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Spatium Memoriae [ŠTO TE NEMA monu

June 13, 2025 – July 19, 2025
Akademie Graz, Neutorgasse 42, Graz



ŠTO TE NEMA



ument archive]

2025

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Photo: Carlos Serra / © ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

Diversity creates by itself

Dr. Astrid Kury, Curator and Director of Akademie Graz

Diversity creates by itself; uniformity is usually imposed by force. The performative and participatory art project ŠTO TE NEMA – Where Have You Been? is dedicated to the collective commemoration of the genocide in Srebrenica in 1995, whose goal was to destroy Bosnia and Herzegovina's diversity.

What can be done to counter the horror of the murderous violence of people who previously lived together peacefully? The Bosnian-American artist Aida Šehović, born in Banja Luka in 1977, tries to give artistic expression to deep upheaval in people's lives. Her hope as well as her experience show that art can pave a way out of the speechlessness and therefore initiate catharsis and healing.

From 2006 to 2020, she opened up spaces of compassion and solidarity around the world: ephemeral in public space, but manifested as

a shared memory. Together with passers-by, the artist filled thousands of cups, *filadžani*, with Bosnian coffee. She is now presenting these collected cups as part of an archive of the nomadic-performative, with plans to ultimately have components of the exhibition, a permanent monument, become a part of the collection at the Srebrenica Memorial Center.

Everything should have been destroyed, including the over 8.000 bodies of the mass murder. We all remember the media images of the forensic detail work, how bone parts and fragments were reunited using DNA analysis in order to be able to bury victims. Aida Šehović's art possesses such emotional precision that, through these many delicate porcelain cups alone, the inviolability of human dignity becomes powerfully tangible – and, with it, our individual share of responsibility for creating a more humane world.



ŠTO TE NEMA nomadic monument in Zurich 2018.
Photo: Sabine Rock | © ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

Spatium Memoriae [ŠTO TE NEMA monument archive]

June 13, 2025 – July 19, 2025

June 11, 2025 | 6 PM – 8:50 PM

DOCUMENTARY FILM: WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN

KIZ RoyalKino Graz, Conrad-von-Hötzendorf-Straße 10, Graz

June 13, 2025 | 10 AM – 5 PM

INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE: Reflection and Remembrance

Akademie Graz, Neutorgasse 42, Graz

June 13, 2025 | 7 PM

EXHIBITION OPENING: Spatium Memoriae – ŠTO TE NEMA
monument archive

Akademie Graz, Neutorgasse 42, Graz



Historical and political context of Srebrenica / Bosnia and Herzegovina

Univ.-Prof. Dr. phil. Florian Bieber, Professor of History and Politics of Southeastern Europe and Director of the Centre for Southeast European Studies at the University of Graz

The genocide in Srebrenica was not only the largest war crime during the three-and-a-half-year war in Bosnia and Herzegovina—it marked both the war's conclusion and its origin. Its end because news of the Bosnian Serb army killing thousands of civilians in summer 1995 spurred stronger Western intervention, which, alongside successful Bosnian and Croatian military operations, ended the war by late summer 1995. Its beginning, as Srebrenica was one of the few Eastern Bosnian towns not captured in spring 1992, when Bosnian Serb forces seized many towns, expelling or killing Bosniaks from Bijeljina to Višegrad.

This expulsion wasn't incidental—it was central to the emergence of Republika Srpska, a separatist project backed by Serbia in 1992. The killings and mass expulsions were part of a political plan to form new nation-states that erased Bosnia's diverse, multinational reality.

Understanding how neighbors turned on each other remains difficult. Most perpetrators had lived peacefully alongside their victims before the war. Neither ancient ethnic hatreds nor longstanding resentments explain the mass violence. Though coexistence varied by region, there were no long-laid plans for ethnic cleansing before 1992. Instead, nationalism surged in the late 1980s, fueled by leaders who exploited fears to mobilize support for violence.

Even then, the violence following Bosnia's 1992 independence was far from spontaneous. There was little intercommunal civilian violence. It was military and paramilitary units—often backed by Serbia and later Croatia—that spread war. "Ethnic cleansing" only became possible when it was ordered from above and executed by organized military units. The violence of the war led to a genocidal radicalization that culminated in the genocide in Srebrenica.

