

# BADCO.

## SPACELESSNESS, TROPES AND TOPOLOGIES - SPATIAL PROBLEMS IN BADCO.'S WORK


OVER THE COURSE OF SEVEN YEARS AND OVER A DOZEN PERFORMANCES THAT BADCO. HAS CREATED SINCE SINCE ITS BEGINNINGS, THE ISSUES OF SPACE AND SPACELESSNESS HAVE BEEN RECURRENT CONCERNS - EITHER AS CONCERNS THAT HAVE CONDITIONED OUR WORK OR CONCERNS THAT WERE THE SUBJECT-MATTER OF THAT WORK. HOWEVER, INSISTENCE ON DEVELOPING INTERNAL COMPLEXITIES OF MOVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE, WHICH WAS ALWAYS AT THE HEART OF BADCO.'S METHODOLOGY, DIDN'T PROVIDE MUCH OPPORTUNITY TO TREAT THE SPACE AS A SEPARATE PROBLEM, BUT RATHER A PLANE WHERE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CONDITIONING AND CREATION HAD TO COMPETE FOR THE SAME ROOM FOR EXPRESSION. SO, LET US BEGIN FROM WHAT CONSTITUTES THOSE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF CONDITIONING.

### CONDITIONS OF SPACELESSNESS


STARTING FROM THE IMMEDIATE FACT THAT BADCO. LACKS ITS OWN WORK SPACES, EXCEPT FOR INTERMITTENT COLLABORATIONS WITH THE ZAGREB-BASED THEATRE HOUSE \$TD ON PRODUCTIONS OF "MAN, CHAIR" (2000), "DIDEROT'S NEPHEW, OR BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER" (2001) OR "MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS..." (2006), THE GROUP MOSTLY SHARED THE PRECARIOUS DESTINY OF LOCAL NON-INSTITUTIONAL THEATRE AND DANCE SCENE. BETWEEN

ATTEMPTS TO SQUEEZE INTO OVERFILLED SCHEDULES OF THEATRE HOUSES, TRANSITORY OCCUPATIONS OF ABANDONED INDUSTRIAL SITES, PERFORMANCES AT CLUBBING OR EXHIBITION VENUES, OPPORTUNITIES TO HOLD PERFORMANCES AT HOME COME ALONG RARELY. WHAT'S MORE, THE OPPORTUNITY TO PERFORM AT HOME OFTEN TIMES COMES AT A PRICE OF HAVING TO RENT THE THEATRE VENUE AND INVEST OWN EFFORT TO GET THE SPACE READY FOR PERFORMANCE - FROM FINDING THE TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT TO CLEANING THE FLOORS. THE GRIM SITUATION OF HAVING TO INVEST INTO HOME PERFORMANCES WHAT NEEDS TO BE EARNED SOME PLACE ELSE IS REFLECTED IN THE DISBALANCE HOW MANY OPPORTUNITIES MORE DEMANDING PERFORMANCES GET TO BE PRESENTED IN CROATIA AND HOW MANY OPPORTUNITIES ABROAD - FOR INSTANCE, OUR PERFORMANCE "DELETED MESSAGES" WAS PERFORMED A MERE FIVE TIMES IN CROATIA AND OVER TWENTY TIMES ABROAD.


AND YET, WHILE OPPORTUNITIES TO PERFORM, DEPENDING THOUGH ON INDIVIDUAL AGILITY, AVAILABLE RESOURCES AND SELECTION PREFERENCES OF RARE FESTIVALS, DO COME ALONG EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, FOR NON-INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS SPATIAL LIMITATIONS PROVE TO BE FAR MORE AGGRAVATING ONCE WE TURN OUR VIEW FROM AVAILABILITY OF PERFORMING VENUES TO AVAILABILITY OF PRODUCTION SPACE. WITHOUT AN ENTITLEMENT TO REHEARSAL SLOTS IN THEATRE HOUSES, WITHOUT A DANCE CENTRE, WITHOUT A CENTRE FOR INDEPENDENT CULTURE, IT



IS LEFT TO STRUGGLE WORKING IN INADEQUATE SPACES, TO CREATE WITHOUT SPATIAL AND TECHNICAL CONDITIONS IT WILL EMPLOY IN PERFORMANCES, TO RELY ON ITS SPACELESS IMAGINATION. FOR EXAMPLE, BADCO. HAS ENJOYED THE BENEFIT OF HOSPITALITY OF CENTER FOR CULTURE NOVI ZAGREB, WHERE IT HAS ACCESS TO NO MORE THAN A SMALL, TECHNICALLY ILL-EQUIPPED REHEARSAL SPACE WITHOUT A MARLEY DANCE FLOOR, ALTHOUGH IT NEVER PERFORMS IN SPACES ANYWHERE SIMILAR TO THAT ONE.



WITH THE NON-INSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT OF OUR WORK, LACKING A PRODUCTION SPACE AND A PERFORMANCE VENUE OF OUR OWN, OUR PERFORMANCES COME TO RELY ON A KIND OF PERFORMATIVE FREE FALL INTO THE ACTUAL SPACE, WHICH PRODUCES CONDITIONINGS OF CONCEPTUAL KIND: EXPERIMENTATION TENDS TO BE SPATIALLY AGNOSTIC, REDUCED TO SPATIAL EXTENSIONS NEEDED FOR EXPRESSION, RELATIONS BETWEEN ACTORS AND SPATIAL RELATIONS, AND RARELY HAVING AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIMENT WITH THE PERFORMATIVITY OF PARTICULAR SPACES. TO SIMPLIFY, PERFORMERS WHO ARE NOT INSTITUTIONALLY TIED DOWN TO THE PERFORMATIVITY OF A PARTICULAR SPACE, CREATORS WHOSE INDEPENDENCE FROM THE INFRASTRUCTURE SETS THEM FREE FOR MOBILITY, AUTHORS WHOSE SPATIAL CONCEPTS ARE NOT DEFINED BY THE IDENTITY OF A PARTICULAR VENUE, EITHER HAVE THE OPTION TO CREATE PERFORMANCES FOR THE GEOMETRY OF GENERIC



SPACE OR THE OPTION TO CREATE PERFORMANCES FOR THE SITE-SPECIFIC LOCALITY. THE PERFORMANCES OF BADCO. ARE MOSTLY SET WITHIN THE GENERIC SPACE, WHILE SOME ARE EVEN INTENT ON EXACERBATING THE GENERIC ASPECT OF SPACE, FOR EXAMPLE BY ERASING THE FUNCTIONAL SEPARATION OF RESPECTIVE POSITIONS OF AUDIENCE AND PERFORMERS IN SPACE AS IS THE CASE OF "DELETED MESSAGES" (2004) OR BY RECOMBINING SPACES WITH DIFFERENT THEATRICAL FUNCTIONS AS IS THE CASE OF "MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS...".

## SPACES AND TROPES

THE CENTRAL FEATURE OF GENERIC PERFORMATIVE SPACES IS THEIR OVERCODING BY THE SYMBOLIC SPACE OF SUBJECT-MATTER. THE MATERIALITY OF PERFORMING SPACE, ALTHOUGH ALWAYS REMAINING PRESENT, RETREATS INTO THE INVISIBLE FUNCTIONAL BACKGROUND OF SYMBOLIZATION - INTO THE METAPHORIC SPACE OF STAGE. ACCORDINGLY, A CANONICAL POST-CONVENTIONAL STRATEGY IN PERFORMING ARTS WOULD BE TO INTERVENE WITH MATERIALITY INTO THE SYMBOLIZATION IN ORDER TO PREVENT IT FROM FORMING A COMPLETE ILLUSION.

THE SPACE IN BADCO.'S WORK IS FREQUENTLY MARKED BY THE DIALECTICS OF MATERIALITY AND SYMBOLIZATION. IN "RIBCAGE" (2003), FOR INSTANCE, THE WALK OF PERFORMERS ALONG THE CIRCUMFERENCE OF THE PERFORMATIVE SPACE STANDS IN

FOR THE FREQUENTLY DEPICTED PRISON WALK PROVIDING THE INMATES WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO EACH OTHER, BUT AT THE SAME TIME THIS WALK FUNCTIONS AS AN ACTUAL FORM FOR PERFORMERS TO STEP OUT OF THE PLOT AND DISCUSS THE PERFORMANCE AS IT UNFOLDS. IN "FLESHDANCE" (2004) THE DANCE IS PUSHED INTO THE SEAM BETWEEN THE FLOOR AND THE WALL AND PERFORMED AS IF THE GRAVITY WAS PULLING DOWN TO BOTH PLANES, ALLOWING IT THUS TO REVISIT THE SPECIFIC DIMENSIONALITY OF SPACE IN THE PAINTINGS OF FRANCIS BACON, BUT ALSO ALLOWING IT TO PRODUCE A VERY SPECIFIC FORM OF DANCE MOVEMENT. "DELETED MESSAGES" EMULATES THE SPACE OF A QUARANTINE, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME USES THE MODEL OF CONTAGION AS ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLE FOR THE UNFOLDING OF PERFORMANCE.

### SPACES AND TOPOLOGIES

HOWEVER, THERE'S ANOTHER LEVEL TO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN METAPHORS AND SPACE WHERE THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLE OF PERFORMANCE COINCIDES WITH THE ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OBSERVABLE IN THE WORLD OUTSIDE OF THE PERFORMANCE - WHERE A TOPOS IN THE PERFORMANCE IS A STRUCTURE OF THE WORLD BEYOND THE CONFINES OF PERFORMANCE.

IN "DELETED MESSAGES" AGAIN THE SPACE IS ORGANIZED SO AS TO FUNCTION AS A SPACE OF SOFT CONTROL, INDICATED BY

WHITE CLOTH COVERING THE ROUGH CONCRETE FLOOR AND THIN, ALMOST INVISIBLE ALUMINUM POLES SUSPENDED IN SPACE. THE RULES HOW TO MOVE AROUND AND BEHAVE INSIDE THE MICRO-WORLD OF PERFORMANCE ARE NOT MADE CLEAR, BUT ONLY SO SLIGHTLY INDICATED. THE LACK OF CLEAR RULES, IN TURN, FORCES THE AUDIENCE SUBJECTIVATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THEIR OWN PROJECTION OF OTHER SUBJECT'S EXPECTATIONS, AND WHATEVER THE RULE THEY CHOSE IT IS THIS VERY PROJECTION OF OTHER SUBJECT'S EXPECTATION THAT LOCKS THEM IN INTO THE PERFORMANCE'S PROGRAM.

