

PORTFOLIO UMETNIKA

ARTIST PORTFOLIO

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<http://temporaries.weebly.com>

Patchwork on Collaboration: *Temporaries*¹

Responsibilities

Temporaries is an artistic project that was originally initiated to question the term and practice of *local dance community* by six artists who have been working in the field of contemporary dance and performance gathered around the activities of Station – Service for Contemporary Dance (www.dancestation.org) in Belgrade (Serbia).

After more than ten years of systematic work on strengthening the local contemporary dance community (although much has been done), due to social and political situation in Serbia, currently there is no consistent artistic scene and structure. Moreover, contemporary dance and contemporary performance are not recognized as relevant artistic and cultural practices by most of the local cultural institutions.

Following this, conditions for generating artistic work are: no cultural policy, no planning for further development, small grants that are not certain even if one gets them, no space for work, totally marginalized independent cultural scene, very few or none budgets for the production of contemporary shows, lack of high institutional education. European funds are supporting only the international collaborations (if one wants to get support, one needs to have an international collaboration – as a condition) and our government never gives us a bigger amount of money that can invest, for example in a six people project. Due to such conditions, as actors of so called *independent art scene* in Belgrade, all six people involved in this project are dispersed working on projects or studying mainly abroad. And so, basically, if we decide to work together we have to presume that such artistic exchange and collaboration will remain temporary. In that sense, we came up to the word *temporaries* used as a term in economy to describe a temporary employed person, temporary employees, that serves for a limited time.

Work

In spite of our original aims and desires to create a space and community, where we can discuss and question problems of current and potential local scene in Belgrade in order to create conditions for individual and collective creative processes, our further interests moved from local towards also global or international contexts. This especially emerged during the process with the

¹ This text was further developed from published text by Jacopo Lanteri, Igor Koruga and Marko Milić, "Player 1 – The artist; Some concept around *Temporaries*: a project by Ana Dubljević, Dušan Bročić, Igor Koruga, Jovana Rakić Kiselčić, Ljiljana Tasić and Marko Milić", in: Silke Bake and Jacopo Lanteri (eds.), *Audiences or communities? Between policies, marketing and true desires*, Salzburg, SZENE, in the frame of the APAP network, 2013.

appearance and understanding of the notion of temporality as a marking condition for a work and knowledge production within the current international context of performing arts, especially contemporary dance and choreography. Therefore, we came up with the desire that residences and performances we want to do within the *Temporaries* project should provide us with continuity of our work. By that action we aim at creating *our scene* – that could have many different forms and provide us conditions to work.

We are not aiming to create a collective, but rather to work with each other *con-dividually*.² This doesn't mean that we want to create a con-dividual work based only on similarities (such are e. g. similar cultural heritage, political history of country, professional and personal histories, same mother tongue, etc.). On the contrary, we also want to underline the importance of our (individual, artistic, social, political, etc.) differences in this project and process as well, that will maintain our desire to collaborate, since we have never been working together (all six of us). By relying on our differences in this project, placing them to continuously exist next to each other within the whole specter of processes – from creation and production, to the everyday living together – we are designing a potential dynamics for not slipping into a collective identity. It isn't easy, especially considering the circumstances of nowadays art market, but still we do fight to achieve it. This is why during the project's first phase – which was realized in Berlin, with the support of APAP network, Tanzfabrik and Uferstudios organization, and also in Belgrade with the support of Belgrade City Council and Independent Cultural Scene in Serbia – we structured our work through a *working alone together* principle. This principle includes our individual works and approaches on ideas, practices, questions, but together – in situation where we are intensively interrelated with each other – discussions, consultations, production and exchange of knowledge, artistic support etc.

One of the references during our first phase of the work in Berlin was the notion of *Temporary Autonomous Zone* by a writer Hakim Bey, introducing ideas of socially-political tactics of creating temporary spaces that elude formal structures of control. Still, we agreed that our desires in this work don't lie in a strongly political-leftist attempts to fight the Western (capitalistic and neo-liberal) social system through artistic activism, but through the attempt to think of new forms of *communal* in public space. To identify or articulate a temporary community that by its form and content functions differently than usual forms of what *communal/community* is, considering this especially within performing arts and its historical background. This further also touches questions of production of certain context or public space for our public practices, which isn't so much defined by where it exactly emerges, or exists, but it's rather articulated by communal bodily investments.³

Consequently, the next important issue during the process was how we shall share this community to others, outside of our process. It became clear that our principles, aims, experiences, issues raised during our *temporary con-dividual community* in order to be communicated out, have to become a concern of the spectator. This is where we came up to the idea for having people participating actively, within the first presentation of our work. The proposal was to create a situation in which we could confront serious social-art issues we were dealing with, and to possibly intervene over them in public space through the performance. However, I want to be clear on this point: it's not that we placed people in *active participation* – because I'm always afraid that such articulation leads to misinterpreting our aims as attempts to actively engage audience – which

² Term coming from a philosopher Gerald Rauning, related to the principle of individuals interrelated by their similarities. Cf. Gerald Rauning, "Inventing con-dividuality – an escape route from the pitfalls of community and collectivity", *Politicality of Performance – TkH Journal for Performing Arts*, 2011, no. 19, 142–146.

