

Connecting  
through Culture  
About the work  
of regional  
platform  
KOOPERATIVA

# About Kooperativa

Kooperativa – Regional platform for culture was established in 2012 by 21 cultural organisations in southeast Europe. The platform has two main strands of activity. The first is to create long-term sustainable framework for the cooperation and development of independent cultural organizations in the Balkan region. The second is the development of contemporary artistic practices, critical public discourse and innovative organizational models.

## Objectives

- To create a framework for long-term sustainable cooperation and exchange among organizations in the independent cultural scene in the region
- To strengthen the organizational capacities through the transfer of knowledge and good practices
- To empower organizations to contribute to the development of cultural and relevant public policies that can positively impact the cultural sector in the region



## **Operational objectives of the platform are as follows:**

### **Short-term:**

- To develop a regional cooperation platform which will be registered as an international alliance of independent cultural organizations
- To create a heterogeneous, open and inclusive space based on the work of its member organisations activities of its members
- To support dynamic peer-to-peer relationships among member organizations

### **Long-term:**

- To encourage regional cooperation to support the cultural sector in the region
- To support cultural organizations in the region to secure financial support from international donor organizations

## **Kooperativa structure**

Kooperativa was founded by non-governmental and non-profit organizations in the Balkans region active

in the field of contemporary culture and arts. Currently Kooperativa members consist primarily of organisations from former Yugoslav countries, but in the future Kooperativa hopes to include neighbouring countries such as Albania, Greece, Romania, Austria and Italy.

Following several conferences, meetings and workshops Kooperativa was registered in 2012 in Zagreb as a regional non-governmental, non-profit organization with 21 founding cultural organizations from the region.

A delegate represents each member organization. Each organization, regardless of whether a network or a smaller local organization only has one delegate (one vote). The delegates constitute the assembly.

Kooperativa is conceived as an open structure, which allows for a continuous inclusion of new members. The membership is based on the activities of individual organizations. In order to become a full Kooperativa member the candidate organization has to demonstrate a commitment to Kooperativa's objectives either through the implementing a project within the given model of cooperation or through certain activities that contribute

photo by: Luka Knežević Strika



**Round table: Perspectives of regional cooperation, Museum of Contemporary Art, Skopje 2017**

to Kooperativa's development. The access to membership is determined by the activities of individual organizations and the same principle will be applied to retaining the membership status of existing members. Inactive organizations will be excluded from full membership. Both the founders and new member organizations have the same rights and obligations.

### **Guidelines of Kooperativa's activity and program strands:**

Kooperativa works on the development of civil society sector in culture in South East Europe through:

- The work on the development and implementation of the model of cooperation among civil society organizations active in the field of culture;
- Empowering organizations for advocating participatory governance models of shaping cultural policies, knowledge transfer and transfer of practices relating to civil-public partnership models;

- Developing and advocating sustainable support measures for the development of regional cooperation.

Kooperativa aspires positively to impact on the development of the civil society sector in the region by encouraging quality and innovative contemporary urban and critical cultural production. The aim of Kooperativa is also to encourage audiences do not have the opportunity to attend, see or participate in contemporary cultural production from neighbouring countries. Active public participation in culture contributes to building understanding between citizens in the region.

The network activities are focused on deepening the dialogue between countries in the region to foster a development model which can secure the continuity of cross-border cultural dialogue, exchange of ideas and as well as decreasing cultural tensions through various encounters such as cultural and knowledge exchange.

The implementation of contemporary critical culture is oriented towards the development of critical thinking that contributes to breaking down stereotypes between citizens in the region as well as fostering shared

photo: program archive



cultural and social ties. Kooperativa's work on empowering organizations for advocating and implementing common cultural activities in the region is oriented towards encouraging changes within cultural policies in member states as well as fostering wider social impact. Advocacy promotes the development of participatory models that shape public policies as well as a new model of governance of public cultural infrastructure.

