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2008 #01



2009 #02

2010 #03

2011 #04

2012 #05

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**YEARBOOK OF THE INDEPENDENT PERFORMING
ARTS SCENE IN SERBIA**

PUBLICATION OF TKH FORUM FOR PERFORMING ARTS CRITIQUE



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× BOJAN DJORDJEV

INTRODUCTION

In numerous and varying definitions of 'raster' available on the Internet, few things accord – raster is a grid structure composed of individual cells/pixels/lines/information creating visual data or screen images. Likewise, the individual grid elements of this RASTER 2008 generate an overview of the current independent scene of performing arts in Serbia.

This publication is released as a special issue of the *Forum for critique in performing arts*, a project of the TkH platform propelled by the real need for critical self-reflection of the independent performing arts scene and demands for its greater visibility and boost. I render this TkH initiative in the light of some more general tendencies of (ultimate) (self)organization pertaining to the independent scene. Particular alignment into a 'grid' or raster among the protagonists of the independent scene takes place mainly through 'bottom-up' initiatives, as in the case of *Druga scena*¹ or *Stanica – servis za savremeni ples*², but also through certain 'top-down' initiatives, coming from the Belgrade City Assembly and Serbian Ministry of Culture. Namely: granting the space of the Nolit publishing company warehouse for use and (partial) management on the part of several independent cultural-artistic organizations and founding of the cultural centre *Magacin u Kraljevića Marka*, establishing of the *Belgrade Dance Centre* in the cultural centre Vuk Karadžić, the open call for management model of the new cultural centre in the Public Baths Danube etc. Things in both directions go slowly and haphazardly, sustaining many a beginner's flaw³. 'Top-down' initiatives do not result from systematic study, research and consultations with the protagonists of the scene and from their demands, but rather from individual actions of members of the public administration (on all levels). Funding is still irregular, it does not follow a clear and transparent cultural policy nor acknowledge significant contributors to the independent scene – remaining sporadic and conditional. However, things have considerably

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1 Other Scene: <http://www.drugascena.org/node/1>

2 Station – Service for contemporary dance: <http://www.dancestation.org>

3 More details on *Magacin u Kraljevića Marka* available in Ana Vujanović and Marta Popivoda, "TkH in MKM: top-down solutions for bottom-up culture", report for *FORUM Journal of Federation of Architects of Serbia and Belgrade Architects Society*, 2008 (unpublished).

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changed when compared to the situation in the 1990s or early 2000s, when independent cultural-artistic projects were mainly financed by international donors, as the public institutions in Serbia had not yet adopted the procedures of annual open calls for support to independent productions. However, the very fact that the sole option for acquiring legal status is forming a non-governmental organization or civic association – supposed, as a legal and operational model, to meet demands of a wide range of different structures and activities: from charities to art collectives – is a telling indication of the State's profound indifference to anything departing from its institutional framework. On the other hand, the protagonists of the independent cultural-artistic scene (performing arts included) grow in number. So do their productions and public visibility. Additionally, they become increasingly interested in self-management, reflection and articulation of their own position in relation to the official cultural policy. This publication is a tangible material contribution to systematic information and representation of independent performing arts scene as an important agency of the cultural life in Serbia today.

Similar initiatives have been, however, launched in the past: note the documentary file on alternative companies in Yugoslavia edited by Dragan Klaić in 1982⁴, or the research and archives created within CENPI (*Center for new theatre and dance*) in the early 2000s, addressing primarily the protagonists of the independent theatre and performance art scene of the 90s, additionally covering some instances of avant-garde and Modernist theatre productions dating back to before the Second World War. Unfortunately, all these initiatives failed to maintain continuity of work – The Alternative Theatre File was an exception to the rule, while the archive work ceased when CENPI closed in 2002/03, bestowing its content to the Archive of Serbia.

Drawing from these predecessors, including similar publications released abroad⁵, *Raster 2008* is structured as a directory of performing arts-related works and projects premiered in Serbia in 2008 as fully independent (or, rather, 'deprived') productions. Beside the info/documentary section – in accordance with the pursuits of TkH as a theoretical-artistic platform aspiring at advancing not merely artistic, but primarily theoretical practices of

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4 Dragan Klaić, *Alternativno pozorište u Jugoslaviji: iskustva samostalnih pozorišnih trupa* (Alternative theatre in Yugoslavia: the experience of independent theatre companies), Sterijino pozorje, Novi Sad, 1982.

5 E.g. *Say Cheese – Theatre and Dance in the Netherlands 2005*, Theater Instituut Nederland, Amsterdam, 2005. and "Arguments for the Future", *Frakcija* No. 16, Zagreb, 2000., an overview of the independent Croatian performing arts scene in the 90s.

contemporary performing arts – the publication, in addition to this editorial, features three theoretical essays, putting into perspective the recent performing arts productions in Serbia in the respective fields of dance, theatre and action/performance art. The works/projects featured in the directory are not listed by discipline but alphabetically, as most of them fall in at least two categories, lacking firm demarcations (even in the introductory essays).

The criteria for selection of works featured in the publication were simple – it covers works and projects created as independent productions. Versatility of the independent performing arts scene ranges from practically ‘no-budget’ works to well supported, yet still independently produced art projects, from discursive to non-verbal theatre, from dance ensemble productions to *cyberformance* or inclusive productions with disabled people, even to performances from the visual art domain – overlapping or converging when engaged in reflection on contemporary performing arts.⁶ Selected authors/groups/projects received a standard info-sheet with technical instructions, while their form-filling methods largely demonstrated different approaches to self-representation – with contributions ranging from neat technical data to lucid auto-poetical miniatures. Those were minimally edited – mainly to meet the space requirements. From 24 invited authors and companies/groups, 21 returned filled forms, enclosing additional material for publication. The remaining three were compiled with information available on the Internet, which was clearly indicated.

The criteria of independent production – understood clearly in financial terms – inevitably left out several projects realized in 2008 as collaborations between the authors from the independent scene and public cultural institutions or festivals.⁷ However, these productions, backed up with

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6 Since the TkH platform works in the field of performing arts, however broadly this field might be conceived, performance created in the visual arts framework did not generally fall in the sphere of our interests or competence. However, as exceptions to the rule, we decided to expand the project directory with several such projects whose performative aspects were deemed important for assessing and reflecting on contemporary performing arts, as in the case of *Revisiting Belgrade* by the art collective *Dez.org*. Other performance art-related projects are mentioned and contextualized in Ana Vilenica’s text “Performance Art in Serbia (2007-08)”, see pages 21-31 in this publication.

7 E.g. Bojana Cvejić’s *Don Giovanni*, Ana Sofrenović’s *Koda*, and Anja Đorđević’s *Atlas* produced by Jugokonzert; Dalija Aćin’s *Duetil/Meet the Expectations*, Petar Pejaković’s *Čarnin poj* (Čarna’s Chant) and Dunja Jocić’s *Not me* produced by Belef Festival 2008; Miroslav Benka’s *Oslikano injem* (Painted in Frost), produced by Madlenianum etc.

powerful institutional resources, achieved significant media attention and entered official systems of representation and documentation. Works and projects presented here were selected precisely because they do not fall under the auspices of any of the numerous public cultural institutions designated to record, archive and promote such inherently ephemeral artistic forms as theatre, performance or dance – leaving behind for the purposes of history only documents and records. It is important to note that the independent, ‘other scene’ (and most of the groups and authors represented in this publication are part of the *Other scene [Druga scena]*), should not be regarded as a refuge to those (for any reason) lacking access to public institutions but – on the contrary – as a conscious ideological-artistic act, demarcating a new cultural realm in the local context.⁸

This being the first in, hopefully, long series of yearbooks, the introductory essays aspire, in covering different time frames, at detailed mapping of the contexts bringing about these productions. Milena Bogavac’s text thus addresses the notion of Serbian alternative theatre in the 2000s, in establishing productive, ethical and aesthetical, differences between the independent and state-sponsored cultural assets. In her contribution, Ana Vilenica provides a condensed historic overview of performance art in Serbia in the last four decades, proceeding with a detailed contextual map of actions/performances produced here throughout the last year. Ana Vujanović examines and reconstructs the never-before-written local history of the XX century dance. Addressing dance as a social symptom, she engages with problems of broad paradigm shifts from Socialism, via post-Socialism, to the neo-liberal capitalism, occurring in Serbia and the region with the demise of the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia (and concurrently with the emerging wave of independent theatre groups in the early 90s). As main problems of the contemporary dance scene in Serbia (which applies to the overall independent artistic scene, even the institutional one), among other things, Vujanović specifies slow advance and lack of critical-theoretical reflection.

Since its launch in 2001 *TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory* has regularly (in issues 2, 3, 6 and 9⁹) published features dedicated to critique of contemporary artistic practices. Featured critical reviews were not solely about discussing and promoting particular productions, but demonstrated different ways of writing on performing arts – forming a solid ground for inven-

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⁸ More in Milena Bogavac’s text “EX Theatre in Serbia – alternative has no alternative!”, pages 13-20 of this publication.

⁹ Issues of the magazine available at: www.tkh-generator.net/sr/casopis.

tion, analysis and creation of new discourses and critical positions. Precisely from this practice, and with conspicuous flaws of critical reception of everything that is not drama theatre in view, the idea for a school of critique came, along with the project *Forum for critique in performing arts*.

With the incentive of the 42nd edition of the Bitef Festival, TkH platform conceived and launched the *School for theory and critique in performing arts: Walking Critique* (Kritika koja hoda - KKH) in September 2008. This was an intense theoretical-practical training in new approaches to critique in contemporary performing arts for young and emerging critics – students and postgraduates at humanities and art departments. The School was conceived by Miško Šuvaković and Ana Vujanović, and conducted by Bojan Djordjević. KKH hosted several theoretical lectures and discussions with speakers from Serbia and foreign guests, the workshop “Critical Tools for Walking Critique” (Isabel de Naverán, Bilbao) and practical work on writing and publishing the reviews at the School’s official blog <http://kkhgrupa.blogspot.com> and Bitef’s bulletin, along with ‘public conceiving of reviews’ through *chat critique* conducted in theatres at the opening nights. The School rapidly aroused substantial interest on the part of the audiences and theatre professionals. Selected reviews were published in the daily papers *Politika* and *Danas*, and in the theatre journal *Scena*, along with regular features for the “Bitef Chronicle” on the national television (RTS). After the festival and the official closing of the School, several ‘alumni’ (Tamara Đorđević, Ana Isaković, Nataša Tepavčević, Aleksandra Pavlović, followed by Ana Vilenica and Tanja Rakić) continued the work, forming an independent group of critics (KKH) under the auspices of the self-educational TkH project *Šverc znanja!* (Knowledge Smuggling), and through their involvement in TkH’s project *Forum for performing arts critique*. The basic activity of the Forum is close cooperation with the protagonists of the independent performing arts scene, in the field of critique and (self-)reflection. Since last October, their blog <http://tkhforum.blogspot.com> has regularly featured reviews and transcripts of round table discussions focused on premiere independent productions. Since the Forum commenced work at the beginning of the Season 2008/09, while this publication covers the production in annual rounds, the reviews created through the Forum feature only as quotes in the project directory. However, *Raster 2009* should feature integral reviews from the Forum collaborators. The Forum aims, in collaboration with the featured artists, at pursuing critique not as assessment or a ‘view from above’, but as integral, constitutive part of creation and discursive production of the new scene. Therefore, *Raster 2008*, beside promoting the protagonists of the independent performing arts scene, aims at promoting and

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supporting fresh and emerging critics, underlining once more the close and mutual connections of artistic and theoretical practices in the formation, development, shaping and advancing the (independent) artistic scene.

Translated by Irena Šentevska

× MILENA BOGAVAC [DRAMA MENTAL STUDIO]

EX THEATRE IN SERBIA: ALTERNATIVE HAS NO ALTERNATIVE!

My intention was to begin this essay with a general definition of alternative theatre. I made an effort to formulate one, consulting academic references. However, it remains beyond my grasp how the notion of 'alternative' can be rendered without establishing its relations to the classics, tradition, or the so called 'mainstream'. Therefore, to begin with, it is important to address the theatre *mainstream* and aesthetical and production principles which propel it.

Looking back (without anger) at the working methods and artistic merits of the grand theatre institutions in this tiny country, I haven't made any groundbreaking discoveries. Serbian theatre *mainstream* is closed to influences coming from contemporary theories, tendencies and currents in performing arts. Captured on its Italian stage. Fixed on superficial interpretations of Stanislavski's theories and stuck in its ungainly production apparatus comprising acting ensembles of full-time employees, armies of ill-humored technicians, scene docks accommodating lavish sets, and repertory system allowing for certain productions to run for several decades. ... Alternative theatre is, therefore, everything else. Everything different.

Each production departing from this rigid framework (in any way or direction) might be considered as theatre 'alternative'. If we make an attempt at systematization of features aligning a certain production with the other alternative feats of Serbian theatre, we can commence with the subject matter.

Productions introducing contemporary issues to the cultural reality of Serbia, or those in any way dealing with and making sense of the world surrounding us, carry a 'virus' of alternative. The same applies to any of the pioneering attempts in terms of form or genre. Accordingly, with the advance of the independent scene in Serbia, the last few years saw, for the first time, theatre productions of as varied genres as: interaction, action/animation, deconstruction of the classics, speech opera, ready-made theatre, stand-up comedy, slam performance, forum theatre, lecture performance... and many others.

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In alternative terms one could address: venues, use of the new media, performing style/techniques, visual or any other elements of work in theatre... However, what is common to all local productions which can be claimed as alternative, is the very process of their creation. While the traditional theatre in Serbia is mainly based on (taken-for-granted) drama stagings, alternative companies do their research. Theatre they make is postdramatic (in a Lehmannian sense) and the verbal text (if any at all) features here merely as one among equally important codes of creation and analysis of the theatre piece. Alternative theatre artists often engage in creative workshops, perceiving them as conduits to the final shape of their creations. ... It is, additionally, important to note that one might align with the local theatre alternative all the independent productions (namely, those remaining outside the big theatres financed with public money). This makes the definition of alternative theatre in the local context even broader, as one of the criteria for considering particular performance as alternative relates to its production 'circumstances'. Even when classical (in terms of their aesthetics), productions of small, independent companies present Serbian theatre with the different and considerably 'economy-friendly' production model. In that sense, they are alternative by the very fact that, unlike mainstream theatre productions, they are not regularly subsidized by public institutions, or tax money allocated to culture. And here we come to our next clue, a key to understanding the alternative theatre scene in Serbia. That is the budget, and we are not mistaken if we call the local, OFF theatre 'low-budget'. However, it would be wrong to assume that the epithet relates only to the production and technical working conditions for the independent companies. Budgets in this case dictate the aesthetics, and largely the ethics, that is, ideology of the theatre alternative in Serbia. In this very effort to make more out of less, all protagonists of the local independent theatre scene enter the domain of cultural and social engagement. Questioning the ways in which the National and all the other public theatres operate, alternative artists declare themselves as conscious. Aware of the society they live in, of the wider context of their work, but also of the fact that Serbia, although extremely poor country, is financing luxury and elitist art – its expenditures for this purpose exceeding respective amounts in more developed countries. In that sense, independent theatre makers in Serbia seem more honest than their institutionally based colleagues. It should be noted that alternative theatre companies are mainly financed from grants to individual projects. Their working conditions are no better than those of their audiences': white-collars, students and many other target groups addressed by (any) theatre.

Treading the alternative path in Serbia means giving up luxury and many privileges enjoyed by the full-time employees on public budgets. Nevertheless, independent position grants the independent artist greater freedom of thought and expression.

If we monitor events on both theatre scenes (namely: mainstream theatre and alternative theatre) we inevitably reach a conclusion that institutions cling to 'established values', treating issues of reality with theatre conventions of realism. On the other side, there is the Other Scene. Artists who constantly re-examine universally accepted aesthetic and social models, bravely trod the spaces where mainstream theatre does not dare enter. Simply speaking, it seems that mainstream theatre holds artistic monopoly over the questions of history. Alternative theatre, however, questions the here-and-now. It is there not to guard, but to inform the history of theatre. Future history or contemporary discourses as different perspectives for observing phenomena of the present.

These two scenes are not mutually exclusive. Moreover, it could be claimed that each depends on and determines the other. As already said, alternative as a term and concept can be defined only in relation to tradition. However, tradition is sustainable only if countered by a strong alternative scene.

Every other position would seem narrow-minded, totalizing and exclusive, because art, more than any other intellectual or sensuous human pursuit, demands openness to different perspectives of viewing of and reflection on reality.

Alternative theatre can exist only in a society with a clearly defined *mainstream*. In the context of this claim, of certain interest is the fact that the alternative theatre in Serbia was more rapidly and 'smoothly' adopted in places abounding with cultural-artistic mainstream. On the map of the theatre alternative in our country, it is precisely cities with a larger *mainstream* cultural output that stand out.

