

CREATIVE SOURCE

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Background

Young people in Belgrade have experienced the lack of access of up to date information in social, cultural and environmental fields, and in the field of human rights, for many years. The past two decades of political turbulences, poor economy and other problems, that all countries of Western Balkan have suffered of, have left painful traces in all segments of society. The culture, art, libraries, architecture and new cultural expressions are usually left behind or pushed away by more existential issues. Generations have grown up surrounded of despair, violence, disinformation, discrimination, misunderstanding, nationalism and segregation.

Culture and arts are fundamental tools in understanding these years from new perspectives, but also fundamental for creating and introducing a different public debate. The creativity of cultural expressions will also be important as a basis for the economical development of the future.

But the access to information about modern creative and cultural accomplishments is very limited to the Serbian youth libraries, art academies, the schools of architecture and other institutions have either very limited collections of books and other media, or offer access only to the students of those schools. The rest of the youth is left without access to information about what happens in the cultural fields in the rest of the world, and even in Serbia.

During the last couple of years several book shops offering books from these fields have opened in Belgrade, but to buy a book that costs a quarter of a monthly salary, is impossible for most young people. There is also a general lack of public spaces for discussions on culture, cultural trends in Europe, social values, or the importance of a creative industry. It is therefore very difficult for young people to access culture, and use the creativity that is inherent in all cultural discussions.

The 16th of April last year a new cultural platform opened in Belgrade, *The European Centre for Culture and Debate – Grad*, which quickly has become a gathering point for all creative forces of Belgrade. Grad is a project of Cultural Front Belgrade and it is the first successful example in the region of converting an old industrial building into a lively and active creative public space.

Grad has a rich and fast growing mailing list of 2,500 members through which it reaches a great number of young people with information on the different activities. Grad also uses a weekly newsletter, a monthly printed booklet, standard PR activities through daily newspapers, weekly and monthly magazines, TV, radio, Internet campaigns and different web portals to invite young people. The Grad Facebook group has 5,000 members in the age of 20 to 32.

Goal of the project

The main goal of the *Creative Source* project is to establish a platform for public discussions and a source of qualitative cultural information accessible for young people in Serbia, who do not have it today. Cultural events and a physical library will function as a source of creativity, and make young people participants of a cultural community that has not been open to them before.

Creative Source will help Grad to begin setting-up a creative and unique meeting point and source of knowledge and inspiration, visions and long-term creative training. The project will also involve Cultural Front's partners from the cities of Zrenjanin, Kragujevac, Pozarevac, Sarajevo, Skopje and Pristina.

Activities of the project

The project consists of two main activities. The first and most important is to create a couple of events at Grad with international guests representing different cultural fields. These events will take place in autumn 2010. The first one in connection to the Belgrade Book Fair, which will have Sweden as the main theme. This will be a great moment to promote a new cultural debate to the young people that already come to Grad. The second event will include cultural actors from other parts of Serbia and the Balkan region. The theme of the event will be discussed and decided upon in cooperation with the participants at the first event.

After these two events Grad will be an even more established and recognized public area for cultural discussions and events, and it will be easier to continue inviting cultural actors the coming years. This is one of the main activities at Grad and a crucial activity in order to reach the goals.

The second main activity is to create a library for Grad. As the established libraries in other cultural institutions of Belgrade are normally closed to the public, it will not be enough for Grad to have only cultural activities. It is also necessary to provide books on cultural topics that are not accessible for young people with cultural interests. Collecting books will be a long term commitment among the members of the Grad network in Sweden and in other countries. The books will be transported by the participants of the events and other contacts of ours traveling to Belgrade.

In order to collect books we will use our contacts in the publishing and art worlds of Sweden. We will promote the project through various activities in Stockholm and to ask for donations of books. The events will be held at the cultural project space of Designstudio S. All the contributors of books will be given a small booklet about the project as a thank you.

