

# GASTARBAJTERICE KAO ANTICIPACIJA SUVREMENOG TRŽIŠTA RADA: uključivanje glasova iz noćne smjene

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RAZGOVOR S MARGARETOM KERN



U DOMU ZA RADNICE. FOTO:  
GORDANINA OSOBNA ARHIVA.  
LJUBAZNOŠĆU GORDANE U. I  
UMJETNICE M. KERN

INSIDE THE FEMALE WORKERS  
DORM. PHOTOGRAPH FROM  
GORDANA'S PERSONAL ALBUM.  
IMAGE CURTESY: GORDANA U.  
AND THE ARTIST M. KERN

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INTERVIEW WITH MARGARETA KERN

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# *GASTARBEITERINNEN AS AN ANTICIPATION OF THE MODERN LABOUR MARKET: Including the Voices from the Night Shift*

U jugoslavenskom i postjugoslavenskom imaginariju figura gastarbajtera, u doslovnom prijevodu „gosta radnika”, zauzima prilično znakovito mjesto. Sada već historijski fenomen ekonomskih migracija koje su se kao jedan od mehanizama smanjivanja kroničnog porasta nezaposlenosti u Jugoslaviji tijekom 1960-ih i 1970-ih masovno odvijale iz smjera SFR Jugoslavije u zapadnu Europu, ponajprije u Saveznu Republiku Njemačku, otkrivaju mnogo o strukturiranju poslijeratnih geopolitičkih i ekonomskih odnosa čije posljedice živimo i danas. Gastarbajtersko iskustvo obilježeno je dvjema ključnim činjenicama: prvo, riječ je o preslagivanju radne snage unutar europskog teritorija; drugo, određeno je nužno kao „privremeno” i vremenski ograničeno, premda su mnogi gastarbajteri u stranoj zemlji provodili i po nekoliko desetljeća. Ovo je posljednje određenje „privremenosti”, temporalne uvjetovanosti položaja gastarbajtera proizvod promišljene strategije kojom su se ovi migrantski radnici na strukturalnoj razini držali podalje od društva države u koju su ulazili. Potencijal njihove socijalne integracije bio je tako zaustavljen i prije no što je započeo, ostavljajući ih na marginama društvenog života, primoravajući ih na kretanje unutar vlastitih skupina i ograničavajući ih tako na njihovu funkciju radnika – stranca na privremenom radu.

U knjizi *Sedmi čovjek (A Seventh Man)*, slikovitoj studiji konstruiranja gastarbajterskog identiteta, John Berger zapisao je da „(...) nisu ljudi ti koji su emigrirali, već strojevi (...) a da bi ponovno postao čovjek (suprug, otac, građanin, patriot) migrant se mora vratiti kući. Domu koji je ostavio jer ondje nije bilo budućnosti za njega.”<sup>1</sup> U međuvremenu, njegov je identitet bio sveden na puku radnu učinkovitost, o čemu zorno svjedoči i završna scena iz dokumentarnog filma Krste Papića *Specijalni vlakovi*, u kojoj glas

In Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav imagery, the figure of *Gastarbeiter*, literally “guest worker”, occupies quite a prominent place. The phenomenon of economic migrations, now already historical, which took place in massive proportions during the 1960s and 1970s from the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia towards Western Europe, primarily the German Federal Republic, as a mechanism to reduce the chronic advance of unemployment, reveals a lot about the structuring of geopolitical and economic relations after World War II, with consequences that still affect us today. The *Gastarbeiter* experience was defined by two crucial facts: firstly, it was a way of rebalancing labour force within the territory of Europe; and secondly, it was necessarily defined as “temporary” and time-limited, although many of the *Gastarbeiter* spent several decades in the foreign country. This latter criterion, the “temporariness”, the definition of the *Gastarbeiter*’s status as transient, was a product of the official strategy by the German state by which, on the structural level, these migrant workers were kept at a distance from the country in which they lived and worked. The potential for their social integration was thus halted before it had even begun, leaving them on the margins of social life and forcing them to circulate within their own group and limiting them to their function as workers – foreigners with temporary employment.

In his book *A Seventh Man*, a vivid study of the way the *Gastarbeiter* identity was construed, John Berger has written that “(...) it is not men who immigrate but machine-minders, sweepers, diggers, cement mixers, cleaners, drillers, etc. This is the significance of temporary migration. To re-become a man (husband, father, citizen, patriot) a migrant has to return home. The home he left because it held no future.”<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, his identity has been reduced to mere work efficiency, a manifest example of which

muškarca „odozgora” – simbolički transmitiran dehumaniziranim strojnim razglasom – obavještava migrantske radnike pred kojima se nalazi putovanje u stranu radnu sredinu da ih odsad neće prozivati njihovim imenom, već brojkom koja im je dodijeljena. Pritom se zastrašujuća sličnost s nedavnim iskustvom najmasovnijega europskog stradanja i sveopće kataklizme humanizma uoči i tijekom Drugog svjetskog rata ne zaustavlja samo na simbolici brojke koja stoji umjesto imena i identiteta (a koja je ostala bolno prisutna kao podsjetnik na zapešćima onih koji su uspjeli preživjeti iskustvo koncentracijskog logora), već i u metafori „specijalnog” vlaka koji ne samo da prevozi s jedne lokacije na drugu nego i „briše” identitete, dehumanizira individualne narative i sudbine.

