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Poetry and Performance



The Eastern European Perspective

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GÁBOR ALTORJAY (Germany)
PAVEL ARSENEV (Russia)
ATTILA CSERNIK (Serbia)
KOLLEKTIVNYE DEISTVIIA (Russia)
ĽUBOMÍR ĎURČEK (Slovakia)
EXTERRA XX (Germany)
DOROTA GAWĘDA, **EGLĖ KULBOKAITĖ** (Poland, Lithuania)
TOMISLAV GOTOVAC (Croatia)
BOHUMILA GRÖGEROVÁ (Czech Republic)
GRUPA ŠESTORICE (Croatia)
JOSEF HIRŠAL (Czech Republic)
KATALIN LADIK (Hungary)
VLADO MARTEK (Croatia)
KIRILL MEDVEDEV (Russia)
ANDREI MONASTYRSKI (Russia)
LADISLAV NOVÁK (Czech Republic)
PAVEL NOVOTNÝ (Czech Republic)
ROMAN OSMINKIN (Russia)
POMARAŃCZOWA ALTERNATYWA (Poland)
EWA PARTUM (Poland)
DMITRI PRIGOV (Russia)
PUSSY RIOT (Russia)
LEV RUBINSTEIN (Russia)
GERHARD RÜHM (Germany)
MLADEN STILINOVIĆ (Croatia)
GABRIELE STÖTZER (Germany)
TAMÁS SZENTYÓBI (Hungary)
BÁLINT SZOMBATHY (Hungary)
RAŠA TODOSIJEVIĆ (Serbia)
DEZIDER TÓTH (Slovakia)
JAROMÍR TYPLT (Czech Republic)
JIŘÍ VALOCH (Czech Republic)

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Poetry and Performance. The Eastern European Perspective

In the second half of the twentieth century, poets and artists in Eastern Europe in particular took up the challenge of reflecting on and investigating the instrumentalization of language for communicative and political-ideological purposes. They did so by drawing attention to the made-ness of language, its materiality and mediality, and by creating performative situations for themselves and their audiences within which possibilities of verbal expression could be tested and acted out. Poetic performance makes the limits of language and speakability tangible.

In the socialist states of Eastern Europe, with all of their differences, poetry and performance are characterized by a double subculturality: on the one hand, they undermine the conventional perception of script and words as neutral means, which, on the other hand, was unacceptable against the cultural-political backdrop, forcing them into the unofficial or partially tolerated cultural scene.

The writing practice of samizdat as well as artists' self-publishing and their relation to the devices of concrete and visual poetry have been treated and presented in previous projects. Until now, however, less consideration has been given to the circumstances of performance. In addition to typewritten literature, subcultural milieus attached particular importance to the oral recitation of poems, poetic installations in self-organized exhibitions, poetry actions and artistic interventions in public space. The interrelation between text and situation in poetic acts functioned as a trigger for actions, performances and happenings – a very specific and notably Eastern European characteristic of performance art.

The focus on artistic positions from Eastern Europe in our exhibition does not imply a territorialization of the topic, however. With the term 'perspective' we aim to change the viewpoint in order to open up new horizons of reflection on what we do and on what we are able to do with language in general. In Eastern Europe, we can observe a specific sensibility for the power and at the same time the fragility and vulnerability of language developing over many decades.

Poetry and performance have produced specific milieus within the diverse cultures of Eastern Europe. There were parallels developing between movements and approaches separated not only by the Iron Curtain from the developments in the West, but also, paradoxically, by barriers between those Eastern European cultures themselves. Nevertheless, what we can see as a characteristic feature here is a transgression of the conventions of local culture and the emergence of international networks. Our exhibition wants to contribute to the current rediscovery of these connections of which, until recently, there was very limited awareness.

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Tamás Szenytyóbi: ***Hungarian Poem***, 1972
Photo: Júlia Veres.
Courtesy of the artist

One of our special concerns is the tension between singular artistic positions and the phenomenon of artistic collectives defined by the specificities of local milieus and subcultural communities. In this exhibition we want to recreate such milieus or to make them accessible by way of comparison, working with thematic groups focused on artistic practices.

The show is composed of various types of coexisting exhibits: text scores, interactive objects, sound and video recordings, films and installations of performance documentation. Together, they present authors from subcultures in socialist states along with contemporary positions that continue the legacy of combining poetry and performance, showing the efforts of poets and artists to break free from controlled language and normative communicative here and now. Poetry and Performance. The Eastern European Perspective thus confronts the current social challenges in the post-socialist countries through the prism of language and ideology and looks back at their points of departure.

Poetry and performance take on an exceptional topicality in periods of political crises, as these ephemeral and flexible art forms enable the reflection on relations and contexts that remain otherwise undiscussed.

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Tamás Szenytyóbi: ***Beautiful Darkness – Audiotactile Visual Poem for the Blind***, 1970
Courtesy of the Szűcs Collection and the artist
photo: ↑Dávid Tóth, ↓Zsolt Birtalan

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Lev Rubinstein: ***The Poet and the Crowd***, 1985
Courtesy of Günter Hirt / Sascha Wonders, Edition S Press

Writing-Reading Performance

Performance places the poetic text in a situational context of production and reception. Beyond the printed word, typographic experiments evolve from a physical process of writing by hand and producing texts by typewriter, which themselves often gain the status of aesthetic objects. The presentation of poetry by way of poets' readings implies a further shift from the reception of self-contained works to the perception of poetry in performance situations.

