



Art of place

creation from space

The Study and Practice of Site Specific Performance in the Czech Republic

Edited by Tomáš Žižka and Radoslava Schmelzová

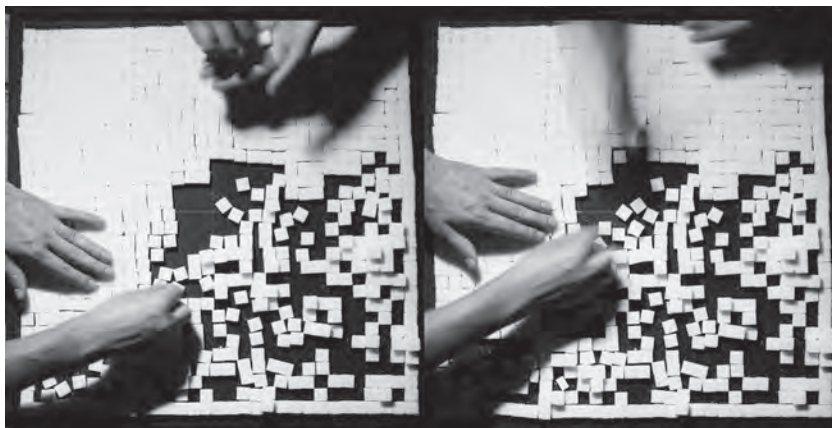
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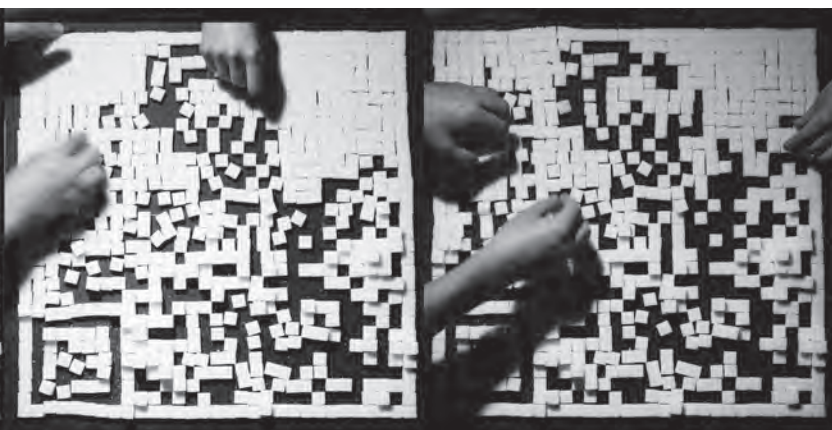
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Introduction

Art of Place

Tomáš Žižka

Times of crisis are always useful. If we were to experience only an endless period of peace and quiet, we would never learn the lessons that conflicts and problems teach us. This publication deals with conflicts—the art of place versus our citizens' attitudes. And it is not so much a comprehensive educational methodology as it is a mosaic of the problems inherent in activities in public spaces.

The program, Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces, was initially offered to students as a research based and experimental supplemental course of study at the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (AMU). The program offered a well-balanced space for an artistic and technologically conceived education in the fields of art and art theory, with an overlapping emphasis on artistic and social diversity, and a sense of theatricality. I feel the need to use the term “theatrical” carefully here. Although the term is often appropriate, today's theater world is divided into the “classical” and the “alternative.” By classical theater, I understand theater in traditional theater buildings with a permanent ensemble of actors, a repertoire etc.

All other theatrical events, where the theater is deliberately done differently, we call alternative or non-traditional. Theater in “non-traditional” contexts invents its own rules, its own structures, and reveals the methodology of the creative process, which then becomes a distinctive strategy-concept for theater and social communication in a particular place, time, and circumstance. It is obvious that the starting points are observation and conceptual thinking, because in these particular places and circumstances the already finished (ready-made) things and objects can be used by people in relation to a presentation, which is then perceived as performance or theater. Controversy remains as to how this old-new vision of the theater, which we understand as a separate art form, will also be perceived as a space of social and visual information, and earn its place at theater schools and institutions. The question remains open whether this can be taught at the same place which protects the classical training in the craft, and where searching and thinking about theater have been gobbled up by professionalism. Our ambition is to realize the importance of the role of place, and this publication in English is the first report on that topic in the Czech Republic.

Other Forms of Art—or–Searching for

Radoslava Schmelzová

*It turns out that art is an unpleasant companion, for it is always elsewhere;
an elsewhere that is not in the middle, or on the edge, nor outside—but simply
elsewhere.*

Miroslav Petříček, *Places of Stories/Místa příběhů*, 2009

the Roots of the Art of Place



Miloš Šejn, *Aqua Speculum*, 1994, Plasy Monastery, Hermit Symposium, videosonic body projection Měkkohlaví (Softhead) Group, Autodafé, Zebín, 1989. Photography Miloš Šejn archive

In search of this “elsewhere,” we will be working with the assumption that the interdisciplinary synthesis broadly called “site specific” has evolved out of the concept of a total work of art and its much later variations—forms like event, happening, environment, action art, performance, body art, installation, minimalism, and conceptual art, which interconnect in this intermedial form created for a specific site. It seems that although the art is linked to a real place, its live shape paradoxically lies in that most indefinite, phantom “elsewhere.” Its approaches are inherently interdisciplinary, moving freely across artistic disciplines. They are constantly evolving, and it is therefore not surprising that they defy rigid theoretical definition. It is significant that no definition of site specific art has been generally accepted without objections. The beginnings of the site specific artistic approach are, as a rule, set in the 1960s. They culminated a decade later, but the radius of their influence has affected a much wider area. Originally a controversial method, site specific is now commonly used in the visual arts, dance and theater.

Throughout the history of art, the idea of a synthesis of artistic disciplines or a universal work of art has appeared and disappeared again and again. In the modern area, the idea was revived in connection with ideas of romantic culture. Then, the processes of its adoption were so potent that they extended across the entire 18th century. For the German Romantics, a close linking of artistic fields was the ideal. (While the Germans can be considered the “parents” of European romanticism, their later “children” in other countries differed considerably, and even surpassed them in terms of international fame.) Although an effort at universality was a very broad common factor of romantic art, its main concern was with an artistic grasp of relationships between man, society, nature and the universe (Schulz, 1999).

At the beginning of the 19th century, the idea of linking various artistic disciplines was transformed into the

concept of the “Gesamtkunstwerk,” a “total work of art,” whose components mutually supported and enhanced each other. The term appeared for the first time in the work “Ästhetik oder Lehre von der Kunst und Weltanschauung” (“Aesthetics, or the Theory of the World View and of Art,” 1827) written by German writer and philosopher Eusebius Trahndorff (1782-1863). It is not clear whether the German composer Richard Wagner knew the text, but he used the same expression in the context of Greek tragedy in his essays “Das Kunstwerk der Zukunft” (“The Artwork of the Future”) and “Die Kunst und die Revolution” (“Art and Revolution”). The concept has since been associated with the aesthetic ideals of Richard Wagner, who out of the 18th century opera created musical romantic drama—a comprehensive work of art where music, singing, dance, visual elements and libretto are all equal and connected using the means of theater.

Wagner’s Demonic Image of the World

Wagner’s thinking was based on the ideas of romanticism. It is well known that Wagner supported the German liberal revolutionary wave of 1848, and that when an arrest warrant was issued for him, he was forced to flee into exile. Yet, as history shows, the romantic musical drama in Wagner’s rendition revived a magically demonic image of the world overwhelmed by the clear Greek spirit as the West was born. The musical drama caused nostalgia for home, for the homeland/cradle of German spirit before Europe. German nationalism took possession of Wagner’s operas with their sweetly melancholic, musically engrossing celebration of death, tragic love and the twilight of the gods on such a scale, that although they are long part of the world’s cultural heritage, a shadow hangs over them to this day. Thus it is still necessary to explain that “*the concept of Teutonism, as the original Germaneness preceding Christian civilization, was an issue of late German nationalism, a mixture of superficial interpretations of Wagner*

and vulgar political chauvinism” (Schulz, 1999). Therefore, the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk appeared in such disparate contexts as in Adolf Hitler’s admiration of Wagner’s operas, and in Andy Warhol’s Factory in New York in the 1960s (Koss, 2008).

Development of Gesamtkunstwerk Idea

The concept of Gesamtkunstwerk showed remarkable durability. It developed in the 20th century as well, even though it was in direct opposition to modernism and its principles (a purity of artistic media, originality, authenticity, and the aesthetic autonomy of the work), which ruled in the arts at least to the 1960s. In 1901, the German art colony in Darmstadt held an exhibition of lifestyle and housing as a total work of art. A group of artists called “Secession” led by Gustav Klimt presented their vision of the so-called complex work of art in the *Kunstschau* exhibition in Vienna in 1908. Paintings and sculptures, and also posters, theatrical costumes, decorations, books, furniture, and even children’s toys were collected in the temporary building designed by architect Josef Hoffmann. The building itself and its exhibition spaces were artifacts as well. Josef Hoffmann continued to develop his work in the spirit of this idea, designing not only architecture, but also the interior down to the smallest detail. The Stoclet Palace in an example of this work. In 1903, he founded the *Wiener Werkstätte* handicraft workshops based on the English Arts & Crafts movement and the ideas of John Ruskin (1819-1900). Hoffmann became one of their main designers.

In 1918, this combining of all types of art under the wing of architecture was proclaimed even by Bruno Taut’s *Architekturprogramm*. This time, a new total work of art was supposed to arise with the active participation of the people, under the leadership of *Arbeitsrat für Kunst* (Workers’ Council for the Arts). Catalan architect Antoni Gaudí (1852–1926) was influenced both by Wagner’s music dramas and by the ideas of John Ruskin, a popularizer of the Arts & Crafts movement, whose influence peaked around 1900 (Frampton, 2004). Ruskin’s statements that no one who is not a great sculptor or painter can be an architect, but only a builder, surely suited Gaudí. The La Sagrada Família Cathedral, on which Gaudí worked for 43 years, defies all styles. This remarkable visionary’s synthetic cathedral construction has won worldwide renown. In addition, in 2003, the Vatican began an initiative to begin the process of Gaudí’s beatification.

Swiss art historian and art curator Harald Szeemann (1933–2005) was interested in the synthesis of the arts. He developed a type of complex “big exhibition” in which the exhibited works of art are tied to a central idea and exposed in new and often surprising relationships. This was undoubtedly inspired by Wagner’s concept. Gaudí’s cathedral La Sagrada Familia appeared at his show *Der Hang zum Gesamtkunstwerk (Tendency to Gesamtkunstwerk)* in 1983 at the Kunsthau Zürich and the Museum des 20. Jahrhunderts in Vienna. This brilliant art-historical exhibition charted thinking about Gesamtkunstwerk in European utopias since 1800, which went beyond aesthetic value and also related to the transformation of social realities. It is precisely this utopian element in community movements that will accompany us to the present. Szeemann was obviously fascinated by the avant-garde desire to merge art and life. He saw a radical artistic and political impulse in the idea of connecting all the arts into one aesthetic whole, which appeared in the pre-war and



A type of garden structures,
garden Lysá nad Labem Castle.
Photography Radoslava
Schmelzová



mamapapa, Kladno+-Záporno
(Positive +-Negative), *Industrial Safari*,
2005. Photography Václav Cílek

post-war avant-gardes of the 20th century, but he was also aware of the weakness of their utopian requirements. At the exhibition *Tendency to Gesamtkunstwerk*, Szeemann introduced the public to the bizarre villa Il Vittoriale degli Italiani in Gardsee which belonged to the Italian poet, writer, and Duce of the Independent Regency of Fiume, Gabriele d'Annunzio (1863 – 1938). D'Annunzio played a controversial role in the early days of Italian fascism as one of the ideological leaders and friends of Mussolini. The compound, with its military museum, library, literary and historical archive, theater, and mausoleum, is sometimes referred to as the fascist amusement park. The Monte Verità colony in Ascona, Switzerland was also given space in the exhibition. It was founded in 1900 in a former fishing village by Belgian Henri Oedenkoven and Austrian Ida Hofmann on the principles of simple socialism. It was an art school where an alternative way of life was cultivated, which included vegetarianism and physical exercise. In 1917, Theodor Reuss, Master of the Order O.T.O. (Ordo Templi Orientis), organized a conference there. Some of the topics included women's rights, a society without nationalism, Freemasonry, and dance as art, ritual and religion. The philosophical basis was a synthesis of Eastern and Western cultures and new philosophical movements such as theosophy and anthroposophy. Hermann Hesse, Carl Gustav Jung, Erich Maria Remarque, Hugo Ball, Isadora Duncan, Paul Klee, Rudolf Steiner, Mary Wigman and Alexej Jawlensky spent time there. The colonists abhorred private property, adhered to a firm moral code, strict vegetarianism, free love, and nudism. They rejected the conventions of marriage, dressing, and politics. They were, so to speak, tolerantly intolerant. If this reminds us of movements such as the hippies in the 1960s or the later new age movement, the resemblance is certainly not coincidental. As already mentioned, some ideas return again and again.

It is obvious that the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* influenced many radical modernist movements. Szeemann found resonance of its influence even in the works of Arnold Schönberg, Marcel Duchamp and representatives of Russian constructivism and surrealism. The influence of utopian and revolutionary works appeared in the 1960s and 1970s in the work of John Cage, Joseph Beuys, Marcel Broodthaers and Hermann Nitsch. In this broader sense, *Gesamtkunstwerk* overlaps with today's synthetic term intermedia, mixed media, and multimedia (the exact distinction or hierarchy is a matter of interpretation). Here we can find the older roots of forms of artistic synthesis such as happenings, performance, experimental theater and other phenomena. It seems that American art historian Juliet Koss was right in arguing that despite the seeming incompatible polarity, the idea of *Gesamtkunstwerk* lies at the heart of modernism.

In this sense we can mention for example counter reliefs of modernist constructivist Vladimir Tatlin. These corner material constructions, made after 1914, were not paintings nor objects nor sculptures nor architecture (Foster et al., 2007). Also worth mentioning is *Merzbau* by Kurt Schwitters which is based on Dadaism, where he merged the sculptural object, architecture and the visual arts. At the Szeemann exhibition, one could see a reconstruction of the original *Hanover Merzbau* made by theater designer Peter Bissegger based on photographs from 1933. Kurt Schwitters called his own one-man group *Merz*. The expression was probably derived from the word "Kommerz" (trade) from one of his collages. After the first world war, Schwitters walked through bombed-out ruins of the city and collected bricks, pieces of concrete and iron, waste from the streets, garbage cans and sewers, old, useless things ... tickets, buttons, shoe soles, broken boards ... which he glued or stuck together. He generated art from these pieces of civilization's waste-spatial objects called *Merzbau*-bizarre three-dimensional art collages. In them,

the art disciplines of collage and assemblage grew organically together with space.

aspect of Pollock's work was discovered by western artists (particularly proponents of anti-form) 15 years later.

“He built the first Merzbau at his home in Hanover and this extraordinary, slowly growing sculpture of plaster and all kinds of garbage had grown, by the time he left Germany in 1935, up to the second floor. Unfortunately it was destroyed in 1943 by Allied bombing” (Dempsey, 2002).

Japanese Pollocks and Performance

Jackson Pollock's action abstract expressionism opened up painting to a potentially infinite space. The new monumental scale and the laying of the canvas on the ground undermined the autonomy of the canvas and transformed it into environment, which extended the experience of the viewer into a complex of spatial experiences in which they directly participated in the process of creating the artwork. Reflections of his processional work appeared in the activities of the Japanese group *Gutai* in the 1950s. In Japan in that period, the Americanization of society was provoking strong resistance. It was therefore shocking that a group of eighteen young artists under the direction of Jiro Yoshihara chose the American artist Jackson Pollock as their master. His action painting, captured in Hans Namuth's famous photographs which showed Pollock spilling and spraying paint, was understood by them through cultural codes that were foreign to the American environment, namely in terms of movement as a radically new way of creating a character/sign in opposition to the ancient Japanese calligraphy. This

Gutai transferred the physical movement and high ritualistic nature of Japanese culture into artistic acts (Foster et al., 2007).

There was a stunning appeal in their concepts based on chance and unpredictability. To apply the paint they used a vibrator, an electric toy car, dispenser; they broke glasses filled with color and pierced bags of color with arrows. One half-naked artist lay in the mud moving erratically, another jumped through six large paper walls. They escalated their theatricality into playful exhibitions built as entertainment spaces with places for contemplation and meditation. They considered the resulting residue to be much less interesting than the gestures that created them, although the results were later exhibited, somewhat unfortunately, as abstract paintings (ibid., 2007). Action or performance were a part of many schools and avant-garde movements of the 20th century—Futurism, the Russian avant-garde, Dada and Surrealism. They developed rapidly in the 1960s and permeated all progressive movements. Action art quickly gained popularity—its feeling of freedom was contagious for both the artists and their audiences.

The Environment for Happenings and Alchemy of the 1960s

The definitive criticism of the scientific, Cartesian mechanistic model of the world that emerged in the late 1960s, simultaneously in many fields in science and the humanities, led, together with the process of deconstructing a homogeneous picture of the world, to a new emergence of various subcultures and alternative currents. Art returned to being actively involved in rituals and life. The first “protohappening” was performed by John Cage in 1952 at Black Mountain College as *Theater piece No. 1* with artist Robert Rauschenberg, dancer Merce Cunningham and others. The approaching 1960s were characterized by the almost visionary artist Allan Kaprow:

“... The young artist of today need no longer say ‘I am a painter,’ or ‘a poet,’ or ‘a dancer.’ He is simply an ‘artist.’ People will be pleased, or perhaps threatened; the critics will be confused or amused, but this will be the alchemy of the sixties” (ibid., 2007, p 452).

Since 1957, Kaprow had been exhibiting his spatial environments, which he considered to be action collages and an extension of Pollock’s paintings. He learned about chance as a principle of composition in collaboration with John Cage. Kaprow reacted to Cage’s sound compositions by creating performances according to musical notation, and added the dimension of space to the music model using movement. In 1959, at the opening of New York’s Reuben Gallery, Kaprow introduced the first public happening called *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, subtitled *Environment for Happening*. The term is here understood as an early form of action art – an organized (and rehearsed) collective event on the border

between art, theater and music, which had the character of an assemblage of events taking place (or perceived) at different times in different places. It took place in three parts of a room divided by sheets of plastic, where performers read their works, painted or played musical instruments, during which the audience twice moved to different part of the room according to precise instructions.

Why were the happenings so shocking? No one in the audience could take away with them anything but a fraction of the experience of the entire show, the boundaries between audience and the performer were broken and their roles were often interchangeable. There was no stage, no story, just a bizarre environment and lack of logic such as one experiences in dreams. The experience was

completely different from that of a theater performance, concert or exhibition. The happening ignored hierarchical value systems and used various media; it emphasized a sphere of simultaneous aesthetic perception – the fall of actor/spectator boundary was just a consequence.

Influences of the Situationist International

Dérive (drift) consisted of wandering about an urban environment without a pre-determined plan or aim. The acquired experiences of psychological impacts of the urban environment on residents were recorded in “psychogeographic” maps of the city.

Détournement (turnabout or derailment) represents the Situationist practice of free use of existing works of art and aesthetic elements, and shifting their original meanings.

The movement of the Situationist International (SI) is the story of how one half forgotten anarchist cell, established in 1957 in the Italian town of Cosio d'Arroscia, which never had more than forty members (among them Guy Debord, Asger Jorn, Constant Nieuwenhuys, and Pinot Gallizio), became the most political art movement, the intellectual source of penetrating foresight with far-reaching political and cultural influence. All of its members shared affection for Surrealism and Marxism. So it is not surprising that after the split up of SI, one faction was devoted exclusively to political activism. The ideas of the main SI theorist Guy Debord directly influenced the unprecedented student revolts in France in 1968.

The SI movement began with a harmless emphasis on several already well known characteristics – a blurring of the boundaries between artist and non-artist, merging creativity and imagination with everyday life, and an effort to step out of the commercialized environment of “high” art, in which artistic value was validated in institutional or commercial ways (Marcus, 1998).

The Situationists was revolutionary in that it criticized the developed consumer society which Guy Debord scrutinized as a society of “spectacle,” preferred over reality. The central theme of their manifesto was the concept of a “constructed situation” where, instead of making traditional artifacts, they arranged a situation they could perform using methods already developed by the group Letterist International (1952 -1957).

Although SI disbanded in 1972 after a bitter dispute among its members, its piercing critique of modern capitalism and emphasis on creativity, through which, it believed, everyday life could be transformed, gained influence in anarchist and feminist circles. (It also inspired punk.) Primarily, however

this movement gave rise to themes like psychogeography, the politicization of urban landscapes, the role of media presentation, the fetishization of art, and the relationship between art, politics and power. The book *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967) by Guy Debord became essential literature for visual and cultural studies. Situationists inspire today's left-wing critics of the contemporary neo-liberal capitalism who are again searching for “shadows of past utopias.”

New Realism

With the New Realists, the neodadaist movement of the 1950s and 1960s, came a redefinition of the relationship of art and art's framework that moved the work of art out into architecture, and even out onto the street which has always been considered a public space. The movement's inspirations were obvious; they recycled themes of the historical avant-gardes, Dada, Duchamp's ready-made objects, Surrealism. Many of the New Realists' works were the end result of events and performances. The New Realists group was founded in Paris in 1960 by art critic Pierre Restany. Yves Klein remains the best-known and most influential member, whose work influenced performance, minimalism, body art and conceptualism. In 1957, with the installation *The Void (Le Vide)*, he opened a completely empty gallery. Arman responded to this by filling the Iris Clert gallery window with garbage, naming the installation *The Full-up (Le Plein)*. Daniel Spoerri pronounced an entire vegetables shop in Copenhagen “found” for an exhibition. Klein pointedly interrogated classical painting. He painted numerous identical monochromes in intense ultramarine and sold them at various prices. He later patented the color as IKB (International Klein Blue). To him it signified endless space and spiritual purity. At other times he signed his canvases with flamethrowers, or sold zones of emptiness on properties which contained his sensibility. In 1960, in his famous *Anthropometry* performance, naked women painted with IKB

left marks on a giant canvas, as living brushes, while the orchestra played Klein's *Monotone Symphony*.

Fluxus and its Nonprofessional Anti-art Without Ego

The concept of intermediality, which appears to be principal for site specific, is associated with late modernity and culminated in the Fluxus movement. The term “intermedia” was first used by Dick Higgins to characterize the overlaps in types of art used in Fluxus works. It was not Gesamtkunstwerk, in which all the arts were united, but rather the elimination of traditional genres and artistic conventions. The movement, which was originally perceived as an international association of pranksters, is seen today as one of the most radical philosophically oriented movements of western modern art in the 2nd half of the 20th century. Fluxus remains one of the most complex—and therefore often underestimated—artistic movements. Many aspects of conceptual art are ascribed to it, such as the turn towards language, text, idea, criticism of institutions and cultural production, as well as the elimination of distinctions between art and its framework, the aesthetics of archival accumulation, and an emphasis on design. Fluxus was based on the experiences of people in exile who left countries devastated by World War II and it was characterized by a strange mixture of melancholy and grotesque comedy. The movement was notable for its internationalism and far greater openness—there were a great number of women artists among members. Freedom of expression was so important that Fluxus promoted collective authorship and destruction of the cult of the artist. It was also associated with low art, popular entertainment, vaudeville, humor and gag.

The movement was founded and named by Lithuanian artist George Maciunas in New York in the 1960s. It gradually spread to Japan and Europe and especially Germany. Maciunas began to question the established status



An Imaginative Association of a Gothic Virgin Mary, sculpture in the landscape. Photography Petr Meduna

of the artist, he promoted artistic anonymity and anti-art that was not meant only for the initiated, but for everybody. Fluxus' concepts of aesthetics of universal events and free formats can be seen in events such as the YAM Festival—a continuous year-round event based on the principles of chance and games (1962-63), during which one performance or event took place every day. The whole thing culminated in the May finale (YAM = May) in 1963. Fluxus' members loved humor and playfulness. Their “catalogs”—Fluxus Boxes (small plastic boxes)—were full of printed cards, manuals and objects to turn simple browsing into a game. They strove for non-professionalism and opposed art that served to promote the artist's self. There was a general dislike of artifacts which had no other function than to be sold to provide artists' livelihoods. Among the members was the founder of video art, Zen poet and thinker Nam June Paik, and also Emmett Williams, Yoko Ono, Robert Watts, Eric Andersen, Albert Finney, Ben Vautier and Joseph Beuys. From the Soviet bloc, Milan Knížák was a member of the movement.

Fluxus artists were active in the visual arts, music, literature, urbanism, architecture and design. The movement combined the aesthetic principles of Dadaism, Bauhaus and Zen Buddhism. It worked with fusions and combinations of all media and artistic disciplines. “*Artists themselves took an extremely restrained stand towards the definition of Fluxus and their preferred audience—so to speak—were the independent thinkers,*” wrote curator Johannes Cladders. However, Fluxus remained one of the most inaccessible and most esoteric cultural formations of the 20th century. The “do it yourself” approach is connected with ideas of the Fluxus movement, as is the idea of Hakim Bey's T.A.Z. (The Temporary Autonomous Zone) in the sense of not relying on gallerists, curators or collectors, but preparing conditions for survival in an independent zone where social norms and social status are not important (Bey, 2004).

Body Art

Since the end of the 1960s, body art has become one of the most popular and most controversial art forms. It focused attention on the body as a response to the impersonal nature of minimalism and conceptualism, while paradoxically expanding both disciplines. Unlike performance, it often takes place in private and only photographic documentation is presented. *Self-Portrait as a Fountain* by American Bruce Nauman is disguised as a tribute to Duchamp, but in fact it shifted his concept in the sense that the author himself becomes a work of art. The body itself became a powerful means of expression to explore and reveal social taboos surrounding sexuality, illness, death and violence. The extreme physical performances of body artists require stamina, endurance and the ability to withstand pain. One example of such extreme achievements are the performances of Chris Burden, who shot his hand in a gallery and also let himself be chained in a “crucified” position to the hood of his car. Another is a performance by Czech body artist Petr Štembera who introduced twigs of shrubs into his arm as gardeners introduce them into the soil (Rezek, 1982). Violence and sadomasochism are present in body art to this day. For example the French artist Orlan uses plastic surgery as an art tool, and changes the physical appearance of her body. The most disturbing works were created in the background of student turmoil in France, during the civil rights movement, and around political scandals in the United States.

Nitsch's Perverse Travesty Gesamtkunstwerk

In 1962 in Vienna the Wiener Aktionsgruppe (Viennese Actionism Group) was established. It included Günter Brus, Otto Mühl and Hermann Nitsch, who from the very beginning stressed a return to ritual and theatricality. In their performances, the body became the central means of expression. The reasons for this were clear. One of the basic Viennese characteristics is the connection of

Catholicism to a patriarchy with a powerful, hierarchical imperial order, which had been smoothly taken over by the bourgeoisie. At the same time, since Sigmund Freud's psychoanalysis, a hypertrophied cult of the sexual body flourished here, all within the framework of post-fascist Austria. Viennese actionists drew almost systematically from ostentatious mental regression and the instinctive side of the human psyche, and turned to the mythological and liturgical, to sacred performance.

Nitsch's *Theatre of Orgies and Mysteries* attempted to return to the intensity of experiences that are associated with catharsis in ancient tragedy, with Catholic Passion Plays, the grandeur of Baroque theater and, not surprisingly, to the greatness of Wagner's operas. To achieve synesthesia and a new conception of Gesamtkunstwerk he used materials from daily life such as oil and vinegar, wine and honey, egg yolks, blood, guts... In his manifesto "Die Blutorgel" Nitsch said: "*Through my artistic production ... I take upon myself the apparently negative, unsavory, perverse, obscene, the passion and the hysteria of the act of sacrifice so that YOU ARE spared the sully, the shaming, the descent into extreme.*"

At the opposite end of this stood Mühl's hoarding, breaking, crushing and smashing all sorts of objects, garbage, food for creating assemblage *Materialaktionen*. The Actionists considered Kurt Schwitters their greatest predecessor. They were followed by a younger generation of artists like Peter Weibel and Valie Export.

Stimuli of Minimalism and Concept

In the U.S., the process of transforming the art of sculpture into an arena where artists reacted to the ruling abstract expressionism by creating minimalist objects began in the 1950s. Here the distinction between sculpture and architecture dissolved, which brought a final crisis to the concept of medium. In 1959, Carl Andre built pyramidal structures out of wood elements. Later



A type of a strong cult place, Domica Cave, Slovakia, *Mother's Womb Earth*, Bükk culture, Neolithic. Photography Radoslava Schmelzová



Magdalena Jetelová, Kurt Gebauer, Jan Vlček, *Climax*, 3. 10. 2007, Prague, former Stalin monument, Letná, light performance.
Photography Radoslava Schmelzová

he combined wooden blocks, bricks or metal plates into three-dimensional forms. Sol LeWitt developed floor or wall structures that were neither architecture nor furniture. American Donald Judd in his 1965 essay "Specific Objects" presented the idea that minimalist art blurs the distinction between painting and sculpture. Simple three-dimensional objects resembled structures. They surrendered the sculptural pedestal and in a large measure created space themselves. It was a kind of minimalism in which it was possible to enter. In 1966, at the exhibition *Primary structures* in the Jewish Museum of New York, 40 British and American sculptors exhibited works in this spirit. Among them were Carl Andre, Walter de Maria, Dan Flavin, Sol LeWitt and Robert Smithson.

In the same year, Robert Morris in "Notes on Sculpture," which gave the theoretical basis of minimalism, described how a minimalist object is transformed by different time and lighting conditions and positions of the viewer in space. Robert Smithson's earthwork expanded the conceptual scope of sculpture even more. In the essay "Entropy and the New Monuments" he found that minimalism had not penetrated the field of entropy. In his works, however, time as a decay factor became the major theme, and his work expanded the essence of understanding a work of art and moved it from the galleries or surrounding architecture to the gigantic scale of open landscape. He was the first to draw attention to other aesthetic qualities of the American industrial landscape different from the European understanding of nature.

This more complex approach to this kind of architecture or landscape was taken up by Germans Bernd and Hilla Becher, who in 1957 began to systematically record European industrial architecture that was threatened by immediate extinction due to the decline of heavy industry, neglect of care, and natural deterioration. Their project was marked by a special duality: an almost obsessive pursuit of objective, factual and comprehensive

documentation, and a melancholic insight stemming from a sense of deep loss that the spatiotemporal disappearance of objects cannot be stopped. Features of their black and white photographs include functionality, series, an anonymity and typology of buildings which places their work in the context of minimalism and conceptualism. Their work opened a major topic related to the extinction of industrial buildings and sites throughout Europe. The works of Robert Smithson also inspired the creations of Gordon Matta-Clark, whose approach to architecture was radical; he created his anti-architectonic pieces on a monumental scale out of abandoned buildings destined for demolition. He hollowed spaces in them, opened them up to the light, split them open vertically and horizontally, dissolving the plane of human perception and inhabitation of architecture and made the buildings completely illegible.

Nonfigurative Spatial Composition– Installation

Beginning in the 1960s, the preconditions for the emergence of "installation" were created within the context of events, happenings and environments. The concept itself, however, appeared frequently beginning in the mid-1980s in the context of postmodernism. These early environments became part of a space and incorporated the viewer into the work of art, thus violating the usual artistic practice, and yet they were not entirely new. For examples of earlier works of this type, see the constructivist object *Proun* by El Lissitzky (1923), the aforementioned objects *Merz* by Kurt Schwitters (since 1920) and the exhibition strategy of Marcel Duchamp, who at the Surrealist exhibition *First Papers of Surrealism* in New York in 1942 wove a web of string throughout the exhibition rooms, between panels with installed paintings, creating a labyrinth from *Sixteen Miles of String*, which created different relationships between the images and the space and urged the audience to view the exhibits actively.



A kind of landscape composition, fragment, St. Wenceslas Baroque Chapel With Angels in Lysá nad Labem. Photography Radoslava Schmelzová



A kind of industrial complex, Vojtěšská iron works, Kladno, 2004. Photography Václav Cílek

Joseph Beuys was among the artists who began to apply the principles of installation; he had already been creating with them since the 1950s. His early installations were often the remains of happenings and performances in which he used substances such as honey, beeswax and felt, with an emphasis on processional changes. The approaches of conceptualists Joseph Kosuth, Hans Haacke and Hannah Darboven, who dematerialized objects for the benefit of their content, explored interactions between space and text. In 1970, at the Pomona Art Gallery in Claremont, Michael Asher created an installation tailored to the physical space—he put a number of new walls and partitions in the gallery, a false low ceiling, removed the doors and let the space be freely accessible for 24 hours. He transformed the gallery into a kind of giant minimalist object and at the same time into an instrument of criticism of the gallery's function as an institution; the work could hardly be sold without the gallery dissolving its essence. In exposing the logic of the work to its socio-cultural context and by its actual dematerialization, he connected his work with the objectives of conceptual art. In this case, a site-specific approach linked the work inextricably with the place and a strong concept.

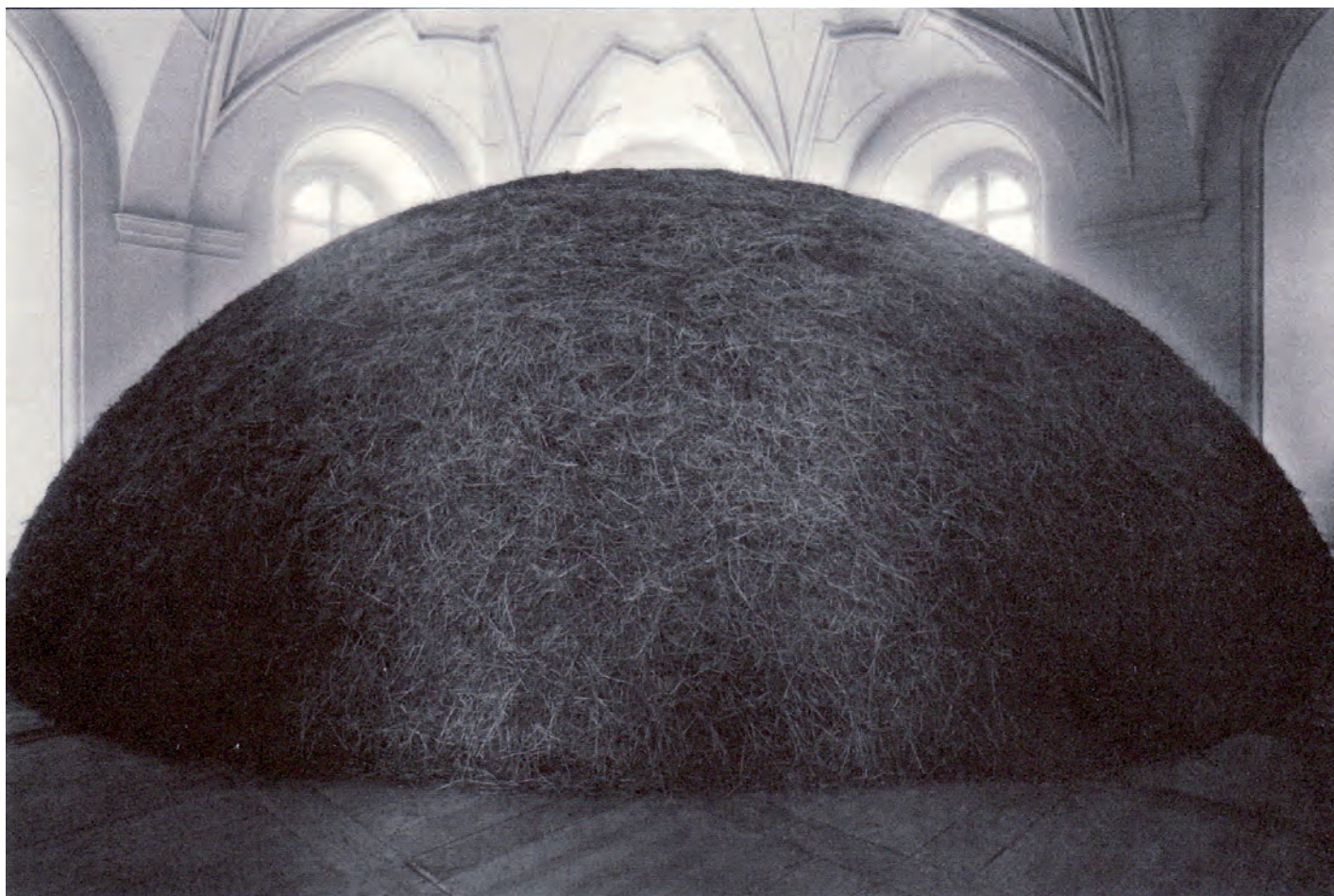
Installation, which contains the principles of sculpture, architecture, and theater, underwent rapid development in which it became an integral part of conceptual art and performance art. It also appears in the conceptual framework of land art. The term *site specific* was established for works that were fixed in one place and determined by their architectural, cultural and institutional context. At the end of the 20 century, this multimedia discipline was one of the major artistic genres and today covers diverse works that may or may not be connected with a particular place. A detailed development of the site specific discipline and its concepts are presented in the article by Denisa Václavová and Tomáš Žižka.

Landscape as a Work of Art, Work of Art as a Landscape

At the end of this transformational process in sculpture, the object had been replaced by the place, and the character of entire spaces became the focus of attention, regardless whether they were in urban areas or landscapes. In the years 1968–1969 when spatial creation was at its peak, Robert Smithson formulated the difference between a *space* (site), which was physical, material, stone, hard, and the documentary photography of space presented in the gallery *non-space* (nonsite). Artists began to create works directly in the landscape and sculptural field. This expanded radically into free spaces in often remote and inaccessible areas, which allowed working on monumental scales where time as a factor could not be ruled out. Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* in the Great Salt Lake was subsequently flooded with water. *Roden Crater* by James Turrell was situated in an extinct volcano. Richard Long and Andy Goldsworthy further strengthened the role of time, creating entirely ephemeral works from natural materials in the landscape—this time they were not massive interventions in the field, but subtle works intended to gradually decay under natural conditions in time, which could be captured only through photographic documentation. How could one petrify a melting snowball with twigs or a construction made of pieces of stone on the sea shore, which the tide gradually disassembles?

A Return to Place

All these works have expanded the definition of sculpture. 19th century memorials marked the actual places, like monuments of battles and graves, or they showed significance, like the equestrian statues, figures of rulers, and saints. Sculptures stood on pedestals that linked the work with the place or architecture, a three-dimensional object was physically tied to cultural conditions. Modernist sculpture of the 20th century became independent of



Hermit Plasy, Ivan Kafka, *Říp From the Western Side*, installation, 1994, Convent of the Cistercian Monastery in Plasy. Photography Ivan Kafka archive

its environment, place, architecture. It was a three-dimensional object which might be exhibited anywhere, usually in a gallery or architectural space. Works created directly in the landscape, such as the *Spiral Jetty*, marked a return to being tied to place, but in the vast space of a landscape. They do so in a way that previously occurred in garden structures and in ritual spaces of ancient and archaic civilizations. Labyrinths were both landscape and architecture. New approaches to spatial creations in the 1970s, referred to as site specific, took place in the countryside or in urban buildings and structures. Their focus shifted to a far wider media – to the cultural context, and the term “extended field” came fully into use for these kinds of exploration. The term appeared in the famous essay “Sculpture in the Expanded Field” by Rosalind Krauss, published in the influential journal *October* in 1979. In Czechoslovak art, the site specific approach developed out of the context of action art, land art and conceptual art. Vladimír Boudník’s actions can be called early happenings—in the early 1950s he walked through Prague, illustrating the cracks in the walls and talking about imagination with random pedestrians. Action art spread through Czechoslovakia in the 2nd half of the 1960s. In the 1970s, it became part of the unofficial culture, and it developed in various forms throughout the 1980s and 1990s. After 1970, the violent politics of the so-called normalization period disrupted the continuity of almost all art activities. Books disappeared from state libraries and the works of undesirable artists were banished from galleries. If artists, theorists, or art critics did not demonstrate a willingness to cooperate with official cultural policy, they found themselves in seclusion, often in complete isolation; many went into exile. Exhibition halls were closed to progressive tendencies and so the need for alternatives increased dramatically. Apartments, pubs, and open landscapes became the alternative sites, and for these places, new ways of working had to be

found, such as the very first happenings in the countryside. The Malechovské Symposium near Klatov launched a series of unofficial exhibitions in the 1980s. Čestmír Suška, Adriana Šimotová, Ivan Kafka, Magdalena Jetelová and Čestmír Kafka participated. Suška’s later theater “Kolotoč” (Carousel) was born in Malechov and the same circle of artists organized events such as *Sculptures and Objects in Mala Strana Backyards* (1981) and *Symposium on Chmelnice* in Mutějovice (1983). An unofficial community was created through these collaborations with an ongoing exchange of ideas and attitudes. Among the representatives of action art who worked in public spaces or landscapes were Josef Daněk, Milan Knížák, Antonín Kopp, Jiří Kovanda, Milan Maur, Karel Miler, Jan Mlčoch, Tomáš Ruller, Zorka Ságlová, Sony Halas, Vladimír Havlík and others. The Theatre in Nerudovka (1975–1979) was the first and really the only place in Prague in the 1970s where contemporary art was regularly exhibited. The scandal which caused the end of the Nerudovka was the exhibition at the Mala Strana Courtyards in May 1981. Here, mostly spatial installations created for a specific time and place appeared, which before that had been rarely seen in Czech art. The event became a spontaneous gesture of civic solidarity, but also a natural form of communication with ordinary citizens and random visitors. In the early 1980s more of such one-off events appeared and all had a similar fate—they were banned and dismantled immediately after opening (Slavická, Pánková, 1995, 1996).



