

PORTFOLIO + CV (2025)

Selected work in curatorial practice, research, and cultural systems (2006–2025)



CURRICULUM VITAE

Natasha Kadin

Curator, Cultural Strategist,
Researcher
Split, Croatia / Silba Island

Contact

mavena@mavena.hr

+385 99 288 5558

mavena.hr | silba-environment-art.hr

RESEARCH PROFILE

Cultural researcher and curator investigating the micropolitics of care, listening ecologies, and institutional acupuncture within post-transitional Mediterranean contexts. PhD candidate consolidating 20 years of curatorial practice into theoretical frameworks that bridge feminist methodology, acoustic ecology, and the politics of cultural commons. Current research examines how ephemeral cultural practices in the South construct nano-utopias—temporary autonomous zones that resist precarity through sustained attention and collective care.

Current Position

Lead Coordinator, *Soundscapes of Tomorrow* (Creative Europe, 2025-2028)

Researcher & Monograph Author, *36 Her Miracles: Twenty Years of Mavena* (with Dr. Miško Šuvaković, 2025-2027)

EDUCATION

2020 – Present

PhD Candidate in Art Theory

University of Media and Communications, Belgrade

Dissertation: Institutional Acupuncture and the Metabolism of Independent Culture

2007 – 2008

MA in Cultural Management and Policy

University of Arts Belgrade / Université Lumière Lyon 2

1997 – 2004

BA in Croatian Language and Literature

University of Zadar

RESEARCH & CURATORIAL PRACTICE

2006 – Present | Founder & Director

Mavena – 36 njezinih čuda

Independent curatorial platform investigating care-based cultural production. Over 100 projects curated across interdisciplinary formats: exhibitions, sound interventions, community rituals, and long-term site-specific research. Focus on feminist methodologies, co-creation, and the archiving of ephemeral practices.

2015 – Present | Founder & Artistic Director

ISPOD BINE – International Sound Art Festival

Annual festival positioned as "listening as cultural policy." Nine editions exploring acoustic ecology, sonic commons, and auditory attentiveness as political practice. Collaborations with 60+ international sound artists. Theoretical framework developed around "spaces of resonance" as alternative public spheres.

2010 – Present | Founder & Curator

SEA – Silba Environment Art

Long-term research platform on Silba Island examining archipelagic thinking, ecological art, and off-grid cultural production. 80+ site-specific projects investigating island as laboratory for post-growth artistic practices and alternative materialities.

2012 – Present | Lead Curator

NMG@PRAKTIKA

Curatorial cycle in Split positioning the gallery as micropolitical laboratory. 12 years, 70+ exhibitions exploring media art, feminist strategies, and participatory frameworks. Space operated as testing ground for institutional alternatives.

2012 – 2022 | Founder & Coordinator

Platforma Doma mladih

Advocacy platform for commons-based cultural infrastructure. Led collective governance model for Dom mladih Split, resulting in nationally recognized co-management framework (*Gradimo dom zajedno*, 2016). Research focus: institutional acupuncture and civil-public partnerships.

TEACHING & ACADEMIC CONTRIBUTIONS

2010 – 2020

Lecturer, Academy of Arts, Split

Courses: Cultural Production, Feminism in Art, Curatorial Practices, Theory of Video Art

2020 – 2024

Guest Lecturer, Faculty of Media and Communication, Belgrade

Topics: Sound, Ecology, Listening as Methodology

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS

2025

Spaces of Resonance: Listening as Cultural Infrastructure

Published anthology documenting ISPOD BINE methodology (2015-2024)

2023

"Archipelagic Thinking and the Politics of Slowness"

Keynote, European Sound Studies Association Conference, Tallinn

2021

"Institutional Acupuncture: Micro-interventions in Post-transitional Contexts"

Essay in *Commons and Care in Contemporary Curating*, eds. Möntmann/Raunig

SKILLS & METHODOLOGIES

Creative Europe project coordination | Feminist curatorial frameworks | Acoustic ecology and sound-based research | Participatory design and co-creation | Cultural policy development | Commons-oriented governance | Site-specific and long-duration practices | Academic writing and theoretical consolidation

PORTFOLIO

MICROPOLITICS OF CARE & NANO-UTOPIAS

Portfolio of Research & Practice 2020-2025

Natasha Kadin

Split, Croatia / Silba Island

"The work is not in the event but in the attention sustained between events."