The Russian poet Lev Rubinstein writes his texts sentence by sentence on index cards which are combined into series. Readings of these text series become minimal actions where the author, in a rudimentarily theatrical gesture, flipps through the cards during the reading.

In his performance for a video camera titled ***Conversation with a Lamp***, Andrei Monastyrski, reflects on how the concept of performativity developed from poetry, retrospectively presenting Russian poets of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the situation of a reading performance. Not the text, its meanings, its structures and references are perceived, but the situational circumstances of its reading. With his artistic practices, Andrei Monastyrski, one of the founding members of the Collective Actions Group, embodies the transition from poetry to performance in Moscow Conceptualism. In 1977, in the countryside near Moscow, the group hung a slogan with a poetic text by Monastyrski, reminiscent of an aphoristic riddle or koan. In this way, the emptiness of political formulas is exposed and then transcended in a Zen-inspired aesthetics of emptiness.

A prominent approach by many artists and poets is the focus on freeing language from ideological usurpation. They tried to understand to which degree they themselves had unconsciously internalized ideology, for instance, as when Dmitri Prigov took on the character of a Soviet militia-man in his readings. It is precisely

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Collective Actions Group (Kollektivnye deistviia): ***Slogan***, 1977
Courtesy of the artists

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Dmitri Prigov, ***The Militiaman***, 1985
Courtesy of Günter Hirt / Sascha Wonders, Edition S Press

this gesture that Pussy Riot cited in their action ***The Policeman Enters the Game*** in the 53rd minute of the World Cup final match on 25 July 2018, thus radicalizing the intertwinement of poetics and politics and intervening into media space.

In contrast to the meta-linguistic practices of Moscow Conceptualism, Monogramista T.D's works rather emphasize intimate processes of writing, whose manipulation of figurative language changes the word into a material image or spatial object. In his ***Snow on the Tree***, letters of an enigmatic poem are "written" on trunk and branches of a growing plant, combining by this way the culture and the nature with the observing participation of the author himself, sitting on the tree.

Ľubomír Ďurček deals with the contextual meanings of a single word. He uses the page format as a performance area in miniature. Writing repeatedly the word "pravda" (truth), the author is occasionally infixing errors, pointing out the meditative variability of the writing process. Vlado Martek's pre-poetry goes back to synergy of elementary practices and concrete materials used for writing conventional poetry by means of tautology.

Mladen Stilinović's statements often imitate the form of slogans used in politics and marketing. His chief interest is in language not as a linguistic object, but as a dynamic field for confronting ideologies. In his work, phrases taken from everyday speech are inscribed into a complex matrix of social relations. In Gábor Altorjay and Tamás Szenytyóbi's first Hungarian happening ***The Lunch*** (***In Memoriam Batu Khan***, 1966), Szenytyóbi styled himself a 'poet at the typewriter.' Their collective writing practice has been transformed into the collective experiment of a happening as a radical gesture against the conventions of modernist art and the cold war determinations.

In the works of the artistic duo Dorota Gawęda and Eglė Kulbokaitė (Young Girl Reading Group), collective reading from mobile displays creates a unique experience of community. Yet here reading the text is not simply transferred to the performative situation; thanks to the installation, its virtual dimension is exceeded in the form of material objects strongly engaging the senses.

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Pussy Riot: ***The Militiaman Comes into Play***, 2018
Courtesy of the PA Images



Monogramista T.D / Dezider Tóth: ***Snow on the Tree***, 1970
Courtesy of the artist

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Vlado Martek: ***Pride***, 1976
Courtesy of Darko Šimičić, Zagreb

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Andrei Monastyrski: ***Conversation with the Lamp***, 1985
Courtesy of Günter Hirt / Sascha Wonders, Edition S Press



Mladen Stilinović: ***My Red***, 1976
Courtesy of Branka Stipančić, Zagreb

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Liberec Radio Studio, ca. 1962
Courtesy of Pavel Novotný Collection, Liberec

Audio Gestures

Auditory or phonic poetry can be understood as a further development of sound-poetry in that it not only involves the sound of language and the transgressive potential of the voice, but also clearly works with the technical possibilities of audio recording. One of the great technological breakthroughs of the 1960s was the personal tape recorder, which meant that sounds could not just be recorded, but edited, cut, modulated, or mixed. Ladislav Novák experimented with a tape recorder at home before he and other poets, such as Josef Hiršal or Bohumila Grögerová, began collaboration with a radio studio in the north Bohemian town of Liberec in the late 1960s on a ***Semester of Experimental Creation***, during which innovative audio compositions were aired over the course of many months. Katalin Ladik, who started her career in the radio Novi Sad, recorded concrete sounds and used up recycled sound recordings played with a magnetophone during her performaces. Similarly to these live sound performances, on her 1976 ***Phonopoetica*** recording she provided a synthesis of the sound interpretation of visual poetry with the improvisational value of the found music. Tamás Szenytyóbi's now rediscovered sound piece, ***Beautiful Darkness – Audiotactile Visual Poem for the Blind*** (1970) also takes the advantages of the non-intentional sounds provided by a prepared magnetophone. The landscape-like piece is made of metal hemispheres and magnetic tapes attached to a wooden board. With the read head removed from the magnetophone, noise-like sounds can be produced from the magnetic tapes and metal hemispheres. The hemispheres are arranged on the surface in the pattern of the Braille letters, and display the words ***Beautiful Darkness***. The interactive-intermedial nature of the work allows for a crossover between different spheres of perception and questions the validity of classical artistic values and the traditional concept of art.

