

International network **BALKAN EXPRESS**

SUSTAINABILITY, ARTS AND SOCIETY

A reader

A patchwork
of ideas and concepts

International network **BALKAN EXPRESS**

SUSTAINABILITY, ARTS AND SOCIETY

A reader

A patchwork
of ideas and concepts

Edited by: Dr. Una Bauer

Published by: Association Balkan Express

For Balkan Express: Tamara Bračić Vidmar, president

Created in the frame of the project “Balkan Express – Reflecting Balkans through new lenses” (2012 – 2014).

Design: Tanja Radež

Proofreading: Heather Pirjevec

Funded by: European Cultural Foundation

Ljubljana, November 2014

Association Balkan Express

Slomškova 7

1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia

balkan.express.network@gmail.com

<https://balkanexpresss.wordpress.com>



CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION

by Una Bauer ... **5**

WHAT IS BALKAN EXPRESS?

by Tamara Bračić Vidmar ... **6**

CONTEXT COMES FROM CON-TEXTERE (TO WEAVE, TO INTERLACE TOGETHER)

A report from the Balkan Express meeting in Maribor, Slovenia, entitled Sustainability of Artistic Action, 28 - 30 November 2012

by Una Bauer ... **8**

THESES ON SUSTAINABILITY: A PRIMER Excerpt

by Eric Zencey ... **20**

A FOCUS ON WORK AND LABOUR Excerpt from “Social Sustainability: A review”

by Joachim H. Spangenberg ... **22**

PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LIFE Excerpt from Making Your Life as an Artist

by Andrew Simonet ... **24**

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH NONSENSE

A report from the Balkan Express Caravan Meeting in Mostar and Sarajevo, 12 - 13 July 2013

by Una Bauer ... **26**

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL Pascal Brunet A lecture ... **32**

CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY IN SPATIAL PLANNING Matjaž Uršič A lecture ... **35**

INDEPENDENT ART ORGANIZATIONS AND CORPORATIZATION OF ART SCENE: AMBER PLATFORM CASE

by Ekmel Ertan ... **38**

SOCIAL CREATIVITY

A report from the Balkan Express Caravan meeting in

Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 13 - 15 November 2013

by Nina Gojić ... **45**

SUSTAINABILITY AND PERFORMANCE Excerpt from Sustainability Education

by Paul Kleiman ... **52**

HAPPINESS AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE Excerpt

by Andrew J. Oswald ... **57**

INTERNATIONAL
NETWORK

BALKAN
express

INTRODUCTION

This reader's aim is not to analytically approach the idea of sustainability and to narrow it down to a specific field and a specific set of questions. It is rather conceived as a patchwork of ideas and definitions, existing next to each other, sometimes contradicting, sometimes complementing each other. Sustainability is certainly not simply understood as an ecological problem, but as a wider social issue of how to find ways to keep doing what we do and do some more, to the benefit of the society we live in, under the oppressing conditions of neo-liberal capitalism. By "we" I mean artists, writers, performers, musicians, producers, philosophers, sociologists and many others, who are passionate about leading a fair and just life.

This reader contains all sorts of things, loosely connected - reports from the meetings of Balkan Express Network, bits of advice aimed at individuals on how to thrive doing what you love doing, research conclusions on how related wealth is to happiness but also some reports on the general direction of funding in the field of culture and arts, and a case study of an independent arts organization in Turkey.

Balkan Express Network was an ideal environment for these discussions, due to its informal and relaxed dynamics, and due to the engagement of various people (mentioned many times in this reader) who treated it as a kind of refuge from the pressures of daily survival.

Dr. Una Bauer,
Editor in chief

BALKAN EXPRESS

NETWORK AND ASSOCIATION

FOR INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION

IN THE FIELD OF CULTURE

Launched in April 2002 in Ljubljana, Slovenia, Balkan Express was formed as an informal network of contemporary performing arts operators from South East Europe and from other regions interested in collaboration in and with the Balkans. The network was initiated through the volunteer work of members of the IETM Network (Belgium) and cultural organisations Bunker Ljubljana (Slovenia) and Ecumest Association (Romania), who believed that the Balkan region needed immediate action to overcome the issues of lack of mobility and lack of dissemination of artistic and cultural information and work.

The mission of Balkan Express was to act as an ongoing platform that enables people to meet, exchange experiences and best practices. It was also a facilitator of mobility with and within South East Europe as well as a promoter of issues concerning cultural policy, mobility, exchange in relation to the development and role of contemporary performing arts and its impact in society. It served as an information point on the contemporary performing arts in the Balkans, the models of management, the opportunities of cooperation and exchange, innovative practices, etc. It nourished the cultural dimension of EU enlargement by focusing on building intercultural competences and cross-border collaboration. Other than the initiators, the more committed partners were Vlaams Theater Institute from Belgium, DOT theatre from Turkey, PAC Multimedia and Lokomotiva from Macedonia, CENPI from Serbia and Jazzfest from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Through the years Balkan Express has grown organically to suit the needs of the cultural operators and artists in the region. In 2012 a legal organisation Balkan Express Association was established in Ljubljana, Slovenia. Balkan Express reaches out to about 300 informal members from different fields of work, taking part in the network's activities. Balkan Express Association has an executive and advisory board comprised of international members, renowned experts from the fields of contemporary arts, cultural policy, philosophy, urbanism and architecture.

Today Balkan Express has a slightly changed focus that might be defined as being a platform connecting people interested in collaboration in and with the Balkans, who are involved in contemporary art and complementary socially engaged practices. Through its activities Balkan Express gives space for reflection on the new roles of contemporary arts in a changing political and social environment. It builds new relations, encourages sharing and cooperation, and contributes to the recognition of contemporary arts in the Balkans and wider. Balkan Express organises summer retreats, training sessions, professional visits, residencies and meetings in order to deepen the understanding and involvement in pressing social issues and to enhance collaboration in the field of socially engaged contemporary art.

The Balkan Express reader titled **Sustainability, arts and society** is a real patchwork of ideas that were gathered and discussed during the last two years of Balkan Express activities. It is being created within the project "**Balkan Express – Reflecting Balkans through new lenses**" (2012 – 2014), that is financed by the **European Cultural Foundation**. The contents tackled and the activities realized during the past two years, form a foundation for further development of Balkan Express Association, which above all aspires to create a dynamic and rich platform for reflection.

Enjoy the reading!

Tamara Bračić Vidmar

President of Balkan Express Association

CONTEXT COMES FROM CON-TEXTERE (TO WEAVE, TO INTERLACE TOGETHER)

A report from the meeting of Balkan Express Network in Maribor, Slovenia, entitled Sustainability of Artistic Action, 28 - 30 November 2012

by Una Bauer

Only two days before our arrival in Maribor, on 26 November, “The second Maribor uprising” (one in a series of public protests) took place. About 10, 000 people demonstrated against “Maribor sheriff”, the corrupted mayor [Franc Kangler](#), on Liberty Square (Trg svobode). Kangler allowed a private company to collect 92% of fines from traffic violations in Maribor although this money should have gone into public funds, as common sense and basic administrative logic demands. During the evening, the area was basically turned into “a war zone”, as reported by the press, an event unprecedented since Slovenian independence in 1991. As the police were using force, tear gas, dogs and horses, the violence escalated. The director of the Maribor Police Department later denied claims of excessive use of police force, however numerous [videos](#) have appeared on YouTube and elsewhere, showing that the police were the first ones to start, when they threw tear gas into the crowd.

This provided a compelling background for the Balkan Express meeting entitled “Sustainability of Artistic Action”, as it showed a frightening instance of private abuse of power, of the way common funds (public funds) are turned into profit (or rather, stolen) for a private company via a highly positioned public officer, the one who should be the guardian of those very public interests. This was not an isolated incident, neither in Slovenia nor elsewhere, but rather an exemplar of what has been happening for years to the public sector in capitalism. In addition, as icing on the cake, the state apparatus protected the theft from its own sector, or rather protected its own undermining by attacking the protesters. This reduction of public sphere, both in terms of funding and in terms of freedoms, is something that directly influences the ideas and practices around the sustainability of artistic action.

Balkan Express network was founded in 2002, with emphasis on mobility, cooperation and exchange of experiences and information on the contemporary (performing) arts scene in the region. With the theme of this meeting, “Sustainability of Artistic Action”, it seems to me that

Balkan Express is making a shift towards an active engagement with the urgent conditions of the disappearance of the public sector and public support for the Arts. Balkan Express was always interested in the role of arts in the building of the social fabric, and in the mutually transformative processes between art and society, however, its focus was perhaps more on mobility and exchange, whereas nowadays, it seems that we have reached a critical point.

“Sustainability of Artistic Action” took place within the framework of the International performing arts festival [Drugajanje](#) and the City Lab, a part of the project [Global City – Local City](#). The Drugajanje festival is organised by [Bunker](#), on the initiative of the high school headmaster Ivan Lorenčič, and in collaboration with the school II. gimnazija Maribor, attempts not only to present performances to the citizens of Maribor, thus questioning the cultural primacy of Ljubljana and also establishing links with Ljubljana, but also to produce and host works which operate with the city of Maribor, taking into account its specificities.

One of the works presented at the festival was especially interesting in the context of thinking about the sustainability of the arts. Saška Rakef performed her solo *The Debt of Rakef Saška / The Debt of RS* dedicated to the absurdities of a situation in which she has found herself in debt by proxy and her futile attempts to get out of it by “saving”. The performance is not simply a story of a family company going bankrupt, but reads as a metaphor for the situation in which various nations, communities and regions have found themselves in, as a result of bad economic decisions in search for more profit on the other side of the planet.

The Drugajanje festival itself became the member of the Global City – Local City project, which gathers festivals in Europe in a network whose aim is slightly different each year, but in general it deals with the issues related to festivals, their curation and possibilities of communicating to the local politicians the values that festivals bring to a community. The meeting of artists and cultural workers related to the Global City- Local City in Maribor took place at the same time as the meeting of the Balkan Express initiative, so we held a session together. The Global City – Local City meeting in Maribor was dealing, among other things, with the complexities of Maribor, as was rather wonderfully stated on their website.

“The city’s identity is easier to define as that-which-is-not, rather to assert what exactly Maribor is: it’s not a village, but it’s not really a city either; it’s not completely provincial, but it’s not urban either; it’s not outspokenly xenophobic, but it’s not tolerant either; it’s not multicultural, but it’s not completely mono-cultural either. Maribor is simply unwilling and unable to decide what and who it is.” See: <http://www.theatrefit.org/lab.php>

I am mentioning this not only in order to provide the context for the Balkan Express meeting and circumstances in which it took place, but also to draw attention to the fact that such a

decision to combine various events together is one strategy for the sustainability of arts/cultural events that is used a lot in the field. As most of us in the field are simultaneously involved with various activities not only because we like them, but also out of existential reasons (for instance I am also a theatre critic, an independent scholar, a lecturer and a translator) it makes perfect sense that a journey to another city because of a project also enables me to see some performances, hear about different projects in addition to the one I am involved in, get to know the possibilities of particular venues, get to know about local initiatives etc. With this double or triple bill, I have more opportunities to survive – I get inputs for my academic work, I can compare a performance production of Zagreb to the performance production of Maribor and other cities I have visited in articles for cultural magazines read by wider audiences. One event like this generates more possibilities for let us call it “personal sustainability”, which then consequently leads to more opportunities of, well, work, both for me and others.

Like this, several events and organisations can share the costs of bringing people over, and also of promoting the work of local artists who can then get the opportunity to perform elsewhere due to their work being seen by somebody who will recommend it further etc. However, there is a downside to that – time is limited, but so is our ability to digest information that we receive, and sometimes if too many things are happening at the same time, a lot of it gets lost in the struggle to keep afloat with all this data. The human ability to concentrate is, after all, limited. Thus, cultural workers are basically forced to choose between working too much and working too much, because “work always generates more work, and no work generates even less work.”

These practices are often not discussed enough, because the field takes them for granted – this is an accepted practice that does not require a particular analysis. That happens automatically. However, once you start thinking about it, you realize that this is also a way of shooting yourself in the foot in terms of audience presence. An audience can, after all, only choose one event at a time, even though members of the audience might want to see them all, because these events fit the same “type” of production attracting similar audiences. This means that by reducing your costs of bringing people over (both artists, curators, cultural workers) via inviting them to various things happening at the same time, you are not really increasing the number of people who actually can see a performance, as various events are in competition with each other.

What happens is also that this then becomes a highly professionalized event, only for people who are anyway working in the field and whose means of survival is to follow the production, whereas the unprofessional audience can also get turned off by the sheer number of relatively “similar” events. Last but not least, it is quite hard to communicate various events to the press

and to explain how they relate to each other. What usually happens then is that one of these events overtakes other events in terms of visibility, and instead of doubling the promotional effect you get its reduction – events that are also happening at the same time get lost in favour of the one which is bigger or easier to prioritize.

