

Shooting Under Siege
A Study of Documentary Film Production Culture in Times of War

Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992-1995

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I don't know what truth is. Truth is something unattainable. We can't think we're creating truth with a camera. But what we can do, is reveal something to viewers that allows them to discover their own truth.

—Michel Brault

For me documentary filmmaking is a way of making a life practice out of exploring the most painful, difficult, complicated mysteries that make us what we are and trying to then not tell you, report to you what happened during the exploration, but actually then translate that into an experience of mystery and truth - and therefore beauty - for everybody who sees the work

- Joshua Oppenheimer

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Abstract

In this MA thesis a study of documentary film production during the war in the nineties in Bosnia and Herzegovina has been conducted. How was it (practically) possible to make these documentaries and what motivated the filmmakers were the research questions. An analysis was made based on two of the most active film production companies that made films during the three and half years of the siege of Sarajevo from April 1992 to December 1995. The war started after the secession from Yugoslavia; a country that had an interdependent film industry between the constituting states. When Bosnia and Herzegovina became an independent state, it was soon apparent that the country was not only lacking technological filmmaking assets, but also in the area of human expertise. In this study I researched the individual efforts of people coming from different (professional) backgrounds who organized themselves (some literally over-night) and started to produce films on a daily basis. The substantial documentary oeuvre they produced was well received abroad.

The research questions were answered with multiple and diverse sources in line with the Production Culture methodology of John Thornton Caldwell. Semi-structured interviews were held with the filmmakers. The elaborate answers were cross-checked with contemporary primary sources from the time of the war (newspaper articles, magazines). All the collected data was clustered in categories based on the main identified themes. The results showed that the practical process of film-making in the war was improvisation dependent of the conditions the production companies had on the first day of the war and their further adaptations to the circumstances. The filmmakers call it *guerilla-filmmaking*. The results further revealed that the filmmaker's main motivation was to fight in the war (in their own manner) through cultural resistance. The irritation they developed towards what western media was showing contributed to the decision to make films/documentaries and to screen them abroad. These more specific reasons were all connected to the overarching reason of fulfilling *the identity/profession of filmmaker*.

The research has shown how producers/filmmakers had a different meaning-making process regarding their identity and film as a medium in war-time. The meaning-making even adapted itself to a terminology used in war-time. The danger in war had not stopped the filmmakers to make films. Their feeling of a filmmaker identity was only stronger. This research can be an incentive for similar research in other countries struck by war to study the meaning-making, creative and production process there.

Foreword

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the participants in my research; the film directors Srđan Vuletić, Nenad Dizdarević, Ademir Kenović and Ismet Nuno Arnautalić. I am very thankful for all their time, patience and kindness in bringing back memories from a very long time ago. It was not easy since it was a difficult, but at the same time also paradoxically beautiful, period from their lives and professional conduct. The war-years in Sarajevo. They have contributed to a film heritage that today is an indispensable part in (the writings of) the history of independent BH national cinema and film culture, its very beginning.

I also want to express my gratitude and appreciation to my supervisors Hanna Surma and Rob Leurs. They have been so kind and patient in waiting for me to bring the work to completion, longer than the usual period in the trajectory of a master thesis at our department. I also want to thank them for reminding me at times to get back on track of the required academic and objective approach, to a topic that stands personally very close to me.

Nina, tvoje riječi motivacije su mi značile nevjerovatno puno u par teških trenutaka tokom rada. Samo se ti i ja sjećamo tih ludih momenata. Hvala ti duši moj najdraži! Mama i tata, bili ste tolika podrška u svakom pogledu od samog izbora studija do njenog završetka. Hvala što ste me toliko bodrili u mojim životnim izborima i što ste mi toliko pomogli ne samo praktično ali i sa vašim strpljenjem u periodu dok sam pisala rad. Volim vas puno!

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Introduction

Before 1992 Bosnia and Herzegovina was one out of six constituent Republics in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.¹ After the death of Yugoslavia's president Josip Broz Tito in 1980 the Republic increasingly experienced political instabilities which ultimately led to its break-up when the constituent republics started declaring their sovereignty and independence at the beginning of the nineties.² The declaration of independence by Bosnia and Herzegovina led to a war between Serbs, Croats and Bosniaks. The war in the multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina started on the 6th of April 1992 and would become the deadliest and longest conflict in Europe since World War II.³

The secession from Yugoslavia left Bosnia and Herzegovina without film production facilities and budgetary input from the state as it was the case in the former country. The war also destroyed movie theatres, production facilities and film archives.⁴ But filmmakers kept making films. Already in the beginning of the war groups of filmmakers in Sarajevo organized themselves and started filming on a daily basis what was happening in Sarajevo.⁵ This has resulted in a collection of more than 100 documentaries made in war that were filmed during the three and a half years of the siege of Sarajevo.⁶ After the war the country was faced with an economic crisis and political challenges. In both war-time and the post-war period BH film authors have produced a considerable number of films that internationally merited critically acclaimed attention. These periods have marked the beginning of a successful Bosnian

1 Socialist Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, SR Croatia, SR Macedonia, SR Montenegro and SR Serbia.

2 In 1991 Slovenia, Macedonia and Croatia were first to declare independence. The multi-ethnic (Croat, Bosniak and Serb) state Bosnia and Herzegovina followed after a referendum in March 1992. The Serb constituent population disapproved of the Referendum and were firmly against independence from the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia.

3 The major constituent people of Bosnia and Herzegovina are Muslims, Croats and Serbs. The war lasted almost four years, 1992-1995.

4 The city of Sarajevo under siege, and its people were shelled everyday and shot at by Serbian snipers from the surrounding hills. Daniel J. Goulding, *Liberated Cinema: The Yugoslav Experience 1945-2001* (Bloomington and Indianapolis; Indiana University Press, 2003), 229.

5 Most of the films made during the war were documentaries. Many were made by the Sarajevo Group of Authors (Saga). The company SAGA was also active before the war but adjusted their production in wartime and replaced video art and commercials for war documentaries. "Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996," (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998), 6.

6 Ibid.

cinema.⁷

In this thesis the phenomenon of the production of films under the extreme circumstances of war will be studied: How was it possible to make films when there was a lack of equipment, in a city that was constantly bombed and electricity was more often cut off than it was available.

The research question in the study is: *What were the production circumstances of films made in war-time in Sarajevo?* This question will be broken down into two parts. The first question will concern the articulation of the motivation of the filmmakers for making the films in war-time, or *why* did they make films? The second question will concentrate on the context of film-making; filming locations, technical equipment, creative process in war-time etc., or *how* did they make films?

Relevance of the research

This research ought to result in a reconstruction of an important period for Bosnian cinema, namely its very beginning.⁸ It will provide insight into the context in which a new national independent cinema was born. It will bear trace of the (production) circumstances under which the first films under the new Bosnian flag were conceived, produced and brought into the world. It is assumed that the war as the context for film-making has been a major contributing factor to what Bosnian cinema is today.⁹ For this reason the aim is to clarify more in-depth *how* the war has been a contributing circumstance to

⁷ There are some cinematic awards that are in the "vitrine" of this small country with only approximately 3,7 inhabitants. E.g. An Oscar for Best Foreign Language film in 2001 for *No Man's Land* directed by Danis Tanović, a Berlinale Golden Bear for best film *Grbavica* (Jasmila Žbanić) and Silver Bear for *Episode in the life of an Iron Picker* directed by Danis Tanović in 2013. Most of the films produced in Bosnia and Herzegovina have entered the selections of major international film festivals. Film theorist Goulding described the production of films in the countries of former Yugoslavia as a "remarkable resilience that native filmmakers have shown as they persevered against the catastrophic consequences of brutal internecine warfare, political corruption, and severe economic disruption. Against considerable odds they have managed to create recent films of enduring artistic and sociocultural interest, including some that have attracted significant international attention." in Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 10.

⁸ Scholarly work on the concept of national cinema is most frequently referenced to Andrew Higson. Higson argued that the discourse is not finite, and cannot bring about a single universally accepted discourse. One can study different manifestations of national cinema at work. He names but a few as defining national cinema in economic terms (who finances the films?), thus linking the output of a national cinema of a country to its film industry. This would be the production approach to the concept. Then there is the aspect of reception. Can a national cinema still be called national if its own people are not consuming it? Higson places equal importance to production and reception as crucial factors for a national cinema to be called as such. Higson names another approach which would be concentrating on the film texts itself. He poses herein questions such as: "What are these films about? Do they share a common style or world view? What sort of projections of the national character do they offer? To what extent are they engaged in "exploring, questioning and constructing a notion of nationhood in the films themselves and in the consciousness of the viewer?" Andrew Higson, "The Concept of National Cinema," in *Screen* 30, no. 4 (1989), 36-47, doi:10.1093/screen/30.4.36.

⁹ For example many of today's Bosnian and Herzegovinian film directors started their professional careers during war-time. Vefik Hadžismajlović, "Foreword." in *Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996*, (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998), 7-8.

the BH film culture.

The most extensive accounts on Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cinema are written by Daniel J. Goulding and Dina Iordanova.¹⁰ Both authors gathered contextual information about the national cinemas covering all the ex-Yugoslav states, including certain film production information. But an in-depth study of the war-time production has not been included. In Goulding's chapter on "The breakup of Yugoslavia: Cinematic Reflections 1991-2001", he describes the changed circumstances in all the countries and the transition from the federal Yugoslav film production to one that was now organized along separate national lines, and therefore also a BH cinema.¹¹ However, as the title itself suggests, Goulding is more descriptive of the reflective nature of the films produced between 1991 and 2001 of the countries' social, cultural and political realities. Goulding did briefly refer to the production circumstances of film-making in the context of war, and the politically and economically disrupted societies of post-Yugoslav states as being in his own words: "a remarkable resilience of the filmmakers".¹² Nevertheless this remarkable phenomenon of resilience in film-making remained analysed at the surface without going in-depth as to *how* it actually was done by the filmmakers. This study will be complementary in this respect.

Iordanova's research also included a chapter about the war period in Sarajevo. Her chapter "Visions of Sarajevo" is an overview of the international and domestic films about Sarajevo and the Bosnian War shot during the war and immediately after.¹³ But the main topic Iordanova brings forward in the chapter is the issue of representation; the fact that foreign media denied local filmmakers agency during the war as they did not give them a chance to

10 Daniel Šuber and Slobodan Karamanić, *Retracing Images: Visual Culture After Yugoslavia* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 14.

11 Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 186.

12 "It is no surprise, of course that the cinema(s) of the former Yugoslavia experienced an initial period of profound disruption, discontinuity, and near collapse following the violent breakup of the country into five successor states - Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia, FR Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro), and Macedonia. What is surprising, however, is the remarkable resilience that native filmmakers have shown as they persevered against the catastrophic consequences of brutal internecine warfare, political corruption, and severe economic disruption. Against considerable odds they have managed to create recent films of enduring artistic and sociocultural interest, including some that have attracted significant international attention." Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 10.

13 In this chapter (and the book in general) Dina Iordanova very often gives her own personal opinion on the matter, by for example stating that Sarajevo did not have a rich cultural life before the war, and that it in fact flourished in the war, to again experience a decline once the war was over. Dina Iordanova, "Visions of Sarajevo," in *Cinema of Flames: Balkan Film, Culture and the Media* (London: British Film Institute, 2001) 235.

represent themselves to the outside world.¹⁴ The researches of both Goulding and Iordanova fall along the lines of more traditional research on film industries by drawing wider, and not so much in-depth, conclusions about the industry by looking solely at the film texts and/or their reception rather than the everyday production practices.

This study will look into these everyday processes in the film-making with the use of the methodological framework of Production Studies.¹⁵ This new field in media research allows media scholars to grasp a more thorough understanding of how the production of films undergoes technological and/or political transitions.¹⁶ They do this by studying how media workers deal and respond to these transitions in their daily professional endeavours.¹⁷ These everyday processes, such as filmmaking during war-time, can tell a lot about the media texts and the context in which they are produced.¹⁸ It was during the war that filmmakers in Bosnia and Herzegovina had to react to the transition in their private life and for this study more importantly also their professional life. Why did one really decide to (continue to) make films when it was war-time, why would one not join the army instead? And once it was decided, how was it done?

Different methods within Production Studies employ a perspective of industry analysis that goes "from the ground up".¹⁹ Therefore, in this study, the actual films of the war-time production will not be the (main) objects of research as Goulding has done in his study. The main focus is on the workers who stood behind the films and the insidious easy questions of why and how they made films during war-time.

14 "The footage they shot and edited was considered as potential propaganda material - even if they were the ones under fire, they were party in the conflict. The same material, however, seemed devoid of propagandistic content as soon as it was picked up and used in films made by Westerners... Although the documentaries by SaGA were edited and presented in a finished form which was possible to distribute, their films were almost never picked up by foreign broadcasters or distributors." [...] "Films produced and edited by Sarajevans received a very limited exposure. At the same time, documentary footage shot by them was widely used, largely uncredited. Their raw footage was good enough to be used by Western film-makers, but its compilation and editing questioned. Their ability to register the ordeal of the city on film was not questioned, the legitimacy of their point of view was. Western interpretations of the siege of Sarajevo enjoyed an exposure which was never granted to the interpretations of local film-makers." Dina Iordanova, "Visions of Sarajevo," 237, 246

15 Production studies is a new approach to studying media industries. The various contributors in the field have used their own approaches in the process. Nevertheless what connects them all is that they look at the production process of media texts at the level of the workforce. Vicky Mayer et al., "Production Studies: Roots and Routes," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries* (New York and London: Routledge 2009) 5.

16 Vicky Mayer et al., "Production Studies," 2.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid, 6.

Theoretical framework: Production Studies explained

In studying the (daily) cultural activities of media producers, the different authors that contributed to the school of Production Studies have used distinct research steps in gathering and analysing data for their case studies. Nevertheless they all share(d) the common perspective of looking into everyday production practices in the creation of media.²⁰ Among the school's contributing authors are Amanda G. Lotz and Vicky Mayer. Their work exemplifies how production culture can be studied in media research.

Lotz conducted a production study research on the television industry in the U.S., when it was experiencing big transitions in the beginning of the 21st Century. Lotz contrasted her research to earlier studies about the television industry that were looking at the macro-level of the industry, or at the level of the media texts.²¹ The other aforementioned contributor to the field of production studies, Mayer, recapitulated that researching the specific in the media industry makes it possible to come to an encompassing answer about the more general.²² This is a connection that is often forgotten when looking at traditional media research as was done by the aforementioned Goulding and Iordanova.²³

The aim in this research is to get a better understanding of producing media under difficult circumstances. The specific method and theory of Production Studies' scholar John Thornton Caldwell culture will be used to reconstruct the daily production practices BH filmmakers had in war-time. The method is best-known under the term Production Culture and it looks into the arena of social, professional and intercultural interactions that take place at the

20 "To do so, we are interested in how media producers make culture, and, in the process, make themselves into particular kinds of workers in modern mediated societies. [...] We assume that directors, and editors lighting technicians and storywriters... etc are all cultural actors too." In Vicky Mayer et al., "Production Studies," 2.

21 In an essay Lotz made a (theoretical) reference to the research from Todd Gitlin who had done his research Inside Prime Time by looking at the daily production circumstances of a television network. Based on his research he concluded that the programming of prime-time television was not always based on certain ideological/political constructions as was often assumed by scholars, but that it more often was a compromise made by executives between giving the advertisers what they want, and the (niche) audience on the other side as well. Amanda Lotz, "Industry-Level Studies and the Contributions of Gitlin's Inside Prime Time," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, ed. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks en John Thornton Caldwell (New York and Londen: Routledge, 2009) 29-33.

22 "Production Studies, in other words, "ground" social theories by showing us how specific production sites, actors, or activities tell us larger lessons about workers, their practices, and the role of their labors in relation to politics, economics and culture." Vicki Mayer, "Bringing the Social Back In Studies of Production Cultures and Social Theory," in *Production Studies: Cultural Studies of Media Industries*, ed. Vicki Mayer, Miranda J. Banks en John Thornton Caldwell (New York and Londen: Routledge, 2009) 15.

23 Ibid.

level of the workflow.²⁴ By looking at what is happening behind the screen in the process of media production, one can study the cultural and social processes that influence the media products.²⁵ Caldwell's method allows to obtain a comprehensive perception on how media texts (films or television programs) are produced. It is accomplished by collecting as much relevant information as possible from different sources.²⁶ Ultimately it also provides answers about the mediatexts themselves without resolving to subjective or descriptive interpretations.

Both the data collection and data analysis are processes of constant comparison in Caldwell's method.²⁷ This is particularly useful for this study because the production circumstances happened a long time ago and a cross-check with sources from the reference period (of war) will enrich and contextualise the information that will be given to me in interviews today with the filmmakers.

Caldwell's research components about media production are:

- 1) economic and industrial analysis
- 2) textual analysis of trade and employee documents
- 3) interviews with film / television box people
- 4) ethnographic field observation of production areas.²⁸

Although some of these components cannot be carried out in this research, such as ethnographic field observation, an attempt to re-construct the production

²⁴ Caldwell considers that a lot of the important decision-making around mediatexts actually occurs at the organisational micro-level. John T. Caldwell, "Cultures of Production. Studying Industry's Deep Texts, Reflexive Rituals, and Managed Self-disclosures," in *Media Industries History, Theory and Method*, ed. Jennifer Holt and Lisa Perren (Malden: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), 201.

²⁵ This is different from the media historic or media political-economical approaches media scholars were habituated to.

²⁶ "[...] I have attempted whenever possible to keep these individual research modes "in check" by placing the discourses and results of any one register (textual, ethnographic, interviews, and political economy) in critical tension or dialogue with the others. This method of cross-checking proves useful when interrogating production practices where, for example, rhetoric of studio press kits does not jive with explanations provided by production craftspeople, or when demo tapes used to market equipment conveniently elide or gloss labor issues raised through more macroscopic industrial analysis or spin, or when sunny disclosures in interviews with producers are contradicted by cost-saving new technologies that displace and stress production workers." John T. Caldwell, *Production Culture: Industrial Reflexivity and Critical Practice in Film and Television* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008) 4.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ "Cross-checking: I have attempted whenever possible to keep these individual research modes "in check" by placing the discourses and results of any one register (textual, ethnographic, interviews, and political economy) in critical tension or dialogue with the others. This method of cross-checking proves useful when interrogating production practices where, for example, rhetoric of studio press kits does not jive with explanations provided by production craftspeople, or when demo tapes used to market equipment conveniently elide or gloss labor issues raised through more macroscopic industrial analysis or spin, or when sunny disclosures in interviews with producers are contradicted by cost-saving new technologies that displace and stress production workers." Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 4.

process will be made based on the interviews with filmmakers and sources with additional contextual information that I will describe in the next paragraph.

How does Caldwell's method relate to the specific research questions in this study and why is it desirable to have these different perspectives? Considering the context of war this method will allow to grasp the decision-making process preceding the production.²⁹ Qualitative semi-structured interviews with the involved filmmakers (producers and directors) will be used to answer questions related to their thoughts and decision-making processes that happened a long time ago. The filmmakers will respond based on their personal memories of the time, of how they recall the past.³⁰ To overcome potential unreliability in some of the answers in the interviews, and to complement the missing component of ethnographic field observation, an additional component of newspaper articles will be used.³¹ The aim is to identify the main themes of motivation that will allow us to better understand the rational behind the wider phenomenon of many filmmakers deciding to film actively in the war.

Within the scope of this study it is not possible to research *all* production companies/groups and/or all films, but it will be possible to identify the case studies where the most material and human resources are accessible for analysis today. They will be chosen after the component of industrial analysis when an overview of active film productions will be created. Two production groups will be chosen as representative examples for the war-time production process. What every specific individual component of Caldwell's method and the additional components (in this study) ought to answer in this study is explained below in more detail.

29 It is studying the (daily) decision-making process and interaction among the cultural workers that Caldwell emphasized as being very important in understanding the production of media. Caldwell, "Cultures of Production," 201.

30 "Oral history is understood as both an act of memory and an inherently subjective account of the past. Interviews record what an interviewer draws out, what the interviewee remembers, what he or she chooses to tell, and how he or she understands what happened, not the unmediated "facts" of what happened in the past. Linda Shopes, "Oral History," in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln, 4th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: SaGE Publications, 2005), 452.

31 The articles are from war-time in which also interviews can be found with the filmmakers.

Research Steps

Economic and industrial analysis

The first step in the analysis will be to describe the economic and industrial context of the film industry of Yugoslavia at the beginning of the war when Bosnia and Herzegovina became independent. Two sources will be critical for this analysis. First the filmmagazine *Sineast*, a Bosnian Film critics magazine that existed from 1967 until 2009. It is considered to be the Bosnian version of the French *Cahiers du Cinéma*.³² *Sineast* managed to publish two war editions in 1992 and 1994 which will be taken as the referential source material. In the war editions they covered the work of filmmakers in the war. The magazine is considered the best replacement of a still not written history of BiH cinematography.³³ The *Sineast* editions have been obtained from the digitized printmedia database of "Media Center" Sarajevo.³⁴

The second source will be a publication obtained at the National Film Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is the publication "Filmography Sarajevo in War 1992-1995".³⁵ An informative conversation was held with Asim Muftić about the war period, film productions, and the Archive.³⁶ He repeatedly stated that the filmography of the films made in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina can never be complete.³⁷ Films made in other cities of Bosnia and Herzegovina have not been registered in the Archive. The publication is in his words "not a beginning nor an end".³⁸ The filmography holds a (narrower)

32 As part of the project for digital preservation and archival of the cultural-historic heritage of BH print media 1866-2016, the *Sineast* film magazine has been digitized from its very first editions to its last (1967-2007). *DVD Sineast 1967-2007* (Sarajevo: Media Center Sarajevo, 2007), DVD.

33 "[...] This set of *Sineast* is actually the most relevant substitute for the still non-existent history of Bosnian cinematography." Midhat Ajanović, "Introduction," *DVD Sineast 1967-2007* (Sarajevo: Media Center Sarajevo, 2007), DVD.

34 *Mediacentar_online*, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.media.ba/bs>.

35 "The project was financed by The Ministry for Culture and Education Sarajevo. The book is a chronological list of all the films made in the war that fulfilled certain criteria established by the editors. The criteria were:

- production quality fulfills conditions for cinema screening. In that way, it would extend their documentary and author durability, and it would create possibilities to screen these works in the cinemas, the documentaries display a film language, i.e. a film narrative structure with a cinematographic character; "the social, cultural and receptive concept in which the work has been presented would be more important than technological and material basis on which it was done." in *Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996* (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998), 240.

36 Asim Muftić is an employee at the National Film Archive of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

37 Conversation with Asim Muftić about the war-time and filmproductions, employee BH National Film Archive, 28 January 2016.

38 "The film production made in war remains a precious and unavoidable document about the war days in Sarajevo. [...] This filmography will be a precious database for the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina cinematography, as well as for a general war picture in Bosnia and its capital, Sarajevo. Vefik Hadžismajlović, "Foreword." in *Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996* (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998), 7-8.

selection of films.³⁹ Although incomplete it is still considered the most inclusive overview and an important database of the cinematography of Bosnia and Herzegovina in war-time.⁴⁰ Its publication dates from 1998 and contains a war filmography from Sarajevo.⁴¹ Analysis of these two sources will result in a descriptive outline of the industry but most importantly overview of the active productions and their involved film workers.⁴² This will serve as the reference point for the determination of the case studies.

Textual analysis of trade and employee documents

Based on the first part in the research it will be made clear which of the most active production companies and/or their reference contact persons are accessible today to provide documents related to the production of their war documentaries. The production companies and film workers involved will be asked for access to their internal documentation related to the documentaries. Caldwell names such documentation deep texts. These can be for example scenario's, diaries of filmmakers, budgets, distribution plans, making-of's. In my research it will be evaluated whether the documents were part of the professional rituals within their production.⁴³

This part of the research revolves around gathering as much as possible information on how it was (technically) made possible to make films under such extreme circumstances as war. This will be complemented through interviews with filmworkers.

39 "This filmography has also to help make a narrower selection of works, which, by their production quality, fulfil conditions for cinema screening. In that way, it can extend their documentary and author durability, and it would create possibilities to screen these works in the cinemas. [...] The film production made in war remains a precious and unavoidable document about the war days in Sarajevo. [...] This filmography will be a precious database for the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina cinematography, as well as for a general war picture in Bosnia and its capital, Sarajevo." Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 The project was financed by The Ministry for Culture and Education Sarajevo. The book is a chronological list of all the films made in the war that fulfilled certain criteria established by the editors. The criteria were:

- "the documentaries display a film language, i.e. a film narrative structure with a cinematographic character

- the social, cultural and receptive concept in which the work has been presented would be more important than technological and material basis on which it was done." *Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996* (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998), 240.

42 These sources will reveal the elementary question on who was involved and where (which production units).

43 Caldwell argued that these are the considerations that need to be taken along when evaluating which documents are considered relevant for the research. Patrick Vonderau, "Borderlands, Contact Zones, and Boundary Games: a Conversation with John T. Caldwell," in *Behind the Screen: Inside European Production Cultures*, ed. Petr Szczepanik and Patrick Vonderau (London/New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 20.

Ethnographic field observation of production areas and interviews with film people

Ethnographic field observation of the production culture is in the case of this research not possible for obvious reasons. The absence of witnessing the *making of* directly will be complemented by qualitative semi-structured interviews with the involved filmworkers, in this study the producers and director of the chosen case studies. The interviewees in this research will be taken as a source to tell their perspective on what motivated them and for describing the production circumstances at the time. The interviews will be held in Sarajevo.

Social scientists Hockey and Forsey have written about how very often in research, participatory observation is considered (in their opinion unjustifiably) superior over interviews in terms of the reported information. They find that, without a valid reason, researchers often assume that interviewees' stories are different than what they actually do in practice.⁴⁴ In this research the interviews will be treated as one of the main contributing sources as they can also give a context, the reasoning and thoughts preceding certain choices.⁴⁵ This is particularly useful for the question about motivation.

The interviews will be semi-structured because a more conversational style of interviewing is considered suitable because it allows for new questions to arise based on given information. The openness of the method will allow not just to get the answers, but also the reasons behind them. The questions about the production circumstances will be mainly focused on themes of the economic circumstances for the production of films, research for films, involved filmworkers, number of shooting days, filming locations, technical equipment, distribution, safety issues etc. The potential issue of memory will be complemented with the use of contemporary sources, such as newspapers, that will be described in the next section.

44 "We argue that the often unintentional arrogance of the social researcher that Giddens alerts us to is very apparent in claims made about the ability participant observation/ethnography bestows upon the researcher to see beyond what people say they do to what they actually do, and/or to highlight the contradictions of lived reality." Jenny Hockey and Martin Forsey, "Ethnography is Not Participant Observation: Reflections on the Interview as Participatory Qualitative Research," in *The Interview: An Ethnographic Approach*, ed. Jam Staples (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 75.

45 Hockey and Forsey stated that interviews are particularly useful to extract the thoughts and values that people base their actions on. Ibid, 72.

Newspaper articles

As been stated before, the oral accounts of filmworkers cannot be considered exhaustive. In this research an additional component was considered necessary. These will be newsarticles about the production of films from time of the war. Interviews with filmmakers can be found and there it can be extracted what they were saying *then* about the production circumstances and their motivation.

The newsarticles will be studied before the interviews to be able to refer to important information. The source for the articles will be the digitized printmedia database of Media Center Sarajevo. The articles can be searched by keywords and will be done with the titles of the films and directors that form the case studies in this research. The newspapers will be the Bosnian daily newspaper *Oslobođenje*, *Sineast* (film critics magazine) and articles from international print media.⁴⁶

Documentaries

The documentaries from the makers (that will be chosen as case studies) will be used for possible illustrative purposes of the findings/results in the analysis. It can exemplify how the study of production culture allows us also to better understand the media texts.

