



We are living  
in a beautiful  
wOURld - Austria



## A beautiful world of the lost generation

*In search of a better life people are leaving Serbia and we became aware that we were losing friends progressively. We decided to make photographs of these young people for memento image collective of their uncertain destinations... (diSTRUKTURA, 2007)*

If there is one phrase that describes the fundamental transformation of the present as we currently experience it, it's "post-truth". It has always been about cultural hegemony, i.e. the production of popular ideas (Antonio Gramsci).

Yet lately an ominous realisation has spread: Claims no longer require any factual basis in reality in order to be widely recognised. The post-truth age in times of unabashed populism has commenced. It is therefore likely that even the art world has its share in it. For decades the critical analysis of perception has determined contemporary artistic production. It was supported by an enlightened, ideology-critical impulse: Seeing, recognition is relative, regarding various factors and areas, starting with our sensory apparatus. "What we see and hear, or what we feel and smell and taste, is only a small fraction of what actually exists out there. Our conscious model of reality is a low-dimensional projection of the inconceivably richer physical reality surrounding us and sustaining us", says philosopher Thomas Metzinger. The perceived world itself is already a construct for every human (astonishingly there is still agreement on a coherent, collective perception of reality). On top of this come various self-reinforcing information echo chambers in which we digitally linger and which give the impression of majority convictions which are in fact only shared by a minority, namely that of the respective echo chamber.

The socio-political consciousness is now the environment in which this type of constructivism is established in the worst way. In the race for headlines, lies suffice in order to determine a narrative. Others may rush to contribute corrections to what has been said, never mind, it is always too late for that. The view of reality has already been altered. Post-truth politics are consequentially only about emotions. At the same time, trust is scarce. Almost everything and everyone is distrusted. Ironically, this situation facilitates the seeding of claims. Most of these claims are aimed to evoke the enormous and imminent threat of migration and flight, which has fundamentally changed the mood in western Europe. A silent majority desires the humane handling of refugees, while a hysterical, aggressive minority pushes the boundaries of what can be said publicly and thus undermines democratic principles and political room for manoeuvre.

What are art's options in a post-factual society? In times of permanent crises, looming disastrous revolutions and crumbling solidarity in Europe? In times when many of art's subversive strategies have already been taken and recoded?

Humans are homo narrans, we need stories in order to be able to understand. The human brain, with its selective and adaptive processes, is a storyteller itself. In order to obtain a complex image of reality, stories by others are required. Salman Rushdie stresses that literature and its stories have the power and the task of not accepting the world as it presents itself as given: "Art does not belong to anybody, no party and no religious groups. It is a single voice which says: 'That's my view, how about yours?' This makes it dangerous

for those trying to control us, telling us what to think.” Art also often deals with stories. diSTRUKTURA for example collected almost 100 personal stories of emigration and immigration, stories of individuals and how they are connected to concrete places. They created a dense, psychogeographical installation of these people, stories and places – many different voices saying: This is how I see it, this is how I experienced it.

Concrete examples illustrating the invisible hurdles that hinder the best intentions for integration are often highly useful within the socio-politically sensitive and politically highly instrumentalised topic of migration. Art particularly comes to the fore here. Its self-concept is open and liberal, programmes convey and support values such as diversity, plurality and equality. Yet the question arises: How inclusive is the art world itself? Doesn't marginalisation, even if in a more subtle form, also come into play?

diSTRUKTURA has collected stories of emigration and immigration during the war in Yugoslavia. The artistic duo has interviewed numerous Austrians of Yugoslavian heritage. The selection was aimed at academically educated people working in the art world, so that potential problems of integration could not be argued to be due to poverty and educational disadvantages. These stories enable an understanding of how migration and integration feel within a certain environment, a specific daily routine, and from an individual perspective, grounded in the same spaces in which the art-loving, autochthonous Austrians move.

The displacement, adjustment, different representation of images is still required – and art has a special expertise in this.

In 2007, the artistic duo diSTRUKTURA began taking photos of their friends and colleagues, in railway stations or airports, just before leaving the country - a place where they were born, where they grew up, in a search for a new, better life elsewhere.



*We are living in a beautiful wORLD, Sasa, 2010*



*We are living in a beautiful wORLD, Nora, 2007*



*Barbi Markovic, video still, 2013*



*Sasa Ivanovic, video still, 2016*

The artists intention was to find out how the interviewed persons positioned themselves in a new environment and what their identity as a citizen made of. But also, how they as intellectuals are involved in the “new” cultural climate and if they try to be an active part of it.

Are they visible in the public life of the city? Do they contribute somehow to the community? Also, do the migrants want to “give back something” to their country of origin? Could it be found in their statements a further emotional link to the country of origin as well as a “bad conscience” against those left behind? But also, an interesting question is, whether the mentality and cultural knowledge of their country of origin is perceived as an advantage for the pursuit of certain activities against non-migrant actors. Are they motivated to take an active part in the social life, or could it be claimed that migrants are primarily for philanthropic reasons engaged in the charitable activities of non-profit organisation and development policies?

These and similar questions formed the basis for the interviews led by diSTRUKTURA during their very personal walks with the migrants coming from the former Yugoslavia. The collected images and sound material build a comprehensive archive from which artists are forming the public presentation on a several levels. One level is a collage-like city map, on which the walking-paths with the interviewed persons are traced and the individually important points marked. The other level consists of the personal interviews, which are available as separate video pieces via dedicated QR codes online.

The interview as a form is an increasingly dominant research method also present in visual art. Not only that the methodology of identity forming is used here, but it is also a contribution to the questions of the visibility and audibility of each human being.



*We are living in a beautiful wORLD - Graz, exhibition view (WonderLab), MSUV, Novi Sad, 2015*

With the use of QR codes, a “hidden public sphere”, to which the interviewees at the beginning of their “integration process” belonged, was underlined in a formal-aesthetic sense. The reduced visual gesture refers to the lettristic-situationist concept of “psychogeography,” evoking the situationist practices of the 1960s, which attempted, among other things, to give the cities their lost human dimension. Similarly, the access to private narratives, which are partly transported with very intimate feelings of the interviewees, is subtly hidden. Through its transformation and translation, the project addresses certain geographic and psychological categories, which have almost disappeared in public discourse on migration. Therefore, it is even more important to point out the social, ideological and cultural dimensions of the problem by presenting the way individual migrants have developed their own strategies of “adaptation” and this said in their own words. At the same time, this project is a reflection of the situation on site.

(Astrid Kury, Mirjana Peitler-Selakov)

## Die wunderschöne Welt der verlorenen Generationen

*„Auf der Suche nach einem besseren Leben verlassen viele Menschen Serbien und uns wurde bewusst, dass wir zunehmend Freunde verlieren. Wir beschlossen, diese junge Menschen zu fotografieren, um von ihren unsicheren Destinationen ein kollektives Erinnerungsbild zu schaffen...(diSTRUKTURA, 2007)*

Wenn es ein Wort gibt, das den epochalen Umbruch der Gegenwart beschreibt, wie wir ihn jetzt erleben, dann ist es „postfaktisch“. Immer schon ging es um kulturelle Hegemonie, also die Produktion zustimmungsfähiger Ideen (Antonio Gramsci). Neuerdings aber hat sich die unheilvolle Erkenntnis breit gemacht, dass Behauptungen gar keine faktischen Entsprechungen in der Realität mehr brauchen, um auf breite Anerkennung zu stoßen. Das postfaktische Zeitalter im Zeichen des ungenierten Populismus hat begonnen. Nicht unwahrscheinlich, dass daran sogar der Kunstbereich seinen Anteil hat. Für Jahrzehnte war es die kritische Auseinandersetzung mit Wahrnehmung, die die zeitgenössische künstlerische Produktion bestimmt hat. Sie war getragen von einem aufklärerischen und ideologiekritischen Impuls: Sehen, erkennen ist relativ, zu den unterschiedlichsten Faktoren und Bereichen, angefangen bereits bei unserem Wahrnehmungsapparat. „Was wir sehen und hören oder ertasten und erfühlen, was wir riechen und schmecken, ist nur ein kleiner Bruchteil dessen, was tatsächlich existiert. Unser bewusstes Wirklichkeitsmodell ist eine niedrigdimensionale Projektion der unvorstellbar reicheren und gehaltvolleren physikalischen Wirklichkeit, die uns umgibt und uns trägt“, so der Philosoph Thomas Metzinger. Die wahrgenommene Welt selbst schon ist für jeden Menschen ein Konstrukt (erstaunlich, dass es trotzdem eine Einigung auf eine kohärente kollektive Wirklichkeitswahrnehmung gibt). Hinzu kommen dann noch die diversen selbstverstärkenden Informationsblasen, in denen wir uns sozial wie digital aufhalten und die mehrheitliche Überzeugungen suggerieren, die doch nur eine Minderheit teilt, nämlich die der jeweiligen Blase.

