

Performance now v.9

Η πράξη της περφόρμανς: διαδικασία
και κριτική παιδαγωγική

16.03.2022

Εύα Γιαννακοπούλου
10:00

03.05.2022

Jorge Cabieses Valdes
18:00

06.04.2022

Μαρία Νικηφοράκη
10:00

23.03.2022

Δανάη Θεοδορίδου
10:00

04.05.2022

Δημήτρης Μπαμπίλης
10:00

Performance now v.9

13.04.2022

Γεωργία Σαγή
10:00

30.03.2022

Πάνος Σκλαβενίτης
10:00

11.05.2022

Λίτσα Κιούση
10:00

Performance praxis:

process and critical pedagogy

Η πράξη της περφόρμανς: διαδικασία και
κριτική παιδαγωγική
Μάρτιος - Νοέμβριος

Στο Performance now v.9 μας ενδιαφέρει να
επισκευάσουμε στις διαδικασίες παραγωγής
των έργων περφόρμανς και στις κριτικές
μεθοδολογίες δυνατότητες που προκύπτουν
από την εξέταση τους. Πως μπορούν
αυτές ν' ανταποκριθούν ως μέρος μιας
κριτικής παιδαγωγικής της περφόρμανς;
Πως μπορεί αυτή να προωθήσει τη μη
παραδοχική εκπαίδευση, τη συλλογική
δημιουργία γνώσης, τη δημιουργική και
απολευτερωτική δράση; Πως μπορεί η
γνώση αυτή να έχει εφαρμογή και επίδραση
σε άλλα πεδία της κοινωνικής ζωής;

Σύνδεση με τους
επιστημονικούς χώρους!

Οι διαλέξεις θα αναρτούνται για
μία εβδομάδα στο:
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Δρ. Αγγελική Αυγητίδου
Αντιπληκτρία καθηγήτρια,
Τμήμα Επιστημών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

Δρ. Φωτεινή Καλλή
Διδάσκουσα με το Πρόγραμμα απόκτησης
ακαδημαϊκής ειδικότητας,
Τμήμα Επιστημών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

Στραγγυλή Τράπεζα: Η παιδαγωγική
της περφόρμανς
Μάιος

Πως η διαδικασία παραγωγής ενός έργου
περφόρμανς μπορεί να μετατραπεί σε
παιδαγωγική μεθοδολογία; Ποιες πρακτικές
από το χώρο των παραδοσιακών τεχνών
μπορούν να βρουν εφαρμογή σε μια
παιδαγωγική προσέγγιση της τέχνης;
αυτής. Με ποιον τρόπο το σώμα μπορεί να
μετατραπεί από αντικείμενο παρατήρησης
σε μέσο παρατήρησης; Μπορεί η τέχνη
της περφόρμανς να χρησιμεύσει
ως παιδαγωγικό εργαλείο προσωπικής
ανάπτυξης και καλλιτεχνικής διακρίσεως
στην αντιστάση μιας παιδαγωγικής που
εστιάζει στη κατάρτιση της δεξιοτεχνίας;
Αυτά είναι μερικά από τα ερωτήματα τα
οποία θα κληθούν οι προσκεκλημένοι/
προκαλεγμένοι της στραγγυλής τράπεζας
να συζητήσουν σε μια προσπάθεια να
βρούμε το κοινό έδαφος πάνω στο οποίο
διαφορετικές παιδαγωγικές μεθοδολογίες
μπορούν να βρουν εφαρμογή.

Συντονισμός στραγγυλής τράπεζας

Δρ. Φωτεινή Καλλή
Διδάσκουσα - Πρόγραμμα «Απόκτηση
ακαδημαϊκής ειδικότητας»,
Τμήμα Επιστημών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

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Ιούνιος - Νοέμβριος

Στα εργαστήρια αυτά οι φοιτητές και
οι φοιτήτριες του Τμήματος μπορούν να
έρχονται σε επαφή με διαφορετικές
προσεγγίσεις της περφόρμανς και της
διαδικασίας παραγωγής έργων μέσα
από πρωτότυπες προσεγγίσεις που έχουν
αναπτύξει οι περφόρμαρ-εκπαιδευτές/
εκπαιδευτριες.

Συντονισμός εργαστηρίων

Μαρία Σιδήρη
Υποψήφια δίδακτρα,
Τμήμα Επιστημών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

Υπεύθυνος media

Νάσια Καρατσιρόκη
Φοιτήτρια,
Κλεινός Κομματός
Φοιτήτης

18.05.2022

Αλέξανδρος Μιχαήλ
10:00

25.05.2022

Γιάννης Παππάς
10:00



Τμήμα Επιστημών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών
Σχολή Καλών Τεχνών
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

Editors

Angeliki Avgitidou
Fotini Kalle

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Scientific Committee

Dr Angeliki Avgitidou, Associate Professor, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Art, University of Western Macedonia.

Dr Fotini Kalle, Teaching staff – Programme for Acquiring Academic Experience, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Art, University of Western Macedonia.

Organizing Committee

Dr Angeliki Avgitidou, Associate Professor, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Art, University of Western Macedonia.

Dr Fotini Kalle, Teaching staff – Programme for Acquiring Academic Experience, Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Art, University of Western Macedonia.

Communications officers

Media: Kleanthis Kommatas (student), Nasia Karatsiraki (student)
Newsletter, workshops: Maria Sideri (PhD student)

Co-organisers

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The editors and the writers

Book design

Ioannis Varvaresos

Poster design

Michail Semoglou

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Angeliki Avgitidou & Fotini Kalle
Editors

Performance now v.9

***Performance praxis:
process and critical pedagogy***

Publisher
Department of Fine and Applied Arts
School of Art
University of Western Macedonia

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Lectures

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Danae Theodoridou
Panos Sklavenitis
Maria Nikiforaki
Georgia Sagri
Jorge Cabieses-Valdés
Dimitris Bampilis
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Workshops

Eva Giannakopoulou
Panos Sklavenitis
Anna Tzakou

Round Table

Danae Theodoridou
Anna Tzakou
Marios Chatziprokopiou

Prologue

Performance now v.9

Performance praxis: process and critical pedagogy

As I have previously mentioned in the past, in 2010 we launched Performance now at the Department of Fine and Applied Arts “as an effort to create a flexible tool for the reflection, education and promotion of performance art in Greece” (Avgitidou, 2013, 9). Already from the sixth edition on “Performance methodologies and the urban landscape”, the demand for reflection on the “tools” of performance and performance methods appears, in that case the methods of intervention in public space and the public sphere. The subsequent editions (seventh and eighth) coincided with the COVID 19 pandemic. The measures imposed to combat it, created a strong desire for communication and collaboration. *Performance now 7* and *8* thus focused on filling this gap with artists’ presentations and with conducting online performances.

However, the years of teaching in the studio had long since generated thoughts and questions about the process of producing performance works and the implications and potentials of performance as a pedagogical tool. In the ninth edition, therefore, we examined the relationship between the process, production and pedagogy of performance. We focused on the processes of performance production and the research methodological possibilities that arise from their examination. The key questions we addressed were: How can these methodological possibilities be reproduced as part of a critical pedagogy of performance? How may this promote non-hierarchical education, collective knowledge creation, democratic and emancipatory action? How can this knowledge have application and impact in other fields of social life?

We chose to look at this through three different platforms spanning in time from March to November 2022. They were:

- **A series of 10 lectures by performance artists** (online). The artists emanated from the expanded field of performance art which has creative exchanges with theatre, digital media and dance. In the lectures, we focused on the production process of their works. In this volume, the artists answer the questions we posed them in relation to the themes we explore in this publication.
- **A series of workshops from performance professionals** (October-November 2022). In these workshops, conducted by Eva Giannakopoulou, Panos Sklavenitis and Anna Tzakou, students of the Department came into contact with different approaches to performance and the process of performance production through original approaches developed by the performers. In this volume you will find the description of these workshops, as well as photographic material from the workshops.
- Round table on the **pedagogy of performance** (online). A discussion with artists of performance and performing arts with the participation of Danae Theodoridou, Anna Tzakou and Marios Hatziprokopiou, moderated by Fotini Kalle and Angeliki Avgitidou. Some of the questions discussed were: How can the process of producing a performance piece be transformed into a pedagogical methodology? What practices from the field of performing arts can be applied in a pedagogical approach of such art? In what way can the body be transformed from an object of observation to a medium of observation? Can the art of performance be used as a pedagogical tool for personal development and artistic expansion in opposition to a pedagogy that focuses on the acquisition of skill? This volume also includes a reflective essay by Fotini Kalle, inspired by the discussion held during the roundtable.

Angeliki Avgitidou, April 2023.

Introduction

Teaching to learn: practicing critical pedagogy in the performance studio

Angeliki Avgitidou

Introduction and framework

The current reflection is based on my experience of teaching performance art in higher education, introducing art students to performance in their first and second year and delivering advanced classes later in their study. The way that I have structured the curriculum of the introductory course is through practice-based learning in basic elements of performance, progressively focusing on multiple ones or introducing specific concepts. The general objectives of this teaching are to create a space of open experimentation, an environment where students may learn from their peers and from themselves (the latter through self-reflection), to help students unlearn behaviours and attitudes towards art and art education that may inhibit their creativity, and to promote an understanding of practice as a locus of knowledge production. When I refer to *unlearning*, I refer to the interpretation provided by Paul Stewart, that un-learning is not about forgetting previously established views and behaviours but about remaining committed to the process of “re-learning” and “becoming” (2021). Theoretical affiliations of this article lie with the works of Paulo Freire, Bel Hooks and their recent interpretations from other scholars. In his book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1997, edition in Brazilian 1970), Paulo Freire criticises the “banking system”, an education where teachers as deemed as owners of knowledge “gifting” this knowledge to their students. Instead, he proposes an emancipatory education, an education in which people take hold of their own reflection and teachers and students are both subjects in revealing reality, critically acknowledging it but also (constantly) recreating it.

Freire has been very influential for his contemporaries, Bel Hooks included, and continues to be a primary reference for critical pedagogy today (Stewart, 2021; Shor, 1987; Kirylo, 1980).

Hooks agrees with Freire in his criticism of the banking system of education but also provides a feminist critique of his work (1994). In her book, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (1994) she unfolds her interest in supporting a democratic classroom, beyond hierarchies of knowledge possession and production while also acknowledging class, gender and race barriers.

