

Testimony – Truth or Politics: The concept of Testimony in the Commemoration of the Yugoslav Wars

Description of implemented activities:

1. Preparation seminar, 13-15.12.16 in Serbia, including the commissioned artists, scholars and war veterans. It presented the project, the interviews, TV and radio programs done from the interviews and held discussions of engaged art (visual and poetry), commemoration and testimony.
 2. Traveling exhibition of 15 audio-visual artworks was curated in dialog between the artists and the curators (MoCAB and CZKD). Artists were gathered by an open call 15.9 - 10.11.16 from: Serbia, Romania, Italy, UK, Switzerland, Macedonia, Croatia, Ireland, Hungary, B&H, Poland/Sweden. The works are based on testimonies of war participants and anti-war activists of the YU wars.
- Boccanera Gallery, Trento, Italy on the 17.11 – 08.12.17.
01.12.18 "Remembering the Yugoslav wars: art and testimony" - round tables:
"Europe, war, memory and testimony: the Yugoslav wars" - scholars from Italy and Croatia
"War, testimony and art" - scholars from Serbia, UK and Italy
2 guided tours
An exhibition guide was printed in 1000 copies
 - The exhibition at the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade 14.12.17 – 29.01.18.
18.01.18 guided tour and film screening (Man don't Cry, B&H) and conversation with the director;
24.11.18 guided tour and archive presentation;
27-28.01.18 open days of testimony;
28.01.18 workshop for youth
2 wall newspapers were printed (600 copies each)
 - Exhibition at the Historical Museum of B&H, Sarajevo 06.03. - 06.04.2018.
09.03.18 War, Veterans and the Consolidation of the Middle Class in Vienna - a talk with Aleks Nikolic (Boem, Vienna)
19.03.18 Private Photography – presenting the research of Friedrich Tietjen (Leipzig, Germany) and Herbert Justnik (Volkskundemuseum Wien)
06.04.18 performance by the artist Lala Raščić
Regular guided tours for adults and youth by the museum/exhibition curator
2 wall newspapers
 - Exhibition at the Volkskundemuseum, Vienna organized with Boem: 12.04. - 30.09.18
11.04.18 Setting Testimony up - Panel discussion with the artists and curators
13.04.18 Objective Archive? Archive vs. Keywords - Workshop by the artist Katarina Šević
Activities of the museum's educational program:

Workshops - "True" Stories - for high school pupils
Guided tours for adults.
Publication of posters and 17,000 brochures

- exhibition at BASOC, Banja luka 17.4 - 5.5.18
11.3.18 War, Veterans and the Consolidation of the Middle Class in Vienna
16.03.18 Private Photography
17.4.18 performance by the artist Lala Raščić
3. The conferences were organized by CZKD, IFDT, The Faculty of Philosophy, Sarajevo and IOS, Regensburg, Germany. For each conference a small publication of texts was published.
- Presentation of the project and consultation in IOS, Regensburg 15-17.02.17
 - The conference Testimony. Poetry. Language. held in IFDT and CZKD Belgrade 14 - 17.12.2017. It focused on the philosophical and poetic aspects of testimony including experienced and young academics, writers and activists from: France, Finland, UK, USA, the Netherlands, Macedonia, Serbia and Croatia.
 - The conference Testimony. Commemoration. Wellbeing. held on the 20-24.04. at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sarajevo and 26-27.04 CZKD/ IFDT, Belgrade
It focused on the sociological aspect of testimony and commemoration of the YU wars and its contextualization in the European and global discourse. Participants were from Serbia, B&H, Germany, Macedonia, UK, the Netherland, Romania, France, Austria, Croatia, and Kosovo.
4. Testimony archive constructed –
- 60 new interviews have been conducted in Serbia, B&H and Vienna.
 - website <http://svedocanstvo-imenovatoratom.org/>
 - A social network, interactive audio-testimony archive
 - Over 200 interviews were technically prepared
 - 80 interviews in BHS and Italian have been time coded and tagged
5. Publication:
- Campaign by OBCT
 - 40 feuillets in Danas
 - Draft Law

Changes in relation to the original application:

In consultation with all partners and with the approval of EACEA, CZKD has replaced the intended partner Via Lactea, Avelgem, Belgium with three partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina – the Historical Museum of B&H, the Centre for Cultural and Social Repair

(which is running BASOC - the social and cultural center of Banja Luka) and the Faculty of Philosophy of the University in Sarajevo.

