

A SUBJECTIVE ATLAS OF SERBIA

Annelys de Vet

For several years Belgrade was regarded as the epicenter of war and aggression. It was a war nobody wanted, but one with which every citizen had to deal then and continues to deal with today. Today the city is home to a million and a half people each of whom have opinions on their history, identity and future. Last year I visited this loaded ground to make a 'Subjective Atlas of Serbia' with Serbian artists and designers. They were invited to map their country in their own way: politically, critically, culinarily, romantically, negatively or positively. Personal involvement was a starting point and the aim was to produce human, unconventional and honest images.

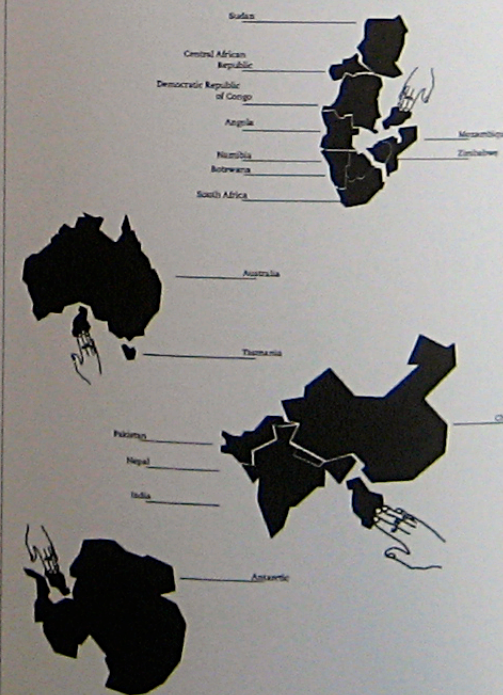
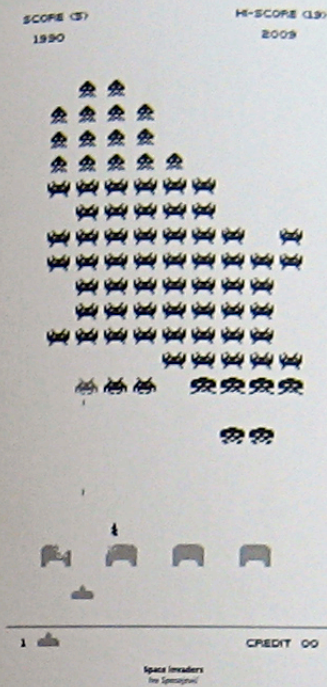
The interviews I conducted about the artists' work directly touched the soul of society. This experience was a crash course in Serbian culture which was far more complex than I had expected. Yet what I experienced with relief while talking with every designer is that Serbians have a great deal of political awareness. They are far more conscious of the collective element in society than we. There seemed to be no room for egotism or individualism. People help and support each other. One of the youngest participants in the atlas, Simon Kuzmanovic (1985), explained proudly that Serbians are actually a very colorful and energetic people; even if you lose them all you still need a lot of energy to start six wars! This is a remarkably disarming way of looking at something with which most others do not know how to deal.

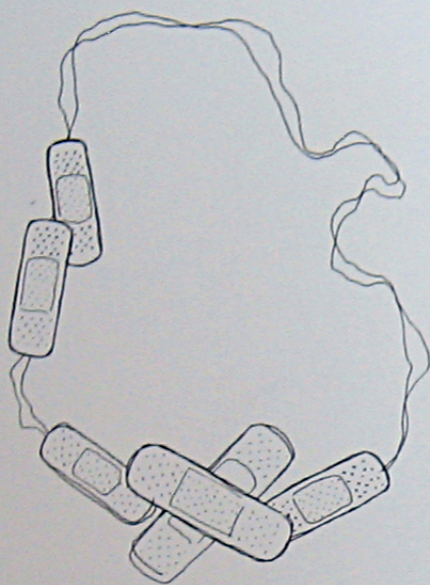
When asked what his contribution to the atlas could be, designer Milan Vukelic answered: 'I don't know yet. I don't know what personal is, what I am, who I am, what Serbia is. All borders change continually,

everything changes from day to day. Nationality, identity; I don't know, I don't know what it is...'. It almost appeared that most people were ashamed of their own culture, or at least could not or did not want to identify with it. National identity seemed to be taboo. 'That's what started wars', a journalist told me, 'isn't it a very dangerous project you are doing?'

