



ALL ABOUT TITO, WITH LOVE, community art project,
modelling workshop, intervention, exhibition,
video documentary 2011/2013

ALL ABOUT TITO

Intervention in a museum space. Sculptural and video workshop.

Community art project. Exhibition.

Kumrovec, Croatia, 2012/2013

In collaboration with David Smithson

Project participants: Ahmed i Elmasa Kavgić, from Labin-Raša; Nadir and Fatima Dedić, Zagreb; Ivica Kukulja, Baliija Mijo and Ljudevit Tršinski, from the town of Zabok; Vilim Broz, Mikša Ivan, Dario Raskaj, Danijel and Dado Vrudelja, from Kumrovec

Josip Broz Tito (1892-1980) was a Yugoslav revolutionary and statesman. He was secretary-general (later president) of the Communist Party (League of Communists) of Yugoslavia (1939-80), supreme commander of the Yugoslav Partisans (1941-45) and the Yugoslav People's Army (1945-80), and marshall (1943-80), premier (1945-53), and president (1953-80) of Yugoslavia. Tito was the chief architect of the "second Yugoslavia," a socialist federation that lasted from World War II until 1991. He was the first Communist leader in power to defy Soviet hegemony, a backer of independent roads to socialism (sometimes referred to as "national communism"), and a promoter of the policy of nonalignment between the two hostile blocs in the Cold War. (from Encyclopedia Britannica)

With the change of political systems in 1989, the official politics defined Tito as a controversial communistic dictator, and held him responsible for the WW2 war crimes in the region. The presence of Tito has been banned in public space, his monuments removed, the streets named after him renamed. The Old Village museum, a preserved 19th century village where Tito was born, has been turned into an ordinary ethnographic open air museum, with a programming completely neglecting the fact that Tito was born there. In the last decade however, a network of NGO citizens' associations called "The Josip Broz Tito Society" emerged all over Croatia, and in the former Yugoslavia region. They gather people who think Tito was a great politician and a great man. Every year for Tito's birthday ca. ten thousand people gather in the village of his birth to pay tribute. But, in the museum there is nothing to see related to Tito's life and accomplishments, except a photo exhibition of US president Nixon visiting the village, which should serve the needs of the increasing number of American tourists.

This project is an attempt to engage the community and reclaim the Old Village Museum as a historical site related to Josip Broz Tito. The participants of the project are all members of Tito Society organizations from Kumrovec, Zagreb, and two other small towns in Croatia. Our end goal is to create an exhibition that will be created by the members of the society, and show it in May for Tito's birthday.

Our open air sculpture workshop led by David Smithson took place in September 2012 and was an intervention in the museum space itself, and lasted for ten days. The interaction

with tourists was an important aspect of the intervention. We also used the opportunity to explain what we were up to, why and how we are working on the project. Each person modeled one head of Tito corresponding to a particular period of his life, as related to particular historical circumstances and political ideas.

Three boys from the neighborhood were curious and wanted to join us. At the beginning of our work they did not know anything about Tito. Our video workshop was about collecting memories and thoughts about Tito, his life and work, as a video archive to accompany the modeled heads in the exhibition. The exhibition will be about Tito as much about the people who like him. Our project participants also include concentration camp survivors from WWII.

Preceded with another one-week workshop, and a small-scale exhibition, our final exhibition will partially be supported by individual members of Tito Society communities, and will take place in 2014.



A group of American tourists observing the modelling work. Ahmed Kavagic, a former mine worker from Istria/Bosnia, with his work showing Josip Broz Tito as on the photo from 1928 when Tito was prosecuted and imprisoned for his activities in the communist party.



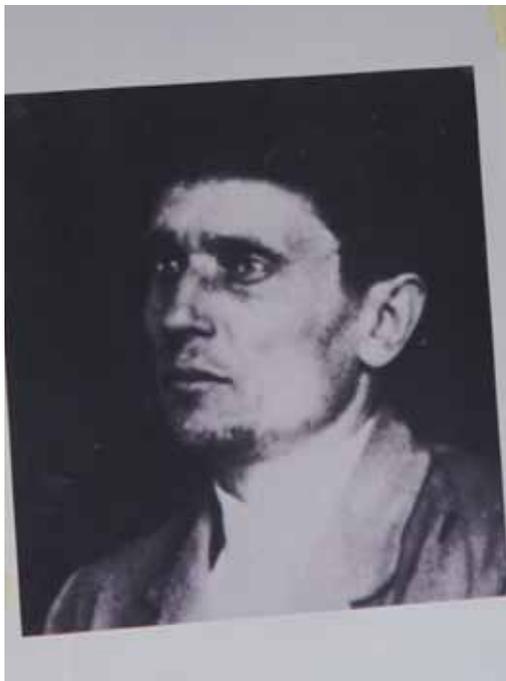


On the previous page: A group of school kids from the south of Croatia visiting the village. They stayed in our workshop for half an hour. That same day two local school boys joined our project, and another one came in on the following day. When they started, they did not know anything about Tito except he was born there. Above: Ivica Kukulja, 44, the youngest president of a Tito Society in Croatia, is as well a war veteran who has been severely injured in the Croatian Homeland War 1991-1995. Below: Mijo Balijski, 80, former manager, with his drawing of Tito as partisan leader in the WWII.





The last four days of the workshop, participants were Ivica Kukolja and Ljudevit Trsinski from the near by city of Zabok and Miksa Ivan, a former high positioned police officer from Kumrovec. His participation in the project made us gained local visibility and visitors as well.



Final works created in the project, presented with the related photos of Tito. The authors: Dario Raškaj, Ivan Mikša, Ahmet Kavgić, Elmasa Kavgić, Ljudevit Tršinski, Ivan Kukulja.





Stills from the video statements: Nadir and Fatima Dedic, concentration camp survivors, Vilim Broz, a relative of Tito's, Ljudevit Trsinski, Ivica Kukolja, Elmasa Kavagic, Mijo Baliija. Some of the project participants could not take part in the modelling workshop because of their age and health problems. Some of them created drawings, and some texts for the exhibition. The video statements, together with texts related to project participants as well as to Tito, will expand the exhibition of Tito's heads and historical photographs.