

desire to make  
a solid history  
will end up in failure

author and choreographer /  
Igor Koruga

performers /  
Nela Antonović, Anđelija Todorović,  
Jelena Jović, Tatjana Pajović, Boris Čakširan,  
Sanja Krsmanović Tasić

design of revolving dress and wig /  
Boris Čakširan

dramaturgy /  
Milica Ivić

sound composition /  
Luka Mejdžor

lighting design /  
Boris Butorac

graphic design /  
Mane Radmanović

production /  
Marijana Cvetković

coordination /  
Marko Pejović

organization /  
Filip Perić

# igor koruga

nela antonović  
jelena jović  
sanja krsmanović tasić  
tatjana pajović  
anđelija todorović  
boris čakširan























The initial desire in the creation of this dance performance is the question: in what way could archiving dance art be an artistic practice? The author's exploration of this desire takes place through a transgenerational creative exchange with six

choreographers/directors/  
dancers/performers of the  
local independent dance  
scene: Nela Antonović,  
Anđelija Todorović, Jelena  
Jović, Tatjana Pajović, Bo-  
ris Čakširan, and Sanja Krs-  
manović Tasić. Together,  
these six artists carry out  
the performance, that is, "ar-  
chive in motion" - embody-  
ing insufficiently document-  
ed records of movements,  
experiences, memories, oral  
histories from their artistic  
works - at a time when there  
is no official institutional

framework for archiving the  
local dance scene. Through  
the transgenerational (self)  
questioning of physical, so-  
cial, emotional, economic,  
ideological and other (mostly  
invisible) vulnerabilities be-  
hind their cultural and artis-  
tic work and practice, the  
tactics, principles, (re)posi-  
tioning and contradictions  
of their self-sustainability as  
a form of resistance, criti-  
cism and togetherness in  
the turbulent socio-political  
circumstances of work and  
life during the last forty years



are also being re-examined. What can Antonović, Todorović, Jović, Pajović, Čakširan and Krsmanović Tasić say about all this from today's perspective (artistically and personally)? What are their bodies carrying and hiding? In what ways is the impermanence of archiving a time and history reflected through the temporality of the artistic performance itself (dance performance)? How does dance art (of independent scenes) survive as a relevant social, cultural, and political

tool for reshaping and re-making the social body? The desire to make solid history is sure to end in failure. The only question is for whom?



## The conversation

on collaboration on the performance as an archive in motion was conducted by Milica Ivić and Igor Koruga, both of whom have participated in the regional project of archiving the contemporary dance, organised by Nomad Dance Academy, since 2015. The goal of the project,

connecting Slovenia, Croatia, Serbia and Macedonia based partners, is to create a digital archive of contemporary dance, with the working title of Balkan Digital Dance Database, which is currently in development stages and will be accessible to the public as of November 2024.



### **Is the desire to create a solid history of dance doomed to fail?**

I would say so. Not in the sense that we are failing at something or that something cannot be realised, but rather that it is hard and challenging to collect all the information, in one place, on one phenomenon, about a history, about a development. To admit that we cannot have all the pieces of a puzzle, that many of the practices we wish to archive are ephemeral and that so far they have had their own moments of being brought to life and ceasing to exist. When we talk about making a dance archive, we are certainly exposing ourselves to a failure, because this cannot be an archive in a conventional sense, containing all the material artefacts (audio-video footage, documents, texts...), but instead some very scattered pieces of information in various fields and institutions, different drawers, memories, oral histories, bodies, so it boils down to picking things wherever they're found and archiving them as they come.

### **How much is the impossibility of building a solid archive and a solid history linked to a broader social-political context and the way in which perceiving and viewing it changes as decades pass?**

Every kind of archiving is absolutely conditioned by socio-political circumstances in which it is taking place due to the fact that, among other things, it was these very circumstances that dictated the history of development of dance practices locally to start with. Even if I wanted to, it would be completely impossible to separate the archive from its context, because it turns out that dance was a part of various socio-cultural and political activities and practices that were either characteristic of a certain time or its product throughout our history. For example, during the nineteen seventies and nineteen eighties, we could say that experimental dance practices started to emerge through some other physical forms of dance – sports and ballroom dance, folk dances, classical dance, the slets – choreographed mass events, performance art and so on. Even with a certain degree of success at that, because these practices were becoming visible, recognised by the public, and had an infrastructure that could support it. On the other hand, during the nineteen nineties, at the time of overall crises and the breakdown of infrastructure that took place



in the entire country, we encountered an absolute cessation of such practices and break-through of some other frameworks and modes in which this experimentality of dance was presented. The principle that emerged was that of struggling to manage to sort things out and reach out for a framework, context or alternative infrastructure in which this particular type of dance could be presented. And even then, it would only be presented temporarily. The best example of this could be various initiatives of forming *experimental ballet* studios or dance companies in nineteen sixties or nineteen seventies (Dusan Trninić, Mira Sanjina, Smiljana Mandukić), where I would point out Katarina Stojkov (Mandukić's student) who initiated dance companies for dancers with completed high school education (the highest available) during almost each of these decades. Some infrastructure frameworks, of different socio-political orientations, in which these companies and initiatives were formed included: KUD "Abrašević", KPGT, People's University Kolarac, Terazije Theatre etc. A particular exception is the founding of the first professional dance company "Signum" in late nineteen eighties at Bitef Theatre – that, during their six years of existence mirrored the turbulent socio-political changes ranging from complete institutional, national and international recognisability (touring at the most prestigious international and global festivals, constant television appearances, best performance awards etc) – to complete fallout in 1993.

