

A young girl with dark hair tied in a ponytail with a purple hair tie, wearing a white t-shirt and bright pink pants, is kneeling on a dark stone base of a large, weathered bronze statue. She is looking down at the base of the statue. The statue is a large, abstract figure, possibly representing a person in a dynamic pose. In the background, there is a public square with a green lawn, a paved area, and several people sitting on benches. A building with a sign that says "HOTEL" is visible in the distance. The overall scene is outdoors during the day.

Directed by
Ana Čigon

With
**Qëndresë Deda
Dardan Zhegrova
Linda Gusia
Majlinda Hoxha
Erëmirë Krasniqi
Vjollca Krasniqi
Lura Limani
Nita Luci,
Hana Qena &
Vesa Qena**

What lies
behind the monuments?

REMEMBERING THE OTHERS

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Mid-length documentary film, 45'54", 2015

English

Subtitles: English, Slovene, German, Macedonian, Bosnian, Albanian

http://anacigon.si/video_remembering.html

"An ambitiously constructed meditation on the representation of women. Remembering the Others explores the socio-political background of public monuments delivering a complex and nuanced take on an issue of international importance. Ana Čigon opts for a clear storytelling that effectively captures the contradictions of modern society."

- Cinewomen magazine



Synopsis

In the film *Remembering the Others* (46', 2015) students, artists, theoreticians and activists from Prishtina, Kosovo talk about the meaning of monuments. The film deals with socio-political background of public monuments, and researches the reasons why portraying women in them is usually omitted. The film then expands its research to other groups of people and historic events that are omitted in public monuments. It gives an explanation of how and why the erection of many monuments are politically motivated and how collective memory of events is shaped also through monuments. The film epilogue opens way to ideas about what kind of monuments the interviewees from Prishtina want for the future.

Remembering the Others states that if the (hi) stories of marginalized groups are hushed, and the (hi)stories that have visibility are not questioned, the result will always be a misleading sense of normality. A status quo that creates a platform that gives certain groups the push to the top positions and to the other groups the push to oblivion, all accompanied by a deceptive sense of fairness and normality.

Biographies

Ana Čigon (1982) is an artist from Slovenia that works in diverse artistic fields like video art, films and performances. She studied painting, video and new media art in Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Linz (Austria).

She began making video art in 2007 for which she won the OHO Award in 2009. In 2014 she started to film her first mid-length documentary film *Remembering the Others*, which she finished in 2015. She has since directed two more documentary films (*Flow / Tok* and *Heroines / Heroinat*) and three short animations (*Francka*, *Macho* in *Rebellious Essence*). She has presented her films in film festivals all over the world and she exhibits her works in art exhibitions internationally. Her projects tackle social and feminist issues, such as underrepresentation of women in historical narration, invisible social groups, relations between the individual and the society, pursuit of happiness, political satire and such. Her works often contain elements of humour, irony, and satire and her artworks are not limited to one media.

Vasja Progar (1986) is a Slovene sound artist who also experimented with different artistic disciplines like sound art, composing and new media art. He composed several contemporary music scores for documentary films as well as scores for (solo) performances and concerts.

Artistic contributions

Qëndresë Deda and Dardan Zhegrova are two young artists from Kosovo who work in diverse artistic disciplines like visual art, poetry and performance. For *Remembering the Others* both artists conceptualised and realised an artistic creative comment of the monuments in Prishtina. Qëndresë Deda contributed a poem and several performative interventions with passers-by in the Mother Theresa Boulevard in Prishtina. Dardan Zhegrova also contributed with a sincere performative intervention, which he dedicated to the memorial of Ibrahim Rugova in Prishtina.

There are three more artists featured in the film: photographer Majlinda Hoxha and performers Hana Qena and Vesa Qena. Majlinda Hoxha who has been documenting monuments in Kosovo for several years has kindly shared five photos from this series for the film. Hana Qena and Vesa Qena are part of Haveit performance group. The other two members of the group are Alketa Sylaj, Arbërore Sylaj. The group has shared three photos of their performances for the film.

Speakers

Beside all of the above mentioned artists, the film also features five more speakers who share their thoughts on the meaning and power of monuments.

Linda Gusia, Vjollca Krasniqi and Nita Luci are professors at the University of Prishtina who have researched different social and feminist issues. Their research was an indispensable help in forming the basis for the interviews and structure of the film.

Another indispensable help in this area were also Erëmirë Krasniqi and Lura Limani, curators of *Lirindja*, an independent zine.

Trailer

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3PnHNmYmg>



Excerpts from the interview for CinéWomen magazine

Ana, tell us about your trajectory as a filmmaker. What inspired you to express yourself in this medium?

The medium I started to work with as an artist is not film. I was trained and have been active for several years in the field of contemporary art. I started as a painter and then turned to video art and performance. However, I was never faithful to a particular medium because of the medium itself. For me the most important thing was to be faithful to an idea, a message, a concept. Depending on the idea I wanted to express, I then decided on the medium. Having said that, it is also true that there are several aspects of painting, video, performance and film that these media have in common. The power of the image, the image that includes the human figure and speaks through composition and body gestures.

- We want to take a closer look at the genesis of your film project: how did you come up with the idea for Remembering The Others?

