

DRUGO MORE

4. 4. 2025

ANNA Here we are together with Drugo More. I'm very happy to have Davor, Ivana and Daria here with me. When I was browsing through your website, I couldn't grasp what Drugo More actually is. So I came to ask you what do you do. What do you do? What is your practice about?

DAVOR We're doing exhibitions, performing arts and these sorts of programs, theory, artists talks. And topic wise, we always try to connect an artwork with certain social processes that are happening right now and reflect on them. We are in Rijeka, small city on the periphery of Europe. Sometimes we see our role as connecting the locals and the local scene with certain issues or problems that are present, let's say, in some other centers. We try to establish links and understanding of these things.


ANNA What about others? Do you have anything more to add?

IVANA We are an NGO that works in culture and arts, producing different programs in different formats. From my perspective we do all formats, but most important is the thematic approach. We detect important topics in society that we need to reflect on, then we discuss or explore it in more depth through different artistic programs.

ANNA You've already covered the outcomes, you're quite considerative about them. The specific thing on Drugo More is that you're an assembly and an organization that is materialized in these bodies sitting in front of me now. Can you talk a little bit about your individual approach towards this organization? How are you linked towards the organization?

DARIA I, the past member, still feel like a member. Drugo More is very grounded and welcoming organization. I think it was a really important time of my growing up. It made me understand what I want to do and how I want to do it. Drugo More gathers interesting people and it feels like a family. This sounds like a cliché, you really don't feel the hierarchy. Everyone is working together, sharing resources and skills and helping each other. I would say learning is the main characteristic of working in Drugo More, because every day you learn something. It's a really good base to being involved in different things.

IVANA Drugo More is an organization, but people are an organization. 15 years ago I started working in Drugo More and the first few months started as a job. Then it quickly became part of my personality, and I probably also integrated a lot of my personality into the organization, so it's kind of mutual relationship. It's integrated into my being. All of us are the particles of Drugo More and Drugo More is all of us in this sense. And if somebody leaves and somebody new comes in, I think we become kind a Borg in Star Trek, you know? We assimilate, but we accept new cultures as well. Each of us brings something new, but we also keep something what we feel as common values.

DAVOR Borg? 

IVANA In a good way. Borg is quite successful structure and the organism. It looks very threatening, but it works very well.

ANNA What about you Davor? I guess you have a more specific approach because you are the first one of Drugo More.

DAVOR When you have something complex, you need organization to deal with stuff. When you want to move some piece of furniture you need two or three people and that's already an organization. From the beginning, it was clear that since we are a small collective, we could organise ourselves mechanically, or organically. By mechanical I mean in a way everybody is piece of a machine. It can work like that; but the organic approach means that each new member contributes with something. The topics, outcomes, values and interests are depending on the interest of people. So Drugo More it's constantly reshaping.

If you look 20, 25 years back, you would see we were changing the focus and formats in relation to who was here and what was happening to us. That's probably logic of a collective rather than organization. Since we are small and we operate with really limited resources, we need to be efficient and that is influencing the relations among us. Our roles are specified and flexible. But we are always trying to come to these roles organically. For that reason it's very important who is coming to organization. Because of the nature of organization, each do a bit of programming, administration, creating, producing. It's a mixture of something that is burdening and something that is more interesting. It's not that we are executing vision of one person, but we are trying to,...

IVANA DARIA 

well... There is a lot of suggestions from one person ..

DAVOR You have some idea, then others interface. When we talk about this natural commoning or being and doing something together, no one is like a blank paper and anyone comes to the group with some experiences, skills, some interests, so I guess there are always some natural competences.. Someone might be more into writing texts, someone is more into writing grants, someone is more into meeting with people....

IVANA Davor started it and found people who accepted this approach. Now we are trying to detect the best traits of each person coming. For example, Dubi is an anarchist who didn't have any social media. But then we saw he's very precise and suggested he can try to deal with social media and PR and it turned

out that he's amazing at it. I think this makes people comfortable - to work with what you're familiar or comfortable with, but also trying something new and then it turns out okay or not. It's trial and error.

ANNA People do realize they have some new skills.

DAVOR Or they not.

IVANA The needs of the organization forces you to try. To try and connect the cables of some sound system and then you realize you can do this. I think we found the nice balance for this.

