

---

MACBA Collection

## 1395 Days without Red (2011)

A film by Šejla Kamerić

---

From a project by Šejla Kamerić and Anri Sala in collaboration with Ari Benjamin Meyers

Single channel video, colour, sound, 60 mins 24 secs

Ed. 2/8

MACBA Collection. Fundació Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona. Work co-produced by Artangel (London) and Fundació Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA); Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen (Rotterdam) / with the support of Han Nefkens, H+F; Manchester International Festival / Whitworth Art Gallery (Manchester); Festival d'Automne (Paris); Arts Council England; European Cultural Foundation; Film Fund Sarajevo; Marian Goodman Gallery (New York) and Hauser & Wirth (London/Zurich). Acquisition 2010

---

*1395 Days without Red* is a cinematographic project by Šejla Kamerić and Anri Sala in collaboration with Ari Benjamin Meyers. Conceived, developed and filmed as a collaborative project, it resulted in two independent films, presented simultaneously for the first time at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA). The films are a unique opportunity to see how, having started with the same materials, the personal reading of each artist and their way of working – not only with the film material, but also the space – convey two completely different ways of understanding the same project.

*1395 Days without Red* digs deep into the experience of the siege of Sarajevo, which took place from 5 April 1992 to 29 February 1996, a period when, according to the UN, the city's inhabitants were reduced from 435,000 to 300,000. During this time, some 10,000 people were killed and over 56,000 were wounded by sniper bullets and exploding grenades. Thousands of homes and public buildings (including the university and the library, which housed over two million volumes) were destroyed in one of the longest sieges in European history. The two films show the trauma inflicted by the conflict on the people of Sarajevo. *1395 Days without Red* is a journey to the past from the perspective of the present, through a series of daily routes in today's Sarajevo, which recreate what was once known as 'Sniper Alley'. A temporal journey referring to the universality of emotions beyond their geographical location and through a city's collective memory. The siege of Sarajevo lasted 1,395 days.

The film follows a woman, played by Maribel Verdú, walking steadily. As she walks, however, at each crossing she is faced with an existential decision: to stop or to run, to cross alone or with others. Meanwhile, elsewhere in the city,

Sarajevo's Symphonic Orchestra is rehearsing passages from Tchaikovsky's 6th Symphony, *Patbétique*. The musicians play again and again, repeating different fragments from the symphony in the same way as the woman keeps on walking, stopping, running and walking again. The music, resounding in her head, helps her to go on.

For Šejla Kamerić (Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 1976) this work is a personal journey through her own recent history, a recreation of events experienced at first hand growing up in Sarajevo during the siege. The film ends in the place where her father was killed. These experiences have unequivocally marked not only her attitude as an artist, but also her way of understanding and practising art: as a tool for conveying experiences, memories and opinions, which can then be shared with others. Through photography and video, a very personal narration develops that alludes to local collective experiences – framed for the most part within the political context of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in relation or in opposition to the global socio-political context –, and to other, more personal experiences that lead her to reflect on universal values. An artistic practice firmly rooted in the search and perception of the artist's own identity.

In *EU/Others*, 2000, Kamerić proposes a reflection on the values and meaning of the categories used to classify people at border crossings. To that end, she installed, on three bridges in the city of Ljubljana, signs like the ones found at passport controls at airports, which group passengers according to their nationality. In this case: EU Citizens/Others. As a result, every time somebody crossed a bridge, they had to face 'the fact of being Others'. But what does 'Others' mean? Through this public action, and almost without altering the context, Kamerić invites us to reflect on the absurdity of the dominant political context, and on how the idea of a nation is sometimes turned into a fetish. Borders are designed in a process of inclusion and exclusion by means of which groups are defined, and which create distinctions between 'us' and 'them', a distinction that often determines the way we value people. The artist reflects on this in the public project *Bosnian Girl*, 2003, where, over an image of herself taken in the studio and retouched using the techniques of the advertising industry, she reproduces a graffiti painted by a Dutch soldier on a wall in the army barracks of Srebrenica (as part of the UN Peace Keeping Forces, the Dutch army was responsible for protecting the safe area): *No teeth...? A mustache...? Smell like shit...? Bosnian Girl!*

Aware of her femininity, self-representation becomes an essential critical tool in the artist's poetics. Kamerić exploits

