





BETON Ltd.

Ljubljana, maj 2022





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leben

izgubljena gesta
lastnega
odstopa



vsebina

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29 ur,



Hoppla, wir leben

Andreja Kopač

BETON Ltd.: IME ČESA JE PREDSTAVNINA?

Predstavnina je *Dogodek*, ki je trajal 29 ur, potekal je 25. in 26. septembra 2021 in je vključeval pet vodenj članov kolektiva, od katerih je bilo eno zaradi tehničnih težav

odpovedano: Branko Jordan: *Nemški cikel kolektiva Beton Ltd.*, Toni Soprano Meneglejte: *Brez naslova*, Miha Horvat / 0045: *Kdaj sem postal del kolektiva Beton Ltd.*, Katarina Stegnar: *Za korak preveč teatra*, Primož Bezjak: *Gesta odstopa*. Vmes so potekali akcije, intervuji, fotografbska beleženja Marija Zupanova in Nade Žgank ter dokumentiranje.

Predstavnina je *Objekt/Instalacija*, skozi katerega je kolektiv Beton Ltd. reflektiral svoj odstop. Predstavnina je *Knjiga*, ki je pred vami in ki bo v prihodnje postala rastoča knjiga, je *Ponavljanje konca*. »V subverzivni poziciji, da živimo, medtem ko vendarle ne živimo, Beton Ltd. ne pristaja na nobeno doslej ugotovljeno ali izbojевано gledališko formo (določene forme uspavajo določene vsebine), ampak smo se tokrat oprijeli redukcije kot temeljnega umetniškega principa, ki je povzročil nastanek predstavnine, kot delo definiramo sami. Ob tem ne gre za opustelo ali bodočo scenografijo, temveč za formo, ki je bližje instalaciji, gledališko napetost pa gradi z osebnimi interpretacijami članov kolektiva v odstopu.«

pravza.

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konec,

kai . . .



ALENKA ZUPANČIČ: Uvod v konec

»Ali živimo v času konca, tik pred koncem, morda že po koncu? Kaj pravzaprav je 'konec', kaj označujemo s to besedo?«

(Alenka Zupančič, prvi stavek knjige Konec, 2019: 7)

»Konec v svojih raznoraznih oblikah je ena pomembnih, ključnih modalnosti našega razmerja do česarkoli: do sveta, do drugih, do nas samih kot dela sveta. Hkrati pa se zdi, da se naše splošno razumevanje do stvari entitete 'konca' dotika le čisto na njenem robu: kolikor je namreč konec vselej konec *nečesa*. Ali imamo lahko kakšen odnos do konca kot takega, konca na sebi, njegove čiste forme, formalne modalnosti? In kaj pravzaprav je ta modalnost, forma, kaj sploh je 'konec kot tak', v najsplošnejšem pomenu besede? Zdi se, da konec ostaja v nekem nerazvezljivem razmerju s tem, kar končuje, in da je prav v tem njegova meja.

Po drugi strani pa obstaja tudi nekaj, kar bi lahko zasilno imenovali 'vzdušje konca'. Slednje je lahko apokaliptično mračno ali bolj veselo, v vsakem primeru pa tu poudarek ni toliko na prekinitvi in prenehanju (*nečesa*) kot na neki specifični obliki življenja in časa. 'Vzdušje konca' ima svojo teksturo, svojo substanco, ki določa način, kako živimo tukaj in zdaj, kako smo, kako 'trajamo'. Kot da bi na koncu obtičali s samim koncem, ki pa se ga ne znebimo tako zlahka. – In v razmerju do tega, do te substance konca, je konec kot prekinitve lahko pravo olajšanje, morebiti celo korak drugam. Ali bi lahko torej rekli, da pravi konec, konec kot tak, nikoli ni enostavno konec tega ali onega, temveč je zmeraj nekakšen konec konca?«

(Alenka Zupančič, Konec, 2019: 7)

"Svet se bo zagotovo končal. A to ne bo konec naših težav."

(Alenka Zupančič, zadnji stavek knjige Konec, 2019: 222)



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Toni Soprano Meneglejte: *brez naslova*

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Končna rešitev?

Nemški cikel kolektiva Beton Ltd.

Branko Jordan

Oznaka »nemški cikel« oziroma »prva predstava iz nemškega cikla« kolektiva Beton Ltd. se je kot podnaslov pojavila leta 2016 s premiero predstave *Ich kann nicht anders*¹. Priprave nanjo smo sicer začeli že leta 2013 pod delovnim naslovom *Otok solz*², ko smo se prijavili na razpis Ministrstva za kulturo za rezidenco v New Yorku, v času, ko smo se sicer intenzivno pripravljali na premiero uprizoritve *Upor ni človek*³ v Anton Podbevšek Teatru, pa na dogodek ob desetletnici Stare mestne elektrarne, ter v času, ki ga je močno zaznamovala ekonomska in politična kriza, med katero je vedno več mladih razmišljalo o (pre)selitvi iz Slovenije:

Vse skupaj se je začelo na vrtu nekega drugega bunkerja. Ne vem, če se spomnite, mogoče ste izgubili zgodovinski spomin, toda poleti 2013 so vsi spodbujali mlade, naj čim prej odidejo. Jurij Gustinčič je takrat v Mladini napisal tisto znamenito misel: »Svet postaja svet emigrantov. Je to žalostno? Nihče ni rekел, da je človekova usoda vesela.«

(Beton Ltd., 2016: 2–3)

Cikel je kronološko nadaljevala uprizoritev *Große Erwartungen/Velika pričakovanja*⁴, čeprav smo se že ob prvi sopostavitvi obeh uprizoritev v sklopu Večera nemškega cikla⁵ s težavo odločili, kako določiti vrstni red: ali izhajati iz situacije, v kateri po »petinsedemdesetih minutah enih samih besed« (Beton Ltd., 2016) priti do točke, ko si ne glede na vse želimo samo objeti in stisniti »staro publiko«, ali pa se po srhljivem soočenju z nepregledno množico praznih sedišč na tribuni za »novo publiko«, nad katerimi visi zlovešč napis »Dobrodošli«, zateči v navidezno zaklonišče, bunker, zapoljen z brez števila deponiranimi artefakti, da bi se soočili s svojimi »navideznimi« nadreprezentiranimi stiskami in težavami belih, debelih, bogatih posameznikov v krizi srednjih let.

Po dveh »normativnih« gledaliških uprizoritvah, ki smo ju ločeno precej frekventno igrali na originalnih prizoriščih pa tudi drugod⁶, se je v cikel uvrstil glasbeno-performativni projekt *Mahlzeit*⁷, ki je bil sprva mišljen dobesedno: kot predah, odmor, čas za malico pred nadaljevanjem cikla, v resnici pa je že napovedoval določen premik proti nečemu, čemur se nismo mogli upreti niti ob nadaljevanju cikla, predstavnini z naslovom *Hoppla, wir leben. Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa*⁸, s katero smo z devetindvajseturnim neprekinjenim dogodkom zaključili nemški cikel kolektiva Beton Ltd. In odstopili.

Sredi elektrarne je konec. Je odstop. Odstopamo od svojih performerskih pozicij, odstopamo od lastnega kolektiva, od lastnih mehanizmov kolektivnega delovanja in pristopamo k ideji, da je lastni odstop dejanje, ki ga v družbi pogrešamo. (Beton Ltd. v odstopu, 2021)

Zdi se torej, da se s predstavnino *Hoppla, wir leben* ni končal zgolj nemški cikel, temveč tudi kolektiv Beton Ltd. sam – tak, kakršen je obstajal dobro desetletje, kakršen smo mislili, da obstaja in se razvija, vse od svoje pra-predstave *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo* – in je bil zato za kolektiv usoden. Beton Ltd. se je znašel na točki, ki morda ni časovno jasno omeje-

¹ Beton Ltd.: *Ich kann nicht anders. Prva predstava iz nemškega cikla. Producija: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiera: 26. avgust 2016 v Športni dvorani Tabor v okviru festivala Mladi levi.*

² Sprva celo pod začasnim delovnim naslovom *Migranti*.

³ Beton Ltd.: *Upor ni človek. Producija: Anton Podbevšek Teater. Premiera: 5. december 2014 v Dvorani novomeške pomladi.*

⁴ Beton Ltd.: *Große Erwartungen/Velika pričakovanja. Druga predstava iz nemškega cikla. Producija: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiera: 30. avgust 2018 v Stari mestni elektrarni v okviru festivala Mladi levi.*

⁵ Večer nemškega cikla: *Ich kann nicht anders in Große Erwartungen/Velika pričakovanja.* 10. marec 2019.

⁶ Uprizoritev *Ich kann nicht anders* mdr. na Tednu slovenske drame (4. april 2017), na mednarodnem gledališkem festivalu Prague Crossroads (5. in 6. oktober 2017), na festivalu Konfrontacje Teatralne v Lublinu (10. in 11. oktober 2017), na KamFestu v Kamniku (11. avgust 2018), na festivalu FKK v Kostanjevici na Krki (6. julij 2019), v gledališču La Mama v New Yorku (16.–19. januar 2020), v sklopu platforme Trigger (31. avgust 2020); uprizoritev *Große Erwartungen/Velika pričakovanja* pa v sklopu platforme Trigger (14. maj 2019), na festivalu Borštnikovo srečanje (20. oktober 2019), festivalu Drugajanje v Mariboru (25. november 2019) in drugod.

⁷ Beton Ltd.: *Mahlzeit. Producija: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiera: 19. december 2019 v Stari mestni elektrarni.*

⁸ Beton Ltd.: *Hoppla, wir leben. Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa. [Skladno dejanje nemškega cikla]. Producija: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiera: 25. in 26. september 2021 v Stari mestni elektrarni.*



na, ki se nemara tudi še ni dokončno izvršila, temveč je točka v trajanju, ki jo še najbolj natančno opisuje sintagma »Beton Ltd. v odstopu«. V vmesnem prostoru. Med prej in potem, med včeraj in jutri.

Toda kako je pravzaprav nastala potreba po ciklu, kaj ga zaznamuje in kako ga misliti? Alfred Gell v svoji antropološki teoriji *Umetnost in delovanje* v razdelku, kjer obravnava razpršene predmete, pravi, da:

/m/nogi umetniki proizvajajo dela v prepoznavnih nizih in skoz vso svojo kariero zavestno vključujejo posebno obdelavo kakšnega posameznega motiva. /.../ /P/ogosto je tako, da umetniška dela oblikujejo »momente« časovnih nizov, pa ne le za to, ker so predmeti, ki jih je mogoče datirati (ker imajo poreklo v določenih prostorsko-časovnih koordinatah), ampak zato, ker oblikujejo porekla; so predniki ali potomci drugih del v oeuvre. Gledano v celoti oblikujejo makropredmet ali časovni predmet, ki se razvija v času. /.../ Za vsako umetniško delo je – govorjeno na splošno – če ga obravnavamo v kontekstu oeuvre njegovega ustvarjalca, verjetno, da je tako »priprava« za poznejša dela kot »povzetek« prejšnjih del. (Gell, 1998: 283–284)

Preden je začel nastajati nemški cikel, je Beton Ltd. tri leta kontinuirano sodeloval z Anton Podbevšek Teatrom iz Novega mesta. Po uprizoritvi *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo*, ki je nastala na povabilo direktorice zavoda Bunker Nevenke Koprivšek in katere avtorstvo je bilo resnici na ljubo podpisano z Betontanc Ltd. (Primož Bezjak, Branko Jordan in Katarina Stegnar), pravzaprav še ni bilo jasno, ali bomo nadaljevali skupno delo. Kolektiv ni nastal na podlagi vnaprejšnje manifestativne potrebe oziroma želje. Šlo je za neke vrste uspešno izpeljan poskus in radovednost, ali in kako se lahko znajdemo v nepredvidljivi situaciji, ki jo med drugim določajo kolektivnost, nehierarhičnost, odsotnost režiserja – ne pa tudi režije (prim. Jordan, 2021). Toda konec leta 2011 nas je k sodelovanju povabil ravnatelj APT-a Matjaž Berger in nato so v Novem mestu (tudi ob soprodukciji zavoda Bunker) nastale tri uprizoritve kolektiva Beton Ltd.: *Rečem, kar mi rečejo, naj rečem* (2012), *Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živeli* (2013) in že omenjena *Upor ni človek* (2014), ki jih lahko štejemo za predstave, ki so del »formativnega obdobja kolektiva« (Jordan, 2021), časovno določenega in vsebinskega niza, v katerem so se zarisali osnovni obrisi postopkov dela in razmerij med jedrnimi člani kolektiva in ki bi ga lahko retrogradno danes poimenovali tudi »novomeški cikel« ali pa, še ustreznejše, »francoski cikel«.

Matjaž Berger je namreč k vabilu za prvo sodelovanje v novomeškem APT-u dodal tudi konkretni predlog za uprizoritveno izhodišče. Šlo je za prozno besedilo, roman *Neimenljivi* Samuela Becketta. Na eni prvih vaj kolektiva⁹ je primerek knjige letel čez dvorano Stare elektrarne in pristal na tleh nekje pod tribuno. Šlo je za ponovitev (re-make) fizične geste, ki jo je dvajset let pred nami po izročilu izvedel že Matjaž Pograjc v našem pra-kolektivu Betontanc. Če se ne motim, je šlo za Shakespearovo dramo Romeo in Julija, ki naj bi jo Matjaž zabrisal čez dvorano Lutkovnega gledališča, da bi lahko nastala ena od betontančevskih klasik *Romeo in Julija*.¹⁰ V njegovem primeru je šlo seveda za manifestativno gesto obračuna z dramskim besedilom v okolju postmoderne in fizičnega gledališča, v našem za gesto pripadnosti snovalnemu gledališču.

Od Samuela Becketta je bila smer vektorja izrisana. Najprej nas je vodila do Eugèna Ionesca, drugega poglavitevnega predstavnika dramatike absurdna prosto po Esslinu, in njegove drame *Morilec brez razloga*, ki je pomenila referenčno izhodišče za predstavo *Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živeli*, in na koncu do Alberta Camusa oziroma njegovih esejev *Mit*

⁹ Kot članica kolektiva je takrat z nami sodelovala tudi igralka Daša Doberšek. Hkrati pa smo pri uprizoritvi *Rečem, kar mi rečejo, naj rečem* prvič sodelovali s tandemom Son:DA, Metko Golec in Mihom Horvatom, ki sta kasneje z nami zlasti kot (so)ustvarjalca na področju scenografije, oblikovanja videa in luči, vizualne podobe predstave in tiskovin v tandemu ali ločeno redno sodelovala pod različnimi umetniškimi imeni, najpogosteje kot Toni Soprano Meneglejte in 007 oziroma 0045.

¹⁰ Betontanc: *Romeo in Julija*, Lutkovno gledališče Ljubljana; režija: Matjaž Pograjc; premiera: maj 1991.



Beton Ltd. se je znašel na točki, ki morda ni časovnojasno omejena, ki se nemara tudí še ni dokončno izvršila, temveč je točka v trajanju, ki jo še najbolj natančno opisuje sintagma »Beton Ltd. v odstopu«. V vmesnem prostoru. Med prej in potem, med včeraj in jutri.



o Sizifu in Uporni človek, na podlagi katerih je nastala predstava z naslovom *Upor ni človek*.

»Francoskega cikla« tedaj še nismo znali misliti na konceptualen način, kot »momente časovnega niza«, temveč zgolj pragmatično, repertoarno, kot vodilo pri izbiranju vsebinskih izhodišč, tem in referenčnih točk oziroma gesel pri naslednjem »koraku«. In vendar je bil cikel povsem izoblikovan: imel je svoj začetek in konec, skupno geografsko točko nastanka oziroma naročnika (producenta), jasne izhodiščne vsebinske oziroma referenčne koordinate, znotraj njega so se vzpostavili tudi temeljni gabariti (ne)razumevanja kolektivnosti in hierarhičnih razmerij med člani kolektiva, sodelavci, ne nazadnje tudi uprioritvene strategije v odnosu do občinstva. Nemški cikel je zato treba misliti najprej v razliki do »francoskega«. V eni od predstavitev nastajajoče uprioritve, ki je nastala leta 2015 z naslovom *O genezi projekta*, smo med drugim napisali:

Po tem, ko je kolektiv Beton Ltd. v produkciji zavoda Bunker ustvaril svojo prvo predstavo *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo* (Ljubljana, 2010), da bi določil koordinate realnega tukaj in zdaj, si je privoščil izlet v neznano, v gledališče absurdna (Beckett, Ionesco, Camus). V tem ni nič nenavadnega. Člani kolektiva smo v osnovi igralci, zato je bilo pričakovati, da se bomo prej ko slej podali v raziskovanje immanentnega v gledališču, toliko bolj če gre za absurd, saj nas k temu napeljuje trenutni kontekst časa. Toliko bolj razumljivo je, da se bomo iz tega izleta morali (enkrat) vrniti k izhodišču, k stvarnosti, ki v sedanjosti vse bolj nadomešča fiktivno, iz-mišljeno, da bi mislili in pre-mislili sebe, takšne, kot smo, in okoliščine, ki nas obdajajo. Če se da vsaj v minimalnem obsegu napovedovati prihodnost, se bo to zgodilo leta 2016. In takrat bo nastal projekt o odhodu, o vračanju, o eksistenci, ki se je na začetku imenoval *Otok solz*, danes pa ga imenujemo *Ich kann nicht anders*.¹¹ (Beton Ltd., 2015)

¹¹ Toda vsebinsko težišče smo že tedaj premikali, upoštevaje aktualne okoliščine: »Toda potem, s časom, nas je realnost prehitela. Namesto oddaljenih preteklih zgodb in zgodb z eksotičnih otokov (Lampedusa), so z Blížnjega vzhoda množično pričeli pritekati ljudje, emigranti, ki so naši akademski teoretični migraciji dobesedno spodnesli tla, nas ujeli v pritlehni domačnosti in povzročili množično hysterije, fobije, otipljive predsodke, da smo se morali, mogoče prvič zares, vprašati, ali smo sploh (še) ljudje. Mi in oni. Zaradi njih, toda iz povsem drugega zornega kota, je začela nastajati predstava o nas. Ne o izmišljenih, temveč resničnih nas, o takšnih, kakršni smo, ne takšnih, o kakršnih se delamo, se igramo, da smo ali bi morali biti.« (Beton Ltd., 2015)

¹² Celoten stavek, ki naj bi ga Luther izrekel, se je glasil: »Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott, helfe mir, Amen.«

¹³ Za tem istim omizjem je poleg predloga za naslov prišlo tudi do ideje, da naj bi bila ta predstava le prva v nizu več predstav, da naj bi šlo torej za cikel, pri čemer nismo definirali končnega obsega, smo ga pa začeli imenovati: nemški.

¹⁴ Drugi takšen temeljni postopek sprejemanja odločitev znotraj kolektivnega imenujemo »rdeča« in pri njem gre za ukrep, s katerim poimenujemo in zaustavimo idejo, ki je osamljena in omejena zgolj na interesno območje posameznega člena kolektiva in nima nobene skupne vrednosti. (prim. Jordan, 2020)

Do odločitve za naslov nastajajočega novega projekta, prvega po »vrnitvi iz Novega mesta«, ki je citat znamenitega stavka nemškega reformatorja Martina Luthra, ki naj bi ga izrekel na zboru stanov v Wormsu leta 1521¹², je prišlo mimogrede, kot preblisk za skupno mizo na enem od sestankov v Bunkerju¹³. Toda ta preblisk, hipna ideja, sodi pravzaprav v arzenal pogosto intuitivnih karizmatičnih idej, kot jih je poimenovala Katarina Stegnar, in v svojem bistvu razkrivajo temeljni postopek sprejemanja odločitev (umetniških in tudi organizacijskih) znotraj delovanja kolektiva Beton Ltd. V praksi gre za ideje, predloge, zamisli, na videz povsem sorodne drugim, ki pa jih v nasprotju s podobnimi idejami in prebliski, ki jih prispeva vsak od posameznih članov kolektiva, hkrati prepoznamo kot »prave«, kot tiste, ki v hipu postanejo skupne, in sprožajo vrsto vsebinskih posledic. Postopek prepoznavanja teh karizmatičnih idej se zdi skoraj religiozen, v resnici pa je povsem banalen, le da tovrstne ideje ne padejo v pozabo, se ne preizprašujejo in postanejo obvezujoče, nekakšni kanoni v procesu gradnje posamezne uprioritve.¹⁴

Če za hip odmislimo vsebino in pomen slavnega Luthrovega stavka, so se s predlogom naslova pred nami izpisale štiri besede v nemščini: ich in kann in nicht in anders, ki so zvenele prav in točno, prepoznane so bile kot karizmatična ideja, predvsem pa so odprle in podprle referenčni prostor, znotraj katerega so se posamezni med sabo nepovezani materiali zazdeli smiselnii, in sprožile asociativni niz, ki je ustvarjal nove materiale itd. Nemčija kot kulturni in politični pojem se je v tistem času neprestano pojavljala kot iztočnica v naših (vsakodnevnih) pogovorih na vajah. Zlasti v povezavi z nemško zunanjou politiko, katere obraz sta predstavljala kanclerka Angela Merkel in njen takratni finančni minister Wolfgang Schäuble, ključna gesla pa so bila: Grčija, dolžniška kriza, migrantski val in Sirija.



Hkrati so se ujele z neko drugo, prav tako nemško referenco, za katero do tedaj nismo zares vedeli, kako jo kontekstualizirati. Šlo je za kulturno ikono, Marcela Reich-Ranickega, najpomembnejšega nemškega kritika svojega časa, ki so ga zaradi njegovega vpliva imenovali književni papež (nem. der Literaturpaps), ki je umrl leta 2013 (nekaj mesecev pred Jurijem Gustinčičem) in ki se je ves čas uvrščal med material za uprizoritveno besedilo *Ich kann nicht anders*. Točneje, v material sta se uvrščala njegov uvodni nagovor k prvi oddaji iz serije televizijskih oddaj, imenovanih *Das Literarische Quartett*, ki jih je pripravljal za nemško televizijsko postajo *Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen* (ZDF) med letoma 1988 in 2001, ter situacija kvarteta, ki ga je v televizijskem studiu tvoril skupaj s Hellmuthom Karaskom, Sigrid Löffler in z Jürgenom Buschejem.

Toda v prvi vrsti je šlo za karizmatično in intuitivno vsebinsko odločitev:

Tako je: mi pač, v nekem momentu, divje rabimo naslov /.../ in z naslovom zelo definiramo, kaj hočemo. In se je pojavil ta *Ich kann nicht anders* /.../ in se nam je zdelo zelo neumno ga prevajat, zdaj pa, kaj ima to veze z nemškim ciklom in s tem, kar je bilo nekje napisano, da smo bili fascinirani nad nemško umetnostjo – to ne vem, če je čisto res, da smo fascinirani nad nemško umetnostjo – , ampak gre za to, da v bistvu /.../ ti vedno obdeluješ neko temo, ampak iz različnih pozicij obdeluješ neko temo /.../ in tukaj smo začeli bolj izjavljati v svojem imenu in to, kar si mislimo o času, v katerem živimo, in kaj je problem časa, v katerem živimo, tako splošno rečeno, in zdaj pa, če ti nečemu rečeš cikel, potem si daš legitimeto, da se z isto vsebino večkrat ukvarjaš. Zelo preprosto. /.../ Mi ne moremo mimo tega, da je, ko je IKNA nastajala, Nemčija bila absolutno v ospredju s politiko Angele Merkel, da se je vsiljevalo vprašanje, kako bo to vplivalo na pozicijo pri nas in je to prineslo cel kup nekih mentalnih okvirjev /.../. Neke intuitivne koordinate se vzpostavijo in takrat rečeš: to je nemški cikel, basta.¹⁵ (Beton Ltd. v Novak, 2020)

¹⁵ Gre za prepis dela zvočnega posnetka pogovora.

Če so v »poreklu« nemškega cikla vsebinska izhodišča za uprizoritve še predstavljeni »naši književniki in njihova dela«, smo v novem ciklu pristali na odločitev, da »bomo izjavljali v svojem imenu«, to, »kar si mislimo o času, v katerem živimo in kaj je problem časa, v katerem živimo« (Beton Ltd. v Novak, 2020), da bomo »mislili in pre-mislili sebe, takšne, kot smo, in okoliščine, ki nas obdajajo.« (Beton Ltd., 2015).

Ena od prednosti in hkrati tudi izzivalnosti snovalnega gledališča (*devised theatre*), kamor lahko v širšem smislu uvrščamo predstave kolektiva Beton Ltd., je avtorsko zapolnjevanje vsebinskih praznin. Tako imenovane točke nič, iz katere potem nastajajo tovrstne uprizoritve. Ta točka nič je seveda nekaj neskončno privlačnega, saj ustvarjalcem ponuja popolnoma proste roke in jim/nam omogoča, da se lotijo/mo tistih tem in vsebin, ki jih/nas resnično zanimajo, hkrati pa pomeni nevarno brezno, da se morda v njej skriva tudi dejanski arbitrarni nič. Te vsebine v strogo dramskem gledališču predstavlja izbira dramske predloge, naslova, za katerim obstajajo določena zgodba, določena vsebina, določene situacije, liki in sporočila, v snovalnem gledališču pa to funkcijo najpogosteje prevzemajo teme, pogosto samonanašalne. Znotraj nemškega cikla so bile teme in vsebinska ozadja običajno dokaj natančno zastavljeni za vsak posamezni »razpršeni predmet«: kriza srednjih let, nemoč, nezmožnost upora, salonska levica, infantilizacija, izobraževalni sistem, skrajna desnica na pohodu, skupnost, participatornost ..., teme in ozadja, ki vsi pripadajo »glasnemu desetletju«, kot so ga poskušali poimenovati v uredništvu *Razpotij*, desetletja, ki:



ni imelo prevratniškega duha osemdesetih, ki je pripeljal do padca Berlinskega zidu, ne svobodnjaškega in reformističnega duha devetdesetih, v spominu nam ne bo ostalo niti po usodnih dogodkih, kakršni so bili 11. september, vstop nekdanjih socialističnih držav v EU (in s tem združitev evropskega vzhoda z Zahodom) ali zlom borze, ki so zaznamovali prvo desetletje tega tisočletja. Prej se zdi, kot da so v minulemu desetletju vsa ta prejšnja ponovno priplavala na površje, nekoliko zaplesala, trčila eno v drugo in za sabo pustila zmedo. (Kosovel, Lisjak Gabrijelčič, 2020)

Nemara pa je bilo to desetletje, del tega desetletja, vsaj toliko, kot je bilo glasno, pravzaprav tudi »nemško«? Obdobje, v katerem je kolektiv Beton Ltd. uprizarjal »črne tokove postmoderne, postčloveškega stanja v prvem delu enaindvajsetega stoletja«. (Sinanović, 2020)

Kajti, in tu pridemo do anekdotične razrešitve pomena intuitivnih umetniških odločitev, pri katerih se resnični pomen, vrednost, smisel in ozadje posameznega fenomena, denimo nemškega cikla, razkrijejo šele post festum v retrospektivnem miselnem postopku¹⁶: prav na dan, ko se je zaključil nikoli povsem pojasnjeni nemški cikel kolektiva Beton Ltd., 26. septembra 2021, se je de facto končalo tudi obdobje vladavine nemške kanclerke Angele Merkel.

