

Resistance

A GUERRILLA TOUR
OF THE REGION



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MARTA BARADIĆ

"The media only showed up
when they saw the words
clitoris, orgasm and sex.
That is what it took."



Kino Katarina
Feminist Guerrilla Cinema
Pula, Croatia

In 2016, Marta Baradić dragged a generator to an abandoned military island, set up chairs, and screened two films without a single permit. Seventy people showed up. That one night became Kino Katarina: a decade of feminist guerilla cinema turning forgotten, off-limits corners of a tourist-consumed Pula into spaces of critical thought and women's voices.

"Individual actions like ours are probably just gestures. But gestures matter."

WHAT IS KINO KATARINA?

A feminist open-air cinema born from a spontaneous, illegal screening on a military island — no electricity, no public transport, no permits. It was built around two ideas: access to public space and culture as a public good.

Guerrilla was the only way to occupy critical spaces in a city consumed by tourist monoculture. Later we got public funding. But we never changed our message.

WHAT MOMENTS SHOWED YOU IT WAS WORKING?

The screening at Muzila — a demilitarized peninsula still officially off-limits — where users of a community psychiatry program joined the audience. Another was the record-attendance night we set inside the ruins of the Uljanik shipyard, the industrial heart of Pula. And at every screening I see it in the young, unknown faces showing up for the first time.



WHAT WERE YOU ADDRESSING?

Over ten years: workers' rights, reproductive rights, women's bodies as sites of ideological conflict, the collapse of the shipbuilding industry. The biggest obstacle was simple — the media ignored us for two years. They only showed up when the program included the words clitoris, orgasm and sex. That is what it took.

CAN FEMINIST ACTIVISM COUNTER THE RIGHT?

Not alone. But feminist movements linking with the pro-Palestinian movement and cultural workers' struggles? That is where energy is building. Feminist engagement is a necessary part of organized, persistent political work connected to a mass movement. Not the whole answer. But without it, there is no answer.

AJNA JUSIĆ



"Activism built on
ego collapses quickly.
Activism built on
conviction endures."

Forgotten Children of War
Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Ajna Jusić was born from an act of wartime sexual violence. She never knew her father. When she arrived in the capital and faced a form asking for his name, a field she had no answer to, she knew she could not stay silent. She founded Forgotten Children of War and fought until Bosnian law finally recognized the existence of children like her. It took years, but it worked.

WHERE DID IT START?

From the first moment I faced that form with no father's name to write, I knew I had to act. Anger alone was not enough, so I started with education. Then I found my people: activists, artists, lawyers working on these issues across the world. That is where I saw the real power of dialogue and working across disciplines. I would do it again. Without thinking.

WHAT DOES THIS WORK DEMAND?

Courage is secondary. What you truly need is to believe 100% in what you stand for, because the moment you become the voice of a group, you take on a responsibility that cannot be treated lightly. What drives me today is the strength of collective thinking — collaborating with exceptional people, each bringing their knowledge and building better tools from the stories of marginalized groups that teach us all how to build a better future.

WHEN DID YOU KNOW IT WAS WORKING?

When the laws passed, my first reaction was: 'well, it was about time'. Not celebration. But then when children born of wartime sexual violence actually start claiming legal status and exercising their rights, that is a completely different feeling. And every award I receive belongs first to them — a reminder to different societies that these children are here. They are alive. They are your neighbors, your colleagues, your families.

WHAT DO YOU TELL YOUNG PEOPLE?

Start with something you would defend at 3am, tired, with no one applauding. Listen to the people whose stories you carry. Do not be afraid to say you don't know — that is where real learning begins. Activism built on ego collapses quickly. Change is slow, but real. Just be prepared not to see it tomorrow.

"When children born of wartime sexual violence started gaining legal status — that feeling is priceless. You never forget it."

Belgrade, 2024 and 2025. In one part of the city, students blockade universities through anarchist plenums after a canopy collapse killed sixteen people and exposed a system that does not just steal — it kills. In another, a festival trying to build bridges between Serbia and Kosovo is banned on its opening day, its organizers receiving death threats and a raw pig's head in the mail. Two different fights. The same city. The same refusal to stay silent.

**"Anarchists cooked up the
blockades. Not liberals,
not the opposition.
Students."**



**SINIŠA
CVETIĆ**

Student Activist
University Blockades

HOW DID IT START?

