

Artistic research on left alternatives

Deaf Shoes (2018)

Potentials for Militant Creativity (2017)

Ironworks ABC (2015-17)

Worksheets for Living Images (2016)

Red Winter (2014)

Workers' Collective (2013)



Artistic intervention in front of GEOX store, Via Ruggiero Settimo, Palermo, 9.7.2018. Photo credits: Cinzia Delnevo

Deaf Shoes

Artistic intervention with speech, banners and props (2018)

Politics of Dissonance, a collateral event of Manifesta 12 curated by Mike Watson
7-9 July 2018, Palermo, Italy

The piece is dealing with the production chain of the garment industry established between Italy and Serbia. One of the Italian companies producing in Serbia is the shoe producer GEOX. The investment by GEOX was helped by Serbian government with high subventions and tax releases. GEOX is just one amongst many companies operating within the Outward Processing Trade system, the EU's way of customs free outsourcing labour-intensive manufacturing to the european periphery while saving its own textile industries. Labor conditions at GEOX are far below legal standards in the country. Workers that openly talked in the media about infringement of labor rights, mistreatment and humiliating attitudes of the management or looked for legal help were dismissed immediately as unionization of workers is not permitted. The performance brings the story of the workers from the EU-periphery to the streets of Palermo.



Artistic intervention, Via Ruggiero Settimo, Palermo, 9.7.2018. Photo credits: Marita Muukkonen



Photo credits: Cinzia Delnevo

Deaf Shoes / Words

Worker 1: The room was terribly hot and the worst it was next to the machine. I asked the supervisor if we could open the window. She intentionally pointed hot air from the exhaust pipe of the machine towards us and said that we could leave immediately if we were not satisfied. There were many who are waiting to replace us in this job.

Worker 2: Did you know that this factory has air condition? They don't want to turn it on because electricity is too expensive. Three people fainted yesterday and the ambulance came. It's no wonder, because since the taps have been blocked people are simply dehydrating.

Worker 4: You still don't get it, you are here to work and not to ask questions. If air conditioners were to be switched on, they would deduct that cost of electricity from our salary.

Worker 2: They don't let us use the rest room. The supervisor told me to wear nappies if I could not bear it. Is she normal?

Worker 4. Psst! She declared that all of us will end up at the graveyard if the company would leave Serbia. And the company will leave if workers do not meet the quota that is required of them.

Worker 3: If they find out that somebody is not at the assembly line, we will be punished by a reduction in salary and one working hour will be subtracted. I can't stand any longer the constant threats that we will be fired.

Worker 1: You should take tranquilizers. I drink pills for blood pressure because it jumped to 190/100 since I'm working here. Concerning the electricity bill, this month again I did not have enough money to pay it, let alone interest and debt. I'm working 12 hours a day, I work on Saturdays, and yet I don't have enough to live on.

Worker 3: You need to find cheap accommodation somewhere in the countryside. Don't pay the bus, better go to the factory on foot. That's how I do and how I can manage to save a few cents for my son.

Worker 4: Have you heard that the president advertises us as cheap labor? The Serbian government subsidizes investors for every job they open and promises them that trade unions won't complain about violations of workers' rights.

Worker 2: Look at my hand! I've hurt myself at the press. What am I going to do now? I still haven't got my new labor contract, and my old one expired two months ago. The company didn't pay my health insurance and now I can't go to the doctor. I will not be able to work anymore.

Worker 4: Let's get in contact with the union. This morning they told us that we will not be able to go on holiday, because the order has to be completed.

Worker 2: If I turn to the union, they will not give me a new contract, that's for sure.

Worker 3: They canceled our vacation and ordered overtime until we're done. Everybody is revolted!

Worker 4: When the second shift comes, we will stop working!

All: Agreed!

This dialogue was written by Rena Rädle and Vladan Jeremić for the artistic intervention "Deaf Shoes". It refers to the happenings in September 2016, when workers of the GEOX factory in Vranje, Serbia, went on a short-term strike due to harsh working conditions. The used information relies on statements of workers in the garment industries in Serbia that were published in local media and collected by researchers of the Clean Cloth Campaign Serbia.



Potentials for militant creativity, flags in public space, Red Rijeka Assembly 2017, Rijeka.

Potentials for militant creativity

Red Rijeka Assembly 2017

With the artistic-political transparents *Potentials for militant creativity* Rädle and Jeremić give an imaginary of militant creativity towards a joint struggle of oppressed positions contradicting hegemonic logic and symbols. On the back side of the banners are slogans written in signs of cooperative work of artists and workers, expressing the potential of self-managed work.

The interventions in public space were part of *RED RIJEKA ASSEMBLY - Towards an international combative production*, 27.4.–30.5.2017, organized by SIZ (Samoupravna interesna zajednica) in Rijeka. During the Assembly, Rädle and Jeremic developed a collaboration with ZIP group and staged street actions with children and interested citizens.

The work of ZIP group *Breaking through homeliness to action* was an installation, street sculpture, created from simple materials. It resembled a house with a tower-arrow breaking through the roof. ZIP invited everyone to climb the tower and perform some action: to show oneself to the public and perhaps shout out a slogan.

Five textile flags, 250x140 cm



Flags at Rijeka's pedestrian zone, Red Rijeka Assembly, 2017.



Flags above the pedestrian zone.



