Andreja Kopač, Ida Hiršenfelder

EXERCISES IN NEXUS
“When you have nowhere to go, when you no longer care, you will come to us, for we are leaders without adherents.”

Neven Korda

Defining the language of visual artist Neven Korda is a curious task, for it seems as if his anchorage points were located in some kind of vector space, in which a sought-after relation could be put into different perspectives between the vector plane and the scalar product. Since these are two complementary planes, we can assume that one dimension is represented by low-resolution visual language with its peculiar perceptual effects, while the other dimension is determined by discursive space of special enunciability, whose basic unit is formed as the minimal function of meaning. The discursive plane that is conceived in such a way is established anew every time, according to the individual internal logic of the event, which is part of current social events as well as part of the individual state of the author’s consciousness. Every event (show/performance/installation) by Neven Korda thus acquires the status of a special plane of enunciation, which on the one hand “consolidates” the discourse of one, while on the other hand it establishes a different kind of gaze every time, and through this gaze it addresses the viewer and itself. The smaller this unit, the more immediate communication with the viewer becomes. The latter often includes various technical flaws and performative privatisms, which gradually become part of the visual spectrum of low resolution, which – precisely by means of its conscious errors – resists intended representation, unambiguous interpretation or polished form in every possible way.
I. Starting Point: Theatre of One

Since 2011, Neven Korda has been using various modes of performative staging, predominantly within the frame of two series of events: the first is *Offshoot Generator* (*Generator stranskih vej* aka *GSV*),\(^1\) subtitled *A Spectacle of Excess Energy* (*Spektakel preveč vložene energije*), while its “ideational extract” takes place within the series of *Consolidations* (*Utrjevanja*)\(^2\) at various venues, the last one of which was staged in May 2013 at the Old Power Station (Stara mestna elektrarna – Elektro Ljubljana). While Korda has also been working on parallel series of video installations all along,\(^3\) in trying to re-/de-construct his internal spaces, I will refer primarily to his latest two series of performances, for they appear to be functioning more consistently within themselves than outwardly. Irrespective of the number of participants in every

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1 Staged for the first time on June 24, 2011, at Španski borci, Ljubljana.
2 Staged for the first time on Friday, December 14, 2012.
3 He works with several media at various venues (Aksioma Project Space, Vžigalica Gallery, Alkatraz, Španski borci, Kiberpipa, SCCA–Ljubljana, SMEEL), where he returns to his origins, video material in low resolution.
performance, the special situation of enunciation, which Korda defines for this purpose, consists predominantly of the discourse of one, which fulfils several functions: as manipulator, initiator, enunciator, leader with no adherents. It is interesting that Korda’s execution in certain segments relates to the work *The Theatre of One (Gledališče enega)*, published in 1981 and based on the doctoral dissertation by Matjaž Šekoranja, which is an analysis of manifestations of the theatre of one in the 1970s in Central Europe. In relation to Slovenia, the work focuses on the actor Stane Sever, his departure from the central theatre institution (SNG Drama Ljubljana) and the founding of his own autonomous theatre, directed towards theatrical manifestation with one (and only) actor, who “produces” various genres: monodrama, prose, poetry and everything *in-between*. Already in the second chapter, the author signals a crisis of theatre