By July 1995, tens of thousands of Bosniaks had sought refuge in Srebrenica, displaced from other areas in Eastern Bosnia. The Bosnian Serb army, led by Ratko Mladić, aimed to seize the town to consolidate territorial control. Mladić dehumanized Bosniaks, calling them "Turks" and denying their right to live in Bosnia. When the army captured Srebrenica, thousands fled to a nearby UN compound, but the Dutch peacekeepers were unable or unwilling to protect them. Many tried to escape; others were captured. Women and children were deported. Men and boys were systematically executed over several days.

The victims' remains were buried, then reburied, to hide evidence—proof the Bosnian Serb forces knew they had committed a war crime. Though the murder of over 8,000 men and boys is extensively documented, with clear evidence that most were civilians killed in cold blood, the genocide is still widely denied today in Republika Srpska and Serbia.



Nomadic monument ŠTO TE NEMA in Srebrenica 2020.
Photo: Paul Lowe | © ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

Spatium Memoriae (Latin: space for memory)

Irfan Hošić, art historian

Spatium Memoriae is yet the latest – though not the final – iteration of the demanding artistic project titled *ŠTO TE NEMA*, initiated by Aida Šehović in 2006 as a nomadic monument. As such, *Spatium Memoriae* is an intermediate phase between the perennial ephemerality of a moving monument on the one hand, and its solid permanence that is being sought after on the other; all within a formative process intoned by the question of how, as an artist, to reflect on the complexity of the Srebrenica tragedy. In Aida Šehović's case, this process is intense and intimate; charged with emotions; permeated with interpersonal relationships, empathy, and care.

Using a documentary-archival methodology of arrangement, storage and sorting, the work has reached its kindred form in 2019, at the Venice Biennale as a part of the Artivism: The Atrocity Prevention Pavilion exhibition, organised by the Auschwitz Institute for the Prevention of Genocide and Mass Atrocities in New York. It has subsequently been presented at the Canadian Institute for Human Rights and the Laumeier Sculpture Park in 2021, the History Museum in Sarajevo and Kunsthau in Dresden in 2022. The work hints at a conceptual and material metamorphosis from a fluid, participatory and organic character into a static, or rather rigid, form. *Spatium Memoriae* represents the artist's decision to display the props she has used for fifteen years to create a nomadic monument, namely 8,372 cups. This process created an imposing structure arranged on dense shelves, the aim of which is to offer additional insight into the artistic dynamics of the author's idea. Storing the numerous cups and displaying them, imbued with the strategy of common archive practice, anticipates the tendency of the eventual completion of the project and an important step towards defining a permanent version of the monument, which is in development.

Spatium Memoriae allows for additional reading of layers that are not visible at first glance. Sometimes in the form of an interactive artwork; in this phase a static and closed act with the aim of being a monument, in addition to everything else, a "space for memory" by Aida Šehović, is a material entity that bypasses vagueness or insufficient explanation. It is useful to remember that the *fildžan*, as a central prop of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian coffee drinking culture, here takes on the role of an object that embodies layers of collective identification in the wake of an almost sacral ritual of sharing and exchange. The *fildžan* represents an indispensable component of socialization and connection.

In *Spatium Memoriae*, Aida Šehović very consciously operates the form used by archivists and, in so doing, shapes the structure 'inviting the visitor to reflect on the past, i.e. to establish links between events, persons, and objects on their own; to join the act of remembrance; to rethink the ways in which the past is represented in the context of wider culture.' Using the methodology of history as a scientific discipline, the artist takes on the role of a researcher, thereby developing her artistic play. Her shelves are not lined with historical

artifacts, or rather, objects found in mass graves (those documented by photographers Tarik Samarah and Zijah Gafić). Although the artifacts of a single suffering serve as a possible way of accessing materials in the archive with the aim of a conscious search for hidden histories, the artist creates an alternative archive that would offer the viewer an insight into her personal, deep and intimate past, which is determined by fractures, traumas and permanent marks.

Spatium Memoriae is the logical extension of the *ŠTO TE NEMA* nomadic monument. In its spatial and temporal dynamics, *Spatium Memoriae* opposes repetition as one of the main models of repeated iterations of nomadic performance. Since 2006, when *ŠTO TE NEMA* started its 'world tour' (Sarajevo 2006, New York 2007, Tuzla 2008, Den Haag 2009, Stockholm 2010, Burlington 2011, Istanbul 2012, New York 2013, Toronto 2014, Geneva 2015, Boston 2016, Chicago 2017, Zurich 2018, Venice 2019, Srebrenica 2020), tautological and somewhat radical pattern of serial repetition has been established, emblematic of modernist art. However, Aida Šehović's repetition comes from the need for explicit memory to preserve culture from oblivion and self-destruction. Through her actions, the artist actually deconstructs the traditional notion of a monument and gives it a new, fluid but also functional form.