**We have been in the process of working on creating an archive of contemporary dance scene for years now, but still quite briefly, taking into account the overall history of dance practices in this region. Thanks to this experience, we've witnessed how the zeal of an individual researcher or publicising new finds, not only changes the perception of a certain segment of dance history, but also establishes a different valorisation of what the dominant dance practices were, what practices were of influence and which ones were forgotten. These are indeed exciting moments for researchers, when something that had been considered an unambiguous knowledge of dance history is questioned and something else that was seen as a side track becomes illuminated in an entirely different way. During the work on this performance, has anything of this nature taken place, not only in terms of discoveries of archive material, but also in terms of changes in your perception of importance or valorisation of some currents of dance history?**

What's crucial for our, yours and mine, understanding of the practice of archiving is that we have naively approached the entire matter with the idea of how we're going to do some research and mapping, continuing some of the previous initiatives, or adding to the existing dominant discourses. Then we've discovered that there were many, at least as far as the prevalent local academic-discursive interpretation was concerned, 'side-', 'inconsequent' phenomena and seeming side tracks, which turned out to be extremely important. The first on this list is KPGT where an entire generation of contemporary dance artists developed in the nineties, in spite of Ljubiša Ristić's conservative political orientation; also, Kaća Stojkov's experimental ballet company that, for instance, introduced its members to queer artist Lindsey Kemp in the late nineteen seventies and early nineteen eighties at Bitef Festival, where they rehearsed together, exchanged experiences, practices etc. Belgrade contemporary ballet studio lead by Smiljana Mandukić by all means remained a space for working with young women, connected, in a broader sense, with feminist emancipatory ideas etc.

For this reason, the archiving practice, for me, represents a kind of a guerrilla action in relation to the existing academic and theoretical discourses. Not with the idea of contesting them, but rather of pointing out that there are still some things that, for the reason of all manner of different circumstances and conditions, could not have fully undergone an in-depth analysis and interpretation. On the other hand, it is a different matter altogether when something is being interpreted twenty or thirty years later. When it comes to our performance, I found it interesting how crucial oral histories are in such an analysis, and then also bodies, embodying the traces and histories of dance practices that had existed here. They definitely represent, in quite a different way, the phenomena discussed by dominant academic and theorist discourses and offer a different perspective on these.

**Let us contextualise one of the key issues we've addressed in this performance – the issue of sustainability. The artists, who are also performers in this dance performance, have been active on the scene independently, as authors, performers, founding members of different companies, initiatives, networks, during different decades in which serious social, economic, political changes took place. They are bearers of an archive related not only to**



dance, but also to collective history of this entire region and different, as we have seen, infrastructure possibilities and lack thereof that were in place. What is interesting is that many of these artists are still active on the scene even today, so that we share this common ground, even though that hadn't been the case in all of the previous decades. Through the conversations with them, we could understand the past much better, the past that we do have some knowledge of, as well as our own intuition and certain valorisations. We faced these perspectives in an open conversation with them. My question would be what discovery related to their positions was actually important.

For me, it is the perspective of vulnerability, or rather this vulnerable position in which, when you are a dance artist trying to develop or sustain your practice, you encounter some extremely exacerbating circumstances in which you have to choose to either stop doing the work that you do or to just carry on somehow. I found it fascinating, what these choices were in terms of sustainability and carrying on. Not in the sense of good or bad choices but rather in the sense of how you as an artist find yourself not between two balls that need to be dodged, but rather six different ones, in which you need to pick the one that will hurt the least. What I found shocking and exciting is recognising the fact that such position of thirty or forty years ago in fact exists to this very day, in the context of neoliberal capitalism that we live. That's why I myself, as a member of a younger generation, could easily understand and identify with some of these choices, positioning and repositioning through which you try to sustain your work as an artist.

The methodology we opted for, with our previous experience of interviewing choreographers and agents on the scene that we had done during the archiving process, was that we also introduced collective conversations along with structured individual interviews with all six performers respectively. This methodological selection was not entirely structured, the results and modes in which this could be processed in an exact manner had not been clear to us. The idea was that, along with our own views of life, career and socio-political circumstances, some topics should also be discussed collectively. This enabled us to get a series of conversations on the subjects I would ask you to elaborate on, along with explaining what it was that was important to you and that we managed to achieve through this type of practice, which I

am not sure is valid in terms of theory. Since in these processes it is not mere data and archive material that would be exclusively documentary or empirical that we are in search of, but also another, additional X hiding somewhere among the relations, somewhere in the zone of the affective, I wonder what you think we've gained by stepping into this space of collective conversations as a principle of archiving, as opposed to what we've lost.

In terms of the approach and the framework of stepping out from the documentarist or empirical into something which is affective or relational, our collocutors were faced with not being able to easily provide socially desirable responses as long as they were together in a certain time and space, but that they instead had to rely on memories they might share with each other, and thus had to check them, and only then give their responses and discuss them. These responses come through the collective dynamics in the relationships the six of them have between themselves. What I think is important to stress is that the performers in this dance performance, regardless of the fact that some of them, may have collaborated among each other do, in essence, work together for the first time now. Now, the subjects we touched upon. These include: the subjects of politics and politicality through one's artistic work; then, the subject of aesthetics, or the relation that they, both individually as artists and as a whole generation, had with the aesthetics within their dance practices; then there was the matter of the position of an independent artist in various socio-political changes and time frames; also the subject of feminism and queer theory and practice within the arts. In our environment feminism might be somewhat more familiar subject, since we already have a dominant theoretical discourse that claims and proves that dance was in a sense grounded on feminist foundations, but it is interesting to see the place queer practices occupy in all this, in the broadest possible sense, related to or expanding on feminism. We've also had the subject of resistance, in the sense of whether it was necessarily only linked to war, the system, ideology, or, also, the uncertain conditions one lives and works in. We have tried to map, in a broadest possible sense, the subject of the relations between the institutional and non-institutional, because it was important for us to understand, since we're talking about artists hailing from a non-institutional scene: what their relation to institutions was and how, if at all, this relation has



changed over the decades and what conditioned it. For example: why they have stepped out of institutions or why they got employed with them or why they have fantasised about institutions. If they were to start some autonomous, independent, non-institutional initiatives, what frameworks would these be a part of, what infrastructures those would be? Ultimately, we've also tackled the subject of communality and initiatives of forming associations over the period of forty years. Of course, only some of these materials made it to the actual performance.