Having all this in mind, I was impressed with the way our meeting was organized. And I was especially impressed with CAAP – Centre of Alternative and Autonomous Production, which hosted our sessions. As a sort of an introduction, we were taken around CAAP and talked through its various activities.

CAAP is a community and social centre in Slovenia, which opened its doors on 16 November 2012. What seems most interesting to me is that it combines different types of cultural practices, understanding culture as a way of life and not solely in its narrow meaning, as that which deals with events of the so-called “high culture” or what a “beautiful soul”^{*} keeps on his Nachtkastl to “elevate” him spiritually before he goes to bed. In fact, as you can see, the word “culture” is not even present in the title of the centre, but what the centre deals with is by all means cultural production. CAAP gathers several projects and initiatives giving them space for their activities. These projects and initiatives are:

- a) **Digital nomadism** whose aim is to do away with exclusion of socially marginalized groups from digital culture. One of the concrete applications of this project is Zero Dollar Laptop, a recycled computer that runs Free and Open Source Software. The project does not only include giving away free laptops but also consists of workshops which enable participants (for instance homeless people) to access technical knowledge.
- b) **Etnomobil** – a travelling autonomous space that is formed every 14 days in various neighbourhoods with a large number of socially vulnerable groups and happens through drawing, singing, playing, dancing, juggling, talking, reading, interviewing, photography.
- c) **Teleport** – a project whose aim is to develop conditions for the sustainability of cycling programs in the local community, i.e. creating conditions that make people prefer cycling, public transport or walking to transport by private cars.

^{*} Hegel's beautiful soul, who claims precisely to have exited the evil world. [...] Hegel does not claim that the world may or may not be evil—he does not claim that what is wrong with the beautiful soul is that it is prejudiced and rigid in its thinking. The world is not some object that we can have different opinions about. No: the problem is far subtler than that. The problem is that the gaze that constitutes the world as a thing “over there,” is evil as such. [...] Evil is not in the eye of the beholder. Evil is the eye of the beholder. Evil is the gaze that sees the world as an evil thing over yonder. (from Timothy Morton's essay “Beautiful Soul Syndrome”, english.ucdavis.edu/people/directory/tbmorton/mortonuclataalk.pdf)

- d) **Seed Library** – collects and holds seeds for people to “borrow” and return, once the plants have grown. Helps maintain the diversity of crops with the free exchange of seeds. The aim of the project is to strengthen the local community through growing vegetables and various linked activities
- e) **Sustainable Local Food** – Zadruga Dobrina (Cooperative Goods) – a program that enables the strengthening of small farmers and their local communities, and supplies the urban population with high quality food, created with a minimum footprint.
- f) **Community Urban Garden** – a program which enables citizens to apply for an allotment in the city followed by workshops on self-organisation, gardening, organic and biodynamic farming, permaculture and the use of community space. So far 80 gardens have been awarded and there are dozens of people on the waiting list.

All of these activities are a part of a two-year program Urban Furrows (Urbane brazde) whose main aim, as we can see from above, is to empower communities (vulnerable communities in particular) via various activities that are conceived to improve the quality of their life. Due to the fact that Slovenia has the lowest level of fruit and vegetable self-sufficiency among EU countries, the project focused on various strategies around the production and distribution of high quality food. Urban Furrows was one of the key programs of Maribor European Capital of Culture 2012.

Amongst other things, within the framework of the Urbane brazde project, the first book by a Roma writer Jasmina Ahmetaj was published in Slovenian, together with the Roma-Slovenian dictionary.

This presentation coincided very well with several remarks that Marta Gregorčič gave during the discussion later on. As the main person behind the programme strand Urban Furrows within Maribor ECOC 2012, Marta also gave us an insight into the difficulties that the Urban Furrows project will be facing when funding runs out by the end of 2012. But I will get back to that later in the text.

After seeing the space and getting to know about the Urban Furrows project and CAAP, **VESNA VUK GODINA**, a very energetic and engaging Slovenian anthropologist and public personality, gave a lecture portraying in broad and general strokes the specificities of Maribor's cultural history. What follows is a summary of her lecture.

As an anthropologist, Vesna Vuk Godina understands culture as a series of symbolic and functional, but also ethnical solutions to concrete situations that benefit a society (which is an

idea that fits well with CAAP's understanding of culture). In order to understand what is going on today, Godina claims that Slovenians address history, they ask about the history of regions or concrete ethnic groups and question why people establish special types of social solutions.

For a long time, Maribor was a trade centre with a very vivid economic life. Its citizens were traders, and those in villages surrounding Maribor were farmers. Throughout history Maribor was mostly under Austrian or German political systems.

To be Slovenian does not simply mean to be of a particular ethnic identity, but it also means to share a particular type of social functioning, to share certain solutions to problems and ideas on what is supposed to be done.

Maribor is rather special in comparison to other parts of Slovenia, and different kinds of social practices exist here. In ex-Yugoslavia, Maribor was the strongest industrial centre and a lot of factories were operating well. This aided the creation of a strong identity of being proud to be a Slovenian in Maribor, which was connected to this economic experience.

The inhabitants of Maribor feel inferior to the citizens of Ljubljana and this reflects the feeling of inferiority that they felt towards the Germans. The formal institutions were, for most part of the past, in the hands of the Germans. However, this sense of inferiority also created a strong ethnic identity against the Germans. And one of the main cornerstones of this identity was the intolerance of inequality. Unlike most other nations, Slovenians throughout history have never had their own ruling class. They have systematic problems with ruling classes.

To be a Slovenian from a historical perspective means to be equal – and equally poor as everybody else. There is an ethical position in this – to be a moral individual means to be poor, and to be equal with everybody else. And to be Slovenian means to decide in a traditional way, with regards to the opinion and participation of the common people. People in Maribor can tolerate to be poor. Also, if those who rule are foreigners, they will accept the fact that they are ruled by foreigners because they have the historical experience of always being ruled by foreigners, by Germans and Austrians. However, they will not tolerate not to be on equal terms with their co-citizens and compatriots.

It is said that if an uprising was to start, it would start in Maribor, or rather, when Maribor moves, the whole of Slovenia will move.

The practice of self-management during communism corresponded well with the general identity of Maribor citizens, or rather, helped its establishment. The workers participated in decision-making.

The fact that Maribor was a strong industrial centre in Yugoslavia also contributed to the strength of the workers' social networks. Although throughout history informal social networks were forming the very basis of social organization, in the area known today as Slovenia the town of Maribor was the place with the strongest informal connections.

Today, however, there is no equality, the workers are not involved in decision making, and there is no work. However, informal social networks are still functioning even though some of the factories were closed years ago.

The Slovenian community is organized in such a way that one is copying one's neighbour, which from a historical point of view seems to be a functional solution for survival. However, this tradition was even stronger in Maribor, due to the collective type of social organisation. The unit is not an individual but a community. Such type of organisation is traditional for villages.

The culture of workers was also about community, not about individuality. One of the main problems of the fact that the factories were closed down with the downfall of communism was that informal networks also suffered, even though they still exist. So, it is not only about closing a factory, but also about the threat to informal social networks.

What socialism was often criticized for was that workers were stealing from the factory, things like toilet paper. But Godina claims that this followed from a particular type of village mentality: in the same way that the village belonged to the workers, so did the factory. But there was also an implicit control in place – the control by co-workers. Therefore, it was a self-regulating social system.

The workers did feel that the factory belonged to them, because they were the ones who built it. As Maribor was bombed during the WW II, there was nothing left, there wasn't a single factory. So, all these factories were built by the workers – they controlled them and made all the decisions.

If you want to introduce "Western solutions", you need to indigenize them, to adapt them to local conditions, and to enrich them with your own tradition. This is what makes Japan and China so successful.

Renault in Novo mesto is an example of an economically successful factory, precisely because they imported Western solutions but managed them in a traditional way. The foreign managers understood that they need to include the workers in the decision making processes. This was

of utmost importance. After a bad beginning, French managers gave the workers self-management back and this resulted in the Novo mesto Renault factory being the second most productive factory in the whole international network.

Transition to capitalism in Slovenia was the smoothest in all of ex-Yugoslavia. Ex-socialist leaders were highly social; a good example is Milan Kučan. They visited factories, talked to the people and listened to them.

With capitalism came the new political elite who are very asocial. It is incredibly important to treat people with dignity, which the new political elite are failing to do. They are not including people into decision making processes, and do not understand the value of acting in a socially responsible way.

The lecture was followed by two discussions – one was framed as a series of short presentations from selected participants, whereas the other included everybody present at the BE meeting and enabled them to briefly present themselves and their interest in the subject.

The moderator of the first discussion was **RARITA ZBRANCA** from Cluj. Rarita is an arts manager, working on advocacy and policy development. She is the executive director and co-founder of the foundation AltArt, which promotes digital culture and aims to strengthen the Romanian cultural sector.

Participants were:

MAJA VIŽIN, the executive producer of the contemporary performing arts company Betontanc, organiser of cultural events and festivals, and adviser and fundraiser for various projects in Bunker.

Maja was talking about the network IMAGINE 2020: Art and Climate Change. Bunker is one of its members, together with Kaaithheater (Brussels, Belgium), Artsadmin (London, UK), Domaine d'O (Montpellier, France), Domino (Zagreb, Croatia), Kampnagel (Hamburg, Germany), Le Quai (Angers, France), LIFT (London, UK), New Theatre Institute of Latvia (Riga, Latvia), Rotterdamse Schouwburg (Rotterdam, Netherlands), Transforma (Torres Vedras, Portugal). The network is focused on the support of artistic work that deals with causes and effects of climate change and is engaged with trying to find new ways of producing artworks with, for instance, less environmental impact.

ŠÁRKA HAVLÍČKOVÁ, the former artistic director of the Prague based theatre Alfred ve dvoře, currently the Programme Manager of Plzen European Capital of Culture 2015.

Šárka shared her experience of working for Plzen Cultural Capital 2015. Her major point was

that the main part of every sustainable process is building trust within a community, such as the trust between cultural workers and political structures. On some level, it is important to show that culture feeds and bleeds into many areas, and that it is economically relevant. On another hand, the constant pressure to create accountability can be a kind of a trap that you are creating for yourself, because not everything is about economic sustainability. A lot of it is important because it brings a different kind of value into the system, which is not so easy to account for.

MARTA GREGORČIČ, the director of the programme strand Urban Furrows, within the project Maribor European Capital of Culture 2012, and author of the book *Potencia. Self-derivation. Revolutionary Struggles*.

Marta was talking about the discrepancy between huge responsibilities that her position holds, which are in clash with rather modest means of realizing these responsibilities. She was quite cautious of the idea of Cultural Capitals as a form of encouraging cultural production in the city, and also about the possibilities for the sustainability of the project once the city stops being Cultural Capital. As one of the key persons in the Urban Furrows project, Marta was talking a bit about the idea behind it – about their attempt to put forward topics necessary for everyday living. The basic drive was to implement a project that was operating somewhere between the fields, a project which was not only about arts and culture understood in the narrow terms. The main problem is that once ECOC is finished, once the circus has left town, the Urban Furrows is left, for instance, to rent a private place with no access to stable funding. Based on other experiences, Martha warned that the year after the city has been given the title of Cultural Capital is the crucial year, and it might turn out to be the tragic year. One of the bad examples was Liverpool 2008, as those who profited from it were really multinational chains rather than independents. So Maribor is under a great test in 2013.

DRAGAN PROTIĆ, a member of the internationally renowned Serbian artistic collective Škart (together with Đorđe Balmazović) driven by the idea to work on the architecture of human relations.

Prota gave a poetic example of an onomatopoeic verse in Serbian: *Ko kolko da*, meaning whatever one gives. Reflecting on it now, it really is a beautiful phrase, because it also communicates responsibility towards a social situation, but this responsibility is not an overt pressure, but an openness. Give as much as you give. And this tautology responds to a lot of things because it communicates a responsibility towards yourself as well: it is important that you feel in tune with what you give. This might sound like an overtly individualistic approach or perhaps even new age nonsense, but if we understand social processes as tightly entwined, then your contribution is never just an individualistic decision, but always already entangled in a web of social relations.