Street action with ZIP group.



Street action with ZIP group.



Red Rijeka Zine at ZIP group's installation.



Workshop for pupils with ZIP group.



View of *Ironworks ABC*. Intervention with transperants at the main square of the Ironworks district Željezara, Sisak 2015.

Ironworks ABC

The *Ironworks ABC* develops a *language of things* in the sense of Tretjakovs biography of *things* that is derived from the material production of an artistic collaboration of steel workers and artists in the ironworks of Sisak (Yugoslavia). There, workers established an artists colony in the 1970s. Over two decades, artists were invited to live in the factory for a few weeks and to make sculptures with the steel workers from the metal products of the factory. The works were signed together and placed on the green spaces of the workers' housing estate Caprag, where they stand until today. The steelworks Sisak, which at the time of workers' self-management in Yugoslavia employed up to 14,000 people, was sold back and forth by financial investors after the war and plundered. Today it is shut down.

Invited by an artist from Sisak, Marijan Crtalić and the Miroslav Kraljević gallery, Rädle & Jeremić did a research in Caprag and Sisak and developed an intervention with a newspaper and banners in the public space of the Caprag worker's housing estate. For their work, they took the form of the sculptures as a basis and abstracted it to symbols. In a second step, the signs become concrete slogans in transformative speeches of the sculptures, that are communicated through the newspaper. This is the *Ironworks ABC*, a

proposal for thinking work as liberated practice and struggle for creation. As a material product of the common work of steelworkers and artists and as testimonies of a *militant optimism* (Ernst Bloch) the sculptures speak about the process of their formation, the conditions of production, liberated work and the possibility of transformation. Because the value of these artistic works lies in the creative collaboration of artists and workers and not in the extant form of the sculptures, this project is interested in the history of production and social transformation. It is not a question of affirming the sculptures as objects which are in need of protection from deterioration, but rather the revalorization of the relations at the core of the creative process. *Ironworks ABC* aims to speak about those relations as art, proposing the symbols and language with which this is possible.

The work consists of:

- Installation of transparencies with slogans
- *Ironworks ABC* newspaper with graphical text work (in Croatian-Serbian):
http://issuu.com/vladanrena/docs/abeceda_zeljezare_press

Produced by Miroslav Kraljević Gallery Zagreb for *Festival Željezara*, June 2015.

An English version of the text work was published at *Rab-Rab, Journal for Political and Formal Inquiries in Art*, Issue 3, Rab-Rab Press, Helsinki, 2016.

A German version of text work was produced for the exhibition *Agitate, Educate, Organize* at after the butcher, Berlin, 2017.



Ironworks ABC. Transparencies at the central square of the *Željezara* district of Sisak.



Distribution of the newspaper in Željezara, the Ironworks district of Sisak.



Ironworks ABC. Transparents with slogans at the central square of the Ironworks district Željezara.



Ironworks ABC, graphics and text on the wall, exhibition views from Agitate, Educate, Organize at after the butcher, Ausstellungsraum für zeitgenössische Kunst und soziale Fragen, Berlin, 2017.



Ironworks ABC, graphics and text on the wall, after the butcher, Berlin, 2017.



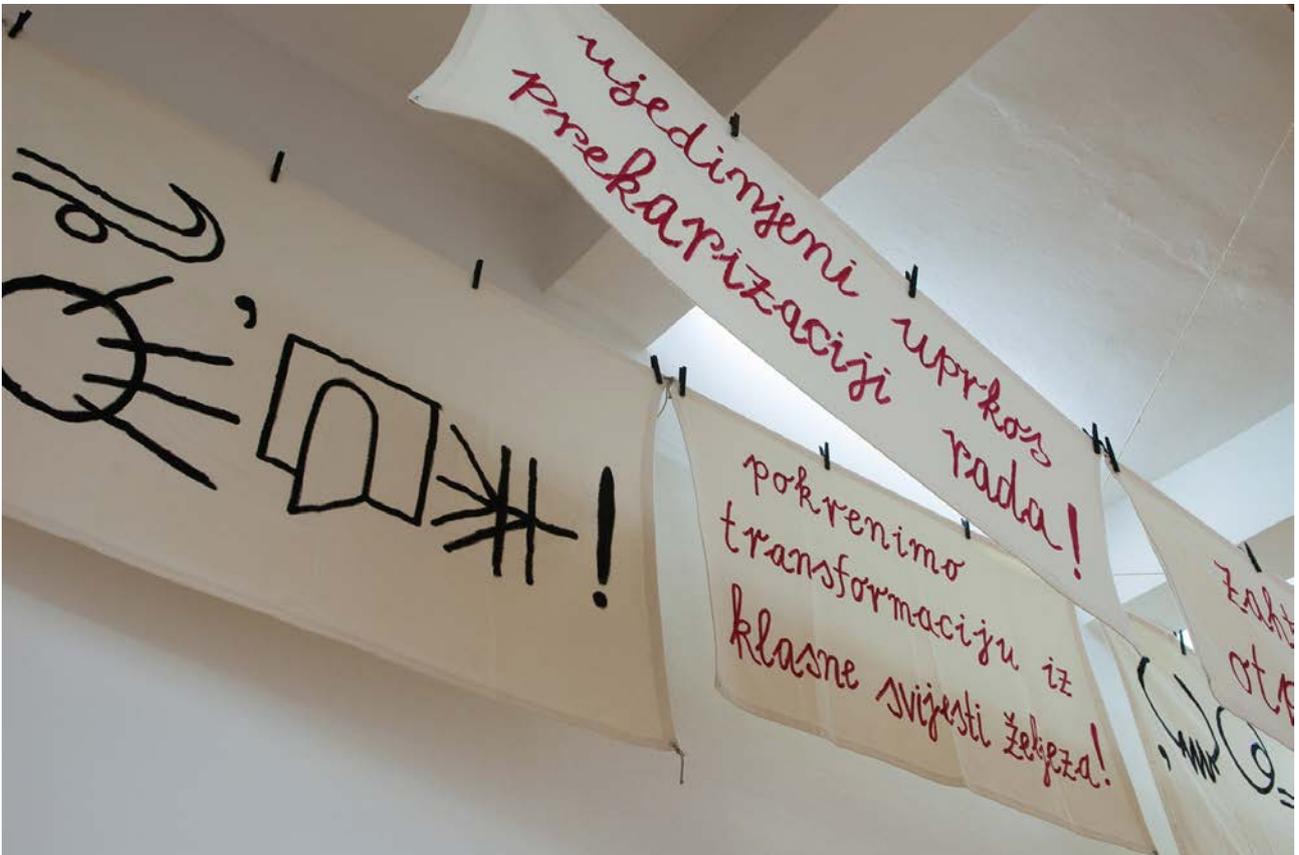
Ironworks ABC, graphics and text on the wall, after the butcher, Berlin, 2017.



