THE PRESENT

[NOMAD DANCE ACADEMY PUBLICATION 2011/2012]

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THE FUTURE

● It is not easy to write a book editorial in the twilight of the world as we know it, or, perhaps, on the eve of a new world, the world as we want it to be.

↪ The world is not only dying; it is also shrinking, looking smaller than ever, in terms of increasingly unavailable funds and resources, in terms of public space, disappearing as we speak, in terms of how hope, faith, and trust are distributed, how we as a civilisation arrange and organise ourselves, and appreciate - or not - what we have. But it also seems much bigger than ever, in terms of challenges, confrontations, and changes that have to be made - by us.

↪ OK, we are flexible, but how much more can we stretch to prevent the ruins of a utopia from crashing on our heads? In what constellation will we wake up after the collapse?

↪ We have been constantly reinventing our working processes and ourselves, searching for the best models and ideas of possible communication, decision-making, and human organisation. It has helped us to make this world a better place, but the feeling of hopelessness is still there.

↪ Is this the end of the past as we know it, or is it the end of future? What future? The future of communisms, the future of the left? Of the independent art scenes? Of project-oriented ways of working? The future of this feeling of inevitability and irreversibility? The future of the Nomad Dance Academy? The future of love?

↪ How do we go on, then? Should we engage even more in low-paid small-scale work, should we entrench ourselves even more deeply in our own practices, making them ever more hermetic and inaccessible to others? Do we need to prioritise profit over social effects? Do we need to roll out red carpets at our festival venues and pretend that everything's fine? Should we go with the flow and never stop to ask ourselves: when does art become a commodity in the hands of capitalism? Can we still call ourselves artists? Should we pretend that nothing is happening? Or should we just drink ourselves into oblivion?

↪ What is to be done?

↪ We answer that question by doing and we believe that doing produces change, that it does make a difference, which is what all of us need, and that it brings art to a place of exploration. Art is something that can take us beyond our expectations and make us see the world as a place where we can celebrate not the profit but the change that our pursuit of art brings. We are so much more than agents of commodifying our own work and that is why we are the future.

↪ With this book, we put forward ideas, findings, dilemmas, thoughts about the past and the future that came from the artists, organisers, writers, programmers, and audiences of the Nomad Dance Academy and our invited friends in 2011 and 2012. During those two years, every piece of work of the NDA was motivated by the urgency of the questions posed above – what do we need so that the world may go on? We have been using artistic frameworks as an excuse to deal with much more urgent questions.

↪ We have initiated the *Woodstock of Knowledge* project, as a framework for producing knowledge through practice, whereby hierarchies are set over the course of the activities and not in advance. We have been reporting from festivals and other working processes as spaces of knowledge production, which is a significant shift in our understanding of festivals, workshops, and residences.

↪ Our collaboration with artists and cultural workers has resulted in the exploration of new working processes, possibilities for further collaboration, and a rethinking of the roles we have, the art and knowledge we produce, and the space we share. We have developed residencies and organised several different festivals; most importantly, we have been rethinking the Now, setting up a possible Future.

↪ In collaboration with Johan Thelander and Anders Jacobsson, the NDA has initiated a series of visits between Sweden and the Balkans and realised, together with a group of 35 international practitioners, the Curatorial Programme of the Kondenz and Locomotion festivals.

We have extended our network and worked on articulating our wishes, needs, problems, and potentials into messages sent to the policy makers through our advocacy platform. We are learning how to become advocates of our own work, at a time when public support and public sphere are eroding on so many levels.

↪ Instead of archiving the past, we are embarking on a continuous archiving of the present. That is how and why this book came to be.

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Dragana Alfirević &
Biljana Tanurovska
Kjulavkovski

**ORGANISING
OUR OWN FUTURE
[ON FESTIVALS
AS SPACES OF
KNOWLEDGE
PRODUCTION]**

by
Dragana
Alfirević
&Jasmina
Založnik

● In order to deal with the exhausted modes of production, which the system is forcing upon us, we[1] have decided to establish a parallel system, a system within the system, where we could play by our own rules, test our ideas of horizontality and direct democracy, and exercise alternatives to dual power; a system that might set us free for a moment and maybe in that rapture allow us to recognise what is needed and what is important, reigniting a passion for and trust in art, which we are starting to lose.

↪ Faced with the flourishing of neo-liberal models of organising in culture, whereby certain highly bureaucratised systems of values and modes of behaviour are simply inherited and taken over from corporate logic, without questioning or understanding, a broad group of people gathered around and within the Nomad Dance Academy initiated several meetings and activities: the Pleskavica festival (Ljubljana), a Residency at the ImPulsTanz festival (Vienna), and the Kondenz & LocoMotion festivals (Belgrade and Skopje, respectively). A very vague common title for all of these events was the 'Woodstock of Knowledge' – reviving, in a way, something that never really involved us, but sounded exciting and desirable to all of us. All of the events we created were dealing precisely with the production of knowledge, not simply with a one-way transfer of knowledge. Speaking of knowledge today, the image of Woodstock seemed appropriate in all aspects, in the sense that, although we are not familiar with that space, for us it is an image of commonness and sharing; also, we liked the image of temporarily breaking the rules only to establish them once again.

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↓ In order to escape the system, to trick its mission of turning cognitive human beings into pure commodity or apparatuses, the self-organised structures of the festivals that have appeared lately have used their opportunity to redefine the value of the art produced there, the meaning of knowledge, and our own position. The motivation behind that was to create a different space, which might accommodate the need for confrontation, critical approach, feedback, and discussion without (self)-censorship and where creativity would happen in between: between people, ideas, and in non-predefined spaces. The various events that we proposed have given us a chance to reflect and develop, and brought us closer to understanding the very traps and challenges that self-organised structures typically pose.

● In 2011 and 2012, several events were organised by and with the Nomad Dance Academy, against the backdrop of the financial crisis, budget cuts, and a shrinking space for education and research. Those events were organised in an attempt to challenge the hyper-production we are facing in the art field, whereby artists are turning into products and are more than ever simply following the logic of the neoliberal matrix and its laws.

↪ This text served as a critical reflection on the events that we organised during 2011 and 2012, spawned by the need to establish a difference within the existing modes of production. We have invented various models and forms in order to grasp other ways of communication and creativity, as well as to question our own positions and abilities to change our decision-making and ways of working. But the question remains: can we recognise this as a new model of programming festivals, or is it just a legitimised escape inwards, to those territories that we need to inhabit in order to do what we want to do? A year later it seems that it was at least an attempt to arrive at a stronger articulation of those artistic and curatorial practices that we affirm. This is what we missed then and what is still missing today. The text is a reflection on the events organized within the frames of Pleskavica 2011 and Pleskavica / COfestival 2012. →

1   'We' stands for Nomad Dance Academy organisers and our partners and friends, but it is always good to ask: 'Who are we, in fact?' and 'Who do we think we are?'.

IN RETROSPECT, WE UNDERSTOOD THE FOLLOWING THREE PRINCIPLES:
1) **Live presence.** Because our happenings depend on the participants' taking an active role in them (without fixed structures or plans), they are becoming more fruitful and complex – expecting full attention from the participants and requiring everybody to argue and position themselves… Whoever was not there, cannot be 'told' what happened there. The experience and transfer of knowledge operate so gently (which is necessarily tied to physical presence and firsthand experience), that it can hardly be taught or simply poured into anyone else. This is both an obstacle and an advantage.
2) **Processuality.** We appreciate that things take time to unfold and that we cannot frame or fix them in time (although there might still be a schedule of some sort). Striving to end up not with a product, but with something more open, or maybe even striving never to end, we decided to launch a number of ideas and principles just to try them out, to let them live. Although we had to work within a concrete and defined period of time, the end result was meant to be perceived not as anything final or rounded, but only as the beginning of something that might further develop on the basis of collaboration, participation, and failure.
3) **Resistance.** We resist all quick and obvious conclusions and offer no solutions – our strivings cannot be mechanically compressed into any one goal and we do not sublimate everything for the sake of being recognisable on the art market; instead, we want to step back and shed light on that which is unspeakable or untradeable, even if the price we have to pay is a temporary lack of clarity or permanent lack of consent (among us and between us and our environment). We resist the compulsion for allclear situations and events.
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WHAT WAS THERE:
1) **Emancipation.** Entering the unknown, we assumed that an open field might create grounds for discovering one's true inner will, bringing one closer to one's own Self, the Self one normally leaves at home when one goes to a festival, meeting, or rehearsal… Constantly repeating the same gestures and following the existing system, we are becoming apparatuses, machines. Emancipation is perceived here as something liberating, the position in which you have to rethink who you are, how you are positioned in space through discussions and creativity, and how you are established through interactions with others, fully aware that as a cognitive being you are changing all the time due to active participation and experience. We understand that emancipation happens inside and as a result of these processes and is not simply a ticket to enter events of this kind.

2) **Addressing the addressable.** One of our strongest realisations is that new models of this kind do insist on rethinking the criteria whereby we evaluate something as a success or failure. A well-known criterion, probably as old as the industrial revolution, is that of attendance and we realised that the level of participation or that of interest/desire/drive is much more important than the number of people in the audience, even if there are only us at the end watching each other. This is for two reasons: first, because any further 'dissemination' of the results will be much more significant if it relates to the personal relation of the visitor/participant and second, because personal motivation is vital to the equality, horizontality, and framing of whatever it is that we are trying to achieve. This brings us back to the realisation that we do not need to address those who are not interested at all (it does not mean that we are neglecting or rejecting them, but there is no need to drag them in); instead, we address the addressable, who already have some interest and desire, just like we do. And yet, sometimes it turns out that even we — the participants of the project — are not always really addressable. Everyone is entitled to do and follow whatever they themselves find appealing.
3) **The future.** At the end of some of the projects mentioned above, we realised that open structures of this kind are much more likely to turn into future collaboration among their participants. Because we have to expose ourselves to the gaze of the other, because we cannot strike up artificial poses (where one only needs to present themselves in the best light), it is much easier to get to know each other (our thoughts, desires, interests…), which is the best basis for collaboration. Also, events with fluid membranes, which allow others to enter, also allow for shared ownership by default and this is the best starting point for the future.
4) **Irreversibility.** There is no turning back. Once you experience the openness of the structure, once you realise you have the power to invite yourself to the festival, once you take responsibility for your behaviour and actions, what you perceive as creativity in art and life can never feel the same again. The results are not quantifiable in the same way, because we are not dealing with products or commodities here, but with people, motives, and contents. Those who experience such a structure become more sensitive about what is produced and seen, and where and how they want to be involved… And that process is irreversible.
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WHAT WAS NOT THERE:
1) **Articulating self-critique.** Some of us felt that we did not speak about the performances, just like we do not speak about them at most festivals. Everyone should be given enough open and

easily accessible space for critique and feedback, because this kind of consensual silence can very easily turn into a weapon against these concepts at their very core. It is useful to understand when we are still playing our roles; not speaking out our thoughts but softening them so as not to hurt the other. Growing and upgrading are only possible with a critical approach and good feedback.

2)   **Artistic/aesthetic evaluation for this kind of events.** In order to understand what happened, to frame it and contextualise what we do in artistic terms, it is necessary to invent some new definitions and connect these processes with our artistic needs and experiences. What is created and why? What kind of art do these events produce? What kind of modes of thinking do they establish?

3)   **Massive audiences.** Although public announcements were made in the same way as they were for other events, dealing with something new, something that is hard to define even for those of us taking part in it, we realised that we could not expect to reach a broader audience. People usually do not know how to recognise and deal with frames created and offered to them, not only because the whole logic of festivals had been turned upside down (sometimes with lectures scheduled in the evenings and performances during the day), but also because of the whole context of these events and their un-presentability in the traditional way. Maybe we had just a few people in the audience, but at least we knew that they were there because they were genuinely interested. It was more important for us to reach out to these people and spend some quality time with them. We also want to give more time to those who were not there to realise what they really want and join us at a later time.

4)   **Big budgets.** We are aware that we only had this kind of freedom because our budgets were small. However, this is not to say that they should remain small and we will demanding the same working and production conditions that other festivals and gatherings have. But at this fragile stage, one of developing something that was quite new even to us, we were happy that our funders had the freedom to say: 'Oh, we do not understand what you are doing, but it did not cost us much anyway'.

5)   **Huge media support.** Organising something new confirmed yet again that what we lack here is research-based journalism. Only a few journalists were prepared to dig into the structure that we offered. Therefore, we decided to organise parallel media coverage, where we could invent our own narratives, reflect on the events, bring up questions and doubts that we thought were necessary or needed (at least for us) but maybe not entirely self-evident. ■
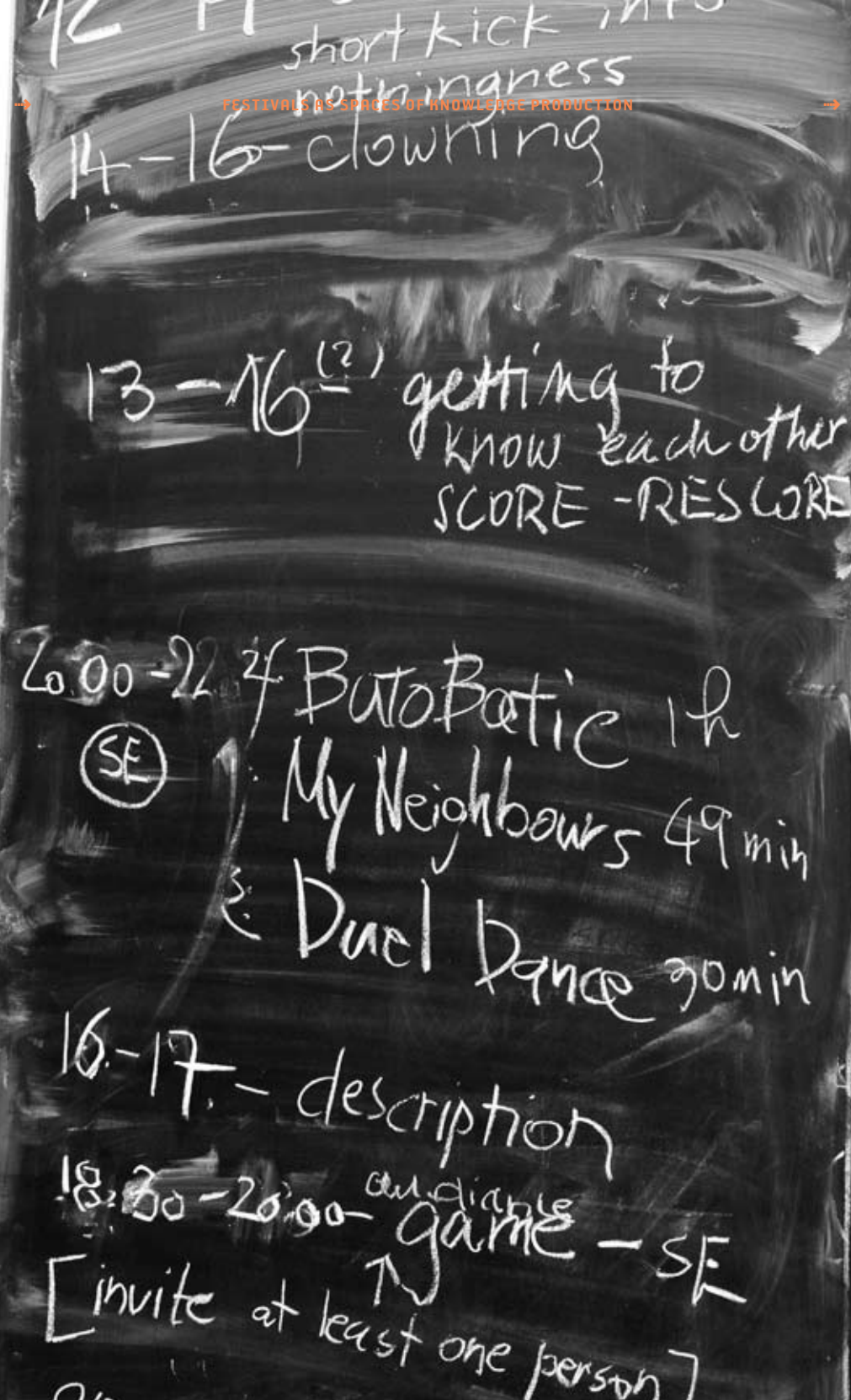
LOCOMOTION,
SKOPJE AND
KONDENZ,
BELGRADE,
OCTOBER
2011

This text is compiled from the notes of the Curatorial Programme Team and from the TCP Report written by Anders Jacobsson and Johan Thelander

BEFORE THE FESTIVAL

↓ Four years ago, the Station Service for Contemporary Dance and the Lokomotiva Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture founded two regional festivals: the Kondenz in Belgrade and the LocoMotion in Skopje.

↪ Both festivals were formed under the auspices of the Nomad Dance Academy network with the aim to present the latest, most innovative works by choreographers from the region and beyond. The goal is to familiarise our local audiences with different aspects of contemporary dance and performance.

↪ Festivals can be seen as ephemeral venues that can both appear and disappear rather quickly. We realise that nowadays artists travel and present their work all over the world, without being able to affect local contexts, to engage in exchange, to learn, or even to acquire experience. Under the logic of neoliberal capitalism festivals have become venues for marketing artistic work, with little to offer in terms of their social, educational, and developmental value and without fostering exchange, intervention, or generation of knowledge. Therefore, this year we have decided to realise the programme in a different way, dedicating most of it to an attempt to alleviate those lacks.

↪ We have decided to join the two festivals together and open up more space for communicating with the audience, offering a programme that will challenge the borders between authorities, space, the audience, performers, programmers, territories, and festivals.

↪ Sharing their responsibilities in curating and organisation and in collaboration with Hybris Konstproduktion from Sweden, Kondenz and LocoMotion devised a part of their respective programmes together and named it "The Curatorial Programme".

↪ Both festivals feature pre-selected programmes consisting of several performances. Kondenz invited four performances by authors active in the European context: Rodrigo Sobarzo, Clément Layes, Dragana Bulut, Maria Baroncea, Eduard Gabia, and Chris Leuenberger; LocoMotionalso invited four performances, by Clément Layes, Dragana Bulut, Maria Baroncea, Eduard Gabia, Torvald Silver, Tehvan Ratsanik , Kire Miladinovski, and Aleksandra Kočovska. "The Curatorial Programme" consists of proposals by a pool of participants, artists, theorists, and organisers working in the field of contemporary performing arts, from a number of countries, including Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Romania, Sweden, France, and Switzerland, among others.

↪ The Curatorial Programme was developed by means of a different festival methodology: rather

than inviting a selection of specific performances, our team of curators invited a set of artists, theorists, and organisers. The selected participants were then asked to propose and co-create the programme with the curating team, bringing different approaches to work creativity, knowledge, aesthetics, etc. Also, they will be present for the duration of the festival and the Curatorial Programme.

↪ The idea is to give the participants a chance to meet their audience, so that together we may try and reconstruct the notion of the festival and spend quality time together. Also, we hope that this will result in producing new fields of interest and knowledge, in exchanging information, sharing, learning about the differences and similarities among various methodologies of creativity, contextual circumstances, and logic.

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HOW DOES THE CURATORIAL PROGRAMME DEAL WITH CURATING?

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Introduction

Kondenz, Belgrade and LocoMotion, Skopje are two festivals dedicated to contemporary dance and the performing arts. They were both launched in 2008, in response to a challenge we had been encountering for some time – the gap between big and market-oriented local festivals of the performing arts and local contemporary performing arts communities. We started by presenting smaller, new, and different works, and inviting our audiences to learn about the state of the performing arts today, as seen by the festival programmers. This year, we want to broach the issues of co-curating, of giving a different kind of space to our colleagues, a selection of practitioners working in different contexts, to come and propose what they would like to do and how they would like to do it.

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Background/context

This year, an underlying interest of both festivals concerns the issue of selecting and organising in the performing arts; in other words, curating (which used to be called programming). Curating in contemporary performing arts has been increasingly discussed over the last five to ten years, lately also in publications (e.g. *Frakcija*, No. 55: *Curating Performing Arts*, summer 2010), conferences (e.g. *Beyond Curating: Strategies of Knowledge Transfer in Dance, Performance and*

Visual Arts, Essen, Germany, January 2011), workshops (e.g. *Towards Curating as a Critical Practice*, Novi Sad, Serbia, April 2011), and festivals (e.g. *Pleskavica*, Ljubljana, Slovenia, June 2011).

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How do we define curating?

Originally, curating was a term used in the visual arts for the activity of selecting and organising museum collections into exhibitions. Today, both the term and the field of knowledge have expanded to include everything, from fundraising and engaging in cultural politics to commissioning new and contextualising existing artworks, producing discourse around them, designing how spectators experience the artistic space, and even how they perform. The boundaries between the respective roles of the curator, performer, choreographer, manager, critic, audience member, and theorist have shifted and lost much of their former clarity. We are interested in grasping the functions of these roles and understanding by doing what curating could mean for us, in these very contexts.

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Why do we want to work on this?

We believe that discussing curating, in which artistic, economic, and political practices all intersect, is important, allowing further investigation and elaboration. Just how we invite, select, distribute, and finance different artistic proposals, how we make them relate to one another and present them to an audience under the conditions of an increasingly globalised market, can make a fundamental impact on deciding what kind of art to produce and what kind of artistic and intellectual discourses and communities to nurture; not to mention deciding whether a particular artistic proposal can meet the audience of a certain local context and what this meeting may produce. Artistic choices of this kind, and thus also the results of any curatorial practice, are deeply entangled with, and framed by, the parameters of time, money, collective processes, and cultural clashes.

↪ The urge to set up a programme that will address the problems of curating came to us because we wanted to experiment with different ways of organising and presenting a festival in collaboration. On the one hand, most festivals put emphasis on showing works by a few established or emerging artists. Festivals thus often promote homogenisation and commercialisation in the distribution of art. On the other hand, the need for artistic, process-based experimentation regarding more conventional and market-oriented formats of displaying and networking in art has spawned a proliferation of open-framed formats, most of which are quite exclusive to the artistic community.

↪ For this year's Kondenz and LocoMotion, we hope to find interesting balances, differences, and translations, by combining different, context-dependent modes of curating. We would like to see both festivals become a place where one can meet and act with others, as well as an open space where audiences will always be welcome.

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Modes of selection - The Curatorial Programme
To make this possible, we have invited a selection of performances/pieces that we find particularly interesting and important to share in our respective local contexts. In addition to this, we have initiated what we call *The Curatorial Programme*, with a group of fifteen specially invited artists, theorists, and curators from Western Europe and the Balkans, thinkers who can offer, we believe, interesting combinations of artistic and discursive practices and experiences, as well as relations to the problems of curating. They are invited to act as co-curators, that is, to submit proposals, pieces, practices, situations, discussions, games, meals, reading sessions, etc. The proposals may be individual or collective, existing or new or emerging. The purpose of this format is to create a space that will be nurturing both for the artistic communities and the public, as well as for the discourses that we are developing together, on what the performing arts could do and become. All events in The Curatorial Programme are free of charge (marked TCP in the schedule).