A canopy collapsed and killed sixteen people. It became clear the system does not only steal, it kills. The liberal opposition responded with performative sixteen-minute road blockades. Then students took matters into their own hands, applied an anarchist model through plenums, and one blocked faculty became all of Serbia.

WHAT MAKES IT DIFFERENT?

No formal leadership. Thousands coordinated through plenums across almost every university in the country. The first blockade was November 25, 2024. In under a month they organized the largest protest in Serbian history – over 150,000 people. Assange once said that Serbia is where the future happens first. This is proof.

MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE?

Students into blockades. Workers into strikes. Everyone into plenums. On one side the plenum, on the other a parliament with fascists in it. Fascists are currently winning. Liberals cannot stop them. Direct democracy can.



TIJANA ĐUKNIĆ

Mirëdita, Dobar Dan!
Cultural Activist
Belgrade, Serbia



"We were on opposite sides.
Now I see we are together,
and those dividing us are
the other side."

WHAT IS MIRĚDITA, DOBAR DAN?

A festival born in 2014 to connect Serbian and Kosovar cultural scenes. Named after Bekim Fehmiu, the great Kosovo-born Yugoslav actor and symbol of multiculturalism. Platforms for real encounters between Serbs and Kosovars barely exist. Political elites fill that vacuum with hate speech. Young people are denied the chance to meet their peers across the border. That is what we try to change. Last year, the Serbian state decided we should not.

WHAT HAPPENED WHEN IT WAS BANNED?

The Ministry of Interior banned it on opening day. We had received death threats, bomb scares, a raw pig's head from far-right groups. Right-wing groups surrounded the venue during rehearsals. The bus with participants was turned back at the city entrance. Artists already in Belgrade were forced to leave the next morning.



WAS IT WORTH IT?

Young people arrive scared and full of prejudice. They leave with friendships they cannot explain back home. Today, having an Albanian friend from Kosovo is a political statement. It shouldn't be. What gives me hope is that Serbian citizens never took to the streets against us. The connections we built cannot be undone by anyone.

KATARINA STANIŠIĆ

In 2023, the City of Podgorica handed an abandoned space to a group of people from completely different backgrounds who shared one thing: a need for a place to create freely. They made breakfast pastries, played music, and stayed all day. DKC Pomorandža is now one of the few genuinely independent cultural centers in the Western Balkans — and its model has since inspired others across the region.

"The most important thing is to have the will — everything else can be figured out."



"People are given the chance to express themselves without censorship and without being shaped by commercial expectations."

HOW DID AN ABANDONED SPACE BECOME A COMMUNITY?

A group of people from completely different backgrounds who shared one need: a place for free expression and collective creativity. By the end of opening day it was clear — this was not just a project. It was a place where community would flourish.

WHY DO NON-COMMERCIAL SPACES MATTER?

So that cities can offer cultural content that is spontaneous and free. When citizens organize events themselves, the concept changes entirely. People are simply given the chance to express themselves the way they want without censorship—not packaged into a mold of what culture is supposed to look like, because financial interests do not exist here.

HOW DO YOU BALANCE AUTONOMY WITH INSTITUTIONS?

The space was granted by the City of Podgorica in August 2023. Despite all the obstacles in sustaining it, quality communication with institutions is especially important so we can secure a fully independent space for citizens that nurtures cultural and social content. We cooperate based on our shared values, not dependency.

WHAT DO YOU TELL YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WANT TO START SOMETHING?

Have the will. Everything else can be figured out. Resources and support find you when you focus on people who share your values. When the story gets going, things come on their own. What you need is a strong team and people ready to take it seriously.



DORIANA MUSAJ

**"Activism is not a guarantee
of success. It is a guarantee
of dignity."**

Tirana, 2018 to 2020. The government passes a special law to demolish the National Theatre without public dialogue – then sends armed police at 4:30am to tear it down while the city sleeps. A few years later, students occupy their faculties demanding a university that treats them as human beings. Two fights, two generations. Both learn the same thing: the state will not protect you. You have to show up yourself.

WHAT DID THIS FIGHT CHANGE IN HOW YOU SEE YOUR PROFESSION?