Table 1. Cross-check sources to answer research questions

Cross-check sources	What is it that motivated the film workers?	How did they (technically) make films?
War filmography		✓
<i>Sineast</i> magazine	✓	✓
Semi-structured interviews	✓	✓
Newspaper articles	✓	✓

⁴⁶ The Dutch *Volkscrant*, The *Los Angeles Times*, The *New York Times*.

Analysis of the results

After the industrial analysis of the active productions two representative examples of war production companies will be chosen for the case study. After the interviews are conducted with their filmworkers, the data analysis will follow. The Grounded Theory will be used for data analysis because the method is bottom-up and it can be applied to all sorts of data, which makes it an applicable choice as the data will be gathered from different types of sources.⁴⁷ Its aim is to inductively (through an open coding process) come to a theory about the phenomenon it is analyzing, hence bottom-up.⁴⁸

Based on Grounded Theory the interviews will all be read/watched through and imported into NVivo for the coding process.⁴⁹ The texts will be broken up into coherent statements that will be organized in nodes. The nodes will be given titles that summarize and explain the essence of the filmmakers' arguments. After the entire interviews are coded and nodes are created the aim is to discover (from different filmmakers) patterns within the explicit or implied meanings of their responses. The nodes would then be inductively and thematically grouped together related to the motivation of Sarajevan filmmakers to continue their profession of filmmaking in Sarajevo between 1992 en 1995.

The summarized statements from the first level of coding, that will be grouped together in categories will be enlisted in appendix B. In the case of entirely different answers and the absence of repetition/overlapping it will mean that the research has not reached saturation and that additional case studies will be needed. Because Caldwell's method and Grounded Theory are methods of constant comparison, after the interviews, excerpts from newspaper articles and film magazines from the war period will be (selectively) coded into

47 The method will be put to use to systematically analyse data from the interviews and articles contrary to what would be merely a descriptive analysis. The Grounded Theory is a systematic method in the Social sciences to analyse qualitative data. Grounded Theory gathers information before making conclusions. It uses inductive reasoning and immersion in the data collection and is a constant comparative method. "Grounded Theory is the study of a concept. It is not a descriptive study of a descriptive problem. It is the study of a concept. [...] And the concept needs a pattern." Barney Glaser, "Grounded Theory is the study of a concept!" *YouTube* video, 0:16, 14 November, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcpxaLQDnLk>.

48 Juliet Corbin & Anselm Strauss, "Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria," in *Qualitative Sociology*, ed. David Smilde and Becca Hanson, vol.13 (Springer US, 1990), 23.

49 Then codes will be applied to the interview texts and nodes created. The different statements will be inductively organized into themes. For the inductive reasoning the research question will be kept in mind throughout the coding. The identified categories will be separated into themes related to the motivation and themes related to the production of the films.

the process for the cross-check between what is being said now and then.⁵⁰ Finally a visual presentation of the findings will be given. This is a step in the Grounded Theory called *axial coding* where the relations between identified categories are presented.⁵¹ The categories will be presented in a Venn diagrams.⁵²

The parts of the interviews related to the practical part of filmmaking will have more specific questions than in the part related to motivation. The questions will be related to for example the economic circumstances for the production of the films. In war-time, when there was no funding, where did the filmmakers get the money from and what was it spent on? Another important question was how they did research for the film, and/or to describe the creative process. In addition, the involved filmworkers, their expertise, the shooting days, locations, equipment, and editing facilities will be discussed. The responses will be (selectively) coded in NVivo based on the aforementioned topics. The specific nodes/meaningful statements will be found in Appendix C.

Through this process of collecting information from different sources and comparing them, a comprehensive answer will be presented as to how the filmmakers articulate(/d) and explain(/-ed) their motivation and production process of documentary films in war-time. The (potential) overlapping answers between the different case studies will give insight into what connected these different productions and filmmakers in their endeavours under the extreme circumstances of war and come close to a saturated answer on what drove filmworkers and how they (technically) made films.

50 Juliet Corbin and Anselm Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques* (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 116.

51 Ibid, 96.

52 The main identified patterns in findings will be presented. Venn diagrams are used to display shared relationships between a few select categories.

Findings

Industry analysis: the state of the BH Film Industry from its independence and beginning of the war

On the 1st of March 1992, the Republic Bosnia and Herzegovina had claimed political and economic independence from Yugoslavia and therefore symbiotically also its cinematography from the former label of Yugoslav cinema. On the sixth of April 1992, the independence of the country was also recognized by the European Economic Community and the United States. On this same day the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina started.⁵³

The BH cinematography from the beginning of the war was faced with two challenges; it had abruptly become an independent film industry, and there was a war. *Sineast*, the film critics magazine, entered an entire new period when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina started in 1992. It became part of what they considered the spiritual and cultural resistance of Sarajevan citizens to the aggression.⁵⁴ *Sineast* brought forward in their first war edition that the war was the main cause, but not the only contributing factor to a sudden non-existent film industry in Bosnia and Herzegovina in its fullest sense.

The interdependent organization of the film industry at the time of Yugoslavia was *another* contributing factor to the unfavourable situation BH cinematography found itself in 1992.⁵⁵ According to the authors of *Sineast*, it was when the country became independent that it became apparent how much Bosnia and Herzegovina had been a "cinematic colony" of Belgrade and Zagreb.⁵⁶ What *Sineast* does not explain to their readers, but what needs to be briefly explained here, is the former Yugoslav film industry system.

The Yugoslav Federal units used to have all their own film studio's in their capitals and funds, but there was also a regular exchange in terms of

⁵³ Ralph Zaklin, *The United Nations Secretariat and the Use of Force in a Unipolar World Power V. Principle* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 47.

⁵⁴ "War *Sineast* - Because!" *Sineast*. (August 1992): 3.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

technical equipment and industry professionals between the different Republics.⁵⁷ However not all the Republics had equally strong local film industries and the exchange was not equally distributed.⁵⁸ Zagreb, Belgrade and Ljubljana were the biggest film centres in the former country.⁵⁹ For a very long time the only film academies were existent in these cities. The biggest film studio Avalon was built near Belgrade. It is for these exemplary reasons that the other centres had more film professions and workers than Sarajevo.⁶⁰ Under the circumstances of war the editorial of *Sineast* for this reason, bitterly alleged (whether rightfully or not) that BH cinematography before the war was the ground for the practice of filmmakers from the other Republics.⁶¹ This had in turn later implications for Bosnia's technological assets and its pool of skilled film professionals.⁶²

With the dissolution of Yugoslav cinema, Bosnia and Herzegovina was on its own. Without the help from the other centres in terms of film professionals, film equipment and facilities, it was suddenly faced with the problem that an entire film crew with all the necessary film professions could not be put together in its film capital Sarajevo.⁶³ This was not only caused because people refuged, died or went to the opposing territories and authorities.⁶⁴ The problem was according to the *Sineast* contributors, in particular, that there was no variety in film professions in the centre of

57 The national film studios wanted the most reknown cast and directors and therefore film professionals would travel across the country. This has caused after the break-up and war sometimes (verbal) conflicts whether certain films from Yugoslavia were Croatian or Bosnian for example. If the film was produced in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bosnians would claim it was their national/cultural heritage, but because the director had come from the Croatian Republic, the Croats argue today that the film is legacy of the national film history of Croatia This was the case with the film *Battle of Neretva* directed by Veljko Bulajić (1969). Nebojša Jovanović, "Bosnian Cinema in the Socialist Yugoslavia and the Anti-Yugoslav backlash," *Kinokultura.com*, 2012, <http://www.kinokultura.com/specials/14/jovanovic.shtml>. (Accessed February 25, 2016).

58 "The wars of succession in Yugoslavia fractured the country into five separate states, each one inheriting in the former Republican-centered film infrastructure and assets that existed before 1991. The most extensive assets are located in Belgrade, Zagreb, and Ljubljana. Lesser assets are located in Sarajevo and Skopje." Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 187.

59 Ibid.

60 Nenad Dizdarević (BH film director) in a pre-interview conversation with the author, February 2016.

61 "BiH Cinema, thanks to a longtime practice (more precisely the common practice) of being the ground for training of film professionals from other Republics, now does not have the personel to gather one entire film crew. It is not only that filmmakers and collaborators left Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina, sided with the aggressor, found refuge in voluntary exile, or were trapped outside BiH. Even if no one had left, without the "help" of other film and television centers, in this country, you cannot put together a standard film crew. The many years of neglect in the personnel policy of the Association of Filmmakers has become so obvious that no one can even get upset anymore". Milan Cvijanović, "BH Filmography April-August 1992," *Sineast War edition*. (August 1992): 5.

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 "...The many years of neglect in the personnel policy of the Association of Filmmakers has become so obvious that no one can even get upset anymore". Milan Cvijanović, "BH Filmography," 5.

Sarajevo due to bad local human resource planning within the local film industry in the former country.⁶⁵

Sineast editors added a positive note that in spite of the country's issue of the missing variety in film professionals, the Republic Bosnia and Herzegovina did have a long authorial independence and recognition of their "homegrown" directors that managed to put down aesthetic norms throughout the 40 years of the cinematography in Yugoslavia.⁶⁶ But now the independent national film industry had to start from "scratch". It was evident that the artistic independence needed to be followed also by an organizational independence of the country's cinematography.⁶⁷

By the time the first war edition of *Sineast* was published (in August 1992) filmworkers had started to organize, focusing on different aspects such as drafting a proposal for a new Law for Cinematography to be delivered to the Ministry of Culture for its adoption.⁶⁸ However throughout the war the government had not ratified a new Law.⁶⁹ It was also necessary to establish and ratify a Law on the Kinoteque as the film Archive of state importance, and organize the establishment of a new laboratory and technical base.⁷⁰ A lot of destroyed cinemas would need to be rebuilt. Bosnia and Herzegovina would need new distribution companies. An association of film workers would have to be created, and education ought to be facilitated for the missing film professions.⁷¹ These were some of the tasks that *Sineast* put forward that needed to be organized in (re)building Bosnia's film industry. However, what is

65 Ibid.

66 "In the late 1950s, the Sarajevo group of documentary filmmakers associated with *Bosna* film established a well-deserved domestic and international reputation for stylistic inventiveness and political boldness. Two of its leading documentarists, Bahrudin Bata Čengić and Boro Drašković, emerged at the end of the 1960s as important feature film directors who contributed significantly to new film tendencies [...] An especially fruitful period of Bosnian feature film production occurred in the 1980s. Most international attention was directed towards the extraordinary critical and popular successes of the first three feature films directed by Emir Kusturica in his native Sarajevo; *Do You Remember Dolly Bell?* (1981), *When Father Was Away On Business* (1985) and *Time of the Gypsies* (1989). There were, however, a significant number of other feature films and short films produced during the period that underscored the sophistication and vitality of Sarajevo's film culture. Among significant Sarajevo-based directors who made important short films and feature films during this period were Vesna Ljubić, Nikola Stojanović, Zlatko Lavanić, Miroslav Mandić, Mirza Idrizović and Ademir Kenović." Goulding, *Liberated Cinema*, 228-229.

67 Milan Cvijanović, "BH Filmography April-August 1992," 6.

68 Because BH cinema through its government agencies needs to ratify it as soon as possible via the competent ministries all agreements on cultural cooperation and even film cooperation, for filmmakers to be able to be represented beyond the borders of BH. Milan Cvijanović, "BH Filmography," 6.

69 "Kinoteka BiH," *Cultureshutdown.net: Bosnia and Herzegovina's Cultural Institutions in Crisis*, September 23, 2012, <http://www.cultureshutdown.net/kinoteka-bih/>. (Accessed February 27, 2016).

70 Gordana Bobinac, "Ten points for the program orientation of BH cinematography", *Sineast War edition*. (August 1992): 12.

71 Milan Cvijanović, "BH Filmography April-August 1992," *Sineast War edition*. (August 1992): 6.

particularly relevant to this research is the situation concerning the (active) production companies and filmworkers in war-time.

Because there was not an industry in place it made what Caldwell calls the micro-level organization even more important.⁷² The three biggest production companies in Sarajevo from before the war, had disappeared in the beginning of the war.⁷³ Production company Sutjeska film had its premises at Jagomir, which were already in the beginning of the war near the front line.⁷⁴ Its destruction meant also the end of the biggest technical base and film archive in Sarajevo.⁷⁵

During April 1992, the employees of Sutjeska film managed to save some equipment and a large part of the film archive. At that moment it was everything that the Bosnian national cinematography possessed.⁷⁶ Bosna Film and Forum, two other big production companies, disappeared completely. In the conversation with Asim Muftić, he explained that the reason behind the biggest production companies shutting down was that people split up. Because the war had started some people went to work for the television and others left.⁷⁷ But not everybody had left.⁷⁸ In its manifest called "Because" the *Sineast* war editorial stated how there was a certain phenomenon when the war started that was quite remarkable. They dedicated their war edition to this phenomenon:

Because in this city also some fools have stayed, whose nationality is that of a film worker (besides Bosniaks, Muslims, Serbs, Croats, Jews, Roma and others, who care more about the last name of being human than the national one) who have, some with arms, others with an electronic camera decided to save Sarajevo, at least its name and dignity. Because in wars usually the culture is destroyed

72 Caldwell considers that a lot of the important decision-making around mediatexts actually occurs at the organisation "micro-level", at the workflow. Caldwell, "Cultures of Production," 201.

73 Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," *Sineast War edition 3-4* (November 1995): 19.

74 Asim Muftić (employee BH National Film Archive) in a conversation with the author, January 2016.

75 Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 19.

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid.

78 "War Sineast - Because!" *Sineast*. (August 1992): 2.

first, and here it is not.⁷⁹

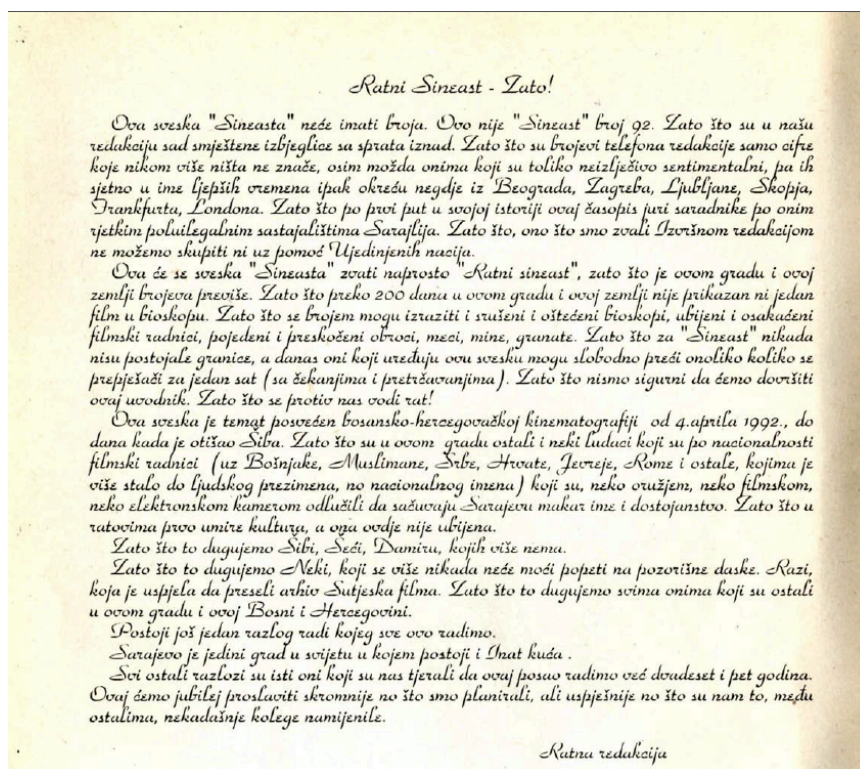


Figure 1. Illustration of *Sineast's* manifesto. "War Sineast - Because!"

Therefore in spite of many lost BH filmworkers due to different reasons, there was also quite a large number that stayed in the city and continued their professional activities.⁸⁰ Because there was a lack of film professionals and particular expertise in film-making, this would be filled in with new filmworkers (or sometimes with people from other branches or professions). This was naturally first carried out among the students from the Academy of Performing Arts.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 19.

⁸¹ What is very important to point out in relation to the opening of this Academy... If there was not this Academy then today we would not have the directors Danis Tanović, Dino Mustafić, Jasmila Zbanić etc. Also in particular the theatre and film actors that we have today performing at our theatres would not be there. It would perhaps be amateuristic. So the opening of the Academy was a very significant moment in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because during the war there was an active cultural resistance by making films and theatre plays that would have not been in place if it was not for the existence of this Academy. Nenad Dizdarević (BH film director) in a pre-interview conversation with the author, February 2016.



Figure 2. Class 1989 of directing at the Academy of Performing Arts: Danis Tanović, Srđan Vuletić, Pjer Žalica, Sanja Hadžić, Marko Mamuzić.⁸²

Table 2. Filmworkers active in war.⁸³

Established filmworkers; e.g.	Cinematographers; e.g.	Students of the Academy of Performing arts ('89 & '92); e.g.	Former TV workers; e.g.	Filmworkers that became directors and screenwriters; e.g.	Journalists, public figures, writers; e.g.
Ademir Kenović	Mustafa Mustafić	Dino Mustafić	Antonio Nino Žalica	Mehmed Akšamija	Tvrtko Kulenović
Nenad Dizdarević	Dragan Resner	Pjer Žalica	Miroslav Benković	Kemal Hrustanović	Enver Dizdar
Zlatko Lavanić	Miljenko Uherka	Srđan Vuletić	Ismet Nuno Arnautalić	Refik Beširević	Zdravko Grebo
Vlatko Filipović	Šahin Šišić	Danis Tanović			
Mirjana Zoranović		Ahmed Imamović			
Bakir Tanović					
Bato Čengić					
Vefik Hadžismailović					
Šahin Šišić					
Nedžad Begović					

⁸² Dino Bajramović, "In the war anonymous, brave and young, the BH directors are today's internationally reknown film authors," *Slobodna Bosna* (March 2003): 48.

⁸³ Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 21.

Vesna Ljubić					
Haris Prolić					
Benjamin Filipović					
Mirza Idrizović					
Vuk Janić					
Sejfudin Tanović					
Ines Tanović					
Nikola Đurđević					
Gojko Šipovac					

Active production companies in the war

According to the second war edition of *Sineast*, twelve production units were active during all the years of the siege.⁸⁴ Some of them were active before the war, others were new.⁸⁵ This information corresponds also with the second main source for the industry analysis, the Filmography of the National Film Archive in Sarajevo with the war-time as referential period January 1 1992 - December 31 1995.⁸⁶

Table 3. Overview of the most active productions in the war after cross-checking *Sineast* and the *Filmography*:

Production company	Number of films
Atalanta	1
SaGA	58
Profil	5
International Centre for Peace, Sarajevo	3
RTV BiH	12
FAOS	11
TV BiH	19
K.A.Family Sarajevo	1
Visual Art Studio Sarajevo	1

⁸⁴ Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 19.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ The project was financed by The Ministry for Culture and Education Sarajevo. The book is a chronological list of all the films made in the war that fulfilled certain criteria established by the editors. The criteria were:

- production quality fulfils conditions for cinema screening. In that way, it would extend their documentary and author durability, and it would create possibilities to screen these works in the cinemas, the documentaries display a film language, i.e. a film narrative structure with a cinematographic character; "the social, cultural and receptive concept in which the work has been presented would be more important than technological and material basis on which it was done." *Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996* (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998), 240.

Ton Light	1
Slovenian Cultural Association Cankar	1
"Dokument"	1
Lav Film Studio ⁸⁷	2

The case studies

From the still active film productions during war-time it has come out that production unit SaGA had the vastest oeuvre of (documentary) films. TV BiH was the second largest in terms of the number of productions, and somewhat smaller but also active, were FAOS and Profil. Within the scope of this study it is not possible to research all production companies and/or all films. As already stated the criteria for determining the case studies was where the most *material* and *film workers* are accessible for analysis and interviews today.

Most of SaGA's films are accessible online today on their official website as this production company unit is still active.⁸⁸ The producers of SaGA and the directors are accessible for interviews. SaGA makes an advantageous case study in terms of material and human resources to cover the components of the production culture research method. An interesting additional fact is that SaGA was internationally the best-known production unit from war-time in Sarajevo whose films travelled at different festivals.⁸⁹

Interviews were held with the founders and producers: Ademir Kenović and Ismet Nuno Arnautalić. Kenović is today also a producer and director.⁹⁰ Known feature film titles that he has directed are: *Kuduz* (1989), *A Perfect Circle* (1997), *Secret Passage* (2004).⁹¹ Ismet Nuno Arnautalić is still producing for SaGA. His newest project is called *A Daily Dose of Sarajevo*.⁹²

Apart from the producers of SaGA one director of the productions was

87 N.B. Lav Film Studio was omitted in the filmography, but was mentioned in *Sineast* as an important contributor since one of the two films they made won the grand prix at Krakow Film Festival in 1993, *To Europe with Love* directed by Mirjana Zoranović. Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 23.

88 *Sagafilm.com*, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.sagafilm.com>.

89 SaGA has received many international awards. Their films have been shown on numerous TV stations, screened at many festivals, and they are also a recipient of the prestigious Felix. Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography", 23.

90 Refresh production was founded by Ademir Kenović in 1998. Their focus is television and film production and distribution. *Refresh.ba*, accessed February 25, 2016, <http://www.refresh.ba>.

91 Ademir Kenović is also the producer of many post-war BH film titles that have been internationally rewarded such as *Fuse* (Pjer Žalica, 2003), *Kod Amidže Idriza* (Pjer Žalica, 2004), *Karaula* (Rajko Grlić, 2006), *Armin* (Ognjen Sviličić, 2007).

92 Every day Arnautalić films the streets and the people of Sarajevo and posts the footage on Facebook. The project is intended for Sarajevans, who have left for various reasons, but who still have a strong desire to maintain their bonds with Sarajevo. *Sagafilm.com*, accessed February 20, 2016, <http://www.sagafilm.com>.

the in-depth case study to obtain a more detailed response to the research questions on how the films were (practically) made and what motivated the filmmakers.

Director Srđan Vuletić, maker of the war documentary *I Burnt Legs* was willing to participate in the research. Srđan Vuletić was in 1992 still a student at the Academy of Performing Arts. He was the first generation of the Directing department that had opened in Sarajevo in 1989.⁹³ From the summer in 1992 he continued his film career where he had left it, but now in war-time. Today he is teaching at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo and is one of the authors associated with the BH national cinema.⁹⁴ He has made five documentaries in the war: *I Burnt Legs* (1992), *March 8* (1993), *War Cinema in Sarajevo* (1994), *Electricity* (1995).

The second case study was the smaller production unit Profil, and director Nenad Dizdarević. Profil consisted of five people and they had produced five films. According to *Sineast* Profil belonged to the more active productions in war-time.⁹⁵ Profil consisted of film workers that were already active a long time before the war. It makes a contrasted and insightful case study as Nenad Dizdarević belonged to the already established generation of filmmakers from Sarajevo.

Dizdarević started his career in 1975 when he was twenty years old during his study of directing at the Academy of Arts in Belgrade with his first feature film in 1977, *Žena Na Kamenu*, based on a novel by Ivo Andrić.⁹⁶ In the 1980's he made several fiction feature films that were based on motives from Yugoslav novels. That was and would become his signature.⁹⁷ Dizdarević was among the first professors at the, in 1981 founded, Academy of

93 Dino Bajramović, "In the war anonymous, brave and young, the BH directors are today's internationally reknown film authors," *Slobodna Bosna* (March 2003): 48.

94 Namely many of SaGA (war-time) directors are today's reknown authors of the national cinema of Bosnia and Herzegovina whereas at the time they were only in the very beginning of their professional careers. Srđan Vuletić is known for his internationally awarded fiction feature films: *Summer in the Golden Valley* (2003) i.a. Tiger Award at the International Rotterdam Film Festival in 2004, *Teško Je Biti Fin* (2007). For his short *Hop, Skip and Jump* (2000). He was the scriptwriter for the short film *Ten Minutes* (2002), winner of the European Film Award. He has produced the short films: *The First Paycheck* (2005), *42 1/2* (2003). Today he works as a professor at the Academy of Performing Arts, course for Screenwriting. This year he has also directed his first theatre play: *When We Would All Speak Out Loud*.

95 SaGA has received many international awards. Their films have been shown on numerous TV stations, screened at many festivals, and they are also a recipient of the prestigious Felix. Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 20.

96 Nenad Dizdarević (BH film director) in a pre-interview conversation with the author, February 2016.

97 *Gazija* (1981) based on a novel by Ivo Andrić, *I To Će Proći* (1985). Ibid.

Performing Arts in Sarajevo. Nenad Dizdarević was finishing a feature film (*The Tough Teens*) when the war started and has made documentary films during the war. Nenad Dizdarević has made *A Blue Guide* - documentary (1992), *The Tough Teens* - feature (1994), and *The Fourth Part of the Brain* - documentary (1995).⁹⁸ Although Profil does not exist anymore today, the films by Nenad Dizdarević are accessible and he agreed to present the story of their in war-time film production. Today Dizdarević is the co-founder and professor at the Sarajevo Film Academy.

⁹⁸ *Filmography Sarajevo 1992-1996* (Sarajevo: National Film Archive Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1998).

What is it that motivated the filmmakers to make the documentaries?

The interviews that were held with the producers of SaGA; Ademir Kenović, Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, director Srđan Vuletić and Profil's director Nenad Dizdarević, revealed common threads in arguments in the filmmakers' perspectives on why they felt personally driven and morally obliged to stay in the war and continue their normal life and work of a filmmaker. These threads have formed the thematic categories in answering the research question on what motivated them to make the documentaries.

The war had brought a new context to their personal circumstances and their professional lives. Some were left without their regular job, others had to stop their film study, and established filmworkers had to adapt from Yugoslav (big) film productions to what they call "guerilla filmmaking".⁹⁹ Nevertheless the filmmakers spoke about new reasons to continue their profession at that time in Sarajevo. Based on my analysis of the gathered data, I will answer the question on how the filmmakers articulated the motivation to make films during the war in the following sections corresponding with the found thematic categories; *cultural resistance*, *creative freedom*, *irritation with the Western media*, *making films/documentaries vs. news*, and *screening them abroad*. These are visually presented in the Venn diagram on the next page.

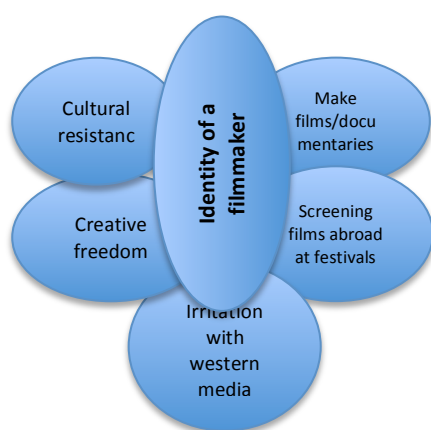


Figure 2. Axial coding of the identified categories related to what motivated the makers to make films in the war-time in Sarajevo.

⁹⁹ Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović, Sarajevo, March 10th, 2016.

Saturation was reached for the research question about motivation of the film makers to make the war-time documentaries. The motivation categories are covered in-depth in the following sections.

Being a filmmaker and pursuing cultural resistance

The filmmakers stated in the interviews that they wanted to continue their regular life and carry on the work in their film profession. This might be seen as an unusual decision in the context of war, as they had to film outside in a city that was under siege, under constant shelling and gunfire.