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Katalin Ladik: ***Phonopoetica. Phonopoetic interpetation of Visual Poetry***, 1976
Courtesy of the Museum of Fine Arts – Artpool Art Research Center (HNB deposit)

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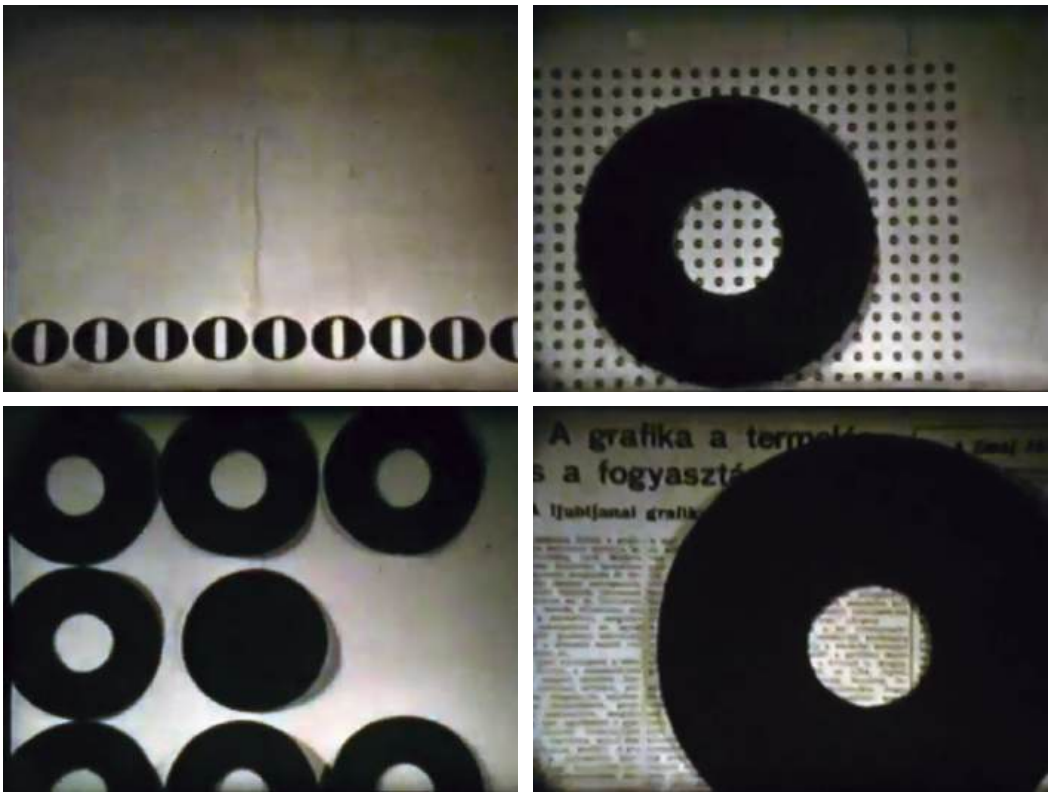
Ladislav Novák: ***Tapes and Boxes***, 1965-1969
Courtesy of Pavel Novotný Collection, Liberec

Kirill Medvedev: ***Live Long, Die Young***, 2012
Courtesy of the artist





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Attila Csernik, Katalin Ladik, Imre Póth: ***O-pus***, 1972
Courtesy of the acb gallery and the artists



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Ewa Partum: ***Active Poetry***, 1971/1973
Courtesy of the artist

Interventions in Public Space

Spoken or written word in public space confronts poetry with politics and involves direct sharing of ideas within a community or interaction with accidental passers-by. Testing the limits of freedom, artists used the street as an open interactive space to replace the page of a book or conventional exhibition space. The performances of Tomislav Gotovac often involved communication with public opinion through self-exposure and controversy of his naked body in the public space. In his late performance ***Degraffiting*** (1990), Gotovac whitewashes a wall thus demonstrating in a poetic gesture the problematic process of defining a new identity after the end of Yugoslavia, as the palimpsest of old graffiti (political slogans and obscene curses) is continuing to show under the paint. The Polish artist Ewa Partum used letters made of white cardboard sold in shops to assemble slogans for the decoration of living and working spaces. She randomly scattered these letters in both urban and natural spaces, and in this way liberated them from their original meaning. She called this series of actions ***Active Poetry***. The Orange Alternative collective, played with the political setting by changing one singular letter in a slogan to mock the prohibition of anti-regime banners. In 1987, they demonstrated in Wrocław with the slogan "Precz z (u)pałami," or "Away with the heat" in English – a totally absurd demand. But if you remove a letter, then "upały" (heat) becomes the word "pały" (truncheons), and the action is now called "Away with the truncheons."

In contemporary Russia, Pavel Arsenev and Roman Osminkin of the Laboratory of Poetic Actionism from St. Petersburg or Kirill Medvedev, a poet, activist, and frontman of the politically engaged rock band Arkady Kots, are experimenting, increasingly via social media, with methods and devices aimed at breaking out of the safe space of art to intervene directly in society. In his video composition for YouTube, ***Why do you poets leave so late...*** the poet-performer situates himself to an unprivileged place – a railway trackage – for his ecstatic dispute with predecessors from the canon of Russian poetry.

