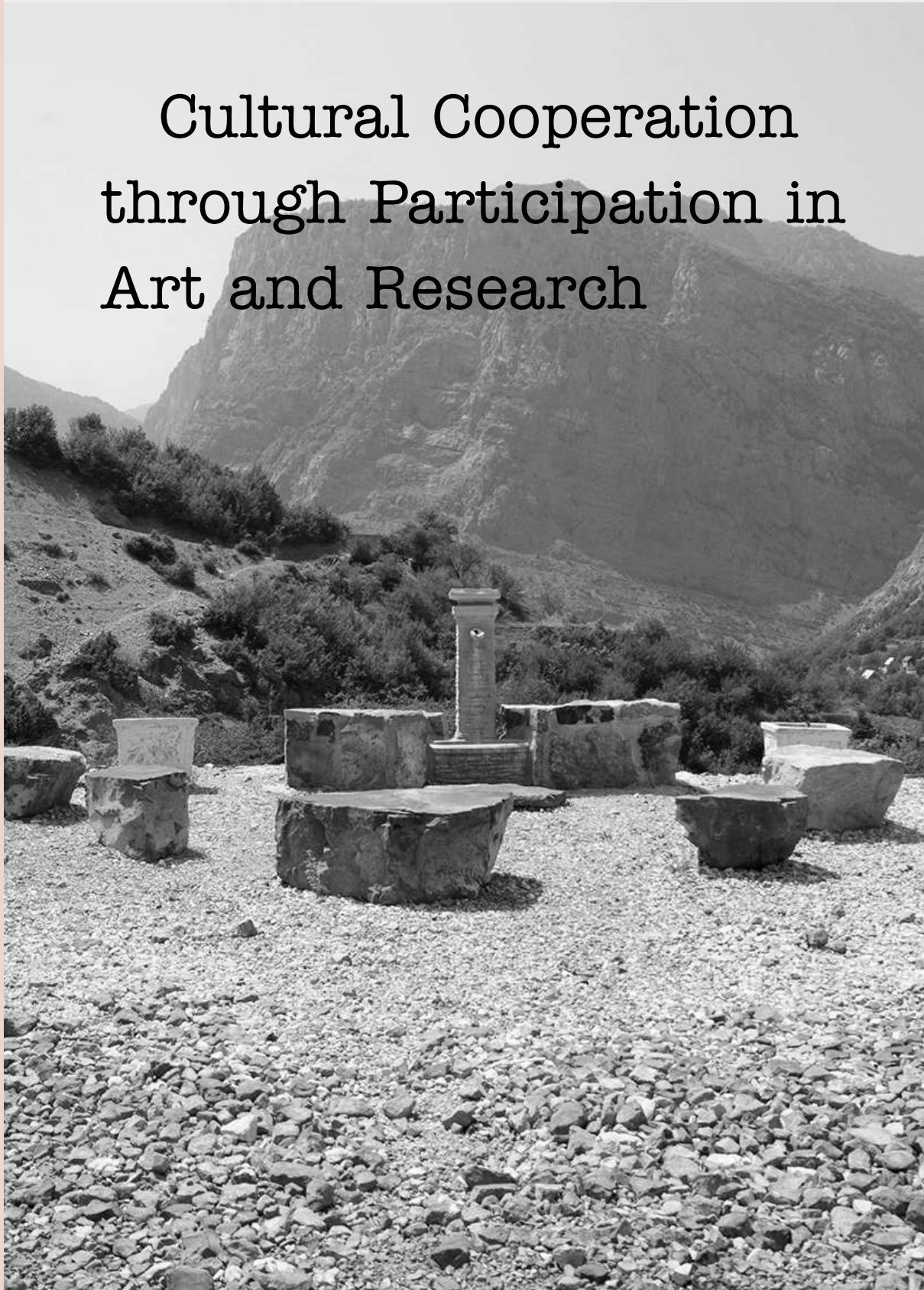


Some Call Us Balkans (SCUB) aims to enhance intercultural dialogue between artists, cultural operators and the general public, within the Western Balkans and the EU, to create positive messages that debunk myths and misconceptions about the Balkans.

The project brings together a large consortium of partners and local NGOs as an interdisciplinary collective from different parts of Europe, to create spaces of encounter that transcend the borders of nationalism. SCUB is a transdisciplinary community that since 2017 has explored and mobilised moments of collective imagination, research and multivocal representations of the Balkan region beyond borders and stereotypes.

# Some Call Us Balkans

## Cultural Cooperation through Participation in Art and Research



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Some Call Us Balkans – Reimagining the Balkans beyond borders and stereotypes

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Some Call Us Balkans (SCUB) is a cultural cooperation project co-funded by the European Union, forming a transdisciplinary research and community that aims to co-create knowledge and reimagine the Balkans beyond borders and nationalisms.

Myths and misconceptions of the ‘Balkans’ produce biases which shape the way we talk, feel and think about it both on the inside and the outside of the region. Some Call Us Balkans aims to traverse, contest, investigate and create different notions of the Balkan as a tangible and intangible territory beyond stereotypical representations and narratives, envisioning new ecologies, modes of inhabiting and coming together on a common ground. Some Call Us Balkans (SCUB) is a cultural cooperation project co-funded by the European Union, forming a transdisciplinary research and community that aims to co-create knowledge and reimagine the Balkans beyond borders and nationalisms.

Within the frame of cultural diplomacy and cooperation, SCUB fosters intercultural dialogue, cross-border cooperation and mobility for artists, cultural operators and their works, by using innovative forms of audience engagement. Starting from the conducted researches in six different localities in the Balkans along three main research streams: The Commons and Right to the City, Migration and Labour, Cultural Heritage and Cultural practice.

The Mobile Forum participatory format where multivocal narration and representation of the Balkans, can be created, contested, debated, listened, performed, imagined will be an ephemeral collective space where differences can collide and produce alternative narrations of reality. This will contribute to the deconstruction of the so-called myth of the ‘Balkans’ as it is often mistakenly understood.

## Concepts.

### PARTICIPATORY ART-BASED RESEARCH

We use art as resource for interacting with the public, examining social issues through creative and cooperative research.

### SOCIALLY ENGAGED ART

We create art involving people and communities in debate, collaboration or social interaction, to foster cultural democracy and diversity.

### OPEN TRAVELING PRACTICE

We travel as an open-scripted action, negotiating the meaning and roles of the host and the guest as co-creators of the journey.

### MYTHOGRAPHY

Myths form narratives and views of the world. We seek to uncover and debunk contemporary myths and misconceptions of the Balkans.

## Activities.

### ART-BASED RESEARCH

Balkan Myths and Misconceptions

Six research projects contesting sociocultural structures that produce divides between people and other people, their environment, and other species.

### PERFORMANCE ART

Foundation of a Traveling Imagination

A group of local artists, cultural operators and activists with a bond to the Balkans co-create a performative

walk of Balkans through Florence.

### CULTURAL RESIDENCY

BL(K)N RES(T)

An educational, excursion-intensive and peer-to-peer capacity building residency in Berlin, resulting in collective forms of knowledge production.

### ARTISTS RESIDENCY

Assembling BL(KN)

Eight contemporary young artists cooperate in a month-long co-creation process through socially engaged art, resulting in an on-site exhibition in Banja Luka.

### CROSS-BALKAN JOURNEY

BLKN Mobile Forum

A mobile assembly space that travels across Balkan cities, enabling cross-border dialogue, connecting local cultural practitioners, communities of practice and artists.

### CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION

Some Call Us Balkans

Showcase of new commissioned contemporary art in two industrial sites in Pristina, exploring alternative forms and ecologies of representing and living in the Balkans.

## Events.

A series of participatory actions that foster mutual learning, awareness and investigate the urban, social and traveling ‘Balkan’ cultural context.

### “Giving voice to Maps”

Collective drawing

“What is our perception of the Balkans?” A collective online drawing activity during COVID-19 lockdown, with vocal artist, performer and art director Francesca Pirami.

### “Collective Terms of Action”

Open call

Selection of 8 emerging artists-travelers, with the aim to form an artists’ collective working transdisciplinarily across borders in the Balkans.

### “Arts on the move”

Online café & podcast

Invited lightning talks on the topic of walking, mapping and traveling as aesthetic and artistic practices, in collaboration with the “walk · listen · create” (WLC) organisation.

### “Melting Imagination”

Socially engaged art exhibition

Contemporary art exploring the Balkans through camp aesthetics, rituals, lullabies, audiowalk, public space performances, video installations and urban interventions.

### “How do we speak of the Balkans”

Participatory exhibition

Exhibiting the SCUB Glossary, a vocabulary aiming to resituate our understanding of the Balkan area. The audience was able to collect the printed pages, creating their own catalogue.

### “Manitarofloi”

Community mountain expedition

Mountain forest exploration guided by the Epirus Mush-



room Society, identifying, collecting, tasting and exhibiting local grown mushroom species.

“Bioblitz by the lake”  
Citizen science activity

Participation in fieldwork scientific research led by biologist Dimitris Papageorgiou, documenting local species of the lake Pamvotida in a citizen science platform.

“Atomic Hangout”  
Public intervention & screening  
The residents of the Sime Solaje street in Banja Luka enliven and co-create together with artists the Gradja, a space where a children’s playground is improvised in the center of the city.

# Ethics-in-Action Framework.

Open and reusable resources, aimed to raise critical awareness and form an accessible and inclusive space within the project and beyond, published under a CC BY-SA 4.0 open license. Read and reuse the resources provided as part of the research conducted within SCUB (see pp. 58–61 for more detail):

OPEN GLOSSARY  
The words we use everyday shape the ways we think and talk. Open Glossary is a living vocabulary with terms of interest for the cohabitating communities, aiming to resituate our territorial understanding.

CODE OF CONDUCT  
The Code of Conduct is a living document co-edited and enriched throughout the project, with the vision to support ethical research and foster a safe environment for this and other Balkan arts and cultural projects.

DIGITAL LIBRARY  
The Digital Group Library gathers literature resources relevant to the Balkans, sociocultural issues and artistic practices in Southeastern Europe, supporting open-access digital scholarship.

DIGITAL REPOSITORY  
All media and publications created during the SCUB project are published open-access and documented with cultural metadata standards, accessible through the SCUB website.

# Partners.

A network of grassroots organisations that support a community of multidisciplinary practitioners, artists and researchers working and traveling across Europe and the Balkans.

ICSE&CO. [ITALY]  
ICSE&Co. is a non-profit organization linked to the Political Sciences Department of the University of Florence. Since 2010 we have worked in three main sectors, sustainable development focused in the Mediterranean area through lifelong learning tools, young people in relation to intercultural issues, and institutional social project development.

ZK/U [GERMANY]  
ZK/U is a residency and platform for creative and urban experimentation. Through its glocal program, ZK/U explores and critiques existing knowledge and practices in urban agglomerations as a springboard to individual and community self-empowerment. ZK/U fosters the expansion of resilient and inclusionary networks that can rise to the challenges of city life in the 21st century.

BOWB [GREECE]  
The Biennale of Western Balkans (BoWB) promotes intangible cultural heritage through art, technology, and open knowledge, with the vision to inspire people experiencing tradition anew. Our mission is to present interdisciplinary art and research that engage aspects of cultural and natural heritage in participatory and educative ways.

SOCIOPATCH [NORTH MACEDONIA]  
SocioPatch – Platform for civic engagement through artistic and cultural practices (est. 2017) is a group of artists working in Skopje and the Balkan region, whose primary goal is to address topics of social relevance, in particular ones dealing with social engagement, art-based research and cultural management.

UNSA GETO [BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA]  
UNSA Geto was founded in 1999 as an association of artists who revolted against the post war repression in their society, gathering musicians and artists until 2009 when they noticed that activists were joining them. We began working on being a bridge between art and activism, using art as a method for democratizing society.

TAČKA KOMUNIKACIJE [SERBIA]  
The “Tačka komunikacije” (Communication Point) association was founded in 2011 by a group of cultural management professionals and cultural theorists. Our activities focus primarily on themes of cultural heritage and cultural tourism. By making use of new media tools we continue to work on collecting, archiving, presenting and promoting the heritage of local communities.

TERMOKISS [KOSOVO]  
Termokiss is a community-run center in Pristina with the mission of urban and civil exchange, reflection and change-making. After revitalizing an abandoned and forgotten building, “Termokiss” social center is open to a range of activities, which can be linked only by being non-for-profit and educational. The space works to promote the ideas of mutual aid and cooperation.

TULLA [ALBANIA]  
TULLA Cultural Center’s activities are based on the institution’s mission to combine social activism with art and culture as an efficient form of creating higher social cohesion by providing marginalized groups with access to the arts, culture and new technologies. The structure is implemented through an annual program of exhibitions, live music performances, festivals, theatre shows and

conferences.

THE GROUND TOUR (Associate Partner) [EUROPE]  
The Ground Tour promotes traveling as a critical practice in order to create spaces of encounter that transgress the borders of nationalism. We are a transdisciplinary collective from different parts of Europe with the desire to connect those who want to reflect and react upon the current conditions of global mobility, and propel new collaborations with them through artistic strategies and applied research methods.

# Members.

AFERDITE SHANI, ICSE&CO.  
Aferdite Shani is an experienced social researcher focused on policy papers on integration processes and foreign relations; she has been working with different european funds and public financing with Ministries, Regions and associations as project manager expert and cooperation projects development. Currently, she is consultant for migration and diaspora with IOM Albania. The main domain of her expertise is intelligence policy relationship management and association manager and network promoter. Locally she has been engaged in cross-cultural approach promoter and social entrepreneurship specialist for migrants.

VIOLA GABA, ICSE&CO.  
She holds a Master Degree in “International Relations and European Studies” with a focus on human rights and gender-equality issues. She has worked for several years in the educational and social sector. Currently she works as a project manager, developing and administering European projects dealing with several topics such as capacity building, human rights and international cooperation.

MIODRAG KUČ, ZK/U  
Miodrag Kuč is an interdisciplinary artist and urban theorist trained as an architect / urban planner in various cultural settings. His work explores the role of ephemeral structures in uncertain urban conditions and spatial appropriations of marginal social groups. He is the founder of the studio ParaArtFormations, which moves at the intersection of urban studies, performative-planning, artistic interventions and micro politics. He works as researcher and leads various projects at ZK/U (Centre for Art and Urbanistics) Berlin, exploring new ways of knowledge production through the lens of critical urban pedagogy.

DENNIS LINDENAU, ZK/U  
Dennis Lindenau is certified project and funding manager with more than 5 years experience in handling larger European cooperation projects funded by Creative Europe, Horizon 2020, Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) and Erasmusplus. Furthermore he is specialised in handling national funding programmes, co-financing funds and Public Funding Laws. He is currently working as funding and financial manager for KUNSTrePUBLIK e.V./ZKU Berlin.

MARIANA ZIKU, BIENNALE OF WESTERN BASKANS  
Mariana Ziku is a resesarcher in the fields of cultural heritage and computer science. She is co-founder of the Biennale of Western Balkans and a PhD candidate and research associate at the Intelligent Interaction RG, Dept. of Cultural Technology and Communication, University of the Aegean. Her research focuses on computing

approaches in the domain of intangible cultural heritage, including data modelling, digital infrastructures for participation and human-computer interaction in arts and culture.

ELLI LEVENTAKI, BIENNALE OF WESTERN BASKANS  
Elli Leventaki is an art historian, a curator, and a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Theory and History of Art in the Athens School of Fine Arts. She is currently a curator at the Biennale of Western Balkans, while simultaneously collaborating with independent art programs and art spaces as a freelance curator.

KATERINA ZACHOU, BIENNALE OF WESTERN BALKANS  
Katerina is a museologist and a cultural manager based in Venice. She is member of the European Cultural Centre of Italy curatorial team, organizing large-scale art and architecture exhibitions, in the context of Biennale di Venezia. She was selected for the NEON Curatorial Exchange Programme 2020 in London, organized by the Whitchapel Gallery in partnership with NEON Organisation. She received an MA in Museology and Cultural Management from the School of Architecture, Faculty of Engineering, AUTH, and a BA in Greek Philology from the School of Philosophy, University of Ioannina.

KLELIJA ZIVKOVIC, SOCIOPATCH  
Klelija Zhivkovikj is a transdisciplinary designer, based in Skopje. She is engaged with two organizations she co-founded: Sociopatch, a platform for civic engagement through artistic and cultural practices, and DGT12, a collaborative, design-based inquiry into digital transformation through pedagogy, performance, and technology. She is a member of the Stella Network, a mentorship network for girls and women, and teaches at Brainster Co.

KLEMENTINA RISTOVSKA, SOCIOPATCH  
Klementina Ristovska is an independent researcher living in Skopje. Her academic training comprises a mix of interdisciplinary curriculums in the humanities and social sciences. This view of transgressing disciplinary boundaries and synthesizing knowledge from various streams has stayed with her influencing the way she engages professionally. She has participated in local and regional grassroots political organising through various social justice initiatives. Currently, she is working on a MA in Gender Studies.

HANA MILENKOVSKA, SOCIOPATCH  
Hana Milenkovska is an Independent Performing Arts Professional. She obtained her Bachelor in Theatre and film directing and has been the artistic leader and creator of the “Social Sculpture” art project with the Roma community in Skopje.

VESNA MALESEVIC, UNSA GETO  
Vesna Malešević is an event/production manager, creative director and social/activist activity coordinator, with more than a decade of experience, as well as a journalist for IMPULS Portal. She is one of the operators of DKC Incel, a social-cultural space. She is also one of the organizers of regional BL ART Festival, an activist festival in Banja Luka which has been running for twelve consecutive years. In her spare time, she enjoys activism through art, good music and sociology.

LIDIJA DRAKULIC, UNSA GETO  
Lidija Drakulić is a live audio engineer, production, event/logistics manager and one of the operators of DKC Incel, a social-cultural space. She is also one of the organizers of regional BL ART Festival, an activist festival in Banja Luka which has been running for twelve consecutive years. In her spare time, she enjoys creating comedy videos, playing instruments and experimenting

# Research-ers.

**ĐURDICA BJELOŠEVIĆ [BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA]**  
Đurdica Bjelošević is a painter and restorer, interested in working with waste. She has been collecting and using recycled material for artistic purposes for a long time, within which she created paintings, installations and sculptures from recycled material. Through these activities she has led several creative workshops for children on the topic of recycling and upcycling. Approaching commonly held habits of contemporary society that endanger and pollute the environment, she tries to convey to the youngest the right attitude towards nature’s well being, through the ingrained value and possibilities of creative use of waste material, that in her work is mostly plastic. She is based in Banja Luka.

**KLELIJA ZHIVKOVIKJ, KLEMENTINA RISTOVSKA [NORTH MACEDONIA]**  
Klelija Zhivkovikj is a transdisciplinary designer, engineer and artist with a love for critical thinking and bewildering. Formally trained in several design disciplines, her ongoing research practice investigates the building blocks of intimacy as organizing principles for models of resource extraction and distribution which can serve as alternatives to the existing ones. She works with installations, digital media and design pedagogy. Her most recent work is the artist book “Prototyping tenderness: A personal log of a dying world” commissioned and published by Private Print Studio. She is a co-founder of the interdisciplinary design studio Pillow Talks, the design-based inquiry into the digital transformation DGT12, and the Platform for civic engagement through artistic and cultural practices Sociopatch. She is based in Skopje.

Klementina Ristovska is an independent researcher working across critical theory and activism. Her academic training comprises a mix of interdisciplinary curriculums in the humanities and social sciences. This ethos of transgressing disciplinary boundaries and synthesising knowledge from various streams has stayed with her, influencing the way she engages professionally. She has taken part in local and international collaborations and grassroots political organising. Currently working on a MA in Gender Studies, she is focused on her foray into artistic research through the involvement with Skopje-based Platform for civic engagement through artistic and cultural practices Sociopatch. She is based in Skopje.

**BORA BABOCI [ALBANIA]**  
Bora Baboci is an artist and spatial researcher, her research interests are merged within her artistic practice and production. Her research is focused on informal space craft, dwelling-in-travel and migratory constructive behaviors. She focuses on the domestic scale as well as the scale of landscapes and ecologies. Her artistic work ranges from drawings to performative installations, exploring the emotional body, its drives and altered states, as well as its physiological memory and roots in space. She has participated in several european residencies and biennales as well as contributed with her research work in publications regarding space and architecture mostly in Europe. She is based in Tirana.