Hermit, Plasy, 1998, Alaister MacLennan, performance in Paradise Garden at the Convent of the Cistercian Monastery in Plasy. Photography Daniel Šperl

Power of place: Monastery in Plasy and The Hermit Foundation

“I know no space so special, concealed and vibrant like Plasy Monastery... It is simply an ideal psychogeographic constellation, a combination of romanticism and functionality. Its atmosphere of the prosaic, metaphysics and melancholy, is, I think, quite unique for a working residence of civilized and sensitive visitors. It is completely exceptional.”

Miloš Vojtěchovský, chief symposium curator

“The atmosphere here is truly double-sided, it really is such a mixture of good and evil. It is amazing, generous, yet is also diabolic, you can have ... weird, weird feelings.” Martin Zet, symposium participant

“The initiative was an attempt to determine how a community functioned in a remote and closed system, a unit that was autonomous. How did it work before and how it could be. The community is simply a religious or artistic one, but it is still a community. The building was damaged and abandoned. This was about giving it some new content. It was a time when this was possible. The old surveillance/guarding system had fallen apart, a new one was still not set up yet.” Miloš Vojtěchovský

With the opening of the borders in the 1990s, electronic culture, Internet and new media massively penetrated an unprepared Czech Republic. In art, it was necessary to remove the schism between discredited official culture and alternative underground. New big topics emerged—ecology, landscape, spirituality. At that time, a new form of art presentation appeared—festivals—and a broader concept of exhibiting art, as Anna Fárová wrote about in connection with the exhibition 9 x 9, which took place in 1981 at the Plasy monastery:

“With big exhibitions, context was always important for me: that various things react together, and thus speak; they connect – and they also say something and achieve something by this connection ... So that something is going on, even during pauses—where there is no picture.”

In the Czech Republic, site specific approaches were among the first to appear, for example at the international symposiums organized since 1992 by the Hermit Foundation at the Cistercian monastery in Plasy near Pilsen. A synthetic model was created here from which other activities later developed which already used well developed forms of complex site specific projects. Informal, unusually open concepts linked various forms of contemporary art with the environment of the former Cistercian monastery, which was completed in the Baroque period by Jan Blažej Santini Aichel, Jean Baptiste Mathey and Killian Ignaz Dietzenhofer. The project, as it was addressed in the text, is almost a model of interdisciplinarity, with a connection to a specific space, an initiatory character. But most of all, it contained the unusual power of inspiration and influence of space on man, which

cannot be defined in categories of scientific positivism, which is described by the now overused and devalued term *genius loci*.

If I mention it here, the term is not the same as the poetic conception of the Romantics, but it is the way a place affects our bodies, our feelings, and the way we organize our work. In artistic reflection, Barnett Newman’s term “absolute” might be mentioned, which he himself had described as something that gives a person a sense of being, a place where one is, feeling *hic et nunc*—“here and now.”

“An experience, which Newman underwent in August 1949 at the prehistoric site of Indian culture, the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks and Serpent Mound. ... A work of art that you cannot see in its entirety ... So it is something you have to experience there on the spot” (Foster et al, 2007, p 365). Generally we can perhaps say that *“... it is not a perception of time of the place, but the physical sensation of time of the place. A sudden clear insight, temporary understanding, confrontation of human destiny standing alone in front of the chaos, without support of memory, history, legend, myth”* (Ibid., 2007, p. 366).

The effect of prehistoric sites and their relation to the works of contemporary art was examined by Lucy R. Lippard in her book *Overlay: Contemporary Art and the Art of Prehistory* (Lippard, 1983). The basic source for the study of these sites is mainly archeology. But back to the

Plasy monastery, there, the effect of place is enhanced by the geometrical structure of sacred architecture. The nine years (1991–1999) of international interdisciplinary symposiums, organized in Plasy, attempted to link traditional and new media through exhibitions, festivals and residencies. Shifts in understanding of what can function as art were fully reflected in the content of the events but also in the artistic forms used—sound and surround sound installations appeared, environments, performances, people worked with found objects. The concept was based on the idea of autonomous artistic communities, the Situationists, Fluxus, conceptual art, minimalism, sound art, performance and new media, which were typical for their different models of exhibitions or places where art can once again come into contact with reality, with life. The visitors were confronted with works they could touch, meet with, and the works were often staged in surprising and disturbing ways. It was also unusual that the creations designed for the specific time and place often had a transient and immaterial character. A search for connections with tradition, an important theme of postmodernism, was present in the references to Baroque and hermeticism. The most important aspect was that the creation took place in direct dialogue with the site. The events took place in the energy field of the ingenious convent architecture of Jan Blažej Santini Aichel, the building emptied of its content, with all the attributes of the original destination dismantled—a place for spiritual life, contemplation. The decaying oversized complex, however, retained the original qualities of its concept of space, of polyphonic sound and clear light. The experience of the power of place in Plasy Monastery can be analyzed as a mytho-poetic or metaphysical discourse. The premises themselves were a silent symposium participant. At the level of metaphorical language, we can speak about meeting with the enigmatic being of the monastery, which was absolutely essential to the project.

The monastery has several time positions. The basic Early Medieval part is quiet, simple and unambiguous. The Baroque layer blends post reformation piety and attempts to build a strong ideology of power. Both layers are connected by geometric relations. Modernity is represented by the abolition of the monastery, the industrial development of the area, the advent of the Enlightenment (the stay of K. L. Metternich), but also the later expulsion of the German population, an occupation by an army, the splitting of the original complex by a road with heavy traffic, and modern decay.

While monasteries usually create a feeling of peace and spiritual contemplation, Plasy adds to this feelings of fear and threat. This is due to both the dimensions of the building, which, especially at night, became a sort of “ghost.” (In the night, historic buildings are often “stronger” than humans.) Everyone was also influenced by the extensive underground systems underneath the monastery, through which water flows, the stones which indicate limit levels, and the threat of the building’s collapse if the water level were to drop.

If we look for contradictory notions as a source of potential artistic tension, here we can juxtapose a sense of spiritual eternity with transience and decay. In the case of the Plasy monastery, these were not abstract concepts, but real everyday experience.

The participants were unanimous that the monastery at Plasy has a strong but ambivalent atmosphere. It was a space that sometimes helped and sometimes hindered. At this moment we are in the territory of phenomenology, metaphysics and psychology. The artists were interested, sometimes obsessively, in how their work was being determined by the monastery. They agreed that its architectural space, perhaps even the geology and morphology of the landscape, functioned as an amplifier. The monastery had been built on a site selected in a way that had a precise meaning. At the time that the monastery ceased to be

used for religious life, it was stripped bare, and this amplified some of its psychosomatic frequencies. Several times people who were not mentally balanced experienced their stay as a burden and had to leave. Others felt as if they had come home (Schmelzová, 2007).

Landscape, City

Site specific approaches in today's developed synthetic form again proceed from thematizing subject matter of metropolitan areas or landscapes and also from community projects which cooperate directly with an area's inhabitants. In the 1990s, a great new theme of landscape appeared in the Czech Republic. It was related to ecology, to protecting nature, and to spatial archeology. These disciplines had developed out of rescue excavations in the North Bohemian brown coal basin at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s. A whole range of archaeological findings and a map of hundreds of square kilometers of researched surface area (in which almost all traces of human activity were recorded—from prehistory right up to the Middle Ages) were the results of these excavations. It then became possible to study the systemic relationships of human activity in a particular place and create clearly defined models of spatial behavior, that were then researched further by other scientific disciplines.

And then finally something remains, something that Miloš Vojtěchovský pinned down. We suspect it is some kind of ancient tradition, Hermeticism used by Baroque, and Baroque used for contemporary art. There is something like an eternal unbroken thread here. He found it and put another bead on it. This sentence is for me a key for the understanding of "Hermit." The role of the thread and role of the threader of beads, a mixture of archaic, religious, awe ... This changes people ... this is unforgettable ... this is the imprinting. We can find it without the Threader, we know it, live in it, there is something of eternity (already found again) in it. It is important to distinguish what is just interesting,

what belongs to the scientific system, and what is on the thread.

-Václav Cílek

In the early 1990s, the concept of landscape was redefined in the Czech environmental literature by its relation to history, myth and cultural memory; this was articulated by a group of scientists influenced by the work of biologist and philosopher Zdenek Neubauer. Scientists with strict scientific world views sometimes ironically refer to the group as the Mystics of the Vineyard (Vineyard is the name of the street that is home to the Science Faculty of Charles University), who were, without irony, threatened with expulsion from the Academy of Sciences. We are thinking of Stanislav Komárek, Antonín Markoš, Jiří Sádlo, Václav Cílek and others. The bases for these ideas can be found in: Catholic education; Eastern teachings; esoteric and hermetic sciences; German naturphilosophy; American transcendentalism; in the work of the Swiss biologist Adolf Portman (1897–1982), who worked on the appearances of living beings—body surfaces of animals, their mimicry, the fantastic shapes of small animals or flowers, but also the morphology of geological formations; in the work of the French philosopher and aesthetic Roger Caillois (1913–1978); or in the visual work of zoologist Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919).

The conjunction of the conservation of nature and aesthetics of nature, or cultural anthropology, created a prolific interdisciplinary approach to the entire countryside, where the sciences are intertwined, but there is also a dialogue taking place with the humanities and the arts. Topics appear, like reading the landscape, mapping, towns, post-industrial landscapes in contrast to their original morphology, or nature and settlement. The aesthetic dimension of landscape is meaningful—it is often a cultural or aesthetic aspect that determines what is worthy of protection and vice versa. At the moment, the concept of

landscape is empty. This does not mean that the landscape has disappeared, of course, it just means that the ability of words to express content is weakening. In this context, we can cite the botanist Jiří Sádlo, who in 2005 wrote characteristically, in the surreal revue *Analogon*—with his proverbial sharpness:

“I am sick of the current hype about the landscape. The topic has become worn out and now every cobbler is dealing with it. Talking about the landscape last made sense from the years 1992 to 1995, until it was run into the ground by congresses of humanitarian engineers ... not only the concept of landscape, but also genius loci deserves hatred, ridicule, contempt, oblivion ...” (Sádlo, 2005).

A Shift in the Site Specific Form

Site-specific projects in this developed stage can be schematically described as a time based event taking place in a particular place; the aim is to revitalize and attract attention to it. These types of projects are based on the peculiarities of the particular location, the cultural history of the place, its history, topography, and it always tries to involve the local community, as well as experts from various scientific disciplines—geology, biology, archeology, ethnology, sociology, psychology, all possible anthropologies and journalism. This can take various forms: storytelling, film, photography, sculpture, installation, performance, audio-video recording. As an example from the late 1990s we can mention the Tuž Broumovsko movement and the Center Broumov which medially went beyond the regional framework of the east Bohemian town Broumov. The circle of people around Jan Piňos began to restore defunct roads and small sacred architecture in the county and to reanimate a group of nine almost defunct Broumov churches built by Christoph and Ignaz Dientzenhofer.

The work of multimedia artist Miloš Šejn and Dutch Butoh dancer Frank van den Ven must be included into

site specific approaches. They have a completely unique, more than fifteen yearlong project *Bohemiae Rosa*, whose individual open workshops have taken place in different areas of Czech landscape (Český ráj, Český kras, Plasy, Bechyně, at a hospital, and at Kuks Castle). The landscape is examined from the perspective of phenomenology, a conceptual approach in visual arts, dance and movement. Frank van den Ven was a student of Min Tanaka, and his work is based on that of this Japanese Butoh dancer. It has been more than 20 years since Tanaka's first secret show in Prague. There is a specific type of movement in the landscape growing from Tanaka's concept which has passed into the Czech environment.

Mamapapa is a civic association of artists, established in 1996. It deals with living forms of art, stage design and lighting design, and works on interdisciplinary site specific projects. Mamapapa's activities have been associated with abandoned or unused places such as the buildings of the former monasteries in Chotěšov, Mnichově Hradiště, and Plasy, a former Jesuit college and loggia in Jičín, and many industrial sites. In cooperation with the Čtyři dny (Four Days) association, they transferred the contemporary theater and dance festival *4 + 4 Days in Motion* from conventional theater buildings and halls into non-traditional spaces, such as the Sewage Plant in Prague-Bubeneč, an abandoned factory hall ČKD Karlin, the site of the former brickworks in Šárecka valley, or the Prague Zoo—where the site specific project *AniKočkaAniPes (NeitherDogNorCat)* took place. The eleventh edition of the festival took place in the former dental polyclinic at 21 Jungmannova Street. It transformed the place into a multi-layered site specific project. On another occasion, it opened the building of the former Federal Assembly in Prague to the public for two days. In 2010, it revived the building of Folk Art Production headquarters (ULUV) for site specific performances and other presentations.



Martin Zet, a workshop about resting, Monastery Bechyně, 2005, experiencing the weight of clay. Photography Radoslava Schmelzová



A type of space of industrial architecture at the former sewage treatment plant. Photography Radoslava Schmelzová

Prague-Bubenec

A project that was a turning point for the mamapapa association was a site specific project that took place in 2005 as part of the 3rd Biennial of Industrial Vestiges. Here another important topic related to landscape is worth mentioning: industrial heritage. A special threat occurred after 1989, when the decline of heavy industry and a construction boom occurred simultaneously. So many buildings were affected all at once that the original purpose of industrial buildings disappeared almost from one day to the next. Suddenly there were hundreds of defunct industrial buildings, and there was an effort to liquidate them. Production premises from the 19th century and earlier became literally “endangered species.” Furthermore, no economy could have been strong enough to save them, even if there had been interest in doing it. Therefore, it is impressive to observe the developments that have occurred in recent years since a team of experts under the leadership of Benjamin Fragner at the Research Center for Industrial Heritage at the Czech Technical University in Prague (ČVUT) began systematically popularizing industrial heritage a decade ago. Today we register an immense interest on the part of the general public, architects, and developers in the industrial buildings. Also, large industrial cities such as Ostrava, Liberec and Kladno are beginning to perceive these premises positively. What previously seemed to be a difficult problem is now seen as an opportunity. The idea behind these remarkable results has been the need for intensive interaction between the private and public spheres. The biennial represents a continuous cycle of exhibitions, performances, concerts and conferences about the potential significance and possible pitfalls surrounding new usages of these former industrial operations which persist as monuments despite the destruction of their entire industries. It was a series of autonomous events organized by public institutions and non-profit organizations, scientists, artists and enthusiasts

from local communities reflecting upon the conservation of industrial heritage, sustainable development of settlements and landscape, new roles and uses of industrial structures, and the role of public and private institutions in this process. Former industrial areas throughout Europe are doing the same. The purpose of the accompanying site specific action *Kladno +- Zaporno, Industrial safari* was to discover the city of Kladno as a cultural phenomenon and to enable related social, ecological, and cultural revitalization. After the decline of heavy industry and the ill-fated privatization of the Kladno steelworks, thousands of qualified people lost their jobs. However, the ruins of the old steelworks Koněv remained in the center of the city. The original name Vojtěžská Works dates from 1855 – named for its founder Vojtěch Lanna (Schmelzová, 2005).

The team opened the facility to the public for one week, offering visitors a night ride by bus or by train on the metallurgical route through the neglected and dangerous area, among old objects which were lit and resounding. Preparations for the project lasted one year and included mapping, archival research, meetings with local authorities, interviews with residents, the involvement of local art associations, and also inviting both Czech and foreign sound, light, and installation artists to collaborate on the project.

The opening of the premises to the public met with enthusiastic interest from citizens but at the same time it was a big emotional strain on many. One of the audience members wondered after the ride: “*They turned it into a complete graveyard.*” The lime kilns of Vojtěžská Works, glowing with red light for the last time, became a symbol of how Kladno’s industrial heritage was transformed in terms of the perception of its value. Thanks to the success of the project, a fragment of the old lime kiln was pronounced a cultural monument. Kladno’s cultural newspaper renamed itself after the project and continues to

develop the topic of cultural memories and industrial heritage in collaboration with the nearby open-air museum of the underground Mayrau Mine. The question of what to do with the premises of the former smelter, fragmented and adrift in partial interests with dozens of owners, remained unsolved. Even though the town could create an architecturally extremely valuable and attractive urban district out of this site, this potential remains untapped. *Kladno+-Záporno* became in its own way almost a model example of today's synthetic form of site specific projects, which can moderate dialogue between the audience and the place remarkably well and mediate art outside of the institutional context. It is an effective strategy for drawing attention to complicated situations in the transformation of public space, its dangerous dissolution into either private property or premises covertly controlled by political power. It is able to uncover displaced problems of the community and help initiate protection of abandoned, dilapidated architectural or industrial buildings. It could be used by conservationist institutions as a method for finding support for the protection of endangered monuments and searching for a new purpose for them. A successful site specific work functioning in public space will always command attention; it cannot be overlooked, let alone ignored.

Currently, site specific form is often removed from its original artistic roots. It is developing differently, mostly individually (Jiří Příhoda, Dominik Lang, Rafani...) but it still keeps open the potential of working across artistic disciplines, even though hybrid forms are not actually at home anywhere or ... are always elsewhere! Art history shows conclusively that artists always return to intermediality and synthetic works, because the dangerous "shifting sands" of the borderline areas where artistic and scientific fields come together and combine are attractive to creative people able to break the old-fashioned schemes of creating and thinking, and to push the limits of art. What and

when something can function as art was and is always determined by artists, and theory reflects that with a certain delay.

Finally, it should be noted that site specific projects are still a living and open form of artistic creation with one big advantage: they have contact with the physical space, its inhabitants, beings, and nature. Recently, a friend sent me an e-mail (time for real conversation is rare) quoting Carl Gustav Jung from 1959:

"At the present time, we are in danger that our whole reality will be replaced by words. This leads to a terrible lack of instinctual awareness of the present, in particular for urban man. There is a lack of contact with full-grown, living, breathing nature. People today only know what is a rabbit or cow from illustrated magazines, lexicons or from the screen and think that they really know it, and then they wonder why it smells in the cow barn, because that was not in the lexicon" (Jung, 1959).

Today, we not only face an inflation of words, but also of images! Site-specific in this sense is "safe," firmly anchored in concrete everyday experiences and of the place and the world. Experience is not transferable, it cannot be read or seen, it must be lived in space and time.



Skupina Měkkohlaví (Softhead Group), Autodafé, Zebín, 1989. Photography Miloš Šejn archive

From Metaphysics to Subversion

Site specific projects at the crossroads

Jan Dvořák

There can never be too many encounters of a living person with his or her landscape, including the artificial one, nor too many attempts to spiritualize reality in a time of mythologized virtuality. And this brings us—with an apology for simplification—to the import of a current artistic phenomenon: *site specific* projects. We find ourselves at an intersection of theater and fine arts, and in part architecture, music, and other kinds of art. And since the first, lively stage of theatrical site specific projects in our environment has passed, and we are at a crossroads, we do not have to explain, promote or adore any more—we can pause and look back.

The actual term *site specific* has been commonly used in the Czech Republic since the second half of the 1990s, specifically since 1998, when it arrived from the Netherlands and Great Britain. It comes from the meanings of *place, locality, venue, habitat or location*, with the attributes special, definite, specific, characteristic, precise, deliberate. However, we must add that the phenomenon and its diverse mutations, permutations and transformations can be traced throughout the history of theater and visual arts in the Czech lands under various other names, often in hiding, often obscurely accented in its objective existence. Throughout the whole history of art, analogous activities of space thematization (*art of place*), the genius loci, adding spiritual dimensions to specific spaces, and the appreciation of the landscape have accompanied us, often very unpretentiously, modestly, as unplanned interventions. Just remember the nature of public religious ceremonies and ceremonies situated in particular locations in the Middle Ages, the Renaissance era, and particularly the Baroque. We can mention the activities of the Jesuits and

other orders and brotherhoods, the whole spectrum of court productions, para-theatrical activities, celebrations, tributes, and festivities in castles and other stately residences and their grounds. We can follow this line all the way up to the fairly recent experiments within the historical framework of the intentions of the Bauhaus concept that architect Joan Brehms had been making beginning in 1948 at the castle gardens in front of the Rococo summerhouse Belárie in Český Krumlov, and in the courtyard of Karlštejn Castle in the 1960s, all of which are fabulous topics from our point of view, most of them still waiting to be grasped analytically, and often actually to be discovered.

After the rich prehistory of the subject, its often serious metaphysical claims, the more recent prerequisites for the development of site specific phenomenon should be mentioned. These can be found in the dynamics and the reformist will of the 20th century, in the non-materialistic efforts of artists, theaters, action artists, dancers and other artists, especially the post-war developments. Two especially relevant activities were the creation of happenings beginning at the turn of the 1950s and 60s, and the legendary sixties' so-called "second theater reform," in which the theater programmatically slipped out of the shell of traditional theater spaces and moved towards cafés, galleries, garages, basements, sacred spaces, prisons, to industrial architecture, to the streets and to nature, thus establishing a direct precursor to site specific projects called *performance*.

We could even consider site specific projects a unique and special type of performance, generally an action which in most cases cannot be repeated, which creates and develops

a situation on the basis of strong *intention*, a concept which is presented and implemented by a singular creator, an active artist of a new type—not an interpreter, but an artist-mover, known as a performer. This site specific project model is a sort of higher, or perhaps even the highest level of the functional theatrical art form called performance.

Typical and important for performance is its joining of intention, scenic work, and the artist's body (possibly including the use of new media and technologies) and the fact that the work happens *here and now*, which excludes marketable reproduction, consumption or musealization. In the case of the site-specific concept, an additional value is created: a targeted dialogue with space (usually originally a non-theatrical one) and the environment, so it is a “performance,” non-transferable and non-mobile, a document of the place.

Site specific performance is also a dialogue with a broader and more abstract framework of social and other contextual correspondences. We are standing face to face with a new value and individuality: a dialogue with an *instance*, a place, space and environment. An important part of this *instance*, which is also worthy of our attention, is its organizational base, the entity of the organizer and animator, the one who initiates the project, plans and develops it, the authority with qualifications, competencies and responsibilities, which may be the type of personality like Tomáš Žižka, the founder of the whole distinctive school, a study program within the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater in Prague, or a group initiative (e.g., civic associations like Four Days, mamapapa, Johan Center in Pilsen, etc.).

An ideal site specific project is thus conceived with the knowledge about its frameworks and the broader context – conscious of a dynamic structure of interactions, i.e., the *constellation*. Interaction is not only with the place, but also with the society and its parameters. Such projects

usually reflect the atmosphere of the time extremely sensitively; they may anticipate tendencies and trends, taking into account social, political, philosophical, psychological, aesthetic, and other signs of the times, as well as the challenges. They are an “interactive reality,” a constitutive aspect of social life.

We can return from these general statements to our modern history where, together with the birth of the performance, the 1970s, with their artistic exploration and adventure also gave rise to *conceptual art*, *land art*, *body art*, and all the environmental art tendencies in general; this created the conditions for site specific projects. The impracticality, folly and often even extravagance of these tendencies, later – beginning in the 1980s—became appealing to the economic and social interests of a more advanced post-industrial society in search of new content, considering the rapidly increasing number of industrial architecture objects in Europe, and the interest in reducing the number of environmentally burdensome facilities. Curiously, enlightened and internationally experienced developers and real estate brokers like Serge Borenstein (Real Estate Karlin) also played a role here. In our context, they did not first address their affluent clientele to inhabit their purchased locales, but rather they first addressed artists to create *an image*, a reputation, and positive media interest in often unappealing locations. According to these developers' belief, artists always attract wealthy people and snobs who ultimately are the only ones who remain in the area. And the artists move on...

The Czech situation is specific in that the industrial architecture is joined by an exceptionally rich architectural heritage, devastated particularly by the recent totalitarian past. (Let us recall realized projects in the Cistercian monastery Plasy, in the Capucine monastery in Mnichovo Hradiště, in the miraculous Dientzenhofer Broumov churches, and within the urban area of Jičín.)

Artists creating site specific projects thus have at their disposal not only boundless nature, but also an extensive arsenal of unused monuments and buildings, often with fascinating and surprising dimensions and potentials (such as a sewage treatment plant), which are very tempting to revive, to reincarnate by theatrical or artistic-theatrical means, and at the highest possible level—in communication with the space, its values, using its specifics and authenticity. The space and shadow of its former meaning and function itself become the topics of a work of art, it offers its own story, the story of a specific genius loci, it becomes its own medium and a new art entity. Over the past decade in the Czech Republic, we have monitored a pronounced boom of theater-art activities anchored in authentic and specific spaces which have been called site specific projects. Quite naturally, this has only been possible within the framework of the newly acquired freedoms of religion and of artistic expression and the general pluralism of the new post-communist socio-political situation (since 1989), with the term *site specific* first becoming domesticated in professional literature at the very end of the 1990s. We should, however, also take into consideration the pre-Velvet Revolution artistic events in underground communities (often literally in squats), from which we inherited irregular conditions for creation and the absence of any permanent platform, a non-institutionalism, a constant and never ending “starting over,” and a certain hiddenness, anonymity and marginality. Each term for a certain existing concept has its own development curve which may be affected by fashion, profanation, and other aspects. And in that way a term arises and may disappear, or may be transformed into another, a new term. A topic may be redefined. It can be assumed that similar artistic activities will continue to develop in the near or distant future, but under yet another name. We are starting to see the subject in perspective, as it happened on October 10, 2008, at the international theater and

architecture symposium *Art in Experimental, Industrial and Non-traditional Spaces*, dedicated to the 10 years of site specific projects in the Czech Republic, held within the context of the 4+4 Days in Motion Festival. Peter Bergmann said on that occasion (loosely paraphrased): “*Site specific begins where I organically come together with a space which was not originally intended for artistic creation. I let it address me and after that a work of art is created.*” So we are also talking about the closing of a certain stage associated with site specific, as Tomáš Žižka also announced with some skepticism at the same symposium. But even if this stage labeled site specific were closing, for me personally, and perhaps especially for the entire development of our theater, the topic of theater projects such as site specific have yet another value. They serve as testimonies and statements within our current thinking about the theater, as necessary discourse on our way towards a new paradigm of theater, emphasizing the theater as a whole, in its entirety. Because site specific projects emphasize, as was often pointed out by Tomáš Žižka, the “*hidden part of creative processes and their equivalence with the result presented,*” for the “*invisible, unaccented part of artistic work.*” Theater can now take place anywhere. The theater, towards which we had previously generally looked “up”—to the stage, to “heaven”—and by contrast, in the rampant profligacy of post-industrial society and decadence of the end of the 20th century increasingly down, into “hell,” into the underground, the basements, gutters and sewers. The theater is now everywhere and the site specific movement has a significant share in interventions in all directions and positions. It is valued also for its non-stage and non-spectacular nature, which strengthens our efforts to overcome and transcend *workcentrism* and *scenecentrism*, to offer an alternative to a self-flagellating exploration of a mere stage and the “work” on it, and to the infinite work-centered interpretations without context or consciousness of their frameworks and wider systems.

Knowledge about the artistic and organizational methods of site specific projects leads us to a necessary exploration of the entire territory of theater, its full scale, including border areas and overlaps. We can finally move from a partial analysis of a scene-centered view of the theater (especially the so-called *text-based theater*) to explore equally, without discrimination or prejudice, all system components, processes, methods, and agendas of the now very open system called the theater. In it, the number of phenomena which cannot be grasped by work or stage centered interpretations is increasing (e.g. performance, site specific and other environmental activities, as well as manifestations of ritualism, multiculturalism and *world theater*, educational theater, theater of gender theories–feminist theater, queer theater, etc., new circus and other manifestations of nomadism, travellism, subcultures and squats, street theater, etc.).

The surviving theatrology, according to the findings of the 19th century, overlooks the fact that the stage is only a display for theater, that the most important thing is not what we see on a monitor, that there are more substantial features for understanding theater, such as memory and processor, data files, programs, operating systems, parameters, mechanics, interfaces, peripherals, network, power, control, etc. We are thus sensibly facing an incentive to make a comprehensive and fundamental analysis of theater, theater in its entirety, including its prerequisites, conditions, rules and processes, often far beyond the traditional scenes and conventional and routine operations, with an examination of the theory and practice of projects such as site specific offering a number of original ideas in this respect. This is one of the biggest contributions of site specific projects to theater and art theory research.

Everything is becoming more dramatic considering the character of today's process of *de-theatralisation of theater* (the opposite process to the *re-theatralisation* of theater in the "first theater reform" in the early 20th century). Its

once "solid" basic model and its theater canon are visibly crumbling away. Also, because of a cynicism of the surviving theater operations output of machined products of cultural industry, we feel with increasing urgency that the "traditional" theater is somewhat outdated and its confidence bruised. Today it is often unimportant what happens on stage, what is said or done, because, in this classical conception, "everything has been already." This explains the breaking away from gilded cherubs above the boxes, from painted curtains and stucco ceilings—to anywhere: *to the performing arts* (particularly in that narrower sense of innovative stage forms, currently the most ambitious types of so called independent theater, art without script, music, dance and physical theater, etc.), u-culture (the underground, manifestations of subcultures and squats), e-culture (the electronic and digital world, virtuality, intermediality), or performativity and theatricality. This explains the heading to these borders of all kinds, and beyond those borders to *crossovers* of all kinds. And in these processes, site specific projects have played and still play an extremely important role, for their additional ethical charge, artistic purity and gravity of intent. Even at this current intersection, where an originally metaphysical ambition is gradually being abandoned, the intellectually-ethical and aesthetic dominant is in favor of social development and communication about current social issues. We are—as a result of fermenting environmental threats and economic-political processes—on the way from an "art project," towards a community expression. In a sense, in our environment, it is also a kind of return to the subversive accents of the unofficial art from the era of "socialism."

Site Specific – Looking For An-other

Denisa Václavová – Tomáš Žižka

“Diligently exercising the senses in the correct understanding of the differences between things is to lay the foundations of all wisdom, all wise eloquence and all wise acts in life.”

Jan Amos Comenius

Space



mamapapa, *Kladno+-Záporno (Positive+-Negative)*. Industrial Safari, 2005, Vojtěšská iron works, Kladno. Photography mamapapa archive

I. THE TERMINOLOGY

Site specific

The term *site specific* is used for art projects created for a specific space and time. The main subject of this art form is space (or place)–as the most important medium and tool for all creation. It is an art which is dependent on the specific location from which it derives.

A site specific project is based on a certain location and draws from all the connections and features of the site. Site specific art is thus connected with establishing a relationship to a space and the search for topics it offers. Characteristic of this type of action are its uniqueness and authenticity–it cannot be moved or reproduced. Its being unmovable is a consequence of its close links with the place. A project cannot be repeated in another location, it is always an original concept. An artistic form which arises in a certain place is specific and therefore generally non-transferable, time-limited.

The entire dramaturgy is defined by this–the events or projects are usually never repeated. The non-repeatability of this art is in the telling of a story of a particular and not just any place, the story is captured in a particular time and space. Site specific art is unique and authentic in how it stems from the identity of the place, which becomes a subject of research, a social probe or a playful challenge for its residents and the community.

The site is seen as a direct experience from which we can read the place's personal story. Then it can be told about and passed on to others through the art work. The space becomes the initial dramaturgical motive for all other considerations about artistic action. Art based on site specific methods wants to search for and create new places and spaces, on both the physical and mental level, to identify with them, point at them, to bring their stories into the social context. Such creative activity appeals to those who live in the area, thus creating the necessary

social bonds needed, for example, to revive abandoned and derelict places of public life. Site specific gives hope to places, recalls and redefines their past. It is mainly these areas that need to draw attention to themselves, and which otherwise would not be considered – these are places of diverse character and different social situations. The process of artistic design of site-specific thus tries to influence the future of these sites.

Part of this often sociological and anthropological work is also immersing into and addressing the stories of those who have been marginalized or may harbor a trauma related to the place (minority groups–prisoners, for example). Influencing public spaces or spaces of life, and creating activities leading to sharing and common experiences is the major topic of site-specific projects. The place is not a background or attractive scenography for theater and art work. It is not theater for looking at, art for exhibition, it is an effort to arouse interest, to create a common concern. Being concerned about a place, one's surroundings, a neighbor. To be interested in public and private, local and global relationships. The site specific approach involves not only architecture–which provides access to historical context–but also works with the identity of the place in time and space as it relates to people and things in the area. Site specific events search for an alternative not only for space, but also for the community of people. They work with local resources to create a new environment, to rediscover and redefine the public space, to provide a new opportunity. This means moving between public and private, providing through artistic experience a new perspective not only on art, but also on the place and its context. People living in the area do not become mere spectators of the artistic process–site-specific works with them as participants, actors, co-creators. This personal work with the spectators tries to tell them more about the place in which they live, confronts them with movement, reawakening, interest, activity. For this

communication, artists of the site specific method try to use the language of the space in which they find themselves. The artist collects information and tries to understand the symbols in order to understand the place, to get closer to it and start a dialogue with it (as well as with its inhabitants). Site specific thus enters a public place with the intention of addressing a space which is private, personal, intimate. Even minimal interventions are often very activating and stimulating. The results of such projects are clear (the rise of residences, cultural centers, civic associations and activities, the development of community projects, etc.).

Site specific art tries to understand how a person functions in a place and with a place, what this occupied and shared space means to him or her. Site specific assists a variety of fields by trying to popularize a certain idea – in sociological probes, urban planning, solutions for public spaces or in museum presentations. Its strength lies in the fact that it is not part of the establishment, and thus reaches the kind of art recipients it needs. It offers an alternative for those who do not go to the theater or exhibitions, either because the current cultural events bore them, or because the conventional approach offered in theaters and galleries is not suited to them. Site specific art comes to them—to the town square, to a means of transport, to their jobs, their street or village, to their homes. It is much more impressive and much more powerful because it attempts to open up a game in an environment which is natural and pleasant for the recipients of the artwork, and they can decide for themselves whether to be the recipients or to end the relationship abruptly.

An unconventional space can be:

A former dental clinic in Jungmannova Street, Prague, Czech Republic

(Site-specific project *World Without Decay?*, 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival 2006)

Site specific could be considered a new phenomenon of artistic collective work—it combines numerous disciplines and thus has an interdisciplinary character, and works extensively with the environment; it is an interactive medium. Although site specific is an art form on the borders of visual and performing arts and the creative scope of this kind of approach is very broad, the term is primarily used to indicate theatrical activities. However, it is a platform where various artistic and scientific disciplines intertwine (theater, visual art, performance, music, film, design, scenography, architecture, dance, choreography, light design, sociology, urban planning, anthropology, geology, philosophy, literature, etc.).

Theater and visual arts take different stimuli from each other, interact and complement each other. While theater provides its experience with the scenic and the spectacular to the art world, visual art provides more experience with the work as a process where the outcome itself is not important. Site specific may be theater performance, an installation, a film, a large event for thousands of people, and an intimate dialogue. It may also be just a photographic documentation or a written record. The definition and the concept itself are constantly evolving. There is not one single version of the interpretation of what site specific is. At the end of the 1990s, the term was redefined to mark the change in the original perception of it—from scenographic and aesthetic experiences (especially by Dutch companies) towards a concern about the place and its inhabitants.

What Has Been Said About Site Specific

“Site specific performances are conceived for, mounted within and conditioned by the particulars of found spaces, existing social situations or locations, both used and disused... They are inseparable from their sites, the only contexts within which they are intelligible.”

Mike Pearson (artistic director of Brith Gof)

“The concept of site specific in theater theory indicates a theater, theatrical way, a methodology which wants to be consciously in contact with a specific environment with all its qualities, its uniqueness, but also with its history and its conflicts. The site specific approach is based on exploring the possibilities of a particular environment (a place, a building) using artistic creation.”

Roman Černík (Johan Centre Plzeň)

“The current social situation calls for transformations of values, blending of styles, for recycling. Site specific projects can thus directly provoke society to self-reflection, to bring into play what hasn't been lost from its original strength. The story of a space, the genius loci and the people who enter into the situation.”

Tomáš Žižka (mamapapa, o.s.)

“Site specific is a project created for a certain place, considering the specifics of that space and with respect to the site itself, its history, its atmosphere and tuning. The art form is not important for what it is (whether it is a theater project, music, art or multimedia), but for the quality of work and its relationship to the location.”

Tomáš Ondrušek (Trstěnice farm)

“Site specific is intense work with a particular place of historical landscape, which should lead to finding the mutual meaningfulness of being and to the formulation of speech which is able to communicate this experience.”

Miloš Šejn (Bohemiae Rosa)

“I see the import of site specific projects mainly in their resuscitation/enlivening of a place, an adventure of discovery, uncovering layers, in connecting people with the landscape, building, finding oneself through something seemingly lifeless and vice versa. An art that can be really close to ordinary people because it changes their everyday perception of the world through what they had previously passed by, not noticing. That’s probably it–site-specific is primarily a view of life, a philosophy, and with some exaggeration, a form of therapy against stereotypes.”

Pavla Boušková (Slaughterhouse Aš)

“People of tribal communities were well aware of the importance of the place, of accurate depictions of the place as theme, and to do so they used surprisingly similar methods to those of site-specific projects. When, in every theater textbook, theater and ritual are placed in the same context, it always looks somewhat forced, but in the case of site-specific projects, the similarity is crystal clear, almost identical. In my opinion, our desire to do this kind of project stems primarily from the fact that we have lost our tribes, disbanded our packs and do not recognize our places. As members of the de-ritualized society, we are trying to fill this psychological hole. In an age of universal convertibility we are looking for uniqueness.”

Ondřej David (theater director)

What do the words *site* and *specific* mean?

The term *site specific* appears, apart from the art world, also in agriculture. It is used in conjunction with site-specific farming (locally targeted farming) which indicates a completely new trend in agricultural production also called precision agriculture. The technology is focused on the acquisition of detailed and specific information from agricultural production, where the properties and parameters of agricultural land, crops and place in general play an important role in planning and management. Irrigation and reclamation systems are also connected with this precision agriculture. The network shows countless websites dealing with this modern method of cultivating agricultural land, which covers a broad range of technologies and methods of planning. It follows that the term *site specific* refers to a situation which resolves, processes and respects the location, maps the place. Virtual or agricultural, it always takes into account all aspects of production and distribution, divides space into networks in which it locates, handles, and analyses specific points.

The English word *site* means place, location, localization, position, land, site, area, venue, building surface, plot, space, production hall, a location in the public computer network, being located or the ability “to be placed.”

Specific means specific, definite, characteristic, special, custom, typical or well-defined. In this article, we use the term *site specific* without a hyphen between words, since this version is widespread in the texts on art and theater. It may, however, be written with different variations.

There several permutations of the term *site specific*:

site-specific (with a hyphen, appears as a term in the construction and processing of computer networks)

site specific (both with the hyphen and without is used in connection with agriculture planning)

In the art world, we see different variations of the word:

site specific theater

site specific art

site specific projects / works / artworks / performance / installations / sculpture, etc.

site-specificity (used primarily within art disciplines) and others.

How to translate the term *site specific* and related concepts into the Czech language?

It is very difficult to translate *site specific* into Czech, and thus the English term was accepted in the early 1990s.

