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ON BITEF, THE PANDEMIC, AND NEW FORMS²

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Abstract

The idea of this paper is to present three exemplary projects which were shown or will be shown at Bitef (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) and which map three generic responses by contemporary theatre to limitations caused by the coronavirus pandemic, but also to the challenges imposed by the global ecological crisis. It must not be forgotten that this pandemic has resulted from the destruction of the global ecosystem. Besides their causal relation, the ecological crisis and the pandemic are linked, from the point of view of theatre and festivals, by the similar restrictions they impose. Apart from the risk of physical gathering yet another challenge are international travels, especially by airplane. The three exemplary theatre responses to the ecological crisis and the pandemic are: a) franchise performances, b) performances on the Internet, and c) substituting live bodies with robots.

Key words

franchise performances, online theatre, robots, pandemic, ecological crises

Last year, Bitef (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) did not have its regular edition. The effect that the Covid-19 pandemic had on international theatre festivals has been twofold and decisive. On the one side, the necessity of physical distancing has made performances (not only at festivals but in general) either difficult or impossible, while on the other, quarantine, self-isolation, border closures, and other anti-pandemic measures have disrupted international travel. Because of all that, 53rd Bitef was postponed until 2021, when it

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happened as a double edition (54th and 55th edition combined). However, not only for the sake of its historical continuity, which has not been broken ever since the beginning of Bitez in 1967, but also in order to reconfirm that theatre and festivals, as two important manifestations of “agora”, can and should survive the most difficult circumstances, it was decided to organize a short, three-day-long edition, Bitez-Prologue. It happened in the period when it is normally scheduled (September 2020). Bitez-Prologue offered a sample of the programme planned for 2020, which is also the programme that was held this year, with a few changes and additions. The two performances which were held in 2020, *Uncanny Valley* (Rimini Protokoll and Kammerspiele München), and *Be Arielle F* by Simon Senn (the author’s troupe and Theatre Vidy-Lausanne) were both artistically and in terms of production suitable for the requirements of the anti-pandemic measures, since they involve a small number of people, which reduced the risk of cancellation due to an illness to a minimum.

The idea of this paper is to present three exemplary projects which were presented at Bitez-Prologue in 2020, at this year Bitez, and are planned for 2022, and which map three *generic* responses by contemporary performing practices to limitations caused by the coronavirus pandemic, but also to the challenges imposed by the global ecological crisis. Namely, it must not be forgotten that – conspiracy theories aside – this pandemic, as well as the ones that are yet to come, have resulted from the destruction of the global ecosystem. Besides their causal relation, the ecological crisis and the pandemic are linked, from the point of view of theatre and theatre festivals, by the similar restrictions they impose. Apart from the risk of physical gathering i.e., physical closeness of many people, yet another challenge are international travels, especially by airplane. Pandemic lockdown has been detrimental to air traffic; on the other hand, this means of traffic had already been recognized as one of the main sources of air pollution and thus very dangerous to global ecosystem.

These three “exemplary” theatre responses to ecological crisis and the pandemic are: a) franchise performances, b) performances on the Internet platforms, and c) substituting live performing body with a *digital*³ one. I am not saying that other possible responses could not exist, but I here focus on those

3 According to Steve Dixon, a performer’s “digital body” implies virtual, cyborg, and robot body. The virtual one belongs only to a virtual space and is as such always an image, a representation of another body. Cyborg is human body with some mechanical interventions, while robot is completely a machine. See: Dixon, Steve (2007) *Digital Performance: A History of New Media in Theater, Dance, Performance Art and Installation*. Cambridge Massachusetts and London England: The MIT Press.

models of anti-pandemic and/or ecologically sustainable theatre that I have recognized as relevant over the past two years from the position of the Bitef curator. Therefore, from the point of view of methodology, this text will *explicitly* be a sum of two performance analysis and one review of a project in the making⁴ (supported by a bit of theoretical debate on the aesthetical nature of performing arts), while *implicitly* it will represent a curatorial self-reflection. The three concrete examples are: a) project *Sustainable Theatre?* by Katie Mitchell and Jérôme Bel, in the production of Théâtre Vidy-Lausanne (franchise performance), b) *Cherry Orchard in the Cherry Orchard* by Bobo Jelčić, De facto company from Zagreb (a performance on an Internet platform), and c) the aforementioned *Uncanny Valley* (digital bodies).