More than thirty designers and artists contributed to the 'Subjective Atlas of Serbia' with very touching, sometimes cynical and critical and at other times very personal and vulnerable stories that deal not with politics, but with people. The contributions take an entirely different view of a nation whose identity is split. They do not relate opinions, but show human observations. In mapping cultural identity this way the publication becomes a tool to understand contemporary society at this time, in this place, at this moment.¹

1 *Subjective Atlas of Serbia*. Edited and designed by Annelys de Vet, with an introduction by Vladimir Arsenijevic (Forthcoming April 2009, by Dom Omladine, Belgrade and De Balie, Amsterdam). The atlas will be published without copyright -to stimulate the widest usage of its images. For more info and to download the pdf: www.subjectiveatlasofserbia.info

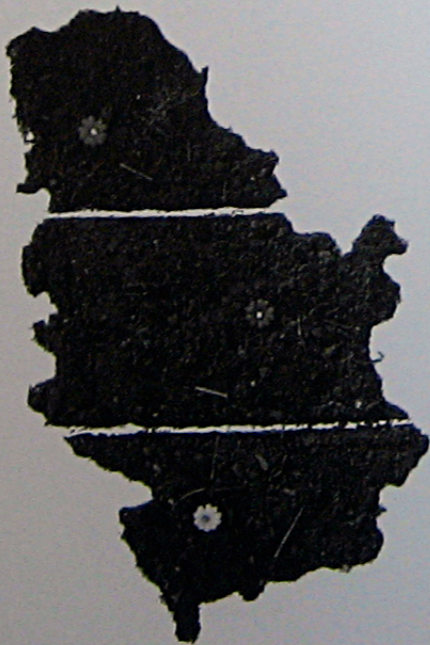




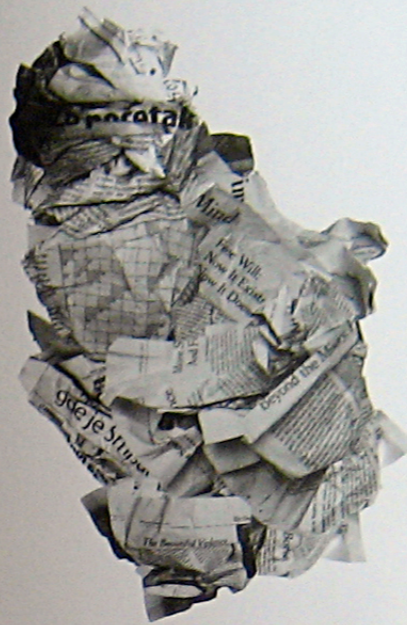
Joe Spasovski



Tom Van Damme



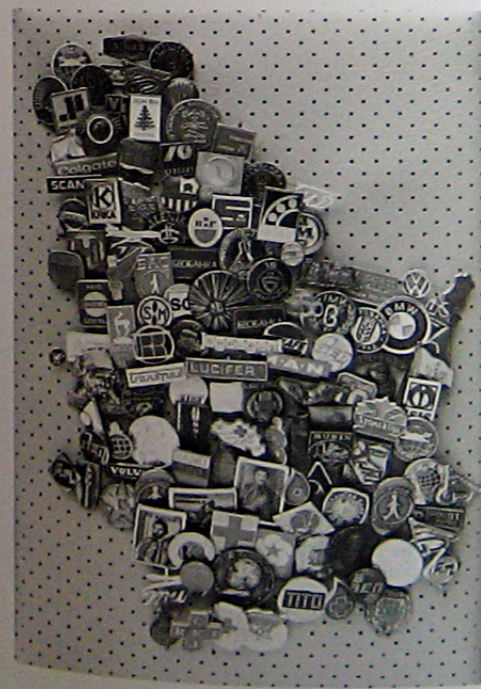
Tim Deegan Crispin



Monica Popovic



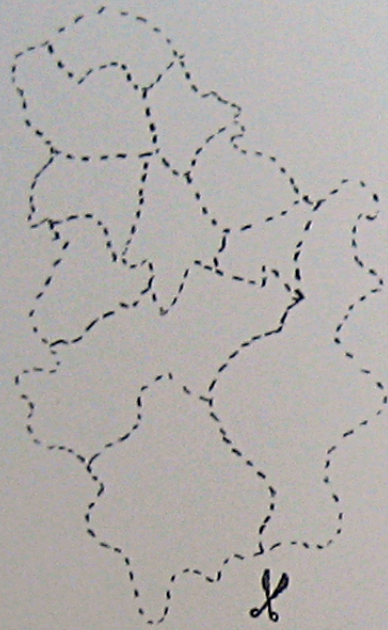
Alan Spina



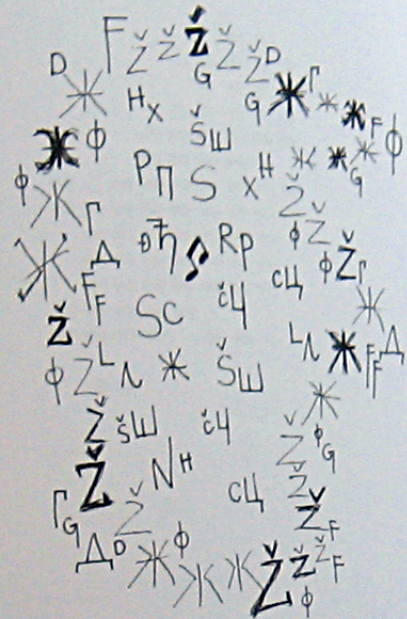
Marcelo Wilson



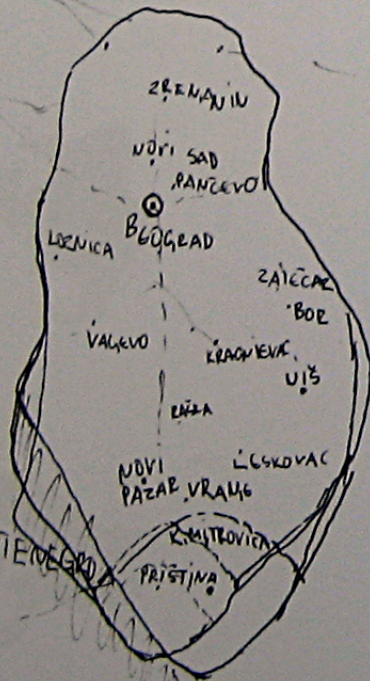
See Beautiful girls of Serbia International Girls



Feel free to contribute
Drawer unknown



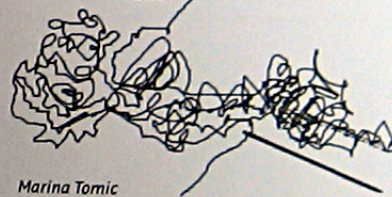
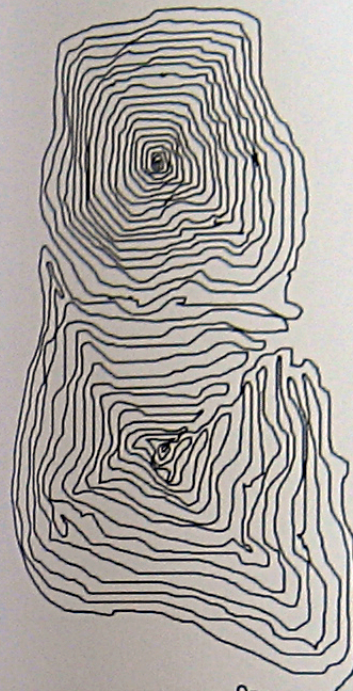
Marija Kovac