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Dear members of the audience
A warm welcome to you all to attend all the events of both festivals, those that you can read about in this programme, as well as spontaneous initiatives.

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The core co-curating team
Dalija Aćin (SRB)
Dragana Alfirević (SRB/SI)
Marijana Cvetković Marković (SRB)
Anders Jacobson (SE)
Iskra Šukarova (MK)
Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski (MK)
Johan Thelander (SE)

AFTER THE FESTIVAL
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Results
In this section, we discuss the different results that we believe came out of TCP as a project and as a curatorial proposal.

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Redistribution of selection
To start with, TCP aimed to produce a different type of power distribution compared to conventional festivals – a curatorial model based on a redistribution of choice and responsibility. The curatorial model we designed to conceive this was that each activity was proposed or "programmed" by the artist her/himself.

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From this we can deduce two main results:
~ **Diversity of selection:** This decentralized order – where more than thirty people were selectors – meant a diversity in the kind of activities that were proposed, how they were carried out and what kind of topics that were addressed. We believe that it is essential for the heterogenization of aesthetic selection and organization that there are many different loci of decision-making.
~ **Empowerment of the artist:** During TCP we experienced an empowering relationship between the artist, the artistic proposal, and the spectator. We believe that this was, to a great extent, a result from the fact that the proposals were selected and carried out by the participants themselves. In this sense, s/he was directly responsible and credited for her/his proposal.
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Duration, attendance and presence
The fact that participants attended throughout the festivals enabled them to take part in the festivals as a whole – something that is quite unusual in conventional festivals or conferences. The participants were thus available for discussion, feedback and critique and could as well attend others' proposals, which in turn made it possible to produce links and relations between the different proposals.
↪ The morning movement practice was reflected in the daily film screenings, filtered through an afternoon discussion and applied in the evening performance, etc. As a "curatorial result" we consider this enabled "relation-making" process between proposals an essential effect.

The relationship between individual and group

Seen from the point of view of a collaborative project, we know from experience how difficult it can be to organize open-framed formats without ending up in a "survival-of-the-strongest" situation, with a lot of focus on group dynamics and power distribution. However, during TCP we experienced a positive and organic relation between individual and collective. We believe that this has five main explanations:

~ The project functioned on the principle that each participant was responsible for their own participation through attending, proposing activities or partaking in other participants' proposed activities.

~ There was no imposed demand for collective decisions in the bigger group of participants.

~ The group was large enough for everyone to be mobile in different smaller constellations.

~ The relation between programmed and spontaneous activities provided a balanced situation with a clear frame of activities and a space to act and react.

~ The kitchen was set up as the festivals pivot point, and offered a space where one could cook, talk, meet and share ideas and thoughts.

~ The combination of people worked out well, which simply implies a little bit of luck.

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Flexibility

The way of scheduling events created a flexibility that enabled adjusting to the situation at hand, for example to benevolently "hijack" a current situation and add something in relation to the previous proposal or to cancel events when they didn't make sense in direct relation to other events. This freedom to re-organize "in real-time", made it possible to make fast decisions that are usually pre-decided and difficult to influence in conventional formats of programming and curating.

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A place to work

More than only showing works and networking, TCP became a place of collective study, new meetings and thoughts, that latched onto the ongoing festivals as well as the participants' dispersed practices.

↪ It functioned not as a market place but as a place to engage in work, and was fueled by the desires of the participants.

↪ We believe that the project as a whole created a situation that enriched the possibilities to "use" the artistic proposals for deepening and developing aesthetic and intellectual inquiries.

Conclusion

We are very pleased with the results of the project and find it relevant to further develop the model of co-curating that we applied. If, how and when this could happen is still to be discussed.

↪ Furthermore, the project has been important for us to strengthen our contacts with the partners of Nomad Dance Academy and the Balkan dance context. We experience that all involved partners have been artistically enriched by the sharing that was made possible by the project. We also hope and believe that there will be positive side-effects of the project in the form of future collaborations and continuous dialogue between invited participants.

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NON-FESTIVALS
[A BRIEF
AFTERTHOUGHT ON
THE CURATORIAL
PROGRAMME]

by
Virginie
Bobin

● Over the course of three days in April—May 2011, Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, a centre for artistic research located on the outskirts of Paris, hosted a series of events addressing performance as a tool for knowledge production, self-organisation, and critical discourse.[1] Entitled *Special Issue*, it was conceived as a live magazine rather than a festival, to be 'written', 'designed', attended, and discussed by its participants and audience alike. The programme comprised performances, games, and other tools conceived by the artists to generate discourse in front of (and often involving) the audience. It investigated the different ways that performance itself appropriates the production of knowledge outside of the established frames of critique and theory, by producing its own methodologies and *assemblies*. As an example, *Blue*, a piece by Spanish choreographer Juan Dominguez, was presented twice in the main theatre space, 'only' to serve as material for two other projects: *Running Commentary*, a dispositive conceived by philosopher and dramaturge Bojana Cvejić as an attempt to produce live commentary on a performance in its own time and space, beyond preliminary communication and the following bar talk or critical review, by inviting three guests to act as voiceovers through headsets tuned to multiple channels; and *Impersonation Game*, a post-performance situation devised by the everybodys collective,[2] in which the choreographer invited three people on stage to interview them about the piece as if they were the authors, before opening the discussion to the rest of the audience, thus challenging its perception of the author's intentions and the authority of his own discourse.

↪ French choreographers Rémy Héritier and Laurent Pichaud invited the audience to play *Choreographic Games* as a collective endeavour to elaborate knowledge about dance without any prerequisite expertise. Jennifer Lacey answered questions from members of the public based on archival materials from her project *My First Time with a Dramaturge* (hosted by Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers in 2010), thus reinventing the status and usage of documents and the relationship between performer and audience altogether – questions that were at the core of some of the public roundtables organised in the mornings. Mårten Spångberg and Krõõt Juurak organised *Double Speak O Field*, a hubristic party in a small red tent filled with loud music, smoke, and 'mystical' fluorescent drinks. Their agenda: 'Ethics unconditionally attaches the production of discourse to measure; to the domain of the head directed by the law. Discourse has been inscribed into notions of exchange, economy, and psychology. In *Double Speak O Field,* the continuous yet divided modality

1   See http://www.leslaboratoires.org/en/ctxnode/503/103.
2   See www.everybodystoolbox.net for more games.

of Western discourse production is ungrounded and rhythmicised, spreading out from an alien zero degree over the entire horizon of a compass. It abolishes exchange and surface on the 0 Field of affect as gift or theft.' Indeed, it was a gift to undo the hierarchy between valid and invalid spaces and forms of discourse production (and to re-evaluate drunken speech and sweaty bodily interactions on the way) – paradoxically healthy.

↪ *Special Issue* chose not to emphasise the production or touring of shows whilst devising an (often less visible) accompanying programme of talks and educational events, as many festivals do. It did not count on big and famous names (the evening programme) to cover our gamble on more 'up-and-coming' artists (the afternoon programme). All of the events were free, whatever their form or cost of production (not charging its audiences is part of the ethics of Les Laboratoires d'Aubervilliers, which are entirely funded by the state; I am well aware that this is possible thanks to the current French government's cultural policies, however precarious this situation may be). A part of the budget was dedicated to inviting people (artists, critics, theorists) from all over Europe to attend *Special Issue* and its various events, without expecting anything from them in return, except their participation. Indeed, *Special Issue* was interested in producing a situation rather than a spectacle, facilitating encounters and exchanges between artists and the audience, experts and non-experts, local and international actors, during and after the events – or, rather, tools, which called for an active commitment rather than passive viewing.

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↓ In that sense, the Curatorial Programme of the 2011 Kondenz and Locomotion festivals, although based on a different agenda (addressing issues and modalities of curating the performing arts today), offered a similar agency. By choosing to dedicate most of its budget to inviting a group of artists, theorists and critics to *be present* and co-curate its programme, it made a courageous statement in favour of a non-market-oriented, discourse-centred framework – or rather, situation – in a context where dance and performance institutions, and thus audiences, too, are less established (and less supported) than in, say, France. By gathering this group of people during several days in one space (Magacin in Belgrade, YCC in Skopje), it highlighted the modalities of exchange and discourse that happen in-between, in the interstices, at breakfast, whilst poring over a Facebook account, dancing with a bowl of spaghetti in one hand, laughing during Pierre-Yves Diacon's *Voice Commands Improvisations*, after interviewing an unknown artist in Maja Ćirić's *Speed Curating*, dancing early in the morning with Minna Weddin, or concentrating on a *Post-performance*
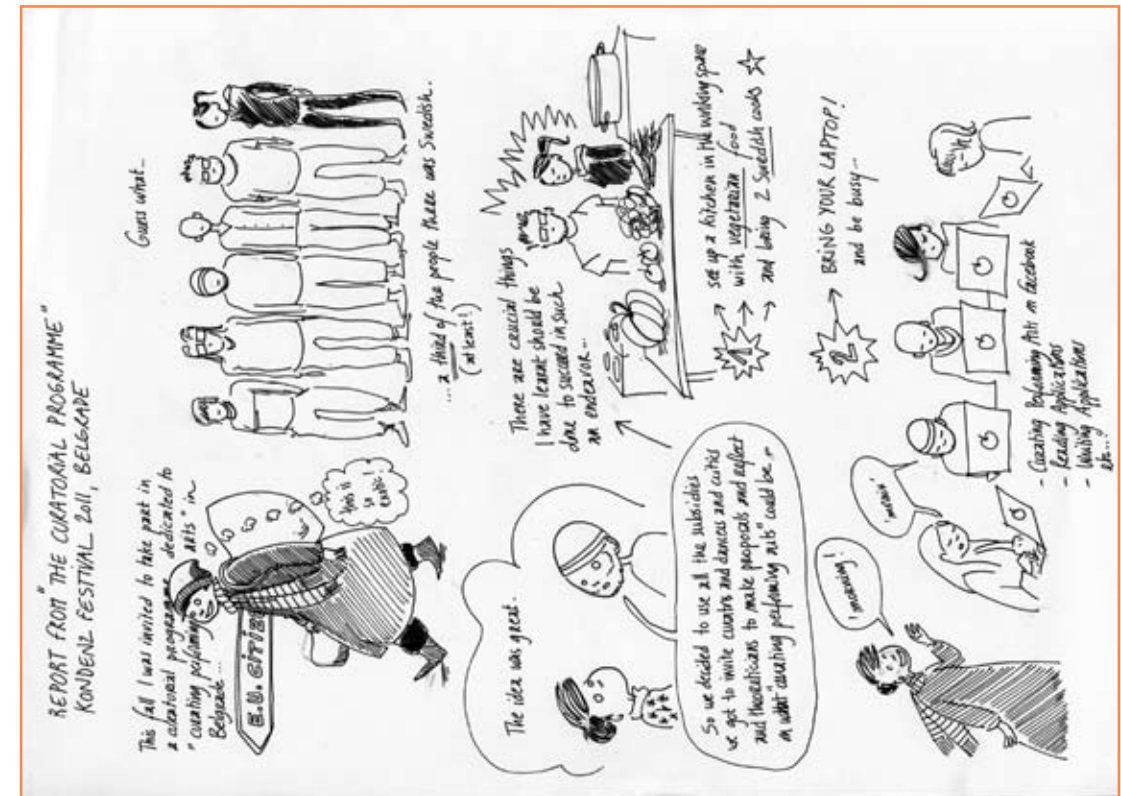
Meditation with Anders Jacobson. Does washing the dishes with a dance critic from Ljubljana or getting drunk with a dancer from Stockholm facilitate the production of knowledge about performance? I would say: yes, definitely. Were there audience members washing the dishes or getting drunk with us? I would say: unfortunately not.

↪ There was a paradox in the construction of the Kondenz festival (the one in which I participated, or, perhaps, 'co-curated', according to the terms of my invitation) and the Curatorial Programme: the gap between the programme of four shows happening on the stage of Bitef teatar, more in line with the classical festival format, and the multiple proposals by the participants of the Curatorial Programme, happening at Magacin (a rather rough alternative space shared by several independent organisations). This inevitably resulted in separating the audience of the 'festival part' at Bitef teatar from the rich situation of exchange and discussion provided by the Curatorial
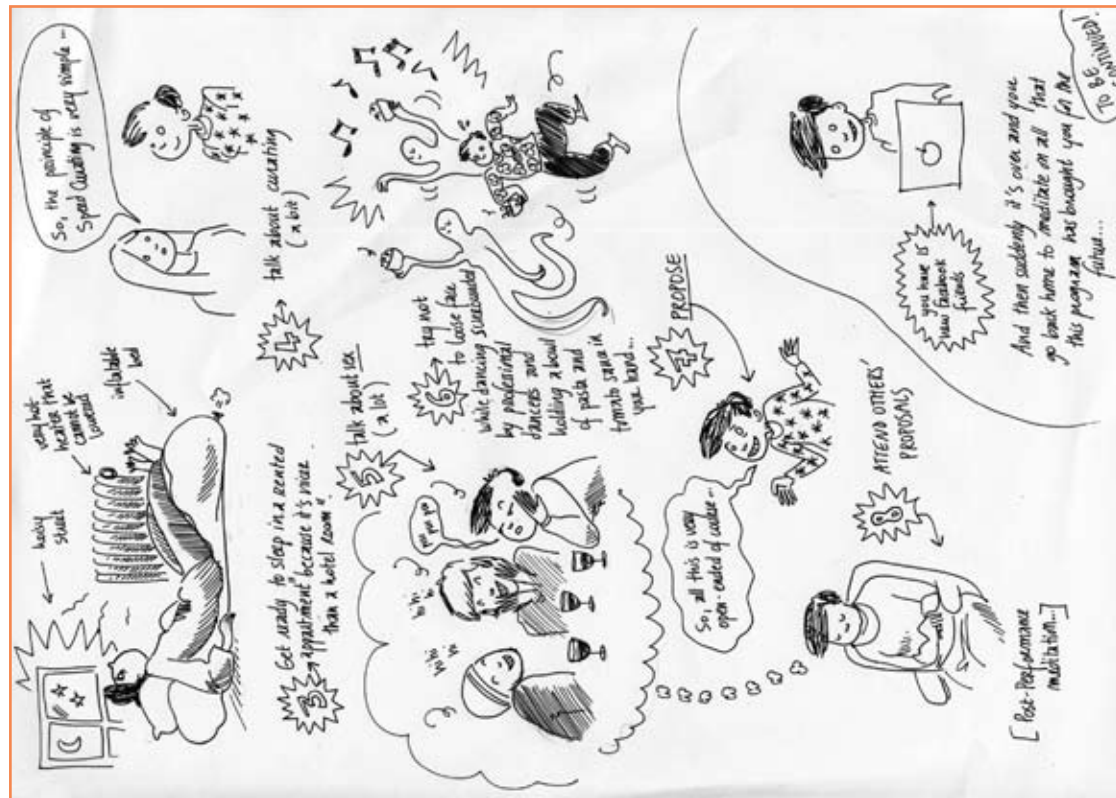
Programme, the meals and the hanging out happening at Magacin. However, it would be false to say that the Curatorial Programme was a happy-few event for cultural producers brought together from Sweden, France, Slovenia, Romania, Switzerland, etc. Students came, actors from the local cultural scene came as well, thus provoking interesting encounters and debates. But resisting discussion was a major issue, as if all of the participants were avoiding it, using their various proposals as detours and bypasses: was this *co*-curating the performing arts? Was this an alternative to programming and how did it contribute to challenging existing formats and proposing new ones?

↪ For instance, it would have been interesting to examine this notion of co-curating. In the visual arts field, where I 'come from', co-curating usually means that a group (sometimes a collective, although that is quite different) of curators sit down to elaborate a concept together, select a list

of artists, co-conceive an exhibition, a biennial or a series of events, etc. It is rare that a group of artists, critics, and theorists are invited to come up, without previous conversations, each with a different proposal, to constitute a programme under the vast umbrella of 'curating the performing arts'. This horizontal, open-ended way of approaching 'curating' provides an interesting experiment as it builds a sort of 'exquisite corpse'[3] of projects, whereby dance pieces, lectures, dialogues, and collective discussions are all put on the same level. In a way, it is a sort of attempt to turn curating upside-down, to reverse the procedure, as the discussion arises from the encounter of events, the contaminations and infiltrations between them. The post-programming encounter was emphasised by the fact that the co-curators (and the audience) met in a space that was to become theirs for five days, where they ate together, mingled and experienced each other's proposals all at once. In that sense the role of food and eating was preponderant in building the conditions for knowledge exchange and yes, even critical discourse on performance (if not directly on curating it!).

↪ Only (curator) Maja Ćirić's *Speed Curating* proposed a witty, direct critique of curating as a mode of merciless selection. However, I would argue that the Curatorial Programme as a whole acted as a practice-based experiment and reflection on alternative ways to curate the performing arts, in a specific context and through a specific network of people, who came out stronger as a result of this epic adventure. It provided a test site for discussing (and celebrating) those forms of performance that challenge the products usually found in more mainstream festivals. As did *Special Issue*, the Curatorial Programme created a temporary assembly of people gathered around a common problem, a collective that ignited new relationships and new potentialities for collaboration, discussion and action on the local and international levels. My hope is that more non-festivals like this will come out of it.

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3   recalling the collaborative method invented by the Surrealists to produce a text out of a series of sentences written successively by a group of persons ignoring the content of the sentence written by the previous collaborator.

NOTES
FROM THE MARGIN
DEFESTIVALISATION –
REFESTIVALISATION?
LJUBLJANA,
JUNE 2011

by
Angelina
Georgieva

● It was a privilege to witness the situation created by the last edition of PLESkavica. It presented a daring endeavour in the context of the performing arts in Southeast Europe. Even now, several months on, I still find provocative, in my thoughts, reactions, and even some of my actions, nourished by what I experienced during this 'closure of festivals'. Without a doubt, the organisers presented a strong concept and I could certainly relate to the urgency with which they stressed the need to question the general economy of performing arts festivals today, alongside the need to find the means and ends to reinvent them. I hope the concept and mode of organisation will be developed still further. That's why I will allow myself to be more critical now and perhaps even a bit harsh, trying to pinpoint some, in my opinion, problematic features of this initial attempt to transform the mode of the festival, so they might be reconsidered in future.

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What was it?

As was stated at the so called 'crisis management' discussion, held just a few days before the end, this was not a festival and the interesting thing, of course, is not to stop at the levelling satisfaction of such a conclusion but to ask further: what was it, then? What did PLESkavica 2011 actually make happen and what not, and what did it propose?

↪ The organisation of the process, which initially promised to turn defestivalisation into refestivalisation, was ideally supposed to use the mode of the festival as a framework where the logic of presenting finished performances was to be replaced by creating a specific time-space for exchanging practices and positions, for collaborative, process-oriented artistic work and discussions, all of these based on self-organising and presumably open to a broader audience. The way this idea took shape in reality made me wonder how much of what was happening was different from existing formats such as residencies, workshop festivals, or even artistic communities. Were they supposed to be hijacked in order to reform the notion festivals and could they do that? The unconvincing part for me was that PLESkavica, aimed at changing the 'rules of the game' called 'festivals', eventually started playing a different game altogether, thus failing to reach the point of 'refestivalisation'; it remained stuck in a hybrid mode, somewhere in between an artistic community and an open/closed workshop programme. There is no doubt that something potentially fruitful might emerge here so I will try now to speculate on why, in my opinion, PLESkavica 2011 failed to offer a convincing form of refestivalisation, i.e. a reformed or transformed dance festival format, and how we may change that.

The tricky side of self-organising

The organisers of PLESkavica 2011 cleverly used their preconditions that called for a more radical approach than the usual festival format. First, they conceived it as an immediate counter-reaction to the current condition of the performing arts scene in Slovenia, which was, particularly in 2011, awash with festivals. And second, the festival had a chance to involve a group of performers who more or less knew each other from before, having participated in the Nomad Dance Academy and sharing a relatively common ground.

↪ They were offered to get into the loose structure of the event, to mould and fill it with contents of their own choosing; furthermore, the organisers had proposed several methodologies regarding the generation of the activities, ideas, and discussions, with special focus on several performance methodologies in particular, such as description, score/rescore, etc. And all of that kept changing. This was frustrating for me and I needed more time to be able to relate to the way the 'gathering' was proceeding, while its objectives got more and more obscure. In the beginning, I was confronted with my own notions of prescribing meaning and significance to festivals. What was being left out of consideration, I thought, was the fact that depending on the context, festivals acquire different meanings and functions. I arrived to PLESkavica from Berlin, where almost each week somewhere in the city a new festival takes place and very often several different festivals are happening simultaneously. Despite this proliferation of festivals in this city, festivals are needed in order to focus our attention on particular art practices and positions. Moreover, originally coming from Bulgaria, I am fully aware of the urgent need that the Bulgarian art scene has for regular and innovative forums of creativity, presentation, and discussion in order to reinvent the local scene and audience by familiarising ourselves with international artistic practices and continually examining and discussing our own standards and trends. But it took me some time to understand that what was going on in the sunny backyard of the Tabor cultural centre was led by the need to empty ourselves of our pre-automated expectations and ideas and to question the production and presentation systems in which artists are currently forced to operate. What are the modes of (self-) exploitation to which we subject ourselves today and why? What actual personal and artistic need do we have to reform the organisation of time and space in work and life?

↪ Occupying a more or less marginal position to what was happening at different festival locations, I got the impression that the organisers of the festival also had to operate as its leaders, in order to get what was a rather diverse international group of participants to take part in the proposed concept of the event. By this I mean that, rather than simply facilitating the happenings, they also directed the participants' attitudes and in passing also made decisions about what could legitimately take place and what could not. The imperatives of self-organising / sharing knowledge / adjustability were imposed in such a way that they eventually turned into a control mechanism. Participants came and went almost continuously and in this dynamics at a certain point not everybody knew each other or could be equally engaged and respond to the process that had been running from the very first day. Also, some issues in organisation were taken too personally for a public event in general. That's why the constellation of the group looked more like a communal setting than a group of autonomous artists deciding how to organise and negotiate a given situation in accordance with their individual needs, values, and convictions. Throughout my stay in Ljubljana I was at a loss to formulate them even to myself, not exactly knowing for what purpose and in what capacity I was there, being perhaps the only participant who was more of a critic and cultural worker than an active participant in dance practice. So I felt a need for a clearer approach to the dynamics of the group and the place of each participant in the general framework.