4 Matjaž Šekoranja: *Gledališče enega: Analiza pojmov v sedemdesetih letih v srednjeevropskem prostoru*, Ljubljana 1981, Knjižnica Mestnega gledališča ljubljanskega. The work was conceived during the author’s studies at the Institute for Theatre Studies, Faculty of Arts, Vienna.
as institution, also in the sense of the form of enunciation, which cannot (that is, it is no longer able to) work as a self-fulfilling prophecy; it works merely as a live, fluid, almost rhizomatic process, which is entirely dependent upon the ability to be integrated into the social context and *milieu*. Here, the theatre of one is established as a possible way out of the crisis of theatre institution, which, according to Šekoranja, transpires as an outburst of exhibitionism in the context of self-affirmation and the search for love. He also mentions that more than three quarters (76 per cent) of the creators of the theatre of one are male. Šekoranja’s analysis ends with an appraisal of multimedia phenomena, which makes it seem as if the crossing over from the institution into the theatre of one is the prerequisite for their establishment. Korda, too, has been emphasising the importance of theatre both in the sense of the generic nature of the communal (space) as well as in the sense of the appropriation of the performative (format). His enunciation thus always transpires also as a critique of theatre code (among other things, Korda was also the leader of the theatre group FV 112/15), however, not at the level of *the performative*, but rather at the level of *the discursive*. Namely, the theatre of one, as Andrijan Lah writes, is always already a response to the institutional crisis of theatre, to the position of the individual in a technicised world, to the dominance of television; yet, on the other hand, it is a frequent occurrence, which proves that theatre with the possibility of transformation is a flexible form, which stems from immediate confrontation with the viewer. And just as Šekoranja sees the theatre of one as an attempt to return to the original forms of human communication (1981: 192), so Korda digitalises forms of direct communication by means of visual language. While doing so, he is aware of his *two-way position*; on the one hand, this position is directed towards the function of spectacle, which he persistently avoids (together with polished form); on the other hand, it concerns the manipulative power of the organisation of the gaze, which Korda tirelessly disperses with a combined system of a larger number of cameras in space and with the ubiquitous presence of performers.

II. Fictional Universe of “Metelkovism”

The performer is always a “prisoner” of his or her own visual code, in which the umbilical cord with the viewer is established relationally, that is, through the shared socio-political context, which is the communal context. The voice of the activist Miha Zadnikar thus emerges as personification of the latter; first in *Offshoot Generator* and later on in *Consolidations*, his manifesto can be read as the individualised voice of the communal context, which, in a digitalised world, is steadily disappearing. Even to such an extent that it has been moved completely into the field of a fictional universe, into the mental spaces of every artist, which is directly related to the disappearance of public spaces, to the condemnation of Metelkova as a space of alternative artistic production, which seems to have stopped fighting for common spaces and shared positions. Korda cannot hide his disappointment about this. “[I]n the ruins of metelkovism, there thrive conformism, egoism, laziness of the spirit... black, black, black” (from a performance in 2007). In the series of his latest performances, Korda the artist, who still works in a studio at Metelkova, has been persistently consolidating an internal critique of the position of Metelkova in the context of disappearance of common spaces, the process that has been reflected in the broader socio-political context for years. The latter is represented by the voice of Miha Zadnikar, who occasionally slips into a dialogue with the actually present Korda, while the mystical voice of LadyBird establishes a reminiscence of the past and an emotional space for the reception of the present.

III. Imperative of Open Space

Since “space and time are not conditions in which we live; rather, they reflect the way we think”,6 the question arises as to how to secure a space of visibility for Korda’s reflection, which is a complex and diachronous conception, yet, in specific performances, only its synchronous axis stands out, only the surface of the problems constantly highlighted by the artist. In his honours thesis *Alternative*

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6 This is one of the generic quotations from the drama performance *Echoes (Odmevi)* by Neven Korda, Ljubljana, 2009.
Cultural Production (Alternativna kulturna produkcija),\(^7\) for instance, he cuts straight into the heart of the problem of Metelkova, which – despite a certain level of cooperative collaboration – has not been able to transcend the conflict between the alternative modes of production and the independent sector. “Politically, culturally, economically and even morally, Metelkova stands outside the frames of state apparatuses,” writes Korda (2008: 54); as such, it competes with both national and independent cultural institutions; and yet, despite this, it has not been able to save the potential of subcultural artistic practices, for due to its location (commercially viable land in the centre of Ljubljana) it keeps finding itself amidst various political lobbies, none of which has enough power to win. As Bratko Bibič describes the agents and the processes of these political, urbanistic and capital-related games in his work Noise from Metelkova (Hrup z Metelkove),\(^8\) their active core lies in the troubled waters between the dependence on public funding and the intrusion of market mechanisms, which means, in the final instance, that the power and its alternative are no longer significantly different. This “new aesthetics” has gradually inhabited the apparatus of the dominant culture, which, according to Korda (2008: 56), not even theorist and publicist Eda Čufer could have predicted. According to Čufer (1997: 61),\(^9\) the actual inability of situating certain aesthetics in the context of the space of existing institution derives precisely from the authentic politics of subcultural practices; for Korda, however, the prerequisite for survival is the upholding of openness at any cost, both physically and spiritually. Subcultural production must set itself up as defence against conservative forms of cultural production and it must establish itself as a process that appropriates actual space. It seems that it is precisely the openness of space that constitutes the precondition for lively creativity, but the rifts within the alternative have marred the processes of openness as such. In this context, the question arises as to how the non-governmental sector in the field of culture and art relieves struggles for open public space in the context of its own functioning.

