

# After Jugo

Sarajevo, the life of a generation

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a multimedia project by Marco Pavan

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## Ivona

My name is Ivona Letic, I am almost 22 years old and finishing the third year of Product Design at the academy of fine arts of Sarajevo. I attended the gymnasium in Lukavica, East Sarajevo, former Serbian Sarajevo. Since I was born, I had the dream of doing some art work, I was always into drawings but I wanted to give myself more time so I didn't go to an art high school, I wanted to think about it a bit because I didn't know what were my options. Then I saw there is a product design section in the academy and I just clicked, that's for me. In my high school there wasn't any art subject, any art activities, so I was kind of rusty and worried that I won't be accepted at the academy. For three months in that summer between high school and the academy I was doing preparation work with one of the professors from the academy, drawing and drawing everyday, was exhausting but it paid off. Lots of people said that I wouldn't be accepted. They said that you need money to give to someone because of the well developed corruption in Bosnia, or you have to be someone important's daughter, but I wanted to try. And because I wasn't really sure I signed for the studies in journalism also, in June, so to have also that option if they didn't accept me. But I got in and that was it. We all got illusions about studies that it was going to be very pretty creative work and all ideas, but it is not. It is more engineering work and computer work, it is not really drawing and creative. But anyway, any university in Bosnia is not in a fantastic situation, it is really bad because of the transition of the system of education and education is not really one of the priority of the government, none of the government, the two we have, actually the three. But I am thinking of just getting through that process and see what happens later. I want to get my bachelor degree here in Sarajevo and I am planning to do my master studies somewhere else. I am thinking about Belgrade because it is close and it has really good master studies for my section. I am also planning to try to get Serb citizenship, because I am citizen of the Republika Srpska I have the right to do that and I am planning to do it because it cheaper if I am citizen of Serbia. Otherwise it is expensive. Or I have some options to go to Norway also through one organization I was working with during the high school but it is pretty far, I am not really sure I want to go so far from home. I have ambitions to stay in Bosnia, not to leave and stay somewhere else and I am going to try to do my best to stay here, to see if I have any opportunity to work in my profession. But it is absurd because, you know, industrial and product design in a country where there is no industry is kind of tricky, but something may happen, you never know. They say I am born under a lucky star, maybe something will happen, something will come from the sky and make it possible, I don't know! I love this country, I love these people, it is where I belong. I know I can make it work anywhere else, I know I can, but it is not the life I was used to, it is not the life I was meant to live, it is not that mentality. I am not really a traditional type, I belong to the orthodox church, but I really don't follow those traditions, I am not religious. But I am patriot in that kind of sense I love the place where I live, I love it with all its faults, with all it's downfalls, I love it. It fits, but of course existence is in the first place, and most of my life, my mother and me, we were fighting for existence and that's something I don't want to do for the rest of my life. I want my kids, my family to have a normal life, normal opportunities for everything. So if I see in few years that this is not

possible, sure I will look for some changes, opportunities somewhere else. But as long as I am not responsible for someone else's life, but for my own, I will try to make it happen here.

*Did anyone make any problem because you, coming from the Republika Srpska, were going to study to Sarajevo University?*

No one really made a problem, no one really was aggressive about it. People are mostly unsecure, about how this is going to work because those people who are not mingling in the city they don't really know the state of mind of Serbs about Bosniaks and Bosniaks about Serbs or Croats, no matter who. And people who are encouraged to go in the city, get out, meet some people, they change their minds. But people who are closed and who have families and parents who are conservatives have that kind of opinion, it is not their fault, it is how they were raised. I was raised not to hate anyone, not to have prejudices, just be liberal about anything. Maybe that's wrong, but it is how I am. Why should I hate Bosniak people because I lost my father or because I had to move from the city, it is not their fault, it is absurd to do so. Young people have the same problems, the same goals in their lives, same ways of enjoying life, partying, like and dislike the same things, all the differences are about characteristics and that's normal, it happens between two Serbs or two Bosniaks, there are bad and good people all over the place. Some people think that maybe it was better for me to study in Serb part of Bosnia. They were thinking that in start, but three years after, a lot of people say: "I hate you for having that kind of life, you are living so good life, you have so good friends". Because when I tell them what we are doing, where we are going, and people from bigger environment think differently, think bigger. People here in Lukavica are more afraid to make steps in their lives, banal stuff, they are satisfied by sitting in the park and drinking, that's it. That's party, that's good time. While people in the city they are not satisfied with that, it is the last option if you don't have anything. We are sitting and we say: "Let's go to Mostar! Let's go, who has a car?" and we are going. So when you talk to young people they want to live that life and they think it is good so there are less and less people, at least of my age, that think that what I did is bad. Especially the opinion about Jovan Diviak, the director of the association, it is pretty bad among Serb people because he was a Serb and he stayed in the city with the Bosnian army. But when you talk to young people they don't care who he is, they think just that it is good I can travel all around Europe for nothing because I am a volunteer in his association. And they are like: "I wanna do that, can I? Can I join, can I do something?" As we get older and mature they see the opportunities, more and more generations from the high school are studying in the city. Why should they pay rent and more expensive scholarship rates in Belgrade, Zagreb, Novi Sad or somewhere else if they can study here and live at home with their parents and it is all nearby. Why should they do that and trouble themselves for nothing? So I think situation is getting better, I don't have any troubles now and I never had in the faculty, no one said like: "You are from Lukavica so you are bad because of it". They are judging me because of my work and that's it. Do I smile when I say 'hi' or do I ignore them? You know, normal stuff. But Sarajevo is a specific environment, because we are so close, the two sides. Somewhere else there are more kilometres between people, situation is tougher, but here is getting better from year to year. Three, four years ago you could go out in the city and be sure that you won't meet anyone from Lukavica. So you could be someone else in the city and be sure that no one will tell anyone, because you will not meet anyone familiar. And now you can't do that anymore. Half of the population in the bar is from Lukavica and I say: "Ah, I came here to get away from you people! To see some new faces and here you are again." So it is normal, people are mixing. A lot of people, of guys, come here to meet girls, they are new faces, different, I don't know, exotic. But is a good reason as long as people are socializing. I don't care about the reason. If you want to get laid, go ahead, I don't care!