

Urban Hum: Memory Theater of the City

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Abstract

The *Urban Hum* platform consists of hybrid theatrical, anthropological, urban and social presentations of deliberately chosen urban, public spaces that are presented as a performative game-structure containing the elements of theatre, dance, musical, stand-up and lecture. *Urban Hum* emphasizes historically rooted continuities (or discontinuities) of specific locations, by creating a tool for artists, architects, urban planners, politicians and historians, in their rethinking and reconceptualization of the city as a vibrant, dynamic, and sustainable habitat, while aiming to serve the citizens in proposing and implementing their solutions. *Urban Hum* is looking for those type of creative solutions that will interlace historical significance of each space, that is the important “urboglyph” (hypertextual semantic of space) for the local community and contemporary and functional everyday experience. This platform is a continuation of Shadow Casters research in the urbanity, public patterns, dynamics and habits of coexistence, and presents innovative approach towards the urban dramaturgy/choreography, by finding creative solution to urban challenges and partnerships. Shadow Casters is an artistic project that unites various media and a diversity of methods in a specific creative exploration of different cities in the world.

Keywords: Urban Memory, Space, Hypertext, Urban Hum, Emotional Geographies, Urban Performing, Shadow Casters.

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Introduction

The original social meanings of many of today's cities are diverted into mere sign-value. Capitalist consumer society involves a destruction of cities – they are less and less to be understood as organic entities, but as objects of calculation and circulation, which eventually implies that they consume themselves.

In our time, cities are threatened by two opposite processes; instrumentalisation and aesthetization. On the one hand, our secular, materialist and quasi-rational culture is turning buildings into mere instrumental structures, devoid of mental meaning, for the purposes of utility and economy. On the other hand, urban fabric is being increasingly turning into the fabrication of seductively aestheticized images without roots in our existential experience. Instead of being a lived and embodied existential metaphor, today's urban culture tends to project purely retinal images, as it were, for the seduction of the eye (Pallasmaa, 2011). Urban memory has unfortunately become self-mirroring as the city became constructed as a memorial itself, cutting out great areas to provide a memory theatre in its very heart. However, cities are living organic, conflictual entities that are constantly remade and recast in thousands of ways through everyday encounters. In different moments, new possibilities for radically different cities open up. The city is an unfinished, expansive and unbounded story. Thus urban research agenda should be not so much about what the city currently is or what it was, but more about what it could become, or what it has never been.

Societies in transition give a semblance of being completely homogenous and unified, with social divisions completely masked, and with the border between the state and civil society concealed, along with the difference between the public and private spheres. These societies are in fact characterized by an ontological uncertainty, i.e. kind of a liminal state between socialism (represented by welfare state policies in most of Europe and tendencies and dynamics in so-called Western societies) and a new political order where everything is open to question, uncertain and confusing. Post-socialism (e.g. in countries of East Europe) can be defined as a certain state that neutralizes the capital and excludes any notion of societal, collective change. (Esbenhade, 1995). However, the transition from socialism in Croatia (following or deconstructing particular economical politics of non-aligned Ex-Yugoslavia) was further more complicated, caused by the war. After the 1991-95 homeland war, Croatia has been managing its difficult, recent past not through recognition of it but through concealment, directing attention away from the pre-war legacy. As well as the other states created after the fall of socialist Yugoslavia, Croatia has deployed national symbols strategically to promote favorable images of its heritage abroad – “nation branding” and suppressed alternatives for other narrative performances. History was thus obliterated and has become a part of people's individual memory and personal mythology. Instead of being integrated, memory was uprooted, detached from life, packaged and sold. The war context makes the transition even more brutal in the whole region of the Western Balkans, compared to Eastern and Central Europe that took its toll not only in the form of destruction of human lives and material property but also in the destruction of heritage of previous era that affected all social, political and cultural life. This has

caused an overall production of discontinuity, which is one of the most devastating elements of influence when it comes to building the future. In such contexts of damaged memory and pervasive collective amnesia, the issue of cultural and urban memory (especially the one dealing with immaterial cultural heritage) and raising its awareness among public, appears as a necessary endeavor.