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\(^7\) Neven Andrič Korda: Alternativna kulturna produkcija, honours thesis, supervisor: Dr Mitja Velikonja, University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ljubljana, 2008.

\(^8\) Bratko Bibič: Hrup z Metelkove, Peace Institute, Ljubljana, 2003, pp. 117–143.

IV. Appropriation of the Physical

In a certain context, artist Korda’s demands for public and open spaces can be transposed into the language of specific physicality and exhaustion, entailed in his performances beyond manifestations of the visual (in low resolution) and the spoken (the textual within the performative). What we are dealing with here is space inherently inscribed with the principles of physis in the sense of a completely idiosyncratic inscription of physicality into Neven Korda’s performances. If we look merely at the projects conceived since 2004, Korda

10 Offshoot Generator contains three layers of dancer Igor Sviderski’s principles of movement. The first layer is represented by the system of movements of the Laban cube as the primary motivation for movement and the basic movement apparatus. The second layer contains layers of “private” movement, derived from the elements of trance and disco dance, which also brings in the context of electronic music, which appeared in Slovenia at the beginning of the 1990s. The third layer was conceived in collaboration with Neven korda, using Meyerhold’s principles of movement as a starting point. The last layer transpires as a “trace” of working with previous collaborators, for instance with Sebastijan Starič, Maruša Geymayer Oblak and Živa Repovž.
has been actively collaborating with dancers and choreographers: Igor Sviderski and Živa Repovž in *Letters from the Present* (*Pisma iz sedanjosti*, 2004), and Rosana Hribar and Igor Sviderski in *TWO* (*DVA*, 2005). With Sviderski, he also developed creative dialogue in the show *Mr Nahtigal* (*Gospod Nahtigal*, 2008), while in the drama performance *Echoes* (*Odmevi*, 2009) he collaborated with Sabina Schwenner and Katjuša Kovačič. Korda works with several dancers, however, with every one of them he has been developing, modifying and advancing the same kind of principles of physicality that, in the context of the precious chapter, converge with the foundations of the spatial. Korda the choreographer thus uses distinct terminology, which cannot be found in the usual (choreographic) processes, for his principles are based on the physical processes of (open) traversal: *convergence, fusion, standstill, protrusion*. It is precisely at the margins of the latter that we find space for appropriation of various modalities of the dancer’s physical body. Using V. E. Meyerhold’s biomechanics as a starting point, we see that we are dealing with two types of convergence that point to the appropriation of the physical: the “literal translation” of the principles of biomechanics (from the past) into various
bodies (in the present) and the “metaphorical translation” of the principles of convergence between the alternative cultural production and the dominant practice, which means that all differences are abolished or blurred. In this context, we encounter a continuous situation of constant convergence, friction and mutual enchainment of two bodies, which becomes evident in the performance *TWO* and which has been appearing in various incarnations since 2004. The specific form of *TWO* (bodies), namely Zadnikar’s and Korda’s (supported by the voice of LadyBird), acquires a specific poise in *Consolidations*, not so much through the principles of movement, but rather through a direct transformation of the physical, which comes about through the change of clothes and the use of masks and other props. What stands out here is, above all, the insistence on the principle of uncompromising openness, which is legible on several levels: as a possibility of (and/or capacity for) quick transformation, as the introduction of physical action, and as consolidation of the principles of biomechanics as the insistence on the intentionally incomplete and unrehearsed form of performative expression, which can (especially with the introduction of speech) quickly acquire the outlines of amateurism, with which it conceals its basic goal and purpose: the demand for open space in all possible perspectives, the demand for open form of artistic expression, which does not belong to any explicit aesthetics that would imply elements of pleasantness. The side-effect of the latter is excessive input of energy, which would be intended for rehearsing the form and polishing the mode of enunciation. In the context of the functions of language according to the linguist Roman Jakobson, it seems that Neven Korda’s work is determined, above all, by the referential function, which relates to the context, which is always socio-political, and the phatic function, which focuses on the direct contact between the performers and the audience. The intersection between the two is an arbitrarily conceived and understood performativity, which

