# How to Use This Book?

This book consists of several differently themed parts. It is the personal story of a journey between Amsterdam and Zagreb, a genealogy of Zagreb’s independent cultural scene, a mapping of cores of criticality in Zagreb today, a search for futurologies, a critique of the notion of independence, and a theory of the scene. This manual is written to assist you in deciding what to read first or foremost. If you do not feel like being guided, it is recommended to disregard this manual and to start and stop reading wherever.

The *Preface* is an excellent synopsis of the book’s argumentation by one of Croatia’s leading art historians, Leonida Kovač.

The *Introduction* is a mapping exercise which outlines a basic understanding of independent culture in Zagreb. Closing off this exercise, I position myself as a researcher and explicate the goal of my writing.

The main text of the book consists of three parts. If the first two parts focus mostly on organization, formation, positionality and politics, the latter part is concerned with formulation and theory.

The first part, *Genealogy,* is a historical account of independent cultures. Its central question is: how are independent cultures born? Based on interviews, participatory research, and (archival) literature research, I trace the birth of independent cultures to the point zero of 1991 and distinguish three subsequent stages after that. The distinction of these phases are propositions towards a genealogy of praxis, in the Foucauldian sense, which tries to understand how new social constellations are born every time the hand of power redistributes the playing cards of life.

In the following part, *Today,* I discuss – freely, speculatively, and in solidarity –the current ‘lived’ condition of independent cultures and the struggles around civil society. In some sense, it narrates the fourth and, so far, last phase of independent cultures, but, at the same time, it connects the past to the future through the present and conjures the question: whose independent cultures are these? It could function as an opening up of the conversation with the scene in Zagreb, its practitioners, and its historians, and it sets the stage for the next and more theoretical part of the book*.*

Part three, *Dimensions of Independence,* is the theoretical core of the book. It addresses the central question: what independence is at stake in independent cultures? It is a proposition towards an aesthetic theory of independence as a renewed notion of critical culture, based on the embrace of untranslatability and the scene as regime in common/s.