

Sarajevo International, 2001, stills from the twelve videos.

SARAJEVO INTERNATIONAL

A Video-Communication Project by Kristina Leko

Twelve Video Installations in Sarajevo Public Spaces

Twelve Videos Created in Collaboration with Foreigners who Moved to Sarajevo in the 1990ies
SCCA Sarajevo 2001

The project participants, twelve foreigners who moved to Sarajevo for personal reasons during the 1990ies, differ from each other in their social background, religion and nationality: from university professor to a small Chinese shopkeeper. My idea was to show economical, political and social backgrounds of an after-war society through the representative selection of foreign citizens. Relevant social and historical issues are revealed through personal video documents.

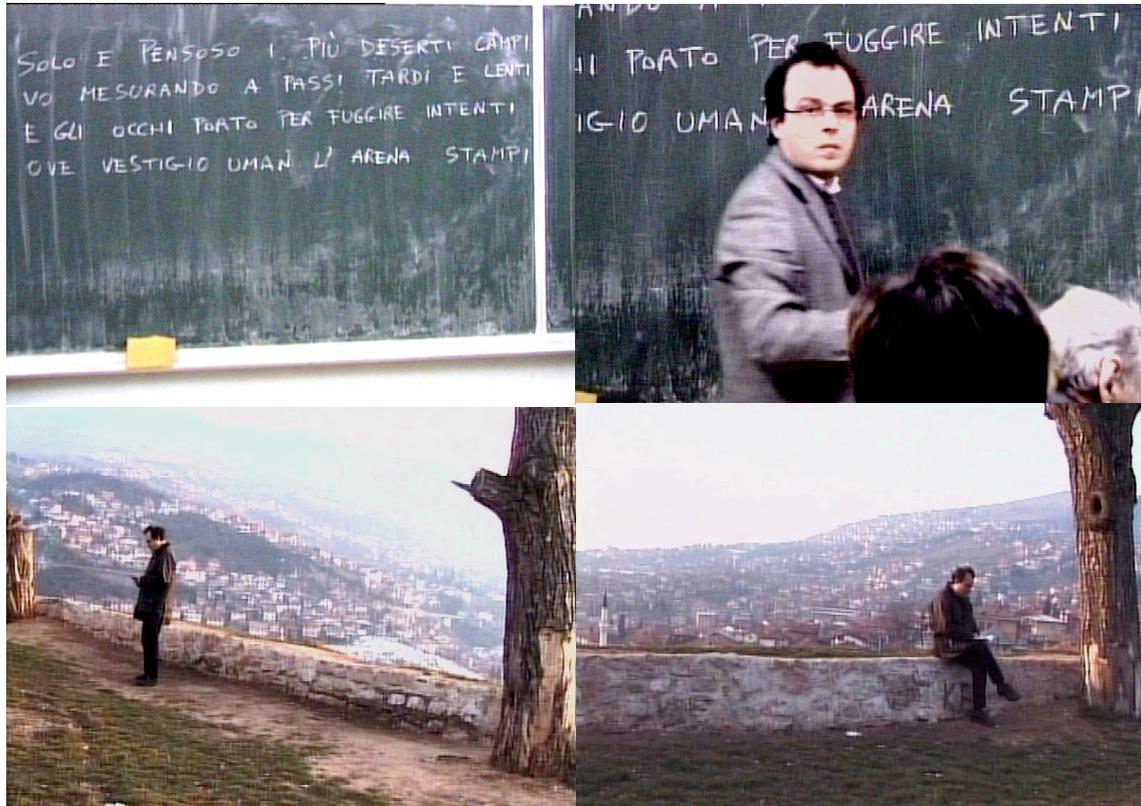
Communication with and among the participants, and to help their integration with their social environment were the aims of the project realized through showing the videos in different public sites in the town: a book-shop, a restaurant, the French Cultural Center, the Student Cultural Center, the airport... and through broadcasts on the local TV station. The choice of the public sites was made in collaboration with the participants and their wishes.

