

# Tajči Čekada



Selected works  
2006 – 2023

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# Biography



**TAJČI ČEKADA**, a child of a city located at the crossroads of the sea and the mountains, an important transversal point of historical migrations and a unique combination of nature and industry. Shaped by the climate, the bura and the jugo winds, she has always reflected on the relationship between humans and nature, curiously questioning everything that is taken for granted. She makes fun of fashion design but takes it deadly seriously. Sometimes, she feeds her friends with shells and then dresses them up in the shells, transforms into a bug that feverishly drinks wine, then becomes a Mr. Rabbit who hops into the forest, dines with a live boar dressed as a snail, creates indestructible dresses for dead bodies, and then organizes her own funeral. During the summers, she makes sandwiches, offers her own blood and mother's milk for comfort. Later, she floats among the swimmers as a gracious lady, waving at them kindly, and then sells souvenirs with her own image. She collaborates and preserves herself in clay for the trip to Mars, carries rocks for hours, covers herself in layers of paint, trains on the island of Goli Otok, and swims for peace in the world. She recently takes great pleasure in blowing up national symbols with massive dynamite explosions. Her phone rings to the theme of Rocky.

Andrea Knežević

# Portfolio

2023

## THE INVISIBLE ONES



A collaborative, unannounced artistic action by five artists – Milijana Babić, Branka Cvjetičanin, Tajči Čekada, Nadija Mustapić, and Nika Rukavina – conducted at the opening of the Rijeka edition of the inter-institutional project/exhibition “Vidljive” (“The Visible Ones”) at the Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art in Rijeka. The performance involved the group of artists arriving at the exhibition opening with their “heads in bags,” followed by sending a press release after the performance, where the artists revealed their identities and reasons for protest and dissatisfaction.

In a widely publicized press release, “The invisible ones” outlined the reasons for their protest, expressing their disagreement with the inter-institutional project/exhibition. The release highlighted several organizational issues, including a lack of dialogue between curators and artists, the objectification of female artists, unpaid work, lack of funding for travel expenses, inadequate production and technical conditions, unclear acquisition policies, and other shortcomings.

2019 – ...

## LADY OF THE PADDLEBOARD

Ongoing project

The work “Lady of the paddleboard” began in 2019 with a performance by the artist Tajči Čekada, who portrayed the appearance of virgin Mary, mother of God, by paddling on a stand-up paddleboard along the Kantrida beach, Rijeka. The performance questions biblical iconography and its appearance in performance art through direct encounters with Catholics, swimmers, tourists, and beach visitors. Since the initial apparition performance, the event continues every year at the same time as a memorial to the apparition and is performed in various media. Through this work, the artist questions personal and social perspectives on proving and verifying practical faith and reflects on ways in which faith is presented in the modern technological age. The work also plays with the idea of media visibility and artistic freedom versus often narrowly defined boundaries of religious organizations. The place of apparition is promoted in a fun way with the aim of recognizing a new religious destination, offering swimmers a prayer that saves them from heat, drowning, and viruses.

Link

**[gospaodsupa.com](https://gospaodsupa.com)**



Ongoing project

2019

## LADY OF THE PADDLEBOARD: APPARITION



On August 15, 2019, which is the Feast of the Assumption of Mary and a national holiday, the artist set out on a paddleboard and demonstrated the apparition for the first time. Special attention was given to the visibility of the action, and during the news coverage of the holiday, the artist competed with usual news in the media space, controlling the narrative through which she placed her performance in the media. As a result, the media published an extremely large amount of news about the performance, using the artist's narrative about a new shrine and miracle at Kantrida, changing and enhancing the appearance and perception of Kantrida as an interesting pilgrimage destination.

Link

**[gospaodsupa.com](https://gospaodsupa.com)**

Ongoing project

2020

## LADY OF THE PADDLEBOARD: SANCTUARY



The installation of the ritual space of the sanctuary, where the anniversary of the apparition is marked in a characteristic way for visitors, is made possible by lighting candles and the opportunity to pray or perform their own ritual dedicated to the performance/apparition. The intervention in the space is conceived as a ritual space characteristic of commemorating through prayer, lighting candles, and offering gifts. The work consists of a stand-up paddleboard on which a printed photograph of the artist as Our Lady of the Paddleboard is placed, along with offered candles. At the same time, the artist produces dedicated websites for the event, expanding the scope of activity and influence, and through them, the event is supported by evidence of the performance/apparition.