**LJUBICA SLAVKOVIĆ [SERBIA]**

**JELENA (JELLY) LUISE [GERMANY]**  
Jelena (Jelly) Luise is an artist and photographer preoccupied with the condition of transit. Their practice traverses emotive repercussions of power and is rooted in a state of perpetual restlessness in the face of contemporary reality. Her image-making is informed by a shifting set of identities and the slippages that occur during translation. Approaching the photographic apparatus with a sense of elasticity, their practice extends into free association, honouring the unconscious of images. Often depicting radiant but troubled scenes, her work is informed by an underlying sense of uncanniness, entropy and unrest. She has lived and worked in Berlin since late 2020.

**LEA BLAU [BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA]**  
Lea Blau is an artist, actress, theatre maker, singing and moving across disciplines and on stage. In her work, Lea explores various languages of contemporary performance with an emphasis on challenging the format between a performer and a spectator. She is not limited within a specific medium, but explores the coexistence between visual, sonic and physical aspects in a live performance. She is based in between Banja Luka and Rjeka and has worked and learned from some of the most exciting contemporary and scenic artists today.

**SEZER SALIHI [NORTH MACEDONIA]**  
Sezer Salihi is an artist, film practitioner, and researcher who through his artistic practice and knowledge aims to impact the social space and community. As a traveller his curiosity to delve into mystery is a stimulus to create known worlds in distant realities. He works through photography and cinema, and has directed and scripted various films among documentary, shorts, music clips and commercials. Through his movies and papers he does not want to show only to be able to dive into interdisciplinary arts but that he can work across different topics known to his social and human environment. His passion about the invisible: unheard and untold stories, for him art and humankind are prominent fields to research and journey across reality and beyond. He is based in Istanbul and Skopje, he is working internationally.

**DIONA KUSARI [KOSOVO]**  
Diona Kusari is a writer, researcher, and multidisciplinary artist. She tries to bring the focus of an overly-automated society to “hidden” and shared knowledge – which may be evoked in conceptual frameworks such as – esoteric practices, hermeticism, divine law, the collective unconscious – the fabric that has organically kept consciousness and the cycles of life in place and evolving. Her practice attempts to foster a universal language, which is not so much based on what can be witnessed and gathered at face value, but reading between the lines, sensing, and symbolism. Diona is based in Pristina and has engaged in civil society in Kosovo for the last 5 Years, working in research and advocacy in the fields of environment and sustainability.

**LORI LAKO [ALBANIA]**  
Lori Lako is a visual artist working across several media and exhibition formats. Her artistic practice reflects on the condition of postmodernity in a fast moving world among a multitude of images and information that hinder historical remembrance and the research of personal identity. One of the important elements of her artistic work is the investigation of the contemporary mediation of the internet and digital devices, whether in historical or personal occurrences. She has worked and exhibited in between Albania, Kosovo, Italy, Germany, Austria and soon will work overseas in New York.

ciplinary approach and theory and practice mingles to give shape to applied artistic research methodologies/formats, narrative-performative storytelling interventions, interactive exhibitions and public art installations, in the form of hybrid and multilayered outputs and outcomes.

**MILLY REID, THE GROUND TOUR**  
Milly Reid is a freelance artist and designer based in Berlin. Following a background in arts, architecture, and social design, her works evolve through poetic narration while exploring the relationship between belonging and environment. Having lived a little bit in a lot of places, she is inspired by processes of adaptation, growth, and ways of being on the move.

# Artists.

The eight artist-travelers are the recipients of the honorarium co-funded by the European Union, selected through the “Collective Terms of Action” International Open Call. The artists collaborate in the one-month artist residency Assembling BL(KN) in Banja Luka, travel across the Balkans through the learning-oriented BLKN Mobile Forum and are commissioned new art presented in the final exhibition Some Call Us Balkans in Pristina.

**ALE RILETTI [ITALY]**  
*Ale Riletti is a cultural creator whose work is often community based and aims to collect memories.* She exercises the embodiment of pleasure as a water skin. Mimetic desire of slipping through living beings made her feel like a raccoon. Trying to stretch roles by gender-playing, re-enacting languages and stories. Outputs are affective, temporary archives of community-empowerment, building new alliances. She does arts as well as many other precarious jobs: music may be a spectrum of a no-working Atlantide. I work in between and live in between Rome, Marseille and Venice.

**MARY MARINOPOULOU [GREECE]**  
Mary Marinopoulou is an artist, curator and theatre practitioner who considers her artistic practice and research as social actions. Her work has been driven by the need to explore the self and its environment as well as the complex strings that hold them together, which has been manifested through video art, short films, multimedia installations and curatorial work. As she progresses, her intention is to dive deeper into these multilayered relationships of identities and the world, explore them with other artists and practitioners, and together respond to the prominent issues of today and perpetual questions of the human psyche. She is based in Athens, and has worked internationally.

**JELENA GAJINOVIĆ [SERBIA]**  
Jelena Gajinović is a new media artist and designer working across disciplines. Interpretation of cultural heritage and presentation of it in physical and digital form is her main interest. Focusing on the process of archiving and preserving tangible and intangible heritage She explores the interrelationships and the relevance of visual information. She is a member of the Association of Fine Artists of Vojvodina, the International Federation of Journalists and she acquired the status of an independent artist. She is based in Novi Sad, has worked and studied in Portugal and participated in many solos and collective exhibitions.

with sound.

**VIRDZINIJA DJEKOVIC, TAČKA KOMUNIKACIJE**  
Virdzinija Djekovic Miketic is a researcher, activist and cultural worker based in Belgrade. She is Ph.D. candidate at Faculty of Dramatic Arts (Belgrade), where she is also engaged as a teaching assistant and researcher in the field of cultural policies. Relation between her theoretical and practical work based on active status as a cultural worker and activist on the independent cultural scene. She is project manager at Tacka komunikacije and she also works as a project and financial manager as a freelancer.

**ANDRIJA STOJANOVIĆ, TAČKA KOMUNIKACIJE**  
Andrija was born in Belgrade in 1984. He graduated Management and Production of Theatre, Radio and Culture at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade and has a Bachelor degree in Information Management at Singidunum University, Belgrade. He gained professional experience through various cultural events and in 2011 he was a founding member of Tačka Komunikacije, which has enabled him to work on the design and production of numerous cultural heritage, social history and new media projects.

**ALBAN NIMANI, TULLA CULTURAL CENTER**  
For over a decade he has been working as a professor of New Media at the Faculty of Arts in Prishtina where he was also The Head of the Applied Arts Department. He has an acclaimed music career as the leader of the alternative band Asgje Sikur Dielli. He also produced a solo intermedia performance which was shown in Albania, Italy, Mexico, and South Africa. Currently, he is involved in art management and promotion as co-founder and director of Tulla – Culture Center in Tirana, where he leads the visual arts, non-formal educational and music programs of the center.

**DAFINA BEQIRI, TULLA CULTURAL CENTER**  
Dafina Beqiri contributes to TULLA as fundraising coordinator and has 20 years of professional experience in complex projects and programs. Dafina is highly experienced in organizational, strategic development and change management with a consistent career record in Grant/Business/Project development and management. Throughout her career she worked closely with various stakeholders and contributed in the empowerment of different local, regional and international institutions from the level of government, civil society organizations to the business community to professionally grow especially in local and regional development, project management, fundraising, management and policy making.

**MIRANDA MEHMETI, TERMOKISS**  
Miranda Mehmeti is a community organiser at Termokiss social-cultural center located in Prishtina, Kosova. Her duties within this position include: hearing out members of the community and their ideas, co-creating the program, outreach with potential new members or partners, organizing events, and everything else in between. Prior to working at Termokiss, Miranda studied English Language and Literature at the University of Prishtina, then served as a project manager for Wikimedians of Albanian Language User Group. She enjoys digging, playing and talking about music – and proudly holds the “music nerd” title in the friend group.

**ENRICO TOMASSINI, THE GROUND TOUR**  
Enrico Tomassini is a transdisciplinary researcher and curator, with a background in Architecture, Social Design and Cinema. Social Engaged Art Practice is at the core of his work. He has engaged, curated and conceptualized complex collaborative and participatory artistic open-processes, where art springs out of an interdis-



Ljubica Slavković, Ljuba, is an architect and an urban planning researcher who runs complex projects in the field of urban politics. She is a teaching assistant and a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Architecture, University of Belgrade, author and project manager at the Center for Cultural Decontamination in Belgrade, and a co-founder of expert organization Nova planska praksa, baza za urbanistička istraživanja i razvoj planiranja (New Planning Practice, base for researching and developing urban planning). She is primarily focused on researching and educating in the field of urban planning, urban politics and production of space, and in the wider societal contexts, empowering and advocating development and implementation of principles of good governance. She has led numerous local and international projects and programs, research, exhibitions, debates, educational forums, workshops, publications, presentations and actions. She is active as a lecturer and public speaker, and is an awarded author, with several publications and numerous articles published. She is based in Belgrade.

#### RIKA KRITHARA [GREECE]

Rika Krithara is an artist and researcher, Her work explores issues of perception, environmental destruction, and critical questions on historical memory. The core of her practice consists of field work in remote mountain regions of multi-layered historical density through video sequences and performative walks. In her video installations, Krithara merges fragments of her mountain days, fictional landscapes, documentary references and sculptural elements. She seeks to place Mountains as a space of connection, thereby expanding perception into resistance and counter-memory. Krithara had 6 solo exhibitions and participated in several group exhibitions at institutions, museums and artist-run projects in Europe. She is based in Athens.

#### SHPAT SHKODRA [KOSOVO]

Shpat Shkodra is anthropologist, a researcher, and a social worker. His works explores spatial memory, cultural practices, and collective memory. His academic training mostly focused in ethnographic methodology, comprises of a mix of arts and social sciences. Up until this point his points of research are mainly focused in artistic research, the production of spaces, cultural practices, and exploring issues of species interconnectivity. He has participated numerous local and international projects and programs, research, arts, debates, educational forums, workshops, publications, presentations and actions. He is currently working as a social worker. He is based in Prishtina.



Photograph by Stella Karafili, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, CC BY-SA 4.0

# Activity #1

# Research.

BALKAN MYTHS AND MISCONCEPTIONS, Balkan region, 2021  
Participatory art-based research (PABR), North Macedonia, Albania, Greece, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, 2021. Six research projects, contesting sociocultural structures that produce divides between people and other people, their environment, and other species in the Balkans.

Researchers:  
Klelija Zhivkovikj, Klementina Ristovska [North Macedonia]  
Bora Baboci [Albania]  
Rika Krithara [Greece]  
Đurđica Bjelošević [Bosnia and Herzogegovina]  
Shpat Shkodra [Kosovo]  
Ljubica Slavković [Serbia]

RESEARCH PROJECT #1 SKOPJE, NORTH MACEDONIA TERMS OF ENCOUNTER
BY DRAGAN TEODOSIEV, HANA MILENKOVSKA, KLELIJA ZIVKOVIC, KLEMENTINA RISTOVSKA, SIMEON ANGELOVSKI

The narrator hits the road with a vague goal of arriving at myths of the contemporary Balkans by driving along with truck drivers’ experience of their Balkanness as relayed in their own gripping stories. The roads change from hole-ridden and muddy to sleek autobahns, and even disappear at random junctures. Eventually, the story loses the plot (to lose one’s ability to understand or cope with what is happening) and burnout enters the stage. The narrator decides to become the subject (a person or thing that is being discussed, described, or dealt with). The narrator has been the subject all along. In place of denouement (the final part of a narrative in which the strands of the plot are drawn together and matters are explained or resolved), the subjects light a cigarette and play music.

Locality	The roads linking the Balkans and the West
Keywords	beauty, labour, encounter, balkaning, communitization
Mode of travelling	By truck
Partner	SocioPatch

Stream of Research	Cultural heritage and Cultural Practices / Migration and Labour
Cross-Cutting Issues	migration, ecology, identity and belonging, mobility, beauty
Glossary	<p>влече за јазик (vlȅtȁzȁk za jazik) – to pull at someone’s tongue. To provoke someone to say out loud something that they’d rather restrain themselves from saying. It can be used both for saying something positive or negative, but it is usually used in the context of being provoked to enter a confrontation.</p> <p>to balkan – to think and act in a continuous pursuit of reclaiming the term Balkan, of becoming capable to celebrate, respect and own the Balkan experience, collective creations and ways of being. Ex. I’m tired of doubting everything Balkan and seeing it as less, I want to start balkaning.”</p>
Myth	<p>Myth 1: Work/life in the West is your best chance for success and happiness. Choosing to stay in your home country is choosing failure, so you must always be facing Westward (со една нога у странство = “with one foot abroad” an often used phrase when someone asks you “How do you do?/What do you work?/How’s life”...)</p> <p>Myth 2: The full organization of our society, our physical and social environment, will only become livable and orderly if we keep Performing the West. Eventually, we’ll get there. For now, we are still on the losing side.</p>

For the most part, our process unfolded in the black mirror. We embraced online meetings as our main space for creation. We talked, reflected and added on each others’ thoughts, expressed, evolved, grew, wrote as we talked – cooked noodles – and then talked some more. Instinctively following a Balkan tradition of storytelling, we unconsciously created our art research narrative as we kept talking. Viber is a mobile application widely used in the Balkans. Truck drivers and trucking dispatchers use it daily to communicate. We used it to temporarily resettle from Skopje to Denis’s truck cabin, rope (see Glossary Entry 01), somewhere on the French highways. Intimate, cigarette-smokey, flat listening sessions, where sounds were born, thread after thread, music was listened to, silences were comfortable, dry humor bits were uttered and enjoyed amid discussions on belonging, art and the Balkan identity. Доле, a Kriva Palanka баваа picnic up in the mountains, and a розба in Kavadarci, on Tikvesko Lake, with ракија и скапа in the vineyards, made up the North-South tips of our truck drivers’ interviews map. Upon receiving the instruction to “work with a community” during the research process, we followed an inkling to interview truck drivers and get acquainted with their views and feelings of the Balkans and their job. In retrospect, what probably sparked our interest in truck drivers was a kind of revolt against the “communitization” of parts of The Balkans and the tendency to burden it with a quest for universality so it can be neatly packaged and presented in the context of a project. We felt like we were expected to “be Balkan” and prove the very stereotypes for The Balkans which we were tasked with dismantling/deconstructing. We felt that the misconceptions of a Balkan person in the West converge in the image of the gastarbeiter. As artists and researchers, our experiences of living and/or working within the EU, or between the EU and The Balkans, didn’t resemble it. However, given the history of Balkan people moving to countries in the EU as a cheap labour force across sectors and industries, we could see significant overlaps with our experience of exporting our labour to the EU through EU funded projects.

RESILIENCE, RESISTANCE AND BEAUTY  
Using music and text, our research team wove together the words and sounds of truck drivers and artists into a story of labour and beauty conveying the conflicting desires and urges which drive our decision-making as workers, who are often targeted as a “community” within the context of contemporary art and culture production. The testimonies of the truck drivers are juxtaposed with our own in a spoken word performance, with the purpose of representing our subjectivity in this process, as well as in the parallel one of working on the project Some Call Us Balkans. As we are distilling myths and misconceptions, both our own and the ones about us, our work tells the story of how subjectivity is continuously forged, and how it in turn serves as a foundation for a relationship to an Other. The process of decision making which took place within our team during the research in action phase inspired us to articulate a document stating our Terms of Encounter, which we prepared to act as ground zero, both for taking responsibility and for setting boundaries.

THE PROCESS  
A series of talks with four truck drivers coupled with unsuccessful attempts to arrange interviews and visits to sites important for the community alerted us to the need for more time necessary to invest in building a genuine connection with them. This led us to a mid-process grounding in our capacity, or lack thereof, to see this process through as we conceived it without compromising its quality and integrity. Our capacity was impeded by our growing frustrations at being unable to afford the time our work merits. A continuous thread during the process, our meetings over Skype emerged as a prime site for growth in a professional and personal sense and forging the research direction. These talks, at times resembling support group therapy sessions, enabled our emotional processing to happen and our experiences to materialise as a valid and integral part of the output.

MONOLOGUE – WE FELT “PULLED AT OUR TONGUES” (SEE GLOSSARY ENTRY 5) AND TALKED BACK  
Split into three acts, the monologue is a train of thought, constructed from the discarded notes taken during the research process. Built using a few different Augusto Boal and Brechtian techniques, it follows the trajectory of the inner conflict brought on by the tendency to consent to precarious working conditions and the passion for creating beauty and community which has been our core motivation. Looking back, the monologue writing process emerges as the culmination of a persistent effort to talk back (to reply quickly and often rudely to something that someone says) to the cop in our heads. Having identified moments of kinship in the stories of our interviewees added to our readiness and confidence in talking back. Composing it and eventually witnessing it come alive during the performance marked a catharsis in our process. Externalizing the inner dialogue each of us leads with our own internalized oppressors helps us hone the arguments and become clearer on where the anger and frustrations come from, where the bitterness ends and personal accountability begins. The monologue as an artwork was the vessel for coming face-to-face with the bones and tiles of our internalised oppressive structures – witnessing its performance allowed us to check ourselves, distinguish what “the Monster” is made of, where and why the oppression hurts us, how to begin the process of healing, so we can start producing new tools for



Extract from the Monologue Video “Terms of Encounter” by SocioPatch, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, Picture by Mila Stardelova, CC BY-SA 4.0



dialogue with ourselves and the Other.

SOUNDSCAPE – WE KNOW WHAT THE BALKANS ARE, AND IF YOU ALLOW US WE MIGHT JUST SHOW YOU

When we speak of what The Balkans is to us we describe sensations, and wax poetic about our belonging as something which we feel in our blood and heartbeat. This is not an argument which has been in service to our pursuit to be taken seriously, but rather one which has labeled us emotional and chaotic. Yet, we stand by the idea that belonging is not rational, and to attempt to rationalize it is to alienate it from all the beauty it can hold. Therefore, our starting point was to try and understand the sounds which can be encountered in the cabin of a truck en route between the EU and The Balkans, and inhabited by a Balkan driver. How is comfort achieved through sound? In which way is belonging called upon for comfort? Some drivers spoke of how driving refrigerating trucks was calming, the sound of the motor of the refrigerator acting as white noise which helps them fall asleep in the evenings. Others spoke of music being distracting when they are on a long drive, and preferring wordless melodies, while others told us of songs which go straight to their hearts, keeping them stimulated on the road. We researched the music which can be found under the genre “камионџиска” or “шоферска”, and created a collections of sounds by way of dissecting, analyzing and extracting meaning from this cultural phenomenon. The resulting soundscape is a piece of original music which asks for your consent to try and show you the way of The Balkans.