When I started writing this article (May 2021) I was not in the position to analyse but to merely “present” the project *Sustainable Theatre?* since it premiered only in September 2021 and only partially. Therefore, this article is not organized chronologically; I have a strong reason to start with this particular project. *Sustainable Theatre?* is not only a response to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, but to wider, prior, and greater challenges, the ones that caused the pandemic in the first place: the ecological crisis.

The main premise of this project’s “sustainability” is that it excludes any type of travel. The authors, English director Katie Mitchell and French choreographer Jérôme Bel didn’t plan to travel over the period of the initial preparations, nor to move and be physically present in Lausanne during rehearsals. Adopting the approach that Jérôme Bel has been exercising since 2007 whenever he has worked in places to which he would have to travel by plane, the two of them planned not to leave their cities, but to hold online rehearsals with the performers in Lausanne. The reason for this approach is neither acute nor pragmatic – the difficulties caused by the quarantine, self-isolation and other anti-pandemic measures – but chronic and the matter of principle: as already noted, air traffic is one of the biggest generators of harmful gasses emission, and a significant source of air pollution which leads to disturbance in ecological balance. It is, actually, their ecological awareness, the fact that both of them refuse to fly by planes for the same reason, what primarily linked these two artists.

4 In the meanwhile Katie Mitchell and Jérôme Bel decided to make two separate projects. Hers was realized in September 2021 under the title *A play for the Living in a Time of Extinction*. I write about it in the new issue of the IATC journal *Critical Stages*.

This restriction does not relate to the preparation of the project only, but also to the performance itself which will not be played out of the theatre where it is produced. This, however, requires an explanation: Swiss performers, technical and production staff will not travel, nor will the stage design and other physical elements be transported, but the performance itself will still be played out of Lausanne. Partners from other towns who want to present this performance will work with local performers and a local director (who will be free to introduce some local motives), all based on a detailed script provided by Théâtre Vidy. An important, if not the crucial aesthetic parameter, is that this script is not only a classical spoken text (let's call it a *play*), but it also includes stage directions (choreography, for example), and technical requirements. The main technical requirement belongs to the concept of ecological sustainability as well, since it implies a reduced use of electricity. In other words, performances played out of Théâtre Vidy will never represent new staging of the same "dramatic text", but re-enactment of the same, detailed "stage text".⁵ That is why I call this type of work on a performance – since this is a generic production model, not thematic and stylistic features of a particular performance – by a widely used term "franchise".

Still, this project does not represent an actual franchise since, as it is already mentioned, local artists are not only allowed but also encouraged to include some local motives related to the topic of the performance. Besides artists, others can also contribute to the local character, as is the case with the original concept: scientists in various disciplines linked to ecology issues, as well as environmental activists.

And what is the (concrete) topic? Judging from Mitchell's interview on the Théâtre Vidy website,⁶ it is clear that the topic should fully correspond to the described form of production: it should also focus on ecology, tackling the issues of global climate changes, air pollution, etc. The third important aspect, the theatre form, should also be in line with the approach and the topic, which means that it has to be suitable for the concept of an ecologically (self) aware theatre. However, this third aspect, theatre form, is a big challenge. As

5 I use the term "stage text" in the sense of a global staging score which involves all the theatre languages: spoken language, space, sounds, actors' tasks, rhythm, lighting... As Richard Schechner put it: "The stage text is the score, the total mise-en-scene, and everything that precedes a performance in order to enable the creation of the score. Significance in the creation of performance text lies in the system of relationships: conflicts, or to put it in a different way, relationships between words, gestures, actors, space, spectators, music, light – everything that happens on stage" (Schechner 1992 : 97).

6 <https://vidy.ch/sustainable-theatre>

stated by Katie Mitchell, the most appropriate theatre mode would be a play on how climate changes influence human destinies, but it supports anthropocentrism, which should be avoided when we advocate for the renewal of ecological balance. That is how the director reached the area of “eco-dramaturgy”, inventing stories that are not focused on human destiny.

Albeit interesting and relevant, the dilemmas linked to the choice of a topic and theatre form of the project *Sustainable Theatre?*⁷ are not crucial for our recognition and classification of possible generic answers that contemporary theatre might give to the challenges of ecological crisis and the related Covid-19 pandemic. What is sufficient for the classification is this basic concept of remote work, without travelling (by plane), and the subsequent touring of the performance based on the model of – *franchise*.