Im gesellschaftspolitischen Bewusstsein hat sich diese Art von Konstruktivismus nun auf übelste Weise etabliert. Im Wettlauf um Headlines reicht die Lüge völlig aus, um einen Diskurs zu bestimmen. Andere mögen mit der Korrektur des Gesagten hinterhereilen, egal, dafür ist es immer zu spät. Der Blick auf die Wirklichkeit ist schon verändert. In den Post-truth-politics geht es folgerichtig nur mehr um Gefühle. Gleichzeitig ist Vertrauen Mangelware. Misstraut wird nahezu allem und allen. Ironischerweise ist es in dieser Situation besonders einfach, Behauptungen in die Welt zu setzen. Die meisten dieser Behauptungen richten sich darauf, aus Migration und Flucht ein gewaltiges Bedrohungsszenario zu evozieren, das die Stimmung in Westeuropa grundlegend verändert hat. Eine schweigende Mehrheit befürwortet den humanen Umgang mit Flüchtlingen, eine hysterisch-aggressive Minderheit verschiebt indessen die Grenzen des öffentlich Sagbaren und unterminiert damit demokratische Prinzipien und politische Handlungsspielräume.

Was sind die Möglichkeiten der Kunst in einer postfaktischen Gesellschaft? In Zeiten auf Dauer gestellter Krisenerfahrungen, erwarteter katastrophaler Umwälzungen und bröckelnder Solidarität in Europa? In Zeiten, wo viele subversive Strategien der Kunst bereits vereinnahmt und umcodiert wurden?

Der Menschen ist ein homo narrans, wir brauchen Geschichten, um zu verstehen. Das menschliche Gehirn in seinen selektiven und adaptiven Prozessen ist selbst ein Geschichtenerzähler. Um ein komplexes Bild der Wirklichkeit zu erhalten, sind dazu die Geschichten von anderen erforderlich. Salman Rushdie betont, dass die Literatur und ihre Geschichten die Kraft und die Aufgabe haben, die Welt, wie sie sich jeweils darstellt, nicht als gegeben hinzunehmen: „Kunst gehört niemandem, keiner Partei und auch keiner religiösen Gruppe. Es ist eine einzelne Stimme, die sagt: ‚So sehe ich das, was meinst du?‘

Das macht sie gefährlich für jene, die kontrollieren wollen, die uns sagen, was wir denken sollen.“ Auch in der Kunst geht es oft um Geschichten. diSTRUKTURA zum Beispiel haben sich an die 100 persönliche Geschichten über Aus- und Einwanderung erzählen lassen, Geschichten von einzelnen Menschen, wie sie mit konkreten Orten verbunden sind. Und sie haben aus diesen Personen, Geschichten und Orten eine dichte psychogeografische Installation gestaltet – viele verschiedene Stimmen, die sagen: So sehe ich das, so habe ich das erlebt.

Im gesellschaftspolitisch sensiblen und hochgradig politisch instrumentalisierten Thema Migration ist es z.B. äußerst hilfreich, wenn man an konkreten Beispielen etwas über die unsichtbaren Hürden erfährt, die die besten Integrationsabsichten behindern können. Gerade der Kunstbereich rückt hier in den Fokus. Das Selbstverständnis hier ist offen und liberal, in den Programmen werden Werte wie Diversität, Pluralität und Gleichheit vermittelt und unterstützt, und doch stellt sich die Frage, wie inklusiv ist der Kulturbereich denn selbst? Werden nicht auch hier, wenn auch in subtilerer Form, Ausgrenzungen wirksam?

diSTRUKTURA hat, nach Geschichten der Auswanderung im Zug des Jugoslawienkriegs, auch Geschichten der Einwanderung gesammelt. Das Künstlerduo hat zahlreiche ÖsterreicherInnen mit ex-jugoslawischen Migrationshintergrund gefragt. Die Auswahl richtete sich an akademisch gebildete vorwiegend aus dem Kulturbereich, sodass allfällige Schwierigkeiten der Integration nicht mehr durch Armut und Bildungsferne wegargumentiert werden können. Diese Geschichten ermöglichen ein Verständnis, wie sich Migration und Integration in einer bestimmten Umgebung, einem konkreten Alltag, einer individuellen Perspektive anfühlen, die sich in denselben Räumen verortet ist, in denen sich auch die kulturaffinen autochthonen ÖsterreicherInnen bewegen.

Immer noch braucht es das Verrücken, Zurechtrücken, Anderszeigen von Bildern, für das die Kunst eine besondere Expertise hat.

Im Jahr 2007 begann das Künstlerduo diSTRUKTURA, Fotoportraits von ihren FreundInnen und KollegInnen aufzunehmen, in Bahnhöfen oder Flughäfen, kurz vor ihrer Abreise, kurz bevor sie den Ort und das Land, wo sie aufgewachsen sind, verlassen werden, um anderswo ein neues Leben zu beginnen.



*We are living in a beautiful wORLD, Banana and Sanja, 2007*



*We are living in a beautiful wORLD, Nemanja, 2007*

Die so entstandene Fotoserie „We are living in a beautiful wouRld“ wurde in den Folgejahren mit einer Reihe von „Simple Statements“ ergänzt. Das sind Textausschnitte, die aus der elektronischen Korrespondenz mit jungen Menschen, die die gleiche oder ähnliche Geschichten erlebt hatten, ausgewählt wurden. Einige berichteten von Enttäuschungen und Resignation davor:

“I always wanted to see Serbia as a developed, fully functioning state like America, Germany or, I don't know, Sweden where one doesn't need to go abroad in pursuit of happiness, but find it right there besides

the people he/she grew up with and loves, where he/she feels the best and at home... but as they say... 'pure wishes and dreams'..."

Andere wieder von neuen Eindrücken danach:

„The peace, the pace of life, the lack of traffic jams and people that are friendlier than in other parts of Canada...but not too imposing. All in all, life here seems like an anti stress therapy session.“

Jahre später greifen Milan Bosnic und Milica Milicevic das Thema Brain Drain und Lost Generation wieder auf, um diesmal zu erfahren, was den Menschen, dort wo sie angekommen sind, geworden ist. Menschen, die dem Betrachter einmal als stumme Gesichter (in Fotoportraits) oder durch gesichtslose Äußerungen (Sätze aus Emails) präsentiert wurden, bekamen im dritten Teil des Projekts, das in Österreich zwischen 2013 und 2016 durchgeführt wurde, mit ihrer Stimme und ihrem Gesicht volle Präsenz (Videos).

Auf der Suche nach MigrantInnen aus dem ehemaligen Jugoslawien in Österreich reiste das Künstlerduo an verschiedene Orte wie Linz, Wien Graz, Wels, Bad Ischl, Salzburg, Innsbruck oder Steyr und versuchte damit, so umfassend wie möglich in Österreich zu recherchieren. Sie führten zahlreiche Interviews, begleiteten jeden einzelnen mit der Kamera durch ihre Stadt, ließen sich an ihre Orte führen und hörten sich ihre Geschichte an. Die Gebäude, Plätze und Orte bekamen durch das Erzählte eine neue Markierung, die Städte damit eine neue Psychogeographie.



