ART BETWEEN PRACTICE AND THEORY

Theoretical Reflections on Artistic Reality on the Threshold of the Third Millennium

Univerza v Ljubljani

Edited by: Jožef Muhovič

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Univerza v Ljubljani
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Foreword

The reason why we hold in our hands the book *Art between Practice and Theory, Theoretical Reflections on Artistic Reality on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* lies in the dedicated work and art research of the members of the Department of Theory of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana in recent years. The awareness that the coexistence of the related fields of art and science at the University of Ljubljana is an advantage that is not limited despite the lack of physical space for the academies' teaching and research work, has brought important milestones: among others, the acquisition of a research project at ARRS, the introduction of a scientific PhD programme in Fine Art Studies and the organisation of the scientific conference *Transformations in Theory, Current Research* held in Koper in September 2020.

The conference actually pursued two goals: to establish a debate and reflection between different professional fields of art or, more precisely, within the research fields of the art academies of the University of Ljubljana, and in this way to connect research colleagues from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design and the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television even more closely. The conference thus provided a unique opportunity to gain insights into the work of researchers from the fields of art, design and scenography. The latest theoretical research presented in the book thus opens up a variety of perspectives and considerations in one place, which will undoubtedly contribute to the deepening of research work and an even closer connection between the disciplines.

Before us are eleven theoretical contributions to research in the fields of art history, image theory, aesthetics, art theory, theory and history of design, theory and history of conservation-restoration, scenographic and visual arts, carefully divided into three sections: Aesthetics, Fine Art Studies and Theatre Studies.

The initiator of the entire project is the Department of Theory of the Academy of Fine Arts and Design, which invited colleagues from the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television as well as the participating lecturers from the Academy of Fine Arts and Design to join the project. I would like to thank and congratulate all those responsible for the publication and especially thank my colleague Nadja Zgonik for inviting me to contribute the foreword to this publication.

I invite the reader to read carefully and engage more closely with our researchers' theoretical reflections on artistic reality on the threshold of the third millennium.

ASSIST. PROF. LUCIJA MOČNIK RAMOVŠ, MA
Dean of Academy of Fine Arts and Design,
University of Ljubljana,
Ljubljana 2021

Theory as a Collaborative Impulse

The Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana (UL ALUO) and its Department of Theory aim to create an open space for interdisciplinary, pluralistic discussion and reflection with the first academic monograph linking theoreticians and historians from the fields of fine and visual art, design, conservation and restoration, and the performing arts, at the points where creative practice and theory intermingle. To demonstrate the need for connections and the benefits of collaboration between related sciences, the Department has joined forces with another academic member of the University of Ljubljana, the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television (UL AGRFT) and its Department of Dramaturgy and Performing Arts. The environment of the two academies is ideal for exploring transart connections, because this is where the creative process begins, from the initial conceptual stimulation or initiation of an idea to the realisation of the artwork, which must be accompanied throughout by reflection based on theoretical and historical starting points. By combining the theoretical strengths of both academies, we aim to demonstrate the collaborative potential of disciplines and fields that work together in the actual arena of contemporary active, engaged art but too rarely cross the boundaries of their disciplines in academic circles.

With the successful launch of the PhD programme in Theory of Fine Arts as part of the interdisciplinary PhD programme in Humanities and Social Sciences led by UL FF and UL FDV in 2020, the Department of Theory UL ALUO began to focus its energies more on unifying research activities. In the same year, a new student prize for outstanding theoretical achievements, teoREM, was also launched at UL ALUO and the first

ARRS research project was acquired. The initial result of the new commitment to research was the organisation of the first scientific conference Transformations in Theory. The current research was organised in 2020 at the Faculty of Education of the University of Primorska in Koper, with the aim of inter-university cooperation between higher education institutions offering study programmes in the arts. The project will now conclude with the publication of a book of scholarly discussions presenting the latest theoretical findings conducted by the entire pedagogical and research staff of the Department of Theory (UL ALUO) and the Department of Dramaturgy and Performing Arts (UL AGRFT).

The book contains scholarly reflections on the phenomena, processes and transformations that characterise and determine the current situation in the fields of fine arts, design, conservation-restoration and theatre studies. The content focuses in part on the current expansion of the field and concept of art, its flirtation with itself, as well as on considerations of the so-called "intermedial" fields of art, such as the border area that connects the two academies, between contemporary performance and fine arts, with the performative practices that have established themselves as the dominant medium in the art of the last decade.

I would like to thank Lucija Močnik Ramovš, MA, Dean of UL ALUO for her support and understanding of the project, as well as Barbara Orel, Head of the *Theatre and Transart Research* programme at UL AGRFT, for her fruitful cooperation on behalf of the project. Above all, however, I would like to thank all the participating theoreticians from UL ALUO and the specially invited theatre scholars from UL AGRFT for their in-depth scientific contributions.

NADJA ZGONIK, PHD
Head of the Department of Theory,
Academy of Fine Arts and Design,
University of Ljubljana,
Ljubljana 2021

Art and Theory at a Time of Intermediality

JOŽEF MUHOVIČ

This paper presents the results of the latest scientific research in the field of aesthetics, art theory studies and theatre studies conducted at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design and the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television of the University of Ljubljana. The research results were presented in the form of lectures and accompanying discussions at a scientific conference in Koper on 29 September 2020. The research is dedicated to thematising, analysing and reflecting on phenomena, processes and transformations that characterise the state of the fine, visual and performing arts in the turbulent period of late modernity. The spectrum of topics is diverse and complex. Before I briefly address them, it is worth saying a few words about the circumstances of the research: the time in which it took place, the nature of the phenomena studied, and the theory in its effort to keep up with the times and the phenomena.

Time

There are two general currents of thought in late modernism. The first ties in with 20th-century modernism, believes in progress and sees its horizons illuminated in a Promethean way. The ideal of this current is the demiurgic "new man 2.0" who rejects previous anthropologies, who outlines the "developmental directions" of life through social construction and who believes he is living in prehistory, the continuation of which will be a highly mechanised, highly emancipated, post- or transhuman history.[1] The other school of thought does not believe in such developmental optimism. Based on the disappointments of the modernist past, it has strongly relativised a belief in redemptive progress, although it maintains the hope for "new man" in the form of "ecology" and "human rights". In the conceptual matrix of this current, the eradication of the old, imperfect world and its replacement by the new, perfect world is more or less an illusion. It strives to protect and develop what it is. In the 21st century, it seeks to give the world and man back the charm that the demiurges of the 20th century took away with their violent and inhuman Promethean actions. The first current, characterised by phenomena such as the information and biotechnological boom, the derealisation of reality, the dehumanisation of man, etc., nourishes the hope that man with his "enlightened mind" can intervene in the "natural order of things" and discover a brave new world. The second current, increasingly characterised by opposition to unbridled globalisation and the oligarchic world economy, finds many reasons for man to respect the natural order of things and abandon the belief that the world and man can be improved by simple intervention. The first current can provisionally be called *radical progressivism* and the second *neo-pragmatism.* Our lives, our economy, our culture and, of course, the art and science that deal with it, today revolve in the intermedial space between these two opposing poles.

Art

The transfer of this visual and operative antithesis to the realm of art is visible on two levels. On the level of general culturalisation, we can trace it in recent times through the difference between so-called hyperculture and cultural essentialism, while on the level of practice and mediality it has long been present through difference and intermedial space between the so-called basic and expanded field of art. Like science, art expresses throughout its history an awareness of what it is moving away from, while it can only guess at what it is moving towards.

1 Cf. Fukuyama, F. (2002): *Our Posthuman Future. Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution.* New York, Farrar, Straus and Giraux.

Therefore, it usually evokes discomfort and even resistance from all kinds of "signifiers of forced directions of development", ideologues who hate the intermedial space of options, alternatives and polyvalences, because of its openness, because it demands to make choices without prior certainty and practise the complexity of synthesis rather than the simplicity of elimination. In contrast, art is "fine-tuned" to "intermediality" and feels like a fish in water in it. *Jacques Derrida* emphasised this nature when he wrote in *L'écriture et la différence* (1967) that every artistic artefact "stands" between a thing and a sign, that "intermediality" is the relationship between a thing and a sign.[2] Its power and uniqueness, Derrida argues, derive precisely from the fact that it does not fit into either of the two ontological categories into which we otherwise divide the world: neither into the sphere of nature or objects (formality) nor into the sphere of the spirit or signs (semantics). The obvious consequence of this is that, from a hermeneutic point of view, the work of art successfully resists both the explanatory science of things and their causal relations and the explanatory interpretation of signs and their meanings.[3]

This is true not only of hermeneutics, but perhaps even more so of the creative hemisphere of art, for its forms, as we know, originally reckon with man's "dual citizenship" and require of him both engagement and detachment, both Promethean spirit and reflection, both emancipation and tradition, both infatuation and sobriety, both contemplation and action, both a sense of poíesis and a sensitivity to téchne. Art simply has the character of both simultaneously and inseparably. That is why it is a true unifier or synthesiser of opposites and cannot be instrumentalised, at least in its most original and authentic core by ideological or fashionable "forced directions". Not even today. The theory of the art system sometimes tries to believe that "relevant" works are primarily those that the system can control and place within its coordinates. But in the long run, artists prove again and again that they not only provide material for the assertion and proof of the models on which the theories are based, but that what is truly original and unique in the art arena usually lies in the "bind spot" of the ideologies, models and theories produced.

2 Cit. after: Derrida, J. (1972): Die soufflierte Rede. In: same (1972): *Die Schrift und die Differenz.* Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 292.

3 Menke, C. (2005): Einführung. In: Koch, G., Voss, C. (2005, pub.): *Zwischen Ding und Zeichen.* Zur ästhetischen Erfahrung in der Kunst. München, Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 15–17.

Theory

In our case, the transfer of the determinants of time to the field of art studies is called contemporaneity.[4] Its understanding is particularly important when it comes to theoretical reflection and the actualisation of simultaneous phenomena. Put simply, it is a matter of establishing that theoretical thought originally has its own historicity. Indeed, art theory, like philosophy according to Hegel's well-known insight, is always too late for "its time": "If we say a word as caution about how the world should be, then philosophy always comes to it too late without further ado." As a thought of the world, it appears at a time when reality has already come to a close of its formal process and ended".[5] In a word: it is a fact that theory always misses the moment when it could voice "how the art world should be". It is precisely this delay, which at first glance appears to be a flaw, that is, in fact, a strength of philosophy and theory, since both, with their aposterior "distance", can pay attention to what eludes us in the unfolding phenomena, i.e. in their simultaneity.[6] In this sense, theory can open up an insight into the difference between contemporaneity/simultaneity and relevancy.[7] In other words, an insight into the question of what is today is actually relevant. The point is to understand the relationship between the quantitative and qualitative aspects of temporal events, which is essential to the existence of the aesthetic and has long been defined by the Greek terms "chronos" (χρόνος), historical, chronological, quantitative time, and "kairós" (καιρός), the moment something "significant" or "decisive", in which something special, qualitatively pivotal and permanently important happens. To illustrate the exploration of the difference between obsolete "temporality" and the kairótic quality of the "always relevant", we can use a quote from Agamben's discussion *What is the Contemporary?*: "Those who are truly contemporary, who truly belong to their time, are those who neither perfectly coincide with it nor adjust themselves to its demands. They are thus in this sense irrelevant [*inattuale*]. But precisely because of this condition, precisely through this disconnection and this anachronism, they are more capable than others of perceiving and grasping their own time."[8] The identification and reflection of this qualitative type is particularly useful in theory when

4 Cf. Komel, D. (2021): *Horizonti kontemporalnosti.* Ljubljana, Inštitut Nove revije.

5 Hegel, G. W. F. (1986): *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie III* (Werke 20). Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 28.

6 Komel 2021, 46.

7 Cf. ibid., 47–50.

8 Agamben, G. (2009): What is the Contemporary?. In: same, *What is an Apparatus? and Other Essays,* Stanford, Stanford University Press, 40.

researchers do not or cannot have a sufficiently large and sobering temporal distance from the phenomena under study. This is a situation that not only characterises the framework of most of the essays published in this book but also implicitly reveals their degree of untimeliness, which is all the easier for the reader to comprehend the more time that has elapsed since the essays were written.

Aesthetics, fine art and theatre studies belong to the field of the humanities, which have been responsible for the "production of meaning" since their beginnings, given that cultural and artistic phenomena within their scope are not only the object of research but are also brought into a meaningful context. Namely, as systems of knowledge and values that serve humanity. In this, the humanities differ from the value-neutral natural and mathematical sciences. There are differences within the humanities today. Some of their studies try to be scientific along the lines of the natural sciences, i.e. value-neutral, as if they were dealing with bare facts.

Still, others see their role in a deconstructive function and develop new ways of perception, reflection and analysis based on modern intellectualism. Especially those who, in a world where everything is for sale and where sentimental fakes can no longer be distinguished from genuine goods, foreground doubt, criticism, mistrust of authority and thus value relativism. They are unaware, however, that reason comes first when unbridled doubt about all things flourishes, as G. K. Chesterton notes.[9] Both are deviations from the humanistic tradition, which always valorises experiential events and findings with meaning, interpreting and evaluating facts according to their "kairótic", i.e. future-based potential. However empirically accurate the humanities may be, they are always hermeneutic at their core. The main problem of the modern humanities is to remain true to their original task of combining empiricism and hermeneutics, exactness and axiology.[10] This becomes clear, at least in part, from the discussions published in this book.

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9 Chesterton, G. K. (2001): *Pravovernost*. Celje, Celjska Mohorjeva družba, 31.

10 Cf. Kos, J. (2021): *Kultura in politika.* Ljubljana, Nova obzorja, 98–100; Muhovič, J. (2019): Preokvirjanja v noosferi. Spremembe v interakcijskih razmerjih med umetnostjo in humanistično znanostjo od razsvetljenstva do danes. In: ANNALES 29/4 (2019), 563–575.

The question, then, is how the intermedial space, the intermediary status of artistic phenomena and the current state of art theory are reflected in the humanist debates triggered by the present work, and how these debates simultaneously "relate" to the two currents of late modernist thought. Let us consider this in a first approximation with a brief account of the field of reflection that ALUO and AGRFT researchers have been working on recently.

Aesthetics

Art today is under the influence of information technologies, digital media and technosciences. This aspect of change is discussed by URŠULA BERLOT POMPE in the paper entitled **A Topology of Virtuality and Technoart**. In the introduction, the author highlights some conceptual changes in the understanding of space in modernist and postmodernist art, while the central part of the text is devoted to the treatment of the concept of "virtuality" in connection with art (the virtual in the relationship with the relevant; the virtual in relation to the real, etc.). Another characteristic phenomenon of late modernist art is the "expansion of the artistic field".

The question of this transformation is explored by JOŽEF MUHOVIČ in his contribution **Art and Boundaries. On the Genome and Models of the Expanded Field of Art**. His paper takes the form of a triptych. In the first part, the author traces the phenomena that "technically" led to the expansion of the artistic field in the period from the Enlightenment to late modernism (Gesamtkunstwerk, avantgarde, objets trouvés, Beuys' "*erweiterter Kunstbegriff*"). In the central part of the discussion, he looks at the model of the "artistic arena" and its transformations, which also date back to the time on the threshold of the new millennium. In the third part, he addresses the nature of the relationship between art and the – wide and high – boundaries of its intellectual-historical paradigms.

Reflection of contemporary design at the level of an aesthetic approach is addressed by BARBARA PREDAN. In her study **Through the Other Side of the Looking-Glass. In Search of Meaning in the Language of Design**, the author set herself the task of investigating how the emerging discipline of design can "intertwine" with the existing verbal language of the community and ultimately compose new forms and meanings within that language. The research led her back to the theoretical musings of John Ruskin, the Victorian art critic and thinker. In the heyday of industrialisation, he stood at the crossroads between the new and the old. He recognised the emergence of a new discipline, but chose not to use the "language of progress", i.e. the utility

of industrialisation, to make sense of it, but rather drew from nature. The author underpins this orientation with reason and sees her goal as a signpost for "design breakthroughs" even in our highly technological times.

The contribution **Non-hierarchical Media Connectivity in Contemporary Drama and Theatre** by TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ deals with the aesthetics of cohesion between dramatic and non-dramatic performance practices. The subject of his study is media connectivity, nomadism and contemporary transmedia transience. In his research, he notes that the live stage and mediatised performance are no longer understood as ontological opposites, and that the exploration and transgression of boundaries between live performance and non-dramatic performance in the performing arts have produced some new strategies that are creative, expressive and have borne fruit in the long term.

Art Theory Studies

Art Theory Studies is a broad field consisting of various disciplines such as visual theory, visual technology, art history, art theory, design history and theory, as well as conservation and restoration theory. The field covers a wide range of contents. These are represented in this publication in the following order.

From the field of design history and theory comes the research paper by PETRA ČERNE OVEN entitled **Articulation of Language through Design Transformation. Historical, Technological and User Contexts.** Here, the author examines the processes that enable the transition from the mental level of language (thought) to its auditory forms and from these to the forms mediated by visual signs (visual semiotics). In the paper, she first introduces the basic concepts of visualising verbal language (so-called "graphic language"), its components, design strategies and possibilities of expression. The problem she addresses is primarily visual literacy, the level of which, as she notes from documentation, is paradoxically not increasing, even though we live in a world of hypertrophic visuality. The author's discussion culminates in an appeal for the systematic improvement of visual literacy through education, the starting point of which she sees at the interface of linguistics and typography as well as other disciplines involved in the process of creatively transforming language into a visualised form.

The research conducted by the authors PETJA GRAFENAUER, NATAŠA IVANOVIČ and URŠKA BARUT entitled **The Archive of the Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies** in the 1950s and Early 1960s and the Desire for an Art Market falls into the field of art historical documentation. The discussion, based on the study of archival

documents of the Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies between 1934 and 1959, reports on the intentions and initiatives of the members of DSLU to gradually establish an "art market" in Slovenia during the aforementioned period, which would be roughly comparable to this kind of market in Western Europe.

The activity of conservation and restoration of works of art has undergone remarkable development in recent decades according to BLAŽ ŠEME, researcher in the field of conservation and restoration, in the paper entitled **Axiological and Teleological Dimensions of Art Heritage Protection in Conservation-Restoration Theory**. The author's contribution aims to present the role of theoretical thinking in current conservation and restoration treatment. Using examples from the conservation and restoration of wall paintings in Slovenia, the main theoretical ideas of this kind and their transformations are presented. The author finds that the essence of these theories is that when deciding on the conservation and restoration treatment of artworks and their practical implementation, their aesthetic and historical potential should be given priority.

From the field of art theory comes a debate entitled **The Experiment of the OHO Group in the Field of Conceptual Architecture.** Here, its author NADJA ZGONIK looks at the working methods of the conceptual group OHO. In particular, around 1970, when the group, on the initiative of architect Niko Lehrman, accepted the challenge to participate in the planning of the new Argonavti entertainment centre and hotel in Nova Gorica. The author traces the group's creative part in the project through a report preserved in the provincial archives of Nova Gorica (infographics, 18 art between practice and theory ways planned through the spaces, interior furnishings, colour studies for interior design, park design, etc.). The author notes that the essence of their contribution is contained in two basic Oho-esque concepts – the myth of the quest for the Golden Fleece and the Argonauts, and the concept of the "time ship" – which the author then uses to trace the group's creative contribution to the design of the Argonavti entertainment centre and hotel.

Theatre Studies

The publication of academic texts at hand includes three research reports or papers from the field of Theatre Studies.

The first is a discussion by BLAŽ LUKAN entitled **Text as Stage or Reading Performance in the Light of Performative Economy.** A reading performance is the execution of a dramatic or theatre text in public in the form of a reading. In his contribution, the author assumes

that a reading performance is a performance genre in its own right and not merely a preparatory act or a surrogate for the "real" theatre. The author shows that the reading of a (theatre) draft is part of the staging process, but at the same time has long been a form of presentation practice in which both the writers and the performers as well as their co-creators present themselves. The paper considers reading as a theatre performance and deals with its "performative economy". It first critically evaluates it and then proposes some performance possibilities that are not yet or not sufficiently used by reading performances.

The second presentation is the paper by ALDO MILOHNIĆ entitled **Current Contributions to the Theory and History of the Theatre of Resistance.** Here, the author discusses some highlighted historical and contemporary examples of theatrical and performative practices of resistance (from the Ljubljana Workers' Stage and the partisan theatre groups during the Second World War to the artivist performative performances of Marko Brecelj). The first part of the discussion presents the paradigm of the theatre of resistance through historical examples, while the second part focuses on the analysis and conceptualisation of the performative work of Marko Brecelj.

The Theatre Studies section and the book as a whole conclude with the paper of BARBARA OREL entitled **Curation in the Field of the Slovenian Performing Arts.** As the title suggests, the focus of the study is on the question of curating in the field of the performing arts, especially in the Slovenian cultural arena, and on the profile of the curator that developed internationally in the 1980s and early 1990s in the context of contemporary performing arts festivals and art centres characterised by a transdisciplinary, transnational, transcultural and transinstitutional hybridisation of artistic practices. In her contribution, the author focuses both on the phenomenology of hybrid performance genres (e.g. performance-exhibition) and on issues of Slovenian terminology closely related to this phenomenology.

AESTHETICS

The topology of virtuality and techno-art

URŠULA BERLOT POMPE

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last decades, spatial concepts of artistic and theoretical discursivity have been moving away from the reductionist approaches that guided the artistic processes of abstraction and fragmentation in modernism. The deformed topologies, decompositions, fractured and curved spatial representations of the artistic avant-gardes at the beginning of the 20th century were often related to the new interpretations of space that emerged with the advent of the theory of relativity and the ideas of multidimensional space. Simultaneously, a similar formal paradigm of reductionism linked the diverse modernist movements, especially abstract art.[1] The integration of scientific and artistic discur-

1 Although the pioneers of abstract painting in the first decades of the 20th century based their work on different philosophical and theoretical assumptions, they were united by a similar formal paradigm of reductionism. The painting processes characterised by rationalisation, abstraction of visible reality, and gradual formal reduction of elements composing pictorial space coincided with the prevailing scientific tendency towards quantification and the deconstruction of reality into its elementary particles or indivisible elements, which are governed by universal laws (Berlot Pompe, 2020). In a similar way as the micro-reality of the scientific world revealed the behaviour of energetically charged particles in physics and chemistry, the reality of cells and chromosomes in biology, or the indivisible sensory-perceptual elements in experimental psychology, modern art approached pure abstraction

sivity was further enabled by post-war technological and economic advances as well as by the emergence of new physical perspectives of reality, which were fostered by the integration of the theory of relativity and quantum mechanics. In the 1960s, the notion of space, no longer conceived as a constant but as a contextually defined concept dependent on the perception of the viewer, was integrated by the idea of the field as the energetic basis of reality, determined by the motion of particles; this shifted the focus of interest from the material and empirical aspects of reality towards a more fundamental, immaterial, energetic dimension, the elastic tension, which is only revealed through the effects of actions on matter. The interest in the invisible dimensions of reality and the concomitant new philosophical attempts to interpret the relationship between the subject and object, the perceiver and reality in phenomenology and psychoanalysis was also reflected in the field of art as a particular interest in the relationship between the spectator, the work of art, and space, which intensified in the postmodern period. Psychoanalytic and post-structuralist approaches describe new relations between conceptions of space and the perceiving subject, who, given the plural and polymorphous nature of reality, experiences themselves as uncertain, fragmented, and dispersed. A number of critical texts on perspective and Cartesian space were accompanied by genre differentiation in the field of art and the emergence of new forms of contemporary art (body art, performance, video art, kinetic art, optical art etc.), among which installation art established itself as the dominant art form. The multi-perspectivism of installation, which does not presuppose an ideal observation point, also subverted the ideas concerning the rational self-centredness of the perspectival view and fostered the development of new models of embodied but de-centred subjectivity. In this regard, installation art realises the post-structuralist theoretical impulses of the de-centred subject (Barthes, Foucault, Lacan, Derrida); in this framework, the individual is perceived as a dislocated, incoherent subject, internally split by unconscious desires.[2]

through painting, focusing on basic artistic concepts – pure colours, lines, and reduced geometric forms. (Kandinsky, for example, wrote about the microscopic analysis of basic painting elements, such as shape, point, line, and surface.) The dominant reductionist method and paradigm of understanding reality permeated the scientific and artistic strategies of modernism (Manovich, 2007; Vitz and Glimcher, 1984).

2 The connections between art and scientific models of reality in the 20th century are covered in more detail in the author's articles Pictorial Abstractions: *Visualizing Space in the Eras of Modernism and Information* (AR Correspondences, 2018), *Kompleksnost in tehnološki biomorfizem v sodobnem abstraktnem slikarstvu / Complexity and Technological Biomorphism in Contemporary Abstract Painting* (Zbornik za Tomaža Brejca / Proceedings for Tomaž Brejec, 2020), *Prostor in gledalec: utelešena zaznava v umetnosti instalacije* / Space and Spectator: Embodied Perception in the Art of Installation (ČKZ, 2018).

While the modern paradigm of space was based on subject–object relations, perception, abstraction, and new geometries, the development of modern information technologies and computer science established new spatial relations, which became part of theoretical reflections and were embraced by artistic practice. These spatial relations were based on the concept of virtual reality and simulation, resulting from the global abandonment of traditional spatio-temporal relations within the new immaterial sphere of the global web. Modern information and telecommunication tools enabled the emergence of new forms of disembodied subjectivity, fluid virtual connections, and altered spatio-temporal parameters of reality in relation to virtuality, highlighting the importance of body(lessness) in cyber-spatiality (A. Vidler) or the idea of temporal accelerations (P. Virilio). In the last decades, theoretical discourse on the problems related to space and contemporary artistic production have often been focused on analyses of the impact of information and digital technologies on the perception of space. Artistic research has historically been dependent on the technologies and media of its time, so the connection between art and technology is not a novelty or a peculiarity of the contemporary era. According to Oliver Grau, art has always adopted or even promoted new technological inventions in the development of media, and furthermore argues that "art's close relationship to machines in particular and technology in general, including the new media of images and their distribution, spans all epochs, from classical antiquity to the present day" (Grau, 2003, 4).

Similar continuity is reflected in the historical transformations of modes of spatial representation; despite the widespread view that the reign of perspectival space, which endured for several centuries (from the 15th century onwards), was shattered and came to an end due to the 20th century art of the modernist avant-gardes, the spatial experience of contemporary modes of spatial representation by means of digitisation, dematerialisation, and new forms of illusion testifies to the contrary.

E. Panofsky, author of one of the most important studies in the field of the culture and technique of perspective (*Die Perspektive als 'Symbolische Form'*, 1927),[3] and later especially Hubert Damisch (*L'origine*

3 A seminal publication on the subject of space was published in the 1920s, i.e. the treatise *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (Die Perspektive als 'Symbolische Form', 1927) by Erwin Panofsky, who argued that perspective transforms psychophysiological space into mathematical space. He drew a parallel between the history of spatial representation and the evolution of abstract thought, which developed starting from the ancient view of the physical universe as being a discontinuity and an "aggregate" and progressed towards the post-Renaissance understanding of space as being infinite, homogeneous, and systematic. Panofsky linked the Renaissance perspective to the emergence of a rational and self-reflexive Cartesian subject. He argued that Renaissance perspective placed the viewer at the centre of the hypothetical

de la perspective, 1987) note that despite the general belief in a fundamental modernist reversal of the (spatial) paradigm after the introduction of the theory of relativity, modernism did not in fact completely abandon the reign of perspectival culture (Vidler, 2000, 8). Damisch points out that the increasing prevalence and utility of perspective in video simulations and other digital representations of space requires a rethinking of perspective (Damisch, 1987). A. Vidler similarly observes:

> **"Despite differences, the contemporary graphic effects of digital space are in fact deeply obligated to the representational experiments of modernism, in a way that carries serious implications for the theorization of virtuality. [...] Perspective is still the rule in virtual reality environments; objects are still conceived and represented within all the three-dimensional conventions of traditional art, since there is little to distinguish Alberti's window from a computer screen (Vidler, 2000, 6).**

2. HYPERSPACE TOPOLOGY AND COMPLEXITY IN THE INFORMATION AGE

The 1970s saw the emergence of new epistemological paradigms in many scientific and technical fields, including chaos theory, the nonlinearity and dynamics of complex systems, fractal geometry, self-organisation and autopoiesis, research on artificial life and intelligence, subsequently joined by theories of neural mirror networks and genetic algorithms. The change of scientific paradigm with the entry into the information age coincides with the new social and philosophical theories of postmodernism, which, in the context of technological expansion of reality through digitisation and the emergence of virtual hyperspace, focused on the concept of simulation. Gilles Deleuze, Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, Jacques Derrida, and François Lyotard found in the concept of simulation an emblem of a technologised society and digital culture, linked to the information flow made possible by digital communication tools and the World Wide Web. In the age of digitalization, the

world and that the perspective representation of space with its vanishing point on the horizon of the picture was connected to the eyes of the viewer who stood before it. In this way, perspective created a hierarchical relationship between the centred viewer and the space of the painting spread before them (Panofsky, 1991). In the feminist and post-structuralist theories of the 1960s, Panofsky's treatise became a key reference for critical studies on perspective as a symbolic form; the authors of these studies stressed that the perspective view was linked to the concepts of mastery, control, and self-centredness of the viewer in relation to the representation of a static "stage".

technologically manipulated image is determined by completely different principles of constitution, reproduction, distribution, transmission, and perception.[4]

The leading paradigm of postmodern science was established on the basis of complexity theory, chaos theory, and the theory of non-linear dynamical systems; already in the 1950s and 1960s fractal geometry described the reality of the phenomena of complex systems and non-linear dynamics, causing the Euclidean geometry to become useless. Chaos theory is based on the observation that even the simplest systems can generate chaotic behaviour, which cannot be understood by accumulating input information, since we are dealing with non-periodicity and complex phenomena, associated with a steep increase in errors. The study of the behaviour of chaotic systems revealed that reality is established through the relationship between order and disorder (chaos). For the study of non-linear systems, it was therefore no longer fundamental to link cause and effect, but rather to look for patterns and certain irregular repetitions (similarities, non-identical iterations). A space that is curved, deformed, twisted, broken, undulated, and dynamic was adequately described by fractal geometry (Benoit Mandelbrot), which revealed similarities (not perfect identity) in the structure of fractals recurring in different scales; the micro scale of the fractal structure reflects the macro structure, and each minimal particle of the system mirrors the order of the whole to which it belongs.

Ernest Ženko notes that postmodern sciences, such as physical theory, which deal with the structure of matter (quantum mechanics), do not contribute anything particularly new to the understanding of space (new in the sense of the break with Einstein's theory of relativity). Similarly, fractal geometry or theory of chaos and complex systems did

4 See, for example, Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation* (1981); Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967); Jacques Derrida, Dissemination (1972). In his critique of simulation and the hyperreal, Baudrillard expresses the belief that the reason for the loss of contact with reality in the postmodern era is conditioned by modern technological and media production. This loss has strategic consequences, affecting different systems of representation (for example, in science and art) but also the wider social condition. In reference to Plato's paradigm of reality, Deleuze (*The Logic of Sense,* 1969) and Derrida reflect on a postmodern society, saturated with images to the point that we are no longer able to distinguish the original from the copy; in this light, both philosophers conclude that we live in a world of simulacra. Deleuze and Guattari (*A Thousand Plateaus/Mille Plateaux*, 1980) see in the global culture of simulation a particular potential for the future. They argue that simulation and hyperreality have reached a transnational level throughout popular culture, and that advanced capitalism is creating a dissolution of old identities and territorialities. Brian Massumi notes that Deleuze and Guattari put Baudrillard's pessimism in opposition to a logic that is affirmative towards simulation: "The challenge is to assume this new world of simulation and take it one step farther, to the point of no return, to raise it to a positive simulation of the highest degree by marshaling all our powers of the false toward shattering the grid of representation once and for all." (Massumi, 1987). Brian Massumi believes that "[h]idden in the images is a kind of genetic code responsible for their generation.

not offer a new spatial model, but rather a new understanding of the surface. This is where Ženko sees the key to understanding postmodern space; he believes that "among all the oppositions that define the relationship between modernism and postmodernism, it is the relationship between surface and depth that is crucial" (Ženko, 2000, 126) or "the emergence of a new kind of flatness and depthlessness, a new kind of surface in the most literal sense as the ultimate formal feature of all postmodernisms" (ibid., 136). He demonstrates this on the example of pop-art. Postmodernity is characterised by strategies for simulating reality and persistent attempts to establish a new reality, which would conceal its original disappearance. Simulation theory identifies global changes in the technologically advanced world, highlighting in the context of art the virtual and interactive nature that characterises the new art forms. Through its effects on temporal and spatial accelerations, the digitisation of space in the information age has had a significant impact and changed the perception of contemporary reality. According to A. Vidler, with the advent of digitalisation, the competing ideas of space in modernism – which replaced the historical primary interest in time that dominated the 19th century – were confronted with a form of spatial timelessness, with a mutation in space itself that transformed space into non-space and time into timelessness (Vidler, 2000). Regarding the relationship between space and time, Paul Virilio argued that (the then) contemporary era did not witness spacelessness and timelessness, but the opposite: it saw the dominance of the concept of temporal space. He notes new forms of "time compression", arguing that "[h]ere no longer exists; everything is now" (Virilio, 2000[a], 125), and that time has finally overcome space as our main mode of perception or, as B. Tschumi notes in the preface to Virilio's work A Landscape of Events, Virilio's space becomes temporal, the theme is "the collapse of time, the acceleration of time, the reversal of time, the simultaneity of all times [...], all space is swallowed up by time. Space becomes temporal" (Tschumi, as cited in Virilio, 2000b, viii).

In the last decades of the information age, in the period of meta-, alter-, or hypermodernism, it is possible to observe new spatial concepts and forms emerging at the interdisciplinary intersection of different media genres, film, photography, art, architecture, and science; this fusion takes place under strong influence of digital technology. Contemporary techniques of spatial representation are structured by the logic of the digitally created environment, which A. Vidler declared to be the dominant form of contemporary hyperspace.[5] Digital virtual-

5 "Hyperspace" is a term used in science, science fiction, cultural studies, but especially in theories of (electronic) media, digital art, and postmodern architecture, where the term

ity is no longer described in terms of types, signs, structures, and cracks, but rather in terms of "grids, folds, layers, and overlappings", which establish and describe the forms of contemporary fluid, curved, and multi-layered space (Vidler, 2000). The contemporary experience of space is defined by the meaning of surface and by virtuality, dematerialisation, and the particularities of hybrid spatial topologies that emerge from the interplay of analogue and digital technological processes. W. J. Mitchell observes that "electronic spaces apparently deny any form of geometry. They are logical, mental spaces and in this sense 'antispatial'. The Net [the World Wide Web] denies geometry. While it does have a definite topology of computational nodes and radiating boulevards for bits [...] it is fundamentally and profoundly antispatial. [...] You cannot say where it is or describe its memorable shape and proportions or tell a stranger how to get there. But you can find things in it without knowing where they are. The Net is ambient – nowhere in particular but everywhere at once" (Mitchell, 1995, 8).

A particular understanding of post-structuralist, dematerialised (hyper)space, a space of folds, layers, foldings and overlappings, is described in the works of Gilles Deleuze. Deleuze' thought is distinctly spatial and often inspired by scientific – mathematical, biological, botanical, or physical – representational models, when he refers to mycelium, chaos, spatial planes, axes, tangents, or mathematical points of inflection. Deleuze compares contemporary spatial reality to the structure of the mycelium, which is a rhizomatic, decentralised, horizontal extension without a centre or relation to verticality; Deleuze's second spatial representation consists in topology and the reality of inflections. According to M. Vatovec, it is the mathematical topology that "appears as a pertinent 'way of thinking' for comparison with Deleuzian concepts, or rather, for comparison of topological functions with Deleuzian concepts" (Vatovec, 2012, 189). Topology presents specific spatial aspects as mathematical problems. It is a generalisation of geometry and classical mathematical analysis and changes the very notion of space: from Euclidean to more general topological space.[6] Its main role is to determine whether spaces are topologically equivalent to each other or

"hyperarchitecture" is becoming widespread. In a broader sense, it refers to a space of a higher dimension, described as a dimension of space that is alternative and parallel to our ordinary space. We access this space by extending our normal perceptual-conscious states (or, as depicted in science fiction, by means of an energy field or other device), and move through it at superluminal speeds, the temporal parameters of past and future being no longer existent. In architectural theory, for example, the term refers to spatial visualisations made possible by digital technology and to the aesthetics of a dematerialised and fluid space, subject to the effects of simulation, projection, and mutation (see for example Luigi Prestinenza Puglisi: HyperArchitecture: Spaces in the Electronic Age. Basel, Boston, Berlin, Birkhäuser, Publishers for Architecture, 1999).

homeomorphic. This entails determining the neighbourhoods, continuities, and other topological properties for a given space as well as attempting to find the same spaces. This identity is called homeomorphism (ibid., 187).[7]

The topological mapping of points in Deleuze's system is subject to the logic of difference, multiplication, and variability: it is neither a continuum of ordinary points nor a discontinuum of extraordinary points. According to M. Doel, there is, instead, "a dissimilatory fractal of singular point-folds, reminiscent of Cantor dust" (Doel, 2000, 128). Many of Deleuze's works (*The Fold,* 1988; *A Thousand Plateaus,* 1980; *The Logic of Sense*, 1981) include series of descriptions of a multilayered and multiplied space: a folded, bent, curved, elastic space that has no constant points, only folds that create consistency. What appear to be points or constants are in fact folds upon folds. The fold is a spatial "differentiator, differential", says Deleuze, who proposes the technique of origami, the art of folding, as the appropriate model of spatial representation (Deleuze, 2009, 16).

Deleuze developed the spatial metaphor of the fold in his work The Fold (*Le Pli*, 1988), which interweaves his diverse interests in physics, metaphysics, mathematics, and art. Through the text, he derives interesting mappings and provides illustrations of scientific and mathematical concepts, comparing and describing them by means of philosophical concepts (considerations on the subject – the monad, which is the 'fold of the world', and on the 'folds in the soul') or illustrating them with examples from art.[8] Deleuze reflects on folded, curved space and on the

6 The distinction between topological and metric space is particularly evident in quotient topology, where gluing is used to create toruses. For example, a two-dimensional torus is obtained from a rectangle by gluing each point on the edge of the rectangle to the opposite point lying on the opposite side of the rectangle, whereas to construct a three-dimensional torus, we can start with a rectangular room in which we stand. Then, "imagine the left wall glued to the right wall, not in the sense of physically gluing one wall to the other, but in the sense that if you walked through the left wall, you would find yourself emerging from the right wall. In the same manner, the front wall is glued to the back wall and the ceiling. So, what do you see if you look through the floor or the ceiling? If you look through the wall, it seems that you see another identical room. There, you can see your own back. If you look through the floor, you see your head below you, and if you look through the ceiling, you see your soles above you ...This three-torus has no edges, and its total volume is just the volume of the room you started with" (Weeks, 1998, 19).

7 The pioneers of research in the field of mathematical topology were Johann Benedict Listing, who first used the term "topology" (1836), and August Ferdinand Möbius. Möbius illustrated homeomorphism with the example of a flexible elastic surface: all possible shapes that are derived from it by the process of bending, twisting, stretching, and warping but without tearing or cutting, will be mutually homeomorphic. Homeomorphism is a topological (not geometrical) equivalence.

8 He extends the concept of fold beyond the Baroque and understands it in a broader sense: "[I]f the Baroque can be stretched beyond its precise historical limits, it appears to us that it is always by virtue of this criterion, which inspires us to recall Michaux when he writes of

operative concept of the fold, which is the "genetic element of the variable curve or fold" (Deleuze, 2009, 28). Using the example of Klee's figure and diagram of the inflection, he derives the thesis about the painter's affinity for the Baroque aesthetics of folds and curves: "Inflection is the authentic atom, the elastic point. That is what Klee extracts as the genetic element of the active, spontaneous line. It [...] opposes him to Kandinsky, a Cartesian, for whom angles are firm, for whom the point is firm, set in motion by an exterior force. For Klee, however, the point as a 'nonconceptual concept of noncontradiction' moves along an inflection. It is the point of inflection itself, where the tangent crosses the curve. This is the point-fold" (ibid.). On the basis of the example of Klee's three figures, he illustrates the relationship of the inflection, the significance of the intertwined curves, and the significance of the shadow, which marks the convex side and thus disengages concavity. He describes the inflection as an ambiguous sign that is weightless: "[I] inflection is the pure Event of the line or of the point, the Virtual, ideality par excellence. It will take place following the axes of the coordinates, but for now it is not yet in the world: it is the World itself, or rather its beginning, as Klee used to say, 'a site of cosmogenesis', 'a nondimensional point', 'between dimensions'" (ibid., 29–30). Deleuze writes about mathematical transformations (referring to works by B. Cache and R. Thom), about the inflection, which "cannot be separated from an infinite variation or an infinitely variable curve", and mentions the Koch's curve, "obtained by means or rounding angles, according to Baroque requirements, by making them proliferate according to a law or homothesis. The curve passes through an infinite number or angular points and never admits a tangent at any of these points. It envelops an infinitely cavernous or porous world, constituting more than a line and less than a surface (Mandelbrot's fractal dimension as a fractional or irrational number, a nondimension, an interdimension)". There is an infinite fluctuation and the possibility of adding a new detour "by making each interval the site of a new folding" (ibid., 31). Deleuze, who is often described as a "horizontal thinker", a thinker of difference and differentiation, also understands space as a differentiating rather than a unifying element. Space is a multilayered interconnectedness that cannot be described

La vie dans les plis (Life in the folds), or Boulez when he looks to Mallarmé and composes "Fold after Fold" or Hantaï, when he constructs a method from folding" (Deleuze, 2009, 59). He also goes back in time, writing about P. Uccello and El Greco, and describes modern painting as comprehending "the textures of matter (the great modern Baroque painters from Paul Klee to Fautrier, Dubuffet, Bettencourt etc.)", stressing, however, that Informel is not a negation of form: "[I]t posits form as folded, existing only as a 'mental landscape' in the soul or in the mind, in upper altitudes: hence it also includes immaterial folds. Material matter makes up the bottom, but folded forms are styles or manners" (ibid., 60–61).

by points, integers, and identities, but rather by multiplicity, fractality, rhizomatic interconnections, inflections, and folds that are constantly in motion. It is a dynamic, changing space where "[m]ovement takes in everything, and there is no place for a subject and an object that can only be concepts. It is the horizon itself that is in movement: the relative horizon recedes when the subject advances, but on the plane of immanence we are always and already on the absolute horizon. Infinite movement is defined by a coming and going, because it does not advance toward a destination without already turning back on itself [...]." (Deleuze and Guattari, 1999, 46). Everything takes place on the surface, on the plane of immanence and consistency. Space is always a pure virtuality: it resists actualisation and changes every time it is actualised.

3. THE VIRTUAL

The virtual constitutes one of the central spatial concepts of postmodern philosophy (Deleuze, Guattari, Derrida, Lyotard) and new media theories. Although virtuality has a long artistic tradition, it is only with the digitisation of space that it has become one of the fundamental concepts in contemporary theories of hyperspace. Here, I present two different conceptions of the virtual; first, Deleuze's understanding of the virtual in relation to the actual, and after that, a more technically-focused approach to the interpretations of the virtual within new media theories, which puts the virtual in opposition to the real.

The virtual – the actual

In Gilles Deleuze's philosophy, the concepts of the virtual and the actual appear as ontological categories which replace the pair of the intelligible (conceptual) and the sensible, also referred to as the pair of essence and existence.[9] "The actual" refers to the material and the current state of affairs, while "the virtual" describes an immaterial, past, and ideal event. The essential element of this definition is the relation of the

9 The conceptual pair of the virtual and the actual constitutes one of the fundamental dualities of Deleuze's ontology, which was introduced in his early writings on Bergson (1956) and discussed in more detail in his seminal work *Difference and Repetition/Différence et répétition* (doctoral dissertation, 1968) as well as in number of his later works. Although he often changes the meaning of his metaphysical categories according to the problems he is addressing, the question of the virtual in relation to the actual keeps emerging as a decisive element of his metaphysical system, remaining active up to his death. Deleuze focuses on this conceptual pair in his works such as *What is Philosophy?/Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* (1991), *Pourparlers* (1990), *The Logic of Sense / Logique du sens* (1969), and, lastly, in his posthumously published chapter (following his suicide in 1995) from the unfinished work *Le Virtuel et l'Actuel / The Virtual and the Actual*. For a more detailed treatment of this issue, see: Sasso, R., Villani, A. (eds.) (2003): *Le Vocabulaire de Gilles Deleuze,* 22–29.

virtual and the actual to the real: both concepts are linked to the real, but in different ways: the virtual is the real as an Idea, while the actual is the real as the actualisation of the virtual (Deleuze, 2011, 327). Deleuze points out that the virtual is not in opposition to the real, but only to the actual. The virtual possesses full reality by itself, but it should not be simply understood as a "reservoir" of potential possibilities.

Deleuze stresses that "the virtual must be defined as strictly a part of the real object – as though the object had one part of itself in the virtual into which it plunged as though into an objective dimension" (Deleuze, 2011, 327). For Deleuze, therefore, "every object is double without it being the case that the two halves resemble one another, one being a virtual image and the other an actual image. Virtual objects are incorporated in the real objects." (ibid.). To understand this duality, topology seems to be the appropriate tool; it explains the homeomorphism of topological spaces or objects residing in a four-dimensional space, such as the Klein bottle, which is a famous graphic representation of a non-orientable surface (a two-dimensional multiplicity).

In the perspective of Deleuze's distinction between actuality and virtuality, and the immersion of the object in the latter, it seems crucial for the reflection on the nature of the art object or art space to recognise the specific duality of the image (virtual and actual image) present in the object, i.e. the idea that the object only appears as real when it emerges as an actualization of virtuality. In The Logic of Sense (1981), Deleuze illustrates this connection in more detail, taking the field of painting as an example. Painting is supposed to represent what lies beneath representation, i.e. the virtual. But this "beneath" should not be understood as another plane, as a foundation that is under the actual (representation), but as having a more topological sense: the virtual and the actual are the other side of the same plane, like the other side of the coin: the virtual lies under the actual, but they are separated only by an infinitesimally thin edge.

In order to comprehend the regime of artistic representation or its relation to the real, it is important to understand Deleuze's emphasis that the actual opposite of the real is not the virtual, but the concept of the possible (possibility), and that the virtual should not be confused with the possible. At this point it is important to introduce another type of conceptual dichotomy, namely the relation between the possible and the real, which also differ because the first "refers to the form of identity in the concept, whereas the [second] designates a pure multiplicity in the Idea" (ibid., 331).

When Deleuze links the possible to identity, he inserts it in the regime of identity and resemblance; for Deleuze, the possible is thus a

category of Platonism – an entity is possible only if it is derived from the identical, it is therefore its copy. Here, we approach the essence of the difference between representation and simulation; the possible operates in the regime of representation and is therefore similar to the real – imitating, copying, and representing it – whereas the actualisation of the virtual is governed by the rule of difference and divergence – the actual is neither similar to nor a copy of the virtual, which it nevertheless embodies (Klepec, 1998, 146). The virtual does not exist outside bodies, on the contrary, it is inside them, even though the bodies do not bear a resemblance to it. Deleuze says:

> **"The actualisation of the virtual [...] always takes place by difference, divergence or differenciation. Actualisation breaks with resemblance as a process no less than it does with identity as a principle." (ibid.).**

Deleuze's philosophy of difference is fundamentally anti-Platonist. Plato argued that the Idea is truth, i.e. the existent. Reality crated by senses is supposed to be only a reflection of a higher reality or Idea; it is therefore a poor copy, while art is only a copy of a copy and as such degraded. This absolute Platonic idea became the model for copies and simulacra. Deleuze, on the other hand, argues that the Idea is a simulacrum, i.e. that it is essentially virtual, also referring to it as the "difference", which is the fundamental concept of the differential philosophy of difference and means that "the Idea is precisely real without being actual, differentiated without being differenciated, and complete without being entire" (Deleuze, 2011, 335).[10]

Deleuze's anti-Platonism[11] implies a denial of the existence of

10 Deleuze's third dualism, the distinction between differentiation and differenciation, is introduced here. Whereas differentiation is the totality of the diacritical relations that occur within the Idea-structure, differenciation is the process of actualisation of such a structure. Differenciation marks the actualisation of virtuality, but it forms only the first half of the notion of difference. What is differenciated must first be distinguished from itself, and only the virtual is different from itself. For Deleuze, thus, the virtual should not be imagined as a doubly latent or preceding phantom of the real; the virtual is not related to the process of realisation but to the process of actualisation or, as Deleuze also refers to it, differenciation: the virtual being this process (Klepec, 1998, 146–147).

11 Deleuze explicates Plato's ontological philosophy of the model, the copy, and the simulacrum in *Difference and Repetition* (1968) as well as in the chapter *Plato and the Simulacrum* of the treatise *The Logic of Sense*, published the following year. Plato distinguishes between two types of images, between "good" icons, which resemble the model – the Idea, and "bad" simulacra, which simulate resemblance even though they are different. The model is endowed with an original superior identity that belongs only to the Idea, while the copy is judged by its derived internal resemblance. The concept of the model acts as a criterion for distinguishing between imitations, good images or icons and bad, simulated images or phantasms. The simulacrum or phantasm (according to Plato) is not just a simple copy of a

an identity that determines the world of representation; "the modern world is one of simulacra", and modern thought is established on the ruins of representation and its concepts of identity, homogeneity, and imitation. The difference and the simulacrum, degraded in Platonism, come to the fore in postmodern theories of simulation and hyperreality. In the theories of simulation, semblance, and hyperreality (Baudrillard, Lyotard, Jameson, Derrida), the concept of difference is no longer present in comparative relations between model and copy (Plato), but appears in serial repetitions of the same elements, and in differential oppositions between the elements of serial, simulated images without an original.

The virtuality of digital space

Today, the question of the relationship between representation and simulation is part of the theoretical discourse on new media and virtuality; these describe the contemporary effects, which are produced by the virtualisation of the real and linked to the accelerated processes of digitisation at all social condition levels. In theoretical discourses on new media, the concepts of virtuality, simulation, and representation are often discussed by focusing on technical aspects, as the Deleuzian dichotomy of the virtual and the actual is usually replaced by another pair of opposites: the relation between the virtual and the real. The studies of virtuality are based on the analyses of the screen functions and the importance of interactivity, technological innovations (software or interfaces), psychological effects of immersion, and altered experiencing of temporal and spatial categories or altered sensory and body perception in interaction with the machine and cyberspace.

Oliver Grau (*Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion,* 2003) notes that the idea of virtuality in new media art has a long history, as it pertains to the tradition of illusionistic and immersive artistic representations, which changed according to the possibilities offered by the media of expression and technologies of the time, from illusionistic frescoes, perspectives, and panoramas, to digitally created illusions experienced interactively by the user. In this context, Deleuze highlights the specificities concerning the virtual environment of computer art. Computer art depends on the development of interfaces and software and through the possibility of interaction enables a metamorphosis of the very concept of image and its perception on the part of the user.

copy or an infinitely slackened resemblance, a degraded icon or image. The simulacrum is a demonic image which, unlike the icon, shows only an external resemblance, as it is constructed around a difference. If it creates an external effect of resemblance, it is only an illusion and not an inner principle of the image.

"In virtual reality, a panoramic view is joined by sensorimotor exploration of an image space that gives the impression of a 'living' environment. Interactive media have changed our idea of the image into one of a multisensory interactive space of experience with a time frame. In a virtual space, the parameters of time and space can be modified at will, allowing the space to be used for modeling and experiment. The possibility of access to such spaces and communication worldwide via data networks, together with the technique of telepresence, opens up a range of new options (Grau, 2003, 7).

Lev Manovich (*The Language of New Media,* 2001) explores the forms of virtual space through the genealogy of the screen and the evolution of representational apparatuses and technologies. According to a well-known definition of virtuality, cited also by Or Ettlinger, the virtual space is "the visible world of pictorial images: paintings, films, photographs, TV programmes, video games, or any other pictorial medium, i.e. physical devices that allow us to experience through them something that is not physically there. According to this interpretation, whatever is seen through any such device is considered to be located inside of virtual space, and therefore 'virtual' (Ettlinger, 2008, 6). In these devices, the screen, or rather the rectangle of a screen, acts as a cut into reality, which is now split into the normal physical space, i.e. the reality of the body, and the virtual space of the image inside the screen. From the point of view of technicialy-focused reflection, the division between real (physical) and virtual space now becomes crucial.

Manovich explains the relations between the body, the mind, and the experience of virtual space through the genealogy of the screen as a frame that has changed forms and functions in visual culture since the Renaissance:

> **"The visual culture of the modern period, from painting to cinema, is characterized by an intriguing phenomenon – the existence of another virtual space, another three-dimensional world enclosed by a frame and situated inside our normal space. The frame separates two absolutely different spaces that somehow coexist" (Manovich, 2001, 95).**

This is the most general definition of the screen as a "classical screen" and equally well describes the Renaissance painting (e.g. Alberti's formulation of the perspectival painting) and the modern computer screen.

Manovich goes on to say that a hundred years ago a new type of screen emerged, which he calls the "dynamic screen". The dynamic screen – for example cinema, television, and video – retains all the

properties of a classical screen but can also display an image changing over time. In addition, the dynamic screen modifies the relationship between the image and the spectator, or the particular viewing regime. "This relationship is already implicit in the classical screen, but now it fully surfaces. A screen's image strives for complete illusion and visual plenitude, while the viewer is expected to suspend disbelieve and to identify with the image. Although the screen is in reality only a window of limited dimensions positioned inside the viewer's physical space, the viewer is expected to focus entirely on what she sees in this window, focusing her attention on the representation and disregarding the physical space outside" (ibid., 96).