„Listening to the music of the Balkans, you soon notice the strange meter. Many ‘skewed’ (limping) time signatures come from the East. The 7/8 time is said to come from India. The beautiful 10/8 time signature comes from Armenia and Iran. In western Turkey, Greece and Egypt the 9/8 size is widely used. In classical art music, 9/4 and 10/4 time are common. All these time signatures also ended up in the Balkans via the Turks. But in Bulgaria, Greece, Albania and Macedonia it is even more colorful. There you will encounter 5/8, 11/16, 13/16, 15/16, 18/16, 25/16 and even 28/16 time signatures. It sounds more unlikely than it is. The local musicians and singers use these time signatures quite often and regularly, like pants that fit them exactly and the local farmers have no trouble dancing flawlessly on them. Precisely because these very strange time signatures occur in the Bulgarian and Greek remote mountain regions and not in Turkey, we must assume that the strangest time signatures are authentic from the Balkans. Since we do not have written music sources from before 1300, it is not easy to determine which rhythms originate from the East and which do not. However, if we take old rhythmic lines of poetry as a starting point (for example Homer), it is clear that limping time signatures were indeed used in (Greek) antiquity. It is therefore very likely that many of the skewed time signatures do indeed have a European source.“\*

PARTICIPATIVE EVENT IN SKOPJE

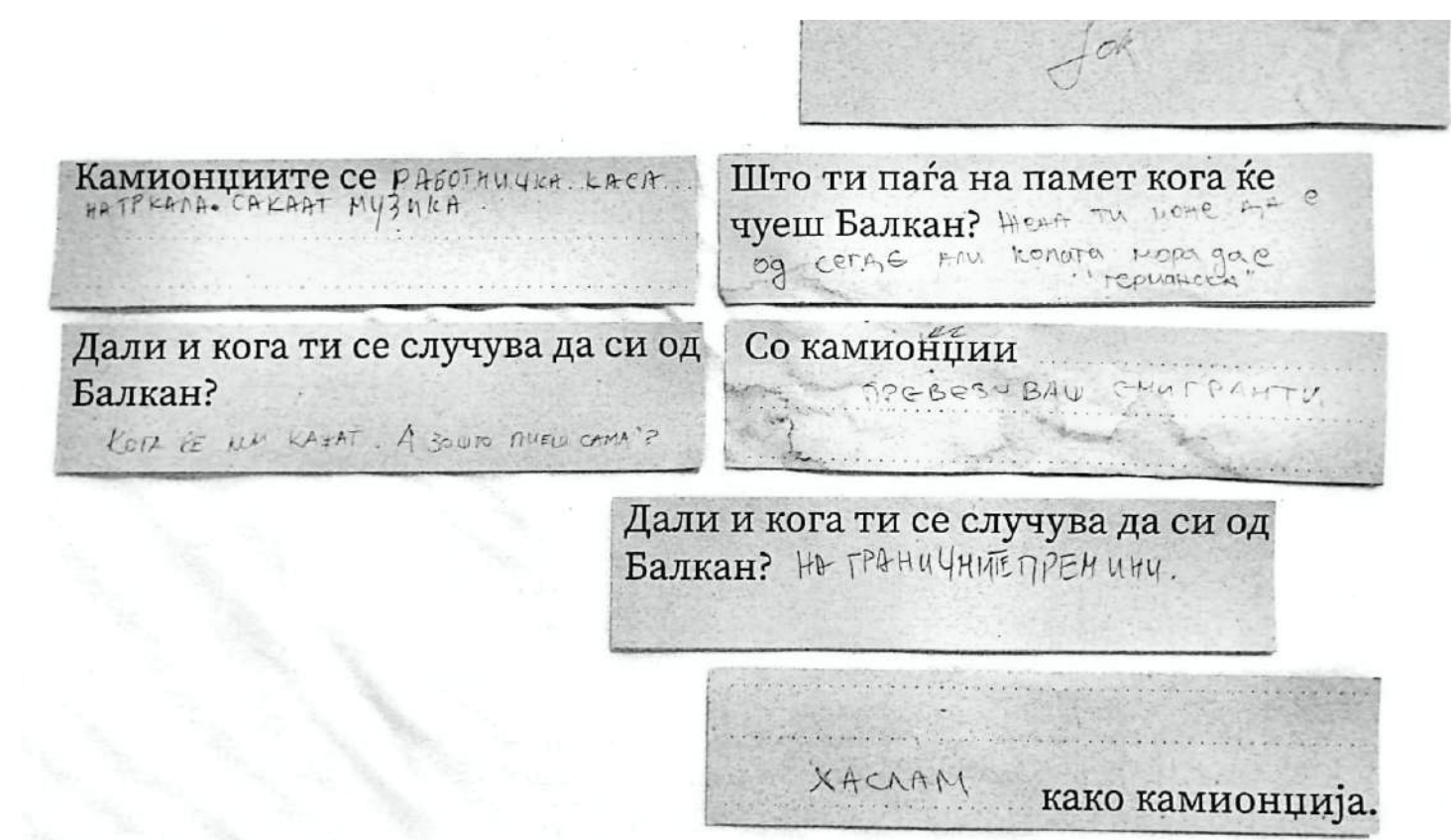
Since the beginning of the project, it was crucial to us to discover and create ways to involve the audience in our process, both as a way to expose our findings to the public, and to communicate the importance of the perspectives our work holds.

Контекст

Koj

Our team of artists–researchers and other collaborators – one social designer, one theatre director, one critical theorist, two musicians/composers/sound designers, one actor, and one camera person.

Collecting impressions Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, picture by SocioPatch, CC BY-SA 4.0



Клелија Живковиќ, Хана Миленковска, Клементина Ристевска, Драган Теодосиев, Симеон Ангеловски, Мартин Ѓоргоски, Мила Старделова

Каде

Мал локален бизнис. Кафе книжарница Буква (which would translate to „Letter“ in English) во центарот на градот– продаваат книги само од мали издавачки куќи. Служат кафе, но и алкохол и работат до полноќ. Веднаш до Кино Култура, една од поважните културни локации во градот, затскриена во брезите зад Домот на Армијата и Собранието на Република Македонија, спроти спорната црква која е „во изградба“ поради растурен тендер веќе една декада, дијагонално од спомен куќата на Мајка Тереза која е критикувана поради стилот кој потсетува на графиките на Ешер, а самата „Буква“ е во градба за која пак Гауди и Хундертвасер се главната инспирација на сопственикот.

Having produced two pieces of performative art, we hosted an event with the purpose of performing both for the local audience in Skopje. During the event, the audience was introduced to our process through a simple participatory activity: each table had pieces of paper which had a question written on them. Each question was one of the many questions we asked ourselves during this process, and inviting the public to answer them was an opportunity to reevaluate both our standpoints and findings.

Балканците се ..... На Балканот ..... како балканец. Балкански ... Кoj ти е омилен балкански израз? Дали и кога ти се случува да си од Балкан? Дали и кога ти се случува да си камионџија? Што ти паѓа на памет кога ќе чуеш камионџија? Дали познаваш камионџија? Камионџиите се ..... Камионџиски ..... како камионџија. Со камионџии Што ти паѓа на памет кога чуеш Балкан?

Структура на нашиот процес

Експозиција: Decision to work on the project – We are reclaiming our voices as Balkan subjects.

Заплет: Decision to choose truck drivers as a community – We see the perception of a Balkan person in the West layered in the image of the gastarbeiter

Кулминација: Decision to ground in our capacity – We cannot afford the time our work merits.

Перипетија: Decision to introduce our subjectivity – We stop trying to act iznad situacije (if the Balkans is in turmoil, so are we)

Расплет: Decision to redefine the terms – We are claiming a common future

Retouching is our favorite artistic device. Each of us is a curator in his own museum. [...] Uncover A, cover up B. Remove all spots. Keep your mouth shut. Think of your tongue as a weapon. Think one thing and say another. Use round expressions to obfuscate your intentions. Hide what you believe. Believe what you hide. – D. Ugresic\*\*

TERMS OF ENCOUNTER

Each party takes decisions along the way that ultimately define the way one participates in the encounter. Not all parties have the same liberty (the power or scope to act as one pleases) to make decisions. (0. Our names matter. We should learn to pronounce them correctly.)

1. Our voices belong to us.
2. Our lived experiences are not a subject of interpretation.
3. Each party bears responsibility for the way they participate. Acknowledging the asymmetry in resources and symbolic capital each brings into the relation is where responsibility begins.
4. We revolt against the stereotype of the Balkan worker. We embrace the stereotype of the Balkan worker.
5. We prioritise a quality resource distribution in the process over an emphasis on delivery and preset markers for success.
6. Capacity building is not a currency. We expect to build our capacities through work, not as compensation for our work.
7. We cannot find community without clarity in our own subjectivity first. Good intentions are problematic. Kinship instead of community.
8. Transformation is turbulent, ugly at times and packed with self-doubt.
9. We choose to explore the gravity of beauty and authorize it to shape the outcome of our joint effort.

NOTES

\* Crispijn Oomes , ‘Een musicologische analyse van Osmaanse invloeden op Balkanmuziek’, [www.donaustroom.eu/een-musicologische-analyse-van-osmaanse-invloeden-op-balkanmuziek](http://www.donaustroom.eu/een-musicologische-analyse-van-osmaanse-invloeden-op-balkanmuziek), 2007

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Foundation of a Traveling Imagination

RESEARCH PROJECT #2  
TIRANA, ALBANIA  
PEAKS, WALKS, CALLS, PAUSE: CHARTING THE ALTITUDES

BY BORA BABOÇI IN COLLABORATION WITH STELLA KARAFILI

The artistic research Peaks, Walks, Calls, Pause: Charting the Altitudes tries to trace ancient traditions and systems of knowledge in order to bring forth the memory of a different understanding of the land, toponyms, ownership, and property. We try to juxtapose these traditions to our contemporary visualization of borders which is highly rooted in the territorial gen plan – economized land, taxation, and territorial control. Travelling to the mountainous region of northern Albania, the extreme conditions of the landscape – hard to economize and hard to map – have produced a symbology, a graphic language, myths and codes that we think can contribute to bring to light an alternate approach to belonging, ownership and the reading of our land.

Locality	Mountainous regions of Kelmend
Keywords	seasons, rocks, humor, long walks, survival
Mode of travelling	Long Walks, tracing environmentally damaging behaviors and locations
Partner	Tulla Cultural Center

Stream of Research	Cultural heritage and Cultural Practices
Cross-Cutting Issues	ecology, the dichotomy urban-rural, identity and belonging, intercultural co-existence, right to the city, minorities, inter-faith dialogue, spiritual practice
Glossary	A dult lehtë () – an expression uttered upon meeting someone, who “comes out” of the peaks, as if they were to say “How are you?”, but it literally means “Did you come out lightly/easily?”  shefi (shefi): One kind of name for the border/property rocks
Myth	Myth 1: Our contemporary visualization of borders which is highly rooted in the territorial gen plan – economized land, taxation, and territorial control there are other mythologies of our lands that suggest a different way to inhabit and conceive borders.

Fonsi, the horse rider, played soccer with his friends in the location called Paja. Lleshi was looking for the horses that were lost. Laçja showed up in the peaks dressed in yellow. We couldn’t tell which trails she walked, but she showed up in front of us, while we had just left her behind. The short cuts, panoramics, easier trails and water sources were a layer of the landscape that we had no knowledge of. Our sense of orientation was momentarily suspended. Her two phones had fallen in the boiling milk and she was now bored and cut off. She wandered in the peaks more than usual. She was collecting primula officinalis. She said it needs to be dried in the shadows. She said she couldn’t stand it anymore up there, it was too harsh and lonely. She had high blood pressure and headaches, but a great sense of humor. What words would be fair when we shared their stories?

We have focused our work in the mountainous region of Kelmend, in northern Albania, and how this kind of terrain affects the relationship to the land, toponyms, property – but also how it affects the body, the voice, communication and myth. Beyond borders, the nature of this terrain is very similar to its bordering countries and shares similar customs and traditions. We have started our work by consulting literature mostly from the 19th century, that show accounts of how this terrain was inhabited before communication and movement changed radically with the arrival of new technologies. At the time, both communication and movement depended on the fatigue of the human body and use of grazed animals. We did two research trips, one in the end of May and one in the end of June 2021, which makes a slight difference on how these lands are inhabited. We went there to look for traces of these older costumes and the drawings you see above are digitized versions of some of the sketches we made while charting the peaks. The first photographs you see in the presentation were taken on the way to the mountains and they start illustrating the nature of the human traces in this area, as if they were illustrations, or gestures, they also enunciate the nature of this terrain. There are a lot of examples around the world, like Zomia – the country of altitude borders of the book “The art of not being governed” or the Songlines of Australian Aboriginals, where there is a strong contrast between local imaginations of the territory and the genplan, the agricultural land plot and in general the administrative toolbox of controlled and taxable land. These terrains, because of their nature, resist this top down controlling system hence giving way to an alternative system, codes and myths that create the imaginary of the land. Though we seldom see some efforts of terracing the land to create roads and agricultural land, the weather and the terrain do not allow for this practice to grow, giving way to animal grazing and an economy which understands land resources very differently, affecting also the imaginary and lived experience of it. A continuous thread during the process, our meetings over Skype emerged as a prime site for growth in a professional and personal sense and forging the research direction. These talks, at times resembling support group therapy sessions, enabled our emotional processing to happen and our experiences to materialise as a valid and integral part of the output.

The first photographs you see in the presentation were taken on the way to the mountains and they start illustrating the nature of the human traces in this area, as if they were illustrations, or gestures, they also enunciate the nature of this terrain. There are a lot of examples around the world, like Zomia – the country of altitude borders of the book “The art of not being governed” or the Songlines of Australian Aboriginals, where there is a strong contrast between local imaginations of the territory and the genplan,



the agricultural land plot and in general the administrative toolbox of controlled and taxable land. These terrains, because of their nature, resist this top down controlling system hence giving way to an alternative system, codes and myths that create the imaginary of the land. Though we seldom see some efforts of terracing the land to create roads and agricultural land, the weather and the terrain do not allow for this practice to grow, giving way to animal grazing and an economy which understands land resources very differently, affecting also the imaginary and lived experience of it.

Long exhausting walks stop at the good places, sources of ice cold water and shade. These are places where mirages of fairladies called Zanas, Oret, Shtojzovallet appear dancing dressed in white. In an account of Franz Nopca who traveled in the region at the end of the 19th century we read about the lazy rocks. These are piles of rocks that travelers at the time threw when they passed by so as to not stop their journey, to not delay, they threw the lazy rock to relieve the fatigue. The presence of the lazy rocks marked all the other travelers that had passed there that had not stopped, so it was just as much a matter of pride for the traveler. Parallel to possible myth and not taking away anything from the local accounts on encountering there mythological beings in the landscape, we suspect these were also places of hallucination and mirages, of a different visual projection of the body in the conditions of physical exhaustion and ice-cold water after long journeys.

The rock is the most omnipotent presence in the highlands. People swear on the rock, they curse on the rock, and pray on the rock. When Marku had a bad dream he took a rock and smashed it to the ground three times and said “Te rafte ty o gur” – “May it fall on you oh rock, may it fall on you”. The images shown in the presentation represent what is called a “Shefi” or a “border rock”. The property is marked with points instead of lines. The border rock is put deep in the ground with 12 or 3,5 testimonies based on different accounts, and each through a single rock in the foundation and then covers it with earth. And the rock cannot be moved without all the testimonies present. This is how the land is marked. The image on the bottom right is a grave rock, in two of the ancient cemeteries we encountered – no one knows exactly when these were first put, there is speculation one of them was established with a plague. Here, we see the appearance of the cross along the sun and the moon. When catholicism entered the region the cross was marked along the rock. The new rituals were adapted in the old ones, and were marked along the old symbols, but the gesture and nature of demarcation and belief was still interpreted along a much older tradition. Included in the presentation are also accounts of a woman that has survived a lightning stroke. The domestic presence of these events in these areas, also tells how they enter myth, as after the rock, the lightning is another important presence that is used in swearing, cursing, and praying.

Another important tradition in the highlands is also Trance-humance, the practice of moving livestock from one grazing ground to another in a seasonal cycle, typically to lowlands in the winter and highlands in the summer. Here we see the living settings of the shepherds before the summer season has begun. As we can see the structures are marked by protective symbols, like the cross, however the way they are signed resembles a more pagan style of marking and tracing. The structures need to be brought to shape every season and they do not necessarily belong to the shepherds that inhabit them. The concept of seasonal property and also shared property is here very singular to be observed. There are also images of the shepherds’ homes during the summer season, after they have arrived with livestock and alternative economies, as much profitable as self-sustainable.

Another interesting account from this area is what we have decided to call “echo-corridors”. The practice of sending news to the nearest town through calls from specific peaks of the mountains was very typical before other modern forms of communication were available in these areas. Words have it from travelers accounts that news through human yell could travel from the area of Kelmend to the city of Shkodra within 24 hours. In the presentation are also included the calls that shepherds use to gather their livestock during grazing, we notice here sounds, rhythms and timbers that we do not have in between humans, a trans-species communication sounds.

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Map by Bora Baboci, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, photograph by Stella Karafili, CC BY-SA 4.0

RESEARCH PROJECT #3

IOANNINA, GREECE

PASSING LINES

BY RIKA KRITHARA

Passing Lines discusses the perception of community, coexistence, and borders, inspired by the passing of Albanian groups of refugees through the Greek mountain borders and their incidental encounters with Greek mountaineers. It is a visual fragment of a shared common struggle in hostile terrain, and an imaginary open assembly upon those mountains. The identities are merged: mountaineers and refugees could not be separated, they are struggling shadows in a world of ice and snow. In the evening they gather together to cook and regain strength but also to reflect, communicate and discuss. This imaginary open assembly is a place of discussions and collective processes, a field of new beginnings, a common ground.

Locality	Mountainous passages of Tymfi, Smolikas and Grammos
Keywords	assembly, coexistence, community, mountain pass, moving lines
Mode of travelling	Crossing borders
Partner	Biennale of Western Balkans

Stream of Research	Cultural heritage and Cultural Practices / Migration and Labour
Cross-Cutting Issues	intercultural co-existence, the right to move, mutual aid, passing invisible lines, community building, the power to shape a common future, mountains as a topos beyond boundaries and borders
Glossary	<p>ορεινό πέρασμα (orifeino pérasma) – mountain pass; a navigable route through a mountain range or over a ridge. Since many of the world’s mountain ranges have presented formidable barriers to travel, passes have played a key role in trade, war, and both human and animal migration throughout history</p> <p>ανοιχτή συνέλευση (anoiichti synélefs) – an open assembly or people’s assembly; a gathering called to address issues of importance to participants. Assemblies tend to be freely open to participation and operate by direct democracy. Some assemblies are of people from a location, some from a given workplace, industry or educational establishment; others are called to address a specific issue</p>
Myth	Myth 1: Constructed fear of the Other and generalizations about race are used as a toxic political tool in the public sphere. Criticism for xenophobic false perceptions comes now from a large array of fields of public and oral history, memory, anthropology, cultural studies, the communities and a mutual aid movement from “below”.

Passing Lines discusses the perception of community, coexistence, and borders, inspired by the passing of Albanian groups of refugees through the Greek mountain borders and their incidental encounters with Greek mountaineers. It is a visual fragment of a shared common struggle in hostile terrain, and an imaginary open assembly upon those mountains. The identities are merged: mountaineers and refugees could not be separated, they are struggling shadows in a world of ice and snow. In the evening they gather together to cook and regain strength but also to reflect, communicate and discuss. This imaginary open assembly is a place of discussions and collective processes, a field of new beginnings, a common ground.

After 1991 there was a constant flow of Albanian refugees through these difficult mountainous passes. Albanians fled in large numbers into Greece everyday and it was not uncommon back then to encounter them tired and exhausted on the Greek mountains near the border. Facing freezing temperatures, snow and craggy terrain with light clothing, lack of food and the uncertainty of seeking a new country, they often encountered groups of mountaineers in their paths. Moving borders and crises, the common history of the Balkans through different narrations: the issues of closed or open borders haunt this project as unsolved questions. Mountains are considered a terrain of freedom, of struggle, but also a place of common ground and common cultural history that goes way back in time.

Passing Lines is an elliptic visual fragment of a common struggle against hostile terrain and a projection of an imaginary forum of exchange and mutual aid created on those mountains. The identities are merged: mountaineers and refugees could not be separated, they are struggling shadows in a world of ice and snow. In the evening they gather together to cook and regain strength but also to reflect, communicate and discuss. This imaginary open assembly, a place of discussions and collective processes is a field of new beginnings, a common ground. In the near future, the Passing Lines project seeks to approach the Albanian communities and include their narrations of their passage into the research. The aim is to investigate the relationship between the mountain area and the local communities in which they navigated, in order to rethink the closeness and dividends of recent history, as well as the barriers/borders between people. A future sequence of the project could be the collaboration with these communities or individuals, to visually represent their own version of their experiences of crossing the border on those mountains.

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Piotr Kropotkin, *Mutual Aid*

Patrick Leigh Fermor, *Between the Woods and the Water/The Broken Road*

Nick Hunt, *Walking the Woods and the Water*

Δημήτρη Ψαρρά, “Πώς συλλογάται ο Ρήγας;”

Christopher C. King, *Lament from Epirus: An Odyssey intoEurope’s Oldest Surviving Folk Music*

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Passing Lines Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, picture by Rika Krithara, CC BY-SA 4.0

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I am on the bank of the Una River, in the National Park while cutting old c.d.s that I use in my artwork. I’ve been doing something like this for about 15 years, figuring out how to make waste a medium for artistic expression. The water is crystal clear. A couple of plastic bottles pass me downstream, I shift my gaze to the empty can next to me. I have a stomach cramp and think about how someone can have such a behaviour. That one can is not a problem, nor are those bottles that have passed, the problem is the fact that citizens who live there and local tourists leave their garbage but even throw it into the river and dump it with intent! The problem is ingratitude, lack of shame, respect and conscience? I wonder if there is a way to influence the change of these bad widespread environmentally unfriendly habits?

Locality	Landfills and rivers
Keywords	environment, waste, (un)consciousness, art, transformation
Mode of travelling	Tracing environmentally damaging behaviors
Partner	UNSA Geto

Stream of Research	The Commons and Right to the City
Cross-Cutting Issues	ecology, environment, identity and belonging, intercultural co-existence, citizenship, civic engagement
Glossary	<p>kud svi, tu i mali Mujo (kud svi tu i mali mujō) – literally: “Where everyone goes, little Mujo goes too.” A popular Bosnian proverb used in the context of work, to justify individual improper behaviour or to appeal to a diffusion of responsibility. Example: – Zašto si bacio vreću za smeće u rijeku? – Ali komšija radi isto! (Why did you throw out your garbage bag in the river? – Well, my neighbour does the same!)</p> <p>beterluk (bōtōrluk) – a characteristic for sloth and naughty man Example: Beterluk građana Banja Luke doveo do uništavanja zelenih površina. (The Banja Luka citizens’ insolence has caused the destruction of greenery.)</p>
Myth	Myth 1: They themselves, especially politicians who are at the forefront of such a careless trend, like to say that we live in an abundance of pure and beautiful natural resources. This is a myth that shatters and re-examines this research, along with the myth that we are an environmentally conscious nation.