*Ivan Redj, video still, 2013*



*Jana Vladusic, video still, 2016*

diSTRUKTURA wollte von diesen Menschen erfahren, wie sie sich in ihre neue Umgebung eingefunden haben und worauf sie ihre Identität als Bürgerinnen und Bürger bauen. Aber auch wie sie als Intellektuelle das neue kulturelle Klima rezipiert haben und wie sie versuchen, sich darin einzuschreiben. Sind sie im öffentlichen Leben der Stadt sichtbar? Tragen sie etwas für die Gemeinschaft bei? Haben die MigrantInnen den Wunsch, ihrem Herkunftsland „zu wollen“? Findet man in ihren Aussagen eine weiter empfundene emotionale Bindung zum Herkunftsland ebenso wie ein „schlechtes Gewissen“ gegenüber den Zurückgebliebenen? Aber auch die Frage, ob die Mentalitäts- und Kulturkenntnisse ihres Herkunftslandes als Vorteil für das Ausüben bestimmter Tätigkeiten gegenüber nicht-migrantischen Akteuren wahrgenommen wird, war von Interesse. Werden sie motiviert, am gesellschaftlichen Leben aktiv teil zu nehmen, oder konnte man feststellen, dass sich Migrantinnen und Migranten aus primär philanthropischen Gründen, d.h. wegen wohlthätiger, gemeinnütziger Ziele, entwicklungspolitisch engagieren?

Diese und ähnliche Fragen bilden den Hintergrund für die Interviews, die diSTRUKTURA während Spaziergängen mit den einzelnen Menschen führte. Das so entstandene Bild- und Tonmaterial formte ein umfassendes Archiv, aus dem das Künstlerduo das Projekt der Öffentlichkeit auf mehreren Ebenen präsentiert. Eine Ebene ist in Form eines collageartigen Stadtplans, auf welchem die mit den interviewten Personen gegangenen Wege nachgezeichnet und die individuell wichtigen Punkte markiert sind. Die andere Ebene bilden die einzelnen Interviews, die als separate Videos über unterschiedliche QR-Codes im Internet zugänglich gemacht wurden. Das Interview als Form ist zu einer zunehmend dominierenden

Forschungsmethode auch in der Kunst präsent. Es werden nicht nur die Methodiken der Identitätsbildung eingesetzt, sondern sie können so als Beitrag zu Fragen der Sichtbarkeit und Hörbarkeit jedes einzelnen gesehen werden.



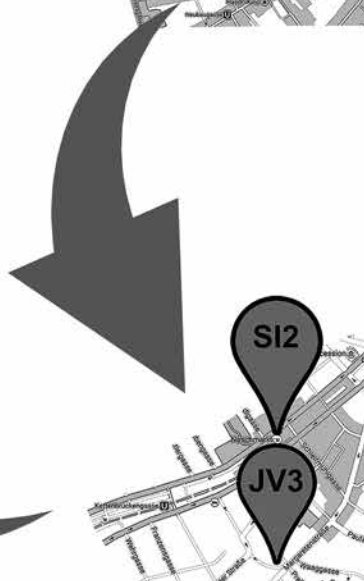
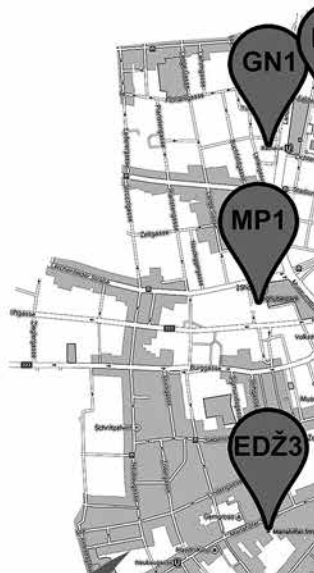
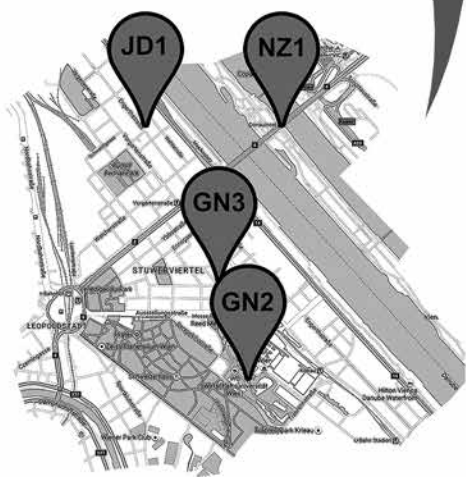
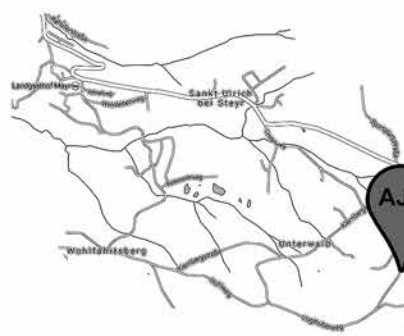
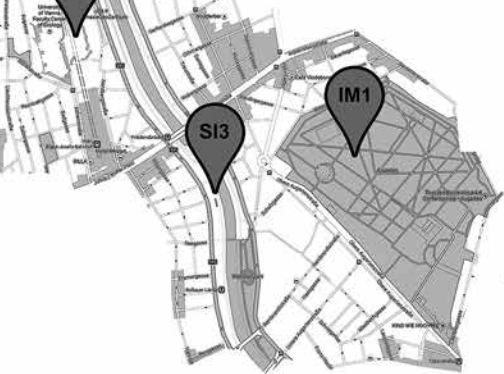
*We are living in a beautiful world - Graz, exhibition view (WonderLab), MSUV, Novi Sad, 2015*

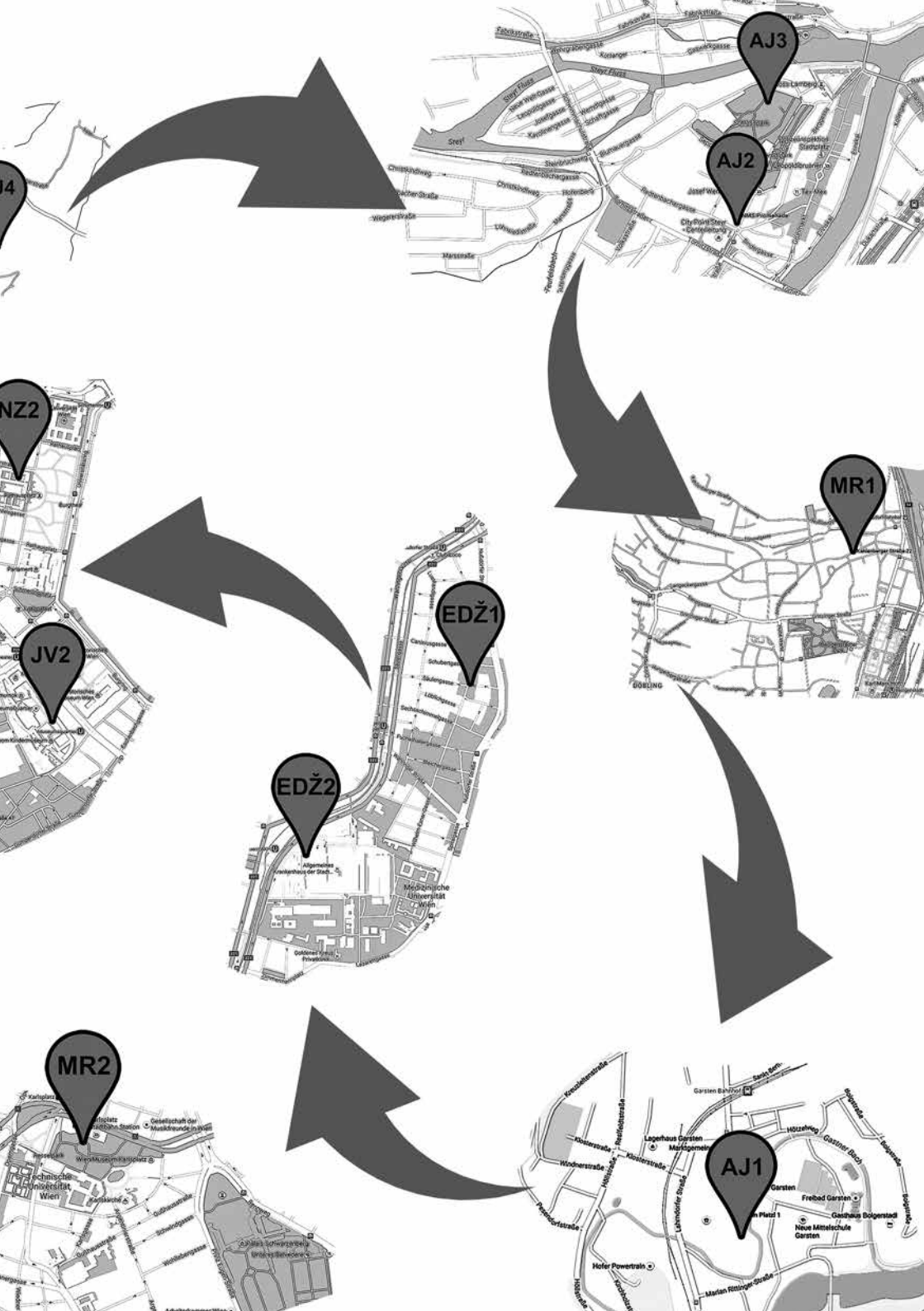
Mit der Verwendung von QR-Codes wurde eine „versteckte Öffentlichkeit“, zu der auch die Interviewten am Anfang ihres „Integrationsprozesses“ gehörten, im formal-ästhetischen Sinn unterstrichen. Die reduzierte visuelle Geste referenziert auf den lettristisch-situationistischen Begriff der „Psychogeographie“ und evoziert die situationistischen Praktiken aus den 1960er-Jahren, mit denen unter anderem versucht wurde, den Städten ihre verlorene humane Dimension zurückzugeben. Vergleichbar bleibt auch der Zugang zu privaten Erzählungen, die zum Teil von sensiblen intimen Empfindungen der befragten Personen handeln, subtil versteckt.

