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I AM JUST COOKING: PERFORMATIVE HEALING IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19 CATASTROPHE

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JEN VAŘIM: PERFORMATIVNÍ LÉČENÍ V DOBĚ KATASTROFY COVID-19

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Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis independently on the following topic:

I AM JUST COOKING: PERFORMATIVE HEALING IN THE TIMES OF COVID-19 CATASTROPHE

under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the use of the cited literature and sources.

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis I aim to reflect on the works I did in the Academy of Performing arts Prague (2019-2021). My interest varied from physical, bodily experiences, somatic to a digital art that was constructed jumping from Quantum Mechanics, post-internet art and artificial intelligence.

In this thesis I reflect on my thinking on healing, performativity and being. I raise the questions such as: "what does it mean to perform in the age of catastrophe (*this is how I refer to the COVID-19 time*) and what (if) we can take anything from it in terms of performativity?". Referring to different artists, theorists and scientists I am going to its' origins and contemplating performativity in terms of healing. Another concept that follows the thinking and is presented in this thesis is "Inner dramaturgies", that was a main methodology creating a dramaturgy in my recent works. It has started its' development in the solo performance "ROOM IN 286/75" and later was expanded in my following works.

ABSTRAKT

V této práci se chci zamyslet nad tvorbou, kterou jsem dělal na Akademii múzických umění v Praze (2019-2021). Můj zájem se lišil od fyzických, tělesných zážitků, somatických až po digitální umění, které bylo vytvořeno na základě kvantové mechaniky, post-internetového umění a umělé inteligence.

V této práci se zamýšlím nad svým myšlením o léčení, performativitě a bytí. Kladu si otázky typu: „co to znamená vystupovat ve věku katastrofy (takto označuji dobu COVID-19) a co (jestli) si z toho můžeme něco vzít, pokud jde o performativitu? S odkazem na různé umělce, teoretiky a vědce jdu k jeho počátkům a zamýšlím se nad performativitou ve smyslu léčení. Dalším konceptem, který navazuje na myšlení a je představen v této práci, je „Vnitřní dramaturgie", což byla hlavní metodika tvorby dramaturgie v mých posledních pracích. Svůj vývoj zahájila sólovým představením „ROOM IN 286/75" a později byla rozšířena v mých následujících dílech.

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

"Hey, and welcome to REST" – that was the opening phrase of my final master work in Academy of Performing arts Prague.

"Hey and welcome to "I am just cooking" – I can say now, when you are about to read my journey from conventional theatre to experimental, healing and inner dialogues-based performances. In this thesis I aim to reflect on the works I did while studying in Academy of Performing arts Prague during the times of catastrophe, also known as COVID-19. During that time people were facing a lot of various individual catastrophes, like dying relatives, the huge unknown of the future, that was / is causing stress and anxiety, having so much time to do nothing and the urge to face themselves. On the other hand – it was not only a personal catastrophe, but the global one as well. Closing businesses, schools, the risk of having a disease and / or serious side effects of it etc.

Depending on sociodemographic, cultural, psychosocial factors, gender, such factors as living alone, or living with a partner etc. people were coping with the catastrophe in various ways. BMC Psychology in July, 2021 released the article under the name "How have people been coping during the COVID-19 pandemic? Patterns and predictors of coping strategies amongst 26,016 UK adults". They found that "individuals living in overcrowded households were more likely to use avoidant strategies, whilst individuals living alone were more likely to use a range of coping strategies"[1].

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[1] Fluharty Fancourt M., D. 2021 '*How have people been coping during the COVID-19 pandemic? Patterns and predictors of coping strategies amongst 26,016 UK adults.*' BMC Psychol 9, 107. Accessed May 6, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1186/s40359-021-00603-9.

Back then, at the beginning of 2020, when the pandemic started, together with my 6 course-mates we started our studies in a new city. We didn't know each other before, and all of sudden – they became pretty much the only one helping to cope with the situation.   My coping with the stress and anxiety was varying from denying, avoiding to emotion-focused and meaning-focused mechanisms that surely will be felt in my recent works.

During that period, my interest varied from physical and bodily experiences, somatic to a digital art that was constructed jumping from Quantum Mechanics, post-internet principles and artificial intelligence. Now, when I am looking back, I could see that the core, that is combining these very different experiences, was to rethink performativity in this age and think of the possible scenarios of the performativity after this time ends. During the COVID-19 time we were asked to stay home and reduce our physical and social contacts. This, of course, influenced the way we are. It has changed the way we are communicating with each other, socialise, do the shopping, work, create etc. Technology has embraced the complexities of daily life and responded with abundant solutions. I assume, if the way we are is changing – then the performativity or performative being is slightly changing as well. During that time, I was navigating myself in between formats, searching for individually authentic presence in the physical and digital worlds. At the same time, I was thinking about healing, and was questioning if there is a place for it in performativity.

Another concept that will be presented in this thesis is "Inner dramaturgies" (I also sometimes refer as "dramaturgies of here and now"), which is, I believe, closely related to the main idea of this writing. I started developing and writing about it during the streaming of my solo performance "ROOM in 286/75", which was streaming live two times a week in TWITCH platform with the main idea to accompany self and others in the worldwide lockdown. Inner dramaturgies are very much based on the insides of individuals, including emotions, feelings, thinking, body-mind set, neuro-system, somatic and the way of being in the very present moment. This allows to create a more personal and real (meaning the content that is shared is happening in a present moment for performers and is important for them in a present time) content, which later can be structured and used as a dramaturgy. These principals can also be applied to the audience. While going to a so-called conventional theatre we are expecting that our imagination will be activated, and the story line will bring us somewhere a bit further from reality happening outside the theatre. So, going to see a performance that is based on "Inner dramaturgies" you can expect to see more grounded and personal content, which, I believe, resonates on the whole body-mind system and is awakening your wholesome.

In 2018, graduating from theatre and film acting in Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, Lithuania, I was writing about Michael Chekhov acting technique, which is mostly based on someone's imagination. "Chekhov offered to penetrate the actor's secret psyche corners and free the many different characters waiting to be awakened through the imagination"[2]. Following this thought, we can say that the acting process is starting and happening inside. But in this case, actors follow their imagination. There

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[2] Marowitz, C. 2006, '*Stanislavski against Chekhov'* (extract from the lecture in Lithuanian Theatre and Music Academy). Kultūros barai. Nr. 11, p. 77-79

they start building various characters using one or another quality they own. While in somatic, somatic movement and inner dramaturgies – you are not following your imagination but instead of that you are focusing on what is happening with(in) you on different levels right now and making it your script.

I believe that using these principles (which are closely related to healing as well) or learning to read them - might help to create a more grounded and present content in relation to conventional theatre.

To achieve this, I will reference various artists and scientists. I will present my works that were created in the frame of previously stated topics – "ROOM in 286/75" [3] (online streaming solo performance), "Apart Ment" [4] (durational online streaming performance), "Fragmented Realities" [5] (online performance created for ZOOM application), "PULSE" [6] (online streaming somatic movement performance) and "REST" [7] (somatic movement based performance-installation in a physical space).

Finally, I will revisit my thinking and methods of working in an experimental way, combining them with the workshops that were held in both physical and digital spaces.

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[3] Online streaming performance, Prague, 2020.
[4] Online streaming durational performance, Prague, 2020
[5] Online streaming performance created for ZOOM application, Prague, Japan, 2020
[6] DISK theatre production, Prague, 2021
[7] Final master work created in a physical space in Academy of Performing Arts Prague, 2021

2 Origins

To begin with, I would like to give some background of my thinking till the very last moment of writing this thesis.

When applying to the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague I knew what qualities I want to build and what I want to explore in relation to contemporary performance. In the motivational letter I stated minimal, repetitive movement, electronic music and media. I think I was lacking these disciplines while studying in theatre and film acting and that was the urge. I felt that I would like to turn my focus more towards reality and to work with the real, body related, raw material instead of staying in the state of illusion or fictional story. I had various ideas about how I want to explore previously stated qualities in a physical space, but almost at the beginning of my studies (beginning of 2020, while studies have started 2019 October) the world was "presented" with the COVID-19 (that we all know but still didn't forget about).

At first, there were sayings that this situation will not last long, people were guessing of the duration, giving a maximum half of a year. We were wrong. From todays' perspective – we see that it lasted even longer than two years and we still do not know when it will end. At the moment of writing (2022 April) we are still asked to wear facemasks, try to keep the distance. People in Shanghai are in a strict lockdown again. So, in the background of people dying or being seriously sick, closing countries borders, curfew, etc. I found myself, *to be really honest*, very debilitated. Imagine a young motivated kid, coming to another city to study, willing to explore, make new friends etc. All of a sudden, he/she/they are facing their rented room walls for nobody knows how long. Slowly it became obvious that things will not go back to "normality" soon (if they will), so we all

were in the pool of the unknown. In the parallel of trying not to catch the virus, we needed to find ways to keep on living (first of all) and then doing arts, working and studying. I came back to my parent's place in Lithuania a night before closing the Czech-Poland border. On March 14th, 2020 there were no flights. I had the only option to travel by bus, which was scheduled for the next day (March 15th). There were only 3 seats left. I booked one. That midnight, as I learnt in the morning of March 15th, Poland closed the border with Czech Republic and Lithuania. We crossed the border 10 minutes to midnight and in one way I was relieved that I didn't need to stay at the border, but at the same I started to realise the weight of the situation or more like the impact on a lot of various scales.

Lecturers were doing their best navigating this situation, giving us a lot of useful tools, reading. All the learning process was shifted to the online platforms, but I couldn't help myself "turning off" the catastrophe, which was becoming louder and bigger. I know that a lot of people were happy to be working from home or studying from home and I know that the "hybrid" way of living – is already a new reality, but to me (back then) it just didn't feel right for quite some time. I felt miserable and kept on thinking why should someone go and see art in the age of catastrophe? I assume, no one was going to the theatre shows during wars, plague or other pandemics, so why is this one somehow different? It's worth mentioning that first of all, you couldn't go to theatres or galleries, because they were closed. So, all the content that you could watch or experience - was online. So-to-say, "what art is needed?" – was turning in my head. I was walking in circles for quite some time, coping with the situation in various ways and trying to convince myself that I need to keep going.

One day I had a thought – "what if this time is for stopping?" – that quite fast built itself in "What if this time is for changing the patterns, revisiting thinking and inner systems? What if this time is for… healing, cleaning and getting to know yourself?"

The idea of healing was giving some calmness and stability. It was calming my running mind about what art I would like to create in these times and possible the future. When you think about healing in performance making – it slightly changes the perspective and suggests another approach. You do not need to produce anything, to try to keep going with the realisation of ideas that you had, fighting over various obstacles. It is enough to find yourself in a present moment and scan your inner system for transformation. It is enough to be. And then work with that as a material. Later on, as you are about to read, thinking on healing led me to the concept of "Inner dramaturgies", which is (in my thinking) very closely related to the healing. Not to take the dramaturgy from somewhere else, somewhere outside an individual's physical realm, but to shift the focus to a person's (or people) inner self. Starting from thinking, crossing body and finishing with somatic. The material (with the both-part's agreement) later can be used in constructing a dramaturgy.

