

ART  
RESISTANCE, SUBVERSION, MADNESS  
UMETNOST: ODPORNIŠTVO, SUBVERZIJA, NOROST

MONITOR ZSA

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**CRITICAL RESISTANCE  
UNDER THE CONDITIONS  
OF GLOBAL CAPITALISM**

**Polona Tratnik**

## **NOTES ON CONTEMPORARY ART: CRITICAL RESISTANCE AND ACTIVIST APPROACHES**

### **Introduction: contemporary tactics of resistance**

If avant-gardes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century could be understood as a part of modern emancipatory plan, today the teleological version of modernity (as Marx and other left-Hegelians took it after Hegel) doesn't seem to correspond to the contemporary world and knowledge; the left-Hegelian calls for complete change, which would bring purifying results, are today acknowledged rather as utopian demands. However the question could be raised, whether there are any similar tendencies to modern or romantic avant-gardes in today's culture? What kind is contemporary critical resistance in cultural or artistic practices and what is its function?

Artistic and cultural practices that contain critical resistance, today follow the logic of information society and thus assert their voice in two manners: on one hand in the mycelium each receiver could be a potential broadcaster or each user a potential distributor, on the other hand in more radical approaches the cultural activists try to take over (to occupy) the broadcasting positions. Cultural activists aim to hold the information, to establish a matrix, within which they manipulate information.

In the postmodern era the power is significantly dispersed, the field of power is nomadic, decentralized and deterritorialised.<sup>1</sup> Therefore also the tactics of resistance have to be of a new kind. An artistic collective NSK has, for example, established a NSK state, of which one can become a citizen and get a passport. Contemporary critical projects and resistance practices originate in the legacy of the artistic historical avant-gardes<sup>2</sup> and in critical theory (Frankfurt school). They often use such strategies to provoke shock and scandal, and to perform riots. Yet, these practices correspond to social or cultural state of our time, where information is one of the privileged concepts.

Critical resistance today detects noise in informational systems and it as well performs noise on its own. Noise (as defined by mathematical theory of communication: 1948, C. E. Shannon, the father of the cyber age) brings mistakes, uncertainty, loses and incapability into the system. According to the informational theory, noise is at least as strong as the signal itself, or even stronger, and cannot be ignored.

Critical resistance and activist approaches in today's culture are important because they stimulate critical thought in global public. With critical deconstruction of the premises

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1 As it is for example observed by Negri and Hardt. See: Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, *Empire*, Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2000.

2 As they were most notably defined by Bürger. See: Peter Bürger, *Theorie der Avantgarde*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1974.

of contemporary society we can comprehend, how the production of (hegemonic) signals and noise functions.

In a similar way Noam Chomsky sees the role of the intellectuals – for him they are those, who can uncover the lies of the governments, analyse the actions in regard to their causes and motives, and they can also show their often hidden intentions. The power they have originates from a political power, the access to information and freedom of speech – the responsibility of intellectuals is in telling the truth and revealing the lies.<sup>3</sup>

### Cultural field and its autonomy

Contemporary art is spreading from a closed world of art into the field of culture, thus today art is discussed as culture and an artist understood as a cultural worker. The opposite could be observed as well: the entering of social issues into the field of “art”.

Besides, as stated by Pierre Bourdieu, there are “all kinds of structural and functional homologies between the social field as a whole, or the political field, and the literary field, which, like them, has its dominated and its dominators, its conservatives and its avant-garde, its subversive struggles and its mechanisms of reproduction, the fact remains that each of these phenomena assumes within it an altogether specific form.”<sup>4</sup> Like the political field, or any other field, the cultural field is a force-field, “which aim at transforming or maintaining the established relation forces: each of the agents commits the force (capital) that he has acquired through previous struggles.”<sup>5</sup> But even if cultural field has a certain autonomy and intellectuals occupy special place within the dominant class, still “The fields of cultural production occupy a dominated position in the field of power,” thus “artists and writers, and more generally intellectuals, are a dominated fraction of the dominant class,”<sup>6</sup>

Contemporary artistic practices are also social-cultural practices, where it is irrelevant, whether we call them art or not. Art in contemporary society is still a relatively open or free locus (in comparison with other fields), it also allows performing more radical approaches, which are usually tolerated exactly because they are understood as artistic practices. However precisely this freedom pushes a radical voice into the field of artistic autonomy (as into socially separated field), which is understood as a socially controlled deviation sphere (a kind of “zoo”). For this reason a segregation of practices, which appear as artistic, takes place – each voice from this sphere is beforehand sentenced to minimal relevance and seriousness. Some attempts thus aim to exceed any limitation and control (therefore they could also be socially criminalized, thus their authors hide with nomadism, with ambiguous presentations and identities etc.).

3 Noam Chomsky, “Odgovornost intelektualcev”, in: *Somrak demokracije*, Ljubljana: Studia humanitatis, 1997, pp. 9–10.

4 Pierre Bourdieu, “The Intellectual Field: A World Apart”, in: *Theory in Contemporary Art since 1985*, MA, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005, pp. 11–12.

5 Ibid., p. 13.

6 Ibid., p. 15.

### Art as a political project: avant-gardes and a better today

Left-Hegelian philosophers with their critical philosophy stimulated the tendency towards change (Ludwig Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, Karl Marx). The concept of avant-garde (which originates from military use; in politics and culture it stimulates progressive and radical accessions) was introduced to revolutionary thought in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is a significantly modern concept. It could also be understood as the more radical version of modernity.<sup>7</sup> It has to be emphasized that there is no avant-garde without an idea of progression to a certain aim or movement on the basis of a certain criterion (without the concept of a telos). Avant-garde is here in front of such movement, therefore it only makes sense if art moves in certain direction. In the moment, when we accept such cognition, we confirm teleological comprehension of art and history in general.<sup>8</sup>

Nicolas Bourriaud believes, that the avant-gardes of the twentieth century (from Dadaism to the Situationist International) could be understood within the tradition of the modern emancipation plan, as a part of modern project in “changing culture, attitudes and mentalities, and individual and social living conditions.”<sup>9</sup> In his view, art was yesterday “intended to prepare and announce a future world: today it is modelling possible universes.”<sup>10</sup> Art (of the nineties and later) has in Bourriaud’s view a historical chance, which he sums up in few words: “*learning to inhabit the world in a better way*, instead of trying to construct it based on a preconceived idea of historical evolution. Otherwise put, the role of artworks is no longer to form imaginary and utopian realities, but to actually be ways of living and models of action within the existing real, whatever the scale chosen by the artist.”<sup>11</sup> For Bourriaud nowadays, “modernity extends into the practices of cultural do-it-yourself and recycling, into the invention of the everyday and the development of time lived, which are not Messianistic utopias and the formal ‘novelties’ that typified modernity yesterday. There is nothing more absurd either than the assertion that contemporary art does not involve any political project, or than the claim that its subversive aspects are not based on any theoretical terrain.”<sup>12</sup>

### Hybridization and transdisciplinarity

If on one hand contemporary art sets itself in contrast to modernist art, it on the other derives from the legacy of artistic historical avant-gardes. However in contrast to them contemporary artistic practices function more systematically and organized. In short,

7 See for example Calinescu’s writing about avant-gardes. In: Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity*, Duke University Press, Durham: 1987.