Within this article I am reflecting on my own role as educator, how I unlearn myself what teaching means and what this role entails within critical pedagogy. In a self-reflexive account, I am examining the reasons why practice was disrupted during specific exercises and why the set goals were not achieved, my response to these disruptions and how it affected the course of the practice carried out in class. I am also observing the reflexive accounts of the students, how they themselves experienced these disruptions, as expressed in their discussions, how they responded to the changes I introduced and what they recognised as achieved goals in their practice.

Observing-Reflecting – Responding – Re-planning

There are a set of exercises that I am repeating each year, especially at beginner level. They consist of simple tasks or use a limited number of broad directions. The overall objectives are that students explore basic elements of performance, become more acquainted with using their body and explore objects and space as elements of performance. What I will be discussing here, is how, as a teacher, I deviate from the original planning of an exercise as a response to how students carry it out. I am using such an introductory exercise as an example.

One of the first exercises that we do in class is to perform with only an A4 sheet of paper as material [1].

[1] I was actually introduced to a similar exercise by performance pioneer Boris Nieslony, during a workshop for the Biennale of Contemporary Art of Thessaloniki in 2009.

The idea is that by limiting the elements/complexity of the performance the students will be able to focus on their exploratory and experimenting journey, which will hopefully unravel creative paths and may help them realize that any material and movement can form part or be a starting point of a performance. While explaining the exercise, I usually provide a few examples myself.

Having repeated this exercise in the past, has at times negatively affected it, in that I may *explain too much* (because I already have the experience of the way it developed before – the misunderstandings that have previously occurred, etc.), thus *leading* the exercise towards a specific unravelling or I may *curtail stages* of the exercise (again anticipating the way it developed before) by thinking “this is as far as it may go”, or assessing that “the goal for this stage of the exercise has been reached”. Questions that I pose myself in my self-reflection are: Did I lead them too much? Provide an example or examples that they were prone to copy? Did my examples restrict the scope of where this exercise could go? Was there an instruction missing that mislead the students as to the task at hand?

This exercise is carried out individually by students who perform at the same time. I observed that occasionally, interactions among two or sometimes more students were occurring. At one occasion this exercise developed into a group action of an unuttered script. In observing these unplanned interactions, I noted that a number of behaviours/processes were developing: *copying* the other student’s action, *following* and *expanding* their action, *disrupting* the action, *intervening* and *changing* the action with the result of *collaborating* in a new action. In response to this development, I chose to prolong the exercise by asking students to create pairs with the person they felt an affinity with and develop an action that they would perform for the rest of the group. This was an expansion of the exercise which was not planned and a rare opportunity for the students to negotiate their performance activity with others while practicing it. It was also an opportunity to create connections between the group which I have found out enhance the educational experience and provide a valuable example of the unexpected opportunities of the live event.

Unexplored Potential, Opportunities and Revelations

How may we say something with just a piece of paper?, I asked once while explaining the exercise. It was a rhetorical question but one student replied “we write in it!”, referring to the way students have learned to communicate in school. Stories and narratives arise in the student actions even when a simple task is asked of them (such as “create a performance with a piece of paper”). Narratives creep into this exercise in the form of *creating a recognizable image* (ex. a bird with paper wings) or *a story*. My assessment is that stories at this stage restrict exploration by fitting too early into something recognizable and frankly too specific. Experimentation in knowledge building is not what students are accustomed to within secondary education, which is usually closer to the “banking system” Freire described in his texts. They are more familiar with communicating stories in oral narration or writing than with bodily expression or art. Students themselves are always quick to state in the beginning of classes that they are introvert, they are not expressive, they are not expressive with their bodies, they are not athletic, etc., noting down their self-restrictions. Examples of questions that I pose to myself as a response to these identified restrictions are: how do I get students to come off the floor and open up to space when they are doing a simple task? or, how may they expand their gestures? In response, I sometimes introduce a suggestion of “*what if?*” to open up expressive possibilities for the students. I choose this phrasing as to not criticize what is happening as deficiency or failure. But there are also times where I change the lesson in response to noticed self-restrictions in the students, unexplored potential and revelations of potential, inspired by what is unravelling in class.

Here’s an example a rare opportunity created; this was the fact that only two students turned up in class so we had plenty of time. After a time of experimentation within the aforementioned exercise, students were asked to create a short performance. There were a few things that I noticed, common in the beginning of the students’ practice. An inward attitude (no eye-contact with the audience), small, undecipherable gestures and an apprehension with the end of the performance.

After both the students presented, I asked them to each re-create the performance of the other person, something that I tried for the first time. It was left open how close to the original performance they were going to aim for. This transformation of performer to audience-with an inside knowledge, led them to a number of realizations about their own performance, realizations that they consequently discussed. These were realizations of:

- the degree of their intentions coming through in their performance;
- how the audience may bestow importance on different elements than the artist does/has planned;
- how performance elements are signs that the audience is constantly interpreting (which lead to a discussion about choices and planning in creating a performance) and, lastly,
- realizations about the existence/importance of sound in the performance.

Conclusion

Criticism on predefined goals in teaching as part of a technocratic non-flexible way of teaching have been expressed by Paulo Freire and Bel Hooks in the past. More recent criticism has exposed productivity-linked education and measurable results as part of the neo-liberal agenda (Stewart, 2021). Amy E. Laboe talks of “forces that deaden the self” when referring to top-down evaluation, overly prescriptive curriculum, test-based accountability...” (2020, 95). Hooks supports that “agendas” of teaching should be flexible and allow for “spontaneous shifts in direction” (1999, 16-7). I have explored how this developed in the practice of a specific exercise in class.

In this process, self-reflection for the students was aided by:

- A condition of conversation and discussion across different optics, in pairs, groups or the class as a whole
- The introduction of analytical and critical tools such as discussion with reflective questions, self-reflexion texts and diaries, and assessment of one-another. Self-reflection texts specifically have led to the creation of awareness of the performance elements (Avgitidou, 2020).

Freire talks about agency and responsibility of, among others, the students. According to him an emancipatory education is an education in which people take hold of their own reflection (ibid., 148). Hooks also supports that “making the classroom a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute is a central goal of transformative pedagogy” (1999, 39). In this process, the students were aided by taking on different roles within the classroom setting, some that the teacher was previously only responsible for, such as assessment, and using self-reflection diaries as a way of tracing their own path in learning and what contributed to it.

For myself as teacher, practicing self-reflection was part of a commitment to a collective process of learning by:

- Keeping open a state of constant reconfiguration by responding to needs, urgencies and desires. Freire talks of the student-teacher relationship as a living relationship in which the teacher responds to what the students want to learn more! (ibid., 109). This is not a one-way street as the humanist pedagogue’s aim is the transformation of reality by and with others, an emancipatory act for the teacher and the students (not *for* the students).
- Returning to questions such as:
- Is there something unravelling presently that provides the opportunity to highlight another aspect of performance for exploration? Has the “failure” to achieve the goals of the exercise that I had set, opened up opportunities for other explorations/objectives?
- In conclusion, appreciating teaching as something that is configured collectively, and knowledge as a continuous cooperative co-configuration, not a prepared product. Indeed, understanding performance itself as an interactive *collective process of learning*.

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Lectures

Performance now v.9

Η πράξη της περφόρμανς: διαδικασία και κριτική παιδαγωγική

16.03.2022

Εύα Γιαννακοπούλου
10:00

23.03.2022

Δανάη Θεοδωρίδου
10:00

30.03.2022

Πάνος Σκλαβενίτης
10:00

Η πράξη της περφόρμανς: διαδικασία και κριτική παιδαγωγική

Μάρτιος – Νοέμβριος

Στο Performance now v.9 μας ενδιαφέρει να εστιάσουμε στις διαδικασίες παραγωγής των έργων περφόρμανς και στις ερευνητικές μεθοδολογικές δυνατότητες που προκύπτουν από την εξέτασή τους. Πως μπορούν αυτές να αναπαράχουν ως μέρος μιας κριτικής παιδαγωγικής της περφόρμανς; Πως μπορεί αυτή να προωθήσει τη μη ιεραρχική εκπαίδευση, τη συλλογική δημιουργία γνώσης, τη δημοκρατική και απελευθερωτική δράση; Πως μπορεί η γνώση αυτή να έχει εφαρμογή και επίδραση σε άλλα πεδία της κοινωνικής ζωής;

Σύνδεση μέσω:
[zoom.us/j/nowmteetf1](https://tiny.cc/nowmteetf1)

Οι διαλέξεις θα αναρτώνται για μία εβδομάδα στο:
vimeo.com/performancestudio

Στρογγυλή Τράπεζα: Η παιδαγωγική της περφόρμανς

Μάιος

Πως η διαδικασία παραγωγής ενός έργου περφόρμανς μπορεί να μετατραπεί σε παιδαγωγική μεθοδολογία; Ποιες πρακτικές από το χώρο των παραστατικών τεχνών μπορούν να βρουν εφαρμογή σε μια παιδαγωγική προσέγγιση της τέχνης αυτής; Με ποιον τρόπο το σώμα μπορεί να μετατραπεί από αντικείμενο παρατήρησης σε μέσο παρατήρησης; Μπορεί η τέχνη της περφόρμανς να χρησιμοποιηθεί ως παιδαγωγικό εργαλείο προσωπικής ανάπτυξης και καλλιτεχνικής διεύρυνσης στον αντίποδα μιας παιδαγωγικής που εστιάζει στη κατάρκτηση της δεξιοτεχνίας; Αυτό είναι μερικά από τα ερωτήματα τα οποία θα κληθούν οι προσκεκλημένοι/προσκεκλημένες της στρογγυλής τράπεζας να συζητήσουν σε μια προσπάθεια να βρεθεί το κοινό έδαφος πάνω στο οποίο διαφορετικές παιδαγωγικές μεθοδολογίες μπορούν να βρουν εφαρμογή.

Οργάνωση και συντονισμός

Δρ. Αγγελική Αυγητίδου
Αναπληρώτρια καθηγήτρια,
Τμήμα Εικαστικών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας.

Δρ. Φωτεινή Καλλέ
Διδάσκουσα με το Πρόγραμμα απόκτησης ακαδημαϊκής εμπειρίας,
Τμήμα Εικαστικών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας.

Συντονισμός στρογγυλής τράπεζας

Δρ. Φωτεινή Καλλέ
Διδάσκουσα - Πρόγραμμα «Απόκτηση ακαδημαϊκής εμπειρίας»,
Τμήμα Εικαστικών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας.

Μαρία Σιδέρη
Υποψήφια διδάκτωρ,
Τμήμα Εικαστικών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών,
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας.

