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austrijski kulturni forum^{SAR}

PUNKOBA*



Exhibition of Photographs “The Face of Bosnia” Offers an Intimate Glimpse into Bosnia and Herzegovina Through the Lens of Christoph Baumgarten

This exhibition, authored by Vienna-based journalist Christoph Baumgarten, presents 24 photojournalistic images depicting portraits of people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, showcasing their diversity and life struggles.

Baumgarten, whose extensive experience in the Balkans includes ten years of engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina, captures a wide range of life stories through his lens. Through the exhibited photographs, visitors will have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with seasonal tourist workers, political leaders, Bosnian refugees who have found a new home, as well as ordinary people who carry the burden of their challenges on a daily basis.

Speaking about the exhibition’s goal, Baumgarten emphasizes: “I want to showcase the richness of different people who make up the fabric of Bosnian society. Each photograph carries a story, and through their collective diversity, I aim to highlight that there is no single stereotype that can define this country.”

The curator of the “The Face of Bosnia” exhibition is Nardina Zubanović, with the Austrian Cultural Forum as the patron. The grand opening of the exhibition is scheduled for May 24 at 6:00 PM at the Boris Smoje Gallery, located at Radićeva 11, in Sarajevo.

LIG BOSNE

Izložba/Exhibition

Galerija Boris Smoje,

Radićeva 11, Sarajevo

24.05.2024.



Željka. Pale. Neum.

Željka was a kitchen assistant on seasonal work in Neum. I met her during the last days of the season. She hadn't had a day off for three months.



Dragan. Banja Luka.

Dragan is probably Bosnia's best known critical journalist. He works for Al Jazeera Balkans and Radio Sarajevo, among other things.



Mirsad. Sarajevo.

Mirsad is a pensioner from Sarajevo. He loves to fish in the Miljacka. His preferred spots are the bridges near Vijećnica.



Milka. Konjic. Sarajevo.

Milka lives on a pension of 400 KM a month. Whenever she has money left over, she donates it to Pomozi.ba. She was one of the first people to support their relief effort for the victims of the earthquake in Turkey and Syria in 2023.



Nina. Sarajevo.

Nina is an artist from Sarajevo with tons of exhibitions and projects. She is currently co-editor of the the subcultural magazine Punkura*.



Džimi. Brčko.

Džimi is a bit of a legend in Brčko. He owns and runs a small restaurant with a reputation for great traditional Bosnian food, that is popular mainly among Locals.



Igor. Sarajevo.

Igor is an avid Željo fan and is passing on his love of football to his son – as seen here during a match in Grbavica.



Nepoznati radnici. Visoko.

Workers digging a tunnel near the “Pyramids” of Visoko. Several nearby mountains and the freshly dug tunnels are presented as relics of an ancient civilization.



Edo. Mostar. Sarajevo.

Edo is a well known and liked figure in the center of Sarajevo. He sells plastic pens in bars and cafes, and sometimes on the streets.



Milica and Tamara. Banja Luka.

Milica and Tamara were activists for the protest movement Pravda za Davida at the time this photo was taken for a reportage. Milica was a student, Tamara was a laboratory assistant.



Dragan. Priboj. Sarajevo

Dragan is the owner of Hotel Promaja, a café/restaurant near the Skakavac Waterfalls. According to local lore, he built the place himself.



Vela. Mostar. Sarajevo.

Adnan, aka Vela, works as a waiter at Galerija Boris Smoje in Sarajevo.



Hermina. Prijedor. Sarajevo.

Hermina could escape the Prijedor massacre at the beginning of the war in Bosnia. Today, she lives in Sarajevo and is an activist for self help groups for patients with an MS diagnosis.



Matej and Enes. Travnik.

Matej is an actor from Travnik, Enes is in charge of the Ivo Andrić Birthplace museum. Here, both work for an event promoting Andrić's novel *Travnička hronika* and the memory of his literature in general as well as the town of the Travnik.



Dževad. Sarajevo.

Dževad lives in Bistrik. He likes to hang out on Trebević. This is where I met him when I got lost on my wack back from the old bobsled track. Dževad and his friend Mirza helped me get back down to town.



Fado. Sarajevo.

Fado mainly lives in Italy and sometimes visits his hometown. He is a vendor/salesman at flea markets mainly in Italy but also other European countries, including Bosnia.



Jovan. Beograd. Sarajevo.

Jovan defended Sarajevo during the siege as a general. After the war, he was dismissed from the Bosnian army and founded a charity to support children from poor families to have a chance to get an education.



Luey. Basra. Travnik.

Luey is probably Travnik's most popular hairdresser and sculptor. He frequently makes and donates sculptures to his hometown. He is originally from Basra in Iraq and came to Bosnia as a refugee.



Dženita and Suzana. Vienna.

Dženita and Suzana at by Pravda za Davida and Pravda za Dženana in Vienna. Dženita from Sarajevo is the cousin of murder victim Dženan Memić, Suzana the mother of David Dragičević, who was murdered in Banja Luka. Both live in the Vienna area.



Davor. Sarajevo. Wiener Neustadt.

Davor is the father of David Dragičević. The photo was taken for a reportage about David's second funeral in David's mother's new hometown in Wiener Neustadt, Austria.



Tatjana. Sarajevo.

Tatjana was just getting ready for her birthday party when I took this photo in the cafeteria in Sarajevo's synagogue.



Lado. Busovača. Zagreb.

Lado is a well known journalist in his new home country in Croatia. He works for Jutarnji List and has a successful interview show called Vida.



Brko. Donji Vakuf. Sarajevo.

Mernes, aka Brko, was a long term waiter at Galerija Boris Smoje in Sarajevo. He now lives and works in Paris.



Alma. Tuzla. Vienna.

Alma came to Austria as a refugee. She studied law and became a lawyer, and decided to go into politics in 2017. Today, she is Minister of Justice in the Austrian government for the Green Party.



Biography

Christoph Baumgarten was born in Austria in 1979. He started his career as a journalist for a local newspaper during his last year in high school, and then worked for the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation (ORF) for 10 years. He now lives in Vienna and still works as a journalist. In 2015, he started his blog Balkan Stories (balkanstories.net) as his private project to tell the stories he came across on his journeys on the Balkans, primarily in former Yugoslavia, and has travelled the region extensively over the past decade. He considers Sarajevo his second home.

As we internalize these short captions and photo descriptions, one question inevitably arises: "Who truly is Christoph?" His photographs narrate tales of our shared present existence because he immerses himself in those moments.

I met Christoph at the Boris Smoje Gallery while he was writing a story about a cat that was eventually adopted by Adrian. At that moment, I thought, "This is a reporter who can be interested in stories about abandoned animals." Until then, I only knew war reporters. In that moment, I could see that Christoph brought peace with his work.

Taken over the course of many years, these portraits – depicting seasonal tourist workers, political leaders, and ordinary people grappling with daily challenges—illustrate ongoing relationships that persist and will endure. I hope you can grasp the emotional context of the present moment, this very evening, as reflected in photographs of the past.

Christoph comes to Bosnia because he cares about it, he takes these pictures because he cares about the people in them. He is not just a photojournalist; he is a man who cares.

I hope that wherever he is, wherever his friends are, there will be peace and love. In Boris Smoje Gallery, Christoph Baumgarten's favorite place, we feel that closeness, that presence.

Thank you, Christoph. It's an immense honor to have curated your inaugural exhibition.

Nardina Zubanović

24.05.2024.

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Izložba/Exhibition

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