

Time - Body - Viewer

by **Branko Miliskovic**

I have been working in the performance and performing arts since early 2004. This began after I became contaminated as it were, with the possibilities to express my views and ideas far beyond conventional mediums such as sculpture, drawing or painting. In the very beginning it was incredibly tough for me to understand how one performance piece can actually work and what would be the most appropriate way to make it happen. A couple of years later, little by little I started realising and paving my own ways, moving from the strong shadow of several established names and into working on my own personal-global ideology.

Now I would like to point out the importance of three almost united ingredients in every performance, or even more precisely, any live event :

Time - Body - Viewer.

A BODY is perhaps the first and the most important element or rather starting point in my performance practice; through time I have been dealing with at least three major types of bodies :

Political body, Military body, Social body

Of course each of these bodies may be divided into several types. For instance Social Body as Emotive body, Disabled body, Collective Body etc. In my work I often use very static body postures, which requires a lot of stamina and charisma to be able to dominate without any additional props or Mise-en-scene.

TIME is the second most important element in my own practice. I speak not only about the time that it takes for my idea to mature, but also of the specific, designated time required for it's delivery at a specific site. In my work, I generally use, so called "stretched time", which differs from a regular time. This means that I make a starting point and finishing point in the period of, shall we say 3 hours, and then, once the audience is with me (a Viewer), I can make that period of time appear shorter or longer, depending on the concept, number of the viewers, occasion, weather, time of the year etc.

VIEWER is the third most important element in my performative practice. Without a viewer or the audience as a collective viewer, I would have enormous difficulties to make any performative concept work. In the beginning of my art studies I worked on number of performances made for video, but each time I had a feeling that something was missing. I never was able to give myself entirely in a performance made only for a camera. I could never concentrate enough and most of the time the entire video seemed to be shallow and incomplete. This is the reason why these days I work mostly on big and demanding performances, mostly within the theatre, always involving the audience. Most of time the audience is just a passive viewer but sometimes, like in my recent work entitled CURFEW, the audience plays the main role on stage. Without the Viewer, delivering the entire concept in space and time, for me personally, would be unimaginable.

At last, I would like to share with you one of the statements that clearly represents my artistic philosophy, and also can be applied to all live arts and happenings :

“ Once I am on stage or pre-designated space I must be sure I am completely in charge of my concept. Then I need to face the entire audience, even if they are out there in the dark, and to make a brief scan of what my current public is. Soon afterwards I have to reach a certain state of mind to be capable to take the energy or shall I say an attention from the entire public. All that energy can make me looking twice as big as I normally do, illuminated, almost super human.

Once I reach that state of illumination or I shall say “fully charged body” I am ready to establish the energy transmission between myself and the audience. I have to be very careful to keep the thread between us through the entire performance as strong as possible, the goal is to achieve so called Collective Catharsis. But once the performance is over, bizarrely enough, the energy I have taken from the audience as a fuel, suddenly goes back to them, leaving me completely shrank, vulnerable and fragile, often unable to speak properly immediately after, walk or even get up from the floor. Afterwards, depends on how outstanding the performance was, I can experience very turbulent emotional shifts, from an overwhelming adrenaline rush to asocial behaviour and depression.”

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