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What's next?
MY ARTS: Non-Profit Organisation for Cultural Support
The On-Going Process of Building Up a Sustainable Art Organisation

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INTRODUCTION

The thesis seeks to stimulate a discussion about the curatorial approach, the challenges and opportunities which curatorial practice and profession face, by providing a critical self-reflection of the on-going process of building up an arts non-profit organisation. Expecting to finish my Master of Advanced Studies in Education / Curating / Managing from the University of Applied Arts in Vienna, Austria and at the same being the co-founder of MY ARTS, a trans disciplinary organisation for cultural support, I base my writings on personal endeavours and lessons learned during this journey, reflecting on the conceptual and management requirements, qualities, necessities, challenges, difficulties, temptations, struggles and enjoyments included in establishing a cultural organisation.

Curating is a changing profession and young graduates and their institutions need to respond to these demands. Nowadays no contemporary art venue or cultural center of any significance can be considered without first involving a curator. A curator's engagement or at least signature is more crucial to the world of contemporary art now than ever before. This is something that has dissolved some old discourses and at the same time creating new ones[1]. The definition of the curator is being explored constantly, creating new ways of thinking about and working with art and culture. But like every development, this creates new problems that need to be dealt with. Due to this development, the numbers of curatorial courses have been growing rapidly over the last decade in various parts of the world[2].

This prompts considerations of the definition of the curator, stepping away from the traditional models, as well as the role of the education in responding to the 21st century reality of the profession. The crushing crisis alongside the astonishing unemployment levels, are forcing self-organised initiatives among young graduates who are stepping away from the pattern of seeking security under the umbrella of private or state institutions, taking on roles far beyond exhibition making, to include reimagining museums; writing the history of curating; creating discursive platforms and undertaking social or political activism, as well as rethinking spectatorship.
The paper argues that in the current era of rapid technological, economic and disciplinary change, lays an opportunity to develop stronger and more vibrant forms of curatorial practice. The need to rethink in curatorial education, the need for the "educational turn" according to Irid Rogoff[3] has become extremely vital, in order to give students, the necessary tools to be part of the new world. Rogoff mentions that: *"We have recently heard much about the "educational turn in curating" among several other "educational turns" affecting cultural practices around us[4] Having participated in several of the projects emerging from this perceived "turn," it seems pertinent to ask whether this umbrella is actually descriptive of the drives that have propelled this desired transition[5]"[6].* Therefore, with the notions of potentiality, actualization, emergency and urgency, she continues questioning, whether this turn is leading to an active movement—a generative moment in which leaves behind the practice that was its originating point and creating something new, something more[7] .

Young graduates should be encouraged to seize the opportunity in these extraordinary times for challenging, collaborations, sharing, group intelligence, inter-/transdisciplinary networks, self-organisation and collective entrepreneurship, marking the skills of a new profession. Towards this new curating it is very important that our educational institutions work to create the conditions, which will optimise graduates' chances.

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1 The Canon of Curating, *Manifesta Journal*, http://www.manifestajournal.org/canon-curating, (04 March 2016)
2 Curator's Network, http://www.curators-network.eu/, (25 April 2016)
3 Rogoff, I. (2008), e-flux, New York
4 "Salon Discussion: 'You Talkin' to me? Why art is turning to education,'" The Institute of Contemporary Arts, London.
5 Among others; A.C.A.D.E.M.Y Hamburg, Antwerp, Eindhoven, 2006-7, "Summit – Non Aligned Initatives in Education Culture," 2007, "Faculties of Architecture, Dutch Pavillion, Venice Architecture Biennale", 2008. The Ph.D. program "Curatorial/Knowledge" at Goldsmiths College, London University, co-directed with Jean-Paul Martinon.
6 Rogoff, I. (2008), e-flux, New York
7 Rogoff, I. (2008), e-flux, New York

Image 1

DAI, the Dutch Art Institute is a bright example in the world of curatorial education. As they state on their website: "*Not to be compared to any studio-based program and certainly not to the notorious edu-factories in the capitals of capitalism, the DAI offers a small scale program, (...) that in many ways exceeds the limits of conventional art education*"[8].

According to Hollert[9], *"it is truly ravishing to observe how, at DAI, the rhetoric of risk and change, usually to be taken as the mark of neoliberal deregulation par excellence, corresponds with an educational, artistic, theoretical and political ethos of auto-critique and communality"*[10].

By constantly challenging and reshaping curating's format, the need for a critical reflection based on my two last years of my studies and my involvement at MY ARTS was of utmost importance. The process can be seen as a reference tool for other aspiring art organisations, but mostly acts as a self-development tool in order to critically plan the next steps of my development. The paper illustrates clear and accessible information on the process of setting up our organisation, leaving at the same time space for interrogation, critique and dialogue. The practical knowledge gained by doing, is then supported by established theories in the field, positioning the personal experience within a broader critical discourse.

Although the information and writings provided here are considered to be practical rather than theoretical oriented, the thesis should not be seen as a manual or some sort of handbook, providing useful, clearly structured information or even instruction on the way a product or a service needs to be assembled or managed. Our described on-going journey follows a non-linear approach, highlighting the importance of process, instead of the pursuit of an end product.

LOCAL AND WIDER CONTEXT OF MY ARTS

The analysis of the effects of culture on its local and broader context and the economic development trajectories of a broader and local scale are very important when we talk about self-organised organisations. We move from the recognition that culture is a key ingredient of post-industrial, information-intensive activity to the fact that a culture-oriented economic development is one that integrates the symbolic and creative elements into any aspect of the urban economy, pursuing collective entrepreneurship and a higher level of interaction between localised individuals and social knowledge internationally.

Culture is for the urban spaces the breathing lung of the society. Culture is a full-fledged economic sector that – as any other – generates impacts on the urban environment, ranging from direct and indirect expenditure to employment generation. However, cultural production is highly contextual and idiosyncratic. For these reasons, urban spaces have the proper infrastructure for cultural production and consumption. Urban spaces provide ideal workspace for artists and cultural managers; and the local economy comes to thrive of it, establishing a symbiotic relation with culture, generating substantial "intangible" or non-pecuniary economic effects. In an age in which societies tend to become multicultural, identities and ways of life confront one another. In the multi-cultural and diverse city, culture can be a lever that stimulates connections, being a common language, a bridge between different groups.

In Vienna, where MY ARTS is based, but also in other places around Europe and internationally, exist various art organizations, think tanks and forums supporting artistic and cultural practices, being unique in their own context, challenging the curating perceptions. From the numerous examples worldwide, here I am describing a few, which I had the privilege to get to know and be influenced by.

From its modest beginnings in 1997 as an annual workshop, Khoj in Delhi, India, has established itself as a non-profit, contemporary arts organization providing financial, physical and intellectual space for artists through its various programs. It has built an international reputation as outstand-

8 http://dutchartinstitute.eu/, (03 May 2016)

9 Hollert, T., External auditor invited by the Dutch Ministry of Education

10 http://dutchartinstitute.eu/, (03 May 2016)

Image 2

Image 3

ing alternative arts incubation space and plays a central role in the development of experimental, interdisciplinary, and critical contemporary art practice in India. Through a variety of programs including workshops, residencies, exhibitions, talks, and community art projects, Khoj has supported the experimentation of many leading Indian artists well before they went on to receive international acclaim. With a focus on building such networks, developing alternative pedagogies, and learning through collaboration and exchange, Khoj programs have created unconventional synapses between art and disciplines such as science, architecture and fashion. The organization facilitates change by encouraging artists and audiences to engage with vital concerns such as ecology, sustainability and community participation[11]. Public and private institutions as well as private benefactors founded the organization.

Moreover, a European example skewing more to cultural management on the boarders between art and business, we find La Fábrica in Madrid, Spain[12]. The company, as they call themselves, devise, create, promote and develop cultural projects in very diverse fields. They start up ideas that in many cases would not exist without their involvement and participation. They are responsible for the role of the connector and consultant in cultural projects contributing value to society.

La Fábrica's areas of work cover the entire sphere of contemporary culture: photography, art, literature, cinema, theatre, dance, architecture, music, science. Their projects have a global viewpoint and use various approaches to drive and disseminate cultural creation using various tools such as: book publishing, exhibition production, creation of festivals and large cultural events, institutional strategies, cultural programming, design and the start-up of creative and exhibition centers, training programs and Internet projects.
Quite interestingly, the company also offers a training program course on Cultural Management in contemporary field aimed at professionals in cultural management and cultural entrepreneurs, creators and the general public with a practical and informative nature, and based on the actual experience of our projects and our team of professionals and collaborators.

Electra is a London based contemporary art organization, which curates, commissions and produces projects by artists working across sound, moving image, performance and the visual arts. Through close dialogue with a range of venues and collaborators, we present our projects across the UK and internationally. At the heart of their practice is a process-based relationship between artist, curator and audiences, which seeks to give the projects space to find their own rhythm, public outputs, and discourse. Electra's core aim is to foster a dialogue between a range of disciplines of contemporary artistic practice, to provide a platform for debate and engaged, dynamic investigations of urgent social, political and cultural questions. Lina Dzuverovic and Anne Hilde Neset founded Electra in 2003, which receives its core funding from Arts Council England[13].

And last but not least a precedent from Athens, Greece pointing out that even in strict political and financial conditions, the ground can be found for emerging challenging practices. NEON, founded in 2013 by collector and entrepreneur Dimitris Daskalopoulos, "works to bring contemporary culture closer to everyone, in the firm belief in the ability of contemporary artistic creativity to rouse, emotionally move and motivate"[14]. It also aims to contribute to the wider efforts being made to revitalise the city and inspire the daily lives of its citizens. NEON does not restrict itself to just one space. It activates public spaces in Athens and the periphery. NEON advocates all institutions, which are established in the field of learning, new productions and the dialogue with the city. NEON seeks to expose the ability contemporary art has to stimulate, inspire and affect the individual and society at large. NEON aims to highlight culture as a key driver of progress and development[15]. The initiative supports artists, working through a program of scholarships and grants, providing them with access to education, research and production resources. Using art as an educational leverage, NEON also

11 http://www.thf.gr/default.aspx?lang=en-, (04 March 2016)
12 http://www.lafabrica.com/en/, (04 March 2016)
13 http://www.electra-productions.com/about/intro.shtml, (30 March 2016)
14 http://neon.org.gr/en, (20 March 2016)
15 http://neon.org.gr/en, (20 March 2016)

cultivates the relationship between young people and awareness of contemporary art and culture.

Founding our organisation with its base in Vienna, was from the one hand a result or practical conditions as it is the city is where our home and work environment currently resides, but also for some very important historical and cultural reasons which allow MY ARTS to benefit from the local context that it belongs.

Vienna, with its tradition as the seat of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, during the 17th-19th centuries knew its political and cultural apogee. All the major cultural personalities of the age - and especially musicians - found sanctuary in a city with an open attitude towards artistic creation. In the last decades, Vienna has gained the titled of a cultural city, acting as the "bridge" between the reuniting East and West through massive investments in culture, architecture, and economic infrastructure. Today Vienna faces a number of challenges, namely that of taking full profit of its new role of regional hub in the heart of the enlarged European Union, investing in its strengths – the innovative character, the educational and research capacity, and increasing its international orientation, which can only be achieved with a more proactive political effort which overcomes the constraints put by an often inward-looking, reluctant national policy. To move more decidedly in that direction, the urban space needs to overcome the "wealthy city lock-in": the tendency for cities where things are going well to forget that they still have to invest in the future to as to anticipate foreseeable changes and maintain their strengths for their communities. Our organization, is building up on this given infrastructure aiming to use it as a springboard and catalyst for cultural and social change through culture and arts, locally and internationally.

