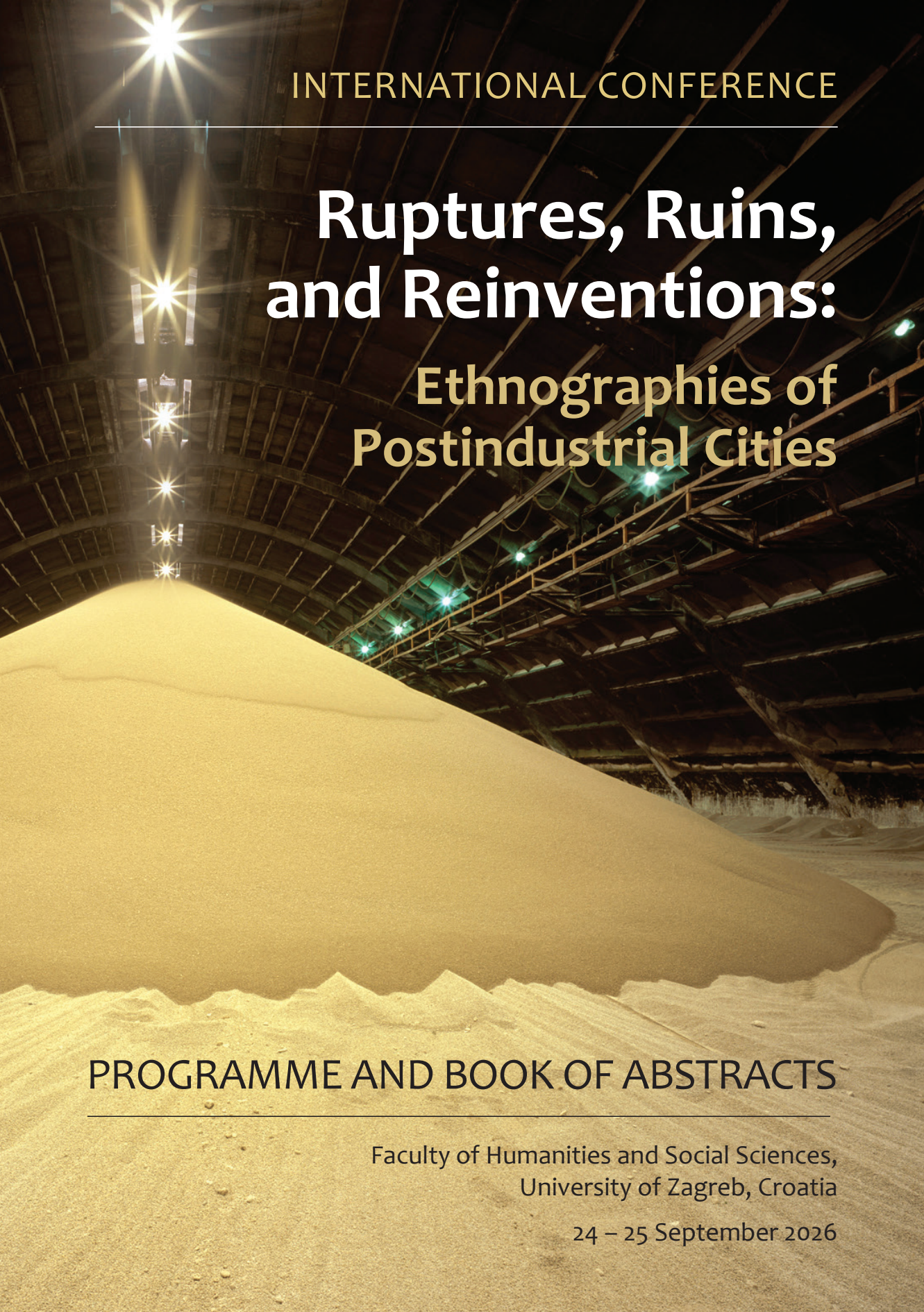




INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Ruptures, Ruins, and Reinventions:

Ethnographies of Postindustrial Cities

PROGRAMME AND BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences,
University of Zagreb, Croatia

24 – 25 September 2026

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Ruptures, Ruins, and Reinventions: Ethnographies of Postindustrial Cities

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, Ivana Lučića 3,
Zagreb, Croatia
24 – 25 September 2026

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This conference is organised as a part of the project *The Transformation of the Postindustrial City: Space, Community, and Work* (IP-2022-10-2473), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation.

The conference is partially funded by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb.

Ruptures, Ruins, and Reinventions: Ethnographies of Postindustrial Cities

Deindustrialisation is among the most consequential processes reshaping cities across Europe and beyond. It does not merely reconfigure urban economies — it unsettles landscapes and timescapes, transforms labour, and leaves behind spaces that defy straightforward reinvention. At the same time, deindustrialisation does not only dissolve communities, it also opens spaces for new ones to emerge. In the Croatian context, these processes intersect with the afterlives of war and rapid privatisation. More broadly, across postsocialist settings, they are entangled with political-economic transition — producing trajectories of social change that are at once locally specific and globally resonant.

The conference “Ruptures, Ruins, and Reinventions: Ethnographies of Postindustrial Cities” builds on the research project *The Transformation of the Postindustrial City: Space, Community, and Work*, funded by the Croatian Science Foundation. The project aims to stimulate academic and professional debates about the experiences of life, work, and space in the deindustrialised city.

