

## Fragmentary working diary in form of an informal glossary

### Mailing list

A mailing list was mostly used for arranging and coordination of deadlines and working obligations. This is not necessarily a problem, but in the context of a regional collaboration, where one group works in two cities, a mailing list can be a useful tool for discussions. This applies especially concerning the subject of this group's work, largely comprising work with text. Discussions via mailing list lasted several days – only when the group started to 'communicate' during Bojana Cvejić's workshop – and soon went on with a tendency of 'coordination' by means of the mailing list.

### Working procedures

A procedure of work was not conceived in advance, nor was it the same for Skopje and Belgrade sub-group. At individual meetings, the working procedures were established ad-hoc, because in the whole course of the work both the approach and the subjects were constantly redefined. Proposed formats of collective self-education on the DSC web site (<http://tiny.cc/jvvx1>) were used intuitively, and not systematically.

### Workshop with Bojana Cvejić (December, 2009)

Concerning the subject of our work (terms/concepts), as the co-editor of EDA (East Dance Academy) Lexicon, Bojana Cvejić was invited to lead



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the workshop. EDA is an artistic initiative, in this particular project engaged with launching and defining new terms/entries from theory and practice of performing arts, generally referring to the region of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. During the preparations for the workshop, already finished entries were distributed, including a list of five 'free' entries, proposed to Skopje and Belgrade group as potential contributions.

When we decided on the terms – "contextual approach" and "festivals", during the workshop we elaborated the premises for future contributions. We had a month and a half to deliver the entries: Belgrade group finished the work on April 15, and Skopje group on May 15. (Publication of the EDA Lexicon being postponed, this will probably not affect the inclusion of our contributions in the book.)

### Post-workshop or "the ecstasy of communication"

Bojana Cvejić's workshop ended in a Belgrade-Skopje idyll: we distributed topics and tasks, discussed details, and it seemed that we would easily fulfill our obligations.

However, as soon as we split apart, something else happened: what we between ourselves called "the ecstasy of communication" (which may also be called an "e-mail clash" along the Belgrade-Skopje line). The workshop ended, promptly followed by a feverish exchange of e-mails, assuming a dramatic tone – it was at times tragic, and at other times a comic dialogue. In fact, it seems that in this period we all began to seriously think about the end product of our self-educational process. Skopje fraction of the group conceived the end product as a performance – a show. The correspondence went too far, and we were all forced to agree on a compromise. We decided to do both. However, the compromise ultimately turned into a compromise: instead of a book we made – a publication; instead of a performance – a public print house. In other words: neither of the two. And, yet, we did both – but in a less ambitious form. It seems, finally, that the "ecstatic communication" phase of the process brought us together and calmed us down. In this phase all our personal wishes and doubts were laid on the table, and there were no reasons left for confrontation. The correspondence lost its intensity and our next encounter (during Rancière's



talk in Belgrade) went nicely and quietly... We all felt that from the two groups we finally became one.

### Writing

As one of the tools of collective self-education, collective writing appeared as a cohesive process, assembling the Belgrade group in a more systematic manner. In both groups, the first draft of the text emerged relatively quickly, initially went through a series of individual interventions and then a series of collective 'close readings' which additionally improved the text, instigating (as well) some constructive debate and actual self-education. What is important to note is that the groups were heterogeneous and members' experience in writing (especially pro-theoretical) texts like glossary entries, varied considerably. However, those differences contributed to the dynamics of work in the group and, more importantly, instigated learning by doing procedures. On the other hand, the language barrier discouraged exchange between the two groups during the process of work on the texts. As the Belgrade contribution was finished earlier, reading sessions of the text conceived in Skopje were organized during the timeshare sessions in Belgrade, in order to break the language barrier verbally, which turned out to be a useful approach.

### Balance of the group - number

It appears that for a continuous work in a group, size of its membership matters. Belgrade group was larger in number, so individual absences from sessions had a lesser impact on its work. When the Skopje sub-group was reduced to three members, stronger discipline was required.

### Terms from the text

During the process of writing, our work on the entry contextual approach suggested some of the terms we were busy with on the grand nylon. It was decided to base our further activities as a group on those terms. Short entries were written for two terms: Soros-realism

and artistic immunity. Because of the subject of the text – engaged, contextual art – we began to study and search examples from artistic practice. This was becoming all the more interesting because we 're-read' and 'apprehended' the contemporary and historical examples through and through, after writing and reading the text as our theoretical platform, a specific point of observation. Our work on the text (and awareness of own ignorance) initiated the collective viewing of Miško Šuvaković's Video Glossary – as an additional opportunity for self-education through discussion.