## Programme

Main program activities implemented by Kooperativa would relate to:

- Promoting and strengthening cooperation among independent cultural organizations from the region
- Building organizational capacities particularly through advocating through exchanged in knowledge and good practices
- Active work on shaping, advocating and promoting sustainable institutional models of support to cooperation in the region.

These activities represent a key step towards securing a long-term sustainable framework for the cooperation and development of the independent cultural scene in the region. They encompass encounters of independent cultural organizations in different countries in the region with the purpose of creating new partnerships, strengthening existing relationships and building mutual sharing of information and experiences. At the same time, Kooperativa's activities include actions directed toward improving cultural policy framework and are oriented toward relevant stakeholders within cultural systems of the countries in the region, but also internationally. By organizing various public events focused on cultural policies, the Kooperativa will commence a dialogue with various organizations working on these issues relevant for the development of cultural cooperation in the region. Kooperativa will also create opportunities for multi-sectorial approach in conceiving and implementing innovative cultural policy measures for long-term cooperation among independent cultural organizations in the region, as well as the cooperation with partners from the rest of Europe.

photo by: Damir Zizic



Conference Regional Cooperation in Perspective, Zagreb 2014

# Advocacy, networking and empowering

This program strand is divided into three groups of activities:

- 1) RegLab – Regional action cultural laboratory offers an innovative, dynamic and flexible approach in providing support and empowering organizations. It is conceived with the aim of the supporting partnerships, providing advocacy support as well as knowledge and good practice exchange.
- 2) Empowering the cooperation of networks in the region – the Kooperativa actively advocates strengthening the capacities of independent cultural organizations in the region and contributing to their organizational development and strengthening their capacity to undertake advocacy work.
- 3) Developing support measures for cultural cooperation on the regional level – Kooperativa advocates systemic support for the development of cultural cooperation in the region by means of establishing sustainable institutional framework for regional cooperation in culture in whose founding and functioning should be involved and participate cultural policy institutions from all countries in the region as well as other relevant institutional partners.





photo: program archive



**Regional Workshop Recycling of good ideas from unfulfilled regulations and strategies in South Eastern Europe, Ljubljana, 2014**

About the work of regional platform Kooperativa



photo: program archive

**Conference at REX, Belgrade 2013**

# A pilot program of exchange and cooperation in the region

The program exchange and cooperation among independent cultural organizations in the region is oriented towards strengthening cultural cooperation of independent cultural organizations. Kooperativa members and their partner organizations will participate in the program and all the programs will be implemented according to the following principle: At least three partners – from three countries from South East Europe. The program is organized by at least three organizations from the region (and beyond) active in the fields of visual arts, contemporary dance, archiving practices, audience development, research of working conditions of cultural workers, activism and public good. .

The pilot program of exchange and cooperation is based on direct and continuous cooperation of the organizations included in the platform through organization of numerous quality and innovative contents of independent culture in different cities and towns in the region. The foundations of the programme implementation are based on the intensive engagement of organizations involved in the work of Kooperativa and common decision-making in choosing the contents to be realized through the Programme through participation of all members in the evaluation and selection process.

In meetings and consultations Kooperativa members set out the principles, operational elements, time frame and other key elements of the implementation of the pilot program including the number and geographical spread of the partners involved in the implementation of individual program lines, typology of activities and types of costs appropriate to be implemented through the pilot programme. Important elements of the Pilot program's implementation are guidelines for the selection of program lines implemented through the Kooperativa. The guidelines were decided by all Kooperativa members in a joint process of evaluation and voting following the call for proposing program



lines within the Pilot program that was open to members and other partner organizations from the region.

The implementation of the Pilot program of exchange and cooperation represents a significant success of Kooperativa because it results from years of advocating and creating conditions for establishing this type of program in the region.

## **Results and effects**

Pilot program of exchange and cooperation was implemented from February 2016 to May 2017.