Ever since the beginning of the pandemic, for a full year now, we have been facing a conceptual and theoretical mess in theatre. Facing the inability to perform live, many theatres from all over the world have started playing recordings of their performances on their YouTube channels, and many TV channels have done the same. Although they are useful as information about performances, which can also contribute to the development of audience, those recordings or livestreams could hardly be considered theatre, even if preceded by the adjective *online* or *digital*, as often is the case. The thesis that recording/livestreams of performances are not theatre is based on the core aesthetic premise of performing arts, as is nowadays most convincingly formulated by Erica Fischer-Lichte. Aesthetic premise of a performance is the physical *co-presence* of performers and the audience (the notion “co-presence” means that the two groups of people share the same space). Their affective, spiritual, physical and intellectual exchange constitutes an *electrical circuit* of actions and reactions, named by Fisher-Lichte “autopoietic feedback loop”, which can be equalled to the notion of *performance*. Therefore, performance is never merely an aesthetic experience, but also a social one. According to theory by Fischer-Lichte, what we colloquially call performance, a sum of previously prepared artistic actions on stage, is just a staging, which turns

7 The question mark in the title refers to the experimental nature of the project which, therefore, has an uncertain outcome

into a performance only after an interaction with the audience's reactions is achieved.⁸

Recordings or livestreams of performances cannot be renamed *online* or *digital theatre* since they do not imply physical co-existence and direct exchange between performers and audience and are thus not theatre at all. If we adhere to that aesthetic logic, then the term theatre, not even a digital one, can refer even to another specific form: theatre created on Internet platforms, amongst which we are particularly interested in "Zoom theatre". As we all know, during the pandemic (self)isolation, Zoom application, which facilitates a virtual encounter of a large number of people and is thus suitable for online conferences, became one of the most widely spread global means of communication practically overnight. It has also become applicable in theatre, first as a multiple virtual/screen stage, on which actors play live in their own (separate) physical spaces, which computer cameras then place into the Zoom meeting windows. Spectators have their own windows as well, but they are usually switched off, so only the ones with performers remain visible.

Here we should stop for a second. These forms, which we call *online* or *digital theatre*, do not represent a novelty in terms of fusion between theatre and the Internet. Since the mid-nineties of the twentieth century, "the Internet theatre has been realized within contemporary institutions of theatre and performance art, but as their specific practice which, instead of paradigmatic live performance/performer, uses digital technology, the Internet space, and computer screen as their constitutive elements." (Vujanović 2006: 269–270). However, if we strictly adhered to the aesthetic criteria, Internet theatre would be denied its theatre status, based on the attitude that nothing in performing arts can be substituted for "paradigmatic live performance".

The "status of theatre" could possibly be acknowledged in a theoretical context which is not aesthetical or ontological but predominantly cultural. Writing about one of the subcategories of Internet theatre, "cyber-performance", which could also include projects created on the Zoom platform, Vujanović states that it is "one of the practices of art in time of culture" (ibid. 278). She supports the theses by stating: "What it practically means is that it should not be seen [cyber-performance, I.M.] as an exclusive and autonomous piece of art created by an art genius out of nothing, but as a work of art which is creat-

8 On the concept of "autopoietic feedback loop" and "performance" (in correlation to the term "staging") see: Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) *The Transformative Power of Performance*. London and New York: Routledge.

ed in a dense network of converging texts of society and culture, the one that does not get excluded from the network but, being created in its centre, it gets defined by it but also definable for it” (ibid.). However, the question remains whether cultural arguments can be used to negate the aesthetic ones. These are two completely different theoretical contexts.

Still, is it possible to come up with an aesthetic argument to support the theses that cyber-performance and similar forms can be considered *immanently theatrical*? Contrary to popular belief, some forms of cyber-performances (also applicable to zoom-performances) do involve the possibility of interaction. Although not created through energy exchange in a common physical space, this exchange does not have to remain any less *decisive* in the development of the action. It is important to add that this interaction represents an inherent, defining characteristic of digital technologies as such. In other words, spectators cannot influence the action by their reactions, sighs, sobs, exclamations, deaf silence, directed attention, or elevated atmosphere, but they can make an influence using the very nature of the Internet (if the concept invites them to, of course). For example, if they are asked to use “likes”, comments, and other means to select, like on a videogame, a new “hyperlink”: one of the paths that can direct further events (if, for example, the number of “likes” a character receives could determine if he would stay in the game or get *killed off*).

If we have now managed to prove, at least conditionally, that Zoom performances can be aesthetically confirmed to have the status of (digital) theatre, we can move on to the analysis of an example, the project *Cherry Orchard in the Cherry Orchard*, by a renowned Croatian theatre and film director, Bobo Jelčić⁹. The first thing anyone acquainted with Jelčić’s theatre will notice is how convincingly he has adapted a new media to his theatre poetics, mostly in terms of dramaturgy and work with actors.