There is no exact translation into Czech nor is there a Czech equivalent. There are, however, several loose translations of this expression. Besides the aforementioned *art project for a specific space*, there is also Miloš Vojtěchovský's expression *a method of dramatization of place*. These creative processes are also called *open theater*.

Tomas Ruller named such projects the *situ-actions*, Ctibor Turba uses terms *theater of public space* and *location theater*, Jerzy Grotowski called it *conquering space*.

Other terms which seek to express the sense of artistic work and which appear in the Czech professional journals are:

theater in an authentic environment

theater of empty space – see Peter Brook's *The Empty Space* (Brook, 1988)

invisible theater – mostly used for activities in public spaces which try to activate the surroundings by small interventions into everyday existence.

art of place

art of location

art in non-traditional spaces

art in public space

interventions in public space

urban theater

art of specific space

an event at a particular place

community art

nomadic theater

artistic guiding – used by Tomáš Žižka in the project *Kladno +- Záporno* (Kladno: the Positives +- and Negatives)

colonization of the premises – used by Milos Vojtěchovský on the topic of industrial buildings and their use for art within the project *Vestiges of the Old Sewage Works* in Bubeneč, Prague.

theater in a social-specific space – At 11:20 I'm Leaving You!

An Archa Theatre project in the refugee camp at Bela pod Bezdězem–Jezová

environmental theater – rarely used in Czech, in English environmental theater, or *environmental art*–see projects of English company Blast Theory. This term was introduced by Richard Schechner, who drew attention to the strong relationship between the theater and the environment (see his book *Environmental Theatre, projects of Performing Garage in New York in the late 1960's*).

In France, we can encounter the term *in situ* (Latin for “in position”).

In the Netherlands, the term *locatietheater* is used, which in English means *theater at a location*. Besides the term site specific, the concept of *sight-specific* appears, which can be translated as an “art project seen in a different way” (a special, unique perspective).

The term *site specific* is most commonly associated with is the word *project*. This is due to the nature of these productions which combine several artistic fields and therefore require that several artistic components be fit together and connected. In another modification, the word *location* occurs. *Site specific location* is applied to projects which are focused primarily on researching a place, which then become on the level of the artistic plan–locations to be

found, verified and studied–and the work of art is the result of this “locating the place.”

In English we find terms for similarly oriented art, such as *site-art*, *art on location*, *relocation*, *artistic intervention* and probably many others. There are also several terms which are essentially used for naming very similar approaches for artistic work with a place. Before the term site specific was coined in the 1990s, concepts already existed in the art world which need to be mentioned in the introduction. The term site specific is a loose continuation of artistic concepts like happening, land art or earth art, body art, environment and performance.

The term *environment* can also be found in the modifications *environmental theater*, *environment projects*, *environmental arts* and *environmental sculpture*, *land art* and again as *landscape projects*, and more.

In the Czech Republic, the term *action art* was used. In the Czech language, equivalent of *land art* is earth art or environmental art. Some terms are still in use, others no longer appear. (For example, the term *environmental theater* now very rarely appears in conjunction with the theater, but rather we have location theater, open air theater, space theater, virtual theater, etc.).

The accurate categorization of these terms is very problematic. Site specific balances on the border of art and theater, and thus it can contain some additional features, such as installation, live art, video art, performing art, land art, street art, squatting and others, which are in their essence methods of site specific projects. The most common words and phrases to appear in connection with site specific are undoubtedly: revitalization, revival, rediscovery, balance, recycling, second hand places, reading places, cleaning a place, the spirit of the place, and others.



Abandoned factory halls in Holešovice, Prague – Site specific exhibition Big Gruppen Hybrid Painting Session, 4 + 4 Days in Motion, 2008 . Photography 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival archive

Tomáš Žižka on site specific

Tomáš Žižka expounded on the term site specific based on his initial confusion of its constituent words—as *side* specific. He saw it as a side specific, i.e. everything that is on the edge, on the periphery: *“It seemed to be really good, so I started to concern myself with it. This resulted in my own re-interpretation and I was surprised that the word was in fact site, i.e. a place, a surface.”* Asked how he perceived the connection of side and site, he replied: *“As a combination of the unseen in space, as a tension of what is hidden behind the edge, or a hunch or intuition which can be found in a particular place. When we are well attuned, sensitive and ready to listen and sense, a lot of the mysterious, the unknown, appears to us, the tension between the beautiful and the ugly. And among all this emerges a kind of conflict which begins to be opened. It’s interesting and we can work with it. The site specific phenomenon began to take shape in the 1970s and 1980s in England, Holland and Belgium, where there was a lack of spaces, theaters and studios for numerous artists. So groups were formed, communities of people who together found empty premises, various docks, power stations, transformer stations, swimming pools, etc., and transformed them into their studios. These empty spaces offered them not only free space, but also a new narrative quality and new style. In addition to finding these places, the artists had to clean them up, so they became the real ‘blue collars’ of the theater. But during such clean ups many things can be found, one can discover reserves in oneself, one can be inspired by something, discover one’s own fears: so environment, space and circumstances are connected to a variety of psychological relationships. In addition, the activities of these groups attracted the attention of people living near the old buildings. The people often thought that the former industrial buildings were occupied by anarchists who wanted to destroy them, but then the artists began developing theater which in some cases worked spontaneously with people of the local community – mostly the poor*

or unemployed, or people with a social handicap who lived around the factory buildings” (Žižka, Macháček, 2006).

“The traditional theatrical forms, and even the newest ones, are shaking, are being questioned and exposed to violent attacks. The theater has been hit in its aesthetic structures, and the relationships between spectator and theater event have been obscured”
(Bablet, 1975).

“I would like to invite you to the opening of this year’s Clouds, which will take place on May 1st 2002 at 5 p.m. in the Central European sky. The invitation is non-transferable and it is valid for two people” (Karásek, 2002).

II. SITE SPECIFIC ROOTS AND SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

In the late 19th century ever new concepts and terminology appeared in art. The 20th century introduced a succession of big and small revolutions into art history. Some will in time disappear from history, some will become the testimony of the entire generation. The boundaries of individual artistic currents and movements overlap, so it is very difficult to define them. Let us at least mention some of these: action painting, happening, land art, body art, environmental theater, installation, performing arts, work in progress, event, performance, street art, street theater, new circus, live art... It is difficult to categorize these currents and tendencies in any way—we cannot create a system to map the terminology. Site specific has an interesting prehistory in artistic expressions of the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time, important changes were taking place in the relations between: artist–space/ place; artist–auditorium/ stage; artist–body.

The space around us—exterior space

Site specific was undoubtedly inspired by land art as the space that is exterior, and by the art of body art as the internal, inward space. The starting points which led artists away from established spaces have their origins in much older social manifestations such as rituals. They show the development of the relationship between the artist and the space, between the artist and their own body. The outer space that surrounds us became a huge challenge for land artists. They discovered a new subject for their work—the subject of public space, places in the landscape, places in the city. When artists put their finishing touches on it, it becomes their painting, sculpture, canvas. Traditional places for exhibiting art are not enough, the artist goes out into the public space. They seek a social context for their work. In the visual arts, they find it in an environment torn out

from the conventions and traditions. “Land” is land and “art” means art. Thus, the Earth and Art. The art of earth, inspiration by nature, respecting the foundational laws of nature. The most important creative material of the artist in this case is the landscape–nature. The space that surrounds us, the outside space, becomes the main actor in the artist’s intent. Land art artists often interfere with nature in a very simple way—they spread stones, sand, or earth somewhere, or create a path, ornaments or a picture out of leaves. They bring a huge snowball to a gallery and let it melt there.

Land art (also environment–surroundings, setting) is often a big art event in nature with the participation of a large number of people, but it can also be a very private, intimate work, possibly even without spectators which can be found in a landscape by accident. In some cases, it can be a protest, an environmental act, coming out of a desire to highlight the important need for developing a relationship with nature. Alois Bauer called land art the *artistic ecology* (Bauer, 2007).

In the 1960s, we also find a related term *earthworks* or *earth art* for art which uses natural materials. Artists created their works of art from natural materials such as clay, stone, sand, grass, water, clams, trees, resin, mud, pollen or wood, and used natural sounds and lights. These works could be seen primarily in the landscape, which served as the inspiration and the main subject.

The space inside us—interior space

A person’s interior space is the object of exploration for artists involved in body art. Body art artists explore their own body and inner world, test their abilities with acts which sometimes verge on self-torture. Body art can sometimes resemble the rituals and rites of ancient times. The artist’s attention is drawn to his body which becomes the subject of interest. Body Art explores the human body as an unknown place, it sees meaning in the compulsive need to open up the essential and the hidden: a body as an

artifact, as an intermediary between mind and God. It is always with us, we are closest to it and still know so little about it. It is the longest path which leads to knowledge and an understanding of it.

Body art artists discover a new space to delve into, to do research in, and to test. What can you do to/with the human body? The human body can be painted over (Y. Klein), tortured (R. Schwarzkogler), tested (M. Abramović), revealed or dirtied (T. Ruller), publicly displayed (Gilbert & George), bound (H. Nitsch), extended and improved (Stelarc), projected onto or played on (L. Anderson), and so on.

Artists close themselves into dark catacombs where they try to hold out as long as possible, they give themselves different tasks and overcome obstacles (such as not entering any building for a year, being closed in a glass cube, watching one's shadow constantly, being naked, not eating, enduring cold and hunger) because they see importance in these hardships as a way of enhancing self-knowledge. This kind of path of artistic expression is often part of the research which is used for the preparation of site specific projects—body art and land art are its distinct components. Experiences and knowledge of one's personal limits aides in further artistic expression, and these results are often presented in the form of site specific projects.

"In my picture of the world, the great outside has its place, as well as the great inside. And between those two poles stands a man, who turns now to one, now to the other" (Jung 1994). *"... how can you know what it's like to be shot in the hand, when you've never experienced it"* (Chris Burden, Noever P. ed., 1996).

Vladimir Boudník foreshadowed action art. He wanted to point out a different way of perceiving art, he wanted ordinary people to develop their imaginations and become creators as well, to live creative lives.

In human history, after every revolution, war, or fundamental change in society, humanity harbored both

depression and euphoria at the same time. So it was after World War II. We will start elucidating this issue beginning with the 1950s, when culture in the world became more free and new approaches appeared in the arts. In the Czech Republic, this time is associated with the darkness of the communist regime. Visual arts of the free world were dominated by abstract painting, action painting and Informel. Out of a Czechoslovakia, traumatized by oppression and lack of freedom not only in art, emerged the personality of Vladimir Boudník, whose absolute individuality defied all artistic practices of his time. He was a precursor to action art in this country.

Vladimir Boudník (1924–1968) had a major influence on Czech art of the 1960s, in particular on the development of happenings. Boudník's street actions were heralds of the future *action art* as we understand it today. In the streets of Prague, mainly on Mala Strana's Kampa and Vltava riverside, he found old cracked walls in which he saw different images of characters, landscapes and animals. He then showed them to passers-by, the usual pedestrians in these places, pointing to the fact that art can be found on the street, in every ordinary thing that surround us. See for yourself what you see, he appealed to the passers-by. He made illustrations on these stains, abrasions, tree barks, cracked plaster or cracks in the walls: heads of women with long hair, heads of horses, or birds and the landscape around a heart someone had drawn in chalk on the wall.

For presentation of his work he used frames and passe-partout which he mounted at a certain place or just hung somewhere. A documentary film from this period captured Boudník as he kindly and patiently tells a lady returning from shopping and a wandering bum about the spots in the wooden frame, or a group of young girls watching Boudník at work, making his paintings in the fissures.

“I drew in the streets, the people were relatively calm. What is remarkable is the imagination of children around nine to twelve years old. The actions were actually quite bland. Only on Jungmannovo Square did we grab the attention of about 100 to 120 people at once” (Ševčík, Morganová, Dušková, 2001).

Boudník was heralding the art of action, he wanted to show a different way of perceiving art, wanted the ordinary people to develop their imaginations and become creators, to live creative lives.

Boudník summarized these ideas in a manifesto which he called *Explosionalism*—the same as his art. This manifesto was to emphasize what he was doing and what he wanted people to see in art. He did not want art to serve as an artifact.

Below is a quote from the work of Vladimír Boudník, which was published in 1950, sent to newspaper editors and friends and given out randomly to people:

“Each of you will be an artist if you get rid of prejudices and inertia. Most of you create, with the help of imagination, various earthly forms from clouds, rocks or lead at Christmas. It is just the same if you look into the cracked wall, marble veins. You see faces, figures... Everything is intertwined, brought to life. Those elements reopen old experiences stored in your brain in the form of memories. You see your heart converted into two dimensions, on the surface. Just repaint or redraw what you’ve seen on paper. You capture your heart and automatically make it understandable to the general public. A single cluster of stains will suggest to people a hundred different forms and combinations. The visions depend on the mood and the life experiences of the observer. It is logical that if a person has not seen an exotic flower or part of a machine, he cannot draw neither one nor the other, and

if those things emerge from the stains they seem incomprehensible to him, although they are clear to others. You can, under the influence of inspiration, approach the stains with a purpose. Many of the images which have persuaded you of their creator’s genius were created on these principles. If you are a manual worker, do not make excuses that your hand trembles. The art of today requires life truth and not superficial, schooled, juggling elegance!” (ibid., 2001).

Although Boudník had graduated from the State School of Graphic Arts in Prague after the war, he did not try to make art his profession. He moved in an industrial sphere. (He worked at ČKD, one of the largest Czechoslovak engineering companies, in Prague.) He was fascinated by ordinary objects of everyday life, the objects which he saw every day at work—screws, rods, machinery, nuts, waste, etc. He used these items—he seared them on the canvas, superimposed papers, imprinted, extruded, engraved. His images were created by a scrummage of all these strange tools, implements, and various materials found mostly in the factory where he worked, in the trash or in the street. Boudník was already primarily concerned that each person should identify with art, that it was part of their daily lives, that an ordinary person should be approached by art. His colleagues from the factory were his regular “viewers” and listeners. He was trying to point out that art is for everyone, that it does not have to be sold or exhibited in galleries.

Thus the *action itself* came to the fore and art became not as much about the result as it was about the process of creation. In the 1950s, it was precisely these tendencies on the border between art and theater that formed new artistic genres with the nature of events/actions – the happening as the next evolutionary stage of performance. Many established notions of art were refuted. Artists entered non-traditional venues, public spaces.

Thus the *action itself* came to the fore, which was not so much about the result as it was the process of creation.

Space and place in art in the 2nd half of the 20th century

Land art, body art, happening and performance became steps in the evolution of site-specific art. These tendencies on the borders of art and theater already have the character of events. Happening merged art with theater and united artists and theater people in mutual play. Site specific unites it all—artists' interest in the outside space in which they live, in the archeology and history of the environment, in their own bodies, in activating the viewer, in the relativization of the division of space into the auditorium and the stage, uniqueness and authenticity, mixing disciplines, use of new technologies, etc.

It is precisely the requirement for a specific time and space which defines the concept of site-specific, that characterizes the art of the 1960s, and the issue of space and place became a central theme of the artistic work of that era. The concepts of space and place are addressed on several levels which intertwine and influence each other. The first question which echoes strongly, is: Does it make sense to create in a studio and exhibit at a gallery? Should artwork be presented outside or inside? This dilemma refers not only to spatial, organizational or physical restraints of gallery or studio environment, but also to a mental need to step out of the established and gradually narrowing framework of creating and exhibiting in artificial places. The

need for an authentic space for the work process itself and for the presentation of the work became a requirement. Artists realized that real spaces activate their work. A relationship that arises in confrontation with real materials and in intense contact with nature inspired and fulfilled their new visions. The emerging conflict between work in the studio and in the landscape deepened into a loss of faith in the non-authentic spaces, which were furthermore institutional in nature. For awhile, galleries were out of the game. There appeared even some projects where, within the work-concept, galleries were closed and their significance and impact on the exposed work were addressed. Being outside the gallery environment became a necessity. The authenticity of the creative space could be found only outside the artificial spaces.

The second level of the *space–place* problem, on the other hand, is connected very closely to the gallery environment. The question is: What are the possibilities of presenting art in a gallery? Artificial gallery spaces are examined, measured, redrawn, calculated, documented, filled and emptied so that their physical properties are negated in order for their structure to come forward, or they are suppressed to make altering their form possible. There is also an effort to create a specific “place” within the gallery environment that would correspond with the exhibited work, or an interest that the gallery be that place, newly discovered and altered. The fact of negating the gallery, even its complete absence, or working with its structure and organization, offer artists an opportunity to once again return to the gallery with newly acquired knowledge about the importance of spaces outside it. Related to this, and in the forefront of artists' interest, was also an exploration of the work itself, its spatiality, and especially the relationship between the work-object and a particular place. If gallery space is not explored through works of art (or the artist's body), works created outside the gallery are presented in it (either by placing the works themselves there or their documentation).

Last but not least, the artist's body is an explored space. The human body becomes a tool that outlines and activates the gallery space, or finds itself secluded in the contexts of the city and the landscape. Physical activity thus connects land art with the body art. Precisely these outer and inner spaces (land art and body art) are the main subjects of 1960s art.

An entirely new form of perceiving a work of art appears—while we simply stand in front of the picture when viewing it, viewing land art requires moving our body, sweating, overcoming obstacles, experiencing our own physicality through the air, wind, rain or the material that surrounds it in the landscape. We move our body in different directions according to the layout of the work itself, we get into positions which are unusual for our body. Dennis Oppenheim points out: “*When you compare a piece of sculpture, an object on a pedestal, to walking outdoors for ten minutes and still being on top of your work, you find an incredible difference in the degree of physicality and sensory immersion*” (Srp, 1982, p. 424).

Lived physicality enters the scene. It is confronted with a gallery space, a theater or an outer space—a landscape, nature—with something we still consider a reflection of real life. This newly found imagination denies all previous conventions. The hanging picture loses its frame, its original position (hanging on the wall) is disrupted—it can be a part of the wall, deny it, or not exist in its original form. A statue does not need the pedestal, we can take a walk on it, it becomes part of our body and/or part of a walk in the countryside. Its position is no longer in the middle of the gallery on a pedestal, it becomes part of our lived reality. This crisis of hung painting and sculpture traditionally exhibited in the gallery triggered a reassessment of some deep-rooted notions like sculpture or gallery. Art theorist Rosalind Krauss expressed her views on sculpture: “*The concept of sculpture was significantly expanded in the moment when a person,*

a decaying factory or a piece of a landscape could become a statue” (Politi, 2005).

Sub-themes of this period, which have been examined in detail, are the pursuit of reality, the concept of the everyday, and the focus on processes and relationships. Time, space and relationships that surround them gain importance. Requirements for a specific space, which is real, and a specific time (here and now) play an important role. A definition of real space is sought and artists explore what can be achieved in a real and in artificially created environments. They are looking for different spaces—physical and psychological. The call for authenticity does not apply to place alone—it also includes exploring embodiedness, and it acknowledges the resources it works with—what material were used and what the method of execution of the work uses. The authenticity that applies to lived spaces is openly declared—this is the place, here is the material, this is my body, this is me. This is not a requirement to exactly portray reality (as we know it from history). What is primary is to *reach, to get to* reality. The everyday manifests itself as a distinctive need for art to become part of life, of thoughts, of individual and small actions—the everyday is not portrayed and does not present itself for some purpose, but vice versa. The naked fact is freed from all expectations. The *work*, the act of making art, acquires a new meaning – it is either completely useless or indistinguishable from everyday work, non-art. Art thus does not have to be distinguished from a common situation, from the lived everyday. There is no explanation, no comment. Reality is simply the way it is. It acquires significance and enters context only by its minimal movement, transfer or alteration. Emphasis on the process itself becomes an important aspect of artistic creation. The actual finished work does not have to be considered the starting point any longer, but the processes and the relationships which occurred in the process become the main objective.



Diana Winklerová, *Absolute Cauliflower*, 2010, The former Center for Folk Art on Národní Avenue, Prague (Site specific project Places of Act, 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival, 2010). Photography 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival archive

III. SITE SPECIFIC AND THE BODY

The body in space, the body as a place

We perceive space primarily through the movement of our bodies and with our senses. Perception of the body through space and the perception of space through the body is an actual experience of our lives. We have at least two ways to physically find ourselves in space, how to treat it. First, we can move in it. Second, we can linger in it without movement. Both options provide—in our case, to actors and audience—a distinctive quality and allow a completely different experience in working with space and in the perception of art events. A prerequisite of movement and immobility in space is orientation. Orientation is possible because we use our senses, which tell us something about our physical and mental position and the position of our body in space. The senses of our body combine to create a sense of space. If we miss one sense or if it is challenged in some way, we have a significant problem with orientation.

They enable and offer the actors and spectators to directly experience space itself with “all their senses.” Another possibility is to identify the space by only one or some of the senses, which results in the highlighting of certain spatial properties. Let us mention the example of a project in which sight was completely excluded. During the preparations for the site specific project in the Cistercian monastery in Plasy which was led by Miloš Vojtěchovsky and Tomáš Žižka, a collective or individual expedition into the underground water channel on the premises constituted a part of getting to know the space. In total darkness, with the haptic experience of wet and slippery walls, and with parts of the 500m path so narrow that they fitted closely to the bodies, hearing, touch and smell become the main medium for understanding the interior of this baroque space. Hearing (loud, almost roaring flowing water falling into a deep pit somewhere ahead, water dripping, the echo of voices confirming one’s own position), touch (the structure of the bottom and walls of the water shaft, the underground plants and animals, a strong stream of water around bare feet),

“If I close one eye, I lose the so-called stereoscopic vision, one aspect of the perception of space disappears. For the ability to perceive this aspect I pay a tax. I cannot directly perceive the “integrity” of space. By integrity I mean the fact that the space lies all around me, not just in front of me” (Šizling, 2004).

Exactly this kind of work with the senses – with sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste—has become a significant part of site specific projects. This is primarily due to the particular environment in which these projects take place.

and smell (the malodor of unventilated spaces, rotten wood and cold water) created an image of underground life which was particularly important for this monastery. Buildings of the extensive complex stand on several hundred wooden

pillars (about 5,100 oak piles, on which oak grates are laid). Everything must be flooded with water from underground springs and the river Střela. The clean water preserves the wood. Santini's and Dientzenhofer's building would have slid to the ground a long time ago without this sophisticated circulation of water in underground channels in marshy land, as the pillars would have rotted long ago and disintegrated (the builders point this out on a chart placed at the Santini staircase).

The aim of such an excursion into the bowels of the old monastery (strenuous and demanding, it could not be undertaken by all the participants) was to better understand the origins of the explored space—its mysterious, strange, muddy underground life. Since the participants were deprived of sight for at least 45 minutes, other senses came to the fore. Hearing and touch offered the opportunity to explore the area in a completely different way than if it had been “seen.” Touch, hearing and smell have resulted in a “new inner vision” of this unique architecture. The example of the Plasy monastery site specific event, in which the human body physically experiences the space with selected senses, illustrates a way of beginning to consider a space, of approaching it, and offers a key for getting to know a specific environment. Moreover, if an actor or spectator is deprived of sight, they inevitably experience the space only internally because light and “seeing” enable the perception of space—without them, it is experienced virtually and created on the basis of our ideas. Likewise, there is always a possibility that sight deceives us precisely because it has a privileged position in judging space compared to other senses.

The example of the Plasy Monastery site specific event, in which the human body physically experiences the space with selected senses, illustrates a way of beginning to consider a space, of approaching it, and offers a key for getting to know a specific environment.



mamapapa, 3ww3, 1998, Old waste water treatment plant, Prague-Bubeneč. Photography Kamil Varga

“With sound we perceive the openness and structuring of a space ... Sound can therefore change and confuse our perception of space, its configuration, if you like, can deceive” (Šizling, 2004).

Sight is our most important sense for obtaining information about the place in which we find ourselves. It is precisely spatial site specific events such as these that can provide this dual experience, haptic and visual together, as opposed to conventionally conceived performances. The polarity of the two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality of the seen space-images is processed by artists in their performances, which are often located in a vast landscape that may include the sea, a river, rocks, beach, dunes, construction sites, a passenger terminal, etc. The viewer perceives the scene horizontally and vertically in the maximum range of his physical body—as far as he can see (for example to the stars), or as far he can turn or move. While the established places for the arts, such as theater or gallery, set out the framework for the presentation; a site-specific artist creates an atypical space, articulates himself. He sets the optic and haptic quality as spectator experience based on their movements – their activity or passivity.

Another sense which can enable us to explore space selected for an art event is the sense of hearing. Its properties are, according to Šizling, purely spatial because it is based on what we have heard that we conclude how deep, high and wide the space is: *“Through sound we perceive the openness and structuring of a space ... Sound can therefore change, confuse and mislead perception of space, or its configuration”* (Šizling, 2004). Hearing allows us to characterize the space. We hear something from afar, or very near, and we imagine the space based on what we have heard. When space can be only heard, it is unseen, and therefore

imagined. As already mentioned, this may cause us to make false assumptions about the position of objects or subjects in space. Spatial perception based on hearing was the main theme of the first site specific event in the Czech Republic (1998) called 3W-W3 *wokno-woda-witr* (*window-water-wind*) held in the Old Sewage Plant in Prague-Bubeneč. Sounds of the strong wind against the dilapidated shutters and broken window panes and ubiquitous real or apparent presence of water, the dripping, leaking and subsequent echo—all this created a permanent sound installation. Other scenes joined in dramaturgically. There were short performances that respected this continuous sound event which took place in industrial architecture reminiscent of a temple dedicated to cleaning an entire city. This confusing play and changing configuration of the space took place on a plain of ever-changing sound that manipulated the audience, turned their heads and bodies and created additional deep and unknown underground spaces which they were never allowed to enter, and about which they could only intuit (and which in reality did not actually physically exist). So here we are talking about spaces which are deduced only on the basis of sensory experience, when one of the senses is either suppressed (not seeing) or deluded (hearing something else). Hearing, specifically our auditory system, thus allows us to orient in space and effects the perception of the position of our body.

The movement of the body in space

We can distinguish between active and passive types of performers' bodily movements in space, just as we can in

the case of the audience members. We can describe this stance in yet another way – an active body can be a participating body whose aim is to explore a certain place in various ways; the passive body is static, unchanging in time and space, waiting for impulses from the mind. For exploration, aside from the senses, an active body in space has a variety of physical acts available to it for researching the space. The most common movement in which we put into practice our activity towards space are our body movements during cleaning. Cleanup is the most natural bodily manifestation in site specific art, a beginning of identifying, exploring, experiencing the space. It often becomes the topic, intention or the overall concept of the project. It is necessary to prepare the entire space for spectators before a theater or art event, but cleanup is also a mediator, a kind of transition phase in which we think about the space itself, how it affects us, what it provokes in us, and what it needs.

Cleanup of the space can have a ritualized character, if done in an intimate way, with humility and respect. (Or just the opposite case, with the help of heavy machinery, cleaning machines, etc. -as we know it from Dutch Dogtroep projects, for example.) When we clean up, we spend time on the site, feel its smells and odors; we get to know its materials as they cling to our hands and our body. We physically feel the fabric of space, its surface, walls, material—we kneel on the floor, we climb the wall, we touch it. The dirt and deposits uncover new themes, directions. The cleanup of the several thousand square meters large CKD hall in Karlin, Prague also meant a great physical effort. During cleaning the participant finds many different objects, some which will become a prop or a piece of art. For example, photographers created a series of images within project Fišlovka that were eventually “framed” in ten huge square clocks collected around the premises of CKD, where they showed shift times. Often, part of the cleanup is a kind of authentic and visible concern for the

place. Cleanup is also a kind of mental necessity—a state in which to settle, clarify and interpret things.

Working with motionless body in space as with a passive unchanging object is typical for art work which applies a Zen and Buddhist approach to space. The passivity and constancy of the body is only seeming—in fact, the same activity appears as if one was involved in intense movement. How is this possible? Zen treats space and time as entities which are happening only in our minds.

The space and the passage of time are only subjects of our mental imagery. Space-time acquires dimensions that correspond to what we are able to perceive and imagine. We imagine ourselves in an environment or space in which we do not move, but we can virtually enter into it.

A Zen garden offers a possibility to connect with the forces of a certain space, look at its qualities and energy. Movement should be in the mind, if we consider the “stopping” itself a movement.

This way of movement corresponds with the objectives of Zen gardens. The body should stop so that mind can have a glimpse of its own nature. To calm the body and mind, a complete stopping in space is necessary. The Zen garden offers a possibility to connect with the forces of a certain space, look at its qualities and energy. Movement should be in the mind, if we consider the “stopping” itself a movement. The actual care of Zen garden then requires some physical activity (careful raking of sand, etc.) in the form of something like a “cleanup”. In Zen and Buddhism, being in space and taking care of it are connected with desire to achieve enlightenment, in the Euro-American world we could speak of trying to communicate with the *genius loci* or to understand the “fabric of space,” to connect with the spirit of the place, etc.

The body in space can be bound or limited. For example, in Miloš Šejn's projects in the Plasy Cistercian Monastery, where the participants of the symposium were not allowed to leave the monastery garden for 24 hours. Or

in Taiwanese artist's Tehching Hsieh's project, he determined not to enter any building for 1 year, and thus was forced to live in the outside spaces of New York. He carefully recorded his journey and all the places associated with food and rest on his map. This deliberate and violent bondage with a place is a possible way to actually physically and mentally experience a place. The place thus materializes and becomes the artist's inner and outer body. Secondly, space can also be explored by a long-term stay in it, through different states of being, like sleeping, taking drugs, meditation or ritual ceremonies (talking to the genius loci). Laurie Anderson had a project in which she slept in different places in the city and in the countryside (public restrooms, beach, street, etc.) ascertaining whether the chosen place influenced her dreams and how it affected her sleep.

In "Dream, Imagination and Existence" Michel Foucault writes about the state in which things unseen and hidden speak to us while we are awake:

be seen as a visual, physical, tactile and thermal perception of the self. Development of such experience may be either suppressed or stimulated by the environment in which the person is" (David, 2001).

"For Aristotle, the value of the dream is related to peace of mind. In night dreaming, the soul is free from the restlessness of the body. In the silence it becomes receptive to the subtle movements of the world, to those farthest quivers" (Foucault, 1995).

Within the art of body art we could name dozens of projects that explore the given space together with the artist's body. Experiencing space and place is a physical problem. Let us recall an idea from Ondřej David's work: *"In humans, the perception of space is closely linked with the perception of self, which creates an intimate connection with their surroundings. The human experience can*

IV. SITE SPECIFIC AND THE SPECTATOR

For site specific it is important to communicate, to look for a new audience unaccustomed to classical theater, or a spectator with no experience of visiting theater at all. Great emphasis is placed on examining the conventions of *actor-observer*. Unlike conventional theater halls and buildings, where the audience sits in a chair or an armchair (and may even fall asleep); in this kind of art it is expected that the audience will actively participate in the process of performance. The concept of the stage and auditorium for site specific performances is quite different from conventional theater productions, and so are the roles of spectator and actor. There is a denial of the established roles—stage and auditorium lose their existing functions, and therefore the spectator and the actor may be interchanged, or one of them may not even exist in the traditional sense of those terms.

A site specific spectator often finds himself in the same space as the actor, they are not separated from each other. The world of play which the spectator thus enters is his own world as well, there is also a tendency towards collective play (game) which is so typical of happenings. Sometimes it is actually very difficult to tell who is watching and who are the actor/performers.

With site specific, we can talk about different types of audience. Whereas in ordinary theater productions, the viewers come on the basis of supply and demand, and their role is largely passive and physically immobile (they usually sit and watch); in site specific projects, we can distinguish the several types of art recipients. First, there is the spectator who also comes on the basis of supply and demand, but his role requires activity since he must somehow cope with the environment he enters into. Different things are demanded from this active audience member than from the spectator in a traditional theater. He is often given a task, has a role, is that of a co-creator of the project. He sometimes becomes an actor/performer

himself—he is drawn into the game and then experiences the same thing as the actor. The spectator has to deal with the cold and darkness, he must take off his shoes and change into different clothes, bake bread, answer questions, find his co-player and save him, to go through a mysterious labyrinth and not get lost, paint his body, wear a cape and put plastic bags on his hands and feet, exercise, etc.

In site specific projects, the spectator is addressed and attacked and his reactions can completely change the entire course of the show. Spectators are confronted face to face with the actors, who expand the spectator's fantasy and let him participate in the mutual play. This type of "active viewer" knows that he is a participant of the art project, his role is therefore experienced consciously. This individual work with the spectator was demonstrated in the project called *Jij, De Stad* (You, City) performed in The Hague in 1990. Everyone who filled in the registration form for the project received a personal letter containing a password, and a time and place where they would be expected. The spectator waited alone at the agreed point where he was picked up by an actor of the Tender ensemble. During a two-hour walk through the city, this duo, actor-spectator came into contact with a homeless person, a taxi driver, or a priest. The situation could be, but did not have to be pre-arranged and played. The boundaries between reality and theater disappeared. The spectator could only guess what was prepared beforehand—and therefore art—and what was "only" reality.

A similar example is the interactive presentation *Desert Rain* by the English group Blast Theory performed in the abandoned halls of Typografie in Florence street in Prague. Here the spectator became a co-player who had to be saved when he could not find the exit of the labyrinth. Using radios and interactive games, his spectator colleagues helped him find the way out, and together they achieved "winning the game." It is typical of these projects



Site specific project *Places of Act*, 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival, 2009, Former Federal Assembly Building, Prague. Photography 4 + 4 Days in Motion archive

that they try to connect spectators with one another through games or in very friendly and simple ways, for example through eating together, or having a drink together on their walk through the space. Grotowski beautifully named this relationship a “special kind of mutuality.” The second type of spectator with which site specific performance works, is the accidental viewer, the one who is not aware that he is about to become a spectator. This applies particularly to productions in public spaces where the actors and observers meet in a variety of situations. The third category is the spectator who doesn’t know that he is a spectator. The ways of working with the random viewers and the viewers who do not know that they are participants of an art event were embodied by the work of the Dutch site specific ensemble Tender. Their working motto was “Is it reality or is it Tender?” They worked in the 1990s, mainly in the city districts of Amsterdam where they also situated their performances which focused on attacking or disrupting “the everyday.” Tender began penetrating the sphere of public space—the streets, squares, crossroads, supermarkets, department stores, swimming pools etc.—as an “invisible theater” with the slogan “the everyday is our stage.” Tender never announced their performances, there was no promotion of projects or performances, no box office.

You will always be able to think that reality is not real, that it is actually Tender. A concrete example of “invisible art” (where the spectator does not know that he is spectator) was the project *Tender goes swimming*, which took place in 1983, when actors “invaded” the swimming pool. The spectators were the typical pool guests. Not even the lifeguards and staff knew that “theater” was happening. “A Tender actress pulled a fish out of the pool, another actor, an elderly gentleman was doing synchronized swimming stunts, an elderly lady in an old-fashioned swimming suit was doing incredible exercises on a towel, a beautiful girl in a bikini was jumping into the

water and men – the spectators were watching, bewitched” (Smid, 1993).

When the actors and the spectators share a common space, it has a magical influence on our perception of ordinary things. Suddenly, they are no longer onstage but in a playing area which is common to all participants. The things of everyday life suddenly become symbols, they have different meanings ascribed to them by the spectator. Peter Eversmann describes directions for this exploration:

Cie Swimming Pool took place in Lucerne on a railway station. Actors dressed as passengers (a girl with backpack—probably coming from school, a well-dressed, a handsome businessman, a lady in a bizarre outfit) chose a place under the DEPARTURES–ARRIVALS board for their playing area. Scene after scene took place (an arrival, gaze, departure, looking at a watch, searching the timetable). The actors thus worked with the theme the place offered and at first glance there was no difference between the actor and the spectator.

“Things that normally can happen, take place in a very short time and in a small space, so the density of these events exceeds the probability and one concludes that everything was very carefully staged” (Eversmann, 1991).

Karel Král describes a good example of an invisible game between audience and actors: *“Copenhagen at Christmas time is full of Santa Clauses. Costumed in this manner, performers of the Danish ensemble Solvognen (Sun Chariot) entered a store in town at this time. No one noticed them, because there were a few dozen other Santas there as well. But then they began giving out the store’s goods to people in the shop – as gifts. The shop assistants did not know what to do. Before the guard woke up to the fact, many had already left with their gifts, and those who were held back by the guards did not want to return the goods—because they got them from Santa Claus”* (Král, 2000, p. 11).

Spectators in site specific performances often do not know who is the actor and who is the audience. Likewise, a site specific spectator need not know that he is the spectator. A performance of the Swiss ensemble

The Anglo-German ensemble Gob Squad, who also participated at the 1999 Festival 4 + 4 Days in Motion in the CKD halls, worked in the same way. They prepared a performance called *15 minutes* in the London underground. A train leaves the station every 15 minutes, which means the performers had an audience for fifteen minutes. The performances were based on detailed observations of passengers waiting for the train and their behavior, from observing ways in which people read the newspaper, sit, stand, kiss, and walk about. Actors limited themselves to observing and imitating bystanders only, and a theatrical situation arose only when they were discovered. A passenger who now understood their role as spectator began searching for actors around him. Perhaps he found one and then watched someone who was actually just another passenger.

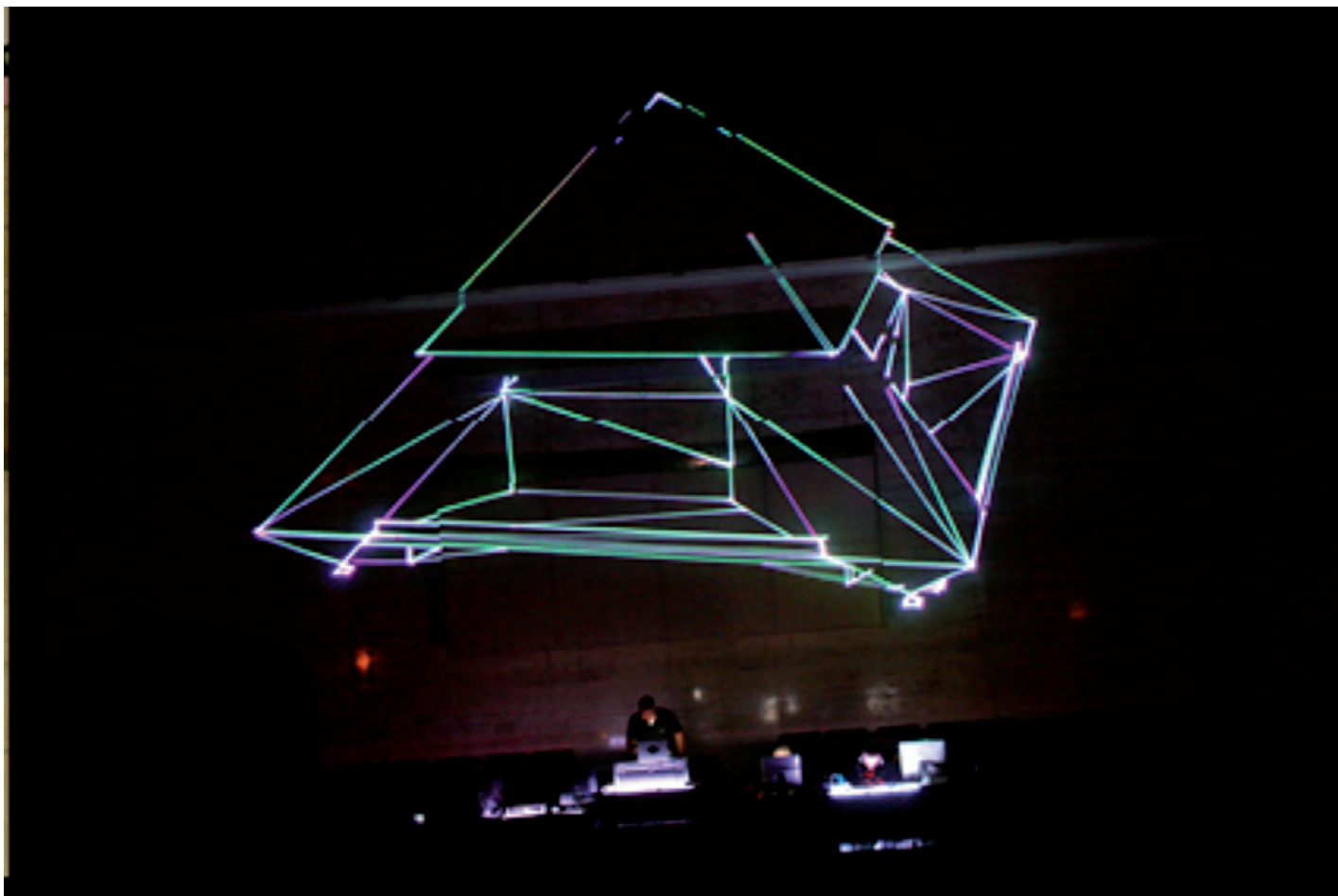
Former Federal Assembly building, Prague (site specific project *Místa činu / Places of Act*, 4 + 4 Days in Motion 2009)

Artist's Ilona Németh's project represents an intimate way of working with spectators. It was carried out at a busy intersection in Dunajská Streda in 2004. The spectators for this project were carefully chosen. A combination of diverse people guaranteed varied views on the place examined. The spectator was to go through an intersection which is very significant for Dunajská Streda – a considerable amount of social life takes place there, and many people associate a multitude of shared experiences with this place. The artist's effort was focused on creating dialogue which would arise out of personal experiences with the place. She recorded testimonies of people who had gone through the route and verbally captured their thoughts:

Ilona Németh in the catalog for the exhibition *27 m*, held at the Moravian Gallery in Brno in 2004, as part of the Project *Neviditeľná príčina / Invisible Cause*. The artist was following up on her long-term project focused on “private and public”.