We will contact museums, art institutions, publishing houses, artists, designers, architects, etc and ask them to donate books they have published (in English). The collection has already started informally and one example is the artist Miriam Bäckström, who has donated more than 20 titles. Another way is to create a "wish-list" of books that should be part of a good library. Experts within each field will be asked to contribute titles to the list. Within *Creative Source* we wish to focus on books in the following fields: Human rights, Gender studies, Sustainable development, Creative communication, Architecture, Art, Video art and digital media, Graphic design and typography, Lighting design and Light art, Fashion, Street art, Film and new media. And books for children.

Time frame of the project and activities

Activity 1 (March/April 2010)

- “Creative source” Letter of Intent
- *Letters will be sent to the museums, galleries, publishing houses and other possible donors in Sweden*

Activity 2 (June 2010)

- “Creative Source” introduction / promotion evening at Designstudio S in Stockholm
- *Introducing project (guests/partners from Grad; live streaming with parallel event at Grad*
- *Realisation of the booklet “Creative Source”*

Activity 3 (May-September 2010)

- Promotion and preparation (collecting of books)
- *Preparation for the opening of the Creative Source library and the regional conference*
- *Promotion of the project in the media in Serbia*

Activity 4 (October 2010)

Opening of the “Creative Source Library” in Belgrade

This year the book fair in Belgrade has focus on Sweden and Grad will cooperate with the fair and have several literature projects.

Activity 5 (October 2010)

- Conference at Grad
- *Public discussion about accessibility of information for young people including guests from Stockholm, Belgrade, Zrenjanin, Pozarevac, Kragujevac, Skopje, Pristina and Sarajevo*

Activity 6 (December 2010)

- Evaluation of the project
- Results of the project

This project will mark the beginning of a long term cooperation between Grad and its network in Sweden and other countries. The network will be of great importance to the success of the project and the fulfilment of its main goal of creating a platform for public discussions on cultural issues for young people in Belgrade. A successful first year of cooperation will make it possible for Grad to strengthen its network and financial backing.

A realistic result of the project is that Grad within three years has become the most important point of reference for young Serbs looking for a deeper knowledge of, and participation in, the local and international cultural life. It will also become a centre where young creative people gather to find partners to cooperate with in their own cultural projects.

Partners of the project

Creative Source is a cooperative project between actors from social, cultural and environmental fields in Sweden and Cultural Front Belgrade, Serbia. The initiative for establishing “Creative Source” platform in Belgrade is a collaboration between the founders of the European Centre for Culture and Debate – Grad, Dejan Ubovic and Ljudmila Stratimirovic, and the partners in Sweden, Aleksandra Stratimirovic, Sandra Praun, Nino Strohecker, and Erik Jennische.

CREATIVE SOURCE

PRESENTATION PARTNERS

SERBIAN PARTNER:

Kulturni Front Beograd

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Kulturni Front Beograd

Dejan Ubovic

Director

The Cultural Front is an independent institution established in Belgrade in 2000. CF's programmes are based on an international exchange of programmes, co-production on the European level, treating the media as a free field for expression, commissioning and promoting young artists, advocating the rights of socially marginalised individuals and groups, constructive cooperation and debate between the civil society and power structures, and generally promoting culture as an integral part of wider social and economic development on the national and regional levels. Organisationally, CF conducts its activities through its three offices in Serbia – in Zrenjanin, Prijepolje and Belgrade.

Grad

Grad - the European Center for Culture and Debate, has emerged on the initiative of the Cultural Front Belgrade and Felix Meritis Foundation in Amsterdam. The old warehouse (built in 1884) on the bank of river Sava, in the neglected part of Belgrade, was re-designed into multifunctional space with possibilities to organize programs such as exhibitions, concerts, debates, performances, conferences, workshops etc. Thanks to support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands through the MATRA program and Belgrade community Savski Venac, Cultural Front opened GRAD in the April 2009. It is under continuous development, but already gained status as one of the most exciting and innovative cultural places in Serbia.

