

RAAŇNIČKA ANKĚTA

The methodology of the research is based on Marx's "The Workers' Inquiry" from 1881, when *Revue Socialiste* asked him to carry out a study into the conditions of the French proletariat.

The 100-question research takes Marx's argument about capitalism hiding its methods of exploitation as its starting point. While artistic production is still granted relative creative autonomy, the deteriorating economic circumstances and working conditions of artists, and their declining control over the reproduction and distribution of their ideas, knowledge and commodities are pushing them further into a contractual relationship with the capital. The contradictions of work in the sphere of culture have become so obscured that work is often considered to be not only stimulating and fulfilling, but also free from any elements of exploitation. The key to understanding exploitation lies in discerning how it shapes the work and life of cultural workers. Workers' Inquiry unveils the antagonisms of art production and labour, resistance against exploitation and commodification, as well as various subjective components embedded in the work processes and work itself. It also serves as a kind of self-emancipation tool as it discloses the ways and different levels of exploitation of interviewees in the spirit of Marx who said: emancipation of workers must come from the workers themselves.

Workers' Inquiry has so far been carried out in Madrid, Spain, and Belgrade and Novi Sad, Serbia; the questions were adapted to each specific local situation and conducted in various formats, either as oral interviews or a written narrative.

What is your level of education?

Where and what did you study?

What kind of institution was it?

How long did you study?

In case it was longer than expected, what was the reason?

Did you have a scholarship?

Did you have to pay for your studies?

Did you work as a student?

What kind of work did you do? (Manual labor / »creative industries« / volunteer work /work within the university (assistant)... / internships / other?)

How many hours a day/week did you work?

How much did you earn?

Did you get health benefits/paid holidays?

Were you able to cover all of your expenses by yourself?

If not, who supported you?

Did you attend any alternative courses/education?

If so, what kind and where?

Did you participate in any political activities or were a member of a political party?

How long did it take you to find a job after finishing your studies?

Was it related to your studies?

Did you work as an intern? In case you did, where and for how long?

What were your responsibilities?

Was it paid internship? If not, were you given any kind of benefits?

How many hours a day/week did you work?

After finishing your internship, did you get an opportunity to apply for a position at the same institution?

Were you offered a contract? If not, what was the reason?

Do you have a job now? Where do you work? Is it related to your studies?

In which field of culture do you work?

How long have you been working there?

Before starting work there, did you work in the same field?

What do you produce in your work?

Are the results of your work shared with others in any way? How?

What kind of contract do you have? Public service employee / free-lance / fixed-term contract / short-term contract / service contract / volunteer?

In case your position is temporary, how does this impact your life?

Would you prefer to have a permanent position? Why?

Have you ever applied for a public service position?

How much do you earn?

Do you consider your work well paid? Does it cover your cost of living?

How many hours a day do you work?

Do you have health insurance? Is it part of Social Security or private insurance? Is it covered by your employer? Do you have a retirement plan?

Are your social security contributions taken into account for your unemployment insurance?

How many days of vacation do you have? Are they paid?

Are you granted sick leave?

Do you have maternity leave?

Does the fact that you have children affect your job position?

Do you have any possibilities for promotion?

What are they?

Do you have another job in addition to this one? Why? What kind of job is it?

Do you spend your free time in any other kind of occupation? If so, describe it.

How often do you visit museums or other cultural institutions outside your working hours?

Do you attend any programs that take place there?

Do you estimate that over the last decade you have become, in the cultural sense, poorer / richer / remained the same?

What is your relationship with your work / co-workers / director?

Do you enjoy your work or does it make you feel frustrated in any way?

Have you ever had any kind of conflict at work? Describe it.

What were the consequences of such conflicts?

Are there conflicts that you are not involved in at your place of employment? What do you think of them? Do you not get involved because you cannot, may not, or will not?

Does your job allow you to be creative?

Do you ever have to censor yourself at work?

Has your work ever been censored?

Do you consider your work environment competitive? If so, how does this affect your performance?

Have you ever filed a complaint? If so, what was the reason? Who did you complain to?

Where are you from? Is your place of origin relevant when discussing your work life?

Does your religious / political /sexual orientation affect your position at work?

Can you speak openly about religious / political issues at work?

Have you ever been attacked because of your religious / political / sexual orientation?

Do you consider that in the political sense over the last decade you have: made progress / regressed / lost interest in politics?

Are you a member of any trade union? Does it provide any assistance when you need it?

Have you ever taken part in a strike or demonstration?

Do you follow other workers' protests? Do you remember any particular protest that struck you as memorable? What is your opinion on strikes, their methods and prospects?

Did you expect to end up working in your current position? Has it fulfilled your expectations?

Do you consider that in the economic sense over the last decade you have: got new opportunities / lost opportunities that used to be available / remained at the status quo / become declassified (lost opportunities that you used to have without getting new ones)?

Comparing your work conditions 10 years ago to those now, what is the difference?

Do you consider your job conditions somehow precarious?

Do you think there is social appreciation of cultural work?

Should your work be considered a public service? Why? How does your work contribute to society?

Do you share the political view of the institution where you work?

What is your opinion about it?

Do you consider the image that the institution projects of itself coherent with its practice and activities?

Are you afraid of losing your job?

Have you ever been afraid because of your work or at your work?

Have you ever thought of leaving the country?

What is to be done?

Is there anything important that we have not asked?

Workers' Inquiry

2012



**ALEKSANDRA
SEKULIĆ**

Have you ever had to engage in auto-censorship in the course of your work?