To give a better understanding of the concept – I refer to a conventional therapy. Just think about it. Someone (usually a psychologist or psychotherapist) is there for you, but he/she/they are not filling the room. They are there and they are listening. You are filling the room with conscious, subconscious minds, emotions, triggers etc. Consequently, you might feel a bit lighter, easier, better (add yours) immediately or after some time. Even if you shared something that is not in your conscious mind yet - during the process you

might think: "oh, wait? What did I just say?" which could lead you to a better self-understanding, which then could explain some of your patterns that you were using in your daily life. It might work as a relief as well. When you unlock something that you felt was locked for a long time. "Inner Dramaturgies" has the same pattern. It gave me the ground for my latest performances created in Academy of Performing arts Prague.

I didn't know back then how it could be applied to performativity or if that could be applied (and I am still learning), but the starting point and the direction were clear.

3 Healing

When I first started digging into healing and tried to unlock what it is – I understood that there are a lot of various definitions of healing and it is related with other big components such as – trust, belief, wholeness, spirituality, suffering, transformation (could be found more if following other definitions).

Table 2. Definitions of Healing and Codes

Respondent	Definitions	Themes	Subthemes
Cassell	"Making whole again"	Wholeness	Transformation
Kubler-Ross	"Becoming whole again"	Wholeness	Loss/Isolation
Saunders	"Finding wholeness"	Wholeness	Suffering
Inui	"Well-being and function"	Narrative	Continuity
Siegel	"A state of mind"	Narrative	Personal
Hammerschlag	"A harmony between the mind, the body and the spirit"	Spirituality	Reconciliation
Stephens	"A spiritual experience"	Spirituality	Transcendence

Story line: Healing is the personal experience of the transcendence of suffering.

Image 1. Table from Thomas R. Egnew, EdD, LICSW book "The Meaning Of Healing: Transcending Suffering"

Thomas R. Egnew's see's healing as "an intensely personal, subjective experience involving a reconciliation of the meaning an individual ascribes to distressing events with his or her perception of wholeness as a person".[8]

Where "to be whole as a person is to be whole amongst others. <…> wholeness of personhood as involving physical, emotional, intellectual, social, and spiritual aspects of human experience".[9]

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[8] Egnew, Thomas R. 2005, *'The meaning of healing: transcending suffering.'* Annals of family medicine vol. 3,3: 255-62. doi:10.1370/afm.313. Accessed May 6, 2022, https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1466870/
[9] Ibid.

So, under the term of healing we have terms spanning spirituality, wholeness, subjective personal experience. During my research and healing related works – "PULSE" and "REST", I have chosen to try treating healing as a process happening on a metalevel (a level or degree – of understanding, existence, etc. – which is higher and often more abstract than those levels at which a subject, etc., is normally understood or treated)[10]. As a result, that has happened because of one or another circumstances, where all the above-mentioned components were involved.

Let's imagine a massage session. The one who takes it, experiences various emotions, meets his / her / their painful parts in the body, is aware of one or another body part the giver is working on and most probably the healing is happening in the very moment or/and as a result. I remember how my father, who has been suffering from immense back pain, experienced an intense course of massages. After each one of them he said he felt a release and as a result – he is not experiencing pain anymore. Now, imagine we invite the audience to observe these sessions as a repetitive, durational performance. The setting is: a performer is laying on the bed, the masseur working on his back. The performer is making noises out of pain and trying to release the tensions here and there (not acting them). This performance happens two times in a week for a month. Would you describe it as a performance? In my understanding, some of the audience could relate to it and some of them couldn't – pretty much the same as with any piece of art. Probably because of the previous experience they had or they hadn't (in this case, back pain, to be concrete).

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[10] Oxford dictionary. *Metalevel.* Accessed May 6, 2022, https://www.lexico.com/definition/metalevel.

Consequently, I have started asking myself if it would be possible to make a performance out of healing qualities that would affect the audience in a present moment or after the performance. To make a performance out of a sequence of movements where a performer's focus would be on internal sensations and tuning in to their own personal and physical experience. This is in opposition to other dance techniques where your focus is on shaping and forming your body, which is choreographed in certain ways for an audience to look at. Can the focus and a real work of the performer on any given stage affect / invite audience members to tune with their bodies differently?

3.1. Dancing as healing

During this process I have been researching dance, psychological, philosophical, science-related papers such as "Your power to heal. Resolving Psychological Barriers to Your Physical Health" by Henry Grayson, PhD, "The healing power of movement", "Dance - the Sacred Art: The Joy of Movement as Spiritual Practice" by Cynthia Winton-Henry, "The Handbook of Body Psychotherapy and Somatic Psychology" by Gustl Marlock, Halko Weiss, Courtenay Young, Michael Soth and many others.

What are the components to create a performative experience, and how to invite people to become part of the experiment-performance-ritual? Meaning to tune in with their bodily presence.

In a parallel to mechanisms of healing, I have started looking around and researching tools that were and still are used for healing. Since at this time my main focus was on the human body – the closest discipline to research was movement.

Dancing was always a great tool for healing. It was and still is used in a lot of rituals in different nations. People are dancing on different occasions and while celebrating something at the same time they are releasing some negativity or some emotions they don't want to feel.[11]

"Dance has been a powerful tool for self-healing through many life experiences and facilitates going to places that could not have been reached otherwise. Whenever I have gotten stuck, some part of me will begin to move, dance, tap, even if only intellectually, I do it because it takes me back into the Light". [12]

Roots of dancing as a healing practice date back millennia and could be found in almost every culture. Dance has been used throughout history to tell a story, recreate myths, and connect with spirits or the Divine, as ritual or prayer and specifically for healing. Many different types of dances are still in practise in different nations – "The dance of the seasons; The dance of the planets; The dance of the peptides (Candice Pert); Moon dance; Sun dance; The dance of time" and many others that could be found explained in Susan Rueppel's article "The Healing Power of Dance".[13]

One of the first modern dance therapies, also known as Dance Movement Therapy or Expressive Movement was developed in the United States in the 1940s and it gave a background for many dance practises to appear.[14]

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[11] Mackrell, Judith R. 2020, *"Dance"*. Encyclopedia Britannica. Accessed April 19, 2022 https://www.britannica.com/art/dance. Accessed 22 January 2022.
[12] Rueppel S. Ph.D *"The Healing Power of Dance"*. (p.18) Accessed May 6, 2022 https://n.b5z.net/i/u/8000224/f/The_Healing_Power_of_Dance_by_Susan_Rueppel.pdf
[13] Ibid.
[14] Gustl Marlock, Halko Weiss, Courtenay Young, Michael Soth. 2015, *"The Handbook of Body Psychotherapy and Somatic Psychology"* North Atlantic Books.

3.1.1. Body-mind centring (BMC)

We have a lot of various practices for healing and it's nothing new. Starting from very simple breathing practises, body-mind centring to ecstatic dance or raving ("spiritual healing in Western subcultures"[15])

<u>Our body moves as our mind moves.</u> The qualities of any movement are a manifestation of how our mind is expressed through the body at that moment. Changes in the quality of movements indicate that the mind has shifted focus in the body. So, we find that movement can be a way to observe the expressions of the mind through the body, and it can also be a way to affect changes in the body-mind relationship. In BMC, "centring" is a process of balancing, not a place of arrival. This balancing is based on dialogue, and the dialogue is based on experience.

The study of BMC includes both the cognitive and experiential learning of the body systems - skeleton, ligaments, muscles, fascia, fat, skin, organs, endocrine glands, nerves, fluids; breathing and vocalisation; the senses and the dynamics of perception; developmental movement (both human infant development and the evolutionary progression through the animal kingdom); and psychophysical integration[16].

3.1.2. Ecstatic dance

Ecstatic dance is one of the well-known practices that are closely related to releasing and healing. I participated in my very first ecstatic dance session in 2018 in Germany. At that time, it was a completely new experience for me. There was some guidance at the

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[15] Hutson, Scott R. 2000, *Anthropological Quarterly* Vol. 73, No. 1. pp. 35 (15 pages). Published By: The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research
[16] Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen *"An introduction to body-mind centring".*

very beginning by a professional dancer, who is practising it and then the whole session was on the bodies moving in the space. She told us: "be aware of your wants, if you want to make a connection – please go, if you want to keep dancing on your own – just kindly say goodbye to a person you've been dancing with (non-verbally). Follow the music and have fun". And then you are on the individual journey with yourself and your body-mind set. That's pretty much the same as people do while raving.

Ecstatic comes from two Latin words: ex (meaning apart) and stasis (meaning standing) – indicating a state in which we are symbolically 'standing apart' from ourselves – separated from the dense, detailed and self-centred layers of our identities which we normally focus on and obsess over and reconnected with something more primal and more necessary: our common human nature. Ecstatic Dance is a form of dynamic meditation, whereby the music is the teacher; there is no structure or steps to follow, you simply move in the way your body tells you to. The events are alcohol-free, talk-free spaces featuring either live DJs or playlists curated by renowned Ecstatic Dance DJs, with a variety of genres ranging from Acoustic, to Reggae, to Hip Hop, to Psytrance and everything in between. Whether you're any good at dancing or not is irrelevant — this is simply about letting go, "releasing the beast", and having some fun.

"In the beginning, movement is random and without any real purpose. It is the result of reflexes being triggered and the baby's body responding."

What ecstatic dance teaches is that it does not matter if you are good at dancing or not. We all have our way of dancing.

Following German artist Joseph Beuys's logic that we are all artists, visual artist who combines performance and sculpture Janine Antoni suggested that we are all choreographers.[17] I would like to suggest that we all are dancers first of all. Just think about our heart beating 60-100 times a minute, or the pulse appearing in our wrists, think about our moving bodies on a daily basis – remember them when we are in a rush, or after coffee, or in the sun. Your body feels and acts differently depending on the circumstances. All of these components are dancing differently and if you are noticing them dancing – according to Janine Antoni – you are a choreographer. "When we arrange the furniture in our house, we are creating choreography. When we decide which shoes to put on in the morning, we are creating choreography. When we speak softly, requiring the listener to lean forward, we are creating choreography".[18]

3.1.3. Somatic

In the latest work of mine – "REST"[19] - which was presented in the Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, I was mostly working on somatic qualities (to be more precise – cellular breathing). Somatic comes from "soma", it "does not mean 'body'; it means 'Me, the bodily being'… "Somas are a kind of living, organic being which you are at this moment, in this place where you are. Soma is everything that is you". [20]

Somatic work in the context of dance basically means that you focus on internal sensations and tune in to your own personal and physical experience; this is in

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[17] Antoni J. '*Choreography.'* Accessed April 20, 2022
http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/choreography/janine-antoni
[18] Ibid.
[19] Installation – somatic movement-based performance "REST". 2021. Created in Academy of Performing Arts in Prague with Sai Sai and Petra Hauerova.
[20] Hanna, T. 1970. *"Bodies in Revolt: A Primer in Somatic Thinking"* (p. 35) New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

opposition to other dance techniques where your focus is on shaping and forming your body. Somatic explorations invite an attentive dialogue with your own body, working in your mind's eye, and listening through other sensors than your ears.