U liku gastarbajtera tako je zgusnuta gotovo sva simbolika društvene, ekonomske i političke hijerarhije koja vlada u radnim odnosima; upravo su uvjeti u kojima se odvija i regulira rad „mjesta na kojima se najneposrednije proživljavaju nedvosmislene i opipljive relacije moći na svakodnevnoj razini”.<sup>2</sup> Gastarbajterice su u sociološkom i kulturološkom aspektu, za razliku od svojih muških pandana, još uvijek relativno nedovoljno istražena pojava, premda njihovo iskustvo možda još i složenije svjedoči o neoliberalizaciji tržišta rada. Stupajući na strano radno tržište, migrantske radnice lišavaju se svoje tradicionalne uloge skrbi o kućanstvu i djeci, koja se najčešće generacijski smjenjuje i pada na pleća njihovih roditelja, no istovremeno se uključuju u prekarne radne odnose u inozemstvu. Pristajanjem na niže nadnice, noćne smjene i slične nepovoljne uvjete rada, gastarbajterice pružaju mogućnost da domaće radnice nakon odrađene dnevne smjene i dalje ostanu u granicama reproduktivnog rada unutar vlastita domaćinstva, onoga što je Silvia Federici opisala kao „naturalizirani kućni rad”.<sup>3</sup> S druge strane,

is the final scene in Krsto Papić’s documentary *Special Trains*, in which a male voice “from above” – typically transmitted through a dehumanized PA system – informs the migrant workers on their way to a foreign work setting that from then on they would not be called by their names, but by their assigned numbers. But the terrifying similarity with the recent experience of mass suffering in Europe and the general cataclysm of humanity before and during World War II does not stop at the mere symbolism of a number standing for one’s name and identity (which remained painfully present as a reminder on the wrists of the concentration camp survivors), but also in the metaphor of a “special” train that not only transports from one location to another, but also “erases” identities and dehumanizes individual narratives and destinies.

Thus, the figure of the *Gastarbeiter* condenses almost the entire symbolism of social, economic, and political hierarchy dominating the workplaces; the conditions in which work is performed and regulated function as sites “where we often experience the most immediate, unambiguous, and tangible relations of power that most of us will encounter on a daily basis.”<sup>2</sup> Sociologically and culturally, the female guest workers are still a relatively under-researched phenomenon, unlike their male counterparts, even though their experience may reveal even more complexly the neoliberalization of the labour market. By joining the foreign labour market, female migrant workers deprive themselves of their traditional role as caretakers of their household and children – a role that mostly experiences a generational shift as a result and falls on the back of their parents – only to become involved in precarious work relations abroad. By agreeing to be less paid, work night shifts, and endure other unfavourable working conditions,

sudbina koju su dijelili i gastarbajteri i gastarbajterice u novoj radno-životnoj sredini, opterećenoj strogo kontroliranim uvjetima rada i stanovanja, prekarnim radnim uvjetima i (barem u početku) nepoznavanjem jezika, ide u prilog tvrdnji da se međudržavne granice ne konstruiraju samo na fizičkom teritoriju granice između dviju država, već se multipliciraju i unutar određene geopolitičke površine kao „simboličke, lingvističke, kulturalne i urbane granice”.<sup>4</sup>

Na izložbi pod nazivom *One su bile kakvo-takvo rješenje*, održanoj u zagrebačkoj Galeriji Nova u lipnju i srpnju 2017. kao dio dugoročnog projekta istraživanja fenomena gastarbajtera kustoskog kolektiva WHW i teoretičara Borisa Budena, u fokus je postavljena upravo specifičnost iskustva ženskoga migrantskog rada. Tematski izložba pokriva spektar od fenomena suvremenih radnica koje kao njegovateljice iz Hrvatske odlaze na rad u Italiju, o čemu govori rad Božene Končić Badurina (nastao u suradnji s kulturnom antropologinjom Dugom Mavrincac), pa do povijesnih gastarbajterica, čija su iskustva dokumentirana u istraživačko-izložbenom projektu Bosiljke Schedlich *Put. Žene iz Jugoslavije u Berlinu*, prvotno postavljenom u Berlinu 1987. i rekreiranom na izložbi u Galeriji Nova. Upravo je Bosiljka Schedlich s vlastitom „gastarbajterskom pričom” jedna od akterica videorada *GOSTikulacije* Margarete Kern, također predstavljenog na izložbi *One su bile kakvo-takvo rješenje*. Dvokanalna videoinstalacija centralni je dio složenog projekta koji je Kern započela 2009. kao svojevrsni „živi arhiv” u kojem su sabrana pluralna, heterogena i individualna iskustva gastarbajterica. Dopuštajući da arhivski materijal u formi osobnih fotografija, pisama i zapisa autentično svjedoči o polifoniji ovih ženskih „mikronarativa” u svjetlu širih političko-ekonomskih događanja, Kern im pridružuje i vlastitu interpretaciju ovog fenomena

the *Gastarbeiterinnen* have made it possible for the local female workers to work in day shifts and remain within the limits of reproductive work in their own families, performing what Silvia Federici has described as “naturalized housework.”<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, the destiny shared by both male and female migrant workers in their new life setting, burdened as it is by a strictly controlled working and housing situation, precarious working conditions, and (at least initially) the lack of linguistic skills, confirms the hypothesis that international borders are not constituted merely on the physical frontier territory between two nation-states, but also proliferate within a particular geopolitical area as “symbolic, linguistic, cultural, and urban boundaries.”<sup>4</sup>

The exhibition titled *They Were Sort of a Solution (One su bile kakvo-takvo rješenje)*, held in June and July 2017 at Gallery Nova in Zagreb as part of a long-term research project on the phenomenon of *Gastarbeiter*, conceptualized by the curatorial collective WHW and theoretician Boris Buden, focused on the specificity of female migrant experience. Thematically, the exhibition covered a range of phenomena, from modern workers who move from Croatia to Italy in order to work as caregivers (addressed by Božena Končić Badurina in collaboration with cultural anthropologist Duga Mavrincac) to the historical *Gastarbeiterinnen*, their experiences documented in the research and exhibition project *Journey: Women from Yugoslavia in Berlin (Put. Žene iz Jugoslavije u Berlinu)* by Bosiljka Schedlich, first presented in Berlin (1987) and then recreated at Gallery Nova. With her own “migrant worker’s story,” Bosiljka Schedlich is also a protagonist in the video *GUESTures (GOSTikulacije)* by Margareta Kern, presented as part of the same exhibition. A two-channel installation is the central part of this complex project, which

u kompleksnom videoradu. Priče triju gastarbajterica, koje je Kern prethodno intervjuirala, nanovo su ispričane u performativnom postupku zabilježenom u mediju filma: glumica Adna Sablych pritom utjelovljuje sve tri žene, izgovarajući i rekreirajući fragmente intervju na desnom ekranu, ali istovremeno postaje i simbol njihove polimorfnosti. Lijevi ekran prikazuje autoricu filma kako na školskoj ploči kredom iscrtava tri predmeta koji odgovaraju svakoj pojedinoj priči, odnosno ženi (Bosiljkina lampa, Janina mačka, Gordanin goblen). Školska ploča pritom funkcionira kao svojevrsna sinegdoha za prostor u kojem se proizvodi, uči i usvaja institucionalno znanje, u kojem se vježba disciplina u fukoovskom smislu riječi, ali i prostor u koji je nužno prodrijeti protuznanjem te subvertirati dominaciju uvriježenog diskursa. Ti se prizori smjenjuju s arhivskim snimkama tvorničkog rada i Titovih diplomatskih posjeta Njemačkoj. Međutim, kako je ustvrdila Nanna Heidenreich pišući o radu *GOSTIkulacije*, „Adna Sablych ne govori umjesto žena (...), već zajedno s njima (...). One su sve prisutne, kao singularne priče (...).”<sup>5</sup>