Like in the case with some of his earlier staging of Chekhov’s plays, first of all *The Seagull*, the text has undergone a radical adaptation, the dramaturgy of the play has been reduced to the crucial event and/or topic, while situations, the relationships and the characters have been modernized, that is to say written again according to the “original”. The story is reduced to the auction at which the cherry orchard will be sold, and which involves only the main participants of this event (landowners, the aristocrats Madame Ranevskaya

9 This statement might seem paradoxical since the described form of interaction, which provides the “theatre” character to Zoom performances, cyber-performances, and the Internet theatre in general, does not exist in the performance *Cherry Orchard in the Cherry Orchard*.

and her brother Gayev; her daughter Anya; her adopted daughter Varya, who manages the estate; the nouveau riche Lopakhin who, having failed to persuade them to accept a pragmatic plan for its salvation, buys the cherry orchard at the auction; family friend and an eternal student Trofimov), while all the other characters and the related plots have been removed.

Thereby reshaped dramaturgy and its media context, a meeting on the Zoom platform, have been linked in a convincing, organic, even *hyper-naturalist* fashion. Namely, the (hidden) spectators are “voyeurs” of a Zoom conference of a contemporary Zagreb family which is having, each of them from their own space (which is real for the actors and fictional for the characters they play), final consultations on the auction which is about to begin. Since the story, which is dense both in terms of narration and of time, also includes the period right after the auction, when we find out what happened to the cherry orchard, the problem appeared what to do, in this naturalistic context, about the time flow (the duration of the auction itself). It was solved in a simple and witty manner, by Lopakhin losing signal in that period.

In line with this hyper-naturalism – the impression that we, the spectators, are watching a Zoom meeting from a real life – the acting is also greatly naturalistic, lifelike, thus adapted to the fact that they are in front of cameras (of their computers). A particularly complex aesthetical question is whether this form of acting is more “theatrical” or “cinematic”, if we agree that those two are different. Some roles in *Cherry Orchard in the Cherry Orchard*, especially the mildly comic ones, display a certain *theatricality* which dissociates us from the (hyper)naturalism and, consequentially, what we typically see as film acting.

The impression of this “lifelike truth” is created not only by how the actors play, with an emphasis on concrete physical actions, but also *where* they play and *what they have on* while they do. The costumes and the setup within the frame, the Zoom-windows, are, on the first level, literally “private” (we can safely assume that every actor plays in their own clothes and in their own private space, whether it is a room, a car, or in the street), but are at the same time, mildly *semiotized*. In terms of intertwining between personal and fictional, phenomenological, and semiotic, most strikingly presented are the characters of Ranevskaya, Varya, and Lopakhin, as well as their surroundings and their situations.

Melancholic, passive-aggressive, self-pitying, spoilt, and hypochondriac Ranevskaya, played in a well-balanced comical manner by Jadranka Đokić, is constantly lying down, we can only see her slanted head, taking her temperature (covid-paranoid?) and drinking something that we do not know whether it is alcohol or hot lemonade (the way this character is presented, she might easily be drinking either). Messy bed linens are slightly covered with a fuzzy, bluish shawl or an overcoat, which is a very witty sign of her *shabby* glamour. Varya, played by Petra Svrtan, the housekeeper of the family house, is dead serious, worried, focused on household chores which we can see she is constantly doing (folding laundry, for example). With the same facial expression and in the same mood, she goes out and walks the streets of Zagreb, probably again carrying out another household task, which we keep following via Zoom application on her mobile phone. Just like her, Lopakhin does not participate in the family online meeting via a laptop or a computer either, but via his mobile phone. Played by Marko Makovičić, Lopakhin is, just like Chekhov made him, a new-age man, energetic, busy, always in motion, which is why he is making important conversations, before and during the auction, while driving his car.

In terms of its general interpretative approach to classic dramaturgy, the project *Cherry Orchard in the Cherry Orchard* could be defined as actualization.¹⁰ As it is already implied, the text adaptation in this project could be considered a rewriting, a new writing of the text based on a classical model, so that the dialogues and the monologues, as well as the characters and situations they create, are adapted to a contemporary context. In this case, that would be the inability of a present-day Zagreb family to face the challenges of transition in post-socialist societies, the societies of the nouveau-riche, tycoon privatization, neoliberal capitalism. The great Peter Brooke stresses that *The Cherry Orchard* is a play about social transition, about the end of one epoch/society and the beginning of another.¹¹ Still, this should not lead us to believe that Jelčić is making political theatre: he has put the story into contemporary context but didn't make a political comment. That remains completely in line with contemporary understanding of Chekhov's dramaturgy, which can be reduced to the main thesis of the text *L'entre-deux ou les bipolarités Tchékovienns*¹² by one of the best world experts of *The Cherry Orchard*, Georges Banu:

10 For different approaches in contemporary directing of classical plays, see: Medenica Ivan (2010) *Klasika i njene maske*. Novi Sad: Sterijino pozorje.

