



Miners' Memories, community project, 2008., photographs from the media archives created through the project.

MINERS' MEMORIES

Expanded Documentary Cinema / Community Project / Community Media Archives, 2008
By Kristina Leko in collaboration with ex-miners and their family members
Labin Municipal Gallery, Croatia

Project participants: Mladen Bajramovic, Sergio Baskjera, Ibrahim Cizmic, Spiro Dmitrovic, Sergio Faraguna, Senad Hujdurovic, Hasnija Karlovic, the student theater workshop "Era", Ahmed i Elmasa Kavagic, Karla Kravanja, Denis Licul, Branka Lovrin, Vaso Majinovic, Marijan Milevoj, Mara Mrdjanovic, Marijan Nikic, Zeljko Radeljevic, Beco Redzic, Dusan Savic, Leona Stemberger, Josip Stemberga, Kristina Tencic. Modelling workshop: David Smithson.

The project deals with the history of coal mining in the area of Labin in Istria, one of the most tourist regions in Croatia. It also deals with the present situation of this ex-mining community, as all the mines in the area were closed down in the 1990ies. Although the local history of coal mining spans over four centuries, it took only 15 years to forget about it. The historical sites related to the mining are neglected and devastated, as if the community is ashamed of its past.

Labin has played an important role in the labour movement. In 1921, through riots against fascism, as Istria became part of Italy, The Labin Miners Republic was established. It was put down after 40 days through a military action. Later in the communist era the mine workers of Labin continued to be an important force of the society. The big strike of 1987 announced and also stimulated the collapse of the regime.

Through this project we wanted to address the issue of neglecting the cultural heritage related to the coal mining. In the media archive of the project we collected documents, photographs, testimonies. Four video documentaries with testimonies about different crucial points of the community history were created (closing the mines, strike from 1987, present living conditions of the retired mine workers, "Once upon a time", a dramatic text written by a mine worker in the 1960ies). Through the exhibition we managed to open up discussion about the issue in the community, as well as to raise the awareness of the special value of this tradition.

The aim of the project is to create a platform through which the ex-miners will influence and take part into designing public spaces. The project will continue through several workshops where interested community members will be able to work together on the proposals for different monuments on a number of historical sites.



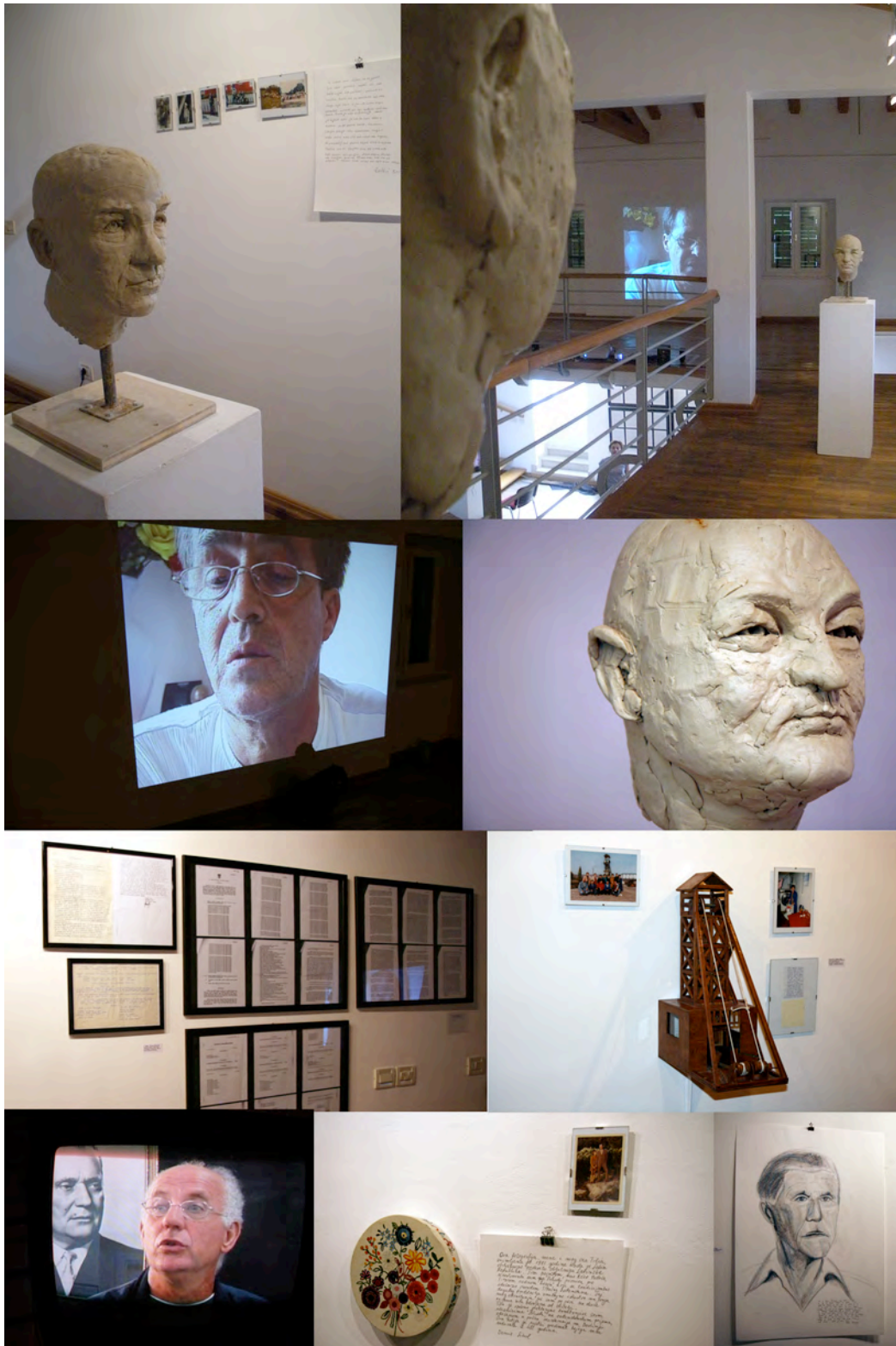
Miners' Memories, expanded documentary cinema, exhibition views, video documentary about the closing down of the mines, 40 min., Labin Municipal Gallery, 2008.



Miners' Memories, expanded documentary cinema, exhibition views, video: testimonies about the strike from 1987, 30 min., Labin Municipal Gallery, 2008.



Miners' Memories, expanded documentary cinema, exhibition views, personal objects, photographs and documents of mine workers and their family members accompanied with handwritten statements, two portraits modeled within the project workshop by a student and an ex-mine worker, Labin Municipal Gallery, 2008.



Miners' Memories, expanded documentary cinema, exhibition views, video: testimonies on present living conditions of the ex-mine workers, 40 min., Labin Municipal Gallery, 2008.



Miners' Memories, expanded documentary cinema, exhibition view, video installation: "Once upon a time", 20 min., a local student theater workshop staging a drama written by Spiro Dmitrovic, mine worker, in the 1960ies, stills from the video.



Miners' Memories, photo documentation of the working in the community, modelling workshop and video shootings, 2008.



Miners' Memories, a selection of photographs from the community media archives created through the project, 2008.