

An **invited plenary lecture** by **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petra Krpan** was also held as part of the three-day international conference “**Open Doors, Open Minds**”, from **16 to 18 December 2025** at the **Technical Faculty in Bihać**.

Within the program, **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Petra Krpan** delivered a keynote lecture titled “**The Material Culture of Trauma: Clothing as an Epistemology of Survival**.” The lecture examines clothing and textiles as key material and semiotic spaces in which identity and experiences of trauma are constituted under conditions of the radical dehumanization of concentration camps. Camp clothing, designed with the aim of systematically erasing individuality and imposing a uniform, biopolitically controlled body (Agamben 1998; Foucault 1977), simultaneously functioned as a silent companion of survival: an object of negotiation, improvisation, hidden micro-gestures, and fragile strategies for preserving human dignity (Scarry 1985; Levi 1986). In its materiality, traces of violence are inscribed, but also forms of micro-resistance—from secret sewing and the exchange of fabric to ritualized practices of dressing that allowed prisoners to maintain a sense of subjectivity and humanity (Young 1993; Koch 2020). By placing this historical dimension in dialogue with contemporary experiences of forced migration and refugee clothing, the lecture opens broader questions concerning the ethics of publicly representing traumatized bodies in museum, artistic, and performative contexts (Hirsch 2012; Panagiotopoulos & Panotouvaki 2019). Identity is thus understood not as a static category but as a continuous, processual form of survival despite attempts at erasure—as memory woven into the body and the fabric (Butler 2004; Mbembe 2003), often the only remaining material evidence of existence that a person carries with them.