

no ONE BELONGS HERE
MORE THAN you

The Living Archive:
Curating Feminist Knowledge

54th October Salon



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Curating Feminist Knowledge

Edited by Red Min(e)d (Jelena Petrović and
Katja Kobolt, Danijela Dugandžić Živanović,
Dunja Kukovec) in collaboration with
Jelena Vesić, editor of the Living Archive
Curatorial School

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Red Min(e)d
Production in times of trouble



Alexis O'Hara is a transdisciplinary artist whose work comprises elements of cabaret, pop music, spoken word, stand-up comedy, vocals and electronics, photography and sound installation. The eclecticism of her work attracts international programmers from various disciplines. She has presented work in Scotland, Austria, Mexico, Germany, Belgium, France, England, Ireland, Slovenia, Australia, Switzerland, the U.S. and across Canada. She lives and works in Montreal.

aLEXIS o’HARA

8 COPING MECHANISMS
FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

Alexis O’Hara, performance, Belgrade, 2013

Good evening. Do not panic. Survival is a state of mind. When you recognize the seriousness of your situation, the ensuing stress can weaken your ability to think and plan. Please understand that the dominant socio-political corporate structure is neither for you nor specifically against you. Set aside your initial fear. Keep in mind that while you cannot control the cultural hegemony, you can control how you operate and live within it.

The last captive specimen of the King Island Emu feminist died in 1822.
The Finsch’s Duck feminist possibly survived until 1870.
The Great Auk feminist was hunted to extinction in the late 19th century,
her down & feathers prized for use in mattress construction.

Fear, frustration and feelings of boiling rage are normal, but beware as they can affect your ability to live in a sexist hetero-normative society. You must recognize your fears and, using common sense, channel the energy that fear generates into becoming more alert, aware and motivated.

Once the most common feminists in the Americas, the last of the
Passenger Pigeon feminists died in the Cincinnati Zoo in 1914.
The Canarian Oystercatcher feminist was last sighted organizing a
make-your-own menstrual pad workshop in 2005.
The last of the Bar-winged Rail feminists died on the operating table,
undergoing a routine liposuction procedure (c. 1980).

Pain is nature’s way of making you pay attention to something wrong with you. But nature also has a way of buffering the pain connected to fascism, sexism, racism, homophobia and corporate greed. You may be too busy – trying to feed your family, pay your rent, develop your artist statement, get your father into an alcoholic rehabilitation program – to pay immediate attention to your psychic injuries. Remember, a special effort must, and can, be made to keep your hopes up, remain positive, and keep working for spiritual survival and emancipation.

A recent poll in USA Today found people are twice as likely to consider calling someone a feminist to be an insult (23%) rather than a compliment (12%). Just 14% of Republican women would label themselves feminist. Fewer than one in ten women aged 25 to 29 identified with feminism.

Another study found that 60% of American women between 18 and 24 are completely devoid of pubic hair. Many men, like Bob Fitzpatrick, a finance student at the University of Michigan, say they are much more likely to perform oral sex on a female partner if she has no pubic hair at all. “I feel cleaner down there, when I’ve been completely waxed,” says Mindy Lewis, a 22-year-old student from Oklahoma.

The Ivory-billed Woodpecker feminist died in 1987 when she married
a rich man and no longer had to think about things like pay equity and
the low conviction rate for rapists in the Western world.
The Bush Wren feminist, concerned that any sort of activism would
make her unattractive to the opposite sex, put on a corset and died in
2009 in Alberta, Canada.
The Tasman Cvorak feminist has been extinct ever since the
Buranovskiye Baboushki lost the 2012 Eurovision competition.

When nothing happens and the dismantling of oppressive consumerist structures isn’t imminent, feelings of boredom and loneliness can creep up on you. Your reaction can often be more of a problem to your survival than any physical factors such as pain, cold, thirst or hunger. Foraging for enlightenment is a good way to avoid boredom and maintain a positive attitude by planning and doing activities that, hopefully, will improve your situation.

The Carolina Parakeet feminist graduated from university, found a nice
husband with a good job in local government, decided that feminists
were all hairy-legged dykes and committed hari-kari in front of a Zara
boutique in downtown Cologne.

Misogyny can be one of the most dangerous threats to survival. It is most important that misogyny be recognized as early as possible. Fortunately, symptoms are easily recognized and preventive measures will avoid a tragedy.

Avoid panic and stay calm. Keep busy, both mentally and physically. Make decisions and act on them. Think positively and plan solutions to problems. You have only one life to live.

Srećno! And remember: No one belongs here more than you!



Alexis O'Hara, *Coping Mechanisms for Endangered Species*, performance, 2013, photo by Tina Smrekar

Red Min(e)d was established by Danijela Dugandžić Živanović, Katja Kobolt, Dunja Kukovec and Jelena Petrović, all of whom are differently positioned in regards to experience and knowledge (feminist theory, contemporary art, culture production and activism), and who live and work in different places (Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Belgrade, Munich); with the mutual idea of researching and discovering possible fields of emancipatory thought and action that is permeated by artistic and curatorial practice, mutual processes of knowledge production and active relations regarding everyday life of society. Continuing the long-term cooperation (spanning several years) between founding members and simultaneously regular members, by creating and commencing the project *Bring In Take Out Living Archive*, Red Min(e)d began its work as a feminist curatorial group in October of 2011. Its first edition was in Zagreb, while the continuation of its work was done in 2012 through interactive exhibits, as part of new editions in Ljubljana, Sarajevo and Vienna. Through cooperation with various collectives, individuals, groups and by representing their work in various contexts, Red Min(e)d shares and develops new methods and meanings of the living archive in the theory and practice of contemporary art, which they base on the feminist understanding of social emancipation.

RED MIN(E)D

NO ONE BELONGS HERE MORE THAN YOU

Real Image

What you hold in your hands is the catalogue, document or book for the 54th October Salon – an international contemporary art event. Bearing the name *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, this exhibition is not another expert- or community-based event; it is a visual art display addressing all people interested in the present and culture. The October Salon used to be a national masquerade, now it is an international parade. Staged in the city center it is meant for everyone. Maybe you are one of the participants, possibly you have seen the show, probably you were nagging about it, or perhaps you dragged this fat book off some dusty bookshelf.

The October Salon is meant for everyone. Hence it presents an opportunity to reconsider the question of art, especially of art in the present. However, art always relates to social reality, power politics and/or bare life. Present art is art that deals with presence or with history in the context of the present. Engaged art is art that deals with political issues or personal issues in the political context.

What art of the present is we might easier explain in continuation to the relatively recent past. After the overnight disintegration of dictator-based socialism, deceitful-democratic capitalism finally became the global economic and political system. There were no more illusions about the Other being better or worse; suddenly all of us were presumably safely sitting in the rollercoaster, with national economies going up or down. Not to forget, many were and still are being duped into a bad, broken or sabotaged wagon and are instantly out of the game. So in the first decade of the global market economy, engaged art, now global as well, was mostly dealing with criticizing the patriarchal capitalist regime and calling for strategies and methods, also within network technology, to defeat social gaps and gain personal freedom.

It is the year 2014. All ideologies are dead and everyone thinks the world could, should and has to become a better place. Many possess too much, but even more possess too little. The divide

is digital and material and it makes everyone more or less miserable – as if continuous historical injustice is stuck in the present and the human condition is signified by permanent war and recurring economy crisis.

The years are passing and the global market economy rolls on. The effect of virtually constant growth is becoming devastating for life. As a result, there are massive protests all around the world. All of today's protests have at least one common goal: to stop inequality (in access, according to social status) using any possible means.

The difference between today and 15 or 20 years ago is that today, on a personal level, we all know what has to be done, but no one knows how to imply this conscious knowledge on the global and national scales. The heaviest burden is sharp vision of what is wrong and what can be done. In a few simple words: work in resonance with nature, laid back, and reclaim personal freedom. It is almost a mystery how all attempts on a large scale for social change are drastically failing, but are so concrete on a personal scale when articulating urgent reforms.

If art used to criticize the present, the politically engaged art of today is visualizing this personal conscious knowledge and structurally testing its implementation.

The way we are connected or divided is based on contingency of birthplace and financial capital, both to a large extent determining our social status, social power and, consequently, our responsibilities and rights as well. As a result, many feel like they don't belong here. They do everything; even risk their children's lives in trying to move somewhere else. When they do get away, they face another problem, which has the same consistency and moral value, where just its form is different.

Maybe we should develop a universal questionnaire, the answers to which will enable us to re-connect or divide ourselves according to worldview, moral standpoints and relational mind set. Not according to nationality or capital. We can even keep the administrative shells of the countries and cities, but instead of world banks, we need a fair-global-distributive-organization for enabling equal access to resources. The world is ours and borders ought to exist only to be crossed.



Karen Mirza, Brad Butler in collaboration with China Miéville,
Deep State, video, 2012, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi



Alexis O'Hara, *Coping Mechanisms for Endangered Species*, performance, 2013, photo by Tina Smrekar

Mirror Image

As Red Min(e)d, we started to work together not to criticize and change the (art)world, but to build an emotional space for processing what we feel matters most. Using feminism as our politics, and thinking of the *polis* and friendship, we have been working on the basis of solidarity and consensus. We are four and we are constantly shifting power between us, using it strictly as a time- and expert-based responsibility and not as an egoistic position or one to compete for. By a constant re-questioning of the basic creative processes and allowing each one of us her personal freedom, we have been building a truly safe space of belonging.

The architecture of KLUZ was considered nostalgic city-center architecture, with shabby interior and grandiose chandelier symbolizing patience and rational choice. We didn't use the space because of what it is; we used it because of what it could be.

The artworks formed the exhibition like sounds make up a song. By looping the artworks through the three-storied space, the clusters of meaning were formed. Again clusters were connected as loops and loops were connected into a song. The set-up was not framed by any certain common theme, each cluster was a universe unto itself and mirroring the introduction text, with the most important content elements repeating like a refrain.

Not only were the clusters' themes dealing with reality and criticizing political realities – in addition, every artwork itself in some way proposed a kind of empowering (re)solution. The solutions were not always suggested as a fixed concept, but were rather sublime or hiding within details...

...just like the Revolution, which has – in our consciousness – already happened... expansively.

The Museum of Non Participation (Karen Mirza and Rachel Anderson) confronts (non)participation and the socio-political in art works. ‘Non Participation’ is not a negation; it is a threshold – a political plastic that expands and contracts that is both unstable and malleable. Museums interrelate hierarchy and exclusion, social critique and (post) colonization. So The Museum of Non Participation embeds its institutional critique in its very title – yet it releases itself from being an actual museum. Instead, it travels as a place, a slogan, a banner, a performance, a newspaper, a film, an intervention, an occupation – situations that enable this museum to “act”. Thus the Museum of Non Participation does not disavow art objects, but it is driven to dislodge them from their central position within the field of art. **Karen Mirza** is a contemporary artist based in London and Istanbul. She has been collaborating with Brad Butler since 1998 and in 2004 formed no.w.here, an artist-run space. Since 2008, they have pursued a strain of practice entitled **The Museum of Non Participation**. This ongoing body of work confronts (non) participation and the socio-political in art works. **Rachel Anderson** is a freelance creative producer based in London. She works as Producer, Collaborative Projects at Artangel, where she develops site-specific works outside of the physical institution, collaborating with a broad range of artists, individuals and communities. Projects manifest in a range of different sites and situations and in varying forms including film, installation, performance and public interventions.

the museum of non participation

THE PATRIARCHAL CLOCK

Scripting the body, no thought, act, move, step into, step up, freeze, hold, follow an internal movement, a twist of a wrist, the weight of the left side of the body on one hip, the pressure of skin, the reaching of a hand, half open, angled, caught. Reflecting on the pedagogy of resistance and women’s bodies, I have become obsessed by images of women being dragged across the street in the ’68 (anti-war movement) in Grosvenor Square, London. The images of grainy black and white archival material was the start of our conversation about unattached militant feminists and the forces of oppression.

My name is Daku Rani, Bandit, Fugitive, Witch, Hex, Dreamer.

The revolution won’t be led by red flags and the sound of Bella Ciao, it won’t be written about by approved academics whose careers we’ve followed and trusted, it won’t elevate the voices of those we long to hear more of... who affirm us and raise our spirits, it won’t fill our airwaves or our ears with solidarity and the justice for which we stand. It won’t happen between respectable hours and in designated areas, it won’t have an allocated tea station, an information board and a “quiet zone”. There won’t be training and organized occupations, no sign-up speaking platforms, no “burn out” support group, no PA system fuelled by pedal power, no press photos, no high visibility vests, no polite unauthoritative signage.

It will come like a flood in the night, with boundless power and uncatchable form, with inconsistency and unpredictability; it will speak with an invisible voice in a language we won’t understand because we never listened before. It will not see us, and it won’t obey our rational demands or follow the path we prepared for it. It will swell and burst. It will be appalling, misplaced and reckless. It will prioritize the wrong values, it will dance to the wrong songs and laugh in the wrong places, it will be unreasonable, it will be angry, it will be untamable, it won’t understand that we are the good ones who devoted our lives to this time. We will be left with no

choice but to join our old enemies in order to put an end to all this... because we have real work to do and a revolution to prepare [1].

October 2013, Belgrade – Red Min(e)d, 54th October Salon, a call to participate, a conversation that had very recently just started between two of the three founders of the Museum of Non Participation, Karen Mirza and Rachel Anderson.

Gossip sh. God + Sib (akin, related.)

One who has contracted a spiritual relationship with another by acting as a sponsor at a baptism. A familiar acquaintance or friend. Especially applied to a woman’s female friends invited to be present at a birth.

Idle talk; trifling or groundless rumour; tittle-tattle [2].

Under the protection of the neon glow of non participation, 20 or so women gathered [3], a diverse age, background, and geography of place was present in the room. The host was a 1908 military officers’ building, a post-WWII former department store of grand sweeping staircases, chandeliers and static escalators defining the outer perimeter of the inner space, which was marked out by a blackboard, steps, neon sign, cushions, offerings, texts, books, herbs, and salt...

What does it feel like to not participate in the rational flow of thoughts, to disavow the order of the mind within the structures of the day. To own parts of oneself that are at best hidden from the light of the day for fear of persecution. As women, we have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge.

The time was 11 p.m.

The night is insanity in the rational, these are night thoughts – it’s not the unthought, it’s the unthinkable. Under the blanket of the night we become unified, the way the distinguishing features disappear, the detailed landscape solidifies, we become the same.

My name is Daku Rani, Bandit, Fugitive, Witch, Hex, Dreamer.

[1] I went to a socialist film festival to see a documentary about the 2011 London riots called “Wonderland: My Child the Rioter” (the riots took place in August 2011 across London and in cities across the UK, they began after the police shot and killed 29-year-old Mark Dugan in North London. Hundreds of thousands of young people took to the streets and thousands were arrested and given severe prison sentences, five people died. Because of the extensive looting that took place during the riots, the mainstream voice of the media and public undermines these actions as “not being political”). Different young people who had been involved in these riots and their parents were interviewed, and there was a panel discussion afterward with a working-class family from the North of England.

The young boy was politicized, angry and radical; he was a very compelling speaker. I think he was studying politics. He was the first in his family to go to university, he positioned himself as somewhere between anti-capitalist and Marxist. At one point, a woman sitting behind me made a comment during the Q&A that went something like this: “You’re a really bright articulate young man and I want to congratulate you, but most of those who joined the riots last year weren’t being political.”

[2] Oxford English Dictionary

[3] See Patricia McFadden: *Why Women’s Spaces Are Critical to Feminist Autonomy*, July 2012: <http://www.millionwomenrise.com/1/post/2012/07/why-womens-spaces-are-critical-to-feminist-autonomy.html>

We've had an idea, it's a seed growing in the dark. In the darkness, under the earth, the dark moon, without definition of daylight, all is altered, the feared the ridiculous the irrational the dangerous the outcast, it takes incredible energy for a seed to germinate, the power of growth and transformation. We're growing an idea, drawing all our reserves for this... in the darkness we are reaching out.

I looked up "cunt" in Barbara Walkers twenty-five-year research opus, *The Women's Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets* and found it was indeed a title back in the day. "Cunt" is related to words from India, China, Ireland, Rome and Egypt. Such words were either titles of respect for women, priestesses and witches, or derivatives of the names of various goddesses [4].

As women, we have come to distrust that power which rises from our deepest and nonrational knowledge.

Audre Lorde [5]

One of the tools of the witch hunts is to destroy us with our own language... Then we do the work for them.

Witch Hunts [6]

(The following text is notes taken from a transcript of Silvia Federici's [7] presentation [8])

The name for female friends in the middle ages was "Gossip". You would say I go out with my Gossip'. Later on, it's referred to as Idle and not having an effect in forms of communication.

Much of the work that was done on the medieval commons was done collectively – you washed clothes collectively, sewed the fields collectively, there were many collective festivals of entertainment, even sex was something done collectively – St John's Night – collectively staying out in the fields all night and sleeping around the bonfires – the sexual regimentation that arrived later did not exist then.

[4] *Threads*, p. 63 – *Threads* combines quotes and excerpts (from a wide range of places, including self-help publications, academic sources, zines), writings, personal stories, illustrations and images.

It's a collection of information, thoughts and ideas that were the basis of workshops that looked at the experiences and politics of the menstrual cycle and what gets called "PMS", and which included information and discussion about female anatomy and sexuality. The motivation for those workshops was to share information and discussion about things as they are experienced in the broader social, political and economic contexts we are living in. The information from those workshops was all collated into the book and ideas were expanded upon.

The whole book can be read online or downloaded for free here: www.threadsbook.org

"I looked up 'cunt...', *Threads*, p. 63 – taken from *Cunt*, Inga Muscio, Ibid, p. 17

[5] Audre Lorde, 1934–1992. A self-styled "black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet", writer Audre Lorde dedicated both her life and her creative talent to confronting and addressing the injustices of racism, sexism and homophobia.

[6] The capitalist construction of male violence against women. We need to remember the start of the women's movement... women resisted for three hundred years. Our roots grow deep.

[7] Silvia Federici is a long-time feminist activist and writer. She is the author of many essays on feminist theory, women and globalization, and feminist struggles. She is the author of *Caliban and the Witch*.

[8] *The People vs. Freedom on Land, Animals and Women* – With celebrated feminist writer, teacher and activist Silvia Federici. Sunday, 23 June 2013, London. Download the entire presentation for free here: http://www.artangel.org.uk/projects/2013/party_for_freedom/talks_audio/talks_audio

This collectivity of women was destroyed. The first thing a women had to do when persecuted as a witch was to denounce other women – the witch hunt accusation was a very isolating experience, the fear of the consequences could be such that you would not want to go near someone who was pointed a finger at as a witch.

The destruction of the collectivity of women led to the nuclear family – the switch of alliance from that of women-to-women to that of woman-to-husband and the nuclear family.

Who were the witches?

1st – The largest group of women, especially in England, were old, poor women, rural women, living on the dole, (poor laws – beginning of capitalism), begging, cursing, imprisonment, torture, hanging... taking place in expropriation (13th century – the Magna Carta [9] provision of land, communal support – 16th century, this ends, beginning of Capitalism, poor women rejected and criminalized, not working was a crime).

2nd group of women – Reproduction crime!

Enemy of children, what was being criminalized was all forms of contraception, abortion, cooperation amongst women, midwives – until the 16th century, women gave birth in a community of women, it was precisely this community, this solidarity amongst women that the witch hunts served to destroy.

Start of demography – Population growth in economic terms, starts to look at reproduction in economic terms, same time as slavery – one solution to the crisis of feudalism was to expand the labour supply (similar to what has been happening in the 80s and 90s with the construction of the global economy). A new policy of how the womb of women has to be controlled as it's connected to the labour market / population growth / labour supply.

Women were killed because of their protection of reproductive rights.

Sexual crime – prostitutes, children outside of marriage, love affairs outside of their class, development of Capitalism / looks at Sexuality as a subversive force and particularly of women's sexuality, which undermined the male authority, undermined the disciplining of labour – the 15/16th-centuries erase a whole set of practices, including sexual practices – in order to create a certain type of worker, a certain type of wage discipline, in order to create a whole population of social reproduction.

Capitalism's Bifurcation – split into wage labour – making goods for the market, and social reproduction – unproductive labour, housework, etc. The witch hunt is fundamental to the destruction of the power and important role women had against feudalism / to the destruction of social power, to construct them into unpaid reproductive workers – placing women at the service of men.

Capitalist development and Witch hunting – relevant for political economy and understanding contemporary power relations.

[9] The time of the Magna Carta... a kind of welfare state.

Many many forms of repression take the form / have the characteristics of witch hunts today.
What are the roots of the subordination of women in capitalist society?
What happened to women in this transformation from a Feudal to a Capitalist society?
Witch hunts took place at the same time enclosures (coeval) happened (which happened in England) – Landlords put fences around the common land and forced peasants off the land, forced them to become wage laborers or vagabonds.
Witch Hunts and Slave Trade (coeval) [10].
Witch Hunt (coeval) development of market economy and conquest, colonialism.
Persecution came from above, from the state, laws, bills, authorities – over time (two centuries), ideology produces suspicions that also produce attacks from below: the emphasis is on the attacks coming from the state.

The persecution of witches / women has served to destroy communal relationships, it has served the advancement of the privatisation of land, which is the spirit / take-off point of the capitalist relationship, but has also served the general privatisation of life, the privatisation of social reproduction – in contemporary life, we can say it has served the destruction of the commons.

The witch hunt is instrumental to the destruction of popular powers (power and knowledges) – the centralising of power, hand in hand with the formation of the nation state, the tremendous centralisation of power, whatever powers or knowledge within the communities, and at the same time the professionalisation of knowledge – the development of medicine as a profession, we can speak of the enclosure of knowledge as well as the enclosure of land.

The witch hunt was instrumental in instituting a new discipline towards work – with Capitalism, which is not the first system of exploitation (it's on a long line of oppressive systems) – and is peculiar to Capitalism as compared to other systems of exploitation of labour. Capitalism makes labour the centre of the accumulation of wealth, therefore the center of power for the ruling class. Capitalism has engaged in a process of disciplining labour, it's more intense and regimented than any other system in previous societies.

Witch hunts were important to gender-based inequality (they lasted until the mid 18th century), changes in the management of the persecution – **the construction of sexual and racial inequalities** – a new type of feminine personality, a new type of social position, degrading demonologies written in Latin / popular versions (happening at the same time as the printing press technology): women as Inferior creatures, born to castrate men, liars by nature, easily seduced by the devil, women's bodies became the science of how to inflict pain, laboratory (private) and degradation in public spaces of women's bodies.

[10] adjective: **coeval**: 1. having the same age or date of origin; contemporary; "these lavas were **coeval with** the volcanic activity."

Legalisation of Rape [11]

“.....By the end of the 15th century, a counter revolution was already underway at every level of social and political life. The first efforts were made by the political authorities to co-opt the youngest, most rebellious male workers, by means of a vicious sexual politics that gave them access to free sex and turned class antagonism into an antagonism against proletarian women... in France the municipal authorities practically de-criminalised rape, provided the victims were women of a lower class. In 14th-century Venice, the rape of unmarried proletarian women rarely called for more than a slap on the wrist, even in the frequent cases in which it involved a group assault. (Ruggiero 1989:91–108) The same was true in most French cities. Here, a gang rape of proletarian women became a common practice, which perpetrators would carry out openly and loudly at night in groups of two to fifteen, breaking into victims’ homes or dragging their victims through the streets without any attempt to hide or disguise themselves. Those who engaged in these ‘sports’ were young journeymen or domestic servants, and the penniless sons of well-to-do families, whilst the women targeted were poor girls working as maids or washerwomen of whom it was rumored they were ‘kept’ by their masters. (Rossiaud 1988:22) On average, half of the town male youth, at some point, engaged in these assaults, which Rossiaud describes as a form of class protest, a means for proletarian men – who were forced to postpone marriage for many years because of their economic conditions – to get back ‘their own’ and take revenge against the rich. But the results were destructive for all workers, as the state-backed raping of poor women undermined the class solidarity that had been achieved in the anti-feudal struggle...

... For Proletarian women, so cavalierly sacrificed by masters and servants alike, the price to be paid was inestimable. Once raped, they could not easily regain their place in society. Their reputation being destroyed, they would have to leave town or turn to prostitution. (*ibid.*, Ruggiero 1985:99) But they were not the only ones to suffer; the legalisation of rape created a climate of intense misogyny that degraded all women regardless of class. It also desensitized the population to the perpetration of violence against women, preparing the ground for the witch hunt, which began in this same period.”

(The Patriarchal Clock)

Estranged recognition – the process of remembering what we know but have forgotten – it's familiar but we don't know it... How do we get beyond the superficial exchange?

I'm on the edge of time trying to remember.

If I stick my fingers down my throat, will I vomit...project a mass of thick, stagnant water?
I open my mouth wide and wait for it to come.
Is it one thing I need to remember or a series of things? I want to purge regret, shame, anger, fury, sorrow, I'm stagnant, I can't move.

[11] The following section is taken from Silvia Federici, *Caliban and the Witch: Women, the Body and Primitive Accumulation*, New York: Autonomedia, 2004, p. 47–48.

I open my mouth, tip back my head and scream...the scream comes from a deep forgotten place and brings forth vile rotten water...its a thick black slimy root, I pull it with both my hands, winding it around my fists, it snags – caught in the mechanics of my system, I jolt it and it frees, I pull and pull... I wrap it in plastic, binding it so it can’t find new life and leave it in the sun to degrade.

“In Egypt around 500 B.C., the shadow or sundial clock divided daylight into 10 ‘hours’ with two twilight hours. The clock was orientated East and West in the morning and an elevated crossbar cast a moving shadow that marked the ‘hours’. The clock was turned the opposite direction at midday to measure the afternoon ‘hours’. The length the hours themselves carried was dependent on the length of sunlight at that time of year.

In the UK, local clocks were set to local sundials’ time and showed local time. It wasn’t until the coming of the railways that time was standardised everywhere. The great Western railway was the first to adopt London time in November 1840, and other railways followed suit. By 1855, 98% of all clocks in Britain were set to Greenwich Mean Time. In an interim period, some town clocks had two hands showing London and Local time. By 1880, under the Statutes (Definition of Time) Act, British standard time became law.” [12]

It is said that Dr. Pinkus, the father of the Pill, decided over a cup of tea with the British endocrinologist, Peter Bishop, that 28 days would be a convenient time interval to allow withdrawal bleeding to occur in women on the Pill. [13]

Off in the twilight hung the low full moon and all the women stood before it grave, as round an altar. Sappho [14]

Invitation [15]

What does it mean for women to gather at the edge of the day, under the blanket of the night and the watch of the moon. Suspicions are reactivated of the historical persecutions of witch hunts that served to destroy communal relationships, advanced the privatisation of land, the privatisation of life, of social reproduction and served the destruction of the commons.

Women are invited to stay overnight. Come as you are, bring comfortable clothes, cushions and bedding so you can rest when you want to, your children are welcome to sleep over. We will provide some food, but bring some for yourself or to share if you want. We will provide some prompts for conversation and some activities that might be interesting; you can also bring something to share.

[12] *Threads*, p.9
[13] *Threads*, p.9 – Katerina Dalton, *Once a month*, p.128
[14] Sappho was a Greek Lyric poet born on the island of Lesbos. Her birth was sometime between 630 and 612 BC, and it is said that she died around 570 BC.
[15] This project will continue... expand to resist, to not participate, to develop knowledge through an aural culture, reject structures, every structure we are living under... capitalist, white supremacist, patriarchal fucking everything of our time!

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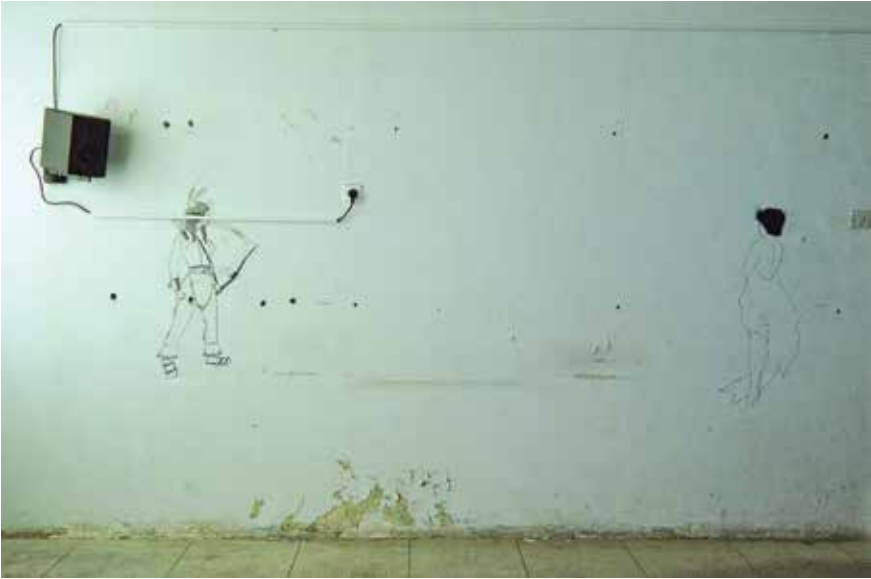
VIJAI PATCHINEELAM

24 PHOTO-ESSAY

A lost step improvised as a pedestal of sorts for a figurative oil painting.



Drawing found in the room where Tejal Shah's video installation *Breaking Waves* was shown.



Graffiti found behind the projection screen for the video *Assemblages* by Angela Melitopoulos and Maurizio Lazzarato.



When informed that the talk was in English, two audience members left.



Young child playfully runs through the exhibition space.



RED MIN(E)D

WHERE AND WHAT IS A MUSEUM?

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In June 2013, when we got appointed as the curators of the 54th October Salon to open, as the title of the event indicates, already in October 2013, we searched for a public museum or a gallery in Belgrade that would be big enough to host over 40 artistic positions, have at its disposal an operating license to be able to welcome public, be open and available in autumn and have heating and electricity in the whole building. We found none. Meanwhile, in one of the most prominent central locations in Belgrade, a huge former textile department store and factory, originally built as an art deco military salon and now in the private hands of one of the most powerful families in Serbia, which has thus for many years now begun to accumulate cultural capital as well – they are also the owners of a big art collection – was standing empty, only occasionally hosting events. The search for a space went on till July. By then, with a lump in our throats, we realized that we faced one of two possibilities: either the 54th October Salon would not take place at all, due to a lack of public space; or this public event would have to go into a private space and transform it into a public one, which of course immediately makes the event additionally vulnerable. So, besides the beating on the “national, local and regional” breast, the event could so also be misappropriated into becoming a promotion of public-private partnership. In any case, this is translation of cultural capital. Indeed, our decision for the event to take place in a private space has raised questions as regards the relationship between public and private. In addition, local real estate owners decided to launch, in the space during the opening days of the exhibition, a public auction of their (mostly) modern art collection, thus already defining the space for us, which the *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition could or couldn't enter. In terms of the display, the exhibition was substantially visually and spatially interrupted. As curators, we decided not to mask or comment on, and thereby naturalize, the visual as well as ideological intrusion, or, material interruption into the exhibition. The break of the real, the reality of capitalism, broke uncommented on into the visual and spatial display. As such, it aroused uncanny affects, as the real usually does. [16] Indeed, the uncanny affect – having its roots in the outside, in what is referred to as “life” – could be entitled “No One Belongs Here More Than Zepter”, [17] as it bears witness to a naturalized “life”. As the difference between the living and the artificial is (...) exclusively a narrative difference, as life cannot be shown, only documented, so also is singularity as resistance turning something regulated and repetitive such as life in a biopolitical paradigm into “something unique” to be searched for (alongside curators and artists as producers) also in an exhibition as a narrative space. [18]

[16] Cf. text by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi in the following publication p. 58 – 71.

[17] Cf. The review of the exhibition by Ivana Hanaček and Ana Kutleša entitled *Nitko ne pripada tu više nego Zepter*. Accessed at: <http://kulturpunkt.hr/content/nitko-ne-pripada-tu-vise-nego-zepter> [Last accessed February 2014].

[18] Boris Groys, *Art Power*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2008, p. 44, 57. Having in mind, that biopolitics defines

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Adrijana Gvozdenović, *Thanks for Your Visit and See You Soon*,
installation, objects and drawings, 2013, photo by Ana Kostić

“what brought life and its mechanisms into the realm of explicit calculations and made knowledge-power an agent of transformation of human life.” Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I, New York: Vintage Books, 1990, p. 143.

Olga Dimitrijević lives and works between Belgrade and Berlin. Graduated dramaturgy at the Faculty of Dramatics Arts in Belgrade, and defended Master thesis at Central European University, Budapest. Her theatre reviews were published in magazines *Vreme* and *Teatron*. She is a member of Belgrade Centre for Queer Studies, occasionally lecturing on film and popular culture, and participating on international conferences. Several of her plays were staged: *Boarding School*, *The Folk's Play* and *Workers Die Singing*, that was awarded with *Sterijino pozorje* prize for the best contemporary dramatic text in Serbia in 2012.

OLGA DIMITRIJEVIĆ

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H A N D I W O R K

It remains unclear how and why at this precise time, but the women are here now. The Kluz building had belonged to them over the course of many years; it was where they came to work, as well as to communicate and socialize; it was where they shared fashion tips, made their customers happy or miserable, where a cup of coffee was enjoyed both during and in between breaks. Some of them would die, others would come along to replace them, and that's how it went on when the textile industry was working full steam and when there was socialism. When socialism left the building, they quickly flew out as well; they left their building, never to return, never to walk through that door again.

But that's how it goes, a little bit of war with a little bit of democracy right after, and the textile industry shuts down. And this certainly was not an isolated case but a widespread scenario, and all those buildings where women built their lives into were locked away or sold – some for peanuts and others for serious money. In any case, they are now the properties of so-called private owners, and parts of these women's lives forever left with them, or remained confined within the walls of those private properties, lives that had slipped through their fingers forever. There should really be no doubt about it, as this is something that's been agreed upon by the ruling oligarchy, the leading economic experts, and the majority of people as well, who still bizarrely believe that capitalism makes any sense whatsoever.

We pass by this building and other padlocked or unlocked ones every day, we pass by those structures where an entire army of men and women who left their whole lives in there is no longer welcome.

Work is life, oh, how very true that is, M and K lament as they pass by, admiring the majestic building. It's all lit up again and there are people inside. The clothes are no longer on the racks, of course, the chic new garments now hang on some smartly dressed people. And our two companions from the era of social ownership have put on their best Friday/Saturday night ensembles in order to pass unnoticed among the refined crowd. Although M and K haven't shopped for clothes for years now, they still own three or four of those suits that they wear on special occasions: when going for a stroll downtown, the rare visits to the theater when they manage to win free tickets on a radio-show call-in, the movies, patron saint day celebrations, birthdays. Basically, the suits are meant to be worn on those rare social occasions when M and K get together with other people, friends, relatives, all those occasions where women again feel like there's more to life than this perpetual transitional despair.

So, the two of them enter the Kluz building with all the others. People walk past them, observing art and kissing each other on the cheek because practically all of them already know each other. This, therefore, is the perfect opportunity to wander about the building once again, walk all the floors and see what has changed. See, the chandelier is still there, no one has taken it. The escalator is there as well, only broken; the upper floors where the manufacturing department once was are as derelict as manufacturing itself. "It's nice to see so many people in here again, but it's not nice that we're no longer here," they think to themselves. And this exhibition, too – parts of it are quite nice, others are really hard to comprehend, and then some of those pieces really hit a nerve, one way or the other. "That's enough, let's go home," and they walk out, but don't get very far. They merely get away from the street, and then they both burst into tears, and they cry in the doorway of a building where luckily nobody's passing through at the moment, for if they had, that would be really, really terrible. So M and K just stand there and cry for a long time. How can they go home like this? So, instead of getting on public transportation, the two friends walk into a bar, order double shots of brandy, clink their glasses and sigh. Two women, alone in a bar. No guests, just one waitress sitting in the corner, and a stereo system. *If the past is haunting you, remember one moment in time.* Dragana Mirković's voice is coming from the speaker as if speaking directly to them (although the lyrics are a bit altered): *We were the sweetest couple, we were sublime...* – they and their building. So many years have passed since the last time they were in there; and hey, better to have that art than an empty building, right? Come to think of it, maybe this is their opportunity to return to the scene of the crime. In a way, that building still belongs to us, they conclude.

Up to this point, there has been no way to get inside the building, but here's their chance now, and it requires some planning; they should seize the opportunity to return to that place where once there was work, where there was life, a life outside their homes and their families, a life abundant with garments, gossip, friendship, tears, and all those professional as well as emotional things.

The plan of action was carefully elaborated on:
M: We need to be sure when and where everyone stands!
K: And to see where the passing can be made!
M: We'll need to bypass the security.
K: To hell with security!
M: That's right!
K and M: (together) This is still our building, we know all its secrets!

And since we're already tackling the dramatic format, why not pursue in the same manner. If we were watching this in a theater, M and K would sing the following number:

*Let us see what we need
Two sandwiches, something to read
Our strength, a scarf and some skill
A magazine, a book if you will
Although when we're together
We don't care about time or the weather!*

Coffee we'll bring, tap water is fine

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*There will be plenty of sunshine
Transistor radio for the news
A great big smile, some comfy shoes
Maybe even a string of beads
And that should cover all our needs.*

*But what about our husbands
And our dear offspring?
Oh, screw them now,
We gotta do our thing*

*Let all our of brood
Cook their own damn food
Forget them now
This is our feud,
Transition in the Balkans is screwed!*

*And if anyone wonders 'bout our final goal:
We need to put an end to this muddy sprawl
Time to let everyone's dreams become true
Here, even this poster's reporting the news
Nobody Belongs Here More Than You!*

And that concludes this brief dramatic interlude, for it is now important to lay low and sing small. M and K carefully plan each and every step; they wrap up the sandwiches the next day, and go back to the exhibition around closing time. Then they strategically bypass the staff and sneak into the back part of the building through a small passage and into a vast space where the manufacturing once was, and where now there's nothing. They wait in silence for eight o'clock, when everyone will leave the building, crouched down and smiling at each other.

They're alone at last and finally free to roam around the building and reminisce. M and K remind each other of where everything stood; they retell the well-known anecdotes, and remember all those things that make up the life of a working woman. This goes on through the whole night. The morning comes, the gates open again, and two tired but cheerful friends mix with other visitors and eventually walk out. It is all so thrilling and exciting that they decide to come back again that evening.

Over the following nights, our women cry, laugh, and remember more and more each night. They remember their colleagues, the ones who have died and others who are still alive; they remember the now ceased manufacturing and the long-gone inventory. The Little Ghosts of the October Salon they dub themselves, bitterly aware that this space no longer belongs to them, and never will. It's clear to us as well that this is all one big fantasy, for fantasy is all we have left when we think about the revival of any branch of industry, or kind of dignified work at all for that matter.

But as they reminisce sauntering through the transformed scenery with only the outlines reminding them of what was once there, our heroines agree that they cannot let this pass.



Ines Doujak, Loomshuttles Warpaths; Haute Couture, 2010, installation,
textile hand out, photo by Ana Kostić

They may not be here anymore, but it's a perfect opportunity to leave a trace, something small, anything. Since all the art is going to be removed anyway and the building will be padlocked again, then it should be something that can be hidden away. So they decide to take a piece of paper and write down all the names they can remember, all their colleagues, all the women who ever worked here. Since all those women belonged to different generations, the list becomes really long, and they try to be mindful not to leave anyone out, even those they didn't like very much.

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And so the list grows, and they don't stop writing, and it requires a lot of paper, and when the paper runs out, they nip an art piece here and there, discretely, so nobody will notice. And there are so many names that if all of them were to come to life and come back to this place again, neither the building nor the entire block would be big enough to take them all in. The building, the block, the entire city even, would be flooded by an army of women: an army of women who were denied the right to work, an army of women who lived and worked, some of whom still live but don't work, some of whom work but at different jobs, and then others of whom are long-gone and vanished – to each their own. Privatization has spat in these women's faces, this same privatization that has been advocated and implemented – and this needs to be repeated over and over again – primarily by men who hold the levers of power. An army of women that fits on one list written by two friends who remember their old days, their small talk and their dignity.

And when the list is finally finished, they take their clandestine operation, this invisible handiwork, and hide it somewhere in that colossal space, they tuck it in well so it will remain there forever, so nobody will ever find it and remove it, regardless of what may become of this place.

A month passes by after the exhibition is taken down; the art goes one way and the art public another. The building owners continue to rent it for occasions such as parties or promotions, or to simply pursue their own interests with it. Our protagonists go back to their lives that are no different than before. But now, ever since, every night (and sometimes day), when the building is vacant and quiet, emanating the working lives embedded in its walls, our army of women emerges from those walls. And again they sew, and they sell clothes, and drink coffee and smoke cigarettes, and gossip and laugh and cry and decide to get a divorce, and they take holidays and make telephone calls at the company's expense and they buy pickled food through the Union because it's cheaper, and there's the occasional lesbian couple and what not. Yes, the clothes are gone, the manufacturing is gone, most of these women are gone, too, and the art is gone as well, but at least their spirits are back.

And now imagine all those buildings, halls, factories, stores, the entire industry that's been swiped, crossed out and obliterated, never to exist again. Imagine all those places inhabited again, by the ghosts of the dead – and the living, too – because truth be told, most of those living workers already live like ghosts – invisible, underprivileged and marginalized, they live only to haunt and terrify this rotten capitalist society. So, imagine an army of ghosts reclaiming what's theirs, ghosts who won't leave, who demand the heads of those responsible for their contract terminations, their poverty and their deaths, the ghosts who scare to death both present and future investors as well as the ruling oligarchy. Imagine the ghosts as soldiers who stand as a symbol of their bygone presence, unbearable in its triumphant return, an army marching into the streets and institutions, indoor and outdoor, into their wiped-out workplaces, their apartments,

the institutions of culture, until they overwhelm the entire country and the whole society and remain there in order to forever nag and ravage it from the inside.

Imagine the panic and the fear it would incite; imagine the anguish and discomfort; imagine the beauty of that sight.

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Radmila Krstajić (b. Joksimović) is an art historian, curator and cultural manager based in Konstanz, Germany. As a holder of scholarships from the Robert Bosch Foundation and the Cultural Foundation of the Free State of Saxony, she has worked in Koelnischer Kunstverein, Cologne and the Museum of Contemporary Art, Leipzig. She has worked on projects of Prelom Kolektiv, Belgrade, and was a curator at the Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade. Since October 2011, she has been a PhD candidate under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Beatrice von Bismarck at HGB Leipzig, with the topic: *Performative Archival Art (and Curatorial) Projects – Potential Fields for Self Education and Emancipation, a Challenge to Art Institutions and the Art System* (working title).

rADMILA kRSTAJIĆ

THE COMFORT
OF DISCOMFORT

It’s only when I knelt down in front of Ines Doujak’s publication that “Loomshuttles/Warpaths” affected me on a bodily level. Whether the curators put the publication on such a low pedestal on purpose or not, I don’t know, but the posture imposed upon me allowed a certain identification to take place with a distant female body bent over a sewing machine, with little or no time to rest and this only to be able to perform its duty again and again, day after day, “just as coal and water are supplied to the steam engine and oil to the wheel” (as Ines Doujak quotes Marx). Only when I

knelt in front of this book, have I felt, or I imagined to be able to feel, the sweat, the misery, the smoke, the fire, the inexorability of the locked doors. Have I been affected? Will I act? Will I from now on question the ecology of social and economic relations behind all of my actions? Of what I buy, what I eat, what I use, what I wear? Will I question my H&M clothes? My MacBook? Why am I part of it all? Who has denied me this choice in the first place? Will I get out of the pattern of wanting to be liked by men, envied by women and accepted by the ones I admire?

Cathleen Schuster and Marcel Dickhage (both born in 1977) have been working together as artists since 2001 and live in Berlin. Their artistic work engages with the contemporary environment, evolves in dialogues and could be termed as critical shaping. They are working with a conceptual approach in time-based media, with archives and related texts/images. In 2013, they were researchers at the Jan van Eyck Academie Maastricht. In 2014, they are taking part in the fellowship program at Künstlerhaus Büchsenhausen Innsbruck. In 2012, Cathleen Schuster and Marcel Dickhage received the GWK Young Artist Award Münster. In 2011, they received a project grant from the Stiftung Kunstfonds Bonn and the German Cultural Center in Cluj. Cathleen Schuster received the Karl Schmidt-Rottluff Grant in 2010.

CATHLEEN SCHUSTER
& MARCEL DICKHAGE

THREE MIRROR IMAGES
OF THE SAME COLOR
(FRAGMENTARY SCRIPT)

*A and B enter the scene through the basement,
through a back door. The basement appears as a clandestine place
that represents the basis (of the building, and the course of this narrative),
that carries a secret, which normal visitors
of the exhibition do not get to see.
The door is heavy and squeaks when opened.
Balloons drift through the shaded space between packaging materials
and safety-at-work symbols of a bygone era.
Exhibition builders are carrying unidentifiable objects in a corner.
One of them has a cigarette in his mouth.*

A It's a bit humid here.
B Yes, it's just a basement.
A Ha, the basement where we projected *Teorema* yesterday evening is a systematic opposition.
B True, so what the basement says about systems ... Yes, I cannot get it out of my head, the opening scene of *Teorema*. The abandoned factories and workers who have now become factory owners and, the question is, part of the bourgeoisie?
A A contemporary question.

*A and B move towards the stairs, come across a few mirrors.
The balloons seem to fly afterwards them. Mirrors on one side of the
staircase are reflecting mirrors on the other side of the staircase,
deconstructing the space. A looks into a mirror and finds the face cut into half.*

A No one belongs here more than you ... that sounds like a hug, an invitation.
A friendly call ...
B ... but is as such, nonetheless, a call. Something is wanted from us, it is both, call and expectation, occupation...

They are about to go up the stairs, then suddenly...

Mirror Occupation! My dears, that's a harsh word with lots of meanings. Occupation, oh ... inevitably, I have to think of the past. Ha! Since my occupation is reflection.
A So?
Mirror So! Ignoramus... This place has been constantly under occupation, so to speak. A lot of people have worked here. Kluz comes from Exclusive. And don't forget that we are in a building of the military's... oh, what am I saying?! We are in a department store! Yes, yes, look out, still quite a few ghosts are living here ...
B (*softly to A*) I don't believe in ghosts. Didn't we want...
A ... to see the exhibition? Yes, let's go.

They go to the upper level, stroll around the inside balcony, admire the oversized chandelier.

B A building of the military's... do you think that was a slip of the tongue?
A I think I read something, built by the Military Officers' Association or something like that. But it has always been a department store – at that time, the officers shopped here.

They hear a sound. People whistle, shout, confusion, like at a demonstration.

B What's that?

A turns around, B keeps on looking downstairs/outside from the balcony.

A A projection.

A beholds blue-helmeted gestalts with neon yellow jackets that come into the image from the right side and press against an unspecified white color field. The white color field seems to resist, and pushes back. Whistling, boos.

A Video material, over-painted, the side of the demonstrators.

A short time later. The white color field has recaptured the image space. Rough white brush strokes dance on the white wall behind the projection until suddenly and unexpectedly a reminder flashes.

A The color white.
Former Saleswoman (steps in from behind a pillar) The color with which the demonstrators wanted to re-clothe the police(men).
A Hey B, you have to see this.

B doesn't react, keeps on looking downstairs/outside from the balcony.

Former Saleswoman I was surprised by the severity of the police. The demonstration was brutally put down.
A Why do you speak in the past? It's everywhere.
Former Saleswoman Yes, possibly, but here were women. The policemen took off their pants to stop their action.

B Clothes stolen! Projected in a warehouse!
Former Saleswoman (to demonstrator) Need a new pair of pants? You cannot go out into the street like that.
Demonstrator Yes, the cop over there just ripped it off. You dirty thief!
Former Saleswoman Do you mean me? Honestly! I really do not steal! (shakes her head and gets ready to move, turns around one more time)

In the projection, an invisible hand draws a pair of pants.