Festivals

Refract (a regional festival of alternative culture) is a unique festival, because for five years now its programmes have been organised simultaneously in six towns in Serbia. The basic idea behind it is "decentralisation at work," and the programmes presented are from the fields of new music, new theatre and visual arts. "The Others ..." is a festival of documentary film based on the "Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival" programme at which, in cooperation with the National Museum of Natural History (New York), anthropological films from all over the world are shown.

Theatre

The Cultural Front (CF) supports and produces performances by The Hats Theatre troupe. The latter is an independent theatre troupe from Belgrade. It has existed in various forms since 1992. Their projects are a kind of modern spectacle, based on a combination of all forms of stage and visual expression relevant today: fashion, theatre (movement), rock and roll, electronic music, video art, comics, photography...

Inter-sector cooperation

Through various projects, CF works towards establishing stronger and more concrete cooperation between the civil sector on the one hand and state (local) structures on the other. One of the examples of this is the three-year cooperation with the Special Prison Hospital and the British Embassy aimed at improving the position of the patients by helping them through occupational/work therapy, producing art programmes in

the hospital itself and a public exhibition of the patients' works. Through certain projects CF also establishes cooperation with the business sector striving towards achieving jointly set strategic goals.

Regional cooperation

A large number of CF's activities are directed towards strategic cooperation with independent institutions in South East Europe (Refract, Cross Radio, CrossMIC). On the other hand, since 2002, there has been the long-run project called "Nordic Art Scene", within which exchange programmes with five Nordic countries are being realized in the fields of art and design. CF's long-term plans are to establish pan-regional cooperation through which Balkan and Nordic cities would be bearers of a cooperation programme in Europe.

Cross Radio

Cross Radio is the biggest cultural information network in the Balkans, which has existed for six years and includes 12 radio stations and independent institutions in 12 cities. A radio show of the same name is broadcast every week by radio stations in Ljubljana (Radio Student), Belgrade (B92), Sarajevo (eFM), Skopje (Kanal 103), Zurich (LoRa), etc. So far over 1500 reviews and interviews have been done within this project.

Cross MIC

CrossMIC is the first music information centre covering Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Macedonia striving to achieve a fundamental recovery and development of the musical stage in this part of Europe. It is a web portal containing all the relevant data sorted by artists, clubs, labels, media and festivals.

Visual arts

One of the activities CF especially cherishes is participation in the production of works by and the promotion of young European photographers, graphic designers and visual artists in general, whose works are presented by CF in dozens of Serbian cities.

Fashion design

Besides individual promotions of interesting designers, a project called "Bazar Mode" (Fashion Bazaar) has been launched. It is a medley of fashion and art, where fashion is presented from the perspective of prospective young local authors who do not have too many possibilities for a break among the established fashion designers. One of the long-term ideas is for the Bazar Mode to grow into a unique artistic movement that will keep changing the venues for its presentations, accept new, young authors into its ranks and thus represent a sound branch of the Serbian fashion design.

SWEDISH PARTNERS:

Aleksandra Stratimirovic

Erik Jennische

Sandra Praun & Nino Strohecker, Designstudio S

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Lives and works in Stockholm, Sweden. Graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts and Design in Belgrade. Completed her studies in specialized lighting design at the University of Fine Arts and Crafts in Stockholm (Konstfack) and Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) in Stockholm.

- Founder and artistic director of *Belgrade of Light* festival in Belgrade, Serbia (since 2008)
- Core member of Transnational Lighting Detectives association (since 2001)
- Founder of Lighting Detectives Belgrade chapter (since 2007)
- Co-founder of *Svetlobna gverila* (Lighting Guerilla) festival, Ljubljana, Slovenia and its artistic director together with Katerina Mirovic (since 2007)

Works on various art projects in Sweden and abroad. Has realised several site-specific art projects on public places in Stockholm, such as County Administrative Court in Stockholm, Jakobsberg train station, Radiation therapy room at Karolinska Hospital.