The principles of somatic have developed out of multi-disciplinary theories emerging from direct experiential explorations of the body, breath, and states of being. Somatic disciplines are forms of complementary medicine often referred to as body therapies, or even as the 'intuitive restoration of self'.

Somatic, according to various researches such as Thomas Hanna, Don Hanlon Johson, Martha Eddy, can be used not only in the field of dance, but it can help on daily-life. It can be used as a tool for building body awareness, proprioception, neuroception. It can help in awakening creativity or releasing the negative emotions.

3.2. Healing qualities in the performance

A dancer friend of mine told me that all dancing could be about healing – even if it is meant to be performed or to be choreographed – its roots are in listening to your body, expanding, exploring, going beyond your limits. In other words – a dancer's focus is always in and out with a transformative change afterwards. A contemporary dancer does not think of himself as destined to reside in a body wrap that defines him as topography: he lives his corporeality in the manner of a 'multi geographic relationship with himself and the world', a mobile network of sensory connections that draws a landscape of intensities.

My personal first touch with healing in the performance making, was working together with the Thai dancer and choreographer Pichet Klunchun in Greece, in Epidaurus

Lyceum in 2018. In the series of workshops, we were combining Thai dance traditions and working on minimal movement, Thai massage traditions with the aim to awaken sensibility. By the end of two weeks, Pichet decided to make an experiment / performance for more than 70 people in the big hall in Epidaurus. His idea was to invite people to observe how we (performers) are doing a massage for a person we individually pick up from the audience. He believed that even if you are observing the massage session-performance your body could tune in and be transformed. The focus of the performer and the tension release from the one taking it – could create a calming experience for the observers too. The experience lasted around 45 minutes and afterwards the room felt different – you could feel that the focus of the audience was shifted towards a gentle and sensible being.

Roza Moshtaghi (IR/NO) - choreographer and performer in her latest work "Bouncing Narratives", which is an interdisciplinary collaborative project, centres around trauma that cannot be expressed in words. One of the main intriguing elements of this performance is location. Performers are moving on a trampoline and the audience is watching it sitting on the ground. It changes watching perspective – you (as an audience) are not watching it in front of you, but it's happening above you (which also makes sense in terms of the topic). In a 40-minutes long performance, Roza stages minimal and repetitive movements, which happen in stages: reaching unison, becoming monster-like figures and finally going back to being in sync movements. She uses bouncing and sliding qualities, which gives the performance some light and easy qualities, even though the topic is not light or easy. Rhythm and speed become the main components and they drive the performance towards a trance-like intensity.

The same element (playing with rhythm and speed) is vivid in Michelle Rizzo performance "HIGHER.xtn" created in 2015, which explores how nightclubs offer dancers a space for self-expression and communion. He considers how dance can facilitate states of flow, totality, and transcendence, and acknowledges the connection between dance and para-religious practices.

At first, the show was presented in a theatre and performed by three performers. Later it was moved to The Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam and now it's performed by performers ranging from two to fifteen in different galleries.

In "HIGHER.xtn" Michelle Rizzo plays with repetitive movements (such as transferring body weight, stepping, turning) that performers perform in sync and then in unison, making a single body. There is hypnotic electronic music (author: Lorenzo Senni) playing all the time and giving a drive for the performance to seek a trance-like intensity. Although I couldn't find Michelle Rizzo talking about healing quality in this performance, it definitely has clubbing, and rave elements in it. This is a "spiritual healing in modern western subcultures".[21]

Another example is "CocoonDance" company production "NO BODY BUT ME" which premiered in 2016. As the description claims "NO BODY BUT ME is a tribute to the body and the movement, a research about the body language and the emotions that it triggers".[22] This 50-minutes lasting performance looks like a very much present moment-based individual research on differently shaped bodies. Of course, it is well rehearsed. Movement qualities such as shaking, repetition, body-mind centring, body

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[21] Hutson, Scott R. 2000, *Anthropological Quarterly* Vol. 73, No. 1, pp. 35 (15 pages). Published By: The George Washington University Institute for Ethnographic Research
[22] https://www.cocoondance-magazine.de/en/productions/no-body-but-me-2016/

expansion are used widely in the performance. Here the body becomes the main actor, the medium between the performer and the spectator. Oscillating between gesture and ecstasy, the pictures of the body bridge the gap between the stage and the auditorium and address the recipient body directly. "NO BODY BUT ME", a little bit similar to "MOMENTUM" (created by the same dance company, premiered in 2016), it is focusing more on the process than a result, more on an open studio like work, where an audience is invited to tune in and to complete an image, to research with the authors. Then, I believe, it becomes more about experiencing a show, being in the moment with performers, in the space, learning and researching with and from the performers. That is where my focus also was going to when I moved this exploration to working in a studio.

4. PULSE, ROOM in 286/75 & APARTMENT

In this section I will briefly present my three latest works that were created during the COVID-19 pandemic. All of them were made in or for digital platforms and all of them are crossing the main topics I was researching during the past few years – healing, performativity, movement and media.

4.1. PULSE

The performance I made in DISK theatre (Prague) in 2021 under the name "PULSE" has started its' development in 2019. Back then together with a professional dancer, friend of mine Viktorija Ambrazaitė we have started developing a concept for the series of workshops on being with self, body in the space with others. [23]

Image 2. Moment from a workshop lead by Viktorija
Ambrazaitė in Kaunas, 2019

We have chosen to present the somatic movement and took the meditative approach, where participants had enough time to explore their inner selves and they didn't need to do anything else. Just to be with self and listen to their bodies. These few days were

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[23] Series of workshops in Kaunas City Chamber Theatre organised by Viktorija Ambrazaitė and Arnis Aleinikovas, 2019

intense on an individual level. Participants (all of them were acting students or graduates) were giving feedback that it was difficult not to act – "I felt the need to do something and at the beginning, it was hard for me to convince myself that I don't need to do anything else, just be. Be there as it is and don't cover it in any way. It's difficult to be at the present moment, because you become vulnerable and you start seeing yourself in a different way" – the participant wrote in the feedback. The methodology of the workshop later was applied to the teenagers that I was working with in the middle of 2021 and with the performers that we were working on the performance PULSE.

Before I started working on PULSE, I was exploring the concept of trust and the lack of it. I was questioning if it is a choice (brain activity) or more like a feeling that we get to trust someone and why a lot of people (me included) are struggling with trusting others. While working with my body (using the method I described above) and digging into the science of trust, I realised I am more interested in the lack of it, which led me to trauma. To be more precise – sexual assault. I remember I have started thinking why is it interesting to me, do I want to speak about it, do I want it to be personal? If yes – then why should someone come and see it? For quite some time, I tried to answer these questions to myself, but the gut feeling was strong enough to keep me rolling. I managed to trust the decision even without knowing why it needs to be done now. So, I made the choice to go with the development instead of being stubborn on the very first idea that I had in mind.

At the end of 2019 in my social media accounts I opened up an invitation to share sexual assault stories with me. Some people replied asking if they could send it via e-mail, some people needed to have a dialogue in a physical space. At the beginning of 2020 I had four people confess (they all were male 16-28) and they all asked me not to

share their identity. That was the moment I started thinking how messed up this is. Think about it, people experienced one of the most crucial trauma in their lives, which according to the psychologists, affects all of your system, and they are not feeling – at least ok – to say: "yep, this has happened to me". At this moment, I saw that this could become not only a piece of art, but it also has a social, even a political message that is already written in itself. "The WHO in 2002 estimated that 73 million boys and 150 million girls under the age of 18 years had experienced various forms of sexual violence"[24], "According to Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU, 215,000 violent sexual crimes were recorded by police in 2015, with nearly 80,000 being rape."[25]

Image 3. PULSE rehearsal for the camera. Director Arnis Aleinikovas; performers – Lara Hereu, Yu-En Ping.

This is how I started working on PULSE, which in 2021 became a DISK theatre production. In the middle of 2020 (*already in the period of COVID-19*) we found out that the theatre approved our application and they are giving us some budget and infrastructure to start working on the performance. Back then people were predicting that the catastrophe of COVID wouldn't last longer than a year, so together with the artist

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[24] Singh MM, Parsekar SS, Nair SN. 2014, *"An epidemiological overview of child sexual abuse"*. J Family Med Prim Care. 2014;3(4):430-435. doi:10.4103/2249-4863.148139

[25] https://www.dailysabah.com/life/2019/02/23/sexual-violence-against-women-on-the-rise-in-eu-us-data-say

Mara Ingea we started dreaming on how it could happen. We created a set and the concept for PULSE in a physical space. At first, we were thinking in terms of a durational, sensual performance, where audience could walk in a theatre and found themselves in different installations, could listen to the confessions, explore audio, visual, physical installations and see the movement sequence, which should be the combining element and bringing the physicality in the performance. Unfortunately, as we all already know now – predictions of how long COVID situation will last – were not right. Or at least - not mine.

I am writing this paper at the beginning of 2022 and we are still in this situation. Governments in the EU are making new restrictions, Shanghai with 25 milion people is in the strict lockdown again [26] and the meme "this is twenty twenty too" makes more sense.

During the creation of PULSE, parallelly I was working with other two performances that were created because of the circumstances of COVID-19. "ROOM IN 286/75" that you will soon read about – was meant to be a live streaming solo performance on twitch. My idea (because of the strict lockdown in the country) was to stream from my room, share my presence and accompany myself and others. At the same time, I was questioning and researching the meaning of performance and performativity, dramaturgy and communication via distance. Which later led me to the biggest experience called "APART MENT". I invited 5 people to my apartment to live there and be with the cameras for 24 hours. This experiment was streaming online on twitch platform.

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[26] BBC. 2022. *China Covid: Clashes in Shanghai over lockdown* evictions. Accessed May 6, 2022, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-61117528.

4.2. ROOM IN 286/75

I have started constructing "ROOM IN 286/75"[27] (the numbers were the house and flat numbers I was in at that time) from the feeling of loneliness and helplessness. It was the second half of 2020 and we were still in a huge lockdown in Prague. At that time, I was questioning a lot of things, starting from personal ones, like "why am I here" to relativity, time, meaning and digital spaces. The very clear tasks that I had for myself with this streaming was to stay in the moment as honest as I can, accompany myself and others in these weird times and explore the performativity through the being body-mind set.

I made a clear decision for myself – to try not to know what I will be doing in the stream and let myself find ways on the camera. Check if the audience (which were unknown to me – there were some nicknames on twitch platform and they could be really whoever) could influence my being, propose something and if that could lead us to a real meeting through the screen.

I have decided to do my first streaming on 14th October 2020. It reminds me a little bit of these times when I had an "ask.fm" account, where people were asking questions and I was free to answer or not. I was thinking about planning the time when I will be streaming (*first streaming was about 1 hour and 15 minutes and then it expanded till almost 5 hours*), but then I decided to stay with the flow. I guess the most important thing to do – not to hide from the "talk and doing list" (like a choreography or mise-en-scène), just be there and trust in myself, trust my body, trust my emotions, trust wholeness and the process.

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[27] Edited footage: https://youtu.be/JvG_HEXWebM

At the same time, I was curious about the performative action. What do we call performative action and if anything could be a performative action? I was questioning – does setting the streams' day and time, turning on camera and stretching could be seen as performative? Who decides that and where does it happen? (referring to perception).

