

No More Reality

CROWD AND PERFORMANCE

DEPO, Istanbul, 31.1. – 5.3. 2009.

Tütün Deposu Lüleci Hendek Cad. No.12, Tophane 34425/ İstanbul

Artists: Fia Backström [Sweden/U.S.], Johanna Billing [Sweden], Susanne Bürner [Germany], Chto Delat [Russia], Marcelo Exposito [Spain], Claire Fontaine [France], Igor Grubic [Croatia], Sharon Hayes [U.S.], Inventory [UK], Olga Kisseleva [France/Russia], Ligna [Germany], Ciprian Muresan [Romania], Marta Popivoda/Illegal Cinema [Serbia], Radek Community [Russia], R.E.P. group [Ukraine], The Revolution Will Not Be Televised [Brazil].



Curators: Claire Staebler and Jelena Vesić

Exhibition Producer: Vladimir Jerić

Production: Depo-Istanbul and Anadolu Kültür

Exhibition Managers: Asena Günal and Balca Ergener

INTRODUCTION

From the popular settings of art history we can recall two faces of the crowd: the first, recognized as the holder of political will (demonstrations or revolutionary masses), appearing in many historical or allegorical paintings, and the second one - more neutral and more dispersed, usually connected to the representation of the city, modernity and urban life. Of course, the crowd is never neutral... Apparently nameless bodies, anonymous minds and ordinary settings are always producing narratives and images related to the dominant politics of public spaces. Even impressionist chronicles that tend to be a 'disinterested' mass scenes are not only the random frames of the street life. As records of early modernity, they basically announce the standardization of the city crowd, the early control of public space and the regulation of the behavior of the masses in the street.

Is that the only perspective?

Standing out as an individual in the crowd becomes the most important aspect that constitutes identity today. It becomes a recognizable sign of successfully realized authorship, originality and authenticity. But, the perspective of this claim can be observed as just another aspect of a new "experience economy", where lifestyle industries are transforming the individual into a unique "commodity personality".

In the culture of the spectacle, everybody is a performer.

The transformation of cultural and political space during the 1990's encompasses different mechanisms of control of public space and, at the same time, establishes propaganda of guarantee and security. Spectacular reports of mass events and war scenes or violent demonstrators are turned into aestheticized images, which feed our imagination. These images we start to love and enjoy the same way we enjoy action movies, horror movies and disaster movies. They tell us that the horror is somewhere else and that we can freely surrender to the visual pleasure and the feeling of security.

Capitalist modernization of society and gentrification of core city areas across the world is taking place parallel with the entrenching and widening of political control of public spaces. The introduction of surveillance technologies and new regimes of behavior are induced through simultaneous processes of privatization of public space and new forms of division between the spheres of private and public.

The No More Reality [Crowd and Performance: demonstration, public space, use of body] examines the new possibilities of collective thinking and collective acting in the public space. It is a theoretical-practical platform, which gathers a group of artists, activists, theorists, curators, magazines and radio broadcasters, investigating performative aspects of the crowd in the streets and the political implications of body practices in the public space. *The No More Reality* is developing in stages starting from 2005. Exhibitions, publications and discussions accompanying this process are conceptualized as fragmentary situations and steps in the research, rather than the final projects with the fixed and definite conclusions.

ARTWORKS

Inventory, *Coagulum - a momentary clot in the heart of commerce*, 2000, 19 min

Inventory is a group of artists-essayists who founded the journal of the same name in 1996. Coagulum is a medical term which describes a clot in the blood. Inventory produces different actions, interventions and situations created in relation to the passive and consumerist character of the contemporary society.



Coagulum - a momentary clot in the heart of commerce represents two filmed actions: one made at Oxford street in London, and another one in a suburban shopping mall in Kingston. Inventory sent out posters, flyers and e-mails inviting people to join the Coagulum. The intention was a simple one - to obstruct the flow of the main thoroughfare of the shopping area and to disturb the daily routine of consumerist ritual. The tool of the obstruction was a clot made of human bodies - a circular formation modeled on the form of the rugby scrum. Assembly point for the 'coagulants' who answered to the call was a small park nearby the shopping mall. They met each other there for the first time and carried out a quick rehearsal for the upcoming performance. During the course of the performance all the surroundings, the shops, the pedestrians, the buskers and browsers, all the unconscious movements of a Saturday afternoon shopping became absurd and laughable from the perspective of the participants of the action. As Inventory wrote later, they had an impression that they are viewing this hustle and bustle from behind a glass screen. The actions took place outside of individual shops, in the 'public' space, and were essentially non-aggressive in nature. However, they cause extreme consternation among the security staff, who swiftly act to intervene.