Υπεύθυνοι media
Νάσια Καρατσιράκη
Φοιτήτρια
Κλεάνθης Κοιμιάς
Φοιτητής

03.05.2022

Jorge Cabieses Valdes
18:00

06.04.2022

Μαρία Νικηφοράκη
10:00

04.05.2022

Δημήτρης Μπαμπίλης
10:00

13.04.2022

Γεωργία Σαγρή
10:00

11.05.2022

Λίτσα Κιούση
10:00

18.05.2022

Αλέξανδρος Μιχαήλ
10:00

25.05.2022

Γιάννης Παππάς
10:00



Τμήμα Εικαστικών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών
Σχολή Καλών Τεχνών
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

My projects require a research process, as they are related to groups or assemblies of people with specific political or social demands. Another source of inspiration are my motorcycle rides around the city. My motorcycle is actually my art studio, as I spend several hours driving per day. It is there that I have conceived and designed most of my works. To be more specific, my visits to paradoxical, surprising and undisciplined places. These are places from which both the “authoritarian” aspect of time and the control it exercises on our lives are absent. This is where I usually provoke various unexpected actions for the sake of the unexpected event. I am referring to the interpersonal entanglements of a rather suffering subject attempting to establish relationships with people.

I also draw inspiration from my son and from parenthood, from the LGBTQIA+ issues and the consequent urgent claims that arise, from the turbulence that, at long last, disturbs the stereotypical depictions of gender. A parallel source of inspiration is the post-human condition and the adventures of our fragmented online identity, the body politics and the parties where anything is possible such as giving birth on stage or going collectively into trance.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

My projects are based on a research process that entails fieldwork, participatory observation and very often archival research and/or references to theoretical sources related to the subject matter of the project I am preparing. I think that the methodology applied in educational contexts can be nurtured by this way of work. In addition to that, there are specific artistic "tools" which can be extremely useful. The process of artistic production in visual arts is one of them, as it can be part of the final result or the result itself. This fact can potentially bridge the gap between artistic practice and educational process and transform them into one. Moreover, it is an open field of negotiation that allows cross-sectoral and interdisciplinary ways of work. Moreover, it allows experimentation and thoughts that escape the formal dichotomy between good and bad, permissible and impermissible, infringing and submissive behavior. I believe that when artistic methods and education are as one, there is no typical categorization of ideas, roles and methodologies. This particular condition is a way of dismantling the classical methodological approach to education and as such it is very beneficial.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

If I could define what performance is, I would say that it is a series of actions, reactions and interactions in constant negotiation which escapes the absolute control of the active subjects and often depends on unexpected associations or the exchange of roles and positions. I would characterize it, therefore, as a kind of gathering or assembly in an eternal process in which different associations and conceptualizations emerge. This is extremely useful on an educational level, because it challenges formal hierarchies by suggesting a horizontal and more democratic relationship with the others. In addition, the performance presupposes correlations, that is, it creates a collective experience during the educational process, which forms a "universe" of political and emotional relationships and transactions, subverting or redefining our coexistence with people. The performative methods applied in the educational process can be a powerful "tool", not precisely because of their originality, but because they can be redefined in relation to the process taking place and the criticism entailed in the core of such practice.

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image,...?

I don't perceive my work as a series of 'projects' but as the result of artistic research that moves organically from one stage to the next based on its goals and audience's feedback.

In particular in the last 7-8 years, in an effort to move beyond the capitalist limits of the "project horizon" (Bojana Kunst), my creation is organized through thematic units that include different forms of work (performances, participatory workshops, artistic publications etc.), and not through self-existing artistic 'products'. From 2015 to 2018, I worked on the notion of the "social imaginary". From 2019 onwards, I work on the practice of democracy and its relation to performance.

The main concept of a period of work suggests the structure of the specific period. For example, in the case of the practice of democracy, I work each time on a specific practice (public speaking, language of protests, practice of assembling, etc.), which I first deconstruct and then reconstruct performatively.

Beyond that, I'm often motivated by a certain phrase, usually my work starts with a title. Other times I am motivated by something completely random, something I heard or saw, most of the time some socio-political event. In any case, I try to listen to the organic evolution of both the work itself (where the work is and what it asks as the next step), and myself as an artist (where I am and what I need for the next step).

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

The production of my artistic work is directly connected to my pedagogical methods of work. My artistic and pedagogical (university art education, participatory workshops with a wide audience) work are intertwined in a way that does not move in one direction (from the artistic to the educational) but always mutually between the two. In both cases, I experiment with tools of thought, movement, writing, coexistence and exchange that can:

1. motivate questions, using them as working material rather than a process that asks for “correct” answers
2. alienate, take the necessary distance to make things open in order to rediscover them
3. provoke speculative processes (artistically and socially)
4. reveal the materiality of the bodies (animate and inanimate) involved in the process
5. practice attention
6. explore the locality of the context in which they take place
7. “disrupt” established patterns and hierarchies
8. create the framework for the creation of commons

The above working principles are further analyzed in the book *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance* (Valiz, 2017), which I co-authored with K. Georgelou and E. Protopapas, and in my most recent book *PUBLICING: Practicing Democracy Through Performance* (Nissos, 2022). In both cases, these principles have emerged through several years of artistic research processes in the studio, the public space, the classroom.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Performance as an art genre emerged at a specific historical moment as a reaction to certain artistic and socio-political conditions, advocating values and practices such as horizontal collaboration, open artistic process, interdisciplinary coexistence, etc. It is indeed paradoxical (though unfortunately not rare) to work or teach an art form that espouses values such as the above, in a way that evokes authoritarian, hierarchical learning processes with the primary goal of gathering “skills” on the part of the participants.

In my work, politics is directly linked to the forms the body takes in public, in front of others. Theorist R. Schneider defines politics as the way “I appear to others, as others appear to me”, therefore as an embodied practice directly related to performance. What matters in political action is not only *what* is said or done but also *how* this happens. The performativity of political action is of the utmost importance.

Understanding the body as the basis of politics, I believe that performance processes are precisely those that can train us to connect the way we use and position our bodies in relation to other bodies, to the way we think, speak, feel and we act politically. From this point of view, performance is clearly also a powerful pedagogical tool, valuable for personal development, the cultivation of community consciousness and democratic exchange.

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

The process is not always the same. Usually, but not always, an idea comes first. In my work sometimes there is research and sometimes there is not, on occasion the work consists of the research itself.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

The educational projects always work in dialogue with the rest of my work, they are shaped by it and shape it in such a way that I wouldn't say that they are clearly distinguished from each other beyond the teaching role that they sometimes have.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Performance is a powerful tool, and when it's not done with that unbearable mannerism which has plagued us so much as viewers, it does all of the above and more. Performance is such a rich and open form that can draw from all social practices, all the physical actions of animals and plants, and everything else that one can imagine, it can take elements of them, synthesize them and above all, this is the rather important, it can isolate them.

What can compare to the ability of art to appropriate a religious ritual, a stone fight, the gait of a leopard, Gilgamesh's dialogues with Enkidu, the wind blowing over a swamp, a delirium, the utopian setting of a video game, an artificial intelligence lecture?

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

My art practice is situated in the intersection of performance art, film and dance. It uses choreography and performative strategies to introduce social connotation to the movement and the body and introduce emotional worlds as a political stance. My projects explore the personal and the political through a scope of choreo-politics, a term I borrow from writer and curator Andres Lepecki. A significant stage of my practise is choosing the “bodies” that I will collaborate with. I choose bodies whose social identity or activity carries in a broader sense a feel for “politics of resistance”. The study of movement (danced and not) and the performativity of those bodies is what comes at the next stage. I do this through organising workshops where we together explore movement and personal experience. All the above, amalgamates to a performance that seeks to express a political or emotional meaning through the use of movement or dance. Another critical phase of the creative process, is also choosing the location where the performance will take place which is usually in the public space. Picking a location within the public space to present a live performance is the step that offers meaning and gives final shape to the work. At this point I research the general history of the place along with the specific relationship to the bodies, where I finally arrive to a spot that can offer a mysterious and ritualistic dimension to the piece.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

The production part of a new work includes a thorough research, familiarization with ideas of the selected team and a period of study similar to anthropological fieldwork. During the research of a project particularly at the first steps of creating, I often collaborate with people from fields outside the art world. In this process resides an educational experience for both sides. This knowledge works as a tool for a continuous re-examination of the goals of the particular work, as well as the re-examination of the engagement with contemporary art in general. Experimenting with interdisciplinary strategies during the creation of a new work, is something that determines the methodology I use for the next phases which is fluid and adjusts to the needs of each project individually. The choices made, whether structural or visual are a result of the initiation with the team I choose to collaborate and carry the inspiration from their material and emotional world. The aim here is to deliver an honest message that carries primarily the ideology true to the group. This in turn makes me re-examine the “consciousness” of an art work through the eyes of “others” and this way often revisit my ideas remaining open to my initial impulse.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Performance art certainly functions as an educational tool because it includes familiarising with otherness, and uses learning as well as unlearning processes in relation to art practice or exploring ideas in general. Through performative practises or mediums that include physicality or corporeality, one can deepen their relation with themselves and deepen their relationship with the others, especially if the ideas being explored in an art project are socially sensitive. The same happens when people from interdisciplinary backgrounds collaborate and interact for the creation of a project. This collaboration carries learning processes as well. In addition to this, performance art often deals with matters of inclusivity and equality, which in turn leads to broadening and receiving a more holistic social consciousness as individuals and visual artists. However, because performance art brings together opposite collaborations and often contradictory messages, it often serves as a tool to mature ideas through disagreements and objections that eventually sharpen critical thinking. I believe that performance art offers a unique possibility to observe things critically and revisit ideas, precisely because it is an art medium carrying fluidity, adjustability as well as temporality. What is left behind is a sensation of lasting stimulations absorbed in a very personal way by both the participant and the viewer.

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

First of all, I collect ceramics or porcelain decorative artefacts. From that collection of, usually second hand items, I develop my work. On many occasions, I have dreams that offer me new ideas, sometimes of a symbolic nature, sometimes quite technical. With all this in mind, I begin to draw on notebooks. After many sketches and if I am sure of the project, I start constructing the final work.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

The production process offers many different technical solutions that I enjoy. They could be related to the construction of the piece itself or to the way it is displayed in a given space. These solutions, always very creative, conform a knowledge that I try to transmit to university students. I believe technical aspects of our artistic practice can somehow relate to the particular content or concept of an artist. I do not get involved in each student's interests or content but I do help them with the technical dimension of their work, thinking that these solutions will help them give shape to their, often ambiguous, thoughts.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Performance has always been a crucial aspect of my practice. But I do see performance as a medium not very different to painting or video and sculpture. I like to see my own production as not necessarily defined by a manner or an artistic medium, but as a process that deals with an enigma, which happens to somehow find its place in the cultural stream or local circuit. But performance has always to do with the event, therefore it can help make your ideas more visible. Because there is no filter, no time distance, the impact is direct.

