



WORKING GROUP FOUR FACES OF OMARSKA

Four Faces of Omarska is an ongoing art project questioning the strategies of production of the memorial from the position of those whose experience and knowledge has been subjugated, excluded and disqualified and which is not part of public remembrance and public history. It is constituted of networks of human relations, experiences, their opinions and discussions on the three eras and four faces of the Omarska mine: 1) The Omarska mining complex, surface mining site and the deposits of metal in Bosnia during socialism; 2) The Omarska camp, a place of mass killings and torture in the 1990s wars on the territory of the former Yugoslavia; 3) The Omarska mining complex, owned by the multinational company Arcelor Mittal; 4) Omarska as the filming location for the historical ethno-blockbuster *St. George Slays the Dragon* (*Sveti Georgije ubiva aždahu*), a recent Serbian film production. The three eras and the four faces of Omarska are elaborately linked by mutual discontinuities and continuities. They speak of the disintegration of Yugoslavia and the destiny of its citizens, or rather of the disintegration of the Yugoslav community.

Most of the atrocities committed during the destruction of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia have been forgotten and the lack of institutions of public and historical remembering has led to their negation and relativization. Forgetting and denial of traumatic past, though convenient instrument for the achievement of coexistence of the victims and perpetrators, indicate the continued presence of the circumstances and politics which the committed crimes were based on. It should be considered in the framework of general social situation because denial of the painful and unpleasant memories serves to the political and economical actuality. Since the newly created countries' public spheres are contaminated by the processes of forgetting and ideological translation, the work on the past and production of counter public are emancipatory actions in the sense of political subjectivation, without which the creation of the counter-memory and creation of the politics and new forms of sociability are impossible.

Oblivion, as a constitutive element of the individual and collective remembrance currently has a significant role in the construction of the national identity. As Alaida Asman says: "It is as easy to remember someone else's guilt, as it is hard to remember our own". As long as the central values of the society are based on the national honor, and image created in a manner to exclude the Others as equal members of the society, the confrontation with our own guilt is not possible. New national states that emerged from the disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia work on the construction of national identities through revisions of the past, mostly through revival of the things considered to be elements of the glorious heroic (mythic) past of a particular nation.

Omarska is a paradigmatic example of this. There is no memorial or any kind of sign that a concentration camp existed there in 1992 where mass torture and murders had been committed. Moreover, the local authorities of Prijedor and Republic of Srpska do not recognize the committed crimes and suffering of victims, these experiences are completely negated. The mining complex is privatized whose majority shareholder is the multinational company Arcelor Mittal. There are even some indications that mass graves possibly exist within the complex. However, research of these indications and exhumations have never taken place.

Instead the complex Omarska was chosen as the filming location for the historical ethno-blockbuster *St. George Slays the Dragon*, a movie which is telling a story about the Serbian army in the First World War, Serbia - Republic of Srpska co-production. Starting point and the framework of the Working group Four Faces of Omarska is the criticism of recent cultural production in Serbia. It poses the question: Which politics stand behind cultural and artistic praxis? The project Four Faces of Omarska is based on the political position of Pavle Levi's text *Capo of Omarska* that raised the question of the ethics of the visual and of the role of the cultural production which participates in the revision of the socialist past and in negation of recent history and war crimes. It is a deconstruction of the cultural and artistic participation in a construction of the Serbian national identity and Serbian national history. What Pavle Levi states is that the decision not to watch the movie *St. George Slays the Dragon* would be the political act by means of which would be able to see what is behind the image of the movie that is in function of negation of the recent history of Omarska. Or better say it is involved in creating the new narrative about Serbian national history without any references to the recent violent events that took place at that site. The important point here is that the processes of creating the narratives of the Serbian national identity and history also includes the entity of Republic of Srpska. That means that these processes are not important only for the state of Serbia, but also for Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the same processes are taking place in one part of its territory.

Since the public sphere in Serbia, but also in the former Yugoslavia, is created by the factors such as the ideological state apparatus, dominant cultural policy and content of commercial nature, it is necessary to make a significant effort in creating a counter-public and open the space for public discussion. It mostly means resistance to the dominant narratives of newly forged state-nations, traditional comprehension of the role of art and culture in building national identities, politics of transition and privatization, old and new forms of discrimination and segregation etc. The goal is to create collectivism of public with the aim of producing counter-public based on the ideas of solidarity and equality. Alexander Kluge defined the public as the 'factory of politics'<sup>1</sup>, where the public sphere represents the space in which political and social change occurs, but only under the precondition of creating the counter-public with the potential to change and expand the possibility of public articulation of experience.

