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Conference > Modelling Public Space(s) in Culture, Skopje, 12-14 October 2017

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The Conference *Modelling Public Spaces in Culture* is one of the activities of *The Dissonant (Co)Spaces* project, aiming to offer diverse thematic overview on “the public space” as a physical location that creates social ties and “the public sphere” as the collection of attributes contributing to the formation of public discourse.

At the conference, public spaces will be reviewed and discussed through two different aspects:

1. Revisionism and production of the history of culture and institution. In this thematic focus we will mostly engage in the modernist heritage from former Yugoslavia, critically examining the term “dissonant heritage”, and its usage in the contemporary context of culture. Another focal point is the development history of the institution in former Yugoslavia.
2. Organizational and institutional innovative approaches in governing and modelling institutions, or proposing new models of public spaces as new models of institutions. We will try to examine diverse approaches such as commons, participation and usership in modelling the new public spaces.

These thematic focuses will be developed in thematic modes of presentation, interviews, lectures, discussions etc.

Overview of the thematic focuses

“We conceive public as a discursive sphere of society which consist of citizens’ speech, actions, and movements, the “words and deeds”, as Hannah Arendt would have it, that can be considered articulations and expressions of ideology. In order to operate politically, the public sphere needs, and hence public space.” (Vujanovic, Ana, Cvejic, Bojana) Public sphere by performance.

Public space and public sphere are two close yet divergent categories that Vujanovic and Cvejic propose as separate concepts since their implications are not symmetrical. Public space is most often understood as a physical, spatial category and public sphere as a discursive one. Public sphere needs a public space, however public space is not always a space of public sphere since it can be touristic, entertainment, leisure etc. An important issue according to them in and around public is the degree of inclusivity.

Public space has been going through crises not only since it has been privatized, rather it has been seen as a crisis of representation in representative democracy.

This conference will try to address public spaces as ones where the public sphere is performed.

One of the thematic focus we would like to try to articulate through the conference is the meaning of the term “dissonant heritage”, how it is perceived by the broader audience and its meaning in the context of public spaces. As Ashworth and Tunbridge wrote in 1995, “The term ‘dissonance’ is often used in music theory, describing that two tones do not blend into one another harmonically, but create a certain tension. The interpretation of heritage is considered dissonant when different groups attribute different stories to a certain object or landscape. As these different interpretations are considered to be true, sometimes even in the most dogmatic way imaginable, it is not particularly unlikely that little space remains for relativization and/or plurality of interpretation.” It is usually connected to unwanted heritage, heritage that hurts and recalls painful memories and whose dissonance causes past events not to be easily reconciled within society’s values and experiences. But it is not only the contested inheritance of the past that hides the dissonance. In fact, every heritage is dissonant to someone and all dissonance is one’s inheritance, but this does not mean that pluralistic interpretation values cannot be established. What is difficult to determine is not to be equated with their (non) existence. In this sense, many heritage sites, but also a lot of museums, have a certain dissonance, perhaps not visible at first glance. Their interpretation can, as well, open an arena for heritage (ab)uses. (Bozic Marojevic, 2014) A different perspective on these and similar issues could also be found in Laurajane Smith’s work, in her authorized heritage discourse theory (2006).

Moreover, we would like to investigate how to recognize and save the values of the 20th century architectural and cultural heritage in a larger socio-political and cultural context today, and how those spaces could be reaffirmed through cultural and artistic initiatives (among other).

The other line of interest is to see where the crisis of the institution as a public space lies; whether this crisis can be solved within the reformation of the existing concept(s) of a state institution or the institution should be articulated within some other framework of collective action in order to be(come) part of the public sphere.

Traditional institutions (as models of public spaces where public content and discourse are created) have been criticized since the 1980s for being conservative, bureaucratic, slow to respond to socio-cultural and artistic changes and demands, self-protecting, non-creative and opposing new ideas in artistic and cultural content as well as in management and organisation.

Critical reflection goes in a different direction, and the general sublimation is that traditional institutions receive a large portion of yearly budgets for culture, maintain the large machinery that doesn't produce "new"; they are oriented towards past and high standard routine that does not allow critical examination of contemporaneity/current political/aesthetical/economic challenges; support traditional values and are nation-oriented and centralized.

Cultural institutions in the post-Yugoslav context have tendency to be politicized in a way that the political elite manipulated their content in non-transparent ways, without open calls or a wider public debate, often promoting nation-building and myth-creating as their primary content, failing to respond to contemporary demands of the 'emancipated spectator'.