**In the further process of our work we tried to map these and to use both collective and individual conversations as material in the performance itself that at the same time conditioned its course or was a part of the existing materials, blending with the new performance materials or documentary footage. We treated it as a new document. Is there something you view as a failure of conducting the collective conversations on the subjects you mentioned?**

What to me remains a shortcoming or failure in such a methodology is, naturally, how much the relational and affective relationships between the collocutors impact the quantity and quality of the responses. In our work, we've certainly obtained some high-quality responses, but I naturally always wonder whether there was a degree of holding back involved or not, how people make decisions to say something or refrain from saying it. The methodology in itself is very vulnerable and uncertain because we can never fully tell what will take place, or what circumstances, relations or affects some questions would stir, individually and collectively, and thence, in this regard, what the responses will be like.

**Let's talk about all the aspects of this performance and building a solid history that is exposed to the failure. Because this does not only involve the live performance, nor the audio materials obtained from individual and collective interviews, nor just the archive video footage, but also original music composed for this performance specifically, the set design and production of additional video and audio footage. Could you paint us a picture of the overall work involving so many different elements, how they were harmonised between themselves individually and how they all in fact contributed to the treatment of this funda-**

**mental issue of vulnerability? How do they contribute to the treatment of these individual important questions we outlined during the process?**

Regardless of the fact that this archive in motion comes from my initiative and artistic concept, it is built on a relational framework and exchange with other collaborators and with their respective fields of expertise (particularly in the case of the six artists and performers that carry it). Essentially, this is not a collective archiving practice. Every one of the collaborators made their own contribution to creating the archive in motion in their own domain of expertise. I've felt the need to have an exchange with you on the theoretical and discursive-practical planes through a choreographic-dramaturgical framework on which such an archive can be based. On the other hand, I think that the six artists who perform this archive in a way also constitute it, not only with their bodies, but also their practices, knowledge and everything else they contributed and offered. Thus, their role was in this regard essential for establishing such an archive and concepts that you and I had developed. This was indeed a trans-generational encounter of sorts, the one between different bodies of knowledge and how this different types of knowledge negotiate within a shared space and with the idea to reach a result, a goal, in this case a dance performance. I think this is a crucial thing: here, we do not perceive the archive as a place of storing and documenting, but rather as a place of reinterpretation and a more profound analysis. This cannot be a performance or an archive that can be performed by any other six performers. In other words, this archive will be performed for as long as they are able to perform it. Along with this, we also have the influence of music, a composer in search of the idea about what vulnerability is and how it can be manifested, what sounds, musical planes, instruments, genres can cover something as heterogeneous and important as their work over the past forty years. Some aspects of progressive rock and avant-garde pop were our reference points, but also those of contemporary ambience electronics. When it comes to the work on the set and lighting design, we were looking for answers in what way the visual screens upon which we handle the archive materials can also serve as a source to outline the material space and time shared by the six of them. The lights and costumes are, on the other hand, a visual space of the intersection between the past (retro-nostalgia) and (instagramic) present etc.



If you can recall it now, what was your relation to the matter of collective work at the start of this project in which the performers are six choreographers, authors and dancers who have been on the scene for decades and who were to work together for the first time now? Initially, we had known, we had some sort of a vague idea, of how much and when they were a part of the same companies, same context, same schools, where they would have encountered or replaced each other. We had no precise information on that. Can you remember your initial idea on how, as a choreographer, you would work with six such performers, as opposed to now, at the end of this process, what is your stance on the potential of this type of collectivity, of these relational possibilities or lack of them? What did you find challenging from your position as a choreographer?

I had structured the initial methodology through three domains of the archive: the memorable; the sensory and the bodily. Such an exchange with them entailed, on one hand, the method of reconstructing their individual artistic practices or the pieces they had performed or authored. But with the goal to re-contextualise it through my own choreographic practice. A small intervention on my part was introduced into each existing reconstruction— be it through costume, video-audio material or a choreographic procedure. For example, one of the choreographic modes of intervening was my audio-video montage of archive footage, conversation with the participants etc. My goal was to provide the analysis of their pieces, practices and careers by means of an audio-video field and choreographic principles. Thus Nela performs the Smiljana Mandukić choreography, „Ćele kula“ of 1973 at the anniversary of the First Serbian Uprising – through the principle of punk-vulnerability; Sanja performs her thirty-year-old practice of Dervish-like spinning against my twelve minute audio montage on the subject of resistance; Boris performs a creative response to his own, thus far, only documented solo of 1993; Tatjana and Anđelija reconstruct their physical materials from the work with the companies of Ister Theatre, Signum, Dah Theatre, POD Theatre – sharing stage after more than thirty years. Jelena offers us the overview of her engagement in the avant-garde pop culture of SFRY in the nineteen eighties – wearing Jelena Šantić’s original pointe shoes.

On the other hand, in a methodological sense, I was interested in how these six artists shared the time and space together, for the first time in over forty years of their respective careers. That’s why



I found it interesting to offer them my own choreographic principles and boundaries of physical motion, so that they would operate within them together as a team, even though they may have their own individual trajectories and movements. What was important for me was how this individuality is manifested inside the collective, as a *singular plural* principle. What are the procedures of movement, in the corporeal and performing sense, upon which such principle rests (what is the quality, the intensity of movement, at what levels, where the performer's gaze is directed etc.) The third thing that was important for me here was how the information we have of them is presented, as well as the information we hear for the first time. What are their stances, and what are my own? How is their collectivity manifested in relation to me as the author and choreographer of this performance, or as a framework that I set or assign for them.