The research includes a broader picture of the environmental problem we face in Bosnia in general, these areas are actually locations where all unscrupulous attitudes and bad behaviors towards nature can be found (actually everywhere) and this happens every day in: nature / wilderness, rivers, protected areas, city, suburbs, villages, legal and illegal landfills. TrashFormNation is a condensation of words contracted into one: Trash, Form and Nation that altogether sounds to the ear as a call for Transformation of the same categories. Its title announces its will of transforming the relationship of citizens to their environment through forming artworks with trash within the complex national context of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

TrashFormNation deals with the problem of alarming environmental unconsciousness in Bosnia and Herzegovina, examining the possibilities of artistic action for changing this devastating image. TrashFormNation shapes around one question: can socially engaged art practices raise awareness and trigger more conscious and responsible behaviors of citizens towards the environment? Within the context of The Balkans that are a treasure trove ( or collection more commonly used) of strange contrasts: beauty and arrogance; beautiful nature and an awful attitude towards it; freedom and limitations; kindness and rigidity; melancholy and resourcefulness; stagnation and enthusiasm;; beters (Bosnian word for stupid, lazy and irresponsible people) and talented people with great abilities; rich cultural, historical heritage and negligence and understanding towards the same. We strive to level, mitigate and reconcile these patterned contrasts through the making of our work. We want to see art practice and trash as a raw resource of transformation, more precisely of TrashFormNation, within our national fragmented community

We recognize the complexity of our environmental issues and we want to cope with it from a multi sided perspective that links together the tangible and intangible aspect of it. On the one hand the obvious negative effects of all sorts of pollution on our environment and health, on the other hand the role of the authorities and communities in generating the problem. Waste treatment remains one of the biggest problems in BiH. We have more than a thousand illegal dumpsites and only 1% of municipal waste is recycled. Smaller towns and rural areas do not have an organized system for collecting and disposing of used oil, batteries, accumulators, tires, electrical equipment, vehicles, agricultural waste, medical waste, expired drugs, pesticides – or, in other words, hazardous waste and chemicals, the operative word being hazardous. If not managed properly, such waste can have dire consequences for the environment and our general public health, contaminating water, soil, as well as the atmosphere. After quite a few long-term consequences, a collectively responsible attitude must finally be launched towards restoring the health of our environment.

The very source of this problem are our governing authorities and their lack of responsibility, a title earned by failing to provide adequate landfills, recycling mechanisms and clear punishments for non-compliance. After a poll was conducted in one of BiH’s Cantons, data revealed that the majority of respondents

expressed concern for their environment at their places of residence, but also for our global environment and its future, expressing desire to change their habits and behaviors. Young people in BiH are particularly aware of environmental problems, shown by various public survey data. However, it is true that by not having citizen engagement, meaningful public consultations and practical debates, we allow those who implement policies and projects to act however they please towards the destruction of our environment, health and well-being. High levels of air pollution, limited water management and waste management capacities, including illegal landfills, uncontrolled construction, industrial pollution and other environmental problems, make BiH one of the worst environmental zones in Europe.

TrashFormNation views all citizens as a responsible community. However, several types of community groups were singled out and observed for the purpose of more clearly defining and understanding the structure of our real ecological situation. These communities are polarized into two opposing attitudes towards the environment. On the one hand, we will observe either a positive prism, while on the other hand, the negative prism in relation to their personal determinations that put them in one of these contexts. Belonging to a positive or negative example of the community depends on the aspirations of their personal awareness, type, attitude and the degree of (ir)responsibility in their relationship to the current environmental situation.

In addition to the mentioned communities, cooperation during the research was achieved at various fronts, including professionals, journalists, the virtual community, and especially citizens as individuals. In order to arrive at the data that is an integral part of our problem with mentality, we must start by examining individuals and their answers and attitudes, so that we can draw an average and clearer picture, such as answering the question: what is causing such irresponsible and ungrateful behavior towards the environment in everyone personally, whether such bad habits are innate or acquired? In case the question does not apply to them, what do they think is the cause of careless and irresponsible behavior in others, without justifying them, themselves or our mentality. Where is the cause of such an “error” in our sensibility?

In support of all this, we have data that we collected from citizens who responded through a public call online and sent a huge number of photos and videos of negative examples of environmental (un)awareness from their personal archives, such as photographs of inorganic and hard-to-decompose waste in nature, polluted rivers and springs, wild dumps that sprouted in unimaginably beautiful and clean areas. These visuals cause cramps, sadness and concern.

By gathering information on environmental issues and the state of the environment, a very clear question has emerged, one that deals with the very cause and essence of the obviously inappropriate, arrogant, ungrateful, very degrading and unscrupulous treatment of the environment by the majority of our citizens and authorities. They themselves, especially politicians who are at the forefront of such a careless trend, like to say that we live in an abundance of pure and beautiful natural resources. This is a myth that shatters and re-examines this research, along with the myth that we are an environmentally conscious nation.

All of this accumulates into one of the first negative impressions we leave on others, and such an impression is very intense and inevitable, precisely because on the other hand, we have beautiful natural resources, and something like this leaves someone with healthy logic in utter disbelief. Extraordinary water resources, such as beautiful rivers, streams, their canyons and valleys, represent important natural treasures and a strong potential for the sustainable and responsible development of local communities, but, unfortunately, not enough effort is invested in protecting such beautiful landscapes . Through this work, we came to the conclusion that art would be able to build a bridge between the three important links of this topic: environmentally responsible and environmentally irresponsible citizens, and our (in)competent state and local institutions.

This “Bermuda Triangle” has existed for many years, and we hope that art will be the secret ingredient that will shatter such a polluted and stagnant cocoon, triggering reactions from which we will all benefit, especially the environment, to which we owe our deepest gratitude. Artists’ needs for activist-oriented action in recent decades have emerged as a response and reaction to the elitist trend of approaching art. Since art has always been a reflection of the state of our society, artists increasingly have a need to react, critique and act. The artistic language, methods and approaches that such actions offer attract attention, focus on a particular problem and its possible solutions, with the aim of raising public awareness through criticism, questioning, presenting solutions, while at the same time, developing new artistic practices. We see the role of the artistic community in the function of associate-transfer with the professional community, the one who listens, interrogates, and offers creative, fresh and, if necessary, shocking or provocative non-violent ideas and solutions for action aimed at an ecologically very unaware community. We believe that artists represent a bridge in the research for new and creative solutions. They are translators and pedagogues-moderators between these three communities (conscious-unconscious-responsible), as we have grouped them through research.

Our goal through this research is to give as much information as possible to artists who will create based on the topic of waste and environmental awareness in BiH, so that we can come up with ideas for ways of action together with them, which should provoke reactions that are aimed towards the points of dormant environmental awareness, ethics and responsibility, all of this constantly neglected and suppressed by most citizens because of various justified and unjustified reasons. We consider it our task and obligation to make sure that all these efforts do not become just another in a series of mere theoretical forms, assumptions and clichés. We see the approach to this problem by designing practical, interesting and effective examples through which we are publicly presenting both the positive and negative sides of the ecological status in which we find ourselves, as well as inciting the ways, values and power of civic activism. As the end result of the research, without any Utopian fantasies, we believe in the power that art can have in being a vehicle for social change and transformation of our community.



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The Process, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, picture by Djurdjica Bjelosevic, CC BY-SA 4.0



BY SHPAT SHKODRA

The pigeon’s whirl around each other in the sky, Pllumaxhit (Pigeon fanciers) look all up – spine straight. Some with a hand on their forehead to avoid the sunset’s sun. Their eyes trained to distinguish the – what appear to be just two black dots now – as this or that pigeon. other comments on the rise and the consistency of the pigeons. One shouts or whistles, the other has a stick on the hand to hit anything noisy, Maks weaves a bag on a stick to scare the pigeons away So that they fly high. For a moment I wish to be a Pllumaxhi myself to be able to travel with my Dynek and Kuta beyond the walls of separation, in between us and them, them and us. Prejudices. The pigeon dances in the sky and twirls as it is free to roam... Sky has no limits for them while here on the ground I am just another one like Pllumaxhis to be considered criminal.

Locality	Villages, Fields: the Sky
Keywords	pigeons, travelling, mobility, pigeon keepers
Mode of travelling	Tracing environmentally damaging behaviors
Partner	Termokiss

Stream of Research	Cultural heritage and Cultural practices
Cross-Cutting Issues	ecology, environment, identity and belonging, intercultural co-existence, citizenship, civic engagement, intercultural co-existence
Glossary	<p>pllumaxhi (pDumadDi) – the Albanian language term for a person who fancies pigeons. Example: Don’t listen to that Pllumaxhi!</p> <p>kuta (kuta) – a type of pigeon that is known for having a furball in his throat.</p>
Myth	Myth 1: They themselves, especially politicians who are at the forefront of such a careless trend, like to say that we live in an abundance of pure and beautiful natural resources. This is a myth that shatters and re-examines this research, along with the myth that we are an environmentally conscious nation.

The general area of focus of this work is wherever we found pigeons in Kosovo. The places where the pigeon racings are held are usually fields away from the city mostly owned by Pllumaxhi’s, therefore our places for field researching have mainly been villages. One exception was when visiting one of my subjects in his house but also the place where he keeps his pigeons located near the centre of Vushtrri, whom we met after attending a race in the suburbs of Vushtrri. Other places include “Kufca e serbve” and “Livocc i siperm” both situated in the suburbs of Gjilan and “Bardh’ i madh” – a place nearby the small town of “Fushw Kosovo”.

Pllumaxhinjt investigates the relations between pigeons and humans in contemporary Kosovo. Taking on pigeon keeping as a cultural practice, and heritage, that is known and practiced for a long time in the region is specified as the target of research. While the overall objective of the paper is to deepen the knowledge about an area we are living in and are generally concerned with, another is facilitating our research collec- tive just recently founded as part of the social center “Termokiss”. The outline of it stands in communicating with each other and breaking our ethnic borders, in a region suffocated by nationalism, and stereotypes. The inspiration for observing the pigeons, and pigeon keepers, arose from the bureaucratic difficulties that we Kosovar engage in when wanting to travel elsewhere – with the visa regime still ongoing. While partaking in speculative biography – an artistic approach used for a hypothetical scenario – that of being a pigeon. As an artistic approach, pinching on the subject of mobility in contemporary Kosovo as it is a known fact that pigeons can fly, and nobody can stop them, while on the other hand Kosovar cannot fly without being bothered by these borders.

Pigeons are a sport and an obsession for many – and this aspect of the relationship between people and pigeons is where this study is mostly focused on. This affection, curiosity, and activity that they share stands as the basis of their created communities, which get together now to organize pigeon races, and then watch their loved ones rotate in the skies. It is these communities’ observations that this study focuses on. It takes on pigeon keeping in an explanatory approach, as a practice of interspecies interaction, and ways in which this interaction is manifested through daily items, objects and material exchanges. A part of their belonging to Pllumaxhi identity is a lot of the stereotypes that were found to exist about pigeons in general, and people who keep them as thieves, criminals, etc. And it is these stereotypes that will draw a parallel between them and Kosovars, which are also stereotyped as being thieves, or criminals, and are not allowed for visas. Nevertheless, These communities and their people are a rare case of coexistence among the different are a heavy reflection of the once visa-free travelling society as a good point for reconciliation – something needed in our region – for breaking apart nationalism and other regressive politics. This study could also be a good example when partaking the human and other species interaction, and the tools and means not to prejudice this relationship, but the opposite of that – take it as an aspect of humans living together with other species and “becoming with” in what Harraway would call “Terrapolis”.

Terrapolis is n-dimensional niche space for multispecies becoming with Terrapolis is at once a story, a speculative fabulation, and a string figure for multispecies worlding, that makes space for unexpected companions“. Most of the references include the literature we found relevant to what’s being expressed, that on pigeons, on pigeon keeping, interspecies relationships. Some other cross-cutting themes include belonging-

ness, identity, intercultural coexistence, environment and ecology. The general area of focus of this paper is wherever we found pigeon keepers in Kosovo during the conducting of field research.

RULES OF THE GAME, THE RACE, THE PIGEONS!

On the quest of finding the pigeon communities, we came across an announcement on the Facebook page named “Federata e pwillumbave fluturues te Kosoves” about a “pigeon race” that was to be held – lo- cation: Gjilan (a city situated in the east of Kosovo) – and immediately set upon the task to attend it. Specificities concerning the race location were shown in the announcement as supposedly near the Hospital of Gjilan, but after several unanswered phone calls, countless times asking around – while at the same time trying not to look shady; while passing through shades to escape the burning sun – this address was found to be wrong. We had already missed the first of the three races announced that day, and were slowly losing hope when Emin – who was competing that day – answered the phone at the sight of his last dynak flying. It took a successful phone call with him to understand the exact location where the pigeon race was to be held: Kosovo, the suburbs of the city of Gjilan – a 20-minute taxi drive to a village they were referring to as “Kufca e Serbve”. After the taxi drive, some not clear trails. We finally found the race in “Kufca e Serbve”, where a group of up to 70 people – all men– was waiting for it to start. During the conducting of the study we found a few examples of women fancying pigeons, but not partaking in the pigeon races. Therefore found this activity to be applied exclusively by men. The exemption of women could shed some light on the existence of the commodifying value of material, and social status added to the activity – that excludes women. But as well about the whole activity being misunderstood as – not fit for women – whose place is “the house” rather than “society”!.For example, A woman we met while wandering in a village called “Livocc i siperm” in search of a pigeon race – told us her recently deceased father fancied pigeons, kept them, but didn’t race them. At some point, when her father was unable to take care of himself, she would take care of him and his pigeons, and every night she would sit him in front of them for a calming effect. For her, taking care of pigeons meant a sort of a “thank you” to her father. Soon after he died, she gave them away.

How does the pllumaxhi obtain his pigeons?. They – with their hawk-like eyes trained to suspect a vulnerable pigeon from afar are always on the lookout for new opportunities of pigeon appropriation. When the lost pigeon is in its radar he lures it with his already obtained pigeons, using the lost pi- geons to socialize with his pigeons. Though the main idea stands that “...the master is more important than his tools...” we found pigeons have a pedigree attached to them that recognizes genetic evolution, strategized upon the abilities required to win the races. All pllumaxhis, when they breed their pi- geons, they do it with the intent to acquire their utmost potential in what is needed to be a champion of the race. This then establishes this pedigree that pigeons have, that sets the prices for them. We were told that based on it, pigeon prices could go from 500 euros – up to 2000 euros for the champion pigeons. This continued with them telling us stories of Pllumaxhis not wanting to sell their pigeons, to guide us even deeper into acknowledging pigeons being more than the money they make – but rather their honor, their status.

There are a lot of types of races people carry out with their pigeons, but the one that was more frequent when this research was conducted and that we’ve set the focus on are the tumbler races. The way the “Gara e pllumbave fluturues‘ goes is. First, the kuta, a type of pigeon with a fur ball in its neck, that serves as bait for making the dynek fly, is released. Dynek is a type of domesticated pigeon used for races because of the characteristic tumblings it makes when landing. These tumblings make their score. Kuta starts to fly as Dynek chases it. In the meantime the pllumaxhi’s, conduct as much noise as they can to force the kuta and dynek to go as high up as possible. An act for which Avni, a pllumaxhi who was attending the race, told us that it will not necessarily scare, or make the pigeons fly higher, and couldn’t explain why they do it if not to make them go higher. Anyways we argue this act as the pllumaxhi’s way to manifest their excitement/elation as it happens in every kind of sport.

When going down, while rotating, the dynek will either move successfully back to the rest of the pigeons or will lose control from turning and could end up hitting the ground hard and die. However, there is always someone – mostly young men – with a circular net that they call “sepeta” chasing them around while positioning themselves perpendicularly to the pigeons they are chasing, so as to save them from falling. The race cannot start without the referee checking the ring in the feet, a sort of ID of the racing bird and determining if it is registered on the book. The referee’s job also consists of commissioning the races, which means organizing the data of each dynek’s score. Judge’s job is to stop any disrespect of rules; he measures the distance of the dyneks with a specific tool, and yells the meters shown on its screen.

Another thing is that to keep pigeons, one needs space. The places where the pigeon racings are held are usually fields away from the city. That is done for the following reasons:so as the pigeons not to get injured, and that they don’t get distracted while growing, or during races, These spaces usually contain lofts with two or more rooms, and they serve for the pllumaxhi to classify the pigeons as he finds it most suitable. Sebush for example had one loft containing the pigeons he caught from others, two lofts containing his pigeons, and a small kitchen closet where he kept the one injured pigeon. As he reasoned, the plague of the injured one might get an infection and infect the others. The places where the pigeons are held often serve as the spaces of the community as well, where they gather and reproduce their community belonging. Building upon the already set theoretic framework by Weber, who when defining communities emphasized the sense of “belongingness” , we set upon the task of answering the following questions: What is a Pllumaxhi? What are the different cases? Why do they do it? What about the communities they belong to?.How do they belong?



Pigeon fanciers, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, photograph by Shpat Shkodra, Ard Myrseli, CC BY-SA 4.0

#### COMMUNITIES

The primary thought is that pllumaxhis are simply people who fancy pigeons. That feeling is a desire, a passion or liking or obsession for them. Upon this identity, a commemoration of their shared passions – sprout the communities they belong to. These communities are reproduced and maintained by symbolic and material exchanges, But even pigeon fancying is manifested differently amongst different pllumaxhis that we’ve had a chance to encounter. Essentially speaking, all Pllumaxhis communities are bound in their shared passion for pigeons, specific spaces they dwell in, places in which they meet and interact with each other. But in the cases we’ve encountered, are there differences in how they feel about pigeons? And what do they do with them and why!? Even though you can, they never eat them as they have feelings of affection for them. Besart, the son of a pllumaxhi (a pllumaxhi himself), at one point of the interaction we had with him, said about his father that “he knows his pigeons better than he knows me, his own kid. And he’ll kick him out for his pigeons...!”.

While some view the activity as a hobby for others is the only thing they do. Take Maksut, for example, who is someone who trains and breeds pigeons with the intent to race them, and for whom – we are judging – that pigeon keeping is slightly more of an obsession. In the little interaction, we could get with him at times; he wasn’t “on the zone” with his pigeons; he told us jokingly he sees them even when he sleeps..Others considered him to be a really passionate and talented pllumaxhi, that can “...sniff a pigeon...” when the person chasing it with sepeta couldn’t find it. Though we didn’t get the chance to see, we were told he has a tattoo on his chest of a winning pigeon number and the year of the championship that his pigeon won. Tattoos are something you do to remember it, that trace your body for your whole life. For him, pigeon keeping is also an issue of pride, disappointment, honor, and social status. It’s his way to obtain the resources Bourdieu wrote about that are available to a group or individual based on praise, prestige, or recognition and translate in value within a particular culture. As an example of the pride he takes into his passion, at one point when we explained why we were attending his race, he asked us to – when answering the same question to others – we reply “WE CAME TO SEE THE CHAMPION” – him and also his son held a lot of pride in being the record holder for the best fly of dynek in Kosovo – 320 meters – “wind also helped it”.

His older brother Imer on the other hand is something else when it comes to interacting with pigeons. The only pigeons he interacts with are the “gjylas’ ‘ – a type of pigeon distinguished by having a fur ball on its neck and mostly appraised for its aesthetics – rather than a rotating ability, as it’s the case with dyneks. There are races and games organized with them as well, which he never participates in. He enjoys going to the field where he keeps his pigeons, feeling the ease of nature, away from the urban setting and sets sight on his gjylas while they are feeding on the maize he poured for them. For him the sight of pigeons, their coo contributes to an ease of mind, a getaway from all the noises – or going on with his own words “... getting rid of the burden of days...”.. Imer could be called a pigeon fancier, but not a keeper or a racer. His reasoning for his decision of not interacting with dyneks or races – is laid indirectly in his grave mimicry when he explains cases where people “spent their life away” because of their obsession for pigeons-referring to pigeon keeping as “...a disease” and taking his brother Maks as an example. We also met others who started doing this when they retired as they hadn’t had the time before.