8 See: Polona Tratnik, *Konec umetnosti: genealogija modernega diskurza: od Hegla k Dantu*, Koper: Univerza na Primorskem, Znanstveno-raziskovalno središče, Založba Annales, Zgodovinsko društvo za južno Primorsko, 2009.

9 Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics*, Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2002, p. 12.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid.

12 Ibid., p. 14.

the nature of contemporary art is fundamentally related to the characteristics of contemporary culture and society – in contrast to modern culture a great role here plays the fact that today's society is informational and that the individual today functions within specific communication vehicles – it is not only the fact that we use internet and other informational systems, within which we function on the basis of inter-activity, but we also travel a lot, switch cultures and worlds instantaneously, and we also take elements from here and there and mix them, on account of this, it could be claimed, we are cultural hybrids.<sup>13</sup>

Principles of hybridization are already significant for the phenomena of postmodernism in art, when media begun to mix and the so-called nomadism through the history of art appears. However, with the principles of montage, collage and assemblage hybridization in art is already present in artistic historical avant-gardes. But in the recent theoretical essays about contemporary art the principle of hybridization is often even strongly emphasized. That is well harmonized with the tendencies in economical and social structuring in postmodern society. Also Julian Stallabrass notices praising of the “advantages of mixing cultures and hybridization” in the world of art, for which he believes is in fact a politically liberal side of speaking about globalization, breaking the cultural borders, which should accompany the supposed breaking of trading borders and consequently magnificent intertwinement of cultural influences, yet according to Stallabrass, this reflects a general vision of this accession – dreams of a global capital.

Furthermore, one of the basic principles in today's art is interdisciplinarity or transdisciplinarity. Contemporary artist must be ready to learn any skills or use any methods and tools, which are needed for the project or in the discourse he/she is entering or developing. In the case when the discourse and techniques are very sophisticated and it would be senseless that one artist would do everything and would be able to realize everything as a professional, the artistic project would rather include various professionals from different fields – for example some natural scientists. The working conditions and spaces could therefore be adapted, or non-artistic environments could be used very often – an artist could therefore work in a laboratory (Bio Artists cooperate with natural scientists and work in laboratories using scientific tools and techniques)<sup>14</sup> or make a performance in an airplane (as for example Dragan Živadinov did in *Noordung Zero Gravity*). Artist could develop an innovative autonomous working space/research laboratory/living space/artistic installation (as did Marko Peljhan with his *Macrolab*<sup>15</sup>). In such a manner artistic practices are entering

13 As this has been described by Welsch as well contemporary cultures have in his view changed so much, that he has therefore introduced a whole new concept of culture, namely the concept of transculturality. In his view contemporary cultures “no longer have the insinuated form of homogeneity and separateness, but are characterized through to the core by mixing and permeations.” Wolfgang Welsch, “Transculturality: the Changing Form of Cultures Today”, in: *Filozofski vestnik*, vol. 22, nr. 2, 2001, p. 67.

14 See: Polona Tratnik, “(Bio)umetnost in manipuliranje z živim”, in: *Annales – Series historia et sociologia*, vol. 18, nr. 2, 2008.

15 See: <<http://makrolab.ljudmila.org/>> 28. 1. 2008. Peljhan's *Macrolab* project (1997–) started with the purpose of establishing an independent and self sufficient performance and research structure in isolation. *Makrolab* is focused on telecommunications, climate change and migration patterns. The primary thesis is that a unified theory for these fields

actual scientific, social, anthropological, political, philosophical or cultural discourse and thus become active critical participants in it.

### Decentralization, nomadism and resistance strategies

The fields of social world are relatively autonomous, however, they also intertwine. Power is today here and there articulated in instant, hardly recognizable forms, still it is basically significantly dispersed and nomadic. Therefore it is also difficult to attack certain visible and solid centres, where power would be centralized and concentrated and which would exist in their fullness and integrity. From this perspective nowadays it is actually impossible to strive for revolutionary aims, which would bring redemptive purifying results.

The turn from modernity to postmodernity, which could in fact be understood as the shift from industrialization to informatization, and which is also marked by the shift from fordism to postfordism, which as well indicates the shift from production to consumption or reception. There is a strong accompanying tendency to be observed in contemporary culture, namely to interactivity or discursivity. Contemporary art practices are not in fact obliged to producing artefacts (on account of that it is also not relevant to speak of a “work of art as an aesthetic object” anymore). Contemporary art “work” is rather an “open work”, which is openly structured – similarly as conceptualized by Umberto Eco<sup>16</sup> – but with even greater tendency to be a “work in process” or “work in progress”, a form of a discourse or an experiment. Rather than foreseeing the results and complete control here we meet the principle of experimentation, where a certain level of unpredictability is to be recon with. It could be claimed that these features are related to contemporary consciousness that there is no absolute way to truth and there is no universal knowledge, but we rather exist in a sphere of infinite unfolding and intertwinement of the horizons of interpretation or understanding (as claimed already by Hans-Georg Gadamer)<sup>17</sup>.

In democratic modes of communication, or in the model of a mycelium, an “observer” has transformed from a passive receiver to an active “user” of an “application”. In this case a project uses democratic method – the user is co-constructing the arising meanings.

will emerge from the project's isolation strategies, a method combining conscious physical, geographical, and political isolation on one hand, and a communications, close proximity and sensor/processor saturation, coupled with energy and biospheric autonomy on the other. *Makrolab* is envisioned not only as an architectural and engineering development process, but also as a highly networked sensor/processor and data aggregation and reflection system, with distinct mapping capabilities and future capability projections (such as the use of sensor carrying UAV's, autonomous robotic probes and full spectrum communications capabilities). On the social level, it provides a living and working environment of close proximity, shared knowledge and responsibility among the crew members. See also: Inke Arns, *Avantgarda v vzvratnem ogledalu: sprememba paradigme recepcije avantgarde v (nekdanji) Jugoslaviji in Rusiji od 80. let do danes*, Ljubljana: Maska (Transformacije), 2006.

