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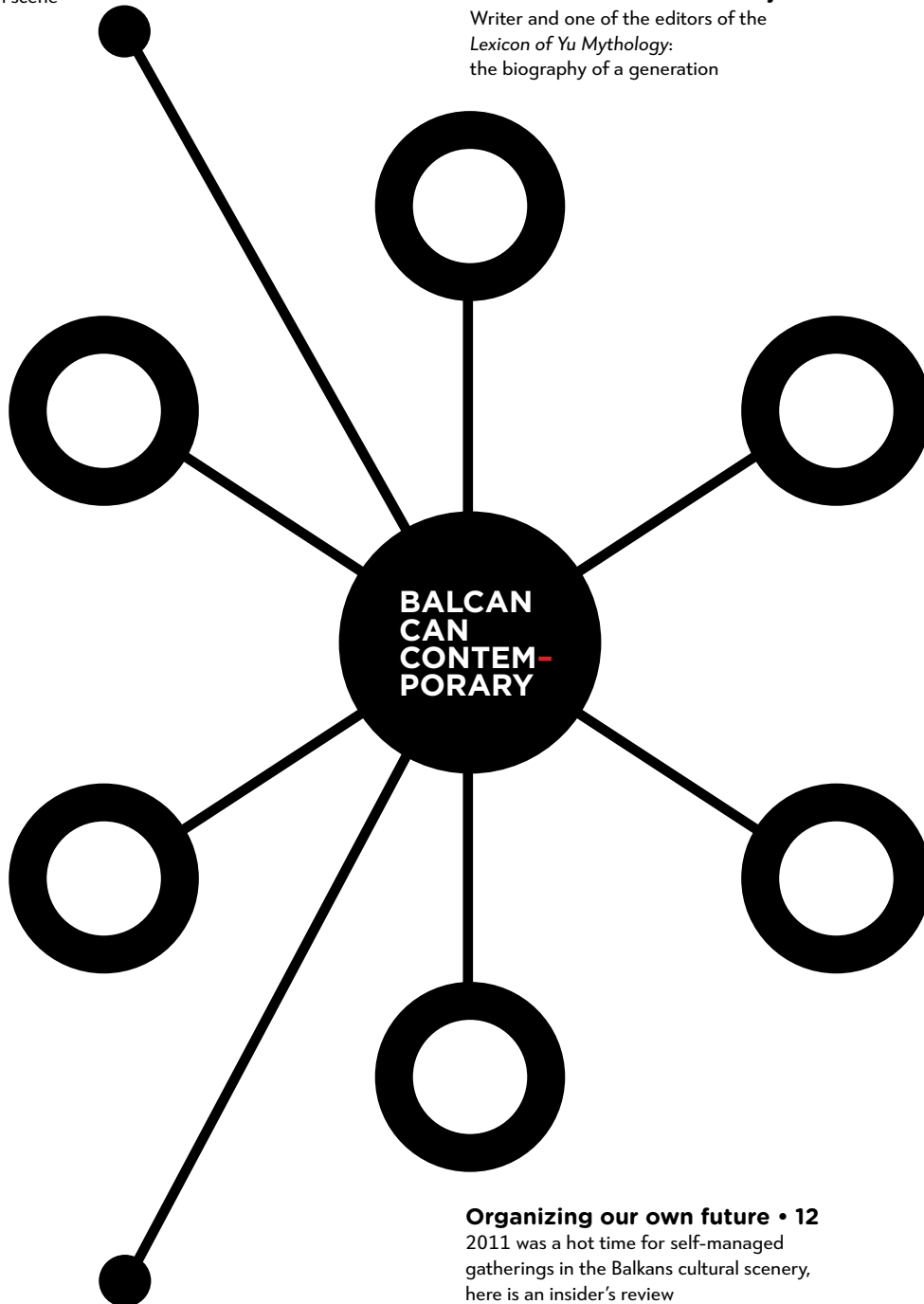
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THE FORWARD ISSUE

December 2011 – March 2012

It has been twenty years since the break up of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia and this issue of BCC magazine gives space to artists that matured since and that have taken it up (the break up and/or Yugoslavia) as a subject.

A major element of a critical analysis of the present is re-unearthing the past and a possible re-imagination of the future. In the Balkans, where the violent and nationalistic break-up of Yugoslavia made the region into fragmented realms that frenziedly selects its pasts, such re-unearthing takes on new and unexpected dimensions.

Could it be that the socialist federation was such a good idea that going back to it becomes actually going forward? Are the ex-Yu republics better off following their own independent paths? Was the regional union possible only through socialism — which the European Union might prove in the coming years?

BCC number 5 is about the current cultural (and socio-economic) landscape in a region whose past may seem prone to glorification, even if we may think we know better. Has the future already come when ideologies that we thought past convince us again of their relevance? Especially since we are all always expecting the future to be slightly better than it ends up being. It was the case twenty years ago, and it will be like that twenty years down the line.

To tell us more about it we have interviewed Vladimir Arsenijević, one of this generation's most celebrated authors and intellectuals, and one of the co-editors of the already cult book *Lexicon of YU Mythology* and Oliver Frlić, the theater director who seems to have specialized in all things YU. Furthermore, one of our editors, Vanja Nikolić gives us an overview of some of the most noted recent theater productions that dealt with the former Yugoslavia on stages across the region.

Our nod to the *Yugoslav socialist self-management* is a text by Dragana Alfirević and Jasmina Založnik on self-managed artistic gatherings that took place in 2011 under the hospices of several festivals in Slovenia and Serbia. This is followed by a dictionary of terms that define the context of the local artistic scenery today.

ZVONIMIR DOBROVIĆ in collaboration with **André von Ah**

BY VANJA NIKOLIĆ

Interview: Vladimir Arsenijević

THESE LITTLE COUNTRIES DO NOT COMPARE WELL WITH YUGOSLAVIA



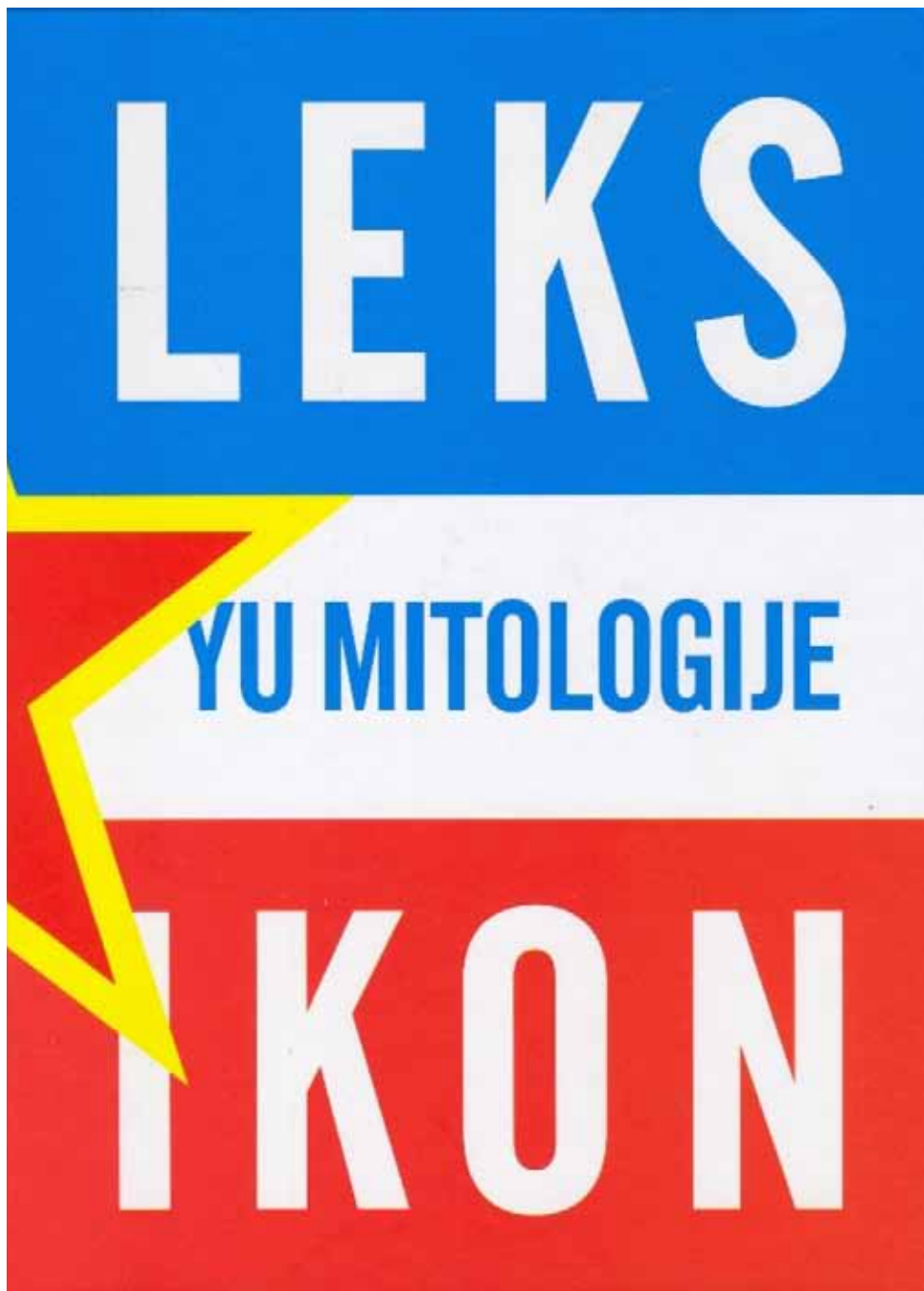
Vladimir Arsenijević is a writer and one of the editors of the Lexicon of Yu Mythology and thus is a good person to ask about what Yugoslavia was in the past and what it is now.

So, you are currently staying in Croatia. How do you feel about Croatia and is that emotion in any way linked with ex-Yugoslavia?

Vladimir Arsenijević: I was born in Pula, where I spent the first seven years of my life, and then I spent another year in Split before my family moved to Belgrade. For me, Croatia is my homeland as much as Serbia, or any other part of what was once the interesting but unfortunately accursed mosaic that we called Yugoslavia. I am not nostalgic for the former ideologies, but I am for the beautiful and courageous attempt of co-existence which we, of course, ruined with pride, and even today we think that we have proven something very important and achieved some “freedoms” which once allegedly weren’t there. To me each of these little states that now exist are sad. But that Croatia has the beautiful coast of the Adriatic Sea makes the sadness somewhat easier to bear, if you are, for example, in Rijeka (as I am now) and not in, I don’t know, in Vinkovci ...

The Lexicon of Yu Mythology is a kind of biography of one generation and one state, but seems to have become much more than that. As an author did you have hopes for that? To what extent has the Lexicon outgrown itself?

VA: The Lexicon is a project that has a long history. The concept was created in 1989 in the editorial office of Start, and the original idea was simply to collect guidelines which would represent everyday life in Yugoslavia. And then when Yugoslavia fell apart, the whole thing got more intense and gained more importance and there were even more reasons for its creation. The work collecting material lasted, with a few interruptions, throughout the nineties and the first years of the 2000s, in Amsterdam, Zagreb and Belgrade, and the book was published as a cooperation between the Croatian and Serbian publishers and distributed throughout the whole territory of the former Yugoslavia. In Slovenia, it was the first non-Slovenian book that got into the local sales charts after independence. Partly, we were hoping that the book would become a biography of one generation, and we hoped that it would become the most diverse selection of references concerning the time that it covers. Future generations will know the various little things on which life depended and that relate to those times, and not just the boring names of generals, battles, and various other sorts of nonsense with which official historiography



The cover of the book *Lexicon of Yu Mythology*, co-edited by Arsenijević

mercilessly, relentlessly and tirelessly overwhelm us. I am glad because of that. A lexicon can not outgrow itself because it is a very fluid project that can very easily change its form. This is neither a book nor a website, nor a theater play or TV show. This is, potentially, all that together and much more.