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11 Six functions of language according to Roman Jakobson: 1. the referential (denotative, cognitive) function is directed towards the context of communication; 2. the emotive or affective (expressive) function refers to the sender as the direct expression of the speaker’s relation to what he or she is saying; 3. the conative function is directed towards the receiver and it finds its grammatical expression in vocatives and imperatives; 4. the phatic function concerns the connection and it is revealed in the exchange of ritual forms in dialogues, whose purpose is to extend communication; 5. the metalingual function is focused on the code (when the sender and/or the receiver have to check if they are using the same code); and 6. the poetic function is focused on the message as such.
appears as a metaphor in Korda’s work, or, to quote Mojca Zlobko in relation to *Offshoot Generator*: “A metaphor that shows what the performance should be like, or at least one of the possibilities of what it could be like. A metaphor about what performativity is in the first place. About self-referentiality. About Korda’s view of Metelkova as a creative space and community. Perhaps about Korda himself or the performers.”

V. Exercises in Nexus

I would have found it hard to define the construction of internal spaces by Korda the artist in such a manner if I had not myself taken part in one of his projects (*Odmevi*, 2009) and if I had not anticipated the duality that emerges between the reflection of the seen and the context of the spoken, which always transpires in dialogue. Inspirational conversations with Neven and the open space of self-enunciation about the reflection on one’s own work enable thinking about the parameters which, despite internal diachrony, emerge only in synchrony, as points, as lines that never meet or intersect, as chips of particular events. The aim of this writing, then, is to spread out the particles of the internal to be able to explain the parameters of the external. If we follow Foucault, according to whom everything is invisible and non-hidden and every statement lies on the surface, what defines the work of Neven Korda is a special mode of consolidation, which keeps crossing over into more or less stable versions of compositions of music and movement or text. What we are dealing with here is a type of lively creativity by means of various fluid forms of performing. The emergent “constructions” thus acquire the shape of a continuum without a predetermined closed dramatic structure, while the equivalent “bulks” generated along the way – if they produce the effect of the manifest – constitute a critique of the politics and the ideologies that narrow the spaces of living and the modes of functioning. And as with any speech act that always contains two modes of ordering – selection and combination – all versions of Consolidations are similar and at the same time different. Namely, their development proceeds along two semantic lines, which according to Jakobson function in line with the principle of similarity.

The duality of Korda’s language can thus be deduced from the appropriation of *physis*, grafted onto the verbal *similarity* with social reality (for instance, friction) and at the same time defined by the *proximity* to Meyerhold’s biomechanics (for instance, protrusion). Combination and contextualisation are two sides of the same operation and Korda traverses both simultaneously. While doing so, by means of self-reflection, he is consistently putting into effect the plan of the implication of open spaces and the idea at stake. In one of our conversations, art critic Ida Hiršenfelder described his work as “exercises in nexus”, which seems to me a very felicitous and inspiring description.

**VI. Strategies of Transposition as Continuous Dialogue**

In his career that spans three decades, Neven Korda, basically a visual artist, has created an opus of unique performative practices that have emerged at the intersection of the textual, the visual and the musical, every time with a specific attitude to (and out of) himself. It is precisely with him that the legacy of the ideational charge of the eighties is gaining a unique historical axis, which culminates in constant action, yet, with certain reservations. While we cannot argue that, in his work, Korda has done away with all elements of sensual and aesthetic experience of the presented, we can refer to the special frequency of enunciation, which, again, transpires as *appropriation of the physical*, namely, as *oscillation* through the continuous changes of tensions in the union of the visual, the acoustic and the textual. Such a structure transfers onto the viewer

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13 *Metaphor* means literal transposition of words or their use in a metaphorical sense. It emerges when we use a word in an unusual connection, which seems to be at odds with its broader and logical meaning.

14 *Metonymy* denotes linguistic or stylistic formation that is similar to metaphor. It comes into being when a word is replaced with another word, when we designate a certain phenomenon with the name of another phenomenon that is connected to the first one in a material, causal or spatial way, and not just in the sense of logical similarity, which is the characteristic of metaphor (for example, I read Pushkin.)