More than thirty alternative theatre groups and artists operate in Belgrade. The larger part of the alternative scene in Novi Sad comprises five or six experimental theatre (self)organizations favoring new models of theatre production. In smaller towns, alternative theatres exist merely as exceptions to the rule, and only when they are somehow connected to the cultural and artistic currents in these two cities. To back up this claim, I shall mention the commune and theatre company Porodica bistrih potoka (Clear Streams Family), operating in the village of Brezovica on the Rudnik mountain. It is merely the geographical setting that largely determines their aesthetics, called the "aesthetics of wildism". Wild and revolution-

ary “forest artists” nevertheless exhibit their art in Belgrade and Novi Sad. PBP have no artistic influence whatsoever on their local community of Gornji Milanovac. The peasants look at them in wonder. Their lifestyle, inextricably linked to their art, meets reception only in big towns. If you ask the people of Gornji Milanovac, they will mostly refer to PBP as a “dangerous sect” or a “bunch of lunatics gathered around that freak (Božidar Mandić)”. In the Belgrade cultural habitat, PBP enjoy different acclaim. They perform in grand theatres and cultural institutions, championed by many relevant theatre scholars and practitioners (for example, Jovan Ćirilov, founder and selector of the Bitef Festival and one of the most influential figures in Serbian theatre). Ćirilov calls them, theoretically justified, “the Serbian Living Theatre”... And, indeed, being a company functioning quite extraordinarily, trying to live in harmony with imperatives of ecology and nature, far from alienation, *high-tech* gadgets and the modern society, and possessed by their commitment to cultural-political revolution of the late 60s, PBP represent a unique phenomenon on the alternative theatre and artistic scene in Serbia. In their home, every August, they host a festival of ecologic theatre called *Šumes*. So, for few days in the year, they manage to move the hub of alternative theatre life from Belgrade and Novi Sad to the forests on Mount Rudnik. However, the only audience of this festival mainly comprises its participants. In its theatre-historical context, PBP’s creative work closely relates to the notions of *avant-garde*. In that sense, *Šumes* is the most alternative of all alternative festivals in Serbia. It functions independently from any budget or institution, propelled only by the enthusiasm and energy of its supporters.

Pančevo is a small town, drafted in big letters on the map of the alternative theatre Serbia. It is only 15 km away from Belgrade. In spatial terms, the town of Pančevo lies closer to downtown Belgrade than many of its remote suburbs. However, there are two reasons why this community will never be Belgrade-governed. Although Pančevo is in every way connected to Belgrade, it cherishes a quite ‘indigenous’ cultural history and tradition, in many respects more advanced than Belgrade’s, especially during the XIX century. On the other hand, Pančevo is notoriously famous for being the most polluted place in Serbia. Oil refinery, fertilizer company “Azotara” and other Pančevo-based industries, do not ‘closely’ follow modern ecological demands. Therefore, in Pančevo, almost every day, sirens for general environmental alarm are due to be at work. Poisoned Pančevo consequently poisons Belgrade. However, as long as Pančevo maintains its independent administration, Belgrade perceives the environmental collapse as being “somewhere else”, that it “happens to others” and that “there’s no reason

to panic". In view of this conglomerate of politically constructed deplorable circumstances, Pančevo can be regarded as the ultimate Serbian alternative. It is different, marginalized, isolated... In the context of the story of Serbian alternative theatre Pančevo stands out again as the host of the only festival with an 'official' mission to assemble independent theatre groups from the whole country, drawing from 'tradition' of the *Festival of amateur, experimental and small stages* founded in 1968. In cultivating this tradition, the festival's producer, Pančevo-based youth cultural centre *Dom omladine*, has indeed been responsive to contemporary theatre currents. In the early 2000s, it reformed and regrouped, becoming EX TEATAR FEST dedicated to experimental, low-budget, alternative, engaged, and independent theatre in Serbia.

The 'Other Scene', artists and organizations propelled by the motto 'different theatre for a different society', thus procured their first national review. EX TEATAR FEST is a true meeting point of the alternative theatre makers from Serbia. In accordance with the aesthetic and ethical principles of the local theatre alternative, EX TEATAR FEST does not charge admission. You don't buy a ticket – you only show interest. It seems that the recent history of EX TEATAR FEST incorporates all the most important alternative theatre companies and artists from Serbia. Since 2006, the participants of this festival were: Sonja Vukičević, Plavo pozorište, Teorija koja Hoda, Dah teatar, Ister teatar, Mimart teatar, Novi Sad-based Forum za novi ples and company Zuplo dno, Saša Asentić and his organization Per.Art, Dalija Aćin and Stanica – servis za savremeni ples, Porodica Bistrih Potoka, Mudra teatar, Drama Mental Studio, Ivan Pravdić and Justart, DDT, Ivana Koraksić and Beogradski Cirkuski Centar, Bitef teatar, Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju, and many other artists whose work represents a brave opposition to commercialization of art and prevalent debauching of the value system in the society. The list of participants of EX TEATAR FEST does not exhaust all the companies, artists and organizations whose work can be regarded as alternative in the overall context of the Serbian theatre.

Several very interesting artists should be addressed at this point, like the director András Urbán who works in the Subotica theatre Kosztolányi Dezső with his own company of actors. András Urbán's Ensemble is not alternative in production terms, but for its authentic profile articulated by the director, and contributing much vigor and originality to the new currents in Serbian theatre. Urbán's contribution to the last year's Bitef Festival comprised three productions: *Brecht – the Hardcore Machine* in the main selection and *Urbi et orbi* and *Gathering Place* in the Bitef Showcase – fringe program conceived as an opportunity to present international Bitef's visitors with highlights of the local theatre production.

The impact of the Bitef Festival, as one of the oldest and biggest European theatre festivals, on the theatre life of the local communities in Serbia, is demonstrated by its other fringe program, organized for more than a decade under the title Bitef Polifonija. Conceived as a program reviewing new trends in theatre for children and youth, Polifonija gradually surpassed its initial concept. Although the core of this theatre review is still composed of the best mainstream performances for young audiences, throughout the last few years it has been featuring many alternative theatre forms. Bitef Polifonija has presented projects by numerous non-governmental organizations employing theatre as means or strategy of promoting different social values. Tolerance to people of different religious or sexual affiliations, awareness of the position of marginalized social groups, like convicts, disabled children and adults, or HIV positive persons, are but few of the 'objectives' of this event. Many of the projects featured here engage with experimental or less established theatre forms, like psycho-drama, education theatre, interactive and forum theatre. Balancing on the verge between theatre and paratheatrical phenomena, this off-Bitef program organically relates to the Serbian theatre alternative. This meta-festival, (that is, festival within the festival), assembled many organizations whose work should not be ignored in the context of the alternative theatre in our country. For example: Žene na delu, Centar E8, Suno e Rromengo (as the only Roma theatre in Serbia), POD teatar (Projekat Objektivna Drama), ERG status, BAZAART and others.

For (self)organization, detailed mapping, intense information flow between the alternative theatre artists, including numerous multimedia projects aimed at educating theatre makers, Serbian theatre can credit the TkH-Centre for performing arts theory and practice. In the last few years, Walking Theory (TkH), conceived as a platform for promotion of new theoretical and critical currents in performing arts, proved itself to be one of the most significant OFF institutions of Serbian theatre. Walking Theory has almost become a school of thought for young intellectuals interested in contemporary theatre. From the *TkH Journal*, which has advanced or, so to speak, sanctioned many current theories and practices of performing arts through series of workshops, conferences, talks, and round table discussions attended by numerous prominent theoreticians and artists, all to exceptional theatre productions, like the *ready-made theatre* project *Boxing Match* (Boks meč) or the first local Internet-performance *Psychosis and Death of the Author* (Psihoza i smrt autora), TkH have earned their right to be considered a relevant institution of the Serbian theatre alternative. No less important is Dah teatar, one of the longest enduring and most success-

ful independent theatre companies in Serbia. Founded in 1991 by Jadranka Anđelić and Dijana Milošević, *Dah teatar* has grown into a theatre of world renown. They performed throughout all Europe, America, as far as New Zealand and Australia... Their success was confirmed by the important Otto Rene Castillo Award for Political Theatre (its former recipients being artists like Robert Wilson, Living Theatre and many other significant contributors to the theatre history of the XX century).

Dah teatar's poetics is grounded in their firm social engagement, and their authentic and original aesthetics. The artists assembled around this theatre have chosen it to be their sole occupation. They work ceaselessly, trying to develop as artists on many levels. Although director's credits usually go to Dijana Milošević, it should be noted that all members of *Dah teatar* eventually become creative contributors. From the research and writing, to conceiving and performing the music score as one of the main elements in all their projects, *Dah teatar* people work together, keeping in mind that theatre is, above all, a collective creative act.

Distinctive language and style in the frameworks of the Serbian theatre alternative was articulated by Plavo pozorište (Blue Theatre) under the artistic leadership of Nenad Čolić. This company, formed with the aim to reform the world, starting from oneself, has been in business for 13 years, shaping their own expression, and tracing the world theatre heritage left by the great reformers like Grotowski, Artaud, Barba, Giannetti, Stanislavski... Along with the TkH or *Dah teatar*, Plavo pozorište invests considerable time to education of theatre professionals (including amateurs interested in alternative performing arts). These three companies (organizations) can thus be regarded as most proficient in educating, not only young artists, but also theatre audiences in Serbia. Speaking of audience education, we come to the most important function that the 'different', that is, alternative theatre, acquires nowadays in the Serbian society.

All patriotic sentiments aside, Serbia can not be deemed a theatre 'superpower'. For various reasons, least important seeming to be the most conspicuous ones: economy-wise, average citizens of Serbia do not evince high demand for theatre. Theatre-going is not a 'normal' part of the local cultural life. It can be regarded as an exceptional or, rather, exclusive activity – not a habitual or deep-seated cultural need, or indispensable element of the middle-class social life. It is hard to tell a cause from consequence to this. However, it would at least be inappropriate to blame the public for leaving most of our theatres empty-seated. There must be a deeper cause to this... The cause is indeed deeper and does not only come from the poor artistic accomplishments of the mainstream theatre. What this is

about is total absence of public theatre education. While the mainstream institutions fail to provide any solution to this problem, alternative theatre groups diligently work on education and awareness-raising on the part of their spectators. In that sense, development and advance of the Other Scene in our country can only positively affect the classical, traditional theatre. It can be correctly comprehended only in its relations to the alternative. Likewise, the alternative can only be acknowledged through its relations to the mainstream theatre.

The Alternative must exist and there is no alternative to it !

Translated by Irena Šentevska

× ANA VILENICA

PERFORMANCE ART IN SERBIA (2007-08)

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What is, actually, contemporary performance art and, respectively, performance art in Serbia in the late 2000s? The term *performance* encompasses a wide range of different and often incompatible cultural and social performative acts. What essentially determines the practice of performance art is primarily its institutional context. Performance art occurs in the institutional frameworks of the Artworld. Perceived as a directed or non-directed event based on *restored behavior*¹ for a gallery, museum, or accidental audience, or the 'eye' of the camera, performance art in Serbia (Yugoslavia) emerged in the frameworks of what the local art history termed *new artistic practices* (*nove umetničke prakse*), situated within the auspices of visual art institutions. Yugoslav artists could not, like their American or (West) European counterparts, defy commodification of art, as Yugoslavia lacked a developed art market, to begin with. *New artistic practices* primarily emerged in response to the domineering *Sober Modernism*² as the general *mainstream* aesthetic norm for the socialist Yugoslavia.

Performance art emerging in this context engaged in critique of the dominant ideologies of socialism, introducing transgressions not likely to be tolerated by this system. Those were various strategies and tactics developed under the influences of conceptual and processual art, Fluxus, and body art. Art (including performance art) developed in Yugoslavia during the 80s featured the postmodern and transavantgarde pluralism. The art scene abounded with neo-isms, favoring various modes of retro-avantgarde.

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1 According to Richard Schechner performance features "restored behavior", implying repetition of previously enacted behavior in a different place or context, nevertheless unique in each instance. See Richard Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge, London, New York, 2003.

2 *Sober Modernism* is the explicitly utilitarian art derived from the patterns of the European 'Moderate Modernism', as a decorative art, neither abstract nor figurative – nevertheless, politically neutral. See: Miško Šuvaković, "Art as a Political Machine: Fragments on the Late Socialist and Postsocialist Art of Mitteleuropa and the Balkans", in Aleš Erjavec (ed), *Postmodernism and the Postsocialist Condition*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 2003, p. 93.

What was common to Yugoslav retro-avantgarde phenomena (and, consequently, to performance art-related ones), was their relation to ideology³. That relation was manifested in the work with ideological matrices of the local-specific socialist context. Such local avantgarde practices related to postmodernism in their use of retrograde tactics, in form of: appropriation, reference, repetition, and re-presentation or display, but also in their engaged eclecticism. What they were disclosing were various totalitarian models and avantgarde utopian iconography rendered empty – devoid of meaning.

Art of the 90s emerged after the traumatic artistic pursuits of late socialism, as the art of the new global era. The 90s saw what used to be subversive strategies of conceptual art (performance art included) becoming dominant *mainstream* working practices.

One of the characteristics of the Nineties is the redefinition of the ontology of artwork according to the idea of the work of art as critical information in the conceptual art of the Sixties and the Seventies. The difference is that 'the new work of the Nineties' is being realized according to the massive media infrastructure of late Postmodernism with the expectations of the positive micro-social projection of political correctness (environment, local customs, the logic or repression of everyday life, the rights of the margin in relation to the center, the gender issue, discursive formations of identity). This new art finds itself between the critique and the apology of social reality; in itself, it is an offer to reality as an imaginary and symbolical representation of possible 'co-existence' of identities and their differences⁴. Today, performance art represents a form of specific engagement and intervention *from* the realm of art *into* the culture and society – in the particular historical and social context. This practice plays with material effects of culture⁵ which, in turn, represent different facets and manifestations of ideology. Performance art is, therefore, material production of potentialities relating to the world which fosters its actuality⁶.

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3 Marina Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism & The Retro-Avantgarde*, Springerin (Hg.), Vienna, 2000, p. 38.

4 Miško Šuvaković, "Critical Phenomenology of Artwork: The Status, the Functions and the Effects of the Artwork at Manifesta 3", available online: <http://www.ljudmila.org/scca/platforma2/suvakovicang.htm>

5 Culture understood as a system of signification which stands for every material form of representation and its material effects. See: John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, Pearson Prentice Hall, 2006.

6 Miško Šuvaković, "Koncepti i paradigme izvođenja u performans umetnosti" (Concepts and paradigms of performance in performance art), in Miško Šuvaković, *Konceptualna umetnost* (Conceptual Art), Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, Novi Sad, 2007, pp. 672-697.

Performance art in Serbia currently represents a conglomerate of different strategies and tactics deployed in aligning with varying discourses in the age of neo-liberal capitalism, post-socialism, national and alternative histories, mass-media produced information, patriarchal fascistoid nationalism, progressive clericalization of the society, anti-communism, environmental crisis, profound theoriophobia, simultaneous lack and overflow of communication, social normalization in the cultural field, and intricate and diversified conditions of cultural production, consumption and exchange.

Artistic scene of the second half of the 2000s features protagonists who develop various *procedures of representation, expression, construction, simulation or performativity*⁷ in dealing with this specific art form. Approaches and working methods adopted currently range from neo-conceptual practices like body art, processual art, theoretical performance and various forms of art activism, to relatively new forms like Internet performance or cyberperformance.

In spite of its relatively long tradition of following Western trends while simultaneously developing original and specific working methods, and appearance as a relatively common practice among the visual artists, performance art in the local context features conspicuous absence from the system of artistic, art-historical, and theoretical education, respectively. Consequently, research in the current practices of performance art in Serbia and its contextualizations appear as exceptions⁸. For that reason, the second part of this essay is dedicated to a preliminary attempt at outlining the intricate realm of current⁹ performance art practices in Serbia. One of the possible ways of meeting this demand is mapping of different artistic methods and approaches. What follows might be considered as *Raster's* contribution to the practice of archiving performance art, a step closer to its possible contextualization and theoretization in terms of the phenomena already recognized within art history and theory, along with specificities of their deployment in the particular works. It is important to note that their working methods and approaches often combine. Consequently, every classification should be deemed conditional, as one of the possible prospects in observing their idiosyncrasies.

Performance art in Serbia, in the period 2007-08, had been strongly referring to *neo-conceptual practices*, displaying its firm affiliations with the heritage of conceptual and post-conceptual art and their respective strategies

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7 *Ibid*, p. 689.

8 Significant contributions to the history and theory of performance art in Serbia came from Jerko Denegri, Milena Dragičević Šešić, Miško Šuvaković, Ana Vujanović etc.

9 Including mainly works from 2008 and, partly, 2007.

and tactics of behavior and work with the body. *Symbolic ritual performances* feature artists in highly conceptualized, behavioral actions communicating particular ideas or clues. E.g. *Final Shot – Final Cut*¹⁰ (2007), video performance by Živko Grozdanić – Gera and Slavko Bogdanović, concerned with the problems of national-bourgeois Serbian ideology symbolically disclosed here in the literary opus of Dobrica Ćosić. Ćosić is notoriously known as advocate of an organicist approach to the Serbian nation, manifested in the concept “All Serbs in one country”. To the symbolic-ritual shooting of Ćosić’s book *Koreni* (Roots) the artists projected a symbolical breach with this form of tradition.

Neo-conceptual practices additionally include *para-ritual, therapy- and existential performances*, maintaining the tradition of the 1970’s body art. These are based on corporeal behavioral actions on the part of the artist employing certain concepts with a view to cathartic response from the audiences. This is featured with a (conditionally speaking) group of artists assembled around the VIP Gallery of Belgrade’s SKC (Student Cultural Center)¹¹, e.g: Gabrijel Savić Ra, Marko Nektan, Nela Antonović, Lidija Antonović, Predrag Radovančević, Jovana Dimitrijević etc, or IMAF (International Multimedia Art Festival) in Odžaci, e.g: Nenad Bogdanović, Branislav B. Čugulj, Marko Bogdanović, Aleksandar Jovanović etc, including the artist Dragan Ilić. For instance, the artist and founder of Mimart theatre, Nela Antonović, in her performance conceived as part of the three-day event *Dreće govori* (Trees Talking), swallowed sawdust later to throw it up, as a homage to annihilated trees and in protest against the systematic destruction of nature. The Serbian-American artist Dragan Ilić, in his performance *The people I don’t like*¹² (2008), in turn worked with frustrations and traumas related to certain personalities from the public, mostly political domain. During the performance he uttered names, like: Slobodan Milošević, Margaret Thatcher, George Bush, Bill Clinton, etc, symbolically assuming the individuals’ identities, then performing an act of self-sacrifice and inviting the audiences to respond to each invocation by throwing sharp pencils from a pile on the floor. Return to the tradition of body art, however with a difference, featured in the work *Rhythm 20*¹³ by Kristian Al-Droubi and Boris Kadin¹⁴. This performance reiterated the *Rhythm 10*, 1970s ref-

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10 http://birobeograd.info/simptom_i_singularizacije_katalog.pdf

11 Curator of the gallery is Gabrijel Savić Ra.

12 <http://www.czkd.org.yu/programi.php?id=2&lang=sr>

13 http://infant.eunet.yu/infant08/english/prateci_program/ritam.htm

14 The performance was conceived by Kristian Al-Droubi (Serbia) and Boris Kadin (Croatia). It premiered at the 7th edition of the festival *Dani hrvatskog performancea* (Days of Croatian Performance) in Varaždin. The Osijek-based artist Andrej Mirčev replaced Kadin in Novi Sad.

erence work by Marina Abramović, the famous artist's act with a knife. Performers Al-Droubi and Andrej Mirčev repeat this act, each playing with the other's hand. During the act, the artists construct a verbal narrative on post-traumatic war syndrome in Serbia after the 90s, building a contextual framework for repeating this reference work from the performance art history. Such reference to artistic and historical legacy can be apprehended in critical terms of re-enactment, implying practices of re-staging of artistic events, based on detailed reconstructions or intentional modifications of the re-staged reference events.