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

The truth is that looking back, there are a series of steps that we, as APARÄMILLON creative team, follow more or less in a specific order, not according to the logic of a recipe, but discovering anew their necessity and resorting to them. Obviously, the discussion concerns what happens before, after or in parallel with the rehearsals, which inevitably comprise the most basic stage in the process of creating each of our projects, since that is the place and time for the collective composition and processing of its individual elements. But moving out of conviction towards a research process, and not to the construction of “well-made” performances, by recycling what we think succeeded in a previous work, everything starts with the discussion of the creative team about the directions we will follow in our research, regardless of the genre that we choose each time, and which is usually expressed in the form of a list of questions, a questionnaire. Then there is the period of desk research, where we look for sources and study those that seem capable of feeding us, followed by a section of visits to important places and interviews with people related to our topic (even if we have one ready, “given”, theatrical text by an author), a process that usually occurs in conjunction with the first period of rehearsals, until the more practical stage arrangement of what will be presented in the end begins. If this seems methodical, I assure you that in practice it is a storm of materials, ideas and people, which somehow eventually find their place, one next to the other. The starting point for all of this is usually a topic that concerns us or a text that has activated us. Personally, I also believe a lot in interdisciplinary dialogue, so there have also been performances born from the desire to respond to something I’ve seen.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

Precisely because we move based on research and not repetition, every project is in practice also a re-examination of the suitability of the tools we have used so far. Taking into account as well that we often work with non-professional actors/performers, lately in a hybrid mix of documentary and reality, the qualities of the cast move the kind of process we will follow. As is the case with whether we are working with someone for the first time or not. When, for example, the request is to create a stage ensemble, there will be a period of familiarization with the tools of acting and directing, without touching the theme or the text of the performance, a process that we do not follow when working with our stable partners or with non-professionals. In any case, however, there is always a debriefing process after the completion of a project, which almost always leads to a different version of the previous model or to its reinforcement, for example giving more time between each step. A useful conclusion is that just as each project requires a different type of presentation that corresponds to it, both in terms of form and content, it seems that the same happens with the process of its creation, although we will rarely get out of demanding research, which is somehow our only constant.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Having dealt with teaching performance in the study setting of both artists and teenagers, I can only answer absolutely vertically and positively. Yes, performance art is one of the most powerful tools for developing the personality and expanding the artistic horizons of a young person - or creator in progress, since its constitutional elements (me-here-now) are the foundations of our existence within society, regardless of the individual characteristics that may have the time, culture or place we happened to live in. Every attempt to connect with the community we belong to, every desire to understand the Other, every attempt to co-shape the perspectives that must inclusively make up the public sphere, will only have benefits from its encounter with the tools of performance. As long as it is led by suitable people, both with the necessary knowledge but also with heightened empathy, since the prevailing confusion around the term can give way to dangerous, if not abusive behaviors, in the false name of overstepping each person's boundaries, which ultimately serves the abuser. The examples that recently shook our field are not few, and they are a product of this literal power that the performance actually has on those who meet it for the first time. With an emphasis on the care for appropriate conditions, I believe that performance is not only appropriate, but irreplaceable for a pedagogical process.

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

Creating a new body of work can have various initiation points. It can be a conversation, an image, a conflict, a random phrase I might hear on the streets. The common factor is always the interest and need of articulating subjects that offer an insight into our complex existence. Once I identify the subject I want to explore, I begin a research using different forms and media, before I enter the studio employing more body-based methods.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

The workshops I facilitate are mostly based on the way I am creating my work. It is a wonderful and enriching opportunity to experience how all these tools can create a field that offers the possibility of research, choice, collaboration and propose new forms of collective action and encounters without hindering or nullifying the evolution of singularity.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Performance can absolutely serve as an effective pedagogical tool to sharpen awareness and sensitivity. It can provide a platform where different approaches, through negotiation, challenge of boundaries, trust, responsibility and care for the other and their vulnerability, create a temporary, tender reality.

Alexandros Michail

18.05.2022

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

There is always something putting things in motion. Usually it is an image, more or less clear, which carries an atmosphere, an emotional charge, however abstract it might be. Sometimes it is an idea that gives birth to images and creates a web of affiliations and nuances, even if they feel irrelevant at the beginning. Other times, it is just a gut feeling. Other times, again, it's all together: I am flooded with images, spaces, ideas, feelings. Often it is research, a colleague's input, or the context of an open call that will ignite the birth of an image.

In any occasion, these are all sparks at whose core lay hidden (awaiting to be unfolded) the world of the artwork. More significantly even, these sparks contain the energy (call it stamina, drive or persistence and patience) which I as an artist need in order to bring forth and materialize this original, abstract conception into the phenomenal world. These images can haunt me for years. They keep coming back again and again, always with the same force until I find the right context or opportunity to realize them. I distinguish these images from other, simpler, less persistent or momentary inspirations that come and go with no return.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

My artistic practice itself often entails creative group workshops with non-artists. The participants might belong to socially vulnerable communities (e.g. HIV positive individuals at the immersive installation *To Whom It May Concern*), or they may just be people who want to participate in the creative process of an art piece (e.g. the citizens of a small town in rural northern Greece, Kastoria, who participated in the immersive live installation *Into the Light* or in the visual installation regarding gender violence, *Behind Closed Doors*).

However, I would describe the creative work with each group as an artistic rather than an educational process. A process where I as an artist guide the group for several months at a time, through a deeply personal, symbolic, multiplex and multilayered collective artistic process which, upon my curation of the material, will form the entire world of the final artwork. Sometimes, the group's involvement concludes here. Consequently, I gather and curate the material shaping it into the final form of the artwork. Other times the group is actively engaged in yet another stage: that of transposing the original material into a live representation in the context of an immersive installation that might entail live or video and sound performances.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Certainly. I find this especially true in projects where I work with groups of non-artists and the collective process defines the final artwork, be it an immersive installation, performance, theatre piece or a combination of these artforms.

Even in cases where the group members do not participate actively in the final art piece, they have created deep bonds and shared a lot with each other within a safe space of creative freedom. Each participation is equally valued regardless of the level of contribution. This frame creates a potential for empowerment and emancipation for each individual participant but also for the community as an entity in itself. The symbolic language of art is a vehicle for, even in principle and unconsciously, emotionally informed communication and it opens up space for new meanings to emerge and be exchanged, personally as well as collectively, within an environment of unprecedented and profound connection that would be impossible through a mere exchange of thoughts and personal opinions.

In projects where the members of the creative group participate actively in the final artwork, the elements of personal development and community awareness building are even stronger.

I often hear participants in these groups describing this creative process as therapeutic. I am quite reserved to such comments and I jump in to remind them that I am an artist. I am not a therapist and they didn't have a therapeutic expectation when they joined this process. I understand that those beneficial aspects, personal development, community and awareness building, lay within the core of my methodology, however, for me, they are always a byproduct of the artistic procedure and not the outcome I aim for. My one and only concern as an artist is always the final artwork, its aesthetic and conceptual integrity.

1. Are there distinct stages in the creative process of your work? For example, do you do some research, are you motivated by a place, an idea, an image, ...?

Both the spontaneity of an idea and the in-depth study can serve as a reconstruction of stages and processes, before (process art), during (participatory art) and even after a performance, especially in case of a long duration performance. As I mentioned in the online lecture at the University of Western Macedonia, on the personal motivation of creating an artistic work or action, additionally to the conceptual framework, what I find important is the freedom of speech, appearance and action in the country or place where a performance is to take place. What follows then is a research or study of historical, spatial, social or political nature, and accordingly, compromises or modifications in its enactment which may be required.

It would be useful to mention some other practical contexts which are often omitted. Constraints and distinct stages such as deadlines for applications and proposals, budgets and costs of procedures until the project is completed, as well as the choice of the duration of a performative project in specific spaces and institutions, intertwined with the mobilization or limitation of an idea and thus with the stages of its implementation. Thus, beyond the initial inspiration, there follows the concretization of the action through research processes and studies towards its execution. Subsequently, many technical issues intervene, with which we are confronted and with which education could prepare students, using them as integral parts and tools for the best possible understanding, preparation and completion of an art performance.

2. In what way does the production process of your project inform the methodology you apply in an educational workshop or project?

Education bears the same communicative, physical and mental characteristics as participatory performance art, as a two-way process by which meanings and ideas are transmitted. In education, this performative process becomes almost indispensable if we consider the way in which teachers need to communicate, especially with young students, in order to keep their interest and participation uninterrupted. The pace, tone and general energy drawn during the lesson is ultimately one of the key elements that will attribute to the transmission of knowledge. Both performance and education are two-way processes in the transmission of meanings and ideas, through the body, the senses and affectivity.

Some practical stages that make up the final execution of a project such as:

- the initial triggering of an idea or inspiration and its concretization
- the research which needs to be studied, as well as combined with different fields of knowledge and collaborations to achieve optimum exploration
- the physical and psychological preparation, distinctly for each specific project depending on the needs of the project
- the methodologies and ways of documenting and communicating
- the way in which the spatial and material needs of the project are set up in relation to the duration of the project, with reference to specific spaces and conditions
- the budgets, costs and requirements of the project
- the empirical process during the execution and the “evidence” after its completion are a methodical set that feeds back and can be applied to educational programs of different ages and teaching.

In contemporary educational programs that apply performative methodologies, we observe that they mostly use the process of physical preparation (and less psychological exercises and practical preparations), which, clearly necessary and easily adaptable, facilitates individual and collective practice. As we mentioned, the combination of different disciplines and collaborations can shape a diverse teaching, and taking corporeal preparation as an example, exercises applied in theatre, dance, gymnastics, martial arts, the practices of various eastern philosophies, etc., can constitute useful educational tools.

3. Is performance art a powerful pedagogical tool for you? For example, can it become a tool for personal development and artistic expansion? Do you consider it as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue within a group?

Only a pluralistic exploration could offer and convey knowledge rather than information. The educator should always reflect this plural identity, because if the concept of humanity ends up becoming an individualized lesson, then we will realize that we have done something wrong. By drawing distinct lines in disciplinary courses, such as theory and practice, do we ultimately succeed in limiting the general scope of knowledge and research of any discipline or art? Everything is connected and co-existing, discourse, numbers, bodily and mental exercise, physics and biology, time and space, and this is how education should work: divisively and cumulatively/ individually and collectively.