The first pilot program of exchange and cooperation began to be implemented in February 2016 and finished in May 2017. In the program during 2016 almost 230 artists and performers participated in 13 cities and 8 countries involving more than 40 civil society organizations. The programme activities that Kooperativa implemented with its member organizations resulted in the following number of people been reached:

- Total number of direct users: 5421
- Total number of indirect users: 212846

During the implementation of the pilot program of exchange and cooperation in the region there were in total:

- 10 exhibitions
- 10 public performances
- 12 public events
- 11 workshops
- 2 theatre performances

There were produced:

- 10 interviews
- 1 publication
- 3 research papers

The number of events the pilot programme was able to put on along with the huge networking of artists over a large geographical area demonstrates the extraordinary potential of long-term development of the cultural sector in the region. The program implementation also strengthened cooperation among organizations in the region and prompted the conception of new cultural initiatives in the region. This model showed the potential that strengthening cultural organizations through the knowledge and exchange cultural exchange could deliver. This pilot demonstrated that the long-term sustainability of cultural organizations in the region could best be strengthened by means of cooperation across the region.

The program's decentralization aspect, the engagement of several countries in the program implementation as well as the openness of programmatic segments indicated the significance of the availability of diverse cultural and artistic contents, particularly in smaller towns, along with the crucial role of culture as a factor of sensitization and socialization of the public and the contribution to doing away with stereotypes and promoting critical thinking.

Furthermore this pilot showed the importance of creating space for dialogue amongst organisations in the cultural sector in region as well as the need for creating spaces for these organizations to engage on the European and international level.

The program contributes to the development of new models of inclusion and governance of resources, which represents a significant breakthrough, but also to capacitating participants for considering other approaches to governance of common goods, participative budgeting, development of new institutional formats and long-term development of the society as a whole.

## Implemented programs

### 1.

#### **City Spaces – Spaces for Citizens // Gradski prostori – prostori za građane**

**PARTNERS:** Expeditio (ME), Mikro Art – Ministry of Space (RS); Alliance Operation City (RH); IPoP – Institute for Spatial Policies (SL)

City Spaces – Spaces for Citizens is a program that deals with the issue of using public spaces potentials in relation to the real needs of the local community, and addresses the question: „How can independent cultural actors be better involved in decision-making processes relating to governance of public spaces. The goal of this program line is to improve the participation of the representatives of independent culture in decision-making processes in smaller local communities such as Herceg Novi, Tivat, and Kotor. Implemented activities comprise: 1) Workshop PUBLIC GOODS – CITIZENS’ SPACES and 2) Study visit to Zagreb and Split of Montenegrins independent cultural actors.

### 2.

#### **Poetics of Radical Publishing // Poetike radikalnog izdavaštva**

**PARTNERS:** Kontrapunkt (MK), Multimedia Institute (RH); New Media Center\_kuda.org (RS)

Poetics of Radical Publishing” is a collaborative project of Kontrapunkt, Multimedia Institute and Kuda.org focused on their publishing activities. In their approach to publishing the partners diverge equally from the culture produced by the market and the culture produced by the national state agendas, which limit the autonomy of critical and creative thought and action. Books supplement primary cultural, research and activist programs of the partners and create intellectual milieu at a distance from the official culture and cultural policy aiming at new forms of book publishing. Here lies the poetics of radical publishing. The activities were organized in such a way that Zagreb partner curated an event in Skopje, the Skopje partner curated the event in Novi Sad and the Novi Sad partner curated the event in Zagreb.



**Mesna zajednica: mesto ili zajednica?, Dobrica Veselinović, Mikro art, Belgrade, 2017 (publication cover page)**

The activities were organized in three ways:

### 1. Round table:

The round table drew on the 2015 publication by Multimedia Institute of Franco Moretti's "Bourgeois" in Croatian translation. The discussion attempted to clarify the terms citizen and bourgeoisie from the political and theoretical perspectives and then discuss how these terms refract through post-socialist circumstances of our societies.