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Roman Osminkin: ***Why do you poets leave so late...***, 2013
Courtesy of the artist

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Tomislav Gotovac: ***Degraffiting***, 1990
Courtesy of the Collection Sarah Gotovac, Tomislav Gotovac Institute, Zagreb



Orange Alternative (Pomarańczowa Alternatywa): ***Away with Heat (Away with Truncheons)***, 1987
Courtesy of Agnieszka Couderq – Fundacja Pomarańczowa Alternatywa

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Jiří Valoch: ***Poet***, 1970
Courtesy of Marinko Sudac Collection, Zagreb

Body Poetry

This section focuses on the body as a physical site for speech acts. On the one hand, embodiment returns language to its material origins. The necessity of mediating such corporeal acts in the process of documentation also tends to introduce a distance between action and perception in photo and video performances. By its focus on how speech acts are embodied, this group of works touches on the core issues of radical narcissism, body-rhetorics, identity politics, gender and gaze. In the trangression of the disciplinary norms that coerce and control the body, in the 1970s the private becomes public. The repetitive formula ***Was ist Kunst?*** in the video performance by Raša Todosijević opens up a complex set of questions related to art as an institution. The automatism of a despotic phonocentric machine serves as a general metaphor for the connection of totalitarian discourse with the institution of art. Jiří Valoch explores the intimacy of the body with a specific focus on image-text and image-sound relations. In a performance for the photo camera, he articulates the word ***POET***, which the viewers can only read from his lips. In the 1970 Budapest performance by Katalin Ladik, the lines between poetic performance, music and body art are blurred. Ladik's poetry develops into a pure form of sound poetry, including elements of archaic ritual, shamanistic mythology and an affinity with folkloric and new music with the use of both traditional and newly-made instruments like drums and bagpipes. In the case of 'autoperforation' artists in the East German underground scene, the body became a site of actions which unsettled through moments of self-injury. In 1984, as the initiative of Gabriele Stötzer, Exterra XX emerged in Erfurt, one of the few groups of working female artists in East Germany. This collective action created a space of performative experience between literature, film, and fashion show.

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Katalin Ladik: ***Poemim***, 1980
Camera: Bogdanka Poznanović
Courtesy of the acb gallery and the artist

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Gabriele Stötzer: "***...didn't I brilliantly entertain you all?***", 1989/2021
Courtesy of the collection ex.oriente.lux, Berlin





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Gábor Altorjay (Germany)
Gábor Altorjay (born 1946 in Budapest, Hungary) is a poet, actionist, and filmmaker. After practicing collective poetry improvisation in 1966, he introduced the happening as a new medium in Hungary together with Tamás Szenytyóbi. His objects and happenings join a Fluxus-like spirit with an affinity for politics, especially after his emigration to West Germany in 1967, where he joined the radical artistic circles around Wolf Vostell. Altorjay was intensively engaged with the critical perception of the 1968 protests and ideas with concepts and event-based pieces confronting the notions and ideologies represented by 'East' and 'West'.

Pavel Arsenev (Russia)
Pavel Arsenev (born 1986 in Leningrad, USSR) is an artist, poet, theorist, and a founding member of the group Laboratory of Poetic Actionism. As an artist, he works with the graphic aspects and materialisation of (poetic) text. He has participated in several international exhibitions and projects including Manifesta 10 (St. Petersburg), Office for Cultural Translations Leipzig), Disobedient Objects (Victoria and Albert Museum), 3rd Moscow International Biennale for Young Art and Subvision Art Festival (Hamburg). Arsenev has published several books of poetry. His work has been translated into English, Italian, Danish, Dutch, Bulgarian, Polish and Slovenian. Arsenev is editor-in-chief of the literary-critical magazine [Translit]. For founding this magazine, he received the Andrei Bely Prize (2012).

Collective Actions Group / Kollektivnye deistviia (Russia)
The Collective Actions Group came into being in 1976. It was founded by Andrei Monastyrski, Nikita Alekseev, Georgi Kizevalter, and Nikolai Panitkov. Later members include Yelena Yelagina, Igor Makarevich, Sergei Romashko and Sabine Hänsgen. Many artists and writers from the Moscow Conceptual circle took part in their actions. These were organized as trips out of town, in the course of which a field of untouched snow would often become a stage for minimal performances. At a later stage of development, the group began to compile documentary volumes about its work. These combine a wide range of material, such as descriptive texts, narratives by the participants, theoretical commentaries, discussions, photographs, drawings, and diagrams, forming a descriptive, narrative and interpretative artwork in its own right.
The first five documentary volumes, which first appeared in samizdat, were republished in a book (Kollektivnye deistviia,Poezdki za gorod, 1998) referring to the actions realized from 1976 to 1989. A further volume, referring to actions from 1990-2009, appeared in 2009 in the Library of Moscow Conceptualism, edited by German Titov. In 2011, the group represented Russia at the Biennale of Venice.

Attila Csernik (Serbia)
Attila Csernik (born 1941 in Bačka Topola, Serbia) is a visual artist, performance artist and poet. Most of his work centers on typography, text and their relation to the image and the body. As a member of the Group Bosch+Bosch (Slavko Matković, Bálint Szombathy, Katalin Ladik, László Szalma, and others) he participated in the radical practice of the Vojvodina neo-avant-garde of the seventies, its aim to broaden the field of art with shock aesthetics and everyday life practices as art, leading beyond the constraints of socialist Yugoslavia's bureaucratized cultural environment of moderate modernism.

Ľubomír Ďurček (Slovakia)
Ľubomír Ďurček (born 1948 in Bratislava, Czechoslovakia) is a conceptual artist, performer, documentarist, and author of experimental texts, books and films. He studied painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava and has worked as a secondary school teacher for most of his life. In 1977, he co-organized the landmark exhibition Photorecords featuring photographs by Czech and Slovak action and concept-oriented artists. In the late 1970s, he collaborated with the underground Labyrinth Theatre and the Temporary Society for Intense Experiences (founded by Ján Budaj, dissident, and after 1989 politician and environmental activist). Ďurček participated in the underground activities of performance artists, worked with amateur artists and organized gatherings. His first solo show took place only after 1989.

