one big topic that I am currently highly intrigued by and that seems to me to be very much ongoing – precisely the question what political art today is. I am more and more under the impression that this attribute of politicality became a dominant agenda. In all applications, curatorial programmes, projects etc. everything is “critical and political”. That became the standard and when you write something you state your work is critical and political and then somehow you fit into this pattern. That sort of became hype.

**Danilo Prnjat:** Yes, but in reality everything is political.

**Aneta Stojnić:** When you say “Everything is political” it is a thing with which in practice you clear out the entire field of political[ity]. Because you can say it and we can all agree, yes, all art is political and that is true, but what are we going to do with it when at some point it becomes something that is not only the dominant discourse but something that is the official agenda as well. How do we artists and cultural workers work within that? I am under the impression that we have reached the point when it is necessary to somehow reposition the term political, namely political art.

**Danilo Prnjat:** I have the impression that two things are being confused here. Indeed, everything is political. You know the example of Žižek with the toilet\(^\text{16}\): all aspects of your life – what you look like, think like, are like – are political.

**Aneta Stojnić:** But that is trivial.

**Danilo Prnjat:** It is trivial, but I am intentionally going back to it. The entire everydayness, and life, is something political. If I enter the room and spit, that is politics. The question is what the politics of a certain project is and what kind of politics is sought. Nobody asks for politics only, that question is trivial in itself, of course.

I want to go back to this artwork – what is the politics of the artwork? Is it in the fact that it treats a political problem, that it automatically designates something as political more than something else? What is Nina’s politics?

**Female voice:** When we think about that very issue of protest and the artwork, someone asked what the piece did for the workers...

**Danilo Prnjat:** It does not address the workers; I do not know why we keep going back to that.

**Female voice:** I think that is the reason why it matters, because we should not observe the commitment in relation to the outcome, if they benefited from it, if something changed. Indeed that as well, but perhaps that happens at the level of an idea, that empowerment; whether they, going through the entire process with her – if she worked with them, if she talked with them – were empowered in such a way as to contemplate their situation and really see that from some perspective “we really have a problem that we need to solve.”

**Aneta Stojnić:** But that is really not present in the work.

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\(^{16}\) Slavoj Žižek quoted an example of three toilets in three different countries (France, Germany and USA), different in appearance and implying a certain type of use in their shape reflecting the discursive and ideological fibre of the cultural contexts where they are located (French existentialism, German idealistic philosophy and American pragmatism).
BoBa: There is another thing, I am not sure if I read it in her text or in the texts she quoted as informative, that the workers asked for support from international figures that have impact on the public opinion, like Noam Chomsky and I don’t remember who else. That means they are aware what culture in the broadest sense does, how people who are influential can perhaps act on people in positions who can actually do something in reality.

Mirjana Dragosavljević: Also relevant is the question, someone has just mentioned it now, of art and politics. Does the artwork have to help these workers directly or perhaps it should work on raising awareness and contemplating own position?

BoBa: Whose own position?

Mirjana Dragosavljević: Theirs too, and while thinking and working with them Nina contemplated her position as well, hence raising awareness in that sense.

Marko Miletić: I believe that that is the largest effect of this work. Perhaps it is not even visible – that is still the key issue that we do not have an answer to – it is the biggest output of this process of production, creation, arrangement, the interviews with the workers – Nina didn’t do a workshop for the workers there, or therapy, that they can learn something from, but these stories would end in tears, people would open up and say some things, those were the horrible scenes when you in fact realise what these people went through, but it came at the end of their struggle, at the end of that process, or near the end. In fact this whole process made a greater impact on Nina and only in the end she included herself and asked herself these questions that perhaps she never contemplated before, in the sense that she started questioning herself: what is my struggle, what am I fighting for, why do I deal with this topic at all, should I be protesting somewhere, what is the position of the artist, what is the position of the cultural worker, is a cultural worker a worker or not? I believe the process influenced her more than she influenced them.

Female voice: I feel this builds on the question concerning social commitment, that frequently it is said that in order for something to be truly committed it has to originate from, not to say personal level, but it has to concern you personally, you should feel it on yourself. Here we see the shift from the workers’ protest to a personal protest. We can also connect that. Could she recognise that as a problem if she couldn’t internalize it?