Remembering the Others is my first documentary film. /.../ I was on a two-month artist residency in Prishtina, Kosovo. Initially, I had no particular work in mind, so my plan for the first few weeks was just to meet people, mostly feminists and artists from the area. /.../ At the end, I felt that the talks I had with people were so valuable that they had to be captured. /.../ I felt that with a film I have enough time to say something more complex, /.../ I also felt the monuments were a great topic for a first film. Everyone has seen monuments in cities, but they are generally not given much thought; they are usually just seen as something that has always been present in the city, and there is not much talk about the representation, about what they symbolise. At least that is my experience.

- *Remembering The Others exemplifies your distinctive narrative formula, which moves from the particular to the general. How did you develop the structure of the film?*

/.../ The structure of the film was quite a challenge. It was not clear to me until the very last interview, because all the interviews opened up new questions. It turned out the story behind monuments was much larger than I expected. At some point I was in front of a very theoretical text. I had some of my image interventions, some drawings and some footage, but it was not enough, so I asked two local artists to help me. I spoke with Qëndresë Deda and Dardan Zhegrova and asked them to talk to me about monuments through art. They made small simple interventions, performances, poetic remarks. I included some of these in the film and also searched for more personal inputs from the interviewees. From these I developed a structure that I felt was more engaging for the audience and more cinematic.

- *A striking work of seemingly improvisational form, Remembering The Others is in fact a highly layered film, open to several different readings. What are you hoping Remembering The Others will trigger in the audience?*

/.../ I thought about how to talk about issues of minorities of the invisible histories in a way that would show these issues affect *everybody*. These issues of course do not affect the lucky elites, the represented, the majority in the same way as they affect the minorities, the Others, because being part of the majority is a privilege and this bring benefits. But still, a history with holes is basically a fiction, it is not scientific and as Vjollca Krasniqi says in the film, this kind of history lacks credibility. And this should be important to everyone since it affects our believes, our identity.

- *Remembering The Others is rather unusual for a documentary film in that it uses a very original dialogic structure. Can you tell us something about the shooting of your film? What was the most challenging thing about making Remembering The Others?*

Probably the most challenging thing was to find a subject that I could relate to in a country I did not know much about. I think that if you don't know even the general information of a place you cannot even formulate the right questions. Because of this I spent the beginning of my stay in Prishtina learning and reading about Kosovo and talking to people. /.../. Then the interviews in front of the camera lasted for about an hour. /.../ A big challenge was how to talk about a theme regarding a foreign country, a foreign society in a way that you do not judge, or you are not intrusive. My dilemma was: do I have the right to talk about this at all?

/.../ To address this issue at least in part I did not include any voice-over narration. Everything that is said in the film is said by women from Prishtina. I also showed the film to all the interviewees and asked them for comments before presenting the film publicly. Having said that I can not be sure the film is neutral. I was still the one who decided about which questions to pose and the one who edited the film and decided which answers to include and which to omit, so by these means my point of view is still expressed in the film.



- *What were some of your aesthetic decisions?*

/.../ Most of the interviews were carried out and filmed by me. I had more liberty when filming the b-rolls and artist performances. When shooting the monuments, I was careful about the composition and what is captured in a frame besides just the monument. The shots are narrating through the whole surface of the image. The experience of painting has thought me that a static picture can be filled with a great number of information, which can demand much more time and thought to be processed than a series of poorly chosen frames. /.../ Besides these, there are also a few tricks, visual effects in the movie which mostly stand for an imaginative reality, like a Prishtina without monuments, where in the film instead of the complete monument one only sees its pedestal.

Another characteristic aesthetic point of the movie are the drawings on post-it papers. Since I had no monuments dedicated to women at disposal, I had to find a simple way to visualise a possible representative image, a representation that would at the same time stand for the under-represented and the need to change this state. For all of the above mentioned, however, I feel it is common that the image works on a very subtle level, my visual interventions are not grandiose and too explicit, but rather minimal. I felt this kind of imagery leaves more space to an active kind of a viewer.

REMEMBERING THE OTHERS

Directed by
Ana Čigon

Artistic contributions
Qëndresë Deda
visual artist and poet
In the film: - interactions with passers-by in Mother Theresa Boulevard
- poem 'A talk with Zahir Pajaziti'
Dardan Zhegrova
visual artist and poet
In the film: - performance 'Selfie with Ibrahim Rugova'

Video interviews
Linda Gusia
professor, University of Prishtina and Alter Habitus
Majlinda Hoxha
photographer and visual artist
In the film: - photo series of monuments in Kosovo (5 photos), copyright by
Majlinda Hoxha
Vjollca Krasniqi
professor, University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philosophy
Lura Limani and Erëmirë Krasniqi
Curators of Lirindja, an independent zine
<http://lirindja.tumblr.com/>
Nita Luci
professor, University of Prishtina and Alter Habitus
Hana Qena and Vesa Qena
performers of artistic group Haveit
other two members of the group: Alketa Sylaj, Lola Sylaj
In the film: - photos of performances Examinime (Examination) and Day of Love,
copyright by Haveit group

script, camera, sound, drawings & editing
Ana Čigon

camera assistance
Donjeta Murati and Vala Osmani

sound editing assistance
Vasja Progar

translations
Qëndresë Deda and Donjeta Murati

production
Ana Čigon
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