The conference engages with postindustrial transformation through three analytical concepts that structure its thematic focus. Ruptures point to cracks in society: conflicts, resistances, inertia, and exclusion caused by postindustrial transformation. The concept of ruins captures the long-term processes in which former industrial sites fall into disuse and decay — the layered traces of abandonment that mark both urban space and the communities once cohered around industrial life. Finally, reinventions trace the multiple and often contested ways in which deindustrialised spaces are transformed — from top-down development strategies and market-driven projects, through city development policies and urban planning initiatives, to the collective and everyday practices by which residents, activists, and communities stake their claims to former industrial landscapes.

The conference seeks to open broader conversations about postindustrial urban futures and about how former industrial spaces might be reinvented in ways that respond to the needs and desires of those who engage with them. We invite reflections on how people live with, through, and against deindustrialisation, and on the methodological and analytical possibilities that ethnographic inquiry brings to these debates — including questions of how to research processes of urban transformation. We welcome papers that engage with postindustrial dynamics across different scales — from everyday micro-practices to transnational entanglements — and across diverse urban contexts, while fostering dialogue between case studies, methodological approaches, and theoretical frameworks.

RUPTURES, RUINS, AND REINVENTIONS: ETHNOGRAPHIES OF POSTINDUSTRIAL CITIES

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb
Council Hall, 24–25 September

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

24 September 2026

- 9:00-9:30 ■ **MEET & GREET**
- 9:30-10:00 ■ **CONFERENCE OPENING**
- 10:00-11:00 ■ **KEYNOTE LECTURE by Felix Ringel:** Between Endurance and Entropy: Reflections on the Actually Existing Postindustrial City
Moderator: Nevena Škrbić Alempijević
- 11:00-11:15 ■ **COFFEE BREAK**
- 11:15-12:45 ■ **PANEL SESSION: Transition, Dispossession, and Violence of the Post**
Moderator: Martina Jakovčić
- Nina Vodopivec:** Beyond the Postindustrial: Deindustrialisation and the Politics of Transition
- Danko Simić and Sanja Potkonjak:** "It's Not Over till It's Over!": Post-Industrial Struggles in Sisak
- Katharina Eisch-Angus:** The Mill across the River – Suburban Criminalisation Narratives in Contexts of De-Industrialisation, Immigration, and Neoliberal Urbicide
- 12:45-14:15 ■ **LUNCH BREAK**
- 14:15-15:45 ■ **ART SESSION**
Moderator: Lea Biličić
Photographing Societal Transformations: Artist Talk with Photographer **Bojan Mrđenović**
- 16:00-17:30 ■ **ART SESSION**
Moderator: Kristina Vugdelija
- Goran Dević:** From the Steelworks to Germany: Screening of Buffet Željezara and Q&A with the Director

25 September 2026

- 9:30-11:00 ■ **PANEL SESSION: Industrial Heritage, Knowledge, and Memory**
Moderator: Petra Kelemen
- Tihana Petrović Leš and Andrea Klobučar:** Work and Everyday Life of Dimička in the Period from 1961 to 1975
- Andrea Matošević:** Beyond Repair: Ethnographies of Shipbuilding Knowledge
- Kristina Vugdelija:** Memory, Community, and Continuity: Reinventing Tradition in Buzin's Postindustrial Superperiphery
- 11:00-11:15 ■ **COFFEE BREAK**
- 11:15-12:45 ■ **PANEL SESSION: Reuse, Reinvention, and Emergent Communities**
Moderator: Nina Vodopivec
- Lea Biličić:** Reinventing the Future: Negotiating Postindustrial Futures at Zagreb's Paromlin
- Iva Grubiša:** *The Concept is Under Construction:* What is Intercultural in The Intercultural Social Centre Trnje?
- Nevena Škrbić Alempijević, Petra Kelemen and Sanja Potkonjak:** Recognising, Transgressing, and Emerging: Ruins, Communities, and Agency in the Former Sljeme Meat Industry in Zagreb
- 12:45-14:00 ■ **LUNCH BREAK**
- 14:00-15:30 ■ **PANEL SESSION: Infrastructure, Suspension, and Unfinished City**
Moderator: Iva Grubiša
- Antun Sevšek:** Towards an Inventory of Development Tropes for Gredelj
- Goran Arčabić:** In Search of the Post-Industrial Identity of Zagreb's "Western Periphery"
- Martina Jakovčić and Tomislav Josip Mlinarić:** Beyond the Factory Ruins: Military Infrastructure and Postindustrial Transformation in Zagreb, Example of Campus Borongaj
- 15:30-15:45 ■ **COFFEE BREAK**
- 15:45-17:15 ■ **KEYNOTE LECTURE by Maruška Svašek:** After Radical Rupture: Sensorial Walking Through 21st Century Hiroshima
Moderator: Sanja Potkonjak
- 17:15-17:30 ■ **CLOSING REMARKS**

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Zagreb, September 2026

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Between Endurance and Entropy: Reflections on the Actually Existing Postindustrial City

