

MARINA GRŽINIĆ

SITUATED
CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICES



*Art, Theory and Activism
from (the East of) Europe*

MARINA GRŽINIĆ

SITUATED CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICES

Art, Theory and Activism from (the East of) Europe

Marina Gržinić
Situated Contemporary Art Practices
Art, Theory and Activism from (the East of) Europe

© 2004 Marina Gržinić, ZRC Publishing, Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst

Published by: Založba ZRC / ZRC Publishing, Ljubljana

Editor-in-Chief: Vojslav Likar

and

Revolver – Archiv für aktuelle Kunst, Frankfurt am Main

Editor-in-Chief: Christoph Keller

English Language Editing: Dean DeVos

Graphic Art & Design: Milojka Žalik Huzjan

All Photographs © 2004 Authors

Printed by Collegium graphicum, d.o.o., Ljubljana, Slovenia

Printed in the EU.

Cover photo:

Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid, *From the Flies of the Market Place*, video film, 1999

Digitalna različica (pdf) je pod pogoji licence CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 prosto dostopna:
<https://doi.org/10.3986/9616500538>



REVOLVER
ARCHIV FÜR AKTUELLE KUNST
Jacobystraße 28
D-60385 Frankfurt am Main
Tel.: +49 (0)69 44 63 62
Fax: +49 (0)69 94 41 24 51
E-Mail: revolver@naiv.de
www.revolver-books.de

ISBN 3-937577-40-8



ZALOŽBA
Z R C

ZALOŽBA ZRC / ZRC PUBLISHING
Novi trg 2
SI-1000 Ljubljana
Tel.: +386 1 470 64 65
Fax: +386 1 425 77 94
E-Mail: zalozba@zrc-sazu.si
www.zrc-sazu.si/zalozba

ISBN 961-6500-53-8

MARINA GRŽINIĆ

SITUATED CONTEMPORARY ART PRACTICES
Art, Theory and Activism from (the East of) Europe

LJUBLJANA – FRANKFURT AM MAIN 2004

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	7
INTRODUCTION	9
1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION	13
I. The Virtual NSK State	13
II. The relation(s) between curators and artists	22
III. Laibach	28
IV. In between Ostojić's legs	30
V. Perversion	38
2. IDENTITY: EACH BORDER IS OVER-PASSED	41
I. Negativity	43
II. Lara Croft – Tomb Raider	46
III. Femininity	50
IV. State of Exception	54
3. THE TIME-SPACE PARADIGM: BIOMECHANICS & MEMORY	59
I. Temporisation of Theory and Time	60
II. It's just Question of Time	63
III. The Body and Biomechanics	66
IV. Memory and Time	76
4. IN THE NAME OF THE SERVER	83
I. 0100101110101101.org's life_sharing	87
II. Who are the Mothers of Monsters?	92
III. Representational Politics	94

5. EVERY WAR HAS ITS MEDIUM: THE EVACUATION OF IMAGES.....	96
I. The Evaporation of the Aura from Photography to Video	96
II. Every war has its medium.....	100
III. Telerobotics and the Return of the Aura.....	105
6. DOES CONTEMPORARY ART NEED MUSEUMS ANYMORE?.....	109
7. THE GENETIC PARADIGM OF CULTURE	124
8. THE OTHER SPACE	136
I. Srebrenica.....	137
II. The Eastern European Condition	142
III. The Other as Two	145
IV. Agamben's <i>Out of Being</i>	148
BIBLIOGRAPHY (selection).....	153
About the author	155

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

It is my great pleasure to have the opportunity to again publish a book in English that brings together my recent theoretical and critical writings dealing with art, politics, theory and philosophy. The book consists of my re-edited and partly rewritten recent works, all published in slightly or thoroughly different versions in international magazines and anthologies. The book provides me the opportunity to much more precisely and in a much more condensed form share some of my criticisms and political readings of the territory of ex-Yugoslavia, the former Eastern Europe, the space of new media and technology, the strategies and tactics employed in organizing world exhibitions, global projects in the arts and culture, the capitalist system with its new economy, globalisation policy, multicultural ideology and new forms of hegemonies.

Situated Contemporary Art Practices therefore provides a much more precise focus to my re-reading of the space of art, culture and politics with references to contemporary philosophy and theory. I can say that with this book all these different influences are returned to their “original place,” although in a diffracted, subverted and not simply mirrored way. But in this consists the power of such groundings, in order to see their displacements onto non-expected paths.

Of course this book would never have found its way in front of the readers if some very concrete personalities had not shown genuine interest in its publication. First and foremost, my sincerest gratitude goes to both directors of the respective publishing houses, Prof. Dr. Oto Luthar, the Director of ZRC SAZU (The Scientific and Research Centre of The Slovenian Academy of Science and Arts), Ljubljana and to Christoph Keller, the Editor in Chief of *Revolver*, Germany.

I would also like to thank Dr. Vojislav Likar, the Editor in Chief of the ZRC SAZU publishing house and Milojka Žalik Huzjan, the designer of the book. I would like to thank the Institute of Philosophy, one of the research units of the above-mentioned Scientific and Research Centre of The Slovenian Academy of Science and Art, where I work as researcher. The Institute has provided a productive context for my research work.

My deepest appreciation goes as well to Dean DeVos, who edited

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

the English texts of the manuscript.

I also would like to thank the following persons for their generous support and interest in my work: Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki, Kathy Rae Huffman, Machiko Kusahara, Hiroshi Yoshioka, Barbara Holub, Trinh T. Minh-ha, Walter Seidl, Alenka Domjan, Adele Eisenstein, Wolfgang Temmel, Eva Ursprung, Varja Velikonja, Lars Henrik Gass, Fundacion Rodriguez, Stevan Vuković, Irene Below, Beatrice von Bismarck, Hito Steyerl, Ioana Georgescu, Charlotte Pöchhacker, Maria Hlavajova, Masaki Hirano, IRWIN, Henk Slager, Emil Hrvatin, Claudia Seidel, Irit Rogoff, Jose-Carlos Mariategui, Justyna Kowalska, Nebojša Jovanović, Branko Čegec, Miško Šuvaković, Šefik-Šeki Tatlić, Nermina Kurspahić, Nataša Govedić, Prof. Dominique Chateau, Zvonka Simčič, Georg Schöllhammer and Tanja Ostojić.

As always, I have to mention with appreciative thoughts Aina Šmid, my video and art partner for the past 22 years, my dearest son David Mauhler, who is a constant critical inspiration for my work and my beloved husband Borut Mauhler.

Marina Gržinić

Ljubljana, May 2004

INTRODUCTION

As theoretician and artist, I can suggest an unconditional, clear repoliticisation of a proper position. To position myself means to take a clear stance on a proper condition of working, living, and acting.

The repoliticisation of a proper position is connected with my and Aina Šmid's background and the specific history of our artistic and my theoretical formation. The powerful and effective punk and rock'n'roll movement in the 1980s in Ljubljana, Slovenia (ex- Yugoslavia) was our intellectual and activist formation context, which strongly influenced our thinking and work. This movement was crucial for the formation of the Ljubljana underground and/or alternative scene in the beginning of 1980s to which we belonged. The Ljubljana underground and/or alternative movement not only reformulated rock and punk resistance within the visual, but displayed sexuality and history differently. This movement gave a subversive and countercultural visibility to both fields: sex and history in connection with politics. It re-articulated repressed sexuality (the gay and lesbian movement) and critiqued (today I can say debunked) the totalitarian unitary history of Socialism. Rock, punk, the Ljubljana gay movement, and anarchist politics were our home, our mother(s), aesthetic languages, and spiritual shelter.

The product of such articulation is not simply an Otherness, but instead what we get is the so-called *Other space*, a productive space of an absolutely different reflection and action. The difference between Otherness and the Other is crucial: "Otherness" is something that functions as an incomprehensible difference or a disturbance, while "the Other space" is opposite to this: it is a strategically built paradigm of different thinking, acting, and parallel living, which is a powerful repoliticisation matrix of a possible different structure. In most cases this Other space is qualified as Otherness in order to shift the strategic power of such a space and reduce it only and solely to pure difference or disturbance connected to everyday existence.

We are living at a time when it is not only important to make a work

of art, but it is also essential to question the condition(s) of our lives, the way in which our lives are produced. I propose that we broaden our perspective by also thinking of ourselves as citizens of the world. This formulation is in my view much more radical, because today everyone says, “mind your own business and do not interfere in our domestic politics!” Yet we will soon be forced to admit that not everyone can be a “citizen of the world” – this privileged position is reserved for only a few, some other(s) cannot be citizens, not even in a proper city, not even in the space where they are given (some sort of) shelter: homeless, ill people, refugees, people without papers and immigrants.

With a subtle analysis of contemporary worlds we can see that culture is no longer against nature, so to speak, but must fight the new barbarians of profit, neo-capitalism’s xenophobia, neo-colonialism, etc. We are in a situation of facing the very powerful censorship of the so-called capitalist “freedom” of communication. The same is true of cyberspace: it opens the imagination, but also allows us to better understand some radical processes of absolute censorship in the real world. Anyway, only a third of the world’s population uses the Internet! The cyberworld was born with the idea of total liberty and exchange of communication, but it also quickly turned into a tool of economic interest and censorship. The Internet, which was marked by the ideology of a pure communication tool, without restrictions, is therefore deeply marked with questions such as: who can communicate and what kind of information, data and etc. are we able to freely distribute through the World Wide Web?

It is almost painful how much our lives are connected with prosthetic tools: technology and prostheses are linked to our eyes, ears, etc. Technology influences the very way we see and understand. It is now possible to say that the world actually does enter our living room(s). Just think of the war in Iraq. Everyday a full TV program, and still we can do very little to oppose this war. “Every war has its medium.” I wrote this sentence in 1994, when I was rethinking the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that took the life of hundreds of thousands of Muslims. In contrast to the war in Iraq today, in the Bosnian War the best and most accurate information was not delivered via satellite connections and CNN’s cannibalisation of every bit of information, but via radio amateurs! By means of radio connections, they were on the prime time TV news reporting on the horrors of the killings, mass decapitations, and

concentration camps in Bosnia. The images were old, but the voice was the most updated information. Here we can see that no technology is outdated and that something as simple as a radio can gain new importance when searching for a truth, if there is any left for us. Nothing can be simply dismissed as unimportant; every institution, every technology, and each “crumb” of critical thinking can be used as a productive tool. It all depends on the content and context.

The fall of the Berlin wall was seen from the Western point of view as a “liberation” of the East from the totalitarian systems. It also initiated a rapid process of erasing our particular Eastern European history. We found ourselves in a space without memory or identity. We had to take this as a kind of a zero position. Instead of being in a situation where changing identity is as simple as changing one’s clothes, from this strange zero level point we could reflect much more radically on our future, on having a future, any future. To put it simply: today, there is really no place to disappear to. Thus, the real ethical stance, in Alain Badiou’s words, has nothing to do with the politics of representation. When taking a real ethical stance, the subject presents itself alone and speaks for itself.*

* Cf. Marina Gržinić’s contribution in *Now What? Artists Write!*, eds. Mark Kremer, Maria Hlavajova & Annie Fletcher, Utrecht: BAK, Basis voor Aktuele Kunst, 2004.

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION

I. THE VIRTUAL NSK STATE

After the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989, and with the “liberation” of Eastern Europe from Socialism and Communism in the 1990s, the group IRWIN with other components of the Neue Slowenische Kunst (NSK) collective from Ljubljana started the project *The NSK State in Time*. The NSK collective has a multiform history. In the beginning of the 1980s, the fine art group IRWIN, with the music group Laibach, a theatre group, best known for one of its founding figures Dragan Živadinov, and with the design group known as New Collectivism, formed one of the most powerful art and social collectives from the East of Europe, known by its German name *Neue Slowenische Kunst*, the acronym NSK, or New Slovenian Art when translated into English. The German was consciously used in the case of Neue Slowenische Kunst to detect the connections with the disavowed German influence on Slovenian art, culture and history. The same applies for the name of the music group Laibach; this is how Ljubljana was renamed during the Second World War occupation of the city by Hitler’s Nazi Germany. Already in the process of naming, therefore, NSK condensed a very precise traumatic way of dealing with Slovenian history and reality.

The NSK State in Time was established in its only possible manner, as a virtual entity that had no real territory (as it was said that it was precisely because of territorial concerns that we were witnessing the Balkan war) but only the insignias of a real State – passports, flag, etc., – which were elaborated as artifacts. From time to time, however, the NSK State in Time was displayed in real space. In the 1990s the NSK State in Time’s Embassies and Consulates, were inaugurated in private apartments and houses, hotel rooms, etc., in order to question the politics of space within/without the Balkans/Europe and the Art Institution. The group IRWIN established the NSK Embassy in Moscow in a private apartment (address: Leninsky Prospect 12, apt. 24) in May and June 1992. The facade of this residential dwelling was embellished with the artistically articulated insignia of a state embassy. Spaces that had always been considered to be out of the matrix of art and culture, or at the margins of the system, were

suddenly transposed into the centre of the art system. NSK Consulates were opened in Florence, Italy (1993), at the Hotel Ambasciatori, and in Umag, Croatia (1994), in the kitchen of Marino Cettina, the Dante Gallery owner's private apartment.

The NSK State in Time displayed an incredible discontinuity and provoked madness in time and within time. In an attempt to emphasize the synthetic dialectical moment developed in the NSK State in Time, I asked myself in the mid-1990s how we could label this *spiritual* element of corporeality (the State in Time) and this *corporeal* element of spirituality (embassies and consulates in concrete private spaces)? I proposed that we define them as *spectres*. I stated, re-elaborating Jacques Derrida *The Spectres of Marx*, that the NSK State in Time is the spectre of the state; NSK Embassies are spectres of Embassies. The NSK State in Time is a transposition, as much as it is also a spectralization of the evacuation of specific historical, social and political spaces of the former Eastern Europe, of its present non-space condition. "What you discover in digital cyberspace" – is always, according to Olivier Marchart (1998) "your own image in a reversed form. (...) This sentence – since obviously it paraphrases the Lacanian communication formula – has an axiomatic status. Wherever you go, you are always already there."

Or, it is possible to say that precisely because NSK comes from a territory that is today described as -ex or -former, therefore deeply grounded in time, NSK's projects imply the re-constitution of its historical, art and cultural space through time. This is why NSK's projects are so deeply involved in re-reading history, into the temporisation and spacialization of culture, art and the social.

The NSK State in Time was followed by the wholly virtual *The NSK Electronic Embassy* project situated only and solely on the Internet, designed by New Collectivism and conceptualised by some of the members of the group IRWIN.¹ The virtual NSK State does not believe in the original story of innocence and does not refer to the drama of life merely as individualization, psychology, tragedy and alienation. Everything is already spoiled at its source. Using cyberfeminist Donna Haraway's vocabulary, we can speak here of the reinvention of the "state" by means

¹ <http://www.ljudmila.org/embassy/> Cf. Marina Gržinić, "IRWIN 1983-2003," in: *Art-ist*, no. 7, Istanbul, 2003, pp. 5-39.

of digital design, of its re-birth, but with a mishap. Based on computer operated video-film projections, visuals and computer generated models; we can “listen” to a citizenship story through numerous documents, images and reproductions, which culminates in a visual simulation. Protocinematic digital scenarios succeed in adjusting the project to the gaze of the user, which wanders, searches, darts from one piece of information to another. Positioning is a key practice. It is the process of working through different levels: the ethical, political and technological.

The virtual NSK State tackles ambiguous procedures of codification and system rules and principles in order to define historical coincidence and artificiality. We witness the formation of the entire system of the interactive bureaucratic-administrative apparatus of a State and the production of artifacts. It is a process of the cloning of those artifacts that are produced by each and every State: the issuing of NSK passports, the opening of (NSK) Embassies and Consulates, the appointment of ambassadors and consular representatives, and the design of various insignias, signs and seals. This parallelism between art and the state at the same time poses some radical questioning of the institution of media art in itself: what is the way to establish the system of rules and instructions that are at the base of the formation of the art system and which are crucial for its reproduction. The virtual NSK State displays the process of rearranging the world’s time zones: “the world” is understood as a constantly moving time machine. The NSK State in Time therefore works precisely through temporal and not simply self-evident movements of the Art Institution that are transposed through processes of Utopia and construction into the Real.

With two symbols or indicators – the NSK cross originated within the artistic legacy of Kasimir Malevich and the Nazi swastika – the virtual NSK State creates terrifying constructions and narratives, deeply rooted in politics. Through the symbols of the three dimensional cross and the heptagonal swastika, the story of the possibility of digital design invention and reinvention was tuned to specific, historical and political positions, without having to abandon the search for efficient links.

Real Communism, Trans-national Capitalism, Bastard Malevich, Illegal Heartfield, Enthroned Magritte, and Naturalized Modernism – these are the elements of the diagram used by the virtual NSK State in its digital narrative trajectory.

N S K G A R D I A T I R A N A



IRWIN in collaboration with Albanian Army, Dec. 21, 1998

IRWIN reused the cross from Malevich's paintings, but emptied it of any spiritual meaning. It is possible to explain this trajectory similarly to that which Heartfield did with the process of montage. Both, New Collectivism and IRWIN employed the sign in an illegal way within the context of Communism/Nazism/Capitalism.

The virtual NSK State employs construction, instead of determinism and integrity; instead of the outdated dichotomy between the public and the private, it ventures to create a possible global (virtual) citizenship. Who is socially competent to define a broader reality, to which our daily experiences are adjusted in order to make them responsible? There is something paradoxical about this virtual state model and its possible (kitschy, conceptual and anti-modern) connections with art. This model forever lost its innocence and has become a marker of time, functioning as a collision of different media worlds, it is an allusion to space and at the same time an illusion of space; it is an illusion that there once existed a world where things were different.

The *NSK (State) Guard* projects, which followed the NSK State in Time projects, are a series of projects wherein "local" but *real* army soldiers guard the flag of the imaginary NSK State in Time. The projects have been realized in 1998 in Tirana in collaboration with the Albanian Army, in 2000 in Prague in collaboration with the Army of the Czech Republic and in Zagreb in collaboration with the Croatian army, in 2001 in Rome in collaboration with the Italian Army and in Graz in collaboration with the Austrian Army, and etc. IRWIN is strongly promoting the idea of the NSK State in Time by further questioning the whole meaning of the construction of history and of the juxtaposition of artifacts in relation to the different strata of contemporary societies.

The NSK Guard is a project that puts together two, so to speak, impossible levels of the functioning of every modern state: real soldier(s) from the respective national armies and the artifact(s) of the NSK State in Time, its flag and the Malevich cross imprinted on armbands. One of the questions is the manner today's national armies function. What is the level of real democratisation in the relation between military/army

IRWIN: *NSK Guard Tirana*

In collaboration with Albanian Army
National Gallery, Tirana, 21. 12. 1998

structures and culture within different societies? Therefore the flag of the imaginary state, of the state that lives only in time, but which is made operational through real passports, real state insignias, and Embassies/Consulates (in private apartments and hotel rooms) is obtaining in such a way its supplement, its parallel counterpart. Real national army soldiers (with armbands imprinted with the Malevich cross) are guarding the (imaginary) NSK flag. The NSK's flag consists of symbols from art history, notably having imprinted in its centre the cross from the paintings of Kasimir Malevich's, who is seen today as the key figure in the whole history of abstract painting.

What we get it is not really a performance, but more some sort of tableau vivant of an encounter between art and society, between the real and the artificially constructed. The idea is to assemble the aseptic, quotidian social reality, life itself, in parallel with its phantasmatic supplement that is art. Or to juxtapose face-to-face, reality that is ART and its phantasmatic supplement – the Army!

The very latest project from the series IRWIN: The NSK State Guard is *The NSK Guard Kyoto*, 2003. This time so-called “salary-men,” an Englishism in Japanese for office workers, took the floor and substituted the real national army and guarded the NSK flag. Within Japanese society salary-men have been an “army” of workers of crucial importance for the process of Japanese industrialization. That salary-men are like an army is emphasized by their uniform style of a rather sober coloured suit and tie. They hide in a certain way behind their uniform by being transformed on the surface into an anonymous part of the system in order to maximize the efficiency of the capitalist machine. Therefore, through their fashion style, and not only and solely by the manner they function, they are integrated into everyday life, becoming a normalized anomaly within the capitalist Japanese system.

And what do we get in such a way? The effect of such juxtaposition is the effect of the derealisation and the de-psychologization of the reality of the Institution of Contemporary Art, and as well of contemporary society in itself. With such juxtaposition we get a disturbing upside down,

IRWIN: *NSK Guard Kyoto*

In collaboration with Japanese Salary-Men
Kyoto Biennial, 4. 10. 2003

NSK GARDIA

K Y O T O

京都市 記念日



IRWIN in collaboration with Japanese Salary-Men, Oct. 4, 2003

or, even better, a *diffracted* picture of which elements are part of reality and which pretend to artificiality. IRWIN does not ask us to merely choose between two or more options within a set of coordinates (Art vs. Army, etc.), but to change the set of coordinates in itself. *This is politics beyond simple dichotomies*, and if we think about the Army and not Art as the “Other” [the abhorrent “Thing”], what we get is *the lack in the Other* and not simply the Other. To point toward the lack in the Other means to point toward the traumatic Real! Or, instead of reality, we have to deal here with the traumatic real, with the re-articulation and re-questioning of the position of the army in contemporary societies, and *the art* within the Art Institution.

Several other projects can be listed that use, in a very specific way, this key concept of derealisation [and de-psychologization] of reality and of art (although we should be aware that contemporary capitalist art-abstract-positioning insists on the psychological moment and on the psychology of the individual artist). A similar strategy was displayed by the Russian Ilya Kabakov, in one of his projects in 2000.² He displayed in the exhibition space a reconstruction of a kitchen that was common to the proletariat in communist times, when Russia was known as the Soviet Union, and moreover through the window of this reconstructed kitchen, it was possible to watch delirious film sequences from the golden soviet time; films that were produced to give totally splendid communist future visions, with smiling faces, and people eager to work and to fight. It does not matter if real life in itself was an absolutely horrific vacuum, that the kitchen was shared by multiple families with far fewer potatoes for the soup, what was more important was this phantasmatic supplement of life that was parallel to the inconsistent and miserable reality. And it was precisely this moment that was shared and presented in the exhibition space: Kabakov displayed the simple and poor soviet kitchen simultaneously with its phantasmatic counterpart (films and visual ideology). In the past we perceived and interpreted this reality as in a classical film narration, seeing different strata of society functioning one after the other, instead of grasping what coexists simultaneously at its base, and is paralleled one near the other!

² Cf. *L'AUTRE MOITIÉ DE L'EUROPE*, (*The Other Part of Europe*), National Gallery Jeu de Paum in Paris in 2000.

This new interpretation can be established also because of the new media technology: with virtual reality we started to see with two eyes, so to speak, in parallel and simultaneously. The virtual environment occurs cinematically, as a kind of reversal of face-to-face intersubjectivity; the subject in virtual reality sees her/his shadowy double, which emerges from behind her/him as a kind of sublime protuberance. In the virtual environment what we see is the concentration of the field and counter-field within the same frame. Precisely this was caught in Kabakov's artwork, or made visible through The NSK State Guard projects. With such a procedure that allows us to externalise our innermost fantasies in all their inconsistency, the artistic practice stages a unique possibility to act out the phantasmatic support of our existence.

Finally, was it not something similar that took place in New York on 11 September 2001? We witnessed precisely this radical derealisation and de-psychologization of the American reality, which shocked not only the USA, but also most of the world that could watch what was going on in New York, in *real time* so to speak, by means of the television video signal. In the collapse of the WTC towers, New York citizens could clearly see the aseptic, quotidian social reality, life itself, in direct parallel with its phantasmatic supplement – Hollywood film scenarios – performed this time in reality. And although all were performed in real time, comprising most of CNN programming that day, nevertheless it seemed that the tremendous fear, shock and desperation gained an almost virtual dimension. It was as if the counter-field (Hollywood) was mirrored back into the reality field itself. The result is not solely a desperate loss of innocent human beings, but what will have even more tragic consequences: the absolute deprivation of the Americans of self-identity.

What is at stake in virtual reality is the temporal loss of the subject's symbolic identity. S/he is forced to assume that s/he is not what s/he thought her/himself to be, but somebody-something else. And this is also why the mass media, especially CNN, are now producing the war against the Muslim world and all the others that are not "the civilized First World," as what is at stake here is the process of trying to cover this absolute "collapse" of the USA self-identity that was until now grounded in absolute power and control.

We can discuss within these theoretical and philosophical contexts also the series of projects by Tanja Ostojić, an artist from Belgrade presently based in Berlin.

II. THE RELATION(S) BETWEEN CURATORS AND ARTISTS

From 2001 to 2003, Tanja Ostojić realized a series of projects (from public performances, art happenings and actions, exhibitions, the writing of a diary, to photo art-documentary works), with one main topic at the core: the relation(s) between curators and artists, or vice versa, in the realm of the contemporary art arena.

I would immediately like to foster the thesis that all these projects deal with something that it is possible to call, according to Slavoj Žižek the *fantasy formation* that sustains the subject's "sense of reality" within contemporary art and culture. Or, to put it more precisely, "... [W]hen the phantasmatic frame disintegrates, the subject undergoes a 'loss of reality' and starts to perceive reality as an 'unreal' nightmarish universe . . . this nightmarish universe is not 'pure fantasy' but, on the contrary, that which remains of reality after reality is deprived of its support in fantasy."³

In short, what we get in all these projects is the reality of the Contemporary Art Institution (along with its curators' and artists' relations) deprived of its support in fantasy. Something much more horrible than just the unreal nightmarish universe that vanishes immediately after we again "enter"/"include ourselves" in this same art reality.

³ Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London: Verso, 1997, p. 66.

WHICH ART WORKS ARE WE TALKING ABOUT HERE?

At the opening of the 49th edition of the Venice Biennale in 2001, Tanja Ostojić, performed *I Will be Your Angel*. Dressed in expensive clothes she showed up with Harald Szeemann, the director of the 49th edition of the Venice Biennale, while he was speaking at press conferences, just appearing in public, or working in his office. She sat near him (also at dinners) in most of the situations mute or just smiling. At the same time she kept a diary that was published after the “Venice story.” She also connected the whole Venice adventure to another project entitled *Black Square on White*, with a clear reference to Kasimir Malevich.

In 2001, after the Venice Biennale, she performed in the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome in a performance-ambient installation with the title (*Zero Gravity*) *Be My Guest*. The result was a video film work (entitled *Be My Guest*) that consists of the reedited documentary materials of the performance. In the Rome performance it seemed that Ostojić lay down in public with the curator Bartolomeo Pietromarchi, who had invited her, and with Ludovico Pratesi, his colleague.

In the Graz project *The Balkan Consulate Proudly Presents: Belgrade*, organized by Rotor in 2002, and curated by the invited Belgrade curator Stevan Vuković, Tanja Ostojić washed the feet of Stevan Vuković in the opening performance, which she called *Sofa for a Curator*.

In 2003 she went for a vacation with the Albanian curator Edi Muka, the outcome of this *Vacation with a Curator* was a series of photographs taken in a paparazzi style, showing them on a beach during an undefined business-friendship-sexual-artistic vacation.

At the end of these trajectories with male curators, to which Ostojić implied the multicultural index (and I will return to this soon), she decided in these (hi)stories, which can be termed a “redefinition of the position of curators and artists within the contemporary art scene,” to engage with a woman curator. The outcome of this collaboration is a photograph entitled: Tanja Ostojić and Marina Gržinić: *The Politics of Queer Curatorial Positions: After Rosa von Praunheim, Fassbinder and Bridge Markland* (2003). This collaboration between us opened an even more complicated relation involving the contamination of identities, power structures, and

borders of influence, as I politicised my proper curatorial/gender/sex position with a *queer positioning*.

I clearly sided with Ostojić in 2001/2002, after she was harshly, privately and publicly, criticized. Already, from the very beginning, when Tanja Ostojić showed up as an Angel in Venice, while implying a possible sexual relation with the main curator, therefore being at the same time the seducing devil or a (symbolic) whore or escort girl (words used by Ostojić to position herself also within the trafficking of women's bodies coming from Eastern Europe), she provoked strong doubts about her politically correct intentions. This criticism was even doubled when in Rome, Ostojić, contrary to Venice, where nothing in fact happened, almost consummated her professional relation with the curator in public.

When lecturing about Ostojić's projects I myself was accepted with very mixed feelings, it seemed, I jeopardized my critical and theoretical position. I could read in the eyes of the public, and not only in 2001 or 2002, but so to speak, the day before yesterday, the question of whether such (my) interpretational engagement was necessary at all. Why contaminate my proper position anyway? It seemed Ostojić went beyond the border of what is today termed and perceived as politically correct action and criticism.

The five male curatorial positions were based upon internal and external situations within the Contemporary Institution of the Arts (centre and/or periphery) and as well the changed relations in Europe regarding influence, power and the need of the Art Capitalist Machine for fresh blood. Mr. Szeemann is an indisputable "institution" within the Contemporary Art Institution, someone who for long has been establishing the rules and is a part of the so-called patriarchal lineage of power structures within Contemporary Arts. He can be also seen as a clear counterpart to Edi Muka, a rising star from a doubly traumatic place within Europe and Art: Albania. When rethinking Muka involvement in this contemporary art "(love)story" about artists and curators, we have to take into account, besides art, also internal-external antagonisms: Serbia-Kosovo-Albania relations and the territory of former-Yugoslavia.

The Rome project is a precise index of the First Capitalist-Art World- Institution-Art Market reality: obscenity and superficiality are here precisely historically grounded in the history of film, culture, and economics.