There also exist institutional structures that administer this activity and walk the bridges to the state. The president of the “Federation of Tumblers of Kosovo” (which community stands as the main subjects of this study) Emin, whose job got to do with organizing pigeon races, and at the same time being a pllumaxhi himself, or Bashkim, for example, who was the judge/referee of the races. Maksut, his brother Imer and other pllumaxhis we met in Vushtrri told us they belong to an association. What is a pigeon association? Why is it? What is the difference between belonging in an association or not? – it’s still hazy to us. They help each

other out. Know each other’s birds, and when they catch them, they return them to their owner, rather than keeping them for themselves. They have a small coffee shop where they meet every night and discuss mainly pigeon-related topics.

Conducting the study we were also interested in the topics they discuss, but also the way they discuss them. We found that the language they use in pigeon-related issues often makes it look like they’re talking about cars. For example, we experienced the saying “... his oil is leaking...” – for when a bird is seen to be tired. Or using the word “tires” to refer to dyneks rotating etc. Continuing to speak of the discussions they had with each other, this research paper on pigeons and pllumaxhis could quickly shift one into a study of much broader structures like the state. Sometimes the word “corruption” is heard – “...The state doesn’t support this sport...”. “Earlier, the Pllumaxhi was vital to winning the race, now is all about money” – shifting into the nostalgia of the past, a compartmental imaginary so embedded in human culture interpretations. We were surprised not to experience much revolt because the winner of the competitions doesn’t get paid at all, even though all attendees pay a membership fee to the federation. It’s where we could go back to Bourdieu again, on the symbolic or material gains one could have – that could catalyze their social status.

The first thing we were concentrated on – that was set as a starting point of this research was the media coverage: music, tv, social network pages, comments, videos, or anything we could find on pigeon fanciers on the internet – but without actually typing the keywords for it. At the very first point of our study, we were equipped with the means and data of exposing the stereotypes about these communities, some of which will be communicated on the following. The word “pllumaxhi” was often found to be used in negative contexts, at times even by pllumaxhis for their own. In social media comments, in several rap songs, the word is found chiefly standing near in strings of words such as bandits, drug dealers, thieves, criminals. Take, for example, the artist 2po2, who at some point during his song “Ngrehja Kamen” uses the word pllumaxhi in a typical rap context – that of a neighborhood filled with “...hajni, Pllumagji, e belagji” (When translated: thievery, pigeon-fanciers, belligerents). We found “Pigeon races” a sport that is not generally approved. As Marger (2011) argued a trait of prejudice and how it infers an individual behavioral characteristics where individuals are judged considering their belonging to a group and not their personal attributes, we argue the same case in the context of our research.

#### STEREOTYPES

... these stereotypes make them more exclusive, hostile to others! Because of them being stereotyped as a community, made them more exclusive, susceptible (towards us in this case), and some, it even made them secretive about their identity.. The little information that was posted online on the schedule and location of pigeon races contained but the name of the pigeon racer and the area that often was found to be wrong. Because of that and because this was a community we didn’t know before, nor them as people, nor their activities as pllumaxhis – most of our fieldwork had a lot to do with us going around villages and fields we’ve never been before and asking around (communicating on the same language was a plus)for pllumaxhis and “Garat e pllumave”, or “Ku pi lshojne pllumat“. On these searches we were presented with even more stereotypes, not only about the communities that fancy pigeons, but the activity of fancying pigeons itself. “The way to fancy pigeons is when you have two apartments that you rent for a thousand euros each, money flowing, family and kids all good” .The activity of bird keeping is seen with disdain and not fit to be conducted. We argue this is caused by the supposed lack of wealth that is seen as a product of bird fancying and goes against the consumerist values that this capitalist society dictates.

Often, when we told them about the reason for us being there – our subject of study, they told us that they felt relieved for us when they understood we are not actually Pigeon-keepers but just researchers who are studying them. A woman we met in “Livoc to sipwrm” when asked about “the Halitis” (a name that was announced doing a pigeon race) was not sure there was any pigeon fancier in that family because they are educated. Imer – a pigeon keeper (but not racer), told us he used to keep pigeons up until the point his kid started to get interested in them. And so as “to save” his kid from this disdained activity – he took them away. Nowadays, he is pigeon fancier but does not have any himself. He interacts with his brother pigeons. Avni, with whom we had an interaction in Gjilan right after we saw the fly of a pigeon and shared cigarettes with each other – said he “couldn’t count the times in life where he got beaten for smoking cigarettes and keeping pigeons.” When asked about these stereotypes? He recognized the stereotypes on pigeon fanciers “not to be believed” but could not answer the question of why do they exist? Redon, a chef whom we met at a local pizzeria, is not at all involved with pigeons, and says they are all bandits, criminals, and thieves! Don’t you know – they even steal pigeons from each other.. And this it’s what brought us to the other point of “At what extent are these stereotypes true?”

#### BREAKING STEREOTYPES

Going back to Sebush’s house in Vushtrri a few days after we met him in a pigeon race, we were welcomed in the best way possible. His invitation to eat qebapa “...the next time we see each other...” wasn’t just a goodbye promise as we thought. He took us to the qebabtore “Tiriqi” that took a five-minute walk away. Sebush walked with his head high and greeted lots of people on the street.

When we returned to his shop/pigeon lofts, he served us some homemade rose juice and couldn’t pass without mentioning that it was made from his own roses. It tasted so nice we asked for another and he joked that it costs 50 cents. We found him quite connected to nature as he talked about fishing and camping next to a lake as an activity he does every Sunday. His offer is given the adequate seriosity this time! At a scroll, he took in his phone pictures; the primary color was green. But even more, and other of the Sunday activities, his life revolves around nature and is interconnected with other species to a great extent. His enemies are the cat and the storks that are killing his pigeons. Same for Bahri, a Pllumaxhi that seemed to be grieving over his dynek that was eaten by a cat. Every once in a while, he expressed determination against living in urban cities and advised us that we should move to the village – as a “frame embedded in the compartmental imaginary as an interpretive frame, organizing people’s experience of the environment”. Sebush, other pllumaxhi’s interact with nature to a considerable extent. The interspecies relationship we argue fits the harmony of what Donna said about interspecies relationship “...who are enmeshed in partial and flawed translations across difference, redo ways of living and dying attuned to still possible finite flourishing, still possible ecologic recuperation” become-with each other or not at all”. The activity of bird keeping is seen with disdain and is



not fit to be conducted. We argue this is caused by the supposed lack of wealth that is seen as a product of bird fancying and goes against the consumerist values that this capitalist society dictates.

#### CONCLUSION

An interesting idea was put on hand by Jerolmack when speaking about the stereotypes revolving around pigeons, with what he calls Spatial Expectations: “What people classify as “pests” or “nuisance animals” are those species of “wildlife” that trespass on sidewalks and colonize human dwellings despite efforts to designate these spaces as human-only places be existentially unsettling because it is read as “matter out of place.” – clearly defines the spatial” and continuing with what Jarolmack experienced “ fanciers grumbled that neighbors blamed them when street pigeons nested on their air conditioners or defecated on their cars. Complaints were more likely to come from newer neighbors, who sometimes failed to perceive the differences between the men’s “stock birds” and feral pigeons. Long-term neighbors, who often had closer ties with fanciers, were more likely to recognize that the pigeons that annoyed them were almost always feral ones. They knew that fanciers vaccinated their birds and only let them out for short periods.”

In conclusion there are similarities between Kosovar’s and pigeons when it comes to the stereotypes annotated to both. Both of these agencies are limited and marginalized for no particular reason. Going by what Haraway wrote, we argue that the case of “pllumaxhis” presented, and their activities, are one of “...the stories in which multispecies players, who are enmeshed in partial and flawed translations across difference, redo ways of living and dying attuned to still possible finite flourishing, still possible recuperation.”

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Sebush served rose juice that he made, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, photograph by Shpat Shkodra and Ard Myrseli, CC BY-SA 4.0



RESEARCH PROJECT #6  
BELGRADE, SERBIA  
TAMING THE WILD: LEAP INTO THE EXTRA-LEGAL BUILDING PRACTICE IN BELGRADE

BY LJUBICA SLAVKOVIĆ

Taming the Wild addresses the widespread extra-legal building practice, a spatial phenomenon widely spread across Belgrade and the Balkans. It occurs in the grey zone of planning and construction, somewhere between legal and illegal, formal and informal, and everywhere across the region. From the outside, it is often perceived as exotic and wild, a must see when on urban safari in this peculiar part of Europe. At the same time, the local mainstream narrative points the finger to the individuals and portrays it as a transgression of those traditionally perceived as “newcomers”, refugees or gastarbeiters. Through different re-search practices, the research focuses on demystifying this spatial phenomenon and the myths that feeds it. A mandatory step in building a better space and a society.

Locality	Urban Belgrade
Keywords	Extra-legal, urban planning, layers, state-driven, perspectives
Mode of travelling	Urban exploration
Partner	Tačka komunikacije

Stream of Research	Cultural heritage and Cultural practices
Cross-Cutting Issues	The commons / encompassing the topics of right to the city, ecology
Glossary	<div>надограђња (nadogrǎdǎa) – a building extension, an add-on. A part of the building that was built subsequently and in most cases completely stands out from the rest of the building (visually, construction-wise, logically etc). Example: “Malo smo nadogradili.” (“We extended it (the building) a bit”).</div> <div>екстра-легално (ǐkstrǎa lǐgalno) – extra-legal. A coinage referring to something that occurs in the gray zone. Example: Nije ni legalno ni ilegalno, to je ekstra-legalno. (It is neither legal nor illegal – it is extra-legal)</div>
Myth	Myth 1: Informal, illegal and extra-legal construction in the Balkans is so widespread because the newcomers are coming to our cities, building as they please and not obeying the rules. Informal, illegal and extra-legal construction in the Balkans is so charming because something as wild as that could never happen on this other side to that uncivilized periphery.

The Balkans have a complex history of extra-legal construction. It is not only a Balkan phenomenon, but it does have its Balkan touch. It is not anything new or unexpected. In fact, in a way, it became a local tradition, a manifestation of culture, a way of life. It attracts many. Its irregularity, unpredictability and uncertainty may shock you. Its spite and defiance may provoke you. Its creativity and freedom of expression may trigger you. And almost certainly, its peculiarity will engage you. The perspectives of urban informality are changing globally. The settlements that develop outside the scope of “legal” are most often defined by poor-quality houses and low living conditions. However, in the last decade, the global scientific community is addressing many characteristics of informal settlements as positive: vibrant communities, creative housing solutions, flexibility, efficient land use patterns etc. Informal construction is not merely seen as illegality or transgressions, but as a bottom-up development that has a lot to show. Unless, that is exactly the opposite of what it is.

For over three decades, spatial transformation in Serbia has occurred in the informal, illegal and extra-legal field, almost as equal to the legal and planned construction. According to the latest official data from 2017, the number of illegally constructed buildings in Serbia was over 2.05 million i.e. 44% of all built footprint. The informal practice in Serbia dates back to when the first urban plans were implemented. The planning processes were always accompanied by the non-planned construction. It began to be massive during the socialist times in the 1960s, in the “right to housing” period and practice and its failure to provide for everyone. It continued to grow in the 1980s, but its wildest forms developed in the 1990s, the civil war period that was characterized with almost a complete lack of urban planning. However, it has continued after the democratic changes of 2000s and up to this day, under a regulatory neoliberal regime, it is still a widespread practice – but it may be argued that it has become a lucrative field, reserved for those who have an open door to the top shelf of power.

The wild architecture of the 1990s has also attracted the West. Belgrade is often seen as an interesting urban playground – it is located in Europe and easy to access, but the minute you find yourself in it you have a feeling that you have left the old world and stepped into an exotic, distance land of breaking and bending the rules in a way you will never meet in “civilized Europe”. An urban safari of a kind, a perfect place to immerse yourself in the wilderness and the opportunities of its lack of boundaries and yet, from a safe distance. Perceived as a cultural `and geographical periphery, but of Europe.

On the local level, the transgression, the illegal and informal, the rudeness of breaking and bending the rules and building more, constructing taller and wider buildings and going kitsch is also supposedly done by The Other. A newcomer, a refugee, a gastarbeiter, a “peasant”, someone of other origin and/or nationality, portrayed as aggressive enough to occupy the space in ways no one around has even thought of doing so before. A newcomer, and yet, rude and powerful enough to not fit in, not even in the limits of local laws and rules.

Of course, it is all a myth. The wild construction in the past two decades is actually anything but wild. In fact, most of it erected in the last two decades, is in possession of a permit of some sort. Under the regulatory processes of neoliberalisation, the set of laws and legal remedies has been implemented through the past decade. It includes a magical Law on Legalization, enabling one to build illegally and then legalizes post-factum. It may be argued that this has become one of the most frequent mechanisms of building, enabling most of the illegal, informal and extra-legal construction to be incorporated into the permanent urban fabric and quite often, the only way to build.



Belgrade building, Some Call Us Balkans, 2021, photograph by Ljubica Slavković, CC BY-SA 4.0



But what does all of this mean to us? First of all, there is nothing sexy about the informal, illegal and extra-legal construction. It has become a lucrative field for those close to power to gain more profit, while the rest of the population is struggling to obtain decent housing. It reveals a lack of adequate policies and the lack of political power to properly solve the housing issues of many, while a few profit from it. It does not strive for the exotic freedoms of the wilderness – it is a well-constructed parallel system that feeds on implementing the neoliberal demands and democratic policies in order to meet the EU, joining demands (and funds) without an actual will to execute them. Of course, it is easiest to blame the ones on the dead end, to feed xenophobia instead of changing the system. And it all flourishes on myths and misconceptions.

The recent development documents of Serbia and international reports in the field of spatial planning, ecology and the rule of law, point out illegal/extra-legal/informal construction as one of the main problems in improving the quality of built and unbuilt environment and the rule of law. Generated by inadequate policies, it may be argued that today, the legislative and urban planning framework is encouraging the practice of extra-legal building practice. At the same time, interpreted as a transgression of individuals and not as a systematic issue, the common public attitude contributes to deepening the problem.

The research focuses on the genesis of a specific practice of transgression in urban planning and spatial development in Belgrade, Serbia. Although widely spread across the city as a spatial phenomenon, they remain in the blind field of institutions and the professional public, so the insight into perspectives of different actors is crucial in demystifying this phenomenon and shifting the narrative. Authorities in the field refer to informal buildings as “usurpation”, but no deeper research on key characteristics and differentiation has been made. Consequently, “the smaller actors” are being hustled out of the process of acting within the legal framework, meeting their needs or even practicing their rights. By researching and presenting information on the extra-legal building practice, the research contributes to the demystification of the origins and processes of informal, illegal and transgressive construction and shifting the mainstream narrative. This is a vital step for further understanding the processes behind the extra-legal practice, as a fundamental step in developing adequate housing and urban planning policies.

Extra-legal construction has a lengthy history and deep impact on society, but to date remains an issue hardly discussed, disentangled and does not provide productive approaches and solutions. Above all, the citizens involved in extra-legal construction are hardly heard by professional actors, or regarded as necessary participants in resolving some of its most pressing impacts. By expanding knowledge, the project aims to create a safe place for people to share their experience, network and empower their participation. The research consists of mapping and presenting, in an artistic and easily understandable way, the genesis of extra-legal construction. By doing so, the research findings contribute to demystifying the procedures of building extra-legally, better understanding its origins and mechanisms, and sparking a public debate so as to shift the public climate needed for a systematic change to be made. By deconstructing a myth, the research aims to contribute to constructing a more just and higher quality urban surrounding.

TIMELINE

Belgrade 1965 / 1975 / 1985

- \* “Market Socialism”
  - \* Intensification of socially directed housing construction
  - \* Informal settlements in the blind spot
- (Constructing the future)

Belgrade 1985 – 1990

- \* Global recession, hypertrophy of state functions
  - \* Shifts in urban planning and land development regulations
  - \* From societal to private and the rise of permanent temporality
- (The elusive future)

Belgrade 1990 – 2000

- \* Disintegration of the SFRY
  - \* Weakening of the planning authorities
  - \* (Socialist) system and planning collapse
- (Exploiting the present)

Belgrade 2000 / 2003 – 2012 / 2021

- \* Post – socialist transition / The rise of authoritarian neoliberalism
  - \* Liberalization of planning and revision of regulatory framework
  - \* Private interest as public interest
- (the elusive future)

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# Activity #2 Performance Art.

FOUNDATION OF A TRAVELING IMAGINATION, Florence, 2021  
A group of local artists, cultural operators and activists with a bond to the Balkans co-create a performative walk of Balkans throughout the city.

The co-designed artistic performative intervention “Morphing Realities – A performative walk of Balkans through Florence”, was hosted by Villa Romana in Florence. On the morning of July 24, 2021, in the heat of July, the community of the Some Call Us Balkans (SCUB) project and the locals, crossed the city center of Florence and constructed a collective memory.

A large carpet conceived as a traveling territory in a ceremonial gesture, tuning up to sound vibrations where sounds of Balkan languages merge with the city soundscape. The carpet is the foundation for an ongoing and developing participatory practice, a space of convivium and movement, an invitation to travel while being in a place with one’s own imagination, a welcoming place for everyday travelers. Exploring different ways of belonging to the Balkans, the carpet welcomes plots, stories and connections, weaved together to form hybrid territories and realities, between here and now, there and tomorrow, beyond national borders, beyond the myths and misconceptions we carry toward one another. The evening concluded with the presentation of SCUB’s art-based research “Balkan Myths and Misconceptions” in a public event in the garden of Villa Romana in Florence.

– Hana Milenkovska, Klelija Zivkovic, Klementina Rist, Dragan Teodosiev (SocioPatch, Skopje): “Investigating the cultural production and aesthetics of the Truck Drivers Community in constant movement between North Macedonia and EU”

– Elias G. Skoulidas (Biennale of Western Balkans, Ioannina): “Investigating the translocal communities of Greek-Albanian in the area of the Epirus towards a new translocal identity of “Epirote”

– Bora Baboci and Stella Karafili (Tulla Culture Center, Tirana): “Investigating the value of land therefore how Land is described and inhabited in the mountainous areas of Northern Albania”

– Shpat Shkodra and Arpad Klemm (Termokiss, Prishtina): “Investigating the relationship in between pigeons and their keepers in the Urban Space of Prishtina”

– Djurdjica Bjelosevic and Vesna Majestorovic

(Unsa Geto, Banja Luka): “Investigating ecology and right to public space in Bosnia Herzegovina”.

# Activity #3 Cultural Residency.

BL(K)N RES(T), Berlin, 2022

An educational, excursion-intensive and peer-to-peer capacity-building residency, resulting in collective forms of knowledge production.

Resting from Balkan, rest in Berlin.

Rest from, by, just rest, regain some energies.

In order to decelerate, gain some calmness and overview of the next steps.

In order to overview, crystallize and archive the knowledge produced so far.

Above all rest from Black screen, redundant, exhausting and distancing in Communication.

In the BL(K)N RES(T) 4-29/10/2021 the partnership came into one place, some of us for the entire month. ZK/U – Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik, as a hosting SCUB partner, created a programme for peer-to-peer capacity building among us. Through research visits/excursions, focused feedback and reflection meetings/tandems the process allowed for collective forms of knowledge production. Mutual learnings, collective inquiries, complementary knowledge, collective intelligence are ingrained in the work spirit and practice of ZK/U, at this point plenty active for 10 years in what here in Berlin are being more and more among those defined as Urban Practitioners.

ZK/U is a universe of its own, a model of cultural venue, that brings together local and global practices in a dialogue that sees a community center active for the neighborhood, alongside 13 studio apartments for world artists, communal spaces, semi public spaces for neighborhood and a variety of funky and interesting habitable structures that see different forms of use coming together, from within and outside of its space.

The space is carefully designed and developed along various spots of negotiation: a communal kitchen for all the residents, a small hut self-built in the outside terrace area for the youngsters of the neighborhood, an accordion folding open building for other local crews and even a community garden. ZKU is involved and mapped as a Campus for education within the independent cultural scene of Berlin, as it promotes informal pedagogies. We met with diverse cooperation formats such as Cetka, Forum Regionum and International Festival for Illustrated Literature, presented by Barbara Bernmeier. All projects dealt with Civil Engagement in Eastern partnerships through means of cultural practices advocating for social claims in highly repressive societies.

We worked on the specific context of the ‘Western Balkans’, imaging new socio-spatial geographies of the re-



Foundation of a Traveling Imagination, Some Call Us Balkans, Florence, 2021, photograph by Francesca Pignanelli, CC BY-SA 4.0



gion with the Berlin Collective Oranotango, a collective combining education, research, activism and art, leading the workshop Critical Cartography for mapping urban, environmental, women and LGBTQI+ led protests, movements and territorial transformations throughout the ‘Balkan’ region.