### Video Glossary

Miško Šuvaković's video glossary is a TV program produced in 2000-2002, describing terms from the artistic practice of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Similarly to EDA, this project gave us a possible example of work with terms/concepts which does not imply compiling a standard dictionary. All episodes (3-4 in one session) were screened and they instigated further discussions. Subsequently we decided to release a DVD of the glossary as one of the end products of the project, and a study tool which contributed specifically to our work on collective self-education.

### Timeshare

Timeshare Campus in both cities turned out to be the most productive working format, realized according to the conception of the whole project – as time specifically dedicated to articulation of the final output. Two months before the timeshare period, in a video link session, both groups agreed on the format of the final work (online, DIY-publication), and the meetings were used for completing the text and other initiatives launched in the meantime, as well as negotiating production terms during the Open Week. Timeshare in Belgrade, beside the closed sessions, comprised three sessions with our guests. With Bojana Kunst and Ana Vujanović we discussed the position we assumed as a group in our work with the terms through the publication, and consultations with Milena Dragičević Šešić helped us finalize the entry "festivals". The victim of such concentrated productivity is this crude and 'unenlightened' fragment.



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## The Group and DSC

The group gave its best performance to DSC when it responded to the demands of the project – when the deadlines for selection of lecturers approached, or during the Timeshare Campus.

After the initial zeal at the first meetings, the group work and communication gradually expired, until the workshop lead by Bojana Cvejić. At the same time, the group inadequately used the open structure of the project and the material resources at its disposal until the very end – when its interests were finally clarified. This situation was reflected within the group from the very beginning, and as the working procedures were applied ad-hoc, the group dynamics was left to its natural flow, including the risk of total failure. This was partly a conscious development, because the group was accidentally composed mainly from people complying to a particular working ethics, as active protagonists of the independent scene, with a certain experience with (self-)organization and self-education. This fact added some difficulty to coordination (due to our numerous other commitments), but also guaranteed that the 'inertia of work experience' would bring results – a closure or conclusion of the 'academic' year (implying not only the final product in terms of an object). What clearly stands out as an indisputable quality in the experience with this type of work is a fact that self-education is most difficult precisely in conditions of procedural freedom – in this case, a process which does not necessarily end with a product, but is a 'product' in itself.

## Language

Although English is the official language of the project, we insist that all our material is published in Macedonian and Serbian, in support of Jacotot's methodology of learning a language. ☺

## The process of 'levelling'

does not imply 'equation', but work on several levels - everyone learns according to his engagement. Everyone gains in the process only what he takes from it.

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## Lost in process – graveyard of ideas

Graveyard of ideas was conceived as a list of initiatives – 'dead ends' in the process. However, all discarded ideas economically found their elaborations and a new place in the publication. However in the course of the work those ideas seemed abandoned and obsolete, each of them did reflect a specific approach to our work on the terms.

## Satellite Terms

Collective irresponsibility, Laziness, Auto-motivation, Responsibility to the group, Responsibility to the project, Responsibility, Tardiness, Misunderstanding, Remaining on board, Taking time, Inclusion in the project, Who is who?, Hierarchy, Distribution of work, Work tasks, Moderation, Lost in translation/Language barrier, Initiative, The big picture, Conflict, Daily life, Personal interests/Group interests, Hegemony of the Serbian over the Macedonian language, Sharing knowledge, Jargon, Self-evidence. Self-indulgence. Prom night.

## Time as obstacle – perception of time within the group

Group moto: "There is still time." ... The learning principle defined as: taking time, was perceived within the group as resisting the demand for efficiency and hyper-productivity of the neo-liberal, post-Fordist conception of work in culture. The time at the group's disposal provided for learning of a different kind, based on practicing the modes of collectivity, instead of the modes of production.

## What is a waste of time?

Collective responsibility occasionally becomes



A product is not imperative

YES NO MAYBE

(Budget as bait! – indecent proposal – twilight zone! Phenomenon of the sense of guilt if a budget remains unspent.)

When something is facilitated, where are the borders of your demands; which rights do you claim?

How to assess motivation which is not based on interests of a broader, programmatic type?

Self-exploitation is

Luxury:

- a) Possibility of questioning and changing one's function/role in a collective;
- b) Personal acquaintance through collective work which is not conditioned by a direct (profitable) result, nor occurs at a private gathering (party, birthday, barbecue, New Year, boat restaurant, premiere) – ? 'From the cradle to the grave' (school days are the best part of one's life);
- c) Getting a better picture of the cultural-political events in the region;
- d) 'Reverse exam' or opportunity to question the professor (Miško Šuvaković).



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