15 Neven Korda is active as director and author of theatre performances, authorial films, documentaries, and video clips. He also mentors and supervises workshops in applied video. He is active in the field of archiving and preserving video records. In the 1980s, he was co-founder and leader of the theatre group FV 112/15, co-founder of the alternative video production company FV Video, and member of the group Borghesia, whose primary responsibility were the visuals. In the 1990s, he also worked as a video editor, author of TV images, director and executor of various projects and TV shows.
as well. First, it is generated as general interest; then, through a fusion of principles, it develops into particular foci; this is followed by decline through diffusion and, ultimately, by dispersal in many directions. The principle of looking, then, is physical again; issues come to the fore through their own framing, while “excess” energy is not re-invested into their linking; rather, some of the connections are completely undone. This is accompanied by the constant danger of the chosen dispositif being populated by meanings that have nothing to do with the performed; even more, they can appear as the opposite, as a negative entity of the invested excess energy. The partially contextualised performative expression is thus not executed according to a predetermined pattern, just as it does not represent a category or (self) reference, but rather a historically conditioned continuum, which can also be read for the future, in the question of searching for creative space that, as part of heterotopic reality, strives to find a community. Yet, not a community that stabilises and confines, but rather one that generates and oscillates. And space that strives for a different interpretation of (theatre) space, which would be able to speak from itself and stand for itself. To achieve the latter, a continuous consolidation of positions is necessary, similar to Stane Sever’s definition of positions: “I persevere in my own professional, artistic positions, at any cost. I see no reason why, after thirty-five years, I should abandon my concept.” Neven Korda, too, registers video strategies of the transpositions of his own opus, with a focus on the manipulation of the seen or the visible as that immaterial and non-existent link, which – precisely in an artist’s construction of internal spaces – can be discerned in everything that existed, everything that still exists and everything that will exist.
Ida Hiršenfelder
Savages in Space Ships

“The world is obliged to support you.”
Neven Korda

Video spaces set up by Neven Korda are systems that stage the relations between the media and the representations of the beautiful. They express social and political contents with technical and performative means. In these spaces, images are transformed into electromagnetic radiation caught in a feedback loop. The images reflect, repeat mantrically and transform visual matrices, captured by the artist with live image and sound. Sometimes he prepares them in advance from a selection of low resolution clips of his own video production. Since the turn of the millennium, he has been accumulating, upgrading and composing collages using characteristic images.
and statements that recur in numerous intimate performances, kinetic installations and generative projections. It is possible to recognise the basic intentions of his activities in every instalment or performance, enhanced by an intentionally poetic and precise subtitle, which describes a particular genre.¹ Every instalment or performance unravels, repeats, reflects, upgrades and deepens his fourfold intentions, namely searching for the beautiful, exploring the effects of technical means on the perception of space and time, political agitation, and analysis of social dynamics. All these tendencies and procedures are also clearly expressed in the performance Consolidations (Utrjevanja),² subtitled Video strategies of transposition in the time and work of an artist.

I. Here comes the time of ... Low Resolution

Conceptualising Consolidations, the artist initially started from the idea of the theatre of one.³ As director/performer, he included the character of the musician LadyBird who, in the second part of the performance, makes a non-textual excursus into the field of club music. This excursus ends the whole action without catharsis, and it stretches the time for the viewers’ reflection on the media projection event one has just witnessed. It is spectacular, however, not in the sense of society of the spectacle, but rather in the sense of conscious use of technical means that produce rough visual and sound aesthetics, in which the production procedures are completely exposed.

If all media images are digital, we must understand them all as more or less densely arranged pixels or bits. This makes it possible to relativise the term “real” in the sense that the image is more real if the arrangement of dots is denser, while the image is more potential if the resolution is sparse.⁴ The performance does not distance the viewers from the procedures constituting the spectacle; quite the opposite, with low resolution effects it allows a connection between representation and the represented, for it is precisely

¹  Genre designations – such as agitational, emotional, theatre, radio, intermedia, triple solo performance – define the medium, the context and the mode of performative action. (See http://www.aksioma.org/ or http://www.e-arihiv.org/video-turn/).
²  Documentation of the performance: http://www.aksioma.org/utrjevanja/.
³  “The theatre of one” is introduced historically and contextually in Andreja Kopač’s text “Constructions of Internal Spaces According to Neven Korda”.
in low resolution where such a spread of reality occurs and directly confronts us. At the same time, “poor images [sounds] show the rare, the obvious, and the unbelievable – that is, if we can still manage to decipher it”.\(^5\) Flusser, for instance, deliberately describes virtual worlds as alternative and not as an illusion, for at the level of perception they produce precisely what is essential for perception of images and not what falls outside their meaning.\(^6\)