In project management there is high degree of auto censorship given that the manner of funding requires it because of the fact that one addresses people who have to approve funds. In my previous job some very vulgar situations have occurred when I was expected to censor myself and others and that was the reason why I left my previous job. This case refers to a state institution in which I used to work which tried to avoid acknowledging political conditioning of culture in which it engaged itself, producing and reproducing it. Of which I became aware only subsequently. That moment when I found it intolerable to still try to 'politicize' all by myself this culture which inertly, just like in other state institutions, only even more strongly, represents a place of passivization.. When I felt that I no longer had any support and the possibility to continue doing it without destroying the integrity of the previous struggle, I gave up.

Have you ever lodged a protest or a complaint? What was the reason and to whom it was addressed?

I wrote to the competent Ministry, but I have never obtained an answer. The result was complete removal of all the people who have been producing the program with me for the previous four years. We have managed to save two projects but have lost a lot of future potential ones.

Are you a member of a trade union? Is it helpful when it is needed?

I was a member of a trade union and it hadn't been helpful. Even though my colleagues in the previous situation i.e. institution have expressed their solidarity with me and have tried to find a way to fight things, they have been completely powerless in terms of mobbing at work and many other things so that trade unions in that concrete case could not help with anything.

Have you ever been afraid due to your work or at your workplace?

I was under the pressure of extreme right-wing organizations because of our work and this pressure involved open incidents and attacks... There were steadily repeated situations which were supposed to instill the fear... But, with the experience from the 1990s, it is difficult to talk about some real fear; it is more a sort of a cramp.



**JELENA
VESIĆ**

Do you presently have a job?

No, I work as a freelancer. But it can be said that it is also a job, which is usually referred to as self-employment. For example I do not have a contract for a project going on presently, on which I have been working for the last three months.

How does that affect your life?

Well, my whole life is very unstable. In the sense of feeling a sort of insecurity... The fact is that I formally exist as a citizen only as a holder of a passport of this country. I do not have any civic benefits. However, that's understandable because this is not a welfare state anymore.

Do you have health insurance?

No.

And pension insurance?

No.

What is your field of work?

Visual arts.

For how long?

For 17 years, I started as a student.

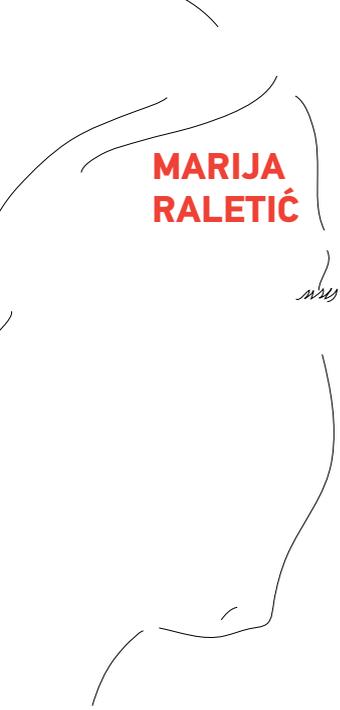
What is a product of your work?

Well, hopefully creation of some different attitude, different approach to the production of art and culture, a different scene, production of new social constellations that could be significant now or later – in a better future. I like the phrase “delayed audience” coined by colleagues Ivana Bago and Antonia Majača. If I think from a Marxist perspective, if I think historically, I do not believe and do not support those concepts of art and artistic (or activist) activity which unfold as pure contemporaneity, which tends towards resolving the things here and now, in actuality which is used as a pure now. This might be justified in some historical moments, but in principle I think that it is more truthful to think about society in the past – present – future constellations.

Is the result of your work shareable with people and how?

(...) As a curator I am always placed in a position between the violent demands of production distributed both – by the state and its repressive apparatuses and supra-state ideological apparatuses such as international foundations – and the artists and cultural workers who work together with me on some topic or content. Thus as a curator I am always in some kind of blockade vis-a-vis methods and goals which emanate from the domain of repressive apparatuses, representing positions of my companions – cultural workers and content makers. The mediating position of a curator seems to me interesting precisely in that sense, and not only as a rhetorical gesture of transmitting contents from the artist to the audience, which mostly ends in counting of audience numbers. The violence of production is transmitted from state and supra-state apparatuses through institutions, people working on the projects etc., so that the strongest impact of violence, its snowball effect, is felt within the cognitariat, the people who engage in production of contents and are

fully economically dependent on this production ... I believe my contribution in that sense resides in my readiness to intervene whenever I can (or cannot)... It practically means that for me the authorial fees for artists, writers, associates etc. and making of their works outside the production routine imposed by strictly professional relationships is at least as important as representation and topical-content properties of an artistic event, perhaps even more. The relations of domination and subordination are reproduced precisely in this segment of organization of production and not in the pure flow of thoughts and ideas. To me the process of production or forms of cooperation are very important. In any project on which I work, I deal with such issues at least 50 percent of the time... of course, if something like working hours exists in our line of work in the first place.



MARIJA RALETIĆ

How long have you studied?

I finished Gymnasium and four years of Veterinary College. I studied ten years but now I have enrolled a new course of studies – at a private Faculty for Culture and Media.

Where do you presently work?

I work at the Museum of Yugoslav History at the info desk selling souvenirs. I have been working there for two and a half years.

What is the product of your work?