IT IS THROUGH THIS SOFT SUBJECTIVATION BY THE POWER OF OWN CHOICE DRIVEN BY THE PROJECTION OF CONTROLLING OTHER - THE CHOICE THAT LEAVES NO CHOICE OTHER THAN WHAT IS PROGRAMMED IN ADVANCE - THAT SUBJECTS ARE FORMED AND INFORMED IN TODAY'S AGE OF COMMODIFIED DESIRE.

THIS COMPLETES THE OVERVIEW OF THREE LEVELS OF CONDITIONING AND PRODUCTIVITY THAT ARE JUXTAPOSED IN THE WORK OF BADCO.; SPACELESSNESS AND SPATIAL MOBILITY, TOPICAL OVERCODING OF PERFORMATIVE SPACE AND MATERIAL INCURSIONS, TOPOLOGICAL HOMOLOGY BETWEEN ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF PERFORMATIVE SPACE AND ORGANIZATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF THE WORLD BEYOND THE PERFORMATIVE SPACE.

TOMISLAV MEDAK, BADCO.

# "GIVE ME A PROBLEM!"

BADCO. 2007

"The ant understood that the producer could overtake power only if he occupies the site of the parasite."<sup>1</sup>

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I remember meeting **badco.** in 2001 confused all I considered being matters of concern in performance then. The situation in contemporary dance and theater in Europe at the time was gravely invested in polemics, in a politics of polarization for/against spectacle, non-acting, choreography as opposed to dance, transparency of a self-referential act, and other protestant gestures of renouncing representation. I came to Zagreb armed with imperative questions like: how can dance make one think, how to subvert the need for recognition in a 19<sup>th</sup> century audience, how to produce nothing so that "they" must produce everything... Seeing **Diderot's Nephew** revealed that there was more than one difference in position. Or, that **badco.** was a group of

<sup>1</sup> Text from the performance **Changes (Promjene)** by **badco.** 2007: "Monologue about work" manuscript.

dancers, dramaturges plus a philosopher, who neither saw urgency in siding by a paradigmatically Western modernist claim for medium-contemporaneity nor loomed as a ludic self-absorbed face from/of the East. Somehow, they **knew better**. To be nomadic means staying home to explore one's own foreign territories, "countries" of work. One of them was the performance art from the 1980s in Croatia. By reworking **Man.chair** by Damir Bartol Indoš into a reconstruction with "dance variations" in 2000, **badco.** were appropriating a history which opened a possibility for another future in Croatian performance. A "manifesto of co-belonging" to be misrecognized both home and abroad!<sup>2</sup> Misrecognition home, i.e. lack of a substantial support from the city that rejects that which does not represent it, finally proves to be an advantage. It propels movement's autonomy, as movement needs continuity and duration for transformation.

Speaking about **badco.** today, it wouldn't suffice to focus on a few preferred performances-examples. Fourteen performances and six projects in seven years - even if they evidence a considerable opus - only form an open, fragmentary whole. Each of the "works" emerges with an entirely different set of relations between space, problematic, and people involved, in one word: situation. From **Confessions (Ispovjedi**

2 **Man-Chair (Čovjek-stolica)** is a performance by D. B. Indoš that took place in 1982. In 2000, it was reconstructed under the title **Man.chair** or **Čovjek.Stolac** in Croatian.



1999) to *Changes* (Promjane 2007), the situations shift to the degree of being incomparably different - in the sense that no one lends an image of an aesthetics, or politics, or working method *badco.* should be identified with. Every performance, similarly to an element in performance, appears as an expression that modifies the whole that we thought *badco.* was. That makes it rather difficult for all those managing business, marketing or represented politics in the arts: what is *badco.* like? where to place it? what to compare it with? how to compare it with its non-coinciding varying self?

Speaking about *badco.* means tracing the heterogeneous movements as forces of expression that crystallize in singular points. The issues I will raise here are less themes, and more nodes through which ideas *qua* problems pass. Problems *qua* problems are the real objects of ideas, for having ideas entails posing, i.e. inventing or constructing problems as both a category of knowledge and a category of being.<sup>3</sup> To grasp something about how *badco.* "does", one has to seek not "thoughts" in their content, but to understand the situations *badco.* create which force one to think. Because, thinking is not a natural possibility, but a creation, and concepts are not evidences of common sense, but are products of imagination, even fiction. Let's begin:

3 Cf. Gilles Deleuze, "The Image of Thought" in *Difference and Repetition*, Continuum, London and New York, 129-167.

## "GIVE ME A PROBLEM!"

It always turns out problematic to make an account of what *badco.*'s performances are "about". In *Diderot's Nephew, Or Blood is Thicker than Water* (*Diderotov nećak, ili krv nije voda*) trusting that there is a text, and even more so, a reference to two plays, "Rameau's nephew" (by D. Diderot) and "The Death of Socrates" (which exists only in the synopsis for a "perfect philosophy play" by the same author) is betrayed: a narrative is hollowed into an empty shell. Rather than voided, the performance teems with parallel worlds, whereby each performer evolves the whole of the performance like a physical and emotional automaton. Systems of improvised actions, around impossible or paradoxical movements, or extreme physical or emotional situations for each performer, compose a (model of a) world of compossible worlds without a vantage-point (viewpoints being multiple *qua* performers).

The question of thematizing one problem or issue is not just a misleading shortcut, it is like cutting out a multiplicity of components, and then trying to unfold relations, connections, encounters in which these components merged forming zones of indiscernability, leaving simple linear causality between ideas and performing actions or materials behind. **Memories are made of this** (2007) is thus a joke of a title when reversed: "this (performance) is made of memories". This performance is subtitled "performance notes", following from *Notes* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, where the author produced a taxonomy

of his writer's notes accumulated over years: "Observationš, "Ideaš, "Scenes and situationš, "Conversations and things overheard", "Feelings and emotionš, "Anecdoteš, "Description of places where I've been", "Things I should remember" etc.

An open-ended string of conversations, stories, statements, movements, radio voices, evergreen and jazz tunes, actions, film scenes, imaginary scenes, images and spaces... extend, and notes shuffle, exchange performers, subjects and predicates. What does F. Scott Fitzgerald, the American writer of the jazz age with "The Crack-Up", the story he wrote in 1936, near the end of his life as an intimate confession of his "emotional bankrupteš" have to do with Dean Martin? **No matter what he was doing, his biographer says, Dino had never had much interest in this world; he was "a menefreghista - one who simply did not give a fuck".** He would never finish the songs he sang at his concerts. He'd sing the song halfway through and say: "No point in sing [sic!] the whole thing, you might not buy the record. Put your hand on my shoulder... But this is not Dino, this is Elvis. While Elvis is with us always, Dino returns only at Christmas time.

Who was it, was it Pravljan Devlahović who said it (first)? I don't remember. What I remember is that at a certain point I wasn't any longer sure whether words or images were circulating for real, or that I had a dream about them which now strikes me as a kind of *déjà vu* or prevision, the awareness of something before you see it and the ability to see something

from the past in full technical colour glory.<sup>4</sup> Of course, this sensation might have been evoked by substitutions, a procedure that both defines metonymy and a kind of confusion of categories in dreams where a house can become two legs can become a word can become yellow. Unlike metonymy in poetry that still leads to a metaphor or a symbol, the memory construed by a dream is concrete, which makes it all the more virtual, real but not actualized.

I will dance (live) (shop) (stroll) so that every movement (payment) (step) I perform (walk), I never really perform (live) (pay) to the full, but interrupt with another movement (payment). I will not attempt to connect these interruptions. With parts of my moving body (apartment) (shop's architecture) (path) I won't form lines and planes, I will imagine that lines and planes have perpetually existed in this space (park). I will work (live) (shop) with (in) multiple (shop departments) parts of my body (apartment) simultaneously. I will not give in to inertia, but will impede it. I will not explore construction, but deconstruction of space into geometrical forms that strike me, speaking with contingency, from the exterior and motorise my body (habitation) (shopping). I will dance (pack my goods) (stroll) along left-right-front-back directions, and in all combinations of those directions.<sup>5</sup>

4 The notion of prevision I owe to Liam Gillick, *Prevision: Should the future help the past?* see [HTTP://WWW.UNITEDNATIONSPLAZA.ORG/READINGROOM/GILLICK\\_PREVISION.PDF](http://www.unitednationsplaza.org/readingroom/gillick_prevision.pdf)

5 This text is the result of overlaying several texts performed in *Memories...* where



Substitutions began already in the entrance, where the performers were leading the audience into the theater space. Each one was describing another space with radically different architecture according to the function of the space the audience was supposed to see, that is, imagine: a shopping mall, a cultural center, an underground railway, a housing project. Not arguing, they were complementing each other, or deviating in a conjunctive way of adding "this... and then that..." despite often funny matches or mismatches among their visions, or between these visions and the actual theater hall we were standing in. By the end of this foreplay, the space had been overwritten and transcoded so many times that the audience could only have a generic memory of it. Maybe the result was the kind of simultaneity or synchrony of images that new generic cities mobilize, what Rem Koolhaas calls "memories of memories: if not all memories at the same time, then at least an abstract, token memory."<sup>6\*</sup> The same applies to a Dean Martin song, or a dialogue from Tarkovsky's **Stalker**, or an album of intimate photos of strangers. The memory or even nostalgia we might feel is the nostalgia for nostalgia, which isn't the same as recollecting the sensation of having a sensation in the past, when you were affected by something. It's not a matter of loss, of the victimhood of ephemerality performance takes pride in. In memory time can slip into a future-past. Films and music, or some of their historical genres but also the home-media like TV, home-video,



2

2

words in brackets substitute each other for each text.

6 Quotes from the projection in **Memories..**



and photos, exercise this power of prevision, partaking in a sensorial becoming with no reference to the lived and the personal. I have never been in the 1950s or to the Grand Canyon, but I can evoke how it feels like. Did you read Karl May as a child?