Former Saleswoman Hey, that's my job! Unbelievable, one is constantly deprived of one's own work. (indignantly turns around and walks off)

In the projection, lines of a drawing (white) flicker on top of a red background. The stylized lines reveal a woman's body lying on the ground. Further lines seem to tear off her t-shirt, and appear as solid footwear in the area of her sexual organs. In the next picture, the solid footwear is improvised to tear the t-shirt off of the body of the woman.

B is turning around.

A Hey, you missed the saleswoman!
B I thought it was a demonstration. In London, December of 2010, right?

An audible alarm rings out, loud. A and B move on.

B Tell me about the video.



Margareta Kern, The State of/and the Body and
 The Body Economic from the animated video series To Whom Does the
 World Belong?, animation, 2013, photo by Ana Kostić

A "The State of/and the Body" is the title. The video shows fragmented drawings, a demonstration in gestures. It wants to recapture the image that was captured in the video recordings of the police, so the state, to monitor and follow-up. The gesture of work of the artist slides upon the gesture of the beaten-up protesters. Margareta Kern wants to hand back the lost space of the image to the demonstrators and to herself. She herself was at this demonstration.

Carpet (lifts up on one side and uncovers the stone floor underneath) This work came out of the frustration from always being commissioned. The artist wasn't paid to make the work but she was paid for doing the exhibition. She got an artist's fee to be in the show and she got her travel paid for. So, in way, this whole exhibition has been in that sense more fair than a lot of the others. (moves back again)

The audible alarm breaks off, A and B have arrived at the staircase and disappear behind a black curtain.

Curtain (whispers to B) In this room you can also find gestures.
B In this room we can also find gestures. (points at the video monitor on the wall)
A How do you know... ?
B This work is complex, has multiple parts, and the main work is actually the big projection. But a side story on this video monitor here shows a dance in gestures, filmed on a landfill in India.
A (comments on the video) A landfill. I count seven females. Their movements seem to be abstractly related to the place. They wear white dresses with individual drawings on them, I see bugs, birds, so maybe animals that inhabit this place? They wear gloves, boots and some of them headpieces with recycled materials or imaginary symbols. The costumes seem to be made for this work. They all wear breathing masks.
B The hand of the artist aka performer goes and does not go in line with the waste collector, which our media-channeled mind wants us to see firsthand. Tejal Shah inspires the hands and bodies to other movements.
A You mean she re-appropriates a space of imagination?
B For a different occupation than the media stereotype. The movements can be read like this or like that.
A Once something seems to make sense, it doesn't make sense in the next moment. Sometimes the dancers trawl the mountain of waste, sometimes they find something, sometimes they seem to embrace it, to measure it, to worship it and even to eat it.
B Which is equally manifested through the sound as through the image. Like you can hear the breathing at one point, which was only possible with the breathing masks on site.
A A rhythm joins to a sound caused by human bodies, for one second, or two, then a voice hums, in abstract vocals, which goes into a secret choreography with the bodies of the dancers.

The curtain moves and slowly turns pink.

Curtain A mutual endeavor. Find a landfill. Find professional dancers and a ballerina who all live near the landfill. Find the persons in charge of the landfill and get the permission to shoot there. Find a timeslot, one which the persons in charge give you and in which you can formulate your work. Prepare the dancers for the landfill beforehand. Develop a choreography in a fragmentary form. Go to the site, work directly, document everything.
B A lot of work.

A The key word! Here, work is a poetic and abstract gesture. The work, so to speak, of waste collectors is affecting all of us.

A and B shake their heads towards the big projection.

Curtain Embedded in larger narratives. Develop a second video using a similar procedure but with different content. Find friends from the queer context in India. Ask and convince them to attend a movie that borders on activism. Speak with them about Post-Pornography, women in India, the homeland of the unicorn, myths, sex, rituals, women who love women. Film in places where it's possible. Find places in which to show the work. Find places in India in which to show the work.



Tejal Shah, *Between the Waves*,
video installation, 2012, photo by Ana Kostić

The curtain moves to the side and lets A and B walk out.

Curtain (*call-calls at A+B*): And in the last five years, I have been thinking very actively about how art should not be my main source of income! (*slowly turns black*)

- A** Art as a source of income.
- B** Back to the ground floor!
- A** Art. Market. Warehouse.

They move towards the staircase.

- B** (*kisses A*) A like Annual. A like Annual Exhibition for Feminist Art.
- A** (*responds to B's kiss*) B like Belgrade. B like Budget Cuts.

Some people are approaching in the staircase. A woman tugs another woman's sleeve.

- Former Saleswoman** I really think you should try this red jacket. The color suits you extremely good.
- Mirror** (*sings*) Red, red, red, are all my clothes ...

A and B step behind a wall.

- A** There it is again, the color red.

Both are facing one of five video monitors, hung in a row. B points at a woman wearing a red sweater and sitting in supervision of a museum on a Barcelona lounge chair and reading newspaper.

- B** I read about this work, Visual Artist urgently looking for any kind of work was a line in local advertisements in papers in Croatia.
- A** This wall doesn't belong to this house.
- B** No, it belongs to this installation.

A (*goes to the other side of the wall and shouts*) Ah, here are the advertisements!

B goes to the other side, A and B stand and search in front of the wall out of frame.



Milijana Babić, *Looking For A Job*, documentation,
2011-2012, photo by Ana Kostić

B It's as if the form of advertisement would itself be artificial.

A Isn't it?

Former Saleswoman This art is my reality.

Video Voice And mine! I am forced to constantly look for work. To sell, pah! How? When there is no market?

A But it is you who makes that decision! Either market or institutions.

Video Voice What do you know about my decisions? From the context in which I live and work, we often take part in exhibitions without being paid, whether for the transport even, and the fee is something nobody even mentions.

B Oh, you mean it's different in our case?

A Here it is, "Vizualna umjetnica hitno traži bilo kakav posao." (*reads and points at a fragment of an ad page*).

A and B move back to the video monitors.

A This monitor is turned off (*presses the power button*).

A light turns on, then the video starts. A staircase is visible, in an old building, a stone floor. A cleaning lady, who turns out to be the artist urgently looking for any kind of job, is cleaning the stairs. All of a sudden, A and B hear footsteps on the other side of the wall. They walk around. Several statues move through the ground floor. They seem almost invisible. Sometimes they talk to each other for some minutes. Then suddenly, they turn around as if someone had called. A woman moves towards A and B. In mechanical motions, she wipes the space, passing the two of them.

B Hey, she looks like ...

A ... Milijana Babic! Is it really her?

Cleaning Lady (*to herself*) I made this project out of pure frustration. For me, this is over. It was all performed in order to make a point, in order to be able to speak about it but also to understand what people are really going through who do it on an everyday basis.

An exhibition builder on crutches comes closer. The cleaning lady greets the exhibition builder, smiling.

Exhibition Builder Well, and I shouldn't have fallen off the ladder... Job done, going to the hospital at my own expense, cause my contract here was not one, and the insurance was 'at my own risk'. Well, we're probably all looking for the same thing, eh?

Cleaning Lady I wanted to be in solidarity with you. What is this, that nobody speaks out loud about this issue?! We are working and working, all the time, but our work and our earnings are not really coming in the same package.

She wipes the monitor, turns off the power button and disappears.

B (*shouts after her*) Frustration! Oh great, and us? Do we get a salary? We workers in the museum, we actually pay to work! There is nothing in our lives except work.

A She is gone. Calm down.

B Why? This is never talked about, OUR work in the museum. Since the workers have wandered

from the monitors into the museum, we stand before it and replace them, unpaid! There isn't even a single union.

A But this isn't work, this is something you do out of love.

B Love or money, money or love! Of course, love!

A And the art you do not love? Why do you wanna be paid for everything? Always the constant desire to get something back for something! One has to be careful! This is it... the basic idea of capitalism. Market, market, market.

B Ah, yes, okay. So free love in the museum. And to finance yourself, you start to share your body with an auction house or what? Is that a feminist way of working?

A You can answer here with no – but it's honest. It makes the modes of production visible, the pacts and deals that led to this exhibition in this particular place.

B Love is colder than capital. On the edge of despair! Now, back to free love in the museum. If you do so, like Tejal Shah, then all are keeping eyes and ears shut.

A And mouths.

B A mouth is still there to kiss. Lips, formulate critique!

A I cannot see it, the critique. It seems to hide in the basement.

B Our time is up, the exhibition closes soon. And there's nothings going on outside today. No demonstrations, just advertisements. A friend recently said to me to criticize curators, to criticize artists – that no longer makes you in these times! It's out of fashion.

A Ha, like this former department store. Out of fashion! Well then, let us NOT criticize white feminists from the Western, Eastern, Northern or Southern hemispheres, who are in favour of their engaged work completely forgetting the local context. Ha, yes, or of a different caliber: who pitch their working tents for a few foreseeable years in Cairo or elsewhere. For their careers. Now what?

B I'm tired, let's have a coffee.



Jelena Sokić, *Bella Ciao*, oil on canvas, 2011; Alexis O'Hara, *Coping Mechanisms for Endangered Species*, performance, 2013; Dina Rončević, *Hot hot burning water*, object and video documentation, 2013, photo by Ana Kostić

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mARIJA rATKOVIĆ

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THE OCTOBER SALON
AS THEATRE DIRECTED BY
IMPOSSIBILITY [1]

The revolution won't be led by red flags and the sound of "Bella Ciao". It will come like a flood in the night, with boundless power and uncatchable form, with inconsistency and unpredictability; it will speak with an invisible voice in a language we won't understand because we never listened before. It will not see us, and it won't obey our rational demands or follow the path we prepared for it. It will swell and burst. It will be appalling, misplaced, and reckless. It will prioritize the wrong values, it will dance to the wrong songs and laugh in the wrong places; it will be unreasonable, it will be untamable... [2]

Karen Mirza and Rachel Anderson

The province does not like the unknown, in principle; that is one of the primary hallmarks that mark its history, its culture, and its mindset. But it rejects the unknown not only in its actuality, it rejects it in time. It does not like the unknown in the past, just as it does not like it in the future. [3]

Radomir Konstantinović

The exhibition *No One Belongs Here More Than You* at this year's October salon dealt with the topic of (non)human nature, through the challenge of finding a new way of (social) imagination towards possible futures and its responsible politics of the commons and communalities. [4] "The October Salon as Theatre Directed by Impossibility" is the product of an attempt to shed light on the socio-political context in which this exhibition has taken place, as well as the reasons for which it is (or was) necessary for it to occur in exactly this context. Set in the form of a palimpsest, [5] this text is based upon a text, and is made up of introductory notes, dialogues with the primary source, highlights, clippings, and a reading of a chapter from Radomir

[1] The title is derived from the expressions 'the province, theatre of normativity' and 'political fair directed by boredom' that appear in Radomir Konstantinović's *Philosophy of The Province*, which forms the theoretical foundation of this text (author's note).
[2] From *The Museum of Non-Participation*: "The Patriarchal Clock", installation, undocumented event, October Salon, 2013.
[3] Radomir Konstantinović, *Filozofija palanke*, Belgrade: Treći program, 1969, p. 8.
[4] *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition concept, Red Min(e)d.
[5] The palimpsest is a fitting metaphor for the feminist concept of *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, since as a textual figure it brings into question 'both the linearity of time and the centralised organisation of space', so appearing as both a subversive and an affirmative text of women's creativity and its cyclical and dis/continued history. Cf. Nadežda Radulova, "Palimpsest kao figura ženskosti", In *Genero, Časopis za feminističku teoriju*, 1, Belgrade: Centar za ženske studije, 2002, p 139–149.

Radomir Konstantinović: "Political Fair Directed by Boredom"
(a chapter from *Philosophy of the Province*)

If the victim of this spirit (as a victim of the belief in the possibility of an absolutely-closed-as-absolutely-meaningful world) is inevitably the politician desired by himself, this is because, equally inevitably, he is not and cannot be a being of love and amorous mystery. Seemingly contradicting his inevitable faithfulness to the ideal of an equanimous position (and, due to his impossibility, the position of indolence as work-against-work) by his station as politician, the spirit of the Province, however, here essentially reaffirms itself again in the same way as its teetotal atheism of absolute meaningfulness as absolute power of The Day is programmatically affirmed. Its political position, which appears as the position of a spirit of action, and as the very reflection of this same action, is in point of fact not only an extension of the attempt to make equanimity possible, but is the pure function of equanimity itself, of his inevitable equanimity to the irrationally nocturnal, here, to the irrationally nocturnal of love.

If he is a politician, he is that because he is not a lover, but also in order to deflect the temptations of love; his love of politics is his non-love of love, a love-of-non-love that is contradictory in and of itself, in his pure action (if he remains faithfully in the sphere of the spirit of politics), a quite illusorily political spirit. Conspiring with permanence that is irreconcilable with transformation, he conspires against any transformation, and, as such, against any action that can be nothing other than the action of transformation. This action is just an illusion of action, or an illusory action: it is devoid not only of a creative subject, but is turned against that subject; by virtue of nothing other than its illusory nature, it is of exceptional importance to the spirit of the Province. Its importance comes from the need to deflect any subjective action that is to any extent more real, as any transformation (which, of necessity, also entails acquaintance with the irrational, as it is a transformation both in the world and in the consciousness: consciousness is transformed through critical moments of consciousness that are the moments of the irrational), but this significance is born out of the necessity of sustaining at least some action in existentially active (inalienably active) being. As he has had to arrive at sentimentalism through his non-tragic nature, and, no less, as in its inability to experience but also in its refusal of experience (as conflict between the known and the unknown, old with new, rational and that which, being still unknown, is to him irrational) he has had to arrive at a particular underscoring of an event (as an attempt to substitute that for experience, to make of it a sort of 'external', exteriorised and so safely rational 'experience' finally, as in the inability of attaining absolute equanimity he has had to arrive at indolence as his quite specific form of work against work, he has had to arrive at this illusion of political action.

He supports this illusion, however, all the more by standing against true action: he is not only a part of his own inability for action but also of his own lack of desire for action, just as the cult of sentimentalism, of a theatrically event-oriented world, or even traditionalism itself (which is, finally, the cult of rationality personified in 'programmatic' consciousness as opposed to the consciousness of love) is the product of an impotence transformed into principle by nothing other than the failure of consciousness to come to terms with it; the illusory nature of existence

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Konstantinović's *Philosophy of the Province*. This text appears as a postscript to *No One Belongs Here More Than You* – as a consequence, but also as a retroactive cause, dealing as it does with a diagnosis of society's reality and the need for new, additional (re)examinations of the (in)ability to achieve the process of political subjectivization through social action in/from the field of art.

I view *No One Belongs Here More Than You* as a radical departure from earlier October Salon exhibitions; this departure is reflected in its clear formulation of a political demand, introduced into the concept of the exhibition through Rosi Braidotti's thesis of the 're-grounding of the subject in a materially embedded sense of responsibility and ethical accountability' for society and the environment. I see this attempt to act, or *establish*, through an exhibition as a demand for progress in terms of curatorial practices, a movement away from representative practice and towards the establishment of a direct real-political experience. In other words, through a concept posited in those terms, *No One Belongs Here More Than You* becomes an attempt to factually achieve socio-political effects in the field of art, through the language and the means of art, in a process of political subjectivization via the production of knowledge and the creation of new forms of communality.

Foucault sees exhibiting as an archaeological practice, based on context and governed by programmes and methodologies, that is oriented towards transforming a field through the production of knowledge. [6] It is my assumption that a *diagnosis of the current condition*, or what Foucault calls *the history of the present*, is the main precondition for performing the October Salon as a feminist, socially engaged exhibition. In addition, it is the history of the present that causes and conditions the (in)ability of the October Salon to fulfil that which its concept requires and presupposes as possible: social imagination versus (inter)subjectivity, [7] politics of communality, and new types of sociability. The performative (cultural, artistic) action of *No One Belongs Here More Than You* takes place within the public institution of the October Salon, at the Belgrade Cultural Centre, and also in a broader arena – within the social and cultural structures in which the exhibition and all its elements take shape: as a sequence of events, as a heterogeneous structure composed of works by various female and male authors, but also as a process-oriented curatorial practice.

If artistic performance takes place in an institution that is constituted and regulated thus (with reference to the semi-autonomous status of art as an institution – author's note), it is never performed as a completely 'felicitous' performative, because it is limited within social structure to the semi-autonomous sphere of art. Artistic performance as performative is therefore neither a reflection of society, nor its second-degree product, but neither is it an act that directly affects societal reality. [8]

In that sense, the exhibition is not, nor can it be, an action that is part of an engagement directly aimed at societal reality or its transformation or ultimate change; but what, then, are the actionable potentials of *No One Belongs Here More Than You*?

[6] "[T]o show that to speak is to do something – something other than to express what one thinks; to translate what one knows, and something other than to play with the structures of a language (langue): to show that to add a statement to a pre-existing series of statements is to perform a complicated and costly gesture, which involves conditions (and not only a situation, a context, and motives), and rules (not the logical and linguistic rules of construction); to show that a change in the order of discourse does not presuppose "new ideas", a little invention and creativity, a different mentality, but transformations in a practice, perhaps also in neighbouring practices, and in their common articulation," Foucault, Michel, *Arheologija znanja*, Belgrade: Plato, 1999.

[7] The concept of intersubjectivity is connected by Luisa Passerini to the relationship between individuals as (political) subjects and the transmission of oral history. See Luisa, Passerini, *Memory and Utopia: The Primacy of Intersubjectivity*, London: Equinox, 2007.

[8] Ana, Vujanović, *Razarajući označitelji/e performansa*, Belgrade: SKC, 2004, p. 159.

to which he is condemned by his inability to exist he turns into his principle. Here he is again the unprecedented master of principle through his fundamental shrewdness (found in conflict with history) to make coercion a matter of his own choice by turning it into principle. Made impotent as a true actor, as one who truly 'makes a difference', he wants this impotence of his to be everywhere, but only so as to prevent his being made impotent any further, to deny in a way any further denial of himself. He wants to not want action, as action of transformation, in the same way as he wants to not want work; but he wants (not to want) this because he cannot not want any action at all, because he is compelled to act, in the same way that he is compelled to speak or to be indolent (this being work against work), and in the same way he is compelled to sensitivity to which he confronts sentimentalism, if this does not lead him to violence, to the spirit of disorder. He is not a sentimentalist solely for the reason that he cannot be tragic, he is also one because he does not want to be tragic. Compelled, however, to want what he does not want, contradicting himself because he contradicts existence, he is in a constant and interminable state of 'being at work' confronting the fundamental working principles of existence by, truly, always attempting anew to 'satisfy' existence by representing it, by mimicking it, and by so mimicking it remaining, importantly, in some way outside of it whilst in it. His primary action is action against action, or action to turn all action into illusory (and so safe) action. Existence, which requires action of him, is thus all the more transformed into a game of illusion. It becomes an endless game of illusion. Himself having made his own illusion, he sinks into the despair that he must offer up as 'payment' for his 'safety'. He is safe because illusory. He is hidden away in illusion. The despair that he finds here is the despair of existence itself, irreconcilable with illusion, but a despair that leads to an ever more feverish creation of this illusion and this illusiveness in all.

At the very edge of nothingness, in his extra-subjectivity of a world that is closed to its utmost, he is at the very edge of a desert that is nothingness because it is absence of movement. The meaning of occurrences (events) that he has found in escape from the irrationally experiential (fleeing from experience as an outburst of rationality of a given order), he thus becomes even greater and fortified within himself, which is why his political act remains only illusorily the act of a 'programme' (or remains so only partially), and becomes an act aimed at creating events.

This activity is here more important than the activity that has as its aim a particular 'programme' by virtue of the very fact that the demand of existence for movement is more significant than its demand for any particular meaning that is meaningful for it only insofar it is an expression and guarantee of movement and only as such. The programme is in some way encompassed by this creation of events, this instinct for event, in the way that, inevitably, meaning is encompassed by existence as pure movement; to some extent, this is also true even of the function of this event (existence reduced to event), such as the function of motion. However, since the programme is here an expression of the inability to be irrational, and not an expression of the power to accept the living and life-giving relationship between the rational and the irrational, the possessory and the non-possessory, it is a pre-existing 'meaning' that, devoid of any true relationship with the meaninglessly irrational, and even being a form of rejection of such a relationship, remains only an illusory meaning, whilst the motion that it would have had to allow here, in its capacity as meaning, remains only wholly illusory motion. Experience, which is essential motion (as order brought into question, and so, faced with the irrational as the non-rational, the not-yet-rationalised), and the guarantee of further motion, is here persistently denied in the name of event as an attempt of a rational experience that is absurd because impossible.

As with other cultural practices that stand for and simulate action, but rarely themselves figure as acts, [9] an exhibition that is part of the October Salon functions as a performative within the field of art. The success of the performative of a certain cultural practice thus depends on the position of the one directing it, or on his or her ability to perform the performance act as felicitous, rather than on any intrinsic values of the performative as utterance or act. The root cause of the failure of an exhibition as a performative act does not reside in the exhibition's inability to achieve its stated concept, but rather in the structure of society that constitutes the relationship between the political and the cultural. According to Ranci re, the relationship between the political and the cultural is such that *[w]hatever might be the specific type of economic circuits they lie within, artistic practices are not exceptions to other practices; [t]hey represent and reconfigure the distribution of these activities.* [10]

Changes to a society through *awareness-raising, true change*, nearly never take place as the exclusive consequence of a cultural or artistic act (performative or otherwise), and it is therefore not possible to gauge the *efficiency of artistic messages* by the measure of their accomplishment. If formulated thus, they *never deliver* on their promise, and it can therefore be said that it is in the nature of the artistic performative to be “unfelicitous”, and that a “felicitous” performative, one that generates effects, is, in reality, an act of transgression. On the other hand, *exhibiting as performance*, as opposed to *exhibiting as representation* in the field of art, draws artistic practices closer to experimental performance within everyday life. Exhibiting as performance entails the need for introducing conventions, the theatrical ‘as if’ condition, and agreement between the participants and the audience: that which is shown must be viewed in the same way as that which is real, and in a performance so viewed, the object of reading expands to cover not just the acts themselves, but also the process of *production of meaning* – the signifying practice – that takes place within the exhibition and flows out from the new, (pre-)existing situation.

What does an exhibition like this, one that can function in society only as a transposed, experimental, or theatrical reality – as an example of what Konstantinovi  dubs the ‘*theatre of normativity*’, the ‘*political fair*’ of province – bring into this closed, [11] impermeable system within which it occurs?

Whilst I see the October Salon show as a theatrical, fair-like event within the enclosed realm of the province, I keep in mind what Radomir Konstantinovi  postulates in the introduction to his *Philosophy of the Province* as the fundamental conditions of existence of the province: *There neither is nor can be any (real) change*; the world outside of the bounds of the province, the world as *chaos*, and the *ideally open* world on the far side of the hill does not exist; or, the world does not exist on the plane of reality, but is there as that which is imagined, as an ideality, an opposition to the province, a utopia that one strives for, but whose materialization is not

[9] “Kulturne prakse su vi e performansi nego  inovi” noted Jelena Ðordevi , “Telo u kulturi” In *Kultura*, 120/121, 2008, p.163–183.

[10] See Jacques, Ranci re, *The Politics of Aesthetics*, London, New York: Continuum, 2009, p. 45.

[11] It is important to note that Konstantinovi  views the closed nature of society of the province in terms of its totality, i.e. as a perfectly closed society, but does so without regard to its political order; this should be distinguished from seeing this society as a totalitarian social order, as *Philosophy of The Province* was most often interpreted in 1990s readings. This enclosed nature of provincial society is the consequence of resistance to change, the consequence of the desire of the *spirit of the province* to maintain the status quo as opposed to the openness and chaos of the *world*. This hallmark of the province, its primary law, does not relate to the political order governing the society of the province, but rather to the defining characteristic of the province, or the (pre) condition for its survival as a stable community and system in the philosophical sense.

In that sense, this programmatic consciousness is opposed to motion, and for that reason opposed to the real-creative existence that is here ‘kept’ immobile, but the spirit is thus even more necessarily focused on event as motion that is its own purpose in and of itself, and which is for that very reason impossible, since it is the motion of necessity, rather than any welling-up from oneself, and is an expression of that which impels to movement. Motion is not a subject in and of itself. It is here equated, however, with the subject, in the extra-subjectivity that seeks after it, as such, submerged in immobility and existentially irreconcilable with it, yet unable to reach – being extra-subjectivity – any real movement as movement of the subject or as fulfilment of subjectivity, and as such able to reach this ‘pure’ motion, or an illusion of the possibility of such motion. It is maintained in this illusion by its own extra-subjective subjectivity, which always, without and within everything, on every plane, sees exclusively the external features of any phenomenon; but it is also maintained in this illusion by the desire to obtain existence from motion by a route that is opposite to the sole possible route: that starting from the subject of existence and towards motion. The spirit conspiring with such movement, with event equated with existence, here shares in the fallacy and the destiny of the spirit of one disordered, up until being equated with it: unreal for itself, and being a lampooning, individualist spirit of the conflict between the ego and the non-ego, a spirit of violence, it believes that existence can be extorted from motion, just as one disordered believes that his ego can be extorted from the world as his non-ego, his ego being ‘hidden away’ (by force imprisoned) in this non-ego, or that it can be torn away from the order of this non-ego through disorder as exemption from this order (which is order through attainment, order through motion, so that being in motion means moving in an order by which this order attains itself). The fact that this ‘programmatic’ master must share his destiny with anyone disordered is thus necessary and serves to prove the assumed unimportance of the programme itself, of it as merely being the function of this event as ideally pure motion. Thus the consciousness that appears here as the consciousness of nothingness is the consciousness of the desert world of immobility, horrified of it and through horror devoted to continuing to seek, fruitlessly, for salvation in motion that is its own purpose and that would proceed from itself (and return unto itself), or, rather, that is even more deeply devoted to creating a desert. The fundamental (albeit not the sole) expression of this desert-creation through fear of it is a great ‘political’ fair, the fair of this ceaseless ‘event’, a political fair whose lead actors are thwarted lovers and that is directed by Boredom as the consciousness of the nothingness of existence that ‘occurs’ and that is, for this reason, infinitely desirous of ‘news’, so that the spirit must direct events for future news that are never sufficiently ‘new’, the same as this spirit, outside of creation, and as if at the very bottom of the spirit, as the dregs of spirit, at the very border of ideally eerie immobility, infinitely more aged than itself, bearing the age of its predictedness, its intransformability, can never appear as new to itself and use that novelty to escape its being dregs, or at least to experience an illusion of light. The emptier life is here (the less like life and the more like a desert), the more it is an event, but, since it cannot ‘extort’ life from life, but can only transform it into an illusion, it always remains a promise of ‘real’ life as ‘real’ event, always a grand future event, and the more it is an event the lower its subjective creative power. (The existence of the world that has conspired to become closed, as close to being closed as possible, is reduced as much as possible to an event: the more closed a world is, the greater the necessity of its being a world of event, or, the more there are subjects, the more there are events: spirit and event are inversely proportionate to one another.)

possible. It is important to consider the utopian existence of the *World* as an imaginary entity in opposition to the *Province*, which is wholly real, so that one can understand the (im)possibility of achieving the stated goal of this year's October Salon, but also the stated objective of any political action in a closed community: the demand for political *subjectivization*.

When one speaks of the concept of utopia, one must take into account the plurality of interpretations this notion attracts, which range, as Rancière puts it, from *the mad delusions that lead to totalitarian catastrophe*, to utopia as *the infinite expansion of the field of possibility that resists all forms of totalizing closure*. Therefore, although unattainable, utopia is the point of departure of the concept of political subjectivization; for the province, utopia means its transformation through a radical opening-up to the world, of its becoming the world. The demand for the political subjectivization, or rather the *identification of the political subject* in *No One Belongs Here More Than You* and through this exhibition is confronted with Konstantinović's *declaration of the impossibility and impotence of identification the subject*, or, rather, the strategy whereby *the impossibility of identification of the subject is the sole form of subjectivization*. [12] According to Rancière, the logic of the process of political subjectivization is based on *impossibility of identification of political subjects* (under the dominant categories of identification and classification), *that is to say subjects who remain unidentifiable in the given field of experience and necessitate 'inaudible' modes of enunciation*. [13] When transposed onto the field of society, this would mean that the logic of political subjectivization through an artistic event, regardless of what that event may be like, is impossible since the political subject is an unidentified remnant within the field of the real. The demand for political subjectivization as a process escapes the processes of identification and classification within the closed system of society, society of the province. Its impossibility on the plane of the real transposes it into a plane outside of the real, as Konstantinović supposes, the plane of the *world as ideality* of openness, thereby affirming the existence of a world outside of the province, a world that cannot reveal itself otherwise.

To quote Konstantinović – through the performance of this year's October Salon, the spirit of the *Province as societal reality* – “finds that which it did not seek, but this time this brings it back to the history which is its impossibility. It is possible, therefore, because it is historically impossible, and is made historical by nothing other than its denial of history.” [14]

[12] Announcement for a series of lectures and a roundtable entitled “Radomir Konstantinović: Tužni tropi kraja subjekta”, part of the project *Učitelj Neznalica i njegovi komiteti*, 12 and 13 July, Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade. <http://uciteljneznalica.org/item-Radomir%20Konstantinovi%C4%87:%20Tu%C5%BE%C5%99ni%20tropi%20kraja%20subjekta%20-786.htm>

[13] See “*Subjectivization (La subjectivation)*” in Rancière, *ibid.*, p. 92.

[14] See Konstantinović, *ibid.*, p. 145.

The mindless political passions of the province originate from this non-impassionedness (in experiential impotence as the power of nothingness, of the indolence of a closed world), but this non-impassionedness is in principle unacceptable in the same way that ideal equanimity is unacceptable (or as nothingness itself is). The politics of this world are the politics of deceit, because they (these politics) are themselves founded upon an attempt to deceive existence (sentimental because non-tragical, event-based because non-experiential, finally, individual because non-subjective), which is akin to attempting to deceive history by degrading it from a history of seeking after meaning to a history of events of a pre-existing meaning, a meaning of the achievable real world devoid of any utopianism. The principle of shrewdness is the primary ‘working’ principle of these politics that are devoid of politics, being without an objective, having themselves as their own purpose, being the sole play ruled by the spirit of in-acting and over-acting. Not being deceived is here the only imperative that, in practice, entails deceiving, since practice is ceaselessly felt by the consciousness of this imperative as possible deceit.

Certainly, the subject of this mindlessly passionate political life – which serves as its own purpose, and whose purpose-less nature, seemingly non-utilitarian, is a necessary consequence of utilitarianism brought to the apex of its inability (to a consciousness, however dim and confused, of this inability) – appears in various guises, and perhaps is, primarily: 1) the individual coming to know, in the agony of tribal unity, the agony of the tribal super-ego (its normativity) as the possibility of his own ego, primarily as ‘importance’ and ‘power’ (all the more so the more this agony is apparent and the more he himself experiences it more deeply; one’s own power is accepted with fear, as an expression of outlawry and as the ‘sin’ of freedom, but also as an attempt to find in it the oblivion of this same ‘sin’); 2) the individual who is by his uniqueness opposed to the uniformity of the super-ego of the tribe condemned to death, but not opposed to the tribal conscience of social life as the life of singularity, and who endeavours to extend the singularity of the super-ego through his own ego, feeling like the tribe (which speaks only through him and not through others) because he is tribally unreconciled with any pluralism whatsoever; and, finally, 3) the strictly determined individual whose absence of freedom is here a guarantee of non-accountability as this freedom to take part in this political fair, or the strictly determined individual who, accepting his absence of freedom as absence of accountability, makes this absence of accountability into this freedom that is not a creative freedom and is therefore freedom to take part in events. Yet, he is always a spirit that seeks salvation from nothingness in politics, with a fever that rises commensurately with the temptation of nothingness. If this activity of his cannot be real, just as the subject of this activity cannot truly find himself in it, it cannot remain ideally outside of activity and outside of the impulse to create the subject. It is nothing other than this impulse to act that incites him to attempt to ‘deceive’ existence thus, to attempt to turn the world of the province into this grand political fair where everything is an ‘illusion’ and not reality, and where everything is, because of this, dreamlike, beyond the reach of any tragic danger; to serve this fair is to give unwanted praise to the action of real existence, so persistently rejected: the very presence of this action as a command in spirit can inspire one to commit this deceit that is taken part in by a whole world fallen prey to the same fate, unique in its unique inability to save ideal (tribal) unity, which here remains only seemingly out-of-time because ideal reality that creates the future by denying ‘real’ reality as insufficient, a utopian dream that ‘moves’ history along, is, finally, an illusion without which there is no history.

Endy Hupperich, World of Magic, oil on canvas,
2011, photo by Ana Kostić



VLADIMIR JERIĆ VLIDI

“HEADS ON TO THE
STRAWBERRY BUSH”

58 For some reason, it seems almost impossible to resist the pathetic need to start this article at the end (cue in a memorable soundtrack from “Grlom u jagode”, a popular Yugoslav series launched in 1975 [1]), and in the signature style of the oft-cited serial, to say something like: “On the week that ended 17th of November, the famous writer Doris Lessing died in London, the art market in NYC made the headlines with some formidable new records - the most expensive work ever was auctioned, the highest grossing auction ever took place - and in Belgrade, the exhibition *No One Belongs Here More Than You* came to an end.”

This need can somewhat be explained by the fact that all these things actually did happen as stated, but also as the consequence of the very peculiar sentiment – as that day, visiting the final hours of it while a farewell concert took place, despite my belief that the exhibition did not resonate with me very much, I also realized that I did not want it to end. This does appear pretty odd, as I am also not the biggest “Grlom u jagode” fan either, despite the fact I started the text with it, although most people find the series irresistibly cute. But “cute” would not be the word to use in describing this exhibition and its wider context, its social affairs.

Like with most things for which we can still not say much about what they are, or were, it seems that we can learn a lot by trying to understand what they are not or cannot be; the project of the Curatorial School was there to implement these and other principles to what was exposed during the several weeks of *No One Belongs...*, which was presented in the magnificent setting of the Kluz department store, a building that could easily be accused of being a potentially show-stealing venue in any situation. And adding the allegedly “controversial” introductory panel a few weeks ahead of the exhibition opening – more on that later – everything promised that there would be no easy way to launch *No One Belongs...*

But however much things got a bit emotional for me on the very last day of the exhibition (now, can we stop with that “Grlom u jagode” music, please? thank you), it would not help much in trying to understand what happened there by starting at the end, so let’s rewind to the very beginning.

[1] Play here: <http://youtu.be/s9uB8rgq0tl>
The title of “Grlom u jagode” is as hard to translate as a lot of the things around this exhibition are – let’s settle for the rogue but funny “Heads On to the Strawberry Bush” – but the meaning of the expression is interesting: often used to depict a decision or action brought about in haste or without much consideration of consequences, it frequently applies to young people or anyone who is “more willing than ready”, to say, that is, to those who, albeit possibly quite unprepared, will act out of love or enthusiasm. Sometimes it may indicate the lack of wisdom, sometimes a random decision; but its meaning mainly reads as being erratic, being in love, being ready to discover, not being aware of what’s ahead while one pursues one’s own goal yet while still going “full speed ahead” (actually, another nice candidate for the translation of this expression).
Over time, the title tune acquired either a slightly comical meaning – humming it or whistling it means that somebody around just started a long and known story beginning with “On that day...” – and, for a lot of people, it still translates as “nostalgia”.



Alexis O'Hara, *Coping Mechanisms for Endangered Species*, performance, 2013, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

Now a significant tradition of the city, the annual event launched in 1960, unlike most of its contemporaries, has somehow survived to its latest, 54th incarnation; and precisely this tradition, or rather the lack of similar or comparable events, following the decay of the “age of prosperity” of the regional cultural and artistic scene, is partial fuel for the fire – a great weight is put on the Salon to remain “the last exhibition standing”, if we take the perspective of generations of (critical and experimental) artists from the region.

The Curatorial School Is On A Mission

Everything followed the sense of being slightly disoriented from the very beginning, starting with “Coping Mechanisms for Endangered Species”, the opening performance by Alexis O'Hara. [2] Her potentially vindictive and witty history and contemplation of the historical and current embodiments of feminism probably got somewhat lost in the performance, as it was conceived so to be elaborated in a play of spoken words and sentences – this slight case of confusion is perhaps to be found in the opaqueness of the allusions and allegories used to actually “name” the protagonists of her speech. But this curious mixture of conceptual and performative did produce some artifacts to mark the entire exhibition – a pair of red high heels to point to sudden absence (mostly of the artist, who ended the piece by leaving her clothes on the very scene), and a small red dress suspended from a handful of white balloons that was descending gradually from the ceiling, day by day, where it had been launched to the opening night as if to announce some sort of presence to come. But we’re waiting for the return of who, of what? Could it perhaps

[2] Watch the performance here: <http://youtu.be/a6F5i4Ucw1Q#t=287>

stand for a flag lowered to half-mast instead, so as to announce a loss and defeat? Will the dress touch the ground eventually? And what happens then?



Jasmina Cibic, *Untitled*, object, 2009,
photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

Out of 37 works inspected, 5 were found to contain a lot of humor, in 11 some humor could be found and used for interpretation, while 21 had to be described as “very somber”. What’s so funny? Curatorial School investigates.

During the introductory days of the exhibition, there was the feeling that something definitely did happen or started happening, but no one seemed to be sure as to exactly what that was, and as the days passed by, the little red dress was closer and closer to the floor. This particular feeling of longing for “something more” is again of a particular kind, as neither I nor most of those I spoke with had any clue as to what we thought should be there, what exactly our expectations were, what should happen. Usually when there is a sort of anticipation like this one was, there is at least some awareness of the kind of image, perhaps just a vague shape of what one is waiting for – but not this time. The unruly alliance of local and international artists and critics who were for this purpose banded together into the project of the Curatorial School did their best to investigate the matter; the artists and curators were being interviewed, the local experts were consulted, and no stone (that is, no work) was left unturned. And the results of this investigation seemed to narrow down the possibilities to several topics through which we could further pursue our dilemma: who the public was of (and for) this exhibition (in this case, it appeared to be “the scene”), what the focus was of the expectations, the actual subject of the exhibition (“contemporary feminist art”), and then especially the kind of approach to the subject matter (here, it could be marked by expressions such as “archive”, “plural” and “plurality”, “community”, “affect”, “somber”, “post” and “feminist”). Finally, the issues of the very terrain of contemporary society through which we are able to observe the causes and effects of such an event had to be considered.

The general sense of waiting for something else, for “something more” to happen, started to

gradually acquire its “weak resolution”, as each day there was usually a very interesting program of debates, lectures and events, and a kind of “community” started to be shaped by the exhibition itself. But this stubborn state of waiting for the essence of the exhibition to reveal itself appeared as the dominant atmosphere lingering over the superheroes of the Curatorial School, who were determined not to give up before decoding *No One Belongs...* So, to understand this exhibition became the quest to understand this “something more”, this something perceived as must being in existence but not (yet) there, to discover the reason for this state of waiting; the Curatorial School was on the case.



Exhibition as Scripted Space: Modes of Production and Production of Modes,
Curatorial School led by Jelena Vesić, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi



A: Alexis O'Hara, *Coping Mechanisms for Endangered Species*, performance, 2013,
photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi, 11. Oct. 2013

Lala Raščić, *Whatever the Object*, performance, 2013, photo by
Vladimir Jerić Vlidi, 17. Nov. 2013

Here, you can observe the relative position of the little red dress to the floor:

A: LRD position on 11 October after the performance by Alexis O'Hara.

B: LRD position on 17 November, during the performance by Lala Raščić.

All Nice People Here, No Ceilings Broken

Also, it felt important to be aware about what this art was not, and that was at least partially clear – it was not the kind of art that made historical records on the art market that week. November 2013 brought the world some new all-time market achievements, as Francis Bacon’s 1969 piece “Three Studies of Lucian Freud” sold for \$142 million, Jeff Koons’ “Balloon Dog” grossed a record for a piece auctioned by a living artist – \$58.4 million, and there was the Christie’s auction that happened in, I believe, New York City, worth a record-breaking \$692 million (perhaps worth noting here is that the entire annual budget of the U.S. National Endowment for the Arts was \$138 million). And, this was way back in November: ever since, it appears that the market has started to “break its own records” every other week.

But most of the artists of *No One Belongs...* were probably mostly unaware of all that. It seems that today there are (at least) two completely distinct art worlds, both in the local as well as the global sense, that are so distinct that they have not even shared a common history for decades now, and nor do they care much about each other; market-oriented artists and experts will pretty much have no clue about even the “stars” of the critical art scene (unless they’re “having problems with inspiration”), while the said scene considers the news on the latest developments in sports and in the art market with a similar lack of interest. A very very tiny intersection of the two could encompass some interesting names, but most artists are, and have been for quite some time now, in an “either/or” position considering the funding. One’s choice of the particular aspect of funding became, then, the choice about the entire future universe of where that particular art would or would not exist. Such and similar “new” divisions seem to be at the core of where “No One Belongs Here More Than You” is located.

There was another related affair, attributed as being one of the several “fake scandals” around *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, the one concerning its very location in an “absolute sense”. It definitely is a problem that the great building of the Kluz department store somehow became a private showroom that wanted people to call it the Zepter Expo now; but the four curators of *No One Belongs...* can definitely not be held responsible for that, as some sharply critical voices seemed to suggest. What happened here is of some significance, as the new owners of this historical place (built in 1908) decided that they would host the exhibition, but wanted something in return – to use the occasion to also exhibit their own collection. According to my knowledge, despite the long and painful recent history of “official” cultural events supposedly funded by the City or State but usually dotted with logos of “supporting” businesses and corporations, this is the first time that a private sponsor tried to intervene into the very program of the Salon, in what works would be on display. A worrying trend, by all means, but, judging by what happened in the case of *No One Belongs...*, at least in Belgrade, the critical art is safe for the time being. Besides this private collection being in a clearly separated space, the selection of (was it cutlery?), fine china and canvases on offer could in no way be mistaken for anything connected with the program of the Salon. If it were not reflecting all the bizarreness and brutality of contemporary reality, this situation could be even comical in a way: the clumsiness with which the private collection attempted to “sneak in” into a bigger exhibition produced the expected effect of its becoming utterly invisible for whoever came to see *No One Belongs...* This is not to say that the situation is “funny” in any way; clearly, it was a “space for space” kind of a deal, where capital offered the physical space in exchange for a bit of a social space of recognition. Somewhat odd may be the perception of such powerfull capital offering such confused programme compared

to independent initiatives, but only until there is the belief that same categories apply to both; in reality, capital will be quite uninterested in how the critical art scene evaluates their agenda – from this scene, not even a nod of acceptance is needed, and their customers, their markets are somewhere else.

At worst, it felt like walking by a random shop window, but it mostly went absolutely unnoticed. No one was tempted by anything to pass through that entrance, as the fine china and whatnot there was clearly visible from far away; perhaps they will consider employing a curator in the future.

Anyway, both during guided tours and in the media, the curators did clearly state what was happening and what their position was, and the walls of Kluz were entirely under their control during *No One Belongs...* If there is perhaps something to take a closer look at here, my nomination would be observing the mechanism through which the presence of a creeping number of corporate “support” for this and that in art events over time eventually resulted in “suddenly” private interests asking to be represented in the programme – it seems to be what is to be expected in all similar “public-private formulas”, gradually being imposed as “the solution” to replace what used to be sovereignly public before.



Madri art, Zepter Auction, during the opening days of the
54. October Salon, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

Volumes could be written about the Salon on the basis of counter-Salons alone, on the exhibitions and events reacting to it, in most cases, against it – the now famous October 75 being the prime example. All that happened at a time where things were not “confused” – a big and glittery expensive Salon was the annual condensation, the outcome of the battle for canonization and prestige within what is recognized as mainstream art, while avant-garde, critical and experimental art were in a way temporarily “united” in their various responses and challenges addressed at the Salon. It was only later, after this transition started, that “non-mainstream” art began seeing the Salon itself as its own place rather than its “negative inspiration”, and most of the change have had to do with the issues of funding and visibillity.

You Know, You Know All These People

64 A “general public” (however abstract, vague or simply untrue that term may be, standing for the fantasy that never exists) decided to start giving up on the concept that art is relevant for life quite some time ago – sometime around the break of 90s, perhaps – and not without reason; the forces of a variety of frequently mutually opposed interests but united in the idea that the world must be rearranged, actors local and global, big or small, that took all the power in the turmoil of dismantling Yugoslavia, decided that the accent would be put not on galleries or concert halls or film festivals anymore, but on TV, not on what is being reflected in public venues but on what was being reported in the yellow press. In short: the importance was now placed not on where anything actually happened but on the places from where people might learn that something happened, and about what it was. But let’s not credit these people even with the idea – they’ve seen it in operation earlier and elsewhere. It simply works.

However, art did not stop being produced, and the making of various exhibitions and events went on – actually, the number of artists, artworks and art events rose exponentially during the 90s and started to diversify more and more, perhaps a bit more around here than in some other places, as to be expected in times of crisis; what was different was this almost complete lack of publicity, of “publicness” – both in terms of “common” people and media, and, of course, of funding, as it evaporated at the speed of light.

The first problem, the one of publicity, found its solution in a manner that is pretty much a global characteristic of today – for the lack of public and media interest in critical art, the artists compensated by creating “the scene”, or “scenes”, and by joining together in numbers with different activists, rebel academics, alternative musicians, odd urban types, writers and their circles and a lot of young and not-that-young people who were “just around”, so that they all became the new audience for each other and a kind of a mutual critique. As already noted, this was already seen happening elsewhere and on a larger scale – yet there are some important regional and urban specificities, but that topic is best left for some other occasion.

So “the scene” – not small, by any means – became the entire universe. This was the place where things like subjectivities, ideas and artworks and actions would be born, this would be their stage to play out whatever their play was, and a place to die – that is, a place to remain for posterity, to inscribe a certain history, or at least a place to be battered by a severe mutual criticism that goes for granted in such circumstances and frequently represents a kind of a badge of honour. There was also a certain, distinctive and largely non-financial, economy of the scene. For better or for worse, but that became the living and working environment of many of the ambitious and curious who would not accept the fate prescribed, and of course, as seen elsewhere, it established itself as the only (semi-)public territory of contemporary society able to operate with certain concepts such as critical art or any form of critical thinking, including feminism. But it also became the place where a lot of people previously enrolled in such battles, deeply concerned about the issues they researched and advocated, worn out and battered by the struggle, came to as a sort of resort. With them came the experience, but also a sense of cynicism, and the awareness of temporary defeat – but it is good to have this question checked here and there, the one of “where are we?”, provided that there is enough grounding to use this tiny word “we”.

This “scene” is where the kind of activism as outlined by this exhibition comes from, and the

“scene” is the primary addressee of the exhibition, because, as witnessed in this process yet unfolding, it stands now for the entire audience. Worth noting is that this scene, although perceived as being in a sort of retreat itself today, is not small at all, and that over time, it, in a somewhat “organic” way, became part of a larger, growing global scene of similar actors.

To understand who could perceive *No One Belongs...* as “ours” may perhaps help to better understand what the pressures were involved in making the exhibition; and important to note is that the figure of a random member of the “general public” walking through the door waiting to be fascinated and possibly transformed in an unsuspected encounter with art objects and concepts is after a long process of transition now being entirely replaced by the figure of the “member of the scene” instead, possibly being precisely the artist or critic or activist herself, and the one quite aware of the problematic to be discussed well before entering the space, with her own already accepted interpretation of its complexity – for better or for worse.

This would mark the first “first” connected with this exhibition – it is, perhaps, the first Salon to admit, to canonize this contemporary situation of a vanishing public and addressing the scene instead; and the authors may agree or not with the observation that it is the first Salon exhibition to do this in a formal way, through its very programme, and especially through language.