16 Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta* (1962). But rather see the later, revised version: Umberto Eco, *The open work*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989.

17 Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Wahrheit und Methode: Grundzüge einer philosophischen Hermeneutik*. Tübingen: Mohr Verlag, 1960.



If an artistic critique is to be performed with using such model, it would produce a kind of referendum mode. Still, such practice manages information, for which it has created a matrix, which limits the discourse.

However the critical resistance practices in art and culture could also be more radically socially or politically engaged – they could manipulate information more directly. In the case of oligopoly net model (significant for broadcasting systems) there are certain centres for distribution of information, which are a sort of centres of power. Several activist approaches are focused on centres of media control or economic and political power. In such a manner activists practice parasitism, usurpation and subversion of dominant systems and related ideologies. Critical resistance practices question and manipulate symbolic, political or other kinds of social power.<sup>18</sup>

Critical, resistance and political strategies are of a great importance for contemporary art. Igor Zabel enumerated some of these strategies, which could be used in art. These are: (1.) revealing the overlooked and hidden mechanisms, which power uses for social surveillance and discipline, (2.) detecting alternative uses of existing mechanisms and technologies, (3.) looking for and developing alternative models of economical, social and political manipulation and (4.) searching for possibilities for parallel (sometimes only temporary) communities and social groups.<sup>19</sup> Zabel also ascertains two key concepts of resistance strategies: autonomy (in the sense of “temporary autonomous zones” as explained by Hakim Bey) and invention. In the case of the first parallel spaces are created, which enable avoidance of dominant social systems, in the case of the latter art invents new instruments or uses, which enable this autonomy – as for example in the case of Marko Peljhan’s practice, who calls such strategies “the strategies of minimal resistance”. Peljhan is pointing to the fact that resistance art, even if it is on a large scale, is only a little point of resistance in comparison to large systems of economical, military and political power. Art has an ability to indicate the hidden relations of power and surveillance mechanisms of social domination, and can even show possible alternatives to these relations and models.

18 Just to mention some examples. Luther Blissett strives to sabotage centres of media control and power with actions of cultural guerrilla, with which he causes panic in various media. Brian Springer is warning about possibility of electronic resistance and guerrilla action with the use of satellite technology – with standard consumer satellite TV system he is exploiting a possibility to include an open TV channels and intercepts raw video material. Etoy is an artistic collective, which brings to light the possibilities of manipulation of international database network. <sup>sm</sup>mark makes sabotages of corporative products – they for example intervened into computer video game and entered homoerotic contents into it, exchanged the voices of the toys etc. The group Monochrom warns about interference in individual’s privacy with global information system, network of cameras CCTV (Closed Circuit TV) in city and shopping centres and with other various electronic systems, with which enterprises carry out checking and control of the employees. A nice example of media activism is a project *Infocalypse Now!* by Sašo Sedlaček (2007), which is an initiative for establishment an autonomous media zone on 700 MHz. An initiative for worldwide high frequency radio or internet network, *Insular Technologies*, coordinated by Marko Peljhan, is in many aspects similar to it. Art practices can be activist also in the means of infiltration into art system, by which they can manipulate the power relations within the art or cultural field. Such an example is the practice of the group 0100101110101101.org, which even has a vague identity. It counts on possibilities of internet manipulation to demonstrate the contradictions of everyday cultural system.

19 Igor Zabel, “Sodobna umetnost”, in: *Eseji I: o moderni in sodobni umetnosti*, pp. 191–192.

In the essay “Nomadic power and cultural resistance” Critical Art Ensemble (CAE), an art collective, shows, how power has started to flow from structured, present and centralized power to power, which is now absent, invisible and decentralized – what used to be resistance is now domination and vice versa. CAE also speaks of vectors of world power, which have now drawn back to virtuality. Holding on the surface of the flowing power for CAE does not necessarily mean to agree and cooperate. Political and cultural activists are in a clumsy situation; nevertheless, they can produce disturbances.<sup>20</sup> Also for CAE the former strategies of subversion or hidden attack are questionable, since to know what we subvert means we suppose the oppression forces are unchangeable and that we are able to define and eliminate them.<sup>21</sup> Today power appropriates subversive strategies. Fredric Jameson observed in the eighties that aesthetic production has “integrated into commodity production generally: the frantic economic urgency of producing fresh waves of ever more novel-seeming goods (from clothing to airplanes), at ever greater rates of turnover, now assigns an increasingly essential structural function and position to aesthetic innovation and experimentation.”<sup>22</sup> But as CAE believes the merits should be acknowledged to those who resist. They are also convinced that the subversive act or product is however not appropriated as quickly as it is dictated by bourgeois aesthetics of efficiency.<sup>23</sup> Contemporary society is specific for its nomadic power, as they observe. The field of power is dispersed, it has no location and no steady point of fixation and it presents itself as a spectacle. A shift could be noticed from archaic space to electronic web. Although technology unites the dispersed field of power and the machinery of sight, which are both part of global empire, the field of power is now specifically nomadic – in such a panoptical space-prison (according to Michel Foucault)<sup>24</sup> the location of resistance is not necessarily to be defined, therefore the power of nomads is the strongest, when they do not need to occupy the defence position.<sup>25</sup>

For elite it is important to be invisible, as it was observed already in the 50-ies by C. Wright Mills.<sup>26</sup> Contemporary elite displaces itself from centralized urban regions to decentralized and deterritorial cyber space. Now, how is it possible to critically estimate the subject, which we cannot locate, investigate and even not see, asks CAE. The revolutionary appeals (for example of the Situationists) are a dead strategy because they demand unpractical unity and in the history attempts that were gaining the property with occupation had proven to have sad results. In postmodern times of nomadic power the architectural monuments of power are empty and safe places, which only reveal

20 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, Ljubljana: Založba / \*cf., Sorosov center za sodobne umetnosti (Žepna zbirka), 1999, p. 6.

21 Ibid., p. 7.

22 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, pp. 4–5.

23 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, p. 7.

24 Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: naissance de la prison*, Paris: Gallimard, 1987.

25 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, pp. 10–11.

