

Modification as a Mode of Resistance

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Google map caption of Vapaan Taiteen Tila © Saga Kinni & Aleksii Pulkkinen

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<p>Modification As a Mode of Resistance is focused on reading temporalities, and more specifically re-reading the past as a plurality through the lens of spaces chosen for live and performance art to take place in. This artistic research has been developed through various experiments tested via performances which I conducted during my studies at LAPS. It is a reflective essay on the artistic research project.</p> <p>I approach this written thesis through three unfolding semi-permeable maps which intersect and intertwine to lay out the connection that I build between 1) re-reading the past. 2) re-constructing past(s). 3) re-framing / re-sensing /re – producing spaces in my performance art works.</p> <p>Taking this into account, I reflect on what tools and theoretical grounds as well as what dramaturgical and aesthetical strategies I have utilized in my artworks and how the techniques that I have developed inform the nature of my work in the future. My entry point towards this study is my autobiography: my memories and archives related to restrictive periods in my life (war and oppression) which I look back at for source materials, expanding further to encounters with histories and spaces in Helsinki and Finland, to in this way go beyond the personal.</p> <p>In this written thesis I navigate through these questions: what is the potential of (the unfinished) pasts that linger through time and space? How do they connect different histories and geographies to expose power structures, create sensitivity for the non-familiar in the present and reshape the future? In what form can they manifest through performance and live art?</p> <p>To find answers to these questions, I look at autobiography through autotheory, taking into account the plasticity and flexibility of the memory in an intersection with theories of human geography on space production.</p> <p>In the end, I argue that looking at the relationship of the chosen performance spaces to their histories, social significance, surroundings, and accessibility reveals a valuable layer in constructing critical performances that connect the performers and audiences in a dialectical way.</p>			
ENTER KEYWORDS HERE Autobiography, autotheory, the past, memory, time, space production, state, power dynamics, re-reading, re-assembling, re-writing, over- imposition, authoritarianism, representation, invisibility, othering, empowering, resistance, erasure, connection.			

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MODIFICATION AS A MODE OF RESISTANCE

An Introduction

‘Modification as a mode of resistance’ stands for returning to memories and documented memoirs from my past as a source to resist invisibility. Modification is a mnemonic skill earned through experience which helps in navigating through difficult situations. It means learning to respond to the challenges of the moment whereby the encountered present becomes a playground for self-discovery in connection to the world. It is a gained sense of survival through struggle. Resistance on the other hand contains many layers of contradictory meanings. The initial resistance is to not return to the past to deal with remembering, as a defense mechanism to dealing with trauma. Once the threshold is crossed, resistance becomes a tool for achieving the very opposite: to remember and prevent forgetting. This remembrance is not one that looks at the past with melancholy but rather with a reflective nostalgia that aims to maintain the ruins of the memory and look at it through these cracks. It is a remembering that doesn’t seek for closure but rather an analysis on how the power structures have infiltrated and modified a body (as a representative of a community). It seeks to capture indoctrination and view it from various perspectives through the modification of its shape. Ultimately, resistance is an homage to Kosovar Albanians of the 90’s who were expelled from public life in Kosova, part of Republic of Serbia at the time because they didn’t agree to commit to the new legislations brought in place after the collapse of Yugoslavia. They were made into objects of resistance (Moten, 2003). It is dedicated to the fascination with the parallel system of education and production that Kosovar Albanians built in order to resist oppression and continue existing as such.

This written thesis is a reflection on exercises that have led to the titled artistic research that culminated with the performance ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’. The process starts in reverse: the un-layering of semi-permeable maps, chosen as an alternative name to ‘chaptering’, aims at making visible the connections that I have made between concepts and practice, in a clearer light. Envisioning the chapters as

unfolding maps seemed like a more natural process for structuring this thesis because the artistic research process has derived from mapping a theoretical ground on which I have based the artistic practice. Further, the mapping constructed during the practical experimentation with live and performance art becomes a map on its own of techniques that came along and have leaked into artistic works I have realized in continuation to the final artistic thesis performance ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’ and those that I am planning to realize in the future.

My initial question when I started envisioning the research consisting of the artistic and the written part was: how to imagine the potentialities of the future through revisiting and differentiating memory from a geographical distance?

I often think of James Joyce who wrote about his family, social circle, Dublin and Ireland all his life but never returned to it once he migrated.¹ I don’t exactly recall the sources, or maybe this is just an urban legend, but I remember that according to one interpretation, he never returned to Ireland so that he would be able to write about it. Although this seems quite masochistic and is far from being the reason why he remained in exile, I relate to how he may have needed the distance to observe from the outside, which being inside disables. Why does our home and our past haunt us when we leave it behind?

I stepped into the research by revisiting my diary entries from the day of the liberation of Kosova which I wrote during the war, when I was 15 years old. Due to their strong power to return me to moments that were associated with very strong affects, I had been avoiding the reading of these diaries for over two decades. Moving to Helsinki for my studies seemed like a good moment to try this Joycean tactic. I became interested in finding ways to be able to read my old texts and to look at them critically considering all the knowledges I had gained between then and now. To achieve this, I was looking

¹ An interpretation of reasons why Joyce left Ireland and never returned:
<https://www.irishtimes.com/life-and-style/abroad/james-joyce-the-emigrant-who-left-dublin-in-body-but-not-in-mind-1.3119627>
Last visited on December 18th, 2021.

at Derrida's *différance*², distancing methodologies of constrained writing by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin, conveyed through their cut-up technique and the widely used Yugoslavian avant-gardist method of reism applied in works known as Concrete Poetry³ which puts the symbol of words at the center and strips them from meaning as well as the power dynamics.⁴ By re-approaching these very personal texts through distancing methods, I wanted to understand their representational sides and open them up for interpretation. I found William S. Burroughs' and Brion Gysin's cut-up technique of rearranging texts by breaking their logical linearity to be the most suitable technique because I wanted to keep the meaning of the words I had written but modify them in a way that they opened up for interpretation of new meanings.

The overarching title of this continuing artistic research also refers to the utilization of the cutup technique developed by William S. Burroughs and Brion Gysin to reinterpret and dialogue with the performativity of my autobiographical writings through modifying texts. I have found this approach very suitable in reading the past selves through a distanced lens that is able to look back at memory with a critical eye.

"Cutting and re-arranging a page of written words introduces a new dimension into writing, enabling the writer to turn images in cinematic variation. Images shift sense under the scissors smell images to sound sight to sound, sound to kinesthetic."⁵

To cut and reassemble and re-read new meanings. In Judith Butler's terms, *to unmake and remake identities through performance*⁶. Through this modification, *différance*⁷ and deconstruction of the documented past, instead of wiping it out, I intend to resist their

2Referring to *différance*, the French term coined by Jacques Derrida. It is a central concept in Derrida's deconstruction, a critical outlook concerned with the relationship between text and meaning. The term *différance* means "difference and deferral of meaning"

3 Boynik Sezgin (editor) 2020. OEI # 90-91: Sickle of Syntax & Hammer of Tautology offers the first English language overview of the history of concrete and visual poetry production in socialist Yugoslavia between 1968 and 1983. <http://www.mottodistribution.com/shop/oei-90-91-sickle-of-syntax-hammer-of-tautology-concrete-and-visual-poetry-in-yugoslavia-1968-1983-sezgin-boynik-ed-oei-editor-9789188829092.html>

Last revisited on December 22nd, 2021.

4 'Like Joyce, Burroughs has long felt that the word, far from being sacred, is too often a barrier to meaning, a tool used by the powerful against the powerless.' – *The Third Mind* by William S. Burroughs and Bryon Gysin.

5 Burroughs and Gysin 1978, 38

6 Butler and Athanasiou 2013, 69

erasure by reapproaching it from a different standpoint. That of the belief that *the past is unfinished*, to refer to curator Zdenka Badovinac⁸, because it informs us about our current position and the direction we are entering the future from. This moment in time or realization is where the capacity to interfere in the formation of future lies. Symbolically, “the capacity to change the past and relegate it to becoming. It espouses the great paradox that Kierkegaard tried to promote that the way to change, and to freedom, to use this highly laden word, leads through repetition”.⁹

In the meantime, I started to become interested in looking at performance sites as *objets trouvés* – found objects and became more and more engrossed by the omnipresent qualities of the primary functions of venues that reveal social relations, power dynamics and hidden layers of historical significance. Through expanding my scope of interest from personal narratives towards those of others, I wanted to connect to others and come up with performative methods that gave meanings to their narratives. Although my artistic works analyzed in this written thesis are widely site-specific and participatory, somewhat immersive even, I will not use these terms to categorize them because my desire is to look for a new possible intersection of autotheoretical performance art with human geography and urban studies. Hence, I particularly look at Henri Lefebvre for the concept of *space production*¹⁰ and Doreen Massey for *space as a political force*¹¹. In terms of non-frontal, spectator-incorporative theatre¹², I have consulted Richard Schechner’s *Environmental Theater* (1973), for a deeper understanding of site-specific art, Nick Kaye’s *Site-Specific Art: Performance, Place and Documentation* (2000), especially in his references to *In The Practice of Everyday Life* where philosopher Michel de Certeau reflects on the relationship between ‘place’ and ‘space’¹³, Miwon Kwon’s *One place after another: site-specific art and locational identity* (2002), Fiona Wilkie’s PhD thesis from University of Surrey School of Arts *Out of Place - The Negotiation of Space in Site-Specific Performance* (2004).

8 Badovinac 2009

9 Ibid.

10 Lefebvre 1991

11 Massey 2007

12 The definition was borrowed from:

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095753747>

13 Kaye 2000, 4

As it became clearer that I was dealing with various time periods in the past that vary drastically from each other, I found it beneficial for my artistic research to metaphorically look at the past as a plurality. This view made it easier for me to draw the lines which both connected and differentiated the reactions and the outcomes caused by the drastic transitions that the country I was born in (Yugoslavia) went through, from the 1980s, when the confederation started collapsing and up till today. What makes these pasts a plurality is their capacity to be remembered in parallel and build the connections between different periods in my life. Thereby, I agree that the past is not finished¹⁴, to refer to Slovenian curator Zdenka Badovinac, because its consequences continue to have repercussions today. This lingering resistance of the past to gain closure thanks to our memorial capacity to remember, offers a great deal of information that can be very useful for the future, in breaking patterns of power hegemony, in learning from previous mistakes as well as in taking best practices from what functioned well back then.

In three chapters called ‘The Unfolding of Semi-Permeable Map #1: The Pasts, Map#2: Artworks and Map#3: The Future’, I elaborate the relationship I build between these pasts and the background of Yugoslavia’s decay, how this form of scrutinizing the correlation between time and space and state has informed my viewpoints and entry points in the performances I have developed through my MA at LAPS which have expanded from solely my experience to the parallels I have found during my residency in Finland as well as what the future of these concepts may be in how I construct performances. I will jump from one unfolding to another hoping that these porous maps will breathe through one another without confusing the reader. When looking at the linear logic between temporalities (the past, the present, the future), the present is absent. The present marks the time of reflection during which I am writing this thesis, which by the time that I end this sentence already belongs to the past and leaves space to what is to come.

14 Badovinac 2009

Despite the strong influence of Foucault's ideas on the hegemony of power, including here the disciplined bodies, *dispositifs* and heterotopias, the performative readings of human geographers' such as Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey, the view on memory as "a fluid and flexible affair"¹⁵ as well as the slight adaptation of the Slovenian retro-Avant Garde art collective Die Neue Slovenische Kunst's artistic methods, I have mostly tried to interweave these knowledges with my artistic voice by rethinking my practice through them as an enriching strategy.

I am not trying to prove any critical or sociological theory nor endorse and reproduce (or appropriate) any artistic approaches, but I look at them to understand my thinking and work processes through them, or in a dialogue with them. I am not attempting nor am I interested in translating vis-à-vis any philosophy or theory into performance art. I am rather borrowing or am inspired by various outlooks to form and articulate my own artistic world.

In this written thesis, I will be referring to personal experiences, encounters, discoveries – although I will mostly not delve into proving them or connecting them to any proven theory or scientific basis. I open many tangents which I wish I could stay with and delve on deeper, should I not be under the pressure of graduating as soon as possible in order to avoid paying for another semester. To give some context to this, as a Kosovar, I am geographically based in a central position in the territory of Europe but don't cherish any rights of the members of the EU who don't have to pay for their education at Uniarts. Some of the open ended and unrounded thoughts are a political statement referring to the above.

15 Bond and Craps and Vermeulen 2017

Now some practical information.

In this written thesis, I will use these abbreviations:

Live Art and Performance Studies- LAPS

Theater Academy of Uniarts Helsinki-TEAK

Die Neue Slovenische Kunst- NSK

Vapaan Taiteen Tila- VTT

William S. Burroughs and Brian Gysin – Burroughs & Gysin.

Finally, I'd like to note that, since the reading of other LAPS students' thesis has served me as a guide and reassurance for the bravery to take windy paths, I wish to pass this on to other LAPS-es, Teak students and those who deal with performance and live art or art in general through concepts and research. Be brave in what you are passionate to do and do it how your passion informs you to do it!

THE UNFOLDING OF SEMI-PERMEABLE MAP #1: THE PASTS

Are we not touched by the same breath of air which was among that which came before? Is there not an echo of those who have been silenced in the voices to which we lend our ears today?

- Walter Benjamin¹⁶

In this Unfolding Semi-Permeable Map, I will elaborate various approaches regarding returning to personal memory related to state oppression through viewing the past in plural and on the interconnectedness to the political developments in certain periods of my complex past which have paved the path to the performances that I have developed during my studies at LAPS MA program. I will introduce these artistic works shortly to then delve into an analysis of them in The Unfolding Semi-Permeable Map #2. I will touch upon the spatial and temporal aspects of these artworks that have influenced the formation of the performance making techniques I have developed. I will also broaden my ideas on autotheory and why I find it practical for my artistic research while also presenting documents that have served as the basis for my return on dealing with memory, in conjunction to how this is different from my previous artistic works. I will land on the work methods of the artistic collectives that have inspired me such as Die Neue Slovenische Kunst which will serve as the base for further elucidation in the Unfolding Semi-Permeable Map #2, where I specifically deal with their influence on the dramaturgy and aesthetics of my artworks.

The content of this chapter is important to the overall artistic research in a way that it introduces the concepts and theoretical grounds on which I have constructed this written thesis. Through reviewing the past in plural and modifying the memories and memoirs of these pasts, I will explain how the resistance against the gravity pull of the power

¹⁶ <https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>.

structures that worked through my body (which was exposed to oppression and othering based on ethnicity) becomes possible through performance art. In other words, the resistance towards indoctrination but also towards a homogenized narrative to thus make room for diversifying the collective memory *through making the non-dominant narratives*¹⁷ visible and audible.

1.1. MEMORY & TIME

In this sub-unfolding, I will describe my entry points to memory & perspectives on time. I believe it is crucial to also explain how and why I make the strict connection between the past as a plurality and the personal as an autotheoretical base to forward my artistic work and research.

When trying to ground my entry points in dealing with memory, I encountered both the difficulties as well as benefits in the fact that memory studies belong to multiple disciplines. I was looking at Maurice Halbwachs' *Social Frameworks of Memory* (Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire), in which he advanced the concept of *collective memory*. Halbwachs is canonized as the founder of memory studies.

According to Halbwachs, “although memory, or better yet, the act of remembering, is fundamentally an individual phenomenon, he emphasized it is always dependent on social structures. We participate in a collective symbolic order which provides us with cognitive schemata, concepts of time and space and thought patterns with which we interpret and remember past events. Thus, social frameworks constitute the all-encompassing horizon in which the act of remembrance takes place.”¹⁸

17 An in-depth study on the master narratives that dominate the public discourse in the post-war Kosova can be found in Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers' "Invisible-Inaudible: Albanian Memories of Socialism after the War in Kosovo" in *Post-communist Nostalgia*, 2012. Edited by Maria Todorova & Zsuzsa Gille. New York: Berghahn Books.

18 Mandolessi 2017

In looking at the nature of memory or how memory functions, I also rely on Catherine Malabou's reading of the concept of *plasticity* according to which "'Plastic', as an adjective, means two things: on the one hand, to be 'susceptible to changes of form' or malleable (clay is a 'plastic' material); and on the other hand, 'having the power to bestow form, the power to mold', as in the expressions, 'plastic surgeon' and 'plastic arts'."'¹⁹

In my reading of memory, which is related to dark heritage, respectively oppression and war, I have been hesitant to elaborate widely on the concept of trauma, although the process of postponement in dealing with the past may be translated as a resistance to revisit a non-pleasant era and area. That being said, I have become familiar with Ruth Leys' concepts on *the genealogy of trauma* in which after a thorough research on neurology, psychoanalysis and psychology, she concludes with two theories on understanding this fragile phenomenon:

1. The first or *mimetic* theory holds that trauma, or the experience of the traumatized subject, can be understood as involving a kind of hypnotic imitation or identification in which, precisely because the victim cannot recall the original traumatogenic event, it is fated to act it out or in other ways imitate it. The idea is that the traumatic experience in its sheer extremity, its affront to common norms and expectations, shatters or disables the victim's cognitive and perceptual capacities so that the experience never becomes part of the ordinary memory system.
2. The second, or *antimimetic*, theory also tends to make imitation basic to the traumatic experience, but it understands imitation differently. The mimetic notion that the victim is hypnotically immersed in the scene of trauma is repudiated in favor of the antithetical idea that in hypnotic imitation the subject is essentially aloof from the traumatic experience, in the sense that it remains a spectator of the traumatic scene, which it can therefore see and represent to oneself and others. The antimimetic theory is compatible with, and often gives way to, the idea that trauma is a purely external event that befalls a fully constituted subject; whatever the damage to the

¹⁹ Malabou 2005, 8

latter's psychical autonomy and integrity, there is in principle no problem of eventually remembering or otherwise recovering the event, though in practice the process of bringing this about may be long and tortuous.²⁰

I borrow from the first theory the reservation of the factuality of trauma and from the second the distance from which I can see and represent the imitation of my trauma to myself and others. A crucial claim by Leys which I rely on in terms of representing autobiographical fragments of my past to a performance art audience is “the failure of representation -thereby permitting it to be passed on to others who can not only imaginatively identify with it but literally share in the communion of suffering.”²¹

As per how I deal with revisiting memory and trauma in my artworks and what have been the outcomes of such techniques and strategies, I will elaborate more in detail on the Unfolding Semi-permeable Map 2#: Artworks and Unfolding Semi-permeable Map 3#: The Future.

I am cautious that although dealing with memory by recalling the past doesn't lessen it, it still bears the element of modification (plasticity) due to how memory functions. Therefore, I approach the memoirs that I bring in as content in this thesis with a dosage of reservation in terms of their truthfulness although they reveal themselves very vividly. When it comes to the documented memoirs or the diary entries, these materials mark a very firm standpoint and perception I have had at a certain time in my life, and it is their reading from today's standpoint that gives them a different meaning compared to their original one.

Based on these readings, I would like to claim my understanding and position in relation to what happens and what to be cautious of when the past is recalled:

The recalled past is distorted: The recalled past always bears a filter that distorts it from its present and it is crucial to remember this characteristic when working with it.

²⁰ Leys 2000, 298-299

²¹ Leys 2000, 253

We fill in the memory gaps that occur through time with interpretations from our current position. In fact, it is precisely this feature of it that opens the potentialities of performativity and the space where I decide to focus in my artistic research.