Exterra XX (Germany)
Exterra XX was established in Erfurt in 1984 as the first collective of female artists in the GDR. Using means of expression such as performance, poetry, photo sessions, film recordings, fashion shows and many other activities, the group tested the limits of artistic genres. What was important for the artists was to create a space that allowed freedom of action and the implementation of subjective forms of artistic expression. This was understood as liberation not only from the monotonous visual reality of the GDR, but also from gender-related roles defined and imposed by the prevailing norms. The artists gained greater recognition after 1988, primarily due to their performances and stage shows with expressive costumes. Among the members of the group were Verena Kyselka, Gabriele Stötzer, Monika Andres, Claudia Bogenhardt, Petra Buchner, Gabriele Göbel and Anke Hendrich. In 1990, the group established Kunsthaus Erfurt.

Dorota Gawęda, Eglė Kulbokaitė (Young Girl Reading Group) (Poland, Lithuania)
Dorota Gawęda (born 1986) and Eglė Kulbo-kaitė (born 1987) are an artist duo based in Basel. Switzerland. Gawęda and Kulbokaitė work within a variety of media, spanning performance, installation, photography, fragrance, sculpture and video. Both are graduates of the Royal College of Art in London (2012) and founders of the extended serial projects Agatha Valkyrie Ice (2014–2017) and Young Girl Reading Group (since 2013). The artists have exhibited internationally, e.g. at Fri Art / Kunsthalle Fribourg; Futura

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Gallery, Prague; ANTI – 6th Athens Biennial; Palais de Tokyo, Paris; Kunstverein Freiburg (DE); MMOMA, Moscow; 13th Baltic Triennial, Contemporary Art Centre, Vilnius; ICA, London; Museum of Modern Art, Warsaw; Kunstverein für die Rheinlande und Westfalen, Düsseldorf; Berlin Biennale 9; Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris; Julia Stoschek Collection, Düsseldorf; Trafo Gallery, Budapest.

Tomislav Gotovac (Croatia)
Tomislav Gotovac, also known as Antonio G. (Gotovac) Lauer (born 1937 in Sombor, Serbia, died 2010 in Zagreb, Croatia) was a multi-disciplinary artist and considered the precursor of performance art in former Yugoslavia. He attended the University of Zagreb and the Academy of Performing Arts in Belgrade. Cinematic imagery intimately connected Gotovac's personal life and artistic work, as he saw himself both as an actor in, and as an observer of a perpetual movie. Gotovac developed a pioneering practice in conceptualism and performance. Approaching his own body as a readymade, he began staging photographs of himself in the sixties. During this decade, he directed experimental films using continuous repetition of images to reveal personal stories. In 1967 he was author of the first Happening in Yugoslavia (Happ Our – Happening) and a key-figure in the New Art Practice (nova umjetnička praksa) of the 1970s. Gotovac worked as an individual artist, independently of any groups, art institutions or artistic associations. He performed his art purposely in public space, radically confronting the categories of privat and public, unmasking the politics of everyday or political manipulations as such. He viewed art not politics as the vehicle for change. Besides performance, photography and avant-garde structuralist film, he was also active in a variety of other media, including collages and two- and three-dimensional mixed-media work. In 2007 he was awarded the Croatian Association of Visual Artists' Life Achievement Award.

Bohumila Grögerová – Josef Hiršal (Czech Republic)
Josef Hiršal (born 1920 in Chomutičky, died 2003 in Prague, Czech Republic) was a poet and translator. In his younger years, he was an adherent of the poetics of surrealism. He considered the period of close collaboration with his partner Bohumila Grögerová between 1962 and 1970 to be the happiest and most productive years of his life. Hiršal and Grögerová's so-called experimental poetry was a reaction against the pervasive devaluation of the term, and an attempt to reinvest words with energy and meaning by revealing their often grotesque semantic structure. Hiršal's translations from the fifties onwards included Chinese tracts, Renaissance poetry, the work of German, Spanish, English, French and Yugoslavian poets, including famous authors such as Morgenstern, Heine, Heissenbüttel, Enzensberger, Jandl and Artmann, spanning a period of two thousand years. His own work progressed from the traditions of the surrealist avant-garde to the experimental book JOB-BOJ (with Bohumila Grögerová, 1968), and to the collection Píseň mládí (Song of Youth, 1986).

Bohumila Grögerová (born 1921 in Prague, died 2014 in Prague, Czech Republic) was a poet and translator. In the 1960s, she and Josef Hiršal co-authored many experimental poems, encompassing a wide range of techniques, ran-ging from purely visual creations to philosophizing riddles. Her work occupies a space where literature, music and visual art come together; it examines not only meaning but also the ancient, audio-visual roots of words and, by extension, thought. In the 1970s, Bohumila Grögerová (often in collaboration with Hiršal) was intensively involved in the genre of experimental radio play.

Group of Six Artists / Grupa šestorice (Croatia)
The Group of Six Artists was an artist collective founded in 1975 by Boris Demur, Željko Jerman, Vlado Martek, Mladen Stilinović, Sven Stilinović and Fedor Vučemilović in Zagreb, Croatia. They began exhibiting in open-air spaces in an attempt to circumvent the traps set by art institutions, and calling their shows 'exhibition-actions' because most of the work was created on site and in response to the given situation. Their work emphasized tautology as the heritage of conceptualism and questioned the status of both artist and artwork in an expanded communication with the audience. The group's activities were documented in experimental films and in the self-published magazine MAJ/75 (1978-1984).