Kern launched in 2009 as a sort of “living archive” gathering the manifold, heterogeneous, and individual experiences of female migrant workers. While letting the archival materials – personal photographs, letters, and notes – give an authentic testimony on the polyphony of these female “micro-narratives” in the light of broader political and economic processes, Kern also added her own interpretation of the phenomenon in this complex video. The stories of three *Gastarbeiterinnen*, whom Kern interviewed beforehand, are here retold in a performative procedure documented in the cinematic medium: actress Adna Sablych impersonates all three of them, telling and recreating fragments from the interview on the screen to the right, thus becoming a symbol of their polymorphism at the same time. The screen to the left shows the author of the film drawing three objects on a school blackboard with a chalk, objects that correspond to individual stories or women (Bosiljka’s lamp, Jana’s cat, Gordana’s tapestry). The blackboard thereby functions as a sort of synecdoche for the space of creating, learning, and acquiring institutional knowledge, where discipline is trained in the Foucaultian sense of the word, yet also a space that must be penetrated by counter-knowledge in order to subvert the dominance of established discourse. These scenes alternate with archival recordings of factory work and Tito’s diplomatic visits to Germany. However, as Nanna Heidenreich has observed when writing on the *GUESTures*, “Adna Sablych speaks not for the women (...), she speaks with them (...). They are all present, as singular stories (...).”<sup>5</sup>

## Kako ste se i zašto zainteresirali za specifičan fenomen žena – gastarbajterica?

MARGARETA  
KERN

U biti, moj je interes krenuo od činjenice da su moji baka i djed bili gastarbajteri i da sam odrastala s njihovim odlascima u Njemačku. Ta mi je tema bila jako bliska, dio je mog životnog iskustva i brojnih razgovora s bakom i djedom, koji su se u međuvremenu i vratili. Ono što mi je bilo posebno zanimljivo prije svega je njihov pristup i odnos prema životu u Njemačkoj, uvjerenje da će se vratiti u domovinu. S druge strane, moje iskustvo emigriranja pratila je namjera da se ne vratim; u Britaniju sam otišla 1992. kada je krenuo rat u Bosni i Hercegovini, aplicirala sam za azil i danas imam britansko državljanstvo – dakle, imam posve drugačiji odnos prema odlasku, prema ostanku u novoj državi i prema vlastitim pravima. Ova je tema prilično kompleksna, no moja su se početna pitanja formulirala oko toga kako su i zašto gastarbajteri sebe vidjeli na taj način. U razgovorima je baka

uvijek isticala kako je konstantno bila uvjerena da će ostati dvije godine, pa se to produžilo za još dvije godine (jer je uvijek trebalo zaraditi još novca), da bi se te dvije godine pretvorile u dvadesetak. U trenutku kada sam počela istraživati ovu temu u Britaniji sam živjela otprilike 17-18 godina, dakle imala sam iza sebe gotovo isto toliko godina emigrantskog „staža” kao i moji baka i djed. U mojem slučaju nikad nije bilo upitno hoću li se vratiti, ali je zanimljivo bilo pitanje odnosa prema pripadanju. No iako je sve krenulo od njih, sam rad *GOSTikulacije* nastao je drugim putem: ideja za rad stvorila se kada sam u sklopu projekta *Putovanja bez povratka (Journeys of No Return)*, vezanom uz migracije, boravila na dvomjesečnoj rezidenciji u Berlinu 2009. godine. Nisam htjela direktno raditi projekt o baki i djedu, no imala sam snažnu potrebu da pokušam razumjeti širi historijski i društveno-politički kontekst koji je, naravno, utjecao na osobne živote i historije. Stupila sam u kontakt s povjesničarkom Monikom Mattes koja

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## How did you become interested in the specific phenomenon of female migrant workers, and why?

MARGARETA  
KERN

In fact, my interest was born from the fact that my grandparents were *Gastarbeiter* and so I grew up with them leaving for Germany. The topic is very close to me, it is part of my living experience and so many conversations with my grandparents, who have meanwhile returned. What I found particularly interesting was their approach and attitude towards their life in Germany, their conviction that they would once return to their homeland. On the other hand, my own emigration experience was informed by my decision not to return: I left for Britain in 1992, when the war broke out in Bosnia and Herzegovina, I applied for political asylum, and today I have British citizenship – thus, my attitude towards leaving my homeland, staying in a foreign country, and my own rights is completely different. This topic

is very complex, but my initial questions revolve around the question why the *Gastarbeiter* see themselves that way, and how exactly. In our conversations, my grandmother always emphasized that she was firmly convinced she would stay only two years; then she stayed two more (because the family needed more money) and eventually those two years turned into twenty. At the time when I started researching the topic, I had been living in Britain for some 17-18 years; thus, I had almost the same length of emigrant life behind me as my grandparents. As for me, I never intended to return, but the question of one's attitude towards belonging somewhere was still interesting. Even though everything started with my grandparents, the *GUESTures* actually had a different source: the idea came to me when I participated in the project called *Journeys of No Return*, linked to migrations, and stayed in Berlin on a two-month residency in 2009. I didn't want to make a project that would explicitly deal with my grandparents, but I felt a

je (zajedno s Esrom Erdem) napravila jedno od rijetkih istraživanja o ženama migranticama u Njemačkoj. Ona me, između ostaloga, uputila na činjenicu da su u telekomunikacijskim tvornicama u Zapadnom Berlinu poput AEG-a, Telefunkena i Siemensa 67 % radništva činile žene, što mi je bilo zanimljivo i iznenađujuće, kao i da su većina radnica bile imigrantice. Počela sam istraživati o tadašnjoj rodnoj politici. Naime, u to je vrijeme Njemačka – a govorimo o ranom poslijeratnom vremenu 1950-ih i 1960-ih – preferirala za ovaj tip radnica zapošljavati migrantice, budući da su one pristajala na nepovoljne radne uvjete poput rada u smjenama, pogotovo noćnima, zbog čega su Njemice mogle ostajati kod kuće, čuvati svoju djecu. Migrantice ulaze u jednu specifičnu i kompleksnu historijsku politiku, koja je također dio hladnoratovskih odnosa. U ovoj je temi dosta specifičnosti tog određenog vremena, no tema je i dalje jako aktualna i vrlo živa, o njoj se još može mnogo toga istražiti.