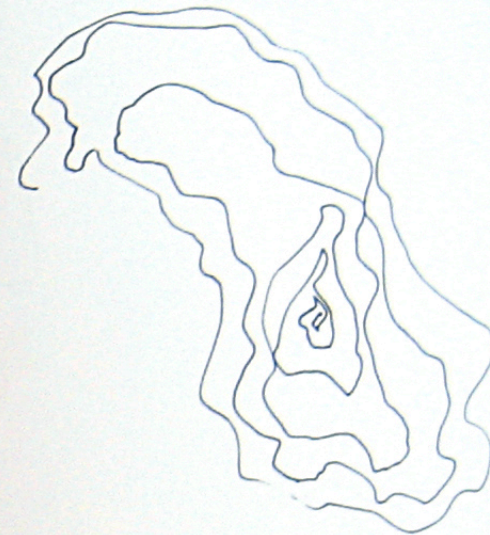
Dragana Grujicic



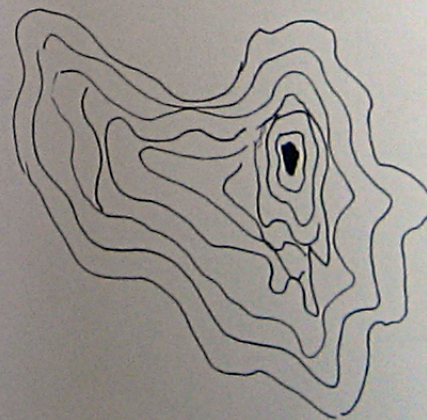
Miroslav Milovic



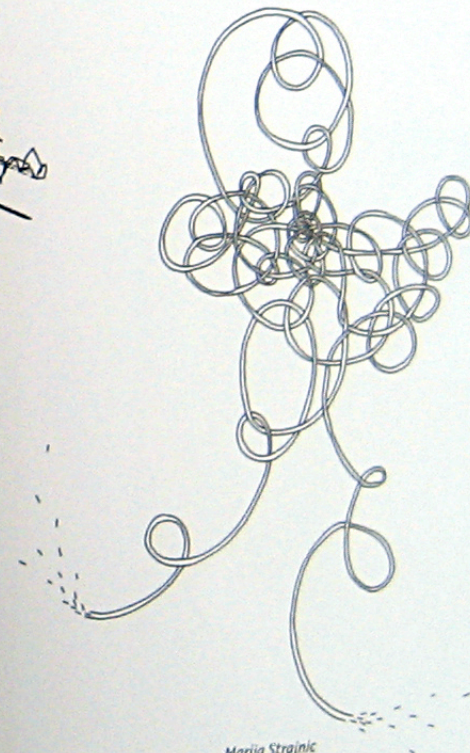
Marina Tomic