**Since you've mentioned communality, let us touch upon how current this question is that does not lose its importance, especially in our post-socialist circumstances. You've mentioned the *singular plural* principle, as a challenge to thinking outside the duality of individual and collective. What we have as a shared platform is the belief that communality cannot be the space of a simple idealisation, but that it is indeed a question we are all called upon to answer. It seems that especially within contemporary dance production in the given circumstances, in Serbia, Belgrade, the question of communality is particularly pressing, as though we were all responsible for producing the new models, as though it were the responsibility of theory and artistic production to offer answers and new models. The position that we share is that this is not a question open to a type of simplified idealisation, neither towards the past, nor in the sense of projecting towards the future, but also rejecting individual responsibility for the solutions or any clear cut answers. Now I would like to elaborate on what we've realised during the process, which is in what way we can provide potential answers about communality. Where they come from and how we've looked for methodology that would demonstrate the ways in which we are at the same time obliged to provide such answers, but are not yet in the position to do so.**

In my artistic work in the past several years I've been through different artistic forms, both in my work as an author and through collaboration with other artists – from the participatory art to formal dance or dra-

matic performances and total experimental dramatic-dance-what-ever performance frameworks. I can say that within all these forms and approaches I've always felt the pressure of theories I had read and that find important, about how to think of communality based on some different alternative principles that come from diverse practices – in the broadest sense – feminism, queer, anti-anthropocentrism etc. So, I don't know, that was a sort of an idea of mine: to try to put all the discourses or theories that I am fond of on paper and use them as a manifesto that I would always be happy to reach for and say this is really hard to accomplish in reality. For the first time I've felt, going through this process, that it is really extremely necessary to pause and say there is no solution. I don't know whether it's nihilism or depression, but somehow, in essence, for me it represents a hopeful space because it relieves me of the pressure to have to be able to conceive a solution in an artistic sense, the methodology of work and the structure of a work of art, in order to be able to offer, at least temporarily, a better world. This doesn't mean that proposals are impossible, but I have the need to somehow say that it is fine to accept the vulnerability we find ourselves in. And this is the vulnerability of ignorance. On the other hand, being vulnerable does not mean that you're not able to put up resistance. Vulnerability is a good mode of resistance to powers that be, especially when it moves and gathers the bodies of the imperilled ones - which in this case are the bodies belonging to a very marginalised artistic discipline. A body is always in a network with other bodies, therefore the vulnerability (of bodies) doesn't exist without social and material relations. A body, as a separate, solid entity – is a product of patriarchal, masculine and capitalist order of things.

**What are the elements of hope, other than admitting that the demands are serious and justified, for initiating new models of communality and inability of individuals in particular, and within artistic frameworks in particular?**

It might be better to say that, aware and sort of admitting to vulnerability existing in this trial and error, we also make a decision not to stop carrying out these attempts. Maybe that's important: we are aware that making such attempts will not lead to a great change, but the very cognitive-emotional recognition of such awareness helps

us carry on attempting. This performing, or performativity of these attempts, takes place through our bodies as its means. It points to a duality – that, apart from circumstances and conditions impacting us, we can also impact these conditions in return. We as bodies are prone to the effects of forming or normativisation (what may, can, must not be done etc.) and are depending on the infrastructures making it possible for us to survive. But in these processes, we can also look for spaces to *queer* this forming, i.e. its questioning and new forms of articulation. In a broader social context, for instance, drag culture and trans community already carry this out to a large extent. In the context of our performance and the archive, detection and interpretation of feminist and queer discourses/practices within pieces, methods, expressions of these six artists (in the nineteen eighties and especially nineteen nineties) – is certainly an example of such a space.

ones who are exposed to agencies (of the world around us) – which further leads to sovereignty, control, centralism, masculinity. I've come to realise how to differentiate between resisting vulnerability and resistance as a social-political form that is shaped by vulnerability, vulnerable positions... or, rather, how vulnerability and resistance operate together.

**What is the most important discovery you think has been achieved during the process of making this performance when it comes to vulnerability and sustainability?**

My discovery has come about through the exchange with the six performers, being confronted with how they have been making decisions under certain circumstances. The way they managed to remain on the scene, but also how they were able to maintain continuity within the general discontinuity. More concretely – when the war's going on and you have nothing to eat, when the infrastructure around you is completely collapsing, when in your desire to fight you are constantly surrounded by both rivals and fellow-sufferers – how do you survive and do art in such vulnerable circumstances? The same goes for when the changes come, along with a better, promised future that turns out to be barren. How do you survive? Is it then that you make the decision to engage in dance, or change your profession, or anything else? Or are you going to carry on doing something that is horribly hard and challenging? Through conversations with Nela, Sanja, Tatjana, Anđelija, Boris and Jelena I've realised in what ways vulnerability becomes a way to be exposed and act at the same time. Because if we convince ourselves that we need to renounce vulnerability in order to act, we fail to see ourselves as the









# Archive

During the work on the performance, in collaboration with Nela Antonović, Tatjana Parović, Boris Čakširan, Jelena Jović, Sanja Krsmanović Tasić and Anđelija Todorović, the availability of archive material on the professional work of these authors since nineteen sixties until present was explored. Materials were obtained from private archives (in digital format), through digitalisation of VHS tapes, as well as from online archives. Photo and video materials were used in the process of editing, combined with audio materials obtained from collective and individual interviews with the performers during the work on the performance, as well as documentary materials that serve as testimonies about the broader social-historical context during the previous decades.

