New Perspectives.
Migration in Central and Southeastern Europe
(working title)
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Migration in Central and Southeastern Europe

1. INTRODUCTION

In Europe migration history is mainly relayed from the immigration society's point of view and rarely from the perspective of emigration countries. This is compounded by the one-sided knowledge production about the backgrounds, dynamics and consequential impacts of migration. The different perspectives are decisive for how migrants, refugees and asylum seekers are viewed, and the way the majority society views and defines itself. The perspectives are multifaceted and do not merely relate to a certain point of view of the immigration or emigration country; but rather they are interlinked with the various ideas put forth by regions, institutions and individuals. This project takes into consideration the plural lenses through which migration is perceived in its reading of a previously unaddressed chapter in cultural history.

Based on the exhibition project Gastarbajteri – 40 years of labor migration¹, we seek to initiate a follow-on project that undertakes this shift in perspective. For, the so-called “Gastarbeiter era” (Gastarbeiterum) has not only affected and shaped the immigration societies, but also the societies in the emigration countries. Moreover, countries that were once traditional emigration countries, such as Turkey or former Yugoslavia, have also become immigration countries themselves in the past few years. Therefore, main focus in this project is to engage with the issues related to the existing migration movements and politics in Central and Southeastern Europe and contextualize them from a globalized perspective. This project will provide the societies in the participating countries (Croatia, Austria, Serbia and Turkey) with expanded knowledge, thus creating a new cartography of cultural history.

In order to interlink New Perspective. Migration in Central and Southeastern Europe and Gastarbajteri and store the various collective memories of migration of different European societies, exhibitions and events and a publication in four languages (German, Turkish, Serbian/Croatian and English) will be conceptualized and realized. Furthermore, this project aims to establish migration as a subject in existing archives, museums and educational institutions. Our project thus addresses an expanded European perspective and incorporating it in a broader canon of knowledge.

¹ Gastarbajteri was exhibited from January to April 2004 at Wien Museum Karlsplatz and at the main branch of the Vienna public libraries. The exhibition was conceptualized and realized by Initiative Minderheiten in cooperation with artist group gangart, migrant women’s organization Peregrina, Wien Museum as well as with migration theorists, practitioners and artists. A main objective of the project, consisting of two exhibitions, a film series, interventions in public spaces and discussion evenings, was to reclaim and more strongly embed the history of labor migration from migrants’ perspectives in Vienna’s and Austria’s cultural memory. (www.gastarbajteri.at).
2. APPROACH UND METHOD

The project New Perspective. Migration in Central and Southeastern Europe is orientated along two main threads: the historical and the spatial.

historical:
What materiality do stories take on in the writing of history?
In what ways do experiences and memories become history?
How do marginalized stories become part of history?

spatial:
In what way does migration change the concept of the nation-state and the construction of space?
How do (supra)national control regulations and measures transform space?
How does migration transform geographical, geopolitical, media, private/public, and linguistic spaces?
Which imaginaries exist in diasporic communities about migrants’ countries of origin and in what ways do they correspond to the realities there?
Which imaginaries about life in the desired country of immigration are there in the countries of origin?

In Belgrade, Istanbul, Vienna and Zagreb transnational teams composed of experts in science, art, culture and socio-political praxis will work in an interdisciplinary manner on for producing and transferring knowledge. Here Interdisciplinarity not only means methodologically interlinking approaches, materials and formats, but it also means engaging plural approaches to the historical and spatial dimensions.

In producing texts and images we will employ “synchronized systems of collective symbolisms.” People construct their global and specific knowledge through the use of imagery and iconography, among other things. This is also true of their knowledge about migration. Particularly the various images and imaginaries circulating among different countries operate as “visual codes.” This is how images depicting groups of men arriving with suitcases at train stations became “icons” of a history of post-war labor migration in Europe. Currently, images of overfilled refugee boats (largely from Africa) stranded on the shores of Europe flicker across TV screens, thus serving as “signs of the reality” of migration today, “a threat to European security,” and global inequality and poverty. In this project we seek to address problems concerning the image and text production that dominate the public sphere and on the stories that these images eclipse. Our understanding of “addressing problems” follows Maria do Mar Castro Varela’s definition as a mode of critique that does not look to uncover the truth, but rather to pluralize it.