Prota offered an example of *Pesničenje*, spontaneously organized poetry evenings/poetry

festival in Belgrade, which is always very well attended. Škart and their friends launched an event that seemed doomed to failure dedicated to a form which seems abandoned in today's world – poetry. Yet, each month 300 to 400 people come to listen to poetry. The entrance is free, however, everyone can give as much as they can (1 euro for instance), and this money is used to make a publication that will be distributed the following month, again for free. The structure of these events came from below, from people's resources, rather than from institutions. And a particular solidarity grew out of these events, a solidarity in which those who attend share certain experiences. Pesničenje confronts the gap between "artists" and "audience" because it creates a community of people who no longer inhabit opposite sides of the spectrum, but contribute to one and the same thing. Also, in a very direct and vivid sense – people know what they are investing in. Their contribution goes towards the production of a book which will get published next month.

DAVOR MIŠKOVIĆ, a sociologist and cultural manager, the president of the association *Drugo More* from Rijeka, Croatia

Davor contributed with probably the most quoted figure of speech of the whole meeting, because he compared population policy and sex to economy and culture, making a point that conversations about sex rarely include conversations about population policy, and that it seems that culture and economy are basically in the same situation. They are related, but they belong to different conceptual universes. And yet, it seems that recently, whenever we talk about arts and culture we need to talk about economy. Cultural industries have a very different concept of art and culture. Mišković went further with his metaphor, comparing cultural industries to sex, because of their focus on ways of acquiring pleasure, and culture and art as we understand it as love. Mišković argues that it is possible that institutions are shaken now, but not the artistic action itself. Love could save us.

IDA DANIEL, a theatre maker and cultural political activist from ACT Association in Bulgaria, a group of NGOs and freelance artists.

Ida spoke about a pervasive lack of feeling that what her association was doing was valuable, even though it did create a sense of community. And in a way, this is the response, the creation of a community in which people support each other is of crucial importance because that is the way to create values. The ACT Association was working in opposition to the inertia of state theatres. The contradiction that Ida pointed to was that it was easy to start with no money, and that it was easy to present yourself, and that it was easy to be seen. But then how to continue? Public money for culture will soon stop existing. And the question, according to Ida, is how do we keep on doing what we are doing so that culture remains valuable without this money.

In the discussion that followed, Ida pointed to the problem hidden in the kind of approach that Prota was advertising for: in a way, this position of self-sufficiency, and refusal to rely on institutions perpetuates the problem of the public not giving enough value to what we are doing because it creates a small community, a small company of friends and does not have a wider impact. Also, if you want to do things professionally, you cannot do them for 1 euro. The question for Ida is whether we can communicate with institutions without being their servants. According to Davor, institution is nothing more than stabilization or systematization of a certain kind of behaviour. It seems that the starting point that we all share is the sense of a serious threat to our present and future.

The consequence of a capitalist state is that it seems that the state is very functional when it comes to repression, but all other mechanisms, especially the ones of social support are totally vanishing, and NGOs are being placed in the position where they have to beg for money from the state to do what is effectively the job of the state. It seems that we are losing 100 or 200 years of struggle in society, and returning back to a place that we thought we had already won.

A lot of the things were said in the discussion, and a lot of the things were about expressing the frustration of the situation we are in, which to a large extent is making us feel helpless. The question is also what type of solutions are useful – whether we need to work towards systematic changes of the problems of the system, or whether small scale approach, local activity, will resonate and produce the necessary change. It seems to me that we need to fight with everything we have, and that one approach does not exclude the other.

Something that was mentioned many times in these discussions was the emphasis on the importance of social structures, and of building them. When one mentions the word “sustainability”, the first thing that comes to mind is the preservation of our planet for future generations, thus issues related to prevention of relentless and merciless exploitation of resources. Yet what was clearly on our minds during the whole meeting, in this or that form, was that it is within a social sphere that the understanding of our world is happening. Šárka was talking about the necessity of building bridges, building trust within the community, and that this was precisely how she understood her work. The lecture of Vesna Vuk Godina was entirely dedicated to the importance of the sense of community, the importance of people feeling empowered by participating in decision making processes. Prota also put an emphasis on organizing a community as a way of making things last, a way of generating connections. The space we were in, CAAP, is entirely dedicated to the strengthening of communities. The problem with the social dimension of sustainability, unlike economic and environmental, is that it is hard to theoretically and analytically pin it down – it resists controlled measurement.

Yet during our meeting, it became transparent that any kind of sustainability, whether it is the sustainability of an artistic action or of an ECOC project, needs to be grounded in social sustainability (meaning that it produces social cohesion, healthy communities and that people want more of it). Throughout the Maribor meeting, there was an understanding that artistic action is always a necessary and organic partner in various social activities, and that sometimes, as in the case of Škart, it is identical to those social activities. This idea has been the mantra of the NGO sector for years, and it is not really the novelty of it that strikes me as interesting, but finding ways of putting this idea into practice.

One of the tasks that it seems to me we (and by we I mean the community of cultural workers and artists) have to insist on, is that growth is not synonymous with development – that the change that is needed is a qualitative change rather than a quantitative change. GDP is a very partial and inaccurate measure of well-being, as was concluded already in the mid-70s, but somehow this idea still needs to take a proper hold. And it is precisely this perverted logic of market liberalization and “economic growth” that has for years been undermining our systems of social security, civic participation, reciprocity and redistribution. As Davor Mišković said in the meeting, institutions are nothing else but structured value systems, organized ways of behaviour. Well, the value system which promotes growth at the expense of meaningful civic participation needs rethinking. What needs to happen is a certain reorientation, from the realization of economic growth to a focus on human development and well-being.

What kind of processes that we can engage with can generate social health and well-being for the future? And also, what kind of processes can make artistic action indispensable for communities, so that communities understand it as a key to their well-being? It seems to me that one of the possible ways of doing that is making artistic action so entwined with other everyday activities that it becomes indistinguishable from them. I come to fix my bike; I get drawn into a performance. I visit CAAP to buy some groceries, I become a part of a travelling singing choir, I cook a meal, and that becomes a theatre piece. Thus, up to the point where eating, knitting and theatre making become various instances of the same action. The task would be to build resilient communities, those that can engage both in a collective and personal capacity and respond to change. I cannot see other ways of grounding artistic action than through organizing the context, through developing equity within and between generations, cultural integration, political participation, self-determination, emancipation.

According to Karl Polanyi, a Hungarian economic anthropologist, when the market tends towards destruction of society, society would reconstitute itself as an active society to defend itself. Let us start then.

THESES ON SUSTAINABILITY: A PRIMER

Excerpt

by Eric Zencey

ESTABLISHING an ecologically sustainable economy requires that humans accept a limit on the amount of scarce low entropy that we take up from the planet (which will also, necessarily, limit the amount of degraded matter and energy that we emit). An effective approach would be to use market mechanisms, such as would occur if we had an economy-wide tax on low-entropy uptake (the extraction of coal and oil, the cutting of lumber). The tax rate could be set to ensure that use do not exceed a limit—the CO₂ absorption capacity of the planet, the regenerative ability of forests. Producers and consumers would have freedom under the cap brought about by the tax. With such a tax, the tax on workers' income could be abandoned. (As the slogan says, we should “tax bads, not goods.” Work is good. The uptake of scarce resources is bad.)

FOR DECADES environmentalism has been primarily a moral vision, with principles susceptible to being reduced to fundamentalist absolutes. Pollution is wrong; it is profanation. We have no right, environmentalism has said, to cause species extinction, to destroy habitats, to expand the dominion of culture across the face of nature. True enough, and so granted. But even Dick Cheney agreed that environmentalism is essentially, merely, a moral vision. (“Conservation,” he said, on his way to giving oil companies everything they wanted, “may be a personal virtue, but it is not a sufficient basis for a sound, comprehensive energy policy.”) The time has long since passed for the achievement of sustainability to be left to simple moral admonition, to finger-wagging in its various forms. It is time to use the power of the market—the power of self-interest, regulated and channelled by wise policy—to do good. Environmentalism must become an economic vision.

ACCEPTING A LIMIT on the economy's uptake of matter and energy from the planet does not mean that we have to accept that history is over, that civilization will stagnate, or that we cannot make continual improvements to the human condition. A no-growth economy is not a no-development economy; there would still be invention, innovation, even fads and fashions. An economy operating within ecological limits will be in dynamic equilibrium (like

nature, its model): just as ecosystems evolve, so would the economy. The quality of life (as it is measured by the Index of Sustainable Economic Welfare, an ecologically minded replacement for GDP) would still improve. If a sustainable economy dedicated to development rather than growth were achieved through market mechanisms, consumers would still reign supreme over economic decision making, free to pursue satisfactions—and fads and fashions—as they choose.

OUR CHALLENGE is to create something unprecedented in human history: an ecologically sustainable civilization that offers a high standard of living widely shared among its citizens, a civilization that does not maintain itself through more-or-less hidden subsidies from antique solar income, or from the unsustainable exploitation of ecosystems and peoples held in slavery or penury, domestically or in remote regions of the globe. The world has never known such a civilization. Most hunting-and-gathering tribes achieved a sustainable balance with their environments, living off current solar income in many of its forms rather than on the draw-down of irreplaceable stocks, but we cannot say that any of them achieved a high standard of material well-being. Medieval western Europe lived in balance with its soil community, achieving a form of sustainable agriculture that lasted until the invention of coal- and steam-propelled agriculture a few centuries ago, but few of us would trade the comforts and freedoms we enjoy today for life as a serf on a baronial estate, or even for the pre-electricity, pre-petroleum life of a mid-nineteenth-century farmer.

NO, THERE IS NO PRECEDENT for what we are struggling to create. We have to make it up ourselves.

See more here:

<http://www.orionmagazine.org/index.php/articles/article/5502>

A FOCUS ON WORK AND LABOUR

Excerpt from “Social Sustainability: A review”

by Joachim H. Spangenberg

Some European authors emphasise the central role of work (enumerated labour and unpaid, voluntary and caring work) for the social sustainability of our (post-) Fordist ‘work societies’. “Work – in the broadest sense (paid and unpaid labour, care work) plays a central role for sustainability.” (Littig, Grießler 2005, p.71). This combines a normative dedication to (and often the explicit call for) gender mainstreaming with the analytical insight that a reform of the organisation of work is a crucial condition for social sustainability (Hildebrandt 2002). Consequently, for (Littig, Grießler 2005) work plays an important role in the definition; for them “social sustainability is a quality of societies. It signifies the nature-society relationships, mediated by work, as well as relations with the society. Social sustainability is given, if work within a society and the related institutional arrangements

- Satisfy an extended set of human needs,
- Are shaped in a way that nature and its reproductive capabilities are preserved over a long period of time and
- The normative claims of social justice, human dignity and participation are fulfilled.” (p. 72).

In a major research project in Germany dedicated to this purpose, social sustainability was defined as having simultaneously a self-determined lifestyle through a mix of paid and voluntary work, the satisfaction of basic needs, a reliable social security system, equal opportunities to participate in a democratic society enabling social innovation and structuring of work types (Hans-Böckler-Foundation 2001). In this context, sustainable work was defined as work that allows a sustainable life style, from an employment perspective characterised by the following:

- a work structure which guarantees the long-term health of the employee and allows him or her to lead a healthy lifestyle (health & safety at work, limits in respect of the extension of working hours and intensity of work and stress caused by deadlines and in coordinating the various components of work);
- a remuneration structure, which at least guarantees a basic income throughout life, and provides for basic needs and active participation in society;
- the facilitating of mixed work options, i.e. simultaneous combination of paid work with

voluntary caring and community work and work as a self-provider [Eigenarbeit] and the changes in this combination as regards career portfolio (access and transition). This should make it possible to do justice to the socio-environmental interests and perspectives of the individual and to increase social justice between the sexes and between age groups (particularly in terms of time and education policy);

- cooperation on products, services and care networks which improve environmentally acceptable provision and the production of which is itself structured in companies, organisations and associations on a socio-environmental basis;
- promotion of individual structuring and social innovation in all types of work, through improvement of legal and institutional requirements (works constitution, “activating” organisations). From this perspective, the link of economic and social developments requires political attention, as social sustainability appears threatened by the current form of globalisation.

This is clearly visible in the analysis of Raymond Torres, a former senior ILO official, who has identified four key trends which are nowadays threatening social sustainability, as a result of the process of globalisation (Torres 2001):

- the emerging, highly volatile new patterns of employment; leading to
- the growing job insecurity, caused by accelerated technological change, the possibilities to relocate production and the unwillingness to train the incumbent staff; and
- the decreasing levels of corporate and income taxes, eroding the financial basis of the welfare state, contributing to
- increasing income inequalities, from polarised primary income distribution and reduced redistribution activities

See more here:

https://www.academia.edu/355661/Social_Sustainability_A_review

PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE LIFE

Excerpt from *Making Your Life as an Artist*

by Andrew Simonet

Success will either happen to me or it will not. I am building an artistic life, not an artistic career, step by step, thinking long-term and staying responsive to changing circumstances.

No one cares about my work.

