



° **Lines (not) to be crossed**, 18 November – 15 December, 2009

Opening:

17 November, 19.00 – 21.30

Project curators: Ana Dzokic and Marc Neelen (STEALTH.unlimited)

Participants:

Insider RTV B92

Vladan Jeremić and Rena Rädle

Astrit Hajrullahu

Fifth Park (Peti Park) - with Branko Belaćević, Marko Miletić, Dubravka Sekulić, Jelena Stefanović

First Archi Brigade (Prva Arhi brigada)

Civil Initiative for Muzil (Gradjanska inicijativa za Muzil)

Right to the City (Pravo na grad)

Talk/discussion: 18 November 2009, 18 November 2009, 19:00, Technischen Universität Wien, Karlsplatz 13, Stiege 1, 4th Floor, Kuppelsaal

Ana Dzokic and Marc Neelen mit Gülsen Bal

During the two decades since the start of the 1990s, the republics of Yugoslavia and Albania have each charted their own path, and while their societies develop along different lines it is striking to see how much they share in terms of issues concerning urban development. A scan through the region brings forward issues vital for the (future of the) the cities like Belgrade, Kotor, Novi Sad, Podgorica, Prishtina, Pula, Skopje, Tirana and Zagreb, that read as if set between a crime scene investigation and a comic story. Privatisation, clientalism, creative abuse of laws and regulations seem commonplace in a context affected by 'wild' urbanization and fast capital investments set within the horizon of a neoliberal context.

At the same time something else starts to get clear: the first, uneasy resistance to these exploitative forces takes shape. Here and there, inhabitants start to organise themselves, civil organisations start turning their eye to the city and journalists started digging through the lucrative dirt. Some of the results of this are possible to see in **Lines (not) to be crossed** - like RTV B92's Insider program on construction mafia, or the resistance of the inhabitants around the Fifth Park in Belgrade to convert 'their' park into a construction site. Or Right to the City's toolbox to act against unfavourable transformations in the public space of Zagreb. As urgent as this resistance may be for the cases brought forwards here, they hint as well to the transformations currently taking place in many other cities throughout the world.

“Cities Log”

The Cities Log depicts a rough section through developments of cities in the Western Balkans during a one-year period: Summer 2008 – 2009. It displays spatially important events, decisions and discussions set in the context of fast capital investments, newly emerging power relations and the challenge brought forward by the transition into new engagements of citizen - and creates a context for **Lines (not) to be crossed**.



The Cities Log chronology has been made by STEALTH.unlimited (Ana Dzokic and Marc Neelen) on the occasion of the T.I.C.A.B – Tirana International Contemporary Art Biannual (September/October 2009), through conversations with and contributions by professionals in the fields of architecture and urban issues, a/o: Besnik Aliaj, Gjergj Bakallbashi, Branko Belacevic, Jelena Stefanovic, Dafne Berc, Teodor Celakoski, Sotir Dhamo, Ulrike Franzel, Valon Germizaj, Zakilina Gligorijevic, Adelina Greca, Astrit Hajrullahu, Florina Jerliu, Aleksandra Kapetanovic, Ivan Kucina, Marko Miletic, Ilir Murseli, Oliver Musovik, Divna Pencic, Dubravka Sekulic, Petrit Selimi, Pulska grupa, Aneta Spaseska, Borislav Vukicevic and others. Design by Ajdin Basic.

Insider B92

“Abuse of Office”, TV serial, 47’, 2009

Abuse of Office, a seven episodes series, reveals the functioning mechanism of the so-called "building mafia" in Serbia and the main reason of its existence – the corruption in city and state institutions. That is why the price of newly built apartments in Belgrade and Serbia is unrealistically high.

The TV serial is named Abuse of Office as journalists of the Insider managed to prove that Serbian Parliament members passed laws that are first of all advantageous for the businessmen in Serbia, allowing the privatisation to turn into the purchase of real estate and not into recuperation of the economy and the ruined factories. Exclusive locations in Belgrade were acquired through buying a ruined factory, company, printing firm - without the building land being included in the price, which, in fact, is worth the most. Further, Insider reveals how many local businessmen were practically allowed to get for free the best empty city land, with which the budget of the city and the state, and consequently also citizens, was cut short for several million Euros.