As can be seen from the specific nodes/or the statements in Appendix B under the category *cultural resistance* it was revealed that in the filmmakers' view there was no question about whether to stay or leave the city, as Nenad Dizdarević explained:

At the very beginning of the aggression, in April/May, there was a number of people that was scared, which is completely normal, human and understandable. They spent a lot of time in the basements, out of their fear. I had decided for myself that if something would happen, it could happen there as well. I could not spend my entire day in the basement. In a sense I did not feel that kind of fear. That was a decision I made, to go out and do something.¹⁰⁰

The filmmakers brought forward in the interviews various reasons for the determination to stay and film. An important reason for the filmmakers was the urge for resistance to the surreal situation that they were caught in by continuing their own (cultural) profession.¹⁰¹ Numerous individual claims at the first level of open coding that the filmworkers articulated were related to

100 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović, Sarajevo, March 13th, 2016.

101 Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović, Sarajevo, February 5th, 2016.

this urge for resistance through a cultural form, by making films. At times it was explicitly stated:

There was a cultural resistance to the barbarians that wanted to demolish everything that was symbol of the city.¹⁰²

and in other statements also implicitly:

Filmworkers just want to make films, that is why they invested their money in films and not other war necessities.¹⁰³

As the filmmakers started to be organized, their work was also recognized and they got support by the government in the way that they did not have to join the army forces.¹⁰⁴ They were exempt from the army and got accreditations as filmmakers.¹⁰⁵ One could think that being exempt from the army could have been also a potential perhaps even very strong motivation for choosing to make films. Although the topic was brought up by the film workers, it was never articulated as influencing the decision to make films.

The cultural resistance (internalised) motive was to show that life went on "normally".¹⁰⁶ For the filmworkers they said that would be to do what they usually did and knew best, to make films. The filmworkers added that there was a wider phenomenon of cultural resistance in Sarajevo. Among most of the citizens, but especially in cultural circles, who stoically continued their work in the arts, theatre and other creative work.¹⁰⁷ For the filmworkers the "weapon" for their (cultural) resistance was the camera:

102 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović, Sarajevo, March 13th, 2016.

103 Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović, Sarajevo, March 1st, 2016.

104 Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

105 Ibid.

106 There were theatre plays in the war, exhibitions and literature evenings. Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

107 Ibid.



Figure 3. Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, producer of SaGA (in the middle) explained that in the war the resistance with the camera was more suited to them.¹⁰⁸

It was better for a filmworker to carry a camera than a gun which was not his profession.¹⁰⁹

The statements from the interviews today about *cultural resistance* were cross-checked with contemporary articles from the war. In the first war edition of film magazine *Sineast* the editors described the phenomenon of cultural resistance of continuing the normal and professional life already in their introduction.¹¹⁰ In the films themselves this topic of cultural resistance of continuing their life and film profession was illustratively shown too. In his film *I Burnt Legs*, Vuletić says that the war had interrupted his study of filmmaking. Nevertheless, it is evident that he has continued to make films. Therefore information about the decision-making process and reasoning behind the productions of continuing their normal life provides insight into the films texts and explains (at least partially) as to why the following scene was incorporated into the film:

¹⁰⁸ Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

¹⁰⁹ Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović, Sarajevo, March 1st, 2016.

¹¹⁰ "Because in this city also some fools have stayed, whose nationality is film worker (beside Bosniak, Muslim, Serb, Croat, Jew, Roma and others, who care more about the human last name, than the national) and who, some with weaponry, some with film or electronic camera decided to save Sarajevo, at least its dignity. Because in wars usually culture is destroyed first, and here it is not. "War Sineast - Because!" *Sineast War edition* (August 1992): 2.



Figure 4. Filmstills from *I Burnt Legs*.

Nenad Dizdarević in *The Fourth Part of the Brain* filmed/documented the destinies of the children that had acted in his feature *The Tough Teens*. He tried to find them all across the countries of former Yugoslavia. At the same time a Japanese Television Station was producing a making-of of Dizdarević's film *The Lost Years; Teenagers in Sarajevo*.¹¹¹ The Japanese cameramen are visible in Dizdarević's film as they were registering a filmmaker at work in the war. The viewer sees Nenad Dizdarević and a camera in the film, as he is looking for the children and interacting with them.

These two examples from the documentaries show that the directors are not present in the classic participatory role of the documentary genre.¹¹² They were also the protagonists/subjects in their films. The viewer can observe how the war had affected their lives but also sees that they had continued making films in war-time.

111 *Lost Years: Teenagers in Sarajevo*, directed by Kyoko Gendatsu, NHK Japan Broadcasting Corporation, 1995.

112 The Participatory Mode is the type of documentary where the filmmaker and film subject(s) are in dialogue. The protagonist(s) is interviewed by the filmmaker. Therefore the filmmaker himself appears in the film. The filmmaker interviews the people formally. Bill Nichols, *Introduction to Documentary* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indian University Press, 2001), 99.

113 *Lost Years: Teenagers in Sarajevo*, directed by Kyoko Gendatsu, NHK Japan Broadcasting Corporation, 1995.



Figure 4. Still from the Japanese making-of where they are registering filmmaker Dizdarević at work in war for the film *Lost Years: Teenagers in Sarajevo*.¹¹³

An important interrelated circumstance and factor for the cultural resistance and a motivating force behind making the films was the filmmakers' possibility for *creative freedom*. They all individually had the favourable condition that they were able to exert their creative freedom and choose what they wanted to make, as described in the next section.

Creative freedom

In the interviews the filmmakers' articulated the importance of their creative and artistic freedom. Especially Vuletić's interview was insightful. He was invited by the producers of SaGA to join the SaGA Sarajevo Group of Authors, but was treated as an independent filmmaker and would be given a filmcrew when he felt he needed one. All the filmmakers expressed that there were no restrictions, censorship or orders as to what they were ought to make. Vuletić stated:

Nobody even asked for an informative level of filmmaking. But they simply said: Do what you like. Therefore it was put down to our level of decision-making. We had the freedom.¹¹⁴

This meant that the filmmakers could work in their own manner and for Vuletić that was defining for an artist.¹¹⁵ The freedom gave Vuletić the opportunity to do something different than what was already produced for television.¹¹⁶ He wanted, what he called, to capture the spirit of the time through the events and the reactions of people as he considered this could never be re-created again.¹¹⁷

Dizdarević brought forward that the production units in war-time were organized based on similar aesthetic and ethical principles. The same was also stated by the producer of SaGA. What was common among them was that they were making documentaries and that they were personal. The films expressed their own experiences of being a filmmaker and/or citizen of Sarajevo. The reason behind this (creative) choice is discussed in the next section.

Nevertheless, the creative freedom in the production culture process was said to have been a decisive factor for the filmtexts. In relation to this, in *Sineast* it was stated that the filmmakers made a diversified selection of creative films on different topics exhibiting different styles.¹¹⁸

Aggravation with international media

The interviewed filmmakers articulated that they were informed about and not content with the manner in which Western media were reporting about the war in their country.¹¹⁹ Together with cultural resistance and creative freedom, this additionally motivated them to make films. The discontent influentially shaped the documentaries that would be in contrast to what the international news

114 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

115 Ibid.

116 Interview with Ademir Kenović and Srđan Vuletić.

117 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

118 "The production is diverse, rich in genres, interesting and achieving international succes". Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 22.

119 "Well it was here on television. There was a TV show, something called like "Others About Us" and there it would be shown what they were broadcasting about us. [...] Therefore that was one of the motivations for me." Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

agencies were doing.¹²⁰ The filmmakers told me during the interviews that there was a general oversimplification in the media, expressing the war and situation only in terms of different sides (muslims, Croats and Serbs), the numbers of casualties, and showing only poverty and misery. The filmmakers articulated that the media were giving false information depicting the nature of the conflict as a civil or religious war and this was another drive for them to react.¹²¹ The nodes that illustrated these claims are:

The Western media were simplifying the war talking in numbers and sides.¹²²

The television was making a cliché situation with three sides in a war, religious war etc.¹²³

They were showing only poverty and misery.¹²⁴

The average viewer in the world could not have identified and empathized with such reports according to the the Sarajevan filmmakers.¹²⁵ The journalists came to Sarajevo politically briefed, the filmmakers stated in the interviews. The editorial centres of Western media were giving political input to their journalists. According to Kenović it was not as much the fault of the journalists, as they were being instructed:¹²⁶

120 The nodes that show the filmmakers' thoughts on (Western) media output are also enlisted in Appendix B.

121 "It was the problem with the editorial centres of media, of world media, that were receiving political inputs that were the problem. I know a lot cases when foreign journalists would write that this was a civil war. When they gave to me what they had written I would tell them that they can write whatever but that it simply has never been a civil war here." Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

122 Interview Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

123 "The television were making a cliché situation. Three sides in war, religious war and such stupid things. That was not the truth. We were satisfied that we could change that general opinion at least for a little bit!" Interview Ismet Nuno Arnautić

124 Nodes Appendix B.

125 "And secondly that I had a certain opinion and irritation about the reporting that was happening by the international media companies from Sarajevo. The irritation was boasted because they simplified the war. For them it was easier to say: The Serbs on one side, and the Muslims on the other, and goodbye. And another thing. They were reporting numbers. Like they even do today from Syria and Iraq. "Today there were 7 dead people". Only numbers... That irritated me personally. When someone tells you that today thirteen people died and 69 were injured. What does that mean to you?? Nothing, it is just a number. Hence this irritated me to such an extent that I took my chance. "Where did all those pictures come about, of people running and crossing sniper alleys from the war. Well they came about because that foreigner was standing there at the crossing, photographer, the whole day and waited for it... It did not cross his mind that he is waiting for someone to be shot! Looking at it retrospectively... There are thousands of these photographs." Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

126 "Regarding the journalists, I knew them, they were here and they themselves were shocked. They were doing their job in the field in a way that was logical. They wanted information from all sides, so that they could be realistic and objective. They have never been a problem." Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

Making films in this context turned out to be an adequate solution, the filmmakers stated in the interviews. With the films they could counterforce the false information that was being spread.¹²⁷ The idea with the films was to tell stories from the war that would get people interested in what was happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina. They stated they made it a formula to give a humane dimension to the films, to portray everyday life of the citizens and how war had affected them.¹²⁸ The struggle of the citizens and their resistance would be something viewers could identify with according to the filmmakers.¹²⁹ This brings the choice of the makers to the genre of documentary films.

Films (documentaries) vs. the News

The filmmakers decided to make documentaries because of what they described as being characteristic to film, and in particular to documentaries. One of the crucial characteristics was related to the previous motivation of responding to world media, in that the filmmakers articulated that documentaries can inform viewers about topics they did not know about.¹³⁰ Nodes that illustrate this:

Documentaries as corrective force in society.¹³¹

Path to the truth vs. what western media were showing.¹³²

Documentary has always this dimension of life.¹³³

The films were not political but films of truth.¹³⁴ (Newspaper *Oslobođenje*)

127 Ibid.

128 I knew what irritated me most in that period and I wanted to avoid that at all costs. I wanted to transform the numbers in casualties to individual testimonies. That the people that I would film in the war, that they would be portrayed as they were, ordinary people, living under horrible circumstances. And if I would film these ordinary people in a good way, then people anywhere could identify with it. That would be much stronger than any BBC or CNN was doing." Interview Srđan Vuletić

129 Ibid.

130 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

131 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović

132 Ibid.

133 Ibid.

134 In this article an interview with filmmakers Srđan Vuletić and Nedžad Begović was published in war-time. "Films of Truth," *Oslobođenje* (February 5, 1995): 7.

Therefore, according to the filmmakers the films had to be films of truth and show the viewers another side of the war in a non-political manner.¹³⁵ Admir Kenović, producer from SaGA, explained in a contemporary interview that it was a distinguishing feature of film that it could have an impact upon their viewers:

Many people think and feel so because the film is in a position to act in a much stronger, more rapid way, than a thousand media informative messages that the political structures and even the state address to the people. Film is undoubtedly very important and for me at this time even more important because a large percentage of film works which are being "pumped" do not fall into the category that can be treated seriously. The other smaller part is therefore viewed with much greater care. Normally, the quality of the film is not to be measured by awards, nor do I think that awards are what film and filmworkers people should strive for. All that matters is the authenticity of the strength the film radiates, authenticity of the feeling, signs, meanings and the ability to attract with some magnetic power a large number of people and in this way to leave a small stamp in the time in which it happened and the time it is talking about.¹³⁶

This brings us to the second argument that was a decisive factor for the choice of genre. Documentaries have a dimension of real life but in contrast to news are not expendables.¹³⁷ It was very important according to Vuletić that the story was not anchored in a certain time but that the story would stand the test of time and still be relevant after two years.¹³⁸ The films that the filmmakers made during the war, they consider them to be still truthful on a higher level than the news coverage of the western media. Because they were not created as

135 " In the West people live in their own hedonism and don't have much of a need to look at these images. There, we did however meet with people of good will, we managed to convince them in the truth about Bosnia. Our films are not political, but films of truth, and yet they were in the eastern countries most watched by various political groups and parties... who recognized themselves in us and our situations." Ibid.

136 Interview with Admir Kenović. Elmir Jukić, "Making a film is very risky, comparable to being in a war," *Sineast* (Maart, 1996): 5.

137 Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

138 Ibid.

expendable products, not to be viewed as a newsitem one evening on television, but in the words of the directors they were made as films.¹³⁹

With the films, the filmmakers created lasting footprints about the war.¹⁴⁰ Making fiction would have been difficult but according to the filmmakers it would also make in their words no sense as the personal testimonies were everywhere. The real life dimension to documentary was capturing what Vuletić called *the spirit of the time*.

That is what I wanted to tell you. When we work here at the Academy with the film students, I show them these works and I talk about my experiences like I am telling you today. There is one thing that is very important. You have to capture the spirit of that time! That film, *Waiting for the parcel*, as most of the films made by SaGA... They can never be filmed again, they cannot be recreated. Not only can you not recreate a destroyed city... It would be too expensive. You could bring ten Hollywoods but you can never film that man again, the reaction of that man when he sees his own name on the list that he received a parcel. That happiness cannot be acted by no one. You can also not re-enact the disappointment of the people that could not find their name on the list... You would be looking: Ena Omerović... and then ahh... And then those responses to them: You can try to look for your name like 16 times, but when you are not there, you are simply not!¹⁴¹

139 Ibid.

140 Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

141 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

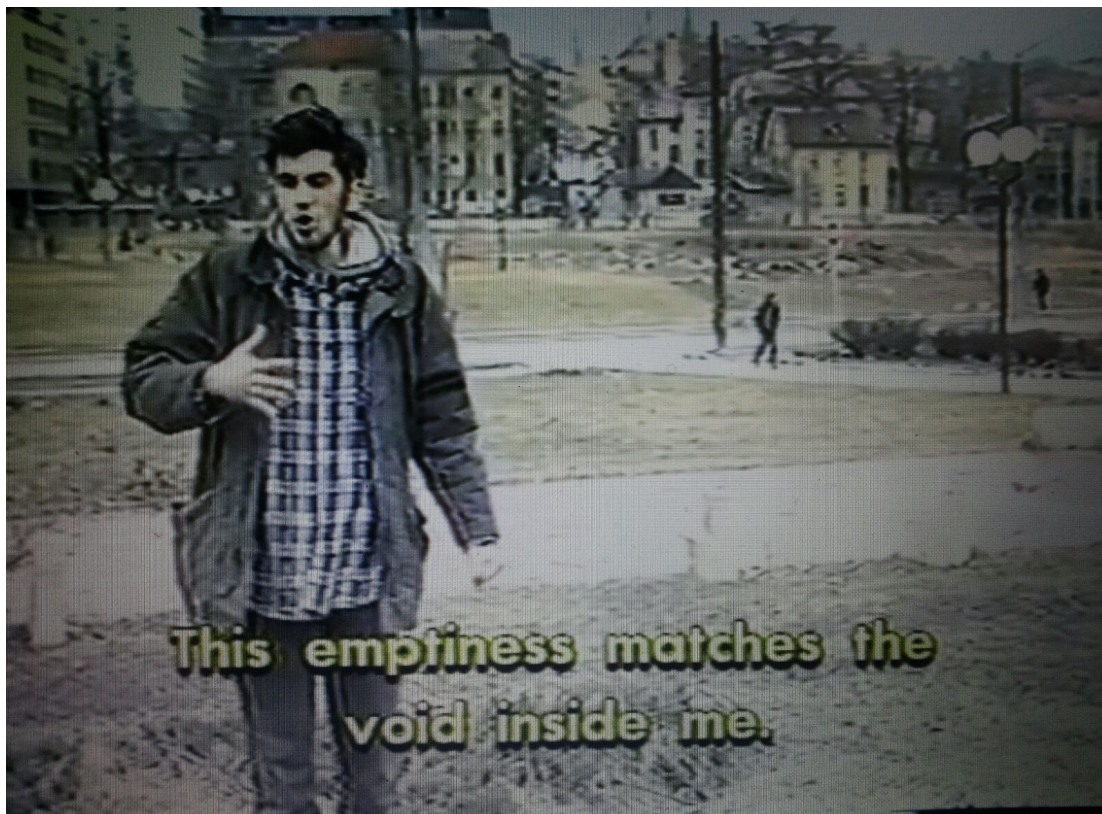


Figure 5. In the film *I Burnt Legs* Vuletić stands in front of a park and explains how the park is now without trees whereas it was full of trees before the war. He uses the empty park as a metaphor for his inner state of what the war has done to him personally.¹⁴²

For SaGA it had become (as they call it) a formula to talk frankly and directly about the human being and their everyday life as they thought that people would be able to identify and empathize with it. *I Burnt Legs* was a film Vuletić brought forward in his interview, as an exemplary film. You could tell your own testimony with documentaries and you could tell people's *personal stories*. Vuletić said that after the war he never returned to documentaries but that he wished he had made even more documentaries during the war.

Screening abroad

Interviews and articles have made clear that the films (particularly from 1994 and onward) were promoted and well received at different filmfestivals across

142 "This film deals with the atrocities of war as portrayed by a film student who spends some time working as a medic. One of the duties he performed was to carry amputated limbs to the cremation furnace. This is a film about the collective madness that engulfed Sarajevo. A one-armed boy is troubled because he can't make big, firm snowballs, a man who lost both legs demonstrates walking on his stumps... The film and the director's story help us understand the commotion and tumult that have occurred in the minds of Sarajevans." "I Burnt Legs," *Sineast* (March, 1996): 30.

Europe.¹⁴³ There was an expressed eagerness to show the films and tell a different story about what was happening in their country. The filmmakers travelled often with their films to places where they were screened, and interviews were held with the audiences.¹⁴⁴ Nodes that illustrate this e.g.:

We wanted to show the films to the world, travel and show it.¹⁴⁵

Work with people's destinies was a very rewarding idea and we were invited to many festivals.¹⁴⁶

Screening the films triggered discussions and roundtables.¹⁴⁷

The films of SaGA were shown everywhere, even at 40 festivals! (Newspaper *Oslobođenje*)¹⁴⁸

Television channels bought the films as well, e.g. Arte and Channel 4.¹⁴⁹ *The Tough Teens* of Dizdarević was shown on Arte and in ten other countries Dizdarević stated.¹⁵⁰ It was awarded the Golden Palm in Valencia. Both festivals and television would buy the film and this was the case with *The Fourth Part of the Brain* as well.¹⁵¹ The films were screened in Argeles, Göteborg, Trieste etc.

I Burnt Legs was screened at the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) in 1993. In general SaGA films were very well received on many festivals and in 1994 they were awarded also the Felix.¹⁵² The reason for the interest and increased understanding is explained by the filmmakers to be a distinguishing feature of film. Dizdarević expressed that

143 Antonio Prlenda, "Thousand Days of Siege - The Power of Pictures from Hell; The Story of SaGA is the Story of Sarajevans," *Oslobođenje* (January 2nd, 1995): 12.

144 "Bosnian and Herzegovinian films have again "shocked" the world public. At a recently held film festival in the South of France, in the city Argeles, one part of the war production has been screened. [...] Our films enjoyed a warm reception and great understanding from the audience and the filmmakers and critics. The hosts paid greater media attention to our visit, therefore Dizdarevic and I gave interviews to Catalunya Radio from Barcelona, Independent, Liberation from Paris." Svjetlana Mustafić, "Film Erases Borders," *Oslobođenje* (July 15th, 1995): 10.

145 Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

146 Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

147 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

148 Antonio Prlenda, "Thousand Days of Siege," 12.

149 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

150 Ibid.

151 There was even a suggestion made to Dizdarević by his French colleagues that he should candidate the film for the Oscars because they thought the film would certainly be shortlisted. Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

152 N. Idrizović, "European Oscar to Sarajevo Sineasts," *Oslobođenje* (October 23rd, 1995): 12.

they managed to accomplish to change the perception of the audience abroad to some extent.

People started to look differently at what Bosnia is and what the war was [...]. It was a path to the truth, the breaking of a pseudomyth of truth about what was happening in Sarajevo.[...] Our films and the round tables showed another picture. That Bosnians are not only primitives. Of course there were also primitive people as they are the ones that make wars, but there was also this core of people that were cultural, artistic and creative that were performing at a worldly level of quality. So that created the opportunity to talk about the war from another angle and perspective.¹⁵³



Figure 6. SaGA receiving the Felix award.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

¹⁵⁴ Dino Bajramović, "In the war anonymous, brave and young, the BH directors are today's internationally reknown film authors," *Slobodna Bosna* (March 2003): 48.

How were the films made (practically) ?

After the motivation and decision-making process behind the documentaries it was studied how the films were technically (practically) realized. With the production culture approach, the textual analysis of trade and employee documents is an integral component in the research. Within the scope of this study it could not have been explored. The filmworkers involved in the case studies have been asked for scenarios, diaries, budgets and/or other relevant documentation in their productions. However, the production studios did not have these at their disposal.

The documents that Dizdarević possessed in the war are stored in the house of his former and deceased producer Refik Beširević. He has no access to this documentation. Srđan Vuletić explained that he did not keep his notes from the war. In SaGA's production they could only provide access to several photographs. These pictures are used throughout this paper as illustrative examples to the findings from the interviews. An unexpected quite useful source for the production circumstances was given by Dizdarević, the Japanese making-of documentary mentioned earlier, of *The Fourth Part of the Brain*.¹⁵⁵ The film has been used as a source for complementary information and illustrative examples to the findings in the interviews. It is in a sense a (partial) document of the component ethnographic field observation of the production of Dizdarević's film. The notes as to how the films were made practically are presented in Appendix C.

The identified themes, presented in the Venn diagram, are the categories that have been distinguished in the film production process that the filmmakers communicated as being different in war-time from film-making under the usual circumstances (in peace). In fact, all the production phases were different. From the composition of film-crews to the creative process and the editing etc. The entire film-making process was "guerilla film-making".¹⁵⁶ There was not

¹⁵⁵ *Lost Years: Teenagers in Sarajevo*, directed by Kyoko Gendatsu.

¹⁵⁶ Vuletić gave film-making in war-time the term guerilla film-making. Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

much planning involved in any of the production phases. The creative process happened at times on the day at work itself, or on the way to work. The equipment was bought before the war and owned by the filmmakers. The film productions were always improvisations and prompt reactions to the current situation(s), from the available technological and human resources in the beginning of the war to unpredictable developments during the course of the war in terms of the safety on shooting days, the finances in terms of co-productions, buying by TV stations. The individual themes are discussed in more detail in the next sections.

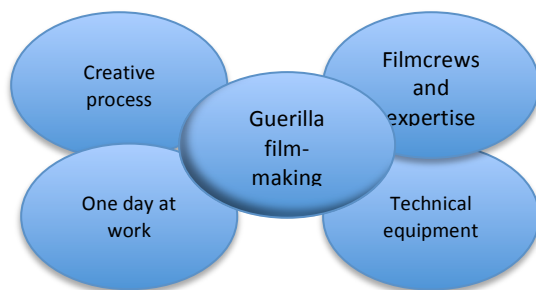


Figure 7. Axial coding of the identified categories related to production circumstances in war-time.

Film crews and expertise

In the war, because of the lack of certain expertise in the field of filmmaking SaGA gathered people of different professions. The producer of SaGA stated in the interview that Sarajevo had editors, cinematographers and directors in place.¹⁵⁷ But in the comparison with articles and other interviews it was noticeable that throughout SaGA's work additional staff was recruited. The production team became a mixture of film professionals, TV workers, cultural workers of different backgrounds (journalists, writers) and volunteers.¹⁵⁸ In the first period of SaGA, only one filmcrew was working per day.¹⁵⁹ This was mainly caused by the lack of technical equipment. Later on, as the production

¹⁵⁷ Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.
¹⁵⁸ Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 21.
¹⁵⁹ Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

material resources increased (mainly from donations of foreign organizations or individuals) multiple filmcrews started working simultaneously.

Vuletić brought forward in the interview that at the level of the filmcrews it was a mixture of more experienced filmworkers and amateurs working in his team. The organizer for *I Burnt Legs*, Ismet Bektašević, was already experienced within the filmsector from before the war. He drove the van in which the filmworkers travelled to the SaGA premises and filming locations. But Vuletić's cinematographer was in fact an amateur at the time, when shooting the film *I Burnt Legs*. Ahmed Imamović had come from the front lines and joined SaGA.¹⁶⁰ A year later he applied to the Academy of Performing Arts to study film and was admitted in 1993. Today Imamović is a Bosnian and Herzegovinian filmmaker. This way, some people that were not working in film made a transition in the war, and a new generation of students was emerging. Vuletić called this in the interview an unconscious transition between the old and new generation of authors in the war.¹⁶¹ When cross-checking with an article from the war edition of *Sineast*, this phenomenon was also brought forward.

[...] was a new wave of people who were for the first time standing behind the camera, true a television camera, and tried, some only once, others persevered and found their place in the cinema of the by war affected Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina.¹⁶²

In Profil, Nenad Dizdarević was working with filmmakers he cooperated with already before the war. Before the war, SaGA used to produce mainly videoclips.¹⁶³ Unlike SaGA, Profil was already a film production company before the war started and therefore they were already working in the

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ "War, although it was bad, looking at it retrospectively had in a sense made an unnoticeable transition between the old and the new authors. In the sense that when the war started, everything that was associated with the authors, a certain context for filmmaking, was lost. We were all, all of a sudden in the same situation." Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

¹⁶² Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 21.

¹⁶³ Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović. Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

filmsector.¹⁶⁴ The director, producer, cinematographer and organizer were all experts in their respective fields.



Figure 8. Mustafa Mustafić, cinematographer from Profil filming *The Fourth Part of the Brain in the War*.¹⁶⁵



Figure 9. Nenad Dizdarević working with cinematographer Mustafić before the war on *The Tough Teens* with a professional film camera before the war.

¹⁶⁴ They were active already from before the war mainly producing video clips since 1990, but just before the war started they had received also funding for a fiction feature film. They decided to organize a group and film every day the situation they had found themselves in. Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

¹⁶⁵ *The Lost Years - Teenagers in Sarajevo*, an NHK production 1995, NHK-Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

Job descriptions

The positions in the film crews in the productions, were to a certain extent divergent from the conventional job descriptions they would had under normal circumstances. In the case of SaGA the role of the producer was also arranging the food. In war-time these were the "salaries" for filmworkers.

Salaries for film workers were sandwiches. Every day we would buy around 20 kilo of bread. At the black market we would buy some cheese. We would buy gasoline, a liter was 30 km... It was necessary that people had a sandwich per day and water. It was difficult to do this.¹⁶⁶

Dizdarević brought forward that in Profil there was not really a producer in the real sense of the word, nor a real organizer. They would work on equal terms as a team on organizing the shootings.

We knew different people. It was working your way around and getting things done. Šarenkapa knew the people where to buy gasoline, then Refik knew some people who could get us permissions for filming, then also I knew other people etc. Therefore there was some kind of division of work under these extreme circumstances. There was not really a producer in the real sense of the role, neither a real organizer, it was just improvisation and finding your ways around.