Das Projekt adressiert durch seine Transformation und Translation bestimmte geographische und psychologische Kategorien, die aber im öffentlichen Diskurs über Migration heute so gut wie verschwunden sind. Umso wichtiger ist es, die soziale, ideologische und kulturelle Dimensionen des Problems aufzuzeigen, indem die Art und Weise, wie einzelne MigrantInnen ihre eigenen Strategien des „Anpassens“ entwickelt haben, in ihren eigenen Worten präsentiert wird. Gleichzeitig ist das auch eine Reflexion der Gegebenheiten vor Ort.

(Astrid Kury, Mirjana Selakov-Peitler)







barbi\_marković

beograd -> wien

Oh, yes, visa



“

*Existential fears can rise a lot here, since I didn't have neither mum, dad, nor aunt and if I didn't have friends, then there were two options; either I'll manage somehow or I'll return, in all probability I won't die.*

s is Schlossberg  
sed to be my add

**there was no chance for me to  
have a decent life in Belgrade**

was not connected  
with the society

10

“

*The other reason is that from my position there was no chance for me to have a decent life in Belgrade, so I've never had an impression that I am losing something.*

I was not connected with the society



*It was very intense every year about the visa extensions. There was something new every year.*

es, visa

tomislav\_bobinec



None of us was guilty  
for we had to come here,

“

*Most immigrants from our war up to the immigrants from Syria have come here because of fear, and fear is the thing that hinders. Some people find their ways and some cannot cope. They are either still afraid or they want to go back home.*

We're at Kaiser Josef I  
one of the two green market

so that the Pag cheese is much  
intense than the cheese

“

*If a person came to Austria as a Slovenian or Croatian, he didn't have any problems. But, if one came as a Bosnian, Serb or a Macedonian, they had all the problems in the world.*

and that was the problem of all our Gastarbeiter



*I mostly feel as Tomislav Bobinec and then I feel as a sailor – I love sailing. Then I feel as a designer, but I don't feel either as Austrian, Croatian or Yugoslav, German or Slav. I don't know.*

er Josef Markt,  
in markets in

marina\_richter

beograd -> wien

terrible harassment  
in the Magistrate



SCHÜBEL-A  
HEURIGER

DI - SA  
16 - 24 UHR

STÜBERLN  
GARTEN

s winery, this is called H  
owned by the family for



*- Tell me, in your opinion, what are conditions for  
highly educated immigrants like?*

*- Well, frankly, if you come from Eastern Europe  
and from the countries not so popular on a social scale,  
not big.*



**I met our people for the first time when  
I started to miss our language.**

We are in the so-called Restal Park  
tz: in fact, it's a wider territory of Ka

“

*Well, I think that integration is a matter of personal decision. If you feel at home, and if you're not surrounded only with your countrymen in your environment, then I guess it must be integration.*

SCHUBEL-AUER  
HEURIGER

DI - SA  
16 - 24 UHR



STÜBERLN  
GARTEN

winery, this is called Heuriger  
owned by the family for 500 ye

*But I think the synergy of cultures is very important and if you live in that country, you have to let your roots grow in it, otherwise, all's in vain.*



emina\_šarić

prijedor -> graz

There are catholic  
people in



**–how could we explain that the war  
was not our fault**

nk that I contribute to the peace

“

*I turned all my knowledge into a resource and kept on working with it. I have never been discriminated. I could speak German so well, that I never allowed anybody to discriminate me. I could always defend myself verbally.*

I went to Prijedor from Sarajevo, from  
Prijedor to Germany, from Germany to

“

*I don't like categorizations. I don't want to say whether I feel as a male or female, whether I am a muslim, catholic, or protestant.*

*I don't like categories. I am afraid of them, I'm afraid of 'WE' or 'YOU'; therefore, I don't like national categorizations, am I a Bosnian or an Austrian? I feel as a person who lives in Graz. How do you call it – a Grazer? That's how I feel, and I'm proud of it.*

Religion wasn't important to



ute to the peace

katarina\_džomba

kotor varoš -> wels



“

*I used to go to school in Kotor Varos, I was in the second grade; my mum told me it's possible that we'd go to Austria for the weekend if my dad manages to cross the border. In the morning, when I was setting off to school, I saw the Gastarbeiter bus and I knew what it meant – “Pack up your things, we're going to Austria!”*



**So, this is the place where I found  
my roots in the new country**

in this park, my mother was trying  
soothe our sorrow day after day

“

*I am experiencing Austrians as very tolerant people who are always trying to understand the other side. They are people who are trying...*


But... I have never experienced any discrimination.

*I feel accepted in the society, I feel as a part of the society and Austrians have never signaled me anything different.*

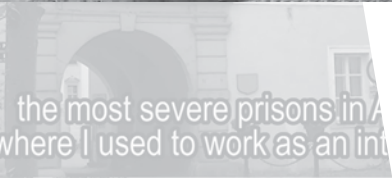


aleksandra\_jaramaz

wels -> laktaši -> steyr




Immigrants who have spent only 3-5 years here  
are having a hard time.



the most severe prisons in Austria  
where I used to work as an interpreter

“

*I am somewhere in between. I could not say that I am a pure Austrian or a pure Yugoslav. I think that I've taken all the best that I have been interested in from Austria and all I'm interested in from our so-called beautiful Yugoslavia.*



don't allow separation in a negative way  
because I have a strong personal

“

*I hang out a lot with Austrian children.*

*I had friends from the former Yugoslavia, but*

*I was interested in learning German and I*

*was hanging out a lot with Austrian girls and I immediately fitted into their circle.*