With my help and instructions, each of the participants shaped his/her story him/herself. The realization of video material took 50 days. Different cultural background caused big differences in the way participants involved them in the creative process. Some of them did shooting themselves, wrote a story or statement and creatively dealt with the video structure. For others, telling the story in a direct way was the only possible expression. Thus, the videos differ from each other a lot.



Sarajevo International, 2001, stills from the video created in collaboration with Yvana Enzler. Above: installation of the work in a Sarajevo bookshop, May 2001.

Yvana Enzler, born in 1952 in Switzerland, diplomat, came to Sarajevo in 1998, and not by chance. The video speaks of her search for her roots: Yvana follows the female line of her family and expose her own complex religious and national identity. It is a story of three women ancestors, her great-great-grandmother born in a Jewish Sarajevo family in the early 19th century, her great-grandmother, catholic from Vienna that married and went to live in Belgrade and finally her grandmother, orthodox. Yvana's complex identity is a metaphor for the identity of Sarajevo. She shows photographs from her family album alternating them with pictures of Sarajevo that correspond to different religious identities.



Sarajevo International, 2001, stills from the video created in collaboration with Marco Noce.

Marco Noce, born in Italy in 1963, came to Sarajevo in 1998 to teach Italian as a lecturer at the Sarajevo University. In 2001, aside from his university job, he worked as an officer at the Italian Embassy, volunteered for the Sarajevo Italian Society, was voluntarily teaching two Italian language courses, and was the founder of a nongovernmental office for cultural exchange between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Italy. His video story starts with a sonnet of Petrarch, an introduction to the reasons for Noce's coming to Sarajevo. Marco Noce, through Petrarch's sonnet and his personal intimate experience, speaks about the feeling of guilt and shame that arise in connection with Sarajevo, and about the feeling of uneasiness shared by many other people who have been lucky enough not to have personally experienced war. Marco is a poet who in order to tell his thoughts combines reading a chat with his wife Laura and a very personal lecture on Petrarch for his students.



Sarajevo International, 2001, stills from the video created in collaboration with Krista Maresch; installation site of the work at the Sarajevo Airport, May 2001.

Krista Maresch, born in 1968 in Austria, professor of the German language, met some young people from Sarajevo in Vienna, only to move to Sarajevo three years later. Krista's video symbolically uses home-video recordings, and speaks of the existence of a dual perspective: one is of Bosnia in Vienna, young people who came there as war refugees; the other is a picture of Sarajevo in the post-war period, misunderstandings between the ones who emigrated during the war and the ones who had stayed in Sarajevo. The video speaks of the differences in mentality and about the efforts to bridge these differences. Krista decided to show her video at the Sarajevo International Airport. In May 2001 her video was part of the program of the closed circuit television at the Sarajevo Airport. It was on the air once an hour.



Sarajevo International, 2001, a still from the video created in collaboration with Imad Ziyada; installation site of the work in the British Council Library in Sarajevo, May 2001.

Imad Ziyada, Palestinian born in Baghdad in 1966, civil engineer, today runs his own design studio in Sarajevo, where he has lived since 1996. Imad did not come to Sarajevo in the way one would expect, through the Arabic lobby in Sarajevo, but thanks to his friend, Vjeko Saja, catholic whom he met in Baghdad in the 1980s. Imad does not have a passport, only a travel document. He is in fact a refugee from Iraq to Sarajevo. He could not find a job in Iraq after the embargo of 1990. In his video Imad tells his life story, a story of friendship and on how to make your dreams come true. Imad sends regular financial support to his family in Baghdad. His video was shown in the British Council Library, since he met his best friend in the English language course in the British Council in Baghdad.



Sarajevo International, 2001, Six out of 12 locations in public and semi public places in the town of Sarajevo where the individuals video stories were shown, May 2001.