Given that I am the first person whom Museum visitors meet when they enter the Museum, I am mostly the one who provides the widest possible range of information regarding the Museum, current exhibitions and so on. Let's say that the product of my work is general provision of information.

What type of a contract do you have?

It is a non-permanent contract, extended every month.

How does that affect your life?

It affects it a lot. For example, I can't take any loan, I can't think about the future, because I there is a permanent possibility that I will lose my job as of next month.

How many days of vacation do you have?

Zero.

Do you have the right to a sick leave?

No.

Do you have the right to a maternity leave?

No.

What is your relationship towards work / other employees like?

I don't have problems with my superiors and my relationship is always such that I try to be diligent, expecting that it will somehow pay off.

Have you ever had any conflicts at work?

Working at the Museum I keep my distance, I don't interfere into other people's problems, I know very little what happens around me. I am in good relations with everyone and that's it.

Do you think that public image projected by the institution in which you work is in accordance with its practice and activities?

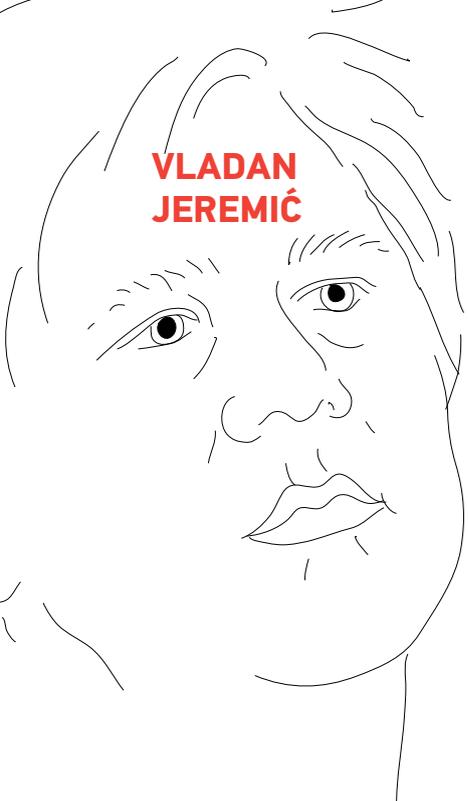
I think it's not.

Are you afraid that you are going to lose your job?

Of course.

Have you ever thought about leaving the country?

I keep thinking about it all the time.



**VLADAN
JEREMIĆ**

What is your estimate – in the past ten years have you become impoverished / enriched / remained the same in cultural sense?

I organized and produced a lot of cultural events and I also worked a lot abroad. In the past seven or eight years, just like a lot of local artists, I worked a lot in the international context; some of my key projects were actually created outside Serbia. After such an experience, namely after constant travelling from one place to the other, I can conclude that it is a specific working framework of precarious nomadism or, plainly speaking, “gastarbeiter” work without permanent address abroad. In such working and living circumstances there is a problem that there is no more time to produce a “conscious content” i.e. no capacity for a content to emerge which is politically grounded in the local context. Thus “nomadic producers of culture and art” perpetuate already existing “global discourse” recognizable internationally and have been moving in circles within it in the past ten years or so.... Actually in such working conditions both: the content and the possibility of political engagement in culture become impoverished.

Have you ever had any kind of conflict at work?

I have had conflicts when I was program editor for Dom omladine (Cultural center DOB), a state-funded institution. An example is an exhibition I curated which the management did not like. It was the exhibition "Balkan Exotic" by Ondrej Brody & Kristofer Paetau. These artists have held a workshop involving actors and actresses from Serbia, in connection with shooting of a porno movie. This affair spawned a series of conflicts, everything is too complicated to retell in detail now; it would require a broader elaboration. Anyhow, in the aftermath I was exposed to pressures which resulted in problems and deteriorating conditions of work.

Have you had to engage in auto-censorship in your work?

Yes, I had to. My work was censored. Auto-censorship is an integral part of "shaping" i.e. curating the content. Whoever claims the opposite identifies the notion of personal freedom with mathematical notion of the infinite, which is very metaphysical, while in real politics of action there is often nothing but anarchic-liberal bourgeois utopia.

Does your religious / political / sexual orientation affect your position at work?

Yes. It is common in Serbia.

For example, an exhibition I curated, showing the work by Živko Grozdanić Gera, "Meteorite Rain" has been criticized by some members of the Serbian Orthodox Church, giving rise to criticism by fellow colleagues from the institution and by other persons. I have felt such criticism on my own skin. If you do not define yourself explicitly heterosexually, and I do not define myself in such a way, you can get a series of problems. I associated with LGBTQ activists and cooperated on projects concerning LGBTQ community. Unfortunately, I have also had problems with the prevailing social framework due to it.

Due to the support to truly left-wing emancipatory politics in the field of culture you can always get problems because in Serbia culture, just like all other sectors, is divided like booty among right-wing political parties. If you are not subordinated to party directives of the Democratic Party (and its derivatives such as the Liberal Democratic Party LDP)