The idea of the postindustrial city, like all post-cities, is based on certain metaphysics: sociomaterial remnants of the past, which is currently being proceeded (industrialism), are either imagined as something that endures or as something that is in the process of disintegration — sometimes, perhaps, even in equal measures. However, making this metaphysics explicit is crucial to understanding how inhabitants of those cities relate to the material and immaterial inheritance of a time declared to be gone by. Are the remnants of the past believed to be actively disturbing the present, hindering or, indeed, allowing new futures to emerge? Or are these postindustrial ruins simply a matter — no pun intended — of decay, whose further decomposition needs to be stopped, sped up or reversed, depending on the demands of the postindustrial present and future? This talk scrutinises these pre-theoretical commitments in order to explore what it actually is that we refer to as the postindustrial city. Different definitions of the postindustrial era have laid contrasting emphases on the term's prefix: is the era of industrialism really over (as in: actually "post") or is the current present "post" because it can only ever be read in relation to the past it deems to have left behind, thereby continuing the existence of this past? Indeed, shouldn't an actually existing era of postindustrialism be called something different to show that these times are something in their own right? With ethnographic examples from Europe and Africa, this paper advances a more focused analytical framework of the postindustrial city in order to more carefully distinguish what we — as analysts and inhabitants of these cities — mean when we navigate specific urban pasts, presents and futures in relation to one another and to the politics of today. Importantly, these attributions to what is seen as remaining from the past are not the outcomes of innocent temporal operations; they are steeped in politics that are both divisive and concerned about which futures contemporary forms of capitalisms allow us to aspire to.

Felix Ringel is an Associate Professor in Social Anthropology at Durham University. He has conducted long-term ethnographic research in various declining postindustrial cities in Europe and Africa. His work on time, the future, and urban sustainability has been published, for example, in *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, *Critique of Anthropology*, *Anthropological Theory* and *Social Analysis*. He is the author of *Back to the Postindustrial Future: An Ethnography of Germany's Fastest-Shrinking City* and the coeditor of The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology's special issue on "*Time-Tricking: Reconsidering Temporal Agency in Troubled Times*". He is currently involved in research in England's postindustrial North East. He is also co-investigator of an interdisciplinary EPSRC programme grant on Electric Composites, EleComp, where he is leading a work package on responsible innovation and sustainable futures.

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After Radical Rupture: Sensorial Walking Through 21st Century Hiroshima

The destruction of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 is arguably the most radical example of urban devastation in global history. One of the few buildings that remained standing after the deadly attack was the Atomic Bomb Dome, a preserved ruin that has played an important role in Japan's heritage politics, which offers a nationalist historiographic vision to survivors, their offspring, and international tourists. Today, it is part of a wider mnemonic landscape of memorials, museums, surviving trees, plaques, and other items that function as powerful reminders of the tragic event and its horrific aftermath.

On Monday 16 February 2026, five anthropology lecturers (Makoto Nishi, Yoko Taguchi, Halina Suwalowska and Maruška Svašek) and one anthropology student (Qianyu Zhou) met at the Dome, which was the starting point of a multisensorial walk through the rebuilt city. The route led past a sports stadium, a housing development, a park, and continued up a nearby hill to a Buddhist stupa and a feminist centre. On their way, the participants engaged in five creative tasks, including drawing, storytelling, sonic exploration, and poetry writing. Avoiding a limiting dark tourism perspective, they purposefully experimented with "stretched ethnography" (Svašek forthcoming) and encountered evidence of political visions, social divisions, and alternative reinventions and counternarratives. The talk reveals multiple ways in which local government and community groups have attempted to transform the city, and discusses the impact of (1) the chosen route, (2) the walking method, and (3) the set tasks on the participants' perception of twenty-first century Hiroshima.

Maruška Svašek is a Professor of Anthropology at Queens University Belfast, co-Director of the *Centre for Creative Ethnography*, and Fellow of the Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice. Her research focuses on the affective relationality of humans, artefacts, and spaces in an era of connectivity and environmental change. In the past decade, she has experimented with non-textual forms of representation, which has resulted in installations, poetry, paintings, a play, and short experimental films. Her publications include *Ethnographies of Movement, Sociality and Space: Place-Making in the New Northern Ireland* (2018, with Milena Komarova), *Creativity in Transition: Politics and Aesthetics of Cultural Production Across the Globe* (2016, with Birgit Meyer), *Emotions and Human Mobility: Ethnographies of Movement* (2012), *Moving Subjects, Moving Objects: Transnationalism, Cultural Production and Emotions* (2012), *Anthropology, Art and Cultural Production* (2007), *Postsocialism: Politics and Emotions in Central and Eastern Europe* (2006) and *Mixed Emotions: Anthropological Studies of Feelings* (2005, with Kay Milton).

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Beyond the Postindustrial: Deindustrialisation and the Politics of Transition

The postindustrial promises a break with the past through the language of transformation, urban reinvention, and new futures. Drawing on long-term ethnographic research, I explore three metanarratives of social change through workers' experiences of deindustrialisation in Slovenia: postsocialist transition, the postindustrial, and the just transition to a post-carbon future. I argue that these metanarratives became intertwined in ways that shift attention away from the politics of privatisation, dispossession, changing class relations, and the declining political significance of (industrial) labour, reframing them as features of postindustrial transformation.

The paper brings together two ethnographic cases with different industrial histories: the textile industry and the former coal-mining region of Zasavje, now included in the Just Transition Mechanism. Although the studied cases occupied different social and political positions within Slovenia's industrial and deindustrialising landscape, they both reveal deindustrialisation as an ongoing process with long-lasting impacts on communities. The postindustrial does not mark the end of deindustrialisation, nor the end of industry. Instead, postindustrial landscapes emerge through the coexistence of deindustrialisation, industrial restructuring, remediation, and competing visions of development and the future.

Workers' experiences reveal what these metanarratives tend to silence: the uneven distribution of costs, the persistence of dispossession, and the slow accumulation of structural violence across bodies, communities, and places. Rather than confirming narratives of rupture and new beginnings, they show how dispossession persists across successive transitions.