### Kako su se geopolitički odnosi manifestirali na primjeru gastarbajterica?

MARGARETA KERN U tekstu *Politike, kulture i ekonomije (Politics, Culture, and Economics)* Kaja Shonick piše da su reakcije Zapadne Njemačke na porast jugoslavenskih migrantskih radnika bile vrlo podijeljene. Postojao je strah da su „Titovi radnici zatrovani komunizmom”, a njemačko se ministarstvo rada tada već borilo s radničkim nemirima koje su poticali talijanski radnici. Međutim, Shonick piše kako se pokazalo da je strah bio neopravdan, a jugoslavenske je radnike Ministarstvo rada s vremenom pozitivno ocijenilo kao „apolitične, sklone učenju njemačkog jezika, s pozitivnom radnom etikom i voljom da se akomodiraju unutar njemačkog društva”.<sup>6</sup> Kad sam počela slušati njihove priče, shvatila sam koliko je čitav ovaj proces bio organiziran i kontroliran, premda su se „neregulirane” migracije iz Jugoslavije odvijale i ranije. Žene s kojima

strong need to understand the broader historical and socio-political context that influenced various personal lives and histories. I contacted Monika Mattes, a historian that conducted (together with Esra Erdem) one of the rare investigations on women migrants in Germany. She also drew my attention to the fact that in telecommunication factories in West Berlin, such as AEG, Telefunken, or Siemens, 67 % of workers were women, which I found both interesting and surprising, as well as the fact that most workers were immigrants. I started to research the gender policy of the time. During the 1950s and 1960s, the time after World War II, Germany preferred employing migrants for this type of work because they agreed to the unfavourable working conditions, such as working in shifts, especially night shifts, so that German women could stay at home and take care of their children. Migrant women were part of a specific and complex historical policy that also belonged to the Cold War relations. In my project, there are lots

of specificities that belong to that particular period, but the issue is still very topical and alive, and there are still lots of things to be researched.

### How were the geopolitical relations manifested in female migrant workers?

MARGARETA KERN In her article *Politics, Culture, and Economics*, Kaja Shonick has written that the reactions of West Germany to the increased number of migrant workers from Yugoslavia were highly divided. There was a fear of “Tito-workers infected with Communism” and the German Ministry of Labour was already struggling against workers’ unrests incited by the Italian workers. However, Shonick adds, it turned out that the fear was groundless and with time the Yugoslav workers earned a positive evaluation of the Ministry of Labour: they were described as “being apolitical, having a good understanding of the German language, a positive work ethics, and a willingness

sam razgovarala odlazile su posredstvom zavoda i tvornica, u suradnji s njemačkim biroima za zapošljavanje. Tvornice bi platile put radnicama, a one bi morale u određenom roku vratiti taj trošak. Dakle, proces nije bio besplatan i slobodan, upravo suprotno: postojao je službeni sporazum koji je obvezivao radnice – one nisu bile slobodne. Mnogo toga u fenomenu gastarbajtera pomalo podsjeća na prežitke nacizma – način na koji su bili organizirani, medicinski provjeravani (samo zdravi radnici bili su prihvaćeni) i prevoženi te kako je bio strukturiran njihov smještaj. Bosiljka je, primjerice, bila smještena u mjestu Flotenstrassen koje se ranije upotrebljavalo kao bolnica, a služilo je i kao logor za prisilni rad. Dakle, ova poveznica s Drugim svjetskim ratom nije samo u našoj imaginaciji; naposljetku, kapitalizam (i industrija) i fašizam i povijesno su bili povezani, zašto bi nas to iznenadilo.

### Kako ste dolazili do svojih sugovornica?

MARGARETA KERN Razgovarala sam s gotovo dvadeset žena.

U početku nisam nijednu od njih poznavala, a kad sam upoznala Bosiljku Schedlich, nadala sam se da ću preko nje doći do sličnih priča, ali se ispostavilo da to nije bilo tako jednostavno. Međutim, u Berlinu su i dalje aktivni nacionalni centri, u početku su to bili jugoslavenski, a onda su se podijelili na hrvatski i srpski, koji je bio mješovitiji. Primijenila sam i druge metode, čak sam posjetila i misu. Nazvala sam svećenika da se najavim i pitala ga može li nakon mise prenijeti informaciju da mi nakon završetka mise mogu prići zainteresirane žene. On je odgovorio kako neću naći nikoga, no da će im ipak to prenijeti. Za vrijeme mise stajala sam ispred crkve pitajući se o ishodu ove akcije, da bih se naposljetku našla okružena ženama. Nakon toga me nazvala Ana; ona nije u filmu, ali u svojoj arhivi ima divna pisma koja sam upotrijebila u izložbi. Dijelove intervjua i njihovih dokumenata

to accommodate themselves to German society.<sup>76</sup> When I started listening to their stories, I realized how strictly the whole process was organized and controlled at that point, although the “unregulated” emigration from Yugoslavia took place before. The women I talked to had left for Germany mediated by institutes and factories, in cooperation with German employment offices. The factory paid the travel expenses and the workers were supposed to pay them back within a particular period of time. Thus, the process was not free in terms of money or choice, quite on the contrary: there was an official agreement binding the workers – they were not free. There is a lot in the *Gastarbeiter* phenomenon that seems like the remnants of Nazism: the way the process was organized, how the workers were medically checked (only the healthy ones were accepted) and transported, and how their accommodation was structured. Bosiljka, for example, was accommodated in a place called Flotenstrassen, which had formerly been a hospital

and a labour camp. Thus, this link with World War II is not only in our imagination: after all, capitalism (and industry) and fascism were also historically linked, so why should it surprise us?

