



# MUSEUM *of the* REVOLUTION



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GEO



LIGHTDOX

a film by Srđan Keča

# MUSEUM *of the* REVOLUTION

a documentary feature by Srđan Keča

## LOGLINE

*Inside the remnants of an abandoned utopian project, a young life persists in the form of a fierce little girl. As the city around her transforms, so looms an end to childhood dreams.*

## ORIGINAL TITLE

MUZEJ REVOLUCIJE

## ENGLISH TITLE

MUSEUM OF THE REVOLUTION

## COUNTRIES

SERBIA, CROATIA, CZECH REPUBLIC

## LANGUAGE SPOKEN

SERBIAN, ROMANY

## RUNNING TIME

91 MIN / 52 MIN

## WORLD PREMIERE

IDFA 2021 – LUMINOUS PROGRAM

## TRAILER

<https://vimeo.com/646009854>

## A PRODUCTION OF

**UZROK** 19start 





## SYNOPSIS

“The wind got up in the night and took our plans away,” reads the proverb in the opening titles of *Museum of the Revolution*. The words are a reference to the 1961 plan to build a grand museum in Belgrade as a tribute to Socialist Yugoslavia. Meant to “safeguard the truth” about the Yugoslav people, the plan never got beyond the construction of the basement.

The derelict building now tells a very different story from the one envisioned by the initiators 60 years ago. In the damp, pitch-dark space live the outcasts of a society reshaped by capitalism. The film focuses on a girl who earns cash on the street by cleaning car windows with her mother. The girl has a close friendship with an old woman who also lives in the basement. Against the background of a transforming city, the three women find refuge in each other.

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

*Museum of the Revolution* was born of a desire to tell a parable about life inside a structure built of aborted dreams. To me, this has been the core experience of post-Yugoslav societies, fast-tracked into capitalism and staggering levels of inequality. The film focuses on those left most vulnerable by this process, and finds them in the darkness of a space that sets off the story's allegorical layer. From there, I wanted to see how far I could push a character-based observational documentary into becoming an essay film, while keeping the essential qualities of both forms intact.





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*Monumental in its  
tender exploration  
of hope lost and  
found.*

**KIRSTEN JOHNSON**

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*MUSEUM of the REVOLUTION is a cinematically subtle yet powerful essay about human destiny, about the weakest who find refuge in the ruins of the former Museum of the Revolution. That is a powerful metaphor. The film is visually and sonically nuanced, without cheap sentimentality or any clichés. A delicate, beautifully composed and intense film.*

**HELENA TŘEŠTÍKOVÁ**





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*MUSEUM of the REVOLUTION casts us into the titular museum's subterranean darkness to discover three arresting individuals eking out their shared lives on the streets of Belgrade: a young girl, her mother, and their aging friend Mara. Unfolding in revelatory fragments through patient camerawork resonant with the works of Jana Ševčíková and Wang Bing, Srđan Keča's intimate portraiture navigates the indelible tenderness, hardships, and resilience shared between the unhomed trio towards an overlooked mirror of contemporary Serbia.*

**JP SNIADOCKI**

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*To safeguard the truth about us, were the words architect Richter used, when he presented his plan for a Museum of the Revolution to be built in Belgrade in 1961... Director Srđan Keča takes this — with great propaganda archive material — as the starting point for his version of the truth as he sees it in a film that is quite as unconventional as Richter wanted the museum to be. Keča works with several layers surrounding three people, who live in and around the basement of the museum, that is what was left of a vision, conveyed in magic luminous sequences of light coming in to the place, light spots of hope, where Milica and her mother Vera stay together with the old woman Mara, who has no contact to her daughter, whom she “gave away” to the social system. In the darkness of poverty they are. Keča stresses this with compassion, when his camera caresses them, often by taking away the sound staying long on their faces. The love relationship between Milica and her mother is beautiful, their life is a constant struggle to survive as polishers of car windows to earn some money to send to the father, who is in prison. The architectural point of view stays in the picture: modern conventional ugly buildings are constructed now in Belgrade along the river of Sava. Keča paints with his camera in a film that asks the question: Is this what we want to safeguard?*

**TUE STEEN MÜLLER**





INTERVIEW *with the* DIRECTOR



THE FILM OPERATES ON AN ALLEGORICAL LEVEL, WITH THE HISTORY OF THIS MUSEUM, AS WELL AS ON A MUCH MORE INTIMATE, HUMAN SCALE. WHICH PROVIDED THE STARTING POINT FOR THIS STORY?