"Give me a problem" spells out: "give me a concept, then!", precisely because the concept is not given, like a regulative idea or a proposition of the state of affairs or of possibilities of knowing. For instance, no pursuit of what memory is, or of what we are capable of inferring about memory. "The concept is the contour, the configuration, the constellation of an event to come", as Deleuze and Guattari wrote (WP: 32), because it extracts an event from the existing situation at the same time as it sets up a new event: a cross-cutting for a new situation. Conceptual methodology in choreographic practice usually assumes working out certain concepts that have been borrowed from a metalinguistic discourse of theory (cf. "language", "text", "deconstruction", "becoming", "body without organs" etc.). But in **badco**, concepts are never represented, they are the events of problems, hence, expressive concepts. Construction amounts to invisible procedures providing occasions for the spectator to make connections. Procedures are never demonstrated as a knowledge aware of itself. For instance, when Krešimir Mikić and Sergej Pristaš in **Memories...** perform a refracted dialogue of answers which act as questions to generate new questions, we don't know that they aren't talking to each other, that the questions are invented on the spot as a consequence to the answers from a previously

held interview. This "disjunctive synthesis" is probably at stake in the movements as well: performers pull out opposite points or strokes of lines in often contrary motion. Movement doesn't separate from or beyond the body but glues to it, as a delayed tracking volume of the body in space. A text on the screen reads: **The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in the mind at the same time, and still retain the ability to function.**

These connections necessarily pass through affections and perceptions, but what is expressed isn't the chain of many causes the destination of which should be the target of analysis/exegesis of the spectator, but it is the power of thinking equal to the power of existing of the spectator that is renewed or expressed. "Give me a concept" screams for:

### **"GIVE ME AN AUDIENCE!"**

A new text could be begun here, one that would concentrate solely on how space and audience are constitutive for **badco.**, or maybe it is the reverse? According to the Ancients, theater is the show constituted by having a witness in the audience (**teatron**). The role of "reception" has been widely stretched nowadays to the notions of "spectatorship", which emphasizes the scopie regime of perception, and of "participation" that overstates the social part to be rehearsed. I wouldn't exaggerate in claiming that in **badco.** it isn't a matter of

"participation" nor "activation" (however, vitalism plays a certain role in audience plugging senses in often synaesthetic environments). The audience is being constituted, or rather implicated. **Solo Me** (2003), a virtual duet of two actual intertwining solos, folds in a square arena of audience. The auditorium isn't just a frame, it's a tactile springboard for movement, a mirror of glances to exchange, a recorder of ears to be whispered in. Nikolina Pristaš and Pravdan Devlahović develop a manner of approaching the audience by offering them something they didn't ask for. Nikolina stops before any spectator whatever and starts snapping her fingers:

"What does it mean?"

Without Nikolina stopping to snap her fingers, the woman replies:

"I don't know."

Nikolina retorts by snapping once again her fingers from an opposite direction:

"I don't know either, but here it comes again."

Address dissolves from being an act to cynically provoke or hijack the audience. It hints at implicating them in a kind of co-composition. In **Fleshdance** (2005), they are sitting at an intimidatingly close distance from a wide white wall. Watching three dancers hinge the horizontal



(floor) and the vertical surface (wall) by movement can dismantle the organism in favor of the body, flesh and nerve only if the gaze acts as a camera: literally framing and deframing a composition of figures, body parts, or wave-flows traversing the tension between the bone and the flesh.

A careful elaboration of spaces, their uses and spatialization in **badco.**'s projects would be needed. I have suggested only a conditioning between audience and the space set-ups so far. However, a principle can be asserted: partly due to the conditions of not having a regular hosting theater, **badco.** is always migrating in its own city. This deprivation forces quite an affirmative - a proactive approach. Instead of getting bored (and boring others) with a critical routine of the question: "what is the readymade dispositif of the situation we are invited to?" "how should the territory be deterritorialized (and reterritorialized)?" **badco.** integrated space as the first component in a situation where transformation should issue from.

**Deleted Messages** (2005) plays up the involvement of the audience in a space to an extreme proportion: nothing to thematize, everything to include! A discreetly delineated territory is inhabited by both performers and the audience, a simulation of a quarantine (the performance is usually performed in abandoned ports or factories). The system where the performers are each performing their material within a pre-given framework of five parameters (the genetic matrix was imported from

Funktionen by Thomas Lehmen, which designate type of movement, space, manner, image and relation towards people and object in space), develops an exchange and mutual infections among materials/performers. The particular meets the singular: while performers who started off with their own particular movement/action materials are heading towards a genesis of a shared code (all five parameters shared by all performers) - as Niklas Luhmann would have it, that only complexity (of mutations) can reduce complexity (lead to a new code)- the audience is organizing itself in moving about the space at their will. Out of the interaction between self-organization (operation+observation of the audience) and "soft" control (surveillance through screening all movements like the collective behavior of swarm intelligence) singular contacts emerge. Approaching audience here means an investigation of collective/singular behavior in regard to attention. A political sense looms from equating attention with response: if to "attend" is transduced to "respond", responsibility is less of a duty, and more of an ability to respond. If **badco.** engages a politics of attention, then it equates attention to a degree of power expressed in one's capacity/disposition to be affected (acted upon) in great many ways.

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Meeting **badco.** every so often doesn't only answer my curiosity about the whereabouts of the group's developments. It invigorates questioning precepts of a performance world I'm subscribing to.

Are the performing arts in the West capable of detecting their politics now (in 2007)?

When will the artists in Europe assume to exercise their power (and their right) to think structurally, and not just individually?  
Doesn't insisting on medium-specificity in regard to choreography, theater or performance reinforce the modernist canon?  
Has our conceptual imagination waned?

(The questions I left Zagreb with after seeing *Memories...*)

## Deviations and their obviousness

Goran Sergej Pristaš, BADco.

1.

"What's the hurry? You want to flee?" - questions I was asked by Marin Blažević in an interview for the upcoming book "Talks on Croatian New Theatre"

1.2

"The nomads are those who don't move on, they become nomads because they refuse to disappear" (Deleuze 1995: 138).

2.

All the artists (Nikolina Bujas - Pristaš, Pravidan Devlahović, Ivana Sajko and me) who established BADco. in 2000, have found the collaborative frame as a possibility for deviation, stationary escape, as a way to structure some pregnant moments of (f)laws of energies and interests, or curds of performance - examples which come into being through a continuity of their complex artistic and personal relations. The complexity of those relations developed through the combinatory dynamics of nearness and remoteness, through the capacity to be affected by each other and to produce a joy of co-belonging.

From the external, local point of view the combination was already deviational - two dancers + two dramaturgists (one of them primarily a playwright). However, from our perspective the organizational platform was clear: to create circumstances for the common work with artistic differentiation through the projects proposed always by one of the authors within the group and done in collaboration with others who want to be included. So if

we try to articulate what was the assembling artistic position the only derivative would be our personal trust that non-filtrated invested ideas will come out in the form of filtrating performance machines, properly assembled, but taken out of their proper ways, out of differences between common and proper. After five years I realize that each of our projects always had a possibility to be whatever and that all of them constitute the face of work in which the common of the group and the individual of the project are indifferent.

## 2.1.

First deviation: Performance Man.Chair was an attempt to find something in common with the live history of performance art in Croatia. We invited performance artist Damir Bartol - Indoš to collaborate with us on the "cover" version of his 1981 performance art piece Man.Chair, now performed by him together with Nikolina and Prvdan. What came out of this encounter was a piece that was inactual as a historical account (because it

was too resemblant to "third theatre" techniques) but also because it translated some rebellious energy of the specimen-performance which didn't refer to any identifiable objective anymore. The big fun and the joy of for all of us who were working on that piece was that it was operating in the slippage between knowledge, interpretation and understanding and that Indoš's original piece was referential in a very limited context, but since it was renewed, played out alive, it figured as a guarantee for the illusion of rootedness of the group in an overtly identitarian culture. At the same time, emptied out of any identifiable progress, the production of the new from the history of new theatre was then only about the production as such, taking place as such - in the same place and within the known markers - but deviating all the possible courses in the time to come. I like to think about the piece Diderot's Nephew in the same way. That piece was made as a flight through multiple signifying regimes, always without a vantage-point, but always almost there, always in the regime reproduction,

but never in the content. Stationary flight and the right to be irresponsible for the world of identities and necessities, the counter-mock-heroic.

2.1.1.

I recall two paradigmatic performances of Man.Chair that show the effects of pure exemplariness of that piece, its being only in a manner of what we could do, its being a piece and entirety at the same time, beside itself, purely linguistic being, the performance which takes place only in language.

Man.Chair was developed as a work in progress. Since we were a company which was only just starting we neither had budget for production nor place for rehearsals. Therefore we agreed that we'll perform it as a work in progress at several smaller festivals in Croatia, where we would be able to spend some time in some room and show the work afterwards, as passersby. One of those festivals was the first Platform for Young Choreographers,

a project which appeared quite unexpectedly as an initiative of two young dancers from Zagreb. Since back then there was actually no real pieces made by young choreographers the programmers presented two choreographies danced by students of the High-school for Rhythm and Dance from Zagreb which were choreographed by their teachers. What was more than obvious in that context was an unusual appearance of biopolitical youngness. In that milieu Indoš's act became a bio-historical act as he was apparently older, different and strange. His performance created uneasiness because the representational frame was distributed throughout the body of common youngness of Croatian dance scene, however the whole festival wasn't saying anything about the youngness of that dance scene except that there are some young girls in the process of formation for dance.

The last performance of Man.Chair was in Tanzquartier Wien. Man.Chair in which Indoš (who started to work in



70-ies) collaborated with Nikolina and Pravdan (who started to work in 90-ies) was presented in a double-bill program with performances by Tomislav Gotovac (who started to work in 50-ies) who collaborated with Aleksandar Ilić and Ivana Keser (who started to work in 90-ies) and Raimund Hoghe (who started to work in 80-ies) Philip Gehmacher (who started to work in the end of 90-ies). That (dis)connection produced the appearance of a common fold of presentability for all of the three performances in which Man.Chair, being prominently in the language of spectacular historicity which doesn't reveal anything anymore, was sharing with the other works only this bio-historical context, which turned it into a representation of a still-liveness of Indoš's work.