Context plays a significant role to the character and development of art organizations. You can also find this shift in the architectural field. AAA (atelier d'architecture autogérée), founded in Paris in 2001, is a good example on how a practice is utilising the context around it by initiating spaces[16]. They have developed a practice of collective re-appropriation of available urban spaces that they transform into self-organized facilities. AAA understand collective creativity not as a control technique to gain better employability as expressed in neo-liberal tongues, but as a tool to change everyday living experiences in very concrete ways: by initiating collaborative practices, creating solidarity networks, and closing cycles between production and consumption. Spatial Agency, a practice initiated by Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till, describe "other ways of doing architecture." In their book they summarize "the operations of spatial agency" under the headlines of "expanding briefs," "initiating," "appropriating," "indeterminacy," "making things visible," "sharing knowledge," and "subverting and opposing," as well as "creating alternate economies[17]. Their proposal to differentiate the modes of operation expresses the need to invent new vocabularies for transformative practices.

On the conditions of space Lefebvre writes: "Appropriation should not be confused with a practice which is closely related to it but still distinct, namely 'diversion' (detournement)"[18]. An existing space may outlive its original purpose and the raison d'etre which determines its forms, functions, and structures; it may thus in a sense become vacant, and susceptible of being diverted, re-appropriated and put to a use quite different from its initial one.

Not surprisingly, Lefebvre focuses on the critical theory of the spectacle, especially as it is elaborated in Guy Debord's *The Society of the Spectacle*. "With the advent of modernity time has vanished from social space. It is recorded solely on measuring-instruments, on clocks, that are isolated and functionally specialized as this time itself. Lived time loses its form and its social interest -- with the exception, that is, of time spent working. Economic space subordinates time to itself"[19]. According to

16 http://www.urbantactics.org/, (20 March 2016)

17 Nishat Awan, Tatjana Schneider, and Jeremy Till, Spatial Agency: Other Ways of Doing Architecture, New York: Routledge, 2011

18 Henry, LEFEBVRE, The Production of Space, (English Translation: Donald Nicholson-Smith), Oxford 1991, pg. 145-150

19 Guy, DEBORD, The Society of Spectaclte, (English Translation: Fredy Perlman), Black & Red 1991, pg. 46-50

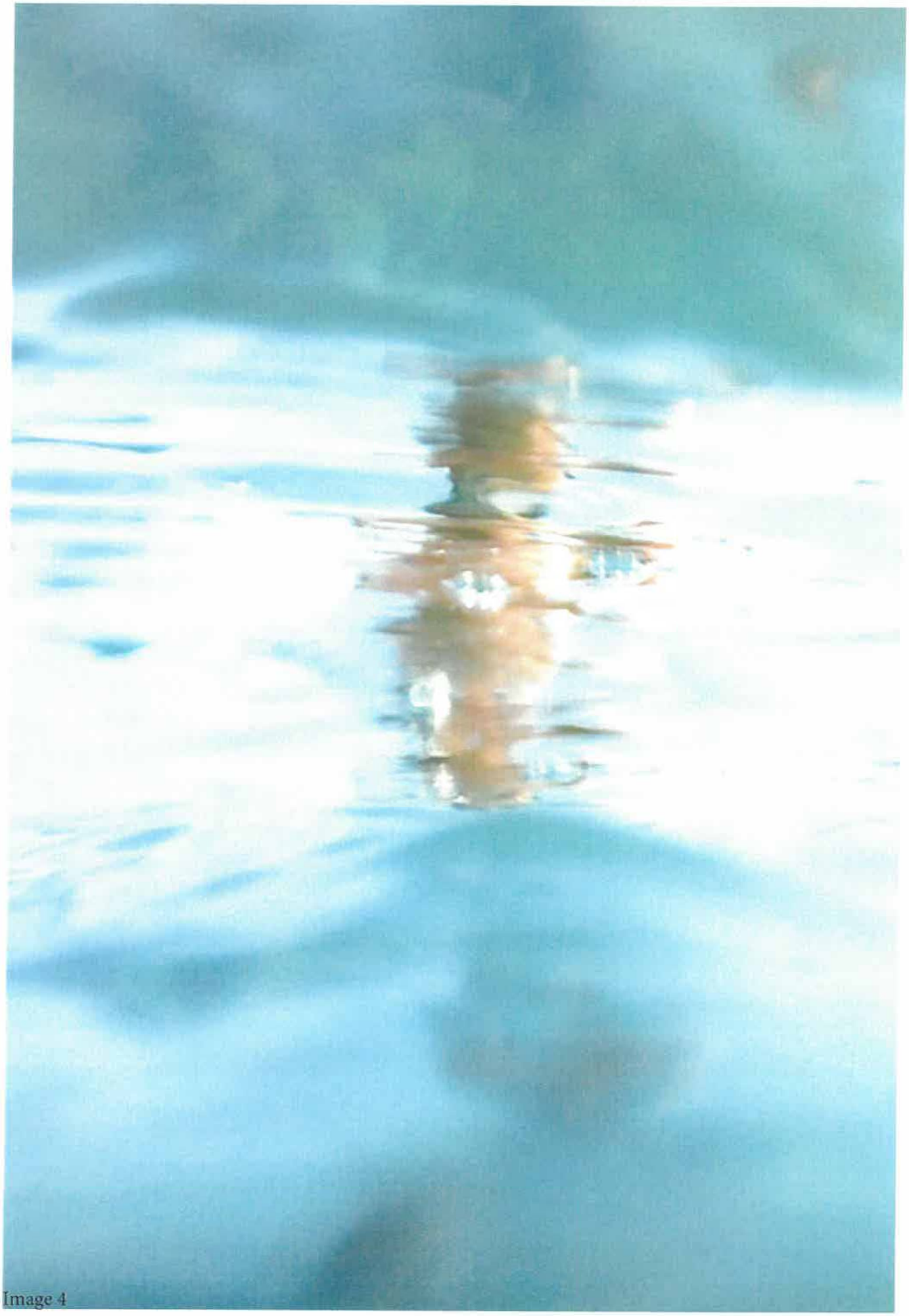

Image 4

Lefebvre, all the above conditions imply the supremacy of space over time with the reappropriation of space being the key to the liberation of time[20].

From the other hand, Debord insists on the primacy of time and its rediscovery: "The spectacle," he writes, "as the present social organization of the paralysis of history and memory, of the abandonment of history built on the foundation of historical time, is the false consciousness of time"[21]. However, precisely because Lefebvre approaches the spectacle from the "perspective" of space rather than time, he is able to re-illuminate and enlarge the terrain on which the battle to abolish the spectacle is being fought.

According to Massey, "it's always 'time and space'"[22]. Space and time become intimately connected. Time is ethereal and virtual and without materiality, however space is material. But there's a dimension of space that is equally abstract and just a dimension, which is our relations with each other. In fact social space, I would argue, is a product of our relations with each other, our connections with each other. So globalization is a new geography constructed out of the relations we have with each other across the globe. And the most important thing is whether we are really thinking socially, whether all those relations are going to be filled with power. So what we have is a geography which is in a sense is the geography of power. What is important is the distribution of those relations mirrors the power relations within the society we have[23].

MY ARTS: NON – PROFIT ORGANISATION FOR CULTURAL SUPPORT CONCEPT AND AIMS

The organisation, which founded in 2015 in Vienna, is a young autonomous initiative positioning itself outside of the institutionalised zone. Nowadays, in the era of neo-liberalism, many young individuals, promising graduates and aspiring professionals show a strong entrepreneur spirit. The economic crisis and the lack of job vacancies and opportunities for them, have become the main reasons the last years leading young graduates and professionals in steering the wheel of their career by taking the leap of faith and materialising their own goals and ideas envisioning an autonomous professional career outside of institutions.
However, we would argue that our beliefs are skewed towards the collective entrepreneurship against the mentality of individual profit. MY ARTS has an artistic social and cultural ethos of self-reflection and collectiveness that re-examines and recodes the conventional entrepreneurial clichés. We are targeting a balance of consistency of experimental artistic practice, networking platform and financial sustainability. When we mean arts we consider the visual art forms of drawing, painting, sculpture, architecture, photography, electronic media, design, and video as well as the performing arts, which include dance, storytelling, poetry, music, film, and theater.

Our organisation aims to promote new perspectives on collaboration and exchange, ethics and aesthetics while bringing together professionals from all over the world with the desire to resist to "capitalist realism"[24]. We focus on music, but we explicitly granting attention to the crossings and interactions with other disciplines; both at the forefront and at the fringes of contemporary practice, making our artistic practices cross-disciplinary and open to collaborations. Vienna plays a very important role for the development of the organization so far but at the same time, we integrate our local context into our work with artists and other practitioners from around the world. We actively take part in international social and artistic development in various formal and informal networks crossing all levels, local, national, and international. Instead of accumulation, alienation, apathy, and competition, a culture that we envision, is comprised of sharing, caring, and living and working together. In this light, we see our organization and space as a micro society that might reflect such vision. It has proven so far a tough procedure but we are convinced is a worthwhile venture.

20 Henry, LEFEBVRE, The Production of Space, (English Translation: Donald Nicholson-Smith), Oxford 1991, pg. 145-150
21 Guy, DEBORD, The Society of Spectaclte, (English Translation: Fredy Perlman), Black & Red 1991, pg. 46-50
22 Doreen, MASSEY, For Space, London 2005, pg.115
23 Ibid.
24 Mark, FISHER, Capitalist Realism, Zero Books 2009, pg. 28-30