I definitely insist on perceiving Ostojić's "stories of successes" as strictly political, although this is a difficult task in these, what Jacques Rancière termed, *post-political times*, as "there is some kind of a basic social pact that prevents understanding of elementary social decisions as political decisions."⁴ Such art decisions are today turned immediately into conflicts about different cultures, or identity differences, or into simple gestures of the administrative regulation of cultural affairs, and so on.

Part of Ostojić's complex project in the opening days of the 49th Venice Biennale, 2001, when she behaved elegantly, dressed as the Angel/Escort of Mr. Szeemann, was also the publishing of a postcard with the title *Black Square on White*. Tanja Ostojić styled her black pubic hair in the form of a "Malevich" square, and organized it in a composition with her /white skin/ Mound of Venus. This photograph had already been taken in 1996, but only printed as a postcard work in 2001 for the 49th Venice Biennale. The Malevich-modelled suprematist pubic entrance, i.e., the "black square on white," as was stated on the postcard, could be seen only by Harald Szeemann, the director of the 49th Venice Biennale, in order for him to declare the "hidden Malevich" in between Ostojić's legs to officially be a part of the Biennale.

Some feminists were furious that she had exposed her beautifully shaped body as an object, as they thought, perhaps, that in the near future she could escape being an object of transaction within the corrupted art market, the art institutions and the tyrannical vampire figures that run the Art edifice. Contrary to such a legitimate, but "traditional" way of understanding Ostojić's happening/performance, the whole story and the photo/postcard with the diary at the end, as a perverted self-instrumentalization that relates to some repressed trauma(s) between visibility and invisibility and object-subject relations, I developed two approaches to grasp as precisely as possible these exceptionally powerful works.

The first approach concerns the authentic act of traversing the fantasy, the second concerns incarnation, both come from the psychoanalytic heritage, and last but not least, from my re-interpretation

⁴ Cf. Slavoj Žižek in talk with Sabine Reul and Thomas Deichmann, "The one measure of true love is: you can insult the other," at The Frankfurt Book Fair, October 2001.

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION



Tanja Ostojić: *Black Square on White*
2001
Photo: Saša Gajin

of the Žižekian thoughts.⁵ The black pubic square has nevertheless an additional, powerful connection to another square, precisely to Hitler's moustache, implying a certain process of fascisation in post-modern art, life and the body of the artist in present times.

Power reproduces itself only through some form of self-distance, by relying on the obscene disavowed fantasy rules and practices that are in conflict with its publicly visible installed norms. The obscene edifice of the Institution of Art is emphatically and pathologically conditioned by the disavowed subject's libidinal investments; the subjects are held by power through forms of phantasmatic eroticisation over them. The simply critical avant-garde assertion of the truth of the obscene art power edifice, that is, together with all its gallery and museum institutions, definitely vulgar, cold, manipulative and almost deprived of any aura, is not enough. Or, to stage the critique against the art edifice in the manner of a bloody, aggressive, destructive event is not enough either. The art power edifice is today already staging such bloody events by itself, in order to protect the abstract, sanitised situation it is publicly empowering!

So what are we as artists compelled to do in order to change things?

After all the possible strategies of subversion that were taken into account in the not so distant past, it is necessary to transpose this subversion on a different level. One of the possible strategies is the Žižekian *overidentification* with the power edifice. Based on Lacan, of course, Žižek elaborated the so-called overidentification. What is it about? Acting precisely in a way to overtly stage the phantasmatic scenario that is discussed, incited, and implied, but not made public. That means, if the art power edifice is relying on obscenity and promiscuity, and, if this is what the whole story about art and its power is, then the proposed process of overidentification will exactly over-display this in the public realm. Ostojić's projects that made visible in public precisely these libidinal relations between the artists and the curator, elaborate just such an overidentification strategy within the obscene art institution. Even more, such an act of overidentification performed publicly is, according to Lacan, via Žižek, an act that allows for the traversing of the fundamental fantasy. With such an act it is possible to radically bring into question our most inherent submission to the power art edifice.

⁵ Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, London and New York: Verso 1999, and Slavoj Žižek, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Lost Highway*, Seattle: The Walter Chapin Simpson Centre for the Humanities, 2000.

III. LAIBACH

The act of traversing the fundamental fantasy, as an overidentification strategy, was used in the public appearances of the music group Laibach in the 1980s in Ljubljana as well. Insisting on the literal repetition of the totalitarian ritual, the group succeeded in overtly staging the hidden phantasmatic scenario of the socialist totalitarian ritual. Laibach? Do you need your memory refreshed? Laibach appeared in the context of the Slovene/ex-Yugoslav punk movement, but nevertheless the group was immediately connected with “Nazism” because of the specific artistic actions they had carried out from the very beginning. The group’s first lead singer performed with cut lips and a bloodied face, in line with his insistence on adopting the costume and pose of Mussolini (he was wearing a pseudo-military uniform). The aim was to destroy the very concept of a rock band performance. This rejected every superfluous picturesque feature, and even the creation of a standard atmosphere, whilst retaining on stage only what Laibach believe to have mediatory value. This was also connected with the disappearance of the classic music performer. Performers were held back, without any individuality or psychological depth, because the more feelings are restrained, the stronger the emotions are.

It is important to precisely distinguish between the authentic act of traversing the fundamental fantasy from an inauthentic one, which even more obfuscates the invisible traces of emptiness of the void around which all things gravitate. One palpable political consequence of this notion of the authentic act, insists Žižek, is that in each concrete constellation there is one touchy nodal point of contention, which decides where one truly stands. In Laibach, from my point of view, this was undoubtedly the deep relation and rooted position of Laibach’s music within the industrial music movement of the 1980s, the most radical and avant-garde rock’n’roll invention. This is the point of absolute Laibach radicalism and not, a relation beyond the repetition of the totalitarian populist ritual, with any popular-populist music movement – which would have resulted in an absolute double obfuscation of the traces of the void around which the socialist totalitarian system rotated.

I am insisting on this difference, as today we have cases in art that

use just the formula of repetition, as it seems it is enough to repeat the logic of a certain work and “the Thing” will perform instead of us. But as is clearly stated here, this is a completely incorrect perception of the Laibach repetition of the totalitarian ritual. What is more, insisting on a simple populist logic always has the effect of a new homogenisation and fascisation of national identity with the consequence of an even stronger denial of trauma(s) and blind spots that are constitutive of present (not only transitional) societies.

What in Tanja Ostojić performance is the point of reference that leads us to the conclusion that we are dealing here with an authentic act of traversing the fundamental fantasy? In Tanja Ostojić it is precisely the pubic Malevich under her stylish gowns, the black square embodied, so to speak, on the topological place, and not some kind of “wallpaper, poster Malevich.”

IV. IN BETWEEN OSTOJIC'S LEGS

Malevich stands at the beginning of an art history edifice that completely evacuated its conditions of (im)possibility. Within the abstracted contemporary art power constellation the genealogy of the specific history of Malevich is totally evacuated. The Capitalist Art System has to constantly display its "beginning" as a state of exception, evacuated and sanitized from the historical, social and political context (abstract painting is a Malevich "invention"). Such a beginning within the First Capitalist Art Machine (*the bondage of the art market, art history and criticism*) has to be dissociated from the flesh, blood and fluids of the Other (in this case, Russian) space, from whence Malevich came. The so-called touchy nodal point of contention in art today is the cannibalistic attitude of the art capitalist power edifice that has displaced and abstracted everything and everybody only for the sake of its proper survival.

And if we are to re-articulate the way this real/impossible kernel is to emerge today in the field of representation, then it is possible only as, via Žižek, a tropological, and I will add, topological incarnation(s). What else is Ostojic's Black Square on White than a tropological incarnation on a topological place! It is a fleshy (*in-carne*) embodiment of the total evacuation of the historical/political and social conditions of the capitalistic edifice of modern art. Only as abstracted (devoured) by the Capitalist Cannibalistic Art System could it "survive" and be integrated into the Western saga of grand civilization. Therefore, in between Ostojic's legs the real/impossible kernel of the art power capitalist machine received the only possible radical and critical appearance that is an appearance in flesh and blood.

The true horror today is not the horrifyingly violent projects in the arts, as they function, paradoxically, as a protective shield that is fantasized as such, protecting us from the true horror – the horror of the abstract positioning of East and West, North and South, art and economy, state terrorism and activism. The psychotic generating experience in itself is that this abstract collaboration functions as a protective shield (which in the end protects only the obscenely visible art institutions and the

art power structures in themselves) and erases all traces of difference, activism, positioning, etc. This is a sign demonstrating the absolute inconsistency and multiplicity of the phantasmatic support and not only the inconsistency of reality in itself.

Ostojić's questioning of curators and artists within contemporary art can also be seen as an act of self-destruction. Wasn't she, so to speak, punished for such mis-behaving, not for going over the border, but for being so to-speak without a border? In 2003, strangely enough, the exhibition *Blood and Honey*, which may be seen as the new art from the Balkans, curated by H. Szeemann, did not include a work by Tanja Ostojić. Wasn't she punished because she – a Daredevil – dared to really question the institution of contemporary art from inside, instead of simply making her work conform to questions of identities and otherness, “duties” imposed by the art machine onto those coming from worlds other than the First one.

The video film *Be My Guest* (15.58 min, 2001) by Tanja Ostojić is based on reedited documentary materials taken from Ostojić's performance presented in Rome in 2001. Invited by the curator Bartolomeo Pietromarchi to have a performance at Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome, Ostojić decided to arrange an unusual setting for it. First she sent an invitation card in the form of a letter in which she announced her performance as a relaxed gathering with food, drinks and informal discussions about art. All to be seen as very civilized, – “You are cordially invited to a refined civilized dinner for two at the exhibition space in the Pallazo delle Esposizioni,”⁶ – a chat about art.

She staged a dinner with Bartolomeo Pietromarchi in the gallery space. After, as she announced in the same letter, she took a bath in the Jacuzzi that was, just as the dinner table, food and drinks, installed in the gallery space for this occasion. Not so long after she immersed herself naked in the bath in the gallery space, Pietromarchi in underwear joined her, as did the art critic Ludovico Pratesi. The ménage a trois of champagne and flirting almost came to a situation of a public coitus interruptus.

Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, as can be heard in the video, amplified the civilized dinner; the opera aria *Viene la Sera* (interpreted by

⁶ From the invitation letter by Tanja Ostojić.

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION



Tanja Ostojić: *Be My Guest*
With Bartolomeo Pietromarchi
2001

Maria Callas) was playing throughout the evening.

In what way are we to establish an interpretation of this performance/video work? If in contemporary art most things are about sex and corruption, and about libidinal/sexual fantasies and empowerment relationships, as I developed in the first part of this text, then Ostojić acted precisely in such a way as to overtly stage this phantasmatic scenario that is discussed, incited, implied, but not made overtly public. Ostojić in her performance/video took on the role of a “society bitch.” “Be my guest” means to invite the curators, and all protagonists from near and far involved in the work and functioning of the Art Institution, to perform the obscene games conducted in the background of the Art Edifice, now in an overtly visible, public, way. This overidentification is performed in front of our eyes in “flesh (in-carne) and ‘hot’ blood.” Tanja Ostojić performed a radicalised version of Federico Fellini’s *La Dolce Vita* (1960). What was only incited in the golden past of the *art nouvelle vague* is today made totally visible in the public gallery space. Furthermore, I can state that Ostojić displayed the secret of the artistic position in relation to curators too well. With this performance/video work she not only broke through the story of the supposedly strictly innocent art business relation between them, but also made visible what is at its core: the abhorrent Thing (via Žižek). This is why it is possible to understand the perplexity first and the disgust afterwards, always after this video is publicly screened. My interpretation is that the public is revolted when it sees “... the kernel of the art being ... turned into excrement.”⁷ “[Sex] also needs some phantasmic screen – . . . any contact with a ‘real’ flesh-and-blood other, any sexual pleasure that we find in touching another human being, is not something evident but something inherently traumatic, and can be sustained only in so far as this other enters the subject’s fantasy-frame. . . . What happens, then, when this screen dissolves? The act turns into ugliness – even horror.”⁸ On one side, at the dinner table, Ostojić assumed an almost protective role, knitting a protective web of fictions for the curator and us, on the other hand (in the Jacuzzi bath) we are witness to a process of the dismantling of all shields. Both are at this point just brutal *jouisseur*, beyond “good taste.”

⁷ Cf. Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, p. 68.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 183-84.

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION

To overidentification and incarnation, it is necessary to also add the process of derealisation.

First, in the gallery space we are faced with the so-called quotidian polite, civilized, aseptic, social reality, life and art itself: eating, talking,



Tanja Ostojić: *Be My Guest*
With Ludovico Pratesi
2001

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION

meeting and exchange about and within art. Then suddenly, but at the same time within the same context and with the same involved individuals, we get a different perspective; we are witness to this changing into the obscene hidden parallel world of the art institution. What we get is the



Tanja Ostojčić: *Sofa for a Curator*
With Stevan Vuković
2002

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION



Tanja Ostojić: *Vacation with a Curator*
With Edi Muka
2003

effect of coming face-to-face of the everyday of art with its phantasmatic supplement. What we see is the concentration of the field (civilized talk and proper behaviour) and its counter-field (the obscene retro scene of the art world) within the same framework (within the same gallery space and at the same time). The effect is a radical derealisation and de-psychologization, resulting in the absolute deprivation of the institution of art of its self-identity, and of course of the “natural” role, perspective and function of curators and artists.

As mentioned above, in 2002 as part of one of the opening events of the Graz based Rotor project *The Balkan Consulate Proudly Presents: Belgrade*, curated by the Belgrade curator Stevan Vuković, Tanja Ostojić washed the feet of Stevan Vuković. It is necessary to read this action in comparison with and through the act of Jesus washing the feet of Judas, which Jesus performed knowing that Judas had already betrayed him. The story goes as follows: “And during supper, the devil having already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God, and was going back to God, rose from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, girded Himself about. Then he poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.” The moment of madness is internal to the subject, and Ostojić does not want to immediately normalize this dimension of excess!

In 2003 Ostojić went on vacation with the Albanian curator Edi Muka. What we received from the project is “only” a series of photographs that were sent via e-mail, today accessible on Ostojić’s official web site. Ostojić’s exhibitionist relation with the Institution is here strictly and thoroughly mediated. The project transfers us onto the level of certain spectrality, in order to precisely underline this ghost-like dimension of the relation between the artist and curator. This relation never simply belongs only to the field of art, but it is always-already politically, culturally and socially mediated.

All these photographs, which are assumed to be authentic memories of an event on the beach, present themselves only and solely as fiction. These “fakes” point not to some deeper content meaning, but to the phantasmatic investment in each and every original.

V. PERVERSION

Seen through queer optics, the answer to what is political, what is art, and what is the role of the curator, troubles many histories and many places. The queer politicisation of a proper curatorial position is reconstructed in Tanja Ostojić and Marina Gržinić: *The Politics of Queer Curatorial Positions: After Rosa von Praunheim, Fassbinder and Bridge Markland* (2003) with a reference to Christopher Makos' portrait of Andy Warhol from the series, *The Altered Image* (1981).

Queer here has to be re-thought first and foremost in connection with the political within art and culture, or with taking the position that Homi Bhabha describes as *not-quite/not-right*.

The photograph *The Politics of Queer Curatorial Positions* establishes a relation not just between individuals and their private inequalities and sexual differences, but brings to the surface a much deeper structural inequality and disproportion affecting relations to history, philosophy and life, gender and politics. Behind *The Politics of Queer Curatorial Positions* is a patiently re-constructed genealogy. The most direct reference is its relation to the painting *Gabrielle d'Estrées and One of Her Sisters*, by the unknown master from the Fontainebleau School, around 1595. The subject of this painting is the mistress of the French King Henry IV, Gabrielle d'Estrées, portrayed on the right in the painting. The same painting had gone through a series of imitations and references: in 1965 Alain Jacquet presented a serigraphy with the title *Gaby d'Estrées*, and in 2003 Lancôme assigned the design of the poster for the 34th Trophée Lancôme to the artists Pierre and Gilles. Pierre and Gilles' solution was an iconic portrait of Elizabeth Jagger with an explicit reference to the portrait of Gabrielle d'Estrées.

Last but not least *The Politics of Queer Curatorial Positions* opens the universe of perversion. Perversion, according to Žižek, is to be seen as a defense against the threat of mortality and against the imposition of sexual difference. In the perverse universe, a human being can survive any catastrophe and is not forced to choose one of the two sexes. Perversion can be described by scenes from Tom and Jerry cartoons – Tom is run over by a heavy truck, dynamite explodes in his mouth, he is sliced to

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION



Tanja Ostojić and Marina Gržinić: *The Politics of Queer Curatorial Positions: After Rosa von Praunheim, Fassbinder and Bridge Markland*
2003

Photo: Jane Štravs

1. OVERIDENTIFICATION, INCARNATION AND DEREALISATION

pieces, yet the story goes on. Similarly the story goes on between artists and curators, their relation is a relation of absolute perversion.

2. IDENTITY: EACH BORDER IS OVER-PASSED

It should be obvious that my view of location and identity through theory, which is supposedly general, is actually rooted in a very situated, or rather, located theory. I will put situated theory parallel to situated knowledge, a term paradigmatically coined by Donna Haraway.⁹ It is not about knowledge produced in different locations or by different agents, which in the time of globalisation somehow works on the line of fairly equal positions of dissemination of their theoretical and critical work, as a kind of *bona fide* relativism. Quite the contrary: to think about located/situated theory is to think about theory and art practices that are open to critical investment and, moreover, which are never innocent practices.¹⁰

The term “located,” according to Katie King,¹¹ is not equivalent to local, though it can be appropriately partial, just as global does not always mean general or universal. What I want to say is that with local/located/location we can produce a very locally based activity that can be a politically powerful point of a universal action. I can, for example, state that the local Ljubljana subculture or underground movement of the 1980s¹² is intrinsically connected to a much wider formation, a global activist formation; or on a more “universal” level I could argue that the local transsexual St. Petersburg movement can be seen through

⁹ Cf. Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. Feminism and Technoscience*, New York and London: Routledge, 1997, pp. 15 and 314.

¹⁰ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Location of identity,” in: *Von mir nach dort: Standort und Identität*, eds. Hannes Luxbacher and Ruth Eva Horak, Vienna: Selene, 2002, pp. 99-105.

¹¹ Cf. Katie King, *Theory in Its Feminist Travels: Conversations in U. S. Women's Movements*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

¹² Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Video as civic discourse in Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia: strategies of visualization and the aesthetics of video in the new Europe,” in: *Culture and technology in the new Europe: civic discourse in transformation in post-communist nations*, ed. Laura B. Lengel, Stamford, Conn: Ablex, 2000, pp. 195-219.

a multi-layered global intersexuality formation.¹³ Located means, above all, distributed and layered, and it is quintessential for theoretical (philosophical, feminist and cultural studies) investigations of identity.

¹³ For Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki the intersexual body “is a paradigm for an alternative concept of the sexed human, a paradigm which allows people to reconsider rigid ideas about the masculine and the feminine and what has been traditionally theorized as ‘sexual difference.’ Actually an intersexual body does not possess both sexes, but is in-between sexes. What we can learn from the intersexual body is the possibility to assume a mobile and unfixed gender position. We propose the intersexual body as a virtual sexual identity.” Cf. Maria Klonaris and Katerina Thomadaki, “Intersexuality and Intermedia. A Manifesto,” in: *The Body Caught in the Intestines of The Computer & Beyond. Women Strategies and/or Strategies by Women in Media, Art and Theory*, eds. Marina Gržinič in collaboration with Adele Eisenstein, Maribor: MKC and Ljubljana: Maska, 2000.

I. NEGATIVITY

In our times identity is intrinsically connected with the most inherent processes of capital. It is important to identify the fact that contemporary global capitalism with its inherent de- or re-territorialisation processes creates conditions for the proliferation of new multiple identities. This production of fluid hybrid identities results in an inherent internal mark that is the failure of identity, identity perceived in its absolute incompleteness. In fact, no social movement can nowadays subsume to be an open-ended, democratic political project without taking into consideration and operationalizing the failure of identity, as well as the negativity, directly at the heart of identity.¹⁴

In which way is the process of the de- or re-territorialisation of capitalism connected with the politics of identity? What is one of the basic laws of capital? To acquire new territories, over and over again. The purpose of capital is to achieve the absolute limit or to exceed the very idea of limits, always transforming into, or rather behaving as a cannibal, devouring, internalising all that was before. Capitalism has always been a system of internal, correlative, contingent limits, of limits that constantly move and reproduce themselves on a broader scale. It is possible to see the scenario of postmodernism breaking with modernism in the line of capitalism that inverts all perimeters and limits to internal limits. Western national modernism and third world “modernism” both became the central part of capitalist territory, not as its bastard products, but as an inherently internal bastion project that was transformed, swallowed and spat out as a territory for future art capitalization. The Western world achieves its goal by creating new movements and styles, simultaneously reproducing and widening the limits of the market. Postmodernism is the aesthetics of the colonization of previous styles, the occupation of its own history transforming it in internal, correlative, contingent limits. Fredric Jameson’s periodisation, which defined postmodernism as the cultural dominant of multinational or consumer capitalism (modernism

¹⁴ Cf. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, London and New York: Verso, 2000, pp. 2-4.

as the cultural logic of monopolistic or imperialistic capitalism, and realism as the cultural logic of classic capitalism), is also an index of a progressive internal cannibalisation, establishing a process of constant de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation.

The history of capitalism is not limited to one original accumulation. When capital started reaching the limits of accumulation within the nation state, where there was suddenly hardly anyone left to be expropriated any more, the process of original accumulation started again at the beginning.¹⁵ Capital was forced to reproduce itself again and again, and this process of constant repetition and reproduction moved the notion of territory activating new sectors of production, distribution and exchange. De-territorialisation is not a process of erasing territories, but first and foremost it is a process of re-territorialisation: constant cannibalisation of old and constant re-invention of new ones. David Harvey elaborated the theory of the flexible accumulation of global capitalism, becoming “the one” after the original accumulation, to describe the emergence of new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological and organizational innovation.¹⁶ Biotechnology and genetic engineering are the trademarks in such a framework, whereas the Internet provides re-territorialisation its new address. “Sold out,” “broke down,” but always look for us at <http://www...> is the new re-direction of desires, facts and bodies in the global world.

The Internet is the purest sign of this process of flexible accumulation. It started as a territory without borders, without restriction; but today formal legislative and economic regulations are transforming the Internet into a new territory with old mechanisms of control, distribution of power and ways of accessing it, colonizing, controlling it daily, by computer corporations, multinational banking systems and investigative federal agencies. One can say that what was secretly capitalised in the still very near past is made visible with such processes on the Internet now. During

¹⁵ Cf. Hito Steyerl, “EXPO 2000: A Bourgeois Utopia,” in: *Gallery (Dante) Marino Cettina. Future Perspectives*, ed. Marina Gržinić, Umag, Croatia: Gallery Marino Cettina, 2001, pp. 136-143.

¹⁶ Cf. David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989, p. 147.

the first phase of capitalism, the time of its realistic doctrine of colonial and imperialist ventures with the goal of exploiting and expropriating space, the physical space, meaning land and geography, was at stake. But today it is no longer about territories in the classical geographical sense. Everything and everybody can be transformed into a new territory and can become part of the re-territorialisation process.

If we are ready to take an even more profound look at the paradigm proposed by the new historical formation, as M. Hardt and T. Negri perceive the Empire,¹⁷ we are in a situation in which instead of dealing with the triadic form of the national state-imperialism-modernity (where imperialism was an extension of the sovereign power of the nation states in Europe, beyond their borders), we have to take into consideration the duality between the Empire and postmodernity. This new historical formation, insist Hardt and Negri, with reference to Foucault (taking his ideas on the passage of the society of punishment to the society of control) and especially to Deleuze and Guattari (taking their view of biopolitics as the production of social beings), shows a high level of effective mobility of its power techniques and paradoxical coherency of its procedures of social control. In short, the Empire is not perceived only through economical moments, but even more so through institutional and organizational paradigms. The logic that moves this new formation of power is, according to Hardt and Negri, functional much more than mathematical, more rhizomatic than being simply inductive or deductive. This flexibility allows the “imperial machine” to function for certain in a horizontal way, as a systematic structure, as well as hierarchically, as a regime of “production of identity,” instead of using difference we have to deal with processes of abstraction and evacuation. The regime is well synchronized with de-territorialisation and re-territorialisation processes.

¹⁷ Cf. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2000.

II. LARA CROFT – TOMB RAIDER

Capital moves from the physical space to a virtual and “spiritual” one. Everything and everybody can fit the need to be a new territory. The transference, the transposition, the colonization is very precise. In establishing new territories, the borders are moved up and down and enlarged. It all depends how great the need for fresh blood, genuine identities, hybrid states of mind and virtual fluids is.

A paradigmatically fabricated case in town is the recently produced film from the Hollywood entertainment machine: *Lara Croft – Tomb Raider*. It is worth discussing this film, as it introduces new elements in the process of re-territorialisation. It presents the newly capitalized sector of physical and spiritual data transformed in a territory of flexible capital. The plot of this feature appears very simple to someone who will not go to the cinema to see the movie or make an effort to see the film elsewhere. A fleshy upper class woman named Lara Croft mixes the roles of James Bond, Spielberg’s Harrison Ford adventure man, *The Mummy*’s best girlfriend and so on, fighting and killing in order to save the world (you expected something else?), so we do not end up with eternal evil.

Each border is over-passed, trans-passed, eradicated or cannibalised. As Hardt and Negri stated,¹⁸ the new formation is a product of the radical transformation that reveals the immediate relation between power and subjectivity, which allows the new emperor a scale of domination that enters the deepest strata of the biopolitical world. It is a process of installing controlling devices, organizational mood, intellectual models and a perceptual habitat that attacks the deepest strata of consciousness, the bodies of the population, and at the same time it extends through inequalities of social relations. According to Hardt and Negri, this process is intrinsically connected with the judicial institutional order, which is perceived as the process of a possible instantaneous validity of the constitution of the way the state acts, its organisation and mobility: from civil war to a police operation.¹⁹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Hysteria: Physical Presence and Juridical Absence & AIDS: Physical Absence and Juridical Presence,” in: *Terminals*, eds. Connie

Lara Croft represents precisely such an intersection, where hypercapitalistic market entertainment apparatuses meet flexible accumulation strategies promising an eternal reproductive freedom. I am interested in creatures like Alien,²⁰ Lara Croft and monsters,²¹ as all of them display identity reproduction, genetic engineering and technoscience so painfully naturally. Lara Croft is almost like an old, strategically well re-designed colonial weapon for identity politics, which will transform, exploit and expropriate the whole system of female yearnings and the power structure of science fiction images. Lara Croft is the newly established little engine in the process of re-territorialisation, showing exactly what kinds of bodies and what forms of alliances called identity relationships are appropriate at the start of the new millennium and at whose cost, and to whose benefit.²² That she is a white, upper-class lady is equally important. But beware! The new domination does not consist of the establishment of a hierarchy simply based on cultural differences, but of the *evacuation of histories of domination and resistance through technological reproduction*.

The story of the woman cloned to be as good as her male partner or even better is a recreation of neo-imperialist and colonialist ventures in the moving image territory and in the representation and colonization of bodies. The white woman in such a context, coming from the USA or the West Europe is a tool for capital to produce clones of itself and its ritualistic imaginary pattern, in such a way becoming re-born over and over again, not to mention re-territorialisation, which is going on, via

Samaras and Victoria Vesna, Los Angeles: Intercampus Arts (ICA), 1999, pp. 51-61; also Marina Gržinić, "Hysteria: Physical Presence, Juridical Absence, and Aids: Physical Absence, Juridical Presence," in: Marina Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism and the Retro-Avant-Garde*, Vienna: Selene and Springerin, 2000.

²⁰ Cf. Marina Gržinić, "Who are the Mothers of the Monsters?" essay re-published in the new reading room of the Old Boys Network: <http://www.obn.org/generator>

²¹ Several of my papers deal with this topic. For example See *Springerin*, March-June 1999 on Translocation, Vienna.

²² Cf. Donna J. Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. Feminism and Technoscience*, p. 292.

Hito Steyerl,²³ only in places where it has not been before, and cloning itself in places where it is not present. Furthermore, Steyerl claimed: the bourgeois Utopia is literally created by the destruction and devastation of localities and of their transformations into non-sites, by all kinds of weapons, engines and bodily modifications.

Similar is the story of Hardt and Negri regarding the Empire: it is in and out, and at the same time it seems centralized, although it is without a centre; the Empire is “everywhere and no-where,” it is centralized and at the same time “u-topic,” which means it is a non-space! That means that dominant processes of production give primacy to communication, and co-operation, whereas biopolitical production has replaced production activities. The focus is on the production and reproduction of life in itself. The production of the surplus by workers in industry and factories is today replaced by an increasing immaterial intellectual power labour force, based on communication, which gives exploitation an immediate social dimension while introducing work within all social elements. Hardt and Negri propose the transformation of the productive process into a “cognitive turn.” Human contacts and interactions and intellectual work – the “accumulation of conscience, technology and skills” not only turn out to be a fundamental productive force, but also are one of the most influential industries for the production of theory, interpretations and fields of intellectual power.