Prevzetno bi bilo trditi, da je nemški cikel kolektiva Beton Ltd. v *resnici* posvetilo tej isti kanclerki, toda nenačrtovana povsem naključna povezanost obeh dogodkov, enega na svetovnem političnem prizorišču, drugega pa na (iz globalne perspektive) povsem marginalnem prizorišču sodobnih uprizoritvenih umetnosti, v Stari mestni elektrarni, vzpostavlja neizogibne »mentalne koordinate«, po katerih rečeš (tisto, kar ti rečejo, da rečeš): »To je nemški cikel, basta,« in govori v prid temu, da se je takoj po zaključku sklepnega dejanja nemškega cikla postavilo »vprašanje vseh vprašanj«, kot je to poimenoval komentator Jutarnjega lista, Marko Biončina:

/k/ako čemo se bez Angele obraniti od svijeta koji je Angela stvorila. Iako će historiografija možda Angelu Merkel bilježiti kao ključnu eurointegracijsku (pa i globalisitčku) političarku 21. stoljeća, temeljno načelo njezina 16-godišnjeg mandata na čelu ipak je bilo ono sadržano u varijacijama refrena njemačke himne, stihovima pjesnika Augusta Heinricha Hoffmanna von Fallerslebna Njemačka iznad svega (Deutschland, Deutschland über alles).
(Biončina, 2021)

Tudi zato je treba pritrditi Gellu, ko pravi, da »za vsako umetniško delo je – govorjeno na splošno – če ga obravnavamo v kontekstu oeuvre njegovega ustvarjalca, verjetno, da je tako 'priprava' za poznejša dela kot 'povzetek' prejšnjih del« (Gell, 1998: 284), sploh če verjamemo Beckettovim besedam iz romana *Neimenljivi*, citiranim v zaključnem monologu uprizoritvenega besedila *Rečem, kar mi rečejo, naj rečem*:

treba je govoriti besede, kolikor jih je, treba jih je govoriti, dokler me ne najdejo, dokler me ne izgovorijo, /.../ nemara so me že izgovorile, nemara so me že ponesle do praga moje zgodbe, do vrat, ki se odpirajo v mojo zgodbo, to bi me presenetilo, če se bojo odprla, bom to jaz, bo to tišina, tam, kjer sem, ne vem, nikoli ne bom vedel, v tišini se ne ve, nadaljevati je treba, nadaljeval bom. (Beckett, 2005: 116)



Kljub vsemu je vendarle treba omeniti, da v zvezi s pomenom in označevalnim nabojem nemškega cikla kolektiva Beton Ltd. ne smemo biti preveč resni in togi, da gre pri njem pravzaprav tudi za izmuzljiv, skoraj duhoviti nesmisel. V uvodnem monologu k *Ich kann nicht anders* lahko na primer preberemo naslednji namig:

Skratka, ein Trio, z naslovom *Ich kann nicht anders*. Martin Luther je to rekel, v Wormsu, Nemčija. Toda Nemčija je v našem primeru samo obrobna opazovalka, v glavnem se stvari dogajajo v Franciji, zato te nežne melodije in sir in a-šik d'Provansal in steklenice kabernet di papa. (Beton Ltd., 2016)

Gre za precej pogosto strategijo kolektiva Beton Ltd., pri kateri lahko stvari, ki jih vzpostavimo kot dejstva (faction), že v naslednjem trenutku postanejo svoje nasprotje (fiction) in s katero pravzaprav razkrivamo iluzijo gledališča, da so posamezne stvari (in osebe in stališča in situacije in okoliščine) resnične samo na videz, samo do določene mere, začasne in v službi določenega namena, namena situacije ali uprizoritve ... Četudi sta ta in podobne strategije postale tudi del nove stvarnosti postfaktične družbe, cikla, ki mu danes niti približno ne znamo določiti konca.

Se nadaljuje. / Forsetzung folgt.

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Ali je zdaj sploh pravi

čas, pravi trenutek za

naslednje vrstice? Ali

kdaj ni? In kdaj se

zaključi? Kdaj se

stvar ozioroma karkoli

zaključi, konča? Kdaj

je pravi trenutek?

/... / *Kdaj sem postal*



član kolektiva Beton

Ltd.? Vse skupaj je

Predstavnina.

Vse je del *skupnega
mozaika.*



I. Kole.

ktiv

Kole -

ktivno



SEIZMOGRAFSKI LEKSIKON PREDSTAVNINE

Q & A delovanja v kolektivu

ali

kdaj sem postal član kolektiva Beton Ltd.

Miha Horvat / 0045

PRED POSTAVITVIJO

Datuma zapisa: 25. in 26. 8. 2021

Vsebina zapisa: Improvizacija/e in vprašanja na dane teme (neposlan e-mail kolektivu)

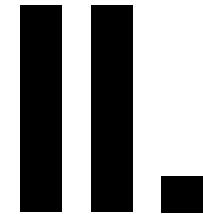
I. KOLEKTIV – KOLEKTIVNOST – KOLEKTIVNO IN – KAKO VSE TO?

Kako na ulici, v javnem prostoru, v javnem prevozu? Kako v razredu, na univerzi, v restavraciji? Kako doma, kako za isto mizo, kako v istem prostoru? Kako na gledališki vaji, kako na rezidenci? Kako in kaj teorija? Kaj in kako ter kdaj v zgodovini? Kako mi, kako mi prej, kako takrat in kako zdaj? Kako začeti skupne ideje, kako jih razvijati, kako si dopustiti prost tok asociacij, kako se ne omejevati, kako se omejevati, kako zapisovati, dokumentirati in kako biti do tega odgovoren? Kako se podpisati in kako zaščititi avtorske pravice oziroma kako biti odprt, vključevalen in jasen? Ali smo kolektiv? Ali delamo kolektivno? Ali se sploh moramo spraševati o kolektivu, kolektivnosti in kolektivnem? Ali je že to, da smo skupaj, dovolj? Ali je možno in ali si želimo postaviti preizprševanje kolektivnosti kot temo?



II. SESTOP – SESTOPANJE – ODSTOP – ODSTOPANJE – PRESTOP – PRESTOPANJE – ABDICIRANJE IN PREVZEMANJE ODGOVORNOSTI

Iz katere točke sestopamo? Iz iste točke? Z iste pozicije? Iz enake situacije? Jo razumemo enako? Jo sploh lahko razumemo enako? So situacije in točke sestopa, odstopa, prestopa enake? In kaj, če niso? Kako in kam sestopamo v tem primeru? Od česa odstopamo potem? Oziroma če ne sestopamo/prestopamo/odstopamo z iste pozicije, kako lahko storimo to skupaj? Kam lahko skupaj gremo? Če je sestop/prestop/odstop tema, ali sta sploh potrebni točki, od kod in kam? In obratno? Ali ni že tema dovolj za izhodišče?



III. METODA – METODIČNOST – METODOLOGIJA

Komunikacije? Dialoga? Skupnega dela? Produciranja skupnega dela? Produciranja skupnega umetniškega dela? Metode postavljanja raziskovalnih vprašanj? Metode postavljanja teme? Metode/logike/principi ustvarjanja? Skupnega ustvarjanja? Metode grajenja skupnih asociacij? Metode kreativnosti? Ali je sploh potrebno razmišljanje o neki metodi, o naši metodi? Ali je sploh treba razvijati skupno metodo?



IV. ČAS – TRENUTEK – KONEC

Ali je zdaj sploh pravi čas, pravi trenutek za naslednje vrstice? Ali kdaj ni? In kdaj se zaključi? Kdaj se stvar oziroma karkoli zaključi, konča? Kdaj je pravi trenutek? Kako je sploh definiran oziroma determiniran čas? In kako je sploh definiran/determiniran naš čas? Ali je to sploh naš čas? Si ga želimo? Si ga znamo vzeti? Ga potrebujemo? Ali je čas morda tema našega gibanja od točke A do točke B in trajanje tega gibanja? Oziroma: zakaj zdaj? Če





govorimo o prostih asociacijah in svobodnem razmišljanju o čemerkoli in poti kamorkoli, je nujen vstop občinstva v naš kip/instalacijo, kar me omejuje pri razmišljanju. Takisto monumentalnost naše umetnine. **Sestop igralca v likovnega umetnika ni moj sestop.**

Tega sam ne čutim, lahko pa to ilustriram.

PRED VODSTVOM

Datum zapisa: 25. 9. 2021

Vsebina zapisa: Načrt, skica, scenarij javnega vodstva

V. IN MEDIAS RES: JAZ V RAZSTAVNINI

JE MORDA KAKŠNO VPRAŠANJE?

Jaz imam eno, dve, celo tri. Prvo vprašanje: Ali vas lahko prosim za skupinsko fotografijo in analizo stanja? Začnimo s pojasnilom ali bolje rečeno z analizo stanja.

POSTAVIMO SE PRED POJASNILO RAZSTAVE IN SE ZMERIMO.

Sledijo moja vprašanja. Zakaj smo tukaj? Zakaj si tukaj? Zakaj? Ali te res zanima? In če da, kaj te pravzaprav zanima? Kakšne so tvoje obveznosti tukaj? Kaj pravzaprav je tukaj? In pojasnilo. Mi smo neka temporalna, začasna skupnost. Skupaj tukaj in zdaj. In kaj vidimo? Kaj vidiš ti? Črno ograjo s črnimi stoli in črnimi gridi. Prozorna tla. Lupino. Dvojno lupino. In temeljni betonski kamen, ki nima zaščite (odra) na tleh. Odra Stare mestne elektrarne. Betonske uteži.

Betonska stojala. Iz sedme vrste in dvakrat po devet uteži. Dvojna lupina, sedem okvirjev brvi in mostu. Mostu nekam. Štirinajst luči.

NADALJUJEMO

Kam vstopam in odstopam, od kod vstopam in odstopam? Beton limited pomeni omejeno. Kaj je omejeno, kaj je neomejeno? Družba z omejeno odgovornostjo? Je to kolektiv, skupnost, družba? Ali je v družbi z omejeno odgovornostjo odgovornost članov omejena na tisto, kar so ali z jamstvom. Najpomembnejša lastnost družbe z omejeno odgovornostjo je, da družbeniki niso odgovorni za obveznosti družbe.

IN

Pravzaprav nisem član kolektiva, nikoli nisem bil oziroma sem hkrati in vedno, že kot avdio-video poročalec za televizijski Studio City. Že kot gledalec ene predstave pred tem. Že kot del »družine Bunker«, kot del »družine Stegnar-Horvat-Bezjak-Golec«. To sem vedno bil. Vendar glede članstva v kolektivu Beton Ltd. še vedno ne vem, ali sem ali nisem član kolektiva oziroma ali to sploh smo. Ali je Beton Ltd. res kolektiv?

TER

Kdaj sem postal član kolektiva Beton Ltd.?



POVEZAVE PRED VODSTVOM

Datum zapisa: 25. 9. 2021

Vsebina zapisa: Viri za javno vodstvo

VI. ZDAJ SEM. ZDAJ SMO.

https://sl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Portlandski_cement
https://mladipodjetnik.si/podjetniski-koticek/ustanovitev-podjetja/katero-obliko-podjetja_izbrati/druzba-z-omejeno-odgovornostjo-d-o-o
https://mladipodjetnik.si/podjetniski-koticek/ustanovitev-podjetja/katero-obliko-podjetja_izbrati/druzba-z-neomejeno-odgovornostjo-d-n-o_vlozili_ali_jamcili_narochnikom?Druze_z_omejeno_odgovornostjo_so_lahko_omejene_z_delnicami
https://www.google.com/search?q=kultura+dialoga&rlz=1C1GCEA_enSI870SI870&oq=kultu_ra+dialog_a&aqs=chrome..69i57.3728j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unlimited_company
<https://fran.si/iskanje?View=1&Query=kolektivnost>
<https://www.artforum.com/print/200706/collectivism-after-modernism-15373>
<https://www.rtvslo.si/kultura/oder/hoppla-wir-leben-umetnisko-del- preizprasuje-gesto odstopa/595232>
<https://www.historycrunch.com/collectivism-overview.html#/>
<https://www.britannica.com/search?query=collectivity>

VI.

VII. PO VODSTVU. PRVIČ.

Ura zapisa: 17.50

Datum zapisa: 26. 9. 2021

Vsebina: Terenski dnevnik – zapis po javnem vodstvu.

Skupinsko vodenje (mojega dela) je potekalo od 16.05 do 16.57, dne 26. 9. 2021. Nekaj minut pred tem sem ugotovil, da je zoom snemal prostorski zvok samo 5 minut in 17 sekund. Celotno vodenje je bilo torej posneto na videu, ob čemer se sprašujem, koliko zvoka in dialoga z obiskovalci se sliši na posnetku mojega mikrofona na videu. Šifre vodstva po spominu so:

- trdnost in prožnost betona;
- dialog in kultura dialoga;
- pogovor o umetnosti znotraj temporalnih, nastalih skupnosti, kolektivov, kot je bila skupnost mojega vodenja.

Ob tem so se pojavili izrazi, kot so: trdnost betona, omejena in neomejena odgovornost, kompromis, temeljni kamen, mavzolej, kontemplacija, branje umetnosti, lastna biografija branja, videnja, trening dunajske šole, drugačen kontekst branja umetnosti, ograje, detajli, deli mozaika ... in ... kdaj sem postal del kolektiva.

Ura je 16.05. VSEH 29 UR: OBJEKTI, SUBJEKTI, PROTOKOLI, ZVOKI, GOVORI, KAMNI, MOJČIN SKOK, LEA IN RENI IN PETRA TER NJIHOV SMS, KVINTET, NEOLOGIZMI IZ MIŠLJENJINE, IZ ABSTRAKCIJE, RAZSTAVA + PREDSTAVA + HOPPLA WIR LEBEN.

VII.

VIII. PO VODSTVU. DRUGIČ.

Datum zapisa: 30. 1. 2022

Vsebina zapisa: Prepis zvočnega zapisa vodstva 0045 z videokamere in s pripetega mikrofona na 0045

VIII.



Posnetek FX-GG20210926_0036

»Dobil sem nedeljski termin ob štirih, ki je, vsaj, kar se mene tiče, športni termin. Po navadi grem v nedeljo ob štirih fuzbal špilat, tako da sem rekel, da bo današnja zgodba bolj športna. Za začetek smo se po športno razdelili ... Vsi se lepo naslonite nazaj ...«

Posnetek FX-GG20210926_0038

»Jaz imam nekaj vprašanj. Tudi sam naslov te predstavitev je neko vprašanje, ampak jaz bom potreboval to skupnost, da smo v dialogu, ker drugače bomo hitro končali ...«

Posnetek FX-GG20210926_0040

»Ni mi fajn govorit. Če moram razmišljati glede vprašanja, kdaj sem postal član kolektiva, sem ga začel odgovarjat že včeraj. Zdaj sem spet član in po mojem smo zdaj mi vsi člani tega kolektiva. Če hočemo biti člani kolektiva, potem vas rabim, da kdo kaj reče. Zakaj si tukaj Nada? Zakaj ti, Nika? 'Jaz sem obiskovalka, ali sem jaz tudi član?' – 'Absolutno. V tem trenutku smo vsi člani kolektiva.'«

Posnetek FX-GG20210926_0042

»Gremo noter. Tukaj je Gregi, ki je prav tako kakor Nada tu po službeni dolžnosti. Vsi smo torej na svojem delovnem mestu. Priznam, da sem se pred tem spraševal, kaj je sploh 'Beton', kakšne so njegove karakteristike. Pravijo, da je trden in neprožen. Če dam oba pojma na mizo, si pač mislimo, kar si mislimo, drugo pa je pojem 'limited', v čemer je bistvo. Zanimivo je, da so družbeniki družbe z neomejeno odgovornostjo, ki to družbo ustanovijo, bolj solidarni, sprejemajo večjo odgovornost ob njenem propadu, medtem ko če družba z omejeno odgovornostjo propade, je odgovornost družbenikov ob propadu manjša. Ampak, naj nadaljujemo naš 'skupnosti' trenutek. Ali si lahko še enkrat odgovorimo na vprašanje, kaj sploh vidimo. Predstavnino. Aha? Kontempliram. Kontempliraš? Ok. Primož? 'Vidim neko naključje v trajanju, v različnih urah, dolgih trenutkih, v času.' – 'Branko?' – 'Vidim veliko praznega prostora, ki je namenjen ljudem. In vidim ogrodje, material tega ogrodja.'«

Posnetek FX-GG20210926_0046

»Zgoraj so štiri različne ograje: manjša, večja, stranska in končna. Betonski deli so vsi isti. Funkcionalna zgodba. Avtorji nismo gradili v fizičnem smislu. Kljub temu da v instalaciji ni fizičnega dela, pa ob njej čutim energijo. Če uporabim izraz »temeljni kamen«, ki ga je včeraj uporabila ena od gledalk (in da žari neko energijo), sem začel razmišljati, kaj se je meni zgodilo v teh 29 urah ... javno vodstvo, pogovor z novinarji in z občinstvom, kvintet saksofonov ... Vsaka odločitev glede črk, kje bodo nalepljene, kaj bo v prostoru, kje bomo mi.«

IX. IZJAVA

Vse skupaj je Predstavnina.

Vse je del skupnega mozaika.

Varja pa dela domačo nalogo.

IX.



X. TAKŠNI, TAKŠNE, TAKŠNO DOKUMENTI TRAJANJA PREDSTAVNINE

Datumi fotografij: 26. 9. 2021

Vsebina fotografij: dodatne likovne postavitve, prostorske instalacije, mize bivanja



* Nevenkin servis za Brankovo čajanko
26. september 2021 09:16



* predstavninski zajtrk in domač kruh
26. september 2021 09:17



* postelja za čuvanje
26. september 2021 10:10



* večerja z Nomad Dance Academy
26. september 2021 20:11



Katarina Stegnar: Tole je rdeča. To je vodenje po naši kolektivnosti. Skozi moje oči



Odstopamo, in v tem ni nič

tragičnega. Treba se je zavedati,

kdaj je **konec**. Pristanek pa ni niti

trd niti mehak. /.../ Kako ponovno

zagnati nas, kako ponovno zagna-

ti družbo, da ne bi bila ukleščena

v **stare strukture**? Da ne bi podle-

gali sentimentalnim odnosom v

ustvarjanju umetnosti, da ne bi

bili kolektivi le **simbolno** za-

točišče, ampak pravo zatočišče.



pre-

več

...

preveč



TOLE JE RDEČA. TO JE VODENJE PO NAŠI KOLEKTIVNOSTI. SKOZI MOJE OČI. Za korak preveč teatra. Za korak preveč kolektivnosti.

Katarina Stegnar

Tole je rdeča. Ta izraz uporabljamo pri Beton Ltd., kadar hočemo označiti, da gre nekaj skozi lastno, personalizirano interpretacijo ali da gre za idejo, ki nima konsenza v celotni skupini. (Branko je najbrž to definiral drugače.) Tole je rdeča. To je vodenje po naši kolektivnosti. Skozi moje oči. Kolektiv je skupnost ljudi, ki jih povezujejo skupno delo, skupni interesi. V zadnjem času se kolektivnost, kolektivno avtorstvo, kot mantra uporablja v sodobnih uprizoritvenih praksah. Zdi se, da predstava ne more biti dobra, če ni bila ustvarjena kolektivno. Beseda je napačno rabljena; tako kot Nizozemci že leta zamenjujejo ignoranco s toleranco, tako mi egalitarno, nehierarhično zamenjujemo s kolektivno. Vsaka predstava je ustvarjena kolektivno, vendar ne nujno v egalitarnem kolektivu. Tako pridemo do demagoškega vprašanja: ali verjamemo, da obstaja (v teatru in v družbi) moč enakovrednih in enakopravnih odnosov, da lahko ljudje nekaj soustvarijo skupaj, ali pa si želimo slediti karizmatičnemu posamezniku, ki ve vse in lahko reši vse? Ali nasedamo konceptu deus ex machina?

VPRAŠANJE USTVARJANJA PROJEKTA V ENAKOPRAVNIH ODNOSIH OB INICIACIJI PRODUKCIJSKE NARAVE

Primer: Collect-if

Moj vstop v vprašanje kolektivnosti se je začel leta 2003 s projektom *Collect-if by Collect-if*, ki ga je iničiral zavod Maska z režiserjem Janezom Janšo in dramaturginjo Bojano Cvejić na čelu. V izhodišče je bilo postavljeno vprašanje, ali lahko skupina neznancev (seveda gledaliških ustvarjalcev) soustvari predstavo, ali lahko postane kolektiv. Podvprašanje pa je bilo, kako si kot poustvarjalec (to je najnižja kasta ustvarjalcev, torej igralec/plesalec) definiran s poetiko priznanih režiserk, režiserjev (Meg Stuart, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Iztok Kovač, Matjaž Pograjc), s katerimi smo Varinia Canto Vila, Bojana Cvejić, Ugo Dehaes, Alix Eynaudi, Emil Hrvatin, Rebecca Murgi in jaz že prej soustvarjali. Vprašanja so bila zelo smiselna: kako surfati med kolektivnostjo in individualizmom, ki zahteva singularnost in pretrganje vezi za potrebe samorealizacije. Kako iti v proces, v katerem ni določen niti estetski postulat (čeprav najbrž je), niti vsebina, niti model odločanja. Je pa zelo jasno, kdo je producent in kdo je vse organiziral, da ne rečem iničiral, čigava je bila osnovna ideja. Predstava *Collect-if* je danes stara dvajset let in je zastavljena kot nanizanka prizorov, prikazovanje odločanja, uprizorjen pogovor. Celotnega procesa se natancno ne spomnim, spomnim pa se neskončnih pogоворov o tem, kaj bomo naredili, debat. Spomnim se občutka (lastnega, že takrat rdeča) svobode, da je vse mogoče, da dejansko lahko naredimo karkoli ... se pravi tudi nič. Poredna ideja, da bi šli z denarjem na počitnice in potem to



»streamali«, je seveda takoj skočila iz malhe. Žgoča debata pa se je odprla tudi pri vprašanju, ali lahko spremenimo naslov predstave. To vprašanje se je pojavilo kot provokacija, hitro je bilo jasno, da je to nemogoče. Hitro je bilo tudi jasno, da je kolektivnost zgolj vsebina, metoda pa je lahko le latentno kolektivna. Gotovo je bila tukaj »na delu« tudi moja naivnost, saj sem kot kolektivnost razumela tudi to, da se o vsem odločamo skupaj. Način odločanja je gotovo bistven pri formaciji kolektivov. Na koncu procesa smo ogromno časa preživeli v gledališču. Ko smo se ob neki priložnosti morali nekaj odločiti, sem med pavzo na kavču zaspala. Collect-if se je pogovarjal, nekajkrat so me poskušali zbuditi. Vsem je bilo jasno, meni in njim, da se delam, da spim.

Morda je bil to moj mali upor. Upor proti lastni naivnosti.

Veliko prahu pa je dvignila tudi pozicija tako imenovanega komentatorja. Za video je v predstavi poskrbel Nejc Saje, talentirani mladi režiser, ki je veliko časa preživel na vajah in opazoval, kaj in kako delamo. Na koncu je prinesel zapakiran izdelek, video, ki je bil del predstave. Video je bil izrazit komentar našega dvomesečnega dela in je več kot očitno prikazoval jalovost našega početja.

Kako z vedrom izprazniti Piranski zaliv?

Kam prideš, če tečeš v krogu?

Pot odločanja nas je na primer zaobšla tudi pri avtorskih pravicah glede knjige *Collect-if by Collect-if*, ki smo jo izdali ob predstavi. Soavtorji smo bili samo seznanjeni, da je knjiga podvržena »copy-left« strategiji. Tako sta se odločila iniciator in urednica knjige (ki je bila del Collect-if-a in je tudi stala na odru). In ni bilo debate. Zadnji žebelj v krsto práv te naivnosti, da soodločamo, je bil odgovor na moje vprašanje; in sicer kakšen je načrt, če slučajno predstava ne bo uspela, če se spremo in razidemo. Ali bomo kaj naredili ali ne bomo naredili nič? Iniciator je odvrnil, da ima rezervni načrt. Smer rešitve. Ob tem se razpira vprašanje, kako lahko ustvarjamo v idealnih enakopravnih odnosih, če nekdo inicira in producentsko vodi projekt. S tem misim, da je posameznik zasnoval, prijavil, zagotovil denar, se dogovoril za koprodukcijo, nato pa k projektu povabil ostale ustvarjalce. Tako že pri vstopu v projekt nismo bili enakopravni niti enakovredni.

GENIALNA FINTA: V METODOLOGIJI KOLEKTIVNO DELO, NE PA V PROCESIH ODLOČANJA, IN INSTI- TUT ZADNJE BESEDE

Primer: Via Negativa

Druga izkušnja v seriji sodelovanja v kolektivih, pa to sploh ni bila oziroma se nikoli ni predstavljala kot taka, a se da iz nje potegniti marsikaj o kolektivnosti, je skupina Via Negativa. Skupina je bila moj domicil petnajst let, v njej sem se izjemno dobro počutila, na performerjih pa je izvajala genialno finto. Podala nam je roko avtorstva, na osi režiser–performer pa se ni odrekla klasičnemu karizmatičnemu odnosu. V metodologiji je bila torej kolektivno delo, ne pa tudi v procesu odločanja. Via Negativa je v svojih začetkih postavila pravilo, da je vsak performer v celoti avtor svojega prizora in da so avtorstva razdeljena. In zdaj, ko to



pišem, grem na spletno stran pogledat, kako so bile stvari napisane: prizori in besedila so avtorsko delo skupine (*>concieved and devised by the group*), na drugi strani pa so koncept, režija, dramaturgija in asistenca avtorsko ovrednoteni posamezno. Način, na katerega se ustvarjalci avtorsko vrednotijo in kakšne hierarhične (režiser, igralec ...) funkcije se prevzemajo navzven, je glavna težava kolektivov. Vprašanje, ki se poraja, je: »Ali je kolektivnost v gledališču mogoča samo v notranjih razmerjih, medtem ko se zunanjí deležniki vedno obračajo samo na režiserja?« V resnici vsak avtor sam približno ve, koliko je naredil sam, koliko pa sta mu pomagala skupina in na koncu Bojan (Jablanovec, režiser in idejni vodja Vie Negative) kot odločevalc.

Naj na kratko razložim metodologijo dela, ki se je takrat uporabljala in se večinoma še vedno. Najprej se konceptualno določita tema in (estetska) omejitve, potem vsak performer dela prizor sam in ga na vajah pokaže skupini. Nič se ne razлага, kaj je kdo hotel, kaj je in kaj ni uspelo, oder je edino merilo. Posamezniki v skupini komentirajo, kaj so videli, kaj se jim zdi problematično, kaj dobro, česa ne razumejo. Potem se »surfa in flešira« o novih idejah, premišljujejo se strategije uprizarjanja (za prizor in tudi za celo predstavo) ter se postavljam vsebinski koncepti za celostno uprizoritev. Na koncu pa se vedno uporabi tudi institut zadnje besede, ki je bil metodološko vpeljan. Bojan kot režiser je vedno govoril zadnji na koncu vsake seanse in v glavnem tudi o vsem odločal. Medtem ko sta bila nabor materiala in proizvajanje vsebin vsekakor velikodušen proces, kot bi vstopili v skupinsko »rudarjenje«.

Branko, Primož in jaz smo bili večkrat del ustvarjalne ekipe Vie Negative, vendar je bila pri formaciji lastnega kolektiva majhna izkustvena razlika. Via Negativa zelo dolgo, vsaj prvih deset let, na odru ni stala skupaj. Skupaj smo se zvrstili v zaporedju solov, prizorov. Skupinskih prizorov ni bilo. Vsak se je izrekal v svojem imenu, vsak je bil odgovoren za svoj prizor, vsak je »bedel« predvsem nad svojo vsebino. Šele kasneje so se začeli dogajati skupinski prizori. In v tem je bistvena razlika. S prijatelji/sodelavci Vie Negative sem soustvarila predstavo, skupaj z njimi sem stala na odru, nisem pa si z njimi odra delila. Ker je šlo za posamezne izjave, nam pravzaprav nič odrskega ni bilo treba vzpostaviti skupaj. To se je sicer v kasnejših produkcijah spremenilo, zdaj tudi že od začetka prizore ustvarja več performerjev skupaj. Mi trije (Katarina, Primož, Branko) pa smo precej več časa v različnih konstelacijah preživeli skupaj na odru kot zunaj njega. Imeli smo močno skupinsko odrsko izkušnjo.

KARIZMATIČNA IDEJA IN EMANCIPIRANI IGRALEC?

Primer: Pograjc in Betontanc

Skoraj v istem času, leta 2004, smo z Matjažem Pograjcem in skupino Betontanc, ki je bila takrat že v svoji drugi, pomlajeni verziji, na Nizozemskem delali predstavo *Everybody for Berlusconi*. Predstavo smo soustvarili z nizozemsko skupino Jonghollandia, danes imenovano Wunderbaum. Prepoznavna in prepoznana gledališka skupina je nastala takoj po šolanju na akademiji, ki so jo obiskovali člani skupine sočasno. Na koncu izobraževanja so se odločili, da želijo nadaljevati skupno gledališko pot. Napisali so manifest (na primer, da želijo delati z mladim občinstvom, na »site specific« lokacijah, obravnavati sodobne teme) in ga razposlali vsem umetniškim vodjem v državi. Umetniški vodja ZT Hollandia Johan Simons jim je takoj ponudil denar in domicil. »Carte blanche«. Takratno ustvarjanje skupine je bilo sodobni teater, njena metodologija za ustvarjanje psiholoških likov pa je bila intervju. Imeli pa so tudi »strica iz ozadja«, precej starejšega scenografa, h kateremu so hodili po



nasvete in ga imeli za nekakšnega mentorja. Vsi trije smo bili nad tem absolutno fascinirani, in od takrat je med nami tlela ideja, da bi sami imeli podobno nehierarhično igralsko gledališko skupino. Takrat smo soustvarili uspešno in kontroverzno predstavo *Everybody for Berlusconi*, pri čemer pa smo imeli tudi precej problemov pri soustvarjanju. Predvsem jim je šlo v Wunderbaumu zelo na živce to, da imamo mi režiserja in da ta svojo »režisersko jurisdikcijo« širi tudi na njih. Želeli so si avtonomije, v kateri so prej ustvarjali. Kljub temu sta bili ideja in vsebina predstave izjemno karizmatični, tako da smo razlike lahko premostili. Karizmatična ideja pa kliče po razlagi. Betontanc in Wunderbaum sva vstopila v koprodukcijo predstave, za idejno podstat katere je poskrbel Pograjc sam. Prvoten naslov je bil *Everybody for tourist*. Koncept je slonel na razlikah, ki jih kot dva naroda (Nizozemci in Slovenci) imamo, in pa na pred sodkih, ki jih imamo drug do drugega. Na drugi strani pa je dejstvo, da dokler smo lahko turisti (navadni ali kulturniški), je svet trdno v svojih tečajih. Na teh idejah smo začeli delati, in ko smo se po kratki prekinivti dobili v Sloveniji, smo neki dan skupaj ležali na travi v Iškem vintgarju. Naenkrat je Walter začel razlagati, da je prebral super knjigo – biografijo o Berlusconiju. In takrat je preskočilo. Vsi smo začutili, da je to prava tema, da je to točna topika za naše sodelovanje. In turisti so v hipu odpadli. Podoben preblisk se nam je zgodil z latvijskim kolektivom Umka.lv, ko smo na odru zagledali »Little Branka« (zimski pajac za enoletnega otroka je postal protagonist predstave *Show your face!*). Ali pa deset let kasneje ob obisku Haludovega na otoku Krku za predstavo *Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živelji*. Tovrstne ideje odpravijo dvome in na novo skalibrirajo kolektive. In nastane predstava.