3. THEMES AND CONTENTS

The following themes will be represented in the exhibitions, documentation and film series in terms of their perspectivity and historicity

1. Labor and economy
2. Regulation attempts, border regimes and rule of law / capacity to act
3. Route / media / circulating images
4. Positions in popular culture and art
5. Fact(s) and fiction(s)

3.1. Labor and economy

In the subject area labor and economy, the emphasis is on historicizing labor migration and contextualizing its contemporary forms in the countries of focus. Political systems have developed and implemented specific forms of labor migration. Simultaneously, migrants have accessed various channels and forms of migration, which transcend official migration regimes.

On state and individual levels migratory movements were and are codetermined by global economic developments. Even the terminology and definitions according to which these movements are understood and governed have been developed, changed and consolidated based on the historical-political circumstances.

⇒ Are there continuities and/or ruptures in the migration regimes during the past few decades, and in the specific discourses and images?
⇒ To what extent can we speak of new forms of labor migration in the 21st century? (Seasonal workers and transnational commuters, artists and scientists etc.)
⇒ Regarding historicizing images of work migrants circulating in Croatia, Austria, Serbia and Turkey: what historical notions are they linked to?
⇒ What kinds of economies emerge in the course of migration? Who profits from migration?
3.2. Regulation attempts, border regimes and rule of law / capacity to act

The tensions produced by global developments have rapidly eroded the sovereignty of the nations regarding migration issues and laws. At the same time, there is a tendency to pass laws and legal measures in grey areas. The “flood” of migration laws and decrees within EU countries is a reflection of current discussions on security, which are becoming more politically relevant and influential beyond the European Union’s borders. Our main focus here will be on the following questions:

- The history of regulating, registering and controlling people (who move between places) and the history of the modes of control and means of registration (e.g. the history of the passport).
- How have the new controls and regulations transformed the borders and border politics of nation-states?
- Who benefits from expanding control measures?
- What are the possibilities for individuals and civil society to take action and resist?

3.3. Route / media / circulating images

Media creates and determines a society’s self-image and how they view others. They have access to a broad public and therefore also shape society’s knowledge about migration. At the same time, images circulating in the media influence the individual’s decision to migrate. In the course of history not only the images but also the media’s forms of expression change. The increasing accessibility to use media has facilitated new forms of communication, thus also enabling interventions in existing social contexts.

- Changes in the means of communication in migration (from the audio cassette to Internet)
- The history of so-called community media in the diaspora. How do migrants intervene in the world of media images and texts and thus turn them around?
- How do images of the country of origin, i.e. images of migration, change?
- How has the image of migrants been negotiated in the country of origin and how has it responded to the changes in migration?

Routes, i.e. points connecting transit between individual countries, have continually shifted and changed. Hence, not only the appearance of the connecting roads has changed, but also the popular use of modes of transportation other than cars and trains; for example, flying has become a much more affordable mode of transportation for many people. The altering borders and border controls come into view along these routes as well. The controls have shifted in location from the actual, physical national boundaries to the airport or the point of departure.
3.4. Positions in popular culture and art

In the past few years migration has been hyped in artistic and cultural spheres (for example, “Balkan Fever” has taken Vienna by storm). At the same time, migration laws are increasingly becoming more restrictive. The disparity between cultural hype and publicly criminalizing and problematizing migratory movements can be also read as a specific targeted economic utilization, as Faith Aydogdu puts it: “The fact that Turkish and Balkan pop music are now becoming more popular outside migrant communities in Austria and Germany indicate that their temporary surge in public interest has aroused greater economic interest now than it did 30 or 40 years ago.”

- What does it mean when subcultural products are consumed and celebrated by mainstream culture?
- To what effect do the artistic works and their forms of representation influence how one “talks about migration”?
- What is the mutual attraction between the artistic sphere and critical discourses on migration based on?
- What effects do these encounters have on methods, terminologies and forms of representation?

3.5. Fact(s) and fiction(s)

The following examples represent a small sample of the stories that serve as points of departure in our research. These specific stories show how discourses on work, regulation attempts, route/media and popular culture bleed into one another, overlap and interact.

After the breakdown of the Soviet Union and the opening of the borders in 1988, thousands of women came to the markets of Turkish cities on the Black Sea where they sold all kinds of things from personal household items to “tank tracks.” Prostitution soon emerged from this so-called “suitcase trade immigration.” The name “Natasha,” as women sex workers are still called today, was even incorporated into traditional folk songs of the region, which until that time had wooed “Fadime” (“oy Natascha Natascha, koydun beni atasa”). In the meantime, programs for sex workers have been set up, providing education, protection and programs facilitating the return to the countries of origin for those who would like to get out of sex work.