The development of the computer screen has enabled an interactive position of the viewer and real-time image manipulation – rather than displaying a single image, the computer screen typically displays multiple co-existing windows, which can also be compared with zapping, the quick switching of television channels that allows the viewer to follow more than one programme; in both cases the viewer has the possibility of simultaneously observing several images. As a fourth type of screen, Manovich describes VR technologies. Paradoxically, with VR, the screen disappears altogether. VR typically uses a head-mounted display whose images completely fill the viewer's visual field. The viewer is no longer looking at a rectangular, flat surface located at a certain distance that acts as a window into another space but is now fully situated within this other space. More precisely, we can say that the two spaces – the real, physical space and the virtual simulated, space – coincide. The virtual space, previously confined to a painting or a cinema screen, now completely encompasses the real space. Frontality, rectangular surface, difference in scale have disappeared, and at certain level even the screen has vanished (ibid., 97). Manovich's genealogy of the modern screen is focused on the classical type of screen introduced by Renaissance paintings – conceived as a window on the world – and its subtypes: the dynamic cinema and television screens and the interactive screen introduced by digital virtuality. The author also draws attention to the different types of temporality that these "screens" establish: in the case of the perspective image, the static image freezes a moment for eternity, the dynamic recording (film) represents moving images in the past, while the computer image also enables interaction and image manipulation in real time. At this point, it is important to highlight the differences in the position of the viewer's body in relation to the screen. The Renaissance painting screen with its perspectivally organised space presupposes a static position of the viewer, who is motionless and monocularly observes the virtual space expanding towards the

horizon. This immobility of the viewer, in turn, presupposes a dynamic mental projection into spatial virtuality; the more the virtual image becomes mobile, the more the viewer becomes immobile and passive in the mode of its reception. In the tradition of representation, viewer assumes a double identity: he or she exists simultaneously in the physical space of his or her body and in the represented, virtual space of the screen; the splitting of the subject is the trade-off for the new mobility of the image (ibid., 107–109).

Another important distinction when reflecting on the relationship between the viewer's body and the virtuality of space (in the context of classical or dynamic representation) is the difference between representation and simulation. In the tradition of the art of simulation, which can be exemplified by the illusionistic spaces of traditional artistic genres, such as frescoes and mosaics, it was important that these were inextricably linked with architecture, enabling the viewer to create a continuity between the virtual and the physical space. In the tradition of simulation, the viewer existed in a single coherent space – the physical space and the virtual space, which continued in the image. As the tradition of simulation sought to merge virtual and physical space, rather than separate them, it focused on finding size correspondences between them and different possibilities that would encourage the viewer to move freely in physical space. In contrast, the tradition of representation aspired to create a moving and movable image that could be moved into any space, which implied that the previous continuity could no longer be guaranteed. For this reason, the image represented a virtual space, clearly distinguished from the physical space where both the image and the viewer were located.

The interaction of viewers with new digital media stimulates the mental projection of the viewer into virtual space, neglecting physicality: mental interaction is emphasised, while physical activity is minimised or neglected. The mind, which is itself immaterial, can "survive" in digital space, unlike the body, which is rendered immobile. Digital technology separates the mind from the real body; at best, the body is mapped into virtual space in the form of an avatar. It is a new form of being, where the viewer, hypothetically, moves freely in a space without a body, and thus the subject becomes a bodiless spectator. The Internet is an infinite cyberspace, which gives rise to worlds within worlds as well as to new spatial and temporal forms. With new forms of being and interpersonal communication, digital space has the potential to transform real, physical space, which today is primarily a technologically supported and media-augmented space.

4. TECHNO-ART

The relationships between body, mind, and space in virtual space also have an inevitable impact on relationships in physical space, as physical distance and orientation are losing their traditional meaning. Digital spaces create a reality that is different from the actual reality – it is no longer conceived as a comprehensive and holistically unified reality, but as a site where different realities and spatial possibilities converge. Today we live in a technologically transformed space that has become our everyday reality; according to Strehovec, in fact, the cyberspace created by the interaction of man and machine causes the internalisation of human existence into a world of man-made machines, which in turn significantly influences our mental processes (Strehovec, 1994).

Techno-art is art that is produced in this new hybrid, analogue-digital space. Its creative process is not necessarily and exclusively limited to digital environment, but combines practices where digital processes are intrinsically intertwined in different forms and domains of artistic production. This type of art is defined by techno-aesthetics, which, according to Miško Šuvaković (2001), is "a postmodern theory that describes, explains, and interprets contemporary society, culture, and art using technological information models for representing the world and creating a new (other, artificial) techno-reality pertaining to the world of people and machines. It is a shift from the production of the object (artefact) to the production of the world itself (context, ambience, reality)" (Šuvaković, 2001, 9).

Techno-art, media art, and hybrid art practices (virtual reality or VR, interactive installation, augmented reality or AR, bioart, nanoart, genetic art, robotic art, art of artificial life, digital animation) are experimentally oriented, transcending genre and cultural limitations through transdisciplinary approaches. This does not only reflect the artistic curiosity or a desire to confront the new and the unknown, but is often also a way of dealing with ethical and socio-political themes or even with critical areas linked to overlooked, problematic, or neglected aspects of science itself and its research processes.

Technology-based art creates hypotheses of new possible worlds. Digital and analogue layers are hybridly intertwined in creative processes: "Large portions of the image resources of our natural environment are combined with artificial images to produce mixed realities, where it is frequently impossible to distinguish between simulacrum and original. [...] In the digitally produced virtual artwork, ''being'' now means ''process''; finished and absolute are replaced by relativity, stability by dynamics" (Grau, 2018, 74). Grau also argues that within the

specific framework of the system of art, media art enters increasingly into discourse and debate on today's crucial social issues, such as the relationship between humans and machines, genetic engineering, and globalisation: "Media art is, therefore, an essential component of how contemporary societies may achieve an adequate self-description and by which means they can seek to attain a critical distance to the increasing pace of change" (ibid., 76). These changes, brought about by the increasing digitisation of everyday life and art, are often linked to a change in sensory perception; Grau observes that in the virtual world and in the framework of virtual reality, the projection and incorporation of spectators into artificial bodies, which are, nevertheless, merely images, will enable the extension of the sensory-cognitive experience and the experience of evocative phenomena that influence our consciousness. Today, audiovisual media, computers, and telecommunication technologies converge to form a polysensory and virtual hypermedium, which changes the cultural history of our sensory apparatus as well as the dynamics of virtual image spaces (ibid., 69).

5. CONCLUSION

Digitisation, information technologies, and cybernetics have established new standards of understanding and creating space also in the field of contemporary artistic production; today, space and technology no longer appear as separate (parallel) categories (as in modernism), but as intrinsically intertwined concepts, which place immateriality, virtuality, disembodiment, fluidity, and dynamism at the core of contemporary aesthetic experience, both at the level of artistic realisation and experiencing art.

Contemporary art and science are emerging in a period characterised by a paradigmatic technological shift. Techno-art, similarly as science, appropriates the technologies of its time and experimentally introduces new research processes and technological tools to address social, cultural, or aesthetic issues. The development of contemporary digital and information technology undoubtedly opens up and encourages new possibilities for artistic research, but the dilemma pointed out by Paul Virilio in the light of techno-science progress seems somehow justified. In *Information Bomb* (2000), Virilio observes that modern science has gradually become techno-science, which, in blurring the distinction between the technological (operational) instrument (i.e. technology) and experimental research, no longer seeks to reveal the coherent truth that will serve humanity. This slippage is treacherous, and Virilio casts it in a negative light:

> **"Indeed, if the 'experience of thought' does in fact lie at the origin of the experimental sciences, we cannot but notice today the decline of that analogue mental process, in favour of instrumental, digital procedures, which are capable, we are told, of boosting knowledge. Operational reality of the technical instrument, resolutory truth of scientific thought – two fundamentally distinct aspects of knowledge, which are fused here without anyone apparently becoming alerted to the situation. Science, which is not so attached to 'truth' as once it was, but more to immediate 'effectiveness', is now drifting towards its decline [...]" (Virilio, 2000, 2–3).**

While Virilio refers to techno-science as a decline of the analogue mental process in favour of instrumental digital procedures in science, A. Nordmann, using the example of nano techno-science, notes that the conditions of truth or falsity, functionality of devices or usefulness of substances no longer serve as its epistemic standards; instead, nanoscience is rather an exploratory attempt to claim foreign territory and to inhabit a new world or an hitherto unexplored region of the world (Nordmann, 2004). Epistemic success is therefore a kind of technical achievement, the elucidation of liminal or extreme aspects of reality, the conquest of invisible topological dimensions revealed by modern optical technologies, biotechnologies, and biogenetics.

The question that could be asked by analogy is whether contemporary technologically-oriented artistic production (techno-art) – in a similar way as contemporary technoscience – replaces the epistemological value of discovering the truth and the unknown with the banal operativity or effects of technological spectacle. At this point, we refer to the reflections by H. Bredekamp (2015), who highlights the active potential of technological images; he believes that scientific and technological imaginaries do not consists only of passive illustrations, but also include dynamic actors, which participate in the epistemological production of knowledge. Scientific illustrations in the natural sciences do not merely represent, but also transform, clarify, and communicate findings in form of images that actively participate in the formation of knowledge as culture. When techno-art is not just a technological experiment, but a cognitive-sensory invention that hypothesises new spatial, semantic, and sensory perspectives within a transdisciplinary interplay of scientific, artistic, and philosophical dimensions, it achieves a transformative potential that both mirrors and transforms the wider social reality.

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Art and boundaries On the genome and models of the expanded art space

JOŽEF MUHOVIČ

Preamble

At the turn of the last millennium, Peter Sloterdijk (1989, 271) wrote that the present-day culture is a great epilogue machine that produces concluding words and, by undoing what pertains to yesterday, produces a glimmer of orientation in the present. During this time, the modern brain, according to Sloterdijk, is still warm from the flow of the last waves created by great epilogues. There is a multitude of post-rhetorics, for example post-Freudianism, post-Marxism, post-structuralism, post-metaphysics, post-historicism—who would not love them for their enthusiasm in bidding farewell to the past, given that the future already looks hazy and intangible?

1. ART OF THE BASIC AND EXPANDED FIELD

Hypothesis

Analogous applies to the field of art. Here, too, the brain is still warm from the flow of the famous waves of the concluding words accompanying the excessively limiting or excessively serious past, which during the last three hundred years flooded in succession the European cultural space: Gesamtkunstwerk, avant-garde movements, objets trouvés, Beuys' erweiterter Kunstbegriff, the collapse of aesthetic difference, the social construction of artistic reality, etc. The more impetuous the concluding words, the sooner the present space opens up for new conceptions and trends. While concluding words do not necessarily bring long-term results, periods, with their epilogic genius, can nevertheless achieve a relatively high degree of self-reflexive awareness in a given moment.

My hypothesis is therefore that in order to trace the nature of transformations in the art space of Modernism, especially late Modernism, it is sufficient, as a first step, to follow the concluding words that the newly emerging ideologies, trends, and movements express in relation to the art of the past, starting from the Enlightenment up to the present day. These words serve as a basis for trying to unravel the logic of change in the morphology, phenomenology and axiology of art.

Time frame

The time frame of the research is the era of modernity. It is the period of the ascent towards the modernist zenith and the period of descent from the zenith. This descent is not characterised only by the waning of the modernist vigour, but also and mainly by a certain impatient need for change, for a post-period that would be able to convincingly suggest, at least to some extent, "that something is in progress, because something else has passed" (Sloterdijk, 1989, 166). The upward path has the character of progression, the downward path the character of deconstruction. As a philosophical concept, Modernism is a modern era movement that characterises the cultural, political, philosophical, and artistic spheres of the last three centuries in European history.[1] On close examination, it represents the secularisation of ideas and perspectives that were already conceived in Christian metaphysics and entered

1 The beginning of Modernism is defined differently according to the context of the discourse. In the humanities it coincides with the High Renaissance, in economics with the industrialisation of the mid-18th century, in political science with the French Revolution of the late 18th century (political Modernism), in literary and art history with the emergence of aesthetic Modernism at the beginning of the 19th century, and, in terms of stylistic labels, with the waning 19th century (Osterhammel, 2009, 1827).

the secular sphere after the rejection of any relevance of transcendent dimensions.[2] In its late phase, it is characterised by the following processes: individuation, through the transformation of old forms of belonging to a community; massification, through the adoption of standardised behaviour and conformist ways of reacting; desacralisation, through the replacement of "big stories" of sacred origin by a "scientific interpretation of the world"; rationalisation, through the dominance of the pragmatic mind, technical efficiency, and the free market; and finally, universalisation, through the global expansion of a single social model that, in its cosmopolitanism, presents itself as the "end of history" (Benoist, Champetier, 2018, 31).

Such structured matrix is also the context of the discussion on the nature of transformations in art, which, in the space of Modernism, is marked by characteristic phase shifts, such as Gesamtkunstwerk, avant-garde movements, objets trouvés, and Beuys' Erweiterter Kunstbegriff. The antecedents of this discussion are the birth of anthropocentrism and secularisation from the spirit of the Enlightenment, and the birth of aesthetics from the spirit of a philosophical sense for sensuality, emancipation and system.

Gesamtkunstwerk

At the turn of the 18th to the 19th century, the idea and practice of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*[3] began to pave the way for the radical transformation of the field of art: at first with the philosophical shift from the sacred to the secular, and then with the reform of opera. In this context, the total work of art was not only a "multimedial" union of all the arts in one piece, as this would be called in today's era modern speak, but contained at its core the tendency towards the emancipation of art. This meant that after 1750, when philosophical aesthetics was "invented", "good works" could emigrate from the territory of religious and historicist basis to the autonomous and secular aesthetic territory. In this process the works retained their "redemptive relevance" (Rettungsrelevanz), thanks to the cult of the artist's "genius" and the interest in the problem of wholeness in the form of the then-popular concept: the notion of "system".

It became central wherever the notion of Creation as a concept for Wholeness with a capital letter was in crisis, and also wherever there was a lack of faith in man as the master of nature and the absolute

2 Cf. Benoist, Champetier, 2018, 31–32

3 The idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk emerged during the Romantic era. The term was first used by the writer and philosopher Eusebius Trahndorff in *Ästhetik oder Lehre von der Weltanschauung und Kunst* (Aesthetics or Doctrine of Worldview and Art) in 1827. 22 years later, the term reappeared in Richard Wagner's *Die Kunst und die Revolution* (Art and Revolution, 1849), and it remains unclear whether Wagner was familiar with Trahndorff's essay.

creator of human history. The concept of system neutrally bridged the distance between the Wholeness belonging to God – the Creator and the wholeness belonging to man in the role of creator. Where the real creators, God and man, had problems with wholeness—and a series of system concepts indicates their existence—the artists as fantastic system creators stepped to the forefront. Whole people for wholeness, and so from that point on, the Whole has its domicile in the work of art, which, in turn, has domicile in the system with a small and a capital S. The works that were sought and appreciated were those that achieved the highest degree of systemic wholeness. In philosophy, the fusion of the Whole, the System, and the Work of Art first occurred when Schelling proclaimed that "the actual way in which philosophy has to be understood is aesthetic, and therefore [...] art is the true organon of philosophy". This, as Odo Marquard argues, is the origin of the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk (Marquard, 1983, 40–41).

The subsequent criticism of the "religion of the Gesamtkunstwerk" showed (cf. Strawinsky 1945, 90–91) that the arts encompassed by Gesamtkunstwerk lose their artistic freshness due to the totalitarian application of the concept and too often remain mere epiphenomena of philosophical speculation; nevertheless, the expansion of the artistic territory from the heteronomous and religious-historicist sphere to the autonomist and aesthetic sphere remained in place.

Avant-garde movements

The "historical" avant-gardes, which emerged at the turn of the 20th century, include movements such as, *Expressionism*, *Futurism*, *Cubism*, *Surrealism*, and *Dadaism*, which were born out of a particular relationship to the concept of "progress" and out of opposition to the existing culture. The main characteristics of avant-gardists were industriousness, an adventurous tendency towards progression, and a *nihilistic* belief that traditional art was "dead" and everything had to be started anew. In contrast to today's *trendsetters*, who are only able to launch short-lived fashions and are content with that, the avant-gardists self-identify as the forerunners of fundamental, long-term, and historically-binding shifts. This aspect of their work is nowadays subject of doubt and criticised as authoritarian, because throughout history many avant-garde conceptions of progress showed that even the loftiest notion of progress is nothing but a leap of the mind into a world of high goals, which in practice often tends to translate into a farcically hard landing. Or as the French writer Romain Gary expresses in a well-known aphorism: "Les avant-gardistes sont des gens qui ne savent pas exactement où ils veulent aller, mais qui sont les premiers là-bas".[4]

The avant-gardists were not satisfied with the Enlightenment-Romantic model of the artist-genius, who in an ivory tower creates extraordinary value in the hope of being noticed by society one day. For them, this type of energy flow between artistic and social empirics was absolutely too extensive. Such a model did not offer the basis to consider changing social life, let alone achieve progress. The intention of the historical avant-gardes was therefore to change social life much faster and much more actively through artistic revolution. However, since the belief that this could be obtained only by artistic means was weak from the start, the historical avant-gardes tried to ally with the political avant-garde. In Italy, Futurism embraced fascism, the Russian avant-garde moved toward Bolshevism, and Surrealism in the 1930s was drawn toward French communism. These relations were uncertain, sometimes friendly, sometimes opposing. With their autocratic structure, fascism and communism represented a marked contrast to the anarchic way towards which the artistic avant-gardes gravitated in the process of changing the world. Despite this, the artistic avant-gardes saw and sought support in the political avant-gardes. When Italian fascism fell, Futurism ended; when communist socialism took over in Soviet Russia, the artistic avant-gardes experienced a sobering experience in the conservatism of socialist realism; when communist socialism withered away, the left-wing artistic avant-gardes lost ground.

Two facts can be deduced from this. Firstly, that the historical avant-gardes consciously—by force of circumstances, but nevertheless—sacrificed the autonomy of art to the heteronomy of political issues, and secondly, that the collaboration with the political avant-gardes did not ultimately help them to achieve their goals, as in pursuing the hypothesis of the political progressiveness both merely languished, deactualised, and grew old (Fleckler, Schieder, Zimmermann, 2000; Beyme, 2005). There are lessons for the future that can be learnt from both outcomes.

Objets trouvés

A third aspect of the transformation of the field and concept of fine art is represented by *objets trouvés* and Duchampian readymades from the beginning of the last century, which, in the form of a shift from the "retinal" to the "mental" (Tomkins, 1999, 50, 148), denote the expansion of art from the production of artefacts to the finding and secondary semanticisation of facts (Benjamin, 1982, 466; Muhovič, 2014, 55–59).

The move away from metaphysical fictions, which at the zenith of

4 "The avantgarde are people who don't exactly know where they want to go, but are the first to get there."

Modernism became subliminally incorporated in artistic artefacts and interpretations, understandably leads towards their demystification. The positive side of the turn from the metaphysics of the sublime to the factual consists in maintaining contact with the everyday life and drawing the unarranged world between the horizons of artistic interest. On the other hand, the downside undoubtedly lies in the danger of slipping from one extreme, i.e. from the idealised intention of transcending what is given in an artificially made (artefactual) form, to the other extreme, consisting in an intellectualistic adopting of factual, the already given, and the ready-made, which might well be an even more intense fiction than the metaphysics of "pure plasticity" and the "sublime".

Der erweiterte Kunstbegriff

It is a modernisation and extrapolation of the avant-gardes' intention to change social life through artistic revolution, but this time with different means and partially different alliances. The term "der erweiterte Kunstbegriff" describes the central notion of artistic theory and practice by the sculptor and performer Joseph Beuys (1921–1986). Starting from the belief that every human being is an artist and as such capable of creating art, Beuys' interpretation of the syntagm "expanded concept of art" understands human creativity in a very broad sense and is conditioned by his ideological adoption of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy as well as of Steiner's notion of the "social organism" and "social creativity" (Beuys & Beuys & Beuys, 1990, 270). The latter, according to Beuys, could produce world- and society-changing social art in the form of so-called social sculpture (Soziale Plastik).

In the 1960s, when a new satiation and a new complacency raised their flag over the Euro-American West, Beuys' expanded concept of art revived the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk by means of multimedia and in a pan-artistic way, drawing from avant-garde movements (Situationism, Fluxus, Happenings) and the political and social discourse of the New Left with elements of anarchism, subversion, de-aestheticisation, internationalism, and emancipation. The problematisation of the concept of art by objets trouvés and readymades reached its end in the 1960s. Beuys' "expansion of the concept of art" is an attempt to revive it using new foundations. It brought into play a series of radical ideas about the role of art in society, the role of artists and their materials, production, audience, perception, communication, etc. The artist's desire for a direct relationship with the recipient and the social environment significantly changed the traditional conception of the work of art. In the new perspective, not only artefactual products can appear as forms of work of art as was the norm before, but also—and

even predominantly—situations (installation, environment), interactions (performance), processes (happening), concepts, communications, institutions, ideological activisms, the politics in which art is supposed to be actively involved, and even the social order itself. Under the banner of "social sculpture", Beuys' vision draws into the field of art the entire social sphere, all areas and forms of social life and social creativity. In this framework, the artist is not a producer of "spiritual objects", generally characterised by communication difficulties and which we try to approach by various forms of hermeneutics and exegesis, but a medium, an agent, and a catalyst of social and political life, having the function which in primitive societies was performed by shamans, but today seems to be in the hands of the artist.

Beuys' "Erweiterung" has its basis in the demystification of the high modernist postulates of purity, sublimity and elevated aestheticism. This demystification was prompted by Neo-Dadaism and American abstract painting, which, in the middle of the previous century and in the form of radical minimalism (F. Stella, R. Ryman) both bade farewell to the "idealism of the spirit" in favour of the "anti-idealism" of pure objectivity (Meinhardt, 2008, 82–85). The consequences of the shift of attention from image, appearance and reference to the objectness of the artefact, from the artefact to facticity, from aesthetic to functional perception, and from art space to the space of social action have been numerous and their effects extend into our time.

The first consequence was the crossing and blurring of the boundaries between art and life, which was the deep desire of the representatives of Happenings in the early 1960s. This was followed by a departure from the traditional (painting and sculpture) medium and a turn towards radically different ways of communicating meanings, in particularly meanings with a discursive, contextual, and socio-critical note and provenance (Seel, 1996, 17–38; Menke, 1993, 391–407).

The shift away from the old media, characterised by a high degree of communicative difficulty, brought into focus new visual and digital media that are based on a high degree of communicability (Schapiro, 1978, 222–224; Muhovič, 2018, 28–51). This resulted in the computerisation and virtualisation of life and had a sobering effect due to the problems brought about by the consequence of this consequence: the derealisation of reality (Welsch, 1996, 9-61; Gumbrecht, 2004, 161).

On the charisma of the basic and expanded state

This is roughly the state of affairs since the reinforcement of the widespread perception that history, according to Sloterdijk (1989, 266–267), has no timetable and that we are making our way through a processual

no-man's-land to the best of our ability. The possibility for the unbridled realities to be expressed and their predictability are both limited. We only know that we can learn about life retrospectively, but we must live it in prospectively (Kierkegaard, 1933, 203). The same is true of art.

From the point of view of the visual arts, the following expansions of their space, concept and competences can be noticed during the historical wave of Modernism:

- Gesamtkunstwerk marks the transition of art from a heteronomous commitment to the religious-historicist tradition towards aesthetic autonomy;
- the avant-gardes support the expansion of the space of artistic autonomy (back) into the space of political heteronomy, favouring the concept of progress as well as artistic means and strategies;
- objets trouvés imply the expansion of the territory of creativity from creative to recreative processes, from the production of semanticised artefacts to the secondary semanticisation of facts;
- Beuys's Erweiterter Kunstbegriff represents a continuation of the avant-garde efforts by "other means", having at their core the expansion of the artist's activity from being the producer of art objects to becoming a trans-métier catalyst (initiator, guide) of social processes, whose ultimate goal is obtaining "world- and society-transforming" effects, driven by the belief in their healing power.

During the course of the described transformations, art with an adjective (fine arts, musical art, literary art, etc.) seems to move away from its centre and is in a situation where it is supposed to discover its centre outside the area of its own métier and competences. Its medium, métier and competences appear to be insufficient, because they are too specialised and have to be combined or even completely replaced by multi- and trans-artistic competences that the "artist with an adjective" does not possess (e.g. activist, managerial, new-media, socio-cultural, and similar competences). In this perspective, the diversity of artistic disciplines becomes a hindrance or a secondary consideration, and everything that makes artists different is perceived as irrelevant, accidental or obsolete. Art is increasingly becoming art without an adjective, unisex. In short: in the shadow of industrialisation, democratisation, market economy, scientification, post-industrialisation and digitisation, the ways in which art "engages with the existing", the medium, nature,

ART OF THE BASIC FIELD	ART OF THE EXPANDED FIELD
Artefact	Fact
Spiritual object	Incoming event
Closed work of art	Open work of art
Form	Interaction
Solidity	Fluidity
Aesthetic perception	Functional perception
Material production	Conceptual production
Formativity	Informativity
High degree of non-communicativeness	High degree of provocativeness
Production of artefacts	Social construction
System of signs	System of ideas
Métier competences	Multimedia and transmedia education
Métier competences	Socio-cultural and political competences
Intimate/complex	Engaged/activist
Personal	Public
Emphasising the difference	Blurring the difference
between art and life	between art and life
Constructive	Critical
Representative	Manifestation
Intrinsic	Extrinsic

FIGURE 1: The relationship between the art of the primary field and the art of the expanded field. There are contrasts between the two paradigms, which can be represented by a certain number of ontic, production, and target differences.

society and man, have radically changed over a period of two to three centuries.

The result of this media and competence transformation is the coexistence of the art of the "basic" and "extended" fields (cf. Frelih, 2018, 6), which we witness today. The art of the basic field is characterised by an adjective related to the discipline and attributed on the basis of art's competences and scope, whereas the art of the expanded field has no adjective. There are contrasts between the two types or paradigms, which can be represented in the form of a certain number of ontic, production, competence and goal differences, which are shown in the diagram in Figure 1.

Despite the simplifications, the diagram suggests that talking about the paradigms of the basic and the expanded fields of art is realistic and provable, even though the paradigms in contemporary experience and practice do not only cohabit, but are also intertwined and intermixed. The paradigm of the basic field is productive of forms and

artefact-centred. Within its framework, the artist is the producer of unique, analogous, contemplative, representational "spiritual objects", which, on the part of the recipient, presuppose specialised knowledge of the métier and competences, and on the part of the artist, "a sincere and humble submission to a spiritual object of the other person, an experience which is not given automatically, but requires preparation and purity of spirit", as Meyer Schapiro wrote in the middle of the last century (1978, 224). The ultimate goal of this paradigm is "the sheer joy over the independent existence of something that is excellent", to use the pithy words by Iris Murdoch (1971, 86). In order to fulfil this, the paradigm's productive processes have to lead to the "perfection of form" that is capable of inviting the individual into non-possessive contemplation, protecting them from the shortcuts of mental myopia and self-centred daydreaming (adapted from ibid.).

The paradigm of the expanded field, on the other hand, is meaning-making and socio-centric. It represents the expansion of the artist's activity from the level of a producer specialised in their métier to that of a supra-disciplinary, multimedia and multicultural catalyst of social and political developments, for whom artistic materials and creative processes are merely a means of promoting "world- and society-changing" projects. In this context, the artist acts bona fide, so that their ideas about the direction and manner in which these processes develop are in fact the most appropriate for reality, and not just what they consider as something that can be self-satisfied. An adventurous and provocative concept of the mind is therefore the answer to the postmodern slogan "everything is permitted".

2. THE MODEL OF ART SPACE AND ART SPACE AFTER EXPANSION

Based on what has been presented, the following questions arise spontaneously: What actually happened with the expansion of art space during modernity? Did this space merely increase, or did it also change? And if there was a change, what actually changed?

To find out, it would be necessary to have a comparison with the situation before the expansion, i.e. a structural model of the basic and non-expanded art space or at least a "standard model" of this space to which the new situation could be compared. Here, I use the term "art space" in opposition to the more widespread and established term "art system" in order to turn attention from the organisational-technical and institutional aspects of art in a given time and society (education,

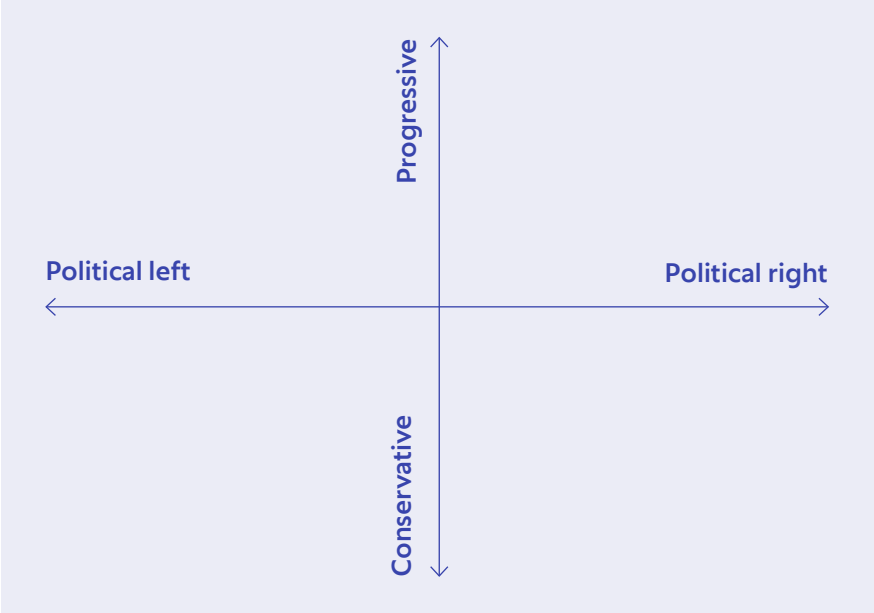

FIGURE 2: The coordinates of the political space in democracies.

production, reception, promotion, exhibiting, etc.) to the deep-structural matrix of conditions that define the very need for art and the general assumptions of its articulation, axiology and pragmatics. Since in aesthetics, at least to my knowledge, there is no theory of art space and, consequently, no standard model of art space, it is necessary to take an indirect path, the path of analogy. The closest analogy is with the theory of political space, which the contemporary political science offers in a reflective form. The analogy, of course, does not presuppose the equivalence of political and artistic phenomena. This is sufficiently evident from the fact that what in the modern period is referred to as "political" is created by the reduction of authentic human beings, on whom art counts, to the "subjects of interest", on whom politics counts. The basis of the analogy can by all means be the structure of the operational matrix.

Prototypical art space model

As the starting point, we can take the space of democratic political arrangements, which is favoured today. The political system in democracies needs to have the capability to resolve and mitigate two fundamental social conflicts: economic and cultural. The economic conflict is manifested in the fact that democracies are based on a market economy, and that they also share the wealth gained through market surplus according to market laws, i.e. extremely unequally. This conflict has been traditionally mirrored in the political system by the distinction between

right and left political parties. Left-wing parties strive for state regulation of economy, redistribution of market surpluses, and a strong welfare state. Right-wing parties argue that redistribution leads to less and less of what could be redistributed, and that too much state regulation causes a decline in competition and efficiency. However, the fundamental cultural conflict in a democratic society manifests in the difference between those who have an interest in preserving the social tradition and those who wish to transcend it in the first place. Democratic elections ensure that economic and cultural changes are always accepted by the majority, thus allowing the system to reach integrative decisions (Lehmann, 2020, 6–7). The picture of such a political space has therefore two coordinates, adapted to the fundamental social conflicts: an abscissa representing economic tensions with opposing left and right parties, and an ordinate showing cultural tensions with conservatism at the bottom and progressivism at the top, as can be seen in Figure 2.

Structural analogies between the political space and art space are undoubtedly risky and dubious. Nevertheless, in the context of a dubious analogy, they can be helpful in providing guidance for our reflections about art space and in verifying these reflections through the art empirics of the past and present. A fundamental characteristic of any political space is therefore the resolution of social conflicts at the economic and cultural levels. If events and developments in art space are observed on the basis of this assumption, it can be concluded that despite the undeniable existence of conflict in art space, conflict resolution is neither its primary task nor its characteristic trait. On closer reflection, this is… differentiation. Differentiation of informative qualities. Analogous to the resolution of conflicts in the political sphere, differentiation takes place in a coordinate system whose base consists of the axis of pragmatics, which is comparable to the axis of economic tensions in the political space, and the axis of axiology, which in the political space is comparable to the axis of cultural tensions.

The axis of pragmatics. Since antiquity, the differentiation on the axis of pragmatics has been marked by the distinction between the so-called *artes vulgares* and *artes liberales*, which differ in the degree of their dependence on immediate practical utility. The former, with a high degree of dependence, would today be referred to as "applied arts", and the latter, with a high degree of independence, could be regarded as "liberal arts". Due to the artisanal-technical nature of the *artes vulgares*, the Greek term "techne" (Gr. τέχνη) came into use as their common denominator, while the Greek term "poiesis" (Gr. Ποίησις) became the common denominator of the *artes liberales*, describing their imaginative

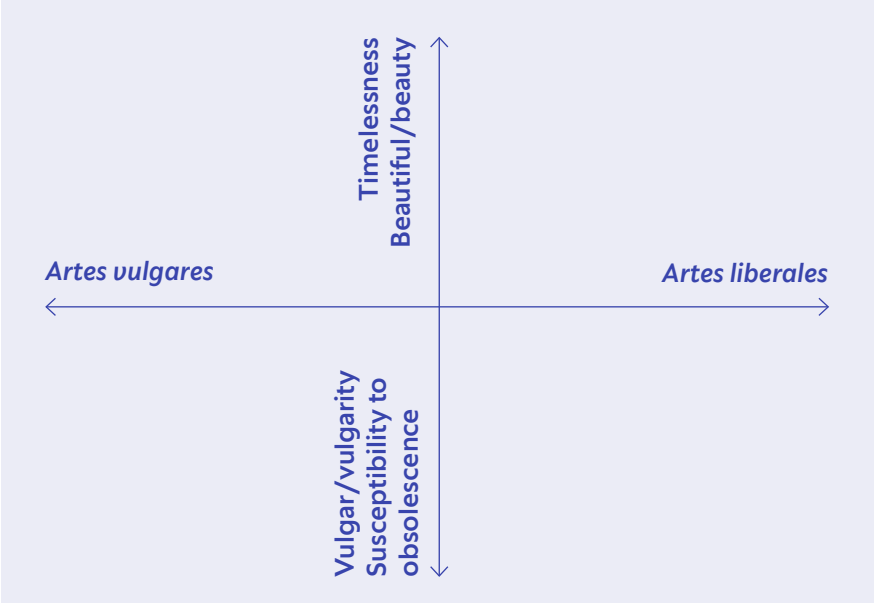

FIGURE 3: The model of a prototypical art space consists of an abscissa of pragmatics with the applicative *artes vulgares* on the left and the *artes liberales* on the right and of an ordinate of axiology with the standards susceptible to obsolescence that apply to ordinary presented below and the timeless standards of beauty indicated above.

and poetic nature.[5] While it is true that from the very beginning only musical art was included among the *artes liberales*, i.e. among the humanistic disciplines, such as grammar, rhetoric, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry and astronomy, it is equally true that between 1400 and 1500 the visual arts and their genres were added to the category, assuming a prominent role, and from the 16th century onwards the term became synonymous with the "fine arts", which, although also committed to utility or pragmatics, are of a higher, spiritual, archetypal, perennial rank.

The axis of axiology. Roughly speaking, art was not born as an ideal but as its measure. The forms produced by art are created to establish and consolidate a sense of the reality and immediacy of the ideal, but especially to measure the direction of the ideal and the degree of its realisation and presence in the world (Muhovič, 2002, 15). What I call "the ideal" in this context has always been present in a concrete form in the social conception of beauty. It has been a frequent subject of reflection since the mid-18th century, when the concept of "beauty" became the central category of the newly founded philosophical discipline of aesthetics – the study of beauty in nature and art. The litmus test of

5 For the old distinction between "poíesis" and "techne", see Sloterdijk 1989, 154–155.

beauty ideals is the art that realises and presents the ideals in a sensuously explicit manner by means of aesthetically shaped forms. These forms compete with each other in the degree of their approximation to the ideal, testing its attainability, presence, and relevance. The verification takes place on the axis of axiology, which, through art space gradually ranges from the vulgar—which is characterised by normality, routine, simplicity, and susceptibility to obsolescence—to the beautiful, characterised by invention, originality, complexity and timelessness.[6] The situation is illustrated in Figure 3.

Models of transformations in Modernism

Although the model of the prototypical art space is provisional, its conceptualisation and structure can nevertheless contribute to the verification or at least contextualisation of the expansions discussed in the first part of this paper.

If we compare the model of the prototypical art space with the art space of the 18th and 19th centuries (Enlightenment, Pre-Romanticism, Romanticism), which had at its core the departure from historicism and classical models and whose most prominent feature was the systemic ideology of the Gesamtkunstwerk, we can notice transformations on both of its base coordinates. On the abscissa of pragmatics, attention then shifted completely to the territory of the "fine arts". Consequently, the differentiation between *artes vulgares* and *artes liberales* on the axis was replaced by a differentiation between the semantic heteronomy of art (art in the service of religious, historicist and representational expectations) and its semantic and aesthetic autonomy, of which aesthetics became the guarantor. Aesthetics, as mentioned, made it possible for the "good" works of art to emigrate from the sphere of religious and historicist basis to the autonomous and secular aesthetic sphere while retaining their "redemptive" relevance. On the ordinate of axiology, attention was cautiously but increasingly clearly leaving behind the axiological early poles of the vulgar and the beautiful, moving in the direction shaped by the philosophers Friedrich Schelling and Friedrich Nietzsche, who adopted the conceptual pair of the Apollonian and the Dionysian. Thus, the concept of the Apollonian started beating the rhythm to the beauty ideals with moderation and harmony, while the concept of the Dionysian not only profiled the identity of the vulgar with expression and excess, but also raised its rating. Figure 4 shows the coordinate system of the post-Enlightenment art space.

6 Or as George Steiner writes: "the painting, the composition are wagers on lastingness. They embody the dur désir de durer (the harsh, demanding desire for durance)" (Steiner, 1989, 27).

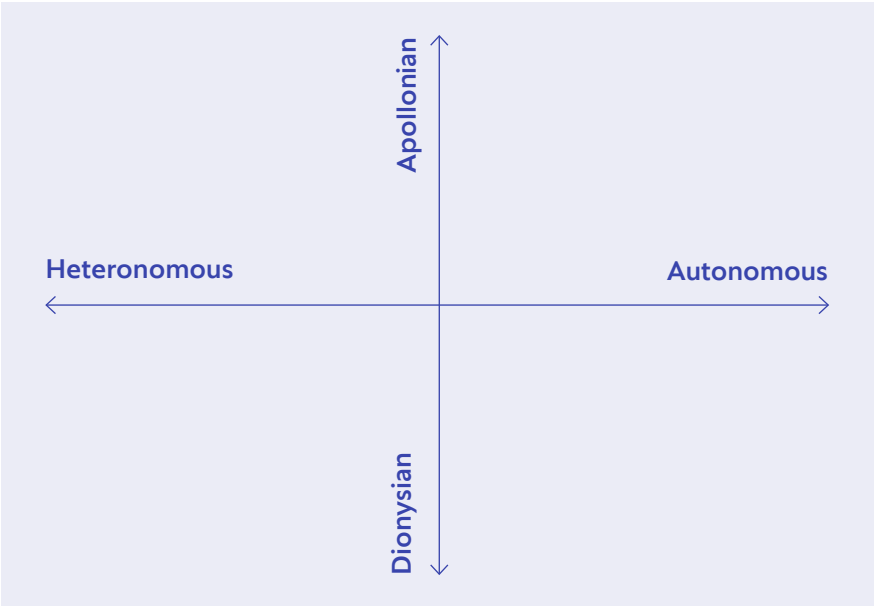

FIGURE 4: Coordinate system of the post-Enlightenment art space.

The emergence of the historical avant-gardes and readymades in art space shook especially the Apollonian-Dionysian axiological axis, which still persisted in the form of expression, but was no longer in the foreground. It was superseded by the avant-garde concepts of "progress" and "progressiveness", which are rooted in opposition to the existing culture. The Apollonian-Dionysian axis was thus transformed into a progressive-conservative axis. In this context, the secondary semanticisation, which entered culture at the beginning of the last century through the doors opened by objets trouvés and readymades, was evaluated as progressive, while the "primary semanticisation" of artefacts from earlier periods was regarded as conservative at least to a certain extent and in certain environments. The pragmatic side of the differentiation on the heteronomous-autonomous axis was gradually being replaced by a differentiation between the visual arts heteronomy (figuration, objecthood, mimetics) and the visual arts autonomy (abstraction, non-objectivity, Mondrian-style "pure plastic art").[7] The model of art space at the beginning of the last century is presented in Figure 5.

Art space transformed again with Beuys' "expanded concept of art". On the pragmatic axis, it expanded from the media- or métier-specific basic field towards the media- and métier-non-specific expanded field of art, which primarily performs the role of a "world- and

7 Cf. Holtzman & James, 1987, 288–300.

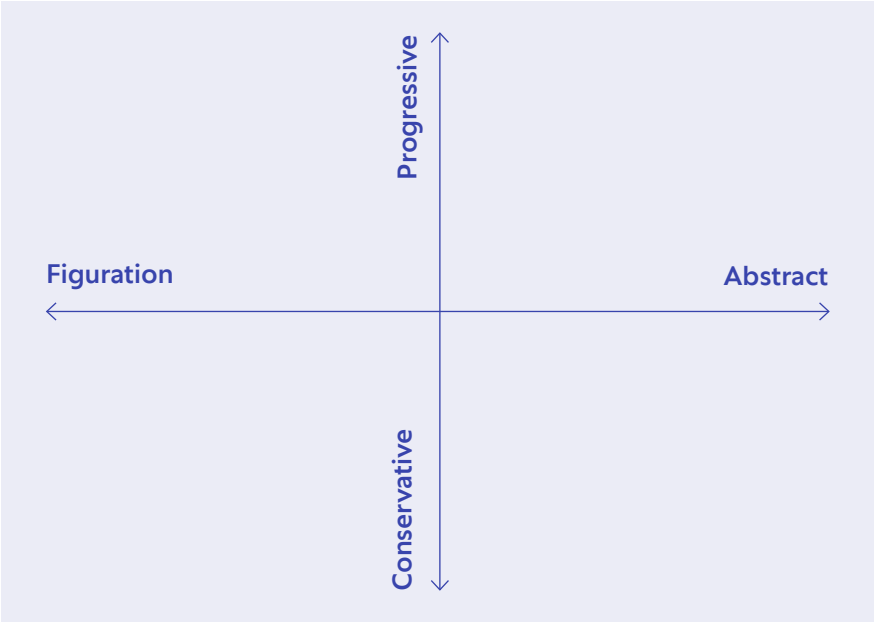

FIGURE 5: Model of the early 20th-century art space: abscissa of figural-abstract and ordinate of conservative-progressive.

society-changing" artistic agent. The core of this expansion is the relation to the artistic medium and, consequently, the relation to the typology of the "art product". Below, I will try to explain what this means. On the other hand, the shift at the axiological level is somewhat paradoxical, if we take into account the developments in art in the second half of the 20th century. Art movements such as New Image Painting demonstrated the necessity to abandon the model of progress and progressiveness in the light of which the avant-garde-calibrated art history was written, as well as the necessity to abandon the avant-garde anathematisation of tradition. The reintroduction of old artistic modes and styles with the prefix of "progressive art" undermined the old model of constant growth and development from bad (conservative) to good (progressive). This axiological transformation cannot be observed for all the forms of artistic creativity in the second half of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century. Progressivism is implicitly but persistently preserved by movements that conceive art as a "world- and society-changing" agent of social construction. In line with their orientation from "worse to better", it is clear that the adepts of this creativity cannot saw off the branch they are sitting on. But it is certainly sensible that they strive to modernise and refine it. And this is what is happening. Progressiveness tends towards "hyperculture" and conservatism towards "cultural essentialism", at least according to schematic

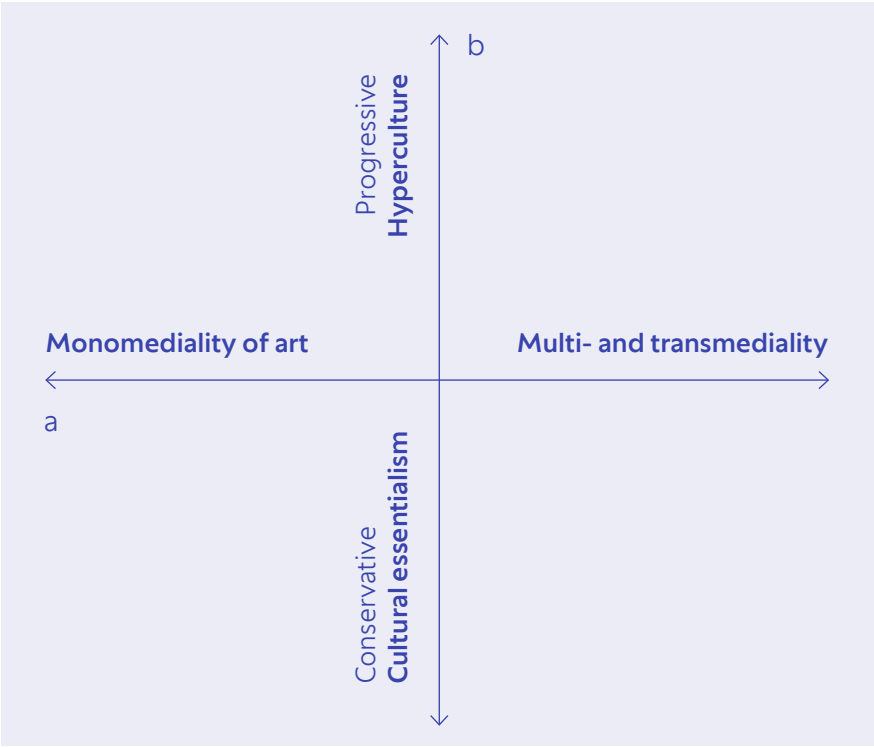

FIGURE 6: Model of the (post-)Beuysian art space: a) axis of pragmatics (monomediality of art – multi- and transmediality of art), b) axis of axiology (progressive: hyperculture – conservative: cultural essentialism).

representations of development prepared by researchers dealing with socio-cultural contemporaneity. They observe that the era of modernity, as it is unfolding in a globalised world, has been manifesting the need for a profound transformation at the economic, political, and cultural levels. They reckon that the basis for change are the differences in relation to the past, which are indicated by the post-industrial economy of singularity, the technical revolution of digitisation and networking, and the favouring of authenticity, which is demanded by the lifestyle of the new middle class in the post-industrial era. In connection with the latter, the phenomenon that sociologists refer to as the "culturalisation of what is social" has a particular prominence. This takes two contrasting forms, which Andreas Reckwitz (2017, 2019) calls "culturalisation I" and "culturalisation II".

Hyperculture. The first culturalisation can be called "hyperculture". At its core, it adopts the form of an expansive aestheticisation of lifestyles, occupations, social contacts, housing culture, travel and, last but not least, the body, and could be ultimately derived from the ideal of the "good life". In this case, culture is to a certain extent hyperculture,

in which everything can potentially become important and precious. The abstract form of this culturalisation is determined, on the one hand, by the objects that move on the cultural markets and, on the other, by the subjects that stand in opposition to these objects with their desire for self-fulfilment. In the context of hyperculture, culture always takes place in cultural markets on which cultural goods compete. This competition only appears to be merely commercial, since there is primarily and essentially a competitive struggle between "articles" that have a more distinct identity, a greater appeal, a greater attractiveness, and are in one way or another exclusive on the market.

Cultural essentialism. Another aspect of culturalisation is what Reckwitz calls "Kulturessenzialismus". The focus of this aspect is on movements and communities that refer to a collective identity and to a culture of identity. This identity is to a certain extent related to the so-called identity politics in which the original American communities recognise themselves, but it also applies to the new nationalisms in Russia, China and India, and to the so-called fundamentalist communities, especially Muslim. These, often in contradiction to what their globalised environment favours, reactivate pre-modern cultural patterns and ways of life. This occurs in explicit opposition to modern patterns, which can be understood as a reaction to the cultural vacuum of modern rationalism and to the global explosion of hyperculture after 1980. In this regard, cultural essentialism is in contrast with hyperculture in a threefold sense: firstly, within its framework, culture is not an endless game of openly competing differences, but a closed system that constantly shapes the world by means of an antagonism (inside–outside, ingroup–outgroup) that for the subject also has a validating function (important–irrelevant, good–bad); secondly, the instance and reference of the cultural sphere is not the self-actualising individual, but the collective, the community; thirdly, it no longer operates through a regime of innovation, novelty and self-transcendence, but by belonging to the traditional, which to a certain extent leads to the essentialisation of culture and life (adapted from: Reckwitz, 2017).

It can be noticed that Reckwitz spontaneously attributes positivity to the "creative dispositif of hyperculture", while denying it to the "creative dispositif of cultural essentialism". This may be questionable, since such an implication can easily be just a matter of theoretical contrasting of phenomena in a state of affairs, rather than a description of that state of affairs. Nevertheless, it has to be considered that such a spontaneous evaluation is performed in the space of empirics. In this respect, hyperculture and cultural essentialism can certainly figure as pre-experiential provisional manifestations of the two extremes

on the axiology axis in art space characterised by the (post-)Beuysian expanded field of art, as shown by the model in Figure 6.

Theoretical self-reflection

The theoretical models, including those presented here, are, of course, only conceptual means by which theory tries to catch the essence of living creativity, which certainly does not exist to validate the theoretical models, but rather the other way around. In the age when theory has assumed a charismatic character, the phenomenological truth constructed by the "art system" dominates the charismatic nature of artistic pursuits, achievements and outstanding results only temporarily and seemingly, as a half-truth. The theory of the art system sometimes tries to "believe" that the "relevant" works are mainly those that the system can control and define by its coordinates. However, in the long run, artists demonstrate again and again that they are not only the creators of the material for postulating and proving the models on which the theories are based; in fact, what they find in art space and is truly original and unique lies in the "dead corner" of constructed models and theories. Their forms do not describe, do not fulfil theoretical requirements, and do not mark, but rather name and evoke. In this way, they do not form an attitude that would be an algorithm for an actionist intervention in the world, but an inimitable life composed of thoughts, forms and actions, "an unnamed need for order, for rhythm, which three words are opposed to chaos and nothingness" in our lives, as Czesław Miłosz expresses. The work of such artists cannot be incorporated into any a priori system that has developed in a space marked by the structuralist abolition of man. Their nature is, by definition, so unique that they are not even remotely suitable to become a cog in the axiological and ideological machine of the art system.

The recently deceased American historian John Lukacs underlined on several occasions that a half-truth is worse than a lie, because it does not contain half of what is true and an equal proportion of what is untrue, but it is an inseparable mixture of a hundred per cent of both—having the appearance of the former and the consequences of the latter. Because of this, art theories and models have to be applied cautiously and prudently—it is the same level of prudence that is required in the field of law. This is particularly the case if these models and theories are measured against a prediction of the future or the temptation to establish the normativity of view.

3. ART AND BOUNDARIES

The fact of moving from art in the narrower sense to art in the broader sense, from its basic to its expanded field, spontaneously calls into discussion the problem of the "border" and the "crossing of borders" in art.

We are physically and spiritually surrounded by many visible and invisible boundaries. We can only act by respecting, verifying, defending and crossing borders and the limits they impose, as well as by setting and respecting them. Each of us crosses the boundaries between sleep and wakefulness, between rest and work, defends themselves against environmental influences relaying on boundaries of their own identity, and sets high standards in various fields of activity. Crossing psycho-physical boundaries results in a change of the state of affairs and does not necessarily represent an achievement. The situation is different with the so-called spiritual boundaries (cultural, artistic, scientific), which require reflection, distinction, decision-making and a high level of creativity in order to be crossed and reformulated. Such boundaries are, for example, the boundaries between everyday and productive thinking, between functional and aesthetic perception, between what is standard and what above standard, between the serial and the unique, between lower and higher quality, between life and art, etc.

The crossing of spiritual boundaries has two fundamental modalities: deconstructive and constructive. The former refers to the crossing of boundaries in the sense of questioning, problematising, transcending and liberating oneself from the rules and values governing within the boundaries; the latter refers to the setting of boundaries by raising qualitative standards. The first aspect takes the form of abandoning a particular creative paradigm and searching for expanded alternative paradigms, while the second occurs as deepening and growing complexity of goals and outcomes within a particular paradigm. The first has the character of lateral thinking, the second the character of vertical thinking.

The art of transcending

The deconstructive or lateral aspect of transcending boundaries in art is linked to a sense of confinement and the need to break free from existing form-making rules and values. In art, this "ability to change perception" is embodied in the mannerist, especially avant-garde movements, where artistic freedom is conceived as the freedom to break with all the constraints of tradition. Opposition to the existing order is usually presented as profoundly subversive: we were prisoners of uniformity, now we are released into the freedom of difference, experiencing a

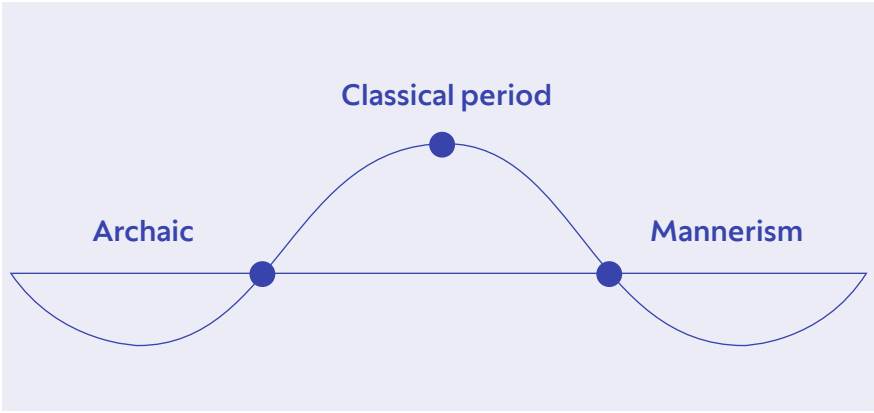

FIGURE 7: The diachronic rhythm of art in the light of form-making transformations, which are prototypically defined by initial, zenithal, and final moments: Archaic, Classical period, Mannerism.

liberating break with established form-making means, modes and values. This type of boundary crossing is, for example, the transition from Impressionism—which still remained in the fine arts medium and followed the classical tradition of painting, further developing it (divisionism)—to the use of readymades. This tradition was abandoned, and a completely different one was adopted: the tradition of dulia (Gr. δουλεία (douleia) 'veneration') or the veneration of already-made and found objects, i.e. a completely different medium and a different aesthetic, meaning-forming and value system. An analogous type of boundary crossing is the above-described transition from sculpture to the unconventional Beuysian "social sculpture". Here, the exchange and transition are achieved by "forcing", when objects and contents that cannot be expressed in the language of the form-making situation are "forced" into this situation. The situation becomes unstable and requires a radical change in the form-making infrastructure (medium, values, formative and informative methods, axiology, etc.). The context of the constraints that define the situation clashes with practice, which in the given situation consciously aims to overthrow the system of rules, traditions and institutions, which are the reason for dissatisfaction by unconventional authorities. In short: the goal is to break the shackles of traditional expressions of consciousness by discovering another—supposedly superior—form of consciousness.