P. S.: To, da so tik pred premiero ubili kontroverznega nizozemskega režiserja Thea Van Gogha in je Wunderbaum hotel odpovedati predstavo (o problematiki radikalnosti v kolektivih bom pisala kasneje), da so se o predstavi pogovarjali v Evropskem parlamentu, da so bili na premieri italijanski vohuni ... Vse to je del gledališke zgodovine.

Ko razmišljam o kolektivnosti, je prelomna točka v tem, kako stvar peljati dlje od premiere; kdo skrbi za postprodukcijo, kdo v to investira? Ali lahko tudi operativno delamo skupaj? Mislim, oba producenta skupaj. Kdo se odloča, ko odloča denar? Zapletlo se je namreč pri postprodukciji; predstava je bila povabljena na nekaj prestižnih, vendar ne bogatih festivalov, na katere pa nismo šli, ker je bil prevoz scenografije predrag. Vabili so nas tudi v Italijo, na študentske »low budget« festivale ... Takrat smo se pogovarjali celo o usurpaciji, da bi predstavo sami odkupili, uvedli slovenske igralce in jo igrali dalje. Morda to nima zveze s kolektivnostjo, je pa povezano s tem, da moraš v nekem trenutku vedeti, kaj imaš v rokah ter kakšno je razmerje med ustvarjalci in producenti. In da je postprodukcija ponavadi odvisna od posameznika, od »težaka«, ki hoče predstavo še igrati.

Vrnimo se k sebi: na eni strani je egalitarno odločanje o umetnosti oziroma umetniškem delu, na drugi strani pa enačba, da sploh lahko pride do kolektiva, pogoj za to pa je »emancipirani igralec« (termin Branka Jordana). Igralec, ki svojo pozicijo na odru jemlje predvsem avtorsko in se »vtika« v vse – v kostume, luč, sceno –, ima svoje ideje in stoji za svojimi stališči. V nekaterih situacijah so te hierarhije bolj rigidne, drugje bolj zabrisane in si soustvarjalci jemljemo sami več odgovornosti, prevzemamo več odgovornosti, po drugi strani pa je ta odgovornost lahko tudi delegirana oziroma se v kreativnem procesu zgodi spontano. Na tej točki je bil za naš razvoj pomemben Matjaž Pograjc, s katerim smo sodelovali v institucionalnih produkcijah in pri Betontancu. Matjaž nam je zaupal, da smo pisali koncepte, tekste, delali koreografijo, dramaturgijo, glasbo, sceno, video, sledili karizmatični ideji na različne načine. Gotovo smo se prek Betontanca že dodobra emancipirali.



KDO REŽIRA?

Primer Beton Ltd.

Leta 2010 nam je Nevenka Koprivšek v Bunkerju ponudila prvo produkcijo. Takrat bodoči Beton Ltd., družba z omejeno odgovornostjo, je skočil z glavo v prazen bazen. Zavezali smo se produkciji predstave, ne da bi vedeli, ali sploh lahko delamo skupaj, brez manifesta in brez metodologije. Imeli pa smo željo in ne-neskončno zaupanje vase. Proces prve predstave *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo*, gledano retrogradno, je proizvedel prvi postulat Beton Ltd., in sicer da odra ne bomo uporabljali kot platformo za lastne igralske eskapade (pokaži, kaj znaš, česar ti drugje ne dajo za delat), drug na drugem ne bomo izvajali režiserke hierarhije, drug drugega ne bomo režirali. Vendar je pomembno, da govorimo o sebi. Na tem mestu se seveda, ob kolektivnem podpisovanju umetnosti gledaliških ustvarjalcev, takoj postavi vprašanje, kdo režira. To, da ni režiserja, ne pomeni odsotnosti režije. Režija je režim ustvarjanja. Hvala, Dragan Živadinov.

Po premeri predstave *Tam daleč stran: uvod v ego-logijo* kot skupina nismo imeli produksijskega načrta, niti se nismo sformalizirali (ustanovili zavoda ali društva), skupino smo takrat jemali kot izlet, kot zatočišče pred hiperprodukcijo gledališča. Potem pa smo dobili povabilo Matjaža Bergerja iz Anton Podbevšek Teatra, da tam naredimo produkcijo na temo Beckettovih *Neimenljivih*. Izkušnja našega medsebojnega sodelovanja je bila tako pozitivna, da smo k sodelovanju povabili kolegico Dašo Doberšek, s katero smo velikokrat stali na odru in smo jo vabili že k soustvarjanju prve predstave. Naša naravna povezanost, zaupanje, fluid so se izkazali za nevirulentne. Mogoče smo se premalo pogovarjali, mogoče smo si sodelovanje interpretirali napačno, temeljna ugotovitev pa je bila, da kolektiv absolutno ni v egalitarnosti idej, da se ideje ne bodo izvajale samo zato, ker smo soustvarjalci v enakopravnih pozicijah, ampak da mora iti vsaka ideja prek vrtinca preizprševanj (iz različnih perspektiv), da bi bila na koncu izvedena.

In da kolektiv ni vsota njegovih posameznih delov. Ampak več.

Leto kasneje, leta 2013, smo ustvarili predstavo *Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živelj*, v kateri smo se vrnili k svoji osnovni celici (Branko, Primož, Katarina). Drugič sta z nami sodelovala Toni Soprano Meneglejte in 0045 kot scenografa, Jure Vlahovič je bil kot glasbenik z nami od začetka, prav tako Andreja Kopač, dramaturginja, in Mateja Benedetti, kostumografinja. V predstavi se nam je pridružil še glasbenik Janez Weiss. Gre za uspešno predstavo, ki se vse od tedaj še vedno igra, vsak december. Naslednje leto smo k sodelovanju ob obdelavi Camusovega eseja *Uporni človek* povabili tri filmske režiserje: Roka Bička, Klemna Dvornika in Žigo Virca. Vsakemu smo priskrbeli budžet za kratki film, ki je bil vključen v predstavo. Morda je bila že takrat podzavestna želja po širitvi kolektiva, po ponovnem poskusu. Vendar ta komunikacija ni stekla, režiserji so svoje delo opravili več kot korektno, vendar kasneje nismo več sodelovali. Morda je bil naš pristop napačen, morda je bila tema preveč določena, da bi lahko vstopili v model soustvarjanja. Morda je postavljen kolektiv z zgodovino že ustvarjenih predstav neprebojna membrana za nove sodelavce. Smo se ujeli v past?



PROBLEMATIKA INTERPRETACIJE AVTORSKEGA VREDNOTENJA

Primer: Brodar-Novak-Stegnar

V istem časovnem obdobju sem postala del še enega kolektiva: Brodar, Novak, Stegnar.

Med letoma 2011 in 2017 smo v gledališču Glej soustvarili tri predstave; *Jure Novak: Zato sem srečen, Katarina po naročilu in Orgija*. Že po izobrazbi smo imeli drugačne vstopne točke: dramaturginja, režiser, igralka. V nehierarhičnost smo vstopali počasi in z jasno metodologijo. Na začetku je na odru stal samo Jure, ki je prinesel tudi vsebino za prvi del, nato sva bila na njem oba, sama sem prinesla temo, na koncu, pri *Orgiji*, pa smo bili na odru vsi trije, temo je prinesla Urška. Odgovornosti smo si med procesom razporejali egalitarno, tik pred finišem pa je Jure ponavadi prevzel režiserska delegiranja glede luči in jakosti zvoka. Z Urško sva mu to z veseljem prepustili. Pri egalitarnih pozicijah se kaže problem izčrpavanja in kroženja informacij. Morda bi bili učinkovitejši, če bi bile naše odgovornosti bolj omejene. Sicer pa je bil kolektiv obenem tudi nujnost, ki ga je izpogojevala finančna situacija za vsako produkcijo. Prej sem govorila o problematiki avtorskega vrednotenja dela posameznikov, tu pa se pojavi tudi problem interpretacije. Čeprav je bilo jasno napisano, da smo vsi soustvarjali, so si mediji to večinoma interpretirali po svoje in za izjave zahtevali Novaka, ki je po izobrazbi režiser. Naju z Urško so se novinarji izogibali, ker sva nekompetentni, ženski? Južneje ko smo igrali, več je bilo patriarhalnih pogledov na naš kolektiv.

RAZREDNI BOJ?

Primer: Nova Pošta

Projekt *Nova Pošta* se je dogajal v sezoni 2017/2018 v koprodukciji Slovenskega mladinskega gledališča in Maske. Šlo je za eksperimentalni projekt; raziskovalen na ravni ustvarjanja in umetniškega izraza, in za nov produkcijski model. Tриje režiserji (Janez Janša, Sebastijan Horvat, Žiga Divjak) so iniciirali projekt in vanj povabili osem performerjev: Primoža Bezjak, Iztoka Drabika Juga, Uroša Kaurina, Gregorja Zorca, Vita Weisa, Dašo Doberšek, Aljo Kapun, Katarino Stegnar, dramaturginjo Urško Brodar, producentko Tino Dobnik in tehničnega vodjo Mateja Marinčka. Vsi naj bi celo sezono posvečali osmišljjanju umetniškega delovanja v družbenem kontekstu. Šlo je za idejo, da štirinajst ljudi celo leto skupaj dela in se hitro odziva na dnevne in družbene probleme, forma izraza (predstava, razstava, okrogla miza, intervencija, performans) pa tudi ni bila strogo določena. Prva predpostavka je seveda bila, da imamo ta privilegij, da visimo skupaj in ne naredimo nič: »Končni produkt ni pomemben. Lahko ga tudi ni.« Zveni znano? In smo v osmih mesecih ustvarili deset dogodkov in eno delavnico. Tam smo viseli in delali. Glavni problem je bil vstop v kolektiv, in ta problem se pojavi vedno, če si s pozicije moči predstavljaš, da je biti v kolektivu to, da so člani pripravljeni delati vse in ob vsakršnih urah. Tudi tisto, kar je povsem v neskladju z njihovim delovanjem, brez preizpraševanja kolektivnosti in odnosov. Na drugi strani pa je denimo igralec z nizko pozicijo in željo, da bo lahko končno prisostvoval odločanju. Ob tem se hitro izkaže, da ga »gospodar« ne dojema kot kompetentnega. V vstopni točki, v pričakovanjih, se stvar bistveno razlikuje v tem, s katere strani privilegija (odra) jo pogledaš.

V bistvu gre pri tovrstnih situacijah za razredni boj.

Izsek iz pogovora, ko sva o *Novi Pošti* modrovala z Gregorjem Zorcem.

»Meni se je zdelo problematično, da je vsak prišel na Pošto s svojimi pričakovanji. Nismo imeli skupnih pričakovanj. Na živce mi je šlo, da se je ogromno govorilo o novem produkcijskem



modelu, jaz pa nisem imel pojma, kaj to je. In kaj je to bilo? Tam so trije režiserji, vsak ima svoj projekt, ki bi ga rad 'sfural', in če ta projekt slučajno ne steče, je tam producent, ki reče, da se je režiser k temu zavezal in da projekt mora biti narejen oziroma javno predstavljen, in potem so tam igralci, ki 'razžaljeni in ponižani' do polnoči pijajo pivo in modrujejo, kaj bo iz tega. Je to kaj novega? Pričakoval sem, da bomo našli skupno kreativno erogeno cono, iz katere bodo potem, ob super pogojih, ki smo jih imeli, kar brstele produkcije raznoraznih formatov. Želel sem si, da bi bil edini 'befel' ideja. Mi pa smo bili umetno sestavljeni in smo za vsak premik porabili ogromno časa.«¹

¹ Celoten pogovor je zapisan v zborniku SMG Ljubljana z naslovom Prva petletka.

Morda je največja tragika koncepta v tem, da se ni nadaljeval. Vsi smo se strinjali, da bi lahko šele po tem peklenškem letu prilagajanja, konfliktov, hiperprodukcije, odpadanja članov zaživeli in ustvarjali kot pravi kolektiv. Naslednjo sezono (2019) smo nekako nadaljevali preizkus kolektivnosti na Novi Pošti v okviru Festivala performansa. Ogrodje je bilo trdno postavljeno; vsebina in koncept določena, denar razdeljen, sodelavci izbrani. Vendar se je metodologija dela tokrat izkazala za izjemno kolektivno; ekipa je vsakega člana na neki način »mentorirala«; estetsko in vsebinsko smo tehtali ideje, si pomagali pri izvedbah in organizaciji. Odločitev pa je bila prepuščena avtorju. In seveda tudi odgovornost za vsak posamični performans. Na drugem Festivalu performansa (2020) pa se je zgodil premik. Enakopravne (tokrat samo članice) smo se v procesu odločile, da bomo naredile samo en performans, skupinsko izjavo. Za dokončanje ideje smo si vzele ogromno časa, premišljale različne vsebine, in ko je prava ideja prišla, je zazvenela med vsemi. Karizmatična ideja. Podpisale smo se skupaj.

Drugo dejstvo pa je to, da se umetniško nismo pozname, nekatere nismo še nikoli sodelovale, zato je bila energija med nami visoka. Ker ne padeš v ustaljene vzorce ustvarjanja, ne veš, kaj pričakovati od drugega. Membran ni bilo treba prebijati. Tovrsten mlad egalitaren kolektiv pa ima gotovo problem, kadar se spušča na polje transgresije kot umetniškega izraza. Stopnja radikalnosti med umetnicami namreč ni bila enaka. Zato lahko z gotovostjo trdim, da lahko kolektivi tudi uspavajo radikalnost, jo plašijo. Lahko prebijemo membrane postanega ali stalnega sodelovanja, lahko presežemo strah pred radikalnimi idejami, prevzemamo toliko odgovornosti, kolikor je zmoremo. Vendar, ali lahko vsi, ki nefiltrirano prispevamo ideje, približno enako tudi tvegamo?

ODVZEMANJE ODLOČITEV

Primer: Forsale

V projekt smo na povabilo režiserke Lee Kukovičič vstopili brez fige v žepu, z »readymade« predstavo *Ich kann nicht anders*. Lahko bi rekli, da je ta predstava naša uspešnica, nekako smo z njo prebili mehurček in stopili na novo pot uprizarjanja oziroma samouprizarjanja. Hkrati je to prva predstava nemškega cikla. Odločitev, da se damo v uporabo kot material za novo predstavo, za nov koncept, smo zaznavali na dveh ravneh. Predstavi smo žeeli dati nova krila, jo poriniti pred novo občinstvo, in žeeli smo preizkusiti lastno delovanje v klasični gledališki hierarhiji. Zelo očitno je namreč bilo, da je to Leina predstava in da sodelujemo samo kot soustvarjalci, včasih celo poustvarjalci. Svoje kolektivno telo, Beton Ltd., smo tako prvič dali na voljo nekomu drugemu. Pisali smo nove tekste, se pogovarjali o konceptih itn. Potem pa smo stopili še na drugo stran Rubikona in bili »samo« še igralci. In čeprav je bilo tako dogovorjeno, me je takšen diskurz presenetil. Konec koncev so nam bile vse pomembne odločitve odvzete, instrumentalizirani in appropriirani smo na koncu – pospravljali scenografijo. Ugotovili smo, da tak način delovanja ni optimalen za nas.



NAŠE (NESIMBOLNO) ZATOČIŠČE IN ICH KANN NICHT MEHR:

Primer: Beton Ltd. v odstopu

Ne moremo več tako naprej.
Ne moremo več tako delovati.
Prostor je treba dati prostoru.
Zato odstopamo.
Ni sentimentalne zaveze.

V pričujočem članku sem naredila celoten krog – od problemov kolektivov oziroma avtorskega vrednotenja dela posameznika, interpretacije modelov odločanja, karizmatičnih idej, emancipiranega igralca, kastnega sistema do radikalnosti in odgovornosti ter vprašanja iniciatorja. Naj se vrнем k nam, »ponižanim in razžaljenim«, in poskusim definirati naš sestop oziroma naš kolektiv v drugem delu našega ustvarjanja – v nemškem ciklu smo leta 2016, s predstavo *Ich kann nicht anders*, radikalno spremenili način dela, ki se razlikuje od zdaj poimenovanega francoskega cikla (*Rečem, kar mi rečejo, naj rečem, Vse, kar smo izgubili, medtem ko smo živelji in Upor ni človek*), v katerem smo si za predlogo jemali kanonizirana dela 20. stoletja (Beckett, Ionesco, Camus). Pri nemškem ciklu smo se že vnaprej odpovedali literarnim predlogam, teme in vsebine smo iskali skozi detekcijo časa, skozi poskus diagnoze družbenih problemov, k temu smo pristopali izjemno intuitivno. Hkrati smo premišljevali svojo performersko pozicijo in odnos do občinstva. Celotna predstava *Große Erwartungen/Velika pričakovanja* (2018), pa tudi razmerja, v katerih sami delujemo, temeljijo na odnosu do občinstva.

Sama kolektiv Beton Ltd. še najbolj dojemam v koncentričnih krogih. Notranji krog smo mi trije, okoli sebe imamo kompetentne ljudi, ki poskrbijo za druge gledališke resorce. Naše zadnje predstave so potekale kot hibridni dogodki, kot samodefinirana umetniška dela. Ta »počasni prestop« kaže našo željo, da želimo naš kolektiv širiti. Da ga želimo revitalizirati, da želimo tvegati s širjenjem kolektiva. Tako smo v *Mahlzeitu* (2019) dali poudarek glasbi, ki je postala konstitutivni del našega delovanja. V predstavi smo skupaj z glasbeniki (Jure Vlahovič, Janez Weiss, Maksim Špelko, Marko Brdnik) obdelali soundtracke naših prejšnjih predstav in jih postavili v drugačen kontekst.

Odmknili smo se iz luči.

V predstavnini *Hoppla, wir leben, Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa* (2021) pa smo želeli obravnavati dvoje: razširiti egalitarnost tudi na stalna sodelavca kolektiva, ki po navadi skrbita za vse, kar je okoli nas vizualnega. Razprli smo obroč notranjega kolektiva, vanj vključili Toni Soprano Meneglejte in 0045. Po drugi strani smo si mi, ki po navadi stojimo na odru, želeli prestopa v drug medij.

Na oder nismo mogli več stopiti. Vsaj v takšni konstelaciji ne – kot kolektiv Beton Ltd. in njegovo natančno delovanje, za katero se zdi, da nima metodologije, ampak ga izvajamo vsakič na novo, ko nekaj drugačnega nastaja. Veliko napak kolektivnosti smo izkusili na lastni koži, zato jih poskušamo vsakič znova ozavestiti in radirati.

Beton Ltd. je bil vedno naše zatočišče.

Problem pa nastane v točki, ko stvar postane simbolno, sentimentalno zatočišče. Ker tega ne znam najbolje definirati, naj citiram: »*Spekel nama je omleto in se ko serijski ženin*



pozanimal, zakaj vendar nisem odplavala nazaj do preluknjanega čolna – svojega zakona. 'No, le zakaj bi plavala nazaj k nasednemu čolnu, ki se bo vsak hip potopil?' sem rekla. 'Ker ponuja simbolno zatočišče,' je pripomnil in skozi roglje vilic ošnil zlati obroček na svojem prstu.«
(Deborah Levy: Cena življenja, 2020: 54)

Odstopamo, in v tem ni nič tragičnega.

Treba se je zavedati, kdaj je konec.

Pristanek pa ni niti trd niti mehak.

Skupinska izkušnja, študij, soustvarjanje predstav, skupni referenčni prostor, premišljevanje medija, odgovori na to, kar smo delali zunaj kolektiva, zatočišče (varno pred hiperprodukциjo), ne delegirane vloge. In po drugi strani: več poskusov širitve kolektiva, a neuspešno, naš »fluid«, ki ni več virulenten, popuščanje drug drugemu. Hkrati popolno zaupanje in popoln polom. Divje iskanje idej, divji upor proti temu, da bi stali na odru. In večna vprašanja, ki prevevajo naše delo. Mešanje osebnega s političnim. So to morda simptomi krize srednjih let ali krize ustvarjanja, ali pa manifestacija meglene atmosfere? Ali pa je deset let limit delovanja za umetniške kolektive. Potem pa jih je treba misliti na novo. Kolikor nemogoče to že je.

*Kako ponovno zagnati nas, kako ponovno zagnati družbo,
da ne bi bila ukleščena v stare strukture?*

*Da ne bi podlegali sentimentalnim odnosom v ustvarjanju
umetnosti, da ne bi bili kolektivi le simbolno zatočišče,
ampak pravo zatočišče.*



Redukcija je
posledica
nezmožnosti
smisla živega
performiranja v
relaciji do
trenutnega
stanja v **družbi**
v svetu,
v katerem je

realnost
gledališču
in umetnosti
odvzela
temeljno moč
ustvariti
nepredstavljivo.
Tako kot je
nepredstavljivo,
da je
v Evropi vojna.



gesta

odstop

gesta

upora



INTIMNA GESTA ODSTOPA = GESTA UPORA: ENA NA ENA

Primož Bezjak

Žreb je določil, da bo moj voden ogled po predstavnini *Hoppla, wir leben. Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa*, z naslovom *Gesta upora*, zadnji. To pomeni zadnjo, 29. uro neprekinjenega dogodka. Odločil sem se za intimno izkušnjo, za personalizirano gesto upora – proti gneči. Za mir.

In tukaj, na povsem praznem odru se v tišini znajdeva samo midva. Ena na ena. Dve osebi; jaz in ti.

Brez varnostnikov. Brez stikov. Brez označevalcev. Odkrita. Intuitivna. Brez maske.

Iskreno – stopiva drug pred drugega.

Iskreno – sva sama pred sabo.

Ena na ena; med dvema subjektoma.

Ena na ena; med subjektom in objektom.

Ena na ena; brez kamere in mikrofona.

Odkritost je lastnost odkritega človeka; iskrenost je dejstvo, da kdo govori in ravna tako, kot v resnici misli in čuti.

Jaz in ti.

Jaz Primož, ne performer, in ti ... s svojim imenom.

Lahko me vprašaš karkoli in poskušal ti bom odgovoriti kar se da iskreno. Le na koncu želim, da ostaneš v tem prostoru sam, sama s predstavnino ter jo poskusit slišati, občutiti, razmisliti o lastni gesti upora ...

To je samo del pogovora, ki sem ga delil z vsakim obiskovalcem oziroma obiskovalko.

Svojo intimno izpoved ali vprašanja drugega sem namerno izpustil. Kar je bilo izrečeno, je bilo izrečeno zgolj v imenu odkritega govora (parrhesie) in bo za večno ostalo v tistem času, v tistem prostoru, v zgodovini. V predstavnini.

Redukcija je posledica nezmožnosti smisla živega performiranja

v relaciji do trenutnega stanja v družbi v svetu,

v katerem je realnost gledališču in umetnosti

odvzela temeljno moč ustvariti nepredstavljivo.

Tako kot je nepredstavljivo, da je v Evropi vojna.

»Parrhesia je svobodni govor tam, kjer svobodni govor ni zaščiten z demokratičnim konsenzom. Da bi neki govor bil parrhesia, potrebujemo tirane. Ti pa, na srečo ali ne, še obstajajo.«¹

Andrej Nikolaidis

¹ Nikolaidis, Andrej: Danes imajo ljudje tako občutljive živce. Delo, Pogledi.si, 13. 5. 2012. Dostopno prek: <https://pogledi.delo.si/mnenja/danes-imajo-ljudje-tako-obcutljive-zivce>.



In *Predstavnina* ravno z razstavljanjem skupnega prostora, časa in dogodka vzpostavlja novo raven diskurzivne diskontinuitete in hkrati prinaša konceptualni obrat iz *The Artist is Present* v *The Artist is Presence* Marine Abramović. /.../ Ob tem se zdi, da gre za neskončno raztegljivo komunikacijsko polje, zaradi česar ga lahko opredelimo zgolj po razlikovalnosti; v



katero se poslej vpisuje bodisi vse (spektakel) bodisi nič (praznina, votlo mesto). Lahko pa nastane – Most, ki razširja govori- co onstran polja uprizorit- venih umetnosti v »celost- no umetnino«, v monument stanja, ki spodmika čas.

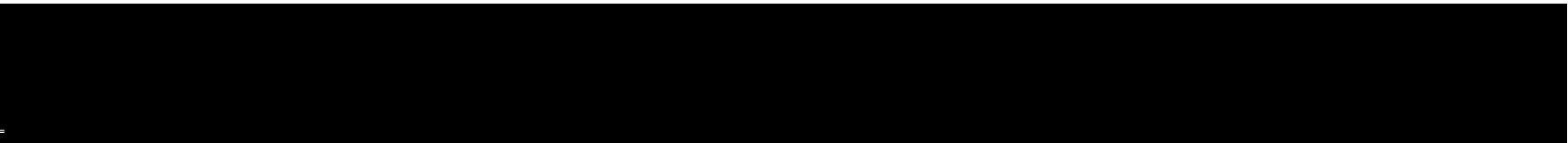


ampak



boj

Izstopa





ALSO SPRACH BETON LTD.: RAZLOMITI (SI) SVET NA TROJE

Andreja Kopač

In naposled so uvedli Predstavnino in ustvarili Most. Branko. Primož. Katarina. Plus Toni Soprano Meneglejte. Plus 0045. Most med gledalci in ustvarjalci, med njimi in nami, med prostorom in časom; med časom, ki nezadržno mineva, in časom, ki bo prišel. In oboje skupaj razlomili na troje: prostor, čas in dogodek. Prostor Stare mestne elektrarne, desetletje skupnega ustvarjanja in uprizoritev kot dogodek *per se*. Ob končanju nemškega cikla, ki je potekal kot tridelni uprizoritveni gestus, smo pred obličjem nečesa novega. Ena skrivnost je končana in začenja se nova. Za Zaratustro Friedricha Nietzschea je človek vselej prehod: most in ne cilj, vrv nad prepadom, ki na svoji poti išče sопotnike, soustvarjalce.

I. PRELOMITI PROSTOR: IZSTOP IZ HABITUSA

»To je torej moja pot, kje je vaša?« Tako je govoril Zaratustra.

Nemški cikel kolektiva Beton Ltd. (Bezjak, Jordan, Stegnar) pojmujem predvsem kot *gesto performativne diskontinuitete*. Ne nujno Odstopa, ampak bolj Izstopa. Izstopa iz cikličnosti produksijskih in postproduksijskih razmerij, iz cikla nenehnega vračanja k enakemu, predvsem k zapovedani *kolektiviteti* ter nujnosti *samoartikuliranja*. Morda tudi iz celotnega spektra notranjih napetosti, ki jih ustvarja (nemogoča) pozicija kontinuiranega delovanja kolektivov. V »zlati dobi« delovanja kolektivov v šestdesetih in sedemdesetih letih prejšnjega stoletja je bilo namreč združevanje v umetniške kolektive velikokrat obenem *modus operandi* umetniškega obstoja in preživetja, vidnosti in izgrajevanje lastnega jezika. A za vse ameriške gledališke eksperimentalne skupine skupaj, kot denimo skupine Goat Island, Oklahoma National Theatre, Wooster Group, je teoretik performansa in profesor Richard Schechner že leta 2009 rekel, da so postale del – *konservativne avantgarde*. In ker Beton Ltd. tega nekako ne želi – je ponudil svoj odstop oziroma izstop, ki je obenem *izstop iz habitusa*.

Sfera umetnosti ni avtonomno polje, temveč heterogeno mesto kulturnih, političnih in ekonomskih silnic, interpretacija katerih je vselej pogojena s specifičnim mestom pogleda. Bourdieujev koncept *habitus* upošteva hipotezo o homologiji med »*prostором дел*« in med »*простором позиций*« v polju kulturne produkcije. V ozadju ontološke povezanosti med *habiturom* in *poljem*, ki ju Bourdieu izenačuje, sama uporabljam izraz polje, se kaže povezanost med dvema stanjema zgodovine; v inkorporiranem stanju (tiste, ki je postala *habitus*) in v objektiviranem stanju (tiste, ki se je akumulirala v objektih). V skladu z logiko »odklanjanja kompromisov z institucijo« se je Bourdieu odločil (Bourdieu, 2003: 15) za pojem *habitus*, ki ga je premislil na novo in ki mi omogoča misliti *gesto performativne diskontinuitete*.



