



OFFICIAL SELECTION  
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TORONTO INTERNATIONAL  
FILM FESTIVAL 2017



THE  
*Druga strana svega*  
OTHER SIDE  
OF EVERYTHING

A door locked  
for 70 years  
in a house haunted  
by history.

A POLITICAL GHOST STORY



## THE OTHER SIDE OF EVERYTHING

a political ghost story

*A door locked for 70 years in a house haunted by history.*

Written, Filmed and Directed by Mila Turajlić

Produced by Carine Chichkowsky and Mila Turajlić

HBO Europe presents a DRIBBLING PICTURES production in co- production with SURVIVANCE in association with ARTE-WDR, with the support of the SERBIAN FILM CENTER, AIDE AUX CINÉMAS DU MONDE, EURIMAGES, DOHA FILM INSTITUTE

RUNTIME: 104 min | COUNTRY: Serbia, France, Qatar | 2017 | LANGUAGE: Serbian



**WINNER OF THE IDFA AWARD FOR BEST FEATURE-LENGTH DOCUMENTARY**

Production company/Sales: DRIBBLING PICTURES

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## LOGLINE

A door locked for 70 years in a house haunted by history.

## SYNOPSIS

*"If I really am a Freedom Fighter, the freedom I have won is the worst failure of my life" -- Srbijanka Turajlić (my mother)*

A locked door inside a Belgrade apartment has kept one family separated from their past for over 70 years. As the filmmaker begins an intimate conversation with her mother, the political fault line running through their home reveals a house and a country haunted by history. The chronicle of a family in Serbia turns into a searing portrait of an activist in times of great turmoil, questioning the responsibility of each generation to fight for their future.



## THE FILM

THE OTHER SIDE OF EVERYTHING takes us into the setting of a family home, using the interior space and internal life of its inhabitants as a way to shed new light on external events. The backbone of the film are my conversations with my mother, and though I am not visible in the frame my voice and my questions are very much a counter-balance to her. It is a dialogue between a mother and daughter, but at the same time between two adults, each at a different stage in her life. My mother, a professor of electrical engineering, became a public figure as a critical voice against the regime of Slobodan Milošević during the civil wars of the 1990s. She was an active member of the Resistance movement, and was fired from Belgrade University for her outspokenness. After the revolution that overthrew the Milošević regime she became a junior minister in the first democratic government. I spent my childhood following her to political rallies and studied political science in the belief that I would be as engaged as she was in fighting for the future of my country. Watching the failure of the democratic transition I lost all faith in political engagement, and decided to leave the country.

As our conversation evolves, there are disagreements, different memories of events, things she would prefer I didn't ask. Rather than filming sit-down interviews, I talk to her while she is doing household tasks, going beyond the persona of the activist to reveal a homemaker and mother, making a cake, or cleaning the family silver. The camera lingers over these family heirlooms, objects handed down through generations, and the material heritage transcends to be a story of moral heritage.

The apartment becomes a character in its own right, as the political invades this personal space. My great-grandfather built the building we live in in the 1920s, when he was the Minister of Justice of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. In the aftermath of the Second World War the communists nationalised the house. They divided our apartment into living space for 4 families, and locked a set of doors in the living room. 70 years later, those doors remain locked, making my childhood home a veritable political front line, literally marking the divisions of Serbia. I choose to focus on this space, through the changing of the seasons, family celebrations of holidays, gathering small individual stories of domestic joy and tragedy from which the history of a nation will emerge.

To contrast with this 'inner view', I have filmed from the apartment windows for almost 10 years. Our house stands in the political nerve center of Belgrade - across the street are the Ministry of Defence that was bombed in 1999, the Supreme Court and the British Embassy. I have filmed protests in front of the court, people standing in line in from the the for visas, police cordons and people arguing and these small glimpses of street life provide an insight into events taking place in Serbia today.

The past is reconstructed with archival flashbacks from moments my mother remembers, offering a personal commentary on seven decades of turbulent history. In particular the archive of the Balkan wars from the 90ties is potent and powerfully disturbing, and the film uses it sparingly. Instead it turns its focus on the voices of reason that went unheard. The archives highlight that at every stage in the rise of nationalism, the break-out of war, the brutal crackdown of the regime, and even during the euphoria of the revolution, there were voices of reason, people who spoke up, which were drowned out in the hysteria. In tracing the forgotten story of the non-acceptance during the Milošević years, the archival research delved into personal VHS collections, salvaging images that have been disappeared since.

