

## ***Turning Europe inside out: After seven and a half exciting years of artistic research and art production on the edges of Europe, project Corners is finishing its journey***

CORNERS is a platform for artists and audiences, designed and driven by cultural organisations at the edges of Europe. During 7 and a half years of the project, CORNERS was dedicated to creating opportunities for artists and researchers to produce multidisciplinary contemporary artistic and cultural collaborative projects. The objective was to enable exchange beyond geographical, political and economic divisions. More than 70 artists and researchers have met through CORNERS, as well as more than 50 organisations and institutions as partners and collaborators from more than 10 countries.

### **Why did we start CORNERS?**

The challenge we faced was how to relate trans-national art experience and production with locally generated and owned initiatives. We wanted to establish an encouraging environment on a large territory that would enable international artists and cultural organizations from different parts of Europe to collaborate but at the same time to include local communities in their work and to disseminate that knowledge and energy at the micro level.

We imagined that the nomadic artist could have a role as both observer and provocateur who, by traveling through local contexts around Europe, could share knowledge and stories. By expanding the field of the art, we wanted to include direct participatory encounters with the audience. Therefore, we developed a structure, “a new production model”, creating templates for artwork that could be reproduced and reinvented in new places without losing the original purpose or having to start from the beginning in each new place.

Through the series of Xpeditions - two weeks explorative journeys to outer regions of Europe - CORNERS artists and researchers were meeting active citizens, organizations and local artists, listening and collecting their stories. Those encounters were the base for artistic collaborations involving two or more artists from different corners of Europe. Their works were co-produced, co-created with local audience, and presented in places that inspired their creation, as well as in some other corners of Europe. Through local inspiration, arts, and audience participation, CORNERS was collecting stories and re-telling them in new environments.

A number of cultural institutions from edges of Europe build a long-term partnership based on shared responsibility. CORNERS was initiated in 2010 by six cultural institutions: [Intercult](#) (Stockholm), [Exodos](#) (Ljubljana), [POGON](#) (Zagreb), [Drugo more](#) (Rijeka), [City Culture Institute](#) (Gdansk), and [Umeå 2014](#) – European Capital of Culture. The project was then further developed together with several institutions, new core partners and associates: [Donostia / San Sebastian 2016](#) – European Capital of Culture, [Arts Council of Northern Ireland](#) (Belfast), [ISIS Arts](#) (Newcastle), [REX](#) (Belgrade), [DokuFest](#) (Prizren) and [Teatro Pubblico Pugliese](#) (Bari).

To all of us CORNERS was a unique opportunity to bring international artistic projects to those places of Europe that are outside of cultural, social or economic centers, to test new model of artistic production, and to focus on many different audiences across Europe. Although CORNERS has come to an end of its journey, many parts of the project will continue its lives individually: through ideas that emerged from the process, collaborations between artists and partners, artwork themselves.

## **What kind of work we produced?**

### **Multidisciplinary artworks**

CORNERS projects involve multiple art forms and have strong cross-cultural dimensions: “Playground” by artists Miha Horvat (Slovenia), Riccardo Spagnulo (Italy), Gianfranco Mirizzi (Croatia), Simon Farid (England) is a growing collection of games where artists collect the games people play around Europe, they bring them to new territories and together with local people they invent new ones.

### **Site-related works**

As opposed to site-specific, CORNERS artworks are site-related, where work is not designed for one place only, but can be performed and shown in many different places and contexts. The work gets related to certain sites by co-creating each version with local audiences: “Windows” by artists Valeria Simone (Italy), Michael Hanna (Northern Ireland), Asier Zabaleta (Basque Country) is a participatory outdoor theatre piece, where residents and visitors answer a series of questions on topics ranging from local to existential issues. Artists meet the communities, and in each place, they collectively formulate questions that are most relevant for their environment, working together to build the narrative for the play.

### **Artworks that communicate beyond language**

CORNERS projects can be presented and understood without language barriers: “Atlas of Tremors” by artists Phil Hession (Northern Ireland), Ivana Ivković (Croatia), Christian Cherene (Spain / Northern Ireland) and Ivan Marušić Klif (Croatia). Together they are collecting folk songs from communities connected to weaving and the production of textiles. They then re-interpret these songs with the help of digital sound processing. The work travels to different sites mapping Europe through songs. Sounds and images are collected in exchange with local singers, leading to an ongoing cartography of encounters.

### **Works designed to be presented in public or unusual places**

CORNERS projects are presented where art is usually not expected, exhibited or performed: “Safari Here” by artists Isabella Mongelli (Italy), Maria Anastassiou (United Kingdom) and Miloš Tomić (Serbia) is a guided tour through neighbourhoods in European cities, created with the local residents. Using tools and aesthetics appropriated from the Tourist Industry, it is aiming to display lesser known histories and present micro-locations, to re-interpret and re-present the fabric of everyday life of a place.

## **CORNERS in numbers:**

### **Number of artists: 71**

Our CORNERS artists come from 12 different countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Georgia, Italy, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain (Basque Country), Sweden, Ukraine and the United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland). They work in many artistic disciplines; from visual and performing arts, dance, new media arts and film to sound art and literature. Some are young and emerging, some are established and recognised with many years of work behind them.

One artist sadly left us forever in 2013 – our dear friend and colleague Željko Zorica Šiš from Zagreb, Croatia.

### **Number of Xpeditions: 8**

In chronological order, our CORNERS Xpeditions were: North Xpedition (north of Sweden and Norway), Caucasus Xpedition (Azarbijan and Georgia), Balkan Xpedition (Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro and Albania), East Xpedition (Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania and Kaliningrad oblast), Basque Xpedition (Spain and France), Northern Ireland Xpedition (Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland), Puglia Xpedition (south of Italy) & North East England Xpedition. We visited 19 countries and more than 50 towns and villages.

### **Number of artworks produced: 16**

CORNERS artworks are collaborations between two or more artists. These collaborations create templates for artworks, and the final projects are then co-created with local audiences in each place the artworks are presented. These artworks include a film screening programme, artistic guided tours, a collection of new and existing games, mappings, small community projects, workshops for kids and grownups, audio walks, participative performances, newspapers, exhibitions, printed booklets and live radio broadcasts.

### **Number of CORNERS events: 11**

CORNERS artworks were presented at 11 events in: Umeå (in the Ersboda neighborhood, Sweden), Stockholm (in the Haninge neighborhood, Sweden), Belfast (Northern Ireland), Prizren (Kosovo), Zagreb (in the Trnje neighborhood, Croatia), Ljubljana (in the Fužine neighborhood, Slovenia), Rijeka (in the Zamet neighborhood, Croatia), Donostia/San Sebastian (in the Amara neighborhood, Basque Country), Blyth (England), Gdansk (in the Dolne Miasto neighborhood, Poland) and East Durham (England).

Lasting for two weeks, CORNERS events enabled our artists to dedicate a significant amount of time to work with local people. Through a participatory process, local audience co-created the CORNERS artworks with our artists for presentation in each neighbourhood.

### **Euros invested: 2.7 million €**

Corners received support from European Commission twice: first for the year and an half long R&D phase, later for a 4 years production and presentation phase. EU granted half of the

total amount for Corners which were matched by the same amount of money by partners organizations.

Find out more about Corners on our website: [cornersofeurope.org](http://cornersofeurope.org) and [cornerslive.org](http://cornerslive.org).