SFRJ / SRJ / SCG / RS / RS-Kosovo / -
Dimitar Vuksanov



Hana Tegeltija



Marija Strajnic

be religious
hate people who aren't

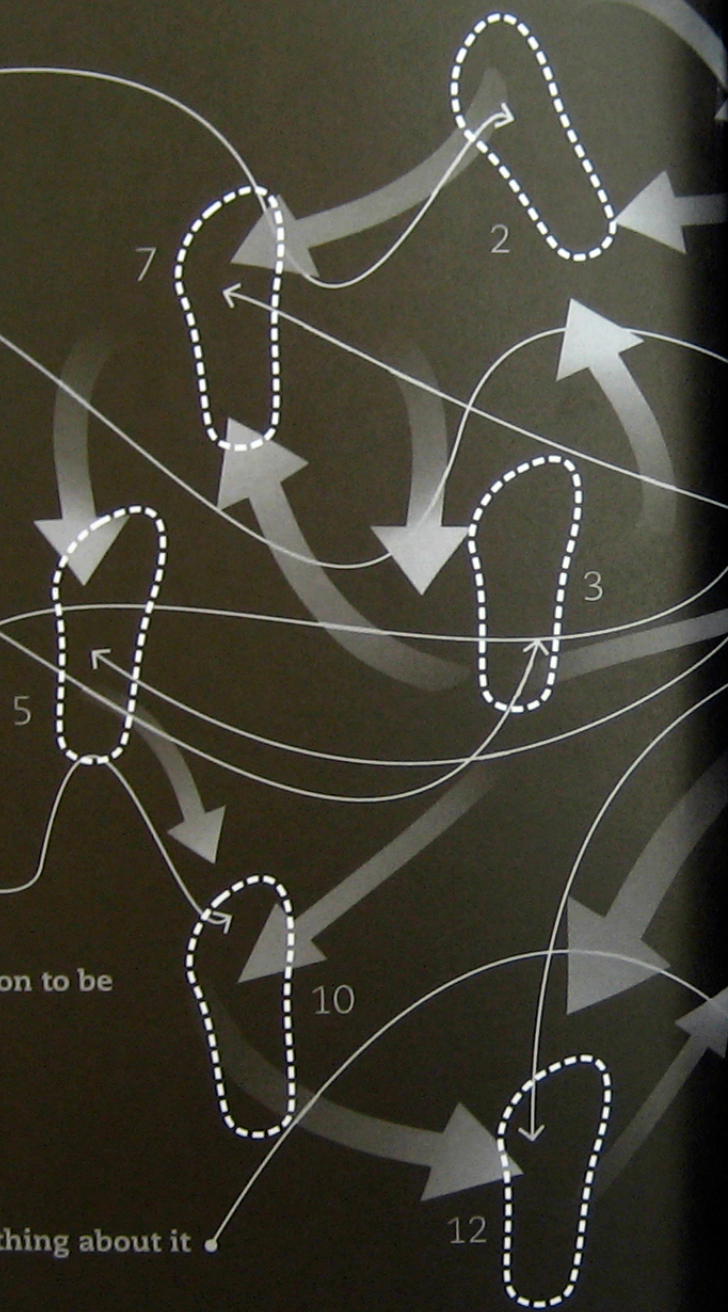
don't travel
there's nothing to see there