This portfolio documents five years of practice positioned at the intersection of curatorial research, acoustic ecology, and institutional critique. The projects operate as case studies in what I term *institutional acupuncture*—precise interventions within the metabolism of independent culture that create temporary autonomous zones, or *nano-utopias*, where alternative relations become briefly but significantly possible.

The work emerges from the post-transitional Mediterranean South, where precarity is not exceptional but structural. Rather than produce resistance through grand gestures, these projects investigate how sustained attention, collective care, and listening practices construct durable alternatives within hostile conditions.

ISPOD BINE: Listening as Cultural Policy

International Sound Art Festival | Split, Croatia | 2015-Present

Conceptual Framework

ISPOD BINE (*Under the Stage*) positions listening as political practice and cultural infrastructure. Nine annual editions have transformed Split's off-season into a space of acoustic attentiveness, inviting 60+ international artists to create site-specific sound interventions that redefine public space through auditory means.

The festival operates on a thesis: that listening—deep, sustained, collective listening—is a form of cultural policy. In a context dominated by visual spectacle and touristic extraction, ISPOD BINE proposes the ear as resistance. The festival refuses amplification in favor of intimacy, rejects the concert format in favor of durational presence, and treats sound not as entertainment but as methodology for understanding place.

Methodology: Spaces of Resonance

Each edition unfolds across three days in late October, when the city exhales between tourist and winter seasons. Artists work with existing resonances: the acoustic signature of abandoned industrial halls, the specific echo of stone alleyways, the subsonic hum of the port. Audiences move through the city on foot, guided by scores that function as listening instructions.

The festival has developed what I call *spaces of resonance*—temporary autonomous zones where attention becomes collective practice. These are not performance venues but acoustic commons: spaces where listening creates provisional community and where sound reveals the hidden politics of public space.

Key Projects (2020-2025)

Edition #6 (2020): *Pandemic Acoustics*

Hybrid format investigating sonic isolation and collective breath. Featured Olivia Block's microphone-amplified breathing exercises performed simultaneously online and in empty gallery, creating resonance between digital and physical bodies.

Edition #7 (2021): *Port Frequencies*

Collaborated with marine biologists to create underwater listening stations in Split harbor. Jana Winderen's hydrophone compositions revealed anthropogenic noise pollution while Anja Kaufmann's intervention amplified dolphin communication patterns, making visible (audible) the Adriatic's acoustic crisis.

Edition #8 (2023): *Stone Memory*

Site-specific cycle exploring Diocletian's Palace as resonant architecture. Angélica Castelló's durational performance inside the Cathedral bell tower transformed the

structure into instrument; visitors experienced 1700-year-old stone as living sonic material.

Edition #9 (2024): *Listening Scores for Public Space*

Series of guided walks using Pauline Oliveros-inspired Deep Listening protocols adapted for Mediterranean urbanism. 120 participants learned to hear the city's metabolism: the rhythm of fishing boats, the pattern of church bells, the echo of footsteps on polished stone.

Theoretical Contribution

The festival has generated methodology documented in *Spaces of Resonance* (2025), an anthology theorizing listening as infrastructure. The book argues that in contexts of cultural precarity, attention itself becomes commons—collectively created, collectively maintained, fragile but renewable.

ISPOD BINE demonstrates that festivals need not be extractive. By operating in off-season, by working with existing acoustics rather than importing spectacle, by treating audience as co-listeners rather than consumers, the project models cultural production as care practice.

SEA / MAGIA BOTANICA

SEA: Archipelagic Thinking and the Politics of Slowness

Silba Environment Art | Silba Island, Croatia | 2010-Present

Context: Island as Laboratory

Silba is a car-free island in the North Adriatic, population 300 (winter) / 3000 (summer). No police, no bank, no gas station. Water arrives by boat. The island operates as laboratory for what happens when growth is impossible, when infrastructure is minimal, when relationality is survival necessity.