The examples above illustrate that the filmcrews could be composed of both professionals and amateurs. This was caused by the situation which was described in the industry analysis of this research, that there was a shortage of expertise in various film functions. Moreover, because of the circumstances that the war had brought, the people were forced to take on different tasks.

166 Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović. Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

There was no traditional film division of labor, where each individual would hold on to their particular tasks.

Finances

In terms of finances in the war, there was no subsidiary support from the government.¹⁶⁷ Before the war SaGA had received funding for a feature film that was never to be made, but the money was still available at their bank account. This is when they made the decision to make films.¹⁶⁸ The unused funding for the feature film gave them the financial ability to start a bigger production in the beginning of the war.¹⁶⁹ It was a lot of money but the value was rapidly dropping because of inflation and they were rushed to change it from Yugoslav dinars to Deutsche Marks.¹⁷⁰ In the war you could buy gasoline, food etc with Deutsche Marks. This is exactly what the money was spent on, as told by the producers.¹⁷¹ Because everything was expensive in war-time SaGA's money was running out fast.¹⁷² They started collaborating later with the production Point du Jour on the project *Sarajevo - A Street Under Siege*. Because this became an on-going project it became also an additional source of income for SaGA.¹⁷³

Profil managed to do the post-production for *The Tough Teens* (Dizdarević's feature) in Paris. The situation in Sarajevo made it impossible to edit a bigger project like his fiction film inside the city.¹⁷⁴ Dizdarević left for Paris and upon arrival tried various ways to get the finances for the post-production. In the beginning he was going from producer to producer but soon he had, in his words, "torn shoes from the search" and realized that it was totally

167 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

168 Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

172 "Salaries for film workers were sandwiches. Every day we would buy around 20 kilo of bread. At the black market we would buy some cheese. We would buy gasoline, a liter was 30 km... People were not even asking. We only spent money in the production on food, gasoline." Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

173 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

174 Ibid.

inefficient.¹⁷⁵ He initiated Igman Productions with the financial support from friends from his home country and colleagues from France.¹⁷⁶ The company received financial support for the post-production from the French Fund for Cinematography. Later in 1994 Dizdarević met producers from a Japanese television network who were looking for a story about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the time Dizdarević was preparing to go to film *The Fourth Part of the Brain*. The Japanese television was very interested in the project and seven days later they called Dizdarević to inform him that they would like to come along to shoot a making-of of Dizdarević's film. They facilitated the finances, shooting permissions, travel expenses, and organization for Dizdarević's documentary.¹⁷⁷ Dizdarević's documentary series *The Blue Guide* was sold to various TV channels and therefore this was an additional source of income.¹⁷⁸

Therefore there were many different ways the filmmakers financed their films, from pre-war film funds to partnerships with television networks abroad. The finances for the productions were, according to the directors, an unpredictable trajectory at all times.

Technical equipment

Similar to the situation with the film crews, that not all participants were coming from the cinema sector, the technology for the films was neither. In the beginning of the nineties the standard technology for film, 35mm or 16mm, was rarely used during the war due to several reasons that came forth in the interviews and articles. It was not available, the physical size of film was not practical for transport, and the costs were too high.

175 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

176 Ibid.

177 Ibid.

178 Ibid.

SaGA was a video production company before the war and they had kept the equipment from the pre-war video productions.¹⁷⁹ Profil had their equipment before the war and editing facilities in the film centre Sutjeska which was near the frontline in the beginning of the war.¹⁸⁰ Profil did not have their own camera, they had to borrow different types of cameras from friends (U-matic, Beta, VHS).¹⁸¹ SaGA was also combining the use of U-matic technology, VHS and Beta.¹⁸² When they received a donation of Beta equipment they switched to this technology.¹⁸³ The electronic technology proved to be more far efficient in war time than traditional film.¹⁸⁴¹⁸⁵ Because videotapes were easier to obtain and bring into and out of the city than film. For example Pippa Scott, a producer from the United States, would send a suitcase with tapes to SaGA every year.¹⁸⁶

The impracticality of the transport of film was evident in the case of *The Tough Teens*. Dizdarević had to send approximately 300kg of film of his feature abroad for editing.

179 Before the breaking out of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, SaGA (Sarajevo Group of Authors) was busy with the production of video clips and trendy commercials. Productions that were quite famous in former Yugoslavia. When 20 months ago the battle erupted, the SaGA employee exchanged their studio for the streets. Mone Slingerland, "War is bad for everything, except for the arts," *Volkskrant* (December 1993).

180 "At that location in the very start of the war there was a front line. So we managed to move the material to the city centre. Then bit by bit I would be sending the film to different locations, to Hungary, to Jadran film, to France. This was done by friends and humanitarian organizations. Then when I arrived in Paris, I had to gather all that material there. There was a big solidarity from colleagues in France, the dean at the time of the famous La Fémis school in Paris helped out as well. I contacted him as a colleague telling him where I was coming from and that I had a film. He watched a part of the material and he offered me the premises at their Faculty for editing of the film. Without any costs. As a trade-off I would give lectures and seminars at that Faculty. I was exactly talking about the experiences of shooting documentary films in the war." Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

181 *Ibid.*

182 The U-matic camera was monstrous and had two parts, one for filming and the other for recording. Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

183 *Ibid.*

184 Vefik Hadžismajlović, "War and Cinematography," 21.

185 "Electronics could save them a lot of money." Mone Slingerland, "War is bad for everything."

186 Ismet Nuno Arnautlić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.



Figure 10. Part of the 35mm film of *The Tough Teens*¹⁸⁷

Film as a technology was standard at the time for cinema and cinema screenings at festivals. Nevertheless Arnautalić in retrospective tells that technology did not matter in the time of war.

I have experienced all the standards. Philips Betamax, JVC that invented VHS, then, H8, U-matic low band, U-matic high band, Beta, Beta SP, and at the television one-inch, two-inch and now we are all digital. Some people did not want it. It was a difficult transition. At the television there were around 20 filmworkers working there, editors. And when electronics came they did not want to work with it. Also certain serious filmmakers were looking at working with electronics with a lot of despise. But then it became clear that it was not important which medium is used. We made a film *MGM Sarajevo* that had a promotion at the Cannes Film Festival. That film was made on VHS, Beta, U-matic, and therefore it was a combination of many technologies. It was not important, they did not ask us about quality, they wanted to know what was seen, they wanted to know the story. The story was the most important.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ *The Lost Years - Teenagers in Sarajevo*, an NHK production 1995, NHK-Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

¹⁸⁸ Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

Electricity

In order to operate the cameras, batteries needed to be charged. During war-time electricity was often cut off. Therefore electricity was a production necessity that needed to be arranged. In the beginning SaGA bought a power generator. Later on, a foreign organization that *had* electricity and was located near SaGA, was providing them with electricity through a cable.¹⁸⁹ Profil had another way of obtaining electricity.

We solved the problem of electricity by visiting someone with a power generator. There was not really a plan, it was more a big improvisation. We managed because we were motivated and we had connections. The filmworkers all knew each other.¹⁹⁰

Editing

The films of SaGA were edited in their own premises whereas Profil had to improvise on this plan as well. They could not edit at the television because television workers were most of the time busy with their own footage.¹⁹¹ SaGA was filming and editing every day and therefore Profil could not do it there. Dizdarević edited his feature film in Paris at the premises of La Fémis.¹⁹² The director had offered him this opportunity in exchange for lectures/seminars about making the war-time documentaries. *The Blue Guide* and *The Fourth Part of the Brain* were also edited abroad, in France and Hungary.¹⁹³

189 Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović. Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

190 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

191 Ibid.

192 Filmschool in Paris

193 Dizdarević could pay his editors in Budapest only for one month. It was a month without too much sleep. They were working for 18 hours. Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.



Figure 11. Dizdarević editing at La Fémis in Paris.¹⁹⁴



Figure 12. SaGa's editing premises. "Equipment was very rudimental. We had it from before the war. U-matic camera and editing facilities."¹⁹⁵

Creative process

In the beginning of the war SaGA and Profil felt inclined to make registrations of the war events that were happening in the city. For example if they were near a massacre that just happened due to the shelling of a grenade they would

¹⁹⁴ Filmstill from *The Lost Years - Teenagers in Sarajevo*, an NHK production 1995, NHK-Japan Broadcasting Corporation.
¹⁹⁵ Ismet Nuno Arnautalić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović. The picture was provided by SaGA.

quickly go and film the scene.¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless the authors communicated in the interviews that very soon they switched to the personal humane stories about ordinary citizens with the war in the background.¹⁹⁷

Ademir Kenović, producer of SaGA brought forward that their group's vision was the resistance of the ordinary person in Sarajevo in everyday life (the category in the motivation to pursue cultural resistance) and therefore these were the stories they were looking for in the creative process. To find these stories you needed to have what Vuletić calls a *reflex for reality*.¹⁹⁸ There was material everywhere, but to make a film you had to notice what was happening and what it said about the wartime in the broader meaning. Then you could call the crew together, facilitate the equipment and go film.¹⁹⁹

This was also stated in a contemporary article in the Dutch *De Volkskrant*, where the editor of *Sineast* stated:

Life in Sarajevo is very concentrated. In a month there is more happening here than in two years in other cities. Video is a fast art form that can respond immediately. Under the pressure of war SaGA comes to great productivity.²⁰⁰

The possibility of immediate response was illustrated in Vuletić's example and the production of his documentary *The Eight March* which was not planned ahead.

On this day I was on my way to SaGA. Everything was frozen, and when I approached the square on Ciglane I saw a lot of flowers. All of a sudden in frozen Sarajevo, in the war, with the sound of shooting in the background, I saw flowers. And you saw people dressed up, particularly

196 Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

197 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

198 Ibid.

199 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

200 Milan Cvijanović, chief editor of *Sineast* said this during the war for the journalist from the Netherlands. Mone Slingerland, "War is bad for everything, except for the arts," *Volkskrant* (December 1993).

women, like this day was a bit different than all the others. Because our office was just beneath the square I entered the office and just said to the people: Lets film this, because... Well, exactly what I was saying before, it is the spirit of the time. You can never recreate that March Eight again, that hunger, that misery, that war psychosis, that ice... It will never come back, that March Eight. That is why that film is great. It is not just a coverage of the fact that the people celebrated this day. The film is particularly great to me because it shows a dimension of Sarajevo as a city, its resistance, and Sarajevo as a city that nurtured certain civilizational achievements. It was not a bewildered city. No they wanted to celebrate this day of women. People that were busy, that were in the battles at the frontlines, took the time, and bought their women a plastic flower on that day. [...]The Eight March is a perfect case study of how the guerilla films came about. I just quickly captured the spirit of the time.²⁰¹

That was one possible "routine" in the creative process in war-time. Another that came forward in the interviews was inspired by the personal experience of the directors' lives in war. Vuletić said that his experience in the hospital working as an assistant made him want to translate his personal tragedy onto film.

When I was at the hospital it was all very vague, there were a lot of people that were injured, lost a leg or arm. All of that seemed abstract until you actually saw it for yourself. And then something happened that even more concretized these horrors into my personal tragedy. What happened to me was that one day I entered into the intensive care. There were a lot of young people there, that were coming from the front lines for example. They were left without certain limbs. I entered and I saw a young woman and I looked at her face and I

201 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

recognized her... I know her until this day who she is. And when I saw her, when I looked at her, and she looked at me... I remember that she started to cry because she was left without her arms. SHE started to cry...That shook me to the core, in every sense of that word. It turned the circumstances from that moment into my personal tragedy.²⁰²

Talking in retrospective, Vuletić stated the creative process was not always conscious but a continuous process based on the directors' personal experiences in war.

Dizdarević made *The Blue Guide* inspired by his and his friends' experiences in the war of how to survive in the city. The film *The Fourth Part of the Brain* was inspired by Dizdarević's (personal) experience from before the war of shooting *The Tough Teens*. They had held castings with teenagers aged 13-15 years. He had footage of the castings where they recited their addresses and telephone numbers.²⁰³ He would use this in the documentary later. He knew that the war must have had affected the children. He wanted to look for the main protagonists who were scattered around in different places of the region. Unknowingly his feature was the research for this documentary in the war. Dizdarević explained that the documentary was about children and how they are the greatest victims in a war.²⁰⁴



202 Ibid.

203 *The Fourth Part of the Brain*. Directed by Nenad Dizdarević. Profil and Igman Productions, 1995.

204 Srđan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

Figure 12. Dizdarević's idea for *The Fourth Part of the Brain* was also based on his previous personal and professional experience with the fiction feature *The Tough Teens*.²⁰⁵

This segment has shown that the creative process was signified by the possibility of immediate response and a reflex for reality by capturing the war's *Zeitgeist* and its effects on the lives of citizens. Furthermore, other examples of Vuletić and Dizdarević's work respectively show that the creative process at times was also put into motion unconsciously by personal experiences in daily life or other projects.

One day of work

The previous components were pre-production and post-production considerations that filmmakers made in accordance with the situation in wartime. In this section the considerations for filming itself will be dissected. What was it that they had to take into account before and during the filming in the streets of besieged Sarajevo, which is within the context of war not a common filming process. As an interview strategy the filmmakers were asked to describe an average day of shooting during the production of the case study films.

SaGA's decision was to work on a daily basis. The filmmakers explained there was also not much else to do in the war. In the words of producer Kenović, they would work every day like Charlie Chaplin.²⁰⁶ The organizer Ismet Bektašević would pick the SaGA filmworkers (with the van they had) at a fixed time near their houses. If someone would not show up at the fixed time, it meant that they would not come that day. They would be in the SaGA premises from 7/8 in the morning until 7/8 in the evening.²⁰⁷

Profil had a similar schedule. They started their day also at a fixed time, which was 10.00 a.m. The meeting location was in the centre where the

205 Filmstills from *The Lost Years - Teenagers in Sarajevo*, an NHK production 1995, NHK-Japan Broadcasting Corporation.

206 Ademir Kenović, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

207 Interviews Kenović, Arnautalić and Vuletić.

producer lived. His location was the most convenient in terms of safety and distance and also near their main filming locations in the city centre. If someone did not show up until 10.30 it meant that they were caught in some problem and that they would not come. Both the production companies had the meetings first, before they went out to work. Dizdarević explained that they would discuss the plans for shooting, evaluate where to go and how. At times when they had gasoline they could go to more distant locations.

In SaGA the filmmakers announced when they wanted a filmcrew so that they would be provided with a cameraman, technician, driver, organizer. The filmmakers expressed that it was difficult to predict safety when shooting. Arnautalić stated that if a few days in a row it was more quiet that they would assume that the next day it would be too. Vuletić stated that after a certain time you developed a certain intuition (Dizdarević brought this also forward in his interview) whether it was a good day to shoot.²⁰⁸ Sometimes it was quiet but you felt that something was about to happen. Vuletić reminded that also the intuition could trick you because just before the end of the war he was hit by a sniper while riding the bicycle to a fellow colleague.²⁰⁹ Safety circumstances were a conditional factor for how long the shootings could last.²¹⁰

For *I Burnt Legs*, Vuletić had three shooting days (with a crew of 6-8 people); one in the hospital, one of him talking and the third day for exteriors around the city.²¹¹ In addition there was one day when a boy without arms was filmed in winter making a snowball. Vuletić did not need a filming permission for the hospital as he was working there.

Dizdarević was filming his film *The Fourth Part of the Brain* a long time. The reason was the theme of the film. In the film Dizdarević documented the reunions with his actors from his film *The Tough Teens*. For this he had to travel across different countries of former Yugoslavia. The transportation was difficult and therefore he needed to use the aid of the UN. Starting in Paris he

208 Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

209 Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

210 Nenad Dizdarević, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

211 Srdan Vuletić, "Shooting Under Siege," interview by author Ena Omerović.

travelled with the Japanese TV network (who were making "the making of") to Zagreb. After Zagreb they flew by an UN transport plane to Sarajevo, that was cut off and only reachable by air. With the cooperation of the UN French peace corps the film and television crew used two armored vehicles to go to a village near Sarajevo where one of the protagonists resided after fleeing his hometown. Being a Muslim, Dizdarević could not go to Serbia to film a couple of protagonists. He made the arrangement with his colleague director Vladimir Blaževski to deliver the messages to the teenagers in Serbia, and to film them, on his behalf. The editing process which happened in Budapest was delayed because the filmcrew could not leave Sarajevo due to heavy shelling for two months.



Figure 13. Dizdarević gives instructions in Budapest to his Serbian friend filmmaker Blaževski before he goes to Serbia to film on Nenad's behalf.²¹²

²¹² *The Lost Years - Teenagers in Sarajevo*, an NHK production 1995, NHK-Japan Broadcasting Corporation.



Figure 14. Blaževski in Belgrade with Nevena showing her the video message from her fellow actor(s) in Sarajevo.²¹³

Therefore a typical day of shooting was characterized by discussing potential filmplans and evaluating the safety and locations. Safety although it could not be entirely predicted. It came out that it was one of the determining factors for whether a film would be shot. Within the city the filmworkers moved by foot or with vehicle. However when the filming locations would be outside Sarajevo they chose to use the help of international peace-keeping organizations, the UN.

213 Ibid.

The results

The industry analysis showed that the BH film industry after the independence was faced with many difficulties from the legal and technological framework to the human assets in terms of different film expertise. This was mainly caused due to three overlapping circumstances; the secession from Yugoslavia, the war, and the organization of the former Yugoslav film industry. There was an articulated firmness of numerous filmworkers on (re)building a Bosnian cinematography (evident as early as 1992) in the film magazines as well as in the individual organization and efforts of different production companies. Twelve production units were considered most active.²¹⁴ Since there was no financial incentive or institutional framework for the making of the war-time, I wanted to find out what the alternative motives were of the filmmakers. Two production companies, SaGA and Profil were taken up as the case studies in this thesis, one smaller and a bigger production company.

Although SaGA and Profil were quite different production companies, the analysis of the results had revealed repetitive articulations of the motivation for making the films. The discussed themes were: *cultural resistance*, *creative freedom*, *irritation with western media*, *screening films abroad*, *make films/documentaries* all bonded to an overarching expressed identity of *being a filmmaker*.²¹⁵ The interviewees stated they wanted to continue their normal life and they explained that because their normal life implied being a filmmaker, they continued making films. They found it to be a symbolic fight with the camera against the destruction of the normal and cultural life in their hometown. Although it meant filming in a city under siege, they persevered in the intention to continue their own (cultural) profession.

The cultural resistance was a wider phenomenon in Sarajevo as also other cultural workers were still active during the war. Furthermore, people coming from different backgrounds joined the bigger film production company

²¹⁴ Data of the production units is not entirely reliable and complete. Because data from other cities than Sarajevo has not been collected and could not be researched for this paper.

²¹⁵ Venn diagram on page 27 in this researchpaper.

SaGA to help. As the case studies had shown, the filmmakers incorporated their cultural resistance within the narratives of their films (e.g. *I Burnt Legs* and *The Fourth Part of the Brain*). The print sources from war-time brought forward similar rhetoric in their claims of a cultural resistance through filmmaking. The emphasis on the filmmaker identity was also articulated in many anecdotes during the interviews. the filmmakers were allowed to work in their own manner, which they also considered to be defining in their work as artists. Artistry can only exist when you are free in your choices, one of the interviewees stated.

Another motivational factor was what the filmmakers expressed to be an *untruthful and superficial reporting of foreign media* about the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The filmmakers emphasized that they wanted their films to stand in clear contrast to what television was doing. They made documentaries to inform viewers on a more profound level what the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina were experiencing. Their films told personal stories and were not as expendable as the television coverage that lacked in-depth information. They strongly articulated the difference between film as a work of (visual) art versus the mere registrations television was making.

The filmworkers' efforts were recognized by the BH government in that they were exempt from joining the armed forces. Their work was also recognized abroad as their works were screened at film festivals and on TV networks internationally. Awards followed and Bosnia and Herzegovina was put on the map of the international film festival circuit.²¹⁶ For the filmauthors it created a starting, broadening and/or renewing of their connections and networks with other filmprofessionals.

In the second part of the research the various aspects of pre-production, production and post-production were analyzed to get a better understanding of not only their personal motivation to make films, but also the practical

216 What was said by the filmmakers to having been a plan to show the world abroad what was happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina, ultimately led to the first international film festival awards for the independent cinema of the country.

circumstances they had to deal with to make their films. If one would have to use one word to describe the production process of war-time films in all stages, it would be *improvisation*. The answer how filmmakers produced films in the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was not to be found in one place. The production circumstances were individual improvisations to an unexpected new situation since the war started in 1992. The filmmakers had to adapt and every production company did what they could with their available financial, technical and human resources at the time. Nevertheless, there were certain overarching and/or important themes that can account for the unwritten rules in the process of guerilla film-making at the time in Sarajevo. The themes discussed were *filmcrews, finances, creative process, technical equipment* and the *days of shooting*.²¹⁷

The lack of expertise in certain sectors of film-making made it necessary to engage new, inexperienced personnel with little or no cinematic background. Afterwards the experience would lead some to enter the Academy of Performing Arts. New authors arose, students that were coming from the Academy (that had only opened its directing department in 1989) and the new filmworkers that joined from other backgrounds in war-time. The composition of the filmcrews during the war was therefore a mixture of filmprofessionals and amateurs on all levels. The job descriptions for the positions were different in war-time as was evident from the example of the producer arranging bread.

Production assets like electricity were a difficult undertaking, as was the food, which were examples of the challenging parts in the production process compared to times of peace. The technological standard for filming in war-time replaced the usual 35mm and 16mm for using electronic film-making, such as VHS. The advantage in terms of technology was that the filmmakers had access to the smaller videoformats which made the production more mobile and adaptable to war circumstances, than working with 35mm.

The editing process of the footage depended on whether you had

217 Venn diagram on page 43 in this research paper.

premises at your disposal. If not, editing usually was carried out abroad.

The creative process mostly leaned on the stories that the filmmakers could observe or experienced in their daily life in the city. It was important for them to film/capture the particularities of living in a city under siege that were specific for that time and place. One had to have a reflex for observing the sometimes absurd reality of war, an immediate response to film when a story presented itself. As a result, the shooting days were a day-to-day process depending on the stories, safety, transportation, permissions etc.

Conclusion

In the beginning of the paper, reference was made to other studies on Post-Yugoslav cinema. Goulding and Iordanova are media academics that covered national cinemas coming from the Balkan very extensively, including the period of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, Caldwell argued that there is a great institutional divide between academic culture on the one hand, and the cultures of media production on the other. He argued that we ought to move away from these traditional methods of media research where one "building block" of the entire media production culture is exposed and based on that wider conclusions are drawn about the media texts and the industry.²¹⁸

As brought forward earlier, Goulding described without much depth the transition in the film industries of Yugoslavia, from the big Yugoslav film productions, to separate national film productions. Without going into much detail, he stated that filmmakers were remarkably resilient in making films in the politically and economically disrupted societies. He omitted to elaborate on *how* they did this. This research, in Caldwell's tradition, did not study exclusively the media texts, nor their reception, or the economic/industrial circumstances, but it concentrated on the production (culture) process of film-making. The remarkable resilience Goulding referred to, was merely a descriptive term given to a complex phenomenon, that has been covered in-depth in this thesis as to *how* and *why* it was there.

Iordanova mainly discussed the reception of filmed material made by local filmmakers in the war-time by the Western media. This was certainly an issue. But Iordanova omitted to describe another, perhaps even important circumstance for the future of the BH film culture. This research has covered the films' afterlives at different film festivals and cultural television stations, which was quite widespread. All these results in the study have given us more

²¹⁸ Caldwell, *Cultures of Production*, 201.

insight into what set the points of departure for the future film culture in the newly established country of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The production culture approach by Caldwell has been used for studying media productions during the process of their making. Nevertheless this study has shown that the approach can also be put to use for studying production processes that happened a long time ago. The research method includes (semi-structured) interviews and the oral history accounts of the filmmakers from SaGA and Profil have been very useful in reconstructing the daily processes of the war-time film production. Perhaps quite unexpectedly there was not a (substantial) issue with remembering details among the filmmakers. This has been proven with the cross-check of information in print sources from the nineties. The filmmakers managed to give fluent elaborate interviews, some even lasting a couple of hours. None of them went astray from the central questions in the research which were related to the production circumstances and their motivation.

An advantageous circumstance in studying the sensitive topic such as war was that I (the interviewer) was someone coming from *their* city, speaking *their* local language. The interviewer and interviewees shared the same cultural and historical background. I believe this has made the interviews more on topic than would have been the case if they were carried out by someone not being from the region. Even when a foreign interviewer would come well-informed on the subject matter, the filmmakers would have most likely felt inclined to tell more about the context of the situation. It would have invited them to digress to wider contextual information about the politics of the conflict. The advantage of a shared cultural background between interviewer and interviewee in this case allowed for the productional story, without resorting to wide contextual descriptions of the war and politics, to be told. The fact that filmmakers answered the interview questions in their own language made the responses more thorough and personal.

The study has shown that the production circumstances in the war forced filmworkers to improvise with what was available to them between 1992 and 1995. At the start of this research I made the assumption that there had to be a strongly articulated motivation of the filmworkers who made films during the siege of Sarajevo. Because, why would anybody make films when your city is bombed on a daily basis? The interview questions on why the filmmakers made films evoked an interesting discussion about the identity of filmmakers and the medium of film in war-time. The (initial) motivation in broader sense, as expressed by the filmmakers, was to show that they were filmmakers and not barbarians (like so many others during war-time) and that they would resist the horrific circumstances by continuing to be *artists*. What strengthened their argument is that the documentaries they made reflected the mission they presented. The films they made documented their intentions of being a counteracting force to what they strongly resented.²¹⁹ Their strong belief in holding on to their identity as artist/filmmakers and using their art as an act of resistance was a driving force for the productions to be realized with the difficult improvisational production facilities, as been described.

The specific manner of articulating the reasoning behind making films was shared among all the interviewees and can be summed up as *an act of cultural resistance*, through *improvisation* and *guerilla film-making*. Although these specific terms may have been introduced after the war, the implied meanings were also to be found in the articles from the time of war. From an outsiders perspective other reasons may also have been valid, such as the exemption from joining the army. Nevertheless, this was never articulated in having been a leading motivation to make films.

The filmworkers considered it was their moral duty to do what they were, be artists, and resist the barbarity of the war with their films. It had become their/a truth about the film-making in war-time.²²⁰ They explicitly

219 For example what the international news media was doing.

220 It was pointed out by Caldwell in his theory of Production Culture that the media workers usually articulate their professions and what they want to make within their mission documents but also in talks with researchers. Nevertheless he also warned that it should be interpreted with the necessary critical and academic distance as for example in the television industry the presented arguments do not always correspond to what

showed the process of their cultural resistance and work as artists to a broader audience by putting themselves as protagonists in their films. The filmmakers did not think that they had anything to explain as to why they did not pick up a real weapon instead of a camera. The entire conversation about art/culture adapted itself to the circumstances and terminology used in war: What in times of peace would have been expressed as e.g. it was a childhood dream to become a storyteller, now was articulated in terms of pursuing resistance to the war through the cultural form of film, continuing normal life, etc.

This manner of speaking about their professional identity and the identity of being a citizen of Sarajevo is perhaps understandable within a context of war. The war imposed a threat on both of these aspects of their lives and (felt and lived) identities. The shootings endangered their life, and the disruption of the national film industry put a break to their professional conduct. History has often shown us that people in wars tend to incline to and feel stronger about their national identity. Quite unusual in this study is that the BH national identity was not emphasized in the spoken rhetoric in the interviews and articles nor in the visual rhetoric of the films. The makers seemingly strongly identified with being Sarajevan citizens (now that the city was under siege) and more importantly in this study with being Sarajevan *filmmakers*. Therefore it was not inasmuch about the national identity but rather more about the identity of the (Sarajevan/Sarajevan) filmmakership.

