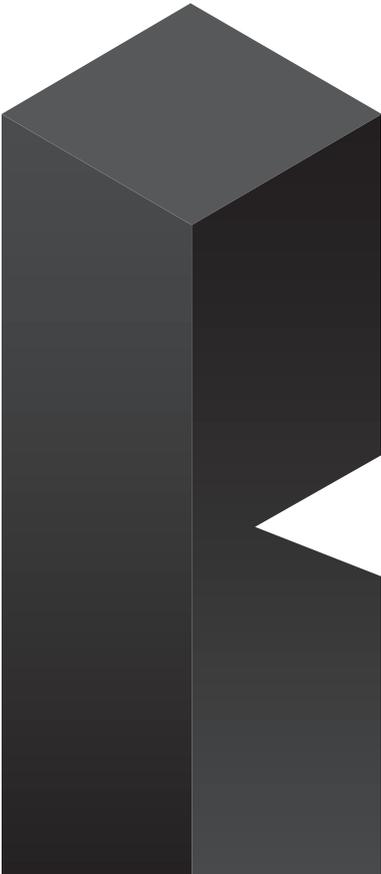


**IF  
BUILDINGS  
COULD  
TALK**

2015-2017





**IF  
BUILDINGS  
COULD  
TALK**

2015-2017

# INTRODUCTION

**I**f buildings could talk (IBCT) is a collaborative project that unfolds the delicate, inner traces of the erasure of collective memory from the local history, exemplified through concrete urban spaces (buildings and their surroundings) which are/were landmarks in one city/area. This obliteration leads towards almost unrecognizable change of the local context affecting entire communities and various social strata as well as the overall urban tissue. IBCT attempts to speak creatively and interdisciplinary about local urban problems, sometimes relating to a single building or block – business or residential – in three different cities: Skopje, initiated by the partner FRU – Faculty of Things that Can't Be Learned, Belgrade with the partner Supervizuelna and Zagreb with the partner Shadow Casters. Through detailed analysis of this building/block components, contextualized within its surrounding and historical developments, IBCT relates to the tendencies of (non)solidarity, degradation, (re)writing of reality – also showing also which the conflicts in those buildings/blocks that potentially open ruptures in the general societal structure are.

The setting of IBCT is cruel and unpredictable, the period of so-called “transition” which tendentiously swipes away all ideological, political, social, cultural and ethical components of the previous period. In a “wild” and naive aspiration towards the EU, trying to keep up with the late capitalist neoliberal economic model, these policies have serious impact on the community but also on the everyday life of the individual.

The overall theme of the project is the devastation of public space and social housing communities as a result of the rigid agendas of mighty corporations, corrupted national and local governments as well as an ideological urge to clean all the traces of the previous governing system thus obliterating the collective memory and phenomena of certain cities. This has resulted into virtually complete disappearance of the concepts of “community”, “communing”, “social owning”, “self-government of reality” thus disuniting the citizens into “strong” individuals not taking care of their own surroundings.

In that manner, IBCT aims to provide agency for the change in the perception of public space and showcase research and re-

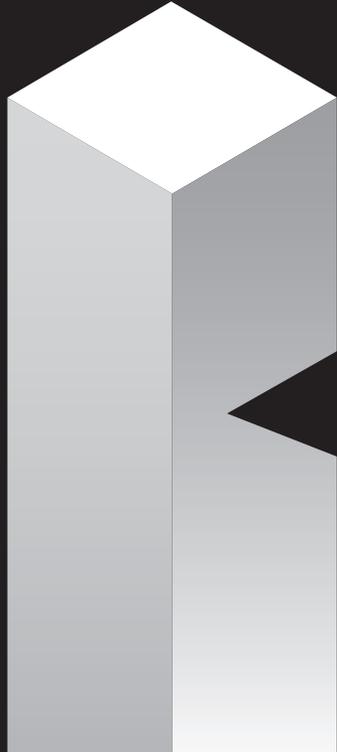
interpretation of the less visible, but still intrinsic economic, political and ideological aspects of public and shared spaces in the cities of Zagreb, Skopje and Belgrade. Furthermore, it aims to revitalize, preserve and contextualize public and shared spaces within their entire historical, urban/spatial, socio-political and economic relations and narratives. This project also strives to raise public awareness about urban and collective memory issues and to inspire local communities to use their resources to act upon them, as well as to broaden and extend the collaboration between professionals, artists, activists and expert communities in the field.

Thus, this project – developed in Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb and their local communities – acts as an envoy towards a change in the perception, in the thinking and acting, setting up an entire agenda of activities such as a performative game-structures containing the elements of theatre, film, visual art and music, exposed in public workshops and walking tours “plays”, taking the building as a reference (historical, architectural, political, artistic) point.

FRU decided to work on the Railway Workers’ Residential Complex, Supervizuelna decided to engage with the business-residential complex “Belville”, while Bacaci Sjenki decided to do research on the “Nada Dimić” Factory - “Moster/Penkala” factory. All of the buildings were considered in terms of their relevance to the envisioned goals on the one hand, and approachability on the other. All of them had been pillars of history, carved with memories of social turmoil, but were also abandoned to slow decay.

Revitalization, contextualization and preservation of authentic spaces are vital for the development of culture and this project strongly believes in that. The methodology was extensively discussed between the partners, but each of the partners established their own methodology autonomously.

The project If Buildings Could Talk (IBCT) is funded by the Balkan Arts and Culture Fund BAC. BAC is supported by the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF).



# CASE STUDIES

**BELVILLE**  
**BELGRADE**

## Business-residential complex "Belville", Belgrade

Milutin Gec (2009)

**B**elville is a complex of residential and business buildings in New Belgrade, Block 67. Spreading on an area of 13,8 hectares it includes 14 residential buildings, each 10 to 13 floors high, with 1,858 apartments sized 31m<sup>2</sup> to 104m<sup>2</sup>, 333 shops, 1300 underground garage places and 600 parking spots above ground. The complex also includes 2 business buildings, one of which is the Shopping Mall "Delta City", which precedes the rest of the site.

The investor of the project is the Block 67 Associates company, whose founders are Delta Real Estate and Hypo Alpe-Adria Bank a.d. The beginning of the realization of the project was in August 2006, the start of construction was in June 2007 and the owners to the apartments received the keys as of December 2009. Upon completion in 2009, before the buildings were sold out, the 25th Summer Universiade guests were hosted in Belville - almost 9,000 of them from 145 countries.

Each of the 14 residential buildings bears a name of a certain kind of flower: Rose, Tulip, Lily, Lilac, Hyacinth, Cyclamen, Wallflower, Lilly-of-the-Valley, Sunflower, Mimosa, Violet, Dandelion, Marigold and Iris.

[<http://belville.rs/>]

Project activities: November 2016 – May 2017

Project leaders: Saša Tkačenko (Supervizuelna) and Mirjana Boba Stojadinović

Collaborators: Mariela Cvetić, Marijana Cvetković, Branislav Nikolić, Manja Ristić, Pesničenje, LP Electro (Sonja Lončar & Andrija Pavlović)

Workshop participants: Matija Bulajić, Tijana Lovrić, Katarina Vasiljević, Olga Mišković, Isidora Ilić, Milja Mladenović, Aleksandra Dejanović, Fedor Jurić, Nevena Alavuk, Milovan Jekić, Predrag Gagović, Irena Đukanović, Svetlana Ristić, Tamara Žderić, Katarina Radulović, Tatjana Gavrilović, Tatjana Nikolić, Igor Cvrkota, Sonja Jankov, Aleksa Bekić, Aleksandra Stajović, Aleksandra Vujić, Pavle Nikolić, Tijana Radovanović, students of Faculty of Architecture, students of High School of Fine Art and Applied Arts.

Event partners: Belgrade International Week of Architecture (BINA), Group 484

Pesničenje participants: škart, group (W)HERE? (poets–new–arrivals from Afghanistan), choir–poetry group VRA–A–GRA (Antigravitational Croaks from Vranje), group ANONYMOUS POETS (Ana Mijailović, Mladen Milošević, Jovana Đoković, Jelena Vukićević, Lidija Kačar, Varvara Vučković, Stefan Simić), Songwriter scene: Ružna Filip, unpaid worker + poetesses–neighbours + poets–passers–by

The Belgrade edition of the “If Buildings Could Talk” Project dealt with the issues of establishing relations towards the public–private space from the most recent history, going as far as asking whether the presence of such a building complex as Belville in New Belgrade belongs to the past or to the contrary, will such a presence in our everyday life actively influence not only the lives of people who live there, but also us, as a new standard of living. Could Belville be telling us a fictitious story of higher standards of living, which brings the prices of real estate up and tears down the spirit of communal living, rooted in the post–WWII New Belgrade?

The residential-business complex Belville was created amongst numerous uncertainties and controversies during the process of its planning, building as well as the selling of the property. However, what was essential to our research were the questions of the idea of contemporary living for middle and higher social classes – as self-perceived and proclaimed by the inhabitants – and how this “contemporary living” influences lifestyles outside Belville.