11 See the TV program: *Tchékhov, le témoin impartial*, La SEPT et l'INA, Paris 1994.

12 Banu, Georges (2010) "L'entre-deux ou les bipolarités Tchékovienns", *Zbornik radova Fakulteta dramskih umetnosti* br. 17. Beograd: FDU.

the play by the Russian grand writer exists within numerous bipolarities (realism–symbolism, Russia – the West, dramatic–comic...), so directing should maintain the tension they generate.

We follow long, truly cinematic scenes in which each of the protagonists in their own windows within the Zoom-conference perform their action in an absent, melancholic and/or desperate manner (Varya is walking down the street, Ranevskaya is sobbing, Lopakhin is driving his car...); the overall melancholy is reinforced by the song *White Roses, Tender Roses* performed by Predrag Cune Gojković... This kind of meditative, ambivalent ending makes a spectator feel trapped between two equally powerful urges. On the one side, one would laugh at these overly dramatic goofballs (no one has died, it is just an estate selloff...), while on the other, one would cry over destiny of these losers of the transition.

Unlike the previous one, the performance *Uncanny Valley* is played in a real, physical space of a stage, with real audience in the theatre (they belong to the same *here* and *now*). The only performer in this show addresses the audience directly several times, he asks questions and gives them tasks that they accept to perform (that they should all simultaneously close their eyes), which would lead one to assume that their interaction is even more intensive than in a classic theatre. That assumption is, however, wrong: not only is the interaction not stronger, but it is non-existent. In one way or the other, this performer does have an influence on the audience, even if he makes them bored or absentminded. On the other hand, they cannot influence him in any way; although he looks completely human, he is – a robot. Since his behaviour is completely programmed, it is not possible to establish an “autopoietic feedback loop” with the audience. That is why it does not surprise that Fischer-Lichte rejected the dilemma of aesthetic essence of this performance, which I have posed during the debate that the two of us had at Bitef-Prologue 2020 in a hybrid form: she addressed us via Zoom from Berlin, which was livestreamed on the screens set up in front of Bitef Theatre in Belgrade, in front of the audience and myself in the capacity of the interviewer:

First, I have to say that I love this work. It has tested how far we can go in challenging the notion of theatre. And in this production the point is reached where it is no longer theatre [...] For me, it was an experiment

that was done, so to say, to prove my idea of the autopoietic feedback loop [she laughs]. You put a robot on stage and wait to see what happens. The loop will not be established. As usually with Kaegi and Rimini Protokoll, the piece was very intelligently made. When I say it is not theatre, it does not mean it is not art. It is a new art format. That is quite important, and it is fantastic. We have to make a distinction. This is art, I can respond aesthetically to it, but I cannot experience it in social terms. When it is done well, I admire that, but it is not theatre. One should coin a new term for these art forms. (Medenica 2020)

Testing the borders of theatre, mentioned by Fischer-Lichte, is not a side effect or an accidental result in *Uncanny Valley*. On the contrary, this testing is the author's deliberate intention, a node which holds together the dense, almost opaque network woven out of numerous thematic threads. The project is structured as a lecture-performance, the lecturer is a humanoid robot who is a stunning *copy* of a German writer Thomas Melle, and the topic is *Overcoming the difficulties caused by the "uncanny valley"*. The meaning of the main topic of the lecture is explained at the very end so the idea of the performance becomes clear in hindsight. Japanese scientist Masahiro Mori has used the term "uncanny valley" to describe the situation which involves a humanoid robot: despite the stunning resemblance, it still does differ from a human, which provokes a feeling of alienation, uneasiness, discomfort.

A dilemma raises. Will the man, Melle himself (who then addresses us for the first time, albeit via screen) soon get degenerated into the *picture* of Dorian Gray decaying in the attic, while his double, a humanoid robot, turns into an independent agent, Dorian Gray himself? Or, as the real Melle demonstrates (again via screen), man will always be able to manipulate the machine, to twist its wrists and ankles (as Melle does to his robot-double), and eventually, in case it becomes too independent, switch off robot's electrical charging? It is claimed that not a single machine has ever passed the Turing test for distinguishing people from machines.