Jasmina Cibic, Dictionary of Imaginary Places-p.746, May, Karl Friedrich
- 12.06.2006, 01:15, object, 2006, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

On 7 November, I was only the 21st to watch the allegedly controversial and polarizing debate held on 5 October. Months later, the number of views rose to 143, which is, I believe, hundreds or thousands of times less than the number of people who would have a strong opinion on the event. Perhaps the reason for this is that those genuinely interested in what was happening, be it a debate or the exhibition, were there as it was happening, and so have had no need to watch it again; and this probably supports the claim that the “general public” may have a secondhand opinion or two but no longer has any connection with these or similar kinds of events.

But Some People You Just Don't Know Until They Arrive And Say "Hi"

Two weeks before the exhibition, it was announced by a panel discussion held at Staro Sajmište (Old Fairgrounds), the site of a Nazi concentration camp from WWII – the event titled “Living Death Camp” aimed at drawing parallels between what happened there and what was happening during 90s at the time of the war in Bosnia, when Serbian forces held and executed numerous citizens of mainly Muslim population, today recognized as Bosniaks, in the camp known as Omarska. As to be expected, the connotations were strongly leading towards the notions of “war crime”, “genocide” and the like; [3] and, as to be expected, it experienced a strong opposition from the side of war veterans, survivors or just apologists from the “Serbian side”, who would rather see the Omarska camp outside of this comparison – often, it appears, they want to believe that what happened in Omarska was “provoked” and was a “defensive operation”. This is now a rather old (never “tired”, but old) debate, and one, it seems, that will only end when a common language is established to gauge the arguments – not unlike, but also not quite the same, as was the case in regard to the WWII debate.



Alexis O'Hara, Squeeeque - The Improbable Igloo, sound installation, 2009-2013, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

A perception of a “scandal” still remains, as the consequence of both the countless “echo chambers” of contemporary media as well as the disorientation caused by the new configuration: if “The Scene” replaced “The World”, then whatever is happening on the scene can easily produce the feeling that “the world is watching.”

[3] The problems of the language are today, maybe, among the most important tasks to solve in order to hope that events like critical public debates might affect their topic of observation, of critique. It seemed to be possible before, when the language was clear, when there was no ambivalence in this regard, and when the question, disturbingly present in some conversations of today, the one of whether the victims may have somehow provoked the horrors done to them under various Nazi regimes and are partly responsible themselves for was to follow, could not be – as it is not – a question. Today, the circle of violence will just spin around endlessly, and to whomever it is convenient at the moment it is possible to take a particular snapshot of a certain situation and say “clearly, they started it first”. This is the essence of any standpoint denying the horrors of Omarska, and it is a classic example of a false argument. Also, this is perhaps the place to pay attention to all of the difficulty from the feminist perspective; women are frequently the victims of the violence from those who are closest to them, and often, the violence is justified by the “snapshot of the spinning wheel” – so, as anybody “can see”, she was just “asking for it”. Such a circle of violence appears as almost a subject of some weird kind of physics, which requires a greater or equal violence for the wheel to be stopped. Feminism asks, “Can the wheel of violence be stopped without an act of violence being involved?”, and for a reason – why try jamming the wheel by breaking one's own arms and legs if the engine behind just needs to be shut down, once and for all? Couldn't we just think long and hard, talk as long as is necessary, and decide that it is over? There is always hope, as we could witness similar attempts being temporarily materialized before – not today, but before – and perhaps this is especially problematic. For such an idea to materialize, it is necessary that it

This, however, is not the occasion on which to enter into a deep discussion about whether this panel was really really well thought out and programmed (it appears perhaps not) or whether it had anything to do with the exhibition (certainly it had) – what is of interest to us here is that it was immediately, before it even unfolded, proclaimed as a “scandal” of a kind. Since I was traveling, I was not aware of the big fuss from its very beginning – but a week later, “certain circles” were still vibrating in debate filled with fierce comments and predictable opinions.

But it turned out to be a sort of a “fake scandal”, once again, at least judging by how many people felt the need to actually see what was happening there in videos that were immediately published on YouTube and at anybody's disposal – on 7 November, I was only the 21st to watch the allegedly controversial and polarizing debate held on 5 October. Months later, the number of views had risen to 143, which is, I believe, hundreds or thousands of times less than the number of people who would have a strong opinion on the event. True, right wingers had their own and much shorter video of the event, which is now at the 3,400 views mark, but all this can hardly be the evidence that a region of millions is being split in half over a much talked about event. Also, in the second week of November, I was the 12th visitor to watch the guided tour of the exhibition – and although the viewership of these materials does count in the few dozens now, there is no reason to believe that it will see a sudden surge in interest. Perhaps the reason for this is that those genuinely interested in what was happening, be it a debate or the exhibition, were there as it was happening, and so have had no need to watch it again, and, as said before, this probably supports the claim that the “general public” may have a secondhand opinion or two, but it no longer has any connection with these or similar kinds of events. As for the reasons outlined above – it is the domain of the corresponding scenes to now cater to the social debate or to the matters of art. A perception of a “scandal” still remains, as the consequence of both the countless “echo chambers” of contemporary media as well as the disorientation caused by the new configuration: if “The Scene” replaced “The World”, then whatever is happening on the scene can easily produce the feeling that “the world is watching.” [4]



View from an exhibition space where Adela Jušićs Ride The Recoil, photo and sound installation, 2013 was displayed, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi >>

will be conducted through the process that presupposes that the arguments are being formulated and thought over, discussed thoroughly, and finally decided upon. But, what to do with language, what language should be used to talk about violence today? [4] Just to avoid a possible misunderstanding, this certainly doesn't mean “that no one is watching”; in this new constellation, it is very likely that whoever is watching is somebody already known, or somebody of a certain “profile” that is already known. Compartmentalizing the world into “scenes” also meant a certain professionalization of issues that before were deemed to be of interest to all – for example, although problems about what happens with the food supply should raise the concerns of the entire population, it is “food activists” who are expected to notice the news and call for the appropriate reaction.

>> We need the images of suffering as the incentive to act now, and as a historical justification later; we need the images of celebration now in order to believe we have the future, and we need them later so we know what to do once we get there. Both kind of images always exist in one another as well – the celebration of life is the function of its improbability, but the hardship and loss are only measured as a deduction from the perceived whole. Does every critique always already contain a certain proposition, however vague it may be formulated, however complex its deduction may be? Admitting this entanglement, and getting back to *No One Belongs...*, it seems that there was a certain asymmetry in action there, and that the images depicting loss and hardship prevail; apparently, most of the authors believed that it was more important to point to all the suffering and violence of today.

“Living Death Camp”, also, announced the forthcoming exhibition as something it will, thankfully, be not – as some even larger and longer-lasting source of attention of right wing conservative activism and idle social violence. But probably one of the greatest successes of *No One Belongs Here More Than You* is precisely, perhaps partially but nevertheless there, a certain fulfillment of the promise from its very title – for whoever recognized themselves in these words, the possibility of just trying to be there, to try to be a part of a certain community or to just launch themselves into some sort of “imaginary” one, it was not ruined by fear that the place would without any warning turn into a kind of news report from the warzones of 90s. [5] One of the few things that seem to receive the unambiguous support these days is the agreement that it is more of a focus, and not less, what is necessary.

But let’s challenge this immediately – the title of the exhibition was also the source of some nice confusion and some interesting associations, so let’s lose the “focus” completely, and have some fun for a change in following my attempt to swich your attention to popular African songs.

Where’s “Here”?

Interestingly enough – and, I believe, this alone speaks volumes on some other phenomena to be discussed more about, preferably soon – it was not until the exhibition had already begun to unfold that I became aware that it had a title in the local language as well. For me, from the very start, it was *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, period, and this is how I “understood” it. Now, we can dissect this title in all its possible implications and meanings (and I believe that it would pass through a critical examination with considerably good marks), but at first I was quite confused when I learned that in the local language it was actually named *Niko ne pripada tu više nego ti*. See, instead of a tiny and fragile “tu” to mark the word “here”, I expected one

[5] This is, perhaps, somewhat cryptic without the reader being aware of the recent history of other exhibitions with similar topics and similar people involved that were the target of right-wing violence – in all of the incidents so far, the conservative attack managed, along with, in some cases, damaging the works or closing the exhibitions, to successfully divert all the attention to the violence itself and to the issues of their own, and not on the intended topics envisioned by the artists and authors. More about the atmosphere and circumstances of how an exhibition can turn into a war zone you can find, for example, in Lab For Culture: “The interruption of the exhibition ‘Exception: Contemporary Art Scene from Prishtina’ – Two eyewitness account” (<http://bit.ly/1pcJPsn>), or Red Thread Journal: “Exception – The case of the exhibition of Young Kosovo Artists in Serbia” (<http://bit.ly/1nEN6Wn>).

non-ambiguous and much more assertive word of “ovde”. The difference is significant – instead of “here”, this indecisive “tu” could also mean “there”, or a very vague “here somewhere”, and in this configuration – at least in the way I perceive the language – it sits right at the place where usually a more robust “ovde” is to be expected.

“From revolution back to waiting for Utopia”: this is how I can describe best what happened when “ovde” revealed itself as “tu” for me, and, of course, many would disagree; I inquired about this with curators, with, again, ambivalent results; one said that this distinction was not important (true, some speakers may not even “hear” the difference), and that it was left to translators to do their job, while the other said that a lot of attention was being paid to the translation of the title, that the certain ambivalence was being noticed and discussed, and that to use the “tu” was the final decision. By now, I don’t think it matters anymore – after the initial surprise, I also believe that “tu” was actually a much better solution, “determining the indeterminable”, that is, addressing the individual place of anybody who reads it, the place that no one could possibly know about but that person. “Tu” stands for where you are, wherever you are – this imperative of belonging is actually addressing, in a rather beautiful manner, the ambivalence of not actually being sure where exactly one belongs, and, depending on how much you like your current place of “belonging”, switches the sentiment of the title between the revolutionary imperative and sarcastic “true life” joke. It is, in a way, a rather slippery terrain, as it aims to the individual perception and reflexion of the current place of belonging and it’s “own history”, rather than to aim for a place with a common name, history and structure we can all agree to exist. But I like it more and more with “tu” involved, with this tiny unassertive microcosm of possibilities, especially the “bad”, the “sarcastic” ones, if for one “tu” appears to be a quite undesirable place to be.

This tiny little “tu”, for “here”, or “there – wherever you are”, is a curious place to think about; the closest description of what surfaces after a while is the word “khona”, which comes from Zulu, to which I came across through the music video of the same name by the South African band Mafikizolo & their guest singer Uhuru. The song definitely should improve your life, at least for a bit – so please do watch and listen to it, and best to do it now. [6] This text can wait. Video is here: youtu.be/yhk52GikhVA.

According to Prince Adewale Oreshade from Nigeria and his great and informative analysis of both the lyrics and the dance scenes in this video, [7] “khona” represents a kind of a place, and a kind of a call – a place that is described as the “afterlife”, or “the other side”, unreachable to the rest of us except through the form of a particular call to a particular person who went “there”. Apparently, from this side we can do nothing more, it seems, but to address it. It is not just any kind of call – it is a candid and persistent call to come back by those who do care and are willing to attend pursuing such “blind calling”, however silent each and every time the answer seems to be.

[6] Play here: <http://youtu.be/yhk52GikhVA>
[7] In his text “Lyrics of Khona by Mafikizolo Featuring Uhuru, and Its Literary Meaning – A Nigerian’s Perspective”, which can be found at <http://citrusmusiclive.com/?p=329>, Prince Adewale Oreshade of Nigeria writes: “Before one goes into their personal experiences, it is pertinent to understand or have an idea what Khona means. Khona means ‘there’ or ‘at that place’. So the song is more of a dialogue-type song. So for every persons mentioned in the song: Khona is a rhetorical call to them to ‘come back. So all of them that are ‘there’, at that ‘other side’ or ‘that place’ should come back. Its kind of a sad plea. Khona being an euphemism for death’s haides and cracks of a broken heart. Even Theo’s dance of throwing his arms and thighs in the forward and then backward direction portrays the come-back-Khona message.”



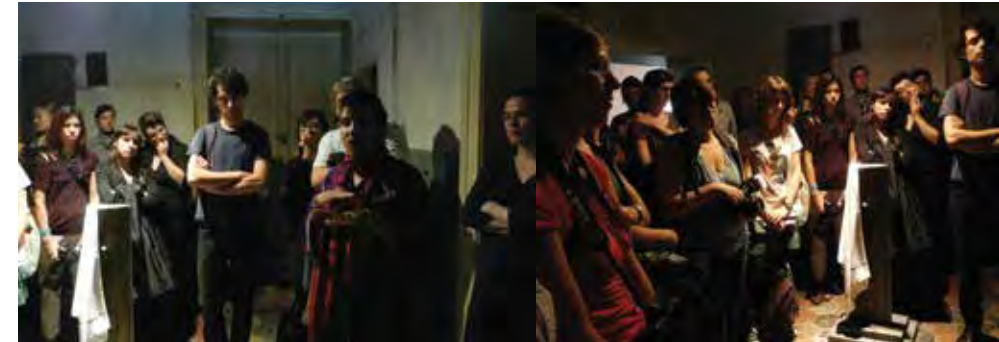
Ines Doujak, Loomshuttles Warpaths;
Haute Couture, 2010, installation, textile hand out,
photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

So the answer to where's "Here"?, in perhaps a slightly funny manner, remains to be beautifully unclear; however, from the context and "who speaks", it is clear that it is far from "just anywhere", and it would be hard to think of another title that describes this display and event with such similar precision and slightly satirical perspective.

Of course, such a call is not really "blind", since all the poses, carefully placed images and objects, especially the dance scenes, do follow a certain grammar and definitely do display all that we at the moment believe could be aestheticized about what a place and situation like "khona" might look like. However, the mystery there, as ever, refuses to reveal itself, it remains a mystery, and then such a call also becomes a kind of "empty call", one that is not empty of content or of an addressee, but is empty of a response. A response is not really expected, it seems; nevertheless, a call has to be reproduced over and over again until the response eventually happens. And from there, the beautiful sadness of khona, of the entire existence, emerges; we know that a response is not expected, but we have no choice but to continue calling – for if we stop, then we know that any response will never, ever, get back to us. So we continue calling in the most persistent manner possible, as if this response could be provoked, as if it is somehow contained in the call itself. Because somehow we just know it actually is. The situation of khona is not one death – death takes over only once the calling stops, when the side of "here" fades its voice and disappears from communication. It is maybe something like the ending of *The Sopranos* then [8] – we have simply stopped looking and can't be sure that anything exists past that point.

[8] In the much anticipated ending of the final episode of the popular series about the imaginary American mobster Tony Soprano, director David Chase decided to suddenly, during the subjective camera shot of the main character, indicate his death by a screen blackout, and without further explanation, to roll the credits of the show.

The literal meaning of the word, Oreshade explains as being this: "Khona being a euphemism for death's Hades and the cracks of a broken heart." Everybody has experienced the loss of somebody particular and something particular – or we know ourselves to be the ones whom somebody deems as being lost; both the people and things lost and those who have remained in their grief can inscribe all those particular bonds and experiences in this one word. That makes it almost revolutionary. Here, however, we digress too far; the point is that Khona is for the future, because of the past, and despite all the odds. The future still bares the potential of overcoming the shortcomings of the past – but only as long as we don't stop calling it aloud, singing it, dancing it out.



Artist talk by Tehal Shah during the exhibition
walk through with artists and curators of the exhibition and
Lorena Herrera Rashid, Untitled, 2013,
photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

It seems that, for some reason yet to get confirmed by hard science, we are bound to materialize every historical scenario we could ever possibly think of – so all the different futures may and probably will happen and will pretty much look exactly like all of the other predictions made today, the images that will serve as blueprints, as guidelines, as the "logic" of a given future to be. From Utopia to the Apocalypse, it appears that all the different seasons of a rather different series will be broadcasted once as reality shows. So projecting the image of the future as dim, full of hardship and struggle and of consequences is not necessarily untrue; and frequently, it tells a lot about the loneliness of the contemporary, too.

THE FUTURE OF THE PRESENT: FROM SOCIAL IMAGINATION TO POLITICAL ARTICULATION

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No One Belongs Here More Than You is taken from the eponymous book of stories written by Miranda July: [1] both intuitively and for a reason. For her characters, fantasy is vital for understanding and living everydayness, while her stories are full of affects and realities mirroring depressed, lonely, isolated people, mostly women or those who are labeled as a minority. They feel terrible frustrations and losses, while they face the failure of their own lives while trying to catch the turbulent drama of their dreams. As the poet Amy Gerstler would say: "While the connections and transformations her characters seek never quite work out, their inner landscapes are painfully, and amusingly, exposed. Notions about the outside world range from idiosyncratic to borderline crazy." [2] This inverted (non)human exposure of their/our contemporary subjectivities are being deeply appropriated by the logic of the contemporary capitalist, patriarchal global society from which their fictional and our real world of everyday life is made up. Fantasies and failures, too. They are fictional characters faced with our reality, speaking to all who are able to see beyond, to transgress the deception of such failure, to change their own dreams, their own imaginary world, their own everyday life stories.

No One Belongs Here More Than You is more than the title of the book and it is more than the title of the 54th October Salon. It is all-in-one: state and statement, invitation and provocation, an affirmative and subversive act that parodies and reveals and at the same time rebirths reality like the carnival seen by Bakhtin – as a moment when everything is permitted to happen on the border between art and life, in order to show the relative nature of all that exists by displays of excess and grotesqueness. [3] It's about everyone, it's about everyday life, it's about our reality. It is offered, like the concept of exhibition, to be (mis)read, (mis)understood, to be affected, but also to be re-worked and re-articulated through our social imagination towards possible futures and political struggles for the commons and communalities. Thinking about the (non) human nature in such a feminist context means to turn on lights of emotions, to make an *affective turn* [4] to the singular subjectivities that are collectively bound and outward-oriented by feminist sustainability or the struggle for the re-grounding of (non)humans in a materially embedded

[1] Miranda July, *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, Edinburgh: Canongate Books, 2005.

[2] Amy Gerstler on Miranda July's *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, 2007, [Last accessed: March 2014]

[3] Cf. Andrew Robinson about the Bakhtin theory seen as a tool for the politics of resistance and of social movement today: *In Theory Bakhtin: Carnival against Capital, Carnival against Power*. <http://ceasefiremagazine.co.uk/in-theory-bakhtin-2/> [Last accessed: March 2014]

[4] As stated by Patricia Ticineto Clough: the "affective turn" is an expression of "a new configuration of bodies, technology, and matter instigating a shift in thought in critical theory" brought on by transformations in the economic, political and cultural realms. Patricia Ticineto Clough & Jean O'Malley Halley (eds.), *The Affective Turn: Theorizing the Social*, Durham: Duke UP, 2007, p. 2.

sense of responsibility and ethical accountability for a society and environment like this, argues Rosi Braidotti. [5] This kind of sustainability implies equality and solidarity in which the politics of affects engages and revives social relations against human alienation produced by the vortex of power relations of the contemporary capitalist condition of everyday life as a permanent and only possible state of our social reality.

Such *affective turn* implies the need to resist the conventional oppositions between reason and emotion, and discourse and affect, the need to reconfigure "the political and ethical (mis) appropriations of emotions; the complex relation between power, subjectivity and emotion; the place of emotion, affect, sentiments and sentimentality within political and political theorizing; the affective dimension of the normative; the affective as a condition of possibility for subjectivity; and the emotive and affective investment in social norms as a constitutive mode of subjectivation." [6] Thus, it implies political articulation that has the power to change the social perception of community and to overcome affective limitations in constructing new forms of sociability and communality through anti-colonial, anti-nationalist, anti-racist, anti-fascist, anti-patriarchal and anti-capitalist principals of thinking, doing, knowing, feeling and, ultimately, living. Such a concept does not provide complete answers or final ideological solutions, but seeks through the histories of emancipatory politics such as feminism, socialism and communism for their meaning today, while it also (re)searches by what measures and means those emancipatory politics got appropriated by the system and society we live in today. It looks beyond and explores whether we can imagine an ideology that involves all those emancipatory politics, not through a repetition of historical feminist and leftist rhetoric and their perpetual negotiation, but by realizing what connects the ideas of those politics and movements today. The affective turn, or rather the politics of affects, makes possible the social imagination of impossible demands that are perhaps utopian yet worthy of the united (non)human struggle. [7] It enables us to think contemporary (non)human nature through (re)articulated social paradigms of that sustainable community which will change the omnipresent post- into pre-social and anti-into ante-political ways of imagining the world to which we belong. Such political articulation is a structural rupture, which provides us with new ways of thinking about belonging and about a basic social construction of work and life, a rupture powerful enough to interpellate us, as political subjects, into our common *history of the present* in order to move towards a possible equal and emancipated future on this globe. In the last instance, this is the place where we all belong equally.

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[5] Cf. Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006, p. 136.

[6] Athena Athanasiou et al., "Towards a New Epistemology: The 'Affective Turn'", In *Historein*, No 8, 2008, p. 5.

[7] Maybe, it is important to add to this, that just such a struggle or revolution could come only from the future. Following the new epistemology of such the affective turn, Jasmina Husanović says, quoting Marx, how these interventions, or such affective turn, should be understood not as "the poetry from the past but only from the future" (Marx 1852). She further explains how those affective interventions are: "luminous and arduous rebellions that open up space for new collectivities... It is about virtuosity and revolution, where the precariat as *Arbeitskraft*, a bare life as labor, become as well a space for an emancipatory turn – of the subjects that stand up against the exploitation of the future." Jasmina Husanović, "Feminističke ekskurzije, transfezalnosti, traverzije: o punoljetnim iskustvima solidarnosti i zajedništva u proizvodnji znanja i emancipativnoj politici", In Jelena Petrović & Damir Arsenijević (eds.), *Feminizam politika jednakosti za sve*, Belgrade: ProFemina, 2011, p. 47–56.

Following the red thread of this idea, we imagined the exhibition named *No One Belongs Here More Than You* and curated it using an experimental feminist methodology, fully aware that feminism and feminist history are not homogenous or linear. Feminism is about the politics of everyday life, it is about doing and living, and it is at the same time about (re)articulating the question *What does feminism mean?* in a time of contemporary global capitalism in a still patriarchal society. The financial crisis and poverty, continuous processes of privatization and neo-colonization (producing new peripheries/minorities through the managing mechanisms of the multiculturalism and the politics of identity) affect it, by structural violence and permanent war(s)... The politics of affects, appearing here, is a force of existence and at the same time an emancipatory field of transformation of the collective “body”, socially accumulated in desire, love, habit, memory, and different kinds of emotions and thinking. It reveals and acts at the different layers of social reality. Our intention was to politically articulate the social imagination and translate it into a sustainable social concept as an open space for an interaction with artists, their works, individuals and collectives, public. Everyone was invited to be there and articulate too loudly one’s own and our own positions, feelings and uncertainty, to discuss and (re)work exposed and exhibited subjects.

No One Belongs Here More Than You departed from the concept of (non)human nature by trying to grasp what defines a social space as human or non-human. It displayed and implied various perspectives from ecological, techno-cultural and political contents to what human nature means on the individual and collective levels – what our relationships are towards the idea of togetherness under affective, material or political conditions of everyday life in the process of constructing and actualising the possible social future. It explored: the politics of the individual and the collective (non)work realities and imaginaries in our lives; the politics of emotions, stereotyping, violence; positions and positioning of women(’s bodies) in social movements, a possible revolution and the state of permanent war we are living in, and the feminist critique of the art system and its hyper production, flexibilisation of work and its precarisation. But what is important to emphasize here is that: the feminist sociality within this exhibition wasn’t only about producing displays or being active in public discussions or appearing at the exhibition events. It was also about transgressing and even eliminating the opposing binaries of private and public, official and unofficial, sublime and trivial... of main, *exhibitional*, and following, less important, *social*. It was about making feminist friendships, by dancing and laughing, and by being together on the border between life and art.



Lala Rašćić, *Travel In a Box*, performance, 2009-2013,
photo by Duško Jelen

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rACHEL o'REILLY

ON JULY-STYLE, OR, TO WHOM
DOES THE (ART) WORLD BELONG? [1]

The exhibition provokes... through the eccentric, diagrammatic depth of what it curates together, the affective notation of an awareness: that “Feminism,” despite being declared of age again, in time with the “Contemporary”, has been assumed to be a moniker of *archaic form* for most of this period of recent art, regardless of where You have been. The foundational underpinnings of this misalignment is diagrammed quite explicitly, through works that delve into materials directly associated with our present neoliberal, eco-disastrous situation, and connect such research up to art historical provocations (especially on 20th century abstraction) alongside flagrant speculations on the disembodied sign of woman.

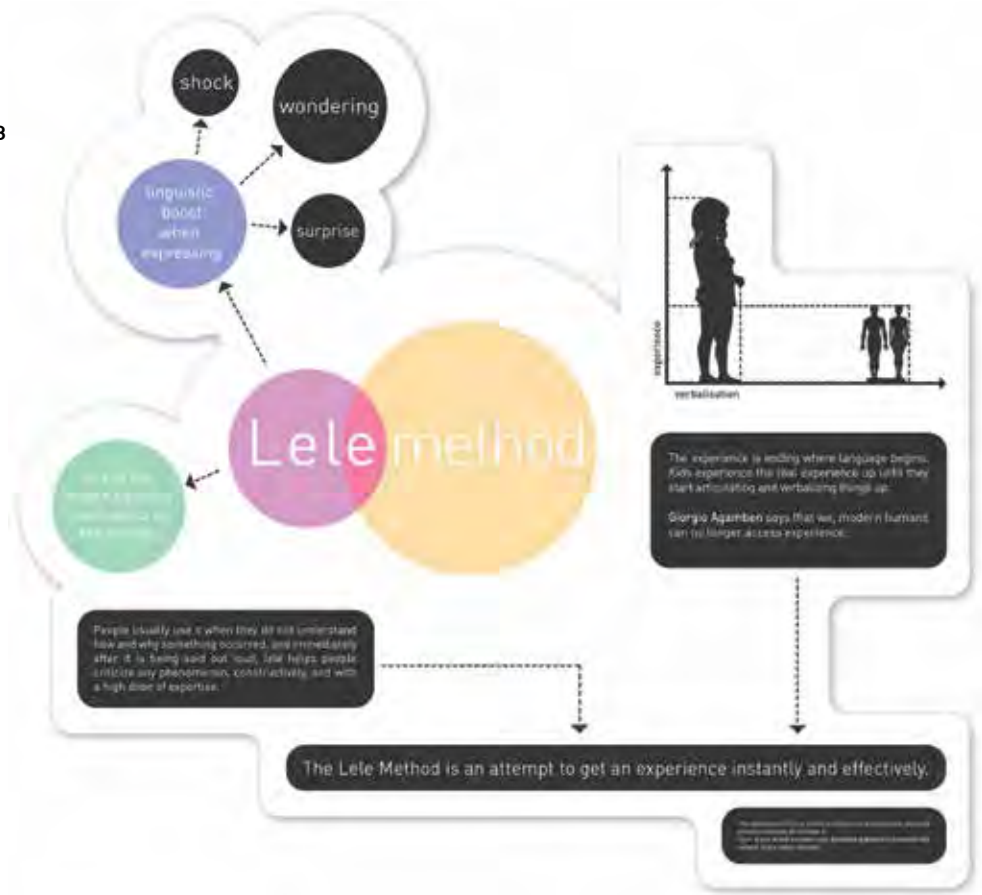
“You” were a late visitor to the exhibition’s converted department store venue. Your resistance to signifier-kitsch has you immediately averting your gaze from red dresses. But despite a colleague’s complaints about the apparent “lack” of abstraction here, you later realize that this is actually one of the *few* figurative motifs of “feminine” materiality that recurs. In its first appearance, the red dress hangs suspended, **extimate**, [2] minus its internal/essential F protagonist, between the warm glow of chandeliers and a string of white balloons. Empty but promising, it is a kind of generic placeholder, for some kind of female-subjected eros. What does it mean for a spectator to be *red-min(e)d* towards sexed affect in *this way*? Is there a different embodiment made possible by our taking up of *this* contemporary art?

[1] Adaptation of the title of Margaret Kern’s work in the exhibition, *To Whom Does the World Belong?*

[2] Extimacy is the recognition that the inside can be pure outside, and the so-called most “personal” an extreme registration of the external. It is not, then, contrary to intimacy but a more structural comprehension of such. Lacan’s concept and neologism, extimacy, according to Jacques-Alain Miller, connotes that “the intimate is Other – like a foreign body, a parasite...” Further than this, “the extimacy of the Other is tied to the vacillation of the subject’s identity to himself,” or inversely “the circle of the subject contains as the most intimate of its intimacy the extimacy of the Other. [...] This is what Lacan is commenting on when he speaks of the unconscious as discourse of the Other, of this Other who, more intimate than my intimacy, stirs me. And this intimate which is radically Other, Lacan expressed with a single word: extimacy.” He diagrams extimacy like so:
Taken from: Jacques-Alain Miller, “Extimacy, The Symptom 9”, In *The Life of Jacques Lacan*, 2008. <http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?p=36> [Last accessed: June 2014]
In other words, the personal is not necessarily the autobiographical; it is often the “general”, the monadic articulation of a perceived in-common.



Jelena Sokić, Room of Obsession, oil on canvas,
2012, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi



Ephemerki, The Lele Method, performance, 2013

The artwork-signage “The Lele Method” by Ephemerki (Skopje) plays a double role of pointing to the exhibition’s own investment in the ambi-valent potential of affect for the political:

“[The] word [Lele] sometimes depicts the shortly shaken numbness and the apathy of our current socio-political constellations, but only with a shout, and then again – everything goes on as usual... Lele is one of the most frequently used words in Macedonia... people usually use it when they do not understand how and why something occurred, and immediately after it is being said out loud, Lele helps people criticize any phenomenon, constructively, and with a high dose of expertise. Try it. If you do not succeed, your libidoless academism automatically returns to you within minutes.”

This “sign” points to the exhibition’s own proposal – to turn your most passionate attachments and ambivalent identifications into external movements (again). You pirouette around the vehemence that emerges in proximity to an apparent re-valuation, especially of figurative painting; you watch *these* paintings *make-sense* somehow, more sense(?), in *this* space. You are relieved that there is no “archive”-teaching, no nostalgic referencing to, or re-firings of, 70s feminist cannons, whether resurrected from here or imported from elsewhere. So relieved! It is these curious, vacillating affectations in the absence of didactic materials that do so well to refrain from *cohering* “the project” for You, as a package of supposedly abstract-enough women’s lives.

You meet a Good Phallo, an art world phallo, outside who wants to talk about this, the exhibition’s “lack” of a discourse, its investment in “emotion”. This is maybe number four for you now. You tell him the frame is easily routed just by diagramming in the opposite way, from oh-so-accessible anxieties, urgencies, outrages, hopes, the intricate forms of such – back to the objects, contexts, contents to which they apply, the constellation of overhanging discourses that you know already. The exhibition presents itself thus, You say; it unfolds what You could soon know about it.

The show’s radical under-investment in didactic publicities is this purposive refusal to case-make contemporaneity along the lines of a hyper-rationalized leftist investment in transformation-by-information. Indeed, it is always a curious thing when Good Phallos, whether autonomy freaks or market savvies, are so ready to do away with the tactility, and affective potentia of commodities, no? [3] The exhibition assumes that this different reign of the phatic informatic, over and above the phallic “line” of rationalistic exhibition argumentation, might prompt a visitor to follow up on a partial, intersectional doubting *towards* a contemporary Feminist exhibitionary drive. By aiming this way, it genuinely asks the question of what that might *feel* like, and *why*.

Exhibition as Extimacy Machine?

Amidst neoliberal enterprise, Feminism re-privatized as conscience neo-feminine consumption and a behind-the-scenes strategy. As a politics, it risked being convinced of an achieved redundancy or was otherwise not expected to be named. This was partly because democracy exported and installed as lady liberty, promising only market saturation and communion with advanced things.

[3] My preferred reference for the “commodity” is, Arjun Appadurai (ed.), *The Social Life of Things: Commodities in Cultural Perspective*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Feminist Art Worldings in this period, because they stage intimate publics [4] of singular-progressive commodity relations, too – don’t, can’t always coherently bargain with art power or political power, aesthetic or revolutionary desire. To succeed in their function as art for/from a political valuing of woman-born things – as a project that holds open a space of belonging for a certain range of identifications and practices – can be to fail at other kinds of coherence. But let us not judge *ambi*-valences in advance for just *this* reason. Who in artlife *can’t* appreciate a (post-) feminist wave when it arises, an exceptional interruption, that comes on like groundswells or the radio, that performs so strongly, so obdurately, against cannon forgers and so many banally aspirational non-contradictory minimalist objects?

Berlant would say intimate publics captured by the exhibition’s call *No One Belongs Here More Than You* keep political optimism “tuned up”, if not worked through, to the side of actual political processes, including in the absence of real material transformations. These intimate publics dialogue with what Deleuze and Guattari understand as the strategies and lure of “minor” arts and literature. For Berlant, their specificity as intimate publics comes especially through their role in materializing shared scenes, stories and tactics for minoritarian surviving when not thriving is ordinary amidst political impasses, which she calls “surviving as an X”.

The extimacy of the intimate public enables the rethinking of the conscientious *value form* of feminist exhibition, precisely *vis-à-vis* these ambi-valences. In their frissioning of artistic and political-imaginative labour, virtualizing art-attachments enable orientations towards what matters to be sensed there, without demanding significant psychic or material investments or losses from *You*. This processing of *virtual* solidarities around cross-border rights status, videographed virtual speech acts, cultural legacies of violence, as an aesthetic heralding of women’s universal *credit/credibility* beyond national-patriarchal-ethnic lines that play a role in annihilating female subjectivities while creating conditions for their protection otherwise, frames the exhibition as a kind of politics that offers *relief* from the political in this way. This does not make it weak, but instead an explicitly *aesthetic* solidarity around survival through the collectivizing technology of exhibition-making. As a machine of extimated correspondences, the exhibition is no less intense for being this placeholder for the political, this re-shuffling of the imaginary, art.

Abstraction for Good Phallos

Abstraction was never just a refrain or pulling away from (this kind of) specificity, it has also been key to laying out and breaking up material towards keener attentive grapplings, patternings. You meet up, perennially, with the Good Phallo who, proximate to such intimate publics, feels out the borderline of a Feminist edge of thought, without ever having done the work of grappling

[4] I take the notion of “intimate publics” and their ambi-valent achievements from Lauren Berlant’s writing on the commodity-saturated public spheres of non-dominate classes in the United States. For Berlant, intimate publics (her major case study being the hundred year-old US women’s culture, the first mass-mediated subculture in the United States) enable swift scenes of affective recognition, virtual reciprocity and belonging among only virtually and vaguely collectivized groups. Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2008.

with feminist texts or peoples, let alone groups. The historical materialist that enters this field invokes this same certain re-pulsing of what Eve Sedgwick called the privilege of unknowing, [5] that can bracket off what is inconvenient about the insistence of other-sexual attachments in desire and in history. A feminist project may not mind being experienced as this conjured vague space of potential for attachment, but it would ask the Good Phallo to at least take his impersonality personally – to not be off put or put at ease by scenes that, despite their apparent accessibility otherwise, do not quite offer up a beatific experience of being already *on that side of her contemporary art*. Try being with that.

With the general feminization/pauperization of everyone’s economy, its not just Good Phallos’ but many ones’/“everyone’s” fantasies of an eviscerated “good life” that fall further away from the complex-erotic, back onto a crypto-chauvinist political economy. More and more, You notice your spectatorship calls for a supplementary rationality that could read *your own* subjective response to back to *the self*, authoritatively. But this is what precarity is. This call for a coherently dry and distant text that is *less affective* than the exhibited one, by which the Good Phallo means a less personally discomforting aesthetic *situation*, is the rejection of the event/fulness, knowledge-objects and iterative processes that are installed as the chosen forms of communication’s *work*.

When *No One Belongs Here More Than You* [Nothing Belongs Here More Than What?] points (in)directly to the politics of experience, it says *directly* that experience is *irreducible*, and it means that. It means You cannot even up or level out these things, across the aporetic divide, through a more officiously respectful *accounting*. Labour fetishization has never solved the simplified problem of equality; abstracted work-sympathy and worker-defense does not enable the smoothing over of this difference.

But why can’t that great breach between the (art)work’s aesthetic labour and the non-aligned viewer be seen as part of the (art)work’s fantastic, still-accessible “difficulty” – when it could be?

Everyone’s Contemporaneity

Andrea Fraser recently revisited the intellectual trajectory of her theorizations of institutional critique, concerned with questions that concern You, too, of how contemporary artistic practice can bolster the autonomy of other precarious world-building practices and fields in and beyond art. [6] In her view, when You defend the autonomy of arts/artisthood, You often risk engaging in an increasingly base or empty defense of “criticality as such”. Understanding autonomy via Bourdieu as “negation in a Freudian sense”, she likened her own psychic investment in the autonomy of art, performed as institutional critique/critique of institutions, to infantile imaginations of omnipotence, unconscious fantasies of agency, which – and here is where the analysis becomes interesting – plays out as a denial that involves nevertheless a partial *lifting* of a repression:

[5] Eve, Sedgwick Kosofsky, “Privilege of Unknowing,” In *Genders 1*, Spring, 1988, p. 102–24.

[6] Andrea Fraser, “Autonomy and Its Contradictions,” In *OPEN*, 23, Autonomy, 2012. http://www.skor.nl/_files/Files/OPEN23-EN%20P106-115.pdf [Last accessed: April 2014]

“Something has been admitted to consciousness as an idea, if only negatively – that was once rejected, dismissed.... what is at issue is inside and outside: whether the idea or affect is owned and accepted or whether it is split off, expelled, projected or otherwise disowned, often, in a sense, by locating it outside of the boundaries of the self, which is also thus constituted in some sense by way of these boundaries, as autonomous and perhaps we could even say as an autonomous field.” [7]

To aim at a critical proximity [Feminism – Contemporary] is to acknowledge the potential for a 2nd act in the drama of processing here, that allows for recognition and reintegration of displaced and outfaced knowing. The real question “is not whether autonomy is childish fantasy, but whether constructions are defensive in function, that ward off conflict, disown conflict, only to reproduce conflicts on some other level – as contradictions – by keeping them protected from potentially transformative engagements.” [8]

You face up, again, to critical art practitioners’ “longing for the political” [9] as one that so often gets shut off in part or totally by an extreme-ordinary negation of women’s subjectivity and lives. That responds to exhibition-making and curatorial labour in ways that do not strengthen the realities of women’s lives and work *there and right here*. A more systemic analysis would promise affective solidarity as *coevalness* between those subjected to and oppressed by intersections of What. Artistic autonomy constructions that systematically place the interests of 50% of the population and all differently raced folk, into spaces (if not so much, anymore, times) that are outside art’s working-through of critical contemporaneity, fall flat Now. **But, anyway**, it is this recognition of asymmetry in the dialogic relationship that is *constitutive* of feminist relationality. The asymmetrical condition can be shared because of, through, feminists’ developed practical and theoretical heritages of knowledges.

The Feminist Exhibition does not, cannot, could not have gotten away with hailing the spectator like Althusser’s cop. But nor does it turn back around to face its critic on the same street, who wants to shut off its loose potentia with a return serving: “Hey you there (Why so de-disciplined)?” It feels instead towards your fragile purchase on *this* otherwise. The paint of Your white cube broke here into filmic spectatorial space, and splattered onto the cops [*To Whom Does the World Belong?*]. Art breaks up over and *into* the aesthetics of political life, and that might be what You, we all, are afraid of. She was dragged in the street there by her hair like an animal, and You joined her there fantastically, for a moment.

[7] Ibid.
[8] Ibid.
[9] Berlant unpacks the complexity of this concept across her national sentimentality trilogy, of which The Female Complaint... (ibid.) is one third. But see also Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2011.

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SONJA LAU

NO ONE BELONGS HERE (OR: FEMINISM IS NOT AN ISLAND OF FELICITY)

One can hardly imagine a more boring novel, and it is sad to see children still read it today.

Gilles Deleuze on *Robinson Crusoe*

In a letter to Goran Đorđević, mailed from New York at the end of the 1970s, Carl Andre points at a curious paradox, which would provide the basis for his refusal to join Đorđević's call for an *International Strike of Artists*. [1] Quoting President Richard Nixon, who allegedly warned his daughter to visit art galleries and museums as those were frequented by "Jews and homosexuals", Andre shows little belief, at least concerning the American environment of his time, that such a proposed action could reach out to the authorities in power or have a benefit for the artistic scene. As a matter of fact, the artist, by going back to Nixon's conspicuously deluded argument, claims to find no trace of a problematic antagonism between the arts and its outer sphere at all that would urgently need to be addressed. On the contrary, he tackles the problem in the radical indifference towards and overt dismissal of the arts, concluding that the suggested art strike would risk impairing nothing but the scene itself. In doing so, he invokes, somewhat accidentally, a notion of the arts as a naturally isolated, sealed-off place: "an island-state of the arts".

Certainly, to Andre, as to many artists of his generation, this art-island, albeit presented with a certain victimization, is not merely a dystopic place. On the contrary, it is through this image, back then, and by keeping its mode of separation intact, that both a critique of the American ruling order and his ultimate artistic interest – the autonomy of arts – can be expressed.

Although Andre's brief note to Đorđević might only disclose one small partition of his actual positioning towards the *International Strike of Artists* (the artist had been previously involved in the *New York Art Strike*) and despite the letter's palpable caricatural overtone, the notion of the arts as a separated space – an "island" – both in its dystopic and utopic renderings – seems to have lost little of its problematic up to today. Already Alfred H. Barr, founder of the Museum of Modern Art as well as occasionally an author and held responsible for early experimentations with the format of the White Cube, gives proof of this supposed analogy in terms of their shared codex of separation. To him, the deliberately produced lack of societal factors and the

[1] Found thanks to the article "The Strike of Art Production" by Jelena Vesić, published in the catalogue *Prelom Kolektiv* (ed.), SKC and Political Practices of Art, Belgrade: Prelom Kolektiv and Skuc Gallery, 2008.

exclusion of any contextual indicators by means of museal whiteness and void, pioneered a sense of "freedom" – a differently different art that would be developed and perceived without any possible recursion to already established belief systems. Barr's museum is the expression of a utopia, an island-state in its ideal constitution: potent with the ability to create content without context. "Dreaming of islands," writes Gilles Deleuze "is dreaming of pulling away, of being already separate, (...) or, it is dreaming of starting from scratch, recreating, beginning anew." [2] Borrowing from both of those movements, Barr seems to call for an artistic production that is deeply indebted to the "dream of the deserted island", a project that as it reaches out to such mythological *utopos*, is bound to fail. It comes to no surprise that a few decades later, artist and critic Brian O'Doherty sets out to rephrase Barr's curatorial utopia as a rigid, and somewhat mechanical ideology: "The outside world must not come in, so windows are usually sealed off." [3] Tangibly letting the dream of seclusion slip into a fiasco of mere exclusion; transfiguring the dream of new beginnings into canonical machinery, his critique proves to have a striking relevance up to today, even well beyond the White Cube. It thus seems that the historical and conflicting relationship between the "island-dream" – the quasi-mythological striving for a new beginning – and the arts, as conjured by this essay, allows for a second glimpse at contemporary modes of production and their specific entanglement, or, appropriation of those not quite utopic grounds, that once urged to "swim in the white free abyss". [4]

The fact that this year's October Salon features nothing less than the depiction of three lonely palm trees adorning an idyllic beach scene – an image that, albeit not directly representing the "dream of the island", palpably calls up a consistent longing for it – does in this context not only puzzle due to its immediate effect of "de-locating" the exhibition from its urban surroundings. Camouflaging the entire facade of the "too familiar" venue – a former department store in the centre of Belgrade – the depicted scene imposes a form of subtraction onto the prominent architecture. By means of what resembles a strategy of counter-specificity, the common and ordinary qualities of the building gradually move out of sight, disguising it into a place of the unknown, that is, cut loose from its "contextual bends".

More important, however, is that the idyllic scenery also serves as a distinct "demarcation line" between the inside and the outside of the exhibition, that masks the surface of the building whilst emphasizing its constitutive role as a "foreground". In order to see the exhibition, one has to cross this "image-threshold", walking right through the picture akin to a quote held firmly between its marks. Inside the space, as if attempting a literal and perhaps ironic juxtaposition of the island-dream and the art-island, an exhibition design that could be read as a loose quotation of the historical ideology of whiteness, reduced captions, artworks that are given "space to breathe". A quote finally also the title of the exhibition *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, borrowed from Miranda July – from a different work deriving from a different context. Lost in quotations, one wonders if this place in question, this safely sealed environment is actually "filled" by references, or entirely "deserted".

[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, 1953–1974, Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2004.
[3] Brian O'Doherty, *Inside the White Cube. The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, Culver City & San Francisco: Lapis Press, San Francisco & First University of California Press edition, 1976.
[4] Kasimir, Malevich, "Non-Objective Art and Suprematism", In *Art in Theorie, 1900–2000: An Anthology of Changing Ideas*, Hoboken: Blackwell Publishing, 2003.

Three palm trees, one may say, do not make a deserted island. Especially not, as a closer glimpse at the poster reveals, if the depicted scene unmask itself as already populated, already “spoiled” scenery. Blurry dots in the background disclose themselves as distant human figures, other elements of the picture only reinforce the growing doubt in the apparent idyll (the thin lines in the background: volleyball nets, signs of a border?). [5] Yet, the “island” that presents itself here is not merely an object of representation. Necessarily bound to the imaginary, as Deleuze continues, the dream of the island does not manifest itself by dwelling on such territory. There is no unity between the island and its inhabitants, but a prolonged drifting towards it, like “the idea of looking behind a curtain when one is not behind it.”

The ultimate fantasy would be to write about a fantasy because as soon as you realize it's a fantasy, it changes. But where does it go? What happens to it? [6]

Prologue of Michael Taussig's *The Beach*. (A fantasy).

Certainly, the depicted beach scene – a place of all places – is not “here”, but somewhere “there”. It may not exist at all – as a matter of fact, as the image is so tightly framed and the gaze bound towards the water only, its contemplation rather recalls the view through a peephole, for which the “background” is always blacked out, and the viewer's presence remains safely hidden. It is affective and sensual, as much as it remains ultimately “flat”, a mere support structure for the exhibition's title printed on top, thus, a background (or: “curtain”) in itself. To speak about the island in the context of this year's October Salon, then, is neither to speak about the seduction of an image, or the way it simulates such modes of drifting, “re-enacting” one could say the island's contingency as a sealed-off space from where to create “anew”. Nor is it to speak about the mere inversion of it, about strategies of unmasking the island as spoiled; an image of flatness (or, art historically speaking, of canonical machinery). Instead, and deliberately dithering between those two positions, the exhibition presents itself as a place “that is not yet decided”, thus scratching on the memory of the island by its shared potentiality to produce “voids” generated by an excess of uncertainties – between foregrounds and backgrounds, statements or quotes, actions or indulgence, invitation or expulsion.

Clearly, and unlike what the title may promise, *No One Belongs Here More Than You* is not a place awaiting for its next social, political or discursive annexation. Feminism, in the end, is not an island of felicity. Walking through the exhibition, I am once again reminded of a last phrase of Deleuze's essay: “Ocean and water embody a principle of segregation such that, on sacred islands, exclusively female communities can come to be, such as on the island of Circe or Calypso.” [7] As I pass by the artworks, I feel neither like a member of this wondrous community, nor like an accidental castaway who comes to spoil the potentiality of the island, but as someone who passes through “curtain” after “curtain”, continuously impeded from anticipating or pre-name the next encounter.

[5] Besides, can the imaginary potentiality of the island actually be “spoiled”? Is it not the dwelling or the attempted conquest, any faulty and porous appropriation of it, as recounted in the uncanny tale of Robinson Crusoe and the like, which makes the “desertedness” of the island, and thus its potential of new beginnings, even more complete?

[6] Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts*, 1953–1974, Los Angeles: Semiotexte, 2004.

[7] Ibid.

Admittedly, while unable to entirely divest myself from any sense of categorization, I still notice a distinct absence: interestingly, no sign of abstraction – the common feature for most collections’ “completeness” and the crucial materialization of the White Cube's ideology – can be found. At last, to review the arts through the lense of the island dream is a curious thing. It allows one to imagine her or his very own history as a completely different one, potentially.