Image 5

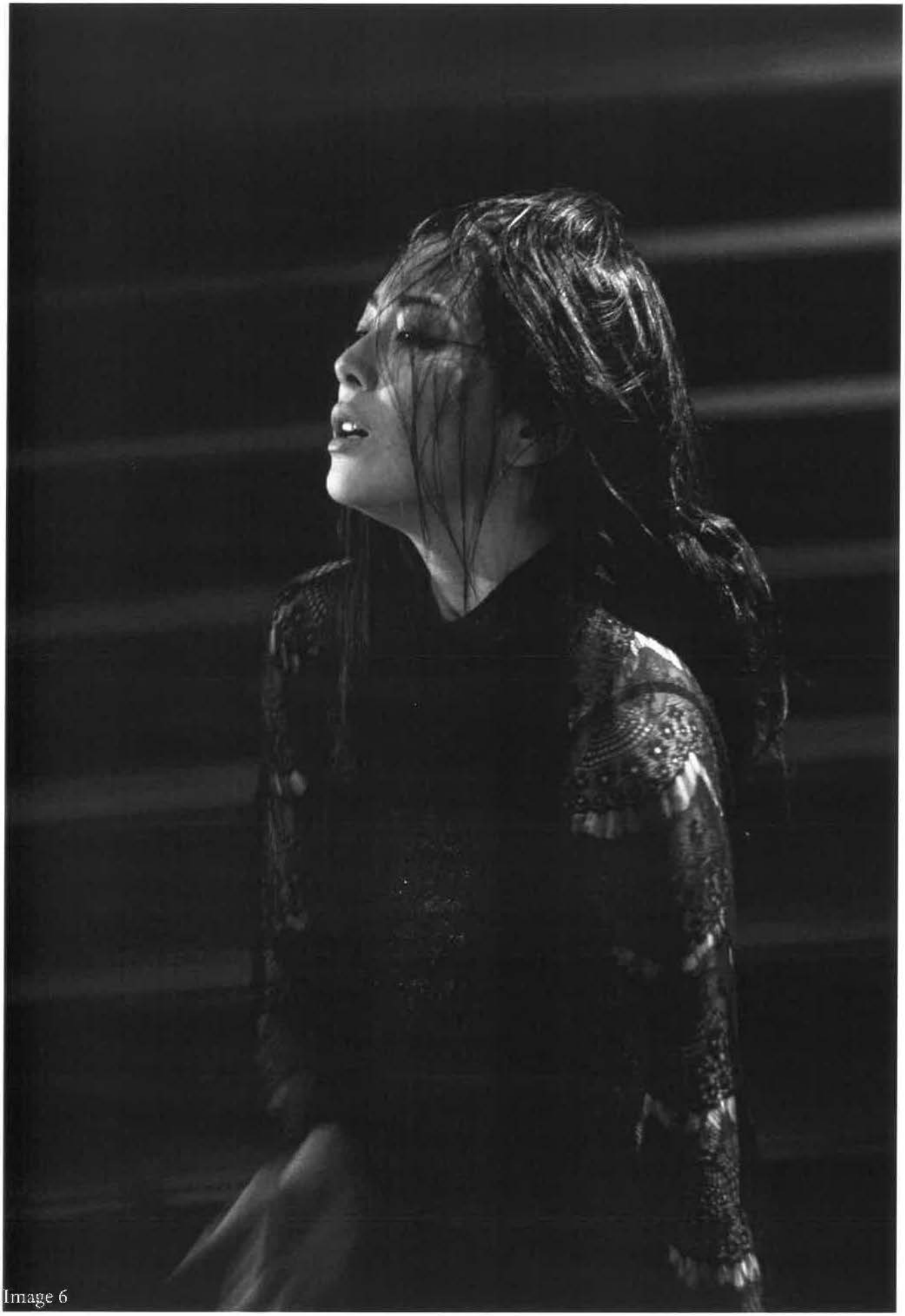

Image 6

Image 7

We believe in what we do and fully commit ourselves to carrying out the task at hand. We think it is possible and desirable to undertake a new style of projects with ambitious high goals introducing a dialogue between young and established professionals in a variety from cultural venues. MY Arts aims to be in tune with society's needs promoting awareness for social issues locally and internationally.

Along with MY ARTS co-founder Yury Revich, the organisation envisions to be a platform for young artists to promote and present their work locally and in a wider context. The organisation was created with the aim to support young creatives, such as musicians, artists, designers, performers, and dancers, by presenting their work alongside already established professionals creating in that way a fruitful dialogue and exchange.
The cultural program involves these two different in experience groups acknowledging the need for young artists to get the opportunity to present their work, gain important experience and utilise a great network of professionals from a variety of disciplines, which can help them to develop their career further. Therefore, we are aiming to build up a strong networking map with resources and cross-border contacts that are not usually embedded within state institutions.

The organisation is launching for the second season now, an international concert and exhibition series under the name "Friday Nights with Yury Revich". The concept of Friday Nights is based on a dialogical cooperation between different forms of art: music, art and applied arts, dance, theatre and performance with the target to open new perspectives in seeing music and hearing to arts. Having a specific concept for each specific event, MY Arts through Friday Nights promotes human rights, the freedom of speech, raises awareness for different causes and combines together a wide and diverse range of music from Baroque to contemporary classical works and jazz, soul, pop, electro with other various forms of art such as applied arts, dance, performance and theatre.

The main location for the event series is in Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus in the centre of Vienna, as the Bank Austria has kindly offered this space for the needs of the project. However, there are also other spaces used such as the Musikverein Wien, Atelierhaus der Akademie der bildenden Künste Wien (Atelier of the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna), Haus der Industrie, ViennaBallhaus etc. Each site has offered a different set of challenges and opportunities to the project, which required us to respond with flexibility, adaptability and positive mentality.

This innovative project represents a format, which is missing from the cultural scene of Vienna. It has gained already the support of many established musicians, artists and professionals in the cultural field such as Peter Turrini, Maresa Hörbiger, Sona MacDonald, Paul Badura Skoda, Justus Frantz, Mercedes Echerer, Giorgio Madia and many others. Young artists, designers and performers are coming from the University of Applied Arts and the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna, from the Chicago Art Foundation in USA, established conservatories in Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom and Greece including others. Therefor it can be understood that our collaborators are coming from a diverse cultural background including many countries around the world adding to the international and multicultural character of our project. It is very important for us to support and promote the local cultural context but at the same time to make strong connections to the international scene.

MY Arts has also started since February 2016 an art residency program including two artists, Brendan Goh and Bojana Stamenkovic, for music and for arts respectively. Taking into consideration that MY Arts is a young art organization with limited financial ability, it is currently not possible to provide an art residency in the physical terms including accommodation and workspace. However, since both artists were already residing in Vienna, the organization provided the notion of the residency by giving the opportunity to these two artists to develop and present their work and research in a period of six months with a small financial contribution covering their production costs.

Friday Nights is the organization's main and current project having a both temporal and long-term nature. Temporal because of the duration of each cultural event lasting from two to three hours depending on the program and long term because all of the events belong to one six-month period circle building up in that way an identity and reputation, maintaining a consistency which is neces-

Image 8

Image 9

sary for our cultural values to be fulfilled. Therefore, good and thorough documentation is something very important for the process and critical development of our project. Also this thesis consists part of this documentation.

Our process so far has been mostly based on experimentation and intuition. We had, and we still have, a very strong mission towards the artists, our immediate audience but also the wider community. But when we first started we didn't know how to fulfill our goals, learning from our mistakes and testing every time something new experimenting new roads.
Looking back to the start we have been through many different phases both in terms of conceptual approach and structure. Decisions and approaches, failures and small successes, all built up to reach to where we are now. Back then, two years ago all, we started without expecting anything; we took a risk to invest time and capital in something that we were all passionate and enthusiastic about.

During the first steps of our process, we focused on creating a platform for collaboration, exchange and dialogue, opening new perspectives in a quite conservative environment on the notion of mutual presentation of music and arts, in classic and contemporary practices.
After the end of our first concert and exhibition circle, we realized by how the participants and the audience had received our inaugural project, we felt even stronger the responsibility to keep promoting culture in a more organized and structured way. This led us to decide to apply for a crowd funding campaign in order to be in a better position to achieve our goals. Working over summer on preparing the campaign for the "wemakeit" platform[25] (in collaborating with the Bank Austria), we were also building up the concept and program for the next year. Our target was to focus on a more socially skewed curatorial approach, based on the ethics of pedagogy to transfer an experience and potential learning outcome tour audience.

CURATORIAL APPROACH AS MEDIATION AND PEDAGOGY

Our curatorial approach is one of understanding, appreciating and responding to participants and audience's varied cultural backgrounds, through a valuable synergy between theatre pedagogies and curating. We would argue that in the present and increasingly internationalized environment of art and culture further examination of this condition is required.

The thesis is illustrating the way our approach utilises information from Augusto Boal's and Jacques LeCoq's Theatre's techniques, which are both inspired by Paulo Freire's Liberatory Pedagogy[26]. Our methodology suggests a process, which is dialectic rather than didactic; in order to discourage the barriers that language creates. As mentioned above, all the members of the team and the majority of our collaborations are multicultural. Therefore, our approach started as a tool to understand and communicate with each other as we argue that language is culturally embedded; physical and gestural techniques can therefore allow the participants and our audiences to understand our messages and meanings.

By placing our role as the facilitator, promoting dialogue, and the audience as the *spect-actors*, both observing and creating during the process, the proposed curatorial model reveals significant critical learning opportunities for both sides. Our critical reflection, through regular meetings with our team and long discussions with our guests, addresses ways for all participants involved to engage with the process, allowing them to have autonomy in our environment.
This approach creates a learning community that empowers participants, generating critical understanding and promoting transformation. According to Boal, "theatre is 'the art of looking at ourselves'; all human beings are actors (they act) and spectators (they observe)"[27]. Through these two

25 https://wemakeit.com/, (30 March 2016)
26 Leigh Anne Howard (2004): Speaking theatre / doing pedagogy: re-visiting theatre of the oppressed, Communication Education, 53:3, 217-233
27 Ibid.

Image 10

theatre educators' theory and praxis, participants start to initiate critiques of cultural and linguistic norms and develop a richer understanding of the given initial concept of each event and its process.

According to the critical pedagogy paradigm based on the work of Paulo Freire[28] education should encourage students to think critically, to analyse social conditions, and to evaluate received information. He states "to establish this kind of critical pedagogy educators must create an educational culture that empowers students by levelling the teacher-student hierarchy and reflects a re-imagining of the academic's hegemonic communication patterns and institutional structures". As a psychosocial exploration, performance is a method of self- understanding or a tool for personal change[29]. Performance provides individuals with an experiential and communicative tool to express what might otherwise be inexpressible.

To the extend it is possible to be achieved during our short-term event time, but also during the long term relationship that we are building with our audience, team and collaborators, we believe in the above liberatory pedagogy theories and we try to utilize them, to promote dialogue and share our cultural values. This dialectical currency between the theater and curating reveals so far significant critical learning opportunities for both sides. The information obtained from this synergy gives useful insights - which are analysed further in the paper - on the various ways to engage with the cultural information.

According to Gibson[30], people from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds not only speak different languages but, possibly more importantly, inhabit different sensory worlds. Therefore, what is perceived through one set of culturally patterned sensory views is quite different from the experience perceived through another. If one wants to speak of a curatorial approach as mediator based on the ethics of productive dialogue in a multicultural and multilinguistic environment, then first one needs to recognise, understand and appreciate these diversities[31].

The paper argues that the language we speak is more than just a medium of expressing thought. In fact, it is a major element for the formation of thought. According to Merleau-Ponty, the *logos* of the cultural world is the recuperation of all the acts of expression – this *logos* is their history, their memory[32]. Thus, to reflect on culture, on that inter-world which occurs by means of symbols (and of which language is only one particular, even if privileged, instance), is to reflect on history, on logos, which develops and makes its advent in the simultaneous and successive community of subjectivities[33]. In order to understand the idea of a thought, without words within which speech itself gives rise to, one must begin by putting language back among expressive phenomena in order to see how it expresses. As part of this, a closer look should be taken at the relation between meaning and expression, between the visibility of the sign and the invisibility of meaning[34].

While the vocabulary used to discuss these cultural and curatorial constructs is recognizable we need to understanding that varies across different cultures. Such considerations are critical where pedagogic strategies rely upon dialogue. One of our team members commented on our last year's meeting at the closing of our first circle of events: *"Since I started being involved with the organisa-*

28 Critical Pedagogy and Architectural Education Author(s): C. Greig Crysler Reviewed Work(s): Source: Journal of Architectural Education (1984-), Vol.48, No. 4 (May, 1995), pp. 208-217, ACSA

29 Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1970

30 Leigh Anne Howard (2004): Speaking theatre / doing pedagogy: re-visiting theatre of the oppressed, Communication Education, 53:3, 217-233

31 Maria Dasli (2011): Reviving the 'moments': from cultural awareness and cross-cultural mediation to critical intercultural language pedagogy, Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 19:1, 21-29

32 Madison, Gary Brent. The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness. USA: Ohio University Press, 1973, p107

33 Hall, T. Edward. The Hidden Dimension. London: The Bodley Head Ltd, 1969, p177

34 Hall, T. Edward. The Hidden Dimension. London: The Bodley Head Ltd, 1969, p2

tion's program, I feel more independent in every sense and my understanding has been constantly questioned and challenged in a constructive way"[35].