Dr. Mariela Cvetić did a workshop with students of architecture, artists and professionals in the field of architecture on the naming of the buildings themed “Why Belville is not belleville?”. The workshop researched the practice of naming in urban space and naming of the urban space. It questioned the politics and history of naming houses, the meaning of the names (*nomen est omen*), and particularly the meaning of the Belville buildings named after flowers, and streets named after Yuri Gagarin, The Spanish-War Fighters, Dorđe Stanojević, the Red Army and Anti-Fascist Struggle.

The name of the complex Belville is incorrectly spelled to start with (it is more likely to be “belleville” in French). What kind of fabrication does this imply? The participants found that the names of the buildings were confusing, as they gave no clues about any spatial or visual orientation. Inquiries into the opinions and experiences of the inhabitants and visitors to Belville proved this. The conclusion is that the names were most likely given as neutral signage and a hint to natural beauty and ecology. Also, one should bear in mind the indistinctive grey tones all buildings are covered with.

The proposals that came out of the workshop included Tamara Žderić’s proposal that each building could have consequential colouring, from pale to darker and from cold to warm colours. She also drew a beautiful sign of one of the flowers that would not be as generic as the ones used. Fedor Jurić, Isidora Ilić, Nevena Alavuk and Milja Mladenović conducted a research if the inhabitants could recognize the existing signs of the flowers if they bore ‘wrong’ names. Most of the inhabitants noticed no

difference as most relied on reading the signs with the names of the buildings. Matija Bulajić and Katarina Vasiljević did a redesign of the signage and combined the large signs on the buildings with words to make them more relatable.

Katarina Radulović wrote a text on her impressions of the complex as someone who had never been in Belville, just like most people living in Belgrade, even though it was highly publicized and everyone is aware of it. She put an emphasis on the utilitarian approach to living there: **"We notice that only the basic needs of a human are addressed that perceive him/her less as a social being, and more as a consumer. Perhaps this complex was built as one where its inhabitants will not have any social or cultural needs?"** Built as an environment for a large number of people, it is contradictory that it is presented as an exclusive and elitist settlement. She writes: **"One feels small and inconsequential among the densely situated very high buildings, that create a feeling of uneasiness and inadequacy. One should keep in mind the time when this complex was built – the unpredictable period of 'transition' that dismisses the ideological, social, cultural and ethical guidelines of the period preceding it."**

Marijana Cvetković's starting point was the social and historical context of New Belgrade (where Belville finds itself), from the vision of a new (part of a) town where a human-measure city should have been built, with all its social, cultural, economic and other needs. She conducted a research on the cultural needs of the Belville inhabitants and visitors and aimed to sketch a new potential layer of communality in Belville. Most of the people considered themselves as members of the middle social classes. The research included curious contacts with the inhabitants who, for the most, were happy with their situation there and, as most of them pointed out, with the sanitary aspect of the complex. When offered, a number of them would have liked to have more cultural content, such as a library or a theatre or an open stage, but that seemed to be more of a wishful thinking than a desire to really do something about it. Very few people had very concrete

ideas about what they wanted to have in the neighbourhood, like a ballet school or a club for retired-people, as well as cultural and educational contents for the youngest and the oldest ones. The neighbouring Delta City shopping mall was received with mixed feelings, from a practical shopping venue to a place with no content, apart from the cinema theatre – as if the shopping mall was a different universe. Cvetković concludes: **“We were most interested whether here, at the heart of the socialist urban project of New Belgrade, the new capitalist kind of neighbourhood will manage to kill the public sphere and the space for interaction, as well as the potential network of human relations that constitutes this public sphere. Belville is one of the first neighbourhoods that successfully completed this function, and the lack of space for arts and culture as space for creating sociability is only its manifestation.”**

For the purpose of the workshops and researches two apartments were rented within Belville and that brought on invaluable insights. For example, the buildings were built out of non-expensive materials and needed constant repair. The corridors to the apartments were rather spiritless and had only one fire-escape – where both the elevators and the staircase were situated. In the evening the complex shows how unpopulated it is, and it is very quiet with few home lights around. It seems most of the inhabitants are working people with young children. It was curious to find that the entire property of the buildings and the grounds between the buildings is private. The fact that the access to it is free to all is due to the shopping spaces on the ground floor. The feeling of trespassing private property is pervasive and on several occasions, owners of some of the properties in Belville had a rash reaction to anything that they felt didn't fit in their “living room standards”. The rules of the outside world did not apply here.

The final event summed up the experiences from the workshops and researches and together with visual artists, architects, poets and musicians it presented programmes to the wider audiences and Belville inhabitants in what appeared as public space, even

though it was private. In the central alley, which is a pedestrian zone with cafes and a few small trees around, Branislav Nikolić made a proper stage from cast out wooden materials reclaimed in the streets of Belgrade. It was a patchwork of apartment doors, window and door frames, children playgrounds... This stage was very distinct in the sterile grey concrete environment with few shy trees. (The artist previously did a two-day workshop on using recycled materials for their creative reshaping into new purposes, mainly in architecture, in collaboration with the Belgrade International Week of Architecture.) The presence of the stage was already the cause of inquisitive looks by Belville inhabitants, but the buildings remained as closed up as ever: no windows opened, no heads appeared, no curtains moved...

The results of the workshops on Belville were presented on large panels in the space and it was curious to see people living there exploring the results.

The first programme performed on the stage was the Spring edition of *Pesničenje* – a training of active poetry, with original musical acts. It gathered over thirty performers. As some of the performers shared afterwards, it was indeed strange to perform to a nine-floor high wall of closed windows with blinds, which is presented as a fully inhabited building to the public. However the audience that came for the event was enjoying themselves in the one-hour long programme.

As dusk was approaching, Manja Ristić performed a live act – sonic ambient – electro-acoustic improvisation. The sounds of bells and pebbles and acoustic violin felt as if they had come out of the surroundings and merged back into them. The children around were enchanted by the sounds, but the other passers-by were less thrilled to be provoked in such an unexpected way. This cold reception to Manja Ristić's sonic ambient was partially what she had anticipated – her live improvisation was aimed at responding to and facing spiritless concrete semi-inhabited environment and she reached out to it.

In the end, LP Electro performed a live act of Electro Pop and Future Synth Pop. Uplifting rhythms made little children flock

around and dance and that made their parents happy. As some of them shared – it was good to hear something different in Belville other than turbo-folk.

**Through research and workshops on the aesthetics, urban and cultural studies, as well as performing sound “signs” and a performative execution of poetry, the impression of the complexity of the space and its dynamics between the inside of the block and Belgrade in general, was articulated in a cognitive, visual and on a bodily level. All of this brought forth the question of establishing a relation towards a public-private space such as Belville and forming an attitude in relation to the past of New Belgrade as a paradigm of Modernist urbanism and standard of living. Bringing in the discarded elements found in the vicinity, or bringing in the sound “signs” articulated the experience of the multi-layered nature of such a space. It was curious to bring such a building complex into public focus, where otherwise very few people who do not live or work there normally come, even from the surrounding areas. A certain amount of surprise even among the journalists who followed the events brought forth the key questions pertaining to the relationship of social and private housing in terms of ownership and particularly in terms of social needs that had been taken as the standard in socialist town planning, while today are considered to be non-profitable, hence a strain to the investors’ budgets and skipped by default in the plans and left up to the inhabitants and small owners to fight for on their own, if they muster the strength.**

Epilogue: Four months after the realization of the final event in Belville, the signs on the buildings, previously containing only graphic signs of the flowers respective to each building, have been renewed and now also contain the written names of the flowers. It took one workshop on the subject and a visual presentation of the results of the workshop for the inhabitants of Belville to take upon the idea, even though no one from the Belville management found it necessary to inform the authors of the original suggestion.

**NADA DIMIĆ -  
MOSTER/PENKALA  
ZAGREB**

## **“Nada Dimić” Factory - “Moster/Penkala” factory, Zagreb**

Hönigsberg and Deutsch design studio (1910)  
and Rudolf Lubynski (upgrade 1919)

**T**his factory presents a significant example of Zagreb industrial heritage located in the city centre. At present, it is abandoned and waiting for its new purpose.

The initial appearance of the-then factory of writing utensils „Penkala“ was a concept of the Hönigsberg and Deutsch design studio (1910), while the Zagreb architect Rudolf Lubynski designed the upgrade of the third floor and the new design of street facades (1919), which was retained during the conversion into the „Nada Dimić“ textile factory and to this day. Although the work of great names of Croatian architecture, the former factory was neglected by its owners and competent institutions for a long period of time. Similar to many other Zagreb industrial heritage facilities, it deteriorated without being given a new purpose. On the one hand, there is the issue of inefficiency of competent city institutions failing to promptly react when it comes to the inadequate treatment of industrial heritage. On the other hand there is a lack of clear regulations pertaining to industrial heritage protection. A huge problem lies also in the lack of public awareness as well as in the practice of various private investors becoming owners of numerous factory facilities. Following privatisation and closedown, those facilities remain merely investment projects relevant primarily for their location.