### How did you find your collocutors?

MARGARETA KERN I talked with some twenty women. In the beginning, I didn't know any of them, and when I met Bosiljka Schedlich, I hoped that I would gain access to similar stories through her, but it was not that easy. However, national centres are still active in Berlin: initially, they were Yugoslav and later separated into Croatian and Serbian, the latter being more mixed. I also resorted to other methods: I even went to a Mass. I called the priest to ask him whether he could inform the women during the Mass that they could approach me afterwards to talk. He said that I wouldn't find anyone, but that he would tell them. During the Mass, I stayed outside the church and wondered whether anything



nisam prikazala ovog puta na izložbi u Zagrebu, ali su prikazani 2011. na izložbi u Galeriji SC-a. U tim se materijalima jasno mogu pratiti iskustva i očekivanja ovih žena, koje su mahom odlazile u dobi od 18 godina – još jedna poveznica s mojim iskustvom, jer sam ja emigrirala sa 17. Zanimljivo je da se u tim osobnim arhivima jasno može pratiti svojevrsno oslobođenje žena, nije tu riječ samo o opresivnom radu; primjerice, Bosiljka mi je pričala o seksualnom oslobođenju žena koje su uglavnom dolazile iz manjih, konzervativnih sredina. Zanimalo me kako takva iskustva ulaze u povijesnu naraciju, dakle problematika historijskog autoriteta: tko ima autoritet nad poviješću te kako se povijest i njezini narativi grade. Film se pokazao kao jedan od načina da ta pitanja sažmem kroz osobne naracije ovih žena.

**Zašto ste za rad odabrali upravo formu filma (točnije, kako forma filma odgovara samoj temi) i pritom odlučili „oživjeti” prikupljene osobne**

**priče kroz performativni postupak, angažiranjem glumice koja će utjeloviti nekoliko intervjuiranih žena?**

MARGARETA KERN Trebalo mi je dosta vremena da dođem do odluke o formi rada jer sam ranije mnogo više radila u mediju fotografije, ovo je moj prvi film. No na neki sam način osjetila da fotografija nije dovoljna u ovom projektu jer je postojao cijeli jedan narativni dio. Pitala sam se kako uključiti upravo taj dio, istovremeno propitujući ideju dokumentarnog portretiranja. Zanimalo me kako probuditi tu historijsku imaginaciju, a da pritom ostane u sadašnjosti – kako biti u isto vrijeme ovdje i u prošlosti. To je bilo jedno od temeljnih polazišta za film i zato sam odabrala pokretnu sliku. Postoji mnogo slojeva u toj odluci. Krenula sam od prikupljenoga arhivskog materijala koji mi je predstavljao početnu referenciju, ali ne i rad. U sklopu jedne izložbe u tvornici Čajavec (koja je proizvodila televizore, a u tom je trenutku već

would come out of the whole action, but eventually I found myself surrounded by women. Afterwards Ana called me: she is not in the film, but has some wonderful letters in her archive, which I have used for the exhibition. Parts of the interview and the documents were not shown in the present Zagreb exhibition, only in 2011, at the exhibition at the SC Gallery. Through these materials, one can trace very well the experiences and expectations of these women, who mostly left at the age of 18 – another link to my personal experience, since I emigrated when I was 17 years old. It is also interesting that these personal archives reveal a sort of women liberation, since their life was not merely oppressive work: thus, Bosiljka told me about the sexual liberation of women who had largely come from small, conservative settings. I was interested in discovering how such experiences would fit into a historical narrative – into the question of historical authority: Who had authority over history and

in what ways history and its narratives were constructed. The film proved to be a good way of condensing these questions through the personal narrations of these women.

**Why did you choose film as the form for your project (or rather: how does the form of film fit the topic?) and thus “bring to life” the collected personal story through a performative procedure, by involving an actress that would impersonate several interviewed women?**

MARGARETA KERN It took me some time to make a decision on the suitable form, since I had mostly been working in the medium of photography and this was my first film. But I somehow felt that photography would not suffice here, since there was a whole narrative part. So I asked myself how I could include that, while questioning the idea of documentary portrayal. I wanted to bring this historical



TVORNICA AEG TELEFUNKEN, OKO 1970.  
 FOTO: GORDANINA OSOBNA ARHIVA. LJUBAZNOŠĆU  
 GORDANE U. I UMJETNICE M. KERN

AEG TELEFUNKEN FACTORY, C.1970. PHOTOGRAPH  
 FROM GORDANA'S PERSONAL ALBUM. IMAGE CURTESY  
 GORDANA U. AND THE ARTIST M. KERN

imagination to life, yet keep it in the present – here and in the past at the same time. That was one of the basic starting points for the film and that is why I opted for working with moving images. There are several layers in that decision. I started from the archival material that I had collected: that was my initial reference, but not the work itself. Within an exhibition at the Čajevac factory (which used to produce television sets and was already bankrupt at the time) I organized a reading of my archive in Banja Luka. The factory hall gave a special flair to that exhibition and that is where we had a collective reading of the archive I had collected. It happened that Zora, one of the women I had met at the Serbian centre in Berlin, came to Banja Luka at the time. When we started reading, I didn't mention that she was present, but around the middle of the process I introduced her to the audience and then, of course, people started asking her things directly, which resulted in a very nice conversation.

This brought me to other questions, related to the aesthetics and politics of artwork as such. What is the role of play and experimentation? What is the role of speech, narration, and archive in film (since a film archives itself in a way, by the very fact that it has become a film)? And finally, what can a film do, what is its political agency in creating new historical imagination?