26 See: Charles Wright Mills, *The Power of Elite*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

the traces of power. It is possible to occupy these spaces (bunkers), but in the best case such occupation would only be a disturbance, which can always be made invisible with media manipulation.<sup>27</sup>

### To hack: activist approaches

Hacker culture means a computer underground, but it is also a significantly postmodern moment, which defines an era, in which the production changes from a stable, material, physical system to more fluid, quick system of production of knowledge, observes Douglas Thomas.<sup>28</sup> Popular stereotypes about hackers express public fears of informational age. Hackers are also being criminalized. If protestant values are money, work, optimality, flexibility, stability and responsibility about the results, hackers present an alternative spirit of informatization, they practice a contra-ethic to the dominant one: they strive for social openness and complete freedom of speech, as observed by Pekka Himanen, who put stress on their *netnic*, which is defined by the values of activity and caring. "Activity in this context involves complete freedom of expression in action, privacy to protect the creation of an individual lifestyle, and a rejection of passive receptiveness in favour of active pursuit of one's passion. *Caring* here means concern for others as an end in itself and a desire to rid the network society of the survival mentality that so easily results from its logic."<sup>29</sup> Still, hacker ethics is not obligatory for all hackers, since hackers do not form a collective, he also believes.

In broader public hackers are a synonym for those who strive for free availability of web information and knowledge, based on them.<sup>30</sup> Contemporary world is marked with globalization and transculturality or multiculturalism, imperialism and terrorism, but also with new scientific and technological appearance, therefore in the reality of the first years of 21st century the questions of social power, social organization, (intellectual) property, state and political antagonisms and resistance are also being redefined, as Janez Strehovec observes. With new technologies, which enable global communication and activity in real time, new forms of domination, hegemony and segregation, as well as also resistance are taking shape.<sup>31</sup> Within the activities that conceptually base on different forms of self-organization of subjects that do not agree, hackers have an important place. Hackers strive for free access to information, they hack firewalls of multinational and national institutions, yet their principal aim is not the content of the information, but uncovering the manners, or, the means of access to information, which is itself usually not really interesting for them.<sup>32</sup>

27 Critical Art Ensemble, *Elektronska državljanska nepokorščina*, p. 18.

28 See: Douglas Thomas, *Hacker Culture*, Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 2002.

29 Pekka Himanen, *The Hacker Ethic And The Spirit Of The Information Age*, New York, Toronto: Random House Trade Paperbacks, 2001, pp. 140–141.

30 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", in: McKenzie Wark, *Hekerski manifest*, Ljubljana: Maska, 2008, p. 244.

31 Ibid., pp. 241–242.

32 Ibid., p. 243. See also: Douglas Thomas, *Hacker Culture*, p. 67.

Early hackers belong to the underground and they hoped for a possibility of free access to information, but the hackers of the nineties already met the world, which is overloaded with masses of commodified information – now their activity gets also cultural and activist character.<sup>33</sup> Hackers understand themselves as a kind of avant-garde, they also write manifestoes, and the reference to Marx and the communist manifesto is often obvious in the case of McKenzie Wark's *Hacker Manifesto* (2004). Wark also considers the question of class and proletarian movement and the related transformation of private property into state monopoly and asks if there is a kind of class today that can open the question of property in another way.<sup>34</sup> Wark's manifesto is concerned with nonmaterial work and nonmaterial products, which are characteristic for contemporary information society, where the former industrial production is replaced with services with great emphasis on intellectual innovations.<sup>35</sup> As Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt (similar also Jeremy Rifkin, Paolo Virno and others) observe, in the last years of twentieth century nonmaterial work appears instead of industrial work, that is work, which produces nonmaterial products as knowledge, information, communication, relation and emotion response.<sup>36</sup> Wark believes that laws which protected the creators of intellectual services as for example copyright and patent recently protect above all the interests of corporative proprietors of intellectual property. Therefore Wark named the actual class of the exploited producers of intellectual services the hacker's class. What is significant for the contemporary situation according to Wark is that the formal traditional propriety relation is not relevant any more, but now we have a situation that originates from media basis of work with information, with their transmission and broadcasting. And this is a relation that is oriented to controlling mobile canals and currents of transmission of information e. a. vectors (from telegraph to broadband internet) – therefore Wark calls new class of exploiters vectorial.<sup>37</sup>

Wark's Manifesto is reviving materialist philosophical tradition. But it even has pretensions as an activist intervention, what means that it wants to launch wider mobilization of readers and their engagement for abolishing the present state, where those, which are exploited are those who work innovatory in the world of abstraction.<sup>38</sup> This Manifesto also has obvious avant-garde ambitions, similar to those to which Walter Benjamin agitated, who believed namely that art attacks with most difficulty, but most significantly, when it is able to mobilize masses.<sup>39</sup> The term hack is by Wark understood widely, it is actually

33 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 243.

34 McKenzie Wark, *Hekerski manifest*, p. 23.

35 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 246.

36 Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, *Multituda. Vojna in demokracija v času imperija*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2005, p. 112.

37 McKenzie Wark, *Hekerski manifest*, p. 247.

38 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 249.

39 Walter Benjamin, "Umetnina v času, ko jo je mogoče tehnično reproducirati", in: Izbrani spisi, Ljubljana: SH Zavod za založniško dejavnost, 1998, p. 174.

a synonym for contemporary creative and innovatory activity (specially in the field of social e-services) as it includes jobs as programmers, musicians, writers, but also engineers, biologists and other natural scientists, which are specially included into the actual social-economical relations, as Strehovec observes.<sup>40</sup>

Where power is related to web or cyber world, the resistance strategies have to be suitably adapted to such technological bases and these subjects have to have hardware and software knowledge. Group Critical Art Ensemble was one of the first that announced electronic civil disobedient in reaction to institutions of e-empire and cognitive capitalism. Also hacktivism as a form of cooperation between artistic activists and hackers traces such challenges and for example attacks the servers of multinational corporations and sit-ins.<sup>41</sup>

### To reveal mechanisms of codification, to practice deconstruction and/or to produce disturbances

Some critics of contemporary art believe that between the self-image and the actual function of contemporary art there is a deep precipice, as art is managed and included in new world order and in such a manner serves the interests of neoliberal economy. Julian Stallabrass thus, for example, sees art as a "sphere of freedom" in tight relation to free market; both should be the factors, which collectively create the prevailing system and its supplement.<sup>42</sup> Although the critics of this kind bring to light several important comprehensions about functioning of contemporary art system, such view is yet too simplified and therefore it distorts the critical and resistant mechanisms that could be traced in many practices of contemporary art (as for example in media activism or in usage of tactical media) in its opposition. Media(artistic)activist groups or individuals are resisting the passive attitude to actual social and political issues. With artistic experiments they critically reflect the use of technological innovation, institutions of political, economic, media or informational power, social control and interference into privacy etc. On the one hand they look for the cracks in dominant texts, which inevitably arise in complex relations and games with power in social space, and with such practicing they perform deconstruction. On the other hand from the contradictions or disruptive forces,<sup>43</sup> which they find in such hegemonic texts, they develop strategies of oppositional reading,<sup>44</sup> which lead to developing strategies of resistance to

40 Janez Strehovec, "Hekati ali imeti, hekati in imeti; razredni antagonizem v času spletne ekonomije, izobraževanja in kulture", p. 245.