It is of course useful to specialize in a certain field, but in the case of education it must be understood that this knowledge, in order to be transferred and to find its practice in our everyday life, it must be connected socially, because everything should concern all of us. Thus, all the sciences as well as the arts must be engaged and adapt in practice through teaching their contribution, as a means of sharpening community consciousness and democratic dialogue for an active interaction, applicable and influential in all fields of social life.

For example, if we talk about equality, then we must start with education itself, how it can have a NON-hierarchical form, how it can offer parity in all fields of knowledge, hopefully penetrating over time into the families that prepare children before they enter school. Finally, in education, it is important that there should be a free flow of ideas in order to raise questions, because the answers given so far seem to be incomplete. There are few omniscient people in the world and it is necessary to realize that, unfortunately, we are not some of them.

Finally, I would use Sigmund Freud's quote "Thought is action in rehearsal" as a literal clarification of the overall concept and process of performance. Performance art is a medium of psychokinetic exercise with multiple tools of expression and communication combining the transmission of both visual-acoustic and kinesthetic functions.

Workshops

Ectotherms and Vertebrates *Dual survival tactics on land and water*

Description and Educational Method of the Workshop

The workshop *Ectotherms and Vertebrates*, attempts to examine the dimension of the liquid element in contrasting or unexpected contexts. How do transitions and oppositions work in visual performance and what kind of fields are constituted? If contact with the liquid element is perceived as a potential condition of transformation for the human body, what are we transformed into when we swim on land or walk in the river?

Amphibians live in a wide range of habitats, including terrestrial, underground, forest or aquatic ecosystems. They live a double life between two elements and test the limits of fluidity that their amphibious life allows or does not allow.

The participating students were invited to explore the possibilities of an imaginary beach and an amphibious coexistence with other swimmers inside a university campus on a cold autumn afternoon.

The workshop began with an one-hour theoretical presentation during which we commented on works and artistic approaches that originate from the relationship between nature or natural elements and humans. The presentation focused on traditional rituals, contemporary performative tactics and performances that negotiate the foundation of nature and water in relation to “healing” habits of everyday life and female* embodied practices.

Visual examples such as Land Art, works by Ana Mendieta, Judy Chicago, Anna Halprin, the methods of the Indian guru Osho and theoretical references such as “The Caliban and the Witch” by S. Federici and excerpts from the book “Hydrofeminism: Or, on becoming a Body of Water” by A. Neimanis, were some of the references discussed during the presentation.

The aim of the first phase of the workshop, was to familiarize the participating students with theoretical and visual references related to ecofeminism and feminist environmental philosophy, as well as to create a base of embodied working methods that would serve in the performative presentation that would follow.

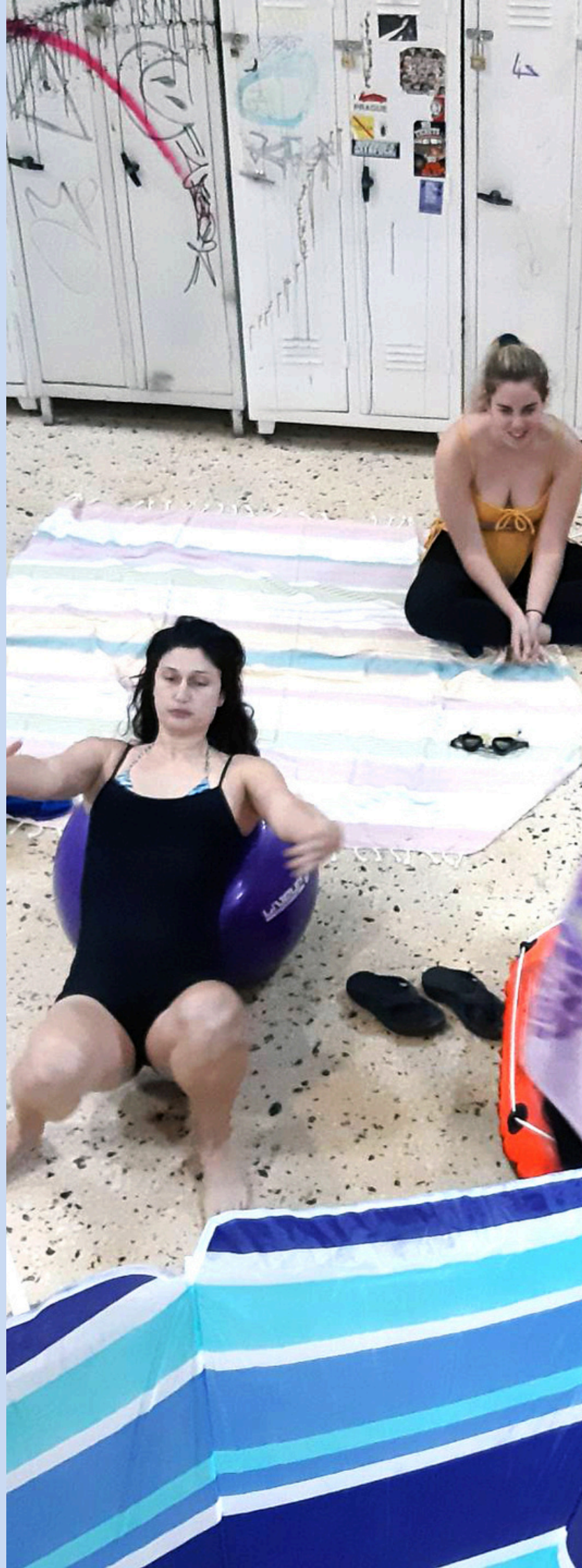
For the second phase of the workshop, the participants were asked to find and bring their swimsuits, as well as anything else they use on the beach, in lakes, rivers or when swimming. The objects they brought, as well as the props which had been found beforehand (umbrellas, beach chairs, etc.), were used in order to create an “amphibious” installation that served as the “backdrop” for the workshop. Based on performative improvisation, the participants first engaged in physical boundary exercises in pairs, and in a second stage they were asked to interact with each other using speech and creating dialogues.

The workshop *Ectotherms and Vertebrates* attempted to highlight methodological “tools” which can be used in embodied performative tactics. Launching from a critical and analytical framework, we attempted to consider gender, politics, ecology and performance, in terms of expanded media, visual and the performing arts.

As the boundaries between visual and performing arts continue to “blur” and interact, it becomes necessary to reexamine methods that allow us to redefine “new” types of emerging expertise.

How do we address or categorize the expanded and layered artistic representations of today? How can we approach or produce interdisciplinary art forms in different contexts? Furthermore, the politics of identity and the body, as well as the multiple faces of feminism, appear to merge, composing a field of different needs and demands. *Ectotherms and Vertebrates* attempted to experiment with expanded strategies and explore interdisciplinary methods related to the visual and performing arts.

* the asterisk indicates a broadening of the term female to include additional gender identities.





Animality exercises - a geography

Description and Educational Method of the Workshop

(I am warning you that I am writing all below to arrive at the conclusion that politicians are bad and they are to blame for everything.

I am writing about the “animality exercises” many months after the workshop took place in Florina. Until yesterday the big fire in Dadia forest was burning. In my house, which is anyway small, it is somewhat difficult to move around because the floor is full of masks and props that I have been working on for an, until recently, upcoming performance.

I planned to go to Makrinitza but the event that was to host us got cancelled. As I write this, I am watching images of the village on television. “Sweeping passage of the storm Daniel”, “torrent swallows up the main parking lot of Makrinitza”.

The previous version of this performance also came close to cancelling but was finally realized, just a few days after the three-day national mourning which followed the deadly refugee shipwreck of Pylos.

“It's one of those days that we wish not to have dawned”, the newscaster continues, “both because of Daniel and of the man who was drowned in Piraeus.” “The death of the 36-year-old man at the port of Piraeus has caused anger and distress.”.

The students who participated in the “animality exercises” were invited in the participatory action *#thehead / On becoming an animal* that I was going to perform at the opening of the main exhibition of the Thessaloniki Biennale *Being as communion*. Most of them responded enthusiastically but at the last minute they had to cancel their trip as this performance was also postponed.

The railway accident in Tempi occurred on 28 February 2023 near the settlement of Evangelismos in Larissa. The fatal accident was also followed by three days of national mourning. The Biennale cancelled or postponed all those events which could be considered acts of a festive nature.

Those students who nevertheless insisted, finally participated in the performance that took place a few months later and contributed decisively to its success, if there was any. The “animality exercises” were an invitation to explore the animal, the absurd, the paradoxical and the carnivalesque, as ways for a group to act in public space. What could be evoked in the everyday life of the city and what could a crowd of people who are constituted, move and behave in such terms reveal about it? And one more thing: how would it help us to think of this strangeness as confrontation and resonance with the absurdity of life?

“Shock and horror at the death of the 36-year-old” insists the television. And “Daniel also visited Attica”. Outside my house it is certainly more difficult to walk than inside. It rains a lot, the wind blows extremely hard, there is lightning and thunder, and I “save” more often than usual because I am afraid the power will go out and I will lose what I am writing.

In my recent work I am more consciously exploring something that has always fascinated me: the political dimension of carnival, the possibilities of sudden change, subversion, rebellion even, that this “upside-down world” carries within it.

“As it is quite obvious, the unfortunate man was pushed overboard by crew members while attempting to board the ship, which was leaving with the catapult down.” “The ship departed normally, as if nothing was going wrong.” And indeed, nothing was going wrong. In our seas crews drown people often. But those were strangers so far, helpless and desperate. Like those off the coast of Pylos.

The crowd of costumed people parading frantically in Thessaloniki amidst all this anguish leads me to reconsider the adolescent thought that it is the clean costumes, the hair partitions and the wooden manners that are ultimately responsible for all of this. The terrible severe manners of uninspired people who hoard money, tell lies, don't fix the trains, drown the immigrants and the poor, burn the forests, kill the poor animals and sternly advise us to stay home. It is politicians and journalists and doctors and all the serious ones who are charged with assessing, prioritizing and organizing the values of our common life. And it's as simple as that. As we had understood it as children. Everything else is bullshit.

We are in fact faced with an archetypal conflict. Against them are masks and songs.



The performer's preparation - Geopoetics workshop I

Description and Educational Method of the Workshop

“Performer is a man of action... he exists beyond aesthetics...He is not seeking to discover something new but something forgotten. Something so old that all distinctions between kinds of aesthetics are no longer of any use...The key question is this: What is your process?...With what quality do you surrender to your own destination?” (in Schechner and Wolford 1997, 376).

