Ismar
Čirkinagić

osmo more the eighth sea

The Eighth Sea is a solo exhibition of Ismar Čirkinagić in which the artist, using nature as a space of memory and testimony, explores political conflict, ecological devastation and their consequences while also questioning our relationship to the contemporary reality. For more than two decades, these themes have occupied a central place in Čirkinagić's artistic practice, and his interest for these themes is deeply rooted in his own experience of war in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The artist approaches the world with a perspective that is both poetic and critical, contrasting the tragedy of human conflict with the silent beauty of changes in nature. Nature in this instance is no mere backdrop to events or a motif, but a silent witness to historical trauma.

The title of the exhibition *The Eighth Sea* refers to the idea of an imaginary 'eighth sea'. The 'seven seas' expression has been historically used as a metaphor for the entire known world, while 'the eighth sea' does not connote a body of water but rather a mental landscape in which the greed of civilization, global crises and human alienation are reflected in a horizon with no direction.

17·9 – 8·11·2026

Muzej suvremene umjetnosti, Zagreb
Museum of Contemporary Art, Zagreb

1 ***Camera Obscura***, 2026
two-channel video, sound
approx. 16 min, loop

Camera Obscura is a two-channel video work based on the optical principle of the camera obscura, whereby the projected image of the outer world appears inverted. The work depicts seemingly tranquil landscapes of mass graves and violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Spain, Guatemala, and Cambodia. By further converting the inverted image into a negative, Čirkinagić disrupts their apparent serenity. The landscape thus becomes a silent witness to events whose traces remain present even when no longer visible to the naked eye.

2 ***The Eighth Sea***, 2026
seven metal shelving units, five-litre plastic containers, seawater
seawater from the North Sea, the Baltic Sea, the Adriatic Sea, the Black Sea, the Aegean Sea, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Atlantic Ocean
185 x 628 x 770 cm

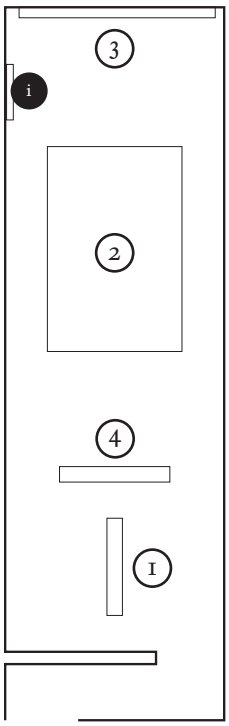
The Eighth Sea brings together seawater from seven seas, distributed in transparent containers on industrial metal shelving and classified according to geographic origin. The installation creates a tension between the natural fluidity of the sea and imposed structures of division and control. From this paradox emerges an imaginary eighth sea — a mental landscape with no fixed location, shaped by human ambition, political conflict, exploitation, and ecological destruction, in which established borders lose their meaning.

3 ***Herbarium***, 2004–2022 / 2026
90 herbarium sheets with plant specimens on acid-free paper, hand-written labels
Plants collected at sites of mass graves in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mallorca, Guatemala, and Cambodia

The installation consists of 90 sheets bearing plants collected at sites of mass violence. Alongside the scientific name, location, and date of collection, the hand-written labels also record the number of bodies found at each site. Begun in the vicinity of Prijedor, the project has for this exhibition been extended for the first time beyond Bosnia and Herzegovina, to three continents. Preserving the plants according to the standards of botanical science, the work binds scientific observation to violence, memory, and absence.

4 ***Circles of Devaluation***, 2026
Shell coasters (Ø 16–20 cm) on textile-covered wooden panels

Circles of Devaluation consists of two large compositions made from coasters hand-sewn from seashells and arranged in concentric circles. Cheap tourist souvenirs are transformed into monumental, almost jewel-like compositions. The low price of these objects, disproportionate to the labour invested in their making, points to exploitation, while the history of shells as currency and their role in the transatlantic slave trade further open the question of how value is assigned to natural materials, objects, and human labour.



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Herbarium
DOCUMENTARY VIDEO

IMPRESSUM

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GRAPHIC DESIGN
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SPECIAL THANKS

The Eighth Sea
dr. sc. Dario Omanović (Centre for Marine Research, Ruđer Bošković Institute)
dr. sc. Mirta Smodlaka Tanković (Centre for Marine Research, Ruđer Bošković Institute)
dr. sc. Lars-Eric Heimburger-Boavida (Mediterranean Institute of Oceanography (MIO)
dr. sc. Daniela Bănaru (Mediterranean Institute of Oceanography (MIO)
dr. sc. Sotiris Karavoltsos (Laboratory of Environmental Chemistry, Department of Chemistry, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)
dr. sc. Andreia Rodrigues (CESAM – Centre for Environmental and Marine Studies and Department of Biology, University of Aveiro)
dr. sc. Florin Timofte (National Institute for Marine Research and Development "Grigore Antipa")
Sune Riis Sørensen (DTU Aqua)
Jesper Sandager (research vessel DANA)

Herbarium
dr. sc. Vanja Nikola Stamenković
(Botanical Garden, Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, University of Zagreb)
Associació Memòria de Mallorca
Choeung Ek Genocidal Center
Ester Miza (San Juan Comalapa / Chi Xot)

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