The deconstructive perspective is, at its core, directed towards a radical critique of the initial paradigm. Its path is the path of negation, which is the only means for establishing the limits of a domain within which the form- and meaning-making rules of the initial paradigm are no longer relevant.

Every paradigm that wants to prevail over the previous one tries first to dominate human memory. It all starts with the advantages of the new paradigm. The past is passé, irrelevant, reactionary, compromised by prejudices, myths and legends. This is also true of the self-conception of our age, which proclaims high developmental expectations regarding the disconnection from nature and in relation to belief in technology and social construction, although, paradoxically, it is faced with what sociologists call "a widespread loss of the future" (Williams, 1989, 103)

The art of establishing

The constructive or vertical aspect of crossing boundaries in art is the aspect of establishing new boundaries by raising the quality standards within a given paradigm (vertical thinking). This mode is about replacing the "medium of novelty" with the "medium of quality". In other words, conversion is about reorienting creativity from the systems of criticism, boundary crossing, leading the way, deconstruction, etc., to the systems of constructiveness, deep insights, original solutions, high complexity and horizons of timelessness.8 The constructive aspect is analogous to record-setting in sports or to the economic term "added value". In its concrete form, it can be observed in the difference between superior and mediocre performances in the field of artistic interpretation and is intensely expressed in masterpieces from specific artistic disciplines, which in the field of aesthetics used to be described by the potent concepts of "archetypical" (universal) and "perennial" (timeless). The driving force and destination of verticalisation in art was exemplified in a unique and simple way by the painter Sol Le Witt, who once aphoristically wrote: "We cannot believe in art if we do not believe in some kind of unchanging attitude towards, or timeless standards of, what is important, and what is essential in life" (Hubbard, 2010, 6).

The vertical aspect of transcending boundaries at all levels occurs continuously or by quantum transition. This is the case whenever the creator manages to establish an authoritative contact between the particularity of their form and its universal, human effect.

Remarks on the rhythm of spiritual-historical time

Lateral boundaries are primarily boundaries in space (limitedness, confinement, transcending, expansion), whereas vertical boundaries are primarily boundaries in time (unfolding, maturation, duration, timelessness). In this case, the reference is, obviously, to cultural space and cultural time (kairós).[8] Each period needs both lateral or deconstructive

8 Gr. kairós (καιρός), qualitative time, an "important" or "decisive" time when something special, ground-breaking, or of lasting importance happens.

and vertical or constructive boundary crossings, although these crossings are dosed and coordinated differently in each period.How? If we observe the spiritual-historical, i.e. form-making, rhythm of art in the light of diachronic transformations, we find that this rhythm takes the form of a curve, prototypically defined in its ascending and descending by the initial, zenithal and final moments. Broadly speaking, the initial moments are represented by the so-called archaic periods, and the zenithal and final moments by classical and mannerist periods respectively (Figure 7).

The archaic periods are characterised by the opening up of new, fresh and more ambitious form-making horizons, clear solutions and the tendency towards primary expression. Such periods can be identified in Greek Archaic, Early Christian Impressionism, early Romanticism, and 19th-century Impressionism, because they essentially share the same spiritual and form-making distinguishing features. The classical periods, which represent the culmination of a certain form-making orientation or paradigm, and in their exceptional creativity rely entirely on the ideal, perfection and beauty consistent with the ideal, include the Greek Classical period, the Renaissance, the Baroque and Modernism. Mannerisms, which, by their variations, exaggerations and travesty of previous classical ideals prove that when you start at the zenith, you can only progress by descending (adapted from: Sloterdijk, 2007, 16), include, for example, Greek Hellenism, Flamboyant, 16th-century Mannerism, and the Rococo, but also our late modernistic era, and share a similar developmental and creative fate (see Figure 8).

Let us see how the deconstructive and constructive aspects of boundary-crossing in these prototypical form-making milieus are related.

In archaic periods, the deconstructive and constructive aspects of boundary-crossing are necessarily coordinated and complementary, since these periods simultaneously require both the dynamics of (a search or exploration) process and the dynamics of (a qualitative) progress. The deconstructive aspect breaks through the spiritual and media horizons of the preceding period, expanding them, while the constructive aspect simultaneously intensifies quality form-making standards leading to form-making solutions that are alternative to those of the preceding period.

In classical periods, when on the basis of an elaborated idea of the ideal, perfection and beauty (e.g. the Renaissance) man believed that the world can be dominated by knowledge in combination with this elaborated idea, the constructive aspects of expanding and transcending boundaries came to the forefront. This is all orientated towards establishing the highest possible standards for the realisation of the

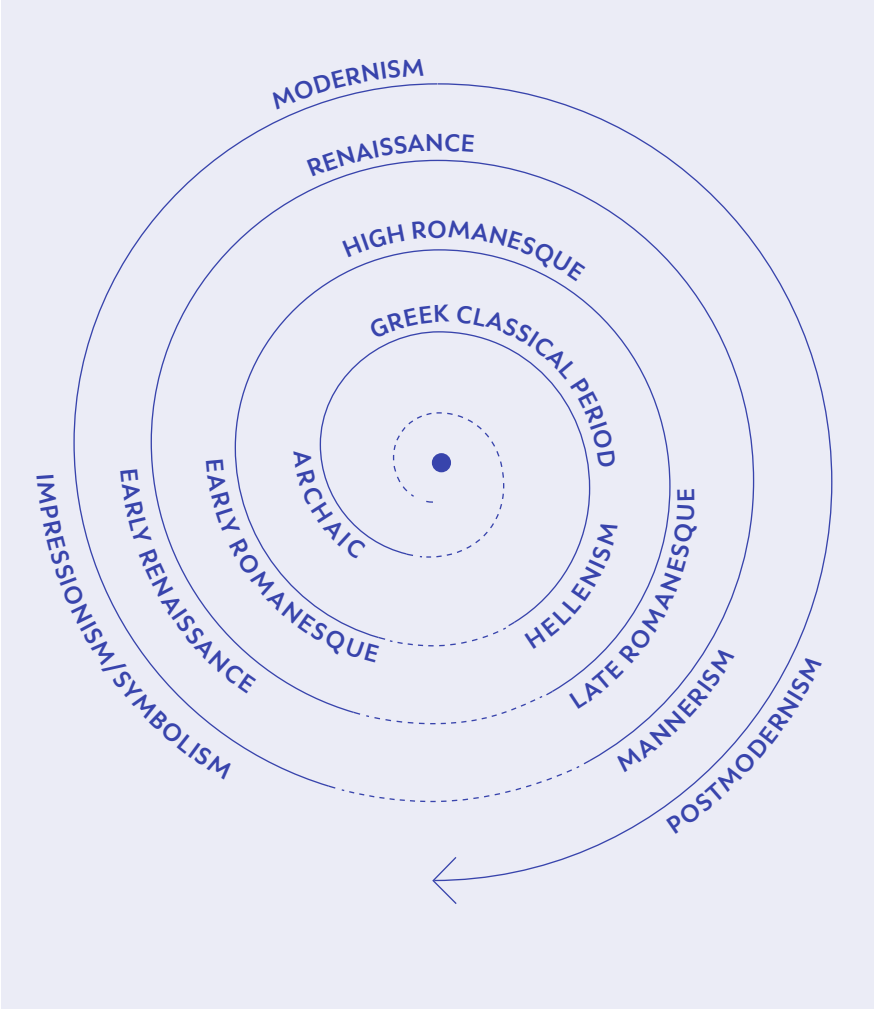

FIGURE 8: Diachronic rhythm in the light of the history of styles.

ideal, perfection and beauty in the world. Since the ideal is already available and does not have to be found, the deconstructive aspects can recede into the background. Waiting vigilantly. In mannerist periods, in which man's great need and desire that something new, different and exciting would emerge again from what is already known, makes it necessary to activate the deconstructive aspects of boundary-crossing, so that a sufficiently large number of lateral searches directed towards discovering alternativities could reveal what this "new" and "different" should be. In this case, the verticalisation of the results can wait for the situation to stabilise and for the new ideals and goals to become more clearly profiled.

From this point of view, it can be said that the "natural" relationship between lateral and vertical services in the arts is complementarity, i.e. functional cooperation and complementarity. This natural relationship ends when one service starts gaining ground at the expense of the other and, for example, deconstructive and constructive ways of crossing boundaries begin to intermix and substitute each other. This happens when, for example, the new (described as avant-garde, provocative, etc.) is automatically equated with quality or originality (cf. Steiner, 1989, 27). In exceptional cases, the concepts of "new" and "quality" may coincide, but they are by no means automatically identical. They are not interchangeable, and one cannot become the other. If we lose the sense of distinguishing one from the other, we are bound to run into a crisis in the sphere of culture—that is to say, finding ourselves in a situation which requires distinguishing, judging, and deciding.[9] Crises are a constant in culture. According to René Girard (cf. Cowdell, 2013), they have their origin in the collapse of the old cultural order, which implodes when distinctions or boundaries within it begin to disappear. For example: when we no longer know what is real and what unreal, what is good and what evil, what is beautiful and what ugly, what is art and what life, what is constructive and what deconstructive, what is vertical and what lateral, etc. This is exactly the situation in which it is only relevant to make decisions without looking for shortcuts to please the idols of mediocre taste, popularity, fashion or political correctness.

9 Gr. κρίσις (krísis) – opinion, judgement, decision; from κρίνειν (krinein) – to judge, to decide.

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Through the Other Side of the Looking Glass
In Search of Meaning in the Language of Design

BARBARA PREDAN

In the introduction to his book *Does Writing have a Future?*, Vilém Flusser makes a provocative assertion: it is only a matter of time before writing, that is, building sequences of letters and numbers, is supplanted by other, more efficient systems of communication (Flusser, 2011, 3). Design is undoubtedly the discipline that, while having contributed enormously to the development of the characters we use to record speech, has already seen some success in supplanting them using various visual languages. It would seem in this context that the focus this text brings to the language of design—that is, the words with which we write about design—is at the very least somewhat unusual, if not downright archaic.

At the same time, we need to be wary that by focusing on researching the language of design we can quickly end up on shaky ground. Lewis Carroll illustrates this point wonderfully in his children's novel *Through the Looking Glass*. In a conversation between Alice and Humpty Dumpty, which takes place on her journey through the looking glass, the author also touches, entirely casually, on the flexible nature of language. In the conversation, Humpty Dumpty uses words in unusual contexts. In response to Alice's bewilderment, he proclaims the words to mean something completely different than what we are used to. "When I use a word, it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less," Humpty Dumpty explains (Carroll, 1994, 61). It is on this—shall we say—sophist, foundation that we might have an easier time understanding Alan Badiou's claim that "philosophy is always the breaking of a mirror [the looking glass]. This mirror is the surface of language, on which the sophist sets everything that philosophy treats in its act. If the philosopher claims to contemplate himself on this sole surface, he sees his double, the sophist, suddenly springs forth from it and can thus take himself for the sophist" (Badiou, 1999, 143–144).

In this text I will explore the field of the language of design to investigate how wide of a gulf separates signification and acting, what the relationship is between—in the words of Badiou—the void and the real. To quote Ernesto Laclau: "Even the most purely constative of assertions has a performative dimension, and, conversely, there is no action that is not embedded in signification" (Laclau, 2009, 71). Laclau would have us go further still, adding to the words and actions the dimension of *effects* as the third "part of an interdependent network" (ibid.). Moreover, in his view all three dimensions, "if properly theorized—cease to belong to a regional discipline and come to define relations operating in the very terrain of a general ontology" (ibid., 72).

Before attempting to find an answer to the dilemma, we need to return to the starting topic—searching for meaning in the language of design. The latter is an analogy to Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. If what Proust sought to express in his book *In Search of Lost Time* is that it is only the creation of art that can save us from our impermanence and give our lives some form of meaning, then the subtitle of this essay has to do with searching for meaning in the language that, in turn, gives meaning to design. This leaves open the question: why does it matter what language we use to build the language of design? An excellent answer is provided by Jacques Rancière, whose thesis on politics also obliquely enters the field of design:

> **"(P)olitics is an activity that reframes the mode of visibility of the common. It is the configuration of a space and a form of temporality in which some affairs are seen as common affairs and subjects are given the capacity for dealing with those affairs. This also means that politics is a conflictual process in which the very meaning of the words is at issue" (Rancière, 2016).**

Rancière is not interested in proposing a concept explaining what politics is. He is interested in:

> **"...examining words whose meaning is at issue in situations where the identification of politics is itself at issue. From that point of view, words that are worth examining to rethink politics might be words that have two characteristics: first, they are not specific to politics but they designate alterations in the visibility of what is normally thought to be the stage of the political; second, they link the question of the common with matters of time and space" (ibid.).**

Rancière's quote on politics holds largely true for design, too: design is an activity that entails constantly transforming our way of seeing, our way of recognising the common. In design, as in politics, there is a configuration of space and a form of temporality in which some affairs are seen as common affairs, with subjects given the capacity for dealing with those affairs. In design, as in politics, the words that design uses in its speech often reveal much more than the design that is manifested in practice. From this perspective, the words that the language of design uses to speak and write are worthy of study. In the words of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson: "It is reasonable enough to assume that words alone don't change reality. But changes in our conceptual system do change what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions" (Lakoff and Johnson, 2001, 132).

In my research, my main interest was therefore how (if at all) these theories manifested during the development of design as a discipline. For the purposes of this text, I will shed light upon a selected—seemingly inconsequential—example in the field of the language of design. This example, despite its seemingly insignificant and cursory nature, will help us answer the following questions: What do we even mean by the language of design? How does the context of nature manifest in the language of design? The reason that these two questions are so critical is that they transport us back to the 19th century, which was when the foundations of design as a professional discipline were being

laid. At the same time, the answers to these questions provide a framework for the fundamental ideas in the design of the 20th century and continue to echo in the language of design in the 21st century.

Let us now stop at the first question—what do we mean when writing about the language of design? This is where Wittgenstein's theory of language as a form of life (Wittgenstein, 2014, 15) can help us frame our thinking. Wittgenstein claims that words are not learned "as sterile, theoretical names for objects", which are only later "assembled into language as a whole; language is learned as a form of life of a particular community, and this pragmatic technique eventually facilitates knowledge of individual words in their relation to external things and abstract notions" (Simoniti, 2014, 263). Likewise, words for new conceptualisations are in most cases not generated in a theoretically sterile manner (Gložančev, 2009, 13–15). We can simplify this to say that the meaning of words is implicit in the way they are used, not in what they represent.

There is another important aspect, however—one derived from Ludwig Wittgenstein's theory by Jure Simoniti. Whenever we are faced with something new, we interpret it using existing patterns. It is therefore the case that as a new discipline develops, its language emerges along the way, arising out of "convenience" (Simoniti, 2014, 274). Starting with the Wittgensteinian context of language as a form of life, we therefore seek to understand how the nascent discipline of design wove itself into the language of the community, eventually forming new words, or giving new meanings to existing ones—meanings that testify to new ways of acting and/or new or additional uses of words. So, what was it that became the foundation of the language of design?

All of the above is important; despite the aforementioned convenience of drawing upon existing patterns, choosing among the many different patterns within the existent is a dilemma that the scribes of the emergent face over and over again. This can be seen in our chosen example: the writings of John Ruskin, the Victorian art critic and thinker, on architecture and design. In a time of burgeoning industrialisation, Ruskin stood on the crossroads between the new and the old. He could sense that a new discipline was emerging, but in making sense of it, instead of drawing on the language of progress and the pragmatic convenience of industrialisation, he chose to stand against the so-called technological breakthroughs of that time by seeking inspiration in nature.

We can find a brilliant example of this in Ruskin's *The Nature of Gothic,* a work of profound importance for the field of design. In his description of the method he uses to analyse gothic architecture,

Ruskin proposes that the act of describing design and architecture is to be compared to the efforts of a chemist tasked with describing a rough mineral. He felt that, when analysing an object or a product, we should, like the chemist, determine both the internal and external structure of the object of analysis, while at the same time be keenly aware that it is only the union of all the parts that makes a soundly designed whole—with the important addition that the individual parts only form a balanced whole when certain conditions are met. Despite the emphasis on the chemist analogy, however, the analytical principle does not transfer to the field of design and architecture in a literal sense. Ruskin writes:

> **"We have; then, the Gothic character submitted to our analysis, just as the rough mineral is submitted to that of the chemist, entangled with many other foreign substances, itself perhaps in no place pure, or ever to be obtained or seen in purity for more than an instant; but nevertheless a thing of definite and separate nature; however inextricable or confused in appearance. Now observe: the chemist defines his mineral by two separate kinds of character; one external, its crystalline form, hardness, lustre, etc., the other internal, the proportions and nature of its constituent atoms. Exactly in the same manner, we shall find that Gothic architecture has external forms and internal elements. Its elements are certain mental tendencies of the builders, legibly expressed in it; as fancifulness, love of variety, love of richness, and such others. Its external forms are pointed arches, vaulted roofs, etc. And unless both the elements and the forms are there, we have no right to call the style Gothic. It is not enough that it has the Form, if it have not also the power and life. It is not enough that it has the Power, if it have not the form. We must therefore inquire into each of these characters successively; and determine first, what is the Mental Expression, and secondly, what the Material Form of Gothic architecture, properly so called" (Ruskin, 1997, 78–79).**

A couple of sentences later Ruskin elaborates on the idea further:

> **"Let us go back for a moment to our chemistry, and note that, in defining a mineral by its constituent parts, it is not one nor another of them, that can make up the mineral, but the union of all: for instance, it is neither in charcoal nor in oxygen, not in lime, that there is the making of chalk, but in the combination of all three in certain measures; they are all found in very different**

> **things from chalk, and there is nothing like chalk either in charcoal or oxygen but they are nevertheless necessary to its existence. So in the various mental characters which make up the soul of Gothic. It is not one nor another that produces it; but their union in certain measures" (ibid.).[1]**

It is fascinating to be able to trace this brief—most would say perfunctory—description[2] of the approach to design analysis as it seeps through the numerous transformations during the development of the professional and scientific language of design, i.e. design theory, which would only be professionalised, in the formal sense, in the 1970s. We will take a brief look at an assortment of the most conspicuous transformations of Ruskin's thought, but let us first address another important aspect of his aforementioned observation—that of correlation. An aspect that Quentin Meillassoux argues is the "central notion of modern philosophy ever since Kant", since for him "it is a characteristic of correlationism that it disqualifies all efforts to consider the spheres of subjectivity and objectivity independently from one another" (Meillassoux, 2011, 18). Whereas objectivity deals with the properties of the object in-itself, subjectivity concerns itself with these properties in relation to the observer, whereby, Meillassoux continues, "we cannot know anything that would be beyond our relation to the world. Consequently, the mathematical properties of the object cannot be exempted from the subjectivation that is the precondition for secondary properties" (ibid., 17). When referring to a "veritable chemical formula", we are therefore talking of "co-givenness, of co-relation, of the co-originary, of co-presence" (ibid., 19).

The question being asked is therefore which is the proper correlate, not which is the proper substrate. And this is precisely what John Ruskin sought to convey with the aforementioned description. In analysing design and architecture, we analyse the co-relation of two types of qualities. Qualities that Badiou defined in the previously mentioned relation between the void and the real, and which Martin Heidegger captured in his deliberation on the nature of things, using a jug as an example. Heidegger asks himself if what defines the jug is its base and sides, or is it the cavity they form, which is what facilitates the jug's function by permitting filling (or pouring out)? This cavity, this void, therefore defines not only the jug itself, but also the work of the designer

1 Ruskin adds the caveat that in architecture and design, these measures, or proportions, are not as fixed. In these fields, a certain amount of deviation from the ideal is permitted when balancing the individual constituent elements.

2 Ruskin does not mention the analytical work of the chemist again in the text.

who designs and makes the jug. The essence of the jug is in the captured void, the usually overlooked nothing that allows the liquid (or air) to fill or vacate the jug. So, even if the jug appears to be something tangible made out of clay, this appearance is only significant insofar as it permits the filling and subsequently containing of its potential contents. Even if that content, in the case of an empty jug, is nothing (Heidegger, 1967). Indeed, it is precisely by showing, using a jug as an example, that it is the nothing that is the essence, that Heidegger manages to refute the thesis that nothing is nothing. To the contrary—it is obvious that nothing is, in fact, something. And, as Ruskin shows, one of our tasks is this: to reveal and name this void, this seeming "nothingness" that is in fact the essence we are looking for. As Badiou writes in his *Manifesto for Philosophy:*

> **»It is thus quite simply false that whereof one cannot speak (in the sense of 'there is nothing to say about it that specifies it and grants it separating properties'), thereof one must be silent. It must on the contrary be named. It must be discerned as indiscernible. We are no longer held, if we accept to be within the effects of the mathematical condition, to choose between the nameable and the unthinkable. We are no longer suspended between something whereof there is an elucidation within language, and something whereof there is but an ineffable, indeed unbearable 'experience', unravelling the mind. For the indiscernible, even though it breaks down the separating powers of language, is nonetheless proposed to the concept, which can demonstratively pass legislation on its existence« (Badiou, 1999, 95).**

Ruskin recognised the latter in the power and life of internal elements, while warning that this must always be understood within the context of their co-dependent relation to the external form. Francis Wolff defines this as follows: "Everything is inside because in order to think anything whatsoever, it is necessary to 'be able to be conscious of it', it is necessary to say it, and so we are locked up in language or in consciousness without being able to get out. In this sense, they have no outside. But in another sense, they are entirely turned towards the outside; they are the world's window: for to be conscious is always to be conscious of something, to speak is necessarily to speak about something" (Wolff, 1997, 11–12). Wolff depicts this in a tangible way using as a tree as an example:

"To be conscious of the tree is to be conscious of the tree itself, and not the idea of the tree; to speak about the tree is not just to utter a word but to speak about the thing" (ibid.). In this way, Ruskin's original theory establishes the possibility of having cognizance of design

despite never using the word "design". We will see below that this cognizance is given to all theorists and practitioners in the field of design, even if they may not be aware of it.

This brings us to Frank Lloyd Wright and the collection of the most visible, most conspicuous transformations (or *effects*, to use Laclau's word) of Ruskin's thought. In his texts, Frank Lloyd Wright (a great proponent of the ideas of John Ruskin and his successor William Morris) elaborated on Ruskin's originatory thought with the term *organic architecture*. He first used the term in 1910 in the introduction of the German edition of a book on his work. He would continue using and expounding upon it in his texts throughout his professional career. In *The Natural House* he explains:

> **"So here I stand before you preaching organic architecture: declaring organic architecture to be the modern ideal and the teaching so much needed if we are to see the whole of life, and to now serve the whole of life, holding no 'traditions' essential to the great TRADITION. Nor cherishing any preconceived form fixing upon us either past, present or future, but—instead—exalting the simple laws of common sense—or of super-sense if you prefer—determining form by way of the nature of materials" (Wright, 1954, 3).**

Wright additionally emphasises the following:

> **"(T)he ideal of an organic architecture [...] a sentient, rational building that would owe its 'style' to the integrity with which it was individually fashioned to serve its particular purpose—a 'thinking' as well as 'feeling' process" (Wright, 1992, 28).**

Wright's work clearly contains an echo of Ruskin's logic of analysing architecture and design according to the principle of analysing a mineral: on the one hand, he constantly emphasises the necessity of balancing the individual parts and the whole, while one the other hand, the thought remains ever present in the context of the understanding of the external form that indisputably follows the internal structure—that is, the search for a relationship between the nature of the material and the sensory process. It should be emphasised that what Wright considers the internal structure of an object does not consist solely of the interior and the individual pieces of design; it also includes—and here Wright, in his own singular manner, echoes Ruskin—the perspective on and interest in the life that is lived within the building. According to

Wright, this life must grow into the physical object, because "the source of this unity is not the act of building within that environment but the life that is lived therein, or more accurately, from the inside out" (Rogers, 2004, 381). The latter also recalls a thought of the second director of the Bauhaus School, Hannes Meyer, who, in his 1928 text entitled *Building*, shifts design and architecture out of the field of the aesthetic process and into the field of the biological process. With this shift he is making the point that our task is not in perfecting artistic expression but in organising the processes of life that manifest as societal, technical, economic and psychological processes (Meyer, 1971, 117–120). Although at first glance this reads like a technical note, Meyer's reflection focuses precisely on what Ruskin calls *life* and *power*. More than that, he sees them as the only possible motive for designing a building (ibid.).

The direct transfer of the term organic architecture to the field of design occurs with Eliot F. Noyes[3] in 1940, when he took up the position of a curator at a new department of industrial design in the Museum of Modern Art in New York. As his first project (which was also the first design project in the Museum of Modern Art–MoMA) he organised a competition and an exhibition in 1940–1941, entitled *Organic Design in Home Furnishings*. A catalogue was printed to accompany the exhibition; in the introduction, Noyes submits the following explanation of the term *organic design*:

> **"A design may be called organic when there is a harmonious organization of the parts within the whole, according to structure, material, and purpose. Within this definition there can be no vain ornamentation or superfluity, but the part of beauty is none the less great — in ideal choice of material, in visual refinement, and in the rational elegance of things intended for use" (Noyes, 1941, [1]).**

It is a definition that would become literal dogma in the practice of modernist design for a few decades. If viewed through the prism of Ruskin's thought, with Noyes (as with Wright and Meyer), Ruskin's analysis of the internal structure of the object is understood as use—an intention. What is added is the function, which, in line with all the previous theories, is understood as *life*. The Slovenian designer Niko Kralj—once again in the manner of Ruskin—would add: "The forms of the products must attend to all demands and follow them, and if even one of those demands changes, then the forms of the products change with it as well" (Kralj, [1971]).

3 His mentor and later an associate was Walter Gropius, the first headmaster of the Bauhaus school and later a lecturer at the Harvard Graduate School of Design (1937–1952).

Niko Kralj had no influence on the international development of design theory; nevertheless, he represents an excellent example of the practical interplay of ideas derived from the traditions of Ruskin, Wright, Meyer and Noyes. He also built both his theory and practice on a sophisticated understanding of how nature works. Kralj believed that relying on clear insights from nature can greatly accelerate the development of design. By relying—like Ruskin before him—on an analytical understanding of the workings of nature and its description, Kralj actually, in his own way, explains designers' ability to achieve quality in their work: "The designer consciously seeks to imitate natural evolution, in which everything superfluous dies off and in which nothing emerges without a cause. Synthetic morphology and the method of discovering evolutionary phenomena that result from contradictions help the designer take the shortest route to technical perfection and new forms that have no past precedent" (Kralj, 1960). Kralj, like Meyer, sees products as biological processes. He sees them as living, heavily interlinked organisms. He continues: "The good form of a product cannot be merely a sheath, the product's external image; rather, it is a living organism linked by many ties to what is inside. This organism must be a balanced whole, to which we cannot add anything to make it better or more beautiful and form which we cannot subtract anything without impairing it" (Kralj, [1971]). Kralj sees the same thing as the prerequisite for quality design as the predecessors: a holistic approach. An approach that strives towards equilibrium in a rapidly changing environment.

Accordingly, Kralj sees the process of designing our environment—again taking biology as an example—as evolutionary stages that, with each technological or non-technological change, newly acquired knowledge or a shift in use, influence the future (re)design of the product. He sees them in a way that recalls the 1960s writings of the world-renowned architect and design theorist Christopher Alexander. In his work *Synthesis of Form*, Alexander describes a design problem as "an effort to achieve fitness between two entities: the form in question and its context. The form is the solution to the problem; the context defines the problem" (Alexander, 1964, 15). Later in the text, he explains this further by way of precisely-defined conditions akin to Ruskin's: "The form is a part of the world over which we have control, and which we decide to shape while leaving the rest of the world as it is. The context is that part of the world which puts demands on this form; anything in the world that makes demands of the form is context" (ibid., 18–19). With an important addition: whenever a new form emerges in the world as it is, the context changes also. It changes due to the necessity of adaptation and the effects of the new form on the original context.

There are many similar examples in which the effects of Ruskin's idea can be identified (whether or not this transfer of thought is deliberate). It keeps tangling itself into the language of design, so it's no wonder that we still hear it echo in the thinking of the design profession today. The only thing that changes—as is evident in the observations of Arturo Escobar—is the understanding of what the totality of the design approach is understood to be. Whereas Ruskin saw the whole as consisting of the internal and external structure of the analysed object, Escobar, in the 21th century (with Alexander's broadened understanding of context as the starting point), sees it as a pluriverse, in which the context of design now comprises at least three universes: the social, the environmental and the technological.

> **"This is a key feature of both biological and social or cultural autonomy; systems can undergo structural changes and adopt various structures in response to interactions with the environment, but they have to maintain a basic organization in order to remain as the units they are. [...] This eventually leads to the coordination of behaviour, communication, and social phenomena through co-ontogenies [co-morphogenesis], resulting in all kinds of complex units (codesign); in humans, this process takes place through language" (Escobar, 2018, 180).**

Here it is crucial to understand that

> **"...the environment does not dictate the relation; rather, it is the organization of the unit (its basic system of relations) that determines its interaction with the environment" (ibid.).**

Despite this expansion of the field and changes in perspective, the essence remains quintessentially Ruskin's. Returning to his original thought, we can see that in 1853, Ruskin bequeathed the nascent discipline an idea that has remained relevant to this day. By applying to the field of architecture and design the approach of a chemist analysing a mineral, and in doing so establishing the concept of correlation—declaring the need to analyse the external and internal structure of the object in search of the relationship between the form and the life, while acknowledging that it is only the sum of all parts that forms the whole, and only under certain conditions—he appears to have struck at the heart of the understanding of design. He managed, as Badiou would put it, to create the "concepts and rules of thinking" that make it possible to represent our time "as the time in which *this event of thought*

has taken place. An event never having taken place before and which is henceforth the shared lot of everyone, whether they know it or not, since a philosophy has constituted for everyone the common shelter of this 'having-taken-place'" (Badiou, 1999, 88).

With this though, we have come full circle back to the beginning of this text. This confirms, in practice, the statement by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson quoted in the introduction: "It is reasonable enough to assume that words alone don't change reality. But changes in our conceptual system do change what is real for us and affect how we perceive the world and act upon those perceptions" (Lakoff and Johnson, 2001, 132). Heeding this assertion, as well as the one by Badiou, a rhetorical question arises: Is the way we see the world of design not a direct result of Ruskin's insightful choice of a 19th century chemist thoroughly analysing a mineral as an analogy? Or, even more importantly: Would the language of design be different if Ruskin, at a time when the discipline of design was in its infancy, hadn't proposed a correlationist approach to the critical analysis of designed objects? Not neglecting, of course, the necessity of seeking and establishing a relationship to the life that is hidden—in the object is worth analysing at all—alongside the mathematical properties, no matter how ubiquitous, of objects.

If anything, Ruskin's impact has vindicated beyond doubt Laclau's assertion that it is not enough to focus on words and actions, we also need to focus on their effects. The examples we selected are interrelated with very tangible webs of mutual dependence. Yet at the same time, in the interplay of the theory and practice of design, both still evolving, we can actively observe this process even today. The chosen example, so minor at first glance, demonstrates the considerable influence Ruskin's thought has had on assigning meaning to and further development of the language in the field of theory of design, as well as design discipline in the broader context of its practice. Moreover, Ruskin showed in a very tangible way that without natural language "it is impossible to discover new paths", as it is the natural language that "drives imagination" (Jakobson, 1970, 312). And this holds true no matter which side of the looking glass we are on. We just need to take care not to be satisfied with the surface reflection.

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Non-Hierarchical Intermedial Intertwining in Contemporary Drama and Theatre[1]

TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ

The chapter focuses on specific forms of the intertwining of media in contemporary performative and visual practices. One could here point out performance art as the most ostensibly intermedial form; however, we choose to go down a slightly different path and use some examples from theatre and contemporary drama: no longer dramatic texts and contemporary theatre. We will focus particularly on the area of intermedia and the interlacing, or rather, intertwining of performative and visual arts; the relationship between performance art and theatre; post-dramatic texts on the one hand and visual culture and art on the other. It is a characteristic of this inter- or trans-disciplinary intertwining that it elicits insistence on traversing the borders between different genres of art, as well as between art and life itself.

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1. DRAMA AND THEATRE AS THE LANGUAGES OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETATION

Let us begin with the thesis that the languages that fill up the "semiotic space" (Lotman) of performance are very diverse and that this diversity is precisely the quality that enables traversing of borders. "Theatre's position as an intermediary between the moving and nondiscrete real world and the immobile and discrete world of the representational arts is the reason for the constant switch of codes on the one hand between the theatre and people's actual behaviour, and on the other hand between theatre and the representational arts. The consequence is that life and painting in many cases relate to each other through theatre which serves as a mediating code, a translation-code (Lotman 1990, 59-60)." Here we will focus on how this mediation affects the manners of interpretation.

However, the notion of in-betweenness and traversing does not stop at this point; instead, we shall also apply it to Rancière's notion of the emancipated spectator who understands the relationship between actors who build up the stage as researchers and spectators playing the role of active interpreters, thus creating their own translation, primarily as an emancipated community of narrators and translators or, rather, interpreters.

Drama and theatre thus become a matter of translation in Bourriaud's sense of the word: art explores the bonds that text and image, time and space, weave between themselves.

Traversing from one cultural landscape into another and thus generating new paths among the multiplicity of forms of expression and communication becomes a feature of performative space (and, to a large extent, gallery space as well). Thus emerges a dynamics of semiotic languages in space that is not simply a sum of individual signifying systems, but rather establishes the theatre or literary event through their interaction, according to Lotman. This event, to a large extent, depends on what Lotman designates with the notion of the relation between the text and the audience. "A text and its readership are in a relationship of mutual activation: a text strives to make its readers conform to itself, to force on them its own system of codes, and the readers respond in the same way. The text as it were contains an image of its 'own' ideal readership, and the readership one of its 'own' text" (Lotman 1990, 63).

The dynamics of semiotic languages that emerges in the theatre is therefore characteristic of both the second paradigm of theatre performance and the third paradigm of reception. The dynamics of the semiotic languages of the reception of performance becomes even

stronger when the creative potentialities of the viewer are fully activated. In this sense, such texts are close to the structuralist and materialist approach to interpretation as practised by Frederick Jameson. We can, however, at the same time understand theatre outside its cause-and-effect dependence on literature, of course, as an activity that not only interprets signs produced by culture but also uses these very signs enabled by culture as its own, namely—in the words of the semiologist Erika Fischer-Lichte—by using them as signs of signs.

2. POST-DRAMATIC EXAMPLES: ELFRIEDE JELINEK, SIMONA SEMENIČ, DINO PEŠUT

A kind of non-dramatic interweaving of monological forms and dialogical currents at different levels takes place in contemporary drama and theatre (let us at this point just recall Oliver Frljić's performances *Damned Be the Traitor of His Homeland and Our Violence and Your Violence* or Elfriede Jelinek's plays, e.g. *Bambiland*). Such deconstructed dialogical forms of drama produce a polyphonic discourse of speech surfaces characterised by dialogism in the Bakhtinian sense of the word. The emerging polylogic form is composed of extreme and virtually unintelligible and unreadable assemblages that are often memorial in nature. These texts do not present any fixed truth or meaning, but rather expose their own processes of representation. What is meant is precisely that which also creates and breaks down meaning itself. The interpretation of such corpora thus becomes ambiguous, often hesitant, while at the same time opening up new possible insights into reality which abolish the self-evidence of ideologisms.

Contemporary drama and collaborative theatre texts thus deny the basic assumptions of absolute drama: dialogues, characters, and dramatic structure. These are replaced by blocks of monologues that often refer to memories. The authors are looking for new approaches to writing for a theatre of a new era. Elfriede Jelinek thus creates speech surfaces that substitute dramatic action and dialogue and combines formal innovations with radical political engagement in content. Most of her later work, e.g. *In the Alps*, *Bambiland*, *Work*, and *Babel*, deal with distinctly up-to-date and topical events: a skiing tragedy in Kaprun, the war in Iraq, Heider and neoNazism. She juxtaposes the profound and the trivial, human emotions with dressing up and fashion. The values that she presents are mostly commodified and empty and had been replaced by television and marketing. Life and death thus become a giant screen obscuring the emptiness and nothingness that lie behind it.

While Jelinek likes to play around with overidentification with problematic, macho genres in everything from pop culture to pornographic content, she uses a different approach in her *Princess Dramas*: here, she borrows traditional and contemporary stories but undermines their form and authoritarian ideology from which they appear to be inseparable. Once she retells these stories in a new way, she thus also establishes new sexually determined parameters of these stories, which means that she gives new, personal interpretations to the contemporary Barthesian mythologies of Lady Di, Jackie Kennedy and Sylvia Plath by translating them into her own mythologies of the unbearable present tense at the beginning of the 21st century.

FIGURE 1: Elfriede Jelinek: *Princess Dramas*, directed by Michał Borczuch: Anja Novak, Janja Majzelj, Maruša Oblak and Damjana Černe, photo Peter Uhan, Mladinsko Theatre Archives

Just like Jelinek, Simona Semenič and other young authors in the area of (no longer) dramatic or contemporary performative practices in Slovenia choose different ways of detours or deviations of set dramatic and theatrical forms. We are witnessing the emergence of hybrid speech surfaces of immense density spewing forth massive chunks of sound material like some kind of memory geysers, where it is no longer clear which are the signified that these chains of signifiers are aimed at. This way, they point out desemantisation and emphasise the performative dimensions of the text, the acoustic material of language, the corporeality of the text, its musicality and polysemy that produce decentralised readings.

Dramatic action in Simona Semenič's plays is thus constantly being interrupted by interventions of the author herself who keeps reminding the reader/spectator that we are either in a theatre or in the act of reading a play, where the reader, who is ultimately creating the drama in the Barthesian sense and deciding about its interpretation, also has the possibility for their own creativity. They can even co-write parts of the play and the story:

> **as we've acquired this information in the previous scene; we learnt where boris came from, / which transportation he took and when he arrived, we can skip this part of their dialogue / In case someone deems this part of the dramatic text absolutely necessary, they can write it / themselves one way or another (Semenič https://www.simonasemenic.com/plays1)**

As our final example of contemporary drama, let us examine the case of Dino Pešut, the dramaturg, dramatist and novelist, representative of Croatian post-dramatic metadrama of the millennial generation. In his graduation thesis at the Academy of Dramatic Art in Zagreb, he defined writing and drama plays in general in a very autobiographical and lucid way and with some authorial licence:

> **A dramatic text is just half-literature. A dramatic text is like the penguin in Herzog's documentary which sets off onto a hill for no apparent reason to die there as if it needed to achieve something. A dramatic text is like a pencil, a young man in love, who will find out that he must die. Thus, dramatic texts are merely half-literature and hard to analyse and talk about separated from their performances. Dramatic texts are like the phoenix bird, so they must burn in order to become real (Pešut, *Deseta* 204).**

This metaphor of the dramatic text as the phoenix bird that has to burn in order to become real speaks in a picturesque, but fairly precise way, about the liminality and transitivity of dramatic writing among media.

Pešut's plays are written as a proper Babylon of dramatic, prose, poetic and essay tactics combined with the author's strong investment in writing down the often banal reality:

> **My real and artistic world is made up of banality. And I am no longer afraid of my banality. This text is banal, I talk about myself with a special meaning, I ground my own youthful enthusiasm**

and try to connect it to my artistic path. And all that is has already been written and revealed. (Pešut, 2017, 209)

Pešut is well aware here that, in fact, everything has already been written down and spelt out, that it is impossible to discover anything new in reality (and probably also in art); it is, however, possible to interpret it in different ways, including authorial ones. In his plays, which are often written in free verse, Pešut keeps returning to Greek tragedy and mythology. He is interested in its content as well as structure, but above all in an intense authorial metatheatrical dialogue with it. He feels very close to Greek mythology, their gods, and the structure of Greek tragedy that inspires him in his disclosure and "undressing" of modernity. An example of this is his acclaimed generational play *H.E.J.T.E.R.I* [H.A.T.E.R.S.], which was successfully staged at the ZKM theatre in Zagreb in 2020. [2]

In this play, which is about the millennial generation that went through burnout and has been symbolically sacrificed at the altar of neoliberalism, mythology appears as a starting point for an authorial interpretation of modernity through ironic paraphrasing of the past. This is done to elaborate the story about a group of friends who are scattered all over the world in different life situations and with diverging dreams, but nevertheless share a common past and a generational bond. Their childhood was marked by war and by growing up in post-war poverty. Through this group and their associations with the antique tragic experience juxtaposed with today's banality, Pešut interprets and topicalises the present.

It would appear that Pešut (as well as part of his generation and even some younger dramatists) is turning back to the drama of language derived from absurdist plays and their verbal violence, however, incorporating these elements into a textual polyphony of voices, inner monologues and other speech surfaces, as well as a hypertrophy

2 KORANA: Gees... I haven't partied since... Huh! I'm Hera! Brilliant!
SANJIN: Right, the patron of marriage between a faggot and his bitch.
KORANA: Who are the children?
MAK: Hera and Zeus's? Hmm... Ares, Hephaestos, Hebe.
PAŠKO: What is this mysterious link between gay teenagers and Greek mythology?
SANJIN: Well, there's some comfort in gods also being flawed.
ROZA: And for them to fuck around and get pissed.
MAK: When I was a kid and I realised I was gay, I was totally ashamed...And I thoght I had to hide it. But then I started to hide my rage and sorrow... Everything. But than this put out all my love and happyness and everything...Then I started reading mythology and that saved me. Their hate. They throw hate on everyone, fact. And they bicker. And make war and love and split up and they get horny. That was also when Kylie Minogue was releasing those clips where everyone was making out. To love you must also hate a bit. There has to be a balance. They forbid us to make love. Then they tell us we are ungrateful. But it's just a minority.

of external happening that can also be written in the way of dramatic dialogues which, however, often change at a moment's notice into quasi-dialogues, long monologic structures, puzzling quotations or poeticised speech.

3. THREE EXAMPLES FROM THEATRE: TOMAŽ PANDUR, VITO TAUFER, AND OLIVER FRLJIĆ

FIGURE 2: Ivo Svetina: *Sheherezade*, directed by Tomaž Pandur: Janez Škof and Olga Kacjan, 1989. Photo Tone Stojko, Mladinsko Theatre Archive.

Besides dramatic and post-dramatic dramatists, it is often the directors in contemporary theatre who interpretatively translate literature into theatre signs, thus creating performances intended for readers who ultimately create drama in the Barthesian way. Let us take an example that is today already considered a classic of Slovenian and Yugoslavian "theatre of images" from the 1980s: the oriental-occidental opera *Šeherzada* [*Sheherazade*] by Ivo Svetina, as directed by Tomaž Pandur. Pandur derives his power of theatre madness from the 'rhizomatic' (Deleuze-Guattari) and open form of Svetina's text. The author knocked the sphere of poetic drama out of the orbit of the then-modern aestheticised political theatre dedicated to the collective spirit and established his own, specific and autonomous theatrical organism. In the staging of *Sheherazade* thus emerged a new "interpretation which is a new text into which the elements of the interpreted text have been

inscribed and any interpretation of which is a contextualisation of the text-object" (Théâtre, Modes, 1987, 121).

In a similar vein, Pandur's performance *Sto minut* [*One Hundred Minutes*] is a distinctly authorial dialogue with Dostoevsky which derives from the orbit of the American theatre of images. While in the staging of *Sheherazade* Pandur was still fascinated by intertextuality that nevertheless consciously persisted as part of theatre (albeit theatre with a capital T, i.e. Theatre), in the case of Dostoevsky he is more interested in the intertwining of media: literature, theatre, film and the new media. He is interested in the theatre of images that adheres to Richard Wagner's utopian model of combining theatre, music, dance, painting, photography, video, sculpture and architecture, thus bringing closer together "theatre and the visual arts in a new understanding of performance, demonstrating why these two histories must be integrated" (Marranca, 1996, 163–164). At the same time, he is also interested in a contemporary, post-democratic world following the Bosnian War, the Kennedy assassination, 9/11, and the Iraq War. The sliding signifiers thus produced by the sophisticated visual-acoustic interpretation of Pandur's modern-day spectacle after Dostoevsky create ethical imperatives and at the same time a sense of uneasiness.

This way, Pandur creates his own interpretations that bring the underlying textual and ideological base to an explosion of seemingly unified texts and sign systems into a multiplicity of contradictory and paradoxical elements. Thus, in his reinterpretation of Dostoevsky, we all become Raskolnikov, both the protagonists on stage and the audience in the auditorium. Just as we all remain voyeurs of some kind of *culture in extremis* in the time which Baudrillard designates as a period of the "transpolitical, transhistorical and transeconomic" (Baudrillard, 1988, 104). And we are forced to take heed of the fact that theatre as a traditional, classical bearer of signification remains in the background.

Both of these performances embody the essential postulates of Pandur's theatre, precisely what the director himself speaks about in his Madrid interview (when he uses the Artaudian-Kosovel syntagmas of "turbulent electrical field", "a series of images that we have never yet seen in our lives, but we are able to recognise at the level of archetypes"), which make up the central theme of his "theatre cosmogony". His performances establish a dialogue between visual and textual languages that are neither in opposition to each other nor in a hierarchical relation. Neither of the two functions as the matrix for the other one.

Here, two parallel paths converge in the act of mutual inspiration: the path of the text and the path of the visual and other theatre codes. The flourishing of visual and gestural elements in Pandur's theatre did

not herald the death of the theatre or the book, nor a cataclysm or a reconciliation of man with himself. It merely announced that "there is within the confines of the stage a privileged zone in which theatre speaks of itself" (Ubersfeld, 1999, 27).

Pandur always conceived of theatre as a personalised attempt at delineating his own gaze, his personal interpretation which is, however, never a dialectical one nor a materialist one. His performances speak in a distinct language, in a dialogic relationship with their textual material or proto-material, and at the same time with numerous corpora of staging tactics from the history of theatrical and performative arts, especially the fundamental technopoetics and phenomena of performative arts of the 20th century.

Sheherazade (1989), followed by the spectacles *Faust* (1990), *Hamlet* (1990), *Carmen* (1992), *La Divina Commedia* (1993) and *Ruska misija* [*Russian Mission*] (1994), as well as his "German" (*Inferno*), post-Yugoslav (*One Hundred Minutes*, *Caligula*, *Tesla Electric Company*) and "Spanish" *Hamlet*, *Barocco*, *Medea*) performances from recent decades, which are equally or, arguably, even more sophisticated and mature in their multi-layering and acting-performing prowess, represent theatre creations with no classic dramatic structure. Thus, we have to interpret them in their spectacular form as postmodern simulacra of Wagner's Gesamtkunstwerk structure in which opera arias are substituted by the non-hierarchical juxtaposition of "verbal declamations" (Marranca). Despite that, they still function as operas in their visual aspects. The meaning is here generated "by the iconography employed" in the performance that has to be understood in the sense of the theatre of images which "owes most of its appeal to the director's ability to replace textual explanations with images, movement and sound" (Foretić, 1997, 268).

For our second example, let us refer to Vito Taufer who undoubtedly introduced the principles of the dramaturgy of space and theatre of images to Slovenia with his performances in the mid-1980s. Let us point out his theatre reflection on Lewis Carroll's classic tale of *Alice in Wonderland*, a performance for young audiences which combined in-depth exploration of theatre space and time with a sensibility for children audiences in the times of late socialism (The Mladinsko Theatre, 1987). Taufer's staging was marked by strong highlights in the area of the post-dramatic and the theatre of images.

While Taufer introduced his departure from Aristotelian dramaturgy and "theological stage" (Derrida, 1967) in the performance *Jaz nisem jaz I*. [*I am Not Me, part 1*], which established the theatre as a means of a post-dramatic interweaving of "image-music-text-technology" and intertwining of different media through its intermedial conception

(painter: Sergej Kapus; stage designer: Iztok Osojnik; live music: Srp; choreography: Ksenija Hribar; masks: Eka Vogelnik; slide show: Bojan Brecelj, etc.), it was his staging of *Alice in Wonderland* that, in dialogue with Carroll, highlighted theatre where "the painterly and sculptural qualities of performance are stressed , transforming this theatre into a spatially dominated one activated by sense impressions, as opposed to a time-dominated one ruled by linear narrative" (Marranca, xi-xii).

Taufer introduced the *tableau* as a central unit of the composition of performance. In dialogue with Artaud, he deconstructed Carroll's nonsense through a parallel reading of two conceptually extremely innovative authors: he translated Carroll's text and drama theatre in a way that created—to quote Deleuze when discussing Artaud—"a creative, central collapse, causing us to emerge in another world and in an entirely different language" (Deleuze, 1990, 83-84). This other world and language belong to the de-hierarchised theatre of images in which "visual and verbal imagery" (Marranca) on the one hand "deconstructs, displaces and puts in question the very questioning of the notion, logic and technological structure of the political" (Lehmann, 2002, 8). Taufer thus connected Alice's journey through spatial and temporal surfaces of the performance "with the montage of juxtaposed or imbricated virtual spaces, which – this is the crucial point – remain independent from one another so that no synthesis is offered, a poetic sphere of *connotations* comes into being" (Lehmann, 2006, 79).

This way, Taufer positioned *Alice* into the world of children of late socialism as well as the mythical world of Lewis Carroll, creating an homage of a kind to Robert Wilson and his theatre of images in both varieties—for children and for grownups. He applied Wilson's narrative system by using the architecture of bodies, space, sound, colours and costumes, as well as Carroll's nonsense, of course, which created the freedom of non-logocentric speech and the special geometry of the performance which was at the same time cubist and Euclidean. It also created the cinematic framework of the theatre stage that was insistently associated with the world of film.

The question that Taufer posed in his performative tactics, along with Carroll and *Alice*, was the following one: Even if the world is subjected to the intrusive terror of ideologies and as such has no sense, what prevents us from inventing sense ourselves? He shaped his performance together with Carroll's characters, e.g. the Mad Hatter and the White Rabbit, whom he related to 20th-century iconographies, which, according to Alain Badiou, was the century of wars. With this, the director found it crucial that the actor developed their own imagery, freely inventing their characters and letting their imaginations run wild.

FIGURE 3: Lewis Carroll – Vito Taufer, *Alice in Wonderland*, 1987, 1994. Sandi Pavlin and Olga Kacjan, Mladinsko Theatre Archives

All of the above bears witness to the fact that during recent decades culture has more than ever been happening on the borderlines that both divide and connect. The borderlines of languages, cultures, styles, media, and ideologies. Virtually all marginal languages of performative practices are being expediently translated into the languages of "our" semiotics, through filtering membranes which so transform foreign texts (of music ...) that they become part of the semiosphere's internal semiotics while still remaining foreign to it.

This way, Taufer (with the aid of Gregor Tomc, who scored the engaged, somewhat Brechtian songs) created a special form of translation into the language of theatre semiotics through membranes filtering and transforming alien texts (of music, visual culture, late-socialist iconography) and the stage essay that textually binds Carroll's speech surfaces, monologues and dialogues. Vocal and acoustic as well as kinetic elements created the space in all of its dynamics, besides visual elements. A jungle of voices and bodies of the many actors representing Carroll's characters surrounded the audience. Taufer built up his stage essay out of eclectic dynamic interweaving of bodies and sounds in seemingly infinite spaces of a cinematically extended film-like but at the same time three-dimensional stage in which he established new performative techniques, new semiotic and phenomenal spaces of *Alice* that commented on prisons and free territories of late socialism, while at the same time creating powerful reflections of the reality of here and now, albeit in fairytale and mythological motifs and iconographies.

This intertwining and intermedial performance essay bears witness to the fact that the elementary act of theatre (just like Lotman argues in the case of thinking) is a translation originating in a dialogue produced by the differences between semiotic structures (the languages of literature, visual arts and theatre) of the participants in the dialogue: Lewis Carroll and the artistic team. This dialogue proceeds from semiotic differences but also similarities, as a complete difference could never result in a creative dialogue.

A characteristic of this performance is also its specific dramaturgy which derives from spatial principles that often shape its story or subject as much as from textual ones. The performance (similar to Wilson's performances) points out the intermediate position of theatre between the moving and the immobile worlds of representational arts (Lotman). It establishes *play spaces* (to use a term coined by Meta Hočevar) which are explicitly chronotopic and dynamic in the sense of traversing across borders inside Lotman's semiosphere. Deriving from Carroll and his nonsense, dramaturgy is often unpredictable and fluid, it does not produce one single bundle of stories and meanings, let alone ideologies. It would be too much to claim that this derives from Wilson's principle that formalism on stage is more productive than "realism", nevertheless, Taufer does not build on realistic narration nor does he construct a mimesis of reality, but rather new, specifically theatrical and authorial spaces for the real.

The Croatian theatre director Oliver Frljić applies seemingly different but in essence very similar procedures of translation in his politically engaged projects.

As an example, let us examine two performances Frljić directed: *Preklet naj bo izdajalec svoje domovine* [*Damned Be the Traitor of His Homeland*] produced by the Mladinsko Theatre in 2010 derives from the final verse of the anthem of the second Yugoslavia which the director uses to interpret the dissolution of Tito's socialist state and its consequences. The other one is the controversial European co-production *Naše nasilje in vaše nasilje* [*Our Violence and Your Violence*] by the Mladinsko Theatre, HNK Ivan Zajec from Rijeka and several other European co-producers which is a very loose interpretation of Peter Weisse's novel *Die Ästhetik des Widerstands* [*The Aesthetics of Resistance*], setting the stage with bizarre stories and quasi-documentary theatre about our postmillennial world of the refugee crisis in Europe. In both of these examples, we are dealing with collaborative theatre, or rather, devising procedures in which the text and its interpretation are emerging parallelly to the process of preparation of the performance in a way that both the text and the staging have multiple authors.