Ironworks ABC, banners at the facade of the gallery after the butcher, Berlin, 2017.



Ironworks ABC, newspaper and banners, view of the solo exhibition Red Winter at Gallery SIZ, Rijeka, 2015.

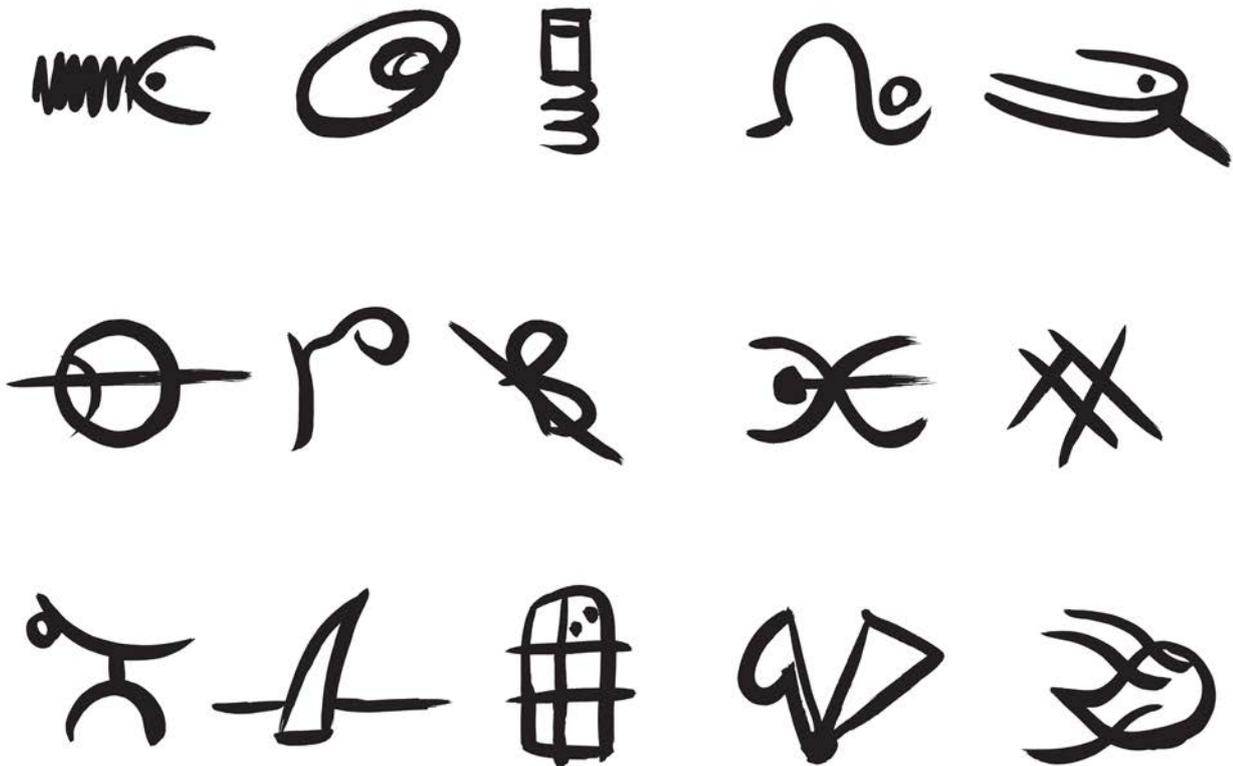


Ironworks ABC, banners, view of the solo exhibition Red Winter at Gallery SIZ, Rijeka, 2015.



Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić

Abeceda Željezare



Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić

Ironworks ABC, cover page of the newspaper.

Abeceda Željezare



We
sculptures of semi-finished metal,
are much more
than mirrors of conditions.
We stand here,
despite war and robbery.