Danilo Prnjat: The whole time I am interested in the artwork.

BoBa: Do you mean that she profited?

Danilo Prnjat: Not necessarily profited; if she
profited, let us know she did. What did she do with the piece?

**Dragana Žarevac:** Perhaps it is a work in progress. Perhaps the position she came to by doing the piece is in fact the piece.

**Danilo Prnjat:** She did work with certain workers, with a certain factory, with a story of protest and then she turned it into a work of art and then she as an international artist went into certain power structures, centres of power – galleries, museums, to show it around the world and perhaps raise awareness with these people about the protests in Serbia. I have an impression that perhaps we can trace this line. When you mentioned “all these workers turned to some international organisations”, maybe there is a thread to try and unravel the ball of yarn that is her piece, how the politicality of the work is channelled.

**Mirjana Dragosavljević:** Then we are again coming back to the point of local, and the side view, how that piece is read differently in different environments.

**Saša Budimlija:** It is a question of addressee, who is the addressee of this piece.

**Danilo Prnjat:** The art audience in some global centres of art power.

**Marija Skoko:** To me personally it is interesting to see this piece from here, just as it is always interesting for me to see news from abroad, foreign news agencies informing about something happening here. I always find it interesting how others see us, since I always have my point of view, and I would not set this on a value level at all. I consider myself the audience for this piece, regardless of whether I approve or not.

**Danilo Prnjat:** We are the audience, but I am trying to understand in a broader sense where this piece will be broadcast, who will be its audience.

**Marko Miletić:** I do not get it, now that you mention that: it seems pejorative when you say: “Some large galleries, museums or some big curators.” Even if this piece was shown or will be shown in large galleries by big curators, or if it ultimately ends in the Erste collection\(^{17}\), what will happen? This might be what you initiated – perhaps it is the problem of the piece, if it is a problem at all – that it may be executed in a universal language and that when it is seen somewhere out there, I do not see people experiencing this as a Serbian protest, how Serbs are exotic and so they protest in such a way...

**Female voice:** And the Cyrillic alphabet?

**Danilo Prnjat:** This was just an assumption to step out of these walls of understanding the piece.

**Dragana Žarevac:** Remember when General Marcos from Chiapas\(^{18}\) invited participants from around the world to come and do pieces in Chiapas about Indians, their

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\(^{17}\) *Kontakt*, a collection of artworks by the Erste Group and ERSTE Foundation focusing on the Central, East and Southeast European art activities, that followed the social and political developments over the previous decades. [www.kontakt-collection.net](http://www.kontakt-collection.net)

\(^{18}\) Subcomandante Marcos or Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, was the nom de guerre used by the main ideologist, spokesman and de facto leader of the Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) in the Mexican federal state of Chiapas, a Mexican rebel movement fighting for the rights of the indigenous peoples of Mexico. Subcomandante Marcos, the character, the constructed persona, the hologram, was created by the Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee of the Zapatistas. Determined by the Zapatistas to have become a distraction, the figure announced it to be destroyed in late May of 2014.
organisation, persecutions etc. A lot of people went; we saw a heap of art-pieces, but what happened? Nothing happened. We now know it exists and that it happened.

**Male voice:** How do you mean nothing? They maintained autonomy, a positive image was constructed. Imagine Gaddafi\(^1\) invited all artists to make a somewhat nicer picture of him.

**Dragana Žarevac:** Perhaps that would not have been bad.

**Male voice:** Still, Chiapas does have a positive image, whatever happened there. There is a crucial problem here. When Marko told me that this is going to take place here, since I did not know in what sense was this supposed to happen and what the structure was, so I asked immediately: “Where are the people from Jugoremedija?”

The people from Jugoremedija are near-by, fifty or sixty kilometres away from here, and they had in fact already worked together with many artists. For instance, they worked with Milica Ružičić\(^2\) when she exhibited a huge painting, which they brought to Zrenjanin\(^2\). There were five hundred people there, they brought Verica Barać\(^2\) and they had a discussion with Milica Ružičić about why she painted that painting, what the painting represents for her. The painting was all over the media, the workers really liked having the painting, they even offered to buy it.

