

THE STORY OF POSTPONING THE END OF THE WORLD

"It has the sea and beautiful islands, it has mountains and deep forests..."
(Anja, Croatia)

"It has a rich nature, from the sea to the mountains, which is also reflected in the diverse culture in such a small territory."
(Ajda, Slovenia)

"Across the mountains to the sea, around lakes and rivers, through canyons and gorges, dense forests and green pastures, you will feel like in the middle of nowhere."
(Marija, Montenegro)

"I'm from a small country in southeastern Europe."
(Anja, Croatia)

"A small Mediterranean country of wild beauty"
(Marija, Montenegro)

"Small country located in Central Europe"
(Ajda, Slovenia)

"A small country at the crossroads between Central and Southeast Europe ..."
(Sonja, Serbia)

"Not everything is right with this countries' system, but still, it's home to a very vital, lively, hearty, and resourceful people who have a lot of spirit and talent for life."
(Milja, Serbia)

"Certainly, what makes it so are the people - they are cheerful, hospitable, sweet and charming, but also complicated, dark and conditioned by politics and traumas from the past ... Once upon a time, this small country was part of a big country. Now we are in the European Union. "
(Anja, Croatia)

"Once upon a time, this small country was part of a large country, and now we are waiting for them to let us into the European Union."
(Sonja, Serbia)

"SMALLNESS HAS ITS ADVANTAGES, AS WELL AS DISADVANTAGES"
(Ajda, Slovenia)

"That great country was called Yugoslavia,
and today, when we want to cover that area in one word,
avoiding listing all the countries that belonged to it,
not to mention the countries of the former Yugoslavia, we
say the YUGOSPHERE AREA.

However, this is not a story about Yugoslavia although
every story that comes from the yugosphere is a bit of a
story about Yugoslavia.

This is not a story about what has divided this great
country, not to mention Yugoslavia, into all those little
countries we are talking about. "
(Sonja, Serbia)

"Selfishness, ignorance, and misunderstanding."
(Marija, Montenegro)

"Ugh. Wrong people."
(Anja, Croatia)

"I don't know."
(Milja, Serbia)

"Personal interests."
(Sonja, Serbia)

"POLITICS!"
(Ajda, Slovenia)

"Because this isn't a STORY of separating."
(Sonja, Serbia)

"This is a story about PUTING TOGETHER"
(Milja, Serbia)

"In our spirit and essence, **we still feel connected...**
The six of us have united by openness, creativity, humanity,
a love for theatre on the one hand, and the other hand the
courage **to do something for the common good** in the field.

We see a great desire and opportunity to connect,
collaborate and **build a unique regional cultural and
artistic scene in this field.** Each country has examples of
good practice, but they need to be integrated into a wider
space - **the regional space.**

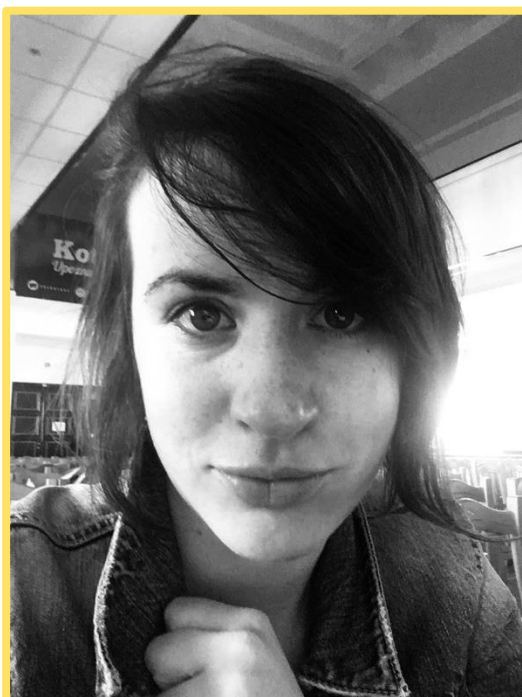
(Ajda, Slovenia)



I am, **Ajda Tomazin**, choreographer and designer by education. After studying for a master's degree in choreography and performance at ATW Giessen, I have focused my artistic work on performance projects - performances, education, interactive installations, site-specific projects... in two target audiences; children and young people and elderly. I strongly believe in the importance of accessibility of artistic experiences in various forms. Art can move you, addresses doubts and through the languages of body, music, drawing, words... it affects the individual and consequently society. In my authorial

performances, I work mainly on the connection between dance and visual art, the performances tend towards abstract language and have interactive nature.

I am **Marija Backović**, a psychologist, drama pedagogue, and producer. I am interested in TYA because I want to allow every child to enrich his / her life with theater. Because theater today is the only place of true encounter.



I am **Anja Pletikosa** and if I had to describe myself in a few words, I would say that I am a playwright and anti-fascist from Zagreb. This means that it is important to me that people think, that they are not sheep, that they trust reason and analytics. I started working in children's theater and working with children completely by accident. I finished my studies of comparative literature and Croatian studies in Zagreb, and there I discovered the world of teatrology, philosophy, and theory of literature. The analytical part of me was satisfied there, but it was not enough. I went further, to Frankfurt at the Goethe Uni, and there I began to engage in practical work, dramaturgy, and aesthetics. Since then I have had my own path, the realization of

what I want to launch with the theater I work in.