Abeceda Željezare X

*Us ,
displaced atoms,
through the heat,
push dreams forward,
in the refreshing cold reality.
If you are realistic,
we can progress
from theory to practice.
Speculation about
bankruptcy
is not realistic.*

*We demand
the cancellation of debt!*





Exhibition view UNDISCIPLINARY LEARNING, DISTRICT, Berlin, 2016, curated by Janine Halka, Suza Husse and Julia Lazarus. Photo: Ina Wudtke

Worksheets on Living Images

In collaboration with Ina Wudtke for UNDISCIPLINARY LEARNING - Remapping The Aesthetics of Resistance, 8-9.-19.11.2016, at DISTRICT Berlin, curated by Janine Halka, Suza Husse and Julia Lazarus.

With the publication *Worksheets on Living Images*, we propose the actualization of a tradition of practices of resistance that combines the performance of "living images" (*tableaux vivants*) with political education and agitation. Social movements were using living images in order to present social contradictions or mediate the history of the movement in pictures. Tableaux vivants were an integral part of the culture of the workers' movement in the 19th century and were, for example, performed as part of the Lassalle and March celebrations. Activists transformed the living image step by step into a form of public protest or agitation for a political cause.

An example of such a spontaneous performance is documented in court papers from Emden. On 13th January 1930 communist activists intervened with a living image at an event of the NSDAP. They represented a Nazi who threatened a worker on the ground with a gun, while a priest or judge consensually watched.

The political force that such agitatorial interventions developed by artistic means inspired us to revive the living image as a form of action. To this end, we developed five worksheets with drawings and instructions for living images that problematize contemporary social and political contradictions. The focus is on the effects of the financial crisis and austerity policy, the division of society, the rise of the right and neo-fascist ideologies, and the security policy directed against refugees in Europe. These proposals are intended to provide suggestions for protest actions or can be used and further developed for educational events.

Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić

Production: DISTRICT, Berlin, 2016

<http://undisciplinarilylearning.com/en>

Online edition *Worksheets on Living Images*: http://raedle-jeremic.net/pdfs/blaetter_zum_lebenden_bild_w.pdf

Reading performance

A worker becomes a writer: MASCH, Agitprop, Margarete Steffin

As part of the program *Undisciplinary Learning: Remapping the Aesthetics of Resistance CITY*, which took place at original sites from Peter Weiss's *The Aesthetics of Resistance*, the artists Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić and Ina Wudtke staged a reading of texts from the worker-writer Margarete Steffin at Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, Berlin. With the reading performance *A worker becomes a writer: MASCH, Agitprop, Margarete Steffin*, alongside Steffin's work the artists Rena Rädle & Vladan Jeremić and Ina Wudtke introduced their Worksheets on Living Images, which they developed as their contribution to the exhibition.