FIGURE 4: Oliver Frljić: *Damned Be the Traitor of His Homeland,* 2010: Draga Potočnjak, Uroš Maček and Primož Bezjak, photo by Nada Žgank, Mladinsko Theatre Archive.

In both cases, Frljić applies the technique of appropriation and reinterpretation of artistic tactics from the past. He uses theatre as a public forum for open discussion that produces the truth in Badiou's conception of the thought of art as produced by art itself. This emphasises the notion of the immanence of truth, or rather, interpretation inside art: "Art is a thought in which artworks are the Real (and not the effect)" (Badiou, 2005, 9). An artistic interpretation is thus "the configuration 'in truth' of works - /and/ is in each and every one of its points the thinking of the thought that it itself is [*pensee de la pensee qu'il est*]" (Ibid., 14). Frljić defends Badiou's notion, demonstrating by his theatre that art is not merely a thoughtless truth that requires a thinker or, rather, a philosopher to think it. Instead, it is at the same time its own thought of itself. Art not only is its own truth but in its works already functions as a reflection of this very truth. Thus, any Frljić performance is also a reflection of the artistic configuration designated as a theatre performance.

In his performances, the director constructs interpretations that represent the theatrical framework of their staging and performative laboratory, inhabited by stories from different parts of the world. However, for Frljić the main point of interest remains the peripheral sphere of the European theatrical, cultural and political semiosphere: the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the 1990s, followed by the war in Croatia and Bosnia, and the Srebrenica genocide. In recent years, this framework has been replaced by the crisis of post-refugee neocatholic and neoliberal Europe with all its newly-composed orientalisms.

4. INTERTEXTUAL AND INTERMEDIAL TRAVERSING AS THE BUILDING BLOCK OF CONTEMPORARY ART

Comparing Frljić's interpretative framework to the one in the works by Simona Semenič or, even more, Dino Pešut, one can discern certain similarities, the main difference being that Pešut is sceptical about political engagement, while Simona Semenič is a bit less radical. Frljić's performances are deliberately politically incorrect, thus producing a specific form of the aesthetics of resistance. As noted by the Canadian critic Raymond Bertin in the magazine *Jeu, Revue du théâtre* when describing the audience's reactions to *Damned Be the Traitor of His Homeland* in Montreal: "This politically incorrect performance that is malicious, grotesque and ripping, is a demonstration of the ravages of war and nationalisms, but also a reflection and rethinking of theatre itself, the role of the artist, the responsibility of each individual in times of war and after that" (Bertin, 2012, n.p.).

Frljić builds his aesthetics of resistance through double encoding and by undermining unambiguous and clear interpretations by spectators (critics included):

I think that the foremost quality of the performance *Our Violence and Your Violence* lies in situating the spectator into a lack of a framework that would clearly determine the mode of functioning of the performance – is it meant ironically or not. /.../ I never set myself the goal of turning into some kind of moral arbitrator (Toporišič, 2016, 4).

Thus, Frljić points out that we are living inside a domain of transcultural business that can interpret and translate any intercultural artistic act into the logic of potential exploitation by the global transpolitical economic and political lobbies. However, through his political incorrectness, he endeavours to turn this situation to his advantage, to shift the interpretation from the field of reactionary thinking into the field of liberation. Contemporary art thus appears to join Susan Sontag in her exclamation: "In place of a hermeneutics, we need an erotics of art" (Sontag, 1978, 438).

To summarise: In contemporary theatre, a performance still represents a semiotic space of traversing or, rather, transitional forms arising between diverse media, as demonstrated by the analysis of selected performative and textual corpora, At the same time, it also records the very process of traversing the borderlines between stage and auditorium, actors and spectators, writers and readers, i.e. the special dynamics of the autopoietic feedback loop. In contemporary performative practices which often intertwine diverse media, genres and cultures, the space of play and watching (as we were able to see in the analysed

examples) frequently becomes an issue of translating and re-coding information from one format into another. Theatre art in the broadest sense of the word thus turns into an exploration of the bonds that interweave words and images, time and space, thus creating the dynamics of semiotic languages in space. The interaction of the time and space of a theatre performance establishes the theatre event as such.

Actors-performers sovereignly build up the stage, while the spectators are active interpreters creating their own translations that are typically creative weavings of words and images, time and space. In the sense of Bonnie Marranca's reading of the theatre of images and Lotman's perception of artworks as systems for the functioning of languages that fill up "the semiotic space" of a performance, a special dynamics of time and space emerges in such theatre corpora, the characteristic of which is traversing or rather breaking through the borders inside the field of creation and reception. In the process of semiosis, contemporary theatre weaves or, rather, interweaves space, light, sound and movement into an unusual open texture that produces meanings on the one hand and aesthetic enjoyment on the other, while both are accompanied by a post-Brechtian attitude of awareness that, despite everything, art can establish at least a temporary community between performers and spectators in a common space of the stage and the auditorium which allows for a temporary feedback loop.

In conclusion: By establishing a dialogue with the traces of the performative turn as defined by Erika Fischer-Lichte, performative practices endeavour to re-legitimise themselves as performative art par *excellence*. Intertwining, nomadic nature and transitivity are thus the qualities demonstrating that live and mediated performances are today no longer to be understood as ontological opposites. The reception of both is a matter of experience through representation in which live performance is no better off or in any way more here and now than a mediated one. The performative turn positions the audience in a liminal state in which the spectators' perception of themselves and the world surrounding them is destabilised. At the same time, it is the very exploration and traversing of the boundaries between live performance and mediated events which produced some of the most interesting examples of the non-hierarchical intertwining of media.

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ART THEORY STUDIES

Articulation of Language through Transformation via Design. Historical, Technological and User Contexts

PETRA ČERNE OVEN

1. INTRODUCTION

In this text we examine the transformation that language undergoes in its translation from the sounds of the spoken word to the image that the sounds represent. For this reason, we can not afford to overlook the context of language and its constituent parts. As users/readers we perceive the transformation of speech into writing as organic and natural.[1] This begs the question: can we define this "naturalness" from different perspectives—for example through the "habit" of reading, through the use of different technologies, and through a historical perspective? Our second interest is in how the different functions of the message and the different ways of and motivations for reading inform the process of transformation.

1 The broader context of the research that Barbara Predan and I embarked on in the summer of 2020 is the "language of design" and, accordingly, what is natural in design and, by contrast, what is not, but might appear so at first glance due to our perception of the world, our thinking and our humanity.

We will be looking at where and when the decisions regarding the representation of speech were or are being made, who is making them, and how. Assuming that this is a process in which typography and linguistics are closely linked, the logical question to ask is why linguists so rarely delve into typography, and whether text designers pay enough attention to language. The field being as broad as it is, our main effort in this text will be to attempt to establish the contextual framework of the technological/historical component of the transformation and then examine, using a small cross-sectional sample, how the theory manifests in practice.

For easier understanding, let us first clarify that by the word "typography", we mean not only the typefaces themselves, but everything in connection with the visual organisation of the written signs of language, with no regard to how the text was reproduced; in short, the elements associated with the articulation of the text, which was carried out by someone in order to visualise the thoughts and ideas of the message in an understandable way.[2]

Even though articulation of text is an important concern within the design profession, language is all too often left out of the discussion. Designers talk about typeface design, page layouts and other visual elements; the information technology experts talk—we are speaking of modern technologies—about the code that constitutes the applications in whose context we, in turn, read. Few, however, seek to combine the above into an integrated system incorporating language. It was more than twenty years ago that British linguist David Crystal argued that "the explication of printed language needs the expertise of both typographers and linguists, in order to provide a complete description of its forms and structures and a satisfactory explanation of its functions and effects." (Crystal, 1998, 7) Why? Because typography is, in a sense, speech frozen in time. If we relate this to Marshall McLuhan's definition of language as a tool that "made it possible for man to accumulate experience and knowledge in a form that made easy transmission and maximum use possible," (McLuhan, 1962, 5) we can conclude that typography is one of the fundamental tools of communication.

2 An even broader definition of the typographical profession is offered by Joseph Moxon in his well-known work *Mechanick Exercises on the Whole Art of Printing*: "[But] by a Typographer, I mean such a one, who by his own Judgement, from solid reasoning with himself, can either perform, or direct others to perform from the beginning to the end, all the Handyworks and Physical operations relating to Typographie" (Moxon, 1978, 11–12).

2. VERBAL GRAPHIC LANGUAGE

This brings us to an interesting fact: we have said that typography is very closely linked to language, in the sense that it is a static representation of spoken, or heard, language, with language in general generally divided into written and spoken language by linguists. As early as in the 1980s, Michael Twyman, a British professor of typography, sought to develop models to take into account the different aspects of language in connection with graphical communication. (Twyman, 1982, 7) He used the term verbal graphic language to mean everything covered by the German word *Schrift*, whose Slovenian equivalent is *pisava*. Compared to the English *type*, these terms have a broader meaning, as the former predominantly refers to print, whereas *Schrift/pisava* can mean anything from handwritten lettering, through typewriter output, to text on a television screen, as well as anything in between. *Verbal* refers to words and *graphic* to the mode of execution (which includes both manual and mechanical production), while *language* points to the fact that it is, in a sense, a *language* of its own—with its own conventions, organisation, usage and history.

Twyman starts out by defining the way in which communication is received (channel): *visual* on one hand and *aural* (words and sounds) on the other. Since spoken language is the domain of linguists, we will be focusing exclusively on the visual category. *Visual language* can be further subdivided into *graphical* (encompassing all language writing systems) and *non-graphical* visual language (gestures, body language). *Graphical language* can then be subdivided according to the mode of visualisation into *verbal* (anything involving letters), *pictorial* (pictures) and *schematic* language (anything not covered by the other two categories).

When things get interesting is when Twyman subdivides the verbal (letter-based) language according to the technology employed into one *written by hand* and one written *using mechanical means*. This is where the concept could use some adaptation to bring it up-to-date, since the mechanical means, otherwise encompassing print, as well as all other mechanical methods of text reproduction (typewriters, conventional television), need to be extended to include the *digital methods*. I therefore propose a division into *manual* and *machine-assisted* methods.

The smallest unit of the verbal language as illustrated in the diagram is the script (the entire set of characters), or alphabet (a set of characters in an established order in a particular script in general).

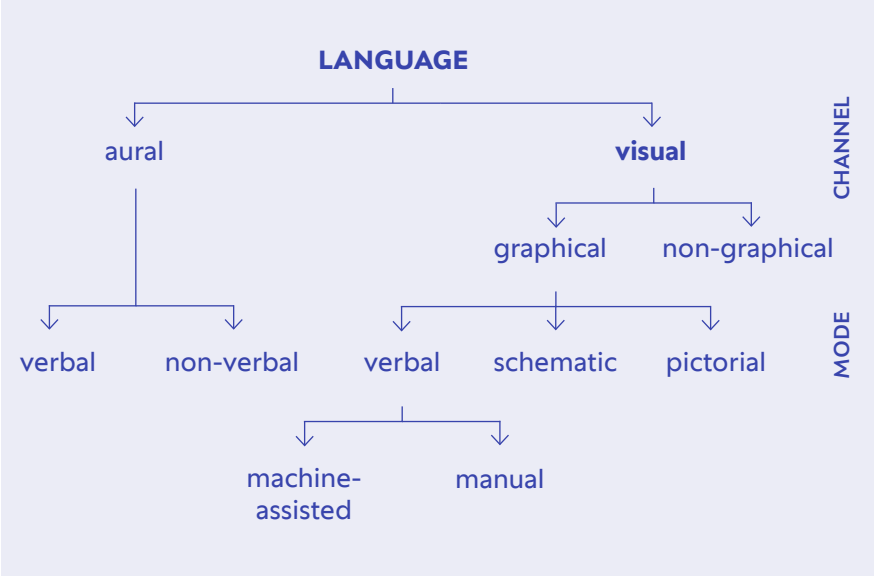


FIGURE 1: The adapted scheme of verbal graphical language per Twyman (Twyman, 1982, 7).

It is phonetic[3] in nature, enabling the use of a relatively small set of characters to write down any sound of nearly any language. The sounds are therefore represented by characters; naturally, this does not yet make it a language—having just the building blocks, the bricks, is not enough. Indeed, of all the aspects of the transformation, establishing a system of visual characters to represent the sounds we hear is perhaps the most trivial.

Why? We know of such translations of sounds into characters that have been left so far behind in the past by the subsequent developments that they can not be used for modern communication. We could offer as an example continuous script (*Scriptio continua*), a style of writing that does not use spaces or, indeed, any other marks to separate the words and sentences. Such documents also lack punctuation, diacritics and capital letters. A similar example is the Greek *boustrophedon*, in which lines are read alternately left to right and then right to left, and which might even involve mirroring of the characters. In both of these instances we are dealing with conventions that held in the past but seem alien to the modern reader. These examples show nicely how solutions for language visualisation have evolved or been refined through time, this process of transformation eventually leading to the present state.

Some Roman inscriptions already exhibit the first modifications to the practice of using just the basic building blocks of language (the

3 There exist, of course, other writing systems, equally suited to modern languages; in this particular discourse, however, we will be limiting ourselves to the Latin script.

letter characters). A great example is the *interpunctus*, which came to be used in classical Latin to separate words. In addition to the circular shape that was predominantly used in manuscripts, we can also encounter—in stone-carved inscriptions—a small equilateral triangle pointing upwards or downwards. This pattern of use nicely demonstrates the impact of the technology employed (the stone chisel versus the paintbrush) on the articulation of the visual language. Roman inscriptions therefore already exhibit a degree of spatial organisation that is one of the variables in articulation.

3. ARTICULATION AND CONFIGURATION OF LANGUAGE

Were we to attempt to explore the entire set of variables that can be used in the configuration of language, the easiest way to illustrate it would be by using a matrix showing the method of *symbolisation* on one axis and the *method of configuration*[4] on the other.

This is because every time we use words, we have to decide how to employ the signs, how to place them, as well as the method we will use to define relationships. This holds true whether we do it intuitively, as laypeople, or as professional designers. We could find examples of each of these 28 methods[5], either in everyday life or in the history of visual language. The matrix shows the theoretical possibilities for articulating of the message, which influence the decisions regarding how to organise the graphical language. Talking about the space where the text will be is not enough, however. The method of symbolisation covers many features that have a key influence on articulation.

If we temporarily set aside the pictorial and schematic elements and instead focus solely on the verbal messages, we can, according to Twyman, divide the features of the graphical language into extrinsic and intrinsic features. (Twyman, 1982, 11) Intrinsic features represent everything that is part of the characters themselves, or of the system that produces these characters; this includes the character set, the slant of the script (cursive or non-cursive), the weight (bold, regular, light), alternative characters (small capitals), letterform styles, sizes. Extrinsic features, on the other hand, include the configuration, microtypography (typeface selection, styles, use of typographic symbols, kerning,

4 Twyman, Michael, 1979. "A schema for the study of graphic language", in: Kolers, P. A., Wrolstad, M. E., & Bouma, H. (eds.), *Processing of Visible Language*, vol. 1. New York & London: Plenum Press, 117–50.

5 It should be noted that new exceptions could probably be found that would not fit into any of the categories.

→ METHOD OF CONFIGURATION
↓ METHOD OF SYMBOLIZATION

	Pure linear	Linear interrupted	List	Linear branching	Matrix	Non-linear directed viewing	Non-linear most options open
Verbal/ numerical	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Pictorial & verbal/ numerical	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Pictorial	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
Schematic	22	23	24	25	26	27	28

FIGURE 2: Matrix of graphical language features per Twyman (Twyman, 1982, 8).

sage using digital tools. This is in contrast to the pre-digital era, when this was predominantly the domain of the professionals in either printing or design.

So how do we make decisions about the articulation of language? It is difficult to pinpoint exactly where, or when, the decisions are made in the design process. We usually make decisions based on our previous experience. As Twyman says, "we frequently do things the way they have been done before simply because we do not stop to think." (Twyman, 1982, 11) We simply fail to look at the options we have available. Certainly we are influenced—at least in the articulation of hand-produced text—by what we have learned in school, but also by our writing skills, our experience of the tool we use to write and the content of the document we are writing. It also seems that we tend to be more deliberate in terms of articulation when we produce text using a machine than when we do so by hand. It must be added that this only applies to machine-assisted production in the pre-digital era, when the process was protracted and the costs were more of a factor. As a result, authors were much more careful with their manuscripts than nowadays, when the possibilities for correction are virtually endless in most cases. This also influences, on a conscious or subconscious level, our decision-making.

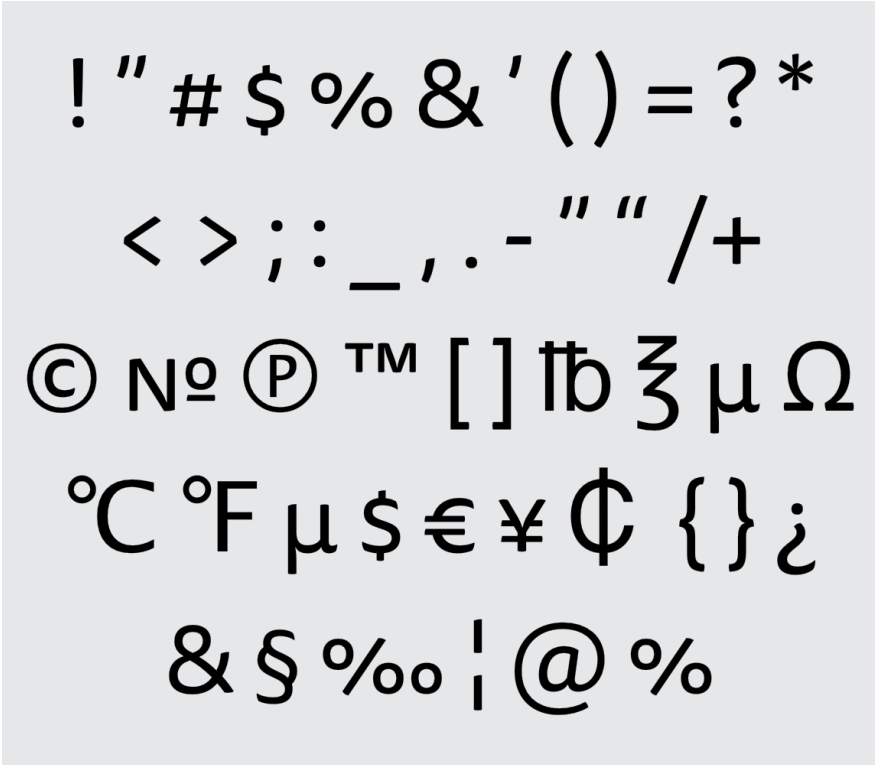


FIGURE 3: The set of characters used for communication is considerably larger than the set of characters in the alphabet. Author's archive.

4. FACTORS OF INFLUENCE IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF LANGUAGE THROUGH DESIGN

We will now discuss some of the most common factors of influence evident within the transition from spoken word (or thought) to its visual representation: technology and means of production; conventions, regulations and rules, as well as the intent and context of the message.

Technology and means of production

One of the main differences between the spoken and visual categories of verbal language lies in the development of the means of production. The biological organ we use to produce sounds has not changed much in the course of human history. Voice is still produced by the vocal chords, still shaped by the nasopharynx. Ways of producing text have, by contrast, varied greatly through history—text could be handwritten, impressed in clay, carved in stone, typed on a typewriter or mechanically typeset using monotype or linotype machines, which was followed by phototypesetting, and at the very end, we entered the digital

age, which brought desktop publishing and everyday communication through digital devices.

Technology is therefore one of the foremost factors influencing the transformation of spoken language into a graphical one. It is, in fact, technology that dictates which visualisation materials can be used and and how much flexibility we are given regarding articulation. (Walker, 2001, 13) Let's look at some examples: A handwritten document exhibits the greatest flexibility of articulation. We can freely choose the size and form of the letters, the place where they are positioned and the leading, as well as deciding the orthography, the colour—we can basically influence all the elements of the message.

On the other extreme is the typewriter.[6] The contrast to handwriting is immediately apparent, with the typewriter limiting us to the use of a single typeface, and while it does permit switching between upper- and lower-case letters, it offers no choice regarding sizing. We are likewise limited to the set of characters offered by the keyboard. The words can be strung together into lines of varying length, but the leading is fixed. If our particular machine features a colour ribbon, we have the luxury of choosing between two colours: black and red. Handwriting and a typewriter represent the extremes: the other technologies all lie somewhere in between the two in terms of flexibility of articulation. (Walker, 2001, 13)

Looking back into history, we can say that the historical process of articulation took place, in a way, "naturally". With the emergence of printing, typefaces came into use that were, so to speak, "frozen" in time. Producing new typefaces in metal was an expensive and, compared to the natural urge that drove the scribes to adjust their handwriting, far more complicated process. In the beginning, as a result, typeface designs were used for a very long time that in all respects resembled the handwriting in manuscripts, of which the incunables were basically an imitation. It was only very slowly that typography became a medium of expression in its own right, casting off the influences of manuscripts and handwriting. Even so, we can also see technology-related interventions in communication. I present as an example two historical texts by the Benedictine monk Bernard of Clairvaux *De consideratione ad Eugenium papam* (approximately dated to the 1400–1410 period).[7]

6 The typewriter (in commercial use since 1874) is the first expression of the desire to mechanise the writing process and one of the most basic mechanical means of reproducing text.

7 The documents being compared are: the manuscript Liber ad Eugenium papam de consideratione from the Carthusian monastery Nieuwlicht of Bloemendaal (approx. 1400 to 1410), now found at the Utrecht University Library (Universiteitsbibliotheek Utrecht Hs. 162. Hs 4 H 14 dl 2 (fol. 60-97r). Available at: https: http://objects.library.uu.nl/reader/index.php?-obj=1874- 334039&lan=en#page//82/67/43/826743074181020375786604283658283467l8.

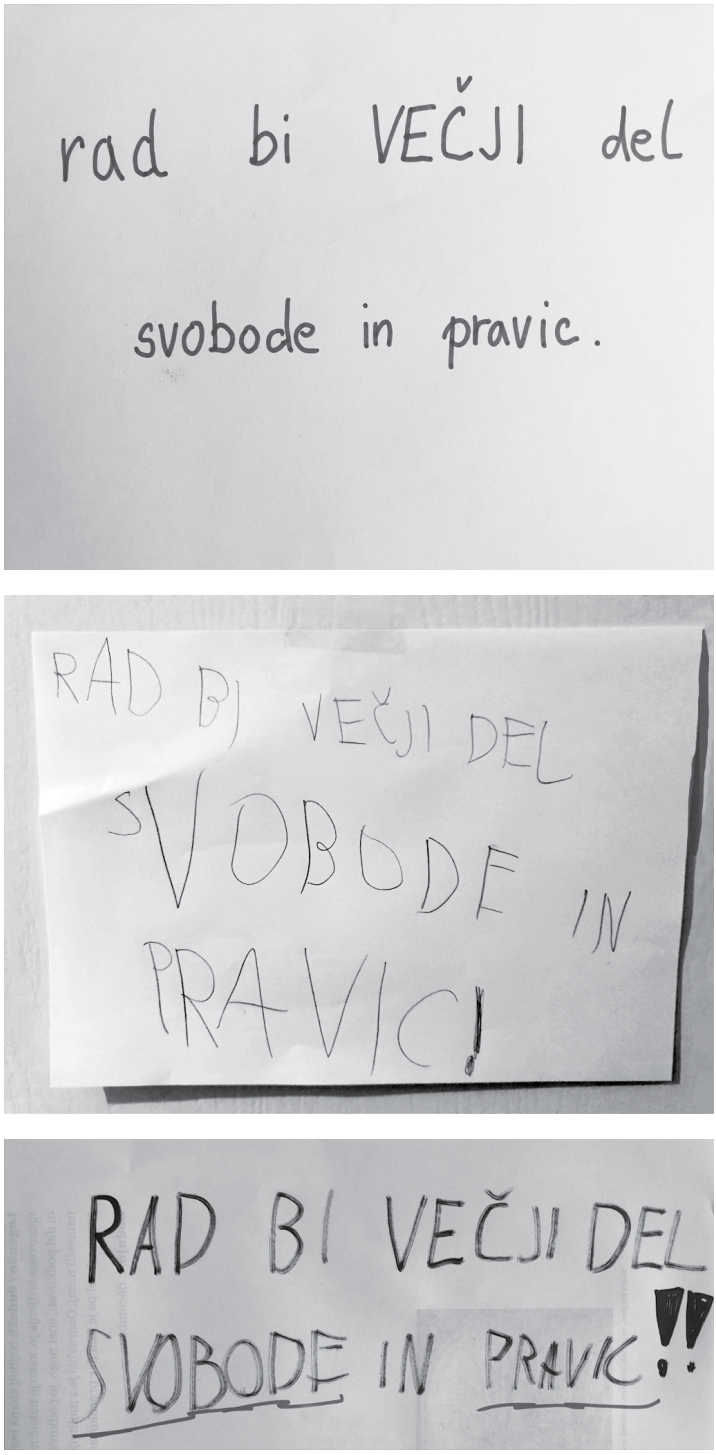


FIGURE 4: Handwritten documents exhibit the greatest flexibility of articulation. Author's archive.

The manuscript was in two columns, which the printed version merged into a single one. While in the manuscript the *Explicit* heading is a rubric in red ink, the heading is black in the printed version (due to the printing being monochromatic). At the same time, it gained an extra blank line above and below to maintain the emphasis. These examples attest to how the decisions on the adaptations of language due to technology (previously handwriting, printed incunabula afterwards) have been taking place throughout history.

Through the development of various typesetting technologies, the roles of intrinsic and extrinsic features—as well as what can be used in communication—shifted. A designer thus could not use bold lettering if the metal type in the bold weight was not available. For the most part, the intrinsic elements were shaped by the typesetting technology, while the extrinsic elements were determined by the technology of reproduction itself, i.e. printing. Accordingly, the possibilities kept changing, and not always for the better. The keyboard of a Monotype typesetting machine featured 250–272 characters. New technology—for instance videotext in the 20th century—brought more stringent limits, the latter supporting no more than 96 characters. (Vernimb, 1980) The beginning of the digital revolution—much like all the preceding changes in technology—was likewise a step back. As we all know, it took computers thirty years and much difficulty to reach the level of quality that had been taken for granted with previous technologies. In terms of typography, each new technology initially offered only a pale imitation of what the previous technologies were capable of. This continues to be a problem for many languages of small nations, as they do not have the same range of options that larger nations do.

We could follow this process of adaptation throughout history, but what makes the transformation more complex still is the fact that technology is not the only element that is changing. Transformation is also crucially influenced by the production relations. All elements are of equal importance: who transmits the message, who decides about design and who decides about the mode and medium of reproduction. The famous Venetian humanist scholar Aldus Manutius (1449/1452–1515) was still a pedagogue, translator, businessman, printer, designer and editor, all rolled into one, in his printing shop Aldine Press. Eventually, however, virtually all of these elements of the process would become professions in their own right. For five hundred years, the articulation of

jpg/mode/2up (4 September 2020); and the printed incunable by Bernardus van Clairvaux, *De consideratione ad Eugenium papam,* ([Utrecht : Nicolaes Ketelaer and Gerard de Leempt, 1474]). Available at: https://www.uu.nl/en/special-collections/about-special-collections/a-virtual-tour-of-special-documents/utrecht-incunabula (4 September 2020).

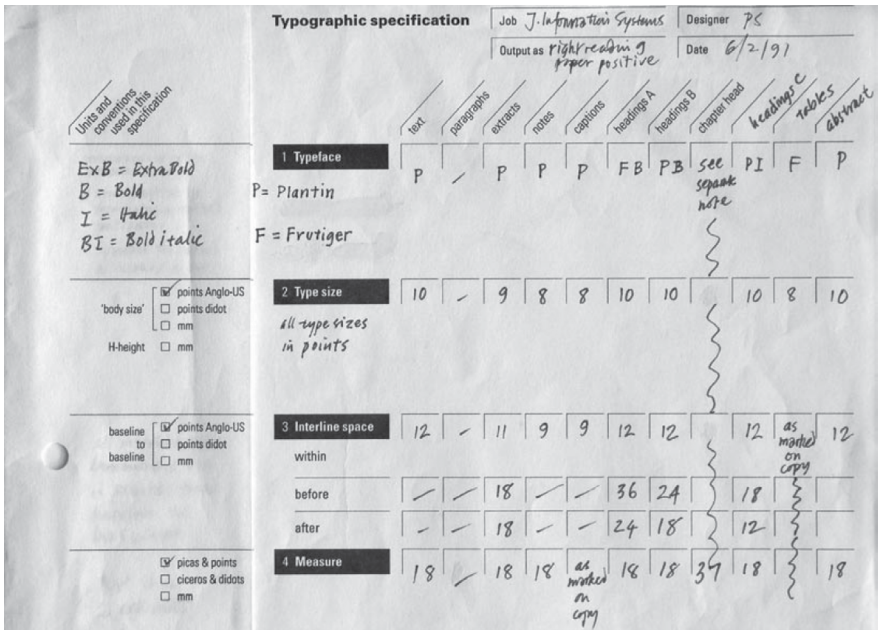


FIGURE 5: Specification for the typographic process by Paul Stiff, 1991. Author's archive.

the mechanically reproduced word was the domain of experts—typesetters, proofreaders, editors, printers—who were the ones responsible for the results. But the processes—especially once the Industrial Revolution was underway—had become increasingly complex, requiring increasing specialisation, and the number of participants in the process grew accordingly.

When modern design developed in the 20th century, even the simplest of printed materials began requiring the designer to specify countless variables in advance, preparing a detailed specification for the reproduction that was then carried out by others. Control of articulation had always depended on experience and knowledge, but this change in production relations also brought a dependence on teamwork, relations within the work collective and leadership skills.

It is only in the digital era, in close association with postmodernism, that a "miracle" finally occurs: suddenly, the designer, the author of the message, or indeed any layperson with the ability to use a computer, can communicate without the backing of a vast system of industrial production.

And so, by the end of 20th century, the circle is complete, so to speak: we are back where monks had been in their medieval monasteries, controlling all aspects of the product. An illustrative example of how the digital age reflected in visual communications is the legendary poster by the New York/Los Angeles–based designer April Greiman,

which she created in 1986 for the *Design Quarterly* magazine. The process of creating the pioneering product—scanning, design, print preparation and multiplication—was performed entirely on a personal computer, and while the process was enormously time-consuming due to the immaturity of the digital technology, it also ushered in a new paradigm in design: no longer is the designer responsible solely for the visuals—she suddenly finds herself as both the author of the content itself and the producer, too.

There was, however, another link to the past that had to be severed in parallel with these developments.

Conventions, regulations and rules

Noam Chomsky argues that the foundations of language consist of "principles that determine an infinite array of possible expressions, structured expressions which have definite meanings." (Chomsky, 2014) The statement holds true for graphical language, as well. The fact is that there is a huge variety of rules and conventions facilitating—or, indeed, hindering—articulation. The rules for writing used to be part of general education; as the profession of a scribe evolved, the rules evolved in parallel, becoming increasingly specific and important, depending on the role of writing in society and the purpose of the documents (matters of state, religion, trade ...). Likewise, with the emergence of print the professionals would meticulously construct rules not just on the material aspects of prints but also regarding all the other elements of the process of text reproduction—editing, proofreading—since these tracked the development of languages and therefore the grammatical conventions.

These rules were something everyone was involved with: artists, printers, writers.[8] It is thanks to these rules that the anomalies that historical development resulted in do not strike us as odd. What other explanation is there for how a simple word, such as gajba (meaning crate), can be written down with characters of different shapes yet remain readable, and understood the same way by all of us?

The purpose of the rules was to ensure order and understandability; they represented a standard of quality. And yet we find cases throughout history of people questioning the value of these rules. The most conspicuous examples came with the avantgarde movement in the beginning of the 20th century. Despite the technological limitations of metal type, composing sticks and wooden frames, which, due to the

8 One of the best-known examples is the rulebook *Hart's Rules for Compositors and Readers* at the University Press, Oxford, which is a reference manual and guide to topics such as style, grammar, typographical rules and punctuation. It was first published in Great Britain by Oxford University Press in 1893. It has since been reprinted and reissued countless times.

FIGURE 6: A simple word gajba, meaning "crate", written in different ways using the Tisa Sans Pro typeface. Author's archive.

laws of gravity, required the blocks of text to be stable and aligned in the X and Y directions, authors like Filippo Tommaso Emilio Marinetti began—in complete defiance of the rules—to change the visualisation in order to influence the articulation of printed word.

These developments took place not just on the level of macrotypography but microtypography as well. We can cite as an example the issue of upper- and lower-case letters. Walter Porstmann, a mathematician and engineer working in the field of standardisation,[9] along with several other thinkers from early 20th century Germany, were debating the reason for the existence of two characters representing a single sound.[10] The same idea also stoked the imagination of the typographer and designer Herbert Bayer, professor of typography at Bauhaus, who, in defiance of both grammatical rules and typographic conventions, ended up designing a small-caps only typeface: Universal typeface.

In practice, of course, the argument for having each sound represented by a single character falls apart immediately. German designer Otl Aicher was in the habit of citing the following example: "*Ich habe in Moskau liebe Genossen*" [I have dear colleagues in Moscow] and "*Ich habe in Moskau Liebe genossen*" [In Moscow, I tasted love],[11] where both sentences consist of the same sounds, but are represented by different characters and have different meanings.

9 Among other things, the author of the paper size standardisation system (DIN 476, 1922) at the Deutsches Institut für Normung.

10 In his book *Sprache und Schrift* (1920).

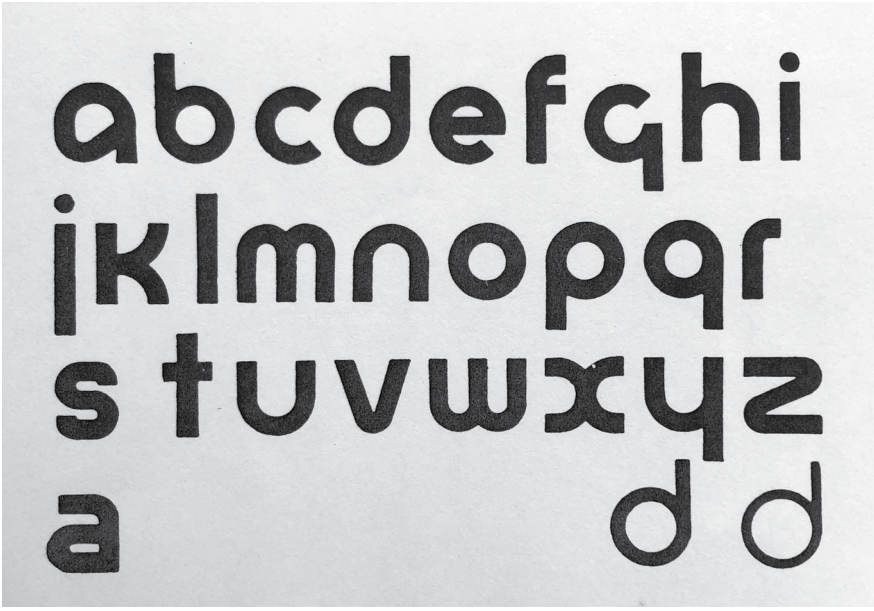


FIGURE 7: One of the best known examples of lowercase alphabet typography, Herbert Bayer, Universal type, 1926. Source: Herbert Spencer, *The visible word*, Lund Humphries, Royal College of Art, London, 1968, pg. 59.

There are other contextual factors influencing the development of rules and conventions in communication, such as when we read and for how long (we might be tired; a different kind of attention is required to read traffic announcements when driving; certain information, such as regarding medications, permits no mistakes; it matters who sends or delivers the message, what the tone of the message is, who the intended recipient is—they might have special needs; we might be reading something in a foreign language; we might find the text uninteresting, etc.). Reading is not often on our mind in everyday life, being able to read has become something we take for granted, and from childhood onwards, reading becomes just one more mode of communication we use to communicate with others. And yet "the way we read", including the contextual factors, ought to be a key piece of information for designers creating the message.

As readers, what we typically see as "natural" is what we are used to[12] and there is a scientific explanation for that. Our brains are

11 I am grateful to Robin Kinross for the Aicher quote. Atypl mailing list correspondence, Robin Kinross, 11 October 2001, 00:14:56.

12 A typical representative in terms of typefaces is the digitalised version of the Times New Roman typeface, which was included as part of the operating system of the first Windows desktop computers. Despite the plethora of excellent modern typefaces available, Times New Roman continues to be perceived as reliable and readable, conveying a certain authority—in short, something "easy to read". This is only due to its presence, across all

programmed to respond positively to "familiar" things; changes are perceived as disruption, inducing fear. We could go so far as to say that our brains are lazy, since they constantly avoid work—which is to say, optimise processes. They do this by recognising familiar patterns that, in turn, inform their responses. Cognitive bias emerges, which can be an issue for designers. We think we "know" something and thus fail to explore the uncharted possibilities of articulation.

The factor of "habituation" is very important for readability and legibility, or, in the words of the American typographer Zuzana Licko: "You read best what you read most" (Licko, 1990, 13) Typography does, however, offer certain golden rules regarding what is readable and what isn't. There have been numerous experts throughout history who researched what comes easier to the eyes and the brain and how readability and legibility can be improved.[13]

In contrast to professional designers, laypeople have a limited set of rules they are familiar with and communicate "naturally". It comes down to three rules: the important things need to be prominent, written using upper-case letters and possibly underlined or repeated multiple times. What laypeople find particularly useful is the intrinsic quality of upper- or lower-case letters, which they often (ab)use.

The intent and context of the message

Another question relevant for transformation is to what extent the various features of typography help express the linguistic meaning or, by contrast, hinder its communication. (Crystal, 1998, 9) In order to make my argument more precise, we need to narrow our focus immediately. In the context of this text we are not discussing art posters or visual poetry. What we are talking about is instances of everyday communication with a specific function and an intent to be read, understood and often also to prompt further interaction—in short, such messages often have an explicit or implicit aim. Due to the fewer genres of text in each language, there was much less need for different visualisations before the 19th century.[14] In this time, however, the explosion of print

technologies, regardless of the function, message or user of the text, ever since it was designed for the London newspaper *The Times* in 1931. This ubiquity has meant that we do not notice it in use and are consequently not "bothered" by it.

13 In 1968, in his book *The Visible Word*, Herbert Spencer, a British designer, editor, book author, photographer and professor at the Royal College of Art gave a summary of everything known at the time about legibility and readability. He mentions a number of scientists throughout history who have researched the topic, but there has been considerably more serious study and research since.

14 Dictionaries are excellent specimens for studying the development of typographic elements, as they have different typographical requirements than fiction. For example, as early as the 16th century, the printer and classical scholar Robert Estienne in Paris was the first to

FIGURE 8: A non-professional visualisation of an instruction, or notice, for users. University Medical Centre Ljubljana, 2019. Author's archive.

and the development of linguistics brought a multitude of challenges in various fields—newspapers, train schedules, schoolbooks and various functional texts.[15] In the 20th century, in part due to the modern way of life, this process only accelerated, with the field becoming even more diverse and rich—in a sense even cacophonous—as a result of the emergence of new media that employed new technologies.

No wonder, then, that problems can arise in the process of transformation, particularly in everyday functional texts. In those, the information is key to understanding subsequent interaction; visualisation therefore requires taking into account the content and purpose of the text, as well as the context, or situation, in which the information will be received. The purpose of a given articulation may be providing information (packaging, prices in stores), informing and prompting a certain reaction on the part of the recipient (filling out a form, notices on doors,

begin using cursive letters (a product of calligraphy, i.e. handwriting) for the purely functional purpose of distinguishing between the different units of text in his epochal Latin-French dictionary, *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* (1531).

15 For more information on the function of language in 19th-century visual communication see: Esbester, Mike, Designing Time: The Design and Use of Nineteenth-Century Transport Timetables, *Journal of Design History,* Vol. 22 No. 2, 2009, 91–113.

operating a parking meter, weighing fruit in a store), facilitating searching for information (dictionaries, indexes, phonebooks) or providing directions (wayfinding signage).

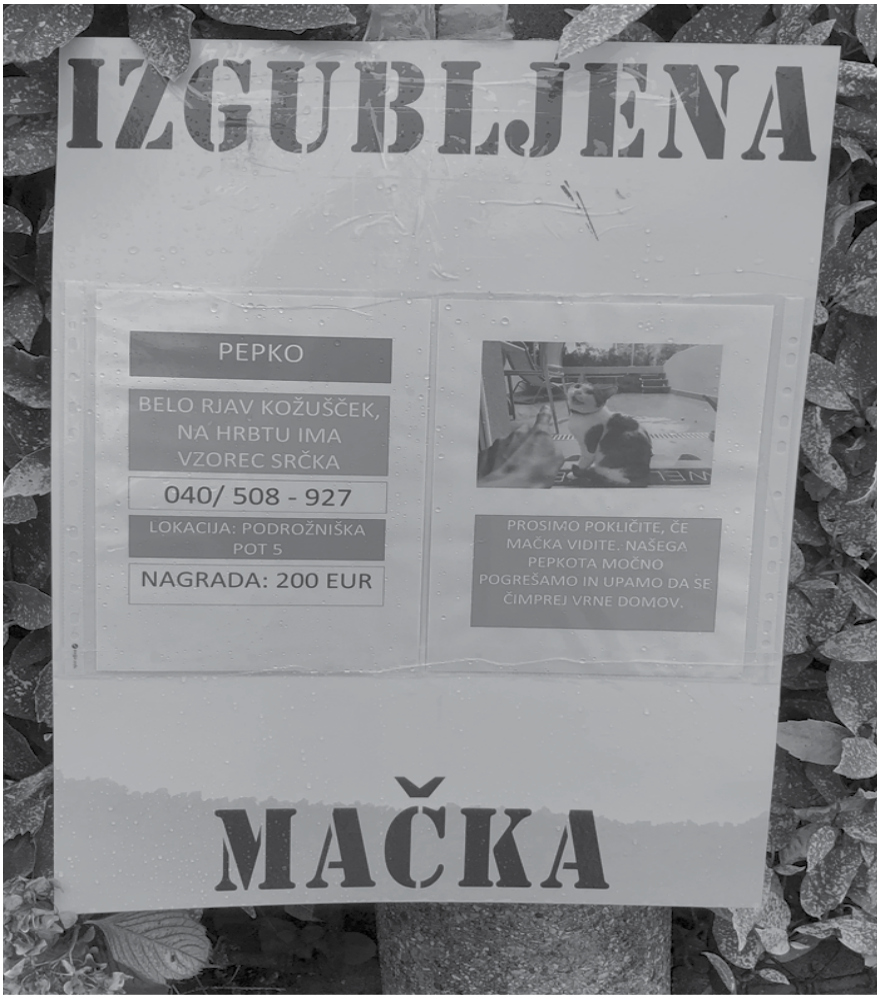
The clarity, transparency and usefulness of information (where the message author orders the information and/or defines the information hierarchy, for instance) is therefore key to understanding. Such examples make plain the natural link between the use of language and the visual organisation of words. On the other hand, the producers of these visualisations have a very subjective attitude towards the content, despite the relatively unified, strong and specific intent of a communication.

5. WHAT IS NATURAL – AN ATTEMPT TO ANALYSE VERNACULAR MESSAGES

Articulating a text intended to communicate something to a specific target audience is not necessarily a professional activity. It is something practiced not only by professionally trained designers but by everyone who uses words at all. In fact, the share of visual messages produced by professionals is minimal. If we wish to analyse the "natural" visual organisation of visual language, it is therefore a good idea to take a look at informal messages designed by non-professionals. (Walker, 2001, 2) In order to use practical examples to find out if there are any common objective parameters that people use to transform verbal messages into visual representations, and whether it makes sense to talk about a "natural" transformation of verbal messages, we need to reduce the number of variables that could lead to erroneous interpretations.

In order to get rid of the majority of variables that could hinder our ability to compare the analysed materials, we prepared a simplified cross-section of vernacular[16] messages that appear at first glance to be very mundane and inconsequential. We will be analysing missing pet notices through which pets' owners communicate with the random public. These documents share the same purpose, starting points, target audience and method of distribution. On the basis of these messages we analysed the elements discussed previously: the impact of technology (whether the message is produced by hand or using a computer); the character set, the range of typefaces and styles; whether the document employs a rich set of typographical elements (cursive style, bold letters, lower-case letters, size); the configuration of information; in which ways the microtypography (leading, character spacing,

16 Everyday, colloquial—not professionally designed.



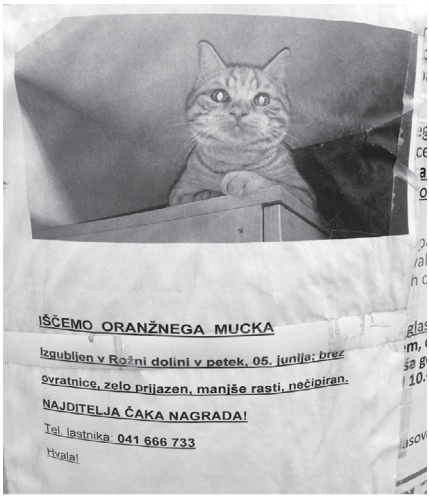


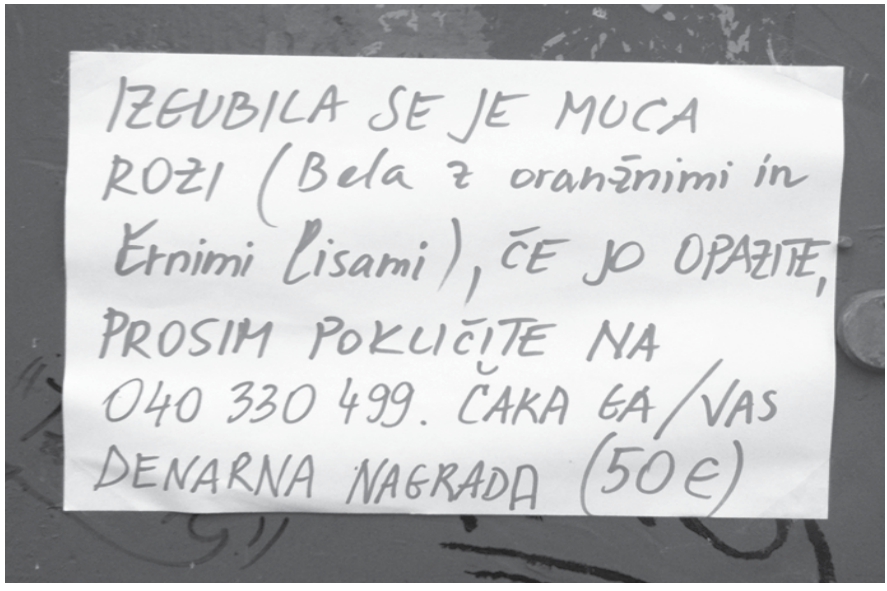
FIGURE 9: A selection of (the most diverse) examples of vernacular communication about missing pets.


V petek, v zgodnjih jutranjih urah, se je v okolici hale Tivoli izgubila psička Brina, stara leto in pol; nosi modro ovratnico.
Vsi, ki ste jo videli, pokličite na telefon 051 712 074.


POGREŠAN
od nedelje 6.9.2020
BELO RJAV MUC S SIVO OVRATNICO
040 508 927 Nagrada: 200 eur
srček na hrbtu


POGREŠAN!
040 303 643


IZGUBILA SE JE
MAČKA TAČKA
Mucka se je izgubila v soboto, 20.2.2021.
Stara je 10 mesecev, črna, z dvema belima lisama. Eno liso ima na vratu, drugo med spodnjimi tačkami.
Je sterilizirana in čipirana.
Če jo opazite, prosimo pokličite na 051 33 55 55.
Hvala za pomoč.


IZGUBILA SE JE MUCA ROŽI (Bela z oranžnimi in črnimi lisami), ČE JO OPAZITE, PROSIM POKLIČITE NA 040 330 499. ČAKA GA/VAS DENARNA NAGRADA (50€)

word spacing) and macrotypography (page units, space, margins, layout) are evident; as well as the use of colour and the degree of adherence to typographic rules.

We also analysed three additional related fields: the use of language (innovative use of language tone, the formality of language and the adherence or non-adherence to grammar rules); the use of image material, the quality of content and technical quality, as well as any interactive or functional elements of the notice itself that are contingent on the target audience (adaptation to users, interactivity, context of use).

Our assumption in the choice of the field was that the documents would offer an insight into natural communication and that the results would yield information on how language is transformed into a visual representation if no professional designers are involved. We analysed 60 examples—47 "missing cat" and 13 "missing dog" notices.[17]

As we analyse the documents, we quickly find that the large majority of them were produced using a personal computer (78.3%), with only 6.7% of the notices (that is, four of them) handwritten and a further 15% combining the use of a computer with subsequent analogue processing (e.g. printing, followed by the addition of data or illustrations, or a printed document glued to a larger, firmer, coloured backing).
The character set is conventional, for the most part (76.7%); only 23.3% of the documents featured elements not in the basic Latin alphabet (e.g. twin exclamation marks, emojis, the @ and & character, hearts, asterisks indicating footnotes, the currency sign, parentheses enclosing the animal's name). The choice of typeface is mostly confined to the range of classic typefaces provided by Microsoft Word (63.3%), with only 36.7% of the documents using unorthodox typefaces (as opposed to the majority using basic sans-serif typefaces). There is considerable variation in the use of intrinsic features of graphic language—cursive styles, bold weights, large character sizes and varying sizes. Of those, varying character sizes are employed most often (46.7%), followed by varying weights (35%), with 13.3% of the examples using no differentiation at all and 5% of the documents exploiting a combination of upper- and lower-case letters.[18]

The extrinsic features of the graphic language—such as the configuration—are mostly varied (63.3%), with line height/leading being the most prominently used element of microtypography (49.2%). The

17 The photographs were taken between 5 July 2010 and 22 February 2021. The condition for inclusion was that the documents were technically intact to the degree that the information could be read normally (not torn, dirty or washed out by rain); in terms of content the condition was for all the notices to have a common focus (searching for a lost pet).

18 Excluding the documents using upper-case letters exclusively.

standout aspect of the documents is the deliberate layout of the elements on the page (the placing of visual material, the position of the headings and the placing of the block of text relative to the image) which can be observed in 46.7% of the documents, while 28.3% of them show no evidence of any specific considerations regarding space or side margins.

Colour is used frequently—only 23.3% of the documents are in black and white. 50% are in colour and 26.7% exhibit strongly functional use of colour (to emphasise headings, call attention to a particular set of information or to ensure the visibility of the document in natural environments through the use of coloured backing).

Nearly half of the documents (49.2%) use an innovative or distinctive tone of language to address the reader (using humour, addressing the reader or passer-by directly, with explicit contact information—"24/7", an emotionally charged message—"we love him"—or a message written from the perspective/on behalf of the animal). They generally use formal language (80.7%), with most of the documents adhering to grammatical rules and conventions (93.1%). All the messages include contact information and 94.9% use image material. 83.3% of such material features content of sufficient quality to permit positive identification of the animal, but the technical quality is often very poor (52.6% of the photos are of poor quality, out of focus, overexposed or have other technical problems).

The majority of message authors (73.3%) think logically, adapting the communication to the user: the notices are posted where they are well-visible and ergonomically adapted to their location in space in a public place (on a tree, on a pillar, on a fence in the street). They often mention rewards as an incentive. Some of the authors make the documents interactive by printing multiple instances of the contact information in the bottom margin, separating them with vertical cuts that permit passers-by to tear off individual instances (15%). The influence of the natural environment and weather factors were taken into account in 56.7% of the documents (placing the information in a plastic transparent folder to protect it from precipitation; covering the sheet in wide adhesive tape; attaching the sheet to the tree with thumb tacks; laminating the sheet, etc.). The majority of the authors use the A4 format (93.3%), with only a small number (6.7%) expanding that by attaching the document to a larger, more visible backing or employing some other technology (e.g. larger print formats, collages).

The above analysis of a cross-section of specific messages plainly shows that laypeople only make use of a very small part of the possibilities that language visualisation offers. Despite the strong personal

motivation involved in the production of the analysed messages, the solutions, for the most part, are not well thought out and show poor use of the possibilities offered by the technological tools. The message authors communicate "naturally", relying on instinct. They use the technology they find most convenient, using only the most basic of the features offered by graphic language (bold weights, upper-case letters, variable sizes). They are aware of the importance of choosing the right location to place image material (although one of poor quality); they show more creativity in the use of language tone, even if they follow grammatical rules in this area too.

6. CONCLUSION

Every day, nearly everyone is exposed to a situation where they have to articulate language, including using professional tools. This is inevitable; the democratisation of typography, lamented by some in professional circles in the 1990s, has long been a fact of life. For this reason, the level of education in the area of visual language ought to be significantly improved.

It has been twenty years already since Gillian Rose wrote: "We're often told that we now live in a world where knowledge as well as many forms of entertainment are visually constructed, and where what we see is as important, if not more so, than what we hear or read. So-called "visual illiteracy" is berated, and there are calls to restructure school and college curricula so that visual grammar can be learnt alongside understandings of texts, numbers and molecules." (Rose, 2001, 1) In view of our analysis, however, we can say with certainty that the practical education of laypeople in the area of visual literacy has not improved, despite the increasingly heavy use of technology exposing us to a deluge of visual content.

If Debbie Millman is correct to say that "Today, the visualization of our personal stories is an integral and essential part of nearly every moment of life, and we use text in all of its forms to define reality, emotions and even time itself. We are now living in a world wherein the condition of our visual communication reflects the condition of our culture," (Millman, 2020) we can conclude that there's still a lot of work before us. In the future, designing tools[19] for laypeople—so that they become more user-friendly and facilitate better quality visual

19 In the field of specialised digital tools for typeface design and associated technologies (Open Type, Variable fonts, Unicode, Font Lab, RoboFab/Python etc.), this has been going on since 1990.

communication—will, at least to some extent, become the domain of designers. Moreover, educating laypeople on how to successfully use visual communication should be brought to the fore.[20]

Education on the basic principles of graphic messaging should begin in the kindergarten, where it would benefit children's literacy (motor skills, aesthetics, communication literacy), and continue at later stages in the form of parallel learning about language and communication for the adult population.[21] The topics addressed in this text are not nothing new to professional designers, who deal with them in practice on a daily basis. What's missing is more theoretical insights at the intersection of linguistics and typography, as well as other professions involved in the process of transforming language into a visual form.

