THE WALKING SOCIETY

S/S 2023 — Issue N° 14

Krk

KRK

WALKING means travelling—moving from one place to another. Advancing, exploring, and innovating. The Walking Society is a virtual community open to everyone from all social, cultural, economic, and geographical backgrounds. Individually and collectively, TWS champions imagination and energy, offering valuable ideas and solutions to better the world. Simply and honestly.

CAMPER means 'peasant' in Mallorquin. Our brand values and aesthetics are influenced by the simplicity of the rural world combined with the history, culture, and landscape of the Mediterranean. Our respect for the arts, tradition, and craftsmanship anchors our promise to deliver original and functional high-quality products with aesthetic appeal and an innovative spirit. We seek a more human approach to doing business, striving to promote cultural diversity while preserving local heritage.

KRK KRK is a large Croatian island in the northernmost part of the Mediterranean. Torn between the sea and Central Europe, this year-round destination has an otherworldly landscape formed of forests, rocks, and karst gorges.

THE WALKING SOCIETY The fourteenth issue of *The Walking Society* crosses Krk Bridge to discover that not all islands are the same and that each is a world unto itself.

WALK, DON'T RUN.

The Mediterranean is many seas in one. Each coast has its own personality, language, architecture, and personal relationship with the sea. Everything changes, from the vegetation and topography to the behaviour of its people. They either resist the rocks and mountains and waves and beaches or shape them. Or perhaps exclude them, or ingeniously exploit them to their advantage.

Krk is part of the Kvarner Gulf and one of the largest islands in the Adriatic Sea. It is irregular in shape and dotted with small inlets and bays. The "bora" blows here, a wind unrivalled in power, and these coastal formations have always provided vital shelter.

In summer, Krk is a tourist paradise and the bays become a refuge for pleasure seekers, packed with skiffs, yachts with furled sails, and boats carrying groups of holidaymakers. The water is transparent, almost green. Local fishermen have to work even harder than usual because grilled fish is a popular delicacy. Beaches are surrounded by coniferous groves, giving the landscape a northerly feel, which is fitting because, for a long time, this part of the Mediterranean was the Austro-Hungarian Empire's only maritime outlet. Some tell-tale signs of that Nordic character, a little inclined to chaotic southern hedonism, can still be seen today. Krk may be seafaring, but it is also tidy, austere, and well-protected from the threats of the sea thanks to perfectly preserved Venetian walls around the island's main town, which also takes its name.

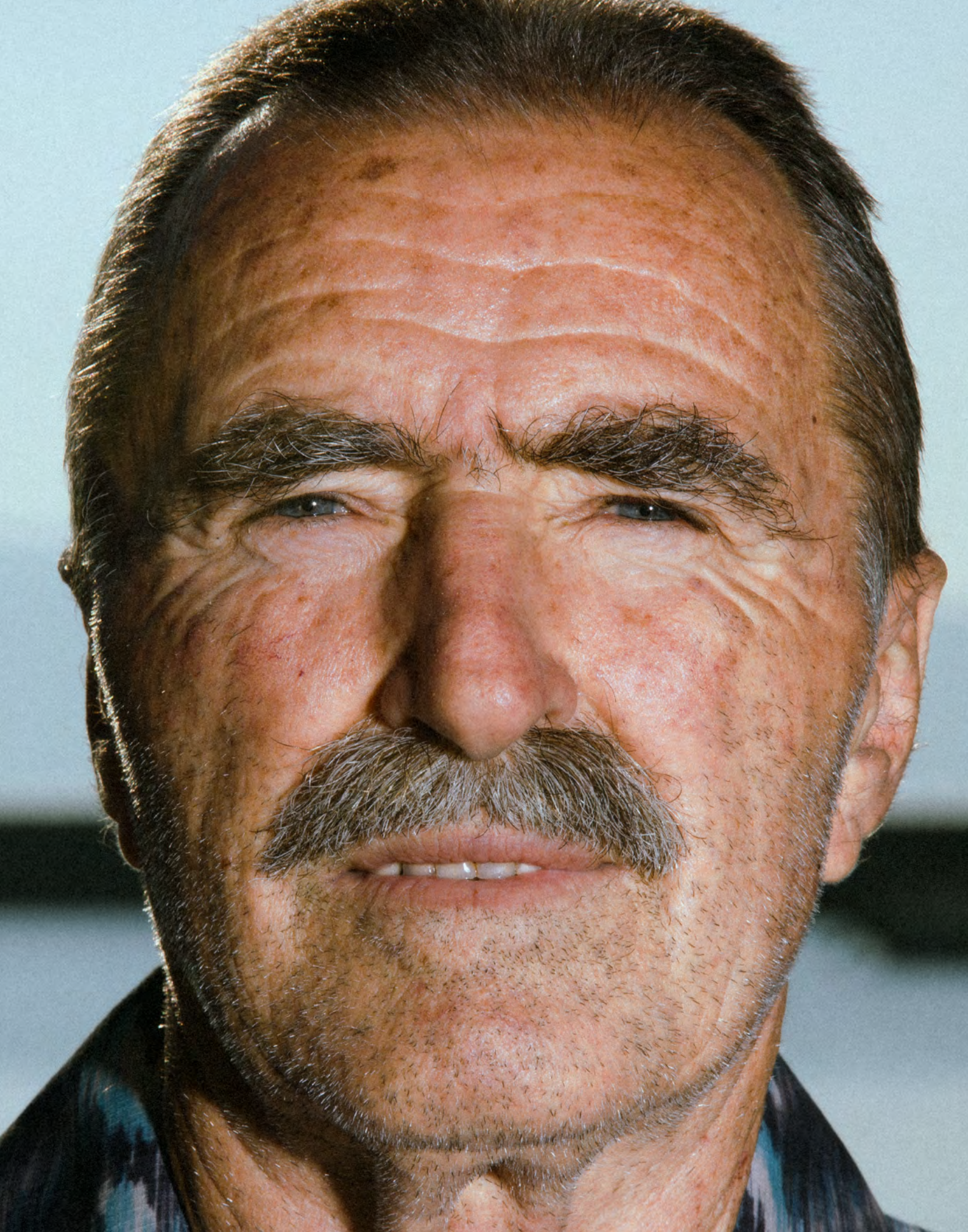
According to some people on the island, there is a word in the Croatian language that indicates a state of extreme relaxation and a disregard for problems or chores, all typical of Mediterranean culture. That word is *pomalo*. But Krk, it seems, does not fully embrace the *pomalo* spirit. On the contrary, it is an industrious island, up at first light to prepare the restaurants and bars for the visitors who flood in every summer, and meticulous about keeping its stone avenues tidy and beaches clean. Outside the inhabited towns, olive trees dominate the island's hills. Olive oil production is a centuries-old tradition that remains an important economic and cultural practice today.

Looking around from the hills that gradually rise from the coast, you can see the sea, but equally a lot of land: this island has not forgotten the mainland, nor will it be forgotten. Continental Europe is almost constantly in sight, just a few kilometres away and then there are the other islands, Plavnik, Prvić, and the great Cres running almost parallel to the Croatian mainland. The horizon is dotted with small white boats for tourism or fishing and almost entirely devoid of the huge container ships that move goods around the westernmost Mediterranean. There are no ports here; there is no traffic. It is a cul-de-sac. And to come and go, from Rijeka to Krk and back again, everyone has to cross a single bridge.