Photo: Sibylle Hofter



Photo: Sibylle Hofter

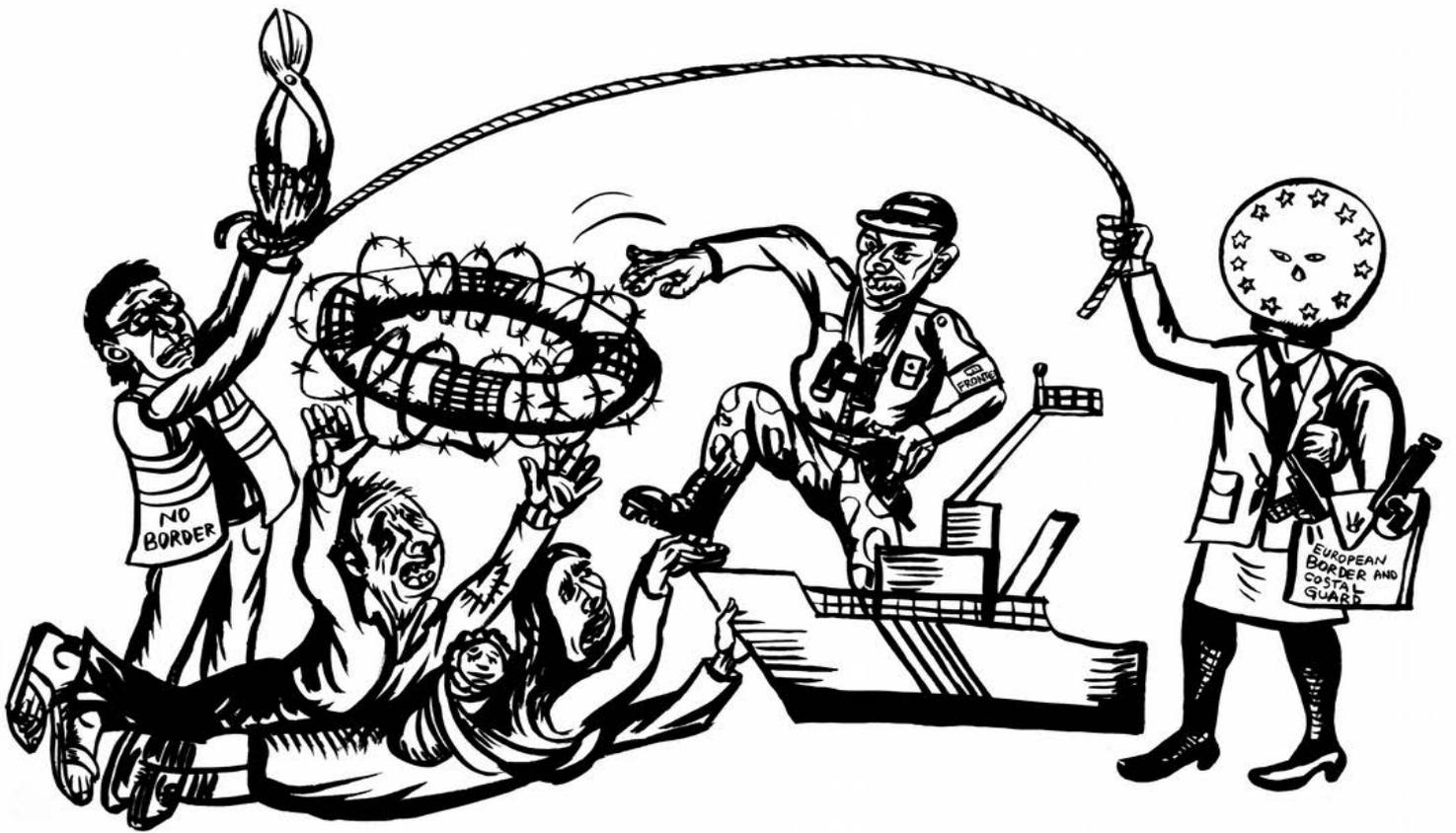


Photo: Lucrezia Zanardi



Photo: Sibylle Hofter

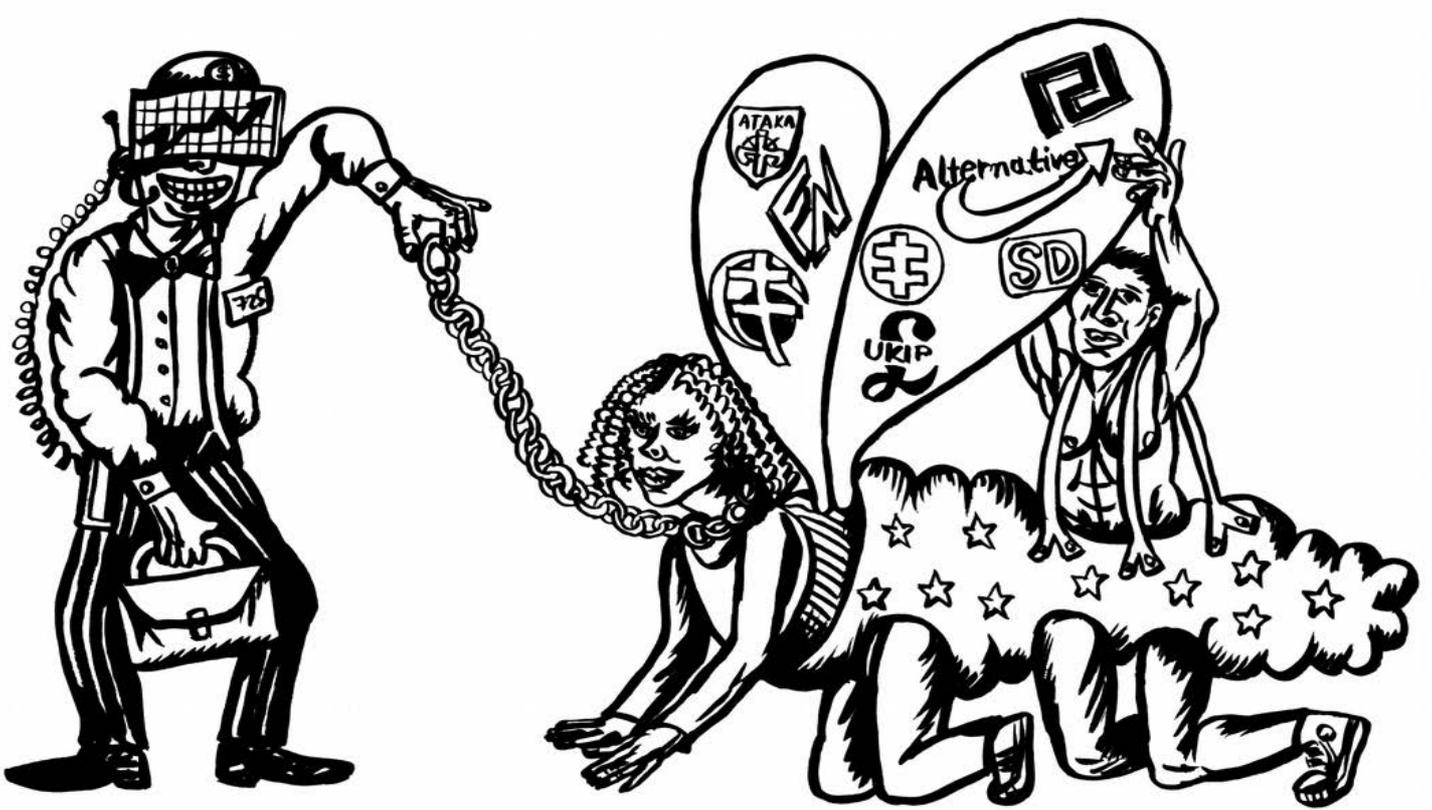
Reading performance *A worker becomes a writer: MASCH, Agitprop, Margarete Steffin*, with Ina Wudtke, Karl-Liebknecht-Haus, 15. October 2016



Drawing from the worksheet no. 1: "The Rescue"



Drawing from worksheet no. 2: "The Deal"



Drawing from worksheet no. 4. "The Metamorphosis"



Drawing of the intervention by communist activists at the NSDAP gathering January 13 1930 in Emden.