Since its erection to this day, this factory underwent many changes and alterations as well as changes of function, ownership and builders. The entire complex originally consisted of the main building, the workers' building and a smaller economy objects in

the courtyard. The first investor Edmund Moser engaged in 1909. the architect bureau Hönigsberg & Deutsch to design “Penkala” – a writing utensils factory. There is no photo evidence (archive material) on this first factory, but there is a cross section of its facade. Between 1919 and 1930, a new architect, Rudolf Lubinski, was hired by the investor to change the original building facades overlooking the street and to add some utility objects. These street facades remained intact to this day. The important aspect of Lubinsky’s building design was the new building that provided a better quality of workers’ life (located in the courtyard). This building contained kitchens, dinning rooms, men’s and women’s wardrobe. Considering that in that period the building complex also comprised the kindergarten, workers’ bathroom as well as decorative interior walls and special furniture equipment, it is more than obvious that the owner wanted to provide high-quality and comfortable spaces for his workers.

The period from 1930 - to 1950 witnessed multiple ownership changes but the interventions on the building were minor and mainly related to the re-organisation of interior rooms in the main building. However, starting from 1950 up until 2000, the factory changed the owner and the production type: it became the textile industry factory “Nada Dimić” (named after the famous female antifascist hero from WWII). In the course of the 50 years, the building along with its new function became the workers’ symbol of the country but also an integral part of the city identity in terms of its social history and collective memory. The factory was the state property until 1993, when it became a joint stock company “Endi International”, still continuing with the textile production i.e. industry. Due to the company debts (12 million kuna, app. 1.620.000 Euros), the factory was bought in 2003 by a local businessmen but very soon it was re-sold to the mayor of the city of Split (Željko Kerum). During this period – from 2003 to present time, the factory complex has been badly devastated and damaged. Although the building was protected

by the Ministry of Culture, certain illegal alterations were made inside of the building. In 2007, a part of building collapsed and in 2010 a big fire devastated around 100 m<sup>2</sup> of building area. In 2011, 50% of joint stocks were transferred to the Croatian Institute IGH and the Stipić group who intended to convert the factory into a residential and business complex. This intention is still not carried out due to financial problems.

At the beginning of the 20 century, the first factory complexes were owned by joint stock companies that by 1910 were employing approximately 6000 workers. The “Penkala” factory was among the largest companies of that time. During that period Zagreb was experiencing rapid urbanisation and the influx of migrants and inhabitants, hence these factory complexes had a decisive role in the social and economic landscape of the early industrial society. The uniqueness of this factory lay in the famous mechanical pencil – a patent made by the inventor Slavoljub Penkala. His product or (in contemporary jargon) “brand” was additionally popularised and promoted in the city streets and squares through creative costumed performances.

Following WWII, the factory under the new name “Nada Dimić” employed around 1700 workers (95% of them were women). It had a major economic impact in the region of North-West Croatia. Following the factory’s privatisation in 1990s, the number of employees radically lowered and its significance rapidly diminished.

This factory is a testimony of economic shifts and changes in our country, reflecting deeper social problems and conflicts. It is therefore important to mention artistic interventions by the famous Croatian artist Sanja Iveković in 2002 when a neon “SOS” sign was mounted on the building facade in order to recall and remind the public and the authorities about the poor state of this building and its previous users/occupants. The same artist soon made a similar intervention with the neon sign “Nada Dimić” again mounted on the main building facade.

Project activities: December 2016- September 2017

Project leaders SC: Sandra Uskoković, Boris Bakal

Collaborators: Nataša Bodrožić (art historian), Marijan Crtalić (visual artist and activist), Maja Kolar (designer), Sonja Leboš (urban anthropologist), Marina Pretković (art-historian, urban anthropologist and ethnologist), Marko Sančanin (architect and activist), Mare Šuljak (video artist and designer) Leo Vukelić (set-designer, performer and theatre director)

Workshop and project participants: Andrea Budić (ethnologist and cultural anthropologist), Jaka Čosić (geographer), Luka Čubrić (art history and Sweden culture and language student), Vanna Gačina (artist and performer), Ivona Gatolin (activist and performance artist), Leila Filipović (landscape architect), Ivona Filipović Grčić (theater producer), Miranda Herceg (video and media artist), Jovan Jović (visual artist and activist), Lucija Klarić (student of dramaturgy), Nikolina Komljenović (dancer, performer and coreographer), Lana Kovačić (designer), Marta Krešić (dancer), Marina Matiša (history student and activist), Matea Marić (sociology and art history student), Vladimir Novak (art student), Maja Pavlinić (art history and anthropology student), Nikolina Rafaj (student of dramaturgy), Josipa Slaviček (student of architecture), Aneis Skelac (activist), Ivan Vekić (historian and art historian)

The research on the “Nada Dimić” factory (ex-factory Penkala) has resulted in the collection of primary and secondary sources on our chosen case study and written testimonies from the period of the original factory and its succession after WWII. The research group has also gained insight into the analysis of the building (state of preservation and damage) as well as its transformation (legal) over a period of time.

The methodology involved key dynamics such as:

- ▼ Establishing and developing micro-spatial urban practices that constitute a new form of urban politics – so called “do-it-yourself urbanism”;
- ▼ Identifying new possibilities and usage for the currently unused building complex;
- ▼ Re-familiarising (in the sense of re-occupying its presently alienated spaces);
- ▼ De-commodification (the assertion of usage values over exchange values in factory space);
- ▼ Alternative economies (such as recycling and gifting economies);
- ▼ Collaboration across differences (in the sense that involve emergent rather than pre-constituted subjects).

Unlike most common views that industrial heritage preservation consists mainly of its physical conservation, our view is that industrial heritage requires a more complex approach that encompasses many intangible aspects such as its usage (function) and vision i.e. a basis for the sustainable development. Therefore the intention of our interdisciplinary workshop that gathered different professions (architects, historians, sociologists, artists, art historians etc.) was to exchange different knowledge and experiences in dealing with heritage, but also to illustrate the good and the bad practice examples. Our interdisciplinary workshop was organised in January 2017 and raised the awareness on the poor and unprotected status of industrial heritage in Zagreb along with offering interdisciplinary sustainable proposals (solutions) for its safeguarding i.e. contemporary revitalisation.

## **The point of attraction, performances and community art research, September 26-29**

During September 2017, several meetings with local authorities, flat owners of condominium buildings in the neighbourhood and previous users (factory workers) were organized in order to initiate a dialogue on this building and its “insecure” future. As part of this final phase of the project, multimedia work (documentary film essay) was created with artists and professionals who already participated in the previous research and workshops: Leo Vukelić, Nikolina Komljenović, Miranda Herceg, Vanna Gačina and two guest artist, Igor Grubić and Siniša Labrović.

As “a point of attraction” the “Open Office” was established in front of the building and collected testimonies from by-passers and people from the neighbourhood.

The idea was to create a non-invasive dialogue with the public and all interested parties in order to make this building closer to everyday life of local residents, making a democratic heritage of this part of Zagreb history and legacy, accessible to its future users.

Final note: Artists, researchers, urban anthropologists, art historians and other participants of the “attraction point” action proposed various solutions for the future of the building - from hybrid function between interactive and participatory technology museum of past industries which inhabited the building, a condominium section with a kindergarten and other necessary services for the neighbourhood, to renewing the building with lots of small food and artisan shops (e.g. shoemaker,

key-maker, music instrument production and tailor). By-passers and local community members were mainly unison about the building's past and not really interested in its immanent future but agreed on all the proposals that would be beneficial to them. The research and the action demonstrated how fragmented was the local community and how disintegrated in their demands and communal ideas and how much needs to be done in order to wake them up.

**RAILWAY WORKERS  
RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX  
SKOPJE**

## Railway Workers' Residential Complex, Skopje

Mihail Dvornikov (1934-1946)

**T**he building, constructed at the end of 1950s to accommodate the railway workers, represents a perimeter block for social housing with an internal communal courtyard. It's divided into 13 sections - 10 were from the initial concept - a joint house which holds four apartment units in row, while 3 of them for multiple housing date from the postwar renewal of the city. These sections used to originally be connected by continuous balconies and also included numerous communal facilities (a cinema hall, canteen, joint laundry rooms, children playgrounds, green areas) thus stimulating the coexistence of the resident and helping to build up a community. The apartment units, through the staircase nucleus on the ground level (the entrance) communicate with the accessible street on one side, and with the inner courtyard on the other.

The programmatic diversity is one of its specificities - original distribution of the areas from 45% housing, 20% communications area and 35% communal areas, a multipurpose cinema theater, enclosing of the communal balconies and their conversion into housing space, inner courtyard with greenery.

It is the first multi-family apartment building in Macedonia and an example of the perfection of integration in the formulation of an apartment block. Its organization of the apartments and the contemporary and standard comfort was inspired by the developed and well-organized apartment construction in The Netherlands, Denmark, Germany and Switzerland.

It is a remnant of the beginnings of modernism in Macedonia, just a few years before the Second World War.