Contemporary cultural context of the post-transitional Serbia is largely affected by a certain logophobia and resistance to theory, generating as a consequence a number of practices critically responding to this situation with various forms of theoretical performance. Theoretical performance¹⁵ is a tendency within the frameworks of performance art, grounded not in its formal aspects, but in appreciation of theory as an essential discursive practice informing the art work in its intertextual relations. A performance of the TkH (Walking Theory)¹⁶ platform titled *Prošle godine u Samoći* (*L'Année dernière à Solitude*) (2006-2008) featured the principle of simulating a creative act while performing theory.¹⁷ In this piece Bojan Djordjević, Siniša Ilić and Sena Djorović reconstructed the film *L'Année dernière à Marienbad* by Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet, using their descriptions of the making of the film as a source material for dubbing they performed live during the film's screening on translucent surfaces. Performing trace as mark of the past and the future in Derridean terms, the authors indicate the present – which is neither. Similar methods are displayed in the work of Maja Solar and Ivan Radenković, a duo from Novi Sad known for their poetical-theoretical performances in public places like clubs and cafés. In their performance *Neposlušni eho/Neposlušna Eho/Rogue Echo* (2008), while raising crucial political and environmental issues, they performed a 'subversive mimesis' as a recurring element of distinction in the struggle for power in the cultural realm.

The last few years in Serbia also saw emergence of *lecture performance* as a specific strategy of pro-theory and self-reflective work. Lecture as performance exists from the early stages of performance art, characterized by enacting of a certain verbal action. The artist Nebojša Milikić employed the format of presentation or performative lecture in his work *Rečnik rata* -

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15 Miško Šuvaković, "Theoretical Performance", *Maska*, no. 1-2 (90-91), Ljubljana, 2005, pp. 67-72.

16 A group of theoreticians and artists assembled around the *Walking Theory* aroused a 'critical storm' in this domain during the 2000s.

17 Miško Šuvaković, "Theoretical Performance", *ibid.*

*Kolekcija*¹⁸ (2008), when he attempted to recall the 90s through an anonymous patron's collection of art objects, created in the period 1986-87–1996-97, at the outset and during the war in Yugoslavia. Artworks – mostly paintings, drawings and prints – and their modes of representation helped Milikić reconstruct the history and overwhelming ideologies in Serbia during the 90s. After the presentation the artist opens debate on the faith of the collection he carries in the trunk of his car. While endeavoring to deal art to the visitors, he is at the same time raising questions on the history and its appropriation in contemporary Serbia. Similar methods feature in the practice of the group Spomenik (Monument)¹⁹ (Damir Arsenijević, Svebor Midžić, Darinka Pop-Mitić, Branimir Stojanović, Milica Tomić), concerned with oblivion of the 1990s' wars in Yugoslavia, and conceptualizing them as the traumatic knot of the contemporary Serbian society. This group was formed in 2002 while questioning the attempts of the Belgrade City Assembly to build a monument dedicated to the wars in former Yugoslavia during the 90s. This art collective proclaimed conversation a monument, declaring its basic strategy as production of autonomous space for discussion. In 2008 the group presented the activities of the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) through a series of lectures delivered by experts on forensics, anthropology, and cultural theories of memory, staged as performance-lectures in gallery and museum venues in Belgrade as part of the 49th October Salon (49. Oktobarski salon). Interactivity and participation have been important issues addressed by performance art since its beginnings. For instance, the unique performance art production of the multimedia artist, poet, playwright, and performer Ivan Pravić provides a spatial and temporal framework for various forms of interaction and participation on the part of the audiences. In his performance *Jedan savet jedno pivo* (One Advice – One Beer) (2007/08) Pravić worked with the ideologies of contemporary communication societies based on domineering material production, exchange and consumption of knowledge, information and communication, where intimate human interaction is increasingly missing.²⁰ He is ironizing this situation, offering advice

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18 Performance lecture *Kolekcija* premiered as part of the international project *Dictionary of war/ Rečnik rata* in Novi Sad (<http://dictionaryofwar.org/concepts/Collection>), being further elaborated, modified, and performed in *Art Klinika* in Novi Sad (<http://www.ledart.org.yu/artklinika/milikic.htm>).

19 http://www.oktobarskisalon.org/49/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=218&Itemid=73

20 Ivan Pravić's reflections on the subject were outlined in the essay: Ivan Pravić, "Učestvovanje publike u delima savremene umetnosti" (Audience participation in contemporary art works), *Polja literature and theory journal*, No. 441, 2006, available online: <http://polja.eunet.yu/polja441/441-7.htm>

to interested audiences on any subject in a 'time-frame' of one beer. The project *Ponovna poseta Beogradu* (Revisiting Belgrade) (2008) by DEZ.ORG collective comprises intimate operations of construction and deconstruction of memories on and in the city, additionally addressing issues of communication and interaction. The audiences are invited to make appointments with artists-guides, joining them in creation of an event of writing new history for a particular place.

The artist Ivana Smiljanić conceived her performance *Igraj! Igraj! Igraj!* (I Dance Dance Dance)²¹ (2007) as her three-day party dancing accompanied by playlists of invited 'players' in the Artworld (theoreticians, critics, curators), artists, and audiences, in disclosing the hierarchy of their mutual relations on the artistic scene. The artist Tanja Strugar also focuses on communication, working with the problems of the Artworld and its biopolitical effects. She follows a procedure prescribed by ULUS (Association of Fine Artists of Serbia), demanding from its members to realize minimum one solo exhibition every four years, in order to be able to keep their social benefits – social and health insurance – as freelance artists. However, at the venue of the anticipated exhibition, she opened a space for debate on ideologies of the Artworld and her affiliations within it.

Various forms of artistic activism and activist working strategies and tactics, additionally impress the pluralist scene of performance art's creative practices in contemporary Serbia. Artistic activism represents interactive work in the social realm of culture, aiming less at aesthetic effects than – increasingly – at political statements. The question of artistic activism is not a question of form, but a question of function. The function of artistic activism as a cultural practice is intentional political action in the realm of ideology of its institutions and their discourses, as a project of (relatively) collective or wider social emancipation through implementation of artistic strategies (e.g. coming from performance art) allowing for a relatively autonomous position of those involved.²² Art activism in Serbia currently displays many facets, ranging from cultural – queer, feminist and environmental, to anti-Fascist and anti-nationalist campaigns. Queer *activist* performances focus on the critique of the mainstream patriarchal ideology in Serbia which discriminates against all the identities not conforming to the dominant heterosexual norm. Queer kolektiv Beograd's performance *Queer kabare* (2005/2008) engages with the issues of progressive militariza-

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21 <http://www.creemaginet.com/sajt/centar-za-kulturnu-dekontaminaciju-i-kontekst-galerija-performans-zurka-ivana-smiljanic>

22 See Aldo Milohnić, "Artivism", available online: <http://eipcp.net/transversal/1203/milohnic/en>

tion and heteronormativization in the Serbian society, its homophobia and problems with capitalism. This ironic comedy-cabaret works in the field of dangerous battles for cultural hegemony – setting on stage marginalized queer, gay, and lesbian bodies, and inducing effects of displacement of fixed identities. The origins of this performance relate to the traditional hosting of the Queer Festival in Belgrade, the annual target for new animosities and violent reactions from the nationalist and fascist-leaning groups in Serbia. Feminist activist performance works its way through the battlefield for equal opportunities women's rights and critique of the patriarchal values of the Serbian society. In the street performance *Ne mogu da odem, zato što...* (I can not leave because...) (2008) touring ten Serbian cities during the *16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women* Campaign, the activist group *Žene na delu* engaged with ideologies of the Serbian patriarchal society confronted with gender violence as its daily experience. This performance featured activists who resumed roles of victims of rape and other forms of violence – claiming that there is a way out of this ominous circle. Scripts used in this campaign were adopted from statements of the victims of gender violence that the activists maintained contacts with. Environmental activist performance deals with the issues of pollution and other violations of environmental balance. Through public actions and performances, environmental activism is practiced by the PBP – *Porodica bistrih potoka* (The Clear Streams Family), environmental commune based on Mount Rudnik. Through its para-ritual performances, this group advocates the ideas of return to and harmony with the 'nature', as a mode of confrontation with the world of mass communication, alienation, and urban violence. Beside their urban events, on the Rudnik mountain the commune annually hosts a performance art festival called *Šumes*. It is possible to address some of the activist practices in the contemporary culture employing the term cultural-artistic actionism. Actionism implies artistic interventions in public spaces, pursuing critique and, ultimately, changes within normative social or cultural systems. Led Art collective²³, known for their actionist engagement throughout the 90s, in 2008 hosted the action *Iz pepela muzej* (From Ash to Museum) as a tribute to their project *IkonoMAHIJA* ili *Torpedom u Led* (IconoMACHY or Torpedo the Ice) (Belgrade, 1998). Referring to the 90s' situation Led Art responded to the current cultural issues and cultural policies. During the campaign *Iz pepela muzej* 76 art pieces were burnt, works by local artists previously recorded and archived – their ashes later to be scattered over the Novi Sad sculpture park and foundations of the Contemporary Art Museum. Famous provo-

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23 <http://www.ledart.org.yu>

cateurs of the local scene or, as they call themselves, “artistic-advertising corporation” *Ilegalni poslastičari* (Illegal Confectioners)²⁴ develop a new form of institutional critique in their cynical actions directed against the dominant sedated and depolitized urban culture in Serbia and its respective values²⁵. In 2008 the group was occupied with the *Čošak Marka Kraljevića* project (Marko Kraljević Corner), a follow-up to their action of re-naming public spaces.²⁶ The action was planned as part of the festival *Art & Life 366 Days* in Shanghai, as inauguration of the plaque with the name of this mythical Serbian hero. The project was backed up with numerous actions and performances, like TV appearances or a donors’ conference in ZMUC (Zemun Small Art Centre), where the artists ironically criticized the national ideology based on mythologization of folk heritage and the concept of ‘Great Serbia’. With certain forms of actionism one could align the practice of the collective character *Zampa di Leone*²⁷ (Lion’s Claw or, rather, Paw), engaged since the late 1990s in a systematic critique of the ‘salon-elitism’ of the local critical and activist art scene with its ‘satirical’ comic strip output. At the exhibition launch in the University Library Svetozar Marković, a mock-Zampa performer dressed in ninja costume asserted his presence as impersonated bad conscience of the local artistic scene in his mannerist self-exhibition.

Among the less commonly adopted strategies of the local performance art scene are the terrorist ones. In artistic terms, ‘terrorist’ actions imply illegal strategies assumed as a mode of operation or making a statement. Terrorist strategies were employed by Danilo Prnjat in his work *Tempo* (2008). He falsely reported a bomb at the mega-market *Tempo*, otherwise property of the Serbian tycoon Miroslav Mišković, president of the Belgrade-based Delta Holding corporation. This artistic-terrorist act aimed at spotlighting the issue of ideological animosity to the Western capitalism, recognized as a threat to the Serbian national identity, in shifting the critical vector towards the nationalist facet of the capitalist system.

The practices of digital, Internet or cyber performance are relatively new phenomena on the local scene, being based on the use of digital technolo-

24 <http://ilegalni.mojblog.rs/arhiva-12-2007.html>

25 Stevan Vuković, “Pessimism of the Intellect, Optimism of the Will: Institutional Critique in Serbia and its Lack of Organic References”, available online: <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0208/vukovic/en>

26 Illegal Confectioners are also responsible for the renowned *Salvador Dali Corner* (Čošak Salvadora Dalija) on the streets Simina and Kapetan Mišina in Belgrade.

27 <http://www.creemaginet.com/sajt/zampa-di-leone-u-obliku-crteza-i-teksta-biblioteka-svetozar-markovic-04-jul-2008-god>

gies in live performances. Example of this tendency is performance of the Fantomat, a member of the SubHuman teatar collective²⁸. In September 2008 Fantomat performed a series of actions in public spaces of the Serbian town Pančevo. By inserting a coin into the slot on his head, accidental audiences could generate (activating specially designed software) an audio-visual act of the Fantomat each time anew declaring state of emergency, as a response to the permanent state of emergency we live in. Internet is a context addressed by Miroslav Mandić, the artist active on the performance art scene since the 1970s. By the end of 2007 Mandić marked the beginning of his existence in the virtual world, naming it *Ružičnjak* (Rose Garden).²⁹ Thus he began to explore the potentialities of the Internet as a communication tool for an alienated world, as a means of commitment to a new universalism reflected in unity of all beings. In 2008 Mandić realized the Internet performance *Svečani nedeljni ručak* (Convivial Sunday Lunch). Every Sunday at noon, by means of live video streaming, Mandić addressed for 15 minutes the attendant at his virtual round table. Performance *Veni! ΕΛΘΕ! Dođi! To the Zapata Private/Pirate Birthday Party. And, Vice Versa...* (2008)³⁰ by Miljana Perić, Teodora Perić, Jelena Milosavljević-Rubil, Julijana Protić and Goran Rubil was conceived as a pirate/private celebration dedicated to the birthday of the famous leader of the Mexican revolution Emiliano Zapata, staged in the online environment by means of the open-source cyberperformance³¹ software UpStage. The audiences took part in the celebration, contributing to the mood with music and conversation. Interaction was provided by the UpStage interface. This performance raised questions related to economy and contemporary culture, potentialities of the new subject of the multitude, and plausibility of a new revolution today. In an attempt to include as many works as possible coming from the pluralist Serbian scene of performance art in the late 2000s, in its second 'act' this essay becomes an archive. I render this archive and potentialities of its traces as a sequence of propositions, statements, indeed guidelines for future research and contextualizations. All these works relate to complex

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28 The author of this essay is also member of this collective.

29 http://miroslavmandic.name/index_en.html

30 http://upstage.org.nz/blog/?page_id=159

31 Cyberformance is a term coined by the cyber-artist and theoretician Helen Varley Jamieson, and it implies digital performance in the virtual i.e. online environment. See Ana Vujanović, "Globalni/Digitalni performans: Cyberformance između kapitala i umetnosti" (Global/digital performance: cyberformance between the capital and art), in Aleksandra Jovičević and Ana Vujanović, *Uvod u studije performansa* (Introduction to Performance Studies), Fabrika knjiga, Belgrade, 2006, p. 271.

structures of art institutions and their agencies (curators, gallerists, critics, journalists, festivals, exhibitions etc.) situated in a particular socio-political, economic and historical context shaped by the cultural realm generating this art. This must be kept in mind in any in-depth analysis. Performance art of the late 2000s in Serbia is “art in the age of culture” or *art in the age of its dissolution*³². It is being dissolved as an autonomous practice, authentic act, and auratic phenomenon into *culture*, yet remaining and materializing in its semi-autonomous realm. This partial autonomy simultaneously opens possibilities for effects of artistic practices on the society and culture, at the same time closing them off in producing effects of normalization. It is about change *and* impossibility of change, implying potentiality strictly in Giorgio Agamben’s terms³³. As opposed to potentiality in the traditional sense, which is annulled in actuality, I refer to potentiality which survives the actuality, actualized as such along with its absence, impossibility or impotentiality. It is an event *in* and *from* the culture – contemplating, questioning, attacking and, ultimately, affecting and having it changed. Because, in Antonio Negri’s terms, ‘every potentiality is always already a creative moment or assertion of the forces of invention establishing what is to come. The transfer to the upcoming, however, always implies a difference – a creative leap.’³⁴ As all the practices addressed strive to realize their potentialities, it is possible to apprehend them only if the complex cultural, political, social and economic environments generating them are taken into account.

Translated by Irena Šentevska

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32 The Serbian translation of Guy Debord’s book *The Society of the Spectacle* refers to art as being in the phase of disappearance (*nestajanje*). I consider the term dissolution (*rastakanje*) used in the Croatian translation more appropriate in accounting for this processes. Cf. Guy Debord, *Društvo spektakla i komentari društvu spektakla*, Bastard books, Zagreb, 1999, p. 151, and Gi Debor, *Društvo spektakla*, Anarhija / Blok 45, Belgrade, 2006, p. 50, available online: <http://www.modukit.com/anarhija-blok45/>.

33 See Giorgio Agamben, *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, Stanford University Press, Stanford Cal., 1999.

34 See Antonio Negri, *Time for Revolution*, Continuum, London, New York, 2005.

× ANA VUJANOVIĆ

NOT QUITE-NOT RIGHT EASTERN WESTERN DANCE (ON THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE SCENE IN SERBIA)

As a prelude to discussion of the contemporary dance scene in Serbia, I must begin by its conceptualization, and contextualization of its synchronic relations with the neighboring countries', and other European or 'Western' contemporary dance scenes. Contemporary dance being a new phenomenon in Serbia, there are two points I would like to put forward, to begin with. Firstly: there is no local contemporary dance history; therefore, there is no need to trace diachronic 'lineage' of the present situation, and secondly: what is currently considered and practiced as contemporary dance in Serbia is contemporary Western dance. Hence, what I need to do here is clarify the influences, uses, transfers, and appropriations of Western dance paradigms in this not-quite-Western-but-not-really-Eastern-either context. Here, I made my starting points plain and clear, nevertheless, lacking in subtlety. But, will this suffice? I wouldn't think so. So, where do we start?