Drift Trail S/S 2023

Dina S/S 2023

Brutus Sandal S/S 2023

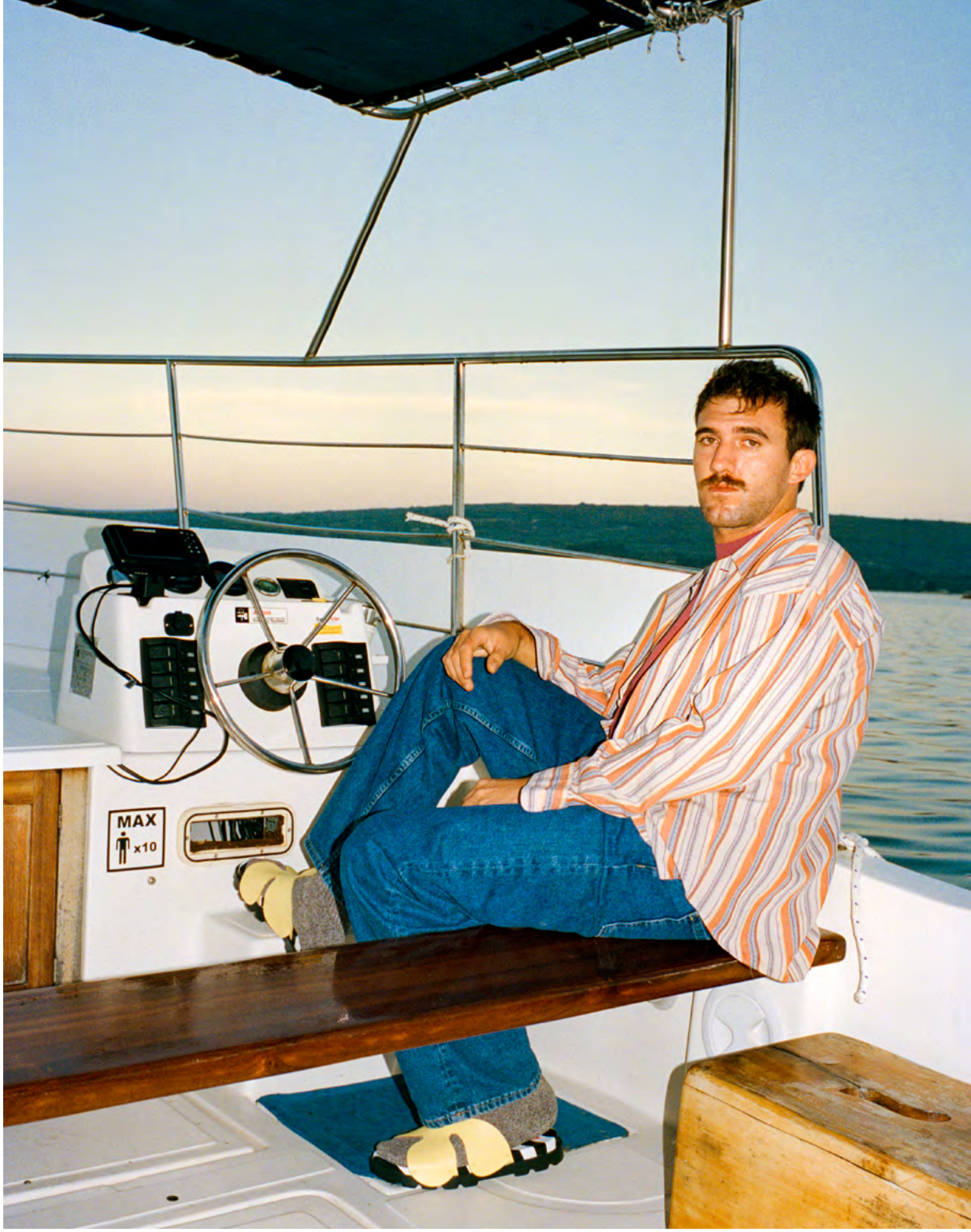


Junction S/S 2023

Out at sea with

DINO GRGURIĆ

Dino has the gruff voice of someone who has seen it all, but he's not even thirty and smiles often. We meet at his home in Punat, one of Krk's largest towns with almost 2,000 inhabitants. Punat looks out over a sheltered inlet. The water is crystal clear with an island right in the middle: like a magical spot conjured up by an illustrator. Dino has a profound relationship with the sea. He has his own boat that he sometimes uses as a water taxi. On this afternoon bathed in warm, almost orange light, he shows us photos of himself as a kid, driving a small motorboat fitted with a Tomos 4, an old Yugoslavian outboard engine. But it is music that truly nourishes him, both financially and culturally. Every year for the past seven years, Dino has organised the Velvet Festival, which he also founded when he was little more than a teenager. In the summer of 2022, Velvet brought artists and DJs from the Balkans, Belgium, Italy, Hungary, Japan, Germany, and Mexico to the island of Krk. The festival doesn't stick to one specific genre and this musical freedom is Dino's pride and joy. As he talks, looking out to sea, he reveals a deep love for this island. He is fascinating to observe. In our globalised and uprooted world, it is rare to witness this kind of fond attachment, a friendship almost, with a place. At the age of 19, Dino already had his own show on Croatia's main radio station, "Hrvatski radio". But his plan for changing Krk is not just about music. It's more complex and ambitious: he wants to bring people together.



Dino has a small boat moored in Punat, a few minutes from his home.
In summer he occasionally takes tourists out.

Punat is located in an almost entirely enclosed bay, one of the most sheltered in the Adriatic. The island of Košljun, home to an ancient Franciscan monastery, lies in the middle.

How did you come to present a show on the country's biggest radio station at just 19 years old?

My show started out as a student project: students have the right to broadcast three hours a day on national radio. But soon after I started, the DJ who had always presented the jazz show died, which meant that at that moment, I was the only person with a show playing artists such as Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders, and other experimental jazz. It was pretty crazy, totally free. Then they asked me to replace him. I did it for a couple of years and then the political situation changed and they made it clear that they wanted a more conservative programme. We weren't fired but the atmosphere changed and I took my show to a radio station aimed at the right community.

That sounds like a rather original musical selection for a nineteen-year-old who grew up in a relatively isolated place!

When my friends and I were nine or ten, Punat had this particular energy. There was a very strong wakeboard scene during the summer and a skateboard scene for the rest of the year. We had a plan to build a skate park in an abandoned church and, of course, we listened to a lot of music, from gangsta rap to psychedelic jazz. Then all this evolved. We founded several punk bands, but it wasn't just punk: we were big fans of Mars Volta, so we played all genres. Many of my best friends went on to do things like experimental theatre in Denmark, Estonia, and so on.

Why do you think there was this particular energy here on Krk?

I can't explain it to you. But there was this underground culture on the island: something strange where everything had to be experimental. We spent hours on the internet and then we jammed. None of my friends ever listened to commercial rap, punk, or jazz.

How did this scene develop after school?

I went to university and didn't like it, but at school, I was always busy organising events. I wanted to be with my friends all the time. I would organise parties, sound systems, and DJ sets for thirty or forty people. That's where my whole organisational streak began to emerge: seeing all these people together listening to music and dancing.

You have an innate talent for organisation.

I think it's a sort of destiny. It felt natural to me, like I had to bring people together.

Did your family understand this commitment?

My mother has always supported me. My parents separated when I was 12 and I grew up with her. I felt the pressure, of course. Deep down, I knew that they were wondering what on earth I was doing. But punk elements of my personality come from my family anyway, especially my cousins in Los Angeles, whom I visited when I was little. My mother's brother is a hippy who travelled a lot; he was always on the road for concerts. He had a moustache and that's why I have one too. He gave me my first guitar.

And what was Krk like culturally when you were a kid? Were there other things to do besides music?

In such an isolated place, so immersed in nature, you can always invent something. Nobody ever gave us a platform, but we never really gave a damn about that. We had the woods and abandoned basements, so we used those. When I was 19, we started the festival and that's when we came into contact with the more official and political side of things, with bureaucracy.

How did the idea of organising a "real" festival come about?

It was me and a couple of friends. We had so many ideas that we were almost imploding. There were no festivals that we thought were good for us back then, nothing really suitable. Yes, there were successful events, but they were only rock or metal, and so on. Nothing really mirrored what we had in mind.

Have you ever thought about leaving the island these days?

Yes, of course I've thought about it. But in Croatia, and Krk in particular, especially since we joined the European Union, it seems that lots of people are leaving without a precise plan, as though they are running away. I look around: Belgrade is always on the cutting edge, Ljubljana is totally European, and then Italy's pretty intriguing, too. There is something missing in Croatia and not solely from a cultural point of view, so even the slightest change can really make an impact. If you have an idea, it might be the first time someone has come up with that here, so it might help to open people's minds. There is plenty of room to experiment. For me, it's more satisfying to create something valuable in a country like Croatia, where so many talented people have emigrated, because you can really see the change before your eyes.

Why do you think that development has moved faster in Belgrade and Ljubljana than in Croatia?

Historically Croatia has been in this strange indecisive limbo about whether it is part of the Balkans or Western Europe. In Belgrade, for example, there are huge vintage and clubbing cultures but there is nothing like that here. It is as though they all agreed to rebuild from scratch after the war, while in Croatia, we lived under the illusion of being a great country for a long time.

Are things changing now?

The next five years will be pivotal. Last year, before the invasion of Ukraine, I thought that Zagreb, Belgrade, and Kyiv would be the next great cultural European cities, ready to become references for Western Europe. There is a need for new inspiration, a new kind of punk. That's not going to happen in Kyiv anymore, for obvious reasons, but Zagreb is on its way to becoming an interesting European city in all respects. Something is starting to shift in even the smallest towns; my friends in Amsterdam and Copenhagen, for example, are noticing.

“I like the fact that many people who come to Krk from Western or Central Europe, even all the artists we call during the festivals, are surprised, almost shocked, that this peaceful place exists. With the festival and growing tourism, there are so many opportunities for the island. But it is important to understand the difference between quality tourism and mass tourism.”

Do you think that this trend for leaving the cities and moving to smaller places with a higher quality of life, like Krk, has had an influence?

Yes, of course, that has changed everything. Historically, this island was just a tourist destination but this trend is placing more importance on places like Krk. These are all indications of a wave that can lead to great change. I can feel it in the air and I think the younger generation can too.

How does Velvet work?

Velvet is a celebration of everything that has happened that year. From jazz to electronica, it is completely multi-genre. It’s probably too rock for the electronica fanatics, too electronica for the rock fanatics, too jazz for the metal fanatics, and too metal for the jazz fanatics. We say that it is the celebration of a generation and nothing to do with genres. It is to do with the sea, the Mediterranean, with people, with being together.

Speaking of the Mediterranean, what does it mean to have been born and raised here?