Video

[gospaodsupa.com/galerije/2020-2](https://gospaodsupa.com/galerije/2020-2)

Ongoing project

2021

## LADY OF THE PADDLEBOARD: STAND STALL



In the spirit of promoting the initial performance, faith, and promoting religious destinations, the artist sets up a stall selling souvenirs - magnets, lighters, calendars, candles, etc. - which are generated from previously recorded materials of the performance/apparition featuring the artist as the Lady of the paddleboard photographed solely for the purpose of propaganda. Despite the restrictions on the operation of many establishments during this pandemic year, the newly created and unrecognized sanctuary of Our Lady of the paddleboard did not fall under restriction measures and thus became the only sanctuary in the region with permission to sell souvenirs.

Video

[youtu.be/d6b4Oppk\\_TY](https://youtu.be/d6b4Oppk_TY)

Ongoing project

2022

## LADY OF THE PADDLEBOARD: ROSARY IN THE SEA



After numerous reactions from the audience, and further reflections on personal, collective, and general questions of faith and its visual manifestations, the latest cycle of this work produced “Rosary in the sea”. A large-sized rosary was offered to beach visitors, floating in the sea as a place where believers could refresh themselves while practicing prayer on that important Catholic holiday. The current theme of this year’s performance was the unbearable heat, warnings from meteorological services about heatwaves, and the danger of the spread of the virus in overcrowded shrines. The Rosary in the sea - site-specific installation was made of plastic floating balls shaped like a rosary that floated in the sea, in the same place where the artist/ Lady appeared four years earlier.

Video

[youtu.be/q4hLAtQ0\\_sY](https://youtu.be/q4hLAtQ0_sY)

Ongoing project

2023

## LADY OF THE PADDLEBOARD: REVELATION



A collective prayer took place during the holiday of the Apparition of Our Lady of Paddleboard, with a large gathering of people from various faiths and backgrounds. Immediately after the prayer, a rumbling sound came from an unknown source, followed by a melodic and gentle female voice. The voice identified itself as Our Lady and delivered a loud message that echoed across the crowded beach, asking her followers to build a chapel in her honor at that same location in the near future. The appearance of Our Lady through sound was viewed as a significant event, symbolizing unity, solidarity, and the power of collective prayer at a time of growing societal division.

This revelation also highlighted the growing trend toward exclusive construction in this prime location, which is currently public and freely used by many but could soon face privatization. The call to build a chapel aims to not only honor Our Lady's request but also preserve this sacred space as a testament to faith and spiritual community for the people of Rijeka and beyond.

Video

**[youtu.be/Olj482755Z8](https://youtu.be/Olj482755Z8)**

2022

## THE PEAK



Collaboration of a group of artists: Urška Brodar, Tajči Čekada, Tina Dobnik, Meta Grčurevič, Olja Grubič, Betina Habjanič, Barbara Kukovec, Katarina Stegnar, who in 2020. used a dynamite explosion to destroy a replica of the Aljaž Tower, one of the most important monuments of Slovenian cultural heritage, and through their act emphasized the presence and growing of intolerance, nationalism, and strengthening of conservative political parties in Slovenia and other European countries. By publishing a false terrorist attack using social media platforms, they present their action as fake news, opening up a space for discussion on the current socio-political atmosphere, particularly targeting groups of citizens with opposing views and calling for dialogue. The work is multimedial and, in addition to the performative part of creating and destroying the replica, the action is documented and multiplied in various artistic performances - video, photography, performance, video installations. At the same time, accompanying events are organized within and outside the context of the work, such as forums and round tables.