Ligna, *Radioballet*, documentation of a performance at the Leipzig main station, 22.06.2003, 15 min

The performance-, theatre- and radio art group LIGNA repeatedly designs experimental situations, which aim for the transgression of conventional application of radio technology and re-actualization of its inherent, but forgotten or ignored potentials.



The action Radioballet took place in the main station of Hamburg and one year later in Leipzig. Both spaces had been recently privatized and subjected to control by surveillance cameras and security guards. The people who beg, sit on the floor, and express 'inadequate behavior' are usually expelled from the space. The Radioballet brought back these excluded gestures. Several hundreds of people followed the invitation to spread around with small radio devices in their pockets. The participants could act where they wanted to: on the platforms, on the stairs or the escalators or in the shopping mall. The 'ballet' was synchronized by the instructions that participant received through portable radios: sit down, stand up, hold your hand in a begging motion, turn around, dance and wave good-bye to the departing train of the revolution... The Radioballet was not conceived as a demonstration or assembly (that could have been forbidden by the police) but rather as a 'Zerstreuung', a German term, that could be translated as dispersion, distraction or distribution. Like ghostly remnants, the excluded gestures haunted and disturbed the surveyed public space during the 90 minutes of the performance and opened it up for uncanny and uncontrollable situation.

◻ **Jelena Vesić** ◻

Dmitry Vilensky/ Chto Delat, *Protest Match*, 2006, 28 min

The Russian Social Forum run parallel to the G8 Summit in Saint Petersburg at Kirov Stadium, in July 2006. Before it opened the Russian security service hold an operation “Barrier”. In its wake more than 200 forum delegates from all over Russia were detained on their way to Petersburg.



Running the Social Forum in parallel with the summit was something that was vetted with the authorities, who made an offer that couldn't be refused: to hold the forum at the stadium. Everyone was sure that the authorities allocated this easily isolatable site on purpose, in order to keep the situation under control. Even before the forum began, the FSB and the police were blackmailing activists, demanding that they not take part in any protests and the forum. Most print shops refused to print information about the forum and people were arrested for handing out leaflets. The authorities did their best to make sure that even minimal participation in the forum would seem risky.

The film covers the situation that has happened at the stadium during Social Forum discussed with a series of interviews with leading and ordinary Russian political activists. The strong stadium's architecture from 50th that could fit about 50000 people plays a symbolic background for the tiny group of activist who build a camp inside it. It plays a role of estrangement device to the meaning of these events.

Marcelo Exposito, *Radical Imagination*, 2004, 60 min

Can we re-invent the demonstrations as an effective form of resistance against contemporary capitalism? Is there a border between the pleasure and politics? Or can we speak today about the political culture which is capable to join political with aesthetical, pleasurable, joyful and fun? These are the main questions inquired through the one hour long documentary video by Marcelo Exposito, exploring the history and development of new activist appropriationist movements, and in particular Reclaim the Streets as the most wide-spread one.



Reclaim the Streets movement arose at the beginning of 1990s around London through the alliance between the ravers, environmental protectionists and various socialist supporters. At the intersection of anti-capitalist and hedonist strategies, Reclaim the Streets sought to test the appropriation of the streets, transforming them from A to B manner of conduct and into the new public sphere in which protest and rave, outrage and desire, are all intertwined in the radical street parties. A high point of the relatively long history of Reclaim the Streets movement was the global day of action in the financial centers of the world on June the 18, 1999, which as the Carnival Against Capitalism generated forms of action that were to be relevant in the several ways for the further development of the anti-globalization movement.

Radical Imagination by Marcelo Exposito investigates the change of the traditional forms of protest: disappearance of the sacrificial mode of the protestors, storming the barricades, violent conflicts, the 'man of the crowd'. It shows the 'politics of pleasure' in which carnival meets rebellion, and individual transformation meets the collective one, aiming to the change of the existing power relations and celebrating 'indestructible lust for life'.