If we consider that the art of performance is something that is not rehearsed, repeated or staged, where does the “discipline” of the performer lie? In what way is his practice defined? What are its building blocks and around what principles/qualities does it need to be practiced? As a maker, practical researcher and teacher of the performing arts I have developed geopoetics, a methodology that focuses on the lived experience of place to explore it as a dream narrative of the present. The practice of geopoetics always begins in the studio and situates the process of performer on three working issues: presence or “liveness”, encounter with the other and space (internal or external), and connection with the personal, social and beyond-the-human element. Organized around the discipline of mindfulness, geopoetics incorporates practices from the postmodern American dance lineage, such as the developmental patterns of Body Mind Centering Developmental Movement, Barbara Dilley's Contemplative Dance Practice, and the Six Viewpoints technique, with the Grotowski School's body theatre tradition. The performer practices ways of synchronizing body and mind, movement as a relationship between body, space and Other, and the interactivity of his or her inner sensory and associative landscape with the external environment.

In November 2022, in the context of the Performance now v.9 Symposium “Performance praxis: process and critical pedagogy”, I was invited to teach a three-hour workshop on performance, for the students of the School of Fine and Applied Arts, in Florina. The aim of the workshop was to explore the performer’s practice beyond aesthetic frameworks and conceptual inclinations and to explore the notion of preparing the performative self as part of his training.

The workshop was organised in two parts. In the first part the students/participants worked with their bodies in space through improvisations of body, mind and space, synchronization and individual and group scores of Dilley's Contemplative Dance Practice. This is a series of practices where the moving body becomes a means of exploring perception. The participant works with the paradox of being a doer and an observer at the same time. He becomes a small laboratory of lived experience, focused on the ways in which body and space relate and create meaning in the present tense. The context of practice created allows the participant to explore the correlation of form and content. He devises actions by exercising attention to his physical, emotional, psychological and social body and listens each time to the impact it creates on space as a cultural reality from both the performer’s and the viewer’s perspective.

Using the above practice as a basis, the students in the second part of the workshop extended their physical practice to object, materiality, architecture, sound (or speech) and a horizontal principle of composition. Here the participants focus on the possibilities of the “event” or “experience” or even the “situation”. In other words, they explore the emergence and constitution of the liminal space of the performance, a space “in between” where any kind of identity (psychological, social, gendered, etc.) can be renounced and suspended. At the individual level, this stage of practice emerges and mobilizes other functions of the self that have to do with the affect, the non-useful and productive, the hidden, the unsaid and the spiritual. On a collective level, it develops the possibility of visibility in the public sphere by cultivating a disposition of self-activity, proactive action and a new way of seeing and organizing the world.



Geopoetics practice highlights performative practice as a process of interrelationship that allows the participant/student to work without knowing, to explore through impulse and association, to examine the hidden, the oblique and the silenced, and to approach artistic composition as an action of response and not necessarily invention. It focuses on a performance practice that rests on four foundations:

- It takes as its starting point the intellect of the body (the plasticity, the affect, the impulse and the associative) to bring the idea (concept) as a result, a conclusion of this creative process.
- It practices the body of the performer first as a psychophysical and meditative (body/mind) container and then as an aesthetic form and carrier of socio-political meaning.
- It insists on the concepts of process, presence (or liveness) and encounter, to create content.
- It explores each space (internal or external) as performative and examines its limits as a political and social event.

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<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315004341>

Round Table

Performance now v.9

Η πράξη της περφόρμανς: διαδικασία
και κριτική παιδαγωγική

26.05.2022

Στρογγυλή τράπεζα
18:00

Αναζητώντας μια κριτική
παιδαγωγική για την τέχνη
της performance

Συμμετέχοντες



Δανάη Θεοδορίδου



Άννα Τζάκου



Μάριος Χατζηπροκοπίου

Συντονισμός

Αγγελική Αυγητίδου
Φωτεινή Καλλέ

Δανάη Θεοδορίδου
Σκηνοθέτης και κριτικός των σύγχρονων
παράστατικών τεχνών

Άννα Τζάκου
Περφόρμαρ, σκηνοθέτης, practice-based
κριτικός / διδάσκουσα στο Παιδαγωγικό
Παιδαγωγικό

Μάριος Χατζηπροκοπίου
Ποιητής, περφόρμαρ και θεωρητικός
της επίτασης



Τμήμα Εκπαιδευτικών και Εφαρμοσμένων Τεχνών
Σχολή Καλών Τεχνών
Πανεπιστήμιο Δυτικής Μακεδονίας

In search of a critical pedagogy for performance art

Participants: Danae Theodoridou, Anna Tzakou, Marios Chatziprokopiou

Coordination: Fotini Kalle, Angeliki Avgitidou

16.03.2022

A round table review...

Fotini Kalle

When in 2011 I was in California to attend a performance workshop by La Pocha Nostra, I had many questions and concerns about performance pedagogy. And this for two reasons: first of all I realized for the first time the effect that a workshop on performance has, not only on my work, but also on me, and secondly because while researching a little later their pedagogical methodology, I read that their pedagogical work is also a political project since they "educate" participants not with the purpose to make them skilled performance artists but to make their ideas more dangerous. This can happen, according to them, if they succeed in making this performance laboratory a demilitarized zone where significant radical behaviors can take place and progressive thinking can be developed, if possible, not only for the duration of the workshop. As La Pocha Nostra write, one motivation for conducting a participatory performance workshop is the empowerment of the participants themselves as social and political beings (Gómez-Peña & Sifuentes, 2011).

But how can someone fit in existing pedagogical practices with concepts such as resistance, contention or even rupture when those concepts come into contact with the authority and guardianship that education presupposes? In other words, how can someone teach the "political", this ontological moment of rupture, that event that will disrupt the existing order (Stavrakakis & Stafylakis, 2008), even that of an educational context, in order for new aspects of the world to arise? Also, how can an artist emancipate himself, use his own will and intelligence without "submitting" to the authority of the instructor? Charles Garoian (1999), performance artist and theorist, also speaks of an emancipatory "pedagogy" of performance art, a new kind of public art that emphasizes collective processes over the production of cultural objects. Avoiding, as he writes, to focus on the pedagogical methodology of performance itself or on the authority of a single person, this pedagogical approach encourages workshop participants to work collaboratively, discuss or reflect on any issues that arise and actively contribute to change. More specifically, Garoian refers to a form of "cultural democracy" as it creates conditions of instability, indeterminate and prone to the complexity and contradiction of boundaries: the boundaries between private and public, self and other. But how is this practically achieved? How can one bypass the pressure of the system itself in terms of implementation and effectiveness of a methodology and turn to concepts such as personal empowerment, democracy, critical thinking and action? How can one bypass the need of an educational system for tangible results?

At the same time many artists such as Marina Abramovic, Guillermo Gómez- Peña, Al Paldrok and others, as well as theoretical approaches from the field of education, as we will see below, talk about the importance of risk or the possibility of making a mistake and the value of this tool in the pedagogical process. And risk is understood here not as impulse, ignorance or arbitrary failure to follow rules, but mainly as non-conventional thinking and acting, in other words, a transcendence of common sense or the way we have learned to think and create. Ken Robinson (2013), a modern educator tells us that if we are not prepared to make mistakes, we will never come up with anything original. A quality whose benefits we enjoy as children but is lost as we continue into adulthood through the dictates of an educational system and later an economy that rewards result rather than effort and above all stigmatizes error.

Jacques Rancière in the *Ignorant Schoolmaster* (2008) he also talks about intelligence resting when need fails, and need here is the will and power to mobilize, to act on one's own initiative. Such a power weakens when it is not placed in front of new challenges, conflicts and conditions of existence. Accordingly, in an interview with Marina Abramovic and when asked if she could give a single piece of advice to all her students, old and new, what would it be, she answered: “to take a risk!” (Abramovic, 2003).

This whole idea of risk, of overcoming personal borders, of the way we have learned to perceive and define the world, or otherwise the *crossing of borders* that the artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña also talks about, sounds particularly attractive and powerful as an idea. However, how can someone place such an idea in the context of a performance workshop when the safety and integrity of the participants is a non-negotiable condition? Under what terms can someone activate a condition of risk or uncertainty, create new situations of existence and coexistence in order to lead the participants to creative results and performances without compromising their physical and psychological safety or even the solidarity of the group members?

The artist with the pseudonym Anonymous Boh member of the nomadic collective Non Grata, in one of the ten commandments to the artistic world and beyond, writes: *escape your comfort zone* (Anonymous Boh, 2013). Accordingly, he himself as Al Pladrok in the 2nd book published by the group (Non Grata, 2007) states that the largest problem in the modern world at an individual level is self-censorship. People do not believe in the possibilities of their own choices and dreams. He believes that only when someone has something to say as a person then he can have something to say as an artist. That's why in Academia Non Grata, a conceptual educational-political "academy" that they founded in 1998, scientists and artists of all disciplines were called to teach, while students often had to participate in social or voluntary actions. As one of the founding members writes in an interview, the value of art lies in offering non-traditional strategies that one can use in everyday life (Non Grata, 2002). But what could these strategies be that would find application in everyday life and how could one teach them in the context of an educational process using performance art as a tool?

In Valentin Torres's book *How we teach performance art* (2014), she also talks about performance pedagogy as a humanistic pedagogical approach in the sense that it places the individual at the center of its process. In this sense, she continues, performance teaching itself reinforces the need for self-realization, stimulation, experimentation, and empowerment since the knowledge produced through experience and play with concepts, terms, and practices helps develop the uniqueness of individual, which is valid as a goal for the whole of today's pedagogical science. However, she states that performance teaching is nevertheless in its early stages and the instructors are still professional artists who base their methods mainly on their own artistic experience.

This is what Torres writes in 2014, citing a long list of artists who either teach at universities or in performance workshops. Could we today talk about a common ground shared by all these approaches and the possibility to establish a pedagogical methodology that enjoys some basic principles? Could performance pedagogy suggest a critical pedagogy that concentrates social, political and pedagogical approaches and negotiates terms such as democracy, community, individuality and citizenship?

To these basic questions, the guests of the round table were invited to give their own answers, through their personal experience as artists teaching in academic and non-academic institutions. Danae Theodoridou, director and researcher of contemporary performing arts, presented her conclusions through the experience of the two projects of artistic research that she has been doing for the last 8 years. The first concerned the practice of contemporary dramaturgy and included a series of workshops and open discussions on the topic of contemporary dramaturgy in performance, addressed to artists of the performing and visual arts, as well as theorists of the same fields. The second focused on the practice of democracy and public discourse and also included a series of performance workshops involving residents of various European cities, non-professional artists.