I spend lots of time here during the biology class



*I am certainly excellently integrated into the society; I*

*hang out with both Austrians and our people. The circle of my*

*friends is multi-culty.*



re prisons in Aus  
work as an inter

miroslav\_marinković

banja luka -> salzburg

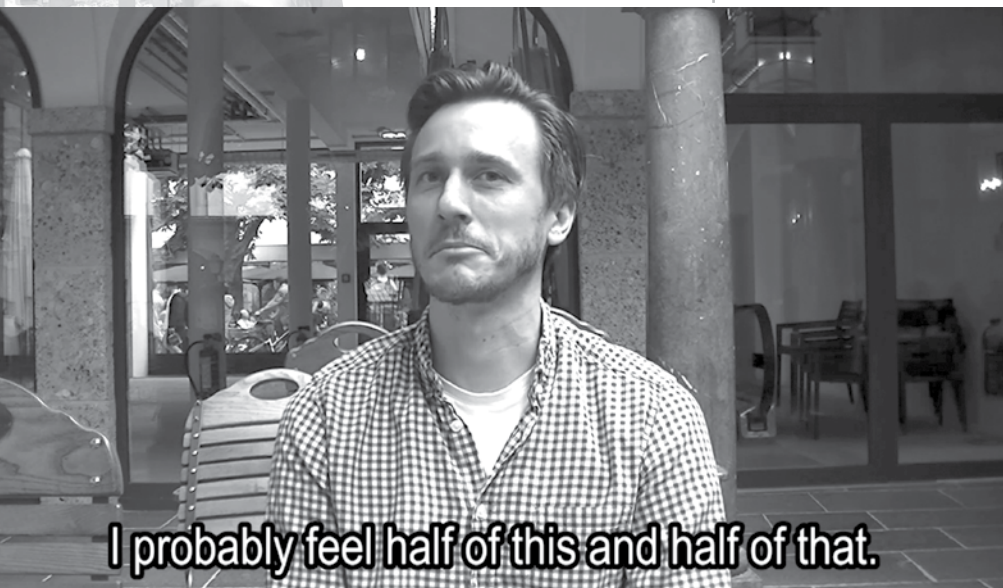


was in Graz from 2012 until now I live

“

*I can't say that I feel as an Austrian, I think I could never say that; I wouldn't like to feel as one, either. And yet, I couldn't say that I feel as a Bosnian. I couldn't define myself as that. Considering the world globally, one should not define oneself so narrowly. I probably feel half of this and half of that.*

I am trying to hang with both our people and

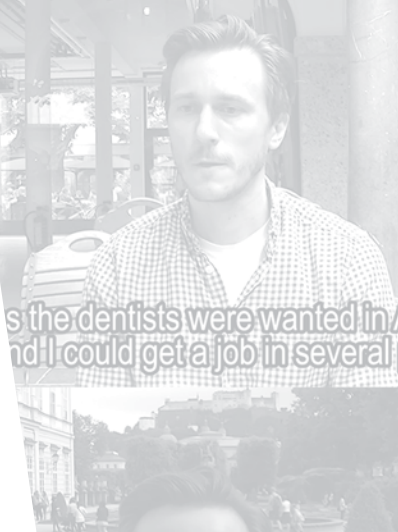


**I probably feel half of this and half of that.**

is a beautiful park and it's in a nice  
I like to walk here

“

*When I started studying, schooling was free for the students from Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Yugoslavia. We had to pay for the housing and living expenses. It was good then.*



*I was thinking about studying in Belgrade or abroad.*

*Since it was impossible to enroll University in Belgrade, I submitted papers to Austria and got a place at University in Graz.*

to hang out equ  
people and Aus

nada\_i\_željko\_čuga

karlovac/zagreb -> graz



and in our country la  
people can learn how



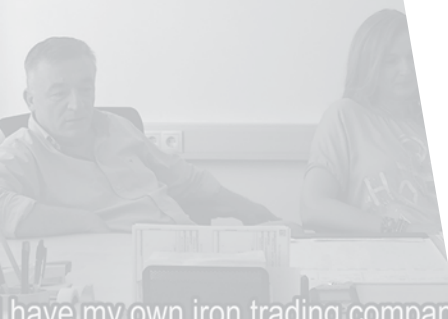
**Simply, I knew I did not belong to the war,**



We welcomed the New Year 19

“

*I have been here since 1991, because of the war; the war hadn't started at the time, but it was known that it'd start. Simply, I knew I did not belong to the war, I wanted to continue living and working. I came to Graz by chance, it wasn't my goal. I came to Graz and stayed here, it's been for 25 years now.*



have my own iron trading compan

“

*I think that our country has lost a lot for all our departures which are still going on. It has definitely lost many good quality young people, unfortunately. Things are getting worse and our country is still at loss. People here benefit from that.*



We welcomed the New Year



*We left Yugoslavia, and Yugoslavia no longer exists. There is no country we could go back to. We will never become Austrians, although we are citizens of Austria. Actually, we don't belong to anyplace. We belong everywhere and nowhere.*



We left Yugoslavia  
Yugoslavia no longer

vladimir\_vuković

vršac -> bad ischl



My wife's grandf

“

*I certainly miss my country, but after 24 years abroad you don't think about it as if you came yesterday. It's as if your hand was cut off and sooner or later you forget that you had it once.*

after 24 years abroad you  
about it as if you came y



**I simply went where I had  
a job and residence.**

I arrived in Germany in 1991  
and I had no problems at first

“

*So I realized that the concept of a nation is actually a bureaucratic issue, and my memories of the country, childhood, the language I speak are something else.*

it is probably the only cafe  
Bad Ischl I love to come in.



*But when it comes to integration, you know that there is no place like home.*

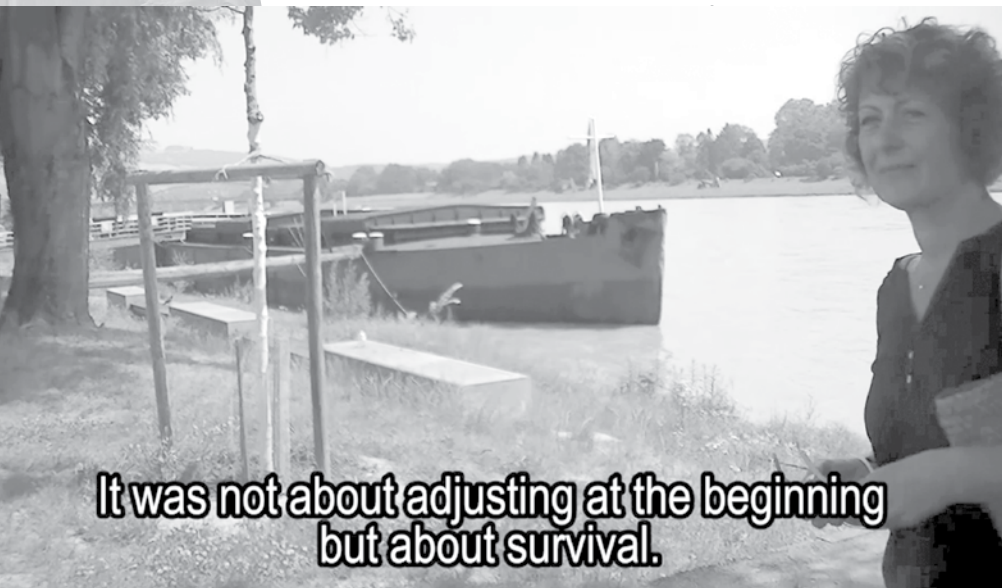
oad you don't thi  
ame yesterday

ksenija\_klopf

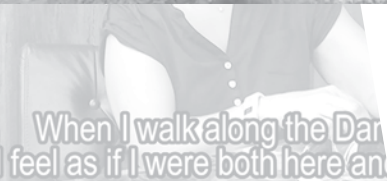
borovo naselje -> linz



could not possibly f



**It was not about adjusting at the beginning  
but about survival.**



When I walk along the Danube  
I feel as if I were both here and



Exactly. I finished my education  
I opened an independent practice of

“

*It was not about adjusting at the  
beginning but about survival. Adjusting is a  
really complicated and long story. One has  
to comply with the system in order to survive,  
and one also needs to keep one's own  
identity.*

----->

“

*Although they don't understand me sometimes, as I react differently because of my mentality; but also, I don't understand why they're so cold sometimes (laugh). The fact is that there are many intolerant people. A week ago a person realised that I'm not an Austrian because of my accent and immediately started seeing me differently.*