Johanna Billing, *Project for Revolution*, 2001, 4,5 min

Johanna Billing's video *Project for Revolution* portrays the group of fashionably dressed young people sitting in the university classroom and mingling around without the clear goal. It actually remakes the famous scene from the *Zabriskie Point* by Michelangelo Antonioni – an emblematic movie that represents the 1968 youth movements, the political unrest in the university campuses, and the conflict between counter-culture and capitalist-conformist establishment. Re-enactment of this remarkable scene is, without doubt, related to the feelings and political

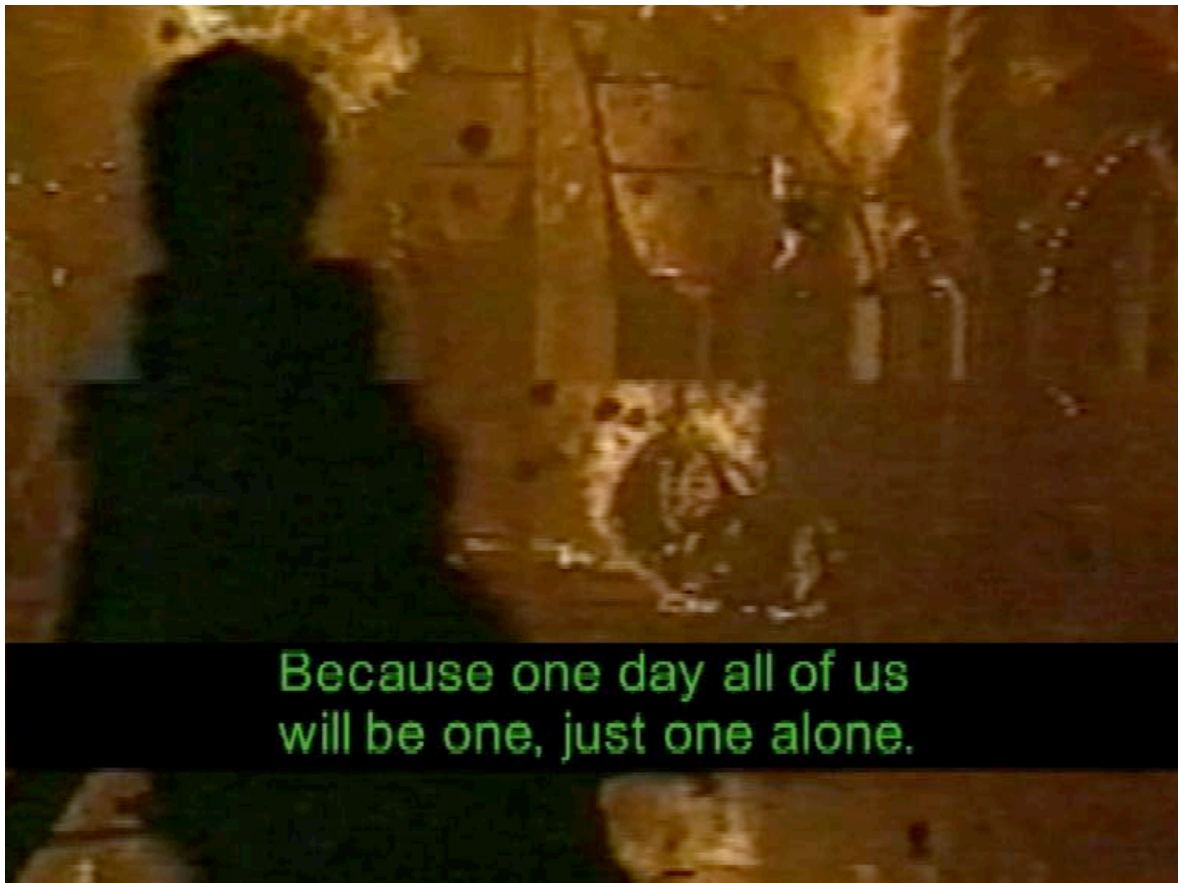


perspectives of the youth of today. While with the very first shot in Antonioni's film we are plunged into a room overcrowded with faces and voices, into a passionate students debate that intends to be revolutionary - on how to recognize the enemy, what tactics and course of action to take, Billing's characters hang out in a university room as if waiting for something to happen, but there is nothing going on, communication is interrupted and the people even avoid eye contact. The silence and feeling of infinite suspense is broken by the noise of a photocopier machine, but in this seems-to-be point of culmination, instead of the important proclamation leaflet, what comes out from the machine is a blank paper. And then the film loops from the beginning.