↪ At PLESkavica 2011, self-organising unfortunately morphed into a frenetic hyper-production of trainings and trials of different methods, with only sporadic mutual reflection on the results of the working sessions and discussion rounds. Numerous crucial issues were thus left out, such as 'what is actually an artistic product nowadays', 'what more can I give from my artistic practice' etc. (to quote some of the questions posted), as was criticism of the way decisions were made, due to the limiting possibilities of such a self-enclosed structure.

↪ Imperatives such as 'Be Involved', 'Be Adjustable', 'Be Ready to Take Risks', etc. merely reproduced neo-liberal creative economy slogans, instead of opposing or transcending them. Furthermore, they prevented what might have been a slow but invaluable accumulation of processes, which could have born fruitful results within the very framework of PLESkavica.

↪ I would suggest inviting the participants to submit their proposals before arriving to the festival; their proposals could then be used to make up a concrete preliminary festival programme. This would produce a more strict structure, which could then be open to reorganisation and change, not, however, on a daily basis, but at least a day in advance; also it would support the continual development of an undertaken work. I believe that such a structure would foster everyone's engagement in the process, instead of relying on chance.

Modules, Practices, Contents

The ambitiously but loosely set 'programme', consisting of methodology proposals and spaces, quickly dissolved and became unrecognisable in the daily changing menu of things to do.

↪ Perhaps I was the only one who had specifically come to Ljubljana to participate in what had been announced as a dramaturgy workshop. It was supposed to address aspiring dance dramaturges with little or no experience. And that was exactly what I needed at this particular moment in my life, amidst my personal chaos of various engagements and plans. But under those circumstances, it should come as no surprise that the workshop could not proceed the way it was announced and in isolation from the work that was already happening. The general group of participants, almost all of them dancers, would not allow a separate 'secret' group to be formed, with set roles and an agenda of its own. In the end, following an *ad hoc* reaction and reformulation of the workshop's concept, the workshop proceeded with a poorly negotiated protocol for decision-making and failed to fulfil the programme that its participants, who had joined it spontaneously, had accepted. However, I think that this turbulent situation produced a possible solution for the future, as well. I thought that the most interesting and fruitful were the mini-workshops that dancers themselves proposed, aimed at trying out concrete practices such as Score/Rescore and Description. But still, it would have been better if we had the time to engage in more in-depth discussion regarding those issues: the principles, more examples, the basis, etc., given that they were attached to the idea of a 'dramaturgy workshop'. Again, what I think was missing was an accumulation of processes and inner continuity. Those different groups worked in isolation from each other, without knowing who was involved in what, what was being achieved, etc.

↪ Now that some time has passed, I wish that the people who were supposed to be the 'dramaturges' or were invited to this workshop in particular had been attached to the group of artists – to observe them from up close, have discussions with them, and after that also with those announced as workshop tutors... That would have been a format based not on coaching but on sharing and developing competencies on a practical basis, accumulating practices (such as pass it on, description, rescore, editing, improvisation, etc.), or inventing new ones...

↪ In general, it seemed that the focus was mainly on rethinking the festival framework rather than artistic issues and processes, which, I'm convinced, can generate new modes of production and audience involvement. What types of presentation formats and practices do not fit in the general festival economy and what types are opposed to or critical of its commodification and can transform it into something else?

↪ The most creative side of self-organisation manifested itself in the inventive formats in which the discussions took place. Setting up specific rules about how one gained the right to speak as well as constantly putting the speakers in different roles and making them speak and behave accordingly broached some significant issues that really have the potential to make a difference and rethink the need for and significance of festivals and modes of presenting artistic work. Ideas such as organising festivals as open works and involving audiences not simply as spectators but also as producers of situations and even content should be given more consideration. Perhaps it would have been more useful to summarise the outcomes of the discussions, to direct them towards formulating collective statements that could have been communicated as the festival's standpoint...

↓

Talking to yourself

Last but not least, I think that the festival's lack of strategies for audience involvement and focus on publicising the event rather than provoking a public discussion on the issues raised there made the festival seem rather hermetic and I could not accept the claim that every festival is like that as a satisfying answer. Actually, this was one of the reasons why, in my opinion, it didn't reach the point of 'refestivalisation'.

↪ To sum up, although it was a very confusing time for me, I also found PLESkavica a very fruitful event; it really changed my expectations and notions of what a festival in the independent scene can call for and I collected significant arguments for that. It had a strong point to make, it was very informative and artistically inspiring, and made me start believing in self-organisation, in the sense of making a festival's participants create its content and ways of processing it. But most of all, I am really happy and grateful for an invaluable exchange I had with a bunch of interesting people and I hope to be able to keep doing that in future.

■

Angelina Georgieva (BG) is a publicist and co-founder of the New Dramaturgies Platform – a non-profit organisation in the field of the performing arts.

**TELL US ABOUT
THE FUTURE OF
THE NOMAD DANCE
ACADEMY (NDA)
AND RECEIVE A
€1,000 GIFT**

by
NDA team
and guests

● We are here, in residency, invited to discuss, explore, propose, and reflect on the past/present/future of the Nomad Dance Academy.

↪ As part of our residency at ImpulsTanz, we have committed ourselves to create a public moment to share our concerns with the guests and audience of the festival. For that purpose we have received a residency budget of €1,000.

↓

↓ We have decided to use our budget in the following way:

~ We would like to invite you to respond to the following question: What is the future of the Nomad Dance Academy?

~ We would like to offer you this public event as a platform to share your responses and give us an opportunity to discuss them.

~ Following the discussion, we would like to offer the full amount of our residency budget as **a gift** to the individual/group whose proposal we find the most inspiring. Although we will not be following any 'objective' criteria in evaluating the proposals, we reserve the right to make a subjective decision about who will receive the gift.

↓

↓ In order to make this offer as clear as possible, we would like to formulate the following procedure:

~ We are inviting you to explore the history and structure of the Nomad Dance Academy by any means you find suitable. To facilitate your research, we can offer you two recent publications by the NDA. You are welcome to visit us at the Hotel am Brillantengrund, 4 Bandgasse, or look for us at different places (the Arsenal, the Lounge, before and after the shows) and ask questions prior to the event. It is up to you to decide how much or how little information you'll need to formulate a response/proposal. In any case, we hope that you will take this opportunity to fantasise and imagine, rather than research.

~ At the public event itself, we will first hear the presentations and then open the floor for a public debate on them.

~ Finally, at the end of this process, we will decide which of the proposals will be offered the gift — €1,000 — the full amount of our residency budget.

~ Once the ritual of gift exchange is performed, we will have a public discussion about the parameters of the whole procedure and its meaning.

The presentations, discussions, and the awarding will take place on Thursday, July 28, at 11 PM, at Garage X You are welcome to join us that evening starting at 10 PM.

**RECAPITLUATION
OF NDA
RESIDENCY AT
THE IMPULSTANZ
FESTIVAL**

by
Igor
Dobričić

● The residency of the Nomad Dance Academy (NDA) at ImpulsTanz has come to an end. The previous Thursday evening you told us about the future, on Friday morning we made a choice and gave the money to Vlad, on Saturday we came together once more to share our recollections / impressions / opinions about the week in general and that Thursday night / Friday morning in particular. On Sunday we left. But the question persists: who do we think *we* are?

↪ First of all, *we* are, obviously, the grammar 'we' that is addressing you. From another perspective, *we* are also the collection of people who were invited to attend a residency in Vienna. And still, beyond existing as a mode of address and a haphazardly and temporarily assembled collective of 14 people who happened to be brought together in a complex web of circumstances, we are also, in many different ways (as guests, students, activists, etc), related to and connected with the past/present/future of the Nomad Dance Academy as a mode of organisation.

↪ The conditions that we finally set up for our encounter with you on Thursday night / Friday morning reflected an attempt to approach the problem of group identity without resolving it in advance. If the first part of the evening was trying to welcome and perform a situation of knowledge/identity production in an open, unstable field of possibilities rather than certainties, in the few hours that followed we managed to unfold, before the eyes of those who stayed with us, an equally open process of reaching a shared conclusion. Because, being 'who *we* are', we also felt that we needed to test the limits of our ability to (dis)agree and explore the potential of group decision-making beyond the given conventions of a democratic consensus.

↪ So, how did we go about this decision-making, once all the proposals were in? At first, we treated them like a cloud of imaginations and directions generated by the activity of all those who were offering them. After awhile, we got lost in this cloud, fell silent, and started all over again, this time by remembering the fragments of thoughts and gestures made by those offering the proposals, which touched and steered each of us individually. Sometime around 3 AM we reached a critical point where we realised an important principle of decision-making that had started playing out in our conversation: **I can only make decisions/choices valid for myself, but my decisions/choices should never obstruct the ability of others to make their own independent decisions/choices – rather, they should empower them to make independent decisions/choices of their own.**

↪ With this realisation, slowly, certain names and faces started appearing from the cloud. We put ten of them on a piece of paper and spent some time recollecting and reconnecting the ideas with faces. Then we invented a simple procedure. One of us kept reading the names one by one and

everybody had to decide whether to keep them on the list or not. If one wanted to keep a name on the list, one only had to stand by it, with ones desires, opinions, and intuitions, or otherwise do nothing. When nobody reacted, the name would be crossed out. We repeated the procedure five times and the list came down to five names at exactly 5 AM. Although we kept repeating it, we could not reduce the list any further. Fatigue started creeping in. Sometime around 5:30 AM we put pieces of paper with the names of the people left on the list in an ImpulsTanz bag. We drew a name from that bag and presented him with a gift of EUR 1,000. His name happened to be Vlad.

➤ Beyond this exploration of collectivity, many questions remain open about our motivation/drive to give away our entire funding, provided by the festival hosting us, to an individual who would tell us about our own future. At the end of this account, we want to reassure you that we are aware of those questions. In fact, they were our driving force. Judging from your reactions, it seems that for eight hours we managed to share this driving force with you.

◼

THE DICTIONARY OF
DEFESTIVALISATION

by
Rok Vevar
& Jasmina
Založnik

FESTIVALISATION – DEFESTIVALISATION

'It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent.' How to detect Nothing and do (create) things with and within it? How to do (create) in a space that the Empire considers nonexistent? How to do things in and with the remainder? By providing a heterochrony to a festival in a fundamental way. Most likely, one should start by relinquishing all those things, activities, and experiences (knowledge) that testify to their own inevitability. Defestivalisation occurs when we remove from our festivals and performances those segments that frighten us with their indispensability and continuity. In order to start recreating art, we should get rid of them first.

↓

THE REMAINDER OF SPACE, TIME, AND THE SELF

Availability, being available, 'accumulation in idleness'. The rehabilitation of that condition, that nothing or void, which is attached to the condition of our being. Space, time, and the Self are the remainder that cannot be capitalised, transformed into efficiency, productivity, or profit. They are those unavailable categories that are lacking in the usual conditions of efficient production. In the context of Festivals based on Self-organised structures, Space, Time, and the Self remain unused – unexploited. To rehabilitate that part of oneself that is combinable and occupies a place open to the other. The condition of community.

↪ 'It is better to do nothing than to contribute to the invention of formal ways of rendering visible that which Empire already recognizes as existent.' (Alain Badiou). As Sartre already stated, the decision is ours. 'We are our choices.'

↓

HETEROTOPIA

The remainder is the excluded place within contemporary society and politics (in Rancière's sense: police). It is a heterotopia of deviation. This negative or negation of the social order, which excludes and removes the remainder or occupies it by capitalisation, has to be affirmed in its inability to be capitalised. It is not a heterotopia of compensation, but another space for the rehabilitation of the potentiality of being (the self, space, time, art, etc.). It is the place that has left the production of art and inhabited what may be the place of its creation. Heterotopia isn't so much about an actual venue, city, or location that exists parallel to everyday reality, but rather a change of perspective, a gap that a thought excavates in the orthodox production of contemporary art practices. It is the decision that things might happen and reflect beyond cultural inevitabilities.

ART WITHOUT A REMAINDER = ART WITHOUT EXISTANTIALITY

'I don't have time for myself because I'm involved in art.' Without providing a remainder (of the self), the production of art, (most likely) for the first time in history, eliminates the subject(ivity) of the artist who creates it, that is the prerequisite condition of artistic authorship. Art is transformed into a 'material world' experienced by 'workers, proletarians' (artists) as a 'domination of dead matter over mankind' (artists). The production of art has led to products experienced by artists as 'foreign and dominating objects'. 'Hence the worker feels himself only when he is not working; when he is working he does not feel himself. He is at home when he is not working, and not at home when he is working.' (Karl Marx)

↪ 'In tearing away the object of his production from man, estranged labor therefore tears away from him his species-life, his true species-objectivity. [...] In the relationship of estranged labor, each man therefore regards the other in accordance with the standard and the situation in which he as a worker finds himself.' (Karl Marx)

↪ The process of objectifying human relations leads to mistrust between individuals; human relations are then assessed by their usefulness. This is the stage 'when everything that men had considered as inalienable became an object of exchange, of traffic [...] virtue, love, conviction, knowledge, conscience, etc. – when everything, in short, passed into commerce. It is the time of general corruption, of universal venality, or, to speak in terms of political economy, the time when everything, moral or physical, having become a marketable value, is brought to the market to be assessed at its truest value'. (Marx)

↪ 'Its basis is that a relation between people takes on the character of a thing [...] that seems so strictly rational and all-embracing as to conceal every trace of its fundamental nature: the relation between people.' (Marx)

↪ We can go even further and, referring to Marx, ask ourselves whether it is truly necessary to feel like workers only when we are drained of our last drop of enthusiasm, when we are totally alienated from what we do.

↓

DETOXICATION

The transition period in which the individual realises the difference between the usual material conditions of production internalised in the structure of their self and the conditions of work in the remainder. 'Let's do something! Let's work!' In its ideal form, detoxification is a process that guarantees the exclusion of all material pressures in cultural production. Exclusion? The policy of raising awareness.

↓

(RE)ACTIVATION

An ongoing activity does not necessarily imply actual 'activity' but rather levels it to inter-passivity – believing or enjoying through the other. The interpassive subject feels depleted and unable to contribute to the norms of social production and suffers from the hyperactive mental fatigue. In order to exit this place, what is first required is a process of detoxification, allowing us to break free from the post-Fordist imperative of ongoing production. It takes a new and different awareness, which is only possible through detoxification. A reactivation of that part of oneself that is excluded from everyday life rhythm. The part that allows the re-emergence of thought.

↓

POTENTIALITY

Potentiality: from the production of art to its creation.

↪ According to Agamben, the potential always outlines something that is not realised yet, reveals places that are possible and their infinite possibility. The potential always hides within paradoxicality. It cannot be revealed in the process of transaction; actualisation is not its purpose. It hides something, to which we may only strive, knowing that we will never discover, achieve, or actualise it. The fascination lies in the very potentiality, our audacity to allow ourselves to flirt with it, because in society, this very potentiality is often neglected and rendered impossible and our lives are thereby viewed as somewhat (de)finite. Art that bets on creativity in the process is conceived and implemented in all of its potentiality. To create is to reveal the potentiality, whereas final products take us back to that part of the social that is burdened by its actualisation and finality. Last but not least, in creation processes, potentiality is observed in its final number of possibilities and established modes of production. It will take a shift from the product to processuality and the excluded register of creativity to overcome the established modes and promote potentiality within the field of art.

↓

PROCESSUALITY

Processuality is a neglected segment of art production because it belongs to the excluded register of creativity. It does not provide immediate effects. In the production (productivity) of art,

processuality is evaded by a satisfactory effect, whilst in the creation of art, productive uses of processuality are not satisfactory because they try to prevent slipping. This vicious circle manifests itself in the use of proven patterns, recipes, and models that are meant to prevent slipping. And yet – paradoxically – these forms ultimately lead to already tried out and known formats, to a commodity serving itself.

↪ In artistic creativity, the openness of the process guarantees the possibility of various registers of process results. In order to classify the results, identify their differences and define them, we have to let them happen in a methodologically pursued processuality. Processuality is the possibility to have the result of methodological creativity in multiple stages, forms, or articulations, contrary to the production of art, where the work is invariably represented only in the formation of the primary level of the process. Processuality is political due to its counter-productivity, which is called creativity.

↓

PROTOCOLS

Protocols are methodological tools that allow in processuality for collective, joint decision-making on the course of an artwork. The process is not necessarily subject to collective decision-making; it may rest on a delegate, selected and authorised by the participants of the process to make decisions (e.g. the choreographer, director, etc.). In collective decision-making, protocols replace human authority. They are necessary in order to secure the implementation of the processual politics of work. Besides, protocols are also possible and indeed most welcome when a collective leaves the decisions to one person. Indeed, collective work only requires a starting-point protocol: i.e. a primary consensus. All other protocols may be derived from it. When it comes to collective works, rather than providing the motivation, protocols tell individuals about the degree of their willingness to participate and create with empathy and understanding for the other. Protocols provide an external structure of decision-making to the place of the artistic self. To make the process creative, neither the protocol nor the artistic self (subject) may negate each other.

↓

DAILY MENU

The daily menu is a reflection of group curation, a process without a particular leader or authority who is supposed to know. It is a reflection of the everyday creation of 'possible' programme units and processes that are offered to the participants as a starting point for their own creativity and

upgrading. A daily menu is not an imperative, but (only) a framework (temporal and spatial), a sort of orientation guide.

↪ In addition, the daily menu does not encompass all the situations and participants' activities that might emerge according to their particular needs, which complement and upgrade the menu, created/curated by the group. It is a reflection of the primary protocol that secures the implementation of the processual politics of work. It enables a festival to communicate both internally (directing the framework processsualities of the work) and externally, since its structure addresses the public, communicates its frameworks (temporal and spatial), and invites the public to participate.

↓

INVISIBLE CITIES

Invisible cities are those cities of creativity that cannot be anticipated, planned, or put on the daily menu. They occur in the form of tasks brought by motivation or an obstacle in the processuality. They take various forms and formats and cannot be avoided at work. We might call them a necessity that emerges in the remainder rather than in the requirements of production. Openness is a condition that gives them space, time, and responsibility. In accordance with Calvino's eponymous book, their witness is the one who reads differences (traveller) and not the emperor of oneness. The one who belongs to the register of creation and not production.

↪ An example may be seen in a conversation between Kublai Khan and Marco Polo, when Marco Polo tries to describe a bridge stone by stone. Kublai Khan interrupts and asks him not to describe individual stones but the bridge. Polo answers that there is no bridge without the stones. Invisible cities are thus those regions of our mind and actions where the mechanisms of the production of art are internalised in us and actually function similarly to the insistence of an instinct.

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KNOWLEDGE-SHARING – CONTRIBUTION – 'COMMON TABLE'

The 'Common table' as the principle of integration and cohabitation; recognising all entities in their fullness and indispensability, like the stones that make up a bridge. Respect and acceptance, along with the responsibility of every participant, 'care for one another', as well as openness and willingness to communicate and 'collaborate'. The common table determines every individual as an equal member, a co-creating and contributing subject. The uniqueness of the subject in relation

to the other, enriching and complementing the other through relations and exchanges with it. All knowledge that is exchanged, upgraded, and transformed in open structures is treated in the same way.

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PARTICIPATION – PARTICIPANT

Participation as an 'upgrade' from the emancipated spectator, which, according to Rancière, presumes (mental) activity on the part of the spectator. By breaking the boundaries between the spectator and the artist/performer, some festivals based on Self-organised structures strive to establish the conditions for an embodied participation of all of their audience or at least some of them. Every individual who enters the structure is considered a participant and accepted with all the responsibilities and prerogatives that come with participating in such a structure. They are accepted as people who have discovered the infinite possibility of the notion of their being in transgressing their predefined and anticipated roles that are, regardless of the situation, attributed to and thereby expected from them. The participant thus signifies a subject who, rather than migrating between individual roles, connects and simultaneously represents a multitude of different roles. The participant may interrupt, switch, shift, continue, and cross the invisible boundaries presumed by existing social productions of knowledge and art.

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THE PARTICIPANT'S ETHICS – ACCEPTING RESPONSIBILITY

If we accept Badiou's thesis that there is no ethics in general, but only processes whereby we negotiate the possibilities of a situation, the subject/participant should be considered capable of accepting responsibility. Hence the participant's ethics relates to trusting the other; participants should be able to transcend general social norms and search through their own reflection for new ways of (co)habitation and creation. It is reflected in the search for one's own 'ontological' being, as it were. It is about responsibility to the other and to oneself in persistence, in loyalty to a wish.

↓

COMMON – COMMUNITY – COLLABORATION – COMMUNICATION

It takes a radical change in our relation to the material and immaterial — they have to be re-appropriated from capital. The common should be first sought in the basics, i.e. the common wealth of the material world, which we all share (the water, the air, etc.) and simultaneously, through the material, we should also approach the results of social production (language, knowledge,

information, affects, etc.), which are only apparently accessible. The common is that which may be complemented, which points to an empty place where a remainder could be embedded. The common is the place that any participant may occupy, along with their responsibilities or prerogatives. It is the place reserved for contribution and ready for a creative protocol. In the transition from the common to community, the space and self open up to the other. A prerequisite to reach the place of the common is communication, which might require nothing but a wish. Perhaps, in addition to the wish, it also requires nothing. And it might be that the wish holds the common objectives that the community is willing to share in the process of communication and collaboration and, if necessary, also change and re-establishment.

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LOYALTY TO AN EVENT

An **event** allows something other than a situation, opinion, or competent unity to occur; an event is a risky and unpredictable supplement, but it disappears almost as soon as it occurs. The event is simultaneously inside and outside of a situation. It occurs in a situation as a supplement that is irreducible to that situation. Therefore, in terms of its 'ontological' status, it is indefinable. Its empiricism is one of disappearance. It is a prime disappearance, which has complemented the situation for a moment and has only being embedded in the situation if there is nothing left of it. The event forces the subject into a new way of existence, a new way of being. It captures her thought.

Loyalty to an event indicates that the individual is constantly mentally present in her own existence, that she will not surrender merely to follow the general laws and social norms but stands ready potentially to reinvent ways of existence in every situation.

Assessing what has actually occurred is never objective! It is an assessment without rules, supported only by what is produced in its always final act of distinct decision.

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THE RHIZOMATIC QUALITY

The concept of the rhizome was defined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their book *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), in which they oppose rhizomatic to arborescent thought; the latter is characteristic of Western thinking (linear, hierarchic, etc.). Rhizomatic thought is non-linear, anarchic and nomadic, horizontal. It represents a uniform distribution that straddles the boundaries established by vertical lines and hierarchic systems; a multiplicity that moves in several directions and connects

with other lines of thought, activity, and existence. It creates networks that cross established, apparent boundaries, just as art should cross the lines of our thought, create new connections between apparently unrelated and separated structures and new horizons of thought, work, existence, being, etc.

