

● NATIONS ● CULTURES ● SMALL HOMELANDS OF CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE ●



KRASNOGRUDA

● SEJNY - STOCKHOLM 1998 ● No. 8 ●

Central Europe
after the End
of the World

Multiple
Identity

Artists after
the Great
Utopia

Kosovo

re-mapping

BELGRADE

POZNAŃ

euralien

SARAJEVO

SKOPJE

SOFIA

VILNIUS

WARSAW

TALLINN

RIGA

LJUBLJANA

ZAGREB

LANDSCAPE



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POGRANICZE ● SEJNY

KRASNOGRUDA

SEJNY-STOCKHOLM ● No. 8

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16-1100 Sejny

skrytka pocztowa 5018

Publishers

Center „Borderland of Arts,
Cultures, Nations” (Sejny)
Center “Intercult” (Stockholm)

On the front page:
Rodoljub Anastasov “Man and
Space XIV-a”, 1991.

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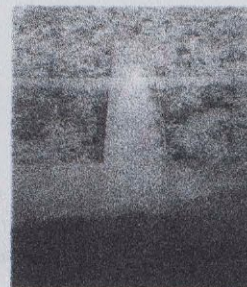
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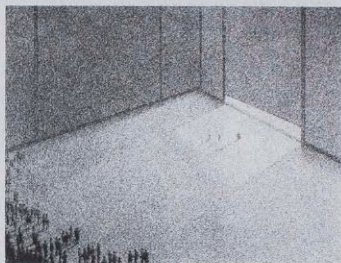


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Printed in Poland

INTERDRUK Białystok

ISSN 1230-7645



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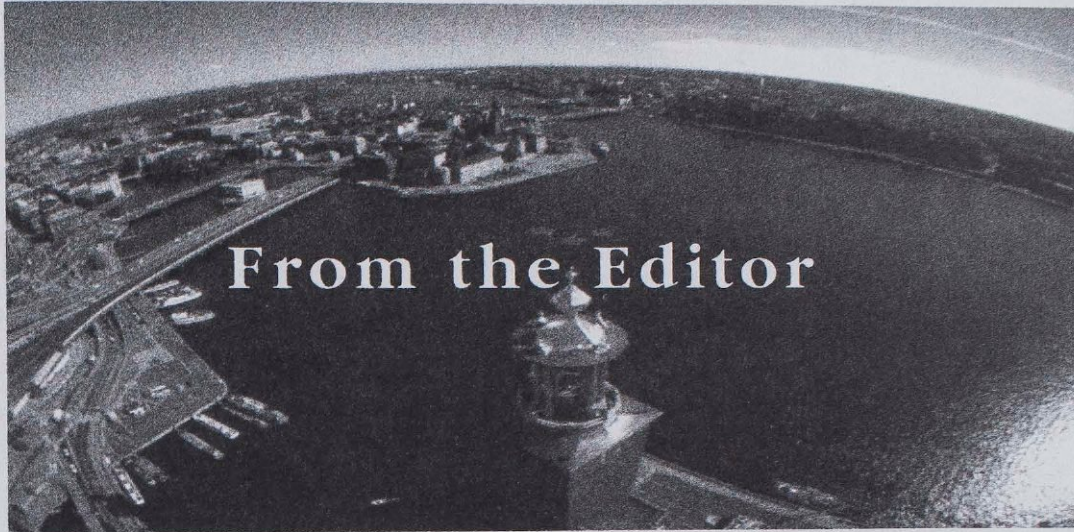
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Milenkovski
"Kulturen
Život"
Kasapi



From the Editor



e have prepared this special English language issue of "Krasnogruda" in collaboration with Centre INTERCULT in Stockholm, this year's Cultural Capital of Europe.

For many years Stockholm has been an open city, attracting interesting personalities from many countries, who were often fleeing from persecution and intolerance. Thanks to this it has become a real multicultural city, which is sensitive to tragedy and human rights violation around the world. Thus, it is not by accident that there we have met people who are curious about this part of Europe that had for many years been cut off behind "the iron curtain" and now is shattered by wars and ethnic conflicts, and which at the same time is undergoing an interesting transformation, that has got an abundant cultural life, and hides a famous, but mysterious, spiritual potential.

And whom should we meet there but... Goran Stefanovski, a playwright from Macedonia, whose search for the truth about the tragedy of former Yugoslavia goes together with Stockholm public's objection to European hypocrisy... But Joanna Helander, a Polish immigrant after the year 1968, who is now coming back to her Silesian small homeland as a photographer and writer, and who has been supporting Teatr Ósmego Dnia's nonconformist activity for many years... But her husband, Bo Porson, a ruthless hunter for Swedish sins against ethics and tolerance, who would have a lot of reservations about this positive image of Stockholm we are presenting here, and with whom Mark Salter had a fierce battle on one winter night trying to extoll Swedish government's and society's virtues, that were apparently lacking in other Western European countries... But Mark Salter himself, who visited Sejny before with his guide to many Central-Eastern Europe's people and places, a journalist who was once involved in dissident movements in communist countries, and who is now traversing Caucasus as the director for the International Centre for Peace Research and Action... But Maciej Zaręba, a writer and journalist, who, in the gloomy time of communism and the martial law, completely devoted himself to the rising opposition movement, Solidarity, in the country he once emigrated from, and who later became famous for his articles revealing the activity of sterilising psychiatric patients in Sweden... But Anders

GORAN STEFANOVSKI was born 27 April 1952 in Bitola, Macedonia. Graduated from University of Skopje (Department of English Language and Literature). He studied also at University of Belgrade (Academy for Theatre, Film and Television and Faculty of Philology M.A.).

Dramaturg in the Drama Section of Skopje Television (1974-1978); lecturer in English Literature at the University of Skopje (1978-1986); Head of Playwriting Department (1986-1991).

In 1992 - Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Skopje.

In 1995 promoted to Full Professor at the University of Skopje.

Theatre plays:

Yane Zadrogaz (1974), *Proud Flesh* (1979), *Flying on the Spot* (1981), *Hi-Fi* (1982), *The False Bottom* (1984), *Tattooed Souls* (1985), *The Black Hole* (1987), *Long Play* (1988), *Shades of Babel* (1989), *Chernodirinski Comes Home* (1991), *Sarajevo* (1992/93), *Bacchanalia* (1996), *Casabalkan* (1997).

Librettos:

Traviatta (rock opera, 1989), *Zodiac* (rock ballet, 1990), *I Love Chernodirinski* (multi-media performance, 1991).

He is also an author of radio plays, one-act plays, TV plays, TV serials and feature film scripts.

Awards, among others:

Best Play of the Year Award at the Macedonian National Theatre Festival for *Tattooed Souls*, Prilep, 1987;

Best Play of the Year Award at the Yugoslav National Theatre Festival for *The Black Hole*, Novi Sad, 1990;

Best Play of the Year Award at the Macedonian National Theatre Festival for *Shades of Babel*, Prilep, 1990.

leadership of a Bulgarian director, in a scene written by a Macedonian playwright. Hopefully everyone can go home with something new, a slight mutation on their mental body should occur. And something will be left behind, so the Swedish presence is certainly not just as observers.

GS: One thing that interests me about the Swedish people is that they have a very developed empathy for other people. They have the heart and ears for other people's stories and troubles. Which is in a way different from people in the Balkans. In the Balkans people are stuck in such a horrible historical acceleration that they are numbed. In order to survive you have to stop feeling. Feeling is a luxury you can do without.

HT: *For me its hard to see that Swedish people should be very engaged in what you can call the post-war situation in the Balkans.*

GS: There are many Swedish UN soldiers walking the streets of Skopje! And I know a great number of people here, many of them dear friends, with amazing civil and human courage and sensitivity.

CT: Everybody seems to be so concerned that Swedes have lost their national roots and their national identity and that this loss creates dangerous conditions for increased racism and national chauvinism. But I believe that the perception of the Swedish personality is internationalist. Most people in Sweden feel empathy even if they do not read daily newspapers and manifest it with political demonstrations. I think we are confused, just like most Europeans are confused, over what's happened. Of course, the Swedish refugee policy has become much more restrictive. But very few people question for example the reception of so many Bosnians during the war. And no serious politician today suggests the immediate deportation of Kosova-Albanians.

GS: I believe that what Chris calls "a crisis in the Swedish national identity" could be seen as a solution rather than as a problem in the 21st century. Everyone's cultural identity is a composite, a mongrel, a mixture. Identity is a flux. It is not something you automatically have, it's something you have to fight for, create, work on and make your own. Like being human. Identity is one's constant process of negotiation with oneself and the world. Identity is not something that can be genetically traced and distilled and cleansed. Nationality is a part of identity, but it should be in balance with the other properties: parenthood, citizenship, sexuality, profession.

It's dangerous when the search for identity goes through the process of "negative identification", i.e. "I am not them". Identity is a story of who we are. This story is all too often socially and politically instrumentalized.

CT: And then nationalism becomes an ideology. It goes beyond patriotic pride into chauvinism and hatred of the Other.

GS: Of course nobody has any problems with national pride. I get very happy when Macedonia scores 2-0 against the other football team, but I would like to leave it at that. As far as sports and culture are concerned: let's fight. But at the same time I'd love to live in a liberal state, which teaches me tolerance and recognition of the Other. Not sacred cleanliness.

CT: Everyone involved has accepted the story Goran has written, but everyone also has their own story – theatrically, politically, around these overlapping circles of different identities. No one has exactly the same story. And then the audience makes their own story, when they have gone through all the 13 rooms – nobody in the audience sees the performance in the same order.

GS: It's a strategy that reminds you of Borges. There should be a random magic quality about it. There should be the Kafkaesque shadows there too. All this is already between the walls of Riksarkivet. A place where for 100 years the Swedish "identity" was kept. And where now there is an empty

center. We want to fill this center with theatrical gravity!

CT: This is one of the ways that Stockholm '98 as a project has been essential to the dramaturgy for the entire project. LANDSCAPE X could not have been done without the framework of Stockholm '98. We could never have thought in terms of a year with a dramaturgy like this. And the National Archives! I didn't even know that it existed until the leadership at Stockholm '98 suggested that we should have a look.

HT: *So the National Archives became the obvious place to bury nationalism?*

GS: Nicely put!

CT: So in the middle of July when we finished performing in the National Archives, we lock the door and we leave national chauvinism in there. And the aliens go out there with a lot of stories to tell, just like opening up the Stasi archives.

HT: *But do you reach the audience that needs a vaccine against this chauvinism?*

CT: There are two answers to that. One answer is: no we won't. We can't expect that theatre or artistic work has any possibility of doing that. I am a great believer in the power of art, but I think the power of art lies in strengthening those of us who are moving in that direction, a commitment to humanism. But the skinhead needs a more miraculous inoculation in order to transform himself.

Another answer is: we are reaching out, as best we can, as far as the resources permit us. We hopefully reach some immigrants here in Sweden, who maybe due to alienation from the Swedish society are starting to develop some attitudes about themselves and about the "other". And we also believe that the performance will speak to a younger audience because it is interactive, it is exiting, it is filled with a lot of different visions...

GS: And it is humorous...

CT: It is not a passive experience. It demands something from the audience, physically as well.

GS: Europe has been through long and numerous maelstroms of nationalistic frenzy. Nationalism and chauvinism are potencies that we all carry in us. We all have infinite energies for good and evil. Politicians often manipulate and instrumentalize these potencies for their own ends. One of the ways of doing this is through the use of "hate speech". This speech demonizes "the Other" and prepares the ground for more cruel battles. All human beings are subject to these mechanisms. As enlightened human beings we must learn how to put a brake on them.

HT: *What do you think the audience will expect before they reach the National Archives? A big happening or a dark statement of the situation?*

GS: I think that the main genre of the 20th century is tragic farce. From Tjechov to Beckett, Charlie Chaplin to Ionesco. This is the language that also is the nerve of the project – if we get it right.

There is a lot of dark humor. There is a political reality behind it all, but we will not force these things onto the audience.

HT: *What have you told the artists?*

GS: Every artist has a room. It is like a play with fourteen scenes. The scenes are very different from each other, in content, in form, in the language which they use. So the artists will work with their own depths, their own rooms, but the connection between them touches the topic which we are setting. So in this respect the rooms are totally different in feel, in texture, and the more different the better. We have to balance form and content. We have a collaborative directorship really. And it's extremely challenging and extremely exiting.



Torch & Stefanowski

e uralien

We've talked too much about nationalism here. That is not the whole story. It is only one face of human alienation, of which there are many faces. And alienation is really at the center of our story!

Bodegård, a prince of poetry, an eminent Polish literature's translator and propagator in Sweden... But Madeleine Grive, artistic leader and producer of the Stockholm Poetry Festival and the literature magazine "90TAL"... Gerald Nagler, Swedish Helsinki Committee chairman, and his wife Monika Nagler, Swedish PEN Club president, who are both involved in the work of Stockholm-Sarajevo Foundation "Open Road"... But Tanja Petovar, an eminent jurist from Slovenia defending human rights and helping the persecuted... But Jens Olof Lasthein, a sensitive photographer who, as a modern European, is travelling to Bosnia, Macedonia, Albania, Russia, in the search for self-knowledge... But Jasenko Selimovič, an immigrant from Bosnia and stage director who tells for the public in Uppsala about the tragedy of refugees in modern Europe...

It is in this circle, in its close or wide vicinity, that Centre INTERCULT, run by Chris Torch, finds its support, and where Ida Burén, Rani Sukhia, Anna Norberg and Buffalo Bromberg also work. Chris Torch's experiences in Living Theatre, his strong commitment to social and political issues, are surely helping him deeply explore complex Central-Eastern European situation and understand local artists and cultural centres and co-operate with them. The project LANDSCAPE X, implemented in Stockholm throughout this year, is a product of this co-operation. Artists from various Central-European countries take part in it, they mainly come from the Balkans and Baltic region, and from Sweden. In the International Council of this project I found myself among such kind of personalities like Borka Pavicevič, Irena Veisaite, Dragan Klaič, Helmut Schäfer, Dušan Jovanovič, Goran Stefanovski. These people have come together again, this time in Stockholm, because for many years now they have been collaborating to convince Europe that the area east of Berlin and Trieste is not a terra incognita, but t h e l a n d s c a p e featuring its own unique character.

This issue of "Krasnogruda" accompanies two first parts of the project LANDSCAPE X: re-mapping and euralien. The last part of the project, utopia/dystopia, will present the theatre magazine "Frakcija" from Zagreb edited by Goran Sergej Pristas. Our aim has been to present not only such permanent columns of our magazine as "Forum" or "Kosovo", but also to take a close look at the artists participating in the project and present their artistic images together with the towns they are now living in. Thus, inviting poets and writers, art and literature critics, essayists and journalists, we want to explore the cultural lives of such cities as: Tallinn, Riga, Warsaw, Sofia, Skopje, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb and Ljubljana. At places we managed to present them against a wide historical background, and sometimes we focused on current events exclusively.

Since there has been little time, the task has not been easy. All the more then I would like to express my appreciation to all the people collaborating with us and who have helped us, in particular: Ljubica Arsovska from Skopje, Tzvetelina Iosifova from Sofia, Natasha Kelhar from Ljubljana, Baiba Tjarve from Riga, Jasna Spaić from Zagreb and Mazllum Saneja from Kosovo. Great thanks should also go to the Stockholm team: Chris Torch, Anna Norberg and Nina Ulmaja. We would like separately to thank institutions and organisations who supported us financially: the Ministry of Culture and Art in Poland, Slovenia and Macedonia, Fund for an Open Society - Yugoslavia and Soros Center for the Arts - Sofia.

Krzysztof Czyżewski

Translated by Tomasz Wyszowski

FORUM



Photo: STANISŁAW J. WOŚ



REHNER
CZYŻEWSKI
DEBELJAK
PIOTROWSKI
VENCLOVA
WOŚ



I am a great believer in the power of art, but I think the power of art lies in strengthening those of us who are moving in that direction, a commitment to humanism.

HT: *How have you chosen the artists?*

CT: Two things were absolutely essential to the choices we made. The first was if an artist was willing to enter into something where he/she would not have full control. It doesn't work with a director who wants to control the entire situation. So we had to feel a sense of curiosity about the other.

Secondly, we were looking for dynamic artists, those who have responded to the changing times in their countries with inspiration to new work, as opposed to those who suddenly became frightened or pacified or overwhelmed. There were many great, disciplined directors in Eastern and Central Europe who – when the changes came – did not know what their function was any longer. They didn't know what to do with their lives. They couldn't use their visions or even the resources of the theatres that they used to have access to. Others saw it as an excellent challenge, they were excited about it. They never believed that that luxury was going to carry on. Instead they started to look for new ways of working.

GS: We are dealing with very, very high quality directors, artists and actors.

CT: I was also looking for diversity, not letting it focus too much. I think we succeeded in that. We had this weekend in February where we all met. It was really inspiring to watch the slightly suspicious arrival of these people. "Okay, now you invited us so what do you expect us to do?" But when they entered the building they became curious and they started to talk. By the time the weekend was over we were really a sensational community. And a kind of healthy competition had already started: "Aha, so you're doing that – well let me see what I can come up with."

GS: There will be a great possibility for artists to live together in Stockholm for the three weeks. I am sure that what will happen will be a spectacular example of cross-fertilization.

HT: *Have the possibilities for artists to co-operate internationally, in the cultural arena, grown after – and maybe even because of – the Balkan war?*

CT: It is hard to say. But at least one aim of this project is to increase the cooperation "east-east" as opposed to the "east-west" direction. In the post-communist countries the reality became "suddenly we can go to the west" so everything was going in that direction. Few explored the regional qualities that they had in common. This is something generally true about cultural exchange in the world. Africans know more about Europe than they do about each other for example. You don't go from South Africa to Gambia on tour, you go to London.

We want to create a temporary community of artists, both from Sweden and from other countries, who during a period of three weeks not only have the performance in common. We hope that it also leads to relationships between the artists, across borders, both mental and geographical.

GS: Within the five years since Chris and I met, I've been invited to a series of seminars and panels, here and in other places. I found myself becoming a part of a whole network of people who work for the same goals. All of a sudden you just bump into the same people, very, very good people. This became an important part of me. Not only politically. The political agenda is not the be all and end all. Human life is larger than that. We've talked too much about nationalism here. That is not the whole story. It is only one face of human alienation, of which there are many faces. And alienation is really at the center of our story!

Homelessness is a universal problem. I am speaking in philosophical terms now. What is our human home? Where is and what is our home at the end of the 20th century. Is our home where our TV set is? Or is there a more sublime "Ithaca" worth traveling to?

SKOPJE, MACEDONIA

Dritëro Kasapi director



Dritëro is a very young man. His ethnic roots are Albanian, just like 25% of his countrymen in Macedonia. This gives him a special perspective – not so much as an Albanian but as member of an ethnic minority struggling for respect and a natural position in the Macedonian cultural scene. Together with his two actors – Bajrush Mjaku and Refet Abazi – he offers exciting perspectives on the new Europe: a patchwork of origins, languages and traditions in a symbiotic flow. If it can't work in Macedonia ... then where?

Theatre directing, the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, Skopje.

THEATRE/SELECTION

- Golden Leaves, children's theatre.
- The Dream of Misery, from a poem.
- The trip, by Ognen Georgievski, Dramski teatr, Skopje.
- Museums of Stories, Macedonian-German co-production.

THE ASYLUM

director: Dritëro Kasapi

ACTORS

Bajrush Mjaku
Refet Abazi

Two highly acclaimed actors from the Albanian Drama Theatre, Skopje. The theatre shares the building with The Turkish Drama Theatre, both forming the Theatre of Minorities. Productions of the Albanian Drama Theatre are performed in the language of the ethnic Albanian minority in Macedonia.

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LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98

X euralien

euralien X

SKOPJE, MACEDONIA

Sašo Milenkovski director

One of Macedonia's finest young directors and playwrights, Sašo was a natural "euralien". The dialogue began: suddenly we received drawings of strange machines, computer programs and ideas for mixed-media installations. Each with a clarity of purpose and unlimited fantasy. How can all this be realized? Sašo is not only child in his heart but also a committed professional, the best possible combination of Balkan soul and European techno...

Stage direction, faculty of Drama Arts, Skopje. Has directed 37 performances.

THEATRE/SELECTION

- Brothers Karamazov, KPGT, ex-Yugoslavia.
- Crime and Punishment, Nepzinhaz, Subotica, ex-Yugoslavia. Award: best director at Drama festival Novi Sad, ex-Yugoslavia.
- Martolozot, Serbian National Theatre, Novi Sad, ex-Yugoslavia.
- Levitan, National Theatre, Zenica, Bosnia.
- Balkan is not dead, National Theatre, Bitola, Macedonia.
- The Powder Cake, Macedonian National Theatre, Skopje.
- Game over, National Theatre Kumanovo, Macedonia. Director and playwright. Award: Best director, State Drama festival, Macedonia.
- Kolede, Rodopy Dramatic Theatre. Director and playwright.
- Bridge, Festival Risto Šiskov, National Theatre Strumica, Macedonia. Director and playwright.
- Deus ex machina, National Theatre, Kumanovo, Macedonia. Playwright.
- This is not an american movie, Dramski Teatr, Skopje, Macedonia. Playwright.

SHOOTING RANGE / ALIEN BUSTERS

director: Sašo Milenkovski

ACTORS

Sonja Mihajlovska,
Vlade Talevski,
Mitko Apostolovski

Set designer: Tihomir Spirovski
Machines' design and construction:
Alien Busters, Mattias Larson

CO-PRODUCTION

National Theatre Bitola, director Blagoja Stefanovski.

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Open Society Fund, Macedonia



STOCKHOLM/LENINGRAD

Alexander Nordström director



A Russian director with a Swedish name, I met Alexander when I was gathering actors for Sweden's first multicultural ensemble at the Swedish National Theatre Center. He came into the room with a natural authority – a sign of his Russian theatre education – and dealt with his colleagues with respect and fantasy. He has – more than any immigrant director I know in Sweden – confronted the challenge of breaking down ethnic barriers in the theatre life of his new country with enthusiasm and an amazing lack of bitterness.

THE ROVING CHARACTERS

Director: Alexander Nordström

ACTORS

Svetlana Rodina Ljungqvist
Paul Moerman
Emma Norbeck
Peter Bergared
Michalis Koutsogiannakis
one actor to be decided

THE INTERROGATION

videoinstallation

ACTORS

Peter Bergared
Michaus Koutsogiannakis

photographer/editor: Yolande Knobel

Lives in Stockholm since '92, free lance stage director both in Stockholm and in Russia. Diploma in stage direction, St Petersburg and Moscow

THEATRE/SELECTION

– Wild dream, by Ayckburne, Boulevardteatern, Stockholm -93
– The Stronger, by Strindberg, The State Academic Theatre, St Petersburg -97
– The Night of the Tribades, by Enqvist, The State Academic Theatre, St Petersburg -97
– The Belle of Amherst, by Luce, Riksteatern, Sweden -94
– The Taming of The Shrew, by Shakespeare, The State Theatre, Krasnojarsk, Siberia -97
– En herrgårdssägen, by Lagerlöf, The Swedish Theatre, Helsingfors -98
– Gustav Vasa, by Strindberg, Malij Drama Theatre, Moscow -98

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



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STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN – SARAJEVO, BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98

Bibi Andersson director

Bibi has brought her insight and empathy as an actress into her later role as activist and spokesperson for the artists in the troubled Balkans. My first trip to Sarajevo was thanks to Bibi – in a Swedish military plane with a "peace brigade" of artists and cultural diplomats, just a short while after the Dayton agreement was signed. Bibi's special capacity to place herself at the hot spot of human understanding makes her a natural collaborator for LANDSCAPE X. Artist, woman, heart and professionalism.

Dramatic Theatre School (1954–56)
and other schools

FILMS/SELECTION

- Smiles of a Summer Night -55
- Persona -57
- The Seventh Seal -57
- Wild Strawberries -57 and many others,
directed by Ingmar Bergman ...
- The Kremlin letter, directed by John Huston -70
- Quintet, directed by Robert Altman -79

AWARDS/SELECTION

- Best actress, Cannes festival for Brink of life -57
- Swedish Guldbagge, Best actress for Persona -73
- Étoile de Cristal of French Film Academy, Best –
Actress for My sister, My love -67
- British Academy Award, Best Foreign Actress,
for The Touch, -71

THEATRE

- actress at Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm
- Debut as a stage director Stockholm -90

BOOK

- "One moment" -96

FILM

- "Meeting in Sarajevo" -97

EX-SWEDEN

Director: Bibi Andersson

ACTORS

- Kristina Adolffsson, actress at The
Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm,
(since -58) with more than 90
roles. Also TV/radio theatre.
- Izudin Bajrovic', National Theatre
in Sarajevo (since -87).

- Zan Marolt, Sarajevo, theatre and
film actor, awarded Best young
European actor, Anger, France -97.
Costume/set design: Gunilla Bodén

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

The Open Road Foundation, Teaterförbundet



STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Sabbath Hela Veckan musicians

Sabbath Hela Veckan is a sextett playing klezmer, gipsy and east-european music, formed in 1989. The members come from Sweden, USA and Finland and have a wide experience in both music and theatre. They have been working with different artists and groups including Johnny Melville, Blanch Wortham, Skottens Music Theatre, Jordcirkus, Roland Schütt, Ida Kalarova.

- Caucasian Chalk Circle, by Bertolt Brecht, Stockholm City Theatre Composers and musicians -95
- Klez - CD (Prophone 024) -95

MEMBERS

Nils Personne: saxophone, add. vocals
Peter Bothén: clarinets, saxophones, add. vocals
Jimmy Friedman: violins, vocals
Lauri Antila, contrabass, add. vocals
Andreas Hedwall, trombones, vocals
Hans Hurtig, accordion, vocals

Music in The Wedding, The Funeral, directed by Alexander Morfov.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Stina Oscarson director



Stina Oscarsson about her first meeting with the National Archives building:

The following night I dreamt that I was wandering around in all those rooms and I never got through. There were silent people everywhere, watching me and the only thing I could hear was a low drumming, the pulse of the building, which never seemed to end...

Skellefteå Music School, 10 years contrabass training
Fenix, 5 years of amateur theatricals. Composer of 3 productions at The Västerbotten Theatre, musician in 6 productions

THEATRE/SELECTION

- Momo eller kampen om tiden, by Michael Ende, dramaturgy, director, producer -94
- Waiting for Godot, Byteatern, Kalmar, assistant director and composer -96
- Verkligheten, vita drömmar och negerbolliar, Teater Katastrof, play-wright, director and composer -97
- The Girl, The Mother and The Trash, Unga Klara, assistant director to Suzanne Osten -98

Musical creation during the movement of the audience. Director Stina Oscarsson together with 10 musicians from Teater Avart, Stockholm.

LANDSCAPE X - INTERCULT - STOCKHOLM '98



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LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Sören Brunes stage design collaborator at the National Archives building

One of Sweden's most creative and prolific stage designers, with a long history of commitment to the arts in a social context. It was truly a pleasure when Sören agreed to join us in "re-mapping" the former National Archives. His first comment after visiting the building: "The best thing to do is to leave it alone, let the space express its own eerie landscape". Still – now there is a touch of Brunes mixed with the dust and hidden voices in the walls of this Swedish national monument...

STAGE DESIGN/SELECTION

- Gold, The Royal Dramatic Theatre
- Three Tall Women, by Edward Albee, The Royal Dramatic Theatre
- The Death of a Salesman, Arthur Miller, The Royal Dramatic Theatre
- Och ge oss skuggorna, by Lars Norén, The Royal Dramatic Theatre

- En uppstoppad hund, Staffan Göthe, Teaterhögskolan in Stockholm
- Personkrets 3:1, by Lars Norén, Riksteatern/The Royal Dramatic Theatre. Among many, many others...

EURALIEN

Sören Brunes has collaborated on the overall design at the former National Archives building. He has also created The Identity Shop.

TALLINN, ESTONIA

Maret Kukkur stage designer

Student Master of Art, Tallinn Art Academy.
Research work at The Drottningholm Theatre, Stockholm -98.

STAGE DESIGN/SELECTION

- Werewolf, Von Krahl theatre, Tallinn. Set design and costume -92.
- Icecube of love, Von Krahl Theatre, Tallinn. Set design and costume -93
- Rasmus the Ramp, by Astrid Lindgren, Theatre Vanemuine, Tartu. Set design and costume -93.
- Jazzkaar, international jazzfestival, Tallinn, festival stage design. From -93-97.

- Daughter of the age of getting married, by Ionesco, Theatre Vanemuine, Tartu, set design and costume -94.
- Woyzeck, by Büchner, Estonian Drama Theatre. Set design and costume -96.
- Them, group exhibition, Gallery Dziga, Lvov, Ukraine -98.

EURALIEN

- costume: "The Roving Characters", directed by Alexander Nordström.
- Bride's Costume in The Wedding/The Funeral, directed by Alexander Morfov.

TOMISLAV OSMANLI

The Boiling Pot Called Skopje

City of Missing Presences



“S

kopje is a boiling pot", its citizens often say as they gasp the air of the hot summer heat, unaware in fact, how right, metaphorically, they really are.

And Skopje truly is a boiling pot. First and foremost, geographically. Skopje is a caldron situated in the shadows of the mountain range of Vodno, Matka, Kitka and Crna Gora, where everything moves in an unusual whirl: the air descends from the adjoining heights and circulates the caldron valley, becoming hot and rising, only to return and somersault once again onto the neighboring hills. From an urban landscape point of view, also, this is a city of dishevelled buildings stretching out along its trajectory.

Historically, this is a region of perpetual simmering – from the early times of prehistory, through the distant reigns of Dardania, Rome, Byzantium, to 518 AD when its worthy urban ancestor Skupi was vaporized by the whirl of tremors caused by a catastrophic earthquake. Later too, when the imperial community of Justiniana Prima was laid out on its lap. In medieval times, when Tzar Dushan made it his imperial seat; in the historical backdrop of the Balkan Quattrocento, when instead of the dawns of Western renaissance, humanism and rationalism, dusk set in, bringing the scent and music of the desert winds and the impending doom of the half-crescent moon that rode on the sabers, the passions and the belligerent cries of the Turkish conquerors.

This was to be the definitive prelude to the all out Balkan fate of cultural dualism that Skopje has boiled in ever since. In the 18th century, when the Austrian General Piccolomini "liberated" the impressive city in which equally impressive church bells had been replaced by minaret spears that pierced the skies of Skopje, he burned the city literally making the caldron of Skopje a "hostage" all over again. Skopje continued to simmer and once again it boiled over when the peasant leader of the Macedonian rebels, Karpoš, was put to a cruel death and impaled before the eyes of the city that already had a long memory and many disturbing recollections. Later, towards the middle of this spent and tired century, during times filled with new passions and élan, it became the capital of the new Macedonian state. It has remained so up to this present day, when it is witness to celebrations and protests that make our blood boil, just as our ancestors, fol-

TOMISLAV OSMANLI, born in 1956, is a writer and a journalist.

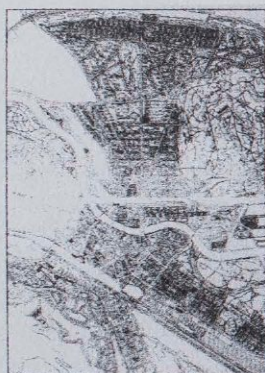
He is the author of a number of screen plays, drama and multi-media scene projects.

Published eight books of prose and drama texts, theoretic treatises on the media and other essays.

Recipient of numerous awards for his work as an author and journalist.



Plan of Skopje from 1929
by J. Mihailović.



Plan of Skopje from 1948
by L. Kubes



Plan of Skopje from 1965
after K. Tange

lowing not the quiet rhythm of the our hearts, but once again the disquieting beat of history.

Furthermore, Skopje is a caldron because the people of the city are placed in the middle of a never-ending, combustible commotion; ultimately, this is also due to the earth itself, which is known to rattle and shake on occasion. Skopje is a place created for whirls. Condemned to disquietude. And, to change.

This is why it is, above all, a place laden with – memories.

The Reign of Nostalgics

If one were to think about it, one would inevitably come up with the romantics, dreamers and yearners, the people that belong to the nostalgic Skopje community as its "most Skopian" category. "Nothing unusual about that", the skeptic would say, for nostalgia is the unavoidable decor of cities, the ideology of local-patriots and traditionalist, even an essential pose of old city cafe dwellers and voyeurs, who always and over and over again, know how to administer it in the right, delicate and animated dose... But one would be wrong! Because the nostalgia of Skopje dreamers is particular. It is of a purely spiritual and personal nature. It is completely immaterial in composition, because the urban substance that would serve to support it has simply vanished.

When the Stockholm, Prague or Belgrade nostalgic reminisces, the buildings and edifices of the city serve as a concrete motive and material inspiration. Their silhouettes magnify, and at the same time merge with the real contours of the city, casting upon the onlooker the nostalgic shadow of the Secessionist period. A Parisian is further supported by a profusion of literature. For the contemporary Roman citizen, the edifices and the legend of the Eternal City are still beheld by the eye, while the Athenian practically has the foundations of the western spirit and history in plain view, supported by the Doric colonnades of the still standing Acropolis and the unreceding strength of the myth...

Unlike them, "the Old Skopjan" draws material for nostalgic yearning from personal and collective – memories. The Old Skopjan digs through memories. He does not live in an eternal, nor even a long-standing city. For the past three decades, he has been living in, what is for the most part, a vanished, or a lost city. Unlike other citizens of the world, a Skopjan fantasizes about his city. It is not out there for him to touch.

35 years ago, on 26 June, the scourge of an earthquake pulverized the extensive continuity of Skopje as a city. On that day, the history of an altogether different city began. A city of disparate urban(istic) discontinuity. When five years ago I wrote the screenplay for a multimedia piece dedicated to Skopje, entitled *Memento for a City*, I couldn't get out of my head one sentence from a short story called *The Wooden Bridge of Childhood* by Dimitar Solev: "It doesn't even cross the mind that you will live in the same, yet altogether different city". This is the basis, the ontological truth of Skopje. And I saw it in the wet eyes of the people who after the performance of our Skopje Memento..., approached us to share their re-veiled melancholic nostalgia and sorrows, awakened for the audience of over 1,000 viewers, once again in a reminiscent summer, 30 years after...

The stage director Dimitrie Osmanli multiplied it through the scenic performances of the artists and the video beam for which he had re-edited passages from his numerous works (feature films, documentaries, TV films,

reportages) dedicated to Skopje, and this was embraced by a whole team of diverse Skopje nostalgics: legends such as the vocal veteran Ljupka Apostolova singing the melodies of our jazz pioneer Dragan Gjakonovski-Špato and the actress Milica Stojanova, the second generation jazz lovers Ljubomir Brandzolica and Aleksandar Dzambazov, two rock generations – the first of the legendary bands "Magnifico" (Mexican music in the style of the Fifties) and "Bis-Bez" (first domestic rock'n'rollers of the Sixties), together with the representatives of the new actors' generation – all of them re-shaping the vanished city spirit and people, each of them in their own way. The Skopje way. All of them with their own memories of **that** city. Skopje that disappeared in 1963.

The rehearsals of this piece dedicated to the traumatic memories of the lost city supported by the documentary material were relentless confrontations with an extinct, former reality that used to be and somehow still is, on video beams and projection screens. All this created a parallel "Memento" of Skopje, embodying the new way the material was experienced and numerous individual discussions. Just as the citizens of that other Skopje, a different, half-city came to life. This discrepancy between the two cities laid out over the same space was strongly felt even by the youngest of the team. This is the most important trend that we are undergoing today: a recognition, a dramatic and elementary urban anagnorsis between the young citizens and the true City. A remembrance of an unknown space, a memento of a city that has not been experienced and is yet one's own!

This rich and individual energy emanated by the lost city, has after all, visited us before, in the most diverse forms: reminiscences, lyric tremors and quivering mementos...

A City Built in Imagination

Post 1963 Skopje has the quality of being recreated in the most diverse ways, depending on how it has been experienced. Befitting the particularity and force of the nostalgic yearning.

In his book *The Taste of Peaches* Vlada Urosevic experiences the city as a wondrous, light and prosaic painting, created by mellow rays of light, the euphoria of bemused youth, the play of sun light, the transparent images of vibrating summer air and the odd aftertaste of dramatic surprise caused by the earthquake. In his *Stories of Skopje*, Skopje is a surrealistic city – before, during and immediately after the earthquake – in the same way that it retains a realistic and intimate structure in the modernistic narration of Dimitar Solev. Yet, it is also a place of peculiarity, human destinies, miracles and secrets, as in Slavko Janevski and his extensive, early and perhaps most deeply experienced cycle of prose dedicated to Skopje, so too for Gogo Ivanovski and his melancholic *A Street That Meant Life*, and for Ivan Tochko and his intrinsic lyric and modernist prose collection *The Premiere ...*

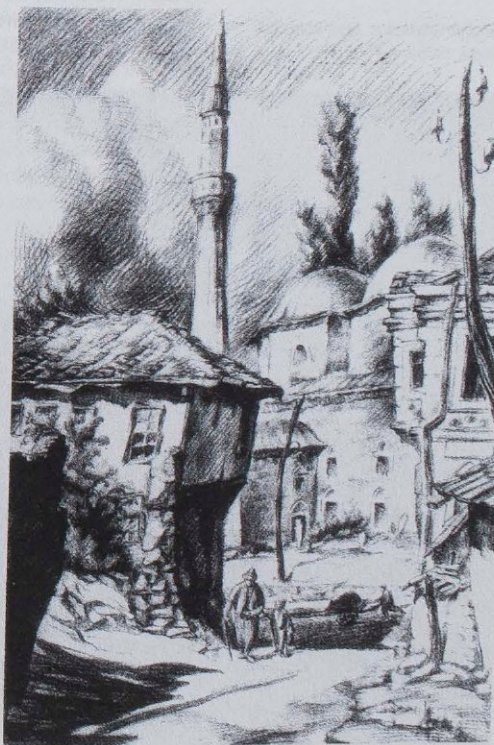
This city is the cause of post-earthquake morality and psychological confrontations in *The Paradox of*



Tomislav Osmanli

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Radmilo Popovski: *The Architecture of Old Skopje*. 1970





The big flood in Skopje in 1962 – one of the main reasons for the subsequent earthquake

Diogenes, and of the traumatic catharses and lyric reminiscences of the *House of Four Winds* by Tome Arsovski. Skopje is the shattered dream of Mateja Matevski's poetry, the place of accumulated layers of historical recollection in the poetry of Blaže Koneski, yet also an unusual and singular center of society in the prose adventures of his *Diary of Years Long Gone*. This is a city with a unrelenting force to acquire *Skopjans*, as in the book of poems with the same name by Gane Todorovski, a metaphysical monument to the strata of centuries in the poetry of Mihail Rendžov.

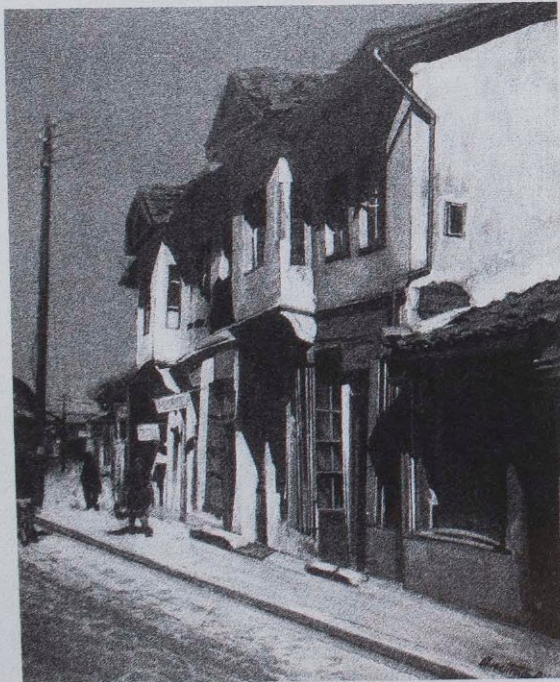
In his drama of nostalgia *Long Play* Goran Stefanovski sees the city being torn between the prospects it offers as a scanty society that is just beginning to open up, and the wishes and the fantasies of the young generation of the era of the Beatles, The Rolling Stones, Hendrix, Dylan and Tom Jones. Recently, in one of those "personal views on Skopje" Goran's uncle, the veteran of theater Riste Stefanovski, let out his tears of pain in the lost river of his youth: "Even to this day, the river Vardar draws me" – he writes – "Sometimes, to this very day, I plunge in to feel the coolness of the water..." Yet, one does not plunge in the same river twice. This is a different river that is but a reminder of the one that is no longer there. As Heraclitus' fate of time. And Heraclitus' essence of this City.

Skopje is the keeper of stirring adventures depicted in the refined prose of the lonely Rambler of its past, writer and chronicle Danilo Kocovski. Beloved home and the setting for the modernistic, individual plots in the prose of Blagoja Ivanov. A singular setting for all kinds of post modern erotic recollections in the prose of Aleksandar Prokopiev. The place for un-lived memories, a Skopje that the young ethno-rock writer Sasho Gigov-Gish yearns for; and the setting of living, painful, social dramas and metaphorical associations by emigrants from the abandoned Aegean as in the work of the writers from Aegean Macedonia, such as Tashko Georgievski's *We Beyond The Damn*, or Ivan Chapovski's *The Wooden Bridges of Skopje ...*

Not to mention the pastel depiction of the melancholic Skopje of yesteryear, as created by the brushwork of the veterans of Macedonian art – Pandilov and Belogaski. The hues of the environment, the temperament of the people and landscapes on the left side of the river Vardar that are born from the expressionist palettes of Nikola Martinovski and Tomo Vladimovski. The post-earthquake painters of the landscapes of the old Skopje as in the case of the canvases of Branko Kostovski and Mitrev, that continued to depict the lost city even after it had vanished, resorting to motifs from old photographs and memory.

In short, the one and only Skopje that vanished is the core recreated in various works. Thus, Skopje becomes the setting that assumes authentically human, at times historical, at others extra-temporal, sometimes local, frequently cosmopolitan, occasionally sentimental, even national characteristics and meaning. Skopje is a myth, it transcends time, it is an imaginary creation that resembles the one imagining it. Finally, it is the setting of dreams. Of my

Radoljub Anastasov: *Motif from Old Skopje*. 1970



dreams too, that appear invariably, as an unusual, alterable, amalgamated collective prose recollection as in my collection of short stories *The Butterfly of Childhood*, even in the screenplay of the film *The Mirages of Skopje*, or a transcendental setting for the sentiments in which sparks from the past ignite, as was the case this summer in my theater piece *Light-bugs in the Night* in which my city vanished.

The Citizen Called (the Old) Skopjan

On the day of the earthquake, Skopje experienced two catastrophies: one brought cataclysmic agony by taking 1 070 human lives and many of its characteristic buildings, edifices and entities. The other, with the effect of a social bomb with a delayed ignition, embodied in the first post-earthquake immigration influx, that fused two new "provincial towns" into the original and authentic one that had numbered around 250,000 people.

The first catastrophe forfeited entire urban institutions of Skopje: the Officers Hall, National Theater, National Bank, Natural Science Museum, the two post office buildings, the Macura and Krango palaces, the Passageway, the pompous modernistic buildings like the administrative facility across the Assembly building, the Government building, the Rectorate, the Railway station, the Freedom square, many private houses in the center and in surrounding neighborhood, new high-rises, whole districts... and it forfeited the material urban foundations of the traditional city.

At the same time, the immigration wave swept away the authentic spirit of Skopje. Having come from various parts, the new inhabitants of Skopje brought with them the specific characteristic of their places of origin – mainly the folklore spirit and rural mentality. En masse. Slowly but surely, the city lost its identity. The old boiling pot melted with the new, twice as strong, social and spiritual essence. Skopje became a multi-folklore mosaic made up of its new inhabitants that were citizens of Skopje in name only, remaining prisoners of their homelands where they left their modest possessions, memories, their loved ones, and their hearts.

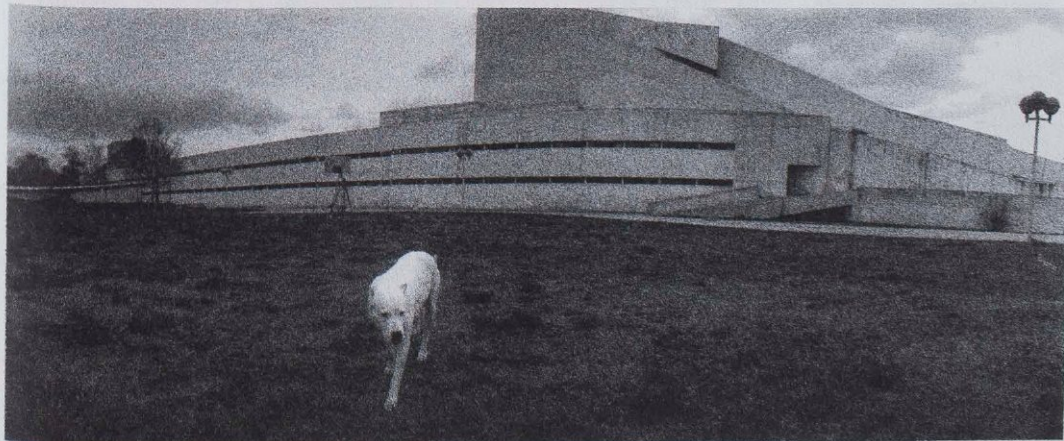
Yet, even with such a high price to pay, Skopje was never inhospitable. This city has always been among the most open: actor Todor Nikolovski, an accepted honorary citizen of Skopje and a contemporary of this century that is coming to a close, recounted to me very vividly a whole range of



Tomislav Osmanli

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Jens Olof Lasthein: Skopje 1995





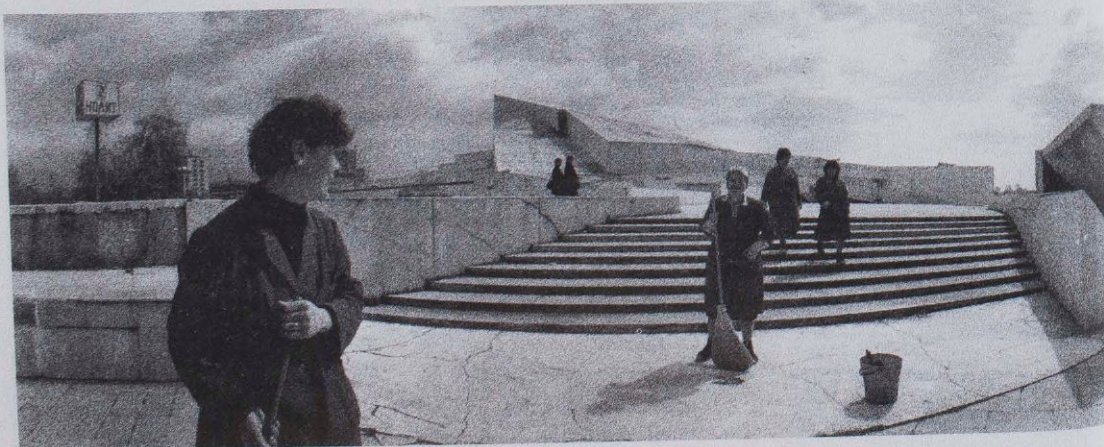
July 26, 1963 – Skopje after earthquake.

acclaimed names and personalities that came to Skopje in the period between the two World Wars and later. Some of them left, yet most of them fell in love with the city and stayed. Skopje was one of the most characteristic cities of the Balkans. A city of communication and junctions. Its historical openness made Skopje a urban, cultural and ethnic alloy of all expected and unexpected, exotic conglomerations: Macedonians, Turks, Serbs, Vlachs, Romanies, Jews, Armenians, Russians, Ukrainians, and Albanians... being its smelting and well blended components. At that time, one came to Skopje in need, out of need, but out of want too. On an even keel. Gradually...

Following the Earthquake Skopje became the smelt of a new, impoverished social alloy; now of less, yet more numerous components. The Jews were deported during the Second World War, leaving the toponym of the Jewish Neighborhood as an ominous monument to their extinction from the multi-ethnic map of the city. Towards the middle of the fifties, many indigenous Turkish families were pressurized into moving to Istanbul, and many Muslim families from Sandzak came to Skopje for the same reason. They came to Skopje in order to move on, yet they remained as new migrants. In the second wave of migration, many repatriated Macedonian families from Aegean Macedonia came to Skopje from the countries of Eastern Europe. Slowly, yet surely, the Armenians, Russians, even Vlachs from Skopje melted away. An unceasing flow of thousands of members of the Albanian nationality from Kosovo came to Skopje. The boil of migrations created an altogether new picture of the city: Skopje ranks number one in terms of the number of Macedonians who live there, but also of Albanians and Romanies. The city of international solidarity became an Open City. A kind of post-earthquake rupture, like post war Rome in Rossellini's surrealist film. The former, a city of international solidarity, of cosmopolitan support for the distraught Macedonian and (third in size) Yugoslav center; the latter (City Open to Migrations), they say, by the will of the formerly very influential politician Edvard Kardelj from Slovenia. A situation much contrary to that of Ljubljana, the capital of Slovenia, where the closed concept of a Central European city with authentic values and merits still prevails.

Let us make things clear: this concept would not have succeeded in Skopje. Skopje is a dynamic structure that would be eaten up by entropy were it to remain closed. In the same way that the city following the earthquake was swallowed up by urban pathology and traumatic social

Jens Olof Lasthein: *Skopje 1995*



phenomenology. The city before the earthquake seemed to be the "natural state" of Skopje. In the period of its most illustrious growth between the two Wars, and later in the period of growth following the earthquake, Skopje always behaved like a sponge: it absorbed as many new inhabitants as it could. At one time, it was evidently the city that did the choosing. After the earthquake, it lost this faculty. For the most part, it was the immigrants, its numerous new inhabitants, that left their native villages and chose it in great numbers. As a settlement to be (re)built. As a place for a new life. Above all, as a place for that understandable human striving for a better life.

The problem is that in choosing the city they did not choose the way of life of the city. Just the opposite. They brought to the city their rural views, demeanor, values and habits. Thus, the city was inhabited by the village. A civic dwelling inhabited by the proletariat. The Center by the Provincial. The authentic "third" and later "quarter" of the traditional (and true) Skopje withdrew within itself, and later in the memories of decaying characteristics, buildings, merits and distinctions; it began nurturing and suffering from the various forms of the affliction of the myth of the "Old Skopjans".

I personally like this myth. I contribute to it. I believe that Skopje must find its own authentic loyalties and renew its traditions. I even believe that this renewal should include the rebuilding of some of its lost capital structures. Although I was born in another city, I grew up in Skopje. Although this is now a different City, I am deeply convinced that the problem of the urban identity of Skopje can be resolved by all of its inhabitants together. Under one condition: that we all see Skopje as our city, while our places of birth remain merely our place of origin; so that we can accept its traditions, characteristics, its authentic spirit, and in so doing adopt its identity. In short, in order to feel, to experience and to create Skopje as our city.

This kind of attitude that can holster hypocrisy. Unless we start belonging more and more to the city, every individual act and conduct will be but futile and unfortunate scraps of the villages that have been left behind; nor will the village take root in the urban space, nor will it live in that urban center.

A Caldron All Over Again

The high price paid is already visible at every step. This is a disproportionate, non-individualized city that still functions according to the collective principles of social, status, professional, political and ethnic forms of socialization founded on the mentality or logic of "village meetings". Of the rural and collective spirit. While the city, contrary to the village, is a complex and harmonized conglomerate of individuals. At least in the European sense of the word.

Much unlike this, Skopje remains and is once again a boiling pot within the Balkans. Full of vivacity, different people, a duality of cultures, national palettes, but also of national imbalance, of movements crosswise and lengthwise, dynamic and open, full of problems and contradictions, at times on the rim of bursting open, at others wonderful and diverse. At times uncertain to the point of exploding, while at others still transparent and full of ordinary, noble, human dreams.

Skopje is a nostalgic perplexity, a diachronic fiction, an authors' inspiration, a flowing idea, a city of missing presence that simmers with us in the real caldron of the times.



Tomislav Osmanli

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July 26, 1963 – Skopje after earthquake.



SUZANA MILEVSKA

ONE STORY, MANY NARRATORS

The Macedonian Contemporary Art
between Tradition and Modernization



The Lamentation of Christ,
St. Panteleimon, Nerezi,
near Skopje, 1164.

In the early twentieth century art Macedonian artists followed the well known models from the world art history, but from time to time they would come to some authentic form based on their inherited culture and art. In this time of modernism this phenomenon is very rare because of the nature of the modern art itself: meant to be as radical as possible, cutting the links to the past and tradition with rare examples of artist keeping to the ideas if not the forms from the past.

Therefore, the Byzantine reflection on contemporary art is very problematic and can be seen only with rigorous methodology which combines many disciplines: philosophy, theology, ethnology, history, etc. The patterns that were followed as being the basis for the conceiving contemporary concepts were:

1. the Christian themes and motifs from the Bible (iconography and narratology)
2. the colors and drawing contours, composition and other plastic, formal and style constructive elements of different periods and monuments
3. theological ideas, problems and symbols

The conclusions of this research were slightly different from the starting assumptions. Namely, the process of reaching the direct patterns used by the artists when imagining their works and trying to develop the new concepts out of the old religious and sacral art, was not an easy task. It is a common practice, even, to use reproductions without taking into account the sources and the contextual meaning of the scenes. Still, there were some important cases for study of artists really concerned with the Christian and Byzantine origins of their work, who do not experience their

source only hedonistically and superficially but also philosophically and theologically.

The case studies of Nikola Martinoski, Dimitar Kondovski, Simon Shemov,

Gligor Stefanov, Slavcho Sokolovski, Aleksandar Stankovski and Zaneta Vangeli, combined with several examples by Tomo Shijak, Gligor Chemerski, Jovan Shumkovski, Koljo Mishev, Vancho Jakov and Zlatko Trajkovski showed the relation between the style changes within Byzantine art and the different theological disputes that caused those developments and the poetics of the contemporary artists.

The interesting disputes about the nature of icon in the period of Iconoclasm and Isihasm and the other questions of the Byzantine aesthetics: the basic concepts and categories in the theories on the icon: real, symbol, idol, beautiful, sublime, are indispensable in order to compare them with the contemporary concepts of the art works inspired by the Byzantine art and help the easier understanding of the reasons why some of the monuments and frescoes were seen as more provoking and were taken as models and patterns to be followed.

There are many texts written on similar topic in the context of the very important polemics that is going on within the contemporary art history in Macedonia about the problem of the relation of the contemporary artists towards the tradition (the first chapter). The interpretation of Prof. Boris Petkovski, Valentino Dimitrovski, Nebojsa Vilic and Emil Aleksiev divert so much that they come to totally opposite conclusions. While Prof. Petkovski and Emil Aleksiev find very close relations between modern art and the Byzantine and folk traditions, Dimitrovski and Vilic are denying any possibility to follow the track of this relation. Dimitrovski argues that, at the time of the first efforts to think painterly modern in Macedonia, the Byzantine artistic heritage and tradition had already "abandoned" and forgotten, and he treats, wrongly, Byzantine art and the folk hand-works and other crafts separately and isolated from each other. The other radical thesis arguing that there is no link between the past and contemporaneity is that of N. Vilic who asserts that the artists of today do not look backwards in their own past even when this is a trend like in post modernism historical styles starting with "neo". His argument is that, being marginalized, Macedonian art scene has been based on patterns usually borrowed from the West and not from our own traditional heritage.

After a profound and attentive exploration of the different artist cases, my opinion would be different from case to case. I tried to avoid superficial conclusions applying directly the very popular but unclear dichotomy modernism/post modernism. The problem I encountered is that this model, which has been taken from the Western theory, had to be used and applied very carefully, with the contextual difference of the regional situation and the individual differences among the various artists poetics in mind.

The most interesting objective is that, positively inspired not only by fres-



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Grigor Čemerski: *The Lamentation of Christ*, 1994





RODOLJUB ANASTASOV was born in Skopje in 1935.

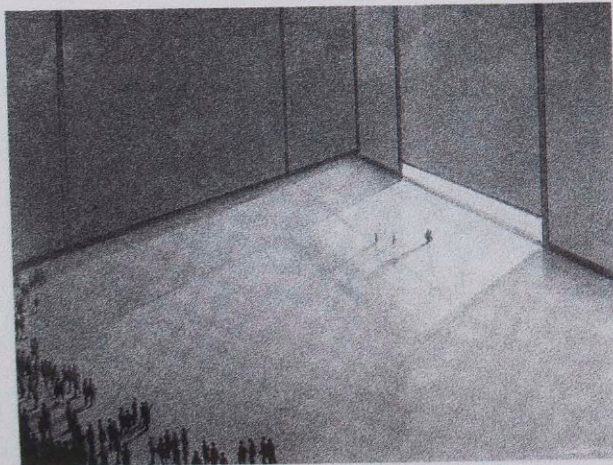
Graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade.

A professor of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Skopje.

"The nature of Anastasov's work can be summarised by Hegel's words: ... *The sensory should be present in a work of art to that extent, to which it can be found in the human spirit, and not as an end in itself.* He believes in art, in its ability to function as a transmitter between physical and spiritual life, blending the characteristics of the ANIMA and LOGOS - the soul and the intellect at a higher level."

(Vladimir Veličkovski)

Rodoljub Anastasov:
Man and Space XLIII, 1982



coes and icons but by the researches of the theological and religious concepts behind the narrative and plastic elements, the three artists, whose works make them the most important figures in this text, (Dimitar Kondovski, Gligor Stefanov, Zaneta Vangeli), came to the idea to start research in this field while studying or travelling abroad. Kondovski on a study trip to Rome 1962, Vangeli while living and studying in Frankfurt 1988, Stefanov while exhibiting and living in London in 1988.

It means that they were not moved by the visual moment of perception but by an attempt for a kind of mental perception and location of their own artistic roots in the past of the country they had left. Living and creating abroad at the moment when they achieved the specific state of the mind influenced by the textual and visual information as well by the feelings which had undergone changes caused by the changed environment and way of life, had urged in these three artists a need for identification based not on the individual but on national and regional basis.

At the moment when the new state of Macedonia is being established and is trying to develop a concept by which to define the national cultural identity of its population while trying to solve the numerous problems in the international community and politics, the questions about the roots and origins of this culture is becoming urgent.

The neglect of the past and traditional art and culture is one of the biggest ecological catastrophes in the modern world. "Colonized" by the bigger and richer cultures, small nations and cultures repress their past and forget their roots.

Macedonian history of art is actually reflecting all known styles, movements and art models promoted via the art history of the Western world. At the same time, there have been authors dealing with the authentic feeling of the region and combining it with the actual current art movements in the West. Surprisingly enough, the art critics did not see such elements as important at the time of the creation of these works, mostly because of the international modern art movement being trend at the time. The specific phenomenon common to Macedonian art in particular and Yugoslav art in general is this opening towards the West in the early sixties, and suppression of national characteristics.

The ideology was playing an important part in this process. There were three objective reasons that made hard any identification with the national: Orthodox or Byzantine heritage: The atheism proclaimed by the

Communist party, the emphasized brotherhood and unity of the nationalities, and the modernism proclaimed by the cultural circles. It can be noticed that there is a very authentic connection among all these circumstances. Unlike the other East European countries at that time, the Communist party of Yugoslavia was clever enough to adopt the modernist ideology as its own, realizing that abstract art is less dangerous to politics than figurative and narrative art. In this context, religious and sacral art was not easily accepted, which is one of the reasons why the outstanding Macedonian artist Dimitar Kondovski was not included in many exhibitions and why to this day there has never been exhibition of his works at the Museum of Contemporary Arts in Skopje – the inertia

was stronger than the recent changes in politics

There are many similar cases which speak of yet another aspect of the relation towards the past: voluntary amnesia caused by the interests of the dominant ideology.

The obvious fact that at the period when the Republic of Macedonia was establishing its independence many of the artists turned towards the most specific heritage of this cultural region is not the only issue of this text, but it is one of the most important objectives that came out of an overview on the Macedonian art scene during the post war period.. It was interesting to compare the earlier stage of the transformation of this heritage,(in the works of the artists in 1960s and 1970s) with the works and the concepts of the artists of the new generations.

The first hypotheses, that the older artists were more impressed with the iconography, the themes and the pictorial qualities of the icon and the frescoes, rather than with a study into the theological concepts of the composition and symbolics of the icons and frescoes as symbol of the Christian world, came out as being too dichotomical and mechanical opposition. The reason for that is mostly ideological. Namely, the artists who were active during the seventh and eighth decade were working in different social and historical conditions. Their context did not allow them to show and escalate their interest for the religious and theological background of the Byzantine problematic in arts that does not necessarily mean that they were not acquainted with these references.

Actually, in the period when any religious confession was not allowed and persecuted it is even a very specific phenomenon of extraordinary courage, within the context of art history of other ex-communist countries, that there were any artist who had stated any interest in the Byzantine art heritage. That is the reason for the impossibility to find any complete elaboration of one theme or style in the framework of one artistic career of that time. All the works that are inspired by the cultural monuments from the Byzantine period are works that were results of some sketches during short trips or, more often, during the conservation (in the conservation teams there were always some very famous artists). Those occasions were good excuses in order to paint some landscape or fresco composition, of course transformed by the artist in the framework in his own style. Those motives were of course present in an more open way in the works by the earlier painters Lazar Lichenovski, Dimitar Pandilov Avramovski, Nikola Martinovski who had been working in Macedonia before the Second World War.

Beginning with the late fifties and early sixties, in Macedonian art there was a very fast development of the many styles of the modernist painting as surrealism, cubism, abstract expressionism, informal, abstract geometrical art, neo-dadaism, pop-art etc. That was the starting point of the artists who were trying to put together the western tradition of the contemporary modernism and the traditional artistic heritage. Mainly, there were two different approaches: a figurative and an abstract one.

Within the first approach the most developed was the expressionist's one, referring to the visit of Giotto to St. Pantelejmon in Nerezi (1164, well known in the Byzantine art history for the sad expression in the treatment of the face of Virgin Mary) as his strongest inspiration for the Renaissance: when asked about the ways in which they connect their expressionists work to the frescoes, artists, and painters in particular, mention this monument as the most common reference,. Artists usually do not make reference to any particular Byzantine style or period , but mostly to some particular monuments and fresco compositions in them, as St. Georgi in



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SONJA ABADŽIEVA Angels of Simon Šemov

In the eighties, when artists – both Yugoslav and foreign – were divided into neo-expressionists and neo-geometricists, and a highly "new" art was being born under the umbrella of Postmodernism, ANOTHER phenomenon took place in Macedonia with Petre (Nikoloski), Gligor (Stefanov), Jovan (Šumkovski), the Zero Group... and with Simon (Šemov). *Arte povera* material (paper-wood, straw, cotton, branches, sand...) became only a substitute for the determination towards the ontological-personal-FAITH. And, for the first time in Macedonian history precise assessments were heard from other parts of Yugoslavia about the individuality of Macedonian art. Simon Šemov, a generation renegade, marked that "WORK" of the young with his unusual personality. (...)

We have previously mentioned Šemov detachment from the "upper states" (reality). I see that "detachment" in his most recent works as an elevation into the higher spheres. Angels, whose prototypes have been watching us for centuries from the FRIEZE OF ANGELS in the Church of St. Sophia in Ohrid, have arisen from the cellulose mash. The angels are, as Pavle Florenski writes, "witnesses of the border between the visible and invisible, like symbolic images of the vision in the transition from one knowledge into another... And it is not accidental that these witnesses, which

make the invisible close and visible by their angelic figures, have long since been called by the people angels in the flesh."

That space of transformation of the visible in no-more-so-designated – is also a subject of elaboration of the Macedonian young painter Jovan Šumkovski. But while he makes his transformations on another level and within the framework of the non-figurative expression. Šemov has chosen the figurative one. The fact that this choice points to tradition and religion is not irrelevant. But it is also a result of the ontological identification with the philosophical and artistic questions about the possible interference between the visible and the invisible. The Angel – a creation only – existing – in the idea – is abstract in itself. His being part of the metaphysical sky is implied with nothing else but contours, while his body remains transparent/empty or gapes open as a window through which light circulates. Light "is invisible in itself and inseparable from the Sun that shines in outer space". The whiteness (non-colour, non-real) of the paper, the perforations disburdening of volume and weight) and the angel's figure, all of them



Kurbinovo, St. Marko in Prilep, St. Sofia and St. Kliment in Ohrid, which are the most important monuments anyway. Some artists of the older generation had explored some less known examples, and there are some texts written by Gligor Chemerski, Borko Lazeski and Dimitar Kondovski that refer to the Byzantine art in very general terms. The second approach, the abstract one, takes two different forms: abstract expression or abstract geometry (Petar Mazev, Dimitar Kondovski,). It is very important to note that the apologists of the communist ideology in Macedonia realized that abstract art is not as dangerous as figurative art, which can show religious compassion.

From the early eighties on, the situation has been rapidly changing: younger artists are no longer so interested in the craft of making icons or frescoes, or in their pictorial worthiest, Instead, they "dive" into the theological concepts behind all this. It is the change in the whole society that made this changes possible: some important books have been translated just recently, the Church has become more active and "visible", so that the artists no longer have to be satisfied with only the superficial gaze, but can also read and study the relevant texts on the Byzantine theological thought.

At this point it became necessary to start with the basic readings in the Byzantine esthetics (Ostrogorski, Talbot-Rice, Uspenski, Bichkov, Loski), to study some well-known examples from the art history (Kandinski, Malevich) and to compare these with the material found in Macedonia. During the late eighties and in the first half of the nineties some Macedonian artists appeared who studied these problems very thoroughly: Gligor Stefanov and Simon Šemov researches the "angeology" of Dionysius Areopagit, Zaneta Vangeli is studying Dionysius Areopagit from the point of his apophatic theology (the impossibility of God's recognition and representation) and the iconoclastic period, Bogdan Grabuloski and Violeta Blazeska are concerned with the early Christian symbolic of the mosaics (they exhibited their latest project "Evoking of the Ancestors" in July, in Heraklea, an ancient Byzantine city, II c. A.D.), Slavcho Sokolovski is exploring the meaning of the litian icons in the Christian processions. One of the most important findings is that as the most provoking period from the history of Byzantine art many of the artists had found the period of iconoclasm – the deprivation of the figurative images, which is in strong relation to the negative theology of Dyonisius Areopagit – the impossibility of God's representation. The discovery of the treasure of philosophical concepts and theological secrets, which had lied buried for a long time, made many of the contemporary artists turn their back to the expressionist's way of painting (most favorite among the representatives of the older generation) and feel closer to the conceptual approach and the way of rethinking the tradition. They are dealing with philosophy and theology rather than with the medium of painting. The medium of installation, it seems, became more popular as one more adequate and appropriate to materialize such concepts. Macedonian contemporary art, for a long time marginalized within the framework of the Yugoslav art, being on the European margins itself, was maybe the only party which had, culturally, "profitted" from the latest war and the dissolution of former Yugoslavia. The country gained

its independence without having to fight for it and without initiating the dissolution, as some of the other ex-Yugoslav republics. Enjoying a sort of calm and peaceful development, with no war in its territory and with not more than sixty war casualties (soldiers serving their military service in the Yugoslav National Army at the moment when the conflict broke up), and no longer frustrated by the "key system"- proportional participation of the Republics in the whole events – Macedonia saw unforeseen flourishing in the field of culture .

The first signs that something exiting was happening in this small southern land, followed by the first conscious reactions from the Yugoslav art critique, were noticed already at The Documenta in Sarajevo 1989, the last big exhibition unifying the artists from all the republics. The shift from provincial out- of-time abstract expressionism, seen at the previous presentations of the Macedonian artists, was especially manifest in the field of sculpture. And the early nineties saw the beginning of the Macedonian artists exit from anonymity and of their inclusion in the international professional art context. Their first presentation abroad, at a time when the independence of the country was still not officially recognized, was the exhibition *Standpunkt: Macedonien Gruppe Zero Aus Skopje Osteuropaisches Kultur und Bildungszentrum, Cologne, May-June, 1990*. The artists Aleksandar Stankovski, Igor Tohevski, Perica Georgievski, Zlatko Trajkovski, Bedi Ibrahim and Miodrag Desovski have been working as a group since 1985 (from 1985 to 1990 they realized more than fifteen performances, murals and installations) but although promoted by the Museum of Macedonia and by the art critic Vladimir Velichkovski in the two big exhibitions presenting works by young artists, paradoxically, their first institutional exhibition as a group was independently organized abroad, thanks to Thomas Strauss from Ignis Center. Their project *Zero Shakti* held in the Museum of Macedonia in 1990 was their second intermedial project: they exhibited sculptural, ambient and video installations. Two years later some of the members of the group (Alexandar Stankovski, Zlatko Trajkovski and Perica Georgievski) invited other artists: Zaneta Vangeli, Ismet Ramichevic and one critic (Suzana Milevska) and realized the exhibition *Order/Chaos* based on the chaos theory. Along with their intermedial and "dirty aesthetics" there were other attempts to overcome the established modernists elite including abstract and minimal artists, mainly nourished by the Museum of Contemporary Art. The artists influenced by the Italian *arte povera*, for example Gligor Stefanov and Petre Nikoloski, who were the first artists to present Macedonia at the Venice Biennial 1993, or Aneta Svetieva, a sculptor who, at the Venice Biennial 1997, exhibited her sculptures inspired by the prehistoric and ancient heritage of forms found in the Balkan archeological sites, or the artists dealing with the new media: video art, performance, installation, electronic arts: Zaneta Vangeli (exhibiting at the 4th Istanbul Biennial 1995), Iskra Dimitrova (Selesta Art Biennial, 1997), Robert Jankuloski (Manifesta 1), Mirna Arsovska, Bogdan Grabuloski/Violeta Blazhevka (Sao Paolo Biennial, 1996), – were enriching the art scene with the intertextual and intermedial intertwining of the works of art made of art material taken form different context and used as a quotation or reinterpretation. The same goes for the members of the group *Zero* who after 1990 started to exhibit

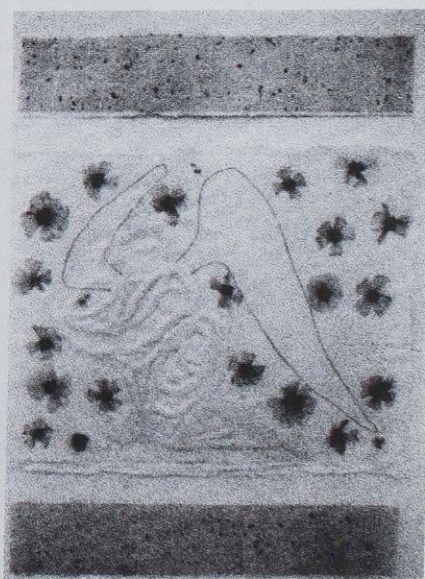


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remind us of a pressed incarnation of the non-material with modern terminology, but not too far from the spirituality of medieval iconpainters when they created "the angelic icons of the angelic world" – symbols of a highly subtle area.

Christianity considers the wings (angels) as a pneuma (spirit). The elevation proposed by Šemov through DEIFICATION of the artistic expression can-only-be-understood – as estrangement from earthly existence. The way he enters the ontological care of the paper (created by his own hand) and the way in which he delivers the body of the angel from the matter so created (in the second act of creation) – all this, almost emulating his own rules of art production, must



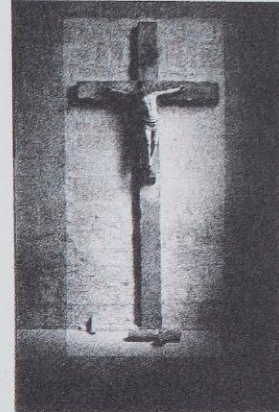
Stanisław J. Woś

PHOTO ATELIER



RAYMOND REHNICER

Multiple Identity and Borders within Human Mind



The industrial society did not only entirely change the means to transform the human environment, but marked also the spiritual and political shape of the environment. The most consequential was – and still seems to be – the concept of nation and nation-state. Until the national-state emerged as the most decisive cultural and political factor a multiform ethnical and religious mixture was usual and even desired in border zones. It was rather difficult to integrate these mixed zones in the homogenous nation-states and that were the most frequent reasons for numerous quarrels in Europe during the last two centuries.

I was born and spent the major part of my life in a mixed region. By the most recent conflict within the old military frontier that occurs throughout former Yugoslavia I was forced to leave my country. Now I live in Czech Republic - where the painful "solution" of similar problems before and after the World War II did not bring ultimate peace to the soul of concerned people.

From Sarajevo – the oldest preserved multicultural city in Europe – I went to Prague, which lost its multiculturality by this painful "solution" of the mixed border zones some fifty years ago. Thanks to a guest professorship at the technical University in Vienna I have now the opportunity to discover a new kind of arising contemporary multiculturality. From my experiences, I accumulated in Sarajevo, Prague and Vienna, I will here try to formulate some ideas about the modern multiculturality. The now disappearing inherited multiculturality of Sarajevo seems to be a relic of the past, therefore I will attempt to develop some more modern concepts of multiple identity borders within human mind.

Borders and its perception

Two remarks from my friends in Vienna were important for my own understanding of that city and Austria in general.

To the simple question concerning my own national identity I was unable to give a simple answer. Some people in my country considered my family name as a typical Jewish one – the family name being a usual

RAYMOND REHNICER passed away on 2 February this year. He was a great friend of "Krasnogruda" and a great ally supporting the activities of the Foundation and Centre "Borderland". We met for the last time last autumn in Chernovtsy, Bukovina, where we invited him as a lecturer to our "Borderland School" organised at the local university. He was deeply moved by a trip to that legendary city which – although devastated as it is – has managed to preserve the fabric of an old, multicultural universe of Central Europe, of which he was an outstanding expert and proponent as an urban architect, writer, and historian of ideas.

He was born on 21 November 1942 in Croatia, he spent his childhood in Serbia, then he moved to live in Istria. He graduated from a gymnasium, a secondary school, in Sarajevo, he studied architecture in Zurich, worked and had lectures in Sarajevo (he designed, among others, the Olympic complex), and when the recent Balkan war had expelled him from his homeland, he settled down in Prague, where he worked in the Town Planning Institute, and was a member of a team focusing on the town's modern development; at the same time he had lectures in Vienna Technical University. His interest was mainly

link us with that transcending state of the spirit of the ancient iconpainter who had the honour of bringing down the invisible to Earth, a sight only known to gods.

SIMON ŠEMOV Angels Paper

In 18th century Germany, in Regensburg, the inquiring mind of Doctor Jacob Christian Schaeffer managed to make paper out of cabbage, tomatoes and carrots. In the 1950's, John Mason in England filled his mincer with grass from his garden in order to make his own paper. I wanted to make paper in my own way.

My dream in art was to move the meadows into my studio. After my mountain wanderings, my rucksack spread smells of yarrow; the dandelion, shepherd's purse and chicory leaves beguiled with their freshness; the St.-John's-wort which "warded off evil spirits", sunbathed in a transparent jar; the wild thyme tea refreshing between two drawings, and an occasional bunch of yellow helichrysum, violet mint or Oriental poppy would find their place among my sketches and paper objects.

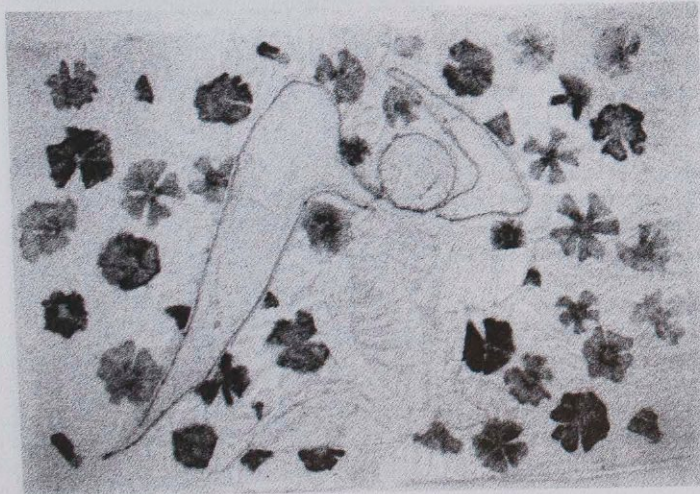
I consulted old books. I made

separately, under their individual names. The exhibitions as *Image Box* (organized in 1994/95 by Soros Center for Contemporary Arts – Skopje, Macedonia) and the production of the first artistic CD Rom in Macedonia in 1996, by the same institution and the same curator Nebojsa Vilich (the Director of SCCA) included the artists that already worked in the field of the media and promoted some new artists that were provoked by the awards and commissions, which was not a policy of the other art institutions. Almost the same artists were exhibited at the exhibition *9 and 1/2* – New Macedonian Art, curated by Zoran Petrovski, the Director of the Museum of Contemporary Art.

In the late eighties, the statement usually mentioned and emphasized by Macedonian art critics, about the situation in the contemporary arts in Macedonia after the Second World War, namely, that the social realism had never become overdominant, which became easy recognizable point for differentialization of this local scene from the other Eastern European countries – turned into a heavy mortgage. The formalism of the minimal and object art, inherited by most of the established abstract expressionists, due to the fact that the most prominent painter and professor at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Petar Mazev, was mainly inspired by *Cobra*, could hardly be adapted to anything new. The artists who were observing the principles of modernism were supported and given opportunities to exhibit in the Museum of Contemporary Art already as very young, especially after participating in the four Youth Biennials (1987, 1989, 1991, 1993) the result of which is the very absurd situation we have today, when for reasons unknown this singular organized promotion of the youngest artists had ceased to exist.

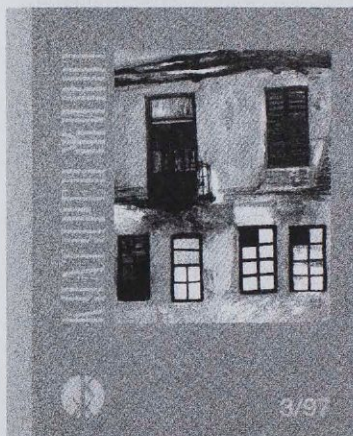
Namely, in the course of the first half of the nineties the most prominent artists of the late eighties: Jovan Shumkovski (Sao Paolo Biennial, 1994), Blagoja Manevski, Dragan Petkovich, Stanko Pavleski, Tome Adzieski and Slavcho Sokolov, at that time exhibiting the results of their research in the realm of structural analysis of the art elements – shape, composition, color, light – abandoned the aesthetic principles they had complied with at the beginning of their careers and manifested curiosity towards the use of new media, especially in the abandoning of the painting and the turn to the three-dimensionality of the object and installation. The last attempt to face the art not only as an isolated island closed in the

self-referential circle in which account was taken exclusively of the problem of representation and artistic procedure, but rather as a site for engagement and commitment, was the exhibition *Parallels* held in Berlin Ifa Gallery 1997 (curator: Nebojsa Vilich). In an attempt to deal with the problems of ecology, violence, war etc., the artists Tome Adzieski, Slavco Sokolovski and Jovan Sumkovski entered with their recent works a new phase of their artistic activities which is more related to the external issues based in the realm of the reality outside the framework of art work. The project *Dossier'96* by Igor Toshevski, dealing with the



problems of transition and privatization of the factories, was the most radical in that sense, having a big impact with its consciousness of the authentic context, the careful planning and its profoundness, as well with the final powerful and witty game in which of the piles of rejects were replaced with a projection of the words from the vocabulary of the period of transition.

As an opposition to the strongly controlled policy of the curators and institutions, there were three independent projects organized in 1995, 1996 and 1997 in the abandoned venue of the old Turkish bath Chifte Amam, organized by the artists themselves who presented more than sixty projects. In 1996 in the same venue the first organized women artists' project *Liquor Amnii* took place. It included five Macedonian artists (Iskra Dimitrova, Zaneta Vangeli, Mirna Arsovska, Margarita Kiselichka Kalajdzieva and Nora Stojanovich) together with five artists from the Boston Mobius Artists Center. The second part of the project, which took place in Providence, USA, was one of the most important presentations of the contemporary Macedonian artists in the States.



Kulturen Život

As a distinctly unique and most relevant mirror of the events and changes in culture, art, philosophy and other spheres of intellectual life in Macedonia, *Kulturen Život* has for over 40 years been among the most significant periodicals of its kind in the country. It has constantly striven to cover the most representative and subtle topics which would express the contemporary state of the spirit, creation and, more importantly,

the crucial issues which reflect the dilemmas, facts and analytical thought of Macedonian artists, authors, literary and art critics, historians and other writers in both a national and global context. This periodical has gathered around itself contributors whose superior individual qualities have influenced the evolution of thought in all spheres of culture and art. In addition, the plays by prominent Macedonian or foreign playwrights, published in each number, have played an important role in the development of the repertoire of the Macedonian theatres.

Kulturen Život also publishes the periodical *Macedonian Review*, for years the only periodical offering information about Macedonia, its history and culture, in English.

Kulturen Život and *Macedonian Review* have their regular readers all over the world, and can be found in almost all the bigger university and national libraries worldwide.



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friends with herbalists. I visited masters of self-manufactured paper. the journey to the paper always began with the mountain: one had to climb up there to gather herbs. You had to carefully steam off the covering from the stern and remove the green chlorophyll. The herb fibres obtained in this way had to be beaten with a wooden pestle on a flat surface and filtered through finer and finer strainers. After you get your cellulose mash you make a sieve, as the old masters did, and put some of the mash in it. As soon as the water drains off, the paper appears on the bottom of the sieve in all its beauty.

This process provided me with a building material, a transparent veil where herbs left their flowery trace, smell and form.

I finally managed to move the meadow by consideration which the process of self-manufactured paper offered me.

I do not know what else this process can offer to satisfy my curiosity. Is it possible in this way to touch the philosophy of the vegetable kingdom, the secrets of existence and survival? Will I see the good little meadow deities with all their miracles and spells hidden over the centuries?

Yet it is most likely (this I know for sure) that only a few captured herbs will remain on the paper with their smell disappearing and colour sealed in the fibres, as traces of the overwhelming desire to touch the essence.