Since the mid to early 1990s, there has been an influx of irregular work migrants from Moldavia to Turkey. These women work in households (child care, nursing, care for the elderly) on the informal market. The majority of these women belongs to the Christian Turkish Gagauz and speaks Turkish. Hardly any of these women have work permits, because they enter and leave the country using a tourist visa.

The official term for migrants in former Yugoslavia, particularly those who went to Germany and Austria, was “those temporarily employed in a foreign country” (“privremeno zaposleni u inostranstvu/nozemstvu”). This term was formative for both one’s status and identity. There was also a term for migrants who returned to former Yugoslavia: “returnees” (povratnici). It was used throughout the country and even in the state’s institutions. For example, returnees’ children received preferred treatment in choosing their schools.

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7 Interview with Fatih Aydogdu in “Balkan Beat” und “Vienna Sound”. In: Köchli, Patulova, Yun (Hg.): fields of transfer. MigrantInnen in der Kulturarbeit. Vienna, 2007, p. 37
Contrary to previous representations (of immigration from different countries to Austria) and in accordance with this project’s spatially expanded perspective of historical and present day forms of migration, this exhibition addresses a range of migratory spaces:

**Transit/borders:** barriers on movement and transit zones; political spaces and overcoming them; living, waiting, temporary (permanent?) establishment/struggles in between spaces.

**Contact zone:** socially, culturally and politically marked confrontations and negotiations between the dominant society and migrant practices/interests.

**Memory/history/utopia:** mental and media spaces of imagination/representation of collective experiences and expectations.

**Transnational social spaces:** economic, communicative and cultural relations between migrants and their society of origin; life practices beyond the dichotomy of here and there.

The exhibition is not meant to function as an artistic parallel narrative to the migration narratives on Central-South (Eastern) Europe on which the overall project focuses. Instead, the exhibition takes its cue from the multilateral concept of the overall project to present a geographically transgressing typological concept of spaces of migration.
5. PLANNED FORMATS

1. Traveling exhibition in Beograd, Istanbul, Vienna and Zagreb with an additional focus on local issues
2. Publication in four languages: collection of materials and (theoretical) background texts on the exhibition project, including the collected materials and documentation of “Gastarbajteri - 40 Years of Labor Migration” and the production of a migration lexicon
3. Events:
   ↘ Film series
   ↘ Lecture series at universities in Belgrade, Istanbul, Vienna and Zagreb
   ↘ Media cooperations
4. Exhibition of contemporary positions in art

6. OBJECTIVES

1. To facilitate a new form of knowledge production and historiography by interlinking the perspectives on labor migration of the (former) countries of origin with those of the immigration countries.
2. To network cultural and research institutions working on migration in Croatia, Austria, Serbia and Turkey.
3. To render accessible and institutionalize the research findings from the exhibition project “Gastarbajteri - 40 Years of Labor Migration,” embedding the knowledge in the structures of national institutions (such as museums, cultural institutions, universities and schools)
4. To change the dominant political and media discourses on migration in Croatia, Austria, Serbia and Turkey. New perspectives are to be applied to the regulations and how nation-states reproduce migration and citizenship.
7. TIMETABLE | CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT

September 2007
Contact partners
Research content
Concept development

5 - 7 October 2007
Transnational meeting in Zagreb with project partners from all countries of focus

October 2007
Fixing partner organizations and exhibition and event locations
Concept development
Timetable for project realization

November 2007
Settling budget
Concept development

December 2007
Final concept, budget and timetable
**Vida Bakondy.** Historian; research focus on migration, (post)colonialism, feminist theories, film and media studies and international development; co-author of the exhibition *Gastarbeiter. 40 Years of Labor Migration* (2004); co-director and co-producer (with Renée Winter) of the documentary film *nach österreich. Erinnerungen an Zwangsarbeit und Arbeitsmigration* [Towards Austria. Reminiscences of Forced Labor and Labor Migration] (A 2005/06); 2001-2006 free-lance work at Initiative Minderheiten; November 2006 - Mai 2007 work and research in Cameroon; PhD candidate at the Institute of Contemporary History at the University of Vienna.