## Archive video footage used:

- 1 / Theatre Mimart: "Sunce zađe / The Sun Sets", 1993.
- 2 / Theatre Mimart: "Boje privida / Colors of Illusion", 1990.
- 3 / Ekatarina Velika: Dum Dum; LP "Dum Dum" (PGP-RTS) 1991.
- 4 / Ekatarina Velika: Tattoo, LP "Ekatarina Velika" (ZKP RTLJ), film "Taiwan Canasta", dir: Goran Marković, 1985.
- 5 / Dancers of Smiljana Mandukić's Belgrade Contemporary Ballet: "Govor tela/Body Language" TV Programme produced by TV Beograd; Dir: Srboľjub Božinović, Written by: Mario Rossi, 1986.
- 6 / Belgrade Dance Theatre: "Bilijar/ Billiard", choreography Vesna Milanović, 1992/1993.
- 7 / Dah Theatre: Zenit/Zenith, directed by: Dijana Milošević and Jadranka Anđelić, footage by RTS 1993.
- 8 / Dah Theatre: Prelazeći liniju/ Crossing the Line, directed by: Dijana Milošević, 2007.
- 9 / Hleb Theatre: "O s(a)vesti- Esej U Pokretu O Dadi Vujasinović / On (Con)science -Essay In Motion About Dada Vujasinović", directed by: Sanja Krsmanović Tasić, 2014.
- 10 / Hleb Theatre: "Doček/The Welcome", directed by: Sanja Krsmanović Tasić, 2016.
- 11 / Josipa Lisac: "Ja bolujem" K.Me-

- tikoš-A.Vuica-K.Klemenčić, LP "Balade" ("SIM" Studio, Zagreb), choreography: Damir Zlatar Frey, performance at ME-SAM International Festival, 1987.
- 12 / Erik Satie: "Two Gymnopedies", directed by: Vladimir P. Petrović, choreography: Dejan Pajović, RTB, 1988.
- 13 / Television Belgrade series on jazz musicians, directed by: Dragoslav Lutovac, choreography: Dejan Pajović, 1987.
- 14 / Signum Troupe: "Tibetanska knjiga mrtvih/Tibethan Book of the Dead", choreography: Dejan Pajović; video footage from Radio Television Belgrade, directed by: Dragoslav Lutovac, 1987.
- 15 / Signum Troupe: "Četiri bagatele/ Four Bagatelles", Milan Mihajlović; choreography: Dejan Pajović; video footage by Radio Television Belgrade, directed by: Dragoslav Lutovac, 1988.
- 16 / Signum Troupe: private recording of a rehearsal at ballet rehearsal room of Terazije Theatre, 1986.
- 17 / Signum Troupe: "McBeth in Search of McBeth", directed and choreographed by: Dejan Pajović, TV Programme on Studio B, 1992.
- 18 / Signum Troupe: "Hair", James Rado & Jerome Ragni, choreography: Dejan Pajović; footage from Sava Centar (M export-import), video directed by Aco Bošković, 1993.

**19 / Ister Theatre:** “The Desert”, private video recording of the performance, 2000.  
**20 / Ister Theatre:** “The Desert”, private video recording of the performance, 2010.  
**21 / Ister Theatre:** “Exhibition”, private video recording of the performance, 1998.  
**22 / Ister Theatre:** “Three Sisters”, private video recording of the performance, 2007.  
**23 / Ister Theatre:** “Lista sumnjivih ili ko je pojeo puding?/A List of Suspects or Who Ate the Pudding?”, private archive recording of the performance, 2002.  
**24 / “Crveno”,** Dušan Kojić; film “Kako je propao rokenrol / The fall of Rock & Roll”, directed by: Zoran Pezo, Vladimir Slavica, Goran Gajić; choreography: Petar Slaj, 1989.  
**25 / “Subotom uveče - U ritmu uspomena”** TV Programme, Radio Television Belgrade; directed and choreographed by: Dejan Pajović, 1992.  
**26 / “Ođila, Si jekh foro”,** film “Osmi dan u nedelji” directed by: Božidar Bota Nikolić; Television Belgrade – Radio Television of Serbia, 1989.  
**27 / “Beograd Noću/Belgrade At Night TV Show”,** script by Stanko Crnobrnja, Kosta Bunuševac, Oliver Mandić, Predrag Sindelić, directed by Stanko Crnobanja; choreography: Petar Slaj, Television Belgrade – Radio Television of Serbia 1981.  
**28 / New Year’s Eve Show Programme,** Lepa Brena i slatki greh, directed by: Mihailo Vukobratović, choreography: Petar Slaj, Television Belgrade – Radio Television of Serbia 1984/85.  
**29 / Nada Topčagić - “Mihajlo, Miki, Miki”,** music video, choreography: Petar Slaj, 1984.  
**30 / Vesna Zmijanac “Splet pesama”, “Folk Parada”** TV Programme, choreography: Petar Slaj, Television Belgrade – Radio Television of Serbia 1986.  
**31 / Usnija Redžepova “Igraču ti, Todore”** (1984), “Zlatna ploča” TV Programme, directed by: Natalija Mićević, Radio Television of Serbia, 2013.

**32 / Zorica Brunclik “Pesma o momku mom”,** LP “Uteši me”, “Folk parada” TV Programme, choreography: Petar Slaj, Television Belgrade – Radio Television of Serbia, 1984.  
**33 / Zdravko Čolić “Ruška”,** LP “Ti si mi u krvi”, Folk Parada TV Programme, Television Belgrade – Radio Television of Serbia, 1984.  
**34 / Jelena Jović: “Pipirevka”** (Polyp-tich, Ister Theatre), private video recording of the performance, 2009.  
**35 / Jelena Jović: “Algorithm”,** private video recording of the performance, 2002.  
**36 / Boris Čakširan: “Solo (Shamanist Methodology in Theatre)”**, private archive recording of the performance, 1995.  
**37 / ERGStatus Dance Theatre: “Psi / Dogs”,** choreography: Boris Čakširan, 2010.  
**38 / ERGstatus Dance Theatre: “Zvučna instalacija u 4 slike, inkluzivna instalacija/Aural Installation in 4 Scenes, an inclusive installation”,** choreography: Boris Čakširan, BELEF, private archive recording of the performance, 2011.  
**39 / ERGstatus Dance Theatre: “Tišina, inkluzivna predstava o gluvom igraču/Silence, an Inclusive Performance about a Deaf Dancer”,** choreography: Boris Čakširan, private archive recording of the performance, 2014.  
**40 / Group “Let’s...”: “Kriva za Gausa/ Blame it on Gauss”,** koreografija: Boris Čakširan, Sanja Krsmanović Tasić, private archive recording of the performance, 2008.  
**41 / ERGStatus Dance Theatre: “Café Intermezzo - excerpts”,** choreography: Boris Čakširan, private archive recording of the performance, 2001.  
**42 / Boris Čakširan, Excerpts from “Beats of Immortality” - Dance Workshop Gaaton - MASPA Israel,** private archive recording of the performance, 1999/2000.  
**43 / Group “Let’s...”: “Thanatos - excerpts 3”,** choreography: Boris Čakširan, private archive recording of the performance, 2011.  
**44 / POD Theatre: “Ekološki festival”,** private archive recording of the per-