Was there a sense of responsibility during the selection and editing of the Lexicon given that the purpose of the Lexicon was to set up the construction of a Yu identity?

VA: Well, we had certain pre-defined thematic groups to make it easier for the people who worked on the guidelines for the selection. And then we let memory do its thing and counted on a certain collective wisdom. It turns out that we were not wrong. People have (again) rebuilt their Yu identity. We fought not to swamp ourselves in thousands of pages of material – they had to be reduced to a bearable 600 or 700 pages, and now I do not even remember how many there were. We tried not to offend any of the collaborators with our choices, and also tried not to leave too many holes in the final version. Of course, it was impossible to satisfy everyone with the structure and the process, so I can only see it as one possible version of the Lexicon, and any further work on it may provide, I'm sure, new, different, and even surprising results. In any case, we were aware of our responsibility, but we also had a good time doing it.

Have you had a chance to see any of the plays made according to the Lexicon, or with Yugoslavia as a theme? And, in your opinion, where does the renewed interest for Yugoslavia that has been seen particularly in the past year come from?

VA: I saw the one in Novi Sad, by Oliver Frlić, and had a lot of fun. That play makes some additional improvements with respect to the book, and also pokes ironic fun at the Lexicon itself, and I think that that is extremely OK. Other plays, unfortunately, I haven't seen. The interest in Yugoslavia will rise and fall depending on how much it appeals to us in the present. To me, that is very ugly, but we can't do much about it. Now, the ultra-liberal economy is failing, along with banks, and that has brought the entire planet into question. The economic crisis undermines the very essence of the European idea, and now everyone, after this, will remember Yugoslavia with melancholy and think that once "we could all eat well". The truth is far from that. Yugoslavia was a country that was devastated by internal problems until it collapsed under pressure, apparently forever. If the Yugoslavs were more mature, Yugoslavia would still exist. This way, she will be just another currency for settling accounts from the past, pulled out from time to time, and nothing more than that. That is sad.

In that case, can it be said that the idea of Yugoslavia is used to arouse nostalgia and deviate attention, and not for an authentic study of political positions?

VA: Well, I don't know what Yugoslavia is used for, honestly. It probably isn't serving any special purpose any more, and everyone has a right to use it, just like all other rejected things, and to do with it whatever they want. For our part, we wanted to define the specific cultural and subcultural nostalgia and forever separate it from the political one. People who like the Lexicon of Yu Mythology are unlikely to be as silly as those who go to Tito's mausoleum on May 25, wearing 'titovke' hats and red scarves and other similar nonsense, or taking an oath of fidelity to the 'only son of our nation and nationalities'. This is an emotionally significantly different type of Yugo-nostalgia. And, of course, it is very hard to believe that these little countries could compare well with Yugoslavia. Thus, we very well know what we have lost, but can not seem to understand what the hell we have gained in the process of disintegration and all the wars of the Nineties, which were, everywhere, replaced with the final vulgarity of the 2000s.

Can it be considered that Yugoslavia still exists, at least in culture, considering the many regional variations?

VA: There is something that we call the 'Yugosphere' or the post-Yugoslav area – those who become ill from the very mention of this name can call it the 'Western Balkan cultural circle' or whatever but ... In any case, the similarity of language and sensibilities cannot be erased just by establishing new border crossings, which is what the extreme naivety of nationalistic projects in the nineties consisted of. Something there still survived, and it was obvious that our closeness is as tough as our hatred and that, simply, just like hate, it does not go anywhere... So today we are pleased to cooperate, that is, with people who care about that, and the others still insist on hate and believe that there is some fantastic quality in it. And so it will last until the next new major political changes in our region.

Do you see yourself as part of an independent culture? What does that mean in Serbia today? What is your relationship to the cultural elite?

VA: I do not know if there is such a thing at all. If it exists, it is such a fragmented circle that it is hard to detect its borders. I personally do not feel that I belong to anyone or anything except to the things that, alone or in cooperation with friends and the people around me, I create myself, and on which I am engaged. My relationship with the cultural elite is non-existent because I do not see what is elite, or exactly what we mean by that. If you think that those old men at the Academy SANU are elite, or the Association of Writers who are so sadly lost in time and space and can not seem to pull out themselves out of their own atavistic matrix, then I have to say that my relationship is summarized in one word: contempt.

What would be your terms for the former Yugoslavia, and for Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Bosnia, and how would you create a new lexicon of today?

VA: Uh, that is a very complicated issue. We once thought about a kind of lexicon of the nineties, but many years have to pass before we can write it, obviously. And the guidelines would be much more pessimistic because the Lexicon deals with a time of peace, safety and prosperity, and all that we are living after the fall of Yugoslavia is something totally different. I wonder on what we will base our memories of this time in the future!

INTERVIEW: OLIVER FRLJIĆ

Oliver Frljić is one of the leading theatre personalities in the ex-Yu region. A director, author and sometimes even performer, he was born in Bosnia and Herzegovina and studied in Zagreb where he has been based ever since. He started his career working with the amateur group Le Cheval, and continued with Teatar &TD, The Zagreb Youth Theatre and even the Croatian National Theatre Ivan pl. Zajc in Rijeka. In the last couple of years he has become a regional star, directing performances in the The Slovenian Youth Theatre in Ljubljana and Atelje 212 in Belgrade as well as with the International Theatre Festival MESS in Sarajevo and the Ex Ponto Festival in Ljubljana. His performances, *Turbo Folk'*, *Cowardice*, *When Father was Away on Business*, *Damned be the Traitor of his Homeland'*, *A Letter from 1920* and many others, are acclaimed both by audiences and critics, although there are regularly those who oppose them, one way or another, from one standpoint or another.

Constantly rethinking his theatre options and poetics, Frljić is one of the most interesting theatre personalities that has emerged lately. Described as radical, rebellious and provocative, his credo seems to be that theatre, in order to have the power and mandate to change the world, must first and foremost change itself. Thus, some of his performances deal with the issues of the present day, while others deal with active history, the type that 'does not want to pass'. Yugoslavia and its ideological, political and social legacy is therefore one of the issues he has often researched and critically handled, even before it became 'en vogue' among the theatre authors and directors throughout the ex-Yu region.

Lately there is a whole wave of nostalgic performances throughout the former republic of Yugoslavia. One is even called *Goodbye, SFRJ*. What is the difference between Yu-nostalgia and Yu-profiting?

The situation now is that under the premises of normalisation there is something going on that is far from normalisation. Now, finally, we can deal with the issues of that certain period of our recent history that was almost forbidden for the last two decades. At the same time, the idea of nostalgic non-critical acceptance of everything concerning that Yugoslav period of our history is also very wrong and therefore harmful, let alone the idea that some are making profit out of such nostalgic approaches. I want to think and see everything concerning former Yugoslavia, or just Yugoslavia, since it fell apart for good, in a critical way. Particularly, my point of view is to try to stay focused as little as possible on the real historical facts of that specific country and the way it collapsed, and as much as possible on the very idea of such a state, the idea that still has certain potential that can not be neglected. In my opinion, Yugoslavia is a higher concept that comprises social equality as well as the end of the logic of national representation, and consequently that term stands for a type of universalism that was not present in such a notion either before or after. Unfortunately, the market condition nowadays is such that Yugoslavia is a lucrative commodity, which results in an abundance of works dealing with that subject, with a whole variety of approaches. Yugoslavia is everywhere, in films, visual arts, theatre... Some of the works are interesting, but even if they succeed in evading this market conditioning of the theme itself, they, on the other hand, put it in a clear neo-liberal frame where it becomes just an article to be traded for, or with. However, there are still works that manage to deal with Yugoslavia as a geopolitical fact, as an idea and, at the same time, as a commodity on the art market.

Speaking of the ideas, let's play the alternative history game. Would Yugoslavia be sustainable with liberal democracy?

I think it could have been sustainable in the same way as China actually is today. China is in a very problematic but also very interesting position. It is still the People's Republic, with everything that implies, and is at the same time one of the major world powers on the global market. Had the Yugoslav system with its planned economy and everything else not been systematically devastated, it might have had a very interesting position, even today. Alternative history is always a tricky ground, since Yugoslavia can not be contemplated outside the South Eastern European context and everything that happened with the countries surrounding it. But still I think that Yugoslavia or something we perceived as Yugoslavia has a certain kind of future potential as an idea. Global economy and its current affairs confirm that belief. It probably would not bear the same name ever again, but the questions of social equality and different distribution of goods have been raised again recently, worldwide. The relation between centre and periphery is changing, and China, for example, is the global centre... Everything is changing.



Oliver Frljić

Let's get back to art. Within the ex-Yu countries theatre is now doing what economy did many years ago, and, actually, never stopped doing: exchanging, communicating, trading....

At a certain moment, we also exchanged bullets.

Therefore, it is almost ridiculous how the fact that somebody is working, like you do, in Belgrade, and that there is some cultural exchange, was an enormous issue in Croatia even only a few years ago. It is a general, although romantic notion that culture is always an avant-garde, that it can foresee processes and cross barriers. But in this sense, culture is only following down the path already trodden by capital.

It is true that some relations in the region, in fact almost all of them, have been re-established, if they ever were broken. But now we have a whole different economy than before, when the countries of Yugoslavia were closely knit and, for example, raw material was dug in one country, sent to another to be refined, then to the third... That model of economy collapsed, never to rise again. But anyway, the third sector is becoming the most productive now, and some exchange of goods, intellectual and cultural, is taking place.

I agree with the conclusion that culture is following capital in that sense, but the discourse of politicians and economists is rather different to artistic discourse, and that is the crucial difference that should not be neglected or forgotten. The common regional market is the idea that is propelled out of sheer economic reasons, since all of the ex-Yu countries finally realised how incompetent they are outside that circle. Cultural and artistic exchange is only natural because of the common past and the fact that we use more or less the same language, regardless of its name. Why is the mention of regional cultural exchange still odious in Croatia? Because of the collective paranoia that has been produced for a number of years, especially of Serbia, but also of some other countries in the region. That is why people speak of them with a certain distance that can not be easily removed. It was as if a kind of lobotomy was performed on the people in general.

But that lobotomy is only partial – when it comes to trading, everything is fine and all the distances are easily forgotten...

Yes, because the war in Croatia is based on a great lie, and that fact is now becoming clear. All the transcripts between soldiers on the battlefield and the high or even the highest political authorities of the time show that a lie is at the very foundation of that war. Unfortunately that fact diminishes or even annihilates all the truisms about that war. The war was the only way for the almost illiterate political elites in Croatia, Serbia and so on, to stay in power. Their primitive political thinking, ignoring the question of whether that is either political or thinking, deprived them of any means of winning and retaining political power other than constant production of enemies. Therefore, naturally, any kind of Yugoslavia, or any similar political and social association was absolutely unacceptable for them. But, the more we deeply and critically deal with the issue of Yugoslavia, the idea behind it and everything else concerning it, the more we realise our own present condition, because it is a direct consequence of the way the former Yugoslavia collapsed. All the human sacrifice and victims are the ballast that stops us from thinking about Yugoslavia, the fallen are used for a very dangerous demagoguery with one single purpose: not to really question why the war broke out and how. Almost every day we get new pieces of evidence about how that war was waged and how its image was fabricated.

