

Rok Vever

How my life turned into a festival

Notes for Lecture Performance

DISKURS 04 – HOPE

“A Fistful of Empty Hands” at the DISKURS. Picturebook for children. Brotherhood and Unity!
Making friends – students from Giessen, David Lakein, Andros Zinsbrowne, Mare Bulc from Ljubljana, Facebook friends with some of them

IT ALL STARTED YEARS BEFORE DISKURS 04

- ~ In Slovenia in the 90's: festivalization of non-institutional performing arts' praxis.
- ~ I was eager to be somehow a part of every festival: Ex-ponto, Exodos, City of Women, Mladi levi, Gibanica, Nagib etc.
- ~ It was hard to wait for another one
- ~ What did I do? Watching performances, discussing about them and most of all, having a groovy time
- ~ IDEA: to see as many performances as possible and as different ones as possible, to sharpen up my watching skills
- ~ A festival represented to me an ideal life
- ~ Now, after Diskurs 2004 I slowly started to realize that I was attending a lot of festivals in one way or another
- ~ In 2004 shortly before Diskurs I started to write for one weekly cultural magazine called Deloskop: I had written a lot of previews and I got my first grey hair from writing festivals previews – a huge amount of programmes and every time I had to make a selection



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out of it to preview it on 1500 characters with spaces; an impossible job

- ~ And there was no end to festivals

Let me give you a list, my festival season in Slovenia looks like this:

- ~ Gibanica – A Moving Cake, slovenian dance platform (every second year in February)
- ~ Rdeče zore, a feminist & anarchistic performing arts festival at Metelkova (February)
- ~ A week of Slovenian Drama, Kranj – 20 minutes out of Ljubljana (in March)
- ~ Break 21 (May)
- ~ Exodos (May)
- ~ Intervene, a festival of dance perspectives that I initiated in Dance theatre Ljubljana (next one in may 2010); I curate it, co-organize it etc.
- ~ Nomad Dance Academy, final productions (June)
- ~ The wide range of different summer festivals (Slovenian coastal festival, Kluže festival)
- ~ Mladi levi (August)
- ~ Fronta, a dance festival in Murska Sobota (September)
- ~ Ex-Ponto (September)
- ~ Slovenian puppet theatre showcase (every second September)
- ~ City of Women (October)
- ~ Borštnikovo srečanje, slovenian theatre showcase (October)
- ~ Naked stage, festival of impro theatre (October, November)
- ~ Read out loud, young playwright platform/meeting (November)

Then every season you have this special/deluxe/collector's edition festivals like:

- ~ Maska 001 – Celebrating the 100th edition of Maska magazine
- ~ En-Knap – 10 years/ En-Knap: 15 years
- ~ IETM festival
- ~ Via Nova festival
- ~ This year: Shocking Gala Show – about Pupilija Ferkeverk Group etc.
- ~ East Dance Academy
- ~ 25 years of Dance Theatre of Ljubljana
- ~ Every 21st of April, on Hitler's birthday, Dragan Živadinov has a traditional events



in process

publication





In between one can quickly go:

- ~ to Zagreb to Evrokaz or to a Festival of word theatre or Perforacije or Platform
- ~ to Belgrade: to BITEF, Belef,
- ~ to Vienna: Impulstanz,
- ~ to Udine:
- ~ to Graz: Steiricher Herbst



FIT LAB OPPORTUNITY



Two years ago I applied to participate at a workshop for young critics, organized by FIT network, and they decided that I'm too old to participate at ..., so they wanted me to teach young critics. I was scared to death.