### 2. Reading groups:

Reading groups aims at introducing participants to the works of authors published by the partner organisations. The participants receive a book in advance and then it is introduced by one of the participants and followed by a group discussion.

### 3. Speed presentations

In speed presentations, participants presented up to three of their favorite books published in their countries. They have five minutes to present each book and elaborate why they consider it an example of radical publishing. The objective of the program is to introduce publications from other post-Yugoslav countries to the local audience.

## 3.

### Extravagant Bodies – Crime and Punishment // Ekstravagantna tijela – Zločin i kazna

PARTNERS: Kiosk (RS), Kontejner (RH), Kontrapunkt (MK)

Extravagant Bodies – Crime and Punishment is a cooperation program dedicated to artistic and critical questioning of social, legal, scientific and ideological construct of criminality and social norms which separate punitive from non-punitive behaviour. The program analysed the ideological premise which lies behind social and legal regulation of crime/criminality.

During the program implementation a series of exhibitions and performances took place in Belgrade and Zagreb along with the symposium in Skopje. The majority of activities in Belgrade and Zagreb took place during November 2016. The exhibition in Zagreb was held in Pogon Jedinstvo from November 18 to 25, while in Belgrade it was in Dom omladine from November 20 to 21, 2016.

The Zagreb exhibition showed many video works, installations, interdisciplinary

About the work of regional Platform Kooperativa

photo by: Milica Mladenović



Poetics of Radical Publishing, Omladinski centar CK13, 2016

projects and photographs of local, regional and international artists.

**ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN ZAGREB:** Ana Adamović (RS); ApsArt (RS); Art Lab (HR); Milijana Babić (HR); Michael Benson (US); Critical Art Ensemble (US); Zatvorsko pesničenje predstavlja: Igor Čoko i Maestral (RS); Richard DeDomenici (UK); Vladimir Dodig Trokut (HR); Vitar Drinković (HR); Karen Finley (US); Amela Frankl (HR); Igor Grubić (HR); Skribonauti (HR); Lynn Hershman Leeson (US); Josip Pino Ivančić (HR); Siniša Labrović (HR); Gordana Lebović (RS); Isidora Spasić (RS); Marko Marković (HR); Novi kolektivizam (SI); Ivan Petrović (RS); Stahl Stenslie (NO); Saša Tkačenko (RS); Zoran Todorović (RS); Ulješure (HR); UBERMORGEN (AT/CH); Sonja Vuk (HR); Zhu Yu (CN).

**ARTISTS PARTICIPATING IN BELGRADE:** Karen Finley (US); Stahl Stenslie (NO); Richard DeDomenici (UK); DADA Jihad kolektiv: Mario Kovač i Nikša Marinović (HR); Siniša Labrović (HR); Božidar Katić (HR); Omen Teatar (RS); Zatvorsko Pesničenje predstavlja: Đorđe Vasiljević (RS); Branko Milisković

(RS); Marta Jovanović (RS); Heartefact (RS); Marko Marković (HR); Josip Pino Ivančić (HR); Critical Art Ensemble (US); Lynn Hershman Leeson (US); kustoski tim Stevan Vuković and Simona Ognjanović (RS).

The program in Belgrade was organized in the form of a series of public events, conversations, discussions, performances, theatre performances and screenings.

**THE SYMPOSIUM IN SKOPJE TOOK PLACE IN APRIL 2017 AND THE PARTICIPANTS WERE:** Ljubomir Danailov Frčkoski, Jelisaveta Blogojević, Anastas Vangeli, Elizabeta Šeleva, Robert Alagjozovski, Žarko Trajanoski, Irena Cvetković, Viki Mladenova and Slavčo Dimitrov.