Bourdieu *habitus* namreč jemlje kot proizvod vključitve objektivne nujnosti, ki proizvaja strategije, ki so prilagojene situaciji, četudi niso proizvod zavestnega prizadevanja za cilje /.../ (Bourdieu, 2003: 16). *Habitus* zanj deluje po principu *praktičnega čuta*: gre za:

akcijo, ki jo vodi 'čut za igro', ki je na videz podobna racionalni akciji, kakršno bi si zamislil nepristranski opazovalec, ki bi imel na voljo vse koristne informacije in bi jih bil zmožen racionalno obvladati. Vendar pa takega ravnanja ne uravnava razum. /.../ Pogoji za racionalno izbiro tako niso nikoli dani v praksi, in vendar agenti veliko pogosteje, kakor če bi ravnali po naključju, 'naredijo točno tisto, kar je treba narediti'. Ker so prepuščeni intuiciji 'praktičnega čuta', ki je proizvod tega, da so dolgo živel v okoliščinah, podobnih tem, v katerih so se znašli, anticipirajo nujnost. (Bourdieu, 2003: 16)

Vprašanje umetniških kolektivov je zato nujno povezano z delovanjem specifičnega *habitus-a* kot vzpostavitvijo nove samosvoje oblike organizacije, ki deluje po principu praktičnega čuta – in ki ravno z vidika praktičnega čuta tudi sprejema odločitve, ki jih čutijo kot nujnost, a so hkrati odraz okoliščin. *Habitus* je torej neobhodno povezan z družbenim svetom, katerega proizvod je, kar omogoča spoznanje brez zavesti, intencionalnost brez intencije in praktično obvladovanje regularnosti sveta, s katerim je mogoče prehiteti prihodnost, ne da bi jo sploh morali dojemati kot prihodnost (Bourdieu, 2003: 17). In celoten nemški cikel je to prihodnost že anticipiral oziroma napovedoval: *Ich kann nicht anders, Große Erwartungen/Velička pričakovanja in Mahlzeit*. Čas za premor. Prosti čas? Sprostitev časa? Sprostitev toka? Ali *Quo Vadis?*

II. PRELOMITI ČAS: ZDAJ NE OBSTAJA

Kot preroški ptič, ki gleda nazaj, ko pripoveduje, kaj bo prišlo ... Je vesolje v škatli?

Vprašanje, zakaj čas dojemamo kot minevanje, je ena največjih skrivnosti fizike. V tem primeru je najpomembnejša teorija – stvarnost sama. In kaj v tem kontekstu pomeni dejanje diskontinuitete – odstop od stvarnosti, kot je bila ustvarjena do sedaj? Pred okoli sto leti je Albert Einstein revolucionarno spremenil predstave o času. Njegovi teoriji relativnosti sta dali času fizikalno identiteto kot delu *prostor-časa*, podlagi, ki jo je mogoče spremenjati in na kateri potekajo dogodki stvarnosti, piše Michael Brooks v članku *Kaj je čas* (prevod iz revije *The Scientist*, prevod: *Global*, avgust 2018: 98–101). Einsteinove ideje so bile torej matematično dokazljive, toda gnetenje prostora in časa skupaj, kot da bi šlo za isto stvar, se ne ujema z našim izkustvom. In medtem ko se lahko v prostoru prosto gibljemo, čas narekuje smer potovanja, zato smo ujeti v večni sedanjosti, ko nas nosi iz preteklosti v prihodnost. Relativnost tako daje obris odra, na katerem se odigrava stvarnost, medtem ko termodinamika pojasnjuje, zakaj ima igra vedno enak osnovni zaplet. Vendar pa to velja le za zaprte sisteme, katerih skupna energija ostaja nespremenjena, zato je treba sistem verjetno – odpreti. Gesto Odstopa kolektiva lahko bržkone beremo tudi v smislu, kako se izmuzniti vedno enakemu osnovnemu zapletu uprizarjanja, po drugi strani pa, da je edini način, da se temu ubeži, to, da se prostor odpre ...

Naslednja težava z »relativnostjo« naj bi bila v tem, da so zakoni, ki opredeljujejo zakone



obnašanja osnovnih delcev, neodvisni od smeri časa. Torej, če bi posneli te procese, naj bi bilo nemogoče trditi, iz katere smeri teče film. Edina izjema so interakcije med delci, znanimi pod imenom *nevralni kaoni*, za katere se zdi, da se spremenijo, če se čas obrne. To bi torej pomenilo, da čas ni osnoven, saj v kvantnem svetu ni časovnega reda; časovni red se pojavi samo, kadar procesi spremenijo kvantni pojav v klasičnega, ki ga je mogoče opazovati. Revolucionarnost te (kvantne trditve) sodobnega fizika Carla Rovellija je, da ima tok enake lastnosti kot to, čemur pravimo čas. In to ni edina ideja, ki postavlja čas v kvantno nevednost. Huw Price, filozof z Univerze v Cambridgeu, trdi: »Če nam fizika pravi, da intuitivne lastnosti časa, kot so njegov tok, še zlasti pa 'zdaj' in velika razlika med preteklostjo in prihodnostjo, niso bistvene za podlago resničnosti, bodo do popolnega razumevanja verjetno prišli samo s povezavo fizike in psihologije.« In Rovelli se strinja, da navsezadnje ni splošnega odgovora na vprašanje, kaj je čas, saj ko razmišljamo o času, nanj gledamo kot na en sam pojem, kar je gotovo narobe. Psihološki čas našega izkustva ali minevanje trenutka, kot ga merijo ure, ali relativni čas, kot ga je raziskoval Einstein, ali čas naraščanja entropije (kaosa), ali čas, zakorenjen v kvanti nevednosti. To je čudovit problem, pravi Rovelli. Čas ni absoluten, nima smeri, (še) ni kvanten, medtem ko Zdaj ne obstaja. Zato lahko čas prepoznamo – zgolj po razlikah (v času). In spet smo pri ključnem segmentu teorije znaka – pri njegovi diferencialnosti. In spet smo (nazaj) pri *performansu* in kategoriji *performativnega*.

III. PRELOMITI DOGODEK: PREDSTAVNINA

Performans ima prevladujoč in svojevrsten značaj, ki je v tem, da lahko še vedno ne pomeni popolnoma nič; za umetnika pomeni možnost, da dela brez pravil in smernic. Njegova zgodovina je kot serija valov, ki pridejo in grejo, včasih se zdi, da so precej nejasni in v mirujočem stanju, v različnih tematikah pa so v središču umetniškega sveta. Ko se je val vrnil, je bilo videti, da se zelo razlikuje od prejšnjih umetniških manifestacij. Tako ima performans še vedno svojo običajno vlogo, izjemen obseg gradiva v tej dolgi, kompleksni in zanimivi zgodovini pa kaže, da bo še naprej kljuboval enostavnim definicijam in da bo vedno sredstvo za prekinitev kakršnihkoli omejitev ali konvencij, ki veljajo za umetniško dejavnost. (Goldberg, 1988: 210)

Izraza *performans* v umetnosti se držita nekakšno »brezpravje in brezvladje« in določena hotena anarhičnost, kar je izhodišče, da performansa ne moremo brati enoznačno, saj se vpisuje na dveh ravneh sočasno; tako na ravni estetike kot funkcije, pri čemer [naj bi bila] je funkcija tista, ki določa estetiko. Poleg tega je imel performans, kakor navaja Goldbergova (1988: 7), pogosto dvojno vlogo; po eni strani je bil *demonstracija*, po drugi pa eksekucija praks umetniškega delovanja, ob čemer bi kakršnakoli definicija negirala možnosti performansa, zaradi česar lahko kot označevalna veriga prosto prehaja skozi različne discipline in medije ter preči različne vrste materiala v različnih kombinacijah.

Prelomiti dogodek tako pomeni predvsem vzeti dogodek iz kontinuitete predhodnega razstavljanja ter ga sestaviti »na novo«. Razstavljanje odra je razstavljanje dogodka, je razširitev časa, v katerega se poslej vpisuje – gledalec. In *Predstavnina* ravno s svojim razstavljanjem skupnega prostora, časa in dogodka vzpostavlja novo raven diskurzivne diskontinuitete in hkrati prinaša konceptualni obrat iz *The Artist is Present* v *The Artist is Presence* Marine Abramović. Vsak od petih akterjev dogodka je namreč svoj dogodek v svoji individualni časovni perspektivi, v poljubnem prostoru in žanru – sestavil na novo in ustvaril



razliko oziroma razlike, ki se poslej vpisujejo v največji meri v gledalca. Namreč, ko govorimo o performansu kot eksperimentalnem dogodku, imamo opraviti s perspektivo, ki je določena s pogledom interpreta, kar je podoben problem, kot ga ima lingvist pri preučevanju lastnega jezika. Ob tem se zdi, da je ločnica med *tekstom* in *kontekstom* zminimalizirana, skoraj zabrisana, križata se proces in produkcija predstavljanja, v osišče česar so postavljeni vstopanje *physisa* v polje izrekanja, prepletanje procesa in produkta in spremenjena funkcija gledanja oziroma pogleda.

Performans *Predstavnina* zato pojmujem kot dogodek diskurzivne diskontinuitete, ki prekine relacijo z uveljavljenimi načini gledanja in prikazovanja v določenem prostoru in času; kot dogodek spremenjene komunikacije in ne odrske estetizacije. Obenem je dogodek hkrati znak in označevalc lastne dejavnosti, pomen katerega (kot diskurzivne kategorije) se vzpostavlja ravno v zarezi pogleda. Ob tem gre vedno tudi za spodletelo mesto kategorizacije, ki lahko deluje kot *lapsus* ravno zato, ker se ne vklaplja v neko estetsko kategorijo. Tri zareze, ki določajo njegovo komunikacijsko razsežnost, so: prelom z diskurzom novega, zareza v pojmovanju polja (uprizarjanja) in vzpostavitev zareze kot diskurzivnega mesta, v katero se poslej vpisuje gledalec. Ob tem se zdi, da gre za neskončno raztegljivo komunikacijsko polje, zaradi česar ga lahko opredelimo zgolj po razlikovalnosti; v katero se poslej vpisuje bodisi vse (spektakel) bodisi *nič* (praznina, votlo mesto). Lahko pa nastane – Most, ki razširja govorico onstran polja uprizoritvenih umetnosti v »celostno umetnino«, v monument stanja, ki spodmika čas.

»Če hočemo govoriti o poeziji, ne moremo govoriti samo o poeziji,« začenja knjižico esejev pesnik Miklavž Komelj, s čimer vzpostavi tezo o *nujnosti poezije*, ki jo je treba po Adrienne Rich vedno znova poudarjati, »saj stari jezik ni dovolj dober za opise sveta, ki ga poskušamo preobraziti« (Komelj, 2010: 6). Gre za vrsto transformacije, ki je nujna, ko govorimo o jeziku umetnosti. Tovrstna nujnost je torej na strani *še-ne-obstoječega*, pri čemer gre za prebitje samoreferencialnosti, kar je edino, kar lahko vodi k spremenjenemu razmerju med subjektom in označevalcem, ki tiči v subjektovi nezvedljivosti na samega sebe. Po Alexandru Koyréju vsaka nova teorija, ki pomeni prelom s starim gledanjem, vsebuje določeno mero spekulativnosti, a je kot taka edini način za doseganje resnice. Tudi zato, ker je ključen Čas.

VI. PRELOMITI EPILOG: HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

Kolektiv = vsebina, ne forma.

Na področju umetnosti je že od devetdesetih let težko govoriti o kolektivih, bolj o sodelovanju oziroma kolaboraciji. Ravno to mejo so člani kolektiva Beton Ltd. v vseh svojih bolj ali manj razširjenih verzijah vztrajno zabrisovali. Včasih se ni vedelo, ali je kolektiv enako kolaboraciji in obratno. A ne glede na to so bili v svoji »preroški zanesenosti« pred časom. Vsaj leto ali dve. Vztrajno so iskali/iščejo soustvarjalce in ne mrličev, in tudi ne črede in vernikov. Tiste, ki bodo napisali nove vrednote na nove table. Katarina Stegnar za časnik *Delo* (4. 12. 2020): »Naša (moja) želja je širitev nehierarhičnega načina delovanja na več sodelavcev, predvsem sodelavcev, ki bodo z nami delili oder. Ta skok na glavo bomo morali kmalu skočiti.« In če je nemški cikel potekal kot *Apokalipsa* pred *Apokalipso*, ki napoveduje razvrednotenje vsega postavljenega, artikuliranega, argumentiranega, za izgon govorice, ima ta gesta za posledico glasbeni premor, ki še pred *Predstavnino* napoveduje: »*Hoppla, wir leben!*« In Odstop ni Izstop, ampak prek geste performativne diskontinuitete izražena želja po drugačni ponovljivosti izidov performativnih poskusov. V prostoru, času in dogodku. Ali



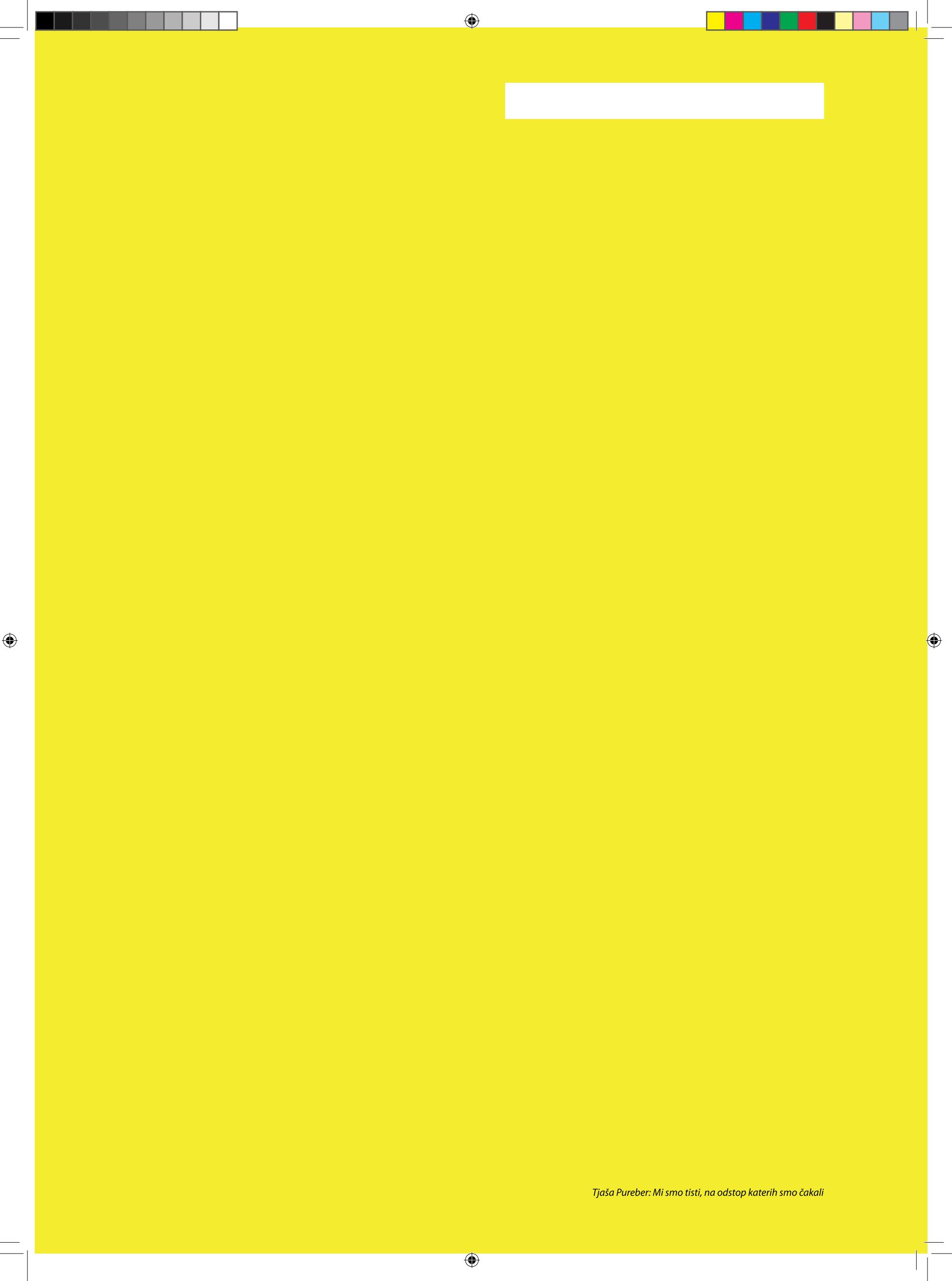
kot je rekel francoski matematik Alain Connes leta 1972: »Resnična verjetnost, ki je podlaga fizike, ni minevanje časa, ampak neponovljivost izida kvantnih poskusov.« Zato: vse najboljše za deseti rojstni dan!

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Če sprejmemo, da smo prišli do zgodovinske točke, od koder sistema z vnovičnim poskusom konsolidacije ni več mogoče reformirati, to pomeni, da bo temeljna družbena sprememba pomenila odstop od pozicij lastnega privilegia – in to kjerkoli jih znotraj družbenih odnosov imamo. /.../ Odstop kot ultimativno politično dejanje. Od spodaj.



Tjaša Pureber: Mi smo tisti, na odstop katerih smo čakali



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MI SMO TISTI, NA ODSTOP KATERIH SMO ČAKALI

Tjaša Pureber

Izhodišče tega zapisa je morda najradikalnejša gesta, ki jo umetnik lahko ponudi: svoj odstop. Zadnje dejanje nemškega cikla Beton Ltd. z naslovom *Hoppla, wir leben. Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa.* nas je soočila z odsotnostjo performativnosti, ki jo je nadomestila masovna instalacija v prostoru Stare mestne elektrarne z občasnimi vodenimi ogledi članov in članic kolektiva v odstopu. Vabilo k premisljevanju koncepta odstopa lahko razumemo na več načinov, med njimi tudi kot odstop od upora, resignacijo; kot kritiko nezmožnosti odstopa; in navsezadnje kot lasten odstop, ki je prvi pogoj za ustvarjanje česar koli novega. Odstop namreč pomeni vsaj dvoje: dejstvo, da se nekaj prepusti drugemu, ali odpoved opravljanja pomembnejše javne funkcije ali službe, resignacijo kot obup, vdanošč v usodo. Čeravno koncept odstopa pogosteje povezujemo z aktom prenehanja politične funkcije, se najprej posvetimo – resignaciji.

Odstop od lastne potencialnosti: resignacija kot strategija preživetja

Živimo v času, ko postaja vse očitnejše, da je zgodovinski kompromis vladajočega in delavskega razreda, ki je imel v drugi polovici 20. stoletja v severnih geografijah za posledico institut socialne države, mrtev. Kapital je kriza, v njej izvoljeni menedžerji zdaj tekmujejo le še v upravljavskih modelih družbenega razkroja. Virov je vse manj, krize, tudi najbrutalnejše v obliki vojne, se izmenjujejo v vse hitrejšem ritmu. Primarni stik z institucijo države je bil za večinsko prebivalstvo severnih ozemelj doslej vezan na javno šolstvo, izobraževanje, zdravstvo, socialo in kulturo, ta izkušnja pa se čedalje bolj približuje izkušnji prebivalcev južnih območij. Tam že dolgo edina oblika stika z državo poteka prek njenih najbolj reprezentativnih aparatov: policije in vojske. Za zaščito privilegijev tistih, ki bodo še lahko vztrajali v zaprti in omejeni skupnosti ekonomskega ugodja ter socialnih in človekovih pravic, bo tudi v Evropi uporabljenih vse več represije in brutalnosti. Torej te iste brutalnosti, ki so jo doslej v tej geografiji najbolj občutili tisti onkraj (državnih in ekonomskih) meja te skupnosti. Sistemsko nasilje je bilo doslej uperjeno predvsem v marginalizirano prebivalstvo (revni, migranti, izbrisani, ljudje brez dokumentov itn.), zdaj pa ga vse bolj čutijo tudi tisti, ki so še včeraj lahko živelii v iluziji koncepta srednjega razreda.

Po globalnem razočaranju nad nezmožnostjo elektorskih levih projektov (Siriza, Podemos, leve stranke in predsedniki v vrsti držav Latinske Amerike), da bi se uprli izčrpavajočim ekonomskim politikam varčevanja, smo bili priča globalnemu obratu v elektorski (skrajno) desni populizem. Ta poleg nacionalizma in neoliberalnega menedžeriranja krize hkrati s škandaliziranjem javnega diskurza in povečano represijo pri številnih ustvarja občutek družbene klavstrofobije. V trenutku, ko se je globalna desnica odpovedala konsolidiraju



volilnega ekstremnega centra, se je cena ohranjanja lastnih pozicij moči zanje bistveno znižala. Zaporne kazni, korupcija, kršitve zakonov, prekrški, sovražni govor, odkrita zloraba institucij. Vse metode političnega delovanja, ki bi lahko načeloma vplivale na (negativno) javno mnenje, v svetu, kjer desnica konsolidira zgolj še svojo bazo, postanejo sprejemljive. Taktike upora civilne družbe še vedno operirajo s koncepti politične odgovornosti, javnega mnenja in volilne všečnosti, desnica pa se je premaknila na nov politični teren, na katerem tovrstna tradicionalna orodja boja proti uničujočim družbenim procesom ne delujejo več. Nepodredljive oblike boja so izpostavljene še večji represiji in/ali gibanjski (samo)cenzuri in nerazumevanju ter so tako pogosto izločene iz širših družbenih gibanj.

Soočeni z domnevno nezmožnostjo temeljne družbene spremembe številni v želji po proizvajanju novih strategij in taktik preživetja bežijo v iluzijo skupnosti dveh. Resignacija v iskanje nekonfliktnega vsakdanjega obstoja ter pobeg od bremena nujnosti in pritiska proizvajanja upornih življenj vodita v individualizacijo, normativnost in repatriarhalizacijo družbe. Zato ni presenetljivo, da v družbi, kjer je večina resignirana, torej odstopljena sama od sebe, nikomur več ne pride na misel, da bi odstopil s svoje pozicije družbene moči.

Onkraj razočaranja nad nedostojanstvom vladajočega razreda

Hoppla, wir leben med drugim odpira vprašanje smiselnosti odstopa vladajočih, še posebej v iskanju njegove funkcije onkraj zadovoljevanja vsakokratnega populističnega ogorčenja vladanih. Monumentalna konstrukcija producira vsebino namesto performerjev, onkraj njih in proti njim. Z vrha se za sramotno hojo po steklenem stropu, ki jo lahko »ljudstvo« opazuje od spodaj, odločijo le redki. Nihče ne skoči/odstopi. Tudi če bi, bi se znašel, znašla v zaprtem labirintu brez točke vstopa ali izhoda. Zaradi dialoga z Betonovim *Hoppla, wir leben* v kontekstu postdjstvene resničnosti in politike sovraštva tako nujno postane vprašljiva pozicija izrekanja dostojanstva. Je gesta odstopa posameznika znotraj sistema, kjer razmerja moči ostanejo nedotaknjena, resnično vir dostojanstva zatiranih? Ali pa je odstop posameznega člena odločevalcev zgolj mehanizem za ohranjanje njihove kolektivne družbene moči? Kakšno dostojanstveno gesto sploh lahko iščemo pri tistih, ki v svoji vsakodnevni praksi izvajajo politiko izkoriščanja vseh, ki so v tej družbi potisnjeni na margino? Če pristanemo na tezo, da klasični pritiski na odločevalce skozi javno mnenje danes ne delujejo več, kakšne so lahko geste iskanja dostojanstva onkraj odstopa s funkcij?

V Latinski Ameriki so v drugi polovici 20. stoletja izbruhnile številne državljanske vojne, v sklopu katerih so oblast v več območjih prevzele vojaške hunte. Najbolj uničujoči režimi so se zvrstili v Braziliji, Argentini, Gvatemali in Čilu. Strmoglavljenje izvoljenih voditeljev je večinoma potekalo ob izdatni podpori Združenih držav Amerike v okviru njihovih prizadevanj za nemoten potek ekstraktivističnih politik in imperialističnih geopolitičnih teženj na celini. Te težnje so bile v kontekstu hladne vojne preoblečene v vojno proti komunizmu, ki so jo intervencionistično izvajali predvsem v Latinski Ameriki in Afriki, kjer so oblast prevzemali predstavniki delavskih gibanj.

Tovrstni vojaški režimi so vladali s politiko strahu, ki se je manifestirala v kampanji nasilnih skrivnih izginotij – zunajsodnih zapiranj, mučenj in usmrтitev v množičnih grobiščih, ki še danes obstajajo po celotni celini. Tarče so bili večinoma pripadniki in pripadnice delavskih in družbenih gibanj, še posebej iz vrst staroselcev, čeprav so bila prisilna izginotja pogosto



tudi povsem arbitarna. Številke izginulih ponekod segajo tudi v več deset tisoč. Po padcu teh režimov so bile v večini držav ustanovljene komisije za resnico, ki so bile pristojne za popis zločinov vojaških hunt. Komisije niso skoraj nikjer dosegle zakonske odgovornosti (ali odstopov) izvajalcev izginotij, mučenj in pobojev, niti niso bile zares ustanovljene s tem namenom. Gašper Kralj v svoji knjigi *Izginuli in vrnjeni* (2008) opozarja, da so bile večinoma namenjene zgolj za zgodovinsko kolektiviziranje individualne bolečine. Večina tistih, ki so v prejšnjem režimu zasedali pozicije moči, je tudi po padcu diktatur te položaje v politiki, vojski, gospodarstvu, pravosodju, policiji in cerkvi obdržala ter ostala nekaznovana. Institut odstopa kot koncept prevzemanja politične (in povsem konkretno) odgovornosti za krivice praktično ni obstajal.

Kot odgovor na stanje neodstopa so se najprej v Argentini, nato pa tudi v drugih območjih Latinske Amerike začeli samoorganizirati sorodniki, predvsem pa matere izginulih. Med drugimi taktikami so razvili *escrache*, javni protest proti nekaznovanju odgovornih in normalizaciji pozabe. Gre za kolektivne intervencije v javnem prostoru, ki imajo lahko več različnih oblik: obešanje plakatov in deljenje letakov v okolici doma ali službe odgovornih za izginotja, protesti pred njihovimi domovi, razkritje njihovih zločinov prijateljem, sodelavcem, sosedom itn. Včasih gre za dolgotrajne, ponavljajoče se prakse, spet drugič za hipna sramotena v javnosti, praviloma pa sta posledici vseh socialna izolacija in skupnostna izločitev odgovornih za izginotja. A kar je še pomembnejše, s procesom kolektivnega protesta so sorodniki žrtev končno postali subjekti svojih življenj. Gre za premik od politike zahtev (po odstopu), ki naj bi jo odredila zunanjia institucija ali lastno samozavedanje, do vzpostavitve socialne pravičnosti s kolektivno direktno akcijo, ki omogoča opolnomočenje njenih akterjev v procesu upora kot ultimativne povrnitve dostojanstva. Nobeno naključje ni, da so v Argentini leta 2001, ko je država ekonomsko doživelva kolaps, množični protesti, ki so odnesli več zaporednih voditeljev, potekali pod gesлом *¡Que se vayan todos!* – »Naj gredo vsi«. To ni bila zahteva. To je bil ultimat. Družbeni krik ljudi v uporu za dostojanstvenost lastnega obstoja.

Vsaka destrukcija je gradnja nove družbene situacije: odstop kot upor

Na tej točki ne moremo mimo reference, ki jo Beton Ltd. uporabi v predstavnini. Ernst Toller je v svojem poglobljenem političnem delu *Hoppla, wir leben* (1927) preizprševal posledice propadle vstaje. V času, ko je bila igra prvič postavljena na oder, so bolj kot sama vsebina ljudi sicer fascinirali tehnični vidiki monumentalne scenografije. Beton Ltd. obiskovalce vnaprej jasno opozori, da v prostoru ne bodo opazovali scenografije bodočih projektov.

Gledajo kolektiv v odstopu. Če ne bo šel nihče drug, bodo šli oni.

Ta pozicija je vse prej kot resignacija, vdanost v usodo. V času populizmov, rastočega neofašizma, vojne, kapitalističnega ekstraktivizma in vsesplošnega družbenega opustošenja, pozicija nevtralnega obiskovalca ne obstaja. Nevtralnost je v tem primeru zgolj sprejemanje statusa quo, ki marginalizira vse več ljudi. V tem svetu sta zato zgolj dve možnosti: v prejšnjih poglavjih opisana resignacija v vsakdanje življenje ali upor. Ali kot je rekel Toller:

»Lahko se obesiš ali delaš revolucijo.«



A kaj, če je za to, da lahko sploh misliš možnost drugega, nujno potrebno prvo (simbolno) dejanje? Je lasten odstop s pozicije moči (denimo v svetu umetnosti), nujni pogoj za ustvarjanje česarkoli novega?