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EXPERIMENT

Despite its transformations by various social, scientific, and art contexts in time, it is experimental art that guarantees its origin and existence by very precise, flexible, and inventive methodologies of work; i.e. it pays a lot of attention (sometimes even all of it) to the process instead of the result (results, of course, are not excluded). In order to give meaning to and recreate its process, experimental art problematises, analyses, and dismantles all aspects of art as a material practice, i.e. all aspects of art as an ideology.

↪ There is still a lot of room left for various forms of experimentation in the (performing) arts. But perhaps before establishing the conditions of production, some mental space should be created and the world allowed to enter it in all of its terrifying as well as liberating dimensions. After all, boundaries (of various modes — art, being, etc.) offer shelter and safety, which might be penetrated or broken by experimental approaches. The allure I find in the word 'experiment' in relation to the performing arts derives from the prospects that such art practices offer us and our unsanctioned curiosity. But to look forward to curiosity, we have to – most likely – miss something in our local context. But first of all we have to perceive it.

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(SELF-)CENSORSHIP

Self-censorship is a way of how the production is being operative in the subjects of artistic creation and a way to gradually reduce the potentiality of creation. Censorship is a transparent norm or prohibition that allows us to see its source, whilst in self-censorship, the subject has internalised that source and it is therefore invisible. It's nothing particularly new. Self-censorship stabilises the value of production by replacing communication between creative subjects with negotiations between and for effects. The criterion of efficiency is the spectator or the audience who refuse this role; an impossible spectator or impossible audience, i.e. an abstract criterion of an artwork's quantifiability by the parameters of visibility and recognisability. It is a request to address the non-addressable, those abstract consumers of culture who have never been interested in art or who

have performed, throughout history, the role of censors. Self-censorship is actually consecrated dealing with latent censors, the quantifiers of production effects.

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SELF-ORGANISATION (organisation of the Self)

Self-organisational structures are not considered entirely organised because organisers always set a framework, an open structure, something of a platform, to which the invited artists contribute according to their inspiration, needs, and necessities. Hence a linear, non-hierarchic structure emerges in a group of individuals prepared and selected beforehand; in a way, it is initiated in advance by a smaller organisational-artistic team. Could we claim that this – due to our discontent with existing modes of organisation and need for contents that those modes preclude – is just the opposite of established organisational forms? Or is this a special structure that transfers the emphasis from organisation to self-organisation, that of the individual's Self, evading all rigorous and technocratic modes of operation, and stands for reactivating and emancipating the individual, approximating what Ivan Illich called Deschooling?

↪ In his book *Deschooling Society,* Ivan Illich established a critical relation to the individual's dependence on the knowledge provided by specialised institutions of contemporary technocratic elites that monopolise education, work processes, medical care, and environment management and subordinate the individual by using the services of those institutions. Hence Illich proposed a humanist way of schooling and learning that would be based on self-initiative, by way of teaching networks of individuals with similar interests.

↪ An ideal step forward from Illich's proposition would be to distribute knowledge among individuals organised in structures within art communities and platforms, which could roughly be called self-organised groups. Individuals themselves could propose and introduce subjects, modes and forms of research, communication, and creation, without having to meet targets or supply an end-product.

↪ The principal and starting-point parameter in such a structure would be the self-responsibility of the individual entering the structure. Indeed, the results would depend on the participants themselves, on their own actions, contributions, and openness to the proposals of others. Self-organising is thus established as organising the self/Self[1] (being aware of one's own needs, wishes,

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1   See 'The Remainder of Space, Time, and the Self' above.

and willingness to restructure one's thoughts and accept those of others, de-framing, stepping out, distancing oneself from established modes of work, etc.). Understanding art as a creative process in itself requires moving away from normative and established ways of thinking and acting. It is a place of experimentation, testing, and playing that is only established through interacting with the Other (dialogues, discussion, creation, etc.).

OPENNESS

'There is no situation of all situations', says Badiou's meta-ontological theorem. There is nothing that can't be expanded or complemented. That is one of the principles of processuality that guide festivals based on Self-organised structures. Our dictionary[2] was likewise made on the presumption of its own uncertainty. Its empty spots indicate its openness, waiting to be complemented, to create parallel notions and proposals. Our dictionary is asking to be complemented.

Rok Vevar is a dance critic and theorist & **Jasmina Založnik** is a publicist and producer.

2   A slightly different version of this dictionary was first published in the *Pleskavica* journal.

**REPORT ON TTT
[TEACHING THE
TEACHERS]
SKOPJE 2011**

**Written by
Martin Sonderkamp
In collaboration with:
Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski
And with the kind support of:
Gisela Müller, Dragana Alfirević
and Aleksandra Janeva Imfeld**

↓ Inspired by talks with Dragana Alfirević, Tamara Curić, Dean Damjanovski, Aleksandra Janeva, Dejan Srhoj, Iskra Šukarova, Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, Rok Vevar, Elke van Kampenhout, Gisela Müller, Vera Sander and Marijana Cvetkovic and Violeta Kachakova.
↓
↓
PEOPLE AND TASK GROUPS
↓
Coordination, Organization and Documentation:
Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, Violeta Kachakova, Katerina Tocinoski
and Pinar Basoglu (intern as part of Wild Cards- Schnee program of Jardin D'Europe).
↓
Facilitating/Concept Development and Archiving Group:
Martin Sonderkamp, Aleksandra Janeva, Rok Vevar and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski.
Team 1 (NDA): Dragana Alfirevic, Tamara Curic, Dean Damjanovski, Aleksandra Janeva Martin Sonderkamp, Dejan Srhoj, Iskra Sukarova, Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski and Rok Vevar.
↓
Team 2 (Invited Speakers and NDA): Gisela Müller, Elke Van Campenhout, Marijana Cvetkovic, Martin Sonderkamp, Aleksandra Janeva, Rok Vevar and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski.
↓
Invited Guest: Vera Sander, Center For Contemporary Dance, University College for Music and Dance
↓
Guests: Students from the Faculty of Dance Pedagogy in Skopje.

SCHEDULE:

20–24 June 2011, Ptuj (Slo)
Prep-Session Teaching the Teachers (TTT)
Participants: members of the Decision Making
Body (DMB)

TTT SKOPJE   [14 - 22 November 2011]

13 November
Arrival: Facilitating/Concept Development and
Archiving Group

14–15 November
Fine Tuning TTT
Facilitating / Concept Development and
Archiving Group

15 November
Arrival: Team 1

16–18 November
Starting to Talk
Team 1

17 November
Arrival: Team 2

18 November
Handing it over: Team 1 meets Team 2

19 November
Thinking The Future, Saying Good-Bye
Departure: Team 1

20 November 2011
Think Tank: Archiving / Performing Arts
Team 2 and Facilitating/Concept Development
and Archiving Group

21–22 November
Reflecting. Digesting
Facilitating/Concept Development and Archiving
Group
Departure Team 2

23 November
Departure Facilitating/Concept Development
and Archiving Group

WHERE ARE WE?
About NDA

● Nomad Dance Academy (**NDA**) has developed into a platform for generating and spreading knowledge, methods, and research through various activities.
↪ From 2005 to 2010 NDA developed through programmes based on three main pillars: education, research, and production, with the aim to professionalise contemporary dance in the Balkans.
↪ Additionally, we realised that we needed to put extra effort into enhancing the visibility of dance and push its acceptance as a contemporary art form.
↪ Consequently, production was supplemented alongside a series of other activities: promoting and disseminating dance, whereby dance gained more public recognition and visibility in the past few years than it had before.
↪ This was understood as the paradigm through which NDA described and organised its efforts, activities, fundraising, and financial management. The education programme was understood and felt as the most recognisable and indispensable of the activities, designed and realised as a unique travelling, nomadic academy.
↪ We realised that by implementing this paradigm, NDA had grown into a platform, progressively shaping itself into a discursive web, which has enabled us to generate and disseminate knowledge multiple directions.
↪ Furthermore, we envisage NDA as a podium from which we can develop innovative educational models related to artistic education in dance, branching out into performing arts and related art forms under the premise that education is an on going, everyday life process.
↪ For us, the educational programme was/is a common point of reference, a common denominator, a major aspect of identity building and a potential for change, both within and of NDA. We understood and felt the educational programme as the most recognisable and indispensable of our activities, designed and realised as a unique traveling, nomadic academy.
↓
↓
WHY are we initiating a paradigm shift? Why are we upgrading Nomad?
Basically, we share the belief and need to continue and extend our programmes in education and, equally important, to shift our paradigm to **It's All Education.**

↳ We understand education as the means to stimulate social and political change, bringing forth future social and cultural capital. Accordingly, education should endeavour to reshape cultural policies on trans-regional, trans-national and trans-European levels. We admit that under the premise **It's All Education** there is a lack of specific channels through which this shift of paradigm can be realized.

↳ We strive to develop and specify other, not yet discovered kinds of knowledge and understanding. We see the flow of information between disciplines as nomadic, as a methodology of migration and transgression.

↳ We don't want to work with familiar, traditional educational models, which articulate education as a one-way, top to bottom transfer of already existing knowledge. Rather, we strive for education based on recursive processes that run in multiple directions.

↳ Consequently, this approach challenges us to provide opportunities and structures that are needed to develop inter- and trans-disciplinary research practices that encompass production, teaching, research.

↳ We see these practices as open spaces for individuals and groups to share and develop concepts and methods that generate specific knowledge relevant to the conditions of the arts in general and in particular to that of dance in the Balkans.

↳ It is this kind of tailor made, context-specific approach towards education through which we want to realize research and sustainable development.

↳ We will recycle our gained know-how and use it as a tool to (re-) formulate, test and apply specific formats and politics of education, dissemination practices and production strategies.

↳ In other words, we are suggesting the approach **It's All Education** as a paradigm shift, as a comprehensive approach to everything NDA does.

↳ Therefore, we have decided to develop NDA's future programmes along two axes.

Axis 1 — NOMAD: This line of programming resembles the original educational programme that took place annually between 2008 and 2010. In the future, Nomad will take place biennially.

Axis 2 — NDI (Nomad Dance Institute) NDI fosters nomadic research and the production of innovative project ideas and concepts, based on temporary residencies. Woodstock of Knowledge is a pilot project line (2011) through which we supported the festivals Pleskavica in Ljubljana, Kondenz in Belgrade and Locomotion in Skopje, as well as **Teaching the Teachers 2011**.

PREPARING TO TALK
PREP-SESSION TEACHING THE TEACHERS (TTT)
Participants: members of the Decision Making Body (DMB)
20–24 June 2011, Ptuj (SI)
↓

↓ In order to evaluate the development of the programme, to produce an outline of TTT and to agree on how to integrate the format and purpose of TTT into the general development plan of NDA, we decided to organise two sessions of TTT, a prepatory one and then the major event TTT Skopje that would take place in Skopje in November 2011.

↳ The prep meeting was held in Ptuj (SLO) during 20-24 June 2011, as part of the annual DMB meeting. All DMB members took part in discussions about how TTT should be designed and modified so that it had a relation to the context of Nomad.

↳ We decided that Martin Sonderkamp and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski would lead the meeting and plan the concept for TTT Skopje, with the right to invite two more collaborators from Nomad who would be included in the TTT core group. The DMB group also asked the core group to invite other participants to TTT to be part of leading and facilitating TTT.

↳ Biljana and Martin invited Aleksandra Imfeld and Rok Vevar. Being the core group, these four developed the concept and designed the final programme of TTT Skopje. Martin Sonderkamp acted as facilitator in collaboration with the core group.

↳ The core group detected several topics that the participants of TTT Skopje would further develop and reflect upon. The core group drafted TTT's programme, consenting to these major aspects: to evaluate Nomad, to exchange through practice and to stimulate future developments of NDA.
↓

↓ **Prepatory dialogues**
The core group organised several meetings via Skype to define and develop topics for TTT and to decide about inviting other participants. Also, Martin Sonderkamp and Aleksandra Janeva met up in Brussels, Biljana Tanurovska and Rok Vevar joined them via Skype.

FINE TUNING TTT
Facilitating / Concept Development and Archiving Group
14–15 November 2011, Skopje (MK)
↓
Participants:
Martin Sonderkamp, Aleksandra Janeva, Rok Vevar, and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski.
↓
The facilitating/concept development group got together to plan, schedule and fine-tune TTT. We agreed to focus on the method **Learning by Doing**, whereby different aspects of education and training, such as teaching, participating, and observing, could be explored through practice.
↪ Furthermore, we agreed to examine and discuss the interrelation between not knowing, knowing, education, position, function, perception and responsivity. One of our major interests was to discuss how to organise and implement a responsive system.
↪ How to provide a system that acts beyond giving and taking, a system that allows 'feed-backing' and learning by doing? We agreed to include exchange through practice, exchange through the very matter that participants of TTT Skopje are producing in their individual field of expertise.

STARTING TO TALK: TTT TEAM 1
16 - 18 November 2011
↓
Participants: NDA members
Dragana Alfirević, Tamara Curić, Dean Damjanovski, Aleksandra Janeva, Martin Sonderkamp, Dejan Srhoj, Iskra Šukarova, Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, and Rok Vevar.
Guests: Students from the Faculty of Dance Pedagogy in Skopje.
↓
Team 1 spent three days together, exchanging methods and teaching practices in the first part of the day. These exchanges focused on the migration of knowledge, shared authorship, methods of collective dissemination and team teaching.
↓
Team 1 met the students of the Faculty of Dance Pedagogy that Iksra Sukarova is leading. Together, we tested some ideas of team teaching. For example: during a dance history lecture the lecturer is being interrupted by a dance practitioner, whenever she/he can add complementary physical knowledge available that would help the students to understand physical aspects and consequences of an artistic method that is being lectured about.
↓
↪ We also worked with 'passing the ball', a game in which one artists/teacher introduces a method/exercise and the next artist/teacher adds on to it, shedding light on aspects of methods outside of the artistic realm and intention of the previous author/teacher.
↪ We played with 'second hand knowledge', pretending to be an expert: a fellow teacher takes the ideas and methods of another and presents them to a group of students as if he was the originator/inventor of the methods/ideas, consequently re-inventing and sometimes even falsifying the original.
↪ In the afternoon, **Team 1** proceeded to evaluate past Nomad educational programmes.
↪ We agreed that the paradigm shift **It's All Education** should not only relate to the act of teaching but should simultaneously be articulated in regards to the general development of future educational programmes.
↪ We examined which formats of production have helped or prevented students from learning, trying to answer questions such as:

↪ Are all students required to make a piece? Is education geared towards producing choreographers only? How are performers, dancers, theorists and critics represented in the educational programmes?
↓
* In the future, a task group that has yet to be created will use the notes from this meeting to design the first edition of the future Nomad Educational Programme (which will then take place biennially)

NOTES FROM STARTING TO TALK: TTT TEAM 1
16 - 18 November 2011
Thoughts and responses: Evaluating NOMAD Educational Programmes, 2008-2010
↓
➜ educational programmes 2008-2010 ➜ the future
With its educational programmes of 2008-2010 NDA reached its goals concerning the dissemination of artistic and educational practices, research, production and the visibility of contemporary dance.
↪ The programmes stimulated the growth of networks among its members and the establishment of networks amongst the younger generation of dance artists and theorists working within and around NDA. The participating young artists continue to weave their own webs, based on their individual circumstances and needs.
↪ The educational programmes took much effort and focus and were seen as a brainchild, through which all involved connected to each other.
↪ We considered rethinking individual, local, regional, and collective aims and what kind of programmes could be initiated to allow the implementation of those aims.
↓
➜ learning ➜ politics ➜ students➜teachers ➜ not knowing ➜ diffusion
We examined the setup of the educational programs in 2008-2010. Most missed were formats other than workshop series, residencies and mentoring being the most favoured formats.
↪ There was a consensus about criticising traditional models that position teachers and students in such a way that only the teaching artist gets to possess, categorise, name, verify, or negate information and the student artist, supposedly not knowing anything, volunteers to receive explanations, definitions, verifications, etc., hoping to gain knowledge.
↓
➜ learning ➜ politics ➜ students ➜ teachers ➜ not knowing ➜ diffusion
 Also, it was suggested to invite teachers/lectures/artists teaching and working with those designing the educational programme in order to build a creative base for decision-making regarding the programme's design.
↪ We were reflecting about how to encourage learning situations where teachers would be allowed to abandon the method of firstly introducing a canonised body of knowledge through which they

map out the territory that students are supposed to walk and learn in. This for example could be a method of composition on which the students would be expected to focus, traverse, and learn to work with. Instead, knowledge could be specifically generated through methods of observation, questioning, and experimentation and be directly related to each individual's profile and research area.

➥ The teaching artists involved could spend longer periods of time with groups of student artists. They should also feel entitled to teach what they don't know, so that their teaching process would also be one of learning and not merely transferring what they already know. This would stimulate the growth of interpersonal intelligence and knowledge, a collective research where knowledge is produced through collective exchange and experimentation.

➥ It was seen as something important that teachers do not simply come to a workshop and teach, for example a technique. We are generally interested in inviting guest artists that are able to respond to the overall aim of Nomad.

➥ We agreed that it was crucial for the further development of the education programme that the invited artists would be willing to modify their artistic approaches and teaching method according to the context their work was embedded in. Long-term mentoring/advising proved to be substantially important as it generated a more thorough process. It was also seen as a possibility to involve local artists who could then teach longer periods or could return several times to work with the participants.

↓

→ learning → politics → students → teachers → not knowing → diffusion

Additionally, it was suggested to have each student propose their own area of research based on their individual interests, process and production needs. That way, the programme could be carefully designed according to its 'real' needs and we could stimulate and support individual growth directly and thus bypass the above-mentioned problematic of merely supplying prescribed, canonised knowledge.

➥ We talked about collaborative practices as a means for learning by doing.

➥ We advocate that student-artists and teacher-artists engage and influence the design of the courses/workshops/modules; mutually putting into effect what they think is significant and relevant to their practice.

➥ The artist-teacher could then act as a facilitator, stimulating learning by asking questions, observing and through discussions. This would help to avoid categorizing already existing or not yet existing, potential knowledge as significant or insignificant.

➥ The teaching artists involved could spend longer periods of time with groups of student-artists, to allow for thorough processes that are tailored towards individual needs.

➥ Additionally, it was suggested to have each student propose their own area of research relevant to their individual interests, process and production needs with which they would apply. Consequently, much of the responsibility would go into the hands of the student artists, who could therefore also learn to become more independent and gain competencies valuable for their own prospective artistic practices and endeavours.

➥ This way, we could directly stimulate and support individual growth and we could bypass the above-mentioned problematic of merely supplying prescribed, canonised knowledge. It was deemed inevitable that in the future Nomad should set up structures that would allow for such an open approach towards the programme.

↓

→ responsive learning environment → modules

We suggested redesigning the workshop format and providing for a learning environment that would act responsively to its own momentum and the needs of the people co-creating and working within it. As a possible dramaturgy we suggested to establish a loose timeline, divided into modules – not a singular workshop – that would correlate to individual stages occurring during the research periods of the participating artists and their attempts to realise diverse modes of public presentation. In future, taskforce education should implement structures and guidelines that would allow for a creative, dynamic exchange between course design, planning, and realisation.

↓

→ diversity → production → practices → relevance → expectations

Due to the clearer vision of the 2010 Nomad Educational Programme, which focused on choreographing and related conceptualising skills, performance theory and production, the formats in which work and research were presented lacked **diversity**. The public presentations were largely tied to the ideas of making choreography, while other activities, such as writing and publishing, lecture performances, exhibitions, and interventions as possible ways of presentation were only mentioned as future additions.

↳ The problem of too little continuous development in the field of writing/criticism and theory could be solved: activities other than choreographing could be strengthened and placed alongside other artistic practices. In this way, one could provide a healthy transition towards non-disciplinary approaches.

↳ With this approach one could also make visible the kind of knowledge that is not taught but happens as students go through the programme, their intercultural experiences, the traces that each city imprints in the memory of each participant, and the kind of work that exists in certain places and not in others.

↓

➙ diversity ➙ production ➙ practices ➙ relevance ➙ expectations

We also discussed what we **expect** from our students. Some said that they wanted the younger generation of artists to engage more with their local scenes, produce more output and consequently have more impact on local and regional developments. It seems important to communicate our expectations clearly and extend invitations that would allow former students to reinvest into Nomad structures in order to stimulate further developments both locally and regionally.

↳ Another issue that was brought up concerns the apparent gap between structural planning and the needs of Nomad artists. In other words, it appears that, when funding, co-production and other kinds of support are available through Nomad, artists within and around Nomad do not seem to be ready to go ahead.

↳ We realized that artists themselves have assumed the position of providers (givers), partly putting their own artistic vision aside to provide space for younger generations. Thinking, planning, and acting on behalf of others might be the very factors that divert artists from their own artistic endeavours.

↳ For example: former students could return and work with current students as tutors/mentors/ advisors. Also, during Nomad programmes, it was judged important to connect visiting students to local artists, to establish contact between the programme and the local scenes.

↳ It was also suggested that the student artists could invite the teacher artists to take part in their own artistic work, for example as performers. This would also help us avoid the hierarchy whereby the older generation is put on top of the younger and it would favour the young (the students/next/future) over the old (the now/past).

↓

➙ diversity ➙ production ➙ practices ➙ relevance ➙ expectations

What was seen as challenging was to make it plain that the Nomad Dance Academy exists beyond its four-month educational programme as well. For the future we would suggest that each local organisation keeps the Nomad spirit running beyond its educational programme. Engaging younger generations could then be stimulated by local artists and organisations and would not be an overall aim of Nomad dance educational programmes.

↳ Many of our Nomad participants were being accepted in BA and MA study programmes throughout Europe, which proves the high quality of the educational programmes. However, it was seen as problematic (though positive for individual students concerned) that our programme will not be able to receive input from former Nomad students and will not be able to benefit from it right away.

↳ However, some participants said that as teachers one should not expect any immediate feedback, reinvestment, or payback. All of that might occur after a longer period of time, which is hard to predict.

↓

➙ passing the ball ➙ diffusing knowledge

One aim of **Team 1** was to exchange and discuss methods and approaches that would diffuse and overlap the fields of artistic, educational and theoretical practice. Since we were a heterogenous group of people comprising dance artists, managers, researchers, and theorists, we felt that it was important to begin to discuss teaching and education through practice.

↳ For this we had set up a few classes with the students from the B.A. programme of the Faculty of Dance Pedagogy at the University of Skopje, where Iskra Šukarova teaches. We discussed methodologies, techniques, and different approaches that we use in teaching.

↓

passing the ball ➙ diffusing knowledge

We worked with the idea of diffusing knowledge, **'passing the ball'**, meaning that one teacher would start working with the students, then another teacher would take over and articulate another proposal, which would then be taken over by someone else.