This gave rise to double movement and activity—in the first stage, the viewer became an actor/participant, telling us about his intimate experience with the site. After, he was the visitor of the exhibition, passing through the same route with headphones, a witness of a private testimony, able to confront his feelings about it. The movement of the spectator was a part of the dramaturgy of the whole site specific event, it is often an important dramatic element. A spectator in a space can observe the imaginary stage and the auditorium if they are directed to do so by certain scenic elements like light, sound, scenery, or an

“I make recordings of people talking about the same place. I personally have many experiences with the selected location in Dunajská Streda, but I do not instruct these people what to talk about, how to behave or what to say. I am surprised by what they tell me, by how our understanding works, by how we can convey our experiences and thus our lives to someone else. Is it possible to speak or to relate to another and thus to become closer to them? With headphones on our ears, listening to their recordings, we will take the same route that someone else had already taken before. Interaction will thus be a matter of a game which visitors will be able to join and experience.”



Vladimír 518, David Vrbík a Ondřej Anděra, SPAM – Karel Gott Prager, 2009, Former Federal Assembly Building, Prague
(Site specific project *Places of Act*, 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival, 2009. Photography 4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival archive)

object. The place where a project takes place has a public character (a street, square, etc.) and whether the spectator was informed in advance or he is just a random spectator, he is familiar with the surroundings and can find his way through it.

Other spaces which are explored are private spaces, such as flats (apartment projects by Howard Lotker and Halka Třešňáková), where the viewer enters a purely intimate zone and looks for a way to deal with the situation. A neutral place is a space where the viewers and players find themselves in equal positions—this applies to sites that are discovered incrementally—they are on the verge of public and private environments and this offers an opportunity to address their function together.

In the *Mysterious Letňany* event, students of the fifth and eighth grades of Letňany basic schools became the creators and spectators of the event. The organizers assigned them to write an essay on *Mysterious Letňany* (the authors of the project were sociologists Magdalena Rajčanová and Rudolf Šmíd). The aim was to find out a little more about the places and buildings of this part of Prague. They received countless adventure and ghost stories that were mostly located in the abandoned settlement's subways (which were smelly and dark). The subway stories became sources of inspiration for the site-specific theater performance *Travels of Tales, Tales of Travels*, which unfolded over a long period of time in an attempt to revive dead and unused space with art projects.

Site specific art, in terms of its approach to the viewer, here follows the tendencies of the so called “second theater reform,” as it was described extensively and in detail by Kazimierz Braun in his book *The Second Theater Reform*. Braun calls the spectator a recipient, a participant, and a co-creator, and he understood the performing arts (and art in general can surely be understood in this way) as a social communication process in which the actor-originator, performance-communique, and

viewer-recipient all play their roles. The spectator is seen not merely as a recipient but also as an originator/agent, which completely changes the perspective on his function and existing role up till now. His activity or passivity is mainly given on the basis of this “originator” and “communique” (Braun, 1993).

It is clear that if we want to have an impact on the viewer's participation in the process of an artistic event it is up to us to choose the means we will use. The decision whether the viewer will become an object or a subject in a shared game gives rhythm and direction to the whole artistic project. The question naturally arises at the moment when we set the condition that the viewer must necessarily be the recipient of a work created in one place at a specific time. In the performing arts we certainly agree with this, but the position of the viewer-recipient has moved from the second theater reform into an even more complicated situation, especially since we are considering an art which is somewhere between theater and visual arts.

Although we characterize site specific as art created in a particular time and space, we do not necessarily have this requirement for the spectator as the recipient – i.e. that he, too, appears at a predetermined time and space to “receive” the work of art. The spectator, according to Braun, brings to the performance his own cultural experience and a certain mental tuning. Braun also refers to processes taking place between the originator and the recipient which are typical for the second theater reform – the integration of spectators and actors, blurring the differences between them, and the overall fusion of performance with life. In the period since these reforms and the present, the viewer can find himself in a variety of positions, precisely in this site specific art. The requirement for receiving things at the same place and time is already losing its substance—the recipient's own activity is appreciated, he can change his position based on his own



Dagmar Šubrtová, *Holy Trinity*, 2005, Kladno+-Zaporno (Positive+-Negative). Industrial safari, 2005, Vojtěšská iron works, Kladno. Photography mamapapa archive

judgment, whether he meets an originator during the art event or not—this too often depends on him. In an artistic event, a participant can co-create the work with the other participants, without being in close or even in any contact with the creator (e.g. Kateřina Šeda's project *There's Nothing There in Ponětovice*, or the interactive performance by Blast Theory, in which the spectator and the actor never met).

In an artistic event, a participant can co-create the work with the other participants, without being in close contact, or even any contact with the creator.

In an interview with the newspaper *Literární noviny*, Tomáš Žižka said: *"This is a unique opportunity to say goodbye after a hundred and fifty years to the space and the lives and relationships which left their traces here in the uncompromisingly rushing age of early capitalism, which still hasn't found a sufficiently powerful idea for its new use. A social act is, we could say with ambition, to open to public debate and to open our eyes to this topic, demonstrating our civic presence."* On the topic of spectator, Žižka adds: *"Who is the spectator? The masses, the material of an onlooker? Is it a man about whom I know nothing? In my projects I am more interested in those who somehow participate in the ceremony, the situation, the act. They are no longer spectators in a passive position who can assume that they will sit down and something will be pushed in front of them. It is rather more that there is a circumstance which is our common shape."*

In this regard I do not care about the audience, I do not care about the spectator prefabricated into a darkened anonymous passivity, I am seeking a co-creator. In many of the events which I do with mamapapa we are more focused on social challenges; they do not offer a product for aesthetic viewing. I actually do not care about the aesthetics either. Incorporated into our events, besides the fact that something is happening, is also the fact that the mental frequency of the place is being activated" (Žižka, Macháček, 2006).

The viewer can be a solitary one, who can change the whole dramaturgy, initiate or take over a role—become an originator. Similarly, the question of the reception of the work is typical for site specific—the spectator can receive work in his apartment or choose the date and time when he will “consume” the work, etc. We have mentioned the typology of the viewer (active, random, etc.) and the possibilities of working with the spectator in the space (movement and communication). Another important aspect of the topic of site specific and the spectator is site specific as a social act that takes place through the spectator–artist relationship. This creative approach to the recipients of art could be called the socialization of the viewer. Why? As mentioned above, the viewer does not come to sit in velvet seats and take in a theater piece, a certain level of activity is expected from him. Or the audience member comes because of their own interest, as the project is closely related to their person, the community they belong to, or the places they live in or are interested in. A spectator, even before they become a spectator is a resident, inhabitant, employee, etc. They do not necessarily participate in public life or take interest in the historical and social context of the place where they live, work and rest, and their knowledge of these matters is generally very marginal. The viewer in site specific projects is destined to be involved not only in the event itself, but also in the public conversation about the place and the situation in which he lives. The task of the project is actually to arouse interest, to bring about a situation that will provide space for personal involvement.

A typical example of a personal and sensitive approach to the viewer was the project *Kladno +- Zaporno* which was situated in the premises of the former smelter Vojtěšská Hut (also known as Koněv) in Kladno. The event was subtitled *Industrial Safari*. It was conceived with the participation of international performers and architects as a trip through illuminated and resounding objects of

the disappearing industrial zone. It dealt with the potential transformation of the entire premises, and thus the future of a completely devastated place, but the sources of inspiration were memories and stories of former employees of Poldi Kladno. Here, the spectator was the creator of the project. His personal view of the past and present of the place determined his concept of the event, his choice of a path through the area. The selection of the individual buildings was crucial for most of the former employees, as their most significant memories were attached to places like the canteen, cafeteria, etc. The organizers took great care in searching for the correct route for the show because some memories were very painful for some of the

contemporary witnesses. The author of the project, Tomáš Žižka, mentions the symbols and icons which must be established in order to begin communication between artists and residents. For him, the work with the audience is a social challenge, which initiates a certain climate. And so an entirely new form of presenting art takes place and it changes the position of the viewer. Just as we can think about on the one hand of a loss of place, here there is a situation of “losing the audience” happening. We refer to their direct activity–“someone somewhere looking at something.” Site specific does not want a spectator, but a co-actor capable of taking responsibility for what is happening in their own space and place.

Editorial note

This text was published in the book Václavová D., Žižka T. a col. (2009: *Site specific*. Prague Scene. The publication has sold out, so we decided to reprint it.

Site specific methodology

- 1/ Research areas
- 2/ Terminology (site, specific, place, space, environment)
- 3/ Methodology (tension, finding, naming, articulation)
- 4/ Relationship to the environment (past, present, approaches, motivations, attitudes)
- 5/ Typology of space (public, private, industrial, sacred, agrarian, natural, military, commercial, historical, virtual, etc.).
- 6/ Typology of projects (urban festivities, traditional celebrations, historical events, protests, festivals, residences, community events, etc.).
- 7/ Mapping locations
- 8/ Caring for a place (cleaning, context, climate, residence)

- 9/ Seeing the spirit of the place (genius loci, a place of holiness and power, practical experiences)
- 10/ Space in theater history (developments, conditions)
- 11/ Site specific in the context of European development
- 12/ Site specific and the audience (the role of the spectator, active, passive, activation, cooperation)
- 13/ Site specific and the body (movement, the body as space, relationships, physicality)
- 14/ Site specific and topic (searching for stories, dramaturgies, oral histories, other methods)
- 15/ Site specific and ways of working (space as a partner, artistic source, tools, inspiration, memory, background)
- 16/ Activation of the public space (public relations, community, specific approaches, initiating platforms, social acts)
- 17/ Characteristics of site specific projects
- 18/ Production (thinking about projects, mobility, documentation)

Recycling the Site Specific Concept

Tomáš Žižka

How can we characterize site specific projects? For example, based loosely on Clifford McLucas, as a kind of hybrid combining architecture or place and event, in which the place and the story intertwine and create a new shape – a place-event, an event in place.

The civic association called mamapapa has been exploring the relationship of person to place in their art projects since 1996. Mamapapa uses site specific methodologies to expose problematic situations to the public and helps to find new positions and approaches to deal with current economic and social changes. These projects have often been spontaneous actions. They were, and still are, a detector of the cultural and social climate with all its advantages and disadvantages—and from this perspective, they seem a good tool for exploring social transformations. Their value lies in their direct artistic intervention without a governmental or commercial motivation. Site specific projects in non-theatrical spaces respond immediately to the political, social and cultural climates of a place, and to the community which lives in a place. This work can inspire public dialogue about finding new uses for degraded urban or rural environments. The projects themselves can be about minority issues, or about the reanimation of neglected areas or dilapidated buildings wrongfully condemned to extinction.

How can we characterize site specific projects? For example, based loosely on Clifford McLucas, as a kind of hybrid combining architecture or place and event, in which the place and the story intertwine and create a new shape – a place-event, an event in place. The term site specific arrived in the Czech Republic (from Western Europe) in the 1990s. These types of events could, however, be found

earlier in Czechoslovakia as well. Under the socialist system in Czechoslovakia, there were alternative artistic and social events that reacted to the state of society. The cultural underground had been developing its own version of what we now call broadly term alternative culture, or in a narrower sense site specific projects, since the 1970s. In those times, the activities were not an organized search for alternative spaces for artistic creation or actions attempting to introduce new ideas. Rather, these activities were born out of the proverbial virtue of necessity, because unofficial art had no opportunity to present itself in cultural organizations nor in public places. Unapproved actions were illegal and so they took place outside the institutions, secretly, in private houses or apartments or somewhere outside the city, in the countryside. Paradoxically, these events were not very important for the artistic community itself, but the former State Security Services (StB) were extremely interested in them. Seen from today's perspective, free and independent behavior can have, the same way it did then, unpleasant political or social and cultural consequences; an inherent tension persists, and it accompanies personal and civic engagement in the present day as well. Today, of course, promoting so-called alternative art forms is much easier; they can be openly identified as initiations or activism, but here the perspective is still very much simplified, in terms of the artistic practice, theory and criticism.

After the Velvet Revolution, the alternative culture sought to create a new foundation for civil society and to broaden the cultural spectrum, because the previous regime's established and highly politicized culture was falling apart. Site specific projects spontaneously appear

where something has come to an end but the new content has not yet been found or determined – the time dimensions of these territories and spaces lies in the lingering, waiting for possibilities and active presences. These can be individual buildings, or large urban or rural sectors where the social structure of the population has changed as a result of important political decisions, such as the expulsion of the Sudeten Germans after World War II; or industry restructuring, job losses, degradation of entire social groups, and the degradation of local territories in the recent past. Most site specific projects are time limited. They are short-term events that should be able to occur spontaneously when there is a tension between the transition from one state to another. In such cases, the artistic approach often inclines towards having strong social content, which, in these cases, seems to be more important than the aesthetic plane. But even so, aesthetics, or the area of emotion and perception in art, cannot be strictly separated from its social aspects. The temporary nature of site specific art projects is also their weak point—over time they tend to be crowded out by vested interests of local governments and business plans of economically influential development groups interested in exploiting the area. Aside from delivering an impulse which can break through enduring thought patterns, it is also important to attract the interest of experts, so that progressive ideas are reflected and supported by the professional public.

Empty spaces and premises offer not only space, but also new stories and styles of creation. The activities of creative groups and individuals immediately attracts the attention of people living in the vicinity of these premises. Artists don't merely discover such places—by simple interventions, like cleaning spaces, making paths through them accessible, and through their initial artistic events—they bring the places back to life and back to the people. As a rule, care for a particular area begins with archival and field

research, during which many hidden or forgotten facts and relationships can be detected. Local people can find some reserves in their relationship to these rediscovered and newly understood places, since each environment carries cultural and historical memory.

Where to Look for Suitable Places for Site Specific Projects?

A good place to start is wherever people feel compelled to participate in public life and influence it at least at the level of local government. Site specific activities cannot be confined to predefined and localized “safe” places. They arise from a natural need of alternatively-minded citizens or members of minorities to express their views and attitudes. They draw attention to civil responsibility. Attendance is no measure of quality; although it is important to add that as far as quality goes, alternative culture and site specific manifestations can be of both good and bad quality. In any case, alternative artistic activities have much less of a problem with audience than most established cultural institutions and theaters, because contact happens immediately, even with accidental visitors in these authentic and often aesthetically unique environments.

Alternative culture has now become a part of state culture but its beginnings were anything but easy. At the time when many site specific projects aimed at the genius loci were originating, new views of culture and education were gaining ground as well. These views place emphasis on the actual processes of creation, not only on their outcomes. The mamapapa and Four Days in Motion organizations introduced the new site specific phenomenon not only into the awareness and vocabulary of theater critics and grant commissions of the Ministry of Culture, but also to the specialist academic communities as well. Their efforts were not attempts to change ingrained attitudes towards progressive trends and artistic conventions; they were about creating together a new artistic and social climate.

Creating in non-traditional environments and situations gradually became an integral and necessary part of the process of integrating Czech culture into the European environment, thanks to the fact that site specific emphasizes local character, social topics, and acceleration. By publishing a book about the subject, *Site Specific* (by Denisa Václavová and Tomáš Žižka, 2009), and through regular presentations of projects by the mamapapa association in professional forums over the past ten years, we have mapped the principles of creating site specific works for various spaces, environments and situations. These educational activities stood in for the absent reflections from the theater critics and theorists. As mentioned previously, the cultural and social opposition in the former Czechoslovakia was born in the 1970s, at the beginning of the so-called Normalization period, and it formed the basis on which new cultural activities were built after 1989. Because of a lack of understanding, local governments sometimes marginalize or criminalize progressive trends in culture, but the trends themselves gradually weaken, and as they are absorbed by mainstream commercial culture, they lose their political and social charge. This natural cycle is continually repeated and creative energy is always reborn in new forms. Our basic premise is that there is a broad nucleus of minority views and alternative approaches to thinking and life that can work effectively with the creative potency of site specific methods, thus fulfilling a basic principle of civil society. The following short retrospective, covering recent past projects, offers an opportunity to look at and analyze the methodology as it was created in practice, when various artistic approaches to place were being tested in individual projects. The projects are presented chronologically in the historical context of theater and art creation. The first of mamapapa's site specific projects was 3WW3 (1998), which took place in the Bubeneč water treatment plant. In it we spontaneously verified the conditions of

this kind of live production, and an emphasis was placed on the theme of catharsis. Ideally, a site specific project is always conceived with the knowledge of its framework and broader context, it works with the dynamic structure of interactions with a place, but also with society and its conditions. In the project *Demolition* (1999), the central theme of the project was how the economic activities of developers were leading to incompetent demolition of areas with old buildings, not only in Prague, but throughout the entire country. The starting energy for an individual or a group is personal and social responsibility. This responsibility toward the state of society is essential for creative approaches in dealing with difficult situations that are part of the public interest. By publishing a book about the subject, *Site Specific* (by Denisa Václavová and Tomáš Žižka, 2009), and through regular presentations of projects by the mamapapa association in professional forums over the past ten years, we have mapped the principles of creating site specific works for various spaces, environments and situations. The professional public is interested in the new methodologies as well. We have started organizing joint projects, lectures and workshops for schools, museums, galleries, and scientific institutions, such as the Institute of Contemporary History and the Research Center for Industrial Heritage at Czech Technical University in Prague. These lectures and workshops are based on learning from experiences gained through participation in various projects. We have worked in this way throughout the Czech Republic at more than seventy locations and contaminated (so to speak) both professional and amateur theater productions with the site specific method. The internal development of this approach is always determined by external conditions, but the attitude of participants is crucial. The conflict of personal and civic responsibilities is the initial energy bringing forth an individual or a group, and this should be seen as a signal about the state of society. Establishing

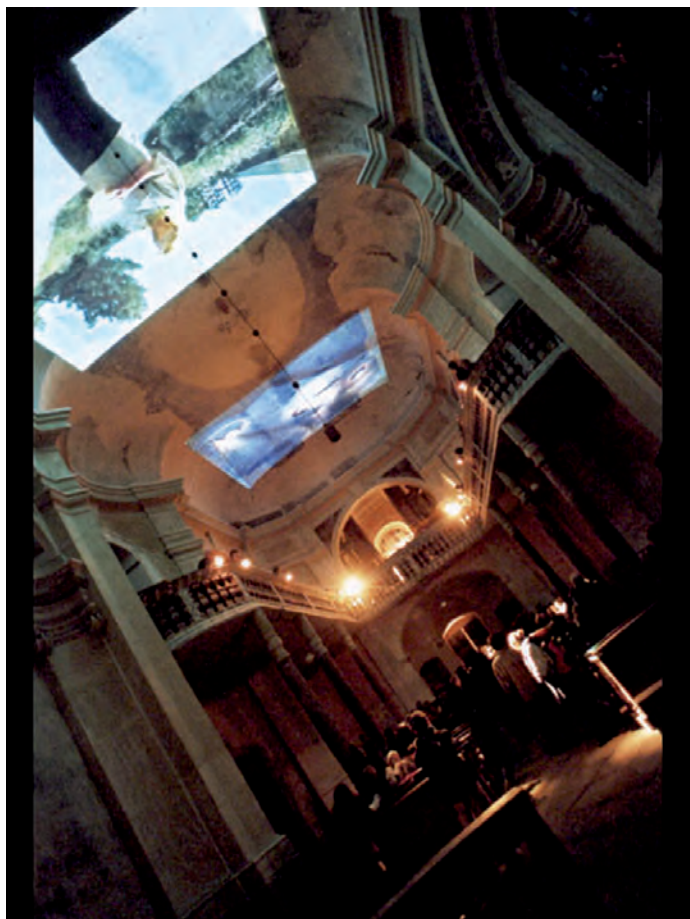
and supporting these phenomena in the early processes eliminates frustration and suppresses undesirable risky behavior and other such incidents.

At the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU) a new pilot program was created dedicated to teaching students how to create theater projects in non-traditional spaces, which is part of the OP PA–Operational Program Prague–Adaptability for retraining and new employment opportunities. Students were given the opportunity to exercise their creative approaches and to fortify their individualities in a creative process that was constant contact with a group. Theatre in this context is understood not as a place or building where it is played, but as a social act. Theater as a social act, in which sociological survey happens, for which a location is sought and found is the condition for developing this creative learning process. This interdisciplinary method applies to projects that go beyond the study of individual fields in theater–set design, acting, producing, directing or dramaturgy. Although in the history of classical theater, there have been activities which anticipated the enterprises of community urban theaters, they mostly took place outside theater buildings. Theatre buildings do not require genius loci, they are usually neutral spaces that change and will change depending on the situation that artists put into it. The theater, however, does not only belong in specially established buildings. Its history has shown this since its beginnings. Therefore, it is necessary to find space for this kind of work in education. In recent decades, many artists have sought out environments that appear to be completely non-theatrical. Most types of theatrical activities for which typologies of places are essential need authentic spaces, places that have their own separate meaning. And most importantly, these spaces must be charged with real events, stories, people and genius loci.

Leaving the protected area of traditional theater involves new artistic and civic responsibilities. We are heading

towards sacred and profane buildings, industrial or prison architecture, galleries, garages, basements, streets and into the countryside, establishing an activism that was called performance in situ (for a specific place) in the artistic discipline called action art which anticipated site specific approaches. Spontaneous change is also taking place on the academic grounds. Although teaching performance at the Academy of Performing Arts is permitted, it still seems problematic to the professional theater science and theory communities. The first sign of change is the Bachelor's program Theater in Non-Traditional Spaces offered by the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater at the Theater Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU). The program develops basic, specific, creative, acting, performance, directorial, dramaturgical and stage design approaches and skills, making possible comprehensive artistic creation in non-traditional spaces, as well as their reflection and comparison with previous activities. Students become more flexible within the scope of interdisciplinary collaboration, and will be capable of realizing their own projects not only in theaters, but also in non-traditional spaces.

Analogous activities that thematize space, understand the genius loci, the spirituality of an area and are conscious of the value of landscape have been present throughout the whole history of art. Most of the basic elements for the contemporary avantgarde theater can be found in rituals. This is the basis of site specific, participatory and community theater. In the ritual, there is no difference between actors and spectators, everyone participates. In all rituals, major issues of the community are addressed–religious initiation rituals, changes in social status, etc. In the past, religious ceremonies took place publicly in the main areas of towns and villages. These places and their existence were sanctified; their position at the sacred center of the village strengthened the community. The history of ritual in places is of great importance for the



mamapapa, *Mirror Movements*, 2001, church of St. Margaret in Šonov, site specific art workshop. Photography mamapapa archive

development of public space and for the development of participatory, community and site specific theater. Sanctifying and strengthening place and community, not a spectacular show, are the main purposes of this activity, and site specific events result from similar initiatives. Medieval liturgical plays also contained elements of sacral ritual. Ceremony without a sacred place would be impossible. Ideological manipulation and public participation in social life were strong components of the late period of medieval spectacle. Just remember the nature of public religious theater and local ceremonies – entire guilds were involved in their preparation and they were a public manifestation of their wealth and status in the city.

Living faith determined man's place in the whole. In this context it is not possible to work with the concept of individual consciousness–guilds and groups at that time performed a representative function for individuals who expressed themselves through their peer groups. Once the playing of games gained in importance and broke loose from its purely religious function they were banned–freedom of expression posed a threat to the community.

In the Baroque and Rococo periods, composed spectacles took place, theatricality permeated the landscape, celebrations were held in gardens, parks and forest game reserves. During the Renaissance and especially Baroque period, the Jesuits, but also members of other religious orders and brotherhoods, influenced court productions with their para-theatrical activities and festivities, which were held at feudal residences often situated in composed landscapes, which served as a deliberate backdrop or scenery for the activities.

Productions in non-theatrical spaces resonated strongly in the social, political and cultural ferment of the Russian Revolution. This was participatory theater–theater as a liberating element, as an instrument of public action, changing man and the world. The acts in spaces were sometimes

of an agitational form. They also sought out places connected with historical memory to hold the performances (Winter Palace, stadiums, Proletkult events, and also Red Square).

Oskar Schlemmer's activities at Bauhaus were an effort to capture the essence of the "universe" and the modalities of space and object relations (and of the human body). This work brought important discoveries in the arts, new foundations for the general methodology and theory of art science, but it depersonalized place and community, if not the actual status of the individual in it. At Bauhaus, the movement and animation register of dance developed with the use and development of processes borrowed from Meyerhold's biomechanics. This examined the function of a person in space and his interaction with it—but the uniqueness of a person and a place were not emphasized. Marcel Duchamp was an important figure in this development towards *genius loci* and the person's attitude to a place. He took everyday objects from their normal environment and put them in an artistic context in which anything could become art. His "anti-art" ready-mades, ordinary things elevated to works of art, allow anyone to be creative, or just simply to be, to observe and discover.

Being inspired by history, consciously or unconsciously, has infiltrated site specific and is one of the main procedures of this method. The emphasis on action taking place in a particular time and place (here and now), the union of an individual with the roots of his society, all of that can be articulated through site specific projects. In today's interconnected world, global responsibility and slogans like "think globally—act locally" are theses which shift site specific projects onto the plane of activism and sometimes of political acts. The social function of sharing common experience is more important than aesthetic value and, if present, can intensify the shared contents and ideas and lead to catharsis. We can mention the especially inspiring

personality and work of Antonin Artaud and some body artists as well. The Fluxus movement continued the process of demolishing the romantic myth of the artist as a solitary creator. They came up with the concept of the artist in the role of performer who carries out an act and animates a situation during a happening or a construction of an environment. Other sources that lead to site specific projects as a potential artistic expression of civil disobedience against the establishment can be seen in the wave of revolt, activism and political art in the 1970s and 1980s, when people in Western Europe protested against the consumer lifestyle and illegally occupied (squatted in) abandoned sites. In the socialist block on the other hand, underground communities enabled those associated with the hidden groups to psychologically withstand the unequal conflict of the individual versus the totalitarian system with its adoration of the masses, ideological control and suppression of individual and civil liberties. Inspiration can also be found in the anarchism of the founder of the Theatre of the Oppressed, Augusto Boal. This Brazilian visionary has significantly influenced the site specific approach although he was not aware of it. For him, the place where an "accident" occurred, a collapse or a misalignment; this was where "invisible theater" in public spaces opened up to a potential dialogue between action and the participants. This situation may be static in the absence of a live actor. The principles and goals are the same—to draw attention to certain social, political, or ecological problems and provoke public discussion about them. But today's problem is the constant ambiguity and fragility of the border between private and public space, the intertwining of private and public spheres, and the exclusion of spontaneous behavior and actions. The current topic surrounding public space is ownership, which is unclear in many cases. Site specific can play a healing role here because care and concern for a specific location regenerates it. Figuratively speaking, reanimating a place



mamapapa, *Genius loci*, 2008, Mnichovo Hradiště. Photography mamapapa archive

restores power of the community associated with that place.

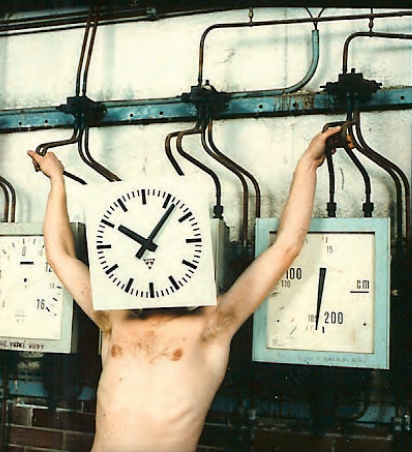
In the previous twenty years, the citizens of the Czech Republic have had to cope with radical changes in society as a whole. The political changes after 1989 entailed the restructuring of entire industries, attenuation programs, restitution and privatization processes, development of new production technologies, and efforts to develop ecological thinking and its application in practice. The positive effects of these changes had a dark side in the form of leaving thousands of industrial buildings and areas or business centers without prospects, empty, dilapidated and useless. Many historical sites also need new uses—whether these were solitary buildings or large building complexes. Currently, the Czech Republic has to deal with the global wave of economic recession and its consequences—the collapse of other businesses and rising unemployment. Society may have abandoned the until recently prevalent theme of globalization and industrialization. It has begun once again to appreciate that uniqueness works in opposition to the massified character of popular culture and empty cultural strategies. The expanded vision of reality used in site specific projects is not a superficial concept. They can happen anywhere and anyhow. They are not defined by professional territoriality, making a livelihood, or confirmation of the only possible artistic direction. More than anything else, their importance is in validating the importance of art on the social or community level. European civilization went through the controversial period of postmodernism, which some condemned, others admired and some are now trying to revive. But our age already has another new attribute—postindustrial. Art in the last few years is in many respects developing eclectically, creators are using post-production procedures, old things are freely transformed—they acquire new meanings when put in different contexts, fragments of wholes revive, regroup and overlap. For a long time now,

creation has not only been the process of creating new values, but also of discovering new or forgotten relationships, contexts, meanings, and uses. Similar principles apply in the sphere of the organization of culture and its analysis. The prerequisites for the development of site specific phenomena are not found only in the cultural opposition. In times of economic crisis and neo-normalization, the projects by fine artists, theater and action artists become a driving force that cannot be trivialized or ignored. Prague City Hall officials would like to squeeze these projects, and alternative projects in general, into their Excel tables of profitability and commerce. The contribution of living forms of alternative art lies in their ability to create the conditions for dialogue, cooperation, and confrontation in local and international settings. Globalization brings a dangerous superficiality into culture, and an intolerance to what is different. Alternative culture teaches understanding and respect for different unknown "territories." It holds to the principles of free creation, originality of thinking, and uniqueness of identity, and, related to this, it supports lifelong learning processes in science and culture, which are important categories in the field of European Union policy.

How are we to classify this controversy over what is beyond the conventions of stage work? Its central aspect is an ambiguity and lack of clarity in terminology, for example between set design and scenic design. When set design works with a place, space and environment, it creates numerous graphic traces, clear contours and specific compositions. Unlike scenic design it expresses itself in pre-described structures and shapes. Scenic design shapes the mechanics, aesthetics and consequences of a dramatic act far more vigorously, but neither term projects the integrity which is the central theme of the scenographic design profession.

Let us regard site specific as an undivided art, it represents a synthesis, a living and authentic form. One of its

options is to search for new uses for abandoned places and abandoned people, but it must also communicate with the space and environment. This is not just a question of preventing physical and mental devastation and destruction. Perhaps more important is the need to redefine the cultural and social functions of the relationship of a population to their location, their community, city or region. We are standing face to face with a new value and individuality: a dialogue with place, space, environment and the community. An important part of this constellation is its "organizational" base – the entity of organizer and animator. The architect and the theater maker should be part of the dialogue which ensues.



Art of Place

Art of place, in the broader meaning is connected with a certain region, landscape or a place, and usually works systematically, creatively and long-term, in harmony with that locality. It sometimes happens as an immediate creative input. The place here functions as an initiator, a guide, or an anchor of the work, as in the landscape creations of Václav Rabas and Antonín Slavíček, or as in Bohuslav Reynek's poetry.

A more specific and current meaning of the word, art of place, is a Czech analogy for the term site specific, which means an artistic event with elements of theatrical art in a non-traditional space, a performance or visual intervention connected with a specific place. Place, in this case, is not any more a static visual or emotional inspiration, such as in landscape painting, nor is it a philosophical or literary refuge, hermitage or home; it is rather composed of inter-action, and the term place is understood as the focal point of the environs. Historically, place is a space charged with memory.

Art of place is an event happening in active interconnection with a given natural, spiritual, social or political charge; it recognizes its character and reacts to it while bringing a topical message. Thus it acquires attributes of an art which not only reflects, but also engages.

Tomáš Žižka, Karel Makonj, Václav Cílek,
Tomáš Ruller, Radoslava Schmelzová,
Benjamin Fragner, Zuzana Urbanová

This collective manifest was created for the occasion of the introduction of a new study program at the Theatre Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts' (DAMU) Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater (KALD), called Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces – Art of Place (DTNP – UMM).

A Shared Theater

The current debate is broadly concerned with what is and what is not theater, what defies the conventions of dramatic or scenic creation, and what, on the other hand, is heading towards the areas of fine art and conceptual art. If this idea is important and worthy of our observation and application when creating, it is necessary to try to understand it and materialize it into action. I believe that for this debate, theatrical art is to be regarded not merely as a dramatic phenomenon, but also as a visual and social act.

In our time, the definition of what is or is not traditional is rapidly changing. The theater has characteristically always been a place of a synthesis of various art forms, where spectators absorb with all of their senses the experience of the story-timeline presented to them at a particular location. However, this condition is impaired by the unclear relationships between visual, dramatic and conceptual arts, and in general by the current insecure status of arts and culture in our society. Professionally, the theater is well settled in the conventional spaces assigned to it and into its molded forms and genres. Fine art is more unstable, but the conventions seek to clamp and tie it down as well in galleries, exhibitions, and art salons. Conceptual art contains action, and although it often works with the principles which we encounter in visual and spatial approaches to theater, it is primarily interested in a particular place, time, and the observer(s). For us, this can be an inspirational journey to rediscover this almost forgotten context: the very lack of clarity and ambiguity between the concepts of dramatic and visual then becomes the central motif of conceptual thinking about the theater.

Thinking conceptually may mean moving away from the art itself, but it also provokes us and inspires us towards issues with contemporary and social consequence. The very process of seeking to understand and grasp the state of art in society can reveal the essence of what is happening to a place, space, environment and people. The aim of

our work is to create compositions in a public space which refer to a certain place, follow the essential environment and time references, and which are shared with the spectators-participants. The singularity of the event in the case of theater in “non-traditional space” is one of the conditions and motivations for creating this type of theater—a stage document. The possibilities of presentation are wider through the use of a variety of media—interactive art forms – with new technologies for recording and presentation (audio, video). Tales of human history have always been linked with visualization. The visual arts have historically played a significant and irreplaceable role in communicating, recording and analyzing information. Creating visual codes is directly related to the social climate and the ability of authors to put an emphasis on clarity; this must be conscious visual communication. Visual arts can work with different kinds of information that are outside the verbal plane of language. This ability plays a unique role not only in science, technology and logic, where visibility cannot be replaced by a text, but also in culture and faith where it touches on ineffable positions of the transcendental.

Theater is not just staging a dramatic text or a visual matter—it is also a path to transcendence. It is a socio-spiritual act that affects a particular community; it creates a climate within itself, and facilitates contacts between its members, or between them and the outside world. The “classical” theater does this as well, but today with us it is now more a place of obsessive habits, conventions, cultural consumerism and prefabricated forms. Theater can and must have—and it has—other meanings and potentials as well. When it turns into a place where certain opinions escalate, it can again create community ties and relationships, seek and find solutions to complex social problems that are otherwise difficult to attain. It can also (and I think it should) be a free platform for open discussion, not only for propositions. A strong social charge

is encoded in the theater. “Theater in non-traditional environments,” or theater anywhere is actually a logical response to the theater in the theater, where pretense and as if, as if, as if... is just a playful way in which the components relate to each other and stage a scenario in the given hierarchy. The nature, methods, and means of expression in creative work are constantly changing; the boundaries of artistic styles are diffuse and are being exceeded in all directions.

Experimental theater in non-theatrical spaces has points in common with both traditional theater and with performance, art of place, and action art. Despite the existence of these hybrid styles, it is evident that the boundary between the “traditional” and “other” theatrical activity has existed for at least a hundred years. “Other theater” is connected not only to non-traditional physical spaces, it also works differently with time, and also especially with the social environment. Communication which comes out of a particular place and is meant for that place (though it may have a quality of general testimony) does have priority, but the actors also work with high symbolism and aesthetic forms. Such communications may have both political content, and also the artists’ commitment never to abandon their level of artistry.

Theater in “non-traditional” contexts invents its own rules, its own structures and discovers methodologies of the creative process, which then become distinctive strategy-concepts, theatrical and social communications for a particular place, time and set of circumstances. It is obvious that the starting points of this type of creation are observation and conceptual thinking, because they work with a place in a particular locality and its conditions – i.e. its objects, buildings, people’s stories—as with found objects (within the meaning of the term ready-made, which first appeared in the work of Marcel Duchamp). One does not simply create any sort of stage design in this context, rather one freely and often playfully moves and

changes the original framework or meaning of objects and the place, uses them in the presentation, which we perceive as theater, an event, performance, or work of art, which is often the only way towards an authentic reflection of reality. It does not manipulate, nor distort, it merely reflects reality. Sometimes, however, reality may appear in a sudden insight with such force that it can break our steady mind maps. Then, the level of lived emotions often has the depth of a transformational experience. Controversy remains as to whether this old-new vision of the theater, which we understand as a separate art form, and perceive as a source of visual and social information, will earn a place at theater schools and institutions—and whether it can be taught at a place where the classical training of the craft is protected, where searching and thinking about theater have been absorbed by professionalism.

The pilot program of Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces was initially offered to students as a research based and experimental supplemental course of study at the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (AMU). It offered a judiciously methodologically conceived space for art education that also involved input from other relevant areas of the humanities and natural sciences, and its aim was to achieve a greater artistic diversity and social sensitivity in its attendees. This means that the program, besides having technological equipment and methodology for teaching art, complements it conceptually with techniques from other social sciences and artistic fields, which help students to experiment and look for alternatives in artistic creation. Technical progress and socio-economic vacillations change the demands on the skills required of arts graduates, and this trend is indeed enhanced by the development of the third sector of the economy, which is generating new job opportunities. The focus is shifting to the ability to work with information and communication technologies, which is a new environment for art itself.

We can talk here too about the so-called sociology of art, as the teaching employs graduates-artists in the public space, using their adaptability, ability to work with specific artistic themes linked with a place regardless of whether they are located in large urban centers, regional industrial towns, or rural locations. Most of the artistic and research work is done in work teams, and so it is necessary to develop students' social skills and emotional intelligence, their sense of teamwork and an ability to communicate and resolve conflicts. This logically implies a need to focus our attention towards current social phenomena as well—issues and problems of our contemporary narrative. That means learning to consciously monitor, chart the environment, and incorporate the construction of artistic meaning into a particular social disposition—to record, document themes from specific locations and let them die out, to listen to the communities in which we are active, to collect information from local narrators (the concept of oral history) and then to dramatically incorporate these ideas into a theatrical testimony, with ethical respect for the sources, of course. It is possible for example, to deal this way with the issue of generational conflict between the pre and post-revolution generations in the Czech Republic, and also to be inspired by socially excluded or marginalized groups, and to make scenic testimonies about the issues of our post-industrial era.

We understand community learning as a method through which young people learn, develop their skills, and gain experience through active participation in areas of importance to the community. Community art transfers what has been learned in school to everyday situations, thereby increasing the ability of students to analyze, evaluate and synthesize based on solving situations in practical ways. Young people today often lack an ability to respect other generations; this would enable them to enjoy a meaningful dialogue that young people miss. They also often lack the ability to interact and relate to their peers

professionally—and in a new and more human way—as experienced, constructive and active people.