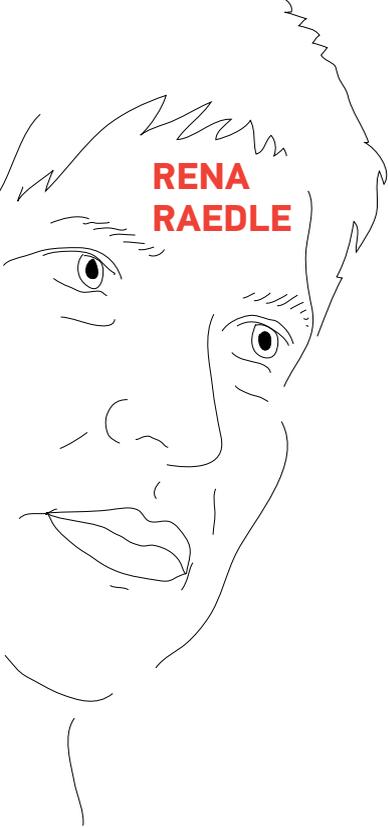
which have been ruling the city of Belgrade for almost 17 years, you will not be able to work and live on the margin in this city. This pertains both to institutional city context and to the so-called "independent scene" which actually stems from the same neo-liberal pro-capitalist anti-Milošević wing of the 1990s which consists of members and sympathizers of the Democratic Party. This so-called "independent scene" only conditionally exercises independence from circles close to the Democratic Party and the LDP. The support provided to certain organizations by city leaders from the Democratic Party, for example by way of very low prices of renting office and exhibition spaces, gives them the possibility to harass other (usually young, only just emerged) cultural producers whom they lure by way of venues for staging events, imposing on them directives of the ruling party or the donor. The local actors with privileged renting prices of venues are in constant collaborative exchange with the authorities. They enjoy political protection and cheap venues and in turn provide for those authorities dissemination of

free market and neoliberal ideology, while their practice usually consists of exploitative working relations in the field of culture because they are themselves blackmailed by the same authorities and neoliberal donor agendas.

I think that the state in which cultural workers find themselves can only be amended if there is a true change of politics. Only when workers, both in the field of culture and in other sectors, come to manage the means of production themselves and set up workers' councils in culture, we will be able to speak of the basis for improvement of conditions.

Do you keep track of workers' protests and what is your opinion on them?

I keep track of workers' protests, especially protests of workers of pharmaceutical company Jugoremedija. The last protest was some ten days ago. It was staged because of the arrest of Jugoremedija director Zdravko Deurić. People protested the decision of the Zrenjanin court. There were some 300 people, which is a significant number for a town such as Zrenjanin. The protest contributed that Deurić be released from custody. I think that protests do produce results, but not always. I think that every protest has to be well thought-out, contextualized, be led in a certain way, have a defined goal and that those who lead it should be clear about politics they want to achieve...



**RENA
RAEDLE**

In which cultural field do you work?

In the field of public education.

What is the product of your work?

Educational value.

What kind of a work contract do you have?

Authorial contract.

How does that affect your life?

I have no security whatsoever. This type of a contract does not regulate old-age insurance, health insurance, paid vacation or anything of the sort.

The salary I have is not enough to enable me to pay insurance myself under any given insurance model.

I have always lived this way; it has never been any different.

Would you prefer to have a full-time job?

Certainly. Although, I am also aware of the limitations of such a working relationship.

Have you ever had to engage in auto-censorship in your work or at a workplace?

Yes, it happens automatically, especially when we talk about fundraising. At the moment when you write project proposal i.e. when you write about project goals, why the project is needed and so on, one advertently or inadvertently adapts to strict donor demands.

Have you ever lodged a protest or a complaint?

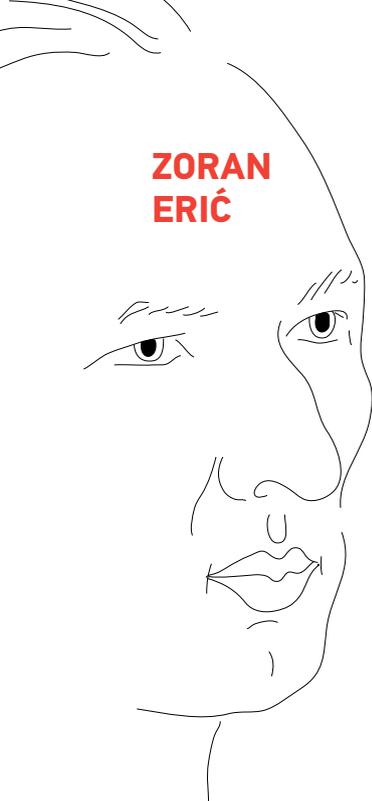
If we talk about relations at work I have not lodged a complaint, I have no-one to address it to. In the context of projects, in the relationship with a donor, it can happen that in the course of the project I can no longer agree to difficult and problematic working and production conditions and I give up. It has happened: I would simply give up my engagement on the project.

Do you estimate or feel that during the past decade in terms of politics you have advanced/ regressed / lost interest in political developments?

I will never lose an interest in political work, even in this cultural field there is more and more need for cultural producers to stage a political appearance and I think it will increasingly be the case.

Are you a member of a trade union?

I would be very glad if I could be, but there is no such possibility for us who are in fully precarious relations. I think that the problem actually is that we are a kind of small entrepreneurs and I don't know in what way this status could change. Only when such a status changes, we could join a trade union or act in solidarity as cultural workers. This is actually the key issue.



**ZORAN
ERIC**

What level of education do you have?

PhD.

In what field of culture do you work?

Visual arts and history of art, I am employed at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade.

What is the product of your work?

Tangible products are exhibitions, publications, research projects or something which is a mixture of research and educational programs I do together with various social groups. The product can be very different – from a typical art-curating position of a researcher and an author of an exhibition to a social position of an institution working in the field of culture.

What type of a contract do you have?

A full-time permanent employment contract.