Josef Hiršal, see Bohumila Grögerová – Josef Hiršal

Katalin Ladik (Hungary)
Katalin Ladik (born in 1942 in Novi Sad, Serbia) is a poet, performer and actress who employs various means of expression. Parallel to her written poetry she also creates sound and visual poems, performance art, writes and performs experimental music and audio plays. In her emblematic early poetic performances from the late sixties she experimented with a phonic minimalism and the physical-sensual expression of her half-naked body. Her visual and graphic scores based on the critical reconsideration of the material and language of traditional woman's activities were considered as scores for musical improvisation. As the first female sound poet of Yugoslavia she regularly participated in local and international sound poetry events and collaborations, and as a vocalist she had a long collaboration with the Zagreb based multi-media musical ensemble ACEZANTEZ. Constructed around the material quality of sound, her vocal compositions strip language of meaning, breaking it down into phonemes to expose its instinctive, mechanical aspects. She lives and works in Budapest, and on the island of Hvar.

Vlado Martek (Croatia)
Vlado Martek (born 1951 in Zagreb, Yugoslavia) is a multimedia conceptual artist, poet and writer. He graduated from the University of Zagreb with a degree in literature and philosophy. His work includes actions, agitations, ambiances, murals, graffiti, texts on his own art and on other artists, prints, art postcards, sculptures, poetic objects, paintings, art books and staged photography.

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Martek's work can be seen primarily as avant-garde poetry, standing in opposition to the dominant lyrical paradigm of European literature. One of the key concepts of Martek is pre-poetry, the idea that poetry is not a finished, isolated work, but rather comes through the poet and the writing process. From 1975 to 1978, Martek was a member of the informal Group of Six Artists.

Kirill Medvedev (Russia)
Kirill Medvedev (born 1975 in Moscow, USSR) is a poet, left-wing activist, and musician. He is the frontman in the band Arkady Kots. Translations of his poetry has been published in the US, Germany, Estonia, England, and the Netherlands. Medvedev's combination of poetry, criticism, and action reexamines old potentialities, looking for gaps and interstices where protest, opposition, and utopianism remain possible. His Andrei Bely prize-winning volume Pokhod na meriiu (March on City Hall, 2014) was released by his publishing house Free Marxist Press. Medvedev's translated essays on politics and aesthetics have made their way into such publications as The London Review of Books and The New Left Review. Nationally, his translation and recording of the protest song Steny (The Walls; Lluis Llach's famous 1968 Catalan protest song L'Estaca, remade into Mury, the anthem of Polish Solidarity in the 1980s) became one of the anthems of the protests in Russia 2012.

Andrei Monastyrski (Russia)
Andrei Monastyrski (born 1949 in Petsamo/Murmansk region, USSR) is a poet, artist, and theorist. He graduated from Moscow State University with a degree in philology. In 1973, he began to work with serial structures and minimalist sound compositions. In 1975, he turned his atten-tion to poetic objects and actions. In 1976, he was one of the founding members of the Collective Actions group and later compiled the group's documentary volumes, Trips Out of Town. Since the 1990s he has also been working with installations and video art. Further on he edited numerous publications, including the first issue of the Moscow Archive of New Art (MANI). In 2003, Monastyrski received the Andrei Bely Prize for his contribution to Russian literature and in 2009, the Innovation Prize for Art Theory. In 2011, Monastyrski and Collective Actions represented Russia at the Venice Biennale.

Monogramista T.D Dezider Tóth (Slovakia)
(born 1947 in Výčapy-Opatovce, Czechoslovakia) is an artist who has been exhibiting his work under the name Monogramista T.D since 1997. He is one of the key representatives of conceptual art in Slovakia. In 1970 he co-organized and took part in the legendary unofficial exhibition 1st Open Studio. Later Tóth also organized the apartment exhibitions Depozit (1976-77) and Shift, Championship in the shift of the Artefact (1979-86). His conceptual work ranges from action art, installations, artists' books to paintings, objects and minimalist interventions. He has taught at the Academy of Fine Arts in Bratislava since 1991. Tóth received the Dominik Tatarka Literature Award in 2012. He lives and works in Brno.

Ladislav Novák (Czech Republic)
Ladislav Novák (born 1925 in Turnov, died 1999 in Třebíč, Czech Republic) was an artist and poet working with sound and image. He studied at Prague's Charles University between 1945 and 1950, writing his thesis on Rhyme and Assonance in the Work of Vítězslav Nezval. He was instrumental in advancing concrete poetry and sound poetry, recordings of which he made in the 1950s. With Jiří Kolář and Josef Hiršal he formed the first Czech Group of Experimental Poetry. In 1962 he acquired a small Sonet Duo tape recorder and began experimenting by recording his own voice. Thanks to a sympathizing editor at Czechoslovak Radio in Liberec, he and other authors had the opportunity to record several of their poems and compositions in a professional studio in 1969, and some of those recordings found their way abroad. Novák also recorded several compositions in the Swedish studio Fylkingen. His work was exhibited internationally together with that of contemporaries such as Henri Chopin, Bob Cobbing, Pierre Garnier, Ernst Jandl and Maurice Lemaître.