Those fallen are ordinary men and women that yesterday were workers and today they are retired or unemployed. The working class and the proletariat, as such, has become a lucrative artistic theme in the last couple of years, as well as Yugoslavia. How do you comment on that emphatic revival of the idea of the worker? You also dealt with that issue in Rijeka, when you did Moliere's Miser in the barely functioning Rijeka shipyard that, at the time was on the verge of bankruptcy... Is theatre a tool of emancipation in that sense, or were you mimicking or even treating that concept ironically?

The problem with the workers, or the working class, is that they largely and very openly displayed their willingness to identify themselves with the nation rather than with the class or the people of their own social status, if the term class is problematic for whatever reason. That is the beginning of the problem. They forgot that their fathers had wanted to build a new form of state, based on proletarian principles, and they also forgot the idea of internationalism, which is, in my opinion, very alive and meaningful today. But it is the result of years of indoctrination, with the state and the nation as the highest ranking priorities, those worth fighting and dying for, regardless of all the differences within that society. So, after the war, we could see where we were and find out who among us belonged to the famous two

hundred rich families, as the first Croatian president put it.

Now we are surprised that there are initiatives coming from different war veterans' associations from the region. I think that trade unions and workers' movements, which do not actually exist here, should be the foundation of solidarity for the working class in the whole region. If that does not happen everything is lost, because it does not really matter any more whether we have a so-called left or right wing party winning the elections. Because, now the situation seems much more helpless than before, since today capital is making all the moves and all the decisions, while parliamentary democracy only serves as a cover. The elections that took place in Croatia a couple of weeks ago serve only to soothe the conscience of those who voted for the hard nationalist party, HDZ, twenty years ago and who were supporters of privatisation processes that turned out to be nothing more than theft on an enormous scale. As far as I am concerned, and I have absolutely no political power, I think that the only way to stop or change the way things are going is to start the process of nationalization. Both locally and globally, the power and capital is concentrated in the hands of a small number of people who also have the state apparatus and institutions working for them, so workers have no means of expressing their frustration, not to mention changing the system. The known models of democracy fail them, and will continue to fail them even if we voted every day in a new round of elections. The premises of neo-liberal capitalism are non arguable, everything else can be questioned except that. Therefore, the only way to change things is to gain real power, or weapons.

Long time ago, 'Workers of the world, unite!' was the popular catchphrase. Is it a ringtone of today also, or maybe of tomorrow?

I do not think so, unfortunately. The main purpose of all the state ideological mechanisms, the kindergartens, schools, universities, the Church, police and the judicial system, is to naturalize the present state. In other words, to convince its subjects that change is impossible and improbable, that the situation as it is has no alternative. So people can not be politically formed in any other way than the one already prescribed. Nominally, we all live in societies that have both horizontal and vertical mobility, but in reality there are just a few of those who actually managed to move out of the caste they were born into. And even if there were more of them, the idea of such great social differences is not something I think we should agree upon.

Do you believe in the call for direct democracy?

No, I believe in armed resistance. Although it is a paradox, since I am a pacifist who never served in the army and fled the war. The real change can be obtained only through armed resistance, it is also written at the end of the Manifesto of the Communist Party. The disproportion of power is such that it leaves no other solution. Of course, that idea is very unpopular today, although liberal democracy allows bombing Iraq and Afghanistan, and can live off the backs of workers in sweat shops in the Far East while continually avowing the pricelessness of human lives. Unfortunately, the system itself understands no other argument than the armed one. We can peacefully protest all we want, every day, but no change will it bring.

Among the institutions that appease critical thought is also theatre, your primary field of work and interest. How do you function in it, bearing in mind everything you just said? Can you apply your thinking in your work, especially when you work in institutions like communal public theatres? What happens to the idea, or ideal, of equal authorial participation in that case?

Well, I gave up that method, at least when I worked in institutions. The experience taught me that because collaborators do not actually know what to do with the possibilities and space given, they can not make use of the freedom that has suddenly opened to them. In the end, it is obvious that they like the model they all are nominally rebelling against, which is having an authoritative director that forces them to do what he or sometimes she wants. I no longer have any illusion left concerning that matter. All I can do is make some sort of scandal, and thus make some symbolic profit for myself, but one man can not change the whole system. The whole cultural climate and policy should change if theatre is no longer to be merely a servant of literature and is to become a generator of different views of the social and political context in which it functions. The same can be said for television programmes. If there were homeless and hungry people on TV screens all the time, on every channel, so that there is no possibility of escaping from those pictures and stories, I think the general public would start to think differently. But, at this point, it is almost impossible.

So, I am working in institutions, where I am just a small change in their rather blurry transactions. Of course, I also have some interest in that and I can not delude myself in that sense. But, it is even harder to work in an independent sector, because there one does not achieve at least that minimum of visibility that is given by the institutions. So, democracy does not work in society, how then can we expect it to work in theatre?

SPIT AND SING, MY YUGOSLAVIA!¹

The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia has not existed for twenty years. After the war, the bloody breakup of the former state was followed by a silent period of hate, present particularly among certain nationalities. In that period, national identity and spirit was extremely emphasized, by obliterating all that was once shared. After that arose, as indicated by the European Union, the need for reconciliation and mutual cooperation, and so the re-connecting and sharing of conversations and work began again.

In artistic production renewed collaboration has emerged for several reasons. First of all, there were material reasons that were able to provide for the co-production of certain artistic creations, whether films, series or plays, more resources, and the co-production itself generated a wider target audience, which included at least two countries of the former state. In addition, artists and intellectuals who were working together before the war, in one state, had had their own personal responses to the wars, and just continued to maintain relationships that were built through private and creative life. In this way a kind of unity in Yugoslavia was never interrupted.

In the past year, artists are again interested in the former state, but this time on a completely different level. In fact, there was a series of art projects, exhibitions and performances that took Yugoslavia as a main topic, its history and what it represents nowadays. The motives for such ventures certainly could be found, at this moment, in an adequate distance in time from the experienced events, and their associated emotions, from which they can be observed and analysed. However, for many art projects that were realized during the last year in Serbia, it seemed that the only motivations were inspiring Yugo-nostalgia in the audience, and providing good entertainment, rather than thinking seriously about themes such as identity, dealing with the past, failed ideology, or any others.

Being Yugoslav

Born in Yu is a play directed by Dino Mustafic and performed by the actors of the Yugoslav Drama Theatre. It deals with life in former Yugoslavia and the question of what it meant to be Yugoslav. This very potent issue, which can arouse topics of guilt, identity, hatred and nationalism, is not sufficiently exploited. The director has not sufficiently explored these aspects, but has only dwelt on pathetic confessions in which actors evoke memories of the Croatian coast and other features of a beautiful Yugoslavia, without asking the question of how and why this beautiful Yugoslavia disintegrated in a terrible war.

The play begins and ends in the same way. All the actors recite their identification numbers. They are a sign that the topic will deal with memories and confessions, not fiction, and that they all have one thing in common, they were born in Yugoslavia. They return to the Yugoslav moments of their life, evoking memories, introducing us to them, most often, recounting stories.

The most successful scenes are those in which the director goes one step further and gives function and commentary to the confessions, such as when actors walk on stage disoriented because they cannot find their way in a pointless changing of street names. They are also lost in the search for national identity, their own history and politics. It is also seen when they, as a chorus, curse all ex-Yugoslavian nationalities, or discuss the genealogy of Serbian and Croatian people, or in a monologue about a conflict with a friend, which started with the topic of Krleža and (or) Andrić, but was filled with national intolerance and misunderstanding, or the story about the inability to obtain a visa to go to a funeral in neighbouring Croatia. However, even these scenes remain superficial in their meaning, only images in a series of other images.

Thus, this performance remained a polemic of a nice and light Yugoslavism, presenting it to us as something that is not a great burden on us. Yugoslavism means to go to the seaside in Croatia, to love Tito, to be a pioneer, to participate in the rallies, to fall in love with Croats or Muslims. How is it possible that, so unburdened with nationality, Yugoslavia still fell into such a terrifying war? This question, unfortunately, does not arise during the performance. Not a single question about guilt is posed, nor the real questions of nationality which led to the slaughter and killing. These issues are noted only as an evil that happened to those who once believed in a beautiful Yugoslavia. They are the evil dragon in the fairy tale that terrified the princesses and ate their princes, the Croats and Muslims, whom they loved.

Responsibility and guilt

It is difficult to analyse the play *Kukavičluk* (Cowardice), from the the National Theatre in Subotica, separately from the plays *Damned be the Traitor of His Homeland* and *Turbo Folk* from the same

directors, as those three make up the cycle on the breakup of Yugoslavia. The topics with which Frlić deals, and the way he examines theatre in each of them are inseparable.

Frlić deals with the “legacy” of former Yugoslav countries. In Croatia, he points to the social context and its value system, through the phenomenon of turbo folk; in Slovenia, the disintegration and the Slovenian point of view, speaking through the bodies of the symbols of the former state. In Serbia, Frlić deals with the social responsibility that everyone (of us) should have when considering the events from the 90s, or turning our heads from these events. The NATO bombing, Milosevic’s Serbia, the 5th of October, the independence of Kosovo, homophobia and xenophobia, are all creators of our reality, and Frlić’s staging is graduated so that the peak is reached in the final scene (Srebrenica) and causes in us an intense feeling of personal responsibility.

Very important, in relation to this performance but also for other performances from the Frlić trilogy, is the question of how the director treats the relationship between reality and theatre. The answer is, perhaps, in Frlić’s commentary about the reaction of the audience to the play: “It’s nice when someone is crying, but this is due to emotional blackmail.” This emotional blackmail and all blackmail which happens between the audience and actors is a topic that Frlić has thoroughly analysed and researched. It might even be concluded that he uses, in a political sense, these complex topics to bring the audience to a certain level of emotion, the level at which it is possible to manipulate the viewer’s emotion and to question the viewer. It is necessary, for example, to use the names of the Srebrenica victims. If not for these names, if we are not faced with the event which makes us feel isolated, pitiful and marked, individually and collectively, Frlić wouldn’t be able to force us to sit in the audience and listen to a list of the names of Srebrenica’s dead. He wouldn’t be able to force us to sit in the audience while in front of us there is no performance, as the actors are also in the audience, and the text just lists 600 names, and still, we sit in the audience and listen. And we react emotionally.

In this game of theatre and reality Frlić goes even further. He puts us in the strange position of not having a person or theatrical situation to applaud. The illusion of theatre no longer exists. Is it because we are affected by what is said? Or is it because the actors did not perform well enough? No. It is because the director has put us in front of our own harsh reality, and we do not applaud that, do we?

Yugoslav heritage

Aside from dealing seriously with the topic of Yugoslavism, Oliver Frlić has dealt with Yugoslavia as a topic more than others in the past year. He has directed so many plays around the former Yugoslavia that the media no longer call him a Croatian director, but a regional one. His performance for Atelje 212 was not devoted directly to Yugoslavia, but rather to the artistic work that it produced, which was extremely popular and important and which shall remain as part of the Yugoslav heritage.