formance at DKC Majdan, 2014.  
**45 / POD Theatre / Community Theatre - “Epidemija Don Kihota/An Epidemic of Don Quixote”,** Spanish Culture Centre Cervantes, private archive recording of the performance, 2016.  
**46 / POD Theatre: “Balans na ivici sveta/Balance on the Edge of the World”,** private archive recording of the performance, 2012.  
**47 / Recordings of performances of Smiljana Mandukić’s Belgrade Ballet,** from the private collection of Sanja Krsmanović Tasić.  
**48 / “Uroboros”** (1986), Culture Centre of Novi Sad, choreography: Damir Zlatar Frey, TV Programme “Autoportret” Culture and the Arts Programme of Radio Television of Serbia, 2016.  
**49 / “Ona će doći/She Will Come”,** directed by: Slobodan Giša Bogunović, Pivara “Nova osećajnost”, 1983.  
**50 / “Ako bismo svi malo utihnuli/ If Everyone could hush down a bit”** Bitef dance company, choreography: Snježana Abramović, 2011.

Archive photographs used:

**1 / Jelena Jović: Katarina Stojkov Company, “Ekperimentalni balet/ Experimental Ballet”,** 1979.  
**2 / Jelena Jović: Nada Kokotović KPGT Magaza - “Godo/Godot”,** 1982/1983.  
**3 / Jelena Jović private archive photographs from everyday life.**  
**4 / Tatjana Pajović, Nenad Čolić: “Sonet bez naslova/A Sonnet Without Title”,** 1994.  
**5 / Tatjana Pajović - POD Theatre/ Play against violence: “Ispovest jedne budale/Confessions of a Fool”,** 2002.  
**6 / Tatjana Pajović - POD Theatre: “Neruda - Priznajem da sam živeo/ Neruda – I Confess That I Have Lived”,** 2014.  
**7 / Tatjana Pajović - POD Theatre/ Community Theatre: “Ostati u tišini/ Keeping Quiet”,** 2017/2018.  
**8 / Tatjana Pajović - POD Theatre / Community Theatre: “Hleb i pesme/ Bread and Songs”,** 2018.  
**9 / Tatjana Pajović - POD Theatre / Community Theatre: “Da li ste videli Don Kihota?/Have You Seen Don Quixote?”,** 2015.  
**10 / Tatjana Pajović - POD Theatre: “Ljubav i drugi demoni/Love and Other Demons”,** 2016.  
**11 / Anđelija Todorović, Tatjana Pajović - Signum Troupe: “The House of Bernarda Alba”,** 1989.  
**12 / Anđelija Todorović, Tatjana Pajović - Signum Troupe: “The Picture of Dorian Gray”,** 1991.  
**13 / Anđelija Todorović, Tatjana Pajović - Signum Troupe: “Magbet traži Magbeta/McBeth in Search of McBeth”,** 1992.  
**14 / Anđelija Todorović, Jelena Jović - Ister Theatre: “The Desert”,** 2000.  
**15 / Anđelija Todorović, Jelena Jović - Ister Theatre: “The Desert”** 2010.  
**16 / Anđelija Todorović, Jelena Jović - Ister Theatre: “Lista sumnjivih ili ko je pojeo puding?/A List of Suspects or Who Ate the Pudding?”,** 2002.  
**17 / Anđelija Todorović, Jelena Jović - Ister Theatre: “Karta za više vožnji/A Ticket for Multiple Rides”,** 1995.  
**18 / Anđelija Todorović, Jelena Jović - Ister Theatre: photographs of Damir Vijuk**

**19 / Sanja Krsmanović Tasić - Hleb Theatre: “Marija Ručara”,** 2022.  
**20 / Sanja Krsmanović Tasić: private archive documentation of her own work as a performer in the performances of Smiljana Mandukić’s Belgrade Ballet.**  
**21 / Sanja Krsmanović Tasić: private archive documentation from everyday life.**  
**22 / Nela Antonović: October Award for Dance,** 1972.  
**23 / Nela Antonović: Ljubljana Dance Days,** 1977.  
**24 / Nela Antonović: an activist performance,** 1993.  
**25 / Nela Antonović: private archive documentation of her work as a performer in the performances of Smiljana Mandukić Belgrade Ballet**  
**26 / Nela Antonović – Theatre Mimart: “Daljina neka samo nama namenjena/ “Some distances, only to us intended”,** 1995.  
**27 / Nela Antonović – Theatre Mimart: “Odabrani se bude/The Chosen Ones Wake Up”,** 2011.  
**28 / Nela Antonović – Theatre Mimart: “Čvor/The Knot”,** 2009.  
**29 / Nela Antonović: private archive documentation of her work as author and performer as a part of Theatre Mimart, from 1984 until present.**  
**30 / Nela Antonović: private archive documentation of everyday life.**  
**31 / Boris Čakširan ErgStatus Dance Company: “Psi/Dogs”,** 2010.  
**32 / Boris Čakširan ErgStatus Dance Company: “Ja nisam kao ti/I am not Like You”,** 2001.  
**33 / Group “Let’s...”: “Thanatos”,** 2011.  
**34 / Boris Čakširan: private archive documentation of everyday life**  
**35 / A photograph of Bitef Theatre under construction, Bitef Theatre archive,** 1989.  
**36 / Sonja Vukićević, “Medea”,** directed by: Ivana Vujić, Bitef Theatre archive, 1991.  
**37 / Festival Aeroplan bez motora – days of urban madness, Bitef Theatre Archive,** 1995.  
**38 / Sonja Vukićević, Slobodan Beštić - performance “Magbet/Ono (McBeth/It)”,** students’ protest on Kolarčeva Street, 1997.