Following this change, in consultation with IOS (Leibniz Institute for East and Southeast European Studies), Regensburg, and the approval of EACEA, we held the second conference in Sarajevo and Belgrade instead of in Regensburg. There it had much more impact since these locations were directly involved by the YU wars and the society is still socially, politically and culturally framed by the wars. In addition, since the Faculty of Philosophy is full-fledged university both undergraduate and graduate students attended. IOS participated in the planning and dissemination of the call for papers of both conferences. From this change also ensued holding the traveling exhibition in 5 locations instead of 4, since in B&H it was held both in Sarajevo (the Federation) and in Banja Luka (Republika Srpska).

The addition, partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina facilitated conducting interviews (testimonies) in Sarajevo, Banja Luka and Tuzla which much enriched our archive.

The new constellation of partners and activities required extending the project which was approved by EACEA. Unfortunately, even with the extension we did not manage to hold the second project presentation in Regensburg within the duration of the project and it will be held on the 13.08.18 (the expenses of this presentation were not included in the financial report.)

As the second conference, which was dedicated to the socio-economic and cultural aspects of testimony and commemoration, was held very close to the end of the project, we were not able to complete the publications envisioned in the project proposal. We are now preparing a publication that will include the proceeding of both conferences and a catalogue of the exhibition.

Due to the extended territorial spread to B&H, we have conducted 60 new interviews out of 100. In addition, the tagging was revealed to be a more complicated process than envisioned i.e. it required more competence and time investment so most of the volunteers that signed up for it resigned and only 100 interview were processed. Lack of additional funding did not allow us to engage further personal and most of the work was done by the project manager herself. However, we are continuing conduct interviews and new paths opened due to the exhibition duration in Vienna (30.09.18) and due to our contacts in Kosovska Mitrovica (Kosovo) as well as continuing the processing the interviews enlarge the spectrum of the social network testimony archive.

In spite of all the difficulties the archive attracted more than 300 users.

Impact and Citizen Involvement

The biggest contribution to the democratization and the inclusion of ordinary people in the discourse about testimony and commemoration was holding the activities in major public institution, especially for state institutions such as MoCAB and IFDT in Belgrade and HMB&H and the Faculty of Philosophy in Sarajevo. The inclusion of the YU wars in the European historical narrative was greatly supported by the participation of the Boccanera Gallery and the Volkskundemuseum. This gave enormous affirmation and credibility to the project and the testimonies.

In the conferences, many conceptual questioned were opened and the interaction between young and experienced scholars contributed much to the thinking all participant and especially the young researchers. It presented research done in local communities and sub-

cultures especially by these young researchers as well as in the centers of hegemonic discourse. The young researchers were gathered by an open call held for each conference, published on main academic mailing lists like Balkan Academic News or H-net which allowed the great diversity of academic intuitions and location. The OBCT information campaign engaged additional young scholars.

Self-referential comments by the non-regional participants of the conferences revealed general ignorance about the YU wars and their commemoration. Therefore, the conferences contributed much to familiarizing prominent thinkers in Europe and the USA with the topic allowing the inclusion of this discourse in the European and global historical narrative. Furthermore, the lecturers represent significant academic institutions in the region and in Europe and which allowed for institutional capacity building and networking.

Each of the partners promoted the project activities through their mailing lists and media contacts. In Belgrade, partners approached different social groups: IFDT – the academics, CZKD and MSUB – the cultural, art and NGO sphere and The Ignorant Schoolmaster – the activists' and veteran sphere. This led to over 500 visitors to the exhibition and about 120 participants in the conference and the accompanying public events. The activities were especially promoted on the daily newspaper Danas by advertising and 40 feuilletons published from the conferences proceedings to which very positive responses were received from experts and the wide public. However, the reaction of the authorities was less favorable, both in direct pressure on the institutions involved and by refusing to grant funding for the project.