## 4.

### Archive as Practice // Arhiv kao praksa

**PARTNERS:** SEE.cult.org (RS), Kurziv (RH), Kulturtreger (RH), SCCA – Ljubljana (SLO), Qendra Multimedia (KOS)

This cooperation program dealt with researching connections between independent culture and contemporary



artistic productions by using diverse archiving practices. After more than two decades, independent culture in the region has produced a significant body of knowledge and practices and has launched numerous artists who were later recognized by the “official culture”. The archive is closely connected to both artistic curation and radical inclusion and democratization and that is why it represents an intersection of institutional museum/archival practice and community archival practice.

Within this program there were interviews with artists and leaders of the independent cultural scene in the region (Marijana Cvetković, Nika Radić, Željko Badurina, Vlasta Delimar, Saša Nabergoj, David Maljković, Nicole Hewitt, Sašo Dodoski, Jeton Neziraj); materials in the Center for Documenting Independent Culture (Kulturni treger) were digitized and workshops on digitization of archival materials were organized and an exhibition was held in Ljubljana (Učinak blizine/ Proximity Effect); three round tables on archiving of independent artistic production were organized.

The program was implemented in Belgrade, Zagreb, Pristina and Skopje. All partners participated in various ways in

the promotion of the project by publishing information on the production and public conversations on their websites as well as on social networks and via mailing lists. The information on the project was published in Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian, Albanian and English.

## 5.

### **Nomad Dance Institute (Programme of Nomad Dance Academy) // Plesni institut Nomad (Program Nomad plesne akademije)**

**PARTNERS:** Lokomotiva (MK), Nomad Dance Academy (SLO), Tala (RH), Station – Service for Contemporary Dance (RS), Nomad Dance Academy (BG)

This program was focused on the presentation of new ideas both on the theoretical and practical level. Conceiving new ideas was connected to contemporary dance: work methodology, learning processes, research frameworks and the like. Nomad Dance Institute dealt with processes of creating performance, curating, teaching, and collaborative learning and archiving.

photo: archive of SCCA



Proximity Effect, exhibition, Ljubljana, 2016

The following activities were implemented: strategic thinking of the dance institute within the framework, a performance titled B-mapping at REPETITION/S: Performance and Philosophy in Ljubljana and an experiential co-learning workshop SITUATIONS in Skopje.

## 6.

### **Corners Balkans // Corners Balkan**

**PARTNERS:** Exodos Ljubljana (SLO), The Other Sea (RH), Fond B92/Rex (RS); **POGON** – Zagreb Center for independent Culture and Youth (RH)

Project Corners Balkan was implemented in three cities: Zagreb, Rijeka and Vranje, RS. CORNERS is a platform for artists that is shaped and initiated by organizations from the edge of Europe. CORNERS creates possibilities for artists and researchers to cooperate on international multidisciplinary artistic projects. It is dedicated to the research of borderline territories of Europe, spaces located outside of cultural, political and social centers. It attempts to connect distant places and cities through art and, to collect

stories and transfer them from one place to another.

CORNERS provides artists and researchers with an opportunity to produce multidisciplinary artistic projects. It makes possible exchange beyond geographic, political and economic divisions. During the program implementation from April to May 2016, there were many organized public events, performances, film screenings, exhibitions, public conversations and workshops. The program users were citizens ranging from elementary and secondary school children to the elderly and members of various communities. The events took place in schools (elementary school Vranje, Zamet), in the open air, (Zamet, Hradecki bridge in Ljubljana) and through public presentations and production spaces such as Jedinstvo on the Sava bank in Zagreb. The program implementation involved more than 30 artists from across Europe and about 15 representatives of civil society organizations from Croatia, Serbia and Slovenia.