Nina Vodopivec (PhD in Social Anthropology) is a research associate at the Institute of Contemporary History. Based on memory and post-socialist studies, she explored industrial workers' memories of socialism, their experiences of post-socialist transformation, and further economic restructuring in Slovenia. Her research on deindustrialisation over the last 20 years has been driven by its invisibility and misrepresentation in the public, academia, and politics. She focuses on gender, labour, the body, political-economic aspects, affect and embodiment, the intertwining of temporalities; past, present, and future, and on experiences and representations of both the past and visions of the future.

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“It’s Not Over till It’s Over!”: Post-Industrial Struggles in Sisak

The post-industrial futures of Sisak are currently being disrupted by a proposed large-scale greenfield and brownfield foreign direct investment: a vertically integrated chicken factory complex encompassing hatcheries, broiler farming, transport and logistics, feed production, slaughtering, and processing. This project stands to transform the socio-ecology of the city and its surrounding region. Similar investments are currently underway – at various stages from proposal to completion – in four Croatian counties.

In this contribution, we argue that the proposed project cannot be understood as a single, one-time event. Through heavy industry, waste industry, war legacies, and natural catastrophe, various “posts” have sedimented in Sisak. This reflects a continuity of capitalist and systemic violence that, through a surplus logic, renders people and land disposable, delegitimises local knowledge, and disregards local agency.

We begin by situating and historicising the currently proposed chicken factory complex, drawing on collaborative, multi-sited research funded by the European Union’s Recovery and Resilience Facility – NextGenerationEU, within the framework of the research project “Postscapes – Time, Space and Communities” at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb – research that has followed the projects as a moving target, attentive throughout to our own shifting positionality within the field. We then turn to how resistance arises through the lived experience of the “post-city,” represented by a wide alliance of civil initiatives and non-governmental organisations, focusing on their knowledge production, strategies, and activities. Finally, we turn to the ambiguities and embodied contradictions within the struggle against the chicken factory complex, framed by the slogan “Nije gotovo dok nije gotovo” [“It’s Not Over till It’s Over!”] pointing to continuities and the urgency of breaking with them.

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Danko Simić (he/him) is a university assistant at the Department of Geography and Regional Science at the University of Graz and a member of the field of excellence “Dimensions of Europe,” dedicated to socio-spatial transformation processes in Southeast Europe. He is also part of the interdisciplinary collective “Waste in Motion,” which adopts and advances approaches from Discard Studies to understand waste and waste flows as effects of relations. In his doctoral project, “What’s a Chicken to Europe?” he interweaves approaches from Discard Studies with commodity studies, employing a multi-sited ethnographic approach to understand the relational geographies of commodity circulation in Southeast Europe.

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Sanja Potkonjak is a Professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, where she teaches qualitative research methods and research ethics. She is a member of the interdisciplinary research collective *Waste in Motion*. Her research examines transformative social processes, postindustrial landscapes, environmental violence, and forms of resistance, with a particular focus on the intersections of ethnography, infrastructure, development, and environmental justice. She has co-authored, with Tea Škokić, the book *Where Does the Factory Live? An Ethnography of the Postindustrial City*, which received the Croatian Ethnological Society Annual Award in 2023. She is currently the Principal Investigator of the POSTSCAPES research project, funded by the NextGenerationEU programme.

The Mill across the River – Suburban Criminalisation Narratives in Contexts of De-Industrialisation, Immigration, and Neoliberal Urbicide

In the spring of 2023, I started a European ethnology student project at the University of Graz to explore the oral history of a derelict flour mill that had been closed a decade before. The mill, itself an impressive industrial landmark of the city of Graz, is situated outside the world heritage centre across the river Mur, in a suburban district that is traditionally marked by (de-)industrialisation, immigration and socio-cultural diversity. Students set off to follow the memories and experiences of ex-mill workers and residents of the surrounding neighbourhood, to document their voices as well as historical images and media material.

At the same time, a fire partly destroyed the mill building and sparked a heated debate in the city between civil society and political actors, and real estate investors and city planners, where long-standing stereotypes and criminalising narratives played a surprisingly significant role. Whilst continuing ethnographic research within the web of memories and narratives around the mill, the group increasingly saw themselves as activists trying to stop the demolition and to give a voice to the needs, the wishes and emotional identification of their research partners in the quarter.

With this background, the paper picks up on public imaginations of crime, dirt, and antisocial attributions that are projected over the river divide towards a marginalised suburbia, as the other side of the grand self-description of the bourgeois city of Graz. Exploring their narrative effects within an ongoing discursive controversy, it then turns its focus towards local peoples' counter-narratives and coping strategies, and their pleas for beauty and recognition within city planning and politics. The story goes on.

Katharina Eisch-Angus has been a full professor at the Department of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at the University of Graz, Austria, since 2012. Beginning in 1981, she studied empirical cultural analysis/folklore studies, philosophy, and ethnology at the universities of Munich, Vienna, and Tübingen, and completed her dissertation in 1992 on "The Language of the Border: An Ethnography of the Bavarian-Bohemian Border Region" under the supervision of Utz Jeggle in Tübingen, Germany. She completed her habilitation at the University of Regensburg, Bavaria, with a monograph titled "Absurd fear – narratives of the security society." In addition to longstanding freelance cultural and museum work, she has been focusing on her research subjects of the anthropology of borders and traumatic collective memory in Eastern Europe, of crafts, art, and cultural heritage, of neoliberal social transformations, and methodological connections between ethnography, cultural semiotics, and psychoanalysis.