Within the methodology of operation of Working Group Four Faces of Omarska, the Public Working Meeting is the main form of exhibiting and serves as an act of stepping out into public and opening the

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander Kluge, *On Film and the Public Sphere*, in *New German Critique*, No. 24/25, Autumn 1981-Winter 1982

space for a wider participation of subjects who do not necessarily come from the fields of art and culture, but want to participate in the creation of common counter-public. Here we do not speak solely and exclusively about the individual responsibility of *an author as public intellectual*<sup>2</sup>, but the role of the community that, in the context of theatre Rancière defined with the following words: ‘the manner of taking time and space, performing body opposed to simple legal apparatus, a set of perceptions, gestures and attitudes which stand before and reshape political forms and institutions.’<sup>3</sup>

Working group Four Faces of Omarska starts from the position that art is public good, a space of knowledge production and production of emancipatory politics, a public sphere with the potential to form a platform for diverse and opposite subjectivities, politics and economies, a place where the battle for political subjectivisation takes place. As Gregory Sholette once pointed out “the aim is not to make political art, but to make art politically”<sup>4</sup>.



**2015** (August 10-19) Group collaborative exhibition of artists from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia and the Netherlands “Unerasable”, in Prizren, Kosovo, presented within the frame of Dokufest and Dealing with the Past program. Organisers: Forum ZFD-Kosovo Program in collaboration with Dokufest (Prizren, Kosovo), Ars Acta (Skopje, Macedonia), Crvena Association for Culture and Art (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina), Initiative for Contemporary Art and Theory (Belgrade, Serbia) with the support of New Perspektiva and Lumbardhi.

**2015** (August 5-6) Commemoration in Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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<sup>2</sup> Simon Sheikh, *Representation, Contestation and Power: The Artist as Public Intellectual*

<sup>3</sup> Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator (La spectateur émancipé)*, edition Jugoslavija, Belgrade 2010

<sup>4</sup> Discussion between Gregory Sholette and Jelena Vesić, *Amateur, Informal, Activist, Self-Organised... 'Dark Matter' and Polarisation of Artistic Work*; in the *Politicality of Performance*, TKH, Belgrade, 2011





**2014** (September 3-7) Lecture performance and performance at the *Zooming Fluid States* in Rijeka, Croatia. Organizer: Drugo more. Partners: Croatian National Theater “Ivan Zajc” Rijeka, Performance Studies International (PSI)

**2014** (August 5-6) Commemoration in Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**2014** (April 3-4) *Art as critical and political practice: Where the subjugated knowledge is, sociability occurs*, presentation of Working Group Four Faces of Omarska at symposium *On Productive Shame, Reconciliation and Agency*. Concept: Suzana Milevska, Endowed Professor for Central and South-Eastern European Art Histories. Organisation: Vice-Rectorate for Art and Research of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna.

**2014** (March 13-14) Lecture *Where subjugated knowledge is, sociability occurs* at the workshop *Critically Assessing the Teaching and Researching of Memory Politics and Practices - Memory, History and State-Building in Bosnia-Herzegovina*. Organiser: University of Zurich, Zurich, Switzerland.

**2014** (January 15 – February 13) *Open Systems 1-01-04/13*. GPL Contemporary, Vienna.  
*ARTSLAB, De/Re/Construction: Time, Space, Memories*  
Project curators: Aneta Stojnić und Nikola Dedić  
Artist Selection: Doplenger, Marina Gržinić, Four Faces of Omarska, TkH

**2014** (January 11-18) Presentation of the project Four Faces of Omarska at the *Study Seminar in Israel: Comparative Memory Activism and Conflict Transformation: Practices and Challenges*. Organiser: The Center for Comparative Conflict Studies (CFCCS)

**2014** (January 27-28) *Between Facts and Fiction* is the closing event of forumZFD's 2013 project *Recollecting the Past in Kosovo: Cultural Memory between Facts and Fiction*. Organisation: Forum ZFD – Kosovo program. Priština, Kosovo

**2013** (August 5-6) Commemoration in Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**2013** (July 2-3) Public event and workshop *Film bulletin Four Faces of Omarska*. Organisation: no.w.here. Open School. London, UK.

**2013** (April 26) Lecture and presentation of the project *Four Faces of Omarska* at the Faculty of Fine Arts in Belgrade (Serbia) within the study program led by profesor Zoran Todorović.

**2013** (April 13) Lecture and presentation of the project *Four Faces of Omarska* at the PhD course *White Cube, Inside and Out* [blok Ideology of the White Cube vs. blok Non-representationalist Politics in Art] within the Erasmus Mundus program. Concept and organiser: Jelena Vesić.

**2013** (June 27) Participated at a round-table debate *Conflicting Memories, Post-War Balkan Monument in Focus*. Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina).

**2013** (March 25-27) Public Working Meeting and Reading groups *The roll of the media in the process of creation of private remembrance*. Organisation and moderation: Working group *Four Faces of Omarska*. Magacin, Belgrade, Serbia. Participated: Žarka Radoja, Dušan Komarčević, Jelena Petrović, Jelena Vesić, Paulina Janusz, Sava Jokić, Faruk Šehić, Marija Ratković



**2013** (February 18-21) Media and remembrance – research travel to Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina.