Although now arranged on shelves, the exhibited cups are defined by the way they were collected. This opens a story about the intimacy of the work, which was created as a collective participation of various participants. The fact that the work has been performed for twenty years indicates its intimate ceremoniality. The last performance in the form of a performative monument, in July 2020 at the Srebrenica-Potočari Memorial Center, proved to be a natural sequence. The fact that its participatory part was attended by people who lost one or more family members in the genocide gave the event a new semantic dimension, while their statement that it is about the 'return of the cups home' rounds out this artistic cosmos into a single, rounded whole, and ultimately gives the artist an unprecedented perspective that she probably neither anticipated nor expected.

Placement of the artwork at the very place where many had been separated from their families in July 1995 has intensified the collective experience of a participatory ritual in all of the present participants. The personal experience of trauma has provided the artist with the opportunity to include the victims of the war since, besides dealing with the artistic and visual representation of the genocide in Srebrenica, her work poses questions of ethical perspectives as well. The artist is aware of the fact that genocide has become a prominent topic of narrative imagination, articulated through political aesthetics, mass media and art. The work of Aida Šehović is a quiet one, with no fuss, festivity and far away from the media spectacle. It is, at the same time, the possible answer to the dignified manner and character of the visual (media and artistic) representation of the tragedy in Srebrenica today.

Program

June 11, 2025 – July 19, 2025

EXHIBITION: *Spatium Memoriae* – ŠTO TE NEMA monument archive in Graz

June 13, 2025 – July 19, 2025

After fifteen years of existence as a living, travelling monument commemorating the victims of the Srebrenica Genocide, the art project ŠTO TE NEMA will be presented for the first time in Austria in the form of an archive – *Spatium Memoriae* (Latin: space of memory).

From 2006 to 2020, the ŠTO TE NEMA monument grew in collaboration with local communities and the Bosnian diaspora across the United States and Europe. Conceived as a participatory nomadic monument in public space, the project by Bosnian-American artist Aida Šehović is dedicated to the collective memory of the victims of the Srebrenica genocide. Every July 11th, thousands of *fildžans* – porcelain coffee cups without handles – were placed in city squares from New York to Istanbul, into which volunteers and visitors poured Bosnian coffee and left them “undrunk” as a sign of remembrance. By 2020, over 8,372 *fildžans* had been collected – one for each identified victim of the genocide.

The final installation of the living monument was presented at the Srebrenica Memorial Center in 2020. The development of the permanent ŠTO TE NEMA monument is currently underway in collaboration with award-winning architect Arna Mačkić.

Spatium Memoriae [ŠTO TE NEMA] presents an archive of the monument made up of original cups collected over 15 years. The cups are displayed in an archival system inspired by the methodology of the International Commission on Missing Persons, symbolically pointing to the tragic reality that remains are still being discovered in mass graves throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Spatium Memoriae is not only a space for remembrance, but a space for learning and dealing with the past. The exhibition reminds us that war, mass violence and human rights violations – 30 years after the genocide in Srebrenica – remain a global threat. In that context, art becomes a tool of resistance, prevention, and healing.

The exhibition introduces visitors to the personal, emotional, and historical consequences of genocide, highlighting the key role of art in social transformation and prevention of systematic violence. Through collective remembrance, *Spatium Memoriae* invites us to create a world without genocide.

The exhibition is organized by Akademie Graz and Kulturvermittlung Steiermark in partnership with Aida Šehović and ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

ŠTO TE NEMA is a non-profit organization based in Sarajevo and New York that uses art as a means

of healing, resistance, and action. It emerged from an art project of the same name dedicated to the Srebrenica genocide.

Aida Šehović is a Bosnian-American artist whose practice encompasses public art, socially engaged art, sculpture, drawing, and time-based media.

INTERACTIVE PERFORMANCE: Reflection and Remembrance

June 13, 2025 | 10 AM – 5 PM

Artist Aida Šehović invites you to join the interactive performance Reflection and Memory. By participating in the process of arranging cups on shelves, we are jointly building an archive of the ŠTO TE NEMA monument in the premises of the Akademie Graz in Graz. The performance will take place on June 13, 2025, and you can join us in one-hour intervals between 10 AM and 5 PM (last time slot 4 PM).