The following archive materials authored and/or performed by Nela Antonović, Tatjana Pajović, Boris Čakširan, Jelena Jović, Sanja Krsmanović Tasić and Anđelija Todorović are used and reconstructed in the performance:

**1 / Theatre Mimart: “Put pored znakovna/The Road By the Roadsigns”,** 1993.  
**2 / Dah Theatre: “Zenit/Zenith”,** 1993.  
**3 / Jelena Jović: “Pipirevka”,** 2009 (“Politpih/Polyptich”, Ister Theatre)  
**4 / Boris Čakširan: “Beats of Immortality” - Dance Workshop Gaaton - MASPA,** 1999/2000.  
**5 / Boris Čakširan: “Solo (Shamanist Methodology in Theatre),”** 1995.  
**6 / Signum Troupe: “The House of Bernarda Alba”,** 1990.  
**7 / Signum Troupe: “The Picture of Dorian Gray”,** 1991.  
**8 / Ister Theatre: “The Desert”,** 2000.  
**9 / Ister Theatre: “The Desert”,** 2010.  
**10 / Ister Theatre: “Logout”,** 2012.



# Biographies



## NELA ANTONOVIĆ

Graduated Smiljana Mandukić's contemporary ballet school that she attended from 1964 to 1972, after that she became a professional member of Smiljana Mandukić's Belgrade Contemporary Ballet, in which she stayed until 1984. All along, she attended the "Lujo Davičo" Ballet School, workshops of various techniques with pedagogues and choreographers from Europe and America (Milana Broš, Martha Graham, Kazuo Ono, Eugenio Barba, Caroline Carlson). She is the winner of the City of Belgrade's "October Flower" award for contemporary solo dance (1972). She acquired the title of scientific researcher as a Master of Technical Sciences and transferred this knowledge to the field of dance and physical theatre, and later completed specialist interdisciplinary studies at the ONCA Faculty of Arts in Oslo, Norway. She founded the non-government theatre "Teatar Mimart" 1984 in Belgrade, where she realized over 70 original dance performances, physical theatre and 500 Art performances. Awards: for the choreography "First Competition of YU Choreographers", Zagreb (1989); for the dance performance *Circle*, BRAMS (1994); for nurturing the Choreo-drama *Free Fall* BRAMS (1996); award for the performance *Institute for the Change of Destiny* at the "Golden Lion" festival, Lviv (1998); Special award "Kiev Travnevi" in Kiev, in San Marino, Moscow, Naples, St. Petersburg, Gelsenkirchen, Cairo, Prague... "Golden Hands Award" lifetime achievement award by World Mime Organization in 2020. She is the creator of the Mimart method, for which she received the International award "Grozdanin kikat" (2019). Nela Antonović published her long-term research experience in the books: *Mimart tree rings* (2000), *Phenomenology of movement* (2004), e-book *25* (2009) and, e-Monography *Mimart* (2014).

## JELENA JOVIĆ STEVANOVIĆ

Was born in London. She graduated from the "Lujo Davičo" ballet school in 1975 (in the class of Prof. Spomenka Prokić). She danced at Kaća Stojkov's "Experimental Ballet", in her first jazz ballet group. In Paris and London, she attended classical and jazz ballet seminars - with Jean Babilée, Peter Goss, John O'Brien in 1981. She met Lindsay Kemp and worked in his troupe in 1980 and 1981, which determined her future path. She worked with Dušan Trninić in the "Belgrade Chamber Ballet", and then with Nada Kokotović, Damir Zlatar Fraj - Choreodrama on TV. She was a longtime collaborator of Petar Slaj. As a choreographer, she worked in YDT, the National Theatre, BDT (in dramatic performances). Since 1994, she has been a member of the Ister Theater, where she worked as a dancer, actress, choreographer... In 2008, Ister received the "Dimitrije Parlić" award for the play of the year. She created and realized the independent author's play *I'm Still Walking*, as a part of the European project "DoPoDo", which premiered at the Belgrade festival Kondenz. She is currently serving her second term in the status commission of the Association of Ballet Artists of Serbia. She has been working with children for ten years, and as part of this pedagogical work, she has been making costumes and choreographies on her own.



## **BORIS ČAKŠIRAN**

Boris Čakširan graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts in Belgrade as a painter-costume designer, but also works as a set designer, choreographer, and director. He has always been interested in physical expression, so in his childhood and youth he was engaged in gymnastics, figure skating and folklore. When he was 17, he suffered an injury that stopped him on his way. After that, he entered the university and started working as a costume designer, building a career one of our most important costume designers, primarily on film, doing TV series and theatre plays.

He returned to dance in 1984 by going to the Contemporary Dance Festival in Bytom, Poland, where he worked on independent projects for 11 years. After that, he worked as a guest choreographer at the MASPA school at the Kibbutz Dance Company for 6 years.

In 1998, he founded the ERGstatus contemporary dance project in Belgrade, as an educational project with international artists - pedagogues, which he has been running since 1999 in the form of an independent dance theatre. As a choreographer, he collaborated with the Mudra Theatre, the Bidadari dance troupe, the "Let's..." group, but he also works in dramatic performances at the Yugoslav Drama Theatre, the "Boško Buha" Theatre and many others.