Saša Kerkoš, concept for overall visual identity
of the 54th October Salon, photo by Saša Kerkoš, 2013

Jelena Vesić is an independent curator, cultural activist, author, editor, and lecturer; she lives and works both in Belgrade and abroad. She co-edited the *Prelom* Journal for Images and Politics, published in Belgrade between 2001 and 2009, and co-founded the Prelom Collective, active in Belgrade from 2005 to 2011. Jelena was one of the founders of the Other Scene network of independent organizations established in 2005/6 in Belgrade. She has co-edited *Red Thread*, a journal of social theory, contemporary art, and activism, and since 2009 serves on the editorial board of *ARTMargins*, an art and theory magazine (published by MIT Press). Her areas of interest focus on the politics of representation in art and visual culture, practices of self-organization and the politicization of cultural work. In her curatorial practice she frequently experiments with various formats, methodologies, and contextual and collaborative aspects of art.

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Exhibition as Scripted Space: Modes of Production and Production of Modes, Curatorial School led by Jelena Vesić, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

Summer 2013, email text Jelena Vesić to Red Min(e)d:

... I am thinking frequently of the different variations on the catalogue form of the ‘-ennial’ exhibitions. It seems to me that in nearly all cases, one form (with slight variations) is being repeated and perpetuated – this the form that is indexing, enumerating, representing participation, and referencing. This is the form that (most often) results in publications with a recognizable tripartite structure, incorporating: 1. *Overview of the curatorial idea* (curators’ text and referential theoretical articles); 2. *Art pages* (photographs and descriptions of artworks); and 3. *Administrative pages* (biographies, lists of participants, venues, events, credits, sponsors, etc.). They are usually executed as a reader, a thematic publication, or a catalogue *proper*.

In the case of the *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition, and with reference to the *Living Archive* project, it might be interesting to emphasize the model of the collective, the

processual, the discursive, the relational, the common, and so on... In other words, it might be productive to move towards the sort of project book that would serve as a notebook or bulletin of the exhibition, linked as such forms are more to the dramaturgy of the event, the exhibition display as a field of positions and potential position-taking, etc... So, a form that would be built as a ‘montage of fragments’ rather than ‘stable narrativisations’ and an ‘organised layering’ of sections and chapters... all in order to avoid the form of administering, indexing, enumerating, and the like...

Jelena Vesić

Introductory Session Of The Living Archive 2013
Curatorial School:

EXHIBITION AS SCRIPTED SPACE: THE MODES OF PRODUCTION AND THE PRODUCTION OF MODES

(Edited transcript of the introductory lecture held
on 10 October 2013)

Hello everyone,

As we gather here today finally in Belgrade, let me summarize a few initial propositions of the *Living Archive Curatorial School*. First of all, we have all responded to this particular invitation to engage in an analytical, affirmative, and critical discussion of the social processes, concepts, and artistic politics of the *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition, together with the Red Min(e)d curatorial group. Secondly, the idea is to engage in a collective process and to produce a kind of note about the exhibition in the form of critical essays or ‘scripts’. This process will last for six days here in Belgrade, and extend further into other formats. The *note* that we will work on should comprise of our essayistic approaches and comments, focusing on the central themes of this year’s October Salon, including but not limited to the politics of space and belonging in the context of our contemporary, nomadic existential experience (with reference to Rosi Braidotti), also in terms of our rethinking of collective practices and ways of living from the perspective of feminist affirmative politics (with reference to Silvia Federici), among others. I would also like to add to our debates some ‘perennial issues’ such as the feminist intervention into art history or feminist critique of the artistic or curatorial canon, as the exhibition *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, in all its modes of communication towards publics, emphasizes the concept of *feminist* as a (political) signifier or prefix. Furthermore, I feel it is not less important to discuss the means or modes by which these themes and issues are being situated in the exhibition space. Or in other words, the very fact that they are being realized and addressed through the form and the format of exhibition itself, which subsequently raises questions about *modes of production* – in this particular case, the production of knowledge, of the aesthetic, of sociability.

Even at first glance, the initial thematic focus of the *Living Archive School* may appear as an extensive field of topics – a broad framework that keeps slipping off any structurally consistent body. However, the school’s method of operation is directly opposite to the unidirectional model

of knowledge transfer, i.e. the teaching and learning model. It is a non-hierarchical discussion format, and, at this point, I am merely hinting at some possible issues to be considered... I am sketching the territory we are moving across.

'The scripted space of the exhibition' (as I have proposed this concept in the invitation for the School) emerges out of its *public moment*. This is the space that is being created through communication and socialization, sometimes through collective action and through various forms of sociability. This is also the terrain of events that intersects the fields of the proclaimed and the contingent, the nominal and the actual, the discursive, the sensible and the everyday. The scripted space is the space of the stage, but also the space of everyday life; or rather, it is the intersection of the two, the result of the organization of the production of artistic contents.

One of ideas that I discussed with the Red Min(e)d curatorial collective at the initial stage of the exhibition project *No One Belongs Here More Than You* was that the School plays the role of a 'communicating vessel' between the exhibition and the catalogue, along with the other discussion platforms such as archives, workshops and collective walk-throughs of the exhibition space etc. Therefore, the production of the catalogue begins simultaneously with the process of installation and becomes a space of confluence where discussion materials generate through the exhibition's emergence into public space. This process of simultaneous reflection and materialization also evokes a salient thesis on curatorship as *bidirectional translation* - from theory to practice and vice versa - as articulated by the cultural theorist and curator Suzana Milevska at the summer school *Curatorial Translation* held in Skopje, Macedonia in 2007.

Over the next couple of days, we will be meeting not in a fixed, static location, but instead in, with and beyond the exhibition space itself, and in dialogue with artists, curators, activists, specialists, technical and managerial staff of the October Salon, and the public. As we have already discussed (both individually and in groups), this discussion process should be a sort of *live editing* - a montage and questioning of concepts, mutual critique and engagement with processual inscriptions and erasures, all of which will take place here in real-time.

What I am proposing here is different type of editing, which differs from the standard institutional and professionalist editorial engagement in the post-production of the text, but instead deals with the production of the text in a completely different manner (one that favors fieldwork and a collectivist approach, as opposed to individual insight into the on-screen document within the office space)... As we have discussed before, our contribution to this exhibition and our relation to it should through this process result in a form of essayistic writing that I previously referred to as 'the script'. Of course, it need not necessarily bear resemblance to the academic or journalistic canon of essay stylistics; it may move in different directions and with respect to the many varied genres of essayism that each one of us have practiced in our previous work in some way. The basic idea is that this 'script' should replace what is, within the genre of exhibition publications, usually referred to as the *catalogue pages* or *art pages* - the pages in which the art is bureaucratized and administered in the 'salon's' manner; we can even say, the pages where art representation becomes a mimesis of the modes of registration, enumeration, standardization, form-filling and other different neo-liberal strategies of control and surveillance.

Since we are opening up the process of exhibition production towards the public (at this moment towards our micro-public, as the exhibition officially opens in a couple of days from now), that

is, since we are speaking about the 'foreground' and the 'background' of this concrete event, it may be useful to address the 'background' idea of the school as well. This is a new initiative, a platform for curatorial education that begins with this exhibition and that will in all likelihood continue in other contexts. The idea that I proposed to the curators of the Red Min(e)d for this occasion was that we should not rest on a concept of the traditional curatorial school where the participants are expected to produce exhibition at the end, but instead stress the simultaneity of exhibiting, educating, and critical writing.

I have suggested that, in an era in which the figure of the art critic is disappearing, or rather being replaced by that of the curator, we should return also to a concept that marked the emergence of curatorial practice in 1970s Yugoslavia - the notion of *applied critique*... This is a concept that originated in the alternative art scene of Yugoslavia, more specifically within the New Art Practice movement, and, in the Belgrade context, was particularly linked to the work of the generation of cultural producers gathered around the Students' Cultural Centre. It should also be noted that this generation of artists, critics and curators organized alternative Octobers between 1971 and 1975 that stood in opposition to the October Salons of their time. As a traditional, locally-oriented painting and sculpture exhibition, the Salon was interpreted and criticized as a bourgeois and conformist institution within the socialist system, and reactionary with respect to the political ambitions of the regime... The concept of *applied critique* offered by this generation of cultural producers related to the simultaneity of thought and action, reflection and display, which methodologically corresponds in the present to our proposed concept of *exhibition as scripted space*. But further than this, today, we can also talk about the critique of the concept of *applied critique*, as well as of critiques of the art of the 1970s in general, and take aim at the political limitations of a certain self-referential obsession with the art system and the internal affairs of that system. From the 1990s onwards, the critical art scene that has been developing in the post-Yugoslav space has become increasingly aware of and, in its practice active towards the porous nature of the art system and its connections with different social fields. I would say that this is also the case with this year's October Salon's *No One Belongs Here More Than You* show - the exhibition desires to transgress the very field of exhibiting and to get involved in various ways in contemporary social problems.

I would like to continue this introductory discussion by posing one basic question that is also proposed in the very name of the School, and that links the two relational positions: the invention of the modes and the process of production, presented through the dichotomy, *the modes of production and the production of modes*. This is obviously a broad subject that has been frequently discussed by Marxist (and not only Marxist) critical art historians and cultural theorists - the subject of the modes of production, and, more specifically, of the production of culture.

I was recently reminded of a text from the *Critical Terms for Art History* collection of essays, written by the Australian (and international) art historian Terry Smith, entitled nothing other than *Modes of Production*. In his analysis, Smith takes a look at the difference between something that could be described as a natural, biological growth - or *spontaneity which happens* - and another, which represents cultural modes of production - the *transformation of raw materials into products*. Interestingly, culture itself, or the social field that we operate in and try to think about, actually presents the main tool for conceptualisations of the modes of production. Of course, such a claim may appear cynical if applied to the operational principles of contemporary cognitive capitalism and its immanent processes of the culturalization of economy or economization of

culture. Nevertheless, the question that I find more interesting for this discussion is this: what would those cultural modes of production be in terms of the production of cultural events in a *particular* context? What would their implications be in the case of an ‘-ennial’ exhibition such as today’s October Salon, it being one of the most popular institutions for contemporary art in this specific region? If we were to consider the historical context, it is important to underscore that the October Salon inherited its positions from the socialist concept of ‘the public’ and the concept of the ‘common good’ (along with its designator of ‘Salon’, which was criticized, as we have already mentioned, by the alternative scene of the time). This is, therefore, not a new festival made for the cultural industry cause – to stimulate neoliberal entertainment economy and tourist consumerism. It is an exhibition faced with enormous pressures exerted by capitalist privatization, numerous ordeals, and even practices of co-optation; it is a cultural institution fraught with many paradoxes and contradictions that can be summed up as ‘a precarious institution of power and prestige captured in transition.’ (Transition, of course, in this context denotes the social transformation from socialism to capitalism and the unfinished privatization of erstwhile common cultural goods. Over the next few days we will all together discuss the various positions and settings of the October Salon along these lines). In this context, the question that should not be overlooked concerns the means and forms in which the production of this exhibition is continuously renewed through a dialogue of ‘expropriated authorship’: to a guest curatorial team and an organizational core that maneuvers through cultural-political environment of ‘unfinished transition’. Each year’s exhibition engages a curatorial team consisting of local and international actors who get an opportunity to establish, promote and carry out their own art policies and modes of production, or at least to contend for them in an antagonistic environment dominated by conflicting interests.

The key question arising from Smith’s discussion on the means of production is the *how* of this production – this is the key question of art, but also the question of form and organization in the broader societal sense. Smith proposes a different direction of interpreting the correlation between ‘production’ and ‘modes’, one that allows for an affirmative view on cultural production, believing that art’s capacity resides in its potential to generate new modes, which can also be exemplary in the context of society in different ways... Therefore, art, and, let’s say, philosophy too, possess the potential to conceive new means or modes hitherto nonexistent. In different historical periods, contexts, or social settings, the production of new modes in art has been or will be either an indication of its autonomy (thought, reflection), or an indication of its transformative function (if it penetrates into society from the activist positions). We often (not without a tinge of nostalgia) find the forms that speak of these ‘new modes’ in the historical avant-gardes and the political horizons in whose midst they originated. As for exhibiting practices, we can think for example of the *Abstract Cabinet* of El Lissitzky, who suggested new modes of exhibiting, modes different from those of the bourgeois salon, a politics of exposure that differs from the exhibition of beautiful objects (paintings, sculptures, etc.) in a sumptuous environment. In the *Abstract Cabinet*, the dichotomy between objects and the environment is abolished. What’s displayed is nothing other than the ideal space dreaming of a better world – a utopian, imaginary world to which everyone belongs (correspondent with the communist ideals of the time). This was no longer a white cube or a black box, nor a residential, museum, or urban space – it was something else... a place of inception of the new modes. A structurally similar place in a different space-time continuum is promised by the exhibition poster of today’s exhibition, with its faraway island and palm trees, bearing the slogan *No One Belongs Here More Than You*.

Smith’s views of art’s potential to produce new modes seem to shine a ray of hope into today’s rather depressing art world, as dominant cultural policies place art in the position of an agent that beautifies, aestheticizes, neutralizes, conceals – that conceals the realities of socio-political space, the sometimes miserable living conditions in gentrified cities... It becomes a force for gentrification, and many large ‘-ennial’ exhibitions are good examples of this trend. Indeed there are many and varied ways in which art brutally co-opts by its capital and participates in gentrification processes, which are at the same time processes of class stratification in terms of rights to the city, living space, and participation in urban living. We can raise the question of what critical practitioners can do, if given a chance to reshape a form of classical contemporary art exhibition that gentrifies and normalizes existing state of affairs?

Such states of affairs make us revisit here too the role of the canon, or rather the question of what canons of contemporaneity could be, and whether we can talk about a concept as paradoxical as a *canon of contemporaneity*... Can we possibly analyze these canons from a contemporary feminist perspective, and, if yes, how?

In a historical sense, a canon has two important distinguishing characteristics. The first one is that it entails a certain exemplariness (educational value), rather than superior performance or uniqueness. The second hallmark of the canon however is that it replaces argumentation with ‘mystical knowledge’, that is, it is not rooted in argumentation, but in authority. The processes, procedures, and forms of how ‘authority without argumentation’ are established in the exhibition space are curiously interpreted and presented in the text *Telling, Showing, Showing Off* by Mieke Bal, where she discusses the mechanisms by which the ‘once upon a time’ narrative formula ascends to the authority of realism of historical facticity and ‘universal truth’.

If the original mystique of the canon was ‘to hear God’s truth’, then the mystique of the canon today is based upon its tacit endurance in a field of liberal permissions, or, more precisely, upon the critical ‘immunity’ of contemporary art practices that guarantees access to already seized spaces of freedom of speech and artistic autonomy.

What may seem interesting today, in the era of *critical art*, is the relationship between the canon and critique of the canon. We know that the traditional interpretation of art based on the concept of the *great-artist-and-his-work* has, ever since the 1960s, been subjected to rigorous criticism from the aspects of gender, race, and other ‘minority positions’ through various forms of institutional criticism, as well as through the analysis of the dispositifs of production and consumption of art, especially from classical Marxist positions. These practices have problematised the conditions and circumstances that produce aesthetic and other normative canons by retroactively pronouncing established artistic procedures as canonical, precisely through the act of their own critical outlawry or intervention into the existing canon. Since, in the modern sense, the canon represents a “tacit authority,” that is, a truth that is presented as natural, logical and naturalised in the discourses of art and culture, it is pronounced, named, recognised and announced only through the process of the critique of the existing canon.

It is a fact, nevertheless, that a critical attitude has become an integral part of contemporary art today: to have a critical attitude towards something, to establish an attitude towards the

context of production, to reflect the working conditions, to practice the *modus operandi* that could be characterized as the intellectualization of artistic practices etc. We wonder, therefore, whether these micro-spaces of transgression or negation of dominant realities or established artistic values, these micro-spaces of disobedience, rebellion, shock, refusal or questioning, have become today a kind of etiquette of contemporary artistic practices and, generally speaking, of the customs of liberal societies? Is a critique of the canon becoming “canonised” in the institution of contemporary art, or is this assumption merely the sophist rhetoric of an impossible proposition?

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How do we handle the dynamics of canonization today? Can one even speak of the canon as a collection of fixed positions, or is it, after all, a set of dynamic constellations? Does the canon endure in a fixed and given form as a universal historical constant – a set of rules that can easily be called on, enumerated, and named by a defined set of terms – or is it something that includes the constant of a relationship, based upon the dynamic of the establishment of authority and rules being conjoined with the process of their critical violation – a dynamic that is equivalent to social processes and instances of the (re)establishment of systems and values?

I would say that the question of the canon in contemporary art is not the question of stable and fixed positions of power, aesthetic regimes, ethical standards, and the political status quo, but rather of a dynamic and changeable form that requires an active and mobile attitude directed towards concrete analyses of concrete situations, the situations that interact or indicate dominant historical, ideological, and institutional postulates. In other words, we can rather speak of canonization as a reactive and dynamic process rather than a stable set of values established through a ‘written law’ of some sort. In that sense, a one-sentence explanation of the rhetoricalness of the statement on the above-mentioned ‘canonization of the critique of the canon’ might go like this: it is not important to merely repeat a critical gesture in the way it was once successfully carried out, but, quite the contrary, one must seek, find, and position oneself in relation to new fields of authority, power, and values establishment.

When Griselda Pollock spoke of a critique of the art-historical canon from the feminist perspective, she formulated it through the concept of intervention, or a ‘lateral approach’ towards what we might call the institutional reproduction of authority and truth in contemporary art. In her interpretation, an intervention is an act that ‘comes from within,’ from one part of the whole; it points to the structural problems of academic disciplines and contemporary politics of exhibiting, indicating at the same time their connections with the material and social practices that surround us all. What’s important for me here for the context of modern *feminisms* is Pollock’s correlation of the particular and the universal, with the claim that ‘even though it speaks the language of a minority, of the local or particular, the effects of intervention are universal.’ The character of the intervention thus ceases to be a mere ‘filling in the blanks’ or ‘complementing the history’ with something that has been omitted, left out, or less known – its main feature becomes precisely the questioning, pointing to and naming the canon, that is, something that is omnipresent in the narration, evaluation and categorisation of artistic activities. It seems to me that Pollock’s insight (who once approached the issue of canon from the art-historical perspective) is worthy of being re-appraised because the concept of *inclusiveness* (characteristic of many contemporary feminisms) is replaced by the concept of *interventions* that aspire to a more universal politics. So how can we apprehend the canon and critique of the canon from the perspective of contemporary *curatorship*?

Canonical curating practices can be described through the establishment of a chain of relations: institution – artists – theorists – organizers – technicians – sponsors – the media, where the curator features as the moving spirit of production and his or her authorship consists in setting this production line in motion. Not unlike a bicycle chain that enables the movement of wheels by engaging each cog of the cogwheel, a curator must engage each production instance – be in touch with everyone and everything. The result of this production process is often an organized and constructed exhibition space (an institutionalized space); a completed and designed relation between objects and subjects (a restrictive, fixed relation); and various animating practices (guided tours, children’s programs, exclusive guest appearances, etc.).

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Inside of curatorial practice itself, critiques of the exhibition canon have been mostly carried out through formal “games” that have violated, in one way or another, this established “chain of relations” in the exhibition production. Such violations include of the unique authorial position of the curator (for example, within the framework of successive selection models – the selected becomes the selector in the next round); of the exhibition as a sum total of various curatorial narratives (fragmentation of the common narrative of the exhibition); a strategy of “opening the code” of artistic production (presenting ideas and sketches instead of finished works); an archival approach to exhibition performativity (presenting a large quantity of material, within the framework of which the observer selects the contents to view, thus creating his/her own version of the exhibition); shifting the exhibition out into the street or some other “non-artistic space”; and a final example, switching roles – artists become curators and vice versa, etc.

However, the most radical critique of the curatorial canon would precisely attempt to break the established institutional practices pertaining to the curator’s position in the centre of the institutional apparatus as the moving spirit of production. These include the practices of maintaining museum programmes, matching exhibitions, launching new generations of artists and new topics – and overall, of the imperative of maintaining the flow and rhythm of cultural production as such (that is, leaving the exhibition’s public, and collaborators, under the impression that things are “in order” and that everyone should remain “in his/her place”). A critique of the curatorial canon would thus, first of all, be a critique of the meeting place of the facile attractiveness of the current professional theories of curation and artistic production, which only provide for accessible curatorial syntheses in the form of a monumental exhibition. It would be primarily a critique of the view of the curator as a manager, someone who securitizes the management of things – maintaining production’s flow and fulfilling all the roles and agencies that the mediating position affords to deliver only overproduced facile, intriguing topics that serve only to entertain supposedly only culturized layers of society.

Vladimir Bjeličić is primarily a cultural worker. An art historian by vocation, he is active in art criticism, curatorial and art practices, but he is also a performer, a DJ, a theatre director and bon vivant. In his work as an author, he focuses on marginalised social groups and phenomena, identity policies and politics of memory.

VLADIMIR BJELIČIĆ

REALITY OR ILLUSION -
ANOTHER CONTEMPORARY ART EXHIBITION?

Poised like the summary of the 54th October Salon, a good portion of this text is almost fictional. It was formed according to the principle of copying and compiling existing accompanying texts for the exhibition and emerged as the consequence of my humble participation within the curatorial school at this year's October Salon that, under the motto *Exhibition as Scripted Space: Modes of Production and Production of Modes*, focused on modes of producing an exhibition and/or the relations between its 'background' and 'foreground', as well as issues of the (political) potential of art to produce other modes.

The need to falsify or appropriate data, i.e. to re-curate, is embodied in the curatorial-guided tour entitled *EXHIBITION WITHIN THE EXHIBITION*. Namely, the idea behind this is a sudden inscription of a personal or a fictional concept in the framework of what is exposed. The purpose was to present one's own selection of artworks to the audience, whereby turning attention to issues related to the concept, creative process and architecture of the exhibition venue, the relationships between exhibited artworks.

54th October Salon
No One Belongs Here More Than You / Niko ne pripada tu više nego ti
11 October – 17 November 2013, Belgrade
Zepter Expo, former RK Kluz, Masarikova 4
www.oktobarskosalon.org
Open hours:
Each day 12 – 8 PM,
Closed on Mondays (except for Monday, 14 October)

Milijana Babić / Ines Dujak / Slaven Tolj / Boris Šribar / Adela Jušić / Milica Tomić / Ivana Smiljanić / Andrea Palašti / Dina Rončević / Flaka Haliti
Curatorial concept: Vladimir Bjeličić

Within the 54th October Salon, Vladimir Bjeličić, together with male and female artists, collectives and other participants of both sexes, deals with visual and discursive methodologies exploring, rethinking and presenting the topic of (non)human nature. The concept and structure of the international art exhibition **No One Belongs Here More Than You** were based on a specific and grounded understanding of singular subjectivities, collectively connected and aimed towards the feminist concept of 'sustainability'. Feminist theoretician Rosi Braidotti sees this type of sustainability as a 're-grounding of the subject in a materially embedded sense of responsibility and ethical accountability' for society and the environment. Challenging the embodied composition of human subjectivity therefore calls for a new ethics of lucidity and the power of transformative

creativity. In that sense, the exhibition starts from the fact that bodies have become techno-cultural constructs caught in the web of complex, parallel and potentially conflicting power relations, through which contemporary capitalist conditions of everyday living have internalised all types of historically mediated ideologies as the permanent and only possible state of social reality. Through the concept of (non)human nature, the exhibition presents a challenge in search for a new (social) imagining of possible futures and its responsible politics of the commons and togetherness.

No One Belongs Here More Than You creates various (non)working stations: the Exhibition, the Perpetuum Mobile, an Audio/Video Booth, a Reading Room, a Forum (place of discussions, talks), a Music Spot and a Curatorial School. In this manner, the living archive (re)produces interactive space – a space of loud (feminist) articulation, where it is possible to think, rework, emancipate and sustain one's own and common positions.

Milijana Babić, an artist from Rijeka, presented herself with the piece "Looking for A Job". It is the documentation of her yearlong search for employment, symbolically signified by the continuously published classified ad in the local newspaper – "Visual artist urgently looking for any kind of work." During the project, the artist worked as a waitress, cleaner, saleswoman, distributor and supervisor/security in a gallery space. In all her jobs, apart from the ones 'through a connection', she was underpaid and treated as a person of a lower order. Aside from dealing with labour market research during times of record unemployment in Croatia, this project also examines the status of contemporary artists in Croatian society and problematizes the insufficiency of the artist profession, with special emphasis on the position of the female artist and the field of visual art. **Ines Dujak**, an Austrian artist, has developed a research and art project "Loomshuttles/Warpaths", exposing extremely complex and asymmetric relations between Europe and Latin America through Andean textile. The embroidery connects with the broader global geography, both past and present, in order to reveal the world as formed through a history of power, disrespect and exploitation, but also a multitude of resistances. In doing so, we are again dealing with the structurally underestimated quality of the 'female' in general and women's work in particular. Starting from a collection of these textiles, the "Loomshuttles/Warpaths" research project strives to present connections and relations, as well as to reveal the past and contemporary history, all the while avoiding well-beaten narrations. **Flaka Haliti**, hailing from Priština, implemented a site-specific art installation under the name of "Me, You and Everyone We Know". In fact, it is a video animation of a graph trying to describe the position of the male and female artists in art history and within power systems, through mind mapping. The animated graph keeps moving, illustrating the difficulty of freezing one's position, and then adds on the complexity of reading and conceiving the material received. The young artist from Sarajevo **Adela Jušić** presented herself with the installation "Ride the Recoil". Composed from photographs and sounds, the piece is based on criticising the "Sniper Ghost Warrior 2" video game. The wartime video game is placed in Sarajevo under siege, its heroes being U.S. snipers defending the city from the invading army, thus presenting a historical corrective. In the game, the main task of operation "Archangel", supposedly taking place in 1993, is to secure evidence of genocide, so that NATO can take action. After gathering evidence, the American soldier kills Marko Vladić (an obvious allusion to Ratko Mladić) and puts an end to the suffering of besieged citizens. "Justice for the ghosts of Sarajevo" the character says at the end of this part of the game. The specific introduction of the club environment into the framework of an exhibition was the topic of Novi Sad-based artist **Andrea Palašti** in her installation "Balkan Disco". The title was borrowed from one of the numerous nightclubs carrying the name of "Balkan" (e.g. "Balkan Disco" in Vicenza; "Balkan Disco Express" in Vienna, "Balkan Night" in Hamburg) where "Balkan" music – traditional

turbo-folk – is listened to. The “Balkan Disco” piece deals with the issue of constructing social mores/behaviours in the context of cultural/social and political discourse. With “Hot, Hot, Burning Water”, **Dina Rončević** primarily examines the heteronormative discourse, i.e. socially imposed gender roles. Fascinated with mechanics, the artist underwent professional retraining to become a car mechanic, which represented the pivotal point for her recent work. Namely, she held several performances where she constructed and disassembled cars and rode with women of various ages and educations. A video of one of these activities and the trike she made with a friend and a group of girls make the exhibited piece. “You’ll Remember Me” is an intervention in space by the Belgrade artist **Ivana Smiljanić**. Using sound, folios, stamps and some intimate notes of hers, the artist created a peculiar environment suggesting the omnipresence of various forms of violence in contemporary society. More accurately, Smiljanić critically analyses the hegemonic presence of authority (institutions, individuals, system) in relation to her own experience. Discreetly tracing the female body contours on white walls, filling them with words that women as objects of torture are exposed to daily, the artist precisely and thoughtfully articulates the repressive patriarchal everyday life. The Belgrade artist **Boris Šribar** presented himself with the video “Men Don’t Cry”. In this piece, Boris does not propagate an answer to the stereotype that “men don’t cry”; he renders it essentially meaningless and avoids embarking on its contemplation on a personal, social, ethical or political plane. The problem of the identity of the other-as-weaker was deconstructed through Boris’ piece and discarded as a worthless construct arising from a single unstable thesis – that crying is a reflection of weakness. Renowned Dubrovnik artist **Slaven Tolj** held a performance entitled “I am dangerous, kill me in front of my children’s eyes 2011–2013”, and exhibited a video of this event as a video piece. The artist is sitting in front of a blank white wall, in the middle of which a sentence is written in pencil: “I am dangerous, kill me in front of my children’s eyes.” Inspired by the contradiction of Osama Bin Laden’s violent murder in front of his daughter’s eyes and with a sense of shame for what that child is going through now, Tolj expresses how “the media impact our perception of values in reality” and sometimes gives us a “superficial depth”. Belgrade artist **Milica Tomić** exhibited “Does Revolution Begin or End in the Kitchen?” Using various media (digital print, fanzine), through a series of interviews with women from Ljubljana, Rijeka, Tuzla, Srebrenica and Belgrade, she dealt with the position of women through revolutions and political systems observed from the viewpoint of the stereotype – the homemaker wife. The research process implied a series of questions about the relationship between the community and bourgeoisie kitchens, from which a series of narratives answering these questions in a complex manner was drawn. The interviews in this piece are, in fact, the first report about how women of various generations and professions continued, were forced, found new solutions or refused to exercise a form of domestic, female, familial, social covenant and set off towards different forms and practices of nourishment.

The suggestive title of the October Salon, *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, was entirely in line with the need felt by the feminist curatorial group Red Mine(d) to open the so-called discursive space, i.e. the exhibition as a potential generator of a collective knowledge exchange and feminism-based emancipating policies. In this context, my intervention was an extension of Red Min(e)d’s aspirations – naturally, under the auspices of a critical approach. However, rather than choosing individual readings of exhibited work or a classical criticism of the entire concept, I chose to lead my observations about this year’s October Salon in a completely different direction.

Fabrication of a lie, i.e. creation of an illusion, seemed appropriate to me, foremost as a reaction to the increasing tabloidization of Serbian society that defines the public and private

spheres through violation of human rights, devaluation of the fight against corruption, depriving institutions of trust, etc. Any piece of information becomes a sensation, manipulated in the aim to regulate power relations, and therefore often loses the epithet of truth and becomes a lie.

On the other hand, contemporary curatorial practices frequently have at their disposal pretentious and dogmatic artworks, like poetic pamphlets, that do not initiate any serious political interventions. The cause of this strategy should be sought in taste and the curator’s need to embed a narrative, i.e. contextualise artworks that are there to fill up the programme. Another reason contributing to this is the art market. Conditioned by trends, rich collectors’ demand and sponsors (both in the corporate and nongovernmental sectors), curators frequently make various compromises, in principle staying true to their own ideological positions. In that respect, it can be said that curatorial practices of today, in their attempt to articulate reality, produce exhibitions as specific simulations of reality, or more accurately – as illusions.

However, is such repetition of illusions sustainable, and what exactly does it tell us about the state of contemporary art? Joseph Beuys claimed anyone could be an artist; this could lead to a random conclusion that anyone can be a curator as well. Although this motto does not suggest that indeed *anyone* can create art, but rather that every human being should apply creative thinking in their specialised field, its relativisation takes us one step further towards the issue of authorship and/or originality (as emanations of the author’s creative genius) of the artwork that is presented as essential. For example, citing Benjamin in his text *On the Museum’s Ruins*, Douglas Crimp claims that postmodern art is stripped of its aura through reproductive technologies. According to him, the notion of the subject that creates is replaced with open confiscation, quotations, overtaking parts, piling and repeating images already existing, whereby leading into question the concepts of originality, authenticity and presence, notions that are essential for the ordered discourse of the museum (or contemporary exhibitions). On the other hand, Richard Schiff suggests in his text *Originality* that the concept of artistic originality becomes subject to the same irony characterising other cultural constructs of crucial significance: being as it is that in various times different standpoints on the topic prevail, originality can lack substance or a fixed destination, either of which is in turn replaced by an irregular history.

We will agree that the dispute about the impossibility of creating the new and original has existed in art for quite a long time. Unfortunately, the discourse on originality cannot create “tectonic shifts” due to the domination of the capitalist order insisting on constantly commercialising the art piece and mimicking the consumerist obsession with it and hence becomes part of the market logic of the search for novelties. Therefore, in the contemporary moment, the concepts of new, original and copy become relative.

Nevertheless, there is no danger, as claimed by Slobodan Mijušković. Art and artists, and those who read, paraphrase or embed meaning into their pieces, have not had any qualms about originality for a long time. This erstwhile imperative of artistic creation has become some form of an appendix to the body, the body of art. It does not perform any vital function, i.e. is not necessary for the well-being and existence of the body, which is quite well off with or without it.

Well, in order for me to conduct my intervention entirely, I will revert to the *illusiveness* of the 54th October Salon concept. Jelena Petrović, one of the Red Min(e)d curators, suggested that illusion, or the point of the exhibition – social imagination, makes that empty field with potential

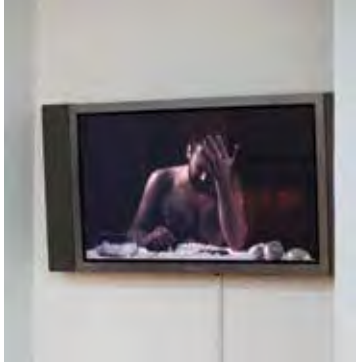
for political subjectivisation. To that extent, my intervention indeed was *criticism in action* encouraging polemics on the transformative potential of the repetition of illusions, because exactly in this continuous production of images and meanings one should look for crevices, blank spaces fitting for active (political) intervention. Therefore, by method of appropriation, compiling and collage, my endeavour brings the task of the curator to a borderline situation and examines the very essence of it. And one step further, through re-curating, I focused on the achievements of curatorial practices, i.e. the crucial issue whether art today, especially if it is politically involved, can really be a trigger or an act of any change whatsoever.

100 On that trail, it becomes obvious that illusions are completely legitimate. They shape our lives and force us to feel alive, just like contemporary art exhibitions. Reality remains just a shadow of an illusion, and this symbolic order engenders constant uncertainty and scepticism, which can also be attributed to the (contemporary) art world.

Author's note – soundtrack for this text: Marlene Dietrich – “Illusions”.
(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYQ8KQENLak>)



Flaka Haliti, *Me, You and Everyone We Know*,
video installation, 2010-2013 and a7 außeneinsatz Curatorial School
We (Don't) Need (No) Education, photo by Ana Kostić



Boris Šribar, *Men Don't Cry*, video,
2010, photo by Ana Kostić

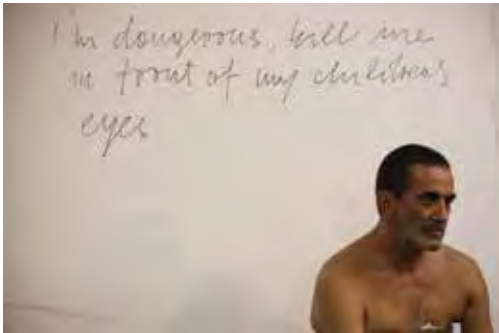


Milijana Babić, *Looking for a Job*,
documentation, 2011-2012,
photo by Ana Kostić

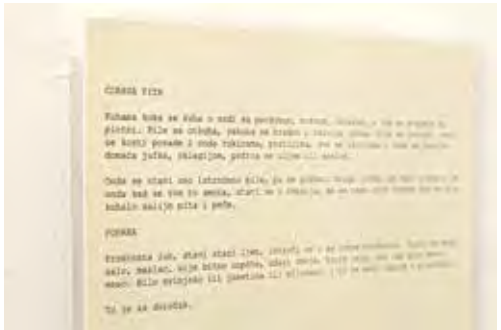
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Andrea Palašti, *Balkan Disco*,
installation, 2010-2013, photo by Ana Kostić



Slaven Tolj, *I'm Dangerous, Kill Me In Front of My Children's Eyes*, performance, 2011-2013, photo by Duško Jelen



Milica Tomić, *Does The Revolution Begin or End in The Kitchen?*, digital print, fanzine,
2011 -2013, photo by Ana Kostić



Adela Jušić, *Ride The Recoil*, mixed media,
2013, photo by Ana Kostić

Mirjana Dragosavljević is an art historian (University of Belgrade Faculty of Philosophy). Worked as an expert associate in the Grafički kolektiv gallery in Belgrade (2008–2010). Former member of the Kontekst kolektiv curatorial collective, Belgrade (2010–2013). Member of the Working group Four Faces of Omarska and one of the founders of the Initiative for Contemporary Art and Theory, Belgrade. Sava Jokić is a senior undergraduate of Commparative Literature and Literary Theory Studies (University of Belgrade Faculty of Philology) and a member of the Marks21.

**mIRJANA DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ
& SAVA JOKIĆ**

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FROM COLLECTIVITY TO
PARTICIPATORY ART PRACTICES

As we know, social relationships are determined by relationships of production. When it examined a work of art, materialist criticism was accustomed to ask how that work stood in relation to the social relationships of production of its time. That is an important question. But also a very difficult one. The answer to it is not always unambiguous. Thus I would now like to suggest a question which lies closer at hand. A question which is somewhat more modest, which is less encompassing, but which seems to me to have a better chance of being answered. Namely, instead of asking: What is the relationship of a work of art to the relationships of production of the time? Is it in accord with them, is it reactionary or does it strive to overthrow them, is it revolutionary? – in place of this question, or in any case before asking this question, I would like to propose another. Before I ask: how does a literary work stand in relation to the relationships of production of a period, I would like to ask: How does it stand in them? This question aims directly at the function that the work has within the literary relationships of production of a period. [1]

Walter Benjamin

In medias res

The reason for this micro-chapter on collective work signed by Sava Jokić and Mirjana Dragosavljević is the specific situation concerning the ideology of collectiveness and various practices of its distribution in the public sphere. The story on collectivity and the specific situation that caused our reflection is found in one detail of the Belgrade October Salon programme *No One Belongs Here More Than You*. Namely, the programme was launched with a public forum entitled Living Death Camp and signed by the following words: “Living Death Camp: a collaboration between Forensic Architecture (Goldsmiths, University of London), the Monument Group and Four Faces of Omarska project from Belgrade.” In such a structured signature, you may note that the collaboration with the Four Faces of Omarska group is characterised with the term project rather than ‘group’ or ‘collective’.

[1] Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer”, In *New Left Review*, I, 62 July-August, [1934] 1970, p. 2.

Therein lies the possibility to ask questions concerning the relationship between the *project work* and *collective policies* within the practices of the Four Faces of Omarska working group. The Working Group Four Faces of Omarska (WGFFO) website quotes data and descriptions framing collective work policies of this specific group: “In March 2009, Milica Tomić, encouraged by the political vision of Pavle Levi’s text ‘The Capo of Omarska’ that explores the issue of ethics of the visual, developed the ‘Four Faces of Omarska’ project. In June 2010, she initiated the establishment of the Working Group ‘Four Faces of Omarska’, whose participants hail from different fields within the humanities. The dynamics and composition of the Working group have been determined through focus and tasks, leaving it open for other participants to join in various stages.”

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A more accurate definition of the word ‘group’, both in the case of Monument Group and Working Group Four Faces of Omarska, comes from curators Ivana Bago and Antonina Majača in the catalogue for the exhibition *Where Everything Is Yet To Happen, 2nd chapter: Exposures*: “Cooperation with Monument Group is founded on recognising the unique methodology of action, whereby the ‘group’ does not represent a fixed identity or collective but rather a platform whose each new transformation carries the potential to gather and empower various collaborators and associates, frequently generating and emancipating new platforms. In this case, an example of such action is the Working Group ‘Four Faces of Omarska’ (Mirjana Dragosavljević, Srđan Hercigonja, Sandro Hergić, Vladimir Miladinović, Marija Ratković, Dejan Vasić, Jovanka Vojinović, Zoran Vučkovic and Milica Tomić), constituted as a separate project/platform, founded on Milica Tomić’s activities within the Monument Group. This anti-hermetic constitution of ‘group’ activity generating not only new projects but also new associated subjects, corresponds precisely with the fundamental question asked by the Where Everything Is Yet To Happen (WEIYTH) project: in what way is it possible to think about comprehending and constituting a community apart from the essentialist models of identification and affiliation, but rather in accordance with the philosophical contemplations of community that define being primarily as ‘being with’, a singular-plural existence / radical exposure to each other (Jean-Luc Nancy), or Giorgio Agamben’s ‘whatever singularity?’ [2] It is important to mention that within the methodology of operation, the Public Working Meeting occupies a significant spot as an ‘interface’ for the inclusion of existing archives, inclusion of new male and female participants into the Working Group Four Faces of Omarska and audience participation. The goal of public working meetings is the production of knowledge and active political subjects who contemplate social issues and produce knowledge that has been excluded or marginalised within the public sphere.

“Living Death Camp” is a concept developed by the Monument Group by connecting the Omarska context (various epochs of the same location) with the context of the Staro Sajmište site (with all the transformations this site has undergone since 1936). A working gathering under the name “Living Death Camp and Forensic Aesthetics: Where Knowledge is Subjugated Sociability Occurs” was organized in April 2012. This working gathering was implemented in cooperation between WGFFO, Monument Group, the Centre for Research Architecture, Goldsmiths, University of London and the Centre for Cultural Decontamination, Belgrade. Interaction between the mentioned three collectives was established by way of reading groups, public working meetings and visits to Staro Sajmište and Omarska and through mutual presentation of the concepts and

[2] Ivana Bago & Antonia Majača, “Exposures”, In Ivana Bago & Antonia Majača, *Where Everything Is Yet To Happen*, Banja Luka: SPAPORT, 2010.

exchange of ideas between these collectives. From the perspective of the WGFFO, the goal of these activities was enhanced understanding of the wider social circumstance the Working group deals with, such as: suspension of the socialist model, period of war and collapse of SFR Yugoslavia, transition with all its complex issues. As WGFFO did not continue dealing with the “Living Death Camp” concept after this event, when the continuation of cooperation was suggested within the October Salon forum held on 5 October 2013 (at the former German Pavillion – Rade Končar, Staro Sajmište), the establishment of a new “LDC” body, i.e. a new platform with potential to gather various interested participants, was suggested as well. Due to the inability to reach consensus within WGFFO about the mentioned programme, a decision was reached to sign the ‘project’ rather instead of the ‘working group’. Due to this type of fissure, when the majority of the collective does not want to participate in the programme, signing the ‘project’, i.e. the ‘concept’ rather than the ‘working group’, was the only viable solution. The matter is a situation relative to the issue of the group signature within collective and/or participative practices. This situation represents a cause for reflection concerning the production relations within the group and its activity within the exhibition and the wider art system within which it operates.

Our intention was to attempt performing an analysis of the concept of collectivity on the one hand, and participation on the other. We will focus on participatory art practices that frequently function as places for cognitive production and social reflection within the space of large biennial-type art exhibitions. By placing these types of art practices into a wider art system context, we would like to conduct a type of intervention and at the same time self-criticism, being that our position here is not external, as we also act within the mentioned ‘working group’. As this situation is not an exception in collective and participatory practices, we feel it is important to reflect on it. We start from the position that the exhibition space represents a public sphere, a space of interaction rather than representation.

Mirjana Dragosavljević and Sava Jokić

Labour, Collective/Private And The Collective

Sava Jokić

Since I agree with Immanuel Wallerstein’s refusal that culture should be studied as a field in itself, i.e. be separate from economy and politics, I would like to present a brief historical perspective of the development of collectivism and its relationship to work/labour.

From the early days, people, in order to survive, had to associate into groups (communities or collectives). In this way, they secured their own existence and also the existence of the collective. Today, as a consequence of the long experience of capitalist modernisation, the category of collectivism has given way to policies of individuality. Whereas individualism gives primacy to the individual, i.e. opposes the individual and the community, collectivism gives most importance to the interdependence of people in the society and/or community and collective. Opposite from the ideology of individualism, the ideology of collectivity aspires to achieving common, general, social goals.

Marx maintains labour and labour processes determine a man significantly, because it is exactly through these processes that social relationships are established, as well as man as social

animal. While the driver of these social processes initially was collective labour, the development of knowledge and technological advancements rendered individuals capable of performing certain tasks individually, which further contributed to the occurrence of the division of labour and establishment of an extreme position of control or management. New social patterns and roles emerged wherein – according to preferences and capabilities – members of society could fulfil themselves as individuals. Art and philosophy as social subsystems represent fields of individual human achievement as inalienable parts of shaping production relationships within broader social processes.

As accumulation increases the power of the individual, the individual attempts to accumulate more than others. Those who own more get a larger portion of economic and social power; political power is achieved in this manner, leading to the subjugation of those who are economically weaker. In time, the concept of private property is created so that surplus products can be expropriated systematically. To ensure the position of new rulers over property, a special apparatus of oppression is created, through which the ruling class oppresses the producers, relying on the apparatus of the class society and the state. Although labour was common initially, now it is placed in service of maintaining the economically superior position of the ruling class, i.e. the class of economic and political power wielders, owners of the means of production. The development of the means of production complexified the division of labour, so that the labour that initially had led to the individualisation of the individual now became the mechanism of de-individualisation. In other words, with the increasingly complex division of labour, people specialised for increasingly narrower functions in production and again became more dependent on the ‘collective’, i.e. ‘joint’ work.

However, in the ‘new’ collective work, man was not returned to the previous shared environment. Whereas in the primal community collective work was serving solely and exclusively the interests of the community, now it served the interest of the capitalist (the owner of the means of production). While returning to collective production, society did not return to collective property as well. This remained private. Hence we come to the situation that the production is collective and the ownership over it private. In other words, originally the collective was above the individual, and now the one above the individual (the person participating in collective production) is the capitalist.

However, it frequently happens that democracy is cancelled in collectives fighting against the effects of capitalism, and that the ‘second march’ begins to develop in the wrong direction. In any collective, and therefore also among those acting in the field of contemporary artistic practices, there is what we might term the ‘inequality of knowledge’, but it is not a simple and hegemonous division into those who ‘know’ and those who ‘do not know’. Collective processes would in this case encourage all individuals in composing a collective in acquiring knowledge in various ways and through various, not always predictable methods. Among other things, the point of these processes is to prevent situations where subgroups pass all decisions in a decentralised or alienated manner (I mean those that are mostly called vertical or hierarchical), regardless of the fact that in larger collectives it is impossible to function without a division of labour to some extent.

One of the goals of contemporary art collective practices is to invent mechanisms that would ultimately lead to the ‘centralisation’ of horizontal discipline over all vertical structures and of

the delegated type. Therefore, in this assembly, democracy should level experience (knowledge), and elevate it by testing its theory in practice and communicating results within the collective.

Participation As A Politicised Working Process

Mirjana Dragosavljević

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Participatory art practices (socially engaged art, community-based art, experimental communities, interventionist art, activist art, etc.) comprise what Claire Bishop [3] termed as the expanded field of post-studio practices where participation is understood as a politicised working process. In these practices, groups themselves represent the artistic medium and material, while production unfolds in the form of social events, workshops, round tables, forum discussions, publications, performances and other forms of action that are hard to define in terms of typical artwork.

These practices occupy a significant spot at events such as annual- or biennial-type exhibitions, in liberal academic contexts or self-education projects, but, on the other hand, problems arise in the stage of materialising the working process due to the production model that does not fit the typical art market frameworks. In that respect, we can speak of the attempt to achieve the “impossible project” mentioned by Ivana Bago and Antonia Majača when they speak of the difference between “action” and “escapism” in 60s and 70s contemporary art in Croatia, specifically connected to the practices of *Gorgona* and the question “Is it possible to make a collective work?” [4]

As Bishop noted, since the 90s, a turn of art practices towards the social has taken place, in a desire to switch the traditional connection between the art object, artist and the audience, i.e. the artist is less and less perceived as an individual producing objects and increasingly as someone who produces situations and discursive practices. Hence there is a rising occurrence of so-called projects in creation or process, starting with a concept, but their further development is largely unpredictable. In this process, the audience is changed as well, and hence it is no longer composed of traditional spectators, but participants who are expected to take part in the actual production of the artwork. As Bishop perceived, this conception of the art practice is most frequently expressed more strongly as an ideal than it is evinced in actual practice. The reason for this primarily rests in the fact that although art represents a creative social force, it does in effect depend on the ruling economic system. We must not forget that participatory practices represent attempts to locate artwork outside of the art market; therefore, one of the issues that arise, pointed out by Sophie Hope, is the difference arising between paid professionals and unpaid participants. [5] In that relationship, on the one side, we have professional artists who are, although not much, paid for their participation, while on the other hand, we have participants-spectators who participate voluntarily, in their free time and who are therefore not paid for their part of the production. It is clear that in order to resolve this issue, as Hope suggests herself, it is necessary to re-evaluate the mentioned distinction between paid professionals and

[3] Claire Bishop, *Artificial Hells, Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*, Verso, London, 2012.