When Father was Away on Business is a classic Yugoslav film, written by Abdulah Sidran and directed by Emir Kusturica. Frlić accepted the demanding task of transposing the screenplay into the theatrical medium – especially demanding if we take into account this particular film, and, in general, the possibility of suggesting with theatrical language a quite different impression to the one that the moving images leave on the audience.



Damned be the Traitor of His Homeland!, by Oliver Frlić

Oliver Frlić was fairly successful in this. To be exact, the result on the stage was not Kusturica’s father on a business trip, but Frlić’s distinctive version. Poetically, however, the play is not nearly as provocative, probing or as interactive as earlier Frlić plays. It is mostly classical, especially in comparison with *Turbo Folk*, *Damned be the Traitor*, and *Cowardice*.

Using the well-known screenplay, the director doesn’t refer to the film, but returns to the drama by

History repeats itself, first as tragedy, second as farce.
Karl Marx

Abdulah Sidran. In doing so, he makes use of the possibility of an entirely new reading of this play. At a time when the personal and political drama from the time of the Information Bureau is no longer our reality, but the influence of politics on personal lives is, nonetheless, constantly present, the distance from the topic (the Information Bureau) is required. This distance makes visible the universal level of the text, in which our reality is not lacking, such as a tendency towards uniform political opinion, the abolition of personal and social freedoms, and the inability to keep a personal life outside the political context and, thus, all personal and family stories became drama, carrying a clear melodramatic tone.

However, Frlić skillfully avoided that melodramatic tone by using Brechtian methodology. By connecting the two characters in the drama, the boy Dino and the adult Dino, in just one character - the old man Dino, Frlić creates a distance from the past and its problems and focuses on the present. In doing so he also creates a certain absurd situation: objectivity and, in some ways, an ironic shift towards the performance taking place on stage. With this, he prevents any actor from taking a melodramatic tone (if they did it would become a farce), but all of them are keeping the distance which is determined by the character of lead protagonist. Although we are not surprised by this performance, not shocked or struck, Frlić gave us some interesting food for thought. It is also important that Frlić, in this play, recreated its own aesthetic using only theatrical language, and in doing so created a significant deviation from the famous film.

Yugo-nostalgia

Last season, Atelje 212 did not only devote this performance to Yugoslavia, but in fact, devoted the entire season to it, which they called 'Next Yu', in which the topic of what is left of the former state was addressed in many different ways. Theatre manager Kokan Mladenovic, also invited authors from different parts of the former state, and in that way fulfilled the concept of the season.

Mladenovic also linked the end of that season and the beginning of the next, named Utopia, with the play Farewell SFRJ, which was directed and written by him. This show takes the plot of the famous film by Wolfgang Isère, Goodbye Lenin, and tries to establish a parallel during the time of the breakup of Yugoslavia.

The story of the film and the performance coincide on several levels. What is different between the play and the film is the context and political background. With the fall of the Berlin Wall, East Berlin and Germany experienced a breakthrough of capitalism and unification, one a new political system, the other, a generally positive thing. The film maker confronts two systems, socialism and capitalism, very explicitly and the main character defends his mother from one, trying to keep her present in the other. Through the comedy that these scenes create, and that are possible only through the technical means of film, the criticism of the two ruling politics was accomplished.

With the disintegration of Yugoslavia, which was, in contrast to East Germany, considered the land of prosperity, many shortcomings came to the surface and resulted in the civil war. So, the two worlds are set side by side, one utopian, in which mother believes despite of all the obvious problems, and the other the situation of war, which at best can be only darkly humorous. It is therefore impossible to compare Yugoslavia and Germany, because such a setting creates the opposite effect. It becomes too hard to simply transfer the same story into the different context, where it can not achieve the same effective humour, nor the same questioning of the ideology and political system. Instead of that, from such a structure is created a play that gives the impression that the director was lacking in attitude or was indecisive about the theme of the play and to whom it is addressed, and, in what is a greater problem, the opacities in the directing are obvious in the actors performance.

Transferring a story from one medium to another is not new. Changing the medium demands serious work. In this case it was not well done, and so in terms of the story there are many mistakes and errors, such as using flashback without a clear function, or a lack of motivation of the characters, who can be unconvincing.

On the directing side, this play is a mixture of post-drama theatre, communicating through dysfunctional songs, at the beginning, and, at the end, a bad attempt at a serious drama dealing with characters in important historical moments, while being mostly a light comedy for the masses. Such indetermination of genre leads to confusion and to the impression that the weighty political and social topic is not a good choice. This performance will, however, be popular as it makes the audience laugh, while also using Yugo-nostalgia as a way to escape from the reality, hardships and crisis of today.

And so the conclusion may be that Yugoslavia is just something nice to remember, and to make us believe that that once life was better, and that one day it will be again. Simply, Yugoslavia seems now a fairy tale with all the good and bad that it brings.

ORGANIZING OUR OWN FUTURE ON THE POTENTIALITIES OF THE SELF-ORGANIZED GATHERINGS IN 2011

In order to deal with the exhausted modes of production, into which the system is forcing us, we have decided to establish a parallel system, a system within the system, where we could play by our own rules, test our ideas of horizontality, direct democracy, and exercise an alternative to dual power. A system that would make us free for a moment, and maybe in this rapture allow us to recognize what is needed, important, while awakening the passion and trust about art that we have begun to lose.

In the recent flourishing of neo-liberal models of organization in culture, in which certain systems of values and modes of behaviour are simply inherited and taken over from corporate logic, and highly bureaucratized, without questioning or understanding, a wider group of people organized around and within the Nomad Dance Academy initiated several meetings and activities: the Pleskavica festival (Ljubljana), the Residency at the ImpulsTanz festival (Vienna), and the Kondenz & LocoMotion festivals (Belgrade, Skopje). A very vague common title for all these events was the 'Woodstock of Knowledge' – a kind of revival of something we have never been a part of, but which sounded exciting and desirable for all of us. All the events we created dealt with knowledge production, and not just one-way knowledge transfer. The image of Woodstock seemed to be appropriate in all its aspects when speaking of knowledge today, in the sense that although we were not there, for us it is an image of commonness and sharing, and, also, we liked the image of the rules being temporarily broken in order to be established again.

So, let's introduce these activities in their chronological order:

Pleskavica, June 9Th – 19Th 2011, Ljubljana



Pleskavica festival,
photo by Sunčan Stone

The Pleskavica festival emerged from ShortCuts festival, part of the final stage of the Nomad Dance Academy Educational Programme, where the participants of the programme presented their works. In 2011, the festival was reshaped and gained a new dimension: instead of inviting finished products, people were invited to co-create the programme or modes of knowledge production at the festival. We took Alan Badiou's Fifteenth Thesis on Affirmation - 'It is better to do nothing, than to act formally for the visibility of what the Empire already renders as visible' – as our guiding idea. We tried to create a space which would be free from the rigid logic of the market; a space where the size of the audience would not be the main criteria, nor even the famous names or the highlights of the dance season, but rather a space where we would be privileged to do nothing as well. We proposed 5 modules (on which the artistic board — Dragana Alfrević, Goran Bogdanovski, Sandra Djorem, Dejan Srhoj, Rok Vevar and Jasmina Založnik — worked for more than 6 months, in order to prepare a fruitful ground for the festival) to the invited artists (40 foreign and local practitioners) as a starting point for creating the programme and for upgrading and rethinking the methodologies of being and working together. The logic of this work was completely decentralized and we moved in constant renegotiations, revisions and upgrades of ideas, and (most importantly!) with enough space for things to consolidate in their meaning or to be disregarded if they lost their meaning. The result was close to 50 events, workshops, lectures, performances, debates, improv sessions, etc. Around 100 participants were present, half of them constantly and another half occasionally coming and leaving during the ten days. We had all a festival should have, and much more: 4 studios, 2 venues, a PR manager, a technical director – we even had a kitchen with 2 meals per day offered to anyone who turned up; we had a kindergarten and a shared temporary library.

The programme was created daily, with all those interested contributing equally, in the manner of the direct democracy that is now being practised at the parliaments of the Occupy movement (<http://15october.net/>), but also in some other self-organized movements around the world. Due to this direct participation all the ideas were given and all the negotiations and adjustments made on the spot.

Nda Residency At Impulstanz Festival, July 23Rd – 31St 2011, Vienna

The Nomad Dance Academy team received an invitation from the ImPulsTanz festival, to do a residency during July, and to present the publication on the NDA and the revisited issue of the Walking Theory Magazine on dance. As we were given free reign in creating the residency we decided to use the site of the ImPulsTanz festival as an environment for our own discussions, plans and (possible/imagined) future activities, and to involve the busy bees of ImPulsTanz & DanceWEB as much as possible. In the same manner we presented our publication – with reversed roles and positions – instead of presenting the past of the Nomad Dance Academy, we invited participants to claim their own vision of it, and offered a gift to the “winner” – the total production budget of 1000 euro. The publication to be presented was offered as a source of information, from which participants could draw their knowledge about what we do. Quite a few people appeared at the event and more than 20 were willing to share their thoughts, predictions, imagination and vision with us. During this event, that lasted from 10pm until 6am the next morning, we learned a lot about initiative, about negotiation, about instantly creating the parameters as the event is unfolding, and found out the importance of what could be defined as direct democracy, without a leader, with minimum intervention from anyone empowered (the organizers) and with each participant having the same kind of power. We learned that it takes creating precise but changeable conditions for an Event to emerge. In its nature this was completely unfathomable event, and it was announced three times differently on the same website, within four days: once as a discussion, then as a book presentation and the third time as a performance.

Festivals Kondenz & Locomotion, October 20Th – 29Th 2011, Belgrade And Skopje



Locomotion festival 2011

These two festivals were initiated in 2008 with the aim to fill the gap between something that is affirmed and confirmed as local contemporary dance and performing arts and what was happening abroad. The festivals have succeeded over the years to gather a certain audience and get significant media and audience feedback, but nevertheless the initiators felt that they should pay more attention towards actively creating relations among artists, curators, and audiences. Acknowledging their previous experiences, during 2011 the local teams of curators invited their colleagues from Hybris Konstproduktion from Stockholm, to co-organize frameworks and to conceive together what resulted in the Curatorial Programme of Kondenz and Locomotion festivals. The team of initiators/curators (Dalija Acin, Dragana Alfirević, Marijana Cvetković Marković, Anders Jacobson, Iskra Šukarova, Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, and Johan Thelander) invited 35 participants (artists, curators, theoreticians and organizers) to co-curate the festivals together in order to question what common space for

programming does to the works of art and to the artists, what spacing and timing mean once we are together, and to work with theory in practice. The novelty and great challenge was also to create one whole out of two festivals, spreading across two countries.

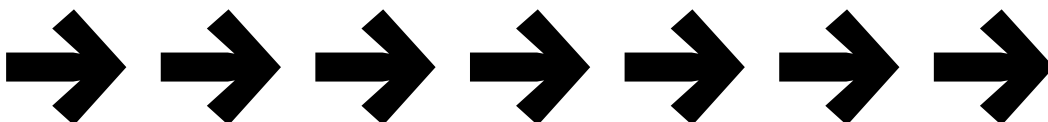
What did we do?

In a very short period of time, we managed to develop some important features over the course of the variety of events. The self-organized structure that was created should be understood more on a programming level and on the level of content than on the basis of organization. As seen from what was written above the organizers of all these events create a platform, prepare a frame in which participants contributed with their knowledge and ideas... However there is still some work to be done in order to create what we have imagined as self-regulating systems within self-organized structures in the (dance) communities.