³ Judith Butler, *Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street*, 2011, www.eipcp.net

is then problematic, since we don't want to treat anyone as inactive, even if spectator just seats and watches the whole event. This further implies that, articulated by Ana Vujanović, "artist's concerns in contemporary performance shouldn't come down to considerations of spectator's activity or passivity or models of their involvement, but rather to the forming of communicational community that is not something that already (pre-) exists."⁴ Vujanović emphasizes that the audience that comes to theatre is not a pre-formed community, but a group of individuals coming from their own private lives. So, to form a temporary "communicational community" with spectators during the performance, as Vujanovic indicates, the procedurality of communication between the artist and spectator needs to be based on certain communicative tasks, ways, forms, and issues that would become the concern of spectators and therefore form their interest in becoming the part of such community.



The Picnic

The people/audience are welcomed to take part in a picnic with a certain artistically-cultural program. They are divided in two and they don't communicate among themselves. But both groups are divided into smaller ones on a picnic blankets and these smaller groups have the same roles as their parent group. One Group is guessing the name of certain principles related to the social and artistic conditions of our work (through the social game of pantomime played by the artists). Individuals have opportunity to win some high quality goods for their picnic (champagne, chocolate cake, drinks, sandwiches, etc.) if they guess the term correctly. Still, they can't share these goods with others on their blanket, only consume it individually. The other Group of the picnic has a different situation. Their blanket groups have some goods provided, but these goods are not independent. One blanket might have only drinks, and other one has only glasses. Thus, in order to experience full picnic, they need to share and exchange their goods. Also this side of the picnic collectively discusses and decides which of the guessed principles from the other side, matches the list of performative materials representing the content of the artistically-cultural program. Materials and principles could be connected in variously – depending on the group decision.

In some way the performance does become their concern, since spectators also take responsibility for the dynamics and flow of the event, equally as we take as authors. The audience is actually implicated in the different/unusual organization of the whole event (from the very beginning) and so they act on that situation. There is something that is proposed to them, certain set of rules that pre-exist but can be/will be transformed by their presence (rules don't need to be followed, right?). Thus, the event can go in various directions. It's a delicate border because it's not

⁴ Ana Vujanović, "Vita Performactiva, On the stage of neoliberal capitalist democratic society", *Politicality of Performance – TkH Journal for Performing Arts*, 2011, no. 19, 115–123.

about asking them to participate directly in order to make the work, to perform, etc. Of course they do participate by taking parts in the games, in social situation or a performance situation: the audience is the performance. But what reflects through this situation/event, is process of switching between representative/aesthetic and social regimes of performing, that creates an antagonistic playground where everything that appears, which is to be seen and heard on the (public) stage becomes a potential agent of the social. Such playground designs a *communicational community* among artist, artwork, and spectators, where their territories become limitless/open and mediated. Therefore, relations, questions and issues emerged during our research, are intertwined with social relations (between artists and spectators, between spectators, between artists, etc.). In this sense, our project carries something like 'a product with a research', since it also communicates, is being affected (always differently) by certain context where it is produced or performed, etc.



Questions

If we would want to say a word about collaboration between us while working on the project, we could name some of the principles that this collaboration was based on. As we talk in Temporaries also about conditions of work in performing arts nowadays, it's good to mention that these conditions also shaped and influenced principles of collaboration in our work. Here are some principles, nothing new, just we observed them appearing in this project more often than others:

Hanging out with each other, as a method of work. Very important.

Not having preset principles of work, but reflecting, questioning and articulating the existing ones.

- # Not having preset and/or fixed positions and roles. Everything or anyone can become something or someone else. As this text does.
- # Everyone works on what he/she finds interesting. If there is at least two persons interested in an idea, the idea is developed. If there is no interest in the group for suggested idea, there is no development of the idea. Also selectivity of our memory sometimes decides for us.
- # About *killing the babies* we decide together. *Babys* – amazing, fabulous ideas which emerged during the process, but perhaps had to be excluded from the presentation of the work.
- # Working in smaller groups and then presenting a concept or idea to each other helps.
- # Focusing on one question at the time and trying to solve it, or marking it well so we can clearly come back to that point. Or this is more a wish for our work.
- # Providing space for variety of individual approaches, which comes not from formal tolerance or political correctness, but from interest for project development. Or from joy.
- # We never voted, which does not mean that the option of voting was excluded.
- # If there is crisis situation going on, minimum three people out of six are enough to gather and work.
- # Working on the project when we have time. We have time when we're paid for that time. We are paid in euros or dinars. But also in other, very different currencies. Particular good becomes currency when we all agree upon it. Quality of work doesn't depend on a currency we're paid in.
- # Taking time for what ever is needed. Not more not less then is needed, which often doesn't seem like that in the present moment. That leads us to the next # .
- # Putting ourselves and the project in potentially vulnerable positions and unsafe situations. Sometimes without knowing it.
- # Not taking things too seriously.



Our collaboration was initiated out of a pure need for collaboration. And it becomes a goal, a theme, a process, a product to itself. One would expect that after two years of work we have tutorial on how to collaborate. If we admit here publicly that this is the first time in our process that we're putting down principles of our collaboration on paper, we could conclude that this was not such a successful collaboration. But we could also see success in not looking for definite solutions, but having patience and fearfulness to stay with an open question.

Stay with an open question.

Stay with an open question.

Repeat after me.

Stay with an open question...



References:

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