DUŠKO DIMITROVSKI

Anastasia

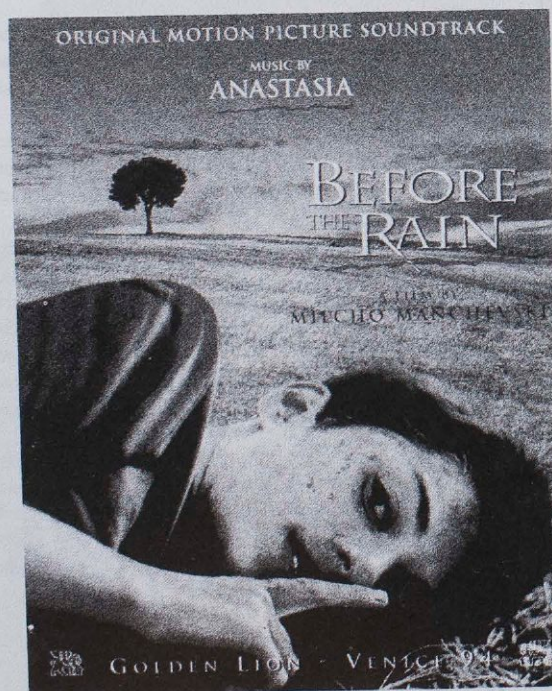
Macedonian Music Group

The first fascinating trait of Anastasia's music that immediately captures our senses is its radical originality; the surprisingly powerful, profound, and suggestive sound which directly originates from an abundantly rich musical tradition. This first shock of fascination is so strong that it momentarily wakes up our curiosity and unlocks the door of our confidence, this letting the young masters from ANASTASIA lead us into their extraordinary world of sounds. Indeed there are no regrets for our succumbing to their creative magic since there is not even a shadow of delusion in ANASTASIA's music. Everything that these marvellous artists offer us is primordially remote in its roots, virginally fresh, and so genuinely modern. An enormous gamut of both the mental and the musical is a clear sign of an emanation of a magnificent talent.

Following their music, from one piece to another, we do not know what exactly should we ascribe our delight to. Is it the little-known, uniquely beautiful melody? Is it the meek, filigree-like lyricism that mesmerizes us with its genuine sincerity? Or is it the

epic, or better still, the mythical power of the sound that almost reaches the heavens? Is it due to the ancient, the mysterious, the ingeniously unexpected beauty of polytonality that flows in ANASTASIA's songs? Could it be the magical lightness of these tunes which merge the age-old Macedonian music with the sounds of both the Orient and Europe, thus making them recognize one another and be no strangers to each other? Should we ascribe this delight to the rhythm that turns some pieces into a four-dimensional sound? There seems to be only one key to this: the perception of this polyrhythmical magic is possible only through devoting ourselves to this music, by admiring it.

The deep underlying connection with Macedonian secular music, with the Byzantine musical genesis, and, especially, with the plunge into the rustic, the non-vocal melody, together with the frequent implementation of Macedonian folk instruments may put forward the question: Isn't this ETHNO music? By this I mean ethno music in the strictest sense of the word, i.e. that has recently been ascribed to this term, as a modern trend of musical expression. The answer would have to be NO. An in-depth analysis would prove that here we encounter a highly exposed, most creative and novel projection of a NEW NATIONAL music. ANASTASIA's music itself inaugurates a process. It is a process that undoubtedly influences the modern sound of an ancient people which has become a newly-recognized nation, and, perhaps, it goes far beyond that.



Goran Trajkoski:
vocal, bagpipes, flute

Zlatko Oridjanski:
guitar, mandolin, flute,
back vocals

Zoran Spasovski:
drums, percussion,
keyboards, back vocals

euralien X

SOFIA, BULGARIA

Alexander Morfov director

Goran called me one night: "I just met a Bulgarian director who is perfect for the project – call him!" Our first meeting occurred in Stockholm in february 98 when the Euralien directors gathered. He was quiet for a long time – listened, observed. Then suddenly, he entered the discussion and turned things upside down. An intellectual fury that left no stone unturned. He defined and questioned the entire project. With a dose of individualism mixed with a deep respect for the work of the actor, Alexander brings to Landscape X what he offers the Bulgarian theatre: a re-generative energy based in a strong belief in the power of art.

Director, the National Theatre Ivan Vazov in Sofia (since -93). Teaches at the National Drama Academy.
Diplomas: Drama direction, Film Direction the National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts

THEATRE /SELECTION

- Director, Sofia Municipal Theatre, 1990-92
- Hamlet, by Shakespeare, director, National Theatre Ivan Vazov -92
- Dom Quijote, after Cervantes, director, National Theatre Ivan Vazov. Theater critics award: Best director of the year -93. Bulgarian Theatre award Askeer, 4 awards
- Enchanted Night, after Beckett and Ionesco, director, National Theatre Ivan Vazov. Presented in Casablanca, Morocco -94, Vienna, Austria -95, Kiev, Ukraine -95
- Midnight Summer dream, by Shakespeare, director, National Theatre Ivan Vazov. Theater critics award: Best performance of the year -95
- The Last Night of Socrates, Centre Wallonie, Paris, France -95
- The tempest, by Shakespeare, director, National Theatre Ivan Vazov -96 First Theatre award, Ohrid festival, Macedonia -97
- Lower depth, by Gorki, director, National Theatre Ivan Vazov. Bulgarian artist award: Best director of the year -97

FILM/SELECTION

- 200 movie kings, film script and directing, Bulgarian National Television -94
- A magic night, film, script and director, Bulgarian National Television -97

THE FUNERAL/THE WEDDING

Director: Alexander Morfov

ACTORS FROM BULGARIA

Dimiter Bakalov
Stoyan Alexiev
Radostina Vrangova
Maria Kavardjikova
Marian Bouzoukov
Nikolay Ouroumov

ACTORS FROM SWEDEN

Mladen Puric
Mina Azarian
Petra C Nilsson
Bert Kolker

Set designer: Elena Ivanova

Music: Sabbath Hela Veckan

Incidental costumes: Maret Kukkur

CO-PRODUCTION

Soros Center for Performing arts, Bulgaria

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Odessos Shiprepair
Golden Sands Hotel

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



SOFIA, BULGARIA

Ivan Pantelev director

Master degree, theatre directing, the National Academy for Theatre and Film arts, Sofia -95. Graduate, research, Cinema- and TV- directing, the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts, Sofia -96. Teacher, theatre department, New Bulgarian University -94/95.

THEATRE/SELECTION

- Chechov-Review, after different works by Chechov, The Youth Theatre, Sofia (92/93). First Prize, National Competition for Small Theatre Forms, Vratza.
- Ivanov, by Chechov, National Palace of Culture, 94/95
- Stabbed by love, after Exiles by James Joyce. National Palace of Culture (95/96)
- Trainspotting, after Arvin Welsh, National Palace of Culture, Sofia -97/98

FILM

- How the Snail went over the Earth, Bulgarian National Television -97

THE STELLAR CONSTELLATION

Theatre installation
director: Ivan Pantelev

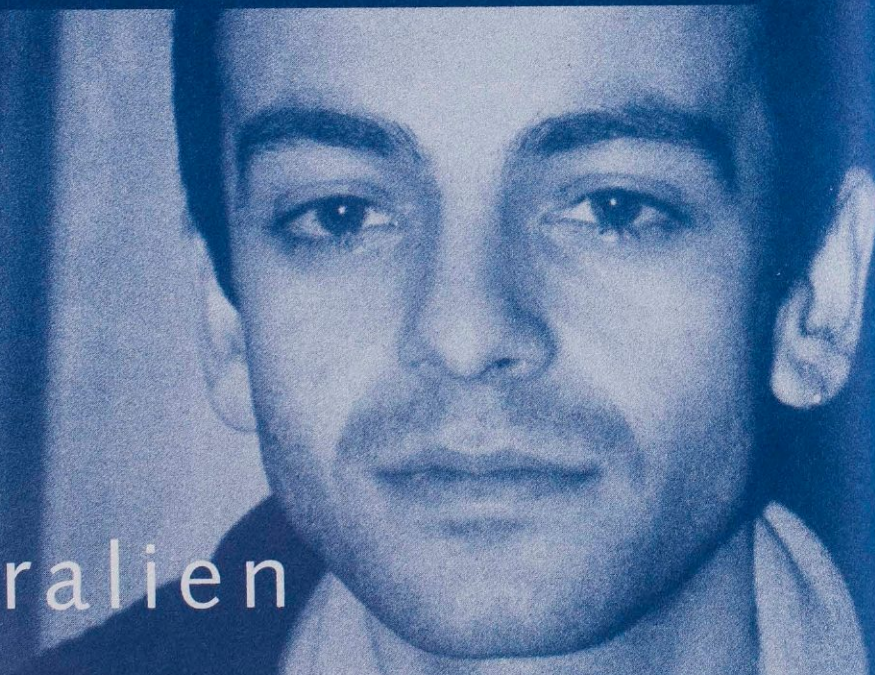
CO-PRODUCTION

Soros Center for the Arts, Bulgaria.

LANDSCAPE X - INTERCULT - STOCKHOLM '98



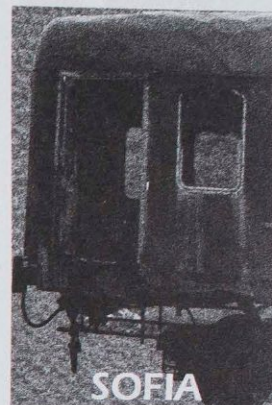
xeuralien



IRINA GENOVA

The Crossing of Modern Trends in the Balkan Countries between the Two World Wars:

Modernism versus National Identity,
National Identity within Modernism



Widening the Cultural Map

Is our view of the cultural map of Europe not focused too exclusively on the large centers of the West? Enlarging our scope to include peripheral countries not only enriches the cultural map with additional shades of meaning, but also with solutions different in character and genesis from what we are used to. We discover other perspectives on the artistic and cultural problems of any given period. Modernism in the Balkan countries was recently examined in this spirit in several retrospective exhibitions: *Zenit and the avant-garde of the twenties* (1983), *Bulgarian art during the 1920's* (1992), *Metamorphoses of the modern – the Greek experience* (1992), and *Bucharest from the 1920s to the 1940s: between avant-garde and modernism* (1994).

A similar proposition is stated by Vida Golubovic at the start of her article "The Zenit experiment," published in the catalog of the above-mentioned exhibition on Zenit. There she writes: "It would be good to expand the avant-garde paradigm beyond its manifestation in western European cultural circles in Italian futurism, German expressionism, French and German dadaism, and French surrealism. The avant-garde stance is characteristic of group aesthetic activities of the twenties all over Europe. Posing the question thus, we would include, in addition to the avant-garde experiments mentioned above, such movements as Polish constructivism, the Kraków avant-garde, poetism, Hungarian activism as well as a number of other more obscure and inadequately studied occurrences in Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria."

During the years following the First World War the development of Balkan art was very dynamic. Artists had experienced the horrors of one bloody conflict after another. The two Balkan wars, the First World War, and the Greek-Turkish War had brought defeat and devastation to the Balkans. Artists in these countries, many of whom had returned from the battlefield, hastened to shake off their nightmarish memories. Urgently they undertook to speed up their artistic development and production.

Several new art societies were formed as early as 1919-1920. Many new journals appeared, which catalyzed the formation of unified literary and artistic circles.

Dr. IRINA GENOVA is an art critic and scientist from Institute for Art Studies, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences from Sofia.

This study, whose first results are presented in the above text, was made possible by the financial support of the Getty Grant Program. I would like to express my gratitude to the J. Paul Getty Trust for the chance to conduct a research trip through the Balkan.

*How the Snail
Went over
the Earth?*

*by
Jordan Rarichkhov
cartoon film*

*Directed
and painted
by
Ivan Panteleev*



In Bulgaria the magazine "Vezni" (Scales; 1919-1922), edited by Geo Milev, was emphatically oriented toward modern European art. The year 1922 saw the appearance of the four issues of *Crescendo*, which included materials on dadaism, constructivism, purism, futurism, translations from Marinetti, and reproductions of work by Mircho Kachulev. The journal that was best known abroad was "Plamak" (Flame; 1924-1925), which was decidedly modernistic, with a leftist political orientation. "Novis", an acronym for New Art, appeared on the threshold of the 1930s. Its manifesto as well as its early editorials show the influence of futurism and constructivism. In Romania there were "Contemporanul" (1922-1924), "Integral" (1925-1928), and the single issue of "75HP" (1924). The main Yugoslavian magazines were "Zenit" (1921-1926; Zagreb - Belgrade) and "Nemoguće L'Impossible" (1930, Belgrade).

As in such artistic centers as Paris and Berlin, Balkan art history of this period is characterized by great intellectual energy and fertility. In the early 1920s young painters from Bulgaria, Romania, Yugoslavia, and Greece explored new spaces beyond their peripheral native countries. Most often they went to Germany, France or Italy, where they experienced the second wave of expressionism, Bauhaus, the successive metamorphoses of Russian constructivism, Dada, surrealism, futurism and several varieties of abstraction. The artistic systems and theories that were so powerful at the beginning of the century, such as Cubism, made less impression on them. One notices that artists from the Balkans often straddle the boundaries between different tendencies.

Peripherality should not always be equated with secondary artistic importance. The situation varies from case to case. The main reason an area is considered peripheral is that it does not bring forth artistic trends and meanings that determine developments elsewhere. Their influence on artistic life beyond their own borders is sensed only in a "hidden" manner; sometimes this took form in a mediating role. The early 1920s saw an unmistakable widening of the scope of artistic ideas in the Balkans. Impulses from different artistic circles inter-fused and engaged with each other, producing results which are not always easy to characterize. Bipolar categories such as native and foreign, official and avant-garde, modernist and traditionalist, original and reproduction, are more of a hindrance than a help. One could claim that the 1920s opened Balkan artists up to new poetic and visual experiences. The widening of the cultural map developed in two directions. On the one hand the Balkan cultures were penetrated by new artistic ideas, modern trends, new indigenous knowledge, and new contacts with other countries. At the same time, interest in Balkan art radiated to the west, albeit in smaller measure and limited to a few figures. Herwarth Walden's prestigious German journal "Der Sturm", which became an international forum of the avant-garde, dedicated issues to contemporary art in Bulgaria (1929) and Romania (1930).

Modernism and Avant-Garde?

Modernism and avant-garde do not have the same meaning in the Balkans as in the artistic centers of western Europe. The pre-war and early post-war tendency towards artistic renewal expressed itself mainly in the defense of subjectiveness; in striving for autonomous, anti-illusionary pictorial space; and in different versions of symbol-

ism and Secession. The influence of German expressionism infiltrated Balkan artistic cultures, where it frequently co-existed with other movements in a fashion characteristic for these cultures. In Bulgarian art of this period, for example, one can see crossings between German expressionism and late Secession, in other cases between constructivism and primitivist tendencies. This may be considered a symptom of the peripherality of the Balkans.

This phenomenon was observed by Magda Carneci in her remarks on the above-mentioned Romanian exhibition *Bucharest between avant-garde and modernism*: "This title was intended to suggest an eclectic cultural reality equally suitable for disciplines like architecture, theater and music, where there was no avant-garde proper, but a comprehensive modernism." The superposition of different cultural and artistic phenomena, which lead to terminological and analytical polyvalency, is noted by many students of the period between the world wars in Balkan cultures.

The new wave in the art of the Balkan countries after the First World War included phenomena that can be identified as versions of modernism or as hybrid variants of avant-garde trends. During the 1920s expressionism and fauvism gain in importance. Around the middle of the decade more or less emphatic and widespread traces of constructivism can be found.

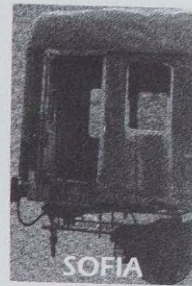
The most consistent interest in constructivism seems to be centered in Bucharest. In the "Zenit" circles in Zagreb and Belgrade avant-garde attitudes were inclined toward dada and futurism as well as constructivism. Bulgarian modernists showed a greater interest in German culture: in expressionism, as everywhere else, but also in German symbolism. The discourse between modernism and the avant-garde in Bulgaria also engaged the question of cultural "roots". In Greece the problem of "Greekness" and its relation with the new tendencies was even more emphasized.

One of the peculiarities of the avant-garde in Balkan cultures was the lack of "negative energy," of destructive pathos. This seems to be a common feature of peripheral cultures during this period. One reason for this is the shared aspiration to create authentic (native) meanings without eliminating foreign (imported) meanings.

The intellectuals and artists who personified modernism in the Balkans had a new outlook on the world, in which active and committed intellectual presence was combined with contemplative resignation. Such personalities were Geo Milev and Sirak Skitnik, Lubomir Micic, Ion Vinea, Victor Brauner, Marcel Janco, Michalis Tombros. Interpersonal contacts between these individuals were of considerable importance: Milev and Micic; Milev and Skitnik with Herwarth Walden; Walden and Micic and Herwarth Walden.

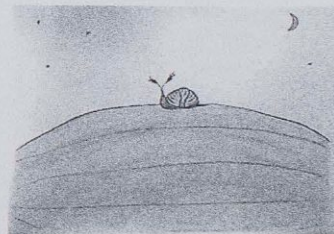
The manifestations of constructivism, futurism and surrealism in Bulgaria did not prove to be long-lived or widespread. The experiments of the 1920s were not significant for subsequent artistic development and were often forgotten. The modernist ideas of "Vezni", the echo of expressionism, futurism, constructivism in "Plamak" and the circle of Geo Milev still can be detected towards 1930 in "Novis". However, this is the only place where the spirit of the early 1920s still reverberates, and even here it is momentary.

Concerning the Bulgarian participation in the International exhibition, organized by "Zenit" in Belgrade in 1924, Irina Subotic wrote: "In the letters of 12th and 18th January 1924 Milev notified Micic of the works he sent to the Zenit exhibition: two oils by Mirco Kaculev



Irina Genova

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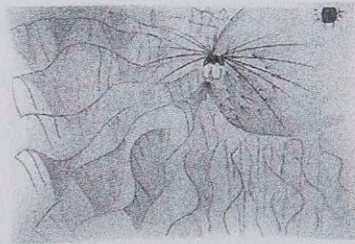
– (*Paradise and Collapse of the Sun*), two etchings by Ana Balsamadzieva (*Love and Work*) and a water-color by Ivan Bojadziev (*My Disposition*).... Although these artists do not belong to the most radical avant-garde currents nor are they very significant in Bulgarian contemporary art, the context in which they appear is interesting: the new artistic moment represented by Kaculev reflects expressionism, while Balsamadzieva strikes a social note and Bojadziev's decorative composition manifests a strong and colorful temperament."

Some of the most genuinely Balkan approaches to avant-garde art were marginal in another sense as well: they were made in the field of graphic art. In book design too (book jackets, illustrations, type fonts) as well as in some scenographic projects one encounters liberated and experimental attitudes. Concerning new tendencies in Greek art of this period Anna Kafetsi mentioned that engraving "in fact took the lead in formulating a new mental angle of vision".

The literary and artistic circles around magazines like "Zenit", "Plamak", "Novis", "Contimporanul", "Integral" and others were a hotbed of experimentation. One of the main aims of these journals was to inform the public about the foreign works and tendencies which they favored. It is fascinating to examine carefully the repertoire of authors and works reproduced and to see which of them recur in more than one magazine.

A common feature of 1920s contemporaneity was marked interest in the technical discoveries that were changing the perception of the material world. In Germany, France and Italy such discoveries nourished movements like constructivism and futurism; they provided the poetry for the engine that was reality.

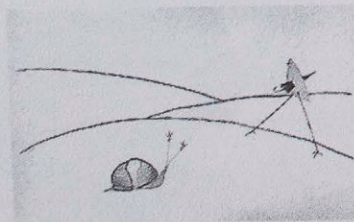
In Balkan cultures these changes led mainly to constructivist experiments. However, they also engendered a belated interest in futurism and in contacts with Marinetti, who consequently visited Belgrade, Sofia and Athens. Further research into these visits would assuredly repay the effort.



The new, technical view of reality also had its impact in Bulgaria. "The airplane brought not only a technical revolution, but also a new perspective and a new vision, whose elements were not late to appear in the visual arts," argued the Bulgarian artist and critic Sirak Skitnik in 1927 in a brief (and ephemeral) essay. This enchantment with technique changed the life of Mirtcho Katchoulev. He began as one of the central figures of the so-called avant-garde of the city of Yambol and, in 1922, of *Crescendo*. In 1924 he participated in the

International exhibition, organized by Zenit in Belgrade. After this start he renounced his artistic activities and became the best specialist of aerial photography in Bulgaria. He invented a number of technical novelties in this field, without having a specialized technical education.

Modernism and National Continuity



A common feature of the new wave in Balkan art after the First World War, a feature apparently opposed to the modern trends and avant-garde attitudes we discussed above, was the quest for cultural continuity, new support for the national identity. The "Movement for National Art" in Bulgaria; the byzantinism and neoclassicism as well as the discussion of "Hellenic character" in Greece; the program of "Romanian art" of the 1920s; the call for "balkanization" in the heart of the "Zenitist" avant-garde: all these phenomena demonstrate the

aspiration to establish one's own identity by "remembering" the latest, "forgotten" authentic artistic structure. At the same time, a renovation of artistic language was also being called for.

"Greekness and modernity in the same phrase? The paradoxical nature of the juxtaposition provides a good opportunity for raising a series of questions. Should we be thinking in terms of a national variation on the modern, now assimilated and local? Was this a modernity of a moderate, derivative kind? Could it have been an anti-modern modernity? The answer is both yes and no..." – wrote Anna Kafetsi in the exhibition catalogue *Metamorphoses of the modern*.

In her article "Rumanian painting of the 1920s and debates about tradition," Ioana Vlasu writes: "A certain spirit of competition, a desire to overcome the consequences of belated entry into the artistic arena of the west, stimulated by international exhibitions, by even more intense cultural contacts which opposed Rumanian art to European art: these things, without doubt, explain the double orientation of our painting, directed to assimilation of the European artistic tradition, but also to the regaining of its own tradition."

In Bulgarian art of the 1920s intellectuals began to conceive of the pre-academic artistic heritage – icons, wood-carving and folk crafts – as a mediating element with modern artistic expression. This theory contains significant contradictions. Whereas in the artistic centers artistic identity is an individual property,, in the peripheral it is mainly a function of national cultural continuity. This results in the seemingly paradoxical demand that modern aesthetic accomplishments be based on the national tradition.

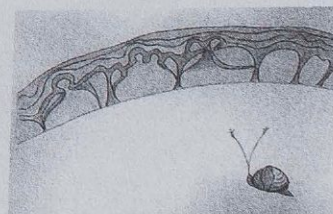
These contradictions were discussed by art critics of the time. Many intellectuals, such as Geo Milev, gave expression to universalistic views. The desire to identify a national tradition stimulated the search for a possible "congruence" between old and new in the interest of modern artists in pre-academic, primitive art. At the same time this attention offers an opportunity to fall back on an authentic artistic meaning. When artists in central cultures look for impulses in the pre-academic art of other cultures, they reject the dominance of their own national tradition, which is conveyed through academic education. In Bulgaria the local culture was extra-academic. Institutionalized artistic education did not appear until late, at the end of 19th century, and even then the curricula were eclectic. After the First World War artists studied folk crafts and old Bulgarian book decoration, icons and wood-carving.

The issue of cultural continuity in 20th-century Balkan art cannot be limited to the search for a vernacular artistic tradition. The question is related to the cultural condition itself, to the decision of whether to preserve or transform it. This requires the critical juxtaposition of local cultural expressions with current developments in European art at large. Studies of this kind, which can gain the necessary depth and breadth only through collaborative effort, should reveal common denominators of the cultural condition, as well as providing another key for the character and the peculiarities of the specific artistic phenomena under consideration.



Irina Genova

e uralien



IVAN

PANTELEEV

Chechov - Review

Look back in anger to Streller
The excitement which greeted the
group of young directors - Alexander
Dimitrov, Galin Stoev, Ivan Panteleev
and Nedyalko Deltchev - is adequate to
the talent and charm of their first perfor-
mances, to the hope which they arise,
to the easiness with which they break
rules, theatrical myths and illusions.

The dramatism which they achieve is
incredible, born in artistic fun and
game. They don't believe in the entirety
of the world and so they watch its
pieces and fragments with curiosity.

This makes their performances artistically
colourful and theatrically playful.
To these newcomers theatre is an intimate
adventure, in which friendship and
solidarity are the only aid to the success
of this adventure. They don't want
to be the angry young men, fury isn't
where they excel.

They prefer the ironic destruction,
the mocking attitude, the soft sugges-
tion. They don't declare this yet but the
lyricism connects their world into some-
thing very intimate.

They are different among them-

CHECHOV - REVIEW

sex and longing in the writing of Anton Pavlovich Chechov
CHECHOV - REVIEW is a performance set up
on a T-shaped platform of dimension:
7m x 4m x 1m x 0.51m.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a performance in which nothing happens; it
begins before the beginning and ends after the end.

CHECHOV - REVIEW does not give answers
and does not pose questions, it denies nothing
and asserts nothing.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a performance in which someone wants to
leave somewhere ...

from the beginning till the end no one of
the actors leaves the stage.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a performance about five austere silhouettes -
bewildered and lonely,

vacillating between "world" and "self", between "now" and "once"...

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a meeting of five people, conceived at the end
of the sixties, with the writing of A. P. Chechov, without attempts of imi-
tating place and time outside the span of here and now.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a performance-collage, built up on fragments of
plays, novels and short stories by A. P. Chechov.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is constructed entirely on
a montage-type plot less principle and with its fragmented structure
stands closer to the video-clip rather than to the classical dramatic pat-
terns.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a poetic geometry, where every one of the characters is isolated from the others; their bodies are in immediate closeness, they touch, they love or injure one another ...

and nevertheless, they seem to be brought together by pure chance.

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a performance in which a man loves a woman who is in love with another man, who loves another woman; she herself is in love with a third one ...

"how nervous and how love sick all they are..."
("Seagull" - Medvedenko).

CHECHOV - REVIEW is a place where the characters created by the author are unified in one (single) anti-character, anonymous, vague, having lost its integrity, vague, having lost its integrity, contradictory and confused, without age and profession, resembling at one instant Arkadina, at another Zarechnaya

or Anna from "The Lady With the Dog".

CHECHOV - REVIEW is an expression of love when you are alone, at home, when you do not hear and do not see anything, but when you do not want to be alone and you do not want to be at home; when you want to hear the voice of the frenzied city and see the exquisitely arranged shop windows, when you think of yourself and of "... some different spring life - mystic, beautiful, rich and holy, beyond the comprehension of the weak sinful man and when, nobody knows why, you want to cry..." (fiance).

In fact the term "heroes" is totally inapplicable to these characters ...

The principle of the video clip, on which Ivan Panteleev builds in the same the action on stage, makes them anti-heroes in the same way, in which turns the short moment into a complete and universal situation. Every following configuration of existing of the characters in the space of performance is unforeseen - because the creator of this configuration is the chance. At the same time every configuration is expected, because this chance is not an accidental happening, but running time.

This is the time which abolishes the reality of the suffered moment and confirms the next one as the only real moment. The body begins to live without another pulse, the eyes fill with another longing, the face starts to look for a new, unfamiliar face. And exactly here, the sacred dramatism of the human existence itself - in the time, running equally for everyone there are no two equal lasting "now".

"Kultura" weekly newspaper



Ivan Panteleev

e uralien

*selves and to their colleagues.
I hope they'll preserve this otherness.*

They are hardly similar to Streller and they don't want to be.

"Kultura" weekly newspaper





Ivan Panteleev Returns to Chechov

The opening show disturbed the spirits of Sofia's theatre-goers. Faithful to his egocentric approach to Chechov's plays, Ivan Panteleev has cut texts, added fragments from other plays by Chechov. It's as if all the characters of this author live near a lake and we learn, almost accidentally, that on the other side Treplyov has shot himself, a neighbour thinks she's a sea-gull, another has to sell or has already sold her estate... In this play the finale is also somewhat different and laconic. A gesture says it all.

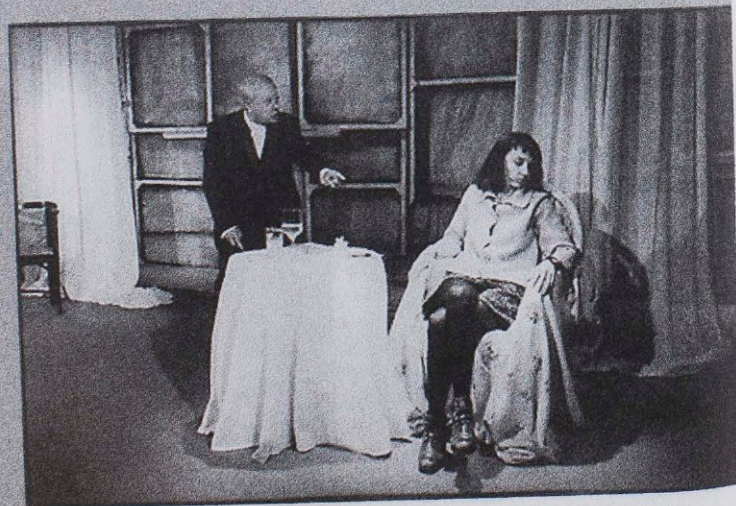
... To Ivan Panteleev "Ivanov" is more than a play. "Ivanov" is a model of the supersense of the world.

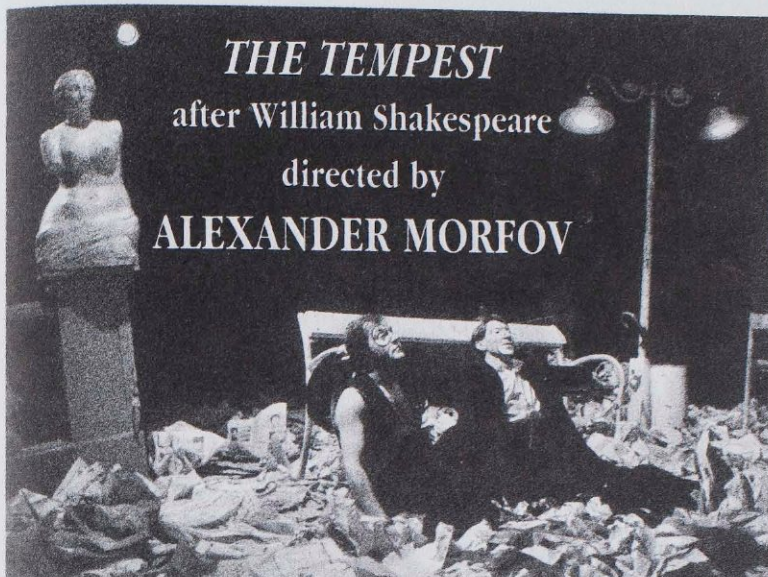
The mathematics and the absolute unavoidability by Marivo...

The (self) confinement in movement appears to be a new key to Chechov, it opens a new page and a curious perspective for reading it today and in the future.

"Kultura"

"24 Tchassa"





THE TEMPEST
after William Shakespeare
directed by
ALEXANDER MORFOV

The Tempest is one of the most interesting performances in the program list of National Theatre. It could be defined as a meeting with the world's culture not only because it is based on Shakespeare (the most "international" author of all times) but also because it is a quite different interpretation - out of all well-known theatre traditions, and in the same time it makes the synthesis of an existing experience.

The Tempest is an excursus in the theatre history. It combines the methods of comedia del'arte, marionette theatre, Eastern dance traditions etc. Grotesque, sketch and clownishness dominate in this performance although there is no lack of profound poetic sensitiveness.

Actors from different generations are involved in an endless game of imagination. They are never tired to improvise or to demonstrate their sense of humour. The improvisation is this tradition that Alexander Morfov wants to revive. His idea inspires all the ensemble of the National Theatre. The most famous actors of the theatre participate in *The Tempest*: Boris Lukanov, Reni Vrangova, Krastio Lafazanov, Marian Bozukov, Vladimir Penév, Iosif Shamli, Teodor Elmazov, Peter Popyordanov. They combine both the classical acting skills and the modern theatre expressions, realizing in that way a brilliant and impressive spectacle. It is very important to emphasize that the attractive theatre of Aleksander Morfov does not suppress the wisdom and the philosophy of Shakespeare's verse.

The poster to *Don Quijote* after Cervantes,
directed by Alexander Morfov, National Theatre, Sofia, 1993.

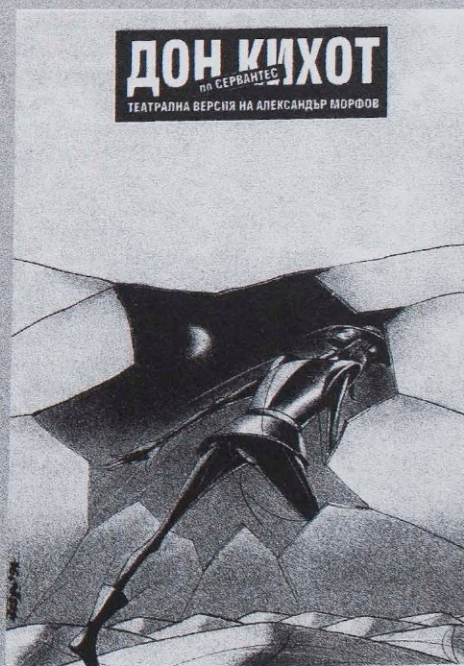


Alexander Morfov

e uralien

The skill of the director closely resemble the mysterious skill of Prospero - to provoke tempests ...
In other words *The Tempest* is a tale about *The Tempest* by William Shakespeare. A tale full of imagination and full of respect towards this mysterious text. The director and the actors tell us the story without wanting to reveal its secret. The tell it as a lovely, amusing and pleasant dream. And they tell it very well ..."

Kultura Newspaper



Young Poets of a New Bulgaria

Translated by Belin Tonchev

IVAN KRUSTEV

The apocryphal story of porcelain

The porcelain passion, 19th century Europe.
Sets, elephants and glasses.
The world is vast and good,
Exquisite, fragile, royal.
And something's there beyond,
The horizon stands up transparent.
America is just a coast.
And China is a black cat.
Montesquieu still writes
His letters of philosophers.
Scholars wear wigs
And ladies – flowers.
Sovereigns are not unsound of mind
Yet they are no great minds.
No spectre haunts Europe
And love is spectre-like.
Unfortunately poets are of the court,
Fortunately their poems are not.
And liberty, like a vase,
Is in the focus of thought.
The new history begins
With porcelain fragments.
Buried in small white elephants
The age of Reason is at our rear.

RUMEN LEONIDOV

My little fellow

scared from birth
you are the outer garment of my soul
the cruel exception
to the syndromes of this world...
My scared little man
gripping at the tail of time
my positive anti-hero of this epoch
does it make any difference
whether you are inessential or nonexistent?
You participate in chaos, in the cycle
of home – work
work – home
you've got your own sun-dial
and your own little scared fellow,
but does anything depend on you
when you yourself depend on everything?
My little fellow, forgotten and ready for great feats –
I don't pity
my mad brothers
I've never mocked
people,
who ponder on the colour of the sky,
nor the simpletons
worried about you –
my little, very little, very scared fellow!
Inessential or nonexistent –
perhaps it's the same?
You know what to live for
but do you know what to die for?
And as I watch you
hurrying for nowhere,
the way you turned your back on the star map above you
and the way you stand upright
when you stop,
hands in pockets
your face to the wall of life
as if in a public lavatory
I wonder:
why is my soul bound
by this white and very soiled raincoat?



Young Poets

e uralien

ВЕЛКИЯ
ОПИСАНИЕ
ЗА БЪЛГАРСКА ЛИТЕРАТУРА



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(The Owl)

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VLADIMIR LEVCHEV

The one who never returns (Nevazvrashthenets)*

I.

Every minute
has its multimillion cities
and skies,
clouds illuminated in a second,
sunset-lit windows.

Every minute
has its secret corridors
leading to dark rooms.

Who lives there?

What would we say to each other?

How would we live together?

I'll never know!

Every minute

like a nevazvrashthenets

I pass by

the countless doors

of eternal life...

II

We are guilty, my soul,

guilty of knowing

about our solitude,

about the end.

We are guilty.

And we are expelled from paradise.

The clock with its two swords

does not let us return

through the doors of minutes

into Eternity.

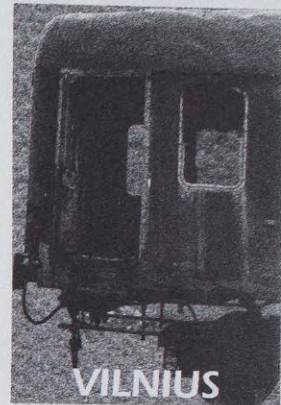
* Nevazvrashthenets means literally: 'One who never returns', a refugee who has left his country without official permission, especially for political reasons.

ELONA BAJORINIENE

Theatre in Twilight

To begin an acquaintance with Lithuanian theatre with the name of director Gintaras Varnas is to find oneself in the epicentre of theatre artists of the younger generation. There are always plenty of young people – actors, directors and scenery designers – on the stage, but not always can one assert that a new generation has come into theatre. In Lithuania, a country which has slightly more than ten state-financed drama theatres and several alternative theatre companies, more than ten young theatre directors are actively working. Nearly all of them are based in Vilnius and work with the same group of actors, scenery designers and composers, their contemporaries. However, the centres of attraction are obvious: Oskaras Koršunovas and Gintaras Varnas. They are far from being fascinated by each other's performances, but follow closely each other's premieres. In their work they seem to look in the opposite directions, but feel each other with their backs. They need each other as a challenge or a whip to go forward. Though Gintaras is eight years older than Oskaras, they studied theatre directing together and both started to work in professional theatre already as students of the Lithuanian Musical Academy. History did not give them time to go the usual way: first a degree of higher education, and then creative work and professional career.

Gintaras Varnas won fame with the performances *Lullabies of Revolution* and *Nostalgias of Communism* produced in 1989 and 1990 in the newly-created "Sėpa" theatre. The word "sėpa" (szopka) is of Polish origin and means a standard wooden wardrobe. Following the tradition of mediaeval theatre, the director divided the wardrobe into two halves: the Kremlin was depicted in the top compartment, and Lithuania – in the bottom one. Masked actors – the Guardian Angel and the Grim Reaper – commented on the events taking place in the wardrobe. In this way Varnas created the whole world: the hell, the heavens and the earth, in which miniature puppets of Stalin, Mikhail Gorbachev, George Bush, Vytautas Landsbergis and other well-known politicians were acting. The puppets could more freely say what was still hushed up officially (rhymed satirical texts for both performances were created by



ELONA BUNDAITE-BAJORINIENE was born in 1956 in Vilnius.

Graduated from the St-Petersburg's Theatre Academy (Cinematography and Music Institute), Theatre Research Department.

1983-1996 - editor of the theatre section of the cultural monthly journal "Kultūros barai"; Vice-president of the Lithuanian national centre of the International Theatre Institute (1992-94); chair of the Theatre Experts Committee of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania (1992-94).

Since 1995 Performing Arts Programme Co-ordinator of the Open Society Fund - Lithuania.

Author of over 60 publications, different genres, about theatre.



two young writers). The history of the Lithuanian-Russian relations up to the latest hot issues was presented as the eternal struggle between God and Devil, good and evil. During the performances of the "Sėpa" theatre the spectators' cheeks used to flush with excitement and tension. It was a unique moment in Lithuanian theatre, a civil and artistic act of great power. This kind of theatre could be created only by a person who did not have anything to lose except his own future. Judging the mood of society, Varnas hit the mark.

The first performance by Oskaras Koršunovas *There to Be Here* produced in the same year (1990) did not attract much attention, but only at first. Soon the performance collected its own audience, started to go on tours and win international awards. Later Koršunovas produced *The Old Woman* (the first variant in 1992, the second variant in 1994), and the musical *Hello Sonya New Year* (1994), and this trilogy became the manifesto of the young generation. All three performances were based on the works of Danil Charms and Alexander Vvedensky, Russian absurd writers who wrote in the twenties and thirties under the Stalin regime and whose work cost them their lives. In the performances of the trilogy Koršunovas did not agonize over solving the eternally perplexing questions of Lithuanian culture: who we are, where we have come from, or where we are going. Koršunovas did not seem to be oppressed by anything: theatre interests him first of all as a game, or as "unbearable lightness of being", to borrow the title of the famous Czech writer Milan Kundera's novel. The director himself explained that in his theatre essential is being "here and there" simultaneously. It is an unstable world without any landmarks, an optical and acoustic delusion, in which really important and real is what cannot be guessed, what is not immediately visible and recognizable. For example, an accidentally met elderly ballerina is Death.

Two years ago (1996) the international theatre forum "The Shifting Point" held by the Open Society Fund-Lithuania provoked a direct confrontation between the theatres of Gintaras Varnas and Oskaras Koršunovas. Both directors staged play-readings which evoked a strong response and later developed into independent fully-fledged perfor-

mances. Varnas chose a little-known play by Federico Garcia Lorca, *El Publico* (The Public), and Koršunovas – the play *P.S. File O.K.* by Lithuanian playwright Sigitas Parulskis. The title of the latter play signalled the manipulation of meanings characteristic of Koršunovas theatre: P.S. can be interpreted both as "post scriptum" and the playwright's initials; accordingly, O.K., apart from the generally used English abbreviation also marks the first letters of the director's first and family names. The production of Parulskis' play showed that Koršunovas already got

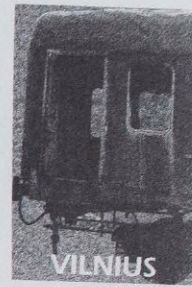
Sigitas Parulskis' *P.S. File O.K.*
Lithuanian State Academic Drama
Theatre, 1997. Director Oskaras
Koršunovas. Photo Dmitrij Matvejev.



interested in the "accursed" questions "who we are" and "where from" (note that in this case "we" means those who are around 30). The offered reply was so extraordinary that it evoked cutting remarks in the local press. The duet of Parulskis and Koršunovas sent a challenge to Lithuanian playwriting nurtured in the Romantic tradition, the ultimate goal of which has always been the preservation of national identity, often associated with the idea of statehood. They took the liberty of revising the values which have been sacred in Lithuania for ages and were defended in the clashes with Soviet troops in January 1991, when blood was spilled. *P.S. File O.K.* brought to the fore the conflict of generations. At the end of the play it is stripped down to the biblical story of Abraham and Isaac, father and son, but the story is reversed in an odd way (contrary to the canonical text, the son sacrifices the father in the performance). The authors of the performance tread on corns of the parents of those who are now in their early thirties, by showing their other, unattractive side and demythologizing their generation. The parents of today's young people are inclined to boast and justify their life with their resistance to the Soviet regime. The public hoisting of the national flag and its legitimization at the turn of the 9th and 10th decades filled their life with meaning. Their children are, at best, indifferent to these symbols. And, finally, P.K. (Parulskis – Koršunovas) ask: who are the parents of modern young people – the best pilot in the world or the best mushroom-picker, as they were often convinced in their Soviet childhood? Or perhaps this "father" was a former KGB interrogator who now works as a school watchman and only approves of training "with a rod of iron"? What and where are the values cherished and implanted by the parents, which the young generation could trust and foster?

The young man's existence is Koršunovas' focus in his latest performance based on the play *Roberto Zucco* by Bernard-Marie Koltes (1997). Yet this time the mass culture entourage – the most tempting bait for the young audience – nearly stifles the main hero's line. The story of the killer without a motive, Roberto Zucco, gave way to the aggressive but not fully exploited image of a roller-skater ramp and deafening, excessively used discotheque music by Gintaras Sodeika. The last two performances by Koršunovas produced on the main stage of the Lithuanian Academic Drama Theatre are not so integral and complete as the trilogy rehearsed and performed in chamber spaces. The trilogy performances had their usual audience, ready to spare a couple of beers for two hours of Koršunovas' theatre. Having transferred his "off" theatre to the main stage, Koršunovas certainly lost part of his former fans, but having turned to large forms, moved into another "weight category" as a professional.

Gintaras Varnas chooses a different way: he makes capital out of consciously avoiding conventional performing spaces. In the performance *The Public* based on the play by Federico Garcia Lorca (1996) on the main stage of the Academic Drama Theatre, he places the audience on the revolving part of the stage. The revolving stage makes one feel like in a merry-go-round. A funny director looking like Salvatore Dali and slightly "touched" actors are rushing around the audience. This odd crew is trying to put together a crazy performance of surrealist scenes, and strangely enough, they are bothered by only one basic question: is the audience going to watch it? The most impressive is the final scene of the performance, reminiscent of the dream in theatre in *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* by Luis Bunuel. At the end of the performance the curtain is raised and the audience sitting on the stage are suddenly left staring at the empty and dark hall of the Academic Theatre, in which the actors, having



Elona Bajoriniene

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Teatras (Theatre in Lithuania)

The magazine presents modern Lithuanian theatre. The reviews, critiques and interviews help recognize new theatre tendencies. It is not only avantgarde that exists in "Teatras", but also classical "theatre" is here presented.

One of the important themes is also the economic situation of contemporary Lithuanian theatres and the problem of financing culture in general.

The professional periodical standard is as good as the editorial one; black and white photos are especially interesting.

The magazine publishes the calendar of premieres and the theatre festivals in Lithuania.

The articles are also provided in English.

Uļakymas 227
Leidykla "Scena"
Gedimino pr. 1, 2001 Vilnius

TeAtrAs
THEATRE IN LITHUANIA
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urban ecology in a broad sense of the word.

As a writer, he became famous for his book *Grass and Elephants*, which – in a form of a diary kept at the beginning of the war in Sarajevo – is a painful account of the rise of nationalistic aggression against a multicultural city mixed with remarks about natural environment, about human violence directed against nature and other people, about nationalism as the highest degree of anthropocentrism. His book *Identity and Multiculturalism: between a nationalistic state and a global village* is just about to be printed.

During his exile in Prague he was doing his best to explain the reason for the Yugoslavian conflicts. Never did he perceive them as a result of nationalistic or religious conflicts, but as a representation of a struggle between chauvinist exclusivity based on the frustration of rootless countryside residents, and a multicultural urban civilisation based on the awareness of differences and possibility of their merger. In his text *A Definite End of Middle Ages* he wrote: "The Europe of united countries may as well learn something from that deprived multicultural Bosnian community, but conserving it would be an extremely inconvenient precedent. That would mean that they straightforwardly admit that all atrocities in the histories of all individual countries, where all instances of the actual multicultural character were sacrificed for the sake of national homogeneity, were but a mere unnecessary historical mistake."

Krzysztof Czyżewski

form of identification there. From a Jewish viewpoint my father was not a Jew, despite our name. His mother, my grandmother, was born in a strong catholic Polish family from northern Bosnia. In order to marry her my grandfather – a rather agnostic Jewish physician – converted to the roman church. On my mother's side the grandfather was Hungarian and his spouse a Croatian protestant – but there too things were not as simple as they seem. In the Hungarian language my mother's maiden name signify "Turk" – and that was the name given to immigrants from southern regions under Turkish rule. Some Hungarian Jews had the same family name, but he could as well be a Bosnian, Serb or even a genuine Turk. My friends reacted with eh remark that I am essentially a typical Austrian, or that I have at least similar roots like most people from Vienna.

The second remark concerns my Balkan origins. One friend said that the Balkans are not as far from Vienna as it is generally supposed, because the border occurs along the famous Viennese circular road – Gürtel. The other considered that Vienna itself is a Balkan city. Both these images are imprinted by the typical European concept – shared by ourselves from Balkans – that the whole Balkan region is nothing else than a highly problematic border zone. In one simple word this concept implies the large variety of unsolved national questions, that are made extremely complicated by nation-states. The possibility that Vienna encounters problems similar to these border zones was rather a surprise for me.

Borders, as well as their ethnic foundations, are principally a result of the culture. Our cultural circle originated in eastern Mediterranean and eventually spread out over the whole Earth, so it now influences the larger part of humankind. This cultural circle generated a remarkably complex form of culture, that is customarily described as civilisation. Civilisation is a result of urban style of life and its name comes from the Latin word for the city. By its essential characteristic, civilisation is not simply a farther development of culture; it also tends to substitute the pre-urban culture in its original culture, that evolved in its own way. Contrary to civilisation, original culture in its original form. However, the spread of civilisation did not fully replace the original culture. It remains much more simple, even simplistic, and it is not surprising that there is a continual – albeit more latent than openly admitted – conflict between these two styles of culture.

The original, pre-urban culture is based on the extremely strong spirit of a closed group is ruled by the primitive spirit of family clan and of that is – regardless its formal manifestation – based upon the concept of race, ethnic group or nation. In the city a person is considered a complete citizen if she/he accepts and respects the complicated rules of urban life style. One inherits the membership in a pre-urban culture by her/his birth, but the membership in an urban group is the result of a free choice.

Nowadays a rising part of humankind lives in cities and the industrial culture – that produced the actual nation-state – rapidly transforms itself into something we do not know yet how to describe. Moreover, the spread of global communication makes it impossible for human groups to continue to be isolated by nation-state borders. After the disappearance of communism, this evolution is the growing trend and not only in Europe. While the outer borders lose their importance, numerous people feel some apprehension when they have to define their own identity. Lacking precisely defined borders, they are distressed by the question how to defend themselves from the potentially dangerous "others". Within the rising number of big cities there are not clear borders and people search to re-create some new, comprehensible frontiers, as the accustomed backbone of their own identity.

Borders and the identity

In Vienna, as well as in most other big cities, it is extremely difficult to define comprehensible frontiers between "us" and "others". Therefore one can easily conclude that the overall conditions in Vienna are rather similar to these in a problematic zone, for example in the Balkans.

On the other hand, due to the general paranoid communist attitude, Prague had for almost half a century an unequivocal, from the ethnic viewpoint "clean" population. At the time I went there, at the end of 1992, this situation was ending. Some of my Prague friends were delighted that their city developed again the prosperous multiculturalism of the first republic and the Austro-Hungarian empire. Numerous others were troubled by the rapid progression of cultural diversity. With more than twenty thousand North Americans, miscellaneous emigrants from former Yugoslavia, numerous immigrant workers from Poland, Ukraine and Vietnam, the national situation changed rapidly. For numerous Prague citizens the question of their own identity became a controversial one, particularly because they suddenly missed the usual clear line between "us" and "others".

Of course, my explanation that we in Sarajevo had a really rich and happy life in a greatly mixed multicultural environment did not persuade my Prague friends. It is certainly not easy to understand that the actual bloodshed in former Yugoslavia is not an inevitable consequence of the urban cultural mix, but the extreme expression of the ancient conflict between two styles of culture – the civilisation and the original pre-urban culture. The conflict did not erupt in our cities and its purpose is not the control over cities – its objective is much more the destruction of urban centres than to gain control over them. The ultimate purpose of the war is the final eradication of these places that reject visible borders between "us" and "others". Under the pretext of liberating Vukovar the city has been destroyed. The same thing happened during more than three years in Sarajevo, and even in the presumably "liberated" Banja Luka, that is the Serbian capital of Bosnia.

This way of destructive "liberation" of cities by nationalists is nothing new in European history. The Nazi movement wanted to re-establish the German national identity by eradicating even the word city – within the Third Reich there was no room for cities, all purified Germans should live in "settlements". In the same spirit, and because the urban environment refuses distinctive borders and creates ambiguous and multiform identities, early Soviet planners invented a particular urban planning practice that was called "de-urbanization".

The Nazi and Soviet rulers, as well as our fervent defenders of national purity, were unable to consider the basic problem of identity without clear limitations. Therefore they all detest the city, where these borders do not even exist. On the contrary, most of my friends consider the city the best place to live. I appreciate very much the possibility to immerse myself in a totally different environment without being forced to cross some frontier – and this is possible only in a truly multicultural city like Vienna. Since I live in Prague there are more and more opportunities for similar experiences. The diversity and tolerance of the city allow numerous people have simultaneously and there to have at the same time more than one basic identity – without becoming schizophrenic. One can feel absolutely Viennese without being forced to abandon her/his ancestral Balkanic, Italian or other identity. One can at the same time feel strongly homosexual or atheist, without any constraint to be less Viennese.



Raymond Rebnicer

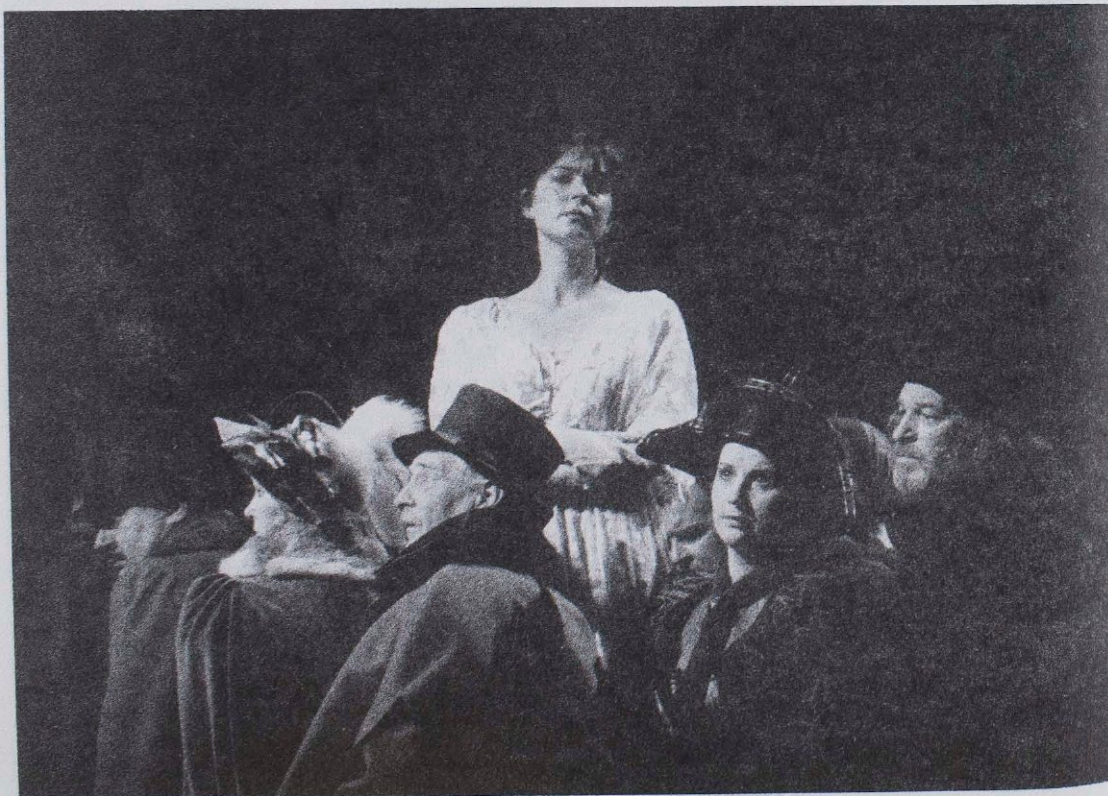
FORUM

already taken off their costumes after the performance, are sitting and scrutinizing them. This exchange of roles between the audience and the actors, the tension-ridden confrontation, the mutual exploring of each other marked a very important moment in Lithuanian theatre. The physical transference of the audience to the centre of action was not the director's formal trick. Varnas produced a performance about theatre waiting for a new public after the shift in society had occurred.

In his next performance, the director himself waited for the audience in an unusual place – the attic of over 400 year old Vilnius University. *The Great Theatre of the World* by Calderon de la Barca was shown several times as part of the larger project *Observatory*. Varnas chose the play by Calderon not by accident; he had been moving in this direction with the "Sėpa" theatre, "the political theatre of the world", and with the production of the play *When Five Years Pass* by another famous Spanish playwright Federic Garcia Lorca on the small stage of the Academic Drama Theatre in 1993. Allegoric heroes of Calderon's mystery, the well-suited romantic environment and the spring wind whistling through the holes in the roof were all members of the performance. The audience sitting on rough wooden benches was attracted not by mysteries recreating the whole image of the world and naive morals, but the magic of theatre. This performance taught Lithuanian theatre accustomed to traditional scenes and production of performances in customary conditions, a lesson of searching for new territories.

It was a possibility to produce a classical play in an untraditional space that attracted Varnas when he received an offer to rehearse *Hedda Gabler*

The Masquerade by Mihkail Lermontov. Vilnius Small Theatre, 1996. Director: Rims Tuminas. Photo Dmitrij Matvejev.



by Ibsen in the Long Hall of the Kaunas Academic Drama Theatre (the premiere took place in the spring of 1998). Hedda Gabler uses the stage, long as a corridor, as a shooting-gallery, in which she is training to keep herself in form. But nobody needs her good form – the people who surround her are petty, shallow and boring, while she (a wonderful role of Jurate Onaityte) is a remarkable, strong personality with an intense emotional life. Sometimes she is childishly playful, sometimes – rapacious and wanting to have her life filled to the brim. She is like a cat who likes to walk alone. The moving force of the performance is the longing for beauty which Hedda is obsessed with. This longing for a different life is equal to the absolute, a search for the impossible. One of the most impressive scenes of the performance starts when having returned from a late party, Lovborg loses the manuscript of his capital work, which falls into Hedda's hands. Ceremoniously slowly Hedda soaks the pages in alcohol and covers the floor with them as if paving a long path. She strikes a match – and Lovborg's whole life bursts into blue flames in front of the audience. Only this Hedda can play with another person's fate so charmingly. But there isn't any other, "more beautiful" life. It is only the same life with the same people. Hedda is impelled to take the final decision blackmailed by Brack attempting to fetter this personality beyond his control. Hedda chooses freedom, or, in other words, herself, though only death can make it possible.

Decorative and colourfully baroque, Varnas' theatre became simpler and purer in *Hedda Gabler*. This time the director limited himself to the black and white colour scale (scenery designer Jurate Paulekaite) and several precise scenery details, e.g. soda-siphons placed at every possible spot to be at hand when somebody needs to ease the hangover or calm the outbursts of passions. In Varnas' performances one often finds the theatre theme, either as the key theme, as in *The Public*, or less manifest. The director receives the audience coming to *Hedda Gabler* with a kind of installation: the lobby is full of portraits of various actresses of the world who played Hedda Gabler. Varnas finds it important that people would feel having come to theatre. He emphasizes the general theatre tradition rather than the concrete tradition of *Hedda Gabler*, as a cultural medium or micro-climate, which is so necessary and which has lately found itself in danger of extinction.

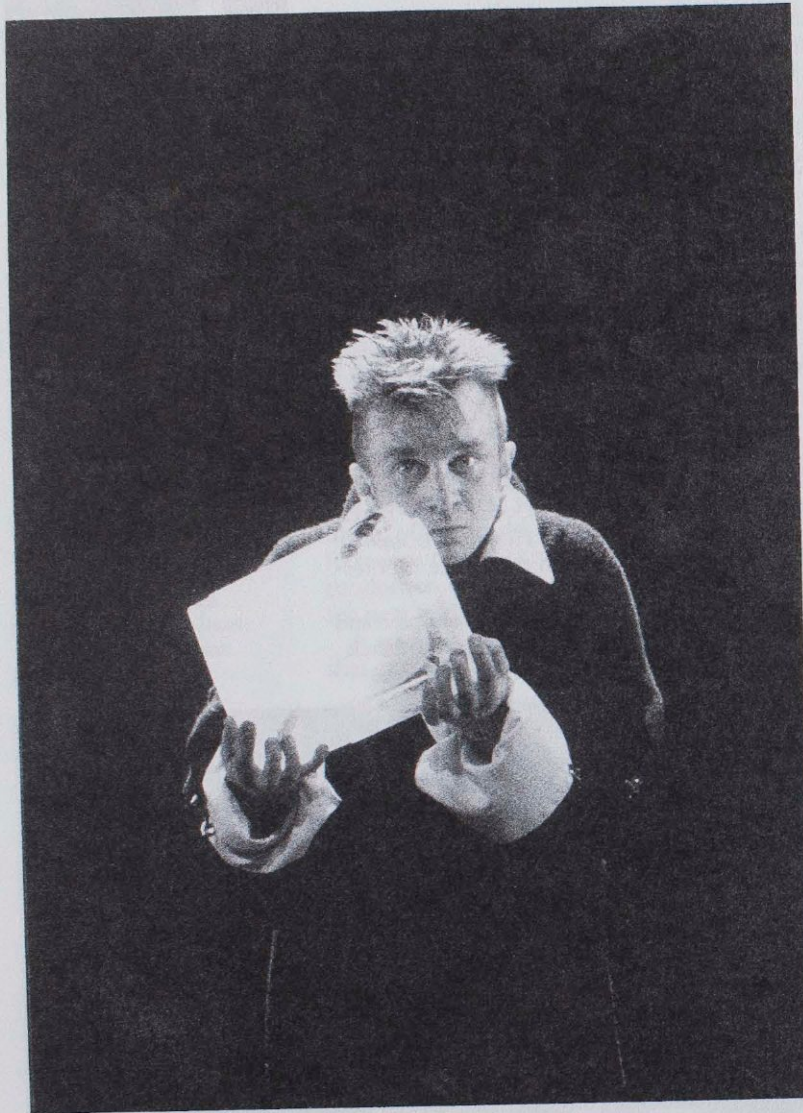
"To create theatre means to build a house", – these words are often repeated by another Lithuanian director, a representative of a different generation, Rimas Tuminas. In Lithuania an image of theatre as "a temple of art" is still very popular. Its authority is supported by the greatest potential of Lithuanian theatre, the middle generation of directors who began their work in the mid-seventies and found shelter in the sacralized theatre space. Eimuntas Nekrošius, Rimas Tuminas and Jonas Vaitkus are the three main figures, the "Olympus" of contemporary Lithuanian theatre, who have been forming its image during the last two decades.

The best Lithuanian directors oppose literary theatre dominated by text and widely spread in countries of different cultures, to the polyphonic speaking in images. Speaking about Lithuanian theatre before 1990 (after the collapse of the Soviet empire, this boundary divided the life of many countries into "before" and "after"), Jonas Vaitkus followed the lead of Jonas Jurašas – having emigrated to the West in 1972, this director produced only a few performances and became a legend. Jurašas was like a matador raising a red cloth in front of the outraged authorities. Performances by Jonas Vaitkus produced in the same Kaunas Academic Drama Theatre scrutinized the mechanisms of the empire of evil and con-



Elona Bajoriniene

e uralien



Hamlet by Shakespeare. Producer: LIFE (Lithuanian International Theatre Festival), 1997. Director: Eimuntas Nekrošius. Hamlet: Andrius Mamontovas. Photo: Dmitrij Matvejev

in style and cannot be mistaken for other directors' work. Vaitkus' talent is fully revealed in the realm of conflicting elements. He is interested in rebellious characters rising above the mediocre. Be it Nora in *The Doll's House* by Ibsen, or Father in *The Father* by Strindberg (produced in 1995 and 1997 respectively in the Vilnius Youth Theatre), they confront the hypocritical society and leave it in search of another, metaphysical reality. This farewell of the characters to, in Vaitkus' words, the depraved material world and their journey toward God constitutes the essence of Vaitkus' theatre today.

Vaitkus' "linear", assertive and declarative theatre, and Nekrošius' theatre open to a plethora of interpretations, have been carrying on the main intrigue of Lithuanian theatre for fifteen years. They both began as oppositionists to official art. Performance after performance, Vaitkus and

fronted it with an artist as a relatively free personality. In addition to the performances analysing the "superman" phenomenon (*Caligula* by Camus, 1983; *Richard II* by Shakespeare, 1985; *Golgotha* based on the novel by Chingiz Aitmatov, 1987), Vaitkus created several performances-visions about artists: musician and artist Mikalojus Konstantinas Ciurlionis (*Pilgrim of Dreams* by Eugenijus Ignatavicius and Jonas Vaitkus, 1975), poet Straždas (opera *Thrush – The Green Bird* by Bronius Kutavicius and Sigitas Geda, 1984). If the play did not offer the opposition of the positive and negative elements, the director would introduce a new character he needed. For example, in the grotesque farce based on *Ubu Roi* by Alfred Jarry (1977), two new lyrical characters appeared: Father-Bird and Child-Bird, who would begin and end the performance with poetry sounding like a prayer. Vaitkus' performances, produced from 1974 to 1987 in the Kaunas Academic Theatre, and since then in different other theatres are unique

Nekrošius turned out to look at the world and regard it from totally different positions. Vaitkus was preoccupied with extraordinary personalities beyond their age and time. In the meantime, the hero of Nekrošius' theatre was an ordinary person like "me and my neighbour". In one of the most remarkable performances by this director, *The Square* based on the documentary short story by Russian writer V. Jeliseyeva (1980), a story of a prisoner evolved into a moving metaphor of the Soviet life. According to Vaitkus, the wheel of history is turned by the mighty of the world. In Nekrošius' theatre history is created in any remote homestead (*A Day Long as a Thousand Years*, based on the novel by Chingiz Aitmatov, 1983). In Vaitkus' theatre characters-signs act in the esoteric space of symbols and create symbols themselves. In the course of Nekrošius' performances, simple objects of daily environment are transformed into polysemantic metaphors reaching into the deepest archaic layers. Finally, in the visions of the world conceived by both directors the transcendental, unearthly world is always present. Heroes of Vaitkus' theatre – supermen and martyrs – seek death as the absolute liberation. In Nekrošius' theatre "the other" world takes part in the affairs of this world and is not separated from it. This can be said about his last performance, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (1997). Hamlet's dead father becomes one of the most important characters of the performance who appears in his son's life at the crucial moments. The Father's Ghost stirs up all trouble when it gives the young prince of Denmark a large lump of ice. Having broken it into pieces Hamlet takes out a dagger, an instrument of revenge. Cruelty gives rise to cruelty, and in the final scene the Ghost mourns over the dead son whom it armed and sent into struggle. The elements of the performance are ice and fire, the coldness of death breathing on one's back and the passions of reckless people. The time of the performance is twilight, an obscure period between light and dark. As always, Nekrošius diagnoses the state of the society in which he lives.

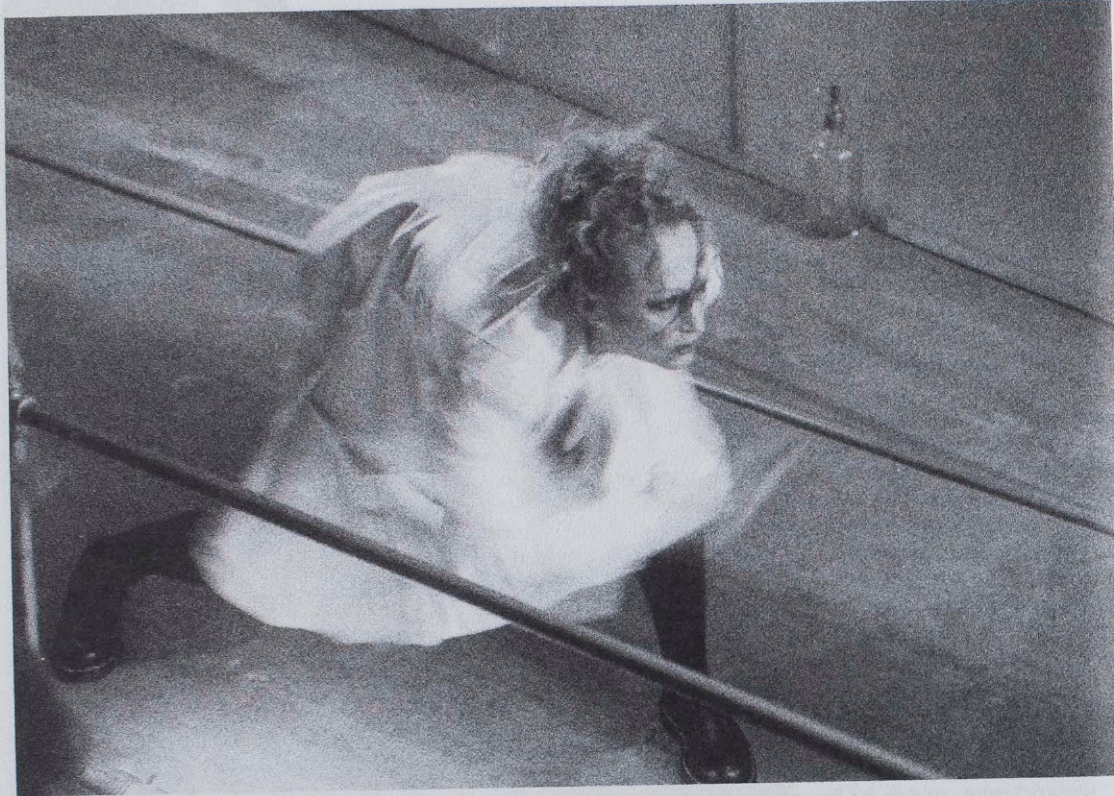
At the peak of political events Nekrošius remained silent for several years and did not produce anything. The first performance after the break was *Mozart and Salieri. Don Juan. Plague* based on the small tragedies by Alexander Pushkin (1994). In this performance the director bluntly asked: who needs art in the time of revolution, and what is the mission of the artist by God's grace. Produced a year later (1995), Chekhov's *Three Sisters* signalled the coming of a new epoch as a trial. Chekhov's characters – officers, once dashing and charming, can no longer withstand it at mid-life, but the generation of young spirited people, first of all the three sisters, are able to break through, though they have already gathered their own bitter experience. Nekrošius' performances are like anthologies of certain historical moments, from which society learns what changes are taking place in its depths. In Nekrošius' performances the aesthetic, emotional and intellectual information is so intense that the director can afford himself not to reckon with the time of the audience living in a different rhythm than ten years ago, and impose on it 3-4 hour performances – revelations. Certainly, it is not easy to watch them.

To watch Rimantas Tuminas' performances, on the contrary, is a pleasant entertainment. His work that evolved out of chamber spaces belongs to the "blood group" of Nekrošius' theatre. Tuminas has always been interested in "the man in the street". When the director places him in a context wider than a room space, his most interesting performances are born – romantically light, full of gentle humour, carelessly playful and also tinted with sorrow. Basically in all his latest performances Tuminas acts on the idea that life is a journey toward death. One of Tuminas' most successful



Elona Bajoriniene

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Hedda Gabler by Ibsen, Kaunas State Drama Theatre, 1998. Director: Gintaras Varnas. Hedda: Jurate Onaityte. Photo: Dmitrij Matvejev

works, *Smile Upon Us, Lord*, based on Grigorij Kanovich's prose (1996) is a story about a few Jews who put all their belongings in a cart and are travelling from a remote Lithuanian village to the capital to visit a son of one of them. This long journey all across Lithuania to Vilnius, called Lithuania's Jerusalem, becomes a metaphor of the tragic fate of the whole Jewish nation. Tuminas' latest performance, *The Masquerade* based on the poetical drama of the 19th century Russian romanticist Mikhail Lermontov, is reminiscent of a Christmas card. The director substantially changed the play and relegated the melodramatic love intrigue to the background. The main character of the performance is the environment – the city of St. Petersburg covered with snow, where a clustering crowd roams around or couples waltz in and out. From time to time, to connect the episodes, the Watchman rolls a snow-ball along the stage, which appears bigger and bigger every time and reaches a phantasmagoric scale in the final scene. Larger than people, the white ball as if gets caked with the history of the whole city.

Lithuanian theatre is really strong and diverse in the domain of drama. Two generations of directors are productively working in this genre, and each of these generations boasts a number of outstanding personalities. Yet this idyllic view gets dimmer when you look at statistics. In Lithuania Nekrošius' performances are shown more seldom than on tours abroad, since the director works for a non-state theatre structure, which finds it too expensive to show his performances frequently. One might think that the Vilnius Small Theatre founded by Tuminas is thriving with *The Masquerade* in repertory, collecting full house and winning international

awards. But this theatre which is considered repertory, offers only two or three performances in general and has not staged a single premiere several years in a row. The yearly number of performances given by the Lithuanian Academic Drama Theatre is three times less its capacity, either because they don't have anything to show, or when they do, an audience does not gather. To put it more plainly, Lithuanian theatre management is still weak and has not adjusted itself to new conditions.

The Lithuanian scenic art cannot boast of a manifest alternative theatre movement. The most "alternative" theatre artist is both the most recognized Lithuanian director Eimuntas Nekrošius, if we consider "alternative" the one who works for a non-state theatre and each time advances astonishing new ideas. True, several years ago quite a few talented theatre artists left state-financed theatres in various cities of Lithuania. Some of them got fascinated with the prospect of working "independently of directors", others protested against the theatre routine or against the unsuccessfully launched (and still unfinished) theatre reform. This wave of naive idealistic "free-lance artists" brought quite a few interesting performances. However, without solid support it subsided as soon as it rose, and now only the most adamant individualists are working outside state-financed theatres. One of them is the actor of unlimited scale of expression, Valentinas Masalskis, the founder of the group "Menu samburis" (Arts Convention) uniting visual artists, musicians and actors for joint projects. Another example is the open-air theatre "Miraklis" (Miracle) established by artist and director Vega Vaieinaitė. It first won attention a couple of years ago during the festival "Vilnius days '95", with a musical puppet and firework performance *Pro Memoria Sv. Stepono Street 7* in the ruins of this house, in memory of its former residents, and in 1997 it produced a puppet mystery of fire on water based on Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, in a popular Vilnius park on the bank of the Vilnelė river. In Šiauliai the stoical couple of artists, director Audrone Bagatyryte and actor Edmundas Leonavicius carry on with "Edmundas' Studio-3", which has produced three experimental mono shows based on Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, poetry of the Far East and *Oedipus the King* by Sophocles.

By the way, in Lithuania any aesthetical heresies are possible in any of the existing traditional, i.e. state-financed repertory theatres. What one theatre regards as a heresy, finds shelter in another one. This most often happens with performances of modern dance or mixed genres, which more easily take root in drama theatres than in opera and musical theatres, which are strongholds of official and salon culture. Sometimes Lithuanian theatre is none whatever; it doesn't have anything to show, let's say, for adolescents. At the same time, Lithuanian theatre is all: it is both dynamic, moved by a desire and having the potential to change, and stuck in the routine, inharmonious and under inefficient management. Theatre is like our life in general. Nekrošius calls this time twilight.

April 1998

Translated by Aušra Cižikiene



Elona Bajoriniene

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TOMAS VENCLOVA

Poems

Translated by Diana Senechal

TOMAS VENCLOVA was born in 1937. Poet, translator, essayist, literary historian and political dissident.

Graduated from Vilnius University, where he studied the Lithuanian language and literature. He attended of the Juri Lotman's seminars at Tartu University.

He was connected with an anti-totalitarian movement, as a dissident deprived of the Soviet citizenship. He emigrated to the USA in 1977.

He gained his PhD at Yale University in 1985, where he conducted courses on the Russian literature and the Lithuanian language.

Venclova marked a new trend in Lithuanian poetry with a small (62 pages) collection of poetry, *The Sign of Language* (1972). It was the first poetry book entirely void of any traces of socialist ideology or Soviet life style. There was no dependence on the predominating styles of rhetoric of pathos, emotional confession or mythologized folklore. The poet turned back to neoclassicism, a merry and solemn school, which was revived anew by a yearning for eternal forms. (...)

Venclova's poetry is the fusion of several realities where cultural memory, the geometry of resurrection, poetic language representing paradise unbound melt into an imagery drawing of many layers, implicit allusive

The Member of the Landing Crew

The hardest thing to do was to hide the boats they had dragged up
onto the sand,
to cut up the tight rubber, shove the scraps under the bushes,
to ignore the prickly rain that comes before the dawn,

inundating the spine. The low pines kept silent across the dunes.
When the line moved, he sighed. His esophagus
recalled the memory of yesterday's seasickness,

and his shoulders, the strap of the backpack. Penicillin, binoculars,
ammunition, written off army storage the year before last,
a letter from an old minister with the words "long live unity",

a radio. Never having been to this seaside before, he sank
in the sand, pressed the pineneedles, aligned himself with his friend's
jacket,
knowing his homeland by the shape of the cumulus cloud.

X

The needle of the compass danced out the ritual klumpakojis dance.
Eight kilometers down the road, next to the deserted farm,
he'd have to encounter the Bear, the Fern Blossom and the Goat –

nicknames from fables. An unfamiliar group stomped its feet
in the glade. The commander, whom he had seen somewhere before
in the unfinished war, said the password. Alleviated,

his companions disappeared in the dug-out, but he lagged behind. His
boot

slipped on the mossy tussock by the stream, and the blow,
missing the back of his head, landed in his elbow. Grabbing

his holster in a rush, he was able to feel
the muscles in his kneeling leg tense; he saw the black aperture
before his eyes and grasped: well, that guy is quicker.

X

His brains, clinging to the stem of a reed, dried up long ago.
The rest soaked into the sand. At least he's lucky:
the secret service couldn't extract any codes from it,

since, were it not for the wet hummock, probably he, like his two
friends,
who were less fortunate that morning, say what you will,
would have misled his people in the dark games of the Great

Powers, would have reached old age in the stinging cigarette smoke
in a provincial cafe with a hundred grams of cognac,
trying persuade everyone, including himself, that he saved

young people from bullets and nooses – or, maybe
having been across the Arctic Circle and back, he would have striven
in vain in ignorant offices for compensation for the lost time.

X

It's better the way it turned out. No cross, no memory.
The trucks stagger on the bumpy strip of gravel road
a few steps away from the place where it all happened.

The sweat-soaked drivers play the brakes like piano keys,
an axe is heard in the pine forest, the farmstead walls turn white,
the cuckoo promises we'll live long yet:

three times or maybe even four times as long as he.
Whoever died will never return; what's lost it gone.
Only the scraps of the rubber boat under the seaside willow

still await the Lord's Judgement, and the outline of the cloud,
exactly the same as then, crawls over the forest glade,
and the algae sway in the stream, which he didn't reach then.

*Author's commentary: In the 1940's, more than one Lithuanian fighter
was sent to Soviet-occupied Lithuania by British and Swedish intelligence
services. Many of them were killed by the KGB units which posed as
Lithuanian guerillas. Those who survived were frequently recruited by the
KGB.*



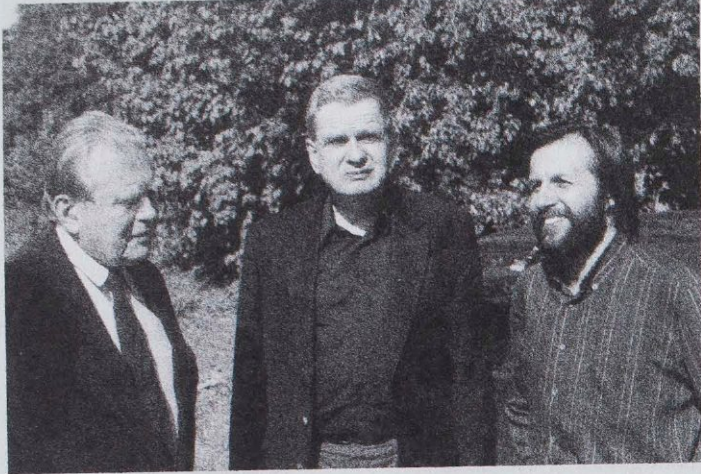
Tomas Venclova

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spaces and tonalities of elevated swift-
ness. More frankness, nostalgic and
tragic notes appeared in his books,
published in emigration – *98 poems*
(1977), *Darkening Light* (1989), but
the contents of creation and its stylis-
tics did not undergo essential
changes. Venclova, the initiator of
Lithuanian structural literary studies, in
emigration manifested himself as the
essayist of European outlook, shrewd
analysis and problematic thinking, he
consolidated in this literary genre *the
principle of absolute intellectual fair-
ness* which Andrei Sakharov demand-
ed from a writer." (Vytautas Kubilius)

Translator of modern poetry, among
others Saint-John Perse, Dylan
Thomas, Wystan Hugh Auden,
Constantine Kavafis, Federico Garcia
Lorca, Czeslaw Milosz.

His poems and essays are translat-
ed into English, Polish, Russian,
Hungarian, Spanish, Portuguese,
Italian, Slovenian, Dutch, Arabic and
other languages.



Tomas Venclova with Czesław Miłosz and Krzysztof Czyżewski in front of the manor-house in Krasnogruda near the Polish-Lithuanian border, close to Sejny.

A View From an Alley

Where gooseberries used to grow, new landlords have turned up the soil.

The courtyard is tightly sealed from the street's chestnut trees by a dark bluish double fence. All dimensions have shrunk, expect for time. There was more space here than childhood alone can explain.

Squinting, you can still climb the dissolved staircase up to the attic, where the floor still squeaks under your cousin's steps. *For long?* He asked us then. *Only for one night* (but that happened later).

On the first floor a mass of mirror turned to stone, easily meshing the hoarfrost of a faraway storm, the crown of a plum tree, a flask rich with dense scents. These early insomnias: the chime through the wall, helping us understand that everything passes, but not soon; that time depends on speech, that the worst case scenario turns out a little less than what we can bear. A heaven of photographs behind the door. In one I make out a shadow with a glass of cherry juice and a dog. These snapshots still live somewhere, although few people today would be able to figure them out. The dog is buried in the corner of the kitchen garden (now I cannot see the place behind the double fence) and the shadow, pressing the glass to his mouth, still glides on the surface of objects, next to the ribbed wallpaper, the destitute greenery, the littered years, which belong not to him, nor to the new landlords, a little more real than he. No one knows what matches this dead space, this empty cell in the net of alleys: indifference or pain? Strangely, they coincide.

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VILNIUS, LITHAUNIA

Gintaras Varnas director

Rumours of Gintaras' early work had already reached me a few years ago. He had created a puppet show that – with dark humor and fascinating satire – exposed the vulnerability of the Soviet leaders. Now one of the finest representatives of a generation of brilliant Lithuanian directors, he carries on a strong tradition, built on knowledge, education and a stubborn will to question both form and content in the theatre.

Freelance stage director. Master of Art at the Lithuanian Music Academy Theatre department. Studied directing 5 years.