From now on, women in blockbuster cinematic adventures will be subjected to the paternalistic male capital rules. This is the new millennium deal, newly invested and capitalized. The rules are clear: kill, beat and fight like our male pals. This is the way women can join the club. It seems that it is not necessary to think any more, just to act. In order to join the club of constant re-territorialisation it is important to repeat the same rules. Lara Croft reproduces the capitalist mode of an entertainment machine using the same violent methods of massacre as her male pals, in the same way they used to expropriate and to conquer all the others in the past, including women. The result is uniform, without any change, simply a reproduction of the pattern of dominance and the recurring ideological stories of the good and the bad guys, no, sorry, women.

²³ Cf. Hito Steyerl, “EXPO 2000: A Bourgeois Utopia,” p. 142.

The question is not if women are intelligent enough to kill, but if it is necessary for them (us) to be localized as a non-site (Hardt's and Negri's "non-space") in order to obtain physical and epistemological visibility, but without or only with a dubious identity, history, and context. In the past women were invisible, but with a hysterical "identity."²⁴

In short, identity is not a preformed category of being or a possession that one can have. The effect of a missing analysis is to treat identity as a preformed category, just being present at or absent from the scene of action. On the contrary, identity is always constituted within several practices and technologies. As Karen Barad²⁵ has argued, identity is always formed in intra-action, in a close system of stratified relationships. It is as well a part of the reconfigurations of knowledge and practices that constitute contemporary philosophy, art, cultural activism and theoretical analysis.

²⁴ Cf. Marina Gržinić, "Hysteria: Physical Presence, Juridical Absence, and Aids: Physical Absence, Juridical Presence," in: Marina Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism and the Retro-Avant-Garde*, Vienna: Selene and Springerin, 2000.

²⁵ Cf. Karen Barad in: Haraway, *Modest_Witness@Second_Millennium. Feminism and Technoscience*.

III. FEMININITY

What is the idea of femininity, or better phrased, what is the story of identity?

For women and men, for both, the masquerade is crucially important. Both identities are in relation to the manqué, castration and loss, although these identities are not, under any circumstances, symmetrical. A one-dimensional identity of woman does not exist, for her the function of veiling, of the macula, of the appearance and semblance (perhaps being symbolically a phallus) is crucial.

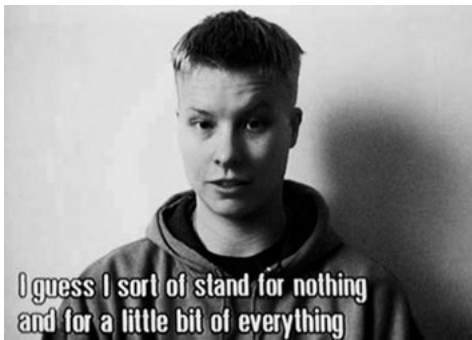
In the video film *Boygirl* by Aurora Reinhard²⁶ (Finland, 2002) we hear about the life of the persons on the screen, looking at their faces. While we expect from the visual introduction that these are men, the shock is produced by the fact that they are all women. The general public around these girls detects the same shock. They are shocked, they even flip out (as is said in the video by one of the interviewed woman), when they realize, looking at them, for example, in the swimming pool, that there where they expected to see something on their bodies, is – nothing. Instead of a penis, there is – nothing. What is more, this is precisely the primal scene of fetishism that clearly shows to us that under semblance or appearance is – nothing.

In the video film *Hostage: The Bachar Tapes* by Walid Ra'ad²⁷ (Lebanon/USA, 2001), we found the reversal of the Boygirl's described primal scene of fetishism. In *Hostage: The Bachar Tapes* initially we get the feeling that the whole narration is so to speak “nothing” special – a kind of a (simple), though dramatic documentary, that suddenly turns, and here the shock is even doubled, in something much more – in a fatal fiction. *Hostage: The*

²⁶ Aurora Reinhard, *Boygirl*, video film, 12.00 min., Finland, 2002 (awarded by the International Media Art Award 2002, ZKM and SWR Baden-Baden, Germany).

²⁷ Walid Ra'ad, *Hostage: The Bachar Tapes*, video film, 16.41 min., Lebanon/USA, 2001 (awarded by the International Media Art Award 2002, ZKM and SWR Baden-Baden, Germany).

2. IDENTITY: EACH BORDER IS OVER-PASSED



Aurora Reinhard: *Boysgirl*
Video film, Finland, 2002



Walid Ra'ad: *Hostage: The Baqar Tapes*
Video film, Lebanon/USA, 2001

Bachar Tapes is a work that starts as a kind of a Cinema Verité description of a person being held hostage in Lebanon. The initial interest for the narration is the effect that the whole story is told from the point of view of an unusual hostage who is rarely heard speaking about his misfortune in a global public setting. His name is Bachar, he is Lebanese and was held (being an employee at the American Embassy in Lebanon) for several years in captivity with 5 other Americans, hostages as well. (Pay attention: “Arabs” are very rarely in the position of victimized hostages, but are more often “portrayed” as those who take hostages). Until this point all seems “usual” in terms of a personal story that goes public.

The point of reversal is the visually formal “strange and bizarre” approach that contradicts the level of narration. From the first moment on a very precise set of visual “disturbances” (*queer interventions*) are added to this narrative “documentary style” of text narration. They instruct us, the viewer, in what way the video was filmed (in which way it was visually constructed in order to be seen as an existential confession for the camera eye), how it is to be dubbed (synchronized when shown out of the Arab world) and how it is to be understood when it becomes public. Moreover, step-by-step, the visual field “attacks” the narration from inside, the text is fragmented with a number of errors, drops, visual mistakes, from pauses in the editing process to drops of colours and badly edited cuts between frames.

We were expecting “too little” from this supposedly stereotypical documentary narration, but in the end we got “too much:” a story based on codes of complete arbitrariness. The story about the documentary that turns into a fiction, or fake (and vice versa), is carefully constructed in the video from the first moment on, but we cannot grasp it from the pure beginning. In this video it is clearly shown that the gaze (contrary to the eye) comes from outside, and emanates from the field of the Other. The feeling that emanates from this work is that named by Freud as *das Unheimliche*, as the frightening feeling of that familiar, something that we know from before, but which constantly retains a weird strangeness.

The video film by Walid Ra’ad can be seen in such a context as a pure radical travesty (if we think about *Boygirl* being a homosexual narrative), and as a work of complete arbitrariness. Ra’ad’s work is therefore a kind of reversed symmetry in a hysterical view. With its travesty we can think about Ra’ad’s video’s plot also as a farce, while *Boygirl* is inscribed within

the realm of tragedy.

Furthermore, I can think about *Hostage: The Bachar Tapes* as the most precise clash between an existential story pretending to be a document and the absolutely anti-documentary visual approach present in this work on the formal visual level. In Ra'ad's work we are confronted with the mise-en-scène of appearance in the mass media. There documentations, descriptions, and editing seem to be a pure semblance. But exactly in this consists the power of mass media, and this is as well the power of the video film work by Ra'ad. The result is a queer story that is *not* in balance with truth and falsity. Queer is not only therefore to be posited through different sexual practices and gender roles, but it has to be re-thought also in connection with political story telling or by taking the position that Homi Bhabha described as not-quite/not-right.

IV. STATE OF EXCEPTION

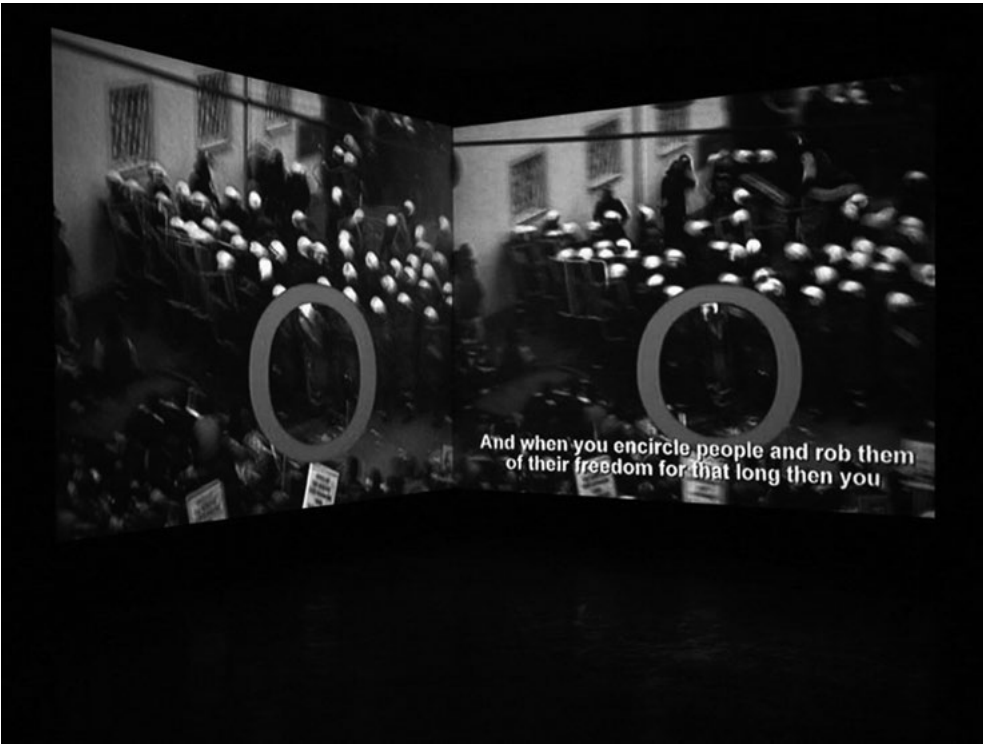
This is what democracy looks like! by Oliver Ressler²⁸ (Austria, 2002), records the first Austrian anti-globalisation demonstrations on the occasion of the World Economic Forum on July 1, 2001 in Salzburg. The demonstrations against the World Economic Forum (a private lobbying organization of major world capital) in Salzburg were ferociously handled by the Austrian police: 900 demonstrators were encircled and held captive by the police in the open space of the City of Salzburg for more than seven hours. The video film consists of visual material from the demonstration, edited and spliced together with the additional reflections of six demonstrators on the events in Salzburg. The video is a precise re-articulation of the event that also shows how mass media and the general public are caught up in a process of falsification and the misinterpretation of facts, relations and positions. The importance of the video work is multi-levelled.

First, the video is an accurate analysis and representation of the anti-global and anti-capitalist demonstrations in the heart of what is considered to be the Western liberal democracy. The analysis of the media, state repression forces, i.e., the police, the public expression of calls for civil rights to be upheld and the whole structure of the clash between the repressive state apparatus and the civil rights demonstrators is here recorded, edited and voiced from the centre(s) of the capitalist Empire and not from somewhere else, where basic democratic rights are under heavy attack anyway.

In short, from the way the video is structured it is possible to discern some of the key elements of contemporary capitalism, state repressive forces and how these conspire to cause what are supposed to be Western liberal democratic rights to disintegrate – and simultaneously to be reconstituted, albeit always in a different manner. When processes of the inalienable basic right to demonstrate, to criticize and to demonstrate

²⁸ Oliver Ressler, *This is what democracy looks like!*, video film, 30 min., Austria, 2002 (awarded by the International Media Art Award 2002, ZKM and SWR Baden-Baden, Germany).

2. IDENTITY: EACH BORDER IS OVER-PASSED



Oliver Ressler: *This is what democracy looks like!*
Video film, Austria, 2002

publicly ostensibly threaten the fabric of the capitalist machine, they are immediately transformed (in other words, without delay) in a state of exception, at the place of intervention. At such place, liberal democratic rights are simply reduced to paper tigers with no teeth at all. The video therefore presents/encodes democracy in contemporary capitalistic states as a point of deadlock between two blocks. And what is waiting to be put into action? It is precisely the “state of exception.” Giorgio Agamben, the Italian philosopher, stated in the mid-1990s that the juridical norm of 20th century capitalist democracy is precisely the law of exception, and what we witness in the video is likewise the complete and terminal fusion of the biological body, but without the polis.

In his *Political Theology*, pace Agamben, Carl Schmitt established the essential proximity between the state of exception and sovereignty. Schmitt’s definition of the sovereign is “the one who can proclaim a state of exception.” The very definition of the term constitutes a “point of disequilibrium between public law and political fact.” If the exceptional measures that characterize the state of exception, as Agamben argued, are “the result of periods of political crisis, and if they for this very reason must be understood through the terrain of politics rather than through the legal or constitutional terrain, they find themselves in the paradoxical position of legal measures that cannot be understood from a legal point of view; the state of exception therefore presents itself as the legal form of that which can have no legal form.” And, furthermore, with Agamben of course, we can argue that “if the sovereign exception is the original set-up through which law relates to life in order to include it in the very same gesture that suspends its own exercise, then a theory of the state of exception would be the preliminary condition for an understanding of the bond between the living being and law.”

Indeed, the encircled demonstrators, detained for several hours in an open space, actually embody the paradigm of the (concentration) camp rather than that of the open public space of the City of Salzburg. This is again something that Agamben formulated, saying that today the bio-political paradigm in Western civilization is the (concentration) camp and not the City.

Power is not simply in the hands of the sovereign, nor in the hands of a single class or group, and cannot therefore be articulated only at the level of a consciousness, as a case of distorted consciousness. The

materialistic paradigm is not enough here. That is why for Ressler in the video power is not the “obscure camera of ideology,” but through an analysis of movements, density of moods, body approaches in the contexts of the demonstration, Ressler produces a lucidity that can almost blind us, the viewers. For here power can be identified at the level of investment in the body. According to Foucault nothing is more material than the exercise of power; Ressler takes precisely this path toward visualization, to quote Foucault, showing “the architecture, anatomy, economy and mechanism of how the body is disciplined.”²⁹ This can be clearly seen in the structure of the video, which shows us the architecture of the body-body relationship (the en-circled process of pressure); the economy of deprivation (the hours of immobility) and the mechanism of fear and anxiety. And what is more important, here we see the structure of power in the field of vision – the power of the surveillance and the eye of the power, the video codes in the most current way.

There is a certain backdrop of visibility, a sorting of bodies, scales, lights and gazes, in the mass media, especially in corporate television. And it is trying to convince us by means of its purported general objectivity of the balance of forces in the field of active demarcation. What is hidden in such (TV) programs is the space between the eye and the gaze or the image of vision. The image of vision, as is consistently illustrated by Ressler’s video, is something other than the eye, it comes from the outside, emanates from the field of the Other. The gaze is always something precarious, contingent, dependent, and unstable. In general we can say that looking is something contingent. The excess, the surplus of the gaze that surpasses the naked eye is something that is structured around a *manqué*, a lack, and a disfiguration.

An objective camera eye simply does not exist, which is why the camera angle in Ressler’s video blends with the perspective of the demonstrators. As viewers we are in direct relation to the events by seeing them through the demonstrators’ viewpoint. The place of the image of vision and its reversal are crucial. And as regards the image of vision, it is more important to include the third element between the body and that image, namely power. The way the visual materials (visual

²⁹ Michel Foucault, “Body / Power,” in: Michel Foucault, *Power / Knowledge*, ed. C. Gordon, Brighton: The Harvester Press, 1980, p. 57.

documentation) and the statements/interviews of the six demonstrators are spliced together is not one of illustration. The images do not illustrate the statements or vice versa. The interviews in Ressler's video are specifically designed to encode what is at stake in the visual field of power.

What is clearly presented here is that the relationship between the visual and the discursive is not one of correspondence. There is no common territory, as it were, in which image and word happily meet; instead, they meet each other in a "non-space," but with a relation to power, as Foucault would say. This is exactly Ressler's video (medium) of power. Oliver Ressler's video is a masquerade about democracy. Under the mask of democracy in capitalistic liberal democratic systems today we encounter the (Scmittian/Agamben) – "state of exception."

Looking at these three videos by Ra'ad, Reinhard and Ressler through the only perspectives possible (namely *non-essentialism* and a strict *anti-documentary positioning of reality*), in the end we witness three stories of the power of the discrepancy between the gaze and the eye.

Last but not least, it is necessary to read the apparatus of repression in Ressler's video as a mere semblance of justice. Yet Oliver Ressler's video is also an act of power; it shows the internal power of the demonstrators, as they are capable of articulating precisely what their own position is, rethinking their moves, contemplating their present position and their possible future defeats. With its proper exhibitionism the anti-globalisation movement claims back for itself a position of power. Because power is grounded in the spectacle. The video is therefore also a process of rendering the body of the anti-globalisation movement spectacular (but without commercialisation!). To put it in a nutshell: it is much better to exhibit power than to be the instrument of power, such as the police are – the apparatus of repression – in the final instance. Through the video analysis, the anti-globalisation movement completes a short circuit: it exhibits power embedded in its spectacular function. It is a re-articulation of the proper position as an emancipatory act.

3. THE TIME-SPACE PARADIGM: BIOMECHANICS & MEMORY

The year 2000 displayed a completely different idea of what we think about territory. Territory as a pure geopolitical and above all physical, material, space is gone. Territory is a much broader concept. Our intellectual concepts, our books, our works and, last but not least, all our archives are the new territories. Giving, contributing concepts, is, therefore, a gesture of expanding and broadening the concept of territory itself.

Territory is theorized here in connection with the Capital machine, which means it is inherently connected with the two most important processes of political economy and the functioning of Capital: re-territorialisation and de-territorialisation (see also Hardt and Negri: *Empire*). In the first period of capitalism (if we think of the Fredric Jameson conceptualisation) the question of territory was connected with its geographical aspect; it was bound to colonial ventures. Today surplus value can be produced also in such dematerialised territory, as is the case with the Internet. Internet space is a territory in which money is invested and where marketing is connected to the stock market.

That is why instead of talking about the production of space, which was connected with the modernistic venture and the colonial mind, we have to talk about the production of time in relation to territory and space. Space is gaining a new dematerialised form, and it is all bound to time. Access to such space is inherently connected to questions of time, to the speed of modems, as there is no longer a question of the conquest of a physical territory, but of converting time into accessible zones.

I. TEMPORISATION OF THEORY AND TIME

How can we also think about theory being a territory? Today theory is first and foremost perfectly integrated within the new information mode that governs capitalistic societies. Theory is not connected with knowledge in the old, humanistic sense of the word, but with information. And the efficiency of information is again connected to time; the speed of the distribution of information is what ultimately produces its surplus value. Theory is first and foremost a tool of colonization through information. This means that there is a huge battle going on within the field of theory. This battle consists in setting clear borders who, when and what will be interpreted. It is of crucial importance, who will give the first interpretation of some processes, which processes will be taken as pioneering ones, and in what way will the process of understanding be applied. To be even clearer: there is a whole new colonization going on in the world, mostly through processes of language translation and understandability. Many interpretations that do not come from the Western Europe and North American context have no access to primal theoretical readings; most of the writings are brought into question with constant remarks that the text is not enough clear. Furthermore, never ending clarifications are requested, with the writers of these interpretations who come from Other worlds than the First capitalist one being subjected to strange police methods and their time consumed and manipulated without borders, with constant requests for the re-adjustment of the thesis displayed in their texts. In the end in most cases, manuscripts, essays, texts, papers, etc., are not published at all, being, anyway, already-always never (ever) clear or convincing enough! If they are indeed published, then it is possible to see editorial censorship in the form of changing the dates when the thesis were originally established or with the addition of modifications to the facts in the texts.

The production of time, as I termed this new mode of production of territory, and theory, body and mind is therefore replacing the older modernistic production of space (according to Henry Lefebvre, who wrote a book with such a title in 1910). The production of time is a

process that involves the temporisation and production of time, similarly, as was the case with space and territory. Both space and time are not something natural, but rather they are subjected to artificial processes of change, production and modification. That is why Lefebvre wrote about the production of space. The Internet, although being a purely dematerialised unit, is perceived as a new space, inherently crucial for the production and dissemination of the surplus value of capital. How can we state that the Internet is a space vitally bound to capital? Because it is controlled, censored, economically invested, and its borders are regulated. All became perfectly clear after the September 11, 2001 attack on the Twin Towers in New York. Servers within the Internet, perceived as spaces of absolute freedom, were shut down for a week, the stock exchange lost a significant percentage of its investments and the Internet police intensified the control and monitoring of the Internet.

The temporisation of time is a process showing that time is not a natural, and even not at all, a dimension that is in synchronicity with our psychological feeling of time.

Time was accelerated and new categories of time emerged (also in relation to history, which I can here very quickly just summarize as long, short and immediate history) that changed the perception of any information. This temporisation of time, the production of time, the way in which time is speeded up, changes with technology. Each technology, and the last is Tele-presence (accessing real spaces through the Internet via Tele-directed-robotics), is used to shorten this difference between time scales.

That is why it is possible to say, via Richard Beardsworth's prophetic thoughts, that we can detect a process of constant tension between the nature of the technical tool that allows the mediation of time and the human experience of time. This tension can most immediately be seen with the digitalisation of memory support-systems and the digitalisation of archives: our experience of time is being rapidly foreshortened, creating a tension between the international nature of the electronic techniques and the corporal realities that make up much of human life.³⁰ It is also clear, via Beardsworth, that future technical intervention into

³⁰ Richard Beardsworth, *Derrida & the Political*, New York and London: Routledge, 1996.

the genetic “ingredients” of what is perceived as human will accelerate processes of evolution at such a speed (if this will remain the right term, again according to Richard Beardsworth) that present conceptions of history, inheritance, memory and the body will need to be dramatically reorganized, if the definition of what is “human,” and what “is not,” is not to become a monopoly game between the technosciences and capital (Beardsworth).

To prevent such a situation it is possible through processes that grasp as accurately as possible the radically artificial condition of the production of time and space, and the aspects of technology that are inherent to such productions. Time and space in their relation with technology and capital, for example the connection of biology and genetics through technology, can help at least to delay (but never to prevent, unfortunately) some of the future catastrophes and to give contingency a new powerful space.

Furthermore, it is important to grasp that without technical devices today we cannot re-capture the experience of time: the dimension of remembering and the dimension of anticipating time. Without memory support techniques, from photography to CD-ROMs or the Internet and DVD archives, the experience of the past would also not be possible.

The temporisation of time precisely articulates a lifetime as a process deeply rooted in prosthetics.

II. IT'S JUST QUESTION OF TIME

Slow Time. Quick time. The reversal of time. It is important to precisely understand this constructed character of the time-space paradigm that is subjected to constant re-articulation. The same is true for real-time telecommunications, operating at the absolute speed of electromagnetic waves, allowing local users of the Internet to communicate with any point on Earth, as if there were no geographical or spatial distance.

The relation with technology is of crucial importance; technology gives more and more to time an amplified dimension of fictionality and spectrality. That is why living in the age of absolute fictionalisation displays a constant need to point out that this or that is going on in *real time*. Time is fictionalised at such a level that we are losing the dimension of the "reality" of time.

To understand the significance of what is going on in this shift in the space-time paradigm, we have to constantly, so to speak, in time, map out, interpret the changes in the time-space paradigm, and as well to experience the sensations produced by various technologies of moving and digital images, e.g., photography, the film apparatus and virtual reality.

We are dragged by time and this is why we have to articulate this relation in time.

I have made use of two paradigms, or time models, developed by Gilles Deleuze in the 1980s in two books: *The Movement-Image* (first published in 1983) and *The Time-Image* (first published in 1985). The two principal time-machine paradigms of the image conceived by Deleuze: the movement-image and time-image, I have described as a spatial rendering of time, in order to suggest a third model: the virtual-image – which would be appropriate for an understanding of the temporal and spatial characteristics of cyberspace.

I propose the following models of images with the following temporal, spatial and compositional characteristics:³¹

³¹ Cf. Marina Gržinić, "Deleuze's time-image models and the virtual-image," in: *Polygraph*, no. 14, Durham: Duke University, 2002, pp. 101-114.

- the movement-image – indirect-time interval – exteriority of space – organic form
- the time-image – direct-time interval – anteriority of space – serial form
- the virtual-image – real-time interval – non-space – synthetic (artificial, simulated) form

What occurs within the virtual-image is, first and foremost, a reversal of the basic relation of time and space established by the Deleuzian cinematic images: time rendered through space. In the virtual-image, space is rendered through time. Even more in the virtual image, the interval disappears; real-time is no longer (in)direct time, but a time without intervals, where space has the value zero (non-space). Moreover, the non-space, which may be defined as a cyberspace index, produces a meaning in which the distribution of information is the result of a complete process of computer calculation. This is not the movement-image's differentiation and integration of meaning, nor the time-image's relinking of irrational divisions, but a simulational process. Instead of the organic form of composition that belongs to the movement-image, and the serial form of composition that belongs to the time-image, the virtual image produces artificial and simulated (synthetic) forms.

If for the two Deleuzian forms of images we can still find some elements of naturality, some psychological dimension of the sense of reality of time, in the virtual-image the real time interval points to the fact that there is not (any) more time left. The real time interval covers exactly this traumatic experience of having forever lost (the organic dimension of) time; the real time interval is the pure sign of the artificiality of time.

In the previous century the constructed dimension of time was still termed with the sense of naturality.

The production of time, as I termed this new mode of production, which is replacing the older modernistic production of space, is a process that involves the temporisation of time, which changes therefore with a change in the technical process that forms it.

I intend to present two performance productions from Ljubljana, Slovenia, which play exactly on specific elements of this production of time for understanding the changes that are going within body, territory, memory and theory. Moreover it is not that these two performances that I intend to analyse in the following text simply describe the new

paradigm, they also develop some new notions precisely thanks to changes in the time-space paradigm. They play on and against the consequence of the space read through time, and elaborate further the notion of the temporisation of time that fatally affects memory, which is no longer perceived as an archive.

The first performance that will be analysed is a work by the Slovenian theatre director Dragan Živadinov, active in the field of theatre and performance from the beginning of the 1980s onward, and one of the founding members of the collective Neue Slowenische Kunst. Živadinov, with his theatre group Cosmokinetic Cabinet Noordung Theatre, performed *Biomechanics Noordung* in 1999. The name of his theatre group derives from Herman Potočnik Noordung, a Slovene pioneer, a world known astrophysics researcher (Herman Potočnik Noordung, 1892-1929).

The second performance to be interpreted, entitled *Camillo memo 4.0: The Cabinet of Memories – A Donating Tears Session*, is a hybrid performance action directed and produced in 1999/2000 by Emil Hrvatin. Emil Hrvatin is a well known Slovene theatre director and writer, whose interest in theatre is very much inflected by the work of Jan Faber, about whom Hrvatin, active from the 1990s on, wrote extensively in Slovenian and in International publications.

III. THE BODY AND BIOMECHANICS

In the video entitled *Transcentrala – NSK State in Time* by Marina Gržinić and Aina Šmid from 1993, the theatre director Dragan Živadinov from Ljubljana explains one of his theatre works, conceived as an almost imaginary trajectory to be displayed in the future. In the beginning, in 1993, when Živadinov explained his future theatrical concept, it sounded like a myth that would slowly become a reality.

“On 20th April 1995, a performance will be premiered in Ljubljana at 8.00 p.m. There will be 12 actors appearing in the premiere, all of whom live in Ljubljana. The theme will be William Shakespeare. The first reprise is due in 2005, i.e., 10 years later, with the same actors, at the same time, same place, same costumes and same stage design. Everything is to be the same unless someone dies. The deceased will be replaced by a symbol. According to the *mise-en-scène*, there, where the live actor performed his task, communicating verbally with his co-actors, a symbol will be placed. The spoken lines of deceased actresses will be replaced by a melody within the same timing. The spoken lines of deceased actors will be replaced by rhythm. The live actors will act as if the deceased were present. The second reprise is due in the year 2015. The whole action will thereby be repeated. Any deceased will be replaced by symbols. The third reprise is due in 2025, the fourth in 2035. The last reprise is to take place in 2045. By that time, all the actors will be dead. I will be alive and the stage will be full of symbols.”

The importance of this performance, which has thus far been realized precisely as was announced, so we have to wait for the next step in 2005, is the implicit process of the production of time. Time is produced also with Živadinov’s dis-limitation and the limitation of a proper lifespan and of his collaborators.

On December 15 1999, Dragan Živadinov’s Cosmokinetic Cabinet Noordung Theatre performed Biomechanics Noordung in a Russian IL-76MDK cosmonaut training aircraft, registration RA 78770, at an altitude of 6,600 meters. The aircraft was stationed at the Yuri Gagarin

Cosmonaut Training Centre, based in Star City, just outside Moscow.³²

Dragan Živadinov's Cosmokinetic Cabinet Noordung Theatre performed its Biomechanics Noordung in zero gravity. The performance by Živadinov involved actors who for one minute performed in zero gravity. The public was not included, but the performance was filmed. The actors wore special costumes re-designed from the time of the Meyerhold theatre research, and the internal space of the aircraft was adapted into a theatre space, decorated with objects from the Russian constructivist art period, which flourished immediately after the October Socialist Revolution, around 1920. The Biomechanics Noordung performance consisted of a repetition of choreographed Biomechanics movements.

To be precise, the Biomechanics Noordung production team was as follows – attractor: Dragan Živadinov; artifacts: Dunja Zupančič; stage instruments: Staša Zupančič; architect: Andraž Torkar; organization and coordination: Project Atol Flight Operations.

Živadinov's Noordung Biomechanics analyses contemporary theatre and performance phenomena through – in relation to or in spite of – the plethora of new technological and electronic means. The investigation is developed through an intersection of theatre, the body, mobility, subjectivity and mechanics, with more general social phenomena and their realities, and especially with contemporary theories on the physiological changes in the human skeleton at zero gravity. This later connection has to be viewed in relation to possible (scientifically confirmed) changes in bone structure that affect people who spend a longer period in zero gravity.