...I will try to resolve my statements, in hope that some new problems to reflect on might eventually occur. I have adopted a theoretical approach, maintaining that problems compel us to reevaluate and reconsider our common beliefs and habits. Consequently, this essay does not entertain positivist academic approaches.¹

“PREHISTORY” OF THE CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN SERBIA

The claim that that there is no (modern) dance history of Serbia is not quite true. However, what we can identify as the local dance history is a fringe non-teleological network of past traces of various “bodily movement practices”. It will not lead us to the actual contemporary dance scene

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¹ Besides, the following overview lacked full insight into the research on the dance scene in Serbia, the survey carried out by the *Station* on behalf of the DBM platform not yet being completed (see: Mediterranean Dance Map at <http://www.d-b-m.org/mapping/index.php?lang=EN>). Therefore, it is liable to change as the research continues.

in Serbia, and it pretty much differs from the dance histories of Western Europe and USA. It is rather an *archeology* of more or less isolated or loosely connected dots, lost tracks, ruptures, parallel flows, accidents, breaches – a *genealogy* of discontinuity of the origins.

The period prior to World War II featured two established forms of bodily cultural-artistic practices in Serbia (and other parts of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia). The first being the work of the philosopher and choreographer Maga Magazinović, whose vision of body emancipation was realized through a 'new dance' combination of gymnastics, plastics, rhythm, feminism, and physical culture as education. She combined the dance techniques and poetics of Emil-Jacque Dalcroze and Rudolf von Laban, Isadora Duncan and Marry Wigman, blended with Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy. The second form was the practice of the pan-Slavic Sokol movement, whose appreciation of the human body was committed to building a healthy collective body for the (Slavic) nation. Both paradigms entertained similar notions (health, body/physical culture...), however, their ideologies differed: emancipation of the individual vs. workout of the collective. Consequently, while Magazinović conceived dance art pieces for small numbers of (female) performers, the Sokols would host a rally (*slet*), a cultural-athletic manifestation for large numbers of various types of performers.

After World War II, both paradigms had their impact on the bodily artistic and cultural practices in Serbia, and the whole of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.² Magazinović had her own studio in Belgrade, and her students Dubravka Maletić and Smiljana Mandukić continued her practice, shifting partly its leftist-bourgeois ideology toward dance forms of amateur culture, encouraged by the socialist state. On the other hand, Sokol rallies grew into an officially sanctioned form of bodily representation – as was the case in many other communist countries – from numerous state parades and festivals, grandest of them all being the famous *Dan mladosti* (Youth Day Rally, also President Tito's birthday) – May 25. If those dance forms have ever had a critical or socially and culturally emancipating potential, it was for the most part lost in their ideological mutations during the 1950s and '60s.

What is necessary to keep in mind about the history of dance in Serbia were the bodily practices developed within the new art forms: performance

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2 For facts and reflections on the history of dance in Serbia after WWII see interviews included in the video installation "Tiger's Leap to History" (Phase I), by Saša Asentić and Ana Vujanović (Novi Sad, 2006/07; as part of the *Indigo Dance* project).

art, body art and happenings of the 1960s and '70s. In those cases, we cannot refer to dance in its actual sense, as it was rather dance *piercing through* other art forms and practices.³ However, we should seriously rethink the status of the artist's body (especially the female artist's) in the works of, say, Marina Abramović (Belgrade) and Katalin Ladik (Novi Sad), profoundly ignored by dance theory and criticism of the time. Several decades later, their conceptual influences are clearly visible in the contemporary dance, and more conspicuous than any coming from the ballet, or amateur, folk, or popular dance (exclusively perceived as *dance* at the time). Their main contribution is conceiving the body along two lines: as artistic material or tool (i.e. body as object or medium of art) and, more importantly, as body of an artist – artistic body (i.e. body as subject of art).

Later on we encounter the core of the contemporary dance scene under the auspices of the postmodern theatre of the late 1970s and '80s – admittedly, more advanced in Slovenia and Croatia than in Serbia and Montenegro. In this framework, we should mention the theatre directors Nada Kokotović (also choreographer), Ljubiša Ristić, Haris Pašović, and choreographer/dancer Sonja Vukićević. Vukićević's 'modern dance' advocated liberation of the ballet body through a less-codified bodily movement, exploring extensive theatre references through narrative and stage design. Her work was greatly influenced by Carolyn Carlson's dance poetics and Pina Bausch's *Tanztheater*, frequently drawing from painting, literature, and film (e.g. Rainer Werner Fassbinder).

Sonja Vukićević also features as a symptomatic figure for the local paradigm shift from the collectivism common to socialist countries (as was the SFRY), to individualism pursued by the capitalist ones (as were the new states, successors to SFRY). In fact, she starred in the last Youth Day Rally, performed in 1987. And, instead of the ordinary *slet*, what we had that year was a modern dance performance (based on fragments of Damir Zlatar Fray's *Bolero*), featuring Vukićević as a solo dancer (although) accompanied by 9.000 youths.⁴ For the first time one could see an individual, clearly singled out of the anonymous mass of dancing bodies, prophesying the collapse of the "all together now!" *slet* ideology, both in syntactic and symbolic terms.

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3 The phrase was adopted from a statement by East Dance Academy; see Goran Sergej Pristaš, Emil Hrvatin, Bojana Kunst, "East Dance Academy", *Maska*, No 103/104, Ljubljana, 2007.

4 At the time she was highly acclaimed both as prima ballerina of the National Theatre in Belgrade and a modern dancer.

CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN SERBIA LACKING INSTITUTION/DISCIPLINE

In discussing the situation in the 1990s and early 2000s, we can finally refer to contemporary dance scene in Serbia in its own terms, in spite of its lack of recognition in that period.⁵ It emerged and evolved mostly within the alternative theatre scene (mainly in Belgrade), as nonverbal, physical, dance theatre, and theatre of movement – as well as in various other forms of experimental theatre and performance. Beside Vukićević's work within the CZKD (Centre for Cultural Decontamination), important contributors to the emerging scene were the following independent theatre groups and artists from Belgrade: Dah teatar, Ister teatar, Plavo pozorište, Mimart, Omen, Erg Status, Boris Čakširan, Ivana Vujić...; alternative theatre festivals, as BELEF and, to a certain extent, BITEF (Belgrade), INFANT (Novi Sad), FIAT (Podgorica), etc.

According to this type of institutional/discursive framing, the main influences on the local dance scene came from theatre: namely, theatre anthropology, choreo-drama, Brechtian theatre, *Tanztheater*, Expressionist theatre, street theatre, butoh and other Far- and Middle-Eastern theatre forms, and not from the international (Western) dance scene of the period. For instance, before 2000 there was no reference to conceptual dance, which was booming on the international scenes in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Instead, there were plenty of references to the neo-avantgarde and performance art of the 1960s, perceived as a repository of still relevant artistic and political tools.

Theatre background of the local dance scene can also help us understand the notable interest of the (SOROS) Fund for an Open Society shown in supporting many of these productions. Throughout the 1990s the Fund featured as the main sponsor of the independent/non-institutional cultural and artistic scene (and its output) in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, due to its 'progressive' political content (in the Serbian case, due to its resistance to Slobodan Milošević's regime).⁶ This indicates that the social role of dance was supposed to be performed at the level of its politically charged content (rendered with theatrical elements often borrowed from the '60s), and not

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5 See Archives of New Theatre and Dance in Serbia, 1990-2000, maintained by the Centre for New Theatre and Dance, Belgrade; now available in The Archives of Serbia.

6 See also: Ana Vujanović, "Blasted Narratives: Belgrade Theater in the 1990s and early 2000s", in *Mind the Map! – History is not Given*, ed. Grzinic, Heeg, Darian, Revolver, Frankfurt, 2006.

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at the level of critical re-thinking of the *dispositif* of the institution of dance, or the historical legacy of ballet or mainstream modern dance (as was the case in the West). This can also help explain why contemporary European dance paradigms – pioneered by Jérôme Bel, Xavier Le Roy and other *conceptual* choreographers focused on performed self-reflection – exerted no influence over the local performing arts scene until the last couple of years.

THE EARLY DAYS OF LOCAL CONTEMPORARY DANCE AS CONTEMPORARY DANCE

In the last few years, we have witnessed an emergence of a contemporary dance scene, eventually recognized and establishing itself as ‘THE’ contemporary dance scene. Merely two years ago, I claimed that there was no such thing as a contemporary dance scene in Serbia. However, in spite of the scarcity of contemporary dance productions, the situation is changing on a macro-level.

A number of choreographers and dancers from the younger generation have been in business since the early 2000s – Bojana Mladenović, Dalija Aćin, Isidora Stanišić, Dragana Alfirević, Dušan Murić, Olivera Kovačević, Saša Asentić etc. – however, a crucial necessity for constitution of a proper dance scene was missing. That necessity being an organizational infrastructure – forming an art institution or, more specifically, “Artworld”.⁷ Ultimately, there were no institutions or organizations that would be responsible for the ‘dance scene’ as a wider organizational, academic, and artistic context for particular productions. Thus, dance productions appeared as rare events, released by only a few of the most active choreographers, in almost empty premises. This could not count as a dance scene, however important the artists might be. At this point, I should mention one “lost opportunity”. The early 2000s saw the non-governmental organization Centre for New Theatre and Dance (CENPI), carrying out research and archives on the current local theatre and dance productions, and hosting dance performances by Bad.co, Performingunit etc, and other presentations and workshops. But CENPI was dismissed after a few years, failing to establish closer contacts with the dance community. (Perhaps it was too early?)

To a certain extent, the contemporary dance scene in Serbia presently comprises a variety of contributors. In addition to the already mentioned choreographers and performers, there are two specialized organizations:

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7 In terms employed by George Dickie and, respectively, Arthur Danto.

Station – Service for Contemporary Dance in Belgrade and New Dance Forum, a project of the Serbian National Theatre in Novi Sad (and collaboration with Per.Art). Also, besides the REX, B92 cultural centre, several institutional theatres admit contemporary dance programming: Bitef theatre, Belgrade Drama Theatre, Serbian National Theatre; along with the theatre festivals: BELEF, BITEF, INFANT, and Festival of Choreographic Miniatures. The year 2008 saw the specialized Belgrade Dance Centre being launched under the auspices of the cultural centre Vuk Karadžić, dedicated not only to contemporary dance, but dance in general – however, issuing open calls for contemporary dance productions. New influence came from the international workshops organized by the Station and the guest choreographers regularly invited by the Forum, as well as through the event conceived by Bojana Cvejić and managed by the TkH platform in Belgrade in 2004 – Pro Tools festival – where Xavier Le Roy, Marten Spångberg, Mette Ingvartsen, and Tino Sehgal performed and conversed with the audience. Even more productive, multi-lateral collaborations are forged within the region (of the Balkans or ex-Yugoslavia), through initiatives, networks, and regional platforms becoming more numerous and intense in the recent years: Balkan Express, Balkan Dance Platform, Nomad Dance Academy, East Dance Academy etc. For the respective micro-artistic contexts they facilitate help in raising their profile, transferring knowledge and know-how, in mutual validation and empowering. What has changed the most is access to public funds and international grants. Nowadays, dance in Serbia, especially in Belgrade, is regularly (though still not sufficiently) supported by the Ministry of Culture, the City’s cultural councils, Pro Helvetia, the European Cultural Foundation, and foreign cultural centers. However, that support, mainly project-based, does not improve the infrastructure, and this presents a problem.

What the process of constitution of a contemporary dance scene in Serbia still lacks completely is: 1) broadening of the dance community (not exceeding the small circle of dozen initiators) and 2) theoretical/critical discourse. Broadening should be understood in terms of emergence of a new/younger generation of choreographers and dancers, and in the sense of decentralization of the scene. The latter addresses a wider problem of the extremely centralized cultural policy in Serbia, as a result of which dance scene actually does not exist outside of Belgrade or Novi Sad, the two largest cities. For that reason, contemporary dance was not cultivated in the Republic of Montenegro while it was a federal unit of the common state (until 2006), nor in the Kosovo province. An important project was conceived in an attempt to address the problem of growth or at least its primary

aspect: “Fostering Creativity”, organised by the Station. It was a series of workshops, trainings and master classes, resulting in seven performances featuring emerging artists, presented as works in progress in 2007. Three voted best received an opportunity to be completed in professional conditions. This project contributed to raising the profile of a certain number – admittedly almost negligible (as we still talk small numbers here) – of new authors. Among the emerging artists (not each of them associated with this project), I shall mention Ljiljana Tasić, Dragana Bulut, Ana Dubljević, or Marko Milić, who seem to be the most proficient contributors of their generation.

As for the second problem, theoretical/critical writing on contemporary dance in Serbia is still scarce – there is not a single theorist or critic, specialized in contemporary dance. The crucial problem is education, as contemporary dance is completely excluded from the academia. Thence, there is only one (privately published) ballet/modern dance journal *Orchestra*, few critics like Jelena Kajgo and Milica Zajcev report on dance and ballet in Serbia for daily newspapers, and few theorists of performing arts and culture, associated with the TkH platform and journal are concerned with the contemporary performing arts in general. In economic terms, demand is raised as the scene is growing, but the adequate supply is still not there: education in a new field is time-consuming, and it is still impossible for any local critic or theorist to specialize exclusively in contemporary dance and make a living on fees for a few reviews per year.

DANCING SOCIAL BODIES

This was a general historical and current overview of the contemporary dance scene in Serbia, from my perspective. What I would like to engage in now is a more theoretical and politically charged discussion of the situation. Those are my concluding remarks, as my intention is not to provide a tool kit of answers and ready prescriptions, but rather to open up a critical debate, still absent in Serbia...

When I argue that history of the local contemporary dance may as well start from the present, I imply not only that contemporary dance is a new phenomenon in Serbia, but also that my writing need not contemplate its historical background since what we have here *now* is contemporary Western dance. At that point I abandoned my case and attempted to clarify what had in the past occupied the place of contemporary dance in present terms.

Now I would like to resume the issue. A few years ago Janez Janša (Emil Hrvatin) put forward a provocative statement: contemporary dance

exists only in democratic societies and doesn't in non-democratic ones.⁸ He has recently corrected himself and added: nevertheless, only in institutional terms.⁹ His argument draws from the notion of emancipation of the individual (through dance), as emblematic for democratic societies. This approach is plausible in explaining why there was no modern dance in Eastern Europe after World War II under the semi-totalitarian communist/socialist regimes, as opposed to the situation in the democratic West – whose democracy was also questionable at the time, but at least implied a multi-party political system. However, what we could see from my 'mis-historization' is that – although there was no contemporary dance beside the *ballet blanc* at the National Theatre and folk dances, there were other, different kinds of dance or, more precisely, bodily movement practices in Serbia during the socialist times. What features more or less in all of them is the general idea of collectivism, which shaped the predominant conceptions of the body, as well as dance forms. Hence, in keeping with the Janša's notion of emancipation through dance, I would rather shift the critical focus. The crucial distinction for a social and political contextualization of dance (in history) is not between democratic and non-democratic societies, but between the capitalist and socialist ones.

Accordingly, 'emancipation of the individual' (attributed to democratic societies) is not reverse to ideology (imputed to non-democratic regimes), but its guiding principle. And its reverse on the other, ideological side is 'collectivism'. The former concept is specific to capitalist societies and basically derives from the economic principle of private ownership, as its ideological foundation. The latter was adopted from the socialist/communist ideological vocabulary, and refers to its milestone concept of public ownership. Consequently, in the case of SFRY, according to the principles of workers' self-management, associated labor etc., and socialist Yugoslavia nominally being a multi-cultural and classless society, that ideology was condensed in the slogan "Brotherhood and Unity". Therefore, what we encounter in capitalist societies is a history of contemporary dance as a high art practice of emancipation of the individual – rendering a singular autonomous subject through liberation of the individual body, expressiveness, creativity, and authorship. On the other hand, in socialist countries such practice was perceived as a bourgeois luxury – what was required was a socially and economically efficient collective – being replaced by dance as an "all together

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8 "Uvod" (Introduction), in *Teorije sodobnega plesa* (Contemporary Dance Theories), Maska, Ljubljana, 2001.

9 EDA (East Dance Academy) presentation and discussion with the artists in residence: Tanzquartier Wien, May 31, 2007.

now!” activity, and nearly anonymous cultural practices of rallies, parades, amateur or folk dances etc.¹⁰

Now I would abstain from categorization and evaluation of these bodily movement forms in terms of artistic, aesthetic, and even political values, to conclude with something that seems to me more central. Looking through this lens I would opine that dance as a cultural-artistic practice (and this implies contemporary dance as well), is not bodily practice of emancipation disengaged from ideology, but a tool for shaping the individual body as the social body. I propose this as a base for social conception of dance, a platform from which we could and should start addressing qualitative differences and particular purposes of this tool, as well as certain instances and trials of resistance to the dominant ideology. This initial standpoint can also help explain the emergence of contemporary dance in the new post-communist and socialist European countries, transforming their ideologies along with the shifting of their respective economic and political structures toward capitalism and multi-party regimes.

But, what’s it like in the ‘real life’? There is fierce criticism of the contemporary dance influences that come (or, rather, are being ‘imported’) from the West. How many times in recent years have I heard complaints by dance practitioners from Tallinn to Skopje that the only dance practiced in the East, supported both locally and internationally, is choreography markedly shaped by influences of the Western contemporary dance, conceptual dance in particular. On the other hand, Eastern choreographers who work along the current lines of contemporary European dance are used to being labeled by Western programmers and critics as lacking anything specifically Eastern and, accordingly, with bad publicity of being constantly late (as opposed to their Western counterparts).¹¹ For instance, I heard such complaints at the Moving Cake festival held in Ljubljana in 2005 and BITEF Showcase: Tel Quel in Belgrade in 2006. The unbearable ambiguity of this position is even rendered as the main concern of Saša Asentić’s piece *Indigo Dance* (2007).