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Work and Everyday Life of *Dimićka* in the Period from 1961 to 1975

The Zagreb City Museum exhibition project "Fashion and Clothing in Zagreb in the 1960s" involved research into Zagreb's textile industry, fabric manufacturing and readymade garments. The research is grounded in the data obtained from printed newspapers and journals published by *Vjesnik* in Zagreb from 1959 to 1972. Used sources and historical literature provided a broader insight into processes and problems within the 1960s textile and garment industry. Analysis of a large volume of data drawn from printed media and literature, and the interviews with workers and consumers from different socioeconomic groups, gave evidence-based data about difficulties within the Zagreb and Yugoslav textile industry. Characteristics such as large import of goods, unqualified female-dominated workforce, small incomes and usage of outdated machinery, were dominant problems of this period. A chronological overview of the studied periodicals has more clearly shown the impressions of the political and economic events on the development and business of the textile industry. The influence of the "small reforms" of 1961, the economic reform of 1965, the political changes of 1968 and the subsequent liberalisation process are noticeable. From today's perspective, the majority of scholars, journalists and performance artists mostly look at the positive aspects of the textile industry and the 1990s privatisation of state-owned factories with a strong sense of nostalgia. Here, the authors once again speak about the cracks within Zagreb's textile industry using the example of the *Nada Dimić* case study. The research is focused on narrative memories of one of the female workers, while also utilising archival sources. The aim of this research was to point out the issues coming from the perspective of one person: a difficult social position, ambivalent emotions, work and everyday life of one "Dimićka," as well as the 1960s colonial status of factories and the workforce, related to "lohn" production for foreign markets.

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Tihana Petrović Leš is a professor at the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology. She is a specialist in the field of history of Croatian ethnology and cultural anthropology, anthropology of cloth and clothing, house industry, intangible heritage (lacemaking). Among her publications are the books *Lepoglava Lacemaking* (2008), *Science and worldview, Ethnology and educational policy of Banovina Croatia 1939-1941* (co-authorship with Suzana Leček, 2010), *Places of Memory: Sv. Rok and Lovinac* (2022).

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Andrea Klobučar is a museum adviser and Head of the Textile and Fashion Accessories Collection at the Museum of Arts and Crafts in Zagreb. Her research interests focus on the history of textiles, clothing and fashion in Croatia, with particular emphasis on women's textile design in the interwar period. She has authored several exhibitions on contemporary Croatian fashion and published articles on the history of fashion and women's textile design.

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Beyond Repair: Ethnographies of Shipbuilding Knowledge

With particular emphasis on the Ship Research Institute (*Brodarski institut*) in Zagreb, in my presentation I will focus on the complex branches of knowledge that were constitutive for a number of shipbuilding cities: Pula, Rijeka, and Split. Current treatment of this once a powerful industry with significant infrastructural development in which a number of natural scientific fields were woven, tells a lot about the contradictions of our times: STEM range of sciences is strongly privileged in academic and research sector while, at the same time, an important STEM scientific and production sector is being neglected and extinguished. Such a “paradoxical” relationship towards shipbuilding knowledge also has an impact on the management of space in these cities, as well as on the “cultural contents” proposed in the facilities of Ship Research Institute. Although these contents and interventions often come with activist approach and good intentions of reminding us of what will be lost when Institute closes, it is a question remains whether such interesting and “strong gestures” can overcome its symbolic nature.

Andrea Matošević is a full professor of ethnology and cultural anthropology at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Juraj Dobrila University in Pula. He has published several monographs and editorial books and won two Milovan Gavazzi awards from the Croatian Ethnological Society. He has been a visiting fellow researcher at the University of Padua, the Leibniz Institute in Regensburg, University College London and the University of Graz.

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Memory, Community, and Continuity: Reinventing Tradition in Buzin's Postindustrial Superperiphery

The paper examines the reinvention of tradition in Buzin, a postindustrial superperiphery on the southern edge of Zagreb. Focusing on the newly established local festival *Dani Buzina* (Days of Buzin), it asks how local memory is mobilised to produce continuity and community in a suburban space marked by intensive spatial, social, and symbolic transformation.

Formerly part of Zagreb's rural outskirts, Buzin is also locally remembered as a workers' settlement tied to nearby industrial and railway work. Since the mid-1990s, postsocialist suburban restructuring and ongoing postindustrial transformation have reshaped Buzin into a business zone and a landscape of consumption and power. This transformation has altered both the spatial organisation of Buzin and the terms through which the settlement is represented and experienced. Buzin is increasingly branded as an attractive, well-connected business and transit location. Locally, the same transformation is articulated through a destabilised sense of place: residents often describe Buzin as neither fully village nor fully city, reflecting tensions between urbanity, rurality, and capitalist spatial reevaluation. Despite its administrative incorporation into Zagreb and its growing business functions, Buzin still retains rural features, family houses, agricultural land, and practices that complicate any straightforward urban identity.

In this context, *Dani Buzina* provides a framework for negotiating what Buzin is and who belongs to its community. Based on ethnographic research of *Dani Buzina* in 2025 and 2026, I examine how community is produced through the organisation and performance of the festival as an invented tradition. I analyse how elements of Buzin's rural and workers' pasts are selected and mobilised in articulating understandings of Buzin today, and how the establishment of a new local tradition produces continuity between past, present, and future.

Kristina Vugdelija is a senior assistant at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. She obtained her PhD in Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology in 2023 with the thesis *The Making of National Heroes in Contemporary Cultures of Memory in Croatia*. She teaches courses on academic literacy, Southeast Europe, and the anthropology of social memory. Her research interests include political anthropology, social memory, postsocialist transformation, and heroism studies. She currently participates in the PostCity and POSTSCAPES research projects, focusing on postindustrial suburban transformation in Zagreb and on post-heroic memoryscapes.