20 This is already happening, to an extent. Worth mentioning in this context are the training seminars at the Public Sector Directorate (Ministry of Public Administration), where ALUO conducted *Basics of Visualisation* workshops for civil servants in 2018 as part of the Inovativen.si project.

21 Taking as an example the music education system in Slovenia, which we know includes many children who will never become professional musicians but who will, in the long term and by virtue of this education, at least become a trained musical audience, the basics of visual communication merit inclusion in the regular curriculum all the more, since every member of our society will, at some stage, be involved in communication.

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The archive of the Slovenian Fine Arts Society in the 1950s and early 1960s and the desire for an art market

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1. FRAGMENTS OF HISTORY 1934–1952

The Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies (ZDSLU) got its present-day name in 1982. In its prior history, this professional organisation for visual artists had been referred to by many different names: Slovensko umetniško društvo (Slovenian Artists' Society, 1899–1919), *Društvo slovenskih upodabljajočih umetnosti,* DSUU (Slovene Society of Fine Arts, 1919–1928, 1945–1953) and then later *Društvo slovenskih likovnih umetnikov*, DSLU (Slovenian Fine Arts Society, 1936–1945, 1953–1982). In fact, the latter name first appeared on 10 March 1934, but in the form *Društvo likovnih umetnikov Dravske banovine* (The Fine Arts Society of Drava Banovina, 1934–1936), which was short-lived. At that time, the society consisted of 26 Slovenian painters and sculptors.

Nineteen years of activity had gone by; the Second World War came and went, followed by a change in the social system. Immediately after the end of the Second World War, on 31 August 1945, the General Assembly of the Slovenian Fine Arts Society proposed several innovations and changes based on a review of the Society's past activities following the liquidation of the former DSLU and the establishment of the new Slovene Society of Fine Artists (DSUU) in Ljubljana. In the early morning in the Small Hall of the Slovenian Philharmonic in Ljubljana, the participants of the General Assembly attended a speech by the Minister of Education Dr. Ferdo Kozak, a presentation by the representative of the President of the Slovenian National Government Boris Kidrič, a speech on the Slovenian Academy of Art by Dr. Stane Mikuž, a discussion about the School of Arts and Crafts in Ljubljana by Miro Šubic and a speech on the founding of the Artists' Cooperative by Dore Klemenčič. The latter also made some proposals regarding social insurance for artists, and Božidar Jakac addressed the question of the establishment of a Slovenian art magazine. The most important function of the meeting was the election of a new president, nine committee members, the inspectorate, the artistic council, two representatives of the monument commission and a four-member preparatory committee for the establishment of the Slovenian Academy of Arts in Ljubljana.[1] Very quickly, on 8 September 1945, the National Liberation Committee of Ljubljana, acting on behalf of the Ministry of the Interior, approved the decision for the society to continue its activities. (Komelj, Zlokarnik, 2019, 31) As mentioned previously, the re-organisation of the society took place in response to the change of the social system, the unenviable situation of some members who had survived the horrors of the camps, and last but not least the dire economic conditions during the war and for some time afterwards. The economic difficulties, personal and collective, are reported in the numerous surviving communications the Society had addressed to its members and other institutions between 1940 and 1945. Reading the materials from the archives of the ZDSLU, which were handed over to the Archive of the Republic of Slovenia in 2015, thus reveals how the society's committee would invite the members to come to collect art supplies—new paints, brushes and Dammar gum—that the society had made available, as well as to make use of the society's premises, where members could "take the opportunity to peruse art magazines and books."[2] We also read how the members sought the society's help in buying rubber boots[3] and about the necessity of organising

1 AS 1286, folder 14, Invitation to the General Assembly, 31 August 1945

2 AS 1286, folder 16, Circular VI, št. 60/42, 25 October 1942.

3 AS 1286, folder 16, Letter from the academic sculptor and painter A. Kogovšek, No 55/44, Nov 1944.

exhibitions in order to raise funds for the artists' basic necessities,[4] how help was sought for sick and feeble colleagues[5] or the families of artists who had been conscripted into the army and had been living solely from the sale of their artwork.[6]

Evident are the many challenges that the Society faced after the war. The programmes were planned in accordance with the political-ideological themes, which were prioritised, and the Society's activities depended on the economic situation in the new country. The Society's 1949 programme could be argued to be the most ideological; several tasks were emphasised by the planners, namely that the Society ought to: unite all Slovenian fine artists for artistic activities and participate productively and broadly in the building of the socialist homeland, the FPRY; work to popularise the development and support of fine arts that would be national in form but socialist in content, so that it would represent an actual artistic expression of the life of the nations of Yugoslavia; assist the development of folk fine arts centres within the People's Republic of Slovenia and the FPRY as a whole; work to develop awareness among its members of the need for strong ideological value and quality of their work in order to culturally educate the people in the spirit of new national and social cohesion, resilience and determination in overcoming any difficulties encountered in the building of socialism; take care of the ideological and political education of its members in the form of lectures and discussions; coordinate with the Artists' Cooperative in the production of painting and sculpture materials and tools of adequate quality; and give initiative to the domestic industry, especially with regard to the setting-up of workshops and cooperatives, etc. (Komelj, Zlokarnik, 2019, 30)

Exploring the art market 1952–1959

The archival material of the ZDSLU offers the first detailed description of what was happening with the Society in the 1950s, their desire to establish a stable art market through pedagogical and economic support for the artists and whether the Society's exhibition space allowed them to achieve this in the time before it was transferred from the Society's premises to the Museum of Modern Art. How did the Society run Mala galerija (Small Gallery) and how did the transfer of management, and especially the change in the gallery's concept, come about? With the change of management, what used to be a trade union

4 AS 1286, folder 16, Letter to the Society, 1944.

5 AS 1286, folder 16, Circular, 1 November 1939.

6 AS 1286, folder 16, Udruženje likovnih umetnka v Beogradu, 1 June 1940.

exhibition space, which could be rented for 500 or 1000 dinars a day,[7] provided that the Society certified the quality of the exhibition, and was mainly used for exhibitions by young, not yet established artists, as well as for presenting non–fine art related projects, turned into Likovni salon (Fine Arts Salon), where artists such as Antoni Clavé, Petar Lubarda, Zoran Mušič, Edo Murtić exhibited, along with other big names in the Slovenian, Yugoslav and international space.

Among its other activities, the Society worked towards the establishment of an art market. This was their aspiration when on 1 May 1952, when "they held a members' exhibition inaugurating the 'exhibition café' on Tito Street named the *Mala galerija*, the Small Gallery, by the artists." (Naši razgledi, 1 May 1952, 25) As reported by *Naši razgledi* (Our Perspectives) or *Ljubljanski dnevnik* (Ljubljana Daily), which mentioned the opening of the exhibition on the last day of April, solo and group exhibitions were to be held there at two to three-week intervals (Ljubljanski dnevnik, 30 April 1952, 12): "we will also be inviting guests from other republics. 'MG' will also exhibit arts and crafts and art photography, with the DSU ensuring careful selection and good quality of the exhibition material.« (Naši razgledi, 1 May 1952, 25) The DSUU already announced its intent to open new premises in March in *Ljudska pravica* (The People's Right): "In addition to the premises in the Museum of Modern Art, which are only suitable for larger exhibitions, the Society will open a smaller gallery, intended for more intimate exhibitions, in the building of *Kreditna banka*, making sure that it will regularly host quality exhibitions that passers-by will be able to view. Exhibitions held in a busy place like this are particularly important because they can be visited incidentally by people who may not yet be a regular audience in the Museum of Modern Art." (Ljudska Pravica, 29 March 1952, 7)

After internal rearrangement,[8] carried out in 1958 and 1959 according to the plans by the architects Oton Jugovec and Svetozar Križaj, the Small Gallery became a complementary exhibition space of the Museum of Modern Art. (Rogina, 2007, 133).

In order to qualify for joining the Society, artists needed to be graduates of the Academy of Fine Arts, later Academy of Fine Arts and Design (ALUO UL) and had to receive a positive assessment by the Artists' Council, which was chaired at the time by Marij Pregelj. In the late 1950s, the Slovenian art world was represented mainly by Ljubljana,

7 In 1955, a worker's monthly wage was 8,500 dinars, while the wage of a public prosecutor was 18,600 dinars (Yearbook 1955 2019).

8 "The Small Gallery is being renovated with the help of funds from the Executive Council of the PC PRS; the Headmaster has mentioned that help was also promised by the OLO Ljubljana. The cost of the renovation will be around 2,000,000 dinars." (Museum of Modern Art 1959, s.p.)

with Maribor on the rise and starting to compete for more equal funding within the DSLU. Trieste was politically problematic but nevertheless home to several Slovenian artists who ended up being used by the state during the political campaign for Trieste. The DSLU, however, instead of immediately responding to Avgust Černigoj's petition to become a member, refused his membership after seeking advice from Belgrade,[9] and in 1958, Lojze Spacal, due to his foreign nationality, was accepted only as an associate member. A comment was made at a DSLU meeting that he would be accepted as a full member if he changed his nationality.[10]

Members of the Society were on the boards of the Jakopič Pavilion, the Museum of Modern Art, the Council for Culture and Education of the People's Republic of Slovenia and the Council for Culture of OLO Ljubljana (District Ljubljana okolica, meaning the vicinity of Ljubljana); they were therefore involved in decision-making on the material and professional issues relating to fine arts in all the existing institutions and financiers in the exhibition field, both at city and republic level. Minutes of various meetings show that for the artists in the Society, material conditions were a very important issue and that the Society was putting a lot of effort into the sale of artworks, commissions, royalties and obtaining various benefits from the city, the republic and the state. The members were guaranteed social insurance, and the Society also provided them with studios from the "studio fund", which e.g. in 1958 expanded to include "several more studios". (Ljudska pravica, 2 October 1958, 6) Some of the studios even had free electricity and rubbish removal, when possible, thanks to agreements with companies. A programme was also introduced—yet to be re-established now, in 21st-century Slovenia, despite long efforts—called *Odstotek za umetnost* (A Percent for Art, "a certain percentage of funds for new constructions going to art equipment." (DSLU 1955, 2)) Moreover, the DSLU secured a deal wherein the media and publishers would pay the artists between 500 and 1800 dinars for reproductions of their work; they also wished to make it so that the Society would be the recipient of fees for the reproduction of works by dead artists.[11] In 1958, they requested the establishment of a managerial organisation that would be tasked with purchasing exhibited works, since that was an area in which "the galleries were quite inflexible."[12]

9 AS 1286, Minutes of the Board of Directors and Artistic Council, 16 September 1957; Letter from Avgust Černigoj to comrade Zoran Kržišnik, Secretary of the DSLU, 23 September 1958.

10 AS 1286, Minutes of the Board of Directors and Artistic Council of the DSLU meeting, 26 Feb 1958.

11 AS 1286, Minutes of the Board of Directors of the DSLU meeting, 14 June 1955.

12 Ibid.

In the otherwise difficult conditions of the post-war years, the DSLU had considerable resources and influence in the national art world, which by the end of the 1950s it had begun to lose. In the 1950s, working alongside and together with the Society, there was also the Artists' Cooperative, a production space and an "economic institution of the DSUU", as stated in the—still hand-written—minutes,[13] which was led by the sculptor Stane Keržič. Boasting a foundry and a graphic workshop, it stood on the site of today's Konzorcij at 29 Slovenian Street in the centre of Ljubljana. It was not long before it began operating with a loss, so it was later eliminated.

At the same time, the Society was renting from the National Bank the gallery space known to this day as the Small Gallery of the Bank of Slovenia, where meetings of the Society were held alongside exhibition activities:

> **"At the General Assembly of the Slovene Society of Fine Artists (DSUU) of February 1952, those present approved a decision to work towards providing the artists with a more appropriate exhibition space in the city centre for smaller exhibitions, one which would replace the exhibition/sales café of the Artists' Cooperative."**[14]

The main considerations in the choice of location were the possibilities it provided for expanding the reach of art and improving its accessibility; the Society was therefore cognizant of the added value of locating the exhibition space in the city's centre, in a high-traffic location, would bring. (Gerlovič, 2018) After competing unsuccessfully for the premises of Putnik's bar, they managed to get a space in the building of the Credit Bank at 11 Tito Street, which they named Mala galerija, the Small Gallery. "Although it was not until October 1952 that the renovation work was complete,[15] the Small Gallery was already opened to the public as an exhibition space on 1 May 1952." (Ljubljanski dnevnik, 30 April 1952, 12; Mejač, 2019, 8)

Operating under the auspices of the DSLU, the Small Gallery was available to any member of the Society, provided that they applied for an exhibition. Exhibitions of external applicants were subject to decisions taken at Society meetings. In 1958, the last year in which the Small

13 AS 1286, An unsigned and undated handwritten document with the contents of the minutes from the meeting of DSLU members.

14 AS 1286, Minutes of the General Assembly of the DSLU, 1 February 1952.

15 AS 1286, Minutes of the VIII. Ordinary General Assembly of the DSUU, Report by the Board of Directors, 4 September 1953.

Gallery was managed by the DSLU, the fine arts programme was especially meagre: the only exhibitions were by two marginal authors—France Godec and France Kunaver—with the rest of the exhibitions held by the Society of Decorative Arts. At the end of 1958, the Small Gallery was already closed for renovation and "reorientation".

Despite its strong activity in the first half of the 1950s and in the context of admittedly difficult post-war circumstances, the DSLU appears to have lacked an overall vision and a focused idea of what direction its exhibition programme should take. It was more concerned with issues of survival, such as sales and other sources of income for its members, pedagogical issues and issues regarding the Cooperative and various commissions, as well as national and international selections. The Small Gallery, meanwhile, was "covered" by members' exhibitions.

Even in the period between 1955 and 1958, when leadership of the DSLU passed to Stojan Batič, who teamed up with Zoran Kržišnik, giving the Small Gallery fresh impetus and a new administrator, it was not very clear what DSLU's hopes were regarding the exhibition activity, and they had no stable concept of where and in what type of premises it was to be pursued. This led to a situation in 1955 where the Board of Directors of the Society, consisting of Tone Kralj, Jože Ciuha, Rajko Slapernik, Jakob Bazelj, Stane Kerščič, Marko Šuštaršič, Cita Potokar and Dore Klemenčič, debated about the lack of exhibition spaces, with the president presenting a report on the possibility of acquiring a "building in Piran" that the Association would have to renovate; meanwhile, they lacked even the funds to send a representative to an exhibition in Paris or to run the programme of the Small Gallery. President of the DSLU, Tone Kralj, reported that the impression he got was that MLO (the City People's Committee) would not provide the funds for the Small Gallery, which would "likely need to be given up" as a result.[16] On 22 April, they nevertheless received 300,000 dinars to cover the expenses of the Small Gallery, but this was counterbalanced by the bank raising the rent for the premises. Right away, the Society asked the bank if paying only "effective expenses" was an option.[17] In the same year, the Council for Education paid half a million dinars to the Society in order to buy the works of those young artists who had exhibited in the Small Gallery but "had not sold anything at the time of the exhibition".[18] The Small Gallery was rented out to the Association of Artists of Applied Arts for meetings and exhibitions, at a rate of 6,000 dinars per exhibition.[19]

16 See note 10.

17 AS 1286, Minutes of the Board of Directors of the DSLU meeting, 4 March 1955.

18 Ibid.

19 AS 1286, Minutes of the Board of Directors of the DSLU meeting, 14 June 1955.

It was the poor programme that ended up costing the Society the Small Gallery. They gave it the lowest position in the hierarchy of what was then the small art world in Ljubljana. It was a place for those who had not managed to get into the two "serious" exhibition venues. The exhibition programme of the Small Gallery thus featured artists who had not yet been established, for reasons ranging from youth to quality. At the same time, the programme also featured high-quality arts and crafts and even non-art projects. Any member of the Society could exhibit here, the only requirement being that they register. When the problem of the programme was noticed by the municipal authorities, the Society initially did not even discuss changing the conceptual direction of the gallery and instead merely lobbied for its preservation. What made the Small Gallery "small" in the local art world of 1957 was that it was the smallest of the three exhibition venues and the lowest on the quality scale. This lack of quality did not escape the Society, who attempted to improve it by various measures, such as the decision "to maintain a certain level of quality of the exhibitions, letting mainly its members exhibit, with the rest of the candidates subject to selection by a jury."[20] As late as 1958, however, they were still considering granting a request by the Planika factory from Kranj, which wanted to exhibit its latest products in the gallery.[21] When the Congress of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia took place in Ljubljana, the members of the Association would exhibit in the Museum of Modern Art, with the Small Gallery hosting an exhibition by the Association of Artists of Applied Arts—a genre of lesser status.

The DSLU's exhibitions in the Small Gallery continued until the summer of 1958; the daily usage fee was 500 dinars for the artists and 1000 dinars for the organisation The Council of the Association of Freedom and Education Societies. The programme ran until December, concluding with a photography exhibition by Peter Kocjančič. The money, however, was still nowhere to be seen. The Society thus lost both an exhibition space and office premises; a substitution was sought in the premises of the Writers' Association. They were also promised space on Tomšič Street. On 4 December 1958, a grant of 500,000 dinars for the renovation of the gallery was approved with the consent of the Executive Council of the People's Republic of Slovenia.[22] On 2 June 1959, the Society's offices re-opened, for a while, at the renovated Small Gallery. At the 1959 Plenary meeting of the Association, the Small Gallery was no longer discussed. It was transferred to the Museum of Modern Art under an agreement between the Society (Batič) and the

20 Ibid.

21 See note 13.

22 AS 1286, Minutes of the Artistic Council of the DSLU meeting, 2 September 1958.

Museum (Kržišnik). A new issue was now on the agenda: the demolition of the Jakopič Pavilion.[23]

What was happening to the Small Gallery in the period before its new management, the Museum of Modern Art, following the example of similar institutions in France, began remodelling it as an exhibition space oriented primarily towards small-scale but carefully selected exhibitions by foreign and domestic modern visual artists, with the Italian sculptor, graphic artist and scenographer Marcello Mascherini being the first to exhibit in the renovated premises on 19 October 1959? While the opening of the renovated salon-style gallery was entirely informal, the gallery would later prove to represent much more than just a few extra square metres of exhibition space for the Museum of Modern Art, becoming instead an important space for "living art".

The art market after the loss of the Small Gallery

After losing the exhibition space, the Society certainly strived to retain its market orientation, as it had no chance of survival without sales and additional republic and national funds. According to Ive Šubic, the president of the Society, the substandard programme of the Small Gallery was not the only culprit for the poor attendance, with poor weather conditions also to blame for the latter on some occasions. At the 1956 exhibition of the Union of Fine Artists of Yugoslavia (SLUJ), for example, which was held in the Museum of Modern Art, only 212 catalogues were sold at 20 dinars each, and of the exhibited works, the only ones to be sold were *Tihožitje* (Still-life) by Miodrag Protić (80,000 dinars), *Avtoportret* by Vojin Bakić (100,000 dinars) and *Deklica z ogrlico* (Girl with a Necklace) in bronze by Angel Radovan Kosta (80,000 dinars).[24] The members (who were also the decision-makers) thus sought solutions that were often suboptimal, such as the introduction of makeshift exhibitions in the restaurant of the *Turist* Hotel in Ljubljana,25 and on the occasion of the congress in the Lev Hotel, or in the sales department of the Slovenian store chain NAMA.

In the 1960s they sought other options; the minutes of various meetings frequently note a desire for well-organised exhibitions that would "actually benefit the wider strata of the public, or audience. A fee was envisioned that would be paid to an artist for an artistic manifestation regardless of whether any of their works were sold /.../ so that the purchase would lose its character as artist support."[26] Deliberating

23 AS 1286, State Secretariat for Finance: Grant transfer, 4 December 1958.

24 AS 1286, Minutes of the Plenary Meeting of the Slovenian Fine Arts Society, 20 January 1958.

25 AS 1286, Letter to the Union of Fine Artists of Yugoslavia, No 81, 3 April 1956.

26 AS 1286, Letter by the *Turist* hotel, 9 November 1956.

the appropriate amount for the fee, most of those present agreed that it should depend on so-called social reputation, which, for "individual artists, is felt every day in a broader sense, which includes matters of staffing. How the social reputation of individual artists is stimulated is a public issue."[27] It was agreed by the majority that all exhibiting members should receive a fee of 5,000 dinars, whereas foreign artists wishing to exhibit, by contrast, would have to pay a fee. They also would not be eligible for remuneration, since "the money belongs to our society; accordingly, spending it on foreign artists would be inappropriate."[28] In any case, all of those present, including Karl Zelenko, were in agreement that in 1964, an art market like the one in Paris, which some of the artists had had an opportunity to experience, had not yet developed in our country. One of the ideas proposed by Zelenko, intended to stimulate the sale of artworks at exhibitions, was to establish a sales department operating under the auspices of the Museum of Modern Art or the City Art Gallery, which would take care of organising commission sales. The galleries would thus be freed from risk and would even receive a percentage of commissions. There had already been small shifts in this area, as the Museum of Modern Art, together with Mladinska knjiga, had promised to begin selling prints. Zelenko, however, was constantly calling for the introduction of a sales service, as was available in large galleries not only abroad, but also in Belgrade. The Association's difficulties with exhibition space of its own continued, the problems most often arising when organising larger exhibitions, as in 1965, when the Association were looking for a space to hold a group exhibition by 200 DSLU members and ended up having to divide it awkwardly and without any concept between the City Art Gallery and the Museum of Modern Art.[29] The minutes and correspondence in the AS paint a picture of the DSLU's operation, the wishes of the members and the occasional insufficiently daring executions; while a strong will to succeed is often evident, it was outweighed by the rampant disagreement that precluded finding common solutions, not only in approaching the Western capitalist market model of the 1960s but also in the more daring ventures of other Yugoslav art societies.

27 AS 1286, Meeting minutes, 8 October 1964.

28 Ibid.

29 AS 1286, Special meeting of the members of DSLU, 2 December 1965.

SOURCE

Archive of the Republic of Slovenia (AS) 1286, Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies.

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The axiological and teleological dimensions of fine art heritage protection in conservation-restoration theory

BLAŽ ŠEME

1. INTRODUCTION

It has been almost 60 years since the first publication of Cesaro Brandi's *Teoria del Restauro* (1963). The book was a milestone in the conservation-restoration profession, being ultimately the work that definitively established the theory of restoration. The bulk of the book consists of lectures that Brandi had held at the ICR (*Istituto centrale per il restauro*) in Rome since its founding in 1939. He was also the first director of this core Italian conservation-restoration institution. Three decades prior, at the International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments in Athens in 1931, the first international Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments (called the *Carta del restauro,* or Athens Charter (Doktrina 1, 2003, 17-21)) was adopted, marking the end of the era in which the practice of restoration essentially amounted to

arbitrary reconstructions.[1] The Charter emphasises among other things the ethical principles of respect for each historical and artistic work and treating conservation-restoration interventions on a case-by-case basis. The Athens Charter marked the first time that the fundamental principles of cultural heritage protection were formulated at an international level.

Among the more important topics addressed by Brandi (Brandi, 2005) are the recognition of the physical, historical and aesthetical nature of a work of art and of the necessity of conserving the artwork as a whole; the ethical principles of visibility and reversibility of the additions of material in restoration; the treatment of lacunae (gaps in the artwork due to damage) as disturbances and the search, informed by Gestalt psychology, for aesthetically pleasing ways of neutralising them using methods such as hatching and neutral tint; the issue of treating patinas and additions; the issue of falsifications and conservation of badly damaged works of art (ruins); preventive restoration.

Soon after the publication of Brandi's book, the Venice Charter (1964) was adopted, being the second international charter in the field of conservation and renovation of monuments and heritage sites. It brought the Athens Charter up to date and supplemented it with additional clarifications regarding certain principles of heritage conservation. With respect to conservation and restoration interventions, the Charter puts an even clearer emphasis on the aesthetical[2] and historical values of a monument, which should be conserved and made visible. Within these basic ethical principles the Charter puts additional emphasis on respect for the original material and authentic documents. If a work of fine art is composed of multiple historical layers, the contribution of each individual period must be respected. Uncovering and additions are only acceptable to a limited extent, and all additions must be both harmonious with the whole and clearly distinguishable from the original parts. The moment any assumptions come into play, the restoration must stop. (Doktrina 1, 2003, 25–28) That same year, the American Group of the IIC (International Institute for Conservation) published the first recommendations for professional standards and procedures, first in the article *The Murray Pease Report* (Anon., 1964) and afterwards, in an expanded form, in a book containing, among other additions, an ethical codex for conservators-restorers of artworks. (Anon., 1968)

In 1972, the Italian *Carta del restauro* was composed, which was based on the principles outlined in the Venice Charter and the ideas developed in Brandi's book. (Anon., 1972) This latest charter defines

1 Source: Carta del Restauro, 1972, 1.

2 The Athens Charter uses the term *artistic* value instead of *aesthetic* value.

restoration as any intervention into the material of an artwork executed with the aim of preserving its material integrity and fully facilitating both its perusal and its transmission into the future. The charter also sets out in more detail the ethical principles and guidelines pertaining to the various genres of art heritage, fine art or other, although these are already outdated in some places. Inspired by the Roman conservation-restoration school represented by Cesare Brandi, the Florentine school soon followed with its own take on conservation-restoration theory, set out in works by Umberto Baldini and Ornelle Casazza.[3] Their key contributions were novel solutions for in-painting of gaps in works of fine art in aesthetically pleasing ways using techniques they referred to as chromatic abstraction, colour selection and golden selection.

There have been noticeable shifts in the development of conservation-restoration theory, especially since the 1980s, and Brandi's thought has increasingly faced criticism. We have on the one hand the problem of his writing style, frequently unclear and allowing very different interpretations (Muñoz Viñas, 2016); on the other hand, some of the concepts are already becoming outdated, and the restoration of modern artworks raises questions and issues that Brandi had not (yet) addressed. One of the foremost critics is Salvador Muñoz Viñas, whose work *Contemporary Theory of Conservation* (2005) seeks to establish a new, more modern conservation-restoration theory that extends Brandi's—now classical—thought. Muñoz Viñas rejects the notion of objectivity, of seeking some original truth, as well as the excessive influence of scientific conservation-restoration approaches in the classical theories. He proposes among other things a shift from objectivism to subjectivism, meaning a more creative and communicative approach to work, a shift from the preservation of truths to the preservation of meanings, to a more sustainable orientation and a more flexible ethics.

Many other authors have importantly contributed to the development of the modern school of thought regarding restoration, including Paul Philippot, Andrzej Tomaszewski, Alessandra Melucco Vaccaro, Terry and Chandra Reedy, Giovanni Carbonara, Barbara Appelbaum, Richard Smith, Stefan Michalski, Elizabeth Mary Pye, Jonathan Ashley-Smith, Isabelle Brajer, María José Martínez Justicia, and Denis Vokić. Dr. Denis Vokić is a conservator-restorer and an alumnus of UL ALUO whose focus includes restoration history, terminology and epistemology. Another important contribution to conservation-restoration theory and practice has been rendered by international institutions such as the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of

3 The two major works: Baldini, 2003; Casazza, 2007.

Cultural Property (ICCROM), Getty Conservation Institute (GCI), International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC), Institute of Conservation (ICON), International Network for the Conservation of Contemporary Art (INCCA), International Council on Monuments and Sites; International Committee on Theory and Philosophy of Conservation and Restoration (ICOMOS TheoPhilos), International Council of Museums; Committee for Conservation (ICOM-CC), European Confederation of Conservator-Restorers' Organisations (ECCO), and the European Network for Conservation-Restoration Education (ENCoRE).

Although an extensive corpus of theoretical texts in the field of conservation-restoration already exists, we have neither any translations into Slovene of even the fundamental works, nor researchers focusing on this field specifically. As a result, there is insufficient familiarity with conservation-restoration theory—contemporary in particular—not just among professionals in the wider field of cultural heritage protection, but also within the conservation-restoration profession itself. This lack of familiarity with contemporary theory and practice engenders a conviction—still ingrained in many places—that conservation-restoration cannot be an object of scientific research; that scientific questions are not something that conservators-restorers concern themselves with. The first item on our agenda is therefore to clarify what contemporary conservation-restoration is, and to answer, at least in basic terms, what the theoretical—especially teleological and axiological—issues and themes in contemporary conservation-restoration theory are, with an emphasis on the conservation of fine art heritage.

2. WHAT ARE THE SCOPE AND THE OB]ECTIVES OF CONSERVATION-RESTORATION OF (FINE) ART HERITAGE?

Conservation-restoration is one of the activities under the umbrella of cultural heritage protection and differs in many ways from conservation and custodianship. The website of the Institute for the Protection of Cultural Heritage of Slovenia defines conservation as "an interdisciplinary discipline [combining] all types of policies, strategies, legal, administrative and technical measures as well as assignments in connection with cultural heritage and its preservation." Conservation-restoration, by contrast, "comprises a variety of activities that are directly carried out on the heritage building or object with the purpose of facilitating its enjoyment, understanding and use."[4]

4 Available at the website of the ZVKDS: www.zvkds.si/sl/podrocja/nase-delo (9 March 2021).

FIGURE 1: Students of conservation-restoration at the Department of Restoration at the Academy of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Ljubljana examining a painting by Vasko Pregelj at the Jože Plečnik High School in Ljubljana (photo: Blaž Šeme, February 2020).

FIGURE 2: Painting on the north-facing side of the shrine in Notranje Gorice before (left) and after (right) the unprofessional restoration (source of photo: documentation of the ZVKDS, OE Ljubljana, March 2008)

This direct physical contact with objects of cultural heritage that characterises the conservation-restoration profession is what distinguishes the discipline from other professions such as conservation architect, landscape architect, historian, art historian, or ethnologist. In this sense, there is at least a partial similarity to the archaeological profession, as well as to professions such as nursing, general practitioner, specialist physician and surgeon. As in archaeology and medicine, there are certain physical operations in conservation-restoration that can be performed by staff of lesser qualifications, typically technicians. When dealing with fine art, however, operations including condition assessment, expert planning, intervention management and documentation and creating the final report with intervention analysis need to be carried out in accordance with ECCO[5] guidelines by a highly qualified professional, a university-educated (at Master's degree) conservator-restorer (Figure 1).

The concept of physical conservation in the conservation-restoration field encompasses both direct conservation interventions (physical protection, cleaning, consolidation, etc.) and indirect interventions that contribute to better physical preservation: regular monitoring, documenting the condition and procedures, study/analysis of past conservation-restoration interventions, research and development of new

5 Source: E.C.C.O. Professional Guidelines (III). Available at: http://www.ecco-eu.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ECCO_professional_guidelines_III.pdf (9 March 2021).

materials and procedures for use in conservation-restoration, development of standards and a code of ethics, raising awareness, education, and presentation. The bungled restoration of the painting adorning the shrine at the crossroads in Notranje Gorice is representative of detrimental attempts at restoration performed by unqualified craftsmen-renovators (Figure 2). This particular example not only reflects the lack of artistic skill on the part of the "restorer", but also unprofessionalism in the sense of a conspicuous lack of interdisciplinarity (no cooperation with conservators), prior analyses and studies and materials documenting the artwork's condition before, during and after the interventions, respect for the original artwork, and other examples of disregard for the contemporary conservation-restoration ethics.

In Slovenian, as in most other European languages, the term restoration was used in lieu of conservation-restoration to refer to the craft and restorer instead of conservator-restorer for the profession until the final decades of the 20th century. In the Anglo-Saxon languages, by contrast, the terms conservation and conservator began displacing restoration and restorer as early as the 19th century. Even a cursory analysis of the evolution in the use of individual English words through time using the BNV[6] web tool reveals that, since the beginning of the 20th century in particular, the word conservation (not always exclusively in the context of heritage conservation) was increasing in frequency. (Figure 3) This period coincides with the rise of a more scientific approach towards conservation-restoration and a more pronounced development of the profession, although the changes in the nomenclature are thought to have occurred earlier, in the 19th century, under the influence of the anti-restoration movement. (Vokić, 2012, 23) The first to begin implementing these changes is held to be Manfred Holyoake with the publication of *The Conservation of Pictures* in 1870. (Holyoake, 1870)

This change in nomenclature distinguished the old guard—the restorers—from the conservators-restorers in the modern sense. In Central Europe, at least, such an approach was impossible: since the end of 19th century, the word conservator had come to refer to experts (at first mainly architects and art historians) entrusted with the conservation of immovable cultural heritage, similar to how curators take care of the moveable cultural heritage in museums. The differences in nomenclature across different countries led to the adoption of the compromise term *conservator-restorer* at the 1984 ICOM-CC conference in Copenhagen.[7]

6 Available at: Google Books Ngram Viewer: https://books.google.com/ngrams (9 March 2021).

7 Quote: "(1) This term is used throughout this text, as a compromise, since the same professional is called, 'conservator' in the English speaking countries, and 'restorer' in those where Romance and Germanic languages are spoken". In: The Conservator-Restorer: a Definition

The slow adoption of the new term is, at least to some extent, apparent from the chronological view comparing usage of the various names for the profession—conservation-restoration, painting conservation and painting restoration—as offered by the BNV tool. (Figure 4)

This admittedly awkward and long new term, conservation-restoration, has become established in our country, at least in professional publications, since it makes clear that the profession combines two basic activities that are closely related, yet also different: conservation, meaning physical preservation of existing objects, and restoration, as a kind of partial re-creation. Conservation in this sense is an intervention aiming to arrest or at least slow down the deterioration of an artwork, thereby physically conserving its existing qualities and significance. Restoration, by contrast, is an intervention through which we attempt to physically restore or highlight certain qualities (primarily aesthetic) of an artwork that had been diminished or lost through time. An alternative approach (Caple, 2000) breaks conservation-restoration down into three basic processes: investigation, revelation and preservation. Using a medical analogy, these processes represent anamnesis and diagnosis (investigation and revelation) and then preventive and curative care (direct revelation and preservation). All of these processes are documented, or informationally preserved.

3. INFORMATIONAL PRESERVATION AS ONE OF THE TASKS OF CONSERVATION-RESTORATION

One aspect of conservation-restoration—overlooked entirely by the classical restoration theory and not comprehensively addressed by the contemporary thought—is documentation, or, in a broader sense, *informational preservation*, a term coined by Muñoz Viñas (Muñoz Viñas, 2005, 23–25). It makes sense to place informational preservation into the context of the different levels, or the multi-layered nature, of (fine) art heritage preservation, in which it represents a method of indirect preservation through various approaches. The most indirect levels of preservation include oral tradition (intangible) and written sources (indirect, tangible). Next there are drawings or copies, a traditional means of indirect and tangible preservation that retains more of the information about the items of art heritage. An even more detailed, or comprehensive, way of preserving an image of an artwork is via high-quality photographs, 3D-scans or other modern optical methods. That said, this is still

of the Profession, København, 1984. Available at: http://www.icom-cc.org/47/about/definition-of-profession-1984/#.YEjz651KiUk (9 March 2021).

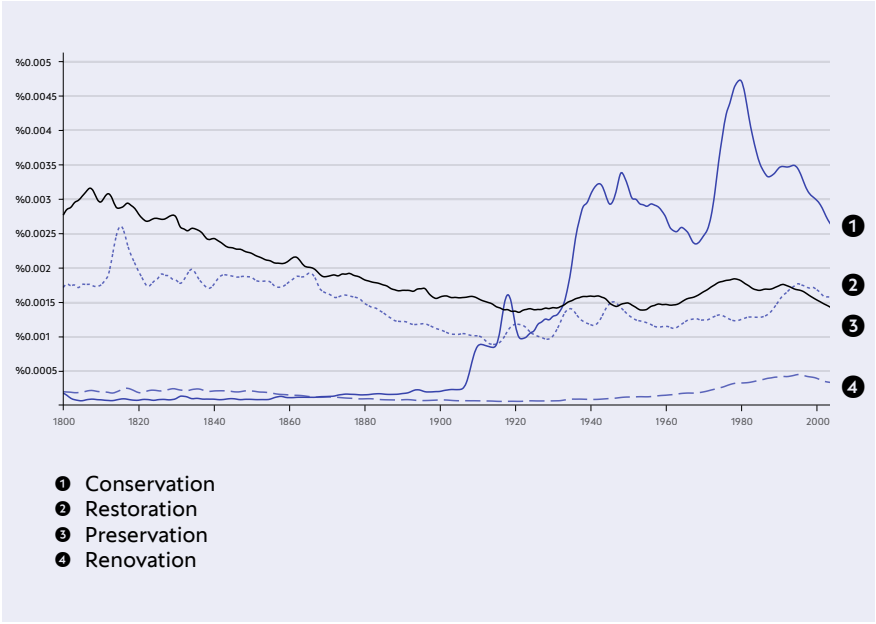

FIGURE 3: A chart comparing the use frequency of the words "conservation", "restoration", "preservation" and "renovation" in the Google Books online library collection, obtained using the Books Ngram Viewer. Viewing the 1800 to 2010 period (March 2021); available at: https://books.google.com/ngrams.

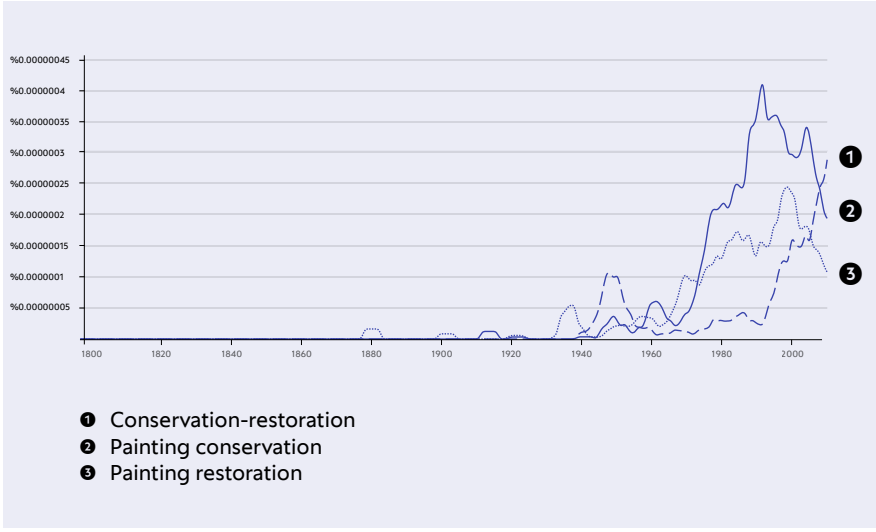

FIGURE 4: A chart comparing the use frequency of the terms "painting conservation", "painting restoration" and "conservation-restoration" over a 100-year period (1910–2010) in the Google Books online library collection, obtained using the Books Ngram Viewer. (March 2021); available at: https://books.google.com/ngrams.

an example of indirect, informational preservation, which can be analogue or digital. In all these cases, it is only the visual aspect of the heritage that is preserved, a snapshot, in a sense, of the artwork. Even though direct preservation of fine art heritage in a maximally authentic tangible form represents the most important level of conservation, these lower levels of indirect preservation possess a significance of their own, particularly in the area of heritage documentation and promotion, as well as its protection.

Of the aforementioned approaches to preservation, oral tradition offers the least amount of reliability and completeness. We have an interesting example in the area of carnival mask preservation. Ethnologist Pavel Medvešček was seeking to reconstruct two old types of carnival masks, the *kotunik* and the *bobunik*, part of the Old Faith tradition of Posočje, based on the accounts given by two men. Something the two men could not agree on was what the headdresses of the two masks looked like; it took a third witness to satisfactorily resolve the disagreement. (Medvešček, 2015, 140-143) Now that the author—and probably the witnesses—are deceased, the author's drawings of the carnival masks remain the only surviving indirect visual source of information about the appearance of the masks. This is an example of indirect visual-tangible preservation.

Heritage-related information in even purely textual sources, especially in the case of fine art heritage, is always incomplete.

In *Catechismus (1550)*, Primož Trubar gives a picturesque description of how a Croatian painter created the wall paintings in the church of Trubar's native village, Rašica: "He gave the saints, especially the apostles, large beards and moustaches in the Turkish and Croatian style." (Stele, 1942, 167)

These paintings, sadly, no longer exist, with the same source reporting that they were destroyed by the Turks in 1528, together with the rest of the church furnishings. Taking this record and comparing it to surviving paintings of the "Croatian painters" in other locations, we get only an approximate idea of how the painting looked.[8] When paintings are described in a more detailed and professional manner, we get a better, but still only partial, impression. Art historian France Stele gives in his field notes the following description of frescoes by "Croatian painters" in a filial church of Sts Phillip and James in Višnje in Suha Krajina, which no longer exist:[9] "Frescoes were discovered on the walls of the nave, painted on a rather rough, uneven plaster. On the south wall next to the arch, part of the fresco depicting the Three Wise Men is preserved.

8 These particular issues were examined in detail by France Stele (Stele, 1942).

9 The old church burned down in 1943.

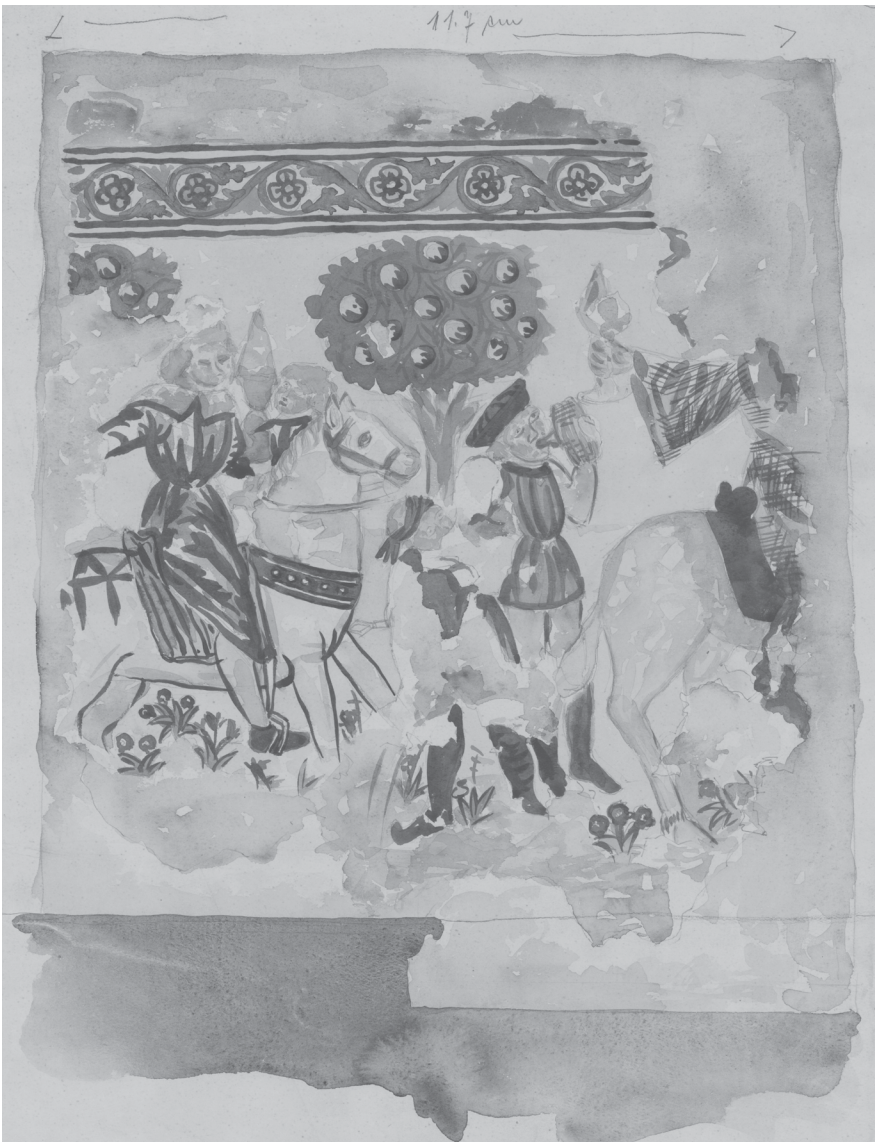

FIGURE 5: A watercolour painting by Franjo Golob depicting the wall painting from the church of Sts Phillip and James in Višnje, 1934 (source: Ministry of Culture; Cultural Heritage Directorate; INDOK center).

From left to right: Landscape with stylised flowers and orange trees /?/. Behind the beardless king riding a white horse is a page holding a gift, which is in the shape of a Gothic ciborium. In front of the king are two pages, the left one only partially preserved; the right one, wearing a cap in the Italian style, is drinking from a small cask. Next is a horse with a reddish mottled coat carrying a king; only the left half is preserved, with the head missing; wide-sleeved arms are extended backwards, holding

a gift in the shape of a Gothic ciborium. Marking the upper edge of the image is a decorative border: on a white background, flanked by red stripes, is a green vine with red flowers. The clothing depicted in the fresco shows Italian influence; the crude technique and white background recall similar paintings seen in Istria. The frescoes can be definitively dated to the 15th century, likely the second half." (SI MK MKS-001-00916) Reading these lines, can we form an impression of the wall paintings described? Certainly, every reader will have formed a slightly different impression, and every artist a mental image of their own, since words cannot convey a picture in all its aspects. Each contemporary instance of conservation-restoration documentation (consisting of a work programme and a report) needs to include at least a brief description of the artwork as part of its general identifying information. The conservator-restorer needs to be able to identify and have solid understanding of the narrative-substantive (semantic) meaning of the artwork in question in the context of related artworks. This is also because such understanding can help and guide the intervention, especially in the stages of uncovering and cleaning of the artwork, and reconstructing the missing parts. A better way of preserving, in an indirect tangible way, the visual aspect of a particular work of art is by means of a drawing or watercolour. A portion of the fresco of the Three Wise Men from the Višnje church thus survives at least in the form of a watercolour sketch by the painter and restorer Franjo Golob. (Figure 5) This surviving rendition gives a better impression of the lost original than what we can glean from the description. At the same time, the art-historical description positions the painting more explicitly within the broader context.

Dating all the way back to the end of the 19th century, a precious legacy consisting of a number of drawings of Slovenian wall paintings was left by Ladislav Beneš and later several other artists. (Mohorčič, 2018) The professional documentation of conservators-restorers often includes drawings, particularly as part of graphical documentation showing the various technological characteristics of an artwork, the extent of damage and degree of preservation, and the interventions carried out on the artwork. Fine art heritage can be preserved in an indirect tangible or digital way by means of an image or a copy and a photograph. We now have more sophisticated digital techniques available, for example photographs in different regions of the electromagnetic spectrum, as well as 3D-scanning and printing, which can record and preserve even more information about an artwork. Matej Langus's copies of Quaglio's paintings of the old dome of the Ljubljana Cathedral are the oldest known copies of wall paintings in Slovenia. (Sitar, 2012, 54) The first decades after the Second World War were particularly prolific

in terms of copies of medieval wall paintings, some of which are now part of museum exhibitions, most of them in the permanent collection of the National Gallery. Nowadays, many copies of works of fine art are produced by conservators-restorers, in most cases to serve as a substitute for a vulnerable original in an outdoor location. In recent times, digital prints pasted onto facades have begun to complement painted copies. A copy may be a more or less accurate reproduction of the original, depending on the degree of preservation of the original or the archival sources and the skill of the copyist. They may approach the original not only in appearance, but also in terms of the technique.

4. THE AXIOLOGICAL DIMENSION OF CONSERVATION-RESTORATION

A substantial part of conservation-restoration theory, both classical and contemporary, deals with issues regarding the axiological aspects of conservation-restoration. It examines which works of art are worth preserving, how to assess their value, how to preserve them appropriately, and how best to present and document the conserved-restored artworks and the interventions themselves. Some of these questions also extend into the fields of ethics and aesthetics.

Why the desire to preserve some works of fine art and not others? A reasonable answer would be that we choose to preserve because of some significance or value that the artwork holds for us. Preservation suggests a level of reverence towards the artwork. Whereas contemporary conservation-restoration places the highest value on the material preservation of the original artwork, this was rarely so in the past, especially if the work was in poor condition. The old approach to restoration was mainly about refurbishing and painting over the old, as well as creating it anew. France Kokalj explains this well in his article *From the documentation regarding the history of restoration in Slovenia* (Kokalj, 1972, 33):

"From the medieval period and all the way up to the present, wall paintings, for example, would be plastered over and repainted multiple times with the same or different motifs, usually according to the client's wishes. This was done for varying reasons, most often the deterioration of wall paintings due to moisture etc., or a change in the artistic taste, emergence of a new style. These were interior renovations (or renovations of facades) and not renovations or restorations of wall paintings in particular. In the case of paintings on wood or canvas, the practice was the same. An artist taking an old picture, applying a new underpaint and painting the picture anew is effectively just reuse of the canvas (albeit

FIGURE 6: Traces of multiple depictions of St Christopher on the south-facing exterior wall of St John's church on Lake Bohinj (photo: Blaž Šeme, October 2016).

a previously painted one); this is not a restoration of the old painting."

Restoring works of art used to be primarily the work of artists and craftsmen. An artwork would usually be restored by an artist of sufficient skill and with good command of the appropriate technique. Kokalj further explains that if a medieval painting workshop renovated a church with motifs different from the original ones, we cannot call this a restoration of the wall paintings; it is instead merely an artistic renovation of the church. It was not uncommon, however, for a client to want the painting renovated with the same motif, in which case the painting would be restored or renovated by overpainting the same motif over the original. This way, the church's paintings were retained

while maintaining the message (motif) of the originals. It would appear that the typical medieval or baroque client commissioning a restoration of wall paintings found physical preservation of the old, damaged (or merely outdated) artworks unnecessary; the important thing was to preserve a motif or even just the decorative function of a painting. The intervention was in most cases only an indirect and partial informational preservation of sorts.

Depictions of St Christopher on church exteriors represent a typical example of such an approach to restoration or renovation of wall paintings in Slovenia. The facade of St John's church in Ribčev Laz in Bohinj features no less than three layers of Gothic-period depictions of St Christopher. The saint looks different in each one, painted in the style that was typical for the time and the workshop of that particular painter. Per clients' request, the painters preserved the motif, the message represented by the saint, over the centuries. They were not asked to make any effort to preserve the previous painting. The only reason that the older paintings were preserved at all was that it was more economical to simply roughen the surface of the previous painted plaster and cover it with a layer of painting plaster—*intonaco*—than to re-do the base layer (*arriccio*). It is interesting to note that the newest—fourth—St Christopher, which dates to the 19th century, was not painted over the previous ones but next to them. (Figure 6) This could indicate that a shift towards a more respectful attitude regarding the preservation of old artworks was already underway at that time. Traces of past renovations of paintings are also found in the interior of the church. The lower part of the presbytery walls, in particular, was completely repainted by the painter and "restorer" Jernej from Loka, most likely due to damage. Another interesting example is what is possibly the earliest dated renovation of wall paintings in our country, carried out in 1539 in the church of St Paul in Podpeč in Dolenjska.[10] Here, the client wished to preserve the depiction of two important donors to the church from the end of the 14th century: "the honourable Lord Henrik Gall and his wife Lady Elizabeth" reads the inscription on the fresco. (Höfler, 2001, 152-153) The original 14th-century costumes from the old fresco had been carried over, but other than that, the new painting is entirely in the style typical of the first half of the 16th century.

That said, it would probably be premature to conclude with a generalisation that there was less respect for old and damaged works of art in the past. One reason for the lack of preservation might be that the artisans of old did not have the knowledge, resources and

10 Next to the figures is an inscription in distinctive gothic lettering: *Renouacio picture* 1539.

FIGURE 7: The social-realist wall painting by Slavko Pengov in Vila Bled; on display (←) and covered up during the visit by the US Secretary of State (→) (photo: Petja Grafenauer).

experience regarding conservation and restoration that we have today. There were other reasons why a particular work of art might diminish in value through time—religious, ideological, economic and others. Some works of art can induce feelings of discomfort, embarrassment or even loathing, which can lead to the artwork being covered up, neglected or even destroyed. A telling example of the former is the large-scale wall painting by Slavko Pengov in Villa Bled, dating from the Socialist Realist period, which was covered up with curtains on the occasion of the recent visit of the US Secretary of State. (Pirc, 2020) (Figure 7)[11]

Pengov was a master of the fresco technique; from an artistic-technical point of view, he was undoubtedly one of the best fresco artists of the 20th century in Slovenia. His wall paintings can be found in a number of places, including the parish church in Bled and the Carpentry Workshops building in the Žale cemetery (sacral motifs), and the National Assembly Building in Ljubljana and the former Palace of the CCCP in Belgrade (social-realist style). This example demonstrates how the evaluation of a work of (fine) art changes through time according to individual and societal perception and environment.

As early as the turn of the 19th century, Austrian art historian Alois Riegel explored in his book *Der moderne Denkmalkultus* (Riegel, 1903) the value,

11 Vanja Pircs, Prekrita umetnina. Zakaj Vila Bled fresko Slavka Pengova skriva za zaveso? [A work of art covered up: Why is Vila Bled hiding a fresco by Slavko Pengov behind a curtain?] *Mladina*, 21 August 2020. Available at: https://www.mladina.si/200729/prekrita-umetnina/ (9 March 2021).

or values, of monuments, which to him were either commemorative or contemporary. He saw the historical value, the *age-value* and the intentional commemorative value as commemorative values and the practical and the *art-value* as contemporary values. In the context of fine arts heritage, Brandi's classical restoration theory figures prominently, since it emphasises the aesthetic (analogous to Riegl's *contemporary*) and historical (analogous to Riegl's *commemorative*) value of a work of fine art. A work of fine art may be assigned other values, such as spiritual-religious, cultural-symbolic, societal, economic, etc., but the aesthetic nature of the object remains crucial for its recognition as a work of art.

Comparing a Gothic wall painting to an archaeological artifact of practical value, we find that the fresco has an aesthetic value that exceeds its historical value; conversely, the archaeological artifact's historical value overshadows its aesthetic value. (Figure 8) In contemporary conservation-restoration theory, there are various authors paying perhaps too much attention to the evaluation of objects of cultural heritage, this being more the domain of conservation theory or the broader theory of cultural heritage protection. Evaluating and registering heritage is mostly done by conservators.