Anna Tzakou, performer, director and practice-based researcher, spoke through her research and experience with the principles of Buddhism and Geography, as practices and their relationship to performance as well as the establishment of a performative landscape body practice. Marios Chatziprokopiou, poet, performer and theorist of performance, spoke about the practices of performance and writing and how they are taught today. His research focuses on migration and refugee performances, contemporary re-readings of ancient drama, gender and sexuality performativity, as well as ritual mourning performances.

Bearing in mind that performance art is an art form that does not focus on practical skills, it can be presented in any space, private or public, artistic or non-artistic, by one or many people and presented as an individual artistic or community project, it creates by definition a breadth of possibilities as to the educational process that one could follow. At the same time, its historical origin as a non-repetitive, non-standard form of art, inextricably linked to the body of the artist who experiences in live time and space the very process of production of the work in an open and equal conversation with the viewer, led this round table to a central question, "How can we actually teach performance through the very principles of performance?".

The resulting conclusions claim an entirely new artistic approach to the educational process, particularly in art education; from the abolition of the dualism between theory and practice to the reformulation of the instructor-student relationship in a horizontal and open learning process. By using spaces that do not place the student's body in a predetermined position, sitting on chairs, in alignment or standing, in combination with the abolition of the physical distance between trainer and trainee, a condition of inclusion is created from the beginning while at the same time it is spatially avoided from the trainer to be placed in a position of power. This is certainly not enough to acquire an open and equal learning process that does not rely on the authority of the instructor. It does not, however, predetermine the type of course, leaving more open the possibility of a coexistence of theory and practice as the goal is to develop skills through experimentation with an emphasis on the process over the result and as opposed to the accumulation of knowledge.

But what are the skills that performance art possesses and that its pedagogy must share? To this question the speakers answered through their own values and added to the toolbox of performance pedagogy conditions such as accepting error as an integral part of the creative process as well as the positive effect this can have on the deeper understanding of the inner intentions and reflections of the artist-participant. They talked about the dream as a pedagogical tool but also the discipline in its opposite as a state of mind and a way of exploring the interior landscape. The constant effort to place the individual in different, than the usual, conditions of existence and coexistence so that new aspects of the self and the world emerge, was another approach that was also proposed as a tool in order to sabotage even the educational process itself when it tends to acquire established tactics and procedures. More generally, we would say the intention of the trainer to mobilize questions instead of giving answers, the deep introspection and prolonged observation of the way the body responds and not acts, i.e. the knowledge produced by the body, the dream but also the lived story as a starting point, there were only some of the tools mentioned, in an attempt to avoid linear structures and develop the corresponding skills. Skills that are not always immediately visible as they are related to the inner qualities of the individual, such as awareness of the relationship between body and mind, empathy and the ability to redefine oneself as an individual and as a potent social being.

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Biographies

Angeliki Avgitidou

Biography

Angeliki Avgitidou studied Architecture at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and Fine Art at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design (MA, PhD). She has exhibited internationally in venues such as the ICA (London) and the French Museum of Photography and she has participated at the Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art, its Performance Festival and the International Biennial of Performance *Deformes* (Chile). She was part of the national representation of Greece at the Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design and Space (2015) and the 15th International Exhibition of Architecture of the Biennale of Venice (2016). She is author of “Performance Art: Education and Practice” (Routledge, 2023), “Performance art: the basics” (University Studio Press, 2020), editor of “Public Art, Public Sphere” (University Studio Press) and co-editor of “Performance now: Performative practices in art and actions in situ” (ION, 2013). Her research interests include the everyday, autobiographical practices, gender and identity, performance and politics, performance documentation and the archive. She is the artistic director of the Performance Now events, since 2010. She teaches as Associate Professor at the Performance studio of the Department of Fine and Applied Arts, School of Art, University of Western Macedonia.

Eva Giannakopoulou

Biography

Eva Giannakopoulou grew up in Ithaca and she is currently residing in Athens where she works. In the past, she has lived in Naples, Barcelona, Istanbul, and Berlin. She has presented performances at various sites, beaches, squares, rivers, parks, and impromptu stages in public space while her work has been exhibited at museums, institutions, galleries, and festivals: PCAI-POLYGREEN CULTURE AND ART INITIATIVE (Ichthyolatry, 2023, a co-production between Greece, Portugal and Italy in the framework of the European project Stronger Peripheries, co-funded by the Creative Europe), Onassis-Stegi Foundation (Kin Baby, FUTURE N.O.W, 2021), Benaki Museum («The Same River Twice», 2019), “The Equilibrists”, 2016, both curated and organized by the New Museum, New York and the DESTE Foundation, Goethe-Institut Athen («Weasel Dance», 2019), Athens Biennale 2018: ANTI, Athens Biennale 2015-2017: OMONOIA (2016), Material Art Fair (Mexico City, 2017) and Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (Berlin, “Autonomy Help ME!”, solo exhibition, 2015). She has co-curated and co-organized numerous art projects and performative events, while in 2013-2014, she was a co-labourer of the MPA-B (Month of Performance Art, Berlin). She is a PhD candidate of the ASFA (Athens School of Fine Arts).

Jorge Cabieses-Valdés

Biography

Jorge Cabieses-Valdés is a visual artist (MFA Fine Art, Goldsmiths College, University of London and Master in Visual Arts, University of Chile) and musician. He has exhibited individually both in Chile and abroad in the following venues: at MAVI, Chile (2022)· D21 Proyectos de Arte, Chile (2020)· Museo de Artes Decorativas, Chile (2018)· Beton 7 Gallery, Greece (2017)· MNBA, Museo sin Muros, Chile (2016)· Co Galería, Chile (2015)· Sala de Arte CCU, Chile (2014)· Galería XS, Chile (2014)· Galería Temporal, Chile (2013)· HIAP Kaapelin Galleria, Finland (2012)· Galería Tajamar, Chile (2011) and Museo de la Solidaridad, Chile (2011).

His work has been exhibited collectively in different art spaces, selected: Royal Gallery, Hyunghee Museum of Contemporary Art, South Korea (2013)· Centro de Arte CeAC, Chile (2011)· Museo de Arte Contemporáneo, Chile (2011)· Forman's Smokehouse Gallery, UK (2010)· Galería Otro Espacio, Spain (2009)· De Service Garage, Holland (2008)· Wallis Gallery, UK (2008)· Brussels Biennale Side Project, Belgium (2008)· Sassoon Gallery, UK (2008)· Hyunghee Museum, South Korea (2007)· Arti et Amicitiae, Holland (2008)· Warande Cultural Center, Belgium (2007)· Museo de las Américas, Spain (2006)· Galería Animal, Chile (2005)· Galería Gabriela Mistral, Chile (2004). In 2013 he participated in the Incheon Art Platform residency program in South Korea and in 2011 in HIAP (Helsinki International Art Program) in Finland. He has obtained the funding programs FONDART (2020, 2018, 2012, 2010 and 2005), Presidente de la República (2006) and DIRAC (2005). His work in performance and sound has been presented (selection): Irida Visions Festival, Greece (2023)· AFA Gallery, Chile (2019)· Gallery Weekend, Chile (2018)· Beton 7 Gallery, Greece (2017)· Idryma 2.14, Greece (2017)· Irida Theatre, Greece (2015)· ASFA BBQ Bodies That Resist, ASFA, Greece (2015) and Galería Gabriela Mistral, Chile (2013).

www.jorgecabiesesvaldes.cl

jorgecabieses-valdes.bandcamp.com

Danae Theodoridou

Biography

Danae Theodoridou is a performance maker and researcher based in Brussels. Her artistic research focuses on «social imaginaries», the practice of democracy and the way that art contributes to the emergence of alternatives socio-political models of coexistence. She teaches in Fontys University of Applied Sciences in Netherlands and in the Departement of Theater at AUTH, curates practice-led research projects, presents and publishes her work internationally. She is the co-author of *The Practice of Dramaturgy: Working on Actions in Performance* (Valiz, 2017) and the author of *PUBLICING: Practising Democracy Through Performance* (Nissos, 2022). www.danaetheodoridou.com

Fotini Kalle

Biography

Fotini Kalle was born in Athens in 1978. She studied Painting in Athens School of Fine Arts and Performance Design and Practice at Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in London with a scholarship from the Alexander S. Onassis foundation. She holds a PhD from the Department of Visual and Applied Arts of AUTH, with scholarship from the State Scholarships Foundation. Her PhD research (2019) negotiates «live art» and its affiliation with political and pedagogical theories and practices. She has presented her work at State Museum of Contemporary Art, Thessaloniki 2019, Athens Biennale 2015-2017, Diverse Universe Performance Festival, Estonia 2015, Month of Performance Art, Berlin 2014, 2nd International Visual Arts Festival of Patras, 2013, and others. She has also participated in workshops in Europe and the USA reflecting on the idea of the body as a cultural vehicle, the concept of utopia, the importance of the space and the object in live art (La Pocha Nostra performance art laboratory, PAI, San Francisco 2011, Nezaket Ekici long duration performances, University of the Arts, Berlin 2013 and others.). Since 2019, she has been teaching courses on performance art at the Department of Visual and Applied Arts of the School of Fine Arts of UOWM. She is a founding member of the performance group *The Girls* and her work ranges from installations, performances and video.

Litsa Kioussi

Biography

Litsa Kioussi (GR, 1977) is a choreographer, dancer and performer based in Berlin. She creates work for small groups, solos, installations, and laboratories. Her current project «An Empire» is a collaboration with visual artist Richard Hancock (UK/DE). Their installation «Fragments Of An Empire» was presented during the Sommerfest at Alte-Münze. Kioussi has recently released her first spoken-word & noise album «there's been trouble in paradise - The Vinyl». Her choreographic work «There's been trouble in Paradise», «Where is the most beautiful funeral?», «Dream Inspector» and «watching alic», has been performed in clubs, galleries and theatres such as Schaubühne Lindenfels (Leipzig), Rebound club (Athens), Temporary Home-Documenta 12 (Kassel), Schwelle7, Eira33 (Lisbon), Panke (Berlin), 638 Kilo Tanz und weitere Delikatessen Festival (Essen), Off-limits Festival (Dortmund), and Slim Week - A Multidisciplinary Music & Art Event (Berlin). The installation *Visiting Time(s)*, has been presented at Weiße Würfel gallery in Leipzig, Panke Berlin, Henrys Dream Festival in Roskilde and Berlin Soup Art Festival in Copenhagen. *Visiting Time(s)*, a series of curated performative events with visual artist Richard Hancock (hancock&kelly) and musicians Jochen Arbeit (Einstürzende Neubauten) and Hopek Quirin, was presented at Panke Berlin.