I am **Milja Mazarak**, a graduated theater director at the FDA in Belgrade, and I am currently attending master's studies in the same field and at the faculty. I am a member of the FEP Council and a member of the FEP organization as a coordinator of international cooperation. That is Milja Mazarak formally, and in fact, I am one of the most ordinary 25-year-old girls. In fact, the only unusual thing about me is that I am incredibly lucky to meet and get to know so many wonderful and quality people in my life. Theater for children and youth is an area that, if you take it seriously, simply asks you to push your limits, to go beyond your limitations, and sometimes you should get so free that you even get lost in the imagination.



I'm **Sonja Petrović**, a multimedia director by profession, an enthusiast by chance. I love big stages, big ensembles, big risks, big chances, and BIG people. I prefer to feel than to think, to talk less, and to work more. As a child, they called me Tyson, Rocky, a small sports tank, and now they don't call me, now I come alone. Since I was eighteen, I have been the director of the Festival of Ecological Theater for Children and Youth, and I have been involved in theater for children and youth out of the need to allow another child to realize what I realized in the same place in

my time.



I am **Tijana Grumić**, a dramaturge, and playwright. My first engagement in the theater was in the youth theater DADOV where, with colleagues from the faculty, I did a play for young people. Having experienced working in a theatre for adults, I realized how much responsibility it takes to create for children and how hard that job is, although it is often presented as an easy one. For several years I have been a part of the Festival of Ecological Theater for Children and Youth where, as a selector of the festival, I try to keep up with modern trends in theater for children and youth. I also try to apply my knowledge and working experience with children and youth, which I've gained through work at the Petnica Research Station, to the theater.

"We met at the Next Generation,
2 years ago in Novi Sad.
It was the first residential program
of its kind in our country and region organized by ASSITEJ Serbia"
Milja

"But given the number of minutes and hours spent
physically and digitally with these women,
it actually happened sometime in the early 20th century."
Anja

"We actually met in the common room of a villa
in Novi Sad that was taken away from a Montenegrin
criminal.
I think it's a little cosmic justice for me, for us ..."
Marija

"Later, we stuck our heads together and set **up a new platform**



Regional platform for affirmation and promotion
of theatre for young audiences

From the First Step
which is clearly defined in
[the manifesto](#)

in which we are committed to **quality contents**,
as well as **infrastructure** and **education** of professional staff working in this domain."
Ajda

"I am ashamed that some people, usually those who are in high positions and who are entrusted with making decisions, are not aware of how important they are and how **important** is the **area** they work in, so they behave arrogantly, ruthlessly, and rudely."
MILJA

"There is no professional theatre for children in Montenegro."
MARIJA

"I would problematize **hyperproduction**, conditions of production and consequently that reflects in the quality of performances. Also the problem of **centralization**, as quality contents are still not present in rural parts of Slovenia."
Ajda

"I am horrified by ugly, **banal** forms and contents"
Anja

"I am ashamed that there is **no education** in the field of theater for children and youth in my country, and that 77% of young drama artists, when asked why you are not involved in theater for children and youth, answered:
WE DID NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY."
Sonja

"Theater workers who (want to) work in the theatre for children and young people (still) unfortunately are, but they should not be **paid less**"
Tijana

"The theater for children and young people we dream of is a **brave** and **responsible** theatre worthy of every child and its imagination, and not this theater which is not only our subjective opinion but also the results of our research."
Sonja

"I think that art must not be careful,
that it must shoot into the heart and mind,
that it must make people **move**...
What is important to me is catharsis, no matter how anyone
understands it."
Anja

"A good theater play for children and young people
is the one after which you don't stop talking
and thinking about it, which **inspires** you and
after which you have the desire to make something so good."
Tijana

"It's a world that has to stand on a sound footing
because only then can it **grow** to the skies and beyond."
Milja

"But *from a young age* ..."
Sonja

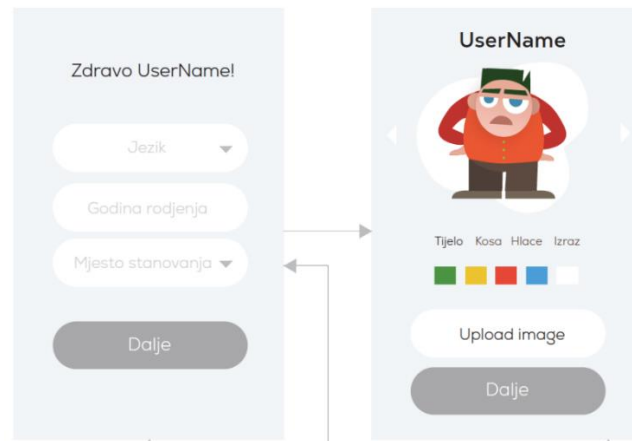
"We established the Platform "Od malih nog(u)"
("From a young age")
because we need a common platform
at the regional level through which we will
only be able to work together, **step by step**,
to change the current situation in the theater
sector for children and youth."
Milja

"Od *mallih nog*..."
Ajda

"That is why one of our first activities is to
unite the region within one virtual space that
serves both education and exchange of knowledge,
information, and experience, and which enables us
to constantly evaluate the sector."
Sonja

"And we are developing the idea of a game application for children, which has two-way communication and serves to educate the theater audience and to constantly monitor children's needs."