In the conservation-restoration field, the important thing is for the experts to recognise and take into account the different values and, where possible, emphasise them further through interventions. Perhaps the most important role of conservators-restorers is in the artistic and technological evaluation of fine art. Some examples of fine art are worth preserving specifically because of material or technological peculiarities, which conservators-restorers are best equipped to recognise. An important factor in the evaluation of objects of cultural heritage—fine arts heritage in particular—is the state of preservation. The value–especially aesthetic, but potentially historical as well—of an artwork that is faded or preserved only in fragments, is certainly much diminished. (Figure 9) Evaluating the condition of works of fine art, their state of preservation and level of vulnerability is one of the principal duties of conservators-restorers. Although they collaborate with experts—primarily from applied-scientific fields—when performing the anamnesis and diagnosis of an object's condition (just as doctors work together with technicians in medicine), the conservators-restorers are the ones responsible for giving the definite diagnosis. Muñoz Viñas oddly does not address this subject in his contemporary conservation-restoration theory. Brandi deals with this topic mainly in the context of preservation of so-called *ruins* (of works of fine art), that is, very poorly preserved works of fine art. He emphasises that an artwork in a particularly poor state of (aesthetic) preservation loses its status as a work of art,

FIGURE 8: A comparison of the aesthetic value of items of cultural heritage: the aesthetic value of the medieval fresco of St Christopher ← is higher than that of the archaeological artifact → (photo: B. Šeme).

FIGURE 9: A comparison of the aesthetic value of items of cultural heritage in different states of preservation: the better preserved medieval fresco of St Christopher ← has a higher aesthetic value than a less well preserved medieval fresco → (photo: B. Šeme).

and ponders where the point is that this happens. He also urges that the conservation-restoration of ruins be limited to the preservation of the status quo (Brandi, 2005, 66), that is, preventive conservation.

The central professional and scientific research questions in conservation-restoration are how to physically reveal, preserve, present and document the objects of cultural heritage in the most appropriate way. The requirement of physical preservation of a maximum level of authenticity

of fine art leads to the development of ethical and aesthetic principles guiding us towards the correct action. These principles are part of an independent conservation-restoration theory, which simultaneously combines and integrates with theories from various other fields, such as medical and therapeutic ethics, Gestalt-psychology, art theory, philosophy of art, language theory, chemical and physical theory, etc.

A conservation-restoration intervention must be carried out in such a way as to respect the significance, or value—historical, aesthetic, etc.— and the physical integrity of the work of art.[12] This fundamental ethical principle is enshrined in conservation-restoration charters and professional codes of ethics. Conservation means the preservation of value and significance, in every sense, of an artwork; restoration, on the other hand, seeks to increase or accentuate them. Muñoz Viñas warns that any attempt to increase a particular value (e.g. aesthetic) inevitably diminishes the others (e.g. historical). (Muñoz Viñas, 2005). Since at least the 19th century there have been lively debates about the appropriateness of aesthetic interventions in works of art. A prominent example of the above in regards to failed aesthetic interventions are the criticisms of Goldenstein's restoration in the Church of St Primus above Kamnik and Goldstein's criticisms of Langus's restoration of Quaglia's paintings in Ljubljana cathedral. (Sitar, 2012, 50-98) As already mentioned, aesthetic issues in theory received considerable attention by Brandi, Baldini and Casazza. Isabelle Brajer provides some more modern, fresh perspectives on image retouching (Brajer, 2015), but a more detailed treatment of this important and interesting topic would, unfortunately, significantly exceed the scope of this article. While expert critiques of instances of conservation-restoration interventions can also contribute to the development of the conservation-restoration profession, this practice has not taken root in Slovenia.

Modern and contemporary fine art brings new challenges for the field of conservation-restoration. It is not only the use of new (often less lasting) materials, electronics, moving elements, etc., which requires a degree of specialisation on the part of conservator-restorers (Hermens, E. & F. Robertson (eds.), 2016) that is the issue, but also the emergence of new forms of artistic expression, such as temporary (to a varying degree) installations, events, or actions. The problem of the accumulation and consequently storage of artefacts is also a growing issue. It is in this context that the internationally renowned visual artist Tobias Putrih, an alumnus of the UL ALUO, ponders the justifiability of having his own sculpture studio, the use of less challenging materials for his sculptures

12 Loosely quoting the Code of Ethics of the Conservator-Restorers' Society of Slovenia. Available at: http://www.slodrs.si/definicija-stroke-in-kodeks-etike/ (9 March 2020).

FIGURE 10: How (if at all) to preserve, restore and exhibit old performance art? Photomontage: A framed still from the ALU Akcija video (V. Bernik, B. Mesarec, A. Pregl, B. Šeme, 1997) (photo: Blaž Šeme).

and the problem of having to discard many of his works after exhibitions.[13] A likely possibility in terms of preservation of this type of work in the future will be the continuous preservation of digital information. In case it is later desired to once again physically exhibit such a work, it will be possible, for instance, to print 3D copies (provided that a 3D-scan of a sculpture exists) or have a performance repeated by professional actors (if a video is available of the performance or action). (Figure 10) The topic of sustainable conservation is also increasing in importance—using conservation-restoration materials that are as durable as possible, with the least amount of harmful impact to users and the environment, as well as involving society in the conservation of art and other heritage in the broadest sense possible.

5. CONCLUSION

13 Tobias Putrih: Perceptron, an online lecture, part of the ALUO Ear events, 3 March 2021. Available at: www.aluo.uni-lj.si/novica/aluo-uho-tobias-putrih-perceptron/ (9 March 2020).

Conservation-restoration theory is a logically organised aggregation of principles and insights that sets out the laws of conservation-restoration. It helps us develop an organised, systematic and effective approach to the investigation of conservation-restoration work. From the classical conservation-restoration theory of Cesare Brandi and his contemporaries, developed in mid-20th century, to the contemporary theory of Salvador Muñoz Viñas and many other authors, conservation-restoration thought has gone through several decades of development. The theory is still evolving intensely and facing new challenges, such as the conservation-restoration of modern and contemporary art and other forms of artistic expression, sustainable and environment-oriented action, good communication, and the development of scientific and artistic research, among others. What all conservation-restoration theories share is that they mainly deal with teleological (pertaining to intention) and axiological (pertaining to value) aspects of conservation-restoration. The classical theory already identified the aesthetic and historical nature of an artwork as its two crucial values we should be aiming to preserve. In conservation-restoration practice we also need to take into account various ethical and aesthetic guidelines, some of which are still developing and changing. It is abundantly clear that contemporary conservation-restoration of fine arts heritage, performed by highly educated conservators-restorers, is a fundamentally different and incomparably more challenging and complex task than the renovation of artworks performed, with varying levels of skill, by the artists-craftsmen of old.

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The Experiment of the OHO Group in the Field of Conceptual Architecture

NADJA ZGONIK

Discussing the OHO Group's[1] creative activity in the discipline of architecture reaches beyond the canonical status the group currently enjoys in the area of art historical writing, casting light on a segment of their activities that has thus far not been at the forefront. The reason for that was the scepticism, if not discomfort, at the dilemma of whether, and how, it is possible to pursue architectural work in the context of conceptual art. Setting aside the perspective that every architectural project has at its core a concept, it would seem that architectural work is determined to such an extent by materiality and objectivity that this should

1 The OHO Group (1966-1971) (uho = ear, oko = eye, oho = ear + eye) was a Slovenian artist collective and one of the most important conceptual art movements in Southeastern Europe in the late sixties. Permanent members included Marko Pogačnik, Milenko Matanović, Andraž Salamun, and David Nez; other artists joined the group occasionally and made contributions. They engaged in visual poetry, land art, happenings, body art, experimental film and conceptual works. They moved their artistic activity from the galleries to the streets and parks. In 1971, they made the decision to devote their lives entirely to art and to live in connection with nature and spiritual forces, and moved to a farm in Šempas as an intentional community *Družina v Šempasu*—Family in Šempas, which operated as a commune until 1979. Marko Pogačnik dedicates his work since 1980 to the healing of the earth.

put it in direct opposition to conceptual art, which sought to evade and radically deconstruct both of these notions. Not to mention that it remained fundamentally opposed to any demands regarding functionality that define architecture. The above aspects exposed would seem to rather constrain the scope of conceptual experimentation in the field of architecture— notwithstanding all the successful attempts at a reduction of the architectural form in modernism. Even so, there have been quite a few dispositions within the history of artistic formulations since the 1960s that have exposed opportunities for conceptual architecture. One of them is the OHO Group's collaboration with the architect Niko Lehrman in 1970 on the architectural project of the Argonauts hotel and leisure centre in Nova Gorica[2] (Figure 1). This was more than just a collaboration between two disparate artistic subjects, the collective and the individual—the OHO Group, through its idiosyncratic approach to collective work, when it welcomed a fifth member based on what their creative practice at the time required, established a new collective creative entity, internalising their collaboration with the architect Niko Lehrman and accepting him as an equal member of the group (Pogačnik, 2012, 38). The group thus absorbed architectural practice as yet another possible avenue of artistic expression. This represented a further expansion of the group's field of activity, which had been remarkably broad since its beginnings, including sculpture, visual poetry, publishing in the *Tribuna* and *Problemi* magazines, art books, comic books, illustrations, body art, performance, *happening*, land art, experimental film and video. It was this versatility, and most of all the fact that the members never let themselves be constrained by any preconceived notions, that was one of the defining characteristics of the OHO Group.

OHO's participation in the project of constructing the *Argonavti* Hotel in Nova Gorica[3], which will be the subject of this discussion, has

2 Construction of the modern Argonavti hotel and leisure centre began in August 1972 in Nova Gorica. It was projected to be finished in 1974, but the work dragged on until 1976. The project documentation, as well as the expert study, which was brought to my attention by Tanja Martelanc, to whom I owe a special thanks, are kept by the Regional Archives of Nova Gorica. The project exceeded its budget and the polyester roof developed leaks immediately upon completion due to construction errors. During the great flood in Nova Gorica in 1983, water flooded the basement rooms, and the company went bankrupt the following year. In 1985, the *Iskra Delta Argonavti* education centre began operating in the hotel building. The signature yellow and white polyester roof was removed and a new, flat, sheet metal roof was erected in its place. In 1993, Iskra Delta sold its share and *Argonavti* became Hotel Perla. In 1999, during the reconstruction of the building in casino hotel, the owner—the HIT company—demolished OHO's *Sun Dial* sculpture.

3 Nova Gorica is a town in western Slovenia, on the border with Italy, built after 1947 as a planned town according to the principles of modernist urbanism. When the Paris Peace Treaty established a new border between Yugoslavia (Slovenia was one of the republics) and Italy, and nearby Gorizia was outside the Yugoslav borders, the socialist government decided to build a modern city that would radiate across the border.

FIGURE 1: Photo of *Hotel Argonavti* on the cover of the book *Občina Nova Gorica* 1947–1977, Nova Gorica, 1977.

so far seemed incongruent with the rest of OHO's history as a whole. Even though the group—after it had already ceased its activities, having transformed itself into the intentional community *Družina v Šempasu*—Family in Šempas in the spring of 1971—exhibited the project at the 7th Paris Youth Biennale that same year, the interest in the project within the art criticism and art history fields remained marginal. In literature, it is mentioned only in passing (Brejc, 1978, 95; Zabel, 1994, 101). Nor has there been any effort within the field of architectural history to evaluate this specific and rare example of conceptual architecture. Contributing factors include in all likelihood its rather negative critical reception, in particular the review published in *Arhitektov bilten* immediately following the completion of the project in March 1976 (Garzarolli, 1976). Matjaž Garzarolli, Jurij Kobe and Janez Koželj mounted a systematic, four-part (Society, Work, Instrument, Result) critique of the newly finished object.

They stated in their conclusion that the avantgarde nature of the building is merely an illusion, since "modern structural patterns, structural details and materials [are used] without understanding the technologies" and that "the design—original in its conceptualism—was lost in the execution, leaving behind just the eccentricity"[4] (Garzarolli, 1976, 7–8). In the critique, the architectural project is credited solely to the architect, with OHO Group's participation noted under the criterion "interdisciplinarity in the design of the working concept" and qualified as a contribution in the area of the "psycho-social research by the OHO Group".[5] Under the "Price/valuation of investment" criterion, the following was written: "The extensive programme of the object is decisively defined by and subordinated to the vision of one single person—the architect—to the extent that it excludes the possibility of subsequent adaptation. In order to gratify the investor's desire for the building to have an attractive appearance, the architect employs a cornucopia of different effects. In light of the questionable utility of the object, the use of expensive materials represents an irrational investment" (Garzarolli, 1976, 7). The fact that, on multiple occasions, the critics preferred to rely on Lehrman's own words instead of evaluating the architecture independently, betrays an obvious discomfort and contradicts the magazine's open-minded and theoretically progressive slant. Regarding "Consistency of concept execution", they report the designer's assertion that "The object is more than just conceptualised architecture [...] it is conceptual art," while the design/conception and methodology are described thus: "The object is designed for a human being torn between physicality and spirituality and all the way to cosmicity. / Space is an amoeba in which physical boundaries and a human beings are of equal value. / Normative visions of a human being are in constant conflict with those of the investor." This is followed by: "Execution: aspiration towards complete equality of everyone participating in the design and construction of the object /.../ [but] the process of execution is in itself evidence of the incorrect perceptions and insufficient understanding of the concept" (Garzarolli, 1976, 7).

Niko Lehrman's decision to invite the conceptualist art group OHO to participate in the architectural project was daring and

4 An even more radical evaluation was provided by Edvard Ravnikar; in a text assessing the urban development of Nova Gorica, of which he had been the first urban planner, he wrote the following: "In the ever faster tempo, the original aspiration to build something that would 'shine across the border' was giving way to an arrogant and ignorant pragmatism and that, in turn, ended up completely overpowered by an anarchic subjectivism (*Argonavti*, etc.)" (Ravnikar, 1983, 43).

5 "Interdisciplinarity in concept design: extremely ambitious in scope: the author with architecture, psychosociological research by OHO, construction and technology engineers, tourist marketing /.../ The execution does not adequately reflect this effort, however" (Garzarolli, 1976, 8).

unconventional—the group, while attracting a lot of attention among the representatives of its generation in Slovenia at the time and achieving impressive international successes, did not enjoy wider understanding and institutional support at home—and the architectural experiment was too radical to win support within the field of architectural criticism.

Who was Niko Lehrman, the architect?[6] He had studied architecture, graduating in 1965 under the mentorship of Professor Edo Mihevc. In 1959/60, during his studies, he worked as the technical editor, satirist and cartoonist for the student newspaper *Tribuna*. After graduating, he first worked in the field of propaganda design at ČGP Delo and afterwards in the architectural design bureau Agens,[7] which he had founded with a group of colleagues. When he was commissioned to design *Argonavti*, he was still a member of the editorial board of *Problemi*, a magazine in which the OHO Group regularly published.

From the outset, the form of collaboration between the architect and the OHO Group was one that was well established in OHO practice, i.e. the concept of the "fifth member". In addition to its constant four members—Marko Pogačnik, David Nez, Milenko Matanović and Andraž Šalamun—the group, in this last period of its operation, undertook a series of collaborations, each with a different person, depending on the theme of the project, taking them on as temporary fifth members. In 1969 and 1970 it was a poet Tomaž Šalamun as a theoretician and artist, then Naško Križnar as the author of several experimental films, e.g. the film Beli ljudje (*White People*) in 1970. The American conceptualist artist Walter De Maria was similarly welcomed when he visited the group in August 1970 (Fig. 2). Architect Niko Lehrman was another one of those who joined as temporary but equal "fifth members" (Pogačnik, 2012, 38). The intensive collaboration on the design of *Argonavti* lasted only a few months, during the autumn and winter of 1970/71, and was limited to the conceptual project phase. By the time construction began in August

6 He was born in 1939 in Ljubljana. He attended a grammar school in Kranj and enrolled in an architecture course at the Technical Faculty in Ljubljana in 1957/58. In 1965, he graduated under the mentorship of Professor Edo Mihevc with the thesis *The Regional Plan for North-Western Istria*, Synthesis, 1:25.000, which received high marks. The biggest project of his life was *Hotel Argonavti*; due to the numerous technical and economic issues encountered in its construction, this project would be his last. The only other published piece of information about him is an obituary written upon his death in 1998 by his architectural colleague and friend, Fedor Žigon (Žigon, 1999).

7 It was founded in 1968 or 1969 and operated in the basement of the apartment block at 8 Cigale Street in Ljubljana. Aside from Niko Lehrman, founding members included Fedor Žigon, Sonja Završnik Podlesek, Marjan Loboda, Jure Apih. Fedor Žigon was also on the editorial board of *Problemi* magazine, and in 1970, in the early period of the *Argonavti* project, the director of the studio, until he was replaced in this position in 1971 by Sašo Pöschl. (Due to the lack of archival documents, the history of the studio can only be roughly reconstructed. I was assisted in collecting the data by two former colleagues of the Agens Studio—architect Marinka Pogačnik Arnič and graphic designer Sonja Završnik Podlesek).

1972,[8] the OHO Group was no longer monitoring, nor involved with the project, despite the new centre of their activities being Šempas, a town in the immediate vicinity of Nova Gorica. In 11 April 1971, they moved into an abandoned farmstead and ended the activities of the OHO Group, reinventing themselves as *Družina v Šempasu*—Family in Šempas—an intentional community aiming to transform life into art. It was precisely their involvement in the *Argonavti* project that brought the Goriška region to their attention. They ended up completely absorbed in the grand project of building a commune; establishing a subsistence economy challenging enough that life began to seem more powerful than art, and for a while this isolated them from everything going on outside the commune, not only from Lehrman and *Argonavti*, but from the art world, exhibitions and events in general.

Let us now return to the beginning of OHO's reflections on the connection between art and outdoor space. In 1970, Sinteza magazine published a conversation between Braco Rotar and members of the OHO Group—Marko Pogačnik, Tomaž Šalamun, David Nez, Milenko Matanović and Andraž Šalamun (Rotar, 1970, 46–48). It was intended as a theoretical reflection on the innovations in the group's mode of operation that had taken place since the summer of 1969, i.e. the shift from galleries to the external natural ambience, towards environmental art. The interview was intended, in Braco Rotar's words, to shed light on "the phenomena, concepts and terms such as programmed art, environment, materials and the like, which occur in connection with the activity of the group or as a product of its activity" (Rotar, 1970, 46). Rotar defined the summer projects carried out in 1969 in Zarica, Sorško polje and Čezsoča as "a form of outdoor sculptures or, more precisely, organisations of open space." These steered the group towards an ever deeper contact with nature, from designing with natural materials to an increasingly sensitive and spiritual relationship with the cosmic forces that govern nature. It became a new stage for art, the medium from which new art was born, but at the same time, as a specific place, a vehicle for memory, a stage for displaying the awareness that landscape bears traces of past cultures. Members of OHO were convinced that interventions must resonate with the locality, and for this to happen, the space must be explored, the layers of cultural memory recognised and the energy field lines perceived. David Nez pointed out that "in an open space, we merely establish a pre-existing configuration of natural phenomena," indirectly drawing attention to the non-invasive attitude towards the environment that had always characterised OHO (Rotar, 1970, 46).

8 *Primorski dnevnik*, 17 August 1972: Construction of the modern Argonavti hotel and leisure centre in Nova Gorica begins, 3.

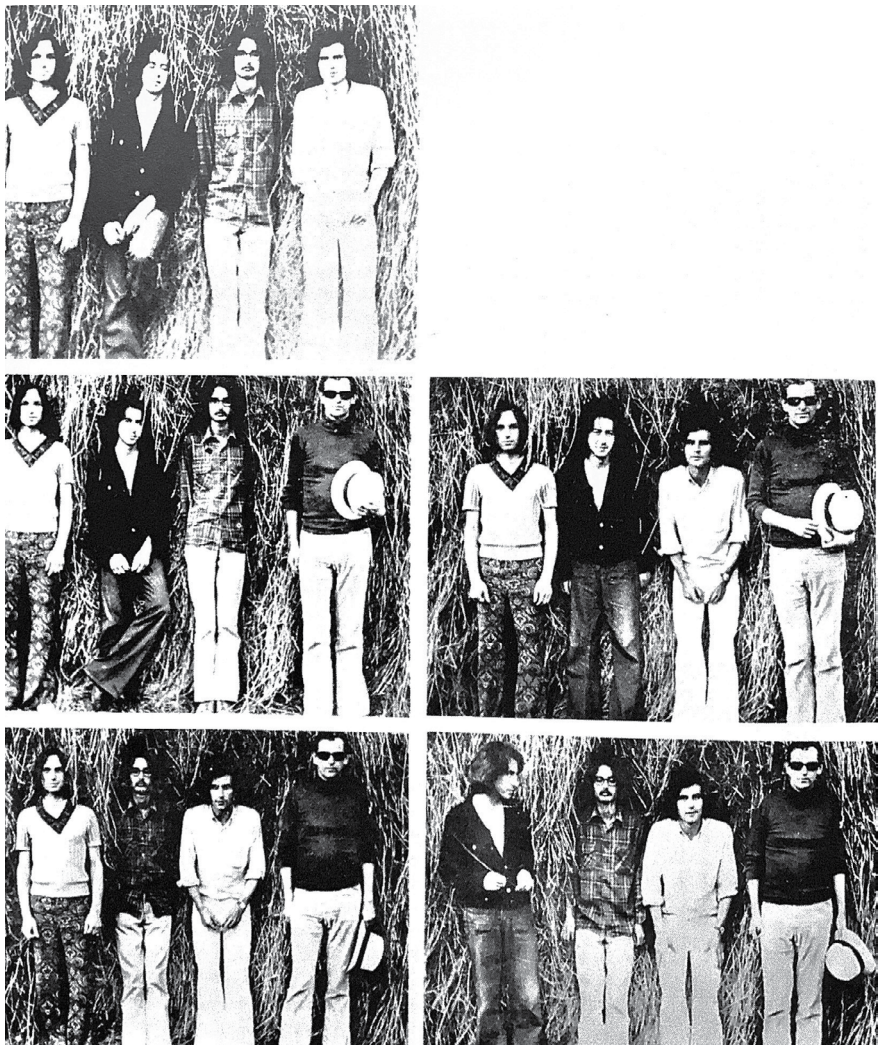

FIGURE 2: Walter de Maria and OHO, 1970, collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana. Photo: published with permission from the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana.

In relation to the materials and technique, OHO did not insist on total de-objectivisation and replacement of the object with an idea. They tolerated them and insisted on the inclusion of the material in the realisation of a project, as unpredictable configurations of elements can only be triggered in a material selected rationally, for its specific charateristics. In the aforementioned interview, Marko Pogačnik said that "you choose the rods, for example, for their flexibility, their schematic nature and optical clarity," and then "you intuitively choose positions to put them in, so that they bend, schematise, and so on." (An example of this are Milenko Matanović's *Installations with Wooden Sticks* in the

Forest in the summer of 1969). The characteristic feature of the OHO Group, as summarised by Tomaž Šalamun, is that "they visualise time, they visualise force, or they visualise temperature, distance, relations in general that no longer have anything to do with material, the material is just the mail service, representing permeability, as a permeable institution" (Rotar, 1970, 48).

When exactly it was in 1970 that Lehrman decided to invite OHO to participate cannot be ascertained from the published chronicles of the group's activities, but it can be assumed that it was towards the end of the year (Brejc, 1970, 95; Zabel, 1994, 101). That year the group achieved several major international successes. In July they were introduced at the Information Show at MoMA in New York, one of the most important exhibitions of conceptual art in history, and in July they appeared at the 4th Belgrade Triennial of Contemporary Art at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade, which was at the time the most important exhibition of the Yugoslav contemporary art. In August they were visited by Walter de Maria—together, they carried out one of the night projects—and in September they exhibited at the Aktionsraum in Munich, a reference institution. In November of the same year they organised the final exhibition of the group's career at the City Art Gallery in Ljubljana. It was in that autumn that collaboration with Lehrman took place (Brejc, 1970, 95; Zabel, 1994, 101).

Lehrman had just finished the wildly successful project of designing and outfitting the Laško beer hall, the first beer hall in Slovenia, which also featured the country's first bowling alley. The beer hall, which opened in August 1969, was on Masaryk Street, close to its intersection with Reselj Street. The beer hall could accommodate 300 guests and featured its own car park and children's play area. In six pavilions with roofs of fire retardant straw, the guests sat on padded kegs, which also concealed lighting fixtures. The tables were constructed from wooden beams and all the furnishings were in what the newspaper report at the time called "Old Slavic" style.[9] The beer hall achieved "a level of popularity that was beyond all expectations" (PANG-104, 2167, 4, 12) and just over half a year later the investor—the trade union tourism company Alpe-Adria in Ljubljana, headed by the director Zlatko Šindič (Schildenfeld before the WW2)—began planning an expansion of its catering business. This was a time when Yugoslav politics began to quietly foster consumerism, as well as develop commercial tourism in addition to trade union tourism in order to obtain foreign currency. Nova Gorica, next to the Italian border, was therefore a sensible choice

9 *Delo*, 13 August 1969: Kuštrin, R., Citizens of Ljubljana get their first beer hall, 6.

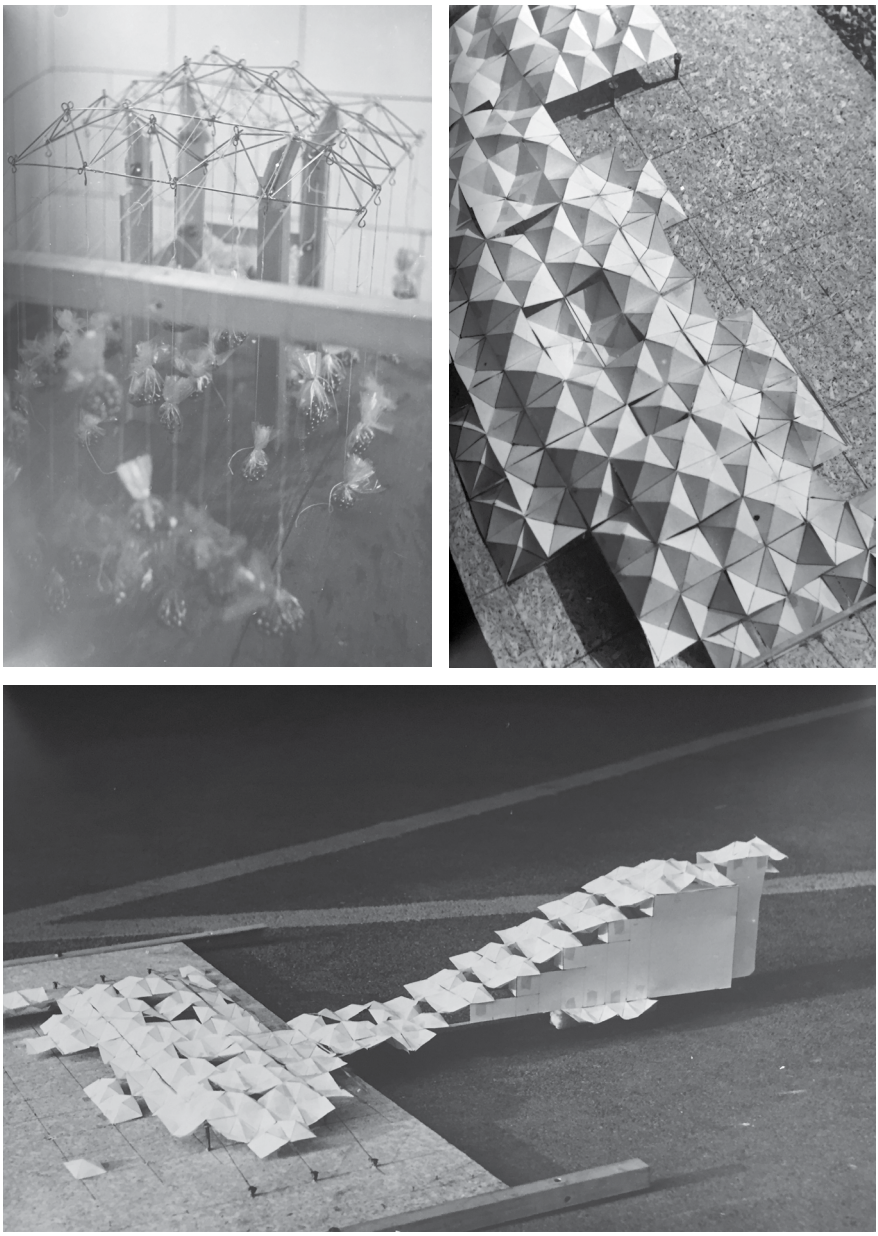

FIGURE 3: OHO, architectural model mobile, 1971, Regional Archives of Nova Gorica, Municipal Assembly of Nova Gorica, fonds 104, t. e. 2167, 4.
Photo: published with the permission of the Regional Archives of Nova Gorica.

FIGURES 4, 5: Architectural model of *Hotel Argonavti*, 1971, Regional Archives of Nova Gorica, Municipal Assembly of Nova Gorica, fonds 104, t. e. 2167, 4.
Photo: published with the permission of the Regional Archives of Nova Gorica.

for the site of the new project. Šindič entrusted the new commission to Lehrman. In May 1970, the *Cvetlična pivnica* (*Cvetlična* beer hall) project in Nova Gorica was submitted to the municipal authorities (PANG-104, 2077). By autumn, at the initiative of the municipality, the project had grown in ambition, with the beer hall transforming into a leisure centre and the hotel—in all likelihood the collaboration between the architect and the OHO Group had already begun at that point—into the *Argonavti* project (Figelj, 2019, 25). At the end of 1970, the architect, together with the members of the OHO Group, set off to Nova Gorica to survey the intended site of the building. They strung up a copper wire across the plot—a few old houses slated for demolition still stood there at the time—which was meant to detect the energy field lines of the site. To ensure that the collaborators' work on the project would be coordinated and in tune with the energy of the site, the wire was cut into five pieces, with each of the five collaborators carrying one in his pocket whenever they met in the office, and Lehrman keeping his permanently on his desk (Pogačnik, 2020).

The extent of OHO's participation in architectural planning can be more precisely assessed with the help of the detailed project study, where their ideas are recorded in the section "The general project of design and artistic furnishing" (PANG 104, 2167, 4, 37-41). It lays out the plans comprehensively and at all levels: from information design, visual communication and graphic design of the navigation signage, through interior design, colour studies and the car park layout, to the idea of having 13 different staff uniforms. In addition to the expert reports, the study includes three photographs, with two of them showing a paper architectural model and one showing an architectural model mobile. This was a structure made from wire; the roof was a three-dimensional lattice consisting of small pyramids with air-filled bags containing small globules hanging suspended from the nodes where the edges of the pyramids intersect the base plane (Figure 3).

The paper model demonstrates the modular design of the object, featuring a square grid in which each field was divided diagonally into two triangular surfaces. These were slanted to break up the surface, forming a relief. The roof was modelled from paper using the origami technique, designed to give the impression that the pyramids were being constantly reconfigured, much like in the game of paper fortune teller. The abundance of symbolic forms is immediately apparent. The intent was for the pyramids to be realised as thin polyester shells, giving an impression of lightness. They were supposed to resemble tent fabric thrown over a temporary lattice structure to serve as an impromptu accommodation. The roof was conceived as a polyester

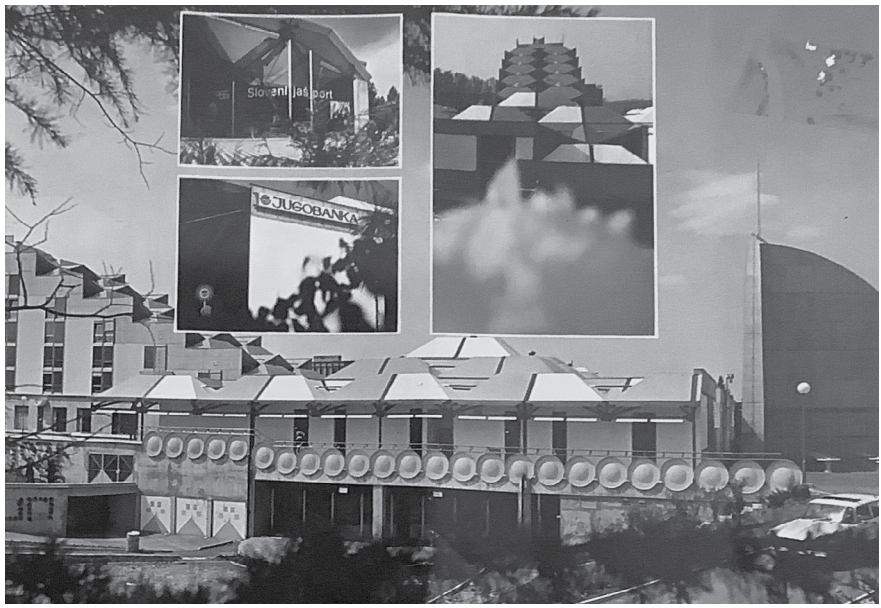

FIGURE 6: Balcony railing with shields, detail of the north-western side of *Hotel Argonavti*, *Hotel Argonavti*. Yugoslavia, tourist leaflet, undated, France Bevk Public Library, Nova Gorica.

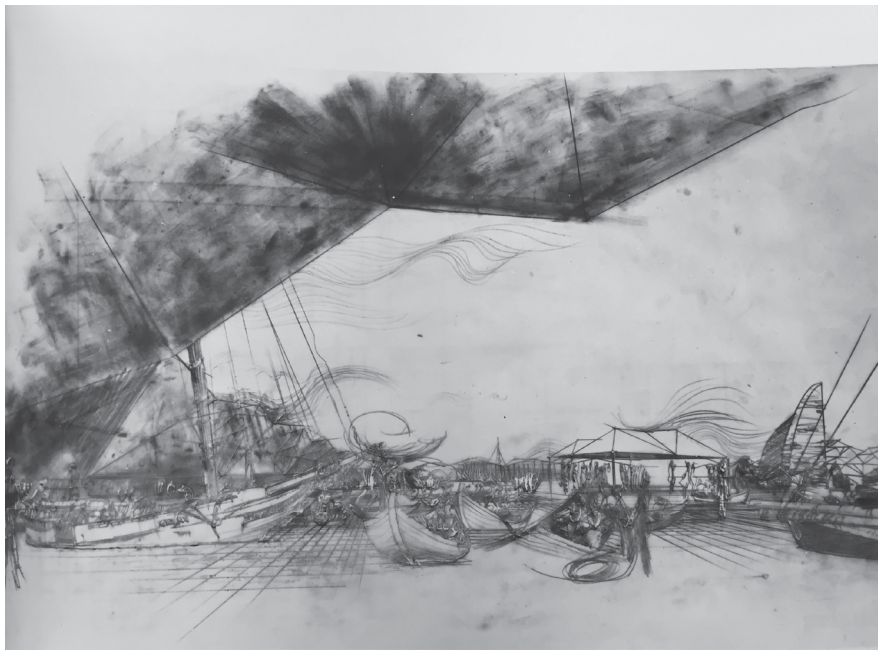

FIGURE 7: Niko Lehrman, Outdoor beer hall, 1971, architectural model of *Hotel Argonavti*, 1971, Regional Archives Nova Gorica, Municipal Assembly of Nova Gorica, fonds 104, t. e. 2167, 4. Photo: published with the permission of the Regional Archives of Nova Gorica.

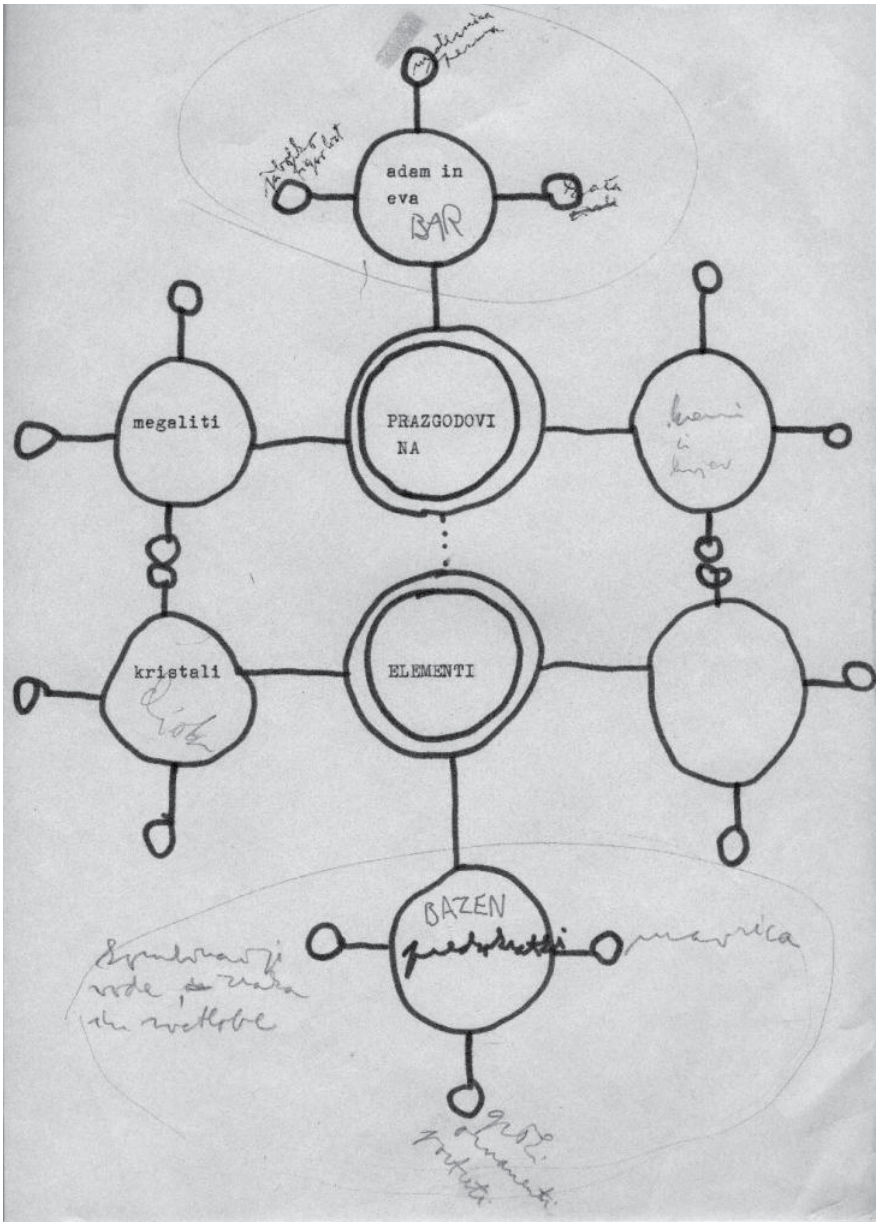

FIGURE 8: Marko Pogačnik, The concept for Hotel Argonavti, 1970, 29.3 x 21 cm, felt-tip pen, typed text and ball-pen on paper, collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana.Photo: published with the permission of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana.

shell resembling tent fabric supported by a visible structural framework inside the building (Figure 4). The design thus resembled a cluster of holiday tents; in addition to being an effective visual metaphor, the idea has to be seen from the perspective of its function—conjuring an ambience appropriate for a hotel and restaurant, leisure and entertainment centre, evoking a sense of relaxation and ease and leaving a pleasant memory of the holiday (Figure 5). The rhythmical repetition of shapes, the simple geometry and the alternating squares, rombi and triangles brought to mind the notions of play and chance—play is an activity associated with leisure time and is therefore one of the aspects that hotel and restaurant architecture ought to fulfil. The idea of play as kindling for creative ideas can be found both among the principles of Bauhaus and in the playfulness of the hippie culture, with the latter being a major source of inspiration for OHO's project.

Tent- and dome-like shapes were a popular element of futurist architecture in the 1960s. They were associated with social utopias and visionary projects, speculations about cities on other planets, enclosed in structures that enable life in a carefully controlled climate. The ideas of Buckminster Fuller, an American architect, inventor and visionary, regarding modular architecture and geodesic domes fascinated people across the globe at the time. In 1966, he was invited to deliver the keynote address at a student seminar taking place as part of the congress of the International Council of Graphic Design Associations (ICOGRADA) at Bled, together with the 2nd BIO.[10] A year later, at Expo '67 in Montreal, he designed the American pavilion, Biosphere, in the shape of a hemispherical dome. There, the visitors could also see the German pavilion, which Otto Frei conceived as an 8,000m2 space covered by a tent-like roof of translucent polyester and supported by a steel structure. The following year, Fuller erected a dome of similar design for the summer theatre in Spoletto—not that far from Slovenia. In this country, similar thinking began to be developed in 1966 by Saša J. Mächtig, who designed a geometric, undulating pyramidal structure resembling a floating cloud that was installed as a canopy at the Evropa café in Ljubljana.

Nowadays, Marko Pogačnik highlights two of OHO group's concepts as having been at the forefront in the *Argonavti* project (Pogačnik, 2020). The first one is the myth of the Golden Fleece and the Argonauts, who sailed along the Danube, Sava and Ljubljanica rivers before Jason's warriors were said to have carried their ship *Argo* to Vipava, sailing along the Vipava and Soča rivers before reaching the sea. The myth linked the

10 *Delo*, 15 July 1966: Bogdan Pogačnik, R. Buckminster Fuller: "More with Less", 5. The title of the lecture was *Zrušimo jezikovne pregrade z grafičnimi simboli*, or Breaking Down Language Barriers through Graphical Symbols

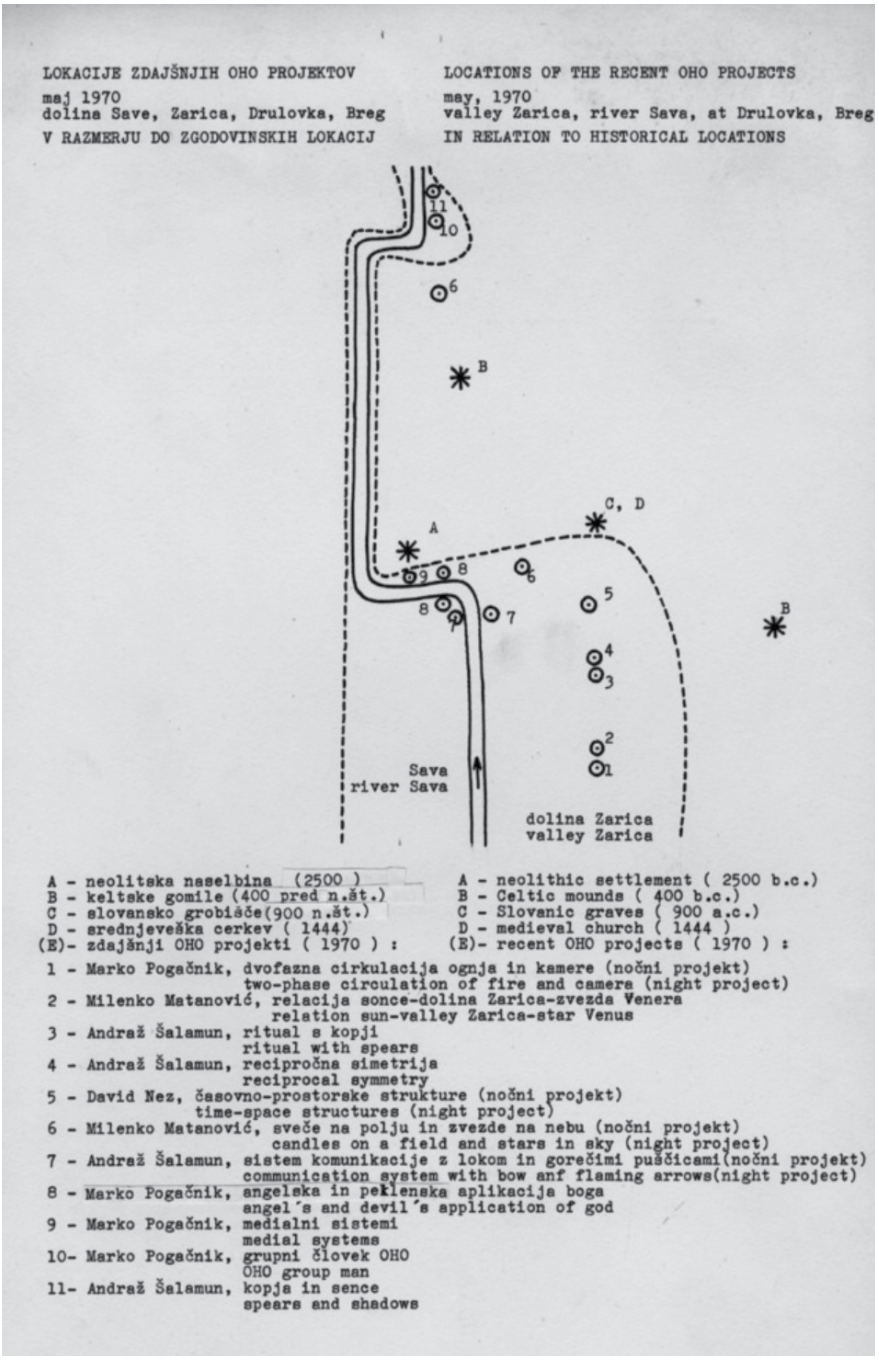

FIGURE 9: Marko Pogačnik, *Locations of current projects in relation to historical sites,* Sava Valley, Zarica, Drulovka, Breg, May 1970, photocopy, 50 x 23.3cm, collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana. Photo: published with the permission of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana.

territories of Yugoslavia and Italy, and in the spirit of good cooperation between the neighbouring countries at the time appeared to be an effective political metaphor for a tourist project that was meant to connect the urban population of both Goricas (Nova Gorica in Slovenia and Gorizia in Italy), as well as attract Italian tourists from the wider Italian heartland. Two further metaphors justifying the project were travel, which connects space, and the ship *Argo* as a means of transport for the Argonauts (Figure 6). The use of modern materials, polyester and colour—the roof was yellow and white—gave the architecture the appearance of a vessel from some different, otherworldly geography; the connection to the Argo galley is further accentuated by shields of yellow polyester affixed to the longitudinal balcony on the north-east side of the object, which resembled those that adorned the sides of ancient galleys. In order to illustrate the myth in an even more tangible and expressive way and to use functional objects to create an ambience similarly attractive as the one in the Laško beer hall in Ljubljana, they considered purchasing old Dalmatian wooden boats, which would have been built into the floor and used as seating for the guests in the open-air beer hall, but the idea was never realised (Figure 7).

The second concept was a vision in which moving between different rooms would be like passing between historical layers, deposits of past civilisations, in other words the concept of a "time vessel" (Pogačnik, 2020). The path through the architectural object was a journey through time, through layers of historical memory, which began deep in the basement with Adam and Eve as the origin of humanity, in a nightclub featuring, accordingly, a bar in the shape of a snake and seats resembling apples (PANG-104, 2167, 4, 38–39). In the context of pagan worship of nature it seems odd, at first glance, to include in the genealogy of the world the Christian myth of the origin of humanity with Adam and Eve as the first parents, and to depict it using the aesthetics of the palaeolithic, a period which in actual fact reached back several hundred thousand years. The story of Adam and Eve ought to be understood in the context of exploring the specific spiritual roots of (the Slovenian region) place, but also in the spirit of the time. The ideal of hippie culture, which was completely unencumbered with ideology, was to live in Paradise, reverting to the way of life of the first parents in a time before the original sin. For them, nakedness was a natural state, and their life in paradise was free of existential worries[11] (Figure 8).

11 Recall the references to Biblical iconography in the notorious Paradise Now as performed by Living Theatre in 1968, as well as OHO's *Hepening Pasijon* (ali *Biblijske zgodbe*)—*The Passion Happening* (or *Tales from the Bible*), performed by OHO in September 1968 at the BITEF festival in Atelje 212 in Belgrade. The hippie culture and hippie-ludism influences on OHO's production from that period are noted by Miško Šuvaković (Šuvaković, 2009, 127–135).

The natural setting that prompted Marko Pogačnik to reflect on these themes was the Zarica canyon of the Sava River, near Kranj. That was the site of one of his first works—an abstract sculpture carved in 1962 from a rock in the canyon. In the summer of 1969 and spring of 1970 the canyon was the site of the group's summer projects, and in the summer of 1970 these included the group's one-day (day or night) training sessions. This is where Marko Pogačnik came up with the idea of the "time vessel". "This valley conceals an unusually rich and robust spiritual tradition," writes Tomaž Brejc. "It begins with Neolithic settlements and continues with Celtic mounds, a Slavic burial site, a medieval Gothic church—and now, as the newest layer of memory imprinted on this almost sacred piece of nature, the projects of OHO" (Brejc, 1970, 31) (Figure 9). Marko Pogačnik represented the vessel physically in the form of a container with layers from the Cretaceous period to the present-day artifacts of the OHO group, exhibiting it at the retrospective exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art in 2012 (Pogačnik, 2012, 58).

From the palaeolithic in the basement, the path ascended to the surface, representing the neolithic, and towards what was the "dominant motif in the composition of the objects" (PANG-104, 2084) and the most striking architectural element conceived by the OHO group—the Sun Dial, *Sončna ura*, "recapitulating the tradition of megalithic sun shrines such as Stonehenge in England" (Pogačnik, 1987) (Figure 10). At 15 metres in height, the monumental reinforced concrete sculpture loomed over the rest of the building. It took the shape of a semi-circular surface split down the middle into two halves meeting at an obtuse angle, which looked like lung lobes. During construction, special attention would need to be paid to the vertical junction of the two lobes, where a vertical slit was supposed to let through a ray of sunlight to illuminate the stone tables, which were planned to be decorated with carvings of the zodiac signs. This particular feature was key to the entire concept, with the whole effect of a calendar, as well as its accuracy, depending on it (PANG-104, 2084). The execution of this detail was not successful. As a result, Marko Pogačnik preferred to call the construction Solar Sculpture (*Solarna skulptura*) instead of a sun dial (Pogačnik, 1987). Had it not been destroyed in 1999, this sculpture would be among the most striking monumental scultpures in Slovenia and a magnificent contribution to the currently trending brutalist architecture.

The only part of architecture that has survived all the transformations and can still be seen today is the stepped structure of the hotel room wing. It was designed to look like a stepped pyramid resembling a Mayan temple. A continuous staircase runs down the middle of the pyramid all the way from the ground to the top floor. Its orientation

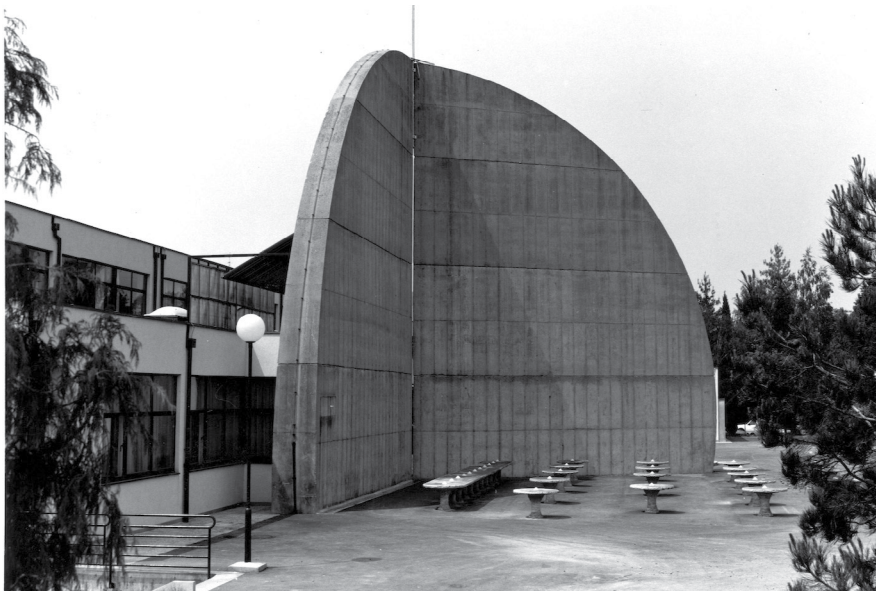

FIGURE 10: OHO (Marko Pogačnik), *The Sun Sculpture next to Hotel Argonavti*, 1971–1972, black and white photo, collection of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana. Photo: published with the permission of the Museum of Modern Art, Ljubljana.

FIGURE 11: *Hotel Argonavti*, circa 1980, black and white photo, archive of the Pavšič Zavadlav photo studio. Photo: published with the permission of Fotoatelje Pavšič Zavadlav, Solkan.

presents the person ascending, or rather descending, the staircase with an uninterrupted view of the religious sanctuary on top of the nearby hill—*Sveta Gora*, or Holy Mount—thus enabling communication with the surrounding space and the sacred site within it (Pogačnik, 1987) (Figure 11).

The architecture, as envisioned by OHO, was to be a synthesis of all the good created in the global cultural past. With the undulating shape of the architectural shell enveloping the modular design, the building gave the impression of a mass constantly being moulded by the same forces that shape nature—tectonic shifts, erosion, decay; the organic nature[12] of the architectural form underscored the fact that its conception involved observation of natural elements and phenomena, the morphology of the landscape, the motion of the planets; as well as the peeling away of the cultural/spiritual layers of the space. It was a symbolic statement of what was expected of the new architecture.

By breaking down the idea of architecture as it was supposed to be, we have come closer to understanding that what we perceive—the specific configuration of the built environment, if architecture is what we have in mind—is only one aspect of a more complex phenomenon: the realisation that in every environment there are deeper structures that influence communication. In his text *Notes on Conceptual Architecture* from 1970, the architect Peter D. Eisenman points out how important it has always been to reflect on form in architecture, but that while this reflection used to be focused on problems of aesthetics, we have now begun to think of form as an informed shape establishing relations to past stages. We are no longer concerned with aesthetic problems, with the analysis of proportions, textures, colours…but with the relationships between the elements established by the architecture, such as an interval, sequence or scene. A specific environment that triggers a set of reactions is the basis for a certain configuration. When extracting, from formal data, the iconographic or symbolic elements drawn from cultural sources, we must also be aware of the difference if these originate from an external space and are perceived by the individual through the senses—sight, hearing, touch, etc.—or if the information regarding iconographic interpretation is at a different, more abstract, level of relationships, since we cannot see or hear them, but we can become aware of them (Eisenman, 1970). The tendency to organise is linked to a deeper realisation. The OHO Group's claiming of the open space that they were contemplating could be understood as a spatial re-qualification that would act to awaken self-awareness in the

12 It is somewhat of a paradox that this was executed using synthetic materials; it should be noted, however, that plastic materials enjoyed considerable popularity at the time.

individual observing this transformation and trigger a new perception of self, and above all harmonise the individual with the natural, earthly and cosmic energy lines.