Gives lectures at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, Lighting Laboratory, Bergs School of Communication and University of Fine Arts and Crafts (Konstfack) in Stockholm, Design Academy, Eindhoven, CAFA, Beijing. Published articles in the magazines *Ljuskultur* (Sweden) *Kvart*, *Ambijenti* (Serbia).

Since 2000 she has been involved, as cultural consultant, in many projects that promote Swedish culture in Serbia and Slovenia through collaboration with Forum Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Kulturni Front Beograd (Serbia).

In 2009 has received support from SI for the project *Shimmering*.

Currently working on:

- Lighting concept for new cultural centre Grad in Belgrade, Serbia
- Light art installation for the Heidenstamskola, Uppsala, Sweden
- Art director and main designer for Trädvästarna Atelier, Stockholm, Sweden
- Art co-director of *Lighting Guerrilla* festival, Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Art director of *Belgrade of Light* festival, Belgrade, Serbia
- Preparing exhibitions to be shown during 2010 in Sweden and abroad

Erik Jennische

1999–2006 Secretary General and project manager at the SILC foundation

(Swedish International Liberal Center) and publisher at SILC Publishing House

2006– Special political Advisor of the Vice Mayor of Culture and Sport in the City of Stockholm

Nino Strohecker

Born 1972 in Salzburg, Austria

MFA in Film/Video at the Art University in Linz, Austria 1996–2002

Lives in Stockholm, Sweden since 2001

Runs Designstudio S together with graphic designer Sandra Praun since 2001

Since 1998 showing the work in solo- and group exhibitions in Austria, Sweden, Mexico and Hungary.

Since 2002 screening the visuals work in different clubs as well as on tour with bands under the name visuals by nino s

Since 2007 successfully screening at film festivals around the world.

Cofounder of the first Swedish VJ community – VJ Union – in 2008

In 2003 Designstudio S started together with curator Tessa Praun the project ÖPPET (swedish for open) in which the studio opens up to public access showing exhibitions. The name of the project refers to both the open studio as space and to the exhibition programme. The intention is not to run a traditional art gallery but to be open for different ideas and allow a broad spectrum that includes everything from installation and photo to book releases and product design.

Awards

Best International Directorial Debut of a Short Film – Victims – NYIIFVF, New York 2009

Best International Avant-Garde Short – Victims – NYIIFVF, Los Angeles 2009

Award of Merit – Victims – The Indie Fest 2008

Honorable Mention Award Experimental – Victims – New Jersey IFF 2008

Honorable Mention Award Experimental – Victims – The Accolade Competition 2008

Best International Experimental Film – Adults Only – NYIIFVF, New York 2007

1999 Winner of the competition Landesausstellung Wels Zeit 2000 together with Alexander Wilhelm

Sandra Praun

Born 1971 in Stockholm, Sweden

RMI-Berghs 1995–97

MFA Graphic Design & Illustration, Konstfack, Stockholm 2004–06

Design assistant at Gabor Palotai Design, 1997–2001

Runs Designstudio S together with artist Nino Strohecker since 2001

Scholarships & grants

2009 IASPIS grant for international cultural exchange

2006 Freemason scholarship (Den Nordiska Första S:t Johannis Logens Jubel-Fond)

2006 Beata Brummers fond, Konstfack

2006 Interdisciplinary studies' honor scholarship, Konstfack

Exhibitions

2009 *Urban Forest*, group exhibition, Designtide, Tokyo, Japan

2009 *Urban Forest*, group exhibition, DesignEast 00, Osaka, Japan

2009 *Flower of Swords*, solo exhibition, Galerie G, Judenburg, Austria

2006 *Labyrinth*, group exhibition, Botkyrka konsthall, Stockholm

2006 *Vårutställning*, group exhibition, Konstfack, Stockholm

2005 *Life cycle*, group exhibition, Konstfack, Stockholm

2005 *Kunstabuch Buchkunst*, group exhibition, Galerie G, Judenburg, Austria

2005 *Artist's books*, group exhibition, Grafiska sällskapet, Stockholm