Just two hours ago I wrote a message to a Serbian friend saying: “Sometimes I look out of my window and I can’t believe I’m here.” The Mediterranean is a fundamental part of my way of thinking, of my life: seeing the sea every day, going down to the beach, being surrounded by this nature and this food. I’m incredibly lucky. In Croatia, especially in Dalmatia, we have this saying, “fjaka”, which is a kind of Mediterranean meditation. It means doing nothing and enjoying the moment to the fullest. Like when you are alone on a boat, in silence, simply contemplating without doing anything. I think it’s a spiritual state.

Lately there has been a strong aesthetic and touristic focus on the Mediterranean. Have you felt that here too?

Yes, and I like the fact that many people who come to Krk from Western or Central Europe, even all the artists we call during the festivals, are surprised, almost shocked, that this peaceful place exists. With the festival and growing tourism, there are so many opportunities for the island. But it is important to understand the difference between quality tourism and mass tourism. A few kilometres from here, Istria has done an excellent job developing a quality offering for tourists. I think Krk should do the same by protecting its wines, sea, and olive trees.

It is also necessary to create a new narrative for those who live and work in these places, something that will improve everyday life here.

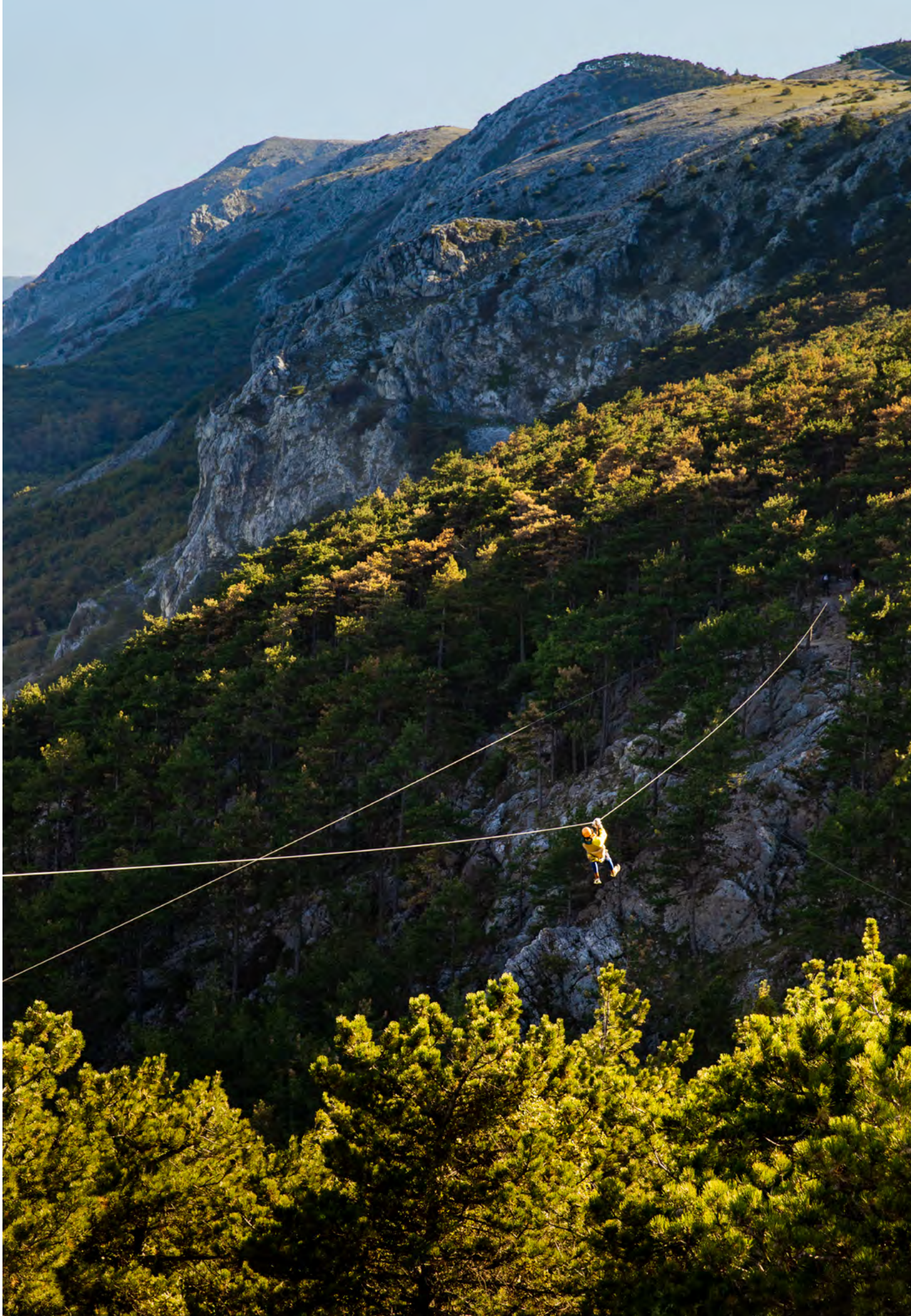
Yes. I had to explore other places. I had to go to Brussels, Antwerp, and Vienna, only to come to the conclusion that this is my place.

Drift Trail S/S 2023

“I was a waiter on a cruise ship in the Caribbean when I saw this zipline in Costa Rica,” explains Igor, founder of Krk’s Edison Zipline, “Then I came back here and recreated it.” The Krk zipline, Igor’s zipline, is one of the few in all of Croatia. You can see the whole island from up there: the central plateau with dry stone walls that once divided the shepherds’ pastures, and the deep valleys filled with conifers. It took time – more than five years – to get all the licences. “And only six months to build everything,” laughs Igor. The hiss of the cable, as someone slides along it, is the only unnatural sound in the peace of the forest. In 2015, the zipline’s first year, fifteen to twenty people visited every day during the summer season. Today, that number has risen to more than 150.

EDISON ZIPLINE

The zipline stretches along two kilometres of steel cables, hung taut between rocks and trees. Starting at a great height with great views, it descends gradually.



Drift Trail S/S 2023

Drift Trail S/S 2023

The zipline is made up of several stages with a total of 8 lines and can reach a maximum speed of 80 km/h.

The 2,000-metre zipline takes approximately two hours to complete, including a brief training session teaching how to brake with the hands and keep the legs in a “monkey-style” position.

THE SHIP MAN

Chuckling, Zeljko tells us that he was forced to move his model ships out of the house because his wife could no longer stand them. But this feels more like an entertaining anecdote because his workshop is anything but improvised. Located in the centre of Krk, a stone's throw from the sea, the space is large, bright, and perfectly ordered.
Each model is treated with obsessive care. "I am an accidental model maker," he says of his passion. This sudden enlightenment feels almost spiritual: "In 1992, I had some health issues and overnight I stopped drinking, smoking, the works. I needed to keep my hands busy so I started making models." It is a disarmingly simple response that requires no deeper or more convoluted explanation. For example, if you ask him why he chose sailing ships, he replies: "Because I don't care about anything else." And your passion for the sea? "I was born here, it's normal."
Zeljko also has a real sailing boat which he uses almost daily. In addition to his models, his studio is crammed with tools, books, projects, drawings, and pieces of old boats. Local boats? Zeljko shakes his head: "You can't say local because navigation has no boundaries."

MIL 1978 S/S 2023


Margarita

MIL 1978 S/S 2023

MIL 1978 S/S 2023

MIL 1978 S/S 2023

MIL 1978 S/S 2023

CROATIA IS THE TWENTIETH COUNTRY TO JOIN THE EUROZONE,
TWENTY YEARS AFTER THE EURO CAME INTO CIRCULATION.

“Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose” is a line from *Sacred Emily*, the poem written by Gertrude Stein in 1913, and one of the most famous lines in 20th-century poetry. A single name can have multiple meanings, implies the Pittsburgh poet, writer, and intellectual. This line comes to mind while crossing the bridge that connects Krk to mainland Croatia, once part of the former Yugoslavia, for it is a bridge in many ways. Let’s start with the physical.

From the mainland, the arch bridge is impressive. It stands fifty metres over the strait and touches down briefly, between its two spans, on the islet of San Marco, as if the bridge wants to rest a moment before setting off again. There is no questioning its strength. The wind blows powerfully here, the currents are lethal, and over one million vehicles cross the concrete structure every year. It seems like the *Krčki most*, or Krk Bridge, unites two planets across those fourteen hundred metres: the dense forests of the mainland on one side and the limestone rock of the island on the other, so pale and bright that it looks white on sunny days.

In July 1980, when the bridge was inaugurated, Marshal Tito had only been dead for two months. For 27 years, he had been President of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, yet within a few years, everything fell apart quickly, tragically, and confusingly. Planning for the bridge had begun a few years earlier when Tito was already old in years and increasingly on the fringes of federal politics. The idea of a bridge connecting Krk with the Croatian coast was first proposed in the early twentieth century, after the First World War. However, the question of Fiume, which became part of Italy in 1919-1920 made everything more complicated. Then the Second World War came, bringing dramatic conflict to the Balkans and Croatia. After the war, Tito took the reins of

Yugoslavia and in 1960 the bridge was proposed once more. After studying different options, a solution was reached a decade later: two reinforced concrete arch spans with the island of San Marco in between.