Then we have another example – Želimir Žilnik\(^3\) who is in constant communication with them.

So these are not incompetent people, these are people who pretty much managed to position themselves in Serbia, managed to resist tycoons, the mafia, they are educated, they possess knowledge in various segments – law, economy etc.

From this I do not see that Nina established the right interaction or the right level of cooperation, this is my opinion about this piece, and also that the piece moved sideways – perhaps she didn’t have enough time, and this cannot be done in a couple of weeks or one month (I, for example, have been producing a work in a foreign country for two years now, I go there and come back and I still don’t think it is finished). It simply takes a lot of time for serious things in a foreign context in order to understand

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19 Muammar Mohammed Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi was the Lybian leader from 1969 to 2011.
20 Milica Ružičić (born 1979, Belgrade), visual artist. [www.milicaruzychic.net](http://www.milicaruzychic.net)
21 The round table was held on 16 February 2011 at the Zrenjanin Cultural Centre. The round table was in fact the shareholders’ assembly where the workers were addressed by Zdravko Đurić, Verica Barać and Milica Ružičić, and it was moderated by Slavo Golić. Milica Ružičić clarifies: “I was invited by Nebojša Popov hoping that one of these speeches would again motivate the workers not to sell their shares, because at the time a part of the workers began to falter due to the years of struggling and they were planning to sell their shares even for next to nothing. We held some sort of motivational speeches and the painting was exhibited there for the workers to look at it for the first time and see that someone from the outside recognized and supported their struggle. My speech took only a couple of minutes because I was ashamed to talk, in front of so many hungry people, about my painting. However, they were happy not to be alone and because someone noticed their struggle.”

The painting’s exhibition in Zrenjanin can be seen here [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1V1PPK3slM](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p1V1PPK3slM)

23 Želimir Žilnik (born 1942, Niš), film director and playwright, one of the central figures of the Yugoslav black wave.
Discussion on TALES OF PROTEST. A NECESSITY at Kontekst at the Local Community Centre
Photograph: Boba Mirjana Stojadinović
them and to collaborate in a right way. Therefore she turned that into an universalisation of strike, protest etc. because she didn’t have time. Perhaps she would have gone deeper into the whole story had she had the possibility. She ended it cleverly with a universalist message that could – according to me – stand anywhere.

Why Cyrillic alphabet and Eisenstein were used – probably because that was the only successful revolution – the October revolution – let’s say a left-wing revolution, because so many right-wing revolutions have been successful since the fall of the Berlin wall. I think it is some kind of a diagnosis of the whole matter from my part.

BOBA: Can you see this piece as the beginning of something, rather than an ending?

M A L E V O I C E: Of course, this is the beginning and this conversation is a continuation, it could continue for a couple more years, she could come back and forth and work...

DEJAN VASIĆ: According to you, what is the universal message you said the piece was completed with?

M A L E V O I C E: The universal position is the position of the strike in general. What does a strike mean? What can it represent? She asked a set of questions what a strike could be. That is the point of this piece by me, rather than the partial story about Jugoremedija.

DEJAN VASIĆ: Are these questions that pose something new or did they exist for a long time now?

M A L E V O I C E: The piece re-actualises these questions, which makes sense to me.

BOBA: I would agree with what Marija mentioned, there is also that moment of internalisation where she places herself in a context, as a being with a certain education, way of development etc, and at some point becomes aware of the moment of the existence of social commitment – and that is putting it very mildly – i.e. she recognises herself there, and ends with a question to herself.

M A L E V O I C E: It is good that she introduced herself as one of the voices within this, I think it is a good strategy in this sense, because without it this piece would have become quite removed, it would have been distanced, we would not have had that perspective. I find it a positive layer. I saw she asked a question concerning this as well and I think it is good, because without that, it would not have the conceptualisation at a different level.

DEJAN VASIĆ: And ethically and politically it would be more questionable if there was no self-reflection opposed to the local context, pronounced in the first person.