Video

[youtu.be/mC\\_oZH3lho](https://youtu.be/mC_oZH3lho)

2019 – 2022

## WORKSITES

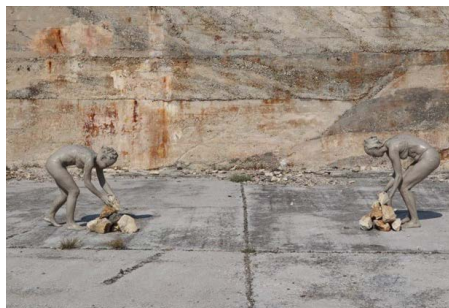
Series of performances conducted  
in collaboration with Ivana Kalc

The artistic series of performative performances called “Worksites” always focuses on the critique of the economy of labor, or questions the meaning of work within a particular context that proves to be relevant in a given space or time. The specificity of each performance is the demonstration of an action that contradicts itself and can last forever, remaining trapped in some kind of status quo, thus emphasizing the absurdity of certain aspects of human behavior. Each “Worksite” is symbolically numbered, derived from the context of the theme being addressed. In the context of choreography and performance style, each “Worksite” is based on a precisely established protocol of movement of certain work sequences that are put into a repetitive mode of movement and repeated.

Series of performances

2019

## WORKSITE 101



In 2019, the artists performed Worksite 101 on Goli otok (Bare island), which bears the name of the most infamous part of the political prison on an island Goli otok, also known as Petrova rupa (Peter's hole). The artists transformed the sequence into the work of prisoners by carrying heavy stones from one pile to another and then back again to the same pile. The one-hour performance refers to the senselessness of repetitive actions that were used as a means of psychological torture, destabilization, and maximum exhaustion of prisoners. In addition to the slow pace of work, the artists covered themselves in clay from the location, further blending into the landscape of Goli otok and becoming invisible.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/radiliste-101](https://tajcicekada.com/radiliste-101)**



Series of performances

2020

## WORKSITE 2020.



In the performance “Worksite 2020.” the artists explore the current issues facing the city of Rijeka within the conceptual framework of the Rijeka 2020 program, which focuses on the themes of work, water, and migration. The piece provides a platform for examining the workers of the factory 3.Maj and other failed industries, as well as the passage of time, which appears stagnant within the repetitive action. The performance takes place on a busy section of the Rijeka promenade, disrupting the usual daily migration patterns of the area. The piece is performed in conjunction with the opening of Rijeka 2020 European Capital of Culture, highlighting the city’s ongoing challenges within the context of its cultural programming.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/radiliste-20202](https://tajcicekada.com/radiliste-20202)**

Series of performances

2020

## WORKSITE 00



Worksite 00 deals with the topic of the circle as a symbol of eternity and infinity, but also as a symbol of closedness and isolation through movement in space. Work is never and cannot be “work for oneself” because its meaning and purpose depend on the general welfare that our work provides for others. Work is (socially) useful and (socially) responsible. The artists question the capitalist structure of the relationship between their own needs and those useful to the community.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/radiliste-00](https://tajcicekada.com/radiliste-00)**

Series of performances

2020

## WORKSITE 5000



During the closure of Rijeka 2020 (European capital of culture), the artists perform Radilište 5000 and their work takes place in the space of the Rijeka fish market. By repeating the effort of the female workers at the market, they carried huge amount of material transported daily on their hands, which during the one-hour performance amounted to half a ton of ice, pointing to the hard and invisible work of the fish market employees.”

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/radiliste-5000](http://tajcicekada.com/radiliste-5000)**

Series of performances

2020

## WORKSITE 69



Radilište 69 was held on the day of the pre-election silence, just before the parliamentary elections in Croatia took place in 2020, and thematizes the political race. The number in the title refers to the 69 political parties on the election lists, which are usually divided into red (left) and blue (right); the bipolarity that maintains the status quo of limited choice. The artists stand in their politically colored squares, applying color to each other's bodies, changing positions and colors until they end up in the identical secondary purple color.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/radiliste-69-2](http://tajcicekada.com/radiliste-69-2)**

Series of performances

2020

## WORKSITE 2



Worksite 2, as the final work of the Radilište cycle, was performed during the opening of the eponymous exhibition by the authors, where their entire opus was presented at the 90/60/90 Gallery in Zagreb. Dreaming of the idea of unity in simultaneously unstable life conditions, the authors speak of the relationships and efforts we make to maintain them. Working towards a common goal requires a series of agreements and compromises; maintaining balance becomes a necessity, while starting from opposing positions, the struggle to maintain one's own status and dominance over others still exists.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/radiliste-2](https://tajcicekada.com/radiliste-2)**