I came to Austria in 1991 as a

When I walk along the Danube



ssibly feel as a

daniel\_čokić  
salzburg

I enjoyed my time  
beautiful memories



“

*I think I haven't experienced any kind of serious discrimination so far...Of course, there is a part of the society who start thinking with prejudice about you as soon as you introduce yourself to them, and that's how the initial discrimination starts, but I have never really had any serious problems regarding that matter.*

but I have never really  
serious problems regarding

**I always say about myself that  
I'm a foreigner forever.**

soon as you introduce yourself to them  
that's how the initial discrimination

“

*I always say about myself that I'm a foreigner forever. When people hear your surname, they know you come from the former Yugoslavia and when you go there, they know that you come from the diaspora. So, wherever you are, you feel as a foreigner.*

but I have never really had  
ous problems regarding that r



ivana\_milaković

banja luka -> wien



13 years ago to find  
an was to stay for a



**Exactly like a European citizen. Although  
I feel strongly my Yugoslav roots.**

We are in front of my university  
ecology. So, this is the ninth be

“

*They are often polite, decent, actually.  
They don't tell me anything, but I can feel  
something in their tone. I sometimes feel as  
a second class citizen.*

This park, is my place, because  
life is going on around here

“

*You know what, I have noticed, when I say Milaković or any other surname with ić, it has some... it also depends on how people see these things. Some people like it, some don't, and some think... they immediately get the idea what it means... Some people get scared. 'Milaković, is it something like Milošević?'*

*This park, is my place, because life is going on around here*



*I can yodel, what to say more about integration. It tells everything.*

*I did need more...  
way Austrian*

dragan\_marinković

banja luka -> salzburg

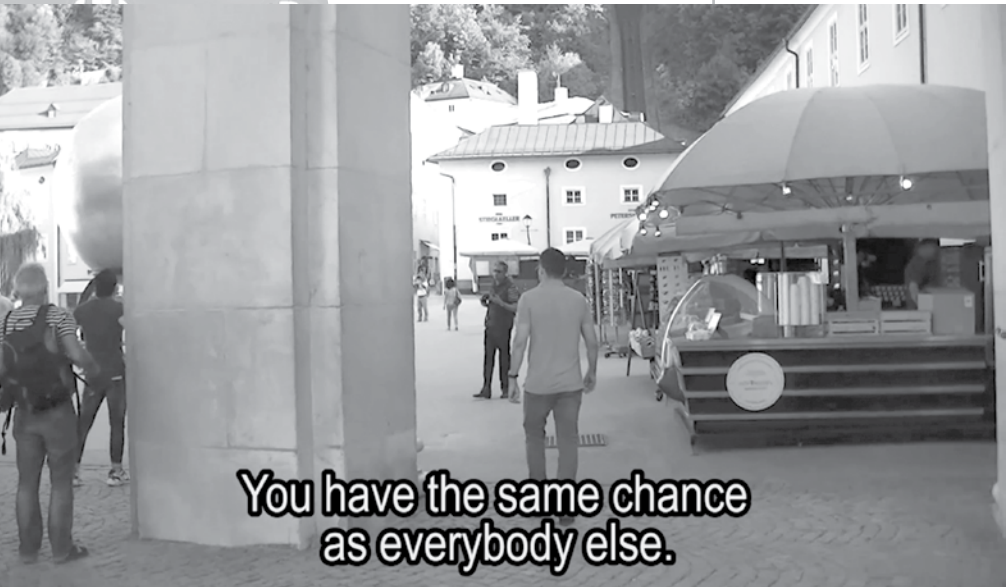


This place is very  
this is where I spent

“

*It doesn't matter whether you were brought up here  
or you came from our country, conditions are the same  
for all. So, it matters if you're fighting, do your best... it  
depends on a person. So, everyone has a chance.*

though I couldn't tell that  
totally. I speak Serbian,



**You have the same chance  
as everybody else.**

We are on the Mönchsberg.  
It's a hill in Salzburg

“

*When you start going to the kindergarten, there's no difference among children. Children can't make a difference...*

*Well, whether we were boys, girls, immigrants, Austrians, there was no difference. Then when we were 10-15... after we were 10, I socialized more with the children from the ex-Yu. We made a group and we were closer friends.*

It was in 1992, before the war



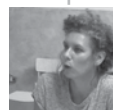
We are on the Mönchs



don't tell that I'm a  
Serbian. I'm

jana\_dolečki

zagreb -> wien



Because I don't ha  
n't know what will

So, if  
conditions



In the basement of this place I've been conducting a chorus called "29th November" for three years,

absolutely live in Vienna, and  
he is the place where I like to g

“

*I have a very personal attitude on the entire concept of integration and adaptation. It's politically manipulative and I don't like to use it and I avoid it in any form of everyday conversation, academic conversation, because it always supposes a society we have to adapt to and I don't think it's necessary, and even if* - - - ->  
*it is, I won't accept it.*

One of the essential reasons why  
I chose Vienna is low tuitions

“

*I think my home is the place where I like to go back to. It's Vienna now. I don't know if it'll stay that way. My heart beats here. I'm sharing everything with these people – worries about elections, worries about charging water in the cafes. You see, you simply become a part of it, because if we share the same worries, then we're all the same.*

But I absolutely live in Vienna, home is the place where I like

One of the essential rea



we talk about our  
for high educati

kristina\_radosavljević ----->

lazarevac -> salzburg ----->



“

*It is getting harder over time, and in some moments you get discouraged but you remember the reason why you came... simply, there are no other possibilities, as in the country I come from I have no possibilities to make progress, build a career, get a job, nothing. Then you keep it as a motivation to make a further progress and forget all bad things, as nothing is hard anymore.*



**but where is your home, family, where you grew up.**

ve to learn German first so I can co  
studies because I'm studying in Ge

“

*No, I don't feel as an Austrian. It's impossible because I was living in Serbia, my whole family is there; I'm used to it. I love my country, and even if I lived here for 40 years, it would be impossible.*

And then later, when you really hard, language and po



*Everything must be when they say it and the way they say it and by the law. I got used to all these, and when you get used to it, when you get into that thing, everything is much easier.*

working in a hote  
nt. I'm a chamb

danijela\_jevtić

čelinac -> wels

we are on a path by



**My friends are 50% Austrians  
and 50% people from the former Yugoslavia.**

It is important how much  
wish to integrate

“

*I have never felt as a second-class citizen. I really must say that I have never felt like that in Austria. It is important how much people wish to integrate and how much they contribute to that. The most important thing is to master the language.*

and never had any problems, re

“

*I came with my parents because of the situation in our country, because of the war. I came at the age of 17, with completed 3 years of high school. It was thought that I'd stay in Austria for year or two or until the war is over; but, 25 years later, I'm still here.*

It is important how much people wish to integrate



*In the beginning, I didn't feel much like fitting because I thought I'd go back home. I started integrating 5-6 years later when I started contacting Austrians.*



parents because of the war, because of

saša\_ivanović

beograd -> wien



“

*From our perspective, Austrians are quite closed, calm, quiet, introverted, they mind their own business, which is their heritage and culture, which doesn't have to be an aggravating factor in your life if you decide to live in Vienna.*

**Therefore, when such people leave the country, the country is at loss,**

much easier than if we went to an  
an country where we didn't know a

“

*It's a multiple loss. It's not about my departure only, I don't want to be subjective and egoistic, but when you consider how many people left, how many people wish to leave but can't...*

automatically felt at home  
when we first came here.