F E M A L E V O I C E: Final question – what is she fighting for? One ends up asking oneself this question, it is a sort of automatic reading – that is what one sees. At that moment the audience and the author, whom it is addressed at and who is the one who addressed it, are all levelled. Perhaps it is not as an intelligent conclusion that it is again some sort of universalisation, but she is not altogether specific whether she is asking someone or herself.

M A L E V O I C E: I think it would be good that people from Jugoremedija see this artwork.

DANilo PRNJAT: I put it forward as an assumption – who sees the piece – in an attempt to locate the political position.
BOBA: In what way do you read this piece physically in this room, with all the contexts you mentioned, there are aunties here and young ladies who practice yoga, their piece of mind, physical stability, on the other hand bread is sold downstairs, on the third side someone might remember that there was a library and there were some good books in it etc?

SAŠA BUDIMLIJA: I do not think the room itself is relevant, because the space reflects what is currently happening in it. Does it matter what happened an hour ago or three days ago in here? Perhaps it matters to you because you are local, but for me it is completely irrelevant.

MARIJA SKOKO: This is a Local Community Centre and that is why it is important.

SAŠA BUDIMLIJA: When I came in I watched the art-piece, I was not interested who is on the painting, I came here for the piece, so I do not relate the piece to the room.

DRAGANA ŽAREVAC: I do not think it is alright not to relate it...

SAŠA BUDIMLIJA: If this room were an installation, then I would look at it, but the installation is these five monitors.

DRAGANA ŽAREVAC: Pardon me, everything is the installation, I cannot separate it.

DANilo PRNJAT: Today one and the same thing in a different space and different context has a completely new meaning. It is not the same whether you get naked in a room at your home or if you undress in a bank.

MARIJA SKOKO: The fact that this is a Local Community Centre and the fact that Kontekst came here very recently and under which conditions, I believe it indeed is a part of this whole story.

BOBA: In what way?

MARIJA SKOKO: I do not know if I could place that within a theoretic problematisation, but the fact that these Local Community Centres were built specifically for the communities that live here and were built by the people in public labour actions should make them belong to all of us equally, but that is not happening anymore, there is no mass movement confronting how Local Community Centres are being used. People are not aware that it belongs to them. These spaces are alienated; if they are used they are used by institutions, which retain control over what they will be used for. Even if there is some excuse at a technical level to rent these offices to get money to maintain the space, the people who belong to the community do not have the decision-making right nor are they aware of any decision-making concerning to whom these offices will be awarded for further use. I believe this is very much a current issue that a lot has been said and written about and perhaps something will happen in that direction.

BOBA: And the artwork in that context?

MARIJA SKOKO: I find the piece quite abstract at a universal and historical level, and that acting, the fact that the words are not authentic and that it is not documentary but spoken by actors, it somehow alienates the entire thing for me.

DANilo PRNJAT: Yet, the scenario was written under the impression of her experience.

MARIJA SKOKO: It doesn’t have the authentic power of a specific case; rather it is
entirely on theoretical level. I find it does not have the actuality and lacks the energy close to a specific case.

I am experiencing this very personally because I have lived in New Belgrade all these years and I am looking at these Local Community Centres, and I do not have anything from them and for everything I want to get done I go across the river because there is some culture there. For example in New Belgrade half a million people do not have a single gallery.

**Male voice:** You have the New Belgrade Summer festival, there are galleries...

**Irena Ristić:** Cross-referencing these two pieces was very valuable for me; it dominated my perception, especially the piece in the back. Somehow it quite determined the perception of the entire piece. As much as I presume it is accidental, or intentional on the part of the organiser, I think it gives the piece a high level of equifinality, so I would recommend to Nina whenever she exhibits this piece to ‘get it in’ someone else’s exhibition if possible, because it seems to me that from the Brechtian *V-effect*24 (as by protruding something out of context, giving it universal or different meanings and ‘shoving’ it back in, and besides there is the clash with the other piece as well), that this is how serious semantics scope is gained, as well as the possibility of equifinality. At the first moment, because I was late, I thought this was intentional and I even thought this was a part of the piece. After a couple of minutes I naturally understood that it wasn’t, but the perception was completely determined with this frightening gaze from the background portrait. For me this is more dominant then Eisenstein and I cannot separate it, like I cannot separate it from this Local Community Centre, even though I didn’t know it from before. The smell of this Local Community Centre, my childhood in Local Community Centres, it is like an ultimate experience of context. To me this is somehow a part of this piece, although I believe it was only a contemplation.