Insider started in 2004, with their first documentary broadcast on RTV B92, in Belgrade, Serbia. Its authors received many international and domestic awards for investigative journalism. “There are forbidden questions, answers that shouldn’t be heard, lines which are not allowed to be crossed. This is the starting point of the Insider.”

Vladan Jeremić and Rena Rädle

“Belleville”, video, 22’, 2009

Belleville is the name of a residential complex in New Belgrade built on the occasion of the international sports manifestation “Summer Universiade 2009”. On 3rd of April 2009 in the early morning, diggers tore down the barracks of 45 Roma families living in close vicinity to the residential units. Their violent eviction was assisted by police without giving time to the residents to save their belongings. Despite Serbia holding the presidency of the “Decade of Roma Inclusion” this year, the authorities didn’t offer alternative housing to the families. The video documents the protest of the victims that set off to the city centre three times to demand shelter in front of the city hall.

Vladan Jeremic and Rena Rädle are working together since 2002 in Belgrade, Serbia and elsewhere. They use art as one possible format for radical criticism and take an active public position in different fields of social activism. Jeremić/Rädle are founders and members of the organizations for culture and communication Biro Beograd, slobodnakultura.org from Belgrade and Top e.V from Berlin.

Astrit Hajrullahu

“Prishtina – the agony of a city”, video, 27', 2009

The documentary film “Prishtina – the agony of a city” is a short chronology on the urban development of Prishtina following the end of the war in 1999 and an analysis on the lack of functioning of the regulatory plans of its neighbourhoods. Although the town did not suffer many damages during the war, it became an urban debacle due to countless illegal constructions and the influence of developers in the urban planning process of Prishtina.

The town management tolerated this kind of influences, while it has become common practice for a number of architects. Citizens of Prishtina highly disapprove these developments but the lack of rule of law makes them powerless. How do the directors of urban planning in the Municipality of Prishtina view the urban plans of the town? What is the opinion of the architects and how do they perceive the functioning of the Municipality of Prishtina? This documentary tries to find some of the answers.

Astrit Hajrullahu (1962, Tetovo, Macedonia) studied at the Faculty of Architecture in the University of Geneva, Switzerland and obtained an MA degree at the Ecole d'Architecture de Paris-Bellville in Paris. Although architecture is his primary profession, he attaches a particular interest to artistic and documentary films. “Prishtina – the agony of a city” is his first documentary.

Fifth Park

“The Struggle for Peti Park”, slideshow/dvd, 7', 2009

This slideshow tells the story of Peti Park (Serbian for "Fifth Park") - a small green area in a 1960s neighbourhood in Belgrade. In mid 2005, the city government cuts the trees with the purpose of building a commercial complex in the park. The local population protested, trying to keep the green area while the city government claimed that the area was already reserved for construction in 1980s and that the mini-park was just a temporary solution. While at one point even the police was involved to make the construction possible, the local population gained popular support among Belgraders and celebrities for their cause. In January 2008 the municipality of Zvezdara re-planted 31 firs in a circular pattern in an effort to keep the park.

Slideshow made by Branko Belačević, Marko Miletić, Dubravka Sekulić, Jelena Stefanović.

Fifth Park – I Want to Know is a collaborative project of the Green Youth of Serbia and the Initiative council for the protection of the Fifth Park, in Belgrade, Serbia. It is supported by the Balkan Fund for Local Initiatives.

First Archi Brigade

“First Architectural Uprising”, slideshow/dvd, 3', 2009

“We are the first Archi Brigade, a spontaneously gathered informal group of students of architecture and others who share the same ideas regarding already existing and yet planned architectural and urban works in our city Skopje. We were formed by the inclination to take a proactive role in the designing of the architectural reality of today.”

Skopje is rapidly and definitely drowning in kitsch of a previously unseen extent and of yet uncertain consequences. The public space in this city is subject to plans and projects of politicians-economists and some of their friends. Independent views raised by other three times to demand shelter in front of the city hall experts are ignored. Instead of public and professional debates about the development

of the city, competitions and plans are made in secret. Therefore, the group claims, "it's time to stop criticizing only on internet forums; it's time to stand up from our comfortable TV chairs and to join the initiative: FIRST ARCHITECTURAL UPRISING, instigated by us, the students of the Faculty of Architecture, for our own good and for the good of Skopje."