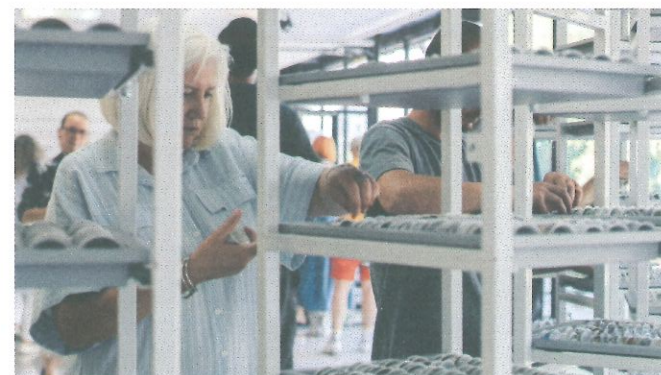
Please email us at office@akademie-graz.at to let us know when you plan to attend and whether you will come alone or with others (and how many).

Opening: June 13, 2025 | 7 PM

EXHIBITED WORKS

Aida Šehović
SPATIUM MEMORIAE [ŠTO TE NEMA], 2006 – 2020
over 8,372 collected cups, metal shelves
Dimensions variable
© Aida Šehović & ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.
Shelf construction: TTO d.o.o. Sarajevo
Shelf design: Aida Šehović, Melisa Delibegović

Aida Šehović
ŠTO TE NEMA posters, 2006 – 2020
© Aida Šehović & ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.
Poster design: Amir Berbić
Photo: Amel Bešliagić, Carlos Serra, Ella Gazibara, Emir Šehanović, Ismeta Curkić, Manka Rabije



ŠTO TE NEMA *Spatium Memoriae* [ŠTO TE NEMA] in Sarajevo 2022.
Photo: Ajla Salčić | © ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

DOCUMENTARY FILM: *Where Have You Been*, 89' minutes

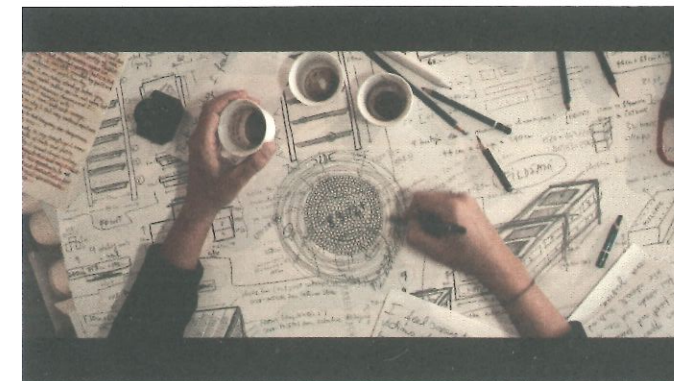
June 11, 2025 | 6 PM – 8:50 PM

Thirty years after the first genocide in Europe since World War II, survivors in Bosnia and Herzegovina continue searching for their missing loved ones. “Where Have You Been” follows Bosnian-American artist Aida Šehović and her participatory, nomadic monument to the Srebrenica Genocide as they return to Bosnia and Herzegovina. After traveling the world for 15 years, the monument reaches its final resting place. At the site of the atrocities, families and survivors gather to fill thousands of small ceramic coffee cups in memory of the victims. As they mourn together, painful questions remain:

What does “never again” mean in a world where perpetrators live with impunity?
How can art and empathy help fill the void left by immeasurable loss and trauma?

Produced by Pinch Media Film Ltd and ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

Mirko Pincelli is an award-winning Italian director and cinematographer with a background in photojournalism, known for his work in both fiction and documentary filmmaking. He is the co-founder of Pinch Media Film Ltd.



Film stills from *Where Have You Been* documentary | © Pinch Media Film Ltd & ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

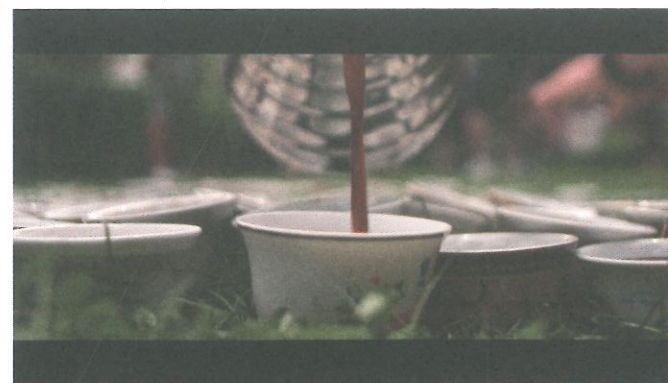
Pinch Media is an independent film production company producing films, documentaries, and interactive projects that embrace experimentation, creativity, and boldness—pushing the boundaries of storytelling.