The recalled past is nonlinear: It remains enigmatic how memory functions. Our brain registers everything and it either erases or hides significant experiences that may damage our bodily functions, to build defense mechanisms; or it exaggerates and multiplies them to the point that they dominate and become a paralysis for the present experiences. Both these forms of recurrence may also intertwine and pop up irregularly, triggered by events at present.

The recalled past is intertwined: Although various experiences sometimes have a natural dramaturgy of occurrence, meaning they somehow have a beginning a climax, a catharsis, and an end, when they are remembered, specific chunks from this dramaturgy may enter other experiences and events and blend in in an illogical way that is neither chronological nor consequential.

With all this being said, this thesis doesn't delve into neurology or psychoanalysis. I am not trying to trace the source of how these memoirs were formed or what pushed me to document them. What I aim instead, is to examine their repercussions in the present and how I am able to read them and make sense of them from my current position through performance art. The basis for my definitions is autotheory, a long and tiring yet rewarding process of self-examination within the capabilities that this process allows.

I would like to also add that I look at recollection or the attempt to capture a past moment as *fleeting and ineffable*. French Philosopher Henri Bergson who referred to our inner perception of time as duration, became aware that the moment one attempted to measure a moment, it would be gone.

One measures an immobile, complete line, whereas time is mobile and incomplete. For the individual, time may speed up or slow down, whereas, for science, it would remain the same. [...] Duration is ineffable and can

only be shown indirectly through images that can never reveal a complete picture. It can only be grasped through a simple intuition of the imagination.²²

Perspectivism of time

I recall many beautiful moments during my studies at LAPS:

Through the group performative presentation that my colleagues did for the elective class on *Performance Philosophy* with professor Tero Nauha, fellow student and friend, dance artist, and pedagogue Mercedes Balarezo²³ brings up glimpses of epistemologies from her home continent, South American and specifically tribal culture in Ecuador. The perception of the position of the past and the future is completely opposite from the dominant perspective in the northern hemisphere. The past is envisioned to be in front of us; it can be gestured as frontal and most importantly it can be ‘seen’ through the eye of the imaginary because it has already happened and there is a clarity to it for as long as the memory allows. The future however remains in the back. It is behind our eyes so it cannot be seen. It is blurry, unknown, unpredictable, mysterious, frightening, threatening, exciting, attractive, and pulling towards but it will only reveal itself when it transgresses through our bodies while forming our present and then it moves to the front. Since I cannot pinpoint what community or communities this epistemology belongs to and am hesitant and aware of appropriating indigenous knowledges, I will bring forth Walter Benjamin’s Angel of History from his *On the Concept of History* written in 1940, to retrace this reversed perception of the fictive positionality of the past or rather the arduous intention to understand the perception of the abstractness of time by humans:

²² Bergson 2007, 11-14; 165-168

²³https://mercedesbalarezo.com/?fbclid=IwAR1m06TddEmf3Xt2Wks3D17hhXuNDIKs90xp64h_JybsOpsFNlsM5gjVYw

There is a painting by Klee called *Angelus Novus*. An angel is depicted there who looks as though he were about to distance himself from something which he is staring at. His eyes are opened wide, his mouth stands open and his wings are outstretched. The Angel of History must look just so. His face is turned towards the past. Where we see the appearance of a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe, which unceasingly piles rubble on top of rubble and hurls it before his feet. He would like to pause for a moment so fair [verweilen: a reference to Goethe's *Faust*], to awaken the dead and to piece together what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise, it has caught itself up in his wings and is so strong that the Angel can no longer close them. The storm drives him irresistibly into the future, to which his back is turned, while the rubble-heap before him grows sky-high. That which we call progress, is this storm.²⁴

I deeply relate to these approaches because my past is very present in front of my eyes. It comes up every time I need to apply for a new visa, airport authorities can't find my country in the computer system, or I don't have access to benefits of the European Union members. The past also occurs in the form of trauma when for example I encounter military, machineguns, tanks or hear emergency alarms, in which cases my body feels automatically displaced to the affect when this was my everyday life (1990-1999). Lastly, the past is present when I encounter suffering, injustice, othering or pushing of certain social groups in the margins of the society.

In the introduction titled *From Utopia to Propaganda and Back* of the book *Post-Communist Nostalgia*, Bulgarian historian Maria Todorova brings up the omnipresent return to studying the past in the territory of Eastern Europe:

The pervasive prescriptive or normative quality of much of the research on Eastern Europe, which may be defined with one word: the obsession over *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. This German term- meaning reassessment, coming to

²⁴ Benjamin 1940. Thesis on the Philosophy of History, On the Concept of History
<https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/benjamin/1940/history.htm>

terms with the past, coping, dealing with it, but also including redress, even retribution²⁵

Todorova speaks of the “climatic moment” when a collective is ready to deal with its traumatic past. There seem to be slight glimpses of favorable conditions for the occurrence of this collective climatic moment in Kosova through the initiation of public discussions over “this muffled struggle centered very much around what and who is remembered and commemorated; whose lives are mournable, what sacrifices notable”²⁶ I consider this to be a healthy step of a community to make amends with their past.

Another perspective of the positionality of the past which I’d like to bring in is that of the performance my colleague Tea Andreoletti created during the LAPSODY: Paramatter performance festival. In the brochure of the festival, she states:

Can a memory allow us to forget? So that water becomes air, the island a mountain and navigation a flight? *Forgetting by Remembering* is an imaginary journey of memories that leave the mind to return to the heart.

Dimenticare [to forget] in italian, means to take out of the mind.
Ricordare [to remember] in italian, means to return to the heart. ²⁷

The memories of the past are related to remembering and forgetting, both at the same time. Being the complex and debatable field that it is, I will approach it having in mind the concepts of collective memory as a social construct (Halbwachs), memory as re-shapable due to its quality of plasticity (Malabou) as well as trauma as a phenomenon occurring between the mimetic and the antimimetic theory (Leys). Through these references and a dialogue with these concepts, I will look at the material that I have

25 Todorova and Gille 2012, 3

26 Limani 2021

27 <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/events/live-art-and-performance-festival-paramatter/>

used in the process of constructing my artistic works, to be further elaborated in the Unfolding Semi-Permeable map #2: Artworks.

By approaching the past as an omnipresent phenomenon that is constantly in front meaning that it resists to arrive to a closure and recurs through memory and various triggers, I am orienting my thought processes towards asking:

What happens if instead of one past, we dissect it into multiple pasts?

If we can recall the past because it is at our disposal (as it has already happened to us) then is the past really finished? In terms of the temporal aspect of my artistic research, these are the main departure points.

Thinking of the past in plural

About six months before my thesis artistic performance took place, I was required to submit an approximate description of the concept and the content of the expected artistic work to the marketing department of Theater Academy for promotional purposes and this is the image and the description that was included in the academy's website and brochure that promoted my final work within the LAPS program at Teak:



Photoshoot for 'The Missing Torch' with Dylan Simon, Nashville Tennessee, 2020

©Draven Brew

SOMETIMES I FORGET HOW MUCH I LOVE TO MOVE

(working title)

Recalling personal experience through performance is a battle with windmills and often times, instead of achieving the much-needed recognition and empathy, it alienates those who haven't been through similar experiences.

During the 90s, the community I was born into went through segregation and ethnic cleansing. Kosovar Albanians were expelled from public life, including education. My mom was teaching English at a mosque. My cousins studied medicine in cold floors of unfinished homes. People were deported and lost their jobs.

In 1999, my home country Kosova went through war. I was 15 at the time.

Through revisiting my diaries, interviewing family, friends and acquaintances as well as recollecting what I remember, a story of necropolitics²⁸ will echo within a foreign restricted space such as Vapaan Taiteen Tila, primarily designated as a bunker. The performance will be developed in collaboration with artists from Finland, their artistic forms and narratives will become fragments of a collective story of a common past we wish we would have shared together.

Can we rewrite the past and how does it inform our future?"

By Fjolla Hoxha (Master of Arts degree in Live Art and Performance Studies, artistic thesis work)²⁹

Although the image included here is related to the video-performance *The Missing Torch* which I will elaborate more in detail in the next unfolding map, when working on what became titled *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, I stayed quite loyal to this given description. Whilst *The Missing Torch* deals with a more distant past for which my knowledge is based on visual and narrated memory, *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances* deals with a lived past I would like to distinguish more precisely, a past I remember in a visceral way. To open another tangent that will relate to the next subchapter called *Space Of State*, I find it very interesting that the working

28 First analysed in depth by author Achille Mbembe, necropolitics refers to the social and political power that controls the people's right to live (biopolitics) or to die, including here the social or political death. For more, please refer to: Mbembe Achille 2019

29 <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/events/without-external-public-sometimes-i-forget-how-much-i-love-to-move/>

title at the time was entangled around the concept of ‘moving’, which I remember had the meaning of the Joycean geographical displacement tied to it when I came up with the naming. However, now that I am rethinking it, it is equally legitimate for the temporal moving through memory as well.

Time and space in this written thesis continuously intersect and intertwine. I speak of temporal spaces and spatial time.

Thinking of the past in plural has a historical and political aspect. There have been drastically different periods I am an extension of (through my parents’ and grandparents’ lived experiences) as well as those that I have lived through myself. I have transitioned through a socialist country with a moderate communist ideology to a vacuum of statelessness and oppression, from a heavily neo-liberal progress and oversight to an embodied understanding of leadership and social responsibility. While there’s a benefit in thinking of these transitions in a consequential continuation, I believe dissecting them is helpful in trying to make sense of how they have affected my being and my artistic orientation.

I think here of the works of the contemporary Polish writer “Olga Tokarczuk who due to her focus on borderlands and their linguistic, cultural, and religious ambiguity is not universally popular in her home country, Poland, as it faces a strong swell of conservatism. Her writing often leans on Poland’s diverse history — a diversity that “official” history is keen to neglect or deny. In a 2018 interview with *The Calvert Journal*, she noted that the “mythology of moving borders” runs deep in her family: without ever moving, her grandmother acquired three different citizenships—Austro-Hungarian, Soviet, and Polish”³⁰

I will briefly try to describe the political background of these dissected pasts, both from my experience as well as public knowledge and how they differ from each other although this over-simplification is done more for purposes of orienting the reader. Some of these various pasts have become a part of my artistic research at LAPS MA

30 Weber 2021

program and I am curious to try to understand through the writing process of this thesis about how they interact, negate, or overlap with each other in my performative work.

The pasts:

1. The ‘golden’ period of Yugoslavia: Roughly post World War II to 1989, when the leader of the confederation Josip Broz Tito died, and SFRY started to collapse with wars occurring in its federations.
2. The Oppression of Serbia (1989-1999): during which exclusion from the public sphere and space by the leading authority of the Serbian state took place, based on ethnicity and religion.
3. Post war Kosova- *from enclosure to openness*³¹: mid 1999 to 2008, when its independence was declared.
4. Contemporary Kosova from 2008 to now: led by the war wing (Kosovo Liberation Guerrilla Army members) up till 2021 when the leftist opposition formed by the front man of the ‘Self-determination’ (*Vetëvendosje*) party Albin Kurti, primarily known as the student resistance leader during the 90s, won more than 50% of the elections, in coalition with former speaker of the parliament of Kosova, Vjosa Osmani.

By bringing up these pasts in a way I am preventing them from ending or they are refusing to become detached from me. They linger through my motivation to return to them and draw them into the present to gain information about the sources of my strong desire to deal with identity politics, bearing in mind the awareness of their nature as social constructs. These pasts fracture me into multiple selves which I have stayed with artistically for different time-lengths in various performances I have tested out or delved into more in depth during the LAPS program. Can I re-read personal biography and reinterpret (initially I wrote ‘heal from’) the feeling of invisibility and othering through looking at it from various distanced temporal and spatial contexts? This modification,

31 Groys 2001

re-reading, multiplication, fracturing/dissecting has become the basis for my mode of resisting the erasure.

In terms of questioning how I create relationships with that which remains, Tokarczuk's concept of the 'moving borders' seems to be very similar to my outlook of the past in plural. While she approaches political history through a spatial positioning, I dissect it into various temporal sections. Both outlooks are abstract and serve the need to make sense of the absurdity of that which is no longer possible to be explained in a rational manner, a language luckily accepted within the realm of creating art!

Entry points: Autotheory

My key readings on what I understand by autotheory are based on writer, curator, theoretician and artist Lauren Fournier's book *Autotheory as Feminist Practice in Art, Writing and Criticism*. I am committed to a personal standpoint supported by glimpses of various critical theories which both help in being cautious about subjectivity (in an extreme case, can fall into narcissism) as well as in order to broaden up the individual perspective. In Lauren Fournier's words:

Most simply, autotheory is the integration of the auto or "self" with philosophy or theory, often in ways that are direct, performative, or self-aware.³²

On her review on Fournier's book for LA Review of Books, writer Teresa Carmody writes:

"Black feminists and other women of color," such as (bell) hooks, are some of the earliest practitioners of autotheory. Their experimental work collectively laid "a foundation for more explicitly autotheoretical work to come," like Paul Preciado's *Testo Yonqui/Testo Junkie* (2008/2013), Maggie Nelson's *The Argonauts* (2015), and Christina Sharpe's *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2016). In such works, personal experience informs the writers' understandings

³² Fournier 2021, 16

of theory, which recursively informs the personal experience. Both the body of the text and the body of the writer are sites of curiosity and knowledge; the text may take a more experimental form; the writer may be made over via the writing.³³

As Fournier points out, autotheoretical modes run through the philosophical tradition, from Jean-Jacques Rousseau to Frantz Fanon, but as a genre, autotheory really began taking shape through feminist practices, extending from early critical-creative hybrid texts (Gloria Anzaldúa, Audre Lorde), conceptual art (Adrian Piper), and performance (Carolee Schneemann, Annie Sprinkle), to contemporary uses of exhibition spaces (Allyson Mitchell and Deirdre Logue), social media, and other digital platforms (Sonia Fernández Pan). Thus, Fournier's definition, "the integration of the auto or 'self' with philosophy or theory, often in ways that are direct, performative, or self-aware," establishes autotheory as an interdisciplinary genre, while finger-poking the locks of other disciplinary gates".³⁴

I approach autotheory through dealing with my own (materials) journals, sounds, objects, and memories (experiential and narrated) and my artistic approach towards the past. Going back to the Joycean anecdote I brought up in the introduction of this thesis, my voice is located geographically, and it becomes noticed/heard through departing the anchored geography. The artistic practice enriched mostly by interpreting the atrocities I have experienced through Foucault's views on biopolitics, biopower and Mbembe's Necropolitics, also interpreted within the Balkan context by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić³⁵ work through my body and in relation to the audiences of my performances. To reiterate Carmody's description from above on how 'personal experience informs the writers' understandings of theory, which recursively informs the personal experience' the relationship between theory and artistic practice become enmeshed and feed each other to in this way enable the entrance of others' readings into a personal narrative.

33 Carmody 2021

34 Ibid.

35 Gržinić and Tatlić 2014

Empowering Others

If I must speak of a life-skill gained through experience, I will say that I have worked on youth empowerment and integration through theater and education for over a decade. I believe this all started with my own exposure as a teenager to the drastic transition from a vague and distant memory of a semi-harmony (I was five years old when Yugoslavia collapsed) to that of caution, fear, isolation, and poverty (a decade of gradual deterioration of human rights during the centralized power of Serbia, more drastically manifested through the wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo). Then there is period of a few months of intensive war in its full meaning of the word, between March 1999 to June 1999, for which my memories are very vivid and by vivid here I mean photographic. The decade between June 1999 till 2019 when I moved to Helsinki, is filled with exposure to self-exploration as a social activist and a ‘responsible citizen’ that takes care of others. I was the leader of the Youth Forum of my high school for 2 years and knew how to write a statute of an organizational body when I was 16. I participated in numerous leadership camps in Kosova and abroad, established the radio channel for my high school, the debate club of my high school, worked on the high school magazine and was member of two youth organizations that worked on environmentalism and democracy. Standing here, I wonder what this drastic change from being afraid to speak my native language (Albanian) and having been trained by my parents how to behave in front of officers, the military and border patrol (1989-1999) did to me when this instant gratification of freedoms blossomed (1999-).

I instinctively became engaged with passing on the knowledges to other youngsters and eventually got engaged in working with those that the very same Kosovar Albanians who were once (not long ago) discriminated, were now discriminating and othering to the pit of the society: the Roma, Ashkali and the Egyptian population.

Through theater-making as a processing tool, I was working with various temporary collectives, mostly international groups that invested in integrating the marginalized into the broader public sphere and culture. As a theater maker, I was interested in empowering these youngsters to embrace their background and not self-deprecate as a

result of embodying the otherness. I wanted them to trust their stories and their voices and build belief that their narratives are equally valid, and worth being heard by other peers as well as the state authorities.

I am proud of the work we did and the difference we made but I am also becoming more and more aware that I had become a part of an apparatus behind which I had buried my own traumatic past and was functioning as a wheel within a system, without any time or space to breathe, reflect, distance, pause, reshape, rest, recharge, reset. This brings me to the reason I decided to seek for educational programs for myself, to further my knowledge, now that I had accumulated all this experience. Further my knowledge or deal with what I had? Surprising outcomes have come up since then!



‘The Unstepped Forest of the Island of TamTum’. Developed with approx. 100 youngsters of different communities in Prizren, Kosova © Fjolla Hoxha

The Diary Entry from the Day of The Liberation

Avoiding the dealing with the past for 20 years can also be read as a blockage. A resistance to return to an uncomfortable territory, metaphorically described as ‘Dealing with ones’ own demons.

I’d like to recall here scholar Lauren Berlant’s viewpoint on resistance: “blockages or surprises are usually part of the convention and not a transgression of it, or anything radical. They make conventionality interesting and rich, even.”³⁶

Folded inside an envelope inside a notebook inside a luggage, two A3 pages of a wall calendar from 1999 travelled with me to Helsinki. On the front of them, there are images of female assumed bodies in female designated undergarments and nightgowns that marketed the productions of the local enterprise ‘Mimoza’, located in my hometown Prizren. This calendar stood hanging at the kitchen of my dad’s aunts’ house which they had inherited from their parents, a 100-year-old Ottoman empire-style house with wooden sealings and a small door at the backyard which had the function to enable Muslim women who were covering in public to go to their neighbors without their headscarves. On the back of these pages that marked the months of January through May 1999 was my handwriting in quite small letters, which made the pages quite full of the description in detail of events and emotions from the day that The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces entered via ground to Kosova and halted the atrocities of the Serbian military and paramilitary forces. I have journaled regularly approximately between 10 years old till my 30s and I remember thinking I had to write these experiences and feelings so that I can outpour them to make room for other ones. Every time I try to go back and read these entries, they bring back the past so accurately and vividly, it is physically difficult to endure. Therefore, I decide not to read them, and they just stay there in a large drawer together with my poetry and essays. I’d like to look at this process of avoiding the return to my “writings as one of the first technologies of remembering”³⁷ as a complex process that both unveils trauma and conceals it.

36 Berlant 2008, 4
37 Mandolessi 2017

These diary entry pages though, were not entered in a notebook which is how I usually wrote, and they just kept reappearing like a talisman that wouldn't go away. Every time I started speaking about this to my colleagues and professors, my voice was shaking, and I was on the edge of bursting to tears. I was avoiding the reading due to the powerful effect these words had in bringing me back to the lived experience and I didn't know how to deal with it.