use silicon, it will resolve
all your problems

worship false idols

be proud
even if you haven't any reason to be

be a politician
even if you don't know anything about it



prejudice = lifestyle

be angry

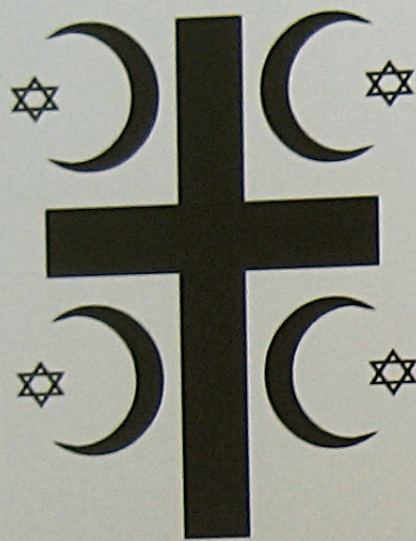
buy BMW
people would respect you

don't apologize
you're always right

use corruption
to get what you want

don't think about your future
it's meaningless

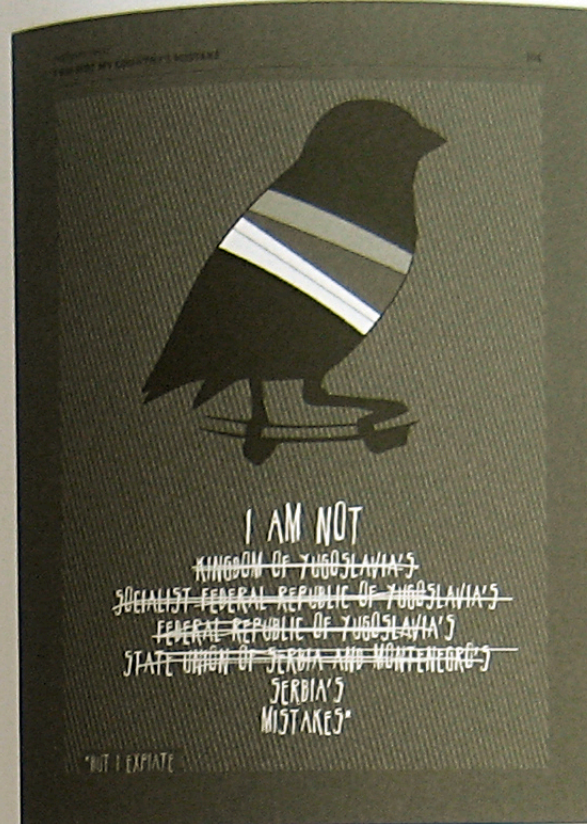




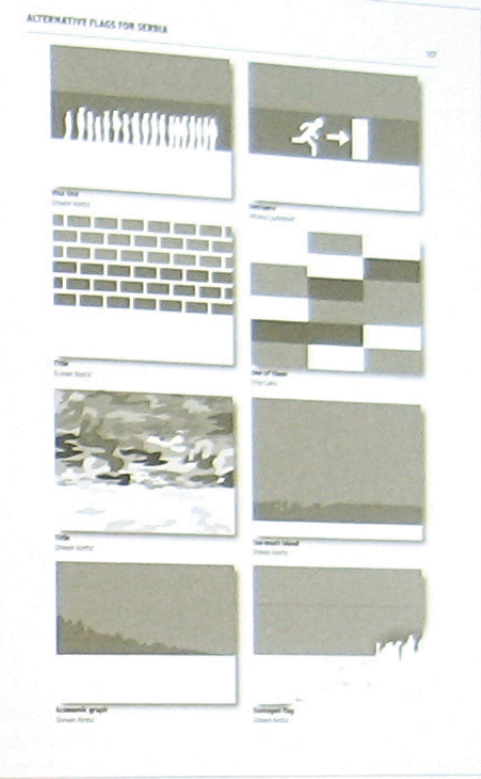
samo sloga
only unity

Muslim Serbs
gay Serbs
Roma Serbs
Albanian Serbs
Jewish Serbs
young Serbs
old Serbs
poor Serbs
country Serbs
other city Serbs
other city districts Serbs
other football club fans Serbs
our Serbian neighbours
our Serbian cousins
our Serbian mothers and fathers
our Serbian sisters
our Serbian brothers
ourselves

This is my version of the Serbian coat of arms that originally consist of a cross and four Cyrillic letters (S) which stands for samo sloga (united Serbs) - only unity Serbs



"NOT I EXPIATE"



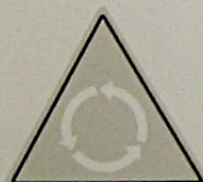
ALTERNATIVE FLAGS FOR SERBIA



STEEP ROAD



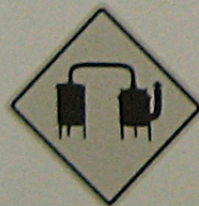
SLALOM



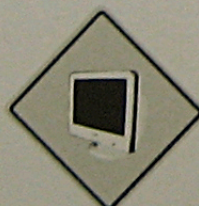
24/7/365



HEADING EU



60% Vol.



SLOW



↑ SEPARATION AHEAD ↑



↑ NEXT 250 km ↑