### 2.1.2

"Our recommended approach follows a practice that liberates sedimented practices of their historicist weight, and a certain vocabulary defined by Hellenic and early Christian experience becomes a shibboleth

of a transitory, minimal, human existence. Whether we talk about Hellenic techniques of subjectivisation of the self (parrhesia) or a tensed Christian awaiting of the second coming of Christ (parousia), the key is to think of the world qua the space of activities simultaneously as the object of knowledge and as well as the grounds where the subject is tested by way of truth, which is the subject himself." (Petar Milat: Introduction to Diderot's Nephew)

## 2.2.

Second deviation: To bluff, or to be in-between the plane of possibilities and the plane of organization. Recently we started a research on the organizational aspects of BADco. Already the first poll among people who are sharing BADco.'s mailing list had shown that almost everybody (including the founders of the group) have somewhat different personal statistics on the legal status, decision-making system, membership etc. At the same time, BADco. is not predominantly visible as a constant differentiability we call BADco. What influenced intrinsic developments and

feelings of co-belonging was the internalization of strategic differentiation in the local context. The modalities of inclusion/exclusion are somehow constantly reinterpreted. One is sometimes on the forefront, sometimes defecting.

In 2001 the group was joined by one more dancer, Aleksandra Janeva. She was not invited as a performer but to choreograph her first piece together with Pravdan and Nikolina who were also just starting to shape their authorial, choreographic positions - the production was called 2trilt and it was done in the form of a dance triptych. Separate pieces by Aleksandra and Nikolina brought the first international visibility of the group. That same year, taking part as a performer in Diderot's Nephew, philosopher Tomislav Medak became a member of the core of BADco. by his own claim. His participation was decisive for the future of the group for the reasons that he didn't have interest in automatic participation in always the same setup of authorial processuality.

Therefore, throughout the process of staging Ivana Sajko's play RibCage I decided to "abdicate" from the position of the director of the piece and went to stage together with other performers (philosopher, dancer, theatre director and architect) which turned the piece into a dialogue on the mechanisms of the play instead of interpretation.

### 2.2.1.

"I was quite unhappy with our walk-discussions that night. It didn't work well because English language created shortness of articulation, but then I also liked that blockage filling. While we were talking about the deadness of our performance I felt the presence of death of articulation, collapse of desire for speaking, a transfer of meaning which was too direct and much lacking of sense. This is what I thought a lot about while I was making our new piece Deleted Messages which is too complex to be pronounced, is over-systematized, it creates an illusion of communication - and then you get

the audience that takes part. We felt like Living Theatre in '68 (which only 10 months ago I would hate and now I like.)" (from my communication with Mårten Spångberg on the performance of RibCage)

Performing in RibCage was always a kind of multiple defection. The piece was set in an empty room surrounded by the audience with only one source of light - a bourgeois lamp with decorative lamp-shade. The situation was defined by several points - the play suggests that everything happens in two rooms - a prison cell and living room of the writer of the play (or at least somebody who directly approaches the characters through the stage directions in her first case.) The performance included five fixed module scenes which are then thematically manipulated by our discussions which happened in-between the scenes. Actually, the discussions were staged like prison-like walks in circle and for each performance we were joined by a guest from the audience - this was a kind of escape

from the closure of the set-up scenes to the surface of communication. The complexity of relations of those who are in the language (philosopher, dramaturgist), those who are in the prescriptions (architect-activist, radical theatre director) and those who are in the performance (dancers) created a new closure which was an open field for the second degree of positive escape - escape into silence of those illiterate in speech. But anyway, those walking scenes were a kind of instrument to measure the efficiency of the performance. The included guests (theorists, dancers, visual artists, theatre directors, unknown) were redefining the level of communicability of what was unknown for them. But the closure always guaranteed the third degree of escape - back to the performance - performance of speech or acting out from the pockets of "spontaneous", but always performativity brought in.

### 2.2.2.

The similar situation we had with the piece Solo Me when Nikolina and Pravdan started to work on two separate solos but in the process they turned it into a duet which seems "that it is in the gestural texture of one of the two dancers that the other one inscribes his/her footnotes or that it is in the one's text/thought that are engraved the footnotes of the other collocutor, without being clear at all what the so-called "main text" is as opposed to the "comments below the line". (Cvejić - Milohnić)

The pleasure of that unclarity between the "main text" and "comments below the line" is a feature of what is in common in faciality of the BADco.'s oeuvre even in the most individuated pieces like Walk This Way by Pravdan Devlahović and Mass for Election Day Silence by Ivana Sajko. Instead of looking for the punctualities of the main and of the below, we tend to keep on the line.

### 2.2.1.

"In a line of writing the ductus of the hand passes continually from the common form of the letters to the particular marks that identify its singular presence, and no one, even using the scrupulous rigor of graphology, could ever trace the real division between those two spheres". (Agamben)

### 2.3.

Third deviation: Illiterate and ignorant performers. Performers such as dramaturges, philosophers, theatre directors, architects - whose presentability was always displaced into others - are coming onto the stage and are thus now juxtaposed to representatives. The deviation happens as a result of openness towards the unknown, not thought yet by us. The limits of an illiterate performer emerge as ignorance for the descriptive character of dramaturgy/presentability of the work. The illiterate performance functions at the level of "localized prescription, and not a description" (Badiou). Illiterate performance is not the one which, through



the mastership of the author, transfers the understanding, but whose knowledge surrenders in confrontation with generic power of difference in performance. Therefore a singular piece is never an ultimate representation of the state of things, not even of the plane of organization, but it exists only in continuity of all our performances, but also performances in general.

### 2.3.1.

"My choreography/performance/dancing is always on the reversible path from thought, decision, idea towards their realizations, and backwards. On this path there are drops into the unknown, flashes of no-control, surprises. So there is not only a body that dances but also a body that melts in movement, that evaporates and that, as such, can become a body which de-materializes dance". (Nikolina Bujas-Pristaš)

### 2.3.2.

However, there is always a decisive point in each of our projects. Even if it might have come out of the unclear, even if it doesn't represent the descriptive clearness of where it came from, each project has its aftermath in retrospective justification. First you act and then, in the new light of this action, you reconstruct the circumstances that led you to act. This process is prescriptive because you are forcing "the issue, in the absence of any guarantee." (Hallward). And that's, exactly, where this writing should end.

poetry will be written by everyone  
and truth will be there in every line  
where the poem is at its most beautiful  
he who began to sing will withdraw  
leaving the poem to others"  
(Braniko Mirković)

## PRIVACY IN ACCORDANCE WITH 'MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS...'

Performance issues identification, at least in two ways. My task as an audience member is to interpret a series of utterances, a process that produces and consolidates identity in relation to work. Work and its environment simultaneously invite the

spectator to participate in processes of identification. Theatre, which is more or less any activity taking place on stage, is therefore always popular. Its address is communal and its production homogenizing. Yet there are moments when theatre cracks open, when it slips away from the abysmal travelling into depths and also from the covering of distances that are explored along surfaces: moments when the theatre play-out of interest is nothing else than material and energetic agency, manifesting itself inside and outside of its assemblages. Such theatre may at the first glance be all too easily misunderstood as an expression of egotism or narcissism, a self-referential production that turns its interest away from the expressed to the expressing, yet remains within an identitarian, though sometimes reversed regime, but that would mean overlooking its central concern: moving away from the politics of identification to the processes of individuation, departing from all conventional strata of interpretation and towards those situations in which the spectator is permitted to engage in affectual production, i.e. away from the maintenance of police, or of politics, towards a possible emergence of the political.

"Memories..." in particular, but also the entire body of work created and performed by BADCO., are close to being a turning point in the context of present-day performance; they are a shift away from semiotic agency towards the capacities

of experience. This Zagreb-based group appears to have consolidated neither its form of performance nor its realm of content, or even its mode of production. Their assured, conscious ignorance of the context dominated by regimes of display, combined with an internal exegesis, or rather an elaborate care of the self, has made them develop an emancipated set of technologies of contemporaneity. However, the fact that they are not activated within any ideology of aesthetics is due to a determined mastery of a set of skills in relation to the given ideological machinery. The practice of BADeco., which transforms this noun into a verb, largely owing to the way in which they are constantly reconsidering their collaboration, is a constant process of coding and recoding. Thus, the practicing of BADeco., which is in no respect void of or free from aesthetic values, ideologies, form etc., but is nevertheless emancipated, consists of elaborating a system of ethics: specific in expression or medium, yet general with respect to its applicability.

BADeco. operates through and within a paradox, between the technologies of contemporaneity and the elaboration of ethics, necessarily intimidating classical theatre while operating as an agency of creative actions, which do not simply break or obey the rules (simultaneously confirming them by the very act of transgression), but change the grammatical system itself,

operating within, as well as upon, a space or a situation where these grammatical rules cannot be distinguished from the event.

In its classical and contemporary sense, theatre employs a model that is based on facilitating of identification, for example, or the opportunities of interpretation, and is therefore essentially static and immobile, operating through sets of rules that abolish any possibility for strategic or structural transformation or displacement. Due to that, both differentiation and differentiation necessitate a distributed decision that cannot be referred to by normative rules.

The application of rules escapes determination, yet precisely because of that it enables action. Within a Kantian regime, representation would imply the very extinction of such actions - which would make it perfectly agreeable to certain ideological and economical contexts - placing itself "outside" the action. It is only possible to articulate the meaning of an action/situation in relation to the action that has been undertaken to transform it. An art, or activation that has an aim of setting creative actions in motion, aspires neither to a truth (ethics) nor to a statement (ideology); it is always questioned and therefore always political.

The different articulation of Participation, or perhaps more adequately of attention, which is proposed in "Memories are made of this..." implies new modes of subjectification, which are both political and existential. It is a kind of attention that shifts the perspective from defensive tendencies of structural allocation to a benevolent, heterogeneous allocation in dynamic resources, emphasizing the opportunity for a multiplicity of new modes of subjectification, which may apply to every engaged subject, independently of its hierarchical position, through equity rather than equality (which is a common watchword in theatre).