After almost two years of carrying these two pages around, they traveled with me to Nashville, Tennessee and I read them for the first time in front of the camera at the *Anachronistic Media Workshop*³⁸ video and music production studio of Dylan Simon. The camera had the power to keep me reading as if I had a responsibility towards it to not stop. It helped me to rebuild the connection with this text which I had written 21 years ago. There were moments that the entry was so naïve and ridiculous that it made me laugh but there were also moments in it that were so powerful that I had to stop for a breath to be able to overcome the tears lined up on my throat. From that moment on, this single diary entry became the basis of a repetitive textual experimentation for which I utilized Burroughs & Gysin's cutup technique. Reiterating Kierkegaard again: 'the way to change, and to freedom, to use this highly laden word, leads through repetition.'

38 <https://anachronisticmediaworkshop.com>

1.2. SPACE OF STATE

In this sub-unfolding, I will explain the theoretical basis for dealing with space as a site through the lens of human geographers as well as give some background information on the geographical spaces I refer to in my artworks. I will also elaborate on the artistic collectives that have influenced my work as well as their relationship to political art in a critical conversation with the state they lived in. Thus, state politics becomes a departure point to construct performative spaces.

Recognition of the politics of space

A crucial part of this thesis is the understanding of space. The sites I utilize to place my performances and how they determine the readings of the performances. Space within the context of social theory. “Space as a political facet that organizes our social relations and structures our relations of power.”³⁹

During this process of the two-year studies and drawing back from my past artistic choices as a performance and theatre maker, I have realized that my artistic sensitivity towards space production is informed by the commonly agreed upon functionality of spaces and how they perform. This realization derives both from my background as a theatre maker trying to flee from the classical sermonic format of performer/priest doing things in front of a sitting and mostly silent audience/congregation as well as from my personal life of being born in a territory that has transitioned through various ideological-political systems, shifted borders and othered its people based on their political identity, more precisely nationality and religion. As stated in the previous unfolding sub-chapter *Memory & Time*, to understand how these influences sit on top of each other and what their interaction is in fact producing in terms of artistic expression, I am dealing with a territorially detached revisiting of my past(s) (while pinned in

³⁹ Solga 2019, 27-36.

Helsinki), through recalling memoirs and returning to journals from a distant life as a teenager in Kosova during the 90s.

Through this approach, I push identity related questions towards positionality questions that define my perspective in relation to space-making by recognizing this affiliation to spaces for their assigned designated roles and repurposing them. This process of spotting certain spaces (which I call ‘objets trouvés’)⁴⁰ and somehow skipping others is also determined by auto-biographical remnants therefore it is impossible to speak of neutral spaces or spaces that are independent from experiences. They surely can exist without this personal edition, on the levels of their designated functionality and materiality however my interest here is in what becomes of them when my presence comes in the game. Philosopher Henri Lefebvre determined these as *Representational Spaces* (1991:42) and the process of this interaction between the auto-biographical and the spaces that inform it is known as *Space Production*.

Scholars working in the fields of human geography such as Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey, “whose branch investigates how social forces operate in concert with both human communities and their physical surroundings in order to produce the very thing we call ‘space’”⁴¹ are the main theoretical influence on my approach to performance sites in this artistic research.

According to Oxford Languages dictionary⁴² “human geography is the branch of geography dealing with how human activity affects or is influenced by the earth's surface.”

Below I will try to explain the views of human geographers Henri Lefebvre, Edward Soja and Doreen Massey and why I find them inspirational in this written thesis. What

40 Merriam-webster dictionary: ‘objet trouvé’: a natural or discarded object found by chance and held to have aesthetic value

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/objet%20trouv%C3%A9>

41 Solga 2019, 31

42 <https://languages.oup.com/google-dictionary-en/>

these scholars have in common is their “preoccupation with the interaction and the influence between spaces and populations.”⁴³

In *Production of Space* (1991: 26-29), Henri Lefebvre speaks of the *not readily visible* connection between social spaces as social products which are concealed by its producers (institutions, governments, individuals) in order to keep the ongoing smooth operations of power. He speaks of the comforting illusion of *spatial innocence* that hides the most complex operations of power in public space. In conclusion, space is not where we work on, but it works on us. In *Thirdspace* (1996), geographer, urban theorist and ardent follower of Lefebvre, Edward Soja brings the production of space into a conversation with Foucault’s definition of heterotopias. Soja Argues that “class identity is not only a product of historical oppression – of one’s place in time, but also a product of one’s locational identity or literal place in the world.”⁴⁴

British feminist, geographer and theorist Doreen Massey moves beyond the Marxist focus on class identity in human geography to examine how gender, racial and other cultural identities interweave in the shaping of modern, global urbanism.

According to Massey’s *For Space*, 1. Space is constituted through interactions, 2. Space is the sphere of multiplicity in the sense of contemporaneous plurality, 3. Space is always under construction. (Massey 2005, 10-11)

Thinking of spaces in such a dynamic term where they are not neutral physical sites but alive factors that contribute to the establishment of power hegemonies has helped me alter my sensitivity towards sites where performance and live art is placed. My inclination to work outside of theater venues has gained meaning, depth and direction in a way that I read spaces as much more than physical territories knowing that they don’t hold a neutral position.

During 2019-2020, together with Nashville based performance and video-artist, we created a short video performance called ‘The Missing Torch’ which is placed in Cyberspace.

43 Solga 2019, 31

44 Solga 2019, 34

In mid 2020, for the Research Seminar (the last project of the first year at LAPS), ‘Rental Auction’ came to life, a performance set on a balcony that was being promoted for rental purposes to an audience on Microsoft teams. Towards the end of 2020, during our Beta projects that aimed at exploring various directions to orient us towards our final artistic piece, my class was working at a gym which I utilized as a gym, a parade setting, a museum, and a bunker.

My interest in bunkers had been intuitively present in other past occasions as well. During LAPSODY: Paramatter festival co-organized with my LAPS colleagues in fall of 2020, I worked with the bunkers at Kuninkaansaari island from the perspective of a dominatrix, a semi-Shepard guide that led the audience to another bunker at the island, which was flooded and was known for its toxic chemicals. The door of this bunker was broken, and it did not serve its purpose. I was mesmerized by its openness that contradicted its initial purpose as a shelter, it’s astonishing beauty that was created through the interaction of the bunker with the surrounding nature, the atmospheric conditions and the echo that the place had. With my back towards the audience, replacing my dominatrix leather jacket with an army jacket that had similar colors to those of rust and mold in the walls of the bunker, I sang with its echo, Double Dare, a song about despising bureaucracy by the goth rock band Bauhaus from the 70s, from Northampton, England. Lastly, my final performance within the scope of my studies ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’ took place at Vapaan Taiteen Tila or The Free Space for Arts administered by the Student Union of Uniarts Helsinki, a 600m² bunker under a gigantic rock in the *Sörnäinen* neighborhood, with a primary function to shelter people during conflicts. I will elaborate on some of these works from the lens of spatial orientation further in this writing, more specifically in *The Unfolding of Semi-Permeable Map#2: The Artworks*.

These spaces become a trigger portal to revisit the pasts and rebuild the relationality with them through placing performances in them as entry points to this process.

In other words, I am interested in what the editors of the book on “Art, performance and the persistence of being’ describe as ‘site’ as a cue to return to the past”⁴⁵ or the power that a venue, a site, a space, a place possesses to take one through a journey in time, even beyond time, to imaginary places which we may or may not recognize.

Between escapism and perspectivism: on nationalism as a trap and expanding the view

Earlier this year, on November 12th to be exact, during a walk around the streets of Helsinki with my colleague from LAPS, Tea Andreoletti, we were discussing about nuances of identity politics and their social construction aspects. Grappling with inner conflict, I was trying to explain my weariness with regards to the complexity of embracing a regained national identity after a long period of struggle against its denial and the risks of becoming instrumentalized. Referring to sociologist and writer Sezgin Boynik’s article *Theories of Nationalism and Contemporary Art in Kosovo*⁴⁶ where he attempts to demystify the post war euphoria and international upbringing into superlative of the at-the-time current contemporary art scene of Kosova, he concludes that at its core, this productive body of artistic work remains nationalistic. He refers here to the post war period during which a massive influx of international presence brought Western trends in art and a political oversight to a place whose statehood was questionable.

The anonymous comic book collective *Zampa di Leone* dealt with this “exoticizing discourse that escorted the neoliberal capitalist colonization of the former socialist countries”⁴⁷ through caricaturizing the contemporary cultural scene that had diffused to the Balkans through the globalization of the contemporary art markets, the emergence of institutional frameworks and organizational infrastructures, cross-border sales and the integration of local markets to, as Olav Velthuis and Stefano Baia Curioni write: (A)

45 Giannachi, Kaye, Shanks 2012, 3

46 Boynik 2007, 214–233

47 Zampa Di Leone 2021, 4

“single, unified interconnected global market or a transnational field of contemporary art, which to a large degree has a shared institutional and organizational set-up.”⁴⁸

To draw an example from Boynik’s article, he explains how when artist Albert Heta in 2004 was invited to exhibit at the 5. *Cetinje Biennial*⁴⁹ curated by René Block and Natasa Ilić, he set an imaginary *Embassy of Kosovo in Montenegro*, an installation which caused a tremendous mediatic scandal. This provocation is highly praised among the international contemporary art scene as one of the best art pieces of the last twenty years, due to its exposing nature of the political conflict between the two countries and a resistance from the union of Serbia and Montenegro to accept the reality of Kosova, unavoidably set to become a state. In this context, the critique that unfolds through the installation becomes an instigator for a fiery political debate.

Kosova declared its independence only on February 17th, 2008 and started to shape into a country. Boynik notes the arising presence of nationalist feelings as ‘positive nationalism’ due to the empowerment of the kind that is similar to that of ‘micro-states’ that challenge the centrality of power, referring here to the theories of the political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson’s which can be found in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983) and criticizes what Hans Belting defines as: “the global new art today”.⁵⁰ (Belting 2009, 40).

Looping back to my conversation with Tea mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, here’s pretty much the core of our dialogue:

Me: (referring to my experience of being othered based on ethnicity) I have been put inside a box without any given choice, based on my nationality and religion, mainly nationality.

48 Velthuis and Baia 2015, 3

49 Montenegro at the time was part of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro. Through a referendum, in 2006 Montenegro left the union in a peaceful manner and this became the final dissolution of ex-Yugoslavia.

50 Belting 2009

Tea: Then you need to visualize that box to understand your relationship with nationalism.

Me: Maybe that is why I am trying to work within the context of spatiality.

On the catalogue of his retrospective published by The National Gallery of Kosova, contemporary artist from Kosova, Sokol Beqiri writes: “in my everyday life, I’m a localist. I love my place...I have chosen to live in Kosova. I haven’t run away even when we were going through big risks. But, in art, you can’t be a localist. To understand the essence of a reality, you must step out of it, to have a wider point of view”.⁵¹

By the critique of Velthuis & Curioni, ‘localist’ here, gains the meaning of parochial, insignificant, and ultimately focused on a narrow view that produces nationalist affects.

Kosova, being the youngest ‘self-determined’ country in the territory of the ‘old continent’ of Europe, established in 2008, is not fully internationally recognized. With a history of belonging to many empires, confederations and a repressive system that led to war, it becomes understandable why Beqiri, I and many others feel the pressure to stay and contribute to the formation and development of it today. The country, as most economically underdeveloped post eastern bloc countries, suffers from the brain drain syndrome and on its younger citizens, this is reflected with a sense of conflict between responsibility to contribute and a guilt for wanting to expand beyond its possibilities and limitations. In wider terms, due to the absence of any established contemporary tradition besides that which is based on patriarchy and resistance towards assimilation, both very tightly intertwined, the country is mostly demotivational for its youth which is interested in exploring its identity beyond the national one. In fact, the national identity is that burden that Sokol Beqiri is talking about, that blinds from being able to ‘have a wider view’. A trap if viewed from the isolated perspective of preservation and obligation without openness to criticality and freedom/limitation to borrow from others. If, however, one has been repressed because of their national identity, how can they set

51 Beqiri 2008

themselves free from this traumatic othering push to the pit of the society and be released from the burden?

Before being able to speak about the different kinds of spaces

I had come to the LAPS program mainly with the above-mentioned burden in my shoulders and question in mind. To give some background context:

I was born in a different country and system (The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia), was oppressed and othered by another (The Republic of Serbia), was 'saved and set free' by another (the western alliance of NATO pact) and lastly became a citizen of another country which is currently known as The Republic of Kosovo or as I call it Kosova, as one pronounces it in Albanian, because the 'o' suffix with which the country is internationally renowned is in fact a suffix borrowed from Serbian, which is not my mother tongue. What is characteristic in this context is that all but the savior part - hereby becoming a 'Deus ex Machina' - happen to be the same territory undergoing various political transitions. Or at least it seems that way...

I was interested in scrutinizing the very early past for which my knowledge was based more on listening to stories that I'd heard from my parents, grandparents and those who had grown up during Yugoslavia. These stories mostly speak of the country that came the closest to the socialist utopia; various nationalities with different cultures and languages, co-habituating in peace in the name of prospering the countries 'people-focused' ideology. I have memories of multiple holidays during the year, my dad's work suitcase always being on hold in the corridor due to his extensive work trips and my grandfather who was a textile engineer, bringing gifts all the way from textile exhibitions in Myanmar, Russia, Egypt and Spain, to name a few. Citizens of Yugoslavia went to university with a guarantee that after their graduation, the state will offer them a job in their profession in one of the state-owned public enterprises as well as they will be offered a flat/house by the state. My mother tells of an instance when she and her brother went to visit London as tourists during the late 70s and the hotel staff

where they were staying warned them that they should be careful to protect their passport which was very valuable therefore very popular among thieves. The possibilities to travel freely towards both the east and the west were made possible by the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961 in Belgrade, under the leadership of the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, Yugoslav President Josip Broz Tito, Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumah, Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, and Indonesian President Sukarno to avoid being involved in the polarized world of the Cold War between the pro-Soviet communist countries belonging to the Warsaw Pact, and the pro-American capitalist countries belonging to NATO.⁵²

To touch upon the downsides of this utopic sounding confederation, in 2008, during the *Documentary and short film festival Dokufest* that takes place in my hometown, Prizren, I watched *Zabranjeni bez zabrane (Censored Without Censorship)*, a documentary directed by Milan Nikodijević and Dinko Tucaković, produced in Serbia, in 2007 about the *Black Wave*, critically the most acknowledged period of Yugoslavian cinema. Through conversation with auteurs like Aleksandar Petrović, Zelimir Zilnik, Dušan Makavejev, Lazar Stojanovic and others, it tells “a painful story about the (state) censorship and persecution they had to face with”⁵³. This was happening in parallel to the freely roaming harmonious family stories I described just a paragraph above. These filmmakers became dissidents because they were questioning and criticizing the communist utopia by making anti-communist films.

Many anti-communists or communists that didn't meet the ideological standpoints of Tito (such as Stalinists) were taken to Goli Otok, which means the Baren Island.⁵⁴ In 1949, the entire island was officially made into a high-security, top secret prison and labor camp run by the authorities of the People's Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, together with the nearby Sveti Grgur island, which held a similar camp for

52 "Non-Aligned Movement | Definition, Mission, & Facts". Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved 10 July 2020

53 Nikodijević and Tucaković 2007

54 Segel 2016

female prisoners. Non-political prisoners were also sent to the island to serve out simple criminal sentences and some of them were sentenced to death. Some of these prisoners were writers, filmmakers, painters.

Drawing in another parallel, I had also heard my elders speak of Aleksandar Ranković⁵⁵ the third most powerful man in Yugoslavia after Josip Broz Tito and Edvard Kardelj (who was the main theoretician/creator of the Yugoslav system of workers' self-management). Ranković, Minister of Internal Affairs, was a proponent of a centralized Yugoslavia and opposed efforts that promoted decentralization. The opponency towards his approach gained the etiquette of separatist forces and those in Kosovo who were rising against it were suspected of pursuing seditious activities. My grandmother, a moderate Muslim, spoke of Ranković as if he were *the devil reincarnate*. She shared an instance that describes his obsession with control hence spying when she, a pharmaceutical factory worker, was offered coffee by her colleagues, during the holy month of Ramadan, to be tested if she was fasting and practicing a religious belief, practices which were restricted during this period. In my grandmother's words her obedience towards the Yugoslavian state regulations was being tested or in her words she was *being provoked*.

Art as subject to political manipulation⁵⁶, politics as a subject to artistic manipulation

All art is subject to political manipulation except that which speaks the language of the same manipulation.

-NSK Statement⁵⁷

Anti-reactionary underground culture managed to erupt and function throughout this period of censorship in ex-Yugoslavia due to many favorable conditions that were absent in other socialist countries of the Warsaw pact at the time: the openness of the

55 Independent International Commission on Kosovo 2000, 35

56 Hackett 2004

57 Benson 1996

confederation towards the western trends but also the peculiar artistic language that these collectives were using in transgressing their critique towards centralized power/totalitarianism. A big factor was also the slow fall of the country that was sealed with the death of its leader, Tito. In one way, they were taking advantage of the weakened confederation to manifest their critique towards the state and in another, they were becoming visionaries of what is to become of this much envied socialist state often considered the closest to what the communist utopia could have become, in practice. In short, “they were predicting the fire.”⁵⁸

This period saw the birth of some of the most significant retro Avant Garde art collectives of the twentieth century. Two of them arose in Slovenia, one of the most economically/culturally/intellectually developed federations. Die Neue Slovenische Kunst also known as NSK and Borghesia both came from Ljubljana, whereas “Autopsia began its art practice in London in the late 1970s and continued during the 1980s in the art centers of the former Yugoslavia. Since 1990, Autopsia has been based in Prague, Czech Republic.”⁵⁹

In terms of their proximity with the avant-garde, “the emphasis on collective and mixed media production, the aim to receive an active response to their works through provocation and shock, their categorical rejection of institutions of art (and state), and most importantly their radical critique of aesthetic autonomy can be seen through the works of all these groups.”⁶⁰

Using the materials of theatre, music visual arts, design, and architecture NSK took on the role of a catalyst, revisiting the traumas of European history and exposing “the hidden mechanisms of ideological domination.”⁶¹

“NSK was founded by the musical group Laibach. Other NSK members include groups such as IRWIN (visual art), Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre (also known as Red Pilot and Cosmokinetic Theatre Noordung), New Collective Studio (graphics; also known as New Collectivism), Retrovision (film and video), and the Department of Pure and Applied Philosophy (theory). The founding groups of the NSK were Laibach, IRWIN,

58 Benson 1996

59 <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Autopsia>

60 Gounaridou 2005, 86-87

61 Benson 1996

and Scipion Nasice Sisters Theater.”⁶² *Membership has traditionally been open to all artistic groups who show an interest in challenging the norms and taboos of Slovene national identity.*⁶³

Slovenian electronic music pioneers and video art trailblazers Borghesia were formed in Ljubljana in 1982. They developed from the alternative theatre group Theatre FV-112/15. Seeking uncharted forms of audio-visual expression in a decaying former Yugoslavia, the then-duo formed by producer Aldo Ivančič and singer Dario Seraval called for a new musical and aesthetic language. “As in the case of their contemporaries Laibach, the prohibited, tabooed, and repressed were forced under the magnifying glass.”⁶⁴

Autopsia’s expression is channeled via multimedia projects that include music and visual production.