Tu stopi v ospredje radikalnost geste samoodstopa. Če želiš karkoli spremeniti, si moraš drzniti zamisliti konec obstoječega, pa najsi bo to konec kolektiva, lastnega ugodja, predvidljivosti vsakodnevnega življenja, umetniškega izraza, države, rasizma, patriarhata ali kapitalizma. Če sprejmemo, da smo prišli do zgodovinske točke, od koder sistema z vnovičnim poskusom konsolidacije ni več mogoče reformirati, to pomeni, da bo temeljna družbena sprememba pomenila odstop od pozicij lastnega privilegija – in to kjerkoli jih znotraj družbenih odnosov imamo. Moč, kot nas opominja Foucault, namreč ne izvira iz ene fokalne točke. Zato odstop premiera, poslanca ali predsednika v resnici ne spremeni sistema. Moč se namreč razporeja in koncentrira v vsakem družbenem odnosu. Zato je nujni pogoj za vzpostavitev horizontalne družbe odstop iz odnosov nadmoči.

A kot opozarja John Holloway v delu *Crack Capitalism* (2010, 35–36) bo za resnično množičen odstop s tovrstnih pozicij moči treba sestopiti tudi iz samovšečnih definicij revolucionarnega dejanja z velikim R. Skozi prepoznavanje revolucionarnosti majhnih razpok v kapitalizmu lahko ustvarjamo kontinuitete, ki povezujejo skoraj nevidne vezi, ki gradijo uporno družbeno tkivo. Razpoka tako nikoli ni končna, vanjo sta vpisani nenehni nedorečenost in nemirnost. Je center transgresije, ki oddaja valove upora. Ne pomeni samonanašalnega prostora, temveč sposobnost prepoznavanja uporov drug drugega. Ultimativna moč razpok, kot piše Holloway (2010, 35–36), je njena zmožnost, da zlomi dimenzionalnost: prostorsko, časovno in tisto, ki je vezana na vire. Zato je upor proti kapitalu upor proti tej dimenzionalnosti. Obstoj kapitalizma pomeni nenehen napad na našo zmožnost odločanja o lastnih življenjih. Razpoka je projekcija v svet onkraj. Zavrnitev produciranja odnosov zatiranja kot vabilo h kolektivni kreativnosti.

Odstop kot ultimativno politično dejanje. Od spodaj.

Viri in literatura:

Foucault, Michel (2000). *Zgodovina seksualnosti I*. Ljubljana: ŠKUC.

Holloway, John (2010). *Crack Capitalism*. New York, Pluto.

Press. Kralj, Gašper (2008). *Izginuli in vrnjeni*. Ljubljana, Založba *c.



Beton Ltd.: 10 +1 leto

Intervju, 5. 10. 2021

Avtorica: Petra Tanko za oddajo

Oder

Produkcija: 3. program

Radia Slovenija - program ARS;

Radiotelevizija Slovenija



Hoppla, wir leben video

Avtor: Gregor Gobec

Produkcija: Bunker, Ljubljana



P O J A S N I L O

Sredi elektrarne je umeščen objekt. Subjekta v tej postavitevi ni. Ne pričakujte predstave. Ni je. Ne bo je.

Sredi elektrarne je predstavnina, kot jo definiramo sami. Instalacija, če hočete. Z naslovom Hoppla, wir leben. Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa.

Sredi elektrarne je sklepno dejanje nemškega cikla, zaključek kroga, ki ga je kolektiv Beton Ltd. iničiral s predstavo Ich kann nicht anders (2016), jeval pa z Große Erwartungen (2018) in Mahlzeit (2019).

Sredi elektrarne je konec. Je odstop. Odstopamo od svojih performerskih pozicij, odstopamo od lastnega kolektiva, od lastnih mehanizmov kolektivnega delovanja in pristopamo k ideji, da je lastni odstop dejanje, ki ga v družbi pogrešamo.

Tega ne velja jemati tragično. Saj je vsak konec pravzaprav konec konca.

Tudi ne velja jemati za tragično dejstva, da ne (z)moremo več stopiti pred vas. Tragično je morda le to, da se v gledališču ne da doseči egalitarne pozicije gledalca in performerja. V to smo morda verjeli pred koncem. Zato ne želimo vstopati v naša/vaša razmerja pretvarjajoč se, da je v gledališču mogoča začasna skupnost. Ta je lahko le del simulakra ali kot del igrarije. Zato nas ni. Še vedno pa verjamemo in upamo, da je legitimno govoriti izključno o sebi, upajoč, da ta vsebina govorí, načovarja tudi širše.

Sredi elektrarne stoji predstavnina, ki je enostavna in preprosta. Tako smo hoteli.

Hotel smo opozoriti na naravno, logično točko (ali obdobje) v biografiji ustvarjalcev, kjer se pojavi potreba, da se nekaj (korenito) spremeni.

Hotel smo opozoriti na točko (ali obdobje) v življenju ljudi, kjer se pojavi potreba, da se nekaj (korenito) spremeni.

Hotel smo opozoriti na točko (ali obdobje) v obstoju sistemov, kjer se pojavi močna potreba, da se nekaj (korenito) spremeni.

V svetu, ki ga živimo, ko je realnost gledališču in umetnosti odvzela temeljno moč ustvariti nepredstavljivo, se nam zdi prav, da vsak zase razmisli o izgubljeni gesti lastnega odstopa.

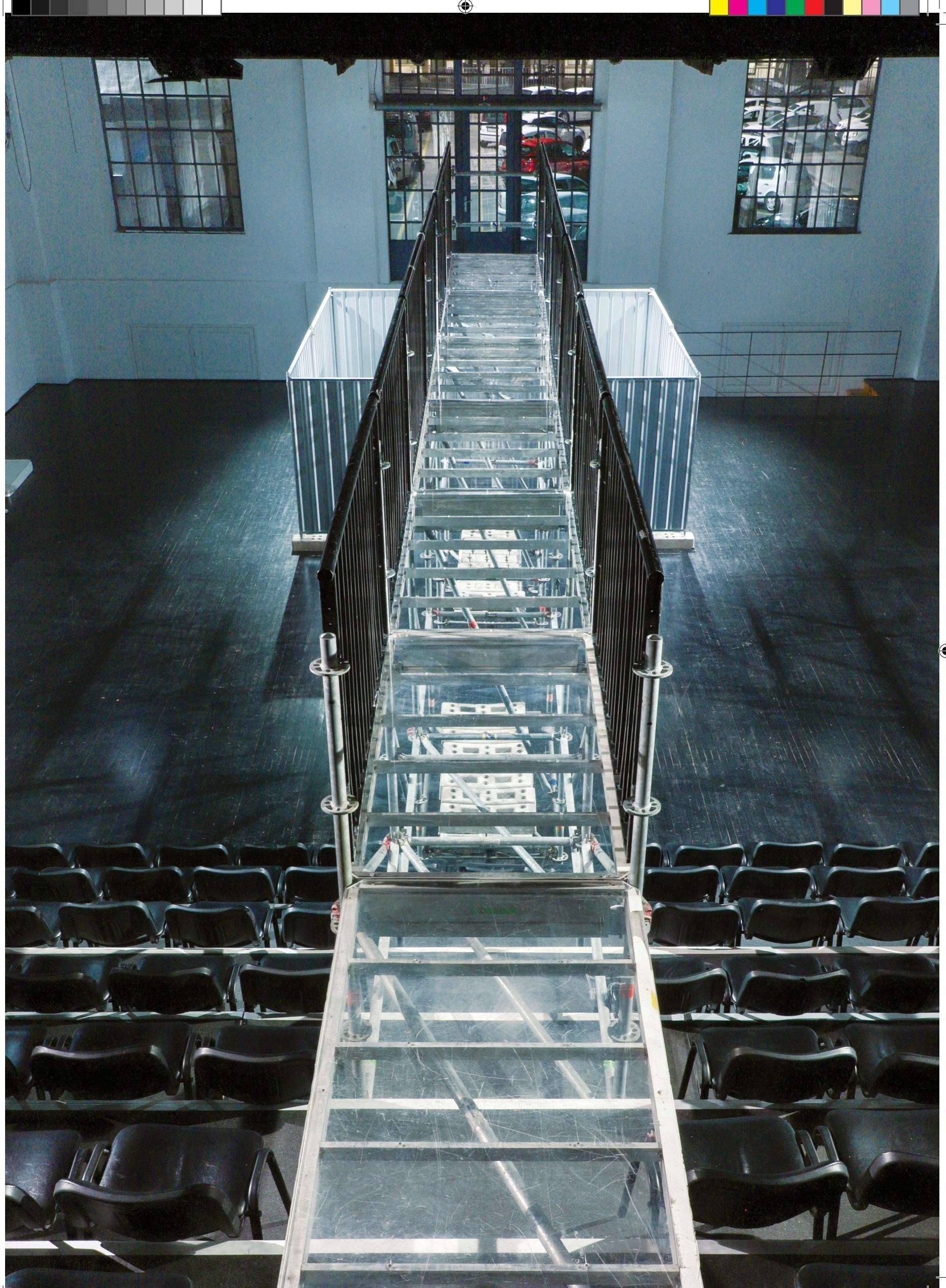


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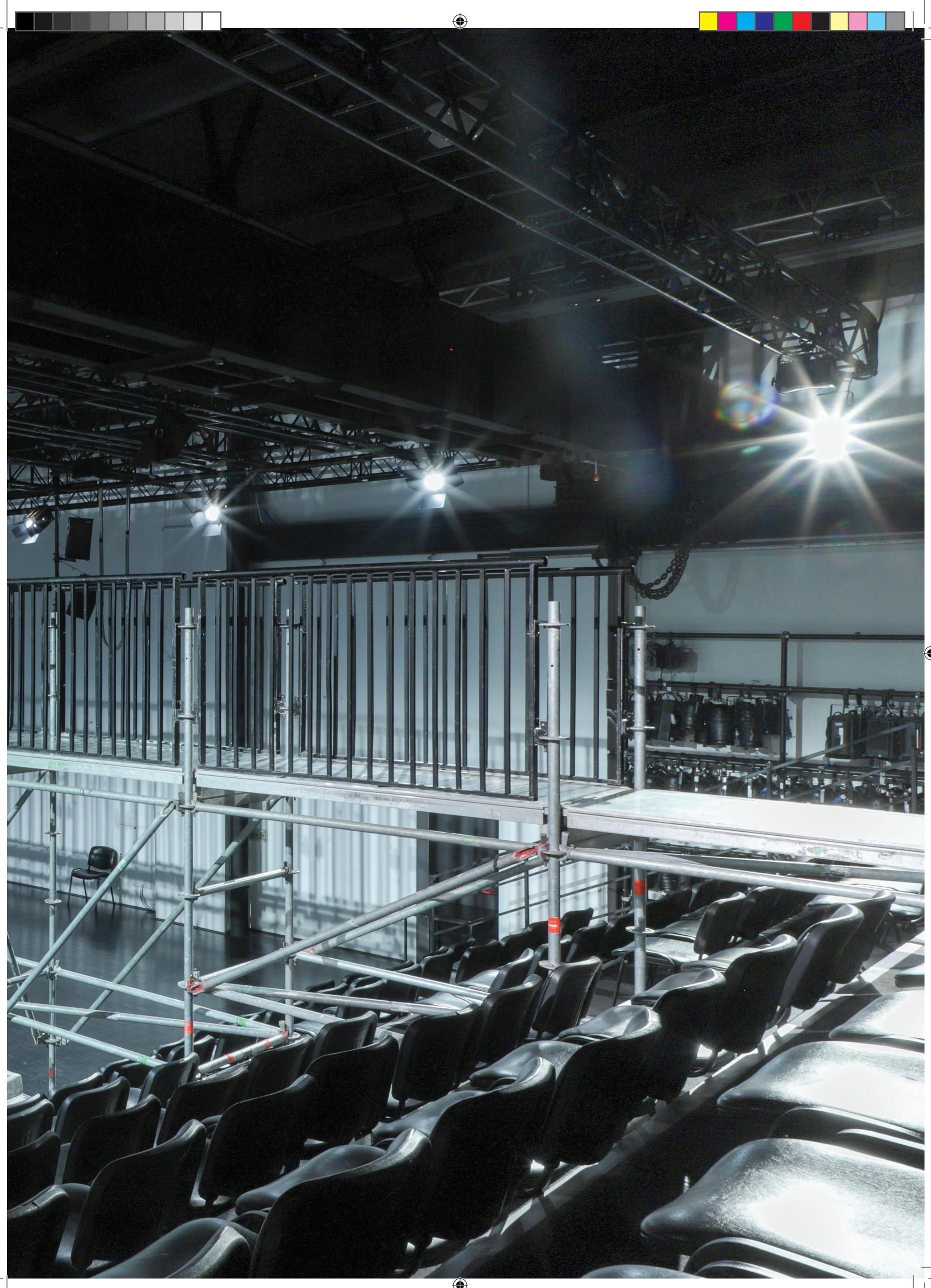


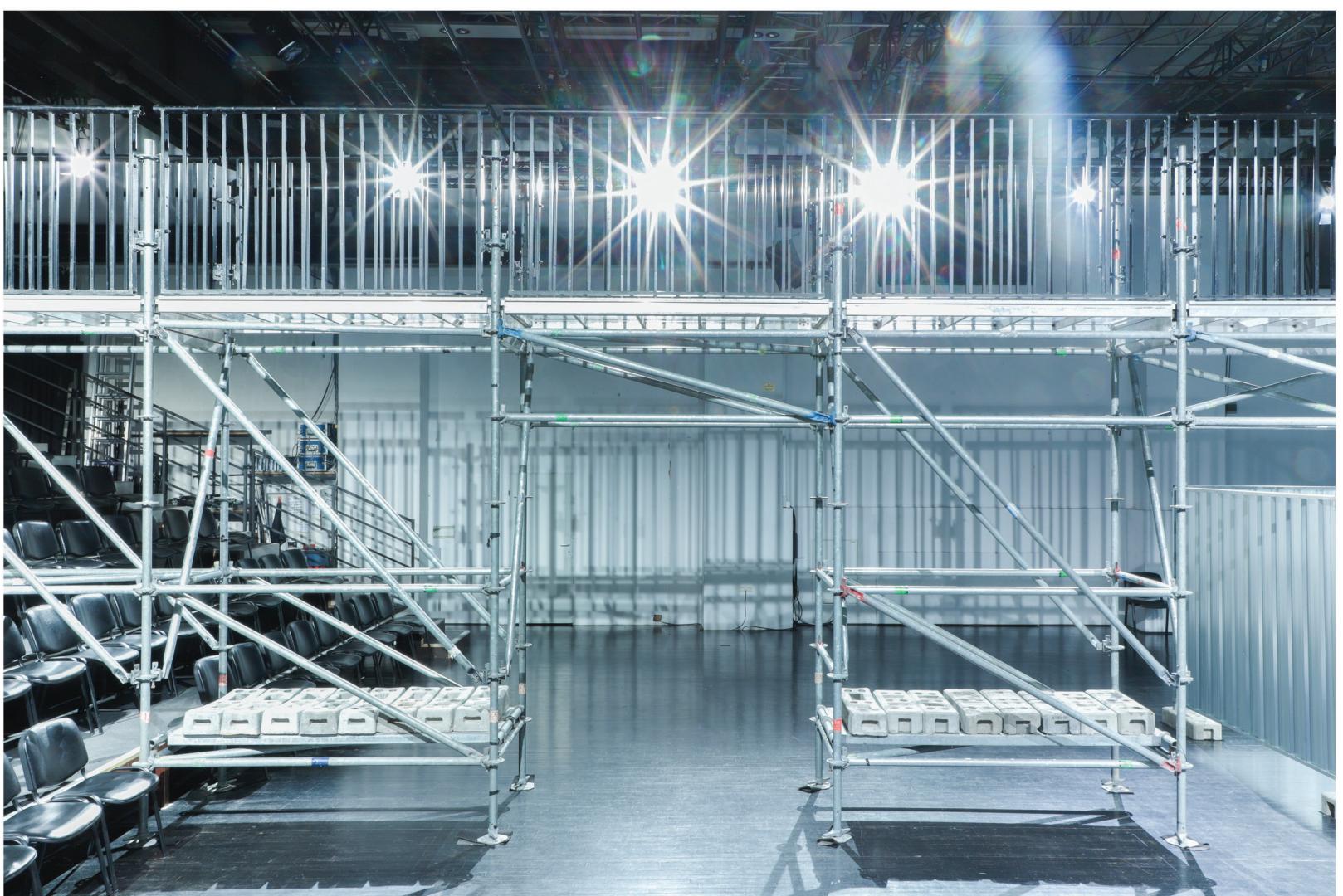
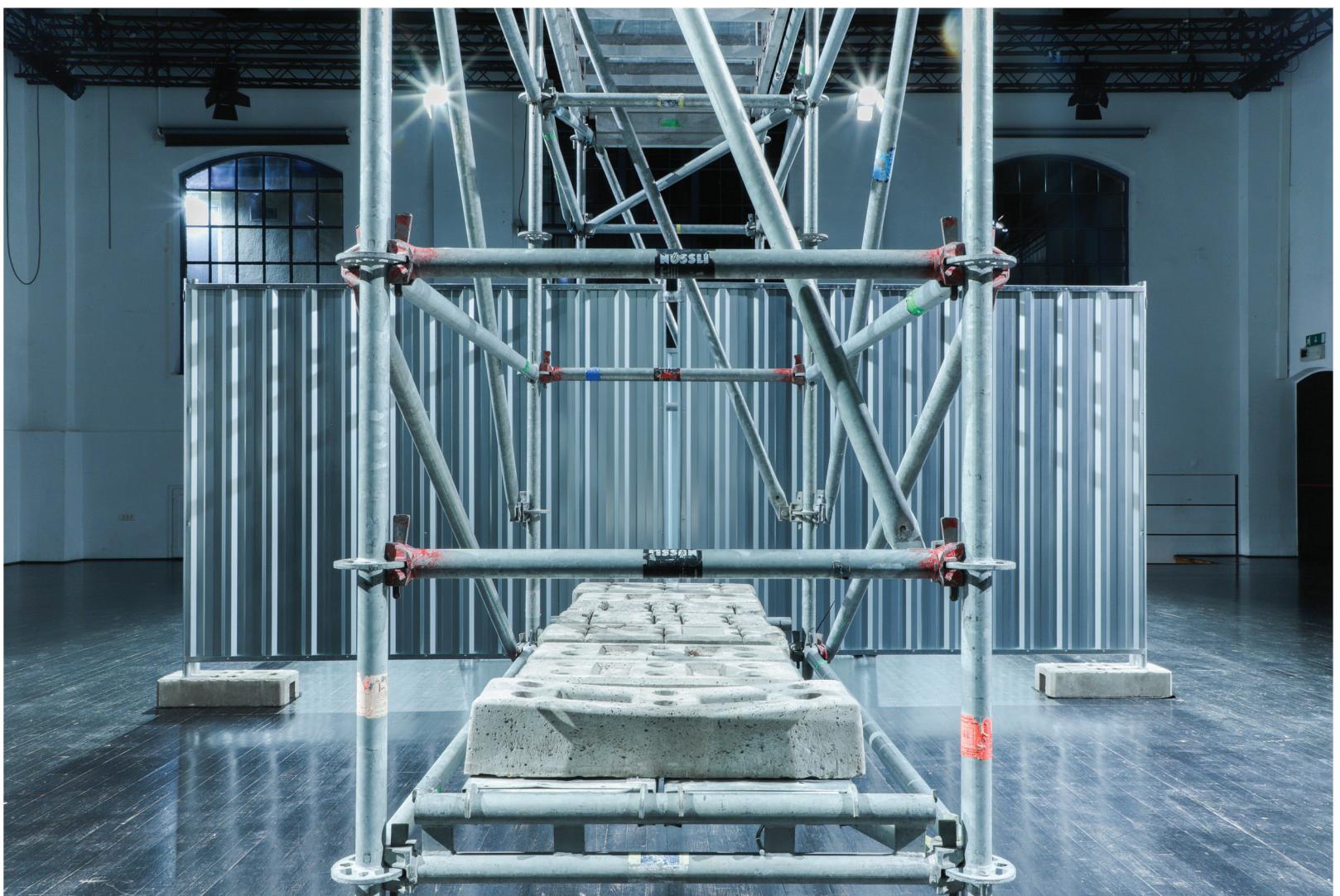


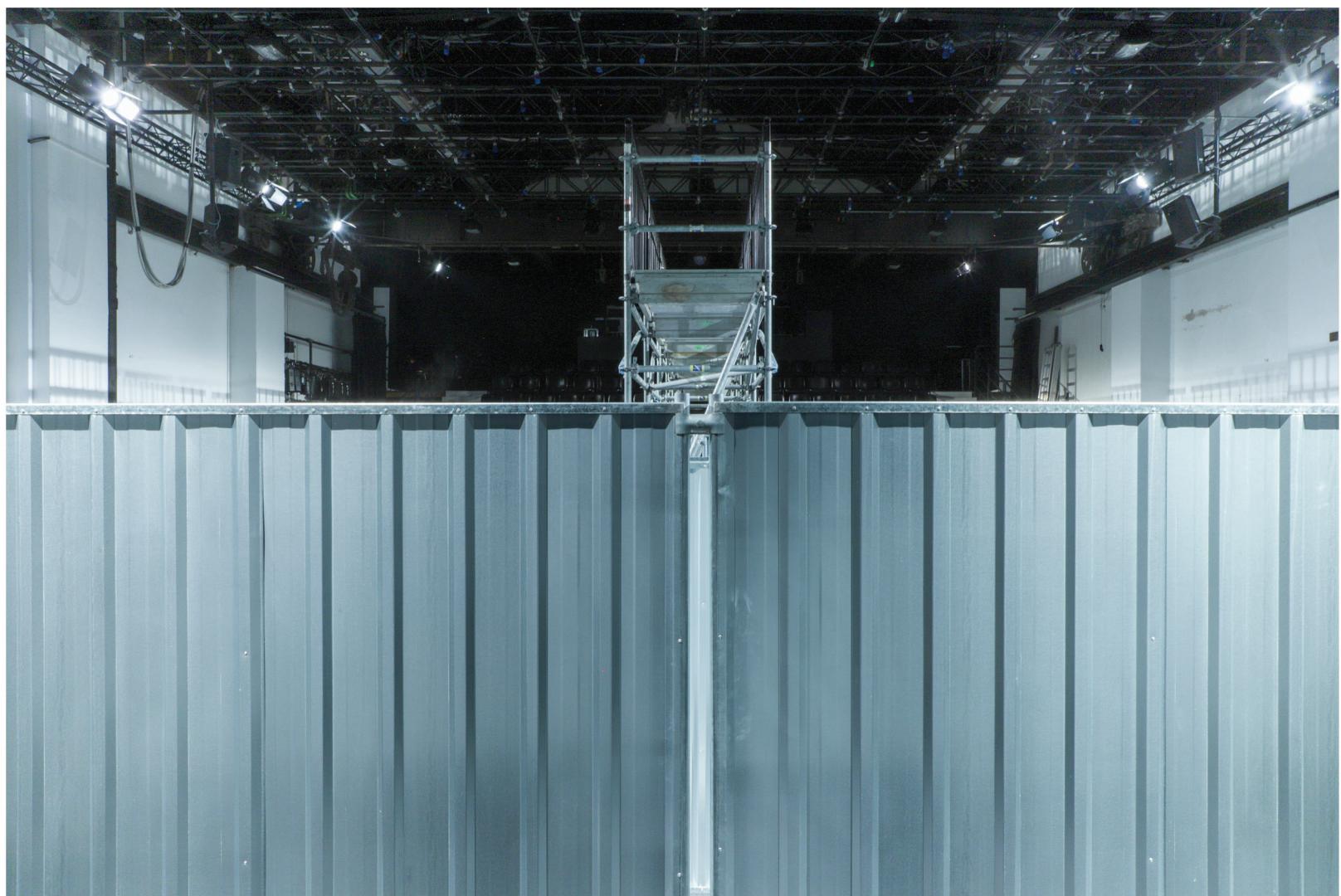
Marijo Zupanov: fotografije predstavnine / PHOTOGRAPHS OF PERFORMANCE :MARIJO ZUPANOV

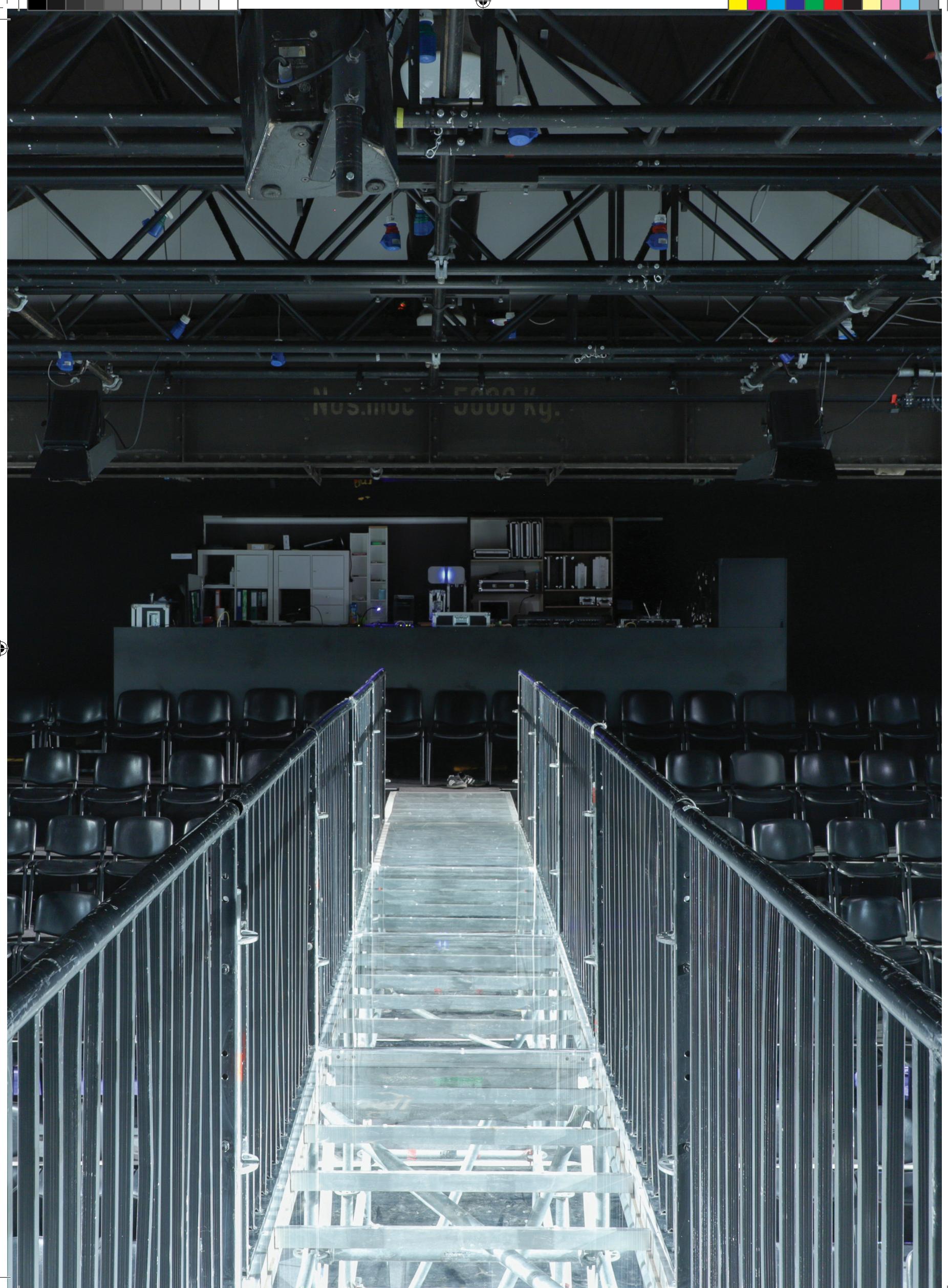














BETON Ltd.



Ljubljana, May 2022





hoppla,
wir
leben

the lost
gesture
of self
resignation



29

hours



Hoppla, wir leben

Andreja Kopač

BETON Ltd.: THE NAME OF WHAT IS PERFORMANCE?

Performance is an *Event* that lasted 29 hours and took place on 25 and 26 September 2021, comprising five guided tours by members of the collective, one of which was cancelled due to technical issues: Branko Jordan: *Beton Ltd. Collective's German cycle*, Toni Soprano Meneglejte: *Untitled*, Miha Horvat / 0045: *When I Became Part of Beton Ltd. Collective*, Katarina Stegnar: *A Step Too Much Theatre*, Primož Bezjak: *Gesture of Resignation*. They were accompanied by actions, interviews, photos by Marijo Zupanov and Nada Žgank and documentation. Performance

is an *Object/Installation* through which Beton Ltd. reflected its resignation. Performance is the Book before you that will become a growing book, it is a *Repetition of the End*. "In the subversive view that we live yet that we don't, Beton Ltd. refuses to settle on any previously established or hard-won theatre form (certain forms lull certain content), but this time, we chose reduction as the fundamental principle of art that resulted in the creation of the performance, as we define the work. It is not a case of bare or future scenography, but a form that is closer to an installation, which builds dramatic suspense through the personal interpretations of the members of the resigning collective."



what

is the

end,



ALENKA ZUPANČIČ: Intruduction to the end

"Are we living in the end, right before the end, perhaps after the end? What is 'the end', what does the word mean?"