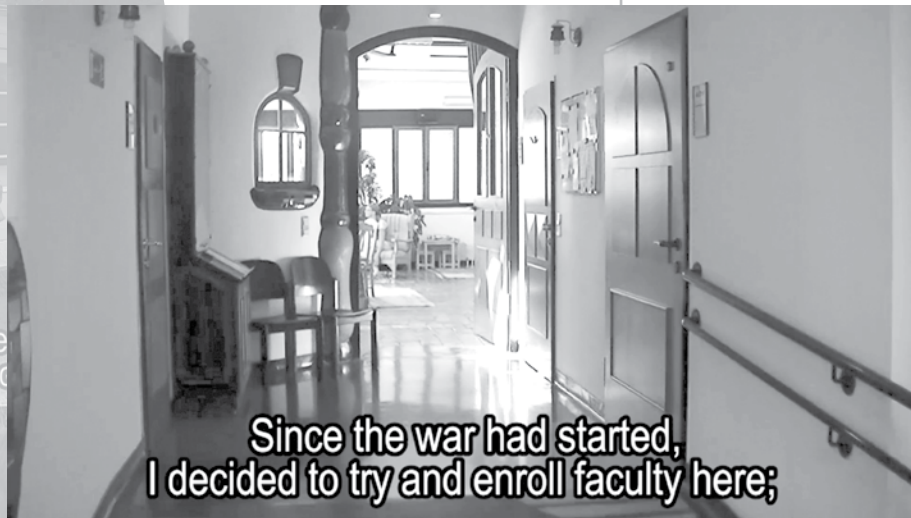


*The city government here in Vienna, recognize that and they do their best to provide them best possible integration in the Austrian society because they are aware of the fact that they can benefit from such a situation.*

ns are quite close  
and their own bus

marija\_balić

zagreb -> graz



Since the war had started,  
I decided to try and enroll faculty here;

“

*I think that I am well accepted as an expert,  
I feel fully integrated on that level. However, there's  
always a feeling that I could have done better on  
everyday level and there is always a question  
whether all that's happening is a matter of  
integration or non-integration, question of my  
attitude and attitude of the environment, and  
also, there always remains uncertainty whether  
all the things that are going on are because of  
my origin.*

Once I got it,  
had no problems further on

“

*What I consider important about going abroad is, when one goes abroad, he has higher expectations and at the same time, the others in the surrounding benefit because that one is ready to give his best and invest much in his career.*

I think it's important to a human  
er ethnicity and other charact



*I think that I have professionally made much more than I've ever imagined, especially in this environment which is specific regarding women, the career of women...*

as studying,  
Seitensprung

vuk\_dedier

beograd -> wien



“

*The country of my origin can lose me only if I never get back. Because of my knowledge and experience, all the things I figured out and was doing here... if I never manage to apply it there, then it's a loss, and that's it. Anyway, if I stayed there, I wouldn't have been what I am now, and I don't know if it would be good enough.*



**I realized that I have classic immigrant problems I was facing during adaptation.**

“

*I really think that Austria is a total  
wonderland. Really. I think that Austria has  
the best life quality in Europe. I don't know...  
Vienna in particular, special level, really.*

has to pass through that  
think it's something terrible.



*I realized that I couldn't do much in Serbia or have a  
good education. So, that was the reason for my coming here.*

ue to me  
e here.

armina\_galijaš

banja luka -> graz



1992 was a break  
Bosnia and Herz

so I finish  
and o



and all these cities are mine;

We are in front of the Center  
for Southeastern Studies

“

*I arrive and I have nothing, I know nobody, I am nobody. And then I went step by step, I had to prove myself, to work, to struggle and to create something, and there were some moments, if I look at them retrospectively, which were inhuman. If someone asked me to make all that over again, I think I would rather die.*

-->

And then I went step by step,  
I had to prove myself

“

*I could never say that I love Bosnia or that I loved Yugoslavia, or that I love Austria. These things are dead in me. I love some people who live there, I love certain places... I'm happy to go there and I'm happy to live here, but I don't feel patriotic and don't feel the need that I should do something for my country. I simply do my best to the society I live in. but I don't have a vision that I should save some countries, love or build them... I don't feel that anymore, unfortunately...*

We are in front of the Center for Southeastern Studies,

then I went step by step



school on 20th M  
y I left Bania Luk

emina\_sivić

cazin -> innsbruck



“

*Regarding the procedure, everything went smoothly and I was surprised because in my life things usually go the other way around. When problems appear, I know everything will be OK, and when something runs smoothly, I know that the problems will start later.*

The reason I came  
is primarily of a ma



**Politics is involved with everything**

In the summertime, it is crowd  
and the park is full of people

“

*While I didn't know where I was coming and tried to make a comparison, everyone told me that the West is a fairy-tale place. I don't approach things in such a way and I know that nothing is perfect and I couldn't believe that such a place can exist...People here are constantly working on the improvement of everything, from infrastructure to culture and education, technological innovation, which cannot be said for the countries of the former Yugoslavia.*



...came to Austria  
...a material natur

ružica\_miličević

sarajevo -> bad ischl

the conditions imm  
they come here?



At the time when I was a refugee,

I left because of the war.  
I came to Bad Ischl as my mother I

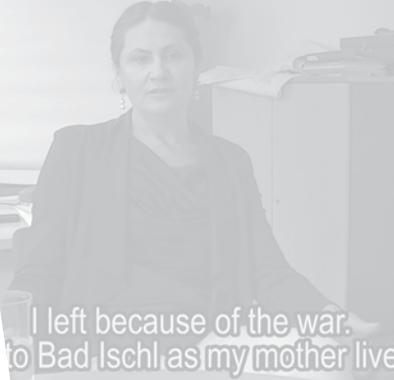
“

*The other day I was thinking why I was no longer in pain because I lost my homeland and I started feeling guilty for feeling so well and then I realized that I finally arrived here, arrived and stayed, that I'm accepted.*

most of the people, if you're interested  
in this context, were working illegally

“

*In Austria, they bother you with all kinds of administrative requirements for foreigners and I experience it as a planned strategy of structural discrimination against people as there is an image of the foreigner Austria needs. It needs cheap labor in construction and tourism industries.*



learned from Au  
and discipline

nebojša\_zavišin

beograd -> wien



“

*- I wanted to ask you – do you think that your origin marks you at work?*

*- Well, not that much. It is possible that there are some glass ceilings...*

**and I became one of them in the meantime.**

Also, do you think that your country has something with your departure?

“

*I'm not an Austrian, but to be honest,  
I'm neither a Serbian.*

I wanted to ask you  
you think that your origin m



*Lots of our people are coming here, at least in my  
industry, whether they stay or not, it's another matter.*

y apply for citiz

ivan\_redi

niš -> graz

literally lost



**and if there are any conflicts they  
can be solved on the playground**

We're on a streetball court near the bus



because Austrians think  
in stereotypes a lot

“

*There were people who found me interesting and were supporting me in my everyday struggle, but I also had negative experiences. One can never be accepted as someone who was born here.*

“

*I see myself as a foreigner and I've turned my negative experience into an advantage. Being a foreigner isn't always easy, but it can be advantageous.*

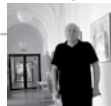
We're on a streetball court near the b  
etball court near the b



*Language was the greatest problem to me; things I was doing and I wanted to do were difficult due to my lack of language skills.*

od opportu  
optional, f

beograd -> wien



I respect the rule  
that gave me the

I said 'I don't have  
don't want anything'

“

*When the country tore apart, a lady clerk asked me 'what's your nationality?' I said 'Yugoslav'; she said 'There's no such thing. You may choose – Serb, Croat, Bosnian.' And I said 'Yugoslav'; and she said 'no, it doesn't go that way. Where were you born?' I said 'In Belgrade' and she said 'A Serb'.*



**I thank my dear Republic of Austria for that.**

and I'm working on the third floor  
of the Department for Integration

“

*For me, integration is mingling. It means that the life of a man is mixed with the people who live in that country. So, that's integration. There can be no integration without Austrian friends, Austrian neighbors, etc. Simmering in one's own sauce is incestuous for me.*