Živadinov inspects the kinetic conceptualisations of new technologies

³² Cf. Marina Gržinić, "Dragan Živadinov's Noordung Cosmokinetic Cabinet Theatre and Emil Hrvatini's Cabinet of Memories = Dragan Živadinov Noordung Kozmokinetikus Kamraszinháza és Emil Hrvatkin Emlékezet-szobája," in: *Digitized bodies – Virtual Spectacles*, ed. Nina Czegledy, Budapest: Ludwig Museum - Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001, pp. 71-85; cf. also Marina Gržinić, "Aesthetics of the digitized body," in: *Selected papers of the 15th International Congress of Aesthetics*, ed. Kiyokazu Nishimura, Tokyo: University of Tokyo, 2003, pp. 81-86; and cf. Marina Gržinić, "Neue Slowenische Kunst," in: *Impossible histories : historical avant-gardes, neo-avant-gardes, and post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*, ed. Miško Šuvaković and Dubravka Djurić, Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 2003, pp. 122-269.



and elaborates on issues of simulation, simulacrum and cyborgs/cybernetics/cybernauts. The contemporary time and space paradigm takes on a central role in his Cosmokinetic Cabinet Noordung Theatre, as does the problem of the “subject” as an actor and performer in the electronic era. With Živadinov, the actor has become a terminal, a final location of numerous networks, placed within a global structure of data-webs, into the current world of cybernetic space. The relation between zero gravity and cyberspace is a topological and topological one. What does this mean? Cyberspace is space where physical space has a value of zero. Through the Internet, on the other hand, it is possible to reach every space – what counts is just time. Zero gravity is the most complete and implosive paradigm of space in cyberspace. It implies a zero dimension of space and it is a final, terminal condition of the total extrapolation of space.

In his seminal book, *Terminal Identity*, Scott Bukatman defines terminal culture or cyberspace as the era in which the digital or tactical has replaced the tactile. He further argues (using Jean Baudrillard’s terms) that physical action in terminal situations – and what else is the zero gravity situation? – returns as a strategy of communication, combining tactile with tactical simulation (Baudrillard).³³ The visual and rhetorical recognition of terminal space therefore prepares the subject for a more direct, bodily engagement (Bukatman).³⁴ The only real engagement is through his/her body, which is the only possible space that res(is)ts when we are in cyberspace.

Shall we think more precisely about virtual reality space? It is a space that convulses the body to the point of vomiting. In virtual space we have the feeling that we will vomit. It is the most internal-body-swallowing of

³³ Cf. J. Baudrillard, *Simulations*, New York: Semiotext (e), 1983, p. 124.

³⁴ Cf. S. Bukatman, *Terminal Identity*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1993.

any space exteriority. The result is a convulsion and the process of trying to empty the stomach, while the brains are completely immersed in or sucked in by the virtual space. This is the most direct engagement of the body in space, it is a position of the body similar to an inside-out glove.

Moreover, cyberspace is grounded upon, or concentrates on, the cybernaut. Timothy Leary reminds us that: "The word cybernetic-person, or cybernaut, returns us to the original meaning of 'pilot' and puts the self-reliant person back in the loop."³⁵ The construction of a new cyberspatial subject thus relies upon a narration of perception followed by kinesis (Bukatman), piloting, mobile distancing, travelling and gravitation. This is exactly the recapitulation of the position of the actor generated by Živadinov's process of physiognomic reconstitution at zero gravity. The actors here are astronauts, they perform while travelling through the zero gravity space. Similarly to Živadinov, or vice versa, in order to constitute electronic space as a paradigm or a matrix that is susceptible to an act of comprehension, writers such as Jean Baudrillard or William Gibson also rely on metaphors and actions of human perception based on mobility.

Noordung Biomechanics refers to a process that combines life with mechanics. Biomechanics is about motion and the action of forces on bodies. The primary domain of Biomechanics is physiology, i.e., the science of dealing with the functions and vital processes of living organisms and mechanical movements. Biomechanics, as first researched by Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), is today used widely in military medicine. Vsevolod Emilevich Meyerhold (1874-1942), with his ideas regarding the Revolutionary Theatre, in which the theatre is perceived as a mobile space with constructivist elements, introduced biomechanical elements into the theatre as agents of dramatically performed actions. Živadinov takes precisely these points from Meyerhold's research and transposes them in his theatre research.

It is also important to emphasize that the word Biomechanics cannot be found in *Webster's New World Dictionary*, but is fully present in the Russian tradition from theatre to physiology. In this context, I can state that what is for the developed "West" associated with genetic engineering, was

³⁵ Cf. T. Leary, "The Cyber-Punk: The Individual as Reality Pilot," in: *Storming the Reality Studio*, ed. L. McCaffery, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1992, p. 252.

in Russia connected with Biomechanics. Biomechanics is research on movement, kinesis and body transformations, which are also changing with technology. Meyerhold's research into the Biomechanics Theatre concerned the actor as an acrobat, but later this relation changed. The dwelling of the body in zero gravity (also perceived as a type of Biomechanics) shows that the changes effectuated on the body are deeply internal. Today it is known that dwelling for a long period of time in zero gravity, at least for one year, results in an inner change to human bones and the skeleton. This is why Biomechanics within zero gravity can be seen as a fundamental process for radical changes in humans' physio-structures.

Živadinov differentiates between three stages in Biomechanics, with respective technological gadgets, political references and body parts:

1. Historical Biomechanics (until the beginning of World War II)
2. Tele-presence Biomechanics (which began with World War II and, I will add, is connected with the increasing expansion of research in rocket technology and astronautics)
3. Cosmic Biomechanics (inaugurated by Živadinov's Noordung Biomechanics).

These levels of suggested historical changes are important because they connect Biomechanics to other levels of differentials, which I call structural differentiations between optical, electronic and computer-digital levels of technological influence on the body, memory and action.

Historical Biomechanics can be seen as the period of optical technologies, where radio is the most important medium, and the body of an actor participating in a historical biomechanical performance, is the body of an acrobat. In Tele-presence Biomechanics, television has become the central apparatus, and it is thus not difficult to see the connection with our own era of electronic technologies and images. The actor in Tele-presence changes from an acrobat into an experimental body. The computer, i.e., for Živadinov, the "intelligent television," is the path to the third stage. Cosmic Biomechanics implies the politics of the digital machine; this is a path from talking-head linear TV to a 3D living form at zero space gravity. Cosmokinetic Cabinet Noordung Theatre is all about the science of motion and the action of forces on bodies. The project is about different bodies in parallel worlds: physical bodies, sexual bodies, social bodies, media bodies and political bodies. Each territory produces a border body. In Cosmic Biomechanics, the change is from muscles to

skeleton. Russian Cosmonaut Sergei Konstantinovich Krikalev, who spent more than a year in the zero gravity ambience (1 year, 5 months and 10 days), showed this clearly. He experienced, according to Živadinov, changes in his bones and skeletal structure.

Possible other examples of these historical changes within the body, memory and action are (precisely in the following order): Cindy Sherman (New York), Dumb Type (Kyoto), Orlan (Canada) and Stelarc (Australia). In the case of Cindy Sherman, the body is a screen used for all sorts of changes, for the complete masquerade of identity. Cindy Sherman copies and reconstructs images from films (stereotypical images of women) and impersonates them as iconic photographs. She uses her body as a screen for projection and transformation, but still everything stays on the superficial level, nothing changes inside; all is just re-played in front of the photographic camera, using styling and make-up techniques. A much more radical step was taken by the actors from the Japanese performance group Dumb Type. The leading actor and director of the group was HIV positive when he established the group. That means that the Dumb Type actor was not a theatre character (as in the case of Cindy Sherman), but a live character. The leading actor in Dumb Type was an Aids bomb, he himself was the reservoir of the virus – he was the virus – and the potential form of the illness. Being HIV positive, he continually reminded us of his virus potentiality that waited to become a reality. Orlan performs operations on her body, as is in the case with beauty corrections. Orlan uses surgical operations as body performances. All is filmed and presented with “bloody” details in front of the public. Orlan is a regression, a pre-final form of a cyborg. Orlan is a modern Frankenstein who reconsiders cosmetology much more seriously than cosmology. A more advanced step is Stelarc, who technologically transformed/upgraded/enhanced his body.³⁶ Stelarc is not just a (superficial) actor, nor a life agent (as the Dumb Type character), but a transformative agent, a body transformed deeply by means of technology. He is the potential cyborg (muscles manipulated through the Internet).

³⁶ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Stelarc – politics of the body,” in: *Stelarc: political prostheses & knowledge of the body = politična proteza in vednost telesa*, ed. M. Gržinić, Ljubljana: Maska and Maribor: MKC, 2002, pp. 95-109; and also cf. M. Gržinić, “Stelarc: politics of the body,” in: M. Gržinić, B. Massumi, T. Murray, Stelarc, *Alternate interfaces – Stelarc*, Monash University: Faculty of Art and Design, 2002, pp. 9-21.

IN COSMIC BIOMECHANICS THE ACTORS ARE VECTORS.

The concept of the body that I am interested in mapping into cyberspace subjectivity is not simply another representational imperative driven by the collapsing of the body into the hyper-real domain of simulation. It is a concept of negotiation between different registers: the natural world, projected subjectivity and human/machine links, etc. Such a concept of the body in cyberspace, re-read through Merleau-Ponty's philosophy,³⁷ returns the body back to the Freudian epistemology of the "body that thinks" (David-Menard). The body that thinks is not only against any mind/body dualism, but it insists on a mysterious corporeal and representational dynamic beyond the limits of any single theory.³⁸

As Živadinov argues, at zero gravity Biomechanics it is no longer a question of psychodynamics', but of space vectors. This is why Živadinov talks about Krikalev's vector. In zero gravity ambience in general, and in Biomechanics Noordung potentiality, the body carries the possibility of inner transformation. Bodies as vectors. Vectors are carriers. Mass, speed and acceleration are typical vector dimensions characterized by orientation, path and sum. The body starts to function as a vector at zero gravity: the body gains the absolute sum of intensity. The transformation of the actor's skeleton is potentially the transformation of Biomechanics: inner bone substance can be used as food or fertilizer.

Algorithms describe these changes. An algorithm is any special way of solving a certain kind of mathematical problem, just as LIFE is a very simple computer program. Therefore it is possible to say that "LIFE" is a special algorithm, connected to a series of computer extrapolations, implying again and again the absolute artificiality of life. This is not the disappearance of life, but the artificilization of its parameters.

Moreover, generally speaking, what is going on in zero gravity can be described in the following way: gravity pulls all bodies in the Earth's sphere, toward the Earth's centre. In the zero gravity ambience, the force

³⁷ Cf. M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London: Routledge and Keagan Paul, 1962, pp. 106, and 187.

³⁸ Cf. M. David-Menard, *Hysteria from Freud to Lacan: Body and Language in Psychoanalysis*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988, p. 8.

by which every mass attracts and is attracted by every other mass is zero. In such conditions exist artificial satellites – objects artificially put into orbit around the Earth –, astronauts, and as well as all the objects in a spacecraft. Bodies move away from the centre of rotation, and therefore, Earth's gravitation is abolished. The bodies in the spacecraft, from a drop of dust to a drop of water, are weightless. One might think about this problem in terms of urinating or of the fuel for the spacecraft. It is interesting that in 1966 it was commonly stated that research on behaviour and living in a zero gravity atmosphere had shown no physiological or biological effects upon the human body.

Real bodies invaded the zero gravity space, presenting a vertiginous display of their very depthlessness. This depthlessness carries a political re-articulation of the first, second and third worlds. Relying on time, having the possibility to access any place on the Earth through the Internet for example, being constrained only by the speed of the connections of our modems, all this creates a fake sense that every space is at hand. Certain places and territories can therefore disappear easily. It is possible to understand Noordung Biomechanics as the re-articulation of this situation. In short, if certain spaces are becoming “zero,” are being erased from our visibility, as Eastern Europe with its specific history for example, then to make visible this zero historical position is possible only in zero gravity, out of the World, in an Other (parallel) space.

In Noordung Biomechanics both the theatre and performance meet the Real. If we think about theatre as a symbolic space of pure representation and about performance where the actor articulates his or her own non-mediated reality, then the Noordung Biomechanics' actor transformed into an astronaut is the traumatic Real of the theatre and performance. Why? One should bear in mind that the Real, the indivisible remainder that resists its reflective idealization, is not “a kind of external kernel which idealization, symbolization is unable to swallow, to internalise, but the irrationality, so to speak the madness, of the very founding gesture of idealization/symbolization.”³⁹

³⁹ S. Žižek, *The Indivisible Remainder*, London and New York: Verso, 1996, pp. 51-52.

IN THE END THERE IS IN FACT A FICTION:

“On 20th April 1995, a performance will be premiered in Ljubljana at 8.00 p.m. There will be 12 actors appearing in the premiere, all of whom live in Ljubljana. The theme will be William Shakespeare. The first reprise is due in 2005, i.e., 10 years later, with the same actors, at the same time, same place, same costumes and same stage design. Everything is to be the same unless someone dies. The deceased will be replaced by a symbol. According to the *mise-en-scène*, there, where the live actor performed his task, communicating verbally with his co-actors, a symbol will be placed. The spoken lines of deceased actresses will be replaced by a melody within the same timing. The spoken lines of deceased actors will be replaced by rhythm. The live actors will act as if the deceased were present. The second reprise is due in the year 2015. The whole action will thereby be repeated. Any deceased will be replaced by symbols. The third reprise is due in 2025, the fourth in 2035. The last reprise is to take place in 2045. By that time, all the actors will be dead. I will be alive and the stage will be full of symbols.” (Živadinov)

IV. MEMORY AND TIME

Camillo memo 4.0: The Cabinet of Memories – A Donating Tears Session is a hybrid performance action, a tableau vivant installation, or simply a theatre play for one visitor/user/participant at a time. It was directed and produced in 1999/2000 by Emil Hrvatin, a theatre director from Ljubljana, in order to re-appropriate the idea of memory itself in the era of fluid body contemporaneity and virtuality. The Cabinet of Memories originated from the ideas of the Italian Renaissance master of the art of memory, Giulio Camillo (1480-1544).

What we can learn of the following project is that in the time of new media technologies memory is a question of time, of a process of temporisation, and not simply an archive. The constitution of memory is not possible without technology. The (digitalised) technological support of memory is the prosthetic tool that allows memory to be effective.

In *The Cabinet of Memories*, the visitor/participant/memory-retriever can enter three rooms/boxes/cabinets: that of Individual Memory, that of Collective Memory and, if neither of these works out, the participant is asked to enter the Cabinet of Physiological Memory.

In the Cabinet of Individual Memory, a celestial blue satin-covered room/box/cabinet (1 x 1.2 x 2m), there is only a mirror on the wall opposite to the box's entrance door. The door of the box closes soon after one of the participants expresses a wish to participate. When s/he has found her/himself left alone, s/he can spend as much time alone as desired in the cabinet. The memories recollected here are the most valuable, and the participant is awarded with a golden certificate. But

Emil Hrvatin: *Camillo memo 4.0: The Cabinet of Memories – A Donating Tears Session*
1999/2000

The Cabinet of Individual Memory
Photo: Igor Omahen





you will rightly ask yourself: how are we sure that s/he was successful in re-collecting memories? Hrvatin has constructed an engine, special test tubes in the form of pyramidal eyeglasses by mean of which tears are collected from the visitor's eyes; if the donation of tears is successful, the participant receives a (golden) certificate.

The act of the re-invention of memory is connected with crying, with fluids from the body, and as such, the participant has to prove his or her successful achievement of memories by crying! In the Cabinet of Individual Memory, the donation of tears that are (re)collected in the test-tube eyeglasses is awarded with the golden certificate. The award is proof of the efficiency of capturing memories without prosthesis, as no extra assistance is given in the celestial blue box. To facilitate the process of memorizing, only a mirror is allowed, perhaps to look deep into one's eyes and imagination.

But if we cannot function in the Cabinet of Individual Memory – the tears do not come at all – then it is possible to ask to enter the Cabinet of Collective Memory. Collective Memory cabinets differs, as Hrvatin has said, from situation to situation, from community to community, and memories have to be induced always from the outside. Collective memories need paths, icons, emblems, and signs in time and space. In the Cabinet of Collective Memory, such memories are induced with the help of television and film images. And who knows better about this distinction between individual and collective memories than Eastern Europeans, with their history of over-staging the collective spirit: the socialist parades, the big collective commemorations, the forced (or maybe not) emotions when some of the dictators died. In the space of collective memory, film and TV evoke different feelings: sentimental, tragic, exulted, joyous and sad. By touching the television screen in this cabinet, the visitor can choose from these icons, emblems, and narratives

Emil Hrvatin: *Camillo memo 4.0: The Cabinet of Memories – A Donating Tears Session*
1999/2000

The Cabinet of Collective Memory

Photo: Igor Omahen

of collectives' memories:

- CROATIA VS. GERMANY – FOOTBALL GAME THAT FINISHED 3-0 for Croatia
- CHILDREN STARVING TO DEATH IN SUDAN
- EXODUS FROM VUKOVAR, from the war in Croatia (1992-1994)
- EXODUS FROM SREBRENICA, from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992-1996)
- TITO'S DEATH in 1980

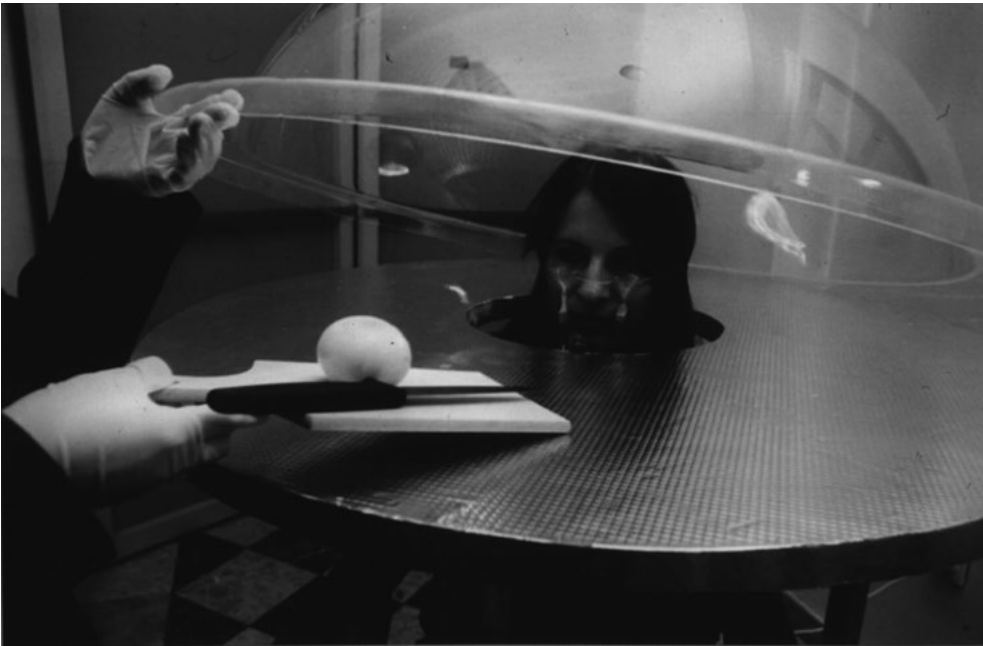
And so on.

Collective memories are a form of masturbation with prosthesis. The participant enters the Cabinet of Collective Memory, the door closes and s/he tries to win the silver certificate award. If this second attempt also fails, then the participant is asked to enter the Purgatory Cabinet: the Cabinet of Physiological Memory. Here, Hrvatin has a secure way to purge the teardrops from the visitor: the gentle rubbing of an onion slice under the nose is the best way to be in synch with our memories. Memories, as a physiological act in the Cabinet of Physiological Memory, are awarded as well, but with a confirmation of participation only – a paper with no value at all. The connection of the cabinets to Paradise, Hell and Purgatory, is a connection that allows us to think about memory also as a topological formation. That means that memory can be connected to metonymic and metaphoric processes, and to different acts of sexuality as well, for example to masturbation, to crying, to touching and rubbing, and to desire. The result of these connections is to show today that the process of memorisation is deeply artificial, prosthetic.

The three cabinets can be perceived as three stages of memorisation and temporisation: Purgatory is the Cabinet of Physiological Memory, but Hell is not the Cabinet of Collective Memory, no matter how emphatic the collective images are; the real inferno is the Cabinet of Individual Memory. It is difficult to cope with our memories in solitude. The onion slice is as much a blessing as it is a slap in the face, allowing us to awake in the reality of pain (or perhaps pleasure, who knows?), which will help us to much more easily get over the horror of our most deeply secret memories.

Each cabinet is a specific matrix of time, and not an archive. The Cabinets of Individual and Collective Memory produce the experience of a temporary deadlock in time. In the Cabinet of Individual Memory,

3. THE TIME-SPACE PARADIGM: BIOMECHANICS & MEMORY



Emil Hrvatin: *Camillo memo 4.0: The Cabinet of Memories – A Donating Tears Session*
1999/2000

The Cabinet of Physiological Memory

Photo: Igor Omahen

this deadlock is seen as an extension of time. Time is perceived as a deep journey into one's own body, the mirroring of the self, an immersion. In the Cabinet of Collective Memory, time is a process of condensation. All memories have to be condensed, verified, and purged as a video image, the projection of a situation, the projection of a tiny slice of an already mediated history. In Physiological space, time is a pure dynamic action, the rubbing of an onion under the nose. In all three cabinets, the question of space is replaced by time: memory as a process of the augmentation of different time zones, a mixture of a real space and a flow of information. Memory is seen as an augmentation of time, and not a montage of space.

What characterizes the replacement of the depth of space by the depth of time, is a splitting into three viewpoints: the sharing of a perception of the environment between the animate (the living subject), the inanimate (the object, the seeing machine) and, from now on we will also have to introduce the abject (the error, mistake, failure). The vision(s) of this viewpoint, its visualizations, are what are already there in the eye of the camera(s), remaining in "a state of latent immediacy in the huge junk heap of the stuff of memory, wanting to reappear, inexorably, when the time comes" (Paul Virilio). To re-appropriate the place of this memory, of virtual memory, in the modern way means, therefore, not to use any more traces – as virtual memory is no longer functioning as a way to access the past, but rather the future – but mistakes, errors, failures! The speed at which TV and radio information circulates (in terms of one-way distribution) have already been overtaken by the immobile speed of computer calculations, which means that the speed of Internet connections is becoming increasingly important. A failure, an error, a mistake is the path leading to a transformation from the subject to the abject, which with its senseless, obscene intervention, can be perceived as the new (though failed!) subject position.

4. IN THE NAME OF THE SERVER

After the fall of the Berlin Wall one could detect in the East (of Europe) the process of a very rapid erasure of our particular history, we found ourselves in a space without memory, identity. We had to take this as a kind of a zero position. To maintain myself as being linked only to a particular identity and being a citizen of only the little Republic of Slovenia is not enough. I propose to broaden this situation by thinking about myself also as the citizen of the world. If I put things in such a manner, which is in my view much more radical, as everybody today is saying “mind your own business and do not interfere with our domestic affairs!,” then very soon we will be forced to see that not everybody can be a citizen of the world. Only to a few is reserved this privileged of being citizens of the world. We, all the others, are allowed to stick our noses just in so-called domestic affairs. Some other(s) cannot even be citizens in a proper city: homeless, ill people, refugees and immigrants.⁴⁰

To put it simply: there is no place where one can really disappear today. We cannot escape from our responsibility toward the world. The best example is NN – Netochka Nezvanova – the nameless lady, as Nezvanova in Russian means without name, who defines herself as NN SUPERIOR or NN TERROR CHIC. They or “her” are active also within the Syndicate List, where she or “they” comment on different postings. Many years in the past I named her the disturbing entity of the reunification of the East and West.

Instead of respecting the Western civilizational moderations of the list (the moderators deleted all that could be disturbing for Western feelings), Netochka Nezvanova or NN insisted on a raw un-moderated

⁴⁰ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Osteuropa als der unteilbare postkommunistische Rest @ : es ist nicht Rot, es ist Blut! = Eastern Europe as the indivisible Post-Communist remainder @ : it is not red, it is blood!,” in: *Ost-West Internet : elektronische Medien im Transformationsprozess Ost- und Mitteleuropas : electronic media in the transformation process of Eastern and Central Europe*, ed. Stephen Kovats, (Edition Bauhaus, Bd. 6), Frankfurt and New York: Campus, 1999, pp. 344-362.

situation and harsh criticism. When Randall M. Packer – another dutiful man (NN characterization) – posted on the Syndicate list such a sentence “As artists, WE can act in a time of great consequences,” obviously referring to the war against Iraq in 2003, that was in its initial phase, Netochka Nezvanova posted a short comment, but as precise as a smart bomb: You are an incompetent parasite! That is why there is a warning on other lists: “If any individual posts anything “Netochka Nezvanova” writes regarding our discussions, s/he will be removed!

“The Internet is no longer a lawless, chaotic, disorganized no-man’s-land”

A comment posted by Netochka Nezvanova on the Syndicate list

The idea of the Internet seemed in the past to be the idea of transposing borders, and being constantly in a fluid Over-De-Trans – territorialisation. Fluidity matches the Internet? No, different art projects and activist groups tell us the opposite story. The Internet, from the point of view of activists or ludicrous hackers, is all about (re)location and territorialisation. It is all about activism from the real space in the virtual domain for real people, and therefore connected with questions of censorship, naming, copyrights, accessibility, property rights and visibility.

The hijacking of sites that were not accessible to everybody, and were therefore copied and mirrored by activists and given to the citizens of the Internet for free access, or the Zapatista movement, which became famous because of the Internet and its WWW activism, exactly match the idea of re-location. The Internet, which was marked by the ideology of being a pure communication tool, without restrictions, is therefore deeply marked with questions such as: who can communicate, and what kind of information, data and etc., is it possible today to freely distribute on the WWW.

It is not really a question of going to some distant geopolitical spaces, such as Africa, or Eastern Europe, or to include Asia, but it is about the capitalization of ideas and concepts becoming territory itself. Theory is such territory, and the Internet and the WWW (World Wide Web) have the same position. They are huge new territories, expanded, and evolved on numerous servers, allowing Capital an even faster triplication. Theory, art and culture are huge archives, and it is the same with our bodies. That everything is becoming, is transformed into a territory for the expansion

of Capital is something that is fundamental to capitalism. In this way the idea of territory itself changes – radically.

Territory is a much broader concept. Our intellectual concepts, our books, our works and, last but not least, all our archives are the new territories. Giving, contributing concepts and ideas to the server, in the name of the server, is, therefore, a gesture of expanding and broadening the concept of territory itself.

The concept of the repoliticisation of the serverspace, and especially of the Internet and of the real and the virtual space that I am proposing here is not grounded in the simple game of identity politics – it is rather a militant response to this constant process of fragmentation, particularization and fluidity. What is lost through this process is the gesture of real politicisation. The concept is rooted in a much deeper universal demand for politics, strategy and tactics of action, theorization, emancipation and uselessness.

If the Internet with its WWW is a specific community, wherein millions are wired, searching for new information, desires and sites or trying to discover possible interfaces, new shifts and paths – one of the questions we have to pose, as artists, social activities and cyborg-political entities, is how we can define the basic elements of this wired condition? How is it possible today to construct a new responsible activism and actions through the “net” without a superficial morality and pathos? The second crucial change that has an effect on east and west, south and north is that in the eighties it was enough to be visible; @2000 it is a question of re-articulation, and moreover re-location, much more than a pure visibility. The following questions or synthetic moments are crucial for the server art agents “Which spaces do they cross when they communicate? What do they call themselves? Are they subjects, cyborgs, monsters, scums, nomads or simply hackers?” (Yvonne Volkart)

The question is why today is a need for the notion of the archive, and for the archive itself. An archive brings simultaneously technical, political and juridical meanings. It is important to distinguish the archive from the experience of memory and also from the notion of archaeology. An archive maps and charts not a technology but the topographical constitution of a space. To store, to accumulate, to capitalize, that is the basic aim of the archive and as well of the activist’s understanding of the server. This is why the archive is at the same time, according to Derrida,

hypermnemic (too much) and *hypomnemic* (too little). These materials and sites are to be perceived as progress in representation: missing frames, raw materials ready for the garbage can, errors in taking visual notes, blurred sex from the underground. And this is why the activist's servers constantly lack data and/or provide too many facts for our actions.

What would be the history of theory, media practice and the new political activism without the Internet and its servers, e-mail, multimedia and CD-ROMs? Our future will be something completely different in terms of action and information – although not all of us have the possibility of using these technologies!

I. 0100101110101101.ORG'S LIFE_SHARING

0100101110101101.org's life_sharing is an Internet artwork commissioned by the Walker Art Centre (U.S.A) – or perhaps, if you prefer, a web-based project – that presents a bizarre shift, a reversal. Rather than moving from dull, drab life into the ecstasy of Internet art, life_sharing takes a radical detour from the thousands of exciting formalistic possibilities of web design (those innovative interfaces that are always trying to amuse us) and returns to dull, drab existence itself – the disgusting impotence of everyday bureaucracy, the exchange of mails, and the negotiation for new projects.

There are subdirectories and maps, dozens of different documents that include e-mail letters, drafts from ongoing projects by 0100101110101101.org, to archives of texts by other authors with 0100101110101101.org's comments, pages of e-mails, half-completed documents, and personal annotations mixed with samples of critical texts – a whole bank of virtual papers. Such a gesture allows us to enter a private life. If you have time to take a ride, browse through the papers, documents, paths, and texts – who knows how long it might take and where we might land.

It is as if we suddenly have access to the constantly microscopically zoomed information content of an individual, in all the dirtiness and business of someone's life. It is as if he or she gives us the possibility of seeing everything under his or her skin, the intestines of the body, so to speak, and of the computer as well. There is something disgusting and repulsive in this action, but powerful at the same time.