Another trigger was several shows that I saw in London, their source being political theatre that uses the re-enactment of historical events or personal stories. On the basic level, the role of that theatre is to incorporate and materialize the suppressed history or the present moment. That sort of theatre, and the methods used by visual artists such as Jeremy Deller or Clio Barnard, proved very inspiring for me. Some of those methods I tried to apply in a setting that would be partly theatrical and partly “domestic”. I was shooting the film in my own studio in London and

bila pod stečajem) organizirala sam čitanje arhiva u Banjoj Luci. Tvorničke prostorije davale su poseban naboj toj izložbi i tu se održalo kolektivno čitanje arhiva koji sam prikupila. Slučajno je baš u to vrijeme u Banju Luku došla Zora, jedna od žena koju sam upoznala u srpskom centru u Berlinu. Kada smo započeli s čitanjem, nisam spomenula da se ona nalazi u publici, međutim, pri sredini procesa predstavila sam je publici i tada su, naravno, ljudi počeli direktno njoj postavljati pitanja i razvio se jedan lijep dijalog. To me navelo na druga pitanja koja su bila više vezana uz estetiku i politiku samog umjetničkog rada. Koja je uloga igre i eksperimentiranja? Koja je uloga govora, naracije i arhiva u filmu (jer na neki način film sam sebe arhivira samim time što postaje film)? I na kraju, što film može učiniti, koje je njegovo političko djelovanje kroz stvaranje nove povijesne imaginacije? Drugi okidač bilo je nekoliko predstava koje sam pogledala u Londonu, s porijeklom u političkom

teatru koji se koristi rekreiranjem povijesnih događaja ili osobnih priča. Na temeljnoj je razini uloga tog teatra u utjelovljenju, materijalizaciji potisnute povijesti ili sadašnjeg trenutka. Ta vrsta teatra i metoda koje primjenjuju i vizualni umjetnici poput Jeremyja Dellera i Clie Barnard pokazala se vrlo inspirativnom za mene. Dio tih metoda nastojala sam smjestiti u prostor koji će djelomično biti teatarski, a dijelom „domaći”. Snimala sam u vlastitom studiju u Londonu, a radila sam s glumicom Adnom Sablyich koja je 1990-ih (kao i ja) došla u London. U tim se odlukama taloži još jedan sloj: na priče intervjuiranih migrantica dolazi njezina priča, pa moja priča – dakle, sljedeće generacije migrantica. Film je strukturiran u tri dijela, što sugerira priče triju žena, ali i tri načina razmišljanja o temi, jer u svakom je dijelu pristup malo drugačiji, i narativno, ali i metodološki: primjerice, u jednom dijelu uključujem i sebe u set, a moja glasovna intervencija, u kojoj sam rekreirala dio svojeg

ZAJEDNIČKO ČITANJE I RADIONICA, DIO IZLOŽBENOG  
PROJEKTA *GUESTURES*, KULLUKOU & GREGORIAN  
GALLERY, MÜNCHEN, NJEMAČKA, 2013.

COLLECTIVE READING AND WORKSHOP, AS PART OF  
*GUESTURES* EXHIBITION AT KULLUKOU & GREGORIAN  
GALLERY, MUNICH, GERMANY, 2013

worked with actress Adna Sablyich, who had come to London in the 1990s (like myself). That is where an additional layer comes in: her story joining those of the interviewed migrant workers, then my own story – a story of the next generation of migrants. The film is structured in three parts, suggesting the stories of three women as well as three ways of thinking about the topic, since the approach is a little different in each of them, narratively as well as methodologically: thus, I included myself in one of them, and my vocal intervention, in which I re-enacted a part of my interview with Jana, which was in part my effort to avoid the fetishization of their stories. There is always an inherent risk that the subject in an artist's work becomes a sort of exoticized Other. The question that intrigued me was: who was the Other in this case and how I could avoid reproducing this Otherness through my film? Those were my conscious interventions. I also felt that in my conversations with the women:

Jana, for example, did not know much about my personal experience and intuitively believed that we were sharing the same destiny. What I also find interesting is this intergenerational segment between various migration layers, which can cause misunderstandings and reveals that some aspects of experience are different. At the same time, there is always a possibility of making room for intergenerational dialogue. Thus, the method applied during the aforementioned workshop in Banja Luka was repeated in my presentation of *GUESTURES* in Munich in 2013, when I moderated, together with curator Katja Kobolt and anthropologist Natalia Bayer, a workshop with various women who had emigrated from various countries. That collective act of reading encouraged them to inscribe, exchange, and add their experiences to the archive, re-mobilizing and transforming it into a sort of movable, migrating archive.

intervjua s Janom, dio je nastojanja da izbjegnem fetišizaciju njihovih priča. Uvijek postoji rizik da subjekt umjetničkog djela na neki način postane egzotizirani Drugi. Pitanje koje me kopkalo je tko je ovdje Drugi i kako u filmu izbjeći reproduciranje te Drugosti? To su bile moje svjesne intervencije u film. To sam osjetila i u vlastitim razgovorima sa ženama; Jana, primjerice, nije znala mnogo o mojem iskustvu i intuitivno je pomislila da smo dijelile istu sudbinu. Zanimljiv mi je taj intergeneracijski segment između različitih slojeva migracija, zbog kojeg može doći do nesporazuma i koji otkriva da su neki aspekti iskustava posve različiti.

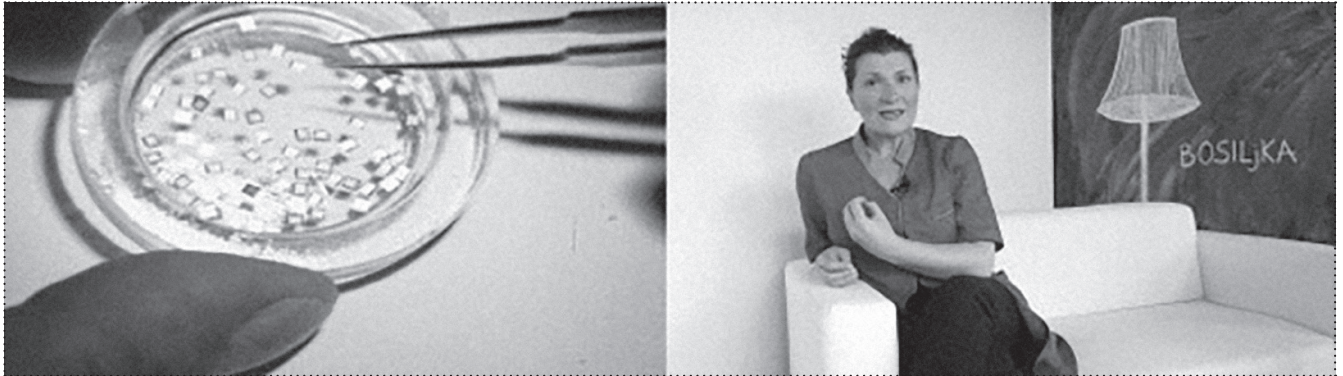
Istovremeno, uvijek postoji mogućnost za otvaranje prostora za intergeneracijski dijalog. Primjerice, metodu primijenjenu tijekom ranije spomenute radionice u Banjoj Luci ponovila sam u sklopu izlaganja rada *GOSTikulacije* u Münchenu 2013., kada sam zajedno s kustosicom Katjom Kobolt i antropologinjom Natalijom Bayer vodila radionicu