↳ We would introduce an idea and then let someone else take it further (even though their knowledge was not necessarily any deeper than that of other teachers) in order to generate a situation where all parties could learn something from that meeting, not only by means of verbal

feedback, but by letting others take over their propositions and develop them further and thus allowing them to contribute to research on that same proposition with their own points of view.
⤷ Generally speaking, we suggested possible ways of interpreting ideas and methods, so that the 'exercises and tasks' might expand and vary according to individual interpretations **diffusing** the pure, initial idea with different responses and alternative solutions.
↓
→ **second-hand teaching** → **intrapersonal knowledge** → **interpersonal knowledge**
Another method we examined was **'second-hand teaching'**, whereby someone who has no or little information about an idea or technique gets to teach it.
⤷ For example: we introduced the dot-technique, a set of rules and tasks invented by Aleksandra Janeva, and then Dejan Srhoj took over and explored her ideas in more depth. It was interesting to witness how the actual investigation, the questions and thoughts about the unknown, quickly revealed that the way we generate knowledge also influences the way we transfer it.
↓
→ **second-hand teaching** → **intrapersonal knowledge** → **interpersonal knowledge**
Someone trying to explain something unknown, a person learning and making up a collection of fact that they pass on to somebody else using the knowledge they have, is already an intelligible act of education.
⤷ When existing intrapersonal knowledge is applied to an unknown territory, knowledge previously acquired can be adopted according to a specific research question. Because this knowledge is being diffused with other kinds of knowledge, it can become relative to the question asked and yield many optional answers and solutions.
⤷ These interventions also helped us to get to know each other in practice, established and understanding of the cross-references we make to other fields of knowledge. The interventions clarified our individual artistic approaches through practice and dialogue allowing each of us to recognize potential and optional solutions.

HANDING IT OVER
18 November 2011
Team 1 meets Team 2
↓
On 18 November both teams met in the afternoon. Each member of **Team 1** presented an evaluation of Nomad to **Team 2**, including their individual outlook on Nomad and its previous educational programmes (2008, 2009, and 2010) They had five minutes each.
↓
Team 1 extracted **key questions** out of the many questions and suggestions that were being voiced during the meeting of Team 1:
⤷ If it's all education, how can one shape an educational programme that allows for already existing Nomad knowledge (the tools, techniques, methodologies, the know-how that had been accumulated) to be incorporated and upgraded into a model that will stimulate and support student-led artistic research?
⤷ How can establish flexible parameters by established by the participants of NDA educational programmes themselves in dialogue with NDA.
↓
Team 2 (invited speakers and NDA):
Gisela Mueller, Elke Van Campenhout, Marijana Cvetković, Martin Sonderkamp, Aleksandra Janeva, Rok Vevar, and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski.
⤷ Gisela Müller talked about the B.A programme Contemporary Dance, Context, Choreography, which she designed and directed in collaboration with Boris Charmatz and Franz Anton Kramer at the Inter University Centre (HZT) in Berlin. The programme engaged its students in the decision-making process regarding inviting guest teachers, deciding upon the content and formats of learning, getting feedback, planning together, and evaluating workshops led by guest teachers. In this three-year pilot programme, module experimental pedagogy was embedded in the curriculum, centring on student-led research, self-learning, and self-generated knowledge.
↓
Elke Van Campenhout spoke about her experiences from the APT/A.PASS programme, which is made in collaboration with the students. A.PR (Advanced Performance Training) is a 12-month post-master performance research programme, based on its participants' individual projects. It

is founded on the principles of self-organisation and collaboration. On the one hand, the learning zone of A.PT rests on individual participants' sharing the result of their research (in discussions, showings, the development and sharing of tools, methodologies, etc.), while on the other hand, the programme is constructed according to the individual needs for information and demands for assistance of external artists, mentors, and colleagues of each participant.

↪ Proof Vera Sander presented the B.A. programme in Dance at the Centre for Contemporary Dance, Cologne University College for Music and Dance (Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln) and Martin Sonderkamp introduced the newly established M.A. programme in Dance Dissemination at the same institution, where he works as a Senior Lecturer.

↪ Marijana Cvetković was delayed in joining Team 2 by inclement weather (she couldn't depart for two days due to heavy fog). She joined in the later discussions as well as in planning the documentation and archiving.

↪ (*We also invited Anna Grip (Cullberg Ballet/Stockholm), a Jardin d'Europe partner of Nomad, but she had to cancel her participation due to her duties as artistic director of Cullberg Ballet.)

↪ We discussed the structural and political difficulties and obstacles that present themselves when topics, approaches, and structures related to self-responsibility, self-motivation, and self-learning are brought into traditional structures such as universities. We agreed to treat rather critically the complex power issues when collaborating with universities and be aware of their implications for Nomad when we collaborate with them.

THINKING THE FUTURE, SAYING GOOD-BYE
19 November 2011
Team 1 and Team 2
↓
Team 1 and **Team 2** met for a last time during the morning session. Each participant made some suggestions about reagrding future developments of Nomad or posed some questions before they left to their home countries:

↪ What are the personal interests of the people who are developing the programme? We should remind ourselves to consider our individual desires! We should re-investigate our individual curiosities

↪ How do we grow? We don't have sufficient financial means, but we have a wealth of artistic and cultural capital and we should use the knowledge and the artists we do have.

↪ To have concrete projects, we need to think about what their structures are and how these structures might walk together. How do artistic vision, overall concept and administrative structure walk freely together?

↪ We should invite people from fields that are missing (the fields we are not interested in), so that we can see what is missing. That would help shift the paradigm: inviting people who have no idea about certain topics, who are not experts, and let them deal with its problematic in a non-specialist way so we can learn from their problem solving.

↪ Would Nomad be feasible within anarchic structures of loose networks, without a general manager? What is a position, what is a function? Power and authority should be allocated through functions not by positions. Power should circulate, not stagnate.

↪ When networks, institutions, and programmes become larger, one has to detach from one's personal input and attachment in order to allow for reflection and critique.

↪ How do we distribute knowledge? How do we affect people with our artistic work?

↪ In the context of education, would it be possible to define the teacher as a living archive?

THINK TANK: ARCHIVING / PERFORMING ARTS
20 November 2011
Team 2
↓

After **Team 1** left, **Team 2** resumed working in the afternoon, discussing topics related to education and the dissemination of knowledge.
↪ We focused on **topics such as 'An Archive of the Future'; 'Communication Archive'; 'A Collection of Left outs'; 'History or Future'; 'How to Archive';**
↪ Together, we developed a few ideas that would allow us to approach archiving from a number of different angles.
↪ The Sunday meeting focused on the topic of Archiving / Performing Arts
↪ The discussions centred on the ways of writing history and the practices of preservation related to topics such as:
↓
permeability ➜ flexibility ➜ mobility ➜ transformability ➜ collective and individual authorship ➜ interpretation ➜ rearrangement ➜ appropriation ➜ aliveness ➜ transmission

NOTES FROM THINK TANK: ARCHIVING / PERFORMING ARTS
20 November
Team 2
↓

To archive means to have the power and necessary structures and methods to direct how things of the past will be understood in the future. An archive should be like an elevator, always coming back to its starting point, but in different forms.
↪ An archivist should not act as collectors but as a processors. They shouldn't direct themselves along definitions and categories of art history.
↪ An initial gesture is needed. Usually, it comes from institutions and organisations with an interest in keeping up history, deciding that a particular aspect is interesting and worth including in the archive.
↪ The archive should operate toward the future. One of its functions should be to predict future developments, not only organise and collect the past. There should be fake/invented/predicted future biographies of artists living now, regardless of the current state of their careers.
↪ We should rethink the way we categorise things, how to shift certain parameters of various categories in order to mislay knowledge.
↪ The archive must serve as a transformative space that will allow us to re-imagine its arrangement so as to reorder what we already know and how we know about it. The archive should become a resource for the rearrangement of knowledge.
↪ Oral culture is included. People should be invited, families, individuals, their knowledge and memories made accessible through real time interviews, newspapers, essays, audio and visual material.
↪ It was agreed upon that an archive should include the history of off-theatre and other spaces and topologies that are traditionally marginalised and often excluded from history.
↪ For example, performances that were never realised, left outs from documentations of rehearsals, the stuff that gets edited out and is never actually presented in public (the making of). This would allow for an understanding of how an artist produces and publishes.
↓
The archive should be kept alive, its flexible categories allowing knowledge and facts to move around. How would people in different countries understand the archive?

↪ The archive must serve as transformative space that will allow us to re-imagine its arrangement so as to reorder what we already know and how we know about it. The archive should become a resource for the rearrangement of knowledge.

↪ The archive should be accessible enough so as to allow for many users to engage with it and interpret and rearrange knowledge according to their own parameters and understanding.

↪ The archive should keep moving and should circulate regionally and internationally, so that its users' various interpretations can leave a mark on it. The archive should contain a way for people to comment on it, so that their thoughts and (different kinds of) knowledge can be made known and visible. Users should be allowed to categorise and order the contents of the archive.

↪ If we thought of the individual as an archive, what would the process of transmitting 'history' look like? How can someone else browse the memory of an individual? Making use of the archive as a visitor by being present in the archive, visitors would become part of the exhibited archive. The individual could then transform him/herself into an object, a performative object.

↓

Archiving / Performing Arts?

The archive would present miscellaneous objects, costumes, music, visuals, sets, etc., the function and meaning of which would be unknown to the users of the archive and raise questions regarding their purpose, stimulating, one hopes, an in-depth research of their use and origin by future generations. The archive should also include instructions for re-enacting certain artistic practices, methods, and performances.

↪ Real people should be included, their relatives, national libraries, newspapers, audio and visual material, essays, and orally transmitted knowledge. It should be a living archive, a space where people and objects are treated equally

↪ Prediction: There will be fake/invented/predicted future biographies of artists living now, their future already exhibited regardless of how their career is proceeding in present times

REFLECTING. DIGESTING.
21–22 November
Facilitating/Concept Development and Archiving Group
↓

Rok Vervar, Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, Martin Sonderkamp and Marijana Cvetković used the two final days to go through the entire process, reflect, collect and plan the next step — publishing material that would reflect on the process we had at TTT.

↪ We split the roles and decided that Martin would propose a first draft and the rest of us would join him later on, by writing and/or proposing topics/game

■

DISCOurse
PRACTICE

by
Aleksandra
Janeva Imfeld

● At many events in the performing arts field and related education, I have found myself in situations where people organised meetings or talks because they wanted to push some ideas further, but so often the setup around those meetings was very closed. A lot of the times, experts are also invited and a lot depends on their attitude to the position they hold at their institution or to the invitation they got to present a lecture or participate in a public discussion. I go to these meetings because I am curious to find out something new and learn wherever I go, but I have come to realise that if the setup is not well thought-through in advance, serious problems may arise regarding the flow of information and involvement of the participants.

↪ Working on the new version of the NOMAD educational programme (www.nomaddanceacademy. org), we wanted to include the opinions and self-teaching potentials of our participants as well, in order to produce a more appropriate and relevant programme, focused not so much on imparting but on sharing and exchanging knowledge.

↪ Even though the programme we built was valuable on many levels, we failed to find a formula that would give the participants more room to help shape the programme with their own input and knowledge.

↪ Therefore, we started researching for a way to challenge the established positions and learn at the same time.

↓

TtT

To prepare for the meeting, many of us read Rancierè's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, where Rancière says that anyone can learn alone. We encouraged each other to question leadership and expertise in a process of learning. We also played with the idea that 'knowledge is not necessary to teaching nor [is] explication necessary to learning'.

↪ In *Teaching the Teachers* (*TtT*) we invited a group of diverse participants, but united in sharing the same interest: body movement.

↪ It was a group of people still taking as well as teaching dance classes, giving workshops, creating their own works in the field of dance, and observing, thinking, and writing about it. We put theorists in a dance class and mixed students with teachers.

↪ A full report can be found in the text "Teaching the Teachers Skopje 2011"

↓

THE CREATION OF THE SYSTEM AND ITS PRINCIPLES

A responsive system was created so that everyone's responsibility and engagement could be amplified and truly shared.

↪ On the first level, we focused on sharing whatever we were working on in terms of teaching and then further analysing and developing our ideas, using our experiences.

↪ All kinds of classifications in terms of labelling and naming different techniques and methodologies in the field of dance were profoundly examined.

↪ In the afternoons, we would get out of the dance studio and sit down and talk, but nonetheless still experimenting with different formats so as not to lose touch with the physicality of the thinking body.

↪ Since I belong to a generation that had to attend a lot of *predavanja* – lectures, where someone literary hands you something over[1] – I guess for me it made sense to disagree with that method and instead question any statement that purported to have the whole truth, which we were supposed to use as the sole basis of our practice.

↪ In the field of dance there are so many different techniques based on the individual paths and lines of research of people who try out different things and then discover ways of doing things that are better suited to their bodies. There is nothing wrong with that, but establishing a kind of alphabet based on the specific needs of a specific body can still do more harm than good in some dance institutions (including the smallest among them – dance classes), since no two bodies are the same and if there is no space to bend the rules and make them conform to your own body, that class can be very counterproductive for you.

↪ It takes time to discover for yourself which technique suits your body most,so till than it is good to be exposed to diverse practices.

↪ I just find it a strange concept, in this day and age, to place anyone who is there to learn onto a set path that does not respect the fact that no two people are quite the same.

↪ I was able to enter *TtT* and got a chance to propose an idea in practice that I had been trying out for a couple of years with different groups, which I call 'dots'. Later on, in a discussion, we called it a bodily practice software. It revolves around the simple idea of having a dot as the initiator of movement and not a body part or surface. In terms of improvisation, it rests on the knowledge I

[1]   In Croatian, *predavanja* means 'lectures'. The word comes from the verb *predavati*, which also means to hand something over to someone repeatedly – Translator's note.

have gained by taking classes and working with others, but then it is applied just to a single dot on the surface or underneath the surface of the body.

↪ (A simple example would be to think of a dot somewhere on your shoulder and treat it as a whole, independent body with a will of its own. That dot then decides about the directions, speed, quality, dynamic, etc. of its movement around the space.

↪ Sometimes you focus on only one dot, but the further you go, the more you challenge yourself by directing an increasing number of dots in different parts of your body at once.)

↪ When this idea of mine was almost fully understood, I gave it away to be further interpreted, developed, and passed on by someone else.

↪ The responses I got came not only in the form of bodily reactions and theoretical feedback from the participants, in which we questioned the status and other levels of this proposition, but in another, valuable form as well: others made propositions of their own and combined them with mine. The way we misunderstood and further developed someone else's practices was important in terms of sharing something, about which we were not entirely certain, with others. That virus of new knowledge opened up space for further discussion, in which everyone could participate on the same level. Because that was a new experiment, none of us could claim to be the expert and that put all of us on the same level in the discussion.

↪ This space, enabling us to combine different approaches, thus became more complex and a creative field was generated.

↪ Immediately, a hierarchical shift occurred. It blurred the gap between those who were sharing and those who were receiving. The material had wrested the authority from the people.

↪ Viewpoints were multiplied because people's positions got mixed up and could be switched around at any moment. The moment anyone got close to becoming an expert, someone else would take their position from them – someone else, who was not an expert in this topic, would take over. Sharing with others, they were also discovering things by themselves.

↪ By shifting our interpersonal relations, we generated a field in which not knowing was the only true leader of the process.

↓

PRACTICE AS THE BASIS FOR CREATING A DISCOURSE

This TTT experience was the closest I ever got to truly experience a balance between the practice and discourse. Discussion was impossible without a moving body as the initiator.

↪ The constant moving between practice and discussion by means of physically active bodies proved to be a rewarding experience for all parties involved and gave us new questions and curiosities.

↪ The process provided each one of us with a different understanding and we were satisfied that there was no need to agree on a single interpretation.

↪ This way of working spawned a collective mind but also left many gaps in it, which we could then fill with our own individual interpretations.

↪ Instead of trying to make a common statement, we strove to multiply our interpretations and challenge any established hierarchy in a learning process.

↪ We also worked on destabilising one's position by making them move, if they were more comfortable discussing and writing, and vice versa.

↪ If this way of working were applied not only to a week of experimentation, but implemented as the basic principle of a more protracted educational programme or another type of learning situation, it would be of great value to all those involved. It would motivate them by opening up space for constructive critique, which could help them and their field to expand, by means of provoking diverse reactions, for which there would be enough space to be heard and included in the process further on.

■

LOVE
LETTERS

by
Dragana Alfirević
& Dejan Srhoj

Gothenburg, 15th October 2012

Dear Dejan,

I want to tell you something about your text. I am angry that you never sent anything to us as editors officially, even after many deadlines that passed by you.

It is not a trivial matter. The world is in crisis. The education systems as we know them, formal or informal are wrinkled, exhausted, and absolutely out of date. Practice is way behind itself, and exactly that part of the practice, which should be in the front, whose tail we should be catching, I mean the practice of education. You cannot be so unconcerned about such an important topic! Who will do it if not you?!

So, the question remains: what kind of a class/training/warm up/preparation do we need today in order to train/warm up/educate/prepare ourselves for the rehearsal or for the day, or for our life as performing artists? And why do we do so many Release, quasi BMC, almost Flying Low classes, if we in our rehearsals and pieces afterwards do something else, totally unrelated to any of these techniques and movement systems? Is it schizophrenia, forgetfulness, indulging in known patterns or something else, and what?

Does it have to do mostly with the economy of the teaching and with the pyramidal star system we all seem to contribute to in different ways?

Jan said today after our class: The education system is the reflection of the societies we have today. I say it would have been much more harmless if it would be only the reflection; it is the mechanism behind and the reason why we have these kinds of societies, so much alike, so boring and passive. So extremely individualized but yet oppressive towards the individual.

Look at the children, they want to learn, something in them knows that they need to learn, learning is a form of survival and a kind of urgency for them. But, even if urgent, learning is not less pleasant and less enjoyable. This is a kind of education we should have, in order to really undeniably learn and in order to have some pleasure and sense in our lives.

So, what do we need in order to achieve this? We need to find ways to awaken teachers in every one of us. And **Teaching The Teachers** in the way it was done in NDA context and your **Training without a Teacher** are for us just the beginning of this. It will maybe take a long time, and long practice to come to the understanding that yes this is what is needed, but can the damage be undone?

So, let's speak about the teaching without a teacher. It is not really without a teacher. It is only without this person in the centre of attention and without his guru aura, which tells us that we are born because of his technique. We do not need a teacher that teaches virtuosity. Because virtuosity nowadays is a precondition for oppression. We need a teacher that teaches himself and we need students that can learn from themselves. In the same space. Because only then a change can happen. To create an environment for each other. We need to come with our roles in the studio, in order to understand these roles and see what to do with them. But nothing more than that.

Because the teacher is not a god (anymore), but a catalyst of a process of a self-education. So much has been said about self-education lately, but not enough about the role of the teacher in this process. Is he a moderator? Is he a bag of references? Is he the most stretched guy in the room? Is he the alpha male in most of the cases? Does he even think about all this? Why is it so important to have a personal contact with a teacher, when all that he is doing is making of you another smaller version of himself?

The teacher of which you speak, I think, is the kind of a teacher that does not deliver perfected knowledge to be poured into some other body, she is in fact preparing the conditions for something to happen. This also carries the risk that nothing might happen, and this risk is inherent to the situation; if she is not able to deal with the risk of not succeeding, she should better open a restaurant. Within the conditions we are speaking about, no one needs to brush knowledge over the students' bodies, hoping that everyone will get something, a lot or a little bit – passing on the frustration and the same genetic material he got from his teachers. No, we deal with particularities and we set a new micro politics of teaching. How do these new micro politics get inscribed into the bigger picture of economy, of inter-personal relations and wider cultural policies and how do we then get organized in order not make it a mass production factory? You remember that there was even a question of should one charge for such a class or not? What do you pay exactly if you pay for such a class?

Of course there was a teacher in your **Training without a teacher,** the one that you did in Dusseldorf. You invited the grown up artists, and maybe this is a prerequisite for this kind of set up, to have people with some experience that they could employ, whether that experience is one of a dancer/performer or not. There is a legend, who knows if it's true, but its loveable, that Anna Halprin said once in one interview from the 1960ies, when she was asked about her classes "We don't call them classes, we call them experiences". The spaces that are being unfolded during such trainings are such a fragile and such delicate spaces, yet strongest spaces of every-body present there, that it is impossible not to learn. And again, not learn the same movement all together, but really learn something of vital importance for your life, possibly also related to how you move but mainly related to so much more. And maybe we agree that experience can only happen in a free zone, when one is present in his totality.

Within the context of **Nomad Dance Academy sessions of Teaching The Teachers**, I have a feeling that we, or rather all of you, the shifting teachers, dealt with exactly these particularities, because the conditions set were so uncertain, unrepeatable and so vulnerable, that everyone could have entered with their experience, which was not even necessarily an experience of a trained dancer. What became important was the physical presence and readiness to engage in individual processes that make you leave the training a little or a lot different than you entered in, but it did not have to do with passing on the information package.

You as a teacher know that well, because you can never put limits to someone else, everyone can only set their own limits and go beyond them on their own. You can just be there.

How do the dancers then really prepare? There are many dance classes today that we know of, which say that they are for every-body, that every-body is different, that we need to treat every-body differently. If it is not only a marketing strategy that makes you feel special and pay for this feeling, then it is ok with me. And what about the way every-body treats it-self?

Some more things should be said about the motivation. With what aim do I wake up and move my aching ass to the class at 8 or 9 in the morning, at any kind of weather? To learn the tricks and move like everybody else in the world does?

Dance class should have never become going to work as if going to a factory. Dance class should have never become a place where I want to be the same as you. Dance class should be(come) a place of pure unlearning and self-introduction.

We are not talking about abolishing a teacher completely. Because it is important that someone sets the conditions for the self-learning to happen. We want to have a teacher who will make sure that there is space for you to be present as a whole person at the class, not a well-sweated and tone-muscled body only. We want to understand why we are doing what we are doing.

If dancers would be soldiers, what kind of army would they make? We don't want to create a monolithic kind of army all-as-one and one-for-all. We want to contribute to creation of a killing machine, where everyone could stand alone against everyone else, where each soldier could be his or her own army.

I know that you have a hard time finding reasons to move in the class or on the stage. Really, what makes us move so much? Why so many dance pieces are reduced to an arena of constantly moving bodies? Is this the kind of work that we want to do, is this what we want to associate ourselves with?

Lot has been said and written about the Practice lately, suddenly everyone is doing Practice. What differentiates Training without a teacher from Practice? In which ways the hierarchies and power are being distributed in both cases? And again, what about economies?

As a teacher (and you know it) one has to seriously undermine his own position in order to be able to ask all these questions. And to shake the ground under his own feet. Only for a series of moments, because this shift needs to be made and to bring us to a different place, where it is ok not to know, where there is no such a strong Chinese Wall between your daily practice and your daily life, and where learning is a never-ending story and not only a grant program of European Union.