◁ **Jelena Vesić** ▷

THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED, (A Revolução Não Será Televisionada), anti-TV show – 8 chapters, 25 min

THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED project began in 2002 under an anti-TV show format. Its objective is to intervene in the TV media with artistic contents. It was made from eight chapters that combine images, narration, text and music.



Participating artists and groups in THE REVOLUTION WILL NOT BE TELEVISED: Alexandre Menossi, Ana Paula Oliveira, André Komatsu, Bijari, Carlo Sansolo, Cia. Cachorra, Contra Filé, Dionisio Neto, Dirtyhandz, DJ Maloca, Eduardo Verderame, Erika Fraenkel, Fabiana Serroni, Gabriela Inui, Hapax, Hugo Fortes, Jeyne Stakflett, Juliana Russo, Lia Chaia, Marcelo Cidade, Mari Lima, MC2, Michael Arms, Noisyman, Núcleo Bartolomeu de Depoimentos, Objeto Amarelo, Ondina de Castro, Oni, Primitivo Gonzales, Ricardo Basbaum, Ricardo Ramalho, Regina Silveira, Roberta Estrela Dalva, Seba, Tiago Judas, Tulio Tavares, Unidade Móvel, Centro de Mídia Independente, Cobaia e Frente 3 de Fevereiro.

◁ The Revolution Will Not Be Televised ▷

Susanne Bürner, *50.000.000 CAN'T BE WRONG*, 2006, 6.24 min

Susanne Bürner's video project captures the bodily and emotional reactions of people. The German artist realized several projects where she manipulated the images in her videos, erasing some "details". *50,000,000 CAN'T BE WRONG* shows groups of people expressing longing and despair through their mimics and gestures. However, the object of their desires is missing. He/she is off-frame, withheld from the gaze of the viewer. All the traces referring to him/her are erased from the footage. What's left is the reflection in the faces of the fans, this abstract crowd celebrating a secret hero. The only indication of the absent protagonist is through the work's title. In 1959 Elvis Presley had published a compilation of his songs entitled *50.000.000 Elvis Fans Can't Be Wrong*. Hereby, he was one of the first rock musicians to incorporate his fans actively in the justification of his existence as an artist.



Due to the strong domination of female presence, the video *50,000,000 CAN'T BE WRONG* is also a good illustration of Gustave Le Bon's definition of the crowd. According to Le Bon, the crowd is rather feminine in nature because of its close vicinity to "the nature" and of its versatile character. Impulsive, mobile and irritable, as Le Bon would say, the crowd doesn't know the meaning of doubt or incertitude and is always extreme. How can the crowd transform the individual who plunges into it at such depth? With the followers of Le Bon, from Gabriel Tarde to Elias Canetti, the concept of imitation has been regularly invoked in order to explain this increasing power. Individuals in a crowd get a collective soul. In the collective soul the intellectual aptitudes of people and their individuality fade out. In the crowd, the individual acquires a feeling of invisible power. With this video Susanne Bürner invites the spectator to be part of this craziness and to plunge into any big fans mass meeting.

R.E.P. group, *We Will R.E.P. You*, Untitled Action, R.E.P. Party 2005-2007, 3.40 min

December, 2004. While the Orange Revolution unfurled over Ukraine, about a twenty artists slipped into the crowd of protestors, militant campers and police, and rejoiced in this unique opportunity to exploit a new field of political action. The R.E.P. group – Revolutionary Experimental Space – had just been born and, with it, a whole new art scene in Ukraine. Unpredictable, audacious and captivated by questions linked to language, representation of political power in Ukraine and the body practice in public space, the R.E.P. group has been continuing its investigations since the events of 2004. Today, the group is reduced to six members: *Mykyta Kadan* (born 1982 in Kyiv), *Janna Kadyrova* (born 1981 in Brovary), *Volodymyr Kuznetsov* (born 1976 in Lutsk), *Lada Nakonechna* (born 1981 in Dnipropetrovsk), *Kseniya Gnylytska* (born 1984 in Kyiv) and *Lesya Khomeno* (born 1980 in Kyiv).