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Reinventing the Future: Negotiating Postindustrial Futures at Zagreb's Paromlin

This paper examines how postindustrial futures are being imagined, activated, and negotiated through the adaptive reuse of the former Paromlin factory in Zagreb. Drawing on the preliminary ethnographic findings from an ongoing doctoral research, the paper conceptualises Paromlin as a site emerging at the intersection of ruination and social rupture on one hand, and the projected reinvention on the other. As Paromlin is currently being repurposed into a new city library and a sociocultural centre, the dissertation will analyse the social impact of this adaptive reuse and explore how diverse stakeholders – institutional and cultural actors, planners, local residents – articulate different visions, strategies and narratives of the site's future. Rather than approaching it as a linear transition from "ruin" to "renewal," the paper aims to show the complexity and multiplicity of futures being produced and overlapped in relation to Paromlin. Based on the early stage of ethnographic fieldwork (interviews with institutional and cultural actors, participant observation, mapping, and Zagreb's cultural policies analysis), this paper particularly focuses on the processes of "programming" these futures in terms of their envisioning, planning and structuring. The dynamics between top-down and bottom-up approaches will be highlighted, as well as the need for multi-actor cooperation in the future-making processes. Lastly, the paper suggests the need for more innovative methodological approaches when doing ethnographic research of an ongoing postindustrial transformation, which would facilitate a more nuanced engagement with its emergent, anticipatory and processual urban dynamics.

Lea Biličić obtained a degree in ethnology and cultural anthropology, as well as comparative literature at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, in 2024. In 2025, she enrolled in the doctoral program for ethnology and cultural anthropology at the same institution. She is currently employed as a research assistant at the PostCity project. She is a member of the European Route of Industrial Heritage (ERIH) international network, within which she participates in the ERIH Young Professionals working group. Her research interests include urban anthropology, sensory ethnography, postindustrial anthropology, and literary anthropology.

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The Concept is Under Construction: What is Intercultural in The Intercultural Social Centre Trnje?

The City of Zagreb's Cultural Development Programme 2024–2030 envisages the transformation of the abandoned Trnje market into the city's first intercultural social centre. While civil society organisations and the independent cultural scene have for over a decade been advocating the opening of such a centre – imagined as a place of welcome and cultural exchange with migrants and refugees living in Zagreb – this is the first time that the need for it has been formally recognised by the municipal authorities. The centre is defined as a space that should contribute to a culture of welcome, as well as to the accessibility and inclusivity of culture and the arts, situating it at the specific site of the former marketplace and providing a timeframe for its reconstruction.

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork conducted since 2024, which included participant observation at public events, organised walking tours around the neighbourhood, and interviews with actors long involved in advocating for the centre, this paper places the concept of interculturality at its core, treating it as an unfinished and open concept filled with diverse and, at times, contested meanings. The paper is structured around the questions of what interculturality means to the different actors shaping this space. What will make it different from other cultural and community centres in Zagreb, and how are the announced intercultural exchange and dialogue imagined in practice?

The research findings suggest that the idea of an intercultural centre is held together by a shared name, but not necessarily by a shared meaning as well. For some of the long-standing advocates, interculturality is a matter of accessibility, something that must run through the centre's programmes, daily operations and the space itself. For others, it is an empty label that would be better dropped, since it puts *Others* on display. As the reconstruction of the space approaches, these competing understandings are still being negotiated.

Iva Grubiša is a research and teaching assistant at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. In 2026, she defended her doctoral dissertation in the field of ethnology and anthropology, titled *Creating a Home: Contemporary Experiences of Refugees in the City of Zagreb*. She is the author of the book *A Taste of Home: The Cultural-Anthropological Overview of Migrant Integration in Zagreb* (2019). Her research interests include home-making practices, the anthropology of urban everyday life, refugee studies, and the anthropology of futures.

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Recognising, Transgressing, and Emerging: Ruins, Communities, and Agency in the Former Sljeme Meat Industry in Zagreb

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This paper is based on three years of ethnographic research at the ruinous site of the former Sljeme meat industry in Zagreb. It asks how postindustrial space is entangled with people's everyday lives and how it participates in shaping social relations. Building on these questions, the paper conceptualises postindustrial communities as relational and processual collectives that emerge through ongoing engagements with ruins and their materiality. Living with a brownfield entails spatial, temporal, and affective modes of relating to the site, where community does not pre-exist, but is continuously (re)produced through practices of encounter, organisation, collaboration, and collective imagination.

The analysis is structured around three interconnected conceptual nodes – recognising, transgressing, and emerging – that capture different ways people engage with the brownfield site. *Recognising* refers to the process of noticing and affectively opening oneself to the site's ruinous materiality. Drawing on discussions of *thing-power* and the vitality of matter, it approaches the brownfield as a dynamic assemblage of human agents and non-human material forces whose agency lies both in their own capacities and in their relations with people. *Transgressing* is explored through literal and symbolic boundary crossings: climbing fences, entering abandoned spaces, negotiating territoriality, and engaging in practices that envision the site's futures by dissolving the boundaries between physical and imagined enclosures. *Emerging* is conceptualised as a set of practices through which communities take shape by reshaping ruinous space: organising events, establishing collaborations, creating opportunities for encounter, and developing new forms of collective action. The paper argues that the ruins of the Sljeme meat industry cannot be understood solely as remnants of an industrial past or as a space of urban decay. Rather, they constitute an affectively and materially vibrant site that actively participates in the making of social and material worlds and communities, as well as imaginaries and practices of postindustrial futures.