Srdan Keča It was definitely the museum itself. In 2014 I made a multi screen installation piece at the Serbian Pavilion at the **Venice Biennale of Architecture**, and it had to do with the space and the architect's ideas behind the Museum of the Revolution. My idea had been to make something about the space itself, but inevitably I met the people who lived there. Along with my assistant director, I continued visiting Mara, the old lady in the film, and her now late partner because we had a great relationship with them during the shoot. So for another two years after making the installation, or maybe more, we would go and visit them.

Sometimes we would bring a camera to shoot something in the space. I thought that there was something there, something more than what we had already made, but I couldn't see a narrative structure. Then one day I saw Mara play with the little girl, Milica, and when I saw the two of them together I momentarily thought that there was a film to be made. We started shooting the

next day, and the story sort of grew in concentric circles from that point.

WHY WAS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE MUSEUM STOPPED IN THE FIRST PLACE?

The plan was made in 1961 but they only started construction in 1978. In the 60s, part of the reason was the large earthquake in Skopje, so a lot of the construction resources went to renewing Skopje. It also had to do with the complexity of the project itself, because the architect Vjenceslav Richter had planned this very ambitious shape for the roof. The will to make such a museum was also drying up. By the time they started building it, in 1978, it was already too late. Construction was halted already a year later.

Those are the specifics but I would say it is reflective of a lot of stops and starts we've had in the history of the Yugoslav space. At the same time, I feel that it's reflective of the structure of the protagonists' lives: a lot of stops and starts, a lot of dreams. The frequency of that happening in their lives is much larger than what the film reflects, obviously, but we tried to bring that into the film's structure as well.

HOW DID YOU FIRST APPROACH THEM WITH THE IDEA OF MAKING THIS FILM? HAVE YOU STAYED IN TOUCH SINCE THE PROJECT ENDED?

With Mara it was kind of a spontaneous extension of our relationship. Then I met Milica and her parents. That transition from making something about the space to making something about the people, it felt seamless. It was almost a spontaneous transition, because when we were filming in the space we would sometimes film people in the background. We had already developed a relationship with the community there, so it just sort of felt natural to them that we would continue shooting with them. I said, we will try to do something different, and the relationship developed over the next year or two. We just became more involved in their day to day lives, much more than is obvious from the film itself.

With Mara, yes we're still in contact. Milica now lives with a foster family, and I say this with both pain and relief. I couldn't really start editing the film until that had happened, because it would have been agonizing editing the material knowing that she wasn't settled. So now she is, but that also means we're no longer in touch.

THE AUDIENCE WILL WITNESS SOME QUITE INTIMATE MOMENTS. DID YOU SET ANY ETHICAL BOUNDARIES WITH REGARDS TO WHAT THE FILM WOULD OR WOULD NOT SHOW?

I put limits on myself and what I was shooting, first of all in terms of the interests of the film itself. What the film is trying to do is to be an observational, character-based documentary that is also an essay. I was always trying to balance those two, but that also meant not being interested in some particularities of the protagonists' lives. I wasn't interested in the audience being certain about some pieces of information about them. A lot of those choices were made while filming, we just didn't shoot certain things. In the edit we filtered it even more, and it became more about showing a mood or a state of mind.

As far as the proximity of the camera to the protagonists is concerned, I think that just reflects how involved we were in their lives at that point. It was imperative for me to be behind the camera myself, because there are ethical decisions even behind the slightest movement of the camera.

THE FILM IS FILLED WITH IMAGES OF BUILDING SITES AND WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL "REDEVELOPMENT". WHAT ROLE DO THESE SEQUENCES PLAY IN THE STORY?

Belgrade is undergoing a huge transformation at the moment. A large part of it has to do with this one project called Belgrade Waterfront, which is connected to Abu Dhabi financiers and a shit-ton of corruption. That, and a few other similar projects have been transforming the city, and it feels less and less like there is a place for people like our protagonists. It's a city that keeps pushing these people out of sight.

For a while they were out of sight in this museum. The museum was a kind of enclave in the city for people who had lived in these liminal spaces, where something was supposed to have been developed but wasn't, and suddenly it was being developed and they were being pushed out, and where a lot of them went was this basement. So for a period it felt like a safe space.

THERE'S A QUOTE AT THE VERY START OF THE FILM FROM THE MUSEUM'S ARCHITECT, VJENCESLAV RICHTER, ABOUT "SAFEGUARDING THE TRUTH ABOUT US." WHAT KIND OF TRUTH IS HE TALKING ABOUT HERE?