## 7.

### **From Diaspora to Diversities // Od dijaspore do različitosti**

**PARTNERS:** Remont (RS), NGO Esperanza (MK), Institute for Contemporary Art (RH), KunstOst (AT)

The program dealt with the redefinition of the term diaspora in wider contemporary contexts of globalization, mobility, cultural nomadism and other types of experiences of temporary and permanent relocations from the original context. It also dealt with the significance of cultural differences as well as the problems of integration in new social circumstances. The program was implemented from February to December 2016. It consisted of 5 exhibitions, 2 workshops and meetings of project and curatorial teams. The exhibitions presented artists and artworks that problematize life and work in diaspora, each exhibition focusing on a different aspect of the problem.

Workshops were conducted by artists Nada Prlja and Johanna Marcade-Mot. They dealt with the experiences of production outside their main country of work, and with the question of migrations on social

and political level. The program was organized in Belgrade, Zagreb and Skopje. As a part of the project a publication with expert and theoretical texts by 13 authors from Europe and Balkan countries was published.

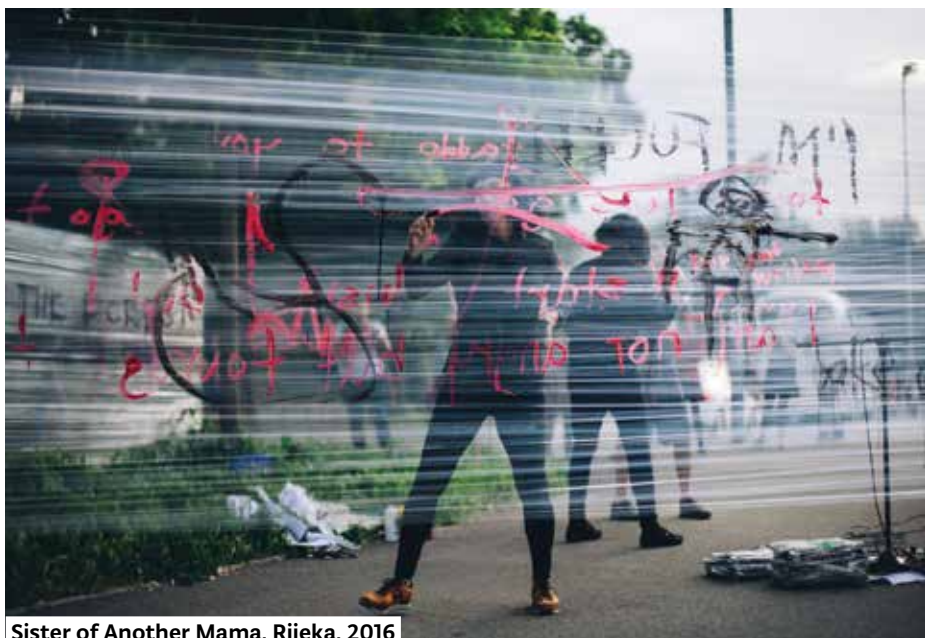
## 8.

### **The Socio-economic Status and the Lifestyle/Workstyle of the Employed/ Engaged in the Civic Cultural Sector of SEE // Socio-ekonomski status i životni/radni stil zaposlenih/angažiranih u civilnom društvu u kulturi u Jugoistočnoj Europi**

**PARTNERS:** Asocijacija NKSS (RS), Asocijacija (SI), Expeditio (CG), Crvena (BiH), Centre for Research and Gender Policy (KOS), Contemporary Art Centre – CAC (MK)

The program was based on the need for encompassing research which provides insight into working conditions in cultural civil society organizations in South East Europe. The goal of the research was to collect data on working conditions on the independent cultural scene in the region

photo by: Tanja Kanazic



**Sister of Another Mama, Rijeka, 2016**



Vahida Ramujkić, No Title #1, installation view, exhibition From Diaspora to Diversities, Remont Gallery, Belgrade, 2016



16 Future read in Concrete and Stone, Skopje, 2016





## 10.

### **Audience is Looking at You // Publika te gleda**

**PARTNERS:** MKC Bitola (MK), OKC Abrašević (BiH), Asocijacija NKSS (RS)

contemporary theatrical experience. The concept of the performance was created by Bojan Đorđev in cooperation with Selma Banić, Fernando Belfiore, Siniša Ilić, Damjan Kecojević, Ola Maciejewska, Katarina Popović and Manolisa Tsipos.