Theatre pedagogy, as described by the theatre educators Jacques LeCoq and Augusto Boal, follows a critical learning structure, which embraces the practice of a continuous and cyclical process, similar to the one, I would argue, of a curatorial project. The work of these two educators is a long and continuous exploration of different ways to reconnect body and mind in theatre praxis. The outlined theatre pedagogy suggests a fluid and dynamic process, based on the body, through initial physical and body exploratory exercises, exploring the possibilities of a creative use of space leading to a critical interrogation of structures, text and ideas. According to LeCoq, the idea that theatre can be non-physical is nonsense. Even if the actor does not move one finger and he simply performs his text, his body is there and the audience is watching it. What is specific about LeCoq's approach is not the body, but the body in space. The focus is the movement in space. Movement in space means relation, play: *le jeu*[36].

Based on these theories and practices, we have developed our program in a way that brings together music with physical theatre taking always into consideration the space that this act is performed and trying to incorporate it in the process. We are aiming through our program to transfer emotions and experiences. The poetic sense deals with an abstract dimension characterised as mimodynamics[37], made up of spaces, lights, colours, materials, sounds, which can be found in everyone.[1] In that way we are creating a dynamic emotion that combines rootedness with an upward surge, having nothing to do with the temptation to give a picture of the actual physicality, ritual, word, etc. (a figurative mime)[38]. It's more than a translation: it is an emotion. Etymologically the word 'emotion' means 'setting in motion'. According to Jacques LeCoq, recognition precedes understanding and creation[39], therefore the paper argues that one can see neither the form nor the movement of a colour; nevertheless the emotion, which they arouse, may set a person in motion – even in emotion. Through process the aim is to express this particular emotion through mimages, through gestures, which have no reference point in the real world. This exercise offers opportunities to translate / represent / present a construct / building / place / notion through mimodynamics, putting them into motion in a way the verbal can never achieve.

An example of this technique was performed as part of our event this year in Musikverein in Vienna on the 29th April. The concept was "Amor Vincit Omnia" (Love Conquers All), inspired by Caravaggio's painting[40], introducing three chapters, presenting three manifestations of love, starting from the very pure form of love, moving to the one between a pair and ultimately leading to the ecumenical love towards all. In doing this we created a transdisciplinary program combining music, singing, theatrical readings, physical theatre and dance.

During the second part of the program, the renowned Austrian actress Maresa Hörbiger was reading in German a series of love letters from famous women to their lovers while the Greek ballet dancer and physical performer Antigoni Chroni was delivering the meanings to the audience using her body as a medium. This was a great challenge for both the participants who were acting on stage and the ones acting as audience, as this was the point at which cultural and linguistic interpretation convergences or divergences became visible.

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35 Madison, Gary Brent. The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness. USA: Ohio University Press, 1973, p108

36 LeCoq, Jacques. The Moving body: Teaching Creative Theatre. USA: Routledge, 2001, pg101

37 LeCoq, Jacques. The Moving body: Teaching Creative Theatre. USA: Routledge, 2001, pg48

38 LeCoq, Jacques. The Moving body: Teaching Creative Theatre. USA: Routledge, 2001, pg48

39 LeCoq, Jacques. The Moving body: Teaching Creative Theatre. USA: Routledge, 2001, pg48

40 Caravaggio, Amor Vincit Omnia (1601-1602), Oil on canvas, 156cm x 113cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Image 11

Image 12

Image 13

During the rehearsals, we as the facilitators were particularly attentive to the quality of players' movements. We needed to identify whether the movements arise from the dancer's own body or from an external image that she is trying to illustrate, or again if she is doing a symbolic movement, giving an external representation of the place / notion that they are trying to describe for the rest of the group. This challenges both performers and audience taking them beyond the fixed perceptions of a construct and what can be expressed[41]. From our point of view, we were prepared at every moment to question our own approach, to get back to seeing the world with freshness and innocence, to avoid imposing clichés.

Another example of our approach is focusing on the presentation of the diverse performers on stage, creating a synergetic and coherent outcome during our preparation stage for an event. The process begins by prompting participants to allocate themselves at a random position in the space provided. One of them takes the initiative – making himself/herself the enabler of the game moving around the performing space creating the relationships with the others. The rest of the participants / artists is asked to respond to the player's passion according to the tension they felt by watching him/her express it. The word 'tension' is deliberately used instead of 'attraction – repulsion', which could have the potential to dictate specific movement. These preparation exercises aimed to reveal the participants' sociocultural perceptions of the world around them; how they perceive the social and built constructs through the interaction with other people from different cultural and professional backgrounds.

At the end of our first events series the team gathered together with the aim to celebrate the end of a given circle through a critical reflection on the impact of engagement with the project and planning as well the next steps of the development. A synopsis of the main outcome from our reflection, through the engagement with the process, is that we were able to see a new form of art creating from the combination of all the forms together. It was not anymore, a music concert, an art gallery, or a theater; it was a combination of emotions, an experience and a learning process.

Moreover, there were insights reflecting the team members' self-development such as: *"Perhaps it was partially an increase of confidence but more importantly I found that this way of communication in the construct of dialogue and self-emancipation, was something I had never really done before; there is a deeper beauty and grace in this process and I am so grateful to having found that"*[42].

"My engagement with the organization is characterized from a kind of curve. In the middle of the year before I join the team, I felt lost, without any confidence. At that point the program helped me to understand a different culture and feeling that I belong somewhere. I got more confident and find out more things about myself and my limits."[43].

We recognise that curating as a subject belongs to a sub-culture, with its own language through which thoughts and ideas may be expressed and communicated[44]. It becomes apparent that for someone to join this culture, such as myself or the other team members, it may be problematic to understand the embedded language. The multicultural and multilinguistic aspect of the group should be seen as a bonus, by pushing us beyond comfortable cultural stereotypes and by embracing diversity.

Also from the perspective of the audience we received the feedback that allow us to believe even more in our approach, based on their encouragement to make the personal cultural and the cultur-

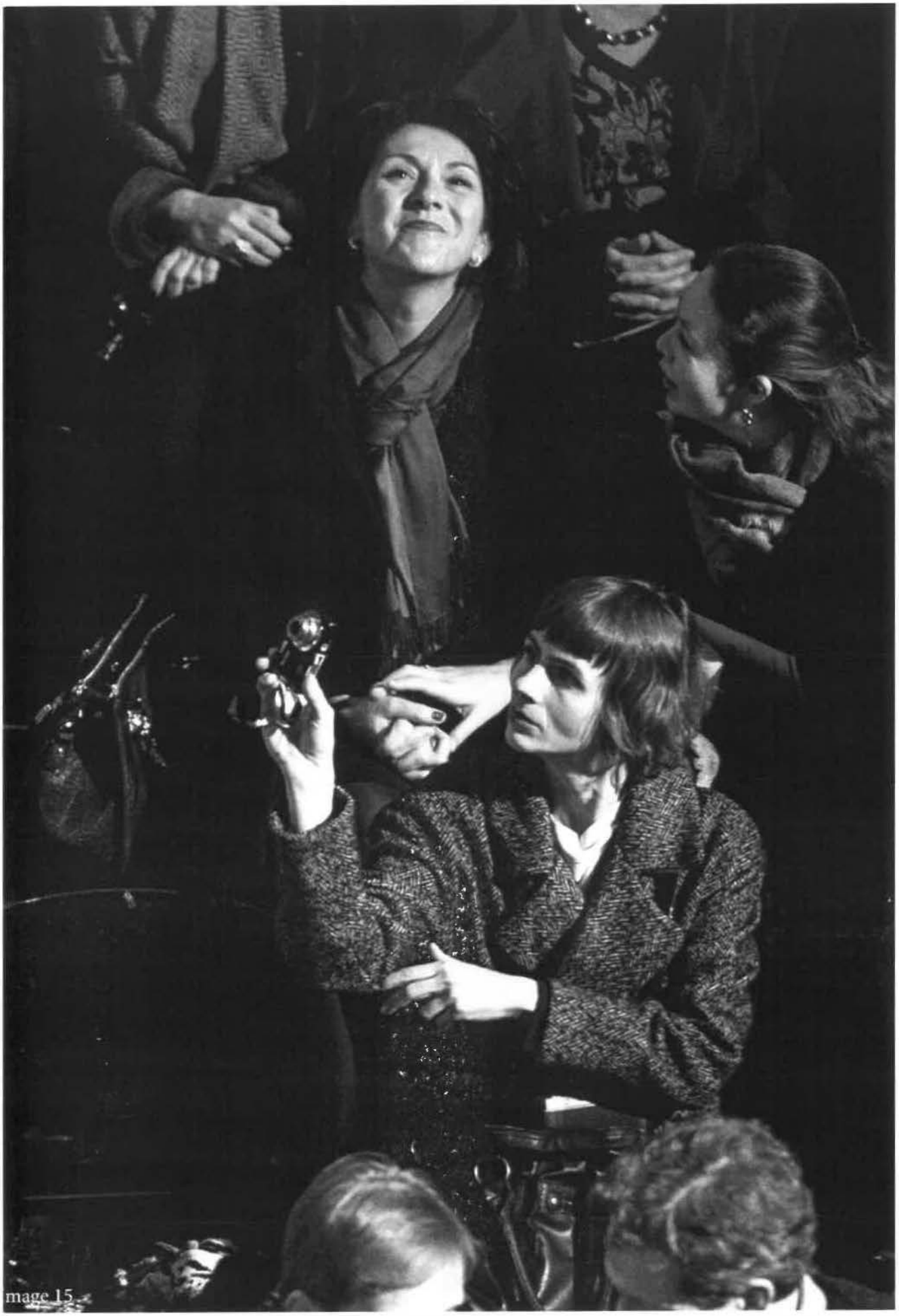
41 Critical Pedagogy and Architectural Education Author(s): C. Greig Crysler Reviewed Work(s): Source: Journal of Architectural Education (1984-), Vol.48, No. 4 (May, 1995), pp. 208-217, ACSA

42 Team member, Project Coordinator Christiana Makri

43 Team member, Project Coordinator Iris Karabaczek

44 Maria Dasli (2011): Reviving the 'moments': from cultural awareness and cross-cultural mediation to critical intercultural language pedagogy, Pedagogy, Culture & Society, 19:1, 21-29

Image 14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al personal. What our approach is suggesting is a possible route to make audience acknowledge this sub-cultural condition, by making them aware of their own cultural conditions and that of the others around them, understanding their personal history as part of larger social processes. Human beings, according to Merleau-Ponty[45], are considered to be born and live in logos, a cultural world. Therefore, language and the way people think and express themselves is a person's "element as water is the element of fishes"[46]. The suggested embodied act of pedagogy gives the possibility to participants of the ability to achieve self-consciousness, eventually leading to greater sociocultural awareness. Participants also gain the ability to perceive their normalized patterns of expression as one of many possible configurations, rather than a given, inexorable state. According to Freire "we know ourselves to be conditioned but not determined"[47].