Walter Benjamin critiqued transnational society, as evolving from a pre-capitalist order into capitalist one, using the theme of “porosity” in order to define various aspects of the city and its urban life. The theme of “porosity” captures the fact that the structuring boundaries of modern capitalism within the city - between public and private, labor and leisure, personal and communal have been enlarged creating a un-bridged gap in social relationships (Gadanhó & Oliveira, 2013).

Place is essentially meant to provide a vehicle for hermeneutic understanding of situations from within i.e. people who are embedded in particular sets of social and spatial relationships since individuals and groups share experiences and express themselves, as part of the process of shaping their places (Madanipour, 2007). Space with its shape and structure has an indispensable and fruitful role in our understanding of the world. Spatial narratives which trace the surface of the city, from invisible connections between objects and images are incrementally constructing threads or patchworks of our urban experience (Gadanhó & Oliveira, 2013). Therefore, authentic experiential or mental elements of urban space are not visual units or geometric gestalt, but *confrontations, encounters and acts* which project and articulate specific embodied and existential meanings. The fact is that space must be encountered, not only viewed; it must be approached, confronted, entered, related to one's body, moved about, and utilised as a context and condition for activities and thoughts. Most importantly, space articulates our relations with other people as well as with the “human institutions” (Pallasmaa, 2011).

The modern economic and social relations of capitalism are nowadays shakily erected, the culture is dominantly improvisatory, and spatial and temporal definitions are indeterminate. In today capitalist co-optation of culture, where urbanism has ceased to be social project and has become fetishist commodity, critically engaged art is the only remaining crucial element of society' culture. Additionally, preservation of urban cultural memory is a vitally important issue for societies undergoing transition, in which cities are going through radical and dramatic changes that are often to the detriment of their immaterial cultural heritage. Shadow Casters, the artistic platform from Zagreb, have conceptualized modes of critique and artistic creations aimed to be transformative in this “new” post-socialist phase of global capital, by using artistic forms as tools to obtain fresh perspectives on the urban environment and therefore to generate a critique of it. Thus, they have started in 2001 with opening of communicative fluxes of the city in order to explore and research alternative, hybrid or combined modality of documenting places/spaces for their possible usage and betterment. They have been using their specific research approach and methodology that conceives the space and the city as a social innovation.

In 2001, Shadow Casters initiated poetic-detective urban travels (Zagreb, Bologna, New York, etc.) in a form of network that united their unique methods, principles and visions for a specific creative exploration of different cities of the world (Shadow Casters, 2001). Each city was perceived and approached as a territory to be read and re-mapped (re-semanticised). International crew that joins professionals from various fields - from arts & architecture to music & science - and of different generations was gathered in order to conceive an interactive multi-facetted and multi-centered performance voyage/research. Through intricate and complex interdisciplinary and multimedia performance (research) the city and its many multi-layered aspects were explored and read as 3D hyper-textual matrix. The specific, dynamic work(shop) guided by members of core team was executed together with dozen of local and international artists, activists and professionals, and large number of local citizens in devised, creative process of the final event- “performance - voyage”, accompanied with many of their fellow citizens in the role of spectators. Multimedia framework (web, digital, video and audio, performance, dance) was thus enabled for audience’ individual journeys of discovery, through which they were invited to follow the artists’ lead and create their own paths through the city, interweaving subjective experiences with the events planted by the work’s creators, and the ever unfolding (story of) city that is ultimately the “lead player” in this work. While receiving information and clues at one step at a time, audience traveled by foot, public transportation or the Web to unknown and familiar locations, public and private spaces, open air and indoor sites. Throughout the journey, they made myriad of choices: which of the many clues to follow, whether to participate in a variety of everyday and unusual human interactions, or simply to observe them, or either choosing how long their travel will take. Therefore the audience discovered new and unknown aspects of the city, its beauty and idiosyncrasies, its multi-layered and multicultural nature, its social, urbanistic and human specificities, arising from the past and embedded in the present (Figures 1-5).