Krk Bridge has always been more than a bridge. Designed by Ilija Stojadinović's Belgrade-based civil engineering and construction company in collaboration with Vukan Njagulj and Bojan Možina, it was, and still is, the pride of Croatia. The reinforced concrete span that stretches 390 metres from the mainland to the islet made it the world's longest concrete arch until 1997. Newly constructed, it was known as Tito's Bridge, but after the death of the former Yugoslav leader, it shed its name in favour of the less divisive Krk Bridge.

How many images and meanings does the word "bridge" contain? A structure that unites places otherwise destined to remain separate, unreachable shores on the horizon. A communication route that stretches over natural obstacles, transforming a hostile chasm into peaceful scenery.

This part of Croatia remained relatively untouched by the war that devastated the country between 1991 and 1996, following the independence of Slovenia and growing ethnic tensions between Serbs and Croats. One of the darkest pages of the whole conflict involved the city of Vukovar, with fighting in Dubrovnik, Šibenik, Zadar, Karlovac, Slavonski Brod, and Osijek. It was one of the most atrocious wars of the twentieth century, resulting in an estimated 500,000 refugees and deportees, and 20,000 victims, with devastating damage to the country's infrastructure, households, exports, and economy, which is estimated to have been hit by 21-25%.

THE BRIDGE IS MORE THAN 50 METRES ABOVE SEA LEVEL AND STOPS ON THE ISLET OF SAN MARCO BETWEEN ONE COAST AND THE OTHER.

REBUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CROATIA AND SERBIA AFTER THE WAR WASN'T AND STILL ISN'T EASY.

After the war, rebuilding relations between the two countries was not, and is still not, easy. 2010 saw a partial easing of tensions, thanks to a visit by Ivo Josipović, president of Croatia, to Belgrade, and Boris Tadić, president of Serbia, to Zagreb and Vukovar. Tadić visited the Vukovar memorial to apologise on behalf of his country. But the governments changed hands and Croatia's entry into the European Union in 2013 once again soured relations. During the 2015 European migrant crisis, the Croatian government closed the border with Serbia for a few days. Subsequently, in 2016 and 2017, Croatia exercised its veto power to block chapters of Serbia's negotiations with the European Union. The reason? A request for greater protection of the Croatian minority in Serbia, still considered insufficient, and the problem of the "universal jurisdiction" that Serbia reserves for war crimes. In short, some bridges are difficult to build even today, especially between the republics that made up the former Yugoslavia.

On the other hand, things are much better between Croatia and the European Union. Having joined the Union in 2013, the country will adopt the euro as of 1 January 2023 and become the twentieth member of the Eurozone, ten years after its admission and twenty years after the euro entered into circulation. Upon formalisation of the agreement, the European Commissioner for Economy, Paolo Gentiloni of Italy, underlined Croatia's "extraordinary journey". From war to Europe in less than 30 years: new bridges built in record time.


TWINS S/S 2023

In the studio with

EMANUELA LEKIĆ

Emanuela opens the door to her atelier on Krk, which was her teenage bedroom before she moved to Zagreb. It is in the heart of the old town, on the top floor and accessed via a narrow staircase. She comes here when she needs peace and quiet to work on an important painting, free from distractions. Emanuela is a young painter, only 26 years old, who has already had three solo exhibitions plus group shows in Croatia and abroad. Her latest series of paintings is called *Noćna smjena* [*Night Shift*, Ed.]. In the entrance, alongside a vinyl collection and posters from previous exhibitions, is a large canvas she recently started working on. Against the white backdrop, you can make out the precise outlines of elements that will be filled with colour. Two large green hands seem to burst out from a mirror of water. On the walls are other completed works: a double portrait of a woman in front of a blackboard, who, Emanuela explains, is one of her school teachers; and a long series of smaller portraits that look like passport photos of children at school but each face is slightly distorted. Her stroke is precise and the colours are full. The references that come to mind, without travelling too many kilometres from where we are, are the New Objectivity of 1920s Germany and Italian Magic Realism of the same period.

Emanuela cites Otto Dix, a leading exponent of the New Objectivity movement in 1920s Germany, as one of her main inspirations.

Another reference is Neo Rauch, a German painter born in 1960, influenced by De Chirico and Magritte.

Self Portrait as a Painter
Oil on canvas, 120x80cm
2022

Anticipation of Dawn
Oil on canvas, 150x100cm
2022

So, this is where you grew up?

Yes. I liked shutting myself away in here, leaving everything outside the door and painting. I live in Zagreb now so this is a peaceful space where I can concentrate on my work alone.

How did you find your path in painting?

In the beginning, I painted without a main theme. It was more of an exercise so I could improve. I didn't immediately think I had anything personal to say. Later, when studying at the Academy [of Fine Arts, Ed.] in Zagreb, I learned a more artistic approach, to consider art that hadn't been painted according to classical canons. Art must be able to tell a story. There is a series I did at the academy inspired by my experience growing up in Krk, at my school specifically. In English, it is called *Distortive Memories*. In a way, I wanted to take the classic posed school photos, which are supposed to portray a perfect moment that we all know isn't necessarily perfect. I wanted to put my own twist on it and show something personal.

Faces seem very important to you.

Yes, absolutely. I graduated in portrait painting and it has been the most important theme for me so far. When I finished the series I just mentioned, I was extremely tired because each painting was imbued with personal emotions and it had really affected me. So I started painting empty city spaces to detach. But even then, almost immediately, faces began to appear. It's something too important to me: you can paint so many emotions on a face depending on how you make the light fall. It's something that really speaks to me from deep inside.

Was it difficult to find your path?

I'd say I'm still looking for it. I can't look back yet and say: this is the best thing I've done. I'm only 26, I'm learning new techniques, studying new things, and sometimes a painting doesn't become what I originally imagined. I always try to be honest with myself. At the Academy, some people advised me not to paint portraits because it was too traditional and to do something contemporary instead. I tried, but it didn't feel honest. It wasn't what I felt. You cannot escape from yourself and what inspires you.

What was the art scene like as you were growing up in Croatia?

Croatia doesn't really have a thriving art scene, so it's important to find something you really like. I wake up every day and decide to paint, not because I am making huge amounts of money from it, but because it is part of me. That means it is vital for me to believe in what I do and less in current trends.

Is there any country whose tradition inspires you?

Definitely Germany, especially in the 1920s. Otto Dix is one of the main inspirations for all my work. But everything is changing; everything has changed since that time. You can't expect to find that scene anymore, but I think the right sensibility is still there. And the new wave, with Neo Rauch and similar artists, is still very strong.

”Movies have a big impact on my imagination. So do music and other paintings, of course. I would say that I start with a concept. For example, the painting I am currently working on, there in the entrance, started with the idea that I wanted to make a mask of my face as it came out of the waters of Krk. I wanted to communicate that Krk is part of my identity.”

How are your exhibitions going?

Lately I've had three solo shows, one right here in Krk, a stone's throw from the house where I grew up. But it is not easy: the type of pictures I paint require a lot of work. It can take up to two years to create 20 paintings for a series, for example. You have to have continuity, and you need an idea and a plan: I can't change my mind in the middle of the series. I do like working like this, in a very organised way. It's also the way I paint: there's an extremely detailed drawing to start with and then, once everything is set up, I can start painting. Of course, I also use photography. I make sketches and then use Photoshop to modify the photographs that I will eventually use to start the sketch.

Do you work mainly in series?

Yes, I like working that way. Obviously, if I have a commission, I also work on single paintings. But starting a series doesn't mean I have a detailed plan for how it will turn out in the end. For example, the series I'm working on, as I told you, started out because I wanted to paint empty spaces and show how the absence of human beings transformed the space. That was the initial idea, but then I got tired and started filling those same spaces with people.

Where do you find your inspiration?

Movies have a big impact on my imagination. So do music and other paintings, of course. I would say that I start with a concept. For example, the painting I am currently working on, there in the entrance, started with the idea that I wanted to make a mask of my face as it came out of the waters of Krk. I wanted to communicate that Krk is part of my identity but not fully, because I later moved to Zagreb and became part of that art scene.

What is Krk's role in your creative process?

It's part of my identity, but I don't think about it too much while I work. Certain elements probably emerge unconsciously. Maybe it's because, as a young girl, I didn't come across many people interested in this kind of traditional painting and now I want to be the first person here to do it. I think it's so positive to have someone to look up to and I would love to be that person for the young people of Krk. I didn't know anyone like that when I started painting, but now people message me on Instagram and ask me how I got here. I am proud, in a way, to be a role model for the young people here who want to go to art school. I wanted to go instead of high school, but my parents didn't want me to. Perhaps they thought it was just a passing phase. But it hasn't passed and here I am.

Kobarah S/S 2023

SOLINE BAY

One of Krk's most beautiful features is the multitude of small bays and inlets along the coast, best appreciated by sailing slowly around the island. The calcareous rock, so porous and easily eroded, can be credited for these natural wonders, such as Soline Bay, which today offers calm, crystal clear waters for boats and bathers. And even rarer wonders: its healing mud.