By offering a strong artistic voice as widely as possible, I give citizens a chance to come close to my work.

I am competing with other artists for scarce resources. The success of other artists is good for me. And mutual artistic support is worth more than money.

I need I need I need I need I need.

My skills are needed in the world.

The future is scary and I do not have time to think about it. With limited, regular planning, I work toward the art, the values, and the life that I believe in.

What I do is frivolous and I am lucky if I get paid for it. We are highly trained professionals, and the work we do, collectively, is essential in our culture. I expect to be compensated fully and fairly. I have the freedom to do unpaid or low-paying work that is rewarding in other ways.

I never have enough time or money to make my work perfect. With the time and resources I have for each project, I will do the best I can.

I have to do everything I possibly can for every project, even if it kills me. No opportunity or work of art is worth the well-being of the people involved. I can say no.

I have to work all the time, with no time off. I schedule down time in my day, my week, and my year, essential to my well-being and artistic growth.

No one cares about art.

The world is hungry for non-commercial experiences, for moments of focus, connection, and insight instead of the profit-driven distraction provided by the entertainment industry.

I wish I had the career that _____ has. I define success for myself, and trust that impact does not correlate with fame.

Download the entire book here:

<http://www.artistsu.org/making/#.U9AW3KhuFps>

LEARNING TO LIVE WITH NONSENSE

Balkan Express Caravan Meeting,
12 and 13 July 2013, Mostar & Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

by **Una Bauer**

As a freelance cultural worker, I have been engaged in several “peripatetic” artistic and cultural projects, which have overlapped in interesting ways enabling me (and many others) to re-visit certain culturally and socially crucial places. By “culturally and socially crucial places” I do not mean necessarily places that offer cutting edge performing arts festivals, or progressive culture meetings with forward thinkers, or state-of-the-art venues that host spectacular productions. I mean places that have functioned, due to historical and political constellations, as neuralgic points of particular areas. One of these cities is certainly Mostar, in Bosnia and Herzegovina. With the project [Corners of Europe](#), I visited Mostar in April 2012. Our guides through the city were Ronald Panza and Mili Sefić from [OKC Abrašević](#), the centre of independent, self-aware and critical culture of Mostar. The tour by Ronald Panza was the best city tour I have ever experienced, because he took into account various social, political and cultural forces operating through Mostar and presented them in a poetic way, without the mystification and excessive mythology that often accompanies this genre. Apart from Ronald’s expressive account of Partisan cemetery by Bogdan Bogdanović, one of the things that I remember vividly from my first visit was Gymnasium Mostar at Španski trg, formerly Aleksa Šantić Gymnasium, now referred to as the Old Gymnasium. It operates under two separate school curricula (with a few classes combined), in Bosnian and Croatian, two completely mutually intelligible languages.

What is odd is that Gymnasium Mostar has been advocated as a positive model, which “neither discriminates, nor assimilates.” It is interesting that “two schools under the same roof” concept in Stolac and Čapljina has been banned by the Mostar Court as segregational in 2012 (right at the time of my first visit), because it separates students on a national basis and breaks the law preventing discrimination. The County Court reversed that decision in June 2013 (right around Balkan Express meeting) on the grounds that “court is not authorized to solve political issues” and that children are free to choose which program to attend. How the “two schools under the same roof” concept is different from the one in Gymnasium Mostar though, seems to be beyond my intellectual capacities. In any case, the story of Gymnasium Mostar stuck, partly because Ronald said at one point: “there is two of everything in Mostar – two

national theatres, two youth theatres, two ER's, two universities..."

And this time, in the framework of Balkan Express project, again guided by Ronald Panza, we visited [Pozorište lutaka Mostar](#), one of... (surprise!)... two city supported puppet theatres (the other one being Lutkarsko kazalište Mostar). By 'we' I mean Samo Selimović from [Bunker](#), Milica Ilić from [IETM](#), Lana Zdravković and Nenad Jelesijević from [Kitch](#), Ivana Katić from [Drugo more](#), Inga Remeta from [Glej Theatre](#), Cristina Marí from [Kosovo 2.0](#) and me. It is very interesting to read the websites of two puppet theatres in parallel. They both claim the same history: they were both founded in 1952 by Đorđe Đoka Bovan in Mostar's neighbourhood Brankovac, in a former Jewish synagogue. They both share a very respectable background and a long puppeteering tradition. That is because they were the same theatre until the war in 1992, when the synagogue suffered heavy damage and all those employed left the theatre. With EU money, the building was redone in 1997 and Pozorište lutaka Mostar started doing performances again. However, the performances were not in pure Croatian, so [Lutkarsko kazalište](#) Mostar was also founded, not to upset national sentiments of anyone. Neither of the puppet theatre's websites refers to nor mentions the other in any way. There are only some vague statements about not wanting to hurt anybody's feelings.

At [Pozorište lutaka Mostar](#), we were greeted by Nedžad Maksumić and Igor Vidačković, both captivating story tellers and undoubtedly great puppeteers (although we did not see them in action as we visited during summer break). Nedžad and his wife Diana Ondelj Maksumić (also a member of the ensemble) lived in Italy from 1993 and 1997 and were working there as puppet artists and actors. The pleasantry of the entire meeting was that Igor is a "young" actor, even though he has been with the theatre since 2006. The prevalent feeling of the encounter was that of a family story, of a group of people who are getting on well, and who are enjoying their work, regardless of the fact that they only get city support for their salaries, but none for touring or productions. That means they have to say no to many opportunities to present their work abroad. However, we found out that Pozorište Lutaka Mostar is open to collaboration with other theatres, not necessarily only children theatres, and that it is willing to offer the space for free to productions that have the funds to travel to Mostar.

Pozorište lutaka Mostar collaborates with foreign directors, especially those of Eastern puppeteering traditions such as the Head Stage Director of the Belarusian State Puppet Theatre Aleksei Lelyavski on Snowwhite, Polish director Jaroslaw Antoniuk on Pinocchio, Bulgarian director Slavčo Malenov on The Tinderbox, Bulgarian director Todor Valov on I want to be normal, and also Robert Walth from Ljubljana. They have one or two opening nights per year, the second production usually being directed by Nedžad Maksumić, with performances taking place every Sunday morning. Their puppets range from more abstract ones to those constructed to resemble human bodies, from those made to please, to those

offering an aesthetic challenge. However, from what I understood, Pozorište lutaka Mostar supports the idea that puppets should do what humans cannot do, rather than imitate them.

Our next stop was [Mostarski teatar mladih](#) (Mostar Youth Theatre), which is different from [Mostarski teatar mladih 1974](#) (Mostar Youth Theatre 1974). It turns out that the former leadership of the Mostar Youth Theatre was engaged in some dubious financial endeavours that led to their suspension. Claiming that they were dismissed for nationalistic reasons, they founded a new company, Mostar Youth Theatre 1974. We met with the artistic director of the Mostar Youth Theatre, Tanja Miletić Oručević, who graduated at Ludwing Solski State Theatre School in Krakow, and holds a PhD from the Janáček Academy of Music and Performing Arts in Brno. With over 30 professional productions in various countries under her belt, Tanja took the position of the artistic director of a theatre heavily in debts, and with her team is still struggling hard to find a way for TMT to operate artistically and produce performances. She directed a documentary monodrama *Seven Sighs* based on the book *Women's Side of War* (Belgrade, 2007) with a very gifted young actress Mirela Mijačank-Kordić (it was her graduation performance). Mirela was very kind to perform for us mid-day, even though the actual premiere of the work took place that same evening (12 July), because we were on a tight schedule, and had to leave for Sarajevo on the same day. The performance was exceptionally moving. Staged in the attic of MTM, an improvised stage recently redone to host smaller productions, using the minimal amount of props and heavily relying on the claustrophobic properties of the space, *Seven Sighs* is a powerful production. With simple means to achieve striking effects, it has a strong cathartic effect on the viewer and opens potentially interesting metaphorical imagery. When Tanja quickly turns the switch on and off behind the audience, in an attempt to create visual effects, it is a technical element that fits perfectly with the horror we are witnessing on stage. As Mirela said, it's a production from a suitcase that can easily travel around with minimal costs. And in a way, such production pays respect to the struggle of sexually and otherwise abused women much more than a spectacular production ever could.

In the discussion that followed, Tanja expressed her frustration that Mostar does not seem to be capable of confronting certain painful issues. Many years have passed since the war, and yet there has not been a proper artistic reflection on the issues that have torn the country apart. At first I was surprised by what she was saying, because it seems to me that Mostar cannot leave the past behind, but I guess Tanja was right in the sense that it is easy to mistake a fog of the ever-present sensation of *déjà vu* for a serious, dedicated and thought through artistic account of a phenomenon. We were also discussing the dramaturgical work that was undertaken on the text of the testimonies, and Tanja's justified reluctance to have one of each (one raped Serbian woman, one raped Croatian woman, one raped Muslim woman) in an attempt to escape false neutral approach that relativises crimes and turns them into a

narrative of some general human struggle. The conversation then turned towards the position of women in the Balkans, and towards the various forms of abuse that women have to go through even in “normal” conditions such as a visit to a gynaecologist or during the act of giving birth, let alone during the war. And towards the need to acknowledge that it is the part of the same chain of patriarchal abuse, rather than a completely different story.

The next day in Sarajevo, led by fascinatingly patient and calm Mela Žuljević (also from Abrašević) who was our Sarajevo guide, we were welcomed by Danijela Dugandžić-Živanović to the offices of the NGO [Crvena](#) (Red). Danijela is one of 10 women who gathered in March 2010 to found Crvena. Crvena arose from a long history of collaboration across nations, through Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade, as well as Srebrenica, Bratunac and Berlin. Its predecessor is [Fondacija Cure](#), which continues to exist and promote feminist activism. The members of Crvena are interested in artistic work and social changes “based on the principles of feminism, ecology, activism and solidarity”. If you want to become a member of Crvena, you can do it [here](#). Crvena was engaged in a number of projects, such as [Women Only Book Club](#), [translation projects](#), [Transfor\(M\)art](#) (a book of heroines and a yearly calendar), [Live Solidarity!](#) (a series of events around International Woman’s Day). Crvena was also locally coordinating [ONE BILLION RISING](#), mass global action against violence against girls and women, which gathered 210 organisations from 37 local communities in B&H. Danijela Dugandžić-Živanović, Dunja Kukovec, Katja Kobolt and Jelena Petrović, under the name [RED MIN\(E\)D](#) are also involved in the ongoing project Bring In Take Out – Living Archive (LA), an archive of various feminist histories. Coming from Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Belgrade and Munich, and from different backgrounds (cultural production, feminist theory, visual arts and activism) they are creating a project which functions both as an art exhibition, research laboratory and archive of feminist art. The compilation of video works from various women artists can be accessed through this link.

Crvena has 45 members, who all contribute financially to the office rent by giving the amount they can afford in their current circumstances. Sufficient funds are difficult to gather via applications, and local support is non-existent. Crvena members collaborate with architects on alternative mapping of the spaces in the city, advocating for the safety of women to be taken into account in architectural projects. Some members are also engaged in the issues of ecological sustainability (through the project LEAF).

This year’s October Salon (Oktobarski salon), an international annual exhibition of contemporary art in Belgrade, will be curated by Crvena, or more precisely, by the RED MIN(E)D curatorial collective. As somebody convivially mentioned, RED MIN(E)D were probably chosen for their concept as they were the only ones who could pull it off on such a tight budget.

With Danijela, we discussed the current state of affairs in terms of women's rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as in the Balkans. The prevalent feeling is that things are not getting better. They are even, in some respects, getting worse. The money that was there from international foundations for the NGO scene of the 1990s and 2000s is slowly slipping away, and local funding is still unavailable. The problem is also that, when there is funding, the international community supports so-called "gender" projects, which are, in Danijela's opinion, a way of neutralizing feminist issues on the grounds that it is easier to reach people if you do not mention feminism. Furthermore, to add to the problem of funding, the grip of religious leaders on women's issues and their bodies is getting stronger.

The thing that I find especially difficult to deal with is that interesting, engaging and intelligent artists, such as [Damir Nikšić](#), are also to a large extent insensitive and indifferent to feminist issues, dismissing them as political correctness, as the slogan "I fuck your mothers" that he took to the [JMBG protests](#) (birth registration protests) clearly shows.

Our next stop was [Pozorište mladih Sarajevo](#), founded in the 1960s. Like many former Yugoslav theatres, it prides itself on a respectable drama history. We met there with the dramaturge Segor Hadžagić. Segor is probably the most optimistic of all the people we met, arguing that the lack of money should be perceived as a challenge, rather than an insurmountable obstacle. And in many ways he is right, except that this line of argumentation can be an excuse for further delay of a fair distribution of money, which takes into account cultural needs, not as an elitist entertainment, but as a necessity.