Through my mother's observations, the daily comings-and-goings in the apartment, and footage of life taking place in the streets as seen from the windows, with contrasting use of archive of 'official' TV reports, we enter a Serbia rarely ever seen in the media, where people are frank about their lives and are trying to create an identity beyond that of political divisions. In showing the lived truths of those whose personal lives have been shaped by political events, the 'other side of everything' emerges, a story in which everyone is at the mercy of the great tides of history, and yet has the power to take their destiny in their own hands.

A challenge for the next generation.



My grandmother in front of the locked doors, 1946

## DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was born in 1979, a year old when Tito died and was 11 years old when Milosevic came to power, 12 when the war in the former Yugoslavia started, 16 when it finished, 20 when NATO bombed us, 21 when we finally got rid of Milosevic, 24 when our Prime Minister was assassinated, and today at the ripe old age of 37, I want to speak of my country, from a very personal angle, and from a very precise point of departure - the place where I live.

Why from there? Because I have been privileged to grow up observing Serbia through the beliefs and actions of a woman who thought it her responsibility to speak up about things that were happening in it. Because my mother and I have always shared this language of politics - she was a student leader in 1968, and so was I in the 90-ties. Because my family home was the gathering place for intellectual discussions, activist meetings and often just refuge from the madness taking place outside. Because this home is in the center of Belgrade and the things happening in Serbia today. Because the more I stare at the locked doors in our living room that I have been faced with all my life, the more I realise how much about Serbia can be understood by talking about divided spaces. Between those seeking to rewrite the past, and those attempting to acknowledge it. And a way of understanding my mother's life is her attempts at bridging this divide.

As I grew, I have come to feel that the personal impulse to act is inspired less by lofty ideals of freedom, justice and equality, and more from the small things we personally hold dear - we act to protect the fabric of our life, the family that gathers on Christmas Eve, the neighbors we grew up with, the trees in front of our house, the roots that connect us.

As a public, we usually have external access to stories of political struggle. Activism takes place in public spaces, and it is a group experience of street demonstrations and inspiring speeches. Having grown up as the daughter of a very visible political activist and professor, I needed to make a film about this experience, but I wanted to build it around a private dialogue. And to get to the heart of civic activism, of engagement as an intimate act, a personal reckoning we each make with ourselves when choosing how to live our lives.

- Mila Turajlić

## SELECTION FROM PRESS REVIEWS

### SEVENTH ROW

*Top 20 acquisition films at TIFF, Sept 14, 2017*

It's a vivid and nuanced portrait of a country too often judged from the outside, still divided by what happened, and conscious of the fact that there can be no easy solutions. – Elena Lazic

### CINEUROPA

**The Other Side of Everything: A perfect cross between personal and political by VLADAN PETKOVIC, 20/11/2017**

The Other Side of Everything is a multi-layered work by a thoroughly precise and dedicated filmmaker who is nothing less than perfect at balancing facts, ideas and emotions, and has an uncanny sense of dynamics, even managing to create moments of pure poetry.

### HIGH ON FILMS

**Tiff review by Arun Kumar, September 12, 2017**

The remarkably layered documentary "The Other Side of Everything" examines Serbia's political past and present by chronicling Srbijanka Turajlic's vast, first-hand experiences...The result is a gently probing documentary on Serbia's history, in relation to the themes of memory and time... the fascinating aspect of the documentary is how Mila Turajlic meditates and gains access to the locked doors of the past.

### INDEPENDENT MAGAZINE

**Making No Truth Claims: Historical Complexity in Mila Turajlic's The Other Side of Everything by Courtney Sheehan, Oct 9, 2017**

Turajlic's film captures Srbijanka's profoundly powerful presence, presenting a stirring portrait of one of the most galvanizing voices for political action in contemporary documentary cinema.

### HOLLYWOOD REPORTER

**The Other Side of Everything' ('Druga strana svega'): Film Review | IDFA 2017, 11/26/2017 by Neil Young**

Accessible, informative and wryly humorous, the film uses Srbijanka's tastefully decorated residence as a prism through which to view the woman, her turbulent times and the complicated history of the former Yugoslavia.

## INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR

### TIFF '17: Mila Turajlic goes behind closed doors in “The Other Side of Everything”

#### What was the genesis for the film?

The genesis came out of the blue one time when I was telling someone about our family home, describing the way we've been living with these invisible neighbors since the Second World War. When I was a child I had seen nothing strange in that. I had reached my late twenties at this point, and bizarrely it was the first time it struck me that it was actually a highly unusual situation, one that offered an interesting prism through which to understand my country.

I also realized that the context I had grown up in, this political salon that my grandparents had created in our house, and my parents had continued, had always provided me with this privileged viewpoint on understanding this whirlwind of major events that were breaking over our heads.