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¹⁰ Metaphorically speaking, “a-professional-Western-contemporary-dancer” is an ideal image of an independent, well-educated and accomplished manager of a private enterprise, while “an-Eastern-mass-of-(semi-)-amateur-performers” is a projection of a Workers’ Council wherein each voice claims equal importance and value in a workforce structure that belongs to all of them (in fact, to the whole society).

¹¹ Statement by Bojana Kunst; see her text “Performing the Other/Eastern Body”, *TkH*, No 4, Belgrade, 2002. (Lecture, International Conference of The Bulgarian Theatre Association: Cultural Bridges, 4-5 June 2002, Varna, and Festival Tanztendenzen, June 12, 2002, Greifswald).

As I return to my arguments from the previous chapter, the question of assumed 'colonization' of Eastern Europe through dance gets additional spotlight. I would nevertheless assume that this is not a question of colonization perceived as an aggression from the outside, but of inner transformation of Eastern societies, adopting a neo-liberal capitalist social structure as already developed in the West. Their transformation annihilates the distinction between the (socialist) East and (capitalist) West – although neither ex-East nor ex-West is still ready to fully accept it. So, when I recently said¹² that what we had in Serbia at the moment was Western contemporary dance, Dalija Aćin asked: "How, when am I (perceived as) an Eastern choreographer?" She made her point. So did I.¹³

Proof-read by Irena Šentevska

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12 Tanzquartier Wien, May 31, 2007.

13 My discussion tackled only the historical background of the local contemporary dance scene, which sustains Western dance history, but not the local/Eastern. We continued with a debate on what the actual outcomes of the local dance history that might be called contemporary Eastern dance would be like – new *slets*, parades, amateur dance? Perhaps... But there lies another problem: these practices have never laid claims to contemporaneity. Thence, a chapter in a discourse on contemporary dance in the former East should address the issue of claims to 'contemporaneity'.





OVERDONE AND GONE / ON SELF TEMPTATION

Concept, choreography, set design: Dalija Aćin, Dramaturgy: Saša Božić, Cast: Ana Dubljević, Ana Ignjatović, Ljiljana Tasić, Original music: Rastko Lazić, Graphic design: Mihailo Ršumović
Premiere: March 2008, Belgrade Drama Theatre

Through a particular choreographic method based on a certain objectivity of body and geometrical features of *mise-en-scène*, the piece *Overdone and Gone* establishes a change of identity-genre relationships; the represented bodies are turned into chimeras, or still lifes. They are unusually gracious, at the same time frightening and dignified, while they persist in their own isolation...

The implicit political engagement of the piece is inscribed in its choreographic procedure, reminding us that there is time in which shapeless human body exists for the spectator not only as a stage metaphor, but also as a (witnessed) reality...

Saša Božić

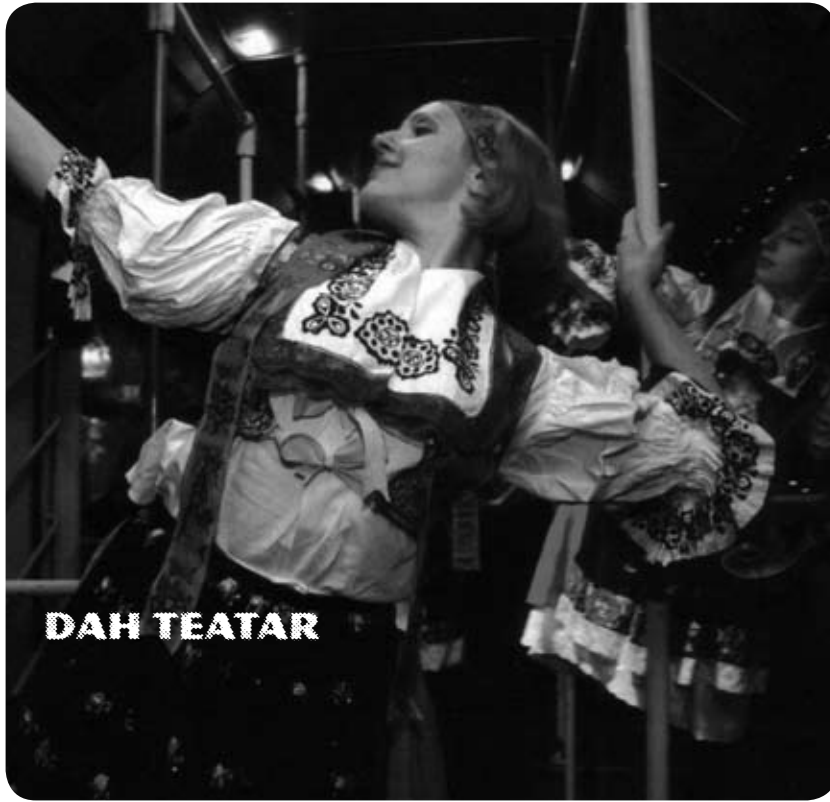
Dalija Aćin was born in 1974. Graduated at Lujko Davičo Ballet school and acquired knowledge and practice from the field of contemporary dance through numerous workshops and residencies throughout Europe (Paris, Berlin, Vienna, Düsseldorf...). Presented her choreographic works on numerous festivals in Serbia and abroad (BITEF, BELEF, Infant, Impulstanz, Tanz im August, Tanz Tendenzen, Mladi levi, Week of Contemporary Dance, Oppla, Performa...) and collaborated with international choreographers (Isabelle Schrad, Thomas Lehmen...). She is the winner of prestigious award of Impulstanz 2008 – “Prix Jardin d’Europe” for the piece *Handle with Great Care*. Co-founder and coordinator of Station – Service for contemporary dance, co-founder and Artistic Board member of Nomad Dance Academy.

WORKS

2008: *Duets/Meet the Expectations*, BELEF, Turkish Bath; *Book of Wandering*, children's performance, Little Theatre Duško Radović; *Overdone and Gone / On self temptation*, Belgrade Drama Theatre;
2007: *Handle with Great Care*, Belgrade Drama Theatre; **2006:** *There is no exception to the rule because I am never what I have*, with Isabelle Shad (Berlin), Bitef Theatre; *GAMEPLAY*, Belgrade Drama Theatre.

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DAH TEATAR

Jadranka Adjelić and Dijana Milošević formed DAH Theatre in 1991 out of the need for profound experimental work. In 1991 actress Maja Mitić joined the Dah Theatre, and actress Sanja Krsmanović Tasić joined in 1993. In 1993 Dah Theatre enlarged its activities by forming the DAH Theatre Research Centre with an ongoing program of workshops, lectures, seminars, guest performances and festivals.

For members of Dah Theatre DAH means to breathe in, to collect the strength, to persist, to be spiritual, to keep the warmth of creation, movement.

Dah Theatre performed and led workshops all over Europe, USA, Australia and New Zealand.

IN/VISIBLE CITY

Dah Theatre with collaborators

Performances: Vranje 19, 20, 21. February; Subotica 18, 19, 20. March, Indjija 8, 9, 10. April; Novi Sad 23. June; Sien i Porsgrunn (Norway) 2, 3, 4. i 5. September; Belgrade, 10. December.

In/Visible City is a series of performances that take place in Belgrade and Serbia buses. During the bus ride the performers, through texts, songs, music of different ethnical communities, introduce the passengers with different parts of the city, emphasizing how many different nationalities lives/lived in the city.

By placing the theatrical actions in buses and trams we wanted to make the daily situation of public transport unusual, and to point out the richness of diversity, also to inspire and stimulate the citizens/passengers to be more tolerant. We have chosen the tram or bus as a place of concentrated space in which our communal life and tolerance towards the others is being tested.

REVIEW

"I felt so much positive energy, and found out a lot about Subotica as well. I came here from Sarajevo and I was well received, but experience from the bus today I'll tell to people for as long as I live. People need actions such as this and it would be nice if they were more frequent."

Draga Bulatović, passenger on the No. 6 bus, Subotica

WORKS

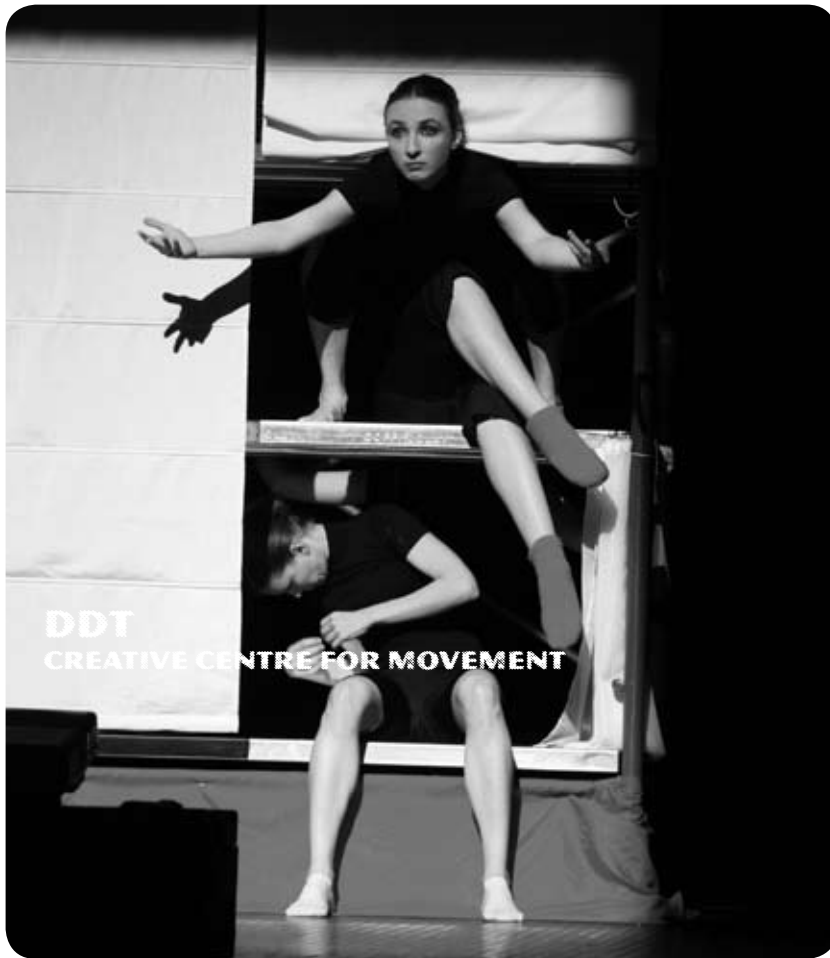
2007: *In Search of the City*, the ruins of the National Library on Kosančićev Venac; **2006:** *Story of Tea*, DAH Theatre; **2005/2006:** *The Guide Through the Alternative History of Belgrade*, squares and streets of Belgrade; **2005:** *Alice and Kafka are Dead/Long Live the Rosenbergs*, Atlanta, USA; **2002:** *Cirque Macabre*, Bitef Theatre; *Dancing with Darkness*, REX, DAH Theatre; *Inner Mandala*; MTM, Mostar (B&H); **2000:** *Maps of Forbidden Remembrance*, Atlanta, USA; **1999:** *Document of Times*, Novi Sad; *Travellers...*

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1992: *The Gifts from Our Ancestors.*

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DDT – Creative Centre for Movement is an independent dance company, founded in 2003. Its work is based on research, development and promotion of contemporary dance. DDT develops educational programme aimed at introducing younger generations into the world of movement and contemporary dance. DDT production includes dance performances and miniatures, children's performances, dance techniques workshops, video-dance works, photography and publishing.
 Founders: Dragana Stanisavljević, Dubravka Subotić, Tijana Malek.

BLOCK

Choreography/dance: Dragana Stanisavljević, Dubravka Subotić, Tijana Malek; Music: Branislav Gluvakov; Video: Vladimir Antonov; Lights: Radovan Samolov
 Premiere: December 21st, 2008. Belgrade Dance Centre

Performance *BLOCK* depicts in humorous manner everyday life of people that surround us. Choreography, situations and characters in the performance are 'picked up' from our surrounding – neighbours, friends, people from the marketplace, hair-dressers, passers-by and the person that sits next to you in public transport. Performers use both dance and animation techniques. Spatially limited by the set design – a scaffolding that represents a skyscraper – dance sequences (partial appearances of body, random sequences of action and character that have only one thing in common – living space) interchange within the frames of different 'apartments'. *BLOCK* reveals every-day life and its private, intimate details filtered by theatre language. Pouring tea, washing hands, laughter and fight with a neighbour for walking in high heels.
 Our life, small secrets and smell of *sarma*.

REVIEW

"What is especially interesting for inquiry are the channels of reception through which the 'dance' we are dragged-into with dance performance *BLOCK* is perceived. Can dance of the audience as protagonists be included and questioned simultaneously with the one performed in front and for our body?"

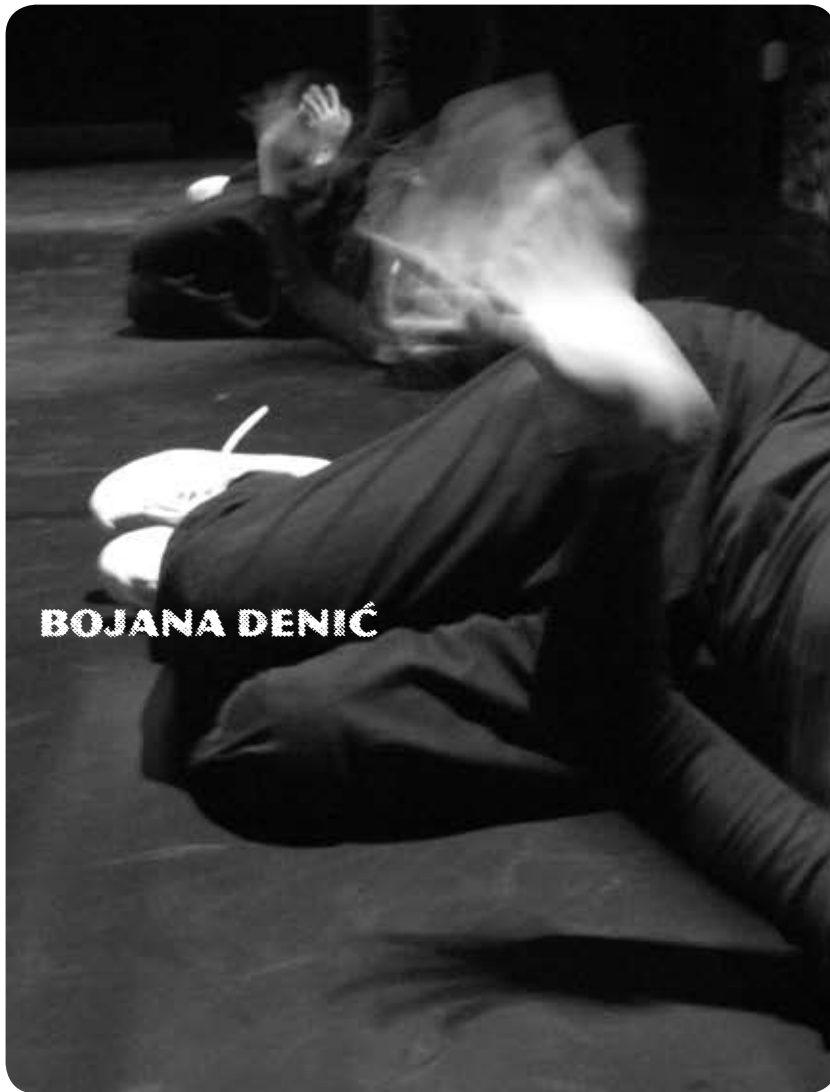
Nataša Tepavčević (KKH)
<http://tkhforum.blogspot.com>

WORKS

2008: *BLOCK*, Belgrade Dance Centre; **2007:** *I'd Like...*, Magacin u Kraljevića Marka; **2006:** *Il circo della vita*, Little Theatre Duško Radović; **2005:** *Table, Spoon, Faces for Atmosphere*, SKC; **2003:** *New York- Beograd*.

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Bojana Denić graduated from Faculty of Philology, department of German studies, University of Belgrade. Studied contemporary dance techniques in Budapest, Berlin, Vienna. Active dancer, choreographer, translator.

BLANKSPACE (MEĐUPROSTOR)

Choreography: Bojana Denić; Performers: Isidora Stanišić, Igor Koruga, Sanja Andjelković, Anita Popović, Ana Ilić; Set and light designer: Aleksandar Denić; Poster and catalogue designer: Goran Dimić
 Premiere: December 26, 2008, Belgrade Dance Centre.

Blankspace as spatial, temporal, psychological, sociological, intimate category. Blankspace as field of existence outside of medialised reality, outside of field of arrogant politics, aggressive advertisements and brutal entertainment. Blankspace as field in which we 'launch-ourselves' into, filed of un-stability, sensitivity, field of listening and observing where, what is secure becomes only optional, and what is complete – partial.

WORKS

2008: *BLANKSPACE*, Belgrade Dance Centre; *DREAMERS*, stage movement, Yugoslav Drama Theatre, (director: Miloš Lolić); *TO DAMASCUS*, dancer, Belgrade Dance Centre, Main Scene (choreographer: Isidora Stanišić); *ATLAS* scenic cantata, stage movement, dancer, Yugoslav Drama Theatre (composer: Anja Djordjević, director: Aleksandar Denić).

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Boba Mirjana Stojadinović (1977), MA Fine Arts at Belgrade Faculty of Fine Arts and Rotterdam/Plymouth (NL/UK) – Piet Zwart Institute in Rotterdam. Her work in different media often explores the nature of place.