We also met up with very charming and talkative young anarchists from the first Sarajevo squat [AVTONOM](#), who have cleaned a part of a huge building (former restaurant?) in order to organise a space for the meetings of the art and activist community. They are hoping to come to some sort of an agreement with the owner, so that he would let them stay there in exchange for them preventing further decay of the space.

My favourite part of this Balkan Express meeting, however, was our visit to [Charlama Depot](#), an open studio led by visual and performance artist Jusuf Hadžifejzović which also functions as a gallery with a permanent collection of local and international artists' works. Jusuf was one of the founders of the project Yugoslav Documenta and the Sarajevo Biennial of Modern Art that helped make art in Sarajevo relevant in the context of the international art scene in the 1980s. Charlama Depot is [a fascinating space](#), located in the half-abandoned shopping centre Skenderija.

Next to several bizarre nail decoration salons, under creepy neon lights coming from the hall, Jusuf collects everything, from art works of Vlado Martek, Mladen Stilinović, Dmitri Prigov,

Nešo Paripović, Milija Pavičević, Raša Todosijević, Saša Bukvic, Maja Bajević, Alma Suljević, Damir Nikšić, Danica Dakić and others to everyday objects framed in a different context. Hajriz Bećirović, the director of Skenderija, has been trying to evict Jusuf from these premises since December 2012. He turned off the lights in the gallery, which meant that we were walking around with mobile phone lights (some light coming from neon lamps in the hallway), while Jusuf was showing us the works of some of the most important Balkan and international artists, telling us stories of their origin. It was at the same time thrilling, maddening and heart-breaking. One of his works consists of a sentence written with a black marker on a piece of paper, letters slowly fading away: “When you understand that nonsense is a fact, you learn to live with that fact.” It might sound pessimistic at first, but I think it is a statement of resistance, vitality and a refusal to be defeated.

Pascal Brunet

SUSTAINABILITY OF THE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

A lecture

Our third Balkan Express meeting in this series of encounters related to the issue of sustainability is taking place close to Kotor, in Dobrota, Montenegro. Our host is Tatjana Rajić from the Expeditio Centre for Sustainable Spatial Development. Expeditio is a non-governmental organization established in 1997 whose mission is to encourage sustainable spatial development in Montenegro and SEE region. Its activities include urban planning, public space and culture, cultural heritage and green building.

This meeting brings together the following people:

urban sociologist **MATJAŽ URŠIČ**,

EKMEL ERTAN from the Istanbul based organization Body Process Arts Association, Art and Technology [platform Amber](#), also involved in the Hybri-City project among other projects.

ISTVAN SZAKATS from the [Fundatia Alt Art](#) in Cluj, Romania, an organisation promoting digital art and technology, turning more and more towards the relationship between culture and society and rethinking of long term developmental strategies of the city. Istvan is also involved in the European Capital of Culture project.

DRAGANA JOVOVIĆ from [Walking Theory](#), a Belgrade based interdisciplinary, theoretical, and critical and art oriented organisation, who will be presenting the film Cultural Worker 3 in 1 in the framework of our meeting.

ALICJA PASZEK from the [European Cultural Foundation](#)

CORINA BUCEA from Cluj, cultural manager working at collective contemporary arts space The Paintbrush Factory ([Fabrica de Pensule](#)), founded in 2009. Fabrica de Pensule gathers artists, galleries and organizations active in the field of theatre, contemporary dance, visual arts, arts in public places and music

SAMO SELIMOVIĆ and **NEVENKA KOPRIVŠEK** from the performing arts organization

Bunker, which runs the Mladi levi festival and is in charge of Stara Elektrarna, a venue in Ljubljana. Bunker is also the organization that took over the running of the Balkan Express Network, and it legalized it as an entity in Slovenia two years ago.

PASCAL BRUNET is the Director of **Relais Culture Europe**, an organization which functions as a help desk for information on the EU, on its strategies and policies. Its aim is also to connect people, and to serve as a space for alternative research regarding perspectives for art and culture.

Pascal amusingly apologized for his “surreal English” before he started the lecture. According to Pascal, Europe needs to deal with an ongoing process of construction of new subjectivities, and is not entirely aware of the dynamics of this process, because it is immersed in it.

In general cultural institutions and contemporary art function in a very conservative frame, meaning that they are still run by white, middle class men and influenced by their values. What is important is to build relationships between member states, rather than talking about a general idea of Europe. One of the main factors in this process is globalization, which Brunet understands as a process of circulation, a relational process, the link between different states and the dynamic which organizes their relationship.

Globalization mobilizes new subjectivities and the task of Europe is to find a way of organizing these new subjectivities. Europe is facing a crisis related to several issues, such as the fact that it keeps getting older, which is then one of the key problems that, according to Pascal, make it impossible to continue with the ideal of a welfare state. The problem of education in Europe, in the light of a breakdown of the welfare state and funding of education, is being approached in various ways. The UK opted for a solution in which education is more and more linked to the international market. Education is perceived as goods, and various educational models and institutions need to be able to compete on the international market in order to flourish.

One of the main questions for Europe today is the question about how we see our society, or rather, which kind of contract we would like to have in our society? (with the presumption that the welfare state is no longer an operational model).

Conservation of artistic production is necessary, but in the art world today the question is whether large artistic events such as the Venice Biennial are testimonies to interesting artistic phenomena or whether they primarily demonstrate international influences of particular countries and power structures.

Capitalism is well aware of the fact that culture is important – amongst the most important

companies in the world are those dealing with culture such as Google, Amazon, and Facebook.

The question is then: how to organize cultural production so that it neither relies excessively on state support, nor is it completely at the mercy of the market. Pascal sees the possible model in the apparition of information non/market (example Wikipedia), which neither relies on public money, nor is dependent on the market (which seems to be the mainstream model).

He quoted several thinkers who offer supporting ideas such as the Nobel laureate Amartya Sen, Dean of the School of Fine Art at the Royal College of Art in London Ute Meta Bauer and Belgian philosopher Isabelle Stengers.

According to Pascal, we are dealing with an interdependent ecosystem where it is important to organize a good balance between various factors.

The development of Europe is highly dependent on its widening, so as to include countries previously excluded such as North African countries, Russia, Turkey, etc., and to think in a generally wider frame than we are used to.

Matjaž Uršič

CULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY IN SPATIAL PLANNING

A lecture

Matjaž started his lecture by pointing to the relationship between explicit knowledge (hard knowledge), data information and documents that account for 5% of knowledge production (tip of the iceberg), and tacit knowledge (soft knowledge) that includes experience, thinking, and commitment, which accounts for 95% of knowledge production. His question deals with how to bring these two types of knowledge together in order to work on cultural sustainability?

The other similar opposition is between tangible material culture: individual buildings, objects etc., and intangible cultural heritage (non-material): beliefs and values. How to evaluate intangible knowledge?

There are four pillars or circles of sustainability: economic sustainability, ecological sustainability, political sustainability, and finally cultural sustainability which deals with identity, memory, belief and meaning, gender and generations, health and well being. However, cultural sustainability is still perceived as a form of a resource, rather than as a pillar of sustainability.

Approach to culture could be divided into:

1. promotional or consumptionist approach – gentrification, culture as a tool that would improve the quality of life
2. productional approach (creative economies) – culture as a field which gains in importance in the turn from Fordist to Post-Fordist economies, and provides new areas of employment and new jobs
3. integrational approach – culture as a mechanism that helps to diminish conflict

All of these approaches instrumentalize culture and see it as a part of the economy, trying to produce economic effects via culture.

We could distinguish between four major trends

and traditions of spatial planning in Europe:

UK – land use management

Germany, Sweden – comprehensive integrated approach

France – regional economic plan

Eastern Europe- transformation processes

Mediterranean – urbanism tradition

The differences in cultural and social context produce different ways of urban spatial organization. Spatial planning always involves high level conflicts, triggers emotions and discussions. People are less and less willing to accept the decision despite the legal base, and civil initiatives get launched.

There seems to be a difference in the level of optimism regarding the state of civil society amongst us. Corina, Samo and Matjaž seem to be somewhat optimistic in the ability of civil initiatives to influence decision making processes.

Corina believes that the power of civil struggle, the joint effort of many people can, at times, beat the power of economic capital.

Pascal on the other hand seems to believe that in the concept of civil society, public space is not as relevant as it used to be, at least in its monolithic form, and organization of social space requires different concepts, which are not fixed in old binary oppositions. Globalization brought new re-compositions and new roles of the civil society. Civil society is no longer a public body with a project. The idea of consensus needs to be replaced by the idea of dissensus, dissensus as a very positive thing. So the struggle is led in terms of management of dissensus, how to play the social and political game in terms of new subjectivities and reorganization between centre and peripheries.

The difference between legality and legitimacy in spatial planning: something can be legally supported, but lacks social legitimacy.

According to Istvan, law is basically a tool for the legitimation of oligarchy, and the question is how can other people who are not in the position of power influence the process of decision making.

Matjaž continued with the scenario of subjective evaluation of costs arising from a formal system of spatial planning: he is applying a cost benefit analysis, but reading it not simply in relation to monetary logic, but also regarding emotional investment, different types of affective production which form the part of this tacit knowledge and cultural context. At a point when

costs overcome benefits, the equilibrium point inside the individual breaks – and disenchantment occurs.

The mechanism of urbanisation includes various methods of exclusion on the basis of cultural difference. Exclusion happens through distancing, indifference, stigmatization, objectification, exoticisation and different citizenship. The paradox is that cities prosper with more heterogeneity (cities with a bigger diversity index are economically more successful). Heterogeneity is directly linked to cultural sustainability.

One of the problems of globalization is that it brings standardization – places are becoming more and more standardized, but also more and more disciplined.

In terms of Arnstein's ladder of citizen participation, which goes from manipulation, therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership, delegated power to citizen control, it is very difficult to pass the level of consultation. Examples of the Rog factory in Ljubljana and the Tokyo fish market.

The question always revolves around dealing with intangible cultural value.

In terms of urban planning failures include communication errors, communication incompetency of actors, intermittent engagement process, failure of new plans to comply with the socio spatial characteristics of a location, and the mismatch of new projects with local development plans.

Pascal argues that there is a difference between technocratic issues and issues of policy.

Kyohei Sakaguchi – a proposition not to build more houses, but to make do with what is already there.

Future of the war – guerrilla war.

INDEPENDENT ART ORGANIZATIONS AND CORPORATIZATION OF THE ART SCENE: **AMBERPLATFORM CASE**

by Ekmel Ertan

Director, amberPlatform/BIS, Sabancı University, FASS

On May 27 2013 as it became public through the social media that a wall of the Gezi Park had been torn down to let construction machines in, a group of 50 voluntary activists from solidarity went to the park and started to stand watch. The group spent the night at the park. Next morning, around 5AM construction machinery went into the park accompanied by the police. The police immediately started attacking the volunteers, who spent the night watching the park, with tear gas and batons. The news of this event went out that morning and rapidly spread via social media and aroused a large majority. When MP Süreyya Sırrı Önder came to the site and stopped the demolition by standing in front of a bulldozer, the event took on a different dimension; the news spread even more and a reaction started to form. The next morning, as the police repeated their aggression and set the tents of protesters on fire, very different groups living in Istanbul all reacted with sensibility and decisiveness. Many sectors of the populace including football fans, shared the sentiment. An unbelievable crowd was pouring into Taksim from all over Istanbul; some crossed the Bosphorus Bridge on foot since transportation was prevented by the city. The violence of the police escalated. Barricades were set up on the major arteries leading to Taksim and protesters clashed with the police. The clashes took the form of officers directly firing at people with tear gas canisters and the crowd pulling back and going forward again after the police left. Meanwhile, the revolt became even more widespread in Istanbul as other cities joined in the protests. The clashes intensified as people poured in the streets and the police attacked them with tear gas, water cannons and batons.

The events that led to the current revolt started with opposition to the government's decision to rebuild the old military barracks in the middle of a city park that were demolished in 1940 on the recommendation of Henri Prost, the French planner who was reworking Istanbul's master plan at the time. The proposed new military barracks was in fact a shopping centre. Given the fact that Istanbul's biggest need is public places and parks, the transformation of a public space into private property was an unacceptable idea for Istanbulites, especially given

that the park in question is in the city centre where this need is direst. Further, Taksim Square bears the political memory of Turkey. Besides a dominant representation of the republic, it also provides a public space of expression to those socially and politically marginalized or “othered” in one way or another. As such, it is the most visible and most public urban place.