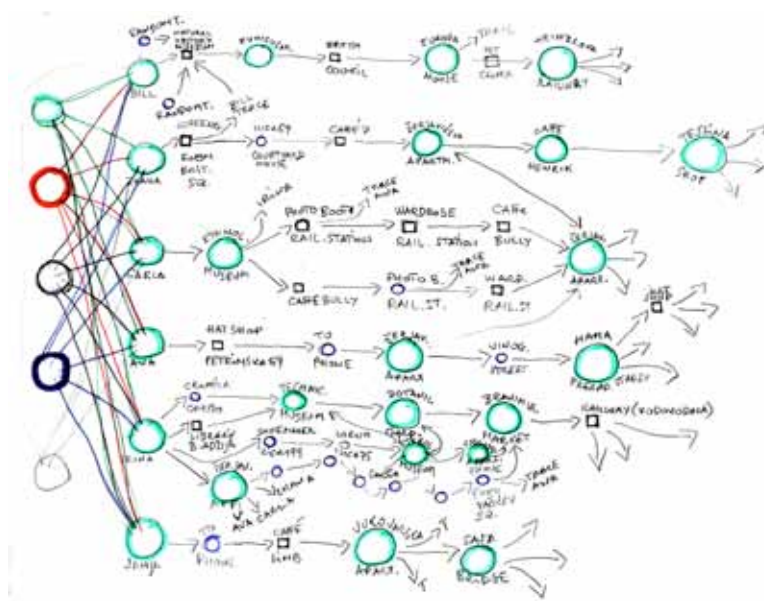
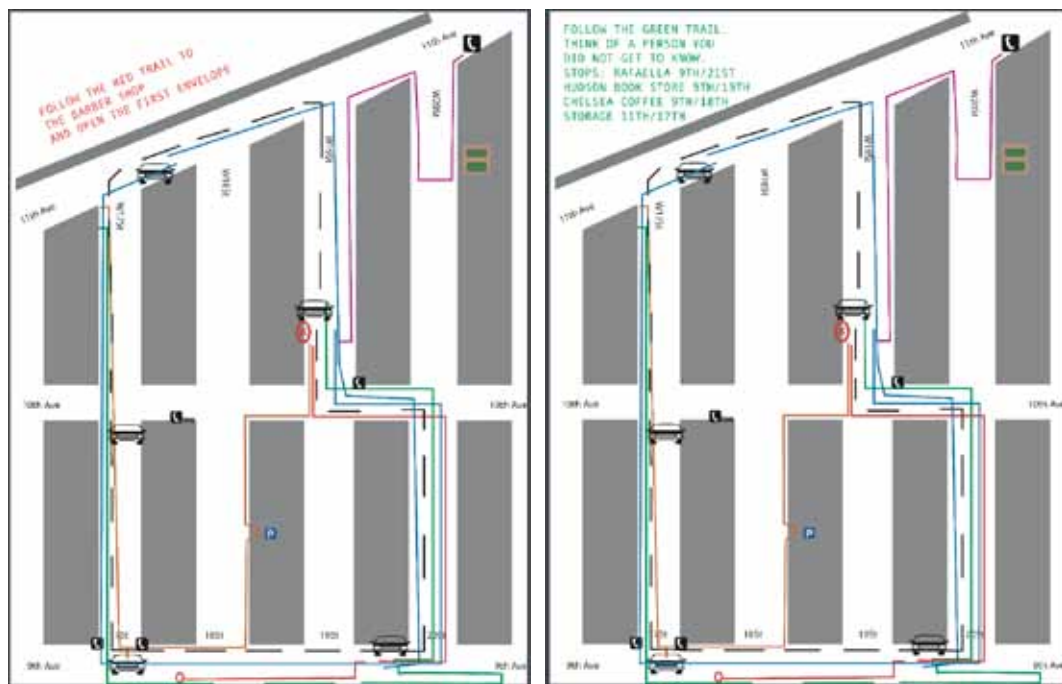


Figure 1. Map of Shadow Casters city voyages Zagreb (2002).