During the Orange Revolution and in the period after, Kiev became a permanent theater for demonstration and protest. Taking advantage of this situation, the R.E.P. group realized a couple of street performances using the codes and the visual aspect of protest to appear in the same context but demonstrating for different reasons, topics and ideas than all the other demonstrators. Making use of stylistics, themes, tricks and attributes of a street politics (street rallies with banners and megaphones, “propaganda” tents, flags, leaflets...) the artists boldly invade everyday life and cultivate their extreme metaphors.

Radek Community, *Demonstration*, 2006, 5.45 min

Radek Community is a group of young artists, activists and musicians set up in Moscow in 1997 around the school of Anatoly Osmolovsky and Avdey Ter-Oganyan. Its name derives from the Radek journal of the 1990s, named in honor of the famous Soviet leftist opposition politician and revolutionary, Karl Radek. United in their rejection of the visual power of the image and its commercial use of art, Radek Community constructs its action strategies from an ironic, mocking, ideological critique of an area that suddenly passed from socialist regime to one of globalised liberalism. Right from the start, the group has made its mark with its political, highly critical urban interventions, such as the occasion during the 1999 electoral campaign when they burst into the Lenin Mausoleum in Red Square waving a banner bearing the words “Against All”, or when they staged a real hunger strike during the first Prague Biennale in 2003, outside the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art – a message for workers in the East, but also a temporary magnifying glass on the relationship between protest and power.



The video *Demonstration* shows a strange demonstration filmed in Moscow. For its action the Radek group had chosen the Barrikadnaya Underground station at the point where traffic lights regulate the flow of pedestrians on their way to work. Members of the group with slogans on red banners accompany the pedestrians as they cross the road, giving the impression of a real demonstration. As they say themselves, all the features of a demonstration are visible – the crowds, the slogans, a street in the centre of the city and the blocked traffic. Marx’s idea about the self-awareness of the revolutionary class appears in action!

Radek Community is a group of artists, cultural activists, authors, musicians – currently Maxim Karakulov (b. 1977), David Ter-Oganyan (1981), Pavel Mikitenko (1977), Petr Bystrov (1981), Alexander Korneev (1980), Alexey Buldakov (1980), Andrei Serguenco (1977), Vladis Shapovalov (1981).

Igor Grubić, *East Side Story*, photo&video installation, 2008

The installation *East Side Story* by Igor Grubić is based on the events that took place in the streets of Belgrade (2001) and Zagreb (2002), when the participants of the Gay Pride parade, were exposed, based on similar matrices of violence, to verbal and physical lynching at the hands of organised neo-Nazi groups and passers-by that found themselves on the spot. The work consists of a two-channel video installation and a series of eleven photographs: one video consists of TV footage presenting alternating scenes of violence from the two cities, whereas the other is a dance re-enactment of these events, performed by a dance group from Zagreb; the photographs show “frozen” dancing figures in the course of this dance intervention in the streets of Zagreb. The dramaturgic structure of the work focuses on the media representation of real events, foregrounding distressing and frightening scenes of violence, which constitute a warning that extreme nationalism, in the absence of an immediate “threatening” ethnic Other, finds a new victim in the shape of “internal enemy”, embodied by sexual minorities in this case. On the other screen, four dancers perform, individually and as a group, their own interpretation of the events, imitating certain gestures and scenes seen in the TV footage of the event and producing a kind of cathartic effect in the viewer. Finally, the “living sculptures” in the photographs represent isolated bodily gestures that translate the interpretation of a particular event into universal signs of aggression, hatred, suffering and pain.



East Side Story should not be viewed solely as a socially engaged work of art, but also as a work which at the same time ponders, through itself, the place of socially engaged art in society. Grubić’s interventionist aesthetic act in public space in itself exteriorizes the ambiguity of visibility and invisibility attendant upon such artistic practice, especially those projects whose acts are subtle and unobtrusive, and require being inscribed into a technical picture in order to form a chain of signs that will transfer the artist’s message in an integral manner to a broader body of recipients.

☐ **Dejan Sretenović, curator of Museum of Contemporary Art - Belgrade; excerpt** ☐

Fia Backström, *HERD INSTINCT 360°*, ongoing project initiated in 2006

Cult action, group therapy, corporate brain washed consumer combatants. Together we feel good. Crowd behavior: removing the inhibitions of the individual, no personal responsibility. Yet community is pressure. *HERD INSTINCT 360°* is an invitation to a group of people to be, see, discuss, and listen to talks about community.