THEATRE/SELECTION

- established the Sepa theater (-88) puppet theatre for adults. Director
- plays: Lullabies of Revolution" by L. Jakimavicius, "Nostalgias of Communism" by J Zabaite.
- When five years has passed, by Garcia Lorca, Vilnius Small Theatre -93
- The Stranger (-95), by Camus, Lithuanian State Academic Drama Theatre, Vilnius -95
- Time and room, by B Strauss, Lithuanian State Academic Drama Theatre Vilnius -97
- Hedda Gabler, by Ibsen, Kaunas State Academic Drama Theatre -98

TOURS/FESTIVALS

- "Baltoscandal" Theatre Festival in Piimu, Estonia -90
- Tours with the Sepa Theatre in Canada, USA -91

TV

- Sepa Wave (-92)
- Isn't it Paris (fashion show film -93)

THE BUS

director: Gintaras Varnas

ACTORS

- Dalia Michelevičiūtė, Lithuanian State Academic Drama Theatre, Vilnius.
- Džiugas Siaurusaitis, Lithuanian State Academic Drama Theatre, Vilnius.
- Arūnas Sakalauskas, Lithuanian State Academic Drama Theatre, Vilnius,
- Rimgaudas Karvelis, The National Youth Theatre, Vilnius.

CO-PRODUCTION

Open Society Fund, Lithuania

With the support of
The Ministry of Culture, Lithuania
Rolf Ahlander, AB Demontenggar – Second hand buses, world wide export



WARSAW, POLAND

Piotr Cieplak director

Warszawa 1997. I had asked everyone I knew where the new dynamic energy in the Polish theatre was today. Piotr's name came up again and again. One evening I found myself at a performance. I arrived late and witnessed only a part of the first act. Well done, not especially exciting. Too much text. After the intermission we entered a room entirely transformed – the seats were gone, the audience stood, the actors hung from ropes from the ceiling, swinging and sliding their way above our heads. A perfect sense of balance and the courage to re-invent. An artistic vision that interpreted not only the text but the spirit of a new Poland. He calls his theatre "the fastest theatre in town" – the emotional range of this theatre has already left marks on the mental asphalt.

THE RAPE OF EUROPE

director: Piotr Cieplak

ACTORS

Kasia Chmielewska, Dada von Bzdúlow
Dance Theatre, Gdansk

Leszek Bzdyl, Dada von Bzdúlow Dance
Theatre, Gdansk

MUSICIANS

Pawel Czepulkowski, Kormorany Orches-
tra, Wroclaw

Jacek Fedorowicz, Kormorany Orchestra,
Wroclaw

Artistic director, Rozmaitosci Theatre, Warsaw. Theatre
direction, Krakow State College of Theatrical Arts.

THEATRE/SELECTION

– Any Woman and I'm a killer, by Fredraos, Wilam
Horzyca Theatre, Torun

– The Soldier of Queen of Madagascar, after
Dobrzanski. Awarded Best young Director; Polish
Confrontations/Polish Classics -91

– An Involuntary Tragedian, based on three plays,
by Chechov, Wilam Horzyca Theatre, Torun -92

– Workshop with Peter Brook, Vienna -93

– A true Account of the Glorious Resurrection of Our
Lord, by Wielkowiecko, Teatr Wspolczesny, Wroclaw
and Teatr Dramatyczny, Warsaw -94. Award: Grand
Prix, Theatre Confrontation, Opole -94.

– Crusades, after Bialoszewski, Dramatyczny Theatre,
Warsaw and Polish Television -95

– The Beautiful Green Bird, by Gozzi, Teatr
Dramatyczny, Warsaw -96

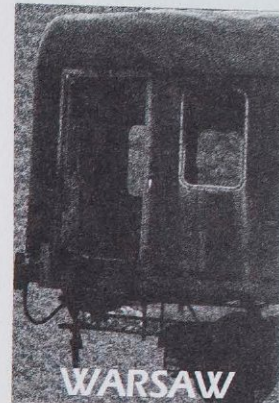
– Best director, Polish Theatre Critics Prize -97

– Dog's testimony, by Suassuna, Rozmaitosci Theatre.
Awarded at Festival of Directing arts, Katowice -98

– The man who was Thursday, by KG Chesterton,
Polish Television -97

A Question about Soul

Krzysztof Czyżewski's Conversation
with Piotr Cieplak about Theatre, Life
and Europe of the End of the XX-th Century



Piotr Cieplak: The reason for our meeting is Stockholm, the participation in the preparations for significant theatre – culture undertakings on the occasion of The European Capital of Culture. But not only. Now, at the Variety Theatre (Teatr Rozmaitości), I'm working on the play "Snake Skin" by a Croatian, Slobodan Snajder. You are dealing with the Balkans and all the possible borderlands, and the play is concerned also with that. The latest two editions of "Krasnogruda" devoted to ex-Yugoslavia have been read over and over by my troupe. What can be considered our common plane is "borderland", which can also be translated into my "variety". I believe in something like a variety of worlds, tones, in paradoxes the world is saturated with. I believe there is nothing like one exponent. When there is only one – theatre dies. I believe there is a conflict, a tension, a mystery on all the levels: in the way of narration, inside a theatrical spectacle, but also on a wider level, in a community of people, in the world.

Krzysztof Czyżewski: *You have at once given our conversation an air of solemnity. You do not want small talk. I daresay that is what you have always been like: treating things seriously, concentrated, aiming high, requiring a lot from yourself and from others. How are you getting on with a Piotr Cieplak like that at the Variety Theatre, a small theatre but a professional one, situated in Marszałkowska Street? How are you getting on as the artistic manager of a so-called repertoire theatre which must be "for people" who may not understand "variety" in the way you do, but just as a light variete, for example? And what about institutional rigidity, little time for preparing first nights, financial troubles. . . ?*

The Variety Theatre has also its

Krzysztof Czyżewski (left) and Piotr Cieplak (right).
Photo: Agnieszka Szyszko.



"What can be considered our common plane is "borderland", which can also be translated into my "variety". I believe in something like a variety of worlds, tones, in paradoxes the world is saturated with. (...) I believe there is a conflict, a tension, a mystery on all the levels: in the way of narration, inside a theatrical spectacle, but also on a wider level, in a community of people, in the world.

chief manager, Bogdan Słoński. He is an expert in a lot of things, it is he who takes decisions and solves a lot of maintenance problems. On the other hand, the kind of tension and intensity which occur in this theatre are very good for it. It is the smallest theatre in Warsaw, thank God! If the existential intensity of the group of actors could be translated into the intensity of theatrical performances, it would be great. I sometimes seem to think that it works. My theatre is a fairly uncommon combination of an institution with something which is a sort of a social-artistic off group. There are two elements combined here, the elements that have been somehow in opposition to each other in theatre until now. What we aim at is to combine it in order to take advantage of what is the blessing of institution and what is the experience of all sorts and kinds of theatrical groups. I do not even mean Grotowski or such experiences, but about something which has been functioning in various wandering theatrical troupes from the beginning of the world. And to some extent we are different from other capital city theatres. Here, some basic movements are enough to be very clearly seen.

What movements are they, for example?

It may sound funny or even prosaic, but, for example, that we talk to one another. For us, the plays we are putting on are not successful titles the theatrical factory undertakes to produce. "Snake Skin", which we are working on now, is an utterance which somehow concerns us and, in connection with that, our co-existence stops being just a purely artistic or aesthetic problem. It is necessary for us to live. We argue about the world, and not from which wing an actor is to enter. We talk to one another, which makes our troupe integrated, at least more than in other theatres. It influences directly our everyday intensive kind of work. There is no revolution here, we do not run barefoot if it is not necessary. Externally it does not differ from the standards and principles in force everywhere, but it is saturated in a different way. We sing a lot together. I am present at every performance, so we can comment upon it without delay.

And what about the skills? Do you work on them, do you invite anybody from the outside?

We spend some days a month with Ms Olga Sz wajger, an expert in human voice and the regions it comes from. It is wonderful as far as the skills are concerned, but what is perhaps even more important is the influence of these meetings on the spiritual climate in the group. After such meeting it is easier for us for talk to one another, we are more patient, more lenient. For me, such direction of work is not fortuitous. I have been

Sankt Petersburg.
Photo: Jens Olof Lasthein



thinking intimately about a theatrical group. I mean working with a permanent troupe, a performance where the work is not finished at the time of the opening night, the value of putting on another production with the same people, so as to be able to develop the experiences from the previous one. Still, it may appear that what is going on in the Variety Theatre, which is a sort of a compromise, will not be enough, that it will be necessary to leave for a barn somewhere in Sejny. But for the time being it is as it is and it seems it will be so for a long time. Kantor did not have such conditions of work as we have here.

From what you are saying, there emerges a certain separateness of your theatre. It is also recognized by viewers and critics in Poland. Something different is beginning to go on within institutional theatre. You are talking about a different atmosphere, about creating a troupe, about different conditions of work. I wonder what it results from. I think that there is an inner necessity like that in you and in your troupe, that you have been missing something like that, that you are looking for your own theatre. Isn't it connected with the reaction to what is going on in theatre abroad? Do you agree with the opinion which is generally expressed in our country, that theatre is in the state of crisis, and it is most certainly so in the Polish theatre? And that it already is something serious, not a temporary bad mood? In Poland where theatre has played a very important role for the latest decades, it has been in the artistic and philosophical vanguard, just in Poland it is said today that all has fallen down, that theatre has become commercialized and has lost its identity. There are people who notice the fact that it was Kantor who marked the end of the epoch of great directors and stage-managers, while some other people say – and it is difficult to disagree with them – that theatre's gravity centre has moved East, that great performances still occur today in Lithuania, Estonia or Russia.

Well, yes, but somebody like Kantor is born once a century, and it is without reference to the tendencies or some general trends. There is no doubt that there is a process of change going on, that a certain idea of theatre has finished. I daresay it is natural. At the moment, a new generation of actors and directors is said to emerge, and a new theatre with them. There are really plenty of new names, but I am afraid that what really connects them are their acts of birth. They are younger. But it may be risky to point out any more aspects they have in common. The old opposition of the alternative and institutional theatre has been completely done away with. The music which we can hear at the theatre today, often hard rock music, would have been out of the question until recently. It is so with the use of the pop culture language as well, but not the gangrenous and Americanized one, but the one connected with fast montage, cellular telephone, techno or rap music. These are the things which may be good or bad, but they belong to modern language, they have their rightful place in theatre. Some time ago there was a violin only... All that has perhaps appeared in the alternative



Piotr Cieplak

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Sankt Petersburg.
Photo: Jens Olof Lasthein



And as theatre is my life, and I have already ruined so many things in my life, theatre remains my chance for redemption. That is why working at the theatre for only those appointed hours resulting from the professional agreement is not enough...

theatre first, but by now it has got mixed up and it is O.K.

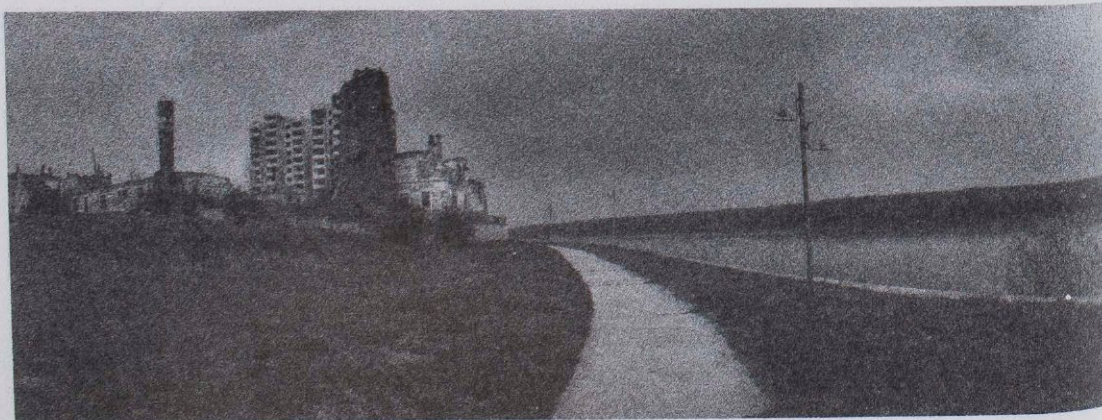
So you do not feel any special generational kinship with your contemporaries who entered theatre with the new wave, for example with Anna Augustynowicz?

I am friends with Zbyszek Soza, because we simply know each other. Annie Augustynowicz, who is achieving her triumphs now, is just my university colleague who I have been quarreling with since the second day of our acquaintance. I think they are a well – mannered society, well – disposed to one another, but maybe that is why – in spite of having quite different ideas connected with what should be done in theatre, having different tastes, being so far away from one another – they can simply like one another.

You have pointed out the things which are the discriminants of the New in theatre and which are connected with some aesthetic aspects, as the pop culture language, new music or mounting. Still, it seems to me that your revolution, your rebellion in theatre, is concentrated not on aesthetics but on a sort of ethos which you and the people dear and near try to find, giving it some perspective into the future. My theatrical experience, as you know, comes from alternative theatre. When I think of what was particularly precious in it, I believe it must have been inter-human intimacy in carrying out a common cause which requires a different way of working, and tearing routine off, looking for a new language of conversation and meeting. It also had its bad sides though. Wandering with "Gardzienice" and meeting various alternative theatres all over the world, I used to notice how easily that community spirit became distorted and changed into slavery under the dictate of some theatrical "guru", how quickly the theatrical language which had been considered authentic, got fossilized in routine and mannerism. There even was a time when I looked with envy at professional actors of institutional theatre who come to the theatre at a given time, do their professional work and then go quietly to their private world and no "guru" meddles with it. And after some time I meet you who says: well, now, ... appointed hours of work are all right, but it is not enough...

While working, somewhere at the beginning of my creative track in Wrocław, on the Mediaeval drama "The Story about Our Lord's Glorious Resurrection" by Mikołaj of Wilkowiecko I wanted to make a publicist sketch in the spirit of picaresque tales. And suddenly I read: "... Death comes." And what now? Is it only a sketch figure or real Death? How to play Death? It was the first time when I asked myself that question. Very slowly I was coming to realize that theatre may include a significant sphere

Vukovar, 1997.
Photo: Jens Olof Lasthein



of subjects, referring to myself personally. In order to do something about angels, death or love, one should work on it for a longer time, one should think about one's theatre, about a certain common cause. One can't drink vodka and do a good theatre. One can't go dubbing and then do a good theatre. Then there arises a question of spirituality, of the necessity of concentration, of mutual relations among actors. And as theatre is my life, and I have already ruined so many things in my life, theatre remains my chance for redemption. That is why working at the theatre for only those appointed hours resulting from the professional agreement is not enough. . .

Aren't you afraid to offer the viewers at that variété of yours in Marszałkowska Street the play by Slobodan Snajder, a cruel and gloomy play, recalling the tragedy in Bosnia, the tragedy we would like to be as far from as possible?

It seems to me that our theatre has already got its own, a bit different, audience. Warsaw is a great, one – and – a half-million city, while our house has only 250 seats. A lot of young people come to us. They have realized that we do serious things here. Serious does not mean deadly bombastic, but it means we treat them seriously. We have done "Dog's Last Will", a play which is awfully funny until all the persons start murdering one another.

I'm not going to hide the fact that I am glad that "Snake Skin" is going to have its first night at your theatre soon. It's for the first time in our country. I have a feeling that ,in Poland, we have overslept Bosnia a little. The most important event in the Europe of the second half of this century has passed almost unnoticed here, there has been nothing more than some press news, without deepened reflection, without any special debates on the subject. As you know, we have been trying to do something in "Borderland", and we are still trying to make Bosnia closer to Poland, but it is still very little.

I think you are right in thinking that Bosnia did not stamp itself deeply in Poland. But maybe it isn't accidental, maybe it does not result from the Polish foolishness or parochiality, but from the fact that the Polish, so deeply tried by History, have been enjoying freedom, democracy and epidemic wealth. Keeping your passport in your drawer, having a possibility to buy one out of twenty brands of beer at a night shop – we feed on it. In a human being there is a natural self-defence against scratching tragedies, against war, against the subjects that have been debated in Poland for years and years.

It would be interesting to trace how it looks like in various places in Europe after the year 1989. We were in Stockholm together not long ago, to see the performance of their theatre "Tribunalen", based on the play "Powder keg" by a Macedonian dramatist Dajan Dukovski. We were both shocked and a bit disgusted with the naturalistic language of the spectacle, full of cruelty and violence expressed directly. Someone who was shocked, too, was the director from Macedonia with whom we were watching the play together and who had put on the same play in Skopje. But he had directed a comedy which had made



Piotr Cieplak

e uralien

Central Bosnia, 1996.
Photo: Jens Olof Lasthein



Religion is not a series of little tales for good children, it is also drama, fear, devils, death, it is nonentity and salvation. It is not Sunday school.

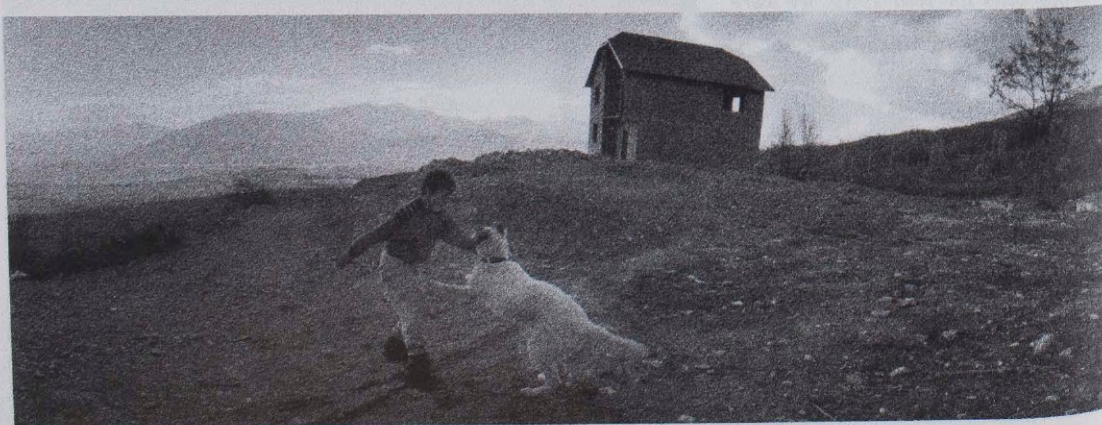
people roar with laughter. There, in the theatre in the Balkans, it is not possible to speak in a different way about the reality which is so close. In Stockholm for a change, while entering a back gate of a street keeping up appearances of wealth and self-satisfaction, one felt the necessity to take everything seriously, and to scratch wounds. This impression deepened when I was in Uppsala some time ago, to see a spectacle about refugees in Europe, entitled "Pentecost", directed by Jasenko Selimović, a director from Sarajevo, now very popular in Sweden. I was sitting in the house with people who perceived intently the tale about persecuted refugees, but most of all they perceived the accusation aimed at Europe, its hypocrisy and conformism. I felt the necessity of a new Europe contending in that house. The ovation seemed neverending. And let us take our country after the year 1989: at last there is peace and quiet, fascination with the West, with wonderful Europe from which we have been separated by the iron curtain.

To some extent I have a feeling that I am doing the play against the tide. I also have a feeling of the universal character of its message. This play is also about Poland, it is written in a modern language, recalling modern metaphors and pictures, for all the world like a Polish romantic play. It speaks about sacrifice, about the hypocrisy of Europe, about the loneliness of a victim who sacrifices himself/herself on the altar of values. And besides, this going against the tide of the Polish reality of today has its sense – a few metres from my theatre there are buildings in whose walls one can still see the bullet holes from the World War II. I have a feeling that the town from "Snake Skin" – in which you do not know who wears what uniforms and who believes in what God, because there are many and it is better not to ask – that it is Warsaw too, and who but the Polish understand so well what the wheel of History means, the wheel that turns in all directions.

Besides, there is something in *Snajder* that I would call a fresh reading of old myths, and it is possible only thanks to experiencing the tragedy from the end of our century from a short distance, from Zagreb, from the Balkans themselves. Let's take Christmas, for example, associated in our country with a carol, with something warm and bright. Our cultural memory does not any longer preserve the real picture of those times, when the Massacre of Innocents took place in the world, when everything was dipped in the night full of monstrosity and cruelty. Only the messengers from there, from the territories of ethnic purges, mass rapes and slaughters, bring back to us, in its completely bare form, what we have had time to varnish and tame.

It is intimate to me to speak about religious aspects like that, to use reli-

Debar, 1995.
Photo: Jens Olof Lasthein



gious figures so that they are not as if they were taken out of the Christ child's crib, not full of bigotry, but so that they carry real meaning in them, and then also cruelty and drama are revealed. Religion is not a series of little tales for good children, it is also drama, fear, devils, death, it is nonentity and salvation. It is not Sunday school. I have found an ally in Snajder.

I know that you went to Croatia to meet him, that you were talking for a long time.

It was important to me to get to know this man personally. And what about the country itself? I was shocked with its beauty and normality. This impression is the more shocking the sooner you realize what lies in wait round the corner. One has a natural tendency to move macabre things away from oneself. One thinks it cannot happen in a civilized world. Zagreb is simply a small Vienna – a wonderful, wealthy, quiet, bourgeois town.

Well, and in that normal European town you met a man who feels ill at ease, fights and is fought against.

Yes, nowhere is it praised to tell one's countrymen unpleasant things. Snajder has troubles because he says unpleasant things to Croatians, hurts them. He has troubles with the Croatian government, because it is a country with a monolithic, dictatorial government. I remember an unusual scene when, when we were going for a walk, a woman came up to Slobodan to thank him for the texts that had been published in some local newspaper some time before. She spoke in a low voice, looking around her. A scene like those of the time of martial law in Warsaw. I gained a lot due to that journey. I realized I understood Snajder because I was Polish. A common Central Europe experience helped me to find a common language with him very quickly. What was, until then, parading with my own particular pain, with a sort of tangling in my own mood, suddenly appeared to be a value making it possible for me to communicate and to have a real conversation. Meetings of that kind lead me, just as they do you, to Stockholm, where, together with a lot of creators from various countries, we are to make a common project on Europe, to create a museum of Europe's sins, and this circumstance – without reference to artistic results of this undertaking – is really very precious to me, some Polish parochial bourgeois. I may be using platitudes, but it is only in connection with that Stockholm adventure that I discover to what extent Polish theatre is closed up. I do not want to say that it is bad, because the aesthetic side of thinking about theatre is very mature, because theatrical taste in our country is really refined. But at the same time our theatre is closed up. We are in great need of travels. Well, now for example, on coming to Sejny, I get to know a lot of things I need for my work on the spectacle, for example what symbolism and myths about snakes there are among Gypsies or Lithuanians...

On coming to Sejny you may experience the same that Slobodan Snajder experienced on reception of his "Snake Skin" – the farther East, the more it changes, because the devilish image of a snake, connected with Christianity, gives way to not yet fully eradicated pre-Christian or Oriental traditions. Here you are on the Polish-Lithuanian borderland, where, until recently, girls used to put out a bowl of milk for snakes on the threshold of their houses, because they believed they would bring them happiness in love and matrimony.

During our conversation in Zagreb Slobodan said he felt a slight thirst after the first nights of his play put out mainly in the West (the world premiere took place in Tübingen), and it was connected with a sort of rationalization of the sphere of religious imagination. Dried-out imagination does not treat seriously such notions as heaven, ghosts or angels. He said



Piotr Cieplak

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then that he counted on Slav potentials. It is funny that he used that expression quite seriously. In Poland the word "Slav" does not have good associations, because we have heard it mainly from the mouths of Russians, and behind it there stood imperial Slavophilism identified with Rusophilism. But there is something in that potential of ours.

Don't you seem to think that religiousness, and what is more, the religiousness in the traditional sense, so, in case of Poland, mostly the Catholic one, comes back among the the younger generation as the definition of their own identity? After the generations looking for their identity in rationalistic, post-modernistic, new-age trends, there comes a time for a serious approach to one's own traditional religion. I don't mean the Catholic integrism which is dangerous and quite popular in the circles of our young intellectuals, but about a kind of re-evaluation of the approach to tradition, which used to be treated much more liberally.

This problem refers to me in the most serious way, on the condition that it is liberated from all the patriotic and national dimension. I am looking for religion in the theatre of a great Polish poet, Miron Białoszewski, in case of whom all the mysticism is born out of simple tales about going downstairs and buying cabbages. I bridle up when I hear that I do religious plays, but I do not object to people's opinions that I do morality plays.

A morality play is a word that, until recently, could not have appeared in young directors' mouths. It smells patina.

One must be awfully careful not to make a black-and-white lecture out of it. It is theatre's duty to ask questions.

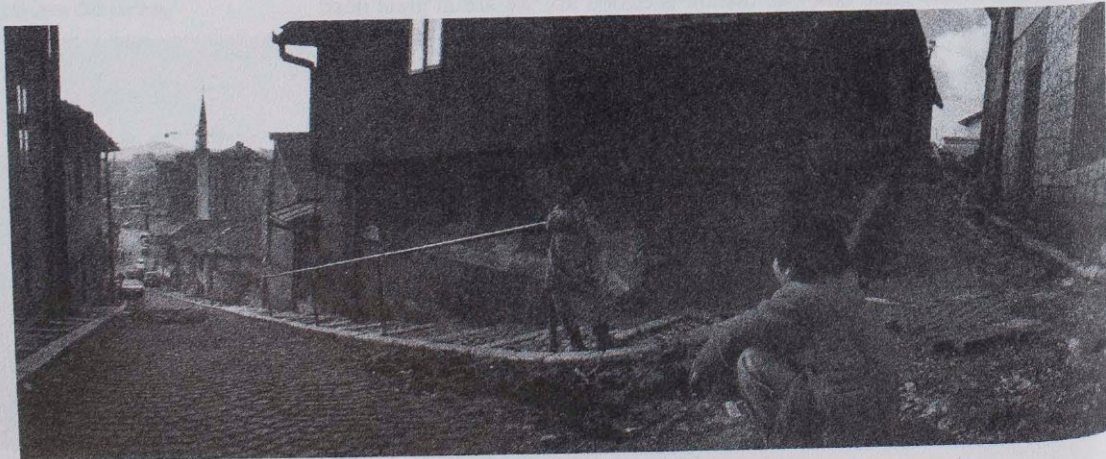
And what question would you like to ask Europe in Stockholm?

I daresay it would be a question about soul. The pitch of this question is not like the one of Dostoyevsky's, who asked Europe about soul. It is the question of a Pole who declares that his favourite reading matter is Winnie-the-Pooh. This question is not asked pathetically. The lack of soul can be noticed in the street, but I am sure it is somewhere. I do not know where it is hidden. Maybe it has simply left the places in which it used to be located before, and it has passed somewhere else. Sometimes, while travelling across Europe, I have an impression that it is hidden in prosaic things, for example when, at a station, a porter drives a wheel-chair very fast to help an elderly lady who is trying to catch the taxi ...

April 1998

Translated by Ewa Stapór

Sarajevo, 1997.
Photo: Jens Olof Lasthein



KÜLLI PAULUS

Estonian Dramaturgy: a Moment on Stage

It has been said that the original literature of any small country has at least two tasks: one is to rank with the World's Literature, the other is to defy it. Contemporary Estonian stage drama has merited the quite avid attention of local theatre critics. It is obvious that a national "product" gains favour long before proving itself – it has a duty not to disappoint. Nevertheless, the present state of Estonian dramatic literature is once again under discussion.

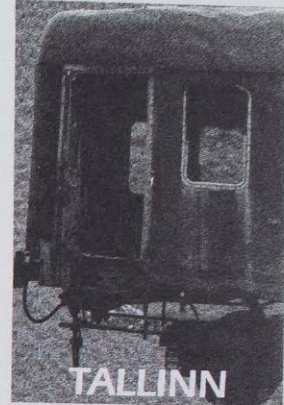
If we look at the Estonian authors that have been staged during recent seasons (i.e. 96/97 & 97/98), we may divide them into three traditional groups: the classics – Lydia Koidula, A. H. Tammsaare, Eduard Vilde; contemporary classics – Madis Koiv, Jaan Kruusvall; and the new generation – Andrus Kivirähk, Toomas Hussar & Erwin Ounapuu and Mart Kivastik.

As we consider what the mass-media and theatre critics say, we find three names that figure in original dramaturgy Koiv, Kruusvall and Kivirähk (Merle Karusoo, who deals with documentary theatre, is in a class of her own). Let us have a brief look at this second group of authors.

Madis Koiv (born 1929) is a physicist, philosopher and a playwright. His prose has been published in the periodicals "Akadeemia", "Looming" and "Vikerkaar". His plays (mostly written years ago, and recently "discovered") are mainly autobiographical – although he does not tend to write plays for the stage (in his words, his plays are "novels in form of a dialogue"), he has definitely altered our understanding of Estonian dramaturgy – both in the form of a written text and as seen on stage.

Koiv's social, historical and philosophical themes are fused and form a multidimensional "reality" (being), his remarks within the text, concerning "inanimate" objects, do not simply illustrate the action or the situation, but are *in themselves* an action or a process ("Suddenly there is a light on the stage. Eyes seize the light, but there is, as yet, no perception. Perception comes only afterwards. In the darkness that follows." – "The Philosopher's Day")

Undoubtedly, Koiv has challenged Estonian theatre – though those staging the plays claim that the material is hard, or even impossible, to adapt for the stage. They try to give us their own version of Koiv's legendary "yellow anguish of evening light" and the perpetual fear of war. The playwright's treatment of space gives us a key to an approach to the "cognition



Estonian Literary Magazine

The magazine presents the 20th century Estonian prose, poetry and dramaturgy.

Its permanent columns include: "Short overview of books by Estonian authors" and "Estonian Literature in Translation".

The quarterly presents Estonian outstanding figures and information on literary competitions.

One of the main theme is also the literature for children.

The magazine is in English. Published and distributed by the Estonian Institute and KOGE Publishing House Ltd.

Imposed and elected identity

This way of building one's own multiple identity is certainly not easy. Although we in Europe consider ourselves highly civilised, the majority of us still have a strong need for clear and unequivocal borders and a feeling of belonging to the nation of our forefather. The process of urbanisation was extremely fast and only a minority has been able to cope with all the consequences of individual freedom and responsibility. The old pre-urban culture seems to have such a strong influence on urban people that many have huge difficulties to liberate themselves from the magic of clear and unequivocal identity – imposed identity seems to be more attractive than the effort required to strengthen these multiple identities.

I am convinced that the deliberate choice of identity, free by individual conscience and responsibility, is the modern (or post-modern) world. Within the actual "global village" there are no efficient ways to isolate and defend some group from the multitude and diversity of influences from "others". So we have to learn to live with these numerous intrusions in our most intimate privacy and, if possible, take an advantage of them. It is certainly not a great achievement of civilisation, but it is a marvellous feeling around the Viennese Naschmarkt (flea market) one can choose between the traditional Austrian and Italian, Greek or Turkish food.

If we do not want to smuggle into the "global village" the obsolete and uncivilised customs of strong borders and unique national identity – as it occurs now in former Yugoslavia – we should accept and cultivate the more civilised understanding of a multiple, freely chosen identity.

Photo: Stanisław J. Woś



Prague, March 18, 1996

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI

The Atlantis Complex, or Central Europe after the End of the World



Let us start our story a bit light-heartedly (if it isn't even taking chances to do so being aware of the gravity of the situation) a short statement by a certain traveller, who for many years now has tirelessly been traversing Central-Europe seeking for the traces of an old civilisation, whose very existence is questionable or even mythological, as the ancient Atlantis.

The traveller's passport is full of various border and AB stamps and visas which were often purchased at a high price. It was often made difficult for him to get a visa after checking with whom he had been involved. He once made himself unpopular with some embassy by preferring some ethnic minority and "sects" (Greek Catholics). In the end he was presented with a proposal and a guarantee. The proposal was that he should go to this country in order to meet reliable people and the guarantee was that he would be protected, with all the costs covered and "all entertainment" provided. When he travelled by plane the direction he decided to take was somehow predetermined by the very place of departure, deprived of a telescopic corridor which usually makes it possible to get directly aboard a plane. He once thought he was kidnapped when the bus he got on after he got through the customs did not go towards the runway but in the opposite direction towards a housing estate. It was only after several small streets that the bus arrived at plane, waiting lonely at the outskirts. When he travelled by car he sometimes envied those from Western Europe for they were not obliged to queue at border crossings. From time to time a small hand-scratched notice bearing the magic English word PRESS attached to the windshield alone sufficed to disregard a whole line. On the other hand, it was hopeless when you came to the border on a national holiday – it was necessary to wait until a special ceremony was over, featuring a delegation of the neighbouring border guard, with whom the host border guard had for so many years collaborated with for customs clearing, in each side's best interest. Sometimes, when he finally entered the promised neighbouring land, he was suddenly and skilfully ambushed: in a car-wreck situated at the edge of a forest there was a policeman with a radar neatly concealed from view. Almost all the travellers were given a ticket for speeding by a police unit – who drives 40 km in the middle of a forest? – a peculiar gift of Slavic hospitality.

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI was born on 6 July 1958 in Warsaw; cultural animator, essayist; long-time worker for theatre Gardzienice; co-founder of a literary-cultural periodical "Time of Culture"; Editor-in-Chief of the periodical "Krasnogruda"; founder and leader of the Borderland Foundation and the Centre "Borderland of Arts, Cultures and Nations"; laureate of, among others, the Wyspiański's Artistic Award of the Young and the Award of Parisian "Kultura" for the year 1996.

Estonian Art

The magazine presents various spheres of the contemporary Estonian art: architecture (ports, private houses), paintings (a permanent column "A Picture in a Museum"), outstanding figures of the world of art. A very important part is also the presentation of the Estonian cultural heritage (for example the gothic art). It points out the role of art in the process of building bridges between the present and the past.

The Estonian art is often presented in a larger, European context (the participation of Estonian artists in the Venetian Biennial).

The magazine publishes the annual calendar of the Estonian exhibitions.

The periodical is published in English by the Estonian Institute.



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of Koiv". His space is a character, even if not the main character ("The space surrounding a person has a greater effect on me than the person himself. When writing a play my object of interest is not the person in a given space, but the space itself. I would rather model the person to suit the space." – from an interview with M.K), the different levels of perception form another space within it. Therefore, what makes his creation magical, is his ability to make these two spaces (worlds) physically existent – both at the same time.

Most of his plays have been staged in "Eesti Draamateater" ("Meeting", "Return to Father", "Philosopher's Day", "Rogues", "Evening Show", "Scenes of Hundred-Year War"), and mainly by Prit Pedajas. Pedajas admits, that staging Koiv's plays is well nigh impossible, and yet he believes that "in theatre – everything is possible".

Somehow, the critics seem to keep their distance – they are all agreed on Koiv's constituting a separate category in Estonian dramatic literature, still there are hesitations as well as fitting it in the context of Estonian or world literature.

Jaan Kruusvall (born 1940) is a prose writer and a playwright (he graduated from Moscow's Institute of Literature), and has also worked as a journalist. Kruusvall is noted for depicting the painful areas of Estonians' minds and history (the time after World War II – in., for instance, "The Colours of Clouds", "the Commune House of Silence", both of which were staged at a time when Soviet literary censorship was severe), he has remained silent for several years. His new play "The Mad Professor, His Course of Life" is now in the repertoire of "Eesti Draamateater", directed by Mikk Mikiver.

While Madis Koiv deals with the philosophical levels of being, the subject of Jaan Kruusvall is Estonians as a nation and how they cope with world – and with their own personal feuds. His stage-language is precise and has an astonishing effect on the audience. Kruusvall's most recent play was a success with the critics, whose attitude to the play in question can be summarised as follows: "people want to recognise themselves on stage".

Andrus Kivirähk (born 1969) – satirist, journalist, prosaist and playwright. He became famous for his political (topical) satires, published in the press under the pseudonym of Ivan Orav. His later book "The Memoirs of Ivan Orav", where the topic of Estonia's (new) independence is dealt with abundant absurd humour, found approbation among the public as well as the critics.

His earlier plays ("Old Men from 7th Floor"; "The Walk on the Rainbow" etc.) are also relished with absurd-humour. His latest works are "Such Guts or How Kreutzwald Found His Fortune" (in Pärnu "Endla") and "The Assassination Attempt" – perhaps his most "serious" work (staged in "Eesti Draamateater" by Hendrik Toompere jun.)

Kivirähk, like Koiv, is clearly not an easy subject for the critics to deal with. He has written about "small" and lonely people, absurd humour is one possibility of talking about them. The oddity of his plays is two-directional: on the one hand, it is revealed in the reality of spectators, and on other hand it plays with the rules and the structure of dramaturgy.

There are different ideas and opinions concerning the present situation of Estonian dramaturgy. It is claimed that there are no innovators (except Koiv), that the artistic quality of plays differ and the amount of original texts, etc. Nevertheless, the original dramaturgy of Estonia will not die out, for what we do have is critical sense and love of theatre – among the playwrights and among the public.

From "Estonian Literary Magazine", No. 6, Spring 1998

ANTS JUSKE

Estonian Art in Times of Transition



Today one could say that the transformation of the form Estonian art has reached its conclusion: the hierarchy of the arts (painting, graphic, arts, sculpture, applied arts etc.) that prevailed during the Soviet period has vanished, the nomenclatura of People's Artists have been toppled from their pedestals, and new institutions have found their place.

In a paper he presented at the Tartu Art Museum, Enn Plodroos compared Estonian art of the Soviet period with a boat drifting out at sea: we had the strength to push off from one shore (the official Soviet socialist realism) but we were too weak to reach the other shore (contemporary Western art). There was, however, a much stronger sense of unity among Estonian artists than one finds today; now one can say that some artists have gone ashore, some art still drifting and some do not even want to get anywhere at all. The picture of Estonian art is today more colourful than ever before.

The crumbling of fine art has not been without repercussion. To start with, the public's adoration has been lost: the replacement of the artistic nomenclatura with a new elite has stripped exhibition halls of the "wide audience" that used to crowd Spring and Autumn Exhibitions in the Tallinn Art hall. Virve-Ines Laanemäe once conducted sociological surveys asking people why they went to an art exhibition. This was about all the "sociology" there was, but it would be interesting to find out today why they do not go to exhibition any more. The answers would probably be "art is incomprehensible" or "anyone can daub like that or drag scrap iron to exhibitions" or something in the same vein.

There is namely a paradox in that the younger generation which regards the art of the Brezhnev stagnation period as a product of utopian socialism modernism (for instance Piret Rääni at her exhibition *Utopia and home*) have become modernist themselves, despite their aspirations.

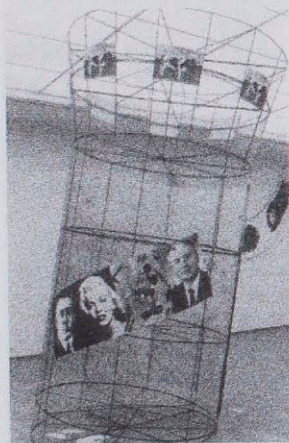
During the Soviet period the status of an artist was somewhat privileged; due to their special source of inspiration, artists were "holy" and art was at the forefront of ideological struggle. Artists were honoured, they were to be both respected and nurtured by

Marko Mäetamm: *Estonia*, 1996.

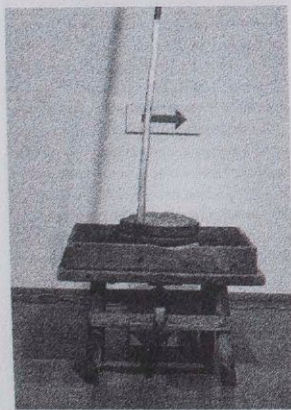




Silver Vahtre, Tonu Noorits: *Trade Mark*



Marko Laimre: *Red Arrow*



the party and the people. Party supervision was not comfortable, of course, but looking back, it seems valuable to quite a few artists compared to the total silence that surrounds them today.

As I already suggested, the status of art and artists in the new artistic climate is something different. In recent years, much has been done to expand the boundaries of art, and the meaning of being an artist has also acquired new perimeters. Art has not only overstepped the limits of its traditional forms and genres, it has also left the exhibition halls.

Instead of elitist professionals in their "ivory towers", the interest of the art world has shifted onto art forms which have, previously, been considered peripheral (a major comeback of photography in art) and marginal phenomena (art of the Third World, feminist art, art of sexual minorities, body art etc.). This is also why I am completely unable to understand claims that the concept of art has nowadays become narrower and artist freedom more limited than ever before. Rather, it is quite the opposite – a sentence of Joseph Beuys that is often quoted, "everybody is an artist", should be interpreted as referring to the enormous freedom offered by contemporary art. The young futurist Mayakovsky had a slogan "Streets are our brushes and squares our palette"; it was just a small step to the next well-known slogan "Art belongs to the people. But the paradox is that when art leaves the palaces and golden frames to go to the people, then the people do not recognise it any more. The latter fact was well understood by the Bolsheviks, who dragged the people into palaces to see art. Contrary to aspirations, the descent of art from its pedestal has turned it into an elitist and decidedly modernist activity. The only difference is that the people – the public – no longer love this kind of elitism.

Our beloved painting and graphical arts have by no means disappeared, they have just withdrawn to commercial galleries, banks, hotels, embassies, and to our cosy homes, of course. So, even this kind of art has in a manner of speaking "gone to the people".

Observing more closely the genesis of Estonian art during the last five or six years, we can distinguish several subsequent layers. The first wedge between the art and the people was driven in by the old avantgarde. Perestroika marked the start of the rehabilitation of the classical avantgarde. It was a kind of art during the stagnation period was somewhat unpopular both with the party and the people. In fact, since the mid 1980s, when several artists were brave enough to exhibit works from their youth at personal exhibitions in the Art Museum, there has been a nostalgic harking back to the Sixties. The Young Artist' Exhibition of 1989 included two retrospectives in what might be seen as an attempt to reconstruct the Young Artist' exhibition of 1966 and the exhibition of the Visarid group.

In the beginning of the 1990s, there was a number of exhibitions of heroic avantgarde classics. Abstract art in its varied forms was brought back to life; one can recall comprehensive personal exhibitions of Jüri Kask, Raul Meel, Leonhard Lapin, Ado Lill et al. The revival of old avantgarde, a sort of a "retro-avant-garde", started at the same time, and is still continuing today. The more or less chronological list that follows speaks for itself: *Avantgard je transavantgard*, the exhibition of kinetic art – *Mobil 1* – in the Tallinn Art Hall, the Harku'75 retrospective in Linnagalerii, as well as numerous personal exhibitions reviewing the past (Raul Meel, Olav Maran, Kajo Pollu etc.). Last year was especially rich in this respect: an exhibition of 1960s art in the Estonian Art Museum, *Kunstitegel Tallinn-Moskva* (Art Axis Tallinn-Moscow) in Tallinn Art Hall, the publication of Ilja Kabakov's book about Ülo Sooster and a catalogue of Marti Milius' private art collection have been published.

This elevation of the avantgarde has triggered a counterattack by younger artists whose artistic development coincided with the opening up of society. In opposition to the established avantgarde that carries the spirit of the 60s, they represent newer trends, new already connected to post-modern art. Keeping alive thirty-year-old art phenomena in a post-modern period seemed anachronistic to the young. Art critics coined the term "rehabilitative art", that is, art which is not promoted because it was forbidden during the "Russian era" that has already become history.

Apart from the retrospective avantgarde, a strong group of neoconceptual artists has emerged in the generation who are now aged between 30 and 40, including Jaan Toomik, Jüri Ojaveer and Raoul Kurvitz. Building upon the preserved forms of classical conceptualism and minimalism, they have found a radical continuation which is more suited to the present day. The latter has also impressed foreign curators and today the most well-known Estonian artist internationally is without doubt Jaan Toomik. An ever younger generation seems to be divided in two camps: on the one side there is a development of neo-conceptual ideas by Peeter Linnap and his school (Mobil galerii), on the other side the neo-pop movement which, in contrast to the 1970s interest in soviet paraphernalia, deals with products of today's Western market economy, images from advertising and mass culture (photos by Destudio, Mall Nukke, Marko Mäetamm). One can add to them artists who have openly adopted commercial attitudes (Aapo Pukk, Navitrolla, Beatrice), something that is entirely unacceptable to the new avantgarde generation who deem themselves to be representatives of "fine" art. They move in the commercial world than painters who started in the Soviet period and are still embarrassed by their commercial success. There are also traditionalists among the painters who defend the rights of the good old form (Jaan Elken, Kreg A Kristing, Vano Allsalu et al.).

The arrival of new media in Estonian art in recent years has dealt a serious blow to the art of 60s generation which had just acquired a status of official art. For instance, critics lost interest in geometrical painting due to the explosive increase in the work of photographers and video artists. In addition came the post-feminist (mare Tralla, Tiina Tammetalu) and other movements orientated towards postmodernist thought.

Development logic tells us that the next wave of artists will oppose the generation in their thirties which is now becoming established. Their advantage is that they started their art studies in an open information society, entirely free of the burden of the Soviet period. The question is – how much can the small world of Estonian art tolerate. One reason for the hurry in getting established is certainly that in the developing art life there is competition for important posts in cultural institutions which determine the chance of having your own exhibition, foreign trips and financial support.

There is a phenomenon that inevitably follows the infamous term "establishment": if you start earlier you reach the finishing line quicker too. And I must grant that at the moment Lithuanian art (that has preserved its traditions for a long time) is in these circumstances, already more interesting than Estonian art.

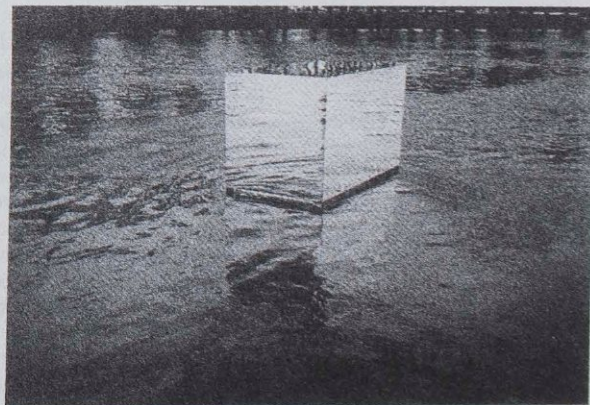
From "Estonian Art" 1/97

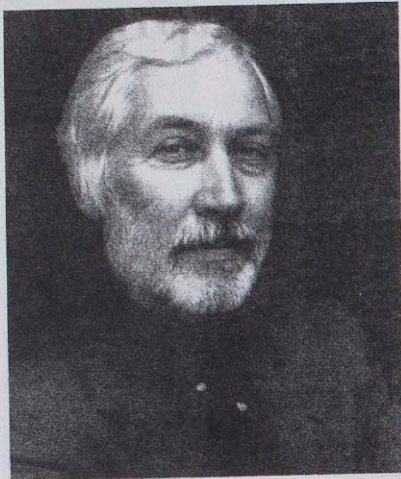


Ants Juske

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Jaan Toomik: *Way to Sao Paulo*, 1994 (videoinstallation).





JAAN KAPLINSKI

Poems

Translated by J. Talvet & H.L. Hix

JAAN KAPLINSKI was born in 1941 in Tartu. Graduated in French philology from the University of Tartu. He has worked as a sociologist (in Tartu) and an ecologist (at the Tallinn Botanical Garden). In 1996 he was mentioned among official candidates for the Nobel Prize of Literature.

He is a translator from French, Spanish, English, Swedish, Chinese. He was elected to the Estonian Parliament.

I Saw Yunichiro to Tallinn

We spoke of East and West, log cabins and wells.
On the way we passed budding trees,
solitary white anemones, spring fog
and yellow-green mist above the forest:
birches and begun to bloom.
Sometimes we grew silent; I think, in truth
we were of such like mind
that speaking became superfluous.
I asked if Satori in Japanese
was the usual word for UNDERSTANDING.
"No," he answered, "that word
conveys a solemnity." The Pedja river
was back in its banks, but in Kärivere
the bottoms were still under water.
An hour was left before the bus to Tartu. We sat in "Viru".
In the lobby I was told that -
without being asked - I should have shown my passport.
I said next time I would.
I returned. On my left the full moon
shone between clouds, and in its glimmer the spruces
stood, as if they were joyous, joyous.
I cannot describe them in any other way.
How the bottoms of the Emajogi looked
in the moonlight I don't know, since I was sleeping.

*From Ohtu toob tagasi kõik
(The Evening Brings Everything Back), 1985*

Here I am Again

on Olevimägi* bound
by the sensation of unreality - the city
only sleeps that big space
we call the city and we
with our offices shops warehouses our evening arguments
are phantoms in convoluted landscapes
dead-end streets between walls in its dozing brain
its real face is revealed
in the foundation and limestone where
beings and things prove true
and speak in a familiar tongue
with me the South-Estonian for whom
history is too brief who
does not go to cafés and who falls asleep reading
in a barn on hay C.G. Jung's "Psychologische Typen"

*From Tolmust ja värvidest
(On Dust and Colours), 1967*

* The Hill of St. Olaf in Tallinn whose name in Estonian (olev)
could be associated with "being" or "present".

Again Someone Somewhere is Speaking

about the generation of the sixties,
the seventies, or the eighties.
But I don't like sadism or masochism;
I don't consider the old wiser than the young
or the young wiser than the old;
my ancestor, too, was Utnapishtim
who lives on Dilmun island, with its fountain of youth;
my children piss in their pants and play in the sandbox;
my brother is the northwest wind in the branches of the willow;
my sister is the sunlight edging a white cloud;
I myself am a blind stone frog in an empty room,
with a scar on my knee from the time
I fell from my bike on a highway near Kärevere,
when bottoms were still flooded and in the forests of Tiksoja
violets bloomed and on the banks of the ditches and in thickets
there were still patches of snow.

*From Ohtu toob tagasi kõik
(The Evening Brings Everything Back), 1985*



Jaan Kaplinski

e uralien

JAAN KAPLINSKI

From Harem to Brothel

Artists in the Post-Communist World

Making art, writing, painting, making music is like making love. It is something that can be hindered, but not stopped, even less can it be ruled and controlled by somebody, be it kings, popes or party secretaries. These people have often been jealous of artists for themselves, deny them the freedom to make love to whom they will, to write and to paint what they wish. They confine women and artists to harems, restricted areas where they are taken care of, where they have nearly everything they could wish for, except freedom. In a harem you must make love to your master and you cannot do so with anybody else. a harem is a restricted area which you cannot leave.

The Communist world was such a harem for most of its inhabitants, and artists were no exception. the Party and the KGB jealously hived them off, away from pernicious Western influences. and only the most loyal and faithful obtained permission to visit the "Capitalist world". Even there they could not easily escape Big Brother's watchful eye. At the most they could travel abroad only in groups which always included KGB officers and their informers. It reminds one of the way women from the Sultan's harem were able to leave it and go into town, accompanied and guarded by eunuchs.

Paradoxically enough, the artists felt they were important. the meticulous censorship, the special attention the KGB, the Party and other bureaucrats paid to them were clear signs that they were important. The writer's pen the and artist's brush had some power: otherwise the powerful state would not have mobilised its secret police and many other officials to guard them. The well-known bulldozing of an unofficial exhibition in a park in Moscow in 1974 was a major disaster. The artists whose works were destroyed nevertheless felt comforted by so much attention. The harem

ladies knew that they would have some influence on the Sultan and his dignitaries.

With the collapse of Communism everything changed. The doors of harem were suddenly left wide open and every woman could leave it. In fact, they were forced to leave, because nobody cared for them any more. The powerholders couldn't afford to have harems and they had to send the ladies away. Where could they go? Some happier ones had skills in something other than the art of love; they could earn some money with handicrafts or music. Some had relatives who took care of them. Some became simply beggars. Many became prostitutes. It is not a long way from harem to brothel, at any rate, the way from harem to freedom is much longer and harder.

In the past, we were forbidden to make love to the rich men from the corrupt West. Now we complete for their favour and gifts. We go and sleep with them as soon as we receive a telephone call. We call-girls and call-boys of the Western world are the luckiest of the post-communist prostitutes. Many of our former harem mates envy us. We are busy, we have to make love to many people, life has become much more expensive and insecure. Sometimes, waiting, exhausted at a large airport in the brave new world of freedom, we ask ourselves what freedom in fact is, where freedom is to be found, the freedom we believed in and some of our comrades died for. We ask ourselves, what is the real difference between a harem and a brothel, an odalisque and a call-girl. Is not the world that opened itself to us simply a much much larger harem with many sultans and emirs who want us to make love to them? After all, there is one difference: they now have a much greater freedom of choice.

From "Estonian Literary Magazine",
No. 6, Spring 1998



TALLINN, ESTONIA

Peeter Jalakas director

Peeter was the first director in Estonia to truly explore the new environment of the post-Soviet era. He formed an independent theatre company in a system where institutions had a monopoly. He built a theatre center in Tallinn, produces one of the Baltic regions finest festivals (Balto-Scandal) and led the way to re-thinking art in the society. I remember standing with him years ago in the yet to be renovated Von Krahl theatre – the chaos of the situation didn't seem to disturb him at all. On the contrary, he seemed to thrive on the infinite possibilities that suddenly opened before him.

Director, producer and playwright. Artistic director at the Von Kraal Theatre since -96.

- diploma in directing, Tallinn University, theatre department -87
- organized first international theatre festival in Estonia Baltoscandal -90
- Artistic director since -96.
- founded the Von Kraal Theatre (-91), venue for contemporary theatre and dance.

THEATRE /SELECTION

- Werewolf, based on the play of Kitzberg
- Voices, co-production with Heap Theatre, N.Y. -92
- Icecube of love, in co-production with Especially Sad Music Orchestra -93
- Strange Angels, director and playwright -93
- Seven Brothers, by A Kivi -95
- Estonian Games, multimedia performance, by Jalakas 96
- Soldiers tale, by I Stravinsky -96
- Olivias Masterclass, libretto, by Peeter Jalakas -97

FORTRESS EUROPE

videoinstallation by Ervin Öunnapuu and Peeter Jalakas

assistant: Kristiina Garancis

CO-PRODUCTION

Von Krahl Theatre

euralien



LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM'98

Ervin Öunnapuu director



Stage-designer for more than 50 theatre productions in Estonia, Latvia, among them 5 operas 1981–97.

AUTHOR, CO-DIRECTOR AND STAGE DESIGNER/SELECTION

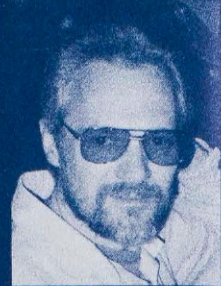
- The Lovers of Sannikovs land, Von Krahl Theatre -94
 - Krupps last tape, Von Krahl Theatre -94
 - Unknown years of Vincent van Gogh, Estonian Drama Theatre -95
 - Noahs ark, Rakvere Theatre -95
 - Fly with me, Estonian Drama Theatre -98
 - Olivias Masterclass, Von Krahl Theatre, contemporary short opera, commissioned for the NYDD, music festival in Tallinn -97
- Award: Estonian Annual Theatre Prize for stage design.

FILM/SELECTION

- The Mayor or the Fundamental Forms of Fear, video, co-scriptwriter and scenographer -97
- Sixty years in a second, video scripwriter, director and scenographer -97
- The Aria, video, scripwriter, director, scenographer -97

RIGA, LATVIA

Pēteris Krilovs director



A highly acclaimed film director during the Soviet times, Pēteris found a new and exciting function in Latvia, as the Baltic countries moved towards independence. He gathered around him younger artists – one of them, Rēgnars, is co-directing *The Consulate* – and focused on their development as men and women of the new theatre. Not as an expression of nationalism but with a strong respect for the vision that is necessary in a time of transition. As a teacher, as a guide, as a director in his own right – Pēteris asks questions, opens new spaces and builds bridges between generations and historical periods.

- Diploma film direction, Moscow Institute of Cinematography
- Film director, The Riga Film Studio 1975–90
- Pedagogue, Drama department at the Latvian Academy of Culture, since -93
- Director of *Homo Novus*, International Festival of Contemporary Theatre 1995–97
- Artistic director Baltic Seaside Drama '98, seminar.

FILM/SELECTION

- *The door opened for you*, feature film -84
- *Daugava*, video award: Lielais Kristaps -95

THEATRE /SELECTION

- *The Sound and Fury*, by Faulkner, Daugavpils Theatre -91
- *The tenth*, by Green, Valmiera Theatre -92
- *The Possessed*, by Dostojevski, Daugavpils Theatre. Award: Best Production of the year -93
- *Duel*, by Chechov, Gundars, Daugavpils Theatre -95

Rēgnars Vaivars

director

Acting and directing, Department of Theatre, Bachelor of Arts, Latvian Academy of Culture

THEATRE/SELECTION

- *White wedding*, by Ruzevitsh, director, stage designer, musical co-author, Theatre Skatuve -96
- *Alice*, music theatre, based on *Alice in Wonderland* by L Carroll, director, Theatre Skatuve -96
- *Rolstein on the beach*, opera, director, Dailes theatre, Vilnius Festival -97
- *Three sisters*, by Jilinger, actor, Dailes Theatre -97

THE CONSULATE

directors: Pēteris Krilovs, Rēgnars Vaivars

ACTORS

Igo Rodrigo Fomins, musician, singer, actor. Indra Roga, actress.

CO-PRODUCTION

The New Theatre Institute-Latvia, a non governmental theatre center which encourages the development of independent theatre.

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Soros Center for Contemporary Arts, Latvia

LANDSCAPE X — INTERCULT — STOCKHOLM '98

X euralien

SOFIJA VONDA

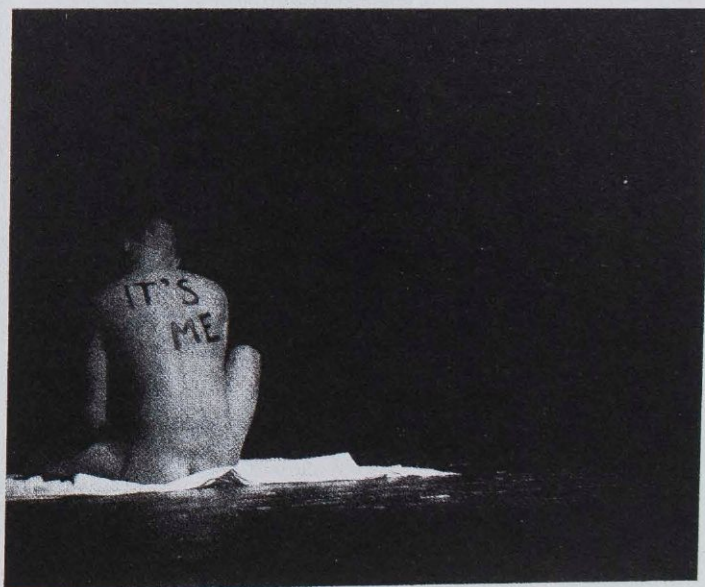
Riga Is on the Start



If I asked about Latvia and Riga, a prosperous westerner would shake his head and give you a faint smile in excuse of his ignorance. Geophysicists in their turn consider Latvia as the geographical centre, but politicians - the furthestmost borderland of Europe. Whatever it really is, historically Riga as a city had originated 800 years ago from a small Liv settlement near the estuary of Daugava, and its founders were tradesmen and priests. Exactly - Albert Bukshevel of Bremen. Craftsmen and tradesman arriving from Germany soon became a privileged strata, but the native population formed the so called plebeian opposition. The situation remained as such for ages. You may call it a destiny or curious coincidence of circumstance but Riga had always been benevolent to immigrants. And still is today.

J. P. Sartre's *Room*, staged by Zane Kreicberga.

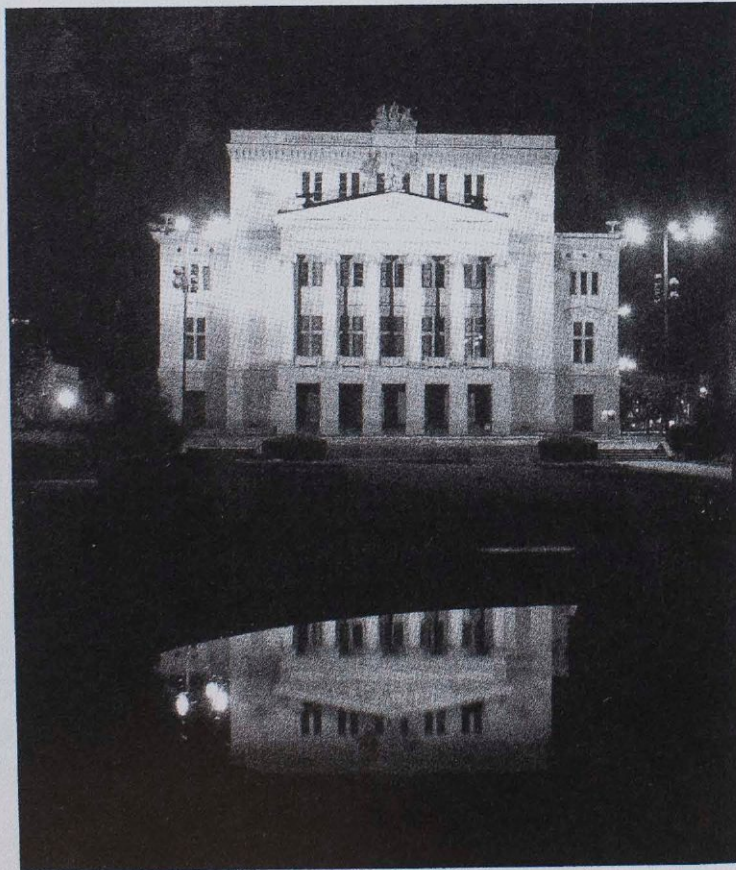
Once being the strong-point of German expansion in the Baltic region Riga became a rich city-state and a Baltic sea trading centre. As time passed, the Danes, the Poles, the Swedes, the Russians became the owners of Riga, they desired and conquered, rooted here and at last were driven away or repatriated. But Riga still stands in its old place. Its history now is found in the museums and architecture, though historical buildings look, to put it mildly, a little bit shabby. But slowly and constantly Riga is being renewed, getting back its old brightness as a capital of Latvia. Only for 29 years Riga has been a capital of the independent state - 22 years before the W.W.II. and 7 years



after Latvia regained its freedom again in 1991.

For all this the westerner would admit Riga quite an European city, reflecting in its own manner all the artistic styles: gothic, baroque, rococo, classicism, eclecticism. Regardless of Riga's mercantile and practical trends, cultural life flourished as citizens welfare grew. Especially in 19th century many outstanding artists, musicians, actors and composers came here to live and work: Richard Wagner, Franz List, Hector Berlioz, Anton Rubinstein. Still it is the same today: Mariss Jansons, Gidon Cremer, Monserat Cabalier and many others come here. Some of the National Opera productions would do credit to the world's best opera houses.

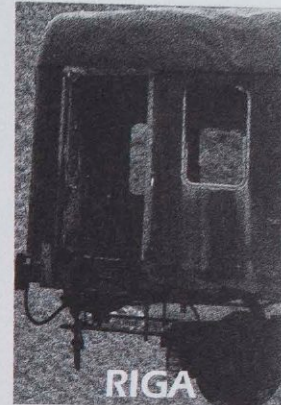
But Riga is not only its history, theatres and museums. Riga is its people too. People with their hope and fear. An invisible break finds itself in the hearts of Riga's native inhabitants: let us call this break the border, separating servitude and freedom. Often this border is labile and it is tragic: despair follows in tracks of hope. Utmost contrasts of life today cannot be disregarded. But between those contrasts and contradictions are many people who endeavour to overcome hardships and to get away from cross-roads. Latvia and Riga are at the beginning point.



The National Opera House.
Photo: Andris Krīevs

GUNA ZELTINA

Young Directors: an Alternative Tension to Latvian Theatre



The Union of Unbearable Theatre" describes itself as an alternative working group, willing to do something absolutely new, non-traditional. "Unbearable - because the fact that the present situation in the field of theatre is unbearable not only in Latvia. We are not better, but we would like to break into this situation through our acts" - says Viesturs Kairiss, the leader of this independent theatre group.

New directing in Latvia is a heterogeneous conception. Young directors have different tempers, tastes and "religions" - from pretentiousness to simplification, from nihilism to positive statement. In the creation of this new theatre experts are looking for the parallels with the French anti-theatre stylists, Robert Wilson's aesthetics of visual inlays or Jerzy Grotowski's principles, with the metaphorical way, practised by Eimuntas Nekrosius and Oscaras Korsunovas (Lithuania). Anyway, all this work by young directors is a more or less vividly realised self-expression, filling the space of our theatres with the flow of new theatre semantics.

The structure of these performances is composed by verbal and visual codes, marks and metaphors, stated in sound, space and colour and realised on the stage which most often is open, not isolated from the spectator. Relative reality, sadly ironical games and intellectu-

Independent Theatre Studio "STAGE"





Independent Theatre "KABATA"
(The Pocket)

al constructions. Games of mind are mixed with sensual reality, the experience. Soft, cruel, cynic, true, artificial. Exploring of the world and creation of new worlds, where the borders between the sacred and the sinful, the holy and the dirty blur. The aesthetic minimalism is combined with super-refined choice of space and properties. They are freely using time, space, things.

Most often young directors choose free-made montages of the text, variations on the theme, dramatisations of a story or a novel, or self-made textual structures. After that the text is structured in new relations with the additional visual, plastic and musical comments.

It is similar to post-structuralism's visual interpretation of language as an action or process, which creates some kind of transformation in the consciousness of the individual.

Their performances are free from the so-called textual terrorism (by theatre semiotic A. Ubersfield).

They are active in creating the system of textual signs and codes, deciphering of which becomes an

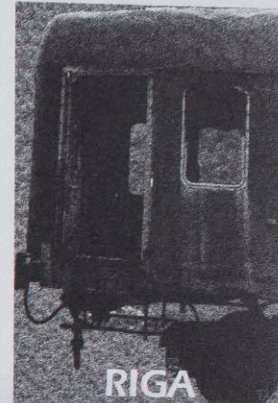
element of the mutual game, played by the director, the stage designer, the actors and the spectators, and, what is very desirable, a source of aesthetic pleasure.

Montage and construction of meaning goes on now on the stage, now in the spectators' consciousness. The psychological discourse of text is denied in favour to looking for new possibilities of the theatre's mental function.

Young directors have their admirers, as well as antagonists. Some are angry with them for their challenging immorality or their incomprehensibility. Even now this new directing brings alternative tension to our theatre, which is needed so much. The waves of new energy spurt over the well-experienced building of the Latvian theatre.

What Do We Have in Common?

A Discussion with Latvian Artists



A new generation of young and talented theatre directors and actors has joined the Latvian theatre lately. Gradually generations replace each other. The new way of directing, called a creator of the alternative and the opposition theatre, most perfectly was seen in the performances produced by "The Union of Unbearable Theatre" and the independent theatre "Skatuve" ("The Stage").

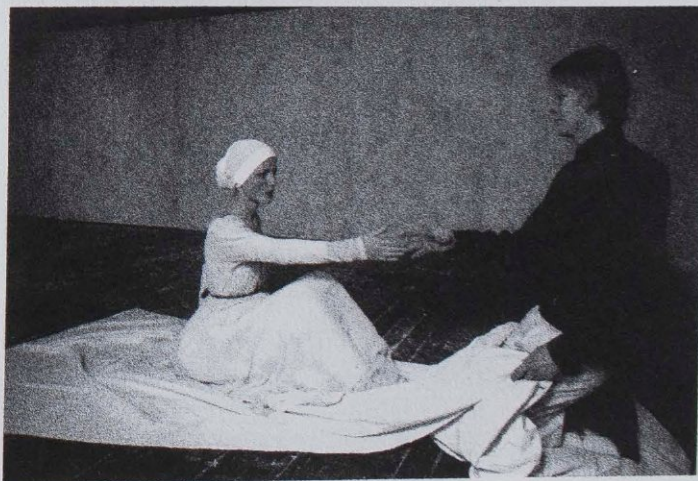
Directors of older and middle-age generations still actively work at theatres. What are the opinions of directors from different generations about theatre situation today. What's going on, does a theatre's face change, if the theatre has reached a new turning point? And how do the directors from rather different generations encounter with the issue of the national identity?

Olgerts Kroders, older generation theatre director, "patriarch of Latvian theatre": The situation of Latvian theatre is very fruitful now. It is the first time when so many talented and young directors enter Latvian theatre at the same time. However I feel confused, that my younger colleagues are absolutely ignorant of the national matter. May be it's a result of a certain backwardness.

Viesturs Kairiņš, young theatre and film director, the leader of "The Union of Unbearable Theatre": I guess, nothing is wrong with our national identity. The national matter is an objective factor. There is no need to pay special attention to it.

Mara Kimele, middle age theatre director: Don't forget the fact that Latvians are minority in their own country. We were

Stone Guest by A. Pushkin.
Director: Viesturs Kairiņš.
Photo: Janis Deinats



taught to feel guilt about being Latvian in the Soviet time. Now it's getting even worse. The whole nation is reprimanded, because we want to be Latvians. I don't want - I am Latvian.

Viesturs Kairiņš: In my opinion, the matter of Latvians should be considered anthropologically, according to the world's context.

For example, Peter Brook's troupe toured in Africa and native people couldn't understand what's going on, what's wrong with the actors? They thought that the actors probably had stomach-aches.

The same thing happens if we make a performance in Latvia and start presenting it all over the world. Is that what we mean by the Latvian national theatre?

Anda Burtniece, older generation theatre scholar: I agree with Viesturs, that national material cannot be revealed only by the national theme. That would be too simple and primitive.

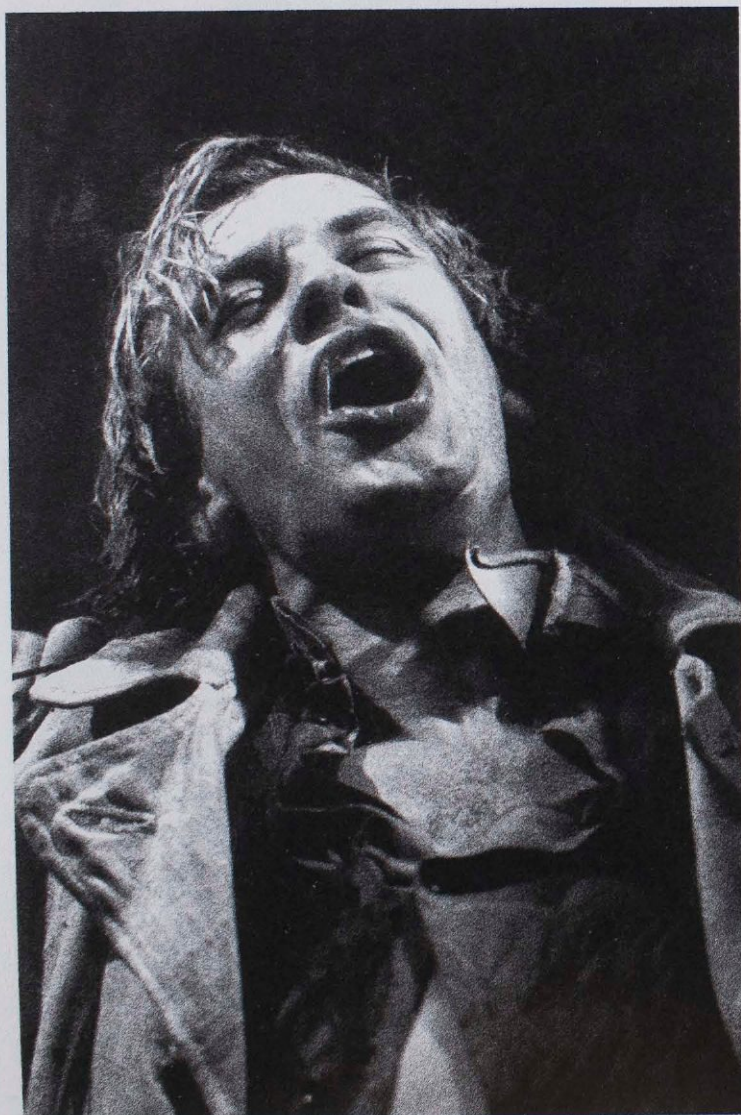
Still, if we Latvians live in defined surroundings and circumstances, is it wise to isolate ourselves from the past and from the problems the nation is dealing with here and now?

Mara Kimele: Our directors, mainly the young ones, have no bonds with the poor, extinct Latvian nation. Maybe it's logic, that young men think more about themselves, than of some old, dying people. We shouldn't forget that the Latvian nation is very old - 70 % are older people. A lot of them will be gone in five or ten years.

Viesturs Kairiņš: I would like to stress that directors have to consider how to influence this chaos, how to keep the world in a state of balance to stop the destruction. Thus rising to greatness themselves and the nation. That's not the only task - to think about the possibility that Latvians might perish, especially in the modern world, because everything may shatter soon. Directors have to decide what is essential for them, what opportunities they have. Each director is the phenomenon.

J.J. Jilinger, young theatre director, "The Union of Unbearable Theatre": National problems are artificial ones. I have no desire to deal with them. I am interested in problems that are important to all

Molloy. Life Without a Maid.
(17 inspirations by S. Beckett).
Director: J. J. Jilinger
Photo: Janis Deinats



human beings all over the world. National is something artificial. Any state itself is an artificial formation. It doesn't seem interesting for me. National identity and all that, I apologise, marasmus is really boring. It is a narrow outlook on life, it is provincialism.

Anda Burtniece: In that case, for example, America might offer you more opportunities to express yourself, without paying attention to these problems.

J.J. Jilinger: The place doesn't make any difference for me. It's just a geographical point on the globe. Why should we create artificial problems? Look at the Latvians, they are so worried about being a minority. Who is worried? That's all propaganda one can manipulate with.

Edmunds Freibergs, middle age theatre director, Artistic Director of the National Theatre: How can we explain the hypnosis of hundred thousands of people gathering together in 1991 and demanding national independence. People from the countryside came, some went on foot, to join the meeting in hopes of a free Latvia. What was that? Will you call that provincialism, senselessness, stupidity?

J.J. Jilinger: No, no! Freedom is the forbidden fruit, yearning for things we miss. Latvia's idea served that well, but already now it's politics. It happened by chance, that I am Latvian. Why shall I be proud of this coincidence? I may be proud of things I've done over and above the coincidence. Why shall I do everything for such a totalitarian formation as the state?

Mara Kimele: We mistake nationality for the state. The state is an entirely different institution. Social formation where many nationalities have to coexist on the equal basis. States collapse and fall to pieces, they come and go, but the nation remains. I find my identity in harmony with Latvians' feelings about the universe, their close relations with the nature, the language, the deeply philosophical outlook on life - that is where I find my identity. I cannot identify myself with the government or the state.

Viesturs Kairiņš: The real artist must be responsible for what he is creating and for what changes his work might provoke. Everything is a part of the system, your national identity as well. But there could be hundreds of other reasons, why it is advantageous to be a director. You are just like yourself. One has to influence the world as favourably and constructively as possible. Everything matters, your being Latvian, too. No other structure allows you to fulfill your expectations as the theatre does.

Prepared by the magazine "Theatrical Herald". April 1998

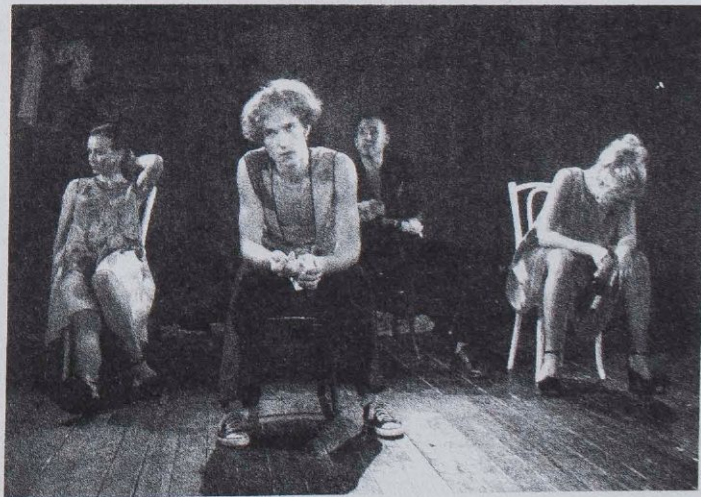
Translated by Diana Romanovitcha

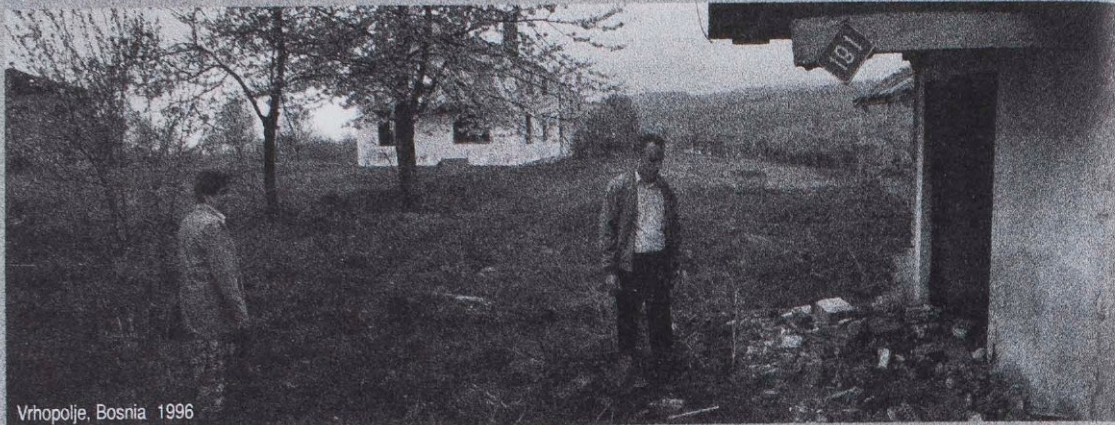


Latvian Artists

e uralien

Molloy. Life Without a Maid.
(17 inspirations by S. Beckett).
Director: J. J. Jilinger
Photo: Janis Deinats





JENS OLOF LASTHEIN LOOKING FOR IDENTITY

The photos that appear in this issue of *Krasnogruda* were taken partly in St Petersburg in 1993, partly in Bosnia and Macedonia during the years 1994-97. These two series are connected only by two facts: they are pictures of Europe in the 90s and I made them. Why I made them is a larger question, a question having to do with, among other things, identity.

Confronted with attempts to define a "European identity", you will at some point begin to wonder what it all means. This sense of confusion is certainly strengthened when the foremost exponent of the idea - the European Union - proves itself completely incapable of stopping the war in former Yugoslavia. Imagine, a war in Europe fueled by nationalism, occurring as we celebrate the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. Truly that gives quite an interesting angle to this celebrated "European identity".

I admit, I am not the first photographer confronting identity when taking pictures. Still, you always need to make your own experiences. And from what I have learned, personal identity has got very little to do with origin, nationality, place of birth or the like. It springs from something very different, I guess it is impossible to say exactly what, except that it is strictly personal. Hence, in talking of a true Serbian, Arian or European identity one succeeds only in reducing one's own personal identity. The list of political figures who's interests are served by such a reduction of personal identity could begin with Milosevic, Tudjman, Karadzic, Lukassenko, Zirinovski, Le Pen, Bossi, and Paisley, but could also include the architects of Fortress Europe.

Than again, pictures do not just tell one single story and my photos, I believe, are no exception. This focus on the question of identity is just one of the impulses which led to these images.



URŠULA CETINSKI

Others

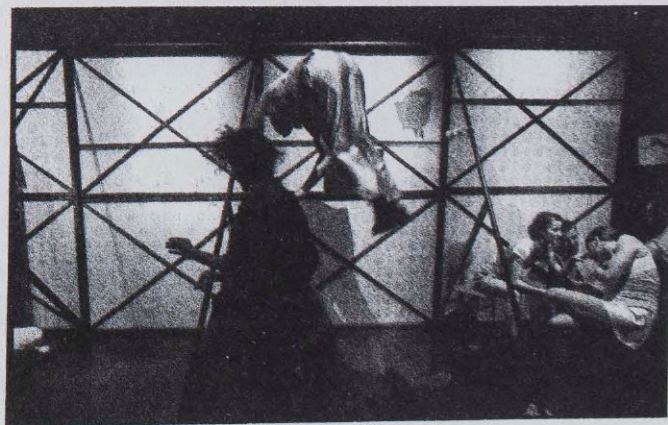
The New Theatre in Slovenia

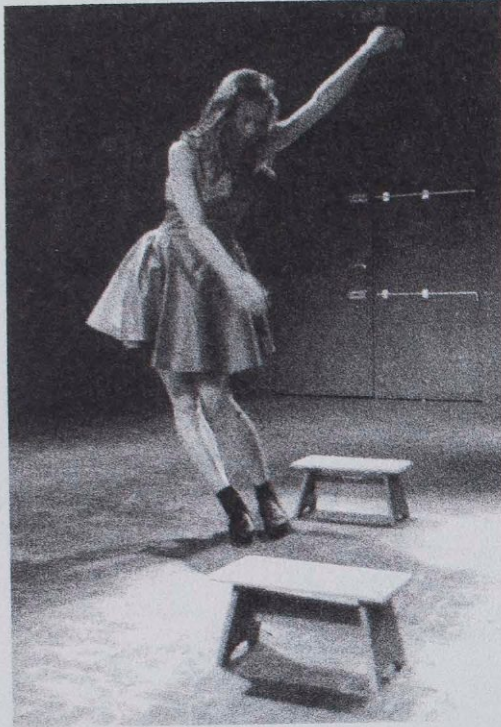


hat has theatre in Slovenia gained with the independence of the country in 1991, my experiences in the theatre management in the society in transition, stereotyped perceptions of the East and art as the ultimate purpose of all these endeavours

In Stockholm, this year's cultural heartland of Europe, there is a building whose rooms will come alive in June with the intermingling of theatre performances from all Europe. The way from one room into another, however, will not be something to be taken for granted. A complex dialogue with "bureaucracy" will chart its course, an attempt to "block" a free flow of movement between the various spaces in the art and spirit. I was first introduced to this idea in Lisbon; I sat in a café on the waterfront, the favourite of Pessoa, as they say. He used to sit there and watch the shimmering of the waves. Slowly, but increasingly I was enthused by the Euralien project. It evoked a certain memory from a few years ago when I landed at Heathrow. Following the logic of economizing on time, I queued up at the end of the shorter line of passengers from different flights. At first, I wondered why my queue so much shorter than the other one, but upon examining the signs more attentively I realised that my queue was in fact intended for the citizens of the European Union, whereas the longer one moving on more slowly was meant for "the others". I went back to the other line, thinking how the queue set for my entrance to Europe was to be different than for the passengers with European passports. Of course I wouldn't dream of comparing this innocent episode with serious – if not tragic real-life events which many experience whilst crossing all the different borders on this planet. For me, though, that was an

Know Your Enemy, directed by Matjaž Pograjc, performed by the Betonlanc Group.
Photo by Andres Gomez





Maja Delak, dancer and choreographer. Her work *Manifestation Introverta* was performed at Cankarjev dom in 1997 as part of the third International Festival City of Women. Photo by Damjan Jermančič

enlightening experience: I was born in Europe, and yet was not considered a European when I stood face to face with the British immigration officer. Anyway, I find the idea of an European identity with all its Eurocentric, colonial and imperialistic ingenuities, an alien one; the category defining certain Europeans such as myself, Asians, Americans, and all the rest of the human beings as "the others", makes one look – from the ethnic point of view – rather interesting and colourful, but nonetheless marginalised and unequal when compared to the "European identity".

