

A SPACE FOR LIVE ART

2008
—
2013

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TO CREATE THE SPACE, TIME IS NEEDED

— Antoine Pickels, writer, performer and curator
at Les halles in Brussels. He designed and set
in motion *A Space For Live Art* and is currently
working on developing its next stage. —

The history of the ASFLA project, to which this document testifies, dates more than 5 years. Back in 2005–2006 three European cultural organisations joined forces to open another space for new forms of performance arts hovering on the horizon throughout Europe at the time, notably the emerging or re-emerging Live Art. They were Les halles in Brussels, Les Subsistances in Lyon and Glasgow's New Territories, whose approaches converged on making use of scenic platforms that didn't correspond to those offered by Black Box or White Cube. Uniting forces for a short-term project, they aimed to make known the vanguard artists of these emerging forms, provide them with an appropriate framework for presenting their work, while at the same time offering the general public the intellectual wherewithal to better grasp the content. The outcome of this pilot project was positive: The public was present, curious, willing to take up the challenges posed by such unconventional works. Likewise, the medias pricked up their antennae immediately while the artists themselves were for once content to encounter dignified working conditions and proper communication channels, in a sector where difficulty had all too often been the norm.

At the same time, however, we realised that the project we had embarked upon was truly vast. From the outset we had to come to grips with the diversity of aesthetic and modes of representation that existed in Europe, all the while expanding our presence from north to south, from east to west. The beauty of live art lies in its diversity, in its living mutations, as it exposes itself and responds to different cultural contexts. In order to take into consideration these differing sensibilities, we needed to expand the project geographically. Thereafter it didn't suffice just to offer a space fit for purpose; it wasn't merely a question of more resources or a better distribution of the works. Other considerations arose—prior or subsequent to the creative endeavour—that proved to be the required conditions for the harmonious development of this very distinct habitat: How to transmit the art of performance and what overlaps were possible with the arts colleges? What forms of support to provide these very young performers so that they could present their work with greater ease and be properly exposed to other ways of creating and presenting their work? What critical tools to forge so that journalist and critic alike were equipped with indispensable frames of reference—something we came to learn they sometimes woefully lacked? What theoretical in-depth studies were necessary? What interventionary measures to come up with to improve conditions of delivery to the public, regardless of their background knowledge of the subject? How to better invest in public spaces and non-cultural sites clearly well suited to such artistic endeavours? How to offer performers appropriate surroundings during their residencies, enabling them create works truly related to the milieu from which they emerged? How to better systemize the collation of documents and to archive those particularly transitory works, often conceived for

a once-off happening? What spaces to open to the public in our respective countries so that those artistic practices, more often than not marginalised, could finally win approval on an institutional level?

We are now eight partners in all: in addition to the three founding members of the project, five others have joined us from Finland, Germany, Slovenia, Poland and Spain, each equally keen to clear the way through unknown terrains and to support those very artistic endeavours that defy definition. In all, eight distinct partners, with very differing profiles and motives, sometimes even opposing aesthetic sensibilities, working in urban contexts of widely varying dimensions, eight partners committed to the fact that this collaborative project should never lead to uniformity, a risk to which such cross border projects are invariably predisposed, while at the same time ensuring quite the reverse: that diversity persists and even flourishes. This project has been an extremely enriching experience for each of the partners, but once again for quite differing reasons: The short interviews in these pages are testimony to A Space for Live Art's varying impacts, depending specifically on the location. While its impact was in part naturally due to the financial means at our disposal, it was the time and effort devoted to the project that truly enabled us to examine these questions in depth, affording us the various exchanges whereby we could learn from each other.

THE BEAUTY OF LIVE ART LIES IN ITS DIVERSITY, IN ITS LIVING MUTATIONS, AS IT EXPOSES ITSELF AND RESPONDS TO DIFFERENT CULTURAL CONTEXTS.

Thanks to the support from the European Union over the last five years, we have been able to double our initial funds and often find other sources of funding while at the same time enhancing our legitimacy in distinctly local contexts. We have meanwhile undertaken an ambitious programme while overseeing an exponential expansion of operations (refer to pp. 22–23 for a complete list of our activities). Over time we have observed how those who were initially the most 'vulnerable' among us have improved in terms of self-assurance and quality, while the most 'established' have dared to take artistic risks, which they might not otherwise have taken.¹ And let us not overlook how the fruition of this Pan European project has enabled the public to discover, at times even rediscover, hundreds of artists of all ages who remained in the relative shade. It would have been nigh on impossible in such a modest publication as this

Eglantine
Chaumont,
Disparaître, Les
Subsistances,
Imaginez
maintenant,
2010, photo:
Romain Etienne.

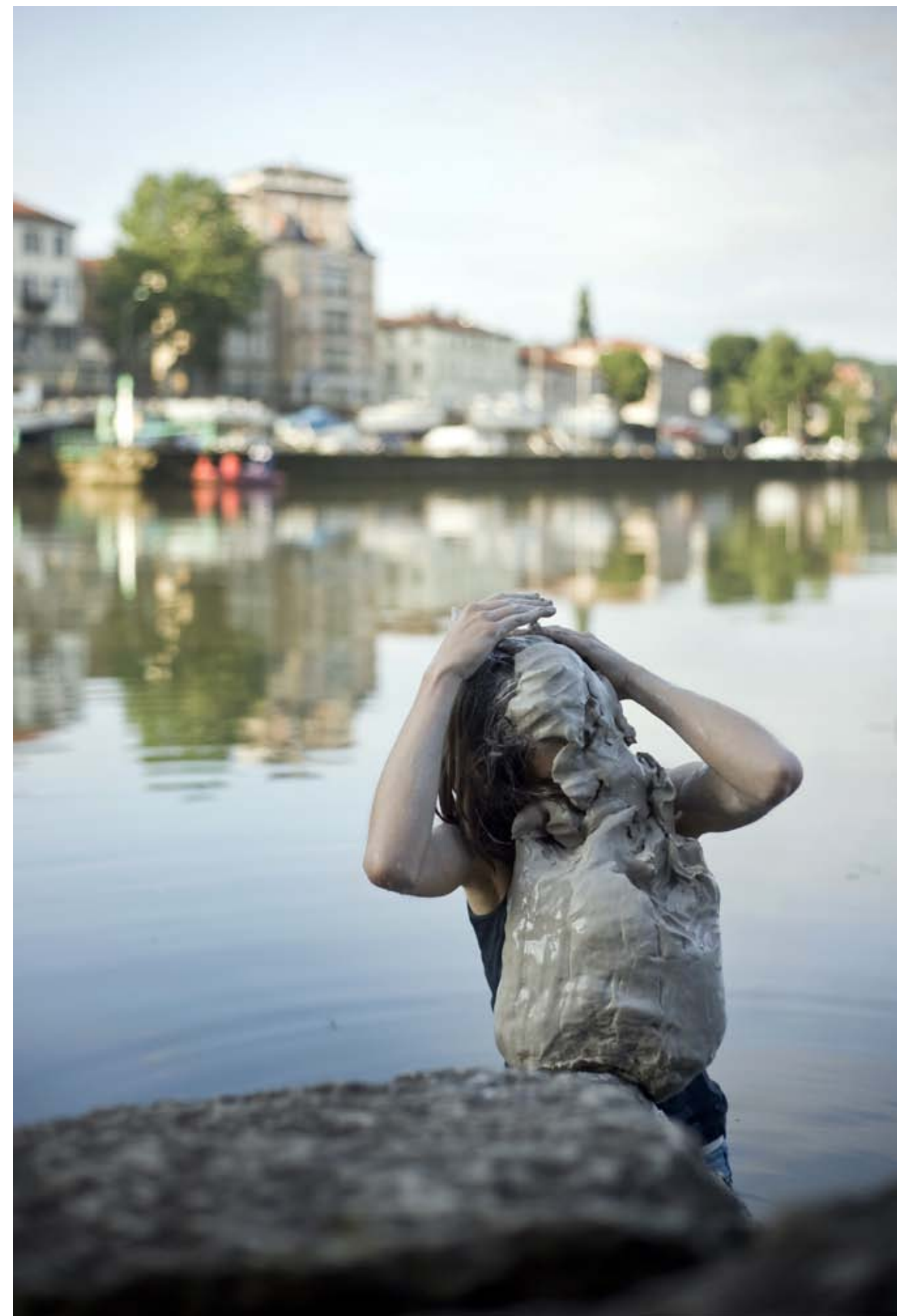
to do justice to all those figures who fascinate, disturb and move us deeply. Each of the eight partners had thus to select, albeit unwillingly, an artist or group who made a mark on their programme in the last five years.

These portraits in text and image of these eight emblematic artists or collectives, accompanied by brief descriptions of each of the eight partners and the short interviews mentioned above, represent but the mere tip of the iceberg. Nonetheless they bespeak of the wide variety of aesthetic approaches and paths that have led the way for Live Art to become what it is today. For those interested, the project's website aspaceforliveart.org offers a wealth of useful information.

Among the project's priorities, and one probably willingly shared by all, was the attention bestowed upon those young performers setting out on their careers. Sometimes encountered during artistic workshops or in partnerships with colleges of art and often closely accompanied in their first steps, these budding artists have asserted in less than five years a radicalism that the ASFLA could and moreover should accommodate. We have asked the performer and lecturer Christophe Alix to make a contribution concerning this particular pillar of the project (refer to his article on pp.18–19) Their partners, in turn, chose eight of these emerging artists or collectives, whom we have baptised, partly as a joke, YEP or young European performers. Embodying the future of Live Art, it is patently clear that they are undaunted, regardless of whether the prevalent reality is one of crisis or otherwise.

As outlined above, the evolving relationship between performance and public space was one of this project's powerful axes. Escaping the relatively square-minded confines of cultural institutions, we went out to meet the everyday man and woman on the streets with these art forms by nature experimental but also far less codified and as such less intimidating than the classical art forms. This greatly contributed to demystifying Live Art, that some had judged to be the reserved domain for a vanguard of sophisticated spectators. Impassioned by the idea of art in public space, Pauline de la Boulaye bases her article (pp.16–17) upon her experiences at the 2012 ANTI festival, whose programme each year completely centres on site-specific works, providing her with food for thought on how to widen the scope of the debate.

Our activities during these five fruitful years have been accompanied by a thorough deepening of the theoretical and critical framework, and the implementation of a multi pronged strategy: round table discussions, seminars, workshops, journalists travelling to different events throughout Europe, critics in residencies, commission of articles and so on. Even if the answer to the question of a balanced relation between a critical stance and 'participation' that Live Art involves has not necessarily been found, numerous writers,



journalists and intellectuals have developed a passion for these discussions during the process. The enthusiastic pens of our sixteen contributors from every corner of Europe bear witness to this phenomenon. We have asked the young British critic, Diana Damian to set out the stimulatingly intellectual experience that such a critical stance towards Live Art represents for her (pp.20–21).