**Vlatka Frketić.** Studied economics in Zagreb; currently studies linguistics and cultural studies at the University of Vienna; staff member in numerous projects, among others: Equal_1 “open up” project leader of the “Anti-racism Conference” project module, Equal_2 “work in process” anti-mobbing project module with a focus on anti-discrimination communication skills; project director for maiz (Linz) in the node research project “Civic Stratification, Gender and Family Migration Policies in Europe” in Spain; conceptualization and facilitation of seminars, for example: anti-discrimination, intercultural communication, migration etc., for Red Cross Vienna, Ludwig Boltzman Institute for Human Rights, Institut im Kontext Vienna, and various NGOs.

**gangart / Simonetta Ferfoglia, Heinrich Pichler.** gangart has expanded their performative, architectural-interventionist approach to urban spaces with a critical focus on the ambivalences of the post-war modern era in Austria to include research processes on the spatialization of socio-political actions, conceptualizing and curating exhibitions for museums and other institutions. In their expanded approach, gangart addresses issues concerning cultural and political representation, migration, performativity and design of constructed environments. Since the mid-1990s, gangart has regularly taken part in participative and community-based programs and cooperations with, i.e. teaching at, Austrian and international universities. gangart works as a team and engages in art, architecture, film and music projects.

**Vladimir Ivanović.** Since 2003, staff member at the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade; since April 2006 PhD “Vom Fremdarbeiter zum Gastarbeiter und Ausländer: jugoslawische ökonomische Emigranten in Österreich und Deutschland 1965-1973” [From ‘Foreign Worker’ to ‘Guest Worker’ and Foreigner: Yugoslavian economic emigrants in Austria and Germany 1965-1973]; currently holds a fellowship from the Austrian Ministry of Education, Art and Culture.

**Jasmina Janković.** Studied German language and literature in Belgrade and Salzburg. Lives and works as a free-lance translator and court interpreter in Vienna; translator, work and engagement in diverse projects within anti-racism and migration contexts, including the exhibition *Gastarbeiter. 40 Years of Labor Migration* at the Wien Museum and *Hidden Histories – remapping Mozart* project during the Vienna Mozart Year 2006.
Cornelia Kogoj, Studied communications; since 1998 general secretary of Initiative Minderheiten; founding member of the European Network against Racism; member of Wiener Wahl Partie activist group; co-curator (with Martina Böse und Sylvia Mattl) of the exhibition Gastarbeiter. 40 Years of Labor Migration; co-director (with Boban Stojkov and Ljubomir Bratic) of the play Liebesforschung - istraživanje ljubavi - Rodimos e kamilpesko; author of numerous publications on minorities, migration and media.


Dilman Muradoglu, Studied communications at the University of Vienna. Currently works as an interpreter at the Goethe Institute in Istanbul and as a free-lance translator; co-author of the exhibition Gastarbeiter. 40 Years of Labor Migration (2004).

Gamze Ongan, Studied marketing and management in Istanbul and theater studies in Vienna; head of research for Gastarbeiter. 40 Years of Labor Migration; since 1993, head of the board Peregrina – Counseling, Education and Therapy Center for Migrant Women, Vienna; board member of Initiative Minderheiten.

Velimir Piškorec, Since 2003, lecturer at the German Department, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb; 2004-2005 Head of the German Department, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb; head of the expert commission for German as a foreign language at the Croatian Ministry of Economics and Education; member of the editing board of the journal Strani jezici; second chief editor of the journal Suvremena lingvistika [Contemporary Linguistics].

Renée Winter, Studied history, feminist theories/gender studies, international development and Russian at the University of Vienna and Paris VII; co-author of the exhibition Gastarbeiter. 40 Years of Labor Migration; co-director and co-producer (with Vida Bakondy) of the documentary film nach österreich. Erinnerungen an Zwangsarbeit und Arbeitsmigration [Towards Austria. Reminiscences of Forced Labor and Labor Migration] (A 2005/06); lecturer at the Institute for Communications at the University of Vienna (2006); publication of the collaborative master's thesis: “Nicht alle Weißen schießen. Afikrepräsentationen im Österreich der 1950er Jahre” [Not all Whites Shoot. Representations of Africa in 1950s Austria], Innsbruck/Vienna/Bozen: Studienverlag (forthcoming, 2007). Currently research fellow and working on the project Fernsehen, Gedächtnis und Geschlecht in Österreich in den 1960er Jahren [Television, Memory and Gender in Austria in the 1960s] at the Institute of Contemporary History, University of Vienna.
For 15 years, Initiative Minderheiten has been advocating for and contributing to creating a society that acknowledges and affords equal treatment and equal rights to minorities in their individual life concepts regardless of their ethnic, social or religious affiliation, sexual orientation or dis/ability. A society can only be considered to have acknowledged minority rights if it facilitates and supports different life concepts in a fair and equal manner. Initiative Minderheiten works towards creating minority alliances.