Institutions, as an epitome for public space where public content is created, somehow haven't met the expectations of cultural workers in the past, therefore diverse professional communities in the arts and culture started reflecting around the idea of institutions and their aim in the changed global socio-political circumstances.

Specifically in this geographical (former Yugoslavia) space, institutions as we know them, were formed after the Second World War, as a specific model of self-management based on the policies of decentralisation and democratization of culture. These institutions are also specific as models in different fields, being responsive towards the needs of the field, or community. However, in the 1990s these institutions created during the period of the Yugoslav self-managed socialism, perverted into self-referential, highly centralized, nation-building entities, very often in service of the nationalist political elites, perpetuating national myths on the one hand, and supporting the political status quo, on the other.

Some organizations and initiatives in culture started thinking about and developing new organizational and governing models based on the principles of democracy, equality, equity, solidarity, mutual assistance, participativeness, respect for diversity etc.

However, the newly formed civil cultural sector, very often labelled as non-institutional or an independent cultural scene, although often motivated by the principles of openness and transparency, operates in highly competitive environment of "creative market". Without proper protective and support mechanisms, which should be established by progressive cultural policies on a state level, their cultural content and work are highly jeopardized i.e. there is a constant threat of their dissipation or disappearance.

SCHEDULE

Thursday, October 12

5:00 p.m. Kitsch throughout Skopje 2014 (Плоштад Слобода/ Freedom Square)

7:00 p.m. Opening

7:10 p.m. *What is the Strategy for Institutional Development of the Ministry of Culture of R.M?*, Minister of Culture of R. Macedonia, Robert Alagjovovski

7:30 p.m. *From Instituting to Constituting Artistic Autonomy*, Pascal Gielen, Antwerp Research Institute

8:45 p.m. Promotion of the book *Cultural Diplomacy: Arts, Festivals and Geopolitics*, participants> Robert Alagjovovski, Minister of Culture of R. Macedonia; Milena Dragičević Šešić, Head of UNESCO Chair in Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation, University of Arts, Serbia, book editor; Ljiljana Rogač Mijatović, Faculty of Dramatic Arts – Belgrade, book co-editor and co-author; and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, Lokomotiva, Skopje, author of a book chapter.

Friday, October 13

10:00 a.m. Short presentation of the project Dissonant (Co)Spaces and Cultural Spaces for Active Citizens, Natasha Bodrozic, Milica Bozic Marojevic, Irina Ljubic, Violeta Kachakova and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski.

THEME 1: Public Space in Culture, Institutional Agency in Public Sphere, Ways of Governing/ Local Context and Specificities

10.30 a.m. *Methods of Institutional Agency in Public Sphere: Challenges and Achievements*, Prof. Milena Dragicevic Sestic, Head of UNESCO Chair in Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation, University of Arts, Serbia.

11:15 a.m. Moderator: Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski; Participants: Ana Žuvela, *Critical Contribution to Understanding Participation: Linking the Concept With the Practice*; Marijana Cvetković, *Instituting Collaborative Arts Practices in Hostile Institutional Conditions*; Sanja Ivanovska Velkoska, *Trade Union of Culture of R.M. (SKRM), Its Role in Reforming the Public Institutions in Macedonia*; Goran Injac, *The Mladinsko Theater, An Institutional Example of Theatre as a Public Space*.

THEME 2; Public Spaces and Their Dissonance – Using, Reusing or Abusing?

1:00 p.m. Moderator; Milica Božić Marojević: Participants; Nataša Bodrožić, *Motel Trogir*; Dragan Markovina, *Split 3: Between Modernism and Revisionism*; Ljiljana Rogac Mijatovic, *Conceiving Cartography of Public Space and Memory*; Claske Vos, *Building European Cultural Spaces: Discussing the Impact of European Cultural Policy Regarding Conceptions of Memory and Identity in Southeast Europe*; Danilo Prnjat, *Dodatno Dopunska Nastava / Houses of Culture Past and Future*, Goran Janev, *Neoliberal Appropriation of Public Space in Post(anti)socialist Macedonia*

THEME 3; What Kind of Public Spaces in Culture Do We /need? To Whom Should Public Institutions as Public Spaces in Culture Belong? Interventions in Governing, Gentrification of Public Sphere, Migrating Institutions, Destituent Spaces

Moderators; Slavco Dimitrov, Martin Sonderkamp and Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski

3:30 – 4:15 p.m. Gigi Argyropoulou, *Destituent Spaces: Instituting as Intervention* and Ivana Dragic/ *Commons as an Emancipatory Tendency in Times of Dissident Practices and Dissonant Spaces /Slavco Dimitrov m.*

4:15 – 5:00 p.m. Dragana Alfirevic, *Endurance, Nomadism and Glitter: The Example of Nomad Dance Academy as Solid Strategies and Fluid Structures*, and Ingrid Cogne, *Specific Strategies Proposed in Relation(s) to the Context(s) in Which Each (Artistic) Proposal Takes Place* / Martin Sonderkamp m.