A few key characteristics of these retro avant-garde collectives:

- Provocation, alienated consciousness, boldness, and shock, through overidentifying with authoritarianism, sexual explicitness, and disturbing topics such as evil or death. In their printworks and music, “Autopsia, examines death as a cultural force that is increasingly repressed.”⁶⁵

It refers to the glorification of the roman aesthetic to parallel the eugenic ideas of ‘pure race’. Laibach on the other hand stated: “Our mission is to make evil lose its nerve”⁶⁶, not making it clear here who they are referring to in a direct way. Laibach uses the German name of Lubljana, exposing through this enigmatic visual symbol the relationship of Slovenia with fascism, an uneasy topic relating to Slovenia’s past that had been dusted away under the carpet. “Post war historical amnesia was state enforced in Yugoslavia.”⁶⁷

62 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neue_Slowenische_Kunst

63 Gow and Carmichael 2001 98-99

64 <https://borghesia.bandzoogle.com/bio>

65 http://www.autopsia.net/autopsia_thanatopolis_book.html

66 Benson 1996

67 Benson 1996

- The utilization of industrialism “(the horror of the communion between totalitarianism and the alienation generated by the industrial production in its slave form)”⁶⁸ or industrial art in all forms they were practicing music, performance, multimedia, painting, graphical printing, and publications to convey their aesthetic and ideology.
- Imitation, over-imposition and collage. I will refer more elaborately on this in the subtitle ‘Imitation of State’.

In terms of direct influence to my work, Borghesia’s music has become part of the soundtrack for video performance *The Missing Torch*. Autopsia’s visual graphics⁶⁹ an inspiration for a retro-spectral writing of a fictional anti-reactionary art wave that has erupted from Kosova which initially was my ambition to create as this very written thesis, however due to the vastness of the project which I will elaborate further in *The Unfolding of Semi-Permeable Map#3: The Future*, it has remained as a plan for a future challenge.

In the case of NSK, which is my main source of focus and inspiration while developing my performative artistic language, it is their take “on opening the possibility of the politicized, systematically ideological art as a consequence of the influence of politics and ideology”⁷⁰ that I find so close to my artistic thinking and has driven me to stay longer with their art and literature around it.

68 Benson 1996

69 Here, I refer mostly to Alexei Monroe’s silkscreen printed book ‘Thanatopolis’ published by Divus in 2016. http://www.autopsia.net/autopsia_thanatopolis_book.html

70 Benson 1996

Imitation of State

Through utilizing the fascist aesthetic, NSK's early works primarily focused on holding a mirror to the declining state of Yugoslavia. They were confronting the myth of communism using fascism, as Yugoslavia "was a state founded on the mythologized cornerstone of the partisan resistance to the fascist occupation."⁷¹ Works of IRWIN, NSK's visual arts department, revealed fascism and communism as two sides of the same totalitarian canvas.

They stated that they are "presenting art in the image of the state"⁷². Simulating a state through the mechanism that the state oppression functions. The complex diagrammed structure of the collective divided in different departments was referring to the state bureaucracy.

I have had the honor to have one of the members of NSK's IRWIN group, visual artist and professor Miran Mohar – who became the ambassador of NSK's *State in Time* in Moscow after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as a mentor during my studies at LAPS. According to Miran, NSK's artistic tools were *overidentification and over imposition* meaning glorifying totalitarian ideological aesthetics in their artworks to in this way criticize the system from inside out or holding a mirror to it instead of providing a moralizing discourse of their weaknesses and flaws. Through using over imposition to expose "the transgression by which the system reproduces itself"⁷³ and embracing a past ideology such as fascism (instead of direct references to communism) they were wittily not only protecting themselves from the similar fate of the censored filmmakers of the black wave or other artists who ended up at the barren island but at the same time building the consequential connection with an undealt past that was echoing to the present.

71 Benson 1996

72 Benson 1996

73 Žižek in Benson 1996

In *Predictions of Fire* the narrator states: “was this a politicized art or an aestheticized politics? (Walter Benjamin). Or was it simply a warning that if you repress history, it will eventually boil over?

...

NSK’s aim was to revive the trauma of the early 20th century avant-garde movements by identifying with them in their state of assimilations of totalitarian regimes. Although they rejected to take a stance in terms of their goals, if they had any goal that would be ‘the destruction of historical naivete’.⁷⁴

One of their most provocative actions involving the media occurred in 1983, when members of *Laibach* gave an interview to TV Slovenia. Instead of answering the reporter in the usual way, they responded by assuming the roles of particular totalitarian types and reciting their answers in an impersonal, alienated manner, “which baffled the public and created a huge scandal”.⁷⁵

“-You step out as provocateurs, as one could say, the number one enemy of the state, do you have many followers?

Art is a noble calling which requires fanaticism. Laibach is an organism whose aims, life and means of activity of the group are higher in strength and duration than the aims, life and means of the individuals which compose it.

-Aren’t you afraid that someone might spank you because of this?

Art is a noble calling which requires fanaticism.”⁷⁶

Ultimately, NSK teaches not to be afraid of the past experiences but to deconstruct them and reconstruct them to gain new meanings. Disassemble them, reassemble them, and read them anew. This is where similarity to the cut-up technique by William Burroughs and Bryon Gysin comes into the play especially in my endeavors to prepare the material for ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’ and throughout this artistic research project, in general.

74 Benson 1996

75 Badovinac 2009

76 Benson 1996

Even after the collapse of Yugoslavia, NSK continued to touch the core of the dysfunctionality of transitioning states, through utilizing an escapist language that generated new symbolical spaces. After the collapse of USSR, they laid out a gigantic black square (as an homage to Kazimir Malevich's revolutionary painting) on the Red Square that symbolizes the epicenter of the country and its pride.

In 1992, NSK formed their *State in Time*, a utopian formation without a physical territory which is not identified by any existing national state. "It is inherently transnational, and its art is a cross-section between 'fiction and reality' in 'the first global state of the universe'".⁷⁷ In 1993, NSK started issuing passports "to anyone who is prepared to identify with its founding principles."⁷⁸ Kosova's new Prime Minister (former army general) Agim Çeku was issued an NSK passport in 2004 indicating that "Kosova itself is almost like an avant-garde artwork, an experimental formation."⁷⁹

At the time NSK began issuing its passports, there were many new states in Europe and war was raging in the Balkans—circumstances that led to increased interest in these artistic copies of official documents, at times out of entirely practical motives.

How does my artistic practice relate to NSK?

I was looking at the approaches and artworks of these collectives that operated within Yugoslavia during my attempt to identify and articulate the impact of the un-lived past of the socialist system which I have inherited as a narrative and as visual glimpses of an early childhood.

I am conscious that I have delved too long into NSK's practice, due to my fascination with them. However, as this is not a thesis about NSK, the key here is to build a connection between their artistic philosophy and mine. I am not trying to reproduce theirs because primarily, I (unfortunately) do not belong to any such large collective that

⁷⁷ <https://nsk-state-pavilion.net/about-nsk/>

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Boynik 2007, 223

was so determined and motivated to dedicate to building a complex web of artforms and artistic interventions. Of course, their practice was informed by the period they were living in which is a different time and space conjunction than that from where I depart. Since on the following unfolding map on *the artworks* I will be focusing on the performances that came as a result of the artistic research overarched under the title ‘Modification as a Mode of Resistance’, I found it important to point out one of the major influences that have informed my path when dealing with the past. As a result, I have embodied performative representations of authoritarianism, blind adoration of totalitarian leaders and have worked with restricted spaces in which the audience has become the subjects of exposing disbalances of hegemony and operating power structures.

When dealing with a precarious past that was dominated by the state political developments, I recall numerous instances from my childhood of overhearing conversations of the adults in relation to the ongoing news they were watching on TV or the endless radio stations that were commenting on the political situation. I repeat what my grandfather (who had a muscular condition that made his head shake when he got upset) used to say after listening to a political debate or the recent news: ‘*S’osht situata mirë*’, which in Kosovar Albanian means ‘*The situation is not good*’. He was talking about a continuous present that seemed like it will never end, and I grew up with a bitter taste of this in limbo and a deep understanding of future as a place of darkness and doom.

In terms of working with autobiographical memories and materials (texts, objects) from the context of the mishmash of transitional political events and the historical developments that have transgressed through my existence in a direct or indirect way, I have asked what marks, wounds, knowledges, traumas, wisdoms have entered my body and how do I make sense of them through utilizing performance art? How do they expand beyond my experience?

How do I communicate through performance in ways that my work conveys meanings for others?

And maybe most importantly, how do my approach, my methodologies and my technical tools enter the realm of performance and live art and extend the possibilities of the field?

THE UNFOLDING OF SEMI-PERMEABLE MAP#2: THE ARTWORKS

In this unfolding, I will map out the trajectory of thought processes, doings, exercises, aesthetical and dramaturgical choices that have led to defining the practices I've utilized, in relation to the concepts that unfolded in the previous semi-permeable mapping titled 'The PASTS'.

In referring to experiments I have conducted during my LAPS studies; I will bring up examples of entering in temporal and spatial relationships with five live and hybrid performances and two audio- performances:

- *The Missing Torch*- video performance, realized in winter 2019 in Nashville, Tennessee at the Anachronistic Media Workshop.
- *The Rental Auction*- hybrid performance on Microsoft teams, realized in spring 2020 as a presentation during the Research Seminar (evaluation) week.
- *Things Other People Do and Double Dare*, a triptych hybrid performance (live and video), realized during Saari / LAPSODY festival in autumn 2020 in Kuninkansaari island, Helsinki.
- *Disciplined Bodies in Restricted Spaces*, live performance during Beta end of term presentation in winter 2020, The Theater Academy, Helsinki.
- *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, final artistic thesis performance at Vapaa Taiteen Tilla, Helsinki.
- *The Place Where There Are No Flies*, audio recording, fall 2019, Helsinki
- *Island Soundscapes*, collaborative audio performance with Minerva Juolahti and Tea Andreoletti, realized during Saari / LAPSODY festival in autumn 2020 in Kuninkansaari island, Helsinki.

I will delve more thoroughly into some works such as my thesis performance 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances' and 'The Missing Torch' because of their complexity and the longer duration I have spent working on them, however the other

mentioned works will also be relatively elaborated because they contain aspects that are important in building the entanglement of ideas and in testing out various forms of working with performance that I am framing in this thesis.

These exercises have reshaped my approach to performance making in a way that I have started relying on spaces which I work with to be informed about how they enter in a conversation with my themes of interest. To use Henri Lefebvre's argument, "(social) space is a (social) product...thus produced space also serves as a tool of thought and of action."⁸⁰

2.1. THOUGHT PROCESSES THROUGH READING SPACE

Due to the strong influence of my pasts in my overall viewpoints on performance making, I am inclined to spaces that contain histories of war, abandoned spaces that may have served a purpose in the past but have remained as relics hanging in the tree of the present, spaces that aren't visible such as sound waves as well as cyber spaces that are produced in a different realm and interact with our bodies in different dimensions.

I have also experimented with the idea of *repurposing spaces* as well as exaggerating their primary function in which case other resembling spaces with similar functions are brought up and examined together, to reveal systems of control that are accepted within the society. I will elaborate later more concretely, by using the examples of works I listed above.

When looking for an anchor where to base my interest in *reading spaces*, I encountered a proximity with *cultural materialism* which in theater at the late twentieth century has translated through *the spatial turn*. As a theatrical approach 'spatial turn' doesn't remain in "looking inward at the formal dimensions of the drama but look outwards at the warp and weft of its contextualizing material circumstances."⁸¹ In this way of seeing and

80 Lefebvre 1991, 26

81 Solga 2019, 28

working, the narrative structures intertwine with “a theatre building’s or company’s larger social, geographical, political and economic contexts.”⁸² While appropriating a theatre specific methodological explanation here, when applying it to performance, *the formal dimensions of the drama* can be understood as the action/movement/placement in space of the human and/or non-human agents while taking into consideration the material circumstances that determine their position within the structure of the wider space (city, village, island etc.), their primary historical function (previously or still serving as a factory, butcher house, sauna etc.), possible notable historical events that redefine it’s significance (house where the first Albanian flag was weaved, cellar where thousands of slaves in Zanzibar drowned etc.), it’s economical background (who financed it and who maintains it) and most importantly, who has access to it. So, in a way, I am adopting this concept of the ‘spatial turn’ to understand the politics of space-making in relation to power dynamics in the society within the context of performance art without fully relying on a specific theory or scholar’s approach.

This inclination to work site-specifically with spaces outside of theater buildings in their classical frontal format (the seated audience faces the performers and remains physically static throughout the performance) has been present in my previous work, especially when dealing with the marginalized youth of the Roma and the Ashkali communities. ‘The Unstepped Forest in the Island of TamTum’ was a “processional”⁸³ performance where the audience was invited inside a ship to sail together with the performers through the infamous island of TamTum, meaning to walk together and imagine that we were sailing and arriving to an island.

The performance took place in the neighborhood where the children and the teenagers lived, an abandoned peripheral neighborhood without any investment or maintenance from the city or wider. The decision-making officials were invited to the performance, and they did show up with their fancy suits and good behaviors, thus creating a deeply meaningful discrepancy between their appearance and that of the neighborhood, which

82 Solga 2019, 28

83 The term is borrowed from Die Borderline Prozession (The Borderline Procession), a performance by Kay Voges, Dirk Baumann and Alexander Kerlin, premiered at Schauspiel Dortmund on 15 April 2016.

opened the questions of their accountability as well as possibilities for a wider debate about poor leadership, unequal governmental distribution of funding and racism.

I think here I'd have to briefly explain what I understand as cultural materialism and why I find many theoretical and socio-political aspects within this study that fit with my approach towards reading history and geography as well as how this ties up to my artistic research.

Based on Kim Solga's *Theory for Theater Studies: Space*, The term (cultural materialism) refers to an interdisciplinary methodology that explores the ways in which different cultural phenomena are enmeshed with one another at the level of lived material experience, and it attempts to account for the tangible effects of that enmeshment on the circulation of goods, money, labor and ideas. (2019: 28). Solga takes the connection Jen Harvie builds between cultural enmeshment and the production and dissemination of ideologies, in her 2013 book "Fair Play: Art, Performance and Neoliberalism to explain how cultural materialism is a spatial practice and an ideal means of making sense of social space in relation to theatrical space. (2019: 29-31)."

2.2. THEORIZING ON TOOLS

My LAPS studies' experience was highly orientated towards individual practices and preparations for the final thesis project. Despite having the luxury of five production studios within the very building of the Theater Academy, it seemed that access to these spaces was of a highly competitive nature and priority was given to students studying classical theatrical professions such as dramaturgy, directing, acting and the whole bits and bobs of staging. Instead of seeing this as a hindering factor, I found it quite inspirational to seek for spaces outside of the theater academy as venues to exhibit the final outcomes of my experimentation during my studies. Through experimenting with performance making outside of the theatre venues I have been able to identify three facets of approaching towards spaces which are:

1. Accentuation/intensification of the primary function of space.
2. Repurposing of space.
3. Unveiling the invisible/ignored/surpassed spaces.

Below I will describe each of them through how I have exhibited them in the performances listed above.

1. Accentuation/intensification of the primary function of the space

I don't exactly recall how I decided so firmly to stage my final thesis performance at *Vapaan Taiteen Tila*, but it was a very instinctive decision. *Vapaan Taiteen Tila* means Free Space for Arts in Finnish and it is "an event space for the students in The University of The Arts Helsinki to organize their exhibitions, concerts, performances, and other events."⁸⁴

In fact, the space is a bomb shelter, a bunker, located in the Vilhonvuori hill near the Sörnäinen Metro station. On top of the hill, there is a park named after the famous Finnish poet Katri Vala whose urn is buried in the rock wall on the Hämeentie side of the park. The shelter was built in 1944 and it shelters 1550 people. It has been very difficult to find public information on whether the bunker has ever been used for its primary function although the majority of people from Helsinki I have consulted while working with VTT have claimed that it has not. The bunker "houses the world's largest heat pump plant, producing district heat and cooling in a single process."⁸⁵

When I went to visit the space for the first time towards winter 2019, I was by the administrative staff that under the regulations of the Helsinki City Rescue Department, in case of an emergency, the space needs to be made available for sheltering within 24

⁸⁴ <https://www.imageandpeace.com/sarajevo-roses/>
Last visited on December 9th, 2021

⁸⁴ <https://no-niin.com>
Last visited on December 9th, 2021

⁸⁵ <https://www.helen.fi/helen-oy/energia/energiantuotanto/voimalaitokset/katri-vala>

hours, which is also the reason why certain entrances/exits cannot be blocked by props. So, the bunker, temporarily used as an art space is arranged in a way that it can take back its primary function as a bomb shelter, if disaster occurs. During my residency in Helsinki within the past two and a half years, I have become fascinated by how spaces that belong to a different time (meaning, currently unfunctional in their primary designated role in the past) have been repurposed. For example, the usage of abandoned factories as artist studios or the usage of the mental hospital of Lapinlahden Lähde, as a center for culture and wellbeing. In the case of bomb shelters however, I was intrigued by the fact that despite their repurposed usage, some of these spaces continue to be maintained as bunkers for possible future necessities to shelter and protect the citizens. Helsinki in fact is filled with such bunkers some of which have permanently been turned into swimming pools, churches, or museums. What I find even more interesting is how easily this process of repurposing spaces has been socially accepted and that its primary usage becomes invisible to those who utilize it as an art space, both as artists and as consumers of art. For me however, the space could not go beyond its being a bunker. Performances and events staged in it were gaining a different meaning because they were staged inside of a bunker. Through the conversations with my Finnish colleagues who became a part of co-creating *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, we understood that there is a vast difference between how they see the space and how I, a survivor of war saw it.

In the video essay of the exhibition *Sarajevo Roses and Clouds of June* by Samra Šabanović and Sheung Yiu that took place in Helsinki's Third Space project, the authors state: "Once you have seen war, you cannot unsee it. War is visible everywhere."⁸⁶ The Independent online monthly magazine *NoNiin*⁸⁷ invited me to write a review about this exhibition and in my review, I write: "In fact, when visiting the exhibition and talking to the lovely and hospitable Samra and Sheung who were always there and eager to have a conversation, I noticed the proximity that was being built due to our common experiences of having lived through conflict and upheaval. There were

⁸⁶ <https://www.imageandpeace.com/sarajevo-roses/>
Last visited on December 9th, 2021

⁸⁷ <https://no-niin.com>
Last visited on December 9th, 2021

moments when one's shared experience triggered a similarity the other was eager to share, situations engraved in our skins, nuances of which we were able to read fluently among us."⁸⁸

The mark of oppression by the state, experienced during my pasts, has left such strong marks that I see power dynamics everywhere and examining this phenomenon via performances that I make has become a dominant recurring strategy. It comes through in all the above-mentioned works which I will describe below.

In the case of *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, I was interested in seeing how accentuating the primary function of Vapaan Taiteen Tilla (henceforth to be referred to as VTT) as a bunker interacted with my fragmented narratives, brought from a different geographical and historical context. By involving artists based in Helsinki and an audience that was used to perceiving VTT as a Free Space for Arts, I aimed at fostering an interaction that would enable a connection beyond that which is familiar.