(*Alenka Zupančič, the first sentence of the book, The End, 2019: 7*)

"The end, in its various forms, is one of the most important, essential modalities of our relationship to anything: to the world, to others, to ourselves as part of the world. At the same time, our general understanding of things seems to touch the entity of "the end" only on its edge: insofar as the end is always the end of *something*. Can we have any relationship to the end as such, the end in itself, its purest form, formal modality? And what is this modality, this form, what is 'the end as such', in the most general sense of the word? The end seems to remain in a kind of unbreakable relationship to what it ends, and that is its boundary.

However, there is also something that could provisionally be called 'the atmosphere of the end'. The latter can be apocalyptically dark or more cheerful, but in any case the emphasis here is not so much on suspension and interruption (of something) but rather on a specific form of life and time. The 'atmosphere of the end' has its own texture, its substance, which determines the way that we live in the here and now, how we are, how we 'endure'. As if we ended up stuck with the end itself, which we cannot get rid of so easily. – And in relation to this, to this substance of the end, the end as a suspension can be a relief, perhaps even a step in another direction. Could we say, therefore, that a true end, the end as such, is never simply the end of this or that, but is always a kind of end of the end?" (*Zupančič, The End, 2019: 7*)

"The world will definitely end. But that will not be the end of our problems."

(*Alenka Zupančič, the last sentence of the book The End, 2019: 222*)



1.

is this book
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tion or
an entry

Toni Soprano Meneglejte: *Untitled*

076



2.

*Is it a
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or a mo-
numen*t



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The final solution?

Beton Ltd. Collective's German Cycle

Branko Jordan

The wording “the German cycle”, more accurately “the first performance of the German cycle”, first appeared as a subtitle in 2016 with the premiere of the performance *Ich kann nicht anders*¹. The preparations for this project started already in 2013 under the working title *The Island of Tears*², when we applied to the Ministry of Culture for an artist residence in New York, in the time of intense preparations for both the premiere of *Revolting Man*³ at the Anton Podbevšek Theatre and the event marking the 10th anniversary of the Old Power Station, and just as importantly, in a period strongly marked by the economic and political crisis, during which more and more young people were considering moving abroad.

It all began in the garden of another bunker. I'm not sure you remember, you may have lost your historical memory, but in 2013, there were voices from all sides encouraging the young to move away as soon as they could. At the time, Jurij Gostinčič wrote that famous thought for Mladina: “The world is becoming a world of migrants. Is this a sad thing? No one said mankind is destined to be happy.” (Beton Ltd., 2016: 2–3)

Chronologically the second performance of the cycle was *Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations*⁴; that said, when we set both performances side by side when we were preparing for an Evening of the *German Cycle*⁵, it became very difficult to decide on the order in which to perform them: whether to start from a situation that takes us through a “seventy-five-minute flood of words” (Beton Ltd.: 2016) to bring us to the point where the only thing that matters is, in spite of everything, to squeeze the “old audience” in a hug or should we travel from an eerie confrontation with the endless auditorium of empty seats for the “new audience”, with an ominous sign “Welcome” stretching over them, to an illusory shelter, a bunker filled with an infinite number of deposited artefacts, to face our “seeming” overrepresented problems and anxieties as white, fat, rich individuals going through a midlife crisis.

After two “normative” theatre performances, which we performed quite frequently at original venues and elsewhere⁶, the cycle continued with a music performance *Mahlzeit*⁷, which was at first meant to be precisely that: an interlude, a break, a lunch break before we returned to the cycle, but, in reality, proved to be a harbinger of a certain shift towards something we could not resist even after resuming the cycle with the performance *Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation*⁸, a twenty-nine hour live event with which we marked the end of Beton Ltd.’s German cycle. And resigned.

In the middle of the power station is the end. The resignation. We resign from our performing positions, we resign from our own collective, from our own mechanisms of collective action, and embrace the idea that self resignation is an act that is missing in society.

(Beton Ltd. in resignation, 2021)

¹ Beton Ltd.: *Ich kann nicht anders. The first performance of the German cycle. Production: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiere: 26 August 2016 at the Tabor Sports Hall in Ljubljana in the frame of the Festival Mladi levi.*

² Initially under the temporary working title *Migrants*.

³ Beton Ltd.: *Revolting Man. Production: Anton Podbevšek Theatre. Premiere: 5 December 2014 at the Anton Podbevšek Theatre.*

⁴ Beton Ltd.: *Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations. The second performance of the German Cycle. Production: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiere: 30 August 2018 at the Old Power Station in the frame of the Festival Mladi levi.*

⁵ An Evening of the German cycle: *Ich kann nicht anders and Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations. 10 March 2019.*

⁶ The performance *Ich kann nicht anders*, among other, at the Week of Slovenian Drama (4 April 2017), the international theatre festival Prague Crossroads (5 and 6 October 2017), Konfrontacje Teatralne in Lublin (10 and 11 October 2017), KamFest in Kamnik (11 August 2018), FKK Festival in Kostanjevica na Krki (6 July 2019), at La Mama in New York (16–19 January 2020), in the frame of Trigger platform (31 August 2020); the performance *Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations* in the frame of the Trigger platform (14 May 2019 and 31 March 2022), at the Maribor Theatre Festival (20 October 2019), at Drugajanje festival in Maribor (25 November 2019) and elsewhere.

⁷ Beton Ltd.: *Mahlzeit. Production: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiere: 19 December 2019 at the Old Power Station.*

⁸ Beton Ltd.: *Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation.[The final act of the German cycle]. Production: Bunker, Ljubljana. Premiere: 25 and 26 September 2021 at the Old Power Station.*



It thus seems that it was not only the German cycle that ended with the performance *Hoppla, wir leben*, but also Beton Ltd. itself – as it existed for a good decade, as we thought it existed and developed since the ur-performance *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy* – and is (was) thus fatal for the collective. Beton Ltd. found themselves at a point that is perhaps not clearly delimited in time, that has perhaps not yet been fully actualised, but is a point in duration, which is probably most accurately described by the syntagm “Beton Ltd. in resignation”. In a space in-between. Between before and after, between yesterday and tomorrow.

But where did this need for a cycle come from to begin with, what marks it and how to think it? In his anthropological study *Art and Agency*, in the chapter on *distributed objects*, Alfred Gell says that:

many artists produce works in recognizable series, consciously evolving a distinctive treatment of a particular motif over the course of their career /.../ it is frequently the case that works of art form ‘moments’ of temporal series, not just because they are datable objects (originating at certain space-time coordinates) but because they form lineages; they are ancestral to, and descendent from, other works in the oeuvre. Taken together, they form a macro-object, or temporal object, which evolves over time. /.../ Any given work of art, in gross terms, considered in the terms of its maker’s oeuvre, is likely to be both a ‘preparation’ for later works, and a ‘recapitulation’ of previous works. (Gell, 1998: 283–284)

Before the German cycle started taking shape, Beton Ltd. cooperated for three years with the Anton Podbevšek Theatre from Novo mesto. After the performance *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy*, which was created at the invitation of Nevenka Koprivšek, director of Bunker, and was, truth be told, signed with the first version of the collective’s name, Betontanc Ltd. (Primož Bezjak, Branko Jordan and Katarina Stegnar), it was not clear whether we would continue working together at all. The collective did not arise out of some earlier overriding necessity or desire. It was a sort of a successfully performed experiment and a matter of curiosity whether and how we would deal with an unpredictable situation determined, among other, by collectiveness, the nonhierarchical form of organisation and the absence of the director – but not of direction (comp. Jordan, 2021). But at the end of 2011, we received an invitation from Matjaž Berger to create a performance at the Anton Podbevšek Theatre in Novo mesto (also in coproduction with Bunker), which was the beginning of a collaboration that yielded three performances: *I Say What I’m Told to Say* (2012), *Everything We’ve Lost While We’ve Gone on Living* (2013) and the above mentioned *Revolting Man* (2014), which can all be considered as belonging to “the collective’s formative phase” (Jordan, 2021), a series of performances created at a specific point in time and forming a thematic whole, which delineated the basic outlines of the methodology and the relations between the collective’s core members and can retroactively be called “the Novo mesto cycle” or, more precisely, “the French cycle”.

⁹ Actress Daša Doberšek was also working with the collective at the time. The performance *I Say What I’m Told to Say* was also our first collaboration with the tandem Son:DA, Metka Golec and Miha Horvat, who later, together or separately, worked with us as (co)makers in the area of set, video, light and visual design (of both the performance and printed materials) under various artistic names, most often as Toni Soprano Meneglejte and 007 or 0045.

¹⁰ Betontanc, *Romeo and Juliet*, Ljubljana Puppet Theatre; directed by: Matjaž Pograjc; premiere: May 1991.

Matjaž Berger namely accompanied his invitation to the Anton Podbevšek Theatre with a concrete proposal, a possible literary source for the performance – Samuel Beckett’s novel *The Unnamable*. At one of the collective’s first rehearsals⁹, a copy of the book flew through the air of the Old Power Station, before landing on the floor underneath the seats. This was a remake of a physical gesture carried out by Matjaž Pograjc in our ur-collective Betontanc two decades ago. If I am not mistaken, the book that Pograjc supposedly hurled across the stage of the Ljubljana Puppet Theatre, which ultimately led to the creation of one of Betontanc’s classics of the same title, was Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*¹⁰. In the case of



Beton Ltd. found themselves at a point that is perhaps not clearly delimited in time, that has perhaps not yet been fully actualised, but is a point in duration, which is probably most accurately described by the syntagma “Beton Ltd. in resignation”.

In a space in-between. Between before and after, between yesterday and tomorrow.



Pograjc, it was a demonstrative gesture signalling a confrontation with the dramatic text in the context of postmodern and physical theatre, ours was a gesture of commitment to devised theatre.

From Samuel Beckett on, we followed a clear course of direction. Our first next stop was Eugène Ionesco, according to Esslin the second most important representative of the theatre of the absurd, and his play *The Killer*, which was the point of departure for the performance *Everything We've Lost While We've Gone on Living*, and the last one Albert Camus and his essays *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Rebel*, which were the sources for the performance entitled *Revolting Man*.

At the time, we did not have enough perspective to be able to think about "the French cycle" conceptually, as "moments of a sequence in time", but did so pragmatically, from a repertoire perspective, as a guideline for how to choose the next area of interest, theme and reference point or find a password for the next "step". Nevertheless, it was a fully developed and well rounded performance cycle: it had a beginning and an end, a common geographical point of creation and commissioner (producer), clearly defined frames of reference and themes to research, and it also laid the groundwork for our (non)understanding of collectiveness and hierarchical relations between the members of the collective, collaborators, and ultimately of the performative strategy in relation to the audience. The German cycle should thus be thought primarily in comparison with the "French" one. In one of the public presentations of the performance we were working on at the time, developed in 2015 under the title *On the Genesis of a Project*, we wrote:

After the collective Beton Ltd. created their first performance *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy* (Ljubljana, 2010), produced by Bunker, to determine the coordinates of the real here and now, we embarked on a trip into the unknown, into the theatre of the absurd (Beckett, Ionesco, Camus). There is nothing unusual about this. We are basically actors, so it was expected that we would sooner or later devote ourselves to exploring the immanent in theatre, all the more so if absurd is in question, given the current context of time and circumstance. We do understand that we will have to return to the point of departure (once), to the reality that is nowadays accumulatively replacing the fictitious, the thought-up, to think about and re-think us, as we are, and the circumstances surrounding us. If it is possible to predict the future in the slightest, then this will happen in 2016. We will create a project about departures, about returns, about existence, which we used to call *The Island of Tears*, but now call *Ich kann nicht anders*.¹¹ (Beton Ltd., 2015)

¹¹ But there was shift in our focus and content already at that time, which was brought forward by the circumstances: "But then, with time, reality got ahead of us. Instead of stories from the past and stories from exotic islands (Lampedusa), we became flooded with a wave of people, emigrants, who literally cut our academic and theoretic migration at its knees, caught us in our coarse domesticity and produced a mass of hysteria, phobias, concrete prejudice, which made us, maybe for the first time, ask whether we were (still) human. Us and them. Because of them, but from a totally different perspective, we started creating a performance about us. Not about the fictitious, but the real us, such as we are, not as we pretend to be, act to be or should be." (Beton Ltd., 2015)

¹² The entire sentence Luther allegedly uttered is as follows: "Hier stehe ich. Ich kann nicht anders. Gott, helfe mir, Amen."

¹³ Working behind this same table produced not only the suggestion for the title but also the idea that this could be the first in a series of performances, that we could create a cycle, although we did not define its final scope, but we did start calling it: German.

We came up with the title for the emerging new project, the first after "returning from Novo mesto", which is a quote taken from the famous speech by the German reformer Martin Luther, who is said to have spoken the words at the Diet of Worms in 1521¹² – quite incidentally, in a flash, sitting together behind the table at one of the meetings at Bunker¹³. But this brainwave, this flash of an idea actually belongs to the arsenal of often intuitive *charismatic ideas*, as Katarina Stegnar calls them, and which in their essence reveal how we arrive at decisions (artistic as well as organisational) within the collective. In practice, these ideas, proposals, thoughts seem to be quite like any other, but are, compared to other similar ideas and thoughts contributed by individual members of the group, immediately recognised as the "right" ones, they become common in an instant and have spillover effects on the content. The procedure of recognising these charismatic ideas seems almost religious, but is in fact quite banal, except that these ideas are not forgotten, are not



questioned and become binding, a sort of canons cutting through the creation process of each individual performance.¹⁴

If we set aside the content and meaning of Luther's sentence for a moment, the proposal for the title laid out four words in German in front of us: *ich* and *kann* and *nicht* and *anders*, which sounded right and exactly to the point; they were recognised as a charismatic idea and, above all, opened up and held the referential space, within which previously unrelated material started making sense and triggered a flow of associations that produced new material and so on. Germany, as a cultural and political phenomenon, was an inexhaustible topic in our "everyday" conversations at rehearsals. Especially Germany's foreign policy, represented by the then chancellor Angela Merkel and her finance minister Wolfgang Schäuble; the keynotes were: Greece, the debt crisis, migration wave and Syria. At the same time, this coincided with another reference, also, coincidentally, belonging to the German cultural space, which we were not able to contextualise until then. It was a reference to the cultural icon Marcel Reich-Ranicki, the most influential German literary critic of his time, widely admired as the "pope of German letters" (Ger.: der Literaturpaps), who died in 2013 (a few months before Jurij Gustinčič) and was recurrently considered as material for the performance text of *Ich kann nicht anders*. More specifically, his introductory speech to the first broadcast of the literary talk show *Das Litterarische Quartet* he hosted on German public television network Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen (ZDF) from 1988 and 2001 and the situation of the quartet he formed together with Hellmuth Karasek, Sigrid Löffler and Jürgen Busche.

But above all, it was a *charismatic* and *intuitive* content decision:

This is how it is: at one moment, of course, we desperately need a title /.../ and with the title we can really define what we want. And then this *Ich kann nicht anders* appeared /.../ and we thought it would be very foolish to translate it; but now, what does this have to do with the German cycle and with what someone wrote somewhere about us being fascinated with German art – well, I'm not sure if that's true, that we are fascinated with German art – the point is that /.../ you always work on a theme, but you work on it from different positions /.../ so here, we started focusing more on speaking in our own name and about how we see the time in which we live and what the problem of the time in which we live is, broadly speaking; now, calling something a cycle gives you the legitimacy to keep returning to and working on the same content. Very simple. /.../ It shouldn't be ignored that when we had our process for *IKNA*, Germany and Angela Merkel's policies were absolutely at the foreground of the public debate, so much so that we could no longer avoid asking ourselves how would all this play out in our space and it also brought in a whole lot of mental frameworks /.../. Some sort of intuitive coordinates develop and then you simply say: this is the German cycle, period.¹⁵ (Beton Ltd. v Novak, 2020)

If at the "origin" of the German cycle, the point of departure for our performative explorations still relied on "our literary writers and their works", in the new cycle, we decided that we would "speak in our own name" and about "how we see the time in which we live and what the problem of the time in which we live is" (Beton Ltd. in Novak, 2020) and that we will "think and re-think us, as we are, and the circumstances surrounding us" (Beton Ltd., 2015).

One of the advantages, but also a challenge of devised theatre – and the performances of the collective Beton Ltd. could broadly be defined as devised theatre – is how its authors are able to bridge the blank space of content. The so called point zero, from which this kind

¹⁴ Another such procedure of making decisions within the collective is called code "red"; it is a measure with which we call out and stop the idea that has no consensus within the group and is limited to the interest sphere of an individual group member and thus has no common value. (comp. Jordan, 2020)

¹⁵ Transcription of a recorded conversation.



of theatre performances then spring up. Of course, artists find this point zero endlessly fascinating, as it gives them complete freedom and allows them/us to work on the topics and content they/we find truly interesting, but it also presents a dangerous pit as it may indeed conceal the actual arbitrary nothing. These contents are in dramatic theatre delineated with the choice of the literary source, the title, which is always already associated with a specific story, specific content, specific situations, characters and messages, whereas in devised theatre, this function is fulfilled by topics, often self-referential. Within the German cycle, the topics and the background were usually framed rather precisely for each individual "distributed object": midlife crisis, helplessness, impossibility of resistance, the salon left, infantilisation, the educational system, far-right politics on the move, community, participation ... themes and backgrounds that belong to the "loud decade", as the cultural journal *Razpotja* suggested the period be called, the decade that:

did not have the revolutionary spirit of the 1980s that led to the fall of the Berlin wall, or the liberal and reformist spirit of the 1990s, we will not remember it even for the devastating events such as September 11th, the entry of formerly socialist countries into the EU (and the resulting union of the European east and west) or the stock market crash, which marked the first decade of the millennium. It seems as if all these prior emphases resurfaced again in the past decade, had a little dance, clashed against each other and left us with quite a mess. (Kosovel, Lisjak Gabrijelčič, 2020)

Perhaps this decade, a part of this decade, was indeed "German" at least as much as it was loud? A period when the collective Beton Ltd. was staging "black streams of the postmodern, posthuman condition in the first part of the twenty-first century". (Sinanović, 2020)

Because, and here we stumble across an anecdotal resolution of the meaning of intuitive artistic choices, which reveal the real meaning, value, purpose and background of a certain phenomenon, let's say the German cycle, only post festum through a retrospective mental procedure: the day when the never entirely explained Beton Ltd.'s German cycle came to an end, 26 September 2021, was de facto also the day when the curtain was brought down on Angela Merkel's reign as German chancellor.¹⁶

It would be presumptuous to claim that Beton Ltd.'s German cycle is in fact dedicated to the chancellor, but the extraordinary coincidence of the timing of these two events, one on the global political stage and the other (from a global perspective) on the entirely marginal stage of contemporary performing arts, at the Old Power Station in Ljubljana, inescapably draws up "mental coordinates" that make you say (what you are told to say): "This is the German cycle, period", and points to the fact that soon after the final act of the German cycle came to an end, the "question of all questions" presented itself, as journalist Marko Biončina of *Jutranji list* called it:

how will we protect ourselves against the world Angela created without Angela. Even though Angela Merkel may go down into the history books as a key proponent of the European (as well as global) integration in the 21st century, the basic principle of her 16-year long reign as chancellor was, nevertheless, what is contained in the refrain of the German national anthem, in the verses of the poet August Heinrich Hoffmann von Fallersleben, Germany above all (Deutschland, Deutschland über alles). (Biončina, 2021)

This is another reason why we can agree with Gell when he says that "[a]ny given work of

¹⁶ Branko had his guided tour with the title Beton Ltd. Collective's German Cycle, which was held as part of the performance *Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation*. and discussed the topics covered by this essay, at the Old Power Station on Sunday, 26 September at 10 am (the order of guided tours was chosen by drawing lots when we handed in the titles). Before this, at the Muzejska street, which was for the duration of the performance temporarily renamed Beton Ltd. street, he exhibited a dispositif of a tea set made of Bavarian porcelain that used to belong to Nevenka Koprivšek, and offered the audience a cup of tea.

As an introduction, he told an anecdote from Salman Rushdie's literary evening at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin, he explained the context of the tea set (Nevenka as the initiator of the Beton Ltd. collective; the case of 216 separate items in a 24-place luxury set of China tea ware discussed under the heading "distributed objects" in the anthropological study *Art and Agency* by Alfred Gell and Metod's discovery that Nevenka's tea set is in fact made of Bavarian, that is German porcelain); the audience then moved on to see the interior of the performance (Explanation and object). The guided tour ended at 11 am.



art, in gross terms, considered in the context of its maker's oeuvre, is likely to be both a 'preparation' for later works, and a 'recapitulation' of previous works" (Gell, 1998: 284), especially if we believe Beckett's words from *The Unnamable*, quoted in the closing monologue of the performance *I Say What I'm Told to Say*:

you must say words, as long as there are any, until they find me, until they say me /.../ perhaps they have said me already, perhaps they have carried me through the threshold of my story, before the door that opens on my story, that would surprise me, if it opens, it will be I, it will be the silence, where I am, I don't know, I'll never know, in the silence you don't know, you must go on, I can't go on, I'll go on. (Beckett, 2005: 116)

However, it should be said that we mustn't be too serious and stiff with the meaning and the signifying charge of the collective's German cycle, that it is actually rather elusive, almost clever nonsense. In the introductory monologue of *Ich kann nicht anders*, we can read the following lead:

In a word, ein Trio, and the title Ich kann nicht anders. Martin Luther said it, in Worms, Germany. But in our case, Germany is but a sideline observer, things are for the most part taking place in France, that's why the soft melody and the cheese and a-chic d'Provansal and bottles of cabernet di papa. (Beton Ltd., 2016)

This is a quite commonly used strategy in Beton Ltd., in which whatever is established as fact (faction) can in the next moment turn into its opposite (fiction) and with which we essentially lay bare the illusion of theatre that individual things (and people and views and situations and circumstances) are only seemingly real, only to a certain extent, that they are transient and in the service of a specific purpose, the purpose of the situation or performance... Even if this and similar strategies have become part of the new reality in the post-truth society, a cycle of which we see no end.

To be continued. / Forsetzung folgt.

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Is now even the right
time, the right moment
for the following lines?

Is there ever not? And

when does it end?

When does a thing or
anything end, finish?

When is the right
moment? /.../ When



have I become a
member of the
Beton Ltd. collective?

Everything is the

Performance.

Everything is a part of a
joint mosaic.



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PERFORMANCE SEISMOGRAPHIC LEXICON

Q & A of Working in the Collective

or

When Did I Become a Member of Beton Ltd.

Miha Horvat / 0045

BEFORE THE SETUP

Written on: 25 and 26 August 2021

Content: Improvisation(s) and questions on given topics (an unsent e-mail to the collective)

I. COLLECTIVE – COLLECTIVITY – COLLECTIVELY AND – HOW?

How on the street, in a public space, in public transport? How in class, in university, in a restaurant? How at home, how at the same table, how in the same place? How during a rehearsal, how during a residency? How and what theory? What and how and when in history? How us, how us before, how then and how now? How to begin joint ideas, how to develop them, how to allow a free flow of associations, how not to limit yourself, how to limit yourself, how to write down document, and be responsible towards it? How to sign yourself and how to protect copyrights or how to be open, inclusive and clear? Are we a collective? Are we working collectively? Do we even need to question collectives, collectivity, and collectively? Is the mere fact that we are together enough? Is it possible and do we wish to have the questioning of collectivity as a topic?

II. DESCENT – DESCENDING – RESIGNATION – RESIGNING – TRANSFER – TRANSFERRING – ABDICATING AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY

From which point do we descend? From the same point? From the same position? From the same situation? Do we understand it the same way? Can we understand it the same way? Are situations and points of descent, resignation, transfer the same? And what if they are not? How and where do we descend to in this case? What do we resign from then? Or, if we do not descend/transfer/resign from the same position, how can we do it together? Where can we go together? If a descent/transfer/resignation is a topic, do we even need the two points – from where and to where? And vice versa? Is a topic not enough for a starting point?

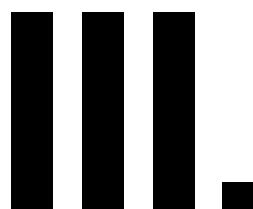
III. METHOD – METHODICALLY – METHODOLOGY

Of communication? Of dialogue? Of joint work? Of producing the joint work? Of producing the joint work of art? Methods of posing research questions? Methods of posing a topic? Methods/logic/principle of creating? Creating together? Methods of building joint associations? Methods of creativity? Do we even need to think about a method, about our method? Do we even need to develop a joint method?

IV. TIME – MOMENT – END

Is now even the right time, the right moment for the following lines? Is there ever not? And when does it end? When does a thing or anything end, finish? When is the right moment?

089 How is time even defined or determined? And how is our time even defined/determined? Is





this even our time? Do we want it? Can we take it? Do we need it? Is time perhaps the topic of our moving from point A to point B and the duration of this movement? Or: why now? If we talk about free associations and free thinking about anything and the road to anywhere, audience must enter our sculpture/installation, which limits my thinking. And the monumentality of our artwork. A descent of an actor into a fine artist is not my descent.

I don't feel this myself, but I can illustrate it.

BEFORE THE GUIDED TOUR

Written on: 25 September 2021

Content: Plan, sketch, screenplay of public guided tour

V. IN MEDIAS RES: ME IN THE EXHIBITION

ARE THERE ANY QUESTIONS?

I have one, two, even three. First question: Can I ask you for a group photo and an analysis of the situation? Let's begin with an explanation, or better, the analysis of the situation.

WE STAND IN FRONT OF THE EXPLANATION OF THE EXHIBITION AND MEASURE OURSELVES.

Here come my questions. Why are we here? Why are you here? Are you really interested? And if yes, what are you interested in? What are your obligations here? What actually is here? And the explanation. We are a kind of a temporal, temporary community. Together here and now. And what do we see? What do you see? A black rail with black chairs and black grids. Translucent floor. A shell. A double shell. And the foundation, the concrete rock with no protection (stage) on the ground. The stage of the Old Power Station. Concrete weights.

Concrete stands. From row even and two times nine weights. A double shell, seven frameworks of footbridges and a bridge. A bridge to somewhere. Fourteen lights.

WE CONTINUE

Where do I enter and resign to, where do I enter and resign from? Beton Ltd. means concrete limited. What is limited, what is unlimited? A limited liability company? Is it a collective, a community, a society? Is the liability of the members of a limited liability company limited to what they have invested or what guarantee to the clients? Limited liability companies can be limited with shares or with a guarantee. The most important characteristic of a limited liability company is that its shareholders are not liable for the company's obligations.

AND

In fact, I am not a member of the collective; I never was but at the same time I have always been – already as an audio-video reporter for the TV show Studio City. As a spectator of one performance before that. As a part of the "Bunker family", as a part of the "Stegnar-Horvat-Bezjak-Golec family". I have always been this. But as far as being a member of the collective, I am not sure, just like I am not sure whether we are one at all. Is Beton Ltd. really a collective?

AS WELL AS

When Did I Become a Member of Beton Ltd.?

V.



LINKS BEFORE THE GUIDED TOUR

Written on: 25 September 2021

Content: Sources for the public guided tour

VI. NOW I AM. NOW WE ARE.

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https://mladipodjetnik.si/podjetniski-koticek/ustanovitev-podjetja/katero-obliko-podjetja_izbrati/druzba-z-neomejeno-odgovornostjo-d-n-o_vlozili_ali_jamcili_narochnikom?Druze_z_omejeno_odgovornostjo_so_lahko_omejene_z_delnicami
https://www.google.com/search?q=kultura+dialoga&rlz=1C1GCEA_enSI870SI870&oq=kultura+dialoga&aqs=chrome..69i57.3728j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8
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<https://www.historycrunch.com/collectivism-overview.html#/>
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VI.

VII. AFTER THE GUIDED TOUR. FIRST TIME.

Written at: 5.50 pm

Written on: 26 September 2021

Content: Field journal – entry after the public guided tour.

The guided tour (of my part) took place between 4.05 pm and 4.57 pm on 26 September 2021. A few minutes before that, I realised that zoom only recorded surround sound for 5 minutes and 15 seconds. The entire guided tour was therefore recorded on video, whereby I wonder how much sound and dialogue with the visitors did my video microphone capture.

By memory, the codes of the guided tour are:

- Strength and flexibility of concrete;
- Dialogue and culture of dialogue;
- Discussion on art in temporal, created communities, collectives, such as the community of my tour.

We encountered expressions such as the strength of the concrete, limited and unlimited responsibility, compromise, foundation stone, mausoleum, contemplation, reading art, autobiography of treading, seeing, practicing the Vienna school, a different context of reading art, rails, details, parts of a mosaic ... and ... when have I become a part of the collective.

VII.

It is 4.05 pm. ALL 29 HOURS: OBJECTS, SUBJECTS, PROTOCOLS, SOUNDS, SPEECHES, STONES, MOJCA'S LEAP, LEJA AND RENI AND PETRA AND THEIR SMS, QUINTET, NEOLOGISMS FROM THINKTION, FROM ABSTRACTION, EXHIBITION + PERFORMANCE + HOPPLA WIR LEBEN.