Community - the formerly functional organization of people into pockets of activity, the dead end possibility of the communist collective manifestations in Russia and China, the unspecific and affirming notions of community some works of art rest upon, the increasing sophistication of corporate communal behavior and outreach, the Hippie yearnings for a return to the primal gathering, the exclusive clubs building a 'We-They identity' paving the way for local and global gated communities, the projection of inherent goodness and empowerment from 'productive get-togethers', from the tiniest family unit to the nationalistic one, the pretense of equality. What was to stir action now makes stale.



Let's have negative group expectations? Yet what experience can be outside of it? Community as communication as co-appearance - Stay Connected.

HERD INSTINCT 360° (2006), a staged situation with sacred undertones, including lectures, performances and communal intake, where the other side of human collective behavior, in society at large as well as in the art-world, is investigated.

⊂ **Fia Backström** ⊃

Sharon Hayes, *I March in the Parade of Liberty But as Long as I Love You I Am Not Free*, sound installation (recording of the live performance), 2007



New York-based artist Sharon Hayes works in performance, video, and installation, creating situations that expose dramatic frictions between collective activities and personal actions. With interventions that are inspired by the language of politics and the dramaturgy of theater, Hayes had staged protests, delivered speeches, and organized demonstrations in which crowds and individuals were invited to rethink their roles in the construction of public opinion. The sound piece *I March in the Parade of Liberty But as Long as I Love You I'm Not Free* is the result of the performance by the artist reading a love letter in the streets of New York through a megaphone. Claiming her love to everybody, Sharon Hayes creates a distance and collusion between the intimacy of a love affair and the fact of doing it in public space. For *No More Reality*, the sound piece, recorded live during her performance, is broadcasted in an unusual interstitial space. Continuing the artist's interrogation of the infinitesimal distance that separates the public from the private, this work is a reflection on the difference between speaking and listening—a kind of confession combining the idiom of politics, the transmission of secrets, and the language of love.

◁ <http://www.shaze.info> ▷

Claire Fontaine, *Brickbats*, 2008

Claire Fontaine is a Paris-based collective artist, founded in 2004. After lifting her name from a popular brand of school notebooks, Claire Fontaine declared herself a “readymade artist” and began to elaborate a version of neo-conceptual art that often looks like other people’s work. Working in neon, video, sculpture, painting and text, her practice can be described as an ongoing interrogation of the political impotence and the crisis of singularity that seem to define contemporary art today. But if the artist herself is the subjective equivalent of a urinal or a Brillo box - as displaced, deprived of its use value, and exchangeable as the products she makes - there is always the possibility of what she calls the “human strike.”



Claire Fontaine uses her freshness and youth to make herself a whatever-singularity and an existential terrorist in search of subjective emancipation. She grows up among the ruins of the notion of authorship, experimenting with collective protocols of production, détournements, and the production of various devices for the sharing of intellectual and private property. The series *Brickbats* interrogates the power of language on people and the relationship between cultures and products.

⊂ **Claire Fontaine** ⊃

Olga Kisseleva, *(in)visible*, Paris, Kiev, New-York, 2007

Kisseleva's project "(in)visible" deals with the conflicts and tensions created by the new way of dividing up and sharing out the world.

At times, certain parts of the world seem to be out of control, lacking order or "Legitimate" power, at least in the eyes of the huge multinationals, the world's new masters. They are usually countries that so far have not been crisscrossed by pipelines and where there are still no sprawling conurbations, no McDonald's or high-tech aquatic leisure centres. So the "major" countries, even the actual companies involved, like multinational empires, set off to "conquer" new territories and parcel out countries and continents amongst themselves, intent on getting their pipeline systems installed and their various products marketed on a grand scale.

Rwanda and Nicaragua, Afghanistan and Iraq, Georgia, Chechnya, Bosnia, Ukraine, Somalia, Israel, Palestine: in the past few years many countries have suffered and are suffering from attempts to divide them up in this way. The "rose" and "orange" revolutions that took place in Georgia and Ukraine may not be comparable with genocide campaigns carried out in Africa or "commando" operations in the Middle East, but overall, the scenario is always similar. First there are the pretexts: defending human rights, conducting an urgent anti-terrorist operation, remedying social injustice or helping the victims of a natural disaster. Next come discussions about sharing markets, and the immediate question of what proportion of orders should be carried off by Total, compared with Shell or Gazprom, takes precedence over "humanitarian" motives.