As a freelance dancer/performer has been engaged in productions and events of various artists, such as Sven Seeger, Guillermo Gómez Peña/La Pocha Nostra, Martijn Tellinga, Luise Wagner, LaborGras, Chantal Yzermans/Radical Low, Cosmin Manolescu, unitedOFFproduction, Veronika Riz, Camille Mutel and others. She teaches classes and workshops on movement, improvisation and composition at dance schools and universities across Europe. Kiouisi received her education at the Merce Cunningham Studio in New York and at D.Grigoriadou Dance School in Athens.

<https://www.litsakiouisi.com>

Alexandros Michail

Biography

Alexandros Michail is a stage director and performer, performance and installation artist. He studied Contemporary Performance (Live Art) with a mise-en-scène direction at Brunel University, London, and Physical Theatre under Jacques Lecoq pedagogy at London International School of Performing Arts (LISPA). He has lived and worked in London where he worked as a performer with Mark Storor, Station House Opera, Penny Woolcock et al. and as a solo aerial artist at English National Opera. Since 2013, based in Thessaloniki, he works across Greece and abroad. He has directed the theater performances «Piece for 2'» (2015) [PANPHYS Award - 8th International Festival of Mime and Physical Theatre] and «Splinters», by Nina Rapi (2018) [Nominated for Best Stage Direction by Queer Theatre Awards]. Fellow of Robert Bosch Stiftung, he has been awarded with a fellowship by Artworks, an artists' supporting program of Stavros Niarchos Foundation and by J. S. Latsis Public Benefit Foundation for his public intervention / art installation about HIV, *To Whom It May Concern* (2018), at Thessaloniki Centre for Contemporary Art. In 2016 he participated with a solo performance in the group exhibition AS ONE, organized and curated by Neon+MAI (Marina Abramovic Institute) at Benaki Museum, Athens. His work has been presented at organizations and events such as: Biennale Architettura 2018, La Biennale di Venezia (Venice), Battersea Arts Centre (London), Buffer Fringe Performing Arts Festival (Nicosia), Macedonian Opera and Ballet (Skopje), Other Music Academy (Weimar), Municipal Theatre of Piraeus (Athens), Argo Theatre (Athens), State Theatre of Northern Greece, State Museum of Contemporary Art, Action Field Kodra, Goethe-Institut, Teatro T, Blackbox Theatre (Thessaloniki), International Dance and Dancetheatre Festival Akropoditi (Syros), International Puppet and Mime Festival (Kilkis), Regional Theatre of Kozani and others.

Dimitris Bampilis

Biography

Dimitris Bampilis is a stage director working exclusively in the realm of the «real». Combining documentary theater with performance, he places a dramaturgy of violence at the heart of his theater practice, highlighting his performers' uncertainties, weaknesses and shortcomings, with the aim of creating theater that demands a politics of the gaze, dialog and debate in the public sphere. Together with Elisavet Xanthopoulou, he co-founded in the past the companies In-vade art, BpPong!, KOLOFON, and REFORMERS, applying their belief in the discontinuity of the artistic self. He studied Theater Studies at the University of Patras, and Theater Direction at the Faculty of Fine Arts at AUTH, under the supervision of Professor Michail Marmarinos. He has collaborated with Documenta 14, the National Theater of Greece, the National Theater of Northern Greece, the Eleusis 2021-2023 – European Capital of Culture, the Piraeus Bank Group Cultural Foundation, the Patras Municipal and Regional Theater, the Semio Theater, and the theater companies Noiti Grammi, ODC ensemble, Per-Theater-Formance, and the BelleVille Collective, on a series of performances in various roles, thereby putting his opposition to all hierarchical divisions of labor into practice. His collaborations with artists so far such as Vasilis Papavasileiou, Włodzimierz Staniewski, La Pocha Nostra, Marina Abramović and the directorial collective Rimini Protokoll have to date helped shape his perspective on theater. He is a co-founder of APARĂMILLON, a new space in ATHENS dedicated to the performing arts and research.

Maria Nikiforaki

Biography

Maria Nikiforaki is experimenting in the field between performance art, film and dance. She uses choreography and video in order to give a social dimension to movement and the body and performative practices to reveal the emotional world as a political stance. Her art explores the personal and the political through a scope of choreo-politics (Lepecki). She graduated from ASFA and Goldsmiths College of London (master MFA Fine Arts). She was given the Vikatos Foundation Scholarship and has received many awards: *ARTWORKS Award* from Stavros Niarchos Foundation, *Trinity Laban Dance Award*, from the choreography department of the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, London, *Performance Voyage 3 Festival Video Performance Award* of Artists' Association MUU, Helsinki. Maria has participated in numerous art exhibitions such as: *Mystery_19 Initiation as a Process: Visual Arts Initiator*, 2023 ELEVSIS European capital of culture, *Unhappy Monuments* (OPANDA & ARTWORKS, Stavros Niarchos Foundation), *Learning From Documenta Workshop 4 - d14/Narratives Reshuffled* (ASFA, Anthropological Research Laboratory and Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences, 2017), GOMENES performance event (Athens Biennale

OMONOIA 2015-2017), Latitude Festival (Big Screen, Film Festival London 2014 and 2015), Performative Labour-ism (Performance Festival, MPA Berlin 2014, Month of Performance, Berlin), Excentricités 3 (Performance Festival 2012, Besançon). Maria lives and works between Athens and London.

Yannis Pappas

Biography

Yiannis Pappas studied sculpture and photography at the Athens School of Fine Arts and at the University of the Arts in Berlin (UdK). Awarded by the Academy of Athens and by the Greek State Scholarship Foundation (IKY) he completed the artistic and scientific MFA «Space Strategies» at the Academy of Arts Weißensee in Berlin. His art-based researches have been assigned by the Goethe Institute and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) through interdisciplinary projects in Europe, Asia and Middle East. In 2021 he received the research stipend from the Department of Culture and Europe, Berlin's Senate. His resonant and visual language includes video work, photography, performances and installations, all of which bear the signs of his anthropological and phenomenological approach toward his subjects. He has exhibited internationally through Europe, Asia, Middle East, South and North America (Biennale of Architecture Venice 2018, Bangkok Art Biennale 2018, Athens Biennale 2016, 7th Berlin Biennale and more), while he attracted the attention of the worldwide press (CNN, New York Times, Artnet, Art Forum, The Calvet Journal, Dapper Dan, Yatzler, Bloomberg Television, Sky Arts and more). Yiannis was born on the island of Patmos, he lives in Berlin and works internationally.

Georgia Sagri

Biography

Georgia Sagri (b. 1979, Athens) is an artist. She lives and works between Athens (Greece) and New York (U.S). She is the founder of the semi-public art space $\Upsilon\Lambda\text{H}[\text{matter}]\text{HYLE}$ (hyle.gr) and the tenured professor of Performance at the Athens School of Fine Arts. At the center of her practice lies the exploration of performance as an ever-evolving field within social and visual life. Much of her work is influenced by her ongoing engagement in political movements and struggles, regarding issues of autonomy, empowerment and self-organization. Her first monograph catalogue was published by Sternberg Press, following her retrospective exhibitions *Georgia Sagri Georgia Sagri* at Kunstverein Braunschweig, and *Georgia Sagri and I* at Portikus, Frankfurt. Her book *Stage of Recovery* was published by Divided Publishing in May 2021.

Panos Sklavenitis

Biography

Panos Sklavenitis, born in 1977 on the island of Ithaca, is a visual artist. In his recent work he explores the world of masquerade and carnival, combining different artistic practices such as participatory actions and performances, in situ installations, video, drawings, texts, workshops and curations. Sklavenitis was a founding member of Voices (2011, coordinated by Elpida Rikou), Temporary Academy of Arts (PAT) (2014, curated by Elpida Karaba) and Most Mechanics Are Crooks. In 2021 he founded the art group Sinodi Papu. He lives and works in Athens.

Anna Tzakou

Biography

Anna Tzakou is a performer, theatre deviser and practice-based researcher. She studied theater in Thessaloniki and contemporary performance practices in the United States (Naropa University, Boulder, CO). In 2017 she received a PhD in performance practices (PhD in performance practice) entitled: *Geopoetics, a mindfulness (sati) site-specific performance practice*, from the University of Exeter (UK). She integrates principles of Buddhism and Geography with american and european methods of post-modern artistic lineages to create a body-landscape performance practice methodology. She has worked in theatrical productions / performances for Athens festival, Onassis Cultural Centre, Athens Biennale, Athens Ancient Drama Festival and Cavafy Archives Onassis Foundation. In 2012 Anna founds group Geopoetics with which she has been creating site-specific walking performances in rural and urban landscapes such as Aigina, Nisyros, Syros, Athens (Eridanos River, Syntagma Square, Lycabettus Hill, Exarcheia), Thessaloniki (Yeni Mosque) and Cyprus (Akamas). The group has been commissioned and funded by the Experimental Stage -1 of Greek National Theatre, Pafos Cultural Capital 2017, ATHENS & EPIDAUROS FESTIVAL, Thessaloniki Dimitria Festival and the Greek Ministry of Culture. Anna has published extracts of her research in the USA, UK and Greece and she has taught in Exeter (UK), Fontys (NL), DIA (NL). Since 2019 she teaches directing, acting and performance at the Department of Performing and Digital Arts at the University of Peloponnese.

<https://annatzakou-geopoetics>.

Marios Chatziprokopiou

Biography

Poet, translator, performer and researcher. He did postgraduate studies in the anthropology of performance and performing arts at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris) with scholarships from the French government and the Michele Foundation, and received his doctorate (summa cum laude) in performance studies from Aberystwyth University (Wales), with a scholarship from the university. He was a postdoctoral fellow at the Centre for Research in the Humanities and postdoctoral research fellow ELIDEK at the University of Thessaly. His research focuses on performances of migration and refugeeism, contemporary re-readings of ancient drama, performances of gender and sexuality, as well as ritual performances of mourning. His articles appear in international edited volumes and peer-reviewed journals. He has presented performances and performance lectures internationally (see for example: Oxford University, Mouvoir Tanztheater/Cologne, Spinnerei/Leipzig, Onassis Foundation, Macedonian Museum of Contemporary Art, Athens Biennale, Mostra Latinoamericana de Performances Urbanas/Brazil, ect.), and has worked as a dramaturg in various productions (Athens festival, Dimitria, Filipponn, etc.). He has translated four books by Clarice Lispector. His poems have been translated into English. His first book poetry *Topical Tropics* (Antipodes 2019) explores issues of queer mourning and desire in connection with oral poetic traditions. He has been shortlisted for the Writers' Society's Yannis Varveris Prize and the National Poetry Prize.

