

ARTISTIC DOSSIER
**NON-ALIGNED NEWSREELS –
VOICES FROM THE DEBRIS**
MILA TURAJLIĆ



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NON-ALIGNED NEWSREELS – VOICES FROM THE DEBRIS MILA TURAJLIĆ

Decolonisation, liberation movements, non-aligned: Yugoslav filmmaker and artist Mila Turajlić delves into unreleased film archives to trace the birth of the Third World project and explore its political imaginary.

Mila Turajlić spent years exploring the filmed archives of the Yugoslav Newsreels, working with Stevan Labudović, Yugoslav President Tito's cameraman, who filmed Tito's travels in Africa and Asia during the tumultuous time of the birth of the Non-Aligned Movement. Mila Turajlić invites the audience to immerse themselves in these long-forgotten and previously unseen images, examining the roll they played in an epic visual battle through which cinema gave a voice to a decolonising world.

On stage, Mila Turajlić engages in live video editing (VJing), creating real-time montages from these images. As she layers these resurfaced images with oral histories, sound recordings, and personal archives, she takes on the challenge of giving a voice to these political projects. The live excavation opens up a space where, together with the audience, they explore the poetry of fragments.



© Non-aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels

Text, direction and performance
MILA TURAJLIĆ
Artistic direction
BARBARA MATIJEVIĆ

Live documentary, duration 1h
Production: Par Avion; Théâtre National
de Bretagne, Centre Dramatique National
(Rennes).



TOUR 2025/2026

Lugano, Festival International de Théâtre (CH)
05 10 2025

Bruxelles, Théâtre National Wallonie-Bruxelles /
Festival des Libertés (BE)
13 10 2025

Münich, Festival Spielart (DE)
18 10 2025

Leipzig, Festival EuroScènes (DE)
07 11 – 08 11 2025

Florence, Festival Lo Schermo dell'arte (IT)
13 11 2025

Angers, Le Quai – CDN (FR)
19 11 – 20 11 2025

Teatro Municipal do Porto (PT)
20 02 – 21 02 2026

Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne (CH)
24 02 – 28 02 2026

Paris, Théâtre de la Bastille (FR)
09 04 – 16 04 2026

Metz, Festival Passages (FR)
26 05 2026

Villeneuve d'Ascq, la rose des vents /
Festival Latitudes Contemporaines (FR)
05 06 – 06 06 2026

THE LABUDOVIĆ REELS

In Belgrade, the former capital of Yugoslavia, shelves of unmarked reels contain an untold story. They overflow with forgotten images of popular jubilation, political summits, and even anti-colonial armed struggles. Mila Turajlić unearths them one by one and meets their maker: Stevan Labudović. Starting in 1954, from Belgrade to Algiers via New York, this passionate cameraman captured on film the anti-imperialist struggles and opposition to a bipolar world, split between East and West, on behalf of Tito and for Yugoslav audiences.

His images tell the story of the emergence of the "Third World" on the international stage and a political utopia: the non-aligned movement. It was a time when people believed cinema could write history. The first phase of Mila Turajlić's project involved producing a two-part documentary: *Non-Aligned: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* and *Ciné-Guerrillas: Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022). The project has since been presented in various forms: video installations, silent screening workshops, live performances. This evolving research process is documented and made accessible to the public via the platform nonalignednewsreels.com



WORKSHOP CALL FOR PARTICIPATION

Ahead of the performance, a workshop led by Mila Turajlić with the public is possible. It extends the performance gesture, inviting participants to work in the artist's style: engaging with the images, reacting and telling stories. The results of this workshop are integrated into Mila Turajlić's final performance, completing the process by allowing a group to bring its own voice to the images and make it visible.

Since these archive images were shot across Africa and Asia during their struggles for decolonisation and their emergence on the global stage, the workshop primarily targets diasporic communities in the cities where the performance will take place. The workshop can be imagined in collaboration with theatres or institutions working with these communities (Algeria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Tanzania, Mozambique, India, Indonesia, and of course Yugoslavia). During the workshop, each participant sits in front of a screen, watching archives selected by the filmmaker, and is invited to create a live commentary in reaction to the images. History is no longer silent but reactivated in the present, through the words of those who bear witness. The goal is to gather people of all ages, thus blending intimate family stories with larger historical narratives.

INTERVIEW WITH MILA TURAJLIĆ

The Serbian filmmaker Mila Turajlić shares her approach to exploring archives to talk about decolonisation, its history, and its storytelling.

In your view, what is an archive?

An archive is memory, identity. It's the vector of a thought. In my country, there's a desire to erase history. Streets are renamed, buildings demolished... For me, working with archives is an act of resistance against erasure. My work creates an archive that will, I hope, allow my generation and future ones to know our stories themselves.