These photographs, taken at protest demonstrations in Ramallah, Kiev, Porto Alegre and Kashmir, represent a counterbalance to the "virtual postcards" that portray these conditions of conquest. These images were shot in black and white, and include no legible symbols or texts. Despite the differences in the facts that lay behind the protests documented here, we can see one thing in all of them: people who do not accept this division of the spoils.

◁ **Viktor Misiano, Chief editor of the Moscow Art Magazine; excerpt** ▷

Marta Popivoda / [illegal_cinema], ongoing project, established in 2007

[illegal_cinema] is conceived as an open (self-) educational project of exchange and contextualization of the auteur, documentary, political, activist, queer, anarchist, censored and other marginalized and in the local context hardly accessible films. The project is open to everyone interested to propose films, with obligation to speak about them, to open up discussion, or to invite guests – wherewith we try to erase the boundaries between the editor (curator) and audience and to perform a long-term process of (collective) self-education. During its realization the project is constantly developing and expanding its original framework, generating different program-lines and trying to explore new modes of facilitating art and culture as a space for diverse knowledge production.

As we consider continuity and regularity crucial for sustaining an influence on a context, the project is being realized since June 2007, every Sunday at the same time (6 p.m.), without any break during the year. The project is taking place in the new venue hosting the independent scene in Belgrade (Magacin u Kraljevića Marka), and is organized by TkH-platform <www.tkh-generator.net>, in collaboration with the platform of the Belgrade independent scene Druga scena (Other Scene) <www.drugascena.org>.



In collaboration with 'No More Reality: Crowd and Performance' the project [illegal_cinema] appears as new edition of thematic cinema which gathers a number of films related to the topics of crowd, demonstration, micro and macro revolutions. Basic idea of the [illegal_cinema] in context of this exhibition is to be a platform for further discussion and consideration of the

topics. Also, one of the aims of bringing this kind of community based projects in the context of art institutions is to legitimize socio-cultural engagement as artistic practice itself. I would like to make a shift from the concept of "art as cultural practice" which is quite popular in recent years, toward the concept of "cultural practice as art", which I consider more problematic and problematizing.

All participating artists, curators, staff of the exhibition and its audience are invited to propose film/s for the programme of Istanbul edition of the [illegal_cinema] project.

◁ Marta Popivoda ▷

Ciprian Muresan / [*Auto-da-Fé*], 2008

A few pages from Elias Canetti's 'Die Blendung' / 'Auto-da-Fé' (1932) are graffitied on walls throughout the cities of Romania.

The text acquires a monumental quality, while the processes of subjective dissolution it describes are embedded into the monumental. The resonance of each sentence, its persistent attempts to locate and rearrange the flotsam of a disintegrating subjectivity, are set against the immobility of walls and enclosures. The rambling monologue that Canetti's protagonist addresses to his library has been interpreted by literary critics as a significant document of the 'end of modernism', shattered utopias and fragmented beliefs. The artist's strategy of dispersing the text replicates to an extent the destructive acceleration written by Canetti into modern urban space.



But by painstakingly recomposing the text from its scattered bits, Ciprian Muresan also engages the transition between modernism and its post-modernities as a historical point where the monumental needs to be re-evaluated. Between the detritus of modernism and post-modern equivocation, Muresan's ambivalent monument to Canetti, to alienating spaces and to the capacity of speech of defining and holding together a subjectivity, embodies the experience of those evacuated, dispossessed of their right to the city and pushed to the very margins of social life.