41 Ibid., pp. 242–243.

42 Julian Stallabrass, *Sodobna umetnost. Zelo kratek uvod*, Ljubljana: Krtina, 2007, p. 13.

43 I borrow the term from John Fiske, who wrote about disruptive forces in television discourse, which is managed by several strategies yet it still contains many disruptive forces. See: John Fiske, "Televizijska kultura: branja poročil, bralci poročil", in: Breda Luthar, Vida Zei and Hanno Hardt (eds.), *Medijska kultura: kako brati medijske tekste*, Ljubljana: Študentska založba, 2004.

44 As Stuart Hall observes, when decoding television discourse, the reader has three options: to read it according to the dominant discourse (the dominant-hegemonic reading), to read it negotiationly or oppositionally. See: Stuart Hall, "Encoding, Decoding", in: Simon During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, New York: Routledge, 1993.

dominant discourses. Therefore they are developing critical and resisting strategies to the existing seemingly natural patterns and ideologies, which are actually culturally and historically conditioned (that is to the so-called "everyday mythologies", as these were discussed by Roland Barthes)<sup>45</sup>, and to everyday forms of social and political domination. Here of the great importance are the modes of codification, which mean to in-form and simultaneously erect forms, as Bourdieu writes in his essay "Codification".<sup>46</sup> Codification namely influences on things to be simple, clear and communicative<sup>47</sup> and is therefore tightly related to discipline and with normalization of practices.<sup>48</sup> Successful codification is thus in close relation to raising discourses as dominant, it is related to dominant ways of thinking, value systems and ideologies. Critical and resistant art is thus a field of struggle, where dominant discourses and their modes of codification are revealed, questioned and criticized. In such a manner art offers different views, transforms the existing values, meanings and codifications, deforms them or can even act as a kind of a virus. As a disturbance in a system such acting is important for establishing critical consciousness in wider public.

45 See: Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, Pariz: Seuil, 1957.

46 Pierre Bourdieu, *Sociologija kot politika*, Ljubljana: Založba / \*cf., 2003, p. 131.

47 Ibid., p. 133.

48 Ibid., p. 132.

of indeterminacy are pretty viable to understand the possibilities of variation which are already contained in the artwork and are not necessarily posited by interpretation. These theories are focused on literature; nevertheless the spaces of indeterminacy are something that every artwork leaves open for the participation of the spectator.

Furthermore, the dynamic identity of the artwork is shown in the relation between historical elements and connections. Since connections are posited and originated by narrative interpretation and do not belong to the artwork's structure, they are always mobile, hence, dynamic and subject to reconfigurations and diverse plottings. The redeployment of alterity is also dynamic inasmuch as it is carried out by narrative interpretation which is always telling different stories for the same artwork and thus making it a living thing.

The mediation of the other, of alterity – the previous order, the connection with past artworks and the narrative interpretation – is constituent of the artwork's meaning; therefore, the artwork can be considered as “*soi-même comme un autre*”, oneself as another. Hence, the artwork is not to be treated as an isolated object in the middle of nowhere or as standing absolutely by itself. Art is what it is through connections, through history, through the stories in which we place it and that shape our everyday life, art traditions and traditions. Narrative interpretation puts forward narrative identities for the artworks; without that art would only be art.<sup>536</sup>

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## ABSTRACTS / AUTHORS

**POLONA TRATNIK:**  
**Notes on Contemporary Art:**  
**Critical Resistance and Activist Approaches**

The paper discusses resistance endeavours in contemporary art and culture. Nowadays critical projects in culture originate in the legacy of the artistic historical avant-gardes, however they have significant contemporary features, yet they arise under global conditions. Contemporary critical practices detect noise in informational systems and they as well perform noise on their own. According to mathematical theory of communication noise brings mistakes, uncertainty, loses and incapability into the system and cannot be ignored. Resistance in art and culture today follows the logic of information society and thus asserts the voice in two manners: on one hand in the mycelium each receiver could be a potential broadcaster or each user a potential distributor, on the other hand in more radical approaches the cultural activists try to take over (to occupy) the broadcasting positions. Cultural activists aim to hold the information, to establish a matrix, within which they manipulate information. Critical and resistant art is a field of struggle, where dominant discourses and their modes of codification are revealed, questioned and criticized. In such a manner art offers different views, transforms the existing values, meanings and codifications, deforms them or can even act as a kind of a virus. As a disturbance in a system such acting is important for establishing critical consciousness in wider public.

**KEY WORDS:** contemporary art, critical art, resistance, activism, informatization, codification.

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**BOJANA KUNST:**  
**Critical Potentiality**

The article analyses how today material practice of art confronts a certain important difference in the understanding of its materiality. That shift is the result of the contemporary understanding of life, which is progressively appropriated and regulated by global capital and the global economy. Not only the potentiality of nature is performed and privatised in advance, but at the same time also aesthetic and cognitive competences of intensities, energies and events are at the core of contemporary commodification and the economy of entertainment. Precisely the necessity of reflecting on the processes that these changes have brought about in the material practice of art is deeply inscribed in the ways we think about critical potentiality today. The material practice here is not understood as a materialistic awareness of historical and ideological discourses, but rather as a constant physical connecting of collaborative protocols of knowledge production, bodily experiences, and inhabitations. Instead of the deconstruction of linguistic and ideological operations and the disclosure of differences, the employment of contemporary protocols of collaboration allows for the possibility of creating virtual spaces in between. It is these virtual spaces in between that enable the different practices to be articulated at once both inside and outside. Protocols are then no longer grounded in linguistic conditioning and the isolated clash of concepts, aesthetics and ideologies, but in division, networking and transitions between the actual and the virtual in the intensification of intensities and actual connections. Critical thought thus needs to re-discover a way to articulate the potentiality of processes and protocols of life that may bring about a change in the ontological place of art itself.