I was curious about being no less. How the camera influences your being, how other people watching influences your being, do you start acting / producing / performing for them, or are you confident with being with them, being as you are today and where those both qualities could meet.

In my first session, I was streaming for more than an hour, more precisely, 1 hour and 19 minutes and I had 2 people as an audience on average. It was changing from 1, to 4 at maximum.

It was weird and hard.

At first, I was hoping that the audience will be in contact – meaning, they will respond to my questions or will be willing to tune in, by saying "hi" or something. They did not. I knew they were watching but no one said anything. So "what to do?" – I thought and I tried to focus on myself. Focus on being in this room. "Be you" – was in my head.

"But how do you do it, when somebody is watching?" and "how to do it, when you are moderating it?" and… "wait… what does it mean to be *me*?".

So, I was not just a person being filmed in my room, but also a moderator, or editor of a life stream – adding text, changing cameras, changing angles and constantly checking for a "hi" from someone. I wrote "I guess this is a normal human reaction, to be in a contact and to seek for a connection, because at the end – we are social creatures".

During the first streaming, I found myself serving or producing my being for them. More like thinking what to do and then doing, which was going against my first idea. "Maybe I will do some stretching" and then stretching, "maybe I will meditate", and then meditate. But always (in my head) being in two parts. Body was trying to meditate and stretch, but the mind was worrying about the streaming and about "someone is watching, so show something or say something, since they are watching, because you said it's a performance".

During the stream I had a lot of thoughts that were appearing in my head, but I could not really catch them all, so I was picking some of them and while using OBS [28] was making them as a question, making as highlight for conversation (which did not happen). The question that I have decided to ask this time was: "What do you prefer to follow? A) body; b) mind". As I said – nobody replied.

Since it was my very first streaming – I did not know how it worked in a sense of body-mind state. I jumped straight to the waters I knew nothing about. After the first streaming I have stated some key questions or areas of interest for myself, that I was following in all the future showings.

1.   What is the camera influence for a person being in a room? When/if the person being in a room starts acting / performing or serving something for an audience, for people watching it? Performative being. Acting. Non-acting.

2.   Does "a room" become an installation or a scenography for people who are watching? Does "a room" become an installation, scenography or other place, than a room for me, being in it?

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3.   What is a performative action in this case? Movements and things that we are doing on the very basis of our lives – are they performative and when they become performative and where do they become performative – for a person doing them or people watching them?

4.   Finding new ways to communicate with people (on a human level)

5.   …and audience – (is there a difference?)

6.   Communicating with people in "guest1563" names. How does it feel to communicate with people you know nothing about while you are sharing your wholeness and vulnerability.

7.   Bessel van der Kolk in his book "The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma" states that "Because of mirror neurons <…> we take not only the movements of other people, but also emotional state and intentions" [29]. Where "mirror neurons are neurons that are activated both when an animal performs an action and when it observes another performing the same action". [30] Is it possible to influence another person through verbal communication – in a chat – being anonymous.

8.   Dramaturgy and the content. Content of the streaming will be – me – Arnis Aleinikovas – a human being – sharing my presence with other people. And this action automatically becomes a performative action (?), because (following the basis of theatre, someone is doing something on so-called stage, someone is watching). So, in this sense I become a performer, and people in their rooms become an audience. The content, again, will be my body presence and mind presence which will come in questions or sentences that will be written using OBS and will appear on the stream.

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[29] Van der Kolk, Bessel A. 2015, *'The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma.'* New York, New York: Penguin Books. (p. 103)
[30] *Mirror Neurons.* Accessed May 4, 2022, https://www.neuroscientificallychallenged.com/glossary/mirror-neurons

9.   Audience response. Since I will have questions, thoughts – that are appearing in my head (which might be philosophical, sociological, or simple ones) and I will be sharing it with people watching – when the audience responds? If response. To what questions do they respond, and what can you say about the audience based on their reactions?

10. Platform. "Twitch streaming and video games go hand in hand — giving millions of viewers and broadcasters a way to interact and share creative content with others." [31] I am aware that I am not streaming content which might be usually found on twitch. How does it affect (if affect) people watching? What does it do to my audience? Do I have any audience from the "gaming" world?

11. Image and how could you play with that while streaming? What is an image? Does text become a part of the image? How can the image change the meaning or create a meaning or destroy a meaning?

4.3. APART MENT

"ROOM IN 286/75" was a starting point and my first step for my still on-going research on the synergy of being and performativity. During the same lockdown I had an idea to extend the practise and to make an online streaming, durational, experimental performance "APART MENT"[32]. The main idea of the performance was to invite 5 different people to one apartment and stream their presence for 24 hours. Following the "ROOM" logic and the need for physical connection (created by COVID-19), I invited them to explore their own presence while being filmed and being observed by people you maybe don't even know.

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[31] *What is twitch?* Accessed May 6, 2022, https://www.digitaltrends.com/gaming/what-is-twitch/
[32] Edited footage: https://youtu.be/ieENZ1_GYCw

Apart (of two or more people or things) separated by a specified distance in time or space) + ment (forming nouns expressing the means or result of an action) = Apartment (in North American definition) is "a suite of rooms forming one residence; a flat".

This experiment was inspired by Agnė Matulevičiūtė and Saulė Bliuvaitė performance "SYNTH PORN" and GOB SQUAD "Room service".

Performance is blurring the lines in between reality and fiction, is questioning performing and its meaning, focuses on physicality and relation between people in the apartment and people behind the screen.

We did two sessions. In this writing I will focus on the first one, but here I want to mention that the second one was 3 hours streaming, where three performers were streaming from their own rooms and they were researching their own individual connection and relation with a camera, self and performativity.

Image 3. APART MENT live streaming, second camera. Being in: Mara Ingea, Yu-En Ping, Arnis Aleinikovas. Captured by Cristina Maldonado.

Following the ROOM 286/75 experience I was curious to broaden it, to build it up and to open this experience for other people. The most intriguing thing was, what could

happen, how the connections could develop between performers being inside the apartment, how cameras and people watching would influence our being and how it will be approached by the audience. I did not expect that anyone would watch us 24 hours, but on average we had 4 people watching us all the time (even at night-time).

During the process of APART MENT, a lot of different sub-topics were crossed. In this process I decided to be a performer, a director, and a person, responsible for all the technical parts. Lesson number one for the future self – decide what you want to do and don't do everything.

People that I invited to a project never had this type of experience before and they did not feel comfortable with that, so I felt a sort of need also to be inside with them, for bringing this "it's ok", "it's not that hard", "maybe it's even fun" energy. I was following the previously found concept "inner dramaturgies", where I let the dramaturgy to appear and to build itself. This is why I was consciously not giving "straight directions". Meaning, the bigger part of the streaming time was not directed, we did not have clear tasks. I invited performers to have one performative task during the streaming and we set time for it. Valtteri was playing his music, Eglė supposed to sing, Mara was making something out of paper, Ping was giving and taking a massage, I proposed to do a breathing ritual in the morning. All of us had one performative task (everyone individually has chosen their performative task. While doing this they already framed how they perceive performativity). All the rest of the experience was not "planned" or "made" as much as it can stay this way. Of course, we were planning meal for dinner, we were planning what we will do all together, we were setting a lot of things inside, but my point was to still let

them (and myself including) be in between the scheduled tasks. The "me performing" and the "me as a human being" merging.

The questions that were around my mind were pretty much the same as in "ROOM 286/75" - what is this being in between performing and not performing? How does it feel and how does this experience ground? Does the fact that the camera is streaming live and someone is watching you doing any action – makes you a performer? Or does the concept, the idea that this is a performance makes it performance?

What are the performative actions, who describes them this way? Do all the actions that performers are doing are performative actions? Or if all this is a personal matter of a perception?

"The world itself can be used in two different ways. It could refer to our experience of seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and smelling <…> and it could also be used to refer to the processes that allow us to extract information from the patterns of energy that impinge on our sense organs".[33]

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[33] Brian Rogers. 2017, *'Perception. A very short introduction'* (p.76), Oxford Press.

5. In performance making

There are different approaches to what art is. The one that I was researching and interested in the most in this period - was "art as someone's perception of reality". More precisely, a fragment of someone's reality, where an artist - mostly a human being who some-why is sharing their perception of reality, fragment of their reality and perception with everyone that is interested or curious. "To perceive is an action, something that we actively do, but not always consciously. Perception is following a chain of activities which are bound together: Action – Attraction – Processing – Perception – Recognition – Action and so on."[34]

Artist could also be described as the one who is opening the door for you to reflect, experience, participate, feel, think etc.

It's not necessary for the artist to explain their artwork. In other words - art, emotions, experience, life is always personal. Even if an artist decides to tell you about what is it to him/her/them - it might resonate completely different to you. This is why sometimes it is interesting not to know what art is about, or what artist wanted to do, because while not knowing, you are free to create your own interpretations. You are not watching, experiencing, participating through the already pre-made lens.

It's like watching an exhibition in the art gallery. Of course, you know the name of the exhibition or a little bit of the concept and artist itself, but me, personally, when I am walking in the gallery, I am consciously not reading the description first. I watch the art and make my own meanings, interpretations, my own art, and then I "check" if it was

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[34] Deimling, J. 2019. *"Intertwining bodies. Performance art studies #66 Your perception might not be my reality"*. Published by PAS.

what the artist had in mind. This gap in between artist and observer was always curiosity evoking.

Marina Abramovic, Serbian performance artist, in her work "512 hours" was inviting the audience to an empty gallery and staying with them from 10am to 6pm, 6 days a week. Here, she was changing the idea or our imagination of what a gallery is and what we call a performance. People at the beginning of the show were asked to put their digital devices into the lockers, got headphones that were blocking the sound and that's it. But it's not "that's it". The performance itself – is an audience experience and it is absolutely personal and unique. I can imagine people's faces (performance was made in 2014) when they realised that there is nothing to watch in the gallery in which you usually come to watch something.

Unfortunately, I did not have an opportunity to be in the performance, but this proves to me, that at the end - <u>art is happening in the one who is observing</u> and because of particular knowledge, experience, preference, beliefs, ability to tune in or not to etc. - they will interpret and embody it in different ways.

Thinking about performance and performativity is way more complex than it might look from the first sight. There are a lot of different articles, researches, ideas, concepts of what defines what, what might be theatre and what might be a performance. What are the main differences, and what might be the borders in defining them. When I was entering the school for a Masters' degree, even now, I am a little bit confused when thinking about performance and theatre, their definitions and pricinples.

The description of performativity first was used by the philosopher John Langshaw Austin.[35] Digging into the nature of linguistics, he was writing that performative statements define an action and "affirm" the social reality while creating it.

Judith Butler (1988) is also using a concept of performativity. Describing gender as a result of repetitive, culturally formed and styled performative actions. She is pointing into the body, its gestures, movements, different consolidated, gender related illusions. Performativity, according to J. Butler, is "a result dependent on context, which is always changing and is socially temporary". [36]

Performative objects or surrogate performers could be objects too. Monika Lipšic in her master thesis work "Performative object problem in performing art"[37] is analysing the meaning of performative objects in art. She is analysing the Erico Mangiono and Marie de Brugerolle in 2003 curated exhibition called "Not to Play with Dead Things". In the exhibition we can see the objects that originally were created by artists working in performance field, but in the gallery they are detached from the original context (performance art) and highlighted as independently performative.