DEZ.ORG is a fluctuating group of visual artists based in Belgrade, that faces problems of expression within art frameworks for each opportunity it creates for itself, as well as questions of production, distribution and interpretation of works, as well as its evaluation. Just as permanently open is the question of the possibility of cooperation itself within a group of visual artists.

REVISITING BELGRADE

Two-day small scale event, space intervention
December 5-6, 2008.

Hotel Kasina, Terazije square, Belgrade

This event is a continuation of an event/project *Hotel New York. Inquiry in Location* that had happened in Hotel New York in Rotterdam in July 2007 as a cooperation of Gunnđís Yr Finnbogadóttir, Maja Bekan and Boba Mirjana Stojadinović. Adaptation and realization of the Belgrade event by Boba Mirjana Stojadinović, organization – artist group DEZ.ORG

Participants (authors/performers in capital letters, audience in regular): Aleksandrija Ajduković, Divna Bekan, MAJA BEKAN, Dina Belančić, GORDANA BELIĆ, Dušica Dražić, Dragan Đorđević, Ivica Geratović, GUNNDIS YR FINNBOGADOTTIR, Nikola Jovanetić, Miroslav Karić, Tijana Knežević, RUTH LEGG, Tanja Marković, Danijela Mršulja, SLAVICA PANIĆ, Milena Pavlović, Žarko Đurić, ANDRIJA PAVLOVIĆ / DRAGAN JOVANOVIĆ, Ljiljana Pavlović, Vesna Perić, Pera Popović, Dragan Protić, Jelena Pušica, Maja Radanović, DRAGAN RAJŠIĆ, MAJA RAKOČEVIĆ CVIJANOV, Bojana Romić, Milica Ružičić, SUSAN SCHMIDT, EMILY KYOKO SNOWDEN, BOBA MIRJANA STOJADINOVIĆ, Marija-Joanna Stojadinović, Vladimir Stojadinović, BORIS ŠRIBAR, Jelena Šribar, IVANA SMILJANIĆ, Spomenka Smiljanić, Slobodan Smiljanić - Bob, Ana Vilenica, Nemanja Višnić, Anica Vučetić, Dejan Vučetić.

Revisiting Belgrade was a discrete event that was possible to attend only with an e-mail reservation. Each visitor faced the uncertainty of where something, they didn't know what, is going to happen. Arriving at the appointed time the visitors were escorted and left in front of the door on the seventh floor of Kasina Hotel to face the space mostly on their own and to explore it. All works have been produced for this event, and they included: performances I:I, space interventions, photographs, objects, sound, video... (exceptionally, one performance happened on the telephone line Reykjavik-Zagreb) presented no more than three at the time. The relation between the visitor, the space and the author became mutually conditioned.

WORKS

(Boba Mirjana Stojadinović)

2008: *My Travels With Barry*, TENT, Rotterdam, NL; *Perfect Society*, Schouwburg, Rotterdam, NL; **2007:**, *Hotel New York. Inquiry in Location*, Hotel New York Rotterdam, NL; **2006:** *Entrance*, Faculty of Fine Arts Gallery; *Autoplay*, Kontekst Gallery, Belgrade, organized by DEZ.ORG, project participants ODA PROJEI, Turkey; H.arta, Romania; Vizionarsko društvo, B&H; **2005:** *Gallery*, Belgrade Youth Centre Gallery.

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HAJDE DA... GROUP

BODY FRAME PROJECT

The *Body Frame* Project is search for answers to the following question: do diversities always induce misunderstandings and increase distance between people, or they can also inspire development and creation of a new quality. Furthermore, the Project also promotes social dialogue, as a way to understand life context that differs from our own. *Body Frame* tends to connect sub-cultures that usually function apart from each other: persons with disabilities and contemporary dance professionals. Within the *Body Frame* Project, we have organized three sets of workshops in Belgrade, and one in Paraćin. All of these were attended by dancers and contemporary dance choreographers, persons with disabilities (wheel-chair users, blind and hard-of-seeing persons, deaf and hard-of-hearing persons), as well as all the other individuals who were interested in experiencing something like this. In September of 2008. Five persons with disabilities and four contemporary dancers started working on a professional dance piece.

CURVE FOR GAUSS

Choreography: Boris Čakširan and Sanja Krsmanović Tasić; Dancers: Ana Živković, Andrijana Lubina, Danijel Todorović, Jelena Stojiljković, Jovana Rakić, Senad Sopnić, Stojan Simić, Svetlana Gogić; Music: Aleksandra Đokić; Voice: Svetlana Gogić; Dramaturgy: Marko Pejović; Costume design: Boris Čakširan; Light design: Paun Pavlović; Dance pedagogue: Dejana Budiška; Photography: Nenad Milošević
Premiere December 10, 2008, Belgrade Dance Centre

Curve for Gauss is a title based on model of Gaussian 'bell shape curve' widely used in statistics (and other disciplines, as well) to describe normal distributions. Basic assumption is that measuring results of certain trait will be grouped around mean value in majority of population. Everyone out of that central distribution area is a member of 'uncontrollable' minority (that is, everyone showing either extremely high or extremely low results for measured trait). Our piece is bringing out the question of introducing 'disturbance of average', that is to say introducing the life itself, by these minority groups of society.

Marko Pejović

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bodyframe/

* source: www.hajdeda.org.rs/okvirtela/



POLYPTYCH

Authors/performers of *Polyptych* are individuals who contributed the most to the course of Ister's creative expression during its existence: Isidora Stanišić, Uroš Petronijević, Miodrag Lazović, Nataša Veljković (video editing), Jelena Jović, Danica Arapović, Anđelija Todorović, Aleksandar Milosavljević (photographs) and Nenad Jelić (music).

Premiere: December 22, 2008, Dah Teatar Centre for Theatre Research

Polyptych is a stage/performance entity composed of five particular and seemingly un-related pieces of different genre. Although using different media (dance/performance, film, music, photography), different artistic manners and forms of expression, when shown together, these pieces form a unique, thematically connected and esthetically unison stage-visual act. The sixth element of *Polyptych* is the space-venue, which will constantly change.

REVIEW

"[T]his piece composed of movement, electronic sound and video-editing was a refreshment in boring preoccupations of standardised theatres competing in acquiring vantage point in distances measured in millimetres of similar realistic procedures of bourgeois drama. Courage and unusual charm of Ister Theatre in Dah Theatre, confirmed that THERE IS STILL HOPE for Belgrade alternative theatre scene."

Goran Cvetković, Radio Beograd 2

WORKS

2007: *THREE SISTERS OR ALL AROUND CHECKOV* – Magacin u Kraljevića Marka, Teatro della Con-taddizione, Milan etc (Dimitrije Parlić Award for best Choreography); *BOOM, BANG – DOG AND MAN*, Bitef theatre; **2005:** *BEACH*, fountain in front of the Hyatt Hotel, BELEF; *VIRGIN ISLANDS*, Belgrade Youth Centre; **2004:** *WEDDING (SERBIAN)*, Mira Trailović Square, BELEF; **2003:** *HEAT*, Yugoslav Drama Theatre facade, BELEF; **2002:** *LIST OF SUSPECTS OR WHO ATE THE PUD-DING?*, Bitef Theatre;

...

1994: *ISLAND – THE DANCE OF ATOMS* – Sava Centre, Art Saves Life festival (Dah Theatre).

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ISTER was the name of the Danube River in classical antiquity, the river that connects two different worlds, two different civilizations. The Ister Theatre was founded in 1994 as a theatre company whose work is characterized by investigation and establishment of links between dance and drama techniques into physical theatre. The work on personal stories, authentic observation of the world, concrete emotions is of crucial importance for the creation of theatre pieces and performances that attempt to draw the attention to truth about the surroundings we live in. Provocation rather than answer. Space as a venue of communication significantly determines work on street performances that are also important segment of Ister practice.

Ister Theatre participated at numerous festivals and performed in Serbia as well as in Bulgaria, Rumania, Great Britain, Italy, The Netherlands, Germany, Egypt. Ister is one of the founding members of the ANET (Association of Independent Theatres) as well as Station – Service for Contemporary Dance.



MIMART is the first experimental theatre in Serbia, established in 1984. in Belgrade. Nela Antonović, founder and artistic leader all these years, is exploring possibilities of moving the borders of theater through a method of creative visualisation Mimart. She is the author of 40 experimental projects and over 400 performances. She published books: *Mimart godovi* (2000) about the method of work and training and *Phenomenology through movement* (2004), about experience from experimental workshops. Nela is writing a 3rd book (2009), about experience of 25 years of work and self critic. Mimart took part at over 30 international theater festivals and won many prizes. Mimart is member of Station.

KNOT

Concept and directing: Nela Antonović; Performers: Ana Bastać, Predrag Radovančević, Branislav Jeremić, Sandra Vidović, Natalija Ignjić, Jelena Mrkić, Nikola Vranić; Music: Predrag Radovančević; Costume design: Anđelija Marković; Set design: Nikola Nikolić; Videoart: Lidija Antonović; Dramaturge: Milan Marković.

Performance *Knot* explores a group of young people that are *hanging around*. Knot, inside each of us, can be tied, untied and stretched. Ambivalent symbolic idea of knot – constraining and uniting – directed us to the topic of loss of identity in life, in order to fit the majority. Transfer from rational perception into out-of-time space and vice versa, is made through video projection from the above. That is the only source of light on stage. If contemporary art should be reflection of social reality, no matter how traumatic, than *hanging around* can be considered as useful waste of time.

REVIEW

“Nela Antonović, concept author and director of *KNOT* creates almost ritual-mantric field, cultural-political discourse aroun knot, in which individual bodies of dancers acquire collective meaning.”

Ana Isaković (KKH)
<http://tkhforum.blogspot.com>

WORKS

2008: *KNOT*, Belgrade Dance Centre;
2007: *Fairies in bionic convergence*, Magacin u Krajevića Marka; *Dead end street*, REX; **2006:** *Crossroad*, DOB; **2005:** *Gift*, SKC; **2004:** *Questions marks*, Atelje 212; *Romeo and Juliete*, BELEF; **2003:** *Black room*, Bitef teatar; *Roaming through Blue*, Atelje 212; **2002:** *Construction of deconstructed*, KULT; **2001:** *Network*, Atelje 212; *Made in Norway*, SKC; **2000:** *Time of Astrals*, Atelje 212; **1999:** *Radish pie in the sky*, Atelje 212; *Caleidoscope*, Barutana; **1998:** *Institute for changing destiny*, Atelje 212; **1997:** *Aurum*, Atelje 212

...

1985: *Urbis ludus*, SKC.

CONTACT

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Sanja Mitrović (1978) lives and works in Amsterdam since 2001. Graduated in Japanese language and literature from Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade in 2004, and Mime Department, Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten in 2005. Since 2007 she works as a docent and tutor at the same school.

She performed in productions of *Montažstroj* (HR) and *Performingunit* (NL), and with choreographer Nicole Beutler and theatre director Olivier Provily. In her directorial works, Mitrović explores the relationship between factuality and fiction in the performance act. She is interested in the idea of documentary theatre based on the multi-disciplinary research (theatre, dance, visual art and popular culture), the problematisation of a pre-existing text and the development of “script” through the performance itself, often with explicit or implicit engagement with the audience.

WILL YOU EVER BE HAPPY AGAIN?

A docu-tale for one Serbian performer, one German performer, and two cardboard boxes

September 26, 2008, BITEF Festival, Centre for Cultural Decontamination
 Concept & direction: Sanja Mitrović; Performers: Sanja Mitrović, Jochen Stechmann;
 Dramaturgy: Felix Ritter; Light design: Erik Gramberg; Sound design: Vladimir Rakić;
 Costume design: Dejan Došljak; Artistic advisor: Vladimir Tupanjac; Still photography: Sjoerd Kelderman; Coproduced by: CZKD, Belgrade & Het Veem, Amsterdam;
 Supported by: BITEF Festival, Belgrade & Pact Zollverein, Essen.

Structured around authentic autobiographical accounts of its performers, *Will You Ever Be Happy Again?* employs documentary strategies to explore how nationality influences one’s personal identity. The work is structured as a succession of performative situations, based, amongst others, on childhood games, primary school classes and sporting events. Exploring their personal and collective memories, the performers counter-point and mirror each other’s cultural and historical backgrounds. In this, they attempt to approach the problem of self-representation and the urge to see oneself through the eyes of another.

REVIEW

“Games, songs and routines had a simple and innocent quality about them, yet tipped into a haunting eloquence about nationalism and the roles of good and evil. The game-experiments and the precision with which they were pursued had an almost scientific quality to them, uncontaminated by sentiment or spectacle.”

Philip Thorne, Imploding Fictions, London

WORKS

2008: *Will You Ever Be Happy Again?*, BITEF Festival, CZKD, Belgrade; Het Veem Theatre, Amsterdam; **2007:** *Books Once Read Make A Good Bullet Proofing*, Gasthuis Theatre, Amsterdam; **2006:** *Shame*, Gasthuis Theatre, Amsterdam; **2005:** *Dhanu*, ITS! Festival, Het Veem Theatre, Amsterdam; **2004:** *The Encyclopedia of the Dead*, Jewish Municipality, Zagreb.

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MUDRA THEATRE

MUDRA Theatre is an independent dance & theatre company that explores dance as a language that crosses geographical, political and cultural borders and searches for the communication between dance forms from various cultures. The members of this company are excellent dancers/actors/performers uniquely trained in various forms of traditional and contemporary dance forms, martial arts, and elements of physical theatre.

SHADOWS DANCING ON MY SHOULDERS

Authors: Ivana Ašković, Boris Čakširan; Dancers: Andrijana Lubina, Dragana Milošević, Jovana Rakić, Jelena Stojiljković; Set and costume design: Boris Čakširan; Music: Aleksandra Đokić; Light design: Paun Pavlović
 Premiere: April 24, 2008, Belgrade Dance Centre

Constant battle between dreams and reality, our hopes and abilities, longing for love and loneliness come to life in this dance drama that juxtaposes lyricism of intimate ambitions and dreams of love with wild, ritualistic energy of the reality that punishes those who walk through life with their eyes closed. The expressive and energetic dance of an excellent all-woman cast, combines, in a unique way, elements of Balcan, Balinese, African, and contemporary dance, as well as aikido and *capoeira*, supported by powerful music, stylistically diverse and with an array of emotional tonality.

WORKS

2008: *Shadows Dancing on My Shoulders*, UK Vuk Karadžić; **2007:** *Forgotten Language*, Bitef theatre (Germany 2006); **2005:** *Dance for Asia* Bitef theatre; *Shadows*, Bitef theatre.

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I'M PRO : SPAM

"One could always find a philosophy to justify a lack of courage" – A. Camus

An intimate history of utopia
Taiko drums and noise riffs and hyper-hiccough sequencers

Fractal raid into reality
Of every fucking precious item/inner that we cultivated through these sick 5000 years of mutual pyramidal evolution of humanity into human rights and technologies for their implementations; while do repeat business we execute relentlessly, eager to be up on the pharaoh boat in the sky, luckily the heaven fell so low, right upon screens of spectacular hacks of ourselves and of surveillance cams
Hooray! Freedom for cams now! So that every anybody can see others executing their freedom and to check sure they are free as well

(17. min)... imagine that imbecile who would start, after reading, to copy and paste and squeeze this through means of communications and all the colorful bijoux glasses, achieving only to be far away from communion.

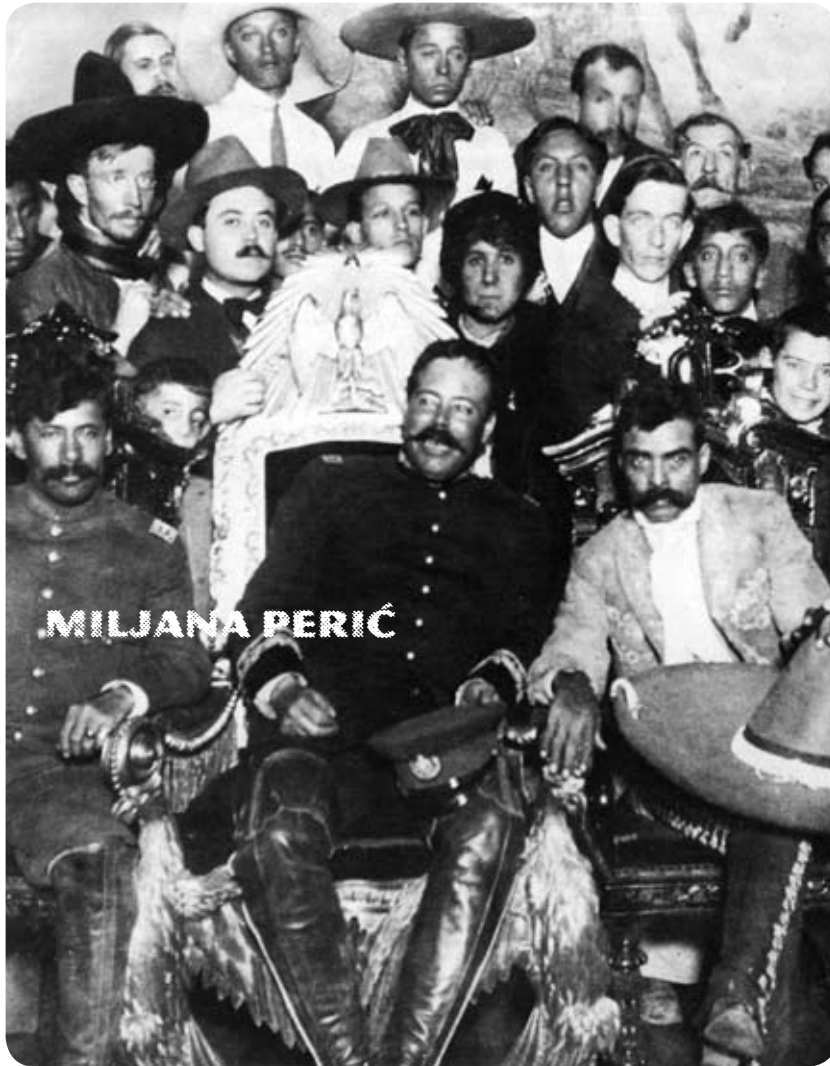
WORKS

2005-07: *Jam snacks*, impro evenings, REX;
2005: *A few Sweaty T-shirts*, no-budget solo, REX;
Snow Queen, Little Theatre Duško Radović
2003-05: *Next step...* (with Bojana Mladenović),
Little Theatre Duško Radović.