At once unsystematic and fragmented, this publication's mission is not to provide a detailed overview of all this project's achievements over the last five years. Above all, we hope it might succeed in opening windows onto that extensive and multi-faceted space that this productive time allowed us to open up and occupy. And so we hope,

for a long time to come. Beyond these snapshots, other challenges are cropping up, notably an ASFLA 3.0 project currently on the drawing board. A radically different project, whose implications Christophe Galent summarises on p.24.

Towards a fresh adventure... Have a great read!

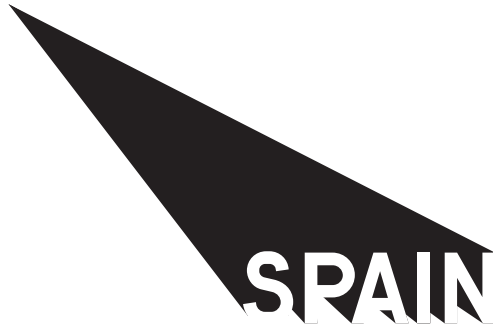
www.aspaceforliveart.org

1. Regrettably, one of our partners, New Territories in Glasgow had to disband for reasons totally unrelated to this project. Notwithstanding, the role played by this festival in the United Kingdom remains to this day, much to our great satisfaction, a powerful influence in the creation of a particularly vibrant Live Art scene.

ACCIÓN!MAD MADRID

Given its ephemeral and intangible character, its indefinability, and the fact that it has never ascribed to a particular artistic movement, Action Art could hardly be considered as a genre apart or an independent artistic practice among the visual arts. Moreover, shaped by different rhythms to those of theatre and dance, and requiring a proactive public that has little to do with the traditional actor-spectator relationship, Action Art has yet to find its niche among the scenic arts. Since 2003 Acción!MAD has organised an annual get together, offering the Madrilenian public a broad and profound perspective of an independent and autonomous genre, governed by its very own spatiotemporal rules. All this from a vast geographical spectrum, it presents artists of all ages with particular emphasis on the works of women.

www.accionmad.org



MONIKA GÜNTHER & RUEDI SCHILL

In their joint performances Monika Günther (*1944 Germany) and Ruedi Schill (*1941 Switzerland) weave a web of close relationships that defy analysis, and that are difficult for the uninitiated viewer to unravel. Initially, the artists' movements and actions seem highly individual. Soon, however, one senses an emotional intimacy, based upon that deep bond between two artists who have been sharing their private lives and working closely together for nearly 20 years. While unpronounced and difficult to describe, this bond defines the mood of their performances. Both artists use their body as a material with which to invite viewers to participate and benefit from unusual experiences while watching seemingly meaningless, alienating movements, mysterious actions and minimal gestures. Participation, in this sense, is understood as sharing the moment in a specific situation rather than direct interaction with the artists. When it comes to documenting their work, Günther and Schill don't generally go for recording their performances on film and video, preferring the still image and the spoken and written word.

— Helen Koriath —

Acción!MAD, 2009,
photo : Isabel León.



THREE QUESTIONS TO... NIEVES CORREA

How has Acción!MAD evolved over the last 5 years in terms of its artistic programme and its reception by the public?

In 2007, Acción!MAD proposed ten performances and two conferences at the Circulo de Bellas Artes. Five years later in 2012, we presented some thirty-nine performances in all, organised two exhibitions and two workshops, one for our regular audience and the other in collaboration with the University of Madrid, a residency, and moreover published theoretical works, (numbers 3 and 4 of the revue Efimera), produced 2 DVDs, one of which was a collaboration with the *LiveArtWork Editions* project. In sum, the festival's growth has afforded us huge exposure, specifically in the various locations where the programme was played, as well as in regions beyond Madrid. We are particularly pleased with the programme being performed in public spaces—an aspect of our work that has assumed a much greater importance over the last two years in its role of going beyond the confines of conventional artistic fields.

How did the European project ASFLA help you achieve what you did, and on what level?

All that Acción!MAD has accomplished over the last five years has been largely thanks to the assistance of the ASFLA project. Leaving aside the issue of financial stability, it was essential for us to work further in those areas of research we set in motion in 2007, as we collectively conceived the project, integrating workshops, publications, and residencies along with performances in public spaces... Thereafter Acción!MAD was no longer simply a festival, but a living organism, which set out with each new festival to strengthen and integrate our projects. Moreover, the experience of working on a European level assisted us in establishing contacts within Spain with other festivals, organisations, cultural as well as other institutions—a matter of considerable importance during these times of economic crisis.

How do you envisage the future of the festival and its collaborations on a European level?

Without collaborations on a Pan-European level, Acción!MAD would no longer be a viable entity—in the way in which it currently functions at any rate—either in strictly economic terms or in the manner in which the project intrinsically develops. We require secure funding—something Spanish cultural institutions could not offer us during our nine years of existence. In parallel to this, we need the feedback from our partner projects, which have helped us to deepen the theoretical aspects of the project.

— Nieves Correa is the artistic director of Acción!MAD —



Walk the Line,
ANTI, 2009,
photo: Pekka
Mäkinen.



ANTTI LAITINEN

Antti Laitinen (born 1975) is one of the most fascinating Finnish contemporary artists. His method is strongly conceptual yet artisan-like and closely connected to nature. Laitinen's works are private journeys of ideas and concrete viewpoints about the artist's relationship with spaces and places. The public is usually only allowed to access his work after the fact, through the documentation. His works are always intimate interactions with nature and natural materials. Laitinen has, for instance, built a private island from natural stones, rowed an enormous ice cube around a lake during summertime and reconstructed a lake by building a monument from blocks of ice cut from the same lake. Antti Laitinen's *Walk the Line* was part of the ANTI Festival in Kuopio, Finland in 2009. He printed a self-portrait onto a map of the town, then followed the lines and carried a GPS device that recorded the path. The live progress of the work and the artist's journey could be followed online.

— Sari Hakala —

THREE QUESTIONS TO... JOHANNA TUUKKANEN & GREGG WHELAN

How has ANTI evolved over the last 5 years in terms of its artistic programme and its reception by the public?

ANTI's fundamental ambition has always been to present the most innovative live art works in a public space, offering challenging and rewarding experiences to audiences, who perhaps wouldn't usually encounter that kind of art. Optimally, the festival becomes a social nexus for meeting and exchange. The festival's essence, and of much of the work we present, can be summed up in a word: exchange. During the last five years we've focused on this idea, commissioning and presenting works that have had a lasting impact on the city. Working with a residency model—whereby artists live and work in Kuopio for a month in the lead-up to the festival—has contributed greatly to creating a series of impressive projects which have touched upon the lives of hundreds — new audiences, new communities and new dialogues spring up each year.

How did the European project ASFLA help to achieve what you did, and on what level?

The ASFLA project has been instrumental, not only in terms of expanding the festival's artistic vision, but also in its very survival. Its support has allowed us to raise our profile locally and nationally, while networking the festival internationally. We've collaborated with partner festivals to co-produce some truly remarkable new works, supporting Finnish artists and helping them export their work to other settings. This European project has enabled us to expand the festival, while supporting a much broader range of artists. Crucially, it's allowed us to establish an annual residency project, something ANTI always wanted to offer, both to visiting artists and to the city itself.

How do you envisage the future of the festival and its collaborations on a European level?

The last five years have taught us a lot about the importance of networking and collaborations with other like-minded festivals and organisations. Given that ANTI is a modestly sized festival, we would be a lot stronger were we to work in partnerships, especially over extended timeframes. As for the festival's artistic direction, we're about to embark on creating a special edition in 2014 featuring works specifically designed for children and a younger audience. It's an interest that has evolved over time: why programme exclusively for adults, especially given that adults and children alike co-inhabit public space. It makes more sense to create a festival that speaks directly to younger members of society. That doesn't mean adults won't find challenging and rewarding pieces, it will still feel like an ANTI Festival—it's just that the adults will have company!

— Johanna Tuukkanen and Gregg Whelan are the artistic directors of ANTI —

CITY OF WOMEN

LJUBLJANA

As a trans-disciplinary festival, City of Women has a rather experimental profile, welcoming artists who experiment with, blur or cross the boundaries of genre. While not restricting itself to Live art, it always includes this format in a programme that extends over ten days and occupies all the city's cultural sites and a number of public spaces. Based on a different theme of artistic, cultural or socio-political relevance each year, the festival is unique in that it focuses on the work of female artists.

www.cityofwomen.org

THREE QUESTIONS TO... MARA VUJIĆ

How has *City of Women* evolved over the last 5 years in terms of its artistic programme and its reception by the public?

Over that period our Live art programme—both at the festival and in the framework of accompanying activities—has focused mainly on the historical dimension. In addition to well-known artists, we also present younger ones and artistic collectives, both local and foreign. Our aim has been to embrace a variety of genres, a greater diversity of works that are politically engaged, carry a feminist or queer agenda, and marked by an experimental approach, mixed with radical aesthetics and marginal artistic practices that defy labelling. We set out to present the most in/famous and radical pieces that have rarely, if at all, been presented to Slovenian audiences. So as to place them in context, we also organized workshops, debates and round tables with artists and theoreticians. It seems we discovered a niche in the cultural map of the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, since our programme successfully catered for and reached an extremely varied and multi-generational audience, built up a loyal fan-base while generating a commendable level of media and press attention.

How did the European project ASFLA help you to achieve what you did, and on what level?

To be part of the ASFLA project was of crucial importance: It gave us the opportunity to improve both the quality and scope of our programme, to participate in more demanding projects while offering greater stability for long-term planning. We could build up a more discriminating audience, open to the experimental artistic practices included in our programme. Another important aspect is mobility: It enabled artistic collaborations and possibilities for research through its wide network of strong, professional players. This exchange of knowledge and experience, better insight into the social and cultural/political idiosyncrasies and local artistic production are but some of the key elements. This knowledge and know-how is now spreading, shared by programme selectors, experts and artists alike, while also accessible to the general public. Last but not least, collaborating in projects on a Pan-European level has had many positive effects on fund-raising efforts, both nationally and locally.

How do you envisage the future of such programmes, particularly in terms of Pan- European collaborations?

In the past few years we have presented more than 50 foreign artists. Many uncharted territories remain, on which we'd like to focus in the future. Some areas for potential developments are: more artistic works with a specific focus on a particular region; more works by local artists, presenting them in a broader European context. It is essential that we expand upon our already existing platform and create opportunities for collaborations with new dynamics, such as merging art with science, activism, new technologies and so on. There is a lot of potential for promoting exchange and travel, developing specific models of co-production and in assigning more relevance to the theoretical-educational discourse. Strengthening the network with new partners means adding a fresh impulse to our current mode of functioning, while offering a broader understanding of Live art that will certainly be reflected in the festival's future programmes.

— Mara Vujić is the artistic director of City of Women —

Performance Art
Theory and Practice,
City of Women, 2012,
photo: Nada Zgank.