2019

## BLUSHING



In all of her works, Tajči Čekada opens up a wide range of topics, mostly of an activist nature, such as speciesism, xenophobia, ecofeminism, and at the Osijek festival, she performed a powerful interactive performance with the audience. Exploring feelings of discomfort, guilt, and shame, Čekada's performance "Blushing" began with a strong body art charge, attempting to produce redness in her face by pinching and hitting her own cheeks. Then, reaching for the blush and reddening her own cheeks, she engages with the audience, smearing blush on the cheeks of visitors' faces as an act of provoking discomfort and embarrassment due to collective immersion in consumerism and unsustainable consumption habits.

Link

**[tajcicekada.com/crvenjenje](http://tajcicekada.com/crvenjenje)**

2018

## SA O ROMA RIJEKO CITY



Sa o Roma Rijeko grade is a three-channel video installation that shows Roma women from the city of Rijeka dressed in unique traditional costumes who speak about their daily lives and reasons for moving to other countries. The video occasionally includes dance scenes accompanied by typical Roma music, interspersed with sounds of train travel. The work aims to bring Roma culture closer to a wider audience and highlights the mass migration and loss of a specific folklore. The focus is on an entire disappearing community and addresses themes such as migration, identity politics, the (im) possibility of daily rituals, social and economic integration, culture, solidarity and tolerance.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/sa-o-roma-rijeko-grade](http://tajcicekada.com/sa-o-roma-rijeko-grade)**

2017

## PLANTS LIFE IN CROATIAN PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS



A series of photographs of plants that exist in various Croatian institutions: hospitals, schools, libraries, and museums. The spaces in the photographs are devoid of human presence; unchanged for decades, they evoke memories of past times and places. The series of plant photographs is a kind of analogy for the place representation of Croatian public institutions and directly reflects the state of society through the image of the plant world. The motif of flora around which the artist builds this very suggestive photographic cycle is not accidental but based on her constant preoccupation with the relationship between humans and nature.

Link

**[tajcicekada.com/biljni-svijet-u-hrvatskim-javnim-ustanovama](http://tajcicekada.com/biljni-svijet-u-hrvatskim-javnim-ustanovama)**



2017

## ECO ECO HUMAN MILK



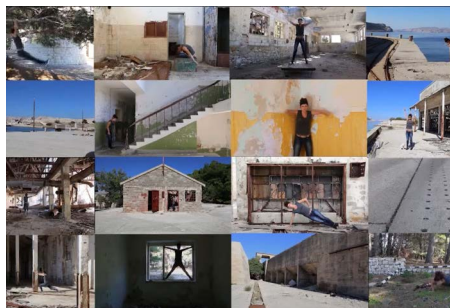
The intention behind this action was to encourage and record public reactions to the existence of products made from human milk, without promoting or advocating for their consumption. The artist's personal stance on consuming milk in adulthood, whether human or from other animals, is not relevant in the context of this action. The focus is on the discussions that arose around the stand where products made from milk donated by 13 breastfeeding mothers from Rijeka were offered. Čekada collected about 15 liters of milk from them and used it to make various products including milk, pure colostrum, spreads, cocoa, etc. She packaged them in a way similar to how the dairy industry does, with corresponding slogans and designs that promote consumption and guarantee a healthy meal, and sold them at health food fairs. The key result showed that the majority of visitors had not previously thought much about topics related to the consumption or non-consumption of milk and dairy products, to whom it is intended, or why people feel disgust towards human milk, even though it is, as the slogan emphasized, the only milk that is uniquely made for humans.

Video

[tajcicekada.com/eko-eko-ljudsko-mlijeko](http://tajcicekada.com/eko-eko-ljudsko-mlijeko)

2016

## SHOWING THE ISLAND, GOLI OTOK



The split-screen video “Goli otok showing” captures the artist Tajči Čekada’s dynamic performance as she races through the desolate landscape of this island. Dressed in athletic gear, she pushes herself to the limits, engaging in seemingly absurd physical activities that speak to the dark history of the location. Through her performance, Čekada confronts the legacy of the former communist camp, where the ancient ideal of “a sound mind in a sound body” took on a haunting, oppressive meaning. The split-screen format of the video emphasizes the contrast between the harsh, barren landscape and the defiant, energetic movement of the artist. Moreover, Čekada’s work is a pointed critique of the way in which historic spaces are often sanitized and stripped of their true meaning for the sake of tourism. By reclaiming this neglected, overlooked space and imbuing it with a new energy, she challenges us to confront the complex, sometimes painful realities of our collective past.