**KEY WORDS:** potentiality, critique, art and life, protocol, collaboration, appropriation.

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**MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ:**

**Around Althusserian-Lacanian Critique of Autonomy of Art:  
Class and the Unconscious**

In my essay I discuss Althusserian-Lacanian critique of "autonomy of art". My "Critiques of "autonomy of art" are mostly based on alienation of *modern art* manifested through the loss of mimetic connection between the work and referent. This could be seen in all big re-establishments of realisms during the long twentieth century. Among the relevant critical grasps of "idealized autonomies of art" Althusserian-Lacanian debate in terms of its analytical and critical elaboration appeared. This debate started from *reading* the autonomy of art with two parallel positions of analysis and critiques:

- a) from the position of analysis of sociability.
- b) from the position of analysis of unconscious.

**KEY WORDS:** Althusserian approach, autonomy of art, class struggle, Lacanian approach, modern art, sociability, unconscious.

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**NIKOLA DEDIĆ:**

**Art, Neurosis, Project: From Fordist to Post-Fordist  
Model of Production**

The main aim of the paper will be to give an interpretation of contemporary art as a critical, political practice, i.e. in Althusserian terminology, a practice which is a part of ideology but which, at the same time, indicates, points out to ideology. In the same time, the paper will extract two possible paradigms: modern, which is characteristic for the Fordist model of production and postmodern, characteristic for the post-Fordist model. The paper will try to suggest the interpretation of the contemporary art as a kind of critical practice

through the restoration of the idea of Utopia, but instead of Utopia as a temporal narrative (the project as a kind of temporal succession), the paper will suggest the interpretation of Utopia as a spatial metaphor, i.e. as a practice of micro-political defining of the relatively autonomous spaces which are not the part of the post-Fordist production of surplus value.

**KEY WORDS:** modernism, postmodernism, capitalism, Utopia, project, biopolitics, ideology.

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**MATILDE CARRASCO BARRANCO:**

**Contemporary Art. Subversion, Pluralism and Democracy**

Nowadays, art has immersed in a vast and open cultural world, ruled by the powerful production and distribution mechanisms of the market, which offers a huge and diverse amount of products for everybody's taste. Parallel, the boundaries and hierarchies of (the so-called *high*) art have also disappeared leading to a pluralistic and relativistic artistic scenario. This pluralism of genres and artforms also matches the demands of the free market. So, in this competitive arena, art seems to be doing well for itself. But, having many advantages, the perfect integration of art in the cultural package seems to carry out the loss of the critical and subversive potential that particularly identifies much of contemporary art. As synonymous of tolerance, pluralism is accepted as a democratic value that favours freedom to judge and choose. However, if such pluralism eliminated discussion and criticism, this could turn the voice of art impotent for a democratic society, which is not free from threats.

**KEY WORDS:** subversion, pluralism, relativism, H. Foster, R. Rochlitz.

**DR. MATILDE CARRASCO BARRANCO** studied Philosophy at the University of Granada, Spain, where she received her Ph.D. in 2000 and worked as a research fellow until 2002. She has been teaching aesthetics and art theory in the University of Murcia, Spain where she is now a Senior Lecturer of the Department of Philosophy. She has widely published on ethics and aesthetics, and has also presented talks and papers to several national and international conferences. Her major current fields of interest are aesthetic theory, art and ethics, criticism, history of aesthetics and art.

**MOJCA PUNCER:**  
**Resistance of Art Against Instrumentalization**

Seemingly old-fashioned argumentative methods derived from Benjamin and Hegel may open up some inspiring new perspectives in relation to the contemporary art. The subversive potential of art practices confronted with challenges in the biotechnological construction of the body and biopolitics can emerge as an obvious contra-power against instrumentalization of the living, as long as its activity remains radical and paradoxical. Each artwork brings dynamic to an artefact in a way that a dead material becomes an element of a dynamic composition embodied in the very content of its form. As a result, a certain level of organization is attained, which provides the artwork with a kind of autonomy. The artistic resistance against instrumentalization involves evaluation of the content in particular. It is based on those new practices and processes which bring a relative autonomization of the art field and which are subversive in their attempts to establish at least a minimal distance to the predominant economical-political relations in the society.

**KEY WORDS:** contemporary art, technical reproduction, instrumentalization, biotechnology, biopolitics, subversion.

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**TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ:**  
**Artaud's Theatre of Cruelty and  
Subversive Strategies in Today's Art**

Paper deals with subversive potentials of contemporary live arts, especially in relation to the links between notions of madness and artistic creation in theories of Foucault and Artaud. Furthermore, it questions the utopian role of art as an instance that transcends those epistemic structures that determine how we think or even that we think. It starts from two statements belonging to Michel Foucault and Antonine Artaud respectively and both reflecting on the specific (utopist?) function of art in the contemporary society. Using examples from contemporary performing arts the paper deals with some artistic approa-

ches that continue the Dadaist (and Artaudian) urge to rebel against society, language and literature; try to destroy all established values and replace logical reason with conscious madness.

**KEY WORDS:** theatre of cruelty, art as counter discourse, name, ready-made, subversive art.

**TOMAŽ TOPORIŠIČ** (Ph.D.) is a dramaturge, translator, theatre theoretician and critic. His primary research interests are the contemporary performing arts and literature, specifically the interaction between the two fields. Currently he is a dramaturge of the Mladinsko Theatre in Ljubljana and assistant professor in Cultural Studies department at University of Primorska in Koper. He is author of three books: *Between Seduction and Suspiciousness (Slovenian Theatre of the Second Half of the 20th Century)*, *The Vulnerable Body of Text and Stage (Crises of the "dramatic author" in the theatre of the 1980-s and 1990-s)*, and *Ecdyses of Drama and Theatre*.

**DUBRAVKA ĐURIĆ:**  
**Visuality, Orality and Performativity  
as Subversive Elements in Poetry**

The text deals with the ways how visuality and sound work in poetry, subverting the dominance of verbality (i.e., 'real' meaning of the poem's words), and with the notion of performativity in poetry. Logocentrism of western literature has been focussed on the meaning as supreme sense which a literary work has to have, while visual and sound performance of the text has been considered as secondary. In last ten years, approximately, poets and theoreticians of poetry speak of oral performance of the text as the way of destabilizing the primacy of the printed text, and of visual performance of the text on the printed page.