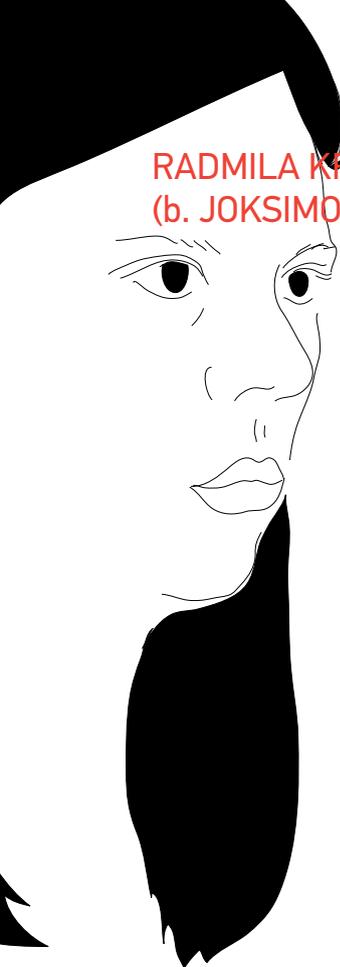
In your estimate, were you in cultural terms impoverished / enriched / remained the same during the past decade?

In a sense I was impoverished along with the entire scene which was impoverished in the past couple of years. The disruptions were great, in 2000 when I began to work there has been great enthusiasm for a couple of years, the entire scene has been developing, there have been a lot of goings on and the scene has become internationalized. After 2003 and the murder of Prime Minister Zoran Djindjić everything began to deteriorate rapidly. The institutions which began to assume a clear profile have fully lost their orientation and budgets began to shrink. Moreover, the scene began to collapse so that paradoxically there are very many initiatives but no homogeneity which existed in the 1990s when the so called “forced alternative“ existed as an oasis outside official art which was exhibited in major institutions. It seems to me that the situation now is again very bad. Concretely, in the case of the Museum of Contemporary Art, there is a problem to finally finish reconstruction of its building, which began no less than five years ago.

Are you a member of a trade union?
No, I'm not.

Do you keep track of workers' protests? What is your opinion on them?

I do. The strikes are a part of our social reality and I think that the way in which even artists comment on and make topical the problem of position of workers in society is very interesting. I have recently cooperated with Zelimir Zilnik on organizing a workshop. He has made excellent documentary films about strikes in Zrenjanin. A lot of cases I am familiar with illustrate this problem very well. The present-day position of workers in society has become quite fragile compared to the position of workers in former socialist society. Another young artist Vladimir Miladinović made a series of drawings the topic of which was self-mutilation of protesting workers. These are really brutal cases. I have closely followed the whole thing. I was personally most interested in strikes of educational workers which occur practically all the time. All this points to huge dissatisfaction which exists in various segments of society, including the one inhabited by cultural workers.



RADMILA KRSTAJIĆ
(b. JOKSIMOVIĆ)

How long have you studied?

Undergraduate studies lasted seven years, master studies lasted three years and I took one year off.

If that was longer than you expected, what was the reason?

It's a good question. Looking back, I think there was no reason. We knew at the time when we were enrolling history of art department that reading lists for exams were massive and that after the third year hardly anyone could manage to progress year by year, that the average length of studies at the department was double than what it was supposed to be. I was actually considered a good student.

How much after the completion of your studies have you been looking for a job?

After I completed undergraduate studies in 2008 I enrolled studies towards a Master degree. After the first year I applied for a scholarship in Germany. I obtained it and it was a working scholarship, the Foundation gave me a scholarship to work at a Kunstverein in Cologne. When I came back, I continued Master studies and got employed in late 2008 at the Museum of Contemporary Art.

Do you presently have a job?

Presently I don't have a job.

In what field of culture do you work when you have a job?

I work in the field of contemporary art, mostly as a curator, organizer, producer – occasionally since 2004.

What are the products of your work?

Exhibitions or projects in other forms. Since I have enrolled PhD studies and I work freelance in addition, the projects I do tend to be smaller ones in which I am just a part of the team.

Do you have health and social insurance?

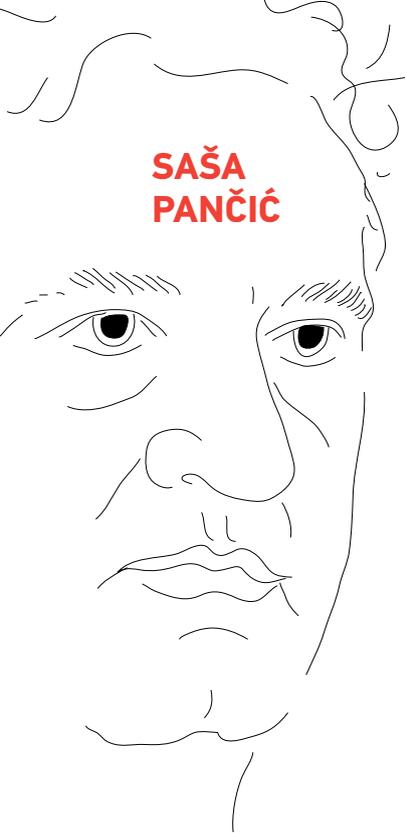
I have health insurance in Germany; I pay it as a student. My parents used to pay social insurance for me since I left my job at the Museum and went to Germany.

Have you ever had to engage in auto-censorship in your work and at your job?