DAVOR And also, every person brings some values. When Daria and Vanda were here, feminist perspectives were more important. We become more aware of gender diversity.

DARIA Yes!

DAVOR Before that we were not so much... I mean we were aware of course..

DARIA Come on! [laught]

DAVOR It's interesting to see the process of learning. We all share the basic values, but somebody is emphasizing something more and that creates an interplay. That is also important for the approach to the program. That we are aware of different perspectives. People could define a program from really different perspective. And you then see what is missing, ...

ANNA When I'm listening to you how the organization changes when new people come it really feels like an organism that is changing its own flows because of its openness. And also when you leave it changes you as an individuality, right? You spoke about common values too. Can you say what are the values of Drugo More?

DAVOR They are quite simple. It is a social justice in relation to different things - how labor is organized, to the identities that have right to express themselves. I would say it's a basic justice. This is something we are trying to do in the programs and in a way we set up the relations in the organization.

ANNA I had this perfect question you on your roles ready here, but when I'm listening to you, you're naturally coming towards the roles. So I want to flip the question a bit and ask: What is the role of the organization?

IVANA The role is to impact society. To raise awareness of things we find important or raise questions about social justice. It's role is to reach some people by its programme and make them question things. To change their habits at least a tiny bit.

DAVOR The role of the organization was also in filling the gaps in the city. In 2000s we did the queer program. It was not existing then. When other people started doing it too, we pulled out.

IVANA It depends on our interest as well. Now we are interested in technology. What technology brings, what is its impact on society. The majority of our program, especially gallery program, is connected to digital culture.

DAVOR Let's say we are not collaborating directly with the local scene, but indirectly. The city has certain characteristics. Our environment is changing. Other people are coming here with their own ideas and with their topics. We are always trying to help these initiatives, providing some very basic things - equipment, organizational and application support...

IVANA Knowledge.

DAVOR Yeah. I would say that this is our role. To support what's going on in the city and also to bring new things in the city that are missing. We also had a lot of spin-offs. Things we started and somebody else pursued to do it. We started a human rights film festival and then gave it to the Filmaktiva. Or Molecula - a network of organizations. This entity came out from our project. Entity detached from us. Unfortunately it's still attached to us. We created a monster.

DARIA But are we also leaving Zoom right now? To Igralke, no?

DAVOR We're doing it together. But we want to give it up.

IVANA This is a great example of what people bring to the organization. We have a very successful performing arts festival. For the past six or seven years, we are trying to get rid of it. None of us is really into that any more even though it's recognised and successful. We have no issue when somebody wants to take it over. Our ex-colleague, Vanda, who is an actress, has her own collective and they are okay with sharing programming. Maybe she can curate it.

DAVOR She's basically curating it. We fused two festivals into one. Because of practical reasons. Because if we just gave them a festival they will get just seven now they created their own festival. But that really depends on trust. Because we know each other very well. And we are sharing...

DARIA ...similar taste.

IVANA Yeah, it's mutual interest. It'll be good for us and it will be good for them. Win-win.

DAVOR That's this spinning of ...

ANNA The role is not only about the outcomes with a certain contextual, thematic framework. It's also about what's behind. What role has Drugo More in relation towards Rijeka's professional scene or Rijeka's emerging artists. You're a bit like trendsetters.

DAVOR But nobody is really following that trend.

ANNA I mean... you've started the performing arts festival and then someone takes it over or you started to be interested in queer topics and then other organizations appear...

IVANA It might have been applicable for a long time but I'm not sure if it's still there. We are getting older. Probably some younger people and organizations are showing up and they are trendsetters in their own bubble. But I'm not sure that we still have impact locally. Maybe we switched focus, maybe we are not on the same level anymore.


DAVOR This strategy of leaving things is related to us needing to be on the edge all the time. We are not

in a position to build something bigger. We don't start with the small festival to create big festival after 10 years. That's not our choice. Also it's practically almost impossible.

IVANA Ecosystem does not allow it.

DAVOR In this city.

ANNA Do you have any dreams for Drugo More?

IVANA Huge amazing building, well equipped, where we could work properly. And not worrying about salaries because it's something we need to continuously think about. It would be amazing to work without worries about the space and utilities and just be able to implement the program. This is my dream. Everybody agrees. 