0100101110101101.org is creating a hole in the brain of the machine as a kind of alien situation, a derealisation of the system of the computer and of the content of so-called everyday life.

In contrast to obscurantist New Age allusions, namely that the Internet and the World Wide Web make the natural exchange of art and perfect communication possible, life_sharing shows clearly that life is an artifact cobbled together from other artifacts, rather than from profound experience. In contrast to the mass media-produced idea that life connected with the new media achieves a natural totality, processes

of 0100101110101101.org's life_sharing visualization underscore this artificial, mediatized, constructed, and unnatural human life, and her/his/its thoughts and emotions. The use of (re)cycling methods suggests a radical re-questioning of originality and repetition, reality and media simulation.⁴¹

0100101110101101.org's technique consists of superimposing two incompatible realms, which they nevertheless allow to invade each other: the symbolic realm of representation – making an Internet art project with a certain structure; and life in itself – the proximity of life, the uncomfortable point of entering, constantly, into somebody's life and taking part in all his/her privacy, which is now visible, open, and proposed as a project. For 0100101110101101.org everyday life functions almost as a decomposing moment of life.

0100101110101101.org's approach is strategic to such an extent that, to paraphrase Christine Buci-Glucksmann's book *The Madness of Seeing (La Folie du Voir)*, the Internet has arrived at the position where "eyes can see how eyes see."⁴² Life_sharing enables the user to see the bureaucratic, archival, and administrative content(s) of everyday life, as well as the users watching this content, being a part of this whole endeavour.

Cyberspace treats the material as a toxic agent. Materiality is extracted from cyberspace, and reduced from object to *abject* – to a senseless, obscene intervention (Julia Kristeva, *Critical Art Ensemble and Pell*).⁴³ The entrance of errors, failures, viruses in perfect, simulated environments and the cyberworld can be viewed, therefore, as a point of developing new esthetical and conceptual strategies, as the error as abject – an object of horror and disgust – cannot be integrated into the matrix. We can actually think about the error, as a way of, in Jacques Derrida's words, developing the logic of re-marking (*re-marque*). The logic of re-marking is similar to the function of the error or the symptom; what at first seemed an informative, general view of an event, a shot, so to speak, from a neutral, objective distance, suddenly turns out to be

⁴¹ Cf. Marina Gržinić, "Video Processes of Re-appropriation," in: *Artintact 4*, CD-ROM edition, Karlsruhe: ZKM and Kantz Verlag, 1997.

⁴² Cf. Christine Buci-Glucksmann, *La Folie du Voir: De L'esthétique Baroque*, Paris: Éd. Galilée, 1986.

⁴³ Cf. Julia Kristeva in Lajoie, "Psychoanalysis and Cyberspace," in: *Cultures of Internet*, ed. Rob Shields, London: Sage Publications, 1996.

both threatening and embodied. The error is actually “the thing” (the abhorrent Thing); it is “the subject” who is speaking and saying more than the subject itself.⁴⁴

Life_sharing is this abject; the user gets the feeling that a mistake has been made, that this is a senseless situation. Something is missing here: the glossy design and the kitsch surroundings. Instead, we are confronted simply with a listed number of maps and subdirectories.

A mistake is like a wound in the image; it is an error in the body, or, as formulated by Richard Beardsworth, a failure representing precisely our submission to time.⁴⁵ To make a mistake is therefore a process of finding a place in time. This is a situation that produces a gap, a hiatus, where we can insert not only a proper body, but also its interpretation. Such a mistake is already apparent in the name of the group: 0100101110101101.org. This name forces the user into a process of endless copying. The fact that 0100101110101101.org has such a strange name induces the user/sender to copy and paste it again and again – it is too difficult to remember precisely. So, from the name on we see a constant path of research practiced by 0100101110101101.org into ways of representation on the WWW and the articulation of the WWW as a (senseless) archive bound to questions of authorship and copying, pasting, removing, and erasing.

To better understand the life_sharing project, let's browse 0100101110101101.org's organizational history. In the net. art community, 0100101110101101.org became famous for their “theft” of the private and closed net. art gallery site Hell.com, which was downloaded during one weekend and served from their own site for endless use by any visitor. 0100101110101101.org made “versions” or “remixes” of other well-known net. art sites, such as Art.Teleportacia. Influenced by the methods of the Situationists and, above all, the Neoists (recent activities in Italy had originated under this Neoist pseudonym), they transferred their approach to the Internet.

Their secretiveness concerning the name 0100101110101101.org is an artistic practice pressing the user to repeat the matrix of the computer

⁴⁴ Cf. Jacques Lacan, *Television*, trans. J. Mehlmann, New York: Norton & Co, 1990.

⁴⁵ Cf. Richard Beardsworth, *Derrida & the Political*, London and New York: Routledge, 1996.

memory (01) – the structure of the computer brain, so to speak – and the openness of the Internet machine, which is all about copying, reusing, and re-making history, life.

0100101110101101.org's project *Darko Maver* – the fake artist prank – was also such a construction: Darko was constructed by means of photos, or more correctly, by photographic documents of actual atrocities, several of which had taken place in Maver's "home patch" of the former Yugoslavia. The story of Darko Maver's life and death is the following: he was born in 1998 at the webzine site called *Degenerated Art*, where 0100101110101101.org started to dispatch information about a mysterious performer-artist who travelled across the former Yugoslavia living in motel rooms and old empty houses, a victim of staged atrocities and ethnic cleansing stories. Maver was born in 1962 near Belgrade, left the Academy of Fine Arts, moved to Ljubljana, and later to Italy. He was arrested and released in Serbia and Kosovo, on several occasions, on the charge of disseminating anti-patriotic propaganda and put in prison in early 1999. In May 1999, Darko Maver's death in prison, under enigmatic circumstances, was announced.

The Darko Maver and life_sharing projects share the tension to reconnect art with life through an obvious mixture of fake life and real data and places. Darko Maver has to be taken very seriously, as he has to be perceived as a topos and a tropos, a figure, construction, artifact, movement, and displacement. Maver's meticulously constructed life and simulated death(s) are today seen as a commonplace and powerful discursive construction. What we envision here is that the Internet has found itself occupying the place of the impossible – the real object of desire. But there is nothing sublime in it; it is simply that the Internet is occupying the structural place, the forbidden place of enjoyment. Accessibility, non-originality, and reproducibility – these are the characteristics that we have to attach to it, thanks to 0100101110101101.org.

The aim of 0100101110101101.org's life_sharing is to effect the "ruin of representation" (Jo Anna Isaak) precisely on the grounds of what has been excluded from the non-represented object (e.g., life itself).⁴⁶ This creates a significance derived from absence, and in this way, investigates

⁴⁶ Cf. Jo Anna Isaak, "Women: The Ruin of Representation," in: *Afterimage*, April 1985.

the means by which a subject, and the body, is produced. Such counter-narratives are resistant to the point that they can no longer be included within a philosophically binary opposition, but inhabit philosophical oppositions, resisting and disorganizing, without ever constituting a third term (Jacques Derrida).⁴⁷ The achievement is this: the decentralization of the subject to the point where instead of outside or inside, there exists a powerful dynamic relation to both outside and inside, dependence and independence, art and nature and, ultimately, to what is real and what is not.

Is 0100101110101101.org (de)archiving life? No, it is rather a simulation of its political and emotional coordinates. However, it is not only this; the way life is presented in the life_sharing project clearly shows that life via the Internet is only an algorithm. life_sharing is powerful on the libidinal rather than on the conceptual level, in the way we “desire” our own oppression, rather than the way we entertain beliefs. The project aims not so much to show life as something else, but rather to instantiate the idea of dealing with, or living with and through, contradictions. This means that it is not a question of losing life, but actually of getting it back through a process of rethinking the place where it was/is produced.

0100101110101101.org uses extreme oppositions to show that life is absolutely mediated, constructed, and fabricated, and that the computer paradigm and life itself have a speculative identity. It shows that instead of being a substantial force, life is composed of clichés. What else is this mountain of e-mails, virtual paperwork, and correspondence? The strategy is not to make fakes, but to develop tactics of political and aesthetic articulation of a proper reality and the politics of resistance, as Homi K. Bhabha would say, around a specific kind of subject that is constructed at the point of disintegration.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Cf. Jacques Derrida, *Positions*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981.

⁴⁸ Cf. Homi K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, London and New York: Routledge, 1994.

II. WHO ARE THE MOTHERS OF MONSTERS?

In cyberspace, as we are warned by Slavoj Žižek, traumatic scenes that have not taken place in life, but which have also never ever been consciously fantasized, are playing an even more important role, showing clearly that the real is a pure virtual entity, an entity which has no positive ontological consistency.⁴⁹ But still this is only one level. Visualization(s) with film and imagining technologies show clearly ideological engendered boundaries, and safely established oxymoron – distance-proximity – relations, in the real world and as well as in its phantasmatic film scenarios. If we remember, the chief military commander Ripley, from the blockbuster film *Alien*, had to use a lot of strength to get rid of the alien creature in the fourth film of the series, which was released in 1997. The creature recognized that Ripley was its biological mother, and this was possible only and solely because in *Alien 4*, Ripley, in comparison to the previous three films, was cloned, i.e., an artificially procreated human entity, and not a true human woman, as she had been in all the films before. This same biological mother had to destroy the Alien with its total dematerialization into the extraterrestrial world. Despite this, the love gesture of the Alien was something both morbid and also extremely romantic and emphatic. We can agree with Stahl Stenslie's thoughts, that in the world of high technology, cloning and bio-chips, the phantasmatic, emphatic relation between two monsters (or a cloned cyborg) or a human and a monster, tells us more about social relations, interactions and the politics of love, than any type of sexual relationship, power restriction or control between humans, no matter the sexual orientation and preferences in the real world. Ripley, despite being cloned, was still too human, and therefore still too ideologically problematic to fit in with a science fiction story. In the industry of the moving image and its ideological support we are still faced with the problem that only a relationship between something that is semi-human and a mucus substance is allowed, and possible. Empathy and a sexual relationship between a human being and

⁴⁹ Cf. Žižek, Slavoj, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Last Highway*, Seattle: The Walter Chapin Simpson Centre for the Humanities, 2000.

something applying for the status of human being is forbidden territory. This applies to the first film featuring cyber-cloning, entitled *Bladerunner*: the relationship between the exterminator and the film heroine Rachel functions smoothly as they are both replicants, rather than a male who is copulating with a female cloned entity. That is why they function as a perfect realization of the phantasmatic love couple (both being almost identical to human beings, without actually being them). The logic of the sexual/emphatic relation is as follows: The love and sex relation in the exchange of empathy between the mucus micro-modelled substance and the human being, in the capitalistic industry of the moving image, which for now have not yet been consumed, always happen at a strategic distance. I will call this distance the safety distance, to keep the hygienic border relationship between us and the formless other in conformance with the ideology that we can produce all other living entities (and this *we* refers to the capitalistic production machine, as who better can do this), but we – or perhaps it is better to say “they” – will not have sex and/or exchange empathy with them.

Is not such a safe distance to be found in reality itself? Is it not similar to the one that is proposed by the conscious first world middle class when relating to the so-called third world, and even when relating to the second world which is situated in the heart of Europe (and known as Eastern Europe)? Through UNICEF and similar organizations, they – the wealthy enough middle, and the over wealthy upper class – are sending one dollar each month for an African kid and in such a manner allow the kids to survive, but it is a question, if the kids, besides surviving, can also live? The relationship is externally emphatic, if we judge from the letters written full of love and thankful thoughts by the African children. But this relationship is absolutely abstract, it does not require any kind of real contact, and it is without any kind of possibility that such contact will transmit a contagious illness or the like. Similar to this is the position of the Alien in *Alien 4* when searching for love and tenderness. Everyone stays at a safe distance. The safety distance teaches us, who could be the mothers of the monsters, how real children should look like and what the borders of our sexual-paternal-maternal lust are.

III. REPRESENTATIONAL POLITICS

In today's world, photographic, electronic and digital images are at the point of effective disintegration. Even with a very small PC we can manipulate every image. Especially photographic images are losing their credibility, for example, in the process of judging events in the world. Images, and especially photography, are at the point of questioning their internal reality effect. This is not simply a question of truth or falsity. Questions of plausibility and implausibility override those concerning whether an image is simply true or false. The problem, therefore, no longer has to do only with mental images and consciousness, but with the paradoxical factuality of new media images, especially computer generated photographic images. If art poses, according to Scott Bukatman, the enigma of the body, then the enigma of technique poses the enigma of art.

At the end of the millennium, the body has found itself in chaos of fear, pain and wars – attacked and de-centred. Above all, it is a fleeting physical-material fact. A credit-card sized processor has taken our body materiality. With a single key, we can plug into any high-tech appliance. And so, our dreams of going somewhere far away, of escaping the dimensions of ourselves as nothingness, are realized here by reversals of the body in time and space, and space in time. It is clear how a tremendous impact can be achieved by technically reversing the linearity of time. Sometimes a backward move by means of the simplest video switch is the most adequate measure of our feelings and thoughts. The bodies that are featured in the art works of Eastern Europe are not only mapped as territories, not only producing a kind of intersection of outer and inner space, nor of visibility and invisibility, but are reconstructed and re-invented again and again within the art medium. From them, we have tried to squeeze out monumental effects – to make them modern relics, sexual fetishes, encrusted and filled with substances such as oil, blood and blue vitriol. As metaphorical territories, these bodies condensed history and a strategy of suspense, so that we may wonder to which history the faces belong, and to whom these bodies were delivered. The bodies were/are links in the eternal replacement of meaning, in the same way that history is itself articulated by partially readable faces and bodies.⁵⁰

In such a context, it is possible to establish an important connection between the image and the power structures that form and surround it and to approach the image, video or film, etc., as part of a larger system of visual and representational communication. This approach is fundamentally concerned with the articulation of a representational politics. The politics of representation in terms of the video and media image is not something that is directly connected with everyday politics, but is rather connected with the political, in so far as the aesthetics of the image is always inscribed in a field of power. Power takes different forms and similarly an electronic and media image as a form of representation has therefore different connections with different types of power.

⁵⁰ Cf. Marina Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism and the Retro-Avant-Garde*, Vienna: Selene and Springerin, 2000.

5. EVERY WAR HAS ITS MEDIUM: THE EVACUATION OF IMAGES

I will examine the aesthetical, political, artistic, and epistemological impacts of the technological transition from an exposure lasting several hours to only a fractions of a second, which for Walter Benjamin marked the gradual evaporation of “aura” from the image. I will focus on the notions of exposure time and photographic aura in the context of Internet telerobotics and the way wars are transmitted to us.⁵¹

I will discuss the manner in which the current limitations of telerobotics technology, delays in transmission-time, busy signals from service providers, crashing web browsers, can be seen as restoring the aura, and with it our sense of space and time.

⁵¹ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Exposure time, the aura, and telerobotics,” in: *The robot in the garden: telerobotics and telepistemology in the age of the Internet*, ed. Ken Goldberg (Leonardo), Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 2000, p. 214-224.

I. THE EVAPORATION OF THE AURA FROM PHOTOGRAPHY TO VIDEO

In “A Small History of Photography” (1931)⁵² and “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936),⁵³ Benjamin asserts that an object’s “aura” is destroyed through its reproducibility. He distinguishes the social-historical experience of photographic representation from that of aesthetic contemplation. Benjamin defines aura as “the unique appearance or semblance of distance, no matter how close the object may be,”⁵⁴ and claims that the modern, contracted conception of space was brought on by the aura’s decay. Benjamin illustrates this with an example in which we experience the passage of time in nature: “While resting on a summer’s noon, to trace a range of mountains on the horizon, or a branch that throws its shadow on the observer, until the moment or the hour [becomes] part of their appearance – that is what it means to breathe the aura of those mountains, that branch.”⁵⁵

In “A Small History of Photography” Benjamin focuses on how the problem of time characterized the evolution of early photography. I quote D. N. Rodowick’s concise but effective presentation:

Neither the indexical quality of the photograph nor its iconic characteristics fascinated Benjamin as much as the interval of time marked by exposure. In the technological transition from an exposure time requiring several hours to only fractions of a second, Benjamin marked the gradual evaporation of aura from the image. The idea of aura invoked here is clearly related to Bergson’s *durée*. For Benjamin, the longer the interval of exposure, the greater the chance that the aura of an environment – the complex temporal relations woven through its represented figures – would

⁵² Walter Benjamin, “A Small History of Photography,” in: *One Way Street*, trans. Edmund Jephcott and Kingsley Shorter, London: NLB, 1979, pp. 240-257.

⁵³ Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,” in: *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, New York: Schocken Books, 1968, pp. 217-251.

⁵⁴ Benjamin, “A Small History of Photography,” p. 250.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

seep into the image, etching itself on the photographic plate... More concretely, the temporal value of the interval determines a qualitative ratio between time and space in the photograph. In the evolution from slow to fast exposure times, segmentations of time yielded qualitative changes in space: sensitivity to light, clearer focus, more extensive depth of field, and significantly, the fixing of movement. Paradoxically, for Benjamin, as the iconic and spatial characteristics of photography became more accurate by decreasing the interval of exposure, the image lost its temporal anchoring in the experience of duration, as well as the fascinating ambiguity of its "aura."⁵⁶

I am interested in this contraction of the interval of exposure time because it depicts a process of erasure, the desire to rid ourselves of the uncontrollable movements and imperfections of long exposure times. What we are witnessing today is the constant shortening, the condensation of the interval of exposure. This shortening of exposure-time is a process of cleaning, of leaving behind the mistakes of blurriness, soft focus, and other imperfections that creep in during long exposures.

As more and more of our images are computer-generated, and television and radio are overtaken by the near instantaneous speed of calculation, we are witnessing an ever more exact and complete aesthetic sterilization of the image. In virtual reality, the physicality of the connection of the image with reality-time is lost. Blurs and other imperfections in the image, which were evidence of time's passage in the real world, are wholly absent from the idealized imagery of virtual reality. With the imperfections of early photography, the viewer finds ways to mark a place in time. But with the collapsing of exposure time (down to nothing in the case of the computer-generated images of virtual reality), the image undergoes a process of complete sterilization. Benjamin predicted the future of photography, its inability to deal with failure, errors, and rubbish: But now let us follow the subsequent development of photography. What do we see? It has become more and more subtle, more and more modern, and the result is that it is now incapable of photographing a tenement or a rubbish-heap without transfiguring it.

⁵⁶ D. N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997, pp. 8-9.

Not to mention a river dam or an electric cable factory: in front of these, photography can now only say, “How beautiful.” “The World is Beautiful” – that is the title of the well-known picture book by Renger-Patzsch in which we see New Objectivity photography at its peak.⁵⁷

It has succeeded in turning abject poverty itself, by handling it in a modish, technically perfect way, into an object of enjoyment. For if it is an economic function of photography to supply the masses, by modish processing, with matter which previously eluded mass consumption – the spring time, famous people, foreign countries – then one of its political functions is to renovate the world as it is from the inside, i.e. by modish techniques.⁵⁸

The tendency that Benjamin identified has increased with digital media. The images that appear on our video monitors are bright, clean, and non-threatening. With its limited resolution, bright colours, and stylised images, digital imagery represents a continuation of the sterilizing process that Benjamin identified in photography.

⁵⁷ Cf. Albert Renger-Patzsch, *Die Welt ist Schön*, ed. Carl Georg Heise, Munich: Kurt Wolff Verlag, 1928.

⁵⁸ Walter Benjamin, “The Author as Producer,” in: *Art in Theory 1900-1990*, eds. Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, Oxford and Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992, pp. 486-487.

II. EVERY WAR HAS ITS MEDIUM

The process of sterilization culminated with the abstract images of the Gulf War at the end of the 1980s. We witnessed to a whole sequel of ranges of the evacuation of images in the so-called postmodern war. Carlo Formenti suggests thinking about the American military intervention in Iraq, not as the beginning of the Third World War, but as the first postmodern war.⁵⁹ Formenti developed this historization relying on Jean Baudrillard text written for the French newspaper *Liberation* just before the Gulf War in 1991 has started.⁶⁰ The abundance of those “clean” images stands in stark contrast to the lack of information about the “dirty” and very real war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1996), instead of live, overhead images, reporting from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, generally consisted of old televised images and the voices of amateur reporters on the radio.

We cannot “forget” about the West intervention with regard to Kosovo. The NATO bombing of Yugoslavia as an intervention “only?” because Serbia was cruelly violating the elementary human rights of the Albanian minority living in Kosovo, a territory that was a part of Serbia, can easily be added to this process of strategic evacuation of the mediated image.

The traumatic lesson of the American military interventions, from Operation Desert Fox against Iraq at the end of the 1980s to the present war in Iraq – Operation Freedom or The War Against Terror –, is that they signal a new era as regards the degree of visibility, dirtiness and number of casualties of postmodern military battles in which the attacking force operates under the constraint that it can sustain no casualties and that it can sustain no images of direct destruction, blood, or dead bodies.

⁵⁹ Cf. Carlo Formenti, “La guerra senza nemici” [“The War Without Enemies”], in: *Guerra virtuale e guerra reale: riflessioni sul conflitto del Golfo [The Virtual and the Real War: Reflectons on the Gulf War]*, eds. Tiziana Villani and Pierre Dalla Vigna, Milano: A.C. Mimesis, 1991, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Cf. Baudrillard, “The Gulf War Did Not Take Place,” in: *Liberation*, January 4, Paris, 1991.

It is almost painful how much our lives are connected with prosthetic tools, technological prosthesis are co-substantial to the way we see and understand. It is possible to say that the world is entering our living room(s), just think of Operation Freedom or The War Against Terror – everyday a full CNN’s TV program.

Let us recall what went on in the final American assault on the Iraqi lines during the Gulf War: no photos, no reports, just rumours that tanks with bulldozer like shields in front of them rolled over Iraqi trenches, simply burying thousands of troops in earth and sand – what went on was allegedly considered too cruel in its sheer mechanical efficiency, too different from the standard notion of a heroic face to face combat, so that images would too severely perturb the public opinion. This is why we have to ask ourselves how much we really know from these images. The evening news show us vivid, engrossing images from these wars. But the images are wholly dislocated in both time and space. NATO bombing raids take place throughout the day – while we are asleep, at work, at home, etc. But images of the raids are neatly bundled together and presented in convenient 5-minute segments on the evening news. Do we really have any sense of where and when these events are taking place?

The abundance of those “clean” images stands in stark contrast to the lack of information about the “dirty” and very real war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1992–1996), instead of live, overhead images, reporting from the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina generally consisted of old televised images and the voices of amateur reporters on the radio. The conflict in the Balkans makes a mockery of the supposed omnipotence of the media. The old notion that a counter-effect can be achieved by showing horrifying visual material is no longer true. Each time it seems as though events in Bosnia have reached their peak, and then TV broadcasts even greater horrors, everyday TV reporting seems inconsistent with the logic of the TV informative-realistic effect. It seems that the reports produce fiction: that the escalation of horrors – concentration camps, massacres, thousands of raped Muslim women – transforms fact into fiction. In 1987, Ernie Tee wrote in the catalogue for the exhibition *Art for Television* that film was the medium of illusion, television the medium of reality and video the medium of metamorphoses,⁶¹ but with the war

⁶¹ Ernie Tee, “The Irreality of Dance,” in: *The Arts for Television*, eds. Kathy

in Bosnia, television has become the medium of fiction. Sensationalism drew the short straw in this war. Daily reports from the battle zones are not sufficient coverage of the events in Bosnia.

Under the noses of Europe and America, it is as if the media were frightened of offering a different slant on the events happening in Bosnia.

Perhaps this war also shows us another internal media process, in particular a process of society? This war can be also seen in another way. According to Peter Weibel, we can think about this war in relation to the idea of what it means when we leave a historically defined position, which imitates (even in the arts) the natural world of our senses.⁶² Our experience of place, position and so on depends on what we call natural interface: the body is, for example, a natural interface, and therefore we have a natural approach to space and time. Our interpretation of the media is experienced through natural interfaces. Our senses and organs are channelled and mediated by an ideology of naturality, neglecting the artificiality of the media. But the media of our time shows us that we have the possibility of an artificial interface, which is the media. According to Weibel, when McLuhan defined media as an extension of man, he just missed calling it an artificial extension.⁶³ And in this artificial media space, we see that the basic concept of how to construct space and time are examples of non-naturality. The media world is dominated by non-identity, or difference. The “real” is replaced by virtual reality. Necessity is replaced by possibility or contingency.⁶⁴

Thus we are obliged to think about “reality” precisely as “unreality” in a manner of a socially constructed fiction (i.e., the war in Bosnia on television has become a medium of fiction). What we call reality, according to Jacques Lacan, constitutes itself against the background of a bliss, a bliss that is an exclusion of the traumatic real.⁶⁵ What Lacan has in mind when he says that fantasy is the ultimate support of reality, is

Rae Huffman and Dorine Mignot, Los Angeles: The Museum of Contemporary Art and Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1987, p. 62.

⁶² Cf. Peter Weibel, “Ways of Contextualisation, or The Exhibition as a Discrete Machine,” in: *Place, Position, Presentation Public*, ed. Ine Gevers, Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie and Amsterdam: De Balie, 1993, p. 225.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 228.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 230.

that reality stabilizes itself only when some fantasy frame of a symbolic bliss forecloses the view into the abyss of the "Real." This is far from being a kind of dreamlike web, which prevents us from seeing reality as it effectively is. It shows us that reality itself is already a dreamlike construct. The functioning of the media, e.g., television in relation to the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, shows us all the dimensions of so-called normal, active reality – a "reality" that is already ideologically and virtually constructed.

In my opinion, the most striking turn of the TV positioning of the war in the territory of ex-Yugoslavia occurred when the Serbs (or more precisely, the bloodthirsty Yugoslavian army under Serb control) kidnapped Bosnian President Alija Izetbegović, who was returning to Sarajevo after one of the innumerable international negotiating sessions. The only means of communication between the kidnapped President, the Yugoslavian army and the rest of the Bosnian Presidency in occupied and already half-demolished Sarajevo, was by way of the then functional, though badly damaged, Sarajevo TV station. The talks and negotiations, the ultimatums and demands were carried out in their entirety and without censorship in front of the global TV auditorium. This happened before the international public got involved in the affair and mediated Izetbegović's release. All those involved could only communicate via TV telephone frequencies while the TV station was broadcasting live! The image of a competent newsreader was broadcast mediating between Generals, the President and the Presidency. Paradoxically, the broadcast was transformed into radio, and temporarily became the medium of drama and information *par excellence*. In this instance, television functioned in the way that was supposed by theorists, to dumbfound audiences in the broadest sense of the word and to force them into action.

This is why I wrote in 1994 that every war has its medium.

I tried to reflect on the paradox that when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was going on, in contrast to the one in Iraq in 2003, the most current information that was delivered, was not through satellite connections and CNN cannibalisation of every and each bit of information, but through radio amateurs! They were reporting through the Internet on the prime time TV news. The images were old but the voice was the most updated information. Therefore no technology is outdated, and each technology, also something such as a radio, can

achieve importance in search of a truth, if any is left for us. Nothing can be simply dismissed: every institution, every technology and each “crumb” of critical thinking can be used as a production/productive tool, what matters is the context.

Nevertheless, the edge of the general media situation is not ecstasy and decay, but the addiction to hyper-primitivism and hyper-imaging.

In some cases, this sterilization has worked its way into the very technology used to capture and convey images. Dimitris Eleftheriotis describes the development of technology designed to eliminate the uneven, choppy movements so common in amateur videos:

The “Digital Image Stabilizer” is a popular feature of many of the new camcorders – it operates through a digital analysis of each frame, which detects and eliminates “abnormal” movements. In a similar fashion, visual surveillance technology depends upon the identification of “abnormal” or “irregular” movements, which disrupt the “normal” flow of people in a street, a shopping centre or supermarket – research currently undertaken looks for ways in which the detection of abnormal movement can become an automation built into the system.⁶⁶

Stabilizers and surveillance systems can be understood as opposing aspects of the same operation of mathematically, legally, and aesthetically sterilizing the image. Given these efforts to “clean up” the images we see, how much do we really know about the tenements, trash-heaps, wars, streets, and supermarkets depicted by today’s imaging technologies? The very technologies that are supposed to give us a “clearer” image, in a very important sense, do just the opposite. By sanitizing the subject, they prevent us from knowing reality itself. We lose our sense of time and place, and are left with a hopelessly stylised and idealized conception of the truth.

⁶⁶ Dimitris Eleftheriotis, “Video poetics: technology, aesthetics and politics,” in: *Screen*, No. 36: 2, London, 1995, p. 105.

III. TELEROBOTICS AND THE RETURN OF THE AURA

The history of imaging technology from photography to video has witnessed an evaporation of the aura, of the unique phenomenon of time and space as captured in the photographic image. I want to suggest that telerobotics can be seen as reversing this trend. In its current form, telerobotics represents a way to restore the aura, to restore the sense of time and place that the image conveys.

In some respects, telerobotic images are very much like other types of images, and suffer from the same evaporation of aura. Because images from telerobotic devices generally come from ordinary video or still-photo digital cameras, there is no significant difference in exposure time between telerobotics and other digital imaging technologies. So it is not in the exposure time that telerobotics distinguishes itself.

There is, however, a difference in transmission time. Telerobotic images are live images, sent to the user on demand. But those images are not transmitted instantly, or even at the speed of television and radio broadcasting. Restrictions on bandwidth significantly delay transmission times, so that images arrive seconds or even minutes after they are requested and sent.