It all started out with the uprooting of a tree and escalated with the unacceptable violence of the police but such a local incident would not have been enough to make also other cities in Anatolia rise up. The causes were closely related to a number of facts that had been accumulating. In the past two years the number of political detainees had surpassed those of China and Iran; Turkey was also the world champion in the number of arrested journalists; administratively, the people were not consulted in decisions that concerned them, leading to a systematic digression from democratic principles; the judicial system was instrumentalized for political ends and the prime minister increasingly behaved as a tyrant, a priori sultan who intervened in the everyday life of the citizens. Recep Tayipp Erdogan had almost managed to bring the 40-year old Turkish-Kurdish conflict to an end but the oppressive and othering discourse he employed in this case constituted a stark contrast.

From May 27 when the revolt began until the last few days mainstream media outlets failed to report on the events, they ignored them. This was a clear breach of people’s right to receive accurate information. As Taksim Square, the heart of the social memory of Turkey, was heavily bombed with tear gas, the Haberturk TV channel chose to broadcast a documentary on penguins and NTV went for recorded old speeches of the prime minister. Other channels continued with their usual sitcoms. The only dissenting channel Halk TV (People’s TV), Ulusal Kanal (National Channel) and Hayat TV supported the revolt and reported on the events with complete live coverage from the first day. While CNN Turk pretended not to know CNN International started reporting on the events. Only when it was impossible to cover what is going on in Taksim with silence, and then disinformation started on those media channels. After 15 days of peaceful occupation of the park, finally last weekend the police entered the park again. There were many children and elderly people in the park. They trusted the authorities, who had explicitly declared that there will not be any intervention in the park. On the violent assault of the police with the tear gas and chemical-added pressurized water people left the park. But resistance continued till the morning, in the streets and all around Istanbul. Now we have a PM in the same league as Mubarek, Gaddafi, Assad or the western ones like Hitler, Mussolini, Salazar and all other fascist dictators of the world. (Ertan)

The history of Turkey’s oppressive regime goes back to 1980s and even before. However, the 1980’s has been the last and may be the biggest breaking point in the near-history of Turkey. The coup d’état started setting the scene for neo-liberal capitalism.

As **PELIN BAŞARAN** stated in her research on the privatization of culture in Turkey, in the last three decades “The state was minimized in accordance with neo-liberal principles and lost its control over many spheres, including culture. With the “liberalization” of culture, the wealthy class, which sought the restoration of its hegemony, started to act in the cultural sphere with its lifestyles and habits, and with its cultural investments in which economic and social capital were transformed into each other. Since the 1980s, the leading families in Turkey have opened their own museums among them the Sadberk Hanım Museum, the Rahmi Koç Museum, the Istanbul Modern, the Pera Museum, the Sakıp Sabancı Museum, and the Çengelhan Museum. They exhibit their large private collections either in their old mansions or in other historical buildings. In addition, corporations like Garanti Bank, Akbank, İşBank, Yapı Kredi Bank, Siemens, and Borusan Holding have established their own cultural centres and galleries.” (Başaran)

The Mayor of Municipality of Istanbul says that “Istanbul should leave its position of being an industrial city, rather it should be a city in which more qualified labour exists and which approaches the world with a different attitude. After that Istanbul should take on the functions of being finance centre, cultural centre and congress centre...” (Başaran)

With those objectives and the entrance of leading families and holdings into the cultural scene starting from the 80’s, they formed a cultural scene - so-called - above classes, politics and ideologies, which is a reflection of global authoritarian populist politics. Today all cultural life is mediated by the extensions of big corporations or the institutions, which are in direct connection with these families and holdings.

In current cultural life in Istanbul the state is not a real actor. The State Museum of Painting and Sculpture has been closed for renovation for the last 9 years. The Atatürk Cultural Centre, which was the house of the State opera and ballet, was closed eight years ago for the same reason; the promised renovation was never properly executed. The State theatre has been under the threat of being closed down; a draft law is awaiting approval. Beside that the state does not financially support art, except the poorly funded movie sector and traditional arts and crafts.

In addition to all that, the PM and his cabinets’ approaches and understanding of art has been alarming in many senses. Translating from **ESRA A. AYSUN**, “It should also be emphasized that the coup d’état in 1980 left the civil society weak implying serious legal restrictions, creating a big gap among the state officials and the professionals of the culture sector. This gap has caused the State to position itself in opposition to the contemporary artistic and cultural production, and implement occasional censorship to art works and artists in the name of protecting the moral or religious rights of the society. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan provoking the demolishing of a statue that he finds ‘freakish’ or of Interior Affairs Idris Naim Şahin defining artists as possible terrorists are only a few of these cases.” (Aysun)

Those attitudes also illustrated an insecure field, which could have been secured by ostentatious venues and events of the private sector. According to Başaran following the withdrawal of the State from the social spheres, culture has become seemingly more inclusive thus it has emerged as a new area for hegemonic struggle.

As a result of neo-liberal politics and the decisions made on the representation of Istanbul as a finance centre, culture has gained more importance. The emerging “service class” demanded new tools to create its identity. Those corporal cultural institutions have created an aura for this new middle class; they feed them to create their identities through the art and culture they served.

Those cultural venues are sharing a certain class identity. The architecture, interior design, graphical identity and their self-representation as well as chic and expensive cafes inside, draws a frame that defines what an art institution should be; therefore what art is! I like to refer to McLuhan’s motto, “medium is the message” here. Those institutions became the mediums for art consumption and they define the way as well as the type of art to consume. I believe, in connection with the arguments on museums, artworks lose their individual stories, social importance and true artistic meaning, but turn out as objects of a temporal art history.

Let us come back to the connection between those corporations and their ongoing investments that were made possible with the help of the current government against the objections and protestations of the local people and NGOs.

Doğan Holding, which has TV channels Kanal D and CNN Türk besides main stream newspapers and many others, also has HES (Hidroelektrik Energy Santrals) in Sinop and Giresun and mines in Gümüşhane; Doğu Holding, which has NTV, Star TV and many others, has also the Artvin Dam and HES on the Çoruh River and many other HES projects; the Çalık Holding which has Atv and the Sabah newspaper also has mines in Erzincan and HES in Rize; the Ipek-Koza Holding which has Kanaltürk and Bugün TV and the Bugün newspaper also has gold mines running in Bergama, Izmir. (Yavuz) All those investments are suspicious and against the will of the local people, NGOs as well as ecologists and experts. Opening up every square in the country to corporations for such investments are the most argued executions of the current government due to the ecological endangers as well as the corrupted relations between the government and the corporations. Erdoğan changed the laws in one night, rendered court decisions ineffective, suppressed local protests with the police force and most importantly blocked the information flow by putting pressure on the media. This dictatorial face of the government actually became visible during the occupation of Gezi Park.

It is difficult to find your way as an independent art institution in such a socio-politically manipulated scene with complex interest relations.

BIS (Body Process Arts Association known as amberPlatform) founded in 2007 as an association by eleven individuals consists of engineers, dancers, academics, artists, researchers, and theoreticians who are working in the field of art and technology. As declared in its foundation documents, BIS aims to examine the social impacts of new technologies from a critical perspective, to promote creative and participatory technology culture, to explore artistic expression made possible with new technologies and to create an international platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience and for new collaborations. While BIS evolved in the 7 years since our inception, we expanded these ideals with concepts like technology for people, technology by people, open knowledge, transparency, DIY culture, creativity, ecology, the commons and similar. BIS annually curates the international amber Art and Technology Festival, and has done so since 2007. amberFestival is a thematic festival. The themes of the amberFestivals so far were – starting from 2007 - voice and survival, inter-passive persona, uncyborgable, datacity, next ecology, paratactic commons and finally this year we are focusing on technology and foolishness with the title “Did you plug it in?” As it can be seen through the themes we are advocating a certain approach to and the understanding of technology. This stance requires a careful relation with supporters, sponsors and collaborators.

BIS realized the first amberFestival in 2007 with personal bank credits by the initiators besides the financial contribution of cultural institutions and attaches of invited artists' countries. Between 2008 and 2010 we received a 3-year grant from the Istanbul 2010 European Capital of Cultural Agency. This was the first time that we and independent contemporary art institutions, artist groups and artists at large were supported by a governmental body in Turkey. But I want to point out that Istanbul 2010 ECCA was using European money at large and it was a European perspective although initiated by local individuals. Neither the State nor any governmental body internalized the 2010 experience. A year after there was nothing left; no institutions or any organizational changes based on new learning acquired from the 2010 experience and no more funding or funding bodies targeting art. In 2011 and 2012 we managed to realize the festival with the support of consulates, cultural institutions, universities and by programming the activities of other projects that we had been running at that time in the festival.

Beside the festival (and conference in the frame of festival), we run or have been running international multi-partner projects that are supported mostly by the EU Culture programme 2007-2013. Most of those projects' budgets were granted in half by the funding body and the other half covered by the organization's own financial resources. Beside that they do not cover the organizations daily base costs and salary of the employees. Nevertheless, since 2008 EU funds were our main financial source.

Contrary to EU countries in Turkey neither State nor city supports NGOs or other independent art institutions on a regular base. Actually with the nature of 1980 coup d'état, NGOs from the State's point of view are still suspected bodies.

Although we organized 6 international festivals and a conference in Istanbul since our inception, run 7 EU projects as a partner and as the leader, curated many exhibitions in Istanbul and abroad, as well as workshops, Artist in Residency Programs, production of artworks, lectures, seminar et al. we only just managed to employ a professional person half a year ago. The three initiators of BIS put their volunteer efforts into making the organization sustainable. Our experience showed us that the EU funding system and mechanism is somehow working to let individual organizations come into existence and survive. But no organization or individual can be expected to be as durable and passionate as we were. Thanks to the EU - but that is not enough to allow an independent art network develop in Istanbul. The local system should encourage and help individuals and young organizations.

Esra Aysun states in her article on cultural entrepreneurship in Istanbul, "The necessity for a funding model that would enable the emergence of independent organizations that would not pursue the policy of any government or private corporation and would be formed by artists or cultural management professionals has yet to emerge as a discussion topic". (Aysun)

We want a greater share from public money for art at large. In Turkey, the States cultural expense per person is less than 1/10th of Europe. Thus as independent organizations we do not want to rely on private money. Basically for two reasons; we do not want our organization to be a tool for the straight forward advertisement policies of companies and we do not want the art we present to be a tool to justify those corporations other involvements that we disapprove of. On the other hand we are not interesting for such corporations, since we are working in a niche, we are not organizing big and popular events, and most importantly we are critical!

Therefore, although it is against the on-going neo-liberal policies, the State should be an actor in the art scene by not making art but indirectly supporting artists and art organizations. Municipalities, especially the municipality of a city like Istanbul that defines itself as a world city should develop funding mechanisms to support the fields of art and culture and should create a stable and democratic ground to let creative industries develop. On the other hand the private sector should stop pouring all the money into its own institutions and should abandon its hegemonic approach. A good solution would be a foundation, which creates a pool with contributions from the private sector to support independent artists and art organizations. The private sector should understand that a creative city, a vivid cultural life and a real art scene is only possible with independent individuals and organizations. Their invisible

investment will help them more in the end and it will be cheaper than running a luxurious, gated art institution for the same audience of 200, who are everywhere (the number is symbolic).

The EU funding system is very important and functional for Turkish NGOs, but we know that shares for art and culture are getting smaller everywhere. Therefore, we need to look for other solutions. We should consider crowdsourcing, which can be a good solution. Actually that is an even better solution as a direct democracy formula. Kickstarter and indigogo showed how successful such systems can be.

After all the experience we have had I believe as independent organizations, we should stay small which increases our capabilities to implement creative solutions and act local in an international network of sharing resources and experiences.

Ekmel Ertan, “#direngeziparkı #direndemokrasi (#resistforgeziparkı #resistfordemocrasi)”, <http://rozenbergquarterly.com/?p=5365>, June 2013

Pelin Başaran, “The Privatization Of Culture And The Development Of Cultural Centres In Turkey In The Post-1980s”, Boğaziçi University, 2007

Esra A. Aysun, “Looking at the Cultural Entrepreneurship in Istanbul“, Current Issues, Supplement of the 130th issue of Sanat Dünyamız magazine, 2013

Yusuf Yavuz, “Bu medya Gezi Parkı’nı neden haber yapamaz”, <http://www.odatv.com/n.php?n=bu-medya-gezi-parkini-neden-haber-yapamaz-1206131200>

SOCIAL CREATIVITY

A report from Balkan Express Caravan Meeting
in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, 13 – 15 November 2013

by Nina Gojić

DAY 1: Wednesday, November 13

The fourth Balkan Express meeting took place in Transylvania's regional capital Cluj-Napoca and was hosted by Corina Bucea and Rarita Zbranca, two cultural managers who had attended previous Balkan Express meetings. The whole event took place in Fabrica de pensule, a former paintbrush factory that has been re-purposed into a multi-functional cultural space. It is located in Cluj's last working class neighbourhood, a few minutes walk away from the "spray building". Apparently there was a tendency in Cluj's architecture to construct residential buildings shaped as the products that were being manufactured in the factories surrounding them. Fabrica de pensule is an encouraging example of how a former industrial complex can successfully be transformed into a shared space for producing and presenting contemporary art as well as hosting a variety of civil initiatives and events, local and international alike. Currently, other than hosting a series of exhibitions, including the early works by one of Romania's most acclaimed and influential artists Cornel Brudaşcu, during the Balkan Express Caravan meeting Fabrica also hosted the Temps d'Images Festival. This is an international interdisciplinary festival that has taken place in ten countries so far and, in the organisers' words, its aim is to bridge the gap between performing arts and moving images. This year's theme of the Romanian edition is solidarity and so the performances, debates and discussions were overarched by the investigation of occurrences or absence of solidarity in times of crisis. The overlap between the Festival and the Caravan was a strategic decision made by the organisers with the aim of enabling the participants of the Caravan to get a multi-faceted insight into the Romanian performing arts scene.