I would say yes, I had to. I say it really in the broadest possible sense, in the sense that you have to understand the sort of people you work with and the profile of the institution in which you work. However, in my opinion, this should be described as business intelligence rather than as censorship; simply, what is required is that you are aware of the general direction the institution you work with is taking and things like that.

In what way is your work useful for society?

I think that our work should be considered useful for society as the work of those who try to contribute to the advancement of society.



**SAŠA
PANČIĆ**

What type of a contract do you have?

I am a free artist. My contracts are mostly signed through the Association of Artists with the City Hall.

How many days of vacation do you have? Is it paid?

No, there is no such thing.

Do you have the right to a sick leave?

I think yes, but I have never used it.

Have you ever had to engage in auto-censorship at your work?

No.

Are you a member of a trade union?

No.

Have you ever taken part in a strike or a demonstration?

Yes.

Has your work ever been censored?

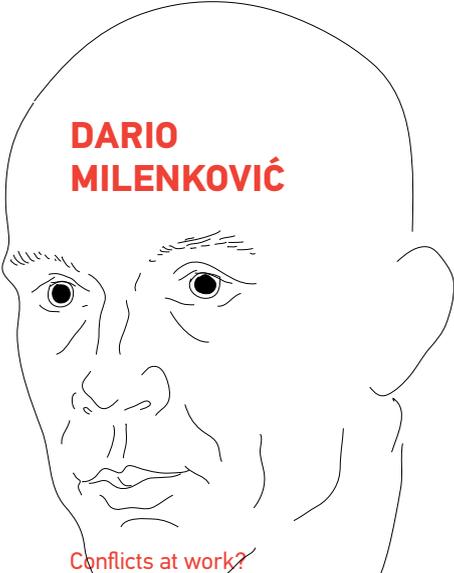
I don't remember, I think no.

Have you ever lodged a protest or a complaint and what was the reason?

Yes, a complaint about the relationship of state bodies towards the Association at the time when I the Association president.

In your estimate, have you, in political terms, advanced / regressed / lost an interest in political developments during the past decade?

In political terms I think I sort of lost an interest, actually I think I even regressed.



DARIO MILENKOVIĆ

Conflicts at work?

At the Philosophical Faculty of Niš where I worked as research associate at the Institute for Sociological Research, I had problems due to my ideological views and political convictions. Even though I was aware that I don't share majority ideological views, I haven't been hiding or been silent about my convictions; thus, problems emerged from the very outset. For example, all my initiatives that the Institute should investigate the topics of right-wing extremism in town, ultra nationalism and neo-Fascism among the young etc, have all been rejected, while on the other hand presence of right-wing organizations and their activity at the Faculty - formalized through the work of student organizations - has been tolerated... If you ask why, you

have problems; this is one of the main reasons why I left the Institute. The Faculty professors and management have allegedly not noticed anything, shrugging the thing off with comments such as "these are our kids being engaged in something". Yes, but engaged in what?!

Thus I encountered various problems, from banal things such as placing 'anti-antifa' (anti-Anti-Fascist) stickers on doors of the Institute to cut tires on the bicycle by which I usually come to work. Of course, these problems are benign compared to the fact that the Faculty management tolerates such phenomena and structures and the implications it has for the overall social situation (of course, the Philosophical Faculty of Niš is not the sole example).

As far as I and my work engagement are concerned, on the one hand due to my political views I have acquired a lot of enemies and on the other due to them I haven't been able to obtain the full-time employment contract even though I had spent more than two years at the Institute.

I have had conflicts with members of ultra-right-wing groups, which have not merely threatened but have physically attacked people on several occasions due to my activism outside the Faculty. Thus an incident occurred

in 2007 in connection with which I have been put on a court trial which still goes on before the Basic Court in Niš. Namely, during the organizing of the Caravan of Peace (an organization from Sarajevo invited people from all former Yugoslav states to travel by bus across former Yugoslav republics and organize programs promoting reconciliation on the territory of former Yugoslavia), which came to Niš in 2007 for this first time, the concert was organized which was attacked by some dozen neo-Nazis. During the incident, some people on both sides sustained injuries. The police merely filed misdemeanor charges for disturbing public peace and order against two people even though it was clear that it was an orchestrated attack. Of course, they are acquitted of the misdemeanor charges and on the basis of their false statements; in 2009 the public prosecutor filed charges against me for inflicting heavy bodily injuries. The trial still goes on.

Have you ever had to engage in auto-censorship in your work?