Eventually, this State Railway Directorate - Skopje (as part of the Yugoslav direction) became privatized and that led to destruction of its programming of 75% housing, 20% communications area and 5% communal area. With time, the multipurpose cinema theater stopped functioning; the communal balconies became gradually enclosed (although not all of them). The tenants take care of the greenery as being the only park in the neighborhood it is used by all of the inhabitants in the area (not all familiar with the specificities and house order of the building). The cinema theater and the yard nowadays are owned by all the tenants of the building.<sup>1</sup>

---

1 For the preparation of the text, the following literature was consulted:  
Stephanie Herold, Biljana Stefanovska, 45+ Post - war Modern Architecture in Europe, Graue Reihe des Instituts für Stadt- und Regionalplanung Technische Universität Berlin, 2012, p. 193  
Проекти на можните иднини: следно домување/ прототипови на станбени блокови за Маџир маало и Дебар маало, Минас Бакалчев во Пресинг списание на комората на овластени архитекти и овластени инженери во Македонија, 2011  
Зорица Блажевска, Повеќедворната станбена куќа во функција на хумано домување на старите луѓе во рамките на семејството, необјавен труд.

Project activities: September 2015 – September 2017

Project leaders (FRU): Ivana Vaseva and Filip Jovanovski

Workshop participants: Slobodan Kocevic, Tome Karevski, Ivan Dzijanovski (tenants); Gala Naseva, Vlado Danailov, Mila Dimitrovska, Anastasija Petrevska, Oliver Musovik, Ilija Tiricovski, Biljana Tanurovska – Kjulavkovski, students from the Faculty of Art and Design Departments under the European University - Republic of Macedonia (within the course of Interior Design).

AKTO 11 Festival for contemporary arts - POP UP AKTO – Skopje

participants: Ivana Dragsic (workshop leader); artists Vladan Jeremic and Rena Radle (Belgrade), BADco.(Zagreb), Nada Prlja and Daniel Serafimovski (Skopje), Jelena Pashic and Matija Kralj (Zagreb), Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic (Belgrade), art collectives Sviracinja (Skopje), Kula (Skopje), Elementi (Bitola); DSPH Sounds showcase; Vedran Horvat (lecturer, Zagreb)

Performative art project partners and participants:

Filip Jovanovski (author), Ivana Vaseva (curator), Dejan Ivanovski (researcher and co-author of the script), tenants in the building, Kristina Lelovac, Sanja Arsovska, Jasmina Vasileva, Dolores Popovic (actresses) , Ilija Tiricovski (video production), Oliver Musovik (production), International theatre festival MOT (Youth Open Theatre), Macedonia

Panel discussions' participants: Ivana Dragsic (moderator),

Ivana Vaseva, Filip Jovanovski, (FRU - Railway Workers' Residential Complex, Skopje) Sasha Tkacenko, Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic, (Supervizuelna - Business-residential complex "Belville", Belgrade), Boris Bakal, Sandra Uskokovic, (Shadow Casters - "Nada Dimić" Factory - "Moster/Penkala" factory, Zagreb); Slobodan Kocevic, Tome Karevski, Ivan Dzijanovski (the Household Council of Railway Workers' Residential Complex,

Skopje), Dejan Ivanovski (moderator, Skopje), Slobodan Veleviski (Faculty of Architecture, Skopje), Helena Sterpin (architect, Pula), Marija Mano Velevska (Faculty of Architecture, Skopje), Tadej Kurepa (journalist, member of platform WHO BUILDS THE CITY, Belgrade).

Event partners and participants: International theatre festival MOT (Youth Open Theatre), Macedonia

The beginning of this project coincides with other activities that the artist and architect Filip Jovanovski and the curator and art historian Ivana Vaseva did within the frames of the organization FRU – Faculty of Things that Can't Be Learned. But first and foremost, it came as a result of the mutual interest in architecture and urbanism in Skopje, especially of the post-war modernist legacy in the country and its treatment, considered against the background of the notorious and devastating project Skopje 2014<sup>2</sup>.

Over this period, the City Trade Centre, one of the symbols of the Macedonian (Yugoslav) modernism and a work by the architect Zhivko Popovski, was under a threat of “baroque-ization” (colloquial term for the re-facading buildings in Macedonia), when a mass of people created a strong campaign against it which led to a local referendum. This was, amongst other things, a feverish reaction to the vivid reality of the city changing rapidly,

---

2 Skopje 2014 is a big urbanistic and architectural project, without publicly known authorship, that first appeared in 2010 as a 3D visualization on YouTube. It suggested an architectural and urbanistic renewal of the city in a style that is an eclectic mix of baroque, neoclassicism and local manifestations of it in the cities in the region (commonly known as baroque). Since the start it was opposed by many people but the Government was determined to finalize its ambitions. Now, after 8 years of its commencement and with a new Government, the construction is still in process.

against the will of many of its citizens, and a lot of buildings, that Skopje was known by and due to which it had been given the epithet of the “city of solidarity” got a baroque facade.

A city that signified solidarity, collectivity, future and wellbeing, got a new look in a matter of days and gained a different political, sociological, anthropological and cultural content, while the citizens, despite all the protests, activist projects, discussions and publications were unable to do anything against the resolute Government and its army of supporters: architects, artists and urbanists.

In that context, the Railway Workers’ Residential Complex, as a space valuable for its architectural authenticity in opposition to the government’s brutal employment of kitsch, became a signifier of what collectivity, joint action and co-habitation on a micro scale mean to FRU and this needed to be emphasized. It seemed like an enclosed oasis in the middle of the hectic city life where moderate tones are very much appreciated as the acoustic of the yard can transport every sound very easily.

A very particular strategic set of an organizational plan and mechanisms has to be implemented when ‘entering other people’s lives’ and inviting them to collaborate. It especially has to be particularly well combined with the precarious situation of the people from the civil sector, or more specifically the independent cultural scene in Macedonia, who due to not having structural financial support are consequently always on the verge of semi-trust in their engagement but more flexible in easily finding solutions or partners for their activities. This meant that a lot of activities intertwined and merged into the Railway Workers’ Residential Complex project.

The 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the AKTO Festival for Contemporary Arts was an overture into the exploration and research of the building. This festival, usually happening in Bitola, popped up in three other cities in 2016 – Skopje, Shtip and Tetovo – and the special pop-up edition in Skopje was held in the Railway Workers' Residential Complex<sup>3</sup>. The festival was envisioned as a pilot phase of the project IBCT which provided testing space not only of the capacities of the organizers but also of the inhabitants' willingness to collaborate.

The festival included a workshop titled “A City for Everyone: Workshop on Reading Detailed Urban Plans” with Ivana Dragsic, a sociologist and an activist from the organization Freedom Square.

The group exhibition “A Collective Decision” curated by the FRU team was also set in the cinema theatre of the Railway Workers' Residential Complex with participation of artists and art collectives from Macedonia, Serbia, and Croatia. The exhibition explored the collective action of artists who decided to call themselves a group and their dynamics, in this context specially selected by their engagement into social topics which relate to housing questions.

A walk through the building in collaboration with the residents from the Household Council was also organized in which guests were guided by the residents and informed about the history of the building.

Vedran Horvat from the Institute of Political Ecology, Zagreb held a lecture: “Out of Context: Self-governance and Sustainability as Alternatives to the Failed Models of Government” where he

---

3 AKTO Festival for contemporary arts is one of the main activities of FRU, curated and organized by Jovanovski and Vaseva for the past 5 years.

talked about the concept of the commons and the theory of the commons by Elinor Ostrom, Nobel Prize winner, introducing self-managing models that offer redistribution of power systems.

Several workshops were held within this program. Most of them were with the tenants of the building and had an informal character, starting with the explanation of what the purpose of the exploration was and who was leading the initiative. The informality and casual atmosphere were crucial because a qualitative approach was employed that focused on the research into the history of the residential complex and the socio-political context that had left marks on it. There was also a project task within the Interior Design Course from the Faculty of Art and Design Department under the European University of the Republic of Macedonia led by the architect Dejan Ivanovski and the assistant Ekaterina Namicheva that caught the attention of the students who articulated their perception of the historical, typological, cultural analysis of building and the advantages and disadvantages of this type of buildings.

This led to conducting and designing more workshops which aimed to discover the change in the general setting of the building (change of structure, people, and neighbourhood area) and devise a narration not so publicly known. The general story was built upon the personal memoirs of three crucial protagonists – Slobodan Kocevic, Tome Karevski and Ivan Dzijanovski - of how they lived there and how the population of the building changed through time. This was supported by research of literature on the building as well as research into the different MA and PHD thesis in architecture and urbanism, as well as exercises of the students of architecture. The architectural drawings of the building served as a basis for the personal memories of the tenants who made up a fictional promenade apartment after apartment.

The finalization of the workshop process was a recording of the oral subjective history of the building that consisted of a sort of index of people that lived there, with the apartments and their inhabitants, histories of families living in the building through the years, changes and movement (some moved from one apartment to another within the building) of the inhabitants, their professional vocation (a lot of them railway employees, but not exclusively), major events in the communal spaces like the cinema theatre and the inner yard (like baseball matches).