5:00 – 5:45 p.m. Rok Vevar, *A Short Historical Observation On The Absence Of The Contemporary Dance Institutions In Socialist Yugoslavia And In The Post-Yu Republics* and Sasa Asentic, *Again Nothing New in Novi Sad* / Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski m.

6:00 p.m. Lecture – Performance, *Images of Past as Images for the Future*, doplenger

6:45 p.m. Danilo Prnjat, presentation of the research on subject: *Public Spaces in Culture/ Houses of Culture in Serbia and Macedonia*

Saturday, October 14

THEME 4: Which Institutions Are Possible in the Context of (Post) Political/Social Crises and How to Overcome the Public – Private – Civil Dualism?

10:30 a.m. – Moderator: Slavco Dimitrov; Adham Hafez and Adam Kucharski, *Extra Territorial Ministry of Culture*; Yane Calovski, *Socio-Cultural Space Center-Jadro*; Ivana Vaseva/ Filip Jovanovski, *Creating Collective Public Space, as Political, Not Organizational Decision*; Violeta Kachakova, *Kino Kultura as Constituting the Public Space of Culture* and Corrado Gemini, *Patterns of Commoning: Ownership and Cultural Production in the Age of Automation*

Discussion

1:00 p.m. Closing of the conference

About the project: The Dissonant (Co)Spaces is a collaborative project involving three regional CSO's: Lokomotiva from Skopje, the Foundation Jelena Šantić from Belgrade and Loose Associations (Slobodne veze) from Zagreb.

The project aims to reflect possibilities for reaffirming derelict, abandoned or “in between” spaces (due to unresolved ownership status or other issues) created within different socio-political and spatial paradigms, by exploring what those spaces can denote today as well as their potential for inclusion and civic participation through public debate, arts and culture.

This project is seen as an attempt to question and explore current processes of history and space-making, while preserving some of the common values and memory by developing new spaces for culture that will promote openness, horizontality, solidarity and inclusion. We aspire towards reactivating and re-making the spaces by producing new content, while preserving memory layers and developing a discursive field in which they will be reflected.

The Dissonant (Co)Spaces extends and transfers on a national level in Macedonia as the project “Cultural Spaces for active citizens („Културни простори за активни граѓани“), addressing the development of the diverse models of public spaces in culture. The project is organized by Lokomotiva – Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture, Skopje, in partnership with the Organization for Art and Culture FRU – Faculty of Things That Can't Be Learned (Здружение ФРУ – Факултет за работи што не се учат), and the collaboration of the Association Freedom Square (Плоштад Слобода), Theatre Navigator Svetko (Театар Навигатор Цветко) and Laud Textile worker (Гласен текстилец).

Concept of the conference: Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski

Programation of the conference: Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, Milica Božić Marojević and Nataša Bodrožić (consultation on parts of the program)

Project manager: Violeta Kachakova

Coordination and production of the conference: Irina Ljubic (Foundation Jelena Santic), Elena Risteska, Pavle Ignovski, Valentino Apostolovski and Kalina Ignovska (Lokomotiva)

The Conference is organized by Lokomotiva Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture.

Venue: Kino Kultura – Space for Contemporary Performing Arts and Contemporary Culture, supported by municipality Centar.

Design of the promotional materials: Nemanja Trajkovic

Proofread: Julija Micova and Ana Vasileva

More information about The Dissonant (Co)Spaces activities <http://dissonantcospaces.blogspot.com> (<http://dissonantcospaces.blogspot.com/>); <http://www.lokomotiva.org.mk> (<https://www.facebook.com/dissonantCospaces/>) (<https://www.facebook.com/dissonantCospaces/>); www.lokomotiva.org.mk (<http://www.lokomotiva.org.mk>); <http://fjs.org.rs/> (<http://fjs.org.rs/>); <https://slobodneveze.wordpress.com/> (<https://slobodneveze.wordpress.com/>)

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