Vesna Malesevic from partner organisation Unsa GETO presented on a Monday evening dinner the work and history of UNSA Geto (Banja Luka, BiH), in front of an audience of African Curators and and local staff. Hana Milenkovska and Klementina Ristovska from partner organisation Sociopatch (Skopje, North Macedonia) presented the Participatory Art-Based Research methodology of SCUB and the outputs of their artistic research led on the ground. Miranda Mehmeti presented the community cultural center Termokiss in Prishtina, Kosovo, where the final exhibition of the project (March 2023) will take place. Enrico Tomassini, curator for the leading organization Icse & Co. shared the ethos and origins of the project.

On a journey across the lively cultural scene and work of Berliner best artistic social practices, we visited local cultural and urban initiatives such as the Floating University, Haus der Statistik, UFA Fabrik, The Lobby for urbanepaxis.berlin, the exhibition ‘Overlap’: young Iranian female photographers at erstererster gallery from RAF Projects with Curator Alireza Labeshka, and the Dragoner Areal & Baupalast with Alex Römer from ConstructLab at Dragoner Area in Xberg.

In a living and interactive format, we shared some of the outcomes of the project’s research in a small exhibition format within the spaces of ZK/U, curated by Milly Reid, Enrico Tomassini and Miodrag Kuc. The audience could reflect on how and why we speak of the “Balkans” by collecting pages of the Open SCUB Glossary (<https://doi.org/10.21428/0eeef24d.8b597f23>) and assembling their own unique printed collections for take away. Read more and



‘Western BLKN WTF?’: towards new socio-spatial geographies in the Balkans, Some Call Us Balkans, Berlin, 2021, photograph by Milly Reid, CC BY-SA 4.0

download the print glossary here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SCUB-Glossary-book-let-pages.pdf>

# Activity #4 Artists Residency.

ASSEMBLING BL(KN), Banja Luka, 2022

Eight contemporary young artists cooperate in a month-long co-creation process through socially engaged art, resulting in an on-site exhibition in Banja Luka.

Assembling BL(KN) hosted by DKC Incel in Banja Luka (Bosnia and Herzegovina) 02-29/05/2022 was choreographed as a process of co-creation between the eight selected artist-travelers, co-production of knowledge, and sharing of collective caring practices. Within the overarching frame of reclaiming the term ‘Balkan’, and its multiple meanings, we contested social structures that produce divides between people and other people,

people and their environment, people and other species. The artist residency aimed at assembling BL – Banja Luka and BLKN – Balkan and their social relationships through moments of exploration, encounter and exchange. The residency skeleton was based on 4 Modules / Weeks, accompanied by a set of international and local experts, community workshops, site-visits, team-building activities, public events and a final exhibition.

## WEEK 1: SETTING THE GROUND

Questions of the week: How the process of deconstructing “Balkan” Myths and Misconceptions can lead us to celebrate what the “Balkan” is? What is the set of values that guide our actions and attitude? What is the project? How and why do we speak of the “Balkans”? What if the “Balkans” are the Center of the World? The hosting partner UNSA Geto warmly welcomed all artists in the Big House organized for them, called Zamak, a castle literally in the local language, that had quite a foundational history linked to a nationalist politician and his delegation for whom the castle was built. In these premises, artists started to get to know each other by offering and sharing different practices and knowledge. During the first days everyone could visit the Archive of Republika Srpska and get to know more about local histories and the ways in which history is being told and remembered in this part of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina after the Dayton Agreement (‘95) was splitted into two parts: Rpk Srpska which is in large majority Serbs, and the Federation, more ethnically mixed. The first activity proposed by artist Ale Riletti was the preparation of a Symposium. People cooked together and shared moments of intimacy, with the idea of building, first of all, a sense of commonality and collective care, inviting guests through the act of cooking and sharing. The Symposium was repeated in other forms over the weeks. In one occasion the artist shared a “body relaxation that works on the psoas, which retain muscular memory (especially of traumas)” and a reading called “Hydrofeminism: Or, On Becoming a Body of Water” by Astrida Neimanis.

Artist Mary Marinopolou offered a workshop titled Absorb Ensemble, in which she shared methods of exploring the urban contexts through the legacy of Dada, Situationism, and psychogeography. The approach included the body sensorial exploration of space with the support of artist and performer Lea Blau.

“Walking and taking sounds, listening to things together, pausing to absorb what is happening, maybe stopping in the middle of the square and just allow ourselves to expose ourselves as the “other” in the city, or “hide” and try to absorb as much from the city, without any filters, is one of the ways I imagine the narrative being created.” Mary Marinopoulou, Artist-Traveler

Special guest Dragana Dardić from the Helsinški Parlament Gradjana Banja Luka guided a feminist tour of the city. Radio Baszok and Social Center covered the podcasting of the public event. Enrico Tomassini, the curator of the residency, shared The Ground Tour Project traveling vision, the foundation of the Some Call them Balkans (SCUB) project, in the form of a space for collective and active reimagining about what this land is or could be. The session involved drawing, writing, reading aloud and listening to one another as ways to reimagine the common myths of this place that some call “Balkans”. The session was recorded as a podcast, and gave birth to a lively discussion on the question of identity and belonging in the region and beyond.

DKC Incel, the cultural venue run by the local partner UNSA Geto, is one of the few intact buildings within a very large industrial complex active till the end of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia: today filled with toxic waste and some remains of human activities populating the site, while trucks run up down the

road crossing the site.

Artist Sezer Salihi presented his research paper and work “Quality of Image” in which he analyzed the role of cinema in creating social spaces for discussion and revolution, showing the renowned Black Yugo Wave movie Mysteries of Organisms by Dušan Makavejev connecting it to Latino American Third wave cinema manifesto. The paper analyzing Quality of Life by Eurostat indicators is the trigger for the artist to explore the gaze and quality of image of different social groups and people.

## WEEK 2: ELABORATING THE VISION

Questions of the week: What does it mean to be a traveler? What travelers are we? How do we work together? What does it mean to set traveling as an artistic practice in context? How do we overcome the perspective of the “Balkan” as another and prompt a different and future imagination of it coming to new terms of encounter within and outside the region while traveling?

“On medieval maps, unknown areas were thought to harbor terrible creatures and marked by cartographers with ‘Here be dragons or sea monsters’.” Lisl Ponger

Assembling BL(KN) was fortunate to have Lisl Ponger as a guest artist. She ran a workshop with a title borrowed from the eponymous photograph, There Be Dragons wherein two men, Columbus and an EU official in a Frontex uniform look towards the horizon. One is scanning the border to prevent foreign persons from entering, while the other looks out towards prospective lands and discoveries. The tension here critically reflects on the contemporary conditions of the travel within a colonial historical frame. A traveler herself, she learned much of what she knows through the act of movement, of finding oneself in unknown and strange circumstances that require new understandings to develop a new horizon. Learning to get lost was the exercise Lisl proposed to the artist-travelers to do. Were they able to get lost?

BoWB – Biennale of Western Balkans held the hybrid workshop Training the Gaze: Community, Feminist and Decolonial Practices with curator and researchers Elli Leventaki, Mariana Ziku and Marianna Stefanitsi, during which art public interventions were tackled from diverse angles. Elli took us on a livestreamed virtual tour of Athens observing public space and artistic interventions in it, in relation to dominant narratives, contemporary viewpoints and social phenomena.

Researcher Adna Camdzic, in collaboration with artist Diona Kusari and local fellow artist and historian Davor Paponja led the workshop Collective fabulation and production of future-oriented imaginaries. Through performative reading and feminist pedagogic practices, we questioned the role of art and artists in affecting social change through the challenges of collective work.

Adna shared her experience in the project “(In)visible Assembly (Assemblea (in)visible)”, a two-day event developed within the context of the project VERSO (funded by the Contemporary Art Foundation Sandretto Re Rebaudengo in Turin). A space to practice radical imagination as an effective tool of collective political and social action. What if instead of asking ourselves how we can live (according to what is already given to us), we start wondering how we want to live? And transform our inner wishes and desires into tools and actions for change? How do we want to live in the Balkans? Guided by artist Diona Kusari, such questions became the starting point to investigate together the pillars of our radically imagined new world.

Guided by Davor Paponja we revisited the complex histories of artifacts, graveyards, tombstones and cemeteries that occupy the public space of the city walking in the deathscape of Banja Luka: material traces that cannot go unnoticed. Named “Carved in Stone, Etched in Memory”, based on a book by the researcher Amila Buturović, the workshop reflected upon conflicting memories



and histories buried in space and time, acting as markers of the past and triggers for the future.

What kind of stories are the dead telling us and how are such stories mediated, transformed and constantly rebuilt and reshaped by the living. How do such stories affect us in our present and what can they tell us about our futures?

The walk ended at Basoc Social center where we met with local renown academic Danijela Majstorović presenting her recently published book “Discourse and Affect in Post-Socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina: Peripheral Selves”. The book proposes a decolonial approach to understanding the context of post-socialist and postwar Eastern Europe. An interesting debate that led us to discuss contemporary history, recent civil society movements, parallelism among different Balkan countries and differences through history till today, forms of inclusion and exclusion in the context of Yugoslavia and migrational necropolitics.

#### WEEK 3: PRODUCTION WEEK

Questions of the week: What does it mean to transfer ideas in the social context? How do we trigger interaction and bridge desires of a local community? How do we question classical archiving and propose a performative character of documenting?

Our last guests landed in town, Elisa Georgi, Miodrag Kuc and Dennis Lindenau from partner organisation ZK/U – Zentrum fur Kunst und Urbanistik. The workshop Communication and Storytelling of a Road Trip started from the questions: How do we communicate and archive collective traveling practices beyond FB/Insta dichotomy? Can diary and blog-like thinking be revamped in the 21st century? The workshop searched for the tools and methods of collective narrative creation beyond classical archiving, questioning linear documentation.

Miodrag Kuc presented Artistic practices in the contested social realm, introducing artistic urban interventions he led on the behalf of ZK/U in the Balkan area. He focused on the case of Gradja, a community run playground in a typical housing block of Banja Luka that was started off as a protest in response to the will of creating a parking lot on the behalf of the municipality and local private developers. The protest was enacted by a group of kids who (physically) defended it from becoming a place for cars. What was protected was the roof of a previously collective atomic shelter, a common infrastructure to be found in Ex Yugoslavian countries. Today Gradja hosts a lively self-organized community of neighbors.

The passage from an idea to its production, in a short time it might be tough. During the Atomic Hangout we had episodes of verbal and vis a vis violence of passersby in relation to our presence, but cases of feeling unsafe came about in many circumstances so much that one of the artists, Mary Marinopolou, developed a stickers work to be spreaded and attached in the city whenever one felt observed and was given a bad gaze, reciting “ljubav Mrznja / Love Hate” in red and black.

#### WEEK 4: PROTOTYPING

Questions of the week: How do you produce a whole individual idea in a short time given? How many things do we have to think? When I will be able to shoot the video? Will there be time?

The final exhibition “Melting Imagination” included 9 shorts movies while 4 were dismissed, 3 audio works recorded and mastered, two urban performative interventions that took place, 1 did not as well as 2 public space interventions. The eight artist-travelers presented some of their tools, works, researches and intents in their fragmentary yet joint hybrid



ljubav Mrznja, Love and Hate, sticker by Mary Marinopolou, Some Call Us Balkans, Banja Luka, 2022, photograph by Mary Marinopolou, CC BY-SA 4.0

character. The exhibition melted together camp aesthetics, collective cathartic rituals, theatrical urban audio exploration, public space performances, ‘Balkan’ lullabies chants, public art installation under the guise of women condition in “Balkans”, participatory film practices, urban intervention and imaginative provocations. Take a look of the exhibition, artworks and flip through the exhibition booklet here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/melting-imagination/>

# Activity #5

# Cross-Balkan Journey

BLKN MOBILE FORUM, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, Tirana, Ioannina, 2022

A mobile assembly space that travels across Balkan cities, enabling cross-border dialogue, connecting local cultural practitioners, communities of practice and artists.

For one month, through six countries, a van full of artists and a team from across a wide international network all came together to encounter the Balkans through art, commons, history, activism and patience.

The SCUB artists Jelena (Jelly) Luise, Ale Riletti, Lea Blau, Lori Lako, Jelena Gajinović, Diona Kusari, Mary Marinopolou and Sezer Salihi embarked on a journey in a discursive program curated by Kumjana Novakova. You can read and see what we felt and took away from time spent in Sarajevo, Belgrade, Skopje, Pristina, Tirana – for a program curated by Bora Baboci – and Ioannina for a program curated by Elli Leventaki, Katerina Zachou and Mariana Ziku, with photographs by Tamara de la Fuente and words by Farah Hasanbegović. Our tireless travelling support team were Chiara Dona, Viola Gaba and Jovana Jankov. Our stunning new visual identity was produced by Eva Simona from Manifattura Tabacchifi.

#### 1ST STOP: SARAJEVO [BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA]

In Sarajevo we met with artists, activists and curators and opened questions about the way art can deal with different forms of disorder – geopolitical, ideological, communal, internal. We spent time with Tanja Vrvilo, Christophe Postic, Aida Kalender, Srđan Vuletić, Ines Tanović, Nedim Alikadić, Andreja Dugandžić, Smirna Kulenović, Elma Hodžić and Nidžara Ahmetašević.

#### 2ND STOP: BELGRADE [SERBIA]

In Belgrade our conversations and encounters centred around the ways we can use art and social practices to resist different kinds of violence. We met with artists, activists and curators who showed us the different ways they resist, help and share common struggles.

We spent time with Dragan Protić and Grupa Škart, Srđan Atanasovski, Sara Sopić, Simona Oganjenović, Ivan Velisavljević, Doplenger, Iva Čukić and Jelena Maksimović.

#### 3RD STOP: SKOPJE [NORTH MACEDONIA]

Our visit to Skopje made us rethink and rediscover architecture, archiving and imagination in ways only this city could. The artists, activists, researchers and curators we met with all shared their unique practices and understanding of the way meaningfulness can be preserved in physical spaces, in creative practices, in the way we relate to each other. We also started the beginnings of some collaborative creative works that we’re going to be exploring more as we move to Kosovo this week ▯

We spent time with Ivana Dragsic, Hristina Ivanoska, Bojana Janeva, Jana Kocevaska, Meri Batakoja and sat in on a lecture by Ian Chambers & Boaventura de Sousa

Santos curated by Viki Mladenova.

#### 4TH STOP: PRISTINA [KOSOVO]

Going to Kosovo had us reflecting on being on this journey together and on all the different ways that collectiveness and limitations interact in the region and in the arts. Through the lens of @manifestabiennial, @dokufest and @fondacioni17 we saw the different ways in which the artists, curators and activists we met with deal with limitations that should be isolating, but through their work and collective imagination create new, vibrant spaces and realities. We spent time with Nita Deda, the team of Dokufest and @lumbardhi, Nita Zequiri and encountered the Manifesta Biennial. The SCUB artists also staged a collective creative action that celebrated the ways we interact and understand our collective as it moves through this journey.

#### 5TH STOP: TIRANA [ALBANIA]

During our visit to Tirana we reflected on memory – how it can oppose the official narrative, how it can reveal the layers of a place’s history, culture, political landscape and of environment. We shared encounters with individual and collectives of researchers, scientists and artists who pave the way to a more positive reality through revealing hidden histories, spaces and even informalities and injustices and by working together bring these dimensions of life to light.

We spent time with Bora Baboci, Arba Baxhaku, Valentina Koca and @zeta\_contemporary\_art\_center, Ana Shrkeli and @berkbotime, Taulant Bino, @bazamentartspace and the @aos\_alb Albanian Ornithological Society, Radical Sense, the dancers of the Was bleibt kollektiv and Gentian Doda.

#### 6TH STOP: IOANNINA [GREECE]

The final stop on our month-long journey in Ioannina had us thinking about our relationship with the environment, how to step out of human-centered narratives and how collective practices of care and protection play out in this region. We met with activists, artists and scholars who are engaged in the constant struggle of preserving nature as a common.

We spent time with @jimpap.geo (Dimitris Papageorgiou), @photometria\_festival, the Mekeio, local environmental activists and the Epirus Mushroom Society. This trip concludes the travelling portion of SCUB, but the experience continues as our artists go off to process and create.

Now our artists go their separate ways to process, rest and to begin working on projects inspired by the things they’ve seen, heard, done and by their personal and shared contexts and interests. Our next and final outcome of SCUB is happening in Pristina in spring 2023, the Some Call Us Balkans exhibition.





Some Call Us Balkans, BLKN Mobile Forum, Ioannina (Zagori), 2022, photograph by Tamara de la Fuente, CC BY-SA 4.0



# Activity #6 Exhibition of Con- temporary Art.



Embodying Identities by Mary Marinopoulou, Some Call Us Balkans, exhibition of contemporary art, Pristina, 2023, photograph by Agon Nimani, CC BY-SA 4.0

SOME CALL US BALKANS, Pristina, 2023

Showcase of newly commissioned contemporary art in two industrial sites in Pristina, exploring alternative forms and ecologies of representing and living in the Balkans.

“Some Call Us Balkans” hosts eight contemporary young artists in the city of Pristina, Kosovo, whose artworks explore the Balkans, its myths and misconceptions, reclaiming the space beyond stereotypes, envisioning new ecologies, modes of inhabiting and coming together on a common ground. The artistic practices cross different places, engage communities and express social claims under the vision of an open-traveling practice across the Balkans and the implementation of participatory art-based research.

What does it mean to travel and being travelers in the Balkans, when the right to mobility is ensured along trajectories of privilege?

How do we speak of the Balkans? Why do we speak of the Balkans?

How can we challenge the notion of Balkans as European Other and bring our reflection to the public space and discourse?

How can we break prejudices we hold one another?

How do we overcome the perspective of the Balkan as an “other” and prompt a different imagination of it?

Are there other forms and ecologies of living and representing the territory?

Organisation team: Miranda Mehmeti, Era Qena, Ismail Myrseli, Shpat Shkodra, Toska Salihu

Curatorial committee: Mariana Ziku, Hana Milenkovska, Miodrag Kuć, Viola Gaba, Vesna Malesevic, Miranda Mehmeti, Alban Nimani, Jovana Jankov, Ale Riletti

Production team: Vildane Maliqi, Dion Zeqiri

Event mediator: Viola Gaba

Graphic design: Biennale of Western Balkans bowb.org

Venues:

Termokiss, Ilaz Kodra, Prishtina 10000, Kosovo

Rilindja, Dritan Hoxha, Prishtina 10000, Kosovo

Artists:

Ale Riletti [Italy]

Mary Marinopoulou [Greece]

Jelena Gajinović [Serbia]

Jelena (Jelly) Luise [Germany]

Lea Blau [BiH]

Sezer Salihi [North Macedonia]

Diona Kusari [Kosovo]

Lori Lako [Albania]

01

Artist: Mary Marinopoulou

Artwork: Embodying Identities

Info: Audiovisual installation

Artist: Mary Marinopoulou

Performer: Anna Vekiari

Choreography: Anna Vekiari, Mary Marinopoulou

Studio: ISON Dance Theater

Music: Choreography inspired by the song Penny for your Thoughts by we.own.the.sky

What is the physical manifestation of trauma? How is the body of one united, divided, different than and the same as the body of the other? And where do these two meet? Two bodies emerge, explore their limits and one another only to discover along. The installation transcends the premise of a time-based media installation and transforms the physical space into an invisible screen; it creates a new space, a “possible” space in which two single bodies coexist and interact.

02

Artist: Sezer Salihi

Artwork: Goblen (The unpaid labor of woman)

Info: Performance-installation

Artist: Sezer Salihi

Performer: Senahat Mustafa Salihi

Goblen has often used a housewife’s handwork as their piece of art. Throughout history, it was seen as necessary to suit the wall of the Balkan houses. Today they are moving out from the walls of the houses and are hidden in the basement.

Goblen is used as a metaphor to focus on Balkan women’s housewives whose labor was not seen, not paid and it is not valued by the same Balkan society. The purpose of putting into a part of the wall is to reveal again the piece as a living organism. In Balkan history, the Wall has the meaning of putting borders, especially to the desires, the freedom of the people. As a way of protesting, Senahat Mustafa Salihi performs the process of the Goblen. This time she will leave the handwork unfinished as a demonstration of revolt and protest against the patriarchy.

03

Artist: Jelena Gajinović

Artwork: Home is there

Info: Installation

Artist: Jelena Gajinovic

The installation ‘Home is there’ is an appropriation of a quote by Sister Amata Andelić, ASC. The attempt to define ‘Home’ in its abstract but also physical framework in the Balkans is present in various context. The visually deconstructed text indicates the fluidity of the term ‘Home’ and the importance of an open text that enables its interpretation.