I work 40 hours a week in  
to have 14 salaries a y

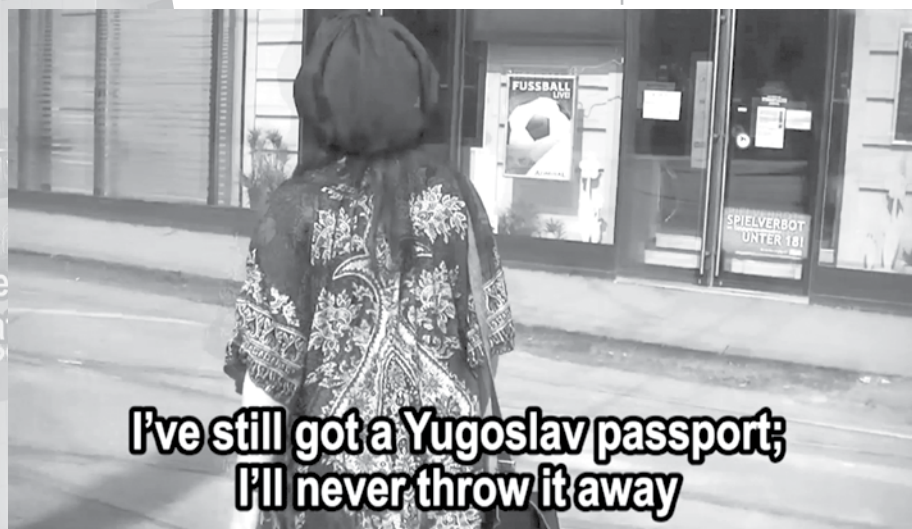
I'm working on the thi



don't have any  
anything. The

irina\_karamarković

priština -> graz



**I've still got a Yugoslav passport;  
I'll never throw it away**

“

*No, I don't present myself nationally. I don't see myself as a classic Serbian artist and I don't know what it means. I also don't see necessity for that nowadays. I think we're global... Moreover, I don't work in Austria only; once you're a musician, you're a nomad.*

and I come from Kosovo,  
from Pristina

“

*What was the most difficult thing to me was that my family hasn't visited me for such a long time.*

haven't found myself in large  
the institutions here than



*Then I had loads of documents translated; then I was experiencing dehumanization in queues in front of an Austrian embassy in Belgrade. At the time I had been still living in Pristina, which means that I had to travel to Belgrade.*

otype of Serbi  
they are very

jana\_vladušić

beograd -> wien



the coldness of Au  
ly something we re

me to Vienna' to finish co  
rn to our homeland Serb

“

*And here integration is something like a two-way street. We have to make a few steps forward, as well as residents of Austria. So that it definitely isn't a one-way street. When one starts feeling nice in a place, I believe that's the sign one's integrated.*



**There were all the communities  
of the former Yugoslavia,**

So that, 5 kilos of documents and  
here is always something missing.

“

*Austria is a very conservative country, and although in the business world it's not important whether a woman is local or a foreigner, in Austria a woman has to put more effort to prove herself in this field.*

It was such a challenge to ex

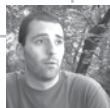


*It happened soon after the bombing so, yes, it was the motive – to go to a better place.*

enna to finish co  
homeland Serb

slobodan\_kajkut

banja luka -> graz



but that was  
judgment about

would  
at I am

**Not like in our country, like –  
"Hi, let's go for a coffee."**

or to get married  
and obtain visa that

“

*I don't remember that I had any problems, except when I was going to extend my visa, in the first couple of years, officials in the police were very impolite, which I can understand, especially if they had to deal with too many people who don't speak German, it can bring to frustration.*

ot like in our country, like  
Hi. let's go for a coffee."

“

*I was shocked by the mentality and kind of coldness here, but comparing to other nations I'd met later, they showed to be warm people. I think we're not used to extreme changes so it all seems so extreme to us.*

Not like in our country  
"Hi, let's go for a coffee"



*One has to learn the language for a year and it didn't seem to be that difficult. We needed visas at the time and it wasn't very simple.*

that was my  
ent about p

emil\_džudžević

beograd -> wien



“

*These are hundreds of thousands of highly educated people who left the country. When you think about it, it's a disaster. Not only that Serbia is at loss, these figures are a disaster. It's like a war.*



**but when you come from Belgrade, you realize it's a 'space shuttle' administration.**

...n fact, we didn't live badly in Belgrade...  
...we were thinking 'it's becoming uns...

“

*Seems like Austria is changing its mentality. As if they decided not to be an isolated alpine republic anymore but a hub for the south-eastern part of Europe.*

Edmund HAMBER

25. 7. 1893

deport. 16. 7. 1938 Dachau

arr. 28. 11. 1940 Buchenwald

culture of remembrance. The names of people who were



*Of course, there are some bureaucratic requirements but we never had any problems, because the definition of a problem is when you have to take three documents in Belgrade; to be honest, we've been delighted regarding that issue here.*



Bietski Platz in th  
of the places wi

miroslav\_prstojević

sarajevo -> wien



MECHITHARISTEN-CONGREGATIONS-  
**BUCH- u. KUNSTDRUCKEREI**  
GEGRÜNDET 1810

**in the Mechitaristengasse, in front of the  
monastery Mekhitarists of the Armenians**

“

*I have never had a problem of not  
being accepted. Although, we can feel that  
bearing of a mild reserve towards foreigners  
in Vienna. I don't want to say rejection, but  
a mild reserve. Caution towards foreigners.*

“

*I feel as a Yugoslav. Everyone say: “It can’t be. How?” “Why shouldn’t I”*

I came to Vienna in October 1991 with the assistance of ORF and UNP



*At some point, Austrians realized that they needed highly educated people, so that doctors and engineers can get a job in Vienna without much trouble.*

I feel as a Yugoslav. Everyone say: “It can’t be. How?” “Why shouldn’t I”

mirjana\_peitler

sombor -> graz



“

*My friends and colleagues who stayed there are very disappointed, unfortunately; most of them who were brought up in the old system haven't found their place in it. So I think that the present country of my origin hasn't lost me and the old one did.*



**that we're not equally valued  
and it was a reason for me to leave.**

I had planned to go to London  
but I remained in Graz.

“

*Then the war started and it started being serious, especially when the war started in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Then people started being provocative and started changing attitudes towards us.*

I speak in terms of profession  
not private matters.



*Because I wanted to go somewhere and it didn't have much to do with the war which was about to start at the time.*

*Simply, I wanted to live and work somewhere else, but I met a Grazer I knew for a long time and I stayed here.*

I knew for a long time  
I stayed here.

NUR MUT !



Milica Milicevic and Milan Bosnic are both MA's of Departments of Painting, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Arts in Belgrade, Serbia and although in diverse individual artistic ventures in group and solo exhibitions, they have been working on joint projects for the past ten years under name diSTRUKTURA. Their ideas are expressed in different media but mostly photography, painting, drawing and video. They live and work in Belgrade.

diSTRUKTURA took part in over 30 individual and more than 50 group exhibitions such as: WonderLab in Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina (2015); Subdued Existence in Taichung Taiwan, distURBANces in Luxembourg (2013), in Vienna and Bratislava (2012), TINA B festival in Prague (2012), Police the Police/ Biennial of young artists in Bucharest (2010), Belgrade Non-Places in Salon of Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade (2009), Hotel Mariakapel: a portrait by Katie Jane in Hoorn, Netherlands (2008), Micro Narratives in Museum of Modern Art Saint Etienne (2008), 48th Octobar Salon in Belgrade (2007) and Steirischer Herbst 2007- next code: love in Graz (2007).

They exhibited solo in Serbia, Austria, Netherlands, Germany, Japan, Czech, Slovenia and Finland.

Their activities were supported by Pollock-Krasner Foundation (2015), European Cultural Foundation, KulturKontakt, Kingdom of Norway, ProHelvetia, Serbian Ministry of Culture, Belgrade City Municipality, Okolje Consulting and others. Their works are now part of many private, public and corporate collections such as H2 Center for Contemporary Art Collection Augsburg, Collection of Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Cultural Center Belgrade Collection, Wiener Stadtische collection, Belgrade City Museum, Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Telenor collection as well as Okolje Consulting Art Collection from Ljubljana.

For the past ten years, they participated in artist in residence programs and workshops in Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Netherlands, Slovenia, Italy, Finland, Egypt and Serbia and for their contributions in diSTRUKTURA duo they have received 2 awards.

[distruktura.com](http://distruktura.com)

diSTRUKTURA

We are living in a beautiful wOURld – Austria

www.distruktura.com

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**G R A Z**  
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Das Land  
Steiermark

BUNDESKANZLERAMT  ÖSTERREICH