ANNA I want to ask about the legal infrastructure of Drugo More. Where it is anchored?

DAVOR Legally we are non profit non-governmental organization. That depends on a national legal framework. In Croatia, you have public institutions, private institutions, non-governmental organizations, artistic organizations and private companies.

IVANA The literal translation would be the association of citizens. This is NGO in Croatia. Citizens with common interest come together and form a legal entity. Udruga. Udruženie.

ANNA So you have some kind of board, the president..

IVANA Yeah. There is responsible person. There is a president and director. There is a board of members.

DAVOR Skupština.

IVANA Assembly. Members are people who are connected with the organization in different sense. They've been following our work and programme for quite some time. Some of them are theatre actors, some designers, artists, or just dedicated audiences. They share our values. We meet at least once a year and we present our program and budget to them. We are taking their inputs into consideration.

DARIA How many members do we have?

IVANA Twenty-five.

ANNA Those 25 people is this assembly. So they advise the decisions.

IVANA We are now in the process of strategic planning for the next five years and we invited all of them to comment on it. What should we change, how they see us from the outside. It's an extended group of friends of Drugo More.

ANNA As we speak about space I think it is important to say where we are at now. We're at the office. It has quite extended space for work - tables, computers. A white board has some plans written. There is a half-opened pingpong table that's used as a shelf and then there are many little tables and four extra chairs. In the last quarter of the room there is this living room-like space, with some bookshelves, a painting, the device to destroy your hardisks and some plants. I would say this is this is the native space of yours now. But what other spaces do you use and are you interested in?

IVANA This is the office but it's also being used as a storage, workshop and activity space. One floor below, there is a gallery space where we have our programme. Alongside of it, there is a theater hall or multi-functional space we use for discursive programs or performances. The building we are based in is from the end of the 19th century. It wasn't build to the needs we have today. So we need to use the office for as storage - that's why is it full of extra furniture. We do have the venue where we can do the public program, but we don't have an adequate space.

ANNA Do you ever think outside of the venue? Is there any extended space where you operate?

IVANA It depends. If we need bigger or different spaces we collaborate with other institutions in the city.

DAVOR In the past, we used a lot of ex-industrial spaces. In 2005 we and one music festival, Cartera, used a paper factory for an art program, concerts

performances, Dj sets, exhibitions. We also used the space where it's now the Museum of Contemporary Art. For one Zoom festival, we used the pier. But right now, it's a situation that they are either dangerous to use - they're really falling apart or they have been renovated and got a new function. Our willingness to use spaces outside of the usual art spaces depends on the context. It is related to the topics that we are dealing with. The last 10 years we have been into the digital cultures and technologies so it doesn't make sense to use public space. On this strategic planning, we had a meeting with our members and they demanded we should start conquering new spaces. They didn't have any precise idea what spaces should it be, but they wanted to push us to start to do it again. The last 10 years we haven't do it much. Or not at all.

IVANA We did, but maybe less.

ANNA Architecture is impactful because it shapes what you do in a way you can't really change. You have to adapt. I also want to emphasize this social dimension of space, the social potential it carries. If I see Drugo More as moderator of encounters of different people with topics they would never encountered, how do you design or moderate these spaces of encounters? How do you approach this eventfulness of your activities?

DAVOR We had a lot of talks about it. How to design an encounter was always a question. This is the destiny of most of the smaller organizations. We are operating in a circle of friends and people we know. The question have always been how to keep a certain level of formality. Because when we all feel as a friends, then it's difficult for outsider to come in. Several times we concluded that we need to approach new people, to make them comfortable. To care about the people who we don't know. Not to stick just among the group of friends drinking beer and smoking cigars and saying how we are awesome.

IVANA There is a discussion about dissatisfaction of this building. We came here as association of different NGOs to have some background.

DAVOR It's this Molekula, which we mentioned.

IVANA Immediately, we realized we don't have any common space to function as a living room or gathering space. This is something we miss all these years. Architecture defines your presence in the city very much. A different building, different architecture could completely change how people approach or see you. If we'd have a ground floor with a little bar, then people can come here and then to a cultural programme. We are in the main street in Rijeka but the access is through the back door, side door... There is no place to hang out. This is a huge minus.