In that sense this study described (the rise of) a successful generation of filmmakers who shared the experience of war and identified themselves as being Sarajevan filmmakers. As a consequence of the war a new state, flag and national identity was established and these filmmakers were not the next generation Yugoslavian filmmakers, but became the founding fathers and mothers of what would become a new national *Bosnian and Herzegovinian* cinema. The new *Bosnian and Herzegovinian* cinema accelerated the establishment of filmmakers who learnt to make films under difficult

happens in practice thereafter. The speaking of the authors in this study was not a sales pitch in the commercial sense that Caldwell meant. Caldwell, *Production Culture*, 4.

production conditions. The international recognition of their war-time films that followed gave a strong impuls to the post-war *Bosnian and Herzegovinian* film culture.²²¹

221 Knowledge of the production circumstances must have had its influence upon the international (film) community.

Post Scriptum / Suggestions for further research

Perhaps the strong articulation of the identity of filmmaker (and the medium of film) under the circumstances of war is the most interesting finding in this study. A contemporary example shows that this manner of speaking, and the activities of cultural workers in war-time, is not necessarily bound to the BH film productions in these case studies (nor to the specific circumstances of Sarajevo under siege). As been stated above, the likelihood of it being related to the context of war and threats imposed to people's identity, is greater. We can see it today being a phenomenon in the following example from Syria.

The Dutch news program *Nieuwsuur* incorporated in their one-hour timeslot a documentary about a Syrian ballet dancer living in Damascus.²²² Similarly to the film students in Sarajevo, Ahmad Joudan was also caught by the war during his study at the second year of the Higher School of Dramatic Arts. Nevertheless he decided to stay in Syria and continue dancing. Today he has a tattoo in Hindi on his neck meaning: "To dance or to die". This of course to be understood metaphorically as he is actually under constant threat by living, dancing and providing dance lessons to children in war-time. The filmmaker/reporter Roozbeh Kaboly asks him why he would dance in war-time? Why he did not fight? These are the obvious questions that Ahmad is asked a lot.²²³ Ahmad's mother answered that in a war everyone fights in his or her own way. Her son's resistance is seen as a battle against the war that is being fought against their cultural life. The children that Ahmed teaches say that dancing helps them to feel happy, normal, and forget the war around them.²²⁴ But then in the middle of the conversation the electricity shuts down and everything is black. And the children yell: Welcome to Syria!

²²² *Nieuwsuur*, "Syrian Ahmad dances against the war in his country," NPO 2: NTR, August 6, 2016.

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *Ibid.*



Figure 15. Photograph from war-time in Sarajevo that has travelled the world.

The parallel in rhetoric in Syria, with the rhetoric in war-time twenty years ago in Sarajevo, is evident. The findings in this research could be put to use in researching cultural activities such as film-making in other countries struck by war and find the parallels. In further work I would like to explore and find out more about what is lying behind the (stronger) cling to the identity of filmmaker when it is under threat.

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Appendix A. INTERVIEWS

Interviewee: Ademir Kenović (Founder and producer of SaGA)

Interviewer: Ena Omerović

Date: 05.02.2016

Place: Sarajevo

*** Start transcript

Interviewer: Could you describe how it all started with SaGA in the war?

Interviewee:

The basis for making the documentaries was that they just before the war had received funding for a feature film. We had the money in bags literally, money was not that much worth at the time. Then we managed to change the money from Yugoslav dinars to Deutsche marks. It was quite a lot of money that we had at the time. This was the basis for making documentary films in the war for us. Sometimes people thought it was strange how we had these resources, and they would come and observe. Even foreign intelligence agencies, to see who was behind us. Nobody was behind us. It was just my decision to use that money and make films! The decision to use the money that was provided for a feature film, to use that to make documentaries.

This funding made possible that we could obtain oil, gas, cables, electricity, materials, cassettes (besides the ones we got from abroad) and in that way we organized a group, friends, colleagues and students, that would gather every day there because there was nothing else to do in the war, and we would gather there at around 7/8 in the morning and go to sleep at 7/8 in the evening. That is where we spent our time. We gave to the people a bit of food and sour cream, and cigarettes. That from the budget we received. Because we also did not want to sell anything.

Interviewer: Can you describe how you felt in the beginning and why you made the decision to film?

Interviewee:

It was when I noticed in the beginning of the war that something surreal was happening, something I had never seen in my life before. The city was bombed, snipers were shooting, you could not walk around, children were in the basements. I said: this is so incredible, this needs to be registered, this needs to be filmed in every way. I gathered the people and said: I suggest we work as Charlie Chaplin, every day filming. We will start tomorrow. Nino Žalica raised his hand and said: "Can I film tomorrow? About children how they were playing in front of the buildings dreaming about travelling...".

Also at the time, I was thinking, this should become a feature films. After the war I made *A Perfect Circle*. So in a sense all these documentaries were in a sense a research for a fiction feature film. You can see when you watch *A Perfect Circle* that it was inspired by certain real-life situations from the war.

To come back to your question. You asked about the motivation. The motivation was this surreal situation, like we were in a new galaxy and filmmakers had to react in their own way, register and show this to the world what we were doing. I was not an idealist, optimist, that I thought it would change the world. But still some people heard, people started talking about it, started coming, there was at least a strong dialogue created. And finally, the result was that we had visual registrations, about what was happening, and what kind of ambient was there. Besides thousand of false information that was sent out from enemy lines, with the epicentre in Belgrade. It was difficult to fight only with words, we needed images. And it was not only us, there were more groups, people that were working privately, television, therefore the corpus of the documentary footage was huge. It is important to mention that every group had their own vision. What we did was the following: The theme was how the horror that happening was affecting the ordinary people that were living in Sarajevo. The resistance of people was much stronger in private, everyday life, in the strong desire to stay and live as normal as possible in an abnormal situation, than that of the army.

We were the biggest group, we had the most professionals. And therefore it was not one or two men working on a film, but there were 7, 8 or 10 people working on a film that were working simultaneously every day. Therefore we produced a huge production, huge mosaic of documentary material. However also others produced material that are very valuable. The television was also doing important things. Like Suljo Mulaomerović filmed the National Library when it was burning. He was in every place, when something was happening. Even we were sometimes registering what was happening, on the day of today, for example the massacre on Markale. the market. Our crew was there nearby so they went and filmed a bit. That footage is horrible. That was by coincidence. What was the worst to me were those awful officials that would deny what had happened and say that there were plastic dolls there, etc. The disgust I have for those people is so big that the people who were shooting, I think were just technically carrying out what they had to. The officials, they were horrible.

Interviewer: For whom were the films made in the war? Who was the audience that you had in mind?

Interviewee:

Then we wanted to show the world what we filmed. We were sending out what we had filmed, through satellite. We would also travel and show it. Very early I already went to Europe to show it. The aim was not the Sarajevan audience. We did also show it to them, they also liked it. But in essentially we wanted the world to be the audience. That people who are important decision-makers, we wanted them to do everything that was necessary, to make an intervention. I was in the States, in Washington, in the Congress, everywhere I was carrying this and was showing it, in New York, San Francisco, Canada.

Interviewer:

How did the foreign journalists go about their business in the war? Did they sometimes use your material?

Interviewee:

Regarding the journalists, I knew them, they were here and they themselves were shocked. They were doing their job in the field in a way that was logical. They wanted information from all sides, so that they could be realistic and objective. They have never been a problem. It was the problem with the editorial centres of media, of world media, that were receiving political inputs that were the problem. I know a lot cases when foreign journalists would write that this was a civil war. When they gave to me what they had written I would tell them that they can write whatever but that it simply has never been a civil war here.

We had a project here that was called Street Under Siege which was shown on various TV channels. BBC did not produce this, they only showed it. Normally they would take off our credits and put it as if it were a BBC program. We did not care, it was only told to us later at the Cannes Film Festival how an editor was signed as author that had never even been here. Journalists were not to blame. It is not strange that journalists would not take our material, however sometimes we were asked whether we wanted to give our material which we did not want because we did not want for it to end up in a different context. Then they offered to buy material. We did not want that either, we wanted to be the owners of our own context, and did not want our filmed material to end up in a different context which was very possible, with a different meaning.

Therefore there was not really a problem with the journalists. They were for the most part doing their job, they were shocked too. There was a gathering of journalists in the Holiday Inn around Christmas before the New Year when shelling of the Holiday Inn started suddenly. The politics was the one that was giving support to the sickos that wanted to occupy, there was a leadership in Serbia that was like that. It was hard to resist that. Military, police, underground forces were fierce and in the hands of a powerful team, who were supported by foreigners who were also negative. And of course, they did not allow the media to show what the real situation was, what we were showing through our films. There was a power struggle. Of the opposing authorities to impose their rule. And in a sense they were also encouraged in this from abroad. It was a combination of imbecility and political incentives.

*** End transcript

Interviewee: Ismet Nuno Arnautalić , producer SaGA

Interviewer: Ena Omerović

Date: 01.03.2016

Place: Sarajevo

*** Start transcript

1. Background

Interview Ismet Nuno Arnautalić

Interviewee:

The main recipe for making the films in the war is that they should not be about the war. The war was in the background. It forced us to think differently, live differently, gather. We were more working with people's destinies, and that is why it was a very rewarding idea. That is why we were invited to all festivals in the world. Even during the war we could travel off to film festivals. We had UN accreditations and festival invitations, from Cannes to Montreal. First we sent out the films, but always with two people along with them. So that we could talk to the people. People did not know what was going on. The televisions were making a cliché situation. Three sides in war, religious war and such stupid things. That was not the truth. We were satisfied that we could change that general opinion at least for a little bit! They would film older women, dressed in traditional religious clothing. But they were not filming intellectual cultural workers, film workers etc.

In the beginning we were:... What now, we did not know how long it would last. Then we figured out, it is best we start doing what we know best. Then around us a lot of young people gathered, famous professionals, volunteers, everyone that wanted to help, to show something, everyone was welcome. Therefore SaGA gathered around 50/60 people and then an important fact is that the government also recognized that it was very important to have such a group, that it will leave us with an important archive, which in the end proved to be true and a very important and positive decision. We made a huge archive.

When we started with the films, we had a very poor technical basis. At the time television had a beta system. We had the lower level, u-matic. In the war there was no chance to have tapes. It would be a shame to film something in the war and have to erase it thereafter. Cause there were no celluloids. But foreigners were coming and were bringing tapes. We met Pippa Scott who was a producer from the States and she was amazed by the elan that was present in SaGA. Then she sent us a suitcase with tapes! That was in 1993. She would send every year a suitcase with tapes in the war, which was golden to us. It were u-matic tapes, VHS tapes...

It turned out that 35 mm was not even necessary. We would make a part of it on VHS... another on... actually whatever was at your reach. Our rule was. Every author would say when they would need a filmcrew. Then we would provide them on the day of their shooting with a film crew, car, camera man, technique, driver, organizer. Then they would go to the editing room. We would do this on a daily basis. Even if there was not really a filmplan we would film the neighborhood. It was important that we were filming. In the process of filming also some serious artworks erupted. There were already established names that were making the films. For example Zlatko Lavanić. He made a fantastic film, *Bums and Dogs*, where he compared the life of Sarajevan homeless people to the life of stray dogs. Srdjan made a fantastic film, *I Burnt Legs*. Mirza Idrizović would film every Friday. He would make small stories. For example *Letter*. He was asked by a friend to bring a letter somewhere. When

arriving there there was not even a house, nothing was left.

There was not a problem with ideas in the war. It were tragic circumstances. It was just important to have a filmcrew. And everywhere where you would go, when you would step out and go the right or go the left, everywhere were life themes.

Very important, exciting themes. It is maybe strange to say it. But in the sense of the art of cinema, it was a very favourable situation. We were only suffering the lack of technical equipment but somehow we came around this too.

Interviewer: How did you manage to produce films?

Interviewee:

Before the war we received some funding from the fund for cinematography for a feature fiction film. However when we received this money that money started to melt. Because of the enormous inflation. Every day the value would drop. Then we managed to change the money to Deutsche Marks and we could keep its value which we would use then not for the salaries. Salaries for film workers were sandwiches. Every day we would buy around 20 kilo of bread. At the black market we would buy some cheese. We would buy gasoline, a liter was 30 km... People were not even asking. We only spent money in the production on food, gasoline. In that sense it was easy for the producer. It was necessary that people have a sandwich per day and water. It was difficult to do this. It was not easy to get the bread. We had a van. One of the filmworkers had a van. He was in the military police and we got him out. They gave him to us. Then we could use it. Then every day he would pick up people. It was difficult to come to SaGA. We had premises on Donje Ciglane.

He would go around and pick up the people and then we would all gather there and share a sandwich. It was very dangerous but we were lucky. There were some situations. Snipers would shoot at our van and I would hear whistling of the bullets and hitting the sidewalk. Above our premises also a grenade fell and destroyed the floor above us. But somehow we had luck. The problem came after the war when we lost some people. It was like they were cut off. Like during the war it seemed as if they were , adrenaline, and after the war we thought it would be easier. And then we lost 2,3, 4 people. Those were people that just died, heart, cancer. It was stress that was the main cause. We were a bit crazy as well. We did not see the difficulty of the situation. We thought it was not worth it to sit in a basement. We felt good doing that.

Interviewer: Did you feel more safe with a camera?

Interviewee:

No, that was even more dangerous. Because the media was a big enemy to them. CNN would come and they would show the truth. That was terrible for them not to be able to spread their lies that it was a religious war. But in the end world media was on our side. Christiane Amanpour for example.

Interviewer: How was it in the beginning with the media?

Interviewee:

Well in the beginning it was not like this. We can blame this to the politics or ignorance of the journalists. But when journalists started coming here and live here. They were living in Holiday Inn. Even for them it was not easy. Holiday Inn was shelled... Big names would

come, John Burns for example, recipient of a Pulitzer. We would cooperate with them. Big names... Vanessa Redgrave, Harvey Keitel..

Interviewer: Iordanova mentions that foreign media would not take over material that was filmed by Sarajevans. Is that true?

Interviewee:

Yes, that is true. We experienced this. Foreign television channels did not want to take our material. Only one television station would take it, Arte. Someone commented that it was too brutal, too bloody. That is true, they did not want this. It was probably for political reasons, that the image they were carrying out and bringing forward, the cliché, would not change too fast. Or they wanted to protect their viewers, or both... not important. That is the truth.

Nevertheless every day it was shown on television what was happening in Sarajevo.

Interviewee:

We did a project Street under Siege. It was after seven days that people figured out that it was not about war. Then the viewership jumped extremely from half a million to four million viewers. That was a very simple concept. With the help of a French company Point du Jour we could work for this with Beta. Sarajevo was a strong film centre before the war. We had the human resources. Cinematographers, editors, organizers. We had the capacities. A producer of the BBC came here and after ten days he left, when he saw that we knew everything.

Interviewer: Therefore not a lot of people left? You could form film crews?

Interviewee:

Not a lot of people left to the other side. The majority stayed. We had a situation that even a Serb refugee from Grbavica to us. A soundman. He understood the situation and came to us the entire war and is still with us.

Interviewer: Therefore there a mix of different nationalities.

Interviewee:

Yes that is true. But the ones that were watching Serb television, SRNA, it was very difficult to stay normal under that influence of propaganda. But he understood it well and brought a good decision. We were a multi-national group.

Interviewer:

Regarding the governmental support? What did you mean by this?

Interviewee:

We did not have any substantial support but more in the sense that they supported us in being able to do what we did. They did not call our workers to the army. It was better for a filmworker to carry a camera than a gun which was not his profession. Our filmworkers were exempted to join the army. That was the support by them which was very important. There

were all younger people and if they were not filming they would have been in the army for sure.

Interviewer:

I have read that Pjer Žalica and Danis Tanović still were in the army? Did they film there?

Interviewee:

Pjer Žalica was with us from the start. We also had problems. We had the premises there underneath cafe London and in the night we would have patrols. Many even slept there. We have valuable stuff lying there. Also sometimes it would be easier to stay and sleep there than go to Alipašino Polje. One time it happened that Nino Žalica was caught and brought to Caca.²²⁵

He went out to smoke a cigarette and was taken away. Caco would catch people and bring them there. It was not possible to say you wanted to film. It was not possible, that was the situation. We managed eventually to bring them back to our crew. Those were the minor problems. I am saying minor because surviving was the big problem. We kind of had luck, because we had no casualties, not injured workers. Somehow luck was on our side.

Interviewer:

Did you film on the more quiet days?

Interviewee:

No, we were really filming every day. When there were shootings and when not. It was difficult to predict when a quiet day would happen.

Interviewer:

When I watched *Children Like Any Other* I saw that the boy was driving his bike throughout town, how was this possible?

Interviewee:

Well it happened that we would have a few days that were more quiet. And then you could conclude that the next day would also be quiet. But you could be wrong... We really had a lot of luck...

It is incredible how much was filmed...

Interviewee:

I have somewhere in the archive, how somehow was giving an interview in front of SaGA and at that moment a grenade fell above and then you see how the person giving the interview was really scared off from the explosion. Shelling was happening everywhere.

We had in our premises offices, an editing room. We had U-matic editing in our premises.

²²⁵ Caca was head of a criminal paramilitary group operating and fighting against Serb forces in Sarajevo.

Then we could edit our films there. And when the French came, 1993/1994 they brought two Beta machines. And then we started working on Beta.

Interviewer:

I read in a newspaper article from the time that first a lot of material was filmed and that later on the films were put together?

Interviewee:

No it was not really like that. Lets look at the first film. I cannot remember which one it was. Lets look at this book. *Eight Years Later*. When we started. That was done in cooperation with the television, and it was also edited there. That was done by Ademir Kenović and Nino Žalica. All of us, worked at the time, the main organizers, at the television. Before the war. And then we all moved to SaGA. Ademir, Mirza Idrizović. I worked actually also one year at the television. Morning at the television and afternoon at SaGA.

My Mother Sehit was done by Faos but edited in our premises. *Letter* was done by our author Mirza Idrizović. He made these small stories (e.g. *Letter*, *Water*) that were later on incorporated in a bigger story, *The Diary of a Filmmaker*. However they also function as independent films.

Interviewer:

What about *Electricity* from Srdjan Vuletić? That was also such a small thematic story.

Interviewee:

That was a bit later that we made that. That was ordered by Deutsche Welle in fact. They ordered small stories. Sometimes it was impossible to make contact. But later on we got a satellite telephone by Soroš. They gave it to us as a gift for us as cultural workers. We had a satellite connection in SaGA and that is how we communicated. One day we received a fax. From Wim Wenders that was asking whether we would accept the Felix award. We thought someone was joking with us (laughs). We used to communicate also through journalists. They had satellite telephones. Also in our close proximity there were some foreign companies where we could go. We tried and did what we could.

Interviewer:

There were also ordered films?

Interviewee:

That was happening to a lesser extent. For example there was a panel and discussion at Arte about the situation with filmworkers here and Ademir went there. He was a guest there and I stayed here to film what the street thought, a 4-minute film. We made a promotion of the films *Street Under Siege*. Then we used all these actors and brought them to kino Radnik and showed them. They were amazed.

We did not stick to any templates. We did some interesting stories.

Interviewer:

Was there also a Sarajevo audience?

Interviewee:

We did some promotions also for the Sarajevo audience. Then there was also the first Sarajevo Film Festival. We were one of the organizers. Radio Zid (Zdravko Grebo) , Kino Radnik (Forum), etc. We brought equipment. We made this first festival. Mess was also one of the organizers (Haris Pašović.)

Interviewer:

Which films did you show from SaGA?

Interviewee:

We showed a couple of films. *Bums And Dogs*. Cannot remember the others. But we also made a promotion of European films. We received video messages from Roman Polanski, Bertolucci, that sent us video messages for the Festival. They found it fantastic that the film workers were not giving up, that they were working hard. That they were making a film festival.

Johan van der Keuken actually made a film about this in the war.

Now also a film is being made about it. An American filmmaker is making it. It is an interesting topic. How people in the war would dress up and go to the cinema. You would be entering the cinema and they would search you and you would leave your gun at the counter not to bring it in.

Interviewer:

I have seen an article with an advertisement that you can celebrate new year at the cinema.

Interviewee:

That was before the war.

Interviewer:

No this was during the war.

Interviewee:

Oh I missed that. I know that in the sixties that in the cinema Apollo (Partizan), Imperijal (Romanija) that two films would be watched for new years. We grew up with films.

What can I say. Everyone had a wrong perception about us. My daughters refugeed to Italy in

the war and she was taken into some artist's house. They thought we don't know anything. They started explaining to her what a washing machine was. And she grew up even with a VHS camera. I was among the first in the city to have a VHS camera and I would film my children growing up. That is 40 years ago... She grew up with the VHS recorder and they were explaining to her how a washing machine works. Everyone had a wrong perception about us. That we did not know anything. And we all grew up with American films. That is the same culture. We used the same furniture, we listened to the same music. When we were in LA in 1994 I met with Bruce Springsteen. He was amazed when I started telling him which songs we were listening to. I invited him to a promotion of our films in LA. Pippa Scott helped us organize this. She was a producer. She is very influential. Bruce Springsteen came.

Interviewer:

What was the effect of your promotion?

Interviewee:

There was not really an effect. Our idea was to come to the festival and talk to the people. Bruce Springsteen was even interested. Phil Alden Robinson was there (director of *Field of Dreams*). He also came to our promotions. The people were fantastically interested, especially the film workers. Phil Alden. I did not know him. And when I came back I rented it in the videostore that was next to us. I called him after that with the satellite phone. I told him that I did not know him, and that I watched his films now. He asked me how, where I watched the films. And whether it was legal. (Laughs)

Videostores were important. People watched terrible copies.

Interviewer:

This also tells us something about film as a medium. You were filming on different technologies. It was happening at a time of the discourse on the ontology of the medium and the film as material basis. There was a discussion going on whether film should adopt new technologies.

Interviewee:

I have experienced all the standards. Philips Betamax, JVC that invented VHS, Then, H8, U-matic low band, U-matic high band, Beta, Beta SP, and at the television one-inch, two-inch and now we are all digital. Some people didn't want it. It was a difficult transition. At the television there were around 20 filmworkers working there, editors. And when electronics came they did not want to work with it. Also certain serious filmmakers were looking at working with electronics with a lot of despire. But then it became clear that it was not important which medium is used. We made a film *MGM Sarajevo* that had a promotion at the Cannes Film Festival. That film was made on VHS, Beta, U-matic, it was a combination of many technologies. It was not important, they did not ask us about quality, they wanted to know what was seen, they wanted to know the story. The story was the most important.

Now, some that were firmly against electronics, towards every film made on electronics.

They eventually also transferred to electronics. Electronics brings many advantages, it is much cheaper. We can save money. We can save around 40.000/50.000 of Marks. For our filmmakers that is a lot of money. 1995 here in Sarajevo, the maker of Cell came. He is an expert for commercials. He is Indian, Sikh and lives in America. And he came in 1995 for the Olympic Committee to make a film about Zetra, to ask for funding for the restoration. He brought 30.000 metres of 35 mm. We could have made two fiction films from that money. And he used this for a commercial of one minute. For them that was not important. Because they did not have to worry about money. We had to worry about every penny.

Interviewer:

Was it a problem for screenings, the technology?

Interviewee:

People would accept tapes. Now it is difficult to find projectors of 35 mm in cinemas. There are ones that are left. And nobody buys it anymore.

Some American directors do not want to make the transition still. In fact they changed from 35 mm to 70 mm. Tarantino is an example. He said he would stop working if he could not work with film.

Interviewer:

How was it with electricity in the war?

Interviewee:

In the beginning we bought an aggregate that was 2KW that could handle editing and that we could charge our batteries. That aggregate was only turned on when really necessary. Then we were helped by some international organizations that were 100/200 metres distanced from us that put a cable to our premises for us to have electricity. Then we had electricity. Then it was a problem that the neighbors saw that we had electricity and then during the night they would connect themselves to our electricity in various ways (laughs out loud). All of a sudden everyone had electricity and the expenses would jump. They would ask us why we were using so much and we answered we were only using it for the necessary.

Interviewer:

Did you ever receive donations from abroad? Also how did you get the money physically? The money before the war.

Interviewee:

I physically was protecting the money. We would have it as cash. I was really afraid that someone would find out that we had that money. Because a lot of things were happening. But we were very lucky.

Interviewer:

When the war started you had to get your money from the bank as soon as possible.

Interviewee:

That is what we did. Then we changed it to marks. Marks was the most important. You could buy anything of Marks. One liter of Petrol was 25/30 Marks. And we would spend 20 liters per day.

Interviewer:

Therefore you had quite a budget if you could spend so much.

Interviewee:

Yes... but it was melting. Melting fast.

Interviewer:

Did you have more support later on?

Interviewee:

When we started working with Point du Jour then the French would bring us some money. For our service. That they covered. Then we had income.

Interviewer:

When Pippa Scott was sending you tapes, how did that arrive in Sarajevo?

Interviewee:

That went through the UN. She had her connections. That was not a problem for her. We also could leave out of the city with our UN badges. But we would not bring tapes. We would bring food. That was more important to us. We'd rather have 20 kilo's of food than film.

Interviewer:

When you had the money in the beginning, you decided to make films and not buy food... You could spend the money differently.

Interviewee:

You know how filmworkers are. For them it is more important to make a film, screen it, that is a very strong passion. We would send out our filmworkers abroad and they would always come back. I was always nervous when I was abroad. I just had a desire to go back. When you would listen to the news abroad, you were listening to what was happening in Sarajevo. It

was far worse than when you were here. Because when you were at a distance you could not imagine the situation. And when you are here you were calm... You could get killed that is true but you were not nervous. The filmworkers could make their own decisions. They were in SaGA and they wanted to stay. It is like sitting at the dentist and of course you will talk to each other because you share the toothache. We all knew everything about each other. We were very close. We were there from 8 in the morning until 8 in the evening. You were either filming, or editing, talking, sitting around. You could watch a film.

*** End transcript

Interviewee: Srdjan Vuletić (Director I Burnt Legs, 1992)

Interviewer: Ena Omerović

Date: 11.03.2016

Place: Sarajevo

*** Start transcript

2. Background

Interviewer: Who were you before the war?

Interviewee: Before the war, in 1989 I started my study of directing at the Academy of Performing Arts in Sarajevo. It is important to mention that this was the first year when students were being admitted to the study of directing. This department was newly formed. Until that time, people that wanted to study directing, had to go abroad. Usually they would go to Belgrade or Prague and to a smaller extent to Zagreb and Ljubljana. I was lucky that when I finished my highschool that exactly then this department opened. I already had certain affinities towards filmmaking. Independent film was something I was interested in. When I was a kid I used to come to this Film Academy as it was one of the only places where you could see independent American and European cinema. I went to watch retrospectives of for example Jim Jarmusch, Wim Wenders, Werner Herzog, Fassbinder. This was in a sense the introduction to my passion for filmmaking. These films were not really screened at cinemas in Yugoslavia.

Interviewer: What film professional activities did you do? What kind of education did you have?

Interviewee: In 1992 I was a student, at the ending of the third year. I had finished two big works at the Academy. One documentary film and a theatre play. The war started when I was finishing my third year at the Film Academy. Another interesting fact was that there were five of us in that generation. These five people were Danis Tanović, Pjer Žalica, Me from Sarajevo, Marko Mamuzić from Belgrade and a girl from Split Sanja Bilić (at the time Sanja Hadžić). Why is this interesting? This is interesting because almost all of the rest of the classes fell apart (people moved away). Only a small number stayed in Sarajevo, looking at the percentages, 50 percent tops. And the three of us stayed all, and we worked in the war, making documentaries. And after the war we continued our careers quite successfully. Danis Tanović received an Oscar etc. Marko Mamuzić has become also quite a good documentarist. Only Sanja Hadžić left the work of film, she writes books.