Pavel Novotný (Czech Republic)
Pavel Novotný (born 1976 in Liberec, Czechoslovakia) is a poet and scholar in German studies at the Faculty of Education in Liberec. He writes poetry, songs, radiophonic compositions. He is also the author of experimental texts, which are created by transposing speech into written form. Novotný has published several books of poetry, as well as prose written together with Helena Skalická. His lifelong project is called Tramvestie, an endless set of sound and text recordings, mapping a tram ride between two neighboring cities Liberec and Jablonec. Together with Jaromír Typlt, he has re-staged the dada composition Ursonate by Kurt Schwitters. The German publishing house Arco has published his dissertation on literary collage and montage (Die Vorformen der literarischen Montage). In 2020, he published a monograph on acoustic literature (Akustische Literatur) at Thelem Verlag.

Orange Alternative / Pomarańczowa Alternatywa (Poland)
Orange Alternative is a Polish underground movement which started in Wrocław and was led by Waldemar Fydrych, commonly known as the Major in the 1980s. Its main purpose was to offer an alternative means of opposition to a wider group of citizens against the authoritarian regime by means of peaceful protest using absurd and nonsensical elements. Orange Alternative has been viewed as part of the broader Solidarity movement, although parody of Solidarity was also one of its guiding themes. Initially they painted graffiti of dwarves on paint used to cover up anti-government slogans on city walls. From 1985 to 1990, Orange Alternative organized more than sixty happenings in several Polish cities. It suspended activity in 1989, but was reactivated in 2001 and has been active on a small scale ever since.

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Roman Osminkin (Russia)
Roman Osminkin (born 1979 in Leningrad, USSR) is a Saint Petersburg based poet, art critic, performer and video artist. He received his PhD from the Russian Institute of Art History with a dissertation on participatory art and its manifestations, and has been a member of the Saint Petersburg Writers Union since 2007. Osminkin was a member of the Laboratory of Poetic Actionism, which combined video-poems (distributing the poetic word in three dimensions) with more aggressive interventions in public space. He was also active in the Saint Petersburg Street University movement that emerged in 2008. Osminkin is interested in the dynamics of poetics and politics within the form and structure of a text or image. Osminkin frequently acts as an invited lecturer and performer in various institutions in Russia and abroad.

Ewa Partum (Poland)
Ewa Partum (born in 1945 in Grodzisk Mazowiecki near Warsaw, Poland) is a conceptual artist whose work combines poetry, performance, and film. She studied at the State Higher School of Visual Arts in Łódź and at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw, where she earned her diploma in 1970. Beginning in 1969, her work has explored issues of female identity, including the gender bias of the art world. Major works include ***Active Poetry*** (1970s), ***Poems by Ewa*** (since 1970), ***Tautological Cinema*** (a series of short films made between 1973 and 1974), and ***Self-Identification*** (1980), a nude performance combined with a series of photomontages. Her works have been exhibited at leading art institutions worldwide. Ewa Partum lives in Berlin.

Dmitri Prigov (Russia)
Dmitri Prigov (born 1940 in Moscow, died 2007 in Moscow, Russia) was a Russian writer, artist, and performer. He graduated as a sculptor in 1965 from the Moscow's Stroganov Art Institute. From 1971 onwards, he wrote and produced numerous poetry cycles, prose texts, mini-dramas and poetic objects for the literary samizdat. His later art blends definitions of poet, sound performer and graphic artist, connecting his poetry to conceptual readings, performances and installations. Prigov embodies the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk in the framework of Moscow conceptualism. Since 1986, he was briefly incarcerated in a psychiatric hospital by the KGB after a performance during which he distributed his poetry cycle Appeals in public places. Prigov was awarded the Pushkin Prize in 1993 and the Boris Pasternak Prize in 2002. His literary texts have been translated into numerous languages, and he has participated in many exhibitions worldwide.

Pussy Riot (Russia)
Pussy Riot is a Russian feminist punk group founded in 2011 and based in Moscow. In 2012, Pussy Riot famously broke into an impromptu concert (with the Punk Prayer: Mother of God Drive Putin Away) at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow. Russian authorities detained three members of the group, two of them were sentenced to two years of confinement in a labor camp. At the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics, members of the group were beaten by Cossack security guards during one of their flash recitals. In 2018, four members of Pussy Riot ran onto the pitch during the World Cup final in Moscow. The stunt was meant to salute Dmitri Prigov, a Russian poet and artist who died 11 years earlier. Prigov used the persona of a militiaman as the central protagonist of his major poetic cycle crucial to the aesthetics of Moscow conceptualism – a legacy the World Cup protesters paid homage to by dressing as contemporary Russian police.

Lev Rubinstein (Russia)
Lev Rubinstein (born 1947 in Moscow, USSR) is a poet from the circle of Moscow Conceptualism. He earned his degree in Russian Philology at the Pedagogical faculty of the Moscow State University in 1971. While working as a librarian, he began using index cards to write sequential texts he describes as a 'hybrid genre' that ' slides along the edges of genres and, like a small mirror, fleetingly reflects each of them, without identifying with any of them.' His work was circulated through samizdat and underground readings in the unofficial art scene of the 1960s and 1970s, finding wide publication only after the late 1980s. Now among Russia's most well-known living poets, Rubinstein lives in Moscow and writes cultural criticism for the independent media.

Gerhard Rühm (Germany)
Gerhard Rühm (born 1930 in Vienna, Austria) is a writer, composer and drawer. Rühm graduated from the piano and composition class at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Vienna. After graduation, he took private lessons from Josef Matthias Hauer, the creator of the method of composing with all twelve notes of the chromatic scale. Since the early 1950s, he has been creating poetry of sound and the spoken word, visual poetry, photomontages; he is also the author of many publications. At the end of the 1960s, he participated in the radio programme Semester of Experimental Creation. He is a co-founder (together with Friedrich Achleitner, H.C. Artmann, Konrad Bayer and Oswald Wiener) of the Vienna Group and publisher of an anthology under the same title. In 1972–1996 he worked as a professor at the University of Fine Arts in Hamburg and in 1978–1982 he was the president of a Graz-based writers' association. Rühm's works combine elements of music, literature, gestures and visual art. His works are prime examples of New Radio Plays and Acoustic Art.