This differentiated mode of attention, combined with the insistence on multiplicity of experience in the used framework, addresses our understanding of Privacy and its Production/Productivity, a Privacy that can be understood both literally and metaphorically.

Privacy is neither operative nor Procedural, and must therefore be abstracted from the impulse of locating. Procedure consists of a general and identifiable, repeatable, finite, and descriptive formula that possesses content, but a content that is subordinate to its potentiality as a formula of Production. Operation, on the other hand, is a specific, serial (non-repeatable), infinite, and non-descriptive Production

Prescribed for a certain set of Procedures, and its effective nature could not be grasped in and for itself in a general form of its Process. The opportunity to articulate a notion of Privacy as emancipated not only from all formal, semantic content, but also from the metaphysics of the everyday, depends on this twofold directionality.

Procedure is perpetually affiliated to a set of operations and vice versa. Operation is immanently multiple, since it safeguards its articulation from endangering potential openness. Articulation of a set of operations functions as a means to comprehend: not what a particular privacy may communicate, but what that communication is. It is a notion of privacy that is inclined to decisions or decision-making, rather than stratification, and is consequently producing differentiation in an active and empowering constitution.

A pure discourse of operations to which interpretation could be correlated is incommensurable, as any operation's contingent to a singularity that is relevant to a defined practice is immediately rephrased through interpretation. Operations are indeterminable to a single interpretative governance and effective in congruity to permission instead of license, whereby permission differs from license in terms of direction: license conditions something general towards something specific,

whereas Permission acts from the specific to the general. Operations support identification solely in the conjunction between divergent interpretations, relating to the way in which a Procedure consistently develops a coordination of multiple meanings, with elements that are inscribed in a Process of differentiation constitutive to the maintenance of reconcilability, or simply form. A singular Procedure can be utilized, interpreted, adjusted, and adapted to fundamentally different intentions, whereas an operation, or a set of operations, is Perpetually singular, independently of what regime it may refer to.

"Memories..." do not set out to define Privacy, or to capture its ontogenesis; a Privacy that would be commensurate with the techniques and technologies of surveillance, control and consumer-motivation. They engage in the production of Privacy (or Privacies) that is neither self-evident nor straightforward, a Privacy that is constantly contested and consequently Political. Their objective is to invent a radically different form of Privacy, which will intervene into and work with the situation of Privacy rather than simply reacting to it.

"Memories..." initially indicate a tension between the conjunctive layout (differentiation) and the disjunctive laid out (differentiation), inclined to contest the mechanisms by which the analysis of change has been delegated to Psychology,



sociology, and even technology, a Process that has emptied scientific research of every fundamental dialectical concept, without which we are unable to understand anything at all. It re-examines the empirics beyond research methodologies that standardize Privacy as a field of objects (rules), but engages the movement of contingencies that is inherent to immanence and to Processes of subjectivation.

It is precisely the fleeting conditions of Privacy that must be urgently maintained, secured, and accumulated. The aim is, firstly, to avoid the exclusion of particular modes of conducting life, or certain modes of existence, from the common understanding of Privacy. Notions of Privacy must insist on being non-discursive, i.e. they must function as an expression of Practice as it subsists in experience; hence they should not be reducible to a grammar or to a whole field of vision. Secondly, Privacy must remain open, resist institutionalization, and insist on being understood as an organization. A normative Privacy is simply no Privacy at all.

Considering all possible endangerments of Privacy (or the private sphere) implies that it is possible to detect an agency that conditions its existence. Essentially, that agency ought to coincide with the state, in most cases a participatory democracy. Accordingly, Privacy is conditioned

by the Public, by the People or individuals to whom Privacy is given, which implies that Privacy is *ipso facto* a Public domain, assuming that the state can gain access to its intrinsic and extrinsic endeavours. A strong democratic state is therefore Predisposed to condition a Privacy that is Predominately institutionalized, i.e. a Privacy that is linear, transparent, and hierarchical, which implies its own obliteration. Privacy conditioned by the state must be recognized as a given, structural matter, governed by a set of rules that turn Privacy into an illusion. These rules offer to the citizens rights, rights that can be exercised but never exercised, Precisely because they are instigated by the state. Less dramatically, one could say that if Privacy is governed by the state, it becomes obsolete to criticism, since the state is the entity that also governs criticism.

This could be understood as implying that the crises of Private and Public spheres are significant indicators of a dissolving state, a democratic apparatus that has lost track of its time. The conundrum is that these indications can only address democracy either from within the democracy itself, or from a reactive stanza that in its turn confirms the reconstruction of a democratic apparatus which is already in crisis. But then again, it is Precisely owing to this crisis, and Precisely because it is so complex and impossible

to define, that we can today engage in discussions on Privacy, Public space, and democracy. Crisis, albeit with negative connotations, constitutes a dissolved or dissolving grammar - a de-territorialisation - that opens up towards the Production of discourse. The crux, however, is to avoid those revisionist strategies that tend to attack concepts with the very arguments that they have initially opposed, rather than articulating critical or reflexive Practices. We can certainly resort to collective mourning, but the battle is already being fought and we must insist on not falling back to semantic legibility or formal rhetoric as a response to the anomies of our contemporary condition. Instead, we must articulate new methods with respect to the contestation of Privacy, the Public sphere, and ultimately democracy.

The crisis of the Private sphere and its weakened institution results in a transformation, a shift away from semiotic signification and towards affectual Production. Notions of Privacy, security, etc. can no longer be described, but are still operating through modes of emergence.

Crises are signals without signification, signals that contest the whole field of vision. If a signal triggers, activation follows, Prolonging the situation along the lines of flight. Activation Precedes action and is cumulative, unlike action, which

unfolds progressively, step-by-step. Activation consists of irritations and acts through intensities of experience rather than its content. Activation captures the body in a way, cancelling all separation between the body and its environment. Its experience is the crisis. Experience is a dynamic ingathering of activation, assuring the continuity of its serial unfolding and moving the reality of the situation, which has an affective quality.

That is to say that discourse on Privacy in crisis may offer only an **activational outline**: a variation in the intensity of feeling over time. It addresses the irritability of bodies (positive or negative) rather than the cognition of subjects. Activational outlines are Perceptual cues that directly activate the responsiveness of the body, rather than reproducing a form or transmitting definite content.

Activational outlines can exploit opportunities of both positive and negative character. A suspended affectual state, a state in which the subject is incapable, or unable to identify e.g. a crisis, offers an opportunity of manipulating that subject, multiplicity, or community into searching for an exit, an escape that would be independent of their political, ideological, or ethical characteristics. In that condition, the subject will instinctively acquire capacities for escape in order to overcome the situation

and enter into a reflexive mood, but as long as all lines of flight are suspended, deliberately or not, it will remain in a state of fear or anxiety. A suspended threat to the Private sphere, in other words, can be used to pacify a subject or a community, and to compartmentalize it, so to say, making it unable to distinguish good from bad governance. A subject under threat or a community subject to the possibility of terror will give permission to the state to circumvent democracy or to disregard e.g. the Geneva Convention.

Crises of Privacy and the Public sphere suddenly appear as an interesting terrain for regimes that cannot offer a relevant policy to be explored. Crisis becomes a tool for modulating collective individuation. Through mass media, it addresses the population from the angle of its potential to re-individuate differentially. As long as a regime can keep the crisis at arm-length's distance, its inhabitants will remain loyal, though only as long as the activation remains cumulative and does not transform into actions, since these would, instead of operating through processual dimensions, have grammatical rules, and that is the point in which crisis would become the content of experience.

From a corporate perspective, a crisis that concerns Privacy is generally positive, although its motivation is an oscillation

between activation and action, a Pulsating, yet expanding motion of territorial coagulation. A structural and state-governed Privacy functions as a cul-de-sac for corporate economies, which build upon transformations in relationship to demand. Crisis is conditioned by movement. Corporate economies synchronically support continuity and fragmentation, movement and its breaks, as a means of continuously re-contextualizing demand. Insight into our Private sphere is evidently favourable, but it would be too hasty to judge that corporate economies are interested in transparency or in abolishing the Private sphere. Instead, corporate forces are interested in a Private sphere that is as multiple and dynamic as possible, conditioned by the possibility of statistic application or the opportunity of measurement. The Private sphere will always be subject to movement, independently of its degree of institutionalization, which renders the benevolent relation to corporate economies favourable. The Privacy enunciated by corporate economies is simultaneously expanding and contracting, mobile and immobile. Hence our interest into the way in which "Memories..." function as a dialectical image does not concern the question whether Participation exists or not, but what kind of Participation it is. If our Political reality has lost its dissentient or antagonistic fundament, then contemporary corporate economies must necessarily engage in antagonistic discourse Production and strategies, if

for no other reasons, then in order to increase customers' demands. Such Participation could be understood as subversive affirmation, or rather affirmative affirmation, i.e. a set of Political tactics that allows for Participation in certain socio-Political or economical discourse, and affirm or consume them while simultaneously undermining them. In such discourse, subversive affirmation is characterized by the idea that affirmation simultaneously Produces a secondary trajectory, which reveals what is being affirmed. Affirmative affirmation argues that deliberate constructions of secondary trajectories are in fact counter-effective, Precisely because they feed on an already assumed failure of the 'enemy'. The Point instead must be to acknowledge the Potentialities of corporate interests and to replace the current trend of celebrating mimesis through Pro-active merging and cooperation, although, and this is important, not on the level of expression, but through Processes of structuralization.

The Private sphere is neither a space nor a concept of consensus, but a configuration of dissensus. It is a multiplicity of spheres, spaces, and creative capacities, configured by its immanent impossibility, reciprocal to the fact that the society, as a totality, is impossible. The Private sphere, however, is Possible Precisely because the society is impossible. Attempts to neutralize these inherent complexities,

in particular the perpetual production of dissensus, the presence of two bodies in one, conditioning an antagonistic political reality, hinges on actualization and an ontogenetic force that must not be overlooked, since it includes the self-generative, irrational modes of collective individuation we call fascism.