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[Dušan Murić was b]orn in 1971 in Čuprija. Hereandtheresomethingeverything.



Miljana Perić is a PhD student at department for Theory of Arts and Media of the Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Arts in Belgrade. Lives and works on the Internet.

VENI! ΕΛΘΕ! DODJI! TO THE ZAPATA PRIVATE/PIRATE BIRTHDAY PARTY. AND, VICE VERSA ...

Authors/performers: Miljana Perić, Teodora Perić, Jelena Milosavljević-Rubil, Julijana Protić, Goran Rubil.

Our private/pirate performance is participative cyber dedication to the birthday celebration of Emiliano Zapata. It will be organised in the ATMosphere of a creative and common gift economy practice. This means that Automated (story)Teller Machine of Author, as a part of traditional artist / musician performing, will be audio-covered with participative cyberformance of partysans who are free to Come! to listen and play music, make some noise, to clap, chant, chit- and cheat-chat in the name of Zapata, or just in their own name. Entry/ism is free, but non-entering could cost us a lot; so, should we still/silently ask ourselves – is there a vice versa?

REVIEW

"In *Veni! ΕΛΘΕ! Dodji! to the Zapata Private/Pirate Birthday Party. And, Vice Versa...*, by Miljana Peric et al, drawings of faces in balaclavas were set against the story of the emergence of Zapatista parties in Mexico in the twentieth century, and electronic music, issuing a call to the audience to "aestheticise what is breaking you", and invoking the political theatre theory of Augusto Boal."

Bree Hadley
<http://www.australianstage.com.au/reviews/international/080808-upstage-festival-1745.html>

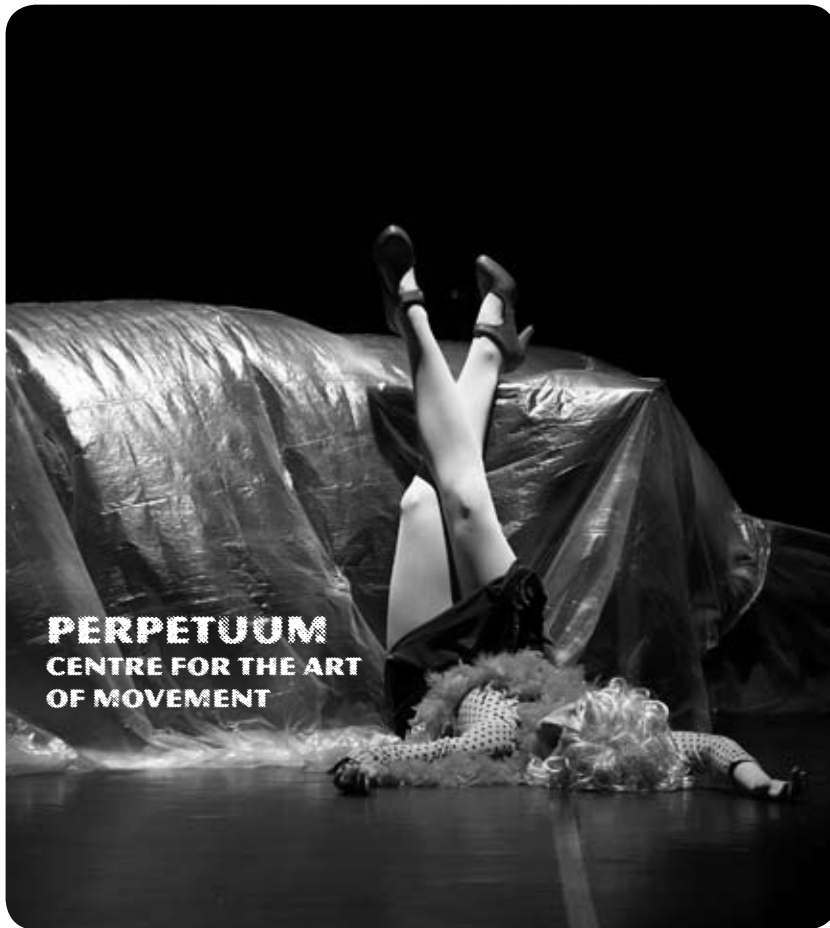
WORKS

2008: *Veni! ΕΛΘΕ! Dodji! to the Zapata Private/Pirate Birthday Party. And, Vice Versa ...* and *RxEgo-Go*, 080808 Up-stage festival.

* Source: http://upstage.org.nz/blog/?page_id=159
 Photography: www.nevadaobserver.com

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PERPETUUM
CENTRE FOR THE ART
OF MOVEMENT

Svetlana Đurović (Perpetuum Centre for the Art of Movement) is the founder, director and choreographer of the Centre for the Art of Movement PERPETUUM (ex Madlenium). Her ballet teachers were M. Sanjina, A. Roja, J. Bjegojević. Her dancing career started in the Dubravka Maletić's contemporary dance studio, then in Dankan Company. Svetlana initiated and founded many manifestations on contemporary art dance (*Body Shop*, *Give me wings for a spin* – festival for children companies – Belgrade, Belgrade Dance Centre). For her artistic and pedagogic work in the field of contemporary dance she received many awards and plaques.

I AM MY OWN COLLECTION

Idea, sound editing, choreography, directed by: Svetlana Đurović; Design: Ranko Lasica; Voices: Dubravka Maletić, Svetlana Đurović; Text (excerpts): Julio Cortazar; The collection of small worthless items: Ego: Tajana Cvjetković; and a boring habit: Andrea Mladenović; and two crazy ideas: Ana and Marija Obradović; L'enfant terrible: Ranko Lasica; and obsession: Biljana Kitić.
Premiere December 12, 2008, Belgrade Dance Centre

Sometimes we carry our femininity like a yoke, like a cross that has been bestowed to us by destiny to save the world with it. Sometimes we swing with it like with a mace, destroying everything in front of us. Trying to reveal the real potential of a woman one should start from inside and explore the deepest corners and tunnels of her own soul and rebellion... yes rebellion against any oppression.

REVIEW

"Svetlana Djurović. offered the idea, choreography, direction and adjusted(adapted) musical parts of different authors through an interesting play, carefully justified but still its genre would be difficult to define. And it was equally a drama, a musical , a dance. The chosen topic – a quest for femine being through dance, literary points and modern music- had its scene realization closest to total theatre."

Milica Zajcev

LONG LASTING PLAY

Idea, sound editing, choreography, directed by: Svetlana Djurović; Dancers: Sanja Janjin, Tajana Cvjetković, Andrea Mladenović, Biljana Kitić, Danica Renner and Ranko Lasica; Sets and costumes: Perpetuum
Premiere: January 28, 2008, Terazije Theatre, Belgrade.

I always lack words when I create a new play, a new story. I have no idea what it is going to be about, what it is going to turn to. I suddenly realize I be nothing but a bare conductor of a magnificent energy which itself creates everything that exists... even my small story...For me that is the perfection of a dance.
A strange and an unerring life indeed. Dedicated to Milica...

WORKS

2008: *I am, my own collection*, Belgrade Dance Centre; *Long lasting play*, Terazije Theatre;
2007: V BODY SHOP Festival, seminar Joe Alegado Vuk Karadžić, Belgrade; **2006:** *Zapis*, IX RODARA Festival, Mexico, BEST CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD, Nov 06; **2005:** *Hurry up!* Kennedy Center, Washington D.C. USA (Belgrade, Italy, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel).

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POD was founded in January 2000 by actress Tatjana Pajović, after more than 15 years of her professional engagement in contemporary theatre. It is a direct result of the actress's long-term cooperation with the Teatro Specchi e Memorie from Milan (Italy) and her participation in their exploration process. The work in POD requires a deeper process of exploration in the field of old knowledges and arts and a constant redefinition of its goals. The process which strives to come closer to the sources of artistic engagement, starting from exploring 'oneself', different roles we assume as individuals in reality and our attitudes to such Reality. Activities of POD are focused on research work and professional production, educational and social work.

AUDITION FOR PARADISE

Directed and dramatised by: Tatjana Pajović and Jelena Vuksanović; Cast: Branka Bajić, Tatjana Stefanović, Nataša Nikolić, Dragan Simeunović

Premiere: February 15, 2008, Dah Theatre Research Centre.

In the play *Audition for Paradise* three people of different 'destinies' meet, finally, in only one they share: in death. In a strange space, on a 'crossing' between the two worlds, desires, dreams, ideals, hopes, values, conflicts... do they still stir us?

Using the 'marvellous in things', inspired by Márquez, Dostoyevsky and Sartre, using the past in present, temporal leaps of the plot forward and backwards, the authors attempt to merge different dimensions of reality - the one we live in and the one we only maybe assume...

REVIEW

"*Audition for Paradise* suggests an authentic stage power of each of the raised questions; it is already a negation in itself, a subversion and heresy of theatre nowadays, for it favours thinking over obsessed accumulation of images and stage frivolity, and returns theatre to its original substance – mystery of a dialogue with oneself and the other in oneself, as well as projecting oneself in the other, resulting in an endless murmur of questions on ultimate matters."

Divna Vuksanović

EITHER-OR

Directed and dramatised by: Tatjana Pajović and Jelena Vuksanović; Cast: Tatjana Stefanović, Branka Bajić, Nataša Nikolić, Petar Jovanović

Premiere: Novembar 4, 2008, Belgrade Dance Centre.

The space of performance is arena of Life. Theoretical base starts from the Myth in the sense of reviewing opinions about Reality which are burried in the Men and which are usually not reviewed. Focus of the Process of the work was on existing of the Vision of Life for Artist and for Men. What is our idea of Life? What is priority in it? Audience together with performers participates in certain experiment in which we try to live together mutual moments on the scene of Life.

WORKS

2008: *EITHER-OR*; *AUDITION FOR PARADISE*;
2007: *LONG TIME AGO THERE WAS A ... FUTURE*;
2006: *BUTTERFLIES*, co-production with Teatro Specchi e Memorie; **2006-2009:** *Teatro e Scuola* Project, performances in Italian language;
2005: *MOURIR C'EST FACILE – TO DIE IS EASY*, co-production with Teatro Specchi e Memorie;
2004: *GARDEN OF DELICATESSEN*; **2003:** *FORUM OF INDEPENDENT THEATRES*; **2002:** *CROSSDI-SOLVE*, ANET International Festival; *NARRATIVES*;
2000: *AETHERA ESMERALDA*, co-production with Teatro Specchi e Memorie.

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**PoToP (DELUGE) THEATRE
(PREDRAG RADOVANČEVIĆ)**

PoToP is multimedia movement theater, which uses numerous techniques of contemporary theater and dance, as well as many technology applications. Composing original music, Predrag Radovančević creates structure of work process, starting with inner imagination, through contemplation to final performance. Anthropology, ritual and non-verbal symbols are included in the process, as well as unusual way of using props, scenography and costumes. Through actualising these problems, Radovančević is engaged in reconsidering major artistic issues. Collaborator of Teatar Mimart, member of Station and Other Scene.

DELUGE (POTOP)

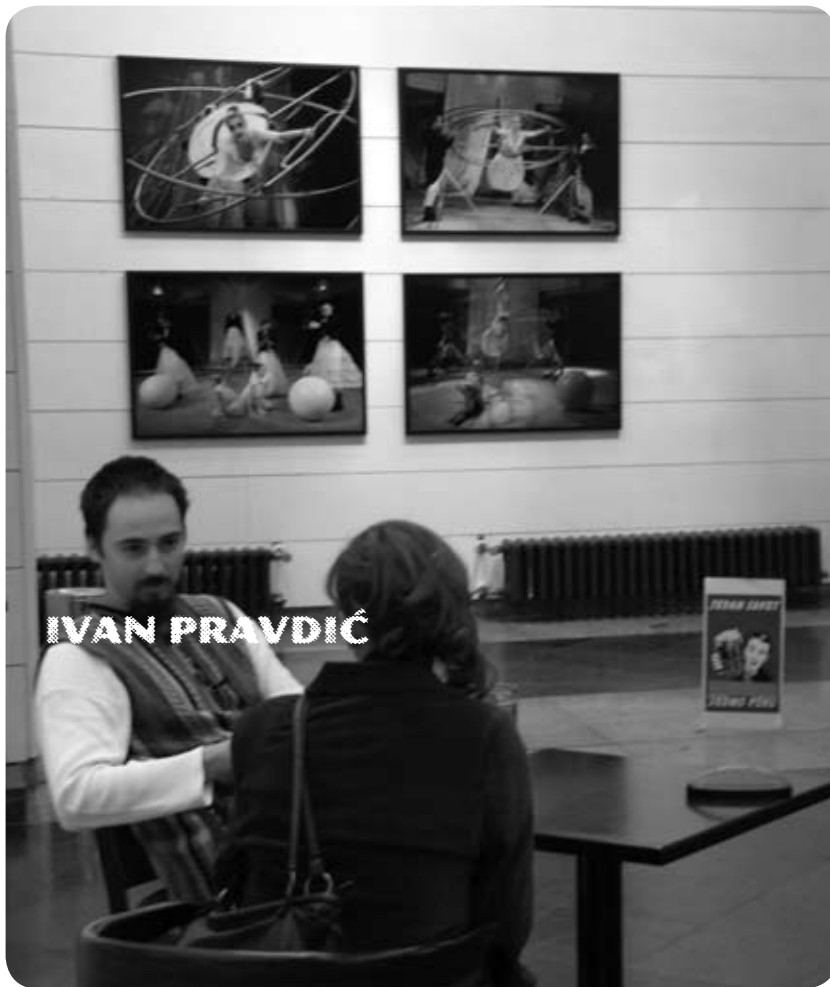
Performance *Deluge* is materialisation of creative ambitions of author to transcend his own body and mind through movement and music. Performer is upgrading his personality, living in modern Babylon. He is going through stages of simple Persona, Centaur, in order to reach Transpersona, the goal of this artistic journey. Mask and Shadow, as parts of his personality, become props, as well as scenography, that is changing during the performance. Video art and music amplify the fusion of all traditions and myths.

WORKS

2008: *KNOT* (Mimart), UK Vuk Karadžić; *PoToP(Deluge)*, Infant festival, Novi Sad, April Encounters, SKC; **2007:** *Fairies in Bionic Convergence* (Mimart), Magacin u Kraljevića Marka; *Dead-end* (Mimart), REX; **2006:** *Crossroads* (Mimart), DOB; **2005:** *GIFT* (Mimart), SKC; **2004:** *Responsibility*, Cesta Festival, Tabor, Czech Republic; **2002-03:** *Judgement Day*, Divadlo na Zabradli, Prag, Czech Republic; T.U.F.C. Festival, Besancon, France.

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IVAN PRAVDIĆ

Ivan Pravić was born in 1975 in Belgrade. Together with Olga Glišin founder of JUSTART. Senior Lecturer of Dramaturgy at the Academy of Arts in Novi Sad. PhD in Multimedia Arts. Creates books, performances, ambiances, actions, plays, drama, poetry, participations of audience, workshops, and video. Has taken part with his works at festivals and conferences in USA, Canada, Russia, Holland, Portugal, Germany, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania.

ONE PIECE OF ADVICE – ONE BEER

Ivan Pravić, author and performer
 Patossoffranje Festival, Smederevo, July 2008.

XIII Biennial of Arts, Pančevo, September 2008.

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Interaction *ONE PIECE OF ADVICE – ONE BEER* was performed at festivals FAKI in Zagreb and Off Limits in Dortmund.

WORKS

2007: *More and More of Less and Less* Infant, Novi Sad; *Kraj partije* i *Premija* Poets Ahead – Stuecke, Mülheim a.d. Ruhr, Germany; **2005:** *Osterburen* Oerol, Terschelling, The Netherlands; *Kvarna karma* SNP, Sterijino Pozorje, Novi Sad; **2004:** *Grave Star* New Media Society Festival, Vancouver, Canada; *COLINA* – Collaboration in Arts, Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal; *Now I'm Left Alone With my Thoughts*, Belgrade Drama Theatre, SKC; **2003:** *Crows*, Balkan Dance Platform, Bucharest, Rumania, Teatar fest Sarajevo, B&H, Bitef Theatre, SNP Novi Sad; **2000:** *Mrežnja* FAKI, Zagreb, Croatia, EXIT, Novi Sad, IV Biennial of Young Artists, Vršac.

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IVAN RADENKOVIĆ & MAJA SOLAR

Ivan Radenković (1977) is a philosopher, ecofeminist and multimedia artist. He is a member of *3D BOLNICA* (3D Hospital) musical project and *Gerusia* students' philosophy club. He publishes periodically. Also, he participated in a women's poetry performance project called *LILITiranje*.

Maja Solar (1980) is a female philosopher, ecofeminist, poet and performer. She is a member of editorship in *Polja*, a magazine for literature and theory. Also, she is a member of poetry school AŽIN as well as a member of *Gerusia* students' philosophy club. She is an author and participant of *LILITiranje*, a women's poetry performance project, and a member of a poetry-political theatre named *Poetske rupe*. She published a book of poetry *Makulalatura* (untalented dirty textual terrorism).