Milja



"My motive is the belief that through this platform, some concrete **steps** will finally be taken and that things will change for the better, because for the first time I see so much enthusiasm from the people around me."

Tijana

"We have a **story** that rarely anyone has. It is based on friendship and really deep mutual understanding. It is not a **utopia**, we are not ideal, we can be impatient and everything that goes with it. But overall we are a great team first and foremost, and we care too much."

Anja

"Love, enthusiasm, and knowledge ...
Passion and perseverance ..."

Marija

"Divergence and modesty sometimes **slow us down**. But then we are again saved by common traits such as objectivity, professional approach, willingness to **change** and great, thorough and serious work for what we believe in and a willingness to take great **responsibility** on ourselves."

Milja

"And the **end of the world**, they say it's near."
Marija

"The primary urge is a **community** of like-minded people - who see the world similarly and have the same **goal** in this field. I am aware that this is a long-term process that is and will be increasingly upgraded and developed. Our fuel is courage, determination, and perseverance."
Ajda

"Step by step..."
Milja

"**Ten years** from now, I see that the platform OD MALIH NOG(U) is connected with people who (want to) work dedicatedly and with quality in the field of theater creation for children and youth."
Tijana

"I see and wish that the platform, **together** with the actors in Each country, will develop and set up its own education System for professional dancers, actors, playwrights, critics, choreographers, directors,... dedicated to the work of diverse performance practices for children and young audiences. Children will have the opportunity to have a full performance experiences, which will have implications to their perspective on the world and their way of thinking."
Ajda

"In 10 years, theater artists for children and young people are highly respected in society and **live** nicely and **normally** from their work. Theater for children and young people is respected and much more money is invested in it."
Milja

"As a place for **meetings**, chances, opportunities for learning, upgrading, and cooperation. As a **pillar** of theatrical creativity in the Balkans."
Marija

"There are always those *wrong people* who care that things fall apart.
If we get in the way of such people, who knows what can happen.
But I think it's always an external *factor*."
Anja

"The platform will survive because of the community that has been built and increasingly resonates with like-minded people. It is a community that is on the margins and is not articulated, not visible, and needs to come together to gain strength, affirmation, and professionalism. That has to have high priority as our final audiences are children and youth, who will gain the most from this platform."

Ajda

"That's why I think that the end of the world can be postponed ... at least for a short time ..."

Marija



The organization, **OPEN DRAWERS** Institute of contemporary interdisciplinary processes (Slovenija) The specificity of the institute is focus on interdisciplinary projects - that is, combining different artistic and scientific disciplines under the umbrella of projects - which applies to authorial projects of performing arts for children and youth, and second main target group - the elderly. We have a focus on quality content for both groups, as well as intergenerational cooperation and education. The main value is hidden in the name, as we appeal to the "drawers" that are OPEN, that is, we do not limit ourselves to any kind of labelings.



Drama Studio Prazan prostor (Montenegro) brings together a group of artists involved in theater and drama pedagogy. The greatest value of this organization is represented by the students, over 3000 of them who are today promoters of human values and the importance of theater, and over 70 of them are actively engaged in artistic work in Montenegro.



LOFT (Croatia) was created in 2012 because its founder and founder Morana Dolenc could no longer remain silent and obediently nod her head! The situation in Croatia in terms of puppetry, children's theater, theater, and culture instead seems sometimes extremely progressive and open, but in fact, I have the impression, it is the property of a few who decide on finances, aesthetics, and general public image. In such a picture, LOFT is a space for freedom and exchange, because it brings together people who think similarly, who want to stay clean, do not want to cheat and embezzle, and want to create honest, critical art that somehow keeps pace with contemporary society. And although we constantly lack resources, financial, spatial, human, to be free, to be independent, and to encourage dialogue and cooperation is the greatest value of LOFT. And speaking of facts, LOFT is an art organization registered in the Theater Register at the Ministry of Culture and Media, dedicated to puppetry, theater, performing arts, and interdisciplinary practices.



The **Festival of Ecological Theater for Children and Youth** (Serbia) has been held in Backa Palanka for 26 years and tries to introduce children to the topic of ecology and bring it closer through art and creativity. The Festival strives to offer its audience quality content during the Festival, given that the theater in Backa Palanka has not existed for 30 years and that the Festival is the only event in the city that deals with systemic culture through the basic event and other local, regional and international projects. What is a special value of the Festival and what is responsible for the special spirit that this Festival has is the fact that the organization of the Festival consists of young people who grew up with the Festival and participated in it, some from birth.