

Un-war Space Lab

Armina Pilav, Karla Crnčević, Servet Cihangiroğlu

ČARDAK/ÇARDAK IN THE VOID

18 August–4 September 2020

artKIT, Glavni trg 14, Maribor/SI

National border systems and border infrastructures are differently organized and represented throughout the world. These systems and infrastructure define, influence, manipulate, surveil as well as destroy people's lives as they also equally violently inscribe histories in the surrounding landscapes. These histories are, of course, created and at the same time concealed by the same (institutionalized) structures that silence different voices at the margins of our geopolitical spaces and societies in general.

With this as their focus, Un-war Space Lab collective proposed a research project on migrating landscapes entitled no-connection: notes on the transformation of violence in the scope of the multiannual project Risk Change. The research was organized and carried out 'on the move' while inhabiting the borders on the Balkan Migration Route close to the coastal city Rijeka in Croatia, Novi Sad, Sombor, Belgrade, Šid in Serbia and across different cities and migration-related places at the island of Malta in Hal Far, Valetta, and Freeport in Birzebugia. In the context of the recent migration flows, the Balkan Migration Route passing through the post-Yugoslavian territory forms the land, sea, and the river system of borders, accessible in Serbia and Bosnia, under 'payable' trafficking circumstances. Borders of Croatia are very porous, expensive to cross, and with the high risk to die for the people on the move while doing a 'game' because of the violent pushbacks by the Croatian police but also from the danger presented by the natural barriers such as rivers Danube, Sava and Kupa. The island of Malta is a migration spot for African nationalities arriving by boats from Lybia since 2003. Migrants arrival exponentially increased in 2014 with the war in Syria, and when the new routes have been introduced, from Egypt and sometimes from Greece.

Un-war Space Lab collective created particular transitional spaces in the form of site-specific meetings under the name čardak/çardak. These spaces included many agents – humans, non-humans and took place in natural or build landscapes. 'čardak/çardak on screen' inhabits the digital space, while 'čardak/çardak in the void' inhabits the physical one, both in each own particular way, they add new layers to the urgencies put forward by the authors and numerous people on the move who have through time collectively created this space of learning, unlearning and exchanging different knowledges.

*"In our view, čardak/çardak spatial and material characteristics are subject to changes, according to the different territories, pandemic outbreaks, biopolitics, individual perception and imagination of belonging to the given by birth state or nation. **čardak/çardak was an impermanent space for our way of living an impermanent life during the residency traveling.** Our being together in čardak/çardak and meeting the others was impermanent, short and characterized with a long list of opposing conditions as being: safe/unsafe, legal/illegal, inside/outside the migrants' experiences, making/unmaking images of migration, between open/closed meetings, political/unpolitical, in the noise/silence with ourselves or others. We were collecting site-specific narratives of events and conditions when the humans have had and still need to move due to the wars and other natural or man-made disasters, lack of employment in their own country, resources as a consequence of the century's long colonization processes and extractions of natural resources in different parts of the Earth.*

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In the conflict geographies, some examples of contemporary čardak(s) are numerous checkpoints between Israel and Palestine, the drones flying over the USA and Mexico border to control and stop migration to the USA, thermal night vision cameras on the borders of the Balkan route, as well as on the Slovenian and Croatian borders, to control and stop migration to the European Union.

The word čardak/čardak originates from the Ottoman times and refers to a border control object 'watchtower' close to rivers, crossroads, on the edges of cities, and strategic borders. The watchtowers were located on the analog distance on the borders between the Ottoman Empire and other territories. The guards in the watchtowers were able to communicate using light or sound analog signals to announce the danger. In rural regions between Croatia and Serbia, čardak was made and used to store yellow gold – the corn - from the agricultural fields. It is also a name for the traditional stone and wooden house for hosting the people in the šumadija region in Serbia.