**2012** (October 30) Working Group Four Faces of Omarska held a workshop within the student exchange project *Because it concerns me?* within the program *Europeans for Peace*. Cooperation between Youth center CK13, Novi Sad, Serbia and Social center Caracol, Bühl, Germany. Place: Youth center CK13, Novi Sad, Serbia.



**2012** (October 12-15) Reading groups and public working meeting – Working group SC: *Methodologies of commemorating sites of suffering* (BLOK) in collaboration with Working Group Four Faces of Omarska. Urban festival 2012. Students center, HDLU, Zagreb, Croatia.





**2012** (September 16) Exhibition and public working meeting *Film bulletin Four Faces of Omarska*, as the part of the exhibition *De/Re/Construction: Time, Space, Memories*, 15. Biennial of Art, Pančevo, Serbia. Curators: Nikola Dedić and Aneta Stojnić.



**2012** (August 23) Working Gathering *Film bulletin Four Faces of Omarska*. Lecturer: Slobodan Šijan, film director and artist. Organisation: Working Group Four Faces of Omarska. Studio ISUT, Belgrade (Serbia).

**2012** (August 5-6) Commemoration in Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**2012** (August 3-4) Public screening of the archival raw video material and discussion *Video archive Four Faces of Omarska*. Organisation and moderation: Working group Four Faces of Omarska. SIT Study abroad program, Belgrade, Serbia.

Participants: Nika Autor (artist, film maker), Giulia Cilla (artist), Sava Jokić (student of General Literature and the Theory of Literature, The Faculty of Philology, Belgrade), Lidija Radojević (politicalologist, senator of the Workers' Punk University/alternative educational program, Ljubljana), Milja Radovanović (student of art history, Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade), Johanna Schaffer (art historian, professor for the theory and practice of visual communication at the Kunsthochschule, Kassel), Branimir Stojanović (psychoanalyst and theorist, Ignorant Schoolmaster and his Cometees, Grupa Spomenik/MonumentGroup), Slobodan Šijan (artist, writer and film maker), Jelena Vesić (independent art historian, curator, lecturer), Stevan Vuković (philosopher, curator and art writer; editor of SKC Filmforum, Belgrade).



**2012** (July 2) On July 2, 2012, London's Olympic tower — the ArcelorMittal Orbit — was reclaimed as a 'Memorial in Exile' by survivors of the Bosnian concentration camp at Omarska, now a fully-functional mine operated by ArcelorMittal. Iron ore and profits extracted from Omarska have been used to manufacture London's newest landmark. This event was organised by Forensic Architecture with participation from the Four Faces of Omarska and Grupa Spomenik.

**2012** (June 15) Working gathering *Film, politics of remembrance and production of a counter-public sphere*. Lecturer: Pavle Levi, film theorist, Stanford University, USA. Organisation: Working group Four Faces of Omarska. Studio ISUT, Belgrade, Serbia.

Participants: Slobodan Šijan (artist, writer and film maker), Branimir Stojanović (psychoanalyst and theorist, Ignorant Schoolmaster and his Cometees, MonumentGroup), Jelena Petrović (MonumentGroup), Staša Tomić (film author), Kontekst kolektiv.

**2012** (May 4) Monument Group and Working Group Four Faces of Omarska are awarded for the fight against the discrimination by the Coalition against discrimination. Media Center, Belgrade, Serbia.

**2012** (April 11-15) Working gathering *Living Death Camp and Forensic aesthetics. Where subjugated knowledge is sociability occurs II*. Organisation: Working group Four Faces of Omarska, Monument Group and Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths University of London. Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia.





APRIL 11, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia. Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju Public Working Meeting “Forensic aesthetics”

Moderators: Damir Arsenijević and Eyal Weizman

Presentations: (Forensic Architecture) Susan Schuppli; (Forensic Oceanography) Lorenzo Pezzani; (The Image of Muammar Gaddafi) Ayesha Hameed; (Radical Meteorology) Nabil Ahmed; (The Political Body of Hugo Chavez) Godofredo Pereira; (Forensic Audiology) Lawrence Abu Hamdan; (Forensic Archaeology) Caroline Sturdy Colls.

APRIL 12, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia

Lectures:

Milan Radanovic, *Istorijska pozadina zlocina nemackog nacistickog okupatora u Srbiji 1941-1942.*

Olga Pintar Manojlovic: *Posle logora -logor!*

Public working visit to Staro Sajmište:

Caroline Sturdy Colls, *Forensic Archaeology: Introduction to non-invasive research methodologies*

Srdan Jovanovic Weiss, *Walking the Line: Through contemporary layers of Staro Sajmište*

APRIL 13, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia

Public Working Meeting and discussion of text: G. W. F. Hegel, *Observation of self-consciousness to its immediate actuality. Physiognomy and Phrenology.* In *The Phenomenology of Mind* (1908)

APRIL 14-15

Working visit to Kozarac, Omarska, Prijedor, Trnopolje, Kozara in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

## 15. APRIL

Working visit to the Memorial Center Jasenovac in Croatia.