In this procedure of generative multiplication of images, the artist screams slogans into a microphone. He expresses the sameness of the contemporary statement “\textit{It is time for austerity measures}” and the newspaper cutting from thirty years ago “\textit{It is time for stabilisation measures}”. The clarity of his voice is blurred and it vanishes between the Pure Data\(^7\) code and the person producing sound. A formal, “mathematical” consciousness is expressed in synthetic computer images and sounds. His voice seemingly denies the analogy with the empirical world and it provides our imagination with sur-corporeal impressions, even though these impressions are still related to our endogenous perceptual forms. It seems that what we are dealing with here is a conflict between the body and the medium, in which the digital hyper-medium has already won.\(^8\)

What is reflected in the broken low-resolution voice, which pitches the artist’s voice almost comically high, are earnest childishness, powerlessness and, last but not least, the essence of low-resolution sound and image, to which Korda is faithful. Low resolution is not used by the artist solely due to aesthetic tendencies; it also expresses his social commitment to work within the frame of possibilities that do not interfere financially with the integrity of other artists who partake in the distribution of funding allocated to the production of cultural contents. As Steyerl writes, the rise of low-resolution “poor image” constitutes a direct revolt against “the rampant privatization of intellectual content”, which also “enables piracy and appropriation”.\(^9\) In this sense, Neven Korda’s projective art appropriates itself, for the images constantly refer to one another. Visual self-referentiality of this kind has developed from the idea

\(^6\) Vilém Flusser: \textit{ibid.}, p. 55.
\(^7\) Pure Data is a generative open-source programme for manipulating sound and video.
\(^9\) Hito Steyerl: \textit{ibid.}, p. 39.
Neven Korda
Consolidations
Aksioma | Project Space, Ljubljana, 2013

Photo: Nada Žgank
that rich high-resolution images, such as those that the artist himself was producing in the context of professional video production in the last decade of the millennium, establish a system of hierarchies that low-resolution technology creatively undermines. The first results of this sort were published in a video compilation *The New New Films 2001–2005*, which is related to the use of widely accessible DIY computer tools. Precisely these images resurface in many versions as video bits that the artist uses to build each and every video space, be it installation or scenery for a (theatre) performance. The short video works in the compilation are determined by the digital format 720x576, which ideologically advocates low resolution. The artist’s mode of production under economical (but not austere) conditions of production also determines the rough aesthetics, editing and simplifications.

II. The Catchpole and the Hangman – the Sameness of Sameness

In *Consolidations*, at the formal level, the artist as director seemingly intervenes into the field of performing arts. In fact, in all performative sequences, a hybrid understanding of various fields of art is revealed completely, for these fields are presented as projective arts, in which the imagery and the content inscribed in it are equally intertwined. This is why evaluation of the artist’s activities would be a fairly slippery affair if we wanted to conduct it with an analysis of procedures accepted within a specific field of art. *Consolidations* stand against the acceptance of such conventions and they challenge social segmentation or professionalisation of work, which hinders the ability to approach the world holistically. The holistic world, in which individual segments are intertwined in solidarity and communication, is represented in the performance by philosopher Miha Zadnikar wearing comfortable bright-orange clothes and sporting a thick long beard, making him look like an Indian sage. Sitting in an execution chair in the centre of the space, he proclaims the following statement: “Politics that is liable only to state management as its sphere of interest is apolitical. ... The class structure of predators uses the term ‘loot’ as if political procedures and public affairs actually involved predatory enterprise. Just as there is an endless division into sectors, in which class structures emerge, the transitional structure is divided
into sector segments of something.” The artist himself comes to a similar conclusion when he states: “Politics serves its own purpose. The entire society is politicised. Politics has monopolised everything and it does not concern itself with establishing relations that make things happen.” In contrast to the philosopher, the artist stages this statement with visual means; he showed it in its original form in the video installation Nanomorphoses (Nanomorfoze, December 2012). On that occasion, he set up a projection in which he showed the non-existent differences between party “faces” committed to the predatory logic expounded by the philosopher. Using generative video images, he fused and morphed the faces of well-known politicians and he covered them with numerous tiny icons of red stars crossed out with swastikas. In so doing, he showed not only the sameness of the so-called representatives of party democracy but also the sameness of the ideological apparatus of the state in transition, which has not produced its own ideological formation, but has instead taken us back to the times of clerical fascism. The installation was constructed with a sensor for measuring distance, causing it to generatively produce the aforementioned icons arranged in a more or less dense raster, in the presence of the audience. By granting his work such interactive aspects, the artist speaks about inter-passivity in which the viewers find themselves in relation to the media space. In Consolidations, he added another aspect to such passivity, namely, the aspect of complicity and co-responsibility of the onlookers who do not become active as co-creators of media images. As I have already indicated, the whole set up was conceived as a scene of execution, in which the producer of media images (the author, the director) puts the philosopher in the execution chair and establishes relations akin to Kafka’s Penal Colony. But the task of the hangman is not straightforward, for he is the executor of the decision and not the producer of the situation. In his hybrid role, not easily defined, several different roles merge: the editor of media images, political agitator and a representative of early manifestations.