Various art researchers (Lehman, 2010; Schechner, 2003, Fischer – Lichte, 2013) are saying that it is very hard to unambiguously state or describe what performance is. In contemporary art – most of the time only self-awareness of an artist can be classified as a final instance. Performance is, what an artist, states being a performance.

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[35] Fischer-Lichte, E. 2013. 'Performatyvumo estetika'. Vilnius: menų spaustuvė, Aidai.
[36] Butler, J. 1988. 'Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory.' Theatre Journal 40 (4): 519–531.
[37] Lipšic, M. 2013. 'Performatyvių objektų problema performanso mene'. Master thesis. Vilnius: VDA.

Once I heard: "performance needs to be rehearsed", but then a performance artist Marina Abramovic in her lecture "Performance. Past. Present. Future"[38] said: "I don't rehearse my work. Because if I would, I wouldn't be performing". For example, US performance artist of Taiwanese background Tehching Hsieh in his life made 5 durational performances. Each of them lasted one year. His "Cage peace", for example, lasted from 29 September 1978 through 30 September 1979. The artist locked himself in an 11.5-by-9-by-8-foot (3.5 by 2.7 by 2.4 m) wooden cage, furnished only with a wash basin, lights, a pail, and a single bed. During the year, he did not allow himself to talk, to read, to write, or to listen to radio and TV. None of the actions were rehearsed. But at the same time, theatre related performances or performances that (I assume) were created to be performed for more than a time and involves more people in the process – yes, they need to be rehearsed. For example, Lukasz Twarkowski performance "RESPUBLIKA". Or at least they need to be discussed in terms of rules. For example, Mara's Ingea participatory performance "Do you know a place that doesn't exist anymore?". Accordingly, it becomes imperious to define the art work and to be clear of the principles that are being used in a creation process.

From the audience perspective, whichever performance you would be watching, no matter in a physical or digital space - is happening on the internal, individual level in the first place. "Everything you've experienced has altered the physical structure of your brain – from the expression of genes to the positions of molecules to the architecture of neurons. Your family of origin, your culture, your friends, your work, every movie you've watched, every conversation you've had – these have all left their footprints in your

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[38] Marina's Abramovic lecture "Performance. Past. Present. Future" in Kaunas, 2022. Organised by Meno Parkas gallery and Kaunas 2022 – European capital of culture.

nervous system" [39]. We are also experiencing the performance on our sensorial level, where different thoughts, different actions that we see on the so-called stage, goes into our nervous system and through the nervous system it "makes sense" or doesn't "make sense". It calls different emotions, triggers different feelings or doesn't. This is why performance, in my understanding, in the first place is (again) an internal experience. I believe this also applies to an artist, not only the audience. Meaning – whenever an artist decides to do a performance / show / film etc. there is a personal need for them too.

Since I am coming from a so-called drama theatre, in my bachelor years I was presented mostly with Chekhov and Stanislavsky techniques. During my master studies I was thinking more in terms of presence, state of being, performative action and performance itself. Most of the time artists working in a conventional theatre or film are showing us their vision of life. In other words, it is a representation of life, a fragment of life. Some fragments or representations of life, mostly focusing or highlighting some social problem or dilemma that the audience is invited to watch and possibly rethink.

Now, when I am thinking in terms of performance – I am thinking about the real (meaning embodied and not a character based) experience the performer has and if it's a real experience – it also has different energy and impact to the audience. This makes the one watching it relate to the piece more personally and live it with their bodies. Judy Hussie-Taylor defining an installation says: "Installation is the act of putting some "thing" into place. It is utilitarian, pragmatic. Install the toilet. That said, installing the urinal

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[39] Eagleman, D. 2016. '*The Brain'.* Prestonpans, Scotland: Canongate Books. (p.46)

upside down is one of the great meditations of the twentieth century" [40]. I am pretty sure that the same could be applied to performance.

Performance not as a reproduction / imitation of reality, but fragment of reality itself

In the world full of cameras (pretty much all of us now have one in our pocket) the term "performance" is highly expanded. For example, whenever I see a human being taking a selfie on Charles Bridge in Prague – I am thinking that he, she or they are performing (creating a character a.k.a. social image or public persona) and sharing it with someone else, because whenever the picture is posted online you could see them going back to the physical reality and sometimes they really look like another human being. Or whenever you are on camera – your presence (unless you are a great actor) slightly changes. You become aware of the audience, of how you look, of the image of yourself, the self-judgement and of the content you want to share.

"Our states of consciousness are constantly shifting, sometimes steadily and sometimes abruptly. We are in a steady stream of influences both internal and external from which we filter a state that to most of us appears to be steady"[41]

In the very first class of dramaturgy that was run by MgA. Sodja Zupanc-Lotker, Ph.D in Academy of Performing Arts Prague, we were asked to bring 5/6 pictures that somehow makes sense to us. We were asked not to overthink, just choose and bring them in the

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[40] Judy Hussie-Taylor. '*Installation.*' Accessed May 5, 2022,
http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/installation/judy-hussie-taylor
[41] David Aldridge and Jorg Fachner *'Music and Altered States. Consciousness, transcendence, therapy and addiction'* p. 10

class. During the class we were asked to share them with others, put them on the ground or other surface and course-mates were asked to say out loud whatever that comes to their mind while watching the composition. Surprisingly, the pictures that we individually have chosen and the composition that we made (how we ordered them and in what form) were speaking to others in different ways. I was surprised and moved by the thought that the picture you are choosing can actually say a lot about the owner of it. "Your brain makes up its mind up to ten seconds before you realise it <…> We think our decisions are conscious, but these data show that consciousness is just the tip of the iceberg" [42]

See what you already have

(in my understanding, this is one of the principles of devised theatre)

You could see colours, shapes, content, the age of the material, some proposed a clear navigation (like a big map), some of them were mysterious and so on. This exercise back then got into my previous thinking about the bodies. Conventional theatre in my seeing and understanding is still a lot about telling the story and making things work in the sphere of illusion. Though my recent practice and research was pretty much based on reality and presence. I was questioning how we could read the elements and make them performative (or maybe they are already performative by themselves, like cooking) without making them look theatrical.

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[42] Smith, K. 2008, '*Brain makes decisions before you even know it.*' Nature. Accessed May 5, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1038/news.2008.751

5.1. Inner dramaturgies

The concept of "Inner dramaturgies" (I also refer to "dramaturgies of here and now") has started its' development in the process of "ROOM IN 286/75" and is based on individual and personal content. During this streaming and, later the PULSE, I was mainly collecting the personal thoughts and feelings in the very real time. This material became a main dramaturgy in the streaming sessions. That method later I used in the online streaming performance called "Fragmented Realities".

 "Fragmented Realities" is a performance specially made for the ZOOM platform and three performers. We have started working together, because that was a task from the Academy in the first place. At the beginning I didn't know what to do and I had no idea what to expect, because the background of education of every artist was different and on top of these unknown – we were working on ZOOM (meaning no physical contact). We had two weeks to make some sort of result. During the first rehearsals, I was checking the atmosphere and was trying to get to know them better. To do so, we were writing letters to each other, dancing (distantly), sharing ourselves and asking questions. We kept this exercise during almost all the rehearsals, which later became not only some personal exchange, but also the great support in the dramaturgy (some content from the letters were used in a performance). The first few days I was proposing to do some exercises while being in our own rooms. We did a slow, somatic movement session, which principles were applied to "PULSE" and "REST" performances too. The next day, I asked them to focus on their own and think about space and memory. "What does this space look like? What objects are there? Where do you choose to locate yourself? Are you in this space often? What does this space have to offer? Are there any corners in the space that you have never been? Is this a new space for you (maybe if it's

not your room). Where are you spending most of the time?" were navigating questions. I proposed to explore spaces through the body, reminding them to touch things and make it a conscious thought afterwards. How does it feel to touch different things and what different objects could tell you?

"While exploring the space be aware of your thoughts – are there any memories appearing? Do you judge them? How do they feel in your body?" – I have stated in the email and asked for a small presentation (up to 3 minutes) the next day.

Without any guidance and giving them complete freedom, they came up with the interesting, personal stories, thoughts and concepts that they wanted to develop. For example, Alžbeta was focusing on hate and the way she was speaking and being, I felt, was frustration-based. "Maybe we can use it?" I thought. Japanese artist Sai Sai was bringing the story of dead insects and was sharing quite vulnerable corners of her presence, she said: "When I see any sharp object, I am thinking of cutting some parts of my body". Jachym Sura was focusing on meditation and was exploring dreams. One rehearsal he came up with the dream of the birds the size of men. It had the darkish, dream-core aesthetics, which surprisingly made a perfect sense, while I was thinking how to combine all these different fragments of someone's reality. This is when I had started thinking in terms of "Fragmented Realities" and this is how the "Inner dramaturgies" were applied to this performance.

At that time ZOOM was used for almost every meeting, schools, business etc. The content that we had to me was proposing to talk about the other side of being on the screen. The one that you are not smiling at. Something that we do not usually see in these work or school related meetings. No one is talking about frustration, no one is

sharing their dreams, or vulnerability when on this or similar applications. We see just a fragment of someone's life. We see things a person chooses to share with us (even the way we put the camera and frame ourselves in the picture). And so, the dramaturgy and the content appeared during different exercises and sharing. It was a real (not created from any character perspective) present and personal experience.

On top of that, I couldn't ignore the fact that the presentation will be happening on ZOOM, which, back then, was quite a new platform for me. This led me to explore the application itself more. We assume that when we see a person on ZOOM – this moment is happening in real time. But actually, with the help of a few other applications – we can easily stream the pre-recorded images, sounds, we can change the picture and distort it. In other words, the reality in the digital world can be easily changed and manipulated (it is enough to think about the filters on Instagram). The idea of playing with the time and images that the audience sees made me think of Quantum Theory, which states that the future might be influencing the past. "We assume that the past influences the future. That's how we appeared to experience reality. But why can't the future influence the past? Take away the names of past and future if that helps you to think of this concept. So, what if the past influences the future and the future influences the past in an endless feedback loop?".[43]

[43] Mcrae, M. 2018 *'This Quantum Theory Predicts That The Future Might Be Influencing The Past'.*
Accessed May 6, 2022,
https://www.sciencealert.com/quantum-physics-theory-predicts-future-might-influence-the-past-retrocausality
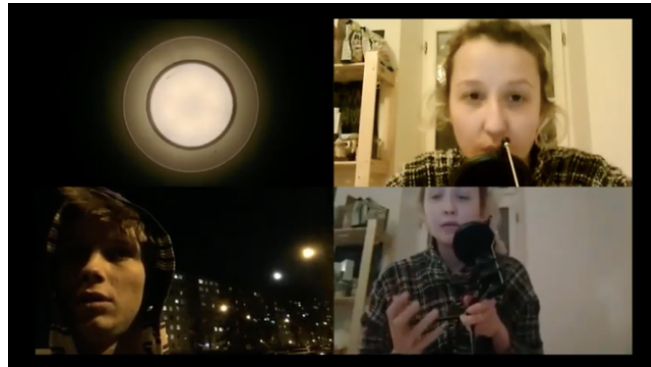
Image 4. Screenshot from an online streaming performance
"Fragmented Realities". Performers: Jachym Sura, Alžbeta
Novakova, Sai Sai.