To realize this, I invited film maker Joonas Mäkelä, currently studying Documentary Filmmaking at Aalto University School of Arts, Design and Architecture and visual and sound artist Timo Viialainen as collaborators in the making of my final thesis performance. As a form of collaboration, I wanted to work with artists who wanted to test out their ideas within the process of creating a performance together. Joonas was interested in experimenting with the boundaries of filmmaking and performance and Timo, in working with the mechanical elements of the bunker, from a sound experience perspective. I was familiar with his previous works which explore the hidden systems of a space; how the installed systems of electricity, water, or sound function within different spaces and what this exposure tells us about these spaces. Through working with the elements that make the space, I wanted to approach the bunker as a character more than as a space, as a source of information that I wanted to enter in a dialogue with, by bringing in mine and my colleagues' readings of the space. VTT is a labyrinthic 600m² venue that has been created through the drilling of a

⁸⁸ Hoxha 2021

massive rock. The walls of the rock from the inside are painted white while the floors are cemented. The space has a main shelter hall which has a small kitchen and two bathrooms, and it connects to a corridor, split in two directions where the ventilation system is based. In one direction, the corridor leads to the exit of the bunker and in the other, to two small rooms which same as the front door, are made of thick iron. Connected to the main hall, across from the area where the performance event props are located is another hall that connects to a space, similarly being used as a temporary theater space.

“The bunker evokes ideas of apocalypse and crisis. Yet, at the same time, it provides protection and shelter.”⁸⁹

VTT is a *heterotopic* space. It is somehow ‘other’: disturbing, intense, incompatible, contradictory, or transforming. It is a world within worlds, mirroring and yet upsetting what is outside.

To refer to Foucault’s own explanation of the term he coined, “Heterotopias are disturbing, probably because they secretly undermine language, because they make it impossible to name this and that, because they shatter or tangle common names, because they destroy ‘syntax’ in advance, and not only the syntax with which we construct sentences but also that less apparent syntax which causes words and things (next to and opposite one another) to ‘hold together’.”⁹⁰

The heterotopia has the power to juxtapose in a single real place several spaces, several emplacements that are in themselves incompatible. Thus, the theatre brings onto the rectangle of the stage a whole series of places that are alien to one another; thus, the cinema is a very odd rectangular room, at the end of which, on a two-dimensional screen, one sees the projection of a three-dimensional space.⁹¹

89 von Friedrich 2017, 68

90 Foucault 1989, 19

91 Foucault 2008 [1967], 18-19

As a heterotopia, the bunker detaches one from the continuity of experiences in social spaces and it blurs the sense of time. I would like to draw another quote from performance artist Harriet von Froreich's MA thesis, a part of which took place at VTT, in relation to the power of VTT:

Being inside means to be completely cut off from any idea about the sun's position, the development of the day or the passing of hours. It is a space of non-temporality, or maybe even a space of hyper-temporality: allowing for a possible outlasting of anyone or anything else.⁹²

I was interested in how these heterotopic qualities of the bunker interacted with my fragmented narratives whose content was indeed able to shatter and undermine language not because I was bringing in memoirs from an experience that took place in a different time and space, but to the contrary, because they became so acute and present at the bunker that allowed for them to gain weight and meaning.



The corridor of VTT. Timo Viialainen observing the ventilation system. Joonas Mäkelä as well as Teppo Vesikukka from the VTT administration are included in the image. © Fjolla Hoxha

92 von Friedrich 2017, 68

Below, I'd like to go back and touch upon the research and experiments we had been conducting that have led to the creation of the performance 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances'.

I started building this performance by primarily asking these questions:

What happens when the past is recreated via the imagination of the war survivor, the subject re-approaching the material after 22 years through distancing tools? (Referring here to the deconstruction of the Diary Entry from The Day of Liberation through using the cut-up technique). What will this re-writing of the past reveal about a possible future? Can it provide the grounds for healing and understanding patterns that could be broken through fabulation for the people to come?

It strikes me to discover that what I now refer to as *reassembling and re-reading new meanings of memory* about a year back, before the performance took shape, I approached as *the process of rewriting and recreating the past via the imagination*. What I make of this discovery is my current inclination to theorize the very same concepts and approaches which I utilized as performance making tools, so in other words to make passive what was actively used to test out ideas. The good aspect of this process is being able to stick to the same concepts that have become my technique of approaching performance making and delve in them deep enough to be able to see different facets and connections that I hadn't noticed while working on the realization of the artistic work itself.

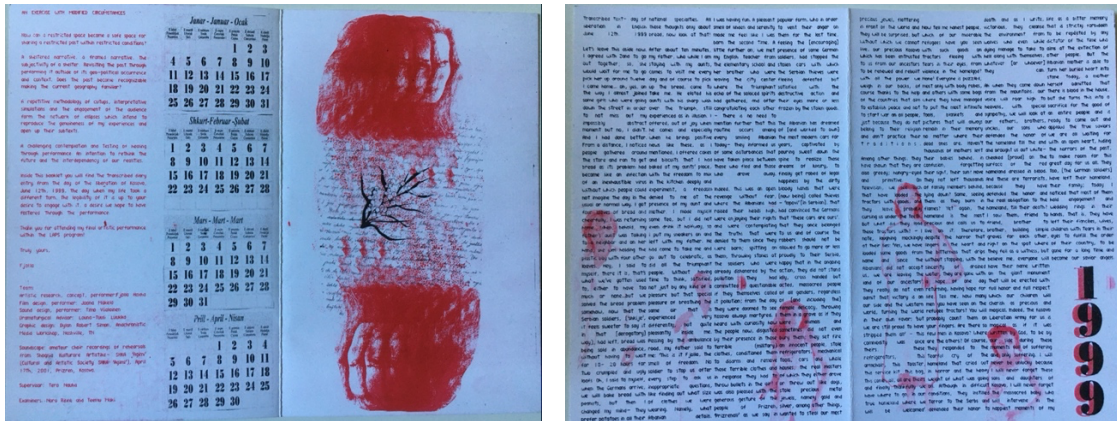
In this process of modifying autobiographical texts to re-read them from today's standpoint, I didn't use the classical cut-up technique that Burroughs and Gysin used when working with printed textual material. In the absence of the computer, they worked by hand, typed text on a typewriter then cut it in columns. Instead, first I entered the diary entry on Microsoft Word in its original form in Albanian, then I translated it into English and in the end, I edited it in the electronic version, using multiple variations of interfering with textual linearity. I drew arrows on top of the text, making chunks of it disappear. I drew mountains, a sun, a snake that crawled from one page to the other and tried to read the diary entry having these barriers imposed on it.



Working studio during the conceptualization of *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, Suvilahti, Helsinki, 2021. © Fjolla Hoxha

I used columns to dissect the text into a verse-like version and I changed the linear order of the columns, thus mixing up parts of the text and re-reading them. What I discovered is that this experiment which I titled ‘The First Experiment’ (please find an attached sample in the Annex), is very helpful in detaching from the strong affect of remembering that is caused by the linear re-reading of the text. I became able to see the patriotism, anger and hatred that had been engrained within a 15-year-old teenager and what this revealed about the power structures that had worked through me. Ultimately, this experiment didn’t form the narrational base of ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’ because I wanted to be able to speak from the perspective of my position and convictions of the present which are washed off from patriotic or revengeful feelings. The experiment however was a great technique for modifying the past to gain distance from it so that it doesn’t overshadow the present in the form of a traumatic experience but at the same time through repeating it, it doesn’t get forgotten. The cutup version of the diary entry from *The Day of The Liberation* became the content of the performance brochure, so the audience could choose if they wished to read the entry in a linear or deconstructed form. I hand out the brochure, designed by

graphic designer Dylan Simon at The Anachronistic Media Workshop to the audience at the end of the performance. Dylan used the imagery from the calendar pages where I had written the journal entry both by overimposing as well as by putting the figures from the women's undergarment commercials at the background of the text.



The brochure for 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances' © Fjolla Hoxha and The Anachronistic Media Workshop

Instead, I decided to work with snippets or fragments from the period of war which I have written last year, as an exercise proposed by my mentor at the time, art historian and curator Giovanna Esposito Yussif, to approach difficult memoirs through fabulation instead of affective narration. Within the performance, these fragments were juxtaposed with the embodiment of an authoritarian character that accentuates the restrictive nature of the bunker and applies to the audience, the methods of repression I was very familiar with because they had been applied to my body- more on this in the next subchapter on *Dramaturgical and Aesthetic* choices I have made in my performances.

The full list of snippets is available for reading at my exposition in *Research Catalogue*⁹³, including a list of memorabilia that I possess from the war period, as well as a few ideas about object-based performances, elements of which were further

93 <https://www.researchcatalogue.net/view/857696/862726>
Retrieved on December 9th, 2021.

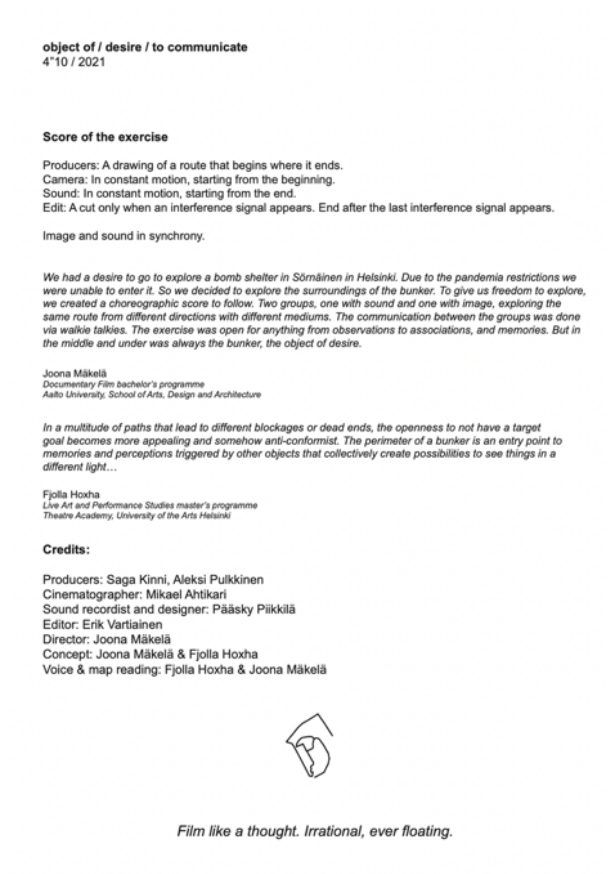
developed and elaborated during the research process on ‘Modification as a Mode of Resistance’ and the creation of ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’.

The next step towards the realization of ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’ within the thought-frame of ‘Modification as a Mode of Resistance’ came at the time when we were getting ready to start working in, or I prefer saying ‘with the space’, in March 2021. We called this ‘The Second Experiment’. You can find the treatment of the exercise attached within the Annex of this written thesis.

Together with filmmaker Joonas Mäkelä and a team of filmmakers (listed in the attached brochure) from Aalto Documentary Film Studies, we were interested in documenting our affective reaction of the first moment we entered Vapaan Taiteen Tila to explore the potentialities of the space for the staging of what became ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’. Due to the Covid-19 restrictions at the time, however, we were not able to realize our idea. VTT was a public facility and like all others that were related to cultural events, it had been temporarily closed, until further notice. This put my plans to realize my final artistic thesis project in May 2021 up in the air. I started thinking about how the concept of ‘modification as a mode of resistance’ in fact implied that in times of restrictions, one could choose to either give in or resist by changing their ways of doing. I shared these thoughts with Joonas, with whom, our collegiality was built on genuine long hours of consultation and sharing ideas and less focused on score-based formal formats. The short documentary was also related to a school task for Joonas’s studies which is why we had the privilege of having a team of producers, sound and camera artists on board. We had two choices: to postpone the project or find ways to resist by adjusting to the circumstances. We decided for the second as this was the basis of my research and Joonas felt strongly interested in the potentialities of incorporating this concept in his work. Not to give up but to resist by adapting to the new situation and work with it.

Instead of focusing on the interior, which was not available to us, we framed the idea so that Joonas, documenting on video and me, on sound would walk around the perimeter of the bunker in opposite directions through following a path drawn on a map by our producers Saga Kinni and Aleksi Pulkkinen and build our relationality by fictionalizing the interior of VTT. We used walkie talkies to stay in touch and would

only share impressions if we had a pressing need to do so. The outcome of this experiment became the short documentary film named *'object of/ desire/ to communicate'* which brought to surface the potential of the present moment to enable a return to the past as well as fictionalize the parallel present (within the bunker) to imagine the future. Below is the brochure of the documentary film, created by Joona.



Joona continued this research related to the framing of narratives through filming the exterior of the bunker, namely the perimeter of the Katri Valan puisto (the Katri Vala park) in various daytimes and brought in the footage via four iPads hanging on the air from the ceiling of the bunker, thus screening the exterior inside during parts of the performance.

The concept of modification here was utilized as a form to think outside the box, due to space restrictions. We saw restrictions as a creative opportunity and a mode to resist

being prevented from practicing our artistic experiments, as a skill that can be gained in rethinking our paths when we encounter barriers.

Timo amplified the sounds of the corridors of the bunker and brought them in the main performance space, to overlay them with my fragmented narrations. I will reveal more details on sound and light, at the next unfolding subchapter which specifically focuses on the dramaturgy and aesthetic of the performances.

In terms of accentuating the space, what we did at VTT was bringing up attention to the probabilities of a past being repeated beyond the temporal and spatial limitations. What had happened to me in Kosova is happening right now in many places in the world. Many bunkers are not used as free spaces for art but as actual shelters and as a reminder, this comes with the final question of the performance.

Imagine a situation where you were the only survivors of a disastrous catastrophe. And all you could take with you was this backpack (I point out to the one next to them). Would you open your hearts and share whatever you managed to grab from your homes on the last minute with these strangers?⁹⁴

This bomb shelter too, always carries the potential to be used for what it was initially built, while we keep improvising and temporarily using it as an art space.

During the *LAPSODY festival* in 2020 that took place at the Kuninkansaari island, I had similarly worked with two different bunkers. "Vallisaari and the neighboring Kuninkansaari served as fortifications during the Swedish reign (in the late thirteenth century to 1808) and the Russian empire (1809–1917) leading up to the new Finnish nation."⁹⁵ I was curious to examine the echoes of the bunkers that were built during these two reigns in the otherwise very biodiverse island, through bringing in a performance in three parts named 'Things Other People Do and Double Dare', a collaboration with performance artists Dylan Simon, Reid Barber and Jesse Weilburg, which I will describe briefly. In 'Things Other People Do', as a dominatrix, I interact

94 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances' script. The full script can be accessed on the annex of this thesis.

95 Bhowmik 2020

with the video in which The Borderlander (performed by Dylan Simon) gives me instructions to tie up the audience gathered in front of the bunker.



Things Other People Do ©Visa Knuuttila

The second part of the performance titled ‘Double Dare’ continues with a sound procession towards another relatively hidden bunker, where the same audience equipped with flashlights, walks behind me while I’m dragging a speaker that emits drone sounds created by artist Jesse Weilburg, inspired by the song ‘Double Dare’ by Bauhaus. There are three other run-down bunkers remaining from the Swedish reign that we encounter on our way. When we arrive to the destination, a bunker with a broken door awaits. I switch from my dominatrix leather jacket to a military jacket and with my back turned to the audience sing the song ‘Double Dare’ by Bauhaus towards the bunker. The bunker is flooded by water because the sea is a few meters away and this constant presence of water has enabled a toxic interaction between the material used to build the bunker and the sea water, thus creating mesmerizing colors on the walls of the bunker. Through the echo that is emitted, I am not only dedicating a song about ‘daring to dare’ to challenge bureaucracy⁹⁶ to the bunker, but also am singing with the bunker which is

⁹⁶ Full song lyrics can be found at: <https://genius.com/Bauhaus-double-dare-lyrics>. Retrieved on December 12th, 2021

adding its own presence through my voice. This is how fictional possibilities of its past are recollected.



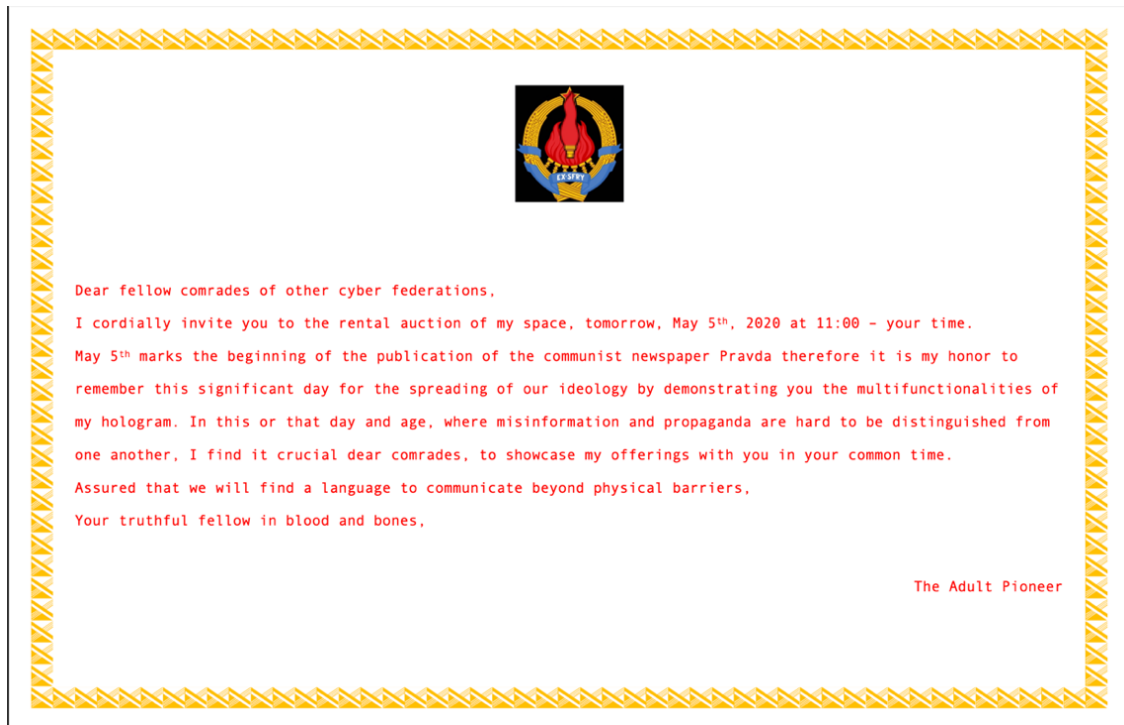
Double Dare © Visa Knuuttila

This form of accentuating the primary function of the space contains similarities with the over-imposition that NSK was working on in their artworks, in a way that it amplifies that which is dominant such as the military history in the case of the Kuninkansaari island or the bunker aspects of VTT which have been placed in secondary position of remembrance today. Do we ignore the primary functions of these architectural constructions because we don't want to deal with the past or because we have overcome them? I intend to ask these questions and invite the audiences to a more direct confrontation with the discomfort that dealing with conflict, war, power domination entails. Based on the feedback that I've gotten from the audiences that have experienced these performances, they have found them confrontational and capable to transcend them to a different reality from theirs. Most importantly, the audiences have found them thought-provoking and reflective of their position within the society they live in today.