SLOVENIA

ESTHER FERRER

Esther Ferrer's work affords us a reason to respect modernism despite its darker side. Subversive humour aside, in exposing absurdity Ferrer points clearly at the individual's responsibility. Freedom itself, however, remains the central inquiry of her interdisciplinary artworks and performances. Freedom to make voices, go nude, to manipulate the body and exercise objects in the best *artist-like* mode: validating the choice to make autonomous art, yet anticipating its social dimension. Her decision to explore limits by abolishing boundaries between artist and public is directly linked with her experience of being a member of performance and music group ZAJ (1967–1996) under Franco's fascistic regime in Spain. She subsequently continued to play (around) with hierarchical notions in a quite minimalistic way, simply by *speaking* and *doing*. It is not surprising that she has also been devoted to pedagogic work and writing. The very fact that she was awarded the Spanish national prize for fine arts (2008) somehow makes that institution less formidable, bearing in mind that she puts creativity before art—preferring to perform a joyful moment rather than praise a make-believe (artistic) paradise.

— Nenad Jelesijević / KITCH —



Appearance 160
“Still Life With
The Writer”,
Interakcje, 2009,
photo: Mariusz
Marchlewicz.

PRZEMYSŁAW KWIEK

Przemysław Kwiek (born in 1945 in Warsaw) graduated from the Faculty of Sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in 1970. In the years 1971–87 he cooperated with Zofia Kulik in the artistic duo KwieKulik, which ranks among the most significant artists of the Polish avant-garde of the 1970s. In 1988, Przemysław Kwiek started his solo career. Since that moment he has been cultivating the so-called Appearance, which he popularizes as a new original form of art. The shortest definition of an Appearance is as follows: “An Appearance can be a performance, but not necessarily.” According to the artist, it means stepping out of the constrictions of the defined fields of art, which creates infinite possibilities of freely combining painting, sculpture, performance, drawing, video or even poetry in one artwork. In this way, he escapes the blade of art criticism, which tends to ascribe artists' actions to well-recognized artistic phenomena. Kwiek's basic materials are current events from the world of politics and art, social issues and his private struggles with everyday problems. Kwiek meticulously picks up the news broadcast by the media and then uses and comments on it in his art. At the same time, he does not avoid blunt commentary, irony and absurd humor, behind which he conceals deep critical reflection of a man entangled in the problems of the modern world.

www.prkwiek.pl

— Paulina Kempisty —

INTERAKCJE PIOTRKOW TRYBUNALSKI

As its name ‘interactions’ suggests, the festival has over the last 15 years been at the forefront and home to Poland's most important event for presenting art-like performances, happenings, actions, conceptual projects along with that most daring of art disciplines, widely referred to as ‘Live art’. Interakcje not only programmes works by those already well established and recognized on the contemporary art scene but also emphasises newer art forms that embrace that which can not be clearly defined or categorised. Alongside the so-called classic veterans, who launched their careers in the sixties and seventies, Interakcje also provide a platform for younger artists as yet unknown to a wider audience. The festival's diversified program addresses a multi-generational and truly diverse public, advocating active participation in culture, and an increasing role for artistic creation in social communications.

www.interakcje.org

POLAND

THREE QUESTIONS TO... STANISLAW PIOTR GAJDA & GORDIAN PIEC

What has been the evolution of *Interakcje* in the last 5 years, in terms of artistic programme, but also in terms of reception by the audiences?

The *Interakcje* Festival programme benefits greatly from the fact of having curators who ensure it presents a coherent view. This approach enables us, along with our public, to come in contact with more than just individual artistic criteria, but rather to learn about current trends, regional variations, the influence of various cultures and other historical contexts. Our participation in the ASFLA project has led us to become increasingly aware of the diverse approaches to Live Art, offering the possibility to position the somewhat secluded Performance Art within the wider framework of the performing arts. Cooperating with partners who organise large international projects has had a direct and beneficial influence on our scheduling and programme. With the inclusion of artists not exclusively visually based but also drawn from theatre and dance circles, we have been able to attract a broader selection of the general public to the Festival.

How much did the European project ASFLA help you to achieve what you did, and on what levels? Taking part in this project has allowed us to gain a modicum of financial stability, something difficult to achieve for a small organisation such as we are. The Festival also receives financial support from local and national sources, from the city of Piotrków Trybunalski and the Polish Ministry of Culture and Natural Heritage, for instance. One might be tempted to think that obtaining European funding would make it easier to secure subsidies on a national level. Unfortunately, it does not translate directly into increased funding or even the certainty of receiving any at all. It is like a yearly lottery. Nevertheless, *Interakcje* is billed as one of Poland's major cultural events, as listed by the Ministry.

How do you envisage the future of such programmes, particularly in terms of Pan European collaborations?

The 15th anniversary of the *Interakcje* Festival happens to fall at an important moment in the short history of the Performance Art genre. While its founding artists are gradually passing away, younger circles, partly formed on the models established by their predecessors, are now taking their place. This year's festival conference sets out to provoke a debate about the forms of transfer and models in Performance Art, while also reflecting on the need for art festivals and how they should be organised. How to present Live Art and Performance Art? Are art galleries the appropriate places to do so? And what form should international collaborations between artists, organisers, and those institutions dealing with Live Art assume?

— Stanislaw Piotr Gajda and Gordian Piec are the organisers and curators of *Interakcje* —

BELGIUM

LES HALLES / TROUBLE BRUSSELS

The European Cultural Centre of the Wallonia-Brussels Federation, has occupied the site of a covered market in Brussels since the 1970s. While firmly anchored in its surrounding, it is also open to the wider world through its participation in a broad range of networks. From the outset les Halles has acted like a magnetic attraction for the theatre, dance, music and circus worlds. Since 2004, particular emphasis has been placed upon Live art, notably with its *Trouble* festival, which has explored the most diverse aspects of the genre, embracing works from all parts of the world, from differing aesthetical sensibilities and ‘professional-disciplines’ yet revamped by forceful dramaturgies which allow for interpretations that render meaning to the gathering of such a wide variety of performances.

www.halles.be

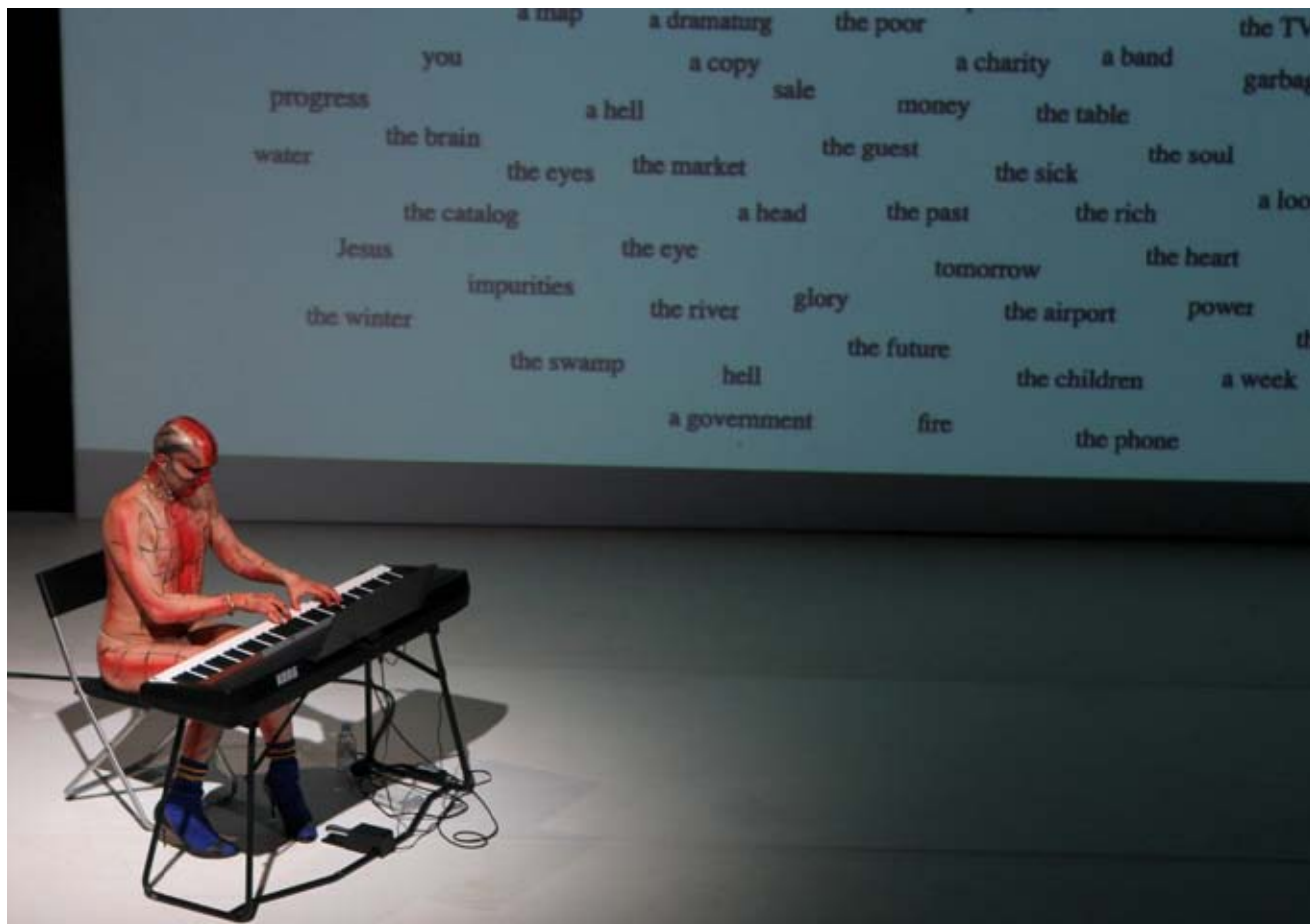
IVO DIMCHEV

Ivo Dimchev is a choreographer and a performance artist originally from Bulgaria. His shows belong to the borderline realms of theatre, performance, contemporary dance and physical installation. He is the recipient of numerous international prizes in dance and theatre with pieces, presented all over North America and Europe. Ivo has won his greatest popularity with the show *Lili Handel — blood, poetry and music from the white whore's boudoir* (2005) which has been performed over 500 times. His stylistics puts emphasis on the performativity—the physical and the material fact of the show—rather than on its referential function of revealing a fictional world. The artist is making a skillful use of the various performance instruments—voice, movement, plasticity, speech, as none of them dominate his aesthetic. All those components complement each other and contribute to the richness of Dimchev's stage presence. His performances, marked by intensive emotionality and multiplicity of techniques, always inhabit the broad spectrum between painfulness and irony, autobiography and fiction, beauty and ugliness, the real and the surreal, the organic and the precise *techné*. A gifted, restless and ambivalent body that produces an overwhelming impact with every gesture and character.

ivodimchev.com

— Mira Todorova —

The P-Project, Trouble, 2012,
photo: Nicolaos Zafiriu.



THREE QUESTIONS TO... EMMANUELLE NIZOU

How has *Trouble* European Performance Festival evolved over the last 5 years in terms of its artistic programme and its reception by the public?