This process was quite open, flexible and lot of things could not be planned in details and early in advance. The project found that it provided an entrance into the people's lives that slightly altered their daily routine and the tenants felt more relaxed and motivated as more outsiders were showing interest in the building. As a result of this process even some unexpected shady dealings around the building's fate were revealed. Namely, the building which should be considered a cultural heritage of some sort, and should be protected as such, has never actually been renovated. The local mayor promised support for the renovation on several occasions, but they never came to fruition. Instead, the study of the renovation plans revealed that there was a hidden agenda to privatize the communal parts of the building. So, the question why the local authorities don't care about preserving, restoring and renovating the building despite giving their promise to the household council members several times, became the burning and central issue. And finally, bearing in mind that only few of the representatives of the Household Council got actively involved in the whole process, while the rest of the tenants were only mildly curious or even completely disinterested, we ask ourselves - why? What happened? It seems that the perfect communal building does not suit the new individualistic, neoliberal and consumerist

society. Can a balance between the individual needs and the common interests be achieved at this place? Or, will it fall to its ruin in this battle.

The case study of the Railway Workers' Residential Complex culminates in the final project event that consists of three activities in the building: a two-panel public discussion on the research conducted in the past 2 years and a discussion on the architectural qualities of the building, but also a research-based performative art project within the Young Open Theater Festival in Skopje and production and launch of this publication.

In first panel, the moderator Ivana Dragsic emphasized the qualities of social living and the potential of architecture to create sociability and social tissue. She writes:

*People comprehended architecture's polyvalence very early in history and we have learned about it from books, but also from our own experiences, especially living in two different political systems. Often instrumentalized to manifest excess of power or authority, architecture has definitely found its noble purpose in many causes: sustainability, accessibility, even solidarity. The historical development of architectural approaches to facilitating physical and mental disabilities, ethnic contestations, environmental issues and political instabilities is beyond fascinating, but also in obvious dissonance with the architecture we are experiencing at the moment. This potential of architecture to create sociability and social tissue is unfortunately under serious threat of great nation-state or market narratives, related to restoration, development and growth (of the nation, GDP, jobs, whatever) and our cities need to demonstrate resilience.*

*Our cities (Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb), put in geo-political, but very describable terms, are ex-YU, post-YU capitals from the Western*

*Balkans or South-East Europe, with a variety of political histories, one of which was obviously shared. They are all facing one serious problem and common struggle along with many other cities with a completely different cultural and political heritage, which is urban decay due to profit or growth-oriented urban planning. Victims of this new order are both the empty spaces planned under such principles, but also the existing structures which may have or have not been constructed as a statement of different historical and political contexts.*

*Such are the many public spaces, housing and infrastructural projects or industry complexes in our cities that have now decayed, been repurposed or refaçaded or just remained untouched, and we asked them what they had to say. Just some decades ago, they were producing micro-societies, goods, maintaining relations and providing decent living standards for the working class, and although that story is pretty much shaded now, the buildings have produced a society of generations of people that still share those values and can perhaps initiate a similar mode of existence.*

About the second panel of the discussion the moderator Dejan Ivanovski writes:

*This apartment block (Railway Colony) was built at the time when Le Corbusier was building the Unite d'Habitation in Marseille which is recognized by UNESCO as a world heritage site.*

*The Railway Colony in Skopje is a building intended to provide housing for the persons employed in the State Railway Directorate – Skopje within the frame of the federal Yugoslav administration. The building is an apartment block which is organized by multiplying several sections around the central inner yard, with a large number of housing units, which on one side communicate through the ground floor staircase (entrance) with the access street and on the other with the inner atrium yard. There are a total of ten staircase*

units within the block out of which eight can be accessed through the services streets, and two through the Eastern side of the inner yard.

The ratio between the built and the non-built space within the frame of the lot is approximately 1:2. This parameter is very important for today's living conditions and it is a key factor. If we take into consideration the surrounding buildings in the Bunjakovec neighborhood based on the Detailed Urban Plan 2020 we can conclude that the treatment of the empty space (greenery, playgrounds, public spaces) is becoming extinct. In the vicinity there are no buildings with a combined program for collective housing and public space within the frame of one lot. Furthermore, within the frame of this collective housing, the Railway Colony, there are other spaces which are semi-public and intended for common use, which are owned by the inhabitants of the apartment block. One of them is the old cinema theatre (this space is currently quite run-down) with dimensions of 19m/8m with a ceiling height of 6m covering a total space of approx. 150 m<sup>2</sup>. This space can be used as a multimedia space where debates and exhibitions can be held, and should be of interest to the municipal authorities. In this way the cinema theatre will continue living as common space for the inhabitants, and will not turn into fruitful ground for fulfillment of individual private interests.

The building also contains open spaces/terraces along the apartments which are oriented towards the central inner yard, as a contact zone between the private space and the semi-public space of the yard. Together with the collective content of the building they contribute to enriching the social interactions of the inhabitants thereby decreasing the feeling of isolation and contributing an integrated living.<sup>4</sup>

---

4 Блажевска З. Повеќедворната станбена куќа во функција на хумано домување на старите луѓе во рамките на семејството, необјавен труд.

*This symbol of Skopje as a prototype of a housing structure leaves room for rethinking and once again posing questions such as:*

*What is the meaning of the building complex Railway Colony built in the fifties for the urban tissue of Skopje? (with a focus on the building) and*

*What are the pros/cons of this kind of typology of a perimeter block which contains various types of public content such as an inner yard, cinema theatre, washing and drying rooms, green spaces, children's playgrounds for the inhabitants today and in the past? (with a focus on the inhabitants).*

The research-based performative art project IF BUILDINGS COULD TALK in Skopje is a collaborative action actively including the local community in the very process of its creation as one of the rare examples of collaborative practices in Macedonia.

It is a multidimensional and multidisciplinary project which was conducted and conceived by the artist Filip Jovanovski, curated by Ivana Vaseva, in collaboration with the architect and researcher Dejan Ivanovski and the creative team actresses: Kristina Lelovac, Sanja Arsovska, Jasmina Vasileva, Dolores Popovic, Ilija Tiricovski, video production and Oliver Musovik, production. In the center of this project is the Railway Workers' Residential Complex in Skopje, built as a rare example of social and communal housing in the frames of the post-war modern architecture.

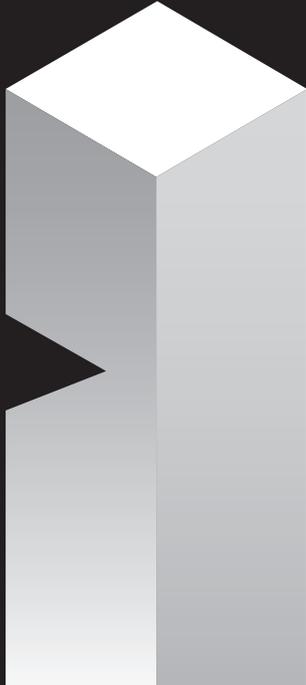
FRU remains dedicated to issues of urban spaces, and as such proceeds with a more in-depth research into the new models of governance of cultural spaces (in the project Cultural spaces for active citizens) based on inclusion and integration of the civil sector and the citizens within their local communities

in collaboration with other partnering organizations<sup>5</sup> from Macedonia. At the core of the research are four case studies: The Army House in Bitola and the Centre for Culture and Arts TEXTILE in Shtip, Kino Kultura in Skopje and the Railway Workers' Residential Complex in Skopje.

---

5 Lokomotiva - Center for new initiatives in culture and art, Skopje as leader and the collaborators the Society for Theater and Educational Activities "Theater Navigator Cvetko", Skopje, Association of textile, leather workers and shoemakers "Loud textile worker/Glasen Tekstilec", Shtip, and the Association for activism, theory and art "Freedom Square", Skopje. This project is financed by the program Civica Mobilitas.

# PARTNERS



## SUPERVIZUELNA

**Supervizuelna** is primarily an electronic magazine for contemporary art and visual culture. Supervizuelna pens down, transmits and analyzes the most pressing ideas, happenings and themes from the field of contemporary visual art regardless of their geographical limits, offering space to raise questions and initiate discussions on art and culture of today. Supervizuelna is based in Belgrade. [[www.supervizuelna.com/](http://www.supervizuelna.com/)]

**Mirjana Boba Stojadinović** is a visual artist. She graduated and received MFA at Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade (2006) and received a MFA at Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam, the Netherlands in collaboration with Faculty of Arts in Plymouth, UK (2008). Since 1998 she has exhibited solo in Serbia and abroad, and she has also curated, organized and participated in numerous group exhibitions. At the core of her interests are space and spatial relations, performatively employing photography, text, sound, objects. Boba is actively dealing with production of the field of contemporary culture. She authored and realized a five-year forum ARTIST AS AUDIENCE. Most recent she curated the Belgrade edition of the transnational project ACTOPOLIS. [<http://bobaart.wordpress.com>]

**Saša Tkačenko** holds an M.A. in Sculpture from the Faculty of Applied Arts of Belgrade. Captivated by the appearances and transformation of public spaces, Saša exposes them to video and photography, or translates their features in sculpture and installations. He is the recipient of the 2013 Mangelos Award for young visual artists in Serbia. Since 2008 he has participated in solo and group exhibitions in Serbia, at Centre Pompidou in Paris, in Museum Moderner Kunst in Vienna, in Bucharest, Guangdong (PR China), at the Australian Center for Photography in Sydney, in Bremen, New York and in Museo di Arte Contemporanea in Torino. He is one of the founding members of Supervizuelna. [<http://sasatkacenko.com/>]

## SHADOW CASTERS

**Bacači Sjenki/Shadow Casters (since 2001)**, is a multi award-winning and critically acclaimed international artistic and production platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, creativity and reflection on inter-media art which successfully and seamlessly combine international collaboration, theatre-making, urban intermedia projects, activism, pedagogical work, video art and curation into the coherent single body of work.