Almost closed off from the sea, this large bay has such a narrow entrance that little water flows through it. It is mostly navigable, with a muddy seabed perfect for mooring that emerges from the water to form a large dark beach at one end. This is the natural healing mud that starts as sediment in a stream running down a nearby hill and accumulates in the bay, enriched with millions of microorganisms. Once covered by the tides and deprived of oxygen, the mud compacts into iodine and sulphur-rich formations. Those aren't monsters or fantastical creatures in the shallow waters of the bay in summer, but people covered in clay from head to toe.

Kobarah S/S 2023

TWINS, Swim Shorts, Ado Bag, Mosa Wallet S/S 2023

Kobarah S/S 2023

For centuries, Krk mud has been used for its healing properties, such as improving metabolism and blood flow.
T-shirt S/S 2023

Apply a layer of mud to the skin, leave it to dry for about 30 minutes before rinsing with salty seawater.

Kobarah, Cap S/S 2023

Kobarah S/S 2023

As tidal currents in the bay are almost non-existent, the water level remains a few centimetres deep, even far from the shore.

Discina Montana

Fomes Fomentarius

Scutellinia Cejpii

KOŠLJUN MUSHROOMS AND THE TWO BROTHERS

Punat Bay overlooks a cove so enclosed by land that it resembles a lake. Only a narrow channel to the south, a few dozen metres wide, connects it with the rest of the Adriatic. The sea here is always still; maritime traffic is practically absent. Floating in the centre of the bay is the small, almost perfectly round island of Košljun.

With a diameter of just 300 metres and a total area of six and a half hectares, the island is three-quarters covered by dense forest. Where the trees end, a fifteenth-century Franciscan monastery stands. Only a handful of monks live here, the island's only inhabitants. Less than a kilometre off the coast of Krk, Košljun can be reached by boat from Punat in a few minutes. This little island is home to more than 400 different plant species and 151 species of mushrooms, numbers that can be compared to those of entire nations. The forest consists mostly of elms, some ancient, and it has not yet been established with certainty whether these grow naturally or were planted hundreds of years ago. Holm oaks, ash trees, and some shrubs, such as laurel and butcher's broom, can also be found alongside the elms.

Legend has it that there was once no bay and all the water surrounding Košljun was extremely fertile land cultivated by two brothers. One of the brothers was blind and, with every harvest, he was systematically robbed by the other. One day, God could no longer tolerate this injustice and decided to sink the island. The only part he saved, which we can still see today, was the part belonging to the blind brother.

Ascobolus Michaudii

Amanita Muscaria

Oudemansiella Mucida

“After the first three years, the trees need pruning,” explains David, “The more you prune, the more the tree grows, but fruit production slows down. It is a delicate balance that comes with experience.” Some of David’s trees are young; others are decades old. The olive tree is resilient like no other plant in the world: if cut down because it is sick or in poor condition, it will grow back from the stump. That’s why you should always look at the roots to discover the true age of a plant. “Most olive trees on Krk are a century old,” David tells us, and only a handful have made it to the 200-year mark. In 1929, a persistent winter frost killed off many shrubs, and another followed in 1956, with temperatures below 20° for several days in a row. Today, this is no longer a risk and the problem, if anything, is water scarcity. But olive trees are already adapting. From Andalusia to Jerusalem, the Mediterranean has always been dotted with these silvery leaves, and green and black fruits. Four indigenous varieties grow here on Krk: Rošulja, Debel, Drobnica, and David’s personal favourite, Plominka, which produces a sweeter and less pungent oil than the others.

THE PLOMINKA HARVEST

MIL 1978 S/S 2023

The Mediterranean Basin is home to more than 1,000 cultivars of olive trees harvested for oil, table olives, or both uses.

MIL 1978 S/S 2023

Native to present-day Syria and the Middle East, the olive tree was brought to the Mediterranean by the Greeks. Today, due to global warming, they also grow further north.

The harvest period depends on cultivation but generally lasts from October to December. The fruit changes colour during these months, indicating it is ripe and ready to pick.

Bonnie S/S 2023, MIL 1978 S/S 2023

Junction S/S 2023

At home with

FRAN VASILIĆ

Fran Vasilić doesn't look like someone born at the turn of the millennium. He has a 70s-style handlebar moustache, a centre parting, and hair that falls over his eyes. And you wouldn't think it listening to his music either, which is a hybrid of indie pop and rock that harks back to the golden age of both genres: a time when Fran was little more than a kid, playing without a guitar on the quiet streets of Krk.
When we meet, he will soon be leaving for a concert in Budapest. He speaks English with a good accent; he just got back from a trip to New York and Los Angeles to develop new collaborations and write some new tracks. Nowadays, Fran Vasilić is a successful musician, but it all happened very quickly and in the least conventional way possible, transforming him from a student to a singer with over 4 million followers on TikTok. His first album, *Retrovizor*, came out in the summer of 2020 and has had more than 10 million streams on Spotify. In his most popular single, *Japanese Pancakes*, he sings with the tired voice of Julian Casablancas or Adam Green. For his latest song, *Hypotheticals*, he posted more than 10 videos on TikTok in which he revealed a lyric, a guitar chord, part of the production process, a chorus, and so on. Because that's how you do things when you're a musician who also happens to be a TikTok star.

As of November 2022, Fran has over 4 million followers on TikTok and his videos have nearly 50 million likes.

In 2023, his first European tour will stop in Vienna, Warsaw, Berlin, Cologne, London, Milan, and Paris.

How did you get into a genre of music that was pretty much in its heyday when you were born?

I was one of those kids who came home from school and spent most of the afternoon on Tumblr. And the community I created there was made up of people like me who listened to music from years ago, from the early Noughties. That's how I discovered The Strokes, The White Stripes, and The Black Keys. It's something that continued throughout high school and then I discovered more contemporary artists at university. In those years, I started exploring synth-pop, Croatian music, and music from 1980s Yugoslavia. The music I make is the coming together of these three genres.

You have a huge community on TikTok. Did that grow during lockdown while you were here on Krk?

Yes, I returned to the island and started working on my first album as soon as lockdown was announced. Music has always been a passion of mine. I have always played the guitar and I have always sung, but I had never tried to record or produce. My thought process was that a lot of people were finding hobbies, like baking bread, but I wanted to understand how music production worked and how to use other tools. At the beginning, the university announced that it would be closed for two weeks and I set myself the goal of recording a song. But then those two weeks stretched to several months and I kept going and ended up with eight songs. So I thought: "OK, at this point, I'm going to make an album."

Did all this happen during the summer of 2020?

I started in March and finished in September. And yes, during that time I downloaded TikTok and saw all these artists, people my own age, using it to promote their music. I had all these songs and I wanted someone to hear them. I started posting and slowly things started to happen.

What was it like when you realised millions of people were following you?

It's a bit surreal. It's hard to get an idea of it, to imagine them. It was only when I started doing concerts this year and saw flesh and blood people singing my songs that I realised that it was all true. Because when you only see them online, it's impossible to really figure out how many people it corresponds to in real life.

How does this affect the way you write and release your music?

I don't think my way of writing is influenced by social media. Even before I started writing music, I always wrote poetry and short stories, so writing is very natural to me. The way in which I release my music is much more thought out. When I released my first record, my process was: I have these songs, I turn them into an album, I release it, I promote it on TikTok, and that's that. But now when I have a new song, I come up with a whole release plan that is very well structured in terms of marketing and promotion.

Who are your role models? Not just when it comes to writing music or lyrics but also being on stage, which is completely different.

In terms of writing, my main inspirations are the great Yugoslav singers, such as Tereza Kesovija and Oliver Mandić. From the international scene, I would say The Strokes and also Gus Dapperton; I like him a lot. When it comes to performance, I am actually quite reserved by nature, but when I'm on stage I like to bring out a different part of myself. I don't have a real role model that inspires me, so instead I try to be myself when I sing. What I always try to do is create a connection with the public. At the end of the day, anyone can listen to music on Spotify whenever they want, but a live concert has to be special and there has to be a bond.

What is the music scene like in Croatia? Has it supported you? Do you know other artists?

I think there is an interesting situation in Croatia right now. I felt a lot of love from so many people when my songs came out. And above all, I had great support from several radio stations, like Yammat FM in Zagreb. And then Dino Grgurić's Velvet Festival was the first to ask me to play live. But on the other hand, I think that many artists in Croatia tend to think only of themselves rather than collaborate as a community. I especially noticed it this year because I went to New York and Los Angeles to take some time out and write a few tracks. I visited a different studio every day and it was amazing how many people I met and all the stimuli. It was incredible and now that I am back in Zagreb, I have noticed this lack of community. If we want to have a more impactful culture and a better music scene, artists should work with each other more and create an ecosystem.

What was it like growing up here on Krk?

It was great, on the one hand, because as a child you know pretty much everyone. It's a big family and there is a very strong sense of community here. On the other hand, of course, it's not easy to find and build your individual identity when you live on such a small island. Summers are the best time because there are so many things to do and places to explore, but winter is tougher as a kid or a teenager.