Lots of love from windy Sweden,
Your wife

Ljubljana, 30th October 2012

Dear Dragana,

I was writing the text you asked me for. And in the middle of the process you stepped in, demanding it tomorrow. I got blocked and wrote something none of us was satisfied with. Therefore I ask you, next time you see me writing in the middle of the night, relax, make a cup of tea, brush my hair and be sure, great text is on its way.

But to be honest, maybe it was not just your fault. I am simply not able to write about Training without a teacher at the moment. I am doing it. And its fresh and young and I have no distance to it. It needs to be happening for some time, and only then will I perhaps be able to articulate it.

On the other hand, I am no teacher in this training. I am simply creating conditions in which knowledge might occur. If it occurs it will find its way to public. I am sure about it.

Best and lots of love from the middle of the night,

Your husband

**17
POINTS FOR
THE FUTURE
OF DANCE**

**by
Mårten
Spångberg**

1)   An expanded choreography owns the future. Dance as we know it is soon, if not already as dead as opera or dixieland jazz. The future belongs to choreography but only if it acknowledges its potentiality as an expanded capacity. Choreography is not the art of making dances (a directional set of tools), it is a generic set of capacities to be applied to any kind of production, analysis or organization.

2)   Choreography is not the art of making dances, it's a complex means of approaching the world. No, the universe.

3)   If we live in a society of performance it's structural foundation is choreography.

4)   In a society based on circulation of abstract values instead of material goods, movement and relations are King, not oil and steel.

5)   In a society organized around immaterial labor, movement is the protagonist. This might not be a good thing, but since there is no choice we better make sure not to leave the definition of those movements to politicians or bureaucrats.

6)   In a society where the subject is the individuals' most precious property, dance should appreciate its capacity for the impersonal.

7)   Dance is always activating forms of performativity, but dance is not the same as performance.

8)   There is an important difference between political on the level of content and on the level of production. There is an important difference between political on the level of representation and on the level of choice. There is an important difference between political on the level of representation and on the term of sensation, experience or sensuality.

9)   Discourse is neither good or bad, it is the position and timing of it that can open or close contexts. Discourse is not equal to theory or Western reason, discourse is any kind of consistency of information flow or communication. It is not discourse as such that needs to be fought but it's guardians.

10)   For dance to have a future it needs to engage in a process of deskilling, i.e. to cancel the proprietary understanding of technique in favor of individual or context specific constructions of abilities, over the generic sense of dance as a *sui generis* technology.

11)   The 20th century had star architects building monuments over a Fordism that was already dead, the future will have star choreographers organizing revolutions, one after the other. The coming insurrection will not be semiotic but will grow and gain strength through proximities between bodies, between spirits, between dances.

12) The problem is not the split between mind and body, nor between body and mind, not even between minds, the real problem is the split between bodies and bodies, and we don't just mean human bodies - we mean any bodies: stones, lions, skin lotion, a little wind, an encyclopedia and so on. The dance of the future must leave the human body behind and embrace all bodies independently and pursue and object oriented contact choreography. Fuck BMC because of its belief in anthropocentricity.

13) Once we had bodies without organs, in the future we will dance together through a conviviality without communality.

14) The rebirth of the new as well as the death of the new is nothing new, yet if we want the future to move we must embrace both newing and the new. This embrace starts as a struggle, the struggle against belonging. The new dance has a job, to betray it's ancestors.

15) Politics is organized through the qualitative difference of perspectives. The maintenance of politics depends on the degree of transparence, hence the fear of corruption. The production of the political on the other hand denies perspective and insists on the horizon, it must be corruptive exactly in order to undermine the maintenance of politics and hence it fucks transparence. A dance that has ambitions reaching further than "nice", must be 360 degrees, ungrounding, oblique and motherfuckin true to the universe.

16) An idea, at least in dance and art, is not hard enough as long as having it doesn't scare you to death. An idea that is not completely psychotic is not worth while pursuing.

17) Remember, policy or cultural politics is not Politics, and is certainly not art. Remember critique is not necessarily a proposition. Remember to be an erotic being that engages in the world through sex rather than economy.

■

**FUTURE
NOSTALGIA
BELLUARD
BOLLWERK
2013**

**THE JANELINE
SLOPES AND THE
BROTHERHOOD AND
UNITY ORKESTAR
PRESENT THEIR
APRÈS-GARDE TOUR
2013**

**A proposal of
Jana Jevtović and
Célina Larrèrović**

● Coming back to 2013 directly from 2063, The Janeline Slopes and the Brotherhood and Unity Orkestar, the very famous band from the European metropolis of Ajvargrad, have travelled back in time. The result is their prevention campaign for a future nostalgia through the performing of their traditional folk repertory once again ! So you can get used to being nostalgic of that which hasn't yet passed away ! Come and discover the future folk culture !

↪ The Janeline Slopes and the Brotherhood and Unity Orkestar will bring you some of their biggest hit songs, including their 2012 chart-topper, *Life of Performers*, as well as some other well-known songs, *Like a Hipster*, *Financial Crisis on my Mind*. And if you missed it 50 years ago, you will be able once again to experience the memorable traditional slam poetry, spoken word, conceptual folk dances of Ajvargrad and other beloved stories.

↪ On our merchandise table, you'll find some products for sale : authentic movement T shirts with retro iconography, IMF mugs, Arabic revolution memorial stickers, CDs of the recorded sounds of the Janeline Slopes and the Brotherhood and Unity Orchestra, and DVDs about Balkan time travel.

↪ This transdisciplinary event will help you discover the way of life through the traditional artistry of the 2010's and will involve smoking / steaming / fulminating / speaking / transdisciplinary / interdisciplinary participants : numerous folk dancers and singers, historians, artisans, astrologers, clairvoyants of the past, story-tellers, as well as, of course, the Orkestar.

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INTENTIONS

If we think nostalgia as an activity, as a generative creation methodology, then nostalgia can be felt as a force as active as the most active longing.

↪ We are nostalgic about working with a group of people and defending a certain notion of community in artistic work. Most of those invited live, work or come from (or all of those things) countries which were once part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. We are aware that a relationship between ex-Yugoslavian countries and nostalgia is a fertile terrain for so much phantasmatic representation, mostly that which is projected onto or turned into cliche through some level of exaggeration or misunderstanding. This is why we want to question collective memory and imagination by experiencing how nostalgia can be a way to project wishes for the future onto the past.

↳ Indeed, it is possible to take into one's hands the perception of identity projected by an onlooker and make use of it in order to shift this intended meaning. The invented band which we call The Janeline Slopes and the Brotherhood and Unity Orkestar is the symbolic community we are proposing, with all of its potential for a particular mythology, to embark on such a trajectory.

↳ We see that there is a difference between a Future Nostalgia which could mean a longing for the future itself, and a Future Nostalgia which could mean the nostalgia one might anticipate oneself experiencing in the future. We will mix the two possible meanings of this premise thanks to the possibilities of performative time travelling : looking forward looking back looking sideways looking up looking down.

↳ If nostalgia is a disease : how to cure it ? Better to prevent than to cure ! So we have decided to choose the methodology of anticipation : our project articulates itself as A Prevention Campaign for Future Nostalgia, the motto of which is "doing it now, to ensure it will not occur later".

↳ The Janeline Slopes and the Brotherhood and Unity Orkestar is an imagined folkloric group of the future (living in A.D. 2063) coming back to the past (A.D. 2013) to perform their 'once-famous' repertory. Practically, this means in the creation of this performance we will be busy producing a folklore / creating the mythology for a Future Nostalgia using the formal shapes of expression of nostalgia (songs, pieces of writing, etc.) and filling them with a contemporary content by making reference to elements most recognizable in the culture of 2013 (an ode to Facebook, a ballad to reality TV, an homage to soya products, the tales of H&M, etc.) Through these mediums we can make an attempt to explore the relation between propaganda and nostalgia.

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WHO ARE WE ?

The Janeline Slopes aka Jevtović & Larrèrović, choreographic obstetricians.

2010 Jana Jevtović and Célina Larrèrović met somewhere in and around the Balkans, between a pancake, a rakija and a Linzertorte, as they were visiting some or other dance / peforming arts festivals and programs - Antistatic, Sofia; Pleskavica, Ljubljana; Nomad Dance Academy 2009 and 2010; CoFestival 2012, Ljubljana; DanceWeb 2011, ImpulsTanz, Vienna.

↳ Since first laying eyes on each other and before realizing whatsoever what they were actually getting themselves into, Jevtović & Larrèrović's talking and practice exchanges have become on-going conversations which drift along questions of the politics of choreography, performative

discourse, curry technique, alternative representation, ready-made concepts, performance practice, courses of the planets, star system organization, production problematics, diverse types of glands, collective experiences and the disasters of life in general.

↳ While still vaguely looking for the meaning of life, they nevertheless decided to concentrate on another ambitious quest : searching for The Choreographic Immaculate Conception.

↳ Jana Jevtović is a believer in doing things both very slowly and very quickly. She normally alternates skittishly between the two, and this is becoming quite useful. She likes folding laundry and has spent 5 years perfecting curry recipes. Occasionally collaborates with others and prefers to do it outside of the studio. Currently learning how to make it to the post office on time and how to lessen the distance between the steps forward and steps back. Sagittarius, Libra rising, with Moon in Capricorn.

↳ Célina Larrèrović is an agnostic who is doing things both very quickly and unproductively, which is in a way equal to doing them slowly and methodically. She likes baking old fashioned cakes while listening to noise music, and has spent 3 years trying to look believable in keikogi. Occasionally collaborates with others and prefers to do it outside of the kitchen. Currently learning how to tidy her room, how not to confuse continuity with haste, and how to increase the distance between emotional and financial crisis. Aquarius, Sagittarius ascendant with Moon in Gemini.

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LINKS

Jevtović & Larrèrović

http://choregraphiebaby.blogspot.fr

Jana Jevtović

http://vimeo.com/janajevtovic

http://vimeo.com/janajevtovic

Célina Larrèrović

**http://nomadnutschaos.blogspot.fr/**

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The Brotherhood and Unity Orkestar

are Dragana Alfirević, Goran Bogdanovski, Marijana Cvetković, Aleksandar Georgiev, Aleksandra Janeva, Gregor Kamnikar, Igor Koruga, Esta Matković, Martina Nevistić, Willy Prager, Jovana Rakić-Kiselčić, Ana Schnabl, Dejan Shroj, Martin Sonderkamp, Biljana Tanurovska-Kljulavkovski, Rok Vevar.

↪ The group of 16 people we have invited to join us to take part in this project is composed of colleagues we have worked with on several occasions, all connected to Nomad Dance Academy, in one way or another. NDA is a network/programme/process based in the Balkans which aims at developing education, research and creation in the field of contemporary dance and performance. Since we have each taken part in its educational program (2009 and 2010, respectively) we have both remained active parts of this boiling non-hierarchical organization which is a very stimulating matrix for projecting a radical potential future for the contemporary performing arts.

↪ The team for Belluard Bollwerk will be composed of people who work at some different levels of artistic production : choreographers, performers, directors, theoreticians, producers, critics…. The perception which interests us the most in relation to this, is the notion of all these many layers making up one communitas and one transitory collective which is for a precise moment sharing a common parallel hyperreality.

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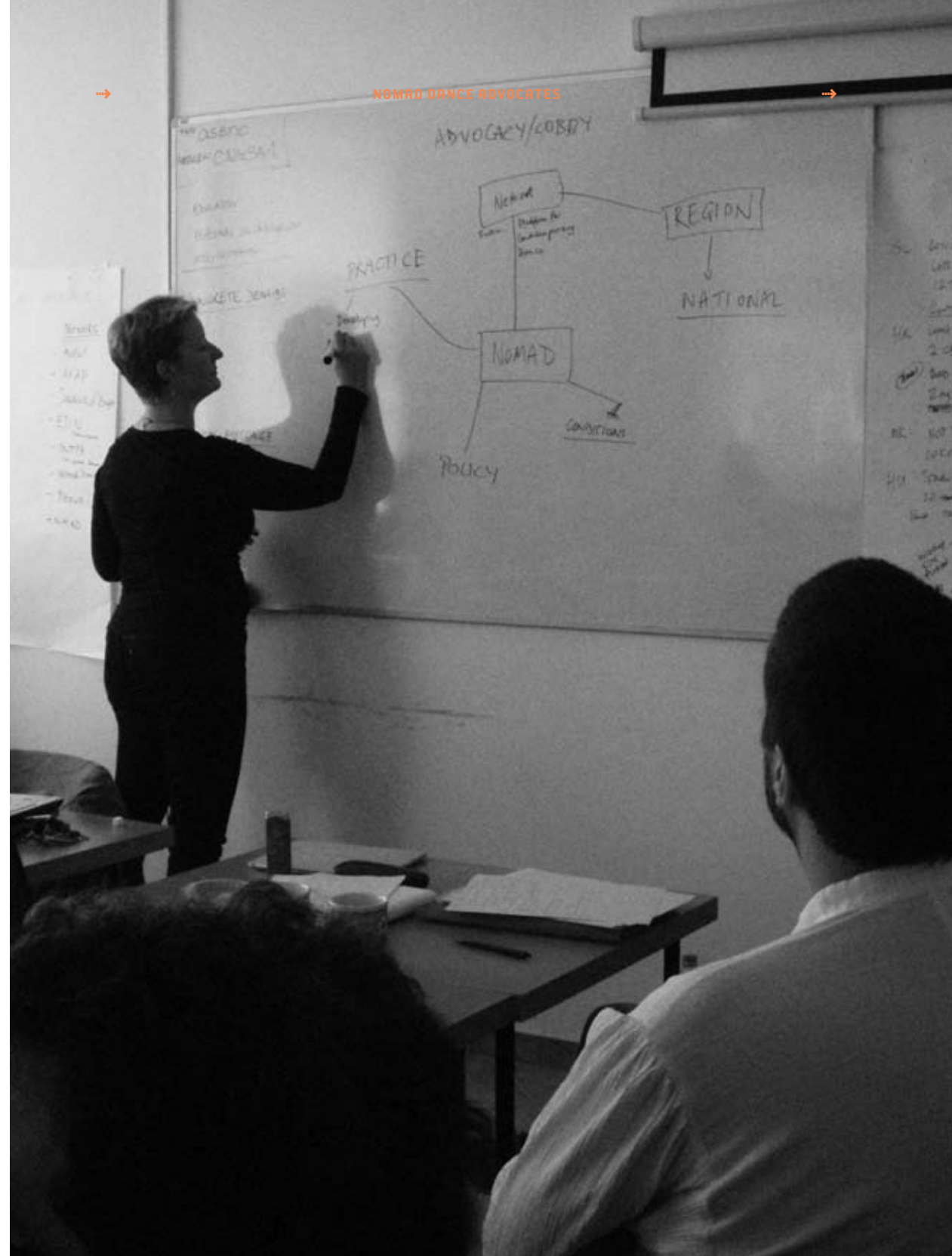
ADVOCACY IN CULTURE: A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE

by
Ilona Kish

● The purpose of this short article is to offer some experiences and perspectives on advocacy in the arts in Europe. What makes it work and when it doesn't – why is it so difficult and at the same time so easy to do? I will briefly explore the barriers, real and perceived alike, that can impede art organisations when we discuss the need for advocacy, and how to do it best.

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↓ The first observation to make is that art organisations often seem to feel that advocacy in the arts is not necessary, or, rather, if it is necessary, that they would prefer not to do it themselves! Sometimes, this comes from a concern that getting involved in advocacy might detract from their artistic work, or that artists should not allow themselves to become over-politicised or instrumentalised for political gains. If you are working for an environmental NGO, a public-health NGO, or a human rights organisation, for example, your primary task is often to deliver front-line services to an identified target group, in that case your relationship with policy and government-led decisions is much more apparent. A great deal of the work *is* policy itself. In the art field, a creative project may be conceptualised, realised, and enjoyed entirely outside of the scope of public policy. As opposed to many other areas of what we call 'public interest advocacy', the primary activity or function of the arts is to produce art. Also, many art workers find public policy rather boring and argue — quite rightly — that they did not go into art in order to work on policy!

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↓ This brings us to the second challenge in defining or making sense of advocacy in the arts: the most visible and often most strongly felt link between government policy and the arts in Europe is in the area of direct funding and subsidies. Depending on the country or region where you live, this may range from funding regularly allocated to large state institutions to opportunities for project-related funding, as is also the case with EU funding. Advocacy in the arts is thus often reduced to, or masked by, the notion of 'asking for money'. This often translates into a narrowly-defined competition between art workers over an increasingly diminishing slice of public money. Understanding or concretising the possibility that advocating for the arts and being visible is a fundamental act of democratic participation takes a greater investment in time and energy on the part of art workers. Taking the engagement beyond the question of funding is fundamentally important. Making policymakers aware of the modalities and needs of the sector and then holding them accountable for their decisions is crucial. Artists and cultural workers need to partake in that process.

↓ This is not to say that the perspective of direct funding for the arts in Europe is unimportant. Following a long period of relatively open and strong funding policies in the arts in most Western democracies after the end of the Second World War, when investing in the arts was seen as an essential element in rebuilding post-war Europe, over the past decade and particularly since the financial crisis began in 2007–8, we have seen a clear and definite trend toward reducing state support for the arts. Indeed, the financial crisis has served more as a pretext for cutting spending in the arts, than a legitimate reason. This would especially apply to countries such as the UK and the Netherlands, where conservative governments have led a deft campaign against the arts, labelling them as elitist and exclusive, in order to justify their far-reaching spending cuts in the arts. The reduction of state support for the arts is, of course, entirely in line with free-market conservative policies, which stress the choice of the individual as much as possible and seek to minimise state intervention and spending to the greatest possible degree. The increasingly popular model is that of the United States, where an almost entirely market-driven policy in the arts remains virtually unchallenged.

↓ Such a generalised kneejerk response to the financial crisis, whilst nothing new, smacks of political short-sightedness and pandering to populist sentiments in the policies of the EU member states. It was made possible by years of eroding public support for, and engagement in, the arts. The advent of the creative industries paradigm and the emergence of new artistic media have generated the misconception that access to culture can only be democratised through the logic of the free market. In political discussions (more often in treasury departments than in ministries of culture) the value of public investment in art has been increasingly determined by its ability to sustain itself on purely commercial terms. In other words, if there is a sufficient paying audience, it has a right to survive (and, by implication, to exist at all). From this point of view, budget cuts are entirely justified as part of an overall cost-saving strategy and thus an easy win for governments under pressure.

↓ However, a panicked response to the proposed cuts in government funding, especially from those organisations expected to suffer the most from the cuts, is almost guaranteed to fail. Failing to engage with the broader questions of public policy in the arts and with long-term policy strategies that are led by arts organisations will inevitably marginalise art organisations when it comes to decision-making in both financial and policy terms.

↓The long-term goal of any strategy of advocacy in the arts on the European level should be extremely simple: to advocate a policy in the arts and culture at all levels of government that will value the role of the arts and seek to provide the appropriate means for the flourishing of a diverse range of art practices as a necessary component of a rich and diverse society.
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↓ Advocacy is about taking an interest and making a long-term investment in your own broader work environment. Whilst building a relationship with a policymaker at whatever level may not hurt a specific funding interest, what I believe it does is to expose and sensitise policymakers to the reality of artistic practices. It gives them a direct experience of the power of the arts that can be translated, when needed, into enlightened policymaking.
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↓ It was years before I realised that effectively, every time I went to see a politician (in my case a Member of the European Parliament), my implicit approach was actually rather arrogant. It went something along the lines of 'I'm here to explain to you how great and important the arts are, and you don't understand that, particularly in the case of the contemporary arts, because if you did, you would be supporting them, therefore you must be a philistine!'. I realised that many advocates of the arts shared the same approach, and even more so when confronted with political systems that are inaccessible or still in the process of transformation from non-democratic structures. Building up relationships of trust and respect with those whom we wish to influence should remain our goal and doing that through the power of the arts is fundamental.
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↓ Whilst in the short run we might extract some benefit from defending a specific project or extolling the virtues and importance of a particular form of art, in the long run this kind of approach nearly always ends up undermining the stability of the sector. Whilst all art may not be equal in quality or reach, it is the diversity and variety of the production of art that makes for a rich and sustainable cultural ecology. What is at stake in the current political climate is not the funding of theatre over music, or preserving monuments at the expense of funding contemporary dance; rather, it is the respect and value of the arts themselves and our commitment to the arts and humanities in general that is targeted by most European policies today. It is important that the producers and practitioners of art position themselves as part of a vibrant whole, that is, as part of a vibrant society.

↓Finally, we often see barriers to advocacy in the arts simply in terms of resources. Most art organisations are small, fragile, and struggling to deliver on their core work, so committing additional resources to advocacy seems hard to justify. Yet most art organisations produce something that needs an audience. Having local decision-makers as valued members of your audience is the first step. Taking a small amount of time out of your schedule to have a conversation with a policymaker and *show* them what we do is another easy step. This should be core to our work. Connecting to other relevant actors, groups, and networks to pool resources and collectively advocate when needed should be our next step, and for those organisations that have the resources, interest, and capacity to engage directly with the advocacy process, the direct involvement of artists and practitioners is immensely valuable in keeping the advocacy process grounded in, and close to, the real needs of the arts themselves.

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↓ When it comes to advocating for the arts – just one person can make a difference. A single advocate for the arts, a well-respected individual in the community, can bring together likeminded people to convince a policymaker to make a change in the approach to the arts.

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↓ Lobbying or advocating is really easy. At the heart of advocacy is the simple act of telling a story and being persuasive. And policymakers need our expertise – by building up a relationship of trust and communication, policymakers should turn to the artists and the cultural community for solutions and ideas for our cultural development. Artists and cultural organisations are absolutely expert in communicating with their audiences – in understanding and exploring what is new, exciting, and stimulating to our individual and collective imaginations.

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↓ The paradox of advocacy in the arts is that it needs to be done at all, that we find ourselves faced with more and more political decision-makers for whom the value of the arts is not self-evident, or who see it in terms of its potential economic benefits.

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↓ The lessons from the past few years are simple: it is increasingly important that we find ways to work across different artistic disciplines and realise that what is essential to a long-term sustainable flourishing of the arts is a policy and funding environment that will value the whole of the cultural ecology, not one sector to the detriment of another. Divided we fail; together, we can change the world. ■

Ilona Kish is a cultural advisor and an expert in EU cultural policy. She was secretary-general of Culture Action Europe – The Political Platform for Arts and Culture, brought together to advocate for better cultural policies in the EU and at the national level.

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See further:
We Are More advocacy toolkit: http://www.wearemore.eu/advocacy-tools/

ADVOCACY: AN
INTRODUCTION

by
Kristina Kujundžić,
Marijana Cvetković
Marković &
Biljana Tanurovska
Kjulavkovski

● The production and distribution of information and knowledge through a network are the dominant principles of the global economy. Having a network is understood as the precondition for all action and collaboration. However, cultural networks should rethink their positions and roles, and reposition themselves as important actors. Nowadays, with enhanced mobility, time and place are becoming less important than participation – especially in activities that have the capacity to transform structures of collaboration, exchange, and advocacy.