First Archi Brigade was initiated by a group of students of architecture in the city of Skopje in Spring 2009. Their first protest against the evident "regression in the field of architecture", embodied in the building of newly-to-be built orthodox church on the main city square was attacked by counter demonstrators and reached extensive media attention.

Civil Initiative for Muzil

"Muzil: First Public Discussion" and "Muzil: The First Visit", video, 4' 45" and 4' 21", newspapers, maps, 2009

Muzil – a peninsula that occupies the southern part of the Pula bay in Croatia – has been used exclusively for military purposes, for almost 200 years – until recently when it was demilitarized. Although its size corresponds to quarter of the city, it is as if Muzil never existed for people of Pula. Now that there is an opportunity to finally get to know and use it, national and local authorities have prohibited access to the area. Arguing that they want to prevent theft and vandalism they ban the entry to all citizens of Pula. "As most citizens, we are certainly neither thieves nor vandals! We want to get to know Muzil and include it in the heritage of the city to which it belongs" proclaims the Civil Initiative for Muzil.

The demilitarization of Muzil has opened an opportunity for a new evolution of Pula. What would the citizens of the city like to see happen there? The worst case scenario is the one in which political decision-makers refuse to engage in dialog with citizens. Could Muzil, the only spot from which you can see the whole city and its surroundings, become a symbol of a new Pula? "We want to use Muzil in order to get to know it, love it, and ultimately plan its future for the well-being of our and coming generations. We have a historical chance to decide together what kind of life in Pula we want!"

These two short videos document the first public appearance of Civil initiative for Muzil (23 January 2009) and the first organised visit to Muzil area (8 March 2009). Videos producer: Videofarma, Pula.

Civil Initiative for Muzil is a network of individuals formed with the aim of discovering the former military area Muzil (Pula, Croatia), opening it to the public, promoting its public utilization and debating its future. The initiative consists only of individuals - not groups, associations, institutions or political parties.

Right to the City (Pravo na grad)

slideshow/dvd, publications, 2009

Initiative Right to the City acts upon topics and cases of unsustainable urban development, privatisation of public space, corruption of the management of public spatial resources and exclusion of the citizens from the process of planning and decision-making in the city of Zagreb. "Relatively to our human and material capacities and the limitation of citizen's influence, we can point out issue to the public, demand changes of law, regulations and plans, use juridical instruments and procedures that are at disposal for citizens, instigate citizen to actions - but we cannot answer to all urgencies nor replace the public government."

"Therefore, if you notice issues related to construction, traffic, or ecological problems in the city of Zagreb - or if you are faced with violation of the quality of life in your direct surrounding, consider possibilities to on your own or together with your neighbours undertake the first steps." This presentation – made with Dubravka Sekulic - shows some of the tools that have been used in actions during the last years.

Right to the City (Pravo na grad) is an initiative and campaign focusing on issues related to the spatial development of Zagreb, Croatia. It started as collaboration of civil society organisations from the domains of youth and independent culture. All the activities are carried out in partnership with Green Action (Zelena akcija).

supported by:

**BM:UKK
ERSTE Foundation
Stadt Wien - Kulturabteilung MA 7**

The Cities Log research has been supported by Swiss Cultural Program in the Western Balkans as part of the project "Individual Utopias now and then – Discontinuity of generational dialogue or what do we have in common?" and by The Netherlands Foundation for Visual Arts, Design and Architecture.

Parallel to the exhibition a workshop will take place from 17-20 November, at the Vienna Technical University within the context of „Kunst als Architekturpraxis“ course.

° **About us:**

Open by appointment only, admission free



**Open Space
Zentrum für Kunstprojekte**
Lassingleithnerplatz 2
A – 1020 Vienna
Austria

(+43) 699 115 286 32

for more info: office@openspace-zkp.org

www.openspace-zkp.org

Open Space - Zentrum für Kunstprojekte aims to create the most vital facilities for art concerned with contributing a model strategy for cross-border and interregional projects on the basis of improving new approach.

° **About Technische Universität Wien**

Institut für Kunst und Gestaltung
Seminarraum 2, Mezzanin
Karlgasse 11, 1. Stock
A-1040 Wien

www.visuelle-kultur.net