Their projects maintain continuity over a number of years, resulting in multiple series of public events and performance creations which we call 'time sculptures'.

They are or have been the leading partner and co-partner on more the 50 small and large-scale projects in Europa, Asia, Africa and N. America since 2001, generating more than 150 cooperations with professionals from more than 30 countries which have resulted in have more than 50 educational, theater and film projects and events.

These projects have stimulated the debate on the nature of and contradictions within the ongoing globalization process and on social, political and cultural issues that have revealed acute problems and issues within local communities. Shadow Casters has been instrumental to considerations of the politics of public space, the consequences of transition processes, the status and forms of intimacy as well as the systematic production of amnesia and discontinuity within its regional context.

In their projects we also thoroughly investigate past and present lives of neuralgic urban locations and related topics of collective and individual memory, which constantly brings our performances to places and localities that are for the first time involved in contemporary artistic discourses.

For this work, SC have received various recognitions and awards, among them Special Jury Award at the 2007 Belgrade BITEF - Exposition; Avaz Dragon Award at the 2008 Sarajevo MESS - the entire trilogy *Process\_City*; the main award *Cloud* at the 2009 PUF in Pula - Ex-Position; Special Jury Award at 2009 BITEF - *Vacation From History*; the main award *Cloud* at the 2010 PUF - *Vacation From History*; Golden Medal at 2015 Prague Quadrennial for the use of urban/public space for the theatre show – *Father Courage* (Dubrovnik Summer Festival, 2013) and Inovative Film Award at Youki festival for the short film *Other side of the show* (Froom! Production, 2015).

The main concept guiding *Shadow Casters* is constantly questioning the identity of the individual, but also the integration of individuals in a collective context.

**Sandra Uskokovic**, a scholar of modern and contemporary Central and Eastern European art, is Assistant Professor at the University of Dubrovnik, Croatia. She holds an MA from George Washington University, USA and a Ph.D. from the University of Zagreb, Croatia. She worked as research fellow at ICCROM, UNESCO and US/ICOMOS and received art research awards from Graham Foundation, Samuel H. Kress Foundation and Getty Trust. Uskokovic has published three books on modern architecture and heritage. Her new book, *Art Dialogues in Public Space*, will be published in 2017. She also has written and published numerous conference papers and research articles in her home country and abroad. A visiting scholar at universities in Europe, Asia, and North America, her research interests include art criticism, architecture, cultural heritage, modern and contemporary art, urban and cultural theory, and performative arts. Expert member of ICOMOS committee on modern heritage and College of Art Association (New York) International Committee. Active member of *Shadow Casters* since 2013.

**Boris Bakal** is a theatre/film director and actor, intermedia artist, curator, writer, educationist and public historian. He authored numerous projects, performances, lectures, installations and multimedia creations in more than 20 states across Europe as well in Asia, Africa and US. His work is marked, among other, by pronounced exploration of the site/time-specific and the interactive elements of arts and culture. He was visiting scholar/researcher at many universities and co-founded several artistic and activist platforms and associations, e.g. Flying University, Orchestra Stolpnik and Bacači Sjenki/Shadow Casters, the artistic platform that has won numerous awards, recognitions and prizes for their work.

## FRU – FACULTY OF THINGS THAT CAN'T BE LEARNED

**The Organization for Art and Culture FRU – Faculty of Things that Can't Be Learned** from Bitola/Skopje is devised as an open educational and production platform in the field of contemporary art and culture, with a distinct focus on cultivation of critical and engaged relations and active engagement in different contexts.

The Faculty of Things That Can't Be Learned functions as an educational platform that incorporates knowledge that is subject to shared effort, exchange, collaboration, self-organization and mutual learning, instead of knowledge which is simply taught or learned. It was established in 2003 as a platform by several artists, and students of theatre, visual arts and architecture for the purpose of production of contemporary arts and culture events.

FRU bases its activities on:

*Public program* aimed at creating an open and critical practice in the country, that addresses the issue of deficiency of informed and educated young people and audiences and the need for a dialogue between the artists and the audiences in the field of civic engagement culture through alternative education and new hybrid formats for action. This program also includes publishing and presentation of publications of theses and topics relevant to the field of contemporary art and culture;

*AKTO Festival for Contemporary Arts* (initiated in Bitola, 2006) that has imposed itself as a serious partner in promoting and producing new forms of influence on the civil consciousness, locally and regionally, as well as introducing ways of including volunteers and young people that gravitate towards, learn from and aid the festival. AKTO has been cooperating with several regional organizations in partnership projects, and has had 12 editions so far, with the participation of about 600 artists. Last

year AKTO, renewed and rebranded under POP UP AKTO, took place in 4 cities (Bitola, Skopje, Shtip and Tetovo) and collaborated with around 250 participants, 30 partner entities, including 70 volunteers, and an audience of around 10 000 people;

*DENES Young Visual Artist Award in Macedonia* (co-partner with CAC – Skopje) which is awarded in collaboration with the partners Trust for Mutual Understanding and Residency Unlimited in NY.

The organization, in the scope of the 14 years since it was established, has taken active part in several regional platforms in the field of contemporary art and culture, has realized fruitful collaboration with a number of international festivals, such as Perforacije (Zagreb) and Culturscapes, (Basel); has been a part of many networks, such as the BCC – Balkan Can Contemporary and Urban Hum, the Dokumentarno vezenje (Documentary Embroidery) project, as well as long-term projects such as Listening to the Audience, Living Libraries: Archives of Civil Disobedience, Culture for Civil Changes, If Buildings could Talk, etc.

[<http://akto-fru.com/en/>]

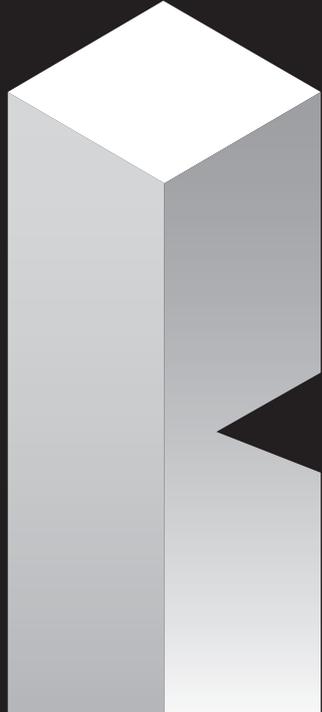
**Ivana Vaseva** (1984) curates, organizes and manages programs and activities in the field of contemporary visual arts and interdisciplinary practices whilst constantly exploring new formats for production and presentation. She lives and works in Skopje, and manages the organization FRU – Faculty of Things that Can't Be Learned jointly with Filip Jovanovski. They are both curators of the last four editions of AKTO Festival for Contemporary Arts. At the moment, Vaseva is curating the Perfect Artist discursive-educational program connected to the DENES Young Visual Artist Award, as well as the long term project on the modernist architectural legacy and thought "If Buildings Could Talk", while also participating in several

research projects and exhibitions in a number of countries. The different formats of exhibition of contemporary visual art are in the focus of her curatorial work as well as the collaborative practices that highlight the potential and the political power of art in different contexts. In 2016, she started a research on cultural workers that became an initiative for changing the Law on Culture in Macedonia, together with Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski. Up until now, she has coordinated the projects “Living Libraries: Archives of Civil Disobedience”; the large research projects Skopje: The Ultimate Collections of Personal Memories 1960 – 2010 Vol.1, The Artist and Dictatorship etc. She is the winner of the award Ladislav Barisic of AICA – Macedonia for the research project Collective action as a Political and not Organizational Decision, together with Filip Jovanovski. She has curated the following exhibitions: You made me so sad, -Now that doesn't have anything to do with you, MSU Has Donkey's Ears, Five Variations of Static: Silence, and etc. She has graduated from the Faculty of Art History in Skopje. She has a specialization in the field of curating acquired through the Curatorial Program at de Appel Arts Centre in Amsterdam (2011/2012).