The delay brought on by bandwidth restrictions presents practical problems for telerobotic installations. Time-delay renders the control of long-distance teleoperations difficult, if not impossible. This difficulty is sometimes overcome by a technique called "supervisory control." The main focus is on the notion of a delayed-real paradigm to overcome the effects of time delay.

"The operator must adopt a 'move-and-wait' strategy whereby a small movement is made and the operator waits to observe the results of the movement before committing to further action. The premise of this research is that the time delay inherent in teleoperation over large distances can be overcome by presenting the operator with an interactive simulation of the system being controlled rather than with the time-delayed video and telemetry data. The simulation runs several seconds ahead of real-time (and is therefore commonly referred to as a 'predictor display') so that the operator's responses and command inputs

to the simulation will arrive at the remote site at the correct time. The simulation models the dynamics and behaviour of the actual system and responds immediately to operator inputs, thereby precluding the need for a move-and-wait strategy. The challenge is to keep this simulation ‘synchronized’ with reality.”⁶⁷

These practical difficulties also bring with them a new context in which to understand Benjamin’s notion of the aura. As I have already noted, Benjamin understands the aura as an appearance or semblance of distance. Telerobotic time-delay brings about precisely such an appearance or semblance. It reminds us of the distance that separates us from the subjects of the images we see. It forces us to think about the network of modems, routers, servers, and telephone lines that the image must travel in order to get to us, and so reaffirms our sense of spatial relations between those subjects and us, the viewers.

In a deeper way, time-delay also enhances our sense of time and distance for the subjects of the image itself. Consider the live video feed from a remote video camera accessible on the Internet. Because the refresh rate is considerably slower than that of cinema or ordinary video, the motion is choppy and unnatural. Moving objects hop from one spot to the next, appearing and disappearing in a discontinuous trajectory. We know that this is the result of slow refresh rates. But we also know that it is because time is passing. As we view images and wait for more to arrive, time continues to pass for the subjects in those images.

As we gain a sense of time, so too do we gain a sense of space. The discontinuity of motion reminds us of not only of the passage of time, but also of the motion through space that takes place during that time. Just as the blur on a photograph reminds us of a shadow’s movement or a child’s unexpected sneeze, the discontinuity of live Internet video shows us in an instant the full extent of the motion that takes place between downloads. We see the fullness of motion in a way that we do not with smooth, continuous video.

Long delays are one of the most frustrating aspects of the Internet. It can be extremely annoying to deal with long time-delays and slow refresh rates – just as it can be annoying to pose for a long exposure or look at a blurry photograph. But in these very shortcomings – in the

⁶⁷ Quotation from http://www.geocities.com/CapeCanaveral/Hangar/2...op_telerob.html

very “imperfections” that annoy and frustrate us – lies our potential to appreciate the full richness of the subject in the image. Our sense of time and place is bound up with our having to deal with the barriers to our own ease and convenience. Time delay bears witness to something that lies beyond the image, and so begins to restore to objects their aura, their distance. Imperfections in data transmission, as well as in imaging technology, affect knowledge in the realm of telerobotics by giving back the aura that seemed, at least on some readings of Benjamin’s discussions of photography, lost forever.

A net-based installation deals specifically with questions of exposure time and the aura in connection with telepistemology: *The Dislocation of Intimacy*.⁶⁸ The Dislocation apparatus is housed in a lightproof box that contains physical objects, some of which move of their own accord within the apparatus. Viewers can interact with these objects via buttons. Viewers can select any combination of buttons, which activate a combination of lighting devices, and return a digital snapshot of the resulting shadow.

Dislocation takes its cue from Sol Lewitt’s 1974 book *Incomplete Open Cubes*, in which 511 photographs of a single cube, “using nine light sources and all their combinations,” makes the ultimate, totalling statement about the fetishism of surfaces in the rugged, aggressively male vernacular of modernism. Dislocation, through its odd mechanics, announces immediately that it won’t be dealing with notions of optical gestalt, but with more complex relationships that unfold over time.

In Dislocation, time reveals itself through deeply imperfect over-shifted exposure. The blurred, soft-focus image embodies the very philosophy of time, of time revealing itself, appearing on the surface of the image.

Dislocation illustrates the way that imperfections in telerobotic images and environments can be used to develop new aesthetic and conceptual strategies. Antiorp writes: “Generally, (people) aren’t anticipating errors, browser deconstruction or denials of service. Incorporating these into programming generates an element of intrigue, seduction and frustration. Error is the mark of the higher organism, and it presents an environment with which one is invited to interact or perhaps control.”⁶⁹

It is at this precise point of contact, at the interface between

⁶⁸ <http://www.dislocation.net>

⁶⁹ Cf. /=cw4t7abs/ (1998)

telepresence and the real, that the user is called on to insert his or her fingerprints, and most importantly his or her physical and temporal presence. The interface can be seen as an imperfection or stain, constantly reminding the user of his or her inability to become fully part of the telepresent environment. The same is true of time delays, of choppiness in a telerobotic video feed, and even of the busy-signals endemic to dial-up Internet service. Transmission delays and slow refresh rates are like a fingerprint on the film, a drop of water on the lens. They are evidence of the image, a reminder of our spatial and temporal distance from the subject.

6. DOES CONTEMPORARY ART NEED MUSEUMS ANYMORE?

The 1990s and the year 2000 showed an increasing proliferation – a boom of museums: world architects compete for a dream amount of money, capital that is reserved by city councils, state associations and funds in Western Europe and America for the third millennium deal-of-a-lifetime in culture, from Texas to Boston, from Helsinki to Berlin: the building of new museums for art and the renovation of old ones. In the heart of the city of Berlin, in the so-called Berlin inner city island, from 2000 on, five museums will be rebuilt; the cost of such a project is estimated at DM 2 billion. According to various reports, never has such a quantity of museums and galleries, at such a rate of financial support, been constructed. The triumph of the museum is real, and thus it is perhaps more appropriate to ask, reversing the introductory question: does, in fact, the Western museum of modern art need art anymore?⁷⁰

Furthermore, how does this affect or undermine the set of parameters of the museum in itself? Museums are among those structures that institutionalised the processes of art and culture in a way that allows us to think about art as an institution. It is a public sphere of need, production and consumption in art that is regulated and institutionalised by museums. Museums are institutions that in the modern world have codified and structured art. We must recognize the redistributed relations of power and the new inner agents and forces in the very institution of Art. The audience in art is currently, today, turned from *res nullius*, from something which belonged to no one, into *res publica*, a public affair, which must be accounted for in every serious analysis of modern art. Not only because of the new tourist logic of the museums, but because of new art production in the changing (local) map of Europe, Asia, Africa and so

⁷⁰ This chapter in a slightly changed form was presented for the first time in public at the CIMAM conference, The International Committee of ICOM – The International Council of Museums of Modern Art, Ludwig Museum Budapest, 22-25 September 2000. Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Does contemporary art need museums anymore?” in: *Interarchive: archivarische Praktiken und Handlungsräume im zeitgenössischen Kunstfeld = archival practices and sites in the contemporary art field*, ed. Beatrice Von Bismarck, Köln: König, 2002, pp. 154-159.

on; museums, and the institution of Art, have to reflect the establishment of new relations of power between the urban periphery, the centre and the institutions.

The question “does contemporary art need museums anymore” perhaps would suggest that it is time to bridge the gap between art and life, transcending Art as the institution of power, bringing it down to earth, direct and real. But as you already know, out there, outside the corrupted “institution of art,” there is no authentic, unspoiled reality of life! Even the community itself is an institution of relations, of stratified power and dynamics. The institution of modern art, including the whole spectrum of power and hierarchic relations embodied and comprised in it, shows something more: that our historical ideas on how we construct the museum are clearly vanishing in the face of this new situation.

Does this imply the death of the museum, as has been proposed in post-structural theory? No! On the contrary, it is, as Peter Weibel has stated on the subject, the end of the historical definition of the museum! This conclusion of definition (that has nothing to do with the end of the museum, as it seems, in fact, that it will live eternally) should be viewed in the context of a complex set of complementary oppositions: between reality and its phantasmatic support, between law and its inherent transgression.⁷¹

I have stated that this conclusion of the definition of the museum today has to be viewed also in the context between reality and its phantasmatic support – and, as this reference to fantasy and phantasmatic support will be used extensively throughout the text, clarification follows herewith. Phantasmatic support, or scenario, is a construction of fantasies or, more simply put, of thoughts on different situations, relations, etc., that help him, her or the thing, the object, the topic under discussion to resist, to survive unchanged in so-called everyday reality. S/he fantasizes about the object, relations, etc., not in order to escape from it or them, but to sustain them. To sustain them in reality unchanged, as these phantasmatic scenarios or thoughts simply prevent the passage to real action and change.

Herein lies the power of fantasy, or of the phantasmatic scenario or construction. Fantasy and the phantasmatic scenario have nothing to do

⁷¹ Cf. Slavoj Žižek, *The Plague of Fantasies*, London: Verso, 1997.

with something fantastic or unreal, but are, despite being constructions and scenarios, almost material. The phantasmatic scenario, a fantasy, has the power to prevent an action and to sustain, to support, the situation as it is in reality: unchanged, much better and more effectively than with the so-called hard-boiled material facts, present and active in this very reality.

Returning to the statement that today we are witnessing the end of the historical definition of the museum, we see, and I refer to Weibel, a shift from author- and object-centred work to observer- and machine-operations-centred work.⁷² The question is not the machine, but the logic of the machine that is transposed in the work of art. Here, we can find a change in the historical definition of the museum. A new moment that seems crucial is also an artificiality of perception and positioning that is connected with the fictionalisation of history. The museum was perceived as a “natural” site, and preserved in a locality of surroundings and continuity, but with the new projects and media-orientated artworks that integrate the public as a fundamental element of the work, we can experience and recognize the artificial social construction of the site of art. The museum is an extension of art, but an artificial one!

We can argue that today the power of the Western museum of modern art is real, but we cannot move further if we establish the analysis exclusively in such a way. I would simply like to say that the universe of the museum cannot be grasped only as a means of direct social criticism because the repetitive phraseology on the museum as an institution of art, co-responsible for the distribution and reproduction of the power of capital is a fact confirmed even by those who run these museums. I propose that we traverse the phantasmatic universe of the museum not only by way of direct criticism, but strictly theoretically (relying upon philosophy, psychoanalysis, and art theory and history), by reviewing fantasies of the current position of the museum, its historical power or non-power relations, in order to reach a possible conclusion. We have to slightly change the terms of looking at things.

Therefore, we can say that instead of the spectral power that was attributed to the museum in the 1970s, when the idea of the revolution of the museum arose and the museum had to face a symbolic destruction

⁷² Cf. Peter Weibel, “Ways of Contextualisation, or The Exhibition as a Discrete Machine,” in: *Place, Position, Presentation Public*, ed. Ine Gevers, Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie and Amsterdam: De Balie, 1993.

that imprinted onto the museum a kind of spectral power – indestructible also in the case of its potential destruction – the museum of 2000 is, in its constant assertion of its real power, definitely vulgar, cold, manipulative and almost deprived of any aura. The museum today is well aware of its own financial, economic and symbolic power, at least the museums of (modern) art in the Western world (North America, Japan, etc.), if we think only of the millions that are invested in the developed Western World towards reorganizing the museums, building and rebuilding them.

In the 1970s, the museum was perceived as a threat to the art community, with its historical and chronological time classifications and with the development of the idea of constant progress in art and culture with styles and trends. The museum was seen as a place of restriction and power which dominated the field and violently provoked the conceptual and neo-avant-garde art world to undermine it. The new situation in the 1990s, when the museum visibly, transparently asserted its power and connection to capital, money, architecture, is a process that can be described as a bringing to light, to act out the underlying fantasy of the 1970s! This situation is much more effective and threatening for the social and symbolic sphere of art perceived as Institution than the spectral power of the museum of the 1970s.

We should not forget that this new museum structure threatens art precisely by way of directly and brutally acting out its absolute power in the social and political reality.

In a certain way, this directness is also a cynical gesture: it is as if the museum, as an institution, is giving directly to the art world what this world has hallucinated for decades, and it seems today that this is the most effective way to distort the art world. Constructive diversion or the sabotage of the museum as an institution of power is simply not possible, because a coordinated international action, based on solidarity against Art seen as an Institution, is not possible either.

It is commonly known that as a consequence of the ready-made, the system of galleries and museums changed the modalities of the artistic function at the beginning of the past century. Before the ready-made, all the elements of artwork were inherent/internal to the material with which the work was realized. Although the artists could have some ideas about norms and values, these external elements were not parts of the work of art. That is why an artwork that was designed as an artwork could be

recognized as such out of the art context, as well. On the contrary, the content of a ready-made is not the concrete object, but its context – i.e., the art gallery or museum. It is possible to say that the context is the content of a ready-made, and therefore, the object of the ready-made is the gallery system in itself (Goran Džorđević and Gržinić⁷³). What is much more important is that the appearance, the birth of a ready-made allowed galleries and museums to assume a monopoly on evaluating the work of art in society. The fact that a ready-made was accepted as a work of art openly demonstrates the arbitrariness of the definition of the work of art by the gallery system and museums. We can say that the fact that the ready-made was accepted as a work of art is the clearest sign of the real power of the system of galleries and museums in society. From that moment on, this relation has been unchanged.

The next point to grasp is that in this displacement from reality to a fantasized universe, the status of the obstacle changes: in the 1970s, the obstacle, the failure, was inherent (the relation between the museum and the neo-avant-gardes movement in art simply did not work smoothly). In the second half of the 1990s, this inherent impossibility was externalised into the positive obstacle, which from the outside prevents its actualisation: history, progress, chronological time are now seen through anti-historical views. And this move, from inherent impossibility to external obstacle, is the very definition of fantasy, of the phantasmatic objective position in which the inherent deadlock acquires positive existence! A-historical exhibitions, ruptures with styles, trends, classifications, etc. all work with the implication that with these obstacles overcome, the relationship will run smoothly. The museum is presented as an institution, a self-reflecting historical phenomenon that uses its own means to examine its functions and possibilities in the context of today's multimedia society. When all the chronology and historical concepts come down to earth, then the re-ordering of the museum and gallery space is based on the curator's geniality and taste; they are seen as creators of an objective, random collective memory (which collective? what memory?) in images and space. This museum structure is no less hallucinatory and no less a spectralization of the phantasmatic scenario of the power of the art institution of the past.

⁷³ Cf. Marina Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism and the Retro-Avant-Garde*, Vienna: Selene and Springerin, 2000.

In contrast with the traditional actions of the museum in masking its power structure, such as in the 1970s when it was sustained only as a phantasmatic spectral entity, the museum today does exactly the opposite: it destroys not itself, but its phantasmatic image/support. As opposed to the 1970s, when the museum was segregated and survived as a spectral entity, it seems that in the 1980s and 1990s the museum survives in reality by sacrificing, destroying its phantasmatic support. – Or not? The museum openly assumes the role of what may be called the devil of transparency, but the paradox of self-exposure, self-transparency, tells us that this transparency makes it even more enigmatic. The art community thinks – not wanting to accept this – that behind the cold manipulative surface, there must be something else! – But the question is, is there really anything behind the cold manipulative surface?

Let us take the first example and move softly to the East. Again, an important clarification: East here is Eastern Europe, perceived as a mental, historical, cultural and productive paradigm, and as a spectral and phantasmatic counterpoint, or the hidden side of the New United Europe.

Our first example will be, since I have to make reference as a theoretician to a proper context of life and work, an analysis of the exhibition 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION, displayed at the newly acquired, but not yet renewed space of the Museum of Modern Art in Ljubljana, i.e., Moderna Galerija (the collection was on view from 25 June to 30 August 2000). The collection was in parallel to another event: Manifesta 2000, simultaneously on view in Ljubljana at various locations (from 24 June to 24 September 2000). Although both projects were displayed in the same location, it seems that they have nothing in common; besides modern art and a strong rivalry that it is implicitly acknowledged, to the pre-supposed question of which exhibition is better and more important, not to mention less expensive for the international and national art community: I have to respond to this question, as a transparent Žižekian leftover, as Slavoj Žižek would say, in a Stalinist manner, both are worse! (but more about Manifesta 2000 later!)

Fortunately, I was invited to write a paper for this conference, and at the same time, these two important projects were carried out in Ljubljana, in my native space, two projects that are important for the whole structure of the space of the modern art of the new Europe and its institutions. So, it is a conceptual, theoretical decision, almost political,

to make such an analysis.

The process of composing the 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION was based on the idea of the dialogue between Eastern and Western Europe, with artworks from the 1960s to the present day, and with a focus on works from Eastern Europe and from the so-called conceptual period.

The first point with regard to this re-collection of excellent works of art from the EAST of Europe in one space concerns the method by which some of the works became part of the collection; we might say that the price that was offered for some of the works was quite small, almost ridiculous for an artwork with a historical past or present, or to put it more concisely: the whole situation of including some of the works in the collection was blurred, in terms of payment and regulations on displaying the work. The act was legitimised afterwards with this phrase found in the leaflet printed for the exhibition and interpreted in the following way: the artists and their works will be reimbursed over the coming years, if they really do become part of the collection (and if not, they will be returned following the exhibition). The Moderna Galerija knows perfectly well what is doing, as far as it re-collects artworks from Eastern European artists and not from the so-called Diaspora: to put it bluntly: who can afford a lawyer! The gesture – the concept of the collection, therefore, does not quite fit the description of a truly ethical act. In the end, the museum will still remain in the fantasy of the art community, with a wish to encounter a truly ethical curatorial act. Why it is so important to speak about this? Speaking not as a lawyer nor a policewoman, I am simply attempting here to identify the model that is invisibly staged in the background of the collection, and which could establish a dangerous pattern of constitution for the institution of art and the method of composing collections of contemporary and modern art in 2000 in Eastern Europe.

The museum is caught in a deadlock, following the perverse scenario of directly enacted fantasy; what was before all presupposed, is today direct. What was merely hinted at in the 1970s, is now “rendered thematic” (Žižek) – the power of the institution, the relocation of the works of art, the displacement. In the 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION, we encounter at its purest this direct transgression, this direct staging of perverse fantasies. What is the spectral fantasy about the authority of the art institution? That there is something brutal and vulgar at the

very beginning of the constitution of every museum and its collection. Similarly, as in the case of the last cannibal, the question of when you eat the last one and clean your village, can be replaced by the question of when you stole the last work of art in order to establish the collection. This is the reason that this direct act renders innocuous the subversive impact of the collection, and provides a thesis, a new confirmation of the Freudian statement that perversion is not subversive at all.

Let us take another detour, and take a look at the so-called (a)historical positioning of the museum and the narratives that reflect it. My further thesis is that the very circular form of such a narrative directly renders visible the circularity of the (a)historical process of the museum. A crucial ingredient of the metamorphic universe of the museum is a certain phrase, a signifying chain, which resonates as a Real that insists and always returns. We can identify, and I make here an extensive reference to Slavoj Žižek, a kind of basic formula that suspends and cuts across time.⁷⁴

In the 1970s, Harald Szeemann insisted and formulated the idea of the open museum; attempts were made to make social contradictions visible in the museum, and consequently to free art from being sentenced to the museum, by connecting it once more with the world outside. The formula phrase was: Art must awaken, museums are prisons!

In the 1980s, Harald Szeemann stated: The museum is a house for art! (in *Archis*, 1988, in a conversation with Rob de Graaf and Antje von Graevenitz), and moreover... art is fragile, an alternative to everything in our society that is geared to consumption and reproduction... that is why art needs to be protected, and the museum is the proper place for this. The museum is not what it seemed to be – the museum is therefore not a prison! (in Debora Meijer's paper/lecture from 1991).⁷⁵

In the 1990s, and in the beginning of the millennium, the catchphrase is: Does modern art need museums anymore? – Rhetorically announcing the potential death of the obscene paternal figure – the museum – in art.

In short, this circularity is based on the impossibility of the museum

⁷⁴ Cf. Žižek, Slavoj, *The Art of the Ridiculous Sublime: On David Lynch's Lost Highway*, Seattle: The Walter Chapin Simpson Centre for the Humanities, 2000.

⁷⁵ Cf. Debora Meijers, "The Museum and The A-Historical Exhibition: the latest gimmick by the arbiters of taste, or an important cultural phenomenon?" in: *Place, Position, Presentation Public*, ed. Ine Gevers, Maastricht: Jan van Eyck Akademie and Amsterdam: De Balie, 1993.

to encounter itself, its proper position. At first the institution is troubled by some insistent message (the symptom), which bombards it from outside, but then, at the conclusion of the analysis, the museum could be able to assume this message as its own. "Does modern art need the museum anymore" can be read as the assertion of the castration: the "father" is always already dead, castrated – there is no enjoying "the" Other; the promise of the fantasy is a lure. This is why the figure of the castrated father is the figure of an excessively exuberant father, similarly to the figure of the museum of our present. Museums are so empowered on the surface, with exuberant, excessive architecture, that it is almost not necessary to go inside the museum; it is enough to see it from the outside!

Let us return to the starting point from another perspective: the 1980s museum was a house for art, and the 1990s museum is the obscene museum, which reveals all its power, without any mask. These two poles can be seen as, first, the "protective museum," and second, the obscene, authoritarian, empowered museum. The two poles that can be reformulated as appearance versus reality, the protective institution against the Real of the over-empowered museum of today that becomes so transparent, obscene in its visibility. But nevertheless, although such polarization tells a lot about the museum spectral figure and its completely artificial character, in the end it rings false.

It is crucial to understand that we are not dealing here with the opposition between the appearance of the protective museum, and, on the other hand, the cruel reality of the powerful institution of modern art of the 1990s that becomes visible once we demystify its appearance. The overpowered museum, far from being the Real beneath the respectful protective appearance, is rather itself a fantasy formation, a protective shield. Both institutions, both museums from the 1980s and 1990s, suspend the agency of the symbolic Law/prohibition, whose function is to introduce art into the universe of social reality. The two museums are the opposition between the Imaginary and the Real; the 1980s museum is the protector of an imaginary safety, and the 1990s museum (just refer back to Moderna Galerija) is the sign of almost lawless violence.

The two museum conditions, the imaginary and real, are what is left, once the paternal symbolic authority disintegrates. (What is missing is the museum as the carrier of the symbolic authority!)

What we get are strangely derealised museums, blind museum

mechanisms that en/act immediately, with no delay!

Back to the 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION. The second point is that it is highly symptomatic that not one, not a single Slovenian artist, was included in the present collection-exhibition, not even the group OHO, which is perceived as the hardcore kernel, or the only conceptual activity in the 1970s in Slovenia. This is even more problematic as the conceptual movement from the East is, as is stated by the museum itself, at the core of the 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION. Paradoxically enough, as the 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION is not produced as a national display, the collection was prepared precisely for an international audience, counting on Manifesta 3 in Ljubljana. The 2000 + ARTEAST COLLECTION disavowed the Slovenian part entirely, de facto eliminating production from the 1960s on. We cannot take into consideration for a minute the excuse that this was because of the possible problems with the national Slovenian space, which will swallow the collection much more easily without a selection of local artists.

For the sake of the clean power of the institution, the proper internal space was completely disavowed, so that the collection displayed an abstract activity, untouched by the national space. From the viewpoint of the Moderna Galerija, this staged fantasy, constructed as a purely aseptic international presentation, protected the museum and its employees from the national space, but at the same time, we can argue, empowered the museum in the international context. In the future, this uncanny situation will have to generate a conceptual exhibition with clear formal regulations of property and reflection of the local space, surpassing the present symbolic and real lawless condition within such an abstract and depersonalised situation.

Or we can look at this from another point of view: an exhibition is a sort of structured text, a pure statement, and if somebody can achieve such an act, erasing the whole space of internal production, why then are we so worried when writing a text, an analysis of this act?

More general conclusions are that the museum of 2000 is not a situation opposed to the virtualised world of the museums in all its abstracted versions. On the contrary, the museum of 2000 displays itself as an abstract category, without any kind of problematic exaggeration, with no causality. The refusal of a productive closure (that would imply, e.g., in the case of Moderna Galerija, the selection of artists from the

Slovenian space and context) means the refusal to face the mortality of the museum itself!

In this case, we are not dealing with the symbolic concealing of the traumatic Real of the context. It is exactly the opposite: the images and acts of utter catastrophe, far from giving access to the Real, function as a protective shield of the Real of the museum and of its abstract and strictly depersonalised situation.

That is why Alexander Brener's action at Manifesta 2000 can be viewed as beyond just an act of barbarism. But as not everyone has been there, I will try first to give an interpretation of his action.

What was the action of Alexander Brener, supported by his partner Barbara Schurz, at Manifesta 2000 in Ljubljana? (Manifesta is proclaimed to be the biennial of modern art from the New Europe.) One day before the official opening of Manifesta, the official Manifesta press conference took place in one of the big halls of Cankarjev dom in Ljubljana; while approximately ten people from the organizational core of Manifesta: the curators of Manifesta, the director of Cankarjev dom and the president of the national board of Manifesta, etc., were seating themselves in front of the audience, introducing themselves, ready to take questions from the audience, Alexander Brener began his action. Brener started to write on a huge special projection screen, behind the table around which the Manifesta core organizers were seated before the public, such words and sentences as: Liberal servants of global capitalism – fuck off, etc. Then he moved in front of the long press conference table, and helped by Barbara Schurz, who delivered their written statement, painted and partly destroyed the table. Brener then lay on it, waiting for the Cankarjev dom security guards to come to remove him, while they were already removing the screaming Barbara Schurz.

What was most striking in the action of Alexander Brener at the press conference of Manifesta 2000 in Ljubljana? He broke with the inherent transgression that is seen as an ability to compromise with the situation of the institution in itself – Brener put forward an action!

Alexander Brener and Barbara Schurz attacked Manifesta within the institution at its core – Cankarjev dom. The space is important for official Slovene culture, and Cankarjev dom is a symbol of the centre around which the main cultural and political, as well as cultural economic affairs turn in the city. Thus, in contrast to the elusive spectral presence

of the audience, who tried with questions to undermine and to clarify the position of this international exhibition (some Byelorussians' asked politely about the border of this New Europe and got an answer that was almost a mockery – something to the effect of: please do not bother us, the curators – we did not have enough time to go everywhere, etc.), Brener was direct, verbal and physical. The conclusion of his action was a direct self-commodification and self-manipulation. He lay down and waited.

Alexander Brener was not functioning as a truly dangerous entity, not as a real serious figure and authority: he was hyperactive, exaggerated, almost ridiculous and melodramatic. After partially destroying the table of the organizers of the press conference, he just lay on it, as if on the beach, waiting for the security guards, and while they were pushing his partner out of the hall, he just shouted her name, as if in some highly melodramatic Hollywood film.

Nevertheless, here we were also able to see the most exact depiction of authority that we rarely have the chance to see so transparently. The Manifesta press conference was “exploding,” but not the authority ritual. They – the Manifesta core organizers – continued the press conference immediately after Brener was removed, without a single word of reference to what happened. Here, as Žižek would say, it is possible to see how difficult it is to effectively interrupt the ritual of authority that sustains the appearance. Even after the embarrassing situation, the press conference continued as if nothing, absolutely nothing, had happened, and similarly the symbolic ritual in itself persisted. It is therefore no surprise that at the end, it was all concluded with a party and a huge amount of food; this conclusion was what the organizers pretended Manifesta to be, a common celebratory toast and festivity.

Hence, it is possible to say that due to Brener's action and his catastrophic scenario, it was possible for the Manifesta organizers and producers to take shelter, to disavow the real concept and results of Manifesta, and therefore to avoid the actual deadlock, the antagonisms, the divisions, the abstractions...of the national/international community.

Let us take another example: the INTERPOL project of Jan Åman and Victor Misiano at the Fargfabriken in Stockholm in 1996. Is it not possible to say that the horrifying “violence” of Oleg Kulik, acting as dog in the art gallery space, is itself already a protective shield that has to be fantasized as such, protecting us from the true horror – the horror

of the abstract positioning of East and West?

In conclusion: the true horror is not all these benevolent institutions and museums, such as Manifesta, Fargfabriken, etc., that protect us from the Brener and Kulik syndromes; nor Moderna Galerija, which completely disavowed Slovenian art – because it could “provoke a national war” between the Museum of Modern Art – Moderna Galerija, the national Slovenian space – and the avant-garde artists, but exactly the reversal of this situation. The truly suffocating and psychotic generating experience in itself is that this protective care (that protects in the end only, and obscenely visibly, the institution in itself) erases all traces of difference, (a-historical) positioning, etc.

Let us now look more closely at the second example: the analysis of the Manifesta 3 project in Ljubljana. The paradox is that Manifesta 3, proclaimed as a pure act of the transnational and global art vision, was in fact commissioned (and not vice versa) by the Slovenian state, the government and the Ministry of Culture, and the main managerial art and culture institutions in the city. When the state is overly bureaucratic, then it takes the role of the gallery and of the museum system. So the state dictates (through a codified system of institutions) the art concept (Goran Djordjević). Manifesta reinforced from the outside, internationally legitimated the power of major national institutions of art and culture in Ljubljana (led by Cankarjev dom). In fact, the major independent (!) institutions that were crucial for the constitution of the paradigm of modern art production in Slovenia from the late 1970s onward, were not included in the Manifesta project (Gallery ŠKUC, Metelkova, Galerija Kapelica [K4]). Manifesta was used as a perfect guise of codification and acceptance of the fake and abstract internationalism in the so-called national realm.

Manifesta was an approval of the international community, insisting on the Schengen agreement in art and culture; demonstrating, furthermore, that Slovenia can fully respect and operate the agreed-upon terms of the game. A clarification: the Schengen agreement, which was first signed as an economic act of regulation in Western Europe in the mid-1980s, became in the 1990s a European Community act of severe regulation focusing on how to stop immigration, how to stop movements of “aliens,” how to regulate the visa application process, crossing borders, the seeking of political asylum, etc.