For community art, it is convenient to use a method of active listening, so-called oral history, a field research historiographic method used in the social sciences. For example, students could work this way amongst themselves, or with external narrators under a teacher's supervision. They will learn important skills like interviewing, asking questions, learning systematically, recording information carefully, searching for distinctive topics and editing them, utilizing materials obtained, and creating a theatrical concept or multimedia work using data acquired in collaboration with local people. This publication provides a description, documentation, but also reflections on several original student projects created for specific localities and communities, and in collaboration with them.

Tomáš Žižka

Head of the program for Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces – Art of Place, at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater – part of the Theater Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague.

Editorial note: The book respects the students' authorial concepts and the visual accompaniment comes mainly from photographs supplied by the authors.



mamapapa, *Dancing Villages* workshop, 2005, Goat Milk Festival, Bela Rechka, Bulgaria. Photography mamapapa archive

From the First Row / Now is the Time

28. 10. 2011

Project authors:

Jakub Štěpán, Zuzana Malá

Form/genre:

A minimalist long-term site specific performance in public spaces
focused on place, scenicity, and spectatorship

Photography:

Jakub Štěpán

to Keep Quiet and Watch



Jakub Štěpán, Zuzana Malá, *From the First Row / Now is...*, 28. 10. 2011, Ústí nad Labem. Photography artists

Project description:

We create a performance out of the “real” world by going to see it. Reality becomes a message, a statement.

We sit in old movie theater seats, a gong announces the beginning and end of the performance, in the middle we have a break for coffee... at the end, we applaud, then discuss what we saw.

We visibly bear witness to places and their stories.

Meanwhile, those who are on the stage think it is we who are on the stage.

We want to go back to the same places and watch from the same point of view, to see the great global performance develop. Changes or persistence create action. “Perhaps the project ends when I can’t sit down at the same place again ...”

We mark the position of the seats on the sidewalk. We want to map where and how this is being played.

There is a little bit of activism in it: when someone is watching you, you do things differently.

Get off the stage and come watch.

Rows of old folding movie theater seats appear at various intervals and at various locations in Prague. They are occupied by spectators who are following the events in that place as if it were all a show. Spectator/performers invite people to join them in watching the spectacle. The format of each session resembles a theatrical performance (with a precisely appointed time for intermission, applause, and quiet viewing without disruption). A documentary is made which captures the process and examines the intellectual output of the project.

Relationship of Theme and Intention:

- to experience and explore the scenic city of urban space and the relationship of the observing to the observed within it
- to give people an opportunity to pause, to get out of their rhythms, “the role(s)” and to give them an opportunity

to go “up to the next level” – as spectators of a story in which they were actors just a moment ago

- to support an (aesthetic) perception of urban space, provoke people into making up stories, to promote gawking in the city as an important social element, and to make it conscious, elevate it into a sympathetic, attentive spectatorship
- to give people silence, contemplation, to search for the essence of spectatorship
- to bring a dynamic tension between the stage and the audience to a place, “re-contextualizing” places
- to point out, without any pre-conceived solutions, problematic issues in urban spaces
- to create a committed project with an opinion, but one which is essentially positive—without sarcasm and escalated confrontations

Personal Reflection:

“I unwittingly laid the foundations of the project when I went to see the demolition of the burnt wing of the Industrial Palace. I thought that if this were a reality show, the event could not have had such an aesthetically perfect form. And it most likely would not have had such perfect form if I had not been there as a spectator ... “

“Later, one night when I was going out of school I saw eight workers kneeling on the ground in front of Disk Theater, each with a tripod and a light hanging over them. Smoke was coming out of their mouths, they were wearing uniforms and working so intently that they were not aware of the people around them. I felt that I was standing in the middle of a stage and I suddenly felt the need to get out of the way, to avoid being in the way of other spectators. At that moment I realized that I was the only spectator.”

The first session: 28. 10. 2011, Thámova St., Karlin Hall, Šípkárna, 10 degrees Celsius. The first act was from 10.45 to 11.30 am, the second from 11.45 to 12.30.

“... a man passed by on a skateboard, he stood on a board without moving at all ... Two pairs of black sweatpants on a clothesline which probably belong to the lady in the purple sweatsuit, she is probably feeding the magpies... the magpies were pecking at something on the roof, it looked like they were taking something apart... the space is cut open, exposed, easily available, in anticipation of something, with many cracks ... at the beginning, there was a Wedekindian student in a white shirt wearing a coat with long slits and a dark red cap ... he returns at the end of the first act, walking in the same direction, but without the red cap ... a man with two German shepherds, I am waiting for his central motif ... I miss the curtain, because even though I am having a break, the action continues ...”

From the First Row continues to define the responsibilities of the participants and those indifferent, the concepts of stage and auditorium, spectator and actor, observed and observer. For a correct reading of the chosen theme, it is also worth remembering the context of earlier events by Jakub Štěpán and Zuzana Malá, which focused on polemics and endangered places. From their protest entrance/artistic intervention into Branické ledárny (Braník Ice House) in a quandary because of developers' speculations, to their perfect mystification of the demolition of the national monument of the Old Sewage Treatment Plant in Prague, Bubeneč as part of the International Biennial of Vestiges of Industry in 2009.

From the First Row shifts their goals in terms of form and content, from concern for place, to identifying and determining the role of the spectators. And the keenness of the watchers makes the passersby nervous.

Benjamin Fragner



Jakub Štěpán, Zuzana Malá, *From the First Row / Now is...*, 28. 10. 2011, Ústí nad Labem. Photography artists

Cablestory

12. 2.–13. 2. 2011

Project authors:

direction–Apolena Vanišová

dramaturgy–Andrej Šoltés

Stage design: Karel Czech, Adriana Černá, Tereza Sléhová, Markéta Stará,
Mathias Straub, Veronika Svobodová, Klára Syrůčková, Jakub Štěpán

Performers: Pavel Blažek, Jan Cina, Vojtěch Fůle, Anne-Françoise Josephová,
Tilen Kožamelj, Šimon Krupa, Eliška Křenková, Soňa Páleníková, Hedvika Řezáčová,
Johana Schmidtmajerová, Filip Šebšajevič, Antonín Týmal, Ewa Zurakowska

Documentation: Tereza Dondová, Alena Drahokoupilová, Klára Jakoubková, Dominik Žižka

Technical support: Luboš Fendrych, Josef Maděra

Production: Kristýna Kamenická, Monika Urbánková, Irena Velichová

Pedagogical guidance: Tomáš Žižka, Jitka Malovaná, Miloslav Klíma, Karel Makonj, Martin Kukučka

Form/genre: principle of developed film / site specific project

Audience: local residents, tourists and spa guests

Photography:

Kateřina Dymáčková, Jiří Jurečka, Jakub Kavan,

Apolena Vanišová, Dominik Žižka



Apolena Vanišová, *Cablestory*, 2011

Cablestory

Relationship of the Theme and Intention:

The main theme of the project *Cablestory* was the history of the city of Jáchymov and its surroundings. Silver ore, and later cobalt, arsenic and radium were mined here since the beginning of the 16th century. In 1945, massive mining of uranium began—for which corrective labor camps and forced labor camps were built in the area. Today the Svornost mine is the only functional Jáchymov mine, but it is not used for the extraction of raw materials. Water that is spontaneously saturated by Jáchymov subsoil contains radon, a rare gas resulting from the decay of radium, which is pumped to the nearby thriving spa area. The city itself, however, deteriorates. Some sites act as “vents” from which the past springs into the present day; these are not only abandoned houses in Jáchymov and ruins of recently destroyed buildings scattered in the woods, but also strange, several hundred meters long rectangles of low blueberry bushes situated in the tall grass on a hill at Abetamy. It is hard to imagine that on this hill, on the spot where a new resort is being built, the Vršek–Barbora labor camp was situated. One feels it without knowing it.

The chair lift of Jáchymov – Klínovec is another complicated story. It was built in 1965, after the mining of uranium had ended, which also enabled the re-opening of Jáchymov spa to the public. At that time, the chair lift was primarily used to transport guests to the spa lookout tower on top of Klínovec. Since the 1980s, after its tensioning rope, pulley and seats were replaced, it has been mainly used to transport people during the winter season. Today, this rare funicular is fighting for survival because it cannot compete with the ski area which is located on the northern slope of the mountain.

The aim of the project was to put these two seemingly unrelated stories together, to remind and to offer an opportunity to pause and ponder.

The Character of and Use of Space:

The *Cablestory* project was prepared and presented at the location of the 1685 meters long chair lift route Jáchymov-Klínovec. The main concern of the creators was to use as many opportunities offered by the space as possible. During the preparations and actual performance, the creative team was operating in rough terrain with almost two meters of snow, and team members overcame the elevation of 428m several times a day.

The actual production began at the bottom station of Jáchymov (sometimes called Black Creek), where the spectators were met by the first performer and local chair lift operators. Here each member of the audience received a log, took their seat, and began to travel towards the top at 2.2 m/s.

In the first half of the route, which runs through a narrow forest corridor, theatrical images were placed directly under the rope so that the viewers were pulled into the airspace of the images, and thus became a part of them. From the middle of the route, where the forest opens up to the top plateau, images were distributed freely in space, usually within a few dozen meters from the funicular.

The final happening took place at the upper station, where viewers threw their logs into the fire and drank grog. It was almost dark by the time the return trip was completed.

Due to the vast area, time constraints, and demanding working conditions, it was not possible to fill the space completely. Therefore, it was essential to use the landscape and material on the slope to the fullest extent possible.

There was also a need to use adverse weather conditions in favor of the project – the physical effort which the viewer had to make to be able to watch the performance, the feeling of loneliness that was created by the thirty-two meters between the seats of the chairlift, the not very credible technical condition of the funicular, the fog, frost, and unceasing wind gusts become a truly solid foundation for the viewing experience.

Personal Reflection:

The original idea for the project *Cablestory* came to me in Boží Dar. I formulated it and wrote it down conscientiously, then laughed at it and let go of it. A year later it resurfaced, but this time it forced me to put it into practice. After a year of planning, of directorial, dramatic and production preparation, and doubt, I found myself at Klinovec with the first part of the creative team, two transit vans loaded to the roof, and a supply of long johns. Eleven days before the presentation, the project still seemed like a crazy dream from which I would soon wake up, a little confused.

During the first week, our core team waded through snowdrifts, felled trees, resurfaced the terrain, drank brandy and sewed costumes in the evenings. At the beginning of the second week, when the performers arrived, there was still no indication of the future performance on the slope. Two days prior to the premiere, on my way to the top of the mountain, as I watched from the chairlift, I realized that it was almost done.

I take my hat off to all those who chose to participate in the project and who, with an almost superhuman commitment, set out to do all that was needed to complete it. *Cablestory* is proof that an unfeasible idea which draws you nonetheless should not be dismissed out of hand. Although our “Prague audiences” were not particularly enthusiastic about this fifteen minute performance, I do not see it as a failure. People who live in the area to this day still give me enthusiastic feedback about the production, and they have convinced me that it is worthwhile working on projects of this kind in the future.

Fragments ... Klinovec ... Keilberg

Were Krušné hory (in English, Ore Mountains, literal translation: Harsh/Tough Mountains) named so because they are really tough?

Here are stories that must be recorded ...

Here are experiences that fade and disappear ...

For the here and now, it was necessary to overcome the hard times of each of us...

“The word ‘tough’ does not come from the miseries of life here, it is used more in the meaning ‘to conquer.’ This is where many misunderstandings come from, that people do not want to come here because it’s tough, but it’s not like that. We can say that life here is definitely not tough, it’s just as difficult as in other mountain ranges. The local villages are not in the valleys, hidden from the wind, they are right on the ridges at 900 meters above sea level. So when the wind and snowstorms come, one can experience hard times here, but that is part of the experience, because this really is living at high altitude.”

Peter Mikšíček for Czech Radio

The Limits: Every man should know his limits. This applies to scientists and artists, students and teachers. The limits define the boundaries within which we need to explore and create. And they help us to understand the things which are closed and hidden within them.

...

The Ore Mountains are a very obliging range – they have a drawn out, 130 km long ridge where you are never below 700 meters. The highest point one can reach, the Klínovec peak, is 1243 meters ...

...

Meteorology: Climatic conditions are also understood to be a cultural climate, which is an integral part of the lifestyle and the need for personal expression, the world view of an individual and the community. We want to respond spontaneously–immediately–relevantly to the current situation in the “social terrain.” Participants are learning to be more flexible and artistically independent than in the comfort of the environment of established cultural sanctuaries.

...

With the establishment of the Czech Republic, to which this territory was allotted, bilingualism in mountain names disappeared, and so the name Klín was initially chosen and then used.

Attendance of Artistic Events: The distinctive nature of the environment and the inaccessibility of the place limits the potential audience, but also shapes it. Attendance usually is not a measure of quality. It is also important to note that alternative culture is also divided into good and bad.

...

Klínovec is the largest ski resort in the Ore Mountains, with surprising lift capacity of 8050 people per hour.

Global Village: Globalization generates superficial forms which are dangerous for culture. Understanding the specifics of the outer limits of artistic expressions contributes to a deeper understanding and respect for the culture of the territory far greater than the one we know.

Project Poetics:

The basic angle of spectator standpoint was their placement (almost diabolically) in the lift seat.

Everything was thus conveniently laid out before the viewer, but they were simultaneously forced to experience their own helplessness, the impossibility of active intervention in the ongoing story below, although they sometimes may have felt the need to intervene, given the demonstrated tragedy of history. (I eliminate the possibility of intervention through a suicidal jump from the seat, although justice and objectivity demand mentioning that it existed.) The combination of active perception and forced passive resistance was part of the dominant impression of the project. In this context, I was a bit disappointed by the final, slightly banal gastronomic happening after the climb, which was essentially unrelated to the theme of the project (perhaps only in that solidarity of bringing logs to the top.) "I put a log, I got grog"- and what? A cheap and superficial consumerist crony-ism

accompanied by the feeling that we are better? Indeed I do not think so ...

But let's not forget that we were still waiting for the chair lift ride down! I believe that at this moment a great dramatical opportunity was missed—seeing the individual stops on the way back in a new and different way would have been interesting, making our own personal existence and well-being uncertain. (Maybe being forced to go down on foot would have been sufficient ...)

I know this (double) task would probably have been beyond the capacity of the small team who went to battle with this long hill and sometimes, working below us, looked like a small colony of ants. But even that can be a characteristic ...

The project was practically accomplished by making a number of stops, some were sometimes more situational (collective), sometimes there were separate installations, and in some cases, there was only a solitary object in the field, which—because of its isolation and lack of correlation—created an impression of a too explicit, obvious symbol.

Every moment of unambiguity is a loss, for it actually prevents empathy.



Apolena Vanišová, *Cablestory*, 2011

The most successful, and the most emotional, in my opinion, of the stops was the situational stop that had the minimum of action, movement, sound, voice (even the song). The relative absence of the audio component in the entire project—perhaps a result of the technical conditions in the harsh exterior—definitely impoverished the project, but the project on the whole was not, as Apolena Vanišová suggests in her explication, a disappointment for “Prague audiences.” I think everyone was aware of how demanding this project was and of the great effort (physical and psychological) put in by all involved. They were also aware of the personal investment and relationship to this area with its many collective injustices and troubled personal destinies, whether national, or philosophically engineered in practice. If each of the viewers realized only that it is better to invent and contemplate philosophy than to carry it out in practice, that alone would be enough to justify the implementation of this valuable project.

Karel Makonj – Tomáš Žižka



Apolena Vanišová, *Cablestory*, 2011

Wolf Ravine / Vlčí rokle

Project title (main theme):

Space–Landscape–Experience: Wolf Ravine (Vlčí rokle)

Date and place of event:

first presentation: 17. 6. 2011 (Natural Monument of Vlčí rokle and vicinity)

second presentation: 16. 7. 2011 (Natural Monument of Vlčí rokle and vicinity)

Authors of the project:

concept–Lukáš Brychta

Participants–Barbora Bartoňová, Eliška Bradová, Lukáš Brychta, Ivanka Čonková, Kateřina Jusková, Kristina Pípková,

Michaela Tůmová

Form/genre: landscape performance

Audience: audience unspecified

Photography:

Tomáš Ruller, Dalia Peterová



Relationship of Theme and Intention: Space–Landscape – Experience: Wolf Ravine

“In this project I would like to focus on the natural landscape and the theatrical means with which we might grasp it. The aim is for the project participants to enter into a landscape (at a predetermined place) and attempt to address this landscape with their bodies. This process should be a meeting with the place. Participants live in the place and gain experience from it. The project is directed toward a sharing of the experience in the final performance. While the final presentation should be a summary of collected ideas, feelings, and observations, the most important thing will be the performers’ individual experiences of the place. The intention is not to uncover historical, sociological, or other layers of the chosen space. Participants should approach the location from the position of strangers, accidental visitors, and this optics of wonder should be maintained throughout the work. It is important to bring to the experience of the landscape as few ideas from elsewhere as possible. The chosen landscape should first speak to the participants—and then through performance (ideally) to the audience as well—in the purest form possible. In addition to this, the audience should share in personal experiences of participating artists. But again, ideally, not with associations leading to facts outside the selected area.”

The above text was the conceptual basis for our work in a ravine near the village of Prosečnice in Posázaví. This area was chosen primarily because of its ideal composition of landscape elements, its compact character and its relative accessibility from the capital. The intention was to find a space with the least visible trace of human activity. We succeeded only in part. The Natural Monument Vlčí rokle (Wolf Ravine) itself meets the set criteria, but its surroundings are made up of former granite quarries and one still active quarry is located in nearby Prosečnice. It is important to note that in those closed quarries the

stone had been dug out manually. Although we can still find traces of notches in the bedrock, at first glance it does not look worked; it does not create the impression of industrially mined land like the contemporary machine-mined quarries do. Rather, nature has reclaimed the territory and covered the last signs of human presence. The yellow hiking trail leads us there from Prosečnice, and after a few tens of meters breaks off from the road, passes under the railway embankment and past three summer cottages, after which it gradually sinks more and more into the forest. It uses the same old path used to transport quarried stone going back to the beginnings of Vlčí rokle. The ravine itself in fact was not suitable for the extraction and so it retains its character, its *genius loci*. The former mining area continues again above it and a bit farther down it ends sharply. The path to the ravine is slightly ascending, inside the terrain it is steep. Vlčí rokle is a ravine overgrown with beech trees over 200 years old, having granite boulders on the slopes. The stream Vlčín flows beneath them. The granite boulders vary in size. The largest are up to several meters tall and they create a large stone sea in the bottom of the ravine. Not far behind Vlčí rokle a yellow hiking trail mark intersects with a red mark, which leads back down to Prosečnice and the station again. The paths to the ravine and further back to the station thus form a sort of circle, a closed loop.

The dominant features of the landscape are granite boulders, rocks and massifs, the predominant trees are beeches and spruces. We could sum up the basic materials of the area as a universal trinity: stone, water, trees. These, of course, are joined by sunlight—the extent released determined by the trees—and surrounding sounds: mostly the hum of running water, birdsong and the rustling of leaves. These are the constituent elements of the character of place.

Dramaturgy:

The dramaturgy of the place, and therefore the performance, is revealed gradually, quite naturally and spontaneously. Vlčí rokle, our main point of interest, had to be somehow reached and also left, and so the journey itself had – as always – a distinctive quality. Not to take into account the time and space of “the journey” would have been a sign of our pure ignorance. Two basic solutions offered themselves up: a round trip journey from the station and back with a break in the middle or, a trip to the ravine, into the ravine itself, and the trip out of the ravine. The first option meant having one break in the trip, the second meant having two separate trips and a stop. In the end we chose a third option, which I will describe below. The whole area is characterized by a considerable amount of diversity over a small area. When walking through the circuit, the character of the place often changes; transitions are sometimes slow, but more often the transitions are sharp and distinct. Thanks to the circuit’s jaggedness, there are various “phenomena” along the way which in themselves arouse attention. This arrangement was noticed by us and we decided to devote time to these places along the way.

The path gradually rises all the way to the ravine. In the ravine it becomes steep, later the climb is gentler and at the end of the Natural Park Vlčí rokle (marked with signs) we arrive at a plain. The stream separates from the road here (from the perspective of our direction of walking, in reality the stream flows towards the road), then the stones disappear and a sort of short “tunnel” of pines begins. This phenomenon therefore makes a natural boundary in the landscape, making it an ideal end of the articulated space. In the performance we decided to end the “guided” part a bit earlier, after the end of a sharp climb in the ravine. Now we can say what the third option was: we maintained a continuity of one path which we did not interrupt by just one stop at Vlčí rokle but rather by ten different stops. By

this multiplication, the stops didn’t become interruptions but a natural part of journey, giving it rhythm.

It was important for us that the stops were not the only reason for the journey, that they did not diminish the surroundings nor become too distinctive. We tried to conceive them more subtly, as understated highlights of particular phenomena of the place or landscape, to use them to articulate given constellations. The goal was to offer the audience a form of journey in which the landscape they were seeing was just as important as our actions. Even better: our actions ideally should aid in exploring the landscape and its specific locales – to become transparent to what they are pointing at. This was the essential requirement for the work on individual sites. We found a similar principle in Chinese landscape painting, where the human figure—usually quite unobtrusive—placed in landscape scenery serves as a bridge for the viewer to enter into the picture, the landscape.

The role of the audience and performers in the show:

The basic objective was to activate the spectators. The performance was meant to enable them to tune into the environment through individual actions. Since we conceived the stops theatrically—it was necessary to watch them from start to finish and some even required a view from a specific angle—we decided to guide the audience through the performance very precisely, but as naturally as possible. Our initial premise was the spectator as voyeur. Thus the performers ignored the viewers, whether when performing actions or moving between locations—each performer participated at several stops, so it was necessary to take into account their movements. In order to make it clear to the visitors what they were to do and when, they received simple instructions during their initial welcome at the railway station: They were to follow the performer carrying a stick, to take cues from him, walk with him, or

wait with him. Viewers thus were in a position where they followed this performer's path in the space and his view of events.

This approach revealed several problems. The most crucial were viewers' unconscious defenses against the strict guidance that limited their freedom as spectators—what they were allowed to follow or not follow and when.

A visitor limited in such a way became, completely against the intent of the project, less active in their perception of the surrounding landscape. Much of the group (about 28 people) let themselves be led dully and passively from stop to stop, several individuals openly revolted and began to walk at their own pace and according to their own opinion about what was worth seeing and what is not.

The role of the guide, the performer with a stick, also became problematic. Since it was impossible for personnel reasons to choose one performer for this role only, we took turns during the journey. We hoped that this change would contribute to an amorphousness of the group of performers, the disappearance of their personalities enabled by a constant transformation. Similar civilian costumes in shades of white and gray were to aid this further. At times when they were not playing a role, the performers walked with the group and assisted the guide in leading them. The result, however, was confusion on the part of the spectators, poor guidance, and variations in the suspense and rhythm of the journey.

As a result of the reactions to the premiere, we decided to try and change the performance, to have a reprise which would give the impression that any casual visitor can freely enter into the space and try things out at will – to create their own actions. We got rid of the role of guide and, by contrast, when greeting visitors now we pointed out that the show was their own journey—that the responsibility for the experience was theirs alone. They were given the freedom to watch whatever they wanted, for any period of time. The individual actions were adapted to this

and were played out in loops until the last spectator left.

The performers who were not active did not accompany the group of spectators this time, but moved directly to their next stop. Actually, there was no group because each spectator walked at their own pace.

With this approach we finally achieved our original intentions. Viewers chose their pace and this helped them tune in faster to their own way of perceiving. Those who did not want to, or were not able to experience the journey as a whole, walked faster than the others and only stopped at sites with prepared events. This turned out to be a positive factor, since their insensitivity did not disturb the experience of the more perceptive viewers. At the other extreme were a few viewers who, after some time of careful observation, quit following prepared stops with performances and walked through the woods on their own, finding their own places in the landscape and looking extremely satisfied. In these cases, the purpose of the project was almost transcended.

The second project of the cycle Space–Landscape–Experience was *Fruit Orchard Torso*, subtitled Autumn Study (27.11.2011, Roztoky). The work in the orchard followed the *Wolf Ravine* themes in both the participants' approach to the space, and in the way they approached the audience.

The concept of the project: Lukáš Brychta

Participants of the project:

Kateřina Bilejová, Eliška Bradová, Lukáš

Brychta, Barbora Debnárová, Julie

Klimentová, James Kosnar, Lucie Páchová,

Ján Valík

Stone Waterfall

Vlčí rokle is made of biotite-amphibolic granodiorite of the Sázava type. It belongs to the Central Bohemian pluton and its age is 300 million years old. It solidified at least 3 km below the then surface of the Earth, perhaps even 6-8 km. The entire ravine has been effected strongly by stone quarrying and the removal of loose granite boulders. Mining approached the central part of the ravine from both sides, but fortunately the ravine was long and so the stone waterfall remained preserved. It has a length of about 300 meters and it is an island of geological wilderness. Granite boulders create numerous stone spreads covered with beech trees in shady and cool places. The beech trees are up to 200 years old. The stream dives deep between the boulders, flowing underground, but when one sits down and listens for a moment you can hear in unexpected places “that the springs haven’t ceased to play underground.” Through narrow cracks between the stones one can crawl into raw, cave-like spaces. The springs can be heard better at night. We found glowing wood on its banks during our midnight watch.

The resulting impression of the final presentation was somehow Japanese due to the colors of nature, the sound of water, and the slow merging with the rock. Freely turning bodies illustrated the roundness of stones which are also in movement but much slower, soothing. Eliška, like a little Buddha, is meditating on a rock. A random passing motorcyclist is confronted with Lukáš’s naked body in the stream which crosses paths with the road here. Startled, he leaves the road and escapes through the forest. Small carnivores play in the grass. A woman’s body is doubled on the surface of the forest pond. The mushrooms are growing and a snake has caught a frog. It cannot swallow it. Why are these things happening? They are happening for you. Memories of a Chinese landscape painting: the empty landscape needs a man who doesn’t obstruct it to complement it. A world of attentive students and small gods. Many old stones and also moss. All the stones can’t be seen from one place at once, something is always hidden. They are all in the right places. Václav Cílek



Lukáš Brychta, *Wolf Ravine*, 2011. Photography Tomáš Ruller

After the fact / Treatise – Wolf Ravine

The journeying there and back again for the premiere appeared to begin and end at the station restaurant—a pilgrimage without drink and food would not be complete and in the tradition of Hašek's party, Křižovnicka's school, or the afternoon's exhibition at Černa rokle. For the wider circle, however, the premiere began at the Main Train Station in Prague—torn out of everyday life—getting on the rumbling railcar, creaking our way on the local single-track, the whole time anticipating which of the unknown travelers have the same destination as we do. The performance concluded with the group discussion filling the occupied night car on our way back.

We enter a place not only with our bodies, but our whole being, the landscape is explored with all the senses and experienced with the emotions and the mind. Every participant and spectator invests the whole or at least a part of himself, each individuality plays a role because the point of the pilgrimage is not in the individual stops, but in the process of wandering. Walking itself is the goal—everything that happens along the way is a part of it. The pilgrim is a flowing stream, sometimes slower, sometimes faster, he departs and returns or gets lost—he acts spontaneously, he is an element.

Leading, directing, let alone stopping are demanding and a big responsibility even for an experienced guide, organizer, dam keeper—whether he has a stick or uses other tricks and means. Difficulties which we encounter along the way are the natural landscape formations and constellations—not problems—they are part of the journey and they are simply overcome. Random unexpected twists develop the plot and natural scenery with atmospheric phenomena, create natural scenes—which change in time. A spectacle of images which evoke surprise are put into play and lead to a “wonder of belonging,” and this watching with wonder is the essence of action, which is given as a theater—event.

(With pleasure) Tomáš Ruller



Lukáš Brychta, *Wolf Ravine*, 2011. Photography Tomáš Ruller

Utopia of Space

A Theater Stage for Open Air Programs at the
International Festival of Theater of European Regions

Hradec Králové, 21. 6.–30. 3. 2011

Project Authors:

Jakub Štěpán, Prokop Vondruška, Poco a Poco Animato

Civic Association

Form/genre:

The basic idea of the proposal was to open up and reflect on the surrounding environment. Theme of the festival, Utopia of Space, was reflected in the choice of materials and selection of the site. The entire construction was erected and used temporarily. After the festival the scaffolding elevation was dismantled and the cladding was recycled.

Audience: festival visitors

Photography: Jakub Štěpán



Project description:

The project originated in 2010 when the 2nd year stage design students in KALD–DAMU (Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater at the Theater Faculty of Performing Arts in Prague) led by Tomáš Žižka, were prompted to look at the Open Air Programs of the International Festival of Theater of European Regions from a different angle. We looked for a site for the festival and found new opportunities for existing spaces. I was intrigued by the Velké náměstí (the Grand Square) parking lot. I wanted to move the festival onto the square, to make the downtown active. We came up with the idea of building a mobile stage from tires and large mirrors. In November 2011 we revived the original idea, this time with the theme utopia—for me that theme was the impetus to finally create something on the square. The idea that we needed nearly 2000 tires was so crazy and provocative that it made it worth trying to build this atypical and innovative construction.

Relationship of the Theme and Intention:

The theme of a parking lot–junkyard–car cemetery–recycling. Working together with Zdenek Charvát we decided to stick with the car theme. We came up with the idea of working with used tires as material for the construction of a multi-functional space. The symbolism of tires as parts of vehicles that are parked on the square, a junkyard, a garbage dump. A political provocation—an effort to draw attention to the issue of the upcoming reconstruction of Velké náměstí.

The Nature and Use of Space:

A circle of tires was created inside the designated area with a square elevation on it which had a playing area 6.5 × 6.5 meters. The overall external dimensions were 23.4 meters. The area had 2 entrances: a technical entrance and an entrance for the audience 3 meters wide. The outer

perimeter was made from about 1800 tires, its dimensions 600 x 185 meters, with auditorium capacity of 172 spectators.

Personal Reflection:

The idea led to a search and process that was very demanding for everyone in the production team. Acquiring so many tires, enduring the whole thing physically, and not giving in was a very daring undertaking. We found ourselves in our utopia, the structure or the building so absorbed us, and we waited in vain for a shocked public or protests from the municipality. The only surprised people were us—the participants and initiators of the project. Nowadays, it is somehow difficult to provoke people, or to point things out. But we consider the very fact that we managed to have a tire construction put up and standing in Hradec Králové for 12 days a good result for our utopian work.



Jakub Štěpán, Prokok Vondruška, Poco a Poco Animato, Utopia, 2011, Hradec Králové. Photography artists



Jakub Štěpán, Prokok Vondruška, Poco a Poco Animato, Utopia, 2011, Hradec Králové. Photography artists

Enter the Utopian Space. Let Us Show You Another Reality!

The producers of the Open Air Program, a traditional part of the International Festival of Theater of European Regions in Hradec Králové in its 12th year, chose “Utopia of Space” as its theme. The Open Air Program 2011 included a total of 137 theater performances and site specific projects, 24 concerts, 3 accompanying exhibitions, and workshops in dance and photography. A number of emerging artists performed there, amateur ensembles, art school students, but also some of the best Czech independent companies presented themselves outside of the traditional network of theater buildings. After the festival’s premiere, whose theme was dedicated to theater recycling, the civic association Poco a Poco Animato decided that it would be beneficial to show the festival visitors an urban environment that they don’t know or don’t normally notice.

The organizers decided to build on the previous year’s inspiring collaboration with stage design students from KALD DAMU, and to put one of the student’s proposals into practice. The utopian stage designed by Jakub Štěpán was chosen. The shape of the new playing area resembled a circus or an arena. Almost two thousand tires were used in its construction—it was set up directly on Velké náměstí (The Grand Square) and had a capacity of 120 spectators. A meeting point was set up for theater ensembles and festival guests which was a feature that had been missing in the previous festival offerings.

In addition to the special festival construction, alias ‘the ring,’ the theme of utopia was explored daily in the special program. Director and performer Marold Langer Philippsen, who works with social and sensory media design, became the curator of this public space and hosted a temporary broadcast called Radio Utopia. He invited artists, performers, and passersby to participate in the broadcast and to react to the topic “Utopia of Space” through sound interventions, scenic readings and radio shows. The radio shows were broadcast locally and streamed over the internet as well. An integral

part of the program was a discussion forum which became a place for reflections on utopias of space. Discussions took place among invited artists, philosophers, sociologists, anthropologists and writers. Some of these interventions were public debates reacting to the circumstance that this very centrally located parking lot was actually a piece of private property with a controversial business plan—the reactions became essentially political. The construction made of tires created the space of an arena for local interest groups, and it could have initiated a public political debate for local citizens. There were talk shows organized regularly at 11:30 pm on the Utopia stage, and Jiří Jelínek and Jiří Kniha tried to evaluate the most interesting festival events with the help of live news and video projections, and also to provoke the public to express their views on what to do with the parking lot, but they got no reaction whatsoever—perhaps because of the late hour. The intention materialized, but it failed to activate the public.

We should learn from the passivity and indifference of the public and in the future undertake a more active intervention, one which would be able to provoke meetings of the wider community and also reactions from public media outlets. This event was an impetus which inspires us and poses an important question: How should one behave in these engaged and politically oriented interventions? How to take on the role of a moderator or spokesperson and get a response from the public and the media? For many projects focusing on media coverage is not a priority, but in this particular case it was a conceptual necessity.

Tomáš Žižka



Jakub Štěpán, Prokok Vondruška, Poco a Poco Animato, Utopia, 2011, Hradec Králové. Photography artists

Project Kolora 01

Race against time

30. 09 and 1. 10. 2011 – Semily

Project Authors:

Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková

Audience:

Residents of all generations from Semily and surrounding areas

(including former factory employees), DAMU students and instructors.

Photography:

Tomáš Hyka, Radomír Novotný, Tomáš Ruller,

Rudolf Šmíd,

Veronika Výprachtická





Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, Semily. Photography artists

Project Description:

The goal of this site specific project was to enrich the cultural and social life of the region using a unique mixture of theater, dance, music and fine arts around the architecturally unique Hybler textile factory in Semily, formerly called Kolora.

Pliny (Diaper) Happening

The project was performed over two afternoons and involved over 30 young artists, students and graduates of diverse (and not only artistic) disciplines, mostly coming from Semily. Among them were students from the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU). Our intention was to highlight the untapped potential of the slowly decaying factory space using artistic means. Many Semily residents have spent their whole lives here, and since production was halted three years ago, the factory has been gradually fading into oblivion. We did not want to offer a concrete idea about the future of the factory; we wanted to attract people's attention and revive the abandoned areas for at least two days, to offer the audience a glimpse of the past and present of this place.

We chose the form of guided factory tours in small groups, where viewers experienced different stops along the way (theater or dance performances, art installations, screenings, etc.) always inspired by the place itself. The project was subsequently presented at the Industrial Heritage Conference—organized by the Research Center for Industrial Heritage at the Faculty of Architecture, Czech Technical University in Prague—which is focused on finding alternative uses for industrial buildings.

Project Phases:

- writing of the projects, promotion, introducing the creators to each other and to the space and its history, creating individual outputs, installation, rehearsing in the factory, projection ...

- 4 weekends + a week before execution
- collecting material (interviews with contemporary witnesses, visiting the archive)
- dress rehearsal
- implementation—two days, about 23 groups/guided tours
- cleaning, accounting
- Industrial Heritage Conference—On the Edge
- project documentary and its projection

Personal Reflection:

In the end, the guided tours were taken by an astounding 400 spectators from all walks of life (including former employees of the factory) and so we met with a wide range of reactions. Of course, these included a few negative reactions—particularly from former employees of the factory who had come out of curiosity and found it difficult to be guided around their former workplace and to accept artistic interventions created from a younger generation's point of view. Above all, we were pleased that in the final room of the performance, we succeeded in creating a place that really came alive; it was not just a theatrical illusion. The audience had the opportunity to meet here, share their experiences, to discuss the future of the building and to have a bit of fun. We have evidence that the local people are not indifferent to the fate of this factory from their very emotional entries in the guest book.

What we see as the benefits of the project:

- enriching the culture of the region
- creating space for public dialogue
- pointing out this unique but gradually decaying industrial facility
- showing one possibility for using the factory for the needs of the city and the community
- clarifying the project for viewers who did not have experience with such forms of theater

- making use of the creative potential of young artists from Semily who would otherwise not have the opportunity to work in their hometown
- connecting creative people—students and graduates of various (not only) art schools + students of dance, music, literature and drama at the Semily Art Basic School

In collaboration with students at FAMU (Film Academy of the Performing Arts in Prague) a professional documentary was made, as well as a short record of the project. Both were presented to project participants and also to people who did not have the opportunity to see the project in Semily

Kolora 01 – Race for Time

At first the project may have seemed like a game in which marginal events from the history of the former Semily industrial production complex were to unfold. The site had been a spinning and weaving factory founded by Franz Schmitt, later named Kolora 01. It is currently owned by Hybler Textiles. It was obvious during preparations and especially during the two days of performance, that we were involved in the most significant experiences of the first stage of our Theater in Non-traditional Spaces study program at DAMU. The lesson for us here is that for Art of Place projects, rough draft interventions, trials, and non-committed school attitudes are not effective. We must take responsibility for the space which we enter into, and for later events as well. The experience is far different from replacing one stage set with another. This becomes credible once the sequence of episodic stories develops into an event. This is the reason that we enter into other places.



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, *Semily*. Photography artists

Mr. Schmitt and his factory

In Semily, we well observed how with each intervention, each step, each story conveyed, a dramaturgical plan unfurled temporally and spatially which contaminated the space with new meanings for its future. After the viewer / visitor / guest / actor had walked through the route defined by the script, he or she was instructed to go behind a curtain. He found himself in another former production hall, close to the end of the journey. A liberating reception was held there, called “The Last Supper.” Food was on the table, there was a relaxed atmosphere. Everyone was left to themselves or to the mercy of others. They reflected on the experience.

The architecture of the former factory, for a few hours and days. had turned into a place of multilayered readings of space and new interactions. After its downfall and decay, an illusion of possible transformation was created—a vision of its future function. The event of ephemeral artistic intention created a new temporal and semantic plane. Henceforth it will have to be seen as a more universal kind of statement.

Benjamin Fagner



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, Semily. Photography artists

Cloakroom for Women

Colorful Kolora

Project *Kolora 01* had important social aspects from the outset. And it fulfilled in every way my expectations about the meaningful use of qualitative sociological methods (ethnomethodologies) as part of the site-specific approach. What I really liked about the whole event was the fact that it was an initiative of several Semily natives, mostly students from art schools. Anežka Navrátilová came up with the idea for a site-specific event in the dormant Hybler (formerly Kolora) textile factory, and she turned it into a project for the Theater in Non-traditional Spaces course. The content analysis of written and visual documents about the textile mill constituted important background material for the performance.

The immediate observation, or rather the “searching for signs of person without finding a person” resulted in performances inspired by found personal correspondence, notes, inscriptions, or decorations taken from the workshops. The audio recordings of biographical narratives made by former textile workers were used both in raw form and as the inspiration for the show “120 %” (Michaela Tůmová).



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, Semily. Photography artists

The Presentation “120 %”

The results of the theater-sociological survey were the immediate inspiration for most of the site specific presentations in Semily.

Inviting the public into a place linked to the lives of a large part of the population was essential. Over two days, the textile factory was visited by more than four hundred spectators of all ages and social groups. It is a very unusual result for this type of event. The actual space of this decaying industrial complex created an architecturally unique context for the stories–performances and art installations–that visitors were drawn into in groups during their more than hour-long “Textile Safari.” The twelve symbolic stops ended with “The Last Supper” with homemade refreshments.



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, Semily. Photography artists

“Girls”

There were numerous surveys dealing both with evaluations of the performance, and of the space itself—its future use, as part of this site specific project. When I was saying goodbye to Anežka on Saturday, I told her that she had revived my almost lost faith in site specific. For a long time I had been documenting performances which looked better in my photos than they actually were. Here it was just the opposite, thank God. Perhaps the only thing deserving criticism is the retrospective perspective of the whole project—its lack of conflict with the present. This was of course partly due to the fact that the event was sponsored by the crumbling textile factory’s current owner. But this is a general problem which raises the question of the degree of opportunities available for artistic interventions in spaces which are privately owned.