I am hoping that what I'm trying to say here will shed more light on some of my personal experiences in theatre management. All my life I have, in one way or another, been involved with the theatre, from theatre direction to producing; currently my most important work seems to be the theatre programme at Cankarjev Dom, the largest Slovenian cultural centre. The cultural and artistic programme of this multi-purpose centre consists of theatre, film, music, fine arts, and humanistic programme. From October to June, theatre events take place in five different halls; the largest one can accommodate 1,400 visitors; the smallest one serves as an experimental studio for only 60 viewers.

We try to follow two basic guidelines in our planning of the theatre programme: to provide our audiences with an information on the state of the theatre worldwide, and to produce new drama and contemporary dance performances. Annually, we bring ten to fifteen foreign visiting theatre productions to Slovenia. By producing or co-producing home productions we support the development of Slovenian theatrical creative endeavours. We have pledged our support to young artists at the beginning of their career and to the unconventional poetics of those artists that do not stand a chance of finding their place in the average Slovenian repertory theatres. In our selection of foreign authors we try to represent a wide variety of genres. Last year's productions featured the DV8 Physical Theatre, Bill T. Jones, Josef Nadj, Meg Stuart. The series of "body-art" performances entitled *The Beauty of the Extreme* included Jerome Bell, Ron Athey, Annie Sprinkle, and Lawrence Steger. We produced Matjaš's Farič's *Trilogy*, *On Three Sides of Heaven* by Betontanc Group, and also assisted in the production of an excellent young choreographer Maja Delak. In addition, we staged the most recent production by Iztok Kovač and his group En Knap, *The Codes of the Cobra*. We joined forces with the Slovenian National Theatre to produce Shakespeare's *Macbeth* with an ensemble of thirty actors on our largest stage. One of the halls has been converted into a theatre laboratory for six theatre directors to stimulate the making of new productions. We are keenly aware of the negative effects of the repertory theatre, where all the creative efforts are submitted to the making of a theatre performance, which is why we really saw no other option but to set aside enough room for young artists, who will thus be able to really focus on their work and explore the possibilities of this medium over longer periods of time. In this case it is really the artistic process and not the final product which matters most. Cankarjev Dom, which was built twenty years ago, is a cen-

tre dedicated to the explorations in the theatre, to the growth and development of new forms of artistic expression. Slovenian artists with international acclaim who haven't at some point collaborated with Cankarjev Dom would be hard to find; for most of them it was their starting point.

Cankarjev Dom is an important part and parcel of the rich and diverse cultural life of Slovenia and Ljubljana, a town with a population of 380,000 which has become the capital of the new independent state in 1991. It would be impossible to make comparisons of this political change with the fall of the Berlin wall, or with the changes in other East European countries. Politically and spiritually, Yugoslavia was always open to many different influences from the East as well as the West. The impact of Slovenian independence on the theatre, however, was far-reaching. War on the territory of the former Yugoslav state has severed the once lively cultural communication between the republics; theatre was no exception. Even a decade ago there had been a number of theatre festivals that served as a platform for an exchange of ideas and experiences vital to the development of all. Theatre directors worked as "visiting" directors in various theatres across the country and thus facilitated the flow of communication. In the nineties, the boundaries have narrowed; drama, which prospers more where the language barriers are felt the least, was especially hard-hit. At Cankarjev dom we are very much aware of these changes – political, economic, and those on spiritual level – in the life on the territory of former Yugoslavia. We are going to conclude this season with visiting performances of theatres from Skopje, Belgrade, Zagreb, Podgorica, and Sarajevo. Our efforts to re-establish the broken links are far from wishful thinking that we can restore what has been lost by the war; we are simply trying to facilitate an open flow of information about the developments in what was once a familiar theatrical setting.

The ideas and the aesthetics of the Slovenian theatre of the eighties – or of the uninstitutionalised Slovenian theatre groups, to be more precise, were strongly influenced by the so-called physical theatre, and the sparks of "Belgian explosion" have touched Slovenian contemporary dance as well. Slovenian choreographers and dancers established creative collaboration with other choreographers or groups in Western Europe; this also stemmed from the fact that no study programmes in contemporary dance were available at home. The early nineties marked a notable increase in the presence of Slovenian theatre groups at various international festivals. It is true, to some extent, that Western-European interest in our theatre intensified on account of the war which suddenly placed Slovenia on the headlines of the world press coverage, but this "fashion fad" was of short breath; the attractiveness of this "political component" soon faded and Slovenian theatre groups were subjected to the "usual" scrutiny of the selectors. Regardless of all this, some Slovenian theatres – the most notable example being Theatre



Uršula Cetinski

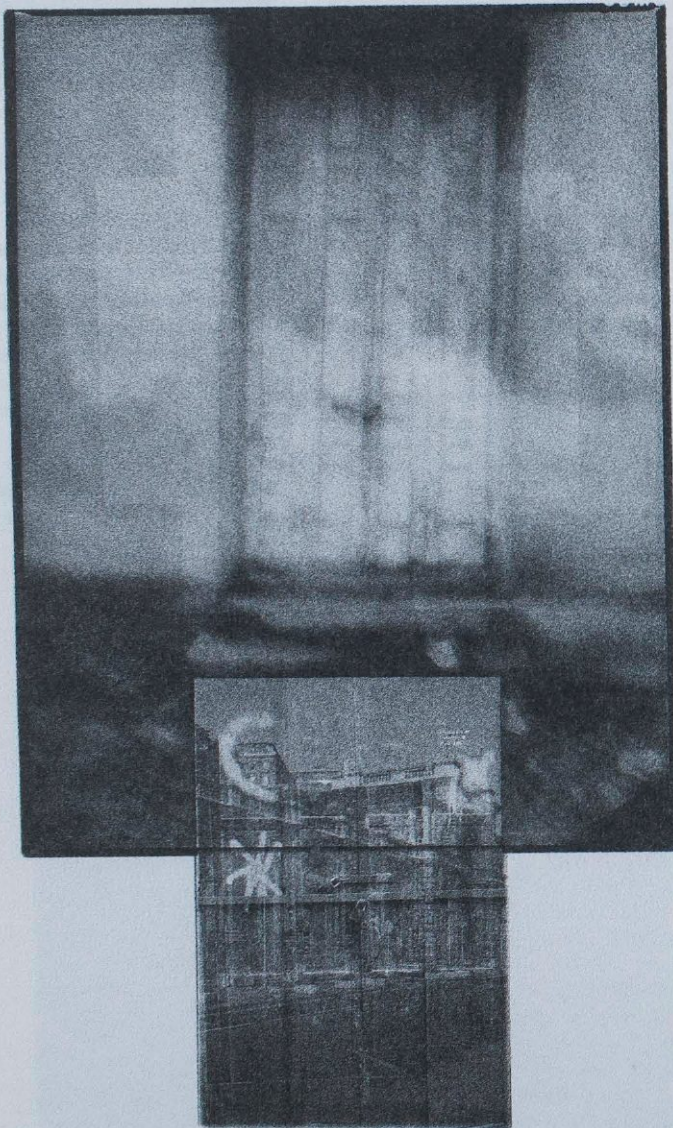
e uralien

Swan Lake, part of the Trilogy by Matjaš Farič. Produced by Cankarjev dom, 1997. The performance won Farič the highest national award - the Prešeren Fund Award. Photo by Borut Kranjc



Sometimes they took little notice of the visas and documents the traveller had obtained at the Embassy, and he was once pushed off a bus with the butt of a rifle. It was not until he sang a certain old folk song and added a statement that despite the existing embargo he desired to invite their great culture's artists to Europe – that they finally let him through. But a certain desperate woman with three children on her way to her husband was not allowed to return to the coach – she was of alien blood. Another time his green card meant to cover all European countries, proved to mean nothing at some border. "This country does not belong to Europe" – he heard while searching for marks to pay appropriate duties. Once he had to pay 10 marks for disinfection – on seeing his astonishment they informed him

Photo: Stanisław J. Woś



that a rusty pipe sticking out the ground nearby had disinfected his car when he was passing by. Let us clarify a most important point, the currency we are here talking about is Deutsch Mark and let us repeat this to soothe everybody: Friedrich Naumann's Mitteleuropa has always been an unimplemented utopia. One could infinitely go on with examples of tragicomic situations he encountered at the border-crossings of the former community of friendship, some of which humiliated the traveller and some of which treated him with generosity. All those examples would prove the truth that the further away you came from, the better the treatment you received.

Let us, however, leave this anecdotal thread so attractive for its Central-European flavour, and take a close look at this picture of the world that emerged before the eyes of the traveller. It is no longer important how he managed to get to all those places, but we are unable to resist the temptation to mention how after revealing the name of the region he came from he could manage to open the doors and hearts of people living in the remotest regions of Central Europe, speaking different languages but preserving some kind of ancient memory of community and kinship. We must tell the story how in a certain village in the mountains, over a thousand kilometres away from the country, he unexpectedly heard his mother tongue preserved in its classic pure form; or how he got to a certain

town onboard a bomber plane lacking other means, or onboard an armoured track under the protection of black soldiers of the international corps; or what arguments he tried to use to make the people speak about what they had seen and remained silent about for many years, and to make them find the keys and the guides to concealed and long-forgotten places. Nor must we forget to say how he freed himself from the protection of the guides to get where they did not want him to go, or to ask a question they were afraid of.

Well, this traveller at the end of the second millennium after Christ saw the world after the end of the world. He saw parks and orchards so neglected and wild that you could play Robin Hood there as if in Sherwood Forest. He saw ruined buildings, whose function was impossible to guess, as no mentally sound person would ever think that at that deserted mountainous place where only shepherds came, somebody had once built an astronomical observatory. He saw a magnificent bridge erected not to constitute a link of some international railway line, but to serve as a local connection to once united townships. He also saw another bridge, which had been blown up, not as much to separate for good the nations inhabiting the opposite banks of a river, but to destroy the bridge's uplifted beauty – a masterpiece by some alien genius, by the sheer military power – as was everything else around. He saw other bridges, tracks, roads, railway embankments leading nowhere and all of a sudden ending at a freshly marked out border, or somewhere in the wilderness. He saw cemeteries full of desecrated tombs and tombstones dispersed in all directions, bearing incomprehensible inscriptions although the dates of death were not from the distant past at all; he also saw cemeteries-pastures for goats and cattle and because of that fortunately spared, unlike many others cleared and graded by bulldozers. He would find tombstones or their fragments in the most unexpected places. They had been used to pave yards, to lay the foundations of a stable, to make stairs, pavements. He visited temples of various religions that had been converted into boxing rings, a storehouse for fertilisers, a museum of atheism, an inn, a cinema, a fire brigade garage... He saw pedestals without crosses, or crosses whose other transom had been cut off, or circles "castrated" of their Stars of David, as he was told by some survivor from Atlantis. He saw monasteries where cattle were kept and tractors parked, and holy books were used as washers in beams supporting rotting ceilings. He visited a certain university that once achieved fame and now stank of urine, where elaborate architecture, delicate mosaics and frescoes stood in sharp contrast to coarse furniture, dirt and low standard of teaching. It was only several decades ago that a certain poet – recognised as one of the greatest in the century –



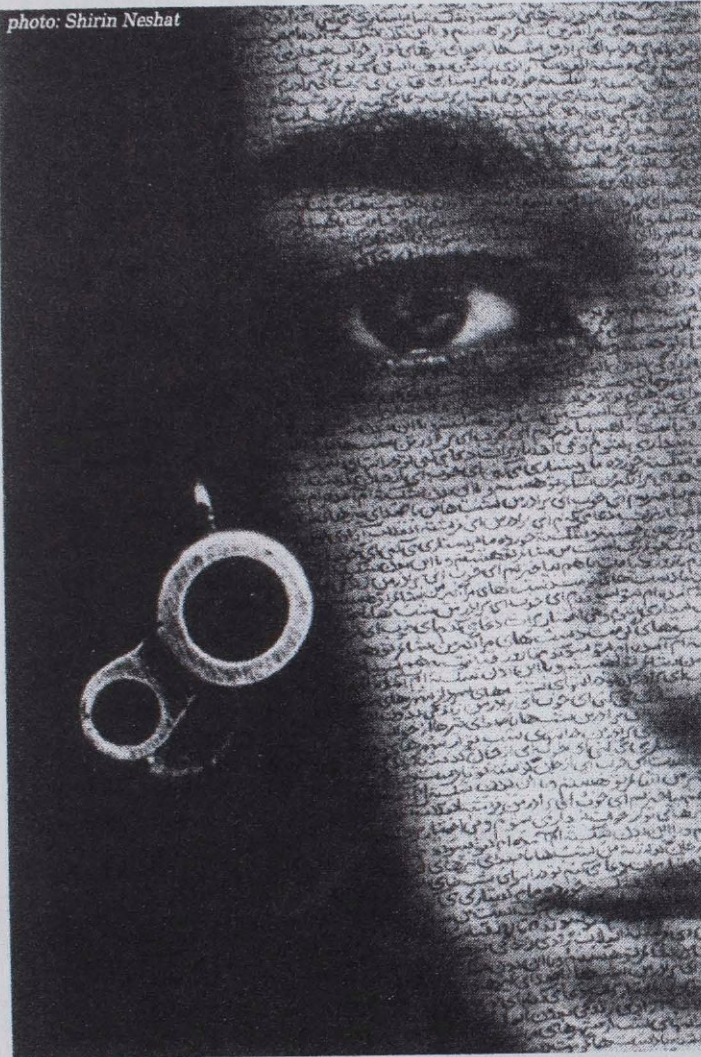
Krzysztof Czyżewski

FORUM

Photo: Stanisław J. Woś



photo: Shirin Neshat



The Poster of the International Festival of Contemporary Arts. Artistic Director Uršula Cetinski

Mladinsko – have been present with their visiting productions in Western and Eastern Europe, as well as in the Americas, for over twenty years.

For the newly founded, two million-strong Slovenian state the task of establishing its presence within the cultural diversity of the global or, for that matter, European theatre market has proved to be a great deal more complex and difficult in comparison with our larger and production-wise well-developed neighbours. In the mind of many a European, Slovenia actually does not even exist. Whenever I pop the question, the reply I usually get from Europeans is a positive one; it is only after a persuasive attempt to tell me that I actually come from Bratislava that I finally see what they really mean – the Slovak republic. During my two years of studying in Austria I was amazed at the stereotyped misconceptions about Eastern Europe, but I have also noticed them elsewhere. The Eastern block was commonly associated with the mental image of a grim, cold, threatening, tightly sealed Soviet Russia described in the bedtime spy novels. It is true, those who knew better admitted that Russian ballet was good, but more often than not I have met with that kind of prejudice, and not only when I talked to hotel receptionists, but

even at the seminars for cultural bureaucrats from important European associations and organisations. My encounters with those who embraced these misconceptions were always too brief to even begin to explain the abounding differences within the countries of Eastern Europe. These have all followed, regardless of everything they had in common after the second world war, their own particular courses – politically and otherwise, and are now different one from another in at least as much as the Western European countries differ between themselves.

In my daily work I come across and examine a large number of offers sent from all over the world by theatre groups interested in performing at Cankarjev Dom. Ninety percent of these are from the United States and Western-European countries. Finding information on the current theatre production in the European East, however, requires considerably more digging. As far as the unfettered flow of communication on what is happening in the European theatre is concerned, we are still far from being a

global village. Information tends to travel one-way only, and even that mostly thanks to the efforts of West-European producers. After the fall of the Berlin wall, theatrical management in Europe has been following the so-called "West-European model" which is, by many of us, seen as alien and with regard to our different cultural and political traditions and structures even impossible to implement. The dominance of these models of theatrical production in the European market also shapes and dictates the taste itself, and thus influences the selection of the programme, especially in the segment of international exchange, the visiting performances. The subject of the aesthetic imperialism of the West, as it is reflected in the theatre, certainly deserves to be examined by a separate in-depth study.

For Slovenia, the year 1991 marked the beginning of a gradual transition towards a different social model; this process has affected all the spheres of life on the economic, social, cultural and other planes. Theatre managements of small and more flexible production units were the quickest to adapt, but new principles of cultural management in the theatre have taken time to gain ground, due to the slow-paced response of cultural administration. The new cultural policy is, frankly, in the on-going process of gradual transition – on the national as well as local levels, without exception and in all the fields, be it the national cultural programme, its financing, priorities in the development of individual projects, the selection of appropriate human resources, or the cultural promotion of Slovenia abroad. Those of us who are involved in international projects often encounter enormous difficulties in our daily work, due to the inconsistencies between the demands of international cooperation and the laws of *modus operandi* in the country where we work.

Foreign visitors to Ljubljana are often amazed at the variety and the quality of the cultural menu in such a miniature country.

For those of us who try to enhance our contribution to the Slovenian cultural life as artists or producers, it is natural to keep improving the existing models and methods by adding to it new knowledge. In those rare moments when we feel that we really have been of assistance in the making of a genuine work of art, we finally stand face to face with our essence. As far as art goes, in the East as much as in the West, regardless of the geographic position, all paths lead to the same destination, which is seen as a myriad of different images and as countless possibilities. Boundaries in the mind can best be comprehended through art; as a symbol of division and separateness on the purely physical level – as Euralien proves – they are often difficult to cross; those marked in our heads are even harder to transcend.

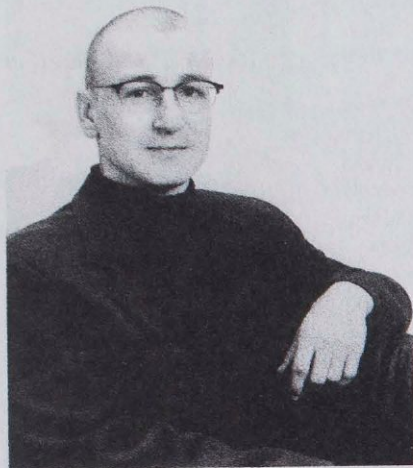


Uršula Cetinski

e uralien



URŠULA CETINSKI is director of the theatre programme at the national cultural centre Cankarjev dom and artistic director of the City of Women international festival of contemporary arts.



Democracy Calls for Responsibility

Mojca Kumerdej's Conversation
with Matjaž Farič

In the eighties, when you started out, Slovenian contemporary dance was in its initial stage of professionalization. In addition to the presence of Plesni Teater Ljubljana, where dancers were provided with an opportunity to learn and develop, many went to study abroad; you left, too, but unlike most who chose to go West, you decided to go to East Germany, to Dresden.

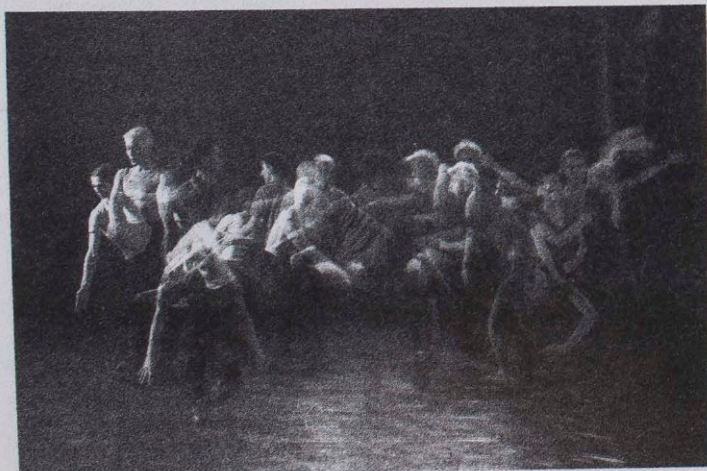
My reasons for choosing the Palluca Schule in Dresden were, on the one hand, really very simple – it was easier to get a scholarship in the East. This, however, was not the only reason; I attended the summer course there and saw how good the school programme really was; their dancers were on a very high level indeed. Palluca Schule, founded by Gret Palluca, one of the first German expressionist dancers and Mary Wigman's associate, had already come under the influence of the Russian classics, but it nonetheless continued to be a strong source of knowledge – an education that was actually passed on in a rather manneristic style, so that I experienced it as some kind of a living heritage. It also had several interesting teachers, whose tradition in dance was altogether different –

they were Chilean emigres to whom Germany offered political asylum after the coup d'etat there. All my experience there carried a political overtone. The communist rule in Yugoslavia at that time had already begun to lose its grip; as a stranger, I could view the East German political situation and aesthetics there from a certain distance. My frequent trips to West Berlin additionally heightened my sensitivity to the differences.

Were you then, in East Germany, regarded as someone who had come from the East?

To the people there Slovenia was a part of Yugoslavia, and they didn't

Clone (1997), Matjaž Farič's latest production. It is an award-winning performance for this year at the international choreographic biennial competition of the Centre International de Bagnolet in France. Produced by Plesni Teater Ljubljana.



perceive it as either the East or the West.

With regard to your experiences, it is clear why you based your first choreography, April 6, after you returned home, on the idea of a totalitarian ideological system.

Ideology is present in all my work. The poetic choreography *wind, Sand, Stars* (1991), which was premiered only a month before the outbreak of war in Yugoslavia, has its source in *The Little Prince* and stresses the absurdity of war. *Clone* is also about ideology. It was premiered at the time when *Dolly the sheep* caused an ideological storm, and now that we have begun to give visiting performances, the polemic regarding human cloning has erupted; this also has an ideological context, of course.

A large part of Slovenian artistic creativity in the eighties reflected, directly or indirectly, the general social situation and the criticism of totalitarian regime; after the breakup with the totalitarian system and the introduction of democracy in the nineties, however, sociologically oriented topics are rare, even among choreographers.

In my opinion, democracy has taken us a little by surprise, and I think this is apparent in my work with dancers. Democracy gives you a certain responsibility, whereas in the totalitarian system you were always told what to do, and someone else was responsible for you. Even though the sense of accepting the responsibility for oneself seems to be increasing in dancers, we are still caught, to some extent, in hierarchic values, and it is at this point where classical ballet comes in. Ideology has been an inherent part of the performing arts, the social hierarchy was reflected in the hierarchy of dance ensembles. This hierarchy, alas, also exists in the contemporary dance, although it is not supposed to. Even though it is contrary to my wishes, it still happens that a choreographer and his dancers find themselves at different steps on the hierarchical ladder. Under the best of circumstances, choreographers and dancers should each carry their part of the responsibility in the creative process.

With your Trilogy: Swan Lake, Romeo and Juliet, The Rite of Spring, you have radically changed the nucleus and the formal structure of ballet, and you have also worked with the Ljubljana opera house.

I wanted to do the *Trilogy* because in my view the division between ballet and contemporary dance has become obsolete at the end of the 20th century. Contemporary dance has a lot to learn from classical ballet and vice versa. Not only that; I wanted to face the great ballets and place them in a different ideological setting.

What is your assessment of contemporary dance in Slovenia in comparison with other East European countries?

As I've already said, Slovenia as a part of Yugoslavia was not regarded as a separate entity and thus wasn't viewed as part of the East nor the West. Regardless of the fact that we did not have state schools for contemporary dance and the favourable conditions necessary to support productions, such as they have in the West, the Slovenian dance scene has retained its vitality. Every breakthrough at home was followed by an attempt

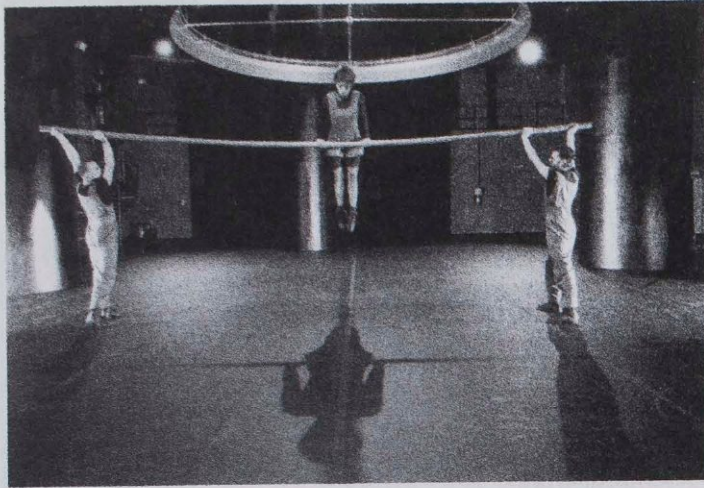


Matjaž Farič

e uralien

Clone (1997).





The Rite of Spring, part of the *Trilogy*
(1996)

for a breakthrough abroad. I am not really familiar with the conditions in the Baltic states, and know only slightly more about the situation in Hungary, which has opened up after the fall of the iron curtain. Nevertheless, I would find it hard to say that those artists who are active on the dance scene in Hungary are typical representatives of Hungarian contemporary dance, for many Hungarian artists live and work abroad. As for the Czech republic, many artists had left long before the iron curtain started to loosen up, or at that time at any rate; East Germany had its Palluca Schule to provide a state-controlled contemporary dance scene,

although its creative and political edge had already been spent at that time. Countries of the former Soviet Union largely remain a mystery to me, above all Russia, and I'm surprised that they haven't experienced, at least not to my knowledge, an explosion of contemporary dance ensembles – if not for other reasons, at least as a form of rebellion against the aesthetics dictated by the classical ballet. As far as the countries of the former Yugoslavia are concerned, Slovenian connections with artists from these other parts hardly exist. I am one of those few Slovenian choreographers who have continued to work in Croatia after the war, but one of the difficulties of Croatian contemporary dance lies in its unflexible organizational structures and their lack of self-awareness, although it had played an avant-garde role in Europe during the seventies. As for other countries of the former Yugoslavia, we haven't had any contact at all.

You are a member of the Society for Contemporary Dance and a member of the Artistic Council of Plesni Teater Ljubljana. What is your vision of the development of contemporary dance in Slovenia?

The state should recognise contemporary dance as an autonomous artistic form in the contemporary arts. For the time being, it still depends on the budget funds allocated to the theatre. We also lack the infrastructure – dance studios and performance halls. Plesni Teater Ljubljana is the only institution where dancers were able to get a place of their own after a decade of struggling, although we do have a number of very good ensembles, such as the En Knap led by Iztok Kovač. The Society for Contemporary Dance was formed by contemporary dance artists several years ago, and we have launched different, also educational programmes, but the work simply can't continue without a political will and the necessary legislation.

With the fall of ideological walls, which were largely only of physical nature, the initial fascination with the East soon faded away. The differences soon became apparent, not only content-wise, but also in the working conditions that are far from encouraging in the East, and besides also frequently unarticulated.

The West soon ceased to be seen as a model example, on account of its overly mass-consumption orientation over the past decade. But then, of course, the old distinctions of the West and the East no longer apply. I even have the impression that the West was more pleased with the old

division, and especially the newly created states were suddenly faced with an identity crisis after fall of the iron curtain. In Slovenia, I think, there is an attempt to introduce national cultural values which have long since lost their vitality, especially by the political forces that hadn't been in power and are now trying to make up for lost time by introducing the outdated values from way back before socialist era. As far as the attitude of the West towards the East is concerned, I'd like to mention the meeting organised last year in Ljubljana by the Slovenian Ministry of Culture and the Council of Europe. It proved that the West continues to pay attention to what it wants to hear, that is, it favours its own models for solutions to the problems and tends to ignore the specifics of particular cultural areas.

In my view, this is due to the misconception, a stereotype about the East as a culturally primitive entity. Articles that are often written about the arts in Eastern European countries lack the necessary knowledge of the context. In addition, dance in the West has become rather commercialized. In Slovenia we are fortunate enough to see quite a number of dance ensembles from the West, and we've had ample opportunity to see that the managerial machinery has made mincemeat out of many good artists who unfortunately have nothing new to say. The pressures of market-orientation have taken control over creativity itself and ousted the understanding of creative process and work. In Slovenia, most of the artists are aware of this and they pay attention to this important component, the fact that creative process should be viewed long-term regardless of the market.

Still, cultural management is our weak spot.

Yes, cultural management is the weak spot of our endeavours in Slovenia, but in this case let me say that there is always something good even in bad things. Many artists who have had a successful breakthrough, including myself, started out in small towns and we developed a lot of resilience. When you survive such tests, you are capable of a lot more, even of independent managerial enterprises.

What was the starting point for your choreography – The Terminal – within the Euralien project which focuses on the problem of ideology and nationalism?

When I received the invitation, I was afraid that it was conceived as one of those projects where the artists from former Yugoslavia and Eastern Europe are expected to whine and complain about their fate, without accepting their share of responsibility for what has taken place, from the position of the victim. After the initial discussions I saw that it allowed more space for creative freedom and individual approach than I had thought. My personal interest converges with the project to the extent to which I am aware of the problem of the borders as they are reflected on the mental levels, as mechanisms of self-censoring and self-repression, and their consequences. My choice of the setting was the airport terminal – a space without identity into which two dancers are placed – Rosana Hribar and Grega Luštek, both members of Plesni Teater Ljubljana. I have fenced the set – the airport terminal – with plexyglass and set limits to the space inside it, literally and symbolically. Transparent walls, slanting outwards, represent the invisible, mental barriers against which we beat mindlessly. I believe my choreography can enable the viewers to see that part of the European landscape which is not entirely pleasing either to the western or the eastern eye.



LJUBLJANA

Matjaž Farič

e uralien

From the Desert through the Forrest (1997) in collaboration with Diversions Dance Company from Cardiff.





A Ministry not Alienated from Culture

Slovenian Ministry of Culture has decided to lend its support to the LANDSCAPE X project, in particular to the part entitled Euralien which incorporates the work of the Slovenian choreographer Matjaž Fanič, because we recognise that Slovenian presence in global cultural centres today is of vital importance, especially in the context of increasing decentralisation. Last year Ljubljana had an opportunity to actively participate in this process through the European Cultural Month, and now the eyes of the world are on Stockholm, the new cultural capital of Europe.

Within the framework of its international cooperation the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia pays special attention to the promotion of Slovenian culture around the world. In this respect we work together with other governmental departments: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Office for Economic Promotion, the Ministry of Economic Relations and Development and the Government PR and Media Office.

It is of extreme importance for Slovenia, a country with a population of two million, to present itself in the Europe of today and tomorrow on a continuous basis through its culture. It is through our culture that we have preserved our identity, and culture played a significant role in the process of the making of the state.

In the transition from a one-party

EDA ČUFER

Nothing New in the East?

It is, presumably, many of us have experienced the situation when our friends from abroad wanted us to tell them about new developments in Eastern Europe. How do artistic and cultural trends on the territory of the former Yugoslav state respond to and reflect the new cultural and political relations? What is happening in Romania and Bulgaria? Indeed, what westerners expect from us, since we live in the post-socialist cultures, is first-hand information and assessment of specific current cultural development in the individual post-socialist countries.

How does Eastern Europe see itself ten years after the fall of socialism? How is this perception reflected in terms of ideas and value systems?

When we try to address these issues, we invariably arrive to a conclusion that we have less information than the person who is asking the question, meaning that everything we do know about the current art and culture in Romania, Bulgaria, or even Bosnia and Serbia, comes from reading papers printed in the West. My meeting in the February this year with Priit Raud, director of the festival of contemporary dance in Estonia, confirms that this is a valid assumption, and that there are no exceptions. I charged at him, full speed, with my questions: What is happening in Lithuania, Latvia, White Russia, Ukraine? What is the direction of current developments in arts and culture in these new states? His hesitant reply reflected my own embarrassment. Would I have been any more capable of telling him what is going on in Zagreb, Split, Skopje, Belgrade, Sarajevo? A great deal less, definitely, than I could have told him about Vienna, Brussels, Frankfurt, or Berlin. And while Priit talked – instead of answering my question – at great length of the new currents in the awakening Skandinavia, I was beginning to wonder if this inability to articulate the basic information on the cultural dynamics in Eastern European countries actually meant that nothing worth mentioning could be taking place in the East, that we are simply busy living. Perhaps, to rephrase the thought, we have lost the ability to critically reflect and evaluate our cultural and artistic endeavours under the pressures of negotiating our material survival, and as a result of the overload in the process of acquiring the elemental rules of a new social system.

This, perhaps, is the main distinctive feature of the so-called transition

period – none of the possibilities are clear-cut, nothing can actually be defined as really old or new, the opposing currents seem to overlap and supersede one another, making it impossible to draw a clear picture; the current state of things cannot be viewed with critical reflection. Viktor Misiano, editor of the Moscow-based magazine for contemporary art and theory, "Hudežestvenij Žurnal" (Art Journal), had to face the most basic problems in getting together his new publishing project, a semi-annual magazine that will cover a wide scope of artistic and intellectual currents in Eastern Europe: he had a hard time finding the writers for these cultural essays, people willing to report on the current cultural events in the cities of Eastern Europe and answer the most usual questions, such as what is new in Prague, Ljubljana, Bucarest, Skopje. On the other hand, Misiano finds that Eastern Europe does have a host of writers capable of writing demanding and specialised journalistic genres, theoreticians and philosophers who are abreast with the contents of postmodern theory. In his view they have lost the motivation for critical reflection on the actual cultural and social/historical developments with respect to theory. Unlike the eighties, which were marked by a lively cultural & political life, there is hardly any noticeable demand for a critical and complex analysis or reflection of the changing social reality in the Eastern Europe of the nineties.

After a decade of the ongoing process of democratisation when communication channels are no longer officially controlled, the effects of four decades of imposed isolation and control of communications are only now beginning to be seen as irreparable damage, a real short-circuit in the information flow. Replacing the outdated social mechanisms and individual patterns with new ones and defining the need for a more dynamic reflection and evaluation of current social, cultural and artistic practices and trends is necessarily a difficult undertaking after almost half a century of living behind the officially sanctioned communication curtain and the accordingly tailored self-perception. On the other hand, it is easy to foresee the outcome of such an excessive passiveness and reluctance to speed up the process of developing and acquiring new, dynamic value systems in the age of planetary globalisation.

The eighties in Eastern Europe were marked by the deconstruction of socialism which led to the disintegration of some of the East-European countries. In Western Europe this was a time when the initiative for political and cultural integration had already been well under way. New social mechanisms were developed to speed up the communication among different cultures, all with a view to strengthening the already strong cultural and historical bond among the Western European countries. New cultural and political programmes have been developed to promote all-European cultural and artistic projects and to encourage the development of mutual interests between the states. To facilitate the information flow special attention has been paid to linguistic diversity in Europe, and the development of translation mechanisms has become one of the top priorities. For Viktor Misiano, who wanted to create a magazine that would offer a complete information on the culture in Eastern Europe, the language also presented a problem. Due to the absence of a cultural or political consensus that could provide the funding needed to include Eastern European languages, he had to choose English as the sole means of communication. Theaterschrift, on the other hand, a magazine published in four different languages of the western Europe, is proof enough that such a consensus is possible, and the magazine thus really offers ample information on the developments in the contemporary performing arts of the eighties and nineties.



LJUBLJANA

Eda Čufer

e uralien

system to parliamentary democracy the Slovenian state has retained its budget funds for culture. Of all the other post-communist countries, the cultural infrastructure has remained unspoilt only in Slovenia; and the cultural institutions have therefore been given the opportunity to modernise in normal circumstances.

In view of this I would like to mention that in March of 1998 the Slovenian Parliament adopted a special law on the so-called "Cultural Tolar", as a complementary funding to the regular annual budget for culture. Slovenian state has thus undertaken to pay special attention to the renovation of the most endangered structures of cultural heritage, the introduction of international standards in public libraries, the provision of additional premises for certain central public institutes in the field of culture, and to the continual support of amateur cultural activities.

The Ministry of Culture, while having a sympathetic ear for new developments, is keenly aware of the necessity to preserve the existing cultural heritage as a prerequisite to envisioning a future. However, it appears that in our contemporary society culture has become the broadest band of social consensus that enables communication without prior exclusion and offence. On this very point the policy of our Ministry matches the gist of the Eurailien project, highlighting the danger of alienation and the nationalistic attitudes in the new Europe which can best be countered by openness and cultural networking.

Jozef Skolec
MINISTER OF CULTURE

EDA ČUFER is a free-lance dramaturge and publicist from Ljubljana.

The article was published on April 6, 1998, on the cultural page of the Slovenian largest daily newspaper "Delo".

The lack of interest among the Eastern European countries, Slovenia included, in the developing of joint mechanisms for information exchange in the arts and culture will unavoidably lead to cultural submission of all Eastern-European nations and will result in accepting their role as purely passive consumers in the global information currents.

Cankarjev Dom

Cultural and Congress Centre

Being one of the largest cultural centres in Europe, our mission statement is to encourage growth and diversity of all the arts, to present the best of Slovenian artists and their artistic achievements across Europe, and to assist them in forging creative links with co-productions abroad. We believe that Matjaz Eric's refreshingly original and unconventional approach to dance as an art form deserves to be shared with an international audience.

In the context of "breaching boundaries" and "cross-fertilization" as two of the basic concepts of the Cultural Capital enterprise, the presence of Landscape X as a model all-

European cultural project in Stockholm is an appropriate way of showcasing our own style as arts producers - a style which has brought us success at home in Slovenia and is gradually gaining hold in all of Europe. We endeavour to bring together the best of our artists by encouraging the development of diverse cultural segments and events, with a view to transcending the existing limiting circumstances and the national cultural boundaries. On the other hand, Cankarjev Dom eagerly embraces opportunities for promising co-productions with international artists. Our commitment to the artists, to the making of new artistic creations also provides us with the "shortcut" to a well-planned cultural programme for our visitors, and we believe this is the true joy and pride of any committed producer. For those of you who plan on seeing Landscape X, take the word of an old cat in the cultural management that your time will be well-invested.

In conclusion, however, allow me to add a few words that will lend substance to the name of our cultural and congress centre. Thanks to our excellent technical facilities, our six major halls that can seat 3,000 visitors, three art galleries, the dedication of our 180 strong working community and our many free-lance associates, Cankarjev Dom offered 847 musical, theatre, dance, film, multi-medial, festival and educational events and art exhibitions to a total of 291,636 visitors last year. The congress department hosted 183 educational conventions, trade fairs, and social events with a total of 127,520 visitors. To put these figures into perspective, let me also add that Ljubljana has a little over 250,000 residents, and the whole population figure for Slovenia comes close to two million.

CANKARJEV DOM
Mitja Rotovnik,
Director General

euralien X

LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

Matjaž Farič director/choreographer

Matjaž came to Landscape X through the "back door" – he was proposed by the producer Natasa Kelhar (Cankarjev Dom) as a brilliant example of contemporary dance in Slovenia. The more I saw, the more fascinated I became. Here was a choreographer who understood dance – the rhythm, the grace – but combined it with a personal vision of the theatre as a collective art form in dialogue with the audience. The dancers virtually flew above our heads, sometimes clumsy, sometimes beautiful. As the idea for Euralien developed, I knew that Matjaž was going to add an essential element to the project – the body, the sensual, the blood pulsing before our eyes.

National Ballet School, Maribor, Slovenia 1982–84.
Artistic director, Plesni Teater, Ljubljana, PTL, since -87.

DANCE/SELECTION

- New Dance Competition, Budapest, award -86
- *Geister Meines Lebens*, choreography. Award at X ballet Competition Germany -87
- 6. April, performance with Eastern Dance Project, group founded by Farič -88
- Ballet Observatorium Zenit, first as dancer in the group *The Red Pilot* -88, then as choreographer -89
- National Theatre, Ljubljana
- *Red Alarm*, Eastern Dance Project, author -89
- *Wind, Sand and Stars*, Slovene Youth Theatre, author -91.
- Solo, author and performer -93
- *The Rite of Spring*, Matjaž Farič group, author -96
- *Swan Lake*, Matjaž Farič Group. Highest Municipal Award, also for performance Solo -94
- *Trilogy, The Last Act – The Rite of Spring, Romeo and Juliet, Swan Lake*, Matjaž Farič Group. Cankarjev Dom, Ljubljana -97
- *Clone*, dance creation, PTL, author -97
- Highest National award for *Trilogy* and *Clone* -98

THE TERMINAL

director/choreographer: Matjaž Farič

DANCERS

Rosana Hribar, Plesni Teater Ljubljana

Gregor Lustek, Plesni Teater Ljubljana

set design: Irena Pivka

music: Random Logic

costume: Mura, European Fashion Design

The Plesni Teater Ljubljana, founded in 1984, is the first professional company of contemporary dance in Slovenia, with an own dance venue. Supported by Ministry of Culture and the City of Ljubljana.

CO-PRODUCER

Cankarjev Dom Congress and Cultural Centre, Ljubljana, Slovenia

WITH THE SUPPORT OF

Ministry of Culture, Slovenia. Mura – European Fashion Design, Slovenia (costume); Akripol, Trebnje, Slovenia (scenography); Ključavnicarstvo Mehle, Grosuplje, Slovenia (scenography); Plesni Teater Ljubljana

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



Welcome back in October!

As autumn arrives and darkness falls, representing a turning inwards, LANDSCAPE X transforms into utopia//dystopia.

Two major European theatre companies have been invited to create so called site-specific events in Skeppsholmskyrkan, a church built in the 1840s on the cultural island of Skeppsholmen, in the center of Stockholm.

8–11 October

Theatre Gardzienice with METAMORPHOSIS – 55 minutes of pure energy, sensualism and desorienting movement. The second half of the full evening program focuses on "the village as imagined utopia". Image, sound and dance from their own micro-cosmos, the village of Gardzienice, Poland. The group has astounded audiences throughout the world with their special style gathered through years of travelling into hidden regions.

21–24 October

Theatre Derevo with CLUMSY DANCES – SONGS OF FISH will fill the entire church with actors, videos and sound. The group members are originally from St Petersburg, but now live in Dresden, Germany. With roots in old circus traditions, but with a finely tuned contemporary stage language, they have won numerous prizes and a huge following.

14–16 October

The symposium BORDERLANDS AND OUTER REACHES brings together cultural philosophers, artists and political thinkers. We reflect publically in the meditative environment of the church. What role will art have in meeting the challenges and dangers of globalization?

Together with Goran Sergej Pristas, editor in chief of Frakcija, a theatre magazine published in Croatia, we have the pleasure to present a special edition about LANDSCAPE X utopia//dystopia.

Chris Torch
artistic director INTERCULT

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



X utopia//dystopia

MARIN BLAŽEVIĆ

Croatian Theatre at the End of the 1990s:

a New Generation on the Road
to Conquest of the Centre Stage

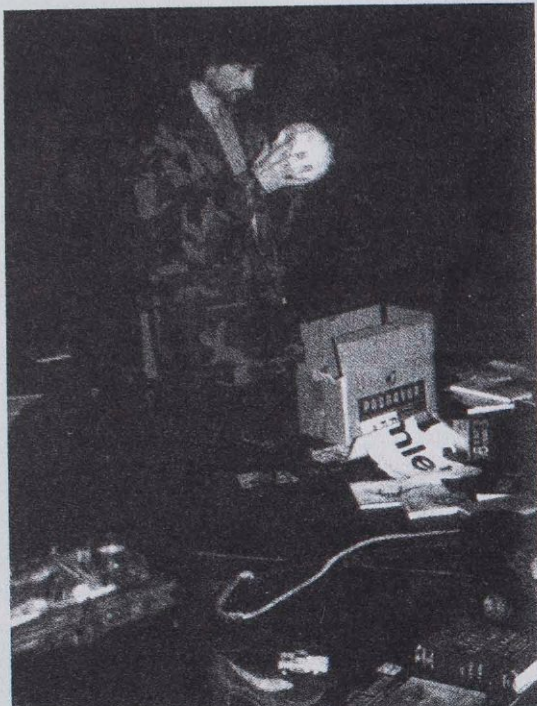


Now, more than ever, it is abundantly clear that a young generation of playwrights and dramatists, directors and choreographers, actors, dancers and performers, theoreticians and critics is gradually bringing about a silent revolution in Croatian Theatre. They are slowly sliding from the edges towards the centre; from the Alternative they are becoming transformed into mainstreams. Ridding itself of the old institutions, this generation is working towards establishing its own, new institutions. The task is an arduous one, since to extricate oneself from the well established is neither simple nor straightforward. Such a transition does not necessarily result in a deterioration of inventiveness. Sliding, and in some cases slipping, is an inevitable process. And although those who are bent on continuing to walk around the edge, as well as those who have merely ventured to the edge, often regard another's slide towards the centre as a betrayal, a defeat, of the Alternative, the situation with regard to Croatian Theatre is such that the only way out is the abolition of the Alternative in the centre. That, however, should not be accomplished through the submission of the Alternative to the centre, and its subsequent decline within the stifling embrace of the centre. Quite the contrary, the Alternative should conquer and become a centre itself – but a new one rather than a restored one!

This process of conquest is currently under way.

Although the old centre is a nesting place for the politically correct and the selected – as is common in states possessing a heritage such as ours – which means, of course, that it attracts the lion's share of monetary input – it is impossible to harness the new generation, or rather that segment of it that we would like to label the Alternative. It has finally been realised that taking centre stage does not necessarily involve jumping on the bandwagon of its institutions (most of the members of the young generation who decided to pursue that course ultimately submitted to those institutions) but winning over its public, the young public.

Gradually but inexorably, the still powerful centre will wane. And yet members of that same generation of the young that will grow old in their new nests will, at the end of their road, debilitated by the onslaughts of ever new and upcoming generations, find recorded in their historical credits at least three of the much abused (but not abolished) sanctities of the



Hamletmašina (The Hamletmaschine), Teatar &TD.

Ivica Boban, The Croatian theatre director and the professor of the Movement on the Academy of Drama Arts, Zagreb, is one of the very rare female directors that never loses her firm style or fails to reflex the politics in the reality in which she works. She entered the 90ties with *The Hamletmaschine* and *Medea* – thus forming the cycle that is a small history of the humanity and spirit in the times of crisis.

generations that they themselves had observed: dramatic text and classic dramaturgy, conventions of stage speech, and the omnipotent power of the director.

At this point in time the new generation has not become fully aware of itself. Its participants have been identified and listed in one point only. They are not united in a movement; they do not present manifestos or make public their intentions to eat away at the foundations of old bastions, or to attack and to succeed a depleted generation. This new generation acts through inertia. Its emergence has been (relatively) pacific, and although not a movement it will inevitably lead to revolutionary change.

There are a number of reasons for this absence of integration, and for a certain degree of indolence on the part of the new generation. First, we are talking about a form of extended supra-generation that encompasses at least three age groups which achieved maturity during the last fifteen years – with its oldest participants now approaching 35 years of age, while the youngest are barely 20. Second, because of the above stated facts, this supra-generation comprises those who have demolished the walls and who have experienced war, as well as those who no longer know of any

such walls but who have heard of the war more than they remember it. The war took this new generation by surprise and brought its participants to a temporary halt – some of them just as they had leapt over the ruins of those walls – but it also created a deep-seated emotional and spiritual bond and vigour, accelerating its process of maturing which thus overtook the ageing process. The third reason is also closely connected with the first, although it is less traumatic: most of the leading figures in the vanguard of the new generation have passed through the Academy of Drama Art (ADA) which, however unsatisfactorily organised it may be, remains the only recognised system of education that opens the door to theatre institutions and that guarantees professional status. Throughout its schooling, and even after it had endured the process, the vanguard had to withstand the cloning generator of the "olds", which the Academy unarguably is. But the youngest among the new generation are already taking advantage of the ways and means that simply present themselves to bypass the ADA, even where they do pass through it formally. All the above listed reasons have one vitally relevant element in common: the vanguard, the first offensive of the young, perhaps better to say, the bud of the new generation, has prepared the field. And it has still not erected any fences, thus enabling the appearance of an increasing number of "new kids on the block".

There is, however, one further reason that is dissociated from the three stated above and which falls within a wider culturological context, and as such transcends the circumstances in which theatre in Croatia is evolving. The era of avante-guard ambitions, of actions centred on aesthetic and ideological innovations, is behind us, a fact which makes it difficult to regard this new generation – and, to an extent, still an Alternative – as a movement, a group of artists, who think alike, who publish their subver-

sive and revolutionary programme and who are forcing their way in like a storm. The New that is being born in Croatian Theatre is new first and foremost in its context and in the context within which it is emerging, in the adjustment of its production activities to new market conditions, and in its artistic concepts and creations which will not be bounded by common poetic guidelines.

This paper will present names and projects, explaining them only sufficiently enough so as to join them to the procession of the new generation. Analysis and critique will be left to the intrigued onlooker.

The Journal - A Point of Convergence

"Frakcija" (Fraction) was the most recent to appear, but it is the first and, to date, the only such publication to make mention of those now referred to as the "new generation". In its subtitle, a magazine for the performing arts, this publication introduces a new and more comprehensive term for everything that in these parts has been termed theatre – a term which encompassed all the variety and, to a degree, the incompatibility of all performance forms. Although it would be more correct (not only for the sake of chronology) to begin this presentation with the events that took place at the end of the 1980s, the project "Frakcija" is so significant that its review may serve as an introduction to any presentation motivated by the same reasons as this one. Likewise, any study of the Croatian Theatre Alternative may use it as a place for the most comprehensive, serious, critical and meta-language contemporisation of one's insight.

"Frakcija" emerged three years ago as a spin-off from the journal "Teatar & Teorija" (Theatre & Theory), which itself was left to deal with the theory of drama, teatrology and drama theatre. The new journal defined its own field in its subtitle, and after its very first number it demonstrated itself to be an organ that seeks out, supports and examines different splinter groups of the mainstream of Croatian Theatre, which extracts that which we have referred to as the edge, or the Alternative, and it does not concentrate only on, shall we say, "new names", but endeavours to establish a continuity with their predecessors. It would be quite wrong to believe that the new generation of Croatian Theatre springs from anything other than old roots. In fact some of the names (let us call them "old-new" names) maintain an active role in the struggle for conquest, and indeed they are the first to reach the centre – and that despite the fact that their most active phase seemed to have arrived to early.

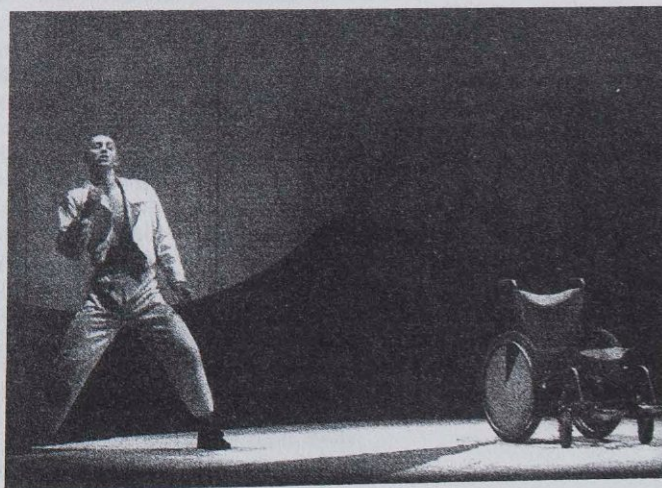
In addition to extensive discourses presenting and investigating the work of outstanding and interesting authors, to studies inspired by specific problem areas touched upon by certain productions or projects (classic theatre criticism being generally avoided) a considerable number of informative presentations and really attractive visual design (with quality photographs always illustrating the context of any given paper), "Frakcija" also



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Montažstroj. Rap opera 101





"Frakcija". Magazin za izvedbene umjetnosti (Fraction. The Magazine for Performing Arts). Redactor-in-Chief Goran Sergej Pristaš. Published by the Academy of Performing Arts and Centre for Performing Arts in Zagreb. Hebrangova 21, 10 000 Zagreb, Croatia; tel. 385 1 48 56 455 fax 385 1 48 56 459.

"Frakcija" is a member of Instituto Internacional del Teatro del Mediterráneo. The magazine has an English supplement.

dedicated to presenting the creators and representatives of the new theatre. In fact, on its 10th anniversary the second issue of "Frakcija" was devoted in its entirety to EUROKAZ which, to date, has played host to a wide range of groups and artists, among whom were: Rosas, La fura dels baus, Giorgio Barberio Corsetti, Jan Fabre, Derevo, Societas Raffaello Sanzio, Needcompany, Francois-Michel Pesenti, Achym Freyer, Stanislas Nordey, Robert Wilson, Stelarc, Rona Athey, Annie Sprinkle, and others. The initiators and (despite all obstacles and negations) still tireless selectors-cum-managers of EUROKAZ, Gordana Vnuk and theatre director Branko Brezovec, are the "old-new" names of the Croatian Theatre Alternative. They are the ones who link the new generation to the subdued theatre movements of the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s. To their own international selection they always counterpoised Slovene Theatre productions (which, incidentally, experienced the same upheavals in the 1980s that Croatian Theatre will experience at the end of the 1990s) and the dissident works of Branko Brezovec himself, and a segment of the Croatian Theatre production which can, in some way, be described as peripheral theatre.

The tenth EUROKAZ rounded off its first decade and posed its selectors the following question: have the iconoclastic theatre, the multimedia per-

contains texts of various genres commissioned for specific issues, dealing with different topics. To date, the following topics have been covered: extra-institutional theatre, the Alternative, Artaud, body/technology, text and textuality (or, "what we can do with words"), the "politicalness" of the 1990s, Brecht. Although some of the well-known "old-new" names contribute to "Frakcija", theoreticians, playwrights and critics belonging to the new generation are the predominant force in the journal.

From the very outset its clearly set concept has been adhered to consistently. In other words, "Frakcija" has conscientiously avoided events in the centre of Croatian Theatre. The new journal "Glumiste", initiated by the political and theatre establishment is a welcome motivation for a more robust clash of opinions, as well a way to accelerate the ultimate conquest.

Two Festivals: Sources

The beginning of activities by the new generation is linked, first and foremost, to 1987 – the first year of EUROKAZ, an international festival

formances, the new technologies, the new dramaturgy, the noble dilettantism, the physical theatre, the post-mainstream – to mention just some of the terms used to describe (to a lesser or greater degree of aptness) the phenomena, the trends and the methods of EUROKAZ shows and performances – had any significant influence on Croatian Theatre? It was found that they had not. As a reaction, last year's (11th) EUROKAZ went into what could be described as vengeful overdrive, opting for the followers of modern primitivism, body art and post-porn-modernism – the result of all this being a thoroughly scandalised public and placing a big question mark over its own future. Fortunately, the battle for staging the 12th Eurokaz has been won and, judging by the programme of the festival, which is to take place in a few months' time, it could herald the beginning of its own self-assassination and, hopefully, of a new self-conception.

True to herself, the art selector for EUROKAZ, Gordana Vnuk, foresaw two years ago during an interview given to *Frakcija* that it would take "... at least ten more years following some radical shift in our theatre life for something relevant to happen." However, although it might not be possible to judge the influence of EUROKAZ – not in the sense of epigonism but rather as an encouragement of authentic expression – for some time to come, at least two – until recently, inconceivable – shifts have already taken place, and not in any radical fashion but spontaneously.

Obsessed with faith in the novelty of the "new" rebellions and impudent (on occasions even avant-gard, courageously radical and shocking; frequently unbending and restrictive, contradictory in itself, overestimated and underestimated – as the present times should be) EUROKAZ has finally reached the gates of the fortresses of the Croatian Theatre centre – that which gathers every year for the summer festival in Dubrovnik. And no sooner had Branko Brezovac received his invitation to attend the summer festival with his Welsh production of *Electra* (the organisers no longer being able to ignore his work) than Bobo Jelcic, a director typical of the new generation and first introduced at the most recent Eurokaz, was selected to be a part of the programme of the most orthodox state-sponsored festival – the one known as the festival of Croatian drama text, the *Days of Marul*, in Split.

The doors have been opened. All that remains is to enter.

For the past fifteen years and at times unjustifiably in the shadow of EUROKAZ, Zagreb has been the stage for the Dance Week Festival. Since the first Week up to this year's 15th anniversary (which "Frakcija" will mark with a special issue) this manifestation has attracted many prominent names, among whom have been: Trisha Brown, Susanne Linke, Pauline Daniels, Josef Nadj, the Lakoon Dance Group, Kilina Cremona (who has lived and worked in Zagreb for the last few years), Truus Bronkhorst, and Nigel Charnoc. Of late, the Week has also been preoccupied with forms falling between theatre and dance and, on those lines, has added the words "Performing Arts Festival" to its initial title.

Mirna Zagar, the Week's artistic selector, has established the Hrvatski institut za pokret i ples (HIPP – Croatian Institute for Movement and Dance), and soon afterwards she participated in the setting up of the MAPAZ project (Moving Academy for Performing Arts, Zagreb). The two groups closely linked to the activities of HIPP-MAPAZ are Studio Mare and Stereo, both of which have considerable experience in monitoring of and participation in the Week. Their productions have achieved no small recognition abroad: Studio Mare, with *Below the Rainbow* (choreographer, Mara Sesardić), and Stereo, with *Darkness*, by Emil Matesić.



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Schmrtz Teatar from Vukovar.

Last year, the 14th Dance Week Festival for the first time introduced an off-programme (executive producer was Edvin Liverić, actor and performer, participant of many extra-institutional, and even Alternative, projects in Croatia, and also of a number of international co-productions). Four young choreographers and dancers were presented last year: Sanela Janković, Iva Nerina Gattin, Ivana Müller and Tomislav Jelčić.

Two Theatres: Two (possible) Sources

The only public theatre which, since its inception in the mid-1960s up to the present day, has endeavoured to maintain a hybrid status balancing somewhere between a classic theatre institution with a repertoire, and leanings towards an off-position (or at least an off-impression) is Teatar &TD. One fact is indisputable: over the last five years, i.e., ever since the post of director has been occupied by Mani Gotovac, Teatar &TD can be regarded primarily as a training ground for a new generation. The management of Teatar &TD has realised the inevitability of changing generations and has accelerated the process by producing texts by young Croatian playwrights such as Ivan Vidić, Mislav Brumec, Asja Srnc, and Darko Lukić; engaging young directors such as Lukas

Nola, Milan Živković, Mislav Brečić, Ivica Buljan, Sanda Hrzić, Bobo Jelčić, and discovering young actors, among them two "stars" of the new generation: Nina Violic and Dražen Sivak. The greatest international success has been achieved by the *Fedra* project, with Ivica Buljan (member of the "Frakcija" board of editors) as director and dramaturge.

Teatar &TD has recently decided to invest the experience it has gained over the past five years in an ambitious project, a festival entitled "The Zone of the Nineties - MMTM" (Mediterranean and Central-European Theatre of the Young). The current season will, however, alongside Pasolini's *Pilad*, by Ivica Buljan, be marked by *Usporavanja* (Slowdown), a work-in-progress by director Bobo Jelčić (interview published in "Frakcija" No 8) and dramaturg Nataša Rajković. With *Usporavanja* they are continuing their research of the theme of the "everyday" as well as their revealing of the inexhaustibility of an actor encouraged to discover the content of a

performance through improvisation, to create characters and to arrive at the text.

Mention of the above named tandem is an introductory reference to yet another theatre institution that is now prepared to co-operate with the new generation of theatre artists, and where Jelčić and Rajković have produced *Promatranja* (Observations). That institution is the Croatian National Theatre in Varaždin, where for some period of time the person holding the dual post of art director and director has been Borna Baletić. He is one of the few members of the new generation who has never attempted to resist the illusory charms of theatre institutions. In an interview he gave for the first issue of "Frakcija" No 1 to the dramatist Goran Sergej Pristaš (editor in chief) and his associate in the productions of *Kraljevo* and *Dvije legende*, by Miroslav Krleža, Baletić's conclusion demonstrated a high degree of maturity: "It would be really nice to be independent, but running from the institution of theatre is like trying to escape from a state institution. If you get out of one you simply have to join another. One simply has to be registered somewhere."

Extra-Institution - Sanctuaries

The tradition of independent theatre groups and productions in Croatian Theatre dates from the early 1970s, but the real boom arrived with the 1990s, when a small number of private theatres were founded. The most successful of them are those initiated by the new generation.

The Croatian Theatre export product most in demand is the MONTAŽSTROJ Performing Unit. Founded back in 1989 as an artistic group it entered the orbit of the Croatian Theatre Alternative in 1991 with the hit production of its generation, Rap opera *101*, the winning project in the co-production competition organised by EUROKAZ. Through a form of physical theatre, MONTAŽSTROJ investigates the sphere of "high-risk dance", the erotic and cruel mutual inter-performance relations between aerobatics, bio-mechanics, and a combination of disco and street dance. MONTAŽSTROJ has toured almost the whole of Europe, as well as a part of the USA, and has currently been developing its work-in-progress project, *Everybody Goes 2 Disco From Moscow 2 San Francisco* in three phases: *Mix* (1994), *Remix* (1995) and *Euro-Body* (1996). Their subsequent four-year performance strategy (covering the period 1997 to 2000) foresees, among other things, a work-in-progress project, *Fragile*. At the time of writing they are working on the first phase (Phase 1: "Mobile-dance sections"; phase 2: "Convertible-acting sections"). Authors are choreographer Borut Separović (interview in "Frakcija", No 1), Tamara Huilmand and dramaturg Goran Sergej Pristaš. The production, based on the Biblical story of the conversion of Saul, investigates the problems of (i.e., fragility) identity and involves performers from a number of countries.

Teatar EXIT has outgrown the character and the communicational limitations of the most popular local off-theatre that had won its reputation and recognition with such hit productions as Berkoff's *Decadence* and Godberg's *The Bouncers* by the mime production *Imago*, based on motifs from *Knots* by Lang; and, in part, with the production *Zudnja* (Yearning), created by Nataša Lusečić (extensive interview in "Frakcija" No 3) who has now opted for other projects not involving Teatar EXIT. At this point in time Teatar EXIT is working on its own theatre premises presented to them by the city authorities, which is a precedent among independent theatres, as well as being a privilege which allows them to work on their



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own institutionalisation. In short, EXIT has entered the centre. Its aesthetic quality has seduced a new generation of the public but in the process its revolutionary energy has been lost (at least for now). It has turned its back on the Alternative and has become a "theatre of risk" in the commercial sense only.

MIG OKA (A blink of an eye), a theatre group founded by the actor Rene Medvešek (interview in "Frakcija" No 1), operates on the basis of much more modest ambitions. Since its imaginative production for children, *Mrvek i crvek* (A crumb and a worm) Medvešek has produced no new shows for his theatre, but he has accepted an invitation from actors of the Zagreb Youth Theatre (the ZeKaeM which, despite its name, is not lending nearly enough support to the new generation) and together with them has created *Hamper* (The Bucket), a poetic play without words in which tramps on a rubbish tip conceive and give a theatre performance. Medvešek's productions for children and adults are not merely some naive and banal theorem about the good, but are the reaction of an element of the new generation to a quite concrete evil which it found itself faced with. Medvešek himself is quoted as saying: "I believe that man's inherent nature is good. Evil is a boil on one's soul, and if art feeds on it instead of endeavouring to lance it, it will itself become a boil upon an boil."

At the Edge of the Edge: Start Points

The names and projects apostrophised represent only the most penetrating and therefore the most visible activities of the new generation.

There are, however, other festivals that are being organised. One such is the Pula International Festival (PUF) which, for the past three years, has been organised by four legendary groups originating from the alternative stream of theatre amateurism: Lero, Daska, Pinklec and Inat, and which invites independent groups from all over Europe to an exchange of experience.

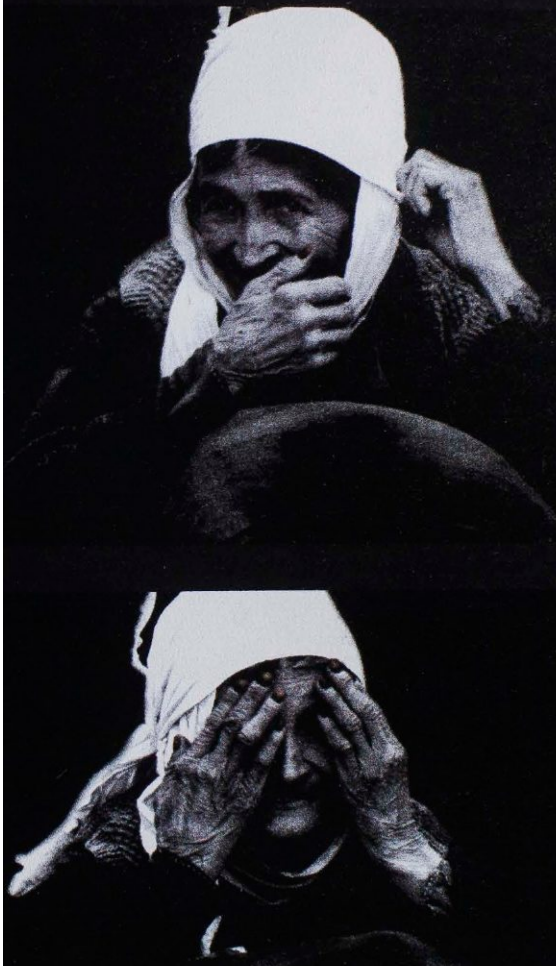
New groups are also being initiated. Among them, particularly interesting are the non-professionals. Schmrtz Teatar both organises happenings whose structure is almost completely open towards interaction with the audience, ironising the fundamental theatre conventions, and performs socially and politically provocative and critical actions and productions. The group Not Your Bitch focuses on the problems of identity (of women and girls) through a form of dance theatre. The Rubicon theatre from Rijeka, the most alive group of the new generation outside Zagreb, researches the phenomenon of chaos (their production Zero), communications (InterNetWork), emotions (dE-Motion-s), through the language of mime and the bio-mechanics method.

New possibilities and new forms of education are being investigated and initiated – mostly through workshops – in the field of performing arts. These include MAPAZ seminars, the Professional Actors Studio in Zagreb, the Imaginary Academy in Groznjan and the International Theatre Festival of the Young (MKFM) in Pula. Year by year the number of young people learning how to express themselves through theatre at the ZeKaeM School grows ever larger. Among them are the youngest of the new generation.

* * *

Presentation of the coming of the new generation should not be concluded. The conquest of the centre continues.

KOSOVO



to: Afrim Spahiu



MALIQI
MERRILL
SPAHIU



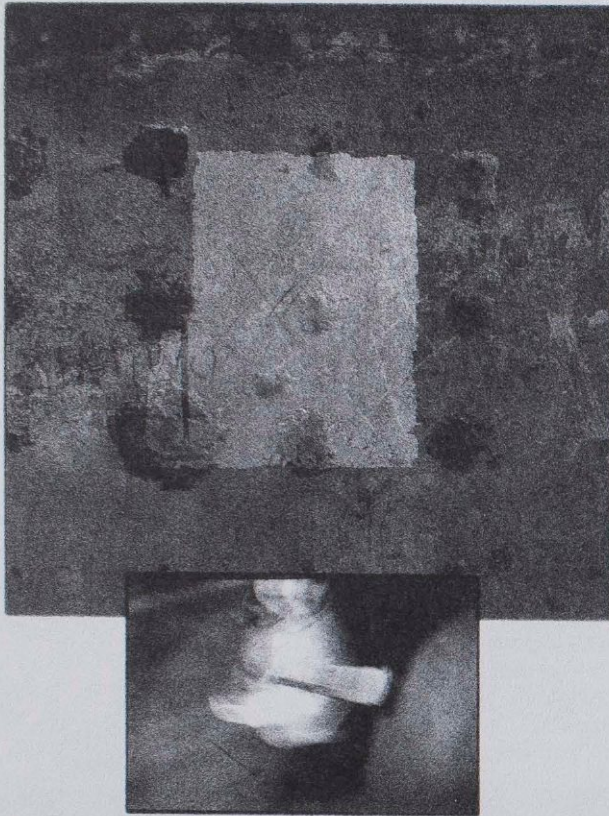


Photo: Stanislaw J. Woś

studied there, but only a small group of thousands of students there knew about that. At another university the traveller witnessed a raging battle for the university's national character to meet the needs of one or another ethnic group, since the meaning of the word *universitas* – and many other words from the old days – were forgotten. The traveller saw manors and palaces either converted into *kolkhozes* or neglected and completely devastated. He saw the ruins of an ancient theatre now used as a rubbish dump. He saw old tenement houses that were inhabited by newcomers from nearby and remote provinces, and where anything beautiful was regarded as superfluous and contemptible. The ultimate aspiration had become a flat in concrete blocks equipped with a lift and a rubbish chute. People abandoned those old parts of the city, leaving the tenement houses with alien and mysterious souls to the poor, to the dregs of society, to the old intelligentsia. He also saw cities whose souls were being destroyed from the inside by leveling old quarters in order to build squares for mili-

tary parades and for the busts of "leaders" of the nation. In a certain capital city that had once boasted of a meticulous and sophisticated architecture, he stood dumbfounded in front of a huge avenue, stretching to the horizon, as straight as an arrow, carved out of a no-longer existing thicket of old villas, lanes, and corners he had once seen in old postcards. Tall concrete blocks were situated along the avenue. Behind them he found miraculously preserved a temple that seemed almost as small as a rubbish container standing nearby. At the far end of the avenue he could see something that seemed to be a gigantic dummy of some surrealist theatrical performance. White at first sight, it turned out to be yellowish-dirty. The nearer he got the more intense horror he felt, but it was only when he stood at the corner of the structure and saw its long equally gigantic side that he realised that it was not a dummy but a palace built for a national leader. The traveller saw concrete blocks lacking a sewage system, with windows deprived of window panes, with entrances deprived of doors. They were constructed for nomads unadapted for the settled walk of life. He also saw concrete housing estates without sewage systems and deprived of any infrastructure, but fully equipped with TV antennae to elevate the rural population to a higher level of civilisation. The population lived in wooden houses and cherished their olden traditions. He saw houses and villages, villas and quarters abandoned and left behind by fugitives, refugees, migrants, only a minor fragment of that mega-migration

of peoples that has swept across those parts in this century.

During the voyage, the more time he spent on exploring new spaces, the more often the lyrics of some song by a Poet came to him: "there won't be another end of the world... there won't be another end of the world...". He saw the world after the end of the world. The world existed, life was still lived more or less normally. But the end of the world had almost not been recognised. A young man diving from a platform into a pool is not aware of the fact that once that platform was climbed by a priest in order to read out scrolls of a holy book. Lobotomy or loss of memory. It does not relate to him personally, but the world he is growing up in. Disability or a blessing? Testimony has been preserved in many places but it was usually written in other countries and on remote continents. Besides, individual accounts often contradict one another, they are often based on myths... Was it just a myth then? The end of certain small homelands, city quarters, families or ethnic groups have already been announced, but not the end of a whole civilisation. Or even if a prediction could be found somewhere to be understood as such even metonymically, each and every of Eastern European society refuses to admit it. It would just mean that "we" are new barbarians, which we would never accept as an image of ourselves. Still, when we dispose of old objects – the fragments of the old world – whether putting them in the attic or throwing them out, when we let old temples and universities decay, when we belittle the old men who have survived the hecatomb, when we erase the memory of the past, we actually have a hand in the annihilation of the whole civilisation. We, however, escape from exploring the truth. We

rather prefer talking ironically about the myth of a land that has actually never existed. This is our Atlantis complex. We pay an extremely high price for that, and our confident ironic smile is only ephemeral. It is not possible for us to conceal the fact that we have trouble with our own identity, that the feeling of temporariness and uncertainty annoys us a lot. Once the traveller visited a country that not long ago had obtained independence and he heard something like this: "if we are no longer with them, who are we with then?" Such a fear-based quandary is very characteristic to us and it is matched by our burning desire to join a stronger ally, to break free from this land, "whose horizon is particularly unclear"- as a certain European dignitary once said. Since this land is and maybe has always been non-existent a kind of Atlantis – somewhere in our subconsciousness this sinister surrealistic truth lies in wait for us: "here is nowhere".

There is much sense in attempting to explore the fact that the old civilisation has perished. The awareness of the end of the world that we have wit-



Krzysztof Czyżewski

FORUM

Photo: Stanisław J. Woś



Afrim Spahiu

PHOTO ATELIER



SHKELZEN MALIQI

Beyond

The New Art of Kosovo

Fine arts in Kosova have been spread from experiments and great volte-faces on the world's art scene. Kosova's fine arts, which lack a long tradition - there were only two pioneer generations of modern artists until recently¹, were dominated by self-content and nonconflictual academism. The first generations of Kosovar artists (with the exception of Xhevdet Xhafa, who remained faithful to his authentic, high-quality formless art, even though it appeared here somewhat late) chose to stick to the trodden paths of figuration, concrete representation, symbolisation or stylisation of the "social reality" and to the spirit of the times, always guided by the social environment's dominant taste. No great experiments with techniques and genres were undertaken. Muslim Mulliqi's work is illustrative of this. In his work as well as in that by best representatives of Kosova's school (Gjelosh Gjokaj, Rexhep Çavdarbasha, Agim Salihu, as well as others) themes and ideas are always clearly connected with time and space. These artists aim their work to be representative of particular culture, they search for something that should be illustrative of the authentic Kosovar and Albanian fine arts. Even though their styles are different and highly individualised, it is interesting to note their thematic closeness: the circles of Albanian Legends, collective as traditional Albanian Towers (*Kulla*), cursed Mountains and Walls that divide the Albanians, Cages, etc. the works of Muslim Mulliqi in particular clearly express this urge to "paint" the spiritual and ideological pulsation of time, to "record" visually the ups and downs of national aspirations. There is a significant overlap between the themes he espoused during the stages of his development with the phases of Kosova's cultural and political development; actually, Mulliqi's art can be taken as a kind of their visualisation. Thus, in the 1950's and 1960's (Rankovic's era) Mulliqi began to paint in the manner of cruel social-realism, which was artistically very powerful but was permeated by the 1970's when Kosova was granted a high level of autonomy with the status and powers close to that of a state. Mulliqi first produced a series of the Albanian towers symbolising resistance, the feeling of rootedness, only to change the theme and begin to paint a cycle of blue skies, stressing the longing for the elevation of collective aspirations likened to the flight of Icarus. Only in his last phase, in the 1980's and 1990's, when the process of abolition of Kosova's autono-



1 The cultivation of fine arts with modern expression in Kosova began only after the The Second World War as a derivative of the Yugoslav socialist educational and cultural system. the art school in Peja sowed the seeds of fine arts, whilst best and most determined students continued their studies at the fine arts academies in Belgrade, Zagreb, Ljubljana and later in Sarajevo. In the late 1960's this generation of Kosovar artists founded the Fine Arts Department at the Teacher's College, and then the academy (and the faculty) of fine arts in Prishtina. Considering that the small number of active artists, the lack of space for exhibitions as well as the absence of demanding art critics and public, the concentration of quality on the Kosovar art scene was unexpectedly high from the very beginning, the most prominent artists from the first generation of artists are as follows: Muslim Mulliqi (1934), Gjelosh Gjokaj (1933), Nusret Salihamitxhiq (1931), Xhevdet Xhafa (1935), Rexhep Ferri (1937), Tahir Emra (1938), Adem Kastrati (1930) and Anton Gllasniqi (1938). The doyens of the applied art in Kosova also belong to this generation: Matej Rodiqi (1929), Augsh Beqiri (1932) and Nuredin Ioxha (1935-1992).

With this spiritual profile and the method of work, the second generation of artists who were born between 1940 and 1955 is very close to this group. The most important artist in this generation is the doyen of sculpture, Agim Çavdarbasha (1944), whereas important

and original cycles have been produced by Daut Berisha (1941), Isak Asllani (1945), Mikel Gjokaj (1946), Nebih Muriqi (1943), Hysni Krasniqi (1942), Fatmir Krypa (1942), Agim Salihu (1951) and Ymer Shaqiri (1955). The most prominent names in the applied arts are Violeta Xhaferi (1947), Shyqri Nimani (1941) and Afrim Spahiu (1951). The artists of other nationalities from Kosova, with whom the Albanian artists co-operated for a long time and who exerted their influence, ought to be mentioned here as well. These are: Vlada Radovic (1901-1988), Hilmija Catovic (1933), Trajko Stojanovic (1934), Svetozar Arsic - Basara (1933), Stevan Cukic (1936) and Zoran Jovanovic-Dobrotin (1942).

2 The best-known alternative spaces with permanent exhibition programmes since 1993 are: in Prishtina restaurants "Koha" and "Hani i 2 Roberteve", pizzeria "Roma", studio "Intermedia" (autumn 1994-spring 1995); the most active in Peja was the "Evergreen" cafe-gallery (1994-1996). In Prizren, "Vatra" Gallery was first, which followed by the opening of the first specialised gallery a "Rada" (since 1995). A specialised gallery "europa" was opened in Peja as well (1996). In february 1997 "dodona" Gallery was opened in Prishtina as a part of the theatre that has the same name. Except the above mentioned exhibi-

my was initiated and brought to an end, did the artist suffer a kind of a break-down of motivation. However, he made a come-back by returning to pure art and working on intimate and melancholic paintings: simple landscapes and portraits. These are artistically very powerful reminding of "eternity" and of incomparable lustre of Faiyum's encaustics.

In any case, until the 1980's the fine arts in Kosova were flourishing whilst academism represented the peak of their development. Nearly all prominent artists had established themselves as professors with their own studios and a possibilities to exhibit their work. The privileges they enjoyed were not such as to arouse envy. Kosova was a poor region, lacking the public that genuinely appreciated art.

After 1981 the Kosovar institutional academism faced an imposed crises which was to become disastrous in the 1990's. The escalation of inter-ethnic and political conflicts ruined the previous cultural system. In the wake of the violent annexation of Kosova (1989-1991) the Albanians were "cleansed" from the educational and cultural institutions (Art Gallery in Prishtina, the Faculty of Arts, cultural centres, and a range of institutions which organised the cultural life, etc.), which were then placed under the total control of Serbs nationalists. The Albanians fine arts was thus either practically extinguished or significantly marginalised.

The Albanian art scene was in a state of shock and depression for the next two years. Only in 1993 there emerged new alternative forms of organising the artistic life², in pace with the rhythm of the comprehensive self-organisation of the Albanian society. Restaurants, coffee-shops and other independent Albanian institutions took the role of galleries. This *art of resistance*³, though of varying violence, also began to question the meaning of art by adopting a critical attitude towards the art of the "father" and their happy, unconflictual academism.

By the end of the 1980's there appeared the third generation of artists⁴. They had moved away from academism, mainly opted against "realism" in painting, while embracing abstract arts and experimentation. This generation reacted against the horror surrounding them. This flight from a dreadful reality is reminiscent of the conclusion Paul Klee drew in a similar historical context a half a century ago when he had said: "The more dreadful

the reality is, the more abstract does art become".

The third generation of Kosovar artists (some of whom are more explicit, while others are hesitant) set out on a search for new forms of expression. Those bravest ones mastered the "destructive" and "deconstructivist" creative expression of the new post-modern art, whose credo can be paradoxically called - *creative nihilism*.

This difference between academism and anti-academism, as one of a possible general qualifications of this art, is stressed for the sake of contrasting the phenomenon. This frame of reference enables us to understand this art in the context of the given situation art finds itself in. In fact, there are two frames of

Sokol Beqiri: *Dreams in Black and White VI*. Lithography



reference: one has to do with the local situation and artistic trends, in comparison with which this art is rather provocative; the other has to do with the trends in the world, in relation to which its provocation appear harmless. But, if this frame of reference is reduced only to its provocative aspect rather than focusing on the value of the project, than its descriptive dimension and that which concerns value can be mixed up. This is particularly conspicuous at the local level where this art is perceived as "nihilistic" and "valueless". However, when i compare the previous and the current alternative arts I am not insisting on the aspect which has do this value. This provocative art is *a priori* neither better nor worse than the previous art; first and foremost, it is completely *different*, and as such it requires different sensibility and, therefore, a different approach as well.

Regarding the second frame of reference and its relation to the current trends in the world, I asked the following question when the "Përtej" exhibition was being conceptualised: "Is the emergence of the generation of young and "angry" Kosovar artists only a shock of local importance? Or, can they, as authentic destroyers of conventions, establish wider communication with modern artistic trends in the world?" I did not try to give a direct answer to this question. I asked the question in order to provoke the visitors of the exhibition.

Maksut Vezgishi's exhibition, held at "Vatra" Café Gallery in Prizren (9-23 february 1993), heralded the emergence of the new Kosovar alternative art. It took place in a marginal space out of reach of the professional audience. It passed almost unnoticed without the critical appraisal it deserved. One of the reasons why art critics and artists did not pay attention to Vezgishi is, most likely, because he is an architect by training, who has also done work in theatre (as director, scenographer, costume designer, etc.). Only few were aware at the time that he also does fine arts, alongside furniture and graphic design. His theatre projects were more successful even though he mainly worked with amateur groups from Prizren.⁵ He was unlucky or, perhaps, he was prevented from working on original projects with professional theatre groups.⁶ In 1990, Vezgishi's project entitled "The Divine Proportions" was awarded the first prize at the last Yugoslav Festival of amateur Theatres.⁷

The theme of Vezgishi's exhibition at the "Vatra" Gallery focused on the new icon, with an iconoclastic tendency for a return to the symbol and to the pure picturesque, as a vision of eternity in this world. What distinguishes Vezgishi's art is not only the spirit of universality and timelessness, but also the tendency to combine various artistic mediums in one project. There is an inclination in Vezgishi's work to transcend the painting, to shift it towards other mediums of expression, always with an inclination to ontologise the picturesque in all the dimensions in which it appears, both in the formal aspects of the scene and in the reflection/image of the event. This means that Vezgishi's performances are not concerned with the stage effect and the theatrics as such, or with possible illustrative and demonstrative functions of specific figurative ideas¹ on the contrary, he sees a performance as an extension of the painting, its outpouring into space, just as a painting itself is an extension of ideal spiritual relations. However, Vezgishi was not able to fully realise these transcending extensions and shifts as he had envisioned them; this ideas were neither understood nor did they elicit support. On the whole, his art seems to be much too ambitious to be approved of and accepted, and is even less successful in gaining institutional support in the pour region as is Kosova where the majority deem that there are much more pressing needs to be met and where the where the government has no interest in "useless" art, particularly



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tion areas, other spaces, such as those belonging to hotels, various associations, religious buildings, etc. occasionally used for exhibitions as well.