[4] DelVe / Ivana Bago & Antonia Majača, “Spit in the Eye of Truth (and then quickly close your eyes before it). Between action and escapism in 60s and 70s contemporary art in SR Croatia”, In Jelena Vesić & Dojčić Zorana, *Exhibition Catalogue of Political Practices of (Post)Yugoslav art: RETROSPEKTIVA 01*, Belgrade: Prelom kolektiv, 2010, 98–124.

[5] Sophie Hope, “Access to the Mountain: Navigating the complexities of participation”, 2013. <https://www.ica.org.uk/blog/sophie-hope-participation> [Last accessed March 2014]

unpaid participants. Straightforward criticism of the modes of art production and consumption in capitalism is expressed through this type of contemplation of art and sociability, and the political potential manifested through producing an artwork.

As Walter Benjamin pointed out in the 1930s, being that social relationships are conditioned by production relationships, when we judge the politics of a piece we should not observe the artist’s declared sympathies but the position the artwork takes in the production relationships of the given era. [6] In the context of the post-Yugoslav art theory scene, there can be words about the gap between the imagined ideals and current cultural policies. Regardless of the political stances and ideologies of individuals, collectives or groups, the fact remains that the independent art scene largely depends on international funds, meaning that it also depends on the international, mostly European, apparatus. Therefore, even in cases when the artist’s declared sympathies and positions are based on communist ideas of resistance and self-organisation, they are forced to find ways of functioning within the existing neoliberal system. Here again we have the mentioned dualism ideal vs. practice, because regardless of how strong the vision of art as the only remaining shelter from the capitalist economy is, it indeed is not outside of that system. This still does not mean we cannot speak about the subversive potential of these practices and creating a different mode of sociability that remains outside of the values of the neoliberal system.

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Aside from production relationships dictated by the market as a product of political economy, another important moment is how collective practices impact the shaping of the public or counter-public. Namely, Alexander Kluge defined the public as the “factory of politics” [7], where the public sphere represents the space in which political and social change occurs, but only under the precondition of creating the counter-public with the potential to change and expand the possibility of public articulation of experience. Being that the typical representative or pseudo-public is shaped by factors such as the ideological state apparatus, dominant cultural policy and content of commercial nature, the role of participatory projects is to offer other ways of contemplating sociability than the imposed ones. In accordance with the ideas of collectivism on resistance and invention, here we have the moment of creating “collectivism of public” with the aim of producing the counter-public. In the context of the post-Yugoslav space, it mostly means resistance to the dominant narratives of newly forged state-nations, a traditional comprehension of the role of art and culture in building national identities, the politics of transition and privatisation, old and new forms of discrimination and segregation, etc. Because of their potential to associate various subjects with common principles and ideologies, collective practices aimed at socially engaged action in the community and production of political subjects possess emancipatory potential and at the same time do not limit their actions to the collective itself but rather expand it with the act of stepping out into public and opening the space for a wider participation of subjects who do not necessarily come from the fields of art and culture yet want to participate in the creation of a common counter-public. Here we do not speak solely and exclusively about the individual responsibility of the ‘artist as public intellectual’, [8] but the role of the community that, in the context of theatre, Rancière defined

[6] Walter Benjamin, *ibid*.

[7] Alexander Kluge, “On Film and the Public Sphere”, in *New German Critique*, no. 24/25, Autumn 1981–Winter 1982, p. 206–222.

[98] Simon Sheikh, “Representation, Contestation and Power: The Artist as Public Intellectual”, 2004. http://www.republicart.net/disc/aap/sheikh02_en.htm [Last accessed: June 2014]

with the following words: “the manner of taking time and space, performing body opposed to simple legal apparatus, a set of perceptions, gestures and attitudes which stand before and reshape political forms and institutions.” [9] For this type of community to be possible, it is necessary to start from the position that art is a public good, a space of knowledge production and production of emancipatory politics, a public sphere with the potential to form a platform for diverse and opposite subjectivities, politics and economies, a place where the battle for political subjectivisation takes place. Therefore we might say that contemplating collectivity and participation represents a significant step towards forming new models of art institutions that will not be one of the two dominant models: the modernist representative ‘white cube’, or cultural industries functioning according to the model of supply and demand with the purpose of creating symbolic and financial capital.

Walter Benjamin claimed in the 30s that a piece of art should actively intervene and produce a model that will enable the spectators to be involved with the production processes and take the role of participant instead of spectator. [10] Three decades later, Roland Barthes declared the death of the author, opposing the importance being given to the author within the capitalist ideology as a ‘person’, questioning the active reception and role of the spectator of the piece. [11] Collective and participatory art practices add on to these ideas and possess the capacity to directly criticise the bourgeois conception of the public sphere, whose basic goal is (self)representation for the sake of accumulating symbolic and financial capital. Apart from problematising the cult of individual authorship on the art market and apart from the desire to transform the passive spectator into an active participant, there is also the heterogeneous character of art collectives and groups challenging the division into private and public space. Another important factor is self-institutionalisation, being that every new group strives to rediscover already tested or introduce radically new ways of self-management. However, here Gregory Sholette warns that what may seem as an empty screen onto which new forms of organisation need to be projected has already been filled with traces of language, history, knowledge and material conditions. For the collective to channel these traces and use them in the appropriate manner, it is first needed to recognise how that same collective uses language and spatial metaphors, consciously or unconsciously. [12]

Self-management, independent production and control over own distribution are factors opposing both the art market and its discourse. When speaking about independent production in post-Yugoslav terms, many issues become evident, such as the impossibility of dialogue with state cultural policy, allocating minimum budgets for independent production, lack of working and exhibition space, inexistence of instruments to provide support to independent cultural workers, public administration resistance to new types of contracts that would be in the interest of independent culture workers, difficult cooperation of independent cultural workers with institutions, etc. Aside from external factors, there is also the complex issue of authorship of an art group and joint work principles and models, as the collectives gather different needs and

[9] Jacques Rancière, *Emancipovani gledalac*, Belgrade: Edicija Jugoslavija, biblioteka SVESKE , 2010.

[10] Walter Benjamin, *ibid.*

[11] Roland Barthes, “The Death of the Author”, In Claire Bishop (ed.), *Participation*, London: Whitechapel, 2006, p.41–45.

[12] Gregory Sholette, “Counting On Your Collective Silence: Notes on Activist Art as Collaborative Practice”, In *Afterimage: The Journal of Media and Cultural Criticism*, November 1999, p. 18–20. http://www.gregorysholette.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/04/09_counting1.pdf [Last accessed: June 2014]

affinities and even the problems of individuals joining them. Being a part of the collective means creating a space of equality and self-management, but also the possibility of experimenting with various styles and media. However, in practice there are often emerging problems within the collectives, because the question of defining authorship of the working group and creating group identity is always present. Factors impacting the working process and articulation of the common policy for the collective or group are absolutely the heterogeneousness of its members, intensiveness of meetings where a throng of ideas are presented, discussed, accepted and/or rejected, and then there are the individual differences in class, age, capacities, knowledge, experience and social status. Although the words ‘group’ and ‘collective’ cannot include all these factors, Sholette considers that it is exactly these differences and corresponding friction that render a collective sustainable. Of course, a tremendous effort is needed to achieve balance between individual needs and collective interest, and the continuity of the public profile as such – as the individual authorship cult is strong at the art market and it therefore often happens that the collective ends up in the shadow of one or several of its individuals.

Being that they are questioning the position of the individual in capitalism and the promotion of the individual artist’s autonomy at the market, art collectives represent a subversive discourse questioning the art production and distribution apparatus inherited from modernism and according to which the chief role of the museums and other art institutions is the (self) representation of the bourgeois class and its values. Participatory art practices aspire towards a collective dimension of experience, erasing the distinction between the author and the audience, professional and amateur, production and reception. As Irit Rogoff points out, the potential for cultural participation is created only after we recognise the art field as an interconnective field, which is in collision with the usual models of representation and/or contemplation. [13] She speaks about art producing the “space of appearance” that Hannah Arendt, in the following words, defines as: “where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly.” [14] In this way, the exhibition as a “space of appearance”, a space between people who act and speak together and produce novelty through the circulation of present meanings constituting sociability, becomes a place where political subjectivisation is feasible. Instead of carrying out political actions of ephemeral character and translating diverse sets of policies into the field of aesthetics and language, Irit Rogoff proposes “acting without a model”, believing that in this way a political space is created in which the audience, i.e. the community, produces meanings. [15]

Another important issue was considered within the forum *No One Belongs Here More Than You* facilitated by artist Margareta Kern: “Which political, aesthetic and social positions are challenged when working collectively with/in contemporary art today? And how do these practices impact the daily life politics and shape its sociability?” [16] When we consider this question within the

[13] Irit Rogoff, “We – Collectivities, Mutualities, Participations”, In Dorothea von Hantelmann & Marjorie Jongbloed (eds.), *I Promise It's Political – Performativity in Art*, Cologne: Museum Ludwig, 2002, p. 126–133.

[14] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1958., quoted in Rogoff, *ibid.*

[15] Rogoff, *ibid.*

[16] Margareta Kern, grupa h.arta (Maria Crista, Anca Gyemant, Rodica Tache), Gözde Ikin, the *ff* art network (Antje Majewski, Charlotte Cullinan, Juliane Solmsdorf), the group a7.außeninsatz (Margret Schütz, Greta Hoheisel), “No One Belongs Here More Than You” forum within the programme of the 54th October Salon, *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, exhibition venue: Zepter Expo, former Kluz Department Store, 13 October 2013.

context of former Yugoslav countries, we must keep in mind that the concept of art as a public good is being rejected, the state is withdrawing from funding independent culture and the public administration does not recognise the importance of the independent cultural scene. For collective and participatory art practices, this means enthusiasm, flexible work and (self) exploitation based on the idealistic assumption of love towards art, which opens the issue of art and money problematised by Jelena Vesić within her lecture “Administration of Aesthetics



Living Death Camp, public dicussion, The Old Fairground
(Rade Končar, Auto Company), Belgrade 5. Oct. 2013,
photo by Milica Lopičić

or Undercurrents of Negotiating Artistic Jobs – Between Love and Money, Between Money and Love...” Through viewing external or internal factors of contemporary artistic production in various segments and at various levels within the *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition, the issue of participation as politicisation of the working process occupies a significant spot because, let us remind ourselves, “the aim is not to make political art, but to make art politically.” [17]



Nina Bunjevac, Fatherland, digital print, comic,
2013, photo by Ana Kostić

[17] Discussion between Gregory Sholette & Jelena Vesić, “Amateur, Informal, Activist, Self-Organised... ‘Dark Matter’ and Polarisation of Artistic Work”, In Ana Vujanović & Aldo Milohnić (eds.), *Politicality of Performance*, Belgrade: TKH, 2011, p. 60–67.

Tanja Marković

Adriana Zaharijević
Katarina Lončarević
Nada Duhaček
Iva Nenić
Ksenija Stevanović

Tanja Marković is a psychologist and feminist activist. She is one of the founders of the Centre for Queer Studies and Uzbuna – a work community for social-political theory, activism and art. She actively cooperated and continues to cooperate with Women at Work, Women in Black and the Centre for Nonviolent Action Sarajevo-Belgrade. In her work, she challenges links between artistic and activist practices.

TANJA MARKOVIĆ

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FEMINIST NETWORKS OF KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND EXCHANGE

The 54th October Salon by the Red Min(e)d curatorial collective brought to the public eye art imbued with feminist epistemai as a practice of speaking out about the personal as political, as a meeting place for the feminist and artistic approaches to world knowledge; the mundane, the power and resistances; places of colonial subjugation and origin of a voice of the post-colonial subjects; gender inequalities, relationships and structured hierarchies in which we work and act; class antagonisms; insufficiently visible knowledge; weak points in the patriarchy already fractured by histories and continuity of various feminist struggles; queer strategies in coping with heteronormative violence; possibilities of solidarity and collective actions as attempts to challenge traditional art world hierarchies – in a world already weary from the new economic crisis whose end is nowhere in sight, while the remains of the welfare state crumble and while art and its institutions are marginalised, particularly in the poorer countries on the fringes and semi-fringes of the developed capitalist world.

This exhibition offers us the possibility to contemplate feminist ways and spaces of affiliation with the social sphere through art and through confronting everything that opposes this affiliation here and now. Some of the performances, such as “The Museum of Non-Participation: The Patriarchal Clock” succeeds in creating at least a temporary ‘safe space’ in which to speak about violence and to experience a very personal exchange between all participants, rendering visible the good strategies of feminist activism in creating the least possible hierarchic relations – utterly alien to the patriarchal structure of sociability – based on horizontal connection between various experiential female positions, and in this case, between the authors of the performance and its participants, as well as between the participants themselves.

The other, antagonistic, space of sociability was created with the “Living Death Camp”, from the Monument and Four Faces of Omarska groups. The antagonism was launched by the unpreparedness of the environment where the event took place to completely face the facts related to the wars of the 1990s. Connections with the feminist episteme were not readily visible here, except if we consider that, in Serbia, some of the key actors in launching the process of facing the past and examining Serbia’s responsibility in relation to the wars of the 1990s were feminists. In the light of new revisionist tendencies in interpreting the history of WWII existing throughout the region, it was crucially important to reflect back on the Staro Sajmište camp because its example properly reflects other important issues of our existence: domination of private capital interests, suppressing facts about the anti-Fascist struggle, constructing a

new mythologised historical image fitting for the class in power and establishing continuity with collaborators rather than anti-Fascist fighters and WWII victors.

In these circumstances, from the string of topics that we – participating in the events of this Salon – initiated as feminist activists, for this occasion I focused on the possibility of contemplating feminist epistemology as a framework in which the curatorial practices of the Red Min(e)d collective could be placed. This is a collective contemplation, in keeping with the good traditions of feminist action and organisation, and in accordance with this, the authorship of the texts was delegated to those authors who contemplated the topic, especially for this occasion, as not so connected with specific pieces exhibited at the 54th October Salon but rather from the framework of the everyday practices of their work. This originated the network of possible questions from which we can now embark on reading the Red Min(e)d’s curatorial manuscript, regardless of whether the crucial conceptual strongholds of that network were borrowed from feminist theory, philosophy, art theory, music theory or feminist pedagogy.

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Adrijana Gvozdenović, Afterparty,
sculpture, 2012, photo by Tina Smrekar

Adriana Zaharijević, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory in Belgrade. She is the author of *Postajanje ženom* [*Becoming Woman*, 2010] and editor of *Neko je rekao feminizam?* [*Did Somebody Say Feminism?* 2007, 2008, 2012]. In her theoretical work, she combines political philosophy and feminist theory, with a particular interest in the genealogy of sexuality.

ADRIANA ZAHARIJEVIĆ

SITUATING KNOWLEDGE

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An Interview by Tanja Marković

TM: What is feminist epistemology?

AZ: In their introduction to *Feminist Epistemologies*, Linda Alcoff and Elizabeth Potter claim that from the perspective of traditional philosophy, the connection between feminism and epistemology is contradictory, almost an oxymoron. [1] If we take it that epistemology deals with the criteria for the establishment of a value-neutral, objective production of knowledge about the world, and that feminist/women’s studies are defined precisely through their politicality (non-value-neutral position) and refusal of impartiality, this is indeed true. However, if the ‘world’ is not understood as Kantian *Ding an sich*, as an entity separate from knowers and from the rules according to which knowledge is established as valid and according to which knowledge shall be produced, if we observe the world as a place inhabited by people in coexistence, then a different set of questions could be proposed. Closely connected to this are the feminist rejection of abstract rationality and the question that hits the very underbelly of traditional epistemology: *who is the one who (has the power to) know*, and within what networks of knowability and expressivity can knowledge be produced as true knowledge?

Some of the ensuing questions could be the following. Modern epistemology began in a room with a fireplace, where Descartes “delivered his mind of every care, procured for himself an assured leisure in a peaceable retirement and found time to seriously and freely address himself” to challenging all his own former opinions [2]. For feminist epistemology, the crucial question becomes whether knowledge is produced in these isolated individual projects or within various forms of communities. Is knowledge a compound complex whose origins and development can be connected to manifold cognitive and non-cognitive processes, or is it an entity created by abstract rationality, convinced that the senses do not lie, that it is not dreaming and that it is not being deceived by *deus deceptor*?

Feminists also focus on the embodiment of the subject of knowledge. Contrary to epistemological tradition, they try to restore desires, feelings, interests and partially conditioned perspectives (conditioned by age, health and the subject’s gender and his/her other important characteristics) into the knower’s ‘pure reason’. Feminist epistemology therefore gives the body back to the subject. This reintroduction of the body inevitably poses a question about whose body that is

[1] Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter (eds.), *Feminist Epistemologies*, New York & London: Routledge, 1993. http://occupytampa.org/files/tristan/fem/books/Feminist%20Epistemologies_nodrm.pdf [Last accessed: March 2014]

[2] René Descartes, *Meditation on First Philosophy*, first published 1641.

and what is it like – what is it capable of? In other words, if it is not taken as a mere corporeal substance (*res extensa*), the body itself becomes the place in which power is inscribed and from which power can emanate. And the embodied subject of knowledge therefore becomes the conscious or unconscious producer of knowledge that can be politicized.

TM: Where is the politicality of women’s studies in general and feminist epistemology particularly?

AZ: Feminist epistemology begins with the premise that the ostensibly neutral bearer of knowledge, the knowing individual, is in fact always male. However, on closer inspection, this embodiment is not only gender-related. It is also inscribed with other tangible prerogatives. Contemporary feminist epistemologies do not privilege gender as an isolated category, but try to *contextualise the humanity of gender*. Let us imagine, say, that Descartes began his *Meditations* by placing next to the fire an old black slave who had just returned from the plantation where he had been picking cotton all day long. From the perspective of modern epistemology, it is harder to make this rationality abstract, but it remains no less human. Hence, the norms exist even in the domain of constitution and production of knowledge, and these norms do not reflect the logic of knowing but the politicality of the knowledge structure. Therefore, it is important to insist that feminist epistemology attempt to show the *political dimension of the epistemological project*.

If we view epistemology as a framework or theory that explains how knowledge of the world is established or generated, i.e. shows us how to understand the nature of ‘reality’, then epistemology is indeed important for feminism and women’s studies. By questioning what we believe to be knowledge/science/fact, we become able to show its normative background. As Ankica Čakardić said in her text “Mind and Gender” (2010), the “critical analysis of existing epistemological theory disciplines and sub-disciplines is not sufficient, but it is important to have in mind two procedures: a) locating the span of knowledge into contexts of social relations, institutions, interests and roles, and b) the necessity of a complete deconstruction of paradigms and concepts within which knowledge theories, research norms and their guarantees, adequacy of rationality and self-understandability of the categorical apparatus are located.” [3]

In other words, the goal (and the space of politicality) of feminist epistemology is not to “just satisfy intellectual curiosity, but to contribute to the goal of emancipation: spreading democracy in knowledge production”. [4]

TM: Why are, in feminist epistemology, the subject and knowledge defined as situated and what are the premises of such knowledge?

AZ: The subject of feminist epistemology is situated, and hence knowledge itself is viewed as *situated*. Contrary to traditional epistemology, this subject is not treated as abstract; the knowledge it produces is not universal and it is shown as conditioned by her/his time/culture/community/specific characteristics. It is impossible to neglect the social *context* and *status* of

[3] Ankica Čakardić, “Um i spol. Kontingencija feminističkoga koncepta socijalne epistemologije”, In Ankica Čakardić, (ed.), *Privilegiranje rubova. Intervencije i prilozi feminističkoj epistemologiji*, Zagreb: Centar za ženske studije i Hrvatsko filozofsko društvo, 2010, p. 19-65.

[4] Alcoff & Potter, *ibid*.

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the knower. Knowledge is not created in a vacuum: it is not separate from historical, social and political circumstances. Thence, the issues of power and acting, in traditional philosophy placed exclusively within political philosophy, *are important* in the sphere of knowing. This leads to erasure of the strict disciplinary delineations and delineations between the spheres of human action and human thought. Finally, facts and values cannot be strictly separated: the manner in which reality is valued impacts the manner in which we interpret it and deliver facts and true knowledge about it.

118 In her text “Situated Knowledges”, Donna Haraway expounds the concept of situated knowledge and, in a sense, sums up the significance of the feminist epistemology project: “We need the power of modern critical theories dealing with how meanings and bodies get made, not in order to deny meanings and bodies, but in order to live in meanings and bodies that have a chance for the future.” [5]



Ivana Smiljanić, You'll Remember Me, installation,
2011, photo by Ana Kostić

[5] Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”, In *Feminist Studies*, Vol. 14 (3), Autumn, 1988, p. 575-599.



Dina Rončević, Hot Hot Burning Water,
object and video documentation, 2013,
photo by Tina Smrekar

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KATARINA IONČAREVIĆ

FEMINIST EPISTEMOLOGIES:
“SERIOUS” THEORIES OR
“IRRATIONAL ‘OLD WIVES’ TALES”?

As a distinct, autonomous field of inquiry within philosophy, epistemology or the theory of knowledge as a discipline dealing with the possibility, nature and limits of human intellectual achievement begins its development with Descartes in the 17th century. His idea to challenge all his beliefs, “to demolish everything completely and start again from the foundations”, [1] signifies a turning point in philosophy and – from that moment – political and practical influences, economic and social interests, beliefs supported by tradition, become irrelevant in the pursuit of knowledge and truth.

Although the development of the modern epistemology projects begins with Descartes, it can be argued that *in one sense* his ‘epistemological break’ with the pre-modern period was not so radical. In pre-modern Europe, epistemic credibility was in correlation with social rank and privilege, and knowledge and truth were a possession of the social elites – kings, their courts and religious leaders. [2] All *others*, the non-elite, were considered as epistemically unreliable and unable to distinguish between true justified beliefs from falsehoods.

‘Non-elites’ were ‘ignorant’ peasants, ‘immature’ children, ‘irrational’ women and ‘unreasonable’ savages. Although modern and Enlightenment epistemology speaks of the universal abstract individual without any particular features such as gender, race, class, as the paradigm of the *universal knower* who can achieve the neutral, ahistorical point of view in order to obtain objective (true) knowledge, a critical and contextual reading of the history of Western epistemology shows that epistemology with Descartes and after him continues to carry the legacy of authoritarianism. Contrary to the usual assumption that modern epistemology does not take the subjectivity of the knower into the account of justified true beliefs, the critical history of modern epistemology shows that it “attributed epistemic justification only to those subjects who could demonstrate the proper epistemic attitude, characterized by the use of reason and the maintenance of an objective stance”. [3] Throughout the history of philosophy, these subjects were *scientists* and

[1] René Descartes, “Meditations on First Philosophy”, In *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, Volume II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 12.
[2] Linda Alcoff, *Real Knowing: New Versions of the Coherence Theory*, Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008, p. 201–205.
[3] Ibid., p. 202.

philosophers who represented the dominant *male elite*. Modern epistemology, albeit conceived as abstract inquiry isolated from everything particular, does allow a very specific subjectivity (of the male elite) to structure its project. And again, those who do not belong to the dominant male elite of philosophers and scientists have been entirely excluded from the realm of knowledge and truth as epistemically unreliable.

During the 1970s and 1980s, feminist theorists recognized several distinctive features shared by traditional epistemologies. Firstly, the assumption that a disembodied reason can produce accurate and objective accounts of the world – the “‘God trick’ was pervasive”, [4] meaning that the disembodied and unlocated reason is able to “see everywhere from nowhere”. [5] Secondly, all traditional epistemologists believe in the progressive logic of reason and science. Thirdly, they all assumed that the differences between knowers were irrelevant. Accordingly, they were in a position to claim human homogeneity and universality. Fourthly, there is a possibility of transcendence through the *omnipotence of reason*: the knower, through the proper use of reason, can escape the limits of the body, time and space, and contemplate the eternal problems related to ‘man’ as a knower. And, in fifth place, all traditional epistemologists deny the connection between power and knowledge; they claim that the *knower* and *power* should be held to be as distinct. [6]

The research field of feminist epistemology today, some 30 years after its emergence, is so heterogeneous and dynamic that it can hardly be reduced to a single philosophical discipline or sub-discipline. It does not even entirely belong to philosophy – although it did provide the initial spark for the feminist reasoning about the epistemological issues. Feminist epistemologies, always necessarily plural, consider the concepts of knowledge, truth, justification, status of the subject, etc., beyond the traditional framework. They define epistemology as “theorizing about knowledge” [7] in general, and as inseparable from politics. [8]

Among other things, the field of research we call feminist epistemologies can be analysed through the classification of various feminist approaches to epistemology, established as early as 1986 by Sandra Harding. She introduced three major contrasting theoretical frameworks she called *feminist empiricism*, *feminist standpoint theories* and *feminist postmodernism*. The classification should be understood as provisory, as the development of feminist epistemologies in subsequent decades has not only shown that it is not able to encompass everything represented by various feminist approaches to the epistemological problems, but that the very boundaries between the offered theoretical frameworks are not always that sharp, and that neither do they exclude each other necessarily and in every case. Feminist epistemologies start from certain shared assumptions: rejection of hierarchical dualisms (mind/body, subject/object, facts/values, etc.), which are the foundation of traditional epistemology; knowledge is always understood as specific,

[4] Nancy Hartsock, “Postmodernism and Political Change: Issues for Feminist Theory”, In Susan Hekman, ed., *Feminist Interpretations of Michel Foucault*, University Park: Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, p. 41; cf. Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective”. In *Feminist Studies* 14(3), 1988, p. 581.
[5] Donna Haraway, *ibid.*
[6] Nancy Hartsock, *ibid.*, 41; Jane Flax, “Postmodernism and Gender Relations in Feminist Theory”. In *Signs* 12(4), 1987, p. 624.
[7] Linda Alcoff, *ibid.*, p. 4.
[8] Katarina Lončarević, Fakultet političkih nauka Univerzitet u Beogradu “Feministička Epistemologija: Nastanak, Razvoj i Ključni Problem”, In *Godišnjak FPN* 7, 2012, p. 41–59.

'situated', local, perspectival and contextual, rather than universal, neutral and non-perspectival (the 'view from nowhere'); and each feminist epistemology examines the relationship between power and knowledge. What, then, are the differences that fulfill and shape the heterogeneous field of feminist epistemologies?

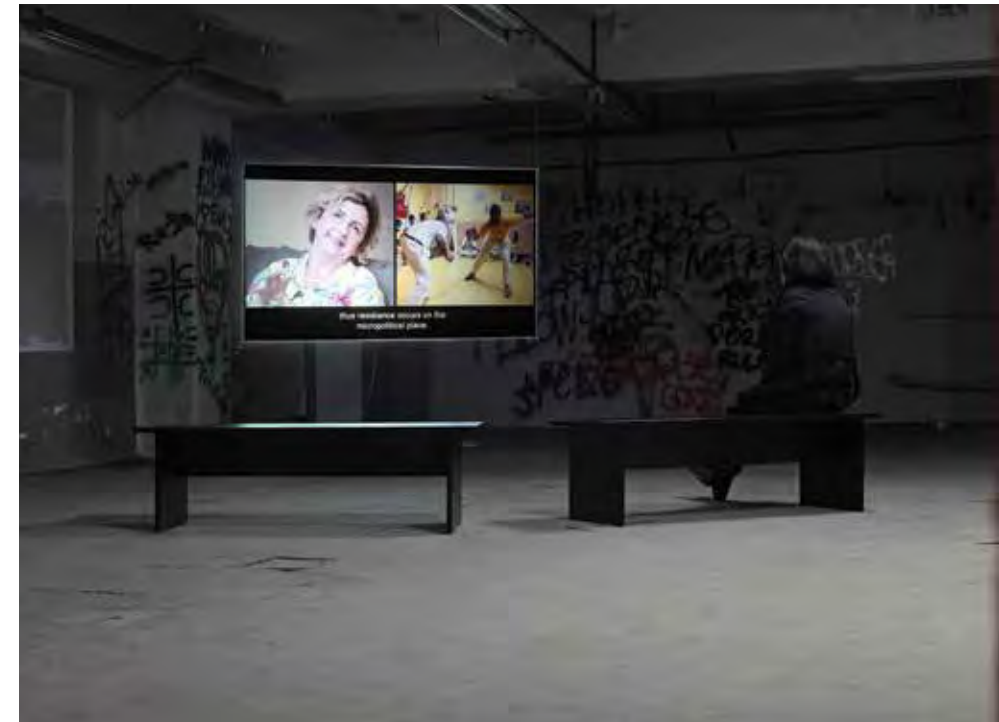
Feminist empiricism is an orientation that is more or less accepted within epistemology as a philosophical discipline as a relevant approach, as it uses the terminology and the conceptual framework of analytic philosophy. It represents a form of reconstructed empiricism that, under the influence of developed feminist methodology – especially the new feminist methods of observation – has a goal to encompass a far greater field of empirical evidence than traditional empiricism, and in that way to expose and confront the androcentrism of the scientific knowledge process. Feminist empiricism primarily emphasises the social nature of knowledge production, arguing that the traditional analysis that focuses on the individual, i.e. the isolated knower, and which does not consider his/her social position, is flawed. Hence, in various forms of feminist empiricism it is claimed that subjects of knowledge are primarily communities rather than isolated individuals of traditional epistemology. [9]



Nandipha Mntambo, *Paso Doble*, video, 2011, photo by Duško Jelen

[9] cf. Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter, "Introduction: When Feminisms Intersect Epistemology", In Linda Alcoff & Elizabeth Potter (eds.), *Feminist Epistemologies*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 1–14; Helen, Longino, *Science as Social Knowledge*, Princeton University Press, 1990; Helen, Longino, "Subjects, Power and Knowledge: Description and Prescription in Feminist Philosophies of Science", In Alcoff & Potter (ur.), *ibid.*, p. 101–120; Lynn Hankinson Nelson, "Epistemological Communities", In Alcoff & Potter (eds.), *ibid.*, p. 121–160.

Different from feminist empiricism that is primarily, if not exclusively, focused on the field of acquiring and developing scientific knowledge, feminist standpoint theories are critical theories that have a purpose to develop knowledge useful for the oppressed and marginalised groups in society. Feminist standpoint theories differ from one another significantly, but they all start from representing the world from a distinct socially situated *perspective* claiming to be in possession of epistemic privilege or authority. "According to analogy with the Marxist claim about the epistemic privilege of the proletariat's standpoint over the core economic, sociologist and historical questions, different versions of feminist standpoint theories establish their claims of epistemic privilege of different features of women's social situation. Class, race, gender and sexuality necessarily structure and set limits to the knower's understanding of reality and, therefore, inform all knowledge claims. Although there are 'different' standpoint epistemologies, they all claim that certain positions produce a 'less false', 'better', even 'correct' and 'true' understanding of the world'. [10]



Angela Melitopoulos, Maurizio Lazzarato, *Assemblages*, video, 2010–2012, photo by Ana Kostić

[10] Katarina Lončarević, *ibid.*, p. 47.

Finally, the position of so-called feminist postmodernism does not develop a specific theory but critiques of proposed feminist epistemologies. In the postmodernist spirit, this orientation starts from the idea that there is no anchoring point or firm ground for knowledge and that the modern subject – absolute, universal and disinterested – does not exist. Our situatedness cannot be overcome by relying on universality, objectivity, rationality, essence or truth. Our situatedness necessarily involves locality, partiality, instability and uncertainty. These theorists share with standpoint ones the belief that knowledge is local, specific, situated and perspectival, but deny that – since all knowledge is partial – some perspective can claim epistemic privilege. All perspectives, including the feminist one, are fragmented and partial and none possess the epistemic privilege over social issues. While, for instance, feminist empiricism frequently criticises standpoint theories for their lack of normative criteria based on which it is to be decided which standpoint is epistemically superior to another, feminist postmodernists challenge the success of any approach that has an ambition to offer ‘better’ knowledge that is ‘more progressive’ in relation to others and “less contaminated by false beliefs and dominating relations of power”. [11] Standpoint theories are accused of adopting the Enlightenment framework that enables them to realise that “[a]ny feminist standpoint will necessarily be partial”. [12]

Feminist epistemology as a heterogeneous and multidisciplinary field of research enabled new and unusual philosophical approaches – both to traditional epistemological problems and through introducing questions and problems that are not asked in epistemology as philosophical discipline. Over 30 years after the first isolated attempts by feminist theorists to develop feminist epistemologies, the field of research that was previously labelled as ‘irrational’ and with no ‘value’, today clearly shows that “knowledge remains central to maintaining and changing unjust systems of power”. [13]

[11] Jane Flax, “The End of Innocence”, In Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, New York & London: Routledge, 1992, p. 456.

[12] Flax 1987, *Ibid.* p. 642.

[13] Patricia Hill Collins, “Comment on Hekman’s ‘Truth and Method: Feminist Standpoint Theory Revisited’: Where’s the Power?”, In *Signs* 22(2), 1997, p. 375.



LA Questionnaire display at the
54. October Salon, photo by Tina Smrekar

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nADA dUHAČEK

FEMINIST
P E D A G O G Y

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In order to discuss feminist education, one must first consider feminist knowledge. Feminist epistemology represents a wide and diverse field that is based on a critique of objective, universal and fixed knowledge. In her “Cyborg Manifesto”, Donna Haraway defined science as “the persuasion of the relevant actors that one’s manufactured knowledge is a route to a desired form of very objective power”. [1] What happens when an education system is constructed on the foundations of this kind of knowledge? It is not surprising that the attempts of progressive pedagogies do not bring about essential changes in power relations, because they do not challenge their epistemological and pedagogical bases, taking into consideration gender as a category.

Toward the end of the 20th century, Valerie Walkerdine and The Girls and Mathematics Unit in Great Britain analyzed why the majority of girls in high school and university choose not to study mathematics or other natural or technical sciences. This longitudinal study offers various and complex insights into the decisions of young women belonging to different classes and ‘racial’/ethnic identities who reject in advance potentially interesting and lucrative professions. The theoretical framework of this explanation takes us back to the 18th century, when modern discourse (in Foucault’s sense) became dominant. Modernity strengthened the idea of women as lacking the capacity for rational thought. And precisely this capacity is closely related to the ability to understand and produce mathematical knowledge.

Rationality and rational thinking were firmly bound to masculinity from the Enlightenment onward. The female body and the female mind become objects of the (male) scientific gaze. From the position of authority, which produces scientific knowledge, it became possible to reach definite conclusions that defined the female mind as inferior. Therefore, the exclusion of women from education systems (emerging in the 19th century) was logically based on their proven *inability* to think rationally. [2] In the early 20th century, women had to prove they were rational, sane and capable of learning and understanding abstract ideas. Middle class women slowly entered the public sphere, primarily through caring and nurturing professions such as teaching.

[1] Donna Haraway, “Cyborg Manifesto”, in *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, London: Free Association Books, 1991, p. 184.
[2] Valerie Walkerdine, *Counting Girls Out: Girls and Mathematics*, London: Falmer Press, 1998 [1989], p. 34–35.

In this lies the contradiction that persists today in child-centered pedagogy; a dichotomy has been created between the caring, passive woman and the curious, active (male) child. According to Valerie Walkerdine:

The ‘capacity for nurturance’ grounded in a naturalized femininity, the object of the scientific gaze, becomes the basis for woman’s fitness to facilitate knowing and reproduce the knower: the support for – yet the opposite to – the production of knowledge. [3]

This confirmed a sexual division between production and reproduction of knowledge. This dichotomy persists to this day in child-centered pedagogy because it positions rote-learning (often associated with girls) and ‘real’ understanding (associated with boys without much critical reflection) as mutually exclusive opposites. In schools throughout the global North, female students receive this message through a hidden curriculum, which clearly instructs them to be nice, quiet and follow the rules. This message fits the definitions of femininity dominant since the Enlightenment, but it is opposite to the characteristics of the active student who is curious, takes risks and asks questions. Experiencing the contradiction between the ideal (male) student and conflicting expectations of their femininity leads to an expected result, and they choose schools, universities and jobs that do not violate the patriarchal norm. When they get into scientific and academic fields previously largely occupied by men, girls and women can be assistants (caring role) and teachers (reproductive work) and they are seldom given space and recognition as innovators (production of new knowledge) or leaders of research projects or science institutions.

A century ago, our ancestors fought for liberation by becoming teachers. Today, young women make up a successful majority in many universities throughout the world, but higher education is no longer the prestigious guarantee of a higher standard of living. Power has shifted to other locations. In “Cyborg Manifesto”, Donna Haraway turns our attention to the risk of “lapsing into boundless difference and giving up the confusing task of making partial, real connection”. [4] In the context of education systems and progressive pedagogy, it is important to link the ways in which schools continue to represent the necessary but insufficient potential for emancipation. One possible connection begins with an acknowledgement of gender as a category in everyday life and the mathematics classroom.

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[3] Ibid., p. 37.
[4] Donna Haraway, *ibid.*, p. 161.



Lorena Herrera Rashid, Untitled, sculpture,
2013, photo by Ana Kostić



Marko Peljhan and Mathew Biederman,
Arctic Perspective Initiative -Sea, Tundra and Ice Paper,
installation, 2011, photo by Duško Jelen

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IVA NENIĆ

‘TO EXPERIENCE ART’
AS A FORM OF FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE
OF THE WORLD

The issue of the relationship between feminist epistemology and social practices of art/culture does not boil down solely to the relationships between interpretation and implementation: staying true to feminist epistemai would also include work in/around art as a form of feminist *praxis*, related ideas-as-material-acts producing movement, deflection, a rift in the fabric of ‘consciousness’, announcing and at times embodying an entirely different world/worlds. Feminist and gender-oriented art theory and history, whose original tasks were: extracting women’s creative work from the historical abyss, searching for women artists who were largely absent from the canon of ‘great’ Western art and revaluating the proper feminine experience, find themselves before new challenges, comparable to the work of those artists who advocate, embody and continue to develop feminist principles and perspectives. Nochlin’s seminal question “Why have there been no great women artists?” is replaced with the question *what* and *how* artists can do by displaying – through the material sign structures of their pieces – various social and political consequences of gender asymmetry and “being of gender”, speaking *from* their positions as gendered subjects, *dancing* various social shifts and utopias through the lens of gender identities. [1] Art and culture theory that take feminist epistemology ‘seriously’ are inextricably connected with this – not only in terms of diversity of the postmodern environment, but also in terms of their basic standpoint.

What sort of knowledge and interpretation position do feminist art and art theory produce when joined? That can be answered readily: this knowledge is situated, ideologically ‘tuned’ by the subjectivised position of the interpreteress, but it is simultaneously of such a type (or it ought to be) to unveil its boundaries and reaches, open its contents and simultaneously expose the rules of the game, without addressing the shining ‘truth’ but rather delineating power relations and the effects of art theory impacts as intervening forms of working in society. Or, as formulated by Jane Flax in her postulate of feminist epistemology – “to take responsibility is to situate ourselves firmly within contingent and imperfect contexts”. [2] In a late-Marxist key, art is practice that indirectly or allusively allows for knowledge of the ideological conditions that shaped it (or the ideological allusion-illusion, as termed by Althusser, is delivered to the senses as a special

[1] Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?”, in *Art News*, 69, January, 1971, p. 22–39. http://f.hypotheses.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/512/files/2012/01/whynogreatwomenartists_4.pdf [Last accessed: June 2014]
[2] Jane Flax, “The End of Innocence”, In Judith Butler & Joan W. Scott (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, New York & London: Routledge, 1992, p. 445–463.

form of cognition/knowledge). In other words, art does not produce knowledge *stricto sensu*. However, the outlined mechanism does not by any means grasp all of the historical or cultural formations we call art: the triangle of postmodernism, feminism and contemporary art practices frequently intentionally emphasizes the ideological and interventionist nature of art practices where “provocation and excess are replaced with deconstruction and multigenre reinterpretation of mechanisms used to display sexuality in adverts, media, economy and art”. [3] i.e. various segments of social ‘reality’ are denaturalised, discussed and mediated through the work of art, and in the form of ‘small’ knowledge/truths that do not claim exclusivity thus get to be returned to the society. In these cases, through occupying a feminist episteme, it is precisely art that in its materiality directly houses the potential for transformative knowledge and shakes the established worldviews, instigating caution or insecurity where stability of identity clichés is expected, ultimately and openly pointing out the ‘rules of the game’ that reinforce seemingly irrefutable ‘social truths’ and calling for disobedience and irresponsiveness. Australian feminist art collective VNS Matrix does precisely this when in their “Cyberfeminist Manifesto for the 21st Century” they declare the clitoris to be the entrance to the matrix, simultaneously criticizing the assumed connection between manhood and technology and literally overtaking symbolic and actual techno-power credentials from the position of a female subject; in her series of photographs (classic photographic portraits, pseudo-historical and fashion photos), Cindy Sherman documents the changing identities of women, sometimes even equipping them with prosthetic extensions, showing (and intentionally intensifying) the factual impacts of oppressing the identity with ideology and unmasking the ‘neutrality’ of aesthetic categories; Martha Rosler’s performances, installations and photo-collages deconstruct the political ‘insignificance’ of the private space traditionally reserved for women and subject them to counter-identification (for instance, the “Semiotics of the Kitchen” video, where the artist, eyes fixed on the audience in front of the TV, ‘displays’ the functions of kitchen utensils – using a series of gestures that boil over from the purely conventional into the intentionally rough/aggressive, in order to create discontinuity in connection with the sight of a female body as a sign of the private sphere).

The system of ruling epistemai in contemporary feminist art and art theory does not exclude perspectives inherited from earlier times in history when different waves of feminism pervaded the fields of art and social theory. The reasons for women’s absence from art canons are still being analysed and we are still working in parallel to introduce the experience of the dispersed female subject and the politically related experience of other oppressed/minority groups into the field of art; that which is definitely more present and expressed more coherently is the focalisation of the feminist perspective and the initiating of its emancipatory, disturbing and activist character. Together with the transformations in art worlds, however, a regrouping in the ranks of theory is also needed: it is required to open up wider space for feminist intervention that will not postulate the hierarchy between ‘feminist’ and ‘non-feminist’ art as its new common-sense category. The works I quoted were intentionally not placed in an ordered and chronological manner: they could be joined by numerous examples of the work of artists that originated outside of the privileged realms of high art – in the mass and alternative popular culture, in traditional communities

[3] Miško Šuvaković, “Feministička umetnost”, In *Pojmovnik moderne i postmoderne likovne umetnosti i teorije posle 1950*, Belgrade & Novi Sad: SANU & Prometej, 1999, p. 89–91.

(folklore and folklorisms), in various everyday practices: some of them were dropped from the mainstream and from feminist projects alike – remember, for example, the blind women *guslars* in the Balkans or the *damenkapelle* (women's orchestras) from the late of 19th and early 20th centuries; remember the art of needlepoint. Although these are practices that obviously could not involve any sort of feminist orientation, the specific feminine performance in their domains must not be forgotten or cast away into the abyss of history solely because they are not comprised in the ruling episteme. In fact, any 'gender inclusion' in art, achieving at least a minimal emancipatory and/or sobering impact and thereby opening up space for female subjects – however different or 'unfree', however much caught in the grip of essentialism in relation to contemporary emancipation discourses, ought to be worthy of attention of a feminist art theory that simultaneously recognises certain insights, identifies their limits and freedoms they have achieved in their factual ideological circumstances. Therefore, the Feminist intervention into the field of art, apart from providing support for clearly profiled feminist art paradigms starting from situated knowledge, should enable new strategic alliances by way of thoroughly shuffling and reconsolidating its own epistemic framework.



Lala Raščić, *The Damned Dam*, performance,
photo by Duško Jelen



Alma Suljević, *Bosanka (Women's writing)*,
performance, photo by Duško Jelen

Ksenija Stevanović is interested in a critical examination of performance in music, experimental and improvised music in the digital age, the position of the voice in the practices of contemporary women composers and opera. She was born in Belgrade, where she graduated from musicology studies at the Belgrade Faculty of Music, with a paper dedicated to the biopolitical reading of the opera. She deals in concert organisation, musical criticism and translation from French and English and is employed as music editor at the 3rd Programme of Radio Belgrade.

KSENIJA STEVANOVIĆ

134 THE SPACE OF
(SELF) LISTENING

At some point during the 54th October Salon, the new single by lady Gaga “Do What U Want” appeared, announcing her forthcoming album *ArtPop*. Walking through the exhibition, the chorus of the song, like an obsessive melody, an earworm, would not cease repeating itself. Feminist epistemology, I would say, begins with the thematisation and problematisation of the ‘body’, i.e. knowledge of the empirical, knowledge that is outside of institutions, which is unrecorded and divorced from history. In other words, in the final consequence, this is a knowledge that lacks language.

“Do what you want with my body,” Gaga says, and then adds “You can’t have my heart/And you won’t use my mind but/Do what you want (with my body).”

And continues: “You can’t stop my voice, cause/You don’t own my life but/Do what you want (with my body).”

In correlation with this year’s October Salon set up by the feminist-oriented curatorial group Red Min(e)d, my subconscious musical choice is as peculiar as it is signifying. It should be noted that the area of my expertise is music and that as a musicologist I find myself, in most cases, removed from the visual world. Although, today it is hard to say that we can observe cultural production as solely a domain of images or as the exclusive space of sound. Let’s say that if the image is omnipresent, so is sound in our digital age. This was also the case at the October Salon, entitled *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, where the pieces were exhibited with more or less discrete sound coming from certain installations. This was the nowadays almost mandatory electronic white noise – the clump of electrical reverbs and higher harmonics that represents, more so each day, the ‘neutral’ presence of the acoustic in the signifier of the contemporary.

At the same time, it should be noted that this type of sound has no body. It is in fact without a single, central source. It belongs to the domain of acousmatic sound, taken in the broadest sense. One of the pieces exhibited at the Salon, “SQUEEEQUE – The Improbable Igloo” by Alexis O’Hara, is an igloo made of loudspeakers, within which visitors can use several microphones equipped with certain basic sound effects (echo, delay). Therefore, visitors engage their voice in a protected, sound-carrying structure, in a magic box composed of voices not projected outwards towards others – hidden from the exterior. The igloo with its reduced resonant sphere is a closed body. In other words, the igloo is an organ, a tool, an instrument. A safe room. Architectural headphones. The space of self-listening.

I revert to the obsessive melody that accompanied my visit. Two lyrics are crucial: “Do what you want with my body” and “You can’t stop my voice, cause...” Within the ‘body-voice’ axis lies the foundation of the possible feminist epistemology from the viewpoint of art, particularly the sonic kind. What can be discovered from the voice, without taking the body into account? The voice, in a difference from the body as a closed system, is aimed ‘outward’. The voice speaks, or in more modern terms – it communicates. The voice sings and comforts. The voice wails and curses. The voice scolds and trembles. The voice tells stories.

