



## Precarious in capitalist culture – Should we continue living like this?

SYMPOSIUM ON THINKING THE FUTURE FROM A LABOR PERSPECTIVE

Kino Kultura, Skopje, November 29-30, 2019

Organized by Faculty of things that can't be learned (FR~U), North Macedonia in partnership with Lokomotiva- Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture and Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung South East Europe

Curated by **Ivana Vaseva**

Speakers:

**Antonia Alampi, Kristina Ampeva, Corina L. Apostol, Djordje Balmazović, Karla Crnčević, Iliana Fokianaki, Vladan Jeremić, Filip Jovanovski, Violeta Kachakova, Biljana Tanurovska – Kjulavkovski, Krunoslav Stojaković, Tara Rukeci, Bojana Piškur, Tjaša Pureber, Kire Vasilev**

When it comes to labor rights, cultural workers are in a particularly desperate condition, because their work often is not regarded as labor and is not valorized as such. The exploitation and marginalization of cultural work, as well as the overall lack of understanding of the emancipatory potential of arts and culture, is rarely addressed as an issue in need of systemic change. For decades now, neoliberal austerity measures push artists and cultural workers into short-term contracts or freelance relations. Often unpaid, they do not even earn a living wage, and most of them live in a cycle of debt and poverty.



Unequal and precarious labor conditions are also evident in other sectors in North Macedonia and the region. In the transition to post-socialism, Yugoslavia's big factories were dispersed into hundreds of private companies that took advantage of cheap labor in the race for profit in a strong rivalry with their competitors. The unchallenged neoliberal discourse penetrated society and labor relations changed, union activities have been oppressed and labor legislation has been neutralized. All this led to the neglect of labor rights and living wages. The state institutions lack systematic procedures and political resolutions that would foster emancipatory culture and improve the labor rights of precarious cultural workers and all workers in general.

**How can precarious cultural workers organize to struggle for better working conditions in this context? What kind of artistic and cultural production can support the struggle for labor rights and make emancipatory social movements stronger in the future?**

This symposium brings together actors from the region and across Europe with institutional, non-governmental and non-institutional backgrounds from the field of culture and art, as well as people who are part of social movements and activists for labor rights, to exchange experiences, discuss existing models and share strategies for labor organization in culture and art.

Starting from the analysis of precarity and freelance working relationships in culture and elsewhere, the symposium will discuss possible new relations of cultural production beyond neoliberal, conservative and ethno-nationalist paradigms. Here, the artistic and cultural context needs strong input from the side of emancipatory forces in society. For this, examples of emancipatory practices in culture in the context of labor struggle will be presented, the function and capacities of public institutions and resources will be discussed, and possibilities of transnational organisation will be addressed.

## AGENDA

### **Friday, November 29, 2019, Kino Kultura**

#### **9am-6pm: Workshops (closed sessions)**

- 9am-1pm: Workers Inquiry workshop in the Macedonian context by **Bojana Piškur** (MSUM, Slovenia) and **Djordje Balmazovic** (skart, Serbia/Slovenia)
- 2pm-6pm: Workshop "Advocacy of cultural workers for labour rights" with **Tjaša Pureber** (cultural worker and former head of advocacy for Asociacija, network of independent cultural workers in Slovenia).

#### **6pm: Opening of the Symposium**

- Presentation of the program, guests, general context and focus of the symposium by **Ivana Vaseva** (FR~U, North Macedonia), **Krunoslav Stojaković** (RLS SEE) and **Vladan Jeremić** (RLS SEE)
- "Art Workers Between Precarity and Resistance: A Genealogy", lecture by **Corina L. Apostol** (Tallinn Art Hall and ArtLeaks, Estonia/Romania)
- "The condition of freelance cultural workers in North Macedonia" presentation by **Ivana Vaseva** and **Violeta Kachakova** (Lokomotiva, North Macedonia)



## **Saturday, November 30, 2019, Kino Kultura**

### **10-11:30am: Public presentations and reports on workshop results**

From the Workers Inquiry workshop in the Macedonian context by **Bojana Piškur and Djordje Balmazović** and “Advocacy of cultural workers for labour” rights by **Tjaša Pureber**

### **11:30am-12pm: Coffee break**

### **12-2pm: Session I: Precarious in capitalist culture**

Moderator: **Biljana Tanurovska – Kjulavkovski** (Lokomotiva, North Macedonia)

- Future Climates by **Antonia Alampi** (Savvy Contemporary, Germany) and **Iliana Fokianaki** (State of Concept Athens, Greece)
- ArtLeaks platform by **Corina L. Apostol** (Tallinn Art Hall and ArtLeaks) and **Vladan Jeremić** (RLS SEE/ArtLeaks)

### **4-6pm: Session II: Precarious in deindustrialized societies**

Moderator: **Filip Jovanovski** (FR~U, North Macedonia)

- Enough with the cuts, Zagreb by **Karla Crnčević** (dramaturgist and film worker, Croatia)
- Presentation of different fights in local context by **Tara Rukeci** (Zrenjanin Social Forum Workers Video Club, Serbia)
- Textile workers in Shtip on the long road to precarity by **Kristina Ampeva** (Loud Textile Worker, North Macedonia)
- Devalorization of labour by **Kire Vasilev** (labor activist, North Macedonia)

### **6pm-6:30pm: Coffee break**

### **6:30pm: Short film projection “Picked pickers”**

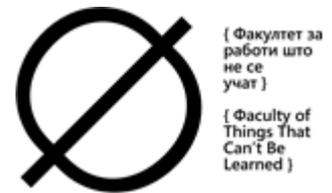
Zrenjanin Social Forum Workers Video Club

### **7pm: Concluding session**

**\*During the symposium there will be mini book fair organized with publications from all participants.**

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The symposium on thinking future from a labor perspective “Precarious in capitalist culture – Should we continue living like this?”, organized by Faculty of things that can't be learned (FR~U), is supported by Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe in the framework of the Left Culture Initiative. The symposium is presented in English and the workshops are conducted in English, Macedonian and Bosnian-Croatian-Serbian. The symposium will be documented on video and posted online and the Worker's Inquiry will be published.



The attendees of the workshops are young artists and cultural workers and all interested parties who applied through the open call (published in early November 2019). This activity is part of the discursive and educational program “The Perfect Artist”, organized by FR~U and partially supported by the City of Skopje and the Ministry of Culture of North Macedonia.

The workshop with Tjaša Pureber is organized by Lokomotiva – Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture in the framework of the yearly program “Contemporary culture and public policies” 2019, curated by Violeta Kachakova and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, developed as part of the project “Program of Lokomotiva in Kino Kultura – project space for contemporary performing arts and contemporary culture” supported by the Ministry of Culture of North Macedonia.

The drawing used for event promotion is by Djordje Balmazovic and is part of the Workers Inquiry workshop in the Macedonian context by Bojana Piškur and Balmazovic.