Figures 2 & 3. Red & green trail maps of Shadow Casters city voyages in New York (2003) - courtesy of Shadow Casters Archive.



Figures 4 & 5. City voyages - audience transport in Chelsea, New York (2003) - courtesy of Shadow Casters Archive.

While expressing particular philosophical and political view on today's world, this treasure hunt/city voyage guided audience through the city on their own choice and chance bases (each spectator must by herself/himself determine individual path consciously choosing between different options and by taking responsibility for her/his decisions). Spatial practices, space and narrative as practice, were thus forms by which they justified a discursive topography as a model for urban experience. This urban journey was about exploring identity problems, decision-making processes and links between society and responsibility, especially in the light of confronting different cultural backgrounds, experiences and habits of the project's participants while bringing a large number of diversified audiences to art and performance work, that has surpassed the usual limitation of audience to "art elite" and had offered the event to citizens from all strata. By introducing

new ways of storytelling and possible approaches to new media communication tools, such as narration in digital media and its possible use within the traditional performance frame, the city could have been read as hyper-space in time-spatial, historical, political, social, game-like and metaphysical sense. The Shadow Casters event in this way has become a new urban document in the city history, evidencing (underlying, illuminating, zooming-up, etc.) city' past stories and invoking his future (political and human) destiny.

Deep urban experiences are primarily relations and acts rather than physical objects, or mere visual entities (Pallasmaa, 2011). The same applies to urban fabric, i.e. architecture. As Frederic Jameson observes, buildings do not have any inherent meaning. They need to be “invested” with meaning and to be inscribed within an allegorical narrative that gives them their meaning. This meaning is simply “projected” on to them. Shadow Casters human-urban network *Man is Space: Vitic Dances* (2004-15) inscribed the meaning of the past, present and future in the microcosm of one of the Zagreb modernist skyscraper (built in 1962 in Lagingjina 7-9) while initiating the process of social re-integration of the tenants by restoring commonly shared spaces (elevators, facades, roof terraces, staircases, etc.). The project of renovation of the elevators (completely financed by co-owners through the special share-holders scheme in 2006) and subsequently general renovation plan for the whole building block (consisting of three condominium buildings) won the Zagreb city renovation grant which will together with EU money from the Energetic Efficiency program result in 2015 with the largest public-private renovation project in Croatia ever (Figures 6-8).



Figure 6. iLinkt dance performance with the Vitic condominium block facade as the backdrop (2006) – photo by Barbara Blasin.

This interdisciplinary community art network reflected tangible and intangible heritage of this building as a resource of sustainable renovation, maintenance

and use. It was a complex endeavor that combined permanent artistic interventions and programs in and around the building, with consistent social engagement, while aiming to raise the public awareness of its tenants and local community, and to restore this iconic building. This project further explored the mechanisms of artistic creativity in order to re-discover, re-contextualize and re-create cultural and urban memory of this building, while underlying the role of the artist as an conduit between temporal and spatial changes that occur in contemporary regeneration of material and non-material aspects of urban life along with intensive civic interactions and participation. The artist Boris Bakal was situating the object and practice within wider sets of entanglements and relations, by questioning what combinations of people, things and meanings need to be “assembled” to make this architecture social. Such spatially engaged approach also incorporated a sense of emotional involvement with people and places. *Vitic Dances : Man is Space* was about exploring the potential of architecture to help secure new social formations while exposing architecture’s “silent complicity” with agendas of the powerful in capitalist political economy. Consequently, this project changed the lives and destinies of 256 inhabitants of this 10-story building. Emotional experiences of the shared community spaces were used as relational flows, fluxes and currents in-between people and places. Misunderstandings, funny events, unexpected encounters, performances, live concerts and oblique strategies have moved inhabitants from hate and mistrust, from despair and disfunctionality to a common vision and restoration of the community and the building itself. On the other hand, with its motley crew of different classes, generations, professions, interests and aspirations, the building itself is one of the unique urban narratives of the decline of the notion and practice of solidarity from the time of Socialism up to today’s life on the dreary lane of so-called Transition – a story that is crucial for understanding the dynamics of transformation of the Croatian and East European society.