**Danilo Prnjat:** Mišković set himself here as an answer to her question.

**Irena Ristić:** To me this is the possibility of various outcomes that in various exhibitions, in various worlds there are different outcomes. In fact Mišković returns it to the local realm, perhaps.

**Nina Hochtl:** I would like to ask you something. You said that you consider the visual level as very dominant and that it decreases the potential of the individual stories. Could you explain a little further what you mean by visual level: do you mean everything together – the installation – or only the footage?

**Female voice:** The footage. I think it is so explicitly linked to the source of the footage that for me it is quite dominating the whole impression, also visually. You immediately see that it is not Zrenjanin, you see that it is filmed material, somebody who knows a little bit more will guess what kind of film it is and the experts will know which film by Eisenstein it is from exactly. I feel this very dominating, but maybe this is a very

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24 *V-effect* (ger. *Verfremdung*) is the crucial concept of Bertolt Brecht’s epic theatre concept and is frequently translated as de-familiarization effect – it assumes the de-familiarization of certain aspects of the selected everyday situation and its recontextualisation in the function of developing distance and critical awareness in the audience.
subjective impression, I am not sure.

Then I think – why did you choose it, why did you choose material from this film and why did you choose film material at all. My guessing is that it works as a comment that these kinds of universal questions by the workers are actually no longer up-to-date, they are something from the past, they are just something that is a leftover, like this film is a leftover... Is this type of people from Zrenjanin actually a leftover from Yugoslav self-management? This is actually what is triggering my thoughts and I think about that.

**Male voice:** They actually won the Jugoremedija case.

**NiNa Höcht:** Yes, they won and in contrast to the *Stachka* where they lost, to put it in those terms.

I would also like to ask you something, you said something in the lines of if I hadn’t included my position in the work it would be more political for you.

**Dejan Vasić:** Not more political, it would function on a different – political and ethical – level had you not reflected your position in the local context, like a visitor from any foreign country.

**NiNa Höcht:** To include the footage of *Strike* has to do with what you called a generalisation of protests and strikes. It has also to do with the experience, when I came the first time to spend a month here, that I was very much involved in the emotions. During the meetings in Zrenjanin it became clear that even though the workers were in control of the factory and they had won the protest, they still had to deal with a lot of traumas. They spoke a lot about the emotional and mental problems they had to cope with.

As it goes, if you are an Artist-in-Residence you spend a certain time at a place and there is also a certain need for a product and yes, you stay at a distance. On the one hand you stay at a distance because you do not live there, you are not protesting with them – I was not part of the factory in that sense. On the other hand you also establish very close relationships or better – very close moments – when people start to cry and you attempt to comfort them in these specific moments.

For me personally, the work is more about posing questions: What do we, as artists, actually do with these materials, with this information? How do I frame them? How do I frame myself?

I am embedded in an artists’ structure, my work is to produce works, and my work is also to show in exhibitions. So the work is meant for an exhibition audience and particularly an international one. There was a presentation here within the context of Belgrade, where I, the framer, was present, but this is a singular situation. The work itself ends up in a circle of exhibiting and viewing, so it will be mainly referential within that circle. In this process, what can I actually do to use certain artistic strategies differently, to challenge them? What strategies do I apply to frame the materials?

*Strike* was done around ninety years ago and Eisenstein actually asked a theatre group to reenact the developments of the strike. I think, it is interesting though, that

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25 *Stachka*, dir. Sergei M. Eisenstein, 1925.
the questions *Strike* poses are still relevant today and the strategies of artists, who draw from protests – thinking in particular of the strategy of re-enactment – haven’t changed that much either.

What does this mean in relation to my practice? The installation is based on the research I did, but yes, it could perhaps have happened at any other site. I do not necessarily think so though, because the individual stories and emotions the workers shared with me gave me a different understanding of what it means to protest.