**KEY WORDS:** performative, poetry, subversion, verbal, visual.

**DR. DUBRAVKA ĐURIĆ** (Dubrovnik, 1961), an Assistant Professor at the Faculty for Media and Communication of Singidunum University. She has published the book on American Language poetry titled *Language, poetry, postmodernism*, and a book on Serbian women's poetry *Speech of the Other*. With Miško Šuvaković she coedited *The Impossible Histories*, with Vladimir Kopicl coedited and cotranslated anthology of American poetry titled *New Poetry Order*, and with the group of younger poets coedited anthology of *Discursive bodies of Poetry*. She coedits "ProFemina" magazine for women's literature and culture.

**EVELIN STERMITZ:**

**Iconographic and Iconologic Art Practices with the Hoover.  
Feminist Artistic Subversions of the Female Body and the Household**

This paper is dealing with textual strategies of feminist subversions in the visual arts, whereby representation is understood as a political issue and art as a political matter. The women's subordination within patriarchal forms of representation and the understanding of "femininity" itself as a social construct is considered in a theory that goes beyond the personal into the questions of ideology, culture and the production of meaning. The constitution of women through social practices in culture is understood to create aesthetics to subvert the production of "woman" as commodity. Theories about feminist art practice since the 1970s and contemporary positions subverting the categories of women's cultural production are discussed through visual examples, demonstrating womanhood in a male society and male dominated art world. In the foreground and in associating the examples is the invention of the household with its tools as an artistic theme, articulating and subverting the woman's definition in and by the society through them. The main fields in demonstrating these positions are mixed media, photography, media and new media art, by finding mutuality in-between the different media through iconological and iconographic analyses.

**KEY WORDS:** feminist art, women artists, visual art, iconography, iconology.

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**ALEŠ ERJAVEC:**

**Power, Freedom and Subversion: Political Theater and its Limits**

The author discusses the work of Ljubiša Ristić, the founder of the »political theater« in which this well-known theater director criticized the »revolution« but, paradoxically, from a revolutionary perspective. In the nineties Ristić sided with the Serbian government and the Milošević regime, to become a marginal cultural figure in the new millennium. Ristić's work and life witness to the impossibility of breaching the barrier between art and life, for in spite of incessantly attempting to transgress the limitations of the former, art cannot enter, *qua* art, the real of the latter.

**KEY WORDS:** Ljubiša Ristić, political theater, art and life.

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**LAUREL SEELY:**

**Sarajevo Cult Band SCH: The Politics of Future Noise**

From R. Murray Schafer's prescriptivist polemic against the aggressions of noise in modern society, to Jacques Attali's descriptivist consideration of noise as a challenge to the ideological work performed by music, the status of noise has proved a particularly vexed question. Many critics nevertheless agree that the distinction between noise and music is culturally and historically conditioned; noise is a sound which, within a specific semiotic system, functions as a type of madness, disrupting the conventional order and challenging the naturalness of the categories that undergird it. This paper considers the political impact of the cult noise band SCH in 1980s Sarajevo. A central issue that the paper addresses is, did the characteristic qualities of noise—its anti-rationality, its close relationship to affect and the body, the collapsing of distance between source and receiver—give SCH the unique ability to challenge dominant discourses? Or did these very qualities undermine the group's potential subversiveness by rendering it completely unassimilable? What, if any, were the ways in which noise as deliberate provocation contributed to political change during this period?

**KEY WORDS:** noise, politics, music, Sarajevo, SCH.

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**DARKO ŠTRAJN:**

***Pierrot le fou* and Eternity in the Sixties**

What was so crazy in *Pierrot le fou*, one of the most recognisable early Godard's movies? Before we start thinking about an answer, we should realize that the very attempt to give an answer to this question is on the same level of craziness as the question and its reference. Craziness is a category of interpretation, an agency of externalisation of a set of



symbolically represented relations and an indication of a reaction to vastly more serious category of madness. These two categories stand one against each other as a system against some particular subversive reflection, which can be whatever between interpretation, imitation, insight, work of art or in some instances even a scientific or political breakthrough. Godard's film, which made use of "modernist" codes of discontinuity and flow of associations (especially suitable for a form of a movie), depicts madness, contained in the world system in the sixties through presentations of craziness of his characters and their visual and poetic contextualisation(s). Where craziness and madness intersect seems to be the space permeated by ubiquitous language, which in the film makes madness obvious through delusions of subjectivity. This could be a starting point to elaborate an understanding of the aesthetics of social practices of a particular time in history, when art was about to survive through a re-definition.

**KEY WORDS:** film, aesthetics, madness, antipsychiatry, avant-garde, discontinuity.

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**CONSTANTINOS V. PROIMOS:**  
**Madness as the Instance of Decision.**  
**A Philosophical Consideration of Light in Rembrandt's**  
**1635 Painting *The Angel Stopping Abraham***  
**from *Sacrificing Isaac to God***

Rembrandt's critics pay tribute to his pictures' lighting that, in accordance with baroque currents of the time, is deemed to be arbitrary. Drawing inspiration from his master Pieter Lastman and Caravaggio, Rembrandt is said to orchestrate an illumination of pictorial space that very rarely matches the natural situations he depicts. Light is rather artificial and as a consequence an agent of the story depicted in painting and a device that boosts into a climax the picture's intensity. The specific and particular use of light in Rembrandt's painting is finely illustrated in his 1635 picture bearing the title: *The Angel Stopping Abraham from Sacrificing Isaac to God*, an oil on canvas 193,5 x 132,8 cm, found at the Hermitage of St Petersburg. In this paper I shall attempt a philosophical consideration of light in Rembrandt's picture arguing that Abraham's faith and religious fervor make him defy all rational rules of contact and wish to sacrifice his only son, Isaac to God. Abraham himself, believing until the very end that something may eventually happen and Isaac's life will be spared is depicted during the instance of decision to

slice his son's throat. Having lost all hope that a miracle may happen, Abraham is pale, agitated and determined, for the instance of his decision to kill his son and subvert all known morality is madness, according to Soren Kierkegaard and Jacques Derrida, two among Abraham's philosophical portraitists. Therefore Rembrandt's light does have a philosophical task to illustrate madness as the instance of decision, based on the Old Testament story.