The festival has become an eagerly awaited annual spring event. A programmatic window open to all formats, be they a one-off event or something more permanent, presenting the entire gamut from intimate to spectacular, embracing all genres from happenings to works-in-progress. The festival's approach remodels itself each year, touching upon different fields so as to question our social issues. Nurturing an on-going dialogue between well-established figures and relatively unknown artists, the festival has also been instrumental in improving the level of the local scene and helping its visibility. Over time, it has won the loyal following of its public, and encouraged the curious to come to terms with those forms of performance. By means of a twin pronged strategy, namely demystification and openness, it provides theoretical and critical clues as to how to understand, while continuously leaning towards those acts with more experimental tendencies. After many years, the behaviour of the public has evolved from that of the passive to that of the interactive spectator, ever in search of experience and encounter. It has ultimately turned into a festive and unifying moment.

How did the European project ASFLA help you to achieve what you did, and on what level?

ASFLA has contributed to the expansion of live art in Brussels in the institutions, through the establishment of a network of partnerships throughout the city. Live art is now ingrained in the fabric, well integrated into what the city has to offer in cultural terms. Besides, the introduction of performance art courses at the city's art schools has boosted the regeneration of the practices involved. In affording students an opportunity to face up to the professional reality, ASFLA has championed the flourishing of the local live art scene, a first step towards its institutional recognition. And the ASFLA project has enabled the scene to assert itself as a gathering place, on a district, city and continental level. Thanks to it financially supporting artists travelling costs, ASFLA has played a significant role in facilitating the momentum behind the movements of people, the transfer of ideas and artistic vocabularies, while marking out its course in more enduring mechanisms.

How do you envisage the future of such programmes, particularly in terms of Pan-European collaborations?

From now on it is up to the professionals to strengthen the work of co-operation within the European networks, and perhaps to establish future collaborations on the basis of our differences, by confronting and using them as exchange tools for the spread of know-how. And then to work for the establishment of a common space that could reinvent the artistic models, not merely for the gratuitous pleasure of transgressing them, but so as to dream of a sense of Europeanness beyond national and regional divisions.

— Emmanuelle Nizou works at Les halles,
where she is the artistic coordinator of *A Space for Live Art* —

GILLES PASTOR

Actor, author and stage director, Gilles Pastor established the *Kastôr Agile Company* in 2002 in Lyon, after a ten-year stretch with the creative collective *les Trois-Huit*. Though the complexity of Pastor's work stems from its autobiographical elements, his theatrical output at the crossroads of genres cannot be simply assigned to personal history. Awarded the *hors les Murs* in Salvador de Bahia in Brazil in 2007, he relentlessly unearths tales of life and death, of the living and of spirits, of love, disenchantment and solitude so as to extract intimate fragments. With unwavering enthusiasm, he guides us through these harrowing tales. In whatever he writes, directs or acts in, he has the art of exploring our sorrows, of revealing them for what they are, of allowing them to cut a track through the night. And therein wavers, like an absence, a certain truth about others and ourselves, at once unsettling and haunting us for a long time to come.

www.kastoragile.com

— Sylvia Botella —

FRANCE

LES SUBSTANCES LYON

This international laboratory for artistic endeavour is devoted to new mediums in the performing arts (dance, theatre, circus, music et al). Substances offers a trans-disciplinary workshop space for creation, work, experimentation and dialogue with the public. With innovative festival programmes such as *Mode d'emploi*, *Aire de jeu*, or *Week-End Ça chante*, it has come up novel artistic projects, reinventing them continuously. Working in tandem with its artists is a means to respond to a world in constant state of flux. It also partakes in several national and international networks, notably *A Space for Live Art*. Encompassing several different projects, its performance programme runs throughout the season, invariably involving other forms of stagecraft.

www.les-subs.com



Lily, coq à bôches,
Trouble, 2011,
photo: Nicolaos Zafiriu.

THREE QUESTIONS TO... CATHY BOUVARD

How has *Substances* evolved over the last 5 years in terms of its artistic programme and its reception by the public?

One of the effects that ASFLA has had upon *Substances* is that it has rendered our performances at once absorbing and transparent. Performance pieces, as such, did form part of our programming ever before we created the network, even though we didn't see them in such terms. Once identifiable and clearly designated, they attracted a more distinct audience rooted in other disciplines. Whereas we used to programme performances by artists largely drawn from the dance and theatre worlds, ASFLA enables us to pose questions concerning performance in its own right. We were thus given the means to elaborate upon the notions we entertained of Performance art and to convey them to the public.

How did the European project ASFLA help you to achieve what you did, and on what level?

One of the objectives of ASFLA was to open ourselves up to European artistic entities, far removed from those we were familiar with. This network facilitated extremely productive exchanges, underlining our similarities in as much as our differences. Each structure naturally has its own particular history, roots and mode of production, which, in turn, made us question the common ground for our actions: That of wanting to defend those artists surviving on the margins of those institutions producing performances, who through their works attempts to engage in a public debate concerning political, financial and moral rationales. Thanks to the wider network we were not only able to expand our vision but also the choice of artists whom we programmed.

How do you envisage the future of such programmes, particularly in terms of Pan European collaborations?

We will continue to programme and to commission performances. And thanks to the contacts we have established through the network, we will pursue this path of exchange with those artists and programmers who have become close collaborators in our working circuit.

— Cathy Bouvard is the Deputy Director of Les Substances —

GERMANY

KAMPNAGEL LIVE ART FESTIVAL HAMBURG

Kampnagel in Hamburg is Germany's largest production and performance facility for national and international freelance artists. It presents a broad spectrum of aesthetical standpoints and groundbreaking tendencies not only in theatre, dance and performance, but also in music, the fine arts and architecture. Since 2009, Kampnagel has hosted a new feature dedicated to Live Art, which each year focuses on a different aspect: the Collective, Body Art, the way we produce reality, and so forth. Some pieces—such as those by artists-in-residence—are developed in-situ, while others might be produced in collaboration with a creatively oriented school. Independently produced works ensure the programme also extends throughout the season.

www.kampnagel.de

THREE QUESTIONS TO... NADINE JESSEN & MELANIE ZIMMERMANN

How has *Panorama* and the *Live Art Festival* evolved over the last 5 years in terms of its artistic programme and its reception by the public?

The *Live Art Festival* has gained a broader acceptance than that of performance art. Before the festival got under way the audience imagined something vague and too complex where performers might be naked or do weird things onstage. We have achieved a greater acceptance by our audiences in Hamburg through presenting a mix of accessible and special art works at the same time. As Kampnagel is home to Europe's largest production and performance facility, it was not always easy to find productions that would fit into the space! Focusing on special themes and questions, every year we create new approaches to the performing arts.

How much did the European project ASFLA help you to achieve what you did, and on what levels?

Kampnagel remains one of the most reputable venues for the performing arts. However, it would have not been possible to focus and to provide such visibility to the performance and live arts without the European network ASFLA. Furthermore, the continual contact with our partners in the project helped us find performances we would not have sought out, thus enabling vibrant exchanges about the development of the arts.

How do you envisage the future of such programmes, particularly in terms of Pan European collaborations?

We think that this network will definitely be of vital importance and helpful in the future! With the current economic situation, the network ensures that partners remain in contact and interact in the best interests of the development of the art form. Curators and artists alike travel and observe performances in different cities. That is an essential element of the artistic process. Video, documentation and so on could never replace the experience of live art and face-to-face encounters with the various players. In that sense, the network is an essential tool for our work.

— Nadine Jessen and Melanie Zimmermann are the curators and dramaturges of the Live Art Festival in Kampnagel —

Messer-Mord,
Kampnagel,
2012, photo:
Edward Chapon.



GOD'S ENTERTAINMENT

In action since 2005, God's Entertainment [GE] is a Vienna based performance collective that explores performance, happenings, visual art and activism, while focusing on the confrontation between art and everyday life. In an attempt to develop new forms of communication in the performing arts, their work tackles on-going political and socio-cultural debates, particularly those dealing with Austrian and European history and cultural identity. True to the slogan: *Don't worry, this isn't theatre!* and the concept of using art as camouflage, their performances are characterised by intense interaction with the audience and an outstanding juggling of elements derived from pop culture, trash, party and DIY aesthetics. Whether setting up a Fight Club, creating a Bollywood musical, erecting an integration camp for Austrians in downtown Vienna or promoting radical ideologies at the city's largest food market, GE's work is invariably edgy, inevitably confronting, highly entertaining and certainly never boring.

www.gods-entertainment.org

— Johannes Maile —

CROATIA

DOMINO ZAGREB

Domino produces the *Perforacije* festival and the Queer Zagreb activities. *Perforacije* takes place annually in three Croatian cities, and presents a range of Balkans artists working in performance art, theatre, and dance, whose differing approaches to art-making blur the borders between the various genres. Queer Zagreb's activities embrace a whole spectrum of events and initiatives that jointly aim at empowering Croatia's LGBTIQ community.

www.perforacije.org — www.queerzagreb.org

NEW TERRITORIES GLASGOW

New Territories, formerly Scotland's International Festival of Live Art, represented an annual barometer of artistic endeavour and experimentation. For years it encompassed the National Review of Live Art (NRLA), Britain's oldest festival of live art with five days of intense activity opening a wide window on sometimes contradictory propositions. The programme was extended via a series of workshops, and stand-alone productions of performances with broader appeal. After twenty editions of the NRLA, a new concept was elaborated, namely TIPA—This Is Performance Art—which concentrated on “raw” radical forms of performance art, with its 2011 edition focusing on European artists. Subsequent editions unfortunately never took place, for the Company had to disband in 2012.

TWO QUESTIONS TO... NIKKI MILLICAN

How did New Territories evolve between 2009 and 2011?

The period was an extremely interesting moment in the evolution of the National Review of Live Art, as it reached its thirtieth anniversary in 2010, a big occasion for the festival and its growing community, after which time it was brought under the New Territories umbrella. But the festival continued to champion live art and began by exploring its peculiar and multifaceted history across different parts of the world, starting with Europe. The festival contributed the biggest programme to the ASFLA project and has proved over the years that there is a real interest in live art practice. To this day I would say we invited many European artists whose work would not otherwise have been seen in the UK, and I do not see other festivals taking up that mantle, it possessed a particular vision. The audience had grown so much over the years that in order to meet demand it was deemed necessary to move from its Arches home to Tramway. The venue allowed for more site-specific work as well as commissioned residencies; the ambition grew exponentially, as did the audience. We were back to the Arches in the last couple of years, space(s) more congenial to the work and the artists, because the attitude was more sympathetic to the work. The audience came with us wherever we laid our hat, trusting the programme would be as joyously fulfilling whilst challenging and unexpected as it always had been.

How much did ASFLA help you to achieve what you did then, and on what levels? ASFLA allowed the furtherance of its ambition for what was the UK's longest running, biggest festival of live art to grow, not so much in terms of its size but in ideas and quality: allowing more time and space for artists to flourish in the form of residencies and commissioning programmes; growing the International Winter School programmes that promoted professional development and research. It also allowed for the continuous documentation of the work that is now housed at the University of Bristol for future research purposes and the enhancement of critical dialogue.