Nevena Škrbić Alempijević is a tenured professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Her research focuses on urban anthropology, postindustrial spaces, and social memory. For the book *A City as an Encounter. The Ethnography of Zagreb Squares*, co-authored with Valentina Guljin Zrnić, she received the Croatian State Award for Science. She served as President of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF). She is the Principal Investigator of the project "The Transformation of the Postindustrial City: Space, Community, and Work" (HRZZ-IP-2022-10-2473) and collaborator in "Postscapes – Time, Space and Communities" (NPOO 581-990-1039).

Petra Kelemen is an associate professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. Her research interests and teaching focus on cultural policies, heritage, festivals and other public events, and the anthropology of tourism. She has received several awards from the University of Zagreb Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences and the Croatian Ethnological Society. She is currently participating in the project "The Transformation of the Postindustrial City: Space, Community, and Work" (2023–2027, HRZZ-IP-2022-10-2473) and in the project "Postscapes – Time, Space and Communities" (2025–2029, NPOO 581-990-1039).

Sanja Potkonjak is a professor at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, where she teaches qualitative research methods and research ethics. She is a member of the interdisciplinary research collective *Waste in Motion*. Her research examines transformation, postindustrial landscapes, environmental violence, and forms of resistance, focusing on the intersections of ethnography, infrastructure, development, and environmental justice. With Tea Škokić, she co-authored the book *Where Does the Factory Live? An Ethnography of the Postindustrial City*, which received the Croatian Ethnological Society Annual Award. She is the Principal Investigator of the POSTSCAPES project, funded by NextGenerationEU.

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Towards an Inventory of Development Tropes for Gredelj

The long-vacated Gredelj complex, by far the largest brownfield in Zagreb, encompassing over 12 hectares, has, despite its literal location in the centre of the city, and perhaps precisely because of it, remained an inert space of contention and speculation. The last surviving complex of the original 19th-century industrial expansion was, from its inception, an uneasy compromise between the interests of economic growth and the ambition of the city to steer its urban development. As a constituent part of the „railway problem,” the continuous debate synonymous with advocating for the dissolution of the perceived barrier of the corridor ever since its completion, the future of Gredelj has always been inextricably linked to that of the railway. Unable to look past the deadlock caused by the municipal coffers lacking the funds necessary to resolve this issue, the planners of Zagreb never formulated a distinct strategy of integrating the area into the city proper throughout the 20th century. This lack of clearly formulated urban strategies and concepts, or the absence of any notable architectural schemes and proposals that could have formed a fertile conceptual ground for imagining the future of Gredelj, has resulted in the almost complete absence of any official planning agenda. This conceptual and procedural vacuum has been opportunistically filled in by numerous speculative and commercial initiatives eager to reap the potential of the size and centrality of the site. Notably lacking throughout these models is any meaningful consideration of the public, communal or social preconditions for “urbanising” Gredelj.

This paper will attempt, from the disciplinary framework of planning history, to create a historical inventory of the ever-repeating development tropes deployed for the area, in the hope of providing a desperately lacking platform for informed discussion about its hopeful inclusion in the city.

Antun Sevšek is an architect, researcher, and activist dealing with the intersections of evolving urban planning strategies and their disruptions in contact with the social and material reality of the city. He is a long-time member of various local NGOs and organisations, including Platforma 9,81, Right to the City, Operation City, and the Open Architecture cooperative. He is the co-founder and lead architect of OO (Organizirano oblikovanje), an interdisciplinary design and research practice based in Zagreb, engaged both in commissioned design work and self-initiated research projects, recognised by a series of domestic and international awards.

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In Search of the Post-Industrial Identity of Zagreb's "Western Periphery"

Over the past three decades, Trešnjevka North – once a peripheral area of Zagreb, today part of the city's broader central zone – has undergone intensive spatial and social transformations marked by pronounced contrasts. Throughout the 20th century, industrialisation was the principal driver of the development and settlement of the former "western periphery." It shaped both the social structure and the identity of Trešnjevka as a working-class district and served as a major force for modernisation in the post-World War II period. With the decline of industrial production at the turn of the 21st century, new opportunities emerged for the reuse of former industrial sites. However, approaches to industrial complexes and buildings that have lost their original function vary considerably, ranging from demolition and conversion into commercial uses to neglect and deterioration, with few examples of successful revitalisation.

Drawing on historical sources, planning documentation, and field observations, this paper examines the transformation of the Voltino neighbourhood as a case study. During the 20th century, Voltino evolved from a "factory town" into an integrated urban neighbourhood. Throughout this process, the close relationship between the neighbourhood and the industrial enterprises that had decisively shaped its spatial and social development gradually weakened. The study explores how deindustrialisation has influenced the neighbourhood's development and considers how the adaptive reuse of abandoned industrial sites may contribute to the formation of its post-industrial identity. It argues that industrial legacy has yet to be sufficiently recognised as a development resource capable of generating new spatial, economic, and cultural value. This is reflected in the absence of a systematic strategy for the adaptive reuse of former industrial sites and their integration into the neighbourhood's broader development needs. The paper thus contributes to the broader discussion on the role of industrial legacy in shaping the post-industrial identity of Zagreb's neighbourhoods.