All the information used during the process has been facilitated by the various experiences and sensations that our collaborators and we have had, influenced by everything they have seen, heard, touched and tasted. All of these elements are inside us and constitute the common heritage, out of which springs dynamic vigour and the desire to create. In this way, through the suggested interdisciplinary synergy, we are empowered to gain autonomy in an internationalized curatorial and learning environment.

RELATIONSHIP OF TEAM MEMBERS

Cultural and arts management is a field that should allow people to combine business, artistic and organizational skills with activities that make a difference in the lives of individuals and communities. Management is a relatively new discipline and the management of arts and cultures an even more recent offshoot[48]. The non-profit status not only means that they must be managed in a particular way, it also imposes a specific set of professional requirements on the manager and the team members. There may be a science to orchestrating team collaboration, but there also is an art. Artists often cannot predict the outcomes of their creative endeavors any more than organizations can predict outcomes for their team challenges. It is to be said that critical management is necessary and contributes practical theories for teams to work better together. A more balanced approach, however, might blend science with art and magnify team effectiveness.

Orchestrating the efforts of team members to collaborate together represents an art form itself. Team leaders can be viewed as "conductors" who must facilitate individuals producing an optimal "composition" for every task. However, team leaders should not orchestrate teams the way we often view musical conductors orchestrating symphonies. According to Ben Zander, conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra, the traditional orchestra conductor metaphor of team leadership may be inappropriate. In a December 1998 interview in Fast Company magazine, he notes that musical conductors are mostly "dictators" with unquestioned authority. He proposes, instead, that conductors would be better served to empower their musicians to be the best they can be. So too should team managers, leaders, and facilitators.

Building up on the above-described principles as well as the values of libaratory pedagogy, I would argue, our team relationships is the greatest asset we have so far. We have grown from a friendship between two like-minded individuals to a very small group of friends and colleagues, respecting each other and pushing for a common goal, building up a very unique pattern of working relationships. Our current limited budget does not allow us to grow into a bigger team being able to have a more structural allocation of activity among the team members. The few people involved are on a non-paid collaboration; they are mainly friends from a broad non-artistic professional background

45 Madison, Gary Brent. The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness. USA: Ohio University Press, 1973, p126

46 Madison, Gary Brent. The Phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty: A Search for the Limits of Consciousness. USA: Ohio University Press, 1973, p130

47 Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1970

48 http://artsdigitalrnd.org.uk/features/digital-culture-2015/, (February 28, 2016)

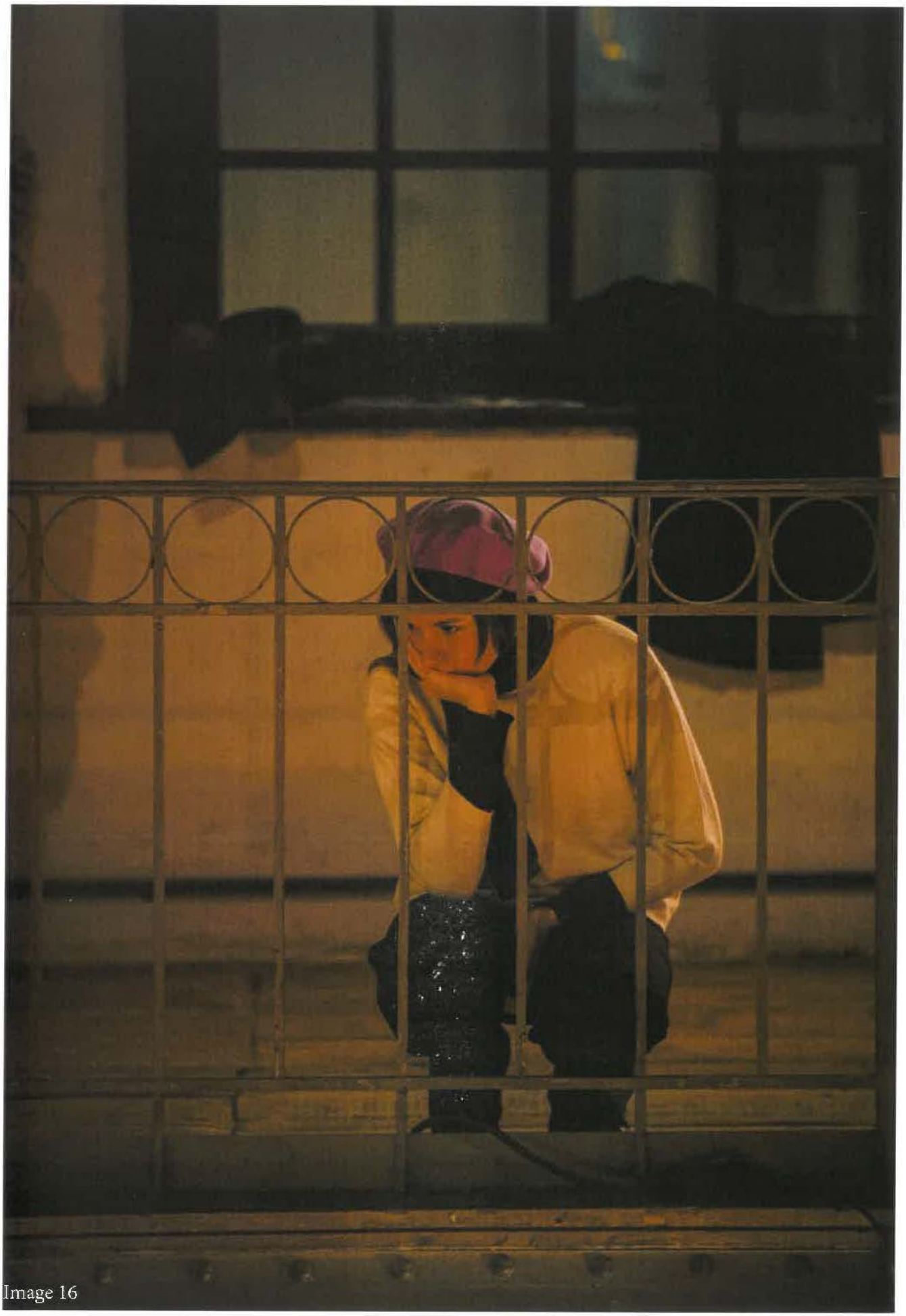


Image 16

Image 17

voluntarily offering their time and expertise to the group. Our team is very small in size, including Yury Revich co-founder and music director, myself and two project coordinators acting voluntarily. We have also a web designer and a public relations manager who are offering freelance work to us. The limitations have become our advantages by forcing us finding new ways and formats of working, communicating and allocating work. The practical restrictions and challenges has led us to work under a very dialogical, collaborative way, based on trust, and a notion of a collective responsibility. We do not see ourselves as leaders or decision makers, but as initiators and connectors. It is inevitable that the organisation of activities cannot be strictly managed and it cannot be hierarchical, we are all involved in all tasks no matter how small, big, important, or not they are.
We have turned our many limitations to our benefits. The greatest challenge I see for us is to be able to keep the same ethics, characteristics and mentality even when we would have less restrictions, more financial ability to prevent situations and a greater collective of people involved in the program, the activities and duties. I see the collective notion of our organization as our strength as we need to maintain it.
In the future we would need to ensure that the conceptual organization is strong and that we keep pushing for creativity, authenticity, staying loyal to our cultural values, ethics and targets. It is interesting to mention that this working format was also a product of our multi-cultural and multi-disciplinary background, that created a non-competitive mentality and a sense of respect and trust for each one's specific knowledge on music, arts, curating, law, communications and marketing, finance and so on, allowing nevertheless space for dialogue and discourse. Each one gives the other the freedom, space and responsibility to take initiatives and decisions.

Yury Revich and myself are both coming from a very different cultural and professional background, Yury being a soloist violin professional artist coming from Moscow, performing internationally and spending many years abroad including Vienna and me, a practicing architect and curator coming from Athens with educational and work experience in United Kingdom, Austria, Greece and UAE. Our two coordinators are international lawyer and diplomat from Cyprus and Austria respectively, both with international experience in their fields.

As mentioned above both Yury and myself do not see the traditional communication methods between "leaders" and "staff "working out for us and the values of our organization. The skills that we are all aiming to develop, considering them useful and necessary for us, include: problem-solving; team-building; transversal competences – such as learning to learn, social and civic competence, initiative-taking, entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness.

Moreover, our roles are focusing on accessing the impulsion to express the art, articulating a sense of purpose and clarity of vision, identifying the steps and resources necessary for getting there, qualifying and quantifying the audience who will enjoy the results, having an idea of other people needed for the project to succeed, planning the next steps for our process, setting up milestones to monitor progress and defining financial needs and goals. In short, they are the functional competences in planning and organizing, marketing and selling, finance and administration. We are all well aware of the need for mutual support and collaboration with a broader network in the cultural field, therefore we are also pushing our activities to that direction too approaching formally or informally each time connections with other public organizations, private institutions, artists, forums and charities including others. Our team meets very regularly in physical terms but we are in contact every day regarding our process, things to do, sharing thoughts and coordinating the whole project. In our every week physical meetings we go through a critical self-reflection session, which allows us all together to control our process and plan our next steps.

MY Arts acknowledges the points above and therefore the structure and relationships of the team reflect our process. Cultivating a "we're-all-in-this-together" mentality requires work. It is very important for the team and all the team members to feel included and appreciated. Building trust and respect among the member of the team is of highest priority. This approach is then reflected to the audience and the people that interact with the art organization and its program. By trusting and boosting the self-confidence and self-emancipation, the team members feel immediately invigorated and more motivated.