**Dragana Žarevac:** To me in the end it seems that this use of the Eisenstein quote does not stand here at all and that this attitude how all demands are equal, how the relationship of the artist is the same as one hundred years ago, I believe it is really not an attitude I could use. My impression is that an awful lot of things have changed in these hundred years and that this is a perspective that has a tremendous distance, distance so great that it cannot perceive the real context anymore.

**Danilo Prnjat:** Considering that the piece deals with workers’ protests and there are many of these in Serbia, why choose a factory based on the self-management system? I have an impression that the self-management thing was not referred to in the piece, and it seems to me that that is of crucial importance for this factory and I have the impression that it can be a highly positive example for the experience of today. The Jugoremedija example says that today there is a factory that has been privatised, where some capitalists started exploiting it, exploiting the workers and the workers rebelled and took the factory back into their own hands and started organising the production and functioning on their own... In the current moment of crisis, where many workers protest about many things, this can be an emancipating policy in terms of developing awareness, because I have the impression that workers around the world do not have this awareness at all. Today workers struggle for jobs and this is highly problematic for me. “I want you to hire me. I want to come to that factory, just secure me a spot” and the fact that I am going to be exploited there is simply not questioned. This is why I think the example of this factory is very important and significant, and it should literally be taken as a model, it can be very positive in that sense.

**Female voice:** If this self-management was actually the most interesting fact about this factory, why didn’t you make it the core theme of your work?

**Nina Höchtl:** I tried to link the question of self-management to my own position as an artist and to the precariousness of many artists. There are certain discussions...
taking place about artists’ unions, but they are only starting...

Thinking back, I decided not to focus primarily on self-management and, without a doubt, this decision has changed everything. Now there are also comments that it would have enriched the work if I had included it, that my own position within the work would be clearer, too. But at that specific moment I was reluctant as I wasn’t interested to solely narrow it down to their fight; I rather wanted to discuss the modes of representation, the mechanisms, the different strategies applied while protesting...

About the inclusion of Strike, it is about the strategy again. I am not saying that things haven’t changed, a lot of things have happened in a hundred years, but the strategy of reenactment is increasingly found again in contemporary art.

**BoBa:** What I like very much at the moment is that, which I see in your position, or shall I say in your methods – the depersonalized position of an artist is actually quite next to the position of the labourer, I would not even use a word worker. It seems to me that you will continue working with this one way or another, maybe, maybe not, I don’t know, but at some point it might be interesting, if you continue, to see how you develop, how you negotiate those two positions, if you relate them.

**Marija Skoko:** It is a rhetorical question, but it is something worth thinking about, whether strategies can really be applied internationally in different contexts and different times. I personally think that local environment and local contexts are crucial in whether the strategies are going to work or not. I think the local environment is really important in that. The same strategies sometimes work and at other times they don’t work, because of the effects of some really meager things.

**NiNa HöchtL:** For example, for the workers in Zrenjanin it was very important to receive international input, to share different strategies, about defence mechanisms and so on, that were applied in different contexts and at different times...

One of the reasons why I didn’t use original footage, photos, video or recordings, which I made, was the complaint by a lot of workers about reportages by international teams. Many times the workers were not happy about how they and their protest were represented. Early on I thought that this was not an approach I wanted to repeat. In general in my practice I apply documentary strategies, but I do not consider myself a documentary maker.

Regarding my own position within the installation, I also thought of the May Day Parade\textsuperscript{26} within the Viennese context where artists actually join in to talk and raise awareness about the precariousness of many people, among them also artists, within the specific life and working conditions in Austria. So I started to think: what would it actually mean if artists self-managed an *I-don’t-know-what*, because we do not literally have factories... How to establish alliances across different fields of working? This is what I was busy with and what I tried to tackle through including myself. What do I fight for? In what way do I fight? In what way do I position myself within the labour I do?

\textsuperscript{26} In Vienna, the May Day Parade has been taking place annually each 1st of May since 2005. See [http://mayday-wien.org/](http://mayday-wien.org/)
**Aneta Stojnić:** How about the decision to have actors who will say the text instead of having the real recording of the interviews of the workers or even having the workers really in the text that you made according to the interviews with them. Why actors? What is the position of the actor as part of the process in your work?