How has the island influenced the way you think about music?

Growing up on Krk gave me a perspective that someone who grew up in the city could never have: even that winter isolation I mentioned is part of the growth and the baggage you carry with you. Sometimes when I'm in cities like Amsterdam or New York, I find them hectic. Here, you've got all the time in the world to absorb life, to think about things, and that's important, especially when you work with art.

You were born after 1996 when Croatia was already an independent country: is there a cultural difference with previous generations?

There is certainly a generational separation. In my family we always say, for example, that my grandmother has never

moved in her life but she has lived in five different states. But for my parents, being Yugoslav was a secondary identity that came after feeling Croatian.

What is your relationship with the sea and Mediterranean identity?

Being raised here, I didn't initially appreciate it as much as I should have. I realised this much later. Now, when I come back here after being away, I think: "Oh my God, this is the most beautiful place in the world!" I look out of the window and see the sea. I think I really only just noticed that.

You grew up in Krk but then you left to study. Why did you come back?

I spent the first 19 years of my life here. I went to elementary school and high school in Krk. Then, at 19, I moved to Amsterdam to study. I was supposed to stay there for three years, but Covid hit and those three years became two because I spent a lot of time in Croatia. At the end of my senior year, two summers ago, I graduated and decided I wasn't going to continue my academic career in that field.

What's your favourite thing to do here nowadays?

Every time I come back here, apart from being with my family, I go for very long walks with my dog.

And as a child?

When I was a child, we lived on this dead-end road where there were never any cars and you could see the sea directly, so we were always out on the street playing.

Looking back, did you expect any of this to happen?

Absolutely not. I didn't have a clear idea of what I wanted to do. I actually liked studying what I was studying, but at the same time, I wasn't 100% convinced of it as a career. In one way or another, I had always hoped to do something creative.

What do you see when you think back to before it all started?

I can't even imagine what my life would be like without music.

"Growing up on Krk gave me a perspective that someone who grew up in the city could never have: even that winter isolation I mentioned is part of the growth and the baggage you carry with you. Sometimes when I'm in cities like Amsterdam or New York, I find them hectic. Here, you've got all the time in the world to absorb life, to think about things, and that's important, especially when you work with art."

Junction S/S 2023

ISTRIA BOASTS A WEALTH OF LEGENDS, PERHAPS DUE TO ITS ISOLATED POSITION AND OTHERWORLDLY LANDSCAPE – RICH IN MOUNTAINS, GORGES, AND CAVES YET SURROUNDED BY SEA. IN THE COLLECTIVE IMAGINATION, THE REGION IS A VAST AND FANTASTICAL BESTIARY OF WITCHES, GIANTS, DWARVES, FAIRIES, AND VAMPIRES.

THESE LEGENDS WERE PASSED DOWN ORALLY AND ONLY TRANSCRIBED AT THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, OFTEN IN LOCAL DIALECTS. BUT THESE WERE THE VERY YEARS WHEN THEIR STRENGTH AND PURPOSE BEGAN TO FADE. THEIR CIRCULATION AND POWER BEGAN TO DISSIPATE WITH THE ANNEXATION OF YUGOSLAVIA AFTER THE FIRST WORLD WAR AND THE ARRIVAL OF MODERNITY. BUT, IN ANCIENT TIMES, THE FAUNA AND FLORA OF ISTRIAN LEGENDS HAD A SOCIAL PURPOSE: TO MARK THE PASSING OF TIME, JUSTIFY CERTAIN RULES, GIVE A NAME TO MYSTERIES AND AN EXPLANATION FOR TRAGEDIES.

PERHAPS BECAUSE OF ITS MANY CAVES AND CREVASSES, THE ISTRIA OF LEGENDS HAS ALWAYS BEEN POPULATED BY OGRES. EITHER GIANTS OR SMALL, ALMOST INVISIBLE BEINGS THAT WERE WIDESPREAD THROUGHOUT THE ITALIAN KARST, THE KVARNER REGION, AND DALMATIA. SOME DID NOT TAKE HUMAN FORM BUT TRANSFORMED INTO

ANIMALS – CALVES, HORSES, OR OFTEN DONKEYS – TO TRICK THEIR VICTIM. THESE MONSTERS THAT ONLY CAME OUT AT NIGHT FEASTED ON MEN: THEIR FUNCTION IN STORIES AND SOCIETY WAS TO KEEP THE POPULATION, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN, AT HOME AND SAFE AFTER DARK.

IN THIS LAND OF SEA AND MOUNTAINS, THE FOG WAS A NATURAL PROTAGONIST IN ISTRIAN MYTHOLOGY. THE *DUHOVINA* WAS A MYSTERIOUS AND EVIL CLOUD THAT TOOK UNBORN OR UNBAPTISED CHILDREN AT NIGHT, SERVING TO EXPLAIN INFERTILITY, STERILITY, AND ABORTIONS WITHOUT THE "BLAME" FALLING UPON THE WOMEN IN QUESTION.

AND THEN THERE WERE THE *KUDLAK* OR *VUKODLAK*, WEREWOLF-VAMPIRE HYBRIDS: UNDEAD, CURSED, OR EXCOMMUNICATED MEN WHO USUALLY KILLED BABIES, CHILDREN, AND PREGNANT WOMEN, FROM WHOM THEY COULD DRAW ENERGY TO CONTINUE "LIVING".

HOWEVER, IT WASN'T JUST HORROR STORIES; THE WORLD OF LEGEND HAD PLENTY OF OTHER TALES. AND SOME RESPONDED TO THAT PRIMARY FUNCTION OF EVERY ANCIENT STORY: EXPLAINING THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD OR, IN THIS CASE, THE GENESIS OF THE ISTRIAN KARST.

THE BIRTH OF THE KARST

One of the main Istrian legends concerns the birth of the rocky Karst Plateau on which this part of Croatia stands, along with part of Slovenia and Friuli-Venezia Giulia. The Karst is an extremely harsh and rocky area that would have been difficult to inhabit in ancient times. The legends tell us that God, having created the world in six days, needed to dispose of the leftover boulders, rocks, and stones, so he ordered the archangel Gabriel to do so. Gabriel filled a sack with the crushed stones, threw it over his shoulder, and headed for the sea. As he crossed a plateau, the devil saw him and punctured the bottom of his sack in spite. Rocks fell out to carpet the earth below and the Karst was born. Witnessing this disaster, God made the land suitable for growing vines and olive trees to make life less difficult for people who would inhabit the area.

THE LONESOME CRY OF THE BORA

The bora is a wind that often blows in Istria, especially around Rijeka. It is known worldwide, because it can reach furious speeds, bringing icy storms and making everyday life very difficult. Once upon a time, only Wind existed. Wind had many sons and daughters: Leveche, Sirocco, Gregale, Tramontane, and Bora. Bora, the eldest daughter, fell in love with a hero of the mountains and ran away to be with him. Her enraged father finally found her in a castle, where he launched himself at her lover, killing him. Upon witnessing this scene, Bora was driven to despair and swore never to leave that place, which was, in fact, the Karst Plateau. In winter to this day, Bora is believed to roam the land and sea, crying and screaming to unleash her pain.

THE VAMPIRE, JURE GRANDO

Jure Grando was the first documented vampire. Born in 1579, he was an Istrian peasant who died in 1656. After his "first" death, villagers saw Grando's silhouette walking the streets at night with a dead sheep on one shoulder and a dead cat on the other, knocking on doors. The people who lived in these houses almost always died a few days later. That is why, sixteen years later, he was exhumed so that an ash stake could be planted in his heart. But upon opening the coffin, the village chief and local priest found a perfectly preserved body instead of a decomposed corpse. Therefore, they beheaded Jure Grando, the vampire, with an axe.

THE GIANT, VELI JOŽE

Veli Jože was a giant.
Istria was once populated
by these huge men,
according to ancient
tales. Envious of their
threatening size, the
villagers poisoned them,
leaving just one live giant
per village, forced into
slavery and hard labour.
One day, he was sent to
Venice and, during the
voyage, he met a slave
called Ilija who taught
him about freedom.
When Veli returned to
Istria, he decided to
lead a rebellion, telling
the other giants about
his discovery. But the
sneaky villagers bribed
the giants with gold and
wine, the rebellion failed,
and the giants returned
to slavery. All except Veli
Jože, who retreated to
the mountains, waiting
for the right moment to
seize freedom.

STRONG WOMEN

East of Krk's old town, the seafront winds its way along a jagged coastline of white rocks and crystal clear waters. On the other side, typically Mediterranean maritime pine forests provide shade in the hottest hours of summer. Cicadas chirp incessantly. In the distance, on the horizon, are the outlines of Cres and the small island of Plavnik. At dusk, or early in the morning, when the breeze allows, the seafront is frequented by solitary runners. Further along the coast, hidden among the trees, is an open space with rings, steel bars, platforms, and a wooden shed for equipment. It is a small but functional public gym where anyone can train for free. Perfectly preserved, it is just a few metres from the sea and therefore only a few seconds from a refreshing dip. Visually speaking, this must surely be one of the finest gyms in the Mediterranean.