Image 18

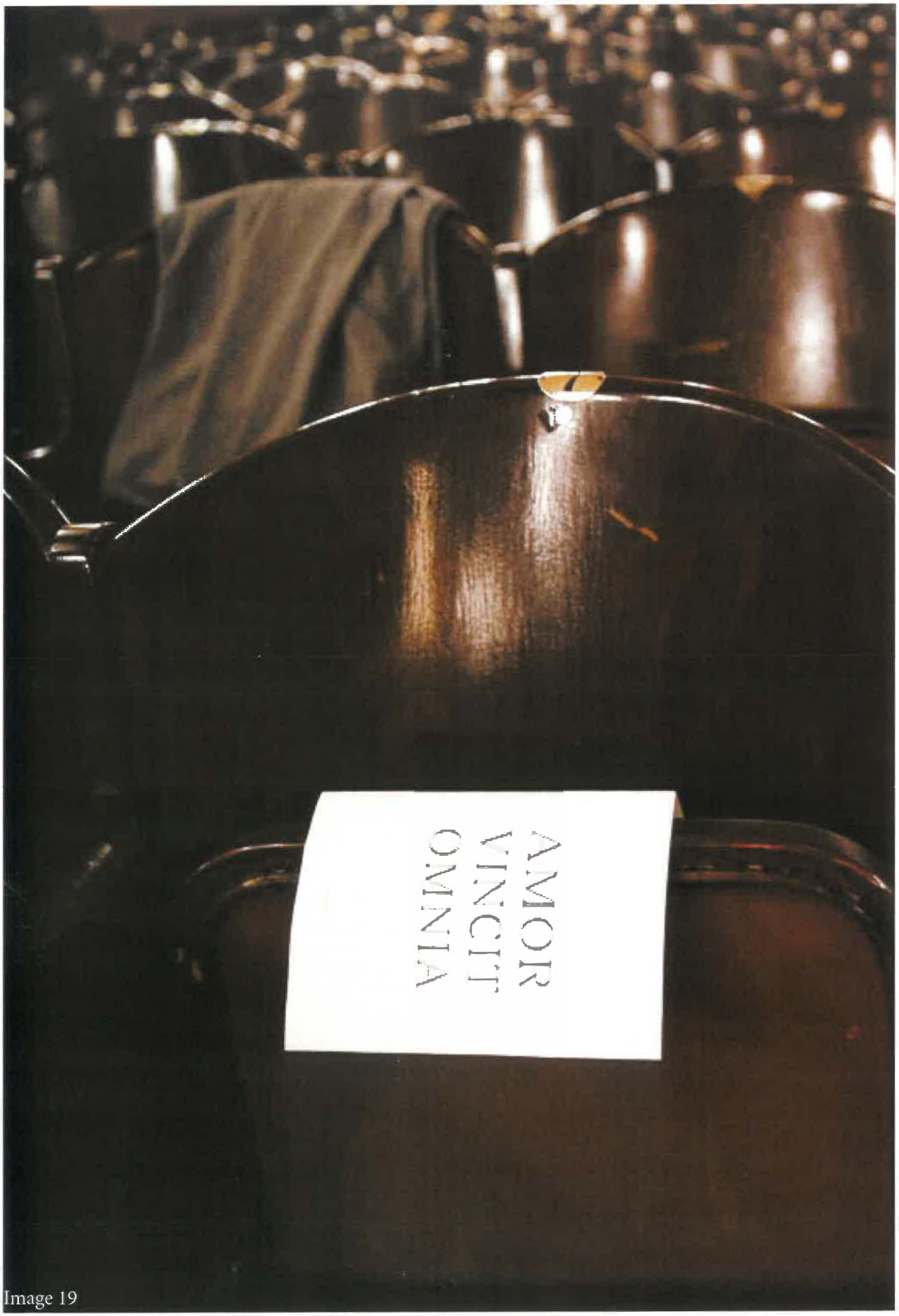
The work of Brazilian artist and director Augusto Boal, like his fellow countryman Paulo Freire, has focused on creating opportunities for people to enliven their capacity to resist oppression[49] There is therefore a distinct difference between this and what Hegel calls the master – slave condition[50], or what Freire refers to as a banking system[51] where the participants remain observers of the received information without feeling they have the power and the right to actively engage and even question the "master".

"In contrast to my previous experiences, I feel sociability during the project that rather being dictated, I have the freedom to experiment and express myself, with the other members of the group giving me the responsibility and trust I require"[52]. The above facilitator–spectator relationship has proven during the project to overcome potential issues of shyness and lack of engagement with the duties and activities. It is an essential Freirean teacher / student approach: being critically aware of one's social conditioning, constructing meaning from inquiry, and bearing witness to the world with humility, empathy and hope[53]. Team and artists were encouraged to perceive the project of the organisation as a form of play and to remember what it was like as a child, when everything seemed new; a time when they did not know, but found themselves in a constant process of discovery. As children, this is a natural condition of existence; as adults it becomes a radical act.

RELATIONSHIP WITH ARTISTS

Our relation with the artist as well as among the team members is a two directional based on a dialogical cooperation. Either the artistic work is produced specifically for the purposes of our concept or a ready piece of work, there is always the space for critical discussions, adjustments and flexibility, allowing through a dynamic learning process, experimentation and innovative authentic outcome. As mentioned above, the very temporal nature of our project shapes our curatorial decisions and relationship with the artists. The main element for the curatorial approach is intuition, improvisation, flexibility and adaptability. There is a certain level up to where we can plan and organize the final outcome, the final experience for the audience. There are certain limitations such as the preparation time (usually it takes place the same day of the event three to four hours before), budgeting for extra rehearsals, personal time, coordination of a large group of people, technical support, general assistant support and many more, which allow less space for coordinating the general curatorial concept and approach. We need to trust that everyone at the time of the event will perform at its best. Trust and responsibility are core elements based on the nature of our program.
We learned to allow space for experimentation, improvisation and we definitely for failures. Most of the times the final outcome for all the above reasons goes beyond what we have imagined or structured. But throughout the whole process so far, that is the most beautiful and powerful element. We have no fixed, predefined final outcome, we learned to focus on the main structure body, the conceptual approach, the emotions and feelings and experience we would like to share with the people who decided to spend their evening with us.
We learn every time from each and every situation, every time we collaborate with different people, different characters and different cultural backgrounds. Some of them are young and more flexible, others are established professionals with a successful career behind them, showing less willingness to be part of something not so structured, predefined. It requires from our side very good social skills, communicating with everyone with respect and treating everyone as equal. Creating a friendly

49 Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1970
50 Critical Pedagogy and Architectural Education Author(s): C. Greig Crysler Reviewed Work(s): Source: Journal of Architectural Education (1984-), Vol.48, No. 4 (May, 1995), pp. 208-217, ACSA
51 Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1970
Leigh Anne Howard (2004): Speaking theatre / doing pedagogy: re-visiting theatre of the oppressed, Communication Education, 53:3, 217-233
52 Team member, Project Coordinator, Christiana Makri
53 Freire, Paulo. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum, 1970



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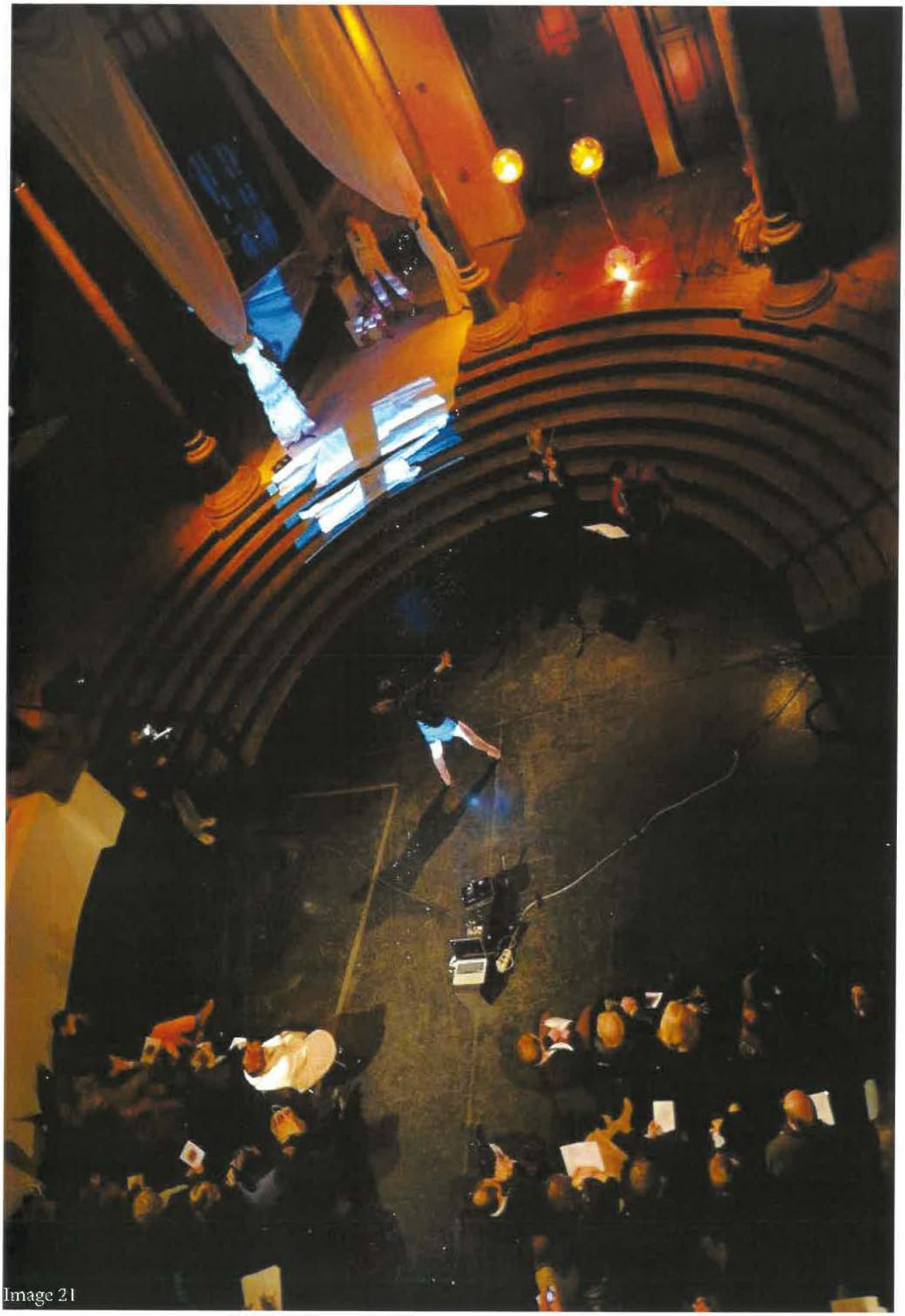

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but at the same time professional environment achieving the best possible outcome each time is our main goal. This is the main reason why many artists and professionals from the cultural field have supported us in many different ways from our first event until now. Maintaining a good network of friends and professionals from diverse cultural and other professional fields, along with our passion for cultural change is of utmost importance for our organisation.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OUR AUDIENCE

The core artistic and cultural mission of the art organizations can be considered prerequisite for the economic and social impact they generate. Many of the organizations have established dense international connections that include partnerships, networks, residencies, hosting visitors and co-productions. Culture in its broadest sense, is often considered hard to define, as it has both a material and immaterial dimension. But also building participation and developing audiences is often hard to define and describe. In recent years, many arts organizations have used them as shorthand to describe one or more of three activities: "broadening" audiences (attracting more audience members like those currently attending), "deepening" them (enriching the experience of participants), or "diversifying" them (bringing new groups into the fold).
Whichever of these goals is sought, however, arts organizations need to pay attention to three matters: understanding audiences and figuring out strategies to "meet them where they are", involving the whole organization in audience development and creating a culture that embraces experimentation and learning.

By building our audiences, we need first to understand our audiences. That requires a hard work of changing ourselves in order to change our audience interactions. I would argue that you couldn't change the quality of the relationship between the audience and the organization unless you change the quality of the relationship within the organization.

RELATIONSHIP WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Digital technology has changed the way that we engage with arts and culture, as with many other areas of life. From viewing online collections for museums to buying tickets to the theatre via mobile phones, audiences now tap into the work of these institutions digitally on a daily basis. Social media has become firmly entrenched with image sharing platforms such as Instagram and Facebook showing rapid growth, and mobile-readiness has improved since 2013[54] . Across the three years, the percentage of arts and cultural organisations making use of most social media platforms has been stable. The most significant has been a movement in photo sharing away from Flickr and onto Instagram. There has also been an increase in use of Kickstarter as a crowd-funding platform, among others like Wemake it.