Self-organization is defined as the process in which a structure or pattern appears in a system without any central authority or external element imposing it through planning. It seems very natural to make a connection with Deleuze and Guattaris's theory of rhizomatic and its opposition – “arborescent” thinking. Their book *A Thousand Plateaus* is organized around the distinction between ‘arborescent’ (or arbolescent) and ‘rhizomatic’. Arbolescent thought is linear, hierarchic, and sedentary. It is full of segmentation and striation. Its opposition is rhizomatic thought, which is non-linear, horizontal, anarchic, and nomadic. The rhizome is an anti-genealogy, without beginning or end; always in the middle, between things, ‘interbeing’, a kind of intermezzo. Therefore the smooth space of the rhizome is always under constant threat of hierarchization and stratification, connecting the heterogenic elements with all kinds of components and only becoming focalized around subjective redundancies due to a function of impotence.

This brief abstract of an explanation of rhizome sounds very natural, and could even be defined as the central point of a self-organized structure, but in practice (due to the modes of thinking – arborescent – that we are influenced by) seems to be almost impossible to achieve in real time. Sometimes the rhizomatic structures appear but they last for just a few moments or are even just perceived by some, but not by everyone. Those who are struggling for this kind of parallel system to come alive (to appear), have to put their faith on the ethics of the participants – the self-responsibility of everyone engaged. How to define it? How do the people/participants themselves perceive their responsibility? Is it enough just to be physically present somewhere, without doing anything at all? According to Deleuze and Guattari we have to accept this and be aware that each of the elements is affecting the rest. The changeable structure, constant interaction and impact is not a rigid formation, but fluid, not predictable, with aims impossible to define – the aims of these kinds of structure are as vague as the structure itself is changeable. They are challenging the risk, unpredictability, constant involvement and activation (of mind and body – of the Self). They can either turn into something really complex and fruitful, or into something dispersed and vague, but nevertheless only by taking the risk of exploring both situations/possible results can they challenge our perception of modes of thinking and being. There is no final truth, no final answer, just constant confrontation, searching for a clarity and temporal realization that could be crushed in the next moment. And this is how art should be perceived – as the field in which risk is grounded, challenges exposed and confrontation with(in) life reflected. Never will everyone be happy with what is done. But getting involved in this kind of structure means that you have to take responsibility for yourself, that it is you who is influencing the structure, the position and the repositioning of its elements.

In order to escape the system, to trick its mission of turning the cognitive human being into a pure commodity or apparatus, the self-organized structures of the festivals that were appearing took the opportunity to redefine the value of the art produced, the meaning of the knowledge and of our own position. The motivation behind this was to create a different space in which the need for confrontation, critical approach, feedback and discussion without (self-)censorship could appear, and where creation would appear in between: in between people, in between ideas and in space that is not predefined. The varieties of the events proposed gave us the possibility to reflect and develop, and brought us closer to understanding the traps and challenges of self-organized structures.



Three principles that we understood retrospectively:

1) Live presence. Due to the fact that happenings depend on participants taking an active role (without a fixed structure and plan) the activities are more fruitful and complex – expecting the full attention of the participants, everybody's arguments and positions. Anyone who is not there cannot be 'told' what had happened there. The experience and the transfer of knowledge operates on such a subtle level, which is necessarily tied to physical presence and first hand experience, that it can hardly be taught or poured into someone else. This is at the same time both an obstacle and an advantage.

2) Process. We appreciate the duration of event in time, understanding that it is not possible to frame it and fix it in time (although a schedule might exist). With the need to end not with a product, but something more open, maybe even never to end, we decided to launch some ideas and principles to try them out, to let them live. Although in a concrete and defined period of time, what we came to was not meant to be perceived as something final, concluded, but just, in a way, the beginning of something that could be further developed on the basis of collaboration, participation and failure.

3) Resistance. We resist the quick and obvious conclusions and we offer no solutions - our strivings cannot be mechanically compressed into one goal, we do not sublimate everything for the sake of recognisability in the art market, but we take a step back and shed light on what is unspeakable or untradeable. Even if the price of this is a temporary lack of clarity or a permanent lack of consent (among us and between us and our environment). We resist the need for all-clear situations and events.

What was there:

1) Emancipation. When entering the unknown, we assumed that an open field could create a ground for discovering your true inner will, bringing you closer to your Self – that Self which you normally leave at home when you go to a festival, meeting, or rehearsal. When repeating the same gestures, following the existing system, we are becoming apparatus, machines. Emancipation is perceived here as something liberating, the position in which you have to rethink who you are, how you are positioned in space through discussion and creation, and how you are established through interactions with others, with full awareness that as a cognitive being you are changing all the time due to active participation, due to active experience. We understand that emancipation happens internally and as a result of these processes, and that it is not a ticket to enter these kinds of events.

2) Addressing the addressable. One of the strongest realizations is that this kind of new model requires a rethink of the criteria for evaluating success. One of the well known criteria, that is probably as old as the industrial revolution, is the criteria of massive attendance, and what we have understood is that the level of participation, or the level of interest/desire/drive, is much more important, even if there is only us at the end watching each other. This is for two reasons: firstly, because the further 'dissemination' of the results will be much more significant if it is related to the personal relation of the visitor/participant, and secondly, because personal motivation is essential for equality, horizontality, for framing what we want to achieve. This brings us back to understanding that we do not need to address those who are not at all interested (which does not mean that we are neglecting or rejecting them, but that we do not drag them in), instead we address those who are already 'addressable' and who already have some interest and desire, just like ourselves. And still it sometimes turns out that not even we, the participants of the project, are really addressable. Everyone has his own right to do and follow what he himself finds appealing.

3) Future. At the end of some of the projects mentioned above, we realized that open structures of this kind are much more likely to turn into future collaborations among participants. Due to the exposing of oneself, due to the lack of the artificial posing (where one only needs to present themselves in the best light), there are much more possibilities to get to know each other better (our thought, desires, interests...) which makes the best basis for collaboration. Also, events with fluid membranes that allow others to enter automatically allow shared ownership and this is the best starting point for the future.

4) Irreversibility. There is no possibility of turning back. Once one has experienced the openness of the structure, sensed the possibility of inviting yourself to the festival, taking responsibility for your behaviour and actions, what is perceived as creation of art and life can never be the same

again. The outcomes are not measurable in the same way, because what we are dealing with is not the products or commodities, but people, motivations and content. Those who experience such a structure become more sensitive towards what is produced, what is seen, where and how to be involved... And this is an irreversible process.

What was not there:

1) Articulation of self critique. Some of us felt that we did not speak about the performances in the same way that we do not speak about them in whichever festival. The space for critique and feedback to and from all those participating should be open and more accessible, as the consensual silence can very easily turn into a weapon against the very core of these concepts. It is useful to understand when are we still playing our roles; not speaking out our inner thought but softening them in order not to hurt the other. Growth and upgrades are only possible with critical approaches and good feedback.

2) Artistic/aesthetic evaluation for this kind of event. In order to understand what has happened, to frame it and contextualize what we do on the artistic level, it is necessary to invent some new definitions and connect these processes with what our artistic needs and experiences are. What was created and why? What kind of art do these events produce? What kind of modes of thinking and working were established?

3) Masses of audience. Although the public announcements were made in the same way as for the other events, we were dealing with something new, something that is hard to define even for those who are part of it, and we realized that we cannot expect to reach a broader audience. People usually did not know how to recognize and deal with the frames that were created and offered to them. Not only because of the turning upside down of the festivals logics (sometimes scheduling the lectures in the evenings and performances during the day), but also because of the whole context of these events and the impossibility of presenting them in the traditional way. Maybe we had just a few people, but we knew that they were there because of their own interest. It was more important to us to reach these people and to spend quality time with them. We also want to give more time to those who were not there, to understand their wish and, only then, for them to appear.

4) Big budgets. We are aware that we could only have had this kind of freedom because our budgets were small. It is not to say that they should remain small, and we will advocate for having the same working and production conditions as any other festival or gathering. At this stage, however, which was a fragile stage of developing something very new to us, we were happy that our funders could have the freedom to say, "Oh, we do not understand what you are doing, but at least it does not cost us much."

5) Huge media support. When organizing something new, it was confirmed again that what is lacking is research-based journalism. Only a few publicists were prepared to dig in into the structure that was offered. Therefore we decided to organize a parallel media in which we could invent our own narrations, reflect on the events, bring up questions and doubts that we think are necessary (at least for us), but which may not be very self-evident.

DICTIONARY

The dictionary was, in a slightly different form, first published in the Pleskavica journal.

By Rok Vevar, Jasmina Založnik

FESTIVALISATION – DEFESTIVALISATION "It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent." How to detect Nothing and do (create) things with and within it? How to do (create) in a space that the Empire considers non-existent? The space which ex-(S)ists but doesn't ex-(0)-ist. How to do things in the remainder and with the remainder? By providing the heterochrony to a festival in a fundamental way. Most likely, the things, activities and experiences (knowledge) testifying to their inevitability should at the starting point be radically relinquished. Defestivalisation is realised when we remove those festival and performing segments that frighten us with their irreplaceability and their incessantness. These should be gotten rid of in the first place in order to start re-creating art.

REMAINDER OF SPACE, TIME AND SELF Availability, being available, "accumulation in idleness". Rehabilitation of that condition, that nothingness or void to which the condition of our being is attached. Place, time and self are those remainders that cannot be capitalised, transformed into efficiency, productivity or profit. Those unavailable categories that are lacking in the usual conditions of efficient production. Space, time and self remain, in the context of festivals based on self-organized principles, unused, unexploited. To rehabilitate that part of oneself that is combinable – and can be combined, which possesses the place open to the other. The condition of community.

"It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent." (Alain Badiou). As Sartre already stated, the decision is ours. "We are our choices."

HETEROTOPIA The remainder is the excluded place within contemporary society and politics (in Rancière's sense: police). It is a heterotopia of deviation. This negative or negation of the excluding social order that removes the remainders or occupies them with capitalisation has to be affirmed in the inability of capitalisation. It is not heterotopia of compensation, but the other space for the rehabilitation of being's potentiality (self, spaces, time, art, etc.). It is the place that has left the art production and has populated the possible place of its creation. Heterotopia isn't so much about the actual venue, city or location that exists parallel to everyday reality, but rather a change of perspective, a gap that a thought excavates in the orthodox production of contemporary art practices. It is a decision that things might happen and be reflected beyond cultural inevitabilities.

ART WITHOUT REMAINDER ☒ ART WITHOUT EXISTENTIALITY

"I don't have time for myself because I'm involved in art." Without providing the remainder (of the self), art production, (most likely) for the first time in history, eliminates the subject(ivity) of the artist who

creates it and thereby the prerequisite condition of artistic authorisation. The art is transformed into a "material world" experienced by "workers, proletarians" (artists) as a "domination of dead matter over mankind" (artists). Art production has led to products experienced by artists as "foreign and dominating objects". "Hence the worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working he does not feel himself. He is at home when he is not working, and not at home when he is working." (Karl Marx)

"In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labour therefore tears away from him his species-life, his true species-objectivity. ... In the relationship of estranged labour, each man therefore regards the other in accordance with the standard and the situation in which he as a worker finds himself." (Karl Marx)

The objectification process of human relations leads to mistrust between individuals and human relations are validated through the criterion of usefulness. This is the stage "when everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic ... virtue, love, conviction, knowledge, conscience, etc. – when everything, in short, passed into commerce. It is the time of general corruption, of universal venality, or, to speak in terms of political economy, the time when everything, moral or physical, having become a marketable value, is brought to the market to be assessed at its truest value." (Marx)

"Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing ... that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people." (Marx)

We can go even further and in reference to Marx ask ourselves whether is it truly necessary to feel like workers only when we are stripped of the last drop of enthusiasm, when we are totally alienated from what we do.