Figures 7 & 8. Left the Vitic condominium block facade (2005) – photo by Barbara Blasin and right, a 1962 – photo courtesy of Toso Dabac archive.

Finally, this project evidences that material building is not an object or end in itself. It alters and conditions our experiences of reality: a building frames and structures, articulates and relates, separates and unites, prohibits and facilitates. A building can be a peculiar form of communication if it expresses something other than its parts, its materials, its construction process, its ideology, or the identity of its owner or inhabitants (Pallasmaa, 2011).

Re-collecting City/Re-collecting Time was the next Shadow Casters' project that started in 2006 and created a multimedia archive of urban events and used it as the tool for studying the hyper-textuality of space and intangible heritage. *Re-collecting the City/Recollecting the Time (RCRT)* re-created and socialized a commonly shared space by evoking the memory while underlying performative character of public spaces, with an emphasis towards the creative investigation of the broader context of artistic and political actions in public spaces. Personal memories and habit memories related to these places have been forgotten, and the meaning they had formed has been lost. The initial phase of the project was focused on detection, archiving, studying and exhibiting of the artworks and the project' documentation on artistic actions as well as political protests and public gatherings in Zagreb that occurred in public, non-typical performing spaces from 1945 to the present. The RCRT project strove to capture fragile and ephemeral aspects of past events by searching for memories of individuals – artists themselves, journalists, accidental passer-by's in various forms: from material ones (photographs, films, videos, written testimonies) to oral histories. The collected materials were mainly formed through two creative outputs of reflective and critical presentation: *Open Offices* and *Wall Newspapers* (Figures 9-12). Drawing on the notion of *lieux de memoire*, Shadow Casters recognized the need for archive as a specific *lieux de memoire* that would serve for the reconstruction of the past, and would be collectively used with respect to political and social context (Shadow Casters, 2015). However, RCRT' archive was based on oral history as it recollected oral, biographical and fragmentary evidences which did not intend to petrify them into fixed forms of historical abstraction, but was an attempt to primarily archive them as the important figures of memory. It is this possibility of the reconstruction of figures of memory that is the essential methodological basis of the social-constructivist archives in Shadow Casters. After all, the question of archiving is not about the past, it is about the future and our responsibility for the future but also about taking responsibility for the past.



Figures 9 & 10. Left a wall display of a RCRT archive of intangible urban heritage, Zagreb/Croatia, 2009 and right, a wall displays of RCRT archive of urban storytelling, Zagreb/Croatia, 2006 – photos courtesy of the Shadow Casters archives.



Figures 11 & 12. Left, presentation and workshop of RCRT project at Leiden University, 2006 and right, at the REX/B92 Center, Belgrade, Serbia, 2008 – photos are courtesy of the Shadow Casters archives.

However, we have to be careful that concern with cultural memory does not become a fear of forgetting – since forgetting is often a source of creativity: a chance to start again, to allow a genuinely new to appear. We are living in the contemporary culture of amnesia, anesthesia, or numbing, where the contemporary public obsession with memory clashes with an intense public panic of oblivion. The latter raises the question: “Is it fear of forgetting that triggers the desire to remember, or is it perhaps the other way around?” Therefore, history/memory debate is not only a disturbance of our notions of the past, but fundamental crisis in our imagination of alternative futures.