In Sarajevo, the exhibition was visited by over 1,200 visitors and covered by 15 different media both electronic and print. Beyond the regular guided tours, a special workshop was held at the request of professors and students from the Faculty of political studies. The conference in the Faculty of Philosophy attracted around 100 people especially students but also professors and activists.

In Banja Luka, the situation was a little tenser. Following a number of request by MoCB and the CCSR to the Museum of Contemporary Art which received no response, the exhibition was held at BASOC and was attended by about 50 people. Despite the low number of visitors this event was of the utmost importance, it showed that war veterans' testimonies can be directly and polemically engaged in public discourse and not only manipulated by the authorities holding the veterans captive through economic means. The exhibition's extensive media coverage in Sarajevo, accessible in Banja Luka, was proof that Serbians war veterans are not excluded, that commemoration has a wider context, that another politics is possible and that there are people in BL, even if mainly from the activist-academic elite that are willing to support it.

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Additional information

The exhibition opening in Vienna was attended by around 200 people and over 1000 till the end of May. It was preceded by a press conference and especially promoted by media addressing the diaspora of countries succeeding Yugoslavia by Boem. The interviews, archive and exhibition had created debate already at the beginning which manifested in the workshop by Katarina Sevic, and in additional interviews held by Boem.

The exhibition in Trento was attended by 200 visitors and 60 people attended the round tables. The OBCT information campaign resulted in the publication of regularly posts and articles giving an overview of the flourishing literature on memory studies in pre & post

Yugoslav time produced by local scholars, thus helping integrate it in the broader European academic reflection on the cultural heritage of war.

12 analytical articles in Italian and English were written by Marco Abram and other OBCT's collaborators, covering news and events related to the memory of the Yugoslav wars in the SEE region but also investigating the relation between the European memory framework and the local dynamics.

OBCT also engaged in various offline initiatives to disseminate the project as participating in other conferences and writing book chapters. Preceding and during the exhibition, OBCT co-organized different public events on related topics, aiming at awareness raising to further maximize the visibility of the project's specific perspective, and encouraging visits to the exhibition such as the presentations of the Italian translation of the book *The Art of Survival*, realized by the Bosnian artist collective Fama; the screening of movies related to the memory of Yugoslav wars (as for example "Dobra Žena" (A Good wife) by Mirjana Karanović) and public meetings with war participants, such as Jovan Divjak.

In 2016 we were approached by the Ombudsman of Serbia regarding his engagement with war veterans from the YU wars. Therefore, we assembled the legal team (Human Rights lawyers) that worked on the project Naming IT War, to develop the draft for a Law of the Rights of Veterans, Disabled Veterans, Civil War Invalids and their Families for Serbia. This was done voluntarily, free of charge. This law and the concepts that lay behind are very important in the context of the YU wars and their commemoration since it is the only law that designates state's responsibility for the wars. Promoting this law impacts not only the discourse in Serbia but in the whole region as well as the relations with the EU regarding the inclusion of the YU wars in the European historical narrative and the process of accession to the EU. In addition, the draft law was done in consultation with war veterans and civil victims, through the testimonies and in cooperation with their organizations as well as with human rights activists from different countries succeeding Yugoslavia. The law was handed in to the Ombudsman with our recommendations.

Follow-up activities:

Beyond the activities mentioned above, continuing interviewing and developing the archive, the project led to further activities on many levels:

- The Ignorant schoolmaster with the Volkskundemuseum applied for the European Remembrance program for the project Testimony Matters.
- A third conference Testimony. Inequality. Human Rights is planned for December 2018.
- Reading groups on topics related to commemoration especially post – communist countries were developed, the first 2 held in June 2018 in Iasi, Rumania; more are planned in the next month in Vienna and Belgrade.
- Workshops about the conceptual-methodological side of gathering testimonies (interviews) are planned in the university of Kosoveska Mitrovica, Serbia and in the University of Zenica B&H