For OHO, the shift towards architecture opened a new field for visual art research, yet another of the diverse forms of artistic expression that the group had tried in the course of their career. Architecture thus found its place among the rest of the media. More than that—if we think carefully, paying attention to what Marko Pogačnik is saying, we could think of architecture as a pivotal field, whose complexity, arising from the way it incorporates the issue of habitation in its totality, facilitated the transformation of the group's method of operation from one form into another, from OHO Group's collective work to *Družina v Šempasu*—Family in Šempas. It contributed to the realisation of the dependency of forms of habitation and self-awareness of the living conditions. It would be difficult to argue that exploring the identity of elements, examining the effects of gravity and their positions, and delving into the cultural identity of a space—themes that OHO were concerned with—was an obvious path into architecture, but on closer examination, those issues are exactly what architecture is concerned with. A building ties the inside and the outside together, anchoring the space; it is at the mercy of gravity and under the influence of natural elements, whether in the form of the building materials or the climate. From this perspective, OHO's turn towards architecture seems not just unobjectionable, but even necessary and understandable. In the case of this particular architectural undertaking, a multi-purpose social centre that is "neither an 'amusement park' nor a 'dance garden', nor a Munich beer hall, nor a youth centre, nor a children's playground, nor a promenade, nor a bar, nor a restaurant; instead it combines all of these into a coherent whole we call a 'mini city', for short," (PANG-104, 2167, 4, 11–12) offered an additional opportunity, since public architecture, by virtue of its social function, opens up the possibility of social effects, promoting social transformation at a much broader and more comprehensive intersection than artistic activity, which addresses its narrowly selected recipients within the isolated space of the gallery, and is similarly isolated and limited in terms of its recipients even when it occurs in an open natural space. When generously presented with an opportunity to communicate with individuals who are not already formed as recipients of art, the members of OHO gratefully accepted. A succinct summary of their perspective is offered by Marko Pogačnik, who says that architecture, while outwardly serving various functions, should internally represent a nest of potentials capable of facilitating a quantum leap—a space for habitation should hold the seed of the future (Pogačnik, 2020).

Designing architecture for the city that Nova Gorica had evolved into in the early 1970s also meant facing certain specific socio-political concepts that had motivated the foundation and development of the city and helped shape its identity. It was here, in the "city of youth" at the "open border",[13] that the idea had developed of an architecture that would concretise, on a large scale, with modern materials and programmes and a trendy aesthetic, progressive social concepts and demonstrate the successes of socialism to the West. The new architectural forms were to facilitate a radically new culture of habitation and lead to a new, better society. The social utopias inspired by the revolutionary 1960s that were supposed to come to fruition in the 1970s were buried in the 1980s by the regressive turn towards postmodernism. Just as the ideal of architecture as a "utopian project" in the form of the *Argonavti* multi-functional social centre, with its free interplay of public, social and commercial interests in the context of social ownership, where the individual could enjoy the luxury of leisure time afforded by a post-industrial society, remained unfulfilled, so did the idea of a commune, instead of being realised as the highest form of society, became in modern times a mere utopian memory.

What began in the "city of roses" as *Cvetlična pivnica* grew into the cross-cultural myth of the Argonauts in the "City on the Open Border", transformed into a global hub for education in the field of cutting-edge computer technology, long seen as the golden fleece of our civilisation, during the time when Iskra Delta's education centre was operating there, until its final transformation into HIT's Perla casino hotel, a home for the most exploitative of the tourism industries in liberal capitalism. A phantom presence in space, alive only in documentation, the *Argonavti* project remains a semaphor of the changing society and art at a pivotal time.

13 *The City of Youth, The City at the Open Border*, *The City of Roses* are some of the popular nicknames for Nova Gorica, the city, which was build as a socialist project to make .

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THEATRE STUDIES

Text as Stage or Staged Readings in Light of Performative Economy

BLAŽ LUKAN

1.

"/.../ what it searches for /.../ are the pulsional incidents, the language lined with flesh, a text where we can hear the grain of the throat, the patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels, a whole carnal stereophony: the articulation of the body, of the tongue, not that of meaning, of language" (Barthes, 1975, 66-67).

"/.../ to fight with language inside language and, inside itself, to lead it astray: not through the message but through wordplay, where it becomes the theatre stage" (Barthes, 2003, 13).

2.

Staged readings are not a new performative genre. In Slovenian theatre, their presence has been noted for a long time[1] and in 2007 an appropriate entry was duly registered in the Slovenian *Theatre Terminology Glossary*. For several years now the *Slovene Theatre Annual*[2] has been taking note of them as well. In recent years, however, we have seen a proper flourishing of staged readings (which is, admittedly, a rather loose definition; a more precise temporal characterisation, however, is not the aim of this paper). Students of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television regularly prepare staged readings with the support of their mentor, the dramatist Žanina Mirčevska. Staged readings have also become a regular feature of the Week of Slovenian Drama Festival, specifically the Slavko Grum award for best new Slovenian play, as this is the form of choice for presenting nominated texts at the festival. There also appeared the Vzkrik Festival, now in its fifth iteration, which is dedicated to drama writing and presents staged readings accompanied by presentations of special issues of literary magazines dedicated to drama (e.g. the *Adept magazine*) or other events.

The *Theatre Terminology Glossary* defines staged reading as "a performance in which the performers interpretatively read a dramatic text out loud, usually written by non-established authors, with minimal use of theatrical means of expression" (Sušec Michieli, 2007, 37). This definition, however, no longer suffices for the analysis of contemporary staged readings. The first part of the definition stating that a staged reading is "a performance in which the performers interpretatively read a dramatic text out loud, usually written by non-established authors" may perhaps still hold up, but even this is not completely true. While a contemporary staged reading is indeed still a staging,[3] it is no longer necessary to "interpretatively read a dramatic text out loud", as virtually the entire text can be transposed into the performance, sometimes

1 See, for example, the report »Nastop Ivana Mraka. Ivan Mrak: Van Goghov vidov ples« ["Performance by Ivan Mrak. Ivan Mrak: Van Gogh's St Vitus' Dance"] (Lukan, 1991, 23–24).

2 *The Repertoire of Slovenian Theatres* has only been recording non-institutional productions which represent the largest percentage of staged readings since the 1987/88 season. This work was, however, done rather selectively at the start. A more systematic approach to cataloguing was taken up only after the 1992/93 season. When staged readings were made part of the programme in theatre institutions, they were recorded under the designation that they were promoted with, i.e. "theatre protocol" in the Slovene National Theatre Maribor during Bojan Štih's tenure (1978-81) or "concert performance", etc.

3 At this point one might be tempted to ask what actually is a staging or, rather, what happens to the text in the process of its staging. Is it not true that any performance essentially cancels out its material? Be it that the written material is transformed into performative signs and becomes part of the signifying system established by the staging or that somehow it still "exists" "somewhere" as a text. In staged readings, the text is, as a rule, still quite the "focal" point, even though it is performed by reading. This only appears to be a paradox.

even without the use of words, i.e. a non-verbal staging, which nevertheless still remains a "reading". Even the "reading" itself is no longer a precondition of a staged reading, as performers often learn the text by heart or diverge from the text ("book", manuscript) during the performance. Even the argument that the text is read by "performers" is no longer necessarily true. A fundamental turn has taken place in contemporary staged readings, as spectators themselves can become readers[4] and thus new "performers", which fundamentally shifts the relationship between performers and spectators; the text can also be pre-recorded and then broadcast to the audience or projected onto the set;[5] the text can also not be read at all, as mentioned above, etc. The claim about "non-established authors", albeit mitigated by the adverb "usually", is today also only partially true, as in recent years we have had the opportunity to hear/see staged readings of texts by many renowned, even canonical authors.[6] It is however true that staged readings have become the basic platform for introducing young dramatists, a point that shall be further elaborated on below. The biggest change in contemporary staged readings, however, concerns the "minimal use of theatrical means of expression," since in some staged readings the reading part becomes fully transposed into theatrical expression. And this fact will be our starting point for further discussion.

3.

Before we turn to reading as theatre performance itself and its "performative economy" which we shall critically evaluate below while also proposing several staging possibilities not yet embraced by staged readings or at least not to an adequate degree, let us elaborate some "objective" starting points. The designation *staged reading* itself is descriptive: a "staged reading" encompasses the reading (of the dramatic material) as well as (its) presentation. This combination might seem paradoxical, as in a traditional perspective of theatre studies reading excludes performing. Contemporary performative aesthetics, however, attribute performative potential also to the reading act itself, which in practice means reading as live presentation. In the language of theory, what is essentially at play in a staged reading is a transition

4 This was the case in the staging of the text xy by Simona Semenič, where it was the spectators who werre reading the play, while the author was silently observing them (Arhar, 2014).

5 This was the case in the staging of Rowan, Strudel, Dance, and More by Simona Semenič directed by Janez Janša, The Mladinsko Theatre and Maska, 2018/19.

6 The cycle of staged readings entitled "New Readings" produced by the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana since the 2014/15 season included also staged readings of well-known texts by Primož Kozak, Emil Filipčič, etc.

or transformation of dramatic or performative material into a performance, in which the theatre performance or staging does not cancel out this material itself (which is the condition of theatricality according to Roland Barthes' well-known formula; 2002, 122-3), but rather preserves it in one form or another. In practice, a staged reading is a rendering of a dramatic or performative text in the manner of reading it out loud and in public.[7]

The reading of (dramatic) material is part of the staging process, but for a long time now it has also been considered a form of performative or presentational practice in which dramatists as well as performers and other collaborators can present themselves. In post-dramatic times, reading has become a legitimate, perhaps even privileged presentational form or format for presenting novel textual as well as performative strategies and practices. Staged readings demonstrate the relation and closeness of this genre to the epic nature of contemporary post-dramatic writing in which the narrative is established as a mode of presentation, while the text is also the instance that determines the performative framework of the staged reading.

4.

In a functional sense the reading of dramatic or performative material is, first and foremost, gaining information about a text (be it new or forgotten, undiscovered or newly translated, etc.), by which the performance endeavours to give as objective and "neutral" a rendering as possible. This does not, however, exclude the application of given ("minimal") performative means. The information can also be more comprehensive, in certain cases outgrowing its elementary aesthetic frame. Even a "literary soirée" can represent a specific kind of staged reading in which the author presents (reads) their (new) play in some kind of an intimate environment and atmosphere. Such presentations are most common for the genre of poetry, while they are less frequently used for the presentation of dramatic literature, as staged readings often function as a kind of substitute for this form. If the text of the play is actually being read by its author, one could claim that in this case the bare information is upgraded by the possibility of the encounter with—literally—the authoritative voice of the dramatist themself, proposing a kind of "immanent" interpretation or vision of their text from their own perspective, which might carry some "aesthetic" quality in itself (as was

7 Another term for staged reading is *performance reading*; while the term reading performance, for example, evokes a similar conceptual difference as that between the theatrical and the performative, as noted by Hans-Thies Lehmann (2003, 183).

the case with the above-mentioned staged reading performed by Ivan Mrak). The author's reading and the interpretative process can, however, become part of the "aesthetic" value of some future staging of the text in which the director or dramaturgist or one of the actors gets wind of the possibility of its "application" and then uses its "memory" for their own conceptualisation.

Reading could also represent the (only) form or performative possibility for "staging" so-called closet dramas (*Lesedrama* or *Buchdrama*), a dramaturgic phenomenon originating in (German) Romanticism that was strictly intended for reading only and not for staging. While today this might seem very anachronistic, such texts do represent the ultimate performative material which can be "ideally" performed just by reading.[8] Contrary to this, a staged reading can also be used for "testing the waters" for the performative potential (of a play or selected excerpt), by which the artists, who might eventually embark on a "proper" staging at some future point, get to check the performative qualities of a play and thus prepare a kind of "pre-performance". They can also present this performative potential to other possible collaborators or propose it to artistic directors and other theatre directors for consideration. This way, a staged reading serves the function of what in the film industry is known as pitching, i.e. an event intended for the authors to propose their ideas, drafts, treatments, scripts or completed projects to producers, as well as actors, directors, etc.

All things considered, even today staged readings remain a testing ground for young, non-established artists, as was implied in the above-mentioned dictionary entry. Perhaps this is even more true today. It would even appear that this has become the primary form for presenting young, new (post-)dramatic writing that is—not exclusively, of course—critical of traditions/conventions and for one reason or another cannot break through onto more established stages or into the repertoires of theatre institutions. Staged readings have thus become an eminent festival format, while a "staged reading festival" or "festival of new dramatic writing" has become the prototype of an event promoting non-established authors and their still untested and unscrutinised plays, thus holding a twofold status in this respect: on the one hand, it serves to promote authors, while on the other it enables the "inner" consolidation of new writing which in fact does not need any additional confirmation, as it is an event-in-itself.

8 Two of the alleged prime representatives of closet drama, Goethe's *Faust* and Schiller's *The Robbers*, "became" legitimate performative material long before the advent of the post-dramatic era.

5.

While our above-mentioned inaugural definition might appear to be quite objective, following the "you have to start somewhere" adage, under critical scrutiny it turns out to be rather problematic, as staged readings are becoming the "ideal" format for our precarious times. The first problem thus lies in the attitude adopted by the mostly unestablished authors themselves, as staged readings with zero budget or minimal material investment allow them to offer their potential "value" to strong "buyers" who might purchase it in the aesthetic or real market. This means that the authors expect to turn a "profit" which can materialise in the form of potential employment, "commission" or even mere recognition of the aesthetic value of the offered item as an investment into the future. In any case, we are talking about precarious (economic) categories. The second problem is the attitude of the addresses, i.e. the potential "buyers" or "commissioners," as staged readings (unless they organise them themselves) enable them to easily find potential candidates (with no particular investment or effort on their side, i.e. inquiries, competitions, grants or investment into "talent") for their own investments (and invention), which to them can bring a completely different kind of "profit" than to the authors.

With all of the above we are moving into the area of the theatre market, or rather, the domain of performative economy, which we will attempt to overcome in the follow-up, before once again returning to it. With the help of some good examples of successfully overcoming the above-mentioned framework, we endeavour to conceptualise staged readings as an autonomous genre, i.e. a legitimate format inside the domain of contemporary performative practices, one that is in no way "limited" or "downgraded" or "incomplete". On the contrary, it is our firm belief that this format is perfectly able to achieve "complete" (self-)realisation within the framework of its genre. Thus we do not consider staged readings to be some kind of a "promotional", "provisional" or "consolatory" performative form for presenting dramatic writing, or rather, dramatic or theatrical material, but rather a performative form in its own right. As such it calls for maximal production, organisation and creative engagement if it is not to remain merely an "approximation" of something bigger or "real" or, in a word, "something else," even though from the perspective of realistic, "practical" economics this is not realistic or viable more often than not. There is, however, another possibility, as we shall see below.

Due to their marginalised position and placement at some kind of a starting point or edge (creatively and production-wise) that is considered to be still "uncontaminated" or "unstigmatised," staged readings

entail a certain subversive element. This means that their marginalised position enables them to speak out about the predominant production, aesthetics or politics with a certain measure of authority. As a rule, the production of staged readings—except when they are produced as a kind of bypass that needs no additional evaluation, a complementary activity of big institutional theatres—manifests the necessity for activating alternative modes of production along the entire production line. Already the very act of writing itself can be conceived in this way: from the very point of conceptualisation which already presupposes a staged reading or the activation of alternative means of performing, completely different from the ones required for an institutional staging, to the entire system and methodology of rehearsals, and all the way to the (opening) night and all the following nights. This approach positions staged readings closer to performance art than to theatre. How so? Due to the specific nature of work and conceptualisation of such projects which from the very start anticipate a short running time. While this might appear to be due to the material scarcity of their production, staged readings, in fact, become fully realised precisely in their uniqueness and "unrepeatability". Finally, even the different promotional strategies could be perceived as alternative and subversive, which renders staged readings to appear as authentic places for testing out fringe, anti-mainstream engagement of the critical potential of performative practices.

6.

Compared to a dramatic performance, a staged reading has more potential for engaging the audience in different ways. This is conditioned by the very spaces in which it is usually presented and are, as a rule, alternative, marginal spaces. If staged readings are presented in an institution, they are usually placed onto chamber stages, rehearsal stages, clubs, or even theatre foyers. According to their staging or mise-en-scene concept, staged readings assume a more chamber-like setting allowing for the display of more intimate, engaged, marginal and subversive topics and writing. The close contact with the text allows for close contact with the audience as well, and for articulating the sense of bonding and community, which increases their capacity for expressing critical opinions and the emancipatory potential of the text and its subversive charge, as well as (self-)critical evaluation of the text itself, the possibility of "improving" or "perfecting" it through staged readings, perhaps even with the help of the spectators themselves, and ultimately self-criticism of one's own performative, aesthetic or "moral" position.

A staged reading enables the spectator to take the attitude they prefer: they can either be "just" a listener or they can be a "spectator" as well or an active participant or even a co-creator. Participation sometimes even proves to be necessary—be it merely in the form of the possibility of constant choice, i.e. the continual possibility of accepting or refusing to participate, or as highlighting the connection or separation between the text and the reader. Reading can turn out to be either an enjoyable experience or a very painful and intimate one or as the awareness of the (im)potency of the fundamental entering or intrusion into the text, i.e. also as the (im)potency of its disclosure or exhaustion. A staged reading probes the performative limits of reading and performing, all the way to the very edge of internalised experience that defies all things performative and to the ultimate "goal" that is to be found in the "realisation" or identification of the subject …

Besides performers and spectators, a staged reading can also put in focus the specific position of the author of the text, be it in the attested form of a "literary soirée" or by taking up a new, performatively more or less exposed function, in which the author might feature as a performer, simultaneous listener, remote addressee of just as a mediator of the dramatic "material." The dialogue with the author may be established from both sides: the side of performers and the side of the audience. There is also the most radical, albeit still a perfectly immanent option: the possibility of simultaneous production of the text in real-time, i.e. live writing in which the spectator may participate as well (deciding about different variants, collecting suggestions, associations, etc.). The staging itself may include simultaneous or post-festum analysis of its production and reception.

7.

All of the above implies that it is actually necessary to further establish staged readings in their genre autonomy. Here we proceed from the conviction that a staged reading is not just a makeshift, temporary, provisional form, nor merely a means or a way for establishing oneself in the predominantly established performative norm, but rather a legitimate and viable option for researching and developing original genre specificity or diversity in relation to performative conventions.[9] A necessary condition to achieve this is to start reflecting on the genre or format of the staged reading in its relationship to the text, which might appear self-evident. A staged reading, as it is blatantly obvious,

9 In Slovene theatre such practices have been introduced by directors such as Ivica Buljan, Jernej Lorenci, Tomi Janežič, Žiga Divjak, etc.

always establishes a relationship to the text, even when it detaches itself from it a priori and positions itself in the area of autonomous performative events where the text can feature merely as a provocation, trace or "memory" of a concrete textual starting-point. Such radical approaches of course raise the question of the limits of the genre of staged readings, which is by no means irrelevant and indeed ought to be raised repeatedly. It is a fact, however, that in this case the informative and presentational functions of the staged reading become lost, which is again relevant to the definition of the intention (or interest) of both the performers and producers.

Maintaining the relation to the text does not imply a potential "return to the text", which, following the "performative turn" and "death of literary theatre," has become virtually impossible anyway. To put it more precisely, it does mean a return to the text, although this does not imply a revitalisation of some anachronistic dramatic theatre paradigm, but rather a methodological legitimisation of the text as a performative area that does not require anything but its own "textuality" for its staging. This conceptual turn, of course, does not renounce the activation of theatrical and spectacular elements in its staging; rather, it concerns a clear definition of anchoring its basic performative decision. In other words: a staged reading should take a stronger ideological position in the text itself and start extracting its performative derivations from it. To borrow, and slightly adapt, an idea introduced by Althusser, we could say that the ideology of a staged reading should interpellate the bare individuality of dramatic or performative material, in other words, its pre-textuality, into the subject, i.e. into the performative content and its meaning (Althusser, 1980, 76). Reading should thus become both the content and the meaning of the staged reading and not merely its form, and therefore also its original performative ideology. This goes particularly for staged readings of contemporary post-dramatic texts which staged readings often take as a starting point. In this case, the theory would argue that what we are dealing with here is a case of "self-staging", as such texts no longer require a concrete theatre staging due to their specific dramatic—performative—approach in writing.

To borrow the words of Walter Benjamin: a (post-dramatic) text is theatrical (or performative) enough by itself and does not require to be (forcibly) theatricalised.10

What we are dealing with here is thus a return to reading. The (marginal) act of reading itself can be subversive enough, since, as a precarious performative practice, it represents a negation of externalised

10 Benjamin here actually referrs to *Hamlet* (quoted in Tackels, 2015, 26).

spectacular neoliberal logic. Let us consider quiet, invisible reading, where performativity equals zero but is at the same time at its most radical. As such it can function as an intervention into the established economic relations of performance, as it abolishes the object of economic exchange: there is simply no product that could be marketed, no profit, just silent, invisible work. While it is true that just like in the case of invisible work in capitalism there is probably no one who would be prepared to pay for this, it can, however, offer creative pleasure by itself—and perhaps this might apply also to its reception. A staged reading ought to reach further, it ought to enact and make visible the bonds that bind the text to its verbal interpretation. It should make use of the performative power of the word in stage volume, the word in both dimensions of the performer's verbal performance. Performed at the margin of staged readings, speech can appear louder and more piercing than when emitted in a theatre environment. The shortcomings of staged readings ought to be used to their advantage, according to the (rhetorical) question: How to attain maximal effects with minimal means? Awareness about their fringe position allows staged readings to rearticulate and critically evaluate all creative and production relations.

8.

The performative possibilities of reading appear to be infinite. Let us enumerate but a few:

- Reading as a "secret" and intimate experience (taking into account the unease that accompanies it, as articulated by Barthes; 2013, 123), as opposed to reading as a public experience emphasising rhetorical signs;
- Reading-in-progress, with all its clumsiness, rawness, slips, inconsistencies, stuttering, errors, unconscious lapsuses, and reading-in-regress, deconstruction of "meaning", reading not as the weaving of the text but rather as its "undoing", as abolishing speech, rather than encouraging it;
- Separating speech from writing, as speech is bound to the throat, while writing is bound to the hand;
- Playing around with the text in its material form, its medium: books, manuscripts, paper, ebook readers, tablets, smartphones; tearing it, smashing it, erasing it, rewriting it;
- Inhabiting the text and moving out of it; blindly following what is written and digressing from it; escaping what is written and inventing new texts based on the old one; abolishing the (modernist) commandment of fidelity to the text

and establishing conditions for a new (postmodern) erotic relationship with it;

- Performing the processuality, the levers of transition, the becoming of both the text and the reading—and the reader—itself, the relation between reading and interpretation (e.g. of a dramatic role);
- Projecting the text onto a background, playing with its graphic, visual value;
- Articulating new relationships between readers and spectators, performers and listeners, group reading, exchanging roles, articulating the connection, community-in-reading;
- Using the text as the domain of performative interventions: repeating what has been read, going back to what has already been said, exposing the problems with understanding and articulation, cases of elimination, ellipsis of the unnecessary or unpleasant text, adding new text, up to its abrupt ironisation and destruction;
- A dialogue with the (living, present?) author, the reader's spontaneous commentary, criticism and polemics, self-criticism, metacriticism;
- Seducing the reader, the possibility of establishing unconventional relationships with them, involving the spectator in the production, co-authorship in the making of the text and performance, the pains and gains of the text;
- Testing the possibility of the birth of mise-en-scene out of the spirit of the text...
- There are even more new possibilities to be found in the connection between the text and the body-in-reading (Lehman, 2003, 183), say when a performer's body experiences physical pain when reading or saying the text or, vice versa when reading causes it extreme pleasure; this relationship might be taken to another level by making the reading into a performance of struggling with the text which leads into a painful split—or perhaps a union reached with difficulty; and the effects of forced reading or even reading torture which may lead to unforeseen and extreme consequences.

9.

In reflecting on the genre and aesthetic conditions of staged readings, it is impossible to avoid an analysis of the conditions of production and the consequences of the "revolution" of reading in staged readings. Concerning production, the phenomenon of staged readings—here we are thinking primarily of the ones taking place in institutions, which, due to various interests, the institutions promote as an integral, albeit marginal part of their programme, be it in order to engage younger collaborators, test out certain plays as potential material for later stagings in the "main" programme, appeal to the segment of the audience that relates more to literature than to theatre, etc.—demonstrates a clash of two different interests or aspects: the interest of the creators and the interest of the theatre as an institution. If institutions perceive the specific format of staged readings as the proper space and means for establishing younger theatre artists or perhaps even an entire generation, this is on the one hand quite an appropriate gesture, while on the other institutions, as a rule, usually fail to clearly articulate this interest. This lack of definition is not an assumption; rather, it is quite concretely reflected in the modest and precarious conditions of production specific to this type of production: a minimal number of rehearsals, minimal budget for equipment, modest fees if any at all, and few dates. What the institution can offer, which is by no means negligible, is rehearsal space, dates for performances, a professional cast if necessary, and well-versed promotion. There is, however, a certain gap between the interest of the institution for such production and its investment; a gap that could only be bridged by a clear definition of its intention that should result in a re-articulation of the conditions of production.

The artists themselves often perceive a staged reading as a performance 'in a nutshell,'—a chamber performance, an opportunity that they need to seize and make the most of. And this is the point where minimal production value clashes with maximal creative desire. Namely, most staged readings are (too) eager to dismiss the act of reading itself and transition into a performance mode, the exploration of space, mise-en-scene, stage and costume design, props, and music, without having proper material support for such a shift. This often results in makeshift, improvised, and ill-elaborated solutions with no real preliminary dramaturgical and performative analysis of what the stage reading format actually is on the one hand, and what kind of a text is being staged on the other. As mentioned above, it is only the intention that is clearly expressed. Thus, in staged readings, we only too often see merely the approximations of "proper" theatre productions, a kind of pre- or prototypical form of theatre which is supposedly on the way to once

becoming full-blown Theatre (which sometimes, albeit rarely, actually happens). We see not-yet-theatre that is actually no-longer-theatre, as the apparent expansion of creativity accompanying the immense desire for establishing oneself combined with material scarcity actually represents an insurmountable obstacle.

All of the above implies two major problems, but also two possible solutions. The first problem, besides a clear definition of intention, is also a clear definition of the space in which a staged reading takes place, i.e. the theatre institution itself. As mentioned above, due to their primordial and initiative character—as an opportunity for establishing new generations, but also for a fundamental reflection on the "birth of theatre" or invention of the genre—staged readings are charged with critical potential or even the possibility of subversion, especially taking into account the poorly defined intention of the institution itself and its provision of modest production conditions. To pose a question: Is it not the case that integrating a staged reading into what appears to be a concrete and aesthetic but is in reality a cultural-political and ideological context opens up the possibility of exposing this context for what it is? To paraphrase a well-known formula by Althusser, namely that critical practice, which is itself a form of ideology, when clashing with another ideology makes this ideology visible. A staged reading can achieve this by exploiting precisely its not-yet-ideological potential and its ideological "innocence", vulnerability and "naivety" in order to expose in its process the ideological clutter that gets piled up in an institution (Althusser, 1980, 169). This "clutter" consists of poorly articulated programme decisions which more often than not are merely a result of apparently self-evident and common-sense traditions, which, as we know, are full of unreflected sediments like the economic relations that the theatre production is subject to.

A staged reading is thus in a unique position to expose the performative economy down to its foundations. By creating "something" (the aesthetic maximum, i.e. the aesthetic and symbolic, as well as market value) virtually "from nothing", so to speak, or rather, from a minimum of investment into the production, and by integrating into the system of commodity exchange, it makes the above-mentioned procedures visible. Sometimes it does not even have to take a definite position apropos these procedures, it can suffice just to present them through its own phenomenon, through its own process, i.e. it is enough to present itself as a process. This way it can realise a crucial element of the theory of performative economy which states that economy actually creates the very phenomenon that it is describing, or rather, that economic models, as well as economic "performances," actually transform

the society in which they appear (Callon, 2006, 23). A staged reading could thus offer an original, epochal and concrete example of the adaptation of the institutional theatre production practice to the model of staged readings. A staged reading cannot and does not have any ambition to replace regular theatre production, of course. It could, however, penetrate it as its "conscience," its original creative possibility and harbinger of necessary changes in the perception of theatre production as art on the one hand and as an emancipatory social force on the other. The other production possibility is even more tightly connected to the reflection of the genre or format of staged readings itself. This brings us closer to the function or, rather, the position of staged readings in non-institutional production, where the conditions are admittedly different. The "poorness" of such productions is often the result and/or reflection of the "poorness" of the non-institution itself. In this context, a staged reading represents a very adequate—i.e. precarious—genre or format, as it offers a way to fulfil the programme demands of financial backers with minimal investment. One could say that in a non-institutional context staged readings perform the role of exposing production and economic mechanisms by default, as its format fits non-institutional conditions so well. Thus it does not even have to give it any explicit thought, but rather functions as "the thing-in-itself".

In non-institutions staged readings sometimes rely more on the audience, with which they often a priori create a community of solidarity and tolerance, rather than on any aesthetic or performative format. In such interactions, the means of expression are relegated to a secondary role, while the goal that takes primary focus can be defined in the constitution of the afore-mentioned community and its collective ideology (or belonging) that is no longer merely aesthetic, of course, as it surpasses the space of happening and reaches out into the wider society.

10.

To conclude, let us define some of the dangers that might beset a staged reading and lie hidden in the genre as well as creative or production processes. It is dangerous to pretend that a staged reading is merely one of the various forms of dramatic performance (be it in the traditional or the modernist sense), as this turns it into a "reduced" performance, a not-yet-Performance (with a capital P) that will once "undoubtedly" turn into one. If an institution organises a staged reading based on this assumption, it takes away all of its subversive potentials. However, if the creators themselves are taken in by this line of thinking,

they betray its original aesthetics. We have to be aware that the modest creative and production investment into staged readings is an advantage rather than a shortcoming, as this way the staging can come closer to the very "essence" of theatre, the "empty space" that allows for a realisation of its "essence". On the other hand, it could be equally dangerous to hold on to the illusion that it is possible to achieve an even bigger spectacular effect in a staged reading than in a regular production, despite its reduced production funding: a staged reading subordinates its spectacular function to the staging of the text; it can happen, as has probably become clear by now, that it is precisely here where the "spectacle of reading" can find its ideal scene. And, last but not least: acceptance of these precarious creative conditions and the neoliberal logic of production ("working for one's own pleasure") by the creators needs to be put into focus, the process of staging itself needs to be integrated into the process of critical reflection, or rather, it is necessary to embed certain emancipatory mechanisms into it that will be capable of producing new models of resistance, organisation, and community. The "less is more" adage does not apply in post-dramatic times, as it is becoming more and more obvious that less, alas, is always just less, and more always needs to be won in a struggle.

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Current Contributions to the Theory and History of Theatre of Resistance

ALDO MILOHNIĆ

The title of the article[1] refers directly to the title of the symposium *Transformations in Theory. Current Research,* organised by the Academy of Fine Arts and Design at the University of Ljubljana. Since I was in the final stages of finishing my then upcoming book entitled *Gledališče upora* (*The Theatre of Resistance*) when the symposium in Koper was taking place (October 2020), it seemed reasonable to present there precisely the findings of this "current research". The book has in the meantime been published by the Ljubljana University Press, Faculty of Arts (2021), so the aim of the present contribution is to call attention to some of the book's key findings and to a degree expand upon them. For the sake of "authenticity", the second part of the article focuses on the resistance (activist and performative) practices of Marko Brecelj, who of course was not the central figure of my presentation at the symposium purely by chance—the event took place right next to the Bell Tower of the Koper Cathedral where years ago Brecelj and his colleagues performed the resounding action *Tapisonirano vnebovzetje* (*Upholstered Assumption*) (more on this in the continuation).

1 The article has been developed in the frame of the research programme Theatre and Interart Studies P6-0376, funded by the Slovenian Research Agency from the state budget.

The term "theatre of resistance" can be understood in different ways, and it also cannot be reduced to a single period in the history of theatre, given that the word "resistance" refers to many phenomena, historical and contemporaneous. *The Dictionary of the Slovenian Standard Language* defines the word resistance in the widest possible sense ("activity with which one resists") and cites peasant uprisings as historical examples. Different examples of resistance can be found also in the 20th century; the most prominent example in the Slovenian territory is undoubtedly resistance against the occupiers during the Second World War, and more recently, the "Slovenian people's uprising" in the time of the second government of the then Prime Minister Janez Janša. The term "theatre" is also not unambiguous and has undergone numerous changes over the centuries; in the last century, the term "performing arts" emerged under the influence of performance art, which also captures hybrid forms of expression or those created at the intersection of visual, music, dance, theatre and paratheatrical practices. One of the early discussions of the theatre of resistance is the monograph *The Theatre of Revolt* by Robert Brustein, which has been reprinted several times since its first publication in 1962. Having said that, we do need to bear in mind that Brustein's term "revolt" is similar to, but not exactly the same as, "resistance"; further, the title of his book is somewhat misleading, because he focuses mainly on playwrights and dramatic texts, leaving their stagings outside of his immediate research interest. Brustein's study was also the basis for Gašper Troha's presentation at the symposium *Theatre of Resistance* held in Maribor, in which he attempted to draw a distinction between the theatre of resistance and the theatre of resistance fighters.[2] I use the term "theatre of resistance" in the widest sense: as theatre created within or as part of resistance or a resistance movement; as theatre created by resistance fighters for resistance fighters and also for those who perhaps are not exactly resistance fighters, but support it or at least do not actively oppose it; and lastly, as theatre that can only circumstantially be called that, since while it includes certain recognisable theatrical elements (masks, costumes, puppets, etc.), it nevertheless takes place outside of a theatrical setting, is distinctly political and engaged and sometimes even completely unburdened by aesthetic considerations, as in the case of performative and paratheatrical actions in the frame of protest manifestations and alike. My understanding of the theatre of resistance is thus not based on Brustein's "theatre

2 The symposium took place on 23 and 24 October 2014 in Maribor and was organised by the Theatre and Interart Research programme and the Theatre and Film Studies Centre at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television of the University of Ljubljana. Based on a presentation at this symposium, Gašper Troha's article was later published in the journal *Dialogi* (Troha 2015).

of revolt", but is more akin to the concept of "radical performance", as developed by Baz Kershaw in his book *The Radical in Performance*. I also draw on the history of political theatre rooted in—at least historically—left-wing and socio-emancipatory theatres, starting with the founding of the Proletarian Theatre in Berlin (1919) and the publication of Erwin Piscator's *The Political Theatre* (1929). Today, this concept is much wider, something that Kershaw also points out (1999, 63).

1. THEATRE'S RESISTANCE AGAINST EXPLOITATION

It follows, in my view, that in the context of the history of Slovenian theatre the research into the theatre of resistance should start with the First World War at the latest and the constitution of the Workers' Stage (Delavski oder) in Ljubljana. In 1919, at the same time as Piscator founded the Proletarian Theatre, the Svoboda Workers' Cultural and Educational Society organised a theatre group. Its first breakthrough was the performance *Jakob Ruda*, which premièred on 23 April 1920 and turned into a mass workers' manifestation. On the very next day, a violent clash between the gendarme and the workers broke out on the street Zaloška cesta; 13 people were killed, among them a 5-year-old girl, at least 30 were wounded. The brutal police repression happened when a group of protesters tried to enter the city centre to join demonstrations in support of the railway workers. The next breakthrough event happened in 1927, when Bratko Kreft took on the lead to found and lead the Workers' Stage under the wings of the Svoboda Workers' and Sports Society (as it later become known as), which he initially wanted to call Proletarian Stage but abandoned the name due to political pressures.[3] His staging of *The Crisis,* a social drama by Rudolf Golouh that the Workers' Stage premièred at the Ljubljana National Theatre a year later, caused quite a stir before it even premièred. Six days before the scheduled première, Svoboda received a decree from the Police Commissioner banning the performance. The ban provoked sharp criticism in the workers' press: in addition to the ban itself, the date of the decree coincided with the 8th anniversary of the police shooting on Zaloška. Public protests ensued and, finally, the authorities yielded and permitted the Workers' Stage to perform the play. The text was highly topical (a strike, workers' increased social hardship amidst the crisis, workers' disunity, etc.); but what was

3 The decision to name the theatre "workers' stage" is explained by one of the actors and directors at the Ljubljana Workers' Stage, Fran Petrè: "The word [proletarian] sounded proud and self-confident, coming from the workers' mouths. But the authorities did not like it and as the pressure mounted, reluctance to use it in the press grew as well. In these circumstances, the milder expression workers' stage therefore prevailed." (Petrè , 1964, 14)

seen for the first time was the use of mass scenes—the performance reportedly included approximately 100 actors, members of the choir and musicians. Even though the authorities only allowed the première and a reprise on 12 May to take place—banning the rerun in Maribor—*The Crisis* turned out to be a great success for the Workers' Stage. The workers' audience in the packed auditorium of the National Theatre easily identified with the play's topic, which highlighted the existential threats faced by the workers during the growing economic crisis and political turmoil in the country. The performance was also a milestone in how socially engaged drama was staged, as Kreft perceptively decided to move the performing focus to impressive mass scenes and reinforce their theatricality with the inclusion of a workers' band and a choir.

The year 1932 proved to be another important milestone in the history of the Workers' Stage. Namely, in that year, several performances directed by Ferdo Delak were staged, which—after the initial breakthrough achieved by Kreft—finally put the Workers' Stage on the map of the Slovenian theatrical avant-garde. The event that has to be highlighted is the ground-breaking and now famous staging of Delak's dramatisation of Ivan Cankar's *Hlapec Jernej in njegova pravica* (The Bailiff Yerney and His Rights). Delak's key dramaturgical innovation was the use of the "speaking choir", which represented the bailiff Yerney, while this collective actor was juxtaposed with a single actor, who interpreted his antagonists. With this simple but remarkably effective conceptual shift, Delak aligned Cankar's parable with its gist: if in the literary text Yerney functions as an allegory of all servants, in Delak's stage version he becomes a tangible representation of multiplied bodies, of a *multitude* (in the jargon of the operaismo political theory) of disenfranchised seekers of justice. With this dramaturgical and directorial manoeuvre, he raised individualistic running around in circles from Pontius to Pilate to the level of collective action, which is also not guaranteed to be effective, but at least hypothetically opens up the possibility of success. On the antagonist side, a reverse dramaturgical gesture is used, as Yerney's different opponents (the young Sitar, Mayor, Judge, Priest) are interpreted by a single actor. This metaphorical condensation of the antagonist in a single body with multiple faces is a personification of the gentlefolk, of the ruling class, which is, although consisting of numerous components, held together by the same "connective tissue" —capital. Based on responses in the then press, Delak did not succumb to the temptation to flatten this multi-headed figure into a caricatured anthropomorphic monster (which would reduce the complexity of the relation to mere agitprop), but instead portrayed Yerney's opponent as an ordinary person, who stands out as special simply because he

occupies the dominant, privileged position in the social structure. This relation, which can, in general terms, be defined as social distance, was depicted—again with (an aesthetically) simple intervention—with the physical distance between the choir of servants, positioned lower in the performing space, and the opponent(s), positioned high up (on a pedestal). Delak's lucid and fresh reading of Cankar's *Yerney* and his accurate transposition of the dramaturgical concept into the three-dimensional space of the theatre was perfectly complemented by projections of exceptional drawings by Ljubivoj Ravnikar, simple scenography (stage platforms and red curtains) and, as importantly, well-considered casting. The audience was thrilled, the performance was critically praised in the press; two more performances were held in Ljubljana and four performances in Celje, Zagreb, Maribor (2000 spectators!) and Ptuj.

Theatre experts recognised the Workers' Stage as a unique artistic phenomenon during its existence, and, even from an appropriate historical distance, this assessment has gone unaltered. Kreft and Delak tailored their directing methods to the circumstances and learned from workers' theatres from abroad. So what is characteristic of this method? To start with, a well-thought-through repertory politics: selecting socially and politically engaged texts, which thematised the poverty-stricken urban proletariat and the destitute rural population, which was important for attracting the workers' audience.

Another important characteristic of this method was collective acting. Both Kreft and Delak often relied on mass scenes, which soon became the Workers' Stage "trademark". The third procedure used by the Worker's Stage, which was perhaps the biggest step forward in their way of performing, was Delak's introduction of the "speaking choir". By employing these specific performance strategies, the Workers' Stage produced an effect, which can—by analogy with Brecht's estrangement effect—be called the amateur effect of proletarian acting. Brecht regarded amateurism as a positive notion, while dilettantism for him meant a bad version of amateurism, one that cannot develop its own mode of artistic expression, in other words, one that cannot overcome a mere mimicking of art professionals. Brecht's conceptual and methodological differentiation between amateurism and dilettantism can thus help us understand the success of the Workers' Stage in the time when Bratko Kreft and Ferdo Delak were running it. In this period, the Workers' Stage developed its own—distinctive and recognisable—way of performing and did not succumb to the temptation of entering a non-productive (and inevitably already lost) competition with Slovenian professional theatres.

Throughout its existence, the Workers' Stage, of course, had to adapt to the political circumstances to be able to continue its activities but did so only to the extent necessary. Choosing the word "workers'" instead of the word "proletarian" for the name of the theatre was one such compromise; often, repertory policies had to be "watered down" to avoid censorship and gain acceptance for the theatre's performances (a few were nevertheless banned), etc. But then again, the Workers' Stage never hid its political affiliations; for everyone involved, each performance was also a political manifestation of the workers' resistance and was understood as part of a general struggle for a more just society.

2. THEATRE'S RESISTANCE AGAINST OCCUPATION

Another important chapter in the history of theatre of resistance was the partisan theatre. Of all the resistance movements of the previous century, which were not few (comp. Brajović et al., 1968), we can find no cultural or artistic involvement as massive and as accomplished as that practiced by the Yugoslav partisans. The founding of the Slovenian National Theatre (SNT) on 12 January 1944 in liberated territory in White Carniola was an especially important milestone in the history of Slovenian theatre, since for the first time a public cultural institution with the official name of Slovenian National Theatre appeared.

The theatre's first general director Filip Kumbatovič Kalan later reminisced that at the very beginning of the theatre's activities no one could say for certain that the founding of a theatrical institution in liberated territory would be as important as it later proved to be. At the time, they still had doubts and wondered whether this "ceremonially established and officially approved theatre is not a mere ridiculous and needless Lilliput". They knew that there were a few truly brilliant and also extremely experienced actors in the then ensemble of the State Theatre in Ljubljana, whereas only younger and not as established actors performed at the Slovenian National Theatre at the time. Moreover, "these older and more experienced actors are working under entirely different conditions, despite the occupation and police surveillance; they have a management and a stage, an equipped stage and regular and scheduled rehearsals and can work without major distractions" (Kalan, 1975, 119). It goes without saying that under such circumstances theatre makers too had to follow the tested partisan maxim "find a way" (any way you can), so they cut this Gordian knot of comparing the incomparable by declaring that "having these lengthy rehearsals and trying to take into account all the traditional theatrical circumstances is too time

consuming – put in simple terms, that this is a very old-fashioned and outdated method of cultural warfare for a partisan" (ibid., 119).

Partisan theatre makers were therefore not overly concerned if the procedural and technical protocols of the old bourgeois theatre were not followed in all their particulars; instead, they relied on their own resourcefulness, which they mastered during that time of scarcity. A similar knack for improvisation was also essential for putting together the programme. There was a lack of new, topical dramatic texts that would go beyond the level of a propaganda-entertainment sketch. The theatre thus decided that they "have to take more risks", and this "more" meant "performing those plays on the partisan stage that prove that we belong to the great tradition of the European culture" (ibid., 166). They chose *The Imaginary Invalid,* although "the people of strictly rationed joy" insisted that "Molière is not and could never be the right author under the partisan circumstances" and that "this miserable and long-deceased court comedian is utterly devoid of any incentive for combat". But the opposite happened. Directed by Jože Tiran, *The Imaginary Invalid* proved to be quite a success and stayed in the theatre's repertory until the liberation. The premiere in Črnomelj (4 November 1944) attracted a large audience and the auditorium was bursting at the seams.

The partisan Molière acquired a certain romantic tinge over the years; partly because those involved with the performance often described it as the greatest achievement of SNT on liberated territory, partly because of the praise it received and not least because of the incredibly warm reception from the audience. It became an event, not only of the turbulent times but also an event in the history of Slovenian theatre.[4] The avant-gardeness of the gesture should, in other words, be considered against the background of the specific circumstances of the performance's creation, the savagery of the time and the brutality of historical events that—directly or indirectly—swept over partisan theatre practitioners too. Staging classical texts on the partisan stage was part and parcel of the culture of resistance, which, according to Ivanka Mežan, actress at the SNT on liberated territory, "was bringing a glimmer of hope" into those very difficult times (Valič, Mežan, Konjajev, 2015, 18). It is in this sense that we can interpret Walter Benjamin's thought from his famous essay "On the Concept of History":

4 Another particular feature of Slovenian partisan theatre was the modern dancer Marta Paulin, known under the partisan name Brina. Her solo dance performances in the frame of partisan theatre were a unique phenomenon in the history of the theatre of resistance. Unfortunately, she had to stop her regular dance appearances six months after joining the partisans because her feet froze during a march of the 14th Brigade to Styria.

"In every era, attempts must be made anew to wrest tradition away from conformism that is about to overpower it" (Benjamin, 1998, 217).

The stagings of classical texts on partisan stages thus prove the thesis that the political in theatre is not only a matter of content, but that the very gesture of deciding to include a certain dramatic text into the programme can be political, with which even dramatic classics may come to life as symbolic "resistance of literature" in the historical context of its actualisation. So, if we interpret the partisan Molière on the horizon of the "historical articulation of the past", which for Benjamin means "to retain that image of the past which unexpectedly appears to the historical subject in a moment of danger", we can perhaps observe an important symbolic gesture of resistance in this flirtation with the bourgeois theatre as well.

An important characteristic of partisan culture and art is that it was an integral part of the national liberation impulse of the people (hence the famous metaphor made by a member of the American allies' mission at the Main Command of the National Liberation Army and Partisan Detachments of Slovenia, Lieutenant Vuchinich,[5] about the invincibility of the nation that fights with a gun and a book in hand) and that it was at the same time also bound into the revolutionary tradition of proletarian internationalism. Certain authors (e.g. Radišić, 1984; Hribar Ožegović, 1965) connect the revolutionary component of partisan theatre with the tradition of radical artistic practices that emerge during the turbulent times of social revolutions. One of the early examples of this is the Paris Commune of 1871, which while lasting only 72 days at the very least indicated that it had a vision of a new, free and emancipatory art. The avant-garde tendencies of the Soviet artists following the October Revolution had greater chances of achieving this goal—for the first time in history, the victorious social revolution created political and material conditions for the emergence of an incredibly widespread revolutionary art of considerable quality, which flourished until Stalin came to power and instigated the systematic suppression of free thinkers, including many avant-garde artists. After the First World War, Piscator's Proletarian Theatre emerged in Germany, which was a well of ideas and inspiration for many later experiments, among other for Brecht's theatre and certain Slovenian avant-garde artists. Partisan art, or at least its most progressive part, relied—in terms of content and staff—especially on the pre-war network of workers' stages: for example, Delak's

5 Lieutenant Vuchinich came up with this metaphor at a gathering of partisan cultural workers in January 1944 in the Slovenian town of Semič.

dramatisation of *The Bailiff Yerney*, prepared for the Workers' Stage, was one of the most sought after performance texts by Yugoslav partisan theatre groups. What is crucial is that partisan art did not presume that it could act as a substitute for politics, let alone for armed struggle against the occupiers and their quisling supporters; instead, it was doubly articulated—in relation to the then social conditions and to itself. Miklavž Komelj thinks that the art that was part of the partisan movement participated in the revolutionary moment through allowing this "transformative process" to affect it in return:

> **"The liminality of partisan art is namely not in art adapting to a liminal situation, but in the fact that it was precisely in this liminal situation, which escalated the inner tensions and contradictions in the arts, that the question of principle was raised: What is art and why and for whom it is art" (Komelj, 2009, 47).**

3. ZOMBIE RESISTANCE AGAINST AUTHORITARIAN DESPOTS

In the 1980s, the famous German playwright Heiner Müller emphasised that "literature should resist the theatre", in other words, that the text is productive for theatre only when it resists direct, automatic or even literal staging (Müller, 1986, 18). Of course, I agree with Müller's point, but would add that it may be applied not only to the relation between literature and theatre but to the relation between theatre and society as well. Namely, only the theatre that resists (society) is productive for society.

The position of art cannot be changed within the existing frames of society; for this to happen, not only art practices characteristic of it but the whole of society would have to undergo radical transformation. The assumption that radical reform of the art practice does not suffice if it is not accompanied by the simultaneous radical transformation of the society was also the point of departure for different art practices that emerged from the turbulent situations of social change and which, in one way or another, became involved in the ideological struggle to trigger, bring about and interpret these changes.

I have written several times before about certain important examples of activist-performative events that took place in Slovenia over the past two decades; so, to avoid repeating myself, I will focus here only on certain characteristics of the "people's uprising" that took place in Ljubljana, although the movement initially started in Maribor

and spilled over to other parts of the country. I will limit myself to the use of "zombie" puppets and masks, which spread through the streets and squares of Ljubljana as an uncontrolled epidemic. This distinctive form of improvised "street theatre" qualifies as the paradigmatic example of contemporary performing practices of resistance that are predicated on a witty employment of the *subversive re-appropriation* method – appropriating or adopting previously infamous or defamatory expressions or metaphors, initially used to attack certain social groups, but then recuperated by those very groups, by means of their own engagement, and turned back at those who had originally sent them into the public, as offensively constructed verbal or iconic degradations.

The wave of mass uprisings against the corrupt political elite swept across Slovenia in winter of 2012 and early spring of 2013, starting in Maribor as a protest against the local authorities headed by the then mayor Franc Kangler. Following the outbreak of protests in Maribor, mass demonstrations were also held in Ljubljana, in support of the Maribor uprising and against the leader of Slovenia's then right-wing government Janez Janša and mayor of Ljubljana Zoran Janković. Around that time, there emerged a claim on the website of the Slovenian Democratic Party, whose president was (and still is) Janez Janša, that the protests were staged by "the communist international" and that they were not an uprising of the people but an "uprising of zombies". This preposterous wording "uprising of zombies" was immediately picked up by the protesters and performatively re-appropriated: it incited a wave of animation, corpographic and choreographic creativity on the part of the protesters, who came up with a myriad of variations on the living dead.

The uprising zombies were not criticised only by the ruling establishment, criticism was heard also from the intellectuals who in other respects supported the protesters.[6]

But if the protesters in masks gave an impression of carnival playfulness, this does not mean that it all was about fun and merry-making. If mass protests were really "of all the people", then all participants were integral part of these events, regardless of whether they performed zombies' masquerades, or exhibited banners with explicit political messages. Without all of these groups of protesters, the uprisings would have not been what they were: significant political manifestations, where people demonstrated their determination to demand and achieve changes, and at the same time a spontaneous eruption of "folk

6 I have analysed some of the more visible examples of such criticism in my book *Umetnost v času vladavine prava in kapitala* (Art in Times of the Rule of Law and Capital) (Milohnić, 2016, 137–139).

culture", which does not deserve to be criticised as being supposedly "apolitical", if, as Mikhail Bakhtin says, it has always celebrated "temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order" (Bahtin, 2008, 16). After all, demonstrations of American pacifists against the war in Vietnam would not have been the same if they had not been supported by the famous street theatre *The Bread and Puppet Theatre*, which, like Slovenian protesting zombies, used giant puppets and masks. Bakhtin's "carnivalisation" was often also mentioned by authors writing about the student protests in Belgrade in 1992 and especially in 1996 and 1997. Numerous examples of humorous and subversive street art performances created by inventive protesters can be found in the article written by Aleksandra Jovićević "Theatre, Paratheatre and Carnival" (Jovićević, 2000) and particularly in the article by Milena Dragićević Šešić "The Street as a Political Space" (Dragićević Šešić, 2001). Among the numerous lucid protest actions, I would like to draw attention to the one involving Belgrade students, who cleaned up and decontaminated Belgrade's main square Terazije, where a day before the supporters of Milošević's regime had held a counter-rally. Similarly as in Ljubljana, the Belgrade protesters performed their actions using the method of subversive re-appropriation, or as Milena Dragićević Šešić described it: "Irony, sarcasm, and invention in every performance emerged in direct reaction to everything that happened. If the citizens at counter-demonstration shouted 'Sheep!' at the protesters, it only took a few days for real sheep to appear in front of the cordon, with messages decorating their fleeces" (Dragićević Šešić, 2001, 79–80). The humour pertaining to the zombie masks is partly rooted in the mechanism of repetition, which Henri Bergson has written about in the famous *Laughter. An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. Certain expressions appear repeatedly in everyday communication and thus become "one of those hackneyed sentences that are accepted as a matter of course", which is why we don't question their actual meaning and "our attention nods". But this can quickly change, if, for any kind of reason, the position of enunciation changes and our nodding attention is "suddenly aroused by the absurdity of meaning" (Bergson, 1977, 72). As in many jokes, it is precisely that moment of absurdity which is responsible for the comic effect. A similar effect was achieved by the zombie uprising: of course, the protesters wearing zombie masks didn't really believe they were communist zombies, as was claimed by the mouthpieces of the then ruling party; they just over-identified with the statement to demonstrate the comic absurdity of accusations about their supposed (political) zombiness.[7]

7 Over-identification is one aspect of the method of subversive affirmation, a politically subtle form of resistance that enables one to criticise power by adopting the role of a fanatical

In other words, by wearing the zombie masks, the protesters symbolically took off the ideological masks from the faces of the ruling party politicians.