Another major problem of our cities today and its urban culture is that social life has been separated from locality, and the experience of living and working as a social relationship has been forgotten. On the other hand, social relations are lived through the emotions, but the emotional qualities of social life have rarely been made apparent within the lexicon of social research and public life. Our emotional links to places we inhabited shortly or in a long-term, are engraved in our cognitive maps of our identity. We identify ourselves with them and thus we temporarily occupy these sites. This is also a political gesture as our emotional memory is arbitrary and expresses only subjective point of view. By using these emotional links and connections of people to certain space we create extremely sensitive geography we call emotional. Emotional geographies differs from actual ones (to use Virilios’ term of naming types of reality) in flattened version of the site decontextualized from historic and everyday layers, or its dynamic. They are not space limited and the appropriation of larger space is evident in notion of homeland, fatherland, or even in the Crusades. However, there is a danger of flattening of the site as it is often being politically used for identity manipulations. On the other hand, emotional geographies make a powerful tool in re-establishing relation with space, site or territory as resource, which are common in general and shareable by definition. Finally, people are spatial beings (man is space) and human appropriation of space always intervenes in someone’s emotional geography, as well as our emotional relations and interactions weave through and help form the fabric of our unique personal geographies.

Within their many projects engaged with urbanity, Shadow Casters are also expressing common concern with spatiality and temporality of emotions, with the way they coalesce around and within certain places. Their approaches associated with being and doing, with participation and performance, with ways of knowing that depend on direct experience, offer encouragement for accessing the world as mediated by feeling. The project *Process City, part II: Ex-position* (2005) invites us to travel through the material space of memory of a city neighborhood that turns into a unique journey through one's own memory, feelings and sub-consciousness, thanks to the special sensorial conditions of the visitors. It is an attempt to understand emotion – conceptually and experientially – in terms of its socio-spatial-temporal meditation and articulation. After all, the most intimate and immediately felt emotional geography is the human body.

The *Ex-position* is a multilingual intermedia and sensorial one-to-one voyage into the city and its urban (oral and written) history. It is based on facts, fictional relations between them and is always relaying on shifting points of view of known and exploited narratives of Togetherness (eg. notion of citizenship). The location site is starting point for the exploration of possible stories that are choreographed and engraved on-site, using advantages and disadvantages of certain (chosen) urban location through the working methods of urban performing, inner/outer mapping, reality recycling, and story telling.



Figures 13, 14 & 15. *Ex-position* voyages in Sarajevo (2008) – photos by Amer Kuhinja.

The narratives are personal, linking performer with wider historical hypertext while involving the voyager as a protagonist of the story (stories), and sometimes shifting identities of different characters (and genders) by interlacing several story-lines. Such urban dramaturgy makes each of *Ex-position*' voyages to become a new urban legend of the chosen city, using the urban space as hypertext while

opening some of the questions for the participants such are: “How does a city settle in our inner world? What does the border between public and private mean and where is it located?” The multimedia performance *Ex-position* aims to map out the temporal dimensions of the design space by making explicit the time design choices, or the temporal implications of design choices, in a number of scenarios drawn from different application domains. This performance is about establishing the inner dramaturgy of the performer/actor, which guides his/her intuition when choosing, or rather, confirming the true reaction or action “here and now”. In all our actions we are exposed to the gaze of the others, and as such we are performers of our own lives. In his book “Representation of Self in Everyday Life,” Ervin Goffmann describes various examples of transition from non/-presentational to presentational in everyday life. If the duality of our experience of the world is reflected in language and if we are witnesses of this duality, then it is also reflected in our performative behaviour (i.e. in this case, the dramaturgical course of the choice of exposure) regardless of the extent of being conscious or unconscious.

These artistic forms show their readers/viewers/players the conflicting, intricate and manifold nature of human activities and products related to the urban realm: descriptions, uses, knowledge, conceptions and spatial *imaginaire*. Also, they are means to foresee implausible, possible and desirable spatial and urban futures, and ways of life, as reconfirmed by the enormous impact and relevance of artistic forms in contemporary culture.