War, although it was bad, looking at it retrospectively has in a sense made an unnoticeable transition between the old and the new authors. In the sense that when the war started, everything that was associated with the authors, a certain context for filmmaking, was lost. We were all, all of a sudden in the same situation. My friend, we have what we have, all that we have is a camera... and Sarajevo. And that is it. Nobody had a production. There was no support in the form of funding from the government. That was it!

Looking at it from this perspective today, it is normal that kids like us, of 20 years something, that we would acclimatize better to these guerilla circumstances than certain people that were used to big productions. They all were encouraged through us. Because they saw how quickly

we reacted and started making films. We did not fall into the trap of only making newsreels/registrations.

Interviewer: How did the war affect what you were doing before the war?

Interviewee: In my personal case, very early when the war started I applied to work as a volunteer in the hospital where my father used to work. I was a volunteer there and I worked a few months there already when Ademir Kenović called me. It was a very chaotic time. Nobody knew who was still alive, who was dead, who went away, who stayed, where they are living, and what is happening to them. There were no mobile phones, no telephone lines. You didn't know who was living in the building next door let alone somewhere else in the city. I was working with something that I did not study for. I was working in the hospital as an assistant. Ademir Kenović invited me in August/September 1992 to work for SaGA. When I came to SaGA we were all at the same level. Although there were some people who already had somewhat more fame, they made already few feature films, or documentary veterans such as Mirza Idrizović, we were all at the same level and in the same situation. In the sense what I told you before. You had what you had. And if you were willing to work under such circumstances, budget zero guerilla filmmaking. There was also a positive thing in all this, and that was that the technology was in place. Very primitive but at least existing. And we had an electricity source which was a treasure at the time. We could charge our batteries. We had also entire independence. We were told, go out and film. Whatever you'd like.

This was interesting also from another perspective. The fact that there was no censorship. At least in SaGA there wasn't. Nobody came to us and said: you have to make a hero movie. Or you need to glorify the war. No no no. Nobody even asked for an informative level of filmmaking. But they simply said: Do what you like. Therefore it was put down to our level of decision-making. We had the freedom.

That was very important for me. Because when I got the chance, and they gave me a filmcrew, do what you want with it. I started making *I Burnt Legs*. It was a blending of two circumstances. One was that I had the experience from the hospital, it was a direct experience of working there. And secondly that I had a certain opinion and irritation about the reporting that was happening by the international media companies from Sarajevo. The irritation was boasted because they simplified the war. For them it was easier to say: The Serbs on one side, and the Muslims on the other, and goodbye. And another thing. They were reporting numbers. Like they even do today from Syria and Iraq. "Today there were 7 dead people". Only numbers... That irritated me personally. When someone tells you that today thirteen people died and 69 were injured. What does that mean to you?? Nothing, it is just a number. Hence this irritated me to such an extent that I took my chance.

This was a bit of an poetic time for me, although I was young at the time, I responded very mature. Perhaps the strongest reaction in my life. It were times of war. Everything could be misused. And therefore I sat down and decided... I will do something about me, something about my life, my experience, my testimony, that could never be falsified. I will film this myself, my own testimony, which I had as a result of the three months that I was working before that in the hospital.

The hospital was an interesting place, an interesting building in the war. Because it was a sublimite. Sarajevo was a huge frontline. Battles were fought one day here and there. One

day it was fought in the south, the next in the north, then east. But in the hospital people were coming from all sides, from all the different front lines, injured people. After them their families. It was a meeting place of so many different life destinies. And then I decided that what I had seen, I would retell it from my own perspective and view. Perhaps it sounded selfish but I did not want it to be misused. I knew what irritated me most in that period and I wanted to avoid that at all costs. I wanted to transform the numbers in casualties to individual testimonies. That the people that I would film in the war, that they would be portrayed as they were, ordinary people, living under horrible circumstances. And if I would film these ordinary people in a good way, then people anywhere could identify with it. That would be much stronger than any BBC or CNN was doing. And that is what happened. Now we now that this had happened. Because when our films started to travel, the reactions from people were: Ohh no, these are actual people dying... Ordinary people are dying, professors of music are dying... When you put it to the level of humanity.

This is what I am bothered with also today. You cannot have empathy towards Syrians because they are not allowing you to have empathy. In these series of SaGA films: *I Burnt Legs* was a flagship film. It was the first one. I told people we had to do this. To talk frankly directly and concretely about the normal people, and people anywhere will relate to the story. That is what was done with "I Burnt Legs" and some mini testimonies of other people. That became in a sense the formula for our films. If we wanted to tell real stories from the war, people would not get hooked to whether a front line has moved a 100 or 200 metres or which artillery arrived that day. People have only attention for normal plane citizens that are dying. That could happen to you as well tomorrow! If things in the political context would change rapidly you could also find yourself in the same situation. The pain and suffering of the people will perhaps push you to exercise pressure on your own government to stop what is happening there, because it is not normal.

That was very early in the war. The first shots for *I Burnt Legs* were made end of the summer and I finished somewhere in the winter. Therefore the film was finalized end of 1992. The scenes in the intensive care where the man without legs walks around, you can see the influence of David Lynch whom I loved at the time, those were filmed as early as August/September. That was a chaotic time. However I knew my way around the hospital, where patients were being placed and I had a story that was a true story. The situation was interesting because only a handful of people, who did not even study medicine, were working as assistants for the entire hospital, for all departments. There was a lack of human resources. A lot of medical staff had left with the army. This is a hospital in the city centre. It was overcrowded in terms of patients. Three/four of us worked in all departments.

Eventually my work turned out to be the research for my film. I went to work in the hospital to work there, not knowing at the time that I would make *I Burnt Legs*. Unconsciously it happened. It is interesting that the four of us, and some other people, were working as assistants. We were transporting patients, attending surgeries. All of us were children of people working as doctors at the hospital. The parents told their children that the hospitals were out of staff and that we ought to help them out.

That is the film *I Burnt Legs*. That film became later a formula (not that it would be exactly copied) but it became a formula for portraying the man, the everyday man, portray him and people will be able to identify with his problems.

Going back to the transition in terms of filmmakers. There were days in SaGA when we were all sitting together at the same table. Mirza Idrizović for example as well, who was already a veteran of cinema, at the time and his wife Zlata Kurt. Nedžad Begović, Pjer Žalica, Nino Žalica (his brother who was also a cinematographer in the war), me, Ademir Kenović, a couple of other people. We were all sitting together and it turned out that actually the younger generation responded in a more practical way in the very beginning. They did not think or calculate, they would just grab the camera and work. The older generation was perhaps used to bigger productions and we were used to student film productions.

Interviewer: One Day Of *I Burnt Legs* (did you write a filmplan, describe one day of shooting, who was in the crew)

Interviewee: The production was organized as follows. SaGA was under the ownership of Ademir Kenović and Ismet Nuno Arnautalić. They had the equipment because they were filming end of the eighties and beginning of the nineties commercials, music videos, and they still had this equipment. That equipment was very rudimental. They had a U-Matic camera, and editing facilities. That U-Matic camera was monstrous. If one would see this camera today... it is ridiculous. That camera had to be used by two men, because it was very heavy, and the body of the camera was separate from the recording device. It was a semi-professional device. It was the only option we had at the moment that was more professional than VHS. It was very heavy for carrying and using. SaGA had also Ismet Bektašević, who would drive a mini-van. We were mobile in that sense. Ismet also fulfilled the role of an organizer. It was interesting that my film was shot by Ahmed Imamović who would become later a film director and I would have more cooperations with.

Interviewer: Was Ahmed a professional cinematographer?

Interviewee: No, he literally came from the front lines and he had a wish to become a DOP and later he would become a director. Later he would enter the Film Academy. The film crew was improvised. He was not a professional. He only had a desire to assist. There was a guy, Oliver Todorović who would help him carry the recording device. Ismet Bektašević was a film worker from before the war and he had a van. He knew more about filmmaking, he was used to filmsets... In the editing room, we had Almir Kenović who was the editor. Good question actually. We in fact had a mix of students, old professionals and some total amateurs that were caught in the situation and helped out because of the war.

Interviewer: How many people were involved in the film?

Interviewee: 6-8 people made the film. That is how every SaGA film was made at the time, with small film crews. Only later, much later, there was one more ambitious project that was called Bums and Dogs that was done more in the way that one would associate with a real filmproduction with sectors. A sector for directing, organization, someone that would select locations.

SaGA was growing production-wise. At the time we would also receive donations, of cameras, that were more mobile. That made it possible that less people would come along to the shooting. You have to bear in mind that Sarajevo was under siege, there was constant

bombardments and sniper fire. You could not really go with ten cars from point A to point B. It was very desirable that we could fit in one small car and go from point A to B. We were usually in the van, because the equipment was big and a lot of us could fit. That van was very important. There was no public transport.

Interviewer: Does it mean that only one filmcrew could work per day?

Interviewee: Yes in the beginning there was only one filmcrew working. You can see that also by the number of films made. There was one filmcrew working, one camera. Only later on, we would have more cameras and filmcrews that could go in different directions. But this was how it started.

Interviewer: I am interested in how you structured your story. You worked in the hospital that turned out later to be in a sense the research for your film. How did you combine this with your general perception of the war?

Interviewee: Ademir Kenović was my professor at the third year of the Film Academy. Exactly the year when the war started. Then he called us, all of us who stayed and he offered us his production at our disposal. Do whatever you like. Before that I already had worked at the hospital, for three/four months. As I said, I sat down and thought about what irritated me in the reports from western media or agencies in general. And that was that there were no names. There was no Ena Omerović. That is something that happened to me in the hospital. When I was at the hospital it was all very vague, there were a lot of people that were injured, lost a leg or arm. All of that seemed abstract until you actually saw it for yourself. And then something additionally happened that even more concretized these horrors into a personal tragedy. What happened to me was that one day I entered into the intensive care. There were a lot of young people there, that were coming from the front lines for example. That were left without certain limbs. And I entered and I saw a young woman, and I looked at her face and I recognized her... I know her until this day who she is. And when I saw her, when I looked at her, and she looked at me... I remember that she started to cry because she was left without her arms. SHE started to cry... That shook me to the core in every sense of that word. It turned the circumstances from that moment into my personal tragedy. Overall I was lucky that I did not lose anybody in the closer nucleus of my family. There were some injured people, I also took some bullets. But it was at that moment that I understood it, when I saw that young woman who I used to hang out with, without her hands, that was a disaster. That pulls you apart. When I got the chance to shoot that, *I Burnt Legs*, I decided I would film that. Because I remembered what was missing in those reports. The real actual person was missing...

Interviewer: So the film became a report of how you experienced the war. You had this personal confrontation when you were in the hospital of the experience of war?

Interviewee: Exactly. I was like everyone living in Sarajevo. We had a problem there. All the people in Sarajevo could not believe that something that we all knew was happening, that it was represented in a different way. In the sense that everything was replaced from tragedy, an Olympic city was bombarded, trams were shot at, it was a crazy time. Trams were working and continuously people were dying in them. After that, you come home and you think this will or can stop every day, foreigners are there to help you. But no way... The foreigner positions himself... I was saying this recently for one film from France. Where did all those pictures come about, of people running and crossing sniper alleys from the war. Well they came about because that foreigner was standing there at the crossing, photographer, the whole day and waited for it... It did not cross his mind that he was a "lešinar", that he is waiting for

someone to be shot!²²⁶ Looking at it retrospectively... there are thousands of these photographs!

Interviewer: I read this in an interview you have earlier. It is easy to make a documentary film by putting the camera on the side of the road and wait for someone to get killed.

Interviewee: Exactly... We could also do our films that way. We knew all these locations. But we did not want to enter in this sensationalism, at least me personally not. I was not seeking these sensational moments, I was looking more for a moment of humanity. If you are telling a story that is more comprehensible at a human level then you succeeded. If it is at the level of mathematics, then... fuck it... That is math...

Interviewer: Did you sit down and write down a filmplan?

Interviewee: I did not write a scenario because of a simple reason, because I decided and wanted to tell my personal story. But I did make a sequence of scenes, a so-called step outline. I wrote down: scene 1, scene 2... So I had a certain preknowledge from school to give it first a spatial and time context and that was how I also eventually made the film. Space/time, where are we, and when are we? Sarajevo, 1992, war. That should be well exposed. And then: who? Well me. Then I thought what was important from my personal story. I remembered everything what I was doing and what left an impact. Then I transformed this. The film ends with my emotions, the way I felt. I felt the way I felt. You can kill me now, but that was how it was at the moment. I felt good, in the sense that I was alive, that I was breathing, that I already had experienced a certain catharsis. When I finished that step outline then I knew that a testimony alone, standing by itself, would not be sufficient. It would be too linear. Then I was looking for another backbone for the story, that was not me, but also not at an informative level. But again at the most humane personal level I found this boy, that had lost his arm, who tells you that he cannot make a snowball... That is what I told you. I filmed a part of the film after the summer. The first part was filmed in september when I got the equipment and the part with the boy was filmed when the first snow fell. This was when I finalized the film.

Interviewer: How many shooting days were there?

Interviewee: I filmed at least three days. One day in the hospital, one day with the boy later on, and one day myself, and one day I filmed the exteriors, of Marijin Dvor destroyed in the war, Skenderija, also in the winter.

Interviewer: Did you have to have a permission to film in the hospital.

Interviewee: No, not at all. I worked there. It was a strange time. Some shots were filmed where there were no people at all. Because there were snipers shooting there. Especially in Skenderija. The park I filmed, it was behind the containers that were put there to be able to pass. I was dangerous there.

Interviewer: Did you have any protection as a crew because of the containers? How were the safety conditions when filming?

Interviewee: What happened is that at a point you get a certain feeling for when it is unrestful, when you should not be shooting. There were days when it was quiet. But there were also quiet days when you felt that it was on a lurk to start to get crazy. You develop this

²²⁶ Lešinar is Bosnian slang used here to describe photographers that were waiting for tragedy, for people to be killed so that they can make their photograph.

feeling, it was already half a year of war. We developed to some extent this feeling when and where you could go to shoot. This was a mix of intuition and experience. Although this feeling can also trick you of course. I was injured on the 13th of September 1995, just before the end of the war. I had an intuition, already three years of war had passed. I felt it was safe. Nobody went on the main street, that foreigners called the sniper alley, because it was too exposed to snipers. But you could pass with the car with full speed. That day I was late to help a colleague, Pjer Zalica. He had to move from an apartment and I went to help him to carry his furniture. I took the bike, and exactly there a sniper caught me, near the Museum. I did not hear a sound! No shooting. That is what I mean that that intuition could trick you.

The production process in general. What you are particularly interested in. There was a camera, there was a battery. There was electricity at SaGA. There was an editor in place that would edit all the films. There were a few DOP's that were rotated, there was a man that had a van that was in a sense an organizer.

Later on this would expand. Mensud Arslanović, one phenomenal director of film, that was a function of film organizer, some sort of line producer. He would organize locations, facilitate it. The crew became in a sense more structured. That there were sectors. However the basis was that we covered themes. One of my favourite films was "Waiting for the parcel". You know why it is dear to me?

Interviewer: Yes I watched it last Sunday because you recommended it.

Interviewee: Did you like it?

Interviewer: Yes, I did. Especially because I know that the parcel and the letter gained an entire different dimension in the war. It was so important to us, even to us abroad. I like how the filmmaker captured these emotions on the faces of the people waiting for the parcels.

Interviewee: Exactly. And here it had even an additional dimension, because people were so hungry.

That's what I wanted to tell you. When we work here at the Academy with the film students. I show them these works and I talk about my experiences like I am telling you today. There is one thing that is very important. You have to capture the spirit of that time! That film, Waiting for the parcel, as most of the films made by SaGA... They can never be filmed again, the cannot be re-created. Not only can you not recreate a destroyed city... It would be too expensive. You can bring ten Hollywood's but you can never film that man again, the reaction of that man when he sees his own name on the list that he received a parcel. That happiness cannot be acted by no one. You can also not re-enact the disappointment of the people that could not find their name on the list... You would be looking: Ena Omerović... and then ahh... And then those responses to them: You can try to look for your name like 16 times, but you are not there, and you are simply not!

The spirit of the time was entirely captured. Totally in some of these films. That cannot be repeated, and thank God it cannot. That it never happens again...

But that is why people return to these films.

Interviewer: This was also in your film. This had just happened to them, you captured the emotions as it just had happened.

Interviewee: You could perhaps film people that just experienced a traffic accident, and that you film them injured. But you cannot recreate that atmosphere, that psychology of war cannot be really re-created.

For example, I filmed also *The First War Cinema*, where people would come through a hole in the wall, gave a cigarette for a ticket and entered to watch some film that was screened with an aggregate. They would gather, risking their lives, to watch some random film. That is that spirit of the time.

Interviewer: We mentioned a bit the foreign media. I found that you had a biggest problem in Belarus?

Interviewee: In 1994 certain aid programs started through various programs and then the Soros foundation gave some funds that the authors also travelled abroad, not only the films. Also that not only one or two authors travelled but that more authors could go and present their films.

Interviewer: You did not go out in 1993?

No, not at all. The first time in 1994. Then I returned and was in Sarajevo until the end of the war.

To come back to the question. When I was in Belarus, it was the first time that I realized that there was an organized reception for us, that was against us, that were claiming that we were making propaganda. We had an entire different aim with our films. We had no government/country behind us. The films did not at all come into being like that. They were not ordered. People were filming what they wanted. They were not even covering geopolitical topics. It was simply small stories. They were totally upset with the film: Confession of a Monster, in which Herak re-tells how he killed those people, some people there. For them he was a hero. They were ultra-nationalists. I said ok...

Interviewer: How did they find out about your coming to Belarus.

Interviewee: That is a good question. Because they came there with flags and stuff. It was really bad. I was thinking... I was at the meeting, at the screening and Q&A. The Q&A... There was a huge theater and a lot of people there, and I remember people saying that it was propaganda, that Herak was a hero. And I thought... man, the basis of a democracy is to talk. I can tell my story. If you don't want to listen to it, that is fine. You can go. And if you want to accuse me of something, also that is ok. But let's talk argumentatively. But I think this was organized, set up. Because they already had some flags... I saw that the organizers got a bit scared beforehand even. We had to enter through the side entrance.

But then again, it was the time of the war. It was easy to get people upset. Even today that is easy.

Interviewer: Do you think they were watching some other news?

Interviewee: Yes, absolutely. They watched different news. But what was stupid to me was that we already had shown tons of films until that moment, about the human being, everyday life, of getting water in the war... Some older man having to traverse 5km to get water and back. I don't see what is propaganda about that. On a political level, I could not understand what was the issue. I remember very often that in Mostar there was some enquete and they asked a man for the news channel: Could you tell us what you think about the conditions of the roads? He answered: Please don't ask me about politics... That is when I realized, that whatever you film, under such circumstances and ambiance, it would be politicized. But whatever, the films travelled everywhere, the responses were fantastic, from San Francisco, Cannes. I personally did not travel too much with the films. I got East Europe... Poland and Belarus. It was ok, especially in Poland. Then some people also would gather, particularly in

Poland, some refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina. That was interesting. They wanted to see something created in their country. They would watch and a bit demoralized. But what can we do... it were war films.

My point was to talk about people. It was not important what someone's name was, whether someone was a Serb, Croat, Bosniak, Orthodox, Catholic, Muslim, or Jew... If you are a man, at a humane level, you should comprehend a problem of another man/person. That was my constant argument. I could not be lurked into a fight about this. Because I was not in that mood. Although I was quite a passionate young man I could not get carried away in this argument, not at the time. I saw that the arguments of the people that wanted to get me carried into a political fight that they were not real arguments. I was continuously insisting on this story, that of the humane dimension of the story. If you did not have this humane dimension I was not interested. That was what we were doing. When I was talking about my experience in the war there was nothing political I was trying to state. I just wanted you to see that I scanned the psychological state of a young person in the war. In an extreme situation.

Interviewer: Did you go to IDFA?

Interviewee: Rada Šešić is my friend, from before the war. She used to follow the works from students before as well. And I was very happy to see that she was working for IDFA. And then she had a great feedback, she always used to follow my work and later on. In spite of the fact that I made a lot of documentaries and that it travelled to many festivals, and many researches were written about it. I had never a click with documentary film. As soon as the war stopped I stopped making documentaries. I do enjoy watching documentaries. Every year I watch some phenomenal documentaries. And I understand that they are an important corrective force in society and they inform you very well about certain things you don't know about. I love that dimension. Because that is that dimension I longed to as well during the war. In a world where society has lost its compass, the documentaries are one of the rare foundations that one can rely on.

I did not go to IDFA, but I am following tendencies in documentaries and I love watching them.

Interviewer: Do you think your background in fiction film influenced your documentaries and their creative dimension?

Interviewee: Yes, that is true, you noticed that well. For example, I tried to structure some films as a fiction film, but I would not force people to re-enact something. I did not cross that line of documentary filmmaking. I would never do that. But dramaturgically I would think in concepts and terms of a fiction film. The time, space and, who, where and why? Then the development, the conflict, and the culmination, the resolution of the conflict. In that sense, I used the structure of fiction film in my documentaries. Until this day I like these documentaries that are structured in such a way. Documentary film has always this dimension of life, something that is interesting, whether it is Michael Moore (where the author is important)...to films that are a sequence of visual compositions that reveal everything. Documentaries are great! There are no rules. And that is good.

We were escaping from an informative dimension. The most important thing to us at the time was just not to make a newsreel, at an informative level. The rest was not important. It had to have this art dimension to it.

Interviewer: What I personally experienced that when going abroad people would be showing you how certain things, normal devices, were working. Such as a television. There was a certain impression in the west that we were primitive people, barbarians... That we were killing each other. Was there also this aspect that you took along?

Interviewee: Well, you know... this is a segment where perhaps I can understand it. I understood it also from the experiences of my sister. She refuged from the war to Sweden. She experienced the same like you. They were showing her the toilet seat and different things. My father is a surgeon. We are perhaps not from a rich family but we certainly came from a family that was well off, we pretty much had everything. And then later on I was thinking... It is normal that he looks at you in such a way, as a barbarian, because he is hearing the news that somewhere there people are slaughtering one another because of a name and surname... How could he experience you differently then? Therefore, I even found a justification for this.

Interviewer: What kind of footage/shots were they making?

Interviewee: That is the problem. I am not defending the western media. I told you already that we were irritated by the tone that was set, the oversimplification. The problem was that they filmed certain shots that they could film, because they *could* film them. If the situations were not there, and certain idiots, they could not have filmed them. They did not make them in the computer. So I do not have objections to that.

Interviewer: That was not a motivating force for your stories?

Interviewee: The series that we made, *Street Under Siege*, had a huge impact because every night on the BBC, Arte, there was a time when this was broadcasted. It is one thing to screen at a festival for a small group of people and it is a different thing when you show it at these television stations such as Arte, where million of people can watch it potentially. They made it in a good way. They would follow the citizens of one street. They knew that in every street of Sarajevo, any street you would go to, there would be a mix of people: orthodox people, catholics, muslims. You would also have a mix of the working class, retired people, sportsmen, intellectuals, musicians, artists. You can cover them all in one street. And that is how they were broadcasting this street every evening. That could have a great impact. That was a very well thought-through TV concept, like a reality show. My film could have also had a impact, because it was understood then that such a film can be comprehensible to anybody... That, that kind of stories, whether you show them in Africa, Canada, the Netherlands, everyone will understand what it is about.

Interviewer: Do you think that in the end these films had an impact in the West and their politics?

Interviewee: Well in the beginning we had no political ambitions with this project in terms of: we have to show this to them the politicians her and there. But then after a while I noticed that certain people from political circles were very carefully watching them. I am not talking about local politicians. Never had any politician, local one, stepped into our premises to see what we were doing. Says also something about them. Perhaps they were also aware that they would not pull off some sort of censorship with us. They were more interested in the what the television was doing. But I noticed that a certain political elite was present, whenever we were abroad, in Belarus, there were always a lot of ambassadors present from different European countries and they would be filming it. It is very possible that a bigger number of politicians watched these films. Whether that had an influence I do not know. Nobody knows. But at the level of understanding it probably had an impact. Also people from the BBC and CCN were coming here and they were watching our works. They were regular guests. They also realized at a certain point that they had to change their approach, of the simplification if horrible. But they told us many times from various newspapers, television stations, we have to simplify things for the mainstream average viewer of our newschannel. Turn it into something they can understand. And those are stupid, dry fact figures, and that is unfortunately the way it is.

Interviewer: I read an article about Susan Sonntag and David Rieff. David Rieff stated that Tragedy is like milk, in terms of its expiration date. Very soon it will be replaced with other news.

Interviewee: Yes, that is true. Good that you mention Susan Sonntag. Susan Sonntag watched our films. She was very aware. She came to SaGA and she watched all the films that we made. SaGA had made a film about her, about her directing *Waiting For Godot*. She loved the film *I Burnt Legs*. I was at her house, at a dinner, much later in her house in New York. She really loved it. She told me that it had helped her in the sense of understanding it. She got the information that she could not find on paper. She got information at the level of what the psychology of the war was. What the war was doing to the ordinary people. She was a great intellectual. And it is true what they said. And exactly for this reason, that tragedy would not be like milk, it is very important not to make a story that is anchored in a certain time, that that story after two years will become totally irrelevant. Because even today, after 25 years, you can still understand these stories. Because they were not filmed as expendable products. They were not filmed to be viewed that night as a news item, they were filmed as films.

Interviewer: Where would you be if you did not start to film in the war?

Interviewee: In the war I would probably continue to work in the hospital. Who knows, perhaps I would be drawn to that profession which I wasn't before that. When you enter the operating room and you undergo the situation that a man wakes up from his surgery, without anesthesia and he swears at you all kind of things, because he is in pain. Then you already have been through a lot. I know people who had studied medicine that would faint afterwards in the OR. Especially in the war it was chaos. So that would be my answer as to what I would be doing in the other case.

Retrospectively when I look at it... There were not many options. The Film Academy was not working. It was only in the summer of 1993 that the Academy would open its doors again. A huge role in the re-opening of the Academy had actually the students that had stayed in the city, because so many professors, particularly from the directing department, had fled the city. Pjer and I were in a sense student demonstrators for all the courses. We would organize lectures. A new generation enrolled that year, we were already working there at the time. That was very interesting. In that year Ahmed Imamović enrolled (who was before my DOP), Jasmila Žbanić (that would become very reknown), Aida Begić as well, Elmir Jukić... That was a very good generation, it turned out.

The war shaped me as well as an author. Because very quickly I had to switch from the student productions to a production that was not even a real production, to a guerilla production. But you get new parameters.

Interviewer: How did the filming of *March Eight* take place?

Interviewee: This film is great. We even shared this film on social media a few days ago on the International Women's day. It is a great case study on what guerilla filmmaking is about. On this day I was on my way to SaGA, everything was frozen, and when I approached the square on Ciglane I saw a lot of flowers. All of a sudden in frozen Sarajevo, in the war, sound of shooting in the background, I saw flowers. And you saw people dressed up, particularly women, like this day was a bit different than the others. Because our office was just beneath the square I just entered the office and said to the people: Lets film this, because... Well, exactly what I was saying before, it is the spirit of the time. You can never recreate that *March Eight* again, that hunger, that misery, that war psychosis, that ice... It will never come back, that *March Eight*. That is why that film is great. It is not just a coverage of that the people celebrated this day. That film is great to me because it shows a dimension of Sarajevo

as a city, its resistance, and Sarajevo as a city that nurtured certain civilizational achievements. It was not a bewildered city. No they wanted to celebrate this day of women. People that were busy, that were in the battles at the front lines, took the time, and bought their women a plastic flower on that day.