Slovenia, as one of the states which is in the process of joining the European Community (in the first wave), is obliged to fully respect this agreement. Slovenia is thus in 2000 in the position of being a *cordon sanitaire*, a zone to protect Western Europe from an epidemic of refugees and immigrants (or, as was publicly stated, in mid-September 2000 by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, who complained that if it is a process of immigration in Western Europe, then it must be controlled and selected, i.e., cleansed of Muslim immigrants).

Multiculturalism is the cultural logic of global capitalism, as new spiritualism is its ideology; multiculturalism is not about putting different particular entities on the same level (as I believed in the past), but about multiplication (as we were taught by Manifesta); this is why global capitalism needs particular identities. In this triangle of global-multicultural-spiritual, the post-political must be seen not as a conflict between global/national ideological visions that are represented by competitive parties, but as abstract collaboration. As Jacques Rancière developed in his theory of the post-political, it is about the collaboration of enlightened technocrats (economists, lawyers, public opinion experts) and liberal multiculturalists. Manifesta 3 is, in its absolutely abstracted version, the international legitimisation of the internal enlightened technocrats of post-socialism (Cankarjev dom, etc.) by international multiculturalists. It also shows a radical discord between the effects of resistance and the institutions and mechanisms of power that provoke them, and the complicity of power, private capital and thought with mastery.

Both the old and new museum – and the “new” museum in the post-socialist context – are caught in an ideological trap. The museum defense against the true threat is actually to stage a bloody, aggressive, destructive threat in order to protect the abstract, sanitized situation. This is the sign demonstrating the absolute inconsistency of the museum phantasmatic support, as well. Instead of the multiple-reality talk, as who else but Slavoj Žižek would say, one should thus insist on a different aspect – on the fact that the phantasmatic support of the reality of the museum is in itself multiple and inconsistent!

The introduced Real perpetuates the Modernist dichotomy of art versus reality. We do not have to recreate the natural situation, but rather to articulate the artificial interventions and nevertheless to make a path, to transpose the museum from an instrument of repression to

6. DOES CONTEMPORARY ART NEED MUSEUMS ANYMORE?

an instrument of criticism, to traverse the universe of the museum from conservation to confrontation.

7. THE GENETIC PARADIGM OF CULTURE

I would like to continue to re-think some methodologies in terms of organizing exhibitions in the context of globalisation. *Documenta 11* in 2002 is the most prominent case; although a variety of other exhibitions in search of this or that (the “Balkan” for example) have recently taken place in Europe. I would like to give some possible answers to the following question: By what operations of exclusion /inclusion relating to the notion of hegemony does this new European world emerge?⁷⁶

These exhibitions are parallel to the phenomenon of global culture and art. What do I want to say? The most important aspect of these exhibitions is that they brought into focus and made visible the art and cultural productions of other worlds, most notably the Third World (Africa, Central and South Asia, Muslim-Asian countries, Latin America) and the Second World (the former Eastern European countries). Through a specific selection, with some future projects scheduled, all these worlds are currently becoming visible in (Western) Europe and the North American continent, where for decades they have been out of focus and still are. It is not only the question of visibility that matters (to see, or even to discover these distant and not so distant but still unknown productions), but also the question of re-contextualization, that is, making accessible and reachable within the Empire of the capitalist First World what until now was perhaps just imagined, or occasionally although very rarely, written about.

What I want to do is to discern the inner necessity of the art/cultural system, in what appears to be a mere contingency today (as many of these exhibitions present themselves as just a moment of discovery – the exhibitions are entitled “searching for this or that” – or even as an act of pure generosity and sharing between different worlds in this era of globalisation).

I could immediately foster the thesis that the way that global art

⁷⁶ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “(I)migrants, hegemony, new internationalism,” in: *Strangers to ourselves*, eds. Maud Belléguic, Mario Rossi and Judith Stewart, Hastings: Hastings Museum & Art Gallery, 2003, p. 62-66.

culture imperialism functions must be looked for elsewhere, outside of the purely cultural context. The elements of the exclusion/inclusion machine are to be found in the scientific discourse of cloning, biotechnology and in the notion of the viability of none other than the (recently deceased) sheep Dolly. Two basic texts are to be taken into account: Sarah Franklin's essay "Dolly's Body: Gender, Genetics and the New Genetic Capital" (2001)⁷⁷ and Donna Haraway's book *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: Female Man© meets OncoMouse™* (1997).⁷⁸

Exhibitions that are prepared as project(s) realizing the new internationalisation of the Third and Second Worlds demonstrate an incredible viability. It seems that these exhibitions have found a way to involve the "world," and at the same time (and this is very important) to prolong their proper life. The inclusion of the Third World is also in the balance, with the proliferation of cultural studies in the capitalist First World, as the Second World (former Eastern Europe) is still (!) on the waiting list, and reserved for special purposes. The former Eastern European art and culture is forced to wait, just as when you wait to take a charter flight. You are waiting for the call, and you have to be ready.

I can say that there exists a certain cosmo-political context in the modern capitalist world connected with pure commodification, within which works from the Third and Second Worlds seem to be perfectly cloned. In a way the structure of most of these exhibitions is as follows: there is a core of artists that are part (forever, or just freshly affiliated) of the capitalist art market, and other artists quickly commodified to, or made to assist with, these aspects. They are presented in a kind of replica situation, always rotating around the centre.

I can state: What was seen before as an obstacle, a failure (the fact that exhibitions did not deal with the Third and Second Worlds, as they were too complex, not developed and not translatable into understanding), what was in the past therefore perceived as an inherent impossibility, is today externalised as a positive obstacle. This move, from inherent

⁷⁷ Cf. Sarah Franklin, "Dolly's Body: Gender, Genetics and the New Genetic Capital," in: *THE BODY/LE CORPS/DER KÖRPER*, ed. Marina Gržinić Mauhler, *FILozofski Vestnik [Acta Philosophica]*, No. 2, Ljubljana: FI ZRC SAZU, 2002.

⁷⁸ Cf. Donna Haraway, *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: Female Man© meets OncoMouse™*, London and New York: Routledge, 1997.

impossibility to external obstacle, is the very definition of fantasy, of the phantasmatic position in which the inherent deadlock acquires positive existence! A-historical exhibitions, ruptures with styles, trends, classifications, etc. are all at work today, with the implication that as soon as the obstacles are removed, the relationship will run smoothly. This global structure is no less hallucinatory and no less a spectralisation of the phantasmatic power of the Art Institution than it was in the past, when this Institution failed to include worlds other than the capitalist First World. Fantasy plays a crucial role in hegemonic formations, a role often at odds with the explicit political/curatorial program of the Institution/Art Exhibition projects. “Fantasy” not only situates the subject in relation to its object, which is the cause of the subject’s desire, but also compensates for the instability of its imaginary and symbolic identifications. This is why it is necessary to articulate not only the equivalence among diverse struggles against oppression, but also to traverse phantasmatic scenarios that might underlie such articulations.

But let’s go step by step. Let’s see what logic is developed and brought to the final stage by the so-called global exhibition projects in the capitalist First World. Let’s explore these fundamental shifts in its very logic.

We have to distinguish between different forms of functioning of the Art Institution within different capitalist periods, decades and logics. The forming of the capitalist art market, in order to sell a single work of art, was based on the development of a careful pedigree – an exact genealogy of this single work of art. What became necessary to accomplish was a shift in the definition of cultural capital: a shift from culture as a whole to the reproductive power of a single work of art, in order to say that this work of art is ready to be capitalized and invested in. In short, this shift involved the formation of an exact genealogy of the single work of art that was enabled therefore to stand for a larger whole. The creation of such a genealogy was accomplished through careful critical and intellectual/theoretical work as well as art marketing-cultural-institutional devices. Such an artwork then started to function as a template for the continued production of artworks of special types. For example the *Young British Art (YBA)* scene today can be seen as precisely the result of such a manner of development. To be even more precise, the shift is synecdochic (the word is used by Sarah Franklin when discussing the process of the formation

of a breed), in the sense that the “substance” from which the artwork is made becomes a template for an entire national contemporary type of production. The same can be seen within the phenomena of what was in the past decade named the new Switzerland Art Scene.

These conceptual processes in the art world are kept alive for decades, enabling the careful selection and proliferation of artists, production, investment and art stock exchanges. In turn, such differentiation(s) have enabled a redefinition of what is cultural context, along with the development of new definitions of what is a historical and an art lineage.

What it is important to notice in this process is how much conceptual apparatus had to be put into motion in the capitalist First World in relation to artwork(s) in order for their value to emerge as “natural.” Therefore, strictly speaking, and based on important statements made by Franklin, the *Young British Art* scene can be considered to be not only a new cultural-technological-aesthetical assemblage, but also almost a breed. Its constitution is, using Franklin’s vocabulary, a discursive formation, and its style a manifestation of the market-investment-art institution-theory capacity. Making a reference to a “breed” in such a context is not a cynical or pejorative remark at all, as the “breed” is in fact a British invention! On the other hand, it is important to introduce into the vocabulary of art and culture notions from the realm of biotechnology, such as template, breed, genealogy, pedigree. If we keep in mind the idea of this effective capital investment (theory-money-art market) in the single work of art, we have to acknowledge the importance of the art-critique-theory “machine” in its background, which obsessively works on providing genealogical and historical power to a unique artwork style and aesthetics.

The final result is a special linkage of money, institutions and critical-theoretical writings that today present themselves even more than ever as a “civilizational kinship.” This kinship (which again comes from the vocabulary of biotechnology) presents itself in the “world” as the most natural and internal process of art and culture in the capitalist First World, and moreover this “civilizational kinship” is today overcoming the cultural borders in order to become the password of the day in political affairs (us against them; the war to preserve civilization, etc.).

Which exact form of exclusion/inclusion will prevail in a certain configuration is the result of struggle. My intention is not to play with the endless impossibility of substitution within the same fundamental field

of impossibility, but to make thematic the different structural principles of this very possibility.

Let's see what is going on with the so-called new global exhibition projects that include selected Third and Second World artists and their works, or which are organized just for them. These projects evidence some important new directions, which can be seen not only as a conceptual, but also primarily as a technological shift. With these projects, firstly, the traditional template of genealogy is disrupted, and secondly, a new kind of assemblage, effectively "reprogrammed" in time and space, is put into action. What is important is not the work of art, but the technique of transfer that provides the means of reproduction. The inclusion of the work of art from the Third and Second World in the territory of the Empire has therefore in most of cases a role to just testify to a successful application of the technique of transfer. In the case of an artwork originating from outside the Empire, neither its own authenticity, nor its own auto-generative capacity is valuable. It is solely here to prove the transfer of the work of art to another context and also, if it persists through time, of the work of art's viability to survive in the new context. Works of art coming from the Third and Second Worlds thus function as "living proof," that the transfer is successful, as it was in the case of Dolly. The transfer is the source of the new global cultural capital, or, as can be stated via Franklin's thoughts: "the transfer is a device for seeding a corporate plan for the production of cultural wealth in the form of cultural-reactors."⁷⁹ These works of art are seen as cultural-reactors.

What is the result of the technology of transfer? Works of art coming from the Third and Second Worlds are removed from the source of their primary conceptual/inner contextual value. The result is a different genealogy, an "enterprised-up genealogy," (as is the case with Dolly⁸⁰), which as a consequence has to take apart all the genealogical descent systems. Within the Third-and-Second-Worlds' newly developed expressions or "enterprised-up genealogy," within this new FAST (FOOD) GENEALOGY (as a reference to a McWorld), the power of the art work to generate new ideas and concepts is not important at all, what is important is solely the transfer. With enterprised-up genealogy, via Franklin, newly flexible subject(s) and their works of art are redesigned

⁷⁹ Cf. Franklin: "Dolly's Body: Gender, Genetics and the New Genetic Capital," p. 128.

⁸⁰ Ibid. p. 127.

and freed from the specific cultural contexts, “ready to become newly promiscuous recombined art works.”⁸¹ Also important is the process of abstraction from the root. With the technique of abstract transfer, when the artwork is cloned within a new paradigm, it also testifies to its removal from the “noise” of the root.⁸² If it were also to transfer the entire poverty and social relations and the possible intellectual implication(s) that the work of art produces in its original context, it would be as politically demanding as costly. Actually nobody can predict what kind of match would result if we allowed the “noise” and the “waste” of the Third and Second Worlds’ real space to come truly closer to, to enter, the Empire. An abstract and evacuated transfer eliminates the risk, producing instead a replica of the desired traits. So it is not so strange that all these works from the Third and Second Worlds are today presented in so-called evacuated and sterile White Modernist Exhibition Cubes. Just think again about the *Documenta 11*. Was not this its main flaw? At the very least, did not the critics complain that the exhibition would have been perfect if the works had not been put into such an abstract (Modernist Cubes) context? But my point is, that this was the precise externalisation of all these global art projects’ inner logic.

According to Franklin it is possible to state that “in terms of genealogy, the technique of transfer effects a 90-degree turn, whereby the ‘descent’ is no longer the equivalent of genealogical gravity.”⁸³ With these exhibitions (*Documenta 11*, etc.) that include new world(s), it is possible to talk about the new cultural capital as a new genetic paradigm of culture. At the heart of such new Internationalism there is, therefore, what Sarah Franklin primarily stated for the sheep Dolly, and I am adapting it for our global, cultural-genetic condition, – “the technique that bypasses the conceptual and artistic capacity of the work of art in its specificity.” The global, for exhibition purposes, “enterprised-up genealogy” functions exactly as cloning in the realm of new biotechnology. Within these new epistemological coordinates of global art, it is less important to know what, – to rephrase Franklin’s statements about Dolly again, – art work coming from the Third or Second world “is, than what it does.”

For these global exhibitions what is important in re-using art works

⁸¹ Ibid. p. 133.

⁸² Ibid. p. 125.

⁸³ Ibid. p. 133.

from the Third or Second Worlds is the process of the compression of genealogical time, offering in such a way an evacuated, sanitized pure context that will thus be constantly perpetuated. Or to put this even more precisely, we see a process of cannibalisation or rapid assimilation of history and specific art practices. These exhibitions instantiated a new form of genealogy, one that eliminates “conventional genealogical time, order, and verticality.” What we have here is an over-rapid historicization, and the totality set on effaces the traces of its own (im)possibility.

Dolly is the vanishing mediator, as are works of art from the Third and Second Worlds. Dolly became even more an iconic sign of its vanishing mediation when she passed away in the year 2003.

What I am trying to develop here is an intensification of the politics of reproduction (as in the case of Dollyesque procreation) within a global cultural context that results in an enterprising-up of genealogy and processes similar to cloning. This specific type of cloning, which is firmly tied to technology, enables capital to remove the substance from the artwork. This has implications for the whole idea of enterprise. A process of expropriation is going on that bases difference on very different relations, influences, and constellations; the Third and Second Worlds' difference(s) are seen solely through relations of enterprise and propriety. Exhibitions are owned and the works are branded! Donna Haraway in *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: Female Man© meets OncoMouse™* describes the effect of cloning precisely as the construction of a new kinship. She describes kinship as “a question of taxonomy, category and the natural status of artificial entities.”⁸⁴ And what else are art works from the Third and Second Worlds than artificial entities, half cloned and in the process of forced naturalization within the only “natural and civilized” capitalist First World? What it is important to understand is the logic of the process. If we use Hegelian terminology, then the radically contingent struggle for hegemony can be operative only in so far as it represses its radically contingent nature, in so far as it undergoes a minimum of naturalization.

For Haraway the brand becomes, a kind of hyper-mark. “The parent company,” which is in our case the well-administered global exhibition

⁸⁴ Cf. Haraway, *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: Female Man© meets OncoMouse™*, p. 67.

⁸⁵ Cf. Ewa Plonowska Ziarek, *An Ethics of Dissensus. Postmodernity, Feminism, and the Politics of Radical Democracy*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001, p. 8.

project, then connects brands and trademarks. As Haraway (through Franklin) points out: these commodity descent lines (and I will add – the Third and Second Worlds’ art works) present different kinds of substantial connection(s), kinship and genealogy which are established solely through trademark(s) or brand(s) as its mark(s). Such exhibitions can be seen therefore as projects that mark a different set of relations, today being generated and procreated within the deadly influence of corporate techno-science, which radically overdetermines, forms and articulates what is considered global culture.

I can posit the following conclusions:

1. We can say that all these exhibitions have several fathers (and not one single mother, just as with Dolly) or owners who establish the brands. Now a specific marking occurs through branding, which establishes a new proprietary relation. And this relation can be seen as the protection of capitalist property rights, which leads to the increasingly privatised ownership of different public projects, exhibitions and etc. All these ownership(s) – new paternal figures – are obscured by quasi impersonal rules and neutral principles in public, and heavy criticism in private, that make visible how these new fathers are behaving as dictators, imposing the absolute right of decisions. Most exhibitions are named after the father-curator!
2. What is missing in these exhibitions is “a patiently documentary genealogical critique,” as Ewa Płonowska Ziarek in her book *An Ethics of Dissensus. Postmodernity, Feminism, and the Politics of Radical Democracy* suggests. Instead we get flat documentaries.⁸⁵ The difference is crucial. In a flat documentary style of presentation it seems that “freedom” can be seen as an easily transferable possession or simply an attribute of the subject. What is needed however is a different viewpoint; we have to think about “freedom” as a situated political praxis (“situated knowledge,” as Haraway argued) with the potential to create modes of being improbable at present.⁸⁶
3. The process of cannibalisation and over-rapid historicization is also happening within the capitalist First World (nothing is left out of the work of the capitalist machine) in order to give fresh blood to different histories and practices and even more to re-connect different sciences and theoretical works. We get exhibitions that connect technological inventions and theoretical work and all is shown in an obsessive natural

⁸⁶

Ibid.

way; it all seems as if it had already been working for centuries. Some exhibitions present such an artificially speeded up lineage of the first capitalist innovations and inventions that it is as if everything has already been here for at least five hundred years. What a powerful civilization and what a splendid science (be sure that here the Third and Second Worlds have nothing to look for!) that was always on the right path – right from the very beginning. In producing this enterprised-up continuity, the civilization can therefore survive happily in its neutrality and as well with its democratic invention(s). And beware, if necessary, everything will be defended to the last man! An excellent example is the New Tate Modern institution of art and its ways of dealing with art works; the way the works are presented there is also part of the new system of branding and marketing. Here we see the matrix of old and new, where rooms with titles announce wholly new dimensions or epoch(s). The social and political dimension is presented as just an event in the course of the new logic of the newly established order, where the social and political “room” is, so to speak, only a stage in a new a-historical art and cultural history.

4. In certain specific social conditions of commodity exchange and those of a global market economy, as Ewa Płonowska Ziarek in her already mentioned book *An Ethics of Dissensus. Postmodernity, Feminism, and the Politics of Radical Democracy* suggests,⁸⁷ abstraction/evacuation has become a direct feature of actual social life. It is the way concrete individuals behave and relate to their fate and social surroundings. I can state that this evacuation entails a cut with the phantasmatic scenario of libidinal drives and is in synch with the process of total disincorporation. What do I want to say? Fascism and Stalinism emerge, as Claude Lefort’s theory of totalitarianism argues, as countermeasures to the fragility of democracy, manifesting itself in the disincorporation of power and the indeterminacy of social relations. Totalitarianism on the contrary negates the symbolic character of the empty place of power instituted in democracy. It aims to restore the connection between power and the body by mobilizing the fantasy of social unity grounded in social substance and ultimately embodied in the figure of the leader. The

⁸⁷ I am developing the conclusion no. 4 based on Ewa Płonowska Ziarek thoughts in her book *An Ethics of Dissensus. Postmodernity, Feminism, and the Politics of Radical Democracy*.

fantasy of the corporeality of power is also what Catholicism performs.

Therefore, I can foster a criticism of such an understanding, as it is possible to precisely link the processes of evacuation and abstraction, I described above, to Lefort's and Mouffe's thesis on the disincorporation of power in democratic regimes. It is possible to install a certain parallelism between them. Actually it is their thesis of disincorporation that prevents them from interrogating the role of fantasy and of the libidinal investments underlying hegemonic formations in democratic politics. The thesis on the disincorporation of power namely leaves little room for an alternative discussion about body and democracy. The same goes for Chantal Mouffe when she postulates that truly democratic citizenship should be abstracted from sexual difference. Actually the minimum of disidentification is already part of the power of the institution that has to take recourse to obscene eroticisation and phantasmatic investment in order to exercise its power.

In short, instead of disincorporation, at the present moment only incarnation, traversing the fundamental fantasy in flesh and blood, might be the way to formulate an alternative discussion about body and democracy. By contesting the exclusion of race, gender, sexuality and class from mainstream political and philosophical theory, African American critics expose the confusion between the normative and descriptive levels of liberal theory. The liberal model of disincorporation of power in democracy is insufficient. Even more, bell hooks is sceptical about the universal principles of colour-blind justice, hooks argues (as it is presented in the book by Ewa Płonowska Ziarek) that the abstraction from the differences of race, gender sexuality, and class obliterates the acute historical contradiction between the histories of Euro-American and New World African Modernities.

Da capo senza fine (sound familiar!): back to civilizational kinship.

In all these articulations, theory has a special function and provides a methodology for hegemonic procedures. In the book *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality* by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau and Slavoj Žižek, the authors deal with the notion of "oppositional determination."⁸⁸ The notion traces a trajectory from Hegel and Marx to Žižek in searching for a path to look into the location of theory and identities. The intention is to look at the

⁸⁸ Judith Butler/Ernesto Laclau/Slavoj Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, London and New York: Verso, 2000, p. 10.

process of theoretical writing and its complicity with power. We can detect a dialectical process between the technology of writing and the politics of publishing. Theory and the industry of theoretical writing are precise pyramidal constructions, carefully safeguarded. Who can publish, when they can and, moreover, who will give the first line of interpretation, all of this is extremely important for the capital machine. Huge symposia, seminars and panels organized to support world exhibitions and global cultural projects provide for the circulation of always the same theoretical personalities and public opinion makers and represent the reproduction of the capitalist machine in theoretical terms. In relation to capital, theory displays itself as an auto-regenerative hypertext. Just as with cloning, we witness the reproduction of capital in genetic terms. After the procedure of original accumulation, capital in its flexible stadium can circulate “naturally.” In such a way theory is not just innocent intellectual work, but is today part of the capitalist machine, enlarging its spiritual as well as its territorial aspirations.

Well administered, with the facility of continuously publishing books within American university publishing houses (having remote departments in Western Europe, or vice versa), those who teach and produce knowledge in the capitalist First World have structured access to the printing tools and technical instruments of publishing.

What counts as political and as technical is at stake here. The line of demarcation between the technical and the political places knowledge inside the field of re-territorialized theory. I want to be very precise here: I want to emphasize the location of theory, because it is crucial not to forget one’s own complicity in the apparatuses of exclusion and inclusion that are constitutive of what may count as the theory/technology of writings and the politics of publishing. Lineage is very important, as is kinship. As Haraway argued, only some “writers” have the semiotic status of authors for any text, as only some actors and “actants” have the status of owners and inventors.⁸⁹

The question is not only how to be compatible with theory, or just in synch with a theoretical position, but also how to rethink theory as the struggle for an impossible-possible emancipation.

⁸⁹ Cf. Haraway, *Modest Witness @ Second Millennium: Female Man© meets OncoMouse™*, p. 24.

8. THE OTHER SPACE

In the final chapter I will discuss the paradigm of the new European Identity in order to situate or reformulate the postsocialist (transitional) condition of the East of Europe, within the matrix of relations and structures of power known precisely as the New Europe. These questions arise with the political and cultural changes that are the effect of the enlargement of the European Union with 10 new members. There exists this constant patronizing of states from Eastern or Central Europe that are called “reform states” by the so-called nucleus of Europe. It is said that these reform states, “need to learn the way” in order to “get the things right.” We have to be careful not to develop new forms of inequality, as “there is no centre without a periphery.”

Even more, if we are to reflect on the future of the new Europe, then we have to take into consideration also the new productive anti-global and anti-hegemonic tendencies in art and culture.

I. SREBRENICA

It is therefore proposed that a possible unity or multiplicity of a common spirit be found, my question is under what conditions? An analysis can be established by reviewing what the thinking academic heads stated about Europe at the end of May 2003. On May 31, 2003, Jürgen Habermas in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* published a text, co-signed by Jacques Derrida (who stated that he was not able to join the writing of the text, but was happy enough to have a chance to at least sign it).⁹⁰ This text is to be seen as a precise answer and a sort of “rebellion” against the January, 31, 2003 list of support for the US war in Iraq, signed by some old and some new states that will become part of the EU. On May, 31, 2003, on the date when the Habermas’ text was published, Umberto Eco, Gianni Vattimo, Richard Rorty and others also published, although in different, but not less important, daily magazines, additional texts of support for the main ideas formulated by Habermas.⁹¹

Lets try to purge what is, so to speak, to become a new European Identity and the new European spirit, rethinking first Habermas’, and afterwards Vattimo’s thoughts.

Habermas exposed in his text two main points that deserve to be analysed. First, the new Europe has to be seen as a space of different speeds, at the heart of which remains what he named the avant-garde, the nucleus of Europe, formed by the most developed European countries. He is presenting again, though through a slightly new rhetoric, the old story of West and East. This difference is in his view underlined further as he sees the West as a spiritual framework, a contour that is much more than Europe, it is a spiritual habitat that is connected with individualism, rationalism, and, last but not least, with the Judeo-Christian framework. Everything, and I repeat, according to Habermas, has to be seen in complete “symphony” with the USA, Canada and Australia.

We have to note that Japan is omitted, although this Western spiritual framework is, first and foremost, the depiction of nothing other than

⁹⁰ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, “Unsere Erneuerung. Nach dem Krieg: Die Wieder-geburt Europas,” in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31.5.2003.

⁹¹ The texts were all published on 31.5.2003 and in the following newspapers: Jürgen Habermas (and co-signed by Jacques Derrida) in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*; Richard Rorty in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*; Fernando Savater in *El País*; Adolf Muschg in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*; Umberto Eco in *La Repubblica*; and Gianni Vattimo in *La Stampa*.

that of the developed Western World, therefore of the First Capitalist World. It is important to note that according to the Vietnamese theorist and filmmaker, Trinh T. Minh-ha, within the Global World the Asian space is granted a specific set of domination relations and expropriation processes/evacuations of historical grounds.⁹²

An obsessive situation exists toward this East (of Asia) that has to be seen as radically different from the East (of Europe). In relation to Asia, an almost daily shaping of different forms of inclusion and exclusion are activated, within and/or with the help of the First capitalist world.

Secondly, Habermas exposed in his text two main traits that are in his view at the root of Europe today. He stated that Europe has in common two main features: the totalitarian regimes and the Holocaust. Here I have to raise a question and to ask where and when we are then to include the massacres within the Balkan territory: Kosovo, Srebrenica, Vukovar? What is evacuated and abstracted is precisely the condition of the impossibility of Europe to become, as termed by Habermas, “a happily individual and rational Judeo-Christian entity.”⁹³ Or lets put this differently, in this act of omission, we can detect precisely the evacuation and abstraction of that impossibility that today prevents the new European home (as termed by Vattimo) to be fully closed, completed and at peace with itself. The concentration camps, the massacres (SREBRENICA!) in the 1990s in the Balkans must be evacuated, abstracted, and rejected, erased from the European memory, in order for this endeavour of the harmonious new European home to become a successful reality.

It is interesting to note that within the real space of Europe, the Balkan is, on one hand, perceived as a disgusting “remainder,” and therefore the massacres and killings there are constantly abstracted. On the other hand, as has been pointed out by the Croat theorist Boris Buden, a specific obsession regarding Eastern Europe, precisely the Balkans, exists on the aesthetic level. It seems that the Balkans are fulfilling a special role for the European imaginary identification processes. The Balkans are seen as an almost raw entity that can produce, but solely in the field

⁹² Cf. Trinh T. Minh-ha, “Shifting the Borders of the Other,” (An Interview with Trinh T. Minh-ha by Marina Gržinić), in: Trinh T. Minh-ha: *Secession*, Vienna 2001, p. 45.

⁹³ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, “Unsere Erneuerung. Nach dem Krieg: Die Wieder-geburt Europas,” in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 31.5.2003.

of aesthetics, new concepts, and therefore the Balkans are capable of providing to contemporary European art some sort of fresh blood.⁹⁴ Viewed from such an angle, I can state that the former West of Europe is a vampire entity or a modern cannibal searching for fresh blood and raw meat! This can easily be understood if we think about the proliferation of exhibitions in Europe that attempt to search for the Balkan identity and the “honey” with which to cover up the bloody wounds produced in the real space of the Balkans also with the help of this same West of Europe.

Vattimo, takes us even two steps further in searching the new European identity, exposing the fact that if we are to talk about identity, then it is something that goes beyond the national states of Europe.⁹⁵ But is he not simply giving the positive mark to what is going on anyway in the real space of Europe? The World Bank, The International Monetary Fund, The World Trade Organization today make the most important decisions regarding the economical and political situation and the future of a number of countries today, not only in Europe, but within the global World. Moreover, following Giorgio Agamben, we have to assert that what really interests the West is the genetic material, the so-called biopower.⁹⁶ There is a whole realm of new technology and biology that is coming together, and opening a field that is known as bio-politics. Biopolitics is about exploring and producing (artificial) life, and it is also the way modern States administer our lives today. Modern States and even more so multinational companies instead of, or in the name of, the national states, are prescribing what is life, when we can die, etc. It is not the idea of nations so much that is a problem today, pace Agamben, but the administration of the definition of life and of our right to die. The borders in question are almost completely regulated by the bureaucratic administration of the Capital machine, assuming all rights to decide on these topics. It is time to understand that the neo-liberal principles of regulations governing economical, political and cultural imperatives are already at work here, going well beyond the national state interest.