#### What was it like for you to interview your own mother as she, in many ways, is the subject of the documentary?

My biggest problem was that my mother is so used to journalists and giving speeches, and to lecturing, as she has been a professor all her life, that I needed to find the right way to break through those essentially protective modes of communication, to find the true intimate tone of our conversation.

It helps that at the start of the film I didn't see her as the subject — for me it was the apartment and she was its caretaker. Over time I began to realize that the questions I am posing to her have their place in the dramaturgy — that we are essentially developing this mother-daughter dialogue that stands in for one generation confronting another. But I have to confess that I took advantage of the fact that as a mother, she basically did this as a favor to me as her daughter, and that she couldn't say no to me.

#### Did you have any production challenges?

It's a strange mode to spend the better part of three years in, when your home is essentially your shooting location. Everything is a potential scene. Every time the door rings, every phone call, every time there's a noise outside the window, you have to be alert because it could be interesting.

It was like being in this heightened combat mode while doing everyday things. The camera always had to be nearby, charged and ready, and my mind always had to be also thinking dramaturgically. The toughest was filming the group scenes — these people are guests in our house. I have known most since my birth. They have come for a relaxed evening, definitely not with the intention of being scrutinized by a camera. Becoming an accepted presence in their midst with my camera took a lot of time.

Another major challenge was reassembling the archives of the 90s, particularly those of the protests and resistance against Milošević. During that era, only private independent TV stations and some cameramen filmed what was going on (state television didn't cover that) and every now and then the police would break into their offices and confiscate their tapes. And they are gone. So it was a question of finding people who are still guarding some of that stuff in their basements. Which effectively means that the images of resistance in Serbia are gone.

#### Were you ever afraid for your safety or the crews while shooting with protests taking place?

The police rang on the door once when I was filming their barricades from the window, threatening to come into the house and confiscate my equipment if I didn't hand over my material. And there was the night when the hooligans I was filming spotted me and I heard them come into the building — it was a little bit unsettling. It's a case of 'we know where you live'. But on the whole, it wasn't any more dangerous than being on the streets in the protests in the 90s.

#### Do you have any concerns about the political nature of the film and how this could impact you on future projects?

Perhaps. But I would be betraying my mother, her attitude, and the entire point of this film if I thought about that.

#### You've touched upon your roots in your past doc *Cinema Komunisto*. Does *The Other Side of Everything* represent a continuation of themes from your first film or does it break away from those themes?

I'm sure that in some way this is a continuation of dealing with the trauma of growing up in a country that in breaking apart, lost its ability to narrate itself.

But I guess with this film I am trying to come at that problem, or that need within me, from a completely different angle. *Cinema Komunisto* felt like a more epic 'voice' whereas here I was aiming for something more poetic and intimate. At the same time politically, they are told from different view points — with this film telling in some ways 'the other side' of communism.

But I feel that it is only in telling stories in this way with a more complex, multi-dimensional understanding, with nothing being simple or easy, that we actually approach what was the real lived experience.





### How did you get funding for *The Other Side*?

The process of funding this film was essentially pure, pure luck in meeting the right people who I could lean on. They fundamentally understood the film I was trying to make and, every time I lost that vision they would help me find it, and had the patience to support a process that ended up lasting five years.

There were several times during the fundraising stage where we chose to walk away from certain types of financing because the conditions the money was attached to weren't aligned with the creative vision of the film. I was lucky in that Carine Chichkowsky, who I met through the Eurodoc program, produced the film with me and really fought for finding the right creative collaborators and the maximum editing time, which is what this film needed.

We started off winning support from our national film funds (the Serbian Film Center, and Aide aux cinémas du monde in France) which allowed us to apply to Eurimages, and then the Doha Film Institute came on board.

We were supremely lucky to have a champion in Hanka Kastelicova, who took the project with her to HBO Europe and would fly to join us in the editing room every time we needed feedback and her perspective. Sabine Rollberg, who took the project for ARTE-WDR also intuitively understood it, and that's where I feel so lucky — we all shared the same vision for the film.

### Who is the target audience for this film?

I think this is a film for people who remember a lot of Yugoslavia and its breakup and who would think "Oh, I never saw this story from that side" or "it was never told like this in the Western media."

But I'm actually most amazed with the reactions of the youngest people who've seen the film, who are around 22 years old. They had a very emotional reaction to the film, and it was because of this confrontation at the end, where I tell my mother I want to leave the country, and when she stares me down asking if I have it in me to speak up, because someone in our generation will have to take on that role. They told me it made them confront how much they personally invest in fighting for their future.