So I was teaching at:

- ~ Festival of theatre reminiscenes at Krakow
- ~ Baltic Circle in Helsinki which happened at the time of IETM meeting in Ljubljana (for which I co-selected a programme)
- ~ Teaching at these festivals opened up opportunity to teach young dance critic at the first "Sofia Dance Week" in Bulgaria
- ~ After that I went to Divadelna Nitra, a slovak theatre festival to teach in FIT lab again
- ~ After coming home I had to prepare for East Dance Academy meeting with a short festival programme and for Exodos lecture about Slovenian dance and theatre scene in the 2nd half of the 20th century



This year I attended:

- ~ One residency programme in Portugal, for one project that was presented two weeks ago in Linz (European cultural capital)
- ~ As a dramaturg I was co-mentoring two projects that were presented at Riga performing arts for which I can't remember the name
- ~ I've just come from Kuopio in Finland where I attended one ANTI-Festival – this years edition was on walking performances
- ~ Immediately afterwards I went to Zagreb at NDA meeting where we would every evening go to festival Platforma, then Perforacije
- ~ And now I am here at DISKURS 09



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I'm curenly in Artistic board for next Gibanica, Slovenian dance platform 2011.



WHAT ONE HAS TO KNOW IN ORDER TO ENTER FESTIVALS NETWORKS



Performing a professional – means:

- ~ to answer mails on time (if you don't have time, you turn on the automatic mail answer in which you write that you're currenly unavailable and that you are going to return to you office – your office, no matter if you really have one or not),
- ~ to make an impression that you're terribly busy all the time,
- ~ to make at least one skype session while preparing something for the festival,
- ~ to walk around with a lap-top while you're at the festival meeting point etc.



Selfpromotion – means:

- ~ Networking: It's good to know at least one person at the festival then this person will introduce you to another person. Hopefull important one.
- ~ You should not give impression that you're too communicative – you should not introduce to people by yourself, you have to wait that somebody else do that instead of yourself.
- ~ The introduction has to be made in the way that it gives an impression of spontaneity.
- ~ Don't show that you're terribly eager to be introduced to important people.
- ~ Important people can be adressed by yourself if they are on cigarette break or something – then you aks them for a fire.



Performing smartness:

- ~ WHAT YOU HAVE TO KNOW: everybody's afraid of making remarks after performances, because they are afraid of turning out stupid; so
- ~ You wait that somebody else decide to do this mistake to speak up first, then you try to patronize the person, to produce contra-argument etc.



Competition about references:

- ~ While analyzing pieces/events/etc. or discuss about performances and so on, it's very good that you use references so that gets clear that you are well-informed, that you're skillfull analyst.
- ~ One has to know which references to use or not use.
- ~ Structuralist and poststructuralist – including ones that claim that they are not poststructuralist – are really good; philosophers/theoreticians of deconstruction are acceptable only if you avoid american ones;
- ~ Post-althusserian philosophers as Badiou, Ranciere and Balibar are very hot; as well as Agamben, de Certeau for example;
- ~ Concerning slovene lacanian school it might be good not to fall on Žižek, you refer to Dolar or even better Alenka Zupančič, as she's the less known of them all;
- ~ Marx and German classical philosophy are also very nice to refer to; (for example: if somebody gets on your nerves, you try to produce a quote from Kant (Critique of Judgement) or some Hegel and they will usually immediately shut up; if you don't know any quotation, you make it up);
- ~ Concerning modern theatre history one should be very careful not to refer to for example Stanislavski because one can make a complete fool out of her/himself; but for example Brecht can be always very handy reference;

An importance of seeing live:

When you talk to people about performances it's very important that you make clear that you saw some groups/artists etc. live. But you have to state that this particular artist is important to see live. When you make a claim that everything has to be seen/perceive etc. live or that theatre is a live practice, you can produce the feeling that you might have not read or badly understood Phillip Auslander.

Being to opinionated – with a step ahead: being too opinionated might be a thin ice too.

Carrying promo materials along: when you have some promomaterials to give away, you have to produce a situation, that people ask you for them. You just mention them and you say that you have some materials about something by accident with you in a hotel room. Then people get immediately curious.



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AT EVERY FESTIVAL ONE HAS TO KNOW HOW TO DEAL WITH HANG OVER.