This improvised "street theatre" of protesting zombies is a hybrid form of performative events with strong political connotations, their aesthetic dimension is in the function of strengthening the channel of communication through which the protesters send critical messages to the authorities. Looked at from this activist aspect, probably the closest to these events are Marko Brecelj's "soft terrorist" actions, as he called this unusual blend of performative ludism, political commentary and non-violent direct action.

4. SOFT TERRORIST RESISTANCE AGAINST DEMOCRATIC DESPOTISM

In his *Laughter. An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, Henri Bergson introduces an important distinction between the witty (*spirituel*) and the comic—the effect of the first is that it makes us laugh at the person who uttered the word (statement), while the later "makes us laugh either at a third party or at ourselves" (ibid., 67). Wit is "the comic in a highly volatile state" (ibid., 70), and in this state of matter the activist artist or the artistic activist—in a word artivist[8]—is like a fish in water; this is the right environment to practice the artivist method of subversive re-appropriation, which was already roughly outlined by Bergson: "You take up a metaphor, a phrase, an argument, and turn it against the man who is, or might be, its author, so that he is made to say what he did not mean to say and lets himself be caught, to some extent, in the toils of language" (ibid., 68).

promotor of the (criticised) Idea in its purest and most authentic form. The method was developed by the art movement Neue sloweinische Kunst (NSK) in the 1980s. I write more about this in *Teorije sodobnega gledališča in performansa* (*Theories of Contemporary Theatre and Performance*) (Milohnić, 2009, 186–187).

8 The expression "artivist" is a derivative of the compound "artivism", which implies a hybrid field between art and activism, similarly as in the expression "hacktivism", which came to be used during the 1990s to describe activist practices in the context of new digital media. In this ("technological") context, the first to start using the term artivismo was the Italian artist Giacomo Verde; his seminal writings on the subject were shortly followed by a mailing list of media activists Activism-Hacking-Artivism created by the Italian researcher and curator Tatiana Bazzichelli. In 2005, I transposed the term into the performing arts theory by writing an article for the performing arts journal Maska entitled "Artivism", dealing with artivist performative practices. The article was later re-published in different journals, books and on websites in Slovenian, English, Croatian, Serbian and Italian. The term has by now been firmly established and is only rarely put in quotation marks.

In Slovenia, the prototype of an artivist, this activist-artistic composite, was without any doubt Marko Brecelj. He was the absolute phenomenon, a performer extraordinaire, a tenacious fighter against the despotism of local sheriffs (especially, of course, the former mayor of Koper Boris Popovič, but also the mayor of Ljubljana Zoran Janković and the former mayor of Maribor Franc Kangler), supporter of youth culture clubs in virtually all Slovenian towns, the founder of the Association of Friends of Moderate Progress (when choosing the name, Brecelj was inspired by no other than the celebrated satirist Jaroslav Hašek and his Party of Moderate Progress Within the Bounds of the Law), an excellent musician and a brilliant speaker as well as a writer, for a little while even a city councillor and I could go on and on—around half a century of Brecelj's public life has amounted to a large number of actions and activities that elude definitions and boxes. Over all these years, Brecelj remained true to himself, consistent in his stubborn insistence on his vision, uncompromising and free-thinking. In his lecture at the Workers and Punks' University (13 May 1998), he stressed that a man is free only when he "has dug deep enough to come to his own, independent standpoint and perspective, from which he can then act", but that it is also important that he has a chance "to mature in contact with artistic expression, with the most current artistic expression of resistance of his time" (Brecelj, 2003, 132). And what is an expression of resistance?

> **"Expression of resistance is the one that refuses to accept the social situation and adopts a critical attitude towards it," this is why "a free man should be in contact with the free-thinking intellectual and artistic currents" (ibid., 133).**

There is no doubt that Brecelj himself contributed enormously to the "artistic expression of resistance of his time". Brecelj was never "just" an artist, his position of enunciation was always multi-layered, effortlessly breaking the rigid boundaries between art, politics, activism, etc. The same is true for the genre boxes within the field of art, which Brecelj rejected and was intentionally careless in dealing with, he did not trouble himself with genre purity and created hybrid events that often eluded clear-cut definitions. The essence of their meaning is perhaps best described by Tanja Lesničar Pučko, who called them "socio-artistic diversions" (Lesničar Pučko, 2005, 26). In her article "An Attack on the Church or the Limits of Church's Artistic Credo?", she points out that Brecelj is not only a musician, performer and activist but, above all, a poet, so he is constantly inventing new words, for example "vatentat" (cotton wool attack), a word coined for the event of blowing salivated

cotton balls through a straw into the then foreign minister Dimitrij Rupel during his speech at the University of Koper in 2003.

Vatentat was one of the numerous "soft terrorist actions", which Brecelj and his colleagues started conceiving a few years earlier, although at the time they did not yet present them in these terms, and which continued also later. The contribution "Soft Terrorism", which is based on an interview Alenka Pirman did with Marko Brecelj in March 2006, lists as many as sixteen "soft terrorist" actions that Brecelj had performed until then either on his own or together with his associates (comp. Brecelj, 2006). An overview of the actions reveals an astonishing variety of "targets"—his artivist repertoire includes virtually all key centres of power, from mayors, ministers and the government, the church and the cardinals to NATO and the US Marines. Perhaps the most resounding soft terrorist action was *Tapisonirano vnebovzetje* (*Upholstered Assumption*), which took place exactly one month before Vatentat. In 2003, when the environmental noise pollution assessment, which also measured the noise emitted by church bells, was made public and the measurements revealed that the bell noise often exceeded the permissible levels, this theme broke out in the media. With their action of silencing (upholstering) the bells of the Koper Cathedral on Assumption Day, Brecelj and his associates joined the public debate in their own specific way. The action was meticulously planned and effectively realised and thus produced no damage on the bell clappers themselves; it did however cause inconvenience to some of its participants.[9] Brecelj, known for his determination, later continued with his soft terrorist actions, a little less so over the past few years, when it became increasingly difficult for him to perform due to poor health and the COVID-19 pandemic, factors that were, of course, beyond his control.

Soft terrorist actions are an unusual blend of performative ludism, political commentary and non-violent direct action, embellished with a large dose of humour, or as Tanja Lesničar Pučko says, "Brecelj's way of performing is always very serious, very radical, fully aware of the possible consequences, yet at the same time he never loses his poetics of the humorous and the non-destructive (cotton wool for the minister, felt for the bells, flour for the artists at the Ljubljana Post Office, 'lessons in politics' for the American marines at the Koper Youth Centre, etc.)" (Lesničar Pučko, 2005, 26).

9 One of the protagonists was Aleš Žumer, president of the ROV cultural society from the town of Železniki. The Železniki Municipal Council, in which the Slovenian People's Party held a majority, considered his participation sufficient grounds for discontinuing the co-funding of the association's activities from the municipal budget, claiming that the society's activities harmed the reputation of the Železniki municipality—a textbook example of how economic censorship can be used to clamp down on divergent views from the other side of the ideological divide.

I might add that the thread running through his soft terrorist performance actions is a merciless castigation of a wide range of manifestations of "democratic despotism", as he called it in his witty and ironical manner and which found its way into the titles of some of his actions, e.g. *To the Democratic Despot Kangler* (2012), for which he created a unique artefact containing his excrement for the then mayor of Maribor.

Because Brecelj was truly original in everything he did, he cannot be compared with any other artivist performer; in certain elements perhaps, at best, with the Serbian artivist Nikola Džafo and his LED ART (ICE ART). Like Brecelj's, Džafo's practice includes miminalistic performative gestures with a maximum of effect, to which he also gives witty names, often using word play, irony and self-irony; he is engaged and tenacious, and his projects are hybrid mixtures of political protest, performance and artistic installation. LED ART started as an informal group in 1993, when Džafo with a few of his friends organised the exhibition *Frozen Art* in Belgrade. Džafo is also the co-founder of the famous Centre for Cultural Decontamination, where the group held an opening performance on 1 January 1995. Also in 1995, they performed *Ko was šiša*—in Džafo's words, "a voluntary exercise in shame"—when they publicly shaved the hair of at least 20 well-known, critical intellectuals.[10] Two years later, LED ART participated in the protests in Belgrade with three artivist actions: *Vrnimo jim sliko (z ogledali proti policijskemu kordonu) (Let's Reflect Them (with mirrors against the police cordon)), Predsednikov rešilni jopič (The President's Life Vest) and Kreda za incidente (Incident Chalk)* (comp. Grginčević, 2004, 131–139) .

The "monumental performance" *Kolenovanje (Kneeling)* is probably Brecelj's most widely known action, which he was performing over the course of seven years of Boris Popović as mayor of Koper. Because *Kolenovanje* spanned a long period, it could be placed in the tradition of durational performances, practiced by numerous performance artists (e.g. Marina Abramović) as well as theatre directors (e.g. Robert Wilson, Tim Etchells, etc.), and in Slovenia since the 1960s by Marko Pogačnik with an event in which he put his body on display at an art gallery in Kranj (comp. Milohnić, 2009, 167). But this is only one of the dimensions of

10 *Ko was šiša* is, of course, a play on words: besides the literal meaning (who cuts your hair), there is also the metaphorical meaning of this Serbian phrase that connotes that nobody is interested in what you think; at the same time, it is reminiscent of the expression "sheep for shearing" (in the sense to be passive, let yourself be exploited, not resisting). In addition, the use of German in the title (the German word "was" means "what" and is also a homonym for the Serbian—and Slovenian—word "you") as well as in the performance's subtitle ("Stutzen macht frei" meaning "shearing sets you free", paraphrase of the "Arbeit macht frei"—"Work sets you free"—slogan displayed at the entrance of the Nazi concentration camp) is reminiscent of the famous performance by Raša Todosijević *Was ist Kunst, Marinela Koželj?* from the late 1970s, in which he was using repressive techniques of police interrogation, Gestapo torture, etc.

Kolenovanje, since Brecelj was not concerned only with the medium but with delivering a clearly political and activist gesture of protest against the despotism of a local sheriff. It would, therefore, be too reductive to interpret *Kolenovanje* only in the sphere of art, since Brecelj—not only in this performance but continuously—traversed it, combining it with different forms of protest, micro resistances, activism, etc. As Blaž Lukan pointed out in his article "Kneeling: Soft Terrorist Performance by Marko Brecelj", *Kolenovanje* is a "transitive performance" and Marko Brecelj a "performative author of perpetual transitioning", characterised by "different crossings and intertwinements of seemingly incompatible categories: a concrete, 'hard' political plan and the 'soft' poetisation of its execution, direct ethical and political condemnation of selected public figures and phenomena and their parodic metaphorisation, conspiratorial subversion and performative guerrilla and public and declarative, manifestational political activism, etc." (Lukan, 2015, 145)

Calling *Kolenovanje* a "monumental performance" is, of course, a witty (self)ironic use of the expression, since the performance itself was based on a minimalist gesture: every time he stumbled upon Mayor Popović, Brecelj would get on his knees and bow down to him. To this end, he attached slippers to his knees with adhesive tape, but later preferred using rolls of toilet paper. The decision to use these props (for which he immediately—much in his style—came up with a new word: "kolenovalniki"("kneers")) was driven primarily by practical concerns (to be able to kneel for a longer period, to keep the trousers clean, etc.), although both props also carry symbolical weight: slippers as a symbol of submissiveness (in Slovenian "copatar", a man wearing slippers, means a submissive person), but also of homeliness, which can be pleasant or horrible (or both at once, as in Freud's notion of das Unheimliche, uncanny); toilet paper as a basic necessity, which can on the other hand also be a metaphor for the political "bog", the faecality of power and so on. Brecelj always performed the action alone, but the execution, of course, required the presence of the mayor. The only exception is a (staged) photograph by Andraž Gombač from the Primorske novice newspaper, depicting Brecelj and four of his associates and collaborators kneeling in front of a portrait of Boris Popović with a halo around his head. A scene reminiscent of worshipping the absolutist ruler, when the subjects would kneel in front of a portrait of King Louis XIV when he was not in Versailles. Kolenovanje is a performance in which Brecelj over-identifies with the position of the subject and, by using the method of subversive affirmation, offers an unyielding critique of the autocratic policies of the mayor of Koper, who of course was avoiding contacts with Brecelj, often unsuccessfully, as the performer was always

on the lookout, carrying his knee equipment wherever he went, ready to fall on his knees in front of—as he called him—the "skytouching palmer" Popović. But on the days when the mayor did manage to escape him, Brecelj used his portrait—a cardboard figure with a halo around the head, which can be seen in the mentioned photograph and which was used also in a few of his other performances, e.g. *Tek okoli despotskega Kopra (Running Around the Despotic Koper)* (2012), when he attached the image to a chair (throne) and carried it through the city streets.

5. FROM CURRENT RESEARCH TO THE RESEARCH OF TOPICALITY

This article presents a few selected examples of the theatre of resistance in Slovenia in the 20th century that were significant in their time and still deserve attention because they can speak volumes on innovation and engagement even today, followed by several more recent examples of artivist practices, which can be understood as special forms of theatre of resistance in the widest (performative) sense. The list of phenomena from the history of Slovenian theatre that can be included in this category is by no means an exhaustive one; new examples of such practices are still created in the present, encouraged by the authoritarian tendencies of the current government. There certainly won't be any shortage of relevant material for future "current research" into the theatre of resistance in Slovenia, because despite increased repression there are always enough people who are aware that speaking truth to power and the authoritarian political elites and telling them what they would prefer not to hear is important for a democratic society.

Although it is characteristic of the present time that it favours communication in the virtual reality, the primary forms of resistance are still those protest manifestations that take place in the physical public space. Like all other rights that are never won once and for all, the right to voice concerns and express dissent in the physical spaces of public life has to be fought for again and again. During the Belgrade protests in the mid-1990s, police cordons blocked the streets to prevent the protesters from marching through the streets; as a result, the movement's main strategic goal became having the right to move freely within the city. "Walking as a form defined the protests and symbolised their spirit," says Dragićević Šešić (2001, 75). This spirit was distilled into a protest slogan "I think therefore I walk", which was a witty paraphrase of René Descartes's famous formulation "Cogito ergo sum". In 1996 and 1997, the word "walking" thus became the synonym of the Belgrade

protests and, interestingly, the same happened with the word "cycling" in the case of more recent protests in Ljubljana against the third government of the Prime Minister Janez Janša. They began in spring 2020 and continued every Friday without interruption until the parliamentary elections in April 2022, when Janša's party lost power. Wanting to voice their opinions at a time when mass gatherings were prohibited due to the COVID-19 epidemic, the protesters decided to protest against the government by cycling through the streets of Ljubljana. The bicycle became the symbol of resistance as well as a symbol of inventiveness, wit and unbridled imagination of these rebels of a new age. Apparently, a new meaning will have to be added to the existing dictionary definition of the word "bicycle". This too should be the task of the future research into performative practices of resistance that take place here and now. If this future current, topical research is done quick enough, it could perhaps be called "research of topicality".

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Curation in the Slovenian Performing Arts

BARBARA OREL

The contribution aims to examine the issues surrounding curation in the field of performing arts in Slovenia. The central point of interest will be curation of contemporary performing arts festivals that are based on a concept or a selected theme and characterised by transdisciplinary, transnational, transcultural and transinstitutional hybridisation of artistic procedures, production strategies and modes of addressing the audience in a globalised world. How did the professional profile of a performing arts curator develop and what is their identity? What is their role in relation to the artistic director and festival selector and how was this role understood in Slovenia? These are the key questions that will guide us through this discussion.

1. CURATOR: THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

In the field of the performing arts, the profile of a curator took shape in the 1980s and early 1990s; however, it was not considered exhaustively until thirty years later. One of the early, if not the earliest, overviews of curation in the performing arts was made in 2010 by the Croatian performing arts journal Frakcija, in the thematic issue entitled *Curating Performing Arts*, which was published in English (and edited by guest editors Florian Malzacher, Tea Tupajić and Petra Zanki). The editors were apparently well aware of the importance of their decision and of the place a historical overview and theoretical consideration of curation in the performing arts have internationally. Later, in 2014, a special thematic issue of the American scientific journal Theater entitled *Performance Curators* was published (edited by Tom Sellar).[1]

The professional profile of a curator emerged in the field of independent theatre, in new or newly defined theatre institutions, festivals and art centres, where the use of interdisciplinary approaches to performance led to new aesthetics, alongside new forms of production that paved the way for new working structures and hierarchies within ensembles, collectives and groups (Malzacher, 2010, 11). Florian Malzacher, who explored curation in the European performing arts, sees Belgium and the Netherlands as the centres of these ideas, from where they spilled over into the neighbouring countries. Tom Sellar, who examined the so-called curatorial turn in the North American context, also connects the emergence of curators in the field of performing arts with the emergence of art centres where various in-between, we could say hybrid, forms of performance were being developed, and notes that curators found inspiration in interdisciplinary experiments, multimedia projects and activism of the 1960s and 1970s. According to Malzacher, the foundations of performing arts curation were largely laid by the mid-1990s, followed by a period of continuity as well as of differentiation, reflection, development and re-questioning of new formats in the form of laboratories and residencies, summer academies, thematic festivals and emerging artists platforms (Malzacher, 2010, 11). In the past twenty years, a group of progressive independent performing arts curators emerged on the international scene, who initiated platforms for new models of collaboration and presentation. These are associated with "selected venues and connected with urbanist, participatory

1 The thematic issues of the journals Frakcija and Theater are the main sources that trace the evolution of the profession of curator in the performing arts. I have also written about this in the article "Curation as Mediation Between Art and Knowledge Production" (Orel, 2017).

and relational performances" that take place "both inside and outside of festivals or institutional contexts" (Sellar, 2014a, 23) and call to be placed within a curatorial frame. Tom Sellar notes that the performing arts followed the developments in the world of art, with the turn coming about in the 1990s, when global art biennials like documenta and the Venice Biennial waged on a new class of nomadic, internationally oriented curators who advocated expansions of exhibition practices and for enlarging perspectives to include non-Western art (ibid.).

2. FESTIVALISATION OF THE PERFORMING ARTS

In Slovenia curation in the field of the performing arts was closely connected with the emergence of international festivals of contemporary (performing) arts in the mid-1990s. In the first years after Slovenia gained independence, the ties with the former common Yugoslav space were temporarily severed (in institutional theatres, but not in the fields of alternative, independent theatre and popular culture) and the space for Slovenian theatre practitioners' activities narrowed considerably (Sušec Michieli, 2008, 41). In the years following 1991, the only opportunity for artists, theatres and producers, who were used to touring, exchanging experiences and meeting fellow makers at festivals in Yugoslavia (at the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF),[2] the International Theatre Festival MESS in Sarajevo, Sterijino pozorje in Novi Sad, the Summer Festival in Dubrovnik and the Summer Festival in Ohrid, if we mention only the most important ones), to present their work was at traditional theatre festivals, namely the Week of Slovenian Drama and Maribor Theatre Festival. This gap was filled in 1993 by the festival Ex Ponto, which was founded in Ljubljana to enable expatriated artists to continue creating work in exile and to re-activate the connections in the arts and culture with the once common Yugoslav space. Initially conceived as a social movement, Ex Ponto (1993–2015) gradually evolved into an international performing arts festival and expanded its activities primarily into Eastern European countries. Not long after, other international festivals were launched: the festival of contemporary performing arts Exodos in Ljubljana, focused especially on establishing connections with the Western production centres and networks (1995–2017); Culture Week, also a festival of contemporary performing arts (referred to also

2 Katarina Pejović provides an overview and analysis of guest appearances of Slovenian performances, theatres and groups at the BITEF festival in her article Prepleteni tokovi: slovensko gledališče in festival Bitef 1967–2016 [Intertwined Currents: Slovenian theatre and Bitef festival 1967–2016] (2017).

as MKT – Multicultural Week, which took place in Maribor from 1995 to 1998); the contemporary arts festival City of Women (1996), focusing on women's creativity in various fields of art and from different parts of the world, including from distant countries usually perceived as exotic, and which has over the years considerably strengthened the segment of performing arts in its programme; the contemporary performing arts festival Young Lions (1997), which initially showcased the most promising but not yet established young artists and groups at the beginning of their careers, and later moved away from the original concept and started to also bring to Ljubljana well-known names from the field of the contemporary performing arts. Ljubljana offered also the festival of young independent artists Break 21 (launched in 1997 and re-conceptualised in 2002 as a festival of urban, technologically supported artistic practices and renamed Break 2.2)[3] and The Beauty of Extreme, which showcased some of the most radical examples of body art (in 1997 and 1999). These festivals added considerably to the vibrancy of theatre life in the 1990s. They had in common advocating interdisciplinary approaches to performance and a tendency to explore new directions and trends in the field. They were also very tightly connected with so-called independent theatre production, and contributed substantially to the consolidation of hybrid performance practices, as well as acting as a social corrective of existing socio-political circumstances.

Festivalisation in the performing arts gained momentum and continued after the turn of the millennium. New international festivals were launched, among them the festival of performance, contemporary dance and theatre Performa (2000) in Maribor, the theatre festival Kluže Ambient (2001), contemporary dance festival Fronta (2006) in Murska Sobota, festival of radical bodies Spider (organised in Ljubljana in 2011 following the first edition that was held in Athens in 2010), CoFestival (2012) in Ljubljana, which was formed through the joining of three contemporary dance festivals: PLESkavica Festival, the European project Modul-dance and Ukrep – Festival of Dance Perspectives. Moreover, institutional theatres, too, started organising festivals in order to showcase their production and present performances representative of the theatre to the interested domestic audience and (invited) guests from abroad. All the mentioned international festivals build their programmes around a concept, around a selected theme, which they open up through various theatrical and interdisciplinary events and other

3 With every new edition, this multimedia festival changed the last number in its name (Break 2.3, Break 2.4). It was last mentioned in the Slovenian Theatre Yearbook in the 2001/2002 season, when it was referred to as Break 2.2, probably because it changed its concept and crossed over to the field of visual art.

artworks, thus creating a space for discussion with the wider public through a range of different discussion formats. Their programming is designed to integrate the festival into the local environment and appeal to the local and the international audience in the most direct way possible, whilst creating platforms for new modes of production, representation and reception, as well as reflection. One of the key tasks of curators is undoubtedly establishing creative connections between artworks and their audience. In doing so, they also create "a very specific public space, well equipped to be a place for political reflection of society by aesthetic means" (von Hartz, 2010, 111). The programming at concept-based festivals was conceived as an original work, regardless of what the festival's programmers were called (project author, artistic director, selector or curator).

3. THE QUESTION OF TERMINOLOGY

An overview of the designations for the leading functions at the mentioned festivals not only gives us an insight into their organisational structure, but also suggests certain dilemmas with the terminology. The difficulty of naming is, on the one hand, a symptom of the changes accompanying the definitions of interdisciplinary approaches and artworks at the intersection of different fields of art, while on the other, it is a result of a lack of reflection of these changes in the field of the performing arts.[4]

The term curator was borrowed from the field of visual arts without much reflection, which has been the object of much polemics. It began to be used in the performing arts to designate programme makers who would in theatre institutions be described using the traditional designations: artistic director, *intendant*, dramaturge, manager, producer (Malzacher, 2010, 11). The terms *theatre curator* and *performance curator* are more common in the USA than in Europe. In Slovenia, the term "curator" can be detected after 2000, especially at the City of Women (first in 2004) and Exodos (after 2011). It is interesting that in both cases the use of the term was initially limited to guests from abroad, and was only later expanded to include contributors from Slovenia. The artistic leadership of the City of Women festival consisted of two segments: the

4 As noted by Florian Malzacher, the difficulties with the terminology can be inferred from the simple fact that so-called independent theatre itself is still not suitably named: "Experimental theatre? Free theatre? All are biased and misleading. Time-based art? Live art? At least these are attempts at defining the genre within different borders. Devised theatre, that is, a theatre that must evolve again and again from scratch? New Theatre – after all these years? Postdramatic theatre? At least one successful, marketable keyword" (Malzacher, 2010, 11–12).

first included (women) selectors,[5] the second comprised guest curators, as specified in the programme notes.[6]

In 2007, the term "selector" was replaced first by "programme director" and later with "artistic director". Like the City of Women festival, Exodos first used the term "curator" to describe the work of a programme maker coming from abroad, namely the world-renowned artist Jan Fabre, who was invited to curate the festival in 2011. With this edition, the festival also redefined its concept and has since then become a biennial event, entrusted to a curator from abroad (in 2013, to the acclaimed British artist and member of Forced Entertainment Tim Etchells; in 2015, to the Belgian curator Jan Goossens; in 2017, to Tang Fu Kuen). Other festivals practically never use the designation "curator". In Slovenia, several terms are commonly used to describe the programme makers of the festivals centred around a selected concept, the most frequently used being artistic director, selector, programme designer, curator.[7] The decision on which term to use depends on the nature of the work and the role an individual performs within the festival team, but also on one's understanding of individual designations. As far as these synonyms are concerned – all of which designate authorship of the festival programme – it is worth pointing out the specificity of the term selector.

In the performing arts, the term selector is associated with the terminology used at retrospective national festivals, such as the Maribor Theatre Festival, Week of Slovenian Drama, Gibanica – Biennial of Slovenian Contemporary Dance Art and Biennial of Puppetry Artists of Slovenia. These festivals design their programmes based on selecting the best performances created in Slovenia in the period considered.

5 That's correct, the festival was run by women, except at the very beginning, when it was led by Koen Van Daele (for six consecutive years, from 1996 to 2001).

6 The 2004 City of Women festival was conceived by "selectors and programme coordinators Sabina Potočki and Bettina Knaup" and "guest curators Katy Beepweel, Laurence Rassel, Karen Wong". The programme was prepared in the same way in the following years – by a selector and a programme coordinator in cooperation with guest curators. By the following year, in 2005, the group of guest curators included also Slovenian authors, Igor Prassel and Miha Zadnikar, besides Culture2Culture and Virginia Villaplana.

7 The Ex Ponto programme was conceived by the "festival's director" Damir Domitrović Kos, also called "author and head of the project", in close collaboration with "assistant project head" Ksenija Gorjak and "coordinator" Ruža Mlač. In the 1990s the Exodos Festival was led by the "festival director" Miran Šušteršič, in collaboration with the "artistic board", sometimes referred to as "artistic direction" (which included Tomaž Toporišič, Irena Štaudohar, Simon Kardum, Boris Pintar). The City of Women festival was conceived and initially run by the "artistic director and head of the project" Uršula Cetinski, who was joined in the festival's second edition by the "selector and coordinator of the programme" Koen Van Daele. The Young Lions festival was initiated and run by Nevenka Koprivšek (up until 2020) – as "festival director", "artistic director" and "programme designer", in cooperation with "programme designers" (Irena Štaudohar, Mojca Jug etc.). The Performa festival has collective "artistic and programme direction", CoFestival is run by the "artistic board", and the Spider festival by the "artistic director".

This is the criterion that has to be met for a performance to be included in the programme, with selected performances competing for the title of the best performance as well as for achievements in other areas (dramaturgy, stage and costume design, acting, etc.). The awards also come with monetary benefits.[8] The audience gets an overview of the quality of the theatrical production, whereas the artists are given an opportunity for (self)reflection. At the same time, national theatre festivals act as venues for the exchange of performances, collaborations, experiences and information and seek to provide a bridge between the national environment in which they operate and the international space they aim to integrate into. At national festivals, the selector chooses performances for the competition programme, aiming to highlight the best performances as well as to contribute to the processes of researching, evaluating and historicising performing arts. While the curator too, of course, selects performances and other kinds of events with regard to their quality, this is nevertheless not the only criterion for including them in the programme. Their work is essentially focused on designing a programme according to the selected concept, theme, problematic, on weaving a whole from the already created artistic and other works as well as establishing connections between artists and groups from different fields so that they may create new artistic works at the festival, perhaps invent new aesthetics, strategies of presenting and modes of addressing the visitors and thus reach out to new audiences. Curators often tend to constitute spaces for new modes of creating, thinking and acting and seek ways to expand them into the public sphere. While selectors of national theatre festivals in Slovenia in principle do not deal with the questions and financial conditions of the (post)production of selected performances (this is done by the festival's organisers), the work of a curator requires a symbiosis between the concept and the production of the festival from the outset. Or, as Goran Sergej Pristaš put it:

> **"Management wrapped up in programming, programming wrapped up in dramaturgy, dramaturgy wrapped up in theory, theory wrapped up in performance, performance wrapped up in education, education wrapped up in dissemination, dissemination wrapped up in management" (Pristaš, 2010, 31).**

8 Award recipients working in institutional theatres progress to a higher pay grade. Award recipients working outside of institutions, so-called freelancers, do not enjoy the same benefit. Among all theatre festivals, it is the national festivals that probably most clearly evince that they are "economic corporations" (as Blaž Lukan has noted, 2004, 35) that regulate the market and determine the price of creations, performances and ultimately artists through a mechanism of rewarding.

When designing festival programmes structured around a concept, mutual questioning, establishing connections and making sense of the mentioned areas are of crucial importance for the festival's successful positioning in the wider social space.

Concept-based festivals only rarely call the authors of their programmes selectors. Understandably so, as their work differs substantially from that of a selector at national festivals. The terms programme maker and artistic director (which is also the most common one) are certainly better suited to describe them. At a certain time, the term curator sounded trendy, because it was associated with ground-breaking authorial visions of makers of a new type of festivals, their progressive ideas, autonomous attitude and understanding of the festival as an original artistic work. Nevertheless, the question arises whether it makes sense to adopt the term curator in the performing arts, given that they have their own tradition of managing theatre institutions and established names for their leaders. This realisation has apparently prompted the selective use of the trendy sounding term curator in Slovenia.

4. CONCEPTUAL CONSIDERATIONS: CURATOR AS DIRECTOR IN POSTDRAMATIC THEATRE

An in-depth theoretical examination of the artistic management of festivals—be they national or concept-based—has not yet been conducted in Slovenian theatre studies. That being said, the festivals and the work of their artistic directors were reflected on in the daily press and media (on the news, in reviews of performances and specific festival's editions), in professional journals (Maska, Dialogi, Literatura), and in scientific journals (Amfiteater). An opportunity to offer overviews of festivals' events is also provided for in the foreword to the Slovenian Theatre Yearbook, which annually presents critical evaluations of the past season. These commentaries, however, focus more on the theatrical production offered than on the festival as an "economic corporation" and an "artwork", to again refer to the author of the article Uvod v razumevanje festivalov [An Introduction to Understanding Festivals] Blaž Lukan (2004, 35 and 38).

A reflection on curating was offered by Eda Čufer in her lecture entitled Occupation Dramaturge, Curator, Editor (10 December 2008), held at the SCCA-Ljubljana Centre for Contemporary Arts in the frame of the Laboratory of Curatorial Practices 2008/09. The manuscript of the lecture has not been preserved and it was also not recorded. Petja Grafenauer wrote in her report that "the lecture attempted to articulate

the similarities and differences in the professional practices of dramaturge and curator, leaving the question of editor aside. /.../ It made very clear the difference in how curatorial and dramaturgical practices were conceptualised and how they functioned before and after 1989" (Grafenauer, Eda Čufer). The lecture was presented in the frame of a series of lectures on curatorial and institutional practices, as part of the educational programme School of Art – School for Curatorial Practices and Critical Writing, which is aimed at reflecting, analysing and evaluating curatorial practices in the field of contemporary visual art and organised annually by the SCCA since 1997.[9]

Among the numerous conceptual definitions of the curator's identity (which in the theory of the visual and performing arts is discussed in relation to dramaturgy, translation, choreography, producing, etc.), there is one that is of particular interest for the present contribution—Beti Žerovc compares curating visual art exhibitions with the field of theatre: she compares the exhibition with the performance and the curator with the theatre director, which is attested to by the article's title: The Exhibition as Artwork, the Curator as Artist: A Comparison with Theatre (Žerovc, 2010).[10]

Žerovc starts from the premise that "the curated group exhibition, and especially the thematic exhibition, can be very similar to the theatre performance as a composite stage-managed event in which the mediation of certain ideas, narratives, experiences, or messages is carried out through careful dramaturgical guidance of the viewer's attention" (Žerovc, 2015, 204). What she is referring to here is not traditional theatre, as she points out, but postdramatic theatre. According to Hans-Thies Lehmann's definition, postdramatic theatre refers to theatre "after" drama, or better, "beyond" drama, i.e. beyond the traditional understanding of drama and the hierarchy of sign systems in theatre. It is a theatre that is essentially marked by two principles: 1. retreat of signification (Lehmann's term, 2003, 101), i.e. moving away from representation, which is replaced by the tendency to present and be present, 2. de-hierarchisation of theatrical means (Lehmann, 2003, 105). The basic principles of de-hierarchisation are, in his view, a side-by-side ordering of theatrical elements or parataxis, simultaneity of signs, play with the density of signs, aesthetics of the overabundance of signs, musicalisation, visual dramaturgy, rhetoric of physicality, irruption of the real,

9 The school's programme in the period from 1997 to 2012 is presented in detail in the compendium *Dilemmas of Curatorial Practices* (156–164).

10 The article by Beti Žerovc was re-published in her book Umetnost kuratorjev: *Vloga kuratorjev v sodobni umetnosti* (2010) [*The Art of Curating: The Role of Curators in Contemporary Art*] and in *When Attitudes Become the Norm: The Contemporary Curator and Institutional Art* (2015).

event/situation, where theatre becomes a "social situation" (Lehmann, 2033, 105–126). As Beti Žerovc has noted, these procedures bear similarities with the curatorial procedures of the exhibition-making process, as nowadays dramaturgy, theatricality and multimediality are introduced into the field with a fanfare (2015, 204) in order to address the audiences as directly as possible. She has also observed a specific phenomenon in Slovenia: theatre directors often act not only as curators of exhibitions but also stage exhibitions as performances. Fine examples of this specificity are Janez Janša, Mare Bulc, Barbara Novakovič and Bojan Jablanovec, who have all crossed over to the medium of exhibition because of different reasons and creative interests. Even though their works are quite diverse (Janez Janša: Life [in Progress], 2009; Mare Bulc: Study for the Last Egoistic Performance, 2006; Barbara Novakovič: Muzeum; Bojan Jablanovec: Via Nova Muzeum, 2009), we can recognise in them a new performance genre, let's call it performance-exhibition. This new genre fits readily into the various hybrid forms of performance emerging from the in-between spaces among different media and fields, their common trait being liminality. This is characteristic of numerous artworks that are essentially defined by interdisciplinarity and intermediality. Explorations of liminality have brought forth different hybrid genres (for example lecture-performance) and performance-exhibition is certainly one of them.

On the other hand, curators of visual art exhibitions, too, evince a deep interest in performative forms of exhibiting, which include visitors as an integral part of the events with the aim of offering them a unique experience. They borrow from the performing arts the tools for directing the audience's attention and the strategies for shaping community and audience. According to curator Matthias Lilienthal, visual arts curators are interested in theatre not as an art genre but as a medium of communication that has at its disposal the tools for effective address of the audience (Sellar, 2014a, 79). Innovative connections between artworks and the audience are thus a priority of both curators of visual art exhibitions and artistic directors of performing arts festivals.

5. CONCLUSION

The professional profile of a curator in the field of the performing arts took shape in Slovenia in the mid-1990s, when different platforms of international, concept-based festivals of contemporary performing arts (the first were Ex Ponto, Exodos, City of Women, Young Lions) started developing alongside traditional national theatre festivals (Maribor

Theatre Festival and Week of Slovenian Drama). The very term curator has been borrowed from the field of the visual arts. Even though the use of the term was appropriated from the visual arts without much reflection and was a source of inexhaustible polemic, the term has stuck in the international arena (the terms used are *theatre curator* and *performance curator*). In Slovenia too, this trendy-sounding term for progressive artistic directors of festivals, whose work is decisively marked by transdisciplinary, transnational, transcultural and transinstitutional hybridisation of artistic procedures, production strategies and new audience development tools in a globalised world, highlighted the ground-breaking, autonomous and artistic work of festival makers who aimed beyond the tradition of drama theatre, into the landscape of postdramatic theatre.

An overview has shown a rather selective use of the term curator in the Slovenian performing arts. Rather than using the term "curator", festival programme makers preferred using terms from the performing arts: the most frequently used were artistic director and programme designer. The prevalence of theatrical terminology points to the festival programme makers' knowledge of the history of performing arts, awareness of the specificity of their institutions and appreciation of the expertise-based use of Slovenian terminology. The intertwining of creative procedures from the fields of the visual and performing arts has occasioned a specific performance genre, the so-called performance-exhibition. It was developed by theatre directors (Janez Janša/ Emil Hrvatin, Mare Bulc, Barbara Novaković, Bojan Jablanovec), who adopted the role of the exhibition curator and created performances as exhibitions.

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NADJA ZGONIK

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SUMMARIES

AESTHETICS

URŠULA BERLOT POMPE

Topology of the Virtual and Technoart

Contemporary discussions in art theory on the nature of space and a large part of visual art reflect on the impact of information technologies, digital media and technosciences on the experience and creation of space. The present discussion introduces some ideological shifts in the understanding of space in the art of modernism and postmodernism, then presents the characteristics of space in the information age and examines new formulations of spatial complexity described by fractal geometry, dynamical systems theory and nonlinearities. It defines the topology of postmodern hyperspace (digitization, dematerialization, simulation) with an emphasis on Deleuze's outline of a multilayered, multiplied and warped space of folds according to the principle of spatial topology as a method of finding homeomorphic mappings between some philosophical and scientific spatial modelings. The central part of the text is devoted to the notion of virtuality, which is based on the difference between Deleuze's ontologically oriented understanding of the virtual in relation to the current and more technical explanations in new media theories (Grau, Manovich) that contrast virtuality with reality. The interactive experience of virtuality provided by the dynamic image of a computer screen changes the very notion of 'image' and the sensory-cognitive aspects of the experience of temporality, corporeality and self-awareness. The text wraps up the critical reflection on the relationship between technology and art with the notion of technoart, questioning the possibility of epistemological production of knowledge through such artistic practices.

Keywords: topology, simulation, virtual, screen, hyperspace.

JOŽEF MUHOVIČ

Art and Borders. On the Genome and Models of the Expanded Space of Art

In his study the author analyses formal, semantic and structural transformations in the artistic space of modern art. He intentionally contrasts the expression »artistic space« against the more widely used and customary expression »art system«. His objective is to direct attention from the organizational-technical and institutional aspects of art towards the deep-structured matrix of conditions defining the need for art itself, and towards the general assumptions of artistic articulation, axiology and pragmatism. The discussion has the shape of a triptych. In the first, historical and panoramic part of the discussion, the author demonstrates the transformation of the so-called basic field of art into the so-called expanded field of art, which in the space of modern art is marked by phase shifts such Gesamtkunstwerk, avant-garde, objets trouvés, and Beuys' »erweiterter Kunstbegriff«. In the central part, the author deals with the concept of »artistic space« and the model of artistic space, and more intensively with the transformations of this model in conditions of crossing from the basic to the expanded field of art. In the third, conceptual part of the discussion, the author thematises the nature of the relationship between art and the borders of its paradigms, that is to say, their crossing and expansion, as well as formation, development and maturation.

Keywords: artistic space, model of artistic space, basic field of art, expanded field of art, Gesamtkunstwerk, avant-gardes, objets trouvés, erweiterter Kunstbegriff.

BARBARA PREDAN

Through the Other Side of the Looking-Glass. In Search of Meaning in the Language of Design

In this text, our goal is to find meaning in the language of design. If what Proust, in his book *In Search of Lost Time*, sought to express is that it is only the creation of art that can save us from our impermanence and give our lives some form of meaning, the question being asked in the present context has to do with searching for meaning in the language of design. In order to tease out this meaning, we asked ourselves the following questions: What do we mean when we talk about the *language of design*? How is the context of *nature* apparent in the language of design?

We go on to show that the main reason these two questions are so critical is that they represent a throwback to the 19th century—a time when the foundations of design as a professional discipline were being laid down. Meanwhile, the answers to these questions trace the crucial transformations of the thought in the design of the 20th century, while also appearing, as an echo, in the language of design in the 21st century. In other words: growing out of the Wittgensteinian context of language as a form of life, we endeavour in this study to understand how the nascent discipline of design wove itself into the language of the community, eventually forming new words, or giving new meanings to existing ones. The study brought us back to the writings of John Ruskin, the Victorian art critic and thinker, on architecture and design. In the time of burgeoning industrialisation, Ruskin found himself standing at the crossroads between the old and the new. He could sense that a new discipline was emerging, but in making sense of it, instead of drawing on the language of progress and the pragmatic convenience of industrialisation, he chose to counter the so-called technological breakthroughs of that time by seeking inspiration in nature.

The chosen example demonstrates the considerable influence Ruskin's thought has had on assigning meaning to and further development of the language of the theory of design, as well as the design discipline in the broader context of its practice.

Keywords: language of design, correlation, John Ruskin, organic design.

TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ

Non-hierarchical Media Connectivity in Contemporary Drama and Theatre

The chapter will focus on specific forms of intermediality in contemporary performing srta and and (no longer) dramatic procedures. In doing so, we will focus on examples of the non-hierarchical connectivity of artistic media within contemporary drama and theater.

Interpreting authors such as Elfriede Jelinek, Oliver Frljić, Simona Semenič, Tomaž Pandur and Dino Pešut, we will try to research the vast field of intermedia, a specific procedures connecting or binding performing arts and literature, literature and theatre, as well as relations between theatre and visual culture and art on the other hand. We will analyse the characteristics of this transdisciplinary artistic connection and its specific ontological status of the stage event. In doing so we will show to what extent this process triggers an insistence on crossing the boundaries between different types of art and art and life. Thus, performance practices seek to be re-legitimized as performative art par excellence. Connectivity, nomadism, and translation are thus traits that we will explore within the contemporary performance and drama practices. We will show, why the living and mediatized arts should no longer be understood as ontologically opposite; and how the reception of both is a matter of experience through representation. With the performative turn, the audience found itself in a liminal state in which the viewer's perception of himself and the surrounding world is destabilized. At the same time, it is precisely the exploration and crossing of boundaries between live performances and no longer dramatic that has produced some very interesting examples of the non-hierarchical binding of the media.

Keywords: contemporary drama, contemporary theatre, post-dramatic, no longer dramatic, intermediality.

THEORIES OF FINE ARTS

PETRA ČERNE OVEN

Articulation of Language Through Design Transformation. Historical, Technological And User Contexts

In this text, we explore how the transformation of language from the audible sound to the visual form representing these voices takes place. For that reason, we cannot ignore the context of language, despite the fact that language is too often left out of the discussion in the design profession. We will be interested in whether the articulation of language is really always natural and to what extent it is successful. The text presents some concepts of verbal graphic language, its components and expressive possibilities, and we also discuss the elements of articulation and configuration of language. The article discusses the influences that can be defined in the transition from the spoken word (or thought) to the visual. The most basic ones are technology and means of production; conventions, regulations and rules; and the purpose and context of the message. Since the articulation of a text that communicates content to a specific target group is not necessarily a professional activity, in the last part of the paper we try to analyze what is »natural« based on a sample of simple informal vernacular messages collected between years 2010 and 2021, which all have a common objective, starting point, target group and method of distribution. We are interested in whether there are common objective parameters by which people transform verbal messages into visual documents. One of the conclusions points to the fact that lay people take advantage of a very small part of the possibilities offered by the visualization of language; most often they communicate »naturally« and use instinct. They take advantage of the technology at hand and use only a few of the most basic variables of verbal graphic language. Although we live in a world oversaturated with visual images, the level of visual literacy is not increasing. Due to the importance of the visual in the modern world, the text appeals for better and systematic visual education of all, not only professional designers, based on theoretical insights at the intersection of linguistics and typography and other disciplines involved in the process of transforming language into visual form.

Keywords: transformation, graphic language, "natural" in communication, typography, vernacular.

PETJA GRAFENAUER, NATAŠA IVANOVIĆ, URŠKA BARUT

The Archive of the Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies in the 1950s and Early 60s and the Desire for an Art Market

The article presents the art market orientation of the Slovenian Association of Fine Arts Societies (ZDSLU) between 1934 and 1959, when the organization sought to establish the art market as the members came to know in the West. The greatest success of the association was the establishment of the Mala galerija, in which many members exhibited, and where the society directly cooperated with the acquisitions. The very extensive archive, which is kept today in the Archives of Slovenia, convey the diverse ideas of the not so homogeneous association of fine artists.

Keywords: DSLU, art market, art history, art politics.

BLAŽ ŠEME

Axiological and Teleological Dimensions of Art Heritage Protection in Conservation-Restoration Theory

The activity of artworks conservation-restoration has undergone a noticeable evolution over several decades, especially in the direction of striving to preserve the greatest possible authenticity of the work of art. With the changes in the attitude and approach to the preservation of works of art, the performers of renovations also changed - from art and craft renovators or restorers to educated conservators-restorers. The latter are dedicated to the professional restoration of works of art that have a certain value for individuals or the community and are therefore worth preserving. With the change of attitude towards the work of art in question, the complexity of the intervention changes, because for the appropriate restoration is not enough "only" artistic skill and craftsmanship of a particular art technique but also specific knowledge and ethical principles of heritage protection. Modern conservation-restoration cannot be imagined without solid theoretical foundations and scientific and artistic research in interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary cooperation with other disciplines in the field of heritage science. The purpose of the paper is to present the starting points, development and current role of theoretical thought in conservation-restoration by including the most important authors of classical and modern conservation-restoration theory. Topics that have been at least partially overlooked or bypassed so far, such as informative preservation with different possible levels within the teleological or purposeful aspect of conservation-restoration, and various axiological or value issues in preserving works of art together with contemporary challenges in conservation-restoration theory and practice. Some main theoretical ideas and their transformations are presented on the examples of preservation and conservation-restoration of mainly wall paintings in Slovenia. The key summary of conservation-restoration theories is that in preserving works of art, it is necessary to recognize primarily aesthetic and historical nature, as two essential values of art that we must preserve. In preserving these and other values of works of art, conservators-restorers must carefully follow various ethical and aesthetic guidelines and recommendations.

Keywords: conservation-restoration theory, fine arts, conservator-restorer, art heritage protection, wall painting.

NADJA ZGONIK

Experiment of the OHO group on the Field of Conceptual Architecture

The activities of OHO Group between 1966 and 1971 in the field of conceptual art is one of the most original processes in Slovenian art. Their work is characterised with pluralism of artistic practices, from the field of sculpture, visual poetry, performance, happening, landart, journalism, artists' books, comics, illustration, body art, experimental film, video, and in 1970 they accepted a new challenge in the field of architecture. Architect Niko Lehrman invited them to participate in the project of a new entertainment center and hotel Argonavti in Nova Gorica. Their involvement can be studied in more detail from the project work kept by the Provincial Archives of Nova Gorica. They focused on infographics, route planning, interior design, uniforms, colour studies and park landscaping. But the essence of their contribution was captured in two OHO concepts: the myth of the search for the golden fleece and the Argonauts, and the concept of the »vessel of time«. The route through the hotel was conceived as a transition between historical periods from the Paleolithic in the basement to the monumental, fifteen-meter-high Sundial sculpture in the pub garden, which replicated the idea of Megalithic solar shrines, to the Neolithic and a hotel building designed in a form of a elongated stepped Mayan pyramid. Marko Pogačnik was convinced that architecture should serve a function on the outside and represent a nucleus on the inside, where potentials are nested that can enable a quantum leap – seeds for the future should be sown in the living space. This was the last OHO group project (representing Yugoslav art at the 1971 Paris Biennale of Young Artists) before the group retreated from the art world in 1971 to a comune, the Family in Šempas.

Keywords: Conceptual architecture, OHO group, Niko Lehrman, Argonauts Hotel, modular architecture, Yugoslav architecture, hippie culture, environment, land art.

THEATRE STUDIES

BLAŽ LUKAN

Text as a Stage or Stage Reading in the Light of Performative Economy

Basically, a stage reading is, theoretically speaking, a transition or transformation of a dramatic or performance text into a staging or performance, where the theatrical performance does not eliminate this text, but preserves it in one form or another. Practically speaking, a stage reading (or performance reading) is a presentation or performance of a dramatic or performance text in public in the manner of reading. The article stems from the belief that stage reading is an autonomous performative genre and not a substitute for »real« theater. Reading a (dramatic) text is part of the staging process, but at the same time it has long been a form of staging or presentation practices in which both playwrights as well as performers and other co-creators present themselves. The article treats reading as a theatrical performance and proposes its »performative economy«, which it first critically evaluates and then offers some performance possibilities that reading performances do not yet use or do not make enough use of. Close contact with the text in the stage reading enables at the same time close contact with the viewer and helps to articulate a sense of connection and collectiveness, which brings with it greater possibilities for expressing the critical position and emancipatory potential of the text and its subversive power, as well as critical autodefinition of the text. To achieve this, the stage reading would need to be further established in its genre autonomy. The stage reading has an ideal opportunity to expose the performative economy at its core. By producing, so to speak, »from scratch« or from a production minimum, »something« or an aesthetic maximum, that is, an aesthetic, symbolic - and also market - value and integrated into the system of trade, it makes these processes visible. The article highlights the belief that the shortcomings of stage reading should be used as its advantages, following the (rhetorical) question: how to achieve maximum with minimal resources. The article's main emphasis is on the analysis of aesthetic and genre qualities of stage reading and its production circumstances. Namely, the awareness of the marginal position enables the stage reading to re-articulate all the creative and production relations and their critical evaluation.

Keywords: reading, stage reading, performative economy, post-dramatic writing, genre autonomy.

ALDO MILOHNIĆ

Current Contributions to the Theory and History of the Theatre of Resistance

The starting point of the article is the author's scientific monograph entitled Theatre of Resistance, published in 2021 as a co-publishing project of the Scientific Publishing House of the Faculty of Arts and the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, which he prepared at the same time as this article. In it, the author discusses some important historical and contemporary examples of theatrical and performative practices of the uprising, from the Ljubljana Workers' Stage and Partisan theatre groups during WWII to artivist (both artistic and activist) protests and engaged performative actions by Marko Brecelj. In the first part of the article, the author discusses the paradigm of the theatre of resistance through historical examples, and in the second part he focuses on several artivistic performances by Marko Brecelj, who is a prototype of a Slovenian artivist and performer, a tireless warrior against the despotism of local authorities, an excellent musician and sharp rhetorician. He is also known for his »soft-terrorism« actions, as he calls the unusual mixture of performance ludicism, political commentary and non-violent direct action, marked by an abundant dose of wit. In the style of Foucault's »fearless speaker«, Brecelj says out loud things that are very unpleasant for the authorities. He is a socio-artistic saboteur, for whom the public use of the mind is synonymous with independent decision-making in every social moment.

Keywords: artivism, Workers' Stage, theatre of resistance, Marko Brecelj, Partisan theatre.

BARBARA OREL

Curation in the Slovenian Performing Arts

This chapter examines the issues of curation in the field of the performing arts in Slovenia. It focuses on the curator profile, which was developed internationally in the 1980s and early 1990s as part of performing arts festivals and art centres, characterised by transdisciplinary, transnational, transcultural and transinstitutional hybridisation of artistic processes, production strategies and audience addressing. In Slovenia, the development of curation in the field of the performing arts was connected with the festivalisation of the Slovenian theatre landscape and the founding of the first contemporary (performing) arts festivals in the mid-1990s (Ex Ponto, Exodos, Mesto žensk/City of Women, Mladi levi/Young Lions, Lepota ekstrema/The Beauty of the Extreme, Fronta/Front) and after 2000 (Performa Festival, Ukrep – Festival of Dance Perspectives, Pajek – Spider Expand!, CoFestival, etc.). The term 'curator' is borrowed from the field of the fine arts; this is a symptom of the changes that took place in the arts as well as a consequence of the lack of theoretical reflection on these changes in the field of the contemporary performing arts. The chapter focuses on the issue of Slovenian terminology, finding that the term 'curator' can be traced after 2000, especially in the scope of the City of Women and Exodos festivals. In both cases, the term initially referred to the guest curators from abroad and later on to curators from Slovenia as well. Generally, however, the festival programme authors preferred employing Slovenian terms from the fields of the performing arts and theatre institution programming, with 'artistic director', 'programme director' and 'selector' being the most frequent.

Among the conceptual considerations of curating strategies (in terms of dramaturgy, translation, choreography, producing, management, etc.), Beti Žerovc's reflection is highlighted. Žerovc recognises the connection between exhibition curating and directing performances in post-dramatic theatre. In this, she points out a singular phenomenon in Slovenia: that of theatre directors acting as exhibition curators and staging performances as exhibitions. The chapter defines this phenomenon as a special hybrid performing genre: performance-exhibition.

Keywords: curator, artistic director, festival, performing arts, Slovenia.

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Urška Barut, MA (1991, Šempeter pri Novi Gorici) holds a master's degree in Art History. In 2016, she worked as an assistant to artist Tanja Prušnik in Vienna, helping setting up of exhibitions in Vienna and Slovenia. From 2016 and 2018, she was a gallery assistant at Vodnikova domačija in the Ljubljana Šiška district and then went on to work as a public relations associate at Aksioma until 2019. In 2016, she participated in the student documentary exhibition *The Lives of Monuments* at MSUM, whereas in 2018, she curated an exhibition by artist Nevenka Miklič Perne entitled In the Mirror the word at the Srečišče Gallery in Ljubljana.

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Jožef Muhovič, PhD was born on December 22, 1954 in St. Lenart near Gornji Grad. After graduating from secondary school, he studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, University of Ljubljana (1973-1977). He also holds a MA in painting (1977-1980) and graphic art (1979-1981) from the same institution. Concurrently, he enrolled in philosophy studies at the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana. He received his Master's degree in 1981, and his doctorate in 1986 with a dissertation in the field of aesthetics. In the period from 1993 to 1996, after receiving a post-doctoral research scholarship from the Alexander von

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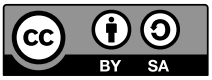

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"It is a fact that theory always misses the moment when it could voice 'how the art world should be'. It is precisely this delay, which at first glance appears to be a flaw, that is, in fact, a strength of philosophy and theory, since both, with their aposterior 'distance', can pay attention to what eludes us in the unfolding phenomena, i.e. in their simultaneity. In this sense, theory can open up an insight into the difference between contemporaneity/simultaneity and relevancy. In other words, an insight into the question of what is today is actually relevant".
(from the Preface)

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