View of **Red Winter** intervention with sound installation and banners at the main square of Levanger, 2014

Red Winter

The artistic intervention with sound, banners and distribution of a newspaper on Levanger's main square creates references between contemporary and historical social movements from Levanger and Norway that are part of world-wide struggles for emancipation. The point of departure is the three-day-long workers' uprising that took place in 1851 on Levanger Square, which was internationally noticed and covered by the news in Paris and London at that time. It was triggered by the arrest of Carl Johan Michelsen, who agitated for the first Norwegian labour movement, led by Marcus Thrane.

The work consists of:

Installation of **sound recordings of four speeches and banners with slogans and drawings**

Red Winter Newspaper (Norwegian/English): http://issuu.com/vladanrena/docs/red_winter_newspaper

Video documentation of the distribution at the square (excerpts): <https://vimeo.com/114021960>

Public discussion at the townhall

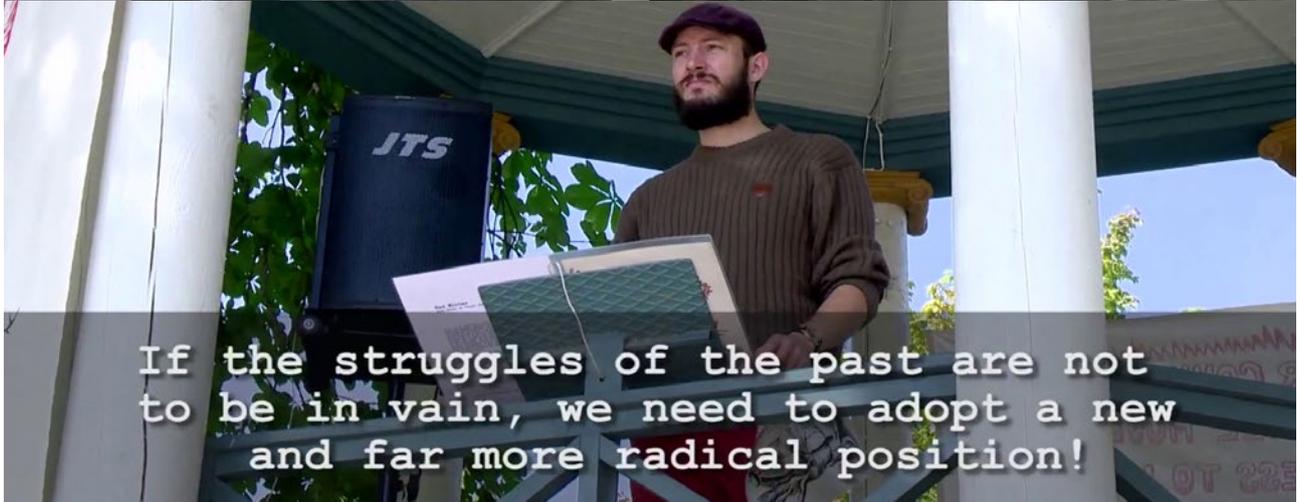
Produced by Levart in the frame of Deep Sites, 5-20 September 2014, curated by Anne-Gro Erikstad.



I call on you to sow the seed of revolution - transfer our power into the 21st century!



institutionalized the racist and sexist biopolitics against us Roma, aided by science and special laws.



If the struggles of the past are not to be in vain, we need to adopt a new and far more radical position!



Down with the landowners!

must not look backward. Do not leave the development of technological progress to the capitalists!

Distribution of the newspaper on the main square of Levanger.

Stills from the video **Red Winter**, 16 min, editing: Rena Rädle, camera: echomedia, Levanger, Norway, 2014

In the center of Levanger, at the historical location of the uprising, we installed banners all around the square. From the square's speakers pavilion, we emitted recorded speeches by political agitators from past and present-day movements. Passer-byes were addressed by us and we distributed a newspaper with the four speeches, drawings and slogans to them.

The speakers represent the first Norwegian labour movement, the antifascist struggle during WW2, emancipatory movements of the Roma and Sami during the last decades and current environmental movements. From their historical positions - but also aware of the present day situation - they share the experience of their struggles and analyze mechanisms of exploitation now and then. They defend their demands, claim political, social and economical equality and call for radical change and revolution.



Red Winter. Banners at the pavillion and around the Levanger town square.

The work **Red Winter*** draws on a local tradition of historical folk theater. However, the aim of the intervention reaches beyond a re-enactment of historical events. The imaginary interaction between the speeches and slogans that are each derived from specific situations and political conjunctions, draws a connection ranging all the way from the past to the social struggles of today.

The particularity of their struggles is traced by the speakers' biographical testimony and accounts, but their incendiary speeches are also directed to a common struggle that needs to be fought at the present. Through the artistic compression of time, space and language, the work creates a new perspective on current positions and makes space for the projection of a future political program beyond particular interests, identity politics and anthropocentrism.