During the performance audience is presented with different stories, but since the same image (dis)appears in four different windows – it becomes difficult to understand which one is real. If any of them are real. Nien-Ping Yu for Taiwanese press "The Affairs" wrote: "Through the editing of live streaming and pre-recorded images, the idea of "now" is distorted and disturbed. The audience is invited to create their own chaotic reality"[44]. So, at the end, this performance (in my understanding) became a complex structure, with personal dramaturgies (here I mean performers individual body-mind state, topics and concepts), the technology, which offered a complex form and tools (playing with the time, perception, real and fake image, sound) and even the science, which brought to this performance another layer. In the process of making it, together with the team (theatre actors Alžbeta Novakova, Jachym Sura and performer Sai Sai) we were researching and reflecting on non-linear dramaturgies, fragmentation of a reality that we are living in now and us as a constantly changing fragment. Where are we, when we open our phones to check our social media, weather, or email? Could we be in both

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[44] 于念平 (2021). '*Ďaleké divadlo*：疫情時代的東歐線上藝術節.' Accessed May 6, 2022,
https://www.theaffairs.com/daleke-divadlo：疫情時代的東歐線上藝術節/.

realities? How do we understand a reality today and how does it change when we are sharing it on ZOOM?

It is worth to mention that this performance has started developing from scratch. Me, as a director, I did not have any prepared script in advance. The script and dramaturgy, content, form and elements, appeared while playing and exploring different exercises and staying vulnerable and transparent. This, I feel for now, is the most important thing to me as an artist. To open the people I am working with, create a trustworthy environment, where everyone could bring the piece of themselves and create together.

Furthermore, here is the moment where healing enters the performativity. The topics that every actor has chosen were real and personal. While allowing them to explore these topics, giving space to talk it through or act it through – you are giving a chance to heal. In other words, you can be as you are (unlike the conventional theatre – where you are asked to create a character and at some point, leave yourself behind). You are transforming the one or another experience into something else. So-to-say, a director and a dramaturg appear in the role of a listener. They are creating a trustworthy environment, where performers could open up themselves, observe & note <u>what is happening</u> (focusing also on the energy level), <u>what content is being shared</u> (counting the verbal one and a not-verbal), <u>what tendencies and patterns are repeating</u>, <u>what is the aim of an individual and collective</u> (*if there is any*) <u>and how it could be transformed or heighten into something else</u>? These are of course very subjective points that were helping me in constructing the performances. Every director is focusing on different questions and that shapes the performance and dramaturgy differently.

So, from the director's perspective, working with "Inner dramaturgies" - it's imperative to keep it simple, think in terms of trust, have a space for playing and exploration without any pre-judgment, stay emphatic and in the flow (of course noting what's being shared in the room). From the performer's perspective - it's cardinal to be in the process fully, meaning at least try to be honest, use this space as an exploration of self and others in the very moment and at least have some motivation to play and engage self in playing (without thinking in terms of "*I am creating a performance now*").

5.2. Confessions as a part of the performance

After the try-out of inner dramaturgies in "Fragmented realities", I decided to explore the concept a bit more. In the performance PULSE I decided to use a documentary material and combine it with the movement sequence for the camera. Being in COVID times made me face myself, loneliness, thoughts that were not appearing in the before-CIVID period. At the beginning it really felt like time was changing and there were moments in my presence where I couldn't understand what was really happening with me, what I felt and why one or another things were happening to me. The emotions and feelings were so mixed up, that usually I was angry inside, because I couldn't tell what was happening with me.

Because of that, I have started filming myself and talking to the camera as if it would be a person or a friend, though at the same time knowing that this is just the camera and no one, despite me, will see it unless I decide differently. After some time of checking the angle and trying to understand the principles – I realised that it could be working in the same way the writing could work. With one rule. You need to be honest with yourself and don't be afraid to see the reality of self. In the moment when you are filming – you need

to allow yourself to be and to speak what is coming from you (it's pretty much the same as in a therapy). You are saying it out loud and you are not holding this anymore. You are speaking with the camera (which is your friend or a person you love) and reflecting things or asking anything you want to ask at the moment. During this time, you can find some answers, or you can understand why you were thinking in one way or another. At the same time, you might become vulnerable and honest about one or another trauma or darker periods in your life and while saying them out loud – you are becoming more conscious about them. This is, again, one of the bottom lines in therapy. It can also be seen as "talking to the mirror", but in this case you are recorded, so you can come back to your past whenever you want. Sometimes it doesn't happen as fast as you'd like it to happen. Meaning that sometimes you cannot reflect immediately on what you have said or how you feel. But while having it recorded – you can come a bit later and re-watch it. That might help in the retrospective.

After some time of trying it alone, I became curious if this also could work for someone else. I thought that it might be helpful for people, who are living alone and have no one to talk to. This led me to the thinking of a platform, where people could be with themselves as they are in the moment. I prepared an invitation text and sent it to the artists or friends living in different countries in Europe. I have invited them by saying: "there are no rules in terms of content". I asked them to try to upload a video once a week into the shared, private YouTube account. "I am preparing for the new performance on healing - which will cross installation, visual art and movement performance. This time, which really changed me and gave me a lot of good and bad thoughts, a lot of feelings that were hard to stand sometimes, was intense. During this time, I have started treating cameras as a friend (since friends were there… online). But

also - sometimes I was not feeling comfortable with saying very intimate things to them. So, I turned on a camera and started recording myself.

"Now - I am inviting you to do the same. Do not push anything. Just sit in front of the camera and let yourself be. Breathe, think, feel and say what's on your mind, heart, soul, body etc. Silence is fine. Everything is just fine" I have stated in the letter and this is how the collective experience has started. During the time more than 10 people were participating in the experiment and were uploading videos from various places, talking about various things that they were going through at that very moment for two and a half months.

When you are talking with friends, people you know or people you love, you get one or another response, feedback, they might ask you questions that could help them to understand you better. They could mirror you or could help to (partly thanks to the mirror neurons[45]) learn something from them. But the camera is not responding. Camera is still and might be perceived as cold. When you are talking to the camera – the only one response you might hear is you responding to yourself. In other words, I believe that talking to the camera (the same as talking to yourself in the shower or in the mirror), might give you a better knowledge of self, might help realise things that are bothering you at the very moment or it could work as a release.

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[45] T.K. Shackelford, V.A. Weekes-Shackelford. 2016 '*Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Psychological Science*', Springer International Publishing AG DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-16999-6_3335-1
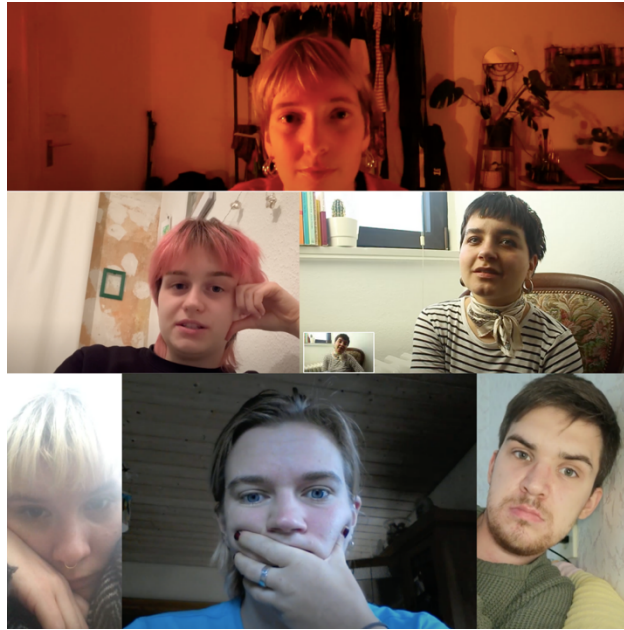
Image 5. The participants of the experiment.

During the experiment, you can see people who are uncomfortable (body language), most of them say it out loud. You can see that he / she / they are trying to be honest, but they are still covering themselves with some masks. Another one is honest (it is, of course, a subjective experience, and different people will see it differently), but all of them are searching for being. Being with self. In front of the camera. In the present moment. And everything that is in between – is a content. Different topics, different thoughts and approaches, which could work very well in making a contemporary performance. While being in front of the camera – you on a very real time see the image of yourself. See the parts you like and maybe you don't like that much. The way you sit, the way you talk, the way you think is present on the camera. Right now, working with teenagers (generation Z) I am seeing that they are very much aware of their image and they are trying to hold it in the Instagram-like aesthetics also in the real world. They are

using a lot of filters to cover how they really are and trying to stay "*cool*" (referring mostly to the TikTok aesthetics, such as angelcore, coconutgirl, e-boy etc.[46]). So, it's even difficult sometimes for them to be *them* on camera. And this is, in my understanding, already the first layer to work on personally. When you start speaking – there is no one else that is responding, so you clearly hear how you sound. If you are being attentive you could hear some answers coming from within, or you could start asking even more questions, such as: "why am I asking this" or "where is it coming from?".

Following each process during the time, you could see how they were changing – from being uncomfortable, not finding a place, thinking about their image and the way they speak to paying less attention to how they look and being a bit more honest with themselves. You could see people crying and sharing quite vulnerable moments from their life even knowing that other people, who are involved in the experiment, could also see their content. We were holding this account open for two and a half months, and in this period of time people (me included) uploaded more than 100 videos. People were showing themselves in different stages in their lives, but the repeating topics were belonging (or more the lack of it) and care, which I found as a perfect element that could be added in the performance PULSE.

"I am losing myself in reality.

I don't know what is real.

I don't know if I am real, in the sense, I don't know if my feelings are real.

I want to cry

But I can't." [47]

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[46] Navlakha, M. 2021. '*A whistle stop tour of tiktok tribes.*' Accessed May 5, 2022, https://www.buro247.com/culture/trends/what-are-the-most-popular-tiktok-aesthetic-explained.
[47] Fragment of a sexual assault story by a man who asked to stay anonymous.

5.3. Managing the studio work. Bodies.

"Rather than being an object for me-as-subject, my body as I live it represents my particular point of view on the world. I am embodied not in the sense that I have a body, but in the sense that I exist or live my body."[48]

When we start talking about healing and taking it to a performativity level – I am convinced that first of all – we need to work with the bodies. We need to relax them or at least this should be a goal. We need to clean our minds and instead of thinking about the things we didn't do or the things that are happening around us, pay more attention to the bodies here and now. Then, we need to be attentive to what are they saying and accept what is coming for us in the very present moment. During the series of workshops with Viktorija Ambrazaite, back in 2019, we explored different dance practises: breathing, body-mind centring, body liquids and lymphatic system activation that are linked to healing. After some time, we noticed that it is hard for the participants to tune fully into the practices. "Maybe it is also because they are actors, so they treat the stage and exercises differently than dancers or non-actors do" - I took a note for myself.

I asked my collaborators: "what do you need in order to relax?" Almost all of them replied they needed to feel safe, to take time to arrive in space, trust it and trust other people in space.