DETOXIFICATION The transition period in which the individual realises the difference between the usual material conditions of production internalised in their self structure, and work conditions in the remainder. "Let's do something! Let's work!" Detoxification is a process that would in its ideal form guarantee the exclusion of all material pressures in the cultural production. The exclusion? The policy of raising awareness.

(RE)ACTIVATION An ongoing activity does not necessarily imply actual "activity" but rather levels it to inter-passivity demonstrated in ongoing activity, routinised procedures of everyday life. In order to exit this place, what is first required is the process of detoxification, allowing us to get liberated from the post-Fordist imperative of ongoing production. It takes the policy of a new and different awareness which is only possible through the process of detoxification. A re-activation of that part of oneself which is excluded from everyday life rhythm. The part which allows the re-emergence of thought.

POTENTIALITY Potentiality: from art production first to its creation. According to Agamben, the potential always outlines something which is not realised, it reveals places that are possible, their infinite possibility. The potential hides within some paradoxality. The potential cannot be revealed in the process of transaction, the actualisation is not its purpose. The potential hides something for which we might strive knowing that we will never discover, achieve or actualise it. The fascination is in the very potentiality, our audacity to allow ourselves to flirt with it, because this potentiality is, in society, often neglected and rendered impossible, and our lives thereby illustrated as somewhat (de)finite. The art that bets on creativity in the process is conceived and implemented in all its potentiality. To create is to reveal potentiality, whereas the final productions take us back to the part of the social, burdened by its actualisation, finality, and – last but not least – in the creation processes, the potentiality is observed in its final number of possibilities and established modes of production. It will take a shift from product to processuality and the excluded register of creativity to overcome the established modes and promote potentiality within the field of art.

PROCESSUALITY Processuality is a neglected segment of art production due to the fact that it belongs to the excluded register of creativity. It does not provide immediate effects. In art production (productivity), processuality is being evaded by a satisfactory effect whilst in the art creation, the productive uses of processuality are not satisfactory because they try to prevent a slip. The vicious circle is demonstrated in the use of proven patterns, recipes and models that would prevent the slip. And yet – paradoxically – these forms ultimately lead to tried and familiar formats, to a commodity serving itself.

In artistic creation, the openness of process guarantees the possibility of various registers of process results. In order to classify the results, identify their differences and define them, we have to let them happen in methodologically pursued processuality. Processuality is the possibility to provide the result of methodological creation its secondary, tertiary, quaternary, etc. stages, forms or articulations, contrary to art production, where the work is actually as a rule represented through the formation of the process's primary level. Processuality is political due to its counter-productivity, which is called creativity.

PROTOCOLS Protocols are methodological tools that, in processuality, allow collective, joint decision-making on the course of the art work. The process is not necessarily subject to collective decision-making; it may be based on a selected delegate authorised by the process participants to make decisions (choreographer, director). In the event of collective decision-making, the human authority is replaced by protocols. These are necessary in order to prevent the inability to implement the processual politics of work. In addition, protocols are also possible and most welcome when a collective leaves the decisions to one person. Indeed, the collective work only requires a starting-point protocol: i.e. primary consensus. All other protocols may be derived from it. When it comes to collective works, rather than providing motivation, the protocols inform individuals on the degree of their willingness to participate and create with empathy and understanding of the other. Protocols provide an external structure of decision-making to the place of the artistic self. To make the process creative, neither protocol nor artistic self (better: subject) may negate.

DAILY MENU The daily menu is the reflection of a group curation, a process lacking a particular leader or authority who is supposed to know. It is a reflection of the everyday creation of "possible" programme units and processes made available to the participants as a starting point for their own creation and improvement. A daily menu is not an imperative, but (only) a framework (temporal and spatial), a sort of orientation guide. In addition, a daily menu does not encompass all the situations and participants' activities that emerge according to their particular needs, which complement and upgrade a menu created/curated by a group. It is a reflection of a primary protocol that prevents the inability to implement the processual politics of work. It enables both a festival's internal (directing framework processualities of the work) and external communication alike due to the fact that its structure addresses the public, communicates its frameworks (temporal and spatial) and invites the public to participate.

INVISIBLE PLACES Invisible places are those places of creativity that cannot be anticipated, planned or put on a daily menu. They occur in the form of tasks, put on a work schedule by either motivation or an obstacle in the processuality. They take various form and formats and cannot be avoided. We might call them the necessity that emerges in the remainder, rather than in the production requirements. Openness is a condition which gives them space, time and responsibility. In accordance with Calvino's eponymous book, their witness is the one who reads differences (the traveller) and not the emperor of oneness. The one that belongs to the register of creation and not production.

An example is the conversation between Kublai Khan and Marco Polo in which Marco Polo tries to describe a bridge stone by stone. Kublai Khan

interrupts him and asks him not to describe individual stones but the bridge. Polo answers that there is no bridge without stones.

Hence the invisible places are those regions of our mind and action where the mechanisms of art production are internalised in us and actually function in a similar way to the insistence of an instinct.

KNOWLEDGE SHARING – CONTRIBUTION – "COMMON TABLE"

A "common table" is the principle of integration and cohabitation. It is recognising any entity in its fullness and indispensableness, like a stone necessary to construct a bridge; respect and acceptance, together with every participant's responsibility, "care for one another" as well as the openness and willingness to communicate and "collaborate". A common table determines every individual as an equal member, a co-creating and contributing subject. The uniqueness of a subject in relation to another that, through relation and exchange, enriches and complements the other. Knowledge that is, in open structures, exchanged, upgraded and transformed is considered in the same way.

PARTICIPATION – PARTICIPANT Participation is the "upgrade" of the emancipated spectator, which, according to Rancière, presumes the spectator's (mental) activity. By breaking the boundaries between the spectator and artist/performer, some of the festivals based on self-organized principles strive to establish conditions for the embodied participation of all of the festival's attendants or its particular units. Every individual entering these structures is considered a participant and accepted with all the associated responsibility and prerogatives. They are accepted as someone who discovers the infinite possibility of the notion of their being, in crossing defined and anticipated roles that are, regardless the specific situation, attributed to and thereby expected from them. Thus the participant signifies a subject that doesn't traverse between individual roles but rather connects and simultaneously represents a magnitude of different roles. The participant has the possibility of interruption, switch, shift, continuation and the crossing of the invisible boundaries presumed by existent social productions of knowledge and art.

PARTICIPANT'S ETHICS – ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY If we accept Badiou's thesis that there is no ethics in general, there are only processes by which we treat the possibilities of a situation, the subject/participant should be considered as capable of accepting responsibility. Hence the participant's ethics relates to trusting the other; the participant that can go beyond general social norms and, through their own reflection, search for new ways of (co)habitation and creation. It is reflected in the search of one's own, we shall just call it "ontological," being; responsibility to the other and the responsibility to oneself in persistence, in loyalty to a wish.

COMMON – COMMUNITY – COLLABORATION – COMMUNICATION The common takes a radical change in the relation to the material and immaterial, its liberation from appropriation by capital. The common should first be searched for in the basics, i.e. a common wealth of the material world that we all share (water, air, etc.) and simultaneously, through the material, also approach the results of social production (language, knowledge, information, affects, etc.) that are only apparently accessible. The common is what is open to be complemented, what points to an empty place where a remainder could be embedded. The common is the place where any participant can enter with their responsibility or prerogatives. The common is the place reserved for contribution and ready for creative protocol. The transition from common to community is opening the space and self outwards, it is being ready to open to the other. A prerequisite to reach the place of the common is communication, which might require nothing but a wish. Perhaps, in addition to a wish, it also requires nothing. And it might be the wish that holds common objectives that the community is willing to share in the process of communication and collaboration and, if necessary, also change and re-establishment.

LOYALTY TO EVENT An EVENT allows something other than situation, opinions, competent unity to occur; an event is a risky and unpredictable supplement, but it disappears once it has occurred.

An event is simultaneously inside and outside of a situation. It occurs in a situation as a supplement irreducible to the situation. Therefore, in terms of its “ontological” status, it is indefinable. The event’s empiricism is the empiricism of disappearance. It is a prime disappearance, which complements the situation for the flash of a moment, only being embedded in the situation if there is nothing left of it. The event forces the subject into a new way of existence, a new way of being. It captures their thought.

LOYALTY TO EVENT indicates that the individual is constantly mentally present in their own existence, they don’t surrender to merely following general laws and social norms but rather are ready to potentially re-invent ways of existence in every situation.

The assessment of what actually has occurred is never objective! It is the assessment without a rule, supported only by what is produced in its always final act of distinct decision.

THE RHIZOMATIC QUALITY The concept of the rhizome defined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004) in which they oppose rhizomatic thought in favour of arborescent thought; the latter being characteristic of the Western line of thought (linear, hierarchic, etc.). Rhizomatic thought is non-linear, anarchic and nomadic, horizontal. It represents a uniform distribution that crosses lines established by vertical lines and a hierarchic system; a multiplicity that moves in several directions and connects with other lines of thought, activity, existence. It creates a network that crosses established apparent boundaries. The same as art should cross the lines of our thought, create new connections between apparently unrelated and separated structures and new horizons of thought, work, existence, being, etc.

EXPERIMENT Despite being transformed by various social, scientific and art contexts in time, experimental art is the art that guarantees its origin and existence by very precise, flexible and inventive work methodologies; i.e. it pays a lot of attention (sometimes even all of it) to the process instead of the result (results, of course, are not excluded). In order to give meaning to and re-create its process, the experimental art problematises, analyses and dismantles all aspects of art as material practices, i.e. all aspects of art as ideologies.

There is still a lot of place left for various forms of experiment in (performing) arts, but perhaps before establishing conditions of production, a mental space should be created and the world allowed to enter in all its terrifying as well as liberating dimensions. After all, boundaries (of various modes – artistic – being) secure shelter and safety, which might be penetrated or broken by experimental approaches. The allure we find in the word ‘experiment’ in relation to performing arts derives from prospects that such art practices allow us unsanctioned curiosity. But to look forward to curiosity we have to – most likely – miss something in our local context. But first of all we have to perceive it.

(SELF)CENSORSHIP Self-censorship is a way for production to be operative in the subjects of artistic creation and a way to gradually reduce the potentiality of creation. Censorship is a transparent norm or prohibition that allows an overview of its source, whilst in self-censorship, said source is internalized in the subject and thus invisible. Nothing particularly new. Self-censorship provides production’s stabilized value by replacing communication between creative subjects with negotiations between effects and for effects. The criterion of efficiency is the spectator or the audience who refuses this role; impossible spectator or impossible audience, i.e. an abstract criterion of an artwork’s quantifiability by the parameters of visibility and recognisability. A request to address the non-addressable, those abstract consumers of culture who have never been interested in art or who have had, throughout history, the role of censors.

Self-censorship is actually the consecrated dealing with latent censors, the quantifiers of production effects.