Social media has allowed us to publicize and market our events at a tiny fraction of the cost we would have incurred using traditional marketing strategies 15 years ago. It also helps us to monitor public perception of our work, which feeds into our curatorial direction. Finally, it provides a means to converse and communicate directly with the public; particularly useful in the event of program changes alterations and many more. Live streaming of events is always more resource-heavy and challenging than hoped or expected. Our personal experience so far, collaborating with Onepoint.fm[55] hasn't been very successful mainly because of technical difficulties. Nevertheless, we are still trying to utilize this opportunity given by technology. What we are never truly aware of is the amount of time and therefore cost required to train and develop the skills needed for the successful application of new technologies. And while we attempt to keep up with new ideas, with a small organization like ours, time and budget are hugely significant.
Digital Culture[56] survey reveals that digital technologies are having a profound effect on arts and cultural organizations mainly in England, UK. The survey was published in 2015 by Nesta, in part-

54 http://artsdigitalrnd.org.uk/features/digital-culture-2015/, (February 28, 2016)
55 www.onepoint.-fm, (February 28, 2016)
56 http://artsdigitalrnd.org.uk/features/digital-culture-2015/, (February 28, 2016)

Image 22

Image 23

nership with Arts Council England (ACE) and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC). Almost three-quarters now believe that they have experienced a major positive impact overall on their ability to deliver their mission effectively. For a large majority of organizations, digital technology has become indispensable to the way they promote, preserve and operate their businesses, and for more than half it is an important part of how they create, distribute and generate revenue from their work in the years between 2013-2015. Large and small organizations alike have responded to the digital challenge by adopting a wide range of activities, which has delivered impacts across the full spectrum of their business areas. Although, there is a slight decrease on the adoption of digital activities and levels of impact comparing to last year, many arts and cultural organizations remain ambitious to try new things. For example, over three-quarters are planning to introduce something new next year, crowd-funding being the most anticipated activity.
The survey, however, indicates several areas where digital activity has fallen since the study commenced in 2013. In 2015, several activities have become significantly less widespread and levels of impact have dropped in key areas such as distribution and creation. There remain a small number of organizations which operate without basic digital tools such as a website, Facebook page or email marketing strategy. Further to this, fourty per cent of organizations still do not have a mobile-optimized web presence and take-up of value-adding data activities appears to have stalled, despite large improvements here over the past three years. Introducing new digital initiatives appears to be more difficult. The financial and organizational barriers preventing organizations from realizing their digital aspirations have become more widespread and the number of organizations that feel well served for digital skills has decreased in several areas.
One interpretation of these findings is that in many arts and cultural organizations, particularly the smaller ones, an earlier appetite for more digital innovation has been replaced by greater caution. However, it continues to be the case that it is the digital experimenters (those that are willing to embrace and take risks with technology) and digital leaders (those that place the most importance on digital) that are most likely to see positive impacts on their organizations – in the audiences they reach, the way they operate, and in their creative capacities.

The worlds of the arts and business are formulating a new relationship, distinct from the traditional models of entertainment or sponsorship. As Miha Pogacnik, a concert violinist and cultural ambassador to Slovenia, argues: "The world of arts must be rescued out of the prison of entertainment and the world of business must be led out of the desert of dullness of meaning!"[57]. In this new relationship, art is a role model for business, since all great art pushes boundaries beyond the established norms. Thus, it can teach us about aesthetics, ambiguity, diversity, chaos, change, courage, and complexity. According to Sir Herbert Read, "The artist's task is to break through the limitations of previously codified knowledge, to lead humanity to the future"[58].

The cultural landscape is marked by the emergence of new thinking about the relationship between the arts, culture and the economy. It is common to define the arts and the economy as two different worlds. Art is seen as the field of the inspiration, imagination, and creativity, the economy as the domain of rationality, efficiency and profit. But these boundaries are progressively shifting. It would be helpful to distinguish between two modes of impacts that artistic interventions can have in organizations: a technical mode with the transfer of skills and knowledge, and an inspirational mode when artists introduce a different role model and new ways of thinking and doing. Art interventions are thought- provoking and capable of engaging people into reflection, self-assessment and development of a new and different knowledge of the organizational issues and therefore provide insights and new understanding of organizational problems and challenges.

"We should not be ashamed of wealth creation, we should be making creating wealth respectable again. We should be using it to further social objectives"[59]. And the truth is that it's not often we hear

57 http://www.creativityatwork.com/2000/09/10/the-idriart-experience-art-and-business-conference-at-the-castle-borl-slovenia/, (February 28, 2016)
58 http://www.creativityatwork.com/2000/09/10/the-idriart-experience-art-and-business-conference-at-the-castle-borl-slovenia/, (February 28, 2016)
59 http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/apr/11/arts-organisations-act-startups, (February 28, 2016)

the words startup and art in the same breath. It's interesting because the low cost and stretched budget is something common to both worlds. Also, the cuts to public arts funding and the general talk of a focus on corporate and private individuals for donations suggests there are more links than one might expect.

During our process so far, we have understood that for an arts non-profit is not only important to be thinking about raising the initial round of funding, but rather to ensure it can be sustainable meeting its needs and fulfilling its mission. According to Anne-Marie Imafidon, making money isn't a bad thing, and neither is collaborating with other charities or organizations, as joint ventures are a win-win-win situation, for the income source benefits, artists benefit and so the audience[60]. Keeping this all in perspective, we are considering as important as finding a funding partner to create more connections with other autonomous, private or public organizations as more people are helped and a relationship is built. Finding another organization with a similar mission can be helpful in a variety of other ways besides finding grants, with tips and insight into everything you're about to be doing. They've been through everything already, and should be able to guide you. The common interest in your goals will be an instant connection among organizations, meaning you'll be on the same page.

It is very important to mention that our project would have not been financially possible without the financial support of the founding members, private sponsors, public organizations, think tanks and international forums.

ON-GOING PROCESS

Self-organized art practices have always offered means of challenging the dominant order and continually finds new ways of doing things without the overarching support of an institution, public funding body or private patron. MY ARTS explored and keeps exploring different models of self-organization within contemporary art practice, examining rationales and tactics for getting started; social, economic and organizational structures; and strategies for survival and sustaining activities.

According to Andrea Phillips, "autonomy is an attribute that is privately earned, self-learned, and styled; is not reliant on others"[61]. As art organizations and institutions are still, or should be, the initiating spaces to generate possibilities for the society in which they find themselves, a possible way to do this is to imitate the fluidity of capitalism. According to Phillips, fluid organisations would be self-critical, changeable, and uncertain, a place where anything can be possible. That imagination comes from both artist and the initiators, but also from the audiences, as described based on the practices of Paolo Freire and Augusto Boal. "A centre for contemporary art has to be speculative. It has to be willing to ask questions about its own status and purpose and try out ideas in response to these questions"[62].

It is important for cultural organizations not to fall into the prevailing pattern of neo-liberalism, despite the fact that in most of the cases this is the reality. A way to resist is to focus on the people relationships, working with a collective, which shares the same ethics and values, in order transparent and dialogical work can be done.

We envision our initiative an entity open to connections and ideas fulfilling a greater collective value rather our individual profit. We are aiming for a place, which promotes transformation, where we test and perform practices loaded with the possibility to lead to a cultural change. So often, budgetary, sponsorship, and governmental matters consume intelligent and committed people. According to Phillips, there are examples of extraordinary practices that maintain inventive curatorial programmes, build networks of local and trans-local relations built on certain solidarities of process and practice,

60 http://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/culture-professionals-blog/2012/apr/11/arts-organisations-act-startups, (February 28, 2016)

61 Andrea, PHILLIPS, Remaking the Arts Centre, 2014. In: Emily Pethick; Binna Choi and Maria Lind, eds. Cluster - Dialectionary. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 4-18.

62 Charles Esche interviewed by Mats Stjernstedt, Artforum (2001), http://artforum.com/index.php?pn=interview&id=1331, (February 28 2016)

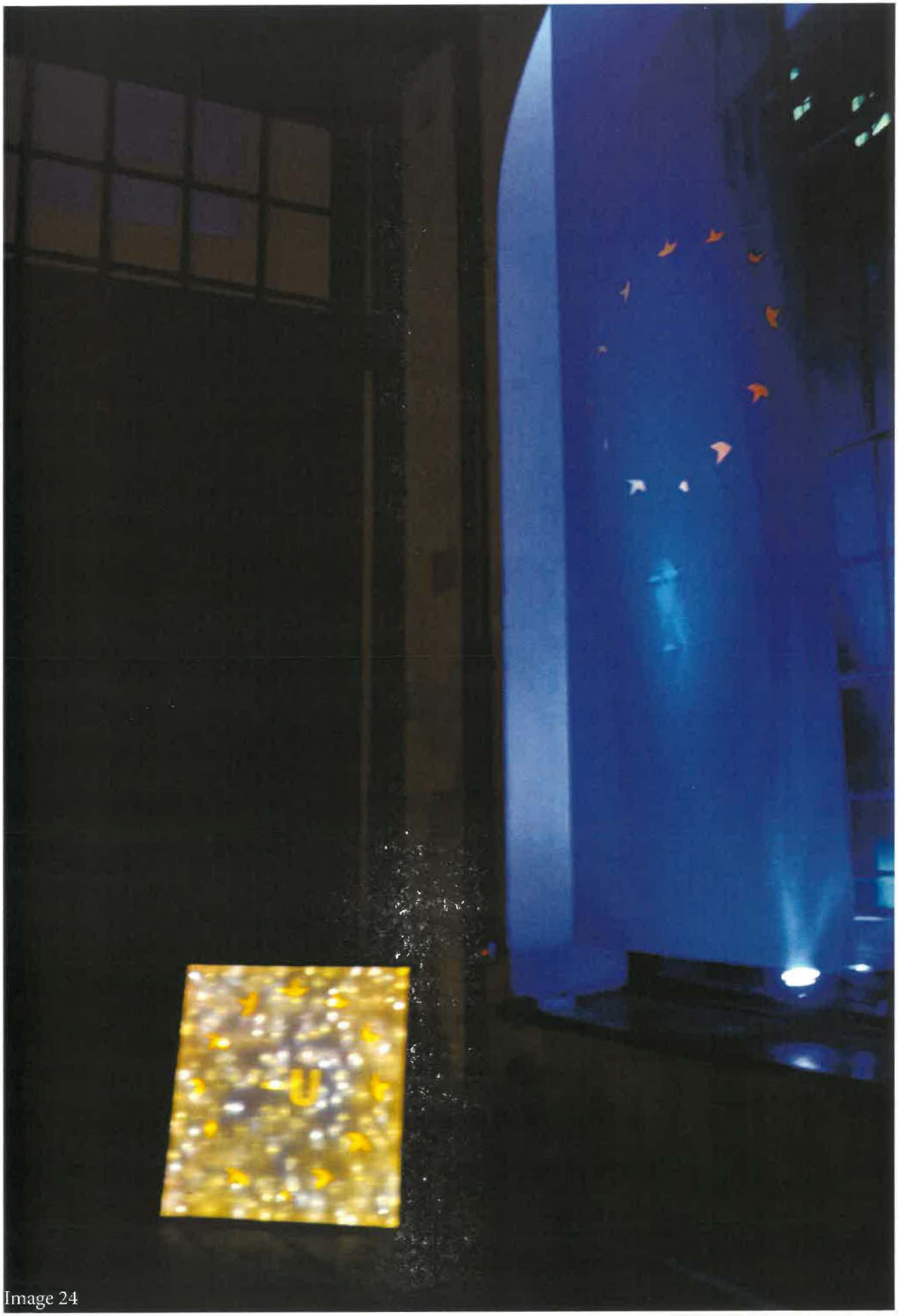
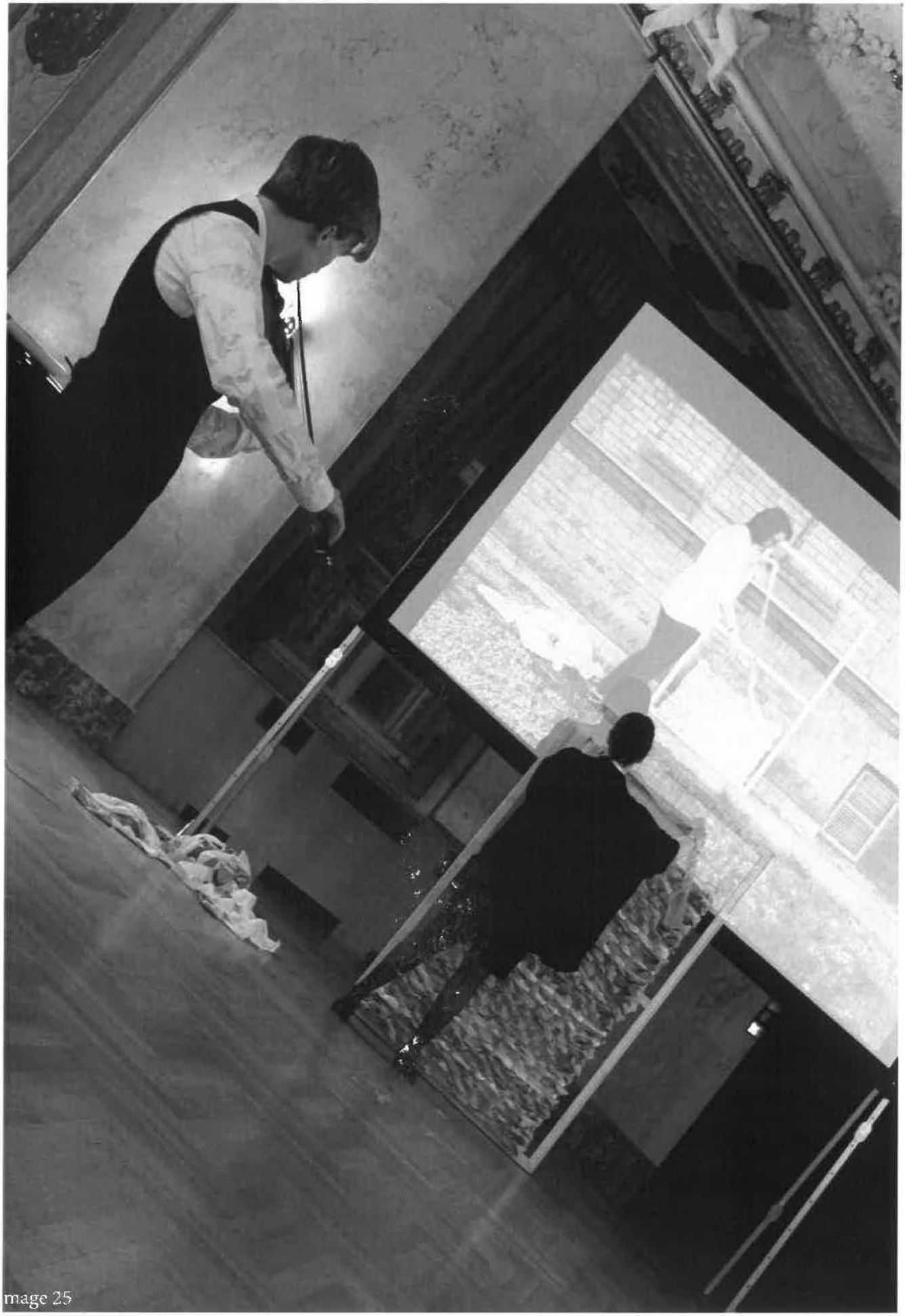