s različitim generacijama žena koje su emigrirale iz raznih zemalja. Taj kolektivni akt čitanja naveo ih je da upišu, razmjene i dodaju svoja iskustva u arhiv, na taj ga način ponovno mobilizirajući i pretvarajući u svojevrsan pokretni, migrirajući arhiv.

Kako sada već povijesni primjer gastarbajtera možemo primijeniti na današnjicu, što cijelo gastarbajtersko iskustvo može reći o današnjim migracijama? S jedne strane na djelu je tendencija prema otvaranju Europe i propagiranju slobodnog kretanja; međutim, otvorenost granica vrijedi isključivo za tržište. Slobodu kretanja zadržavaju kapital i oni koji ga posjeduju. Na svim ostalim razinama kretanje uopće nije slobodno, postoje granice koje su sada i pod mnogo strožom kontrolom.

MARGARETA KERN Nedavno sam čitala tekst Sandra Mezzadre kojeg sam upoznala prije nekoliko godina, a koji

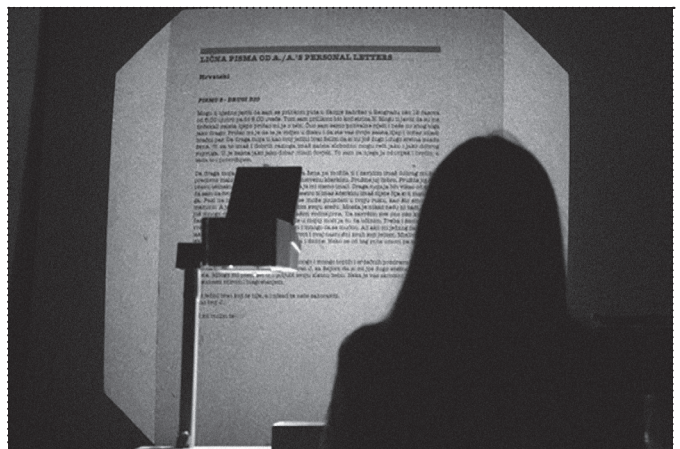




VIDEO ISJEČAK IZ FILMA GUESTURES  
| GOSTIKU LAČUJE, DOUBLE-CHANNEL  
HD VIDEO, 33 MIN., 2011.

STILL FROM GUESTURES |  
GOSTIKULACIJE, DOUBLE-CHANNEL  
HD VIDEO, 33 MINUTES, 2011

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zanimljivo piše o tome. Kompleksno je to pitanje jer su gastarbajteri, i to ne samo jugoslavenski (oni su, naime, stigli u zadnjem valu), specifični za Njemačku. Njemačka se još uvijek muči i nastoji nositi s migracijom iz tog perioda, a što nužno ima posljedice i na sadašnje migracije, isprepliće se sa sadašnjošću. Zapadne su se zemlje obogatile na povijesti kolonijalizma i eksploatacije. Njemačka je imala manji udio u kolonizaciji nego, primjerice, Britanija; recimo, Brexit predstavlja fantom kolonijalizma, cijela imaginacija Brexita počiva na ideji odsječenog dijela tijela, što je za Britaniju bivše carstvo. S britanske pozicije tu dolazi do kompleksnog konflikta između njihove želje da rekonstruiraju svoje carstvo, makar na imaginarnoj razini, i njihove potrebe za jeftinom radnom snagom. Bit će jako zanimljivo vidjeti kako će se to razriješiti, jer su te dvije želje potpuno suprotstavljene. Posljedice Brexita već su vidljive, a to je tek početak – kako stvarnih tako i imaginarnih, fiktivnih posljedica. Te je tenzije

dobro opisala Saskia Sassen 1984. u tekstu *Radne migracije i nova industrijska podjela rada* (*Labor Migration and the New Industrial Division of Labor*) u kojem govori o kontradiktornoj ulozi države u akumulacijskom procesu: „Korištenje strane radne snage, bilo robova ili imigranata, temeljna je tendencija unutar razvoja svjetskoga kapitalističkog sustava. (...) Osnaživanje nacionalnih granica pridonijelo je periferijalizaciji jednog dijela svijeta i određivanju tamošnjih radnika kao rezervne radne snage. Kontroliranje granica pojavilo se kao mehanizam za olakšavanje ekstrahiranja viška vrijednosti pridavanjem statusa formalne ili neformalne bespomoćnosti stranim radnicima uopće i kriminaliziranjem ilegalnih imigranata.”<sup>7</sup> Dakle, uvijek postoji to imaginarno, ideja da se nešto može kontrolirati. Projekt na kojem trenutno radim tematizira način na koji se kolonijalno veže uz vojsku, što je povezano i s pitanjem migracija. Svjedočimo procesu i težnji da se granice danas militariziraju; naravno da je

IZLOŽBA GUESTURES | GOSTIKULACIJE, POSTAV U  
GALERIJI STUDENTSKOG CENTRA, ZAGREB, 2011.