**NiNa Höchtl:** Any interview situation is a staged one since it takes place in a specific setting. I have a certain interest, so you are not just freely talking to me anymore. I ask questions, you answer, your body language might tell something else than your words, if there is a camera or an audio recorder you will perform differently, knowing that it could be used in yet another context. In my practice, I am not interested in using the recordings themselves because I consider the moments of doing them where the fiction starts. As I do not understand Serbian, all the conversations, all the information went through translation. So in the process of translation there is already taking place a certain degree of fictionalization. I am neither interested in looking for nor in working with authenticity. So if all the information I had gathered was already filtered through other people – their understanding, words, focus, mediation – I thought to take yet a step further.

First, I was considering the idea to perform the script with the workers themselves. However, something else came up that influenced the process. Just then I had gotten to know that in Serbia actresses and actors were receiving more work, as the law had recently changed. Since from now on all the movies had to be dubbed into Serbian there were finally more possibilities to earn money. So right at the moment when their work situation got better I was wondering how they would interpret, re-say words of people that had been protesting for their work since years. Besides I was interested in the personal experience to work with them, to make them say words, to swallow the words and so on. In this sense, I think that the utterance of words, their repetition, has an influence on you.

**Aneta Stojnić:** How did you work with the actors? Did you direct them in some way or you just gave them the text and just let them interpret it?

**NiNa Höchtl:** I gave them the text and I told them to take their time, to read it, and then to read it to me.

**Aneta Stojnić:** Did you correct them or not?

**NiNa Höchtl:** In one case I said that I considered it way too dramatic, but if he really wanted to do it that way... So we had a conversation about it. Even though I do not understand Serbian I can still trace his particular articulation, one that I sense as very dramatic, but that is fine, too, if he understands and perceives the text in this way... perhaps this is also his way of distancing himself from the text, form the words, taking on a role?

I think that we also take on specific roles in protests and especially some of the workers in Zrenjanin did so. They told me that this was also a burden for some of them. For example, their leader had to do interviews for the media again and again but many of the other workers didn’t consider him doing it well. He also took on a particular role in front of the media: the one as a leader. Perhaps, at the beginning, he enjoyed...
doing it, but at the end he told that he would never do it again.

**Aneta Stojnić**: Part of the skills of an actor or the art of an actor is to be able to provide through their act certain sub-texts, certain different meanings that are not visible in the semantic text. If you have one actor who sounds almost as if you are really not sure if this is an actor or an “authentic person”, then you have another actor that is really theatrical in a way or a theatre actor, this brings some uncertainty into what they are saying.

**Nina Höchtl**: I didn’t want to make it clear, I actually like it when you doubt if the text is directly taken from interviews. In the media, we see a lot of restaged material, and it is literally re-staged. I attempted to create an uncertainty in the viewer regarding the material presented. I think, there are these obvious insinuations that give hints that you are not listening to the actual words of the workers, but I like it that you were not sure about it. Obviously, I do not read Serbian, so it is not my voice either, I also have an “alter ego” voice.

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This example of the struggle at the time of the discussion was the only successful one. However, persistent obstructions by the state structures were undertaken in order to destroy even that singular example. After many years of fabrication of doubt and setting up fictitious police investigations – not yielding any results – disturbed the normal functioning of the factory and increased distrust among Jugoremedija’s partners, henceforth lowering the quality of the business, which at last brought the factory to bankruptcy. In order for the factory to exit bankruptcy, the state demanded proposals of reprogramming, but forbade the workers and shareholders to apply with their proposals. Currently the situation is unclear, it is still unknown who exactly bought the shares from the state and whether this new owner will continue production and to what extent, or if the factory will become a place for repackaging drugs imported from India and China. The destiny of the factory and its workers is once again quite uncertain.