Architecture is not just form or aesthetics. It is a structure of social relationships in time and space. The Theatre showed concretely that public space is not neutral, it can be instrumentalized by power, but it can equally become a tool of resistance and solidarity. The city is produced as much by civic practices as by plans and institutions. That is something I cannot unsee.

WHEN DID IT BECOME PERSONAL?

From a professional concern it became a personal cause the moment that law passed. Silence would have meant complicity. Fundamental rights were being violated: the right to speak in the city, the right to memory, the right to democratic participation. In that context, staying quiet was a choice I could not make.

HOW DID YOU FIGHT BACK?

The most guerrilla act was simply using the space as it was meant to be used – for gathering, discussion, culture. In under ten months we hosted 65 performances: concerts, debates, exhibitions. Then the 2019 earthquake hit Tirana. The Theatre became an emergency solidarity hub. Over 15,000 citizens came to donate. Two hundred self-organized volunteers distributed 100 aid shipments – without a single state institution involved.

WHAT DID SOCIETY WIN EVEN THOUGH THE BUILDING FELL?

The building was demolished. But the resistance shifted the debate from the narrow idea of “development” to the question of who decides for the city and in whose name. Activism is not worthless even when it fails to stop a demolition. Resistance builds connections, creates new civic language, and expands the boundaries of what is considered acceptable in relation to power. Even without a material victory, civic engagement produces dignity and collective memory.



SIDORELA VATNIKAJ

"For those few days, the university was truly ours - the students."

WHAT PUSHED YOU INTO THE STUDENT PROTEST?

I was a second-year student who already knew the faculty I was studying at was not the university I had dreamed of. It was bureaucratic, dehumanizing, built to kill critical thinking. When the protest sparked I felt robbed – of time, energy, and the dreams I had invested in university as an institution. I knew I had to be part of it.

WHAT DID THOSE DAYS FEEL LIKE FROM INSIDE?

The most special moments were the days and nights locked inside the faculty. For about a month we stayed for 24 hours a day. Our mothers cooked for all of us, including the friends who came to support us. That was when we started to actually live the dream we were fighting for.

HOW DO YOU SEE ACTIVISM IN ALBANIA TODAY?

Struggling, due to NGO-ization of civic life, mass emigration, and exhaustion. But a new culture is slowly building: communities defending neighborhoods, protecting natural resources, opposing injustice. It's moving forward – slowly, but finally in the right direction.

WHAT WAS THE HARDEST PRESSURE TO BEAR?

Not the prime minister labeling us personally. Not the threats. The hardest was society expecting us to be heroes of a thirty-year transition. We were twenty-year-olds with no political formation and no tradition of organizing. At some point the weight felt bigger than us. And after the protest, most people left. Not just the movement. Albania. Without the hope that honest civic engagement can produce real change.

DIBRAN HOXHA

"There can be no normality in an abnormal situation."

ORCA has thrown mud at the University of Pristina rectorate, interrupted lectures by confirmed plagiarists, staged Halloween protests wearing the faces of fraudulent professors, and compiled a 492-page dossier exposing academic fraud. Its activists have been arrested. They kept going. In a country where nearly half of university leadership has been found to have published in fake journals, ORCA decided that formal letters were not enough.

WHY DIRECT ACTION AND NOT FORMAL LETTERS?

Direct action came after a series of formal steps: reports to university bodies, public denunciations, symbolic protests. We chose it at the moment when the university had already confirmed the plagiarism, but the professors kept teaching as if nothing had happened. Our principle is simple: inform the public about abuses in institutions, especially the University of Pristina. When institutions refuse to act, we make the abnormal visible.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN JUSTICE SIDES WITH THE POWERFUL?

We do not stop at one action. We keep exposing the absurdity. When confirmed plagiarists were banned only from mentoring theses for two years, a laughable punishment in proportion to the crime, we used symbolic actions to keep mocking that response and keep the issue alive in public consciousness. The goal is never just one moment. It is sustained pressure.

"Passivity reduces the university experience to a mere formality."

IS CREATIVITY A POLITICAL WEAPON?

Every abuse needs a symbol that stays in people's minds and connects directly to the act and the person responsible. In our internal discussions, most of the time is spent on the concept of the action itself. The execution is just the final step. A Halloween protest wearing the faces of plagiarist professors. Mud thrown at the rectorate. A lecture interrupted by a bell. All of these are not stunts. They're memories of what they want us to forget.