SEA (*Silba Environment Art*) has operated here for 15 years as long-term research platform investigating archipelagic thinking: fragmented, non-hierarchical, attention to detail, acceptance of isolation as generative condition. The platform questions what art looks like when made with/for a community of 300 rather than the international circuit, when materials must arrive by ferry, when permanence is impossible because everything salt and wind eventually erodes.

Methodology: Residencies as Ritual

80+ artists have completed site-specific residencies lasting 2-6 weeks. The structure is intentionally simple: housing, studio space, connection to community, time. No

programming requirements, no production deadlines, no exhibition obligations. The work emerges from attention to place.

What has developed is methodology of slowness. Artists arrive exhausted from mainland precarity—multiple jobs, grant cycles, constant production. The island enforces rest. No car means walking. Limited ferry schedule means staying. Small community means encountering same people daily, building trust slowly. The work that emerges reflects this rhythm.

Magia Botanica: Sound Archive of Island Ecologies (2023-Present)

Recent evolution focuses on acoustic ecology and ethnobotany. I am creating sound archive of Silba's disappearing knowledge systems: recordings of elderly women describing medicinal plants in dialect, field recordings of specific ecosystems (rocky shore, pine forest, abandoned orchard), documentation of seasonal rituals.

This becomes *Magia Botanica*—literal botanical magic, but also investigation of how knowledge lives in sound, how landscape speaks through human voice, how archive can be sensory rather than textual. The project questions what gets preserved when a place is documented through listening rather than photography, through vernacular language rather than academic taxonomy.

Key Projects (2020-2025)

Dlana Residency (2019-2024):

Five-year program hosting artists in restored stone house. Focus on textile arts, fermentation practices, plant-based materials. Resulted in methodology of "island craft"—making with whatever the ecosystem provides. Artist Petra Čeko developed natural dye palette from local plants; Martina Meštrović created paper from invasive species; Ivana Meštrović wove textiles using found fishing net.

Radio Silba (2017-Present):

Monthly FM broadcast during summer season featuring island voices, field recordings, oral history. Functions as sonic commons—anyone can contribute content, no editorial hierarchy. Archive now contains 60+ hours of material: fishermen's weather prediction methods, children's games in dialect, elderly women's songs, ambient recordings from all seasons.

Crnice s Otoka / Island Fragments (2017-Present):

Site-specific newspaper published seasonally, printed in Split, distributed free on island. Combines photography, poetry, ecological data, community announcements. Exists as physical object connecting islanders to documentation of their own place. Archive of slow time.

Soundscape Mapping (2023-2024):

Collaboration with acoustic ecologist to create sonic map of island's ecosystems. Identified 40+ distinct acoustic zones from submarine Posidonia meadows to pine

canopy to stone wall microclimates. Recordings reveal alarming loss of insect populations, increasing boat noise pollution, shifting bird migration patterns due to climate change. Audio evidence becomes advocacy tool for marine protection.

Theoretical Contribution: Off-grid as Methodology

SEA demonstrates that marginality can be method. The island's lack of infrastructure becomes asset: artists learn to work without constant connectivity, without same-day shipping, without access to art supply stores. This forces innovation, collaboration, attention to what's actually present.

The platform models post-growth artistic practice. How do we make work when production can't expand infinitely? When materials are limited? When audience is neighbors rather than global market? These questions, once specific to island context, increasingly describe conditions facing cultural production everywhere.

Archipelagic thinking offers alternative to mainland logic: not network but constellation, not growth but seasons, not permanence but beautiful ephemerality. The work erodes like stone in salt wind, and this is not failure but truth.

NMG@PRAKTIKA

NMG@PRAKTIKA: The Gallery as Micropolitical Laboratory

Curatorial Cycle | Split, Croatia | 2012-Present

Institutional Context

PRAKTIKA is 40-square-meter gallery within Dom mladih (Youth Centre), a contested public building in Split's city center. For 12 years, I've used this minimal space as laboratory for testing what gallery can be when operating outside market logic, outside institutional validation, outside expectations of permanence.