**Filip Jovanovski** (1979) is a visual artist and civil activist. He often uses a curatorial approach in his works, and creates socially engaged projects often working with local communities. In 2016, he realized his durational project called CAC (Center for Art and Culture) TEXTILE in Shtip, where together with some textile workers he created a two-week program designed according to their needs.

He has participated in several solo and group exhibitions: Decision, Center for Culture Bitola, 2010; Don't Stare so Romantically, Prima Center Berlin, 2011; Museum of City Of Skopje-Open Graphic Studio, 2014; Biennale of Young Artists (2009/2011/2013); SEAfair ( Fair Electronic Arts ) - Museum of

Contemporary Art Skopje, 2010; Festival Perforacije Zagreb, 2010; Festival Synchronized Cities, 2010; Victory Obsessed, Poznan, Poland, 2013; Parallel Universe, Duplex Gallery 100m2 Sarajevo, 2014. He was an artist in residence at ISCP and at T.I.C.A (Tirana Institute for Contemporary Arts). He won the 2013 DENES Award, and was awarded by the AICA (Association of Art Critics in Macedonia) for the research project: Collective Action as a Political and not Organizational Decision, with curator Ivana Vaseva in 2015. He was the 2011 Macedonian representative at the Prague Quadrennial for stage design and space. Since 2007, he has been Artistic Director of the Festival for Contemporary Arts AKTO in Bitola.



**GALLERY**

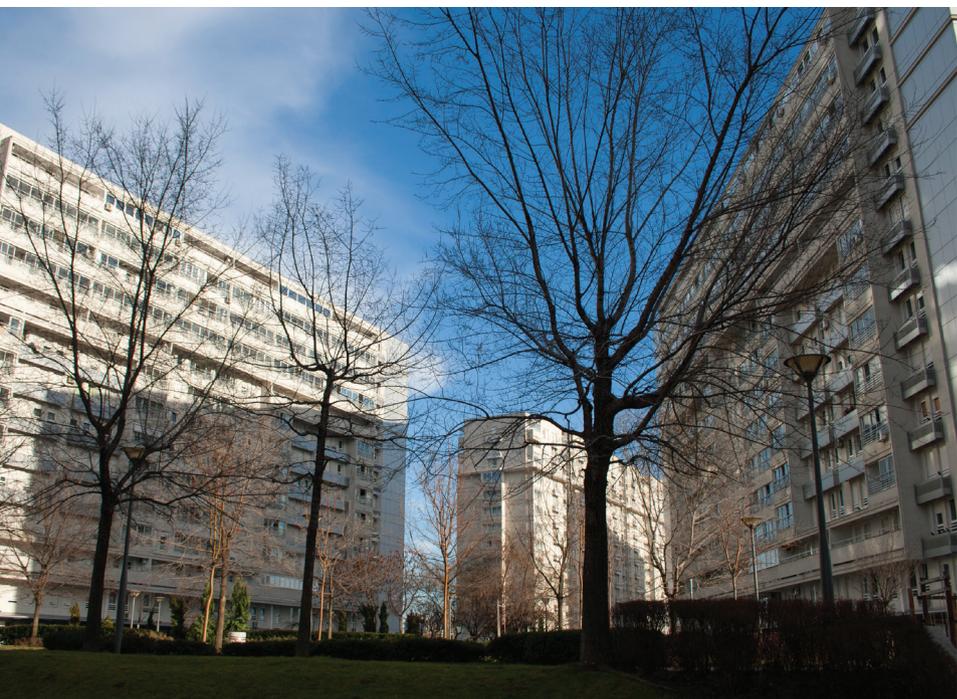
# BELVILLE BELGRADE







Belville, Belgrade, view, photo: Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic



Belville, Belgrade, view, photo: Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic



Belville, Belgrade, view,  
photo: Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic



Belville, Belgrade, interior view,  
photo: Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic



Belville, Belgrade, interior view, photo: Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic



Workshop with Mariela Cvetić, photo: Mirjana Boba Stojadinovic



Presentation of the works from the workshop, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Branislav Nikolić intervention, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Branislav Nikolić intervention, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



LP Elektro performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



LP Elektro performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



LP Elektro performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



LP Elektro performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Manja Ristić performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Manja Ristić performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Manja Ristić performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Manja Ristić performance, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Pesničenje - a training of active poetry, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Pesničenje - a training of active poetry, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Pesničenje - a training of active poetry, photo: Nemanja Knezevic



Pesničenje - a training of active poetry, photo: Nemanja Knezevic

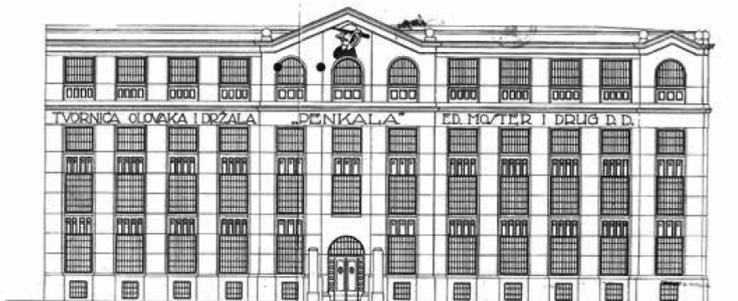
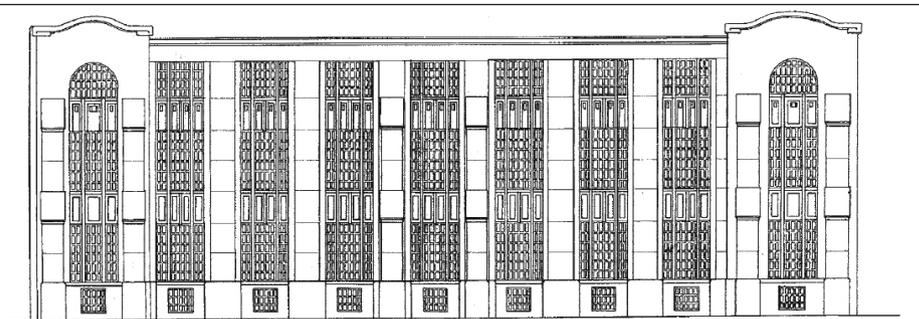




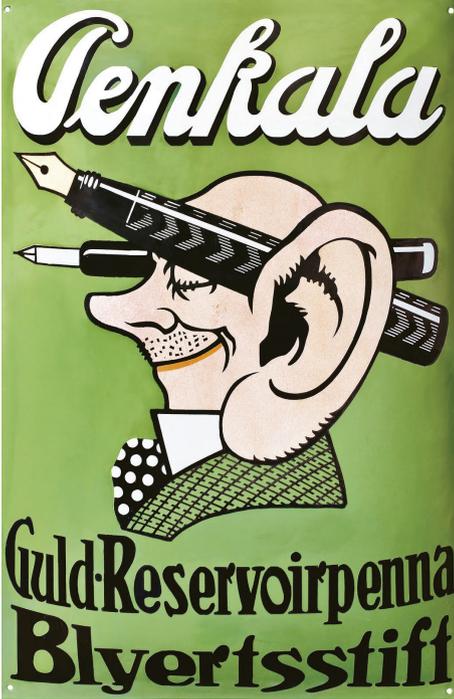
# NADADIMIĆ - MOSTER/PENKALA ZAGREB



Nada Dimić - Penkala, Zagreb, exterior view, photo from Shadow Casters' archive



Nada Dimić - Penkala, Zagreb, Facade, architectural drawing Rudolf Lubinsky, 1930

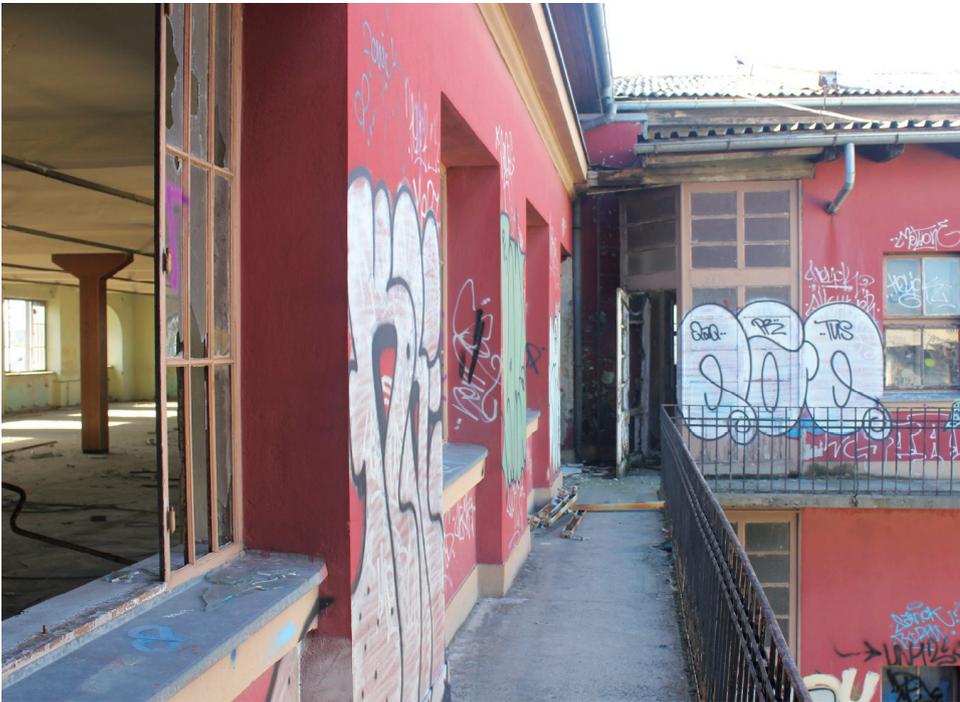


Penkala ad, 1910,  
photo from Shadow Casters' archive



**Nicht drehen**  
oder schieben,  
ein einfacher **Druck**  
auf die zu beschreibende Fläche ge-  
nügt, um die Mine des  
**Penkala**  
Fullbleistiftes hervorzuholen und  
ihn schreibbereit zu machen. Wer  
das berücksichtigt, wird an ihm  
seine helle Freude haben.  
In allen besseren Schreibwaren-  
handlungen von MK. i.-an zu haben.  
Alleinige Fabrikanten:  
**Edmund Moser & Co.**  
Berlin-Rixdorf und Zagreb (Agram)