If we were to speak about the feminist insight into the nature of the relationship between the body and the voice, and/or the image and the sound, then it would be aimed at extolling the significance of ‘narration’ in the knowledge acquisition process [1]. The voice – which is always, let us not forget it – multiplied – accounts (tells, speaks) for the female experience, because all other epistemological systems have been cancelled. Or, what is left to the woman is to ‘tell it like it is’, since any other signifying process is already overloaded with the disproportionate distribution of power within the offered layout that – in fact – does not provide for the entry of the female experience and knowledge as such. The horror of Homer’s Sirens lies in the fact that, by singing, they narrate the knowledge of the hidden. Fear and annihilation originate from the fact that they ‘may be telling the truth’, while acting within the field of absolute seduction and enjoyment (*jouissance*). Their song is both intentional and signifying, because without it, it would be harmless (a ditty, ‘chantonement’). The purposefulness of their song, the desire of their song, the establishment of the power of their song are disruptive for the (heteronormative) community. Their goal is destruction through truth in the form of seduction. On the other hand, the visual image of the Sirens is neither seductive nor beautiful. Their bodies are queer, chimerical, composite, terrible and uncanny. The relationship between the seductive voice and the deterring body is perverse. Sailors with wax in their ears only see half-women, half-birds on an island full of bones. Since Odysseus’ ears are open, too, what he hears is more potent, beautiful and truthful than what he is about to see. Hence, the terror stems up from the need of someone, a stranger, to tell us something, to speak to us like we are familiar. Whatever that someone may be like. However repulsive they may be. However we may deny their existence or the fact that they have something to say. Narration is always a relationship. The story is always an invitation to establish more: a community.

Today, Lady Gaga tries to be Homer’s Siren. And she fails. Because she does not think about the voice. Because she thinks the voice is only the carrier of the message. Homer’s Sirens know that the truth must be told (sung) in a certain manner. That is their intentionality and gesturality. That is the meeting of the body and the voice, which cannot be separated or split.

In erasing the connections between the body and the voice, as if there was no relationship between them – because *you can do what you want with my body*, but as long as I *have my voice* it is all right, as the song goes – lies the fundamental problem of epistemology from the feminist standpoint. The voice comes from the body, whatever it may be. The voice emerges both outside the body and because of it. In the absolute surrender to the desire of the other censorship occurs, a disruption where the voice is no longer able to keep track of the body’s experience.

[1] Adriana Cavarero, *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti. Filosofia della narrazione*, Milano: Feltrinelli, 1997.

It remains mute. Without the chance to appear. This muteness and speechlessness has always accompanied and continues to accompany the female knowledge and experience. Because the desire of the other, normative and linguistically powerful, tried to foresee and capture the possibility of resistance and otherness. Feminism, however, as a political practice, announced that resistance to the master trope should be nurtured into existence. It remains important, in that respect, to follow the voice's exodus into the world, into a space that is saturated and preformed by dominant voices and stories. A woman's voice, telling the experience of the body, sneaks into that space and colours it with noise.

136 When Irena Tomažin held her performance within the October Salon entitled “The Taste of Silence”, I wondered whether it was enough for an expanded vocal technique to reach the issue of narrativity, the voice that fights against silence and sinks into it? Can it reach that practice that remains unwritten, oral and experiential, and connected with the voice? I wondered whether the body and voice communicate the pain of expressing sense or do we, through our artists' protocols, simply perform our learned mimesis of this tangled knot?

Feminist practices nurture the attempt that the ‘voice’, whatever it may be like – visual, soundless, expressive – be in passionate correlation with the body so it can communicate the speechlessness of the female experience and lack of orientation in a language that was given to us, but is not ours.

If the 54th October Salon is epistemic in something, it is when it speaks of the process that is not complete. Because women still often, too often, fall into the trap of the mute and self-contained, aseptic and closed. It should be screamed that the body is not ‘free for all’ and that the voice does not withdraw itself, but seeks, tempts, seduces and manipulates. In a word – voice tells.



Irena Tomažin, The Taste of Silence,
Music spot at the 54. October Salon photo by Duško Jelen

FEMINIST EXPOSURE WITH(IN)
THE LIVING ARCHIVE

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Before becoming feminists, we have all been lesbians.

Marina Gržinić [1]

The story about the *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition, here retold by means of language, corresponds in many aspects with the story of the *Bring In Take Out Living Archive* (LA), a continuous work by the feminist curatorial group Red Min(e)d, artists and collaborators gathered (not exclusively) around the idea of a common space in time (real or/and virtual) and investing knowledge, time, work, energy and emotions to construct it and make it experiential and thus liveable. [2] When one understands fiction as a medium of the imaginary and the latter not in contrast to reality but in a relation to or as an answer to it, then a discussion on art and art itself are put in the relation with its/their context(s) or with that which has been neutralized by an entirety of normative regulations and what is known to us as 'life'. 'Human', as well as 'animal', 'men', 'women' and so also 'feminist' and 'lesbian', is a result of an on-going process of these regulations as biopolitical governmentality. [3] In such a context, as simple a question as where is a place for 'life' and/or where can we live our 'lives', instead of our (biopolitically) regulated post-socialist genealogies and bodies 'living' us, moved us, Red Min(e)d, to start with the work on the *Bring In Take Out Living Archive*, which experienced its latest and at the same time its biggest edition as the 54th October Salon in Belgrade entitled *No One Belongs Here More Than You*.

[1] Marina Gržinić in the LA Questionnaire. See: <http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/questionnaire/> [Last accessed: June 2014]

[2] It might come as an unusual methodological and rhetorical decision to take as our point of departure a curatorial genealogy such as this of the 54th October Salon exhibition and not the facts and phenomena related to the renowned October Salon institution itself. On the latter, various subjects project and invest heterogeneous ideas and (libidinal) economies. However, these different agents all share one common proposition: that the October Salon is a key event or even a key institution dedicated to the presentation of contemporary art in at least Serbia for sure, even if not the whole region. Regarding the scope of the event, there is already less agreement. Some see its position foremost internationally; others regionally; and there are also those who would like to give it "back" an exclusively national character. The current scope is, to be honest, somewhere in between all three propositions. Especially the former – who consider (or would like to) the October Salon to have (more of) a position internationally and regionally – underline its unique character, as other (bi-, tri-) annual contemporary art events in the region have almost exclusively a national scope. However, the October Salon shares with other contemporary art events in the region the context of austerity measures, precarious work conditions and (apolitical) attitudes, best to be pinned down by a post-socialist discourse as a global phenomena (Dimitrakaki 2012) and as a whole of attitudes towards the past (especially towards emancipatory movements and political projects like communism), stripping it – our past, our contemporaneity and thus also our future – of any emancipatory potential or commons. The "commons" has in the eyes of the few finally turned to (the) truth (of private ownership), while for all the others it has taken the shape of social Darwinism – although in different registers and qualities, depending (still) on geopolitical positions, class, race, gender and sex. All are competing against all under quite different conditions.

[3] On bio-(or rather necro-)political governmentality in the so-called post-socialist context, cf. Marina Gržinić, "Euro-Slovenian Necrocapitalism", in *EIPCP*, 2, 2008. <http://eipcp.net/transversal/0208/grznic/en> [Last accessed: June 2014]

Even though misogyny, as hate towards normative and, by patriarchy and capitalist interpellation, regulated female subjects (positions), represents to the eyes of some feminist thinkers and activists an important emancipatory potential and method of feminist thought and activism, [4] Red Min(e)d has taken a different path: from and towards friendship, collectivity and affect, using the platform of the *Bring In Take Out – Living Archive*.

From the very beginning, the *Bring In Take Out – Living Archive* (LA) has been opening up the question of multiple relations between feminism and art exhibition practices: in time – questioning its historical scripts and ways of archiving, producing and institutionalizing historical knowledge; and in space – basically referring to the complex and as yet undefined post-Yugoslav political geography in a feminist way, approaching this 'location' through different theoretical, artistic, activist, as well curatorial backgrounds and positions. The curatorial intention was to co-create the LA as a space that spatially functions like a *polis* as defined by Hannah Arendt: not as a city-state in its physical location, but as "the organization of the people as it arises out of acting and speaking together", whose "true space lies between people living together for this purpose, no matter where they happen to be." [5] Approaching an archive in such a way, as an interactive space, is facing many difficult questions with as of yet unknown answers, but it also enables a live mapping of a range of contemporary (individual/collective) positions grounded in feminism. In this way, the LA is seen as a practice with potential to (re)configure the politics of feminism in the field of curatorial and art exhibition practices through a common social imagination of space and time. It insists on what feminist avant-garde ought to be, rather than what the feminism is or was.

Lucy Lippard, a feminist curator and art critic, once commented on generations and art, claiming the importance of curators and artists of the same generation working together due to their sharing similar experiences and horizons. To think the LA is for us also to think a generation. That said, similar to Angela Dimitrakaki or Madina Tlostanova, who think 'post-socialism' globally, one should also think generation beyond age, and yet still think in terms of space and time. [6] As the 'post-socialist' generation is the generation of the 'old new (wo)men', we are all united in *oh so flexible* humanity. We belong to a broadly diversified globality of perfect losers. However, instead of some leftist (actually potentially quite comfortable) positions promoting "sometimes doing nothing is the most violent thing to do", [7] we started (not so comfortable) work on the LA. In the face of the obvious and ever-growing exposures of the most of "post-socialist" subjects, and especially women, lesbians and other 'non-humans', feminism(s) as well as many working in art (artists, curators and other art workers) and, last but not least, the *No One Belongs Here*

[4] cf. Eva Bahovec, "What is left on the left?", in *Mladina Alternative*, Autumn, 2013. <http://www.mladina.si/151326/eva-bahovec-what-is-left-on-the-left/> [Last accessed: June 2014]. This is also the case with some leftist positions advocating the "new (wo)man" by hating the "old".

[5] Hanna Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958, p. 198.

[6] Angela Dimitrakaki, "Feminist Politics and Institutional Critiques: Imagining a Curatorial Commons", in Katrin Kivimaa (ed.), *Working with Feminism. Curating Exhibitions in Eastern Europe*, Tallinn: TLU Press, 2012, p. 19–39.

Madina Tlostanova, "The Vanished Second World, Global Coloniality, and Decolonial Gendered Agency. Why Did We Disappear, or 'Can the Post-Socialist Speak'?", in Biljana Kašić & Petrović Jelena et. al. (eds.), *Feminist Critical Interventions. Thinking Heritage, Decolonising, Crossings*, Zagreb & Ljubljana: Red Athena UP, 2013, p. 51–65.

[7] Cf. Klemen Slakonja's hilarious parody of famous headlines taken from Slavoj Žižek's talks and writings, available at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=80X0pbCV_t4 [Last accessed: February 2014].

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More Than You exhibition, have rightly raised the question: *Who, how, where, why and for whom is feminism to transform, break the current biopolitical logic of late capitalism and work towards emancipation?* This question – reaching from methods, space and time towards agency, subjects and, last but not least, representation – has been a core generating moment of the *LA* since its first editions in 2011.

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Black Water and Her Daughter, *LA Music Spot* at the 54. October Salon, foto by Tina Smrekar

The materiality of *LA*, which we are continuously working on, is the intervention into our everyday, into *our* material (re)production. While we work/produce, we need to also reproduce the conditions for our production. This is a global phenomena, but it has a local and regional palpability in the so-called post-Yugoslav space, where Red Min(e)d has mostly been active. Within the arts sector, there is a chronic and ever-increasing lack of funds, public and free studio and exhibition spaces for the continuous and in-depth mutual work and knowledge exchange between curators, artists, critics, researchers, art historians and the public. This all results in: poor public visibility, exchange and documentation, weak critical response and reflection, limited access to and sharing of knowledge and, above all, a deteriorated, apolitical relation between *art* and *life*. This fragmental process of post-socialist transitional reversals (nationalism, free market economy/privatisation, labour/class and gender inequality) triggered a near abolition of public (art) institutions and, further, paradoxically pushed art back into the chains of art autonomy, into *l'art pour l'art*. [8]

[8] Especially grave is the problem of this closed public (art) institution in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Or on the other hand, art has undergone a process of ‘culturalisation’, taking over the role of other no longer properly functioning public institutions, like public education, social care, etc. Additionally, in the global context, we witness an ascent of a totalitarian urge, lets call it by its name – fascism, and of the aestheticization of politics – not unlike the way Benjamin described it already in 1936, this time re-articulated mainly by capital, consumerism, representative democracy (with its centralisation of power into the only two quite identical political options) as well as through the means of visual mass electronic media. [9]

In this context, feminist curating is introducing changes into the materiality of ‘who can enter, produce and claim art and under what conditions?’ It is not about access and inclusion, it is about transformation of the space one is entering into and acting in, about the structure of this space and the production process. We ask: how does our artistic work stand in the production of our period? Where is our position: next to the subject(s) of feminism? “... what kind of a position is that? It is that of a benefactor. Of an ideological patron. An impossible position,” stated Benjamin [10] Therefore, with the *LA*, we have developed a number of methodologies and tools with which we intervene into the outlined materiality, a set of so-called ‘(non)working stations’. [11]

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LA Audio Video Booth at the 54. October Salon, photo by Vladimir Jerić Vlidi

[9] “Fascism attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses strive to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses, whom Fascism, with its Führer cult, forces to their knees, has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values.” Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer”, In *New Left Review* 1 / 62, July/August, 1970, p. 14.

[10] Walter Benjamin, *ibid.*, p. 4.

[11] The Exhibition – as the core space of the *LA*, always evolving (around) new concepts and in which life inscribes itself by: The Forum – social gathering for voicing out emerging subjects referring to the main referential backgrounds of the exhibitions; The *Perpetuum Mobile* – compilation of video works on display at the *LA* exhibitions; The Reading Room with publications and The Questionnaire asking about feminism and art, all continuously growing on the basis of an open call and thus open interfaces for getting to know new artists, practices and knowledge; The Audio/Video Booth for documentation, editing, online publishing and archive enquiries; The Music Spot – for live sound events; and The Curatorial School for feminist reading and scribing the contemporary art exhibition through common notes, running comments, curatorial texts.

Contrary to the horizon of expectations with which the exhibition *No One Belongs Here More Than You* and its authors (curators, artists as well as other participants and collaborators) were faced with (and which *LA* confronts continuously), the impetus of the exhibition was never the (sole) illustration of the state of affairs in feminism(s) or of (exposed and in many cases victimized) female positions. Feminist intervention, fighting the effects of violence against women (which we know can take on many forms) is doubtlessly very important, albeit also one of the few 'politically consumed' feminist positions. Other than 'gender monitoring' and fashionable 'Sex-in-the-City'-like lifestyle programmes, which are actually far away from feminist politics, there seem to be many projects that depart from the "women equals victim" in order that this departure position become politically naturalized. This is obviously a question about the subject(s) and object(s) of feminism, which have for the Red Min(e)d always been a universal: Feminism should be a safe and common ground for all, or in other words, it is a politics of solidarity and equality.

Discussing the question 'How do we make it different?', Red Min(e)d states that it is not about inclusiveness of women artists into mainstream, conventional and already codified institutions and museums; yet neither is it about exclusiveness, always ever finding 'brand new' artists, from 'brand new' territories and presenting "brand new" commissions and 'brand new' site-specific works following the flow of hyper-production in a way that fetishises the "new" as well as the margin through the signifier 'women's' or 'feminist'. It is about common work, the realization of which sometimes takes time, for the production framework to become able to be created, a production framework that wouldn't only imply 'body art', as curator and friend Jelena Vesić once pithily commented. It is about non-hierarchical structure, or at least floating, shifting hierarchies. It is about horizontal payment, so every one, regardless of her or his status in the art market gets for equivalent work an equal fee. It is about the de-habitualising of the habitual (feminism, exhibition making, museum) while at the same time claiming universality and institutionality by a loud feminist articulation that produces non-patriarchal and non-capitalist political subjects and their emancipated social relations. Concretely, it is about articulating the agenda of individual *LA* events and proposing artists in a dialogue with both *LA* open calls (*Perpetuum Mobile* and the *LA online Questionnaire*) as well as collaborating with organisations, collectives, individuals throughout every *LA* edition. Also, the *LA* includes documentation of the '(non)working stations' and their results are given to public and free share. [12] The documentation as such has grown since late 2011 and is inscribing our 'lives' (and with that, also artworks) into regional and global contexts, which as a rule evacuate our voices even before they stop reverberating. By this, the *LA* in a way 're-introduces', especially in the post-Yugoslav space where Red Min(e)d has been mainly active, the museum paradigm, as there are very few art institutions that work on publicly accessible documentation of and discourse on contemporary (post)Yugoslav art practices.

All different *LA* methodologies bear witness to the main quality of feminist curating: Feminist curators, artists and the public – we are not agents, we are producers, or as Bojana Pejić once suggested: feminist curating "is not a theme, it's a method." [13]

[12] The *Perpetuum Mobile* compilation of video works as well as the Reading Room and the Questionnaire are on display only at *LA* live editions.

[13] Cf. Interview with Bojana Pejić, *ArtMargins*, 2009, <http://www.artmargins.com/index.php/interviews/540-bojana-pejic-gender-feminism-eastern-european-art-interview> [Last accessed: April 2014]



LA Reading Room at the 54. October Salon,
photo by Duško Jelen

Saša Kerkoš, Compassion in design?

Saša Kerkoš has been dealing with the research of compassion through different forms of experimental workshops and practices. She presented her work at the World Design Capital 2012 (Finland), as the TEDx talk experiment (Slovenia), the founded research project of non-verbal communication of emotions in the multi-touch environment the Aalto Media factory Helsinki as well as creative



workshops with homeless people in Portland (USA) and with the children from the orphanages in Bali. Saša Kerkoš is a multi-task graphic designer and illustrator, art and creative director and collaborations initiator, working on a diverse range of projects that can improve creative and innovative ideas to build more tolerant sustainable and open environments. She currently works between Ljubljana, Helsinki and Bali.



Compassion in design? experimental workshop,
curatorial school by Saša Kerkoš,
photo by Duško Jelen

h.arta is a group of three women artists, Maria Crista, Anca Gyemant and Rodica Tache. We have been working together as h.arta group since 2001, when we founded the h.arta space, a not-for-profit space in Timisoara. h.arta is sometimes a physical space, but many times its projects take different formats, changing contexts and locations. Our group is based on our friendship, on an everyday negotiation of the differences between us. We use friendship as a way of learning together how to acknowledge the different nuances of each situation, as a safe space, as a political statement about the power of solidarity. We are interested in topics ranging from knowledge production and (re)writing histories to gender issues in global capitalist times, all these in the context of working in various collaborations with persons and groups with different backgrounds.

h.ARTA

SOME FRAGMENTS ABOUT ART AND LIFE

We live the end of the world. (Definitely there is nothing new about this; for some categories of people, the end of the world was and is always their condition.)

The continuous shrinking of the commons. In Romania, projects of huge cyanide mining and hydraulic fracturing that are pushed aggressively by the government against people's will and rights. A growing and open disrespect towards life. Atrocious killings of street dogs prescribed by law. The open condemnation of poor people while poverty is made broader and broader. Racism that infiltrates every aspect of life.

The constant signs of violence imbedded in the structure of the city. A sign posted by the municipality at several points in the city of Timisoara stating: "Today a beggar, tomorrow an aggressor. Do you want this?" On a commercial banner for a hypermarket, the image of a cute hippopotamus toy next to chunks of meat, and below, the text: "Why buy toys from us? Because we have the best meat."

In this atmosphere of lack of hope and purpose, when the lack of respect towards life, when extreme inequality and unfairness are not even hidden anymore under the neoliberal rhetoric of hypocritical 'democracy' but are made the norm, what are still some possibilities of acting towards change and affirming life, what are still some possibilities of retaining hope and energy for action? What could still be the role of art in this context? When is it strategic to call your work art? When do you give up labelling what you do as being art? What do you choose to bring inside the profession and when do you stop calling yourself an artist and become just a citizen, or an activist or a teacher? And also, how can we adapt these questions to the complex contexts of our everyday living and working situations, how can we go beyond the intellectual clarity of ideas and immerse ourselves in the messy, unclear, often disappointing realities of the banal, modest everyday?

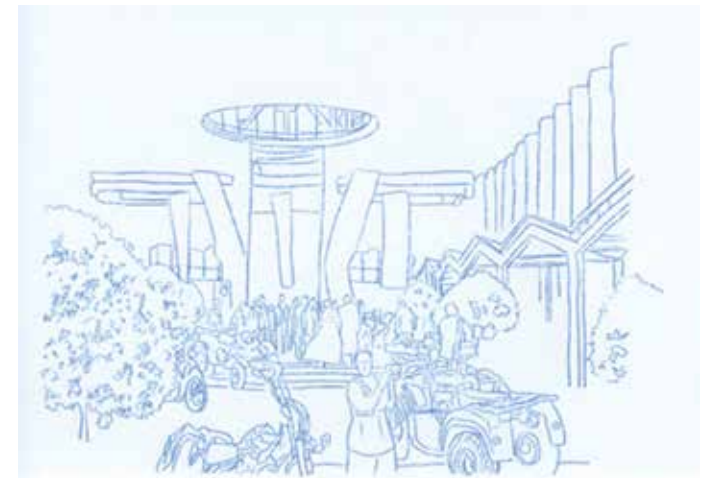
We are a group of three women artists interested in dealing with the possibilities and limitations of the public space and with finding alternative educational models in a feminist frame. Our methodology is based on friendship, which we understand as an everyday negotiation of differences, as a way of learning from each other, and as a political statement about the power of solidarity.

We are interested in finding forms and formats that use art as a methodology for analysis and critique. We try to find forms of artistic/cultural/activist/educational practice that are low-key and modest, that are sometimes hard to categorize, that are blurring domains and identities, that wish not only to react to the context, but also to formulate alternatives, even if these forms also contain the possibility of ending in failure.

This text consists of three fragments written in different moments of our practice (the years 2008, 2010 and 2012), fragments referring to examples of our work, examples that deal with the issue of happiness and a meaningful life, inside and outside norms and prescriptions. We think these fragments could function as partial, provisory, faulted and indirect answers to the set of questions above, discussing the mixture of power and powerlessness, of energy and depression, of doubt and hope that are constantly accompanying both artistic practice and everyday life.

2008. The Most Beautiful Day of My Life

You cannot speak about happiness without referring to the most commonly prescribed reason for happiness, the heterosexual marriage. Taking as a starting point the case of a shopping mall in Timisoara where all the civil marriages in the city were performed in 2006–2011, and also using other different examples of gendered consumerism, we wanted to reflect on the ways in which heteronormativity is performed and ritualized in a public space that is more and more taken over by consumerist practices. We used fragments of text and images that we obtained in a non-pretentious way of drawing, carbon-copying photos and women magazine clippings. Using this modest method of drawing, we observe the reality and we present it in a mode in which, by estranging it, we make it more visible in its absurdities and contradictions.



h.arta, *The Most Beautiful Day of My Life*,
2010, carbon copied drawing

26 May 2006 was the date of the first marriage ever held in a Timișoara mall. Based on an agreement between Timișoara Mayor's Office and Iulius Mall, marriages took place exclusively at the Iulius Mall, in a space called "The House of Marriage". Brides and grooms ascended the steps of the mall to be part of a ceremony held against a background of ads and shop windows.

Certainly, for some of the couples, the mall space was not appropriate for the solemnity of the ceremony. Certainly, some of the couples getting married there were aware of the financial implications of the agreement between the Mayor's Office and the management of the mall. Still, a significant proportion of these couples chose to participate in this ceremony in their princely outfits, accompanied by their entourage, and then they used to leave in a white limousine, followed by a string of flower-bedecked cars, in honour of the dream come true.

If, at first sight, the image of the bride and groom ascending solemnly the long flight of steps as if they were in a temple, walking under the LCD screens that are constantly beaming ads and between different billboards, seems absurd, upon closer look we might see that this association between weddings and the environment of the mall is not so inappropriate. Why shouldn't the spectacle of the wedding, an extraordinary moment, be suited to the artificial, utopia-like atmosphere of the mall? Why shouldn't it be appropriate to sign the marriage certificate, a document that is connected with the distribution, consumption and accumulation of property, in a place dedicated to profit – such as a mall? Why not take the first step in the most exclusive of relationships, in an environment that is purged of everything that is "ugly", "embarrassing", unwanted and marginalized by society?

That fairy-tale-like day, when the bride and groom are the protagonists of videos, photographs and everybody's eyes, inaugurates a very concrete reality in which partners have rights and obligations of both sexual and economic natures, while their marriage certificate gives them a certainty of "love", "loyalty" and "bond". Of course, this contract is not equitable to both parties – historically, marriage is a patriarchal institution, both from the ideological as well as practical perspectives. (How many of the couples who got married at the mall will defy, for example, the tradition that says that doing housework and raising the kids are exclusively a woman's job?) In one of the ceremonies we witnessed, the bride and groom were smiling ecstatically at the camera, holding the marriage certificate they had just signed.

The marriage certificate, boasted as a profitable contract by most couples, places their relationship above all other relationships they might have with other people. This primordial relationship gives them rights over each other that people outside this bond cannot enjoy, and it also gives them pragmatic rights in society, such as a bigger house or a promotion. But the most important gain is that they are given the right to consider that their "real" life has begun, that they have managed to put into practice the most essential part of their life plan. It was perfect that the speckless mall house the flawless institution of marriage. Those who refuse to see the light and direction that marriage can bring into their life will simply be expelled.

How many of those who are in a heterosexual couple consider their lives fit "normality" without any tensions and contradictions? The ad for the Wedding Fair that was held at the mall in 2008 showed a bride that, while posing in a very artificial attitude, was holding a picture frame in her hands.



h.arta, *The Most Beautiful Day of My Life*,
2010, carbon copied drawing

The narrow frame to which one has to adapt in order to give one's life an appearance of "normality". The ideal of the happy family, in which everyone knows their role and never questions it and which you must try to attain if you don't want your life to be catalogued as incomplete, immature, a failure. On Valentine's Day, we had one-day marriages at the Timișoara mall. Couple after couple posed inside a white-satin heart-shaped frame decorated with red roses. Right behind them, an oversized shopping bag bearing the inscription "I love shopping." Some of the people who had their picture taken like this were also holding the "marriage certificate" in their hands. One week later, on Dragobete Day (the Romanian holiday of love, t.n.), people danced in the limbo trying to squeeze through a narrowing frame while still holding hands. One girl laughed and jumped over when the space became too narrow.

2010. Friendship As A Model For Feminism

Our friendship was not from the beginning related to feminism, as our work as h.arta group was not clearly defined by feminist ideas from its very beginning, although feminist ideas were always there as intuitions looking for the vocabulary that would give them shape. It happened that we all graduated from the same art academy (which we were profoundly disappointed with) and we were in the same situation of looking for a possibility of working as artists in an art context that at that point seemed very difficult to comprehend and enter. Our friendship started in the context of our profession. At the beginning, it was a friendship based on a shared mixture of a feeling of inadequacy as fresh graduates with an obsolete and useless education, of enthusiasm and curiosity about art and of a need to work collectively. Soon our friendship expanded to our

private lives, too, functioning as some sort of stable ground (as lovers might come and go, as family relations can be suffocating, as the economic situation fluctuates, our friendship stays).

In the context of our profession, which so often, same as any other field, is taken over by the ideas of success and competition, in the art field that is so often infiltrated by the ideology that makes people see themselves as individuals separated by their needs, fears and egos, in the context of cultural work that so often uses critique as an empty form that only reinforces the very structures that are critiqued, we consider that friendship is an important way to see yourself as an intrinsic part of a larger reality, to think of yourself in connection to others and, in this sense, to try to challenge the divisions and fragmentations that capitalist ideology creates.

Also, as a form of solidarity between people that are not tied by family relations, we consider friendship as a useful tool against the worrying ubiquity of conservative discourses that declare “blood relations” as the only meaningful tie between people and against the oppressiveness of heteronormativity.

Friendship, as an inherent part of our lives, fulfilling needs of intimacy, trust and communication, providing an everyday support in the practical contingencies of life, constituting a continual practice of negotiation in what concerns our ideas, our difficulties, our disagreements, our inherent hierarchies, ties private life with work and agency, emotion with politics. In this sense, we consider friendship as a useful model for feminism, a model that goes beyond private relations and becomes a way of political relating to others.

As cultural workers, as part of a field that is at the same time dealing a lot with personal, everyday issues and their political relevance but that is also based on a highly professionalized language and code of behavior, we are very much interested in analyzing what are the real political possibilities of critique and change that this field contains. Many times, this analysis leads to discouraging thoughts. Thoughts about language that is used sometimes only to depict and not to enact possibilities of change. Thoughts about subtlety, intelligence, coherence and a good theoretical knowledge used sometimes to create an appearance of critique, a critique that never goes beyond the field that created it and never reaches the everyday. About cultural critical projects that can be sometimes only vents that are sustaining the status quo, about them being sometimes only “proofs” that the system is democratic enough to sustain “plural” views, views that are condemned to remain sterile in their beautiful, intellectual clarity. We experienced all these problems ourselves in our work and one of our important interests and struggles is to try to go beyond the merely theoretical field of our ideas, concepts and words and to try to enact them in our daily lives, even if this struggle involves failing many times. We consider friendship as a field of negotiation, as a complex mixture of emotions, conflicts, care, compromise and accountability towards others, a powerful symbol for this struggle of unifying the theoretical clarity and “correctness” of our discourses with the acts and attitudes of our everyday lives.

2012. A Few Fragments About Happiness

Together with friends and colleagues from Timisoara we wanted to visit our recent past, to reflect on the precariousness of the present in the spaces where some form of social solidarity was lost. We visited and documented post-industrial locations from Timisoara. We tried to find out details about the histories of these places, to find the newspaper fragments on the way in which these factories have been forcefully bankrupted, dissipated traces that remain online from the histories

of abuses, strikes and protests. We discussed with people who live and/or work around these spaces their personal stories, proving once more our belief that the memory of the recent past is more nuance and complex than the way this memory is reflected in the official discourses.

In these waiting spaces, places lost from the commons, places frozen in history, ruins of the past that are still waiting for an uncertain future, we wanted to project our thoughts on happiness. Happiness not as an ecstatic state but as a dignified way of living, happiness not as an individual issue but as a possibility for a fairer world. When is happiness possible?

Why in the so-called civilised societies are the traces of unhappiness, of poverty, of despair hidden? Why are the unhappy ones evicted to the margins of society, why are they hidden from our gaze? Is it maybe because they might remind us of our own unhappiness? Or is it maybe because it's important for the maintaining of the status quo to ignore the connections between our own happiness and their despair? Is happiness balance? Is individual happiness possible when it is not something that every being shares?

Here there are some fragments from the text that accompanied the images in the video, as subtitles:

The duty to be happy according to a predetermined design, to follow a life scenario that includes also a house in the suburbs, with a courtyard for your children to play in. The gated space in which the family can isolate itself, in its intimate paradise. A place in which you can be exclusively with your own kind, with the ones that share your social status and your life plans. A place in which the ones who are marginal, the unhappy ones are not in the reach of your gaze.



h.arta, A Few Fragments About Happiness,
2012, video still

A rusty bridge, a field with grass, which in the timespan of three months, that went by between our two visits to this place was almost completely covered with piles of garbage and construction debris searched by humans and dogs. In the background, the ruins of a factory. A small pond in which fish and frogs are still alive, progressively swamped with garbage. Large portions of land are excavated. A man who lived in the neighbourhood told us that these chunks of land with grass are taken to the yards of each house in the city. A few years ago, people used to use this land to next to the pound for picnics, when it was still clean grass and water here. A Roma man joined our discussion. Every time he started to speak, he would say: “Sorry for wanting to say something myself.” A child passed by us. On his ragged t-shirt was written “The world is mine.” He asked for a cigarette.

The hope for happiness is unequally distributed. It's not just that some people have more chances to hope for happiness, but also their happiness is based on the unhappiness of others, on their complete lack of hope.

Solventul used to be one of the biggest chemical plants in the country. The first time we visited its ruins, we discovered a place with the atmosphere of a metaphysical painting, with deserted offices, with mountains of bricks and with reservoirs, above which the smell of chemicals still lingered. The man who was guarding the place told us about how the plant was only artificially bankrupt, that there was still a demand for its products and there were still valid contracts. The land, being inside the city is very valuable. He used to work in the plant for 30 years, and he knows that (because of the poor working conditions and the disregard of the safety rules after 1990) many of his colleagues are not alive any more. He and two old dogs were guarding the place from the marginal, mostly Roma people who searched the ruins for recyclable metals.

When we tried to go back to Solventul three months later, it was not possible to enter any longer. A demolition firm was dismembering the last standing structures. One of the workers told us that maybe a shopping mall was going to be built there.

Capitalism needs desertion and destruction, needs a blank page on which to inscribe its own rules. Capitalism is built on ruins.

What is the significance of our meditative walks at the peripheries of the city, around former factories, in empty spaces between blocks of flats?

What is the significance of the memories of our childhoods in socialist times, when we used to make school visits to these factories that at the time were still working? When the people populating them still had the dignity of their profession (or at least this is how it seemed to us)? Were the workers in these factories happy, these people who lived the effervescence of times when the world was re-invented? Or is this effervescence only the product of our imagination, of the imagination of people living in times when no fundamental change seems possible any longer? Are these walks among the ruins about the nostalgia for a past that never took place? During these contemplative walks through the places of the past, through spaces that wait for an uncertain future, places that are metaphors for our own precariousness, we thought about the possibilities and limits of the artistic process. These spaces that, through their mixture of uncertainty and possibility, reminded us of our condition as artists during uncertain times were at the same time symbolic for the borders between spaces that art can relevantly and effectively talk about and those spaces for which art remains superfluous. In them, we were tourists visiting the past and trying to analyze it. But beyond this limiting gaze of the tourist who always goes back to his safe place at 'home' – the artist's condition – is there a possibility for art (even though in a limited and merely symbolic way) to be the spark that triggers understanding and leads to action?



A Few Fragments About Happiness,
2012, video still

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ANGELA DIMITRAKAKI
& LARA PERRY

TOWARDS A RETHINKING
OF FEMINIST INTERVENTION

A Different Route

In 2014 there exists a rich history of feminist curating practice to be examined as feminist intervention. [1] Feminist critique has often extended its analysis from what could be framed *within* an artwork (be it object or process-based) to what could be accepted as worthy of collecting and displaying by an art museum and even to that which sought to evade institutional canonisation. There has evidently been a strong strand of critical exhibition practice in feminist art, and it is not an accident that an exhibition project – the “Womanhouse” created by staff and students of the California Institute of the Arts Feminist Art Programme (1972) – is often considered the ground zero of contemporary feminist art practice. So what if feminist research turned from women or feminist artists to women or feminist curators, from women’s or feminist art making to women’s or feminist curating? Could such a turn (imagined rather than actual at present) discover a different route into feminism’s art histories? Would this displacement of the artist in favour of the curator permit greater insight into why feminism has not in fact succeeded at transforming a capitalist art institution (once belonging to the West but now globally hegemonic) that has, arguably and paradoxically, managed to both include women artists and exclude or neutralize feminist politics?

As always, this is a question that begins with, but cannot be limited to, reflection on the activities of women – either as artists or curators. When it comes to the latter, in the core geographies of the West, it is possible to identify a number of prominent women curators who are making exceptional feminist work in the context of a new genre of often freelance and migrant curatorial practice. Examples to be called upon include Ute Meta Bauer, who began a distinguished

[1] Although the concept of ‘feminist intervention’ has been widely used in Western feminist art discourse, Griselda Pollock, one of the founding figures of feminist art history, popularised and elaborated on its meaning. See in particular her chapter “Feminist Interventions in the Histories of Art” in *Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art*, London: Routledge, 1988. Pollock is not keen to advance a feminist art history as a side project to an unaltered, main (and mainstream) body of art historical investigation but rather for feminist (i.e. politically motivated) scholarship to intervene in art history overall by deconstructing its gendered conventions and reconstructing it in ways which acknowledge both the historically specific obstacles faced by women artists and any transformative struggles against a male-dominated canon.

curatorial career as artistic director of Künstlerhaus Stuttgart and has been involved in major projects including directing *First Story – Women Building / New Narratives for the 21st Century* (Porto, 2001); Maria Lind, who has developed an influential and critical practice of curating exhibition as process; Rosa Martinez, prolific curator of biennial and other projects; [2] Ruth Noack, curator of the ‘feminist’ *Documenta 12* (2008); and Bettina Knaup and Beatrice Ellen Stammer, whose *Re.Act Feminism* project (Berlin and touring, 2008–2013) aimed at creating an archive of feminist performance. All of these women have made important contributions to the development of curatorial projects that address and valorize women’s and feminist art – but the existence of many prominent women curators is not in itself evidence of the success of feminist politics. The valorisation of the curator as cultural producer re-inscribes a gendered and classed division of labour: Dorothee Richter argues that the contemporary curatorial role “adapts the masculine mythos of *artistic genius*, connects this with mobility and networking ...[and thus produces] the new role model for the Western post-industrial conditions of life.” [3] And as curator Rosa Martinez reminds us, “presenting and defending the work of women artists” is simply something that “most curators, male and female, do not do [...]”. [4] In the absence of a systematic investigation into women curators’ contribution to the legitimization and circulation of women’s art, we would choose to eschew, or at least defer, the exploration of individual curators’ careers in favour of addressing some of the *strategies* that might constitute a tradition of feminist curatorial practice in exhibition and counter-exhibition platforms.

Rethinking The Context: Post-Cold War Capitalism

There are two (intertwined) developments that distinguish both individual careers and the history of feminist curatorial strategies that we would seek to write: post-Cold War politics and the expansion of multi-national capitalism. All of these individuals and projects have succeeded, or not, in a contemporary art world which is both shaped by the social, economic, ideological practices of advanced capitalism and which attempts to resist its main currents. These practices entail, overall, changes in production that marked the transition from the 20th to the 21st century on a global scale. If in the Conceptual Art of the 1960s it was still hard to detect the emergence of a generalised field of production of affect/ideas/communication and service provision that would bring the profession ‘artist’ much closer to the profession ‘curator’, such a development was unmissable in 2000.

A critical shift of focus in feminist analysis would at least lead to a reconsideration of the art world as a context where *gendered* ‘art workers’, engaged in different, if intersecting, kinds of labour (as artists, curators, etc.), sustain a complex field of production. One task here would be to chart, in feminist terms, the transformation of curatorial (and other art) labour from the 1960s to date. But also to articulate, in feminist terms as well, *how* such labour interacted with what Rosalind Krauss called in 1990 “the cultural logic of the late capitalist museum”, hitting

[2] Katy Deepwell, “‘Curatorial Strategies and Feminist Politics’, Part I: An Interview with Rosa Martinez and Part II: An Interview with Maria Lind”, In *n.paradoxa*: international feminist art journal 18, 2006, p. 5–26.

[3] Dorothee Richter in conversation with False-Hearted Fanny, “Feminist Demands on Curating”, In Elke Krasny & Frauenmuseum Meran (eds.), *Women's: Museum/Frauen: Museum, Curatorial Politics in Feminism*, Education and Art, Szeged: Locker Verlag, 2013., p. 92.

[4] Katy Deepwell, *ibid.*, p. 7.

the nail on the head by recycling Fredric Jameson’s landmark synthesis of postmodernism as capitalism. [5] When Gregory Sholette asserts that the “dark matter” of precarised art workers (curators, artists and whatever other variant of non-star status art professionals) is essential for reproducing a capitalist art economy, [6] can feminist art history address the fact that this dark matter is now often of the female sex?

Losing The Plot, Or Losing The Politics?

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Such an enquiry could expose the long and continuous history of feminist curating, which has tended to be submerged by the weight of the search for novelty. The trajectory of feminist art practice and curating that ventured out of the museum and gallery space was to be returned to the art institution in the 1990s often stripped of its politics and in the guise of a ‘new’ paradigm of hip participatory art. If one thread of feminist practice has been to take a ‘corrective’ attitude towards the museum and the gallery (exemplified, for instance, in the work of the Guerrilla Girls, a New York outfit that dubbed itself ‘the conscience of the art world’ and produced a series of posters and publications that questioned the status of women and artists of colour in museums and commercial galleries), a different form of feminist activism was to pose the question: *if not in the institution, then where?* How important is the conception of an ‘outside’ for the feminist imagination?

The artist Suzanne Lacy’s work with communities and performance has completely transformed the concept of public art, but a recent interview of Lacy with curator Catherine Wood makes manifest how aware a feminist artist has to be of the boundary between ‘art’ and ‘life’. As Lacy puts it: “The idea of leaving the art world in order to make the art and then referring back to the art world to frame what I’d done was always part of my practice.” [7] What Wood probes in relation to this statement is precisely the now habitual effacement of feminism in the lineage of participatory art paradigms that have dominated the early 21st-century scene. This was only recently addressed in feminist art history. Helena Reckitt’s critique specifically of Nicolas Bourriaud’s influential and extensively debated notion of “relational aesthetics” explores some of the art-world mechanisms that have worked to *rupture* the sense of an evolving feminist exhibition practice at the same time that curatorial work has, Reckitt observes, been somehow ‘feminised’ through a growing emphasis on its affective labour. [8]

In part, feminist curatorial practice has itself been constituted through notions of rupture. In the late 1960s and 1970s in the West, the transposition of second-wave feminism in the arts involved a critique of an evolutionary modernist narrative, based on breaks, leaps forward and hard-won

[5] Rosalind Krauss, “The Cultural Logic of the Late Capitalist Museum”, In *October 54*, Autumn 1990, p. 13–14.
[6] Gregory Sholette, *Dark Matter: Art in the Age of Enterprise Culture*, London: Pluto Press, 2011.
[7] Suzanne Lacy & Catherine Wood, “Art as Life, Art as Politics, Art as Political Action: An Interview with Suzanne Lacy”, In Angela Dimitrakaki & Lara Perry (eds.), *Politics in a Glass Case*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013, p. 129.
[8] See Helena Reckitt, “Forgotten Relations”, In Angela Dimitrakaki & Lara Perry (eds.), *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013, p. 131–56. The ‘feminisation’ of curatorial labour has many faces. These include the growing precarisation of curators and related professionals, and especially those whose practice exceeds the confines of the art institution (with many having to hold several jobs to survive) and the shift towards a curatorial practice of care. It is, of course, no secret that many academic curatorial courses are populated with female students who are eventually to compete for the relatively few advertised posts and many of whom will have to combine the ‘double burden’ of family (unwaged labour) and job/s (waged labour) that often requires excessive mobility and ‘flexible’ hours, which involve their constant availability.

progress accomplished by heroic male artists. [9] Crucially, and excluding the ‘anomaly’ of the early Russian avant-garde (which unlike other historical avant-gardes did include women artists), [10] such a critique often took the form of discrete exhibition projects intended to challenge curatorial orthodoxies in the display of modern and contemporary art.

While it was the case that some feminists attempted to realise feminist collections in the form of women’s museums (the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Washington, D.C., established in 1981, is an important but by no means exclusive example), it is more common to find feminist activity focused on temporary exhibition. This is the case for historical surveys like Anne Sutherland Harris’s and Linda Nochlin’s *Women Artists 1550–1950*, held at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1976 or *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality* held at the New Museum in New York in 1985, both of which could be seen as having tested different approaches to feminist art historical thinking.

But key to many feminist interventions in the art world has been a dissatisfaction with the lack of women artists in the various ‘annuals’ and ‘biennials’ that take the temperature of contemporary art, and which restrict the visibility of living and working women artists (Hayward Gallery, Whitney Annual, Venice). Lack of adequate feminist research in the history of the exhibition, and especially into the dominance of the exhibition form in the last quarter of the 20th century and since (of which the mushrooming of biennials is symptomatic), does not permit us at present to draw conclusions about the role of feminism in this process.

Strategies of Temporality

One aspect of this was to engage specifically with the *temporality* of the history of art that was constructed in exhibition display. Curatorial projects such as Catherine de Zegher’s *Inside the Visible: An Elliptical Traverse of 20th-Century Art in, of, and from the Feminine*, shown in Britain and the US, attempted to introduce a non-linear timeframe in the interpretation of twentieth-century art drawn from various parts of the world. [11] In her catalogue essay, De Zegher explained: “Several recurrent cycles, rather than a linear survey with its investment in artistic originality and genealogies, structure the exhibition.” [12] The exhibition was realised in the mid-1990s, a decade during which the stereotyping of feminism allowed it to be dismissed as passé and ill-suited to the needs of the emancipated woman to be found in the West’s metropolises (the period of what used to be called ‘post-feminism’).

At approximately the same time, on the distant West Coast of the United States, Amelia Jones was putting together a major group exhibition, *Sexual Politics: Judy Chicago’s Dinner Party in Feminist Art History*, accompanied by a volume under the same title. The unusual title alone, placing a singular work of art in a historical context that admitted to the presence of feminism,

[9] On the complexity of the relationship of modernism and feminism, see indicatively the long essay by Griselda Pollock, “Feminism and Modernism”, In Rozsika Parker & Griselda Pollock (eds.), *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women’s Movement 1970–1985*, London: Pandora Press, 1985, p. 101–106.
[10] This ‘anomaly’ was formally acknowledged in the exhibition *Amazons of the Avant-Garde*, at the Guggenheim in New York, 15 September 1999 to 7 January 2000, and curated by John E. Bowlt, Matthew Drutt and Zelfira Tregulova.
[11] See Sue Malvern, “Rethinking Inside the Visible”, In Angela Dimitrakaki & Lara Perry (eds.), *Politics in a Glass Case*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013, p. 104–119.
[12] Catherine de Zegher, “Inside the Visible”, In Catherine de Zegher (ed.), *Inside the Visible*, Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1996, p. 20.

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betrays the experimental spirit in which the project was conceived. This curatorial project, placing an iconic yet controversial artwork, “The Dinner Party” (1974–79), alongside and within the variety of feminist art, was focused through an opposite conception of the function of time in feminism. It focused on the fine grain detail of historic placement, which could be interpreted as investigating and clarifying the relationships between works of art of the same era, or mobilising a *horizontal* – as opposed to a vertical – art historical paradigm.

Strategies of Networks

158 The contrasting approaches of *Inside the Visible* and *Sexual Politics* can be framed in terms of temporality, but also in relation to concepts of the feminine that function as shorthand in a very abbreviated version of the history of feminism and art within the Anglo-American context. [13] The focus in Anglophone feminism on questions of *defining* (and often subverting) the feminine has tended to overshadow other feminist objectives, which we find being worked through in exhibitions from the wider post-Cold War European context. For example, the group exhibition *Dissertare/Disertare* (Rome, 2006) was realised through an Italian feminist paradigm of cura - ting by *networking* as an alternative to the model of the curator as director. The momentous exhibition *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, conceived and overseen by Bojana Pejić in 2010 in Vienna and subsequently in Warsaw, was constructed through a different model of curatorial collaboration: here, a transnational workforce of local curators contributed to an unprecedented regional survey, yet one facilitated not by the liberal state but by a private funder. Indeed, the near-loss of distinction between ‘good’ public funding and ‘bad’ private funding has been an effect of the realization that state services, at least in post-1989, post-socialist (in the broader sense) Europe, belong wholesale to capital. [14] *Gender Check* examined the gendered condition in Eastern European art in which both ‘Eastern Europe’ and ‘the feminine’ were treated as a political category rather than a geographical or biological reference.

[13] These two exhibitions could be related to positions in the fabled divergence of feminism around ‘the body’ (1970s/American) and ‘theory’ (1980s/Anglo) that structure many accounts of the history of feminism. For discussions of this mapping of feminism’s history and its relation to exhibition history, see Juli Carson, “On Discourse as Monument: Institutional Spaces and Feminist Problematics”, In Griselda Pollock & Joyce Zemans (eds.), *Museums after Modernism: Strategies of Engagement*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2007, p. 190–224.

[14] Angela Dimitrakaki, “Feminist Politics and Institutional Critiques: Imagining a Curatorial Commons”, In Katrin Kivimaa, (ed.), *Working with Feminism: Curating and Exhibitions in Eastern Europe*, Tallinn: Tallinn University Press, 2013, p. 19–39. The essay’s emphasis is on suggesting that the term ‘post-socialist Europe’, once applied to the former Eastern European region, should now be extended to the whole European continent, as capitalism imposes uniform cultures of arts funding, especially after the global financial crisis of 2008–9. More importantly, capitalism imposes a shared mentality of ‘how to curate’ (through competing for funding, through the imposition of highly bureaucratised regimes based on ‘projects’ and the requirement of ‘reports’ that measure results and demand a constant stream of ‘success stories’).