IM defines a minority as people who experience discrimination based on their ethnic, social or religious affiliation, sexual orientation or dis/ability. Politically, discrimination means excluding certain people from certain rights; socially, it means experiencing prejudices and exclusions. In Austria, legally recognized ethnic groups are also considered minorities, as well as migrants and refugees, lesbians and gays, and people with dis/abilities. This definition is not based on a group’s number of members, but rather on their lack of power in comparison to that of the hegemonic majority.

Initiative Minderheiten edits a quarterly journal **STIMME von und für Minderheiten** [VOICE of and for Minorities] and produces the bi-monthly radio program **STIMME** that airs on several free radio stations across Austria.

### Initiative Minderheiten projects and events

- **Gastarbajteri – 40 Years of Labor Migration Exhibition** Project Wien Museum Karlsplatz and the Gürtel (main branch of the) public library in Vienna, 2004
- **Liebesforschung - istryvanje ljubavi - Rodimos e kamilpesko** Theater project in cooperation with Romani dori, dieTheater Karlsplatz, as part of the EQUAL project “work in process” 2006
- **Hidden Histories – remapping Mozart** Project coordinator, part of the Vienna Mozart Year 2006
- **Bürgerliche Freiheit gibt es nur im Rahmen von äußerer Ordnung – Roma und Sinti seit der Aufklärung** [Bougeoise freedom only exists within external order – Roma and Sinti since Enlightenment] lectures, discussions and film screenings during the exhibition project **Hidden Histories – remapping Mozart**, Bösendorfer Piano Factory, 2006
- **Mobbingprävention am Arbeitsplatz** [Mobbing Prevention on the Workplace] Workshops as part of the EQUAL project “work in process” in cooperation with Peregrina, 2005-2006
- **Antidiskriminatorische Betriebsvereinbarung** [Anti-discrimination Employment Agreement], 2004 – 2006
- **subtitle – Kulturproduktionen von Minderheiten zwischen Ethnisierung und Politik** [subtitle – minority cultural productions between ethnification and politics] Symposium, main branch of the Vienna public library, 2005
- **dezentrale medien** Project coordinator; education for migrants in new media, 2002 - 2004
- **Open Up** Project coordinator for two modules in the EQUAL project “open up,” 2002 - 2004
- **Plakatwettbewerb Kolaric lebt. Plakate gegen Fremdenfeindlichkeit und Rassismus** [Poster competition: Kolaric is alive. Posters against xenophobia and racism], 2004
- **Minderheitenbox. Das Medienpaket für den Bildungsbereich** [Minority educational packet. Media packet for educational contexts], 2000 - 2001
- **Wettbewerb klanggesetz – Vertonung des Art. 7** [Competition: sounding law – putting sound / music to Article 7], 2000
- **Internationale Sommerhochschule Minderheiten und Medien** [International summer academy for minorities and media], 1999
CREDITS

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Cooperation partners
Gangart, Wien www.gangart.org
Peregrina – Counseling Center for Migrant Women, Vienna www.peregrina.at
diskursiv – Verein zur Verqueerung gesellschaftlicher Zusammenhänge www.diskursiv.at
Rexb92, Belgrade www.rexb92.net
Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade www.msub.org.yu
Kinoteka Beograd www.kinoteka.org.yu
Koc University, Istanbul www.ku.edu.tr
Bilgi University, Istanbul http://international.bilgi.edu.tr/
Milli Reasürans Sanat galerisi, Istanbul www.millireasuranssanatgalerisi.com/english/aboutus.htm
German Department of the Faculty of Philosophy University of Zagreb
www.ffzg.hr/german/2004/index.php

Project begin
September 2007

Participating countries
Croatia, Austria, Serbia, Turkey,

Participants:
Curatorial board, Vienna
Vida Bakondy, Vlatka Frketić, gangart / Simonetta Ferfoglia, Heinrich Pichler /, Jasmina Janković,
Cornelia Kogoj, Gamze Ongan, Renée Winter

Concept and coordination, Zagreb
Velimir Piškorec

Concept and coordination, Beograd
Vladimir Ivanović

Concept and coordination, Istanbul
Dilman Muradoğlu

Art project
Christian Kravagna