The documentary screening will be followed by a panel discussion with:

Wolfgang Petritsch (former UN High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina)
Melita Hummel-Sunjic (former senior communications expert at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees)
Norbert Mappes-Niediek (author specialising in South-East Europe)
Aida Šehović (artist)
Moderation: Helmut Konrad (historian and former rector of the University of Graz)

The film screening and discussion to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide is an event by the Steirische Kulturinitiative, linked to the exhibition *Spatium Memoriae* ŠTO TE NEMA organized by Kulturvermittlung Steiermark and Akademie Graz.

Admission free.
Registration at steirische@kulturinitiative.at



ŠTO TE NEMA – Remembering in Public Space

Univ.-Doz. Dr. habil Dženeta Karabegović, University of Salzburg and Board Member of ŠTO TE NEMA

Art, collective memory, and shared rituals are central tools for keeping the lessons of the past alive and for finding answers to the challenges of our present. ŠTO TE NEMA stands as a powerful example of this connection. It is a dynamic project that has continuously evolved – as an artistic and social space for reflection, hope, and the collective search for a world without genocide, both in Bosnia and Herzegovina and beyond.

The project began on July 11, 2006, when a women's organization from Srebrenica provided the first 923 *filadžani* – traditional Bosnian coffee cups – for a commemorative ceremony. Artist Aida Šehović arranged the cups in the center of Sarajevo as a one-time performance. Each cup symbolized a victim of the Srebrenica Genocide. The public was invited to fill the cups with Bosnian coffee and leave them untouched – a silent yet powerful act of remembrance in a public space.

What began as a symbolic act grew over the years into a global, participatory memorial – a place of collective mourning, healing, and solidarity. Over 15 years, the installation was realized in as many international locations. Through the continued involvement of Bosnian families at home and in the diaspora, as well as supporters from around the world, the number of donated *filadžani* grew to over 8,372 – corresponding to the official death toll of the Srebrenica genocide. Today, the number of cups exceeds the number of victims who have been identified and buried so far, as more than 1,000 people are still considered missing.

The phrase ŠTO TE NEMA – “Why are you not here?” – is deeply rooted in Bosnian language and culture. Originally part of a well-known song and an expression of longing, it becomes here a haunting question that relatives, survivors, and post-genocide societies must continue to ask

themselves. The empty cups embody this absence: they represent lost lives, interrupted stories – but also the responsibility to preserve and carry forward this memory.

The memorial has become a living symbol of solidarity with the survivors and was most recently displayed on the 25th anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide. The on-site presentation was not only the result of collaboration between numerous individuals, organizations, and the participating women's initiative, but also raised central questions: How can annual commemorations be transformed into a lasting movement of resilience and hope – and how can a permanent form be created for this previously nomadic memorial?

In 2021, ŠTO TE NEMA was officially registered as a non-profit organization in the United States. With its expansion to Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2022, an important step was taken toward strengthening local partnerships and establishing long-term roots on the ground. In 2023, the board was expanded by four new members to initiate new projects – including the development of a future permanent memorial with a participatory character.

ŠTO TE NEMA understands art as a tool for healing, resistance, and collective action. The power of this work lies in its openness: people are invited to become part of the remembrance – not as passive observers, but as active participants in shaping a transnational space of memory.

Through exhibitions such as *Spatium Memoriae*, the project builds on its history while also opening new perspectives for the future. It becomes clear here as well: remembrance is not just about looking back – it is an active contribution to the ongoing dialogue about justice, peace, and responsibility.



ŠTO TE NEMA nomadic monument in Venice 2019.
Photo: Adnan Sačiragić | © ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.



ŠTO TE NEMA nomadic monument in New York 2013.
Photo: Paul Ramirez Jonas | © ŠTO TE NEMA, Inc.

Organization:

Aida Šehović / ŠTO TE NEMA Inc.
Akademie Graz
Kulturvermittlung Steiermark

Film Screening and Discussion:

Mirko Pincelli / Pinch Media Film Ltd
Aida Šehović / ŠTO TE NEMA Inc.
Steirische Kulturinitiative
With thanks to KIZ RoyalKino

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Hannah Marquardt

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Printing:

Dobra Knjiga Sarajevo (fliers)
Duggal Visual Solutions New York (posters)

Transport:

Unit Group d.o.o.

Institutional Partners & Educational Work:

Centre for Southeast European Studies, University of Graz