**2012** (April 3-6) Working gathering *Living Death Camp and Forensic aesthetics. Where subjugated knowledge is sociability occurs* I. Organisation: Working group Four Faces of Omarska, Monument Group and Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths University of London. Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia.

APRIL3-4, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia.

Reading groups moderated by Branimir Stojanović i Jelena Petrović

Participants: Damir Arsenijević, Ivana Bago, Mirjana Dragosavljević, Anela Hakalović, Srđan Hercigonja, Jasna Kovo, Antonia Majača, Daniela Majstorović, Vladimir Miladinović, Sudbin Musić, Donjeta Salihu, Igor Sovilj, Milica Tomić, Dejan Vasić, Shpresa Veliqui, Ana Vilenica, Jovanka Vojinović, Zoran Vučkovic, Uglješa Vuković

APRIL 5, Sava square, Belgrade, Serbia.

Public working visit to the: Memorial dedicated to the "Fallen Fighters And Victims Of 1990-1999 Wars In The Territory Of Former Yugoslavia". Moderation and discussion: Milica Tomić.

Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia.

Lecture and public discussion: "Forensic architecture"

Moderator: Andrew Herscher, writer and architecture theoretician, profesor at the University of Michigan, USA.

APRIL 6, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia.

Workshop "Forensic architecture"

Moderator: Andrew Herscher, writer and architecture theoretician, profesor at the University of Michigan, USA.

APRIL 7, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade, Serbia.

Projection: "Forensic Aesthetics: the Architecture of Skulls and other Living Matter. Eyal Weizman"

**2012** (January 20) Presentation at the conference *Dealing with the past in Serbia. What next?* Organisation: BKV Fund, Fönd Heinrich Boll, Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade. Place: National library of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia.

**2011** (August 5-6) Commemoration in Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**2011** (May 24) Public Working Meeting and lecture *Memorial of Subjugated Knowledge. How to think memorial without political and economical power.* Lecturer: Andrew Hearcher. Organisation: Ignorant Schoolmaster and his Cometees and Working Group Four Faces of Omarska. Center for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade (Serbia).

**2011** (11<sup>th</sup> July) Workshop *Film, politics of memory and production of counter public sphere - How to think about memorial in film?* Lecturer: Pavle Levi. Organisation: Working Group Four Faces of Omarska. Studio ISUT, Belgrade, Serbia.

Participants: Slobodan Šijan (artist, writer and film maker), Kontekst kolektiv, Ignorant Schoolmaster and his Cometees.





**2011** (May – October) Results of reading group, workshop and publication as the part of the project *What is the name of war today?* (Ignorant schoolmaster, Monument Group, Four Faces of Omarska) are exhibited at the Biennial *Time machine – No Network*, Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Curator: Branislav Dimitrijević.

**2011** (9<sup>th</sup> May)- Kozarac/Omarska, Bosna i Hercegovina. On the 9<sup>th</sup> May, Day of Victory, Women in Black, Helsinki Committee for Human Rights Serbia, Center for Women's Studies Belgrade, Monument Group and Working Group Four Faces of Omarska with the support of Former camp detainees' association Prijedor 92 and Association of the former Former camp detainees' association of Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed the Declaration about continuous struggle against Fascism.

**2011** (April 14-16) Presentation of the Four Faces Omarska at the conference *On the surface: The heritage of Mins and Mining*, Innsbruck University, Austria.

**2010** (October-November) *Where Everything Is Yet To Happen, 2nd chapter: Exposures*, SPAPORT, Banja Luka, Curators: DeLve/Institute for Duration, Location and Variables (Ivana Bago & Antonija Majača). Exhibition and public working meeting Working group Four Faces of Omarska. "Rudi Čajevac", Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina. Participants of the Public Working Meeting: Nusreta Sivac, Sudbin Musić, Satko Mujagić, Rezak Hukanović, Aleksandar Trifunović, Staša Tomić, Ivana Bago, Antonija Majača and public.



**2010** (September-October) Exhibition *One day*, Milica Tomić. The first presentation of the project Four Faces of Omarska (exposing the archive, reading groups, public working meetings). Curator: Dejan Sretenović. Showroom of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Belgrade, Serbia.

**2010** (August 5-6) Commemoration in Omarska, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**2010** (June 26-28) Research/Working visit to Omarska, Prijedor, Banja Luka, Sanski most in Bosnia and Herzegovina.