A private sphere governed by fear is one emptied of content, since it is governed by sustained affectual production, a tactic as inconsiderate as it is politically decisive. Conceptions of the private sphere must be generative of friction instead of producing a consensus with recourse to rational and procedural meta-grammar. This results in a conception of the private sphere as a non-representational operability, configured by its inherent impossibility and a perpetual production of dissensus, open for opportunities to discard privacy. It is a private sphere configured through structural confinements and instigated as an institution, but also understood as an agency of creative actions that are not simply a matter of breaking or obeying the rules (simultaneously affirming them in the act of transgression), but actions that change the grammatical system itself, operating within, and upon, a space where grammatical rules cannot be distinguished from the empirical event. Privacy understood as a creative action is the reversed correlative to the state of exception.



True innovation, as opposed to formally indifferent modification of the commodity (the structured notion of Privacy), involves a distributed decision that cannot be referred to any normative condition or application of grammatical rules. This is in accord with Wittgenstein's observation that rules can never stipulate their own application. Seen that way, experience functions as a generative principle of dissensus, in the creation of differentiation of Privacy and its spheres.

BADco. sets in action an unconditional escape from *what*, a good question in order to discover an essence or locate an idea i.e. constructive of an end of Politics and of dissensus, in favour of questions characterized by: *who?*, *how much?*, *where?*, *in which case?*, which create particular spaces and times, determining the double aspect of differentiation (qualitative) and differentiation (quantitative) and outlining a movement of dramatisation. For BADco., there is always something beneath representation, a "drama" beneath all logos, a Privacy without bounds, an attention becoming a subject.

----- Original Message -----

From: Nikolina Pristaš

To: Iva Nerina Sibila

Sent: Friday, December 05, 2008 5:05 PM

Subject: An interview via e-mail with Nikolina Pristaš, by Iva Nerina Sibila.\*

I.N.S.: I saw *Changes* twice. First time in a large auditorium, sitting somewhere in the middle, when unfortunately I wasn't able to see a good portion of the performance because it takes place almost entirely in the dark. At the same time, on the right side of the stage there was a small stand, which at first seemed to be a part of the set, but during the performance I realized that one can watch the performance from this position, much closer to the performers. Second time I watched it from there and the experience was completely different. From this perspective, I was allowed to see what really happens with the performers, their concentration, tension; I was able to perceive how movements migrate from one body to another, to see all the tiny gestures.

It seems to me that choreographers of the younger generation and of the similar geopolitical context (Manuel Pelmus and Dalija Aćin, for example) like to work with the idea of reduced visibility that brings the performers' presence in question, just as it does with the position of the audience. Could you describe the function of semidarkness i.e. selective visibility in *Changes*?

N.P.: In essence *Changes* goes through three light environments coming out of three ideas of space; open field (in which sources of light make their way into space through open entrances), cleared space – a desert (space homogenized by purple light) and altering – activating space (lit by sensor activated lamps that react to movement). However, generally, the idea of space as desert (this is why we cut the number of spectators in half with regards to the number of seats and why all of the entrances remain open during the entire performance) is in connection with the main theme of the performance: relation between parasites and the environment. I found it very interesting to read that Michel Serres, the author of the book *The Parasite*, states that if a parasite wants to seize power it always has to eliminate of all other parasites in order to take control over the whole space, it needs to eradicate all noise; the message of order needs to pass through silence. I see an analogy between that claim and John Cage's 4'33" composition. Cage's decision to evacuate music from the concert hall in turn makes possible for other noises to crawl into it. There is no space without a parasite, you simply cannot eliminate the parasite and I was keenly interested to work with the productive value of it.

But returning to the question, selective visibility in each of these light environments has a different dramaturgical function, but it is always in one way or another guided by the logic of the relation between a parasite / noise and the environment. In the initial situation the intensity and source of light constantly, slowly shift and thus change the visible and invisible areas of space and dancers' bodies—this is as if someone constantly opens and closes the entrances into the space so the light happens upon events taking place there.

The choice of this type of lighting was primarily led by the idea of dispersing the spectators' monolithic gaze in an activating relationship toward offered points of intensity and information appearing in the space, stimulating the spectators to pay attention, to mobilize other senses with which they perceive the space—first and foremost their hearing—and to enhance the impression of porousness, vastness of the space, of the stage as a space through which one passes. The full purple light takes over this environment and thus the space becomes homogenous—a unique volume containing both you and us. It takes a couple of seconds for the eye to get used to this new condition and to distinguish dancers' bodies from the environment. The function of this change is to change the impression of materiality of the space and the bodies; everything remains the same, but is seen differently. And the last light environment is made of sensor lamps arranged over the stage which are motion activated and whose function is to inscribe the logic of lighting the space into the texture of choreography, or in other words, to become one of its agents. The composition of choreography in this last part of the performance is almost entirely conditioned by the unpredictable reactions of the lighting objects.

Thus I see differences in authorial optings for selective visibility. In both Dalija's and Manuel's work we see a reduction procedure at work although for completely different purpose and with different effects. While Manuel choreographs using speech and puts the spectators in the situation where they imagine motion based on his description of the choreography, Dalija's dancers we can hardly make out in the darkness, we see two figures melted with the object, as if in an optical illusion. Both authors reduce the visibility in order to

take advantage of the power of theatre illusion, as well as direct the spectators' attention where they want. In *Changes* the intensities and relations between four basic modes of the performance—light, choreography, text and sound—are constantly interchanging; the spectators' attention is more dispersed, it travels along those layers of the performance, it is left to its own devices to direct different points of intensity which can attract their attention at any moment. *Changes* disappoints the spectator whose attention is automatized.

I.N.S.: The spectator, depending on the position in the auditorium, gets completely different information about the performance. Personally, I found the performance much more interesting from a closer view. I understand the author's stand not to serve the spectator with an unambiguous product, but I am still worried by the fact that certain views enable the spectator to see important segments of the performance. Would you care to comment this?

N.P.: I'll try to answer this metaphorically. A group of people sits at the table having a conversation. Someone's cell phone goes off. The ringing of the cell phone interrupts the conversation for a moment, the noise interrupts the circulation of messages, creates a disturbance in the system. At the moment the person answers the cell phone two communication systems are created. To the person talking on the phone the conversation at the table becomes noise in the channel. If she nears the table and depending on her attention, the conversation at the table will from noise slowly again turn into a message. The same is valid for the group of people at the table. The noise and messages constantly change

roles depending on the position of the spectators and their attention. In this regard *Changes* are in the continuity of preoccupations of BADco's work, especially when it comes to the problem of audience's attention. Most of our work is more concerned with the conditions of viewing than showing. After the Berlin performance I participated in the project *Impersonation Game* by Mette Ingvarsten and Alice Chauchat. This project is a game in which three artists who saw the performance answer the author's questions as if they are the authors of the performance. To my question why to overlap planes of the performance, why to saturate it with information and signals, Alice gave a very simple answer: "The important theme of the performance is the problem of work and laziness in art, we want to try to produce the audience that will work – think parallel with us."

I.N.S.: It seems to me that the text, either spoken live or recorded, leads the dramaturgy of this performance. The topics you are interested in are expressed very explicitly and it is very playful in the form in which it is presented with regards to the movement. With this I have in mind a live reading, recordings in English and there is also some sound, noise even music at one moment. On the other hand, the movement is very precisely defined. If I were to describe it, I'd say it's an energy which powerfully starts from the center of the body, breaks the body into lines, a sequence which is purposefully and almost aggressively arrested. With regards to the form, there are a lot of knees on the floor, tight feet, large jumps which begin and end in themselves. We also see clear gestures: listening, quieting down, holding the violin, waving at someone... The

very sequence of movements, it seems, is given to the moment, while position in space and communication have been arranged and discussed in advance. There are two exits from this code of movement: one is completely still lying on the floor, and another is an attempt of continual spinning – both are connected with the recording of Cage's silent composition.

What is the relationship between gesture and movement? It seemed to me that by using recognizable gestures you are trying to assign a meaning to a completely abstract movement.

N.P.: The dancing in *Changes* is treated as noise—immediate, incommunicable and untranslatable expression of the body. The dancing thus does not communicate anything but the very gesture of dancing. This is important for the following reasons: La Fontaine's fable ends with the Ant asking the Grasshopper: "How spent you the summer?" The Grasshopper's answer was: "Night and day to each comer I sang if you please." "You sang! I am at ease: For 'tis plain at a glance, Now ma'am, you must dance." The paradox is that dance, even though it requires a lot of physical effort, is not seen as serious work. This is work without a purpose, it doesn't produce anything but itself and that is its purpose. Further, thematizing dance as constant production by working, presenting it as a sequence that continuously regenerates itself and mutates, conditioned the decision for horizontal arrangement of the choreography, the decision not to arrange the choreography compositionally with its climaxes, condensations and dissipations. And finally, the saturation with dance (as well as with specific acoustics it creates) functions

as a counterpart to Cage's noisy silence. Communication gestures are thus needed because, as all gestural material in the performance, they stand in opposition to dancing. However, they too went through the choreographic process; they were undone, hidden, twisted, dismantled, broken. They also float on the borderline between being a message and being just noise.

I.N.S.: Choreography, with the dancers dressed in black, with the heavy "traffic" of powerful, "untidy" movements, towards the end condenses in a more nervous, clumsy, hurried and more constrained variant. "Invited" by a whistle, they answer by reentering the same code of movement. I saw this as an "anthill" in which an individual can't exactly make choices. Could you, please, comment on this? And at the beginning you make an attempt to take the violin and play it, but you give up. The violin bow from the source of music becomes a stick that's used to threaten. Where do you see the possibility of *change*, which you call for in your text? Is the only exit from this anthill (whose choreographic structure is, by the way, excellent) staying still, not doing anything? Lying on the floor with one's face down? I always saw the movement as a powerful means which enables us, beyond words, to cross the border of intellectual and social framework, and touch upon some simpler and more powerful level of existence. I don't see this as one of Martha Graham's "primitive mysteries", but as a start of some new energy that leads into individuality, autonomy... Quite the contrary, I see the body/movement as an evidence of social restriction, the dying of art...