NMG@PRAKTIKA (*New Media Gallery at PRAKTIKA*) functions as ongoing experiment in curatorial methodology. 70+ exhibitions across 12 years have investigated single question: What does it mean to sustain attention in context of perpetual crisis? The space operates month-to-month, constantly threatened with closure, always underfunded. This precarity becomes methodology.

Curatorial Methodology: The Long Conversation

Rather than produce spectacular one-off exhibitions, NMG@PRAKTIKA operates as durational conversation. Artists return multiple times across years. Projects unfold slowly, sometimes taking two seasons to realize. Exhibition documentation feeds into next project, creating archive that itself becomes curatorial material.

The space prioritizes video art, sound installation, media archaeology—practices requiring time and attention. Visitors often arrive alone, spend 45 minutes with single work. The gallery becomes refuge from Split's tourist economy: dark, quiet, slow.

Key Projects (2020-2025)

2020: *Pandemic Infrastructure*

Five online/offline hybrid exhibitions investigating digital intimacy during lockdown. Featured Ana Hušman's video diaries documenting empty Split streets, Damir Očko's sound piece amplifying domestic acoustics of isolation, and Tanja Vujinović's participatory project collecting voice messages from quarantined elderly.

2021: *Post-Memory Series*

Three-part investigation of Yugoslav cultural infrastructure through lens of children of transition. Included Doplgenger's video essay on abandoned youth centers, Adela Jušić's performance documentation about disappeared bodies, and Nataša Ilić's archival intervention reconstructing feminist publishing from 1980s.

2022-2023: *Listening Topologies*

Six exhibitions connecting NMG methodology to ISPOD BINE research. Created feedback loop between festival's public interventions and gallery's intimate space. Featured Marija Šujica's multichannel installation mapping Split's acoustic zones, Ivana Armanini's video exploring relationship between voice and architecture, and Anissa Touati's sound piece investigating Mediterranean migration routes through sonic testimony.

2024: *Archiving the Ephemeral*

Meta-curatorial project documenting 12 years of NMG programming. Invited five curators to re-activate archival materials: floor plans, press releases, documentation photos, correspondence. Exhibition questioned how ephemeral practices get historicized, what gets lost in documentation, whether exhibition can be reconstituted from its traces.

Theoretical Contribution: Institutional Acupuncture

The gallery demonstrates what I call *institutional acupuncture*—precise, small-scale interventions within larger institutional body that generate disproportionate effect. PRAKTIKA is tiny space within contested building within struggling city within peripheral nation. Yet it has sustained 12 years of rigorous programming by working *with* precarity rather than against it.

Methodology includes: working without budgets (artists donate time), working with students (building capacity), working across years (slow accumulation), working transparently (all correspondence archived publicly), working collectively (decisions by committee of 5).

The space proves that sustainability isn't about securing permanent funding but about building practice that can endure through cycles of crisis and calm. The gallery has survived regime changes, pandemic, multiple threats of eviction, chronic underfunding—not through resistance but through profound flexibility and commitment to attention.

ADVOCACY / DOM MLADIH

Institutional Acupuncture: The Struggle for Cultural Commons

Platforma Doma mladih | Split, Croatia | 2012-2022

Context: The Building as Common

Dom mladih (Youth Centre) is 4000-square-meter public building in Split's city center. Built 1959 as socialist youth infrastructure, it spent 1990s-2000s in legal limbo—publicly owned but privately managed, slowly degraded through neglect and corrupt rental contracts. By 2012, the building was crisis: broken plumbing, illegal nightclub in basement, multiple NGOs operating without formal agreements, no maintenance budget, constant threat of privatization.

The struggle for Dom mladih became ten-year experiment in institutional acupuncture: Could a coalition of small organizations transform public building into genuine commons through sustained attention, transparent process, and refusal to either abandon or privatize shared infrastructure?

Platforma Doma mladih: Collective Governance as Practice

I co-founded Platforma in 2012 with 9 NGOs sharing space in Dom mladih. The coalition developed methodology now documented in *Gradimo dom zajedno (Building Home Together, 2016)*—nationally recognized model for civil-public partnership in cultural infrastructure.