Parties are very important part of the festivals.
So that's why I consider myself being on the verge of alcoholism.

ONE SHOULD NEVER STAY UNTIL THE LAST DAY: YOU SHOULD LEAVE FEW DAYS BEFORE THE END

One day before the end of the festival audiences, programmers and festival crew enter the first stage of the post-festival depression. So you should be very careful not to take part in it. It's very disturbing: it makes you think of something.

LET'S GET SMART – WHAT'S A FESTIVAL
Of Other Spaces – Heterotopia (1967)

Now I'm being smart using a reference, but not too strategic and tactical, because it is a really too exploited. Anyway.

In his text about other spaces, Foucault systemizes heterotopias with 6 categories.

Fourth principle. Quoting Foucault and being very smart: »Heterotopias are most often linked to slices in time – which is to say that they open onto what might be termed, for the sake of symmetry, heterochronies. The heterotopia begins to function at full capacity when men arrive at a sort of absolute break with their traditional time.«

Foucault talks first about heterotopias which accumulate almost endless amounts of time in form of archives, libraries, museums etc.

»Opposite these heterotopias that are linked to the accumulation of time, there are those linked, on the contrary, to time in its most flowing, transitory, precarious aspect, to time in the mode of the festival. These heterotopias are not oriented toward the eternal, they are rather absolutely temporal [chroniques]. Such, for example, are the fairgrounds, these' marvelous empty sites on the outskirts of cities that teem once or twice a year with stands, displays, heteroclite



objects, wrestlers, snakewomen, fortune-tellers, and so forth. Quite recently, a new kind of temporal heterotopia has been invented: vacation villages, such as those Polynesian villages that offer a compact three weeks of primitive and eternal nudity to the inhabitants of the cities.”

☞
HOW MY LIFE TURNED INTO A FESTIVAL

☞
I ask myself what is temporary in the case when one's life turns into a festival. A feeling of temporarity itself? What is the original life when one constantly live in other spaces? In heterochronies?

☞
I HAVE FESTIVAL AT HOME

☞
I have a festival at home, waiting for me in my room and it almost never happens. It consist of books, films on DVDs, of music on CDs, of food waiting for me in the fridge etc.

☞
To end this lecture seriously and with a drop of sentiment, I will read you one badly translated poem and a summarized one; because I didn't have time to find it in the library. They are from a Slovenian poet called Alojz Ihan. He's a poet and professor of immunology at Ljubljana's Medical Faculty.

☞
They are about being stucked or cricling endlessly.

☞
A TUNNEL

☞
Imagine a tunnel that is passed by many people every day,
An entirely short tunnel,
An ordinary pass under a road or railways
Which was passed by you thousands of times totally by the way.
But some day you enter it and when you supposed to exit after a few steps,
You are still in it, in the entirely short tunnel.
It is passed by dozens and dozens of people every day,
You see them how easily they find their way out,
There's only you who walk and walk and run and run, crying for help,
screaming ... but you can't find its end.
Although the tunnel might be only a step long, a half of step, centime-



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tre, a quarter of a word, it takes weeks, months, years or even decades for you to come out.

And if it happens that you manage to come out at last,
You come to know that you were crazy.

☞
A FOX

☞
A wolf is chasing a fox.
A fox is trying to escape from him.
From time to time she is looking back to see how good she is in leaving the wolf behind.
There comes a moment when the fox could rest for an hour,
But she's running on.
There comes a moment when the fox could rest for a day, but she's running on, trying to escape from him.
Looking behind at a certain point she realizes that there's no wolf on a horizon and that gives her an extra push and another portion of self-confidence. In that moment she realizes that she is really good in escaping from.
There comes a time when the fox could rest for a week.
But she's running on because she's trying to escape from wolf for good.
And then comes a time when the fox could rest for the rest of her life.
But she forgets what it is that she is running from.
☞
Some say that this is the moment, when the wolf gets this strange almost spooky feeling that he's being followed.