↪ Therefore, the Nomad Dance Academy (NDA) is rethinking its role and trying to be responsive. As a network and platform, a regional, constantly growing and learning structure, the NDA aspires to continue connecting various actors around a shared discourse and articulating the needs of the Balkan region and neighbouring countries. Also, the NDA strives to develop new capacities, in order to become a more visible interlocutor and advocate for the needs of actors on the scene.

↪ Nevertheless, the NDA recognises that not only its own members, but more broadly, the Balkan region's contemporary art and culture community have only very limited means of exchanging knowledge and practices regarding structured action in advocacy as well as activities in raising public awareness, which are important tools for participating in public policy-making and other relevant democratic processes in society.

↪ Recognising that as a weakness, but also a need, the NDA network decided to invest its work in capacity-building and more focused and structured initiatives in advocacy. The network has experienced solidarity as an essential mechanism for the empowerment of all actors in the field; therefore, we wanted to share our unique experiences. We have expanded our network to include neighbouring countries as well, with their similar cultural environments.

↪ Due to the limited knowhow in the field of advocacy, we have invited experienced partners to share their knowledge with us, as well as a few other partners from beyond the region, in order to extend our advocacy to the rest of Europe: beside partners from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Serbia, and Slovenia, we have also invited partners from Albania, Austria, and Hungary.

↪ The NDA network functions in a set structure that may be described as a decentralised system of decision-making. In this non-hierarchical system, decision-making on the highest level is entrusted to its active members.

↪ To realise the aims set forth above, we have created *Nomad Dance Advocates*, a platform that involves a special 'task-group' (comprising the authors of this foreword) working on coordination,

content-development, and financial matters. Other members participate in all activities of the project and some are involved in groups working on different problems concerning the task at hand; we call them problem groups.

↪ The *Nomad Dance Advocates* is meant to create an opportunity for the network to raise its capacity for advocacy, which has become an indispensable tool for independent organisations. To do that, we had to engage all of our previous experience and capitalise on it, we had to do research and enlarge our network of partners and thus open up space for our initiatives in advocacy. The project also represents a shift in the strategic work of the Nomad Dance Academy platform, in favour of direct and permanent work in advocacy in the wider region of Southeast Europe. It will start in November 2012, with a gathering in Skopje, Macedonia, which will offer artists and politicians a chance to develop a long-term partnership.

↪ A part of the project is to research the existing policies and practices that shape, directly or indirectly, the cultural and social space in which the NDA and its partners operates and strives to intervene. Through its various programmes, the NDA and its partners has been creating certain forms of practices, the effects and results of which need to be more thoroughly researched, especially regarding issues such as education in contemporary dance/performing arts, regional cultural collaboration, and, consequently, post-war social integration in the Balkans, inter-sectoral collaboration (between arts and culture and other fields, such as education, science and research, business, etc.), "brain-drain" (the tendency of many young and middle-aged professionals in arts and culture to leave the region), the region's growing market in the performing arts, theoretical reflexion on and foundation of artistic and cultural practices in the region, etc.

↪ We devised the following methodology. For the first stage, the NDA network chose three thematic foci of research: regional cultural cooperation, education, and inter-sectoral collaboration. The purpose of research is to map: 1) the existing public policies and their measures and instruments that regulate and direct the three selected fields and 2) all public, civil, and private actors who have developed structures, practices, and specific experiences in relation to the three fields. The purpose of this mapping was to give us insight into the context of our work, as well as to archive presence as the starting position for developing new directions for/in policies that shape our conditions of work. The research was performed by five researchers.

↪ After that, we invited a colleague and collaborator to develop a text that should summarise their findings and provide an edited and personal overview. The text below is this overview, a glimpse into the findings, as well as the author's personal description of the process. An integral version of the research is found on our website: www.nomaddanceacademy.org.

↪ The research and other activities of Nomad Dance Advocates should produce a set of recommendations that will be developed and offered to various stakeholders in the field of arts and culture and be a part of a toolbox.

↪ All of our activities are meant to be the NDA's contribution toward overcoming the gap between policy-makers on the national and supranational levels and cultural workers. With the latest political developments in the region (conservative policies, financial crisis, and constant challenges) and the European Union's internal political and economic problems, the gap is only further widening. On the other hand, the need of the arts and culture sector to be better organised, more articulate with its statements and better connected is a trend that is becoming evident in many various forms. Europe is obviously at a historical crossroads and we want to take an active role in helping it to choose the path of solidarity, collaboration, human rights, prosperity, and peace. We strongly believe that arts and culture have an essential place in this difficult endeavour.

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**REPRESENTATION
OF THE OFF, THE
NOT THERE**

by
Jasmina Založnik

● In Eastern Europe the 'transition decade' refers to the 1990s, when it went through a series of radical transformations that affected almost every aspect of social life. This transition is usually presented as the shift from the socialist cultural model, with its official doctrines on the one hand and non-conformism on the other, to something known and implemented and articulated by the West as the new Western paradigm of contemporary art. This kind of idea of 'con-temporary art' was also popularised and implemented by numerous NGOs from the West. When reflecting on our own histories, we usually take these systematisations for granted, neglecting the formal and aesthetic similarities between Eastern 'non-art' and Western 'art' and even adhering to the Western periodisation, which holds that the history of some specific fields in the East begins only after the '90s.

↪ This article tries to connect different approaches and observations on cultural policy, in order to draw a line on the (always changing) cultural policies of the region, focusing on the contemporary dance scenes of Bulgaria, Hungary, Albania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia, using research by our invited contributors.[1] By perusing their cultural policies (especially their regulations, strategic documents, laws and other acts, as well as funding and the existing infrastructure…) we can grasp the situation in those countries and start looking for a nexus between them. What might be their common ground? Is it legitimate at all to simplify what is a rather complex situation, in order to provide the reader with a basic rundown of the differences and similarities between them, extracted from a rather 'inadequate' collection of documents? On the one hand, there is a diversity of choreographic styles and artistic aesthetics, numerous initiatives, existing in a certain place at a certain time, different models of production and programmes of education, connecting and presenting the main capital of the regional dance scene (which is in some countries stronger and more developed than in others, but still exists everywhere), while on the other hand, the scene is constantly marginalised in a position of *not really there*, suffering from almost impossible conditions of production, without real government support and with no possibility of a systematic growth.

↪ To be sure, there are differences, but I want to argue to the contrary. With all the changes that are currently shaping the political and economic situation, there is even less support for the scene than before. Although in some of the countries the scene has barely formulated its base, the

1   Aida Čengić, Violeta Kačakova, Kristina Kujundžić, Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, and Marijana Cvetković Marković; for more information, go to www.nomaddanceacademy.org.

enthusiasm coming from private initiatives has managed to force some changes in the system, with a positive effect on the scene. In less than two years, it has become more than obvious that even a gentle breeze could knock down the whole of the existing system, especially because it was 'never really there' and had never made its way into the mainstream …

↳ Therefore, it is even more important to speak and write about it, which means reflecting on the off-, the sidelined, the not there. Or even more importantly, writing, speaking, and reflecting on it, one must try to dig into what is officially non-existent. Therefore, I will allow myself a short detour into the 'history', not intended at first, because it underlines the situation in some important ways. As I already mentioned above, the central issue concerns the neuralgic relationship that exists between us and them, between the East and the West, between invisibility and nonexistence. In their research project *The Tiger's Leap into History,*[2] Ana Vujanović and Saša Asentić offer an important realisation. In their own words: 'It is commonly accepted that Eastern societies (communist/socialist) overslept the second half of the 20th century behind the Iron Curtain that divided democratic (capitalist) West and totalitarian (communist) East. So it only stands to reason that there was no contemporary dance in the East. Following this teleological view of history as progress, contemporary dance "expectedly" appeared in Eastern societies alongside their transition to democracy capitalism in the 90s and in some countries due to the war period that has affected some of the countries even in the beginning of 21st century (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina). There is a prevailing consent not only that contemporary dance appears organically in the new social conditions, but that it is proof of the very democracy of the ex-Eastern societies. Naturally this "late awaking" of the East results in its always-being-late in its actual attempts to keep step with the contemporary dance scene of the West'.[3]

↳ What do their claims explain? How can one deal with countries where the ideology of the West determines our existence? How can one act if there are only poor or no sources at all to document the history of contemporary dance in those countries? What can one deduce from a situation like that? What exactly can one hold onto?

↳ Several different answers could be offered. One of them was already given a few lines above, concerning the marginal position of contemporary dance. Another answer lies in the positioning of contemporary dance vis-à-vis national values. Contemporary dance has never really restricted itself to national boarders or followed official local policies. It always had a kind of 'guerrilla position', which never needed to be included in the official histories. It was always looking for inventions, searching for an 'interspace' between spaces belonging to someone else, streets or even private apartments, where it could be safe or just follow the urge of artists and choreographers to express themselves. Therefore it seemed as if contemporary dance had never really existed, because it mostly resided far from big theatres and official studios, without any official institutions to back it up, without real visibility or recognition, and often poorly or not documented at all. This kind of situation has made it easy to erase the history of contemporary dance in the region and resulted in the ignorance of its elected governments. Also, it has made the Western idea or claim that contemporary dance emerged in the region only after the fall of the Iron Curtain more believable than before.

↳ This text argues for the opposite. Despite the lack of inside information, it will outline the situation as it is, with emphasis on some of the important facts, initiatives, and artists, which should be taken as a major factor in the development of the scene. Let me return to some of the observations I already made about Ana Vujanović and Saša Asentić. By supporting the official (cultural) history we support political, governmental, and official arrogance and ignorance toward the field. As Michel Foucault and Walter Benjamin taught us, those official documents and their visibility serve only to illustrate and shore up a particular construction of history. In Benjamin's words: 'To articulate the past historically, does not mean to recognize it "the way it really was". [...] It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger'.[4] In Benjamin's conception of history, 'the tiger's leap' is a history entirely redirected toward the future. … 'A Tiger's Leap functions as a reality-check, staging its political structures, power hierarchy, and ownership, not only over products and material infrastructures but also over the concepts, names, and paradigms – history itself.'[5] This kind of approach could be implemented by theorists and artists working in the field with the aim not only to (re)examine its history but also to fight for its inclusion into existing cultural policies and a more serious and egalitarian progress of the field.

2   For more information on the project, go to http://www.perart.org/savremeni-ples/tigrov-skok-u-istoriju/.
3   Bojana Kunst, 'Performing the Other Body', *Bal canis*, Vol. II, No. 4 (2002), pp. 75–76, quotation taken from: Ana Vujanović: Tiger Leap: A Method of reloading History of Local Scenes.

4   Walter Benjamin, 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1969), p. 255.
5   Ana Vujanović, 'Tiger's Leap: A Method of Reloading the History of Local Scenes', a lecture given at *Maska* and other occasions.

↳ There have been several projects dealing with history and (re)examining their own cultural heritage, the ideology of the West (as well as the East), with the clear purpose of filling the gap in knowledge and historical memory that was either erased or forgotten (*East Art Map*, *East Dance Academy*, *What to Affirm, What to Perform*, *The Tiger's Leap*…). Thanks to private initiatives, some publishing houses and platforms have appeared in the past, providing theoretical and critical support for projects that were of marginal interest to the mainstream media, theatre and dance criticism, and official drama, theatre, and dance studies (*Maska*, *TkH*, *Frakcija*, *Kretanja*, 'New Dramaturgies',[6] etc.). They are fighting for acceptance in the tradition of contemporary dance as well as in current production, which has always represented the off/non-scene. They are fighting to bring it back from its invisible and precarious position, to prevent its extinction, they are fighting against the treatment of dance artists and theorists (as) amateurs; they are fighting for its acceptance as an official field with proper organisations and programmes in education, which might secure its continuous functioning and institutionalisation.
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TURNING BACK AGAIN… EASTERN EUROPE

Although most Western discourses conflate the so-called Eastern Europe into a single entity, one should be aware of the differences between individual countries, resulting from their divergent political visions and orientation and tactics. Even pre-WWII influences played an important role in the development of contemporary dance in individual countries. Due to the lack of space here, we will focus only on the period after World War II, that is, even more narrowly, on the period after 1948, when the main split between Eastern-European Countries occurred — the Tito-Stalin split.
↓

THE FIRST SPLIT (THE TITO-STALIN DOCTRINE AND POLITICS)

After 1948 Tito's Yugoslavia was under special conditions — it pursued a policy of neutrality and became one of the founding members of the Nonaligned Movement. Tito tried to open up to the West and let Yugoslavia's citizens travel and study abroad, which enhanced the mobility of ideas across borders. This is also the reason why stronger Western influences may be detected in at least some of the regions and countries of the former Yugoslavia (especially in Slovenia/Ljubljana, Croatia/

Zagreb, and Serbia/Belgrade)[7] and why Yugoslavia's production, with different modes of production taking hold from the 1950s on, used to be relatively well-integrated with the international performing arts scene and movements.
↳ Due to Yugoslavia's favourable geopolitical position, private networking in the performing arts field began already in the 1950s (e.g. artists', critics', theorists', and intellectuals' travels to Paris, where they received fresh ideas and information and brought them back to Yugoslavia) and continued with organised and planned networking through festivals and visits by foreign companies and artists to Yugoslavia, which resulted from Tito's efforts to affirm Yugoslavia's distancing from the East by means of cultural exchange with the West (e.g. the Bitef festival, visits of American artists and companies as part of US efforts to broaden its influence in Europe).
↳ Existentialism, which in Yugoslavia appeared right after World War II, legitimised individualist positions and gave them their metaphysical foundations; the theatre of the absurd was a strong reference point, opening up experimental theatre formats and offering strategies for politically engaged resistance, with a wide range of coded readings; also, the American avant-garde had a strong influence on the performing arts field during this period. All these influences came together as a result of individual initiatives, coincidence, activism, and creative madness that tried to improve and innovate Yugoslavia's inadequate scene. Although they did influence the scene, they were never affirmed by the system or the government.
↳ In other socialist countries, due to the travel restrictions they imposed on their citizens, especially regarding travel across the Iron Curtain, as well as their stronger systems of government control, their scenes are harder to document, because they had to 'hide' and go on mostly in the underground (private apartments and cellars), so as not to provoke government repression.
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THE TRANSITION

After the fall of the Iron Curtain and the emergence of an interest in the West in the 'authenticity' of the East, 'the difference that could be recognized and is still recognizable […] was seen primarily in the institutional status of contemporary dance. The contemporary dance in the above mentioned countries "has been marginal for decades, condemned to non-existence or fighting for survival,

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6   For more information, go to http://www.dramaturgynew.net.

7   It is important to mention that Yugoslavia was very centralised and the cultural scene was concentrated around the biggest cities.

without a basic structure that would assure its development, outside its dialogue with institutions, and a critique, attempting this only in more-or-less the last (two) decade(s) with the rise and struggle for a basic infrastructure'.[8] The key difference between the East and the West that generated this situation was not aesthetic, but structural , although it was always presented as aesthetic in the West, which invented and imposed the terminology of transition, in order to prove that Yugoslavia's situation was special in aesthetic terms. We have to be aware of how we treat and perceive the world in light of the growing popularity of a new and influential academic and political paradigm known as 'transformation studies' or 'transitology'. The concept of 'transition' is used in order to examine and support a tendency that evolved in global politics of the late 20th century — namely, the fall of authoritarian and totalitarian regimes and their transition to the Western democratic model. In the West, transitology became a foreign policy tool used to promote democratic and market reforms in Second and Third World countries. It became instrumental in implementing a series of radical political and economic transformations in post-authoritarian and post-totalitarian states, a 'neo-liberal discourse of radical reform' and a new ideology. As Bojana Kunst shows (following Boris Groys), this discourse quickly reached the domain of art and culture, altering not only pre-established artistic and aesthetic conventions but also changing the social status of art in post-communist society. This is also a major reason why some changes in the field have become more visible following the 1990s, of course, not everywhere at the same time, but still within a decade or so. The process of 'democratisation', the new ideology of neo-liberalism, was interrupted by war, economic crises, frequent transfers of power in the political sphere, etc. These were the main factors that put an already fragile field of art in a difficult and unenviable position.

↪ Take The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia for example, which was founded during World War II and lasted until 1992, when it dissolved in the Yugoslav Wars. During Tito's rule, especially the late 1970s, the arts scene was developing due to his personal interest in art. Among other internationally renowned names, the remarkable performance *Einstein on the Beach*, scored by Philip Glass and directed by Robert Wilson, was presented at the Bitef festival already in 1976. The Yugoslav Wars (Slovenia: 1991; Croatia: 1991—1995; Bosnia and Herzegovina: 1992—1995; Kosovo: 1998—1999) interrupted or almost completely ruined the arts scenes of Yugoslavia's successor states, leading to instability and impoverishment especially in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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8   Bojana Kunst: Politics of affection and uneasiness. Maska, volume XVIII., no. 5-6 (82-83), 2003, p. 29

↪ This is also the reason why some of the countries only entered the process of democratisation at the very end of the 20th century; during that time, there were only slight changes in those countries' cultural policies, namely, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia and Albania, due to their proximity to Kosovo and the conflict there, which indirectly affected them as well).

↪ In the case of Bulgaria, culture was one of the spheres heavily affected by the economic and spiritual crisis during the transition. Goals frequently changed and the activities of various different levels of government were rarely followed up. There was little coordination between different levels of administration and the private business sector showed no interest in supporting cultural activities. This was especially visible in the NGO sector – independent artists and groups, who were not recognised by the government. Similar processes affected the countries that took part in or were indirectly affected by the wars.

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Very different processes could be observed in Hungary, a country that, in comparison with Slovenia and Croatia, soon established an 'agency' for funding projects in culture (even independent artists and organisations were supported by the government as well as their local communities, mostly on the basis of annual calls for projects).

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THE PREVIOUS DECADE AND THE PRESENT

As I already outlined at the outset, today, the dance scene (along with the rest of the independent scene) is facing a new form of decline. Although in some of the countries contemporary dance appeared to be already included in their cultural policies (Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Hungary), the conservative parties and their 'totalitarian' ways of governing are slowly but surely destroying it again. Today more than ever one sees funding cuts in all fields of culture and changes of funding priorities, occurring as a result of the power of ministers and governments and their quick changes or reinterpretations of already existing laws, acts, and strategic documents. In most cases, the official explanation is that the government is trying to reduce the national debt, but the cuts are affecting independent artists much more than public institutions. And even within the independent sector in most of the countries, there are clear differences in the positioning of individual subsectors; it is typically the field of contemporary dance that has always been without any real political power and institutional backing, which makes it even more fragile in its ongoing struggles

with the government. It was always the proverbial stepchild of the art scene, because independent culture and youth cultural policies were never really implemented in the system. Why?

↪ Cultural policy-making remains the domain of the authorities and decision-making is handled by nationally and locally elected politicians. This means that the minister has complete power (practising it today more than ever before) over delegating power and funds. These countries' civil society cannot really participate in deciding about their country's cultural policies. The role of experts is usually just advisory or corrective and their suggestions are often and easily ignored. Conservative administrations mostly see culture (that is, the independent cultural sector) as a source of unnecessary expenditure and even potential criticism. The new governments have deployed warlike and offensive tactics, pushing legislation through parliament and thus quickly and systematically rebuilding the entire legal system; equally, they have enforced major changes in the cultural arena without detailed strategy papers or ignoring existing ones. The driving force behind these changes is cutting spending, to be achieved by strengthening the position of the state. In different countries this kind of administration could be seen at different times, but it has become even more pronounced over the past few years.

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CULTURAL POLICIES AND STRATEGIES OF DEVELOPING LEGISLATION IN CULTURAL PLANNING
The countries under consideration here have different histories, political and financial structures, regulations, laws, and special documents that shape their cultural policies (most of them are often changed and few are ever properly implemented). In general, we can say that none of the countries have developed or, rather, implemented a clear strategy. I will provide only one example, which should give us good insight into the situation. The example is Serbia, where the new Law on Culture was adopted in 2009. Although the new Law was adopted as the legal umbrella for a systematic regulation of the cultural sector and is meant to be an important strategic document outlining the priorities in Serbian cultural policy for the next ten years, very 'few bylaws are finished and adopted until today, which disables implementation of the Law itself. Consequently, in practice, the old ways and protocols of functioning in cultural system remain and are still dominant (which is the case with the majority of the new laws in Serbia, created to follow and to introduce the European Union standards)'.[9] Similar examples could be found in other countries as well.

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9   Marijana Cvetković, 'Performing Arts in Serbia: Policies and Actors', http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/
(2 November 2012).

↪ This could be a reason for the lack of continuity shown by contemporary dance in the countries under consideration here. According to Blaž Lukan, a continual development of contemporary dance can be seen only in Slovenia and, with its strong heritage but to a somewhat lesser degree, in Croatia. As I already mentioned, the main reason for that lies in their geopolitical position (proximity to the West) and relative economic stability, when compared to other countries in 'transition' and their inability to complete their post-socialist economic restructuring, still suffering from the effects of the war, long after the '90s.

↪ Nevertheless, because contemporary dance was never institutionalised, it has always appeared on the margins and depended on the will of the government, as cultural policy and decision-making are the preserve of elected politicians. The structure and implementation of funding is closely connected with the position of the NGO sector in each country. In most cases, even the NGOs that are recognised by their governments (or by foreign foundations) usually have only short-term funding, based on individual projects, or maybe a few years' worth of programme funding (as in the case of Slovenia).

↪ In most of the cases considered here, cultural policies are unstable, changing every four years or even more often. Somewhat simplifying, we could classify the countries and their cultural policies in three categories: A — systematic attempts of change (Slovenia, Croatia, and Hungary); B — semi-systematic attempts of change (Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, and Macedonia); and C — stagnation (almost all of the countries now, with some strong efforts visible in Albania).

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THE ROLE OF THE MINISTRIES OF CULTURE AND NATIONAL CULTURAL FUNDS AND BODIES
The ministries of culture together with arm's length political bodies (national cultural funds and councils) play the main part in cultural policy making, but certain responsibilities for certain areas of culture are also delegated to other ministries (education, foreign affairs, etc.). The government bodies (ministries) either support the NGO sector, ignore it, or assume different attitudes in those countries where politics is decentralised. In some of the countries there are semi-arm's length bodies that fulfil certain responsibilities of the ministries. Funds for culture are allocated on different levels of government: national and local (cities, towns, and municipalities).
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We can roughly distinguish between three types of situations:

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1.   Systems in which some of the budget goes directly toward supporting independent cultural workers and the NGO sector (contemporary dance may be recognised as a specific art field or at least as part of the independent theatre or wider performing arts field). In this case, funding for contemporary dance, produced mainly by independent artists and NGOs, comes from two main sources: the state and local communities (Slovenia, Croatia, Hungary, and over the past few years, partly in Bosnia and Herzegovina). In other countries (Serbia, the rest of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Albania) the NGO scene and artists are almost completely disregarded.