Penkala newspaper ad,  
from Shadow Casters' archive



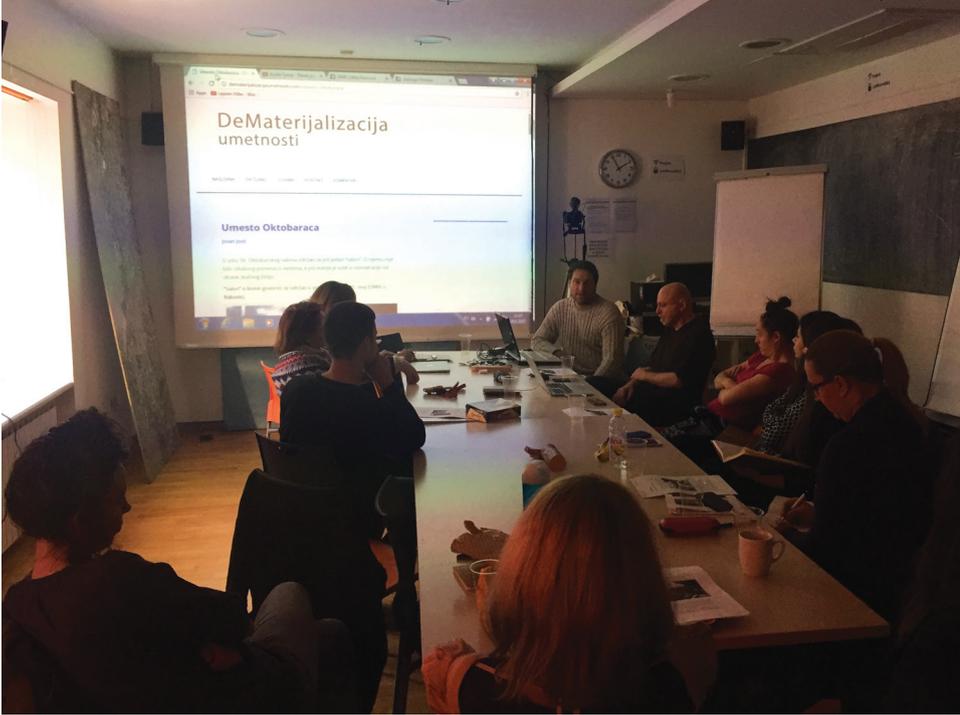
Nada Dimić - Penkala, Zagreb, exterior detail, photo: Marina Pretković



Nada Dimić - Penkala, Zagreb, interior view, photo: Marina Pretković



Nada Dimić - Penkala, Zagreb, interior view, photo: Marina Pretković



IBCT Workshop, Zagreb, 2017, photo: Mare Šuljak



IBCT Workshop, Zagreb, 2017, photo: Mare Šuljak

# RAILWAY WORKERS RESIDENTIAL COMPLEX SKOPJE







Railway Workers Residential Complex Skopje, view, photo: Ilija Tiricovski



If Buildings could talk, part of the research based performance by Filip Jovanovski, photo: Zoran Šekerov







Railway Workers Residential Complex Skopje, view, photo: Zoran Šekerov



DSPH Sounds showcase/ MKD in the frames of 11. POP UP AKTO Festival - Skopje, photo: Vladimir Popovski



View of the exhibition "Collective decision" in the frames of 11. POP UP AKTO Festival - Skopje, photo: Vladimir Popovski

The publication was prepared within the project “If Buildings Could Talk”

Ivana Vaseva, Oliver Musovik

**If Buildings Could Talk**

Publisher: FRU – Faculty for Things that Can't Be Learned,

address: 3E Hristo Uzunov St., Bitola

[<http://akto-fru.com/>]

Editors: Ivana Vaseva, Oliver Musovik

Texts: Ivana Vaseva, Filip Jovanovski, Mirjana Boba Stojadinović,

Saša Tkačenko, Boris Bakal, Sandra Uskoković

Design: KOMA

Proofreaders: Ana Vasileva (Skopje and Belgrade),

Katarina Pejović (Zagreb)

Photos: Belgrade - Mirjana Boba Stojadinović, Nevena Alavuk, Nemanja Knežević; Zagreb - Mare Šuljak, Marina Pretković, Shadow Casters archive;

Skopje - Zoran Šekerov, Oliver Musovik, Ilija Tiricovski, Vladimir Popovski

Print: Propoint, ul. 1520 br. 12-a Pintija, Skopje (head office)

Place of publication: Skopje

Edition: 300

CIP - Каталогизација во публикација

Национална и универзитетска библиотека “Св. Климент Охридски”,  
Скопје

721.03

IF buildings could talk : 2015-2017 / [texts: Ivana Vaseva ... и др.] - Bitola : Fakultet za raboti što ne se učit, 2017. - 72 стр. : фотографии ; 21 см

Автори: Ivana Vaseva, Filip Jovanovski, Mirjana Boba Stojadinović, Saša Tkačenko, Boris Bakal, Sandra Uskoković

ISBN 978-608-65831-2-5

1. Vaseva, Ivana [автор]

а) АКТО Фестивал за современи уметности (Битола) - 2016

б) Архитектура - Згради - Историско-културолошки аспекти

COBISS.MK-ID 104173066

©2017 FRU – Faculty for Things that Can't Be Learned and the authors.

All rights for this edition are protected by law. It is forbidden to copy, reproduce, or publish parts or the entire edition in printed and electronic media or for any other public use or performance without the prior consent of the publisher and the authors.

The project “If Buildings Could Talk” and the resulting publication are made possible through the Balkan Arts and Culture Fund (BAC) supported by the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF). The content and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Government and European Cultural Foundation.

Project Partner Organizations:

Supervizuelna, Belgrade / Shadow Casters, Zagreb / Faculty of things that can't be learned

SUPERVIZUELNA



The project If Buildings Could Talk is funded by Balkan Arts and Culture Fund BAC.

BAC is supported by the Swiss Government through the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and the European Cultural Foundation (ECF).

This publication is supported by the Swiss Government and European Cultural Foundation. The content and findings of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the Swiss Government and European Cultural Foundation.

Patrons:



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
Confédération suisse  
Confederazione Svizzera  
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Confederation



EUROPEAN  
CULTURAL  
FOUNDATION



Supporters:



Grupa  
484



Events' Partners:



БИНБ





This publication is the result of the initiative and the efforts of a few people from Skopje, Belgrade and Zagreb to re-examine, re-evaluate and preserve the cultural heritage - in this specific case the cultural heritage from the area of collective housing architecture and industrial architecture. These efforts were in contrast to the contemporary tendencies of ignoring, neglect and strong individualization of the individual, as opposed to the collective.

The activities merged into one joint project titled "If Buildings Could Talk" which took place simultaneously in the three cities in a period of two years, and in spite of the different methodological approaches and the different social and political context, it addressed the confrontation of the neoliberal logic and the nationalist matrixes of neglecting the past and the values of the past.

The manner in which this publication is arranged was similar to the work process: first, we made a brief outline of the buildings that were subject of our analysis, comparative findings and architectonic evaluations, and then we developed a subjective, experiential and observational overview of the work process and the actions taken from the point of view of the initiators themselves, as well as a few people involved in the process. Over the course of the process which was quite uncertain, yet at the same time challenging, many other realities were revealed, which may not have been taken into consideration, but could serve as starting points for other discussions.

Thematically, through the examples of these three buildings, the publication re-examines the social model of housing and industrial heritage, and the confronting attitudes of the neoliberal policies and tactics emerging from them, as well as the ideas of a "creative city" and the schemes for urban regeneration.

Finally, this publication should raise the speculative possibilities for the relationship between the public and the private, collectivity and the individual expression and offer another view of the city, of history and the collective endeavors which may provoke the interest of other researchers in future.