— Nikki Millican, former director of New Territories, is currently an independent producer and curator —

A QUESTION FOR... ZVONIMIR DOBROVIĆ

How do you envisage the future of Domino's programme and the extent of its Pan-European collaborations in terms of live/performance art?

Domino is dedicated through its artistic programmes to continue to commission, co-produce and present a wide range of artists from the Balkans and Eastern Europe. One of our developing strategies is to facilitate international cooperation between artists in the sphere of performance/live art. With this in mind, we started a research and development residency program in Croatia for multi-disciplinary artists, as well as for curators. These partnerships with fellow organizations throughout the ASFLA network constitute a substantial part of our future ability to provide easier exchanges and development opportunities for artists. One of the platforms we have been developing is a site-specific project *Night of Performances*, where we invite six to eight artists to create new site-specific work/s, presented beside each other during one evening / night. This format has toured quite successfully, given it involves participation by local artists, attracts large audiences and has proved to be a challenge that artists appreciate.

— Zvonimir Dobrović is the director of Domino —

SCOTLAND

BLACK MARKET INTERNATIONAL

If Black Market International (BMI) had a motto, it might well be 'Expect the Unexpected!'—and that would hold as true for the artists who are members of BMI as for the audiences who have been surprised, beguiled and stimulated by their work. Since 1985, a handful of remarkably disparate artists—from all quarters of the globe, and from a variety of creative disciplines—have come together in durational performances where sparks fly, often literally. Each one brings objects, or works-in-progress, to the space. As time passes, that space becomes a melting pot of new initiatives as individuals draw inspiration—and frequently 'hi-jack' actual bits of material—from other people's work in a process that is spontaneous, ephemeral. And, in its own way, a microcosm of a society where give and take evolves into a fabric of unforeseen possibilities, alive with fresh ways of looking at, and using, such everyday objects as shoes, clothes, books, balloons and stones. And even if tensions occasionally simmer in the moment, the need to stay curious and playful is understood and embraced by every participant. Afterwards, you look around with widened eyes: unexpectedly realizing that performance art is the stuff of daily life and vice versa.

blackmarketinternational.blogspot.be

— Mary Brennan —

New Territories, 2008, photo: Naranja.



YEP! YOUNG EUROPEAN PERFORMERS

Act(ing),
Perforacije, 2009,
photo: Domino/
Darko Vaupotić.

PETRA KOVAČIĆ

Petra Kovačić, 30, lives and works in Split, Croatia. She graduated in Fine Arts in 2008. In addition to her visual arts education, she has participated in workshops on sculpture, theater, dance and movement. Interested by the act of artistic creation, Kovačić approaches the audience as participants in the process and immerses them in her own questionings. Her piece *Act(ing)*, 2009, is emblematic of this process. She sews a gallery door, while the audience is inside watching. To get out, people have to cut through the threads the artist used to enclose them. An immersive performance-installation, *Act(ing)* questions both the role of the artist in today's world and the ephemerality of creation while putting an accent on the places the audiences are given and give themselves.

— André von Ah —



Ota minut syliin, ANTI, 2012,
photo: Pekka Mäkinen.



MARIA KÄRKKÄINEN

Maria Kärkkäinen (born 1980) is a Kuopio-based photographer whose themes have focused on the sense of community and encounters. Interaction and closeness between people and the processing of these elements are subjects close to Kärkkäinen's heart. Her family and their everyday environment have been the subjects of many of her works. *Ota minut syliin* (Take me into your arms) is a series of photographs that originally featured older people as the subjects: the artist asked various people if she could sit on their laps and recorded these encounters. At the 2012 ANTI festival, Kärkkäinen applied the themes of *Ota minut syliin* to a live art happening for children. The meeting between the artist and children took place on wire ropes, simulating free flying. The performance could be viewed online.

— Sari Hakala —

BRANKO MILISKOVIĆ

Branko Milisković studied sculpture; there is a distinctly sculptural approach in the way he constructs his performative personas: it is a meticulous process of character building, of finding the ideal proportions between what might be considered real and transposed identity or gender. He creates ambiguous and androgynous characters in whose appearance we can trace echoes of cabaret as well as of the performance art of the late 70s and early 80s. Ever since Duchamp's alter-ego Rose Sélavy, the notion of transvestism and androgynousness has been questioned by artists such as Ulay, Urs Lüthi, Michel Journiac and subsequently by Yasumasa Morimura and Cindy Sherman, who gave it yet another layer of meaning, shifting the frame of reference from gender towards the history of art and media culture. In Branko Milisković's work this approach underpins a personal history and traces of his own traumatic background of a young person raised under wartime conditions in former Yugoslavia. Consequently, the question of identity and cultural conflict emerges, though it never overshadows the fascinating performative aspect of his work.

brankomiliskovic.wordpress.com

— Dobrila Denegri —



The Absolute, Trouble, 2011,
photo: Nemanja Ladić.



Interakcje, 2012,
photo: Mariusz
Marchlewicz.

JULIA KUREK

Julia Kurek (born in 1984 in Szczecin) graduated summa cum laude from the Academy of Fine Arts in Gdansk, specializing in Intermedia. She obtained a Ph.D. in the same field at the Kraków Academy of Fine Arts. She lives in Gdansk, where she works as a lecturer at the Polish-Japanese Institute of Information Technology. She creates videos, performances and paintings. She has received several awards in Poland and she participates in exhibitions and festivals all over Europe. In 2012, she was invited to take part in Moscow International Biennale For Young Art as one of four artists from Poland. Julia Kurek often chooses public space as the setting for her performances. Usually, these are busy streets or squares in the city centre, where she can interact with casual onlookers. In her activities she refers to the socio-historical context of a given place. By invoking autobiographical motifs and her own status as a woman, an artist or a daughter, she examines the clichés and the social hierarchy which is in force at a given place and time.

juliakurek.blogspot.com

— Paulina Kempisty —

YEP! YOUNG EUROPEAN PERFORMERS

GAËTAN RUSQUET

Born in 1984, Gaëtan Rusquet initially trained at ENSAAMA in Paris, and thereafter at La Cambre in Brussels. He enhanced his training under Gwendoline Robin, Christian Rizzo, Rebecca French and Andrew Mottershead. Since 2009, either in solo projects or in collaboration with others, this performer, visual artist, dancer and stage designer in so many disciplines and arenas has set forth troubling objects and stage designs, categorised by a sense of risk and unique choice of subject matter. Regardless of whether embellished with balloons, plants, pools of paints or sheer flights of fancy, whether short or permanent, his performances and installations surface in a semi-darkness from where light emanates, playing with its limits, pushing the body itself to retrieve energy's poetic violence and mark its passage.

gaetanrusquet.zic.fr

— Sylvia Botella —



Va-et-vient,
Acción!MAD,
2010, photo:
Mathias Nouel.

Girl Monster #18,
Kampnagel Live Art Festival, 2012.
Photo: Conny Winter.



GIRL MONSTER

Chicks on Speed, the electro-art-punk combo, have hit the stage. Mingling music, performance, film and theatre, the influence of the feminist avant-garde pervades their current pop production. No, this is not an evening at the theatre. Is this a series of events? A workshop, maybe? What Chicks on Speed present with *Girl Monster* is a hybrid of all of the above, and yet it defies categorisation. While deviating from the norm, they unite that which doesn't belong together—and in the process put together an outrageous evening, in the best sense of the word. A Hydra-like creature with nine heads, *Girl Monster* first surfaced seven years ago: With the release at that time of their CD anthology, a fresh chapter in feminist music history began. Icons of the post-punk era such as the Slits thrust their necks out alongside other contemporary acts. One of those who pricked up her ears was the dramaturge Nadine Jessen, with the result that *Girl Monster* sprung to life onstage in 2008. From feminist to avant-garde, this outrageously good evening embraces everything from video to performance.

— Chris Köver —

Plea on a Sofa,
City of Women, 2012,
photo: Nada Zgank.



LEJA JURIŠIĆ & TEJA REBA

In 2009 Slovene performers Jurišić and Reba irreversibly (re-)defined paths of their individual artistic careers when they joined forces in a collaborative piece entitled *Between Us* and staged an idiosyncratic performative twist in the final scene, which turned into a performance *Plea on a Sofa*, dedicated to the imprisoned members of the punk group Pussy Riot. By performing a series of dialogue-duels, which they re-appropriate for every re-run by adding various (up-to-date) local references, combined with eruptions of spontaneous and forced laughter, they generate an atmosphere of particular intimacy and appropriation of the term 'public space', whereby sitting on a sofa in fur coats, with their legs crossed and wearing red lipstick, they address each other as well as themselves by simply calling out a series of names. In the moment when the space between them begins to communicate with the viewer, it also astutely slips into a 'black hole' of the LOL generation, Facebook communication, anti-intellectual rejection and neoliberal erosion as "*a spectre haunting Europe...*"

— Andreja Kopa —

S'avale, Les Substances,
Imaginez maintenant, 2010,
photo: Romain Etienne.



THIBAUD LE MAGUER

Thibaud Le Maguer revels at the thought of a *rendezvous*: "One never knows where or how it all will end up" And, his career is a case in point. A classically trained dancer, his first steps were at the side of Mathilde Monnier (exe.r.ce) and thereafter with Brice Leroux, Lluís Ayet, Marc Vincent and Jonathan Schatz, before appearing in *Transforme* at Royaumont. Since 2006 he has traced out his own path, namely that of a performer who prefers interchanges between the various artistic fields. On the boundary between performance and choreography, his gestural language is marked by the instantaneous quality of the performers' movements. Offering a wellspring for the imagination, his creations, whether solo or duo, (*Pellis*, *Champs*, *Multiplex*, followed by *S'avale* and *Unum*) invite spectators to trigger their individual perceptions, faced with bodies in transformation.