VIII. AFTER THE GUIDED TOUR. SECOND TIME.

Written on: 30 January 2022

Content: A transcription of the sound recording of the guided tour from the camera 0045 and the microphone attached to 0045

VIII.



Recording FX-GG20210926_0036

"I got Sunday at 4 pm, which is, as far as I'm concerned, a sports slot. I usually play football on Sundays at 4 pm and so I said to myself that the story of today will be more sporty. To start with, we formed teams, like we do in sport ... Everybody, just lean back ..."

Recording FX-GG20210926_0038

"I have a few questions. The mere title of this presentation is a kind of a question, but I will need this community to be in a dialogue, otherwise we will wrap it up quickly ..."

Recording FX-GG20210926_0040

"I don't feel like talking. If I have to think about the question on when I became a member of the collective, I began replying yesterday already. Now I am a member again and I think that all of us are members of this collective now. If we want to be members of the collective, I need you to say something. Why are you here, Nada? Why you, Nika?" – "I am a visitor, am I a member, too?" – "Absolutely. In this moment, we are all members of the collective."

Recording FX-GG20210926_0042

"Let's go inside. We have Gregi here, who is just like Nada – here as part of his job. We are therefore all doing our job. I admit that, before, I was wondering what 'Beton' really is, what are its characteristics. It is said to be hard and not flexible. If I put both these concepts on the table, we think about it whatever we think about it; but the other thing is the concept of 'limited' and that is the point. Interesting that the founding shareholders of an unlimited liability company have more solidarity, while the liability of the shareholders of a limited liability company is lower if the company goes under. But, let's continue our moment of 'community'. Can we answer the question of what we actually see, again. A performance. Aha? I am contemplating. You are contemplating? OK, Primož? 'I see a certain coincidence in duration, in various hours, in long moments, in time.' – 'Branko?' – 'I see a lot of empty space dedicated to people. And I see a framework, the material of this framework.'"

Recording FX-GG20210926_0046

"On top, there are four different rails: the smaller one, the larger one, the side one, and the end one. The concrete parts are the same. A functional story. The authors did not build in a physical sense. Although there is no physical part in this installation, I nevertheless feel energy close to it. If I use the term 'foundation stone', which was used by one of the spectators yesterday (saying that it glows a certain energy), I began thinking what happened to me in these 29 hours ... a public guided tour, talking to the press and the audience, a saxophone quintet ... Every decision regarding the letters, where they will be pasted, what will be in the room, where will we stand."

IX.

IX. STATEMENT

Everything is the Performance.

Everything is a part of a joint mosaic.

Varja is doing her homework.



X. LIKE THIS PERFORMANCE DURATION DOCUMENTS

Photos taken on: 26 September 2021

Content: Additional art setups, space installations, tables of living

X.



* Nevenka's tea set for Branko's tea party
26 september 2021 09:16



* performance breakfast and home-made bread
26 september 2021 09:17



* bed for guards
26 september 2021 10:10



* dinner with the Nomad Dance Academy
26 september 2021 20:11



Katarina Stegnar: This Is Code "Red". This Is Guidance Through our Collectiveness. Through my Eyes.

We are resigning, and there is nothing tragic about this. It is important to know when things end.

The landing is neither hard nor soft. /.../ How to set us in motion again, how to set the society in motion again so that it is released from the grip of the old structures? So that we would not be prisoners of sentimental relations in making art, so that collectives would not be mere symbolic shelters, but the true shelter.



too

much..

domestic



THIS IS CODE "RED".
THIS IS GUIDANCE THROUGH OUR COLLECTIVENESS.
THROUGH MY EYES.
**A Step Too Much of Theatre. A Step Too
Much of Collectiveness.**

Katarina Stegnar

This is code "red". We, Beton Ltd. use the expression when we want to signal that something is run through an own, personalised interpretation or that we are dealing with an idea that lacks consensus in the group. (Branko would probably give a different definition.) This is code "red". This is guidance through our collectiveness. Through my eyes. A collective is a group of people bound together by shared work, common interests. In recent years, collectiveness, i.e. collective authorship, has been used as a mantra in the field of contemporary performing arts. It seems as if a performance cannot be good if it is not created by a collective. But the word is used incorrectly; just as the Dutch have been mistaking ignorance with tolerance, we have been mistaking the egalitarian and the nonhierarchical with the collective. All performances are created collectively, but not necessarily in an egalitarian collective. Which brings us to a demagogic question: Do we believe that there exists (in theatre and in society) a power of equal relationships, that people can do things together, or do we wish to follow a charismatic individual who knows it all and can be the saviour? Are we falling for the concept of *deus ex machina*?

THE QUESTION OF CREATING ON AN EQUAL FOOTING WHEN THE PROJECT IS INITIATED BY A PRODUCER

The case of Collect-if

My entry into the question of collectiveness began in 2003 with the project *Collect-if* by Collect-if, which was initiated by Maska with director Janez Janša and dramaturge Bojana Cvejić as heads of the project. The starting point was the question whether a group of people who don't know each other (but are, of course, theatre makers) can cocreate a performance, whether they can become a collective. And the second question was the extent to which a performer (i.e. the lowest caste in the theatrical hierarchy, actor/dancer) is defined by the poetics of renowned directors (Meg Stuart, Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Iztok Kovač, Matjaž Pograjc), with whom Varinia Canto Vila, Bojana Cvejić, Ugo Dehaes, Alix Eynaudi, Emil Hrvatin, Rebecca Murgi and I collaborated prior to this project. The questions were extremely relevant: how to negotiate with collectivity an individualism which requires detachment and singularization of every member for the purpose of self-realization; how does one enter a process when its aesthetic premise or the content or the model of decision-making are not decided (although they probably were). The one thing that is very clear is who is the producer, who organised and initiated the whole thing and whose idea it was. The performance *Collect-if* is now twenty years old and is conceived as a series of scenes, as an exposition of the decision-making process, a staged conversation. I don't recall the process in detail, but I do remember infinite discussions about what we are going





to do, the debates. I remember the feeling (my own, code "red" already then) of freedom, that anything is possible, that we can actually do whatever we want ... which meant we could also do nothing. A naughty idea that we would use the money to go for a holiday and then "stream" the whole thing was, of course, immediately out of the bag. There was a heated debate also about the question whether we could change the title of the piece. The question was meant as a provocation, it soon became obvious that that was impossible. What was also quickly clear was that collectiveness is merely the content, whereas the method could be only latently collective. Undoubtedly, there was some naivety "at work" here on my part – my perception of collectivity was, among other, that all decisions are made collectively. The way decisions are made is undeniably an essential aspect to be considered when collectives are formed. Towards the end of the process, we were spending a lot of our time in the theatre. Once, when we had to decide about something yet again, I fell asleep on the couch during a break. Collect-if were discussing, they tried to make me wake up a few times. It was perfectly clear to all of us that I was pretending to be asleep.

Perhaps this was my little rebellion. A rebellion against my own naivety.

The position of the so called commentator also caused quite a stir. The author of the video was Nejc Saje, a talented young film director, who spent a lot of time at rehearsals, observing what we did and how we worked. In the end, he presented us with his product, a video that became part of the performance. The video was a straightforward comment on the two-month process and clearly revealed the futility of our efforts.

How to empty the Piran bay using a bucket?

Where do you end up if you run in a circle?

We were not included, for example, also in the decision about the copyright for the book *Collect-if* by Collect-if, which was published along the performance. We, the coauthors were merely told that the book was going to be distributed under a "copyleft" strategy. This was decided by the initiator and the book editor (who was a member of Collect-if and also appeared on the stage). No debate. The final nail in the coffin of this same naivety – believing that we were deciding collectively – was the answer to my question about what was the plan if the performance didn't work out, if we had a serious disagreement and people started quitting the project. What would we do or would we do nothing? The initiator's reply was that he had a backup plan. A direction towards a solution. This raises the question of how to create in an ideal setting of equality when there is an initiator and a producer of the project. By which I mean, when there is a person who conceived the project, applied for the funding, made coproduction arrangements and then invited other makers to join the project. We were thus not on an equal footing from the very start of the project.

AN INGENIOUS TRICK: THE METHODOLOGY IS COLLECTIVE, BUT NOT THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, AND THE INSTITUTE OF THE LAST WORD

The case of Via Negativa

My second experience from a series of collaborations with collectives – which it actually wasn't and never presented itself as such, but can tell us a lot about collectiveness – was Via Negativa. Via Negativa was my home for fifteen years and I really enjoyed the whole



experience of working with the group, which, however, was playing an ingenious trick on the performers. While offering us a hand of authorship, it nonetheless did not relinquish the traditional charismatic relationship on the axis director–performer. In other words, the methodology was collective, but the decision-making process was not. From its inception, Via Negativa had a rule stating that each of the performers is the author of his or her scene and that the performance's authorship is divided. So, for the purposes of this text, I decide to go online to see how the credits were formulated there: the group has authorship over the scenes and the text ("conceived and devised by the group"), whereas (the authors of) the concept, direction, dramaturgy and assistance are listed separately. The way in which makers are considered in terms of authorship and which hierarchical functions (director, actor ...) are adopted for an outside eye prove to be the main source of troubles in collectives. The question that pops up is: "*Is collectiveness in theatre possible only as internal dynamics, while other concerned parties will always turn to the director only?*" The truth is that the author always more or less knows how much of the work he did himself and how much did the group, and ultimately Bojan (Jablanovec, theatre director and Via Negativa's artistic director) as the decision-maker, help him.

Let me briefly explain the working methodology that was used at the time and predominantly still is. The first step is to delineate the concept, the theme and the (aesthetic) frame, then the performer works on the scene by him or herself and shows the material to the group at rehearsals. There are no explanations as to what was the aim, what worked and what didn't, the stage is the sole measure. The group then comments on what they saw, what they found problematic, what was good, what they didn't understand. Then the group "surf and flash" new ideas, discuss performing strategies (for the scene as well as the performance as a whole), formulate the concept and define the subject-matter of the piece. In the end, however, the methodologically introduced institute of the last word is always applied. Bojan, being the director, was always the last to speak and ultimately had the final say on most issues. The gathering of the material and the production of content, though, were a truly generous process, as if one entered a group "mining".

Branko, Primož and I were part of Via Negativa's creative team many times; however, compared to the formation of our own collective, there was a small experiential difference. Namely, for a very long time, at least for the entire first decade, Via Negativa's performers never stood on the stage at the same time. We always lined up in a succession of solos, scenes; there were no group scenes. Each performer was making his or her own artistic statement, each was responsible for his or her own scene, each "watched over" his or her own content first. It was years later that we started creating group scenes. And therein lies the fundamental difference. I went through the process of creating a performance with my friends/colleagues from Via Negativa, I stood on the same stage as they did, but I did not share the stage with them. There never was a need to create a stage situation together, because our focus was on individual statements. This changed with later productions and it is now common practice to create group scenes from the very beginning of the creation process. The three of us (Katarina, Primož, Branko) spent much more time together on the stage – in different constellations – than off it. We shared a strong stage experience.

A CHARISMATIC IDEA AND THE EMANCIPATED ACTOR?

The case of Pograjc and Betontanc

At nearly the same time, in 2004, we worked with Matjaž Pograjc and the group Betontanc, which at the time had a revamped and rejuvenated cast, on the performance *Everybody for*



Berlusconi in the Netherlands. The performance was cocreated with the Dutch group Jong-hollandia, today known as Wunderbaum. This recognisable and recognised theatre group came together shortly after its members finished their studies. The group studied at the academy in the same class, and after graduating, they decided to go down the theatre path as a group. They wrote a manifesto (declaring, for example, that they wanted to work with young audiences, at “site-specific” locations and focus on contemporary issues) and sent it to all artistic directors in the country. The artistic director of ZT Hollandia Johan Simons immediately offered them funding and a domicile. A “carte blanche”. Their work was contemporary theatre, their methodology for character development was the interview. They also had an “uncle from behind the scenes”, a set designer who was much older than they were and whom they often asked for advice, considered him a mentor of sorts. We three were absolutely fascinated with this and after that harboured the idea of having a similar nonhierarchical theatre group one day. So we cocreated a successful and controversial performance *Everybody for Berlusconi*, although the creation process was not without difficulties we had to iron out. The Wunderbaum group were especially irritated by the fact that we had a director and that he was exercising his “directorial jurisdiction” over them too. They wanted the creative autonomy they once had. Nevertheless, the idea and the content of the piece were extremely charismatic, and this helped us overcome the differences.

But a charismatic idea requires explanation. Betontanc and Wunderbaum entered a coproduction, the idea for which was brought in by Pograjc. The initial title of the piece was *Everybody for Tourist*. The concept revolved around the differences between two nations (the Dutch and the Slovenians) and the prejudices we hold against one another. On the other hand, there was the fact that as long as we are able to remain tourists (regular or cultural), the world will remain firmly on its axis. We started working on these ideas. One day, as we were laying on the grass at Iška gorge (we were then rehearsing in Slovenia), Walter started telling us about a great book he had read – a biography on Berlusconi. And then it clicked. We instantly knew that this was the right theme, that we unmistakably found the topic for our collaboration. The tourists were immediately discarded. We had a similar flash of inspiration with the Latvian collective Umka.lv, when we saw “Little Branko” on the stage (the baby snow onesie became the protagonist of *Show Your Face!*). Or a decade later, upon visiting Haludovo on island Krk, when we were preparing for the performance *Everything We've Lost While We've Gone on Living*. This sort of ideas clear up the doubts and can recalibrate a collective. Which leads to a performance.

P.S.: That the controversial Dutch theatre director Theo Van Gogh was killed just before the premiere and Wunderbaum wanted to cancel the show (I am discussing the problem of radicality in collectives below), that the performance was discussed in the European Parliament, that there were Italian spies at the premiere ... All this is part of theatre history.

The issue of what happens after the premiere can be a real game changer for collectives; who takes care of postproduction, who invests in all this? Is it possible to run the production together? I mean, both of the producers together. Who makes decisions when the deciding factor is money? Namely, things got complicated with the postproduction; we were invited to several prestigious, but not particularly affluent festivals, which we ultimately never went to, because the transportation of the set was too expensive. We were invited also to Italy, to a few “low budget” student festivals ... We even discussed usurpation, that we would buy off the performance, get in Slovenian actors and go on performing it. Maybe this has nothing to do with collectiveness, but it is tied to the fact that there comes a point when you have to know what is in your hands and what is the relation



between the makers and the producers. As well as to the fact that postproduction typically depends on an individual person, the “nagger” who wants to see the piece performed again.

But let's return to us: there is egalitarian decision-making about art or an artwork on the one hand and on the other, an equation that makes a collective possible in the first place, which depends on the “emancipated actor” (Branko Jordan's term). An actor who sees her or himself as an author first and who “pokes his nose” everywhere – in the costumes, lighting, set – has her own ideas and speaks up for her views. In some situations, these hierarchies are more rigid, in other more blurred and the people involved can take on more responsibilities, although responsibility can also be delegated or happens spontaneously in the course of the process. Matjaž Pograjc, with whom we collaborated in institutional productions and in the context of Betontanc, was very important for our development in this sense. Matjaž trusted us with writing concepts and texts, doing choreography, dramaturgy, music, set, video, he let us pursue a charismatic idea in different ways. We have certainly become thoroughly emancipated by and through working with Betontanc.

WHO'S DIRECTING?

The case of Beton Ltd.

In 2010, Nevenka Koprivšek offered us our first production at the Bunker. Beton Ltd.-to-be, a company with limited responsibility (if we translate the Slovenian version of the abbreviation Ltd., *d.o.o.*, *družba z omejeno odgovornostjo*) jumped into an empty pool head first. We made a commitment to create a performance not knowing whether we would be able to work together at all, without a manifesto, without methodology. What we did have was the desire and noninfinite trust in ourselves. Seen retrospectively, the process for our first performance *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy* produced the first premise of Beton Ltd., namely, that we would not use the stage as a platform for our own acting escapades (make it a talent show or do what we are not able to realise elsewhere), that we would not impose a directing hierarchy over one another, that we would not direct one another. But we would, in one way or the other, speak about us. Collective creativity in theatre immediately raises the question of who is directing. Having no director does not mean an absence of direction. Directing is a regime of creating. Thank you, Dragan Živadinov.

After the premiere of *So Far Away: Introduction to Ego-logy*, we had no production plans as a group neither did we want to make it formal (start an institute or an association); we saw the group as an excursion, as a shelter from artistic hyperproduction. And then we received an invitation from Matjaž Berger and the Anton Podbevšek Theatre to develop a piece on the theme of Beckett's *The Unnamable*. The experience of working together in the past was so positive that we decided to invite our colleague Daša Doberšek to join us – we had shared the stage many times and wanted to work with her before. This time, the natural connection, the trust and the flow between us proved to be nonvirulent. Perhaps we didn't talk enough, perhaps we each had our own interpretations of how our collaboration should look like; be that as it may, the basic realisation was that a collective in no way means the equality of ideas or that ideas will be realised simply because we are collaborating as equals, but that every idea has to go through a vortex of questioning (from different perspectives) to be realised. And that the collective is not a sum of its individual parts. But more.

A year later, in 2013, we created the performance *Everything We've Lost While We've Gone on Living*, with which we returned to our original unit (Branko, Primož, Katarina). This was our second collaboration with Toni Soprano Meneglejte and 0045 as set designers, whereas



musician Jure Vlahovič, dramaturge Andreja Kopač and costume designer Mateja Benedetti were part of the group since the beginning. We had also invited musician Janez Weiss to join us. *Everything We've Lost While We've Gone on Living* was a successful show – it still is, it is performed every December since 2013. In the following year, we invited three film directors, Rok Biček, Klemen Dvornik and Žiga Virc, to work with us on Camus' essay *The Rebel*. Each was offered a budget for a short film, which was to be included in the performance. There may well have been a subconscious desire already at the time to extend the circle of collaborators, to try again. But we were not really on the same wavelength; the directors did their job more than correctly, but we didn't work together again. Perhaps the approach was wrong, perhaps the theme was too specific for us to enter a model of collective art making. Perhaps having a history of productions as a collective created a membrane that the new collaborators could not penetrate. Did we walk into a trap?

THE PROBLEM OF INTERPRETING AUTHORSHIP

The case of Brodar-Novak-Stegnar

At roughly the same time, I became part of another collective: Brodar, Novak, Stegnar. Between 2011 and 2017, we created three performances at Glej Theatre: *Jure Novak: Reasons to Be Happy*, *Katarina on Demand* and *An Orgy*. Our points of entry were different, if for no other reason than because of our respective training: a dramaturge, a director, an actress. We were entering the nonhierarchical relationship slowly and with a clear methodology. At first, there was only Jure on the stage, who also brought in the topic for the first piece; then Jure and I, the theme was mine; and in the end, in *An Orgy*, all three of us performed, the theme was Urška's. We shared the responsibilities equally throughout the process; in the final phase, however, Jure usually took over the directorial decisions about the lights and sound levels. Urška and I gladly delegated these decisions to him. There is a problem of exhaustion and circulation of information in such egalitarian constellations. Perhaps we would be more effective if our responsibilities were more limited. But then again, being in a collective was also a matter of necessity, conditioned on the financial circumstances of each of the performances. I have addressed the problem of recognising individual authorship earlier, but here we face another problem, the problem of interpretation. Although it was clearly stated that the performance was coauthored by the three of us, the media had to put their own interpretation on it and kept asking Novak, a trained theatre director, for statements. The journalists avoided Urška and me, because we were not competent, were women? The further south we went, the more patriarchal the views on our collective became.

A CLASS STRUGGLE?

The case of The New Post Office

The project *The New Post Office* ran throughout the season 2017/2018 as a co-production of Mladinsko Theatre and Maska. It was an experimental project – not only did it aim to experiment in terms of the creative process and artistic expression, it also involved a new production model. The project was initiated by three theatre directors (Janez Janša, Sebastijan Horvat, Žiga Divjak), who extended invitations to eight performers, Primož Bezjak, Iztok Drabik Jug, Uroš Kaurin, Gregor Zorc, Vito Weis, Daša Doberšek, Alja Kapun, Katarina Stegnar, dramaturge Urška Brodar, producer Tina Dobnik and technical assistant Mate Marinček. The idea was that we devote the entire season's work to making sense of art and artistic practice within the social context; more specifically, to form a team of



fourteen people that is able to quickly respond to current events and social problems, with the form of expression (performance, exhibition, round table, intervention) not strictly defined. The first given was, of course, that we had the privilege to hang out together and eventually do nothing: "*The final product is not important. There can be none at all.*" Sounds familiar? Anyhow, in the eight months of working together, we created ten events and a workshop. We hung out there and worked. The main problem was entering the collective, and this problem always pops up when one in a position of power thinks that being in a collective means its members are willing to do everything and work at all hours. Even things that are totally inconsistent with who they are as makers, without questioning collectiveness and examining relationships. And on the other side, there is the actor with his or her lower-grade position and a desire to be finally included in the decision-making. It then quickly becomes apparent that the "master" does not consider him competent. As far as the point of entry and the expectations are concerned, there is a considerable difference from which side of the privilege (the stage) one looks at the whole thing.

These sort of situations are, in their essence, about class struggle.

This is an excerpt from a conversation about *The New Post Office* I had with Gregor Zorc.

*"What I found problematic was that every one of us came to the Post with his own expectations. We had no common expectations. I was irritated by all the talk about a new production model – I had absolutely no idea what it meant. What was it really? There are three directors, each with his own project they want to pull off, and if it just so happens that the project starts falling apart, there is the producer, who says that the director made a commitment and is bound to realise the project, or at least have a public presentation; and then there are the actors, who, 'humiliated and insulted', drink beer until midnight and philosophise about the possible outcomes. Is this a new thing? I was expecting we would be able to find a common creative erogenous zone, which would, given the extraordinary conditions we have had, be sprouting with productions of various formats. I was hoping that the only overriding principle behind our choices would be the idea. But we were put together artificially and it took us an enormous amount of time to make the simplest of movements."*¹

¹ The entire conversation is available in the compendium entitled *The First Five Years* published by Mladinsko Theatre.

Perhaps, the most tragic aspect of this concept is that it was not pursued further. We all agreed that it was only after this hell of a year of adjustments, conflict, hyperproduction, losses of members that we were able to genuinely work together and create as a proper collective. In the following season (2019), we resumed this test of collectiveness at the New Post Office in the frame of the Performance Festival. The framework was solid; the content and the concept were delineated, the money divided, the collaborators chosen. This time, however, the process turned out to be much more collective; we were "coaching" each other in different ways, bounced ideas off each other both in terms of aesthetics and content, we helped each other with the execution as well as organisation. The decisions were, of course, always up to the author. As well as the responsibility for the event itself. With the second Performance Festival in 2020, however, there came a shift. Some time into the process, we (this time only female members) collectively decided that we will create a single performance event, one group statement. We took a lot of time to develop the idea, we explored different aspects, and when we finally hit on the right strategy, it resonated with all of us. A charismatic idea. The credits were collective.

Another important factor in this collaboration was that we did not know each other as artists, some of us had never worked together before, consequently the energy between us was very high. You don't know what to expect from the other because you don't fall into the familiar patterns of creating. But there were essentially no barriers to break. Still, a young



egalitarian collective as was ours can face a problem if it decides to adopt transgression as a strategy. As a collective, we namely did not share the same level of radicality. I can therefore say with certainty that collectives can lull radicality, scare it off. We can break the membranes of a stale or long-standing collaboration, we can overcome the fear of radical ideas, take on as much responsibility as we can. But can we – we who put unfiltered ideas out there – also take the same risks?

LOSING THE POWER TO DECIDE

The case of Forsale

We entered this project at the invitation of director Lea Kukovičić without any ifs or buts, with a “ready-made” performance *Ich kann nicht anders*. We could say that this performance is our hit show, that we broke the bubble with it and, in a way, began a new path of performing or, better, self-performing. It is also the first performance of the German cycle. The decision to let ourselves be used as material for a new performance, a new concept, was twofold. On the one hand, we wanted to give wings to our piece, push it in front of a new audience and on the other, we wanted to test our collective in the context of the traditional theatrical hierarchy. It was namely very clear that this was Lea’s performance and that our role is one of cocreators, at times even interpreters. We thus put our collective body – Beton Ltd. – at someone else’s disposal. We were writing new texts, discussing concepts and so on. Then a point came when we crossed the Rubicon and became “mere” actors. And even though this was our arrangement from the start, the discourse took me by surprise. We basically had all of the important decisions taken from us, we ended up clearing the set, instrumentalised and appropriated.

(NONSYMBOLIC) SHELTER AND *ICH KANN NICHT MEHR:*

The case of Beton Ltd. in resignation

We can’t go on like this.
We can’t go on working like this.
We should give space to space.
That’s why we are resigning.
No sentimental commitment.

I made full circle in the present contribution – from the problems of collectives and individual authorship, interpretation of decision-making models, charismatic ideas, the emancipated actor, the caste system to radicality, responsibility and the question of initiation. But let me return to us, the “humiliated and insulted”, and try to explain our withdrawal and describe our collective in the second half of its performance making: with the German cycle, which started in 2016 with the performance *Ich kann nicht anders*, we radically changed the way we worked, compared to the so called French cycle (*I Say What I Am Told to Say, Everything We’ve Lost While We’ve Gone on Living and Revolting Man*), which drew on the 20th century literary canon (Beckett, Ionesco, Camus). In the German cycle, we renounced all literary sources in advance and instead focused on detecting the topics and the subject-matter by carefully observing the times in which we lived, through an attempt to diagnose social problems; our approach was very intuitive. We were also reexamining our position as performers and our attitudes towards the audience. The performance *Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations* (2018), for example, as well as the entire network of relations in which we work, are based on the relation to the audience.



I think Beton Ltd. is best described as forming concentric circles. The inner circle consists of the three of us, we surround ourselves with competent individuals, who take care of other theatre components. Our recent performances were in fact hybrid events, self-defined artworks. This “slow transition” is indicative of a desire to expand the collective. To revitalise it, to take the risk of expanding it. In *Mahlzeit* (2019), we thus placed emphasis on music, which became the constitutive part of the work. Joined by musicians Jure Vlahovič, Janez Weiss, Maksim Špelko and Marko Brdnik, we worked on the soundtracks of our previous performances and positioned them in a new context.

We stepped out of the spotlight.

In the performance *Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation.* (2021), our investigative focus was twofold: to expand the egalitarian ethos to include two of our permanent collaborators who usually look after all things visual for us. We opened up the inner circle and included Toni Soprano Menegleite and 0045. On the other hand, being the ones who usually stand on the stage, we wanted to make a transition to another medium.

Going on stage became impossible. At least not in the existing constellation – as a collective Beton Ltd. and with our specific approach to creating, which may seem to lack a clear procedure because it is invented each time anew, as the ideas emerge and develop. We have learned a lot about the mistakes of collectiveness through experience, so we continually try to be aware of them and erase them.

Beton Ltd. was always our shelter.

But the difficulty arises when something becomes a symbolic, sentimental shelter. I find this difficult to define, so let me quote: *“He made us both an omelette and then, as a serial husband, wanted to know more about why I did not swim back to the leaking boat that was my marriage. ‘Well, why would I swim back to a boat that is going to crash and sink,’ I asked. ‘It offers symbolic protection,’ he said, glancing through the prongs of his fork at the band of gold on his finger.”* (Deborah Levy: *The Cost of Living*, 2018)

We are resigning, and there is nothing tragic about this.

It is important to know when things end.

The landing is neither hard nor soft.

A group experience, learning, cocreating performances, a common space of reference, exploration of the medium, answers to what we did outside of the collective, a shelter (protection against hyperproduction), no undertaking of delegated roles. And on the other hand: several attempts at expanding the collective, unsuccessfully, our “flow” that ceased to be virulent, leniency toward each other. Complete trust and complete failure at the same time. A wild search for ideas, fierce resistance to being on the stage again. And the eternal questions that permeate our work. Blending the personal with the political. Could all these be the symptoms of a midlife or a creative crisis, or a manifestation of a murky atmosphere? Perhaps ten years is the limit for art collectives to stay operational. After this point, they have to reinvent themselves. No matter how impossible this may seem to be.

*How to set us in motion again, how to set the society in motion again
so that it is released from the grip of the old structures?*

*So that we would not be prisoners of sentimental relations in making art,
so that collectives would not be mere symbolic shelters,
but the true shelter.*



Reduction is the
consequence

of the inability

to perform live

in relation to the

current social

situation in the

world in which



reality took
from theatre
and art the basic
power to create
the unimaginable.
Like it is
unimaginable
that there is
war in Europe.

Primož Bezjak: Intimate gesture of resignation = gesture of resistance: one on one



Gesture

Resigna-

tion/res.

stance



INTIMATE GESTURE OF RESIGNATION = GESTURE OF RESISTANCE: ONE ON ONE

Primož Bezjak

The luck of the draw had it. My guided tour of the performance *Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation.*, entitled *Gesture of Resignation*, was to be the last one. The last hour of the event lasting for 29 continuous hours. I opted for an intimate experience, a personalised gesture of resistance – against the crowd. For peace.