2. Repurposing of space

In this section, I'd like to bring up two performance works: *The Rental Auction* as well as *Disciplined Bodies in Restricted Spaces*. In *The Rental Auction*, I bring back the character of the *Adult Pioneer* from *The Missing Torch*⁹⁷ and place her in a balcony which she tries to convince 'fellow comrades of other cyber federations' to rent as a living space. This performance was a response to the drastic changes that erupted after the shut down in March 2020, due to the spread of Covid-19, a period during which we tried to continue with classes and examinations via zoom, Microsoft teams or other platforms that gained prevalent significance in our lives. During this period, I experienced a strong flashback from to the war period which also intensified in March 1999, but now that we were experiencing a catastrophe in a global scale, I was far away from my family and home. The *Adult Pioneer*, appearing as a blind admirer of the ideology of Yugoslavian communism tries to rent out via Microsoft teams a cyber space that was filtered as a balcony, blurring the lines between time and space as well as whether this adoration was in fact truthful or a façade in a world where it is no longer clear what the meaning of reality is. The *Adult Pioneer* interacts with the audience via the screen in a fashion of a TV commercial trying to sell out, or to convince the audience to rent this space by praising its benefits that cannot go beyond the representation of the ideology. The role of *The Adult Pioneer* in forwarding this ideology is very clearly marked by gestures and objects that are used to promote the rental of the space such as for example balloons with the colors of the Yugoslavian flag, an image of Tito which has a plexiglass on top where the new tenant can draw their leader as we as an onion which can be used for cooking but also fake crying to show the exaltation by the system and the solidarity during public parades or other mass gatherings. The audience remains distant to what is being promoted not only because of the screen but also because of the uneasy feeling of the ambiguity between adoration or irony, thus paralyzing the efforts of *The Adult Pioneer* to get into any monetary transaction with the audience.

97 More in detail about *The Missing Torch* in the next approach towards spaces in performance.



Letter sent to the audience via email, a day before the performance *Rental Auction*

© Fjolla Hoxha

In *Disciplined Bodies in Restricted Spaces*, I utilized the gym where we were preparing and showcased our works, to recall other spaces that work along similar lines in relation to controlling bodies. At the gym, I simulated a museum section that exhibits paintings glorifying soldiers and state leaders to then jump into an interaction with the audience where I was asking them to march and walk in certain directions, resembling the character of the drummer boy, a well-known motif from the 2nd World War known to me more closely via Laibach's collage where they removed the face of the *Hitlerjungend* drummer boy and replaced it with the face of the "Statue of Liberty" (NYC)⁹⁸. At the end, I recalled the many instances where due to their vastness, gyms are used to temporarily shelter people who have for some reason become homeless. I invited the audience to use the mats where I had previously made them march and before that had placed paper notes saying 'do not step on until told to do so', to sit and

⁹⁸ <https://wtc.laibach.org/products/drummer-boy>
Retrieved on December 10th, 2021

rest from the turmoil they have experienced and asked them if they can share with others what they have managed to save and brought on their backpacks, which I had placed as a prop on the sides of the mats, together with a blanket. What the audience members found on their backpacks instead was the list of items that I remembered I had packed when my family and I were expecting to be expelled from our homes during the war. While finding the recollection of the museum exhibition and the drummer boy a bit vague as a reference, my colleagues who were the main audience of these performative exercises, found the list on the backpacks to be a very strong affective gesture that had stayed with them. This in fact formed the last scene in ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’ the quote from which I brought up above (on page 64 of this thesis) and will elaborate more on the subchapter below.

When it comes to the name of this performance, ‘Disciplined bodies’ may not be the right Foucauldian term I use. It relates to the practice of modern nation states and their regulation of their subjects through "an explosion of numerous and diverse techniques for achieving the subjugations of bodies and the control of populations".⁹⁹

If I had to rework on this performance, I’d accord it closer to the term of *dispositif* or dispositive used “generally to refer to the various institutional, physical, and administrative mechanisms and knowledge structures which enhance and maintain the exercise of power within the social body. The links between these elements are said to be heterogeneous since knowledge, practices, techniques, and institutions are established and reestablished in every age. It is through these links that power relations are structured”.¹⁰⁰

99 Foucault 1976, 140

100 Larroche 2019, 83

3. Unveiling the invisible/ignored/surpassed spaces

Here, I would like to focus on two audio works and one video work, that lay in the realm of spaces difficult to notice at first glance. Following Lefebvre's claim that "as social product, social spaces are not transparent surfaces, but rather they create the illusion of transparency"¹⁰¹, I'd like to go further to British feminist geographer and theorist Doreen Massey's concept of "geographical imaginations which stands for powerful elements in the armory of legitimation of political strategies"¹⁰², to adopt this approach to the formulation that I propose here. Invisible, ignored, or surpassed spaces are more so a tool to unearth these legitimized political strategies Massey is talking about. A form of escapism when there is no room left for certain identities within the existing spatial conditions.

In *The Missing Torch*, a 9-minute video performance, my collaborator Dylan Simon and I question the possibilities for the existence of The Adult Pioneer, a nostalgic figure that is somehow trapped in the past, believing in the existence of Yugoslavia as it used to be, with all its cultural remnants, transmitted through the figure of the blind admirer. The departure point for this project was the deconstruction of this romanticizing of the past through looking at its aftermath of fractured identities and how that affected a shift towards neoliberalism in the previously socialist territory. Since existing in Yugoslavia, a long-gone country, is no longer possible, the Adult Pioneer lives in a hologram, reciting the Yugoslavian hymn in three languages and the pledge of the pioneer with pride, trapped between analog spaces, believing Yugoslavia is still alive. The cyber space starts to glitch and gives the Adult Pioneer hints of abnormality: she starts to repeat words and her image starts to dissolve. Her identity from that of the pioneer shifts towards 'the Muslim, Albanian woman' who realizes that she doesn't have a torch, meaning that she was never in fact represented in Yugoslavia within the spectrum of the colors of her political identity. Seeking for a torch, as Yugoslavia collapses, she encounters the Travel

101 Solga 2019, 32

102 Massey 2007, 24-25

Agent who promotes war territories as tourist attractions¹⁰³ and tricks her into having a Kalashnikov in place of ‘the torch she never had’. Once she becomes equipped with this replacement of the torch, her image disappears from the cyber space.

In this video performance, analog cyber space becomes the dimension of contemporaneous existence (Massey 2007, 23) where the self and the other are not constituents in a violent binary, but rather are in it together, along with a host of other (often ignored) actors (Solga 2019, 35).



Editing the ‘The Missing Torch’ with Dylan Simon, Anachronistic Media Workshop, Nashville, TN, 2019 © Fjolla Hoxha

During Fall 2019, I attended a few sessions of the class titled *Live Electronics Atelier* with Alejandro Olarte at the Sibelius Academy. It was a nicely curated class, with a lot of practical exercises following the initial presentation about a certain topic. I was interested in the possibilities of using music in my performances and I wanted to try out various forms of dealing with it. During the class on sound wave frequencies, Alejandro brought in old radios to demonstrate the various lengths of waves. Recollecting

103 <https://blogit.uniarts.fi/kirjoitus/laps-students-artistic-work-during-the-studies/>

memoirs from growing up with a constant presence of the radio during my childhood, I became interested in the potential of the disappearing analog radios in the Amplitude Modulation- AM wave frequency. With the advancement of technology, this easy to maintain carrier wave frequency no longer met the criteria needed to live up to the current digital developments. Surprisingly though, due to the use of longer wavelength radio waves, this carrier wave frequency was able to capture data transmitted in other parts of the world which to me was a fascinating discovery. With a small battery radio outside of the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki, I was able to capture live radio emission- from stations in India, China, Afghanistan, Iran as well as other Asian countries whose languages I could not detect. This one-take of radio search in AM waves became a 4.22-minute sound piece which I titled *The Place Where There Are No Flies*¹⁰⁴, a title I borrowed from the video project from 1993 *Transcentrala, NEUE SLOWENISCHE KUNST DRZAVA V CASU (NSK State in Time)*.

Interviewed members of Laibach declare the following:

-Where is Laibach bound to at the end of the millennium?

-Laibach is bound to the place where there are no flies.

-Isn't Laibach just a metaphor of a time, lost forever?

-This is for the future to tell.

We can't be sure about the future since it is undefinable.

We live in time loops of the presence, constantly turning into past which is in turn our future. Today we are tomorrow's past therefore.¹⁰⁵

I used the same method to capture radio waves at the Kuninkansaari Island which in juncture to my colleagues' works became the triptych called *Island Soundscapes*, emitted in Helsinki's metro stations on the opening day of LAPSODY Paramatter performance art festival.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴The piece can be found at <https://soundcloud.com/fjolla-hoxha/the-place-where-there-are-no-flies-1>
Retrieved on December 11th, 2021

¹⁰⁵ Gržinic and Smid 1993

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.uniarts.fi/en/events/live-art-and-performance-festival-paramatter/>
Retrieved on December 11th, 2021

In *Kunikansaari*, mentioned earlier as an island known for its history related to the Swedish and Russian occupation of Finland, I was able to capture various radio stations from Russia, emitting a sermon, an educational program about language as well as an audio documentary about Stalin. Audio-waves were revealing not only a parallel existence of spaces but a metaphoric dissonance towards the past.

2.3. AESTHETICS AND DRAMATURGY

On auto theory, self-actualization, and bodily presence in space

As an artist coming mostly from the experience of being behind the stage, a key challenge for me has been to put my body forth on stage as a performance artist. Because of dealing with autobiographical themes which mainly question the absence of my cultural identity from the representation within the political discourse, I found pushing these bodily boundaries by performing and thus being present in my own performances to be the best solution in order to self-actualize. In these terms, speaking of the stakes of the performative, and its limits, I'd like to draw on José Esteban Muños' elaboration of the concept of misidentification:

I have wanted to posit that such processes of self-actualization come into discourse as a response to ideologies that discriminate against, demean, and attempt to destroy components of subjectivity that do not conform or respond to narratives of universalization and normalization. The misidentifying subject is not a flier who escapes the atmospheric force field of ideology. Neither is she a trickster figure who can effortlessly come out on top every time. Sometimes misidentification is insufficient.¹⁰⁷

So that *my disturbing subjectivity* takes its place, I utilize the subversion that occurs through *over-imposition*, a term explained in *The Unfolding of Semi-permeable Map#1*

107 Muños 1999, 161-62.

(page 45) through the work methodologies of the NSK. I often situate my body in highly patriarchal spaces: bunkers, cyber-space, gyms, to disturb these spaces through my relationship to war, the military, power dynamics, consequently the patriarchy and how my ambiguous presence and the questioning of all this is achieved via the autotheoretical approach of a female body. Being drawn towards autotheory is almost as much of an attempt to flee from it. Muños speaks of the struggles that the misidentified subject has within themselves due to the constant need to remind others of their existence and the exhaustion that this process produces on their body. I acknowledge this difficult process by trying to avoid drawing firm positions of myself as a victim or a survivor by opening the performative process to ambiguity and the multiplicity of states of being. To achieve this, I jump between the authoritarian character, the narrating survivor (myself) and the invisible character, in an attempt to not allow the process of categorization and identification to endure. Through the escaping character that changes form and doesn't belong to a static representational role, I intend to both build a critical and a distanced relationship to my past as well as stay with it to protect it from erasure. In other words, I try to achieve the effect of presence among the audience, which the editors of *Archaeologies of Presence: Art, Performance and the Persistence of Being* (2012) Gabriella Giannachi, Nick Kaye, Michael Shanks describe as:

Occurring in relation to situated acts, 'presence' not only invites consideration of individual experience, perception, and consciousness, but also directs attention outside the self into the social and the spatial, toward the enactment of 'co-presence' as well as perceptions and habitations of place.¹⁰⁸

108 Giannachi and Kaye and Shanks 2012, 2

The power of materials

In the above-mentioned performances, I use materials that I have brought from home that are charged with very strong memories such as golden coins which my dad used to bribe officers and military with, to help us cross borders or road patrol, tape recordings of choir songs from days before and after the war, an original pioneer hat from Yugoslavia and a list of belongings that I had packed on my backpack, awaiting to be expelled from my house during the war.

These materials become *objects of fetish*, in theorist Slavoj Žižek's terms, *epitomizing the risk of their own dismissal*. The presence of a fetish object becomes denotative, according to Žižek, especially when we comprehend that "it functions merely through its "negative" presence; that is, that the object (as a positive given) is, in its presence, an embodiment, a pure confirmation and a sign of its own absence, its own manque."¹⁰⁹

In the case of the pioneer hat for example, I have missed being a pioneer that pledged allegiance to Comrade Tito's Yugoslavia by 2 years and this has created an almost fetishistic longing and curiosity to bring up a possible past that never existed.

Having witnessed such tremendous changes in political systems whilst *staying with*¹¹⁰ or in performance theorist Bojana Cvejić's term *being with* an undefined status of national recognition, equip me with a strong sensation of being on the move, in transition, in a liminal zone, entailing all the above mentioned and none of them at the same time. How to create from within this space-time zone and what comes out of it are very interesting questions that have risen particularly while being away from home and in a position to reflect from a distance.

109 Djurić, Šuvaković 2003

110 Haraway 2016



Props from 'The Break', scene from *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, 2021

© Fjolla Hoxha

On the Representation of Authoritarianism and Violence

In the examples of my performance work, I mentioned above my inclination to bring fragments of characters that hold power and discipline on other bodies. In 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances' for example, I've asked the audience to bring their IDs and passports (image below) and have engaged those who have neglected this request in various small tasks that needed to be carried out during the performance, by then endorsing them as confidantes when switching into the storyteller of the memory narratives. By embodying a position of privilege, I intend to question the positions of control and oppression, feelings which are so bodily familiar to me due to my experiences. Due to ethical implications of such a take in relation to audience participation, I have tried to make it clear in advance that there will be imposition of authoritarianism during the performance and those who feel uncomfortable can either skip the performance or are welcome to leave it at any time.



An Exercise with Modified
Circumstances, VTT, Helsinki, 2021. ©
Joonas Mäkelä

Below I will speak from within the experience of showcasing of *The Missing Torch*, in relation to war photos that I have used which ironically are known as the most internationally recognized images of the Kosovar war. When it comes to the agency of photography and what the images of violence reproduce, I have consulted Susan Sontag, Walter Benjamin, John Berger and Roland Barthes' analysis of images to be able to understand better what has occurred with the usage of images that depict destruction, people in mass exodus, mass graves or the pain in the face of a person who shows to the camera the image of a missing or killed child. My intention when using these images was to expose these atrocities and remember them while asking the question of whether such pain and trauma can be equated to the thirst for power, domination, and control.

I have found it very interesting that of all the remarks I have received from the viewers of this video project, there have been no comments on the images of live gatherings and protests, or the military references presented in the short film, but much critique has been focused on showing the massacred, displaced and suffering bodies.

My conviction here is that images expose political standpoints and identify those who pose a threat to the leading positions of the authoritarian powers.

To speak in Susan Sontag's terms from her timeless essay collection 'On photography':

Photographs really are experience captured, and the camera is the ideal arm of consciousness in its acquisitive mood. To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge — and, therefore, like power.¹¹¹

I believe that in a broader scale, this system of condemning to which I was exposed by using images of violence is forwarded both by making visible as well as by making invisible via the narratives chosen to be told or not through images. It depends on the situation and whose stories are told. Especially when it comes to my own narratives that contain exposure to violence, I believe I have legitimate rights to fragment or fabulate them, due to their autobiographical and archival nature, but I must admit that I have felt uneasy about having used stories or images of other Kosovars in my performances because my proximity with them based on my nationality does not necessarily legitimize my decision to make their narratives or bodies visible. At the same time, I am not sure if I have the right to hold accountable others in positions of privilege who are ignorant to the violence, I had become familiar with through being exposed to rougher life conditions.

Does representing violence reproduce it or does it affirm and bring forth invisible bodies? Does perception/ reception depend on who is experiencing it? Here again, I draw from the provocative ideas of the retro-avant-garde; their critique of aesthetic autonomy and the problematizing of "the aesthetic category of meaning."¹¹²

I am similarly inclined to a more provocative expression in performance art because of my interest to focus on issues rather than solutions. In a more banal metaphoric language, I am interested in exposing the dirty laundry, not in hiding it.

¹¹¹ Popova on Sontag

¹¹² Gounaridou 2005, 86-87



An Exercise with Modified Circumstances, VTT, Helsinki, 2021. © Joona Mäkelä

To explain my position further, another example that comes to mind is Brecht. He did not combat the prominent ideological slogans by using critical distance, irony, and rational argument; rather, he used these slogans in an even more radical form—essentially repeating them—and thus exposed their meaninglessness. NSK have a similar relation to representation and repetition, whether of ideological gestures or of models from the past: they appropriate them in order to make more visible who it is that speaks through them and what message is being conveyed to whom.

The strong presence of political influence in my personal life has equipped me with the ability to very clearly identify the patterns through which the decisions made by those who are in the position of authoritative power can affect the lives of those who exist merely in the realm of modest ambitions of survival and small pleasures. Hence, art has become permanently politicized and, in my understanding, it cannot exist without (knowingly or not) being in interaction with the dynamic that propels the power structures in society.

My desire is to lead the audience of my performances through an experience of awareness of being in a dialectical time-space and to experience discomfort which leaves them with questions to be asked that may not have a firm answer. Maybe more in

philosopher Jacques Rancière's logic of "the ignorant schoolmaster"¹¹³, I am interested in learning from the audience through the meanings which occur in them that may never occur to me due to the subjectivity of the matter as well as I am curious about the objectivity which informs their interpretation.



An Exercise with Modified Circumstances, VTT, Helsinki, 2021. © Joonas Mäkelä

One key element of how this relationship was attempted to be built with the audience of 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances' was through its placement in space by the orientation of light. Although we managed to work at VTT due to the eased Covid-19 restrictions, we were allowed to have only seven people in the audience, despite the vastness of the space we were working in. I wanted to utilize this restriction to create an intimate experience with these seven audience members who could either be interpreted as the lucky ones or the misfortunate ones, in terms of their involvement as characters in the making of the performance. While the bunker is in full darkness throughout the majority of the performance, I lead the audience with hand lights through areas I want them to stand by, observe and view things from, including here the shadows occurring on the walls which were a very crucial element in the process of imagining the past. There is no spot to sit on although mats and blankets are placed in corners of the space,

113 Rancière 1991

for a later stage. At the beginning of the performance, by taking their original IDs and passports, I take the audience members identity away. I ask them very personal questions and keep their documents till further notice. After the scene called *The Break*, during which I serve stark bread and tea to the audience while having the tape of my choir song recordings play, I call each of them and give them back their IDs/passports. Then I tell them they can go grab a blanket, mat and backpack, to get comfortable for the remaining portion of the performance. With a mild green light emitting nature images via a projector, Joonas with a banjo and me, singing, perform John Denver's song 'Country roads, take me home', in relation to the narrative that I tell about my mother teaching this song to her students in a mosque, during the period of expulsion from the public life (including schools) of Albanians in Kosova in the 90s.

Besides explaining another instance of examining control over audience bodies, here I'd like to point out the importance of navigating the lights through space. This action could not have been done by any of my colleagues, although we have tried this at the bunker. Giving away light, especially to two white Finnish men, meant giving up on the story that I was so determined to tell. We agreed that the only way this message would actually be passed on was if I have full control over the lights and the orientation of the audience. I turn the electric lights on right before asking the audience if they would share their belongings with a stranger, as quoted earlier, in which way I break the illusion of the past through which I sale them and bring them back to the present.

To represent through producing space

The concept of *space production* has been tremendously helpful in dealing with the representation of the past, as an entry point to the questions I would like to ask, the thoughts I would like to provoke and feelings I would like to evoke.