Mladen Stilinović (Croatia)
Mladen Stilinović (born 1947 in Beograd, Serbia, died 2016 in Pula) was a conceptual artist whose work focused on the language of politics and its reflection in art and the everyday. From 1969-1976 he worked with experimental film and from 1975-1979 he was a member of Zagreb's Group of Six Artists. His works include drawings,

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collages, photographs, artist books, paintings, installations, actions, films, and video. They probe the field of artistic signs and speech by decoding verbal and visual clichés, separating language from common or daily political ideas and connotations.

Gabriele Stötzer (Germany)
Gabriele Stötzer (born 1953 in Emleben, GDR) is a German writer, artist, and actress. She was first trained as a medical technician in Erfurt, and then studied pedagogy. In 1976, she participated in the protests against the expatriation of the songwriter Wolf Biermann, for which she was exmatriculated and arrested. After serving a year in the Women's Prison Hoheneck, she began to work as an artist, both alone and as part of the Erfurt artists' group, founded in 1984. She made music, worked with textiles, wrote poems and prose, staged performances and fashion shows, ran a private gallery, and made films on super 8. Today, Gabriele Stötzer teaches and writes.

Tamás Szenytyóbi (Hungary)
Tamás Szenytyóbi (born 1944 in Fót, Hungary) also known as Tamás St. Auby, Stjauby, Emmy (Emily) Grant, St. Aubsky, T. Taub, St. Turba is a poet and author of happenings. He represents one of the most radical positions within the Hungarian neo-avantgarde. During the 1960s, he turned away from metaphysical poetry and began creating happenings and actions. Along with Gábor Altorjay, Szenytyóbi initiated the first Hungarian happening, ***The Lunch*** (***In Memoriam Batu Khan***, 1966). Around the same time, he also made intermedia objects, as well as concrete and visual poems. In 1968, Szenytyóbi founded the International Parallel Union of Telecommunications (IPUT) through which he, as the organization's superintendent, has carried out part of his activities.

Bálint Szombathy (Hungary)
Bálint Szombathy (born 1950 in Paćir, Serbia) is a visual artist, performance artist and theorist of nomadic and hybrid productions. Each medium has similar weight in his work, from performative pieces centered on intervention, mail art, visual poetry to the object- and installation-centered works of recent decades. Szombathy is well known for his semiological photo-performances and for extending poems physically to disrupt the faculties of urban space. In the 1970s he was co-founder and catalyst of the Group Bosch+Bosch. He lives and works in Budapest.

Raša Todosijević (Serbia)
Raša Todosijević (born 1945 in Belgrade, Yugoslavia) is a painter, sculp-tor, and writer. He graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Belgrade in 1969, where he studied painting. In the early 1970s, he belonged to a group of artists gathered around the Belgrade Student Center, where a new form of artistic expression was conceived, later called New Artistic Practice (nova umjetnička praksa). His means of expression include installations, performances, videos, paintings, sculptures, as well as objects made of different, clashing organic and non-organic materials: bread, fish, rubber plants, mud, plaster, water, metal, found objects, transistors, etc. His performance pieces explore totalitarian behavior and build a victim-torturer relationship, bringing light into philosophical and theoretical question of art's definition, for instance by asking Was ist Kunst? – what is art in German – over and over again in one of his videos.

Dezider Tóth, see Monogramista T.D

Jaromír Typlt (Czech Republic)
Jaromír Typlt (born 1973 in Nová Paka, Czechoslovakia) is a poet and art historian. He graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Charles University, Prague. At present, he applies himself to exhibitions of progressive art and photography. Typlt has published several books of poetry and fiction. Since around 1999, he has experimented with incorporating the written word in other forms of art, such as art books, stage performances, audio recordings, and short films. His interests as an art historian include art brut, among other subjects. He has amplified the form of so-called 'mutated authorial reading' in which he makes use of pre-recorded voices, language rhythm, as well as found objects and scenic action in space. In recent years, he has been producing book-objects in conjunction with other allied artists.

Jiří Valoch (Czech Republic)
Jiří Valoch (born 1946 in Brno, Czechoslovakia) is an art theorist, curator, artist and poet. Valoch completed his studies in Czech, German and aesthetics at the Faculty of Philosophy at Masaryk University in Brno, with a thesis on the development and typology of visual and phonic poetry. Valoch has been creating visual poetry since 1963. By the end of the 1960s, his work transformed itself in accordance with the development of concrete poetry and conceptual art. From 1972 to 2001, Valoch worked as a theorist and curator in The House of Arts in Brno (Dům umění města Brna), where he organized exhibitions of key personalities of Czech art (V. Boštík, M. Knížák and many others). From the early 1970s, he participated in the organization of informal exhibitions in several different spaces throughout Czechoslovakia.

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On the cover pages:
Katalin Ladik *Phonic performance*, Budapest 1970
Courtesy of the Irokéz Collection and the artist

poetry and performance

The Eastern European perspective

Kassák Museum, 1033 Budapest, Fő tér 1.
25 June – 4 October 2021

Curators / Text: **Tomáš Glanc**, **Sabine Hänsgen**, **Emese Kürti**

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