"What can I do to help them and how to create a safe space?" – I wrote in my notebook and realised it might be one of the key things for making a performance about / for healing.

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[48] Toombs, Kay S. 1992. '*The Meaning of Illness: A Phenomenological Account of the Different Perspectives of Physician and Patient.'* Springer Science & Business Media

It reminded me of what I have read about kids in terms of developing movement. "When we give a young child: 1. frequent opportunities to learn how to use their arms and legs; when we give them 2. that opportunity without restrictions; and when we keep 3. the duration of those opportunities just right; the process plays out exactly as it is designed".[49]

The movement sequence for performance PULSE has started developing from the confessions that are linked to inner dramaturgies. I didn't know what precise movements or movement sequence needed to be there, but I knew that bodies should be involved. Also, it is pivotal to use the bodies in the context of the topic of the performance. I was re-reading and re-listening the confessions and taking some notes. For example, after reading a confession: "I looked at all that situation with a very clear vision for the first time. Suddenly I was: "Ok, I need to stop this shit, stop this nonsense". But I was out of my mind, because of the acid, so I needed to wait till it stopped", I wrote – "Maybe some movement quality from laying on the ground". After "I could not believe my mom was not saying anything. She kept being silent." – I noted "balancing". Text was resonating in my body and appearing in some minimal body movements that I didn't know yet how they should connect. I had them in mind and was ready to try them in the studio.

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[49] Solis, C. 2018, *'Patterns of Movement'.* Accessed May 6, 2022,
https://brainfitkids.com/patterns-of-movement/

Together with the performers (not professional dancers Eglė Šimėnaitė, Mara Ingea, En-Ping Yu, Lara Hereu, Sai Sai), composer Valtteri Alanen, we gathered for a series of workshops, with the aim of grounding the theoretical knowledge into the physical bodies. We did a warming-up exercise, which aimed to change a person's focus. Help them to arrive at their body. From mind and thinking to the body. In other words, it invites one to be aware of the body and be in the body more than in a head. We have been walking in a space, and changing our focus from our feet, to knees, to chest, to shoulders, to neck, to head. This exercise took around 30 minutes and it was supported by minimal ambient music by, for example, Ryuichi Sakomoto.

After that we did a shaking exercise that was expanded the other days. This exercise was to sum up the first part of warming up and to release all the unnecessary, negative energy from our bodies. "It felt very nice - I felt like I could do it for hours" - one of the performers' said after the session.

The second part of the warm-up was to change the focus from the inner body to outer space (not losing the previously found quality) and to explore the space with the body. We have been walking in a space, experiencing and seeing it, different objects, different colours, shapes and materials. Finally, participants have been asked to walk in a space and observe other people in the room. Here, the focus was divided into the inner body (that is already warmed up) and outer space. Participants have been asked to meet other people, stop and follow their body impulses with this particular person.

Since it was a long time (because of COVID-19) we were not able to experience human touch, people were crying, hugging and staying with each other for more than 10

minutes. Then we repeated this meeting exercise two more times, and people were meeting different bodies - the energies, impulses and connections were different.

"We need four hugs a day for survival. We need 8 hugs a day for maintenance. We need 12 hugs a day for growth"[50]

I feel that the touch of the physical bodies is important to me not only in the personal life, but also in the performance making. Parallelly with the breathing that I will describe in this thesis soon - touching could help to explore spaces, places and other human beings. While working with other people – I like to get to know them a little bit better and the exercise of, let's say, hugging people – could give you a lot of information. You could sense the tension or relaxation of the muscles, you can feel if the person is willing to open up to you or not, you can sense if a person is feeling uncomfortable while being hugged, what is his / her / their intention and how are they hugging you (what that could say about them). I am convinced that in the moment of touch, we become more open, vulnerable, learning about others and the world around us with our bodies, not minds. Also, when you hold a person for a longer time – you cannot ignore the bodily presence, so you also start to be more receptive towards the other and self. Here is the reference to the kids. Touch is one of the first senses, which develops even before birth. Our skin is the sensory organ responsible for the sense of touch. Within the layers of skin five different types of receptors are located to detect pressure, heat, cold, pain and light touch. Touch receptors are located throughout the body, concentrated in the mouth and hands. No surprise, then, that babies and young children are driven to explore their

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[50] Medically reviewed by Karen Cross, FNP, MSN — Written by Erica Cirino. Updated on April 11, 2018. '*What are the benefits of hugging?*'. Accessed May 6, 2022,https://www.healthline.com/health/hugging-benefits#How-many-hugs-do-we-need.

world with their hands and mouth. "The proprioceptive system allows us to know about the stationary position of our body and also gives us information about our movements."[51] We know where our hand is and how to make it move to reach and grasp an object because of our proprioceptive system. The visual system ties into the proprioceptive system, too, which is why some children with visual impairments have problems knowing where their bodies are located in space.

The next element that we were working with – was breathing. We all know how important this is, but sometimes we are taking it for granted. It can be and *it is* a tool to deal with the emotions and to help you go through your day. Marina Abramovic in her lecture "Performance. Past. Present. Future" [52] suggested to use breathing as a tool to work with the anger. "Just sit down and stop breathing. Don't breathe. Till the very moment you will be blue and you will be about to pass out. And then inhale. 80% chance that anger will be gone". There is a lot of information on the internet saying that because of the enormous stress we have to deal with every day, most of us are not breathing properly (meaning we are not using "belly breathing"). "Proper breathing starts in the nose and then moves to the stomach as your diaphragm contracts, the belly expands and your lungs fill with air."[53] Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen in her lecture on "Lengthening and Shortening Contractions of the Diaphragm for Ease of Movement and Breath" describes the breathing techniques and the importance of this mechanism. We watched it with the team in the studio and afterwards we did a breathing session for 15 minutes,

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[51] Moss, K. *"Some Things to Learn from Learning Through Touch"* Text of original webpage article, accessed May 6, 2022: http://www.tsbvi.edu/seehear/spring05/things.htm.
[52] Marina's Abramovic lecture "Performance. Past. Present. Future" in Kaunas, 2022. Organised by Meno Parkas gallery and Kaunas 2022 – European capital of culture.
[53] Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen. *Lengthening and Shortening Contractions of the Diaphragm for Ease of Movement and Breath*. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZ086B_OwN0

where everyone located themselves in the room and were breathing for 15 minutes at their own tempo.

During the time, when you are focusing only on your breathing (it's not so easy to do in the first place, having in mind our constantly running minds and changing images in nowadays life) – it could help you to reduce stress (or on the contrary bring more stress, because you were running from yourself on a daily basis while scrolling Instagram stories or watching YouTube, etc.). It's also imperative for group bonding. For example, when we were working in Kaunas City Chamber Theatre with a series of workshops on somatic – breathing was always the first exercise and we could clearly see how the person changed after 15 minutes of only breathing. Moreover, it is not only about an individual. While being in the room with other people – you hear other people breathing too and unconsciously you are tuning in with others. From what I have noticed while working with people of different ages – for many of them it is not that easy to just breathe. One of the teenagers in the workshop[54] that I held in 2021 said "at this moment you have only yourself and it's scary". While breathing and focusing only on breathing (nothing more) you are becoming vulnerable. In other words, while giving self or others time to breathe, honestly, with the intention to rest, or to tune in with yourself – various things might appear to you. Despite the vulnerability and the individual processes that are happening inside of every human being, breathing is also a great tool for changing the focus. Right now, we are living in a world full of screens, running, fast information, COVID, and now the Ukrainian war. We need to act fast, because the new we have today – will not be any more important tomorrow. Accordingly, breathing could take off this stress and change the body-mind set in the room. Starting from there, with the help

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[54] Workshop for teenagers (14-18 years old) in a summer camp in Lithuania.

of the music, it could be transformed into more concentrated or more dreamy, melancholic, boosting energy.

Of course, as any other healing-related practise, it requires a right amount of time. It's never a fast process. Remarkably, I tried to handle duration as an extension of time. More like giving the necessary/right amount of time for performers to reach their inner selves, to make them not to think about anything else, but the body presence in the space. However, Henri Bergson doubts that duration should be understood as time extension: "Actually duration has little to do with extension or other spatial references" [55]. Dance theorist Andre Lepecki in his work on duration transforms quantitative time to qualitative time "What happens is that in those (durational) works, long hours, several days, years (quantitative time) are modulated and undone by specific actions that ensure that quantity is continuously transformed into intensity (qualitative time or duration)" [56] and brings the word to endure as is etymologically linked to duration.

As much as duration - repetition is playing a big role in healing. Henry Grayson in his book "Your Power to Heal" talks a lot about the repetitive mind and how much it is affecting our bodies and/or the other way around. He invites us to become aware of our thoughts in order to get a better knowledge of our negative or positive beliefs. "Our most repetitive thought patterns will most often be rehearsing our most cherished beliefs, positive and negative." [57] In other words – there is a simple truth behind that – if we have thoughts about sadness, we will feel sad; if we have thoughts about happiness or love –

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[55] Bergson H. 2001, '*Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness'*. Mineola, New York: Dover. p. 126.
[56] Lepecki A. '*Duration'*. Accessed May 6, 2022, http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/duration/andre-lepecki.
[57] Grayson H., 2017, *"Your power to heal. Resolving Psychological Barriers to your Physical Health"* (l.3131)

we will feel accordingly. If we think thoughts about pain – the pain is likely to increase; if you think the task will be difficult – it will be more or less so; and so on and so on.

Michelle Rizzo's performance "HIGHER.xtn" is made of repetitive movements (it is possible to count the number of movements that are repeated during the performance) and they keep repeating them for more than 30 minutes. Repetitive movements can be found in previously described performances of Roza Moshtaghi, CocoonDance Company too. They are also rooted in almost every ancient ritual. Henry Grayson is pointing to negative thoughts and their repetition – what leads to such feelings as being powerless, sadness, madness etc. So, repetitive movements in performance makes the audience really see them and through them. When watching a movement that is being repeated to an infinite loop – the audience starts seeing something else, but not the plain movement. It drives the quality to some sort-of transcendence. This is why in the studio we were also repeating the exercises and playing with their duration.

Finally, we went into pairs and one person was laying on the ground and his/her/their task was to move from point A to point B in the room, while the other person was touching the moving one's body.

The touch was gentle and more like giving an energy to the body than pushing it to one or another direction. So, there were two bodies moving in space. The first one was giving impulses and the second one was moving accordingly to the first person's impulses.

"You are moving in the space and the person is pointing you to some body parts, that you are not using in the movement. So, your focus goes there and then you keep on moving, but more consciously using the part of your body that was touched. Then it

goes to another body part and your body response with the movement. Always response if you let it." – another performer stated after exercise.

The next day, we started with the same warming up exercise. We brought our focus into different parts of our bodies. Shaking part was expanded. We have been shaking for 10 minutes. I proposed to hold personal tempo and personal intensity.

Later in the sessions we were expanding this quality till it became a half an hour-long practice. People were shaking their bodies from one or another part in their bodies with different energy with or without a flow of music. They said that while doing this practice for a bigger amount of time, some of them reached a trance-like state of being. Some of them felt the blocks in their body and achieved letting it go or becoming more flexible.