I am interested in how my work is read in different geographies and by those who come from different socio-political and historical backgrounds. This diversity of interpretation enriches my work, makes it multifaceted, and protects it from a universal representation

which I consider to be so dangerous in terms of reproducing the very concept of power dominance I am inclined to criticize.

To illustrate with an example, I presented ‘The Missing Torch’ on many occasions to three different audiences: family and friends in Kosova, colleagues and friends in Finland and Americans in the U.S.

Exploring the concept of *Yugonostalgia* through the context of euphoria for a past time-space as well as the deterioration of the socialist country through the reproduction of Yugoslavian aesthetics via the VHS format served us very well in producing strong reactions to the video-performance.

To the Kosovars, even those who were born after its liberation in 1999, the video-performance emitted a familiar feeling for an aesthetic which they never experienced, and they had little desire to question the historical references and almost full agreement with their representation. The reaction of my teachers and colleagues in Finland was one questioning the conflict between the mediums (VHS transmitted on YouTube), a disapproval of how real images were used to juxtapose meanings and a sort of shame or guilt of geo-political and historical ignorance. Those who watched it in the U.S. were angry about their hegemonic presence across the ocean, were curious to know more about the history and complimented us as ‘good actors and filmmakers’.

In the case of VTT, I desperately needed to remove any sign of The Free Space for Arts from its primary functional architecture, to connect to the particular history that I was aiming to work with. The emptiness of the bunker at the same time exposed the smallness of us as humans, in the larger scale of forces and relationships in the world.



Vapaan Taiteen Tila, in the process of being emptied in preparation for the rehearsals of An Exercise with Modified Circumstances. © Fjolla Hoxha

THE UNFOLDING OF SEMI-PERMEABLE MAP#3: THE FUTURE

We believe in the future and will look for it in the past, if necessary

Laibach¹¹⁴

Outcomes

My LAPS MA studies were an almost instinctive journey during which I stemmed from the desire to practice and test out performative visions for which I didn't have fully clear-cut conceptual definitions. I have entered my studied at LAPS and Teak overall as a room to push my boundaries as an artist, both through the themes I chose to work with as well as by putting my body on the front through performing. As I've already mentioned, in my previous practice in the field of dramaturgy, playwrighting and theater directing, I have spoken through others' bodies but not as much through putting my body on the front. I have found performing to be empowering, therapeutic and enriching for my experience in the field of performance art. My inclination towards participatory performance has been present in my previous works where I was engaged as a playwright or director but as a performer myself, in most cases of which I invite the audience to participate as co-performers, I have enjoyed the vulnerability that this situation of direct interaction creates and the unpredicted possibilities of learning that come up during them.

I believe that through this research which I aim to continue, I have tested out methods of working with performance and have at least set the base for a way of working with performance and live art which I intend to stick to and expand beyond the autotheoretical approach. At this point, building a performance begins by looking at the relationship of the given space to its history, significance, surroundings, and accessibility and what all these factors reveal and mean to those who are engaged in the

114 Benson 1996

process of making. I will bring up two examples of future projects and one of an already realized project that illustrate how working with space, time and audience as dynamic multiplicities come up in various contexts through my work.

1. I was invited by the Helsinki based gallery Myymälä2 to perform during their Relational Art Week (RAW) festival. Within their space, which is technically the basement of a residential building, I realized a live performance called ‘Building A Passport Exhibition’ during which I invited the audience to build an exhibition together.



‘Building A Passport Exhibition’, Myymälä2, August 2021. © Veera Kuusisto

The exhibition contained photocopies of visas from my passport and the audience was invited to verbally express visceral descriptions of these photocopies, which I typed as they spoke and attached below the photocopies that I nailed on the walls. In the end, I invited the audience to draw planar drawings relating to geotechnical investigations (schemes of which I had printed out as well) on top of the photocopies, thus disrupting the fixed identity that stamped me in a certain controlled citizen category by shifting the focus from legislation to territory. Following the exhibition, the defaced photocopies of

the passport were used for a process wall at the gallery for a duration of two weeks, during which the audience could continue to interact with the work.

2. With Portuguese theater maker Cecília Sousa, we are planning on working at ‘A padria do povo’ (‘People’s Bakery’) in a neighborhood in Lisbon. The bakery carries a very important history as it was built in 1904, at the proposal of King D. Carlos, to make bread cheaper for the parishes of Santa Isabel and Campolide. Traces of this connection with royalty still exist today through the clock and the safe offered by the monarch, on display inside the house which serves as a restaurant.

We are interested in exploring the meeting territory between our various geographies through a very mundane object charged with a lot of power: bread. It comes in through my personal context as a survivor of the conflict in Kosova in 1999 during which I waited in long lines for bread from 5am, to 12pm when the bread truck would arrive and only two pieces were designated to each person.

More than to bring attention to the maliciousness of a conflict erupting at the turn of the 21st century in European territory I am interested in the symbolism of bread and what it means in different cultures and in different time periods. Bread here gains a metaphorical meaning as well, as it represents the process of feeding. Feeding of the mind, body or soul. How do we feed ourselves at a time when we need to be cautious about being social while the basis that ensures our bread lies within the society?

I will be conducting interviews with the workers and the locals that live around this space and engage them in the creation of a performance that will take place at the bakery.

3. As a response to Helsinki City Theatre’s Stage for Contemporary Performance – open call for premieres in 2022-23, a pilot project that aims to include different forms of contemporary performance in the theatre’s seasonal program, I am exclusively interested in working with the technical staff of studio Pasila, where the stage is based. In this way, I am interested in breaking the hierarchy between creator and supporting staff and in making the labor of the staff visible and recognized by engaging them as the

sole co-creators of a collectively built performance. I will focus on the relationship of their creativity to lay bare the illusion that theater creates.

In terms of work discipline, I would like to mark the importance of conducting studio work which for me was key in developing a complex project. Till the end of this year, Teak had a studio at *Suvilahti* at students' disposal which I utilized for about two months, to lay out my research, meet with my colleagues and have long hours of conversations or test out ideas as well as conduct rehearsals. It is of crucial importance to make a distinction between living space and workspace, but this is more of a lesson to myself as most artists and institutions in Finland supporting artists, have figured this out a long time ago!



Working studio during the conceptualization of *An Exercise with Modified Circumstances*, Suvilahti, Helsinki, 2021. © Fjolla Hoxha

Mishaps

There are many things that I would do differently, if I had a second chance to redo the work I did.

Some tips to my future self and artist who may be reading this written thesis to find some sparks and caution before they delve into a performance art related research project:

1. When conducting interviews, record them!

During the process of building ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’, I interviewed a few people that had a connection to the pasts I was dealing with, such as Auli Valle, a World War Two survivor and Red Cross activist who had worked in ex-Yugoslavian territories throughout the 90s and 2000s, a very important person in the process who exposed the possibility to connect with others through struggle, beyond the temporal and spatial barriers. I believe some of the things she said would have been useful material to base some of my conclusions on, but I didn’t record them, thus their interpretation would have not been fully relevant. Instead, I have this delightful image as a memoir of the time we spent together (see the page below). I also interviewed the Swedish photographer Ann Christine Eek who had been taking black and white pictures of people and the landscapes in Kosova since the 70s. She revealed some very interesting hidden facts about the system of control that was present in Kosova, where who the internationals residing or visiting Kosova were and what their presence in the province was related to was almost a given fact of control and surveillance.

Contrary to these missed chances, I remembered to record my mother’s description of the situation and her singing of ‘Country Roads’, a song by John Denver which she sang to her students during the period of segregation in the 90s in Kosovo. The story and the song became a part of ‘An Exercise with Modified Circumstances’.



Meeting with Auli Valle and Joonas Mäkelä. ©Joonas Mäkelä

2. Take a team photo.

I think it is very important to take agency for the work that is done collectively by documenting it. We somehow didn't remember to take a team photo that would have maybe captured the creative and collaborative spirit of the project and would have been a great memoir.

3. Take more time to delve in the theoretical readings of the research.

This is more of a wish than a mishap really. As a non-EU citizen, I am required to pay for my studies which in a way has limited my freedom to spend a longer time to study and delve into various fields such as memory studies, Balkan studies, feminist studies, queer studies, state building and architecture. This may have been helpful in my initial inclination to not rely so much on the Western European scholars to convey a more site-specific study.

Plans

Initially, instead of writing a long report and reflection on my experience during the LAPS MA program which served very helpful none the less to shed light on what in fact I was experimenting with during my studies, I wanted to write a fictional retrospective about an anti-reactionary art wave that would have had erupted in Kosova during the same time as NSK, Borghesia and Autopsia were operating in Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia. The goal of this project which would entail imagining artistic collectives, bands, visual and performance artists and their artistic philosophies as well as their artistic output, was to fulfill the *sehensucht* but also to try to understand why such an occurrence was not in fact possible. By *sehensucht* here, I mean a yearning for a parallel past that may have led to less tragic political events should there have been more economical equality and a less centralized hunger for power.

I wondered why the birth of such an art wave and of such art collectives didn't or even couldn't emerge from Kosova. When I asked for the opinion of my mentor Miran Mohar on this, he said that every country has its own trajectory and Kosova does so as well. Miran, one of the founding members of NSK, the department of IRWIN in particular, is a part time lecturer at the Center for Contemporary *Art* Prishtina's summer school as well as at UBT University in Prishtina for over a decade now, which makes him a reliable source that can make comparisons and understand the exact situation I was referring to. However, in my opinion, the more complex answer lies in the historical oppression and the denial of a sovereign statehood. Paradoxically, Kosovars were too busy protecting their national identity as Albanians and Muslims, both of which marginalized them in the scope of the ex-Yugoslavian territory, not to mention here that these were both camouflages to enable a centralized economic dominance, which I spoke of more thoroughly at the Unfolding Semi-Permeable Map #1 of this thesis. Once the sovereign state was formed in 2008, criticality towards nationalism and its propaganda apparatus became possible and the eruption of a semi-Avant Garde too. These connections that I am bringing here probably belong to a whole new thesis, maybe a PhD project which I am inclined to follow but I am very glad to have been able to set the basis for these thoughts and observations during my MA studies at LAPS.

LAST REMARKS

Lastly, I'd like to conclude that this reflective process on my artistic endeavors during the last two years has been very enriching. It has been a tremendous experience to observe how complex theoretical questions have translated into artworks to then be reiterated in a theoretical framework at the end. There have been moments during the realization process of performances such as 'An Exercise with Modified Circumstances' when even the script was reduced to a 'to do' list. Here's an example from my notes dating April 28th, 2021:

1. Tryout with costumes
2. Double check if any prop is missing.
3. If so, get them from Teak
4. Coordinate with Markus to get them to VTT
5. Digitalize choir songs.
6. Test lights
7. Test video
8. *Mise en scène*
9. Mat? Sleep at VTT?

Looking at the list above, I am reminded that performance art remains within the realm of the theater processes and no matter how much I have wished to escape the theatrical language of representation by being as autobiographical and autotheoretical as possible, I have to admit that the nature of my work is representational. I want to go as far as to say, hell, the nature of the world is representational! It is not the term 'representation' on its own that is the problem, but how I deal with it that needs to be carefully taken into consideration. Rather than a mistrust towards institutionally designated venues for theatre and performance art production, I feel an inclination to scrutinize and disrupt so that new questions, new dilemmas, new debates, and new approaches to the field could erupt.

In conceptual terms, I am very happy that I decided to deal with such abstract and all-encompassing terms as time and space. In the course of about a year of conceptualizing

‘Modification as a Mode of Resistance’, I have realized how important it is to stay with the trouble, to bring up Haraway here again. The nuances of concepts and their interconnectedness to other concepts and theories is only possible this way. Time as a plurality, space production, the deconstruction of memory and theorizing on autobiographical material are all metaphors used to make sense of that strong inner drive to conduct the kind of performances that I have been inclined to create, as a result of all kinds of social exposures that have permeated through me throughout my life.

This research has equipped me with an understanding of the complexities and the interconnectedness of various study fields, and I have gained trust that incredible potentials lie in their intersectionality.

If I need to have a final remark, I’d like to add that I am fascinated by the idea that spaces are alive. They tell us so much about the ways in which human society formulates its convictions and it connects to its fellows from different temporalities and places. I am genuinely interested in the processes of stripping the layers of time that coexist in various spaces at different instances or in parallel.

On another note, I don’t believe that working with oneself and with others exclude each other. I love teaching and will continue working as an educator, utilizing performance art as a tool for questioning sedimented narratives. I believe now that criticality is a higher form of recognition and acknowledgement, equally empowering to taking space and having a voice. Working socially towards sharing and transforming one’s own experience as well as creating socially engaged and political art remains the epitome of the kind of art I would like to keep being engaged with and I am eager to add to it the now clearly defined element of inclination to read performative space.

I will close this written thesis with a wish that my work inspires others to take windy paths, test out and criticize some of my ideas and take them further. It is the only way we can keep the present exciting and nurture fruitful thoughts to feed those in the future!

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ANNEX

1.

Experiment 1. Cutup samples

An Exercise with Modified Circumstances

Transcribed text- day of liberation in English

June 12th, 1999

Let's leave this aside now. I agreed with Zana to go out together so that she would wait for me to go pick her up around twelve. I came home... oh, yes, on the way I almost joined some girls who were going down the street <u>in order</u> <u>to</u> not be left	without my impossible abstract moment but no, I didn't. And I had done better. From a distance, I noticed people gathered around the store and ran to get bread as its problem had become like an infection of an inexhaustible	virus without which people could not imagine the day in the usual or normal way. I got four loaves of bread and cheerfully, I was returning home. When, behold, my father's aunt was talking to a neighbor and on her hand, she was holding the plastic bag with	four other loaves. Hey, I said to myself, here it is, that's what we've gotten used to, either to have too much or none, but we solved the bread problem somehow, now that the Serbian soldiers, (<u>'shkije'</u> , it feels sweeter to say it that way), had
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2.

Experiment 2: *object/of/desire/to communicate*

Filming along the perimeter of VTT with filmmaker Joonas Mäkelä

Initially, based on trying to find the meeting points between my performance thesis roughly named ‘Modification as a mode of resistance’ and Joonas’s interest in exploring boundaries between cinema and performance.

With Vapaan Taiteen Tila being unavailable to film Joonas’s school exercise through which we were thinking of testing out the emotions that the space evokes, the movement, the light, the sound and the filming angles that we could further during my performance, we decided to not give up. This is a principle that fits with my study and that I am trying to follow with the pandemic restrictions becoming stricter in Finland in which case I am preparing that I may not be able to use VTT at all, in the worst-case scenario. Luckily, Joonas and the filming team from Aalto University are on board with this idea.

Instead of seeing restrictions as barriers, we want to use limitations to induce creative solutions to resist falling into a state of paralysis which is so easily possible in such precarious circumstances.

This approach builds a connection with my past experiences of being expelled from the public life and having to become vigilant in order to exist and survive. A whirlpool of memories erupts.

To other members of the team, VTT is The Free Space for Arts, and its bombing shelter function is almost invisible. These different ways of perceiving the space carry the creative potential that we are looking to explore and merge.

The bunker which as a space is intended to shelter people in order to enable them life/ to stay alive, in circumstances when their lives are endangered, or VTT which is a host to not only Uniarts Helsinki events but to a larger scope of performances and exhibitions in the city, strangely becomes an 'object of desire', an unreachable shelter for our ideas to brew. Instead, we remain outside, imagining what the potentialities of the inside could be.

What do we want to achieve with the exercise within these modified circumstances?

We would like to explore what we can, in this case, the external structure of the bunker, the top, the perimeter, the part of it that has been adjusted to a normal life in Kallio, one of Helsinki's most vibrant areas. The structure that through its external camouflage, it enables people to believe in the existence of a free and safe life or forget about the existence of war, violence, attack, aggression, disaster.

What does it mean to be trapped outside?

We want to find elements of the exterior that give hints of the bunker as a restricted space to shelter people in case of a crisis. Maybe also try to guess what the function of those elements may be. We will leave the interpretation of the found objects to the momentary impression and not visit the space beforehand in order to keep the raw reaction for the filming/sound recording. Hence, we will operate on the basis of impressions connected to things that are there and associations to our experiential and cultural backgrounds as exposures that will inform our approach to the exercise as a whole.

Obstacles have offered a whole new way of dealing with our ideas and goals so that we have become open to whatever comes and consider exploring ourselves as much of a part of the project as what the outcome of the filming and sound recording will be. This take still requires a certain set of rules and collective agreements as a starting point of orientation. We are experimenting with a form of working through which we don't

know what the other team members will bring in - material wise, but we will deal with it in present and forward it to others.

The choreography of the exercise is as follows:

The producers Saga Kinni and Aleksi Pulkkinen will visit the site on Wednesday afternoon (17.03.2021) and draw 2 identical maps of the site and venue and mark the route that two groups will follow. As per what kind of map they will draw, it remains to be found out at the moment of the meeting. They were invited to be as truthful to their creative interpretation of the perimeter of VTT as they can.

The groups are Joonas with Mikael Ahtikari on camera and Fjolla with Pääsä Piikkilä on sound recording equipment. We will meet at the door of VTT and each of us takes one of the maps. One starts to explore - follow the map clockwise, the other, counterclockwise.

When we meet somewhere during the marked route, we exchange the maps and continue our journeys. Now, we will locate the marked spots from the maps we have exchanged.

Both groups will carry a walkie talkie to communicate with the other group during the journey. The walkie talkie is used primarily to send a message but not start a conversation, unless necessary. It can be used to ask a question without an expectation for a verbal response. What we want to achieve with this is to influence or inspire the other's perspective that may be reflected via the mediums that they carry during their route, or it may not.

What are we doing by shooting in one direction and recording sound in the other direction?

Entering an explorative journey by utilizing a map drawn by another person evokes the playfulness of the exercise as much as the collective labor and the concept of trusting another's judgement and perspective, in our case, the creativity and the approach of a

different artist, one we haven't met before and don't know what kind of art they make or what beliefs or experiences they may have. We have a basic knowledge of what the others' names are and what their role in the exercise is. Joonas is the only person who knows everyone and is building the bridge of communication. The only common knowledge as a directive to the exercise that everyone has been exposed to in advance is Fjolla's diary entry 'Liberation Day' translated into English. How this will be utilized, if at all or interpreted, is to be discovered during the process of the exercise.

We dive into what the others have drawn for us with the intention of translating the map into the language of a different medium and a different point of view.

Through a split experience we want to tackle the possibilities of capturing details that may build a speculative narrative with regards to what we are not able to see directly from the inside. Hence, by evoking the imaginary, we re-functionalize the bunker and its meanings.

Since the piece will be edited, the various perspectives may offer a variety of understandings, all legitimate to their own right based on the one who is gazing-experiencing, that will then be interpreted by the editor without any hints as to what to keep of the 45-minute shooting and what to set aside. The final piece the editor will compile will be 5 minutes long.

How does the way we choose to communicate inform the nature of the exercise we are trying to undertake?

By framing the usage of walkie talkies, we will not be relying on verbal language as a reinforced element to achieve precision but also as a shortcut for communicating our affective reactions to the other. We want to give a larger space to interpretation. We want to allow the possibility of getting lost, confused or ending up discovering something completely disproportional to one another. How we communicate informs what we want to explore, at least as a starting point that may also lead to a completely unpredicted outcome.

What kind of hints do we give the other on the first part of the route, in order to minimize the imposition of our perspective to them?