Walk-through the exhibition with Marija Ratković, Flaka Haliti’s *Hoods Required Beyond This Point*, drawings, 2013, photo by Duško Jelen

A Critical Inversion: From The Semiotic To The Material

The above are just two examples of the ways in which a feminist curatorial practice can produce a variety of strategies for addressing different historical and political situations. The networks and flows of capitalist globalisation made it apparent that definitive geographical and chronological boundaries could be only imagined rather than kept, and that critical evaluations cannot be geographically contained.

160 What then might be a practice, which mobilises relational rather than fixed structures, entail? This question is tied to the one concerning the (re)production of otherness through curatorial and exhibition practices, which always involve the constitution of the ‘other’ who is the subject of the exhibition. But also, the economic context for sustaining such a curatorial practice is itself subject to the processes of casualisation and precarisation that characterise labour and employment relations in the 21st century, and the structures that might sustain such a practice of curating (one free from immediate market pressures and economic insecurity) are diminishing. Arguably, material urgency rather than semiotic instability is defining the framework in which a responsive methodology of feminist curating must now come into being. And this constitutes a veritable *inversion* of the priorities of the 1970s and 1980s, at least in the West.

It is hard to imagine how such a methodology would not, in the immediate future, be about transgressing the institutional threshold where the public collapses into the clientele, history into image, and politics into discourse. But on the other hand, given that we are dependent on capital’s institutions for selling our labour (curatorial or artistic) against that of others, it is equally hard to imagine that a methodology of feminist transgression is imminent in feminist curating at present.

Realistically speaking, feminism’s urgent task today is to think carefully whether women’s emancipation is compatible with participating in the reproduction of a culture of competition and antagonism, which is precisely the mentality of neoliberal art institutions. This requires nothing less than rethinking what ‘feminist intervention’ means today as opposed to 40 years ago. And given also the dilution of Cold War divisions between East and West, it requires also the recognition of the fact that many more women are now responsible for such a rethinking. Numbers are not, of course, everything, and taken on their own they are not necessarily transformative. That said, the possibility of an increased critical mass of feminists, who can think across their diverse generational and especially regional experiences in an art world under global reconstruction, needs to be addressed for what it is: a new prospect for coordinated feminist action, which may or may not be realised as unprecedented gains or losses for feminist politics.

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LIDIJA RADOJEVIĆ

ART PRACTICES:
BETWEEN PASSIVE CREATION
AND ACTIVE PRODUCTION

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Concerning art practices that in various ways resist the capitalist antisocial impacts on society and the spread of capitalist production modes in the field of art, [1] I would like to use this contribution to point out the basic differences existing between *relations of production* and *relations in production*; also, the position of the female/male worker within the labour process and the possibilities for resistance to capitalist relations through it. In spite of the capitalist social context in which art production takes place, the space for politically engaged action in the field of art exists in *its most important part – production*. Production is the place it can be seen “not only how capital produces, but how capital is produced. We shall at last force the secret of profit making.” [2] As it is not important *what* is being produced for capital (re)production, but rather how it is produced, the same can apply to artistic practices and products: more important than what they are saying is how they are created and how they are organised. Through concepts stemming from the theoretical understanding of this difference between relations of production and relations in production, in the first and second parts of the text I will highlight two paradigmatic examples from the *No One Belongs Here More Than You* exhibition within the 54th October Salon that represent different approaches to the issue and process of art production in the framework of today’s capitalist society; also, various ways of resisting capitalist modes and relationships within that process will be highlighted as well.

The relationship between capitalism and art and its social impacts are thematically increasingly present in art and theory papers, but also in artistic and curatorial practices. Considering the increasing presence and imposition of capitalist relations in art production, their problematisation and presentation have been expected. Due to the differentiations in fields of art, the subordination of art production to capitalist demands scales upward both in volume and degree of subordination. Art production represents, in fact, a general concept that doesn’t just imply different art forms, but different producers as well and their position within the production process in each of these types of artistic creation. The differences in their positions impact the establishment of different, opposing interests they may have within art production. Another

[1] The cause for writing this article is, among other things, the following review: *No One Belongs Here More Than Zepter* by Ivana Hanaček and Ana Kutleša, which places resistance against the capitalist mode of art production as the primary criterion for judging the exhibition. Based on this criterion, they speak of two different artistic practices, which I intend to clarify in the third section regarding the theoretical framework and approach.

[2] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume 1, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Capital-Volume-I.pdf> [Last accessed: April, 2014]

result is the different political positions of individual female and male producers, as well as of their different ways of working and the contents of their work.

Subordination to capitalist production relations and resistance against the spreading of capitalist relations of production to as yet unconquered fields of social reproduction, together, comprise the history of capitalism, and the art field is certainly no exception to this. Capitalist production relations turn useful things into a form of social wealth, so that under their influence the very purpose of art in society is changed. The traditional socially cohesive, emancipating significance and social role of art are disappearing, whereas the new purpose of art reduces artistic production to the creation and preservation of values. The quoted change requires that the production be reorganised entirely and hence producers react differently and in accordance with their own interests to the breach by capitalist relations into the field of art. On the one hand, through introducing entrepreneurial techniques and methods, art production subjects itself to the requirements of capital, while on the other hand, it activates resistance and the pursuit of ways for alternative art production – for which it is especially important to understand what capital is, and where and in what manner subordination to capital requirements actually takes place.

Capitalism as Conflicting Social Relationship

Opposed to the present-day glorification of *homo economicus* and the possessive individualism that lie at the root of ‘market society’ where everything depends on rational individuals, Marx claimed that: “Society does not consist of individuals, but expresses the sum of interrelations, the relations within which these individuals stand.” [3] Social relationships in capitalism turn people into slaves, land into property and human creativity into a commodity. “Capital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character.” [4] The specificity of capital is not *what* it produces, because relations of domination and exploitation also existed in pre-capitalist historical formations, but primarily how that relation is (re)produced.

Capitalism is a social, rather than an economic system where the production of material conditions for human life takes place in these historically specific social relations. *Capitalist social relations* or *capital* are materialised in our everyday reality and they condition our daily life interactions, because the carriers of social productions, producers, material conditions for their existence and their interrelations are (re)produced together *with them*. Simon Clarke, in his analysis of capital reproduction and the role of the working class, warns us that “[i]n reproducing itself, capital also reproduces the working class, but it does not reproduce the working class as its passive servant, it reproduces the working class as the barrier to its own reproduction.” [5]

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[3] Karl Marx, *Kritika politične ekonomije* 1857/58, Ljubljana: Inštitut za marksistične študije & ZRC SAZU, 1985, p. 159.

[4] Karl Marx, *Capital*, Volume 3, <https://libcom.org/files/Capital-Volume-III.pdf> [Last accessed: April, 2014]

[5] Simon Clarke, “State, Class Struggle and The Reproduction of Capital”, In Simon Clarke (ed.), *The State Debate*, London: Macmillan, 1991, p. 190.

Although the reproduction of capital and the working class are closely connected, in their bases, they remain antagonists. [6]

Due to this correlation, workers' interests are frequently and voluntarily subjugated under to the interests of capital. Partly because workers hope that the development of capitalism will yield well-being for them as well, partly because the connection is often used to manipulate interests of the working class. [7] Clarke also warns that the working class has an active role in the reproduction of capitalist relations. What that activity is going to be depends on the workers' awareness, i.e. if they are aware and active producers, and on their political struggle for their own interests, meaning it depends on the class struggle. The class struggle between those making the products and those appropriating them historically develops and alters the form and content of social relations. This is the reason why constantly new ways of capitalist subordination and disciplining of the working class are invented, so that capitalist social relations can be reproduced as dominant. Also, a continuous inventing of new forms of resistance against this reproduction is needed rather than taking over and repeating old ones which has – much like the response to present-day subordinations – become part of cultural history and political folklore. Therefore, this resistance is of a more symbolical type.

Labour Process As The Place For Material, Ideological And Political Impacts

In order to understand production and its composite parts it is important to understand that they are, primarily, abstractions of real social relations. Due to their historical difference appearing every time, it is necessary to reduce them to their abstract image to obtain a theoretic image. The process of production, as described by Michael Burawoy in his book *The Politics of Production*, [8] is multidimensional. Apart from the economic dimension, we perceive production as a process that has political and ideological impacts. Production entails not only making useful things, but also the (re)production of certain social-productive relations. We must understand the process of production as the unity of material-technological and social-class relations via which a specific mode of production is created. This unity is established through two inseparable parts of the process of production: the *productive force* within which lies for us the most important labour process and *relations of production* that determine the conditions of connecting producers in the process of distribution, exchange and consumption of goods. Relations of production are objective and external to the labour process, but they also embrace and guide it. In this interwovenness,

[6] The antagonistic relation is a result of contradictions stemming from collective, social forms of productions and individual private forms of product appropriation. This contradiction is a fundamental one, because its impact is that the worker's daily existence is subordinated to the needs of reproducing labour power as commodity. Also, this contradiction remains invisible for the worker and presents itself as his own decision. Hence, to the worker, doing a certain job seems like his own free decision, any wages made just an (honest) salary for work performed, while the coercive and exploitative relations standing in the background remain hidden from him.

[7] These types of manipulations are popular nowadays with austerity-measure politicians who promote their cultural policies and convince cultural and art workers to support them because it is for their own good. Workers are aware that it is precisely national cultural policies aiming at cultural and creative industries, as well as culture markets that lead solely to their final proletarianisation, while the importance of art and culture will be reduced to entertainment, but they are also aware that the same politics is not going to invest future public finance into a diverse and dispersed non-profit culture production, which spells out the cancellation of their profession for many producers. The impossible choice of 'your money or your life' placed before culture and art producers requires producers to submit to capital requirements, which in turn renders setting up resistance against it difficult.

[8] Michael Burawoy, *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes Under Capitalism and Socialism*, London: Verso, 1985.

the labour process represents a material basis for relations of production, whereas relations of production associate and overcome various labour processes. This is why the labour process is never just a socially neutral or technological and organisational issue, but represents an insight into the reproduction of a certain society, as it actually links the technological and social-class analyses of the mode of production.

Burawoy further introduces the concept of *relations in production*, with which he intends to include labour process organisation and its proper production policy. Hence, within the actual labour process, he places a focus on its importance and specificity, which have an important role in the reproduction of capitalism. Similar to relations of production, relations in production must reproduce themselves directly. With this, Burawoy accents the dynamism and changeability of relations within the labour process. Relations in production are those relations that the worker-producer experiences directly and therefore are the basis of the cooperation or resistance of worker-producers in the process of production. Reproduction of capital therefore depends on the capitalist's ability to perpetuate his surveillance over the labour process and to extort cooperation from workers, without damaging himself and thus his ability to appropriate the surplus value.

Clarke also shows in the previously quoted analysis that capital has to rule the labour process if it intends to establish itself as dominant. With the change of the workers' position that takes place by the labour power entering the act of production, i.e. the labour process, he points out an important transformation. If outside of production, in the course of exchange, workers are separated from the means of production, then the process of production in fact represents a union of the labour power and means of production. The capitalist attempts to disable association outside of production as much as possible, because this association returns the social power to the worker. The social form of all production factors is changed in the labour process; and also through the labour process, the relations valid in the field of exchange do not have such firm foundations for application in production. The individual worker is turned into a workers' collective, whereas the means of production that existed on the market as goods are socialised and become collective through labour relations. The changed status of production factors is therefore the material basis of the social power for the producers' and workers' direct struggle against imposed capitalist relations.

The Revolutionary Role Of Male and Female Producers Is In Their Relation To Their Own Labour And The Act of Production

Based on the presented theoretic concepts creating a difference between the concepts of relations in production and relations of production, I would like to revert to two examples of artistic work, i.e. artistic practices within the 54th October Salon entitled *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, opposing this conjoining of capitalism and art in various ways. We can roughly categorise them into two groups: artistic practices that articulate resistance through the product and/or content, and practices articulating resistance through the very process of production.

The first art-work falls into art-works/practices dealing with the activity of the art system and the position of the artist within it, i.e. pointing out the powerlessness of the artists creating under capitalist conditions. In such pieces/practices, resistance is articulated through frustration at the social power of capitalism and its socially destructive effects. This frustration has its material

basis in the working conditions of the producer in the field of art, because they are increasingly confronted with the fact that the capitalist mode of production is wresting away control over the labour process, and consequently along with it, paid work. One of the examples of this is “Looking For A Job” by artist Milijana Babić. Within the exhibition, the artist displayed the documentation of her yearlong art project in which she researched not only the labour market in times of record unemployment in Croatia, but particularly emphasised within that topic the poor working conditions and position of artists. In spite of these pieces being important because they articulate and render visible these urgent issues, their articulation of resistance in fact does no harm to the capitalist mode of production. The problem is in their approach and manner of establishing the critique of the capitalist system. Capitalist relations of production turning a useful thing into the means of acquiring wealth enable capitalism to be elastic, to include each critique of the existing system into its operation and make it work for its benefit.

Therefore, the representation of the artistic vocation and artists as victims of capitalism, regardless of the art form and the degree of presented violence performed on the artists, does not span further than moral outrage and professional revolt. As long as works of art are available for commoditisation that creates from them the objects of value generation and conservation, neither their contents nor their form will prevent further subordination of the field of art to the capitalist mode of production. At the same time, pointing out the endangerment of the artistic vocation has political consequences, because it takes away the ability to connect to others who are also being exploited (sometimes even more brutally) and establishes itself as a distinct social excess, which in reality it is not, although it makes other vocations visible by its call.



A detail from the LA Reading Room at the 54. October Salon,
photo by Duško Jelen

Different from the first example, the other type of resistance practice is basically grounded in the subordination to capitalist conditions that it does not perceive as excessive but as a reality in which it, opposite of contemporary capitalist processes, it wants to build different ways of producing art. Often these production practices are named as the creation of a certain policy or politicisation of a certain space and time. For them, it is significant that – rather than deal with the final product – they deal with the way it was produced or is being produced, i.e. actual production. On the basis of principles such as the commons, solidarity and collective, possibilities of an alternate organisation of artistic production and connection into possible new (art) communities open up.

As an example of this type of practice I shall list the work of the Red Min(e)d curatorial group that, when creating the exhibition *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, based on previous exhibition practices within the common platform *Bring In Take Out Living Archive*, consciously stepped into the world ruled by the capitalist social relations that determine our daily lives. [9] However, this awareness does not necessarily entail the acceptance and subordination to these relations, but an attempt to change them through introducing new ways of art production, opposed to the existing ones. Through collective creation of new methodologies for organisation and action at these events, the work of this feminist group (informally and then formally called Red Min(e)d), establishes space to create fissures in dominant forms of knowledge flows that the existing system always co-modifies and privatises or simply excludes. Through the envisaged long-term platform entitled *Bring In Take Out Living Archive*, Red Min(e)d searches for a way to overcome project-based art production via other art production possibilities. Construction of this platform is therefore based on continuous and collective work without a hierarchical division being put onto those coming from the art world and those who do not, because that common space is being built on the basis of those topics that bring the everyday into the field of art, by way of being open to various experimental approaches and possibilities of political articulation. [10] Based on this, the labour process of the exhibition is organised directly – public events that transcend borders between formal and informal, individual work and collective practices, not always visible and not always represented. Hence, with the establishment of relations in production that actively combat the dominant and usual forms of exhibition required by the art system, [11] it resists the subordination of art production to capital requirements. The selection of exhibited pieces points to this, more based on political friendship than on institutional norm and

[9] “The exhibition takes fully into account the fact that bodies have become techno-cultural constructs immersed in networks of complex, simultaneous and potentially conflicting power-relations in which all kinds of historically transposed ideologies have been internalized by contemporary capitalist conditions of everyday life as a permanent and only possible state of social reality.” (<http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/54th-october-salon/concept/>, [Last accessed: February 2014].

[10] “In this way, *No One Belongs Here More Than You* (re)produces an interactive space – the space of a loud (feminist) articulation out of which it is possible to reflect, rework, emancipate and sustain one’s own and our own positions. As described by Biljana Kašić, “it is an open space that means and creates both dislocation and new location, visibility and presence of the invisible, possibility and freedom of experimentation, thereby enabling politicization of space and time.” It is not only about being interactive, it is also about being (in)active.” (<http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/54th-october-salon/concept/>, [Last accessed: February 2014].

[11] The art system or the so-called art-world is the institutional framework of capitalist relations of production in the field of art. It is comprised of institutions such as modern or contemporary art museums, exhibition venues, fairs, private galleries that have before – as labour process factors – performed individual functions within the production of visual art. By way of separation from the process of labour and subordination of the social impacts of the division of labour to capital interests, capitalist relations of production were given a material base, because the entire production of visual art must be subordinated to new criteria.

valuation. [12] The exhibition is shaped through questions asked and topics in ‘communication with the audience that simultaneously sneaks into the field of collective thinking about art as system and about all of these topics that relate to their positions.’ [13] In this place, I start from the fact that the curatorial group invites both female and male exhibition participants alike to join in working together in the process of creating the *Living Archive* (organisation of labour based on solidarity and equality) and in creating a common goal (production of knowledge and methodologies overcoming the commodity form). Without such alliances and relations, the impact of this collective labour practice, if it remained based only on the work of the group within established exhibition practices, would remain nothing more than mere subordination to capitalist relations of production – fulfilling biographical representative forms and individual self-promotion, and the creation of cultural capital for public or private funders, organisations or institutions, as much as its topics may be politically involved.

Due to the objective capitalist relations of production that shape the exhibition, artwork or practice, the hardest thing is to clearly set a purpose or goal for it. Articulation of politically involved outreach in this specific case of the exhibition today is not in their didactic tables and accompanying texts, but more in the very process of the origin of the exhibition, i.e. its labour process. With this, I revert to the fact that in capitalist production the labour process is just a means, while the process of increasing value or generation of profit is the ultimate goal. Hence it is important that through the process of creating the exhibition it is made clear what its intended purpose is – education and reflections of the (local) population or developing the culture market and/or the culture scene. The social impact of the exhibition is different in relation to this, because the first option connects art and society whereas the second includes it into capitalist mass production. Mass production of art events and objects originating with the introduction of the market and market relations is in fact a looting of events of any socially cohesive importance, and even more brutal when covered by politically involved topics.

The conception of culture and art as a means to emancipate man and society has been replaced by the conception of culture and art as a means to reach profit. Direct male and female producers in the fields of culture and art thereby morph into productive workers – for capitalism – who are alienated in capitalist production from the product and their work alike. The irrelevance and futility of the contents and products whose only basic purpose and meaning is only the creation of surplus value and the alienation of their producers is perhaps best described by Marx, who says on this topic that “In fact, of course, this ‘productive’ worker cares as much about the crappy shit he has to make as does the capitalist himself who employs him, and who also couldn’t give a damn for the junk.” [14] Interest for the relation between art and capitalism thereby at least partly prevents culture and art from turning into that junk. The struggle for labour processes where, instead of hierarchy, equality and comradeship prevails, and instead of competition, solidarity,

[12] <http://www.danas.rs/upload/documents/Dodaci/2013/Omot%20Oktobarski%20salon%202013%20novinar.pdf> [Last accessed: February 2014].

[13] Ibid.

[14] Karl Marx, *Kritika politične ekonomije 1857/58*, ibid., p. 166.

the struggle for products to be owned by all and the struggle for production to serve the needs of society rather than capital is the continuation of the workers’ it is a struggle for civilisation achievements, that means for cultural and art production, as well.



Jože Barši, Mladen Dolar, Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit 1, video and text, 2013, photo by Ana Kostić

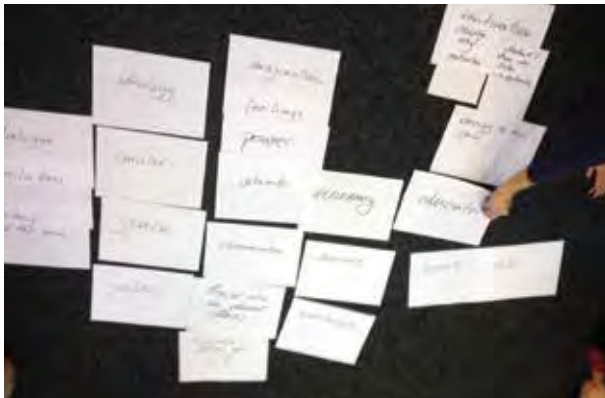
a7.außeneinsatz is a collective of art educators (in German: *Kunstvermittlerinnen*, literally translated, “art mediators”) based in five different cities in Germany (Berlin/Kassel/Freiburg/Münster/München). a7.außeneinsatz works at the crossroads of art education, performance lecture, theatre and curatorial practice, with the goal of breaking through the established traditions of institutional art education. Since 2010, a7.außeneinsatz has worked on experimental art education projects in cooperation with different art institutions (e.g. KW – Institute of Contemporary Art/Berlin, Kunsthalle Fridericianum/Kassel, Museum für Neue Kunst/Freiburg), schools and art academies. Two members of the a7.außeneinsatz, Margret Schütz and Greta Hoheisel, led the workshop “We (Don’t) Need (No) Education” at the 54th October Salon in Belgrade.

a7.AUSSENEINSATZ

BODIES, HISTORIES – EMBODIED HISTORY OF/IN AN EXHIBITION SPACE

Some remarks on performative art education in a museum context

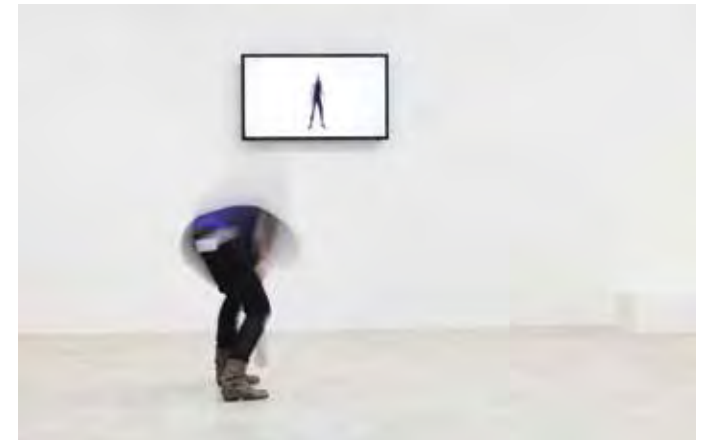
When entering an art museum, you step into a space of a ‘compressed’ time. In the habitual space of a museum, as practiced and cultivated since the bourgeois revolution and the establishment of national states, you are confronted, among other things, with a dense and in many aspects exclusive and even authoritative art history narrative. Preserved in museum storage and displayed in exhibition spaces are objects from different centuries, eras and lifetimes. The works are considered worthy of museal conservation and presentation because they seem to simultaneously represent both a particular moment in art history as well as the overall development of human culture or a ‘national being’. It seems that everything that does not enter the climate-controlled halls of a museum is excluded from this overall narrative, from an ‘archive’, and is thus rendered dispensable. On the (usually perfect) white walls of an exhibition space, these ‘grand’ narratives are unfolded before the eyes of a visitor. Covering the distance of just a few square metres, sometimes guided by means of text, audio or additional visual information, visitors move over the thresholds of centuries, countries and even continents within minutes.



We (Don’t) Need (No) Education, curatorial school by a7.außeneinsatz on experimental art education, photo by Greta Hoheisel

The dense historical narrative of an art museum, which manifests itself in space through the arrangement of objects, dictates a rhythm, which the visitor is to follow. *Walking – turning – standing still – walking – turning – standing still*. Visitors are to submit to an ‘unwritten script’ and ‘behavioural rules’ that are “inscribed almost physically” [1] within an exhibition space and are to be performed by each individual body.

This encoded ‘choreography’ of an exhibition space, *walking – turning – standing still – walking – turning – standing still*, has been the initial point of departure of all a7.außeneinsatz projects, which we have in most instances realized together with students. Our aim has been to intervene into, to disrupt this encoded ‘choreography’ or rhythm of an individual yet almost ‘archetypical’ museum narrative with the public and their concrete physical bodies. By disrupting this choreography and rhythm, we try to create a space for alternative scripts, for the usually overlooked or excluded, and for the body of the visitor in the here and now of the museum space.



Nataša Teofilović, One for Tango, 3D animation, 2012, photo by Ana Kostić

The show *No One Belongs Here More Than You* didn’t take place in a traditional, habitual museum space but in an empty building that had been previously used as a garment factory and clothing store. Nevertheless, in many parts, the show’s display ‘reenacted’ that of a museum. Considering the fact that at that moment, in Belgrade, only very few public art museums were accessible to the public, this ‘reenactment’ made a reference to the special local situation. Except for special gaps, which revealed the temporary and tentative construction of the exhibition, the display cited the situation of a museum: with a ‘curatorial prologue’, which

[1] Armin Nassehi, “Public Space as a Place of Habit”, In Michael Elmgreen & Ingar Dragset & Eva Kraus & Nan Mellinger (eds.), *A Space Called Public/Hoffentlich Öffentlich*, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2013, p. 284.

traditionally serves as an opening to the narrative to follow, which establishes the setting and gives a background; and with a lot of white, neutral walls, which were integrated in the former architecture, giving the whole space the appearance of a museum. At the same time, the exhibition was also de-habitualizing the museum, by showing traces of the former function. In a way, the escalator in the centre of the building tore a gap in the surface of the narrative of a museum.

Moreover even, gaps were provided by the programme itself. By inviting artists' groups that didn't bring a piece of art but were creating situations – like the Museum of Non-Participation by Karen Mirza and Rachel Anderson, the Reading Room, and our workshop – spaces opened up for participation, or even for calling the exhibition itself into question. In our workshop, we used these gaps offered by the curators for disrupting the choreography and rhythm of the exhibition itself and to create a space for alternative scripts and for the body of the visitor in the here and now of the museum space.

In order to do so, we first of all usually extend the time spent in a museum from the usual two or three hours to several days. In this time frame, the body is not able to sustain the scripted rules of behavior and conduct of a museum (walk, don't run, look, don't touch, only talk quietly...). Sustaining the rhythm of the museum narrative of *walking – turning – standing still – walking – turning – standing still* becomes more and more difficult. Over the course of time, the body, whether out of exhaustion, boredom or disorientation, starts to demand different behavioural patterns and postures: sitting or laying down, shaking the feet and legs, stretching, yawning, maybe even running and shouting.

Through performative exercises, we enhance these impulses to move and to behave differently. The participants are encouraged to physically relate to the artworks on display and to react to the given museum architecture. Through establishing an individual physical relationship to an artwork and/or a detail of the museum architecture, the participants of our workshop appropriate and occupy first of all the physical space around them, but then also, and more importantly, the time of and in a museum. By interrupting and disturbing the overall rhythm of the dense museum narrative through pauses, breaks, short cuts and refusals to submit to the rules and regulations of physical behavior, a 'space of one's own' is opening up. We call this space a space of potentialities and possibilities, a space for individual, tactile knowledge, as opposed to historical, rational knowledge, a space for the postures, gestures and attitudes of each individual participant and museum visitor, with alternative, unwritten scripts of behavior and the permanent rewriting of the overall narrative.

All the sitting, laying, shaking and stretching, all the small moments of positioning oneself in relation to everybody and everything else around, happens right in the space of this condensed museum narrative, the exhibition itself, and not hidden away in some back room reserved for 'gallery education'. This performative, educational intervention is very visible, audible and recognizable, not only for the participants themselves but for the other visitors of the museum as well.

One of the interventions we did in Belgrade was called the "Barometer", a simple action with which to visualize individual opinions related to the topic of the exhibition. It starts with a questionnaire. In the case of *No One Belongs Here More Than You*, we focused on our participants' attitudes towards feminism. They completed sentences to statements: "I don't call myself a feminist, because....", "If I could change into the opposite sex for one day, I would...",



Lorena Herrera Rashid, *Pachanga*, installation, 2008; Curatorial School We (Don't) Need (No) Education by a7auBeneinsatz, foto by Duško Jelen



Lorena Herrera Rashid, *Untitled*, sculpture, 2012; We (Don't) Need (No) Education, curatorial school by a7auBeneinsatz, photo by Duško Jelen

"Resistance against gender stereotypes starts from simple things like...". In a second step, the participants react physically to the statements and sentences they have just generated. If one agrees with the statement, he or she steps forward. If someone disagrees, he or she turns the other way. Through this simple group exercise, a picture of the group's attitudes and opinions is created in the concrete space.

Thus, the workshop participants are encouraged to position themselves towards the artworks and the museum in a way (and time) that is suitable to them. This happens first of all in a very literal, physical way, then in a verbal, more intellectual way and, in a third step, this leads to a mental positioning, an attitude towards the space, the objects, the institution providing the frame and reason for the whole undertaking. The final performance of the group is an assembly of many small acts, positionings and gestures, scripted according to the participants' wishes and needs. Time is compressed or extended, space is experienced in a different way, and therefore a new rhythm is enacted and performed by the participants. The script of the exhibition is examined, deconstructed and rewritten in order to find an alternative narrative in time and space.

By performing this 'other' narrative in a museum, directly next to the narrative created by the curators of the exhibition, the potential of a productive clash of narratives and opinions is generated. At best, this clash opens up a perspective onto something that can be called the 'transformative discourse in art education'. The museum, first of all being interrupted, attacked, criticized or ignored in its institutional work, can become a space not of a 're-production' but of a creation of voices, bodies, experiences and meanings that differ from its usual script, and incorporate the specific knowledge of the visitors as a comment on the exhibition or as feedback to the institution's work: "the imperative is less about introducing certain public segments to these than about introducing the institutions – due to their long isolation and self-referential deficits – to the surrounding world, i.e. their local milieu." [2]

[2] Carmen Mörsch, "At a Crossroads of Four Discourses, In Carmen Mörsch (ed.), *documenta 12. Education II. Between Cultural Practice and Public Service*, Zurich: diaphanes, 2009, p. 10.

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ELKE KRASNY

REDRAWING THE LINES BETWEEN ART, HISTORY, MOVEMENTS AND POLITICS.

Toward a Feminist Historiography
of Exhibition-Making and Curating

Women's museums were first initiated in the 1980s. Their beginnings were strongly associated with the struggles and goals of the second-wave feminist movement. In 1981, the Bonn Women's Museum / Frauenmuseum Bonn was founded by Marianne Pitzen and a group of women working across the fields of art and history, thereby becoming the first women's museum. In 1982, the Kvindemuseet Aarhus / Aarhus Women's Museum in Denmark was started as a grassroots movement and has developed into a state-recognized national museum devoted to researching, collecting and exhibiting the lives and labor of women in Denmark. In 1988, the Museo delle Donne Merano / Frauenmuseum Meran / Meran Women's Museum in Italy was founded on the private initiative of fashion and accessories collector Evelyn Ortner, and is now run by the Verein Frauenmuseum / Museum Association. Many more women's museums worldwide were established in the years to follow. The broad range of objectives held by the many women's museums in different parts of the world defies being gathered under a single definition. As museums, each is distinctly marked by its location, context and history. At the same time, these institutions are joined by complex transnational exchanges and cross-cultural collaborations. The current material and political conditions of globalization, neoliberalism, cultural competition and austerity urbanism impact strongly on the exhibition culture, politics and collection strategies of each women's museum. Put more simply, women's museums continue to assert their right to exercise control over the presentation of the historic, social, economic and political roles of women. Many of them include artists' works or artists' interventions in their exhibition-making strategies. Quite a few of the world's women's museums struggle with dire economic situations and/or with complex political challenges. They have worked out a host of different strategies and tactics to endure over time. New women's museums continue to emerge. Most recent new initiatives include the Museo de la Mujer in Buenos Aires / Buenos Aires Women's Museum in Argentina, which was set up in 2006, or the website of the Istanbul Kadın Müzesi / Istanbul Women's Museum in Turkey, which went online in 2011. Transnational networking, intensified debates and frequent exchanges marked the first decade of the new millennium for women's museums. The

International Association of Women's Museums was founded in 2012 at the Fourth International Congress of Women's Museums in Alice Springs, Australia. This new association is based in Bonn and headed by Bettina Bab, historian and long-standing curator at the Women's Museum Bonn / Frauenmuseum Bonn. The Third International Congress of Women's Museums was hosted by the Buenos Aires Women's Museum, Museo de las Mujeres, Buenos Aires / Buenos Aires Women's Museum in Argentina. The Second International Congress of Women's Museums was hosted by the Bonn Women's Museum / Frauenmuseum Bonn. In 2013, the Association of Women's Museums includes 50 different museums and 14 different initiatives. It is the successor to the network of women's museums (<http://www.womeninmuseum.net>), which was initiated at the First International Congress of Women's Museums hosted by the Meran Women's Museum in 2008.

Feminist art exhibitions date back to the 1970s, when they preceded the complex processes of (self-)institutional pushing for women's museums. Far from pretending to be comprehensive, I instead want to outline the contours of a historiographic cartography of the very first feminist art exhibitions, which were strongly related to the feminist movement and also the feminist art movement of the time. In 1970, the coalition of Women Artists in Revolution organized an all-female artists' show entitled *X12, 12 Women Artists* in New York. In the same year, a collective of female artists called Kanonklubben put on the feminist group show *Damebilleder* (trans: *Lady Portraits or Women's Images*) in different locations throughout Copenhagen. What has most commonly been referred to as the first pioneering feminist group show, is the February 1972 project *Womanhouse* by Judy Chicago and Miriam Shapiro. They used a 17-room, soon-to-be-demolished house in Hollywood, California to set up *Womanhouse*, a temporary feminist art exhibition and performance space. In 1975, Lucy Lippard organized c. 7,500, a show comprised solely of conceptual women artists, held at the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia. In 1975, VALIE EXPORT organized both a symposium and a multidisciplinary exhibition at Gallery next St. Stephen's Cathedral / Galerie nächst St. Stephan in Vienna. The title of the project was *MAGNA. Feminismus: Kunst und Kreativität. Ein Überblick über die weibliche Sensibilität, Imagination, Projektion und Problematik, suggeriert durch ein Tableau von Bildern, Objekten, Fotos, Vorträgen, Diskussionen, Lesungen, Filmen, Videobändern und Aktionen, zusammengestellt von VALIE EXPORT / MAGNA. Feminism: Art and Creativity. A Survey of the Female Sensibility, Imagination, Projection and Problems Suggested Through a Tableau of Images, Objects, Photographs, Lectures, Discussions, Films, Videos and Actions, compiled by VALIE EXPORT*. In the same year, *Magma: Rassegna internazionale di donne artiste / Magma: International Exhibition of Women Artists* organized by Romana Loda, took place in the Castello Oldofredi in Brescia, Italy. In 1976, the survey exhibition *Women Artists 1550–1950* by art historians Linda Nochlin and Ann Sutherland Harris was shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In 1979, Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* opened at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. The eve of the opening witnessed Suzanne Lacy's large-scale participatory performance the International *Dinner Party*, in which the artist explored the potentials of an international women's community. Most of the organizers of these early feminist group exhibitions were artists who acted as what we have come to call curators. At the time, the initiators referred to their exhibition-making activities as organizing, compiling or putting together. These pioneering feminist exhibition projects were not only marked by the political claim to position women as artists, authors and simply creators and the search for feminist and feminine expressions in art-making, but also by international networking and transnational exchange. Today, critical contemporary feminist curatorial practices can be found both inside and outside of the art field and the art museum. These practices equally defy a single definition as they constantly redraw the lines of negotiation between art and politics in

the curating and writing of art's histories, theories and practices. At the heart of critical feminist curatorial practices lies the struggle of redefining and reinventing feminism on the battlefield of representational politics and of transgressing boundaries of conventional curatorship. These curatorial practices navigate the contested terrain of exhibiting, aiming not only to address the legacies of historical feminism(s), but also to work out what is at stake for the future of feminism.

Feminism has come of age. Again, far from claiming to be comprehensive, I want to outline a cartography of contemporary feminist exhibitions in the first decade of the 21st century. Interestingly enough, emerging transnational redefinitions of feminism, new feminist struggles and the return to the feminist art revolution of the 1960s and 1970s gave ample reason for several large-scale and profoundly researched curatorial projects, often staged in mainstream institutions. In 2004, Stella Rollig, who was the newly appointed director of the Lentos Art Museum in Linz, Austria at the time, dedicated her opening exhibition *Paula's Home* exclusively to the works of female artists. The two curators, Angelika Gillmayr and Elisabeth Nowak-Thaller, saw this project as a critical reflection of their institution and its legacy. The year 2007 was a prolific year in terms of feminist art exhibitions, including *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum, New York, curated by Linda Nochlin and Maura Reilly. The two curators aimed for a transnational show dedicated to the theoretical concept of difference in order to make, in their own words, "feminism a plural noun" in defiance of the notion of "unitary feminism" and the construction of a "timeless woman". [1] Connie Butler curated *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution at the Museum of Contemporary Art Los Angeles*. The curator describes her ambition "to make the case that feminism's impact on art of the 1970s constitutes the most influential international 'movement' of any during the postwar period." Butler invokes "bell hook's proposal to resignify the term 'feminist movement', to deliver it from its nomenclatorial fixity and reconnect it to the verb 'to move'." [2] The exhibition *Gender Battle* and the conference *Gender Battle. Lectures, theatre and debates about the rules of gender, sexuality and the impact of feminism in the art of the seventies* was curated by Juan Vicente Aliaga at the Galician Center for Contemporary Art Santiago de Compostela Galicia, Spain. The exhibition *L'Art au Féminin: Approches Contemporaines / Woman Art: Contemporary Approaches*, curated by Nadira Laggoune, was shown at the Musée d'Art Moderne et Contemporain d'Alger, Algiers as part of *Algiers, Arab Cultural Capital*. In 2009, *Gender Check: Femininity and Masculinity in the Art of Eastern Europe*, curated by Bojana Pejić, was shown at the *Museum of Modern Art Ludwig Foundation Vienna / mumok Wien, Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig* and in 2010 at the Zacheta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw. A team of 26 art historians, cultural theorists and curators conducted the groundbreaking research for the exhibition, and *Gender Check: A Reader* was published to "test and 'correct' propositions made in the hitherto dominant Western discourse on gender," highlighting "the necessity of an in-depth and long-term approach to the issue of gender in Eastern European art." [3] In 2009, *Rebelle: Kunst en feminisme / Rebelle: Art & Feminism 1969–2009*, curated by Mirjam Westen, was shown at the Museum voor Moderne Kunst Arnhem/Museum for Modern Art Arnhem in

[1] Maura Reilly & Linda Nochlin, "Curator's Preface", In Maura Reilly & Linda Nochlin (eds.), *Global Feminisms. New Directions in Contemporary Art*, London & New York: Merrell, 2007, p. 11.

[2] Cornelia Butler, "Art and Feminism: An Ideology of Shifting Criteria", In Lisa Gabrielle Mark (ed.), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press Cambridge, 2007, p. 15

[3] Christine Böhler & Rainer Fuchs, "Preface", In Bojana Pejić & ERTSE Foundation & Museum Moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien (eds.), *Gender Check: A Reader. Art and Theory in Eastern Europe*, Cologne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2010, p. 9.

the Netherlands. The exhibition created a constellation of artists from different generations and continents set into a context. Photos, documentaries and newspaper clippings showed the movements, social developments and changing position of women in the world and, in particular, in the art world. Also in 2009, *elles@centre pompidou*, curated by Camille Morineau, was shown at the Centre Pompidou. The curatorial strategy paralleled that of the *Paula's Home* exhibition in 2004, with all permanent collection galleries being dedicated solely to female artists from the museum's collections. Around 500 works by more than 200 women artists were exhibited, displaying a different art history of the 20th and 21st centuries. All these different exhibitions are clearly indicative of the fact that feminism has become an integral part of the curatorial agenda in the first decade of the 21st century. The pioneering feminist group shows of the 1970s were, for the better part, organized by artists who doubled as curators, a term not yet used at the time. They referred instead to their work as organizing or compiling. Exhibitions throughout the 1980s, the 1990s and the most recent culmination in large-scale exhibitions in the 2000s bear witness to the long-standing emergence of a transnational field of expert feminist curatorial knowledge production. Feminist curators, researchers and theorists have made significant crossings, shifts and turns within the curatorial field. Equally important, they have recently begun the production of theoretical discourse and committed scholarship in the emerging field of the historiography of feminist curatorship. Again, I want to use the model of cartography to sketch an outline of the recent historiography of the emerging field of publications on feminist curatorship. In 2006, *n.paradoxa: international feminist art journal* dedicated a special issue to curatorial strategies, and the same year *n.paradoxa*-editor Katy Deepwell contributed the essay *Feminist Curatorial Strategies and Practices since the 1970s* to the volume *New Museum Theory and Practice*, edited by Janet Marstine. In 2007, Griselda Pollock's *Encounters in the Virtual Feminist Museum: Time, Space and the Archive* was published. In the 2010 edition of *The Feminism and Visual Culture Reader*, edited by Amelia Jones, we find "Connie Butler, Amelia Jones, and Maura Reilly (in dialogue) on Feminist Curating and the 'Return' of Feminist Art". Also published in 2010: *Feminisms Is Still Our Name: Seven Essays on Historiography and Curatorial Practices*, edited by Hedlin Hayden and Sjöholm Skrubbe. In 2012, *Working with Feminism: Curating and Exhibitions in Eastern Europe*, edited by Katrin Kivimaa, appeared; and in 2013, *Politics in a Glass Case: Feminism, Exhibition Cultures and Curatorial Transgressions*, edited by Angela Dimitrakaki and Lara Perry. The cartography I am attempting to outline here relies on thinking spatially instead of thinking solely in temporal terms. This kind of "exploration of chronology through cartography" was introduced by Marsha Meskimmon [4]. "Thinking spatially, however, we can admit the coexistence in time of locationally distinct narratives and connect disjointed temporalities thus asking vital questions concerning networks of relation, processes of exchange, and affinities of meaning." This way of thinking leads to the assumption of a curatorial vantage point from which an uncharted territory of possible dialogues and alignments between women's museums and independent feminist curatorial agencies can be both traced and projected. Such an approach relies on dialogical and contradictory constellations, rather than monological linear sequences.

[4] Marsha Meskimmon, "Chronology through Cartography: Mapping 1970s Feminist Art Globally", In Lisa Gabrielle Mark (ed.), *WACK! Art and the Feminist Revolution*, Massachusetts and London: The MIT Press Cambridge, 2007, p. 323.

Seen from a more distanced or meta-vantage point, women's museums and feminist curatorship do share a common horizon of past feminist struggles and of being part of feminist movements working toward shaping and reshaping a future feminist project. On the ground though, they barely ever intersect in dialogue or even in joint knowledge production. This lack of exchange led me to the belief that it is indeed possible to initiate dialogue and to create temporary alignments between activists, artists, curators, educators, historians, museum directors, researchers, theorists and scholars who are actively involved in women's museums or in the field of feminist curating. Yet, I would like to point out that it is only from this curatorial meta-vantage point that I was actually able to envision meeting on the conflicted yet common ground of feminist struggles and feminist politics. [5]

Public at the exhibition opening 54th October Salon
No One Belongs Here More Than You, photo by Tina Smrekar

[5] This text is part of my introductory essay to the publication: Elke Krasny (ed.), *Women's Museum: Curatorial Politics in Feminism, Education, History, and Art*, Vienna & Meran: Löcker & Frauenmuseum Meran, 2013.



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ana nedeLJKOVIĆ

ARTEDU: 2013 OCTOBER SALON

180 During the October Salon, within the Cultural Centre of Belgrade educational programmes, I organised and conducted workshops for youth, children and adults, as well as helped prepare the organisation of school guided tours through exhibition. [1] In this text, I will present the programme “Artedu Workshop: 2013 October Salon”. The programme was intended for all interested high school students in Belgrade, and several freshman university students joined in as well. Nearly 40 participants came to the workshops, all solely pursuing their own interests.

The programme structure was such that the youth were actively involved in its development from the start. Together with the wonderful young people within the KCB Team, [2] we explored the exhibition during the preparatory stage and created a selection of pieces and topics that were most appealing to their generation. KCB Team members also prepared interesting guided tours for their peers. During the workshop, we initiated dynamic discussions and one very important segment was the practical part, where the participants developed their own work: drawings, comic book strips, photographs and short films.

The positive and creative atmosphere at the workshop and the very concept of *No One Belongs Here More Than You* put forward by the Red Min(e)d curatorial team encouraged me to contemplate contemporary art, education and honesty. About how important it was to speak openly and personally about art. How important it was to be honest as an artist, curator, educator and audience member. About what exhibitions are for (in Serbia) today, what the expectations, previous knowledge and interests the youth brought to the October Salon and what their relation to art and culture was.

Contemporary art exhibitions are usually accompanied by a standard set of stereotypes: a lack of understanding or ‘awe towards art’, the uncomfortable chill of silently walking through museums and galleries, fear of misunderstanding theoretical texts, fear of non-belonging, fear that we will not give the correct response, that we will be unable to accurately reproduce ‘precisely what the artist thought, precisely what the curator thought’. There is a frequent impression that exhibitions are meant for some other and different people who, different from me/you/us ‘know what it is about’. Breaking up these stereotypes was precisely the workshop programme concept. Of course, the issue of how interested young people are in culture, particularly contemporary art

[1] The following programmes were organised within the Cultural Centre of Belgrade educational programmes: the youth workshop Artedu: 2013 October Salon, the *KCB workshop for children and adults*, the *KCB Club* and exhibition tours for high schools.
[2] The KCB Team was a group of high school and university students cooperating with the Cultural Centre of Belgrade in developing and implementing youth programmes. The KCB Team members for 2013 are: Filip Pajović, Bogdan Car, Katarina Mitrović, Bojan Lacmanović, Jovana Vujanov, Maša Tomanović, Milivoje Petrović, Uroš Ranković, Milica Đoković and Miloš Lazović.

and events like the October Salon, is a very complex one. Most frequently, everything unfolds within the enchanted circle of art, education and culture. In our education system, contemporary art is insufficiently represented in art and related classes, and it is virtually non-existent in practice. The artist covered in class is still just a piece of data, with clearly listed years of birth and death. On the other hand, the local art scene and situation in culture are such that lack of money, closed museums and a troublesome culture policy are talked about more instead of art itself. Serbian society suffered serious damage in the past, and the logical consequence was that the youth, generally speaking, were less interested in art and culture, and more in money and all the shiny stuff money can buy. The present generation of teenagers in Serbia often chooses the wrong value systems, largely because there are virtually no entertaining or high-quality art and culture programmes intended for them. The consequence of this is a highly alarming situation in society. The present generations are prone to embracing troubling social stereotypes and uncritically reproducing political slogans. If the approach to the youth does not change we will soon have a quite nasty, traditionalist society. I believe that precisely through exhibitions such as the October Salon we can constructively and creatively encourage the young to form and honestly interpret their opinions and attitudes. On the other hand, based on their reactions and needs we can contemplate future art and culture.

What happens in practice when young people come to an exhibition entitled *No One Belongs Here More Than You*? How do they experience the exhibition? Are they able to feel that they belong?

Yes, they could feel it. But this is something that needs calculated and gradual work on. Some of them have come to the workshops we organise at the Cultural Centre of Belgrade and have participated in similar programmes at previous October Salons. Others were here for the first time. For yet others, this was the first contemporary art exhibition at all even. They all come with different prior knowledge and expectations. It is important to greet them with the words “It’s great you’re here” instead of “How is it even possible you have never...” It is important to ask them questions rather than provide ready-made answers. It is crucial to start from what they actually think about the exhibition, rather than the established opinion about what they are “supposed to learn” from the exhibition. Educational programmes are not outposts of the conservative education system but a space for exploration, freedom and experimentation. *No One Belongs Here More Than You* enabled such an approach with its concept and selection of pieces.

We howled in the igloo installation constructed entirely out of speakers, but we also got to talking about the freedom of speech and fear of exposing one’s opinion; we ran through the exhibition, so that later, each one alone, walking through it slowly, could find some detail just for them; we drew personal maps of the exhibition, brought our friends. On the last day of the workshop, the participants put up their pieces among the exhibited work at the Salon for half an hour. Everyone chose a spot they preferred and we organised a tour through this new, ephemeral and amended October Salon.