Richter was a utopian thinker. He was quite unique among architects in Yugoslavia in that way. He didn't actually see many of his plans made, but he wrote a lot of theoretical texts about how he saw the future socialist city. His aim was to build a

project for what a socialist living space should look like, one which centered around people and how they spend their time, instead of borrowing existing solutions from capitalism. So where he's coming from with "the truth about us", he saw the museum as a space for perpetual revolution. The largest part of it was this big theatre that he saw as a space for discussion. He was less interested in what was in the museum and more in the space itself as a gathering place for people.

IS THERE AN ALLEGORY THERE ABOUT THE END OF THAT IDEALIST THINKING, A KIND OF PARADISE LOST?

The allegorical layer that we were thinking about the entire time was to connect that utopian vision to the tiny little utopia of a little girl and an old lady in this space at the beginning of the film, and how that little utopia gets eroded by growing up. What we're left with in the end is on the level of society, the disillusioned society that we have right now in Serbia, one that doesn't really have dreams or projects, as a society. And on the other hand the same kind of erosion is encroaching upon the protagonists' lives. If there is one thing resisting both of those erosions, it's the protagonists' care for each other.

RORY O'CONNOR



## ABOUT *the* DIRECTOR

Srđan Keča's medium-length films *A Letter To Dad* (IDFA 2011, Dokufest 2011 - Best Balkan Documentary) and *Mirage* (Jihlava IDFF 2012 - Best Central and Eastern European Documentary) screened at leading documentary film festivals, while his video installations have been exhibited at venues like the Venice Biennale of Architecture and the Whitechapel Gallery. The found-footage feature documentary *Flotel Europa*, produced and edited by Keča, premiered at the 2015 Berlin Film Festival, winning the Tagesspiegel Jury Prize. His debut feature documentary as director, *Museum of the Revolution*, is set to premiere at IDFA 2021. Keča is a graduate of the Ateliers Varan and the UK National Film and Television School (NFTS). Since 2015 he has worked as Assistant Professor in the Department of Art & Art History at Stanford University, teaching in the MFA Documentary Film Program.



*the* CREW





VANJA  
JAMBROVIĆ

Since 2009 she's been making films with Restart as a delegate producer. Vanja's track record includes more than 20 films of all shapes and sizes. Her films have circled the globe, having been screened in competition at IDFA, Hot Docs, Toronto IFF, Visions du Reel, Fid Marseille, Karlovy Vary IFF, Sarajevo FF and hundreds more. Vanja is also a Sundance Institute Documentary Film Program Grantee, for the feature documentary project "Museum of the Revolution" directed by Srđan Keča (2021). Also, film that she produced «Srbenka» (2018) directed by Nebojša Slijepčević has been preselected for

EFA Awards in the best documentary category in 2018 and won Doc Alliance Award for the best documentary in 2018. With her projects Vanja was a part of several professional workshops such as: EAVE (2015), Producers on the move (Cannes 2014), Robert Bosch Coproduction Prize Germany Eastern Europe (Berlin, 2013), Berlinale Talent Campus (Berlin, 2013), Emerging Producers 2012 (Jihlava), Sarajevo Talent Campus (Sarajevo, 2012), EURODOC (France 2010) and many more. Since 2020 Vanja is teaching «Documentary production» at Academy of Drama Art in Zagreb.

Restart is an organisation focused on production, education, distribution and exhibition of creative documentary films. Restart's programs are:

- Documentary film production  
<http://restarted.hr/>
- Restart Label – Distribution of documentary films in the territory of ex-Yugoslavia  
<http://www.restartlabel.net/>
- Dokukino Cinema in the centre of Zagreb  
<http://www.dokukino.net/>
- Documentary Film Education, organization of different workshops  
<http://skola.restarted.hr/>

restart





HRVOSLAVA  
BRKUŠIĆ

Hrvoslava Brkušić is a graduate of the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb, Editing department and Academy of Fine Arts, New Media Department. She edited films that have participated in festivals such as Rotterdam Film Festivals, Toronto, Locarno, Oberhausen, CPG Dox, 25 fps, etc.