Video  
[youtu.be/SG7gHQxCVFI](https://youtu.be/SG7gHQxCVFI)

2015

## THE OPHELIA CASE



Tajči Čekada herself portrays the fictional character Ophelia from Shakespeare's play Hamlet and in her video reinvents the famous painting by John Everett Millais, which has become one of the most striking motifs in art history. The work explores the power of such a visual interpretation based on a literary narrative that ultimately becomes the primary visual symbol of the entire drama. In this work, the explored visual motif is presented through a combination of video and photography that blend into each other, symbolizing the eternal cycle of life and death.

Video

**[youtu.be/1SNEhFRtg3o](https://youtu.be/1SNEhFRtg3o)**

2015

## HAM AND CHEESE, KULEN AND CHEESE, JUST CHEESE



The performance was held in 2015 at the "PerforaACIJE" festival in Rijeka. It lasted for three hours during which Čekada made exactly 100 sandwiches. She decided to do this performance because, although she actively works as an artist, she sometimes had to resort to additional work, which at the time was making sandwiches for sale in several beach bars in Rijeka. By participating in the festival, in addition to a performance fee of 1500 kn, the production cost for making the sandwiches was covered. Čekada then sold the sandwiches after the performance and earned an additional 1473 kn. This means she earned 2973 kn for three hours of work. With this performance, in addition to making a decent income, Čekada wanted to draw attention to the economic difficulties that artists, especially those who only perform, are facing. In Croatia, there aren't many festivals and similar opportunities that are well-compensated, and performance art doesn't have the best reputation on the art market.

Video

[youtu.be/LDPKtat3znc](https://youtu.be/LDPKtat3znc)

2014

## F TO H



F TO H is a multi-day performance of cross-species and transgender transformation from a female human being to a male hare. The central part of the work includes a “surgical” procedure in a dental office where the artist/hare elongates their front teeth. The artist explores the idea of the dependence of humans and other living species, or even more radically, their equality, not only in a picnic with a wild boar, but also in this video performance. The transformation process involves undergoing a surgical procedure. The artist/rabbit enjoys the new identity and wants to immortalize the moment. She/he orders her/his own portrait, then hops away with a stick in hand into a snowy landscape. The work questions gender identity and invokes associations from historical and artistic imagery: when the hare finally sniffs the air in the forest, puts down the stick and hops uncertainly and then very deftly, the artist/hare reminds us of Joseph Beuys’ explanation of pictures to a dead rabbit as well as the famous portrait of a rabbit by Albrecht Dürer.

Video

[youtu.be/QcuHNntLQBg](https://youtu.be/QcuHNntLQBg)

2014

## WHAT IS PERFORMANCE ART AND WHAT DO PERFORMERS ACTUALLY DO?



This is a performance made from a discussion about the meaning of performance art taken from the forum.hr portal. It serves as a script for the performance of the same name in which 21 people participate, each representing a forum member. The assumption is that the group of people who are discussing performance art on the forum by denying it as an art form represents the opinion of a large part of the population, and therefore also the majority of passers-by who found themselves at the Rijeka performance. By adopting the discourse of denial and ridicule of performance art, it becomes part of defining this medium as an equal artistic discipline, an attempt to bring together and merge the opinions of the majority with what performance art actually is.