N.P.: When it comes to the “anthill” scene (the last scene), the paradox is in the fact that in order to perform this scene we don’t need to rehearse the elements of choreography but the speed of reaction and imagination in combinations. Each dancer decides on the spot in relation to other dancers and that, if we include a relative unpredictability of sensor lamps going on and off, constitutes a very complex and unpredictable system of relations between us. Everything is a free choice, but this free choice involves awareness that we are part of the same system and that every individual decision triggers a series of other decisions, which are in essence part of a chain-reaction. With regards to other scenes in the performance, the “anthill” is the most free when it comes to dancing/performing, and the fact that the soundtrack, which anthropomorphizes the ants, creates the need to interpret this explicitly dance scene through a discursive environment, in my opinion, signals the lack of trust in the dance. Instead of observing how the dance operates with regards to the environment and the system of relations in which it is set, it is interpreted via only one element of this scene—the soundtrack. The question is (and the performance wants to ask this question among others): why don’t we have the same problem with music since music represents the same interpretative and rhythmic dictate to the dance as does the text? Music affects the way we perceive dance to the point that it almost conditions that same perception, doesn’t it? And in this scene none of the dancing is conditioned by the soundtrack, except its interpretation, and this is no longer up to me. The parasite that is taking over the environment (!). Besides, isn’t it interesting that in societies in which dancing is not considered real work, dance is considered enslaved at that moment when

it is brought in proximity to labor? From my perspective, I don't question the expressive potential of the dance, on the contrary.

Bottom line, *Changes* is a performance with clearly expressed conceptual direction but in it you'll find dancing from the first to the last minute. As opposed to *Fleshdance*, dance in *Changes* is instrumentalized. I am interested in different creative problems while choreography is the field of my thinking and acting.

I.N.S.: You worked with a team of excellent dancers. I am interested in the process of making this performance, the relationship between improvisation and choreography which here, it seems, is completely permeated. How do you experience your co-performers?

N.P.: When you have a privilege to work with such a team—the one which you don't have to seduce, talk them into working with you—the only thing you have to worry about is how to come to a rehearsal with an idea, a problem that will be challenging for all of you when it comes to thinking about it and performing it. Practically the biggest question that stood before all of us at the beginning of the process was whether we, who are so different, can dance together within the same system. Each dancer's style, i.e. that what truly makes her that dancing singularity, was something I by no means wanted to erase, on the contrary. I think that the very differences between us contribute to the performing richness of the piece. What we share in the performance, and the performance is always a *decalque* of the process, is a certain collection of

choreographic decisions, structural points and attentions, everything else is a sum of decisions of dancers who combine, think, dance, work and thus create the texture of *Changes*.

*Translated by Tomislav Kuzmanović*

\*This interview was published in the magazine "Kretanja", no. 8/9|

## OPERATION, RE-ENACTMENT, RECONSTRUCTION

Here is a reconstruction model: Zagreb, early May 1945. German and **ustasha** troops are retreating from the city. Several filmmakers, mostly pioneers of Croatian film, participate in the action of saving the filming equipment and material, which the occupation forces intend to take with them. A part of the equipment has been transported from the former building of state production into private homes, but it is impossible to hide everything. Therefore, the cameramen have grabbed the cameras and come out into the streets, filming the retreat of German and **ustasha** convoy from Zagreb. In order to avoid suspicion, they camouflage some of the cameras behind the windowpanes or behave as if they were fleeing themselves. Sometimes they even ask the retreating soldiers to help them transport the equipment

to a filming location. The whole action is coordinated by film director Branko Marjanović, who is based in the city centre and plans the locations. On 8 May, the partisan forces enter the city, but the filming goes on. Mistrustful partisans occasionally stop civilians carrying cameras, but the cameramen tell them the predefined password: "Florijan knows everything!" Even though Florijan does not exist and the cameramen have invented the password, a name behind the action helps regulate the situation. The cameramen are left alone. In this way, a historical document is created that is known in present-day literature as the "Liberation of Zagreb."<sup>1</sup>

So what is there to be reconstructed? Everything has been filmed, documented; the object of cameraman's attention is permanently available, evidencing the fact of a rupture, a revolution, an "event" of truth (Badiou), a breakthrough from the situation, from the way things are. The film, same as the con password naming some Florijan, resituates and names the event, de-constituting the community in decline and establishing another on the rise. Still, the story narrated above is indispensable for the "truthfulness" of the filmed material. The film is apparently neutral, void of all action. The main difference between the shots made before 8 May 1945 and the later ones is the fact that the documents about the retreat of troops from Zagreb are voyeur-like, filmed from behind the windowpanes, clandestinely or with great caution: they have been made by cameramen with a mission. The shots of partisans entering the city indicate uncertainty, but also show the enthusiasm of the cameramen, their camera

1 Cf. Ivo Škrabalo: **između publike i države** [Between the Public and the State], Zagreb: Znanje, 1984, p. 109.



running with the momentum, the filming operation having become an action. The shots were presented in the first issue of **Filmske novosti**, a cinema journal created by our filmmakers. Prior to 8 May 1945, they were employed in the production sector of Hrvatski slikopis, an institute producing propaganda film journals for the puppet regime of Croatia. The day of the liberation of Zagreb also brought changes in the production staff. The material made by the staff of Hrvatski slikopis became the material of **Filmske novosti**, first released on 21 May 1945. The idea behind the documentary operation became the “thought of a founding fiction, or a foundation by fiction.”<sup>2</sup> In this way, our story has been transformed into a myth, since that fiction is the operation as such. To say it more clearly: the operation is no fiction, but its fiction (the way our story goes, the notes on the making of the first post-war film material in Croatia, the history of Croatian film that includes it, or the narrative in the margins of the film) is an operation. The story about the operation accompanying the documentary has transformed its own fiction into the “foundation or into the inauguration of **meaning** itself.”<sup>3</sup>

Paradoxically, the film does not document the story about the operation, but the very embeddedness of that story in the film, that is, before it has become a narrative, presents the “**living heart of the logos**.”<sup>4</sup> The myth of an operation being **the** operation is lived and living because it was created on the very spot of the event, at the site of its originating. It was created at the site where one

2 Jean-Luc Nancy: **The Inoperative Community**, University of Minnesota, 1990, p. 53.

3 **ibidem**, italics are Nancy's.

4 **ibid.**, p. 49, italics are Nancy's.



cinematography was declining and another emerging, at the site of birth, of innovation – both social and aesthetic.

However, what makes this operation interesting is also the fact that it was an operation of saving one's bare life. But saving one's life did not consist in retreating or hiding – rather, it meant investing one's life into an action that was ideological and corresponded with the mimetic aspect of the film. If a political decision merged the documentation of the operation of retreat with the action of saving the equipment, it was ideology that homogenized the enthusiasm of the cameramen and the action of saving one's life with the entry of partisans into the city. It was the ideology of the codename (Florijan), of situating the whole thing in vagueness, that homogenized the two social choreographies:<sup>5</sup> the organization of the filming plan according to the flow of refugee convoys and the enthusiasm of confronting the new in the flow of history.

But we are still preoccupied with a question containing the word “reconstruction”: Why reconstruct? The third stage of liberation in the story of our cameramen is their rehabilitation with respect to ideology. Thus, if we wish to help them and leave them in the field of the aesthetic, we will have to take the action upon ourselves, to accept that our action, the one that would reconstruct the whole thing in the mode of a repeated performance, will be a representation of the immanently political in the narrative of Operation Florijan. Let us assume that we have production facilities that enable us to engage a sufficient number of performers, vehicles, weapons, and old equipment – the operation will still

5 Cf. Andrew Hewitt, **Social Choreography**. Duke University Press, 2005.

fail. The best we can accomplish is a re-enactment or staging of the adapted narrative, rather than its reconstruction. Why is that so? Because the situated narrative such as that of *Operation Florijan* requires a previous interruption of myth, a sort of Brechtian literarization, an introduction of the originating speech, of mythological operation before the interruption, of communication that no longer establishes a community, but points to the performers that now have nothing in common with those in the situation of having to fight for their bare lives, however aestheticized their social choreography may be:

“This literarization of the theater, as indeed the literarization of all public affairs, must be developed to the greatest possible extent. Literarization means putting across ideas through actions; interspersing the ‘performed’ with the ‘formulated.’ (...) So far as the communication of the subject matter is concerned, the spectator must not be misled along the path of empathy; instead, a form of intercourse takes place between the spectator and the actor, and basically, in spite of all the strangeness and detachment, the actor addresses himself directly to the spectator.”<sup>6</sup>

The literarized theatre is a theatre in which footnotes and observations help us look left or right, beyond the situation or narrative by which the aesthetic ideology homogenizes.<sup>7</sup> In this respect, we must distinguish the reconstruction

6 Bertolt Brecht in **Brecht on Theatre**, New York: Hill & Wang, 1964, p. 44.

7 On the literarized theatre, the theatre of interrupted myth, Nancy has written: “This does not mean that there is no theater – as though there could be literature without theater. But theater, here, no longer means the scene of representation: it means the extreme edge of this scene, the dividing line where singular beings are exposed to one another.

of performance from the re-enactment of action, which we receive in the form of myth or narrative. The narrativized action presupposes that our film on the Liberation of Zagreb can substitute Operation Florijan or serve as its metaphor. The fact that I have called it Operation Florijan means that it is possible to use the narrative about shooting the first post-war film in order to derive a **blueprint** for the performance of a social narrative on an undercover agent. Therefore, the re-enactment of such an action has its recognizable performative scheme, its social choreography, in which Operation Florijan is only a metaphor for the birth of new cinematography. The reconstruction of performance, however, presupposes that the artistic performance is a possible "**blueprint** for thinking and effecting modern social organization: it is not only a secondary representation but also a primary performance of that order."<sup>8</sup>

This means that we have two possible procedures and a single goal: 1. Creating an artistic performance as a **mise-en-scène** of the narrative (Operation Florijan) or a **re-enactment** of the action; 2. **Reconstructing** such a performance as literarization or interruption of myth, even if the performance has never existed, since its operation is its fiction; 3. **Reconstructing** the situation, that is, acting retrospectively in the field of political action and seeking to re-enact

What is shared on this extreme and difficult limit is not communion, not the completed identity of all in one, nor any kind of completed identity. What is shared therefore is not the annulment of sharing, but sharing itself, and consequently everyone's nonidentity, each one's nonidentity to himself and to others, and the nonidentity of the work to itself, and finally the nonidentity of literature to literature itself." Jean-Luc Nancy: **The Inoperative Community**, p. 68.