SELF-ORGANISATION (organisation of the Self) Self-organisational structure is not considered to be entirely at the organisation level because organisers always set a framework, an open structure, somewhat of a platform within which the invited artists contribute in accordance with their inspiration, needs and necessities. Hence a linear, non-hierarchic structure emerges in a group of individuals prepared and selected beforehand and is, in a way, initiated beforehand by a smaller organisational-artistic team. Could we claim that this is – due to discontent with organisational modes and a need for contents made impossible by such an organisation – just a negative of established organisational forms? Or is it a special structure that transfers the emphasis from the organisational level to the self-organisation of the individual’s Self that evades rigorous and technocratic modes of operation and stands for the re-activation and emancipation of an individual, which comes close to what Ivan Illich terms ‘deschooling’.

In his book *Deschooling Society*, Ivan Illich established a critical relation to the individual’s dependence on knowledge provided by specialised institutions of contemporary technocratic elites that monopolise education, work processes, medical care, environment management and subordinate the individual through the use of these institutions’ services. Hence Illich proposed a humanist way of schooling and learning that would be based on self-initiative by way of learning networks of individuals with similar interests.

An ideal step forward from Illich’s proposition would mean distribution of knowledge between individuals within the structures in art communities and platforms that can roughly be called self-organised groups. The individuals themselves propose and introduce subjects, modes and forms of research, communication and creation without being target- or production- (end product) oriented.

The principal and starting point parameter of such a structure is self-responsibility of any individual who enters the structure. Indeed, the result depends on the participants themselves, on their own activation, contribution and openness to proposals of others. Thus self-organisation is established as organising self/Self* (awareness of one’s own needs, wishes and willingness to restructure one’s thoughts, openness to accept others, dis-framing, stepping out, taking distance from established modes of work, etc.). Understanding art as a creative process in itself requires moving away from normative and established ways of thinking and acting. It is a place of experimentation, testing, playing that is only established through activity with the Other (dialogues, discussion, creation, etc.) See THE REMAINDER OF SELF, TIME AND SPACE.

OPENNESS “There is no situation of all situations,” is Badiou’s metaontological theorem. There is nothing that couldn’t be added or complemented. This is one of the processuality principles of festivals based on Self-organized principles. Our dictionary, too, has been made on the presumption of its uncertainty. Its empty spots illustrate the openness to be complemented, to create parallel notions and proposals. Our dictionary calls out to be complemented.

THE POLITICALITY OF PERFORMANCE — BILINGUAL ISSUE OF TKH (WALKING THEORY) JOURNAL FOR PERFORMING ARTS THEORY (NO.19)



EDITED BY: ANA VUJANOVIĆ AND ALDO MILOHNIĆ

Contributions by: Janelle Reinelt, Aleksandra Jovičević, Ana Vujanović, Bojana Kunst, Sezgin Boynik, Gerald Raunig, Aldo Milohnić, Gregory Sholette and Jelena Vesić, The Art and/as Politics Group (Aneta Stojnić, Ana Isaković, Marko Đorđević and Sava Jokić) of the De-schooling the Classroom project.

This issue is realised as part of activities within the BCC project and De-schooling the Classroom. The topic of this issue was researched in the context of TkH project "Performance and the Public" produced at Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers.

The complete issue along with previous issues of TkH Journal are available online at www.tkh-generator.net

BY ANA VUJANOVIĆ AND ALDO MILOHNIĆ

EXCERPT FROM THE POLITICALITY OF PERFORMANCE: A FEW INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

In a broader historical perspective, the social position of art seems relatively marginal, which could serve as a possible starting point to think about what the *politicality of performance* might mean today. It seems that the political relevance of art has become disputable, due to its commercialisation and commodification by the entertainment and creative industries, the mass media's at least partial appropriation of its political relevance, and an overall "aestheticisation of life" in the 20th century, to name only a few possible factors. But at the same time, the topic itself has been attracting more and more theoretical and artistic attention. We devote this issue of the *TkH* Journal to the topic of the politicality of performance because we want to open up more space for thinking about these two seemingly irreconcilable tendencies. The discussion may include (but is not limited to) questions such as the following: What is the meaning of these notions nowadays and how are they disconnected or interconnected? Why do we find the proposed topic important or, to put it simply, why is there such a preoccupation with the political in the performing arts today? Might it merely be an alibi concocted to secure the support of public funds and various other foundations? Maybe it is just a desperate attempt to be recognised as a socially relevant practice instead of being dismissed as an elitist type of entertainment? Or is it just the neo-liberal capitalist state of affairs, which blurs the borders between different social practices and where some old questions – such as how we practise politics and where politics is located today – are still waiting for an answer?

By introducing the notion of *politicality* in the title of the volume, we want to emphasise that our main concern is not a particular politics of contemporary performing arts. Instead, our aim is to try to grasp the politicality of performance as an aspect of this art practice that represents the ways in which it acts and intervenes in the public sphere, related to discussions and conflicts around the following issues: the subjects and objects that perform in it; the arrangement of positions and powers among them; and the ideological discourses that shape a common symbolic and sensorial order of society, which affects its material structure and partitions. Accordingly, our intention is neither to advocate political performance, nor to classify performances in any of the usual categories (engaged, *l'art-pour-l'art*, etc.). Instead, we want to encourage critical and analytical reflections of a broad and complex *grid of politicality* as an aspect that characterises each and every performance – be they supposedly political or apolitical, resistant or complicit, transformative or servile – as social events that take place in the public sphere.

UPCOMING AND UP&COMING IN THE REGION



Silent Killer, photo by Vibor Juhas



Splendid, by Senka Bulić



Bartelby, photo by Miha Fras

CROATIA

Maja Drobac / Srikanth Kolari
Silent Killer
Zagreb Dance Centre, Ilica 10, Zagreb, Croatia
January 12 -14, 2012
(dance)

Silent Killer is a dance performance in two parts joined together with a photo exhibition. The project was inspired by work with HIV/AIDS infected children in India, whose portraits are exhibited in the exhibition. The first part of the performance is a contemporary story about a woman who sells her body on the streets despite the fact that she has AIDS. This part is danced with contemporary dance technique. The other part of the performance is a contemporary reconstruction of a classical varna (the most complex item in the classical Indian dance, Bharatanatyam) and is about a 15 year old girl who was born with the HIV virus in her blood. Her father left her when she was just a baby, and now she decides to search for him. The story is danced using Bharatanatyam techniques. What connects both stories is the way they are presented, through the 9 rasas (emotions as written in the Natya Shastra, an Indian book about theatre art). *All money collected through the sale of tickets and photographs is for the MILANA association in Bangalore, India, which cares for children affected by HIV and/or AIDS. The money will buy school books and uniforms, clothes, food, and everything else needed for the children. We would also like to pay for ART treatment, which can help some of the children and prolong their lives.*

Ana Catarina Vieira / Angelo Madureira
Oil
HKD na Sušaku, Rijeka
January 12, 2012 at 8PM
(dance)
www.perforacije.org

Days of Professional Dance Artists, Rijeka
HKD Sušak, Rijeka, 7PM
February 1-3, 2012
Art as Diagnosis, or Diagnosis as an Art Choreographer: Žak Valenta
Thank you Choreographer: Senka Baruška
Do We Dream the Same Dreams
choreographer: Gordana Svetopetrić
(dance)

OOOR
title unknown: the tournament
OOOR / Ivana Rončević, Ivana Vratarić,
Selma Banich, Sandra Banić Naumovski and Adam Semijalac
Zagreb Dance Centre, Ilica 10, Zagreb, Croatia
February 3 and 4, 2012
(dance)
<http://koautorskainicijativaooor.blogspot.com/>

BADco.
Is There Life on Stage?
Zagreb Youth Theatre, Teslina 7, Zagreb, Croatia
February 15, 2012
(dance)
www.badco.hr

Responsibility for Things Seen
Zagreb Youth Theatre, Teslina 7, Zagreb, Croatia
February 15-19, 2012
(presentation / workshop)
<http://www.zekaem.hr/>

Interdisciplinary lab: Imaging Technologies and Strategies of [Micro-]Performance and symposium: Performing Images.
Zagreb, Croatia
March 12-18, 2012
(presentation / workshop)
www.badco.hr

SERBIA

Ongoing event
Community Center
(in former army barrack dr. Arčibald Rajs)
Novi Sad
www.drustvenicentar.org
What is a Community Centre?
A Community Centre is:
A place for Town meetings and gatherings of the citizens of Novi Sad;
A place of creation, innovation and freedom;
A place of sharing knowledge and gaining experience through study and practical work;
A place of personal and community development;
A place for interactive exchange of experiences and the active participation of citizens in the social life of the city;

A place of support to all who contribute to the development of the community;
A place for active leisure time;
A place to improve the culture of life in the city;
The only place we can create together!
The Community Centre is based on the values of: Solidarity, social equality, individual freedom and mutual support;
Civic activism - the active contribution of the local and wider community;
Openness - the Community Centre is accessible and open to all.
The perceived problems in the city from which emerged the idea of a Social Centre:
Lack of space for individuals and groups engaged in activities relevant to the community;
Lack of affordable space for citizens for independent cultural, sporting, educational and social activities;
Lack of interactive encounters between these individuals and organizations;
Lack of choice of content for quality leisure time, converged in one place.

Days of DAH Theatre
DAH Theatre, Marulićeva 8
February 15 - 18, 2012
www.dahteatarcenter.com

→ February 15, 2012
Gently, Gently, Gently.

A Co-production of Dah Theatre and the Cultural Center of Novi Sad, in cooperation with the group Secondhanders, Gently, Gently, Gently is a concert performance that deals with nostalgia and its impact on the cultural scene in former Yugoslavia. In the form of a concert, using the musical heritage of space that was once a unique cultural space, it explores the possibility of a cultural space that is not limited by geographical and historical determinants, and is itself a fantasy of the best country in the world.

→ February 16, 2012
Crossing the Line

Based on the book Women's Side of War, published by Women in Black, these are the testimonies, statements, letters and memories that show the specific suffering of women in war, but also their courage and strength to overcome the trauma of war and establish a normal life, the play also shows the importance of solidarity with women in spite of borders and divisions.

→February 17, 2012

The Story of Tea

Taking as its starting point Chekhov's play The Three Sisters, and with a central theme involving a toy train, which will eventually take sisters to their dream, Moscow, this piece is about of missed opportunities. Trains and missed opportunities lead to missing people, missing truths and missing language. This play explores the meaning of memory in relation to the truth.

→February 18, 2012

The Natasijević Code

Dealing with the famous family Natasijević and their cultural heritage, part of this performance is made from biographical material while part is fictional and adapted from the literary work of Momčilo Natasijević. For this reason, multiple forms of expression are combined in this performance.

SLOVENIA

Jean Genet

Splendid

Director: Senka Bulić

Mini Teater, Ljubljana

January 8 and 22, 2012

Production: Mini Teater

www.mini-teater.si

On the 7th floor of the luxury hotel Splendid, the police have surrounded seven gangsters and one police officer who joined them. On the radio there is a female announcer commenting on the situation. A daughter of an American millionaire has been taken hostage. This night the notorious gang "Huja" is once again challenging the police. Outside the hotel there are more and more curious people waiting to see what is going to happen. Tired, unshaven and in black ties, the Genet gangsters never put their weapons down. Not even while they're dancing. In a moment of carelessness one of the gangsters unfortunately squeezes the hostage too tight, resulting in her "unfortunate death". To solve the situation and prevent the attack of the police forces the gang leader comes up with a heroic solution – to personally appear on the hotel balcony, dressed in the woman's clothes, with her fan, wearing her lace and glitter.