Video  
[youtu.be/DvQdtw2xOjg](https://youtu.be/DvQdtw2xOjg)

2013

## THE PICNIC



This performance is full of allegories and symbolism and alludes to Lewis Carroll's novel "Alice in Wonderland," in which Alice meets a piglet that is actually a child. Through her artistic reinterpretation of this encounter, Tajči gives us an opportunity to reflect on the connection between humans and animals and the nature of each individual's identity. She also invites us to think about a holistic vision of the world that emphasizes the interconnection of all things and beings, as well as the importance of nature and its harmony. Through the encounter with a wild boar, Tajči leads us into a world of imagination and symbolism, where the boundaries between reality and fiction merge and allow us to see the world in a new and different way. The wild boar is not really wild but tamed and dressed in white clothes. The artist, on the other hand, rejects human characteristics and becomes a snail. Through the costumed transformation of the pig, we recognize that this is a paraphrase of Alice's encounter with the piglet from Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland." Through her artistic reinterpretation of this encounter, Tajči gives us an opportunity to reflect on the connection between humans and animals and the nature of individual identity.

Video

[youtu.be/kRCHfpzdkrM](https://youtu.be/kRCHfpzdkrM)

2013

## SELF-PORTRAITS



This performance humorously comments on the process of artistic creation. The series of photographs shown in the performance communicates with the viewer on a level that is different from the experience of viewing without the context of the accompanying video. Knowledge of the creation process can significantly influence the interpretation and perception of a work of art. This work emphasizes the impact that this knowledge has on the viewer's experience. As the viewer gains a deeper understanding of the origins of the work, their interpretation of the artwork changes, ultimately changing the atmosphere, emotion, and attitude of the viewer towards the piece. This demonstrates the dynamic nature of art and the inherent complexity of the relationship between the artist, the artwork, and the viewer. This entertaining suggestion highlights the connection of everything and reminds us that every decision, moment, and gesture that leads to the creation of a work of art is part of a much larger story. The performance thus becomes not only a work of art but also an opportunity to explore the artistic process and the wider context in which the work was created.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/autoportreti](http://tajcicekada.com/autoportreti)**



2012

## POST MORTEM HIGH FASHION



In the performance and ambient installation "Post mortem high fashion", Tajči Čekada aims to transcend the contradictions between fundamental artistic and fashion assumptions and ambitions, exploring the opposition between the eternal and transient nature of beauty and fashion. Through her work, she challenges the concept of fashion as a temporal and secular concept, different from the enduring value of art. Ultimately, she encourages us to analyze our own understanding of beauty, fashion, and art, and their place in our lives.

Video

[youtu.be/bmP38pU7kG8](https://youtu.be/bmP38pU7kG8)

2007

## FUNERAL DRESSES AND URNS



The exhibition/performance “Funeral dresses and Urns” is a work in which funeral rituals and our comprehension of death is explored. Using five funeral dresses and five ceramic urns, Elda Čekada and Tajči Čekada examine the perception of death in contemporary society. They approach the topic multidisciplinary by offering visitors several different variations of presentation. In addition to the urns, the dresses are presented by women lying around motionless in a funeral like appearance, while sometimes she arranges them as installations on walls. The “Funeral dresses and Urns” exhibition opens up the possibility of artistic discourse on death, burial, and especially on traditional absurdities related to funeral rituals deeply rooted in our culture. As such, it provides an exciting and provocative perspective of this important process.

Video

**[tajcicekada.com/posmrtna-odijela-i-urne](http://tajcicekada.com/posmrtna-odijela-i-urne)**

2006

## MARS



This performance involves three people: Elda Čekada, Krešo Kovačiček, and Tajči Čekada. Elda covers the performers with liquid clay, after which they remain rooted and immobile for an extended period while watching TV. The performance explores the theme of global warming and the idea of leaving Earth as the only way to survive. The use of clay creates a connection with the Earth, emphasizing the urgent need to protect and preserve the planet from the effects of climate change. By including Elda's role, the performance takes on a collaborative and communal aspect, highlighting the importance of collective action in addressing ecological problems. The performers' immobility and TV watching suggest a sense of waiting or anticipation, while the main theme of leaving Earth for Mars evokes hope but also an uncertain future. Overall, this performance encourages us to reflect on our impact on the planet and its possible future, and to consider the urgent need for action in the fight against global ecological challenges.

Video

**[youtu.be/Addl4BbwJDc](https://youtu.be/Addl4BbwJDc)**

## Portfolio



**[www.tajcicekada.com](http://www.tajcicekada.com)**  
**[tajcicekada@yahoo.com](mailto:tajcicekada@yahoo.com)**  
**+385 (0)91 72 67 888**