Rudolf Šmíd



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, *Semily*. Photography artists

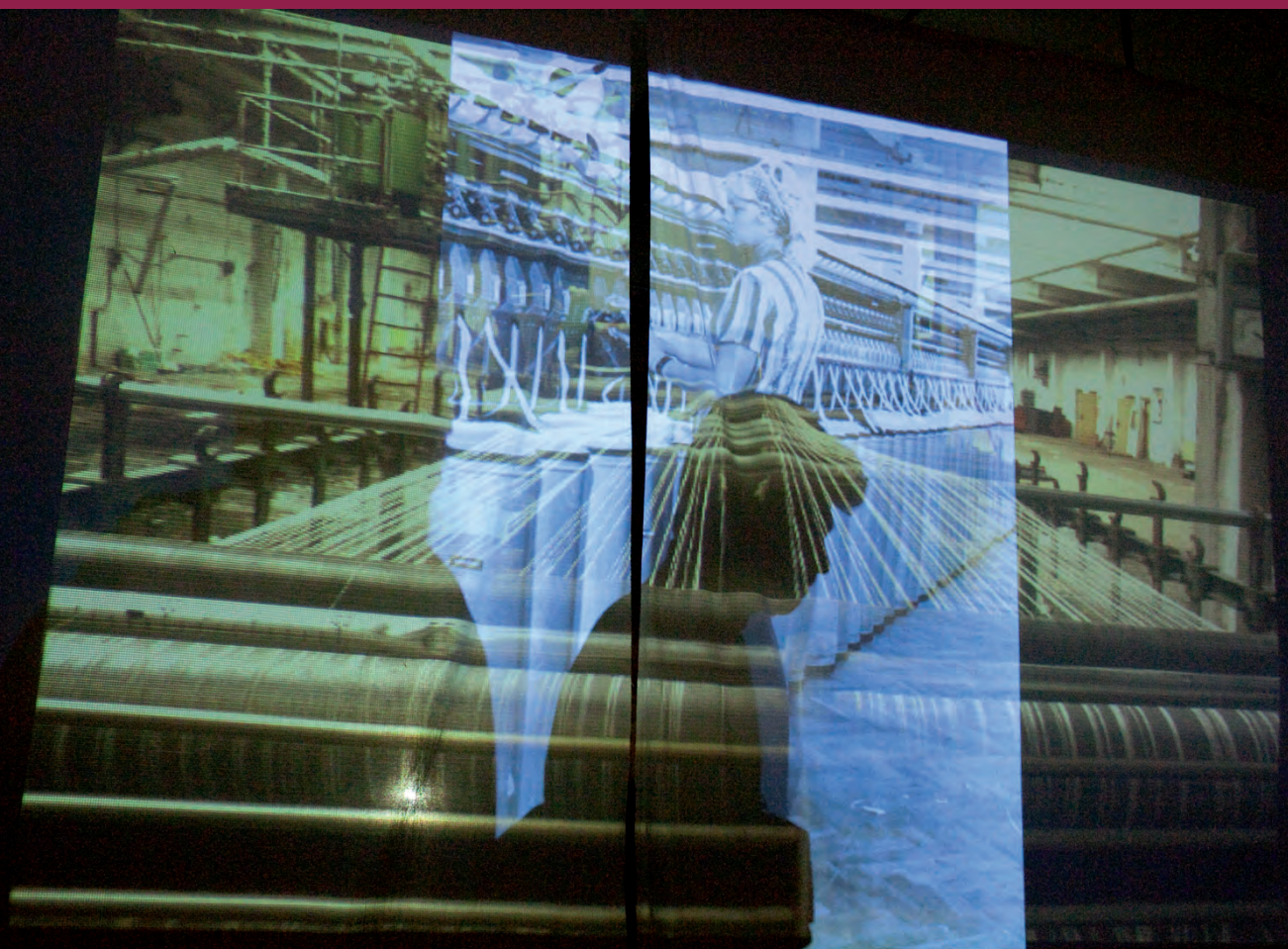
Performance “Showers”

INTERACTION-ACTION

I. INPUT/ENTRANCE DIALOG

The very first encounter with the factory showed the immense opportunities of the richness and multidimensionality of the entire physical space with its historical, social, political and economic contexts, visual and dramatic qualities plus an emotional charge that created a complex and inexhaustible potential.

The key was to find the strategy of the basic approach—one out of many possibilities of course-plotting options for the process of exploring the unfolding event. This must not be a mechanical application of dramaturgical and directorial plans with a constructed structure of ideas and professionalized thought patterns, dominated by the rational—but rather an organic fermentation, a mixing, pouring and growing out of ripening premonitions, in a harmonious unity of senses and emotions. The process demanded a conceptual balance of thinking, intuition and inspiration, with an awareness of the equal importance of the first and last step.



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolora 01*, 2011, Semily. Photography artists

Projection–”Meantime” (Mezičas)

II. OUTPUT-EXIT DIALOG

An organism grown in this way shows its vitality by performing. Spectators enter into the relationships of performers and the place. Correctness of choice and maturity of intention are verified by the sincerity of performance in attentive confrontation of active performers and participants, in the diversity of individuals and variability from group to group, all changing in time and repetition–accelerating energy into the feedback, an induction dependent on their responsiveness.

The gate was opened, the clock was punched, we were ushered into the arcade with its original information signs. Here we watched the narrative puppet scene “How Mr. Schmitt Came to Have the Factory,” and then we passed through a colorful mandala made from spools of thread–the “Entrance Mosaic.” Our guide led us into the building and locked the door. We were instructed about what we could and could not do, then we walked around the workshop which looked like it was abandoned only a minute ago, with stairs disappearing into the ceiling. We witnessed a subtle creaking of carts in a sensitive and sophisticated display of the paradoxical role of women, followed by a screening of the propaganda film “The 120%”. Afterwards, we followed a tight thread through a dim waiting room in order to get to the washroom for “Showers”, where a bent cleaning woman splashed a wet cloth with frustration, while a projection of men taking showers took place. Next, we were witness to the one-woman show which took place between the lockers of a suggested changing room in “Women’s Changing Room,” where everyone smokes despite all the prohibitions, which made the former factory employees (and living witnesses) angry. Afterwards we went up the stairs to the “Recording Studio Kolora 01” to the sounds of the chanson “In the Cotton,” which sounded absurd in the emptied hall. Next we went past a beautifully torn curtain, to the ballroom where we saw an exhibition reminiscent of the Czechoslovak Spartakiad (mass physical exercises)



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolara 01*, 2011, *Semily*. Photography artists

– a student ballet mega show of “Girls” in work suits and boys in overalls drumming on barrels. After that we went around some colored spools and curious machines, up another floor to windows with poetic texts on them overlooking views of the factory. We were halted at the artistically barricaded stairs to the clock tower. The “BSP BPZ ČSSR” Art School Theater scene prepared a surprising protest, then we passed through a projection in “Split-time,” a creation of found images of everyday banal beauty, on view from both sides. Afterwards we were led into the space of the “Time in Light” which was filled with authentic audio-stories, memories which were fading in dim lights, but which were also lighting a variety of still life arrangements. We crossed the bridge with a final pass by a video screen with answers to the question “What shall we do about it?” And on to the great climax–“The Last Supper” – which ended the performance with homemade refreshments and we sat in the children’s corner which was full of witty and intelligently designed games. We had everything we needed to take a breath and to digest, to unwind after the catharsis, to express and discuss. There was even an audience survey and a guest book. The space was decorated with furniture found from the factory and the lighting was effective too. There were portable toilets and orientation arrows. The space was ideal for social interaction–in short, for THE END-ing.

(AN UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE)

Tomáš Ruller

The Last Supper



Anežka Navrátilová, Mariana Večeríková, *Kolara 01*, 2011, Semily. Photography artists

Anthropology of Space

Václav Cílek

Let us look more closely at the matter. Leonardo had no revelation and as Valéry said, no abyss opened up at his right hand. There is no doubt about it. However, in the painting “The Virgin and Child with Saint Anne” the Virgin’s garment, which touches the face of the child, looks like a vulture. In one fragment of the flight of birds, da Vinci suddenly stops and pursues a childhood memory: “It seems I was destined to be deeply concerned with the vulture – for I recall as one of my very earliest memories, that while I was in my cradle, a vulture came to me, forced open my mouth with its tail, and struck me with its tail many times against my lips.”

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “Cézanne’s Doubt”



The train station Praha-Bubny today holds more poetry than the castle courtyard. Photography Václav Cílek

INTRODUCTION: DEFINING AND DELINEATING THE CONCEPT

Theater is a synthetic form of art, which consists of the functionally and mutually intensifying actions of various different activities and techniques: acting, music or sound, visual output, lighting, sound recording and reproduction; and many other activities. In such associated “intertwined” fields, it is virtually impossible to provide a simple, universally valid definition of terms; much as in the natural sciences where it is very difficult to define what life is.

DEFINITION 1 (author): A non-traditional theater space can be considered a type of physical space which is not usually used for theatrical activity, or any physical or metaphysical (for example social or political) space which is used in a theatrically new way.

DEFINITION 2 (Denisa Václavová): Site-specific is an art project created for a specific space and time.

DEFINITION 3 (Tomáš Žižka): Site specific is a community form in a given location.

In the first definition every other word is questionable. For example, is puppet theater a traditional or, on the contrary, a non-traditional field? Or what is still “new” in this changeable time and what is not? For a traditional spectator, an abandoned factory is a new space but for an alternative spectator a new space may be the gold-plated and thus exotic stage of the National Theater. I speak from personal experience: when I enter the National Theater, once in every five years, I feel that I am attending some significant event of a leading alternative subculture which is to me already by its exotic, complex and confusing existence subversive to my world.

If I were an actor I wouldn't worry too much about these questions (and many of the others following) because for actors the aim is to create a quality performance which brings something to the participants (the actors and audience) of the site specific event. The result is likely to be impure in style; traditional forms will mix uncontrollably with the new ones. The situation would be similar to an aging graffiti artist who initially rebelled against the establishment but then uses his artistic talents to become a graphic designer working for a corporation or in advertising. He uses features of his former sub- or counter-culture in his work, thus making common everyday viewers accustomed to it. What was initially a protest against the establishment begins to operate as a firm part of the establishment.

Site Specific as a Phase of Life

Of course there are also the opposite cases, when traditional artists working in traditional disciplines learn their limits, and this moves them elsewhere. It used to be said that the French painter begins as an abstract savage and ends as an academic, while the Czech artist is a realist at first, but by retirement he becomes avant-garde. Neither of these sayings apply today, but one of the possible approaches to site specific is to look at it as a phase of life that not only draws from traditional forms (or from resistance to these forms; the result is the same) but also enriches them. English philosophy graduates usually have no problem getting work in banking because they are known to be able to think critically and evaluate situations. Similarly, a site specific actor will probably have more life experience and will go through more kinds of environments than a traditional actor. Site specific can then become an inspiration for classical theater, and I imagine that a person who went through this school of life could, for example, work as a spokesperson of the nuclear power plant Temelín.

Non-Traditional Spaces are Traditional

I can picture the founders of Czech theater in the 19th century playing in village pubs and commons, and thus in non-traditional theater spaces. When Min Tanaka did something similar twenty years ago in the Japanese countryside we looked at the whole thing with admiration and surprise. The fact is, unusual spaces are essentially natural for the theater. On the other hand, we can consider the opera scene as an esoteric discipline which is, unlike hip hop, accessible only to true insiders. Site specific in a shopping mall is a typical play on the town square, and using the church in Broumov for action art is basically a passion play. There is no reason to play at site specific and condemn Hynais' curtain and other props in big theaters. They are, and have been since the Middle Ages, vessels for communicating. Yet even today we feel, perhaps ever since the Dada cabaret nonsenses at the end of World War I, that site specific, although it has been around for at least a century, is different from traditional theater. What is the nature of this distinctiveness?

Distinctiveness of Site Specific

Definitions are devised for us to know precisely what it is being discussed. In matters of art we shouldn't know things so precisely. In poetry or painting it is typical that a powerful experience comes for reasons that defy analysis, precisely because they partly lie in the realm where words still don't exist. "Whoever grasps too much/will overlook the infinite" said Rainer Maria Rilke in his poem "Walk at Night" (translated from the German by Franz Wright). Similarly, American poet Theodore Roethke suggests in his diaries that things are revealed to those who are not looking too meticulously.

Old Town Square – The benches that allow one to watch what is happening are occupied first.

Sculpture of an intellectual hanging from the kitchen of the Center for Theoretical Studies in Jilská street in

Prague, but we are actually more interested in what the roofer's doing on the roof. A victory of action over art. In site specific, or generally in theater in non-traditional theater spaces, we welcome it when the creator defines things in his own way, just as we don't expect a painter to work with a universal definition of art in his work. It is difficult to be a heretic in this situation because that is precisely what is expected from the creator.

On the Whole, However, We Can Say:

Traditional theater takes place at a predefined location with elaborate stage design while site specific includes an active search for space and finding backdrops which exist already. The environment itself becomes the stage and "actor." The area of a theater stage is more or less given, while the non-traditional spaces remain open to the changes of time, random influences and interventions. One result of theater work in a non-traditional space is often knowledge about or reflections on how this space works. Some events revive and purify found space; they give it a new meaning or give meaning where there was none before. Traditional theater works are in the sphere of "culture." Site specific sometimes touches the collective sacred, which can have both light and dark forms. Tomáš Ruller says that theater is about communication and performance is about sharing. In site specific time is real, rarely illusive and actors represent themselves (see: www.ruller.cz, it is all there). Site specific is often based on antiquated situations, rituals, and heritages of other cultures. The spectator usually participates in the event.

The time of the spectator is different than the time of the actor – the spectator comes, is briefly drawn into the story and then leaves. The traditional gradation of action does not take place. The spectators, who are normally prisoners in their seats and must take in all of the prepared scenes, here are free to simply leave.

Traditional theater works in a different media environment – with posters, programs, applause, a national cult of celebrities, tabloids, etc. Site specific is a community matter, people come out of interest, the reward is not abstract fame but recognition by certain, often interesting people, and also knowledge and self-knowledge.

Performance, or rather performance art, is understood as an art event. Performing art is understood as a theatrical event. This difference is not significant in terms of art, but it is from the point of view of critics and grant agencies. This means that the performance (performance art) will be visited—in the better case—by visual critics who will write about it in art magazines and financing will often be obtained through art grant agencies. In contrast, it has so far rarely happened that the site specific (performing art) should be attended by theater critics and reviews should appear in theater magazines.

Happening

When a physicist talks about space he almost always adds the word time. In our case, the compound “space-time” (“časoprostor” in Czech) means that the space of a site specific event is fluid, that it changes with time, and we have limited power over it. This follows from the fact that repetition of an action in the same form is difficult or impossible and probably unnecessary. An active flow in the stream of time can be best described as happening. It is like a walk in the forest, which, while planned and scheduled, in fact happens as the situation requires.

Exercise: we sit down opposite a blade of grass stirred by the wind, and we move our body in a rhythm that corresponds to the immediate state of the environment. This makes us more open to external rhythms of the surroundings. In another situation we sit in the forest opposite a mushroom and try to express its inner rhythm by movements of our body, and then repeating the same thing with another species of mushroom.

Another exercise: we go to the countryside and try to find a tree that suits us. Then we spend the next four hours with it, during which we don't do anything else.

Rhythm

If the word time must be added to the word space, then we need to add rhythm to the word time. In music, recitation or dramatic declamation, the function of rhythm is very well recognized and elaborated theoretically. In site specific, the environment is often the carrier of rhythm. Rhythm of a birch grove is different from the rhythm of spruce monoculture. The quiver of an aspen leaf is different from the tranquility of a pine branch moving and returning and again and again in the wind. Rhythm is mainly created by people who walk differently on Wenceslas Square than on Charles Square. In traditional theater, rhythm is essential to carry emotion. But in site specific, we can afford a “state of rhythmlessness.” Emotionality is not the main objective here, we do not need to make the spectator cry or laugh. The emotionality of site specific is rather a side effect of the choice of location and actions. For activities such as performance, emotionality is often redundant because of its verbosity.

Space and its Metaphors (Allegorical Spaces)

The train station Praha-Bubny today holds more poetry than the castle courtyard.

The essential classic work on the “philosophy of space” is Gaston Bachelard's *The Poetics of Space* (Bachelard, 2009), recently published in our country. It can be read as poetry which inspires one to some kind of action. For example, Bachelard quotes Jules Vallès's statement: “Space has always reduced me to silence.”

Space is either referred to as a real, physical space, or as a metaphorical space, such as social space, or even the spaces of music, philosophy, space for negotiations, etc. If, for example, we open Ladislav Benyovszky's anthology

The Spatiality 3 (Benyovszky, 2007) and read the chapter titles, like “Determinateness as a Method of Occurrence—the original birthplace of time-space syntheses or Hesitant Self-Denial, dynamism of drawing out and retracting and space-time,” it is apparent that certain kinds of studies of space are devastating as far as theatrical production goes. Unfortunately, complicated beings seek out complicated texts, and thus entangle the situation even further. Site specific always contains a conceptual component and therefore has a tendency to a certain complexity. This will eventually impair the spontaneity and create a barrier between the performance and the audience. The spectator usually rejects rather than shares a riddle. Sometimes artists use their own complicated incomprehensibility as a weapon against colleagues and spectators. Although complexity and incomprehensibility do go hand in hand, they are not synonyms.

I think actors are more likely to focus their studies towards grouping and simplification, or more precisely the ability to present complex contents of mind in an understandable way (William Shakespeare, the King James Bible). Zdeněk Kratochvíl in the book *Source of Knowledge* quotes from late antiquity that “the purpose of all education is, above all, to return honestly to the simplicity of heart.” Intuition can be given, but usually it is necessary to cultivate it. It works better if it is based on life experience and the kind of education which impregnates personality, a condition in which we eventually forget learned facts (to quote Zdenek Pinc). In this concept, study is necessary but it should eventually lead to ignorance.

I am trying to warn against harmful or excessive ways of study because most published works about space are concerned only with its allegories or metaphors. Allegory means that the thing has been transferred elsewhere, said otherwise. Metaphor means transfer. In Greece, moving companies are called “Metaphor”.

Cyrano de Bergerac in his *Journey to the Moon* describes two moon rivers, which have the quality that when one becomes stronger the other weakens, and vice versa. One is the river of imagination, the other of memory. Equivalently, in the case of site specific we could talk about the river of education and the river of creativity. Still, some background information is necessary so that we do not discover things discovered long ago, as I often see done.

Offering Keys to the Work

What basic balance does site specific require? It is about a proportionate representation of the visual and conceptual. In most cases, it is necessary that an action can stand on its own, without the knowledge of the idea behind it (Joseph Beuys). I don't have to recognize the concept but I need to feel that it is present. In a survey, readers of the natural science magazine *Vesmír* (Universe) said that they count on the fact that they will not understand everything, but insisted on the highest quality of information. In site specific, the spectator often cannot forget some particular moment and they return to it in their memories. Only later they learn what the idea behind the image was and this doubles their astonishment retroactively. Unlike many artists, I believe that the work or author's motivation should be explained a little, a clue or a key should be given, a few simple sentences like: “We wanted to draw attention to...” “We found it impressive...” “At the beginning of our action ...” “We followed ...”

When we help the viewers to be oriented in the arts, we also train them to be sensitive, and the number of sympathizers grows. How tired people are of the pride of modern art, which neither explains nor serves, and so they make their revenge with their indifference, which leads to its isolation! And then they complain about not being understood.

Spaces of General, Non-Directed Education

I am not certain and I could be mistaken, but with advancing age I am ever more convinced that for everyone—and especially for actors—the most important thing is that they experience the space of a non-directed education with classical elements. This means that the actor reads books, listens to music or looks at paintings he likes and needs, and occasionally reaches for a classic novel or traditional art as a source of beauty and appropriateness. In other words: keeps himself in the stream of culture, and despite the difficulties of life refines himself now and then. This, however, can only be realized at fifty years of age, when we clearly perceive whether he is a personality or only the shell of a personality standing in front of us. Czech Radio. Prague. Places of power and energy, such as media centers or power plants immediately stimulate attention, as if a stream flowed there which we resist but it sweeps us away.

Analysis of Real Spaces

So far we have talked more about the approaches and development of the actor's or artist's personality in the field of site specific, let us now move on to the craft. How can real space be grasped, how to reflect on it and include it in activities? The first step is to decide whether the event will take place:

1. in an urban environment or in an anthropogenic (human generated) environment
2. in the natural environment.
3. in a transitional environment between man and nature—for example, in a quarry pit.

In an urban environment, we need to know:

1. Basic history of the buildings and their function.
2. Important historical moments—for example, it is said that the Chernobyl plant was built on the spot where an airline bomb fell on a children's camp in the war. Here the story, perhaps the legend offers itself.

3. The anthropology of work and holidays—how the place normally lives.

4. Emotions connected with the place. Sometimes just asking people is enough: “Do you come here often? How do you like it here?”

In natural environments I need to have some knowledge of the layers of the landscape:

1. What is the geological foundation? Is there granite, limestone, sandstone? Do significant springs come to the surface here? Are the soils fertile?
2. What did the original vegetation look like, what animals live here (beaver, swallowtail etc.)?
3. Prehistoric settlements, the history of colonization, major cult sites.
4. Historic layers of important interventions in the landscape, founding of towns, directions of old roads and trade routes, places of pilgrimage, markets, major industries.
5. Local history of the 20th century.
6. The present, which can be defined as anything that happened after 1990.

Transition areas between two natural environments are called ecotones. An example of an ecotone is the edge of the forest. More species of birds live here, different plants grow here, there is more life here than in the forest alone or in a meadow. Species with different life strategies meet here—such as larks and woodpeckers; animals rest here, the hunter's high seat is here—he feeds animals most of his life, and sometimes shoots them. Ecotones are richer in relationships, contrasts, paradoxes and transition rituals, but difficult to grasp because they belong to more worlds. It seems complicated, but actually most of the necessary information can be found summarized in the following sources:

Monographs, local guidebooks, memorial books.

Historical maps (www.geolab.cz).

The Protected Areas Czech Republic Edition. In fifteen extensive monographs all of the areas declared protected



The flow of Qi (Ch'i) shown by the sheep
below Locket Castle, West Bohemian feng shui.
Photography Václav Cílek



Tourists under the Astronomical Clock.
Something moves – how exciting!.
Photography Václav Cílek

in the Czech Republic are presented (Mackovčín ed., 1997-2010).

Olympia's edition of touristic guidebooks (the last, almost complete edition was published by Olympia in the 1980s, is about 35 volumes). These surprisingly good guides contain detailed introductory chapters on the character of an area, its history, important figures and landmarks.

If no other source is at hand, one can begin by studying notes on the back of tourist maps of the ratio 1: 50 000.

Time Transgression

Time transgression is the analogue of ecotone, it is a dynamic boundary between two contrasting periods, both of which are contained in the place or work. Transgression means to go over. The term is used also for when sea gradually floods the mainland. In social terms, for example, it is about the end of a war, the beginning of a crisis, a wave of social disease gradually going through the continent—or the time when alternating current was introduced, the railway line, or the Internet. An abandoned factory is a typical space where two different times are present.

Cézanne's Method

Approaches to the place or landscape are, of course, many, but "Cézanne's method" has proved successful. Merleau-Ponty describes it in these words:

"But what motivates the painter's movement can never be simply perspective or geometry or the laws governing the breakdown of color, or, for that matter, any particular knowledge." Motivating all the movements from which a picture gradually emerges can be only one thing: the landscape in its totality and in its absolute fullness, precisely what Cézanne called a "motif." He would start by discovering the geological foundations of the landscape; then, according to Mme Cézanne, he would halt and look

at everything with widened eyes, "germinating" with the countryside. The task before him was, first, to forget all he had ever learned from science and, second, through these sciences to recapture the structure of the landscape as an emerging organism. To do this, all the partial views one catches sight of must be welded together; all that the eye's versatility disperses must be reunited; one must, as Gasquet put it, "join the wandering hands of nature." "A minute of the world is going by which must be painted in its full reality." His meditation would suddenly be consummated: "I have a hold on my motif," Cézanne would say, and ... began to paint ... "The landscape thinks itself in me," he would say, "and I am its consciousness... Art is a process of expression..." (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Cézanne's Doubt")

Politics as a Site Specific Art

In the Aeneid, in the famous verses about Rome (VI, 850) Virgil writes that others can carve beautiful sculptures and pursue all kinds of skills, but that government will be the art of Rome: "... remember, Roman, it is for you to rule nations with your power, (that will be your skill) to crown peace with law ..."

Similarly, Jacob Burckhardt in his famous 1860 book *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, which has been published in many more recent editions, works with the idea that the politics of the Renaissance represent a synthesis of that new way of life.

If both of the theses contain at least a grain of truth, these times, along with the latest social trends, could or should be studied as sources of inspiration for site specific.

Analysis of Virtual Space

Virtual space is connected to the human mind, but it can mostly (with the exception of cyberspace) be characterized as a real place. In the case of site specific we most often think of spaces of societies or one of its components,

such as financial and economic sectors, or political spaces. Most site specific events that have taken place in the Czech Republic were not based on any preliminary analyses, they were instead focused on the following steps:

1. Finding an interesting place.
2. Doing something beautiful in it.
3. Using the corrective of reason to affix it to the social context.

Virtual spaces are so complex and changing in time that I can't think of one specific, concrete example of how to grasp them. I think that the main approach is to be guided by the actual place. Perhaps one of the few criteria of work in virtual spaces is to understand the basic scale:

1. Globalized spaces relate to (almost) the whole world. A typical representative is the airport, the chain store, the ATM machine.
2. Although European spaces are fragmented from Lisbon to Košice, they have several common features, such as a heritage of antiquity, urban culture and market economies. A typical European place is a museum, a spa, a scientific institute or a theater building made of stone.
3. Local space concerns us, and it is up to us how we define ourselves. Typical locations are Vyšehrad in Prague, a forest theater in Řevnice, the pub called Oasis at Smíchov train station.

In these spaces it is possible, and in most cases necessary, to carry out a social zoom, where, for example, the expansion of Chinese textile destroys operations in Vodňany and for the first time after a thousand years, flax is no longer grown in the Czech Republic. Some of the best site specific events are very closely linked with real deglobalized places, but they reflect something of world events. Some locations have lost character of the place and became global symbols—Red Square in Moscow, Wall Street, the administrative parts of Brussels, holy Jerusalem. There are a huge number of books about this subject and it is perhaps appropriate to mention Zygmunt

Bauman's work here, for example *Globalization: The Human Consequences*.

Ethnic Space

Each culture treats their space according to its needs and internal inclinations. Stories of missionaries who tried to disrupt the mental world of natives by rebuilding their villages are anecdotally repeated. It is also seen in the case of Nubians, who were expelled from their painted villages during the construction of the Aswan Dam and put in concrete pens where they lost a large piece of their identity. Among the thousands of ethnic groups there are distinct concepts of place and space, manifested for example by the placement of cemeteries.

In principle, we can also distinguish between the spaces of nomads and settlers. For example, the Bedouins do not roam aimlessly, they choose one of the yearly circuits called "dira" in Arabia. They travel according to moisture, pasture and water resources. Once in a while, however, they meet in places where conflicts are forbidden and either trade, or dance and look for partners in another tribe in order to prevent inbreeding.

In terms of our culture, it is interesting to see how the European city emerged and what functions it had, see, for example the already classic monograph by R. E. Wycherley on how the pragmatic Greeks founded cities (Wycherley, 1952). Also, the collection of studies edited by Sylva Fischerová and Jiří Starý, *Myth and Geography—World, Space and Their Understanding in Older and Newer Cultures* (Herrmann and Sons, Prague, 2008), can serve as further introduction to the topic.

Space and Feng Shui

Feng Shui is an ancient, possibly Neolithic Chinese doctrine about where to found a village in order to maximize the benefit from the moisture and shield it from the winds. Later the learning developed specifically



We share this view with C. G. Jung, Lou Andreas-Salomé, Gustav Klimt and Salvador Dalí. It is the view from bathroom window to backyard below from Sigmund Freud's apartment. Photography Václav Cílek

connected to the establishment of temples and to find the proper location of family tombs. In more recent times it has been applied to the interiors of houses. In most cases it reaches Europe in a popular form—how to rearrange the furniture when you have a headache. Around 150 titles about Feng Shui have been published in the Czech Republic and I can't think of one that I could strongly recommend (for starters try, Andrew Alois Urbiš: *Žít feng-šuej v našich podmínkách/ Living Feng Shui in Our Conditions*, 2010).

However, the current popularity of Feng Shui garbage should not obscure the fact that it is one of the deepest concepts on how to handle space, developed over many centuries. Although the doctrine is based on the flow of life force ch'i, it does not require a magical approach because it also has aesthetic foundations. In other words, a Feng Shui aspirant or user does not necessarily have to feel magical underground currents and pathogenic zones, but they must have a sense of beauty, art and proportion.

Part of the doctrine is the notion that sharp corners are negative, that the center of the space should be empty ("the happy middle"), that entrances and stairs to the house are important and should not be blocked because the force flows through them, etc.. Feng Shui is important because it verbally and logically analyzes the elements of space and their functioning. With ancient Greek temples we perceive their sensitive incorporation into the landscape, but documents of an ancient Greek Feng Shui (from late tradition of Vitruvius, Alberti) are few and scanty. Critically understood (both trusted and mistrusted), Feng Shui is great for a deeper understanding of the surroundings, or for equipping the bedroom, but when used in stage design, it leads to the creation of pure, meditative, almost sterile and sleepy environments. Another part of Feng Shui is the study of mirrors.

Genius Loci

Genius loci is literally the spirit of the place, but today we take it metaphorically as the atmosphere or charge of a certain place. Genius loci comes into being when a place has some power before the arrival of man. Man appears and attempts to win the favor of this power. His dead, especially heroes and poets, growing together and united with the original basis together create one many-membered being. Its original function was protection; today it is mostly inspiration.

Genius loci is a living thing. People on the move need two or three days before they are connected with it on a subconscious level. Something in them is looking for and needs the spirit of the place. Otherwise genius loci is something that we feel immediately, but then it takes another thirty years before we get accustomed to it. Perhaps the best definition of genius loci is – “it is the unnameable reason for which we return to a given place.”

Giza, behind the Pyramid of Menkaure. Mixing two mysterious worlds – Egypt of the pharaohs and the broken wagons of pyramid explorers. The two worlds are divided by five thousand years, but they have a lot in common. Perhaps the best definition of genius loci is – “it is the unnameable reason for which we return to a given place.”

Topos

Topos is the Greek word for place, but in fact, it means something more – it is also the way a place functions. Topos is not only the actual location, but also the stories, fates and types of people that are linked with it. We sometimes talk about a literary topos, for example at night in a cemetery. In her important monograph *Places With a Secret* (Místa s tajemstvím, 1994), Daniela Hodrová describes places like a mountain, a crevice, a city, but also even places like a book, and a text. We can already feel the ambivalence of the term – I can have a strong and

mysterious book (like *The Zohar* or *Ibbur*), which creates its own space; a word that will become a place.

Similarly, a powerful figure such as Alexander the Great or Helen of Troy creates not only a story, but also a force that saturates certain places. A Czech example would be Karel Hynek Mácha, who has become inseparable from the Czech countryside. The concept of literary spaces (the plural is *topoi*) originally comes from another giant, inspirational monograph by Ernest Robert Curtius *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (Curtius, 1998). Curtius, among other things, defines “old” (today we would say archaic) as a part of an essence, or quotes Valéry – “that modern spirit is content with little.” Curtius is remarkable because he shows that what we consider to be modern is actually merged with ancient tradition, as if our rivers took their water from the Tiber.

Makom

The word *makom* comes from the Hebrew. It means “the place” but more a place in the heart. Imagine that this place, this heart is tied to the fixed stars of our lives by variously long and variously elastic threads – to the real home landscape, the language, the people with whom we live. As we get older and change, the length and strength of the threads-relationships changes. Then it is necessary every so often to stop, and to find out where one’s heart is wandering or roaming and what it is bound with. In the Kabbalah, the meaning of the word *makom* is more grave – it represents the sixth heaven, where everything is predestined. In the sixth heaven, high above the mundane events, the seeds of events that will ripen on the earth in time are made. That is why people observe eclipses, storms and strange clouds and are worried by the comets. In the middle of the sixth heaven, there is the dark abyss Daat Beria, the voice that gives knowledge comes out of it. *Makom*, however, can also be seen on an entirely practical, everyday level. When I am young, I need to find out

who I am. Afterwards, I take care of my family and build a career, and eventually mature to greater work. *Makom* is not stable, it is transformed by loyalty to oneself, family, country, god, etc. The basic anchor of *makom* is the six-pointed star, its upper triangle in the primary sense means the obligation towards the things overhead, and bottom triangle is the obligation towards practical, mundane issues. They are intertwined. One option of site specific is a natural stance – so that the levels of both the lower and upper triangle are present in the action. But this is basically the function of classical theater as well (Cílek, 2004).

Darkness as Interior Spaces

We usually look at a stage of any type in terms of lighting, but here I am trying to show that shadow and darkness can function just as powerfully. It is generally understood that light is the outer world and darkness the inner one. After long observation of darkness in various caves, old mines, and after a week in total darkness, I have become convinced that the darkness is not just a lack of light, as bitter is not just the absence of sweet, or a desert just the lack of a lake, but an independent phenomenon. We are well aware of this in the case of light and do not define it as a lack of darkness. Architects and interior designers should work with darkness in just the same way they work with light. We can take as an example vibrant luxury stores with an abundance of light, or another modern facility—the casino, which on the contrary must be dark.

It was only after my stay in the dark that I began to realize the beauty and value of a state for which we use the word “twilight”. It reigns for example at a cafe in Vienna, a Tibetan monastery or at sunset. I would describe twilight as a psychological condition in which sensations coming from the outside are in balance with the feelings and thoughts within. Mere light is too “external.” A forest

clearing lit by the sun which still however has shady and dark areas seems a natural and preferable model for interior light. And because some feelings, thoughts and physical processes can only be provided through darkness, the need for its protection is clear. Darkness, after a few million years of human evolution began to disappear thoughtlessly and dramatically after 1960.

Impressions of the dark are individual and most people who have experienced staying in the dark speak of the “embrace of the night”—about how they did not want to leave their safe dark room at the end of the experiment. I myself have met three kinds of darkness. Darkness came first as Demeter, a Greek goddess who mainly watches over crops and plants. She is a caring underground Mother of Roots of Blessed Darkness that veils man and gives him peace and concentration.

This kind of darkness at some point evolved into another form which I would call Nemesis. Nemesis was originally also an agricultural goddess, but her main function was to protect order and balance happiness. She mercilessly punished anyone who was guilty of prideful or powerful arrogance. It is said about her that she caused the Persian defeat at the nearby Marathon because the proud Persians brought with them a marble block to make a monument of their victory. Finally, Pheidias carved a statue of Nemesis out of it.

Nemesis punishes guilt and sends her fiery serpents of remorse that bite into the human body and tear it. However, afterwards a person becomes more aware of what they did or did not do and they have a chance to reconcile with the multitude of powerful “Children of the Night.” I heard of a case in which a judge, during his stay in a German darkness sanatorium realized that his misconduct caused the suicide of a man who was probably innocent. Nemesis caught up with him in there, but after a few nights in tears he was able to soften her up. I myself felt I better understood texts from the Egyptian



Acropolis. There are places to which all of us relate. We compare all Greek temples with the Parthenon. Photography Václav Čílek

Book of the Dead, when the underworld gods in one episode of the cannibalistic myth hack and devour a man's body. By this act they also relieved him of his burden. I think it is becoming clear that man brings his demons with him into the night which become even stronger in the dark. The last type of darkness was destructive, a destructive darkness as an expression of evil. I had a childish feeling that the bogeyman was standing in the corner of the room and that he is very evil. I paid attention and was sure not to drive away this fear too quickly, because then I would have nothing to observe. I realized that the word "night"—noc, Nacht, nox—is one of the very old Indo-European words and that it is related to the word nothing. It expresses another fundamental aspect of darkness, as something that can engulf the world and bring it into chaos and destruction. There was a strong presence, a tangible feeling of real evil.

Psychedelic Space

Actually, I am not surprised that by sleep, that little death, a person enters into a world of darkness, where he regenerates and connects to the deeper parts of his being, but also finds himself on the edge of a hostile environment, which he tries to keep away with a prayer for healthy sleep. The ancient Greeks sometimes imagined a sleeping body as a city with keepers at the gate while wolves and monsters waited outside. I wonder why taking drugs rarely makes one better. I think because a person, by voluntarily entering the night, opens their gates to it and lulls their guardians to sleep, and they are eventually overpowered by monsters. In artistic creation it is usually the case that the drugs first give inspiration, then take it away. Unfortunately, all my peers from my generation have witnessed this more than once. A similar, but slower and in most cases more manageable process happens with alcohol.

Death as Space of Treacherous Sharing

So far we have stayed on the level of craftsmanship and simple philosophy, but we can go much further. One of the sources of theater are kinds of sacred plays which are played for the gods, not the people. In other cases, we see a theatrical event which is intended for the dead. In the Balkans, nobody believes the wailing and breast-beating of professional mourners but it the appropriate thing to do, and the dead, who for the next 40 days will remain among the living, can be fooled by them quite well. The Berbers bury their dead, and then the women lock their house to prevent their return. Another example was the funeral of an important dignitary or member of the Pharaoh's family in ancient Egypt. It was a complex choreographed "show" designed for the subjects and relatives, and for the deceased himself, and all of the gods he will meet in his underworld and later celestial journey. The performance began on the embalmment tables in Mennofer, then the body was taken by a solar barge with noble curves "beyond the water" into the valley temple. It was then taken up a narrow, decorated tunnel on an upward path toward the memorial temple, and placed into the pyramid. The whole thing was accompanied by chanting and music, the placing of flowers and hundreds of other tasks (these elements can be found, for example in the Coptic Liturgy of St. Basil). Many of these activities are based on general human psychology and are used to this day. Allegorical wagons of May Day parades resemble the triumphs of Roman emperors, or the Hellenic festivals in Alexandria. I am not trying to draw attention to the antique gestures and habits, but to the fact that a considerable part of the art of past ages was not intended for the living but the dead and that this tradition perhaps should be cultivated again. I discuss this topic in more detail in Orpheus, *The Book of Underground Rivers* (Cilek, 2009), an anthology of ancient sayings about the complex journey through the underworld.



Golgotha, Jerusalem, Final Place. Photography Václav Čilek

I cannot rule out, for example, that contests for Miss Something-or-other are not in fact fallen versions of the cult of the goddess Aphrodite. I do not judge the cultish aspects of football matches, as seen in the actions of hard-core fans, where at the same time we can feel a lack of gravity and sacredness. Things were probably similar in ancient times.

Site Specific and Natural Disasters: the Need for Small Rituals

So far we have understood site specific as an art or a kind of social reflection, or a possibility for regeneration of locations or collective memory. Now we will see how it can be applied to give comfort, psychological support, and possibly to find a way to live with the elements. Imagine an almost unsolvable situation where a theater group arrives at a flooded village a few days after a flood and must choose a performance which would help the desperate victims, weary rescue workers, and helpless army of engineers, and perhaps sets some new rules for working with water as well. Here we can really touch the marrow of things. Art is forgotten (like Cézanne forgot science to create with its aid) and people and the insecure world outside remain. Rescue workers distribute blankets and food to the victims. Their dreams, fears, and neuroses can only be touched by art or God. But since we are not students of the Catholic seminary in Litoměřice, we try to find our own solutions.

The basic principle is that, if a personal experience becomes collective memory, it is less painful.

After a disaster, one's soul can be affected by posttraumatic stress disorder, or PTSD. This involves long-term psychological problems that manifest in nervousness, insomnia, sudden waves of memories, but also in an increased tendency to suicide, partner problems or forms of inappropriate behavior. A few years after the flooding caused by hurricane Katrina almost 10% of the youth population

had problems dealing with the disaster. In New Orleans, the number of heart attacks of older people post Katrina increased to three times the number before the disaster. The effects of disasters last for years.

In the first days and weeks of a disaster the blow is usually better borne by men than women, but after about three months, the roles change. The men are responsible for repairing the house and obtaining financing. In the first months after Katrina, violent crime in New Orleans dropped, probably because it was people with affection for the place and its community that were first to return to the city. But the situation rapidly changed for the worse. A year after Katrina, the number of murders rose by 70% and amounted to 97 killed per one hundred thousand inhabitants, nearly eight times more than the U.S. average. In general, we can say that the New Orleans society after the disaster is less homogeneous and significantly more violent than it was before the disaster. But it bore the seeds of this state long before the hurricane, and Katrina only highlighted the social disease. Most today believe that it will take at least ten more years until this misfortune will be smoothed over in the minds of people.