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ANNA Here we are again with Davor. We are now in the exhibition space in its foyer with a historicist dekor. Last time we talked about what Drugo More is doing, what is it's role and how does it organise space socially. At the end you spoke about need to have a certain level of formality. How do you understand this formality? How do you design it?

DAVOR Our audience is mostly from people who are part of this wider cultural scene of Rijeka - artists, researchers, professors on the Academy or the Faculty of Philosophy. We know them all personally. But they are not the only ones who are coming to events. So we want to avoid situation where we engage with our friends in a relaxed conversations and that we don't pay attention to the new people. In that sense we are talking about a level of formalisation of our behaviour. It should be distanced from regular friendship. What we need to do it's to pay attention especially to the new people, those who are coming for the first time and to engage in conversation with them, try to explain what's going on and what is the displayed work about. These other people should see they are invited here because situation is formal, the event is formal event. It's not something we created in our living room. We created it in a public space so it needs to be accessible to the public. This accessibility is provided through this formalisation.

ANNA So you represent Drugo More. You are representatives of Drugo More as an organisation and this is how you approach the audience.

DAVOR Precisely.

ANNA So you also have some kind of Drugo More personality, each of you?

DAVOR This formalisation is not really about Drugo More. It's about understanding the social interaction. Everybody is invited and there are rules how they could participate. Because otherwise we would sit on the balcony and smoke cigars, drink beers with our friends. And that's not acceptable.

ANNA On the other side of this process are relationships with artists. You have quite dense programme so you really must have a whole net of relations towards the worldwide art scene. How are these relations established?

DAVOR We have quite wide network. When we're starting a conversation with the artist that we don't know, we start with presenting the conditions what we can offer. What kind of expenses we can cover, what context we can provide and who is the audience. So that's the starting point. It's formal again. Then, we are trying to establish more informal relation with them. We work in continuity with artists. Usually it's not one show and then end. When it works, we are trying to have this longer relationship. We also always try to explain our position. We are small organisation in a peripheral city. Exhibiting here will not give the artist visibility. We don't have big budgets. I think it is important for artists to understand our limits and what can we offer. Sometimes the collaboration with us open in some new opportunities for the artist. We also have a network of organisations, with whom we collaborate and exchange informations. Also, artists could recommend other artists to collaborate with us. They can give us information about possible fundings. This network it's quite informal, nothing is public.

ANNA It's nice you speak about understanding of your position. When you understand where you are at, what resources you have and what can you do, this marks the field for you. And then maybe the limitations are not that limiting. They might push you to think creatively in a different way. You've also spoke about visibility and that this is something you can't provide. What did you meant by this?

DAVOR For the visibility of artists, most important

things are festivals or exhibitions that have a high visibility in the artistic field, which is not related to audience but to other curators, researchers, academics coming there.

ANNA Professional events, let's say.

DAVOR Another level is institution. Because the whole system of artist status refers if you are working with important institutions. And we are not that. We are where we are - organisation that is known but it doesn't have any of this institutional power. What we can offer is approach. Because we don't act as a curators, we are acting as a producers, but giving a lots curatorial support to production and presentation of the artwork. We work very closely with artists and leaving them lots of freedom with decisions but at the same time giving support. This is something that i think some artists appreciate a lot, some of them not at all. So we're working in the margins of the spectre. Sometimes it's huge attention or no attention. So that's something quite specific. And we are always trying to create a paradigm, a context, a certain field together with other people, where their work fits.

ANNA In this paradigm, the artists could relate to each other, right? And then, me for example, can track which institutions and artists have similar interest.

DAVOR In creating our programme, we're following certain topics. Most of the artists who are coming here to work, are know our programme and other events we create. They how they practice could fit here.

ANNA What relationships for Drugo More are necessary to to be able to exist?

DAVOR The network is most important thing for us. For our existence, to do what we want to do, the most important thing is this informal network. We are also part of some formal networks, but that is good for other purposes – like advocacy. These informal relationships are the mixture of professional collaboration and friendship. It's in between. Because when you get in an interaction with people, you get to know also their personal things,...

ANNA You start caring about the people?

DAVOR True, yeah.

ANNA How do you care? Have you ever think of any tools of taking care about the relations?

DAVOR We don't have any kind of specific tool. But basically - it is communication, and in times of need, providing whatever is needed.

ANNA The last question about relationships is on the relation to funding and funding authorities. How do you approach this part of your work?