\_Bosnian-Croatian

Dom je tamo,

gdje je ljubav,

gdje je praštanje,

gdje je zajedništvo,



gdje možemo biti  
ono što jesmo

\_English  
The home is there,  
where is love,  
where is forgiveness,  
where is the fellowship,  
where we can be  
what we are

04  
Artist: Jelena (Jelly) Luise  
Artwork: To my friends (...)  
Info: Installation  
Artist: Jelena (Jelly) Luise

The installation ‘To my friends...’ is an open-ended, shifting body of works, displayed as a framed Hahnemühle print behind museum glass sitting across an oil on canvas. Dealing with sentiments like nationalism, kitsch, and the western gaze onto the Balkans, the works don’t seek to disentangle, but are rather open to complicating matters, inspired by the framework of the psychoanalytic practice of free association. The work argues that redemptive conclusions are counter-productive when thinking about repeated fragmentation, and instead offers a more fluid, disrupted trajectory, as it appears in this dream, a non-linear description and (dis)integration of the Balkanic identity, or feeling.

05  
Artist: Ale Riletti  
Artwork: vol. III – ‘Oda e sirenave’  
Info: Mermaid cabaret  
Artist: Ale Sandra

Alia\*, for Ale Sandra is an ephemeral laboratory. It is rooted in the Mediterranean, where it tries to observe matriarchal elements inside a patriarchal structure and combine them according to the different contexts where it appears. What she calls ‘our research’ is an adventure: ‘by sea, I with my sisters spread all over are trying to sew memories of a mediterranean cult, echoing a lost matriarchal society. Whether real or fictional, this philologic game pursues the elements of a mediterranean, feminine sense of the fluid connection between bodies; a magical tool to evoke and lull the unofficial memories of those inhabiting margins of power.’ Ale enacts a hybrid form of ritual listening and caring for memory: manifesting at times as occasion to share stories, games, meals; at times combining sound, spoken language, movement, organic and inorganic objects and fluids as celebrating the genealogy resewed – empowering us. A sort of feminist Atlantis.

06  
Artist: Lea Blau  
Artwork: Good night, honest Iago!  
Info: Video-installation  
Artist: Lea Blau

The video-installation is a poignant exploration of the experiences of displacement, longing, and the search for identity. At its heart is a collection of striking plaster lions, traditionally used to symbolize wealth and prosperity in Balkan homes. However, their presence here is melancholic, serving as a reminder of the emptiness and longing felt by those who have left their homes behind. The cheap material of the lions only further emphasizes the futility of such desires. In the accompanying video work, the artist wears a carnival mask of a lion while navigating the streets of a foreign land, highlighting their own sense of otherness

and the struggle to find a place within an adopted but never fully embraced environment.

07  
Artist: Lori Lako  
Artwork: W-here is Balkan?  
Info: Video art  
Artist: Lori Lako

Due to lack of proper playgrounds, as kids we would often appropriate public space. The video of Lori Lako stages a usual neighborhood football scene, where the interaction of the subjects with the location can result indifferent at first sight, though we are all conscious of the influence that the environment, our buildings and our ruins have on us in direct or rather indirect ways. In the depicted scene, the switch is given by the subjects of the game, which in this case are mixed gender. Shifting in this way the dynamics of the game which is often perceived as a hyper-masculine one. Another shift is given by the ball which is not the usual soccer one. There can be seen printed on its surface the Balkan geographical map, within its borders that are subject of continuous ever and ongoing conflicts. While terms like Balkan or Balkanization are most of the time associated with pejorative meanings full of misconceptions. The players, with every kick of the ball, move it away from themselves, as it is always the other to be the Balkan.

08  
Artist: Diona Kusari  
Artwork: The more I stay, the more territorial I become  
Info: Outdoor sound installation-performance  
Artist: Diona Kusari

‘Psychotherapeutic’ sessions, whereby the inner conversations are made visible and public, are broadcasted through a moving van (kamionginë) which goes en route to the center and peripheral parts of Prishtina. In trying to amend the dissonance between the artist’s personal truth and society’s vestiges of shame and honor bonds – the ego, superego and collective consciousness speak through her. A slight reappropriation of a familiar scenario in cities all over Kosovo – men going around town driving a van shouting “hekura, hekura” into a speaker attached on top of it, as a way of informing households that they will purchase their unused home devices to collect steel and iron parts. Such sounds are so omnipresent that our bodies have learned this cue. Immediately as one hears this muffled sound one can identify it, just as how we are taught to shut down our bodies and senses to the cacophony in public space.



Goblen (The unpaid labor of woman) by Sezer Salihi, Some Call Us Balkans, exhibition of contemporary art, Pristina, 2023, photographs by Agon Nimani, CC BY-SA 4.0



# Event #1 Collective Drawing.

## GIVING VOICE TO MAPS, 2021

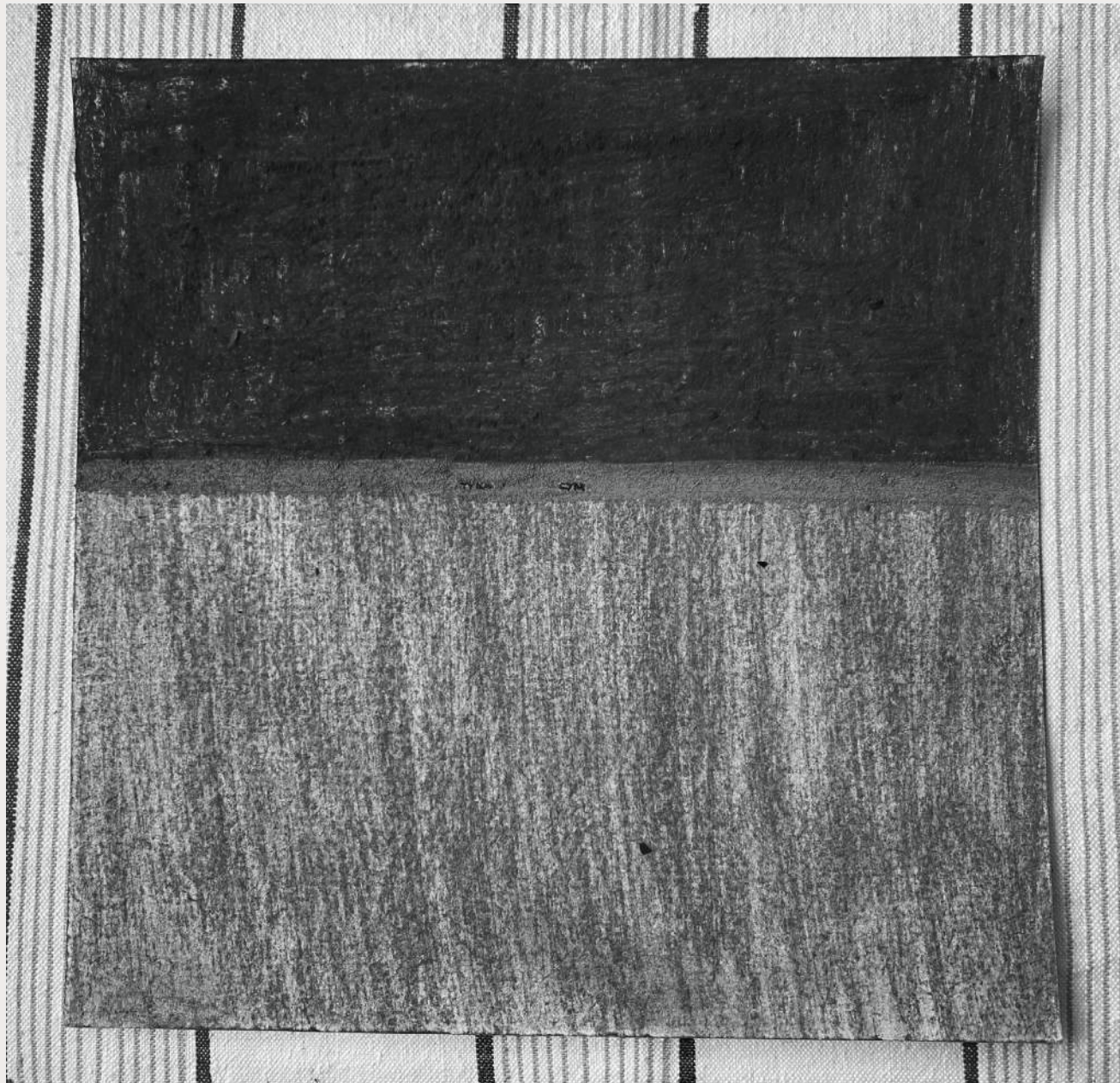
“What is our perception of the Balkans?” A collective online drawing activity during COVID-19 lockdown, with vocal artist, performer and art director Francesca Pirami.

“Voice to maps” is a workshop taking place online among all partners of the Some Call Us Balkans (SCUB) project, on January 15, 2021, (during the COVID-19 pandemic). The workshop introduces the Ground Tour Project research methodology, adopted since 2017 and onwards

in the Balkan region (download the portfolio booklet here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/the-ground-project-portfolio.pdf>).

The workshop is curated by Enrico Tomassini and The Ground Tour Project in collaboration with vocal artist, performer and art director Francesca Pirami with the purpose of co-creating a choir of voices, a multivocal map of the perception of inside and outside the Balkans. During a 30-minute speed session, the partner members and external collaborators created drawings on a piece of paper using a black pen and yellow, blue, red and green coloured pencils, reflecting on their experience of the Balkans.

## Event #2 Open Call.



Giving Voice to Maps, Collective drawing online, Some Call Us Balkans, drawing by Klelija, CC BY-SA 4.0

## COLLECTIVE TERMS OF ACTION, 2021

Selection of 8 emerging artists-travelers, with the aim to form an artists' collective working transdisciplinarily across borders in the Balkans.

“Collective Terms of Action” (29/11/2021 – 15/01/2022) is the open call of the Some Call Us Balkans project, aimed at artists. Based on the artistic research built throughout the project, the SCUB community is looking for 8 emerging artist-travelers:

- The selected 8 artist-travelers will form together a collective and will work jointly and transdisciplinary, and will be required to commit in terms of time and presence.

- Emerging transdisciplinary artist-travelers participating in our Open Call are highly motivated in supporting local realities, organizations and social claims through their skills and competencies and to work together.

- Each partner organisation will be selecting one artist from their respective country to become part of the project. The selection of the 8 finalists will be a collective decision of all SCUB partners.

SCUB programme offers a three steps co-creation and mutual learning process for all artists participating:

MAY 2022 – 1 Month residency in Banja Luka (BIH) – DKC Incel space where the artists along with a set of experts, curators, and local communities will co-create based on socially engaged art practices.

mid SEPT – mid OCT 2022 – 1 Month Journey to all partners' selected sites, and local communities, where the artists will stage in public space the Mobile Forum in a participatory educational format, and put into action the dramaturgy of the Ground Tour Journey that is imagined as a traveling theatre piece, in which the artist-travelers, the localities, the communities and the local actors involved will be the protagonists.

APRIL 2023 – The Artists will have a mentored and remote time to produce retrospectively an individual work to be presented at the final exhibition of the project in Pristina at the partner space of Termokiss – Community Center

### OPPORTUNITIES

- Content: you will be tutored and gain input by an international and local crowd of experts in Public Art, Community Art, and Socially-Engaged Art Practices.

- Exchange: You will be facilitated in a mutual learning process for developing and sharing your skills through intercultural dialogue and transnational collaborations, both with experts and local communities

- Transfer: the Mobile Forum, the final outcomes and your personal work will be visible both in the “Balkan” area and in the EU.

- Resources: you will be supported by the expertise and know-how of all SCUB community members and partners.

- Process: You will go through a process of self and collective reflection around questions of identity and belonging.

### INFORMATION

Artists' Honorarium: 2400 € = 1000 € for the Artists Residency + 1000 € for the Ground Tour Journey + 400 € for final individual artwork to be exhibited in Pristina.

Travel and Accommodation will be covered during the implementation of the programme.

By applying to the Collective Terms of Action Open Call you declare competence and availability of carrying out the described tasks and agree to work collaboratively and ethically according to the SCUB Code of Conduct throughout your participation.

# Event #3 Podcast.

## ARTS ON THE MOVE, 2021

Invited lightning talks on the topic of walking, mapping and traveling as aesthetic and artistic practices, in collaboration with the “walk · listen · create” (WLC) organisation.

Arts on the Move is a “Walk Listen Create Cafe” with Artist and Professor Karen O'Rourke and Artist and Professor Francesco Careri, in collaboration with the creative sharing platform dedicated to “Walking Arts – Walk Listen Create”.

Francesco Careri, (Associate Professor in University of Roma 3) author of the book Walkscapes: Walking as an aesthetic practice is an architect and a co-founder of Stalker / Osservatorio Nomade, an artistic and nomadic research group, which in 1995 started a series of walks in Rome and in various European and American cities, exploring the system of interstitial voids of the urban archipelagos.

Karen O'Rourke, author of the book Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers, is an artist and Professor of Digital Art at Jean Monnet University Saint-Etienne, France. Her work has been exhibited in Europe, the United States, and South America. More info at <https://walklistencreate.org>

# Event #4 Exhibition of Socially Engaged Art.

## MELTING IMAGINATION, Banja Luka, 2022

Collaborative art exploring the Balkans through camp aesthetics, rituals, lullabies, audiowalk, public space performances, video installations and urban interventions.

Melting Imagination is the result of the month-long Artist Residency in Banja Luka, Assembling BL(KN) in spring 2022. The exhibition co-curated by Enrico Tomassini and the participating artists includes collective and indi-



# Event #5 Participatory Exhibition.

HOW DO WE SPEAK OF THE BALKANS, Berlin, 2022  
Exhibiting the SCUB Glossary, a vocabulary aiming to resituate our understanding of the Balkan area. The audience was able to collect the printed pages, creating their own catalogue.

In a living and interactive format, we shared some of the outcomes of the Participatory Art-Based Research “Myths and Misconceptions”, by inviting the audience to bring new nuances, impressions and understandings while pondering and acquiring new words to reflect on how and why we speak of the “Balkans”.

The space of the staircase at ZK/U turned into a pop-up exhibition curated by Enrico Tomassini, Milly Reid, Miodrag Kuc. Visitors could experience some alternative definitions about the Balkans, in the form of large and small format prints. The OpenSCUBglossary is a growing vocabulary that aims to resituate our understanding of the region. The words we use in our everyday culture shape the ways we think and talk about the Balkans. Rooted in the words and expressions uncovered during the project’s research phase, Myths and Misconceptions, the glossary invites us to imagine and speak of the ‘Balkans’ otherwise: to recognise it through its language, turns of phrases, and visual meaning.

The pages of the glossary are imagined to form a new cartography of the “Balkans” on the wall. The audience could collect the printed pages of their choice and assemble their own glossary, which was put together always in different combinations. The first definition to open the exhibition was the term to balkan which is for us to think and act in a continuous pursuit of reclaiming the term Balkan, of becoming capable of celebrating, respecting and owning the Balkan experience, collective creations and ways of being.

Ex. I’m tired of doubting everything Balkan and seeing it as less, I want to start balkaning.”

Download the Glossary print layout here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/SCUB-Glossary-booklet-pages.pdf>

vidual artistic practices that investigate the urban, social and traveling ‘Balkan’ context, through a process of mutual learning and awareness raising.

The exhibition ‘melts’ together camp aesthetics, collective chatartic rituals, theatrical urban audio explorations, public space performances, lullaby chants, public art installation, participatory film practices, urban interventions and imaginative provocations. By breaching stereotypical imagination of contemporary notions and misconceptions of the ‘Balkans’, the exhibition becomes a journey across the role of art in shaping reality and our understanding of the world.

Working on different research streams and aesthetics the artist-travellers were accompanied by a set of international and local experts, and communities through workshops, site-visits, team-building activities, public events in the co-creation of individual and collective artistic practices. Expanding on SCUB overarching frame of reclaiming the term ‘Balkan’, and its multiple meanings, while contesting social structures that produce divides between peo-ple and other people, people and their environment, the Artists were led to imagine their role as travelers and researchers in the ‘Balkans’. Download the exhibition booklet created by Enrico Tomassini here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Melting-Imagination-booklet-SCUB.pdf>

## ARTWORKS

Artist: Mary Marinopoulou

Artwork: The Great B

Info: Audio Walk, 38 min.

Voice actors: Lea Blau, Jelena Jandrić, Bojan Kolopić, Cedomir Protic, Sanjin Vidovic

Sound edit and mastering: Dragan Bosnjak

An exploration of common traits and common talks on Balkan identity. The Great “B” is an audio walk along the most notable points in any Balkan city: the mosque, the river bridge, the outdoor market and the orthodox church. One can experience it in every Balkan city, without restrictions on how to walk along these points. The “B” can be reversed, distorted, or placed up-side-down, it can take longer or shorter to walk, or simply be experienced as a soundscape. Read about and listen to the Great B here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/the-great-b/>

Artist: Jelena (Jelly) Luise

Artwork: ipak je naše naše

Info: 4 Video-channel installation

A visual research on Balkan camp aesthetic ipak je naše naše is an ongoing exploration of the Balkanic camp aesthetic. Here the Sontagesque notion that camp embodies a love for the unnatural, of artifice and exaggeration is projected in a sociopolitical context where camp is no longer not political, but instead becomes a modus operandi for fantasy and opulence but also of survival.

Artists: Diona Kusari and Ale Rilletti

Artwork: Fshati digjet, nusja krihet (The Village is Burning, The Bride is Grooming)

Info: ephemeral archive

Sound edit and mastering: Dragan Bosnjak

As a refute to moral policing governing our lives, we decided to be joined in matrimony. Our failed marriage, lathered by the ever-present ethnic and gender-based discrimination, was fused by the various agents that gave emergence to its becoming and consequently, stopped it in its tracks.

The work is an ephemeral archive; it gathers relics of a marriage that never happened. This act of radical love, desired to embody disobedience to a state of patriarchal hellsome and hatred of the outliers. What’s the meaning of marriage today? How can we hack institutions from the inside? Its delicate traces are sacred as witnessing a

fragile possibility of escaping the constraints of biopolitical devices. Namely, they echo physical and moral threats, which dismantled our concrete hope of transformation. Through this altar we call everybody to participate in this memory of a failure, coded in the red and blue binarism.

Artist: Sezer Salihi

Artwork I: The Quality of Image

Info: 3 Screens installation

Films created by: Lea Blau, Drazen Crnomat, The Kids of Gradja

An aesthetic visual research on the Quality of Life of Balkans. Inspired by Eurostat indicators for Quality of Life Sezer Salihi explores visually the subjective view of the world of different social actors that bring their gaze of the world through the lenses of the camera. Inspired by the third cinema manifesto he gives space to the view of the world of ordinary humans, with the intent to explore the quality of image in the environment they are living and creates a small planet of overlapping views that reconstitute a sense of a unique piece of a diversity of gazes.

Artwork II: Balkan Lullaby Songs

Info: Audio piece, Lullabies Booklet (52 pages)

Sound edit and mastering: Dejan Savić

Balkan Lullaby Songs is a research project aiming to collect the songs that we all hear first through the voices of our mothers and grandmothers, a time in which we do not know anything about language, nationality and war. Lullabies Song is an intimate exploration of our primordial origins as human beings that envisions a New Balkan to be without stereotypes, discrimination and hatred among the people. The Goblen mirror is experienced as a confrontational tool that allows you to connect with your inner world and to disconnect from the cruelty of the real world we live in. Download and read the Balkan Lullabies booklet here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Balkan-Lullaby-Songs-Sezer-Salihi.pdf>



Sezer Salihi, Balkan Lullaby Songs, Banja Luka, Some Call Us Balkans, 2022, CC BY-SA 4.0

Artist: Jelena Gajinović

Artwork: dom je tamo

Info: Text

Home as a place of territorial, physical and spiritual sense of belonging. The text “Home is there” is an appropriation of a quote by Sister Amata Andelić, ASC. The attempt to define Home in its abstract but also physical framework in the Balkans is present in various contexts. Original quote: “Dom je tamo gdje je ljubav, gdje je praštanje, gdje je zajednica, gdje možemo biti ono što jesmo” // “Home is where love is, where there is forgiveness, where there is a community, where we can be who we are”.

Artist: Lea Blau

Artwork: MEN WHO WANT EVERYTHING

Info: Performance Piece

A performative action inspired by slavic pagan rituals of excruciation and banishment of evil spirits. By remembering and reimagining myths in the Balkans, the artist questions how cultural traditions and underrepresented spiritual practices in balkan states exist in the now and become tools of resistance. On the threshold between devotion, fantasy and provocation, the ritual calls for communal sharing and co-creation of a reality beyond borders and prejudices.