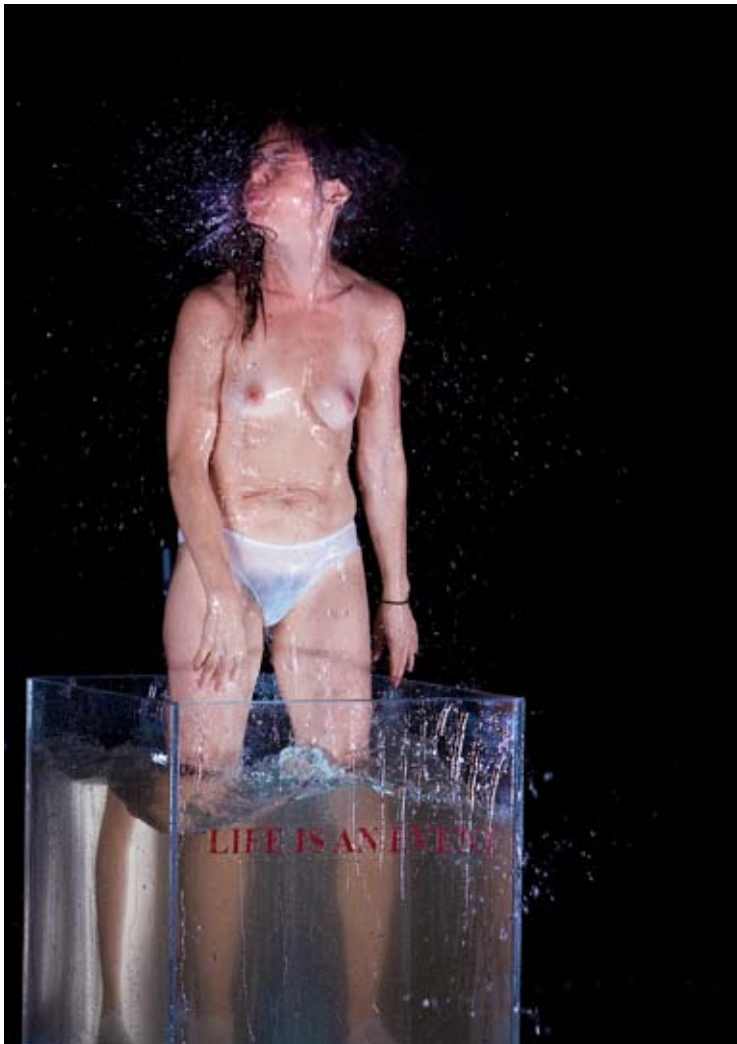
thibaud-le-maguer.over-blog.com

— Pascal Cebulski —

A TRIP OUT OF TOWN: REFLECTIONS, LIVE ART, PUBLIC SPACE

— Pauline de La Boulaye —

Alejandra Herrera Silva,
Domestic Labor, ANTI, 2012,
photo: Pekka Mäkinen.



What exactly are we suffering from? I wish to speak of that sadness that plagues Europe and the western World. Some envision the worst, others long to go elsewhere. I am in Finland, a land of sleepy lakes and climatic extremes.

Yesterday in Kuopio a woman cried aloud: “Life is an event” while pouring wine and milk over herself. She spills, she gathers, she runs naked, she wears a wedding gown she sowed herself, she dives into an aquarium and then into a public fountain, she bites off the head of a fish with her teeth, she wipes and tidies up, as if transplanting all this domestic agitation into a public park. It rains and the icy air makes us shiver. For two hours visitors to the park silently witness these interminable comings and goings: routine torturing us in its worst way. The woman regularly chooses another woman from among the public. The ritual is invariably similar: Writing one’s own crisis on a glass full of wine. Breaking the glass. Removing the debris. The shivering woman transforms into a servant, child, woman and water nymph. At once vulnerable and fascinating, she incorporates all women.

Alejandra Herrera places herself in a perilous situation. It is her cry, there, somewhere aloft in north-eastern Europe, where there is (a) space for extreme postures that lay bare the limits of our relations with the world around us. That space is none other than—and home to—Kuopio’s ANTI Contemporary Art Festival. She had to leave her children behind her on the far shores of the Atlantic, in the United States, in Los Angeles where she decided to settle after quitting her native Chile. She made the trip from Los Angeles to Kuopio, from one side of the Atlantic to the other, because it was essential for her to make her performance happen. Her white tee shirt bore the red lettering of “Fighting for my soul.” Alejandra condensed into two hours this absolute necessity for herself and the western world.

It seemed that everything in that month of September 2012 was escalating out of control: the overgrown cities and loss of contact with nature, the shattering of economic empires alongside the breakdown of the dream of democracy, the overblown cultural idols and the increasing scarcity of an uncalculated gest.

One has access to everything, everywhere. And, one can be seen everywhere. The Internet modifies our perception of the world. On a universal level, a sort of second skin akin to a virtual membrane linking that which physically outperforms the human body. At times this human body of ours, with its cycles and its limits, seems to dwindle faced with the intensity of this cyberworld.

In this vast, asymmetrical context where everything seemed out of kilter, in 2012, in Kuopio, in the ANTI-chamber of a world to come, I had the impression that humankind was attempting to reinvent itself. Here, the performances called into question the notions of public space, sexual categories and the im/ balance between nature and culture, basically the three fundamental cornerstones of human organisation on the planet. Might the 2012 ANTI Festival be a form of litmus test for the world of the 21st century? Like its ten previous chapters, events at the 2012 ANTI were spread throughout the city: In banks, parks, shops, walls and so on. But this time, it also incorporated an island devoid of any vestiges of civilisation, overrun by all-powerful woods and lakes. While there

was no electric power, a sauna, an open-fire and tents were at everybody’s disposition. This was the culmination of *Up to Nature*, an itinerant European project for six performances.

Five times daily a boat linked Kuopio to the island of Karho. I could see on either bank, from the lake’s sleepy waters, performances contrasting to and corresponding with Finland’s climates, light, nights and days. On this rugged island, nature, in all its everlasting devastation, belittles any notion of creative work, of culture and civilisation. In Kuopio, just as in cities elsewhere, soil, water and vegetation have been relegated to their outer, or subterranean zones even their parklands. Yet we can sense the possibility of a balance between nature and culture while we float along in this boat. During the 45-minute voyage, everything curiously seems to fall into place.

At the city’s waterfront, we find ourselves in Finland’s ninth largest city Kuopio, home to 105,000 inhabitants. The city is built on a grid network, with perpendicular streets like in Manhattan. A municipality like many others, with its public places (institutions, museums, universities); its public spaces (streets, parks, public thoroughfares and intersections of all sorts), its public domains (woods, lakes, and countryside) and not forgetting its public sphere (trans-media/ virtual space and the collective unconscious).

The festival’s delegates invited three American artists to participate: Alejandra Herrera and Heather Cassils from Los Angeles, and Kris Grey from New York. All three called into question the notion of sexual identity. An identity attributed to each of us at birth, and which determines our future social behaviour. The majority of societies in the world accept the existence of two distinct social and highly codified categories: man and woman. Manifest in public space, these codes are cultural by nature.

I watched these artists push their bodies and minds well beyond their limits in a manner few European artists would dare. At ANTI, the artists’ and their public’s sense of responsibility engender a strong mutual engagement I rarely witnessed elsewhere.

Heather Cassils, for instance. Her facial features reveal the perfection of a Greek statue. She has sculpted a body through bodybuilding. A muscular, sinuous, masculine physique. ‘A woman with the body of a man’ reads the title of a magazine cover she conjures up. Her ambiguous appearance engenders confusion whenever I come across her on the street, in a café, or talk with her. She made a mould of her torso so as to create a bust made of ice, at once fragile and powerful. For over four hours, she held herself erect, naked against that block of ice in the provincial government’s offices in Kuopio. Coming into contact with her body, the ice melts gently, provoking melodious droplets and birdsong that evoke a divine world. As her breasts and skin come in contact with the ice, they suffer unbearable frostbite. With scant regard for her surroundings she holds herself erect, framed in by the portraits of various notables of both sexes of earlier centuries. Her Plexiglas rostrum fills with water. In the silence, we radiate an encouraging warmth.

“My body is the most honest place I can speak from”. This is the reason Heather chose to get to know her body’s minutest detail, regulating the elements, the quantity of testosterone, hardly grateful for having to inject alien substances such as steroids into her body. She controls her

image just as it were an extension of herself. She is the creator of a double vision: of body and image, of man and woman. Similar to one of her inspirers, the Greek god Tiresias, who was transformed into a woman before becoming once again a man. Similarly, a double, Kris Grey, alias Justin Credible, is a woman turned man, s/he has occupied a shop with sexual accessories, a club and the market in Kuopio’s large square.

Another world exists on the city’s further shores, on the islands. Boats rarely dock at Karho Island. Its 53 hectares of natural reserve are protected from the outside world. Such public property is rarely put to use by festivals. It doesn’t lend itself easily for cultural events, given the lack of electricity, maddening insects, and no Internet connection. And yet, we can connect ourselves with something else. The performances held on the island put us directly in touch with something animal, ritualistic, wild, denatured. We lose all sense of culture, of the notion of art, of commentary. The body takes on its full meaning. A rapid excursion without discussion.

On a path, Nic Green (UK) waits for a group to lead them to a spot that she alone seems to know. She placed some clumps of wood there for seating. She offers everyone a glass of some extract or other to share. She awakens our senses so as to tell us a story. From the top of her tree, Johanna Kirsch from Austria shared her ideas on freedom. Close by, Antti Laitinen from Finland cuts up a tree, which will take him two days to reassemble. At the close of day, Fiksda/Langgard/Becker, a Norwegian group of dancers and musicians, guide us through a trip inspired by voodoo rites. Elsewhere on the island, French Mottershead (UK) provides instruction in fishing, weaving and scouting. The German Martin Nachbar offers an animal dance to the backdrop of a music of bells and cymbals attached to a tautened cord hung between two trees: he froths at the mouth, he puffs, he breaks free, he attaches tails, plumes, paws and carapaces to his body.

On Karho, we are as close as we can get to the process of creating a performance. Urban decorum and cultural codes disappear to give way to a direct and natural contact with the creative act. The performances, however, appear to lose their critical stance towards our social and cultural codes. The time has come to make our way back to the boat. The outing on the lake has the effect of a charming interlude. Might it be a first aid station to help us eradicate that bad western habit of diametrically opposing nature to culture? It is exactly at this place, this third location, that the American couple Annie Sprinke and Beth Stephens chose for the closing performance of the festival: their wedding in blue with lake Kallavesi on the boat *Queen R*, with the active participation of the festival-goers. These two Americans are in love with each other and our planet. This is their eighth marriage with the earth. Each year, the ceremony is celebrated using a different colour. With much humour, they merge life and art, culture and nature in the fresh praxis of their invention: Eco-sexology. In order to prepare us for the ceremony, they organise eco-sensual excursions to the city’s way-out spaces. Ever exploring the outer limits of public domains, the 2012 ANTI Festival organised a weekend of activities for children, on the mountain that overlooks Kuopio. Dina Roncevic from Croatia, with the help of a group of adolescents in working outfits, stripped down a car, that quintessentially mythical object of industrial societies. This infatuation with the open-air out-of-town is by no means a particularly Finnish trait. Sub-urban lots

abandoned since the 80s are being currently re-appropriated by western artists. The countryside, the deserts, uninhabited islands have come to represent a sort of anti-cultural Wild West, beyond the western world. Performance art, however, requires an urban setting; otherwise it loses its critical influence. So why put ourselves at such a distance? Possibilities to express oneself freely in urban centres have been considerably curtailed. It is becoming increasingly difficult to avoid the manipulative systems in place, which would have us believe that the street remains a forum for freedom of expression, whether in artistic terms or as a place to voice one’s opposition.

From the 1980s European cities set about using a multitude of locations for art and culture. Good intentions were never lacking, but the end effect has been to distance artists from the street and public places, as though shunting them towards spaces with invisible walls.