DAVOR In a way, this is our core business. When we are thinking what will be our programme, we think about funding. The options are already known to us. Regularly, we are applying only for a few funds and that's it. In Croatia, there is a city level and a national level. There are some foundations, two national, other on a European level. We also apply to European Commission. Sometimes artists want to protest against somebody that is funding us. That is usually EU. But that is rare situation. If we know in advance that artist doesn't want to be associated with certain funding, we don't apply to it. Also similar thing with this political struggles. In past few years, there is this idea of boycotting Russian artists and organisations, Israeli artists and organisations, Palestinian. In that sense, we are not boycotting anybody. But we are not questioning our cooperation neither with Israeli, neither Palestinian organisations that are part of our network. Also with the Russian and Ukrainian. It doesn't make sense for us, but we know this could be problematic for many other artists. So this is problematic. It's not related to funding, more to collaboration. These things sometimes pop up. Especially now with all conflicts.

ANNA With critical programme you collaborate with critical artists. And you enter towards this global battlefield.

DAVOR Of course we are not collaborating with artists who are pro-Netanyahu, pro-Putin, pro-Zelensky, whatever. We are collaborating with artists who are critical in their context. For us, it doesn't make sense to boycott them. This is nationalism for me. It

is problematic that you understand these people as a monolithic group. So we want to avoid this,...

ANNA Is there any ongoing struggle or any pitfalls? Have you had, as Drugo More, over the 25 years of your existence any struggles?

DAVOR We're always struggling to survive. That's something ongoing.

ANNA So it's a combination of money, space,...

DAVOR Lack of the basic resources. Money, space, equipment, all that stuff. All the time we are on the verge of disappearing. Nothing is stable, everything is really precarious. Somehow we are used to living this situation and we are surviving it. But it's taking a toll for everybody. It's difficult to function for so many years in this position. And people are tired of this insecurity.

ANNA Then we are slowly entering to the very last parts. I want to ask once again about the tools. What is the main tool? What is the tool set of Drugo More?

DAVOR That is a difficult question, there are material resources that are necessary. For programme, there is definitely technical and material set of tools and also skills related to manage them. Writing email is a part of this materiality. To find these resources and to manage them is basically 70,80 % of our work. And if you think more in a metaphorical sense - do we have a toolkit? Do we have a of skills and approaches that we use in our work?

ANNA Yes, like a methodology.

DAVOR We don't have a specific methodology. Tools depends on individual situation. But we have certain rules. The basic rule is that what we are interested in advocating for social justice. That is our mission in whatever context. We are not really engaged in a programme that is made for fun, for kids or just to fill free time. Then, we are aware we can't cover all topics, so we are trying to focus on few of them. We are also trying to quickly react on immediate crisis and current situations. Other general rule is that we are working with people, not with the artworks. If we don't resonate with the people, we don't collaborate

further. We just don't have capacity to work with people we don't like. And then it's autonomy. It's really important for us to give everybody autonomy, from graphic designer to the artist. We never interfere with what they're delivering to us. We don't change things. It's artists final decision, how work will look like. We try to interfere as less as possible. And if, just for the necessary things of a collaborative process.

ANNA Your rules are promoting art, promoting social justice, then the ability to be reactive on what's happening, than the focus on you working with people, not art and the autonomy. That was almost it. There is just last bonus question on ends and ending. How do you understand end in relation towards what you do? How do you navigate endings?

DAVOR We don't have endings. It's just going on. Well, of course. The show is from 30th to 24th of April. The programme is from 8 to 10. But we're constantly doing programme. Sometimes we feel that it's never ending. Because it is. We cannot say we did this and now we will think about something new.

ANNA People have no end. When you work with people, they have their time and they cannot be just cut off.

DAVOR You're right. You are always in relation. You always need to respond. Because there is always something going on. And in creating the programme, we can't stop. If we stop to do things, what does it mean? I think that we are not specific here. The quality of each organisation is that it basically never stop.

Drugo More is an organisation that produces, promotes, researches and disseminates culture. It was established in 1999 in Umag, Croatia. Now it is based in Rijeka, Croatia.

The conversations were conducted with Davor Mišković, Ivana Katić and Daria Morosin in Rijeka between 29. 3. - 19. 4. 2025