Tomislav Zajec

SVINJE (PIGS)

Director: Renata Vidič

Glej Theatre, Ljubljana

Premier: January 13 at 8pm

Performances: January 14 – 17 at 8pm

Production: Glej Theatre & City of Women

www.glej.si, www.cityofwomen.org

The play SVINJE (PIGS) is based on the text by Croatian writer Tomislav Zajec and directed by one of Slovenia's youngest generation of theatre directors, Renata Vidič. It is subtitled as "a musical in 10 scenes from farm-life" and focuses on the life of two "kind" sisters, living on a pig farm, who brutally kill all visitors and are only kind to their animals. Ibru, the authoritarian "lady of the farm," approaching her thirties, devotes her whole life to the pigs and to taking care of her baby sister, Mala Ibru (Little Ibru), who spends her time searching for the meaning of life and trying to find a teacher who will teach her something she can be good at. The director has chosen a kind of "horror-comedy" as her genre and tries to expose the consequences of authoritarian relationships, or rather relationships of power, as reflected in relationships between parent and child(ren), teacher and child, society and the individual, and similar interactions.

MA & AL

Direction: Ivica Buljan

Mini teater, Ljubljana

January 13

Production: Mini Teater

www.mini-teater.si

Ivica Buljan is one of the most productive directors of post-dramatic theatre in Croatia, and he has directed and toured all over Europe. His most recent show, Ma and Al, is inspired by texts by J.D. Salinger and Bernard-Maria Koltès, in which the reader can recognise the parental couple from the dysfunctional family Glass. The space is decorated with fragments of props, and the border between real and fictitious experience becomes blurred as the audience is called upon and drawn into the playful hysteria of the actors that play characters from the novel and the play. The issues brought up are various and everyday: family breakups, the death of a child, American democracy, the relationship between traditional and contemporary theatre, art, the Vietnam war, etc. Strong performances by Senka Bulić and Marko Mandić give us an in-depth understanding of these texts from Salinger and Koltès.

Who is Next?

Concept and direction: Janez Janša

Stara mestna elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana

January 23 and 24

Production: Maska Ljubljana

Co-production: Tanzquartier, Wien (Austria),

Inkonst, Malmö (Sweden)

Miha Nemeč and Nejc Valenti

Lire@anti

Direction: Miha Nemeč

Glej Theatre, Ljubljana

January 24, at 8pm

Production: Glej Theatre

Co-production: SNG Nova Gorica, KD TNK and

VŠU Nova Gorica

www.glej.si

This performance was awarded the 'Borštnik Jury Prize' at the 46th Maribor Theatre Festival of Borštnikovo srečanje: "In the absence of original contemporary drama at this year's Maribor Theatre Festival Life®anti were one of the few exceptions. The performance provides us with an insight into an interesting cultural and historic point in time. It is also a great point of identification of a collective memory and a lesson of the eternal, unchanging presence of opposing views, the splendour and misery of theatre – the oblivion, the mythification and demythification. Theatre within the theatre, a fresh joint participation of one of the national production houses with the independent scene. The two miniature performances about a conflict on the purpose of theatre, 110 years ago, between the "man of literature" Etbin Kristan, and the theatre superintendent Fran Milčinski, and the fight of the great actress, Maria Nablocka, against her drifting into oblivion seem strikingly current. Consistently carried out in all respects and surprisingly fresh." (Večer on October 24, 2011)

Jure Novak

Reasons to be Happy

Glej Theatre, Ljubljana

January 26 – 28 and 31

Production: Glej Theatre

Co-production: Zavod Poza

www.glej.si

It is our duty to be happy. Happy men, women and children on posters and in TV ads constantly show us easy ways to be happy. What is happiness, apart from its chemical make up? Why is it so high on the ladder of contemporary values? And furthermore – why is happiness the only value that is not called into question, that is inherently good? Have you felt bad in the past month? Have you felt depressed, sad, tormented or even hopeless? Have you been finding it hard to do things you usually enjoy doing? We have the solution: Jure Novak's Reasons to be

Happy, a performance about depression, is the performance for you. If you buy a ticket now, you will also receive instant gratification. Offer valid while supplies last.

Miloš Lolić after Hwerman Melville

Bartleby The Scrivener

Mini teater, Ljubljana

January 27 at 10.30pm

Production: Mini teater

www.mini-teater.si

This performance was awarded the 'Grand Prize' at the 46th Maribor Theatre Festival of Borštnikovo srečanje.

Bartleby The Scrivener is a surprisingly current short story by the American classical writer, Herman Melville, known almost exclusively for his novel Moby Dick. Bartleby, or "the most famous story of Wall Street," is based on Bartleby's seemingly simple answer: "I'd prefer not to." This is his unexpected response to the request from his superior, the narrator, to help with some office work. After this initial defiance, Bartleby continues to counter all requests and demands with the compelling "I'd prefer not to" or "I'd rather not." This earns him the right to survive, that is to say, the right to passive insistence.

Rosana Hribar and Gregor Luštek

To Whom It May Concern?

Španski Borci Cultural Centre, Zaloška 61,

Ljubljana

January 31 at 8pm

Production: Flota

www.spanskiborci.si

Who is interested in anything today? What is art useful for, and what should be done with it? In To Whom It May Concern?, dancers and choreographers Rosana Hribar and Gregor Luštek deal with questions that tackle the very core of performing, understanding and reflecting art today.

Jure Novak

Reasons to be happy

Glej Theatre, Ljubljana

February 1 and 2

Production: Glej Theatre

Co-production: Zavod Poza

www.glej.si

Idea & leading the process: Mateja Bučar
Processing...

Stara mestna Elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana

Premiere: March 8 at 8pm

Performances: March 9 and 10 at 8pm

Production: DUM Association of Artists

Co-production: Zavod Bunker/ Stara mestna elek-

trarna – Elektro Ljubljana, Zavod ZET

www.dum-club.si

Ellipses are forms that invite us into the dynamics, beauty and passion of their inner tension. The inner tension is there because each ellipse consists precisely of two inner focuses – that can never merge into one – if they do – we get a circle and the ellipse disappears.

These two inner focuses are in constant relation to each other also constantly depend on each others "doings"...

This definition seems an attractive one for many dilemmas and struggles that we are facing today. Ellipses are also forms that are somehow open in their "inside" and closed from their "outside". We can speculate that this is something that we might be facing, when trying to see the "big picture" of today's problems with life on earth. For example: The outside exploitations of the natural resources seem to be closing in, and only the inside spaces, only the "inner matters" are left to be explored later on ...



Splendid, by Senka Bulić

Janez Janša
The Wailing Wall
During Maribor 1012 – European Capital of Culture
March 9 – 24
Production: APT Novo Mesto, Maska Ljubljana, Huis en Festival a/d Werf, Utrecht, Netherlands
www.maska.si

Let us ask ourselves a naive question: why are no sounds of crying played in TV series or TV films (that is, fictional material intended for individual viewing) at moments that could arouse emotions in the viewers that make them cry? The answer to this question can be direct and clear: fiction uses different means, different tricks (first and foremost, music, usually a violin or a piano), to manipulate the viewers' emotions. But crying, wailing, is not an expression related only to one type of emotion. It can be brought about by sadness, sentiment, euphoria and, last but not least, comedy.

The Wailing Wall is a public performance of crying. One part of the installation is the wall that resembles Jerusalem's Wailing Wall and is an ice construction placed in a public space. The other part draws on the intimate performance of crying. Janez Janša reconstructed the Cabinet of Memories, the 1998 installation-performance of memory for one visitor by Emil Hrvatin. The reconstruction of the Cabinet of Memories is a completely new construction of space and, among other things, examines the memory of remembering.

TOURS

Who is Next?
Concept and direction: Janez Janša
Tanzquartier, Wien (Austria)
January 27 and 28 at 8.30pm
Production: Maska Ljubljana
Co-production: Tanzquartier, Wien (Austria), Inkonst, Malmö (Sweden)
www.maska.si

This performance brings up the question of the responsibility of an individual in this contemporary society of recession, shock, precariousness,

uncertainty and indifference. What is an act that can create a change? Is democracy just an empty ritual of endless dialogues, which lead nowhere? Who is going to take the responsibility to act? To go all the way? Is violence the only solution? The performance unfolds this question in a combination of documentary and fiction. Who is next? is composed of film, music and choreography and creates a field where many players and many names take their places to negotiate action, the spectators included. There is no doubt that something has to be done, urgently. The questions are what should be done and who is going to do it? Can we do something in the theatre? Is theatre a place of action?

DIE BESTEN AUS DEM OSTEN!
"Yue Medlin Yue"
Volkstheater, Vienna
The world premiere of the newest production from Qendra Multimedia (Prishtina)
February 24 & 25, 2012

"Yue Medlin Yue" is the newest play by the Kosovo playwright Jeton Neziraj. The central focus of this tragicomedy of the absurd is a Roma family which was forcedly expelled from Germany to Kosovo. Finding themselves in a new reality, this family has to face the challenges of the newborn state. A Roma girl, Medlin, one day falls into a hole created by a construction company. And while, in a coma, she fights for her life, her father, striving to pursue justice, faces bureaucratic officers, businessmen, policemen and embassy workers. This is a political drama about chaotic post-war Kosovo, but, above all, it is a drama about the unwanted Roma in Europe. Away from those common stereotypes about Roma people, away from that exoticism which usually accompanies Roma topics, "Yue Medlin Yue" is an intelligent drama that portrays the emotional process that thousands of Roma people from Europe undergo, as they yield to the violent processes of repatriation. The play is directed by Blerta Neziraj, with actors Kushtrim Hoxha, Anisa Ismaili, Fisnik Sykaj, Kujtim Pacaku, Fitore Broqi, Bajram Ginolli. Video: Yll Citaku. Sound and music composer: Gabriele Marangoni. Musician: Susanna Tognella. Stage and

light design: Nico de Rooij. Costume designer: Dorothy Barnes

Contrefugue at DansFabrik, Le Quartz, Brest 2012
Co-produced by Perforacije Festival
February 27 – March 3, 2012

Contrefugue is a program within a program, it is a roster of artists who are shaking things up, who are challenging the formats in which they work, who are experimenting with their own methods and who are presented together as a laboratory of atmosphere and intention. There are also connotations behind the very name of this program – one that it will leave no escape, then that it is an inversion of a preceding rhythm, while it also has a curious resonance of the fictitious force. It is also at this point good to admit that a program that is geographically focused has its own challenges and can sometimes be easily overlooked as the easiest of concepts. Well, certainly not when it comes to the Balkans, a region that is always full of surprises. Also artistic.

A roster of artists from Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia will present work that often crosses the lines between genres, whose work is raw and direct, sometimes ironic and always intriguing. In some of this work it will be clear that you are not there only to watch and observe, but that you are also a witness and an accomplice, even perpetrator. Željko Zorica from Croatia will have the audience eat from his hands, and Petra Kovačić and Vlasta Delimar, both Croatian, will gently guide their spectators through visual discovery of transformation of space. Via Negativa from Slovenia and Ivo Dimchev from Bulgaria will present (dis)able and powerful bodies on stage and on separate evenings they will also perform surprising concerts. Young performance and visual artist from Macedonia, Igor Josifov, will do a durational performance over several days, and a young duo, Antonia Kuzmanić and Jakov Labrović, behind the group Room 100 from Split, will present the work that touchingly deals with pain and happiness. These performances, most of which are going to be presented for the first time in France, are a tip of the iceberg of what is down there – in the Balkans.
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