Pelotas Flota S/S 2023

Pelotas Flota S/S 2023


6KG
6KG

BCN S/S 2023

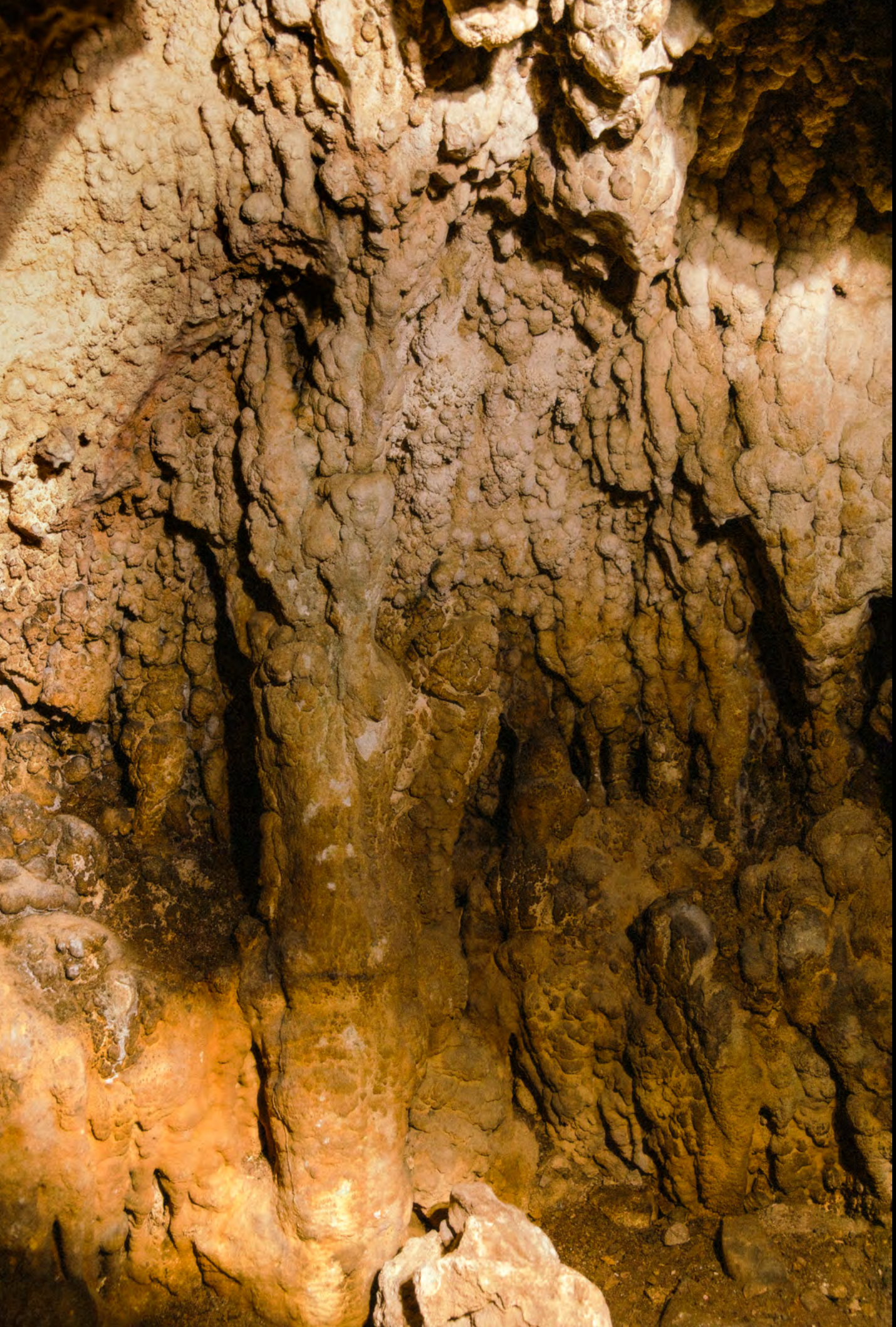

Pelotas Flota, BCN, BCN, Pelotas Flota, Pelotas Flota, BCN S/S 2023

BCN S/S 2023

BISERUJKA

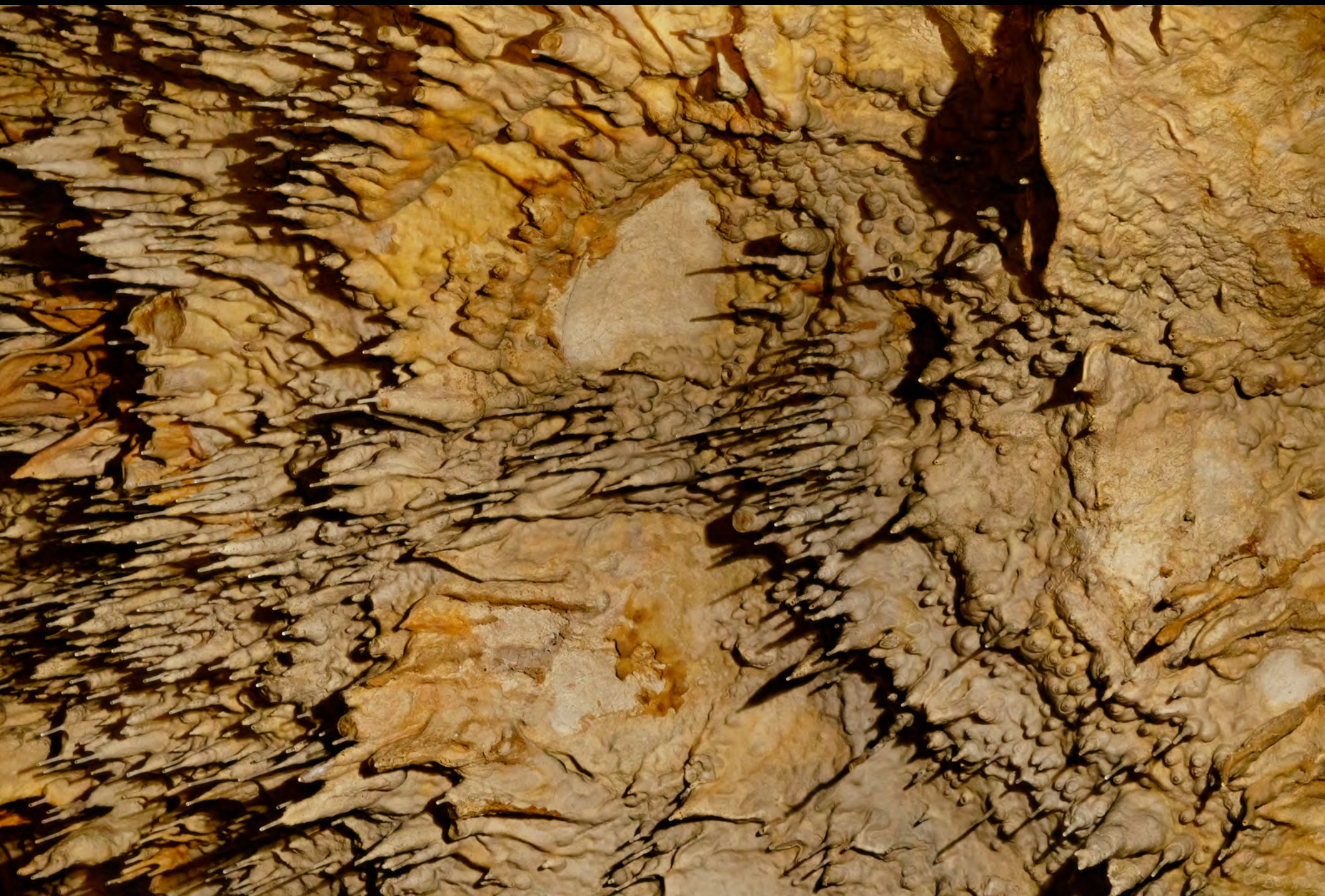
Thirteen metres below the earth's surface, a network of passageways travels through the limestone rock that forms the island of Krk. This is Biserujka Cave, one of the most famous caves in Croatia, easily accessible via tunnels of a decent width, making it an exciting place to explore. Walls and ceilings adorned with stalagmites, stalactites, and calcite columns resemble sacred architecture. The pearly rock is mainly calcareous like the rest of the Karst Plateau, with shades of grey and red created by the amalgam of minerals, especially iron and manganese oxides. Limestone is a soluble rock, which rainwater, rich in carbonic acid, has shaped over the millennia, carving out the caves that now characterise this region. Upon emerging from the cave, which remains a fresh 10 to 13 degrees year-round, visitors are greeted by views of the sea, the small cove of Rudine, and mainland Croatia beyond. Legend has it that pirates used to hide their loot and treasures in Biserujka Cave, which could be true, given its proximity to the mainland.

CAVE



Karst S/S 2023

A species of small woodlouse lives in Biserujka Cave and nowhere else in the world: the *Alpioniscus christiani* is only a few millimetres long. The remains of cave bears from 16,000 years ago have also been found here.