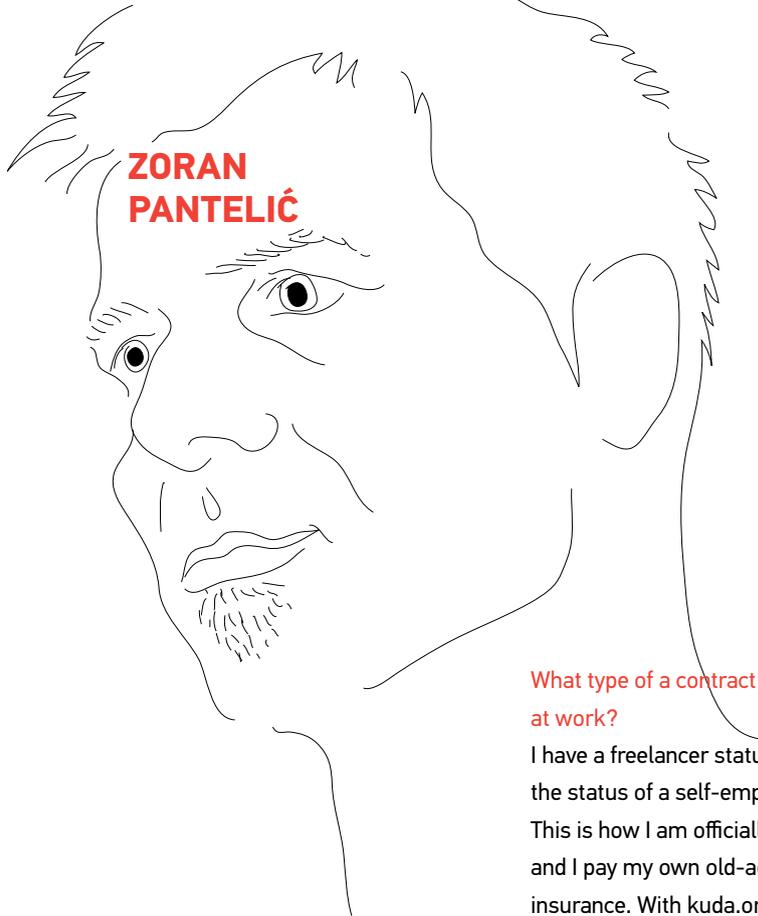
Well yes, I "had to" but I nevertheless didn't, during my work at the Faculty. Had I engaged in auto-censorship a little bit more I would have been able to keep my job.

Where are you from? Is your origin relevant for discussing your professional life?

Yes I think that my origin has largely determined my professional and political orientation. I was born in Croatia by a Serbian father and a Hungarian mother and as a teenager I lived through the war there. This has directly affected my subsequent convictions. Unlike most people who have experienced the 1990s war and have been forced to leave their homes, I have felt the need and the obligation to make a sort of a contribution that the evils like nationalism, Fascism and racism should never again appear in the future as guiding ideas which lead to new wars.

Do you follow workers' protests?

Of course I follow what happens in Europe, especially in Greece. As far as trade unions and workers' protests in Serbia are concerned, there is practically nothing going on, at least nothing serious. Actually, I think that these things are at such a level that trade unions are just extended hands of political parties. So one cannot really talk about any serious influence of the fight for workers' rights.



ZORAN PANTELIĆ

Have you participated in some political activities as a student?

Yes, in demonstrations, my studies lasted until 1991; however this was not articulated by the work of a political organization. As students we went to protests and got involved, but that was on amateur level, more like an instinctive reaction to get involved in some form of public action in order to be able to influence social processes.

What type of a contract do you have at work?

I have a freelancer status or rather the status of a self-employed artist. This is how I am officially registered and I pay my own old-age and social insurance. With kuda.org my relationship is regulated by an authorial contract, this is what we internally agreed on as a collective. We mostly work on several projects simultaneously, very often these are different but kindred phenomena we are interested in, we apply with several donors, we also do coproduction with other organizations and on the basis of such engagement we sign our own working contracts to work on these projects.

Have you ever been censored or had to engage in auto-censorship in your work?

Not directly. But some conditions which were imposed and which appear as sophisticated forms of corruption also constitute a form of censorship. There is one example to illustrate this: we apply to conduct certain activities, but get a reply from the city secretary for culture who blackmails us saying that we will obtain funds for our activities only if we participate in his campaign. An agreement to such terms is very common and represents a form of auto-censorship because one needs to ensure funding for realization of one's programs. This is a form of corruption which is more widely reflected in other forms of cultural production as well.

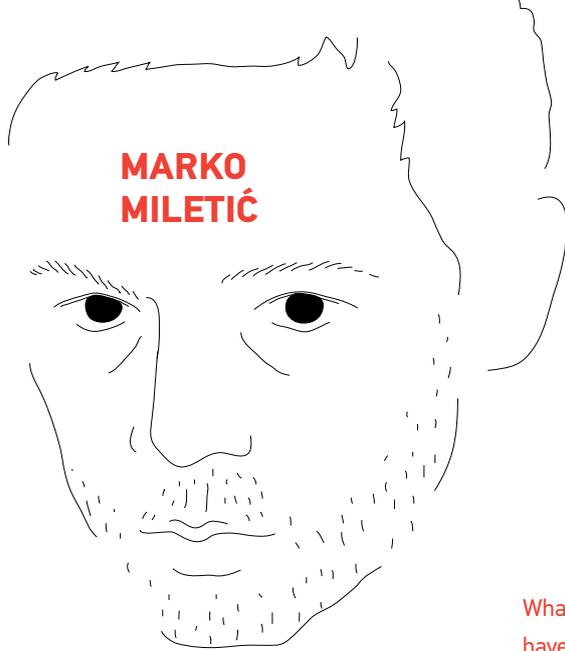
Do you keep track of workers' protests and what is your opinion on these strikes and their methods?

Of course we keep track of them also as a collective. The most outstanding example is the one of Jugoremedija in Zrenjanin, because it is in our neighborhood, but other clashes that occurred during the process of privatization are no less

interesting. These are complex situations and there is a whole range of things which are important for initiating some concrete actions – issues such as how to respond and how to help these people... But some kind of a solidarity act or a contribution depends on many things such as what kind of language is used, what sort of paradigms, mutual understanding and time spent in joint meetings for a joint articulation of context is able to produce a solution.

Are you afraid you might lose your job?

It is not a question of fear of losing a job, because the job was created by ourselves. The more important question is how to redirect that corps of knowledge, that symbolic capital, through existing practice and transform it into something else or new so that it could produce a stronger social effect. This is more of a conceptual dilemma.