ROGUE ECHO

is a textual figure which consists of political, economic, and ecological aspects. It was performed by Ivan Radenković and Maja Solar on the September 14, 2008, at the 13th Biennial of Art in Pančevo. Considering the idea of *mimesis* as subversive repetition, this performance thematizes questions about (non)positions of Otherness and the Strangeness (women, plurisexuality, non-white races, animals, non-capitalistic economies etc). Echo of a nymph called Echo responds to Narcissus's call in an impossible way: literally repeating Narcissus's words, Echo speaks *differently* each time. Performance was followed by video and music.

WORKS

2008: *OVDE SKOČI, OVDE REČI UJEDAJU* – engaged poetry performance; **2007-08:** *LILITiranje* – women's poetry performances.

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photography: Spartak Dulic

Gabrijel Savić Ra (1978), studied philosophy at Faculty of Philosophy, Belgrade. Curator of three galleries at Belgrade Students Cultural Center. Exhibited and performed in country and worldwide. Published two books of poetry and many articles about theory of art. In 2005 rewarded for best video achievement on Video Film Alternative Festival in Belgrade. Founder of art group *Corpus Artisticum*.

TOUCHING – BREATHING – WALKING

Ars in actio – perfo festival, Dom kulture Studentski grad, Belgrade

Breathing or in this case suffocation shows so called social changes, where individual is still suffocated by degenerative political turbulences. *Walking* demonstrates bloody road, which young people walked on and died in the name of something not worth dying for. *Touching* points out the need to be touched by something we have forgotten – love.

DIGRESSIONS OF MORTALITY INTO ROBOTIC METAPHYSICS

Dr. Vinko Perčić Gallery, Subotica

Digressions Of Mortality Into Robotic Metaphysics represents synthetic (in Hegelian sense) redefinition of individual relationship towards human mortality, which transforms in robotic metaphysics. Using this code, indifference substitutes all human feelings, everything is down to rationality, which is in this case synthetic.

REVIEW

“The calmness that comes over Gabrijel Savić Ra while he is performing, gives his pieces an aura of trust. He opens himself up to the pain and to the audience.”

Juniper Perils (SAD)
Independent curator, artist and theoretician

WORKS

2008: *Breathing – Walking – Touching*, Ars in actio – perfo festival, Belgrade; **2006:** *Under The Reason*, Atelier Momas Gallery, Brussels, Belgium; *Intrusive reprogramming of perception*, Museum of Contemporary Art of Vojvodina, Novi Sad; **2005:** *De profundis, my cyber Lord – downloading the Gods*, IETM meeting, Gallery of Youth Cultural Center, Belgrade; **2004:** *Satori cyber Adonai De Profundis*, BELEF 04, Belgrade; **2003:** *The Marriage©*, Federal Agency for cultural property, Belgrade; **2002:** *Time Codes*, 5th International Biennial of Young Artists, Vršac.

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Isidora Stanišić was born in 1975 in Belgrade. She finished ballet school "Lujo Davico" in 1993 where she currently teaches. She had professional trainings in France, Hungary, Russia, Italy, Austria... Active as choreographer, dancer and choreographer-collaborator in numerous theatre productions. She won First Prize and Audience Prize at 4th Festival of choreographic miniatures.

TO DAMASCUS

Choreography: Isidora Stanišić; Assistant: Ana Ignjatović; Performers: Milica Pisić, Ana Dubljević, Bojana Denić, Dragana Milošević, Tijana Prendović, Čarni Đerić; Dramaturge: Saša Božić; Music: Anja Đorđević.
Premiere: October 9, 2008, Belgrade Dance Centre.

To Damascus is a dance piece whose title refers to the New Testament parable, as well as the well known Strindberg's play. The biblical reference from the title (travel of Saul, persecutor of Christians, during which he experiences religious enlightenment) is ironically twisted in the piece. The vertical travel towards the cognition of the soul is replaced with a horizontal travel, more precisely, traveling on the surface (of clothes). Stanišić structurally appropriates fashion principles, complicating them with the motive of traveling. The choreography is not a critique of the shallow fashion subject, rather it stages the system of fashion, analysing the ways in which fashion generates subjects and effects it produces.

REVIEW

"Shirts, skirts, shoes, ties, helmets, ear-rings, hats, corsets are an imperative here, and movement is, even though expansive and abundant – 'lost'. Every gesture produced in the piece is obsessed with and controlled by an accessory, while body is submissive in its presence, as a carrier and necessary element of costume."

Tamara Đorđević (KKH)
<http://tkhforum.blogspot.com>

WORKS

2008: *To Damascus*, Belgrade Dance Centre;
2006: *Self-erase*, BELEF; **2002:** *Elevator*, Bitef Theatre; *Die Blechtrommel*, National Theatre, Belgrade;
2001: *Organisation of Work*, Bitef Theatre;
2000: *Les Valses Nobles et Sentimentales*, KPGT;
1998: *Bastard*, National Theatre, Belgrade.

* Source: www.ukvuk.com

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SET (STUDIO FOR ELECTRONIC THEATRE)

SET was founded in December 2007 as joint programmatic-production initiative created by the association Academica Group (Open Arc Theatre programme) from Belgrade, together with the pioneers of digital theatre – Dutch-British group Amsterdam Cyber Theatre. SET gathers artists, researchers and operators of digital theatre (Cambridge University, Anglia Ruskin University from UK and Interaktionslabors platform from Germany are direct partners) with main mission to promote and enable the development of digital theatre and wider-spread use of digital technology in performing arts. SET centres are Belgrade (production) and Cambridge (programmatic & technology design).

**SLAUGHTERHOUSE FIVE
VERSION 2008.1**

Directing & digital set and adaptation: Fahrudin Nuno Salihbegović; Translation into Serbian, adaptation and dramatisation: Tatjana Ljujić; Actors: Janoš Buš, Vahidin Prelić, Andrijana Lubina, Imer Mushkolaj, Jovana Rakić; Original music by: Vladimir Bojović; Costume: Ranka Delić; Video of final scene: Marko Tešović / Danilo Stojić; Main engineer / lighting and audio design: Boris Butorac; Production team: Academica Group & partners.

Slaughterhouse five is digital total theatre play, made after novel of Kurt Vonnegut (1969). First version of the play was showed on August 20, 2007 in Užice (southwest Serbia), and current version had premiere on September 4, 2008 in Belgrade.

REVIEW

“Judging from Salihbegovic’s work, it seems that the Studio for Electronic Theatre, Belgrade, could play a key role in ensuring that Serbia remains in a strong position – potentially a leading one - in digital media arts”

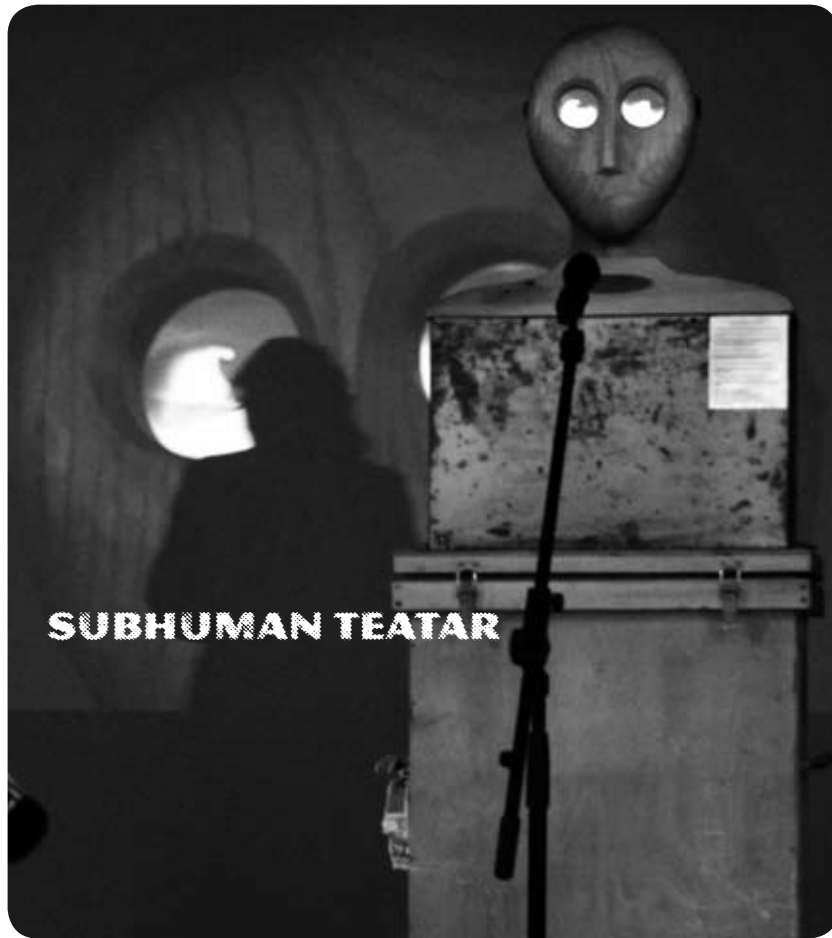
Maureen Thomas
Senior Research Fellow,
Churchill College, University of
Cambridge

WORKS

2007-08: *Slaughterhouse 5*; **2006:** *Sokočalo Project*, workshop, Open Arc Theatre, Academica Group and Amsterdam Cyber Theatre, Užice.

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SUBHUMAN TEATAR

SubHuman Theatre is an art collective founded in 2004. It's main interest is body as a focus of normativ work of power in contemporary society. The main issue concerns complex embodied material relations between body and technology. SHT does not romanticize this relations, but asks questions always having in mind that they are not innocent. Ana Vilenica – performer and art historian, and Venelin Shurelov – scenographer and multimedia artist are collaborating from 2002 on art projects. They are co-founders of SubHuman Theatre.

PERFORMANS / FANTOMAT CEREMONIAL SPEECH

September 13, 2008, XIII Biennial of Arts, Pančevo.
concept: Fantomat, Ana Vilenica, Venelin Shurelov; speech: Fantomat, Maja Pelević, Ana Vilenica; audio/video editing: Vladimir Antonov; voice: Dejan Čančarević i Ana Vilenica

Fantomat is a member of SubHuman Theatre. His purpose and his activities have been inspired by the way in which slot machines in commercialized public places work. He assumes the form of a machine with purpose: entertainment and consumption, but he gives back unexpected contents. Fantomat consists of a humanoid wooden head, interface for communication with users, and specially designed software with a database, answers, speeches, poetic texts, films and other diverse visual and audio material enabling his activities. During action performed in Pančevo, after each activation with a coin, Fantomat gave detailed instructions to the citizens for behaviour during the state of emergency.

www.bos.org.yu/cepit/evolucija/html/15/fantomat.htm

WORKS

2008: *Tabula Rasa*, Stay, Stay, Stay, Public Bath, Sofia; **2007:** *SubHuman-Performing the notion*, Finito Ma Non Troppo, Red House, Sofia; *SubChat*, Exhibition of section 13, SBH, Sofia; **2006:** *Touching the void*, Art in no gravity space, Red House, Sofia; **2005:** *Subhuman*, Art in no gravity space, Red House, Sofia; *From here to there*, Salon 5, Gallery of Contemporary Art, Pančevo.

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TKH
WALKING THEORY

TkH: Walking Theory was founded as a research theoretical-artistic group in Belgrade in 2000. The aim of TkH Platform is to encourage development of contemporary performing arts practices and their critical discourses through programmes-projects: TkH Journal for Performing Arts Theory, educational projects, on-line platform (tkh-generator.net), as well as artistic and theoretical manifestations and projects. TkH Platform is engaged in the cultural policy field and empowering of infrastructural and discursive potentials of independent artistic and cultural initiatives (Other Scene, The FaMa, Clubture, PaF).

Siniša Ilić (1977), visual artist, and Bojan Djordjev (1977), theatre director, collaborate since 1998 in various theatre, performance and visual art projects. Both are co-founders of TkH platform through which they realize part of their artistic and theoretical activities. Sena Djorović (1977), actress of the National Theatre from Belgrade, participates in most of performance projects by Ilić and Djordjev

L'ANNÉE DERNIÈRE À SOLITUDE / LAST YEAR AT SOLITUDE

Performance in two chapters, March 2008
Chapter I – *Traces*, Magacin u Kraljevića Marka – *Project Space*
Chapter II – *Culoirs*, SKC, Grand Hall.

Authors/performers: Bojan Djordjev, Siniša Ilić, Sena Djorović; Graphic design: Katarina Popović and Katya Bonnenfant; Production: Jelena Knežević; Organisation: Ana Dimitrijević; Co-production of TkH Platform and Akademie Schloss Solitude.

Space installation *Traces* and performance with film screening *Culoirs* (Corridors) are two parts of *L'Année dernière à Solitude* performance, an homage to a capital work of European modernist film *Last Year at Marienbad* (*L'Année dernière à Marienbad*) Alain Resnais and Alain Robbe-Grillet.

By live 'dubbing' of the film with new dialogues, repeating the iconic shots at the original shooting location in Munich, creating an archive of material traces of the events from the film, and re-creating the situation of labyrinth corridors of Marienbad on stage with semi-transparent film screening, the authors together with the audience attempt to enter the hypnotic narrative of this film-riddle.

REVIEW

"I have sympathy for this permanent regeneration of creativity born on the ashes of a former culture, because it makes a new and different relationship with art product possible. This is the very logic which underlies the installation *L'Année dernière à Solitude*. Or wasn't it a theatre performance?"

Jean-Baptist Joly

WORKS

2008: *L'Année dernière à Solitude*, Magacin u Kraljevića Marka – SKC, Schloss Solitude, Stuttgart (2006); *Woman-Bomb*, Belgrade drama Theatre; **2007:** *Europa*, Czkd; *Rio bar*, Magacin u Kraljevića Marka; *Boxing Match – Readymade Theatre*, Czkd; **2005:** *Operrra (of Female Gender)*, Belef, Jevremovac Botanical Gardens; *No name: Snow White*, Little Theatre Duško Radović; **2004:** *Psychosis and Death of the Author*, Bitef; *Actress (work in Progress)*, Stuttgart; **since 2002:** *Desert of Picture*, archive-performance project; **2002/3:** *Dracula Project*, Vienna-Lyon.

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WHITE SHADOW ALEKSANDRA BJELAJAC

Aleksandra Bjelajac born in 1977 in Belgrade. Aleksandra is designer, painter, dancer and choreographer. In 1999 starts with professional work, participating in numerous projects and festivals in Serbia and abroad. Her work was strongly influenced by her teachers: Zdravko Vajagić (painter) and Katsura Kan (Butoh master).

Member of MAPA (Moving Academy for Performing Arts) artistic team since 2008.

White Shadow is a group whose members are coming from different art fields: fine arts, music and dance. The main goal of the group is the research of the relations between: space, colour, surface, sound, voice, body and movement. The name of the group comes from the principle of contrast of light and shadow where shadow verifies the existence of light and with its whiteness acquires new and more complete meaning.

REFLECTION / WHITE SHADOW

Author: Aleksandra Bjelajac; Music: Ognjen Belder; Voice: Nataša Popovska; Dancers: Jelena Čapkunović, Biljana Tejić, Nebojša Ivanović, Ognjen Belder, Aleksandra Bjelajac; Set design: Ivana Tanasijević, Ognjen Belder, Aleksandra Bjelajac; Costumes: "Trojka"

Premiere: September 28, 2008, Belgrade Dance Center.

If human being is a wave, its soul could be an ocean. Sunrays break through ocean's depths and the reflected light is refracted by the dance of waves... The movement is everywhere and it is unstoppable.

I am interested in transformation of movement into dance enveloping the whole being, present in our lives just like a murmur of the wind of which we are not aware most of the time

What does our reflection of our own surroundings look like?

What is our mirror?

Secret?

Everything is relative – every reflection has different angle.

Reflection is a story about the moment based on intimate experiences of performers and their relations.

Aleksandra Bjelajac

WORKS

2008: *Reflection*, Belgrade Dance Center; *Dark Tea Party*, Belgrade Dance Center; **2007:** *Through the Trees*, Jevremovac Botanical Gardens; **2005:** *The Game of Folly* – collaboration with Omen Theatre, Bitef Theatre; **2004:** *Chair*, Japanese Cultural Center (Paris), *Der Weltverbesserer* – collaboration with Stevan Bodroža, Little Theatre Duško Radović.

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WOMEN AT WORK is a feminist organization. We instigate and develop emancipatory politics for women in social, economic and cultural sphere through three programme lines:

ACT – Creating the change in consciousness and attitudes on social problems and aspects of patriarchal culture through cultural activism

INFORM – Increase the access of information to women and other social groups through education, publishing and media

COOPERATE – Support and network with in/formal organizations and initiatives sharing our politics, values and principals

Zoe Gudović, organizer and performance producer, art manager.

I CAN NOT LEAVE, BECAUSE...

Directing: Ivana Koraksić; Actresses: Biljana Stanković Lori, Vesna Bujošević, Ana Imširović, Saša Pokrajac; Sets: Marija Vidić; Script: Sunčica Vučaj; Organization: Zoe Gudović

Performance was held in public squares of Belgrade, Velika Plana, Smederevo, Vlasotince, Niš, Novi Bečej, Novi Sad and Loznica, but also at Female Prison in Požarevac and Roma settlement Pančevački Rit from 25. November til 10. December within the *16 Days of Activism Against Violence Against Women* annual campaign.

Traveling performance *I can not leave, because...* deals with psychological mechanisms of violence due to which abused women face difficulties in the process of leaving abusive relationships and partners.

WORKS

2007: *React before it's too late!* – director Ivana Koraksić, Leskovac, Niš, Užice, Bačka Topola, Novi Bečej, Novi Sad, Velika Plana, Smederevo, Grocka, Kruševac, Loznica, Požarevac, Pančevo, Sombor, Valjevo, Šabac, Inđija, Zrenjanin, Kikinda, Vlasotince, Novi Pazar, Pirot; **2006:** *Do you see violence against women?* – director Zoe Gudović; **2005:** *Red card for perpetrators!* – director Ivana Koraksić; **2004:** *They don't trust us, why?* – director Jelena Dakić; **2003:** *Why there are not among us?* – director Jelena Dakić.

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