Mentioning the Turing test directly points at the other of the two main themes of this lecture-performance. The first one is the life story of Thomas Melle, while the other is the tragic destiny of Alan Turing, whose invention not only helped decode Nazi ciphers in the Second World War but represented a forerunner of computers. What links their destinies is the metaphor of "psychiatric patient as a computer": it is known that many psychiatric patients see themselves as computers, claims Melle-robot. Melle himself suffers from bi-

polar disorder, which is marked by fluctuation between manic and depressive states. Turing suffered from depression, and then committed suicide, after being forced to take oestrogen as a part of *cure* against homosexuality, which caused him to develop secondary female sex characteristics (forming of a breast tissue). The metaphor of *psychiatric patient as a computer* is brought forward in Melle's alleged¹³ decision to be substituted by a robot (which is the spitting image of him) on public occasions, since bipolarity is followed by performance anxiety, uncertainty and, above all, the loss of control. If he delegated his position of a subject to a computer/machine/robot, the panic would disappear. In Turing's case, this metaphor is even more complex, and we can read it as several levels of transgression: from man into woman, from a mentally sane person into a depressed one (who commits suicide), from subject into an estranged identity, from man into machine.

Still, how are all these questions – from psychiatric illnesses to the relation between the man and the machine/computer – linked to Kaegi's testing of theatre itself, which I claimed was the director's aim? To become someone/something else, to have a double identity (male-female, healthy-mentally ill, man-machine), to delegate subjectivity to one's own double, to test if the copy will be more real than the original, to wonder whether you have a control over (self)representation, to not expose oneself in public... all of those themes refer *par excellence* to the aesthetic, even ontological essence of theatre. That is why we can justly claim that *Uncanny Valley* is not so much a project on previously listed topics, but on aesthetic identity of theatre.

However, as we have already emphasized, one could relativize the theatrical status of *Uncanny Valley* according to the same aesthetic criterion as applied to the projects on the Zoom-platform (the absence of live exchange between the audience and the performers). That approach would, however, be overly simple and reductionist. This intelligent project by Stefan Kaegi raises so many provocative questions about aesthetic identity of the theatre, that, if anything, it can vigorously upset our fixed presumptions about that identity.

In the end, we can make a few questions which, for now, surely cannot be answered. Which of these forms will turn out to be a temporary response

13 This is not a decision made by Thomas Melle in real life but represents a fictional construct that this project by Stefan Kaegi is based on.

to the ecological and/or pandemic crisis, and which ones will survive and become a more lasting contribution to the contemporary performing arts? If we start from the hypothesis that the end of the pandemic will also mean the end of the necessity of physical distancing, and that physical co-presence of performers and the audience will surely be confirmed as an aesthetic essence of theatre, then one might say that all the forms that excluded live presence (performances with robots, projects on online platforms...) will remain what they essentially are: experiments on the border between theatre and other artistic and media practices. On the other hand, ecological crisis will not vanish, and the protection of the environment should become a criterion for all the human activities, including theatre. Franchise-performances are merely the tip of an iceberg, one of the first responses by the theatre to the ecological crisis, namely air pollution caused by air traffic. Let's hope that these responses will become wider and deeper, and that we are yet to think and write about them.

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O BITEFU, PANDEMIJI I NOVIM FORMAMA

Apstrakt

Namera ovog rada je da predstavi tri egzemplarna projekta koja su prikazana ili će biti prikazana na Bitefu (Beogradski internacionalni teatarski festival) i koja mapiraju tri generička odgovora savremenog pozorišta na ograničenja prouzrokovana pandemijom koronavirusa, ali i na izazove nametnute globalnom ekološkom krizom. Ne sme da se zaboravi da je ova pandemija rezultat uništenja globalnog ekosistema. Pored njihovog uzročno-posledičnog odnosa, ekološka kriza i pandemija povezane su, iz ugla pozorišta i festivala, i sličnim ograničenjima koja nameću. Pored rizika koji nosi fizičko okupljanje, drugi izazov su međunarodna putovanja, naročito ona avionom. Tri egzemplarna pozorišna odgovora na ekološku krizu i pandemiju su: a) predstave-franšize, b) predstave na internetu, c) zamena živih tela robotima.

Ključne reči

predstave-franšize, onlajn pozorište, roboti, pandemija, ekološka kriza

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