Her artistic practice take shape in the variety of media - sound installations, live performances, film and video. Her main idea and interest in she's artistic approach is exploration of sound

behavior through experiment with frequencies and waves in general and exploration of different media possibilities and materials (16 mm film, DV techniques, digital media). She is constantly seeking new expression in film language, experiencing film not only as a medium of telling a story but also as a new tool in the way of seeing the world we are in. She is a member of the analog film lab Klubvizija Zagreb, and cofounder of the female artistic collective *Ljubavnice*.



HRVOJE  
NIKŠIĆ

Hrvoje Nikšić is a Zagreb-based composer, musician, music producer, sound designer and engineer, engaging the Croatian alternative and experimental music scene for over twenty five years, and the owner of the music production studio “Kramasonik” for over fifteen. As a composer and sound engineer, he has worked on a myriad of sound projects including composing music for theater, radio dramas, and films. In 2008 he was one of the laureates in the category of electronic music in the National Award for the Promotion of Music.

During the years he was nominated several times for the Croatian discography award “Porin” in the categories of production and sound engineering in jazz, world music and alternative music categories. He is also the winner of that award in 2015 in the category of a producer for the best jazz edition of the year. Performed live at some of the region’s most prestigious experimental music events, such as the Showroom of Contemporary Sound, Zagreb; Music Biennale, Zagreb; 25FPS film festival, Zagreb; and the Museum of Contemporary Art.



### JAKOV MUNIŽABA

Sound editor and sound designer for about one hundred movies shown in prime festivals such as the ones in Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Paris, Amsterdam, Athens, Locarno, Copenhagen, etc. Sound recordist for film and sound-art projects all around the globe and working as an regular

associate at Radio Belgrade's Electronic music studio. Worked on many awarded radio and theater plays and sound-art installations. Finished doctoral thesis in Audio-visual arts in 2019th. Teaching sound design in Belgrade's University since 2007, based in Belgrade, Serbia.

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Ministry of Culture and Media



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Hrvatski audiovizualni centar



**GEO**  
TELEVISION

MUSEUM *of the* REVOLUTION was developed through:

**BEL  
DOCS**

presented at  
**DOX** Leipzig  
Co-Pro Market  
2018

**ZAG  
REB  
DOX  
PRO**

  
institute of  
documentary  
film

  
**idfa**  
Industry  
Official selection  
IDFA Forum 2019

**DOCU  
ROUGH CUT  
BOUTIQUE**  
Sarajevo Film Festival  
BALKAN DOCUMENTARY CENTER

**WE  
MW**

INDUSTRY AWARDS *during* DEVELOPMENT *and* PRODUCTION:

BELDOCS IN PROGRESS 2018., BEOGRAD, RS - LIVING PICTURES IMAGE POST-PRODUCTION IN-KIND PRIZE

ZAGREBDOX PRO 2019., ZAGREB, HR - HBO ADRIA DEVELOPMENT AWARD

EAST DOC FORUM 2019., PRAG, CZ - EAST DOC PLATFORM AWARD, IDFA FORUM AWARD

DOCU ROUGH CUT BOUTIQUE 2020, SOFIA (BUGARSKA), SARAJEVO (BIH) - AVANPOST MEDIA AWARD

LAST STOP TRIESTE, 2021, TRIESTE FILM FESTIVAL 2021 (ITALIJA) - FLOW DIGITAL CINEMA AWARD



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#### FEATURING

MARA MARIJA SAVIĆ  
MILICA MILICA NOVAKOV  
VERA VERA NOVAKOV

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#### FILM CREW

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY SRĐAN KEČA  
CINEMATOGRAPHER SRĐAN KEČA  
PRODUCERS VANJA JAMBROVIĆ, SRĐAN KEČA  
CO-PRODUCER LUKÁŠ KOKEŠ  
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS SARA STOJKOVIĆ, OLIVER SERTIĆ  
EDITED BY HRVOSLAVA BRKUŠIĆ, SRĐAN KEČA  
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR RADIŠA CVETKOVIĆ  
SOUND DESIGNER JAKOV MUNIŽABA  
ORIGINAL MUSIC HRVOJE NIKŠIĆ

SOUND RE-RECORDING MIXER LUKÁŠ MOUDRÝ /  
STUDIO BEEP, PRAGUE  
SOUND RECORDIST RADIŠA CVETKOVIĆ  
FOLEY ARTIST ANDERA VESELKOVÁ  
FOLEY RECORDIST LUKAS ŠUTO  
COLORISTS ROBERT ARNOLD / LATERAL FILMS,  
CATALIN MILOIU / AVANPOST MEDIA  
GRAPHIC DESIGNER MIDNIGHT MARAUDER

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