3. I've used the term "art of resistance" for the first time in the review of Iliriana Loxha's exhibition in the "Koha" Cafe Gallery (April 1994). (Sh. Maliqi, *rezistenca e artit*, Zeri, 12 mars 1994).

4. The most prominent representatives of the generation are Sokol Beqiri, Mehmet Behluli, Maksut Vezgishi, Gani Lallosi, Ismet Jonuzi, Visar Mulliqi, Teuta Pula, Zave Prelvukaj, Afrim Hajrullahu, Arsim Salihamixqi, Hazir Reka. Two other artists, Gani Bajraktari and Haxhi Kastrati, also became popular together with this generation. They are somewhat older but had been marginalised for a long time because they lived in a village.

5. The play was awarded "The Golden Mask" as a complete authorial project.

6. Vezgishi was awarded the first prize for scenography at the All-Albanian Theatre Festival in Vlora (Albania) 1995, for the play entitled "Perbindeshi" (the Monster), performed by the Theatre of Nationalities in Shkup (Skopje, Macedonia).

7. Prompted by this, I made a note, which has not published, and here follows in its entirety: "Vezgishi is inspired by constructivist and supremacist art (his inquiries into fine arts as well as his applications in design and scenography follow that direction). He extended his quest in the area of fine arts to theatre projects in an interesting way, whereby the stage becomes a kind of microcosm and a motion vision of eternity. "The Divine Proportions" project, as a visual play without text, is in fact a restrained spectacle of fundamental relations where everything is purged and freed from unnecessary explanations. The movement melts into space breathes

with body movements, the bodies perform the cosmic music, the drama of entropy, dreamy vertigo, self-closure and self-deconstruction of being enfold as the music plays and bodies move. Vezgishi surprises one with his exceptional work with amateurs, which results in a production of a well-rounded performance, which never slips out of control. This control implies the procedure that springs out of fine arts, but with the elements of live dance that takes place in space and time, in a form of supremacist vision, which means that it can be reduced to simple geometrical forms and constructions of a circle, square or "live" triangle. Considering all this, the author has correctly judged individual vocations and pantomimic skills of amateur actors, therefore, he engaged them testing the limits of their ability by slowing down those slower and less skilful ones and by speeding up those fast and more skilful ones making them give their utmost as perfect wheels of the moving vision of eternity. This is the experimental theatre par excellence such as we have never had in Kosova before. Vezgishi's complex art, regardless of the medium through which it is expressed, aims towards the ontological and might be a mystical reflection of primary forms and relations.

Sokol Beqiri: *Dreams in Black and White II*. Lithography



because the aims of such art are even more sublime.

Sokol Beqiri's exhibition at the "Intermedia" studio in Prishtina (March 1995) represented the second important stage in the emergence of the new art in Kosova. Beqiri graduated in Graphics at Prishtina's Academy of fine Arts and completed his postgraduate studies at the academy in Ljubljana. His works were shown in several renowned exhibitions (in the Ljubljana and Zagreb biennials of graphics) and he had his own exhibition in Frankfurt am Main in 1994 (*Palais Jalta*). His vocation in graphics is abstract expressionism reduced to the relations between white and black. Meanwhile, Beqiri worked with other techniques, bravely searching for transcendent moment in the approach, bordering on art and non-art, painting and non-painting, artefact and non-artefact, living and non-living, life and death, beauty and kitsch. The "Intermedia" exhibition, set up in the relatively small space in the attic, offered an interesting intersection of Beqiri's deconstructivist research. The exhibition was conceptualised as dense reminiscence of that which can be called the roaring gallop of artistic avantgardes of the 20th century, but presented as their mockery and parody.⁸ Parody was conspicuous at his exhibition in the restaurant "The Inn of two Roberts" (*Hani i Dy Robertëve*), on April 1997, where alongside the graphics and the paintings which were deliberately provocative, "without taste", "ugly", done in randomly rough and incompatible colours, he also exhibited two big panels of photo-wallpaper with idyllic landscapes as a motif, but which the artist had painted over with wax of different colours so that nothing remained of their "decorative", "beautifying" function, that clearly artificial expression of deceptive taste, surrogate consumption, instant beauty and kitsch.⁹ This distance, which is irony and parody at the same time, is also discernible in the treatment and in the change of functions of ethnographic objects, such as windows, doors, barrels... being old and beautiful, these ethnographic items usually impose an un-reflected idolatrous and idolising attitude the tradition of the "folk" genius. But, with his interventions on these items, the artist suddenly points, by using artistic means only, to their dangerous disfiguration and degeneration: to wooden barrels and churns the artist added tiny cones thus giving them a shape of a kind of "ethno-bombs", only to cover them

with a deceptive variety of colours, to resemble candy, and to look like the kitsch that surrounds us, thus order to portraying "harmless" aggression, which caused such mass destruction in the case of Bosnia.

The third important step for the emergence of the alternative art in Kosova are two successive exhibitions of Mehmet Behluli in Prishtina in January and March 1997 (*Hani i Dy Robertëve* and the "Dodona" Gallery). While the first exhibition featured his works which represent the first three stages of his artistic research,¹⁰ in the "Dodona" Gallery he presented the exhibition/installation, a complete cycle of works which were mostly created especially for this

space. Leaving behind the phase of monochrome abstraction from the early 1990's when he was a post-graduate in Sarajevo, with his new work Behluli arrives at a conceptual crossroads between configuration reduced to innocent images as if done by a "child" on the one hand, and installations and objects representing the spatial adaptation of ideas for painting, on the other hand. Yet, in both of two variants, he preserves the basic monochromatic approach in the creation of visions. He works with one dominant colour (white and black colour, or the combination of them, take on this role in his last works) which he uses in his subtle investigation of inner movements and pulsation of facture, compositional shapes, clash of tones, etc. Meanwhile, the monochromy is achieved in the installations by means of melting tar upon objects used in everyday life, mainly old and discarded things, like bags, boxes, books that are no longer in "fashion", chairs, windows, doors, closets, old mirrors and clocks, hats, ropes, etc, the entire range of transient things which have been burnt or destroyed not only by the passage of time and unstoppable entropy, but also because of mad beliefs, a desire to achieve ideological fantasies, unrealisable utopias. The tar which floods the world turns into a vision (metaphor is rather obvious) of the catastrophic reality of Sarajevo for example, where the artist lived until the out-break of the war, and where such spaces, rooms, piles of burned books and libraries really exist. The artist is shocked with and protests against the consequences of totalitarian ideologies, calling upon us to be cautious, not to be fooled with bogus material goods.

On the whole the alternative art in Kosova, displayed at the exhibition *Përtej*¹¹ with the works by three artists (including composer Ilir Bajri), who have their individualised visions and approaches, reveals and political reality which is falling into pieces before our very eyes. Such attitudes also concern the art, which remains intact, within the iron frames of self-deceitful indifference and a worldview which is naive and illusory since it fails to see the open pit, the civilisational abyss, the absurd and the threat of general entropy.

June-August, 1997



SOKOL BEQIRI was born in Peja in 1964. In 1989 he graduated at the Academy of Figurative Arts in Prishtina. In 1991 he specialized in graphics in the class of Branco Suhy at the University of Lubljana.

Awards: Award for Graphic Art of the Academy of Fine Arts, Prishtina, 1987; Award "Nadezhda Petroviq" of Ivanjica Colonie, Ivanjica, 1987; Award in Biennial of Student Graphic Art of Yugoslavia, Belgrade, 1990; Award "Mosa Pijade" for Young Talents in Salon of Cetinje, Cetinje, 1990; Award for Graphic Art Spring Salon, Prishtina, 1991.



Shekelzen Maliqi

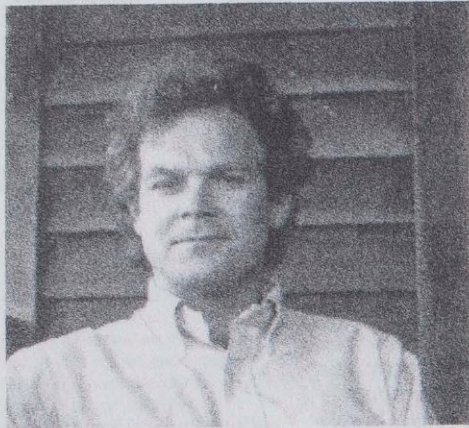
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8. For more details about the exhibition see my article in the MM review, "Kavanozi i avangardes se gerryer" (The Jar of Eroded Avant-Garde), MM, nr 1, Prishtine/Peje 1995, fq. 178-182.

9. In the review of this exhibition published in Sheshi (the Square), the cultural supplement of the weekly Zeri, I wrote the following: "the mockery of our kitsch outlook on the world and of our habit to make things prettier is fully expressed in the works with big panels covered with wall-paper portraying idyllic beautiful landscapes: mountains, woods, streams. the author has dirtied all these beautiful sights so that they cannot be recognised, thus making us stop being slaves to these beautiful sights and from being fascinated with illusions. the provocation is conceptual, because it returns us to the eternal question that concerns the sense and the limits of art." (Sh. Maliqi, Sfidat e brezit te tete, ne Sheshi, Shtojce mujore per kulture, nr 2, Zeri, mars 1997).

10. See the review, Sh. Maliqi, Abstraksioni dhe fabula (Abstraction and Fable), Revista mikste MM, Prishtine/Tirane, nr 5, fq. 408-410.

11. *Përtej* means in Albanian - over, beyond, on the other side. The title of the exhibition was intentionally retained in the Albanian language. and, it was taken from Vezgishi worldview and projects (his unrealised theatre project was entitled *Përtej*), but here this title took on some other current and political connotations which have to do with going beyond prejudice and artistic abstinence.



CHRISTOPHER MERRILL

KOSOVO

CHRISTOPHER MERRILL was born 24 February 1957 in Northampton; poet (among others *Workbook* 1988, *Fevers & Tides* 1989, *Watch Fire* 1994), writer (among others novels *The Grass of Another Country: A Journey Through the World of Soccer* 1993, *The Old Bridge: The Third Balkan War and the Age of the Refugee* 1995), essayist (among others *The Forest of Speaking Trees: An Essay on Poetry* 1996), translator from French (André Breton) and Slovenian (Tomaž Šalamun, Aleš Debeljak); lecturer among others of Open Society Institute in Sarajevo University; currently lecturer of modern literature in College of the Holy Cross in Worcester; co-founder of the periodical "Quarterly West", member of the editorial staff of "Orion", "The Paris Review", "El Palacio", laureate among others of Puchcart Prize in Poetry, Editors' Award in Poetry of the periodical "Columbia", The Academy of American Poets Peter Lavan Younger Poets Award, the Prize for Translators awarded by the Slovene Ministry of Culture.

The *Kosovo* is a chapter of the book *Only the Nails Remain: A Balkan Triptych*, which will be published at the end of 1998 in The United States of America.

I did not know Arkan was living in the Grand Hotel. Not until after I had checked in one evening (the choice was between a room with heat and one with a phone) did I learn of the paramilitary leader's decision to turn the seedy hotel into his base of operations. Kosovo's newly elected parliament deputy was already making his mark on Prištinë. He had opened a gas station to sell his smuggled petroleum, he was looking into banking opportunities, he was said to be preparing for his next campaign of terror, this time against Albanians, who had boycotted the election. To his specialties of murder and mayhem Arkan was adding politics, and now the President of the Serbian Unity Party was ensconced at the Grand – where I had taken a heated room, which, as it turned out, was not only unheated but also had no hot water. By then it was too late to move. Besides, I was hungry.

At this hour the dining room was nearly empty, unlike the bar, which was popular with the JNA and secret police. The Grand was a good place for them to unwind (the maintenance of a police state is a huge responsibility), since the target of their oppression avoided it. Indeed, what was once an Albanian establishment was now an instrument of those plotting the Albanians' persecution. It is worth recalling the steps by which Milošević instituted apartheid in Kosovo: the revocation of the province's constitutional autonomy (twenty-two Albanians and two policemen were killed during two days of protests against the new constitution); the purging of Albanians from every position of influence in the province – political, educational, cultural, journalistic; the imposition of martial law. Note the logical fallacy: Milošević was waging wars in Croatia and Bosnia on behalf of ethnic rights, yet his claim to Kosovo was based on historical rights. What was once Serbian, et cetera, et cetera.

A curious history, which for Serbian nationalists begins and ends on Kosovo Polje – Blackbird's Field. The decline of the medieval Serbian kingdom may be traced to the sudden death, in 1355, of Tsar Stefan Dušan, perhaps a victim of poisoning. Dušan, Serbia's greatest leader, was at once a patricide and a skilled politician who expanded his empire until it stretched from the Sava to the Gulf of Corinth and from the Bulgarian border to the Adriatic. He subdued the Bulgarians by marrying the tsar's sister, fended off the Hungarians, conquered Macedonia, and then proclaimed

himself tsar of the Serbs, Greeks, Bulgarians, and Albanians. His son, Uroš, however, was no match for the forces arrayed against him – Serbian noblemen contending for the throne, Ottomans marching on the border – and when he died, without an heir, in 1371, it was too late for the claimants to the throne to form an effective front against the Turks. True, at the Battle of Kosovo, Lazar teamed up with Vuk Branković Tvrtko of Bosnia, but they could not withstand the fighting machine of Sultan Murad, who only the month before had taken the fortress at Niš. Both sides suffered heavy losses – Murad himself died at the hands of a Serbian knight, Lazar was captured and beheaded, most of the Serbian noblemen were killed or went into exile. But it fell to the conquered Serbs to fashion poetry from the bloodshed. In some versions of the Kosovo epic the defeat is blamed on Branković's supposed treachery, in other versions the crucial event is Lazar's decision to sacrifice earthly glory for the heavenly kingdom. In either case, as Vasko Popa wrote, "The blackbird dries his blood-drenched wings/ At the fire of red peonies" – still a common flower on Blackbird's Field. And this "image of disaster of the Battle of Kosovo," according to the critic Svetozar Koljević, "has lived for centuries in Serbian literary and oral traditions with the elusive vividness of a hallucination."

It was in the name of this history that Serbian authorities were attempting to strip Albanians of their jobs, culture, and language. They looked askance at the foreign press, too. A Frenchwoman stopped by my table to say that in the Grand journalists' notebooks had a habit of disappearing from their rooms. I called for my bill and hurried upstairs, recalling an EC military monitor's warning.

"Kosovo," he said, "is a massacre waiting to happen."

To find the headquarters of LDK, the Democratic League of Kosova (the Albanian spelling), I was advised to write out its initials on a piece of paper and show them to a cab driver. An Albanian would happily drive me there; a Serb might deliver me to the police. As it happened, my cab driver was the same Serb who had taken me from the bus station to the Grand. The good news was, I had tipped him well (he was suffering from emphysema, I felt sorry for him); the bad news, he could only read Cyrillic. Another driver, offering to help, spat on the ground once he had deciphered my handwriting. He muttered something to my driver, who gave me an ugly look, and off we went. It was impossible to know if he preferred hard currency to escorting me to jail, for all he did was wheeze as we bounced and skidded over a stretch of mud behind the soccer stadium – the road had disappeared – before abruptly switching off the engine in front of a small Quonset hut, which housed the Albanian PEN Center and the Kosova Writers Association. Next door was Prištine's central police station.

Rexhep Ismajli called the main room in the hut the only free fifty square meters in Kosova. Among the copiers and facsimile machines were writers drinking coffee and human rights workers documenting Serbian abuses. Ismajli, a social linguist and translator of French at Prištine University until the Serbian authorities had dismissed him and more than 800 of his Albanian colleagues, was the Vice President of LDK. He made a point of showing me around the Albanians' only public building. The tour took less than a minute. First, a bookcase of Albanian works, then portraits of three tutelary spirits: a sculpture of Nadm Frashëri, the Muslim apostle-poet of Albanian nationalism; a painting of Gjergj Fishta, the Franciscan priest and Albania's national poet; and a photograph of F.S. Noli, the Harvard-educated Orthodox bishop, translator of Cervantes and Shakespeare, and first freely elected president in the Balkans, who ruled for only six months.



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Because Serbs and Greeks were afraid of democracy, Ismajli explained, neglecting to add that Noli was overthrown by his own countryman, King Zog, albeit with Yugoslav support. Ismajli pointed at the ceiling.

"Of course it's bugged," he said.

But he did not mince words. The reunification of Albanians in Kosova, western Macedonia, and Albania was inevitable, he said, because Greater Albania was a valid political idea as well as a cultural fact, notwithstanding eighty years of division. War in Kosova would thus be international in scope (Greece and Bulgaria might also join in), and any Serbian provocation, of which there were countless daily instances, could lead to war. It was up to Clinton to stop Milošević. There was no telling how long the LDK leadership could counsel patience to its membership. But what choice did they have? There were hundreds of Albanian villages the JNA could overrun without fear of harming Serbs; but convincing Albanians to hold out for peaceful change was becoming ever more difficult, since they were now required to hand over their guns to the authorities (some villagers were buying hunting rifles to give to the police in order to avoid arrest) even as the JNA was arming the Serbs.

Then came the history lesson, obligatory in the Balkans. What Ismajli emphasized, though, was a tradition of tolerance instead of grievance – four religions living side by side, Sephardic Jews having migrated into the region after their expulsion from Spain. Albanians were the oldest Balkan people, and the religious diversity of this ancient crossroads, between East and West, Byzantium and Rome, had of necessity fostered tolerance. It was not unlike Sarajevo, with this difference: the war in Bosnia was an internal affair. If fighting broke out in Kosova the tragedy would be much greater.

"It's not a classic war," said the beautiful young architect. "Just every day there's a beating, a killing."

She was the prettiest of my Albanian acquaintances to give the lie to the ethnic joke that they could not learn languages. The language Albanians refused to learn, I realized in LDK headquarters, listening to people speak English, French, and German, was Serbian. Albanian is a Romance language, distinct from the Slavic tongues, and Albanian Kosovoans had the same interests – cultural and political – in using their own language as their Slavic countrymen: language *is* identity. The architect, who had never

been allowed to work at her profession, looked up.

"Something is happening," she murmured.

The man in the doorway, a dental surgeon on "forced holiday," had in tow three students just released from jail. Their crime was studying with him, in Albanian, the construction of bridges and crowns; two fellow students were still in custody. What happened was this: when they had gone to the surgeon's house to get their fall semester grades, his Serbian neighbor had called the authorities. The police arrested the students and beat them on their hands. But they did not betray their teacher.

Graffiti from Kosovo.
Photo: Flamur Doli



"It was my fault," he said. "I shouldn't have had so many come at the same time."

Of course, he should have been able to teach them at the university. Meantime, he worked in the parallel system of schools, hospitals, cultural institutions, and media the Albanians had established just to survive. You had to admire their tenacity. One dental student, for example, who was rubbing his bruised hands, had already fled from Sarajevo. He commuted 90 kilometers a day to attend the surgeon's lectures. No wonder he had done poorly on his exams. And now this.

"He's seen everything," said the surgeon. "He has so much to think about!"

"What has never been can never be," Vuk Karadžić wrote. "One land only but two masters." It was true: power sharing was not in the political lexicon of either the Albanians or the Serbs, thanks in no small measure to Karadžić's work on the Kosovo epic, sung by *guslars*, at the heart of Serbian nationalism. The Serbs had won this war of poetries. "The Downfall of the Kingdom of Serbia," for example, tells the story of Lazarus, the Serbian prince who on the eve of the Battle of Kosovo has a remarkable dream. A grey falcon flies from Jerusalem, with a swallow in its beak. But the falcon turns into Elijah, and the swallow becomes a letter from the Holy Mother spelling out the choice the prince must make between a heavenly and an earthly kingdom. Here are the poem's concluding lines:

And Lazarus chose heaven,
not the earth,
And tailored there
a church at Kosovo –
O not of stone
but out of silk and velvet –
And he summoned there
the Patriarch of Serbia,
Summoned there
the lordly twelve high bishops:
And he gathered up his forces,
had them
Take with him
the saving bread and wine.
As soon as Lazarus
has given out
His orders,
then across the level plain
Of Kosovo
pour all the Turks.

Lazarus's church of silk and velvet, a lovely metaphor for Kosovo's Orthodox shrines and monasteries, had given way to a darker figure—the black-and-blue fatigues and flak jackets of the soldiers patrolling the streets of Prištine. And the Turks? It was another seventy years before they conquered Serbia. In Kosovo, they built bridges and mosques (most Albanians were Muslims); recruited Albanians to serve in the Sultan's army; made Turkish the official language. They gave Serbian poets a powerful theme. And Serbs had only two names for Albanians – separatist terrorists and Turks.

"Just as we are not and do not want to be Turks, so we shall oppose with all our might anyone who would like to turn us into Slavs or Austrians or Greeks, we want to be Albanians." This memorandum from



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the Albanian League in Prizren to the British delegation to the 1878 Congress of Berlin garnered little support in diplomatic circles. Bismarck for one did not believe that Albanians were a distinct nationality, and while the Great Powers could no longer ignore a people their own historians and poets regarded as direct descendants of the Ilyrians they did not hesitate to divide up most of the Albanian lands among Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria. Five hundred years of Ottoman rule were ending, even as the Porte's last Muslim subjects were developing a national consciousness. They codified their language, created a poetry, and in the First Balkan War declared independence – only to be occupied by Serbia. One month later, when the Great Powers granted Albania autonomy (ceding vast tracts of land to Serbia, Montenegro, and Greece), Montenegro laid siege to Shkodër, et cetera, et cetera. In short, occupation and partition are the watchwords of Albanian history. Yet Greater Albania is easier to envision, at least from a cartographer's perspective, than Greater Serbia: only borders separate Kosovo Albanians from their brethren in Albania and western Macedonia.

Ah, but borders are drawn in blood.

Serbs, Montenegrans, Greeks, Bulgarians, Italians, Austrians, all fought over Albanian lands in the Great War. And no one was happy with the decision at Versailles to restore Albania's 1913 borders. The Serbian dynasty enlisted none other than Ivo Andrić to sort out its Albanian policy. In a secret memorandum, dated 1939 and finally published in Croatia in 1977, the Nobel laureate advocated partitioning Albania, assimilating Catholic and Orthodox Albanians, and deporting the Muslims to Turkey – a hateful document which reinforces Charles Simic's observation that it is time to dismantle "the myth of the critical independence of the intellectuals."

"Ali Podrimja is not from here," the beautiful young architect told me when Kosovo's greatest poet arrived at LDK headquarters. "He's from the cosmos."

As it happened, the poet was on his way to the Vienna Human Rights Conference. One circle was closing for me: it was Podrimja who had read at the publishing party my Slovenian friends had taken me to in Carinthia. He spoke warmly of Tomaž Šalamun, recalling an Albanian poetry night in Ljubljana, in 1988, disrupted by bomb threats – called in by Serbs wary of Slovenian-Albanian ties. Kosovo was indeed Slovenia's dark twin. Slovenian nationalists had used the Albanian cause in their own independence drive;

Kosovo had lost its autonomy. Slovenia's population was declining; Kosovo had the highest birth rate in Europe; Slovenian poets had international reputations; Kosovo Albanians were almost unknown; and so on. Twice that night in Ljubljana the poets had to move to a new location. A two-hour event stretched into six. Šalamun was inspired by the danger.

"I would love to have my reading blown up," the Slovenian poet announced.

Podrimja was accustomed to such threats. At this year's Frankfurt Book Fair, during a symposium on the Balkan War, the poet had just

Graffiti from Kosovo.
Photo: Flamur Doli



begun to read when twenty policemen swarmed in around him. Don't be afraid, said one policeman. Unruffled, Podrimja asked him to go have a coffee with him. The policeman's reply astonished the poet: I want to hear your poem about the Berlin Wall. And when Podrimja, stopping in Ljubljana on his way home to Prištine, told this story to Šalamun, the Slovenian poet said, You're a lucky man. You will have a long life. No one can hurt you.

Podrimja was not convinced of that. His faith was in Albanian poetry, which he described in some of the same terms that Slovenians used to praise their own poetry. "It takes the side of a people who are not conquerors," he said. "It is against violence, because its source is not only in our struggle for Albanian existence but also for universal existence."

And then he was gone, but not before leaving me with a copy of the poem that the German policeman admired, which Rexhep Ismajli and I immediately translated:

Fates

I tiptoe through the Berlin Wall
with a rose in my hand

I'm afraid of hurting
the fallen souls

When I wanted to go through the Albanian Wall
my feet my head were soaked in blood

Over hills and fields
a woman dressed in black
looks for my grave

And my body
wakes up every day among you
civilization's terrible torso

Doesn't it bother you
the way my torso
accuses

J.J.'s hand, when I shook it, was as soft as a sponge. He was unshaven, his eyes were bloodshot, and he had shuffled into LDK headquarters with the stiff bearing of an old man, though he was not much more than thirty. The doctor with him explained that J.J. had spent the last twenty-four hours in police custody – for selling video cassettes of Albanian folk singers. Hard to see the crime in that. His family company was licensed to sell them, and he had come to Prištine yesterday, from his home in a nearby village, to check on his business. But when he arrived at his office his brother was out and the only customer was an undercover policeman waiting to beat him. Two uniformed policemen came to take him to a Serbian café. There, in the water closet, one policeman (both were drunk) showed him a bullet, put it in his revolver, and said, Do you see? He cocked the revolver and stuck it in J.J.'s mouth. Now you will learn who the Serbian police are, he said, shoving it down his throat. Then I will kill you. The other policeman started to hit him, and then the first one used his revolver to strike him on his head, his back, his legs – everywhere. They tortured



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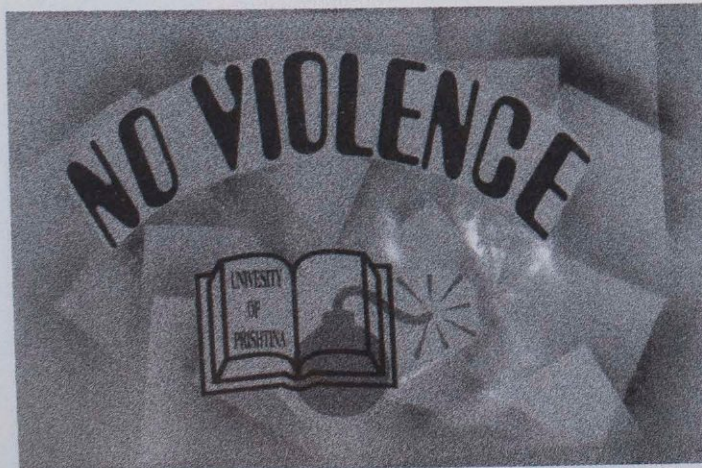
him for four hours. Then they adopted a new strategy, threatening to shoot him if he did not lead them to his brother. But his brother was nowhere to be found, so they went to the police station, where the beating resumed until a civil inspector arrived. Did the police beat you? the civil inspector asked. Until they were tired, J.J. said. What shall we do with him? the civil inspector asked the policemen. You know what you can do, they said. What they did was take his money and release him, promising to kill him in ten days. That was why J.J. would only tell me his initials. And your brother? I said. In hiding, he said. Will you leave the country? I said. Who will give me a visa? he said. Besides, he was the sole provider for his parents, his brothers, his wife and son. Do you want to see what they did to him? said the doctor. I nodded. J.J. slowly pulled his shirt over his head. His entire upper back was a solid bruise the color of the sky at sunset, shot through with lines of black and blue; more bruises and welts covered his calves, thighs, and buttocks. And his hand, said the doctor, lifting J.J.'s swollen right hand, it's probably broken. We haven't been able to X-ray it yet. Why, I wondered, did he shake my hand?

We're lucky in one way, said the former tour guide. Our president is a nice, calm writer who has kept our people calm. And we're lucky in a special way: whatever the Serbs do is wrong. That's why we're patient. It's unnatural to keep doing something wrong. If someone tells you you're drunk, you'd better believe it. And the whole world is telling them they're drunk, but they don't realize it yet. They call this the cradle of their civilization. I say, Let's turn to the encyclopedia. It's not the churches they want, it's the minerals – the lead, copper, gold, silver. But the mines are closed down. What I want is to drive to Albania one day, have a swim in the Adriatic, then a nice dinner, a cognac, and drive back. We're the same people as them. We just haven't seen them for fifty years.

What George Orwell called "the evil atmosphere of war" pervaded Prištine, a dingy, unfinished city. MIG fighter jets buzzed the drab apartment buildings. Soldiers and policemen armed with automatic weapons lined the muddy streets. The poet Eqrem Basha and I, in search of a car, walked toward the distant snow-capped mountains, discussing the relative merits of Ivo Andrić and my beloved St.-John Perse. Fate had linked the diplomats, awarding them the Nobel Prize for Literature in successive years.

Juxtapose the photograph of Andrić at the signing of the Tripartite Pact, alongside Ribbentrop, with the story of St.-John Perse staring Hitler down at the Munich Conference, and you will have a history of the conflicting political engagements of twentieth century writers. Sadly, this is a parable of talents in which the muse does not necessarily distinguish between the cowardly and courageous. The Bridge on the Drina is a masterpiece, despite the novelist's political sympathies. "Only after Andrić won the Nobel Prize did we learn he was a fascist," said Eqrem, motioning me quickly into a battered Fiat. "The Serbian

Graffiti from Kosovo.
Photo: Flamur Doli



project has always been to purify this area, spiritually and ethnically. But the more they tried to assimilate us, the stronger we became." This was because the Albanians had a revolutionary tradition to inspire them and, in the poet-president Ibrahim Rugova, a leader with the moral authority of Vaclav Havel to guide them. It was up to the writers to articulate democratic principles, relying on metaphors to evade the censors, as in Eqrem's poem, "Urban Planning," which we had translated before setting out:

First place the city where it will catch
The sun morning and evening

Then plan for the sewers
To remove the remains
Of assassinations on dark nights

Set the monument to the unknown hero
In the center where he can breathe
Freely when the seasons change

And
Don't put skyscrapers
Where their shadows will fall on people

When you design the streets
They should lead out from the city's heart
So blood will flow
To every limb

If there is no river
Pour the tears of the despairing
If there are no parks
Plant a forest with hair that stands on end
And
Before everything else
Leave room for solar panels

Because the city
From the very first will catch the sun

And the sun was shining when we drove to a nearby village to visit Eqrem's best friend, Agim Çavdarbasha, Kosova's foremost sculptor. Every day the sculptor and his students – he too had been dismissed from the university – walked two kilometers to this studio, which he heated with scraps of leftover wood; he worked in marble and bronze only during the summer. The sculptor had no money, no commissions, and his galleries had been shut down, yet he seemed remarkably content.

"Il travail toujours," marveled Eqrem.

Outside, large abstract pieces, which owed a debt to Henry Moore, took up most of the available space. But it was a series of smaller works that caught my eye – "Cages," which consisted of haunting forms trapped in bars. They were Eqrem's favorites, too.

"The very first sentence of our history books," he sighed, "says we are descendants of Slavs."

Hydajet Hyseni had spent ten years – almost his entire adult life – in prison for "counterrevolutionary activities" – writing and publishing poetry.



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Display

ALI PODRIMJA: *Smile in the Cage*, Published by Dukagjini, Pejë, Kosovo 1994



This book is a lament for the lost century. Podrimja speaks for his people which writhe through the basements of the XX century. "Somewhere on the middle floor, when my neighbor sees me, he opens the door and starts cleaning his cold gun... But the poor man does not know that I, also, have the right to live". Written mostly in 1992, during his several months' stay in Western Europe, these poems are a continuing dialogue with "Europe that was killed by sleep". His voice accuses: "My

But the dictates of the recording angel were what he now obeyed, documenting Serbian abuses for the Council on Human Rights and Freedom. There was no shortage of work for the volunteers in this unheated office.

Hydajet, a thin, dark-haired young man, apologized for not speaking English – a prison legacy, said his elderly translator. They made an unlikely pair. The translator was a former banker (the dismissal of all Albanian bankers had created new opportunities for Arkan), the last person you might expect to find working for an "enemy of the people," as the poet was called. Hydajet's problems, the translator explained, dated back to his university days when a friend published some of his poems--without his knowledge. Soon after, the secret police kidnapped him and took him to a house in the woods; at the end of a lengthy interrogation he was ordered to choose between informing on other students or going to prison. He managed to escape, hiding out for the next four years, in Kosovo and abroad, with his friend, Kadri Zeka, until the secret police assassinated Zeka in Stuttgart. That was when Hydajet joined the student movement, writing poems and articles for their publications.

"Propaganda," he said in English.

March 1981. The first demonstration in Prištinë was a spontaneous affair--a food fight at the university – which spiraled out of control. Student demands for better food, housing, and working conditions gave way to mass protests in towns and villages across the province – and sharper political focus: the province should be granted republican status. The Serbs' worst nightmare thus became the Albanians' rallying cry. Riot police moved in, and for the first time since World War Two Yugoslavs fired on their own countrymen, killing at least a dozen Albanians and wounding hundreds. Martial law was established; half of the adult Albanian population was arrested or reprimanded; some died in detention. It was not long before Hydajet was taken into custody and interrogated for four months.

"The police tortured me in every way imaginable," he said, opening an album of photographs.

I cannot describe the horror I felt looking at these pictures of beaten, murdered, and mutilated Albanians – teenagers, old men, priests, a woman with her ear cut off – which formed the backdrop to Hydajet's recollections of his year in solitary confinement in a Serbian prison. Then he was placed in a cell with murderers and rapists who were ordered to abuse the Albanians. Yet the Serbian prisoners came to see their folly, even banding together with the Albanians to fight the guards. We found a common language, said the poet, whose hero was Adem Demaçi, the Albanian's Mandela. After twenty-eight years of imprisonment, Demaçi still believed the Albanians' enemy was the Serbian government, not the Serbian people. I would rather kill my own son than someone else, said Demaçi. What Hydajet learned in prison was that the Serbs and Albanians were in the same fix.

"It's all a prison here," he said, closing the album. "You just don't see the bars. I'm convinced the Serbs in Kosova will understand the truth one day. My only fear is that will be too late, and the government will repeat the tragedy of Bosnia. As we say, Arkan didn't come here for fun."

More aggrieved men and women filed into the room. Foreign human rights workers were recording stories, in French and German – of a woman beaten in front of her children, of a man shot for selling cigarettes. The poet gave me copies of several lists of missing and murdered Albanians.

"We are determined to find a peaceful solution," he said, "but the people are beginning to think freedom must be fought for. They say that if we don't fight we'll be the only ones who don't get their land. You must

beware of a patient man when he finally becomes angry."

My hands were shaking as I wrote, and I was having trouble catching my breath.

"I hope the next time we meet we can talk about poetry," said Hydajet before we parted.

The banker escorted me back to my hotel, bidding me farewell when we came within eyesight of the building. On your next visit, he said, please stay at my house. It's not much, but at least it's not as dangerous as the Grand. And then he vanished into the crowd.

Shoeshiners were doing a brisk business. A line had formed at a kiosk named McDonald's. On every corner policemen wearing flak jackets were pointing their automatic weapons at passers-by. I went to the National Library, a modernist building enclosed in ornamental bars, like a giant cage. It was surrounded by mud, the front door was locked, several windows were broken. So much for that.

I circled the city, peering into empty stores and closed museums, churches and a Muslim cemetery. At dusk I came to a plaza, in the middle of which stood a tall, white tri-pronged monument. All at once the sky was full of blackbirds, thousands upon thousands of blackbirds circling the white spires, cawing hysterically. It was an ominous scene, which brought to mind a distant Sunday morning in Seattle, when I had awakened from a troubling dream, the effects of which I could not shake off. The sky on that spring day had the greenish tinge of an impending hurricane, though the forecast was for clear weather, and from my front porch I saw nothing to suggest a storm brewing – except for the flock of barn swallows flying furiously up and down the street, zigzagging around the apple trees that lined the parking strip. I was staring at the birds, wondering what was going on, when my neighbor opened his door. Did you hear the news? he cried. Mount St. Helens had erupted.

The cackling blackbirds (reincarnated Serbian warriors, according to local legend) settled on the roofs of the nearby apartment buildings. I did not want to spend another minute here—or in Kosovo, for that matter—but before going I had to learn the name of the monument. Off to one side of the plaza was a handsome young couple, and it was not until I had introduced myself to them that I noticed the man's beard; sewn into his leather jacket was a red patch emblazoned with Greater Serbia insignia. Tempted to beg their pardon and leave, nevertheless I went ahead and asked them what the monument was called. The man answered pleasantly enough.

"What does that mean?" I said.

"Togetherness," he replied.

"The three cultures?" I said. "Muslim, Catholic, and Orthodox?"

With a nod of his head he offered to write its name down for me. I opened my notebook, and several loose papers fell out – the lists of missing and murdered Albanians that Hydajet Hyseni had given me. My heart was pounding as I skipped over my Prištine interviews in search of a blank page. When he had written out the name in Cyrillic (which I could not read), I thanked him profusely.

"Another time," he said, meaning, I presume, "Any time."

The blackbirds flew up into the sky again and just as quickly resettled on the roofs. Over a mosque's loudspeaker came the chanting of a muezzin calling the faithful to prayer. MIG fighter jets buzzed the city. Under the circumstances the Serb's slip of the tongue seemed appropriate.



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body wakes up every day among you as a terrible torso of civilization". But the poet winds up the watch for awakening: "Inside awareness Motherland always awakes". The first edition of this book in Albanian and German language was published in 1993, by Wieser Verlag from Austria, and was republished in Tirana, too. Our edition is more complete since the author gave a second edition to the book and added new poems.

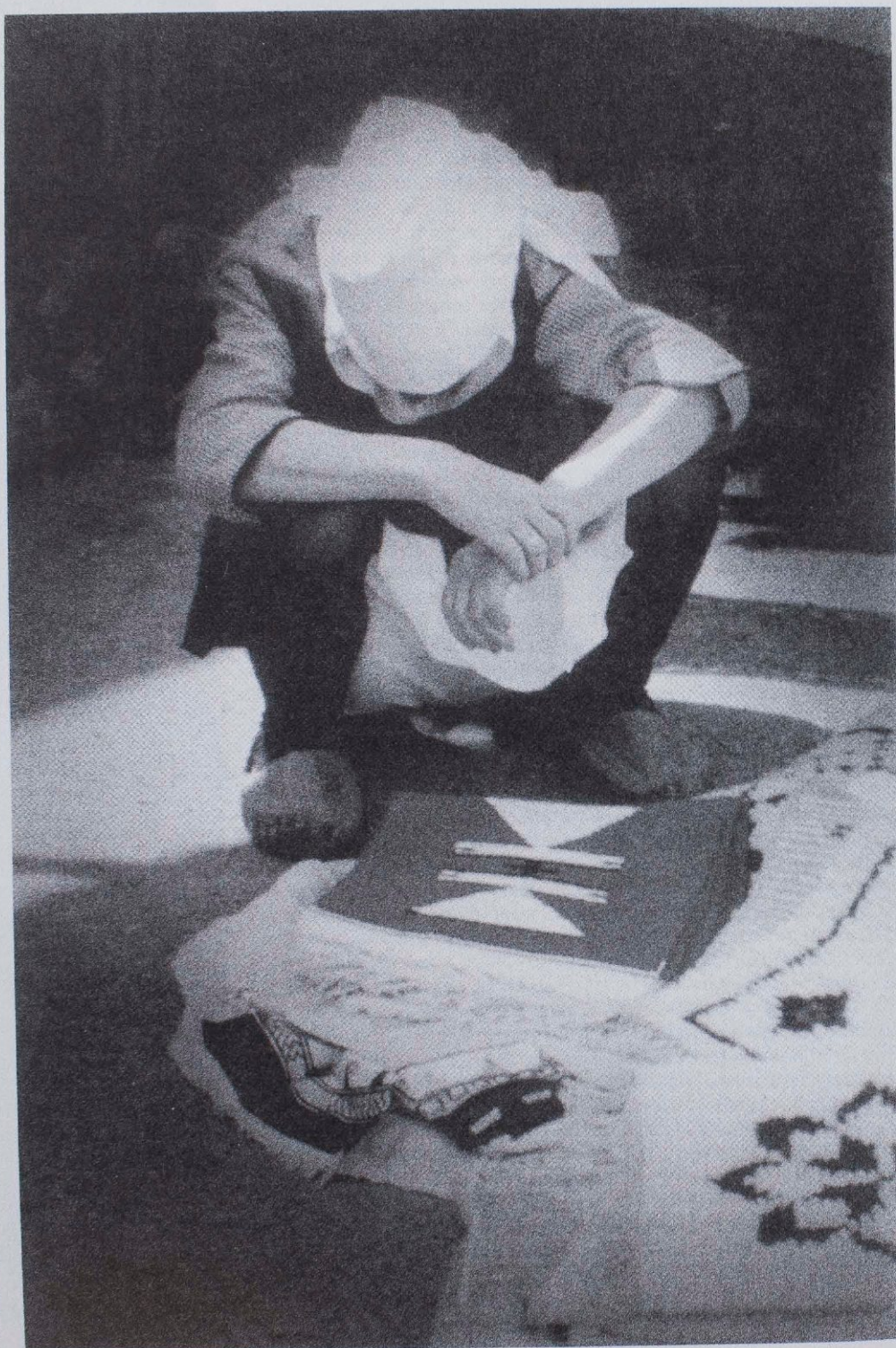
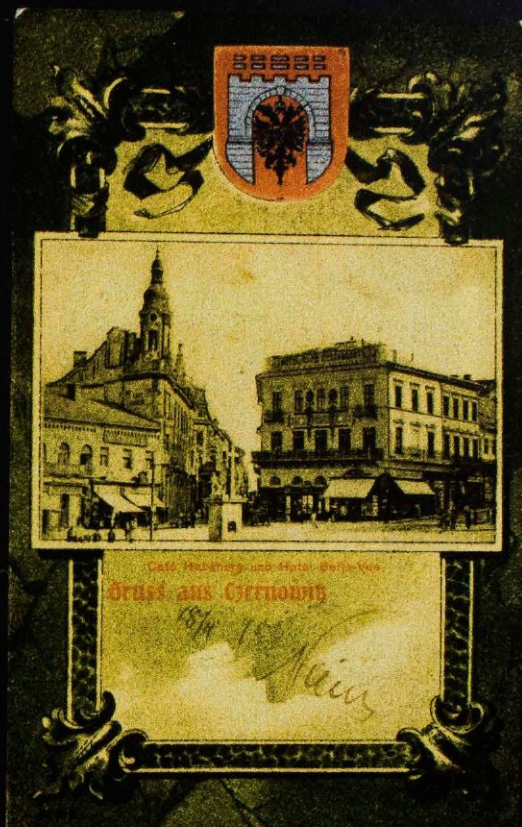


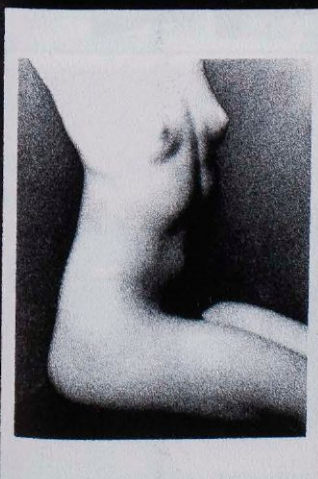
Photo: Afrim Spahiu

*Members of the flying
Café Europa
use to send postcards to
one another.*

Café Europa



CARNECI
MERRILL
DEBELJAK
MACHEJ
KIELAR
CZYŻEWSKI

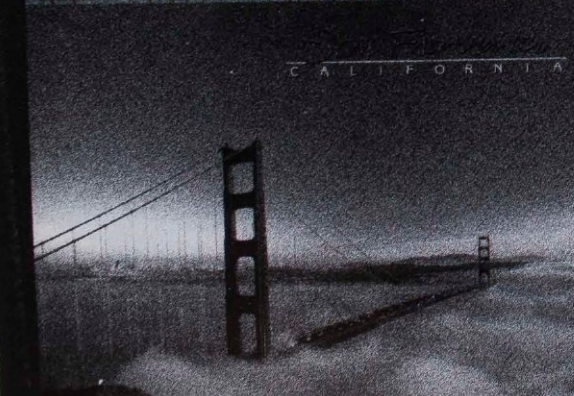




DUM KRAHA U ČERNÉ MATKY BOŽÍ



Ljubljana 1906



MAGDA CARNECI

Poems

Translated by Adam J. Sorkin & Dennis O'Driscoll



The Blood Which Enters

The blood which enters the world
and the blood which leaves
whoever donates it and whoever receives
from whatever veins into our veins
above all the vessels of the body
It's a sea in its own right

a silent sea
poured into capillaries of glass
in the depths of a cell
in elements and stars
at the very heart of every word

less corruptible
than metal or fire
a silent sea a wisp of wind
paving the way for resurrection

Take from me, take all my blood.

Translated by Dennis O'Driscoll with the poet

MAGDA CARNECI was born in 1956 in Gîrleni (Romania); poet (*Hypermatière* 1980, *Un silence assourdissant* 1984, *Chaosmos* 1992), essayist and translator from French, English and Italian; art history professor at Bucharest University and author of several books on the subject (including *The Romanian Art in the 80s*, *Texts on Post-Modernism*, *The Discourse of Force and Imagination: the Romanian art in the time of the communist rule*), author of anthologies, exhibition curator, conference organiser.

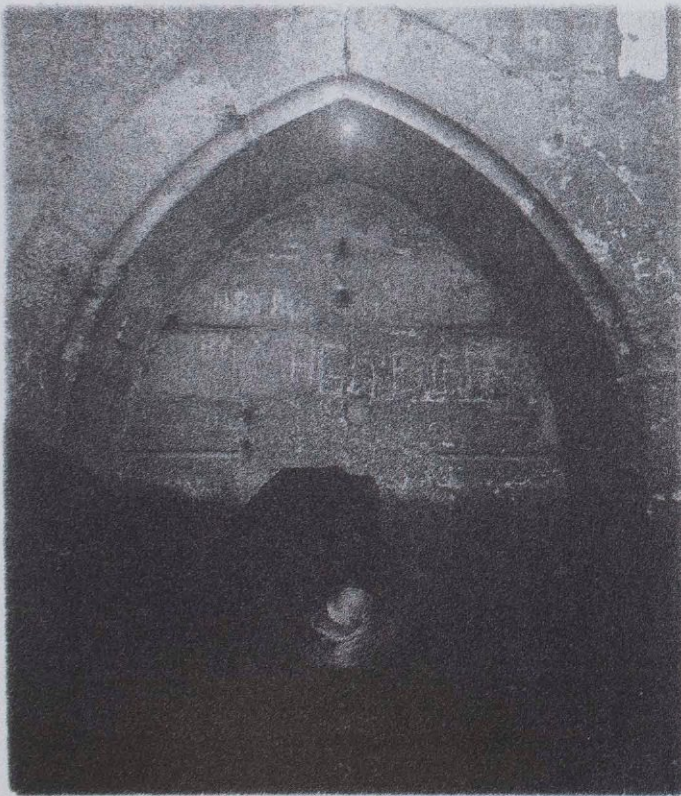
nessed or that had taken place just before we were born and whose glow can still be seen is the beginning of our Central-European identity. And let us not be afraid of the name "new barbarians". To a great extent the name is true independently of whether our predecessors spoke the same language or a completely different one. It is not only destruction that barbarians bring, but also a potential for new blood.

The traveller exploring Central-Europe has for many years been immersed in the twilight and that experience of termination and the following vacuum have let him feel the community of that space, feel this land as a whole. The space might have never existed as a real entity. It is only the end of this world and the vacuum it has left that have revealed the existence of an entire spiritual continent.

Somewhere in the periphery the traveller has started a new chapter of his life by adapting, for cultural activities, a school and a temple that have survived the annihilation of the old civilisation. An old poet coming back across the ocean once visited those parts. They met: a barbarian starting a life anew, and a refugee from Atlantis coming back to his homeland from before the end of the world, as he always remembered it. The old man was curious about the new life that was being born. He was careful not to apply an old cliché to the world he found himself in, still a different world. He did not emanate bitterness about what had been lost, he wanted to assist the new. The young one, whom the old man's attitude filled with strength and faith, was keeping the old man company in his trips to the places where he was born, spent his childhood, his studies and where he

grew up. The young one needed the old one's presence, words and books to interpret the place where he had come to live, to interpret himself. He understood that the end of the world, which passed almost unnoticed, has sealed the place he is now living at. He was a newcomer who settled at the gate to the old city, who could not get inside without finding and understanding a mysterious code. Is the whole of Central Europe such a sealed land? We live here within the borders of national states and remain in the peripheries of a spiritual continent, for the entrance code of Central Europe is a civilisation code. Our identity cannot be created ex nihilo, in a monody of a national key and apart from what had existed before. For identity always emerges from the place that is unsealed and accessible only to the heart.

Photo: Stanislaw J. Woś

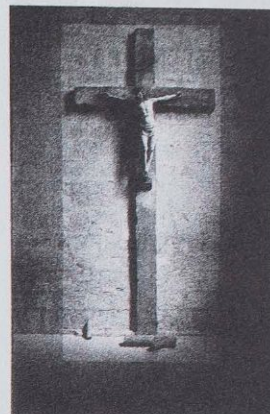


April 1998

Translated by Tomasz Wyszowski

ALEŠ DEBELJAK

After the Great Utopia: The Relevance of National Culture and the Challenge of Globalisation



Dur troublesome fin-de-millennium seems to be a time-period marked by many "ends". Francis Fukuyama promotes "the end of history", Jean Baudrillard advances the thesis of "the end of the social", Daniel Bell talks about "the end of ideology", Michel Foucault analyses "the end of the subject" while many left-wing writers pontificate on "the end of the nation". If anything, however, the end of the 20th century is experiencing the end of the idea of a nation-state, which is gradually falling prey to the global circuit of anonymous transnational capital. While the nation-state, the modern form of which grew out of the 19th European emancipatory movements, had been in a position to successfully supervise economic tendencies throughout its territory up until the Second World War, such control is today nearly impossible. In light of the mega-corporations's efforts to establish a global market beyond any specific borders – linguistic, political, ethnic or religious – with their tacit spelling out of the rules for the operations of individual national governments, the "national" source of capital is not only unidentifiable but also utterly irrelevant. It seems that culture is the last remaining sphere that may be able to preserve some of the features of a specific national experience. I will draw on the case of Slovenia to demonstrate, *pars pro toto*, how it is possible to reconcile the particular national tradition with the universal mechanisms of globalisation.

A nation with a fully developed cultural identity of course has no problem in facing the challenges and influences from the outside. Indeed, facing up to different mentalities and forms of behaviour is the only attitude Slovenians might adopt in order to avoid succumbing to the alluring sirens of self-sufficiency, provincial xenophobia and consequent national withering. The "other" becomes an enemy only when we are unsure of our own identity. In the case of Slovenia, however, there should be little doubt about the existence of such specific national identity. The accomplishments of the leading writers, artists, and other creative minds provide the Slovenian nation with a strong sense of identity regardless of a small number of people that make up the total Slovenian population. I hasten to add that a small number of people, two million, does not necessarily make a nation small. Moreover: it would not be impossible to argue that the metaphysical smallness of a nation may be measured first and foremost in

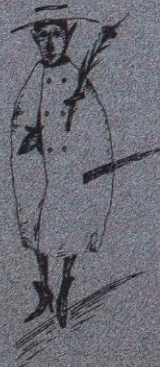
flying *Café Europa*

*Somewhere
at the crossroads of Time
There must be
"Café Europe" ...
Who should you meet there but ...
everyone?*

Tadeusz Kantor

The starting point for this enterprise was the idea to set up a literary café. Just that. But a genuine one. Let its name be Café Europe, as it formerly was in Chernovtsy, Sarajevo, Vienna or Paris. Late Tadeusz Kantor wrote a text entitled "Café Europe" and it is not worth overlooking. The thing is to have a place for people to meet in a possibly relaxed atmosphere to hold disputes and arguments over artistic and ideological issues. Literary cafés to a large extent contributed to development of the cultural life in the 19th and the early 20th century. Today they are almost extinct. However, the need for places to motivate artistic circles: to issue artistic manifestos, to present a chance for ideological debates and face-to-face contact for artistic human-beings. It seems to me that the closer to the end of the century and the more power the modern communication technology exercises over us, the more we long for a literary café - be it cramped, smoky and bustling, but cosy and teeming with life.

K. Cz.



Chaosmos

In the end
disorder reaches perfection
languages dissolve into the music of wind
chaos attains pure splendor.

In the end out of the whirlwinds whirlpools evolution
the world screeches to a halt a fixed image
waters skies cities hang suspended
the entire universe consummates
in a daring and profound
photograph.

He holds up the print still wet
examines it for a long, long time
examines himself for as long a time
and gulps it down.

Translated by Adam J. Sorkin with the poet

Couple Poem

1.

The old woman is telling the much younger woman
about her past: tender red lips and
foamy, hot rapids which now she can look upon only while weeping
In the ill-furnished room time slows down slows down
turns back: stops short for a suspended instant
and suddenly reveals a ghastly countenance.
At that moment the young woman sees the huge translucent Vein
through which she and the old woman and
the impoverished room and the meager, sordid things around them
together with the entire city and frothing cascades
like a colorless blood incomprehensible a monotonous murmuring
flow out of a bottomless obscure mouth
into another dark mouth.

2.

The old woman is telling the much younger woman
about her past: savage diseases and cruel operations
chilling complaints about medicines and death.
In the austere room the young woman absentmindedly listens to her:
she is thinking of love love and all at once
she would love everything around her the chairs, the table
the old woman and her decrepit, wretched things
the grimy window the city.

And suddenly she imagines death
 with a strange, unbridled joy; a construction
 at her overawed heart a fierce fiery wave floods her body
 as in puberty when in a secret fever she daydreamed
 of her first man her first love-making.
 At that very moment the young woman sees
 a dazzling Blood
 incomprehensible foamy flow out
 of a bottomless obscure mouth
 into another vast illuminated mouth.



Magda Carneci

Café Europa

Translated by Adam J. Sorkin with the poet

Hyacintha

Her name was Hyacintha, *iacinta*,
 name of the spicy flower of spring unfortunate melancholy ephebe
 diffusing his unripe blood throughout the countryside
 and name of a Christian martyr
 her name was *iacinta*, how strange, hyacinth, I was exalted
 as it from breathing in her perfume suffused in chloroform
 her name was Hyacintha but she ignored everything
 and cared for nothing.

She lay in the white hospital bed,
 had four children, didn't know anything about sex, genitals,
 cycles, pills, all those mysterious things,
 she was sallow and thin, had straw-colored hair,
 almost a peasant, was afraid of the lancet and of blood,
 desired to have no more children. I asked her,
 do you know how it feels to be a hyacinth?
Iacinta looked at me, so startled.

She lay in the white hospital bed
 terrorized by her very body ashamed

Just because her name was Hyacintha, *iacinta*,
 spicy flower of spring plucked from snow-covered fields,
 handsome ill-fated ephebe,
 immaculate Christian martyr,
 I taught her about genitals, cycles and pills,
 in the bed full of hyacinth flowers
 I helped her
 to disseminate
 her blood...

Translated by Adam J. Sorkin with the poet

CHRISTOPHER MERRILL

Poems

Three Riddles

A moth eating words? A miracle,
I whispered, discovering a worm
Swallowed our speeches whole,
Devoured ideas in the dark.
And that strange thief stole
No wisdom from his meal.

It hangs like a holster
Under the mater's cloak,
Pierced and piercing.
Praise him for using it -
Quickly lifting his garment -
To light the mouth of the cave!

Covering, uncovering her
Scatched breast, like a poor
Man fingering a diamond
Found in the street - what she felt
In secret, I now feel.
Why else would it sting me?

Because

variation on a theme by Yannis Ritsos

Because the Dead Sea released its hostages - the taste for salt, a rudder
and a sail;
Because a band of Roman slaves, disguised in their master's robes, fled
across the Continent;
Because one manuscript, one waxen shoal of words, burned a
monastery down;
Because the sun spurned the Black Forest, and windmills ground the
peasants into the earth, into the air, into the voice of the boy who
cried wolf;
Because the crowd hissed at the empty stage, and the prompter drank
himself to sleep, and the diva hid in the pit;
Because we let barbed wire replace our wooden faces and fences;
Because a scream left a trail through the ruined air;
Because I followed that trial into the woods, where my hands dissolved
in smoke and rain;
Because I wandered for days, weeks, until I found himself outside a
walled city, a city abandoned hundreds of years ago;
Because I couldn't scale the walls nor find a way to return to my
homeland, and so I settled along a river in the desert;
Because the river changed course, and its banks crumbled into the dry
bed, where I was on my knees, speechless and afraid;
Because whenever I hike into the desert, I talk and talk and talk;
Because I have never been to the desert;
Because I refuse to follow any trail whose markings are not completely
clear;
Because I distrust signs, guideposts, land- and seamounts;
Because on my single visit to the ancient city I rifled the ruins for pot-
sherds and stone tools - and was warned never to return;
Because I heed all warnings, all directives from the crowd;
Because I won't listen to anyone but myself;
Because I love to cry wolf;
Because everything I read smells of smoke;
Because sometimes I wake at night to find my hands covered with salt,
my sheet wrapped around me like a sail;
Because I can't tell this is the desert or the sea;
Because I never learned to read the stars and don't know where we're
heading;
Because of this and more, much more, I hid your name in the well...
and here it is again, filling my cup.



Christopher Merrill

Café Europa

ALEŠ DEBELJAK

Poems

Translated by Christopher Merrill & Author

Across the River, to the East

A young roebuck darts across a clearing. The ancient shot,
on a bridge in the disappearing town, reverberates through the age.
So what. Water surges over the riverbank. The Lord of Corridors
throws in a restless night of sleep in the villa by the rivers' confluence.

The empty echo of His steps. The band in the park has gone to sleep.

You,
who survived the camps and cold of the Urals, walk by guards who
look the other way.
They flesh you a secret sign. And you glide across courtyards paved
with grey bones.
You crossed the last border long ago and learned the fundamental les-
son

of the world: only he who accepts the painful offering survives.
Ignore the flowers' architecture! Strike as hard as He has dreamed.
So that a skull crumbles like a vanilla cookie on the bottom of a bowl.
Strike!

So that the groans of children and angels glitter on the blade, reviving
your instincts. Let the tribe recognize itself (if there is no other way)
in the wound, let the last wall of the fortress fall to pieces.

Bosnian Elegy

For Miljenko Jergović

Sing, young poet, touch my burning skin, darkened by long treks through the wild hills to the ends of the world. Don't give up now, though the gunners' fevered sights are trained on the stained facades of libraries and palaces constant reminders of a cruel century.

Just list what remains: flocks of swallows twittering under ruined arches and bell towers, the eternal wisdom of the French novel we read in the bomb shelter, the blond peach fuzz which disappears from the baby's earlobes, dull thuds from the Pannonian plains.

The smell of gunpowder irritates the lungs. We haven't crossed the threshold. Speak, then, when the pools of unconsecrated water ripple. Rings glow in the depths. The past rejoices.

Believe me: I'm ready, sing to me for the last time of love's temptations, of the mysteries of a woman's shadow, of marble stairs. Sing, as you sang before your hair turned gray!

Lord of Tears

Let it be: may your ears never hear the fluttering of jays covering the gutters of the watchtowers, like heaven's fruit. It rots in silence. May your steps measure the bottomless depths of the academy's drawing room: here an old dream is revived in the breath of emissaries

from distant embassies. The dream of endless land, where the same name is spoken with the same dread. May your spit harden into crystal. May your hand caress no one. May the heroes who crossed the Illyrian hills and lay down in the dunes by the warm sea tell your future. Inevitably alone.

May the rising tide wash over the ruins the armies left behind. May the commanders listen with deadly seriousness to the orders given by memory, which thickens like wax. You will use it

to seal up the legacy of pain growing steadily in the collected works of the court poets. They will flee with you to shores of the divided island. It will be too late when you kneel down before a cruel star.



Aleš Debeljak

Café Europa

Incantation

The new arc of your eyebrows draws a splendid arch
in the air, supported by the down of the angels, the ones who guard
the doors to language. It's only rival is the grace of the mute ballerina.
Imperfect verbs: like the green snow you see now for the first time.

How it lies on a mountain range you cross in an instant.
Like a comet flashing from body to body. Your little arms embrace
the whole planet. You question the secret of the fool moon. You're
a stranger to passers-by, a gift to me: from the touch of two languages

your will grows. You take in everything, like a viaduct
boldly stretching from mother to daughter. You make
agnostic see: a quilt of lightning is more beautiful

then a field of buckwheat. Even I was struck. You were washed clean
when you revealed yourself to me: the eternal word. I admit it:
I'm grateful to you for guiding me safely through the throes of labour.

Night Bride

Your breath is intoxicating: fresh as an olive branch
slipped into the confessional. You're the funnel a typhoon
which forces demons and saints to speak the same language. And
stand in two orderly rows. Are you coming? The migration

of matter from the dead to living means nothing to you. You bring
such beautiful unrest when you whirl around in your orbit. As if
uninterested in the division following ancient roads through the capitals
This is our home today. Maybe tomorrow, too, if we still know how to
love.

You're sitting on the world, which bursts at the seams. You're
as thick as honey. Your whispered imperative must be taken seriously:
to be. But a ghost train across the old continent, through

diplomatic corridors, carrying guests to a wedding. One guest is fated
to wear a crown of thorns - and then to die of it. I alone will wait for
all
the faces to recognize themselves in one wrapped in a translucent cloth.

ZBIGNIEW MACHEJ

Poems

Translated by Czesław Miłosz & Robert Hass,
Andrzej Sosnowski,



Orchards in July

Water from cold springs
and glittering minerals
tirelessly wander.
Patient, unceasing,
they overcome granite, layers
of hungry gravel, iridescent
precincts of clay. If they abandon
themselves to the black
roots, it's only to go
up, as high as possible
through wells hidden
under the bark of fruit trees. Through
the green touched with gray of leaves,
fallen petals of white
flowers with rosy edges,
apples, heavy with sweet redness,
and their bitterish seeds.
Oh, waters from cold
springs and glittering
minerals! You are awaited
by a cirrus cloud with a sunny
fluid outline
and by the abyss of blue
which has been rinsed
in the just wind.

Translated by Czesław Miłosz and Robert Hass

ZBIGNIEW MACHEJ was born on 17 August 1958 in Cieszyn (Poland); poet and translator. Poetry books: *Trzeci Brzeg* (The Third Bank) 1992, *Legendy Praskiego Metra* (Legends of Prague Metro) 1996; translator from Czech and Slovak; former deputy director of Polish Culture Institute in Prague; currently working in the festival office "Kraków 2000"; member of editorial staff "Literature in the World" and "Krasnogruda".

Sleeping Muse

Only the head remains,
a bird's white egg, life's
secret inside it.
Her eyebrows -
the simplest symbol
of the lily, an ideogram
of the lotus.
Invisible, closed
lids, a flat nose
and a vague trace
of the mouth.
The face is asleep.
From forehead to chin
a line: a scar
of external form,
a scratch that divides
this dream and joints it
to the world.

* * *

Motionless days, cold
and sunless, their height
marked by a rook's flight
over the park where last year's
leaves lie rotting, and over
the suburban field where kids
set fire to dead grass
again

A November Sunday

To lie on the pavement. To be
at the bottom of this puddle,
dark as lead. To rot
at the curb, in cold mud
as a poplar leaf. To lie
on the pavement, under a street lamp.
At the bottom of the puddle.
As a bus ticket or a newspaper scrap
no one will read.

MARZANNA BOGUMIŁA KIELAR

Poems

Translated by Mia Dintinjana



Sacra Conversazione

In evening silence.
how come you're at my side suddenly, present in trembling and in
trust?
The soft bindweed of touch as it before a journey
so inevitable, how come?
Like fragrance close
the tempting hollow of the palm, as you
from all things, good and bad,
and their exquisite, brief abundance
slowly take your pick: a handful of black berries
and they shut my mouth
these huckleberries

Nudity

tree branches pasted with white and deep rose-flushed tinge,
with buzzing bees;
the day's bosom has unfolded widely in the sun,
in the frail breeze, in fragrances of freshly harvested
meadow and the long-stemmed chamomilla on its southern side.
The overgrown, darkening edge of the pond.
Your hand in my hair and on the neck, tenderly,
gently. All of its fragileness (and trembling?).
The nudity of leaves breaking open, thickening
greenness, fingers, laying bare a maidenly shoulder.

MARZANNA BOGUMIŁA
KIELAR was born on 8 February
1963 in Goldap; poet (*Sacra con-
versazione*, 1992); graduated from
the Philosophy Department at
Warsaw University; assistant in
Methodology Institute in Higher
School of Special Pedagogy in
Warsaw, currently working on her
doctoral dissertation; member of
editorial staff of "Krasnogruda".

In the shadow

Droning and fragrance fill the air,
the chestnut trees have barely blossomed, they stand
heavy in moist greenness; secretly
you're turning me on,
a ray of sunshine, reaching me;
like Susanna, young and chaste, death
is bathing before me
murmuring, singing to herself, her hair twisted in a bun,
she's fastening it up,
with small bone combs, showing her neckline, for my mouth?
With her make-up on?
From behind the house the smell of wood is carried on the wind,
the massive pine logs, tumbled aside the path in cords;
the smell of pine pitch
stronger before nightfall,
in the notepad a telephone number that needs crossing out
- like a colourful, embroidered pillow the day retreats
from beneath the head

* * *

A lake, graced in graphite splendour before dusk,
at the close of a hot day;
the varied play of hues and shadows,
only there's less and less light; the twilight thickens
from the forest line on the opposite shore
filling the air with cool, smoky mist;
blackness is probing deeper
and the landscape is closing up
like sex - to yield in, softly open and
embrace us both, absorbed in each other, on towels
thrown upon the grass.

Temptation

a mere instant

what bewildered joy, when you finally drive up
bringing your stuff in from the old
run-down van, what joy like waterfall
all the engenders this perpetuation
gentle cobwebs of light under the chestnut trees
a discarded scrap of core and the way you inhale smoke, half closing
your eyes,
as ashes fall on your shirt and you quickly shake them off
the conjunction of yellow asters, clouds of dust upon the street
and such celebration because you're near
the swallows alighting downward, looks like rain, there's less and less
sky
and the light still pouring only from the cracks and rifts
in long streams;

to memorise
these fragments that can not be held
like nothing

Midges

The clear, dark blue of evening sky, the snow,
little red airplane dots above my head
are but memory now, a faded needlework
from recent journey.
The circle connects and the simplest of gestures
can emerge anew: saying hello, touching one's lips,
shaking the snowflakes off
together with the clothes
in the misty, amberlike air



Marzanna Kielar

Café Europa

KRZYSZTOF CZYŻEWSKI

The Temptation of a Poet



1.

What does this absent look matter, this look, which misses my look - that of a lover, who looks for reciprocation and is impatient to satisfy his desire? What does this look matter, which sweeps the shape of the world, resorts to itself, turns down any intimacy, comes from far away and understands nothing? And is anything tempting in it for those who sing the shape of the world?

In the monastery of St. Mark in Florence, in the very first cell on the left on the first floor, I witnessed the drama of looks that will never meet. "Noli me tangere". The fresco by Fra Angelico is saturated with the abundant nature and blazing red of Mary Magdalene, who - just like "blood that gushes from between the roots" - inclines towards Him with her whole self. "Do not hold onto me, Mary, do not./ I am still impregnated/ with the scent of nard left by the deathly sheet./ I have not yet returned to my Father" (Roman Brandstatter: Jesus speaks to Mary Magdalene). On his way to the Father, he will not cast a look at her, he will pronounce "Noli me tangere" and will become an unreachable remoteness to her.

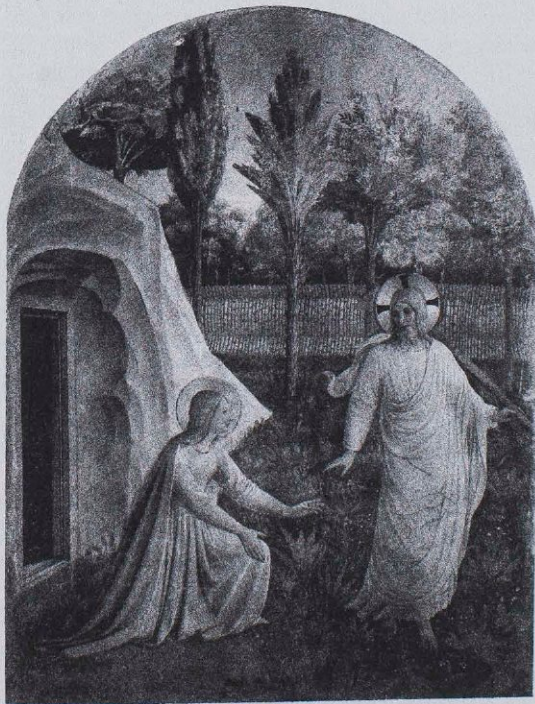
There is little room in the cell, filled with the white of the walls and the light coming from a window towards the only fresco, which perfectly fits the aisleless vault with its upper arch. It is here that, with their prayers, Fra Angelico and his Dominican brothers liberated the paints from weight and vividness, by lighting them up from the inside. Thus, the onlooker looks in the light, which indeed is a look in another form of existence. This space and this light make you strongly

concentrate on the fresco, which is "punto di fuga" - as the masters of quattrocento used to put it - the place, where all the lines of vision focus. This makes me participate in the drama of looks, which takes place in the cells of the monastery, the looks, which lead me into temptation - I follow them, turn to them, I - all-inflamed - cross them and feel a strong desire. But they do not reciprocate, they remain absent. As if they were feeling the touch of death, or the touch of another life. For a moment, I become Saint Dominic, who can see the Annunciation from behind angel Gabriel's wings on the fresco in the third cell. Did Hermes see the same in Hades, when Orpheus looked back and unveiled Eurydice's face? How moving is the aloofness of Mary's look, her remoteness - so unexpected to me looking for closeness. At the same time there is bliss to become the angel's look towards her at this presented moment, the look that can see in the light (at any other occasion I would have to close my eyes looking in the light). Mary does not look at the angel; although she is wholly immersed in his presence, she has never looked at him. How is it possible to be present and be together without the senses employed? How can an individual exist without touching, seeing and without sympathy?

In a poem by Rainer Maria Rilke "The Annunciation" the angel turns his young face to her and she reciprocates. Their looks "merged together (...) the sight - with the seen; the eyes - with their shine./ Nothing but the place and the moment./ This is frightening. And they both got

frightened." And we understand the fact, that another poem of the series "Mary's Life" is entitled "Joseph's Suspicions". Meanwhile, in the Dominican cell of the Annunciation, they are both different, incomprehensible. Everything there "rings different from desire" (Cvetayeva in her letter to Rilke). The angel just exists; he does not even talk, neither kneel, nor make any gestures to convey the message, as he did in other frescoes by Fra Angelico. Mary, as if she had become a root herself. She has a faraway look in her eyes. This is the way we are accustomed to describe people, who have become inaccessible to us.

Just then, in the cell, for the first time, I sensed the temptation of a poet. Concealed behind the angel's wings, he turns to Her. With his "flesh made of pupils/ under so many a lid" (Rilke: An Elegy to Marina Cvetayeva) awaits her look, to unite with her forever. But she leaves. For a moment, he can see her face and her posture. Strange though they seem to him and subjected to an unknown rule, he will miss them. He becomes the lover of a leaver. He will never possess her and never feel at home. A poet cannot have the faraway look in his eyes. But eternally striving for her - who is incomprehensible and receding - he will transcend himself. For "He follows the voice, when he does transcend (Rilke: Sonnets to Orpheus, V).



And when he leaves the cell for the broad daylight, he will be mangled by women, for he will remain faithful to the memory of the woman he has become the lover of, or he will commit suicide of his anguish, for he has lost her; or the lightning sent by God will kill him, for he has revealed the secret; or he will start mysteries with his song and word.

2.

"Let the blaze of thought burn your flesh; break off from matter as flames get separated from a tree it has burnt" - Orpheus used to repeat this to his disciple at the temple in Delphi as an instruction that has survived until now. Poets can hear that instruction of their archpriest. But, can they cope with it? They enjoy their mysteries though. The letters from Cvetayeva to Rilke are full of proper instructions for them. A great battlefield between Psyche and Eve. "I have always translated the flesh into the soul (be-fleshed it!), the physical love - in order to love it - I have sublimed so much that nothing has remained of it. (...) But I have always been jealous of the flesh: to be sung in such a way! (...) The soul is never loved as the flesh is - at most it is praised. The flesh is loved with all one's soul. Who has ever got lost for the soul?"

Cvetayeva is a real Amageddon of soul and flesh. Psyche, even if she were winning an innumerable number of times, she will never perish Eve. The gift of a poet is the flesh, which is always transcended in the mysteries. "This is your tamed burden, this is your gift." - as Rilke put this in a letter to her. She called him "German Orpheus". The tamed burden is the great temptation of a poet. These are the mysteries that he starts with his song and word.

The same could have been seen in Rome in 1904, when Rilke was writing the poem "Orpheus, Eurydice, Hermes". The marble relief from the 5th century B.C. representing all of them, by a Greek sculptor Kallimach, had disappeared. But three Roman copies from the 1st or 2nd century AD had survived. Rilke surely saw one of them in Louvre, when he worked with his master, Rodin, who also sculptured Orpheus. The most time, though, he



Krzysztof Czyżewski
Café Europa



spent studying a copy of the relief in Roman Villa Albani, and then also in Museo Nazionale in Naples, where he stopped in the same year in summer on his way to Germany. Then he saw her, Eurydice, at the moment when Orpheus turned to her and unveiled her face. One hand she gave to Hermes, the other one she placed on her husband's shoulder. Although she is so close as to turn her head a bit and drink from his lips, she escapes his eyes. She does not belong to him. The very moment has become "punto di fuga" in Rilke's poem. The meeting of a tempted poet with his so-beloved, for whom he exerted all his poetic powers, for whom "the whole world was made of lamentation" and "the lamenting skies with odd stars". Rilke has not written a poem about the miraculous power of Orpheus's song, begot by the agony after his wife's death; nor has he written it about a journey to the underworld and the defeat of death; nor about our weak nature, overwhelmed by desires we cannot control; nor about his turning round, which is at the heart of the drama, about breaking his vows and his doom - as it was in the case of Lot's wife turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back as she fled Sodom. All of these are just traces, which only let us come closer to them, after the turning round and the unveiling. It is Hermes that has led them here, the god who continually transcends the boundaries between the two worlds, the psychopomp, who

conducts souls to meet their doom. What was the temptation, which has drawn the poet before her face? A woman "full of the deathly greatness", "untouchable in her new virginity", whose "sex was gently folded/ as a young flower at dusk". She couldn't recognise him. "She was not that fair-haired woman,/ whose name used to crop up in the poet's songs". But it was him, Orpheus - the one who can heal with light ("just think - Cvetayeva wrote to Rilke - a different world, different light, things lit differently) that with his song of love called her to that road, where she tamed the death. And she went leaving him abandoned in the flames of blood, longing and the creative power. She went "ringing different from desire", looking from inside the darkness in light, under "the lamenting skies with odd stars".

He then met her who left and settled down on the other side. He himself will not be allowed to settle there. Never will a poet's work become his home. It is the temptation of a lover who leaves with a faraway look in her eyes that will remain. He will transcend to her.

3.

This is not, however, the end of the story of the two lovers. Isn't it striking that they always, even when put far apart, remain together? And could one think of them as distant? Thus maybe their separation is incorporated in some kind of unity?

This would be in accordance with the Orphic mysteries. Let us then stop at Rainer Maria Rilke in 1904, when he started them. In his letter to Lou Andreas-Salomé of January 15, he shared his impressions he got after seeing a Roman wall painting from the Pompeian period discovered in the ruins of an ancient villa in the vicinity of Boscoreale and put out in Paris for sale: "It represented a woman sitting in silence, with a solemn face, listening intently to a man... (...) He was a type of traveller, who had just crossed the threshold of this composed, dignified woman's home, a foreigner visiting a noble lady in her homeland (...) as if he was still listening, as if he was waiting for the unexpected, which would have altered everything, his feet impatient to continue marching, never at peace, even more agitated than his hands.

Thus, the picture represented movement and peace, not to contradict them, but to reveal the likeness, a complete unity, which was slowly closing like a healing wound..."

Translated by: Tomasz Wyszowski

STOCKHOLM - EUROPAS KULTURHUVUDSTAD 1998 OCH DET ATERFUNNA EUROPA



Kulturhuvudstadsprocessen får i och med genomförandet i Stockholm 1998 sin fjortonde plats i Europa. Så långt norrut har man tidigare inte omfarrat platser med beskrivningen "kulturhuvudstad". Man kanske kan se detta som en ny form av djärvhet i synen på den europeiska identiteten och som ett område i kontinentens utkanter.

Kulturhuvudstadsåret inneår upptäcker av kulturmarkaer som leder både inåt - mot den egna kulturen - och utåt - mot världen omkring. Ibland sammanfaller allt detta i ett mentalt landskap, som också omfarrar gemensamma minnen och förhoppningar om en gemensam framtid. För oss är **Landscape X** ett projekt som tydliggör sådana frågeställningar utifrån teaterns tillspetsade situationer och därför av nödvändighet utgör en viktig del av det stycke "kott" som formar den europeiska gestalten med alla dess sär och blånader. Sverige måste där vara en del av denna kulturella kropp, som den tar sig inför ett tusenårsskifte. Att vara en del av detta Europa med sina folkgrupperingar i förändring är lika nödvändigt som att också föra fram den egna identiteten och dess rotter.

Beate Sydhoff

programdirektor Stockholm - Europas Kulturhuvudstad 1998

Stockholm - Europas Kulturhuvudstad 1998 presenterar under 1998 ett program där Sverige och världen är både utgångspunkt och mål. Avsikten är att långsiktigt förbättra kulturens ställning och att göra den tillgänglig för så många som möjligt.

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Statens kulturråd

The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs

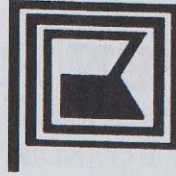
The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs is one of several government agencies responsible for implementing national cultural policy and for allocating funds for various cultural purposes. The National Council for Cultural Affairs also follows developments in the cultural sphere and carries out studies and other tasks on behalf of the government.

The National Council for Cultural Affairs' area of responsibility covers theatre, dance, music, literature, public libraries, cultural periodicals, museums, exhibitions and visual arts. One of the Council's main tasks is to allocate grants to cultural institutions, organisations and groups. The Council does not, however, allocate funds to individuals. Altogether the Council has about SEK 1.2 billion to allocate in one year. Most of these funds go to institutional activities.

The Council also issues informational and statistical publications such as *Kulturen i siffror* (Culture in Figures), which has issues on various themes and contains a lot of very interesting statistics about our reading habits, all kinds of figures about the theatre, the content and range of music and dance, etc. *Kulturpolitik i praktiken* (Swedish Cultural Policy, available in English) is a survey of how state cultural policy functions. *Kulturkatalogen* (the Culture Catalogue) is a guide to government authorities, institutions and organisations within the field of culture. *Kulturtidskriften* (the Culture Journal) is a catalogue of the various cultural periodicals that exist and *Lyssna* (Listen) is a list of the sound recordings that have received support from the Council for Cultural Affairs. Studies and evaluations are published in the series *Rapport från Statens Kulturråd* (Report from the National Council for Cultural Affairs)

As regards the role of the National Council for Cultural Affairs in an international perspective it can be noted that the Council is primarily engaged in activities that take place within Sweden. There are, however, possibilities of receiving grants through the Council for certain activities concerning international cultural exchange, as is the case with Intercult. The rule still applies that it is ensembles, groups, institutions and organisations that may be awarded grants and that the grants are mainly given to practising artists. The grants principally cover travel costs for foreign tours, special guest performance exchanges and participation in festivals. In certain cases it is possible to obtain grants to participate in international conferences.

More information on grants for international cultural exchange can be found in the folder *3 vägar till internationellt kulturstöd* (3 ways to grants for international cultural activities), which can be ordered from the National Council for Cultural Affairs, telephone 08/679 72 60, fax 08/611 13 49 or e-mail: info@kur.se The National Council for Cultural Affairs' home page can be found at: <http://www.kur.se>



The Polish Institute in Stockholm

The Polish Institute in Stockholm is located in a beautiful two storey villa, one of the most beautiful buildings of the 18th c. in Stockholm. It was built in 1889 for major Claes Adelskjöld who, being under the influence of his Mediterranean journeys, designed it in both the antique and the renaissance styles. An architect Wilhelm Klemming made its project according to the Majors' etchings. In 1909 the villa was bought by Erik Frisell /Grängesbolag company/. A Swedish architect Ferdinand Boberg executed several alterations in its interiors.

From the very beginning the house has been a place of frequent and lively meetings of the Swedish cultural circles. In the years 1926 - 1938 the Swedish writer Gustav Hellström lived here and wrote his major novels.

Because of its representative architecture, the interiors of the house have often been used as settings in several Swedish films.

Poland bought the villa in 1973 and made thorough and careful renovations. Accidentally during the renovation unique sculptured ceilings from major Adelskjöld's times have been uncovered. Today they still decorate the salons of the villa.

The villa was sold to new proprietors /Poland/ under one and only condition: because of its role in the Swedish culture and its architectural value it would continue to be used as a cultural place. The Polish Institute has met these requirements and continues splendidly the long lasting tradition of the place as a cultural centre.

The Institute's ample activities are in the first place connected with the promotion of Polish culture and education. In cooperation with the Swedish Institute and other Swedish institutions our aim is to promote Polish culture in Sweden.

The Polish Institute organizes symposia and discussion panels which help both countries to understand and deepen knowledge about one another. We are always there to assist those who wish to present Polish culture in their local environment. Through exhibitions of Polish paintings, graphic art., posters or concerts, discussions, lectures or seminars and film shows, we promote both the past achievements and new trends in the Polish culture. We address different cultural environments and tastes.

We lend books, video films, slides, newspapers and give out free information materials.