Also, artists Filip Jovanovski and Ivana Vaseva did a research in Tetovo, in the Museum of the Establishment of the Communist Party of Macedonia. The research is a phase of the exhibition "And from the darkness noise arose, bad mouth agape death". The research comprised several levels. Starting from the fact that Museum of Victims of the Communist Regime was opened in 2011, while at the same time in Tetovo there is a memorial house commemorating the establishment of the Communist Party, artist Filip Jovanovski compiled everyday hate speech which revolves around the meaning of the word "communist" in Macedonia and based on this compilation produced an artwork.

Finally, artist Ivana Dragšić researched Macedonian poetry written by the participants of the antifascist struggle, particularly focusing on Macedonian poet and partisan Aco Karamanov.

Audience is Looking at You is a program that encouraged cooperation among cultural youth centers, sharing practices and experiences on audience development. The activities focused on exchange of know-how on building relationships between artistic and cultural organizations on the one hand and audience on the other.

The program consisted of three national round tables on the topic of audience development (Belgrade, Mostar, Zagreb) and a regional working meeting with experts. The result of the program was the publication with minutes of the round table discussions, conclusions and recommendations for further steps in audience development.



# 11.

## Building Common Platform for Balkan Arts and Business Forum // Izgradnja zajedničke platforme za Balkanski umjetnički i poslovni forum

**PARTNERS:** Asocijacija (SLO), Center for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe (RS), JADRO (MK), Crvena (BiH)

This program was based on the research on new models of sustainability of independent cultural organizations. It's aimed at opening the space for cooperation between organizations and the business sector. The project consisted of conducting a study of the existing good practices of cooperation among the business and cultural sectors. The study covers the Western Balkans and the results are turned into an interactive internet platform that presents the collected data and analyses.



## Platform members

1. Youth Cultural Centre Abrašević, Mostar
2. Association for Culture and Art – CRVENA, Sarajevo
3. Multimedia Institute MI2, Zagreb
4. The Other Sea, Rijeka
5. Clubture network, Zagreb
6. DokuFest, Prizren
7. Kontrapunkt, Skopje
8. Lokomotiva – Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture, Skopje
9. Media Artes, Ohrid
10. Freedom Square, Skopje
11. Youth Cultural Center – Bitola, Bitola
12. Expeditio – Center for Sustainable Spatial Development, Kotor
13. KIOSK – Platform for contemporary art, Belgrade
14. Remont – Independent Artistic Association, Belgrade
15. FUND B92, Belgrade
16. Association of Independent Cultural Scene of Serbia, Belgrade
17. The Pekinjah Association, Ljubljana
18. Asocijacija, Association of Arts and Culture NGOs and Freelancers, Ljubljana
19. Exodos, Ljubljana
20. JADRO – Association of the independent culture scene, Skopje
21. SEECult.org, Belgrade
22. Kurziv – Platform for Matters of Culture, Media and Society, Zagreb
23. Center for Empirical Cultural Studies of South-East Europe, Niš
24. Lumbardhi Foundation, Prizren
25. Alliance Operation City, Zagreb
26. Creative Syndicate, Zagreb
27. Kulturtreger – Association for Culture Development, Zagreb
28. Ministry of Space, Belgrade
29. Station – Service for Contemporary Dance, Belgrade
30. New Media Center\_kuda.org, Novi Sad
31. United Artists Labour, Belgrade
32. Contemporary Art Center – Skopje, Skopje
33. AKCIJA, Sarajevo
34. Nomad Dance Academy Slovenia, Ljubljana

More information on KOOPERATIVA at:

<http://platforma-kooperativa.org>

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