One possibility is to only communicate via map. Then the objects and spots we find would be open for all kind of examination. There would also be a chance that the examination and observing wouldn't be towards the same object, even though the location would be quite the same.

Another option is to communicate via walkie talkies during our journeys. It would probably lead to a more accurate exchange of locations, observations and ideas. At the same time, it might narrow our perspective and limit the idea of free observing.

Duration of the shootings and framing the scene

The recording will take 45 minutes. It will start from the doors of VTT. There will be a clapperboard and after that the producers will give the maps for the groups. Then the groups will head towards their directions. Everyone else, except Mikael, will be seen in the picture before the journeys begin.

Joona will mostly stay behind the camera, and ideally it would not be too obvious that the sound group is taking another route, not before the groups meet during the journey. This shouldn't be taken too seriously though; it is more than possible to work on the dramaturgy afterwards during the editing stage.

Because the recording will take approximately 45 minutes, both of the groups should have a watch or timer so they will both finish the route at the same time. Recording will end when the groups meet on the doors of VTT. The recordings will take place on Thursday 18th 1pm.

3.

Script for:

An Exercise with Modified Circumstances

Performers: Fjolla Hoxha, Joonas Mäkelä

Sound: Timo Viilainen

Via *lyyti*, the ticket registration system, the Audience is advised to bring their ID or preferably passport to access performance. If they don't, a more thorough investigation and possibly interrogation will take place at the entrance of the performance.

CHECKPOINT REGISTRATION

A straight across spot at the entrance of the bunker. I, as a Checkpoint Officer (with a mask, a plexiglass shield on my face and gloves on) come with a hand-light from the corridor in Vapaan Taiteen Tila (VTT from here on). I turn the light to see the audience waiting in the darkness, blinding them with the light, then place the light on the floor, towards the wall so that it forms a large shadow of me.

Checkpoint Officer (CH.O.) to the audience: Please stand in line one by one with a 2meter social distance!

CH.O. Checks the document thoroughly. Questions to the audience include the request to repeat their name, birthdate, birthplace, 'what brings you to Vapaan Taiteen Tilla?', 'How long do you plan to stay here?', 'Where do you live?', 'Do you have a steady contract?', 'Are you married?', 'How much do you earn per year?', 'Are you politically exposed?', 'What is your native language?', 'Do you intend to stay here after the performance?'. Once the questioning of one member ends, CH.O. holds on to the passports and tells the audience member to step outside. If an audience member hasn't brought an identification document, they are interrogated more thoroughly and given a

replacement card which they have to hold on to throughout the performance. These audience members become helpers in carrying props during the performance and are called in their personal name when needed.

TRANSITION

CH.O., holding the light, identification documents in her pocket, opens the door to the main hall of VTT and leads the audience in. She doesn't tell the audience where to go, but at the table on one corner of the bunker, she lays out all the identification documents, takes her plexiglass mask and gloves out, also her long jacket and goes towards the horizontal center of the bunker. She places one of the lights on one side and turns on another that is standing on the floor. The audience naturally takes position in front of her.

SMACK MY BITCH UP

Sound: Prodigy- Smack my bitch up is played.

For the duration of the song, Fjolla will exercise intensively (jumping jacks, high knees, squats) and speak while exercising.

Lately I have developed an exercise routine. This is in contradiction to my earlier claim that I am eating to store energy reserves for rainy days. When they come to kick us out of the house, who knows, we'll end up in some mountains or the train tracks. Thus, I will be the only one to survive. I am warning everyone to follow my example.

That was before I realized the disproportion between endurance and collecting fat reserves to keep me going...

My mother comes upstairs in a hurry to ask me to lower the volume. Three armed soldiers in Serbian army uniform have just entered the garden ... (start running backwards).

They are talking in Serbian to my grandfather and my dad at the balcony. I look out I can't see them...but I hear their voices.

I hear my name. Fjolla Hoxha, 15 godina. Rodjena u Prishtini...Kosovo i Metohia. Republika Serbie.

Then I hear the names of everyone else who lives in the house.

This is all said before the singing part of the song for which I stop exercising and sing along in front of the light.

As I am back on exercising again:

This instance has taken place in early April 1999. I didn't understand what the listing was all about.

After the war, I had overheard from someone at home how those were liquidation lists, and they were found at a house in the neighborhood which was arranged with all kinds of torture equipment: manual and electric.

The song ends. Holding both lights in my hands, I go on to the back of the hall leaving the audience in complete darkness.

4 screens hanging from the ceiling towards the end of the bunker are directed vertically and they turn on slowly, one by one. On the screens, one can view the exterior of VTT, filmed at different times of the day and from different starting points.

PLAYING WITH THE LIZARDS

I come back from behind the back of the hall when the screens turn white. I have two workers' lights with me and place them by the 'exit' signs of the bunker towards the walls, not far away from the screens. I bring a banner, colors and a black back and start drawing poring the color onto the banner.

During summer 1999, I am spending a month at the house of my dad's aunts. *Teta Feria* and *Teta Pesent* are their names. Both in their 60s they live in a big Ottoman Empire style house with high embroidered wooden ceilings. I am sunbathing at the back yard, laying in the foldable polish bed called 'polski krevet' and playing with lizards that come out between the cobbler stones and the tomato plants.

The garden has a small backyard door called 'kapixhik', similar to ones from Alice in Wonderland.

Ideally, the *kapixhik* can be projected on the walls behind the audience through the light.

These doors are made to enable women who were covered to move around without their headscarves when they go to have coffee and read the coffee cups or ask for a bit of sugar from the neighbor, or salt or an egg.

The neighbor's house in fact belonged to my great great grandfather but he had lost it in usury.

Now, uncle *Ljubisha* and his mother live there. Ljubisha is a dentist, and my aunts are his clients.

I start cutting the drawn tomato plants, lizards, polish foldable bed with a scalp.

My aunts said that one day they saw uncle Ljubisha in a uniform.

We later learned that soldiers stayed in that house, just across from the kapixhik of the backyard where I was sunbathing and playing with lizards that came out of the cobbler stones and leaves of tomato plants.

I take the lights from the walls and point them out towards the drawing.

In revenge to the paramilitary forces that stayed at uncle Ljubisha's house, his house was burned, and the fire caught my aunts' house. Both of my brothers were in the house when this happened, but they survived somehow, so did quite a lot of furniture due to neighbors' immediate support. People went through fires to save as much as they could but the lizards, the polish bed and the tomato plants all turned into ash.

I pour out ash from the black bag and pour it on top of the drawings.

My brothers can't stand the smell of anything burning since then.

My aunt Pesent and Feriha's health deteriorated after they lost their house.

I take out the frame while the drawing remains on the floor and reflect the shapes of the drawings on the frame through the lights. Dream-like shapes appear on the walls.

The house was rebuilt by the humanitarian organization Caritas, with the cheapest material that would ensure them the possibility to fake sums in collaboration with the companies they bought the material from and pump up their pockets. My parents used their savings to improve the house after that and my aunts moved back in there. Before they died, they verbally left the house to my parents, but this was not put on paper. After they died, many of their sisters and their children asked for their share from it. To enable that, my parents sold their summer house at the beach in Turkey. When all the estate issues settled won, my parents moved into the new house, and they live there now.

A DICTIONARY OF WAR TERMINOLOGY

I turn off the hand/worker's lights and bring one to the center of the bunker. I ask the person who didn't bring the identification document to place a chair from the corner of the space where all the props are to the spot that I dictate. I step on the chair and place the light on a string so that it hangs from above. I pull out a piece of paper from my pocket.

Please repeat after me:

After each term I pause and wait for the audience to repeat the term.

Humanitarian Catastrophe, Envoy. Armed forces. Human shield. Ambush. Ethnic Cleansing. KFOR- Kosovo Forces of NATO Allies. UNMIK: United Nations Mission in Kosovo. KLA: Kosovo Liberation Army. NATO: North Atlantic Treaty Organization. UN Security Council Resolution 1244. Marti Ahtisaari. ICTY: International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

THE GOLDEN COIN

I step down from the chair. I ask the person with no ID/passport to bring the chair to the side and help me with carrying a table. The identification documents are all laid out on one corner of the table. From the prop bin, I bring three transparent cups and put two walkie talkies and a coin on my pockets. I pull the light further down from the string so that it stands right on top of my head.

Kul huvallahu ehad

Allahu-s-samed

Lem jelid ve lem juled

Ve lem jekun lehu kufuven ehad.

Kul huvallahu ehad
 Allahu-s-samed
 Lem jelid ve lem juled
 Ve lem jekun lehu kufuven ehad.

Kul huvallahu ehad
 Allahu-s-samed
 Lem jelid ve lem juled
 Ve lem jekun lehu kufuven ehad.

Every year during the 90s, we go to our summer house in Turkey for three months. It's the highlight of my year. Often, out of the blue we are pulled on the side by the police even though my dad isn't speeding, and the car seems alright. The police invent some issue related to the car or the papers and threaten with a fine. The more he argues, the bigger the fine gets. At some point, my dad figures out a trick.

I pull out the golden coin from my pocket and place it to the light to have it be seen by the audience and shine.

He prints gold plated images of Nikola Tesla, archbishop Saint Sava, poet Vuk Karadzic and gives these out as a bribe. It works out almost every time. I say three Kuluallah's and one Elham prayer every time we go on the road and wish that one: we aren't pulled aside, two, my mother who had a very sensitive stomach, doesn't vomit, three, our car doesn't have a malfunction, four, we don't get in a car accident.

I put the coin under one of the cups and shuffle the cups while saying the prayer:

Bismillahir-rahmanir-rahim
 Elham dulilahi rabin alemin
 E Rahman i Rahim
 Maliki jaumedin
 I jaken abudu ve I jaken nestehi

Sirataledhine enamte alehi

Gairim magdubi alehi veledalim amin

To the audience: Can anyone tell me where the coin is?

To audience member who speaks up : this is a very precious item to me (referring to the coin) so I can't give it to you, but I would like to show you something else. Please follow me.

THE BOMBING

I leave the coin on the table and pull out a walkie talkie from my belt. I place it on the table and turn it on. I shuffle the light which forms illusory shadows as if the cups were moving. With the other walkie talkie next to my mouth and on and another hand light on one hand, I lead the audience member outside of the main hall and close the door. I turn on the water sink next to the main hall and leave the water running. I lead the audience member to a small room at the end of the corridor of the bunker, turn towards them and speak to the walkie talkie. The light is on the floor so we can see each other in the dark. The other audience members are listening from the walkie talkie that I left at the table in the main hall.

On March 24th, 1999, the NATO ally forces start their bombing campaign against the Yugoslav army. It the day when night turns into day with flashing green light that brightens up the whole sky. My aunt is staying at our house because she doesn't feel safe on the fourth floor of her flat. Suddenly in the middle of the night, we all need to pee. There's 11 of us in the house. We line up down the stairs waiting for our turn to enter the only bathroom at my parents' house.

On March 26th, I turn 15. My mom bakes a cake with everything that we have at home, but the power cuts so she forgets the cake in the oven. Luckily, my aunt is sleeping downstairs and when the power comes back on, she smells the baking cake and turns the oven off.

On the same day, about 20 kilometers away from my town, 47 members of the Berishaj family are massacred. 5 of them are under the age of 15 years old.

I lead the audience member back to the main room, turn off the water sink, turn off the walkie talkie.

THE BREAK

I put the cups and the coin away in the prop bin and place my plexiglass and gloves on. I bring a tape player on the floor and play the cassette recoding of the choir rehearsals of the Cultural Artistic Society- Agimi while singing along. I ask the person without an ID/passport to carry the bin next to the table. I bring out a tea canteen and cups as well as a metal sugar cube cup with a few cubes only. I bring out a metal (army) plate covered with a blue fabric and uncover the fabric. There is stale bread in there. Another empty bowl has a plaster on it which says: potatoes/peanuts. I invite the audience for tea and serve them tea and bread if they want any. They stand around the space awkwardly and maybe have small conversations. After making sure everyone has been treated with tea and bread, I start calling everyone's names and double check the ID belongs to them. I hand out their IDs and ask them to go grab a mat, a blanket and a backpack laid out on a further corner of the bunker towards the entrance and make themselves comfortable in the space. I ask back the replacement card from the audience member without an ID and remind them to read instructions better next time. I thank them for the help and ask them to go grab a mat, blanket and backpack and get comfortable in the space.

COUNTRY ROADS

A green light turns on from the projector placed by the backstage wall of the bunker. A spotlight coming from the ceiling differentiates the light between me and Joona and the audience. Joona starts walking slowly away from the green light playing free tunes on the banjo while I speak.

During the 90s, Kosovar Albanians are expelled from public education institutions and studying in Albanian becomes illegal. My mom, a professor of English language is teaching in different mosques around my hometown, Prizren. She comes home with all kinds of stories about her cool students, so I beg her to take me to her classes and experience this myself. Sometimes she does. I am eager to see young adults especially cute looking guys with ponytails. Her students have all kinds of styles; one even has neon green hair. In one of her classes, she is teaching them the song 'Take me home, country roads' by John Denver's. Does anyone know of it? Well, Joonah and I will attempt to sing it together today.

We start singing and invite the audience to join in the third refrain.

Almost heaven, West Virginia
 Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River
 Life is old there, older than the trees
 Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze

Country roads, take me home
 To the place I belong
 West Virginia, mountain mama
 Take me home, country roads

All my memories gather 'round her
 Miner's lady, stranger to blue water
 Dark and dusty, painted on the sky
 Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye

Country roads, take me home
 To the place I belong
 West Virginia, mountain mama
 Take me home, country roads

I hear her voice in the mornin' hour, she calls me
The radio reminds me of my home far away
Drivin' down the road, I get a feelin'
That I should've been home yesterday, yesterday.

Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads

Country roads, take me home
To the place I belong
West Virginia, mountain mama
Take me home, country roads.

LIGHS ON

The projector is off. Joona goes back toward the backstage. I go around the bunker and turn all the hand-lamps one by one. Then I go to the front door and turn on the big light. The room is overtaken by the light.

Imagine a situation where you were the only survivors of a disastrous catastrophe. And all you could take with you was this backpack (I point out to the one next to them). Would you open your hearts and share whatever you managed to grab from your homes on the last minute and share it with these strangers?

The audience members open the backpacks. There is a piece of paper that is identical in all the backpacks, and it reads.

List of possessions:

Two pairs of underwear

Two pairs of socks
Bag of crackers
Bag of dried raisins
Shampoo
An empty sketchbook
My poetry notebook
Uncle's phone number in Turkey
Uncle's phone number in the U.S.
One t-shirt
Photo of the whole family
Journal
A pen and refills
A pencil
Sharpener
Woolen jumper
Woolen tights
'Robinson Crusoe' – Daniel Defoe
Bottle of Water
Flashlight

Sometimes audience members read them aloud to compare the lists.

I grab the brochure of the performance and distribute it to all the audience members. They take their time to read. The cutup text of my diary entry The Liberation Day cut up in various columns is the content of the brochure- as well as the outline of the concept of the performance and the team engaged in the making of it.

4.

Script for:

THE MISSING TORCH

THE STORY OF THE ADULT PIONEER

Framed picture of Tito on the wall in the bathroom

AUDIO: BORGHESIA's A.R can be heard

Closeup: eye and hand layering eyeliner

Closeup: lips and hand layering red lipstick

Torso shot: The woman is staring at the mirror. She buttons the last buttons of her shirt, puts on her red scarf, takes the pioneer hat from her front and puts it on with ceremony. Looks at herself again.

Blackout

The pioneer in profile. The Yugoslavian flag behind her. She is whistling the anthem. She turns towards the camera – now her communist greeting can be seen.

Words on the screen: ORIGINAL

FJOLLA: Hej, Sloveni, jošte živi
Duh naših dedova,
Dok za narod srce bije
njihovih sinova.

Words on the screen: NATIVE

FJOLLA: Hej Sllavë
 Fantazma e gjyshërve tanë rnon
 Për aq sa zemrat e bijve të saj
 buçasin për popullin

Words on the screen: GLOBAL

FJOLLA: Hey Slavs
 our grandfathers' Spirit lives
 As long as their sons' heart
 beats for the people

Pan all the way out. Cut

Bust and up

The glitch – three different languages are mixed – texts gain a new meaning

Cut to:

A MOMENT OF CLARITY

Today, as I become a Pioneer,
 I give my Pioneer's word of honor -
 That I shall study and work diligently,
 respect parents and my seniors,
 and be a loyal and honest comrade
 That I shall love our homeland, self-managed
 socialist federal republic of Yugoslavia.
 That I shall spread brotherhood and unity
 and the principles for which comrade Tito fought.
 And that I shall value all peoples of the world who respect freedom and peace!

Big physical glitch, momentary disappearance.

Head – static

The Yugoslavian emblem had 5 torches.

Slovenians, Serbs, Croats, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins

They all had a torch inscribed in Yugoslavian symbols

I come from the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo

I am not Slavic

Serbo-Croatian is not my mother-tongue

I am a traditionally Muslim Albanian woman (close up)

And I don't have a torch!

Fade to:

Tito's funeral

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92NR7S2YhsU&feature=emb_logo

cut to:

THE TRAVEL AGENT'S story

The Flag has changed to the American flag- full frame. THE TRAVEL AGENT walks onto the frame. Torso

THE TRAVEL AGENT stares at the camera in silence. He recuperates himself and wears a smile.

Hello, I'm a representative for the agency of travel and exploitation of foreign countries.

The autonomous province of Kosovo, recently known as Republic of Kosova is composed of a spacious valley enclosed by the steep slopes of the Sharr mountains in the southeast, and a fertile valley in the southwest, drained by the river White Drin.

Influenced by the Adriatic climate and protected by strong winds on its northern side, it enjoys very favorable conditions for agriculture.

Cut to: flashes of images of mass graves, death and destruction from the war.

*

In every town in the Republic of Kosova, the ancient and modern stand side by side, the people of this region are gradually adapting to new ways of life.

Cut to: refugee camp.

*

Prishtina, the capital of the Republic of Kosova has a population which is composed of Albanians, Serbs, Roma and Turks who live and work together in complete equality.

Cut to: Images of Albanians protesting

*

The most industrially developed part of the country of the Republic of Kosova, is (cynical tone and smile) the most contested geo-political region, close to the border with Serbia. With what was the second largest mine in Yugoslavia of lead and silver and the largest lead-zinc and silver mine in Europe. Besides these metals, the region also yields pyrites and gold.

Cut to: Images from the Bondsteel us camp

Foreign Investors have committed to build and equip a new 500-megawatt coal-fired power plant. Sitting on more than 14 billion tons of proven lignite reserves, the fifth largest in the world, The Republic of Kosova is struggling with power shortages. The new plant is designed to meet nearly half of the country's power demand. The

successful implementation of this project has the potential to reshape the overall economic perspective of the country.

Cut to: images of smog from Obiliq

Images appear during Dylan's talking.

Fade to black.

In the black, THE PIONEER and THE NATIONALIST TRAVEL AGENT, in profile at two edges of the frame, walk towards each other. They stop a few feet from each other. The Travel Agent pivots towards the camera. He speaks to the camera.

Try out both full body and torso.

THE NATIONALIST TRAVEL AGENT

In a gesture of international good will, I present you (he turns to the pioneer and gives her the weapon) the torch that you never had. The automatic weapon is handed.

He pivots back, with both hands he gives the Pioneer the weapon. In one movement he turns and walks off the frame.

THE PIONEER pivots towards the camera and stands there until it fades to black. disappears with the gun.