Another Shadow Casters’ work that acts as searching supplement and oblique commentary for the co-optation of memory to urban thinking is the satirical city promenade/ performance around Dubrovnik – named Father Courage (a paraphrase of the title of Brecht’s famous classic). The reference to Brecht only evokes his themes of survival, courage and responsibility, and his loose, epic structures. Father Courage is about the question of survival, i.e. Father Courage is the city of Dubrovnik itself, who must make his own choices (Radosavljevic, 2013). The commentary on the city is oblique, but it also allows the city to make its own commentary, and allows a time to experience the relationship between city and performance, and to fit them together in different ways (Turner, 2013). Father Courage present a new entering into a discussion about Dubrovnik’s past and future, or just another way of entering the city. This large scale urban journey-performance of Shadow Casters (held in summer 2014 in the Old city of Dubrovnik) consisted of five parts (performances), each taking place simultaneously and passing through the same set of urban locations, meeting the same placekeepers, though not always in the same circumstances. As participants walked through the city, they were becoming aware of other walkers elsewhere, and other possible experiences. The project was driven by a desire to wake up and activate the audience in relation to its everyday urban reality. This urban-theatrical tour was consequently aimed predominantly at the locals, inviting them to participate in the creation of new urban myths.



Figure 16 & 17. Left, the Father Courage performance at the Buža city walls and a map of the five starting points – photos provided by the Dubrovnik Summer Festival, 2013.

All these projects form a methodological basis of *Urban Hum* regional platform (2015) that introduces the triadic view of urban space, an attitude towards perceived and conceived spaces, which associates them with a lived space of the future within the framework that brings together the fields of urban geography and visual culture. This platform is inspired by a deep desire to create new vocabularies, imaginations and strategies for action that could bring about a radically different city, that are often and largely absent in writings on the city. While debates about the ills, or not, of gentrification can help us to organise and sharpen our analysis on current directions and class alliances in the contemporary city, our view is that we need to develop a much wider political imaginary to intervene in the unfolding story of the city and engage in the building of an equalizing participatory democracy to realize radically different urban futures and values.

Urban Hum thus thoroughly investigates past and present lives of neuralgic urban locations and related topics of collective and individual memory, which constantly brings their performances to places and localities that are for the first time involved in contemporary artistic discourses. It is conceptualized as performative, educational, multimedia or socially engaged “time sculptures” that tackle entirely different creative approaches and often involve audience as co-creators and participants in process and production of their works. Within its research process and implementation, *Urban Hum* includes experts and professionals from various disciplines who are invited to rethink acute “problems” in real public spaces thus providing art research contribution to interdisciplinary urban studies. The international group of authors (actors/performers and urban researchers) are exploring different, interesting and historically burdened public spaces and contents, that are being executed (performed) in various galleries and theatre spaces in the city. They are “performing” one single public space with all its urban contents, its real and superimposed spatial and political relations, contextualized within historical

urban relevance of the same public space, that is further activated through documentary and fiction materials emerging from research process.

The integral part of the platform is post-dramatic performance in the form of ludic lecture. It deals with hypertextual reading of public, private, business and other shared urban spaces in cities where the performance is played (i.e. held). Thus, although for the most part, methodologically and dramaturgically fixed and determined, it is enriched in every chosen city by narratives of the local community which are gathered through a multi-disciplinary research. Playing/performing/lecturing actors from all the partner cities in the region also cooperate in this working process and execution. The lecture-performance is interactively involving audience in the show through specially designed social games by mutually evoking with them all historical, economic, political and personal dynamics, and the usage of the deliberately chosen urban area. Thus the content of this performance is a space as a resource but also its transformation through time. The show in that way features: the historical figures, present and past land and building owners, current users of these spaces, and citizens of the chosen area that have their own opinions or needs to use these spaces. In such a way, this lecture-performance triggers the net of (multi)personal choreographies by naming the contents and events of chosen spaces, that are linked or derived from them. Performers are playing all these characters, traveling with their help through time and space, linking the chosen place to some other place in other city in Croatia, or in the region. Each of these events is broadly contextualized with contemporary events in the world, either with scientific discoveries or events from literature (theory or fiction).

This performance event is also a sharing space of knowledge and applied methodologies among *Urban Hum* regional partners in order to create a working model for implementation of activist and political action. Performance as an artistic form is critical of today's policies of shared urban space usage, privatization and transformation, and through its discursivity offers the audience a possibility to present their problem solutions. *Urban Hum* combines such artistic creativity and political activism and transfer them into presence of interpretative systems that translate memories and urban traditions into meaningful contemporary forms what makes crucial passage from protest to project, and vice versa.