We like the project **LANDSCAPE X** and will gladly help you to give it more publicity. You have rightly picked up some of the top avantgarde theatres from Poland /greatly appraised by theatre critics/. As you rightly put it, the Teatr Osmego Dnia has grown in its legend. It did perform in the communist Poland and now it will be interesting to see how it operates in new conditions, in a free country, in plain liberty, which subjects it will take up now and in which form. It fits well one of the themes of the project: a change of the political situation in Central Europe and its influence on artists, subject matters and their artistic expression. You have also picked up Mr. Cieslak from "Teatr Rozmaitosci" - Warszawa - one of the best, the most hailed theatre director of the new generation. Gardzienice is famous in Poland and also abroad - one our fringe theatre and also one of the best new scenes that emerged in the last years.



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Road is a non profit organization, founded in 1994 by the Actors Club of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm. The mission of Open Road is to create a fund to support rebuilding and development of culture in war-torn Sarajevo. Today we must continue to open roads between many countries in Europe and work for human rights wherever it is needed. We believe that a free cultural life bridges over ethnical, geographical, religious and other borders. We believe that culture is vital. If it dies, everything that finds expression through it will disappear - dreams, visions, opinions and thoughts. If we loose this, what's left?

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The Employment Office
for workers in the cultural
and media market



Arbetsförmedlingen

Kultur Media

"KULTUR MEDIA" is an employment office which specializes in placement for people who seek cultural and media employment.

Our ambition is to be a natural link for all involved when it comes to placement on the cultural and media market. We are planning to establish a contact net with Europe where we think there is a demand for cultural and media jobs on an exchange basis.

Together with the traditional employment office we have a programmebooking agency with over 4000 programmes, where you can engage for instance, a lecturer, a comedian, a magician, a clown or a string quartet for a party, conference or maybe a privat function.

exhibitions | theater | concerts | festivals | films | books | journals | training | video art | open discussions | performances



Fund for an Open Society – Yugoslavia

Fund for an Open Society has operated in Yugoslavia since 1991. Within its activities the Fund supports projects in various programs: humanitarian, medical, children and youth, publishing, media and the Internet, education and the development of civil society among others. The Culture and Arts Program is prominent within the Fund's overall mission of fostering and developing the civil society, democracy and human rights.

In a country where nationalism, isolation, xenophobia, and primitivism, poverty and manipulation prevail, Culture and Arts, as a system of value open toward all traditions, ideas and people, are of utmost importance.

Initiated by the Fund, the alternative cultural centers in Belgrade, Novi Sad, Priština and Podgorica are today the centers of top artistic and cultural achievements; furthermore, they strongly promote a new generation of young artists and intellectuals who have matured in the period of the war and international isolation. The energy of bitterness but also of hope, domineering the most important artistic achievements - from literature to music and theater - attests that investing in this field is of crucial importance for the development of a new democratic, civic and decent society. [\[fosyu@opennet.org\]](mailto:fosyu@opennet.org)



ALEŠ DEBELJAK was born 25 December 1961 in Ljubljana; poet (among others: *Zamenjave, zamenjave* 1982, *Imena smrti* 1985, *Slovar tišine* 1989, *Minute strahu* 1990, *Mest in otrok* 1996), essayist (among others the books *Postmoderna sfinga* 1989, *Temno nebo Amerike* 1994, *Zaton idolov* 1994), translator from English and Serbo-Croatian; member of editorial staff of the Slovene periodicals "Literatura" and "Phainomena"; PhD in sociology, in charge of Cultural Studies Department in Ljubljana University; holder of scholarship from Fulbright and several American universities; author of poetic anthologies (including *Američka metafikcija* 1988, *Prisoners of Freedom. Contemporary Slovenian Poetry* 1994, *The Imagination of Terra Incognita: Slovenian Writing 1945-1995* 1997); laureate of the Award "Vilenica's Crystal" (Slovenia), Miriam Lindberg Israel Poetry for Peace Prize (Tel Aviv), Hayden Carruth Poetry Prize (New York).

regard to how much the people believe into their nation's creative potential and the richness of their cultural tradition.

The argument of the small numerical size as an evidence in support of the claim about the inevitable, if gradual absorption of Slovenian nation in the "larger context" is much used today in Ljubljana as well as in Brussels. It is, alas, far from being new. A quick glance at the Slovenian history reveals a long tradition of this erroneous, albeit politically potent "argument of numbers". Such was, for example, the 19th century Ilyrian tradition of writers like Stanko Vraz and Ljudevit Gaj, who called for the unification of Slovenian and Croatian languages on the basis of alleged "linguistic pragmatism". After the First World War, this argument manifested itself in the ideological straight-jacket of the "integral Yugoslavism". Today, the argument is often advanced by members of the political elite who do not understand politics in the ancient Greek sense, that is, as a discussion of *res publica*, "public affairs". Instead, they view it as nothing else but an exclusivist technology of power. As such, they mistakenly believe that Slovenians can somehow be European in a direct, unmediated sense, without first being who Slovenians really are: the citizens of the Slovenian nation-state. In other words, the fact that Slovenians are Europeans only insofar as they are citizens of the Slovenian nation-state, is in the folds of the "argument of numbers" almost entirely lost.

I am convinced, though, that the issue should be reversed. It was precisely the numerical limitation of Slovenians as a people that forced the key players in the Slovenian national culture to interact with foreign strategies of creativity and thinking, critically recuperating them according to their own will and principles. After all, the small population, coupled with a fruitful, if troublesome, geographic location of Slovenian nation at the crossroads of the Roman, Panonic, Germanic and Balkan cultural traditions has always presented our ancestors with the impossibility of an ideal bucolic "sameness". The notion of self-absorbed and uncontaminated Slovenian culture where national *ego in Arcadia* would be quietly nurtured is of course but an illusion.

Slovenian creative minds have been traditionally in a dialogue with the gospel of the Western civilization, drawing on the linguistic self-confidence of Protestantism, the Italian Renaissance, the Central European baroque, French rationalism, German Romanticism and Expressionism, historicist Viennese architecture, English rock'n'roll, American pop-art and French "new-wave" films, not to mention the allure of Hollywood screen and the intricacies of Balkan blues.

The idea that art and culture, if understood only as a formal ornament to the national life, can provide neither national freedom nor unfettered flight of imagination, appeared very early in the Slovenian history. The sheer decorative, non-substantial character of works of art and cultural tradition at large would of course end in nothing else but in a gradual decay. The leading Slovenian literary critic in the period between the world wars, Josip Vidmar, captured the importance of local interaction with the tendencies of the wider world in his seminal essay "The Cultural Problems of Slovenian Identity" (1932). He vividly explained that a small nation is "like a very uneven peninsula – the ocean keeps splashing against its many shores and the fresh wind infinitely blows over its entire surface".

This commitment to the "winds" of the Central European sentiment and the "ocean" of the Western civilizational experience has personally helped me in two ways. Both as a writer who is using universal codes of expression to present what I believe is an individual vision, and as a Slovenian with a particular collective experience in my background, I gradually came

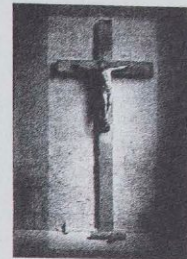
to see that it would be impossible to divorce myself from the treasure of the national cultural references. A truly cosmopolitan personality can only be the one, I surmise, who comfortably traverses various cultural meridians of the planet, while not giving up the reflection of his/her national roots. Such genuine cosmopolitanism was, for example, exercised in opuses and biographies of James Joyce, Pablo Picasso, Rainer Maria Rilke, Samuel Beckett and Paul Celan, to name but a few.

In post-independence Slovenia, there are two types of provincialism that combat this kind of cosmopolitan *habitus*. The first one was given birth by the conservative nationalist formula of an autarkic and often violent "navel gazing", i.e. the mentality that cannot, would not, and is unable to learn anything from the others. The second kind of provincialism is represented by the *bona fide* liberal "internationalists" whose main characteristic might be seen in the fact that they despise each and every aspect of the national identity because of fear of being lumped together with the nationalist zealots. As a result, this position drives "internationalist" liberals toward an uncritical approval of each and every idea that comes from "the West". Such minds in a servile manner offer their ingratiating "bless you!" when this or that fashionable cultural guru sneezes in Paris, London or New York.

Both kinds of opponents to the dialectics of local and global aspect of human condition are active in contemporary Slovenia. This constellation is, alas, not all that different from other post-communist countries. The velvet revolutions in 1989 indeed produced a semblance of the renaissance of the national ideas in Eastern and Central Europe, encouraging the debates on validity of the national cultural experience and teasing the peoples with the cheep utopian promise of miraculously resolved conflicts in newly independent countries. Almost a decade after the *annus mirabilis*, however, it has become rather clear that only a very few original approaches to the relation between the national and global aspect of collective identity emerged on the ruins of communist *ancien regime*. Intellectuals from Central and Eastern Europe have, with largely thoughtless transplantation of assorted Western stereotypes and conceptual forms, almost unanimously accepted the role of "poor relatives" that only compete with each other in efforts to impress their rich cousins in Europe, that is, Western Europe.

However, what kind of Europe are we really talking about? As for me, I am convinced that the discussion must primarily concentrate on the following difference between two aspects of "the European idea". On the one hand, one must entertain the project of integration of diverse European societies, an enterprise based exclusively on the economic standards. As such, this is a goal that is as interesting as it is crucial. On the other hand, one must take measure of Europe as a common, if elusive spiritual and mental realm. What is the price of the first aspect taking over the second? Modern European epiphany does not reveal itself solely in the noble tradition of the Roman law, Greek philosophy, Renaissance art and Romantic poetry, of universal human and civil rights. Contemporary idea of Europe is advanced in the increasingly popular right-wing politics of "fascism with a smile", too. This highly conservative gate-keeping is cast not only as a tool to strengthen "natural" communities but is no less forcefully presented as a legitimation of the global market economy. The latter is promulgated by the progeny of nefarious Lord Chamberlain whose job is to ram down our throats the idea that the "economics of the bottom line" is the ultimate, if not the only purpose of human existence.

After the disintegration of the Berlin Wall and the unification of



Aleš Debeljak

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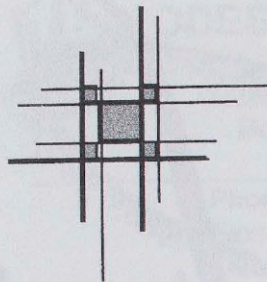
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Soros Center for the Arts Sofia

The Soros Centre for the Arts- Sofia is a non-governmental organization registered under the Persons and Family Act by a decision of the Sofia City Court. It was established to support the development of a new environment for contemporary Bulgarian art and culture. The Centre supports and initiates projects that embody the values of the open society, encourage free contacts among artists and institutions internationally, and stimulate new, contemporary and different tendencies. The centre supports projects of Bulgarian citizens or organizations, active in the arts and culture. It collaborates closely with the Open Society Foundation.

The Centre has four Programmes - Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Music and Literature. Along with these main national Programmes the team of the Centre also coordinates the Network Programmes which link it to the Soros Centres for Contemporary Arts Network and the Soros Foundations Network.

The Soros Center for the Arts supports projects of individuals and organizations selected through open competition. Projects are required to be directed to contemporary Bulgarian art and to provoke public interest. Funding and initiating are provided under several Programmes which concentrate on different areas. Their priorities, as well as the rules of project financing, are laid down by the Programmes' advisory boards and change through the years according to public and cultural conditions and the interest of policy changes at the Soros Centre for the Arts towards new trends.

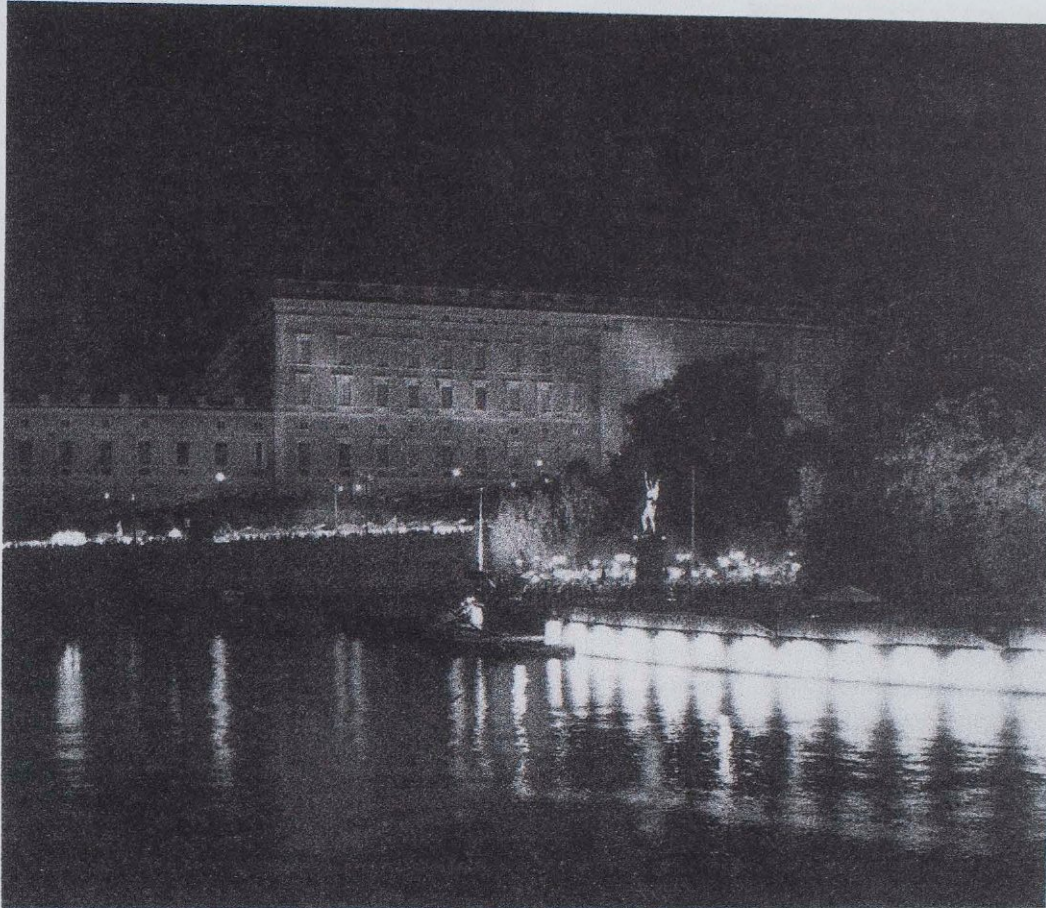
Theatre & Performing Arts Programme

The Theatre Programme of the Soros Centre for the Arts is aimed at supporting the development of the new cultural environment in the performing arts in Bulgaria. The Programme extends its partners' network in Bulgaria and Europe, stimulates the process of integration of Bulgarian culture with that of Europe and the world and facilitates international exchanges. The Programme supports contemporary trends in the work in performing arts and border line genres.

The Programme collaborates with partner organizations and individuals in the NGO sector, initiates and realizes own and joint projects. Following the international and interdisciplinary approach in its activities, the Programme is closely connected to and works with the Performing Arts Network Programme.

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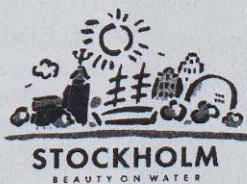
Beauty on water. Where stillness and the city meet.



Stop for a moment. Go down to the water's edge – it's never far away.
To a place where stillness and the city meet, where tranquillity takes you
by the hand, just when you need it most. Here your thoughts can wander
free, undisturbed.

Then go back. Back to the pulse, the people and the events. To everything
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Stockholm Poetry Festival 1998

5,6,7 of December

Finally, Stockholm has got it's own international poetry festival. The grand opening 1997 became a great success. Over 1.300 people came to the festival. This year, 1998, when Stockholm is the culture capital of Europe, the festival will go on in three days, the 5th, 6th and 7th of December. One of this years theme will be "The world in Europe". The British poet Benjamin Zephaniah is one of the poets who will performe at the festival. The festival is arranged by the 90's Journal of literature and fine arts. Artistic leader and producer is Madeleine Grive, chief editor of the 90's.

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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Dear Guests,

As has been our custom for the past twenty years we are presenting two events in one evening: an older, departing one, and a new one which is arriving.

The older one, "Carmina Burana", once called ethno-orator, we consider to be a fully theatrical piece. The new, arriving one, cannot be called a theatrical piece yet.

To be a piece, to be a performance, a work must mature, earn its attire, its props, its scenography.

Earn Indeed, because it is not our custom to adorn something that has not yet hardened and defined its identity.

A few words about this "non-piece". As with all our work (from the very beginning) this one originated in music.

Music is the beginning and essence of everything we create.

In this work for the first time we changed our philosophy and we learnt music not from living people, but from stones.

Living stones.

For traces of this ancient Greek music - from the 5th cent. To 2nd cent. A.D. - can be found, in many instances, only written in stones.

Singing from stone is like singing out the stone, to testify that it is at least as alive as nature.

What we invite you to see in the second part of the evening is most of all contemporary voices singing ancient melodies lines in ancient keys. Everything has been slightly adjusted, e.g. tempi, rhythm, dynamics... And perhaps "not adjusted", perhaps organically in agreement with The Spirit of Time, because no one can recreate the life-line of rhythm. One can only follow Intuition.

Those songs remain in relation to a book, the philosophy of which we referred to in our creative process. This great book appeared at a critical time when The Old Gods Dionysus and Apollo were leaving and Christ, The New God, was coming. The book was written by Apuleius of

Gardzienice

"Metamorphoses"

The Cast:

**Tomasz Rodowicz, Mariusz Gołaj,
Mariana Sadowska, Marcin Mrowca,
Elżbieta Rojek, Joanna Holcberger,
Katrín Forsmo, Britta Forslund, Martin
Essen-Möller.**

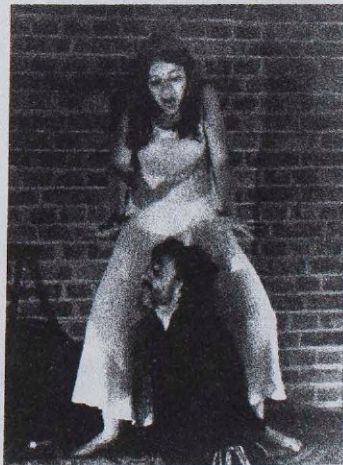
Musical elaboration:

Maciej Rychły.

Direction and musical dramaturgy:

Włodzimierz Staniewski.

*"We,
the Platonic family,
know only that
which is festive,
joyful, sacred,
sublime, celestial..."*



Madaura, who used to say about himself and his friends: "We, the Platonic family, know only that which is festive, joyful, sacred, sublime, celestial..."

Living in 2nd cent. A.D., Apuleius was a Platonist. Therefore, our work refers to Platonic essences: the nature of the soul, the nature of love, and the mysteries of changes. It refers to everything Apuleius the Platonist talked about allegorically in "Metamorphoses".

What we will sing for you is - to use a painter's expression - the priming of a canvas.

The form "it" has assumed now I call "a theatrical essay".

From a wide range of songs which we have been rehearsing since last year - or perhaps longer - we choose for each evening a slightly different arrangement, sounding the depth we want to reach and aiming at a direction everything will irreversibly follow soon.

A few interesting details. In the past we approached Apuleius and the songs of stone several times then we abandoned the subject. However, as if in passing, a few things came out of these attempts: strange fruit such as Artistic Inn "Golden Ass" at Grodzka Street in Lublin, where our offices are located; and a scenario written by a well-known English dramatist Howard Brenton. The scenario was an outcome of our collaboration with The Royal Shakespeare Company. From that remained the song entitled "You Are Broken", sung in English.

And one more thing. There will be a third event this evening, so we have a triptych and not a diptych, as usual. The event is this building - The Backhouse and this park. This Backhouse raised from sheer reins is our greatest piece. And the park will also soon "perform" in all its glory.

Włodzimierz Staniewski

Translated by Małgorzata Garbarska
and Artur Przystupa

Mariana Sadowska & Tomasz Rodowicz.
Photo: Joanna Holcgreber



The Borderland Foundation has been launched in May 1990, the Center "Borderland of Arts, Cultures, Nations" in January 1991 by the governor of the Suwałki province. The both are established in Sejny, in Nord-East Poland, close to the border with Lithuania.

We have chosen Sejny, a small town near Lithuanian border, because the traces of the material and spiritual legacy are still present here. Main street with the White Synagogue



recalls Jewish presence; little evangelical church reminds us of Protestants. Polish and Lithuanian presence is a reality of today's Sejny. In the vicinity of the town one can also find many traces of Russian Old-believers, and if we move further down to the south and to the east - we may find more vast territories of cultural interpretation: Tartar, Karaites and Armenian districts, all of Belarus and Ukraine.

We are trying to gather wisdom and richness of borderlands - wealth which results from co-existence of different traditions and beliefs. We are searching for a path that begins in the ancient times and leads toward the present day, for a language which would make elders wisdom legible to the young generation and would inspire a new artistic, pedagogical and scientific research.

The main objective of the Borderland Foundation and the Centre is to contribute to strengthening all environment according all initiatives, processes, groups of people as well as individuals acting towards regaining their living environment according to its own identity and tradition but at the same time respecting ethnic differences and cultural diversity. In other words, their goal is to develop every day practices aiming at creating open communities in areas characterised by the co-existence of dif-

ferent national, ethnic, religious and cultural minorities. to find and develop means to preserve traditional cultures, sometimes also minority cultures, to create possibilities to be presented and to be understood.

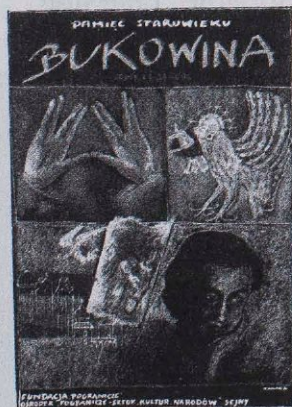
Some of our activities have a form of the permanent, daily work. They are: The Classes of Cultural Heritage, Sejny Theater, Klezmer Music Group, Documentary Centre of Borderland Cultures, Art Gallery "White Synagogue" and Borderland Publishing House.

Other activities are organized once or few times a year. They are: Memory of Ancient Time, Meeting the Other, Central European Forum of Culture, Gypsy Art Village, European Borderland School, Open Regions of the Central and Eastern Europe, Camera Pro Minoritate, Café Europa.

OPEN REGIONS OF CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPE.

Long-term project aiming at: a) Comprehensive and in-depth exploration of multicultural regions' heritage through facts finding tours, documentation collecting and study work; b) Dissemination of the heritage through educational programmes and artistic-cultural projects; c) Popularisation of the heritage through publication of books, organisation of seminars, exhibitions, concerts, theatrical performances, film sessions, etc.

The project is intercultural in character and initiates collaboration between representatives of various nationalities and religions, which compose a common heritage in a give region. To date the project has focused on: Transylvania, Bosnia, Bukovina and Spisz. Macedonia will shortly be included in this list.



BORDERLAND PUBLISHING HOUSE

The Publishing House mainly publishes the series of books "Krasnogruda Library", which presents the culture and history of Central-

Eastern Europe. These include: a) Literature: the anthology of Slovene (bilingual) and Bosnian poetry, Sarajevo Writers Library (poetry: Izet Sarajlić, Stevan Tontić, Goran Simić, Ivan Kordić, Marina Trumić, Valeria Skrinjar-Tvrz, Ferida Duraković, Josip Osti), essays on Sarajevo by Dževad Karahazan, poetry and essays by Gienadij Ajgi, essays on modern Polish borderland literature by Leszek Szaruga, Polish-Lithuanian collection of poems by Marceljus Martinajtis, a novel about the World of Jews living in Lithuania by Grigorij Kanowicz, a novel by Teresa Lubkiewicz-Urbanowicz about the Polish-Lithuanian borderland;



b) History and history of culture: book by Daniel Beauvois about the Polish-Ukrainian borderland, book by Adam Bartosz about history and culture of Gypsies, book by Antoni Kroh about multicultural Spisz (in Polish, Slovak, Hungarian and German);

MEMORY OF ANCIENT TIME

The project has been implemented for many years with a group of children from our borderland: from Lithuania: Poles and Lithuanians, from Poland: Lithuanians, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Russian - Old-believers and Poles. The fundamental objective of this artistic-educational work with children is to try to answer the question does tradition matter for the young generation of the end of the 20th century? The settings of the work is the space the children experience directly: neighbourhood, natural environment and religious rituals; hence the titles of individual project stages: *House, Nest, Temple*; the children participate in a real house, nest and temple building, which is accompanied by artistic workshops and other activities drawing upon archetypes, symbols and traditional beliefs concerning those spaces, as well as intercultural activities integrating participants in the context of their own and other's individual traditions.



CAMERA PRO MINORITATE

An international film festival organized once a year in Sejny (next 1-4 October 1998). There are two basic parts of the meeting: a) film presentations consisting of documentary films and TV periodical programmes for national minorities of Central and Eastern Europe; b) international seminar with the participation of film makers, scientists and journalists from various European countries.



THE CLASSES OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

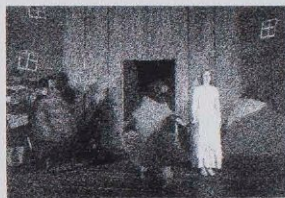
This is a European educational programme that gathers youth from the Secondary School in Sejny, who have got an extended educational curriculum, namely history and culture of their own region. The knowledge, respect to past traditions, curiosity toward the others living close but showing different cultural habits (language, faith, mentality), all are the education for tolerance.

There are two practical forms of this project: school seminars, meetings with specialists (writers, poets, journalists, historians, ethnographers) and excursions to the villages, where

multiculturalism is still alive (Vilnius, Transylvania, Polish-Belarusian borderland villages). They documented their meetings with people (kept diaries, take photos and video film, recorded conversations).

SEJNY THEATRE

Theatrical-musical group consisting of young people - university students and secondary school leavers. All of them come from Sejny or its vicinity and are graduates of the Cultural Heritage Class. They have all been driven by an urge to explore the culture of the past and express it artistically. They started with minor theatrical-musical pieces that gave them an opportunity to meet people in borderland areas during summer holidays. Those meetings with old people, a window to the past, led them to an unknown world excavated in their memories, and let them vividly experience history and culture.



"The Dybbuk", a theatrical performance, based on a Jewish drama by Shloime Ansky "Between two worlds", is deeply rooted in their engrossment in the past. They are now working on "Wijuny", a performance based on a drama by Teresa Lubkiewicz-Urbanowicz and on their own texts or those they have been given by people, and stories found during explorations in Polish villages in the vicinity of Lida (Belarus).

The group of the Sejny Theatre works under the supervision of Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska and Wojciech Szroeder.

THE KLEZMER BAND

The orchestra consists of the following instruments: the accordion, violin, clarinet, mandolin, double bass, viola, and drums. The instruments play during feasts, dancing meetings, and they also play concerts. The most important ones are those played in the White Synagogue, where this no longer existing world comes back in memories.

"The Klezmer Band" is conducted by Wojciech Szroeder. Their most important artistic experience is their participation in the gala concert of the 8th Jewish Culture Festival in Cracow in 1997 and the unforgettable musical feast where they could accompany David Krakauer, an eminent clarinettist.



BORDERLAND SCHOOL

One year training programme addressed to managers and leaders of cultural, educational and social organisations dealing with regional multicultural issues in Central and Eastern Europe. During the year each participant takes part in three sessions. All training sessions are divided in three main parts:

I. *Workshop of Leaders* - which aims at developing the necessary know-how and competencies to lead an organisation and to create programmes, in such a way that they are stable and well-organised, that they have clearly defined goals and working methods and that their competent leaders can objectively evaluate their efficiency.

II. *Workshop of Borderlands* - which focuses on Central and Eastern European multi-cultural regions, on their historical and cultural heritage, national and religious conflicts as well as their socio-political situation.

III. *Workshop of Animators* - which focuses on the ways and methods to deal with issues related to human rights, national minorities, education, tolerance, mass-media and the like, based on the experience of outstanding animators and programmes enjoying the respect of many organisations.

During three sessions every participant elaborates his own project, which should be realised in the nearest future.

The Borderland Team

Teresa Bobrowska, Małgorzata Sporek-Czyżewska, Bożena Szroeder, Agnieszka Szyszko, Urszula Wasilewska, Iwona Zaborowska, Krzysztof Czyżewski, Jerzy Czyżyński, Wojciech Szroeder, Wiesław Szumiński.



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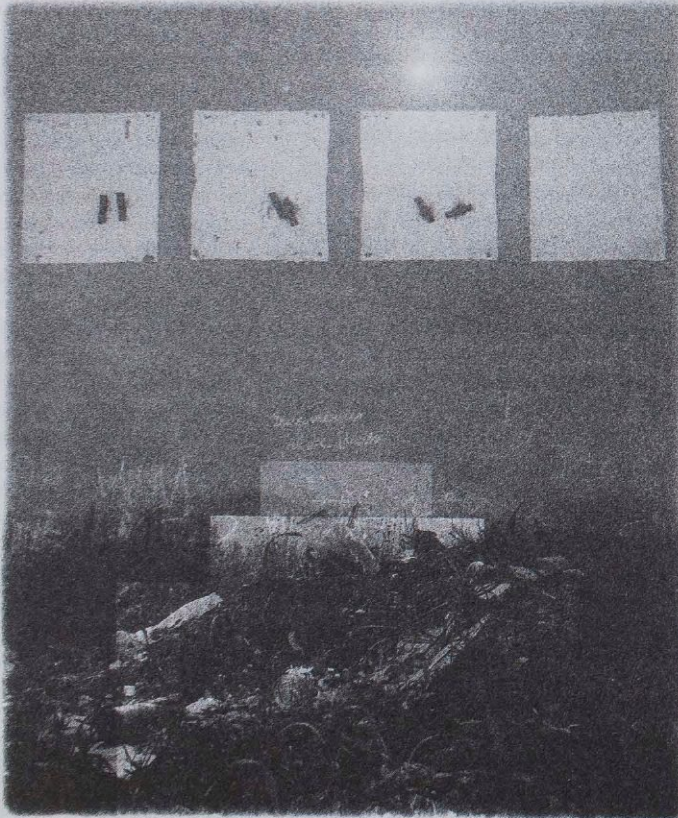
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Germany, Western Europe cannot, despite the ever-growing homogenization of the global markets, obscure its metaphysical failure and political sterility. Internal disintegration of its political and moral backbone was particularly well unmasked in the third Balkan war, where the European diplomacy for the most part struggled to deny the basic right to self-defence to Bosnian and Croatian victims. This situation is painfully reminiscent of the 1930s, a period in which Europe was myopically proud of its arrogant authority of "the sick...secret diplomacy that trades with territories of small nations, calming down the rebellious looks with the League of Nations, run by the traders and oppressors themselves", as the Slovenian avant-garde poet Srečko Kosovel wrote in his lucid public lecture "Disintegration Of Society And Decay Of Art" (1925). Kosovel was of course describing the situation in his time. His prophetic insight, however, poetically intimates of the situation today.

More to the point: thrilled by the political proximity to Western Europe and full of resentment for the present Serbian political madness, those who shape Slovenian public discourse often grow oblivious to the fact that in the contemporary world the philosophy of the postmodern domination no longer requires machine guns to express itself. The primary strategy today appears to be the use of the forms of the seemingly harmless "ethnically neutral" economy, trans-national capital, uniform cultural patterns and a gradual mass-media unification of each and every particular mentality and idiosyncratic experience.

Photo: Stanislaw J. Woś



If Slovenians are to survive as a full-fledged nation in the times of unavoidable economic integration and often hollow rhetoric of the "united Europe", then we must keep in mind not only the capacities of economic productivity, but also those of our operas and theatres. Successful businessmen should thrive equally well as the variety of national TV and radio stations; political know-how should be thought about in the same breath as the accomplishments of the diverse creative and intellectual impulses. While it is certainly not an easy job for such impulses to extend their reach beyond the national borders, the importance of cultural creativity nonetheless lies in that it serves as a constant reminder that, after the declaration of independence, our dilemma should no longer be spontaneously expressed in light of the defeatist traditional formula, advanced by the 19th century writer, Fran Levstik: "We can either be Russian or Prussian". Today, we can finally be ourselves.

Having said all that, I make no bones about it. I do realize that

there is no point in pretending to ignore relevant historical and social-political processes that have led to our contemporary condition. In other words: from the village champions (Yugoslavia) Slovenians have become the Olympic losers (Western Europe). Instead of colonization with the accompanying politics of Italianization, Germanization and Serbization, all of which were fought against not in the least because the enemy was possible to define, we are now facing the situation of the anonymous multinational capital. Its formidable forces are discussed in Slavoj Žižek's essay "Multiculturalism Or The Cultural Logic Of The Multinational Capitalism" (1997). Here, this famous philosopher bitterly argues that the multinational capital does no longer call for the use of unmediated violence, since particular cultures are much more effectively destroyed by the global market itself.

How to respond to this challenge? I have no original answer. As a poet, though, I simply think that the inspiration may still be drawn from the rich heritage of Slovenian cultural innovation and experiment, if not directly from the literary works of art. Not very comforting, I admit. It is, alas, most likely the only comfort one can possibly get. A political program that would ignore the spiritual and cultural component of the national identity in Slovenian efforts to join European Union, would soon find itself in a position where it will be reduced to managing perhaps better paid, yet sorrowfully hollowed out labor force whose main attraction for foreign investments will be its low hourly wage.

A responsible attitude towards the national tradition is essential to the extent that culture is not a gift from our ancestors. Instead, we have borrowed it from our grandchildren. Today's situation is less than promising. In Central and Eastern Europe, we are, on one hand, dealing with ethnic fundamentalism which prioritises the "Blut-und-Boden" ideology. On the other hand, we are witnessing the upsurge of a-national liberalism, triggered by the social-Darwinist logic of the market.

Benjamin Barber, American theorist of communitarianism, described in his meticulously researched "Jihad vs. McWorld" (1995) these intertwined processes as a mixture of hatred, the exclusiveness of the tribal form, and the all-embracing maximization of profit. Specific movements founded on the grounds of ethnic, religious or cultural obsessions with a prescribed way of communication which Barber calls Jihad, as well as movements of McWorld (aspirations for uniformity and homogenization promoted by global corporations), share many similarities despite their mutual hostility. The underlying idea of both is a dismissal of democracy. Jihad uses the bloody policy of the ethnic exclusivism while McWorld prefers the bloodless economy of profit. The result of the former is voluntary blindness within which the traitors of the tribal Cause are persecuted, while the latter offers the consumerist *rigor mortis* where we all do nothing else but "entertain ourselves to death."

Neither under the Jihad's canopy nor under the McWorld's umbrella, however, is there a place for a citizen. Jihad replaced this concept by a paranoid warrior and McWorld cultivates an ignorant consumer. If the ancient truth about *si non est civis, non est homo* is still valid today as it should be, then the consequences of accepting either Jihad or McWorld will be those of a premeditated catastrophe. Without the comprehensive experience of citizenship there is no democracy. The emphasis on democracy within this context is essential if one is to realize that the democratic order provides conditions for the emergence of public sphere with its capability to produce free development of various personal practices and cultural styles.



Aleš Debeljak

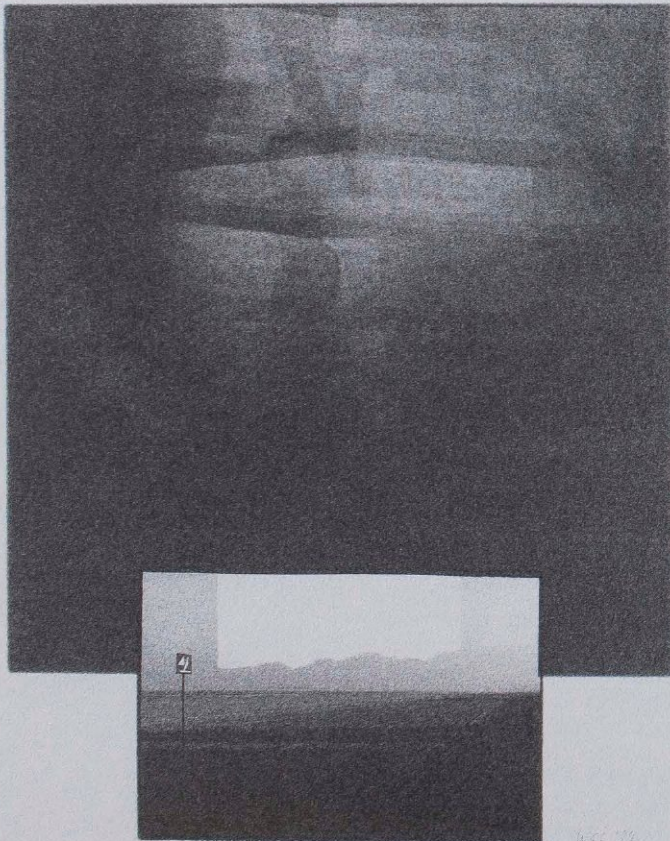
FORUM

Such public sphere depends on the civil society which, in turn, articulates itself through the tension vis-a-vis to the institutions of the nation-state. This tension is a corner stone of a democratic society. From this vantage point, the importance of the nation-state is indissmissible since it provides minimum of regulation of conditions for the functioning of the social life. Zygmund Bauman, arguably the most lucid theorist of postmodernity in the English-speaking world, in his book "Life in Fragments" (1995) argues: "The bigger the share of sovereignty that nation-states relegate to the supra-national all-European institutions, the lesser the possibility for a successful defense of their own identities, based on the nation-state." Should we choose to dismiss the idea of the nation-state, we thus, in the final analysis, allow the proliferation of movements of local and ethnic communities, and concomitantly tolerate the destructive crusade of "fast music, fast food and fast computers" of the global capitalist machine.

Allowing both processes to grow unhindered would in my opinion prove disastrous. The worlds of Jihad and McWorld are by definition incapable of respecting that unity of the symbolic, cultural and social experience which builds multilayered history of national existence and collective mentality. Both are primarily reflected in the mother's tongue which is not only a mechanical tool of communication. Instead, it must be first and foremost understood as a metaphysical worldview. For this writer, a poet by vocation, this aspect is of fundamental relevance in discussing affairs of

culture, its pitfalls and advantages. The fateful intimacy of language and national identity was in the Slovenian history best perceived by poets, starting with a founding father of modern letters, Romantic poet France Prešeren. His rejection of German, the language he could bring to the highest aesthetic levels, did not imply a simple pragmatic exchange of the means of expression (a financially more powerful area, larger public, sizable market, etc.). Prešeren's commitment to his mother tongue was an embodiment of an existential and political decision, his article of faith, that seems to be today gaining a renewed importance. If the mother tongue presents a particular worldview, it is possible to argue that it also represents a language of a specific comprehensive perspective that cannot be sufficiently expressed in any other language. Consider a following anecdote. One of my college students has, after a lecture, come up to me and sadly stated that he really is not sure what makes him a Slovenian. He is surfing on the Internet, watching MTV and Hollywood "slash and burn" movies, dressing

Photo: Stanislaw J. Woś



in Benneton shops, and listening to the Viennese international radio station The Blue Danube, while all the rural idyllic of the Slovenian "hayracks" and the rituals of peasant festivities are, understandably, lost to him. I am sure that he is not alone in facing this central dilemma. I often wonder about it myself. But when I, in the course of our discussion, switched to English only to prove a point, my student suddenly realized how English, despite being the *lingua franca* of the modern world and the language of international mass culture, radically narrowed his verbal register and flattened out his imaginative horizon.

It is thus the specific perspective of the mother tongue that integrates all the cultural, geographic, symbolic and social aspects of the national experience. The refuge of our mother tongue is thus the place where every single thing has a name. Small wonder. The language, after all, transcends our individuality since it is older and greater than time which is, in turn, older and greater than space, as Joseph Brodsky illuminatingly says in his essay "To Please a Shadow" (1989). Make no mistake: I, too, find the nationalistic logic which ignores all that is foreign and different, most repulsive. But that does not mean that I have to automatically subscribe to another extreme which would make me reject the national experience *tout court*. A personal example might be in order here. I happened to have spent many years in America. I have my second *alma mater* there, my publisher, my friends, my editorial affiliations, and professional network. I could even go so far as to say that I figuratively live on the bridge between Slovenia and America. In my home in Ljubljana, my wife and I speak American English to each other for she, an American herself, does not yet feel comfortable in her adopted language.

Despite varieties of such "Americanization" of my self, however, I cannot and would not follow many Slovenian politicians of the economic reductionism and their business counterparts, who cheerfully declare that a disrespect of the mother-tongue, five hundred words in Basic English and the fluency in the rhetorics of cable TV spontaneously put them on the best path to a promised land of (Western) Europe. I have no desire whatsoever to adopt this attitude. I cannot support it because I know that a human being cannot live on bread alone. This that does not necessarily mean that I support the privileges of starvation, either.

If it is true that life without a spiritual sphere in which existential experience of an individual and of a nation can be fully expressed is but a dull vegetative life, then the Slovenian economic success in the age of the newly gained independence must be accompanied by a cultural narrative about the symbolic and the material value of the language, ethical values, the fateful burden of history and the mythic tradition. This story makes us see our lives against the broader background of national destiny, making us a critical link in the great chain of being that is not going to end with us; it makes us preserve our national culture and language in the era of the current European integration that considers smaller nations an unnecessary inconvenience.

Many sceptics would of course question the need to preserve the national culture. These voices argue that the concern with *res publica* should be an exclusive matter of professional politicians. I, for one, think otherwise. I am convinced that the preservation of the cultural conscience in a broader environment of a civil society is essential in a democratic nation-state not only because it is too important to be left to the political elite alone. Now that we have come to the end of our Yugoslav *via dolorosa*, the awareness of importance of national culture may prevent us from turning into Viennese lakeys, as Serbian popular press is wont on



Aleš Debeljak

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calling Slovenians. The crass metaphor, of course, is farfetched but it does nonetheless dramatize the present Slovenian uncritical longing towards the "European Paradise Lost."

If we try to resist the modern temptation of perverted Cartesian slogan "I shop therefore I am!", then we may still find an inspiration – with doubts though not without hope, in a committed, though not glorifying way – in the meaning of the cultural tradition. Thus we may perhaps figure out where we stand while attempting to decode the signals of the modern pre-catastrophic world. In the latter not only individuals but entire nations are being destroyed. Under the pressure of the ideology of "cold peace" entire nations are condemned to disappearance, as we have been all too painfully reminded by the Bosnian tragedy.

To assume a firm stand against both the provincial mind of ethnic exclusivism as well as that of corporate homogenization, we must look back to the history of Slovenian literature. There, at least to me, the grace of that special light is revealed, the glow of which our lives are enriched by that narrative which is "just to the complexity and multiple meanings of the history and is able to open up a broad realm of human creativity that with elegance of its form reaches to a kind of transcendence and appeals to the better aspects of our selves", as the American critic Neil Postman said in his opening speech at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 1993.

Inspiration that Slovenes use to measure the distance and proximity of the collective mentality is probably best seen in the characters of literary works of art. Their destinies and fights are still, in my opinion, a great source of inspiration even today for they reveal how the existentialist dilemma of Slovenians has always been connected with the metaphysical dilemma of cultural identity. The latter has not been automatically accepted as a given, as it was not accepted either by Germans or by Serbs. We had been living under the same roof in a less than equal relationship with the former for long eleven centuries, and with the latter for seventy years.

The characters of our national literature had to fight first for their identity and second, to ensure its wider public recognition. The essential archetype of these *rites of passage* suggests their contemporary usage. This should be viewed in the fact that Slovenians have not created a nation-state only to freely enjoy the thrills of *ex Occidente luxus*. The nation-state should be here to help us be, and not to simply have, if I may paraphrase Erich Fromm's perhaps forgotten, though still very powerful distinction.

The emphasis that I chose to place upon language and comprehensive national cultural experience has, in a limited context of this essay, but a single ambition: to dramatize the inherent dangers of the entirely economist approach to Slovenian identity, striving to put absolutely all affairs of culture, art and their social existence to the mercy of the invisible hand of the market. If we are not aware of the history of our national culture which cannot and should not be measured according to its "marketability", we may very well turn into the tribe of children with no memory and no concerns and thus, by extension, without freedom. Such kind of tribe was totally unprotected when it faced the underground cannibalistic children of the dark, as H. G. Wells described the consequences of losing the sense of history in his work "The Time Machine".

A small nation at the end of the 20th century is thus presented both with a challenge and a responsibility to show that we are up to bringing the very notion of freedom to bear.

PIOTR PIOTROWSKI

Post-War Central Europe: Art, History and Geography

Writing his essay on the tragedy of Central Europe, Milan Kundera made an attempt to prove a crisis of the European values after the postwar division of the continent. Hence, the Czech writer argued, a dramatic appeal of the director of the Hungarian press agency – "We are dying for Europe" – broadcast when Soviet tanks appeared in the fall of 1956 on the streets of Budapest, fell into void. In Kundera's opinion, Europe defined as a system of values did not exist at that moment any more, since it had been divided into two political blocs, one of which (the West) was based primarily on a market economy, and the other (the East) on the steel of bayonets. For the West, Central Europe was "just" the East, that is, the area of Soviet domination. Thus, the problem was not that the culture of Central Europe "did not perish yet," but rather that it "ceased to exist for those whom we loved" – "for our beloved Europe."¹

Kundera's essay is marked with the nostalgia for the Golden Age of Central European culture which, in his view, was founded on the cornerstone of the Austro-Hungarian Empire of Franz Joseph. Its fall, caused mainly by the pressure of nationalisms emerging at the turn of the century, was concluded by the general division of Europe into two blocs in 1945, the question is, however, whether the parts were homogeneous. Was the expansion of the Soviet Empire on the territory of Central Europe – as tragic as it was – a cause of a crisis of its cultural identity? Does the fact that Western politicians as well as some scholars regarded the middle part of the continent as a uniform realm of the Soviet East imply that the Central Europe disappeared? These are the key issues that must be addressed by artistic geography.

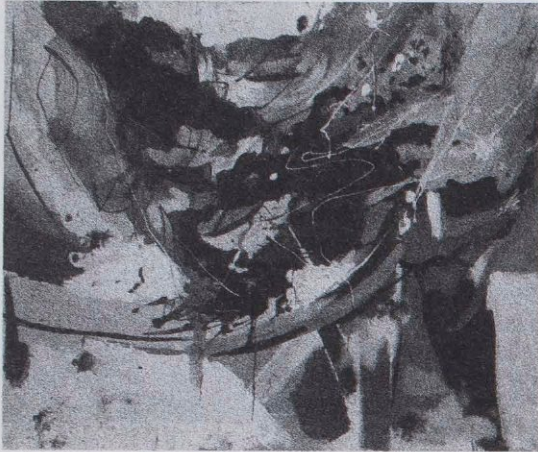
The territory of the German Democratic Republic and Poland in the North, Czechoslovakia and Hungary in the middle, and Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, and Romania in the South was not a uniform region either in terms of its political history, or economic condition, or, for that matter, cultural traditions. What is more, the countries in the middle of the continent, politically dominated by the Soviet Union, were all trying, in one way or another, to manifest their independence, even under the communist rule. In some cases, independence was political, as, most distinctly, in the case of Yugoslavia ruled by Jozif Broz-Tito and later of Nicolae Ceaucescu's



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Fields of teaching and research: history of the 20th century art, art and theory of the avant-garde, modernism and post-modernism, politics and visual culture.

1. I am referring to a Polish translation of Kundera's essay, "Zachód porwany albo tragedia Europy Środkowej," trans. from French M.L., *Zeszyty Literackie*, No. 5 (Winter 1984): 14-31.



Tadeusz Kantor: *Amarapura*, 1957,
Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań.

Romania, where the end turned out much more tragic, but also, if only for a short time, in Władysław Gomułka's Poland and Imre Nagy's Hungary of 1956, or Dubček's Czechoslovakia with its "socialism with a human face" of 1968.

However, in the first place, the search for local identities was manifest in culture, particularly that created on the margins of the official cultural policy of each state, or even in overt opposition to it. Thus, most likely, any common Central European tradition is hardly conceivable.

In spite of that, though, looking for some common denominator of the artistic strategies of resistance against the ideological indoctrination of communism identified with the socialist realism, we should point to neo-constructivism which was widespread in Central Europe since the political "thaw" of the late fifties. Neo-constructivism was

recognized everywhere, perhaps with the exception of Bulgaria. Of course, many artists all over the world would refer to the constructivist heritage, but here, in Central Europe, the role of such references was unique.

Notably, its high status related to the mythology of the art persecuted in the times of Stalinism in the Soviet Union. The great masters of the Soviet avant-garde, such as Malevich or Rodchenko, whose artistic achievements are unquestionable, were recognized (not always and not in all cases quite correctly) as the victims of Stalinism, which endowed neo-constructivism with the aura of resistance against the official art associated with the communist regime that contributed to the fall of the avant-garde in Russia. Moreover, in some countries there was biographical continuity between the constructivist tradition and contemporary art: in the GDR lived Hermann Glöckner, a very active artist almost till the end of his very long life, i.e. till the eighties, however, his influences among young East-German artists were not very significant; in Hungary lived Lajos Kassak, not very active after World War II but still extremely influential, while in Poland Henryk Stażewski, a member of many international groups before the war, not only remained influential, but continued his artistic career almost till the end of his long life (he died in 1988 at the age of 94, while Glöckner died in 1987 at the age of 98). Other Polish artists whose impact was significant were Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński who both died in the early fifties. The neo-constructivist trends were also quite strong in the sixties and seventies in Czechoslovakia and in Romania, although there the ties with the pre-World War II heritage were not so prominent. I mean here such Czech artists as Hugo Demartini, Stanislav Kolibal, Jan Kubiček, and Zdeněk Sykora, or the Rumanian groups "111" and "Sigma."

All neo-constructivists favored the discourse of freedom expressed in a more or less orthodox language of geometry. The crucial question, however, to repeat after Rosalind Krauss, is: how was the expression of freedom possible in that way, if the "grid," a system of intersecting lines, allegedly discovered anew again and again, is one of the most stereotypical visual devices? Furthermore, as the American art historian suggests, all the artists who started using "grid" as their "own" means of expression brought their artistic evolution to an end, since in many respects (structural, logical, as well as commonsensical) that particular figure can only be repeated.² What was then the justification of the discourse of freedom or, more precisely, of its mythologization in the artistic practice of the Central European neo-con-

2. R. Krauss, *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1987).

structivists? Most likely, it was the negative function of that art; the fact that under the specific historical circumstances it was directed against the socialist realism, absolutizing "form" (or even "pure form") while the authorities, particularly in the early fifties, were conducting a campaign against the so-called "formalism" identified with the bourgeois culture. According to the doctrine of the socialist realism, the form was supposed to be "national" ("narodnaya"), and the content "socialist." On the contrary, the neo-constructivists preferred the form to be universal, whereas the so-called content did not exist for them at all.

The significance of neo-constructivism in Central Europe, particularly when the socialist realism entered the phase of its decline, that is, depending on a specific country, from the late fifties till the early sixties or even later, is connected with a more general problem, namely that of the autonomy of the work of art. One can say that at that time the discussions on the autonomy of art started in all Central European countries, signifying mainly the resistance against the Soviet model of art understood primarily as propaganda. In the context of the official politicization of the artistic culture, autonomous art was perceived as an expression of freedom. Hence, freedom in art was associated with the right to remain non-committed, to practice art as an independent activity. The freedom to choose one's own means of expression, which at that time meant referring to all kinds of abstraction, or at least to a non-realistic poetics opposing the official realism, was connected with the right to create an autonomous work of art. The autonomy of art was supposed to be a domain of universal meanings, of the true sense of European culture opposed to the Soviet one associated with art as political propaganda.

The problem of universalism understood in this particular way and related to the autonomy of art as well as to the idea of freedom is one of the most mythologized aspects of the Central European culture. I cannot consider this fascinating issue in more detail here, let me just stress – referring to an argument of Magda Cârneci – that such a perspective gave the local intellectuals a chance to develop their cultural identity by integration with the European universe of values.³ It was a strategy of compensation for traumatic experiences, aimed at the "evil" of politics and history. The mythology of universalism was a background of cultural self-defense; of the resistance against the totalitarian oppression and the so-called Soviet internationalism. While the latter (i.e. the communist internationalism) was commonly associated with the culture involved in the party propaganda, the former (i.e. the European universalism) implied the autonomy of the work of art and its existential dimension, absolute or (most often) ahistorical.

The problem of the autonomy of the work of art has its own historical dynamic. In Central Europe, it surfaced quite distinctly at the moment of the decline of the socialist realism, and – next to neo-constructivism discussed above – it was associated with a more or less direct reception of the French *informelle*. At first, that process began as early as around 1955 in



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3. M. Cârneci, "Another Image of Eastern Europe," *Revue Roumaine d'Histoire de l'Art*, Vol. XXX, 1993.

Milan Křižák: *Action on New World in Prague*, 1965.





Jiří Kolař: Newsreel - 21 August 1968,

Poland.⁴ Tadeusz Kantor, one of the most prominent practitioners of that kind of art, would bring from Paris the models of the painting of gesture, then to show his pictures in Cracow and Warsaw. What seems rather interesting, shedding also some light on the reception of the *informelle* in the whole region, Kantor was not interested in the contemporary subversive trends, such as the painting of Jean Dubuffet, the COBRA group or the situationists. Instead, he would rather focus on the "museum" version of the *informelle*, quickly evolving towards the painting of the matter (*la peinture de matiere*), that is, towards a *par excellence* aestheticized conception of representation.⁵ This means that what the artists in Central Europe really needed was not the subversion of culture but its defense – the defense against the involvement of art in politics. Aestheticization and the autonomy of the act of creation were considered the remedies for the damaged prestige and status of the work of art defiled by the politics of the socialist realism. Later on, to keep to the Polish example, along with the political changes and the seizure of power by an anti-Stalinist faction of the Polish communists, such tendencies would distinctly increase so that in the late fifties certain forms of abstraction permeated into the official artistic culture. A good example in this respect was a 1958 Exhibition of the Countries of Peoples' Democracy in Moscow, where the Polish pavilion proved quite different from all the others (being almost exclusively filled with the works of the socialist realism), and as such it provoked a genuine interest of the public as well as a critique of the official delegations of other socialist countries. In Czechoslovakia the interest in the *informelle* began not much later, but little of it could be seen in the official manifestations of the local art.⁶ In Hungary, mainly due to the repressions after the Budapest insurrection, the art of that kind appeared only in the mid-sixties, almost simultaneously with the reception of the "new figuration" connected with different variants of pop-art.⁷ In Hungarian art, these two currents would sometimes overlap, as for instance in the works of Endre Tót, which once again confirmed the idea of the autonomy of art. It was not only the socialist realism (art as propaganda) which was rejected, but also critical art understood as subversion (pop-art and neo-dadaism), followed almost exclusively its aesthetic conventions.

In the remaining countries of the region – Bulgaria, the GDR, and Romania – a similar pattern of reception is difficult to detect. Nevertheless, in Romania the debate on the autonomy of art also began in the early sixties, bringing, however, visible artistic results only after Nicolae Ceaucescu came to power in the middle of the decade. A direct catalyst of change was a 1965 exhibition of the late Ion Juculescu, a classic of the modern Romanian art.

In as much as the fifties and early sixties were a period of a strong interest in various forms of non-figurative art, the late sixties and early seventies brought a more and more widespread reception of the neo-avant-garde: conceptual art, happening, object art, etc. Even though the problematic of the autonomy of art was still relevant, somehow it started to differentiate. In Czechoslovakia before 1968 there appeared various forms of engaged art making comments on reality, exemplified, for instance, by the works of the "Aktual" group, and particularly of its best known member, Milan Knižák. In fact, the year 1968 itself was uniquely recorded as an amalgam of personal and historical facts in Jiří Kolař's "Newsreel". Then, as a result of the so-called normalization which included police repression, the military intervention of the Warsaw Pact, and the end of the Prague Spring, all the manifestations of neo-avant-garde, which by definition could not be tolerated by the authorities, were interpreted in a political context. Since all

4. Cf. Odwilż. Sztuka ok. 1956 [The Thaw. Art ca. 1956], ed. Piotr Piotrowski (Poznań: Muzeum Narodowe, 1996).

5. A. Markowska, "Wielkie «teraz», czyli o sztuce" [The Great Now or, On Art], in *Odwilż...*

6. Ohniska znovuzrozeni: áeske umini, 1956-1963 [Focal Points of Revival: Czech Art 1956-1963] (Praha: Galerie hlavního mesta Prahy, 1994); *Sest'desiate roky* [The Sixties], ed. Z. Rusinova (Bratislava: Slovenska narodna galeria, 1995).

7. *Hatvanas évek* [The Sixties], eds. L. Beke, I. Devenyi, G. Horvath (Budapest: Magyar Nemzeti Galeria, 1991); K. Keserü, *Variations on Pop-Art* (Budapest: Ernst Museum, 1993).

forms of independent artistic activity were prohibited, all art – by the very fact of its appearance – had political significance, even if it did not happen to refer directly to politics, such as, for example, picnics and trips into the countryside organized by the School of the Knights of the Cross [Křižovnícká škola], or the performances of such artists as Jan Mleoch, Tomáš Ruller, and the most influential of them, Petr Štembera. Of course, at that time there was in Czechoslovakia some artistic activity which openly criticized various aspects of social life; for instance, the work of Jiří Sozanský, nevertheless, the problem lies more in the contextualization of the Czech and Slovak art of the times of "normalization," than in any kind of overt critique of the power system. Even the apparently neutral work of the conceptualist Jiří Valoch from Brno could not escape the context of the "forbidden art."⁸

On the contrary, in Poland, which after the 1970 revolt of the Gdańsk shipyard workers and the ensuing change of the power elite was in a completely different situation, critical art turned out extremely rare. The Polish artists of the neo-avant-garde, enjoying almost total freedom of choice as far as their means of expression were concerned, were quite reluctant to use the idiom of political critique, since that would have violated the agreement between them and the authorities. The message of the party was clearly the following: "use any forms you like, but don't get involved in politics." Paradoxically, then, Polish artistic practice combined the models of the neo-avant-garde or, in other words, of critical postmodernism, with the modernist values such as, particularly, the autonomy of the work of art. There was no political reception of the neo-avant-garde determined by the context, since in fact almost everything was allowed, with the single exception of a direct critique of the regime. Of course, there were some attempts at such a critique, for instance at the Repassage Gallery in Warsaw,⁹ yet they did not affect the general artistic atmosphere of the seventies, unfavorable to any form of political commitment and primarily concentrated on the principle of *ars gratia artis*.¹⁰

In Hungary, together with the slow but steady liberalization of social life and the advent of "goulash communism," some artists – most notably Sandor Piczehelyi and Tamas Szentjóby – levelled an open critique against the Eastern European totalitarian system. Szentjóby was sometimes very specific in this respect, as in the case of the "Portable Trench for Three Persons" from 1968 made after the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops. However, such attempts were not frequent; on the contrary, they were quite rare in all Central European countries, and, for example in the GDR even very unique: Robert Rehfeldt's "Ou est le diable" (1969) was a quite unusual case.

In the other countries of the region the situation was indeed very different. In Bulgaria, the avant-garde tendencies appeared much later than in Czechoslovakia, Hungary or Poland (in fact only in the late eighties) to be adopted in uniquely syncretic forms, since the tradition of the neo-avant-garde overlapped with the reception of neo-expressionism. Romania resembled Czechoslovakia, although on a much smaller scale: in the early seventies, the political situation was becoming tenser and tenser after Ceaucescu had proclaimed in 1971 his so-called "July theses" anticipating a more strict control over culture. His declarations were put into practice in the mid-seventies when he was "elected" President of the Republic and combined the positions of the party leader and the nominal head of state (practically every party leader was the head of state, but in order to maintain the appearance of the division of power and democracy some countries of the Soviet bloc, including the USSR, would separate the two posts). From that



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8. Cf. *Vytvarné umění*. The magazine for Contemporary Art [issue titled "Zakazane umění" (Forbidden Art)], Nos. 3-4, 1995; Nos. 1-2, 1996.

9. *Repassage*, ed. M. Sitkowska (Warsaw: Galeria Zachęta, 1993).

10. P. Piotrowski, *Dekada* (Poznań: Obserwator, 1991).

Petr Štembera: *The Vaccination*, 1975.



11. Experimental Art in Romania, 1960-1990, ed. M. Cârnci (Bucharest: Soros Center for Contemporary Art), in press.

12. Cf. P. Kaiser, C. Petzold, Boheme und Dictatur in der DDR. Gruppen. Konflikte, quartiere, 1970-1989 (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1997).

13. Cf. Polish Realities. New Art from Poland (Glasgow: Third Eye Center; Łódź: Muzeum Sztuki, 1988); Ekspresja lat osiemdziesiątych [Expression of the Eighties], ed. R. Ziarkiewicz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo A. Bonarskiego, 1990); Realizm radykalny. Abstrakcja konkretna. Sztuka drugiej połowy lat osiemdziesiątych [Radical Realism. Concrete Abstraction. The Art of the Late Eighties], eds. J. Zagrodzki, R. Ziarkiewicz (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo A. Bonarskiego, 1990).

14. M. Cârnci, Arta Anilor '80 [Art in the Eighties] (Bucharest: Litera) [no date].

15. Cf. P. Kaiser, C. Petzold...

16. J. Olić, "Tvrdohlaví, 1987-1990," Výtvarné umění, No. 1 (1991).

17. Cf. "Zajímalo nás rozbitý urážený model, který tady byl", Rozhovor Marty Smolilkové s Janou a Jiřím Ševáikovými, "Výtvarné umění [Issue titled "Zakázané umění"], Nos. 1-2 (1996): 136-144.

18. For the documentation of the movement, cf. Uj szenzibilitás IV, New Sensibility IV, ed. L. Hegyi (Pécsi Galéria, 1987). Cf. also 80-as Évek Képzőművészeti/Hungarian Art of the Eighties, ed. K. Keserű (Budapest: Ernst Museum, 1994).

moment on, just like in Czechoslovakia, all the manifestations of the neo-avant-garde were not approved by the authorities, i.e. the work of such artists as Ion Grigorescu, Geta Bratescu, Paul Neagu (who in the early seventies emigrated to the UK) which had nothing to do with the critique of the regime was recognized as critical.¹¹ No doubt, it was the context that determined the political significance of art explicitly endorsing the autonomy of the artifact. In the German Democratic Republic, the early seventies, marked by the replacement of the hard-liner Walter Ulbricht by Erich Honecker, brought a promise of some liberalization of the state cultural policy which, although it was never fulfilled, provoked the aspirations to artistic freedom that with time became difficult to muffle. Later on, alternative artistic groups, such as those in Berlin Prenzlauer Berg, Dresden-Neustadt or Leipziger Osten, came into being in various East German cities, but that would happen already in the eighties with their characteristic atmosphere of the "new expression."¹²

The eighties, witnessing the decline of communism taking place in various ways in all Central European countries (in Poland it was the political confrontation of the martial law, in Hungary growing economic and political liberalization) were the next – in fact the last – "turning point" in the artistic culture of the region under the communist rule. The common convention of the "new expression" or neo-expressionism in painting, sculpture, and installations acquired a number of different meanings. In Poland it functioned in the domain of the culture which opposed the system, both in direct contact with the political centers of opposition (the underground institutions of Solidarity and the Catholic Church), and somewhat detached from them in the so-called "third circuit" trying to find some independent space free from the pressure of the politicians of the regime and the opposition alike, but by no means apolitical in itself.¹³

For sure, an artistic alternative to the dwindling communist power system, additionally undermined by Gorbachev's *perestroika* in the USSR, was the "new expression" in Romania (holding its own lively debate on post-modernism)¹⁴ and in the GDR.¹⁵ On the other hand, the situation in Czechoslovakia and Hungary was somewhat different. In Czechoslovakia, the first official (that is, permitted by the authorities) display of the "new art" was probably an exhibition of a group ironically calling themselves "Tvrdohlaví" organized in Prague in 1987.¹⁶ That act of coming out of the underground into the open seems quite symptomatic, for in fact it meant the end of resistance against the "normalization," which was becoming much less strict anyway, and the acceptance of the political situation as it was. Such an attitude was completely different from the one characteristic of the Czechoslovakia of the seventies, immediately after the suppression of the Prague Spring, when various forms of the neo-avant-garde had subversive political significance. Of course, in the eighties the Czech underground also generated some variants of the "new expression," but the decision of the young artists from the "Tvrdohlaví" group indicated a turning point – the epoch of resistance was over to give way to a new perspective of consent, and – contrary to what was going on at the same time in the GDR and Romania – neo-expressionism was a sign of that process.¹⁷ In Hungary, where the seventies were not, like in Czechoslovakia, a decade of a strong political tension and resistance against the official culture, since the authorities started introducing more liberal cultural and economic policies, neo-expressionism, which appeared already in the early eighties, quite swiftly entered the domain of the official.¹⁸ Represented by such artists as Imre Bak, Ákos Birkás, Károly Keleman, and István Nádler, it was shown at the 1986 Biennale in Venice in the Hungarian pavilion organized by Katalin

Néray, the director of Műcsarnok, one of the most prestigious exhibition centers of the country, which most definitely indicated its officially recognized status. Incidentally, in Hungary, in contrast to both Poland and Czechoslovakia, the "new expression" was not only an object of interest of the young generation beginning their careers in the eighties, but also of the older artists rooted in the art that was criticized and superseded by neo-expressionism, that is, in neo-constructivism and neo-avant-garde (this refers, for instance, to the aforementioned participants of the 42nd Venetian Biennale). The new art was also interpreted in the context of Kadar's "new economic policy" introduced at the end of his rule, including an adjustment of the Hungarian economy to the free market and the rise of the private sector.¹⁹ Parallel to the new developments, it accompanied not just the process of the economic transformation, but also the emergence of new social strata of Hungarian society involved in business and of new social mores – the rhetoric of individualism in economy corresponded to the mythology of artistic individualism conveyed in the language of the "new expression." One of the most outstanding artists of the Hungarian neo-avant-garde, Miklós Erdély, has even made a comparison between the social status of the "new painter" and that of another new figure – a private cabdriver.²⁰

Thus, looking at the postwar art of Central Europe, we are likely to realize that together with the dismantling of the Stalinist cultural policy dating back to the mid-fifties, which finally coincided with the decline and fall of communism in the eighties, the idea of the autonomy of art was gradually becoming less and less compelling and influential. That process was directly proportional to the pressure of the socialist realism understood as the party doctrine of art as propaganda. When the ideological pressure happened to be strong, or at least as long as it was well remembered, the autonomy of art as a key to independent artistic creation was respectively stressed as well. However, as time passed, communists would attach less and less significance to art as an instrument of propaganda, which brought about a less and less dogmatic endorsement of the autonomy of art that in various ways became involved in political and social processes. A good example in this respect may be provided by the history of Polish art. The reception of the *informelle* which took place in Poland in the mid-fifties was directly connected with the problem of the artistic independence. On the contrary, in the eighties, when the political situation was very tense under the martial law, the communists not only did not make any attempts to use art for the purposes of propaganda or, for that matter, to impose some ideologically motivated artistic doctrine, but even tempted artists with a kind of liberalism, encouraging them to remain on the institutionalized state-controlled artistic scene. The point was, however, that Polish artists would for a long time unanimously boycott official institutions, getting involved in unofficial artistic enterprises and criticizing the system in their art in various ways. Hence, under such circumstances, the conception of the autonomy of art was questioned, and what is more, it was questioned quite deliberately, if not programmatically. Of course, that was possible only because the regime ceased to have the ambition to impose any obligatory artistic doctrine. However, in those countries where such an ambition of the authority was still vivid, and the administration tried to continue the "hard," in the matter of fact the Stalinist cultural policy, i.e. in the GDR and in Romania, an alternative culture stressed the notion of the autonomy of art, as a main oppositional strategy. In East Germany many alternative artistic groups and circles came into being in various cities: Berlin, Dresden, Halle, Leipzig, and Karl-Marx-Stadt, but almost all of them built their theo-



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19. Cf. M. Peternák, "Who Is (Was) the Victim, Who is (Was) the Culprit and What Happened?/Hungarian Art in the Eighties," *Modern and contemporary Hungarian Art. Bulletin*, 1985-1990 (Budapest: Soros Foundation, 1991).

20. Peternák, 20.

Sándor Pinczehelyi: *The Hammer & Sickle*, 1973, King Stephen Museum, Székesfehérvár.



retical approach around the problem of the autonomy of art.²¹ In Romania, in turn, a widespread discussion on post-modernism among artists and intellectuals was mostly associated with an understanding the right to express the autonomous values in art and culture, free from political pressure.²² Here, both in the GDR and Romania, in the countries ruled by the strongest "hard liners", the autonomy of art still meant freedom from the communist oppression.

Still, no matter how advanced the process of the de-autonomization of art in some Central European countries became in the eighties, it was hardly comparable to the critical art in the West, and particularly in the USA, but also in Russia, where soc-art and conceptualism were largely involved in the critique of the social condition of the country.²³

At the moment, after the fall of communism in 1989 and a kind of liberation of the societies of Central Europe, a question of the cultural identity of the region arises once more. Until recently, it had been determined by the specific status of this part of the continent – the territory between the West and the Soviet Union, where culture was the primary domain in which autonomy could be manifested. Now, when the negative point of reference is gone and the Central European countries are trying to join the Western institutions, one may ask a question whether they will be able to maintain their cultural identity which has always – not just under the Soviet domination – been constructed in opposition to major cultural centers. Will the growing commercialization and commodification of culture, the pressure of mass culture, and the globalization of artistic models justify Kundera's argument about the "tragedy" of Central Europe? Needless to say, no answer to these questions can be provided today, since it requires both time and reflection. What we can say, however, right now, is that the key to a definition of the region's identity – its unique *genius loci* – lies not so much in the historical or artistic processes, but in our interpretive strategy; in – as Norman Bryson has put it, following Culler and Derrida – "framing."²⁴ This is an active strategy, since the choice of the context depends on the scholar's effort, on his or her interpretive perspective. A context "is just more text," writes Bryson, thus, it is there that we can find the meaning of the text. In our case, that is, in the case of the geographers of art, the context is constituted by many elements. Just as we used to decipher the meanings of the autonomous art of Central Europe by referring them to particular stages of historical processes which determined the identity of our part of the continent, now, witnessing the occidentalization of Central European culture, we must view it in a proper context again. This con-text is history – both remote, and, paradoxically, the most recent that we are perhaps trying to forget – the history of the Soviet domination and of the states of the so-called "people's democracy." It constitutes a direct frame of reference for all the contemporary ambitions to participate in Western culture, and – most probably – it will also determine the cultural characteristics of the region after 1989.

21. Cf. *Jenseits der Staatskultur. Traditionen autonomer Kunst in der DDR*, ed. G. Muschter, R. Thomas (München: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992); P. Kaiser, C. Petzold, *Boheme und Diktatur in der DDR. Gruppen, Konflikte, Quartiere, 1970-1989* (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 1997); M. damus, *Malerei der DDR. Funktionen der bildenden Kunst in realen Sozialismus*, (Hamburg: Rewohlt, 1991), pp. 357-361.

22. M. Cârnci, *Arta Anilor'80 [Art in the Eighties]* (Bucharest: Litera) [no date].

23. *Nonconformist Art. The Soviet Experience, 1956-1986*, eds. A. Rosenfeld, N. T. Dodge (Rutgers, N. J.: Thames & Hudson, Jane Vorheer Zimmerli Art Museum, 1991).

24. N. Bryson, "Art in Context," in *Studies in Historical Change*, ed. R. Cohen (Charlottesville: The University of Virginia Press, 1992).

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TOMAS VENCLOVA

Native Realm Revisited: Mickiewicz's Lithuania and Mickiewicz in Lithuania

In more than one of his studies, Wiktor Weintraub dealt with a peculiar image (and self-image) of Mickiewicz as prophet, a leader of his people, the embodiment of its collective strivings and a charismatic teacher for generations to come. The messianic idea promoted by Mickiewicz and echoed by more than one of his contemporaries may seem bizarre to us, yet it fired the imagination of his readers and was instrumental in bringing momentous changes to Eastern Europe's intellectual and political map. What is frequently overlooked in this connection is the fact that Mickiewicz's prophesies have shaped the collective identity not of one nation but of two, namely, of Poland and Lithuania. All prophets fail, and Mickiewicz did not foresee a significant event in his native region, that is, the appearance of one more modern state, Lithuania, next to Poland, even though he himself had contributed to its spiritual crystallization arguably more than anybody else. I am going to discuss two closely connected topics: firstly, the relation of the prophetic image of Mickiewicz to his Lithuanian background, secondly, his paradoxical role in the development of Lithuanian national identity.

I will start with two translations of Mickiewicz's work into Lithuanian, which are uncommon in more than one respect. The first of them was produced as early as 1822 but remained in manuscript form for a hundred-odd years and made its way into print only in 1929. The translated story has the title *Žywila*; its Lithuanian translation is inserted into a much larger whole, a Romantic history of the Grand Duchy entitled *The Deeds of Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians*. The author of that larger whole was

Simonas Daukantas alias Szymon Dowkont, at that time still a student at the University of Wilno (Vilnius) which Mickiewicz had attended as well.

Strangely enough, *Žywila* appears to be the very first text by Mickiewicz translated into any language. The only possible contenders could be two ballads, *The Nymph of Switez* and *The Lilies*, translated into Russian by Kondratii Ryleev soon after their appearance in Mickiewicz's first book, *Ballads and Romances*, published in Wilno also in 1822. Yet Ryleev most likely lags behind Daukantas by at least one year. Incidentally, Ryleev's incomplete translations did not go beyond draft stage and also remained in manuscript form for decades.

That alone would be enough reason to consider Daukantas's translation noteworthy. Still, there are more oddities associated with it. *Žywila* obviously does not belong to the cardinal works of Mickiewicz. It is a youthful literary exercise patterned after Greek and Roman historians. Written in 1819, before Mickiewicz's decisive turn to Romanticism, it was discussed during a meeting of the secret Philomath society and at the end of February of the same year anonymously published in *Tygodnik Wileński (Wilno Weekly)* as "an excerpt from ancient Polish manuscripts conferred to the editors by Mr. S. F. Ż." (Mickiewicz hinted at a known Wilno philologist and antiquary Szymon Feliks Żukowski). Tradition maintains that Mickiewicz's colleagues jokingly presented it to their professor Leon Borowski as an authentic literary monument, and Borowski was consequently instrumental in *Žywila's* publication. Therefore, it was a forgery characteristic of the period, though perhaps without any serious attempt to deceive. Mickiewicz



never reprinted *Żywila*, and it was soon forgotten. Its authorship was established beyond any doubt only in 1884.

The short and concise story displays (in rather embryonic form) several motifs which became typical for the mature Mickiewicz: fatal passion, treason and, finally, a patriotic deed of a heroic woman. *Żywila*, daughter of Koryat, the Lithuanian prince of Nowogródek, falls in love with a knight named Poray. Upon learning about her secret affair (though not about her lover's identity), Koryat condemns her to death. In order to rescue *Żywila*, Poray opens the gates of the Nowogródek to the Russian enemies. With their help, he manages to bring *Żywila* out of prison, yet she kills him for his betrayal of the native city, chases out the Russians, sword in hand, and dies. (A rather unexpected tinge is given to the story by the fact that Poray was the heraldic title of Mickiewicz's ancestors).

Daukantas might have known Mickiewicz personally: for two years, they were classmates in the Department of Literature and Liberal Arts in Wilno (though Daukantas was appreciably older). One may add that Daukantas was most likely considered a candidate for membership in one of the secret student societies which were extensions of the Philomaths. Still, he took *Żywila* for an authentic excerpt from Lithuanian chronicles. Like many others, he was led into error by its language, patterned after the sixteenth century historian Maciej Strykowski. His translation was free enough. For unknown reasons, he switched the time of the story by approximately a century, from 1400 to the much earlier period of Gediminas (Giedymin). Moreover, inserted into Daukantas's treatise, *Żywila* changed its function: instead of a not-too-serious stylization, intended, at least in part, for pure entertainment, it became one more unequivocal example of Lithuanian patriotism. Incidentally, while Mickiewicz merely juxtaposed *Żywila* to heroic women of Greece and Rome, his translator rounded off the story with a statement that neither Rome nor Greece had given birth to so glorious a maiden. To put it succinctly, Daukantas, by placing Mickiewicz's heroine into the context of his work, transformed her into Grażyna avant le lettre.

The specific status of the Lithuanian *Żywila* was corroborated by one more fact. This very first translation of a work of Mickiewicz work was a translation into a language virtually devoid of any literary tradition – a language considered close to extinction, or, in any case, bound to remain an obscure local dialect. In 1822, Lithuanian literature, for all practical purposes, was limited to a small number of devotional and linguistic books. The first rather pitiable

collection of poems in Lithuanian had appeared in Wilno only eight years before. A significant eighteenth-century work, *The Seasons* by Donelaitis (which Mickiewicz mentioned benevolently in a footnote to Grażyna), was printed in Königsberg in 1818 after half a century of precarious manuscript existence during which time it was read by a very few. If *Żywila* was a marginal part of Mickiewicz's corpus, its translator was himself a marginal figure – incidentally, a marginal figure by choice. He could have become a notable historian and folklorist if he had chosen Polish as his medium. This would have presented no problems for him, since he was perfectly bilingual as all intellectuals of Lithuanian origin were in those days; yet already during his student years, he decided to write exclusively in Lithuanian. His ambition was to resurrect the language and to create a distinct sense of Lithuanian identity based on linguistic criteria, and he proceeded towards this goal almost single-handedly: to generate the impression that there were many Lithuanian authors, he produced books under several pseudonyms. Most of these books remained unprinted, but they were read, copied and discussed.

Daukantas was the first Lithuanian representative of the "philological revolution" which swept Eastern Europe in the nineteenth century. His goal, as stated in the introduction to *The Deeds of Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians*, was "to prove to all the enemies of Lithuanian and Samogitian that everybody endowed with sufficient will and ability could write in Lithuanian as successfully as in any other language cultivated at the present time." He still considered his native Samogitian dialect a specific language, even if inseparable from Lithuanian. One of the enemies that hindered the cultivation of the idiom was obviously the Russian Empire, which ruled the Lithuanian lands of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth after the Third Partition. Yet Daukantas took the next step which transformed him into the founding father of modern Lithuanian nationalism: he listed among the hostile forces also Polish-speaking gentry and educated strata. The social conflict between Lithuanian-speaking peasants and Polish (or Polonized) upper classes was interpreted as a conflict between two different nations, each of them with its separate past and separate future. In *The Deeds of Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians* one already finds a diatribe concerning the "evil forces of this world," which "under the guise of unity ... kept the [Lithuanian] tribe in contempt." In Daukantas's words, these unnamed evil forces first deprived Lithuanians of freedom, then shackled them with irons and finally handed over

their slaves to the highwaymen. One may easily identify the evildoers here with Polish aristocracy, and the highwaymen with the czarist regime (the only partitioning power Lithuanian peasants were aware of). That would not necessarily have raised the eyebrows of many Polish ideologues of the period. But in Daukantas's later writings, and even more in the writings of his numerous followers, the guilt came to be implicitly assigned to any Polish speaker.

Therefore, Daukantas created an ideological framework which differed significantly from the framework of his classmates, the Philomaths. The collapse of the Commonwealth, even if undesirable, was, for him, not the worst misfortune. It was preceded by a more profound disaster, namely, the collapse of free pagan Lithuania under the impact of the union with Christian Poland.

In this context, *Žywila* could be interpreted anew, as a symbol of maidenly Lithuania whose beloved (Poland) committed a despicable treason handing her, together with her country, to the Russians. To be precise, that interpretation was never stated explicitly, either by Daukantas or by other Lithuanian writers dealing with the topic. Yet the immense popularity of *Žywila*'s story in Lithuania, especially in the periods of Polish-Lithuanian tension, is indicative enough. A marginal story by a young Mickiewicz, never well-known in Poland, became one of the paradigmatic texts of Lithuanian culture, virtually eclipsing *Grażyna* and *Konrad Wallenrod*. Rather similarly, Daukantas himself was promoted from marginal figure to archetypal "father of the nation" by the Lithuanian national movement. *Žywila*'s translation appeared for a second time in Daukantas's next large treatise, *A Samogitian History* (1838); incidentally, there he assigned the authorship to his friend Teodor Narbutt, a dilettante Wilno historian. Then, *Žywila* was translated anew (in 1890), included into school readers (either as an authentic story or a genuine folk legend), retold by various authors and adapted for the stage more than once. Mickiewicz's authorship was rarely if ever mentioned. The very name *Žywila*, in its Lithuanized form *Živile*, became one of the most popular female names. It was (and still is) perceived as strictly ethnic, authentically Baltic, devoid of Slavic or any other foreign tinge. This, of course, is a paradox. The name's root, in contrast to *Grażyna*, is not a Baltic but a Slavic one (Mickiewicz concocted it by conflating the names of several Pomeranian and Masovian deities). As late as 1947-48, *Žywila* was dramatized by a modernist emigre playwright and novelist Antanas Škema. In his version, the story of *Žywila* and Poray is repeated three times in three different historical contexts. At first, it develops in

medieval Lithuania, in strict accordance with Mickiewicz's pattern; then, during the uprising of 1863 (*Žywila* is a young daughter of a landowner, and her lover an insurrectionist); finally, in Vilnius occupied by the Soviets, in the spring of 1941 (both heroes are fighters in the Lithuanian underground; this time, the young man redeems his bad karma – he refuses to save his beloved by means of treason, and perishes together with her).

The other translation of Mickiewicz's work I would like to discuss at some length was almost as bizarre. After the uprising of 1831, a small booklet in Lithuanian (seven pages in all) appeared in Paris. It consisted of The Pilgrim's Litany followed by The Prayer of the Pilgrim – the two final and arguably most impressive parts of Mickiewicz's messianic manifesto, *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims*. Władysław Mickiewicz incorrectly listed it as a complete translation an error which found its way into several bibliographies. Yet it was, in any case, a remarkable event in the history of Mickiewicz's translations. The booklet lacks a date: according to some conjectures, it appeared as early as March 1833, five months after the original Polish edition. That would make it the very first (if partial) translation of *The Books*, preceding translations into French, German and English which were printed later that year. Since Lithuanian literature in 1833 remained at the same embryonic stage as it had been at in 1822, this would have been nothing short of amazing. It would also have been uncommon in the case that the booklet was published in 1836, as is usually assumed now. On the other hand, the translation of *The Books* into Lithuanian seemed somewhat natural, given the Polish-Lithuanian relations during the uprising and in its aftermath.