*Forming our own čardak/čardak, in Croatia, Serbia, Malta, and even this one 'in the void' in Maribor is an attempt to show an imposed free space from humans and their intentional activities that form the impermanent society. **We are gathering in the mediatic space while remaining interrelated and de-centralized group aware of transitional geographies while inhabiting them, opposing the fascist order of belonging to the nation-state constructs and continuous reproduction of violence and war with all possible means shifting between weapons, military industry, migration laws, capitalism and patriarchal abuse of nature and humans.***

Un-war Space Lab is led by **Armina Pilav**, a researcher in ecologies of violent spatial transformations and lecturer at the Department of Landscape Architecture, The University of Sheffield. She received the Marie Curie Fellowship for her Un-war Space research (2016-2018) developed at the Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment at TU Delft. **Karla Crnčević** holds a MA in film dramaturgy and is based in Rijeka and Zagreb. She is one of founders of the Unseen, experimental hybrid festival held in Cavtat, started in 2017. Her work explores politics of images and sound through various formats and working conditions. **Servet Cihangiroğlu**'s work focuses on ephemeral documenting of the contemporary conditions of war in Turkey while exploring his own experience and living in complex and conflict environments. In his practice, he employs various bodily interactions and different physical materials in performative relationships, photography, video, urban and domestic spaces.

BIOGRAPHIES

Armina Pilav is a feminist, architect, researcher, and lecturer at the Department of Landscape Architecture, The University of Sheffield. She received the Marie Curie Individual Fellowship for her Un-war Space research (2016-2018) developed at the Faculty of Architecture and Built Environment – TU Delft. Armina's research, practice, and teaching intersects and focuses on politics of re-presentation and re-production of physical, mediated space, bodily experiences in extreme conditions of the war destruction, or other disaster condition. Armina uses cross-media tools, psychospaciality and radical observations to explore ecologies of transformations of rivers, land, and related natural forms, architectures, and society during and after the wartime. Her work explores and at the same time creates different processes and spaces such as archiving practices, transitional landscapes, impermanent organization of humans/non-humans within the post-traumatic landscape systems. She publishes in magazines and academic journals and exhibits regularly. Her recent research on the destruction of Sarajevo and Mostar and the inhabitants' transformation of violence has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale of Architecture (2018), and as part of the Architecture of Shame project in Matera in July 2019. Armina is a member of the Association for Culture and Art Crvena in Sarajevo.

Karla Crnčević was born in 1989 in Dubrovnik, Croatia. She holds a MA in Film dramaturgy and BA in Comparative literature. From 2012, she intensively works as a film worker, mainly as Assistant Director, Production Assistant and Script Supervisor, for different types of productions on the local and foreign film market. Worked as an Assistant Dramaturge/Dramaturge on *Obrana Sokratova*, d. T. Janežič, Dubrovačke ljetne igre 2013; *Živio Harms*, d. A. Popovski, theatre Kerempuh, Zagreb 2014; *My little corner of the world*, d. Anica Tomić, Dramsko kazalište Gavella, Zagreb, 2014; *Obustava radova / Nedovršeni*, Montažstroj, 2015. She has produced videos and audio pieces for contemporary dance works (*Šavovi*, d. Mila Pavičević; *Elegies of Lost and Found*, d. Mila Pavicevic&Sergiu Matis). She works as a program coordinator, publication editor and producer on Film mutations: Festival of invisible cinema (Film-Protufilm) in Zagreb. Periodically she collaborates with the Third Channel of Croatian Radio. Her critical essays on poetry, film and theatre have been published in magazines and web portals. In 2018, the Croatian Audiovisual Center supported her full-length documentary *The Escape Lines*, where she started collaborating with researcher Armina Pilav. Her first short movie *Up the Hill* was shown at the opening of festival *Vox Feminae* in Zagreb, as a 'broken' documentary. She is a founder of Unseen, an experimental hybrid festival held in Cavtat, started in 2017, focusing on different models of audio-visual representation in the public space and occupying the space with movie images and body performance while creating unusual types of social choreography.

Servet Cihangiroğlu was born in 1985 in Şirnak, Eastern Anatolia where he completed primary and secondary education. In 2014, Servet graduated at the Institute of Fine Arts, Sculpture Department at Hacettepe University of Ankara. His work focuses on ephemeral documenting of the contemporary conditions of war in Turkey while exploring his own experience and living in complex and conflict environments. In his practice, he employs various bodily interactions and different physical materials in performative relationships, photography, video, urban and domestic spaces. He has exhibited in numerous group exhibitions and festivals, while his works are part of private collections. Servet also participates in art residencies and pedagogical projects for different age groups, across the fields of arts and culture. Currently, he lives in Paris as artist in residency hosted by the I-team Learning Lab organized by Relais Culture Europe from Paris.

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