10  Sound recording, Neven Korda, SCCA, Center for Contemporary Arts – Ljubljana, Project Room, 6 Metelkova, December 20, 2012 (the author’s archive), 00:08:42.
11  “The Right has performed an anathema, with which we lost self-management as an economic model along with welfare and human considerations. This Right is represented by the heavy-handed, who were part of the League of Communists of Slovenia, even though they were actually defeated in fractional conflicts, only to force their way into power after 1991 and now even usurp it.” Ibid., 00:29:25.
of digital club culture and “queer” identities. The point of his violence cannot be distinguished clearly, for the repressive role of the catchpole is similar to objective violence, that is, “precisely the kind of violence that maintains this ‘normal’ state of affairs. Objective violence is invisible, for it sustains status quo, in relation to which (that is, to the transgression of which) we perceive something as (subjective) violence. To become aware of it, a parallax shift of sorts is needed.”  

The latter is established in one of the oscillating peaks of the performance, when the executor distributes masks with the faces of politicians among the audience, so the viewers can recognise the sameness of sameness in themselves. Korda understands projection events that strive to achieve such an activation of the audience, that is, interactivity (which was particularly present in the projection events Parallel Worlds [Paralelni svetovi], which took place at Metelkova from 2006 to 2012), as public agorae. Images must acquire visible incarnation so as to be included in rituals of a certain community in public space. This is why they have to occupy a place where bodies congregate and create public spaces. The projection of video image as a medium thus grants them not only visibility but also physical presence in social space.

III. Space and Time Are Not Conditions in Which We Live; Rather, They Reflect the Way We Think

Despite firmly established political agitation in the works by Neven Korda, it has been evident ever since The New New Films (2001–2005) that he is, above all, committed to emotional experience and visual perception. He explores states such as melancholia, joy, eroticism, solidarity, historical memory and so on, which are essential for the functioning of an integral personality. The author argues that “regular and programmed movement, which is repeated along the same and often also interrupted path (in a loop), produces a multitude of metamorphoses, beautiful and meaningful moments in functional structures”. In video installations, a link is established between the body and

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the image, and the body again takes central stage. As a rule, we are still gazing at a flat, rectangular surface, which works as a window opening into the space where our body is present. Yet, despite spatial extension, the representation of image remains tied to the screen and projection mechanisms, but Korda constantly seeks to abolish the limitations of the proportions of the 3x4 format, which is no less formally binding than representation of any other convention within the social spectrum. “For, anthropologically speaking, man does not appear as the master of his images but rather – and this is something entirely different – as the ‘space of images’ that occupy one’s body: one is left to the images that one creates himself/herself, and one constantly tries to control them.”¹⁴ The virtual and the projected, then, are juxtaposed to the linear perception of time, spatial determination, objective truths and simulations. Time in Neven Korda’s projection art flows in from everywhere and space is dispersed in all directions, which enables the artist to bring time into the present moment, to ramify space rhizomatically and to perceive it as subjectively beautiful.

Neven Korda
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Andreja Kopač, Ida Hiršenfelder
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