And here, on a completely empty stage, in silence, there is only us two.

One on one. Two people; me and you.

No security guards. No contacts. No signifiers. Open. Intuitive. Without a mask.

Sincerely – step towards one another. Sincerely – be alone with ourselves.

One on one; between two subjects.

One on one; between a subject and an object. One on one: no camera, no microphone.

Honesty is the characteristic of an open person; sincerity is the fact that a person speaks and acts, as they really think and feel.

Me and you.

Me, Primož, not a performer, and you ... with your name.

You can ask me whatever you want and I'll try to answer as sincerely as possible.

*The only thing I want is for you to remain here alone with the performance
and try to hear and feel it, to think of your own gesture of resistance ...*

This is just a part of the talk I shared with every visitor. I deliberately omitted my intimate confession and the questions posed to me. What was said was said only in the name of free speech (parrhesia) and will remain forever in that time, in that space, in history.
In performance.

*Reduction is the consequence of the inability to perform live
in relation to the current social situation in the world
in which reality took from theatre and art the basic power to create the unimaginable.
Like it is unimaginable that there is war in Europe.*

"Parrhesia is free speech where free speech is not protected with a democratic consensus. For a speech to be considered parrhesia, we need tyrants. And those, luckily or not, still exist."¹

Andrej Nikolaidis

Translation by Sonja Benčina.



Performance formulates a new level of discursive discontinuity and at the same **time** brings a conceptual shift from *The Artist Is Present* to *The Artist Is Presence* (Marina Abramović). /.../
It seems we are dealing with an infinitely elastic communication field, which is why it can be defined only through differentiation; and this is



where either everything
(spectacle) is inscribed
thereafter or nothing
(emptiness, emptied
space). Or – a Bridge is
created, one that expands
language beyond the field
of performing arts into a
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but

rather of

With-

drawal



ALSO SPRACH BETON LTD.: TO **BREAK** THE WORLD IN THREE

Andreja Kopač

Ultimately, they set up a Performance and created a Bridge. Branko. Primož. Katarina. Plus, Toni Soprano Meneglejte. Plus 0045. A bridge between *viewers* and *makers*, between *them* and *us*, between *space* and *time*; between the time that is inevitably passing and the time yet to come. And then they broke both in three: to *space*, *time* and *event*. The space of the Old Power Station, a decade of collective creating and the performance as an event *per se*. With the German cycle, which was realised as a *performative gestus* in three parts, coming to a close, we are facing something new. One mystery is ending, and another is beginning. For Friedrich Nietzsche's Zarathustra, man is a transition: a bridge not a goal, a rope over a precipice, seeking a companion to travel with, people to create with.

I. TO BREAK THE SPACE: WITHDRAWAL FROM THE HABITUS

"This is my way; where is yours?" Thus Spoke Zarathustra.

I would interpret the German cycle of the collective Beton Ltd. (Bezjak, Jordan, Stegnar) above all as a gesture of *performative discontinuity*. Not necessarily of Resignation, but rather of Withdrawal. A withdrawal from the endless cycle of production and post-production relations, from eternally returning to the same, towards *collectivity* and a need for *self-articulation*. Perhaps also from the whole spectrum of internal tensions resulting from the (impossible) position of continuous collaboration as a collective. During the "golden age" of art collectives in the 1960s and 1970s, forming collectives was often the *modus operandi* of artistic existence and survival, visibility and developing one's own language. Still, performance theorist and professor Richard Schechner said already back in 2009 that the American experimental theatre groups such as Goat Island, Oklahoma National Theatre and Wooster Group all became part of the – *conservative avantgarde*. And because Beton Ltd. does not want to see that happen, it offered its resignation, or better, a withdrawal, which is at the same time a *withdrawal from the habitus*.

The sphere of art is not an autonomous field, but a heterogeneous landscape of cultural, political and economic forces, the interpretation of which is always conditioned on a specific point of view. Bourdieu's concept of the *habitus* takes into account the thesis about a homology between the "*space of works*" and the "*space of positions*" in the field of cultural production. Against a background of ontological correlation between *habitus* and *field* – which Bourdieu equates, I myself prefer the term *field* – we can observe the interconnections between two states of history; in an embodied state (history that became



habitus) and in an objectified state (the one accumulated in objects). The logic of the “refusal to compromise with institutions” led Bourdieu (Bourdieu, 2003: 15) toward the notion of *Habitus*, which he re-examined and redefined and which will help me frame the *gesture of performative discontinuity*.

Bourdieu understands habitus as “a product of the incorporation of objective necessity, it produces strategies which, even if they are not produced by consciously aiming at explicitly formulated goals /.../ turn out to be objectively adjusted to the situation” (Bourdieu, 2003: 16). For Bourdieu, habitus works on the principle of practical sense:

“Action guided by a ‘feel for the game’ has all the appearances of the rational action that an impartial observer, endowed with all the necessary information and capable of mastering it rationally, would deduce. The conditions of rational calculation are practically never given in practice /.../ And yet agents do do, much more often than if they were behaving randomly, ‘the only thing to do’. This is because, following the intuitions of a ‘logic of practice’ which is the product of a lasting exposure to conditions similar to those in which they are placed, they anticipate the necessary imminent way of the world.” (Bourdieu, 2003: 16)

The question of art collectives is thus inevitably linked to the workings of a specific habitus as a constitution of a new independent form of organisation working on the principle of practical sense – this practical sense is also what they base their decisions on and while they may perceive them as necessary, they are also a reflection of circumstances. Habitus is thus necessarily connected to the social world, it is its product; it enables knowledge without cognitive intent, intentionality without intention and practical mastery of the world’s regularities, which allows one to anticipate the future, without even needing to posit it as such. The German cycle as a whole anticipated, foreshadowed this future: *Ich kann nicht anders, Große Erwartungen/Great Expectations* and *Mahlzeit*. Time for a break. Free time? To free the time? To free the flow? Or Quo Vadis?

II. TO BREAK THE TIME: NOW DOES NOT EXIST

As a prophetic bird that looks back as it foretells the future ... Is the universe in a box?

The question of why we experience time as passing is perhaps the greatest mystery in physics. In the present case, what is most important is the theory – reality itself. So, what does an act of discontinuity mean in this context – this break with the reality as it has unfolded until now? A century ago, Albert Einstein revolutionised our ideas of time. His theories of relativity gave time a physical identity as part of *space-time*, a malleable fabric on which reality’s events play out, says Michael Brooks in his article *What Is Time* (originally published in *The Scientist; Global*, August 2018: 98–101). Einstein’s ideas are mathematically sound but moulding together space and time as if they were the same thing doesn’t square with our experience. And while we are free to move as we please in space, time dictates a direction of travel, trapping us in an eternal present as it conveys us from the past to the future. Relativity thus gives us the outline of the stage on which reality plays out, while thermodynamics explains why the play always follows the same plot line. But this only applies to closed systems whose total energy remains unchanged, so the system prob-



ably must be – opened up. The gesture of *collective resignation* could well be read through the lens of how to escape always following the same plot line of performing, but on the other hand, also as a realisation that the only way to get around this is to open up ...

Another problem with “relativity” is that the laws governing the behaviour of fundamental particles are independent of time’s direction. Meaning, if we were to film these processes, we wouldn’t be able to tell which way the film is running. The one exception is interactions of particles known as neutral kaons, which do appear to change if time is reversed. This then means that time is not something fundamental, because there is no order of time in the quantum world; the order of time surfaces only when processes change the quantum phenomenon into a traditional one, one that can be observed. Contemporary physicist Carlo Rovelli made a revolutionary (quantum physics) discovery when he posited that the flow has the same properties as what we call time. And this is not the only idea that roots time in quantum ignorance. Philosopher Huw Price from the University of Cambridge says: “If physics tells us that intuitive features of time such as its flow, a special ‘now’ and a deep difference between past and future are not fundamental to the fabric of reality, perhaps a complete understanding will only come from marrying physics and psychology.” Rovelli agrees that, in the end, there may not be one universally valid answer to the question of what time is, because when we think about time, we tend to think about it as a single package, and that’s definitely wrong. There is the psychological time of our experience; the passing instants of time that clocks measure; relative time as explored by Einstein; time as entropy increase; and perhaps, now, time rooted in quantum ignorance. It’s a beautiful problem, says Rovelli. Time is not absolute, has no direction, is not (yet) quantum in nature – and Now does not exist. That’s why we become aware of time – only through differences (in time). Which brings us back to the crucial segment of the theory of the sign – its differentiation. Which brings us back (again) to *performance* and the category of the *performative*.

III. TO BREAK THE EVENT: PER-FORMATION

“But performance has one overriding and peculiar character, which is that it still can be anything at all; for the artist, it represents the possibility of working without rules and guidelines. Its history is like a series of waves; it has come and gone, sometimes seeming to be rather obscure or dormant while different issues have been the focus of the art world. When it has returned it has looked very different from its previous manifestation. Thus, performance still has its customary role; for the extraordinary range of material in this long, complex and fascinating history demonstrates that it continues to defy easy definition, and that it will always be a means to break through any limits or conventions imposed on art activity.” (Goldberg, 1988: 210)

In art, the term *performance* is never far from implying a certain “absence of law and order”, a particular willed anarchy – this suggests that performance defies a single, unambiguous reading because it is inscribed on two levels at once; on the level of aesthetics and of function, where function is [supposed to be] the one that determines the aesthetic. Moreover, claims Goldberg (1988: 7), performance often had a dual role; on the one hand, it was a demonstration, on the other an *execution* of a range of artistic practices; to try to fit it into a definition would negate its potential, which means that, as a signifying chain, it can move freely between the disciplines and media and traverse a variety of materials in different combinations.

To break the event thus means, above all, to extract the event from the continuity of prior



per-formation and reconstruct it "anew". Deconstructing the stage means deconstructing the event, it is an expansion of time, which is from now on inscribed with – the viewer. With the deconstruction of the common space, time and event, *Performance* formulates a new level of discursive discontinuity and at the same time brings a conceptual shift from *The Artist Is Present* to *The Artist Is Presence* (Marina Abramović). All five performers namely constructed their events in their own time perspective, in a space and genre of their choice – anew and created a difference or differences that come to be inscribed, first and foremost, in the viewer. Namely, when we speak about performance as an experiment, we unavoidably deal with a perspective that depends on the interpreter's point of view, which is a problem similar to the one a linguist tackles when he studies his own language. It seems as if the boundary between *text* and *context* is minimised, almost blurred, the process and the production of presentation overlap, at the axis of which we find *physis* entering the sphere of enunciation, coalescence of process and product and a changed function of viewing or the gaze.

I therefore understand the performance *Performance* as an event of discursive discontinuity that interrupts the relation with the established modes of viewing and presentation in a specific space and time; as an event of changed communication, not of theatrical aesthetisation. At the same time, the event is also the sign and the signifier of its own action, the meaning of which (as a discursive category) is constituted precisely through the cut of the gaze. Its categorisation, however, always fails, but can function as a *lapsus* precisely because it does not fit a predefined aesthetic category. The three cuts that determine its communicative dimension are: a break with the discourse of the new, a cut into the understanding of the field (of performance) and framing the cut as a discursive site which is thereafter inscribed with the viewer. It seems we are dealing with an infinitely elastic communication field, which is why it can be defined only through differentiation; and this is where either *everything* (spectacle) is inscribed thereafter or *nothing* [emptiness, emptied space]. Or – a Bridge is created, one that expands language beyond the field of performing arts into a "total work of art", into a monument of the state of play that pulls out time from under us.

"If we want to speak about poetry, we cannot speak about poetry only" says poet Miklavž Komelj in his book of essays to advance the thesis about the importance, necessity even of poetry, which should, according to Adrienne Rich, always be kept in mind, "because the old language does not adequately describe the world we want to change" (Komelj, 2010: 6). We can speak of a kind of a transformation that is absolutely necessary in the context of the language of art. This kind of necessity is on the side of the *not-yet-existing*, it is about a break through self-referentiality, which is the only thing that can lead to a different relation between the subject and the signifier, which is hiding in the subject's irreducibility to itself. According to Alexander Koyré, every new theory that breaks with the old way of looking at things entails a certain amount of speculation, but as such also presents the only way of getting to the truth. Also because Time is of the essence.

VI. TO BREAK THE EPILOGUE: **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

Collective = content not form.

Looking at the area of art since the 1990s, we can hardly speak of collectives, but more of cooperation and collaboration. In all of their more or less extended versions, Beton Ltd. insisted on blurring precisely this boundary. There were times when no one knew whether collective equalled collaboration or the reverse was true. But regardless of this, their



"prophetic zeal" consistently pushed them forward, ahead of their time. At least a year or two. They were/are searching for comakers not corpses or a crowd or followers. People who will write down new values on new signposts. Katarina Stegnar for newspaper Delo (4 December 2020): "I – we wish to expand the nonhierarchical way of working to more collaborators, especially collaborators who will share the stage with us. We will soon have to take this leap." And if the German cycle was in a way the *Apocalypse before the Apocalypse* announcing the depreciation of the constructed, the articulated, the reasoned, the expulsion of speech, the present gesture results in a musical break that – already prior to *Performance* – declares: "Hoppla, wir leben!" And resignation is not withdrawal, but a desire for a different repeatability of outcomes of performative experimentation expressed through the gesture of performative discontinuity. In space, time and event. Or as the French mathematician Alain Connes said in 1972: "The real probability, which is the basis of physics, is not the passing of time, but the unrepeatability of quantum experiments." So, happy 10th birthday!

Translation by Katja Kosj.

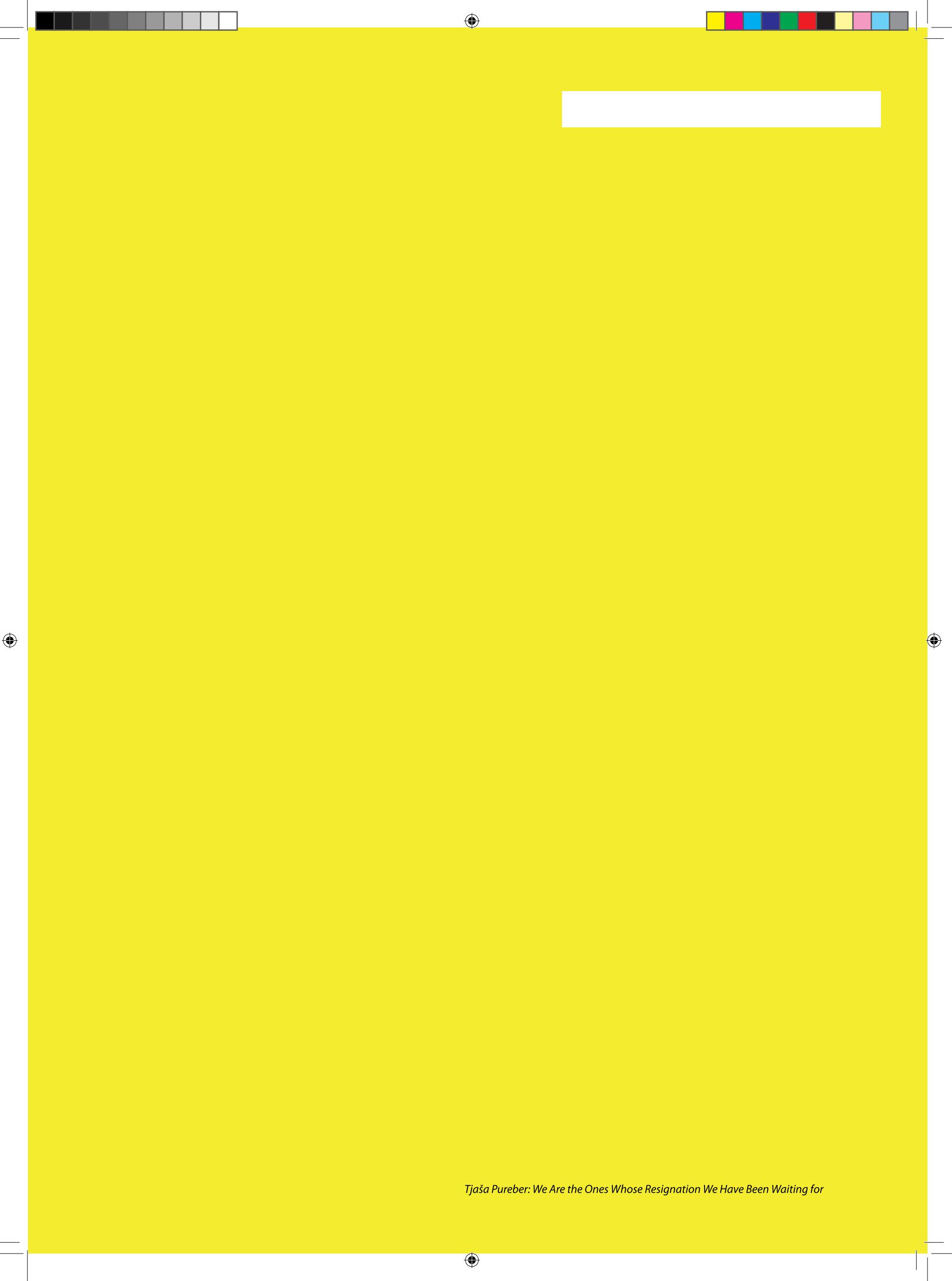
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If we accept
that we have reached
the historical point
from which the system
can no longer be
reformed with another
attempt at
its consolidation,
then the fundamental
social change
will mean
a resignation
from the positions
of our own
privilege – anywhere
they exist within our
social relations. /.../
Resignation as the
ultimate political act.
From below.



Tjaša Pureber: We Are the Ones Whose Resignation We Have Been Waiting for





WE ARE THE ONES WHOSE RESIGNATION WE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR

Tjaša Pureber

Starting point of this text is perhaps the most radical gesture an artist can offer: their resignation. The last act of the Beton Ltd. German cycle, entitled *Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation.*, confronted us with the absence of performativity replaced by a massive installation in the middle of the Old Power Station, with occasional guided tours by members of the resigning collective. The invitation to reflect on the concept of resignation can be interpreted in several ways, including as giving up resistance, as submission; as criticism of the inability to resign; and finally as self resignation, which is the precondition for creating anything new. Resignation means at least two things: the fact of relinquishing something to someone or giving up an important public office or position, resignation as desperation, fatalism. Even though the concept of resignation is more often associated with the act of giving up a political office, let us first focus on submission.

Resignation from one's own potentiality: submission as a survival strategy

We live in a time when it is becoming increasingly obvious that the historical compromise between the ruling and working classes, which brought about the institution of the welfare state in North geographies in the second half of the 20th century, is dead. Capital is crisis, in which elected managers now only compete in management models of social disintegration. Resources are becoming more and more scarce, and crises, even the most brutal ones in the form of war, follow one another at a faster and faster pace. For the majority population of Northern territories, primary contact with the institution of the state has thus far been tied to public schools, education, healthcare, social welfare and culture. But this contact is increasingly approaching the experience of people living in the South. In the South, the only form of contact with the state has long been through its most repressive apparatuses: the police and the military. In order to protect the privileges of those who are still able to persist in a closed and gated community of economic comfort and social and human rights, more and more repression and brutality will be used, including in Europe. The same brutality that, in this geography, was previously felt most prominently by those outside the (national and economic) borders of this community. Systemic violence has thus far targeted mainly the marginalised population (the poor, migrants, the Erased, people without papers, etc., but is now also increasingly felt by those who, only yesterday, were able to live in the illusion of the middle class concept).

After the global disappointment over the inability of electoral left-wing projects (Siriza, Podemos, leftist parties and presidents in a number of Latin American countries), to resist the draining austerity policies, we witnessed a global shift to the electoral (extreme) right-wing populism. The latter, in addition to nationalism and a neoliberal crisis manage-



ment style, the scandalisation of public discourse and increased repression, gives many a sense of social claustrophobia. The moment that the global right gave up the consolidation of the electoral extreme centre, the price of preserving their own positions of power decreased significantly. Prison sentences, corruption, law violations, offences, hate speech, blatant abuses of institutions. Any method of political action that could, in principle, have a (negative) impact on public opinion, in a world where the right is now consolidating only its political base, becomes acceptable. The civil society's tactics of resistance still use concepts of political responsibility, public opinion and likeability, while the right has moved to a new political terrain, where such traditional tools for fighting the devastating social processes no longer work. Non-submissive forms of fighting are exposed to even greater repression and/or (self)censorship and misunderstanding by the movement, and are therefore often excluded from wider social movements.

Faced with the supposed inability to produce a radical social change and wishing to develop new strategies and tactics of survival, many find refuge in the illusion communities of two. Resignation into finding the everyday existence, free of conflict, as well as escape from the burden of the necessity and pressure to produce rebellious lives lead to the individualisation, normativity and repatriarchization of society. It is no wonder then that, in a society where most people are self-resigned, no one thinks about resigning from their position of social power.

Beyond disappointment over the indignity of the ruling class

Among other, *Hoppla, wir leben* opens the question of whether it makes sense for the members of the ruling classes to resign, particularly in search of a new function beyond satisfying, each time, the populist outrage of the ruled. The monumental construction produces content instead of the performers, beyond and against them. From the top, only few decide to take the walk of shame over the glass ceiling, which the "people" can observe from below. No one jumps/resigns. Even if they did, they would find themselves in a closed labyrinth without a point of entry or exit. As a result of its dialogue with Beton's *Hoppla, wir leben*, in the context of post-factual reality and the politics of hate, the position of the expression of dignity necessarily becomes questionable. Is the gesture of an individual's resignation within the system, in which power relations remain intact, really a source of dignity of the oppressed? Or is the resignation of one decision-maker merely a mechanism for the preservation of their collective social power? What dignified gesture can we even look for in those whose everyday practice is the politics of exploitation of everyone who is pushed on the margins of this society? If we agree with the argument that classic pressures on decision-makers through public opinion are no longer working, what could be the gestures of finding dignity beyond resignation from an office?

In the second half of the 20th century, Latin America was in the grip of civil wars, which brought military juntas to power in many places. The most destructive regimes ruled in Brazil, Argentina, Guatemala and Chile. The fall of elected leaders was largely due to substantial help from the United States of America as part of their efforts for a smooth implementation of extractivist policies and imperialist geopolitical aspirations in the continent. In the context of cold war, these aspirations were disguised as the war against Communism, which was waged in an interventionist fashion mainly in Latin America and Africa, where representatives of workers' movements came to power.



Such military regimes ruled with the politics of fear manifested in a campaign of violent secret disappearances – extrajudicial imprisonments, tortures and executions in mass graves that are still spread across the continent. In most cases, the targets were members of workers' and social movements, particularly indigenous communities although, frequently, forced disappearances were also completely arbitrary. In some places, disappeared people can be counted in the tens of thousands. After the fall of these regimes, truth commissions were established in most of these countries with the aim of recording the crimes of military juntas. The commissions rarely saw to the legal accountability (or resignations) of those responsible for the disappearances, tortures and killings, nor were they set up for that purpose. In his book *Izginuli in vrjeni* (*Disappeared and Returned*, 2008), Gašper Kralj highlights that their main purpose was the historical collectivisation of individual pain. After the fall of dictatorships, most of those in positions of power under the previous regime kept their positions in politics, the military, economy, justice system, police and Church, and remained unpunished. The institution of resignation as a concept of assuming political (as well as quite concrete) responsibility for injustices was practically non-existent.

In response to the state of non-resignation, the disappeared people's relatives, particularly their mothers, started self-organising, first in Argentine, then in other parts of Latin America. One of the tactics they developed was escrache, a public demonstration against the impunity of those responsible and the normalisation of oblivion. These are collective interventions in public space, which can take various forms: putting up posters and distributing fliers in the vicinity of the homes or offices of those responsible for the disappearances, protests outside their homes, exposing their crimes to their friends, co-workers, neighbours, etc. Sometimes these were long-lasting, repeated practices, other times they were instantaneous public shamings but, as a rule, they all resulted in the social isolation and exclusion of the people responsible from the community. Most importantly, through the process of collective protest, the victims' relatives finally became the subjects of their own lives. This is a shift from the politics of demands (for resignation) imposed by an external institution or self-awareness to the achievement of social justice through a direct collective action, which enables the empowerment of its actors in the process of resistance as the ultimate restoration of dignity. It is no coincidence that in 2001, when the country experienced an economic collapse, mass demonstrations in Argentine that brought down several leaders were held under the motto *¡Que se vayan todos!* – “All of them must go!”. It was not a demand. It was an ultimatum. A social cry of people in resistance for the dignity of their existence.

Every destruction is a creation of a new social situation: **resignation as resistance**

At this point, we cannot go past the reference used by Beton Ltd. in Performance. In his in-depth political work *Hoppla, wir leben*, Ernst Toller questioned the consequences of a failed uprising. At a time when the performance was first put on stage, the technical aspects of its monumental scenography were more fascinating to people than the content itself. Beton Ltd. clearly warns the audience ahead of time that they will not be observing the scenography of future projects in the space.

They are watching the resigning collective. If no one else goes, they will.



This position is far from submission, fatalism. In a time of populisms, growing neo-fascism, war, capitalist extractivism and general social devastation, there is no such thing as a neutral audience. Neutrality in this case is merely the acceptance of the status quo that marginalises more and more people. Thus, there are only two options in this world: resignation to everyday life, as described in previous chapters, or resistance. Or, as Toller writes:

"Either hang one's self or change the world."

But what if the first (symbolic) action is indispensable to even think about the possibility of the second? Is one's own resignation from a position of power (e.g. in the world of art) a prerequisite for creating anything new?

This is where the radicalness of the gesture of self-resignation comes to the forefront. If you want to change anything, you have to dare consider the end of the existing, be it the end of a collective, of your own pleasure, the predictability of everyday life, artistic expression, state, racism, patriarchy or capitalism. If we accept that we have reached the historical point from which the system can no longer be reformed with another attempt at its consolidation, then the fundamental social change will mean a resignation from the positions of our own privilege – anywhere they exist within our social relations. Power, as Foucault reminds us, does not stem from one focal point. Hence the resignation of a prime minister, a deputy or a president does not in fact change the system. Power is divided between and concentrated in all social relations. Therefore the prerequisite for creating a horizontal society is resigning from relations of power-over.

But as John Holloway points out in *Crack Capitalism* (2010: 35–36), a truly mass resignation from such positions of power will also require the abandonment of self-centred definitions of the revolutionary act with a capital R. By recognising the revolutionarity of small cracks in capitalism, we can create continuities that connect the nearly invisible bonds that form the rebellious social tissue. A crack is thus never final, it contains constant indeterminacy and restlessness. It is the centre of transgression that sends waves of resistance. It does not represent a self-referential space, but the ability to recognise each other's resistance. The ultimate power of cracks, according to Holloway (2010, 35–36), is its ability to break dimensionality: spatial, temporal and resource-based. That is why resistance against capitalism is resistance against this dimensionality. The existence of capitalism represents a constant attack on our ability to determine agency over our own lives. A crack is a projection into the world beyond. A rejection of producing relationships of oppression as an invitation to collective creativity

Resignation as the ultimate political act. From below.

Translation by Špela Bibić

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Beton Ltd.: 10+1 leto

Interview, 5 October 2021

Author: Petra Tanko for Oder

Production: 3. program of Radio Slovenia – program ARS; Radiotelevision Slovenia



Hoppla, wir leben video

Author: Gregor Gobec

Production: Bunker, Ljubljana





EXPLANATION

An object is located in the middle of the power station. There is no subject in this set up. Do not expect a performance. There isn't one. There won't be one.

In the middle of the power station, there's a per-formaton, as we call it. An installation, if you will. Titled Hoppla, wir leben. The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation.

In the middle of the power station is the final act of the Germany Cycle, the completion of the circle that the Beton Ltd. collective initiated with Ich kann nicht anders (2016) and continued with Große Erwartungen (2018) and Mahlzeit (2019).

In the middle of the power station is the end. The resignation.

We resign from our performing positions, we resign from our own collective, from our own mechanisms of collective action, and embrace the idea that self-resignation is an act that is missing in society.

There is nothing tragic about it. After all, every end is actually the end of the end.

Nor is there anything tragic about the fact that we can no longer stand

before you. Perhaps the only tragedy is that the egalitarian position of spectator and performer cannot be achieved in theatre. We may have believed this before the end. Therefore, we do not want to enter into our/your relationships by pretending that a temporary community is possible theatre. It can only be part of a simulacrum or as part of a game. That's why we're not here.

However, we still believe and hope that it is only legitimate to speak about oneself, hoping that this content speaks and addresses more broadly.

In the middle of the power station stands a per-formaton that is simple and straightforward. That's what we wanted.

We wanted to draw attention to a natural, logical point (or period) in the biography of the creators where the need

arises to (radically) change something.

We wanted to draw attention to a point (or period) in the lives of people

where the need arises to (radically) change something.

We wanted to draw attention to a point (or period) in the existence of systems where a strong

need arises to (radically) change something.



Beton Ltd.

Hoppla, wir leben

Izgubljena gesta lastnega odstopa / The Lost Gesture of Self Resignation

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