As a fighter for inclusive practices, he was also one of the founders and artistic director of the festival of engaged theater *Off Frame* in Belgrade, as well as a co-founder of IAN - International Network of Inclusive Theatre.

## **SANJA KRSMANOVIĆ TASIĆ**

Graduated from the Faculty of Philology in Belgrade and from the Faculty of Physical Education in Novi Sad, specializing in modern and jazz dance under the guidance of Ljiljana Mišić. She has evolved as an artist through collaborations with Torger Vetal (Odin Teatret), Yoshi Oida, Ren Mireck, Carolyn Carlson, Katsumi Sakakura, Shira Daimond, Deborah Hunt, and many others. A member and soloist of Belgrade Contemporary Ballet led by Smiljana Mandukić from 1982 to 1991, she also belonged to the MIMART movement theatre and the Belgrade Dance Theatre ensemble. Co-founder, choreographer, and dance educator at the Center for Artistic Dance and the Center for Movement and Dance. From 1993 to 2014, she was a core member, both artistically and organizationally, of DAH Theatre, a theater company, and DAH Theatre Center for Theatre Research, where she actively participated as an actress, choreographer, and program director. Within this context, she contributed as an author, co-author, and team member to the development of numerous artistic and socially engaged projects and Festivals. She founded Hleb Theatre in 2014, where she developed a new stage form called "essay in motion," fusing her experience in contemporary dance and theater. Alongside Boris Čakširan, she authored the dance performance involving dancers with and without disabilities titled "Blame It on Gauss" (FRAME OF BODY, "Let's..." Group). In 2017, she initiated the "Days of Smiljana Mandukić" festival and project, dedicated to preserving and archiving intangible dance heritage in support of the youngest and oldest choreographers and dancers in our country. Some of her most significant authored projects include "Smiljana Mandukić - Essay in Motion," "The Body Remembers" documentary dance performance, "Splinter," featuring dancers aged 18 to 95, "Spinning Wheel," "Daikon - Essay in Motion about the Dancer's Body" (DOPODO project), the musical "Words of Stone," "Mothers," "On (Con) science - Essay in Motion about Dada Vujasinović," "Farewell," "Borrowed Memories" (NETMEM project), "Tales of Bread and Blood," "Sisters in Arms," the first New Zealand-Serbian coproduction, "Welcome," and many others. She conducts workshops and performs worldwide. She serves as the President of the International Drama and Theatre Education Association - IDEA and President of CEDEUM.

## **TATJANA PAJOVIĆ**

The founder and artistic director of the Theater Project Objective Drama - POD Theatre, 2000. She is a trained ballerina ("Lujo Davičo" school), actress and theatre/drama pedagogue. She graduated in Political Science for International Affairs at the Faculty of Political Sciences in Belgrade - Department of International Studies. She trained professionally in the field of performing arts and theatre pedagogy at the "Specchie e Memorie Theatre in Milan (1995-1998, mentor: director Massimo Gianetti). She is one of the founders and members of the first professional theatre troupe SIGNUM from Belgrade in 1988-1993. With Nenad Čolić, the founder and a member of the Plavo Theatre in 1995. After years of experience working with great pedagogues in the field of dance and drama, having worked in classical and musical theatre, having become acquainted with the work of Grotowski, Artaud, Barba, and Massimo Gianetti, she definitively opted for a research theatre approach through the heritage of anthropological theatre and work in smaller, dedicated groups. This is where POD Theatre originates - a process based on constant research and establishing the relationship between the role of Man and the role of Artist, developing a special methodology for working with children, young people, professional artists and adults of different ages and backgrounds. Since 1995, she has created, co-created, managed and mentored various artistic projects, events, performances, workshops, and seminars in Serbia and abroad. In 2014, she started the Community Theatre project - intergenerational cooperation, which includes POD Theatre in the European network of the community theatre project CARAVAN NEXT.

## **ANĐELIJA TODOROVIĆ**

Graduated from the "Lujo Davičo" ballet school in Belgrade. She participated in many workshops in Paris, London, and Belgrade. From 1980 to 1983, she was a member of the troupe "Belgrade New Ballet" under the leadership of Dušan Trninić. Until 1986, she participated in the performances of the National Theatre, the Belgrade Drama Theatre, etc. and collaborated with contemporary choreographers and directors: Damir Zlatac Fraj, Nada Kokotović, Lidija Pilipenko, Miljenko Štambuk, Miljenko Vikić, Janez Pipan, Ivica Kunčević. From 1986 to 1992, she was a member of the Terazije Theatre, where she performed soloist roles in repertoire performances. She is the co-founder of the SIGNUM troupe (1986), which, under the artistic direction of choreographer Dejan Pajović, creates performances that participate in festivals in Yugoslavia and abroad. Together with a group of authors, she founded the Ister theatre in 1994, whose she is also artistic director, which participates with its projects in all significant festivals of contemporary theatre in Serbia and Montenegro, as well as in festivals in Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Romania, Bulgaria, Egypt. With Ister, she achieved awards: "Dimitrije Parlić" Professional Award in 2008 for the dance performance of the year, awards from INFANT Festival, Festival of Small Theater Forms, Sterijino Pozorje theatre festival...

She works as an independent choreographer in many drama performances in Belgrade theatres, as well as in theatres in Sombor, Niš, Užice, Vranje, and Vršac, for which she has received awards. She collaborates in the field of contemporary dance and contemporary theatre with renowned domestic and foreign choreographers of contemporary dance expression - Isidora Stanišić, Dalija Aćin, Dušan Murić, Dragana Bulut, Bojana Mladenović, Damir Todorović, Odile Duboc, Saša Božić... From 2013 to 2017 she was a president of the Association of Ballet dancers in Serbia and the director of the Festival of choreographic miniatures in Belgrade.



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Photographs of the artist in this publication  
were taken from private archives

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