DOES ACTIVISM MATTER?

Almost no progressive movement in history started without students at its center. A student who limits themselves to finishing their degree while surrounded by corruption and abuse does not fully play their role. Students are not just the professionals of tomorrow. They are agents of change today. Passivity reduces university to a formality. Engagement is the only way to produce real change in institutions and in society.



In Tetovo, one of the most polluted cities in the world, activists held a concert at the city dump and carried coffins through the streets to count the dead. Across Macedonia, over 5000 books by women authors were donated to libraries that never had them – including the women's ward of a prison. And in Skopje, paint bombs were thrown at a regime's monuments until a government fell.

ARIANIT XHAFERI

"Guerila actions contain surprise, shock, sometimes even coffins. They hit harder than mass protests."





WHY GUERILA AND NOT CLASSICAL PROTEST?

Classical protests lose their effect when repeated too often. Guerrilla actions do not need large numbers. The concert held at the city dump while Teto-vo choked on polluted air. The coffins carried through the streets to count the people the pollution was killing... These actions contain an element of the morbid that forces a reaction. That is the point.

MESSAGE TO YOUNG PEOPLE WHO FEEL DISCOURAGED?

A struggle consists of many battles; some won, some lost. But the struggle must continue. Change does not come quickly. Pressure must be maintained in different forms throughout the entire year, not only in winter when the problem becomes unbearable.

HOW DO YOU START WHEN INSTITUTIONS IGNORE YOU?

First you identify the problem. Then you define it clearly and push it through media toward the authorities. Then directly to them. When you see they are not paying attention, that is when you move to public action. You do not need a big organization. You do not need a budget. You need a story, and people who think like you, who can carry it further — journalists, doctors, anyone with reach.

DOES ACTIVISM NEED EXPERIENCE TO WORK?

Actually the opposite. Large, established organizations follow templates. Creativity comes mostly from lack of experience. People who have no established way of doing things are forced to find new approaches. That is what makes them more creative. Inexperience is not a weakness in activism. It is often the source of the best ideas.

SARA MILENKOVSKA

Spodeli Avtorka
Cultural Activist
Skopje

"Sometimes the most radical thing you can do is start something small."

WHERE DID IT START?

From a quiet but persistent feeling of emptiness. Not emptiness on shelves, but emptiness in whose stories are accessible, whose experiences are recognized, whose knowledge circulates. When a young girl could not find the literature she needed, that was not an isolated case. It was a symptom of a wider structural inequality. Addressing that feeling slowly became a practice.

DOES IT REACH BEYOND SKOPJE?

Skopje has more resources, events and books – but even there feminist and queer literature is not systematically available. In smaller cities the gap is even more visible. That is why the initiative moves: books in Macedonian, Albanian, Bosnian, Serbian, Romani and Aromanian to more than 20 places across Macedonia, including the women's ward of Idrizovo prison. Access to knowledge must be a right, not a privilege.



ARE THESE INITIATIVES AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE SYSTEM?

Not an alternative. A pressure on it. Spodeli Avtorka shows that this kind of space needs to exist institutionally too, not only through enthusiasm and volunteer work. When knowledge moves faster and more inclusively outside formal channels than inside them, that is not a success story. That is a signal that something is broken.

RAMADAN RAMADANI

Colorful Revolution

Civic Activist

Skopje

**"People with different
opinions can unite under
a shared cause."**

WHAT WAS THE TURNING POINT?

During one of the largest Student Plenum protests, Albanian protesters joined the march toward the Government building. That moment created a broader, all-civic front of solidarity that could no longer be broken through ethnic division. It formed a front built on the understanding that what holds both society and the state together is not ethnic identity but shared civic purpose.

WHEN DOES A PROTEST BECOME A REAL ACT OF CITIZENSHIP?

When it manages to push for political measures: to cancel a decision, modify it, or at least temporarily suspend it. That is the true measure of success. Not the number of people in the street. The decision that changes because of them.



WHAT MUST A NEW GENERATION NEVER LOSE?

The insistence on a purely civic discourse. One that is healthy and self-aware, where no one blocks anyone else. Even people and communities with very different opinions can unite under a civic conversation that actually holds society and the state together.

Final stop...

There is no stopping now.

Resistance only knows how
to move forward.



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