2.   Systems in which funding goes mainly to state-owned institutions and the NGO sector is not treated separately but together with the state institutions and programmes. In these cases the independent scene usually has to rely completely on foreign funding (Albania, Hungary, and Macedonia). In those countries strategies or special funds for supporting artists just do not really exist, but on the other hand, certain special cases show that some artists, companies, and organisations do receive some support.

3.   A combination of 1 and 2, in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina and its 'decentralised political and administrative setup, with various levels of government – state, entity, cantonal, and municipal. Republika Srpska[10] is not divided into cantons. This setup is a consequence of two peace treaties that laid the foundations for modern Bosnia and Herzegovina: the Washington Agreement and the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, better known as the Dayton Peace Agreement. [...] Therefore, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, 13 different ministries are in charge of culture: the Ministry of Civil Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Ministry of Education and Culture of Republika Srpska, the Federal Ministry of Culture and Sports, and a variety of cantonal ministries – in nine cantons, the ministries of education, science, culture, and sports and in the Canton of Sarajevo the Ministry of Culture and Sport'.[11]

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10   Republika Srpska is one of the two main political entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the other being the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Constitution of Republika Srpska defines it as a territorially unified, indivisible, and inalienable constitutional and legal entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which independently performs its constitutional, legislative, executive, and judicial functions.

11   Aida Čengić, 'Regional Co-operation and the Performing Arts: Bosnia and Herzegovina', in this volume. **http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/** (2 November 2012).

↪ Government funds are very important for the development of the scene. Although in most cases, the NGO sector does not completely depend on government funding, the latter plays an important role in maintaining its continued work, due to the changing statutory environment and financial support, coming from other sources. Although 'government' is used here as an umbrella term for all levels of public administration, research does show that in each country, the capital city (municipality) supports the local scene much more than other, smaller communities do. It must be stressed that the support for the scene is rather modest. In most cases its total support is close to or smaller than the budget of an average city theatre.

↪ This is also the reason why most of the NGOs are quite skilled and successful in securing alternative resources from international development organisations that offer funding in most of the region and lately also in applying for funds from the European Commission. However, the long-term sustainability of this kind of funding is highly dubious. First, these are insecure sources of funding (support is available only for a limited period of time) and second, their priorities often change. Regarding the EU as well as some other funds there is another problem that has to be mentioned: most of them are available only if local funding has already been secured. Since the central governments, as well as those of municipalities and cantons, have introduced drastic funding cuts in culture and the funding for the independent cultural sector has been extremely small or even non-existent, as in the case of Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, and for the most part Bosnia and Herzegovina, European projects in collaboration have been jeopardised and with them the very existence of the NGO sector. This means that independent artists and organisations are being pushed into a precarious position, where they will have to adapt to the new mobile and flexible structures and their survival will not be guaranteed. This kind of instability has already been highlighted before, as it has forced many active and promising artists and theorists to leave.

↪ There is no question that the contemporary dance scene has been forced to innovate and learn some highly efficient self-management techniques in order to survive. Choreographers, theorists, and dancers, exhausted and almost burnt out, have started to question their working hours spent not on producing dance, but filling in forms for institutions that have yet to bear any fruit. Although many of them are present and recognised internationally, their governments still do not recognise many of them; therefore, many have decided to leave their countries. Those who are still struggling for recognition are getting exhausted, overwhelmed with working on a number of projects at any given time, not only dancing, performing, and choreographing, but also organising

and administrating. As a result, much of their work remains unfinished, as work in progress, with interesting ideas and concepts but nothing more. Is it just a matter of time when those who are still here will leave as well, looking for a different framework, one that might provide them with at least a modicum of stability and security? As highly skilled and multitasking professionals, they are in a good position to find better and more stable jobs elsewhere.

↪ There are also additional problems that beset the existing system in the region. As it is almost impossible for contemporary dancers to find employment, they are forced to fend for themselves through self-employment and trying to get money from whatever grants are available. The rigorous production modes enforced by the funds are making dancers apply for grants as choreographers, sometimes much too early in their careers. On the one hand, the scene is forced to exhaust itself in overproduction, while on the other, the existing framework does not allow it to develop and grow.

↪ Of course, this pessimistic overview is not all black; there have certainly been brighter moments in the past as well, which have kept the scene alive, such as the openings of dance venues across the region, professional associations engaged in major funding bodies and therefore in a position to wield at least some political influence, new international, regional or local networks, festivals... Now we must see what kind of documents and acts, produced over the last decade, have made us a bit more optimistic about the future, in other words, which documents have been significant for independent artists, companies, and organisations working in the field of contemporary dance and struggling with a non-existent market and lack of visibility and reflection. What are the achievements of the government sector and what of individual initiatives, bereft of government support?

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IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND LAWS

As I mentioned above, some positive approaches have been made on the local, national and regional levels. After the '90s, the countries of the region developed their cultural policies on the basis of different documents and acts. Some of the countries have special laws that regulate independent artists (cultural workers) or even laws that specifically address the performing arts and dance field. In some of them there are no special laws related to the field of dance but there still exist some general documents or acts that function as strategic documents for cultural policy (strategies in cultural policy and national programmes for culture). Nevertheless, most of these documents are nor really implemented or are frequently changed, along with the politicians in power. The whole situation depends on the minister and the party in power.

↪ I will not go into much detail here and present the various documents that each country has adopted, as the most important political acts are described elsewhere in this volume, in the separate analyses that show the changing and unstable situation across the region.[12] Nevertheless, I would like to present two cases to substantiate my observations. The first case is Slovenia and shows transparently how cultural policies really work in the region. The first National Programme for Culture was adopted in 2003 (National Programme for Culture 2004–2007). The document was judged weak and rather broad in its strategy. It was severely criticised by civil society (the experts and NGOs), especially due to its failure to offer concrete policies that might direct the development of culture in the country. Although the second National Programme for Culture (2008–2011) was similarly criticised for the same reasons, as well as for failing to complement the existing programmes in primary and secondary education with insights from art theory and practice, it did contain an important element related to the field of contemporary dance that should be mentioned. It envisioned the founding of a Center of Contemporary Dance Arts. The very last act of the previous centre-left government was precisely the establishment of the Center on 13 July 2011. One could say that this was a major cultural policy achievement for the scene, as it had fought for institutionalisation for more than two decades. Unfortunately, it became clear, very soon, that the Center was just an excuse and empty gesture that was not really meant to help the scene. In August 2012, barely a year later, the Center was officially abolished. One may reasonably ask, then, if strategic documents have any function at all and for whom they are intended.

↪ My other example is Hungary. As Kristina Kujundžić's analysis[13] shows, *Act XVIX of 2008* was an important step forward for that country's independent performing arts sector. The full official title of the Act, which went into effect on 1 March 2009, is *Act XCIX of 2008 on the Support and Special Employment Rules of Performing Arts Organisations*. In Kujundžić's words, 'Prepared in close co-operation with professional organisations, it was considered a major cultural policy achievement of the previous government'.[14]

↪ The aim of the Act was 'to secure the status of artists employed by theatres and orchestras, in line with related UNESCO recommendations'. 'It also regulated the conditions of access to state subsidies. [...] The Performing Arts Act also set the details of dealing with procedural issues

12   See the analyses at **http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/.**
13   Kristina Kujundžić, 'Hungary', in this volume: **http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/** (2 November 2012).
14   *Ibid.*

related to the development and dissemination of theatre, dance, and music productions, enhancing the development of audiences, promoting the field internationally, and building institutional capacities and infrastructure. The Performing Arts Act envisaged the establishment of the National Performing Arts Council for the Reconciliation of Interests. […] In recent years the Performing Arts Act has been regarded as a most carefully prepared document that provided some extra state support for theatres, symphonic orchestras, and dance groups, in two ways: by increasing the amount of sponsorship generated by the Act and also by giving performing arts a more favourable treatment in the central budget. However, in 2011 substantial amendments were made to the Act and the theatre part was almost completely rewritten.'[15]

↪ These two examples show that while legislation that specifically deals with the field and might help in solving some of its problems is often adopted or announced, it rarely comes into being or if it does, it is usually abolished soon or not enforced or implemented at all.

↪ Similar problems beset funded acts and councils, which should function as an instrument of closer cooperation between the countries of the region, since regional and international cooperation is an official priority for most of them.

↪ For example, the Council of Ministers of Culture of Southeast Europe was established in 2003, comprising the ministers of culture of 11 Southeast-European states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, and Turkey, as well as Austria as an associate member. 'It was initiated to be the instrument for closer cooperation among the SEE countries in the field of culture as well as promoter of culture as agent of reconciliation. Today, the main issues that this body deals with are mostly in the field of cultural heritage (architecture, monuments, archeology, film/audiovisual heritage), while contemporary arts, where cooperation and exchange in the SEE Region is far most developed, is not taken into account.'[16] The region's civil society organisations in arts and culture have no influence or possibility to participate in setting their country's national agenda for the Council, which means that they have been left out again, although they probably have as many projects in regional collaboration as the public sector does.

↪ In addition to the foundation of the Council of Ministers of Culture, which was really dictated by the region's foreign policy priorities (the EU, Council of Europe, etc.), there are also other funds

available for regional cooperation. One of those sources is the IPA funding used for projects with a cultural component and carried out by local organisations. The 'cross-border cooperation' component of the IPA funds aims at supporting the beneficiary countries in cross-border cooperation in the region, with EU Member States, and in cross-border and inter-regional projects. However, these projects are primarily oriented toward cultural heritage and cultural tourism. There are some other instruments and grants available, but in most of the countries, regional cooperation is not really a priority (even when defined as such in their national programmes for culture), which is evident, for instance, in the meagre amounts of funding available in this area.

↪ Nevertheless, regional cooperation in the field of contemporary art is considered rather dynamic. Many collaborative projects are funded by grants from the EU Cultural Programme, as most organisations need to collaborate and exchange knowledge and skills in order to keep developing or even survive.

↪ At this point we are already approaching the issue of education, which is neglected, as I will presently show, on the formal and institutional level and has therefore been forced to develop under the auspices of informal educational programmes on various levels.

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EDUCATION

Contemporary dance cannot take its cue from the mainstream, from its founding pillars, where schools and educational programmes play an important role, neither from the dance centres and companies, which provide employment for most of the regional scene, small as it is. Therfore those few existing supporting stones have to be appreciated even more, cherished with great care, and nourished for the future.

↪ The region still suffers from a lack of secondary as well as higher education in contemporary dance. Most of the region's programmes in formal dance education focus on classical ballet and just a few established institutions have incorporated contemporary dance in their curricula. However, in some of the countries, a few institutions and programmes in contemporary dance have been approved recently.

↪ Officially, as a separate programme of study, high-school students may take contemporary dance in Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, and Hungary.

↪ The first official programme in contemporary dance education appeared in Slovenia in 1999, as a separate programme of study at the Srednja vzgojiteljska šola in gimnazija Ljubljana (Secondary

15   *Ibid.*
16   Marijana Cvetković, 'Performing Arts in Serbia: Policies and Actors', http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/ (2 November 2012).

School of Pedagogy and General Education in Ljubljana). In Serbia, a Department for Contemporary Dance was founded at the Lujo Davičo High School of Ballet in 2003.[17] In Croatia, there are three high schools of contemporary dance that are recognised by the Ministry of Culture: 1) the most esteemed among them is the Ana Maletić Primary and Secondary School of Contemporary Dance in Zagreb (established as early as 1932 and state-run since 1954); 2) the Franjo Lučić School of Art with its long tradition of music education, which added contemporary dance to its curriculum in 2006; 3) in the autumn of 2012, another secondary school of contemporary dance was opened — in Zadar — as part of the Blagoje Bersa School of Music. In Hungary, artistic training in dance was introduced to the schooling system just over sixty years ago but even today, the curriculum of the Hungarian Dance Academy includes only modern, but not contemporary dance; the latter is taught at the Budapest Contemporary Dance Academy. 'This is also an institution of higher learning, because it provides three years of basic (BA) studies and another two years of master's studies in contemporary dance. Officially, the school was established in 2004, but its roots go back to 1979.'[18] In the cities of Győr and Pécs there are secondary schools of dance and the ballet school in the city of Szeged offers some schooling in contemporary dance as well.

↪ The Department of Ballet Pedagogy at the Ss. Cyril and Methodius University Faculty of Music in Skopje is the first official state academy of dance established in any of the former Yugoslav republics and 'may be seen as an opportunity to attract prospective students from across the region.'[19] The newly founded Department offers specialisations in contemporary dance and classical ballet. Another option is the Department of Contemporary Dance (Skopje Dance Academy) at the Faculty of Applied Music of the private University of Audiovisual Arts — European Film Academy ESRA, Paris — Skopje — New York.

↪ In Slovenia the Academy of Dance was founded in 2010 and in Croatia a study programme in the pedagogy of ballet and contemporary dance at the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb is expected to open soon. In 2011, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports, the vice-rector for development and regional planning of the University of Zagreb, and the Academy of Dramatic Arts in Zagreb signed an agreement on mutual cooperation and the implementation of a study programme in the field of dance.

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17   For more information on this school, go to **http://www.ldavico.edu.rs/**.
18   Kristina Kujundžić, 'Hungary', in this volume: **http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/** (2 November 2012).
19   Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, 'Macedonia', in this volume: **http://www.nomaddanceacademy.org/** (2 November 2012).

↪ In Bulgaria, the most important and highly developed programme in contemporary dance is the programme of Choreography for Contemporary Dance Theatre and Art Management at the Varna Free University. Elsewhere, education in contemporary dance is part of theatre studies (the programmes in dance theatre at the New Bulgarian University Theatre Department and the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts).

↪ In Bosnia and Albania there are no programmes of study in contemporary dance. However, one of the most prominent figures in contemporary dance in Albania, Gjergj Prevazi, artistic director of the Albania Dance Meeting festival and director of Albanian Dance Theatre Company, a partner of the Nomad Network and a professor at the choreography division since 2000, has led there a programme in education, through which he has managed to educate around 30 students in contemporary performing arts concepts and techniques.

↪ Due to the region's lack of opportunities in higher education, most aspiring dancers study at established academies abroad, especially at the Salzburg Experimental Academy of Dance, and School for new Dance Development – SNDD, Amsterdam, Trinity Laban, London. Every year, there are is a small number of scholarships available for those who wish to study abroad, but only in some of the countries considered here.

↪ Furthermore, another serious problem is the lack of appropriate jobs in the region for dancers and choreographers who come out of these schools. There are almost no official dance companies in the region and government support, which might alleviate the situation, is virtually non-existent.
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INFORMAL EDUCATION

Despite the high levels of activity, international visibility, and presence of the region's contemporary dance scene, neither local (the municipalities) nor national (the ministries and governments) authorities have clear policies that might address its needs and meet the conditions for its stability and further development. Therefore, the scene continues to exist outside of established institutions.

↪ Nevertheless, there are quite a few informal programmes available on the scene that are recognised internationally and attract the younger generation. Not that all of them are very progressive, but still, generally speaking, organisations strive to develop programmes that are innovative, interdisciplinary, and suited to the needs of their country and the region.

↪ The formats and contents of the available programmes frequently change, as they are trying to cover the most current and relevant topics, issues proposed by the dance community itself, to build

a base and fill the gap in formal dance education. Various programmes may be found in the form of seminars, coaching programmes, workshops, dance classes, lectures, talks, discussions, screenings, conferences… They may be practically or theoretically oriented, specialised or interdisciplinary, short- or long-term projects.

↳ The number and diversity of these informal programmes vary between individual countries and therefore it is difficult to offer a general assessment of the region as a whole.

↳ Basic educational programmes for dancers as well as specialised programmes for professionals have been developed by private initiatives. Many professional dancers across the region began their careers in unofficial dance education, which then took them to some of Europe's leading dance academies.

↳ Also, festivals play a important role here. As they are more readily recognised and supported by most of the region's governments (or maybe just a more 'reliable' target for funding), most of them also function as platforms for dance education (practical and theoretical alike) and may be viewed as an important element in or even the base for audience building.

↳ For example, in the case of Albania, the most important event that provides informal education in modern and contemporary dance is the Albania Dance Meeting festival, an international festival of modern and contemporary dance.[20] 'The festival has annual character and started in 2009, and it is organized in the city of Durres. Moreover, in the frame of the festival different workshops are being organized, which are open to dance students, young dancers, actors, theater directors etc. All the choreographers and companies that are presented at the festival additionally provide workshops for the participants. This way they have possibilities to be introduced and learn the recent contemporary dance's techniques and concepts.'[21] Likewise in Macedonia and Bulgaria, there is almost no informal education in contemporary dance.[22] Most of the educational programmes there are still arranged and offered at dance festivals. Nevertheless, there are some private initiatives that do organise one-off workshops and seminars; one of the most significant of those is surely the Nomad Dance Academy.

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20 For more information, go to http://www.dancealbfest.com/.
21 Violeta Kachakova, 'Desktop Analysis on Contemporary Performing Art Scene in Albania', www.nomaddanceacademy.org (5 November 2012).
22 For more detailed information on informal education, go to www.nomaddanceacademy.org

THE NOMAD DANCE ACADEMY[23]

The Nomad Dance Academy (henceforward the NDA) has tried to respond to the needs of the region and provide current, relevant, and flexible programmes in dance education. It is a rare programme in the region (though not the only one) that strives to forge artistic connections and knowledge exchange.

↳ At the NDA, young professionals, mostly from the region, had the opportunity to produce new knowledge and collaborate. There are few opportunities like that in the region. Their programme may be seen as one of a few systematic attempts to offer education and professional development opportunities to emerging artists in the region.

↳ One of their most important programmes was Nomad Dance Academy Education, several months of intensive training not only in contemporary dance techniques, but also the theory and practice of dramaturgy, lighting, etc. It was a regional and nomadic programme, which means that the students travelled from one city to the next, meeting various experts who offered them additional knowledge as well as reflected on their own creations and creative visions. The programme managed to create significant partnerships in the region, thus enabling local knowledge and experiences to form an education programme. It also managed to build a platform for the mobility and exchange of knowledge and experience between teachers, locally, regionally, and internationally ('between the East and the West').

↳ The programme, which unfortunately existed within the Academy for only three years, produced remarkable results. Most of its former students are now locally and internationally recognised.

↳ The NDA managed to build a network and frame in which individuals of different backgrounds, nationalities, and ages got a chance to meet, debate, and connect. Those connections have enabled various collaborations and a number of artists have used them in their projects. As the programme tried to avoid restricting its students and participants to a finite number of techniques and encouraged them instead to reflect on the concepts, development, and performances, it is not surprising that those who are still active among them have developed professionally ever further. They appear to be among the most interesting artists of the new generation, working extensively around the world and pursuing vibrant careers in the European performing arts field. This is possibly due to their interdisciplinary pre-education and collaboration with colleagues of different

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23 Observations made in this section are subjective and based only on my own experiences in the Academy.

backgrounds, which is the most interesting segment of the contemporary performing arts. We can see here the NDA's contemporary understanding of dance, integrated on different levels of the NDA's organisation, as a socially active aesthetic pursuit, working against the realities of post-industrial, consumerist, and media society to challenge the current boundaries of the performing arts.

↪ Apart from the NDA, we should also mention a few other efforts, in which certain other educational programmes appeared in collaboration with partner organisations. An important programme among those is certainly the Critical Endeavour project, an education platform for dance critics established under the auspices of the Jardin d'Europe network. This programme allowed dance critics from the region to attend European festivals of contemporary dance and work with renowned European dance critics.

The NDA was also a base for small-scale dance festivals, which were lacking in the region, such as the LocoMotion, Kondenz, the Antistatic festival, and Short Cuts (now better known as Pleskavica). These festivals were founded as a response to the need of local artistic audiences to see at least once a year the latest, cutting-edge developments in the fields of contemporary dance and the performing arts. The festivals also seek to provide an opportunity to reflect on the scene, its needs, existing modes of productions, etc. They focus on local, regional, and international artists who develop experimental and critical performances and actively engage in contemporary art and culture, as well as on developing formats suitable for knowledge production and artistic development.

↪ Unfortunately, not only in the case of Nomad, the young generations realise that the numerous, decade-long efforts by their older colleagues to change the conditions of work in their field have failed and so many of them are deciding to pursue their careers outside their country.

↪ They are using the NDA's horizontal managing structure and self-organisation principle as the basis for their own development, either for contacts and venues, or just as their basic principle of functioning.

↪ Although the NDA has managed to support regional collaboration in contemporary dance, helped young artists to exchange their ideas, enriched the programmes of local festivals and other venues, and partly persuaded at least some young professionals to stay in the region, it has not really realised its commitment to develop its programmes further.

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↪ This means 'that the effort broad in the local and regional context has a significant role, but unfortunately, the creativity ("their products") are being soon exported and are feeding the West again from what was developed on the sweat of the East. However, despite the creation of a certain critical mass of people who are working for decades on creating conditions for development and promotion of contemporary dance as a recognizable and independent art, it seems that no serious impact was made for the development and establishment of an independent scene of contemporary dance. There was a void and a lack of initiative by the young generations of dancers, choreographers and cultural workers to develop independent contemporary dance scene due to the apathy that stems from the lack of conditions and unsystematic and ad hoc policies' of the political bodies.[24] Although their skills and knowledge could greatly benefit cultural-policy making for the future (not just due to their familiarity with the scene and its needs, as well as their inter-sectoral, local, regional, and international connections and innovative and creative ideas about possible strategies for future development), the actual policy-makers do not recognise their value and importance. Independent art is especially interesting as an 'export commodity' and may further help the development of institutional art.

↪ If the situation as we know it today continues (no implementation of existing documents and instruments in the field, further budget cuts, etc.), it seems that we might have to return to *The Tiger's Leap*.

↪ The networks and collaborations, artistic practices, artists, companies, and organisations that have been here for decades and are making the biggest contribution to the region's tradition as well as current production in contemporary dance can be quickly forgotten and disappear in history, because the contemporary dance scene is still the off-, the not really there, and may grow even less visible due to its exclusion from the region's cultural policies. How and where should we then search for its traces? On the international contemporary scene, looking for familiar, Balkan-sounding names? And when they grow exhausted and retire, who is going to succeed them? Who may benefit from all those efforts made on the scene, for all those years?

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24   Bilijana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski speaking on the case of Macedonia. See her remarks at **www.nomaddanceacademy,org**.

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www.nomaddanceacademy.org
http://www.cofestival.net/
http://nomaddanceacademy.org/kondenz_locomotion2011.htm
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