**MARKO
MILETIĆ**

What is the product of your work?

In addition to material effects and products which we can perceive in terms of exhibitions, various works, projections, texts, what is even more important for us at the Kon-tekst are effects that our work could produce in terms of critical and political understanding of problems in cultural production and society as a whole.

What type of a contract do you have?

I don't have any permanent employment contract i.e. I do not work full-time. As far as salary is concerned, I mostly sign a contract on authorial fee. On the basis of these contracts my social and health insurance is covered only to a very small extent. Thus I have been working with more or less the same intensity for five or six years, but officially I have merely three months of service. I am almost 30 and I wonder whether I would live long enough to be in retirement and if I do, how much would it amount to? Moreover, I don't have permanent health insurance and I don't have enough money to make payments to a private retirement fund.

How many hours a day do you work?

If we take an average, it would be at least 8 hours a day. Given that we obtain project funding throughout the year, there are various cycles depending on the stage of project realization. For example, in the past month I have been working at least 12 hours a day. This overtime work is not recorded anywhere. I try to sum up to make it measurable, but the imposed precarious position in which we live implies constant communication, social networks, smart telephones, informal meetings (only some of the examples). Even though time spent in these activities seems like fun and relaxation, we are actually creating a surplus value being exploited by someone, but of course that doesn't count...

Conflicts at work?

There were conflicts with various political and institutional structures, for example when the Kontekst Gallery ceased to work. It was a conflict with an institution, the former Center for Culture Stari grad, now Cultural Institution Parobrod. This conflict has largely determined our future work. We no longer have the possibility to use the physical space which has represented a large part of the context of what we do; our work at the Kontekst Gallery was continued as the Kontekst Collective. While we were working at the Kontekst Gallery we have permanently been in some kind of negotiations with the institution, for example what we are allowed to exhibit and in what way; it was a standard situation - various bureaucratic conflicts between the Kontekst Gallery and the Center for Culture Stari grad. What was perhaps the most visible was closing of the exhibition "Exception" at the Kontekst Gallery in early 2008. At that point we enjoyed the support of the Centre but the conflict erupted with state institutions and policies.



**NEBOJŠA
MILIKIĆ**

In which segment of culture do you work?

It is in the broadest sense of the word an independent cultural production. The Centre (Rex) engages in hosting, production or co-production of alternative artistic and cultural projects. I work on projects that I initiate myself.

What type of a contract do you have?

I work full-time. It is a permanent employment contract; however the exact terms under which the contract is permanent are not quite clear, at least they are not fully clear to me. For example, until two months ago I was convinced that even if I don't earn money through projects I would nevertheless obtain a regular salary. However, this situation actually happened five or six years ago - there were not enough projects being carried out and I was fired i.e. I was indirectly asked to take an unpaid leave of absence. I went abroad on some residency program so it was not exactly being fired but... it is an unsolved issue, but few years ago I was unofficially informed that even if I don't ensure funding through the projects I work on, fund-raise or coordinate, I would still have a salary... so I have a problem with this lack of definition and it seems that this problem will not be solved. Sometimes I joke and say that I am a precarious employee or a freelance employee. This indeterminacy has its good sides as well; it means I have freedom in the choice of topics I deal with, program contents and so on.

Do you consider your work to be well-paid?

Well we would first have to see how well a work is paid generally. I don't think that I should be paid more than any other worker either in culture or outside it. And since all of us in Serbia are badly paid, so am I. But I don't think my job is particularly specific, important or different from other jobs which would justify my saying that I am weakly paid but for example someone who does some manual work should be satisfied with what I get. The construction workers cannot make more than 600-700 Euros and that's the most difficult job there is, not only manually, but also intellectually and creatively.

Is your salary enough to cover your living expenses?

No. And there's continuity to it, whenever there's talk about how projects are financed I say that I largely finance my own projects. In the past ten years of cultural work I have spent all my savings which were considerable.

How often outside working hours do you visit cultural institutions and programs?

Intensively, I visit all events I can manage to visit, especially those close to the areas I cover through my work at Rex. If I do a debate program, then I visit all debates in Belgrade. Not only to acquaint myself with topics, but also in order to see how the others do it, to become acquainted with people who make public appearances and so on.

Can you openly talk about political issues at work?

Yes but I get reproached for it sometimes, because my political orientation leads me into conflicts. I participate in those conflicts; sometimes initiate them in the sense that I cannot stand that tension... I get reproached for being rash and too strict or that my manner is not something which produces results.

In your estimate, in political terms have you advanced/ regressed/ lost interest in political developments in the past ten years?

I advanced as a politically conscious being but again I do not perceive my position outside the general position. There is a huge disorientation especially at the independent scene and people do not have cognitive apparatus to engage with these things. It is a sort of regression in which I allegedly advance and I think that it is not a good position. This regression is also a problem of mine, with this general regression I regress as well, no matter how self-conscious I can be.

Have you ever taken part in a strike or a demonstration?

In a strike while I was at the Faculty which was in strike, and in demonstrations numerous times. For example last year, the Faculty blockade, I was at the plenum almost every day. I also attended a couple of workers' strikes which are very traumatic for me because of the presence of a very small number of people, bad vocabulary, and partiality of their goals... I regularly take part in demonstrations before the court which conducts a trial to clear the name of Draža Mihajlović as well as other protests...

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**TRANS
EUROPE
HALLES**

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