

A fascination with archives often entails a longing to return to sources, stories, and their beginnings. It is associated with a meticulous attention to detail, the uncovering of exciting connections, the collection of testimonies and reliable traces, accounts that corroborate a story, and contribute to the (re)construction of histories from below. However, at a time when the notion of the 'archive' threatens to become a dead metaphor or a cheap replacement for 'canon' or 'corpus', the symposium suggests to take a particularly contentious example – that of the Yugoslav Partisan 'counter-archive' – as a starting-point for its reconsideration of archival politics.

The Yugoslav, socialist, and Partisan past was both demonized by the resurgent Balkan nationalist projects of the 1990s and commodified by Yugonostalgic memorialization, stylized as either heroic or droll. Against these versions of a 'frozen' past, a multiplicity of projects, cultural, artistic, or political, have sought to document and aggregate past fragments, diverse snapshots, artworks, political events – a diverse archive to be retrieved in order to unsettle current narratives and mobilize emancipatory changes. The term 'Partisan counter-archive' in particular builds on two recent publications, Gal Kirn's Partisan Counter Archive and Davor Konjukušić's Red Light, which tackle the return to the Yugoslav Partisan struggle and its after-life, going beyond both revisionism and nostalgia.

Seeking to connect this particular example to wider revolutionary and decolonial histories, the symposium will also draw on some of the most advanced considerations of archival practices in radical modernist traditions and contemporary art. How can counter-archives connect the testimonies and legacies of past struggles with the victims of today's oppression? What kind of power struggles are produced by counter-archives, and how do they manage to draw attention to what has been lost, overlooked, reduced, suppressed, or omitted from national archives and established historiography?

These questions and similar lines of inquiry will be discussed by researchers, artists, and filmmakers who have been working on (or with) the notion of counter-archive/s, recombining and reinterpreting the legacy of the oppressed. Coming from various disciplines and dealing with different archival materials, participants of this symposium share a critical awareness that the work on and with archives is traversed by profound power struggles.

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29–30
April 2021

Counter Archive

Online Symposium In English

Organized by
Gal Kirn + Claudia Peppel

With: Daniela Agostinho, Cristina Baldacci,
Paula López Barreiro, Omer Fast, Jacopo Galimberti,
Sanja Horvatinčić, Davor Konjukušić, Alia Mossallam,
Marta Popivoda, Elena Vogman



This ICI event is organized in cooperation with the project Ré.Part – Partisan Resistance(s): Visual culture, collective imagination and revolutionary memory (ANR-15-IDEX-02) of Laboratoire de Recherche Historique Rhône-Alpes (LARHRA) de l'Université Grenoble Alpes, with generous support of the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung

Programme

Thursday,
29 April 2021

- 15:00 Introduction by Gal Kirn
- 15:30 – 17:00 **Section I:
Yugoslav Partisan Photography**
moderated by Gal Kirn
Davor Konjikušić:
From Red Glow of Partisan Photography
to Counter-Archive
Sanja Horvatinčić:
Partisan Drežnica: Heritage from Below
- 17:30 – 19:00 **Section II:
On the Notion of Counter-Archive**
moderated by Rachel Aumiller
Gal Kirn:
Partisan Counter-Memory: From Violence
to Emancipation
Paula López Barreiro:
Resurrecting the Partisan Antifascist Struggle:
Art, Politics and Memory from the Civil War
to Contemporary Spain
- 19:30 **Screening
'Landscapes of Resistance'**
(96 min, Marta Popivoda, 2021)
Followed by a discussion with the filmmaker
Marta Popivoda and Ana Vujanović

Friday,
30 April 2021

- 15:00 – 17:00 **Section III:
Obsessions With Retrieving the Past**
moderated by Claudia Peppel
Jacopo Galimberti:
Three Figures of Partisans:
Fellaghas, Guerrillas, and Brigadists (1966–1972)
Daniela Agostinho:
Off the Record: Reassembling Latent Histories
Cristina Baldacci:
An-/Counter-/Meta-Archives: An Obsession
of Contemporary Art
- 17:30 – 19:00 **Section IV:
Archival Futures**
moderated by Marlon Miguel
Elena Vogman:
Archives of the Future: Eisenstein and Vertov
Alia Mossallam:
Specters of Labor. The Builders of the Aswan
High Dam in Egypt: Between Propagandist
Depictions and Community Archiving Projects
- 19:30 **Screening
'KARLA'**
(HD video, 34:45 min, Omer Fast, 2020)
Followed by a discussion with the artist
Omer Fast, Cristina Baldacci and Claudia Peppel