WE HAVE BECOME PHANTOMS HAUNTING PUBLIC SPACE.

The plaza, for instance, in front of the Centre Pompidou in Paris, attracted a motley collection: street artists, travelling minstrels, mime-and impromptu artists, Dadaists, members of the Fluxus movement and so on. Those, in fact, who set the whole performance art idea in motion. Those rebellious spirits of May 68 in Paris, who longed to abolish the walls that separated life and art, the walls of theatres and museums, to take art to the streets and to let the imagination take grip of power. It was for these very people that Pompidou created that ultra-modern vessel. If the Centre itself only occupies half of the lot its sits on, it was so as to leave room for an open-air stage. All kinds of performances are authorised there. The police don’t intervene. This islet of liberty didn’t, however, survive any length of time, and the plaza’s current emptiness cries out. Nowadays where can we see performances in public designated spaces? Primarily at festivals. But all public performances in the street are contingent upon obtaining permission from local authorities. All these communication and security personnel work against spontaneity and the freedom of the artist.

Another phenomenon that has curtailed the freedom of expression in public spaces is the lack of transparency concerning what is considered private and public. Pedestrian zones, commercial centres and sometimes even public transport are nowadays administered by the private sector. Different laws apply to these jurisdictions.

And finally, in order to avoid the nuisance factor linked to direct contact with an otherwise largely receptive public, performance is increasingly sectorised and relegated indoors, to the interior of public space. With certain indicators, such as a mark on the ground, or the presence of a video camera, one can identify the performance as ‘artistic’, in others words, to label it as such. Otherwise it might simply be regarded as an act of pure folly, be seen as posing a menace or a personal attack. Passers-by no longer hesitate about taking the matter to the courts. Despite the calibre of the Kuopio

Festival’s programmation, contact with the local population remains negligible. Most spectators have travelled from outside to attend events. This is symptomatic of the persistent chasm between art and society, between social spaces and cultural arenas. Where is life, and its creative potential, in our 21st century urban centres? Everybody seems so keen on creating life, of ‘social’ links, as they say. It as though we have become phantoms haunting public space. The artists at ANTI work body and soul to wake us from this nightmare. A bystander curious to experience things directly rather than consume them might comment. ‘Pinch me or I’m imagining things.’ Where are the spaces for such experiences? At the festival conference, Pier Luigi Sacco, director of Sienna’s European capital of culture in 2019 underlined the urgency “to rediscover public space”. Joanna Zylinska from Great Britain substantiate his comments. Bio Art practitioners, like artists in general, manipulate life, the concept of being alive. How the audience responds is ultimately their responsibility. Artists seem to be crying out in the wilderness: “Is there anyone out there to respond?” Are those who make the trip to Kuopio responsible folk or just completely off-the-wall? Most citizens are in the process of consuming cultural products by means of perfusion. They purchase that which seems to be lacking. A supplement for the soul. But it never satisfies. The outer appearance is polished each day so as to camouflage the emptiness inside. Entire districts in new cities sell this veneer of culture ever more dearly. Some people want to live there, where they expect life to be soulful. Those who pinch themselves set to out know whether we have a soul or not. Hundreds of boxes are piled on top of each other in the basement of a bank in the centre of Kuopio¹. Each box safeguards a testimonial photo to a performance that took place in Europe². As soon as the photo is exposed to light, we become witness to its destruction. This curious safety-box made me think about the European obsession with archives and cultural legacy, which never ceases to sap our aging memories. Cultural legacies have become a viable economic value for our continent. Life in days gone by: a cultural, touristic and disembodied product. Has performance art a future in the heart of our cities? How do we delineate this critical posture in motion without neutralising its force? This is a challenge for museums of the 21st century, such as London’s Tate Modern.

On returning home to Brussels I’m still absorbed in the shadows of an intimate family album that had been projected onto the facade of a nameless apartment building. (Jukka Huitila- Finland.)

1. *Disappearing Images*, exhibition. Curated by Béatrice Josse (FRAC Lorraine, France).

2. Under the auspices of *A Space for Live Art*.

TEACHING LIVE ART: TO EXPLORE THE MEANING OF LIFE

— Christophe Alix —

Alit Kreiz & Anton Mirto / A2,
The Future of Death, City of Women,
2008, photo: Nada Zgank.

Performance, or Live Art, is rarely taught prior to students undertaking a Bachelor's degree in the British university sector. Even then, they tend to choose a degree in theatre or dance in which some of them will only incidentally find an interest in Live Art when offered as a study option (sometimes it is compulsory) in most courses throughout the UK. In other European countries it is only offered, to the best of my knowledge, as a postgraduate degree or as an option at postgraduate level in a very few places. That is not to say that Live Art is unpopular, it remains quite unknown to the general public, and therefore commands very little attention from education and art governing bodies (including in the UK). That is the current state this art discipline, a field that has existed for

more than a century; one might even argue it has always been there, we just used to give it a different name.

Teaching how to live is an impossible task in itself, but I believe that Live Art allows us to reflect on a number of features that might help to give meaning to our lives. To learn, for instance, how to grapple with an awareness of our everyday life as well as being more consciously and critically engaged in past and current political, gender-based and societal issues. The practice of executing a particular creative journey based on personal concerns in which society might find an echo could be regarded as being at the heart of the Live Art field. To cultivate a politics of the self, I encourage students to find his/her

individual route and to engage with the work of various practitioners and theorists. This personal journey might include self-reflection, field trips, interviews, states of mind, observation, drawing and writing. It can actually encompass everything in terms of possible exploration. Live Art is such an interdisciplinary practice that an artist can work on absolutely anything to make countless possible links with any aspect of our past, present and future state of life. That is why a teacher of Live Art would certainly pay closer attention to the creative process of the student's project more than to the performance itself. Creating a diverse and complex array of creative strategies to deploy or to explore, the artist is no way restricted to the spaces, materials and sources that he/she might work on.

The performer becomes the mind and body of his/her own art piece, being both the deviser and interpreter of the performance. For a student of visual and fine art, this perspective of making a work is very much in line with their creative process; aiming more intuitively at a live exhibition instead of a show, with the artist's body placed at the centre of the work. This gives them a challenging approach in terms of body awareness. For a dance student, the body is already positioned at the heart of the piece; the creative process is explored on a more physical level and the student would need to be challenged to perform outside the secure setting of a studio or a gallery space. As for theatre students, there is a web of intricacies to confront, one of which is the concept of “being themselves”. Theatre students are very often determined to construct a persona on stage owing to their educational backgrounds within a certain dramatic or literary canon. In other words, it seems that they are either struggling to face the reality of being who they are in the performance space, or they find themselves battling against the habitual demands of their embedded acting skills.

As a teacher in Performance and Performance Studies (my background being in Theatre and Theatre Studies), I see myself continually trying to convey the same idea using different idioms. When first year theatre students, most of them for the very first time, encounter the practice of performance: “Be Yourself”, “Don't Act”, “Be Present”, “Don't Feign”, “Don't Try to Represent”, and so on, I always emphasise the fact that living an action in the performance space and in real life contains almost the same strength; that we have to face the complexities of what it means to be at the centre of public attention without being a character that is something special, most probably mysterious, yet the same principle would apply in life, “I am consciously alive”.

Interestingly enough, Stanislavski, one of the most influential modern theatre practitioners, equates the same conceptual relationship between acting and life as that which I underlined above between performing and living. However, a markedly important difference between acting and performing, or theatre and performance, is the idea that characterisation has very little acceptance in Live Art, or at least this is how—I think—it has been most successfully defined. I express a representation of myself to you, spectators; this is what one might call my persona. I do not intend to enter into an interminable polemical debate on what is performance and what is not. I would only say that, as a starting point, we cannot escape the representation of ourselves, although we can contemplate the possibility of being as close as possible to how we are in society when present in the performance space. That is the essence of Live Art in its execution: to learn how to be yourself.

“TO BE YOURSELF” IS ALREADY QUITE A LOT TO LEARN ABOUT.

A great number of contemporary theatre practitioners and playwrights have explored in their work this sense of the disembodiment of character. The boundaries between theatre and performance are certainly more porous than they used to be. I hear actors today arguing that they are not acting, but performing, while I observe that a theatrical event finds its place in a Live Art festival. Let me give an illustration. The piece *How to Live* (2004) by Bobby Baker, which has toured in many Live Art festivals, might be billed as a theatrical event: she assumes a character (a psychotherapist who is counselling her patient, a little pea). What makes her work sit well in the Performance Art section of our library is that she is pretty much the same person on stage as she is in real life. She has an identical accent, intonation, facial expression, body language, etc. She is Bobby Baker portraying herself as a psychotherapist who is telling us stories about how to live; yet she is staging *How to Live*. For Live Art purists, the idea of “pushing” the self is theatrical, and it is therefore placed outside of the performing experience. Still, it does not mean that the performer is dishonest or lies; it simply means that there are different degrees of performing the self in Live Art. Michael Kirby in his renowned text *Acting and Not-Acting* (1972) contrasted

the varying degrees of ‘reality’ that co-exist with the amount of acting in any given, often loosely defined, performance. It would be interesting to look at a matrix contrasting the different levels of ‘reality’ with the amount of performance of the self in the discipline of Live Art. As we see, besides the performance concept, aim or strategy chosen by the artist, “to be yourself” is already quite a lot to learn about. And I would say that is, in the first place, about accepting the potential to be watched as we are by others.

As for teaching strategies, I would propose a very simple exercise to illustrate my argument on expressing the self. I ask students to sit on a chair and to work on the presence of being there. It requires the performers to focus on a flow of natural thoughts and a great sense of spatial exploration of the present time, both aimed at controlling their selves in the performance space. I then ask them to engage in some very basic actions such as pouring water into a glass and to drink it, or to walk around and observe the details of the performance space. The performer must be able to focus on being present without pushing the self, being self-indulgent, having confidence issues or anticipating the next action to execute. Each action should be fully and consciously executed at the right moment, even if the same action is repeated many times (which is not always something that live artists would like to consider). This preparation includes the necessity for the performer to be conscious of the presence of the group members watching the action. The audience is not always sitting on a chair watching the performance, the spectators are—without saying—invited to walk around, sit on the floor or even talk to each other (although nowadays spectators feel the need to stay silent out of respect for the art piece), and they can even be asked to contribute. Finally, I ask the students to shout throughout the precisely executed actions one sentence reflecting a genuine and personal message to the world. This is what most often creates a paradox for the performer: to live the emotion and the presence, the action and the performance, the doing and the speaking, the politics and the self. That is probably why so many Live Art performances are more visually embedded, lest the word or logos might dominate the entire work. Words are, however, part of the expression of Live Art, and students must be confronted with them when they learn how to create a Live Art piece just as much as they need to be challenged on the sources, process strategies, spaces, histories and so on. Silence and sight are fine, so too are sounds and words; everything is meaningful in order to express the significance of our presence, even if there is no meaning to life.