And again, Vattimo, talks about the gene of socialism, which can be

⁹⁴ Cf. Boris Buden, “Jebe lud zbnunjenog” [The Idiot Fucks the Crazy], in: *Zarez*, no. 107, Zagreb, Croatia 2003.

⁹⁵ Cf. Vattimo, “Casa Europa,” in: *La Stampa*. 31.5.2003.

⁹⁶ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *L'aperto. L'uomo e l'animale* [The Open. Man and Animal], Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002, pp. 81-82.

seen as something specific to Europe. In doing so, he simply suggests that we have to put into parenthesis the real socialist histories of the horrors of Europe. But, the history of socialism cannot be evacuated from its Eastern European legacy. The gene of socialism as proposed by Vattimo is a process of the swallowing, or better to put evacuating, of several decades of the histories of the East of Europe. This means to evacuate precisely those conditions of impossibility that would normally prevent one from seeing socialism only as a process of humanization and progression.

If it is to talk about genes, then it is to underline the gene of oppression and wars exported from the nucleus of Europe toward its east/south borders or out of Europe. These genes produced millions of refugees, immigrants, people without papers, trafficking in bodies and minds, the slavery of millions, etc. The gene of inclusion and exclusion from or within Europe, is to be seen today, according to Gail Lewis, the British theoretician, also in the form of a black woman's body, the body in constant processes of trafficking, exploitation and being subsumed within different stories of contemporary racism.⁹⁷

And even more, if we are to count all the academic heads mentioned above who stood up in defense of the new Europe, all the members of the new holly alliance against the devil – outside of the new Europe, then we cannot just acknowledge what was stated by the American philosopher and feminist, Alison M. Jaggar, in an interview published in *Zarez*, Zagreb, that on a global neo-liberal scale, contemporary democracy has the face of a white man! And even more, she added that what is to be heard from the other part of the gender divide is only the wealthy academic white women elite.⁹⁸

If we think within such parameters and the stories that are shaping the identity of the new Europe, then we cannot be but critical of stories of the empowering of naked life. Naked life (which I am using in reference to Giorgio Agamben) is a situation of absolute and total deprivation,

⁹⁷ Cf. Gail Lewis: "Imaginarities of Europe: Technologies of Gender, Economies of Power," in: Keynote presentation at *The International Feminist Research Conference*, Lund 21.8.2003, Sweden.

⁹⁸ Cf. Alison M. Jaggar: "Prava za sve članove ljudske zajednice" ["Rights for all the Members of the Community"] (An Interview with Alison M. Jaggar by Maja Uzelac), in: *Zarez*, no. 107, Zagreb, Croatia 2003.

when individuals have nothing but their (naked) life.⁹⁹

The term comes from Roman Law, wherein slaves were perceived as sacred/animals, i.e. without any rights other than the right to have a naked life, and therefore only the right to die. Today we have a similar situation in relation to refugees, immigrants, emigrants, people without papers, etc, and also when thinking about contemporary slaves (the ones that are included within all sorts of trafficking: children, women, etc). We have to be critical toward such interpretations that see a source of irrational power coming or dissipating from so-called people without citizenship, with undocumented lives. To credit them an over-empowerment when they are bearing just a naked life is a dangerous form of academic institutionalisation and moreover a rationalization of the total forms of oppression of people and bodies without papers, without rights, who are in possession of one thing only, their naked lives.

My critique is directed precisely against this transformation of naked life into a category of obscene *jouissance*, into a category of enjoyment. If we are to give credit to such stories it means we are to empower solely managerial academic groups within the global capitalist system trying to rationalize, in the world of an almost panicky rotating global capitalist system forms of deprivations and the naked lives of millions. Phrased differently, in reference to Agamben, this is a rationalization of a life without form, or a process to give to formless forms of lives a kind of form, but without life!

⁹⁹ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer. Il potere sovrano e la nuda vita*, Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 1995, p. 14.

II. THE EASTERN EUROPEAN CONDITION

I can propose a further theoretical-political positioning. The idea of this positioning, or of taking a (conceptually) specific ground is to philosophically denote and to articulate a proper Eastern European position. This idea is not grounded in the simple game of identity politics, whereby specific monsters/entities search for their rights in cyberspace; rather it is a militant response to this constant process of fragmentation and particularization. Moreover, I insist on the re-politicisation of the cyberworld by taking a ground that is not a geographical space or a location on the geographical map of the New Europe, but, as Edward Said would say, it is a ground that is a concept, a paradigm of such a space. My rethinking of the position of (post) feminism and gender theories today is also a direct answer to the often populist remarks that today is not the time to divide East and West (Europe), and that due to the ideology of globalisation it is only home that matters: "No East, no West, home is the best!" Despite the ideological blindness of such a sentence, which forgets to take into account the claustrophobic tendency, and totalitarian flavour intrinsic to every ideology of intimacy, again we have to ask where is this home? In which spiritual and conceptual context is it situated, if we have one!

Instead of reflecting myself as an academically gender-positioned female writer, and therefore as a (cyber)feminist from Eastern Europe, I propose a radical reversal of a possible interpretation of this Eastern European position or a paradigm. I would like to propose articulating my proper Eastern European position (or if you prefer in Lyotard's term: my Eastern European condition) as a (post) feminist – as a cyberfeminist paradigm.¹⁰⁰ Eastern Europe is to be seen as a woman paradigm, or, as the female side in the process of sexual difference and grounding ourselves in the real or cyberworld. It can be perceived as the militant theorization of a particular position in the crucial debate, when entering the third millennium, in the debate concerning ways and modes and last but

¹⁰⁰ Marina Gržinić, "A theoretical-political positioning of philosophy, media and cyberfeminism," in: *Techniques of cyber<>feminism <mode=message>*, eds. Claudia Reiche and Andrea Sick, Bremen: Thealit Frauen.Kultur.Labor, 2002, p. 141-154.

not least, protocols for entering the (cyber)space of hopes, uselessness, theory and terror.

“Eastern Europe” has always been subjected to different readings.¹⁰¹ It was often viewed as a land of romantic, mythological events. Seen through a Marxist-Leninist filter, the technological backwardness offered the myth of a grand brotherly community and total sexual freedom (which was, due to its materialist nature, devoid of ethics and morals, thus capable of the worst sins) or of an exclusively totalitarian project and of the realization of an Eastern despotism in which poverty, misery, mucus and blood decant incessantly. It is exactly this last myth which nowadays presents itself in its most horrible form, for it is moving from the realm of the symbolic into the realm of the real, while we all still hope it will remain a Western phantasmagoria. The events in the former Yugoslavia are a materialization, the entry of the real into the place of the symbolic. To this we have to add the flow of refugees and illegal immigrants. This is even truer if we refer to integration processes (former Eastern European states forced to be police watchdogs) and disintegration procedures (acquiring the right passport) and last but not least, to the wars raging in the Balkans and in the former Soviet Union. It is these facts and changes in the East that have brought about a new view on Europe. A reading of the East on the part of the West is exemplified by an absence of communication and with the attitude of “looking but not seeing, listening but not hearing.” This last attitude has continued throughout most of the current events in which people in the former Yugoslavia die by the thousands and takes refuge by the millions. Although all this is happening in the heart of Europe, this same Europe can repudiate this European heartland, for it has renamed it the “Balkans.” Due to recent atrocious events, some people have given up the pleasure of their contemplative and philosophical reading. With references to history, philosophy (Kant) and the arts, we can elaborate the idea of Eastern Europe as the indivisible remainder of all European atrocities. Eastern Europe is a piece of shit and the bloody symptom of the political, cultural and epistemological failures of our present century.

¹⁰¹ Cf. Marina Gržinić, “Encountering the Balkan. The radicalisation of positioning,” in: *Art in Europe: 1990-2000*, ed. Gianfranco Maraniello, Milan: Skira, 2002, pp. 115-126.

The East is a stranger for Western Europe, the one who steals from us (from you!) or endangers the national substance of the emerging united Europe. Every construction of the “foreigner” requires somebody who steals or endangers our national substance. We witness an “obsession with the foreigner who has a unique relation to pleasure.” Events in the Balkans have taken their course in a rational manner, but, as Slavoj Žižek formulated, “Balkan is rational, what is irrational is the view the West has about these events.” According to him, nationalism is the “back side” of real socialist systems and not a reaction to the demise of communism.

For the East one topic only is typical: History. The re-appropriation of history. The whole socialist machine was aimed at neutralizing the side effects of a pertinent interpretation of its reality and of art production, at covering up, at an effacement or renaming of history. At the discursive level this was a struggle for the formation and the interpretation of the history of the East, for a re-appropriation of the history of socialism by the East as well as by the West.

What we are dealing with here now is a deconstruction and a renewed construction of the same History, but a History which is now augmented by thoughts, images and facts which were so far inexpressible. What we are interested in is the “internal re-articulation” being engendered beyond the neo-colonial positions of the West, the one that lives “here,” without being recognized as such. What we are witnessing is a process of mirroring and reflection of one’s own self and of one’s own “Eastern” position, when the recycling of different histories does not refer to Western but to Eastern positions and conditions.

An alternative history of the East of Europe signifies a demand for the redefinition relations within contemporary constructions and relations of power.

III. THE OTHER AS TWO

Not so long ago, I was trying to rethink the difference between the One and the Other. I called them Western European Scums and Eastern European Monsters.¹⁰² These differences imply a certain processuality, but also a certain fixity within global times of local spaces. Why is this difference important? With the war of the USA and the allies against Iraq, when this war is called – Operation Freedom or The War Against Terror – these differences between the One and the Other, between the local and the global, between activity and passivity, become even more transparent.

We have a triangle of global-multicultural-spiritual on one side, and, capital-democracy-ethics, on the other. The functions of these system(s) are, according to Alain Badiou, the French theoretician, processes that can be called Counting for the One. Who is the One? In everyday jargon it is the USA and Western Europe, or simply: the First Capitalist World, indeed. The One counts, one, two, three states from the Former Eastern Europe will become a part of a New European World. The USA counts one, two, three states from the Former Eastern Europe will become part of NATO; or, simply, they count this and that state will be erased, or transformed into “targets of opportunity,” as the initial attack against Iraq on 20 March at 3.20 in the morning was described by CNN!

The real ethical stance, in Alain Badiou words, has nothing to do with the politics of representation. In ethics the subject presents itself alone and speaks for itself. Insisting on the impossible is, according to Badiou, a way to stop the counting for the One (to free ourselves from the powers of the One). The stopping of such counting for the One is, therefore, the most important process in the space of politics, which is

¹⁰² Marina Gržinić, “Spectralization of Europe,” in: *The spectralization of technology: from elsewhere to cyberfeminism and back : institutional modes of the cyberworld*, eds. Marina Gržinić and Adele Eisenstein, Maribor: MKC, 1999, p. 17-32; cf. also Marina Gržinić, *Fiction Reconstructed. Eastern Europe, Post-Socialism and the Retro-Avant-Garde*, Vienna: Seleno and Springerin, 2000; and Marina Gržinić, “The spectralization of Europe,” in: *Net_condition: art and global media*, eds. Peter Weibel and Timothy Druckrey, Cambridge, Mass. and London: The MIT Press, 2000, p. 114-125

a process of political in(ter)vention, a new possible way of acting today.

I would like to connect two poles here: Badiou's proposal to stop counting for the One, and the parallel process that instead of thinking

of the Other in relation to the One, we have to operate with the Other as Two.

The Other as Two. To discuss the theory of the Other as TWO means also to constitute a possible radical positioning for other worlds, paradigms of thinking, etc., out of the (First) Western capitalist worlds. That means that these others, the Other, is not simply to be seen as a couple or a twin (as Eastern Europe is understood as the mirror image of Western Europe, etc., or as its pure symptom), but TWO.

But lets go step by step, to explain in detail the process described above. In order to do this I will make reference to Alenka Zupančič's text "Nietzsche and Nothingness."¹⁰³

What is the result of the theorization above: the One is in a disproportionate relation to the Other. When we put the One against the Other it is obvious that the One needs the Other, but only because it needs to establish a demarcation in the field, otherwise there is not any relation between them. When we put them together they form a unity, but this unity will not give us any third possibility. This is why in such a relation the Other is just a negative of the One. This is why we have to give another interpretation: the Other is not to be perceived as the one of the One, but as Two. And even more, TWO at the same time.

That means we do not have a dialectic of affirmation and negation, but two parallel dialectics which do not come one from the other, but both are present at the same time! In such a constellation the History of the world is not the History of the lost mythical One, but it is the History of the double source. In this way Eastern Europe, Africa and etc., perceived as TWO, could be seen as one of the sources of the World, etc. I would like to remind you that to be present at the same time, to not become one from the other, is also one of the possible artistic strategies today, with the effect of radical derealisation: juxtaposing reality and its phantasmatic supplement face to face; to parallel one to the other.

¹⁰³ Cf. Alenka Zupančič, "Nietzsche in nič" ["Nietzsche and Nothingness"], in: *FILozofski Vestnik [Acta Philosophica]*, No. 3, Ljubljana: FI ZRC SAZU, 2000.

Furthermore: to say that the Other is two means not to explain the difference between the One and the Other, but to point to the difference immanent in the Other. The third possibility is the Other of the Other, that means that the surplus of two is not the third, but that this surplus stays, is already inherent in the Other; the two of the Other stays as its most internal obstacle (Zupančič). The Other of the Other means that the Other is not the double or the repetition of the One. The inclusion of the third possibility, is not the third possibility at all! The third possibility is therefore the Other of the Other, that is, the auto-referential moment already generated through language.

The Other is not something that exists, that simply is! The Other is, according to Zupančič, something that is becoming! This is why it is possible to say woman does not exist, Eastern Europe does not exist. This is the crucial difference between the One and the Other, between woman and man, between the East and the West. Even more: The Other is just the name for becoming Two! Lacan said: The One has nothing to do with becoming; the One receives its power from the signifier that affirms itself in the process of naming. The genesis or the becoming of the One does not exist.

The One exists, so to speak, with a dictate. The One exists because of a decree, because of an order. Or, as Zupančič stated: the One exists with a punch, the One exists on a blow!

This means that with counting (and this is where Badiou is absolutely right) for the One we will never get to two. The Other is defined by the fact that we start to count at two, two is the first number. Two is not 1+1, this is why instead of saying it is the Other, Lacan says it is TWO. If we start to think about the other as two, then we get, as I have suggested, the possibility to think of the world not as One existing only in conformity with the first capitalistic machine, but as two or three worlds, which are simultaneous productive spaces with their parallel histories. Only within such a context is it possible to understand the postsocialist condition of the East of Europe as the productive future of Europe.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁴ Marina Gržinić, "Le réel traumatique de l'art. L'art de l'Europe de l'Est. Spectralisation de l'Europe," in: *Utopia 3 : la question de l'art au 3e millénaire: généalogie critique et axiomatique minimale : actes du colloque international* - Université Paris VIII, Université de Venise, (Art et pensée, 6). Sammeron: GERMS, 2002, pp. 173-185.

IV. AGAMBEN'S OUT OF BEING

As for now, I can state that an anthropological machine is working at the basis of globalisation, and it is working on a secret connection of putting man and animal together. The idea is to make them both more human; humanization is at the basis of this connection. This idea of humanity is the idea of Being and its inclusion into civilization. But who decides what is human, and when the non-humans will take part in the process of humanization? The capital machine of course!

In his last book *The Open. Man and Animal* (2002), Giorgio Agamben is actually warning us that maybe it is time to insist on the dissolving, or better put, the separation of this connection between man and animal. This animal namely can also be seen as the body of the modern slave. Instead of the slave from the Roman Empire, it is possible to think about the body of the immigrant, refugee, clandestine people, poor and proletariats. He proposes a cut with this constant hybridisation. To be left out of the anthropological machine, not to be saved, is therefore our only possible salvation. Not to be part of the process of the capitalist humanization, to be left out of Being, is maybe the only possible way to have a decent Being.

Out of Being is also the subtitle of the last chapter in the already mentioned book by Agamben. Allow me now to go fast, but deep, in establishing the map behind this proposed "Out of Being." I can put forward the following thesis. In the modern history of philosophy three books or three positions of thinking marked the way of understanding Being (Sein), which Derrida defines "we and our life":

In 1927 Heidegger published *Being and Time*.

In 1943 Sartre published *Being and Nothingness*.

In 1988 Badiou published *Being and the Event*.¹⁰⁵

I would like to add to this established line the title of the last chapter in the already mentioned book by Agamben *The Open* (published in 2002), Out of Being.¹⁰⁶

The Heideggerian *Being and Time* is about the (Western) temporisation

¹⁰⁵ Alain Badiou, *L'être et l'événement*, Paris: Seuil, 1988.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Giorgio Agamben, *L'aperto. L'uomo e l'animale* [*The Open. Man and Animal*], Torino: Bollati Boringhieri, 2002.

of History. Sartre's Being is the one of nothingness in relation to the Holocaust. Although, I can state with Derida that Sartre nothingness is only a modality of being something as nothing.

Alain Badiou made a cut in the line of Being with the event. Françoise Proust in 1998 defined Badiou's event as a cut within the house of Western philosophy that resembles the anthropological machine in theory and philosophy.¹⁰⁷ Badiou is very well aware that the house of Western philosophy resembles the anthropological machine that is today compelled just to an empty and panic rotation, producing the total evacuation of histories and practices out of the First Capitalist World. Proust describes this house of philosophy as the Western metaphysics that is transformed in a suffocating house that is preventing us from breathing. Badiou's event is, according to Proust, the gesture of opening a window, or better put, of opening the windows to start to breathe again. But is not this just a gesture to provide fresh air within the always already same, old and unchanged house of Western metaphysics? In this trajectory we can identify other paths or modifications through history in relation to Being. I can think about the Deleuzian never ending of Being, or, Being in the process of Becoming. Derrida introduced differance. It claims a difference by means of only one single character (the a instead of the e). Within such a context, Badiou made the most radical gesture, indeed. He tried at least to start to think about Being from the beginning. Badiou's event is to be perceived similarly to the gesture of the Professor who after listening and making corrections tells us, "From the beginning, once again, please." But the text stays the same!

I argue that these moves lead to the modification of the Western Institution of Metaphysics, or of the great philosophical and civilizational edifice, but in the last instance, the edifice stays unchanged. Agamben is the one therefore that provides us with the most radical gesture. Agamben's Out of Being is not the simple gesture of opening the windows within the old anthropological machine. He is telling us: to be saved we have to leave the house! Out of Being! Out of Being can be perceived as the radical Badiou's event, indeed, so invoked by Badiou himself.

What is important is to understand that this Out of Being is not

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Françoise Proust, "What is the Event?," in: *FILozofSKI VESTNIK [Acta Philosophica]*, No.1, Ljubljana: FI ZRC SAZU, 1998, pp. 9-19.

a gesture of foreclosure, being suddenly dragged into a queer space without a time, or out of time. To find ourselves in some kind of wired suspension of time. Out of Being means to open ourselves toward another temporality. Or, if we are to be even more precise, this means to start with a projection of a completely other film, and not to spend time, which is Badiou's suggestion, with the redefinition of one single sequence, which doesn't matter even if it is the initial one.

Out of Being is to be open not toward the space of Otherness, but toward the Other, Second, Third, Space.

A good example is IRWIN's installation and/or the interactive CD-ROM project with the title *The East Art Map* (2002). In this project a history of Avant-Garde Art from the former Eastern Europe is reconstructed through hundreds of images and references. Taking its cue from Alfred H. Barr's seminal diagram illustrating the development of Western abstract art, IRWIN's *East Art Map* is a retrospective (re) construction and mapping of Eastern European Art (1920 – 2001). It implies also a radical hold on the process of a too fast historicization (that is equal to the process of forgetting) of different spaces, places, and territories in the world. The East Art Map makes visible what was for decades out of the gaze of the Western (First Capitalist World) history. The East Art Map is important, as it opens the way of perceiving the (new) avant-garde movement as not simply the space of the (disturbing) Otherness, but as the Other space. With this project we can perhaps think about Aesthetics in a new productive form that is *Easthetics*.

So, if I am to give a kind of a coded order, we can read the story of Being and of the madly anthropological machine of humanization run by capital as follows:

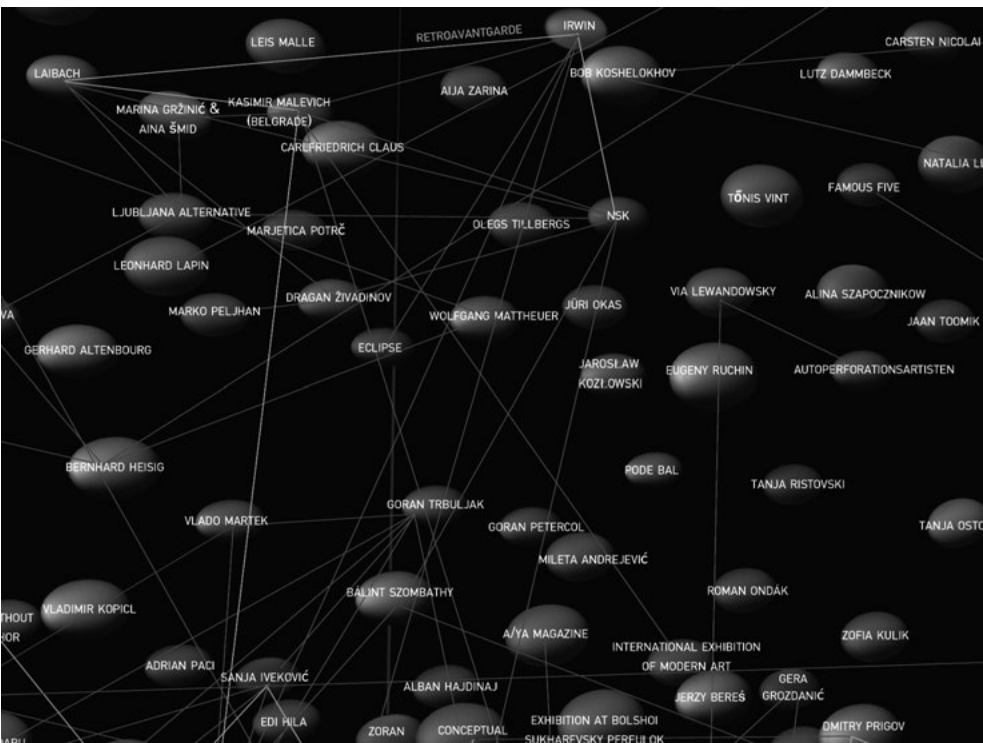
Badiou – beginning (with his event, he would like to re-question once again the beginning of the edifice of being, and ask us to start from the beginning), Deleuze – becoming (he insists on the never ending becoming of being), Derrida – differAnce (he establishes A difference of being) and Agamben – out of being.

Agamben is aware that the anthropological machine of being is rotating today only and solely as a mad machine that nobody can correct or improve (despite the efforts of rethinking it from the beginning or as in its never ending becoming and/or difference), which is why he suggests an end – out of being.

8. THE OTHER SPACE

And I will end here as well, in order to have a chance to go on with a completely other parallel (hi)story or film.

8. THE OTHER SPACE



IRWIN: *The East Art Map*

Interactive CD-ROM

2002

Produced by IRWIN and New Moment

BIBLIOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Synthese : die Retro-Avantgarde oder eine Kartographie des Post-Sozialismus. IN: *50 Jahre Kunst aus Mitteleuropa 1949-1999 : Aspekte, Positionen : Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig Wien, Palais Liechtenstein und 20er Haus*, 18. Dezember 1999 - 27. Februar 2000. Wien: Museum moderner Kunst Stiftung Ludwig, 1999.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Osteuropa als der unteilbare postkommunistische Rest @ : es ist nicht Rot, es ist Blut! = Eastern Europe as the indivisible Post-Communist remainder @ : it is not red, it is blood!. IN: KOVATS, Stephen (ed.). *Ost-West Internet : elektronische Medien im Transformationsprozess Ost- und Mitteleuropas : electronic media in the transformation process of Eastern and Central Europe*, (Edition Bauhaus, Bd. 6). Frankfurt; New York: Campus, 1999.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Das virtuelle Bild und das Echtzeit-intervall = The virtual-image and the real-time interval. IN: RITTER, Roland (ed.). *Scattered images : Fragmente von Realitäten = Fragments of realities*, (HDA Dokumente zur Architektur, 11). Graz: Haus der Architektur, 1999.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Spectralization of Europe. IN: GRŽINIĆ, Marina (ed.), EISENSTEIN, Adele (ed.). *The spectralization of technology: from elsewhere to cyberfeminism and back : institutional modes of the cyberworld*. Maribor: MKC, 1999.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Video as civic discourse in Slovenia and the former Yugoslavia : strategies of visualization and the aesthetics of video in the new Europe. IN: LENGEL, Laura B. (ed.). *Culture and technology in the new Europe : civic discourse in transformation in post-communist nations*, (Civic discourse for the third millennium). Stamford, Conn: Ablex, 2000.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, The spectralization of Europe. IN: WEIBEL, Peter (ed.), DRUCKREY, Timothy (ed.). *Net_condition : art and global media*. Cambridge (Massachusetts); London (England): The MIT Press, 2000.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Exposure time, the aura, and telerobotics. IN: GOLDBERG, Ken (ed.). *The robot in the garden : telerobotics and telepistemology in the age of the internet*, (Leonardo). Cambridge (Massachusetts); London (England): The MIT Press, 2000.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, *Fiction reconstructed : Eastern Europe, post-socialism & the retro-avant-garde*. Vienna: Selene, 2000.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Dragan Živadinov's Noordung Cosmokinetic

Cabinet Theatre and Emil Hrvatin's Cabinet of Memories = Dragan Živadinov Noordung Kozmokinetikus Kamraszínháza és Emil Hrvatkin Emlékezetsszobája. IN: CZEGLÉDY, Nina (ed.). *Digitized bodies - virtual spectacles*. Budapest: Ludwig Museum - Museum of Contemporary Art: = Ludwig Múzeum - Kortárs Művészeti Múzeum, 2001.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Stelarc: politics of the body. IN: GRŽINIĆ, Marina, MASSUMI, Brian, MURRAY, Timothy, STELARC. *Alternate interfaces - Stelarc*. [S. l.]: Monash University, Faculty of Art and Design, 2002.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Encountering the Balkan. The radicalization of positioning. IN: MARANIELLO, Gianfranco (ed.). *Art in Europe : 1990-2000*. Milan: Skira, 2002.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Does contemporary art need museums anymore?. IN: VON BISMARCK, Beatrice. *Interarchive : archivarische Praktiken und Handlungsräume im zeitgenössischen Kunstfeld = archival practices and sites in the contemporary art field*. Köln: König, 2002.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, A theoretical-political positioning of philosophy, media and cyberfeminism. IN: REICHE, Claudia (ed.), SICK, Andrea (ed.). *Technics of cyber<>feminism <mode=message>*. Bremen: Thealit Frauen. Kulted.Labor, 2002.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Le réel traumatique de l'art. L'art de l'Europe de l'Est. Spectralisation de l'Europe. IN: BRUNI, Ciro Giordano (ed.). *Utopia 3 : la question de l'art au 3e millénaire : généalogie critique et axiomatique minimale : actes du colloque international - Université Paris VIII, Université de Venise, (Art et pensée, 6)*. Sammeron: GERMS, 2002.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, Neue Slowenische Kunst. IN: ŠUVAKOVIĆ, Miško (ed.), DJURIĆ, Dubravka (ed.). *Impossible histories : historical avant-gardes, neo-avant-gardes, and post-avant-gardes in Yugoslavia, 1918-1991*. Cambridge; London: The MIT Press, 2003.

Marina GRŽINIĆ, *Global capitalism and the genetic paradigm of culture*. IN: GRŽINIĆ, Marina (ed.). *The future of computer arts & the history of The International Festival of Computer Arts, Maribor 1995-2004*. Ljubljana: Maska; Maribor: MKC, 2004.

BIBLIOGRAPHY (SELECTION)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marina Gržinić holds a Ph.D. in philosophy and works as a researcher at the Institute of Philosophy at the ZRC SAZU (Scientific Research Centre of the Slovenian Academy of Science and Art) in Ljubljana. She is Professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna. She also works as a freelance media theorist, art critic and curator.

In collaboration with Aina Šmid, Marina Gržinić has been involved in video art since 1982. They have collaborated on more than 40 video art projects, made a short film and numerous video and media installations; independently they have also directed several video documentaries and television productions; additionally they realized an interactive CD-ROM for ZKM, Karlsruhe in 1997. In their 22 years of collaborative media work Gržinić and Šmid have presented and exhibited their video works and video installations at more than 100 video festivals around the world and have received several major awards for their video productions. Gržinić has published hundreds of articles and edited 13 books.

margrz@zrc-sazu.si

CIP - Kataložni zapis o publikaciji
Narodna in univerzitetna knjižnica, Ljubljana

7.01 "19"

GRŽINIČ, Marina

Situated contemporary art practices : art, theory and activism from (the east of)
Europe / Marina Gržinič. - Ljubljana : Založba ZRC = ZRC Publishing ; Frankfurt am
Main : Revolver - Archiv für aktuelle Kunst, 2004

ISBN 961-6500-53-8 (Založba ZRC)

ISBN 3-937577-40-8 (Revolver)

215233280