In terms of the approach in production. That was the advantage of SaGA that things were within reach. I did not announce this shooting. It happened within a few hours. I just stated that I needed a crew. I did not need the car and organizer as it was just right there. I just needed a DOP and soundman. Lets do it. We went and shot it, edited, and the film was finished within a few days. And until this day it is being shown.

Interviewer: You mentioned this a bit before. That you did not know the people you were working with, before the war?

Interviewee: No, I did not know them. Apart from Ademir Kenović, who invited me. And Pjer Žalica that studied with me, and Danis Tanović. All the others I had perhaps seen on television before but had not met them personally.

Interviewer: Making of a fiction film was not an option for you because of the war?

Interviewee: No, I was still a student. And also in the war it made no sense to me to make a fiction film. Even today I think this way. What I regret now, is that I did not film even more... That I did not spend even more time, more courage, to make more films, because wherever you turned your camera you could film something. That park that I talk about in the film. I would pass through it. I saw that park gradually disappearing in the winter of 1992/1993. We know that that was one of the rare parks in Sarajevo that was truly beautiful. I watched how the trees were disappearing. There was no electricity. People started to cut the trees one by one. Especially in the winter, they needed it for heating. I saw how it was disappearing gradually. In the beginning people were more reluctant. Only the rude ones were cutting in the beginning and then later on there was a mania and everybody was cutting it. First we were appalled by this, although people were dying. And then I figured, it is normal, it will grow back. We need to survive.

And what happened. I remember one morning, it was December 1992, and it was very foggy, and then I heard a sound: Tuk Tuk. When there was fog people had more courage. I remember that a lot of people were cutting. And then I saw something incredible... I saw a man standing on a branch of the tree, and he was sawing the branch he was standing on, totally insane. You could see that he totally lost it, he just wanted to get that tree. There was filmic material anywhere. You could just come and see the stories unfold in front of you.

Interviewer: When you would compare the shooting of your films before the war with during the war, how would you compare it?

Interviewee: Before the war I filmed student films. You got an assignment at school and you filmed it. There was no mystification around it. We would film for one another. Someone would help you out. And then during the war it was entirely different, and after the war I started to make films professionally and that was also a different production. But in the war, key was that reflex for reality. The reflex for the reality was particular in the war. You needed to notice what was happening, call someone to facilitate for you the equipment, go out and shoot. No philosophy, just go out and shoot.

There was a problem at first in the war. There was an idea that nothing mattered except when a grenade fell, you should run over there and film the people who got killed, that was very important so that the world could see it. Even later some would do this. But from the

beginning I knew the television was going to do this anyway. As a film author you need to go beyond that. In the starting phase, some of the documentarists went to register these happenings, like the massacre near the brewery, only as a raw material. And really when you look at that, it looks awful. It is good to have that documented, but it has no backbone of an idea. Apart from stating that the war is terrible, that people die etc. But also there, the people were just a mass. When you don't have that additional dimension, who that person was... Then only it would make sense. Then afterwards those massacres were stopped being shown at festivals, they went into the archives, and people would buy them as an archive of the war.

Interviewer: Where did you live, how did you come to your work?

Interviewee: I lived on Dolac Malta. SaGA would provide gasoline for the van. Then Ismet would pick us up every morning at a certain location. Then we would go with the Alley of Life to Ciglane where SaGA's premises were. If I was sleeping at someone's place in the city centre, then I would just wake up and walk to SaGA.

Interviewer: What kind of van was it?

Interviewee: The van was not bulletproof. Only later some armored cars would appear when the journalists from satellite media such as CNN realized that it was dangerous, and the UN, and they would have a few. The van would first pick up the producers, Ismet Nuno Arnautalić and Ademir Kenović, and then the rest of us. That was cool, because you were less exposed the less time you would be in the streets. For some bombardments. But what was good, there was an exact agreed time and location. And if you were not there it was assumed immediately you would not come. That was very flexible, it was not obligatory every day that you had to be there at SaGA. A lot people lived in the centre and they would walk. So we would all fit in one tour. In the summer we used a lot the bike like in the Netherlands.

Interviewer: But that was really dangerous?

Interviewee: Yes, but we had that Alley of Life. You would start at Malta and there was a long wall where now Mercator is. At the crossings there were containers that would hide you. We all went via this route, and then through the tunnel to Ciglane.

We would gather there, see whether someone had something to film, whether someone had an idea, whether it was too dangerous to film, what were some obligations. If there was nothing to do, you would go your own way after it. There was a good circumstance that we had some sort of accreditations. So we could move around. That was very good. We could walk around, listen to stories. People could recognize you, what you were doing. They would be grateful, for what you were doing. Even if you would go to the frontlines. They would just say: do your job, just film, that is just as important, that the people see it, and the world. They did not know that the world was passive, that only a few people decide about that. They had understanding for what we were doing. Nobody would come up to you and say: What are you filming, why are you doing this?

Everybody wanted to come in front of the camera and tell their problem. A lot of people did just repeat that sentence, just film. But in general everyone had their story to tell. Things were polarized. People were under extreme circumstances. And in that extreme experience, every one was very concrete in their stories. Absolutely.

You had accreditations because you needed to be mobilized to the army as a man at the time. Personally I did not need an accreditation because I was already on duty in the hospital. There were check-points. Because the frontlines in the war in Sarajevo were in the city centre even! So you needed the papers, to have them, to be able to move around. We had that as SaGA workers.

Interviewer: For who did you make the films?

Interviewee:

That is the most interesting fact. And that is, that it was for no one! Nobody ever came to SaGA from the locals and said: Come on, make a film about this or that. Or that they would order some film, some propaganda film. And then a second important thing is that the films were never censored. Nobody came and said: Let me see what you guys are doing here... And the third thing... The most crazy thing is that nobody ordered this. That was the most beautiful thing. I already told you how *March Eighth* came into being, how *I Burnt Legs* came about. I was telling you from my own experience. Also the other people worked this way. For no one! This is for me the definition of an artist.

You felt the need to tell certain stories. You had in this case the lucky circumstances that you had the resources to do that. There were no contracts, there was no money, there was nothing that was the usual with normal film production. There was no PR, no foundation, nothing of that existed. So to the question: For who? I would answer for myself. I as an artist felt the need to tell this story. And I did that or not. This was not only the case with films in the war. There were also artists that held exhibitions in the war. And I was like: for who does this man make the exhibition? These sculptures? For me that is the artist, he does it for himself, that is his answer to everything that is happening. He makes that sculpture, makes that painting, or illustration, or installation. That is when I realized also that we were working in the same way.

As an artist you either feel or you don't feel the urge to respond to the reality and to your surrounding. It is different when you live in Berlin, or New York and you have a great contract and you need to finish four assignments in a certain time... You do that out of urge but you also do it for the money. But here there was no money included, nobody pushed you, you just came, and you said I need to film this. I need to film these people buying flowers for their women on *March Eighth* or I will go to hell. And then you film.

Interviewer: Perhaps it is strange that today these films have in spite of a different intention gained an informative character...

Interviewee:

Yes, that is great that it went like this. Because people today don't have the information anymore. That is what I mentioned before. Everything that was filmed in the war with that informative character. That informative character has expired, had an expiration date. Who is interested today in facts what happened on a certain day. But these films that we have made, they have gained certain patina, you can understand them in a humane manner, you understand the problems. You can understand a certain time, and you also got the information that you don't have anymore.

*** End transcript

Interviewee: Nenad Dizdarević (*The Tough Teens*, *The Blue Guide*, *The Fourth Part of the Brain*, 1995)

Interviewer: Ena Omerović

Date: 13.03.2016

Place: Sarajevo

*** Start transcript

3. Background

Interviewer: Who were you before the war? What kind of education did you have? What film professional activities did you do?

Interviewee: I started my professional film career as long ago as 1975, when I was 20 years old. With my colleague Tarik Haverić, we made an adaptation for a TV drama *Blago u duvaru* which was an adaptation of short stories written by my uncle Zijo Dizdarević. Therefore very early on I had started my professional career. I graduated in 1977 in Belgrade. That was the period in which TV Sarajevo was rapidly developing and there were not enough human resources that had finished universities. Therefore my generation had that luck and privilege, to immediately get an opportunity of a job at the television. At the third year of my study I made this drama *The Truth about the UFO* which was also the final project for the third year. And for the graduation film I made *Zena na kamenu*, that was an adaptation of a novel by Ivo Andrić. I had decided that I would mainly be pursuing adaptations of literary works and the first film that I had made in 1981 was also based on motives from novels of Ivo Andrić and the film *I To Ce Proći* (1985) as well. *The Tough Teens* was based on the novel by Branko Ćopić etc. I was one of the youngest debutants in the history of Yugoslavia.

Then in the eighties the idea was born that a Academy of Performing Arts should be opened in Sarajevo. So that young people would not have to go to Belgrade, Prague, Paris, Zagreb to study but that they could study here. I was among the first professors at this Academy (from its second year). The Academy had first only the study of Drama and then later on also departments for Directing and Theatre would be opened. Later on also Dramaturgy. So it developed.

What is very important to point out in relation to the opening of this Academy... If there was not this Academy then today we would not have the directors Danis Tanović, Dino Mustafić, Jasmila Žbanić etc. Also in particular the theatre and film actors that we have today performing at our theatres would not be there. It would perhaps be amateuristic. So the opening of the Academy was a very significant moment in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because during the war there was an active cultural resistance by making films and theatre plays that would have not been in place if it was not for the existence of this Academy.

Interviewer: How did the war affect what you were doing before the war?

Interviewee:

After the war I went to Paris. Just before the very start of the war I had finished my feature film *The Tough Teens*. On the 28th of March I had finished the shooting of my film, and the war started officially in the beginning of April. Then it happened that I was supposed to teach

a new generation of actors. And then we did not know in the beginning how long the war would last. They were admitted in September 1991 and I told them in March to go home and what happened is that, this was the only generation of actors from the Academy in which there was not a single one from Sarajevo. They came from Banja Luka, Split, also few from Montenegro, from Tuzla etc. Therefore practically I was left without an entire generation. This coincided with the fact that I had just finished my film. I was persuaded also by friends to go and finish my film. That is also very symbolic for the cultural life in Sarajevo during the war, that the first independent fiction film of Bosnia and Herzegovina was completed during the war time. Therefore I left the city and managed to finish the film in Paris. Of course there were a lot of complications. First of all to transport the film material from Sarajevo, because it was filmed on 35mm. So that was all around 300 kg. In April we already started the transport. The editing until that day was in the film centre in Jagomir. At that location in the very start of the war there was a front line. So we managed to move the material to the city centre. Then bits by bits I would be sending the film to different locations, to Hungary, to Jadran film, to France. This was done by friends and humanitarian organizations. Then when I arrived in Paris, I had to gather all that material there. There was a big solidarity from colleagues in France, the dean at the time of the famous La Fémis school in Paris helped out as well. I contacted him as a colleague telling him where I was coming from and that I had a film. He watched a part of the material and he offered me the premises at their Faculty for editing of the film. Without any costs. As a trade-off I would give lectures and seminars at that Faculty. I was exactly talking about the experiences of shooting documentary films in the war.

That is when the idea was born to make the documentary *The Fourth Part of the Brain*. Because the actors in *The Tough Teens* were children from 13 to 15 years. When we had the casting in 1991 we were organizing all over Bosnia and Herzegovina. Therefore I knew that some children were living in Vogosca, some in Zvornik, etc. Then I had the idea to make this film. We had the world premiere of *The Tough Teens* in July of 1994. It was in the middle of the war. We managed only to get three of the actors to be present at the premiere. The rest was filmed thanks to my friend Vladimir Blaževski that filmed the children that ended up in Serbia and Montenegro. We were colleagues from the Film Academy. He is from Belgrade so he could take over this part. We edited the film in Budapest. We got some good offer there, because in Sarajevo there were not really the conditions to make a more serious project. The film did it very well. It was shown even on Arte. Also some ten other countries, from Sweden, Australia etc. Both at festivals and television would buy the film. Where there were immigrants from our country, there was also a big interest for such themes. Then I decided to stay in Paris a certain time. Then after the war I returned to Sarajevo and established the Sarajevo Film Academy six years ago.

Interviewer: How was the decision made to stay and film?

Interviewee: At the very beginning of the aggression, in April/May, there was a number of people that was scared, which is completely normal, human and understandable. They spent a lot of time in the basements, out of their fear. I had decided for myself that if something would happen, it could happen there as well. I cannot spend my entire day there at the basement. In a sense I did not feel that kind of fear. That was a decision I made, to go out and do something. The reason to stay and film was mainly because in a sense cultural resistance. And to show people that here life goes on, at least we were trying to move on with our lives normally. I left Sarajevo in 1993 and came back for that premiere in 1994 of *The Tough Teens*. Therefore I was only 9 months in Paris. In 1992 and 1993 I was in Sarajevo. In March

1993 I managed to get out. There was a lot of things that I filmed, archival footage and *The Blue Guide*. That was an opportunity to show to the world another side of the war. Because the journalists that were here, they came here briefed with the perception that we were a wild bunch of Balkan primitive people killing each other. They were fascinated with the quality of films that were coming from our country at the time. Screenings of the films were also the trigger and inspired organization of some tables where the real situation of the war would be discussed. That people start to look differently at what Bosnia is and what war was. They were shocked how they were making fun of them, it was a path to the truth, the breaking of a pseudomyth of truth about what was happening in Sarajevo. They came to Sarajevo usually with one idea and left with another. They were called back and then they would send someone else. They had their own politics that they wanted to show. They came briefed, totally inadequate with what was really going on. The journalist had to comply to what they were ordering and not to what was reality. They were conducting politics and for their politics it was not alright what was the truth but what they wanted to be the truth in front of their audience - a lie! However our films and the round tables showed another picture. That Bosnians are not only primitives. Of course there were also primitive people as they are the ones that make wars, but there was also this core of people that were cultural, artistic and creative that were performing at a European and worldly level of quality. So that created the opportunity to talk about the war from another angle and perspective. With other intentions. When you watch some of the reports that were made in those years, by Americans, English, French, Spanish, there was always a portrayal of poverty, misery... similar as to what is happening today with the reports from Syria. Perhaps so far I have only seen two or three TV reports that were portraying the Syrians as they are, as cultural, that they speak foreign languages, that there are also doctors, architects. That it is not only misery...

Interviewer: How did you know about this imago that was created abroad?

Interviewee: Well it was here on television. There was a TV show, something called like "Others About Us" and there it would be shown what they were broadcasting about us. Another thing is that they used to come briefed. I have met many of them so I know what and how they were thinking. There were clear expectations of what they had to come back home with. Therefore that was one of the motivations for me. But we had the information what the public was really interested in and wanted to see, and what the politics wanted to send out in the world. In France there were three politics active in parallel, one was the one of Mitterand, pro-Serbian politics, pro-Milosevic, hence Serbian. Then you had the one of the intellectuals and cultural workers that did understand what was going on which was in collision with the official politics of France, and then you had the third, the associations of ordinary citizens, a developed civil society, that felt the need to help Bosnia and Herzegovina and they would send convoys with food, medicine, they would take out the wounded and provide them healthcare in France. Therefore there was the opportunity to organize the round tables and talk about another truth.

Interviewer: *The Blue Guide*, the documentary you made in 1992, what did it talk about?

Interviewee: That was a film about how to survive in Sarajevo. How to cross the street, how to feed yourself, all those sorts of thing. That was a collection of experiences of my friends. And then every episode would end with a freeze frame with the question: Is this citizen a Muslim, Croat, Serb or from the category Others? That was making black humor of the situation because they were constantly talking about the different citizen groups. Particularly

the English liked this black-humorous approach. In the end we would say: If you answered it correctly, A, B , or B, A, then you have won a trip to Sarajevo, in one direction. It was ironic. Channel 4 bought this. Before that it was also shown at some manifestations. Vanessa Redgrave organized one such manifestation in Manchester where Rade Šerbedžija was, Zlatko Arslanagić. Mira Furlan etc. Then we screened it there, and someone saw it from the television, they liked and ordered it. This was in the end of 1993 and I attended that screening as well.

Interviewer: Under which production was this film made?

Interviewee: Profil was the production company. Together with Refik Beširević I had made this production before the war already. It was this company that produced *The Tough Teens*, that produced *The Fourth Part of the Brain*, *The Blue Guide*...

Also Igman Production was set up in France for the post-production of *The Tough Teens*. Then through Igman Productions we managed to obtain some resources for filming *The Fourth Part of the Brain*, from the French fund for cinematography. That was a way how to continued working. Had I not had a firm, it would have been difficult. Then I took a risk and friends invested in this firm, Bosnians and French people. Then in 2000 we closed this production as there was no work anymore. We would also sell our film to Channel 4, TV 5, and that is how we earned some money as well. This in turn could be invested for *The Fourth Part of the Brain*. When the interest for the Bosnian problem diminished from both sides we shut down this production. This was some sort of insanity that we had. We felt the need to bring this project to the end. What was the way? It was to open a firm. Because to go from producer to producer, that would be a waste of time. Our goal was to finish the film as soon as possible and return to Sarajevo. It was the faster and more efficient way. I had tried going from producer to producer and I had torn shoes from this search. They would tell you: come in seven days... etc.

Interviewer: Did you have any financial resources for this production?

Interviewee: No, there was no money. We had to improvise, find our way around. In France, England, then later on the Japanese came. Somehow it started.

Interviewer: What happened with the Japanese?

Interviewee: That was incredible. Some of these stories are truly incredible. Namely they came and wanted to make a story about Bosnia and Herzegovina, about Sarajevo. They wanted to make a TV Show about the Sarajevan Anne Frank. I forgot her name, but they used to call her the Sarajevo Anne Frank. She was in Paris. And then the parents did not allow it. Then they were looking for other stories and they met me. At the time I had already made the decision to film *The Fourth Part of the Brain* and I told them the story. They went back to Japan and after seven days they called me that they would like to come, and whether I was willing to cooperate. Yes of course I was willing. So they said that they would come and make "the making of". They wanted to make a film about me making the film about these children. They facilitated it them also financially. Then they facilitated also the shooting permissions and the travelling expenses and organization. We returned together then. They had this satellite telephone as well which was useful. They had everything. That helped us incredibly to finish this film.

What happened, what was very interesting. The premiere of *The Tough Teens* was on July 27th 1994. The Japanese had heard that there would be a bombardment in Sarajevo and that they were commanded to leave Sarajevo. So they were not there at the premiere. They were warned by their government. And it was true, there was this bombardment, and we could not leave for a month out of Sarajevo until the flights were starting again. They waited all this time in Zagreb for us to come. *The Blue Guide*. I did not have a firm at the time, nor a permanent residence. It was known that I would go every morning to this coffeeshop. Then one morning I was at the coffeeshop and the owner told me one morning when I came there: Channel Four called you. And I was like: Get out of here. And he was like: No, I am serious. I told them you would be here at a certain time and they really called. They said that they watched *The Blue Guide*. They asked me whether I was prepared to come there to shorten it and make the English version. I thought it was a joke. Incredible. Incredible things were happening.

Interviewer: Who was involved in your production in Sarajevo?

Interviewee:

Refik Beširević was the producer, Mustafa Mustafić as the DOP and Dino Šarenkapa as the organizer/driver etc.

Interviewer: Did you know each other from before?

Interviewee: Well yes, of course! With Mustafa Mustafić, I used to work with already in 1977. With Refik I used to work as well before. That is how we decided to set up this firm, based on our similar affinities in the artistic and humane sense. Dino Šarenkapa was also already experienced as an organizer and it was a natural choice.

Interviewer: What was the role of the producer and organizer in war-time?

Interviewee: (Laughs) It functioned more as a group. We would know different people. It was getting your way around and getting things done. Šarenkapa knew the people where to buy gasoline, Refik knew some people who could get us permissions for filming, I knew then some other people. Therefore there was some kind of division of work under these extreme circumstances. There was not really a producer in the real sense of the role, neither a real organizer, it was just improvisation and finding your ways around.

Interviewer: Where would you edit? Could you finish this in Sarajevo?

Interviewee: No, this was not possible. The editing was at the Television. It was impossible to get there. And they were also occupied because they were making a television program. For the editing at the television there was no opportunity to find a free slot. Therefore I could only finish this when I went abroad. I collected the material and edited later on. There were very few places where you could edit in this time and where there were places they were already occupied. Like SaGA. They had their editing facilities but they were also producing almost every day films. I could not get three weeks there to edit my film. That was impossible. Before the war I had my editing at Sutjeska and this was unavailable.

Therefore *The Blue Guide*, *The Though Teens* were edited in France, and *The Fourth Part of the Brain* in Budapest.²²⁷

Interviewer: Did you have a camera?

Interviewee: No, not even that. We would also borrow cameras. One day it would be VHS, the other day U-matic from the Television for a day or two, then Beta. We borrowed from friends when they were not using them... We used all different techniques... We bought tapes from them, or asked foreigners to bring them. There was not really some same principle. There was some sort of black market at the time where this was exchanged. It was very expensive. Also when we were filming we would erase some footage on the spot. I would tell Pujda (Mustafa Mustafić) to erase it, and he would rewind the tape and we would continue. It was very difficult to do that later. We would do it on the spot, because we were trying to be economic with our material.

Interviewer: Regarding the batteries. There was not really electricity. How did you solve this?

Interviewee: Again this was whatever worked. Someone had an aggregate, another had electricity. We would visit someone. There was not really a plan, or system. Under such circumstances there was not really a possibility of planning. It was all a big improvisation and we managed to do so because we were so motivated first of all, second of all we all had already quite some experience with film and television. We had our connections, friends, acquaintances. I started my career in 1975. That means I already had 20 years of experience and you build up your network. The film world in Sarajevo was not that big, perhaps in total there were 100 filmworkers. So we knew each other. That was not really a problem.

Interviewer: How did you do it with the money? Did you have to physically carry all this during the shooting days?

Interviewee: Yes, that was funny. There was no euro of course at the time. Because we were travelling. Refik had to carry these coupons that were Bosnian There was no Bosnian money at the time, there were coupons. Then German Marks, Kuna's Lipa's , Hungarian Forint, Francs. We exchanged this all beforehand in France and carried it along. We would exchange this in Budapest, Paris, Ljubljana. When we finished the shooting and the editing in Budapest, Refik would take out the money and he would have six currencies! That was how it was. It was all carried in our pockets.

Interviewer: Where would you be had you not stayed and filmed?

Interviewee: That I don't know... It is very difficult to talk about what would be if... It was just simply our decision, and there was no question about it. We were not even thinking about doing other things. We were just doing our job. It went natural. The groups that were filming

²²⁷ From the pre-interview conversation it was clear that Nenad's third film from the war *The Fourth Part of the Brain* was edited in Hungary, Budapest in four weeks. They had only money to pay the editors one month. And they were working 18 hours per days since they had to go through 50 hours of material. Part of the *Brain* was edited in Hungary, Budapest in four weeks. They had only money to pay the editors one month. And they were working 18 hours per days since they had to go through 50 hours of material.

in parallel formed according to some similar affinities. That was matter of choice, people that share similar views about film esthetics and ethics.

Interviewer: The films were on different film materials?

Interviewee: Yes, The Tough Teens were on 35 mm, The Blue Guide was made on U-matic, VHS and Beta. The Fourth Part of the Brain the same, but also a small part on 16 mm. Because I was in France I could buy and rent a camera.

Interviewer: I have read that the material for *The Tough Teens* was confiscated by opposing authorities in the beginning of the war?

Interviewee:

No, this did not happen. Sutjeska film was near the front line. Then the employees from Sutjeska film were carrying away the material. On one side the enemies were entering on the other they were trying to save film material. There was no confiscation. I just had to transport it.

Interviewer: Can you describe one day of shooting in the war?

Interviewee:

Well Refik Beširević lived in Kralja Tomislava. I lived in today's Branilaca Sarajeva, Dino Šarenkapa on Bjelave, Pujdo also lived in the centre of the city. Then we had a daily appointment that we would meet at Refik's place at 10:00 a.m. Refik Beširević was half way for everybody. It was also the safest location. Because he also had a garden, so we were shielded away from snipers. The other locations were a bit more dangerous. Then we knew if somebody did not show up until 10:00/10:30 that there was some problem. That was how we would gather around, and we would make plans for shooting. We were evaluating where we could go by foot, where we could come without a van. We would grab out bags and go to Titova for example in the city centre. We would usually go by foot. Sometimes when we had gasoline, when we would get some van, then we would go with the van to some more distant locations. If we would not film for a few days then we would just make the agreement to meet in three/four days. There was some principal agreement to meet at 10:00. If one of us would not show up, we knew that the situation was dangerous.

Sometimes we would film only two hours and shooting would start then we would stop. Sometimes we could film all days. The days in the autumn and winter were shorter.

Interviewer:

You mentioned in our pre-interview that this was the first and only war where so many films have been made?

Interviewee:

Yes, and that there was such a big cultural resistance. Not only in terms of filmmaking. But also theatre plays, exhibitions, concerts, literature evening. That was a cultural resistance to

the barbarians that were trying to destroy everything that was cultural, from the National Library etc. They wanted to demolish everything that was symbol of this city.

Interviewer:

Your film *The Blue Guide* film was shown at many TV channels, how and when did this come about? Who reached out? And also with the Festivals, how did that go?

Interviewee:

The Blue Guide was not really for festivals, it was more suited for TV. *The Tough Teens* received a Golden Palm in 1994 at the Valencia Festival of Mediterranean Cinema, then in Trieste etc. It had this festival life.²²⁸ *The Fourth Part of the Brain* as well. Also at a certain moment, these colleagues in France, that really liked the film a lot, suggested that it should be a candidate for the Oscar. But at the time it was a requirement that the film should also be on film, on 35mm. But at the time, to change from VHS to 35mm was very expensive, and we did not have that money. They thought it was a big shame, because they thought it would certainly be one of the candidates... To be among the five six nominees. Normally the content had priority over the form but only in this case the form was a burden for the submission to the Oscars. One metre only cost ten dollars at the time, we did not have that money.

In 1994 we made, during the Cannes Film Festival, a friend helped us to make a promotion of *The Tough Teens* at the Market of Cannes Film Festival. A lot of people from other festivals came there and they saw the film. And this was how the film was invited to other festivals. Then it was a chain reaction. If it was at one festival, it would be invited to another.

Interviewer:

What about the film *The Fourth Part of the Brain*?

Interviewee:

Well very quickly after the film was finished it was bought by Arte. And then other TV stations followed and festivals. Sometimes I would also travel there. Like to Valencia. I was also in Goteborg with both *The Tough Teens* and *The Fourth Part of the Brain*.

Interviewer: You said in our previous conversation that the theme of the film *The Fourth Part of the Brain* forced upon itself the form, style, narrative. How much could you in general plan and write down in advance in this period? Was there a research beforehand or along the way? Was this the only case where form was “forced” upon itself due to its theme?

Interviewee:

Well, there was a certain synopsis, which for every documentary film can fit in half a page. "I want to find out the destiny of the children that acted in my film *The Tough Teens* that came from all corners of Bosnia and Herzegovina and I am interested in what happened to them. I

²²⁸ Film festival in the south of France, in the city Argeles. Screening of *The Tough Teens* and Q&A

did not know what happened to them. So this I went to look for with my film. The form was forced upon it because of the subject, because the children I filmed were scattered in different location because of the war. Like what I told you, that I could not travel to Serbia. That a colleague had to film there. Then we had to film them with VHS, they would film themselves. The form and dramaturgy of that film was forced upon itself because of the impossibility of getting in touch and being in contact. The film would have looked entirely different was I able to go there. But because Vladimir Blaževski, my colleague and very good friend, and great director, is not me... He was just the person that would carry the messages to the other children, filmed them and posed questions to them. So the entire form was forced because of the circumstances and the theme of the film.