### What do you want audiences to take away from *The Other Side of Everything*?

I guess exactly that — a space for an inner reflection on what their parents and grandparents had to fight for, what each one of us has done in our life, how much we switch off or choose to engage, and what are the consequences — not only for our communities but for our ability to look ourselves in the mirror.

by Selina Chignall

September 14, 2017 [realscreen.com](https://realscreen.com)

## ABOUT THE TEAM

### Mila Turajlic DIRECTOR & PRODUCER

Mila Turajlic is a documentary filmmaker from Belgrade, Serbia, whose film CINEMA KOMUNISTO premiered at IDFA and the Tribeca Film Festival, and went on to win 15 awards including top prize at the Chicago Int'l Film Festival in 2011, and the FOCAL Award for Creative Use of Archival Footage. After obtaining a degree in politics and international relations at the London School of Economics, Mila left her activities in student debate and activism in the belief that art would always be more subversive than politics. She specialised in documentary filmmaking at La Fémis in Paris and gained experience on series for Discovery and ARTE, as well as fiction films (APOCALYPTO dir. Mel Gibson, BROTHERS BLOOM dir. Rian Johnson). She is an alumni of EURODOC, Berlin Talent Campus, Discovery Campus, and teaches at Archidoc and the Balkan Documentary Center. Mila produces the "Magnificent 7 Festival of European Documentary Films" in Belgrade since 2005, and is a founder and first president of DokSerbia, the association of Serbian documentary filmmakers.



[www.dissimila.rs](http://www.dissimila.rs)

#### FILMOGRAPHY:

CINEMA KOMUNISTO (2011)

THE OTHER SIDE OF EVERYTHING (2017)

THE LABUDOVIĆ REELS (in production)

### Carine Chichkowsky PRODUCER

After a career in sales and marketing in machinery industry in Canada, Carine Chichkowsky decided to work for her passion, cinema and documentary films. She went on to be production manager for several companies producing short movies, videoclip and documentaries for almost ten years. Since 2009, she followed for the Films de la Villa the production and distribution of MAFROUZA, a monumental documentary cycle of 5X150', Golden Leopard in Locarno Film Festival. Together with Guillaume Morel, in 2010 she founded Survivance, an independent production and distribution company. She graduated in 1996 with a double Master Degree in Business and Administration from Laval University in Quebec and from the Grenoble Business School. In 2008, she graduated with a Master Degree in documentary cinema from Paris 7 University. She is an alumni of EURODOC and is currently completing EAVE.



[www.survivance.net](http://www.survivance.net)



### DRIBBLING PICTURES Belgrade, Serbia

Dribbling Pictures is a Belgrade-based production company exclusively devoted to producing creative documentaries that are best described, using a football analogy, as a 'dribbling of the mind'. It was founded in 2006 by filmmakers Boris Mitic and Mila Turajlic. Our projects have always been oriented towards international audiences and have been developed through international production platforms (Discovery Campus Masterschool, IDFA Academy, Ex Oriente, ARCHIDOC). Our films have toured most prestigious international film festivals (IDFA, Tribeca, HotDocs, DocsLisboa, Visions du Reel, Goteborg, Sarajevo etc.) and had cinema releases in France, UK, Italy, Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.

TV partners include Arte, HBO Europe, MDR, WDR, BR, Pheonix, SVT, UR, YLE, YLE FST, RTS, RTSI, RAI 3, TV3, TVP, TV Kultura, Sky Arts, ERT, ERR, LTV, IBA Channel 1, Yes Docu, CYBC, RTV SLO, RTRS, BHT, HRT, B92, Eurochannel and Al Jazeera, with major funding received from Eurimages, Cinéma du monde, Doha Film Institute, the IDFA Bertha Fund, the Croatian Audiovisual Center and the Serbian Film Center.

Boris's most recent film IN PRAISE OF NOTHING (narrated by Iggy Pop) premiered at the Locarno Film Festival in 2017, while Mila, is in production on THE LABUDOVIĆ REELS, a documentary film about the Non-Aligned Movement, narrated by President Tito's cameraman.

More information on our website: [www.dribblingpictures.com](http://www.dribblingpictures.com)

## CREDITS

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MILA TURAJLIĆ

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Performed by	JOSIPA LISAC IX festival vojničkih pjesama '70 Music and Lyrics by – Branko Karakaš Conductor – Budimir Gajić, Kapetan I klase Orchestra Revijski Orkestar Umetničkog Ansambla JNA

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Violin by	CHRISTELLE LASSORT
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The tenants of Birčaninova 20a

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The Matić family

The Čolić family

The members of the Yugoslav team  
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