The introduction to the civil scene in Cluj began with a slot on Wednesday in which local initiatives were presented through the umbrella concept of social creativity. In Rariţa's words, all these initiatives meet in the investigation of how new types of society's functioning can be imagined through culture and innovative alternatives to the current state of affairs. Hence, the first initiative was presented by Camelia, one of the organisers of the Autonomous Market of Cluj. It is envisioned as a non-profit exchange of material goods (including electronic books and music) but also involving workshops and service exchanges, Food Not Bombs events and education about civil rights. The first market happened in December 2012 and continued to

take place more or less regularly once a month in different public spaces across Cluj, including Fabrica de pensule. It is carried out by volunteers, based on donations from anyone who wishes to participate in the exchange and the attendance is growing from event to event. The market is mostly visited by the homeless, Roma and the supporters of this kind of social gathering, but more and more random passers'-by attention is caught with each event. Corina made an important point by differentiating this initiative from charities due to its clear social and political stance and raising of awareness about why being based on gift economy is important. However, when the market took place in Fabrica de pensule, it was not met with equal approval by all. Apparently there was some disagreement about the fact that an "elite" artistic space hosted a primarily political event that attracted participants who usually do not attend nor fit into the image of a typical art audience. A consensus still has not been reached. Nevertheless, the Autonomous Market proves to be an important and sustainable initiative which indeed provides a different understanding of how economy might function on principles other than one class benefiting at the expense of another, a situation we are increasingly becoming aware of in transitional societies.

Sorana, one of the initiators of the Urban gardening project at the Fabrica de pensule was the second speaker. This project is part of the Butterfly Effect organisation's activities and is financed by a Romanian NGO which supports civil initiatives. The garden is located on the roof of Fabrica and was being built during the Balkan Express Caravan meeting – we could even hear the sounds of construction from outside the windows during the presentations. For now, the garden is only open to the existing community in Fabrica, but if a growing interest in the project appears, they plan to expand and organise more urban gardens across town because the main objective of such a project is not about the products of the garden, but about the genesis of new communities. For now this is a guerrilla project, but the organisers are putting pressure on the town municipality to legalise urban gardening.

Pata Rat IT cluster was presented by its initiator, István. This is an example of how a simple gesture using simple means to activate citizens' solidarity can create a valuable contribution to a marginalised community living on the periphery of Cluj. Pata Rat is a slum inhabited by around 2000 citizens with a growing population. Due to the new mayor's policy, a Nokia research centre was built in the place of the former settlement of mostly Roma people, who were then forcibly transferred to Pata Rat. István decided to intervene by using social networks such as Facebook and set up a group in which he first sought teachers who would voluntarily teach kids from the community. After this successfully done, he asked people to donate spare computer equipment to enhance the learning process. The response was so big that there was so much equipment and a house had to be built in order to accommodate it all. Now called the Pata Rat IT cluster, the house was built by the inhabitants of the settlement with mostly donated material. At the moment they are having some problems with ensuring Internet

connection in the cluster, but the project is ongoing and continues to develop.

Corina introduced a project she initiated with her Mixer Group, called Kitchen Stories. Drawn by the predominantly Eastern European phenomenon of recipe books mostly collected by women, they approached the theme from an ethnographic point of view and even organised an exhibition which presented recipe books as a specifically female type of analogous open source system. Besides that they have organised five public cooking events and built a mobile kitchen for the purpose. Like the urban gardening project, the main goal of getting together with mostly non-professional cooks is community building and exchange based on random encounter.

A project that caused some dissent about its classification as a socially creative initiative was the Cluj Hub. One of the initiators, Cristian, explained how the idea occurred as a reaction to the lack of shared workspace for IT developers, entrepreneurs and freelancers from different areas of expertise. They help start-ups to appear, organise entrepreneurship training programmes, involve tech innovation and support creative industries. The space is rented out for a certain price, but the criticism from the participants arose from the fact that those who pay the rent do not get to participate in the decision-making policy of the organisation and that it is regular business presented as socially engaged. However, Cristian responded that the Hub is in fact a social enterprise because all the gain is reinvested for the same purpose which results in a self-sustainable mechanism in the long-term. As time was running out, the potentially very interesting discussion did not have a chance to develop further so we moved on to the final presentation.

Save Rosia Montana was presented again by Sorana as probably the widest-ranging Romanian environmental initiative which developed into a proper movement in the past years and continues to polarise the Romanian society. This grassroots initiative was first conceived a decade ago as a reaction to the project of building a mining plant in the Apuseni mountains near Cluj which would cause severe environmental consequences. The pros and cons belong to a familiar discourse when it comes to such projects: the pro side sees the alleged economic benefits this project may bring, whereas the cons, other than warning about the ecological aspect of it, include disagreement with the usual way the political elites monopolise decision-making on such important issues by excluding the public in the process. The festival annually held as part of the resistance involves artist contributions as well and so various workshops are always organised in support of the usual protest strategies. Also, the role of culture was emphasised by the fact that framing something as a cultural event alleviates the bureaucratic complications that may occur. Save Rosia Montana continues to be one of the most vital Romanian massive movements and so far has been able to prevent the mining project from being realised.

The afternoon session was part of the Temps d'images programme so the following events were attended by a wider audience. First we had the chance to hear about another local activist project concerned with alternative community building. This time it was about the colloquially known "most complicated neighbourhood in Cluj", Mănăştur. The participants who mostly came from an artistic background engaged in an attempt to activate a different type of neighbourhood culture by working together with the inhabitants and facilitating their ideas. They built a common urban garden together with the local kids, started recycling waste and making furniture out of used tires, created a stage for common activities and plenary sessions which enable the citizens to discuss future plans for the neighbourhood, etc. What followed was a discussion with local architects, cultural managers, city councillors and other participants who were already familiar with the project. They particularly highlighted the problem of public space, which is a stumbling stone when it comes to communicating the issue with the city governance. This is why informal procedures such as this one tend to be more successful because they ignore the potential bureaucratic obstacles. It was also pointed out that this significantly experimental project is specific because it had no clear goal at the time of its inception, which is an encouraging and new approach for Cluj's local scene. However, there was some disappointment since some of the communal projects failed because the very inhabitants of Mănăştur did not take proper care of the common goods. Finally, the question about the relationship between culture and social practice was raised and it was concluded that in this case the process is more important than the product because it relies on sustaining relations between the public space and its users. Thus, ethics comes first regardless of the categorisation. The question that ended the discussion was about the role of the artist in society, which was promised to be addressed further on Friday and in the Skype lecture by the Romanian artist Dan Perjovschi.

The last slot of day one was reserved for launching the third issue of *Gazeta de Artă Politică*. This is a Bucharest-based journal started by theatre-makers and theoreticians who felt the need to redefine the term of political as a reaction to it being understood solely as party politics. By understanding political as the way the social field is organised, they are exploring the notion of political art and the paradoxical position of the artist who is conducting social critique while being immersed in the system. The first issue consolidated this kind of understanding of the political, while the second addressed the question of labour in art institutions which they dealt with, for example, by conducting a set of interviews with the less visible agents in a theatre such as technicians, sound and light designers etc. The third issue which was launched on spot deals with art for young audiences and the necessity to re-envision the current practices in children's theatres. They announced that the following issue will be focusing on art for marginal communities. What is particularly important is that the principles advocated in the journal seem to be applied in the production as well, so it is entirely self-financed, the contributors write pro bono and the journal is distributed free of charge.

Likewise, part of the material is available online in English for free and can be accessed at <http://artapolitica.ro/?lang=en>. The journal itself does not seem to differ significantly from other journals of its type, but every such platform is an important expansion of communication about the interstices between artistic and political practice.

DAY 2: Thursday, November 14

After quite a detailed introduction to the activities conducted by organisations within Fabrica de pensule and their fellow initiatives during Day One, the first thing on the schedule of Day Two was the meet-up of the Balkan Express core working group in order to further discuss conceptions of social creativity. The discussion was moderated by Samo from Bunker, one of the founding members of Balkan Express. After a few introductory observations about the initiatives presented the previous day, the issue of public space emerged quite soon as a shared and pertinent problem all over the Balkans. The countries of Balkans old and new, with the possible exception of Greece, all face similar treatment of public space in the process of transition from real-socialist to a neo-liberal economy. Consequently, the perception of public space is changing: before it belonged to everybody and now it belongs to no one. The working group participants gave examples of how public space is perceived and treated in their respective countries so although there is a tangible difference between, for example, Kosovo where, in Majlinda's words, there is no recognition of public space and its potential to be articulated as a site of resistance such as in Romania, a common feature about the current situation in the Balkans could be extracted: public space is becoming increasingly privatised as part of the ongoing neo-liberalisation of all our societies. István stressed that rather than communicating on the axis private-public, we should look at how space is being produced and by whom because the relation and direction always change. Precisely that is the question of public. Also, this is where the arts come in because of the ability to produce tools people can use for critique.

Soon, the examples of recent protests and their relationship with the sphere of culture emerged. Samo gave the example of last year's protests in Slovenia and said how their aestheticization can sometimes be tricky because it can take attention away from more important issues. Alexandros gave the Greek example of protests which are getting boring because of saturation with repetitive and predictable strategies. There have been so many that even the most radical ones fade out in the memory of Athenians. This was a very important point because it proved how even the most progressive leftist and anarchist approaches tend to uniform their activist procedures, making them monotonous and lessening their efficiency. However, when Alexandros mentioned a squatted theatre that functioned in Athens and where activists and artists shared both the space and activities, it reinstated the idea that culture can be comprehended as a field in which new strategies and tools for producing

meaning can be envisioned and tried out.

A somewhat different example of mixing art and politics came from Mario, the founder and manager of the Jazavac theatre from Banja Luka. The situation with art funding in a society fragmented by the national criteria prevents new initiatives from developing smoothly so Mario explained how he managed to put up the entire theatre from private funds. The major problem in Bosnia remains thinking in categories of three ethnic groups, which reflects upon all segments of the society. Cluj, a multi-ethnic city itself, is not unfamiliar with this kind of reasoning. During the nineties the city was governed by Gheorghe Funar, a very right-wing mayor, whose people were able to, for example, cut the funding for cultural events if their managers belonged to the “wrong” ethnicity. Danko from the Belgrade-based Hartefakt fund spoke about the appropriation of public space in Belgrade, which also happens by reproducing nationalist discourse. Recently the political and economic relations between Serbia and Azerbaijan have been improving which sometimes manifests in bizarre manners, to say the least – a statue of the former dictator Heydar Aliyev has been placed in one of Belgrade’s biggest parks, close to that of famous Serbian writer Milorad Pavić. This working group once again brought to light the most common maladies of post-socialist Balkan countries, which all occur as a consequence of transition. On the one side, ethno-nationalist tendencies grow stronger in times of crisis while the neo-liberal solutions to that crisis claim to be the only possible ones. The examples the participants exchanged, showed how that kind of logic can indeed be interrupted by envisioning alternatives to deficient dichotomies always anew.