Image 24



mage 25

that are qualitatively and critically much more developed than that through which I was fostered in the 1970s[63]. Nevertheless, such practices and individuals also need to answer more relevant and contradictory demands, shaped through the political and economic shifts in cultural funding.

it becomes clear that in order to maintain spaces of cultural production as contingent and coherent forms, one has to become conversant with both the languages of struggle and the languages of capital in order to survive[64]. Conditions differ between territories and patterns of funding and support for local, experimental practices contrast considerably. But rather than what I would call content-driven critique, what I am interested in is managerial and organizational change that embeds political equality within the organization itself. This necessitates a humbler and messy approach in which the aesthetic is placed on lateral terms with the more mundane opening up of facilities and capacities. It is, for arts organizations, the act of maintaining a space through which the conditions of neo-liberalism must pass and be transformed. This is an act for management; for attendance to the arts of administration in real terms. Arts centres could be places where we rehearse such ideas. Neo-liberal culture is so hard. People's bodies need to find places to take care of themselves and their communities in this hard culture; arts centres should be these places[65].

63 Andrea, PHILLIPS, Remaking the Art Centre. 2014. In: Emily Pethick; Binna Choi and Maria Lind, eds. Cluster - Dialectionary. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 20

64 Andrea, PHILLIPS, Remaking the Art Centre. 2014. In: Emily Pethick; Binna Choi and Maria Lind, eds. Cluster - Dialectionary. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 20

65 Andrea, PHILLIPS, Remaking the Art Centre. 2014. In: Emily Pethick; Binna Choi and Maria Lind, eds. Cluster - Dialectionary. Berlin: Sternberg Press, pp. 20

Image 26

Image 27

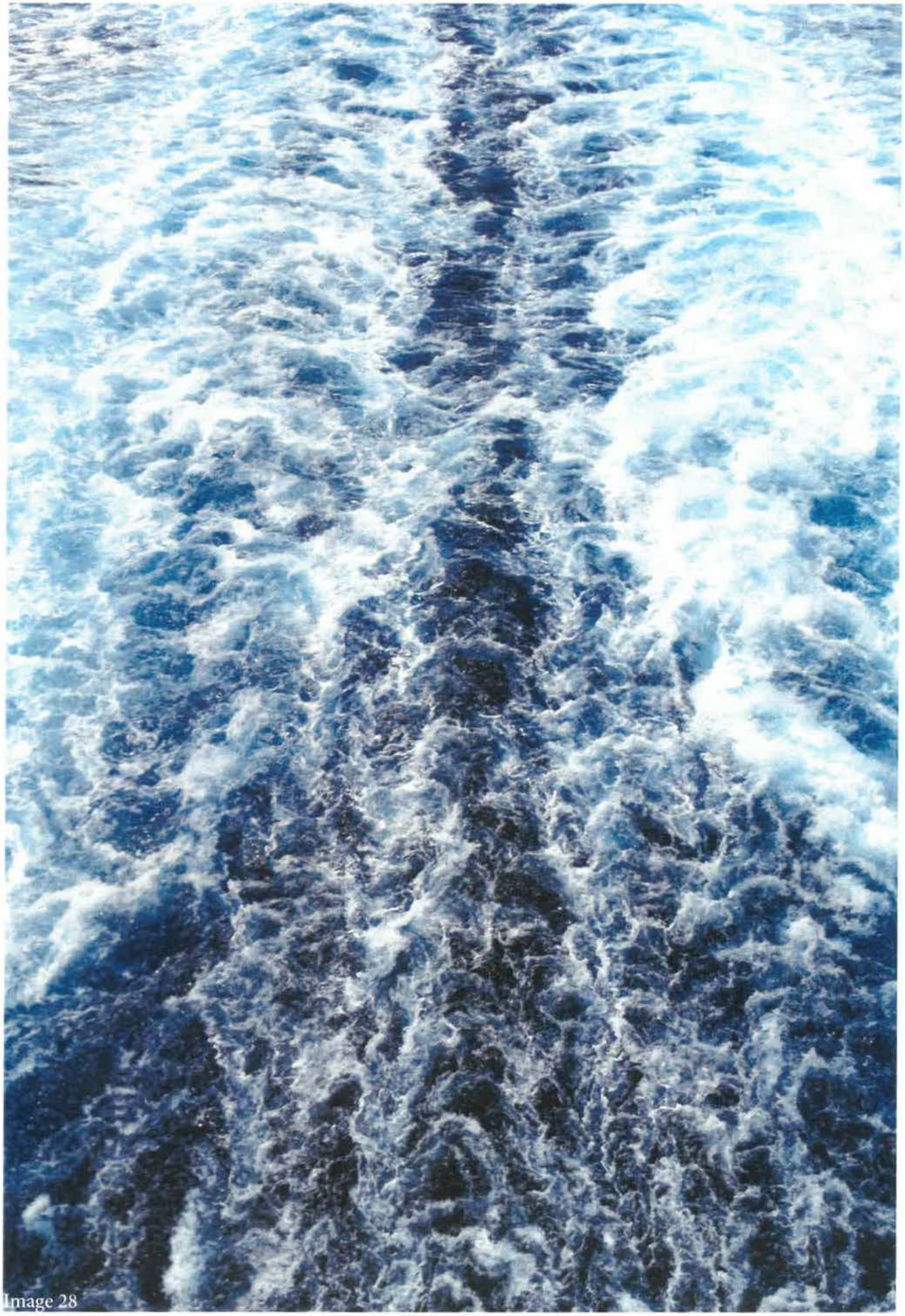


Image 28

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APPENDIX

Cover Photo: Miliou-Theocharaki, M., Seeds Growing on my Stockings, Mixed Media, 2014
Image 1, pg.4: Curatorial Installation, Print on paper, Curator: Mia Papaefthimiou, Artist: Ioanna Kafida, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2015, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 2, pg.6: Curatorial Installation, Print on paper, Curator: Mia Papaefthimiou, Artist: Ioanna Kafida, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2015, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 3, pg.7: Miliou-Theocharaki, M., Infrathin 2, Mixed Media, 2016
Image 4, pg.10: Miliou-Theocharaki, M., Infrathin 5, Mixed Media, 2016
Image 5, pg.12: Photo Credits Mia Papaefthimiou, 2016, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 6, pg.13: Artist: Manaho Schimokawa, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 7, pg.14: Yury Revich and Mia Papaefthimiou, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Musikverein Wien
Image 8, pg.16: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 9, pg.17: Artist: Karola Niederhuber, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 10, pg.19: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 11, pg.22: Curatorial Installation and Performance, Print on paper, Curator: Mia Papaefthimiou, Artist: Ioanna Kafida, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2015, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 12, pg.23: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 13, pg.23: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 14, pg.25: Artist: Elli Papadiamanti, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 15, pg.26: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 16, pg.28: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 17, pg.29: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Musikverein Wien
Image 18, pg.31: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 19, pg.33: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Musikverein Wien
Image 20, pg.34: Artist: Elli Papadiamanti, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Musikverein Wien
Image 21, pg.35: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 22, pg.37: Artist: Markus C. Ender, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 23, pg.38: Artist: Manaho Schimokawa, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 24, pg.39: Artist: Alex Riegler, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Atelierhaus der Akademie der Bildenden Künste Wien
Image 25, pg.42: Artist: Yury Revich and Bojana Stamenkovic, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 26, pg.44: Artist: Bojana Stamenkovic, Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Bank Austria Salon, Altes Rathaus
Image 27, pg.45: Photo Credits Maximilian Brunner Photography, 2016, Musikverein Wien
Image 28, pg.46: Miliou-Theocharaki, M., Possibility, Mixed Media, 2016