*The title Red Winter was inspired by the dramatic play Raud Vinter by Thorvald Sund, based on the Levanger riots in 1851, and performed in Levanger for the first time in 2006.



Speech by the member of the Thrane movement

Citizens of Levanger!

Some one hundred and fifty years ago, they sent Carl Johan Michelsen and our comrades to jail. Why were they thrown into the dungeon?
 Because they were hungry! Because they had no work!
 Because they wanted to send their children to school, but didn't have the money for it!
 Because they no longer wanted to send their children to war as cannon fodder for the gentlemen in power!
 Because they wanted to have a say in matters concerning them.
 Ha! They had to use soldiers to defeat our rebellion; we have given these mighty gentlemen quite a fright!
 There would be plenty for everyone, if only things were distributed fairly:

Down with the landowners!

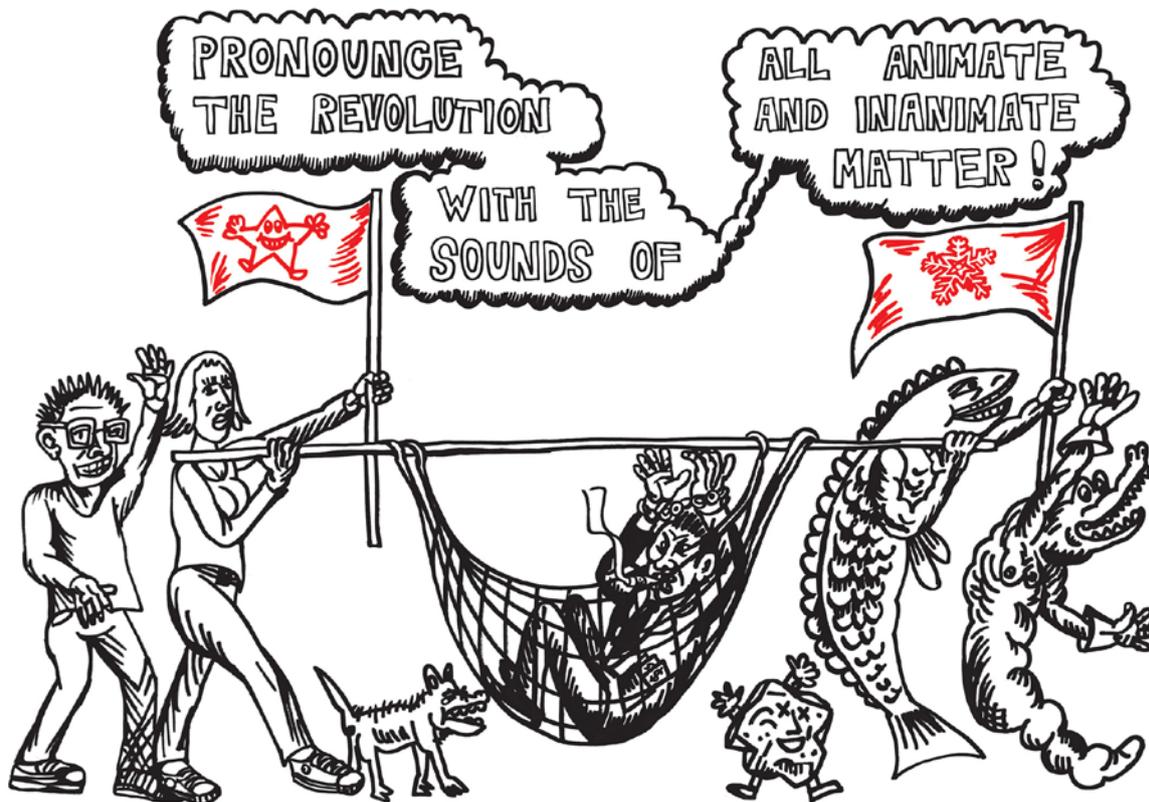
Now, one hundred and fifty years later, I stand on Levanger Torg once again.
 I hear that you have fought for the right to vote and the right to education, and even military service for women.
 I hear that Norway is a rich country now.
 I also hear that begging is nowadays banned in Levanger?
 Is it really necessary for anyone to beg?
 The more I enquire, the more I realize that you have not achieved the kind of social justice for which we fought in 1851.
 You have fought for political equality and equality before the law;
 Do not stop there!
 Fight for economic equality as well!
 Only by fighting against the propertied class can we pave the way for a just society.

I call on you to sow the seed of revolution - transfer our power into the 21st century!

Let the revolution start from this place in Levanger.
 Let it spread to the south from the periphery of northern Europe and ignite the heart of Europe, which is weakened by the poison of neo-liberalism and neo-colonialism!
 Europe with all its riches will have to change its relationship to the world.
 The wars for resources, the exploitation and plundering of the periphery, the expropriation of land, the internment of the displaced and dispossessed, all this needs to be brought to a halt.
 That is what we are fighting for, at this moment, in this place!

But before I return to the past, I want to tell you one more thing:
 As modern socialists, you must not look backward. Do not leave the development of technological progress to the capitalists!
 Your so-called Facebook and Twitter revolutions will not endure as long as modern technology remains a resource in the hands of the capitalists.

You yourselves must take control of technological progress!
 Increase the speed of social transformation!
 For economic democracy!