*** End transcript

Appendix B. NODES MOTIVATION

Cultural resistance

- Big cultural resistance (first and only war where so many films were made (Dizdarević)
- Decision to stay linked to cultural resistance (Dizdarević)
- Decision to stay made by Kenović when he saw the surreal situation, it needed to be filmed
- Decision was to stay and do what they know best (Arnautić)
- Filmworkers just want to make films, that is why they invested their money in films and not other war necessities (Arnautić)
- There was a cultural resistance to the barbarians that wanted to demolish everything that was symbol of the city (Dizdarević)
- It was better for a filmworker to carry a camera than a gun which was not his profession (Arnautić)
- Hajrudin Šiba Krvavac on how artists, intellectuals, public workers can contribute to the truth reaching the world, by doing what they usually do (*Sineast* 1992)
- Motivation was that filmmakers had to react in their own way, register and show it to the world (Kenović)
- Not even thinking about doing something different (Dizdarević), Vuletić would maybe continue his work in the hospital had he not been able to film.
- Not too many filmworkers left, a lot stayed in the city (Arnautić)
- "Some fools whose nationality is filmmaker have stayed to save Sarajevo with a film or electronic camera. They would not allow the culture to be destroyed." (*Sineast* 1992)
- There was wider phenomenon of cultural resistance, not only in terms of filmmaking. (Dizdarević)
- SaGA defending themselves with the weapon of their creative work, art and culture (*Oslobođenje*)
- Performers of all ethnic groups are working together, in refutation of the claim by the Serbian nationalists' leader Radovan Karadžić, that Serbs and Muslims and Croats have a natural hatred for each other [...]. (*New York Times* 1993)
- We want to make our lives as normal as possible, he said. We want our work to be impeccable. (*New York Times*, 1993)

Creative freedom

- Filmmakers could decide what they would shoot (Vuletić)
- Films were not ordered (Vuletić)
- It is important to mention that every group had their own vision (Kenović)
- No censorship (Vuletić)
- No one asked for an informative level of filmmaking (Vuletić)
- Politicians did not interfere (Arnautić)
- That was a matter of choice, people that share similar views about film aesthetics and ethics (Dizdarević)
- This freedom was important for Vuletić.
- Vuletić was able to make a personal story speaking on the behalf of many Sarajevans (*Sineast*)

Irritation with international media

- The Western media were simplifying the war talking in numbers and sides. (Vuletić)
- The television was making a cliché situation with three sides in a war, religious war etc (Arnautić)
- The journalists were doing their job in a logical way (Kenović)
- The international media was not filming intellectual cultural workers, film workers etc. (Arnautić)
- *The Blue Guide* based on experiences of friends (Dizdarević)
- They were showing only poverty and misery (Dizdarević)
- Politics of France was pro-Milošević (Dizdarević)
- People had a wrong perception about us (Arnautić), that we did not know anything.
- Normal that journalists did not take our material (both sides did not want this too much) - Kenović
- Journalists came briefed (Dizdarević)
- It was not easy for journalists (Vanessa Redgrave, Harvey Keitel) because the Holiday Inn where they stayed was also shelled. (Arnautić)
- It was not a problem of the journalists but of the foreign politics. (Kenović)
- It was a problem with the editorial centres of world media that were giving political inputs to journalists (Kenović)
- In the end world media was on our side (e.g. Christiane Amanpour) (Arnautić)
- "Why are we seeing less and less on TV about that bloody holocaust in the Balkans. Sarajevo isn't sexy anymore." That's what Christiane Amanpour, the CNN's reporter there [...] (*LA Times*)
- In the beginning it was not like that, we should either blame it on the politics or ignorant journalists. (Arnautić)
- Exception The Japanese television wanted to make a story about the Sarajevan Anne Frank (Dizdarević)
- Exception The Japanese Television wanted to make a making of Dizdarević's *The Fourth Part of the Brain* (Dizdarević)
- Sontag and Rieff agree that politics has an influence on media. The change in the French politics, with the going of Mitterand changed the political perception towards BiH and the media. (*Oslobođenje*)
- Sontag and Rieff reviewed [...] that Bosnia slid from the top media priority because of fatigued audience with continuous tragedy. (*Oslobođenje*)
- Tragedy is like milk said Rieff, lasts until its ruin. (*Oslobođenje*)
-
-
-
- Films (documentaries) vs. News)
-

- Films are not "expendables" like the news (Vuletić)
- Capture the spirit of the time (Vuletić & Kenović)
- Counter force to the false information from the enemy lines (Kenović)
- Documentaries as corrective force in society (Dizdarević)
- SaGA used to make commercials and videos before the war but they changed it to documentaries in the war (*Volkskrant* 1993)
- The journalists were doing their job in a logical way (Kenović)
- Documentary has always this dimension of life (Vuletić)
- Escape informative dimension (Vuletić)
- Film based on MY personal experience, my testimony (Vuletić)
- Films have no expiration date vs. the news. (Vuletić)
- Have an art dimension to it (Vuletić)
- In a war it makes no sense to make fiction (Vuletić)
- Opportunity to show another side of the war (Dizdarević)
- Path to the truth vs. what western media were showing (Dizdarević)
- Respond to the reporting media with a dosage of irony in the Dizdarević's documentary about the different ethnicities (Dizdarević)
- You had to have a reflex for reality, to notice what was happening and go shoot (Vuletić)
- Tell personal stories (Dizdarević)
- The films were not political but films of truth (*Oslobodenje*)
- What the media did not show, SaGA's films would (Kenović)
- Important to film the Bosnian society, how their daily life looked like in the war (*Volkskrant* 1993)
- Art director Marco Müller of Locarno said that the cinematic expressions and personal stories had more impact than the news (*Oslobodenje*)
- Authors are sending messages out to the world that are documents about the intimacy of the aggression that will avoid the falsification of history (*Oslobodenje*)
- Performers of all ethnic groups are working together, in refutation of the claim by the Serbian nationalists' leader Radovan Karadžić, that Serbs and Muslims and Croats have a natural hatred for each other [...] (*New York Times* 1993)

Screening abroad

- We wanted to show the films to the world, travel and show it. (Kenović)
- Work with people's destinies was a very rewarding idea and we were invited to many festivals (Arnautić)
- We hoped that the important decision-makers would make an intervention (Kenović)
- Two people would travel to the festivals to tell people what was going on (Arnautić)
- There was a promotion of *The Tough Teens* (Dizdarević) at the Cannes Film Festival
- There was a panel and discussion at Arte and producer Kenović went to talk about the filmworkers
- *The Tough Teens* and *The Fourth Part of the Brain* (Dizdarević) had a festival life
- The documentary of Dizdarević was bought by Arte and other TV channels and selected for festivals
- *The Blue Guide* (Dizdarević) was more suited for TV
- *The Blue Guide* (Dizdarević) was bought by Channel Four
- *Street under Siege*, when people figured it was not about war the viewership jumped to 4 million (Arnautić)
- Screening the films triggered discussions and roundtables (Dizdarević)
- Project *Street under Siege* (SaGA) was shown on many TV programs (Kenović)
- No political ambition (Vuletić)
- Kenovic of SaGA was in Washington, Congress, New York, San Francisco, Canada etc
- Filmmakers travelled abroad (Vuletić)
- Colleagues of Dizdarevic suggested his film should be a candidate for an Oscar (Dizdarević)
- As a result a dialogue was created, and there were visual registrations of what was happening (Kenović)
- I don't know about the effect of the promotions but people were really interested, especially film workers (Arnautić)
- Art director Marco Müller of Locarno said that the cinematic expressions and personal stories had more impact than the news (*Oslobodenje*)
- Authors are sending messages out to the world about the intimacy of the aggression that will avoid the falsification of history (*Oslobodenje*)
- The films of SaGA were shown everywhere, even at 40 festivals! (*Oslobodenje*)
- Bosnian filmmakers in Argeles, loud applause and support for Bosnia and Herzegovina after the screenings during the press conference (*Oslobodenje*)

Appendix C. NODES PRODUCTION

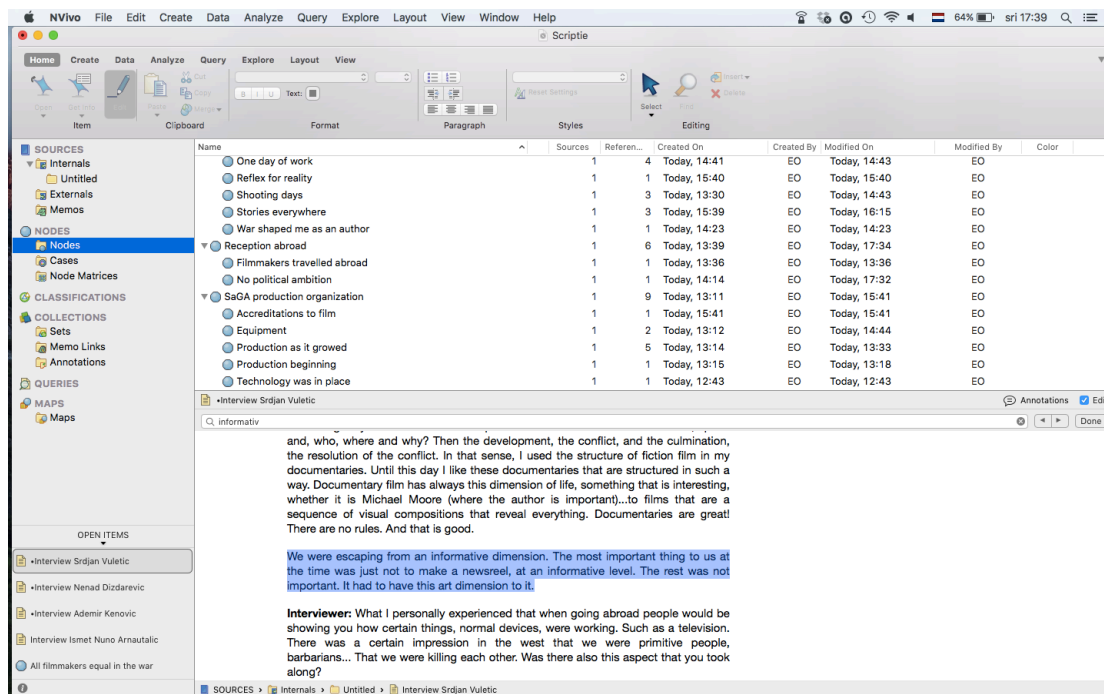


Figure C1. Screenshot from NVIVO - Coding software.

Filmcrews and expertise

- A context for filmmaking was lost. We were all in the same situation. My friend, all that we have is a camera... and Sarajevo. That is it (Vuletić)
- All filmmakers were equal in the war (Vuletić)
- We were a mixed group with people that had more fame, documentary veterans such as Mirza Idrizović. But we were all working at the same level (Vuletić)
- The younger generation did not think but just grabbed the camera. The older generation was perhaps used to bigger productions (Vuletić)
- The war, although bad, had made an unnoticeable transition between the old and the new authors (Vuletić)
- The younger directors acclimatised better to the guerilla circumstances than the established authors. They were encouraged by them (Vuletić)
- The filmcrew was improvised. Imamović was not a professional, he had only a desire to help. (Vuletić)
- Ahmed Imamović the DOP of Vuletić came from the front lines and had a wish to become a cameraman. (Vuletić)
- Ahmed Imamović later entered the Academy of Performing Arts (Vuletić)
- Almir Kenović was the editor. Good question. We actually in fact had a mix of students, professionals and some total amateurs. (Vuletić)
- In the beginning there was only one filmcrew working (Vuletić)
- The production became more structured in a sense, there were sectors like directing, organization, someone for locations etc. (Vuletić)
- There were a few DOPs that would rotate (Vuletić)
- Ismet Bektašević the driver was in fact experienced with filmmaking from before the war (Vuletić)
- It was desirable to go in a small car from A to B, because of the bombardments and snipers. Therefore smaller crews.
- Mensud Arslanović, phenomenal director of film, was a sort of a line producer. He would organize locations, facilitate it. (Vuletić)
- The filmworkers in Profil were experienced and had cooperated. (Dizdarević)

- The parts of the film where the children were living in Serbia and Montenegro was filmed by my colleague Vladimir Blaževski from Belgrade (Dizdarević)
 - The producer had to arrange the food in the war (SaGA, Arnautalić)
 - The producer was not the producer in the traditional sense, they worked as a group and improvised and found their ways around (Dizdarević)
 - There was an organizer (Vuletić)
 - Together with Refik Beširević the production company Profil existed before the war (Dizdarević)
 - One time a filmworker was caught to join the criminal resistance group in Sarajevo (Arnautalić)
 - Profil had a DOP, director and organizer (Dizdarević)
 - Rule was that when an author needed a filmcrew they would provide him that for the day (car, camera man, technique, etc.) (Arnautalić)
 - SaGA gathered professionals, students, volunteers, everyone was welcome to help (Arnautalić)
 - SaGA had a mix of different nationalities (Arnautalić)
 - SaGA had Ismet Bektašević who drove a mini-van and also fulfilled the role of organizer (Vuletić)
 - SaGA production was under the ownership of Ademir Kenović and Ismet Nuno Arnautalić (Vuletić)
 - SaGA was supported by the government not substantially but the workers were exempted from the army (Arnautalić)
 - SaGA had already cinematographers, editors, organizers (Arnautalić)
 - Sarajevo was a strong film centre before the war. We had the human resources. cinematographers, editors, organizers (Arnautalić)
 - The biggest production in war-time, 7, 8 or 10 people working on a film (Kenović)
 - Every group had their own vision. SaGA's vision was the resistance of the ordinary person in Sarajevo in everyday life (Kenović)
 - Milan Cviljanović[...] SaGA prevented that young filmtalent fled the city and made a foundation for the future. If there will be any Bosnia then... (Milan Cviljanovic, Volkskrant 1993)
 - There was a lack of cameramen and technicians and this led that many SaGA employees had more than one job. (*Volkskrant* 1993)
 - The staffing of filmworkers was carried out among filmstudents, TV workers, filmworkers that turned into directors and screenwriters but also people from other fields such as journalists, writers, public figures. There were quite some people who were for the first time standing behind the camera.
 - The makers of documentaries, those who stayed in the city, together with those who used the camera for the first time, and other people from TV, other known people from Sarajevo's cultural and public life, participated in the "events of Sarajevo" (*Filmography* 1998, Vefik Hadžismajlović, p.4)
 - Therefore there was a new wave of people who were for the first time standing behind the camera, true a television camera, and tried, some only once, others persevered and found their place in the cinema of the by war affected Sarajevo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. (*Sineast*)²²⁹
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- Equipment was very rudimental. We had it from before the war. U-matic camera and editing facilities. (Arnautalić)
 - First we had U-matic editing in the SaGA premises (Arnautalić)
 - In the beginning SaGA bought a power generator that was used for charging batteries. (Arnautalić)
 - It turned out that 35mm was not even necessary. We would make part of it on VHS, another on something different. Whatever was at your reach (Arnautalić)
 - Later SaGA was helped with an international organization nearby with a cable to their premises so they had electricity. (Arnautalić)
 - MGM Sarajevo was promoted at the Cannes Film Festival. Nobody asked about technology. They wanted to know the story.
 - One day SaGA received a fax from Wim Wenders whether they would accept the Felix award. (Arnautalić)
 - Pippa Scott producer from the States would send every year a suitcase with tapes (U-matic, VHS)
 - We had accreditations as a filmmaker, and you could move around and pass check-points. Because in the war, frontlines were everywhere (Vuletić)
 - We were usually in the van because a lot of us could fit and the equipment too (Vuletić)
 - Production as it grew, more filmcrews could be working per day, they had more cameras (Vuletić)
 - Profil did not have their camera, they borrowed from friends different types (U-matic, Beta, VHS)
 - SaGA got a satellite phone later from SOROS (Arnautalić)
 - SaGA had a poor technical base (U-matic, lower than Beta) (Arnautalić)
 - Some American directors still do not want to make the transition. Tarantino is an example (Arnautalić)
 - Technology was in place, we had a treasure which was the electricity source (Vuletić)
 - The French donated later Beta machines and SaGA switched to Beta (Arnautalić)

- A lot serious filmmakers were looking with despise but quickly they figured it was not important (Arnaulić)
- The technical base the film was made on was not important (Arnaulić)
- There was a camera, there was a battery, and there was electricity (Vuletić)
- There was tape shortage (Arnaulić)
- Before the satellite phone they used to communicate through journalists sometimes (they had satellite phones) (Arnaulić)
- Electricity was not always available but when it was there were lots of activities at the SaGA premises (Volkskrant Slingerland 1993)
- The U-matic camera was monstrous and had to be used by two men. Body of camera was separate from recording device.
- Electricity we solved by visiting someone with a power generator. There was not really a plan, it was more a big improvisation (Dizdarević)
- It was all a big improvisation and we managed because we were motivated and we had connections, the filmworkers all knew each other. (Dizdarević)
- Profil did not have their camera, they borrowed from friends different types (U-matic, Beta, VHS)
- First the film material for *The Tough Teens* was transported from Sarajevo to different locations (around 300kg), Hungary, Zagreb, France. (friends and humanitarian organizations helped)(Dizdarević)
- *The Blue Guide* and *The Tough Teens* were made on U-matic, VHS and Beta (Dizdarević)
- First we had U-matic editing in the SaGA premises (Arnaulić)
- The editing facilities from Profil before the war were near a frontline (Dizdarević)
- Editing in Paris and teaching in return was what Dizdarević did for *The Tough Teens*
- Editing was done before the war in film centre Sutjeska (Dizdarević)
- Editing was not possible in Sarajevo for Profil, SaGA was occupied and they could not sit and edit there three weeks, television was busy too (Dizdarević)
- The director of La Fémis in Paris offered Dizdarević the premises for editing the film. The "trade-off" were lectures and seminars by Dizdarević about the experience of shooting docu's in the war
- [...] This, let's call it, "electronic cinematography" was, with some insignificant exceptions, the only possible production form, having in mind that film devices have been mostly destroyed... (Filmography)
- Given the lack of equipment (film, cameras, lightning) the film production was oriented towards using electronic video technology, that had proven itself to be more effective in war-time. (*Sineast war edition 2*)
- Videotapes were easier to obtain and their bringing into the city was more easy as well as taking them out of the city as finished products went without major problems. (*Sineast war edition 2*)
- Because it were filmmakers, meeting with the video technique resulted into cinematic works done with video technology. The structure remained filmic, the framing as well, narration, whereas the electronic tape gave the films a purpose for the medium of television. (*Sineast war edition 2*)
- Some films were transcribed to film and they were successful participants at major film festivals. Unfortunately, because of shortage of funds that transcription was only done in exceptional circumstances and these films will serve a valuable document for the future. [...](*Sineast war edition 2*)

Finances

- There was no support in the form of funding from the government (Vuletić)
- The financial basis for SaGA was money they were funded for before the war for a feature (Kenović)
- We had the money in bags literally because Yugoslav dinars were not worth that much at the time (Kenović)
- We received before the war some funding from the Fund for Cinematography for a feature fiction film. But this started to melt, because of enormous inflation. We changed the money to DEM to keep the value (Arnaulić)
- The fund they received (SaGA), they changed it to Deutsche Marks to keep the value (Arnaulić)
- SaGA changed money to German Marks, and with Marks you could buy anything (Arnaulić)
- SaGA had to physically protect their money but luckily nothing had happened (Arnaulić)
- People were not even asking for anything. They could spend the money on food, gasoline. It was necessary that people have a sandwich per day and water... (Arnaulić)
- A liter of gasoline cost 30 KM! Every day 20 kilo of bread was needed. Sometimes at the blackmarket cheese...
- When SaGA worked with Point du Jour they got some money for the services (Arnaulić)
- The only way was to open a firm because going from producer to producer was inefficient (Dizdarević)
- Igman productions was set up in France for the post-production of *The Tough Teens* (Dizdarević)
- I used to be at a coffeeshop often in the morning. Then one day Channel four called the owner of that shop. They wanted *The Blue Guide* (Dizdarević)

- We would also sell our film to Channel 4, TV 5, and that is how we earned some money as well. (Dizdarević)
- Igman productions was set up by Bosnians and French people, friends that invested and took the risk with me (Dizdarević)
- Then through Igman Productions the French Fund for Cinematography gave funding for *The Fourth Part of the Brain* (Dizdarević)
- Because to go from producer to producer, that would be a waste of time. Our goal was to finish the film as soon as possible and return to Sarajevo. It was the faster and more efficient way. I had tried going from producer to producer and I had torn shoes from this search. They would tell you: come in seven days... etc. (Dizdarević)
- The Japanese facilitated also the finances, shooting permissions, travel expenses, and organization (Dizdarević)
- Producer Refik was walking around with six currencies for the film *The Fourth Part of the Brain* (Dizdarević)
- Collecting money in France, England and from the Japanese (Dizdarević)

Creative process

- In the beginning some went to register massacres. But this has no backbone, it only states that war is terrible, that people die. etc (Vuletić)
- Even we were sometimes registering what was happening, on the day of today for example the massacre on Markale (Kenović)
- You need an extra dimension, of who the person is. Later the registrations stopped, they went into the archives (Vuletić)
- We could have entered into sensationalism, but we were not seeking sensational moments. I was looking for a moment of humanity (Vuletić)
- Every group had their own vision. SaGA's vision was the resistance of the ordinary person in Sarajevo in everyday life (Kenović)
- The formula for the films became to tell real stories from the war. People would have attention for ordinary citizens whom this was happening to (Vuletić)
- *I Burnt Legs* became later a formula (not exactly copied of course) but a formula for portraying the man, the everyday man, and people will be able to identify (Vuletić)
- There was filmic material anywhere. You could just come and see the stories unfold in front of you (Vuletić)
- The ideas were not a problem, you just needed a film crew (Arnautalić)
- If there was no plan they would simply film the neighborhood (Arnautalić)
- In the war you needed a reflex for reality. Notice what is happening, call someone to facilitate the equipment, go out and shoot. No philosophy, just go out and shoot (Vuletić)
- Life in Sarajevo is very concentrated. In a month there is more happening here than in two years in other cities (Volkskrant Slingerland 1993)
- Video is a fast art form that can respond immediately. Under the pressure of war SaGA comes to great productivity (Cviljanovic, Volkskrant, Slingerland 1993)
- My work at the hospital unconsciously became the research for my film (Vuletić)
- As an artist you either feel or you don't feel the urge to respond to the reality and your surrounding (Vuletić)
- A moment that turned the circumstances of war into my personal tragedy happened working in the hospital. When I got the chance to shoot that, I decided to make *I Burnt Legs* (Vuletić)
- Thinking about what happened and what left an impact. The film ends with the my emotions (Vuletić)
- Main recipe for the films was to keep the war in the background (Arnautalić)
- I made a decision to make something about me, my life, my experience, my testimony (Vuletić)
- A testimony by itself would not be sufficient and I wanted a backbone for my story. That is the parallel story of the boy that lost his arm (Vuletić)
- No scenario was written because it was a personal story. There was a step outline giving it a spatial and time context (Vuletić)
- I would think dramaturgically in terms of the time, space, who, where and why (Vuletić)
- I structured my films as fiction but never asked people to re-enact something. But concepts and terms of fiction were used (development, conflict, culmination, resolution) (Vuletić)
- I tell my students at the Academy that you had to capture the spirit of the time, it could never be filmed again, not re-created (Vuletić)
- The psychology of war cannot be re-created. In my film *The First War Cinema*, people would come through the wall, give a cigarette for a ticket, risk their lives. That is the spirit of the time (Vuletić)
- *The Eight March* was not planned. I came near work and saw near the premises a lot of flowers, people dressed up. I stepped into SaGA and said let's film this (Vuletić)
- *The Eight March* is a perfect case study of how the guerilla films came about. I just quickly captured the spirit of the time (Vuletić)

- The dimension of documentaries being a corrective force in society was the one I longed for in the war (Vuletić)
- *Electricity* from Srđan Vuletić was an ordered film by Deutsche Welle. But orders happened to a lesser extent (Arnautalić)
- Established author Zlatko Lavanić made *Bums and Dogs* comparing the life of Sarajevan homeless people to the life of stray dogs
- *The Blue Guide* was inspired by the experiences of friends, about how to survive in Sarajevo (Dizdarević)
- Milan Cviljanović[...] SaGA prevented that young filmtalent fled the city and made a foundation for the future. If there will be any Bosnia then... (Milan Cviljanovic, Volkskrant 1993)
- Because we had a casting in 1991 with children from 13 to 15, I knew that they were living in different places now. That is how the idea was born to find the children (Dizdarević)
- The form of the film was forced because of the circumstances and the theme of the film (Dizdarević)
- The form of the film *The Fourth Part of the Brain* was because of the war. Because of the impossibility of getting in touch and travelling everywhere (Dizdarević)
- A friend who is a filmmaker filmed in Serbia and Montenegro because I could not travel there (Dizdarević)
- The important thing was to make a film comprehensible to anybody (Africa, Canada,Netherlands), like the project *Street Under Siege* (Vuletić)

One day of shooting

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- SaGA organized a group gathering every day from 7 or 8 until 7 or 8 in the evening (Kenović)
- SaGA idea was, work every day like Charlie Chaplin, it needed to be filmed in every way (Kenović)
- A filmworker would pick up every day everybody with the van (Arnautalić)
- If you were not there at the agreed time, it would be assumed that you would not come (Vuletić)
- In the summer we used a lot the bike (Vuletić)
- The fixed time for meeting was 10.00 and if somebody did not show up until 10.30 it meant there was some problem. (Dizdarević)
- We had a daily meeting at the producer's place because it was the closest and safest location in street Kralja Tomislava (Dizdarević)
- When we met we would make plans for shooting,evaluating where to go and how (by foot usually). (Dizdarević)
- When we had gasoline we would sometimes go with the van to more distant locations. (Dizdarević)
- The day began that we would be picked up by the van at a certain place and time (Vuletić)
- The Alley of Life was where we could drive,there was a long wall and containers that would hide you and then through the tunnel to the premises (Vuletić)
- But when a few days would be quiet you would predict that the next day would be too (Arnautalic)
- Our rule was. Every author would say when they would need a filmcrew. Then we would provide them on the day of their shooting with a filmcrew,camera man,technique,driver,organizer (Arnautalić)
- We kind of had luck because we had no casualties,no injured workers,somehow luck was on our side (Arnautalić)
- A feeling developed that was a mix of intuition and experience when it was safe to shoot. It could trick you like it tricked me once and a sniper caught me, not when shooting (Vuletić)
- Difficult to predict when it would be safer (Arnautalić)
- It was after the war that SaGA lost some people (heart, cancer) because of stress
- The filming days were sometimes only two hours long and at other times all days,depending on the shooting (Dizdarević)
- There were three shooting days, summer and winter. One day hospital, one day myself, one day exteriors. One day in the winter with the boy making the snowball (Vuletić)
- The shooting of the Eight March was not announced. It ihappened all within a few hours. I just needed a DOP and soundman. The films was finished in a few day (Vuletić)
- In the war you needed a reflex for reality. Notice what is happening,call someone to facilitate the equipment,go out and shoot.No philosophy, just go out and shoot (Vuletić)
- *March Eight* is a great case study on what guerilla filmmaking is about. Showing a dimension of Sarajevo, its resistance, and a city that nurtured civilizational achievements (Vuletić)
- Film author Mirza Idrizovic made films every Friday (Arnautalić)