Goran Arčabić holds degrees in History and Croatian Language and Literature from the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, where he also completed a master's degree in Croatian History and a PhD in Modern and Contemporary Croatian History in the European and World Context. He is a museum advisor at the Zagreb City Museum. His research focuses on industrialisation, the history of economic institutions, and industrial heritage, with particular expertise in planned in socialist Croatia and Yugoslavia (1947–1952). He led the project Zagreb Industrial Heritage: History, Current State, and Perspectives, resulting in two professional monographs.

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Beyond the Factory Ruins: Military Infrastructure and Postindustrial Transformation in Zagreb, Example of Campus Borongaj as an Innovation Ecosystem

Papers on postindustrial cities have largely privileged the factory as the emblematic site of industrial decline, directing attention to abandoned production facilities and the redevelopment of former industrial landscapes. However, postindustrial cities are shaped not only by abandoned factories, but also by other obsolete infrastructure, including military brownfield sites, which become part of broader urban restructuring. Although these military sites are not strictly postindustrial, they can be understood within the same triangle of the “rupture – ruin – reinventions” concept. Military withdrawal, in coordination with post-socialist transition and changing land uses, creates ruptures in urban structures. Abandoned military buildings, decaying infrastructure and partial demolition produce ruins in urban landscapes. New potential functions and redevelopment plans bring reinventions into these urban areas.

This paper argues that postindustrial urbanism cannot be understood solely through the lens of industrial ruins. Instead, it examines Borongaj, a former military complex in the eastern part of Zagreb, as a site where post-socialist transformation, infrastructural obsolescence and competing urban futures intersect. The former military site Borongaj is a space of suspended transformation and a playground for new innovation ecosystems and new forms of cooperation between different stakeholders, including the university, the city and the economy/entrepreneurship.

Although Borongaj does not fit the conventional image of a postindustrial landscape, its transformation reflects many of the processes associated with postindustrial cities: the abandonment of large-scale state infrastructures, fragmented redevelopment, uncertain planning trajectories and the emergence of new forms of urban use. Borongaj embodies an ongoing and incomplete process of reinvention.

Martina Jakovčić is a full professor and vice-dean for finances and operations at University of Zagreb Faculty of Science. She specialised in economic and urban geography with particular focus on brownfield regeneration. In her work she studies changes of spatial and functional structures of cities caused by brownfield regeneration and processes of planning, including participative and strategic planning.

Tomislav Josip Mlinarić is a full professor at Faculty of Transport and Traffic Sciences and vice-rector for innovation, technology transfer and cooperation with the economic sector at the University of Zagreb. In his work he studies topics of urban mobility and challenges regarding mobility in postindustrial cities by connecting the academic community and relevant economic actors.

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Photographing Societal Transformations: Artist Talk with Photographer

Bojan Mrđenović will present a selection of his photographic works dealing with topics of deindustrialization and post-industrialization. Throughout his long investigative photographic projects, he focuses on landscape and architecture as places of social activity. With current focus on post-socialist transition, he is trying to trace ideas underlying material transformations and transitions. Through various examples and case-studies, he examines how structural relationships and relations of power influence our individual condition.

Bojan Mrđenović (b. 1987) is a photographer and a filmmaker. He graduated in Art History and Information Science from Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Zagreb in 2012. He graduated in Cinematography from Academy of Dramatic Art, Zagreb in 2015. He is currently employed as a photography teacher at the department of Cinematography at the same Academy. He has exhibited photographic works at solo exhibitions and has participated in many group exhibitions in Croatia and abroad.

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From the Steelworks to Germany: Screening of *Buffet Željezara* and Q&A with the Director

What remains when the factory, the jobs, and the community's last gathering place disappear? The documentary *Buffet Željezara* takes us through the final days of a shift bar located at a bus station beside the entrance to what was once one of the largest steelworks in Yugoslavia. Through an observational portrayal of everyday conversations between the owners, Erna and Dževad, and their regular customers, the film reveals a space where humour, nostalgia, disappointment, and hope intertwine. At the heart of these "pub conversations" emerges a new utopia of post-industrial society – Germany, imagined as the promised land. What appear to be ordinary conversations about work, emigration, and the future gradually become a testimony to the transformation of labour, community, and the sense of belonging in post-socialist Europe. The closure of the shift bar marks the end of one era while opening a new chapter in the lives of its owners.

The screening will be followed by a conversation with the director about the making of the film, the observational documentary approach, and the themes of labour, migration, and social change explored in the film.

Buffet Željezara; 2017; DCP; 61 minutes; colour.

Goran Dević (born in Sisak in 1971) studied law and archaeology before graduating in Film and Television Directing from the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb in 2008. He is currently a Full Professor at the Academy, where he serves as Head of the Documentary Film Department within the Film and Television Directing programme.

His documentaries *Imported Crows*, *I Have Nothing Nice to Tell You*, *Three*, *Buffet Željezara*, and *On the Water* have received numerous awards at international film festivals, including Sarajevo, Prizren, Oberhausen, Leipzig, Belgrade, and ZagrebDox. His documentary *Pavilion 6* is the first Croatian film to be co-produced by the BBC.

Together with director Zvonimir Jurić, he co-directed the feature-length war drama *The Blacks*, which received praise and awards at international festivals. Retrospectives of his documentary work have been presented at Arsenal in Berlin, Crossing Europe Film Festival in Linz, Beldocs in Belgrade, ZagrebDox, the MAXXI Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome, and the Dutch House in Sisak. His films have also been screened at institutions including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, Casino Luxembourg, Beirut Art Center, and Galerija Nova in Zagreb. He is the recipient of the City of Zagreb Award and the founder of the production company Fifteenth Art.

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