Speech by the activist for a radical ecological turnaround

I greet you, my dear friends, in the language of the people of this northern landscape.

Inaudibly for you, I greet the stones under our feet and the distant mountains from which they were hewn. My inner self receives the screeching answers of birds that mingle with the roar of the wind.

Fossil capitalism has forged an alliance with death!

Using ever more destructive methods, it forces all natural wealth from our planet. We human inhabitants of Norway are among the infinitely small percentage of living things that immediately and directly profit from the destruction of the earth.

With oil drilling planned in the Arctic, the Barents Sea and off the coast of Lofoten, we endanger our last untouched marine regions.

Do we really believe that quick profits such as these will enable our descendants to survive the collapse of the ecosystem?

Last year we achieved an important victory in the fight for the Lofoten Islands.

But we demand more:

Stop all oil production in the Arctic!

I agree with the comrade from the Thrane movement of the 19th century: we need a revolution, and we are the ones who must spark it off!
I agree with the Romanistan activist that we must not simply retreat into our own biotope, but need to enter into coalitions that rise above homo sapiens as a species!

The resistance fighter from World War II is right when he says that fascism is on its way back. We can see it right in the midst of society: in the racist campaign slogans of so-called patriotic parties, in the pamphlets of young people filled with hate, in the neo-Nazi attacks on migrants and Roma throughout Europe.

If the struggles of the past are not to be in vain, we need to adopt a new and far more radical position!

The old logic that places the individual at the centre of the world is too limited.

We need a radical, a truly revolutionary change in perspective!

Away with anthropocentrism!

The inhabitants of the seas, the skies and the earth are our allies.

The plants and the minerals are our comrades!

Let us regard the revolution from the perspective of the sand!

Let us write our slogans in the language of the ocean's depth!

Let us proclaim the revolution with the sounds of all animate and inanimate matter!



Pavillion with sound installation, newspaper and banners.



Public discussion about the artistic action at the townhall of Levanger.



Still from the video **Workers' Collective**. Distribution of the newspaper in front of the main gate of the Mining and Smelting Basin of Bor (RTB). 5 min, editing: Rena Rädle, camera: Rastko Popov, Bor 2013

Workers' Collective

Workers' Collective is an artistic transformation dealing with the experience of the historical workers' self-management in Yugoslavia. We edited a special issue of the Mining Company's newspaper *Bor Collective* (Borski kolektiv) and distributed it to the workers in front of the RTB gate.

Bor Collective was first time issued in 1947, with the establishment of workers' self-management in the RTB Mining Company. Though still published under the same name, today *Bor Collective* represents the voice of the RTB director and management floor instead of the workers. We used samples of the historical newspaper and photo archives of the Bor People's Library to assembly an updated version of the first number, now under the programatically changed name *Workers' Collective* (Radnički kolektiv).

The work consists of:

Newspaper Workers' Collective: http://issuu.com/vladanrena/docs/radnicki_kolektiv

Video documentation of the distribution in front of the gate: <https://vimeo.com/114715217>

Documentation of the discussion with workers at the library: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpOGirLg91o>

Produced with the support of: Ministry of culture and information of Serbia, Bor Municipality, People's Library Bor. Curated by Dragan Stojmenović Sima.



Bor Collective, issue from 1947 and issue from 2012.
 Special edition **Workers' Collective**, 16 pages.
 Rena Rädle and Vladan Jeremić in collaboration with Saša Lović, Bor 2013

Texts cut out from the original newspapers are updated striking through and replacing certain words, old political slogans are contrasted with new ones. A collage of historical and contemporary practices of workers' self-organization is printed on a double page. It shows photos of the election of the workers' councils after the socialization of the mine and images of the mass protests during the last decade, when many branches of the mining company entered the privatization process and stopped production.

Another photomontage refers to a form of workers' protest that emerged after many remained without wages or pension. Fighting for the existence of themselves and their families, the workers blocked the national highway with mining trucks and protested with loafs of bread pinned to their placards. There is also a comic strip problematising the position of the union leaders. Ironically, the sentences scribbled onto the pictures of the workers' spokesmen resemble the typical phrases of the Mine Company's management. And there is a double page edited by a musician and former worker at RTB with a collection of workers' humour and poetry.



Photomontage, double-page from **Workers' Collective**

Almost thousand newspapers were distributed to the workers in front of the copper mines' gate during shift change. They were invited to the discussion at the People's Library of Bor the same evening. The discussion centred amongst others on the fact that the so called democratisation of the society did not lead to an increase but to the total loss of workers' control in the management of their factories. Another problem that was raised was the corruption of the big trade-unions by the political establishment that controls the privatisation process and the reform of workers' rights legislation.

A few weeks after the discussion, the president of the Independent Workers' Union Bor went on hunger-strike to protest against corruption in the privatisation process of the Mining Company and the directors' attempt to press the workers join his newly founded trade-union under threat of dismissal.





Still from the video **Workers' Collective**



Video still: Distribution of **Workers' Collective**



Video still: Distribution of **Workers' Collective**



Documentation of public presentation of the newspaper **Workers' Collective** at the People's Library Bor and discussion with Dragiša Trujkić, president of the Independent Workers' Union Bor, Milan Rakita, sociologist and Ivan Radenković, philosopher.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GpOGirLg91o>