Episodes of severe flooding were repeated in Central Europe several times from the years 1997–2010, both on the scale of individual places and entire regions. They were studied in a series of research projects and summarized in the compilation *Psychology of a Catastrophic Event* (Kohoutek, Čermák, 2009). Like in the case of Katrina, the study showed that psychological restoration takes a long time. Shortly after the flood, we can expect about a quarter or a third of people to suffer from some form of post-traumatic stress. That number drops to about 10% over the next two years, which still represents hundreds or thousands of people.

The more difficult phase occurs only after two or three years when there is finally a little time to attend to oneself.

It was first necessary to repair the houses and only after a while do people begin to make observations, evaluate their neighbors and “repair” themselves. In approximately 30% of cases the flood strengthened family ties, and in 15% the result was family breakdown and deterioration of relationships with friends. Here, too, the flood brings earlier problems to the surface and amplifies them.

Experience shows that paramedics, firefighters and police officers also suffer from posttraumatic states. They, too, need attention. Disaster victims themselves tend to have highly individual reactions, in which they feel contentment and joy at the fact that they survived, but there are also metaphysical feelings of guilt that their conduct offended God or nature, and that they are therefore responsible for the misery. There are the typical string of emotions—from helplessness, anger, looking for someone to blame, envy that a neighbor got more assistance, to a partial reconciliation. It is interesting that a medium level rather than high amount of emotional support proved most helpful—people felt that they had someone to rely on, but knew that they had to resolve the matter themselves. A new psychological discipline is being developed which deals with post-traumatic personality growth, i.e. situations where disaster offers one a different way of life, or at least a different way of perceiving the world.

It is good when the community itself tries, albeit slowly and not very effectively, to help, because in this way it builds its self-confidence and this determines the functioning of the local community for years to come. Unfortunately, it often happens that local, slightly confused volunteers are driven away by professional helpers who see them as a hindrance to effective external assistance; this encourages a dependence on the state. After a few weeks, the exhausted volunteers leave, since good will has its limits. Some of them leave with a sense of ingratitude and misunderstanding, because sometimes they

functioned as lightning rods—as visible evidence of an abnormal situation and moreover, their homes were not flooded, so they have somewhere to go back to. In the following months or years someone from the outside should come to these flooded areas and at least ask what people need. For folklorists it is interesting to observe the healing role of small rituals similar to (old Slavic) thanksgivings. This can be a commemoration, Mass for the dead, or celebrations at the end of one phase of assistance—a sort of flood ball.

I deliberately talked about this matter in detail so as to bring other, so far little explored possibilities for theater in three post catastrophic fields:

catharsis of areas affected by disaster,
devising small, natural, collective rituals that help people to overcome these challenges over time, necessary to cope with a natural disaster,
supporting post-traumatic creativity, new directions for minds worn out by disaster.

Exercise: on the Fourth Nile cataract in northern Sudan there are rock gongs from the time older than the Egypt of the Pharaohs. People beat them, or sat on the bank of the river and threw pebbles on different sizes and different sounding stones. The whole thing was probably quite complex with singing and dancing. It was a kind of communication with the river—to rise slowly and sensibly. The exercise consists in finding a way to bring this custom to the river Horní Ohře. Site specific in running water almost always has great magic.

Here we are pretty far away from the original “instructions for doing art” but there are other horizons, such as theater played for Earth or water, theater interaction with cows and other animals or natural events performed for the dead. This is not avant-garde, but another return to the classical Greek theater and its many archaic predecessors.

Space in Architecture and Sculpture

In my opinion, architecture and sculpture are very close to site specific art. Both must deal with real space effectively and need great understanding of space in order for the sculpture or architecture to work aesthetically, socially and practically. The late fruits of these efforts are the art of installation, environment, or a work of art in public space. Site specific, action art and performance are actually social mobiles, moving multimedia sculptures. The artist can proceed in two ways—either take one of his favorite works as a solid base, such as Dürer's carving or a Chinese garden, and animate it, but it is more realistic to with the current trend of reviving urban places, as, for example, as represented in the significant publication by Jan Gehl (Gehl, 2000, 2002).

Gehl observes that the benches facing the place where something is happening are the ones that are first occupied. This is also the principle of a Turkish teahouse or a Greek coffee shop. A hidden camera followed events during the completion of a department store. More people watched the construction workers than the strikingly arranged shop windows. Wherever something is happening observers appear. This is a great hope for site specific. If something can be criticized about these useful tendencies to regenerate public spaces, then it is the lack of chaos and bizarreness. Regenerations resulting from public competitions usually lead to a state of sterile German cleanliness without mystery or inspiration. This too can become, just like the sterile interior of a shopping center or a gas station, an artistic challenge.

It pays to study the ideas of painters, sculptors and architects about space and filling space (see Kupka, V.Kandinsky, P. Klee, N. Pevsner and many others).

Site Specific Machine—legalized staring at neighbors

In his lecture about his intervention into an old railway track in New York City at the Gočár Symposium in

Hradec Kralove (8. – 9. 9. 2010), David Vávra presented a special case of the automatic site specific. The architect created a system of benches reminiscent of theater seats in the area of the former elevated train platform. People sit there and deliberately watch other people who enter the staircase and continue on the route of the former railway. The architect has thus in effect legalized our need to stare at other people. In the process of their legitimized staring the people who enter can also watch the people on the benches. I can imagine a site specific machine which would be located somewhere above the subway escalator, where the viewers would spend a curious half hour simply looking at the people coming towards them. Again, this is a very old, at least as old as the medieval concept of cafes in Cairo or a more recently the institution of the Greek, Turkish and Parisian bistros, all of which face the people walking by.

“Hence arises the fact which strikes the eye everywhere in the records of ethnology and folklore—the fact that the same frigid and detached spirit which leads to success in the study of astronomy or botany leads to disaster in the study of mythology or human origins ... If a man wishes to know the origin of human society, to know what society, philosophically speaking, really is, let him not go into the British Museum; let him go into society.”

K. G. Chesterton's essay “Science and The Savages” from the book *Heretics*.

Areas of Interspecies Communication

In the last few years we have witnessed a sharp increase in projects that focus on courtship dances of animals or birds' singing. We are however not just listening to the animals any more—there are artists who first listened to the whales and then, using microphones submerged in the water, also played back to them.

American ecologist Irene Pepperberg taught Alex the parrot acts which we might have thought possible in

chimpanzees but not in birds. Alex learned to recognize 35 objects. He uses words such as “come here” and “I want it” functionally, not randomly. He recognizes and accurately names seven colors and can count to six. He understands even relatively abstract concepts, such as that some things are “the same” and others are “different.” These experiments demonstrated that parrots are roughly at the same level of intelligence as primates, whales and elephants. Many other species are probably just as smart, but we cannot communicate with them technically.

Animals with whom we can communicate usually live in a social environment like people—that is, in a community in which there are hierarchies and various lobby groups. What are the experiences of our Czech parrots bred in the laboratory for interspecies communication at the Charles University Faculty of Humanities in Prague like?

There is a small flock of seven birds on average. The parrots can see each other and they do live in cages, but they are able to fly. Students alternate, but it is preferable that the birds are not disturbed by “onlookers” so experiments are carried out privately. Students test the birds using several methods, such as a competition between the parrot and another student—the teacher gives them tasks and waits for the better answer.

Some results are surprising and shed light on human competitiveness. She-parrot Jarina was not too eager to study and her results were very poor. Everything changed very quickly when Marketa, who already spoke quite well was added to the group. She used the appropriate words like “hello” when somebody entered the room, or “ouch” when pecked at. When Jarina found out how much better Marketa was in communication with humans—and better communication with the “boss” in this case means a higher social status—she began using human words within hours! But still a big difference remained. In late 2003 Marketa used 269 expressions and Jarina just over 30. But she knew more sounds and had become more

sensitive to vocal intonation. An interesting situation occurs when it is easier for a parrot to communicate with another parrot using human words rather than “parrot song.” Birds even use the Czech language to swear at each other! This is a real example.

When a different smart bird, for example raven, is assigned to communicate with parrot, another interesting situation occurs. For birds who are strangers to one another it is more convenient to agree to use the language both birds are familiar with—Czech. These studies teach us to recognize what we need more and more of—the art of communication—which did not begin in the parliament or in the nursery, but somewhere in a Mesozoic forest, or even earlier. This also reflects one of many, and in this case a truly exhilarating new relationships in the world.

Conclusion

My friend Jerry Zaslove from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver wrote to me: “If the future of the world is not in culture, there won’t be any future at all.” The world is changing, the theater too, the role of site specific in this process is natural and irreplaceable.

Artists of Place

“How it (the past) marks itself as higher actuality is determined by the image as which and in which it is comprehended. And this dialectical penetration and actualization of former concepts puts the truth of all present action to the test. Or rather, it serves to ignite the explosive materials that are latent in what has been.”

Walter Benjamin, *Paris, The Capital of the 19th Century, Arcades Project (Passagenwerk)*, translated by Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin

Usually they are creative, but often annoyingly uncompromising and emotional; they snoop inquisitively into the past and simultaneously look into their own future with an open face, legitimately, for this means to desire, to expect ...

They work freely anywhere between a bankrupted factory and a barren lake. It makes me think of the project *mass meat*: a small monument to the victims of meat and mass media—a moment when, somewhere in the north of the country, in a decaying industrial, a pig’s head was placed on a television set with icy irony, with lit candles beside it, and through the window a gentle fragment of this gray industrial quarter shone. They often “test the world” in remote villages and towns and forgotten landscapes, regardless whether it is in the Sudetenland, Slovakia, or in the Balkans, somewhere far away in the mountains, where not even Google Maps focus their satellites, where no alarms nor cameras yet peep ...

And they bring an image of the world which inspires respect. But what kind of image is this? Where does the image lead? Where are its edges? And what concerns of our time does it hit? These images are often uncompromisingly critical, but also very sensitive, yet so authentic that it is often “difficult to manage” for the participants themselves. They attract attention to the symptoms—to the haunting and non-chronological game of latencies and crises; they find similarities in the images presented in both the past and current reality, first usurped, then false, and finally monstrous. Someone might say: “Well, that’s unbelievable!” Mostly because they laugh as they do it (but at other times they are serious, pale) ... and we watch with chills down our spine as their hand slowly ignites the explosive’s fuse ...

It is here that the question emerges: Under what conditions can a different artistic approach arise in the so familiar context of contemporary art? And, are we catching a glimpse of experiment here? And, how does this come hand in hand with a revolt against the prevailing commercial system and radical rejection of the *status quo*? The electrifying effect is sometimes shocking, but is it always revealing? Well, the state of the world may in fact be behind this, the spirit of our times.

“Performance is again on the edge, the work of crazies, maladjusted citizens, bohemians; ‘artists.’ I see this time, people, groups, work from the perspective of disappearance: as a procession which had passed, but we can still hear the trumpets from a distance.”

Richard Schechner, “The Decline and Fall of the (American) Avant-Garde.” *Performing Arts Journal*, 1981

In order for a speech of phrases, speech without concealment, in which there is no time for ones' own personal thinking to become part of citizens' thinking, not to be perceived as something alien, it must extend to all segments of culture and **on the level of space, this means erasing the memory of sites**. These "artists of place" work systematically with locality, its memory and its community, and are equipped both with an artistic and theoretical background; moreover, both are linked to experiences gained in the field. This terrain is often a kind of *terra incognita*, a vague empty space, a metabolite secreted by the body of the city, or even a society where organisms, ghosts, myths of urban (sub) culture and aesthetics live and thrive.

We read about spaces which most of us do not have direct experience of and few of us would willingly walk around in, here our views are shaped by mass media. This landscape of islands of emptiness created by industry and our current neglected urbanization, but obviously by society as well, is made up of industrial complexes, disused stations, old ports, residual landfill sites, quarries, river banks and urban peripheries, ghettos and isolated, remote villages, old churches and monasteries, *le terrain vague* of long forgotten places and stories where the time passes and life is being done differently. A landscape of no-places, spaces of temporary existence—all those undecided, marginalized vague islands have their people, often groups segregated by social, age, gender or ethnic criteria.

According to culturologist Pavel Hájek: *"Efforts aimed at understanding the other come, in the majority of cases, at the moment when a new power system is fixed, absorbed, and more or less respected—that is, when the 'wilderness' is finally assimilated, when there are almost no authentic sources of information left (...) at the moment when there is almost nothing to know: wildernesses (even those of today's industrial, ethnic, social ones...), their scope and frequency, represent the historical development of human inability, impossibility of directly respecting the other."* Perhaps the new system is absorbed and the phase of erosion is setting in, wildernesses are disappearing, but the sources of society are refreshed only by the complicated efforts of coming to know the other people.

This book presents creative artistic site specific projects, which originated in the newly established interdisciplinary program of study in **Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces (DTNP) at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater (KALD), at the Theater Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (DAMU), in its as it were "zero year"**, and whose authors—students coming from the traditions of alternative theater—return again (how many times has it been) to the strategies of the avant-garde, combining theater with conceptual thinking and artistic practice. Theater has always been a visual and performative matter, but these students are also working with sociological methods, the methods of so-called oral history, field procedures of "reading" landscape as interpreted text through the prism of life of ordinary people. None of them, however, would "waltz into" a place on the borderlands, or into the Roma community with a utopian enthusiasm for engaging in culture—quite the opposite, they are coming cautiously and

deliberately, aware of all ethical risks. If I am to choose a metaphor: they approach cautiously like dogs with their tails between their legs.

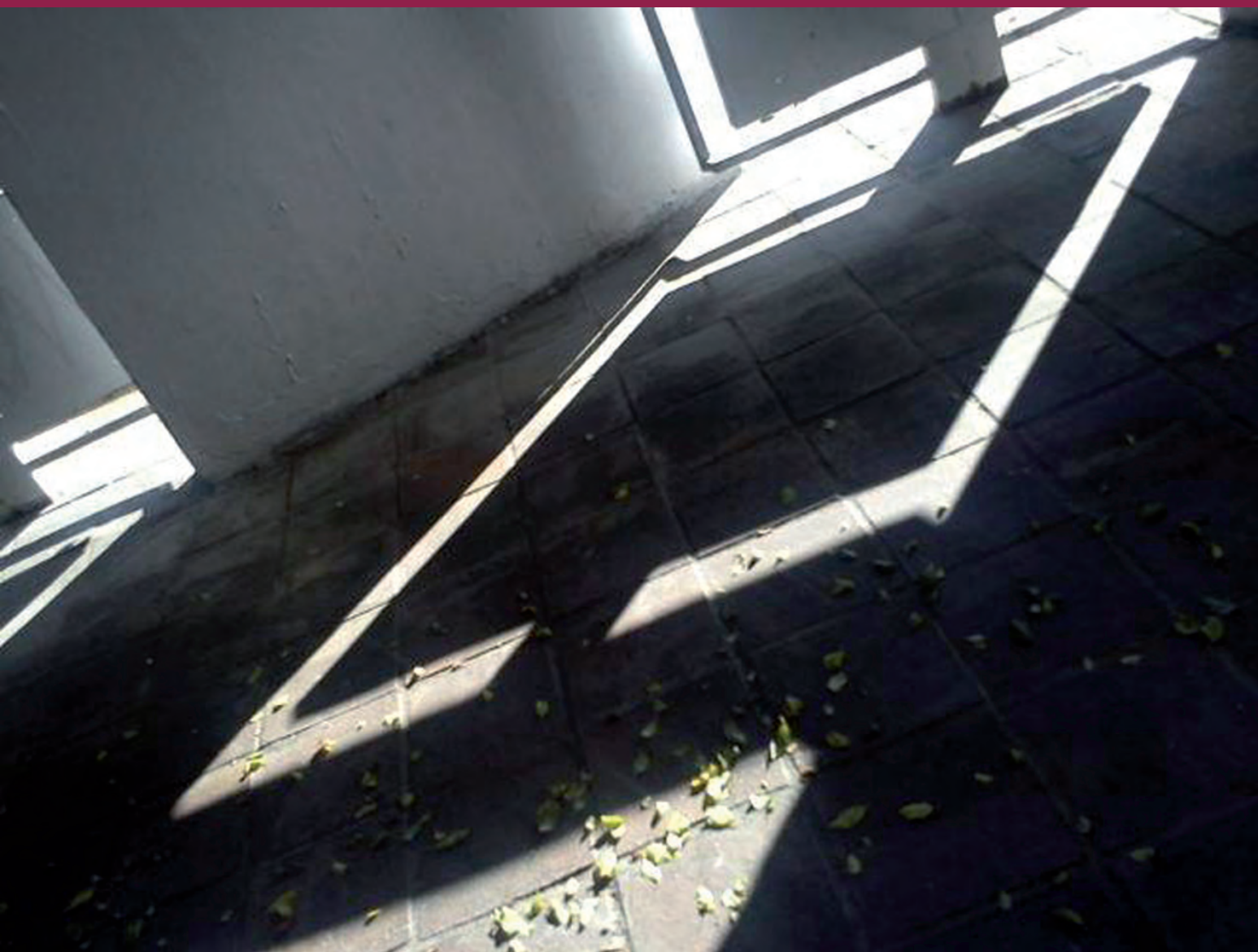
The determining factor for this type of work is always a place—and it often is a **very unusual space**, in which participants become intertwined and they link imagination with the methods of art and science. This is not surprising, for they were taught the art of place by innovative educators as well, individuals from diverse disciplines such as theater, geology, history of industrial architecture, performance, production and sociology—one almost wants to say by a few venerable founding fathers like: Karel Makonj, Miloslav Klíma, Vladimír Mikeš, Tomáš Žižka, Václav Cílek, Benjamin Fragner, Tomáš Ruller, Pavel Štorek and Rudolf Šmíd.

This book is primarily a tribute to social ecologist Bohuslav Blažek (1942-2004), who tirelessly searched for a common language of arts, social and natural sciences. As a university instructor, he led the students towards independent and critical thinking and an unconventional view of architecture and the environment—among other places, at the Department of Theater Anthropology at the Theater Academy of Performing Arts in Prague (1999-2002).

. . . when I bought a ticket, walked in, and saw this marvelous curtain go up with the possibility of something happening behind it, and then nothing happening..

John Cage

Radoslava Schmelzová



Light, 2012, Vltavská Metro station. Photography mamapapa archive

Timeline

Compiled by Jan Dvořák

1949

March 24

Artist **Vladimír Boudník** on his solitary path of the action artist publishes his manifesto *Art-Explosionalism* (April 15, 1949 continues with *Manifesto of Explosionalism no. 2*).

1950

February 15

Vladimír Boudník distributes *Explosionalism Manifesto no. 3* and commences his *painting actions* in several public spaces in Prague, inviting passersby to actively participate in the experience. In May, the artist begins to issue a typewritten edition of *Explosionalism*.

1964

After the prologue ("Environment," 1962-63) **Milan Knížák's** first happenings take place in Prague (*Demonstrations of One*, 1964; *A Walk in the New World in Prague–Demonstration of All The Senses; Demonstrations for J.M., Game of Soldiers*, 1965, etc.). The **Happening** movement, including its Czech offshoots, as well as other forms of action art belong to the constitutive prehistory of site specific theater projects.

1966

Action artist and initiator of happenings **Eugen Brikcius** organizes the happening *Achilles and the Tortoise*, and a year later another event *Kampa Still Life with Beer*. In 1967, in the gardens under Prague Castle, he created his *Thanksgiving* event; in the same year, he also realized also *Humanized Crossroads*; in 1968, *Picnics, Spiritually Mapping the City*, etc.

1968

March 17

In Brno, the company **Goose on a String (Husa na provázku)** launches its public activity as an indirect domestic residue of the rapid process of theater development in Europe and America in the 1960s, for which the term "second theater reform" has become used in our country. Speaking about the characteristics of the reform which generated prerequisites for site specific projects within our country, we should mention the particularly imaginative and varying relationship of the theatrical environment to space, taking into account a flexibility in the artist-spectator relationship and attention to the specifics of space.

1969

June 4

The Ministry of Interior permits the formation of the **Jazz Section** of the Union of musicians. The organization's inaugural meeting took place on October 30, 1969. Through its publications–**Jazz Bulletin** (from 1972) the **Situation Edition** (from 1979) and the editorial series in **Jazzpetit** (from 1980) – the Jazz Section promoted new ideas and concepts in the visual arts and theater, and reported on trends in conceptual art, land art, etc.

1970

Eugen Brikcius moves from happenings and other action forms on to manifestations of **land art**, another constitutive requirement of site specific projects (including projects *Sundial, Monthly Hours*). His activities were continued by, among others, the painter Rudolf Němec (in that year he carried out the outdoor event

Pupation in Roztoky), and in the first half of the 1970s other artists (Olaf Hanel, Zorka Ságlová, Karel Nepraš and Jan Steklík of Křižovnická School of Pure Humor Without Wit). A younger generation would follow, including Pavel Büchler and his group K.Q.N.

1973

Brno's Theater on a String (Divadlo na Provázku) founds its traditional event **Theater in Motion (Divadlo v pohybu)** which from the 1980s, would take place in five-year intervals (1982, 1987, 1993, 1998, etc.) with the aim of presenting tendencies of irregular and alternative theater and para-theatrical events.

1974

Jan Mlčochenter's action art presents individual artistic events in specific locations: *Ascent of Mount Kotel*, 1974; *Suspension–The Big Sleep*, 1974; *No Return* in the Terezin Small Fortress, 1976 etc. He later worked with Karel Miler and Peter Štembera.

The Happening, *The Way* in the Moravský kras cave Pekárna, was a work by Brno action artist, follower of land art and performer **Tomáš Ruller**, who later participated in many events related to the topic of this publication (in activities *Malechov* in 1980 and 1981, *Mala Strana courtyards* in 1981, a performance with Min Tanaka and Mai Juku in 1988, etc.). He often worked with Goose on a String theater (Husa na provázku)–for example in the events Theater in motion II and III, Mir Karavan, etc. and his work is at the intersection of art and theater, in the new line of Czech art of the 1970s called **performance**, a precedent stage of site specific projects.

1976

Jiří Kovanda carries out events in the public space of Wenceslas Square – *Theater* and *Untitled* (with sequels in 1977, 1978 and later).

1980

June 3 – 14

The Working Symposium of Artists **Terezín '80**, was located in the economic building and cells of Terezin Small Fortress. Its artistic outputs–works by Zdeněk Beran, Ivan Bukovský, Ivan Dolejšek, Lubomír Janeček, Petr Kovář, Oldřich Kulháněk and Jiříh Sozanský–were documented by the Jazz Section in a catalog of the same name and by film footage by Michal Baumbruck. Sculptor **Čestmír Suška** graduated in sculpture at the Academy of Fine Arts (studying from 1974–1980) with his work *Figure in Time*, which deals with the object in an environment and in time. He later began to create art labyrinths, installations, action and processual concepts and theateralized art presentations–foreshadowing attributes of subsequent site specific projects. Significant in this respect is his collaboration with Naďa Rawová–especially the activity of 15 artists named **Malechov '80** after its South Bohemian location, held in July and August 1980.

The most significant world theater festival Theater of Nations this year took place–under the name **Festival of Fools**, in Amsterdam. 90 groups from 25 countries participated (Czech participants included Divadlo na provázku/Theatre on a String). 500 performances were held for 100,000 spectators in many industrial, atypical and outdoor spaces. This marked a shift of theater to new environments, communication frameworks and contexts established in the Netherlands, the birthplace of site specific projects.

1981

May 12 – 24

Mala Strana (Lesser Quarter) Courtyards '81–an installation by 20 artists in historical Mala Strana courtyards initiated by Čestmír Suška and Jiří T. Kotalík in collaboration with the Theatre on Nerudovka, attended by

spectators and participants individually following a map for the event. (A publication was issued about the action called *Courtyards 81–Sculptures and Objects in Lesser Quarter Courtyards* with text by Jiří T. Kotalík.)

Summer

The visual event by organizers Čestmír Suška and Nada Rawová **Malechov 81** is repeated as a non-public “art symposium”.

September 26

In the majestic and dilapidated West Bohemian **Plasy Monastery** Anna Fárová launched an exhibition by 18 photographers titled *9 & 9*; this monastic complex was thus discovered and introduced to the art community for subsequent activities.

Čestmír Suška, the sculptor, documentary filmmaker Michael Baumbruck and the composer of minimalist music Pavel Richter founded **Art Theater Carousel (Výtvarné divadlo Kolotoč)** as an outcome of creative efforts to animate figurines, masks, silhouettes, to cinematize images and examine them in time and space.

1982

Implementation of the project *Pater Noster* of Čestmíra Suška's Art Theater Carousel (Výtvarné divadlo Kolotoč) in the elevator of the Faculty of the Czech Technical University in Prague.

September

In Brno, the **Theater in Movement** takes place for the second time—the performances included theater productions by Divadlo na provázku, a series of para-dramatic events, juggling and acrobatics workshops, etc., with a very creative use of the garden area of the Moravian Museum (in collaboration with Aleš Lamer, Tomáš Ruller, and others).

The event and ecological memento **Most 81/82** took place. Located in the outdoor spaces of the devastated city, it was a collaboration by several artists and was documented in

the *Jazz Section* publication of the same name and a by a documentary film by Michael Baumbruck.

In the *Jazz Section*, two decisive publications were printed in 1982 and 1983: “Minimal & Earth & Concept Art” by Karel Srp (*Jazzpetit* No. 11, 1st and 2nd part) and “Body, Matter and Reality in Contemporary Art” by Petr Rezek (*Jazzpetit* No. 17).

1983

June 18 – July 17

On the initiative of director Peter Scherhauser and dramaturg Petr Oslzlý, Theatre Husa na provázku / Goose on a String, becomes the first Czech theater to programmatically enter a purely industrial space in Copenhagen—the abandoned former rolling mill Valseverket—as a part of an international project *Together–Společně* on the topic Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of the Heart (together with the ensembles Den Bla Hest from Denmark, Teatr 77 from Poland and Cardiff Laboratory Theatre of Wales).

At the Prague Quadrennial, **Čestmír Suška** confronts official exposition with project *Spatial Moonlighting* inside the Brussels pavilion of the Exhibition Hall in Prague.

1984

In the Prague Juniors' Club at Chmelnice, Japanese Butoh dancer and choreographer **Min Tanaka** appears semi-illegally (with his production *Emotions*). A year later, at the same place, he performs *The Roof of Heaven*, which he also performed in the authentic environment of the Zbrašovské Caves in Teplice nad Bečvou. Later he performed in the Czech Republic several times—at Husa na provázku, Dum u divého muže in Prague, St. Nicholas church in Old Town Square, at DISK Theater, Archa Theater, the National Theater, and particularly in the open air in Jeseník Spa in 1996, where he danced *The Way of Life* surrounded by the statues of Jan Šimek.

The anonymous and perplexing program of the art sect **B.K.S.** (Bude konec světa / The World Will End) is beginning to develop work in a number of specific environments and locations. In the 1980s, it is mostly as a joke for the small circle of people involved (Jiří David, Jaroslav Róna, František Skála, Čestmír Suška, and others), and in a humorously morbid and surreal ceremony in the early 1990s for the general public as well. The activities of the group, important for their installations and actions in bizarre environments, were documented in the publication (*B. K. S.- Twenty Years of The Secret Organization*, Výtvarné umění/Fine Art, 1994, No. 3).

In **Technical Magazine T 84**, **Benjamin Fragner** publishes the study “Discarded factories” (“Odložené továrny”) (No.8, p. 14), regarded as pioneering in turning towards new uses of industrial architecture in the Czech Republic.

1985

June 26 – July 7, August 26. – September 1

In Prague, in the open air festival on Střelecký Island **Divadelní pouť/Theater Fair** was held for the first time, at the initiative of Václav Kotek, Jan Kratochvíl, Jakub Krejčí and Karel Makonj. Several projects, which worked with the peculiarity of atypical environments, were presented here (in two stages). From 1985 to 1990, six annual summer events took place. (In 1986, the fair also moved to Bratislava and Ostrava; in 1987, to Roskilde and Aarhus in Denmark, and also to Austria.)

Sociologist and ecologist **Bohuslav Blažek**, a pioneer in activities focused on landscape, held the *Landscape Symposium* in Smilkov park in southern Bohemia in collaboration with visual and theater artists who explored the historical contexts of this baroque location. Blažek’s research of landscape was often interconnected with artistic reflection and had a very intensive continuation throughout the 1990s, when this artistic discipline found its name–site specific.

The barbaric destruction of the train station building at Prague–Těšnov gave rise to a movement for the preservation of **industrial monuments** in the Czech Republic, and later–in 1987 – to the founding of the Division for Protection of Industrial Heritage at the National Technical Museum in Prague.

1986

January 17 – 19

Prague Five’s three-day event The Maze/ Bludiště aneb Mimotočskřed chmelový in Prague’s Junior-club Na Chmelnici was based on Čestmír Suška’s concept as a series of parallel productions by several ensembles located in specific areas of the club.

1987

Eva Dvořáková, Benjamin Fragner and Tomáš Šenberger initiate the formation of the **Division for Industrial Heritage Protection** at the National Technical Museum in Prague. (These activities later continue at the Research Centre for Industrial Heritage at ČVU.)

House No. 50–an environmental installation project by **Jiří Sozanský**.

1989

Petersburg theater commune **Derevo** settles into the Prague 4 Cultural Center in 1992, called theater Rampa (today the home of Duncan Centre). They performed their outdoor movement and physical theater projects on Branická Street, among others. Later–in 1998–Derevo participated in the 4 +4 Days in Motion festival in the waste water treatment plant in Bubeneč.

1990

The exhibition Czech Alternative took place at the Prague National Gallery ÚLUV. Over time the exhibition presented more than 150 leading Czech artists,

performers, music and theater groups; Allen Ginsberg and Lou Reed performed here as well.

Linhart Foundation brought some of the **spaces under the Stalin monument** into operation and organized the *Totalitarian Zone* festival in them, an event focusing on live international confrontation of alternative artists (with galleries, independent and avant-garde culture concerts and theater stages). 200 artists from 17 countries participated in the festival, and within two weeks it was seen by 30,000 spectators.

A 14-day nonstop outdoor project *Alternative* took place – it was an action for opening alternative clubs in Prague's Old Town Square. President Václav Havel and his advisers attended a meeting with representatives of Alternative.

Subsequently, Mayor of Prague Jaroslav Kořán offered dozens of empty spaces to alternative culture (future R. C. Bunkr, Rock Café, Roxy spaces, and more).

Stud-Art '90 – a show of young Czech artists in the spaces under the former Stalin monument in Prague. Students of all Prague art schools were invited to participate. Pale blue neon signs announced the screening of films by FAMU students. The audience deservedly responded positively to *Space Odyssey II* by Jan Svěrák and *Playback exercise* by Sklep Theater. The activities under the Stalin monument moved to **Dum U divého muže** on Sněmovní street in Lesser Quarter (Mala Strana). The first public event there was an exhibition of Martin Mainer's work. The same location hosted Min Tanaka, who introduced Butoh dance, and a performance by the theater commune Derevo.

At the Theater Faculty of the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague a new department was founded, the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater. There, Helena and Pavel Štourač met Dominik Tesař and together with S. Boráros, J. Brůček, V. Vrtek and M. Tůmová founded the ensemble **Continuo**, which has been engaged in street performances from its beginnings.

For 10 years, every summer since 1997, their event *Kratochvílení* has introduced a number of devised projects (for example, *Circus Vitae* in 1998). This event, which has site specific features, takes place in the castle Kratochvíle garden near Netolice. The core of this commune-type group, which works with numerous guests, has had their domicile in South Bohemia (from 1992 in Třebon) and since 1995, in a large and gradually restored farmhouse Švestkový dvůr/Plum Court, surrounded by tents, caravans and trailers on the outskirts of the village of Malovice.

Valdice – Jiří Sozanský's targeted localization project.

The exhibition **Industrial Architecture – Unused Heritage** is held at Prague's National Technical Museum.

After returning from Austria, **Eugen Brikcius** goes back to exploring communication in public spaces with his events: *Sundial*, 1990; *Moon hours*, *Still Life 2 and a half at Kampa*, 1991; *Thanksgiving*, 1992.

1991

February

Petr Bergmann, an acknowledged organizer of the independent art scene, wins the tender for the use of a school on Kafka Street (which was the home of the legendary Václav Martinec's theater Křesadlo in the first half of the 1970s) in Prague's Dejvice, and establishes a multifunctional cultural-social center with the unofficial name Black Hand. It becomes the home of Těatr Novogo Fronta, among others. The activity of this important center was ended in 1998 with the demolition of the building.

May–June

Guest performances of American ensemble **The Bread and Puppet Theater** with their project *Columbus – A New World Order*. The introductory part took place in Realistické divadlo in Prague, afterwards expanding into the adjacent Kinsky orchards. The extensive open-air

part of the paganly mysterious *Outer Story* ends with the famous rite of baking and serving bread. (The ensemble, led by Peter Schumann, had given their first guest performance in the Czech Republic in 1987- the chamber production *Life and Death of the Fireman*—on October 27 and 28 at the Junior-club Na Chmelnici.)

Linhart Foundation organized *Festival of Light “under Stalin,”* on the occasion of the Year of Tibet. The relationship of light and darkness dominated all installations and performances by dozens of domestic and foreign non-conformist artists.

The Dutch ensemble **Dogtroep**, that had been traveling the world since 1975, made their first stop in the Czech Republic—with the project *Stolen Titles* in Baráčnická rychta, Prague.

1992

June 13

The first concert – of the cult hardcore band Fugazzi—at **Roxy**. The Linhart Foundation won the Prague 1 Tender and acquired a permanent home for its activities there in the former Prague movie theater Roxy on Dlouhá Street. The first anonymous action on the borders of art and theater by **Skrytá tvůrčí jednotka K'D/K'D Hidden Creative Unit** appear (the group was later known as Jednotka / Unit), led by **Křištof Kintera**.

April–June

The **Hermit** Foundation under the direction of **Miloš Vojtěchovský** starts holding its annual (until 1998) International Interdisciplinary Symposium—art, music, dance and other events and performances—at the Cistercian monastery in Plasy.

1993

June–July

The Hermit Foundation International Interdisciplinary Symposium continues in the monastery Plasy. The

program was called *Letokruhy – Hermit II* and it dealt with the phenomenon of Baroque, this time with an emphasis on intermedial characteristics. It is attended by 100 artists.

1994

June 3 – 5

...Příští vlna / next wave..., a festival of alternative theater and the arts took place for the first time. It was held in several locations in Prague, including outdoor locations for specific guest projects. (For example, Jumping Hamada performed in the passage of Divadlo v Dlouhé or around Palace Akropolis, Alex Švamberk in the atrium of the Divadlo Na zábradlí, Bílé divadlo from Ostrava on Řetězová Street, Teatr Novogo Fronta in the Klementinum courtyard, Antonia Svobodová's performance in Old Town Square and on the roof of DISK Theater, Ensemble Continuo in the streets of the Old Town etc.) Since 1997, the festival has taken place the second week in October. The festival was founded by Jan Dvořák and Vladimír Hulec. Jana Návrátová and Denisa Václavová also participated in the initial two years, followed by Jakub Matějka a Jakub Vedral from Happy End Production. *Malamut*, a festival of action art, was established in the fall in Ostrava on the initiative of **Petr Lysáček** and **Jiří Surůvka**. (It was held on the streets of Ostrava and in the deserted Pavilion C in Ostrava's Exhibition Hall.) The project *Riders of the Apocalypse* was presented in 1996 as part of the Malamut festival. (The festival is named after the breed of dog, “who are strong, a bit different, and cannot be tamed.”) Beginning in 1999, the festival included installations and processual installations in public spaces as well as performances, and also more socially directed action, such as dialogue with the homeless in *Homeless Home* or the action *Pater Noster* (which took place in the building of Ostrava Town Hall). The civic association Vaňkovka was founded in Brno; in 1998 it was succeeded by the foundation of the same

name. Its aim was to regenerate the former factory complex in the city center for cultural and artistic use. Since 1996, a number of art events, performances and site specific projects have taken place there.

1995

Bohemiae Rosa – an international interdisciplinary workshop for dancers and artists, since 1995 – is still exploring the relationships between body, art and landscape. Its project topics include: exploration / body / place–exploration, restoration and creation of relationships between visual arts, dance, performance, music, literature, architecture, science, and the cultural landscape. The output of each of the workshops is a one-day presentation / performance open to the public, detailed video and photographic documentation, diaries of participants, text summaries and web presentations. At the end of 2004, the result of a ten-year effort was summarized in the form of a DVD *Bohemiae Rosa Project–10 Years*. Its authors are Miloš Šejn, Frank van de Ven and the civic association Bohemiae Rosa.

The international festival of performance art and action **Serpens** was held for the first time–in a synagogue at Palmovka, Prague. The initiators were director Ivo Krobot, playwright and dramaturg Michal Lázňovský (also active in the Divadlo na voru/Theater on the raft), and art theorist and curator Martina Pachmanová.

Artist **Jiří Sozanský** organizes the environmental project *Forum populi* in Sarajevo, one of several artistic, action and other installations during his three years of activities in Bosnia.

In the fall, a group of young people occupy the first of the houses in the unique historical site Old Střešovice (in Prague) which was designated for demolition by the pre-November regime. In 1998, the Charity Association of Merry-men (Medaci) is established on the initiative of

squatters and offers social and cultural programs under the project *Alternative for Old Střešovice*.

1996

February 25

Maze '96 – a parallel event of **Pražská pěťka/Prague Five** – with ensembles and artists performing in the whole area of the newly opened Palac Akropolis after its reconstruction.

March 22 – May 4

Ensemble **Dogtroep** performs for the second time in the Czech Republic–their project *Cool, Heavy Tango* premieres at the Archa Theater.

The civic association **Čtyři dny/Four days** was founded this year. Each year it organizes international theater **4 + 4 Days in Motion Festival**, which always takes place in atypical spaces, animating non-traditional places of Prague architecture–especially formerly industrial sites. The association, whose founders and long-term supporters are Pavel Štorek, Denisa Václavová, Markéta Černá and Nikola Böhmová (initially also Claudia Nasli), also organizes international co-production projects, cultural exchanges, performances and workshops.

Mamapapa civic organization was founded, a Czech division of the Amsterdam based independent non-profit initiative MAPA (Moving Academy for Performing Arts), which organizes courses, workshops, training sessions, lectures, seminars, presentations and co-productions–from acting, stage design and lighting design to management and communication. Leading personalities of the mamapapa Czech initiative–which contributed significantly to the development of site specific projects in the Czech Republic–were Tomáš Žižka, Markéta Hurychová, Šárka Havlíčková and others. Studio Citadel at 16 Klimentská Street in Prague became their home.

Hermit Foundation in the Cistercian monastery Pasy organized residencies, events, performances, installations,

exhibitions and screenings (curator Miloš Vojtěchovský) within the project *Center for Metamedia*.

1997

MAPA-forum in Bratislava–International pedagogical meeting in cooperation with the Amsterdam's MAPA, dedicated to the issue of the relationship of teacher and student at art schools and lifelong learning in the performing arts.

The project *The Birth / Zrod* took place–preparing the space of the **Monastery in Mnichovo Hradiště** as a residential space for performing arts artists. Gradually implemented here were: the art-theater project *The Tree / Strom* with children from Mnichovo Hradiště exploring the tree and its symbolism; *Solstice / Slunovrata*–one day project of celebrating the summer solstice, coupled with the presentation of children's theater workshop *Golden Bough* and *Maria Sabina*, a two-week project of creative workshops in Mnichovo Hradiště with the Swiss theater troupe Les moutreurs d'Images and a seven-day performance of *Maria Sabina*.

Stories in The Wind / Příběhy ve větru in the theater barn in Mala Lhota–performance of KALD DAMU graduate student Andrea Jantošková.

In the southern Bohemian summer castle Kratochvíle, near Netolice, the Group **Continuo**, led by **Pavel Štourač**, opens *Kratochvílení*, a ten year series of site specific projects. Over the years, the relationship to the entire complex, especially the massive moat, and the illumination of Renaissance architecture gradually deepened. At the same time, the number of performers increased (up to 50 from many European countries)–as so did the number of trainees in summer workshops in Malovice. In 2006, the last, tenth year, Leszek Madzik, the representative of stylized theater and legendary creator of the Polish *Scena Plastyczna KUL* in Lublin, worked with Štourač on the directorial concept.