**KEY WORDS:** Abraham, decision, light, madness, Rembrandt.

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**PAULA ZUPANC:**  
**The Fragmented Subject in Honoré de Balzac**  
***Le chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*: Precursor to Post-Modernism**

By analyzing the paradoxical narrative/theatrical structure of the well known story, *Le Chef-d'oeuvre inconnu*-*The Unknown masterpiece* by Honoré de Balzac, put in place to bring about the "subject" of the story, madness and creativity, I reflect on the inability of language to speak (about) madness. The 19th century French writer Honoré de Balzac created a gigantic opus of various *nouvelles* which were ultimately collected under the title *La Comédie humaine*. He depicted French society mostly from the time of the beginning of the Restauration through the reign of Louis Philippe in a so called *realistic* and *romantic* styles, which did not have much to do with comedy or the comic, but more with tragedy and the tragic. In a number of his stories, gathered under the title *Les contes philosophiques*, he went back to the times of Classicism, or even farther, in order to bring to light an idea which pertains to philosophy, and to processes of artistic creativity. The work under consideration deals with three very important philosophical questions for Balzac – artistic inspiration *versus* truth in painting, importance of nature *versus* artifact, and the delineation of geniality from madness. The author deploys various narrative and rhetorical techniques, and various modes of presentation to seduce the reader into the model (he presents) of verisimilitude. I also reflect on the inability of language to speak (about) madness through questions and

thoughts formed and posited by Foucault and Derrida, transferred and reflected upon in the critical study on writing, philosophy, and madness – *Writing and Madness* (1985) by Shoshana Felman<sup>537</sup>.

**KEY WORDS:** subject, narrative, narrator, *mis-en-abîme*, paradox, theatrical model, verisimilitude, artificial, god, nature, woman's body, fragments.

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### **MATEJ VATOVEC: On Two Types of Psychosis, Theatre and the Internet**

Social psychology created the dramatic concept of everyday life – this notion is linked with the subject's everyday role-playing in different situations. From this everyday role-playing, numerous parallels can be drawn, going from theatre play to internet role-play. The main question in the article revolves around the particular mode of being of the subject, which is presupposed as the subject of anti-representation. All this is shown through the theatrical practice of Italian actor and director Carmelo Bene, as the subversive subject on stage (in art), on the other hand, the subversive play is shown through the analysis of the web page MySpace, for which it can be said only that actually it is only the product of the capitalistic production and reproduction (in this case of subjects) system, which gives the chimerical freedom of role-playing (the usual internet hiding behind pseudonyms that we knew in the era of the more »primitive« protocol IRC).

**KEY WORDS:** Deleuze, Bene, play, internet, MySpace.

**MATEJ VATOVEC** is a Ph.D. student of philosophy and theory of visual culture at the University of Primorska. He works on the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze (mainly on the concepts of difference, repetition and imagination) and Karl Marx. He is member of the Slovenian Society of Aesthetics. He published in the Slovenian reviews *Borec* and *Kino!* and has participated in various Slovenian and international congresses.

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### **MIŠKO ŠUVAKOVIĆ: Strategies and Tactics of Performance Art**

The discussion deals with the notion of performance and the ways of defining interdisciplinary field of performance art. Performance art is posited as directed or non-directed 'event', 'action', articulated as artwork performed by artist or performers with or without their audience in public or private space. The term performance art has two meanings: (1) it is introduced in early 70s and refers to complex events, prepared in advance, realized by the artist, who is at the same time the author, in front of museum, gallery audience or in front of bypasengers, and (2) retrospectively or anticipatory, it is applied as identificatory mark for art experiments, in the range of futurist festivals, dada cabarets constructivist paratheatrical experiments and surrealist's events, through happenings, neodada, actionism and Fluxus, body art, events, minimal and postmodern experimental dance, experimental and minimal music, to postconceptual, eclectic postmodernist techno-performance and conceptual performance in choreographic dance.

**KEY WORDS:** action, art work, body art, event, performance art, fluxus, experimental dance.

### **MAJA MURNIK: Body Art Practices: Some Thoughts**

Body Art can be understood as performance art *par excellence*, according to the fact that a performer does not represent someone else any more, as the convention of traditional drama theatre claims, which some earlier Body Art practices explicitly criticized (e.g. Chris Burden); on the contrary, a performer emphasizes his physical presence. What is staging here, live body in the process is; even more, precisely this body is brought into focus and therefore everything inscribed into it and everything it points out, alludes or simply is. The philosophy of Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the body and understands it as something opened; it is all the time in the act of staging from which it cannot be stepped out and assumed a cold, neutral position of a "geometer". Thus his philosophy in some moments corresponds well to these art practices.

In Body Art practices from the end of the 60s onwards Amelia Jones, one of most discernible researchers of the area, recognized the dislocating and the de-centering of the autonomous Cartesian subject of modernism. But through Body Art practices not only modernism was deconstructing, but the body as well. If the first Body Art performers were interested in their own bodies as in a new art medium and were touching its borders and capabilities, later the body has been opening more and more, until at last it has started to crumble and decompose itself.

**KEY WORDS:** body art, Merleau-Ponty, body, performance art.

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### **STELARC: Indifferent Body**

**STELARC** has performed with a Third Hand; a Virtual Body and a 6-legged walking robot. He is surgically constructing and stem cell growing an ear on his arm. He is presently Chair in Performance Art at Brunel University and Senior Research Fellow at the MARCS Labs at the University of Western Sydney. He was Honorary Professor of Art and Robotics at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh and has been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws from Monash University in Melbourne.

### **MARÍA ANTONIA GONZÁLEZ VALERIO: Mind the Gap. Hermeneutics and Analytic Aesthetics on Narrativity and Historicity in the Artwork**

Noël Carroll has postulated *identifying narratives* as a means to establish art status. This paper follows and further develops this line of thought by introducing the temporality of the artwork as a relevant issue in the understanding of narrative when applied to art. The temporality of the artwork is explained in three different modes: as occurrence, as historicity and as supra-temporality. I have tried to show how this constitutive temporality of the artwork is subject to what I have called *narrative interpretation* which I have distinguished from Carroll's *identifying narratives*. My contention is that narrative interpretation is a way to connect the artwork with preceding and succeeding artworks and that through these connections it configures the work's narrative identity as a dynamic one. I have made use of Paul Ricoeur's concept of *narrative identity*, reformulating it in order to reach a narrative interpretation that focuses on the artwork's historical elements as inserted in a plot. Therefore, this paper introduces concepts from continental hermeneutics that help to provide a frame for both *narrative interpretation* and *narrative identity*.

**KEY WORDS:** hermeneutics, narrative identity, narrative connection, interpretation, time.

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