During the workshop, the most frequently uttered words were “prejudice” and “stereotypes”. We tried to talk about equality, but we talked about inequality, we tried to criticise prejudice in others, but we faced our own as well. We came up with examples of how to present everyday life through art. We explored what small, personal and practical meaning exists behind a big word, like, say – feminism.



A work/plan for a walk through the exhibition by Nina Cupić at the ARTEDU curatorial school, photo by Nina Cupić



A work by Sofija Kinkele at the ARTEDU curatorial school by Ana Nedeljković, photo by Sofija Kinkele

All questions were welcome, and through them we formed various views of the exhibition: Why did the artist explain her work in a poem? What is the artist who cries in his video like in his private life? Will I get a job when I graduate from university? Why is it strange for a woman to do that? Why are we afraid to speak about violence? Why are you surprised to hear bad language at an exhibition? Who are the groups discriminated against at school, or the club I go to? What prejudice do we have about clothing styles? What do the ideal woman and ideal man look like

based on ads? What is the life of the Inuit like and what are the parties in Mexico like? How is Syria defending itself on Facebook? What is it like being a girl in street art and why are women housewives in Serbia today?



A work by Uroš Ranković at the
ARTEDU curatorial school by Ana Nedeljković,
photo by Uroš Ranković

A short film about the October Salon was shot within the workshop. Accompanied by great music, shots of the building, details of pieces, the basement, technical staff, statements from workshop participants, some completely random details, the crystal chandelier and secret passages all fly by in rapid succession. The film in fact shows how the youth see the exhibition in a highly effective manner. When we overcome prejudice and stereotypes, when we approach the exhibition sincerely, when we feel we belong to it, it becomes a dynamic whole where hierarchies collapse – a whole wholly different from the silently passing by of exhibited pieces and usual ways of looking at them. The exhibition is an interactive space. The exhibition is a fun place.



ARTEDU curatorial school by Ana Nedeljković
in front of Slaven Tolj's Untitled, installation,
2008, photo by Filip Pajović

Stefano Faoro's (b. 1984 in Italy) work is related to graphic design (professionally and more), cinema and language (ongoing research while part of Jan Van Eyck Academie in Maastricht) and visual art (mostly precarious unpaid practice).

STEFANO FAORO

IN THE MEANWHILE, IN THE SMALL ROOM IN THE REAR OF THE BUILDING...

186 To think about one thing that, you know, at least in my own kind of experience ... within a collective work, of course, you get this sort of 'go beyond your own individual practice', but there are constant contradictions around that moment of reproducing yourself, and reproducing it in the way I mean, when I was thinking about friendship ... the cultural sector relies on an informal economy, I mean this is what it relies on. And in a way, this is what I find really challenging working as an artist, which is ... How do we create and care for these relationships and become really vigilant, and think of ways to organize ourselves in relation to the logics of capital. I don't know ... There is also that space that we need to discover, in a way thinking through, experimenting, what it means to be individuals, until the system is constantly individualizing everything we do, so there is that kind of constantly coming back to yourself.

And as an artist, there are all these things, how do you pay your rent, how do you pay your studio, how do you negotiate the market, how do you negotiate your job, work for an institution, get public funding, how do you do all these economies. How are we creating these microeconomic systems, how do we start to use the force of collectivity, but with the full knowledge of what capital is. How are we going to keep shifting, but it is tough...

Until they check us out.

(here something happens to the microphone, voices get blurry and slow, only a few words are recognizable...)

(a few minutes after, the voices are clear again)

I have worked as an activist all my life, and for me it is really rewarding, and now I feel like there should be something problematic about it.

(everybody laughs)

For me, it is very rewarding, it is the only safe space that I have, with people that I work with, everybody and my friends. I want to have these not-paid situations because the reward I have, love, friendship, emotions, all this, this worth more than the money.

(not possible to understand, all blurry again)

institution. And I earn my money there and I bring my money to

collectives where

(not possible to understand, sound of microphone touching fabric)

I have to provoke you with a question.
Yes.

What if you are saying the same things, but you are from a conservative american right-wing tea party?

I don't know, I mean...

(impossible to understand because of a laugh)

I don't care...

I know you are not! But how do we situate what you just said politically?

But this, of course, it is hard, that's why we are here. But I'm just saying I don't want to leave this room with only this heavy feeling. Because for me, my politics of being a feminist and being within a collective is that I'm empowered by this. That's where I get most of the power I get. This is where I'm free the most. And I can actually make some sort of social change, through the collective. Because it helps me, I become a better person, because I learn so much, I'm inspired everyday. And when you work alone, you don't have this, maybe it is easier. In a collective, everything is an issue, we criticize everything, even the stupidest things you could imagine. But it is so rewarding, because the result of it is that finally we give birth to this decision. This is it, even if it takes 20 hours...

(the talk ends here, what follows was said from one person to another only)

I think the difference is not in the means, in the relationships between people

(impossible to understand, everybody talks)

in the group, just them. Whether it is friendship or not, this doesn't matter if we don't think about the context in which the group of people is taking part, what is the relation that the group has with

(impossible to understand, everybody talks)

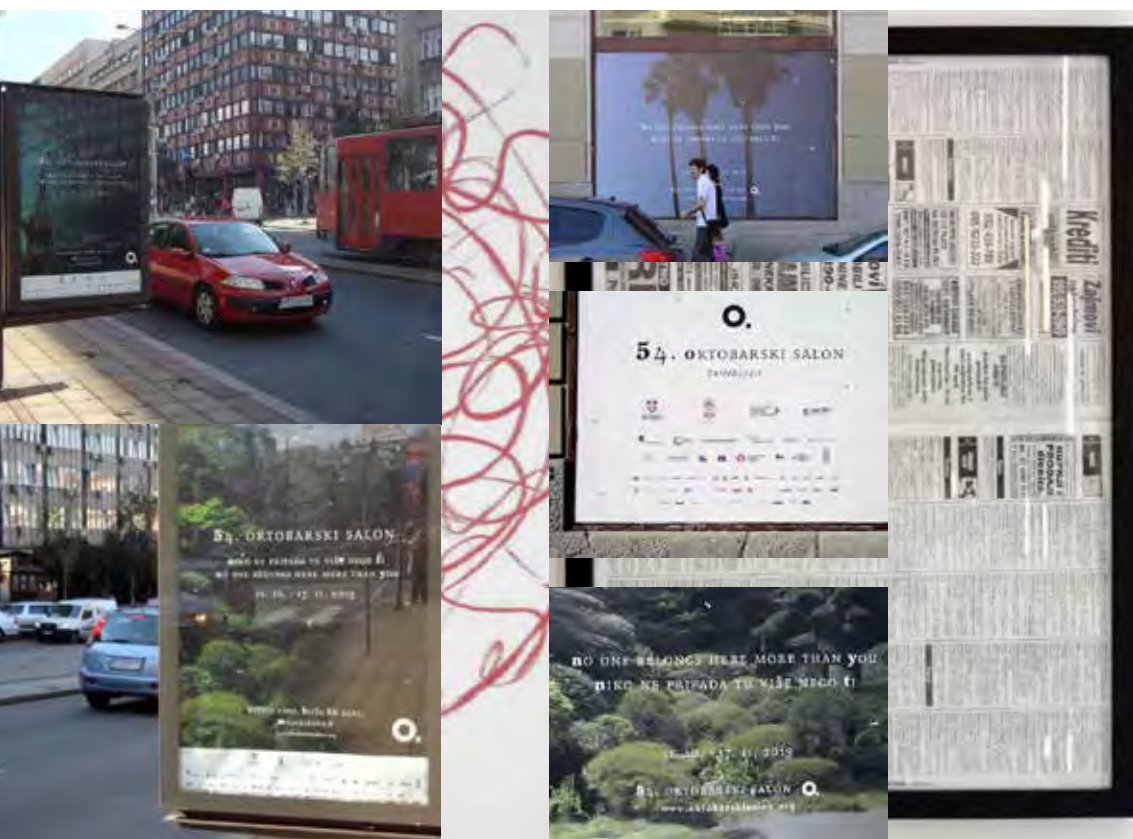
and if there are not, what is this autonomy for? And this politics, no? Of how a group or an individual

(impossible to understand, everybody talks and chairs are moved)

within themselves and with the before and after, and the outside

(the recording ends here)





Róza El-Hassan spent her childhood in Germany, Westfalen, is of Syrian-Hungarian origins and moved to Budapest in 1987. Róza studied at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts, Painting Department; Städtelschule, Frankfurt a. M. and the Intermédia Department, MKF, as well as Social Design (with a DLA thesis on Traditional Romani Handcraft and Contemporary Design) at the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. Róza regularly exhibits her objects and drawings – which are also a part of numerous art collections – at solo and group exhibitions and collaborates with numerous artists and theoreticians as well developing curatorial, social intervention and social design projects.

rÓZA eL-HASSAN

ON COLLECTIVITY

MARGARETA KERN, THE GROUP H.ARTA (MARIA CRISTA, ANCA GYEMANT, RODICA TACHE),
GÖZDE İLKIN, THE ff NETWORK OF ARTISTS (ANTJE MAJEWSKI, CHARLOTTE CULLINAN,
JULIANE SOLMSDORF), A7.AUBENEINSATZ (MARGRET SCHÜTZ, GRETA HOHEISEL)
Forum: No One Belongs Here More Than You, October 13th, 2013.

This forum discussion involving two collectives, one network of artists and two individual artists will open up the questions around collective and individual practices as artists and cultural workers, some of whom are also involved with/in social movements. The shift between artistic work and social engagement operates on different levels and it is as such perceived through diverse forms of creating, working, protesting, and finally, living. The question always is what is an artistic action and what is the object of art within the frame of socially and politically engaged art practices that are aimed at constituting a socially aware and responsible political subject. The main question related to the topic should be: what political, aesthetic and social positions are at stake when working collectively with/in contemporary art today? And how does it affect the politics of everyday life and shape its sociality? Is working collectively as artists and cultural workers inherently a form of resistance to the logic of capital, or is collectivity simply a mode of networking in a more supportive, less alienating way (e.g. exhibition openings)?

Taking into account the different social, historical and political contexts that we are operating in, the discussion will reflect issues such as: visibility and invisibility in terms of anonymity and authorship; the politics of belonging and of producing new socialites; the role that feminism(s) have in working together in the field of contemporary art through/within social movements and politically engaged practices.

R. On Collectivity

Referring to the introduction part, I would like to present a selection of subjective notions that define different approaches to *collectivity*.

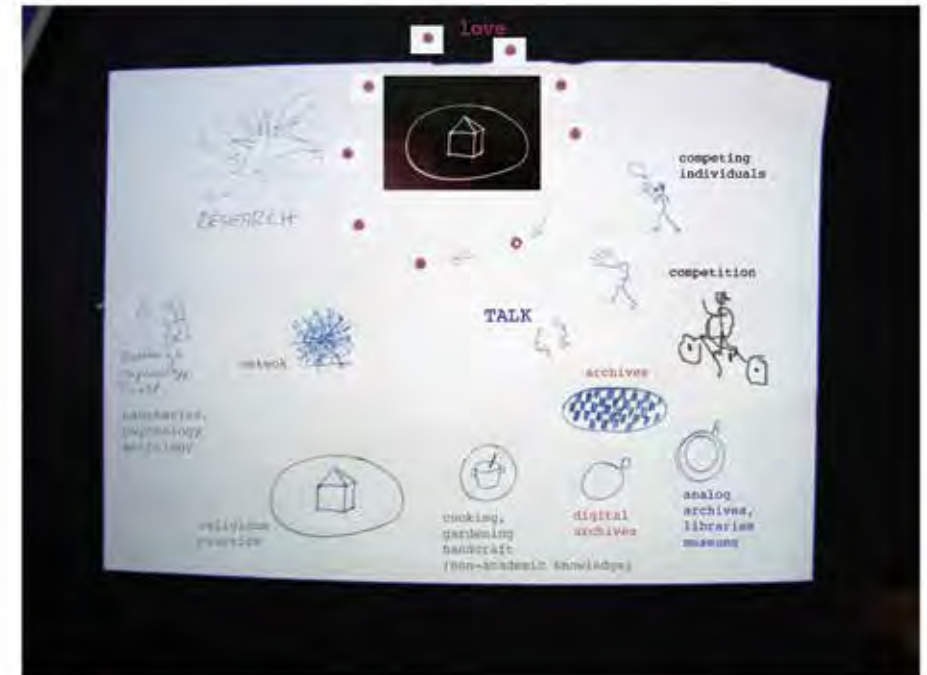
But let's start with Wikipedia; it was surprisingly good for an art-theoretical topic:

“An *artist collective* is an initiative that is the result of a group of artists working together, usually under their own management, towards shared aims. The aims of an artist collective can include almost anything that is relevant to the needs of the artist, this can range from purchasing bulk materials, sharing equipment, space or materials, through to following shared ideologies,

aesthetic and political views or even living and working together as an extended family. Sharing of ownership, risk, benefits, and status is implied, as opposed to other, more common business structures with an explicit hierarchy of ownership such as an association or a company. Compare with art colony, and art cooperative.”

(According to the statistics of the website, the above entry is a collective piece of text, it was edited 430 times by 255 authors. It is no reliable academic reference, but rather a meme (see *R. Dawkins, 1976, The Selfish Meme*). It is freeware, can be used and quoted by anyone under the terms of creative commons.

But here follows some of my rather subjective keywords, the notions of which intend to be some cornerstones in the complex field of relations.



- red dot marks: market, state subvention, exchange, award, presentation, support, hunger, war all catalisators and excelerators

House on black marks: collective knowledge,
and poses the question of legitimate power

A drawing by Róza El-Hassan

stripping off social conventions

Antje, Juliane and Charlotte (Shasha) from the *ff* network tell us about their collective, where they feel free of social conventions and pressure, where they make music, cross gender taboos, organize demonstrations and have a good time. Most of them have careers (and incomes) as individual artists. Their collective space is a special space of non-commercial artistic freedom. Their events happen mostly in Berlin or Vienna. For me, it is a post-Dadaist situation and rooted in the notion of freedom stripping off all our conventions.

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Antje and Shasha (Charlotte) describe it as anarchist and situationist. They hope to build some kind of nucleus, which will have a broader effect.



ff (Antje Majewski, Charlotte Cullinan, Juliane Solmsdorf), photo by Duško Jelen

the intervention

The next speaker is Gözde Ilkin, from Istanbul. Like the members of the *ff* network, she also has a career as an individual artist, she creates something like textile paintings, collages, patchwork. Parallel to her individual work, she has participated in many collective events such as *Apartment Projects*, *Oda projesim* and *Atticult* (a collective of three women, 2006–2013), in street actions, tagging interventions, they produced stickers, clothes as well, women's clothing, (anti)fashion appears as a stage for messages. The messages are carried, worn and distributed in the streets of her home Istanbul, a city of 14 million registered inhabitants.



Gözde Ilkin, *Inaccessible Double City, Turbulence*, embroideries, 2012, photo by Tina Smrekar

Design appears as a form of resistance in this metropolis with an incredibly fast-growing economy while the city being razed by a sweeping gentrification process. (The surface of rich textile patterns is inherited in the culture.)

During the discussion I ask the question: "Do you have a mission to improve the world? Do you hope for the system to change?" Antje from the *ff* network answers, "she creates micro spaces and moments of freedom and joy. Only about 12 or 14 from 16 group members are affected, not the whole population of the earth." It is a playful freedom that is rooted in Rrose Sélavy's notion of freedom.

Still, she can raise attention, since the *ff* events have a strong physical presence (while broad mass media images events often lack a spatial or time dimension)

Gözde smiles when she hears the demand for system change – a political demand of millions of young people from the Middle East appears on her face, "a better future is in her shining eyes", as we Syrians would say while comforting each other. We demand scary things like revolution and system change, still Gözde's subjective artwork, and the messages in the clothes are fragile and sensitive.

The next to speak is the *h.arta* group from Temesvár / Timisoara, Romania.



h.arta (Maria Crista, Anca Gyemant, Rodica Tache), photo by Duško Jelen

the absolute necessity

Three women from Timsoara, Temesvár – in the region of Romania close to Hungary. I imagine their collective must have the form of intimate private support and solidarity. No matter, if it is a pot of food you cook together and share, an artwork, a discussion or an urban garden they create.

Usually nothing special happens in places like my hometown Budapest or Timisoara, one of the events is our poverty and our limits. An art collective takes the form of absolute necessity and solidarity. Here, in my city, in Budapest, there are days when one of the group members or artist friends has income and other days when the other has. "We invite also our mothers for a dinner," we hear from the *h.arta*'s.

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To my question as to whether their collective intends to change the world for the better and believes in system change, one of the h.arta's, Anca Gyemant answers: "We create a space for political imagination."

Artists have the power to envision a positive future – in dark or hopeless times.

First of all, we have the power to envision it, not to create and establish, or to force, but to envision. We teach the neighbors about collectivity, we are artists, we imagine a positive future and social models. I imagine their space is like mine, maybe also in a socialist apartment block 20 years after the fall of the socialist "people's republic".

Living in multicultural Timisoara, the h.arta group emphasizes the importance of an anti-racist and feminist perspective, but they take distance from the neoliberal notion of multiculturalism. They want friendship, something deeper than the *laissez-faire* principle of multiculturalism. "Is the collective a temporary solution for one intervention or a few interventions, or is it sustainable?" asks Jelena Petrovic from the Red Mind(ed) collective.

They were just friends at the academy of fine art, all the rest came later, the feminist aspect as well – friendship became an useful model for feminism that goes beyond private relations and became a way of being politically related to others. Anca Gyemant says: "Our collective is sustainable."

collectivity in time

Jelena's question is important, sometimes the change and transformation of collectives and initiatives is fast and impulsive, the Rhizomes are pulsing, changing or undergoing storms Deleuze & Guatarri never dreamed about. This happened to lot of Syrian initiatives (I started to write about this in the project "QrcodesforSyria", mapping civil initiatives and formations during the revolution).

In other places, collectives and friendships show a big calm stability that often combine with a high degree of introversion and contemplation, as I see in Hungary.

In Northern Europe, I see a higher mobility and implementation of networking into the existing economic system (see Marion von Osten on mobility, and from the same author, *Be Creative! The Creative Imperative* in collaboration with Peter Spillmann, 2002) in order to increase the commercial production and flexibility of society. I write about this in my study "Ancient Romani Handcraft and Social Design", following the example of the MyVillages.org and intuitive design theories. [1]

Since the economic crisis of 2008, flexibility models of creative collectives more often receive state funding, they fill gaps in the education system, the social and urban gentrification, and help

[1] Marion von Osten & Peter Spillmann, *Be Creative! exhibition and exhibition guide*, Zürich: Museum für Angewandte Kunst, 2002. Later, Geert Lovink developed this discursive turn and in 2006 edited a comprehensive reader, with downloadable freeware version: Geert Lovink & Ned Rossiter (eds.), *My Creativity Reader: A Critique of Creative Industries*, Amsterdam: Institute of Network Cultures, 2007. networkcultures.org/_uploads/32.pdf [Last accessed: June 2014]

in emergency situations in humanitarian crisis regions and reorganize societies in transformation. One of the keywords is collective intelligence.

collective intelligence

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Not to be confused with group intelligence, collaborative intelligence, or knowledge sharing.

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Types of *collective intelligence*

Collective intelligence is shared or group intelligence that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and competition of many individuals and appears in consensus decision making. The term appears in sociobiology, political science and in context of mass peer review and crowdsourcing applications. It may involve consensus, social capital and formalisms such as voting systems, social media and other means of quantifying mass activity. **Collective IQ** is a measure of collective intelligence, although it is often used interchangeably with the term collective intelligence.

Collective intelligence has also been attributed to bacteria¹ and animals.²

It can be understood as an emergent property from the synergies among: 1) data-information-knowledge; 2) software-hardware; and 3) experts (those with new insights as well as recognized authorities) that continually learns from feedback to produce just-in-time knowledge for better decisions than these three elements acting alone.³ Or more narrowly as an emergent property between people and ways of processing information.⁴ This notion of collective intelligence is referred to as **Symbiotic intelligence** by Norman Lee Johnson.⁵ The concept is used in sociology, business, computer science and mass communications: it also appears in science fiction.



a7.außeneinsatz (Margret Schütz, Greta Hoheisel), photo by Duško Jelen

the institutional critique

Following decades of institutional critique in art, institutional critique became like a magic pill to revitalize museums. The mobility and vitality of most large state cultural institutions have difficulties competing with the mobility of power concentrated around money, networks and

small functional units (e.g. established foundations, initiatives, friendships, private enterprises and collectives with a deep commitment for social change). Institutions are still representations of power. Their power and stability often protects artistic autonomy. Another further thing that has so much changed is our relationship to tradition, cultural heritage, museums and collections. Collectives and revolutionaries who entered museums through actions once ran the danger of destroying their shelter-like stability. Today, collectives like A7.aufeneinsatz actionists are rather like guards and guides in museums, there to revitalize and to mediate. Actually, the notion of institutional critique is so broad and the institution's role in societies with transitional justice so different, that I have a bad conscience even bringing it up.

real and imagined victims of support and power

- How shall we judge the situation? Do highly autonomous nuclear collectives permanently scan the international and local support systems to find funding for their activities and goals (to change the system) or does the international or local power system scan the landscape of collective intelligence to maintain its power by targeted support of collective intelligence and nuclear groups or individuals with high catalyst value?

Let's assume the second:

Collectives often have a network character, a collective not being simply something that is free of hierarchies set by conventions, institutional power and dominance of subjects.

A collective might also have to defend common financial interests. The wiggle room offered to curators acting on the resources usually given by international foundations, monetary actors and local context (power) is narrow as hell. They form a rhizome-like network to survive and use art collectives very carefully, which they support, which includes feminist art collectives as well. I do not quote very exactly, but Jelena Vesić, a great curator and art critic, said during the discussion: "In each collective, there's a moment of very very innocent internalization."

From my aspect, many curatorial networks form more or less invisible collectives and alliances, which live in the moment of the *discursive turn* (in Claire Bishop's terms) and the global space is as thin and narrow as the space between two printed letters.

Jelena Vesić's term "internalization" here means accepting dominant role models, and power models as well, to make them their own, subjective and internalized.

I am aware that this is highly critical, but sometimes it is good to see our borders, to be able to act more freely instead of bumping again and again into walls and against other humans.

I tend to drift away from the topic of our talk, touching on the question of the autonomy of collectives. The jet-setting lifestyle of curators was often an object in critique in Eastern Europe. Still, it is good if network oligarchies have the financial power to create archives, to print books and to travel/move in space over great distances, and the official time-dimension is the "discursive turn" itself. Theoretically, you can sit in Timisoara / Temesvár, Romania or Homs, Syria or in any besieged and isolated place in your local context, completely prohibited to move, under siege, blocked by military regimes or by visa demands or just by your own personal financial restrictions, and you can still have access to the realm of knowledge production through

the Internet and to all texts and videos. (What you do not have, whether you are part of a local collective or just an individual and isolated from all global collectives, is the face-to-face relationship to others living in other countries. This face-to-face relationship is the basis of trust. The smaller the circle of people whom you trust, the smaller the number of alliances: you are weaker. (Actually, a global network can also be achieved by a local tragedy and diaspora (Lebanon in the 1975 war, and recently Syria) not only through an elitist support system.)

Still, when you are only (exclusively) part of a global (international) elitist collective or network, you live in the thin space of rhizomes created by your supporters.

Of course, in reality, most artists and curators act in a mixture of these two extreme situations. Nobody acts only locally and nobody acts only globally.

Even a real hero, a victim in the besieged city of Homs, Bassel Shahaddeh, who organized video workshops in Syria and was killed by a regime sniper, who had returned from the U.S. to besieged Homs and had a Fulbright scholarship when he was martyred.

Razan Zaitouna, a jurist, was awarded in 2011 with the European Sakharov Prize, and her collective had probably just found some support from international funds for her work in the documentation center for human rights when she was kidnapped in December 2013 in Damascus – day by day we hope not forever, but maybe forever. [2] Caricaturist Akram Raslan was the editor of a local Syrian newspaper in Homs when he was arrested in October 2012 in his office and was two times reported executed. Day by day we hope that he is still alive. It is not relevant to ask whether international foundations, whether the local Syrian state's (regime's) salary as a newspaper editor or teacher or whether relatives and friends supported these artists and activists in the moment when they were willing to sacrifice their lives for the freedom of the community. [3]

I tell about all this since the myth of an externalized power and an internalized dominant support system is losing its scary face. Unfortunately, we see brute violence appearing in Syria. Still, the myth of the sponsor is weakened. We have to trust ourselves. Each actor is mainly defined by her/his responsibility for her/his own act. The individual act counts. It does not count who your sponsor is when you decide to risk your life and your collective for human justice, choose to be a martyr for freedom and provide video workshops in a besieged city like Homs or document crimes like the French journalist Maria Colvin (who lost her life in February 2012 in Homs) or Syrian Razan Zaitouna. Heroic acts are performed in small collectives. All this speaks for the renewed notion of collectives. The h.arta group talks about the true value of friendship. This true

[12] Razan Zaytouna began giving people for free legal, juristic advice at the start of the Syrian revolution and was for this service awarded the Sakharov Prize in Brussels. After the celebration, she returned immediately from Brussels to Syria and said she was not willing to leave Syria and continued her work. Her husband was also member of her team. See <http://womennewsnetwork.net/2014/01/18/syrian-woman-rights-attorney/> and http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/sakharov/laureates/zaitouneh_en.html [Last accessed: June 2014]

[3] See a text about the Syrian artists who suffered most from the regime during the revolution, to be published at: Róza El-Hassan, "Shadi Alshadeh Syrian Voices", In *CIMAM 2012 Annual Conference, Museums Beyond the Crises*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing & CIMAM, 2014.

and deep value is extended to becoming a role model for communication and political practice. One of the nuclear elements was the family. It stays, but it is extended in times of crisis by friendship and a broader sisterhood.

the institutionalization of friendship

Friendship – this is not completely new. It happened in the decade after the political turn in 1989 (the Fall of the Berlin Wall) when Viktor Misiano wrote about the IRWIN group, János Sugár, Yuri Leidermann and Vadim Fishkin using the term of institutionalization of friendship. [4] I have stolen – sorry, appropriated – this terminology (cat. “Leseraum”, Secession, Vienna 2002) for Milica Tomić and me to describe our activity and a female friendship. Soon, we ‘institutionalized’ our friendship, Milica had the idea of establishing a “Foundation Roza El-Hassan Milica Tomić” and appointed Barney, a (real) pit bull, as its curator (2001, Škuc Gallery, Ljubljana). [5]

In 1990, there was indeed a lack of international institutions and of a network in ex-socialist countries; we started to reorganize it, but did not enter real institutional power and we remained on the critical edge.

Jelena Vesić says: “There was collectivity in societies where there is no (art)market, and collectivity connects through a kind of interest.”

I don’t tell anybody, but in my mind I add to all this all my language certificates, nearly five – I often feel like a suspicious ambassador, all my networks and collectives included.

“But the ability for self-organization in society is a value itself.” (replies Karen Mirza, from the Museum of Non-Participation)

Still, our personal mirror is critical: are we Snow White or the Bad Queen?

As a functional tool, I would suggest, for countries that underwent colonization or occupation, language schools. Mladen Stilinovic’s famous artwork says “An Artist who doesn’t speak English is not artist.” (1994).

An additional element in non-EU countries is visa restrictions. An artist who has no visa is no artist.

[4] Victor Misiano, “The Institutionalization of Friendship”, In *Irwin – Texts*, 1998. <http://www.irwin.si/texts/institutionalisation/> [Last accessed: June 2014]

Victor Misiano, “Vertrauensgemeinschaft-Confidential Community”, about Milica Tomić, Yuri Leiderman [...et. al.]”, In *Exhibition catalogue Vertrauensgemeinschaft-Confidential Community*, Ulm: Cooperativ, Stadthaus Ulm, 2000.

[5] Foundation... is a work about faith, fortune and misfortune, a poetical comment on the art system referring to a renowned tale by Braco Dimitrijević about two artists: “Once upon a time, there was a king who went hunting. He came to a village where two artists were living. As the king’s had dog lost his way, they entered the garden of one of the artists. They befriended and the king invited him to join his court. The artist became famous while his friend remained unknown.” source: <http://www.galerija.skuc-drustvo.si/foundation.htm> [Last accessed: June 2014]

While Braco Dimitrijević created a poetic and enigmatic narrative of the renaissance story, represented in the Museum by text and two socklets (one empty), Milica Tomić had the idea of transforming it into a radical interactive performance. We took Barney the pit bull to the art academy in Ljubljana to select young artists for a show in the city’s most established and progressive gallery, Škuc Gallery, and offered our fee and production costs as the prize for the best artist. The discussion in the academy was also about the dignity of artists. See also for extended description: <http://milicatonic.wordpress.com/works/foundation/> [Last accessed: June 2014]

Antje from the *ff* network tells us about former ex-sociés (((artists from former socialist countries forming networks)))) with a twinge of conscience:

“It is true, all of us in the *ff* have the art market in Berlin, and when we come together we bring in private money. Still, we do not need to practice self-censorship all the time. We do not need to suspect that all we do is poisoned, because then you cannot step forward to think it is wonderful to make art!”

Danijela Dugandžić Živanović from Sarajevo, the Red Mind(e)d, finishes the discussion with a strong voice:

“The intellectual talks, the collective and friendship are the only joy I have in life. It is worth more than money.”

To get a deeper picture of collective work, we should also think, as a last cornerstone, about the counterpoint of collectivity, about isolation of the individual, its mental and political effects. It caused big problems during the modernistic transformation of many societies, but we know those decades are basically behind us.

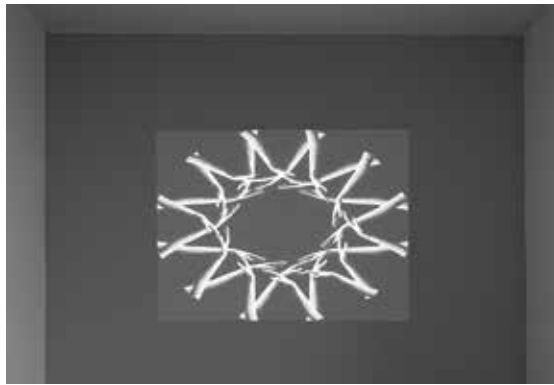


No One Belongs Here More Than You, forum discussion with collectives: h.arta (Maria Crista, Anca Gyemant, Rodica Tache), ff (Antje Majewski, Charlotte Cullinan, Juliane Solmsdorf), a7.auBeneinsatz (Margret Schütz, Greta Hoheisel), and artists Gözde Ilkin and Margareta Kern (moderator)

PRODUCTION IN TIMES OF TROUBLE

202 *We liberate ourselves by acknowledging our enslavement because in that recognition are the reasons for our struggle and for uniting and organising with other people.*

Silvia Federici [1]



Nataša Teofilović, a|symmetry, 2D/3D character animation, 2013, photo by Ana Kostić

The story of us [2] is a simple one. It starts with recognizing the things you long for and things you wish for yourself in other people. This is how we met. It was between Skopje, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, parties, presentations, festivals, exhibitions... and between, the lives we shared and moments we spent together. We talked and experienced things, finding our common ground in feminism,

[1] Marina Vishmidt, "Permanent Reproductive Crisis", an interview with Silvia Federici, In *Mute*, March 7, 2013.

[2] The feminist curatorial group Red Min(e)d, more at: <http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/about-red-mined/> [Last accessed: April 2014]

[3] "Because women's work is never done and is underpaid or unpaid or boring or repetitious and we're the first to get fired and what we look like is more important than what we do and if we get raped it's our fault and if we get beaten we must have provoked it and if we raise our voices we're nagging bitches and if we enjoy sex we're nymphos and if we don't we're frigid and if we love women it's because we can't get a 'real' man and if we ask our doctor too many questions we're neurotic and/or pushy and if we expect childcare we're selfish and if we stand up for our rights we're aggressive and 'unfeminine' and if we don't we're typical weak females and if we want to get married we're out to trap a man and if we don't we're unnatural and because we still can't get an adequate safe contraceptive but men can walk on the moon and if we can't cope or don't want a pregnancy we're made to feel guilty about abortion and ... for lots of other reasons we are part of the women's liberation movement." Author unknown, quoted in *The Torch*, September 14, 1987. <http://www.isabelmonzon.com.ar/womansright.htm> [Last accessed: April 2014].

with which we started and ended every conversation. Feminism was the uniting factor. [3] We all understood that contemporary art and the system behind it was no place for feminists, and when it was, it was feminists always creating it and opening it for everyone. The journey started just there. In the quest for space, for solidarity, for open grounds enabling us to share our views and learn from others. We did this for us, but also for the sake of trying to shake up the known, the usual, the already made and tried out. Focusing on a process in which we would not forget to respect everyone involved, their lives, their stories, their needs and ideas was an imperative. The decision to create Red Min(e)d as a feminist curatorial group and to curate exhibitions in a feminist way and in times like these, times of precarity [4] made of flexible, underpaid jobs was a decision we made intentionally. It was also the beginning of an idea about a *Living Archive*, in which you could bring in and take out whatever speaks to you. Collecting what is given to us and sharing it with others in different spaces and cities meant not only collecting artworks and their documentation as well as stories of artists/scholars/activists, but also understanding the position of each person we met and understanding how s/he works, produces and lives and the challenges s/he meets. This empty space between artist and curator and their expected roles in this system needed to be changed. Four of us, different but savvy enough to know that this can work if and only if we put the right ingredients into it.

The Ingredients For A Feminist Art Exhibition

In the beginning of the *Living Archive*, we decided we would focus on the process, we would try to change standard understanding of what feminism is, what topics it deals with, what it means to make a feminist exhibition, how does it look and which practices in contemporary art needed to be changed through feminist exhibition in order to challenge the patriarchal understanding of the art world. We, of course, knew that this would not be an easy task and nothing would run smoothly and without problems. For these and other such reasons, we agreed in the beginning that whatever happens we will focus on LOVE, on the politics of love. Putting feminist FRIENDSHIP and LOVE first and before all misunderstandings, disagreements and problems was the best thing we could do for us, for the *Living Archive* and for all the people involved in the process. Everyone counts, everyone's input is important, everyone is celebrated and part of our collective. The more I think about it, the more I understand that the logic was embedded in the "We will not leave anyone behind" quote we used so often. [5]

Another important issue for us was to dig deeper into the core of the trouble, into the very real of the systems we live in, the position of girls and women in it, the position of so-called minorities and the position of art and feminism in this system. What we, feminists, claim is missing and why we are discriminated against and stereotyped is the lack of SOLIDARITY between feminists, between women and girls, as well as between all other progressive political individuals and collectives. The key element needed to stand up against patriarchy and all the conservative politics we are faced with in our daily lives has to be our capability to act in solidarity with others

[4] Silvia Federici, *Precarious Labour: A Feminist Viewpoint*, 2008. <http://inthemiddleofthewhirlwind.wordpress.com/precarius-labor-a-feminist-viewpoint/> [Last accessed: April 2014]

[5] Paraphrasing of the "We cannot leave the wounded behind." – Quote by Josip Broz Tito during the Battle of the Neretva (Bitka na Neretvi) in Jablanica in 1943, so named after the Neretva River. It is also known as the Battle for the Wounded (Bitka za ranjenike) and the most humane battle during WWII in the former Yugoslavia.

around us. Moreover, the solidarity we long for and the solidarity we offer needs to be tried out and placed into the actuality of the unusual working conditions, deadlines, free work and kilometres that stand between us. [6] The collective that we have created, as well as the concept of the exhibition itself, was an experiment for us as well as for the people we have collaborated and shared the idea of the living archive with. We knew there would be failures and mistakes, things we were not all satisfied with and problems regarding our position as curators. Before we were appointed to curate the 54th October Salon, [7] we had already created a community of artists / scholars / activists / curators / authors through the different live editions and with different people, who then became friends enjoying working together. We have made sure that each one of them understands our position and has an insight into our plans, our ideas and our politics.

How To Create A Feminist Exhibition As Precarious Workers

What we have known since the first edition of the *Living Archive* is that most artists, curators and authors, just like each one of us, have no salaries, have no health insurance, have no savings, have no studios, no security and no plans for future. They produce hungry, tired, love sick, home sick, lonely, with friends, using the equipment and skills of their friends and giving their lives, time and energy to produce art knowing that most of the people around them believe that art is just a commodity. This is true for most of the artists we work with. Also, in most of the post-Yugoslav countries, art is simply not perceived a necessity. Budgets for art and cultural institutions are cut each year and only (nationally) recognized and mainstream artists are supported. Museums are closed, cultural organizations are used to implement projects tailored by the big donors [8] and most of the production money goes into politically acceptable projects. In comparison to, for example, the film industry, the situation in the visual arts production is even more degrading, and even more so if the art is produced by women and has strong political agendas. As Dunja Blažević [9] once said, “of course there are more and more women running museums and working in art institutions. You tend to find women in all sectors in which there is no money and no power.” This is true for most of the countries we did the *Living Archive* in [10] and we knew that we would need to make the most of our small budgets but at the same time that we should not be the ones to put artists in even more precarious positions. What we have is what we share equally between us. Someone’s being famous was never a reason for us to give more money, more energy or more space to them. We could not create situations that stood against the feminist bases we set in the beginning, horizontal one. We succeeded somehow in this not because of some presumption we’d made about having the same starting position as the other artists and authors we were collaborating with, but because we continued to remind people what it was the *Living Archive* is and what this community what it means to us in Red Min(e)d, what it stands for. To be even clearer, it means always putting our feminist politics before our personal agendas and interests and standing for that.

[6] Red Min(e)d works between Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Belgrade and Munich and other places.

[7] See more at: <http://oktobarskisalona.org/> [Last accessed: April 2014]

[8] If they wish to survive.

[9] Curator, art historian and the former directress of the Student Cultural Center in Belgrade, and now the directress SCCA in Sarajevo.

[10] Zagreb, Croatia; Ljubljana, Slovenia; Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina; Belgrade, Serbia and so forth.

It has been our role to clearly speak about this and make sure that everyone who comes to the *Living Archive* understands our concept from the core, in the exhibitions, in the selection of works and in all communication regarding exhibitions. Beginning already with the very first edition the first edition in Zagreb, [11] we wrote a *Manual How Not To Behave In The Living Archive*, [12] where we pointed what was possible in the *Living Archive* and invited people to use the space of the exhibition and claim it as their own. We also wanted to show the production circumstances around the exhibition, to enable the viewer to see the actual work, to recognize the phases, the time and the energy given to it and not to look for a perfect product. Seeing how the production of an artwork and the production of an exhibition can be stripped of its actual life, stripped away from the person who creates and works, is what we are used to seeing at exhibitions. However, it seems that the ‘white box’ is still what’s expected. Coming back to the 54th October Salon, what it showed was the labour, the work behind each artwork, the tears, the feminist agendas, the sociality and the affect as well as the living in the *Living Archive*. It may have failed to satisfy the already codified expectations of the already codified contemporary art scene, but for us, it broadens the community as one coming from everywhere, it opens our minds and hearts, and it teaches us more about the importance of sharing and enabling ourselves to share the works and ideas of amazing people coming from art, activism, theory, from everywhere, through this *Living Archive* edition at the 54th October Salon.

White Rabbits, Supplies, Surprise And Suspense

There are strategies; there are ways and magic behind it all. It’s in the political friendship I mentioned earlier. It’s in the ability to overrule the drama and the troubles that occur. It’s in the embedded care for each other and laughter we share.

Somehow each edition and each work comes with the magic we create to make it happen. This magic. We call it 3S. 3S stands for the Supplies, Surprise and Suspense of each exhibition. We always know what is which, and we also always know what of which is lacking. We look for it and we make sure it’s present and visible in the exhibition.

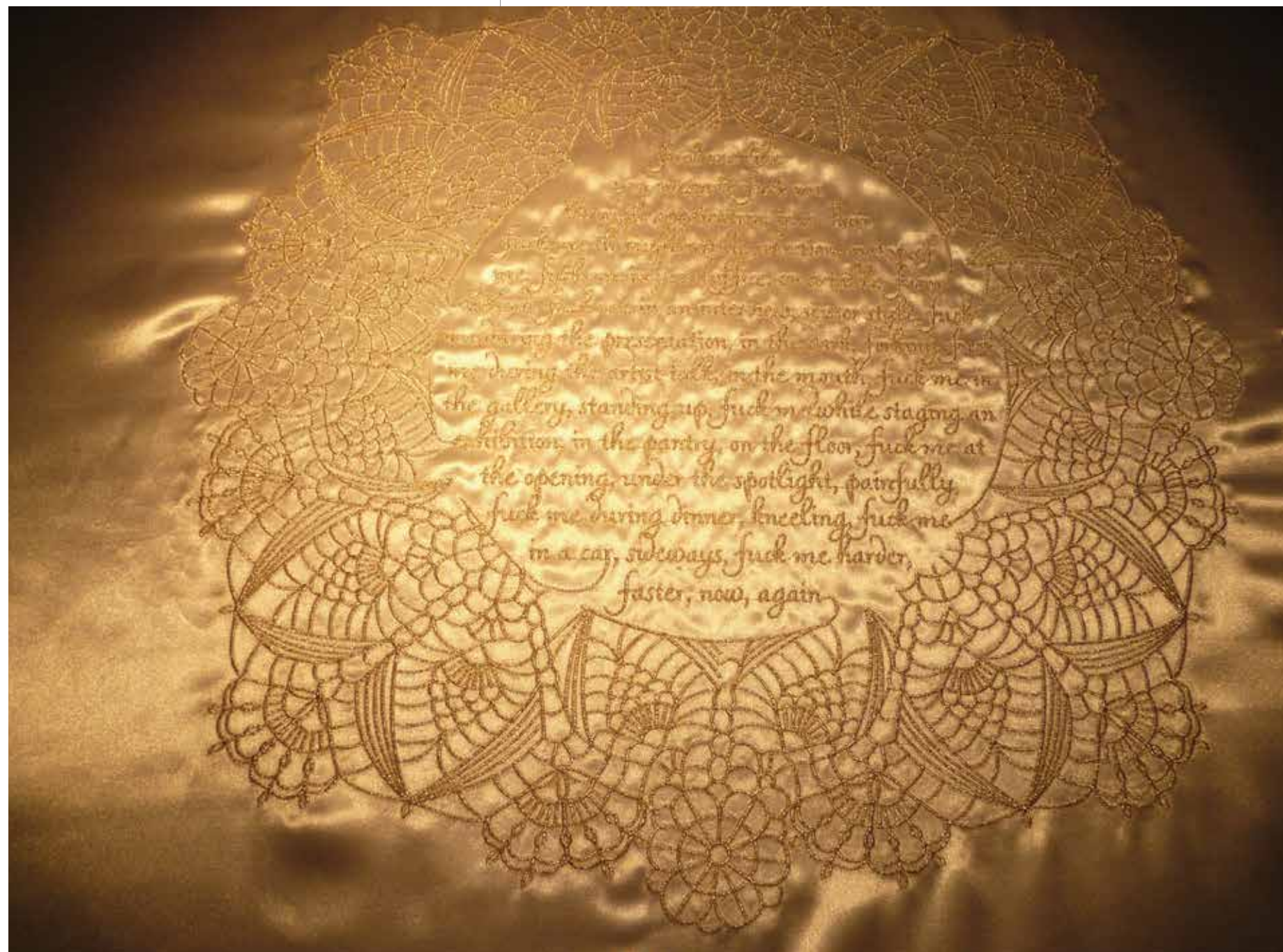
Supplies will always arrive for what we need to make it happen, our motivator and wind at our back. Surprise is what is not expected, what opens questions, what strikes you, what blows your mind and makes you become critical. Suspense is what will pull you back on track and make you think deeper, or whisk you away. It’s all about how you experience it.

Finally, it – this magic – is the white rabbit that shows up only to those who know where to look.

And when you find that rabbit hole, don’t step back. Failure (Falling) can be great!

[11] Zagreb edition, The Bring In Take Out – Living Archive (LA), Interactive Contemporary Art Exhibition, 13–16. October 2011, Zagreb. See: <http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/la-editions/zagreb/> [Last accessed: April 2014]

[12] Cf. <http://bringintakeout.wordpress.com/related-info-2/manual-how-not-to-behave/> [Last accessed: April 2014]

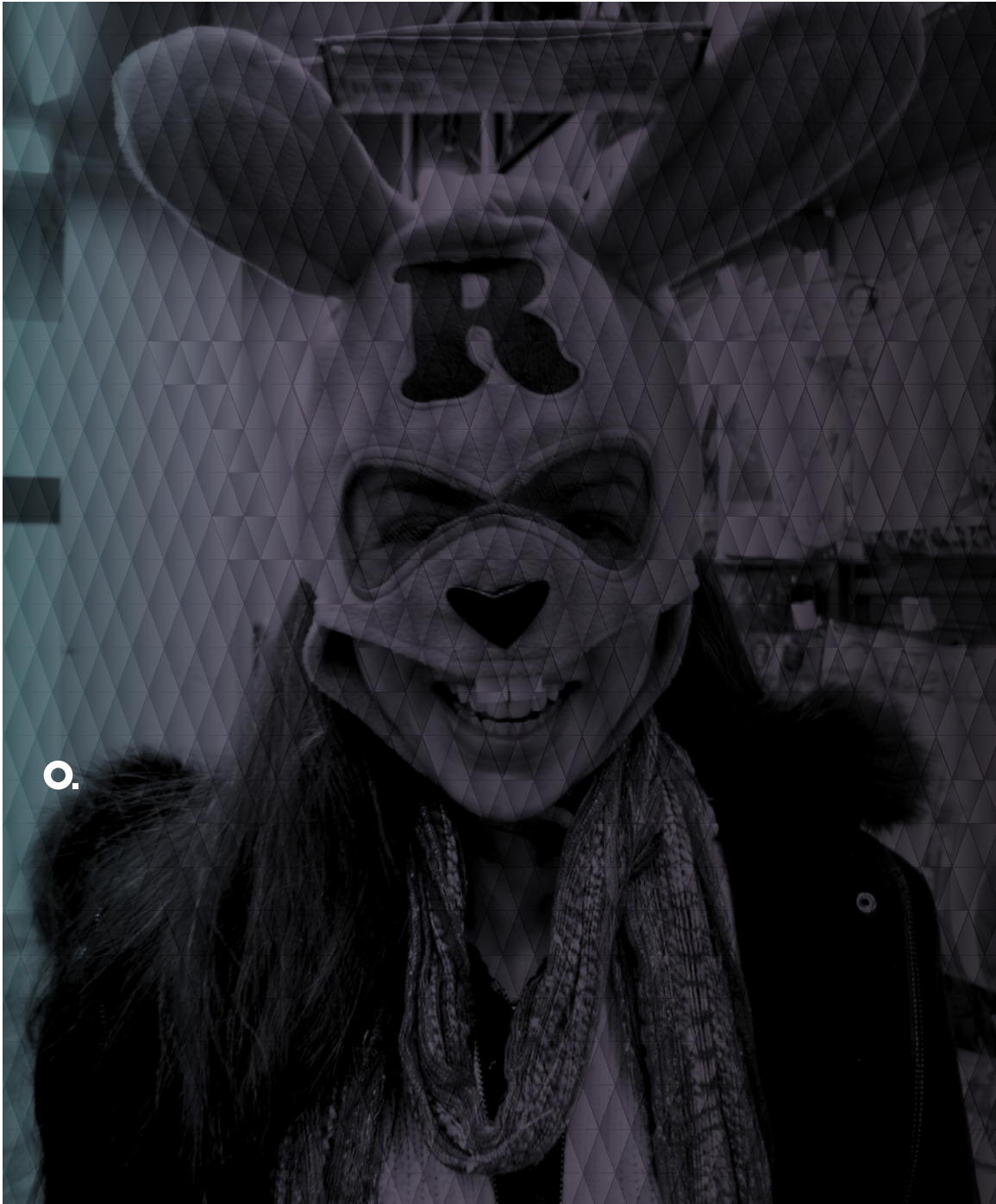


founder and patron

organizer

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o.