Artist: Lori Lako

Artwork: May the best of your yesterdays be the worst of your tomorrows

Info: Video Installation

Assistant Director: Sezer Salihi

Acting coach: Hana Milenkovska

Men drinking rakia. They don’t look particularly concerned about the site, no more than with the continuous raising of their glasses. The three men are sitting in a post-industrial landscape that recalls the end of the socialist era in its ruinous state. Staging the most common visual representation of social gatherings in the public spaces of the Balkans, the men go on toast after toast, until they leave the seats. Two of the glasses are broken. Some blood stains can be seen on the table cloth. Something must have happened.



Lori Lako, May the best of your yesterdays be the worst of your tomorrows, Banja Luka, Some Call Us Balkans, 2022, CC BY-SA 4.0



# Event #6 Com- munity Mountain Expedi- tion.

MANITAROFILOI, Zagori, 2022

Mountain forest exploration guided by the Epirus Mushroom Society, identifying, collecting, tasting and exhibiting local grown mushroom species.

The last stop of the cross-Balkan journey “BLKN Mobile Forum” is the city of Ioannina in Greece, in a programme co-curated by Elli Leventaki, Katerina Zachou and Mariana Ziku with Kumjana Novakova. The SCUB community traveled in the mountainous area of Zagori, to meet the members of the Epirus Mushroom Society, and with them, to start on an expedition through the mountain forest paths for finding, identifying and talking about the local species of mushrooms and beyond. The expedition had us thinking about our relationship with the environment, how to step out of human-centered narratives and how collective practices of care and protection play out in the wider Balkan region.

“In order for our actions, both civic and creative, to be truly collective and in the service of all life, we must work in solidarity with the natural world. In order to maintain balance and care and prevent mindless exploitation and the erasure of traditions and practices, the uses of natural resources must be valued by what is compatible, not what is profitable. It comes down to considering nature not as an economic resource but as a common – not a common we own but one we belonged to.”

Farah Hasanbegović, creative communicator of SCUB and film director

“On this journey we will always have a vivid memory of the warmth with which Vassilis from the Epirus Mushroom Society accompanied us: the kindness in the gesture of the harvest, the scrupulous attention in dusting the roots and turning the mushrooms upside down, the diligence in teaching us how to go and identify the gills, the sponge, the rings that differentiate the hundreds of species that inhabit this geography.”

Chiara Donà, International Relations and Projects Teatro della Toscana

The expedition brought together the traveling artists, cultural professionals, communicators and

the project’s member partners from the Balkans and Europe, sitting on the same table to eat the collected mushrooms in the welcoming Guest House of Elati, with the guidance of the Epirus Mushroom Society, its members and its president Thanasis Ntinou and the local Cultural Association of the village of Elati.

# Event #7 Citizen Sci- ence Activ- ity.

BIOBLITZ BY THE LAKE, Ioannina, 2022

Participation in fieldwork scientific research, documenting local species of the lake ecosystem in a citizen science platform.

In the last stop of the cross-Balkan journey “BLKN Mobile Forum”, the artists, cultural operators and the project’s organisation members go to a fieldwork research for exploring the natural heritage of the lake Pamvotida in Ioannina, Greece. We meet Dimitris Papageorgiou, biologist, researcher and the Bioblitz by the lake. The activity focuses on finding and identifying species on the lakeside of Pamvotida, which is the lake of the city of Ioannina. We walk along the banks paying attention to what surrounds us, to listen, observe and smell.

Dimitris talks to us about vegetation and fish fauna but he also talks about the actions taken by citizens to avoid pollution and the actions taken to protect the environment and natural heritage. Bioblitz is a citizen science activity which involves public participation and collaboration in scientific research, with the aim to create new knowledge and understanding. The team collected evidence of biodiversity by photographing all kinds of lake species. The images were enriched with metadata (e.g. place, time, medium) and uploaded on iNaturalist, a platform with a vibrant community of scientists and naturalists that help identify the data and build a crowdsourced repository of natural heritage.





# Event #8 Public In- terven- tion & Screen- ing.

ATOMIC HANGOUT, Banja Luka, 2022–2023

The residents of the Sime Solaje street in Banja Luka enliven and co-create together with artists the Gradja, a space where a children's playground is improvised in the center of the city.

Project partners ZK/U and DKC Incel worked creatively throughout 2022 and 2023, together with the SCUB community and artists to reclaim a public space in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Grada, the surface of an atomic shelter located in Banja Luka, has been facing ongoing issues since 2011 when it served as the only improvised playground in the Centar 1 neighborhood. Twelve years later, residents are still fighting to preserve this space from being converted into a parking lot.

In 2022 we mapped the needs of the residents and reflected on ways and methods they could use to intervene and improve their neighbourhood. In May 2023, we implemented some infrastructural improvements, such as a wooden tribune, mobile trees for an agile park, painted walls, a new roof, and improved basketball and court facilities. We celebrated this with a program development, including sports and cultural events, community radio, and guest events at Grada. The action took place with the participation of the local community, mobilising grassroots urban politics through artistic intervention. 10 trees were planted in movable barrels, encouraging a collective maintenance plan (watering, pruning, fertilizing) and creating a basic infrastructure for spatial negotiations (leisure areas, sport areas, 'creative' polygons, etc.). We are delighted to see the "Atomic Hangout" in action and are already working together on plans for 2024/2025, which include extended landscape design projects, improved water supply and more.

One of the outputs was a live zine made with the contribution of all the kids in the park, designed by artist Jelly Luise, with the support of artists Lori Lako and Jelena Gajinovic, and photo scanned by curator Enrico Tomassini. The zine was donated to the neighbors, who saw into it a spark for a crowdfunding process. Read the zine here: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/gradja-zine-co.pdf>.

Zine page drawing by participating children of the Gradja community, zine design by Jelena (Jelly) Luise with participating artists Lori Lako and Jelena Gajinovic, Atomic Hangout, Some Call Us Balkans, Banja Luka, 2022, CC BY-SA 4.0





# Ethics in Action Framework.

A key objective of the SCUB project is to create open and reusable resources within an “ethics in action” framework. The Open Glossary and the Code of Conduct are two of the project’s outputs, conceived as living documents that are reviewed, edited and enriched along the activities by the SCUB community, aimed to raise critical awareness and form an inclusive collaborative space within the project and beyond, published under a CC BY-SA 4.0 open license.

## i. Open Glossary: A living vocabulary with terms of interest for the cohabitating com-

## munities in the Balkans.

by Klementina Ristovska, Klelija Zhivkovikj, Mariana Ziku, Elli Leventaki, and Enrico Tomassini  
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The words we use in our everyday culture shape the ways we think and talk about the Balkans. OpenSCUB-glossary is a growing vocabulary that aims to resituate our understanding of the region. Rooted in the words and expressions uncovered during the project’s research phase, Myths and Misconceptions, the glossary invites us to imagine and speak of the ‘Balkans’ otherwise: to recognise it through its language, turns of phrases, and visual meaning.

ορεινό πέρασμα (oreino pérasma) – mountain pass; a navigable route through a mountain range or over a ridge. Since many of the world’s mountain ranges have presented formidable barriers to travel, passes have played a key role in trade, war, and both human and animal migration throughout history.

ανοιχτή συνέλευση (anoichtē: synélefsē:) – an open assembly or people’s assembly; a gathering called to address issues of importance to participants. Assemblies tend to be freely open to participation and operate by direct democracy. Some assemblies are of people from a location, some from a given workplace, industry or educational establishment; others are called to address a specific issue.

αλληλοβοήθεια (alē:lovoē:theja) – mutual aid; voluntary reciprocal exchange of resources and services for mutual benefit. Mutual aid projects are a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions.

beterluk (beterluk) – a characteristic of an indolent and rude person Example: Beterluk građana Banja Luke doveo do uništavanja zelenih površina. (The Banja Luka citizens’ insolence has caused the destruction of greenery.)

javašluk (javašluk) – irresponsibility (of authorities or individuals). Example: Javašluk i nerad nadležnih u Banja Luke doveo do uništavanja zelenih površina. (The irresponsibility of the Banja Luka authorities has caused the destruction of greenery.)

bahatost (bahatost) – negligence, arrogance, insolence and contempt for others; an attitude of overesti-

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mating one’s own value or one’s own skills.

sirovina (s’irovina) – a primitive person

kud svi, tu i mali Mujo (kud svi tu i mali mujo) – literally: “Where everyone goes, little Mujo goes too.” A popular Bosnian proverb used in the context of work, to justify individual improper behaviour or to appeal to a diffusion of responsibility. Example: – Zašto si bacio vreću za smeće u rijeku? – Ali komšija radi isto! (Why did you throw out your garbage bag in the river? – Well, my neighbour does the same!)

A dult lehtë (a dult lehtë) – an expression uttered upon meeting someone, who “comes out” of the peaks, as if they were to say “How are you?”, but it literally means “Did you come out lightly/easily?”

shefi (ʃɛfi): One kind of name for the border/property rocks

verim (verim) – literally: summering. To spend the summer somewhere

ban (ban) – short for “banesë” (banesə) which means home, used to refer to the homes of the shepherds in the peaks

gollubar (gotubar) – a Serbian word that people use for pigeon fanciers. Example: Where are the golubars?

pllumaxhi (płumadži) – the Albanian language term for a person who fancies pigeons. Example: Don’t listen to that pllumaxhi!

kuta (kuta) – a type of pigeon that is known for having a furball in his throat.

dynek (dynek) – a type of domesticated pigeon used for races because of the characteristic tumblings it makes when landing.

sepeta (sepeṭa) – a rounded cloth texture, used to catch the birds so they don’t fall on the ground and hurt themselves when landing

rope (ɣɔɾɛ) – up there, up here; a reference to the West, as geographically positioned north of the Balkans, i.e. upwards from the Balkans on a map. Used both when in The Balkans and when in The West. Rope is something you reach for. Example: Kako e rope? How are things up there?

done (dɔɭɛ) – down here, down there; a reference to The Balkans, as geographically positioned south of the West, i.e. downwards from the West on a map. Used predominantly when in the West. Example: Ќе идеш done? Are you heading down there?

газда (gazda) – a he. He owns at least two trucks (or other capital). The gazda no longer sells his labour, thus he can afford to live with his family, buy his children a blow-up backyard pool and host abundant feasts on a long table for friends, acquaintances and random passers-by. He supervises his workers, insists on being held in high esteem, but retains a sense of solidarity with his workers for not so long ago he, too, was one. He is unmoved by high art and remains a fan of the folk aesthetic. One often makes it as a gazda upon moving to the USA.

печалбар (peṭʃalbar) – who lives and works abroad as a means of survival, whose life is shaped by work. The root of the word, печал (pɛtʃʋal) means grief, sorrow.

влече за јазик (vlɛtʃɛ za jazik) – to pull at someone’s tongue. To provoke someone to say out loud something that they’d rather restrain themselves from saying. It can be used both for saying something positive or negative, but it is usually used in the context of being provoked to enter a confrontation.

мозок на пасење (mozok na paseɳɛ) – when one is on autopilot, meaning they aren’t paying attention or fully participating where their body is, their brain is grazing elsewhere (lit.). It implies that this person is idle, and isn’t concerned with how their autopilot mind-set is affecting their environment

ќути, бар има работа (cuti bar ima rabota) – literally: hush, at least we have work. A proclamation of gratitude and humility by workers. A phrase often used to put precarity and scarcity in perspective. Closely related to and sometimes followed by “може и полошо” (mozɛ i polʃo); it could be worse, a linguistic expression and an enduring coping mechanism of Macedonians.

ќути трај прај (cuti, traj, praj) – literally: hush, keep quiet, keep busy. A phrase uttered in support of obedience and conformity, usually from a well-meaning compatriot

свекрва (svɛkɔrva) – literally: mother-in-law. Someone who follows you around, monitoring how you complete chores, and fixing your mistakes after you’ve moved on, or most commonly – while you are in the middle of completing them. свекрваче (diminutive) is the colorful indicator of where each editor is located within a shared document, such as Google docs.

iznad situacije (iznad situacije) – literally: (to rise) above the situation. The term is used in daily speech in its original Serbian form since that way it packs an extra layer of meaning – lightly hinting at a humorous experience of the hardship that one is rising above.

EUsplaining – the act of deciding what the Balkans needs and asking Balkan people to comply with this view by setting outcome expectations as the conditions for giving support, which in effect works as an act of –splaining with practical consequences

to balkan – to think and act in a continuous pursuit of reclaiming the term Balkan, of becoming capable to celebrate, respect and own the Balkan experience, collective creations and ways of being. Ex. I’m tired of doubting everything Balkan and seeing it as less, I want to start balkaning.”

communitization (kə'mju:nɪtɪ'zeɪʃ(ə)n) – the act of addressing a group of living beings which share a commonality as a community in the context of socially engaged art, and letting this act suffice as social engagement.

## ii. Code of Conduct: An

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# “ethics in action” framework with a focus on Balkan arts and cultural projects.

By Mariana Ziku, Klelija Zhivkovikj, Klementina Ristovska, Elli Leventaki, and Enrico Tomassini  
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## 1 PURPOSE STATEMENT

Some Call Us Balkans (SCUB) – Cultural Cooperation project is built upon a collective consensus of shared values and views among the partners, which constitute a co-created and open-ended Code of Conduct (CoC) that advocates for inclusivity, equality, and multivocality. The aim is to ensure a transparent, respectful and safe (online and offline) space for everyone, both within the SCUB community and in relation to other organisations and individuals. The SCUB CoC goes beyond national narratives while taking into account the Balkan specificity and the diverse backgrounds of the people involved, with a view to effectively bring together artists and communities of

practice in a transdisciplinary cultural context.

## 2 SUPPORTED GROUPS

With a collaborative attitude being central in SCUB, the community is looking to build meaningful and reliable bonds with inclusive institutions and cultural workers, local communities, solidarity networks, independent activists, civil society representatives, members of the GLAM sector, active NGOs, artists’ groups, socially engaged projects and mindful individuals. All communication, selection, support, or otherwise participatory processes are strictly non-biased and non-discriminatory on any grounds (ex. gender, age, religion, race, etc), but rather consciously reflect the openness and accessibility of the project. SCUB particularly aspires to connect with marginalized, minority, underrepresented, lesser-known, or appreciated groups, in order to collectively create an impactful outcome and share knowledge on an equal basis.

## 3 AVOIDABLES

Being respectful is key within the SCUB community, in order for everyone to feel welcome, understood, and heard. There is a zero-tolerance policy towards any form of discriminating, insulting or racist behaviours of all sorts. SCUB does not support any type of biased, sexist, ageist, violent, or otherwise disrespectful attitude throughout all its events, meetings, and (digital/physical) activities, concerning either the core team or any collaborative parties.

## 4 RESPONSES & ACTIONS

SCUB community members are committed to assisting and supporting each other, by noticing and calling attention to problematic behaviours, while aiming at resolving complex issues and potential complications with composure and impartiality. Advocating initially for prevention, any team member or collaborative party is advised to voice out their problem and communicate any inconvenience, so that it can be openly discussed within the community, and managed in a polite and respectful way. If there is a problematic attitude observed in any online or offline interaction, the involved parties will be brought together to address and process it, to avoid any escalation of the situation. Ultimately, it is up to the SCUB community to decide whether there is a need for an apology to effectively resolve the issue, or if further action should be taken.

## 5 ENCOURAGED BEHAVIOURS

Wishing to promote and maintain a mutually respectful, inclusive, and collaborative, digital and physical environment during all processes, it is important for SCUB (and non-SCUB) members to be responsible and considerate to all at all times. By keeping all collective processes transparent and taking into account each others’ time, resources, and creativity, the community aspires to effectively raise awareness on artists’ and art professionals’ rights, as well as to empower their work and resilience. At the same time, it is ok to not agree 100% on something, but it is important that the outcome of a democratic decision-making proceeding is respected. There can always be room for improvement or a different course of action, but everyone is entitled to an opinion and for their effort to be appreciated, so sharing feedback, requesting input, or commenting on someone’s work is advised to be done in a polite and productive manner.

## 6 SCOPE

All of the abovementioned behaviours and principles are applicable both for digital and physical spaces and are expected to facilitate internal and external communications and relations management throughout the project. With art acting as a catalyst for transformation in this long-term creative transformative process, SCUB community

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needs to ensure accessibility without discrimination for communities and individuals in all local and trans-local contexts, while caring for all those involved. A respective approach based on open-access and ethical data sharing is also provisioned for all content produced during the project, which is placed under the FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and CARE (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, Ethics) principles, and is shared using the Creative Commons Licences.

## 7 ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

SCUB community aspires to be a safe zone for sharing knowledge, uplifting collective creation, and talking about the Balkans in a critical way through arts and culture, in order to explore new perspectives outside the Western canon and the dominant narratives. Despite aiming to interact and engage with a broad and diverse audience, communities are acknowledged a priori as a crucial aspect of the project and are to be approached with honesty, patience, and respect. Additionally, SCUB wishes to take a firm stance regarding global climate change, and for that is committed to organising environmental-friendly events to address the urgency of the matter and the need for immediate reduction of the carbon footprint.

## 8 REPORTING GUIDELINES

For SCUB community members – Request for an open dialogue among the members of the community via a public email addressed to all partners is a must, in order to maintain the transparency of the project’s processes and arrange for a dedicated meeting on the issue.

For all other parties – It is kindly requested that you report any insulting, disrespectful, or otherwise unwanted behaviour to SCUB via email, social media, or personal contact. Your anonymity will be fully respected. #SCUBcommunity is constantly at your disposal for any further clarifications and support.

## 9 REFERENCES

<https://github.com/mozilla/diversity-coc-review.io>

<https://mozilla.github.io/diversity-coc-review.io/modules/assessment/ownership-location>

Sources of CoC

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[https://wiki.mozilla.org/Engagement/Developer\\_Engagement/Event\\_request\\_guidelines](https://wiki.mozilla.org/Engagement/Developer_Engagement/Event_request_guidelines)

Course in a Box | Ownership & Location (mozilla.github.io)

[https://geekfeminism.wikia.org/wiki/Conference\\_anti-harassment](https://geekfeminism.wikia.org/wiki/Conference_anti-harassment)

[https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana\\_Professional/Europeana\\_Network/Association\\_Updates/Governance\\_documents/Europeana-Network-Association-Code-of-Conduct.pdf](https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Europeana_Network/Association_Updates/Governance_documents/Europeana-Network-Association-Code-of-Conduct.pdf)

Code of conduct – Biennale of Western Balkans (bowb.org)

Code of conduct Termokiss / Termokiss Principles

Universal Code of Conduct/Policy text – Meta (wiki-

media.org)

Coc through discursive frame/logic > <https://www.zku-berlin.org/discourses/general-approach/>

Building CoC/values through the Project > <https://www.zku-berlin.org/timeline/aiming-at-a-world-where-many-worlds-fit/>

The Ground Tour Open Travelling practice

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Words matter [https://issuu.com/tropenmuseum/docs/wordsmatter\\_english/72](https://issuu.com/tropenmuseum/docs/wordsmatter_english/72)

FAIR principles [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FAIR\\_data](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FAIR_data)

CARE principles <https://datascience.codata.org/articles/10.5334/dsj-2020-043/>

## iii. Digital Library.

The Digital Group Library gathers literature resources relevant to the Balkans, sociocultural issues and artistic practices in Southeastern Europe, supporting open-access digital scholarship. The open-access literature collection of the SCUB project is accessible on Zotero: [https://www.zotero.org/groups/2866407/some\\_call\\_us\\_balkans](https://www.zotero.org/groups/2866407/some_call_us_balkans).

## iv. Digital Repository.

The Digital Repository gathers all media in image, video and sound, publications and graphic design, produced during the SCUB project. The digital repository is published open-access, with the aim to function as an online space to collect, store, index, document, preserve and redistribute material in digital formats that can be openly accessed, reused and republished by everyone, under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license. For the setup of the repository, we employed digital documentation based on metadata standards as promoted through Europeana and the National Documentation Centre in Greece (<https://www.ekt.gr/el/publications/25039>). The repository infrastructure was based on the open-source collection management system “Tainacan”, developed by the Network Intelligence Laboratory of the University of Brasilia. Approx. 1.000 new, high quality images, videos, GIFs, reels and sound have been created and shared under a CC BY-SA 4.0 open license in the framework of the SCUB project, documented within the digital repository by applying good practices regarding cultural data documentation: <https://somecallusbalkans.org/items/>





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