GUESTURES | GOSTIKULACIJE EXHIBITION, VIEW OF THE  
INSTALLATION AT THE STUDENT CENTRE GALLERY,  
ZAGREB, 2011

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**How can we relate the already historical case of Yugoslav Gastarbeiter to our present situation, and what can that experience say about today's migrations? On the one hand, there is a tendency of European opening and advocating free movement; on the other, borders are only open for the market. Capital and the ones who own it – they have a monopoly over the freedom of movement. On all other levels, movement is everything else but free, there are borders and they are much more strictly controlled now.**

MARGARETA  
KERN

I've recently read an article by Sandro Mezzadra, whom I met a few years ago, and he has some interesting things to say on this topic. It is a complex question, since the guest workers, not only from Yugoslavia (who came in the last wave) were a typically German phenomenon. Germany is still struggling and trying to handle the migration of those times, which necessarily has an impact on the present-day migrations,

intertwining with the present. The Western countries have grown rich on the history of colonialism and exploitation. Germany has less to do with colonialism than Britain, for example: and Brexit is in fact a phantom of colonialism, it relies on the idea of a severed limb, which the former Empire is for Britain. From the British perspective, there is a complex conflict between their desire to reconstruct their empire, at least on an imaginary level, and their need of cheap labour. It will be extremely interesting to follow how this will evolve, since these two desires are contradictory. The consequences of Brexit are already visible, and it is only the beginning – there are both actual and imaginary, fictitious consequences. Saskia Sassen described these tensions very well back in 1984, in her article *Labor Migration and the New Industrial Division of Labor*, where she writes about the contradictory role of the state in the process of accumulation: “The use of foreign labor, whether slaves or immigrants, has been a basic tendency in

oduvijek to bio slučaj, ali je sada to potencirano. Mislim da je u tome korijen kolonijalizma – u ideji da se tako nešto uopće može zamisliti, a kamoli provoditi. Možda baš zbog toga što već dugo živim u Britaniji primjećujem ondje mnogo ostataka kolonijalnog, jer taj se kolonijalizam krije i u nekoj vrsti dozvole koju daju sami sebi. Način na koji su izbjeglice tretirane u kampu u Calaisu predstavlja nezamislivu količinu proizvedenog nasilja, a potpuna dehumanizacija prisutna u izbjegličkim kampovima može se tumačiti kroz ideju o „izvanrednim stanjima” o kojoj piše Giorgio Agamben. Na kraju, željela bih prenijeti vrlo inspirativne riječi Frantza Fanona, koji je ustvrdio da ne želi samo kraj kolonijalizma nego i kraj pozicije unutar koje kolonijalizam ima smisla i opravdanja.<sup>8</sup> Riječ je o tome da ne smijemo niti dozvoliti mogućnost da kolonijalizam i fašizam opet postanu smisljeni.

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<sup>1</sup> John Berger, Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man*, London, New York, Verso, 2010., 62.

<sup>2</sup> Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work*, Durham, London, Duke University Press, 2011., 2.

<sup>3</sup> Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero*, Oakland, New York, PM Press/Common Nations, 2012., 9.

<sup>4</sup> Sandro Mezzadra, Brett Neilson, *Border as Method*, Durham, London, Duke University Press, 2013., VII.

<sup>5</sup> Nanna Heidenreich, „Stories that Matter: Migration Told, Retold and Listened to – thinking with *GUESTures*”, u: Margareta Kern, *GUESTures*, London, München, VerlegerIn, 2014., 60.

<sup>6</sup> Kaja Shonick, „Politics, Culture, and Economics: Reassessing the West German Guest Worker Agreement with Yugoslavia”, *Journal of Contemporary History*, 44, 2009., 719–736.

<sup>7</sup> Saskia Sassen, „Labor Migration and the New Industrial Division of Labor”, u: June C. Nash, Maria P. Fernandez-Kelly (ur.), *Women, Men and International Division of Labor*, New York, State University of New York Press, 1983., 175–204.

<sup>8</sup> Stefano Harney, Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study*, Minor Compositions, Wivenhoe, New York, 2013., 8.

the development of the world capitalist system. (...) The enforcement of national borders contributes to the peripheralization of a part of the world and the designation of its workers as a labor reserve. Border enforcement emerges as a mechanism facilitating the extraction of surplus value by assigning a status of formal or informal powerlessness to foreign workers generally and criminality to illegal immigrants.<sup>7</sup>

Thus, there is always the imaginary aspect, the idea that things could be controlled. The project I am currently working on deals with the way in which colonialism is linked to the military, which is also related to the migration issue. We are witnessing the process and the tendency of militarizing the borders. Of course, it has always been so, but now it is really intense. I think that the roots of colonialism are precisely there – in the idea that something like that is imaginable in the first place, let alone feasible. Perhaps it is because I've been living in Britain for a long time, where

there are lots of remnants of colonialism, and that colonialism is also hidden in this authority they are claiming. The way in which refugees are treated in the camp of Calais involves an unthinkable degree of intentional violence, while the complete dehumanization present in the refugee camps can be interpreted by using the notion of the “state of exception” that Giorgio Agamben has written about. To conclude, I would like to quote the highly inspiring words of Frantz Fanon, who said that he not only wished for the end of colonialism, but also the end of any standpoint from which colonialism makes sense.<sup>8</sup> The point is that we should not even allow for a constellation in which colonialism and fascism could once more make sense.

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<sup>1</sup> John Berger and Jean Mohr, *A Seventh Man* (London and New York: Verso, 2010), 62.

<sup>2</sup> Kathi Weeks, *The Problem With Work* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2011), 2.

<sup>3</sup> Silvia Federici, *Revolution at Point Zero* (Oakland and New York: PM Press/Common Nations, 2012), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *Border as Method* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013), vii.

<sup>5</sup> Nanna Heidenreich, "Stories that Matter: Migration Told, Retold and Listened to – Thinking with *GUESTures*," in: Margareta Kern, *GUESTures* (London and Munich: VerlegerIn, 2014), 60.

<sup>6</sup> Kaja Shonick, "Politics, Culture, and Economics: Reassessing the West German Guest Worker Agreement with Yugoslavia," *Journal of Contemporary History* 44 (2009), 719-736, here 727.

<sup>7</sup> Saskia Sassen, "Labor Migration and the New Industrial Division of Labor," in: *Women, Men and International Division of Labor*, ed. June C. Nash and Maria P. Fernandez-Kelly (New York: State University of New York Press, 1983), 175-204, here 175 and 184.

<sup>8</sup> Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning & Black Study* (Wivenhoe and New York: Minor Compositions, 2013), 8.