The translator was, in all probability, Kiprijonas Nezabitauskas alias Cyprian Józef Lubicz Niezabitoski. Nineteen years older than Mickiewicz and fourteen years older than Daukantas, he belonged to the pre-Philomath generation brought up in the still independent Commonwealth. A Catholic priest, he was involved in the uprising and had to emigrate. Haunted by the typical bad luck of an exile, Nezabitauskas may have committed suicide in Nancy in 1837, though the circumstances of his death remain obscure. In France, he became a utopian radical and a follower of Lamennais (whom he translated into Lithuanian). No wonder he was sus-



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ceptible to Mickiewicz's Messianist doctrine as well. *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims*, written in a simple style and addressing the emigre masses, provided didactic and soul-elevating reading for former insurrectionists of Lithuanian origin, the number of whom living in Paris at the time was considerable. All of them were, of course, bilingual, yet at least for some of them, as presumably for Nezabitauskas himself, Lithuanian was their first and native language. They might have perceived Mickiewicz's Messianist text as one more prayer-book.

Incidentally, Nezabitauskas wrote a book of poetry in Lithuanian which he sent to Mickiewicz, asking him for sponsorship. The book opened with a dedication in verse, entitled "For Eminent Sir Adam Mickiewicz, a Famous and Great Poet, Our Distinguished Lithuanian Fellow-Countryman Writing in the Polish Language." Mickiewicz did not comply with Nezabitauskas's request, and the book, like *The Deeds of Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians*, remained unprinted for almost a century (it was published in 1930). It consisted mainly of translations and imitations of Lamennais. Highly rhetorical and written in awkward syllabic verse, it would not merit much attention if it were not the first consistent attempt of producing political and philosophical poetry in the Lithuanian language. Nezabitauskas shared Daukantas's conviction that Lithuanian could become as cultivated and flexible as Polish: according to him, it possessed a "rich treasure of adequate words" and the "power of precise and pleasant expression." Yet ideologically, he was Daukantas's diametric opposite. He never perceived Lithuanians as a separate nation. Most of them were, for him, just "uneducated native ploughmen," worthy of attention yet having no particular place in history. And educated Lithuanians, including Nezabitauskas himself, were part and parcel of the Polish nation, even if they sometimes used a different idiom. In his poetry, Nezabitauskas defined himself as a Pole, using the word as a virtual synonym for Lithuanian. As any émigré of 1831, he professed faith in resurrection of the Commonwealth: here, in the integrated Polish-Lithuanian universe, he saw the ideal text and plenitude of truth. Mickiewicz's work was accepted by Nezabitauskas, and presumably, by his émigré readers, word for word, without the slightest attempt at reinterpretation.

This soon ceased to be the case. The same Lithuanian national movement which had brought Daukantas from marginality into limelight, condemned Nezabitauskas to virtual oblivion. Incidentally, the fate which befell *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims* in Lithuania

was as distinctive as the fate of *Žywila*. After Nezabitauskas's attempt, it was translated anew only in 1919, in the context of the struggle for Lithuania's independence (which led to an armed conflict with Poland). "Translation" is probably not the right term here, since Mickiewicz's work was transmogrified by changing "Poland" into "Lithuania" and "Poles" into "Lithuanians." The magical number of three partitioning powers (Russia, Prussia and Austria), emphasized by Mickiewicz as the unholy opposite to the Trinity, remained intact in Lithuanian popular mythology, with the sole difference being that in the list of the historical enemies the place of Austria, which was never involved in Lithuanian affairs, was assigned to Poland.

According to some sources, *The Pilgrim's Litany* was translated into Lithuanian for the third time in 1991 and distributed in the form of a leaflet to the defenders of the Parliament in Vilnius on January 13 of that year. I did not have the opportunity to verify that information, neither did I see the text, but I am sure it was also adapted by excising all mentions of Poland and references to Polish history (which, in any case, is less than well known in contemporary Lithuania).

Thus, Mickiewicz's influence on Lithuanian culture was rife with extraordinary contradictions. The very image of his native land, its past and its ethnic character, which became a standard paradigm for generations of Polish (and foreign) readers, underwent peculiar reinterpretations in the country he had, not without reason, considered his own. The process of the establishment of the modern cultural identity of Poland and Lithuania, which owes much to Mickiewicz and to Polish Romanticism in general, reveals an intense love-hate relationship: one may say that Lithuanian and Polish cultures are complementary yet at the same time provide a polemical background for each other. In the development of Lithuanian culture, one easily discerns two conflicting if sometimes interwoven threads which start with Mickiewicz's classmate Daukantas and Mickiewicz's correspondent Nezabitauskas. Let us look more closely at Mickiewicz's own concept of Lithuania that contributed to the birth of those opposite ideologemes.

The *terminus a quo* of Polish Romanticism is traditionally identified with the same year (1822) that Daukantas wrote his Romantic manifesto of modern Lithuanian nationalism, *The Deeds of Ancient Lithuanians and Samogitians*. There is unity of place as well, since both currents crystallized in Wilno. One important difference consists in the fact that the Lithuanian current stayed, for a long period, underground, while the Polish current became

immediately visible. In contrast to Daukantas, who could not count on publishing his treatise, Mickiewicz managed to print *Ballads and Romances*, even if not without some trouble, and gained fame overnight. Of course the two classmates were personalities of different caliber; moreover, only one of them worked in a well-developed linguistic and cultural milieu. But perhaps the more significant cause of their different fate was the fact that Daukantas's pattern of thinking was historically premature while Mickiewicz's answered some real social and spiritual needs.

The eighteenth-century intellectual order which was rationalist, Europocentric and referring back to Greco-Roman heritage underwent a profound crisis throughout the civilized world – a crisis aggravated in Poland in Lithuania by a loss of independence and the Napoleonic wars. It was proved beyond any doubt that history moves in unpredictable ways. The new *episteme* advanced to the fore the activity of the subject who was entitled to criticize reality and to create it anew; only a mystic and a clairvoyant, that is, the poet, could foresee the future; irrational faith and emotion prevailed over reason. These commonly known traits of Romantic Weltanschauung were complemented by regionalism which was opposed to Classicist centralization. Interest in the dark, non-rational side of the psyche found its counterpart in the reorientation of cultural pursuits towards the periphery, be it social, historical or geographical. The magisterial culture of the over-determined center was supplanted by subcultures marked by metaphysic strivings and the spirit of revolt; the urban setting had to yield to primitive scenery; and Europe had to give way to the Orient.

Mickiewicz was fortunate enough to have been born in a borderline region, which could be easily perceived as an Eastern European Scotland or Brittany. In his introduction to *Ballads and Romances* he praised the works of Scottish poets (writing in English), patterning himself as their counterpart, a Lithuanian poet of Polish language. He was also fortunate to be brought up in Wilno, since it was a civilized European city with a large Western community, yet at the same time the epitome of "otherness" and exoticism; to a degree, it was even Oriental (St. Petersburg was more Westernized, even though it was geographically farther to the East). Marked by conservative Catholicism and, by Baroque architecture, the city preserved much of the Baroque carnivalesque tradition. The heritage of the Middle Ages and remnants of paganism were also visible in it. And Wilno was surrounded by an unusual and picturesque land which, by a small stretch of imagination, could be construed as "wild".

The medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania was created and ruled by a heathen tribe speaking an ancient Baltic language incomprehensible to the Slavs, but it also included

numerous Slavic lands professing Eastern Orthodox faith. After entering into a close alliance with the Polish Crown, it was usually perceived as sort of Poland's eastern extension. The upper classes of the Grand Duchy became, for the most part, Catholic and Polonized, yet the country preserved much of its unique character. The Lithuanian language and Eastern Slavic (Ruthenian) dialects which later developed into Belorussian survived mainly among the peasants. There was an old tradition of juxtaposing "sylvan" Lithuania to "agricultural" Poland, and also of opposing Lithuanian backwardness to Polish civilization; at the same time, Lithuanian gentry more often than not interpreted their lack of refinement as a sign of antiquity and nobleness, looking at the "people of the Crown" (*koroniarze*) with ill-concealed disdain. In the context of Mickiewicz's times, all of this provided a splendid chance for Romantic imagination. Lithuania was patterned as "the other half" of the civilized country, one of those fascinatingly different lands which promised the chance of reassessing the entire European culture. For Mickiewicz (who, incidentally, never visited Warsaw or Cracow) his native periphery presented a world which was equal and even superior to that of Poland proper, that is, of the West. Like the mad peasant girl in his programmatic ballad *The Romantic*, Lithuania could not be assessed through the lenses of learning (*mędrca szkiełko i oko*). One had to read just the focus and discover in "the other" an aesthetic and ethical value. Lithuania was implicitly opposed to the Crown as the land of spiritual vision to the land of reason. Here, the feeling of infiniteness and miraculousness had survived; there, limited common sense reigned.

In a talk with Stefan Garczyński in Dresden (1832), Mickiewicz defined himself as "wild Lithuanian", having in mind primarily his non-conformist character and independence of mind. But there was more than that in his self-identification. An exotic and untamed country became a symbol for the untamed powers of the psyche. The lands of the former Grand Duchy provided a specific chronotope, a symbolic space of forests and lakes permeated with spiritual fluids and, for all practical reasons, merging with the other world. Here was a universe



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of isolation and magic, of mystery and horror, of melancholy, suffering and anxiety – all the paradigmatic Romantic traits, corroborated, incidentally, by the actual situation of those backward regions, especially in the Belorussian half of the Grand Duchy. The dialogue in Mickiewicz's ballads usually developed as the dialogue of two worlds, one of day and the other of night (the latter was metaphorically presented as the sunken city of Świtez). In that oneiric landscape, the tension between life and death and between nature and culture was supplemented by the tension between different historical eras, social strata and, last but not least, different languages. The poet himself became a medium of the spirits who had before expressed themselves in the unintelligible idiom of heathen tribes. The miraculous incursion of transcendental powers into everyday life became virtually analogous to the incursion of the peripheral Romantic poet into the established world of "central" culture.

The image of Lithuania as land of primeval unity was complemented by its past. For the Romantics, the Middle Ages were a privileged era, the main focus of history. And Lithuania possessed a medieval past of Shakespearean dimensions, happily conflating all the traits of Romantic North and Romantic Orient. On the one hand, it was a semi-mythical barbarian country endowed with weird creative powers, quite similar to that of Germanic and Celtic Europe which Romantic poets had opposed to the Mediterranean world. On the other hand, Lithuanian heathen faith substituted for Islam: Lithuanians withstood the attacks of the crusaders who called them "Northern Saracens," and later renounced paganism by their own choice. To add one more Romantic tinge, Lithuanian language and identity were perceived as something bound to disappear, and not without reason, since Lithuanian letters, as we have said, had not yet gone beyond the embryonic stage. The past was apparently preserved only in the folklore, among the uneducated people whose illiteracy equalled historical memory. It lingered there, to quote Mickiewicz's ballad, as a "hieroglyph, adorning moss-grown rocks, an inscription entwined with a meaning fallen asleep."

This myth of Lithuania as "the shadow" of Poland, the counterculture which presented a foil for the West – in a word, the archetypal "other" for the Polish Crown – enabled Mickiewicz to create an anticanonical paradigm which supplanted the cultural soliloquy of the Polish Enlightenment. The scarcity of reliable knowledge about Lithuania and the vagueness of her spatio-temporal borders could not be but helpful for Romantic imagination. First of all, one may note, so to speak, the oscillating semantics

of the very term "Lithuanian." It might be applied either to the former Grand Duchy in its entirety, that is, to the lands which were ethnically Lithuanian as well as to those which were ethnically Belorussian, or to the old pagan Lithuania with its non-Slavic language and specific cultural heritage. Mickiewicz more frequently than not used the first concept; in other words, he perceived Lithuania rather as a historical region than a linguistic and cultural entity. He was well aware that the Grand Duchy consisted of two linguistically separate parts. In his article on Franciszek Karpiński (1827), he wrote: "The common people in Lithuania use either the Ruthenian dialect, mixed with Polish idiom, or the Lithuanian language, which is totally different from Polish." It is more than plausible that Mickiewicz heard some Lithuanian in Wilno, Kowno, perhaps even in his native Nowogródek region where Lithuanian-speakers survived in several villages until the middle of the twentieth century, and during the emigre meetings, attended also by the countrymen of Nezabitauskas. Fragments of three Lithuanian folk-songs, written down in Mickiewicz's hand in Paris, were published by Michał Brensztejn and Jan Otrębski in 1927: they demonstrate a rather remarkable sense of Lithuanian grammar. On the other hand, Mickiewicz never clearly distinguished Lithuanians from Latvians and Prussians. And, notwithstanding the obvious linguistic difference, he used the term "Lithuanian" also for the speakers of Slavic dialects, as far as they lived in the territory of the former Grand Duchy. The concept of Belorussia as a particular cultural realm crystallized only around 1830, and one finds the term "Belorussian" in Mickiewicz's corpus only once (in his 1853 letter to Ignacy Domejko).

This semantic confusion was amplified by the fact that the Nowogródek region, although inhabited mainly by Belorussian speakers, was for several centuries considered a part and parcel of so-called Lithuania Propria – Lithuania in the narrow sense; as different from the "Ruthenian" regions of the Grand Duchy. In any case, Mickiewicz's ballads, such as *Maryla's Grave* and *The Three Brothers Budrys*, allegedly free translations of authentic Lithuanian folklore, were either typical Romantic forgeries or, at best, distant echoes of Belorussian laments and songs. (The same can be said about the ritual texts in Part II of *Forefather's Eve*).

"Lithuanian" blended not only with "Ruthenian". On another hierarchical level, both Lithuanian and Ruthenian were interpreted as regional variants of Polish. In the well-known poem *The Review of the Army*, in *Pan Tadeusz* and many other works, Mickiewicz (incidentally, just as the Lithuanian

speaker Nezabitauskas) used the word "Litwin" ("Lithuanian") as a perfect substitute for "Polak" ("Pole"). Though Romantic Lithuanian studies were much in vogue during Mickiewicz's university years, and also afterwards, the linguistic concept of the nation at that time was accepted and elaborated only by a few marginal figures. Baltic folklore and ethnography were considered an inseparable part of Polish heritage, a valuable legacy from the independence period; the ancient Baltic Olympus was interpreted as a variant of the common Slavic Olympus. "The shadow side" of Poland was, for Mickiewicz and his milieu, still Poland, just as the far side of the Moon never ceased to be part of the Moon.

However, this attitude towards the Lithuanian language and Lithuanian identity was not without its fine points and diachronic nuances. In his commentaries to *Grażyna*, Mickiewicz agreed with Ksawery Bohusz, a Wilno scholar who insisted that Lithuanian was a perfect, uncommonly rich and consistent language which, in ancient times, most likely served as a medium for vast literature. Here, he opposed Joachim Lelewel, who ridiculed Bohusz mercilessly. He also supported Bohusz's assertion that Christianity and union with Poland were detrimental for that imaginary ancient Baltic culture - an idea which was to make a substantial career in the writings of Daukantas and other ideologues of the Lithuanian national movement. On the other hand, if Bohusz considered preservation of Lithuanian a matter of honor for the Poles, Mickiewicz would have probably subscribed to the ambivalent attitude of fellow Philomath Jan Czeczot, in whose opinion the demise of the native (Lithuanian and/or Belorussian) idiom was deplorable yet had to be accepted since its development would have harmed the unity and purity of Polish.

In the oft-quoted introduction to *Konrad Wallenrod* Mickiewicz stated: "Lithuania is now altogether a thing of the past ... It is just such subjects that Schiller bids us to seek: *Was unsterblich im Gesang soll leben, Muss im Leben untergeben*, What is to have eternal life in song must perish in actual life." These words are usually interpreted as a strategic move aimed at concealing the actual message of *Konrad Wallenrod* from censorship. Indeed, medieval Lithuania in Mickiewicz's epic poem figured as a rather transparent pseudonym for the entire Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, the resurrection of which was the first article of the author's creed. Yet here, a characteristic ambiguity persisted: if applied to real medieval Lithuania with its separate historical identity, Mickiewicz's statement had to be taken quite literally.

In *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish*

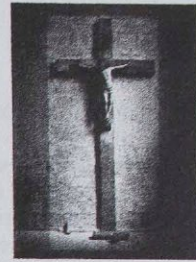
Pilgrims, the Commonwealth was praised as a prefiguration of united Europe and united humankind: "And God rewarded them [the Poles], for a great nation, Lithuania, united

itself with Poland, as husband with wife, two souls in one body. And there was never before this such a union of nations. But hereafter there shall be. For that union and marriage of Lithuania and Poland is the symbol of the future union of all Christian peoples in the name of faith and freedom."

Characteristically, according to Mickiewicz, Lithuania played a dominant male role in that marriage (in agreement with the real historical marriage of Władysław Jagiełło, the Lithuanian, and Jadwiga, the Pole). Still, by the same token, Lithuania's separate identity became redundant. Now, it was indivisible from the Polish Crown, even if it retained primeval mystical powers unavailable to its partner.

In his courses in Slavic literatures at the Collège de France (particularly in the lecture on March 24, 1843) Mickiewicz presented a summary of his views on Lithuania, introducing some new important elements into it. He noted that ancient Lithuanians, "the least known tribe in Europe," were neither Slavs nor Germans; their language was "the oldest language spoken on the European mainland," akin to Sanskrit and at the same time the least polished by literary usage. In Mickiewicz's words, the country, although negligible on the map, was extremely significant historically. That significance pertained primarily to the spiritual area. Among Lithuanians, one found "primordial thought, the soul of every tradition."

"Nowhere did religious beliefs constitute as extensive and as complete a whole." In his dilettantish though characteristic argument, Mickiewicz related ancient Lithuanian animism to old Indian religion and defined it as the purer form of the Brahman faith, extending also to the political realm. He even put forth a bizarre hypothesis that ancient Lithuanians were a colony of Hindus who wandered as far as the shores of the Baltic. According to him, Lithuania was spiritually connected to Poland by a unique link, "by a certain great mystery," the external expression of which was the political union of both countries, "the most significant turning point event in the history of the North." Notwithstanding all the vicissitudes of fate, the union continued up to Mickiewicz's own days, at least at the metaphysical level. To give one more quote, contemporary



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Lithuanian people do not have "any feeling of national identity, do not exist as a state, do not even cherish such a project: the concept of nation and fatherland is absent in its language." Nevertheless it is endowed with a certain great if nebulous mission. As fits a prophetic text, the lecture on Lithuania ends with a somewhat perplexing sentence: "Therefore, that people is one of those which abide in e x p e c t a t i o n".

Mickiewicz's words should not be interpreted as a prediction of that sea change in Lithuania's political fate which actually occurred in the twentieth century. After the union, Lithuania's separate historical existence became, for Mickiewicz, not only redundant but unimaginable. He could also hardly form a notion of a mature, fully developed culture in the Lithuanian language. Texts in Lithuanian (though he was aware of their existence) were, for him, an exotic appendage to Polish culture, a bizarre if likeable minority phenomenon which could only affirm the domination and all-embracing value of Polish. *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims* put it in the most succinct form: "The Lithuanian and the Masovian are brothers: do brothers quarrel because one hath for a name Władysław, another Witow? Their last name is the same, the name of Poles." Lithuanian separatism was, in this perspective, an extravagant and transitory deviation at the best, a mortal sin at the worst. What Mickiewicz actually had in mind while speaking of Lithuania's mission, was something strictly spiritual. Lithuania had to produce a mystical leader whose exploits would cause the resurrection of the Commonwealth. Mickiewicz himself could pretend to that leadership. He combined in his personality both the Pole and the Lithuanian "other" (a trait he shared, incidentally, with Andrzej Towiański). This split provided him with an inner tension which could be interpreted as the source of his prophetic gift.

To a degree, one might compare Mickiewicz's attitude toward Lithuania to the attitude of conservative Catholic theologians of his era towards the Jews. According to their reasoning, the Jews gave birth to the Savior yet their historical role ended with this act.

This myth of the savior coming from Lithuanian lands became virtually a central paradigm of post-Romantic Polish culture and contributed appreciably to the actual development of Poland's history. Still, the words about Lithuanians as a people abiding in expectation also opened a different vista for which Mickiewicz would not take responsibility.

Incidentally, one should note a specific version of the Lithuanian myth which found its embodiment

not in Mickiewicz's messianic texts but in *Pan Tadeusz*. Here, Lithuania appeared as private homeland, the idyllic chronotope of childhood and early youth, *locus amoenus* colored by nostalgia. In contrast with another mythical space of Polish culture, the Ukraine, its nature was far from extravagant, and its customs free from excessive cruelty and horror. It was an abode of happy and conservative daily life, of national, social and generational concord. Its supra-ethnic identity, transcending the differences of language and denomination, included Jews, Tartars and vaguely perceived common folk, speaking either Belorussian or Lithuanian. It might have had certain particularist ambitions but was bound for everlasting reconciliation with the Polish Crown; in fact, it was the better, more traditional part of Poland, unspoiled by foreign influences and unfailingly patriotic. This mythic Lithuania to a large degree substituted for the actual Lithuania in Polish political and cultural discourse, existing as a sort of parallel space which rarely if ever intersected with the real one.

Let us return to that real Lithuania where the Lithuanian national movement was gradually gaining strength. If Daukantas was a lonely precursor, his ideas fell on fertile ground in the second half of the nineteenth century. One may say that the problem consisted in a prefix. Mickiewicz, as all the Poles of his milieu and his generation, differentiated between *ród* (gens) and *naród* (nation): one might at the same time belong to the Lithuanian rod and the Polish *naród*. Adding the prefix *na-* to the definition of the Lithuanian people (and thus making concepts of the Pole and the Lithuanian mutually exclusive) became the order of the day.

This semantic and ideological shift occurred after Mickiewicz's death – to be precise, after the uprising of 1863, when social developments in the eastern half of the former Commonwealth resulted in the birth of the Lithuanian-speaking educated strata of peasant origin. It conducted a linguistic revolution, analogous to simultaneous revolutions in Czech or Finnish lands: a standardized language was forged out of many peasant dialects, and a new community of writers and readers in the Lithuanian language crystallized. Repressive reality led to the over-semanticization of the language phenomenon. Lithuanian, which had already been described by Mickiewicz and many others as the oldest language of the continent, the relic of the ancient Indo-European period and the vessel of vaguely defined spiritual truths, obtained a mythical prestige: it referred to the lost sacral world of harmony and freedom – to put it otherwise, that world was still present in the language, if only in an embryonic form. Moreover, following Daukantas's example, Lithuanian intellectuals

interpreted the social conflict between peasants and upper classes primarily as a language conflict. Language had to give a clear-cut, legible contour to the identity of the Lithuanian people. According to the old Romantic belief, it was declared the most decisive and hierarchically the highest element of that identity: contamination of the language signified impending annihilation of the group and its culture. Language was hypostatized: it took the place of the individual, it could be victimized and even martyred. The rights of language substituted for civic rights, hence the tendency for linguistic purism, usually directed against Polish borrowings, syntactical patterns and even orthography. (One may add that even Lithuanian versification became a sort of ideological construct: Mickiewicz's syllabic poems were translated employing syllabotonic, that is, emphatically non-Polish verse).

Thus, language provided one focus for the crystallization of the modern Lithuanian nation. Another focus was found in the mythic image of Lithuania created by the Wilno school of Polish Romanticism, that is, primarily by Mickiewicz. As I have said before, it was, to a degree, patterned after the Romantic image of Scotland and Brittany: and not unlike Gaelic and Breton nationalists, Lithuanians accepted it as their own. Mickiewicz's opposition of untamed Lithuania versus civilized Poland supplied a ready-made paradigm for the affirmation of Lithuanian national uniqueness. The old cultural code juxtaposing "I" and "the other" re-ed in place, yet was transformed in the new nationalist discourse. If Polish culture of the Romantic period found its quasi-natural supplement in the exotic and sacralized culture of Lithuania, the budding Lithuanian culture of post-Romantic times readily accepted the notion of its own sacred character yet construed the Polish culture as its perfect antipode, the embodiment of all the negative and prohibited qualities: non-authenticity, anarchy and corruption. This change of discourse, comparable to a geological shift, created different meanings for most of the words and categories inherited from Mickiewicz's writings. Together with Daukantas, new Lithuanian ideologues considered union with Poland original sin, which brought Lithuania into the degenerating Western world and meant disintegration of her harmonious and noble pre-historic life. Characteristically, Konrad Wallenrod and the story of Alpuhara became metaphors for the "eternal Polish perfidy," allegedly directed against Lithuanians (a transformation similar and genetically related to the transformation of Wallenrod's image in Slavophile discourse) And since Wallenrod, according to Mickiewicz, was of Lithuanian origin himself, he could also become a semantic mask for the

Polonized gentry which, in the opinion of Lithuanian nationalists, renounced ties with its own ethnic group and finally found itself beyond redemption.

Incidentally, this was not the first time that Lithuanian nationalist discourse employed a ready-made paradigm endowing it with new senses. Even before Daukantas, a conservative Sarmatian cult of the native tradition served for some Lithuanian speakers as a vehicle for new political currents. Now, a semantic paradox of the same kind appeared: the Romanticism of Polish provenance became a vehicle for a movement striving for separation from Poland. Mickiewicz's cult of language, folklore and history brought a result which would be, for him, a manifest aberration. Lithuanian culture adapted for its own needs Mickiewicz's recognition of the past as an area of resistance and activity where human personality was tested, as well as his image of the poet as a spiritual leader of the nation. The elements borrowed from Polish literature finally crystallized into a native tradition living by its own rules. Moreover, Mickiewicz's very existence helped to affirm Lithuanian national pride. There was more than one attempt to set him and other writers of the "Wilno school" apart from Polish letters and to incorporate them into separate Lithuanian culture. In a similar vein, the entire history of the Grand Duchy was appropriated as a Lithuanian, that is, strictly ethnic phenomenon.

This creation of the counter-myth and development of a new set of rhetorical strategies took a long time. The opposite ideologeme, which we noticed in Nezabitauskas's writings, survived in Lithuanian letters at least until the beginning of the twentieth century. A case in point was Antanas Baranauskas alias Antoni Baranowski, a poet and religious figure who at the end of his life, in 1897, became the bishop of Sejny. He was acquainted with Mickiewicz's writings by one of his teachers, a Polish Catholic priest Alexander Gabszewicz (who was soon exiled to Kola, exactly for providing his pupils with banned literature). It is said that Gabszewicz publicly expressed doubts about the suitability of the Lithuanian language for poetry which could equal Mickiewicz's. In response, Baranauskas wrote a long and brilliant poem, *The Forest of Anykščiai*, patterned after the descriptive parts of *Pan Tadeusz* and developing the Lithuanian sylvan myth. Another poetic text by Baranauskas, *A Journey to St .*



Tomas Venclova

FORUM

Petersburg, was also obviously a response to Mickiewicz, namely, to his *Digression*. A bizarre melange of rather naive descriptions and apocalyptic visions in folksong style, it obtained immense prestige during the era of the Lithuanian national movement. Just like *Digression*, it possessed very strong anti-Russian overtones (for that reason, it was printed in Lithuania in full as late as 1989, although many people knew its banned passages by heart). Baranauskas never doubted the messianic role of Poland for Lithuania. The integrated world of the Commonwealth was, for him, paradise lost, as it was for Mickiewicz. Although held in high esteem by the Lithuanian nationalist ideologues, Baranauskas never sympathized with their goals and their rhetoric. Nevertheless, his poetry was accepted as their manifesto precisely because it was written in the Lithuanian language.

The transformation of language choice into an ideological sign also finally sealed the fate of Mickiewicz in the country he called his own. He was liked and read by several generations, in the Polish original as well as in Lithuanian translations which were and are abundant. Early Lithuanian intellectuals, who were perfectly bilingual, considered the very act of translating Mickiewicz a patriotic statement, affirming the rights of their native language and serving as the best means of its cultivation. Later, as knowledge of Polish in Lithuania faded, the translations became the only way of bringing Mickiewicz to the Lithuanian reading public. Simultaneously, the attempts to integrate him fully into the Lithuanian culture failed.

The highly ambivalent attitude towards Mickiewicz perhaps found its best expression in two statements presumably written by the same man and virtually at the same time, yet directly opposed in their message. Commemorating the centennial of Mickiewicz's birth, Vincas Kudirka, a follower of Polish Positivists and the leading figure of the Lithuanian national movement (who translated *Forefathers' Eve* into his native language, characteristically omitting *The Great Improvisation* and all other mystical scenes), greeted the erection of the poet's monument in Warsaw in the first issue of the illegal Lithuanian journal which appeared under his editorship. There, he called Mickiewicz "the man whose famous name is for all times connected with Lithuania, and from whom we should learn to love her." Yet there is also a note, most likely in Kudirka's hand, on the margins of a Polish pamphlet *Who was Mickiewicz*, printed in 1898: "For us, genuine Lithuanians ... Mickiewicz with his false prophecy about the impending *finis* of our nation (which fortunately and contrary to his opinion did not take place) is an alien and irrelevant

genius who does not merit much of our interest. Mickiewicz did not recognize Lithuania, Lithuania leaves him to the Poles." For making the paradox perfect, the note was written not in Lithuanian but in Polish.

The famous invocation to Lithuania in the opening line of *Pan Tadeusz*, predictably, also underwent an unusual transformation. It became a sort of motto for the entire Lithuanian national movement. None other than Vincas Kudirka incorporated Mickiewicz's words "Lithuania, my fatherland" as the first line of the Lithuanian national anthem (banned during the Soviet era yet recently resurrected). Characteristically, he changed the pronoun "my" into "our." This plural could include those inhabitants of Lithuania who, like Mickiewicz himself, considered Polish their native language. Actually, it excluded them as socially and linguistically alien. To be precise, the first line of *Pan Tadeusz* was the only significant line of the poem for Lithuanian nationalist discourse. In contrast to *Żywila*, *Grażyna* or *Konrad Wallenrod*, Mickiewicz's epic was never successfully adopted by the Lithuanian reading public. If *Konrad Wallenrod*, for instance, was translated into Lithuanian three times already in the XIX century (starting in 1860, five years after the author's death), *Pan Tadeusz* appeared only in the 1920s, although its opening part was translated as early as 1848. The problem consisted not so much in the poem's size and its complicated stylistics as in the fact that there was a glaring gap between the mentality which found its expression in *Pan Tadeusz* and the mentality of modern Lithuanian nationalists. One could easily imagine Soplicowo on ethnic Lithuanian territory (there were many such instances), yet it was perceived as a locus of total – and fatal – difference. Only the critical and satirical parts of the poem could elicit positive response. The attitudes of Polish-speaking gentry were, for Lithuanian speakers, grotesque if not pernicious; the idea of union, so dear for Mickiewicz, was judged to be a tool for perpetuating the dominance of that supposedly colonialist and anachronistic group. This re-evaluation went to virtually any length. In 1927, the translation of *Pan Tadeusz* was reprinted for use in Lithuanian schools, with the excision of all the references to Poland (General Dąbrowski became a nameless "commander"). No wonder this bizarre operation stirred strong Polish protests.

On the other hand, Lithuanian ideologues adopted Mickiewicz's messianism very easily though also with a characteristic shift. The image of Poland as a crucified nation whose unjust suffering would redeem the world and bring freedom to all was applied to Lithuania, though in a reduced form.

Lithuania hardly had an eschatological task to perform, but her fate was nevertheless perceived as unique and significant for the whole world. Her mission consisted mainly if not exclusively in providing the example of a saintly martyr trampled upon by innumerable enemies. Mickiewicz's stereotype of Poles as a chosen group and of Poland as the only nation loyal to faith and freedom while all the other nations sinned against it was, not without reason, interpreted as imperialist or, in any case, leading to dangerous aberrations; yet virtually the same intellectual mythologeme, in its strictly Lithuanian variant, met with an enthusiastic response. The concept of the ideal peasant milieu marked by uncommon kindness and wisdom, of a pacifist society opposed to cruel neighbors, be they Slavic or Germanic, bizarrely mixed with the Romantic image of warlike and victorious medieval Lithuania. Both myths consolidated under Mickiewicz's very strong influence. The idea of one's own group as the embodiment of mutual help, brotherly love and disdain for the material side of life was taken, to a significant degree, from *The Books of the Polish Nation and of the Polish Pilgrims*, and the imagery of Lithuanian heroism owed much if not everything to Mickiewicz's earlier works.

This mythology was double-edged. It gave the feeling of integration to the Lithuanian ethnic community, that is, it substantiated Lithuanian identity which finally gave birth to mature culture and to the independent and democratic Lithuanian state. Incidentally, that state, just like Poland, was resurrected not once but twice, in 1918 and in 1991. On the other hand, the fear of the evil "other" contributed to the culture of vengeance, mutual suspicion and restriction which unfortunately is still present in Lithuania, as well as in her larger neighbor (the alienation and the emergence of the recriminations were, of course, bilateral processes). Mickiewicz underrated the power and persistence of linguistic nationalism which was brought into being by Romantic discourse. Today it hopefully has started to recede. The poet who came from the multi-ethnic, multi-religious Grand Duchy and emphasized reconciliation and coexistence, may yet become a symbol of interethnic solidarity and of solidarity between two independent modern states.

There are telling details in the posthumous fate of the cultural figures I have discussed in the course of this paper. Simonas Daukantas, the marginal historian who became the founding father of Lithuanian separatism, recently gave his name to the square in Vilnius (formerly Napoleon's square) where the presidential palace stands. There is a project to erect a monument to Antanas Baranauskas in Sejny, but it is

opposed by the Polish church (quite a paradoxical situation, if one remembers that Bishop Baranauskas was pro-Polish and pro-union). No square, street or monument whatever commemo-

rates Kiprijonas Nezabitauskas, another partisan of the old Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As for Mickiewicz, his monument in Vilnius (which, incidentally, has only Lithuanian inscription on its pedestal) became a rallying point for Lithuanian dissidents in 1988. Their demonstrations soon developed into an avalanche-like movement which finally resulted in the regaining of Lithuania's independence. This modern Lithuania shares her capital, some historical relics and historical memories, but not much else, with the old Grand Duchy which was Mickiewicz's native realm.

The story of Mickiewicz's appropriation by Lithuanian culture elucidates the dynamics of ideological constructs and myths typical for more than one Eastern European society. The history of modern Lithuania may be reasonably well described as the history of the semantic shift between two concepts of the Lithuanian: that of inhabitant of the former Grand Duchy and that of a person loyal to a new, Lithuanian-speaking national state. Any attempts to conflate these two concepts failed, reflecting a larger failure of endeavors to postulate direct historical continuity between the Grand Duchy and modern Lithuania. There is a lacuna here which cannot be either filled or ignored: actually, it represents the constituent element of modern Lithuanian identity. Mickiewicz, the most illustrious Lithuanian in the first sense of the term, provides a sort of litmus test for this semantic shift. His life and work are symbolic, and to a large degree responsible, for the watershed between two ideologemes. Speaking about Mickiewicz's role in this historical context, one is tempted to employ - and to alter - his own famous formula: *hic obiit Magnus Ducatus, hic nata est Lituania*.

Wiktor Weintraub Memorial Lecture,
Harvard University, April 2, 1998



Tomas Venclova

FORUM

STANISŁAW WOŚ was born in 1951. Graduated from the High School of Fine Arts in Gdańsk. Disciplines: photography, painting, graphics. He lives in Suwałki.

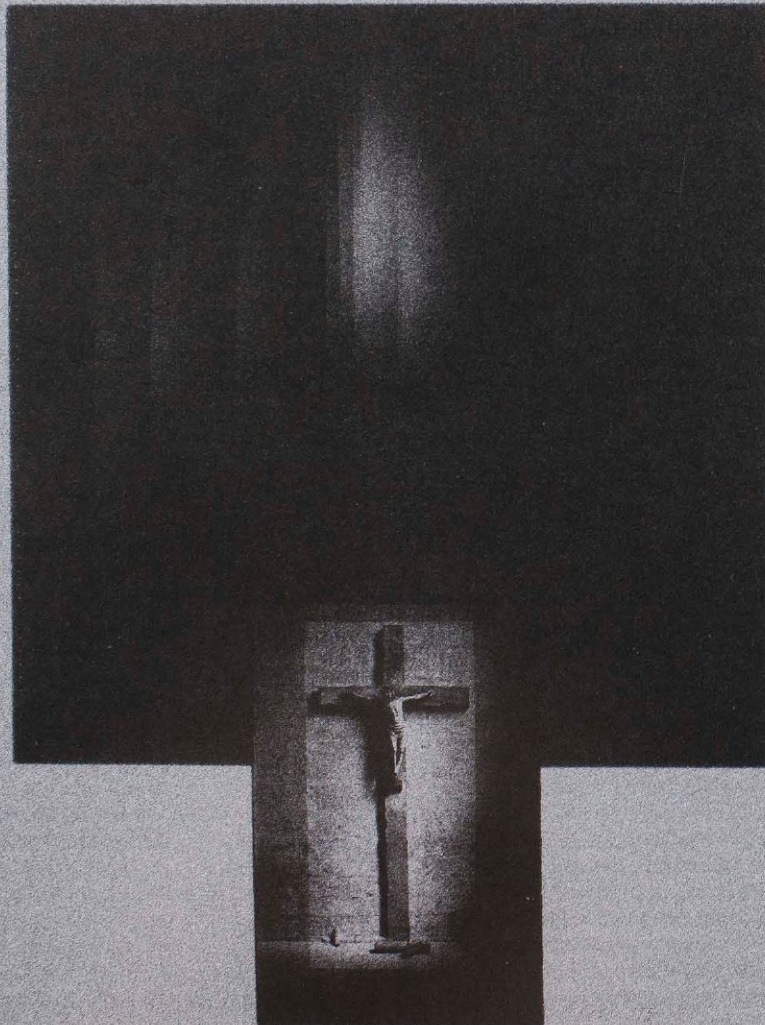
He had many one-man exhibitions, including: Paderborn (Germany), Budapest, Dunkirk, Copenhagen, Poznań, Toruń, Białystok and group exhibitions in: Toronto, Arhus (Denmark), Rome, Voipaaia (Finland), Berlin, Rotterdam, Landshut (Germany), Brighton (Great Britain), Sarajevo, Ljubljana, Kraków.

The artist carries out photographic research into the phenomenon of passing away.

The sequences of photos created by S.J. Woś bind together visions and reflections concerning the notion of passing away. The artist has been carrying on his private "research" on this phenomenon via photographic records which shows the principles of the original existence of death. He does it using carefully selected symbols – motives of nature: monumental formations of stone, trees, human figures, or artificial, strange objects placed within their own universe. The space is dynamised by the "old" ancient light in the shapes of miniature suns, pieces of glass, sudden apparition of vast, geometrical spots that capture time.



Ewa Przytuła





INTERCULT

Intercult is an independent production unit founded 1991 in Stockholm. Intercult initiates and realizes projects that cross borders – geographic, ethnic and mental.

The world changes. Economic and political integration increases – so called "globalization". At the same time a number of citizens are left out of the exchange. The gap between the countries of the Northern hemisphere and those in the South grows wider. Many immigrants lack opportunities and influence in their adopted countries. "Fortress Europe" is no longer a dark fantasy but a bleak reality. But underneath this dark surface, a dynamic potential: the creative vision latent in mixed societies.

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- Networking.
- Intercultural performances and projects.
- Audience development and outreach.
- Seminars and workshops.

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- Theatre Gardzienice, Poland -92
- Re:Orient Festival, Stockholm -93, -94
- Sarajevo, international co-production -93
- Odin Teatret, Denmark -90, -95
- Roma Theatre Pralipe, Macedonia -94
- Bacchanalia, international co-production -96
- Theater an der Ruhr, Germany -96
- Re:map, co-production with Copenhagen '96
- Theatre Royal Stratford East, England -97
- Ravenna Teatro, Italy/Senegal -97
- The Sami Theatre, Sweden, -98
- Landscape X – co-production with Stockholm '98

NETWORKING

- Informal European Theatre Meeting, since -86
- Swedish Theatre Union, since -93
- The Multicultural Network, Sweden, since -96
- The European Theatre Xchange, since -96

INTERCULT STAFF

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Svetlana Rogina Ljungkvist
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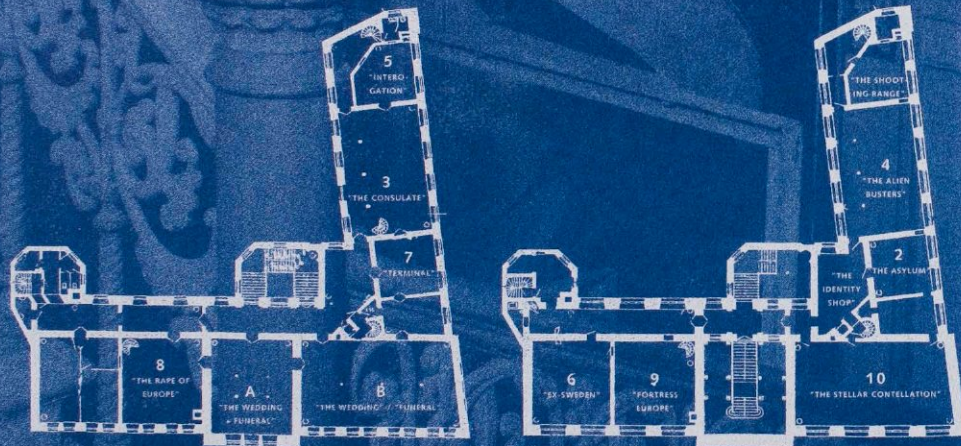
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GAMLA RIKSARKIVET

The National Archives Building

After 4 years of construction the first documents were put on the iron shelves of The National Archives building in 1891. It was used as such until 1968, when the archives were moved to a new and bigger building. But the last documents, 15 000 meters of shelves, stayed until 1996. Since then the building has remained untouched, a monument of national history, filled with ghosts and hidden stories about the past.



LANDSCAPE X - INTERKULT - STOCKHOLM '98

FORMER THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES Architect: Axel Nyström, height: 30 meters, 8 floors, materials: iron, concrete, bricks



EUROPE TREMBLES. BORDERS CRUMBLE. CRACKS IN THE TRIBAL MASK.
WOUNDED LANDSCAPES. BROKEN DREAMS. NEW VISIONS.

LANDSCAPE



X AS NO LONGER, X AS THE UNKNOWN FACTOR, X AS A CROSSROADS.

re-mapping 29/5–7/6

euralien 23/6–5/7

utopia//dystopia 8–24/10

ADVISORY COUNCILS

Intercult had the privilege of support and advice by two groups of people during preparation of the project:

IN SWEDEN

Gerald Nagler, chairman, Swedish Helsinki Committee
Niklas Brunius, dramaturg, Riksteatern
Tanja Petovar, jurist, International IDEA
Agneta Pleijel, writer
Tihomir Ilievski, ambassador, Republic of Macedonia
Monica Nagler, president, Swedish PEN Club
Suzanne Osten, artistic director Unga Klara

INTERNATIONAL

Dragan Klaić, TIN, The Netherlands
Helmut Schäfer, Theater an der Ruhr, Germany
Goran Stefanovski, playwright, Macedonia
Borka Pavićević, director, Center for Cultural De-contamination, Belgrade
Irene Veisaitė, chairperson, Open Society Fund, Lithuania
Krzysztof Czyzewski, the Borderland Foundation, Poland

LANDSCAPE X

Concept and production: Intercult
In collaboration with Stockholm 98
Graphic Design: Nina Ulmaja
The personal texts about the artists scattered throughout the catalogue have been written by Chris Torch, artistic director for Intercult.

PARTNERS

Open Society Fund Lithuania, Cankarjev Dom, Slovenia, The New Theatre Institute, Latvia, Fond for an Open Society, Yugoslavia, Soros Center for the Arts, Bulgaria, The Swedish Helsinki Committee, The Swedish PEN-club, Ravenna Teatro, Italy, Theater an der Ruhr, Germany, Center for Cultural De-contamination, Belgrade

WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF

The Swedish Institute, The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs, EU-DGX-Kaleidoscope program, The County of Stockholm, The City of Stockholm, Stiftelsen Framtidens kultur, Kultur i hela landet, the Open Society Institute (Arts and Cultural Network), Stockholm Information Service, Sida, Konstnärsnämnden, Stadsdelsnämnden Maria-Gamla Stan, AF-Kultur och Media, Kulturkanalen, The Polish Institute, Ministries of Culture from participating countries (see Blue Pages)

THANKS TO

Oden-Lab, Holy-Foto, Sjuhäradsbygdens tryckeri, Adesign Företagsprofilering, Rolf Ahlander Demonteringar and many others, who with their warm support made the project possible...



X

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Yolande Knobel filmmaker and filmeditor

Bachelor of Arts, Film and Theatre,
University of Stockholm.

FILMS/SELECTION

- Stina Ekman, a sculptress, documentary. Director/
editor -84-86

- This is also a trip, documentary, director/editor,
Swedish Television -87/88

- The Ways of the Wind, documentary about the poet
Lutfi Öskök. Editor. Awarded: Best Film Essay, Festival
of Art film, Montreal, Canada -94

- Siege, fiction, editor. -95
- The house of the Sager Family, documentary. Editor,
Swedish television, -95
- Ich heiss Sabine Spielrein, documentary, editor, 96/97
- No comments in individual cases, editor, Swedish
television -98

- photographer/editor for LANDSCAPE X: re-mapping,
"Listen, little man!", directed by Ana Miljanic.
- photographer/editor for LANDSCAPE X: euralien
"The interrogation", directed by Alexander Nordström.

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Jens Olof Lasthein photographer

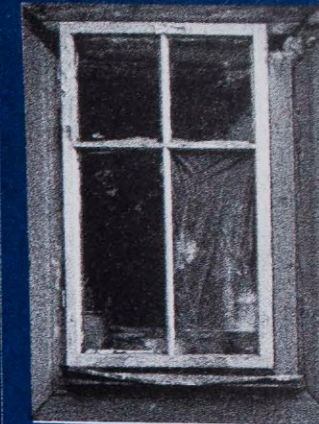
Jens Olof Lasthein is featured as photographer for LANDSCAPE X including an exhibition at the former National Archives. The photos that appear in this issue of Krasnogruda were taken partly in St Petersburg in 1993, partly in Bosnia and Macedonia during the years 1994-97.



- The Nordic Photo School, Stockholm, 1989-92
- Exhibitions: Stockholm, Lund, Göteborg, Ribe and
Copenhagen
- Grants from The Arts Grants Committee, Sweden -93
and Sweden's Authors Fund -97



re-mapping Belgrade



"Macbeth" by Sonja Vukicević in front of the police cordon during student demonstrations in winter 1996/97. Photo: Vesna Pavlović.



At exactly midnight, actors from the Center for Cultural Decontamination appeared and, there in front of the police line, performed a fragment from their Macbeth. The policemen looked on appalled. One, asked what he thought of the performance, did not want to give his name but answered: "I don't like this kind of shows."

"What kind do you like?" Do you go to the theater?"

"Yea, sure, always. All we need is a theater in Bor."

"What do you make of the appearance here of these actors and everything going on here?"

"Well, nothing. It's nice...."

How do you feel standing here?

"Stupid."

"If you weren't in uniform, would you be on the other side of the police line?"

"That's a different question."

If you got the order to go in beating, would you obey the beating part?

"No."

Ivana Stevanovic, "Macbeth in front of blue cordon", Demokratija (January 24, 1997.)

THE CENTER FOR
CULTURAL
DECONTAMINATION

SKART

DRAGICEVIĆ-SESIĆ
PAVICEVIĆ
SUBOTIĆ

My last evening in Belgrade, I attended an astonishing free-form modern-dance performance of "Macbeth", of all things, choreographed by and starring one of the country's famous theatrical figures, Sonja Vukićević, in the harrowing role of Lady Macbeth. I say, "of all things", but it quickly became evident that this was the perfect play for this moment. No one in the audience needed a playbill to recognize that what was really being alluded to was the tale of Slobodan and Mira, their lunge for power, and its inevitable, terrifying, blood-drenched dénouement. That was the easy part, but Vukićević was up to something far more sophisticated as well. For she'd made the first third of the piece, the exposition of the initial relationship between Macbeth and his wife, incredibly erotic and engrossing, drawing the audience in, inviting people to remember how thrilling and vivifying and involving that initial lunge for power and territory and glory had been for all of them, and thereby implicating them in the horrors that were to follow. This, it seemed to me, in a stylized, theatrical context, was precisely the sort of cathartic confrontation with the past that Serbians in general needed to be moving toward.

Lawrence Weschler, "Aristotle in Belgrade". NEW YORKER (February 10, 1997)



"Macbeth" by Sonja Vukicević. Photo: Vesna Pavlović.

BORKA PAVICEVIĆ

The Center for Cultural Decontamination: Re-mapping Landscape X



Much has already been written about the landscape in art or nature. There are almost as many paeans to "Homeland the Beautiful," in which homeland is a function of landscape or nature, as there are songs of love. Ambrose Bierce wrote a short story called "Landscape after a Battle." The title says it all: a lyrical landscape turns into a scorched field, littered with corpses. There is a point when the vision of nature that is "landscape" becomes "territory," the realm of men.

Nowhere in the world has there been more map-redrawing during the past few years than in former Yugoslavia. The map that once was has become Landscape X. Even so, after all the commissions and acronym plans and zones of separation and demarcation lines, after all the "respect for international borders," it is still rare to hear the end-products of the war called by name. We are "the Balkans," or "south-central Europe," or – better still – "the unstable region."

Some of us had our own maps, intimate landscapes of a homeland whose demographics were as varied as its geography and climate. They inform the Center for Cultural Decontamination's project, "Remapping," in which we examine what happens to the individual when landscape becomes territory. We assume that former Yugoslavia, now a historical expression for a country that no longer exists, exists as a map in memory, a European community in microcosm. The violence perpetrated upon that map – in memory and in fact – is violence perpetrated on the body. The body is at once actor and acted upon, carrier of time and space.

Sonja Vukicevic's career as a ballerina spans several variants of Yugoslav time and space. In "Remapping," she brings to the body, as symbol, the changes to the map of a country, as object. She dances, inter alia, the Dayton Agreement. Ms. Vukicevic's map will be presented in a setting not unlike the Center for Cultural Decontamination. In Belgrade, the Center is located in the Veljkovic Pavillion, a pre-WWII building that was once housed the first private art museum in the Balkans. In Stockholm, "Remapping" will be staged in the Riksakivet, the archive. "Remapping," in which dance leaves no material trace, will thus link two venerable collections of memory into one contemporary moment.

As maps change and borders proliferate, more and more travel docu-

THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL DECONTAMINATION A Chronology

The Center for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD) in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, is an independent, supranational cultural institution which, since 1993, has worked to revive the liberal spirit of arts and public discourse under impossible conditions. On January 1, 1998, the CZKD celebrated its third anniversary of work in the historic Veljkovic Pavilion, where it has mounted over 50 exhibitions, performances and public events. The Center aims to transform a social atmosphere which has been contaminated by orchestrated nationalism, hatred, and destruction. Its events to date have attracted thousands of persons of all ages, from all walks of life, as well as enormous attention from domestic and international media.

Unaffiliated with any political party or government organ, the CZKD provides a venue for artists and cultural workers to work with colleagues from abroad and from other former Yugoslav lands. It is an open professional forum where persons can freely articulate their reactions to events transpiring around them.

Founded in wartime, the CZKD continues to struggle against official efforts to silence independent voices. It welcomes the sounds of hundreds of thousands of whistles on the streets of Belgrade and other cities across

Serbia. The artists associated with the CZKD know an overture when they hear one - but they also know that "the play's the thing." Denazification and pacification are ongoing processes. Despite the whistles, the environment in which the CZKD operates continues to manifest in the extreme all forms of violence, hatred and intolerance.

The CZKD is headquarters in the Veljkovic Pavilion. The building, largely left to ruin since WWII, mirrors its surroundings. Built in the 1930 s, the Pavilion was the first private art museum in the Balkans and served as a link between that region and European traditions of art and expression. After WWII, in the name of the "people", the Pavilion's archive and collection of applied and graphic arts were pillaged and lost forever. Its symbolic significance, however, was not lost. The CZKD is working not only to restore the Pavilion building, but its place in our cultural life.

The social effect of that violence is a daily reality. In order to transform that reality and facilitate social catharsis, the CZKD has sponsored activities that include, among others, the following:

1995 Openings

Jan 1 **High Noon:**

Decontamination I, opening of the Veljkovic Pavilion. An exhibition of pre-WWII documents, including Veljkovic family papers, which were found on the floor when the building was unshuttered.

Jan 14 **Decontamination II**, press conference for all Helsinki Committee members from Belgrade, Pristina, and Podgorica, as well as the Swedish Helsinki Committee

Mar 31 **Contra-dibidon**, an exhibition of Slovenian painting and sculpture

Apr 19 **Numeric**, a production by the Mimart theatrical company, using voice, shadow and the body

May 6 **Give Me Back My Flag**, in which Vuk Velickovic used the flag and map of former Yugoslavia to illustrate their mutual destruction

May 27 **Living in Sarajevo**, an exhibition of the art and material culture of Sarajevo under siege

Jun 16 **A workshop for young**



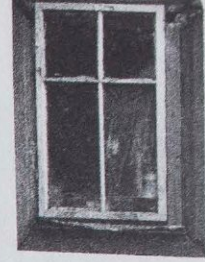
BORKA PAVICEVIĆ & SLOBODAN ŠNAJDER
photo: Vesna Pavlović

ments are required to navigate Landscape X. Visas are a growth industry. The rules are Darwinian: the more complicated the visa form, the better to winnow out the unfit. In Belgrade, the Veljkovic Pavillion just happens to be located next to the German consulate. During these war years, the lines of people waiting every morning have become longer and longer. They line up at night, many hours before the consulate opens. They crowd the sidewalk, they block the entrance to the Center, their parked cars make the street impassable. They seek to emigrate or they seek asylum. They wait on little makeshift stools, which we have collected and exhibit as a material element of "Remapping."

Other street performance elements of "Remapping" set one map against another. A sequence of juxtapositions - some poignant, some absurd - show how those who waited in long lines for visas look at Stockholm.

We will see how Stockholm looks at them.



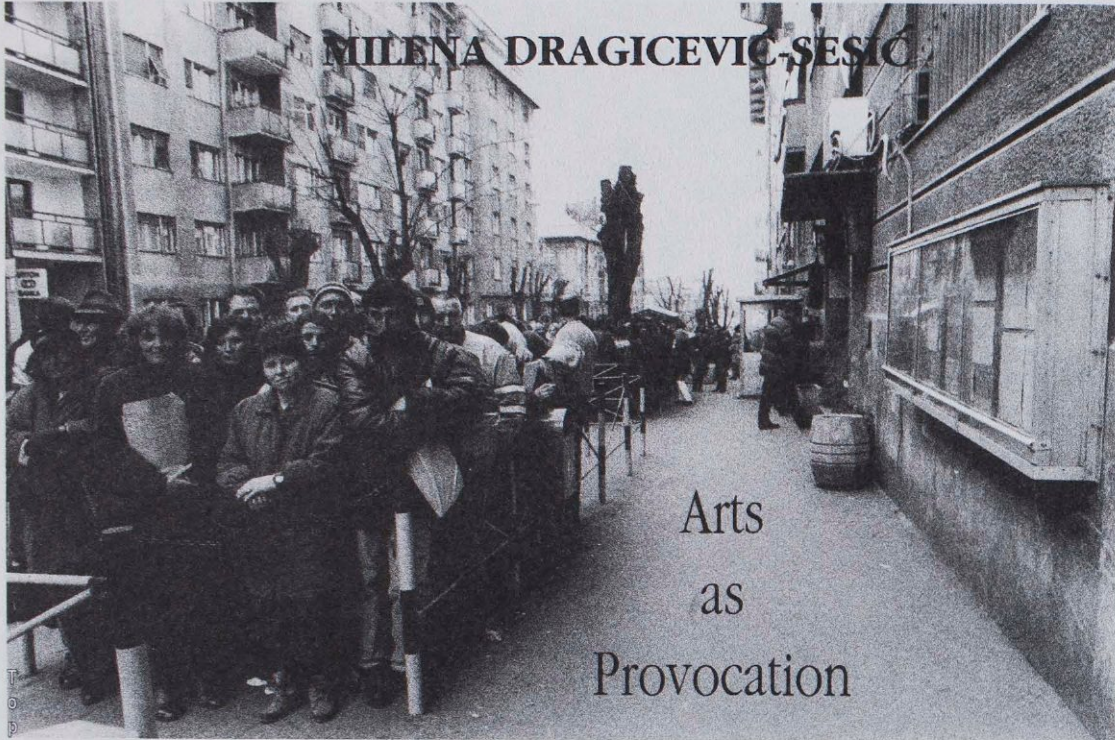


Mirjana Miočinović

Re-mapping

people led by the "Vid" theatre company on how a theatre operates

- Jun 31 **The Devils**, production of Camus adaptation of Dostoevsky, examining the origins of terror, the weakness of liberalism, and the dynamic of revolution vs. reform. Directed by Ana Mijljanic.
- Jul 20 **What Can We Do To Stop The Killing In Bosnia And Herzegovina**, a working meeting of NGOs and like-minded parties, held in response to the ethnic cleansing of Srebrenica and Zepa
- Jul 29 **Exhibition of photographs** by Dragan Dangubic of the pre-WWII memorabilia of an unidentified Belgrade family, examining the idea of a civil society
- Sep 4 **Photo Safari**, an exhibition of photographs by Talent, a young Belgrade artist
- Sep 7 **Public head-shaving** in solidarity with and shared responsibility for internees, initiated by painter Nikola Dzafic, and video-projected onto the street
- Sep 8 **An exhibition of flags** submitted by individual artists as persons, not as members of any state or nation
- Sep 9 Press conference of **Erland Josephson**, Swedish actor and writer
- Oct 2 **Camera Lucida**, an exhibition of pieces from the collection of the Centre for Modern Art, Soros Fond of Yugoslavia
- Oct 18 **High Noon, with Nationalism**, a discussion of Ivan Stambolic's book, Journey into Nowhere
- Oct 21 **A promotion** held in Novi Sad to publicise the work of the CZKD
- Oct 25 **We Have Lost: Musical**



MILENA DRAGICEVIC-SESIĆ

Arts
as
Provocation

Decontamination, a concert of the protest songs of Vuk Stambolovic

Nov 18 **The Face of Illness**, presentation of slides by Dejan Grba on the connection between physical and spiritual illness

Dec 12 **The National Interest: A Retrospective**, an exhibition of paintings by Ratomir Gligorijevic, treating the sources of inspiration for civil resistance

Dec 23 **Oh, Octagon!**, jazz concert

1996 Openings

Jan 1 **High Noon: The Nest**, in which children presented notes and tokens of their thoughts on the first day of the first year after the Dayton Accords

Jan 7 **Emission from the EU Mission**, a performance time capsule of objects, sound, and pictures

Feb 3 **Tuzla - Belgrade 1996**, an exhibition of documents on the cultural life of Tuzla under siege



The project Listen, Little Man! addressed marginal social groups: pensioners, housewives, refugees without citizenship, refugees who are still trying to preserve their cultural identity by continuing the tradition of the old community, unemployed youth wandering around at noon in shopping malls like Cumicevo sokace, working women who finish their jobs at 3 PM and travel home to suburbs in crowded buses, with their bags full of things they have bought at the market in morning hours.

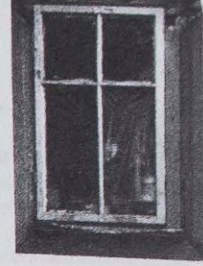
Who were the people for whom the play was performed? Only for those who were there for a real purpose, unaware that the play would take place. These accidental spectators were the true audience, and only with them could this play achieve its purpose: provocation. This accidental audience had different reactions: silently observing; enjoying while observing; teasing and laughing; participating and performing; protesting; refusing to accept the event and leaving; accepting the event as something else and joining it. In this way, a theatre of intervention conducts a spontaneous dialogue with the audience, guided by audience reactions that can extend the dialogue or terminate it completely.

Video metapresentation, metaperformance, is a necessary production element for this type of play-performance. Cameras interrupted the happening, particularly at moments when they were completely unsuitable, except in a shopping mall where their presence could be understood as a part of regular marketing.

Borka Pavicevic asked herself: What has actually happened? Is what happened what we are living now? Do we only notice it because of the theatre? Were those little performances the theatre? Works of art?

There was no message: "This is Theatre!" To the contrary, the message was "This is happening – really happening! Take part – dance, go shopping, vote, wait patiently in the queue, drive."

We tried to enter into the complex relationship between and among life, art and politics. This performance was a collage of fragments of different structures and genres: from striptease to playing balota in Mirjevo, all a truthful poetic document of the end of the twentieth century. The borders between art and reality were crossed numbers of times, spectators became actors, actors became spectators, and the question "What is art for?" had different, more or less direct answers. Is there art in order to make our reality more beautiful, even for a moment (as in the bus or in Kalemegdan), to help us fly to the world of false glamour, even for a moment (the escapism of the Comic corner), to provoke us and make us decide about our own lives and make us take over the responsibilities for it (Passport), to think more about true contradictions of this "society of plenitude" where hunger is hidden from the public eyes (Hyatt), to make us laugh or to make us, through this bitter laughter, ask ourselves about the meaning of our existence?



Milena Dragicević-Sest

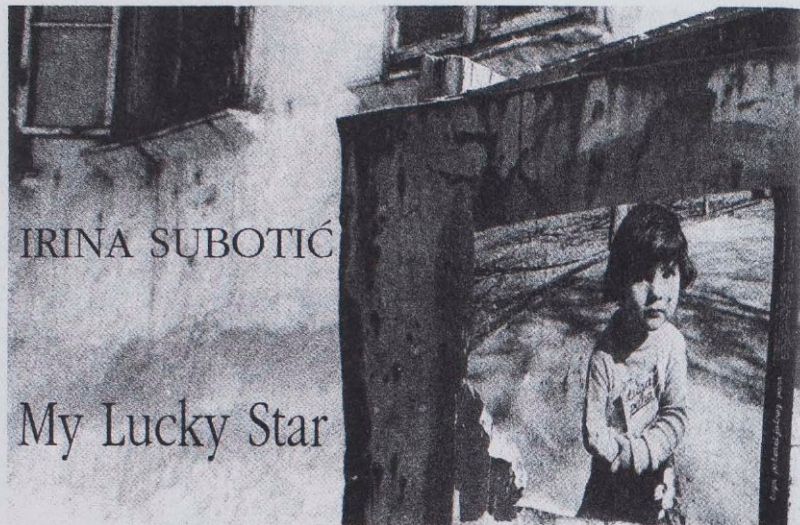
R e-mapping

- Feb 29 **Leap Year**, in which drummers of all ages greet the leap year
- Mar 8 **We're still in the streets!**, presenting the many collected actions of Women in Black, who have taken to the streets every Wednesday to protest the war
- Mar 24 **Magic Brush**, an ironic view of Belgrade's post-war catharsis
- Apr 1 Week-long visit of Swedish director and actor, **Etienne Glaser**, including lectures, films and demonstration of his work, focusing on the link between art



and politics and how to work with and for young people

- Apr 6 **Anniversary** of the beginning of war in Bosnia, including public reading of anti-nationalistic texts
- Apr 28 **Plays of Closeness**, performance, workshops and discussions on World Day of Ballet
- May 5 **BIS**, a sculpture exhibition of seven young artists
- May 17 **Come on, now!**, an anniversary exhibition of the art group "Led Art" and public cooking of beans, in honor of dismissed financial official Avramovic
- May 25 **Ultra-sounds**, an exhibition of graphics of Dragan Zivancevic. Graphics originate in the ultrasound photos of development of a human foetus.
- May 28 **Nistar the Wanderer**, a work in progress, by the theater group "Omen," about the Jewish wanderer who after 2,000 years has come to Belgrade.
- Jun 6 **Stockpile of Danilo Kis**, an ambient theatre production based on the biography and works of Yugoslav anti-nationalist writer Danilo Kis
- Jun 19 **Macbeth/It**, a dance and drama production from the standpoint of Lady Macbeth. Directed and choreographed by Sonja Vukicevic
- Jul 2 **Tendencies of the '90s: The Hiatus of Modernism and Postmodernism**, a fine arts discussions
- Jul 20 **Three Hundred Issues**, a celebration of the cover pages of the independent weekly Vreme, representing a chronology of events in former Yugoslavia
- Sep 19 **Alter Image Festival** (Open Society Fund), projects by artists and authors who have consciously opposed the establishment
- Oct 7 **Performance K**, closing the Alter Image festival, examined the works of artists who have left our country because of the war
- Oct 16 **Start of stage tour in Montenegro**, an unofficial cultural exchange initiated by a regional NGO partnership
- Oct 19 **Poverty Ball**, a fashion show by Jovana Ivkovic
- Nov 8 **Day of Peru**, including a



Belgrade's artistic environment will be presented in Stockholm – Europe's cultural capital '98 – in several segments. These segments intertwine in different art disciplines – installations set up to serve performance events, theatre, dance and music productions; they, however, can also speak for themselves and appear as autonomous instruments of visual speech. Branko Pavić, noted print artist and professor at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade and Škart Group conceived the visual presentation.

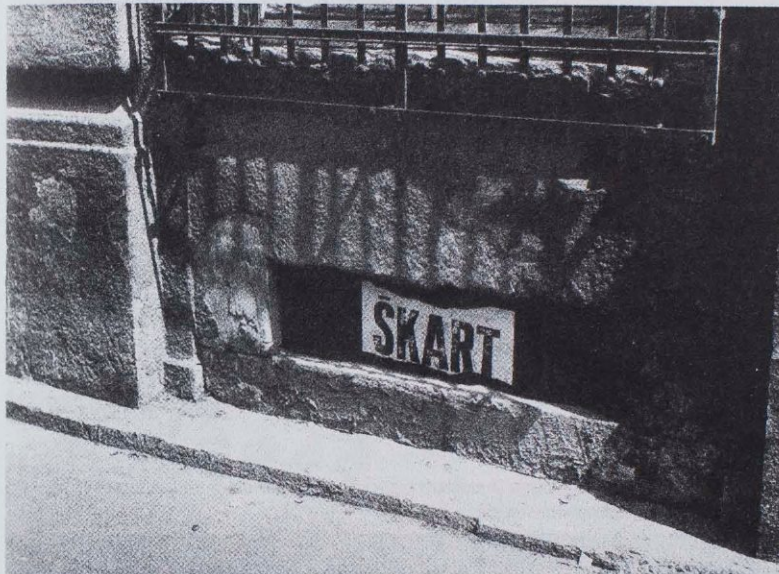
With the Kafkaesque atmosphere of a tight kiosk at the entrance to a specific venue in Sweden's capital, with breathing space for only one solitary individual, the authors invite people to reflect about the status of the Individual in a world crammed with objects of the consumer society; the kiosk is also the place where the promotional material of the action is handed out and its remote connotations stretch out to the idea behind Rodchenko's kiosk at the time of Productivist Constructivism. The installation in the toilet facilities is in the same spirit and counts on the setting and the process of work rather than the contents.

Branko Pavić applied the idea as early as 1995 in his print opus *My Lucky Star*, in which he engaged to re-map the highly topical and provocative system of current developments in the world and especially in our region. His idea agrees well with the idea presented in Stockholm. The installation in the old building of the Riksarkivet, made of genuine maps ground and mixed with paper pulp, creates a new map before the eyes of the public who can watch the slide presentation of the process in the Re-Mapping Room.

With students of the Faculty of Architecture, participating in Workshop 301, Branko Pavić has already created several remarkable multidisciplinary installations. One of them was a highly ingenious action to mark the anniversary of the student protest: in the night of 16-17 November 1997, Belgrade's Faculty of Architecture was filled with student's works, displayed under a telling title: *Lust for Life*. It reflected student reactions to the setting they live in and encompassed computer animation, installations with ironic yet dramatic associations of fear, danger, departure, flight... In a word – ruthless life stories. Think a *Wish* was a project showing on a large screen recordings of the student protest in the winter of 1996/1997

with some visual interventions and outstanding musical background by Goran Vukojčić with whom Pavić is preparing Alzheimer's Symphony, an audio-visual installation for the Stockholm audiences.

Workshop 301 was set up in response to the need of prospective architects to broaden their artistic education. For the last five years it has been helping them in multidisciplinary research and solution of space problems. A group of young people, led by Professor Pavić and assistant Professor Jelenković, demonstrates high professionalism and sensibility in the pursuit of specific aesthetic goals with the help of new technologies, attesting to youthful unbridled ingeniousness as well as complex dilemmas confronting them in life. They also show an outstanding feeling of their time and a quiet need to be genuine participants in the creation of a new age and mentality rather than just passive observers thereof.



Skart

The group SKART (SCRAPS) was founded in 1990 in the abandoned graphic studio at the Faculty of Architecture in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

Sadness – Belgrade, December 1992 – August 1993

The proclamation "The Attempted Killing of Belgrade" was read on several radio stations and published in the independent press. This was the starting point of the project "The Sadness". December 1992. Empty days before the holidays. Empty shops. Empty pockets. Empty tomorrow. "The sadness of the potential customer" was given away to people at the department store entrance. Some people returned the gift. They need nothing any more.

From then on SKART printed every week the small hand made Sadness cardboard booklets and gave away copies to passers by at different city locations and in various circumstances. All these gift giving – receiving



Irina Subotić

Re-mapping

- concert by the Sin Fronteras Group
- Nov 11 **Trio Jerusalem**, a concert of ethno jazz
- Dec 7 **The Decontamination of Eros**, an exhibition of paintings and sculpture by Pedja Ristic
- Dec 10 **Instead of the Performance**, a discussion among theatre professionals about the role and responsibility of theatre in current circumstances
- Dec 20 **Ecologist**, the exhibition of children's projects on protection of the environment
- Dec 28 **Laying Santa Bare**, a holiday fair for neighborhood and refugee children

1997 Openings

- During the many months of protests in Belgrade, the Center organized **Laying Freedom Bare**, a series of public events about freedom and democracy. Many of the events described below were part of that series.
- Jan 3 A conversation with **Bibi Anderson** about the role of artists in times of social change
- Jan 22 **Nocturno**, an exhibition of darkened mirrors as a symbol of our reality
- Jan 22 **Macbeth/It** performed in front of police cordon during the student demonstrations
- Jan 28 **Instead of the Performance**, promotion of the book
- Feb 13 A conversation with writer **Gyorgy Konrad**
- Feb 13 **Bible Study**, an exhibition demystifying the "spiritual" origins of Serbian national politics
- Feb 20 **Refugees and Us**, a conference on the legal rights of

- refugees, organized with Group 484
- Feb 28 **Local self-governing and the state**, a conversation with **Gabor Demsky**, mayor of Budapest
- March 7 **More Than A Whistle**, an exhibition of noisemakers, mostly creatively-inspired everyday objects, used by Belgrade citizens during the protests
- March 17 **European Week Against Racism**, a series of public actions
- March 18 **Drama of Closeness**, a conversation with writer **Vane Ivanovic** on Croats, Serbs and Yugoslavs
- March 24 **Culture and Civil Society**, a conversation with actor **Liv Ullman** and **Gerald Nagler**, president of the Swedish Helsinki Committee
- Apr 4 **Student Parliament** fundraising auction
- Apr 6 **Anniversary** of the beginning of the war in Bosnia
- Apr 15 **Murder** (Fund for an Open Society), annual exhibition of artists
- Apr 20 Week-long visit of Slovene conceptual artist **Breda Kralj**
- May 5 **Silencio!**, a concert by New Music Workshop
- May 9 **Culture and Politics in Civil Society**, a conversation with **Dragan Klajic**, director of The Netherlands Theater Institute, and **Chris Kvelamans**, director of The De Balli Institute for Culture and Politics
- May 10 **Autonomy of the University**, a discussion with **Mme. Gendreau-Massaloux**, director of the Sorbonne
- May 12 **Students and the City**, a film presentation and discussion between (U.S.) Bates College students and their Belgrade colleagues
- May 17 **Hi-Fi**, by Goran Stefanovski, directed by Hajdana Baletic, performance premiere
- May 19 **Utopia as Reality**, a discussion with the French and Yugoslav members of Longo mai
- May 19 **Macbeth/It** performed in Podgorica (Montenegro) festival
- May 23 **Life Sings**, an exhibition of politics and art
- May 29 **School Equipment**, an ironic "trade fair" of materials used in Belgrade secondary

actions were photographed by Vesna Pavlovic; later on, these stills as posters and books gave a permanent visual dimension to what was at the beginning a purely literary project.

For a few weeks Sadness was suspended because of the lack of money (thanks to friends the project was resurrected after the February crisis). Sometimes there was no cardboard. Sometimes there was no printer's dye. But SKART never gave up.

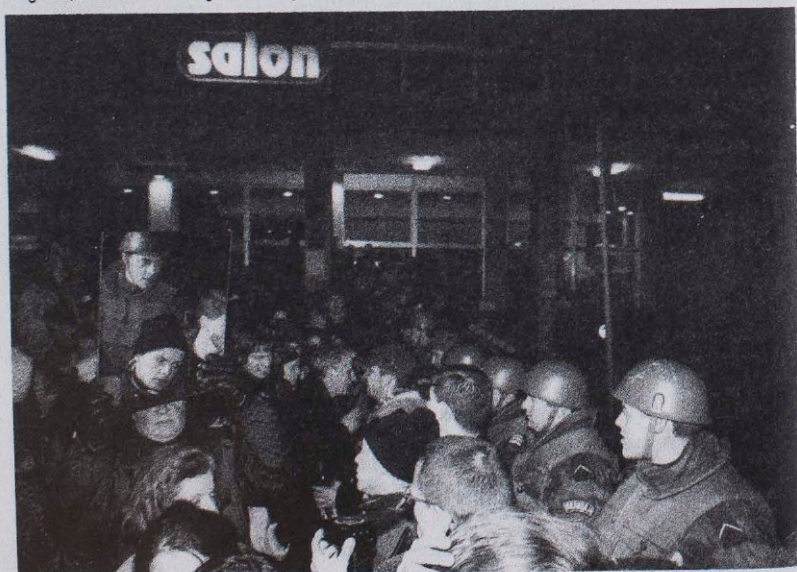
... Sadness of the potential traveler, sadness of the potential winner, sadness of potential vegetables, sadness of potential return, sadness of potential hell, sadness of potential friendship, sadness of potential rifles, sadness of potential field...

Nine months and twenty-three printed issues of Sadness. A series of sadness posters were gazing from city walls and fences.

SKART's Sadness is the public declaration of our personal sadness... a project that realized an underlying whisper in the background of the general hollering. Skirts Sadness is an authentic amulet against Sadness. An Attempt to kill Belgrade. Small pieces of cardboard with the truth of particular time.

SKART's collaborator on Sadness, Vesna Pavlovic, was associated as the photographer or cinematographer with various other groups, projects or institutions: LED ART (ICE ART or FROZEN ART), Women in Black, Radio B-92, or authors: artist Marc Hawker on the film "The Zombietown", writer Srdjan Valjarevic on "Winter Diary".

ICE ART within the students's protests (A one-hour project with mirrors in front of the police cordon). Belgrade, 1997. Photo: Dragoslan Krnajski.



the
sadness
of potential
geneology

belonging
to mummy and daddy.

like you.

(after all,
there are
photographs.)

it's sad
if they think
belonging to history and geography.

ZAGREB
BELGRADE
MARCH
1993

translated by david albahari
helped by Lepi SOROS

the
sadness
of potential
landscapes

landscapes
will shake off
sadness.

in the end
the landscapes
remain.

(four
seasons.)

landscapes are
sadly neat.

FALLING (ONLY WINTER)
BELGRADE
JANUARY
1993

translated by david albahari
helped by Lepi SOROS

the
sadness
of potential
vegetables

fruit
and
vegetables.

sow them.

(grow them.)

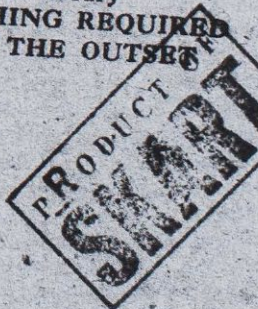
it's sad
being
what is not allowed to sprout.

GARDEN
BELGRADE
MARCH
1993

translated by david albahari
helped by Lepi SOROS

DELICATE
EDITION

-0004-
library
NOTHING REQUIRED
AT THE OUTSET



000021



Irina Subotić

I e-mapping

- schools
- June 4 **Pertej**, an exhibition of works by Albanian artists from Kosovo
- June 10 Press conference and discussion with **Chris Torch**, director of Intercult, "Stockholm 1998, Cultural Capital of Europe"
- June 26 **Station**, a performance by young people
- July **Macbeth/It** performed in Novi Sad and Budva, as well as at festivals in Koper and Ptuj, Slovenia, where it was the first performance by a Belgrade company since the war
- July 1 A conversation with **Jan Vanije** on medical care for disabled persons and their families
- July 15 **Transformers**, an exhibition of French and Yugoslav artists
- August 11 **Women's Conference**, organized by Women in Black, with participation of more than 122 towns
- August 19 **Social Democracy Week**, lectures on the history of social democratic and liberal ideas in Serbia
- August 29 **Local Elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina**, discussions with guests from Sarajevo, Tuzla and Mostar
- Sep 3 **Lust for Life: Wilhelm Reich in Belgrade** (Fund for an Open Society), a festival of the work of the great rebel and pioneer
- Sep 5 **Listen, Little Man**, small street scenes, directed by Ana Miljanic.
- Sep 9 **Little man and politics**, a discussion including C. Young (UK), Barbara Goodrich Dunn (USA), Ellen Willis (USA), Mark Ludwig (USA), Gustl Marlock (Germany), Zarko Korac

- (Belgrade), Gajo Sekulic (Sarajevo), J. Bell (USA)
- Sep 9 **Snakeskin**, a guest performance by Theater a.d. Ruhr, Germany, directed by Roberto Ciulli, of Slobodan Snajder's play
- Sep 10 **Is war circus?**, a discussion of "Snakeskin"
- Sep 11 A discussion with **Slobodan Snajder**, a prominent dramatist from Zagreb, Croatia, on problems of denazification.
- Sep 11 **Orgon reality**, a discussion including Richard Blasband (USA), Armin Bechman (Germany), Ilse Schmidt Zimmerman (Germany), Heiko Lasek (Germany), Hieke Buhl (Germany), Bettine Rose (Germany), Jovan Ristic (Yugoslavia)
- Sep 13 **Solemn painting then and now**, memories of the exhibition that never was, paintings of Mica Popovic
- Sep 25 A discussion with Macedonian dramatist **Goran Stefanovski**.
- Sep 19 **Macbeth/It** opens in Cetinje biennial (Montenegro)
- Oct 7 **Macbeth/It** opens in festival "Via Regia" in Erfurt, Germany
- Oct 8 **Diary cuts of a print-holic**, opening of the exhibition of massive collages by Halil Tikvesa
- Oct 11 **Woman in Black, Belgrade**, documentary screening for 6th anniversary of protests in Belgrade. Film directed by Zoran Solomun and Helga Reidemeister.
- Oct 22 A discussion with director **Jiri Mencil** on eastern European film and culture in the times of transition.
- Oct 23 **The children we were ...**, exhibition of photographs by Ognjen Radosevic inspired by citizen protests
- Oct 24 A discussion with French political theoretician **Guy Sorman**
- Oct 25 **Post Yugoslav Theater Landscape**, Theatre Festival in Theater a.d. Ruhr, Mulheim, Germany, including a performance of "Macbeth/It" and participation in the seminar "And now what?"
- Nov 4 **Chaos in action**, simulation of exhibition in 11 cities in Europe connected with computer and video links

IRINA SUBOTIĆ

Protest Aesthetisation and Protest Culture



For well-known reasons the wide-spread notion of 'new democracies', painstakingly built across the ravaged territories of former communist, that is socialist regimes, holds least true for our country. Nonetheless, the turbulent events of the winter of 1996/97 – and especially the student protest – brought to light some signs indicating that we might be able to identify ourselves as a society, which (against all odds) not only knows which road to embark upon in search for solutions, but also finds the ways of their civilized pursuit. Needless to say, after a time, the travelled path may appear to be but a utopian projection of a quite imaginary future, and yet it will remain on record that during those months the streets and squares in Belgrade and Novi Sad – and other Serbian towns – bore witness to surprisingly clever and meaningful interventions. There are plenty of reasons to classify them as the culture of protest.

If we apply Gianni Vattimo's term "the oscillating identity" to the situation we experienced at the time, the pendulum would doubtlessly be in the upswing position, conducting to an identity that we should like to be identified by. There seems to have existed a manifest and fanatical desire not only to translate into life the election results promising a new and better life, but also to survive aesthetically – and this is indubitably a request of a higher order. This request is all the more important if one bears in mind that aesthetisation has indeed become a luxury in view of this country's unparalleled spiritual and material deprivation, gradually but inexorably affecting an ever-growing number of people of highly diverse social strata.

The civilized world understood the three-month-long protest in the winter of 1996-97 largely owing to the tools the protest used, the sound with which it spread, the objects which marked it, the force of the expression which never slackened, be it day or night. Mass media across the world enjoyed covering and interpreting the protest and did it daily, accepting and supporting it. It was, in its turn, an added source of energy which the young people (but not only the young) needed to spend three winter months out in the street, in the rain and snow, and take walks, at times quite long, at times per force short, at times in circles – like inmates in a prison.

The outstanding articulation of requests – the student ones above all – expressed in artistic and para-artistic forms, indicated unequivocally an awareness that the urban population for one was ready for a change and willing to fight for it by democratic means. Clear signs of a civil and civilized revolt were recognizable in ingenious slogans; witty, intelligent, imaginative placards and badges, reflecting both optimistic faith and positive strength that something could be achieved, which would then allow moving on. On the other hand, the ever-present irony and sarcasm spoke of integrity, historical consciousness and inherent pessimism typical of the rational facet of the national frame of mind. Thousands of flyers and posters, big and small; handouts and leaflets; photographs, postcards, and even expediently published books and albums rounded off an aesthetically designed environment and spoke of the need to immediately commit the protest to history and museums of art.