Milica Ružičić, 2014
Past *Artist as Audience* (2010–2014) discussions have been on the works by the following artists:

- Nemanja Lađić
- Goran Micevski
- Mariela Cvetić
- Irena Ristić
- Predrag Terzić
- Ivan Petrović
- Saša Tkačenko
- Irena Lagator Pejović
- Branka Kuzmanović
- Milena Putnik

**Bioskopi: povratak otpisanih Cinemas: the Return of the Written-offs**

- Peti park – borba za svakodnevicu *Fifth park – Struggle for Everyday* (Branko Belačević, Dubravka Sekulić, Jelena Stefanović, Marko Miletić, Srdan Prodanović)
- Nataša Teofilović
- Jelica Radovanović / Dejan Andelković
- Marko Crnobrnja
- Milorad Mladenović
- Bik Van der Pol
- Zoran Pantelić
- Dragana Žarevac
- Lana Vasiljević
- Miloš Tomić
- Boris Šribar
- Igor Milovanović
- Zoran Todorović
- Nikoleta Marković
- Saša Rakezić alias Aleksandar Zograf
ABOUT THE ARTIST

Nina Höchtl is a research-based artist who spends most of her time in Mexico City. Currently she is a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at the Institute of Aesthetic Research, National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM). She studied at the University of Applied Arts (Vienna, A) and the Piet Zwart Institute (Rotterdam, NL). In 2013, she received a PhD in Art by Practice at Goldsmiths College (London, UK).

In her projects, Höchtl is not fixed on a particular medium. She explores the practice of fiction-making as a political process in art, literature, politics, history, and popular culture, with an emphasis on feminist, queer, post- and decolonial theory and practice.

Exhibitions (selection):
(2013) Unexpected Encounters (Curators: 0gms, Beirut, Kontekst collective), Camera Austria, Graz (A)
(2012) All Work No Play (Curators: Eva Martischnig and Adriana Marques), ACF London (UK); Quebradora: Lucha Libre in Contemporary Mexican Art (Curator: Amy Pederson), Mission Cultural Center for the Latino Arts (USA)
(2011) Artist as Audience (Curator: Boba Mirjana Stojadinović), Galerija Kontekst, Belgrade (SER); Video Evening #08 (Curators: Kolektiva Institute), Galerija Photon, Ljubljana (SL); Spaceship Yugoslavia (Curators: Anita Šurkić, Arman Kulašić, Arnela Mujkanović, Dejan Marković, Jovana Komnenić, Katja Sudec, Naomi Hennig), NGBK, Berlin (D); about translation (Curators: Karin Pernegger and Dagmar Höss), Galerie IG Bildende Kunst, Vienna (A); Pièces de résistance (Curators: Andrea Domesle, Michal Kolecek, Frank Eckhardt), Motorenhalle Dresden (D); Schon wieder und nochmal? – Handlungsspielräume (Curator: Sabine Winkler, Medienturm Graz (A); ein arbeit, die das was sie reflektiert, nicht loswird (Curators: Petja Dimitrova, Lina Dokuzović, Eduard Freudmann, Can Gülçü, Ana Hoffner and Ivan Jurica), Kunstpavillon Innsbruck und Kunsthalle Exnergasse (A), NACH DEMOKRATIE (Curator: Raimar Stange), Kunstraum NÖ, Vienna (A).

All her projects can be found on website www.ninahoechtl.org
The entire documentation of all the discussions, photographs, edited audio-material as well as texts on the works discussed, are available here http://razgovori.wordpress.com

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The project is deposited in the Copyright Agency for Serbia
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Cultural Centre REX
Jevrejska 16, Belgrade
www.rex.b92.net

Several discussions have been realized in cooperation with the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade www.msub.org.rs

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Enabled the presence of Nina Höchtl for the discussion, as well as the printing of this booklet.

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Simultaneous translator for English for Bik Van der Pol: Marija Asanović Simultaneous translator for English for Nina Höchtl: Ljubica Gavanski Translation of the transcript for Nina Höchtl: Zoran Lojanica

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Spaces where Belgrade discussions have been happening:

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Višnjička Str. 76
http://ekspedicijainexfilm.blogspot.com

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http://kontekstprostor.wordpress.com
www.kontekst.rs

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www.kcb.org.rs
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