

Interview questions for Igor Bošnjak:

- You were born and raised in Sarajevo, completed your art studies in Belgrade, and have lived and worked in Trebinje since 1993?

*When I was 12 years old, during the war I moved to Trebinje where I was finished Academy in 2005, BFA painting department. From 2007 to 2011 I was studied MFA and PhD on Interdisciplinary department of Theory of Art and Media on University of Arts in Belgrade (Serbia), so in 2008 I finished MFA studies.*

- The process of coming to terms with the consequences of the war (1992 – 1995) and the end of Yugoslavia is a leitmotif in your artistic work – I have noticed this, for example, in the video works BHS and Contemporary Cemeteries; what others would you add to this list? Would you say that dealing with this subject is a necessity for you, or a burden, or do you see it (also) as an opportunity to find and redefine yourself after losing the country in which you grew up?

*Many recent works also deals with memory and history of ex Yugoslavia as a postwar history of new countries. In my recent video trilogy "It is not litteral past that rules us, it is image of the past" i am questionig how images of the past relates to future images. Every present was once part of the future, but nonetheless the imagining of a tomorrow that is initially just a projection is irretrievably different from the causality that thinks in terms of temporal moments between the actual and the becoming. All recent videos and installation talk about a culture of remembrance in former Yugoslavia, its evolution and the importance for the future generations. Many works also centres on the question of why images from the past often appear more futuristic than plausible images of an imagined future. Even science fiction films often look like a journey not so much into the future but rather into an unknown past: it is not the unimaginable that finds expression in such cases, but rather those variants of the past that obviously failed to be realized. Because, it is very important to say that all big narratives, ideology in our region in some way failed. So we have everything unfinished: unfinished modernism, unfinished socialism, etc.*

- What have you taken with you from Yugoslavia for your artistic work and development? Are there any role models from those earlier times that have influenced you and are important to you?

*Art era of 70s and late 60s for me was very important in ex Yugoslavia, especially artists from Belgrade and Zagreb from that period. I admire and really appreciate artists which have a lot of influence on me like Belgrade artists: Rasa Todosijevic, Nesa Paripovic, Era Milivojevic, Slobodan Šijan as well artists from Zagreb: Vlado Martek, Tomislav Gotovac, Mladen Stilinovic, Zeljko Jerman, Braco Dimitrijevic etc. Early conceptual art, visualising poetry, movement so-called "New Art Practice" from Zagreb and Black Wave were very important for me and for my understing of social context of ex Yugoslavia. Yugoslav Black Wave was very important for me, is a blanket term for a film movement of the 1960s and early 1970s in Yugoslavia with a notable directors such as Dušan Makavejev, Saša Petrović and Želimir Žilnik. Their films are known for their non-traditional approach to film making, their very dark humor and their critical examination of the Yugoslav society at the time.*

- Just now, video is your preferred artistic medium. But you began your art studies in Trebinje as a painter. Can you tell us something about this development?

*Firstly I use painting and drawing, then I turn myself to photography and video, because I realise that moving images are so better for my way of thinking. During the studies in Belgrade I read a lot of cinema art theory so things go in that kind of a direction. Soon I realise that I need to use more "light" medium such as video, film and photography, because it is very easy to send some video or media oriented works then to deal with problems of borders, visa carnet and a lot of bureaucracy if you use paintings and objected framed art works. So in a way it was question of what I like more and also question of economic reason.*

- The dissolution of Yugoslavia led to the emergence of seven new states. Have the art centres that existed up to then lost importance and/or has this development caused new ones to arise?

*For me it is very subjective viewpoint. In my opinion arts scenes of nowadays countries are very fluent and vivid and interesting but without important state funds and support. Art scene of ex Yugoslavia was also big and important but with a lot of investment in art. Nowadays young and mid age artist may have ability to travel more and to have more information on art then artists from ex Yugoslavia. Before war Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and Novi Sad were major art centres, nowadays some other cities are on the map: Skopje, Sarajevo, Pristina, Split, Banja Luka, Cetinje, Maribor...*

- Both as an artist and as an organiser, you are highly involved in international cooperation projects, but you have also remained very aware of the importance of regional cooperation. How difficult is it to organise regional cooperation projects, also in view of the difficult economic and, at times, political circumstances?

*It is really very hard to work in that kind of circumstances. We always need to beware that funds for arts and culture in our countries are really always small, so we need to be very compatible to manage and solve all kind of obstacles. Reality is always confronting in front of us, but in the end there is a kind of satisfaction, because you realise that fight for project has sense because some people (audience) respect and like what you are doing.*