Finally, *Urban Hum* is piecing together the performative depictions of urban images and the performative translations of mute urban objects. The urban, then, whether experienced in a spatial or in a performative narrative, exists both as the real and as the imaginary, most often simultaneously. Shadow Casters are therefore inducing hypertextualization of urban spaces, which not only give an account of the city, but have urban experiences fundamentally embedded within them; they give "literary" form to the city and to urban life. Quoting the words of Octavio Paz (Paz, 2011): "No human work escapes language. The ultimate reality of language eludes us. It is indivisible and inseparable from man. It is a condition of our existence and not an object, an organism, or a conventional system of signs that we can accept or reject."

Cultural boundaries in urban culture are not rigid, especially in our era of telecommunications. Additionally, cultural boundaries should not be reduced simply to geography, nationality, ethnicity, or gender. Urban diversity should be considered in relation to fluid linguistic differences, embracing the call for a critical rethinking of the categories of politics. Architecture, embodied in the shattered tower of Babel, has operated since time immemorial at the limits of language. It inhabits the margins and constitutes a limiting zone for cultures, representing and enabling human action in specific ways that have changed throughout history. Therefore, urban culture is *ornamentum* of human action, always present, sometimes in focus and often becoming background (Perez Gomez, 2008).

To understand and project the lessons of our human heritage, we need memory, and memory is built from linguistic interpretation. *Urban Hum* investigates, re-interprets, performs and exploits the powerful appropriation of memories of certain space. Such interpretation enables *Urban Hum* to approach an ethical promise, contributing to the evolution of urban memory and not merely producing irrelevant novelties. Finally, we can understand heritage (historical art and architecture) because we have learned to translate through the time. It is only by scrupulously re-creating a given urban world that new practices can build on older practices to produce coherent work amid our global world in crisis. Retracing the growth of our urban consciousness can enable us to project new promises that account for the presence of Other and Togetherness, and frame a space for mutual understanding and sharing (Perez Gomez, 2008).

Conclusion

Continuously insisting on the methodology of *devised artistic practice*, Shadow Casters are trying to tackle the rethinking of city/space as hypertextual narrative by means of dramaturgical techniques, performative excellence and simple, understandable messages/actions interacted with the audience. Our urban *quotidienne* evidences the general lack of engagement of citizens in shaping their immediate future as well of lacking broader vision of historical continuity of social ideas and togetherness. *Urban Hum* is designing the spaces of cultural learning by training our project participants to discover urban narratives that will consequently be transposed into witty, multi-layered performative urban presentations, and can easily be translated to other fields through its basic form of performance. Furthermore, by giving an opportunity to young authors from various disciplines to collaborate with the citizens through various levels and various roles, *Urban Hum* introduces a new, experimental concept and progressive model that can assist in the future for the implementation of the propositions for the advancement of the coexistence in public spaces, or their betterment.

Urban Hum exclusively focuses on process rather than product, events rather than lasting objects, and participatory experience rather than detached spectatorship. It is well known that governments across the world use participatory events as means to forge a sense of national identity and belonging. However, *Urban Hum* is creating the community under the banner of difference rather than identity. Furthermore, it is not so interested in tracing a history of the city, but in mapping

history of the city in a way that changes that history, and makes something new. Rather than trying to make that history visible as itself, *Urban Hum* creates a performance that enters into a relationship with that history or those historical performances to make something new.

“Knowing the city, let alone directing its forces, is a forlorn task; the artwork can only hope to beat the bounds, making new edges, picking up what it finds as it goes (Gadanhó & Oliveira, 2013).”

Endnote

Shadow Casters was founded in 2001 by Bacaci Sjenki and is a multi award-winning and critically acclaimed international artistic and production platform for interdisciplinary collaboration, creativity and reflection on inter-media art from Zagreb. Shadow Casters work with public urban space through various art interventions and projects is one of the main areas on which their work is focused.

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