CRITICISM AND LIVE ART: A BRIEF INCISION

— Diana Damian —

FROM WHERE I'M SAT...

... I'm inhabiting two encounters at once; the performance that unfolds around me—a journey of switched positions, questions, emotions and routes—and the architecture of the text that might follow it. I am attempting to record moments, to remember those powerful collisions of affect and thought, the nuances of my thinking, and at the same time, I'm navigating the debris of memories, I'm writing the encounter. This negotiation disappears as quickly as the performance ends, though its traces still linger with me, and I think about the priority of each fragment. The stuff that stuck, where does it take me? The stuff that I've forgotten during the constant attempts at remembering, where has it gone, and how can I recall it for you, the reader?

In most instances, criticism emerges from memory, from fractured emotions, illegible notes, fragments and incomplete images. It takes shape through small acts of reception and resistance: the deep, echoing sound that engulfs Julia Bardsley's *Meta-Family*—the iconography of the queered family politics (Trouble #8); the intricate theatricality and static cinematography in Grace Schwindt's *Tenant* as she explores the legacy of a political regime and its social breadth and weight (Spill 2012). These traces not only connect the work with its legacy but also make visible the position criticism has in its relationship to live work. In both of those instances, the dominant imagery came to inhabit the critical text, which in turn, was affected by the dynamic politics of each piece, by an engagement with strategy and textual architecture as ways to reconstitute these fragments, to place them in a lineage of work without imposing fictional narratives, to extrapolate rather than de-code, to invite affect without losing perspective.

Criticism has a relationship to the particularity of a performance, to the positions which one navigates during an encounter, and the contexts that might situate that. As a writer interested in investigating these vestiges, in thinking about the processes that might be at stake during a critical engagement, I return to this moment of dual inhabitation.

This moment is somewhat suggestive of the different kinds of negotiations that might inform the multiplicity of relationships between criticism and the field of live art. We're not used to criticism having a body; criticism is always in the shadow of that which it addresses (and so it should be; without it, it wouldn't hold an identity), tentatively present in a range of public sites. It is absorbed by this intersection of sites, negotiating the individual and the culturally collective. Both Bardsley and Schwindt engage in more than a historical and normative rhetoric; they deconstruct in an attempt to build back again, and it is these strategies that could provide a learning point for criticism's own modalities of approach, particularly for a field of practice so concerned with cultural re-evaluation through the constitution of experiences that hold new currencies.

What these currencies suggest is that criticism, despite its shape-shifting cartography, might be in a certain tense relationship with strategies of judgment and scope. In some sense, it is because it's still dominated by those doctrines that seek to capitalise on cultural valuation offered by inflections of objectivity found in mainstream

press. We've understood that authority and objectivity become redundant frameworks in the face of a field of work that seeks to engage so thoroughly and unusually with social norms, with re-siting politics and constructing juxtapositions. What this means is that it's the categorical insistence of de-coding that comes into question.

Take Susan Sontag's proposition in her seminal essay *Against Interpretation*¹: to locate de-coding as absolutist and multiple, historically and culturally contingent. In order to understand what we might think of as critical practice—as that which can be embedded and external, textual and interventionist—it might be imperative to understand its processes, to better acquaint ourselves with its discursive possibilities. If live art is that which confronts, considers, engages, then its respective critical possibilities might be freed from the constraints of certainty. Instead, we might look out for legacies, for making moments visible, for extending others. As critic and writer Mary Paterson writes “the generic freedom of live art rubs off on the texts that are written about it”².

SITES OF OCCUPATION

Throughout last year I engaged in numerous projects that sought to spend some time elaborating on questions of process and practice within criticism, in relation to live art. I wanted to better understand what these critical transactions and positions might be at the moment of dual inhabitation, between the now of the performance and the material output of the critical gesture. By investigating some of the critical strategies so defined by live art's numerous contexts, by its intriguing and problematic relationship to the institution, I sought to examine its relationship to judgment.

Writing Shop was a project I led with a group of writers from across Europe as part of *Trouble 8 Festival* in Bruxelles. Together, we sought to investigate the ways in which a consideration of process might open up critical practice to be a collective gesture. Within the architecture of the festival, we sought to navigate work in constant dialogue, seeking to map out the emergent discussions and, as a result, consider our own relationship to the work. With a Philosopher in Residence, curated discussions bringing together theory and practice, a range of challenging work that painted the landscape of practices within the field, we explored critical strategies that aimed to re-constitute, to join up, to make visible. We held open sessions daily where our process could be observed, and the resulting documentation was exhibited at the end of the festival in an attempt to not only showcase what these fragments, notes and memories might have morphed into, but also to examine the potential of collective practice.

As in any process, there were moments of doubt and hesitation, failure and risk. Individual authority was the first point of contention; in attempting to write a paragraph that might express a position both individual and collective, the discursive process felt less concerned with excavation, and more with contextualisation. This dynamic of collaboration that manifested itself through maps, notes, images and texts, propagated the significant potential offered by interrogation of practice. What became clear is that in this interrogative process, criticism had gained a body; in its multiplicity of approaches, we had collectively constructed a cartography



full of ghosts, but one that also mapped out directions of thought and avenues for considering the shape of contemporary live art practice in its immediate socio-political context. We had considered criticism to be an event in and of itself, and had constructed this from the vestiges of the sites we encountered.

IF LIVE ART IS THAT WHICH CONFRONTS, CONSIDERS, ENGAGES, THEN ITS RESPECTIVE CRITICAL POSSIBILITIES MIGHT BE FREED FROM THE CONSTRAINTS OF CERTAINTY.

Spill Festival took place in Ipswich for the first time this past year, artist director Robert Pacitti's home town. As part of this relocation, there was a constant sense of civic engagement that positioned the live work as that which might enable relationships. As writer in residence, I worked with six emergent writers to navigate a range of routes throughout the festival, responding to its theme of proximity. We sought to use this as a context to consider the relationship between live work and critical

practice, interrogating the personal within the public gesture of a response, thinking about the myriad of approaches in which a fragment might become dominant.

We navigated the work of a range of emerging artists engaged in a dialogue with the specific nature and stories of a site both social and historical. Walking became a mode of investigating. These memories and encounters took geographical counterparts. In the multiplicity of work that took over this small town, in the ways in which the Town Hall became a hub of both civic and cultural activity, critical agency was found in the negotiation of these different languages: that of the environment, the work and its social counterparts. Critical practice took a multiplicity of positions, all contained by one cartography, enabling different discursive processes navigated through the architecture of the festival itself, from salons to workshops. Given the scope of the platform and the community formed around it, shape-shifting and morphing, there was a sense that criticism might enable dialogic processes through its constant mapping—an exercise in constituting a critical live art ecology. In the ways in which the personal navigated memories and relics, judgment became a means of making visible, and writing a process of emergence.

Something has changed radically over the past ten years, not solely because live art itself has changed its different cultural nuances and positions, its languages of subversions and representation, its delineation and challenging of limits and permissions. Criticism has been

freed from the imperatives of translation and de-coding, revealing the multiplicities of possible practices, strategies and modes of judgment that might better embed and make visible an encounter, a piece of work, its language and politics, its relationship to the world. Yet within this, a question of sustainability has emerged, of finding ways to constitute an infrastructure that won't allow for disparity, instead capitalise on polyphony and begin to excavate judgment and interpretive modes.

Writing Shop, Trouble, 2012.
photo: Nicolaos Zafiriou.

1. Sontag, Susan. *Against Interpretation and Other Essays*. Penguin: London.1961. Print.
2. *In Time: A Collection of Live Art Case Studies*. Published by Live Art UK. Ed Live Art Development Agency. London: 2010. PDF.

3

A CHALLENGE FOR THE FUTURE OF LIVE ART

— Christophe Galent is director of Les halles, Brussels —

After almost a decade A Space for Live Art's (ASFLA) pioneering spirit has permanently positioned Live art, this singularly creative expression, in the European cultural landscape. Hundreds of erstwhile propositions have come to fruition, patently arousing public interest while inducing artistic emulation. This Pan-European project has been a powerful contributory factor behind the introduction of Live art into theatres that hitherto showed scant interest, while ensuring an even wider choice for those who had previously programmed it into their production schedules. The mounting rise in popularity of Live art over recent years can't simply be reduced to mechanical factors due to competition between various actors in the cultural sector of a specialised market. It signifies a more ground-breaking movement. Live art shuns the traditional systems prevalent in the scenic arts. Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary, trans-disciplinary are all appropriate descriptions. The term confers, moreover, an additional ideological value that the current trendier vocabulary doesn't capture. Along with the circus world, theatre and dance circles increasingly rebuff administrative labels while progressively opening their studio doors to other artistic disciplines. This breach of traditional frameworks, as happened with the emergence of Live art, stems from a deeper evolution, which touches upon the relationship between the 'creator' and the 'public' in the artistic gest.

Inter/multi/trans-disciplinarity doesn't fundamentally affect the divisions of the act itself at the site of performance: The spectator sits/stands passively in the hall, while the artist onstage alone has the right to be active. And yet, we are living through an age that is witness to the disintegration of such deferential roles. The new media and the Internet are pushing us towards a more interactive dynamic—itsself part and parcel of the nature and strategy of Live art. The performer's act nowadays requires fewer spectators and more presence. It derives its very force from the encounter with those who assist in the act, rather than those who merely attend as passive witnesses. It is this very transformation of the spectator into an accomplice in the proceedings that has made Live art a determining element in the reinvention of the performing arts.

What are the conditions necessary for this transformation? What will it entail? How is it possible? What horizons will it broaden? It is by intensifying these questions, from a practical as well as theoretical point of view, that the ASFLA experience will henceforth gain in scope and depth. Essentially, it will consist of working in such a way as to enable novel forms of relationships between artists and the public.

How? By creating those very conditions for increased interactivity between the performers' acts and their mysterious first matter, in the alchemistic sense of the term: Presence. Those present or in attendance represent a diverse and mixed bag. At times by sheer coincidence, even reluctantly on occasion, as in the case where the performance is directed at those happening to pass by, when the performer's actions call out to, provoke, confuse our emotions, mental constructions and set of beliefs, rather than simply present them. The performer's involvement with the audience is inseparable from the audience's involvement with the performer. This polemical balance influences the development of the performance act.

The performer is well used to challenging those present; let's now help those present, that muddled heap of somewhat identical participants known as the audience, to challenge the performance and to challenge themselves by means of the performance. Let us ask of the artists to answer back, to respond to issues raised at preceding public debates, organised yearly around various themes. Let us organise think-tank residencies away from the cultural haunts. Let us grapple with ourselves while confronting performers during their shared residencies, enabling them to meet each other periodically throughout Europe. Let us from the outset create a sound box, one they will come to bang upon over and again, one on which they leave their mark, attack and test. Let us make a note of these ordeals and tribulations. In sum, let's make of the 'performative' instant a personal criterion for a vibrant know-how, for that which shapes our societies. Could there be any better challenge for the next round of the ASFLA?

CREDITS

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