<sup>8</sup> Andrew Hewitt, **Social Choreography**, p. 14.



the situation of the Liberation of Zagreb (whereby one should at least apply another type of situating, depriving Stalin of his revolution).

The interest of this artistic plan will remain in the field of reconstruction, primarily because re-enactment includes restarting the mechanism of the aesthetic ideology of action. Reconstruction presupposes a new approach to construction, in which we will find a place for the voice of those who speak non-constitutively, at the brink of muteness, at the brink of becoming literature:

“On this limit, the one who exposes himself and to whom – if we listen, if we read, if our ethical and political condition is one of listening or reading – we expose ourselves, does not deliver a founding speech. On the contrary, he suspends this speech, he interrupts it and he says that he is interrupting it.”

The practice of re-enactment often comes close to the practice of reconstitution, namely in the case of re-enactment to which the author or performer of the original performance is invited. Instead of de-mythologization and non-identitarian presentation, such re-enactment mythologizes the performance by placing it operatively in non-time, on the level of permanently possible rather than potential. Such practices never reach the brink of presentation in non-identity, since they are identitarian and establish their origin and identity in time – falling into the utopian trap of aesthetic ideology.

Therefore, reconstruction will open up the possibility of bringing mythologized

9 Jean-Luc Nancy: *The Inoperative Community*, p. 68.



performance back into the field of affirmation, of the politics of emancipation rather than identification – by literarizing it, as Emil Hrvatin has done on the basis of **Pupilija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilička**, a mythical Slovenian performance from the 60s. Whereas originally it was performed by artists that were “illiterate” in terms of acting and dance – poets, musicians, and students – Hrvatin re-enacted it with a team of performers that were too literate for that – which generated an entirely new relational frame and created a new performance, while its contextual and referential aspect was transferred to the presentation machinery of Power-Point, running in the background. The reconstruction consisted of a complex set of questions, suppositions, re-enactments, footnotes, quotations, original shots, etc. However, there was a point in which the entire performance reopened into the field of myth, and that was the *mise-en-scène* of the Law, the scene that the reconstruction owed to the sacrifice as a constitutive act of Western society. The original performance of **Pupilija** ended by slaughtering one of the seven hens that were freely roaming around the scene. With no ritual whatsoever, the end of the performance ended the life of the hen – the **Gallus sacer**. By interpreting performance as a state of exception, a state of illusion, the act of subversive affirmation took the life of someone whose identity had been erased completely, by which he obtained a new identity, the identity of a performer. Until the moment of death, the moment of restarting the reality. And in that reality, the Reconstruction of **Pupilija** ends with a *mise-en-scène* of the Law: the version that I have seen ends with a video clip in which a lawyer explains the legal repercussions of killing an animal in public place. In another version, the audience votes for or against killing the hen. Eventually, the hen is not killed, since legal consequences are drastic,



while the fictional relationship between the law and violence gives a new fundamental power to Hrvatín's reconstruction, power of the community of those who, deprived of their identity, expose themselves to one another at the brink of the scene, on the margins of the law.

However, if we understand politics as the brink of the scene (rather than mere obscenity), the place where the subject is radicalised in performance, the procedures of reconstruction will open up numerous other issues – from the redundancy in art to the metaphor of art as a state of exception to the constitutive role of artistic experiment in the community or the problem of social invention in post-vanguard art.

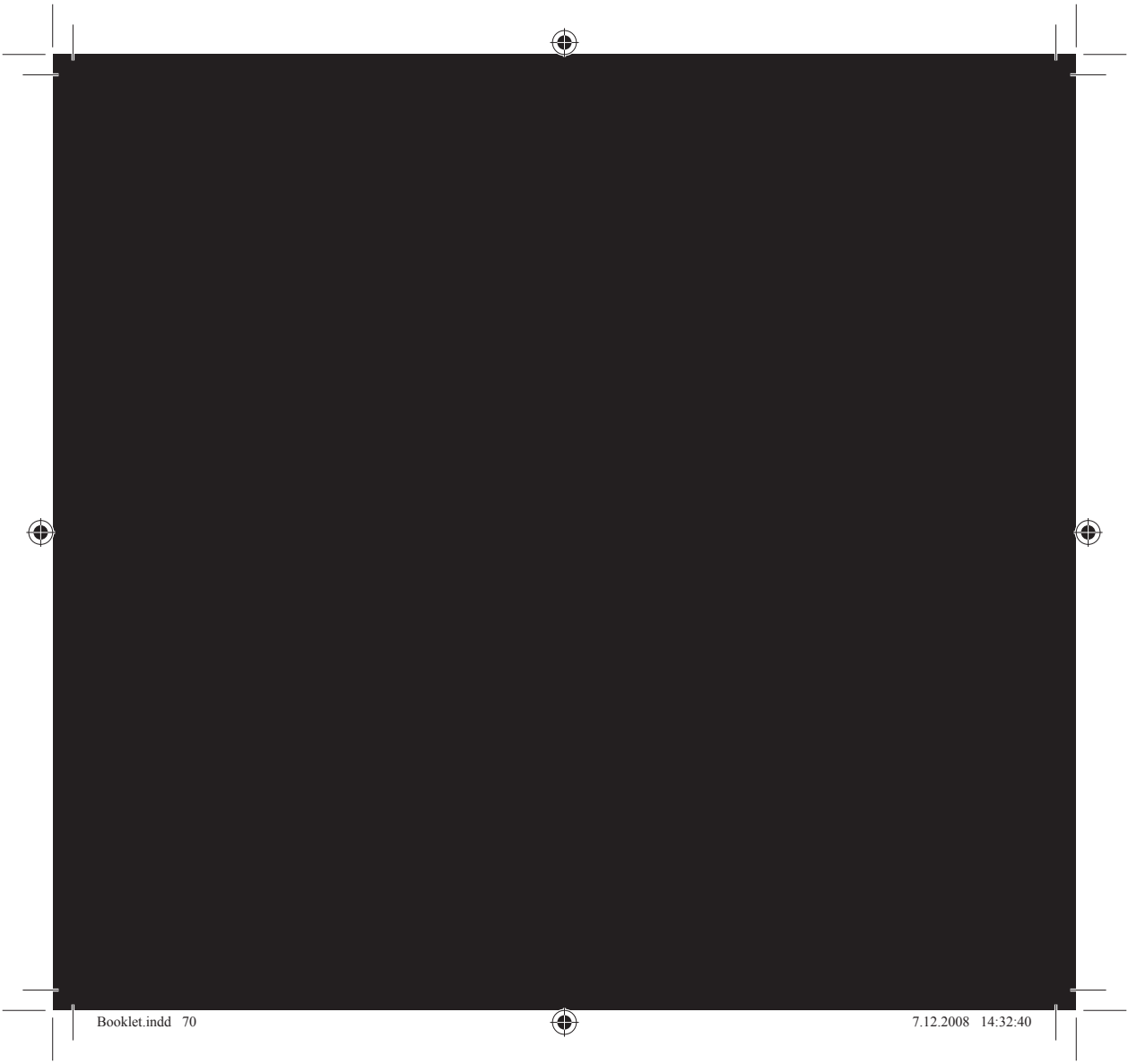
In the performing arts, the majority of referential investigations or reconstructions focused on the 60s and on those authors whose work, among other things, did not set a disciplinary framework to their own artistic practices, but rather offered a possibility of participation to those who were illiterate in art, and even a possibility of becoming illiterate in the process, e.g. Yvonne Reiner, Steve Paxton, Trisha Brown, etc. It is difficult to say whether it is the immanent politicality of social choreography, or the impression that all artistic practice in the 60s was steeped into the political tensions of the time, that has been so attractive to researchers interested in the political aspect of performance, but it is certain that the mythology of the 60s did deeply steep the performing arts of the time into the myth of politicality, which indirectly corresponds to the aestheticized policies of today. For this reason we find interest in the performance of **Majski i ostali rituali**. [**Rituals of May and Other Rituals**] from 1970 (which was actually

interrupted by lowering the curtain and never performed completely), in which a group of filmmakers gathered under the name of PAN 69, among them the now famous visual artist Mladen Stilinović, re-enacted some selected events of that historical month, such as: the celebration of 1 May - Workers' Day, the Youth Baton, Tito's birthday, the student protests, the speech of President Tito addressing the students, the expulsion from the Party, admittance to the Party, etc. These events are just as interesting as those from 1945, since the student protests of 1968 remain equally unreadable from today's perspective. It is generally known that there were protests and that they were an echo of those happening all over Europe, as well as that they occurred after the student demonstrations in Belgrade. It is known that they were organized and even the names of the leaders are known. However, very few people know the real proportions of the protests, whether the organizers of Operation 1968 fought purposefully, with the aim of achieving more communism, less socialism, or whatever. Thus, what we know about 1968 in Zagreb is a myth and we should reconstruct a whole series of events in order to obtain a real picture of the politics behind the protests, since many among the participants were later situated in the Croatian national movement of 1971, which had a significantly different ideology from what we know about the myth of 1968.

Seen from today's perspective, the events of 1968 have, unlike Operation Florijan, their own construction in the performative body of the happening of **Majski i ostali rituali**, which opens up space for investigating the blueprint of socio-political relations in the artistic community of Zagreb in the 60s.

**Majski i ostali rituali** is a rather unknown happening and there is very few evidence that it has ever been actually performed. All that we may discover

or state about it today is actually constitutive and basic for the group that performed it and for the community in which it was created, as well as for the community that takes interest in historicizing a living artistic act. Someone might observe that these are only historical facts, just like any other facts in today's art of archivable data. However, that is not quite correct. What distinguishes a mythologized performance from an article about that performance, photographs from the past, or remnants of the action is precisely the fact that a performance, since performed live, is a specific and directly political or social intervention that establishes a new potential set of relations, a system that we may not understand at first, but if it offers the joy of production, it will certainly open up the possibility of a new social or communal organization. Here we must go beyond the framework of the production of meaning or context, beyond all interpretations indicating that it is possible to read what we call our present from those performances. It is precisely such interpretations that mythologize performance and identify invention with foundation.



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