◁ Mihnea Mircan, 2008 ▷

**Ecstasy, Fear & Number:
From the "Man in the Crowd" to the Self-Organizing Multitude**
Lecture by Brian Holmes

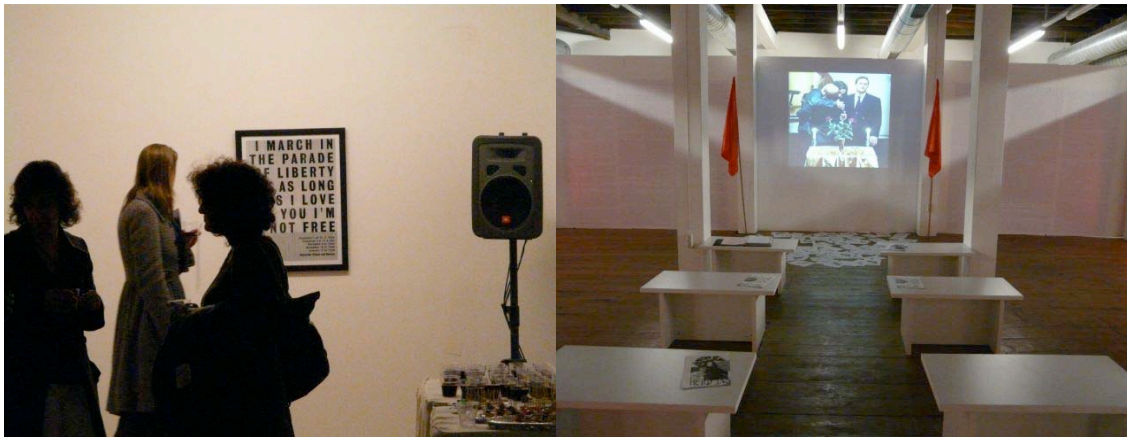


How to put the "public" back into the space of the city? Between the raw police repression of demonstrations in the United States and the open anarchist rebellions of Greece lies an ambiguous arena of individual expression, nascent self-organization and attempted control, where the political dimension of urban life is risked, lost and sometimes regained. The exhibition "*No More Reality [Crowd and Performance: demonstration, public space, use of body]*," curated by Jelena Vesić and Claire Staebler, offers a chance to examine a wide range of artistic approaches to the ecstatic and frightening element of number, with its invitation to self-dissolution and/or collective agency. Do we face an environment of simulation and simulacra, a fully manipulated realm where every significant gesture has been foreseen or even scripted in advance? Is the violence of the state and the mob the only alternative to the submissive acceptance of neutralizing control? Or are there still ways to elicit a public confrontation over substantial issues, by subverting the figures of seduction, indifference and self-interest that contemporary democracies celebrate as an ideal and enforce as a norm?

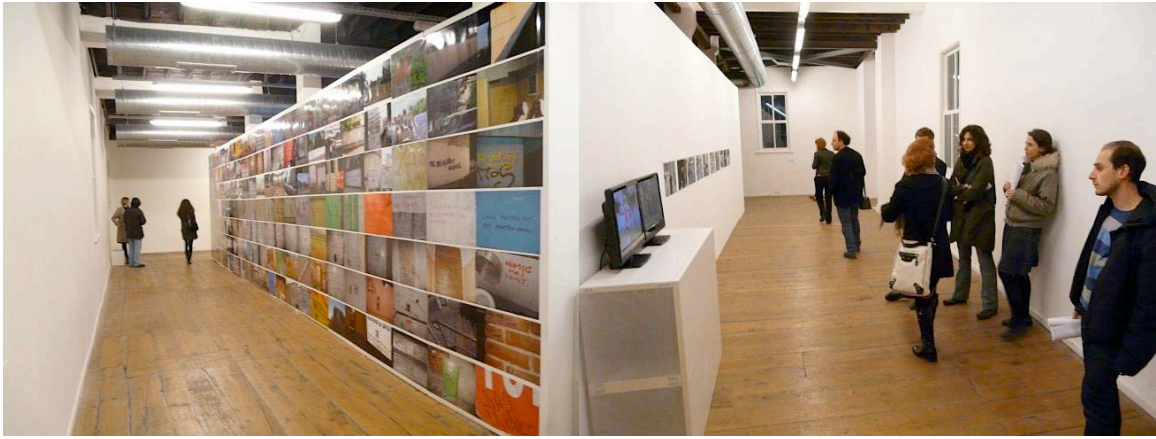
This lecture situates the recent transformations of politicized public space in a longer history stretching back through the mid-twentieth century phenomenon of mass and leader, towards earlier experiences of possibility and panic in the newly commodified urban realm. What emerges is a matrix of possibilities and traps, overlaying each other in the persistent temptation of the crowd.

┌ Brian Holmes ┐

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	(universal equivalent) Flâneur King Mob (popular panic)	<i>"Vaporization and centralization of the self."</i> (Charles Baudelaire)
Crowd (1848)		
	(constructivism) New Man Herrenmensch (cult of the leader)	<i>"Let him assemble us all into his machine."</i> (Matthew Josephson, on Henry Ford)
Mass (1917)		
	(neural net) Swarm Traffic Flow (simulacrum)	<i>"Multiplicity's score is written by the General Intellect."</i> (Paolo Virno)
Multitude (1968)		

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