Formation of **festival A.K.T.** in the House of Arts in Brno (curators: Tereza Petišková and František Kowolowski). *Permanent Performance* at Cheb's Gallery 4 (Milan Kozelka, Skrytá tvůrčí jednotka/Hidden creative unit, Tomáš Ruller, Petr Váša, and others.). Exhibition *Artwork in the Public Space* at the Trade Fair Palace in Prague (curators: Ludvík Hlaváček, Kateřina Pavlíčková, Karolína Fabelová and Pavla Niklová).

1998

June 2–5

The European theater alternative–Entrée to the Festival 4 +4 Days in Motion in the Theater Komedie and Experimental space Roxy.

In the school year 1998/1999, at the Theater Faculty of AMU in Prague, a three-year theater anthropology study program was created. The new **Department of Theater Anthropology** was led by Professor Vladimír Mikeš. Other lecturers include prof. Jaroslav Malina, prof. Jana Pilátová (who develops her integration program here), Bohuslav Blažek, Branislav Mazúch, David Prachař, Tomáš Žižka and others. The study program included the subjects: inherited, present and future dramatic spaces; space and person within it; set design as a language of space; space as text (J. Malina); articulation of traditional and non-traditional space; interaction and reaction in space (T. Žižka); reading the countryside; reading towns (B. Blažek) and others. Unfortunately, the department was dissolved when Markéta Schartová became the Dean of the Academy in the year 2000.

September 23

About the Site – a seminar on possible spaces and public places for performing arts, the one-off, a festival or residential activity in the Czech Republic. The focus of attention include the Roxy club, the Sewage Treatment Plant in Prague Bubeneč, the Brickyard in Třešť, a circus tent, the Capuchin monastery in Mnichovo Hradiště,

the Cistercian monastery in Plasy, the theater farm in Trstěnice, the Cibulka farmhouse, Vaňkovka in Brno and numerous unused and dilapidated industrial and religious spaces.

Forum For Room at the Theater Faculty of Academy of Performing Arts in Prague. An open meeting of theater artists, initiated by the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater and dealing with issues of authentic and specific locations for the theater.

One week artists' meeting *Ritual of Place* in the Cistercian **monastery in Plasy** – a symposium co-organized with the Foundation Hermit within the residencies project of the Center for Metamedia. Also, Miloš Vojtěchovský organized a seminar and a workshop on issues of performing arts, the interdisciplinary festival LIMBO I, exchange project INTERIM, with several residencies, etc. November 14 – 19

Griftheater 1998–After a month long workshop on **recycling** in the old sewage treatment plant in Prague–Bubeneč (built in 1895), Dutch instructors from *Griftheater* ensemble for Czech and foreign performing artists, with mamapapa, initiated the site-specific **project 3 W / W 3 – wokno woda witr / window water wind** presented at the same location in the Festival 4 +4 Days in Motion.

Johan, a center for cultural and social projects in Pilsen develops its activities beginning this year in three main directions: art projects (festivals, performances, theatrical and para-theatrical events); social work (street work, prevention of undesirable phenomena, rehabilitation projects, working with volunteers); and educational projects (aesthetic and dramatic education, courses, seminars, etc.).

The international festival *Trstěnický Faun* is established In Trstěnice, on the Urban farm and by the successive settling in the residential area Vojnarka, used for art residencies, workshops and land art symposia, on the

initiative of civic associations Faun and mamapapa, Brno Studio Dům, DAMU, and others.

1999

June 7 – 27

As part of the accompanying program of the 9th international exhibition of scenography and theater architecture, **the Prague Quadrennial 1999**, an international theater project **Le Campement**, organized by the Czech Forman Brothers, was hosted in front of the Industrial Palace at Prague Exhibition Hall. It took the form of a theatrical “lying down, camp or enclosure,” which included a cabin for the guests of the Forman Brothers Theatre and partners from the French Volière Dromesco. The first public presentation of the light laboratory project **LightLab** is held as one of the exhibition's accompanying events.

The experimental space Roxy launched a new **festival Akční Praha/Action Prague**–a show of action art, performance and happening.

June 22

Divadelní noviny (No. 13, p. 14) published an interview with **Tomáš Žižka** titled *Site Specific–the interplay with the story of a space*, by Martina Musilová.

August 7–15, September 11

Východní žně/ Eastern harvest–Symposium on Joachim Dutschke's **organic farm Fořt** in Černý Důl in Krkonoše; on September 11 the project **Eclipse (in culture and agriculture)** took place, ending with a show of works by Czech and Russian performing arts artists (organized by mamapapa in cooperation with the civic association Faun from Trstěnice).

A site specific workshop took place in the forest theater near Cvikov in northern Bohemia.

September 17–18

A seminar on space for museums in Bechyně, illuminating one possible approach to light and space. The event took

place within program OSF Prague–Brána muzea otevřená/
Museum Gate Open.

November 28–31

Po-svícení / En-lighting – a cognitive retreat in Jičín
(Hubojedy) to gain practical experience in outdoor
lighting with students of KALD DAMU and the
Department of Theater Anthropology DAMU.

Nové bojler / New boilers – a site specific project for an
abandoned boiler room in the former halls of ČKD Karlin.

Author: **mamapapa** in collaboration with photographers
Miro Švolík, Eva Mělo, Kamil Varga and others.

November 13 – 20

The 4th year of the international theater festival 4
+4 Days in Motion in the abandoned **halls of ČKD
Praha in Karlin**. In addition to the site specific project
Demolition—a space set change, the project *Safe* was
presented on November 13 by the British-German
ensemble Gob Squad, focused since 1994 on works of art
created for specific spaces. The following day the ballet
group Baletní jednotka Křeč introduced their project
Corpus / s / ex machine. A symposium also took place
focused on stage solutions for spaces of the abandoned
factory ČKD hall in Prague 8–Karlin, attended by:
Štěpánka Šimlová, Ivan Vosecký, Martin Janíček, Miloš
Šejn, Nora Sopková, Miloš Fekar and others.

November 16

Klub 8 launches project poetry for passengers (*Poetry
Streetcar; Poets in the Subway*).

At the end of the year, an extensive exhibition *Hnízda her
/ Nest of Games* directed by **Petr Nikl** was launched in the
Rudolfinum.

2000

January 12 – February 20

An extensive exhibition *Hnízda her / Nest of Games* is
held at the Rudolfinum. With concept and organization
by **Petr Nikl**, it is described as a “six-week changeable

playground combining visual, musical and theatrical
forms in a mutually open play, with the permanent
presence of various authors and guests,” who included
Josef Daněk, Blahoslav Rozbořil, Jiří Dobeš, Martin
Janíček, Krištof Kintera, Jaroslav Kořán, Petr Lysáček,
František Skála, Jiří Surůvka, and ensembles Divadelní
Studio Čisté Radosti, Kamera Skura, Laurychovo divadlo,
Mehedaha and Skrytá tvůrčí Jednotka.

March 7

Čestmír Suška—a sculptor, performer and leader of
Výtvarné divadlo Kolotoč/ Fine Arts Theater founds
a civic association **Bubec** in Prague- Řeporyje and builds
Bubec Sculpture Studio in the former storage hall. Since
then, regular *Art Safari* events have been held there—the
meetings of artists with presentations in this particular
space, including its exterior. Suška’s dimensional objects
are also created here—for example, the cycle *Rezavé květy
/ Rusty flowers*, later placed in a variety of public and
industrial spaces (including the Karlin halls in Thámová
Street in 2007, and in the years 2010-2011, the installation
of a floating steel structure on the surface of the Vltava by
Mánes Gallery in Petr Nikl’s project *Play*).

April 13 – 16

Archa Theater hosts the general assembly of the European
theater network **IETM** (Informal European Theatre
Meeting / Neformální setkání evropského divadla). The
accompanying program is called *Čtyři noci / Four nights* of
contemporary theater, dance, music and new media in the
Czech Republic organized by the civic association Čtyři
dny/Four days in the halls of ČKD, in Karlin Boiler house,
Archa Theatre and Roxy / NoD. (However, the mamapapa
project for the participants, planned for the newly
renovated Imperial Hotel on Na Poříčí Street in Prague,
failed to take place.)

June 25 – July 7

City–Landscape, a **site specific summer school in Jičín**
and site specific symposium on the hidden concept of

baroque landscape in Jičín and its surroundings including light illumination in the Jesuit college (a mamapapa project in collaboration with the District Museum and Gallery Jičín and Municipal Office in Jičín).

Obilí a obydlí / Grain and dwelling—a two-part international site specific symposium on “wildness and domestication” which took place at the renovated residential estate Vojnarka in Trstěnice and at Fořt farm in Černý Důl in Krkonoše (organized by mamapapa in cooperation with the civic association Faun Trstěnice).
September 13 – 19

Pražský parní válec / Prague Steamroller—a new “performance festival” focused on performance, video, installation and photography, organized in Václav Špála Gallery and many other places in Prague by galleries MXM from Prague and 761 from Ostrava, within the event *Prague–European City of Culture 2000*. This festival was followed by the 2nd action art festival **Akční Praha II / Action Prague 2**.
September 30

Tělo jako Kotel / Body as a Boiler—public exhibition at the end of the mamapapa workshop in the former **boiler room Fišlovka** in Karlín (ČKD Prague–Karlín, Pernerova St. 57). Portuguese dancer and philosopher Joao Fiadeiro accompanied workshop participants through “reality.” Organized by mamapapa in collaboration with RE.AL. Companhia Lisabon and Serge Borenstein’s Real Estate Karlín Group.
October 11 – 22

Moving Station / Hemžící se zastávka—the first joint site specific workshop by Roman Černík, Tomáš Žižka, Stefanie Thors and others to support the activities of Pilsen independent cultural and social scene and their newly opened communication space in the old train station building Plzeň – Jižní předměstí (Pilsen–South Suburbs). The theatrical and educational **Center Johan** organized a workshop in collaboration with mamapapa as part of the

off-program during the festival Divadlo 2000/Theater 2000 in Pilsen. In the coming months and years, many events, improvisations, screenings, exhibitions, etc. took place in this space now also called *Moving Station* followed on the premises of the station Pilsen–South Suburbs.

October 15

Tečka za společnou plavbou / The Spot After a Joint Cruise—open air-urban theater by Petra Kandusová, Radovan Lipus and Marek Pivovar in the House of Art in Ostrava. **ARTES(t)CO**—Czech-Japanese site specific **PAP** project in the environment of Prague TESCO department store on Národní Avenue on the initiative of mamapapa.

Svatojánská noc / Midsummer night—a light happening organized by mamapapa in collaboration with the District Museum and Gallery Jičín and civic association Lodžie in Jičín.

November 4 – 11

The 5th year of international theater festival 4 +4 Days in Motion took place in an abandoned **brewery in Holešovice, Prague**. A site specific project **Kvas–Sládkův sen** took place within the festival. The organizers (mamapapa and Čtyři dny) situated it in the former brewery. Participants were students of Academy of Performing Arts and academies of Fine Arts and Applied Arts in Prague.

November 20–22

Osvěta / Limity (Light / Limits)—a mamapapa seminar for art school students in **Bechyně monastery** on LightLab, lighting for non-traditional spaces and site specific projects. Video presentations of mamapapa projects were also part of the event, with exposition of experiences in different spaces and contexts.

2001

Petr Bergmann opened the Broumov Cultural Center in a former brewery in Broumov. A number of events related to the subject of site specific took place there until 2006:

festival Broumovské kulturní léto / Broumov Cultural Summer; Týdny pro broumovské kostely / Weeks for Broumov Churches; Týden pro broumovské stodoly / A Week for Broumov Barns; Týden pro Broumovsko / A Week for Broumov Region, etc.

January 26

David Černý made accessible a new cultural enclave **Meet Factory** in the former Prague ham factory in Holešovice (Osadní Street), where Teatr Novogo Fronta, among others found a home for awhile. When this space was closed after several years of operation, David Černý continued this concept at a dilapidated Czech Railways building in a new address in Zlíchov, which has been in operation since 2007.

March 3

First performance of by a new “international improvisation unit,” **Krepsko** formed by Petr Lorenc and Linnea Happonen–*Past na tlustokožce / Trap for a Pachyderm*. The group was created in the environment of Roxy / NoD and Alfred ve dvoře theater and specialized in physical and situational improvisational theater. Its core performers were: Linnea Happonen, Ondřej Lipovský, Žán Loose, Petr Lorenc, Pierre Nadaud, Anna Polívková, Veronika Švábová and Vojta Švejda.

March 5–November

Civic association mamapapa introduced “six dance steps in the practice of an independent artist”–a series of creative workshops, events and symposia entitled **Dialogues**. Four dialogues were held in Prague, the third took place in Broumov. On July 20, the results of site specific art workshop **Pohyby zrcadla / Mirror Movements** were presented in the baroque church of St. Margaret in Šonov. On July 21, an evening light and music performance **LightLab** in All Saints Church in Heřmánkovice took place, also as part of the **Week for Broumov Churches**, and the 4th Dialogue (5- 12 August) took place in the Bechyně monastery.

April 19

Consecration of the bell Francis–a celebration of light for the Franciscan monastery in Bechyně, organized as a public event on the occasion of 500 years of the establishment of the monastery. (Mamapapa worked in cooperation with the basic art school and civic association Monastery Bechyně.)

June

The conference **Vestiges of Industry** took place, organized by the Section for the Protection of Industrial Heritage at the National Technical Museum in Prague, followed by the International Biennial *Vestiges of Industry* in 2003, 2005 etc.

June 8 – 10

The three day festival **Moving Station–Hemžící se zastávka 2** took place in Pilsen. Pilsner ensembles Tyan and Rámus participated, as did a group of performers Podobojí Živanti from Most. Soon, from August 20 – 23, the series continued (*Moving Station -Hemžící se zastávka 3*) with a multimedia presentation of the project *Pohyby zrcadel / Movements of Mirrors – Šonov*. In 2003, after several subsequent festivals, the Moving Station became an open communication space for the ongoing work of theater artists, jugglers, fine artists, photographers and other artists, while continuing the revitalization of the former railway station building of Pilsen–South Suburbs.

August 5 – 12

Garden – a site specific residential event with a series of evening light and sound improvisations on the intimacy of the creative process led by Tomáš Žižka, Jan Svoboda, Martin Janíček and Michael Delia in Bechyně monastery. The one week of activities was part of a program *Dialogs and Limits* (the organizer was the Bechyně civic association Klášter).

September 4 – 8

Jiří Dobeš–a well-known organizer within the sphere of independent theater and a member of the Pardubice group **Jumping Hamada** (also known for his collaboration with

artist Jiří Sozanský on his numerous projects) organized in Pardubice—after a prologue in the form of international alternative show of independent culture *Vystup na horu z popela* (see year 1997 and subsequent years)—the **festival Ostrovy neklidu / Islands of Unrest**, which in the following years became a base for the presentation of projects related to site specific.

October 8 – 15

The intermedia improvisation at NoD and at the Academy Workshop by Sachio Takahashi and Ruyza Fukuhara – a co-production project of the Association PAP DAMU, Miloš Šejn's AVU Studio of Conceptual Art, and mamapapa – a creative workshop for electroacoustic composition, action painting, sound installations, butoh dance, body and performance.

October 22 – 29

Body – a light installation in the windows of Tyrš House in Prague – a synchronized projection in ten windows of the largest gym in Prague. The project, based on a mamapapa concept, was co-created by students of M. Bielický's Studio of New Media at the Academy of Fine Arts, Trimedia and Panasonic.

October

Publication of the first issue of a new independent theater revue **Orghast**, and with it, among other works, a fundamental synthetic work on site specific theater projects by Denisa Václavová (Orghast 2002, p 51).

November 1

After a two-year break caused by the departure of Ctibor Turba, the civic association **MOTUS** reopened theater Alfred ve dvoře with the show **Opět v provozu / Working Again**, offering performances by Petr Krušelnický, Halka Třešňáková, Ondřej Lipovský, Adela Stodolová, Stefanie Thors, Vojta Švejda and the groups Krepisko, Envoi, Stage Code.

The residential space **Preslova** in Prague Smíchov opens—a space for artistic creation by artists from the fields of theater, dance, music and new media.

Pohyby zrcadla / Mirror Movements—site specific workshop in **Šonov u Broumova**, journey around the ring of baroque churches in the protected area Broumovsko. The workshop was part of the program *A Week for Broumov Churches* (in collaboration with prof. Mike Pearson, Performance Studies, and light designer Mike Brookes of the University of Wales Aberystwyth / Department of Theater, Film and Television Studies).

October 5 and 6

As part of the **Ostrava project Ostrá tráva**, a performance was held in Silesian Ostrava and experts met in Ostrava House of Art to discuss: “Will Ostrava live on (and how)?” The project was carried out by Petra Kandusová (author), Tomáš Žižka (supervision), Marek Pivovar (screenplay), Radovan Lipus (director), Lenka Dřímlová (choreography) and Hana Spurná and Andrea Weglarzyová (production). The following year, an anthology was published about the project, edited by P. Kandusová—it is subtitled *Lomy a zlomy Ostravy / Fractures and Faults of Ostrava 2001*.

October 25 – 27

The site specific project *The Great Outdoors* by Anglo-German ensemble Gob Squad took place as part of the 6th year of the festival 4 +4 Days in Motion at the auditorium of **Tyrš House**, “a place for the cultivation of body and spirit.” The leitmotif of this year which took place in the authentic environments of physical processes of the gymnasiums of Tyrš House and Nosticova Hall was culture and sport, and their mutual relationships and diversity.

2002

February 16–March 1

In collaboration with the British Council and with the participation of Czech performers, mamapapa introduced a project by the British cyber-group **Blast Theory**. The

group works on the borderlines of virtual reality and real spaces, using the latest technological resources for their activities and installations. The project was called *Desert Rain* and it took place in the premises of the former printing house Typografia.

June 6

Projection of the CD-ROM *Pohyby Zrcadla–Broumov a Šonov / Mirror Movements–Broumov and Šonov*, recorded material in the Broumov region in 2001 (production: mamapapa).

July 18–22

The international workshop *Klášteření Chotěšov / Chotěšov Abbey* took place as a program focused on site specific and on publicizing the needs of the damaged and abandoned abbey premises. The main teachers were Mikhail Ivanov and Nina Gasteva of the St. Petersburg independent movement theatre Iguana Dance Theatre (formerly members of Derevo), Roman Černík from the Pilsen center Johan, who organized the project, Tomáš Žižka and Martin Janíček representing mamapapa.

October 4

Feast at Vojnarka farm in Trstěnice – a music and light event of the OSF Prague program *Brána muzea otevřená/Museum Gate Opened*, highlighting the possible approaches to the light and space in this baroque farmhouse and its historical contexts (mamapapa and civic association Faun Trstěnice).

2003

January 1

Rituál smrti / Death ritual–a site specific project in the Vyšehrad casemates, confronting, as a multimedia form, two cultural perspectives on the phenomenon of death–European and Asian. The author of the concept was Yun Hee Kim, a graduate of Theater Anthropology at DAMU from Korea.

March 21–23

Jáma a kyvadlo / The Pit and the Pendulum–the story by E. A. Poe was the starting material for an environmental project choreographed with light choreography in and around the newly renovated Písecká Gate of the Prague Castle. The author of the concept was Tina Judnic, a Slovenian scenography student at KALD DAMU Prague.

June 13 – 29

Prague Quadrennial 2003, an international exhibition of scenography and theater architecture was held at the exhibition ground Výstaviště Praha. The topic is Labyrinth of the World and Paradise of Theatre; the project *Heart of the PQ*, conceived by Tomáš Žižka, presented the entire Czech independent scene.

June 24 – 28

International Biennial Vestiges Of Industry in the Ecotechnical Museum and the old sewage treatment plant in Prague–Bubeneč, which included exhibitions, installations, conferences, excursions, and the site specific performance *Latimérie* conceived by Jiří Adámek. The biennial was organized by the Research Centre for Industrial Heritage at the Czech Technical University in Prague.

July 7–20

Genius loci – a creative studio of lighting design for exteriors–a project of mamapapa summer workshops on premises of Capuchin monastery in Mnichovo Hradiště.

August 17–24

The cultural and social project *Sloterhaus* took place in the Art Nouveau premises of devastated city slaughterhouse in west Bohemian town of Aš, organized by the Center Johan, mamapapa and civic association Karel Ašler z Aše.

September–October

Křižovatka / Crossroads – a happening on the crossroads tram tracks on Strossmayer Square in Prague – Holešovice (organized by Divadlo Alfred ve dvoře).

October

In Karlin gallery Litera, **Jiří Sozanský** introduced his extensive multimedia project tied to a specific location *Karlin–Zone A*, in response to the consequences of the devastating floods in this area, using texts by S. Beckett (in collaboration with ensemble Teatr Novogo Fronta, sports and cultural community BoxArt Prague and documentary filmmaker Michal Baumbruck).

October 24 – 31

A creative meeting and international project **Stage in Motion**, presenting innovative theater directions, initiated by the civic association Čtyři dny / Four days; also participating were Schaubühne Lindenfels from Leipzig, Italian Teatro di Vita from Bologna, the French Centre Choréographique National de Nantes and Slovenian Exodus from Ljubljana. The project became part of the 8th **4 + 4 Days in Motion** festival which took place on the grounds of the **former brickworks**, V Šáreckém Udolí 37, Prague 6 (with a sequel in the next edition of the festival, from May 21 – 28, 2004).

2004

May 21 – 28

At the 9th year of the international theater festival **4 + 4 Days in Motion**, the intention is finding new places for presentation of art under the slogan “Welcome to the meadow which is the world.” It is situated in Stromovka, a former royal park in Prague 7 (in a the tent around Šlechta restaurant). The second part of the international project **Stage in Motion** took place within the festival, including the symposium *The Role of Theater Festivals Today*.

September 1 – 5

A performance of **Daniel Gulek's** group **Cahin Caha** with the project *Grimm*—first in the tent at the new festival Letní Letná, then at the Mimoriál festival in Kolin with a modified open-air version on the darkened island

using magic and the specifics of the environment. It was performed again in Pilsen on September 16 – 17 at Theater festival.

October 7

Teatr Novogo Fronta introduces a physical action situated in a specific space for the first time—*Phantomysteria* in the Klementinum courtyard during the festival ...příští vlna / next wave ...

2005

September 19 – 24

The third symposium **International Biennial Vestiges of Industry** – this time it is about the possibilities, implications, and pitfalls of the conversion of industrial buildings taking place in the Old Sewage Treatment Plant in Prague-Bubeneč (Ecotechnical museum) as well as the Vojtěšská ironworks (Koněv), the mining museum Mayrau and other places in Kladno. It included exhibitions, performances (e.g. the Finnish-Czech project *Yellow Ball* by Kristýna Černá), conferences, concerts, excursions and especially **the industrial safari Kladno +-ZÁPORNO / Positive +-Negative**, conceived by mamapapa as a performance-journey between the illuminated and resounding objects of the disappearing industrial zone, and as a performance by the international artistic team. A separate publication with the same title was published about this event.

May 18 – 25

The 10th year of the international theater festival **4 + 4 Days in Motion** this time was held in the sports arena HC Hvězda in Prague 6. Part of the festival's activities was a specific project **AniKočkaAniPes / NeitherCatNorDog**, an interactive evening tour of the Prague Zoo, inspired by the manifestations of nocturnal lives of animals and artists. The curators of this project were Čtyři dny / Four Days and Šárka Havlíčková.

The group **Continuo** from Malovice successfully presented *Vakokodeska* street parade at the World Expo 2005 in Aichi Prefecture, Japan. In the same year, this project was presented at the příští vlna... / next wave ... festival in the streets of Prague's Old Town (October 6), in the historic streets of Český Krumlov (23 October) during the festival Mirakulum, and abroad.

2006

April–October

A series of workshops called **Site Specific Link Mostar**, held in Mostar (Bosnia and Herzegovina) by Šárka Havlíčková, Daniela Voráčková, Phillipp Schenker, Jan Nebeský, Martin Kukučka and Lukáš Trpišovský (SKUTR), introduced site specific projects to Mostar University art students from various disciplines– production-dramaturgy, directing, acting and set design. The series of workshops was followed by the preparation and performance of site specific projects like *Bystander Effect* (prepared by director Miroslav Bambušek), *Live Art and Events in Public Spaces* (Šárka Havlíčková), *Site Specific from the Actor's Point of View* (Stage Code) and others.

May 19 – 30

The 11th year of the festival 4 + 4 Days in Motion took place in a former dental **polyclinic** (Jungmannova 21, Prague 1). The project included theater performances, art projects, installations, lectures on architecture, projections, concerts, etc. The project also included the so-called subprojects: *Vedlejší účinky / Side Effects – A Unique Art Ambulance in the House of Cultural Services*. (The project was co-created by association Čtyři dny and Alfred ve dvoře theater in collaboration with artists from groups Vosto5, Orelsko, Matapa, Stage Code and Hanka Poislová, Michaela Huffsteterová, Miroslav Bambušek, Eva Bláhová, Veronika Šváblová, Howard Lotker, Stefi Thors, Tomina Jeřábek, Eva Dohnalová, Vojta Švejda and others).

June 20 – 23

Solstice–International Symposium on community arts activities and initiatives in villages, organized by the mamapapa association at the Agricultural Museum as a community art project, along with the long standing initiative *Tančící vesnice / Dancing villages*. In addition to the interactive installations, an exhibition by photographer Miro Švolík *Krajina jako tělo / Landscape as a Body* took place.

August 16 – September 30

Umění na černo / Art in Black–theaters, concerts, workshops, exhibitions and performances in the **former Mayrau mine** (in the Mining museum Mayrau in Vinařice near Kladno) at the initiative of Dagmar Šubrtová. A new magazine *Kladno Záporno* was launched at the same location.

September 16 – 17

Zažít město jinak / Experience the City Differently – a car-free weekend at the waterfront on Prague's Smetanovo nábřeží, accompanied by the event *Umělci městu / Artists to the City* (performances, installations, music and lectures in public spaces), organized by civic associations Oživení and MOTUS.

September 22 – 30

Nad střechy / Above the Rooftops–a site-specific project directed by Alžběta Tichoňová in the premises of the former Capuchin monastery in Mnichovo Hradiště. The organizer was Prague Studio Damúza.

Publication of the first volume of ***Divadlo a interakce / Theatre and Interaction***, initiated by prof. Miloslav Klíma from the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theatre of the Theatre Faculty of Academy of Performing Arts. It is the annual presentation of theoretical works by doctoral students of this department and their teachers and trainers in which a number of topics focus on issues of site specific projects. So far – in the years 2006-2012–volumes I-VI have been published.

2007

May 19 – 26

12th international theater festival 4 +4 Days in Motion took place at the Agricultural Museum in Letna Park in Prague, in Ponec Theatre and Archa Theatre. The organizers also organized an extensive international site specific project led by the famous Dutch ensemble **Silo**. This group and the representatives of Czech performing arts scene (Halka Třešňáková, Veronika Švábová, Stage Code, Jan Burian, Howard Lotker and others) presented a theater arts project named *Kultivar pro Národní zemědělské muzeum a jeho okolí na Letné / Cultivar for the National Agricultural Museum and its Surroundings*.

September 17 – 23

The **4th International Biennial Vestiges of Industry 2007** was about the potentials, import and pitfalls of conversion. The program, which included exhibitions, performances, concerts, excursions and a conference, was held in Prague, Kladno, Liberec, and Ostrava. The accompanying program presented the performance *Kanalizační ozvěny / Sewer Echoes*, a concert with video projection in Trafačka in Prague and a happening in the boiler room in Andělská Hora near Chrástava.

October 7

Opening of the 14th edition of the festival ...příští vlna / next wave ... A train departed from the Prague – Vysočany station, and a music and theater happening, a new **Train Opera** by composer Michal Nežtek with a libretto by Vratislav Brabenec, took place in the carriages among the passengers. The project was conceived by Agon Orchestra and the Plastic People of the Universe, conducted by Petr Kofroň. The opera was directed by Radek Tůma and played to its conclusion at Smichov station. It was also performed in the interior of the newly opened independent cultural center **Meet Factory** (Ke Sklárně 15, Praha 5 – Zličov).

On October 11, a performance by choreographer Miguel Pereira, first presented in the same year during the Prague Quadrennial 2007, took place at Republic Square in Prague.

2008

April 15 – 29

Objects and Projects—series of lectures focusing on art events taking place outside the traditional theater space at the Art Institute–Theatre Institute in Prague. Apr. 15 Tomáš Žižka's presentation on SITE SPECIFIC, Apr. 22 on SIDE SPECIFIC and Apr. 29 a presentation by Pavel Štorek and Tomáš Žižka on SPACE SPECIFIC.

September 10 and 11

Site specific project *Chabal 008–čistá voda rozpomínání / Clear Water of Remembrance* in Pilsen pumping station Na Homolce as part of festival Theater 2008's off-program. It was the result of an international summer workshop, with Tomáš Žižka and Roman Černík for the Czech side (prepared by the civic association Johan in cooperation with mamapapa).

October 3 – 10

An international theatrical and architecture symposium **Art in Experimental, Industrial and Non-traditional Spaces** took place in factory Hall 30 opposite the Prague Exhibition Grounds, as part of the *Festival 4 +4 Days in Motion* which was held at Vltavská junction and Holešovice halls. The program of the second day was dedicated to the 10 years of site specific projects in the Czech Republic and Petr Bergmann, Šárka Havlíčková, Martin Křištof (Stanice Žilina) and Tomáš Žižka, among others, presented their views.

November 20

Site Specific, a monograph on site specific projects by Denisa Václavová and Tomáš Žižka is published by *Pražská scéna* as the first of its kind in the Czech language. The publication, with graphic work by Markéta Kinterová,

offers texts by the authors, an extensive documentation on the most important site specific projects, and contributions by Petr Bergmann, Ondřej David, Jan Dvořák, Šárka Havlíčková, Vladimír Hulec, Křištof Kintera, Marianna Serranová, Miloš Šejn, Nina Vangeli and Miloš Vojtěchovský.

2009

May

Společenské ledárny / Social icehouse, a site specific project by Zuzana Malá, Jakub Stěpán and the group Oldstars Deus ex machina in the abandoned icehouse in Prague-Braník.

October 9 and 10

An international conference took place as part of the **International biennial Vestiges of Industry** in the old sewage treatment plant in Prague-Bubeneč called, *Industrial Heritage: In the vacuum between professionals and amateurs?*, organized by the Research Centre for Industrial Heritage ČVUT. The exhibition *Co jsme si zbořili / What We Tore Down*, was opened during the conference at the Bubeneč water treatment plant, it later moved to the Mayrau Mine museum in Vinařice. Two important publications were published about it: *Průmyslové dědictví / Industrial Heritage / 2–In the Vacuum Between Professionals and Amateurs*, edited by Benjamin Fragner and Vladislava Valchařová, and *Co jsme si zbořili / What We Tore Down. Evaluation of the Disappearing Industrial Era / a Decade* by Benjamin Fragner and Jan Zikmund. The accompanying program included a performance by DAMU students *Základy / Basics: What shall we build?* in Bubeneč water treatment plant, theater performances and workshops in the mining museum Mayrau in Kladno, in the Michael mine in Brandýs, and on the premises of the Kladno ironworks Koněv, as well as a performance *Zdař Bůh! / God-speed!* in the Michal mine in Ostrava-Michálkovice where Miroslav

Bambušek and his team launched his project **Cesty energie 2009-2013 / Paths of Energy 2009-2013** with the topic “black coal.” This project continued the following year with a section on “water” at the Ecotechnical Museum in Bubeneč.

October 9-16

International Theatre **Festival 4 + 4 Days in Motion**, was held at the former seat of the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly next to the National Museum. Part of the program was the site specific project *Place of Acts / Místa činu*.

A new pilot **program Theater Creation In Non-traditional Spaces** was established at the Department of Alternative and Puppet Theater of the Theater Academy in Prague on the initiative of Karel Makonj, Miroslav Klíma and Tomáš Žižka. The program takes into account the necessity of teamwork in this artistic activity and focuses on community projects, with an emphasis on the use of industrial architecture, public space and rural landscapes. In addition to Tomáš Žižka, the head of the program, the concept of the study program was also developed by Karel Makonj, Václav Cílek, Tomáš Ruller, Radoslava Schmelzová, Benjamin Fragner and Zuzana Urbanová. A book was published as well: *Divadlo v netradičním prostoru, performance a site specific – současné tendence / Theater in Non-traditional Spaces, Performance and Site Specific–Current Trends*, compiled by Radoslava Schmelzová (also the author of its introduction *Jiné podoby umění aneb hledání kořenů umění místa / Other Forms of Art, or Finding the Roots of the Art of Place*) with texts by Václav Cílek, Benjamin Fragner, Miroslav Klíma, Michal Koleček, Martin Kukučka, Karel Makonj, Tomáš Ruller, Rudolf Šmíd, Pavel Štorek, Denisa Václavová, Tomáš Žižka and others.

2010

Až nadejde čas / When the Time Comes—a project by students of *Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces*

program at KALD DAMU (winter semester 2010-2011) for the train station Plzeň–South Suburbs. Directed by Apolena Vanišová and conceived as a “journey / theater installation.” Movement: Katarina Rampáčková, stage design: Adriana Černá and Prokop Vondruška, music: Petr Krušelnický and performers: Jan Cina, Jonáš Janků, Anne-Francoise Joseph and Šimon Krupa.

October 15–24

International Theatre **Festival 4 + 4 Days in Motion** for the first time with the “series” *Místa činu / Places of Act* which took place at the unique building of the former Centre for Folk Art Production (ÚLUV) in the derelict functionalist palace (built in 1934-38) on Národní třída in Prague. It was once known as Dům Svazu čs. díla—a major focus of avant-garde art. The central concept – developed by Kristof Kintera—conceived of the house as a cluster of cells containing artists of all types, including conceptual, multimedia etc. The festival also took place in Holešovice’s La Fabrika, Studio ALTA, Archa Theatre, etc.

November 4

Play, an exhibition-interactive project conceived by Peter Nikl and many of his associates in the line of his game-type expositions like *Hnízda her / Nests of Games* or *Orbis pictus* opened at Manes Gallery in Prague. Because of the extraordinary success of the exhibition with the series of events and workshops, it was extended until February 2011.

2011

February 12 and 13

Lanostory / Cablestory, a site specific project on the cableway route Jáchymov-Klinovec based on the principle of “developed film”, directed by Apolena Vanišová. Other participants include dramaturg Andrej Šoltéz, theater fine artists Karel Czech, Adriana Černá, Tereza Sléňová, Markéta Stará, Mathias Strub, Veronika Svobodová, Klára Syrečková, Jakub Štěpán and other students from KALD DAMU.

March 2

Kam Ústíme? / Where Are We Going? Ústínadlabem – a site specific game held in Ústí nad Labem-Předlečí on the initiative of Linda Petráková, Mathias Straub, Veronika Výprachtická, Anežka Navrátilová, Lukáš Brychta, Eliška Bradová and Klára Syrečková. In 2011-2012, a number of original projects by KALD DAMU students took place in Ústí nad Labem, (in the slum and suburbs of Předlice, where conflicts with so-called “maladjusted citizens” often take place), in collaboration with the students of Faculty of Art and Design UJEP in Ústí nad Labem.

June 17

The first showing of a landscape performance in the natural reserve *Vlčí rokle / Wolf Ravine*. The performance was conceived by Lukáš Brychta, also performing were Barbora Bartoňová, Eliška Bradová, Ivanka Čonková, Kateřina Jusková, Kristina Pípková and Michaela Tůmová.

October 9

The 18th annual gathering of theater and other arts alternatives ...*příští vlna / next wave* included, among other events, a premiere of Jan Kačenaš and Miroslav Bambuška’s project **Uran / Uranium**, held in a large abandoned air defense bunker from the socialist era in Drnov near Slaný. It was part of the national cycle *Cesty energie 2009-2013 / Paths of Energy 2009-2013*, focusing on four main sources of energy (coal–uranium–water–oil).

October 15 – 22

The 16th international festival of contemporary art **4 + 4 Days in Motion** confirmed its dramaturgical shift from theater towards the full range of contemporary arts, as festival organizer Pavel Štorek stated in the festival newsletter. The repertoire documented it as well, in many locations (including the Archa Theatre, Studio ALTA, MeetFactory, Alfred ve dvoře), and especially the event / site specific project *Crime scene*, again in the former Centre for Folk Art (ÚLUV) on Národní třída in

Prague, and also in old Vršovice (e.g. the project ProLuka by Křištof Kintera and Denisa Václavová) at Vršovice Stadium of Bohemians 1905 football club.

October 28

Z první řady / Ted' je čas být zticha a dívat se / From the First Row / Now is the Time to Be Quiet and Watch, a minimalist long-term site specific performance in public space by Jakub Štěpán and Zuzana Malá, students at KALD DAMU. This project (as well as several previously mentioned ones) is documented in a separate publication **Umění místa / Art of Place** (published by Nakladatelství AMU, Prague 2012), compiled by Tomáš Žižka, head of the program *Theater Creation in Non-traditional Spaces* at KALD DAMU.

2012

October 7

At the festival ...příští vlna / next wave..., the 4th part of Miroslav Bambušek's cycle *Cesty energie / Paths of Energy* **Oil** took place in the authentic environment of the Pardubice refinery PARAMO (this time in co-operation with Ewan McLaren and with music by Vladimír Franz)..

October – November 11

Organizers of the **festival 4 + 4 Days in Motion** conceived it again as a massive collective artistic intervention in the brutalist architecture of the abandoned premises of the former International Union of Students (later a casino) at the end of Pařížská Street, near Vltava river embankment in Prague.

November 22

An exhibition opened: *Kartografie naděje – příběhy sociální změny / Cartography of Hope–stories of social change* in the **DOX Centre for Contemporary Art**, an important contribution to the development of socio-critical tendencies of contemporary art with presentations of a series of community and community-protest projects (using materials by Denisa Václavová and Tomáš Žižka).

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Compiled by Jan Dvořák

Translator's note (Marija Ilic):

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See: www.damu.cz/katedry-a-kabinety/katedra-alternativniho-a-loutkoveho-divadla/pedagogove/mga.-tomas-zizka

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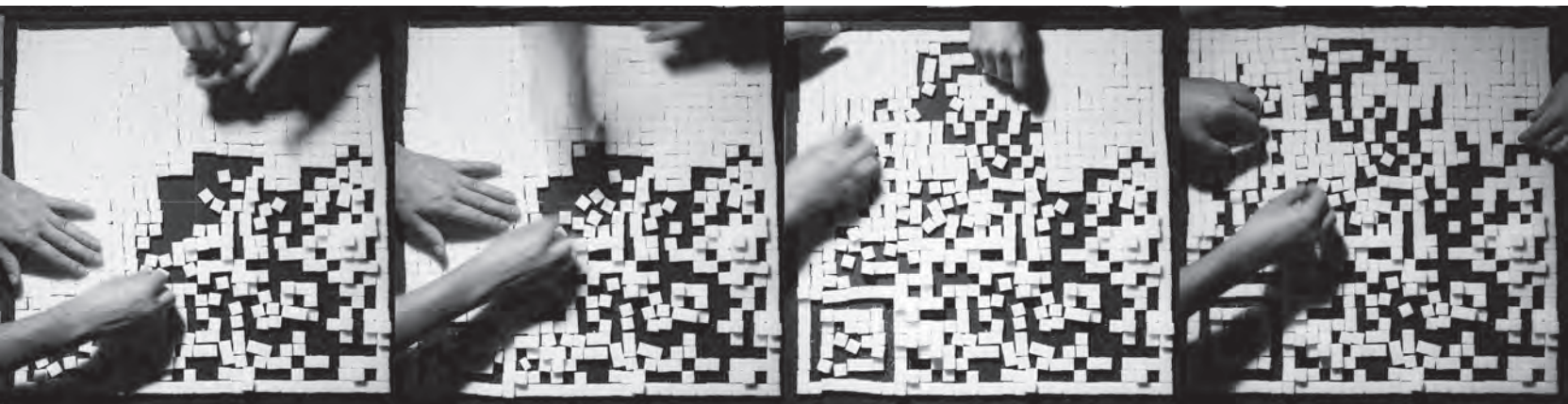
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