Prof. dr. Sanja Potkonjak

Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

University of Zagreb

spotkonjak@ffzg.hr

Dr Tea Škokić, Senior Researcher

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, Zagreb

tea@ief.hr

Broader Abstract for the workshop *Post-Socialist City in a Social and Cultural* *Perspective* 7-8 June 2021

 **Post-Yugoslav Area Research Center** at the Institute of Western and Southern Slavic Studies (PROP, University of Warsaw) and Center for Research of Nationalism and Culture (CINIK, Skopje)

**Meaningful remembrance: making artscapes of socialist city and deindustrialised world**

In this paper, we use the Croatian town of Sisak to discuss artscapes created by Sisak-born artists who address urban decline and deindustrialisation of their hometown in the aftermath of political changes during the 1990s. We will discuss the work of conceptual artists Marijan Crtalić and Marko Tadić and film-maker Goran Dević and

explore concepts of “speculative views”, imaginations of the “pastfutures”, and the nostalgia of industrial ruins in their artwork.

While they moved to live in bigger town Zagreb, Sisak, their youth's town was not forgotten for them. Moreover, it stood and still stands as a place of constant reverberation in their art. This so-called loyal diaspora of deindustrialised and crumbling towns (cf. McCormack 2009: 208) stand as the knowledge bearer of a socialist city. We interpret their work in the context of artscapes. Artscape creates a reflection of a multitemporal experience of socialism and deterritorialised experience of global capitalist transformation. In contrast to restorative nostalgic drives, or drives that are battling enforced post-socialist forgetfulness, the meaningful memory is presented as a deliberate, engaged, and interventionist gesture to asses, situate and reflect on one's positions as conceived by futures (hopes and expectations) embodied in the past times. In other words, we look at how they spatialised time as it can be only expressed in spatial metaphors. And in doing so, we look at how socialism, the fall of it, industrialisation, modernisation, and consecutive deindustrialisation defined them in the ways they produce the meaningful remembrance of time and space.

For Marijan Crtalić, Sisak is emptied of glorious past, albeit pregnant with remnants of socialist grandeur. The socialist environment he recalls and evokes in creating an artscape of remembrance is the environment of progressive grandeur, of a growth, governed by the teleology of progress, unimaginable today. The artscape of a socialist town is the one of industrialisation, urbanisation, a neat and structured place inhabited by sophisticated public art, holistically planned to be able to exercise to fullness its ideas and reach promised futures. Pastfutures evoked in Crtalić's artscapes in exhibitions *Levels and targets*, and the *Invisible Sisak. The Steelwork Phenomenon* are a kind of exploration of the past promises of the future and how the future dismembers the past.

Marko Tadić’s exhibition titled *The Speculative View* was conceptualised as an intervention on art photography from the socialist period, taken from the town’s and factory monographs bought in the flea markets in Zagreb during the preparation of the exhibition. Tadić looks for promises ingrained in socialist modernisation teleology: industrialisation, urbanisation, production of new socialist wo/men, a paragon of educated, cultured, leisured, and consumption indulged workers. The promise and hope inherent to Marko's historical temporalisation of socialism in his work are consistent with the critical design take that looks upon futures of the past.

Two documentary films made by Goran Dević, *Two furnaces for Udarnik Josip* *Trojko* (2012), and *Steel-mill Café* (2017), address how the futures pasts transgressed into the post-socialist present. Dević isinterested in time that embodies at least two spatial metaphors at the same time. The multitemporal frame is used to portray an overlapping vision of time, spaces of discontinuity hosting expectations of industrial growth and experiences of industrial decline.