Why are Stevan Labudović's archive images special?

Because they float in history. Yugoslavia no longer exists. Socialism no longer exists. They are doubly orphaned, both ideologically and politically. They've become disoriented, much like the Yugoslav people after the disintegration of the country.

Why were these images of the Algerian War filmed?

At the time, the goal was to create a documentary about the National Liberation Army to show internationally, especially at the UN, as part of a diplomatic and political struggle for the non-aligned. It was also meant to document how the struggle was organized and to study guerrilla techniques.

Propaganda work?

Counter-propaganda. Stevan Labudović saw himself as a soldier in a war of images. For my part, I aimed to question the very status of this image, created as a tool of political struggle.

Can you describe your relationship with Stevan Labudović?

I found myself in an extraordinary situation: working with filmed archives alongside the man who filmed them. Without him, it would be very difficult to interpret these orphaned images. He also gave me access to an intimate and personal dimension of the Algerian war. So, I was able to look at these archives through the eyes and commitment of the man behind the camera.

What issues guided your work? What would history have erased?

My work doesn't take sides. By focusing on the political and militant ideology of the non-aligned countries, I primarily tried to understand how, like them, we can search for a third way. To open a critical space between two positions to find an independent stance.

— Interview conducted by Francis Cossu,
July 2023



Biennale de Charjah, 2025



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MEMORY IN THE FLESH

Serbian documentarian Mila Turajlić brings to light the missing images of non-aligned countries through archival footage.

It's a way to reconstruct a collective memory, contemplate a common identity, and spark debate. Archives are highly political objects. But one must have access to them, assimilate, and interpret them. Mila Turajlić dedicates her energy to this task.

"After the breakup of Yugoslavia, one of the nationalist president Slobodan Milošević's goals was to erase our collective memory. Everything disappeared: the names of streets, schools, monuments, the history taught to children..." she explains. Thus, her vocation was born: exhumation as a calling. The strength of her commitment is undoubtedly tied to her mother, Srbijanka Turajlić, a mathematics professor at the university, tireless activist, and pro-democracy figure during and after the Milošević years. She owes the precision of her language, in part, to Agnès Varda. "When I discovered *The Gleaners and I*, it was a shock," she recalls. "I realized that politics and intimacy could blend in a very original way."

Her three films—*Cinema Komunisto* (2010), *The Other Side of Everything* (2017), and the diptych *Scenes from the Labudović Reels* (2022-2023)—plunge us into the history of Yugoslavia, a communist country that broke ties with the USSR, a state that used cinema to shape its identity, and one of the driving forces behind the Non-Aligned Movement. These nations refused to depend on the world's superpowers and fought against imperialism and colonialism. In her installation *Giving Voice to the Non-Aligned Archives*, people who have lost their collective memory are shown discovering the footage filmed by Stevan Labudović, an indefatigable field cameraman. Mila Turajlić films their reactions, and we hear their comments. Finally, the past begins to speak.

— Les Inrocks, Igor Hansen-Løve (2023)

MILA TURAJLIĆ CREATOR

Born in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, Mila Turajlić is a filmmaker and artist. Initially drawn to a career in political activism, she later pivoted towards artistic practice as a more subversive and effective form of engagement. From then on she chose the path of documentary filmmaking as a gesture of restoring forgotten stories. Her works are built on a combination of oral histories, cinematic archives, and found footage to create a new language that confronts memory and ruins with the vanishing narratives of History.

In 2010, she directed *Cinema Komunisto* (winner of 16 awards, including the FOCAL Award for Creative Use of Archival Footage), *The Other Side of Everything* in 2017 (winner of 33 awards, including the IDFA Award for Best Feature Documentary), and then the diptych *Scenes from the Labudović Reels (Non-Aligned & Cine-Guerillas)* in 2022 – an archival road trip exploring the birth of the Third World project.

THE NON- ALIGNED MOVEMENT

Founded in 1961 at the Belgrade Conference, continuing the spirit and repetition cut of the Bandung Conference of 1955, the Non-Aligned Movement brought together countries that did not wish to align with the East-West confrontation. Instead, they sought to promote the real independence of Southern nations in the context of decolonisation. 25 countries from Asia, Africa, and the Middle East participated in its creation, alongside Yugoslavia. By 2016, 120 countries were members. While its political influence has diminished since the end of the Cold War, this movement continues to play a significant role. New movements, following the wake of anti-globalisation movements, draw inspiration from the principles and struggles it embodied to advocate a form of globalisation that is more aligned with the interests of the Global South.

Source: Le Monde diplomatique



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