In the afternoon the participants of the Caravan joined a public talk on art and sustainability, which was again part of the Temps d’images programme. This time it was moderated by Corina, the co-organiser of Balkan Express Caravan. After a greeting by the festival director who asked to discuss practical solutions rather than theorise too much (although I must admit I do not understand how can one talk about practice before grasping the situation theoretically), a debate started between the invited speakers and guests. The conversation itself was a little unfocused and actually did not touch upon too many practical issues or examples. First, Alexandros said that survival and sustainability are often confused and that it takes time for art to become sustainable. There is no sustainability if there is no genuine relation with the public, with the least mediating possible. Norbert Petrovici, a Cluj-based sociologist, warned that dependency on money can very easily be accessed through neo-liberal discourse and that it is necessary to create autonomous spaces that are able to function outside the market. Not by surprise, the issue of negative trends across Europe – namely, the withdrawal of state money from the arts – was brought into the discussion and we could hear the argument that art cannot be sustainable if it wants to rely only on funding by its consumers. Again, this was claimed as an issue of survival more than sustainability, which was recognised as a symptom of precarity in the arts. The remaining discussion revolved around the mostly agreed-upon fact that there is a general lack of efficient policies that would help resolve these paradoxes. In

the end, artist and activist Veda Petrovici shared a thought about the relationship between art and activism understood as subversive politics. She said that subversive politics is always illegal because it is potentially dangerous for the system, while art is always legal. This leads to another paradox: through art one can act subversively because of the secure frame art provides, but this can also mean that subversive politics can be made harmless because they become legalised.

DAY 3: Friday, November 15

On the third day there was a change of plan in order to break up the formal frame of the Caravan so we all met at the main square, Piața Unirii. We were split into small groups so Danko, Aleksandar and I went to the greenmarket to get some groceries for lunch. We all met at Rarița's place and a Caravan version of Corina's Kitchen Stories happened since everybody jumped in and out to help with the preparation. The talks from previous days continued in a laid-back way and a change of plan also left some time for us to actually see the city on a sunny afternoon.

SUSTAINABILITY AND PERFORMANCE

from Paul Kleiman, “Staging Sustainability: Making Sense of Sustainability in HE Dance, Drama and Music” in *Sustainability Education: Perspectives and Practice Across Higher Education*, ed. by Paula Jones, David Selby, Stephen R. Sterling, London & Washington: Earthscan, 2010

by Paul Kleiman

Performance is increasingly regarded not only as a creative practice and mode of representation but also as a vital means of embodied enquiry and as analytical trope

Arts and Humanities Research Council [AHRC], 2009.

If one looks beyond and behind the word “sustainability”, and understands it – at least in part – as an active concern with the relationship between humans and their environment, and the impact and consequences of the activities of the former on the latter, then it becomes obvious that there is a sustained and rich tradition of that concern manifested in the performing arts. The arts, generally, have long been a powerful source of awareness, understanding and appreciation of our environment, whether it is the “natural” world or the urban and industrial landscapes that the majority of the world’s population now inhabit.

[...]

Performance is not only an action and an art form. In the discourses and practices of performing arts higher education, it is also a field of study and a method of enquiry (or a way of knowing): Arts-informed research.... may trump conventional forms of research when it comes to generating questions or raising awareness of complex subtleties that matter. The deep strengths of using arts in research may be closer to the act of problematizing traditional conclusions than it is to providing answers in containers that are watertight. In this sense, the products of this research are closer in function to deep conversation and insightful dialogue than they are to error free conclusions (Eisner, 2008, p. 7)

The arts can be seen as ways of doing, knowing and being that often involve multiple paradoxes and the holding-in-mind of many interpretations and positions (Danvers, 2007). The philosopher Alva Noë, who has worked closely with dancers and choreographers, states that “experience, consciousness, is always necessarily embodied. It is always, necessarily,

environmentally situated.” He goes on to say that performance – particularly dance – “is an enactment or modelling of the fundamental fact of our relationship to the world around us.”(Noë, 2008), and that dancers perceive their dancing not simply as a form of doing or action but primarily as a research tool, a way to explore the world and to generate knowledge and understanding.

[..]

Such developments in Higher Education in performing arts are a response to some of the “hard questions” identified by Kershaw about the theatre’s relationship with and response to the environment and environmental issues and “the ambivalence of theatre in the face of calamity for humanity” (Kershaw, 2007, p. 10).

One of the hard questions Kershaw asks is “In what ways has the theatre been unavoidably embroiled in the ecological mess that is climate change? (Kershaw, 2007, p. 10), and anyone who has been involved in theatre-making and production will know that the theatre has a complex and difficult relationship with the notion of sustainability. On the one hand, the theatre is intensely frugal in the acquisition and use of resources, and simultaneously wildly profligate in relation to their disposal. In the face of a general lack of financial resources in the arts and the resulting, often severe, limitations on production budgets, designers have to be particularly innovative in their design solutions, and very resourceful in acquiring the materials to realize their designs. The constraints also mean that, when purchasing items, frequently only the cheapest options are up, or until recently, were pursued. Inevitably, questions such as where and how items such as timber were sourced were rarely, if ever, considered.

More troubling, perhaps, from a sustainability perspective was the matter of disposal once a production had finished. The traditional theatre flat of painted canvas stretched over wooden frames was eminently recyclable. It is now rarely if ever seen, and many companies and theatres utilize the latest (affordable) developments in materials and technology.

Building- based theatre companies had scenic stores, props rooms and wardrobes where scenery, properties and costumes could be kept to be used or adapted in other productions. But in many cases, at the end of the last performance, the crew would dismantle everything on stage and much of it would go into a skip to be taken away to some landfill site.

Those practices were frequently replicated in the conservatories, universities and colleges where the performing arts were studied and performed. With the increasing focus on sustainability and the environment, while the skip may still stand outside at the end of a production period, it now often remains partially filled or even empty, as policies - both explicit and implicit – on the acquisition, use and re-use of materials are taken on board and implemented.

[..]

As the notion of sustainability has surged the agenda for HE, its integration into institutional practices has occurred not only at the macro level of strategy and policy, but also at the micro level of course content. Increasingly, performing arts students encounter course curricula and understanding of sustainability issues in relation to their subjects of study and related activities.

In a typical example, students on a new technical/production degree course at Rose Bruford College (RBC) have to “demonstrate an awareness of the environmental issues associated with the live performance industry” (RBC, 2008). [...] RBC is now planning to introduce a sustainability element into all its courses (Email correspondence with author, 2008).

At another UK HEI, the University of Chichester, although sustainability per se is not addressed formally in the curriculum there is, as in other institutions, a significant amount of concern among students and staff about environmental issues. A senior lecturer reports that a considerable proportion of final year devised productions devote an element of their considerations “to the narratives of consumption and sustainability” (Email correspondence with author, 2008):

In the past three years we have had a number of ecological disaster zones (exploded suns, waste-filled landscapes, spaces where the “natural” reclaims a redundant “technological” space etc.). Following more recent work and collaboration with an architect who designed “rain water capacitors” blending glass architecture with gardening, I have engaged with two undergraduate devising processes that have engages with “sustainability”. *United States of Austerity* (2006) drew on the imagining of an unsustainable city and worked from Paul Auster’s novel *Country of Last Things* and Donald Barthelme’s *They Called For More Structure* (Email correspondence with author, 2008).

At Edith Cowan University in Australia, one of the project units on its Contemporary Performance course was based entirely on sustainability and the environment. Students created four original performances that were presented as part of the university’s annual theatre festival. The festival was staged entirely at an inner city site that, 14 years previously, had been a heavily degraded and polluted industrial area, and which, by the time the Peppercorn Festival took place in 1997, had become a rehabilitate wasteland developed according to permaculture principles. The titles and descriptions of the productions, which were produced to coincide with World Environment Day, demonstrate very different takes on the project theme (Edith Cowan University, 2007).

The examples above demonstrate that there are clearly a number of opportunities and a variety of ways in which sustainability issues can be and are being addressed in performing

arts curricula. The first example, namely ensuring that students have properly to consider the environmental impact of their plans and activities, is a more formal approach that is more in line with the legal and regulatory framework that has developed around sustainability. While it is clearly essential that students who are planning careers in the performing arts, particularly in the areas of design, management and technical production, are made aware and have some experience of sustainability considerations in relation to their work, it does not necessarily follow that they themselves are interested in or committed to sustainability. Rather like health and safety regulations, there is a danger that sustainability issues can be perceived merely as something that must be taken into consideration along with everything else.

In the other examples, students are creating work that has a sustainability theme. This approach may not have the force majeure of legal obligation, but it does provide the opportunity, through the process of research, devising, performance and reflection, for students to develop, individually and collectively, an intellectual, emotional and even a political commitment to the idea of sustainability. Students are increasingly creating work, and being increasingly encouraged to create work that is ecologically themed, because it is clear that it is important to society and its survival. This work is then communicated through various arts and performance practices to the wider culture, where it contributes to the “warming effect” around sustainability. One of the academics who responded to the question “Do we do sustainability in the performing arts?” described this process as follows:

While it may be considered that the performing arts subject areas do not share the immediacy of subjects such as architecture or engineering sciences, they are valued by colleagues in these areas who welcome the opportunity to either use the performing arts as a means of communicating ecological sustainability issues and practices, or draw on the knowledge (e.g. of space, narrative and decision-making processes) of the subject area (Email correspondence with author, 2008).

One curriculum area in drama/theatre that does lend itself to the integration and promotion of sustainability is that of applied drama or applied theatre (Nicholson, 2005). Both terms are used to describe an expanding set of practices and accompanying discourses in which theatre and drama skills and a range of other skills are applied in specific contexts such as communities, prisons, schools or hospitals. The teaching of applied theatre and drama necessarily involves equipping students with the pedagogic experiences and tools that enable them to conceptualize and develop into their roles as emerging applied theatre practitioners who will, as graduates, go into the community and find work in such roles, thus continuing and expanding the field and themselves.

Courses in applied theatre have embedded in them many opportunities for students to engage

with sustainability issues through placements and the development of applied theatre projects for and with a range of arts and non-arts organizations and communities. At the Central School of Speech and Drama and at Royal Holloway, University of London, part of this provision enables students to set up and run projects in developing countries. Providing these curriculum opportunities create the first layers of potential sustainability, that is the students develop links (and future jobs) while on their course, and through undertaking projects in the community develop their skills as practitioners.

HAPPINESS AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

Excerpt, published in *Economic Journal*, 1997

by Andrew J. Oswald

Every day, in every industrialized country of the world, journalists and politicians give out a conscious and unconscious message. It is that better economic performance means more happiness for a nation. This idea is rarely questioned. We feel we would be more cheery if our boss raised our pay, and assume that countries must be roughly the same. The results in this paper suggest that, in a developed nation, economic progress buys only a small amount of extra happiness. Four main pieces of evidence have been offered for this claim.

1. Reported happiness in the US has gone up only fractionally over the post-war period.
2. Reported levels of “satisfaction with life” in Europe are only slightly higher than they were twenty years ago. Some countries show drops.
3. Although the rate of suicide in Britain has fallen by approximately one third over the last hundred years, the number for men has risen, in almost all Western nations, from the 1970s to the present. Rich countries seem to have high suicide rates.
4. Job satisfaction has not increased, over those parts of the last quarter of a century for which data are available, in the US and the UK.

These gains in national well-being appear to be so slight that a case could be made, as by Richard Easterlin (1974), that economic growth is worthless. This paper argues that Easterlin is wrong -- but only just. Because the task of measuring well-being is a difficult and relatively unconventional one, the paper's results cannot be accepted uncritically. First, it might be argued that interview responses to happiness and satisfaction questions do not mean anything reliable. Second, it might be argued that the use of suicide data as an indicator of a society's happiness is too strange to be taken seriously, or that such data are unhelpful because they are a reflection of mental illness and not of any objectively low quality of life. There is no wholly convincing way to dispose of such objections. As in any area of social science, it is prudent to

view the paper's punch lines cautiously. Nevertheless, a simple reply to critics is that these kinds of statistics are probably the only ones available to us if we wish to measure well-being, and that, at the very least they raise doubts about routine beliefs. Moreover, counter-arguments to the methodological criticisms have been produced many times. It is known in the psychological and medical literatures that objective economic events are correlated with happiness scores and with suicide (and para-suicide).

Another possible line of attack on the paper's conclusions is to appeal to common-sense observation. How can it be, one might ask, that money buys little well-being and yet we see individuals around us constantly striving to make more of it? The answer may be that what matters to someone who lives in a rich country is his or her relative income. A spectator who leaps up at a football match gets at first a much better view of the game; by the time his neighbours are up it is no better than before. If there is something to this, it would explain why intuition is capable of misleading us about the national benefits of economic performance. Such intuition has been built up by observing how each of us feels as our income rises. Yet, implicitly, that holds others' incomes constant. Hence common sense may not be a good guide to what happens when a whole society gets richer. The conclusions of the paper do not mean that economic forces have little impact on people's lives. A consistent theme through the paper's different forms of evidence has been the vulnerability of human beings to joblessness. Unemployment appears to be the primary economic source of unhappiness. If so, economic growth should not be a government's primary concern.

See full paper here:

https://www.academia.edu/4600786/Happiness_and_Economic_Performance

INTERNATIONAL
NETWORK

BALKAN

express