It is this consciousness, which strives to give the ideas a concrete form, process them with the use of modern technologies and, moreover, aesthetise them in line with current pleasing visual practice and then to present them and preserve from rapid oblivion, which also indicates a new kind of protest, different from all the previous ones. If we think of the resources the students had and the manner in which they communicated during their earlier long, massive and – in terms of its consequences – most important protest of June 1968, we can see a fundamental civilisational shift and an extraordinarily cultivated awareness that ideas can be disseminated much more effectively through their exteriorization, aesthetisation and use of media support.

Another general characteristic of the protest was the commendable readiness to record and keep for future generations every move, every idea, and every track of the revolt. Hence so many brilliant photographs which subsequently appeared in various publications; authentic documentary video and film material; performances and theatre plays; open-air concerts, live or taped; exhibitions displaying personal and public collections of objects used in the protest and even scientific symposia addressing the student movement, rapidly conserving the present for history and museum studies. In no time at all we realized that the visual language was on a par with the mood and that it supported ethical attitudes and messages. It was also a tool and measure of atonement for concrete, palpable sins around us. The rich imagination of individual professions found incredible modes of expression, while preserving the authenticity of the mood and scenery: students of architecture could be identified by the ever-present placard which grew into the protest trade-mark; students of art history were identified by quotations of historical styles and students of the Faculty of Fine Arts by their plastic interventions; just as the students of the Faculty of Applied Arts and Industrial Design manifested their practical skills in an appropriate way. One cannot forget young biologists (and all the others...) who painstakingly sought for and assiduously analyzed various types of living beings, hoping that their specific traits would permit them to identify the hidden Chancellor Veličković. The local flavour of the universal protest was recognizable in diverse instruments for anti-television noise at 19:30. Thousands, dozens (or were there hundreds?) of thousands of whistles were more than just a tool for the production of a piercing sound as a message or warning. The whistles – quite unexpectedly and outside usual connotations – became the identity sign of those ready for spiritual enterprise... and very quickly, in the early days of the protest already, they became an indispensable prop of even the most dignified citizens of both genders, all ages, professions, social origins and



Irina Subotić

I e-mapping

- Nov 9 **Day Against Racism and Nationalism**, young people's performance
- Nov 19 Discussion about the **return of refugees** with guests from Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Nov 25 **Chameleons**, exhibition of Mirjana Petrovic
- Nov 29 A discussion with ex-Yugoslav director **Lordan Zafranovic**, now in exile in the Czech Republic, about artistic and political choices.
- Dec 5 **Talents** (Fund for an Open Society), a children's performance
- Dec 10 **Laying Freedom Bare**, Liv Ullmann's second visit to the Centre, on the International Day of Human Rights.
- Dec 17 **Return of refugees**, meeting organized by Group 484 with Croatian peace NGOs from Lika, Kordun, Banija, Dalmacija and Western Slavonia.
- Dec 18 **Legal regulation against the violence in family**, sixteen days of activism about violence against women, organized by the SOS telephone for women and children victims of violence and Women's Legal Group

1998 Openings

- Jan 1 **Little Match-Seller**, third anniversary of the opening of the Centre, a program based on the Hans Christian Andersen tale, on the these "The cold, hunger and fear disappeared..."
- Jan 13 Opening night of **To you from yesterday**, a play by Varja Djukic on the life and work of Marina Cvetaeva, performed on Orthodox New Year.
- Jan 22 **Belgrade in transition**, six weeks of discussions on urban planning and architecture, based

- on the battle against illegal housing plans and kitsch
- Feb 16 Exhibition and promotion of the **Painting Workshop Program for Youth and Children** of the Fund for an Open Society.
- Feb 24. **Shangri-La**, an exhibition of works of Ivana Popov, Ivana Klikovic and Marija Dragojlovic
- March 2 **Ph. D. Nationalism**, the first of a series of examinations of the material culture of nationalism. This comparison of Serbian and Hungarian nationalism included author Eric Weaver, sociologists Gyorgy Csepeli (Budapest) and Ivan Colovic (Belgrade), and journalists Endre B. Bojtar (Budapest) and Petar Lukovic (Belgrade).
- March 7 **Belgrade Circle** began meeting (again) each Saturday at noon to hear reports from Kosovo by NGOs, journalists and diplomats

options.

The energy of the young pulsed befittingly – countless drums, probably from every single jazz, rock, pop or folk band in Belgrade, added colour brimming with youthful strength, so badly needed to create a future.

The readiness to persevere culminated in the face of blue cordons of the riot police, when organized groups of citizens supporting the students, and made of all trades – university professors, artists, professional organizations, sportsmen and the like – took shifts not only in the physical sense, but also in initiatives to vest with a meaningful content the encounters (or possible collisions) with the guardians of peace and order. Art historians are sure to remember and offer different interpretations of the mirrors with which artists and critics "made prints" of the reality for the benefit of police cordons. The theories of mirrority acquired a manifold meaning, which has probably never been applied so profoundly and so much to the point.

Owing to the personal commitment or only concepts borrowed from artists and art theoreticians, some events were tantamount to successful mass artistic performances. The caricatured puppet of a prisoner with the face and features of the most important personality in our lives (for which a young man was arrested and ill treated); (our) life belts made of ice (which would thaw just like our hope of salvation) or silhouettes of individuals beaten by the police (ritually) drawn on the pavements – these are only some of the activities through which the students artistically conceptualized their ideas, finding for them an appropriate form, sufficiently communicative to be read properly, without being vulgarized or encumbered by narrative elements.

One such impressive action was the final act of the protest when the whole Chancellery building of the Belgrade University, where the whole drama had started three months earlier, was "wrapped" in virginally white cloth, like Christo's wrappings of large and noted buildings or natural landscapes. This "dressing" of the Chancellery had a multifold meaning – end of a stage in the struggle; freezing of the status quo; shutting the eyes; and mastering the situation (at least to a degree...).

Although the authors and participants in these activities largely remained anonymous, their ideas irradiated the student protest to the core and became an integral part of their aspirations and intentions. Through them it was nicer and easier to recognize the goals of young people and the profiles of the committed, of those wishing for changes in the society so that their future life in this environment would become more bearable.

The culture of the 1996-97 protest thus appears as a phenomenon, which in a rather unexpected way grew into the defence of one's own identity and the identity of the society at large. It will be remembered as such because it shed light on the nicest facet of our mentality, which blends together great ambition, excessive expectations, brilliant ideas, ingenious spirit, creative strength needed to overcome tremendous difficulties of all kinds... The ensuing result showed the other facet, characteristic of deeply rooted melancholy, lack of confidence in one's own powers, surrender at the turning point, discord as a historical syndrome, incredible tolerance... It is more than likely that the future holds for us what Milan Kovačević, our eminent and early deceased philosopher, wrote in the interview published posthumously by Književne Novine in May 1988: "The steadiest Serb continuity is the continuity of repetitive resurrections".

The translations into English by
Mirka Jankovic and Barbara Davis.

re-mapping



BELGRADE, SERBIA

Borka Pavićević Artistic director and founder of the Center for Cultural Decontamination

A woman of incredible energy, who has constantly been at the center of the artistic storms that have raged in Yugoslavia since the 60's. She has led some of the most important theatre institutions in her country, she has suffered the pain of separation from many of her colleagues as Yugoslavia was brought to shambles by war and political conflict. She works in the margins like an artistic surgeon, analysing and operating at the most sensitive points of the collective body. Most importantly – she is a magnet for artists with a conscience, who gather around her at the Center for Cultural De-contamination.

THEATRE/ SELECTION

- Dramaturgist, Theatre Atelier 212, Belgrade (ten years)
- BITEF, Belgrade's annual international festival of avant-garde theatre (twenty years)
- New Sensibility, Theatre company. Founder.
- Dramaturgist in various theatres in Belgrade, Subotica, Ljubljana and Skopje.
- Participated in the artistic movement KPGT, from the word for theatre in Croatian, Serbian, Slovenian and Macedonian languages.

- Artistic director, Belgrade's Drama Theatre, resigned because of public and political statements
- Regular column, Vreme magazine, since it began.
- Regular column "Post-Dayton Fashion", Danas newspaper, since it began.
- Fashion, book about the years of war, published -94.
- co-president Belgrade Circle, organization of independent intellectuals.

Artistic co-director, re-mapping.

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98





BELGRADE

The Center for Cultural De-contamination

Center for Cultural De-contamination: Just a few meters from the entrance people line up at the German Consulate. As maps change and borders proliferate, more and more travel documents are required to navigate LANDSCAPE X. During the war years, the lines of people waiting every morning have become longer and longer. They seek to emigrate or they seek asylum. They sit and wait on small makeshift stools, which we have collected and exhibited as a material element of "re-mapping".

LANDSCAPE X - INTERCULT - STOCKHOLM '98



re-mapping

re-mapping X

BELGRADE, SERBIA

Sonja Vukićević director, dancer/choreographer

Once Yugoslavia's most praised ballet dancer, Sonja went through a transformation. Now she interprets her country's history with insight, anger and precision, no longer as an instrument for "national culture" but as an individual artist concerned about her nation.

Wild, rhythmic, personal – a unique personality in Balkan art history.

Director, dancer and choreographer at the Center for Cultural De-contamination, Belgrade.

DANCE/THEATRE SELECTION

- solo dancer Belgrade Ballet: classical/neoclassical repertoire. Dances leading ballet roles in Rijeka, Zagreb, Ljubljana, Novi Sad. International tours. Awarded with most of the Yugoslavian awards for ballet art.
- Choreographer for fifty performances in Belgrade, Subotica, Novi Sad, Budva, Cetinje, Ljubljana.
- director Macbeth, Center for Cultural De-contamination -96

DAMAGE

The Process, by Kafka
director: Sonja Vukićević

ACTORS

Milan Antić
Srdan Ivanović
Zoltan Molnar
Marija Opsenica
Nada Sekulić
Miloš Sofrenović
Luka Vukićević
David Zivković, child actor

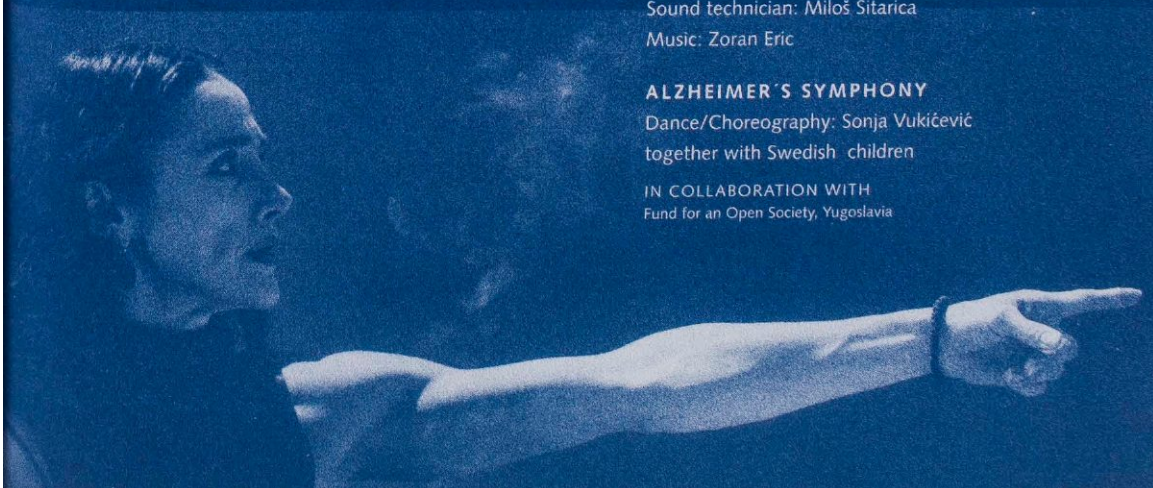
Light design: Aleksandar Jocić
Light technician: Milan Mihajlović
Sound technician: Miloš Sitarica
Music: Zoran Eric

ALZHEIMER'S SYMPHONY

Dance/Choreography: Sonja Vukićević
together with Swedish children

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Fund for an Open Society, Yugoslavia

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



BELGRAD, SERBIA

Branco Pavić video installation artist



- master of Arts, Belgrade University School of Fine Arts
- professor, Belgrade University School of Architecture

SOLO EXHIBITIONS/SELECTION

- SER, den Haag, Holland, -89
- Grafki kolektiv, Belgrade, -83 and -86
- Faculty of Architecture, Belgrade, -93
- Dom mladih gallery, Sarajevo -92

GROUP EXHIBITIONS/SELECTION

- May Exhibition of the Belgrade Circle, Grafki Kolektiv Gallery -81
- The 5th Mini-Print International, Cadaques, Spain -85
- The Hanga Annual, -87 Metropolitan Museum of Fine Arts, Tokyo, Japan
- Toys, the Palm Gallery, New York, USA -88
- 40e Salon de la Jeune Peinture, Grand Palais, Paris, France -89
- Graphic Art, Belgrade Circle, Campeche, Mexico, -95
- The View on the Wall, Cinema Rex&Radio B92, Belgrade-96
- Visible-Invisible, Thessaloniki, HEL EXPO, Greece -97
- Map Room, Michaelis School of Fine Art, Cape Town, Republic of South Africa -97

PUBLIC COLLECTION/SELECTION

- Kanagawa Prefectural Gallery, Yokohama, Japan -85
- Museum of Modern Art, Belgrade -86

DAMAGE

exhibition/videoinstallation: "re-mapping room" with Center for Cultural De-contamination

ALZHEIMER'S SYMPHONY

video collage

IN COLLABORATION WITH

Center for Cultural De-contamination, Belgrade Fund for an Open Society, Yugoslavia



BELGRADE, SERBIA

Zoran Eric musician

Professor of composition and orchestration, Belgrade Academy of Music (since -80).

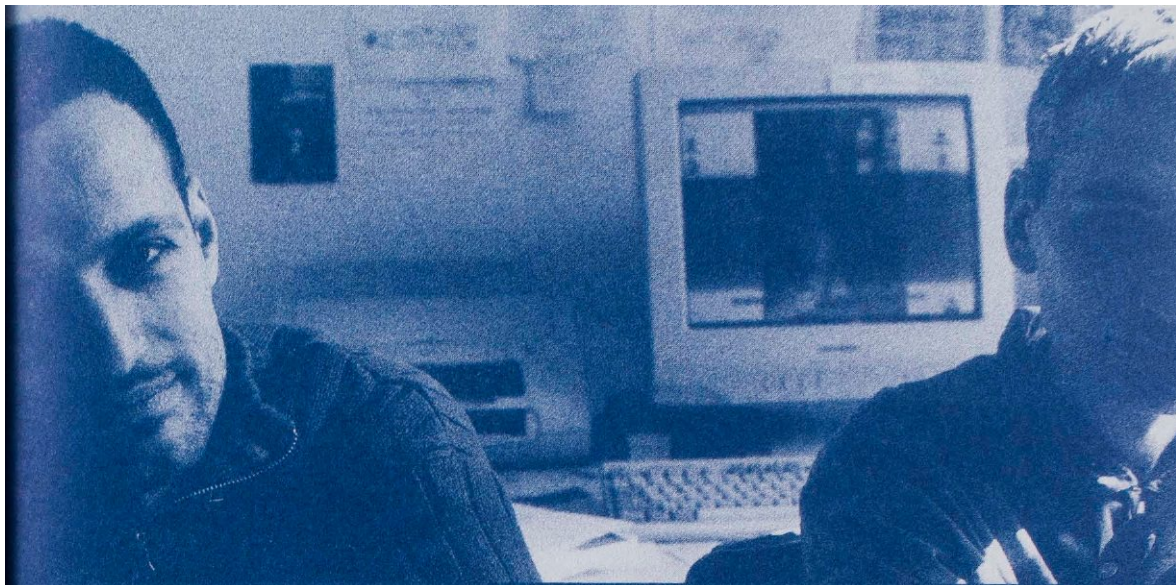
MUSIC/SELECTION

- Mirage, piano synthesizer and symphony orchestra -79
- Banovic Strahinja, ballet -81
- Off, double bass and twelve strings -82
- Cartoon, f13 string instruments and harpsichord -84
- Subito, two basses, female choir, piano and tape -84
- Talea Konzertstuck -89
- Nicht für Elise, fantastic catalogue for piano -89
- Images of Chaos, cycle, 1-5 from 1990-97.

Music to The Process, after Kafka.
Directed by Sonja Vukičević.

LANDSCAPE X - INTERCULT - STOCKHOLM '98

X re-mapping



BELGRADE, SERBIA

Dragan Protić, graphic designer
Dorde Balmazović, graphic designer
Boris Mladenović, composer and painter

ŠKART Art action group

ŠKART was founded in 1990 in the abandoned graphic studio at the Faculty of Architecture by Dragan Protić and Dorde Balmazović. ŠKART produces graphic material (programs, posters, booklets) for several theatre- and art-festivals, concerts, music cd's. Vesna Pavlović, photographer, is a permanent collaborator.

"What I find beautiful in efforts and results of the group ŠKART is on the one hand the poetry of nothingness and on the other hand the poetry of ordered modesty. All these things of theirs which they had named scrap/skart/ the things made out of something stupid mankind discarded, all these things are the proof that nothing on this planet should go to waste. I think what ŠKART does is aesthetics of modesty"

Knjizevna literary magazine 391/92.

I don't know what to say about that.
Perhaps all Jugoslavia is today scraps/skart.

unknown woman on the street

GRAPHIC DESIGN/EXHIBITIONS/ACTIONS SELECTION

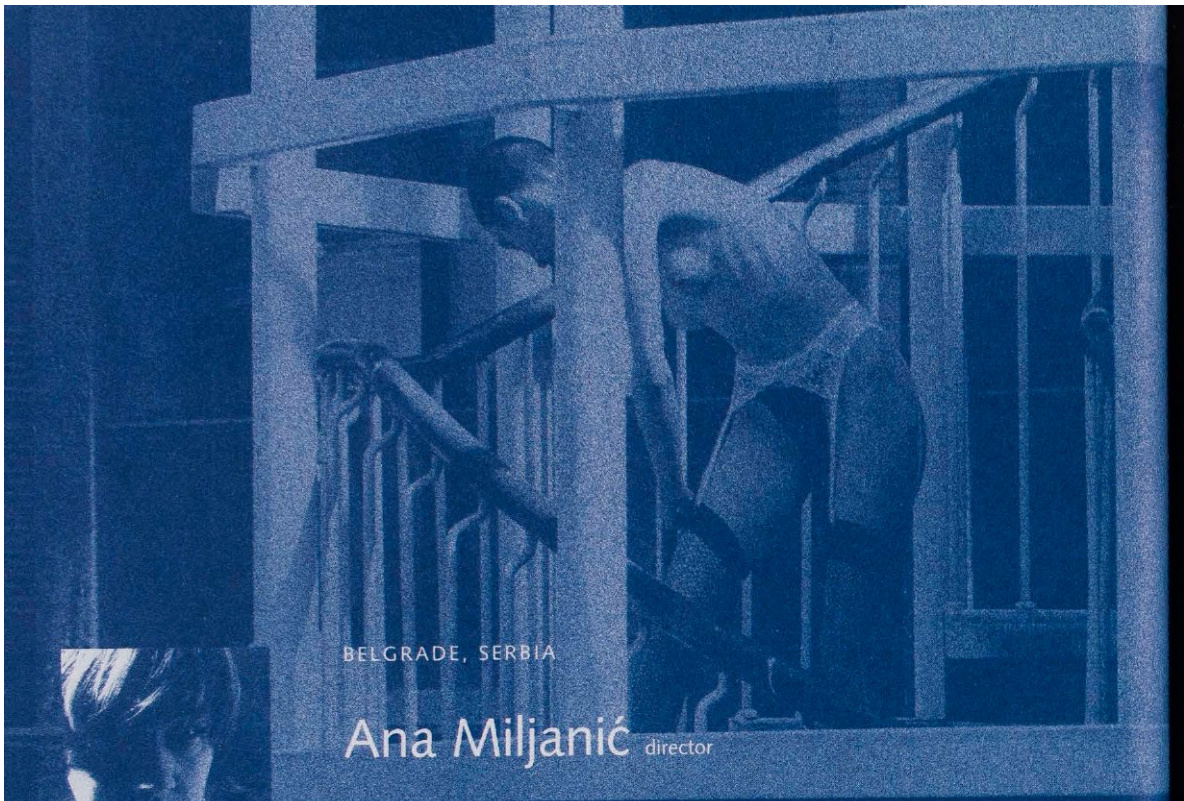
- ŠKART is confined and isolated in the gallery Imago, Zrenjanin -90.
- ŠKART Wishes You a Nice Day art action: posters and radio messages during -90
- Sadness, art project December -92 until August -93: Started with proclamation: The Attempted Killing of Belgrade. The Sadness of the Potential Consumer - cardboard given to people in the empty shops. Followed by new cardboards every week there was enough ink and paper. In nine months twentythree printed issues of Sadness
- School with Pete, book, cartoons by eleven year old boy Jovan Ruzics, published by ŠKART.
- Accused (I am not guilty), project dedicated to Mirjana B, girl selling newspaper, charged for disturbance in the street. ŠKART created posters and put them all over Belgrade.
- You Could No More, series of posters: family photographs and personalities from the "new past".
- Students' Cordon Against Cordon, protest-action during one week against the siege in Belgrade January 1997. When the cordon was withdrawn, ŠKART printed cardboards to put as a necklace with the text: Permit for the Free Walk in All Directions.
- Graphic design for Cinema Rex, Media Center and Radio B92, Belgrade.

Graphic design Center for Cultural De-contamination.

DAMAGE
installation/exhibition

LISTEN, LITTLE MAN
participating in the unannounced street events,
directed by Ana Miljanić

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Fund for an Open Society, Yugoslavia



BELGRADE, SERBIA

Ana Miljanić director



**LISTEN, LITTLE MAN
IMAGE**

director: Ana Miljanić

Unannounced street events, based on the texts of Wilhelm Reich, in the Stockholm region. Sound and image from the meeting with Stockholm creates the performance Image – the "Finale".

– actors and technicians from the Center for Cultural De-contamination.

From Sweden special guest:

Jonathan Rodriguez.

– art-action group ŠKART

– video: Yolande Knobel

IN COLLABORATION WITH
Fund for an Open Society, Yugoslavia

Theatre director, Center for Cultural De-contamination since -95. One of the founders.

THEATRE/SELECTION

– Diploma Faculty of Dramatic Art, Belgrade -93

– Our fathers, by Marambo, Belgrade Drama Theatre.

Awards: One of the 7 best FRY productions of the year -92

– Caligula, by Camus, open air spectacle, summer festival Becej -93

– Perfect day for banana fish, by Selinger, Faculty of Dramatic Art, Belgrade -93

**1995–97 CENTER FOR CULTURAL
DE-CONTAMINATION, SELECTION**

– Listen, little man, by Wilhelm Reich. Small street gazes.

– Little match-seller – three years of Center for Cultural De-contamination.

– Performance K, "public gesture – performance", including documents related to artists that left the country because of the war, Alter Image festival, Belgrade -97.

– Stockpile of Danilo Kis, "ambient theatre production" based on the life and work of Danilo Kis, anti-nationalist author.

– The Devils – from Camus/Dostojevski.

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



re-mapping

**r e-mapping
Poznań**

Joanna Helander: *No Man's Land*. Teatr Ósmego Dnia



**TEATR
ÓSMEGO DNIA**

**JEDLIŃSKI
KOZŁOWSKI**

HELANDER

Joanna
Helander

PHOTO
ATELIER



Joanna Helander: *The Sexton*



Joanna Helander: *The Gipsy with the Bottle of Wine*

There is a passion in us to snap at...

Maria Blimel's Conversation
with the Creators
of TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA



Did you know, when you were starting your work in TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA during your university studies, that you wanted to live on theatre, for theatre, and do theatre for a living? What was it that drew you to just that theatre?

Ewa Wójciak: It was clear that we wanted to live on theatre and for theatre, but it was not quite clear what it meant. In those years it was not being an actor or realizing some successful plays that we understood as the notion of theatre; what we did understand by it was creating a new social and artistic reality. We were looking for a new language, and a new world we wanted to create, an alternative one and quite different from the one in which we were functioning in those years of real socialism.

Tadeusz Janiszewski: We did not know it right from the beginning. Every one of us had come there for a different reason and at a different time. I was interested in theatre at the time and I wanted to be an actor. That was overlapped with Grotowski's initiations with our small revolutions connected with collective creation, with opposition to traditional drama and all the stage space. We started to be drawn to building an alternative group living together and creating things jointly.

Marcin Kęszycki: As for me, I also did not know at first where I was going. I was 19 years old, I was starting my university studies. I was a good boy from a decent house who found himself, quite accidentally, at the festival of Open Theatre in Wrocław; was there my idea of life and of myself was turned upside down. I saw a spectacle of TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA, entitled "In One Breath" based on the poetry of Stanisław Barańczak and I got infected. I remember the moment when an actress's face appeared close to me, really perspiring. That perspiration was really something. On coming back to Poznań I was looking for posters of that theatre all over the town. I started coming to every performance, until somebody got interested and asked me who I was. I was offered tickets, and then I was admitted to scrubbing the floor before a performance. It was almost like cleaning an altar! I did not quite know what I wanted, I only knew that I could lose everything with those people and I wanted it.

Adam Borowski: I was 17 years old. What could a boy like that think? I was a young man who entered the strangest place in the world. Without any introduction terms I was offered something so unusual, something

"Even if it can be difficult to comprehend and interpret every single scene, the Teatr Ósmego Dnia points out a very suggestive searchlight to the essential questions of our time".

Goeteborg-Posten



TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA: *Sale for Everyone*. Photo: Joanna Helander

ruining my world order to such a great extent, something so fascinating, that one could only give himself over to it completely, or go away. I stayed.

Jacek Chmaj: It was the year 1978. In the Warsaw students' club "The Barn" there was a great nomadic gathering, because there were spectacles and artistic workshops of TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA going on. It was all so intense and important for me that for a couple of months I could do nothing, because everything seemed unimportant. After about a year they offered me a chance to co-operate with them. I left Warsaw and came to Poznań. It was a hard time,

there was no money, no flat. The tours we made a living on were often cancelled. I felt I was a burden. I could not function like that so we partied for some time. I helped and took part only occasionally in some activities. And at last, after the theatre had returned to Poland, there appeared new conditions for work, I am here, I have almost forgotten Warsaw.

What is the method of work for TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA? What does collective work, improvisation, mean in your case. Where have you gotten your inspiration? And is it different today from what it was when you started?

E.W. It is not different. I have a feeling that we are among the few who have contemporary stuck to the concept of a theatre dispensing with the literature from centuries ago. We have been looking for our own language for everyday reality, without referring to the classics, from Shakespeare, for example. The hero of our performances has always been a human being of the times we live in, a human being of our everyday socio-political reality, a human being with a soul and a need to transcend, whom we have known from railway stations, streets, our own experiences. After our performance "No Man's Land", Adam Michnik said that we were a sort of an "archpolish theatre able to create a universal subject from the outlook greatly concentrated on Polish character." The basic pleasure of our work has been to write new quasi-dramas, spectacles which also carried a new text in them.

T.J.: There was a time, too, when, knowing great literature, we were not brave enough to use our own words. But finally the description of our improvisations quite accidentally appeared to be a sort of a poetic record which could be used in a spectacle. It meant we did not have to use Dostoyevsky or Camus, Miłosz or Herbert, because, in the description of improvisation, in our own notes after rehearsals we could find the texts which could serve us.

M.K.: What is important in the method of our work is being a community, is collective improvisation. Today, after years of practice, we are able to formulate complete scenes built on marks or metaphors which are sometimes very precise. It is from improvisation that all our poetic theatrical language emerges. Sometimes audience may witness that, but usually not: the improvisations go on in almost laboratory-like conditions.

Has anyone inspired you in a theatrical work of that kind?

E.W.: To some extent it has been Jerzy Grotowski and The Laboratory

"Teatr Ósmego Dnia is similar to the best American alternative theatres of the '60s and '70s. As in the Open Theatre or Performance Group, the emphasis is on physically precise acting expressing emotions that are almost painfully exaggerated".

"The Drama Review"

Theatre. We have learned the method of work from his actors, Cieslak and Ścierański, but the method has undergone a significant transformation and has served the development in quite a different direction. To some extent our masters have been Dostoyevsky and Artaud, but it has never been an indiscriminating acceptance of patterns.

T.J.: As for me, I was greatly impressed, side by side with "Apocalypsis cum figuris" of The Laboratory Theatre, by Tadeusz Kantor's theatre, first "Lovelies and Dowdies", and then "The Dead Class".

J.Ch.: From the very beginning, your strength is in the fact that you work together. It is not a theatre made by one person helped by others. The truth lies in collective creation.

E.W.: You are right. It has always been a theatre strongly opposed to subordination to a leader. We all have strong social temperaments. Out of our natural discussion about the world, out of a necessity to participate in it, has been born a discussion in the theatre, on the stage. We have always been exceptionally sensitive to the world, wherever we have gone. In Russia, for example, during the common caravan of theatres from all over the world, our colleagues from the West organized football matches on The Moscow Red Square, and we, completely by ourselves and out of the official programme, visited railway stations, private flats, streets. We have been fascinated with reality and life. I daresay that is from where collective creation has emerged. From sympathy, as someone has put it nicely, speaking about Bertolt Brecht's creative inspiration.

In the '70s TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA went along a very difficult track. You had your political guards, the theatre was controlled by the authorities of the Communist party, you were constantly surveyed by The Safety Service, searches, arrests, fake trials in economic and criminal cases were an everyday routine. You were forbidden to go abroad and to some towns, to act during some festivals. The Polish Students' Association, which was the theatre's patron, sometimes called off all Polish festivals only in order to prevent your theatre from performing. The attempts at liquidating you carried on. There was a constantly conspiracy of silence. It was not permitted to write or speak about the theatre. Did all these experiences influence what you are doing today, or do you rather try to erase those sad recollections from your memory?

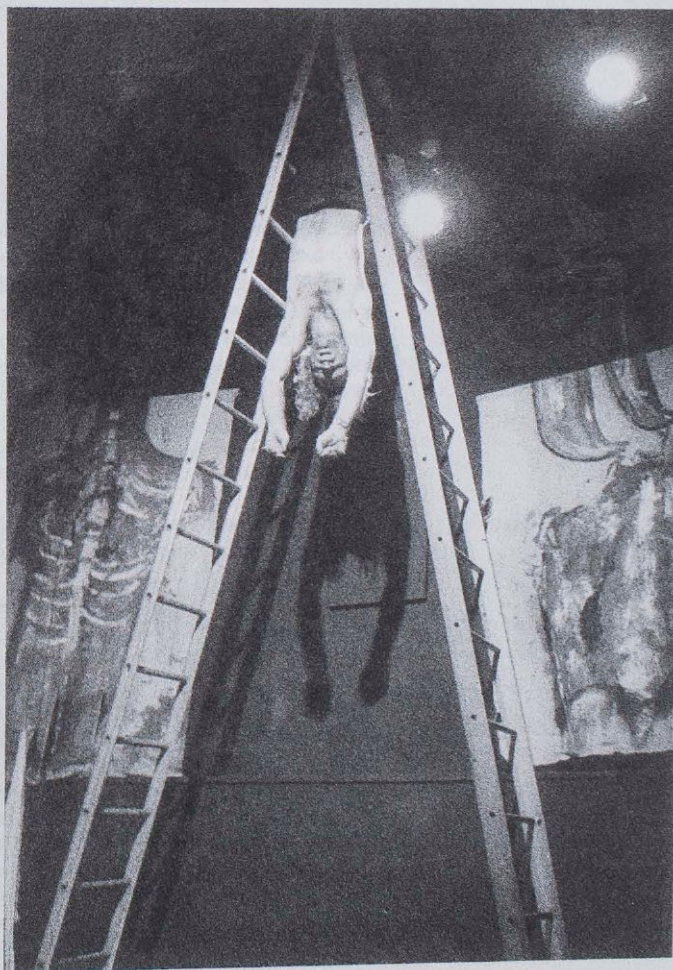
E.W.: These experiences cannot

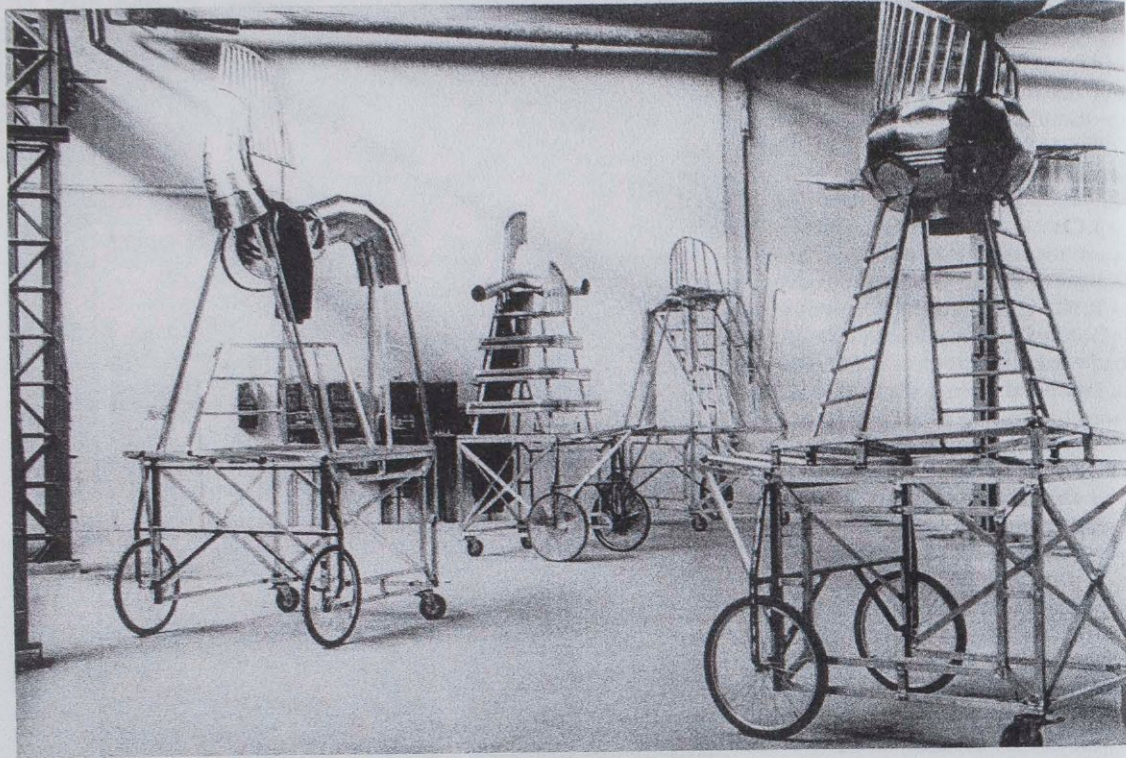


Teatr Ósmego Dnia

R e-mapping

TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA: *Autodafé*.
Photo: Joanna Helander





The scenography for the new performance "The Summit".

be left out, although I think it is useless if we want to speak about what is going on now and about the modern world. When we think about a performance today, the pictures from those times do not come to our minds, and what is more, sometimes I have a feeling that it is uncommonly far away. It is simply hard to believe it is only a couple of years that divides us from those times. It is a shocking discovery that it all seems as if it were not from this life. All that must have shaped us somehow, must have had an impact on our lives, but I have no feeling of the burden of that past.

In 1979 you found yourselves in the Poznań "Estrada" (Dais), an agency dealing with the promotion of professional artists. You became professionals.

M.K.: It was a trap for us, because they had enough of us in those student organizations. There was a Machiavelli-like idea behind it: if we professionalize them now and give them money, they will have more to lose and will calm down. In that situation we were rescued by ... socialism. The manager of "Estrada" was so afraid that he would ruin his career that he left us as almost a completely independent unit, having even its own accountant. So, holding regular state jobs, we were free, without any repertoire obligations and other restrictions. Such a comfortable situation lasted for a year, but at that time we managed to make one of my favourite performances, "More than One Life".

T.J.: From documents we have seen later, the authorities were greatly concerned that it was impossible to blow us up from the inside, that we could not be made to quarrel with one another, that it was impossible to send the manager to Switzerland on a scholarship. They were thinking

about splitting the group up and "Estrada" was one of the attempts of the kind.

Then there came a time of the so called "solidarity carnival", that is, the happy years of 1980-1981 ...

M.K.: For us, it was mostly a time of travels, which penetrated deeply inside us and on which we survived for many later years of blockades and impossibilities of travelling. The most important travel of our lives was the expedition to Mexico. Since that time some references to that voyage have appeared in almost every one of our performances.

E.W.: Mexico was really fascinating, because never before had we come so close to our spectators, and it was not on the principle of shallow emotions, resulting, as it were, from the Latin temperament. They were fascinated with our performances and the Polish reality. Never before had we been able to have such wonderful talks with people about what kind of a society we would like to build, how people should organize themselves, what to fight for, how to avoid party domination which is the enemy of social uprisings. It was a series of deep and motivated relationships, spiritual and intellectual adventures. Fantastic experiences, stopped tragically by the martial law in Poland.

Tell us about your experiences of acting in Polish churches during the time of Solidarity. You have always said that you were the only true people's theatre, because you acted for working-class people, for people who never went to the theatre. Then you were presenting the spectacles " Wormwood", " Ascent" (based on Mandelsztam), "A Small Apocalypse" (based on Konwicki) and your first street spectacle "The Report from the City under Siege" .

E.W.: It was the adventure of all the society, not only ours. Solidarity was built by workers together with intellectuals. We acted for people who did not go to the theatre, didn't watch television, and maybe that is why, paradoxical as it may seem, they understood so very well our theatre we were coming to them with. On one hand it was accompanied by a positive emotion that we belonged to the same camp, and, on the other hand, our viewers, because they did not have any ready-made ideas, accepted everything spontaneously and with a deep understanding. After two years it fossilized slowly: this patriotic, stereotypical reception was becoming a burden as anti-communist only. Besides, more and more artists were barging into this sphere and there was more and more artistic trash.

Then came 13th December, 1981, the introduction of the martial law in Poland. What was happening to you then?

E.W.: On the day when martial law was introduced, we were presenting the spectacle "More than One Life" in The Old Theatre in Kraków. After the performance we were sipping at some brandy with



Teatr Ósmego Dnia

re-mapping

"Four magnificent actors: Ewa Wójciak, Adam Borowski, Tadeusz Janiszewski, Marcin Kęszycki enliven the stage by their powerful ability of clear presence which goes out of the sense of the words, transforming the naked space by genius using of few props, evoking in semi-darkness a world of anxiety and suffering. Negated voices, mouth - incessantly petrified in expression in a search for understanding from behind misty window-panes."

Roberta Sanna,
"La Nuova Sardegna"

"We should look for new solutions in order not to fall into a caricature of being Polish or «being European». That is why «No Man's Land» is a great diagnostic of this problem - the performance gives a hope that this investigation is possible, that there is a language within which we can investigate. (...) Teatr Ósmego Dnia is our cultural identity, our input into European Community".

Adam Michnik

TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA: *Ascent*.
Photo: Joanna Helander



our friend the singer, Leszek Długosz, who formulated the thesis that our role was finished, because everything was permitted. There was decadent in the air, and freedom was unbridled. At the same time arrests were already going on and one could see live the scenes which were presented in that performance.

T.J.: While still employed in "Estrada", we performed officially in the church in Żytnia street in Warsaw. And it was that which led to the official liquidation of the theatre, that is, to the statement that that theatre did not exist in Poland. This statement was in force until 1989. Wherever we performed in Europe in the years 1985-89, the Polish Embassies said that theatre like that did not exist and that did were not represent Polish culture. When we received the first prize in Edinburgh, the Polish Consul protested violently.

In Poland during the martial law the only places you could perform were in churches. Then came the period of exile.

E.W.: The departure in 1985 was not meant to be a long-term one. Simply, there came some new invitations to festivals, and we needed contact with the world. We could not leave together, because only a part of the troupe got passports. What happened then resulted in changing that departure to a quasi-emigration. We had to persuade our colleagues not to come back, because we were beginning to feel that the situation in churches was changing. Perhaps because of some political decision, the Church wanted to have that period of culture patronage behind it. And there were no other places in Poland then, in which we could perform.

What did the experience of being in the West mean to you? Did it influence the shape of the next productions, your thinking about theatre?

T.J.: Those four years in the West were difficult years, a real school of survival. Nobody gave us money. We learned how to organize performances, how to make a living on theatre. In the '70s we were not thinking about it at all. But there came a moment in which we said to ourselves that if we believed in it and if we did theatre only, we would make a living. And it is so. But with no compromises from our idea of theatre.

E.W.: The experience of the West was mostly the experience of functioning in the conditions of a free market. We learned how to function on our own and how to defend ourselves against mass culture of American origin. And so, everything that started in Poland after 1989 was very well known to us. That is why we have been looking at it in peace and from a

distance, but also with anxiety, because we know what the results are of being subject to such influences without creating a certain resistance to them. *When 1989 came, you received an official invitation from the Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki and the Minister of Culture Izabella Cywińska to come back to Poland. But the return did not appear very easy...*

M.K.: Maybe we imagined too much. We were very impatient then and it seemed to us all that, all the organization, it was neverending. But it looks differ-

ent from the distance. In the end we became a state theatre in two weeks time.

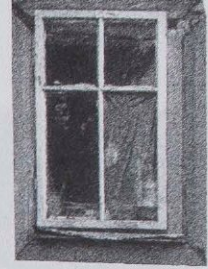
E.W.: Those first two years after 1989 were very energetic in Poland, it was a good period of democracy. We, of course, had to struggle with various problems, using even the help of mass media, asking them to intercede. But at last we got our theatre and we still have it. To some extent we were serviced very quickly by the new reality.

In that period there happened a very significant thing – you parted with Leszek Raczak, one of the creators of TEATR ÓSMEGO DNIA, for many years the company's managing and artistic director. How did you get on without him?

E.W.: The first production after the separation was "The Sabbath", a street spectacle, easier in that situation, because it required less improvisation, and more thinking in the terms of a big form of street theatre. It was more difficult with the next production, "Dance As Long As You Can", rehearsing by ourselves, without any help from the outside. What is important is that we were still faithful to our idea of theatre. Leszek's departure did not cause a revolution in our thinking about theatre, about what we wanted to do and who we wanted to reach. Rather it was so that Leszek had changed his interests and the areas he wanted to. We consistently stick to the same – we try to name somehow those contemporary subjects which touch us and which require expression. The origin of "The Sabbath", for example, is connected with an unusual adventure in Milan, when, on a narrow street, we came across a great exhibition of Mediaeval torture instruments. A performance originated resulting from the necessity of defending tolerance, the right to different opinions, from the conviction that, in this new reality, dissimilarity must be defended even if it is extreme or represented by a small group of people. And in the performance "Dance As Long As You Can" we tried, not on a great social level, but on a very personal human level, to chase that demon of mediocrity, dwarfing of great ideas for which we had been fighting for many years. Now the conquerors rest on their laurels and justice runs away from the winners' camp. A very personal performance was created, but I think it expressed the experience of a whole generation of Poles who had believed very deeply that it was possible to create a decent, beautiful social reality. Who experienced a grave defeat, bitter fall or just went impetuously into all that was offered by the world of power and politics, who sold their convictions, their ideals, without looking back. That is what the production is about.

Is it the same theme for the performance you are creating to open in Stockholm?

E.W.: "The Summit" is another performance resulting from the same need to speak about what touches us very personally and hurts. Today we have an impression that the world we are living in has gone mad, that money and mass media manipulation have never dominated the world to such a great extent. One of the specific inspirations for us is the famous summit meeting in Essen,



Teatr Ósmego Dnia

r e-mapping

"It grabs you in the guts in a way that out tames British theatre rarely even tries..."

"The Scotsman"



Photo: Joanna Helander



JOANNA HELANDER was born in 1948 in Southern Poland. It was while she was studying romance language at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in 1968 that she was arrested for having protested against the Warsaw Pact's invasion of Czechoslovakia.

In 1971 she emigrated to Sweden, where she trained as a photographer. Parallel to her photography, Joanna Helander began writing in Swedish, and in 1978 published her book "Kobieta" (Fyra Förläggare). In 1983 she was awarded the "Photographer of the Year" Prize.

Her second book "Gerard K - The Letters from Poland" (Norstedts, 1986) is both a photographic work and the story of her own Polish-German-Jewish family, with her father in the lead role. Presented in dramatized form by the Radio Theatre, the book also became the starting point for the film "Returning". Together with Bo Persson, Joanna Helander directed the feature length film "Eight Day Theatre", which was nominated in 1992 for the European film prize FELIX. The following year the film was invited by the Academy of Motion Picture in Los Angeles to stand as a candidate for an Oscar in the documentary film class.

The other two films in Joanna Helander's and Bo Persson's Polish trilogy, much admired by the critics, are: "The Twins from Cracow" and "Returning".

devoted to the problem of famine in the Third World. As it was written in the press, it was one of the most distinguished meetings of the rulers of this world. "Essen - trinken" - said the headlines of newspapers and what we want to say is contained in it. We are concerned with it too. It is alarming that the gloss of the great world is so uncritically accepted in Poland. Balls organized for the benefit of hungry children by the Princess of Monaco, during which Rolls-Royces drive out of pies, make people happy. And the truth is that the world is bloody. Perhaps today the number of nations and people who have lost their motherlands, their own spots under the sun, their identity, who starve and look for shelter, is greater than ever. There is a passion in us to snap at that subject.

M.K.: There is also a picture which has been very strongly rooted in us for many years, a picture recorded by some film camera in the Tiananmen Square, when tanks moved against people there. It is the picture of a man who appeared before the tanks, the picture of a lonely man in a white shirt, with two shopping bags, who - it seemed - stopped the tanks by dancing. It is an important motif of many of our performances, also of "The Summit".

Many people wonder how your theatre, in spite of all the changes, still exists, that you still live in a community, you work together, you live together, you spend your holidays together.

E.W.: A lot of communities which were created in the '60s, split up one day in a natural way. People went away to their occupations, to banks, insurance agencies, etc. It is still nice to meet old hippies, the people of those times. In the West they form the theatrical audience today. We are united by theatre. But it will never be a theatre at any price. We will never be selling or commercializing ourselves or putting ourselves on the market. It is dominated by a very deep tradition which is impossible to part with. It is ours and resulting from ourselves in too great an extent to make it possible for us to change into people who do theatre for money and, in connection with that, interpret the trends and the market perfectly. I dare say it is not for us and even if it means that our attitude is already very exotic in modern times, we will most probably remain like this.

April 1998.

Translated by
Ewa Stapor

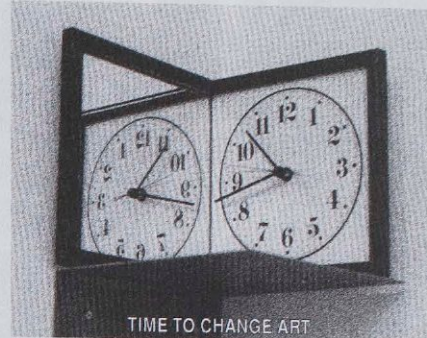
Where are the Jews from the Olden Days (graffiti)

Photo: Joanna Helander



JAROMIR JEDLIŃSKI

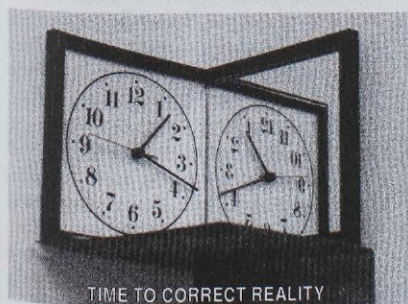
Visual Investigations of Jarosław Kozłowski



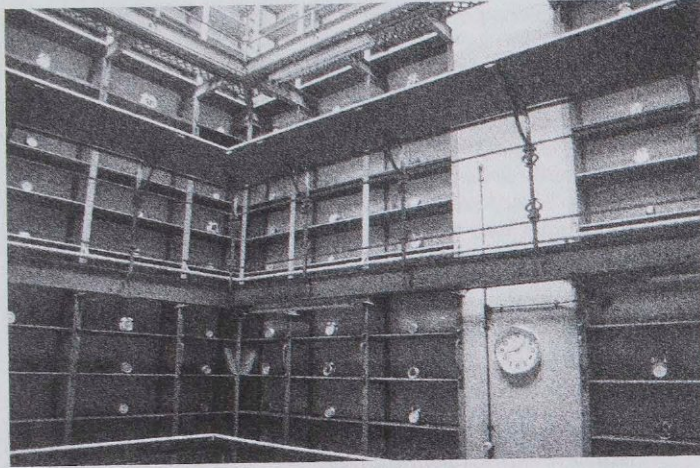
*The voice of instinct is always
right in some way, but has not yet
learnt to express itself exactly.*
From: Wittgenstein's Lectures, 1930¹

Jarosław Kozłowski, an artist, for several decades now working in Poznan, a city in the west of Poland, is a distinguished persona in the artistic milieu of this city. His work and his attitudes have strongly resounded in Polish as well as European art. This artist is not only a teacher: a professor in the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznan, a professor in Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam, until recently he had been a professor in Statens Kunstakademi in Oslo, he is not only the dynamo revealing facts in the field of other artists' art's life: in the years from 1972-1989 he ran the Gallery Akumulatory 2 in Poznan, which he had set up himself, in the years 1991-1993 he was the collection and exhibition programme curator in the Modern Art

Centre in Ujazdowski Palace in Warsaw. The artist is also – both in his own artistic endeavour and in his teaching and organisational activities – a seeker of the most transparent means, ways and methods of translation or interpretation of the complication of the reality, tongues, attitudes, aspirations, questions, dreams – another Babel's Tower. Translation and interpretation, as well as the search for reliability of art seem to indicate the space of Jarosław Kozłowski's mind and work. The attention he pays to the Otherness has fundamental bearing on the nature of the issues he addresses. His self-control – in relation to his own personality, his social life and the life of art – sensitises and illuminates his existential, social and artistic attitude. In one of his recent works that employs two groups of clocks: one group with clock-hands rotating clockwise and another group with anticlockwise hands, and mirrors fixed in front of the two groups of clocks, which actually reverse the direction of the rotations, Jarosław Kozłowski declares TIME TO CORRECT REALITY and TIME TO CHANGE ART. The artist practices the art of transformation of the attitude



1. "Wittgenstein's Lectures.
Cambridge 1930-1932", edited by
Desmond Lee, Basil Blackwell,
Oxford 1982, p.22.



Jaroslław Kozłowski: *Personal Files*,
Archief, Den Haag 1993.
Photo: J. Kozłowski

towards life and towards art, he conducts visual investigations that have a lot to do with the 20th century linguistic philosophy, and those investigations are made visible through arrangements of signs and spatial structures he produces himself. Kozłowski's treats his work as an instrument of cognition of and an instrument of investigation into (as much as a mirror is such an instrument) his own cognitive and expressive instruments. He ponders upon art itself and transforms his conclusions into the material of his own expression embroiled with the system of art's social function, such as: demonstration, exhibition, catalogue, auction, ceremony, artistic criticism, concert. His complex artistic (meta-artistic, in fact) activities carried out in Berlin in 1985 in daadgalerie were entitled "The Show" – "The Exhibition" and were accompanied by a publication entitled "The Catalogue", all of which was topped off with an activity featuring Emmet Williams entitled "The Auction". Jaroslław Kozłowski's partner from DAAD in Berlin in that enterprise was René Block, who reported the event in his article published in the catalogue of the artist's individual exhibition that we organised together in 1994 in Lodz in the Museum of Art under the title "Things and Spaces"². Jaroslław

2. René Block, "Jaroslław Kozłowski", in: "Jaroslław Kozłowski. Rzeczy i przestrzenie" ("Jaroslław Kozłowski. Things and spaces"), exh. cat. edited by Urszula Czartoryska, Muzeum Sztuki (Museum of Art.), Łódź 1994, (Polish and English version).
3. Arthur C. Danto, "The End of Art.", in: A.C. Danto, "The Philosophical Disenfranchisement of Art.", Columbia University Press, New York 1986, p. 81.

Kozłowski previously for long working periods drew on the philosophy of language, on logic, semantics and semiology. He made use of those matters of reflection and knowledge to create his own meaningful structures or installations. He carried out unique "Exercises in Semiotics", as he named one of his presentations in 1977 in his Gallery Akumulatory 2 in Poznan. In his essay from the mid 1980s, Arthur C. Danto investigated the question of the "end of art" (the essay's title was "The End of Art"), these are his words:

"It supposes that its own philosophy is what art aims at, so that art fulfills its destiny by becoming philosophy at last. Of course art does a great deal more and less than this, which makes the death of art. An overstatement"³.

In his every piece, Jaroslław Kozłowski tries to get to Another side of the reality. He imposes certain features peculiar to philosophical investigation upon art itself, in which he seems to be in concert with Arthur C. Danto's investigations; with each next piece of his, the artist incarnates another brand-new-born art, principally its perpetually new genesis. Thus, Kozłowski's diagnoses and aspirations turn out to run counter to Danto's modern art's label as "post-historical". That is how we only can perceive how distinct a philosopher is, who arrives to art through the universe of his discipline, from an artist, who through the medium of his work, as well as through the media of other artists' art, strives to work out another philosophy in the context of a new Babel Tower. Jaroslław Kozłowski is an artist. On the other hand, philosophy is only one of the elements constituting the world where he lives and works, which he struggles with. Ludwig Wittgenstein played an important role – together with the representatives of the Vienna Circle, and with the British school of analytic thinking or with the Lvov-Warsaw school

of logic – in the process of early shaping of Kozłowski's views and attitudes. He, as the author of "Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus", said in his lecture in Cambridge in 1931:

"Science builds a house with bricks which, once laid, are not touched again. Philosophy ties a room and so to handle things many times. The essence of its procedure is that it starts with a mess; we do not mind being hazy so long as the haze gradually clears."⁴

In the same sense art, as Jarosław Kozłowski sees and incarnates it in his realisations, endeavours again and again to tidy a room anew. Piotr Piotrowski, the curator of Jarosław Kozłowski's individual exhibition in the National Museum in Poznań in 1997 entitled "Spaces of Time", wrote about the artist's art as about "Furnishing a Room"⁵. In point of fact, Jarosław Kozłowski still tidies up or furnishes a new the rooms belonging to the residents of the Babel Tower of the turn of the 20th century, of those who speak various languages, show distinct sensitivities, have diversified aspirations and potentials, who traverse their own and alien parts, whose helplessness towards everything that is inconceivable – similar to art's essential helplessness – he provides with instruments, tongues based on instincts, on intuition, on co-participation, on resignation, which in effect can reduce the incomprehension and misunderstandings. Jarosław Kozłowski bluntly demonstrates that the cultural Babel Tower results from uncritical acceptance of various conventions: cognitive, social, artistic-institutionalised, and with his artistic, pedagogical or organisational endeavour, he proposes to open up the spaces of thought, sight and convention in the name of freedom – the intrinsic domain of art. As seen in this way art ceases to exist as a supplementation to life, but becomes fundamental life aid – for an artist himself, for

his student-partners, for the audience, in actual fact for everybody that gets involved in his work when presenting their own work, that puts their own attitude against the message coming from an artist's attitude. A year ago I had an interview with Jarosław Kozłowski. I asked him about his dreams and about freedom, and about sharing freedom with other artists. The artist's answers deserve careful consideration: "Although they have tried many times and are still trying to discover an effective way to control and constrain imagination, they haven't fortunately discovered it yet. And dreaming is possible as long as such freedom exists. Thanks to my imagination I can freely traverse time and space, I can stand on my head and turn the world upside down. I do my best to make use of this freedom to the extreme, and it is art where I can most conveniently do that. The only restriction is the rules I impose myself. (...) Another issue is freedom in the context of the function of art, this is when it comes to the so-called artistic scene, to art's institutional circulation, where dreams often turn out to be more or less attractive utopias. Still, I think that in spite of numerous rules imposed, and limitations, sometimes restrictions and sheer manipulation, it is also possible to entertain independence there, but

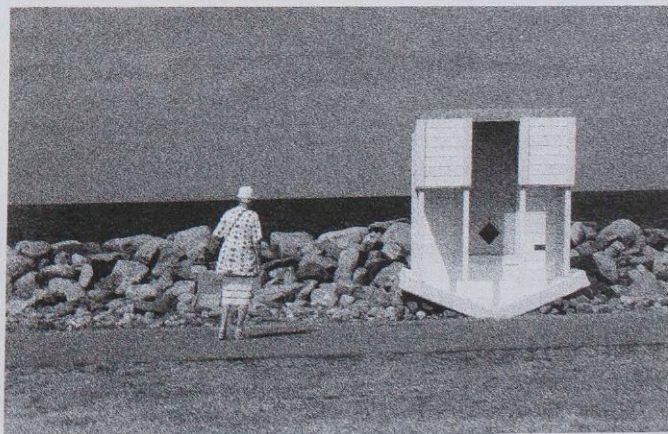


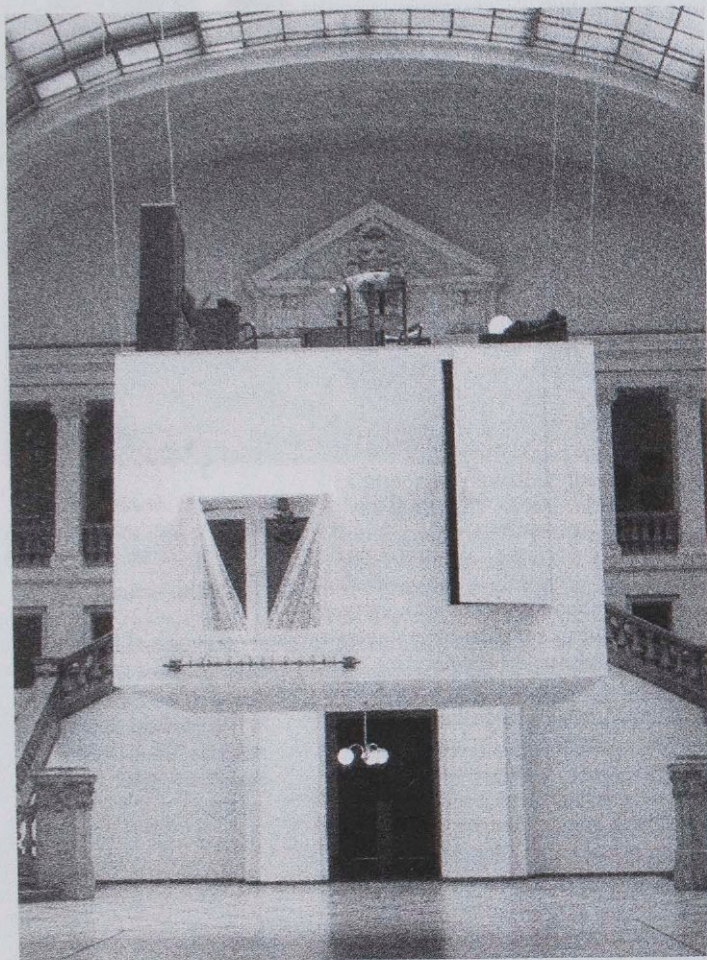
Jaromir Jedliński

r e-mapping

4. "Wittgenstein's Lectures...", op. Cit., p. 42.
5. "Jarosław Kozłowski. Przestrzenie czasu" ("Jarosław Kozłowski. Spaces of Time"), exh. cat. edited by Piotr Piotrowski, Muzeum Narodowe (National Museum), Poznań 1997, (Polish and English version).

Jarosław Kozłowski: *Swedish Bathhouse - Australian Version*, Art-huts, Malmö 1994.
Photo: J. Kozłowski





Jarosław Kozłowski: *Negative Room*, Muzeum Narodowe, Poznań 1997. Photo: J. Kozłowski

6. "Rozmowy o sztuce VI. Z Jarosławem Kozłowskim rozmawia Jaromir Jedliński" ("Conversations on Art. VI. Jaromir Jedliński in Conversation with Jarosław Kozłowski"), in: "Odra" Monthly Magazine, September 1997, p. 88.

under one condition: such independence must be motivated by the artistic attitude and the ethic accepted. (...) It seems to me that you always have to share you freedom, or even more, as a matter of fact freedom only comes true in a dialogue, when confronted with the freedom of the other. While dreaming you experience freedom for yourself, but the moment ideas materialise through the artistic medium, they become a communicative means, which requires a partner. This is a game where at least two participants have a hand in"⁶.

The partnership, freedom-sharing, exceeding limits and restrictions, which the artist points out himself,

are all indicative of – so important for his work – total concentration on the Otherness, multiplicity, on the doubleness of individual identity, on the ambivalence of experiencing and learning the world, and this concentration may turn out to be very productive to make our relations with the world more complete. The question of doubleness was also raised in such Jarosław Kozłowski's earlier works as: "Double Agent"; "Double Image", "Double Identity", "Double Exposure", and later in several versions of his work "Soft Protection". In the case of many realisations-versions of "Soft Protection" the artist made use of multiple arrangements of various pieces of furniture and home appliances cut in half and put together with two different halves; each half from an object of the same function – a chair, bed, table, radio etc. He dressed the lines of contact between those heterogeneous parts with adhesive bandage as if wounds. In a text published in the catalogue of Kozłowski's exhibition "Episodes" that took place in the Modern Art Centre in Warsaw, Philip Peters formulated extremely interesting observations concerning this group of the artist's works. He said:

"So here we have two aspects of the same situation: the living room as a situation that has been left behind and is itself irreparably damaged and the living room as a metaphor for the lives of the people who have left it. Probably not out of their own accord. This means that there are at least two ways of discussing this work: on a philosophical level about objects and their meaning in certain situations. And on the level of, let us say, what is going on in the world which reflects this situation or which is reflected by it. Both approaches seem valid and they seem to support each other. The objects in question remind one of the ancient Greek story which tells us that once man

and woman were oneness, Then they were separated and since that day try to find their counterpart to become whole again. Transposing this from man and woman in general to the level of individuals it will be clear that not every individual (if any) will be able to meet his/her perfect match. Neither have Kozłowski's pieces of furniture. They are almost without exception ill matched: they clearly have relation problems. In other words: sometimes one has to settle for less than the absolute. In this way the objects reflect the human condition striving for perfection and never been able to attain it. On the other hand they softly protect each other, to paraphrase their title. So the way in which uniquely partners are condemned to each other is also emphatically moving: the numb leading the blind. It is clear that this room is damaged in a serious way while still trying to remain the same room (or: re-construct it). The damage may be done but memories are kept alive and wounded objects remain the same objects now trying for new solutions in their unexpected and originally uncalled for combinations. Like people: a scarred warrior is still a warrior (whether actually fighting or being able to fight or not). So the room becomes the image of a person with different wounded parts, physical and mental. In fact, looked at in this light there is a certain matter-of-fact-like heroism in these survivors of a catastrophe we don't know about. In these view these works emanate a certain optimism in the midst of hard times: it is not only about the shortcomings of the human condition but also hope, about struggle, about the repair – however provisory – of self. People have an almost endless capacity for that – but scars may be visible.¹⁷

That accurate description of relations holding in the world paralleled with the description of the series of works "Soft Protection" by Jarosław

Kozłowski, is a fine picture of art itself. Art mirrors the world to the same extent as the world mirrors art. Jarosław Kozłowski belongs with the artists who restore the relations between art and the world, who establish interrelations between these two separate – or maybe inseparable – domains of the reality. This is art that tries anew to formulate its status – artistically realising its sensations, realistically demonstrating its pondering upon the world and itself. It seems that is the way Jarosław Kozłowski understood his aspirations when in an interview by Jerzy Ludwiński, published in the catalogue of the artist's exhibition "Things and Spaces" in the Art Museum in Lodz, he said:

"... I'd like to ask you to imagine three concentric rings. The first one is the domain of reality, both social and material, such as we experience it. The second one would be domain of art., such as it is usually conceived, the kind we have referred to rather critically here. The third one would also involve art, but conceived quite differently, the art. That we are interested in. The relationship between the first and the second ring, or between reality and art. In the usual sense of the term is rather well understood. Art. Is independent upon reality as its image, projection, commentary, language, utopias or – as Beuys would have put it – universal social therapy. Reality authenticates art., art. In turn introduces order and gives metaphysical dimension to reality. The relationship between the first two rings and the third one would be quite different. It would contain elements of the first ring – that of reality, as well as elements of the second ring – that of art. In both cases, however, these elements would not be borrowings. They would not involve any dependence on the contexts from which they have been taken. It is a bit like the case of a glass of water from the work of Michael Craig-Martin, which at some



Jaromir Jedliński

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JAROMIR JEDLIŃSKI was born in 1955 in Poznań. He graduated from the Art History Institute, Poznań University and completed postgraduate studies at the Courtauld Institute, London University.

1984-88 - a lecturer in the Film, Television and Theatre High School in Łódź.

1991-96 - a director of the Museum of Art in Łódź.

A lecturer in the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań.

An organizer of many exhibitions and seminars in Poland and other European countries, in America, Japan, Israel.

An author of many articles, essays, books, including "Joseph Beuys. Texts, commentaries, interviews".

An author of the films: "The XX century Architecture in Poland";

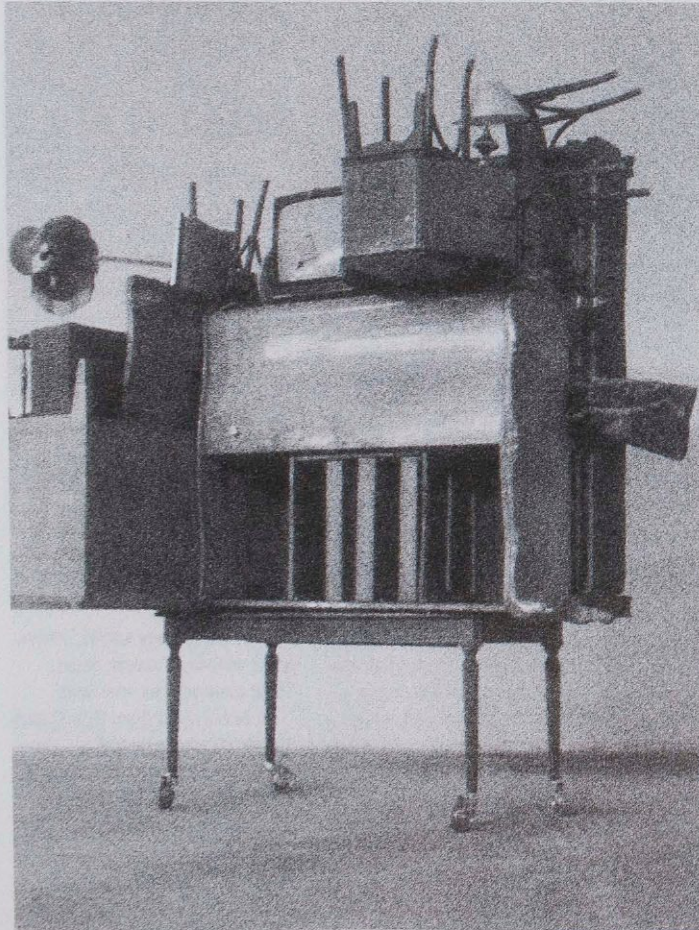
"Władysław Strzemiński. Constructing of Vision" and the Polish Radio programme "The Conversations on Art",

The Chairman of the Programme Council of the Tadeusz Kantor Foundation in Cracow.

7. Philip Peters, "Jarosław Kozłowski. A defender of Humanity", in: "Jarosław Kozłowski. Epizody" ("Jarosław Kozłowski. Episodes"), exh. cat. Edited by Ewa Gorządek, Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej, Warszawa 1997, p. 62.

8. Jarosław Kozłowski - Jerzy Ludwiński, "Conversation", in: "Jarosław Kozłowski. Rzeczy i przestrzenie" ("Jarosław Kozłowski. Things and spaces"), op. cit., pp. 101-102.

Jarosław Kozłowski: *Living Room - Nomadic Version*, Istanbul Biennale, Istanbul 1996. Photo: J. Kozłowski



point stopped being just a glass filled two thirds with water, and became an oak tree. Craig-Martin preserved the physical form of a glass of water, but changed its substance. The objects within this third ring often look the same, but their new status and different internal relations between them make for the fact that they are not themselves from the domain of reality any more, and they have even less in common with their representations or transformations from the domain of art. They assume a different identity, and with it they regain their lost dignity.¹⁸

In the end let me provide several remarks from the point of view of a curator of many exhibitions, in

which Jarosław Kozłowski's art was included. His works were presented in the following exhibitions I happened to organise or co-organise: "Vision and Unity. Strzeminski and Nine Contemporary Polish Artists" in Van Reekum Museum in Apeldoorn (at that time Kozłowski presented a parallel exhibition in Archipel Gallery in Apeldoorn) in 1989; "The Art Museum in Lodz 1931-1992. Collection-Documentation-Actualité" in Musée d'Art Contemporain, and in Espace Lyonnaise d'Art Contemporain in Lyons in 1992; "Polnische Avantgarde 1930-1990" in Kunsthalle in Berlin in 1992/1993; "Jarosław Kozłowski. Things and Spaces" in the Art Museum in Lodz in 1994; "Art from Poland 1945-1996" in Mucsarnok Palace of Art in Budapest in 1997. Contact with such an artist as Jarosław Kozłowski becomes a significant lesson for exhibition curators who, and for institutions that, enjoy collaboration with the artist. Collaboration with him forces you to carry out continuing examination of your own assumptions about art, and about the mechanisms behind art's operation. Working with the artist is starting a game full of multiple meanings, a game between an artist and a curator, between an artist and a museum or a gallery, between art and the world of art, a game depending on proving the reliability of the partners in this paradoxical form of collaboration, as every game is. This game is raising the same questions about our own ability – that of artists and artistic institutions – to disturb the set order of interrelations and meanings, our ability to open up spaces enclosed by conventional attitudes, meanings and relationships with the reality – which should be corrected according to Jarosław Kozłowski's postulate "TIME TO CORRECT REALITY" – and with art itself, which should be changed according to his "TIME TO CHANGE ART".

Translated by Tomasz Wyszowski

re-mapping X

POZNAN, POLAND

Teatr Ósmego Dnia

Nearly 30 years of art and struggle. This collective of stage artists/activists have not only followed the flow of changes in Poland, they have initiated changes themselves. From street performances to church cellars to a painful time in exile during martial law, they have never lost heart. Instead they have allowed themselves to be inspired by the struggle – and their theatrical language has incorporated these life experiences. Courage, integrity and a spectacular vision.

LANDSCAPE X – INTERCULT – STOCKHOLM '98



POZNAN, POLAND

Teatr Ósmego Dnia

Teatr Ósmego Dnia, Theatre of the Eight Day, has created more than 40 premieres, which have been shown in many European countries and in Mexico. Since 1992 Teatr Ósmego Dnia has its own cultural center in Poznan.

THEATRE/SELECTION

- No man's land, indoors, -91. No man's land, second version.
- Wormwood, indoors -92
- Sabbath, open air show, -93
- Dance As Long as You Can, indoors
- Ultimus, open air show, main artistic event for the theme Peregrination, EXPO'98, Lisbon

FILM/SELECTION

- Eight Day Theatre, documentary by Bo Persson and Joanna Helander -92

THE SUMMIT

Open air show about hunger, power and borders. World Premiere!

Screen-play, direction, dramaturgy:
Ósmego Dnia

Scenography: Jacek Chmaj

Music: Arnold Dabrowski

Costumes: the company in collaboration
with Izabela Rudzka

ACTORS

Ewa Wójciak
Masza Bogucka
Adam Borowski
Krzysztof Fabiański
Tadeusz Janiszewski
Tomasz Jarosz
Marcin Kęszycki
Marcin Kolczyński
Włodzimierz Kwieciński
Przemysław Mosiężny
Janusz Stolarski

WITH SUPPORT FROM
The Authorities of the City of Poznan

e uralien

Jens Olof Lasthein: Sarajewo 1994



STOCKHOLM
SARAJEVO
SKOPJE
SOFIA
VILNIUS
WARSAW
TALLINN
RIGA
LJUBLJANA
ZAGREB

LANDSCAPE X - INTERCULT - STOCKHOLM '98

X re-mapping

Jens Olof Lasthein

PHOTO ATELIER



Macedonia 1995



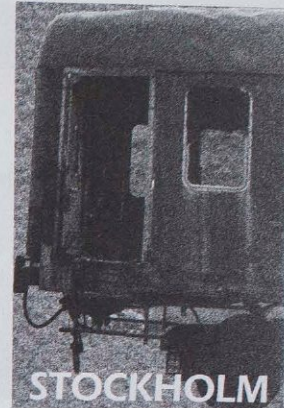
Sarajevo 1994



Sarajevo 1994

Theatre critic Henric Tiselius
in the middle of a dialogue between

Chris Torch and Goran Stefanovski



I met **Chris Torch**, artistic director of the production unit *Intercult* and the inventor and driving wheel for *LANDSCAPE X*, in a conversation with the leading Macedonian playwright **Goran Stefanovski**, responsible for *LANDSCAPE X: euralien*. The event takes place in the former National Archives Building (*Gamla Riksarkivet*) in June/July 1998.

In Western Europe we often see the theatre as a dinosaur, if not dead and exterminated from the daily debate, at least a very slow and, at best, reflective art form. But in Eastern Europe it has recently shown another direction: total contact, in dialogue with (and within...) the society. Sometimes even powerful.

Even if LANDSCAPE X has mainly invited theatre artists and activists, our discussion didn't center primarily around theatre. Instead – we sat down at the Intercult office on the southside of Stockholm, and talked about the project itself, how it has developed and the main ideas behind this large-scale, politically aware cultural project, crossing more borders than one even knew existed.

Henric Tiselius: *Tell us about the background to LANDSCAPE X: euralien. How did you two meet and how did you get personally involved in the project?*

Chris Torch: We came in contact with each other in 1992, during preparation for the theatre project called *Sarajevo – Tales of a City*. Goran agreed to write the play and then we lived through a series of intense experiences, some positive and some not so positive. Later on we maintained connection and then I commissioned Goran to write *Bacchanalia*. Another intercultural work.

Euralien was first suggested at an advisory board meeting where we talked about *LANDSCAPE X* before it was formed in the way it is now. Goran's first flash was a amusement park; a kind of Disneyland of nationalist kitsch...

Goran Stefanovski: During twenty years in Ex-Yugoslavia I was a luxurious playwright. I worked with very magic theatre resources, on very expensive productions. We somehow believed that we had reached the end of history and touched utopia, There was a certain tragic blindness in it all. When Yugoslavia collapsed that tragic mistake was obvious. The only question left was: where did it go wrong and what to do now? That was when I met

CHRIS TORCH was born in 1952 in Cleveland, Ohio (USA) to a family of Italian immigrants.

Graduated from Amherst College, Massachusetts (Arts in Dramatic Arts and Business Administration).

Actor and animator with the LIVING THEATRE (1974-76); founder, set-designer and artistic co-director for the international theatre collective JORD-CIRKUS in Stockholm (1977-1991).

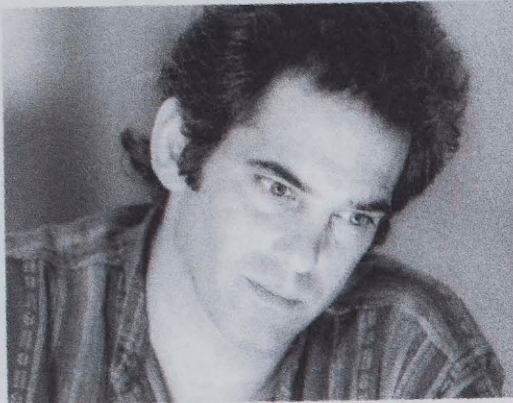
In 1992 he founded the international production unit INTERCULT; initiator of a series of festivals (Re:ORIENT - 1993, 1994, CROSSROADS - 1995), international performances/co-productions (Theatre Gardzienice - 1992, Roma Theatre Pralipe - 1994, SARAJEVO - 1993).

1992-1995 - founder and artistic director for SHIKASTA - Sweden's first intercultural ensemble at the Swedish National Theatre (Riksteatern).

1995 - returned as artistic director to INTERCULT.

Projects initiated: performance URSKULD (1995-96), The European Theatre Xchange (1996, 1997), Theater an der Ruhr (1996), Theatre Royale Stratford East (1997), Ravenna Teatro (1997), BACCHANALIA (1996), Re:MAP (1996), LANDSCAPE X (1998).

Member of the Executive Committee and the Council, Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM), 1991-1996.



Chris Torch.
Photo Bernd Uhlig.

Everybody seems to be so concerned that Swedes have lost their national roots and their national identity and that this loss creates dangerous conditions for increased racism and national chauvinism. But I believe that the perception of the Swedish personality is internationalist. Most people in Sweden feel empathy even if they do not read daily newspapers and manifest it with political demonstrations.

Chris. He comes from a radical, "poor" theatrical tradition that's never forgotten its intellectual and political responsibility. So he was a good catalyst. He channels artistic energy. Intercult is really a channel, an antenna that detects those energies and turns them into action. Intercult sees the theatricality of politics and the politics of theatre – and it's not only political action. It's also the whole issue of multicultural identities. The lack of understanding of these identities is – I believe – the real reason for the collapse of Yugoslavia and the whole Eastern European block.

CT: The Sarajevo project was created in the midst of the war. It was like shooting at a moving target. Everyday you had a totally new situation. And we were trying to create a play that was humanistic, ethical, attractive and could explain the situation to

Europeans. Working with artists who were still in the throes of going crazy.

GS: The fact that Chris is a catalyst can be very dangerous. He is not an outsider but he does come from the outside and looks at things outside – in. He asks some very simple questions. He came to Skopje, and he knew there was a Turkish Drama Theatre, an Albanian Drama Theatre and a Macedonian National Theatre there. He asked the simple question: "Have you ever collaborated together on a project?" This is a taboo question, a question nobody's asked before. And yet a question of ultimate importance.

CT: This opened up some sores and the sores are still there in some ways. The process is still going on. We actually landed on the hot space but we also lost some friendships.

GS: Chris is a moving theatrical activist. He is not into this idea of the artist who sits in his ivory tower and bullshits his way to fame and worship. Which is what many "national" artists do in their "national" cultures, particularly in the Balkans. So this man comes and sort of breaks the rules of the game. Puts a question mark over the whole way things work out there. And that creates tectonic movement.

CT: Goran is a Balkan animal deep inside, but his mind has been Europeanized or globalized so much that it is possible for him to see even as an outsider. He's been an interpreter for what I observe, and I'm an interpreter for what he knows. "Chris, something's going on here which you don't understand", he says to me. And occasionally he succeeds in calling me back and occasionally I run straight into the wall anyway.

GS: My wife is English, and she came to Skopje in 1974. We had two children, a home and we were very happy. But in 1992 – when the war started – she decided to move back to England. So we started a new chapter in life. I didn't leave my work at the university in Skopje. I started commuting and living on planes. A maddening way of life. And as if that wasn't enough – I now have a third angle of the triangle: Chris and Sweden.

I have tried to embrace this life of contradiction and live with it. And in this respect the work in Sweden has given me a possibility to accept this new situation. Not as a catastrophe but as a possibility for change.

HT: Tell us about the development of *Euralien*.

CT: The key breakthrough for the whole idea came when we got access to the former National Archives Building. The development of the concept could then start: the wedding between Goran's idea of this labyrinth of nationalist kitsch and my idea to invite representatives of the most dynamic work from primarily the Balkans and the Baltic region. From the beginning we talked about trying to reflect all of Eastern and Central Europe, but we

focused soon on the Balkan and Baltic regions. These nations have populations more or less the same size, they experience themselves as having been occupied, they are post-communist. They share dreams of entering the European community, and they have the same kind of strength and bitterness behind them. All of the Baltic and Balkan countries have strong minority groups to deal with, and multicultural identities.

So – here are all these people I met and was trying to understand with my research. How could we fit them into Goran's concept? Goran is a playwright able to see the challenge in the limitations that I give him as a producer: it must be with this number of people, with these languages in the performance, it must use different kinds of artists, etc., etc. This does not threaten his integrity, he uses it as a diving board to go further. He both incorporates and at the same time places some heavy demands himself. I haven't had one artist question the script. You have people involved from nine different countries and none of them has said to me "well, that is not my perspective, this is not what I want to do."

HT: *Tell me about your ideas behind the script?*

GS: In the last years I have lost the ease to travel. Which faced me with the question of who I am. As a young man I had a passport that allowed me access to the whole of Europe. Then that was taken away from me. The Berlin Wall came down, but then the Schengen Wall went up. A huge number of people became members of "the other Europe". There has always been another Europe but it has not been so clearly defined. Now there are eight million people databased in Brussels, who tried during the last few years to illegally enter Europe. Today there is a whole invisible nation made up of true "euraliens".

HT: *Should Euralien then be seen as a heavy political statement?*

GS: No! The situation is sweet and sour at the same time, like the Chinese sauce. It's sad and very funny. It's tragi-comic. Like Charlie Chaplin's films. Charlie Chaplin is the ultimate refuge. He finds himself in Alaska in the goldrush wearing summer clothes!

As a Euralien spectator, you will – for a few hours – be placed in the shoes of a refugee, of a "Euro" alien. Not so that you feel guilty! And not because we have any romantic illusions about the "aliens" themselves either. But just so that you for a moment feel from the inside someone else's reality. We're turning things inside out. In one room for instance the "reality" is a civil war in Sweden that has split Stockholm apart. A woman cannot cross the street to go home. There is a Bosnian UN observer. Bosnia is a developed welfare, social-democratic society...

CT: That scene is directed by Bibi Andersson and performed by a Swedish actress and two Bosnian actors. This is an good example how we work as producers. We put together actors with a playwright and a director, introduce people to one another and observe how the combination works and when it starts to flow. The framework that I defined was a very eclectic gathering of artists from different places. Also from different fields, not only theatre but also dance and visual arts. Each of these people has the free space to do what they want and still everything should somehow work together. A gathering of all these "euraliens" in collaboration with Swedish artists. I wanted to go beyond the ordinary guest performance. We have, for example, initiated a collaboration between Swedish immigrant actors and Bulgarian professionals under the



Torch & Stefanovski

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During twenty years in Ex-Yugoslavia I was a luxurious playwright. I worked with very magic theatre resources, on very expensive productions. We somehow believed that we had reached the end of history and touched utopia. There was a certain tragic blindness in it all.

Goran Stefanovski.
Photo: Vesna Pavlović.