BCN S/S 2023

BCN S/S 2023

Kobarah, BCN S/S 2023

At the market with

DAVID MRAKOVČIĆ

Markets have always been a part of Mediterranean culture. They are everywhere, both on the islands and the mainland, and if you had to rank them all, there is no doubt that Krk market would feature in your top five. Small stalls are set up early in the morning when the air is still chilly and humid from the night before. They are arranged along the pedestrianised promenade in the city centre, with boats moored on the water just a few metres away. The first, at the head of the row, lays out vegetables: courgettes and cabbages, including a huge green Savoy. Then honey, home-fermented veg – a speciality in this part of the Mediterranean – and, of course, extra virgin olive oil. David Mrakovčić makes a delicious one. The olives are harvested in October, just a few kilometres from where we stand now. David also organises this market, which has brought together the island's farmers since 2018. It is just one of the projects run by his NGO "Progres Krk", which he launched in 2016 to promote sustainable agriculture, organic production, and a culture of respect for land and people.

In addition to his market business, David owns an olive grove, which he has been cultivating over the past ten years. Some of his trees are young and others are almost 100 years old.

Croatian olive oil is mainly exported to the closest markets: Bosnia, Slovenia, Serbia, and Italy.

How did this market begin? Were you trying to counteract the disappearance of a certain type of agriculture?

Yes. Our agricultural traditions had all but disappeared. If you go towards the hills, a few hundred metres from here, you will find an enormous field, of more than 7 or 8 hectares. I don't think that even 5% of it is farmed. I wanted to promote organic production because I believe it is the future, as well as the sustainable cultivation of vegetables. The market is the main outcome of that idea: showing people that they can purchase excellent organic products on a regular basis. People are used to it now and, of course, the tourists love it because it feels like a typical Mediterranean market.

You graduated in agronomy in Zagreb and eventually returned to the island where you grew up. What were your reasons for that?

I tried living in Zagreb and I didn't like it. Too big, too noisy. I hated not knowing my next-door neighbours. And the fact that nobody was interested in getting to know them. I was surrounded by people yet I felt isolated. I prefer small cities, with all their folklore. I like saying hello to people in the street. I have a deep connection with nature. More than a sea person, I am a land person: my family have always been farmers who have always grown anything and everything, experimenting with olives, grapes, and vegetables.

You have a close relationship with olive growing.

When I came back, there was no work for an agronomist. So I started a business from scratch, first building dry stone walls and then pruning and caring for olive trees. One day I bought an old, abandoned olive grove and brought it back to life in six months. My grandmother left me other olive trees, which had been left to grow wild in a forest, and I rented others from the State, the church, and other neighbouring lands. Then I cut down the bush all around it. Olive trees have an incredible ability to come back to life. If the tree is sick, you cut it and a new tree grows in its place. I did this to give new life to those trees and that land, and now, after 10 years, they are starting to produce the first really satisfying fruits.

In your opinion, does an initiative like your market also have educational value?

I think the main advantage is having a direct relationship with the producer. And getting back all the things we had lost with supermarkets since there are no more farmers markets: seasonality, changes in fruit and vegetables, what a good or bad year means for a certain species, direct communication with the growers and so on. Not to mention that people can rediscover a vast variety of products: for example, vinegars made from wild plants that no one even remembered we could use. When I talked to my grandmother, she told me about all the different plants she ate in her day and now we eat far fewer. Today, some vegetables that had fallen into disuse because they were seen as "poor" foods in the sudden switch from socialism to capitalism are experiencing a kind of renaissance. Some people even consider them "superfoods". But they are just vegetables, like any other vegetable we have eaten for centuries.

Then there is the fact that since 2020, more and more people have been thinking of leaving the big cities.

One of my goals is to ride this wave, this strange shift where people from the cities want to move to the countryside and have their own gardens and make a living from that. On the flip side, people from rural areas still want to move to cities.

How did the inhabitants of Krk and the tourists react to the arrival of the market?

There is a huge audience here and it's easy to sell: these stalls come from all over Croatia. The first stall, with the fruit and vegetables, comes from a place on the border with Serbia. If coming here is worth his time, it's worth it for everyone. I used to have my own vegetable garden, and I would sell mixed boxes designed to cover what you needed for a week, but I don't have time anymore. It was a good business but now I grow for myself and my family.

Do these islands – Krk, Cres, and Rab – live as a single community, or is each island an entity in its own right?

I think they have separate identities. They tried to create a unity but it was more of a branding operation for tourism. Other than that, they are separated due to historical circumstances. Cres was under Italian rule from 1921 until the end of the war, so they have a different culture. We are all connected and there has always been an exchange of people and goods, but we are not an archipelago in the strict sense of the word. People are very proud of these differences too. There's a significant difference in terms of cultural identity between someone who comes from Rab and someone from Krk.

And what is the relationship with the mainland? Is Krk really an island or can it sometimes be seen as an atypical extension?

That depends whether you ask someone from the island or the mainland. We feel like an island, yes, but very closely connected. But I think that people from Rijeka still see Krk as exotic, even though it is only half an hour by car and there is continuous movement between the two. I have a lot of friends from Rijeka, and every time they come to Krk, they prepare for it as though they are going on some kind of trip.

Croatia has an extremely long stretch of coast: are there many differences as you go further south?

Yes. Not so much in terms of architecture, but culturally for sure. There is a difference in the mentality. Northern people are calmer, less passionate, and less extroverted. Dalmatians are considered warmer, louder, and more prone to outbursts of love and violence, whereas here in the north, we consider ourselves to have a more lukewarm temperament. There is a saying in Dalmatia, "pomalo", which means to take it easy, to relax. There is no "pomalo" here in the north. We are more similar to northern Europeans, more structured.

When did Krk become such a famous island?

After the war, in the second half of the nineties. There was tourism before that, of course, but this type of tourism,

let's call it mass tourism, started after 1996. I think we have reached a plateau now.

How do locals feel about the tourists?

It is a bittersweet relationship. In April, everyone is desperate for the season to start, and by August, everyone has had enough. Then in October, as the seasonal businesses begin to close, everyone is sad again because the island gradually empties.

Is Krk gradually depopulating, like so many other islands?

No, the people who live here stay. There is an excellent demographic situation because many people who came here for work decided to stay. Depopulation is a problem on the mainland but not on the island.

Why do you think that is?

There is an excellent quality of life here and, as I said before, the island is close to the mainland so we have everything we need. We've got everything a family needs.

Despite its unique characteristics, would you say that Krk is part of the Mediterranean community?

Sure, I feel Mediterranean, like a Mediterranean Slav. You know that Venetian dialect that all navigators used, a kind of lingua franca? A lot of that vocabulary exists in our fishing jargon: if you go to southern Dalmatia or Sicily, you can find similarities. Single words.

People also take immense pride in their Roman origins here.

Yes, and you will notice the winged lions from when Krk was part of the Venetian Republic. There was a large Italian community here, so in a sense, we have a very rich legacy.

Do you still feel echoes of pre-1996 Croatia?

I don't know. We haven't had a great deal of trauma here. We were isolated in a rather peaceful way. There was great poverty at that time: the economy was a disaster and tourism collapsed, but we were children so we didn't experience it directly. Perhaps we had more freedom than today but I believe this can be said of everywhere in the world.

"I think the main advantage is having a direct relationship with the producer. And getting back all the things we had lost with supermarkets since there are no more farmers' markets: seasonality, changes in fruit and vegetables, what a good or bad year means for a certain species, direct communication with the growers and so on."

Spiro S/S 2023

S/S 2023

Brutus Sandal
TWINS
Junction
BCN
Drift Trail

Walk,

Don’t

S/S 2023

Brutus Sandal
Dina
BCN
Drift Trail
Runner K21
Pelotas Flota

TWINS
Camaleon
Bonnie
Drift Trail
Junction
Kobarah

S/S 2023

Kobarah
Spiro
Pelotas Flota
Pelotas Flota
Bonnie
Karst

Runner K21
BCN
Peu Rambla
Drift Trail
Bonnie
Junction






Run.

Junction S/S 2023

Something inherent to the nature of islands is the melancholy they emanate when it is time to leave. This links to how you depart: on a boat, looking back from the stern as the island grows smaller and smaller until it can be contained in a single glance. This is not the case for Krk. As you drive up towards the northern plateau, the road becomes more barren, little by little. The woods on either side thin out and disappear; the horizon opens up. The bridge that connects Krk to the mainland begins here. There is no stern from which to admire the shrinking island. Although if you look out of the car window, you can see the strait you are crossing, moving eighty metres below, and the approaching Rijeka coast with its dense green forests.

In a way, this makes it impossible to say goodbye to Krk. The bridge is, after all, a way of remaining attached to it, making the separation gradual and slow. Does this make it less of an island? Its inhabitants say no. Because the bridge was designed to be a farewell: difficult to reach, far from any town or village, along a rugged stretch of coast, over an inhospitable strait. This rejection of sentimentality makes Krk unique and unlike most Mediterranean islands. Here, once more, we sense its composed, measured character, which seems more prone to practicality than passion. That’s another thing to remember as you drive away without looking back.

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