Key Strategies:

Radical Transparency: All meetings open, all correspondence public, all decisions documented in accessible language. Building trust through visibility.

Infrastructural Literacy: Teaching ourselves municipal policy, property law, EU funding mechanisms. Making expertise collective rather than depending on consultants.

Slow Negotiation: Rather than demand immediate change, spending years building relationship with city officials. Demonstrating through sustained presence that we weren't leaving.

Prefigurative Politics: Operating *as if* we already had the partnership we were demanding. Creating shared calendar, collective maintenance schedule, common protocols—modeling the future we wanted.

Outcomes (2012-2022)

2014: Secured first formal Agreement with City of Split recognizing coalition's role in building management.

2016: Published *Gradimo dom zajedno* documenting methodology. Manual adopted by other cities facing similar struggles.

2018: Won EU funding (ESF) for infrastructural renovation—first public investment in building in 20 years.

2019: Established Co-Management Board including city representatives, NGO coalition, and community members. First example in Croatia of formalized civil-public partnership in cultural infrastructure.

2020-2022: During pandemic, Dom mladih functioned as mutual aid hub: food distribution, mental health hotline, digital literacy workshops for elderly. The building proved its value as commons precisely when institutional culture collapsed.

Theoretical Contribution: Acupuncture Not Resistance

The Dom mladih struggle demonstrates alternative to both state control and market privatization. Rather than protest (which positions civil society as outside institution) or abandon (which accepts institutional failure), Platforma practiced *inhabitation*—occupying the building so completely, so carefully, so collaboratively that our presence became undeniable.

This is institutional acupuncture: finding precise pressure point within bureaucratic body where small intervention generates systemic effect. For Platforma, that point was

simply *staying*—maintaining presence through every crisis, every regime change, every threat of eviction. Attention became our primary tool.

The work required sacrificing individual organizational interests for collective survival. It required learning to negotiate with hostile officials. It required accepting that change happens across years, not months. It required building solidarity across ideological differences within coalition.

What emerged is model for cultural commons: infrastructure neither state-controlled nor privatized but genuinely co-governed. The work continues, now led by younger generation I helped train. The building still stands. The commons remain possible.

THE MONOGRAPH

36 Her Miracles: Archiving Twenty Years of Ephemeral Practice

Monograph Research with Dr. Miško Šuvaković | 2025-2027

Research Question

How do we archive practices that refuse documentation? Mavena has operated for 20 years producing exhibitions, performances, interventions, workshops, festivals—work designed to be experienced in person, in real time, then to disappear. Now, in collaboration with art theorist Dr. Miško Šuvaković, I am attempting to historicize this deliberately ephemeral practice.

36 Her Miracles is monograph examining Mavena's methodology from 2006-2027. The title references traditional religious calendar (36 annual feast days) while claiming women's cultural labor as miraculous—not supernatural but systematically undervalued.

Methodology: Theory from Practice

Rather than apply existing theoretical frameworks, the monograph generates theory *from practice*. Šuvaković and I are analyzing 20 years of projects to identify patterns, recurring strategies, underlying logics. What emerges are concepts like:

Institutional Acupuncture: Precise interventions within cultural metabolism

Nano-Utopias: Temporary autonomous zones created through sustained attention

Care as Infrastructure: Maintenance practices as primary cultural production

Archipelagic Thinking: Fragmentation as methodology not deficit

Spaces of Resonance: Commons created through collective listening

Structure

The book operates in three registers:

Part I: Context | Post-transitional Mediterranean South as site of cultural production. Analysis of precarity as structural condition, not temporary crisis. Examination of how independent culture operates when institutions fail.

Part II: Projects | Deep documentation of 36 key projects across 20 years. Each project analyzed through multiple lenses: practical (how it was made), relational (who it served), theoretical (what it demonstrated), political (what it changed).

Part III: Methodology | Consolidation of Mavena's curatorial strategies into transferable frameworks. This section positions my practice within broader theoretical discussions of feminist curating, participatory art, institutional critique, and cultural commons.