At the end of it - I proposed to go to extremes - to do it as fast as you can, as intensive as you can and then as slow and as minimum as you can (so it's not maybe even visible, but you could sense it in your body).

After shaking, we repeated the touch exercise that we did on the previous day, but also expanded it in a way that the person, who is giving touch, could fully navigate the one's on the floor experience. By that giving an information to stop or direction to move. This time – it was more about dialogue. The person, who was moving - was listening to the one, who was touching him/her/them, and the one who was touching, was focusing on a moving the one better.

"If you are really tuning with a person, who is moving, you could see how their body thinks, and you could see what body parts will move further, so you can play with it. You can help them or block them and propose a different way to move - they could accept or

deny it. So, it's a communication without words" – I said before the exercise. During the studio work, this exercise became in a way a holding exercise. Maybe because of the lack of touch that we were experiencing during COVID-19 pandemic, this practice was bringing calmness, acceptance and love in the room, which was also the energy that I wanted to keep in the performance.

Later in the workshops, we have started with the touch extension. One person was laying on the ground and two other people were touching his/her/their body. Slowly, giving full attention, full energy and then making the touches faster, changing them accordingly. At the end people were collaborating and turning a person on their belly and moving his/her/their bodies in the space.

This exercise was to make the body warm again and at the same time to relax and to learn to give a full trust to other people. For each of the performer we were doing it for 7-8 minutes.

And after this we opened up the trust topic. We have started talking about what trust is, and since it is a big concept and everyone has their own experience and interpretation of it, we were discussing and searching for some common ground, or topics that we cross when we talk about trust.[58]

We did a small trust related physical exercise. One person was in the middle of the circle and his/her/their task was to lose control, give their body weight and trust people around them, that they will catch you. When we were doing it in Kaunas in 2019, it took way more time for people to be comfortable with the idea of losing control.

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[58] Sai Sai, who was participating in the sessions via zoom – recorded the session. It is possible to download it from here: https://xfs.jp/5HKxCB

This exercise suggested trying "balancing".

"I noted balancing for myself after reading the confession" – I thought in the latest sessions, we were building the movement sequence, expanding the previously stated movement qualities and thinking how they could work together, what is the natural impulse to do what, what should be the transitions.

Back then, at the end of 2020, it was already clear that the very first idea – to do a performance in a physical space - would not work. For this reason, at the same time as working in the studio, I was thinking about possible opportunities to capture this on the camera.

It is worth mentioning that all the time Sai Sai from Japan was with us on ZOOM (in these workshops and in all the process later until the premiere day). She was watching and participating in a workshop distantly. That moved me to try finding ways how she could be involved in the process even from a distance.

At the end, the audience was invited to watch a performative film[59] on YouTube and then go to the ZOOM application, where they could expand their own experience. In the second part they could walk in different breakout rooms and re-watch the media, listen to the confessions, the soundscape that the composer Valtteri Alanen was playing live, re-listen to the human sound installation (artist Eglė Šimėnaitė), participate in the live performance on touch (performed by Sai Sai). In the premiere we also had a third part, which was a discussion with an artistic team on performance and a discussion with a psychologist on the women and men sexual assault.

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[59] PULSE. Performative film. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t7vpuZ9_SGg&t=1423s

"Thanks so much for this show" – the artist from Hamburg Simone Karl wrote to our Instagram account – "It was quite interesting how you managed to work on sexual violence – without giving space to perpetrators and without victimizing people"

6. Live-stream, being and performativity

In the times of COVID-19 we were meeting in digital spaces more than the physical ones. In this section I will lead you through my way of thinking and working in a digital space, combining performative being, presence and healing that was already presented before in this thesis. It will also cross technicalities that were met on the way and will end with the short note on ethics and experiment navigation.

According to Slater, presence has three aspects: the sense of being there, individual's recognition of what is there as real or present, and a memory of "there" as a real place. Prior research suggests that presence should be considered an everyday phenomenon and a "basic property of normal conscious experience"[60]

I am just cooking and streaming this action on twitch platform. Does it become

performative?

If yes, then what about these people who are streaming themselves gaming, sleeping, eating on various platforms? Is this action and set up could be seen as a performance? Or is it enough for an artist to call it performance for it to be a performance?

The signal to come from my computer to the twitch platform takes around 11 seconds. That means that my being, my thoughts reach the audience in the future. Or for them – I am already in the past, though they are seeing it "in real time". In that sense – we are

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[60] Slater M, Steed A. 2000, '*A virtual presence counter. Presence'.* Teleop Virt 9(5):413–434. Accessed May 6, 2022, https://doi.org/10.1162/105474600566925.

not sharing any "real time". It is the future or the past. There is no common ground, as there is in the performance, happening in a physical space.

"Being sad is not bad", "we are constantly growing" and the third Newton law of motion – "The statement means that in every interaction, there is a pair of forces acting on the two interacting objects. The size of the forces on the first object equals the size of the force on the second object. The direction of the force on the first object is opposite to the direction of the force on the second object. Forces always come in pairs - equal and opposite action-reaction force pairs."[61] These were the highlights I wrote on the OBS program and everyone who was watching the "ROOM IN 286/75" could see it during the second streaming.

Image 6. Screenshot from an online streaming performance "ROOM IN 286/75"
Performance by Arnis Aleinikovas

From the very first minute I pressed "start streaming" I got a little bit nervous and found myself more in the "performative way of being" than in "human being state". Meaning, I was ready to serve, to interact, to show something. In this moment when the camera turns on, it does change the way we behave, or if it is not seen from the other side, it

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[61] Newton's third law, accessed May 6, 2022,
https://www.physicsclassroom.com/class/newtlaws/Lesson-4/Newton-s-Third-Law.

definitely does something for us inside. Now I am imagining a conflict happening on the street and all of a sudden somebody starts filming it. If we had a person, who was angry about the situation, now he is angry because of the situation and because of somebody filming him.

So, starting with a camera on and seeing the number of people watching, growing (though, it was not 1000 people, it was varying from 1 to 10), the first impulse was to interact. Say "hi", say "welcome" and reflect on what you are doing here a little bit, how do you feel in this very present moment.

I have been dealing with the mind, which was constantly rolling against the first idea, saying: "do something, do something, say something, say something". And it makes sense if we think in terms of set-rules. Audience is spending their time watching me, so I need to do something. I was watching people come and go. "I guess it is boring" was on my mind several times and the self-doubt was becoming bigger. So, the first part of the stream I was constantly dealing with these thoughts – "people are bored", "I suck with this performance", "is this even a performance?", "what am I doing or what should I do here?".

One of the thoughts that came to me when I was in the middle of the stream, was that I need to set some rules for the future streaming and stick to it.

I do not have any "rules" for my being in my room when I am not being watched – meaning I do not follow any schedule like: "6 pm. Workout; 7 pm. Dinner; 8 pm.

Watching Netflix; 9 pm." etc. so, I am inviting people to "nothing" (you might think), to my room, where I am being and I am not doing anything to impress you.

So, the main rule I set (not before, but ongoing) for the second and next series of streaming was – to try to make connections, talk with them, and communicate my thoughts and stay transparent in being. These became my goals and the basis for dramaturgy, that were constructed following the "Inner dramaturgies" principles.

Image 7. Screenshot from an online streaming performance "ROOM IN 286/75"
Performance by Arnis Aleinikovas

On my 6th streaming the new COVID-19 restrictions were applied in Czech Republic. Back then (end of October, 2020) they added a curfew and limited personal movement during both day and night time hours.

So, I kept on streaming from my room, asking the same questions that were stated above. With some of them I am getting more familiar. For example, I am not anymore worrying that twitch is mainly a platform for people to stream how they are gaming. Somehow, I am not worrying that much about if someone is trying to connect with me, if they are watching me or not. It does not influence my being so much (as it was in the

beginning). I am following my own presence and being honest with myself and others who come in the digital room.

6.1. Strategies

I tried to keep this ROOM open twice a week for a few months. During all the streaming sessions I was sharing different information that I was reading or watching. I was asking questions that were important to me at that time. Even though the structure could be seen as chaotic from the outside, or "no structure" could be applied, I noticed that during the sessions I kept on repeating some things.

Since I was not focusing on any in advance prepared dramaturgy, I started noticing what is my, as a performer, strategy, how am I navigating this experience and building it unconsciously. And here are the five big steps or (I called them "stations") that I took out from this experience.

At first – I was staying with people who were watching. Meaning, I tried to have a direct contact with my front computer camera and I was imagining that in their screens I was appearing as directly watching to them. Not as a character, not as an avatar (a virtual body created by users to project their identity and actions into the world [62]), but me, as Arnis Aleinikovas, the same human being, who appeared in the same shared virtual room. I stayed with them for quite some time. It was helping me to calm down and to get over the intense feeling of "being watched by the unknown". During that time, according to my present mood, I was sharing some videos, reading some poetry, painting, or

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[62] Koskela T. 2016, *"Hybrid Avatars – Enabling co-Presence in Multiple Realities"*.

making the questions for the possible discussion referring to different sources that I was recently reading.

If I were drawing a map, then the second "station" would be – me, disconnecting from the camera. Meaning, shifting my attention to my body and my room I was in back then. Though, I do not believe you can fully disconnect (in this case I remember meditation and all these masters, who can disconnect from this world, with years of practise). Maybe, after a year or longer streaming you can disconnect yourself from the camera fully (in a sense you are not seeing it as a cold device anymore, or you ignore it, or you do not pay so much attention in the feeling of being watched). The second station was me with my body and self in the room. Seeing the room as it was. Seeing objects and not ignoring them, because they were a part of the set or installation. This was also a part that the audience could see. In other words, now, when I re-think it, it's a double focus, or more like being in between these two worlds. Being aware of the camera presence, but more focusing on a physical reality that you are surrounded by (meaning objects, room, self, body, thoughts, feelings etc.)

In the third station I was interacting with an audience again, but in slightly different way. Here I am thinking how I could call it. "Interacting through the performative body" is on my mind. Meaning, that differently than the first time - this time, I am interacting with an audience through some performative lens. In the second station I warmed up my body (it's sort of a preparation process referencing the healing practices mentioned above) and now I am ready to "perform". (Note: the change is in the energy. Adrenaline. The energy is higher, a little bit like "high on coffee") and a conscious decision to perform (which now feels as a transformation of mundane). In this period, I was shifting my

attention from people that are watching, to myself, to the room, to the people again more easily. The state was something in between drag-queen and avatar, it had some character related qualities.

The fourth part was so-called "performance". "The noun performance indicates a set of disciplinary considerations in addition to action and speech, including movement, narrative, ritual, and spectacle". [63] Every time it was worrying. I was playing with a camera, lighting, moving in the space, interacting with objects etc. Every stream – it was something different, because it was not planned in advance.

The fifth part was coming back to the ground and reality. It was like a closing circle. I found myself sitting in front of the computer (after all this shared journey), and was talking with people who were still watching, or people that just opened this stream.

There is a difference between doing a performance on twitch or any other streaming platform. You cannot really control when people are entering or when they are leaving. While inviting people to a "live" show (meaning happening in a shared physical space) you can predict that they will come on time and stay there all the time, they will be able to follow the narrative (although it is also not a factor anymore in my mind).

ROOM started where it ended, but after every journey I was slightly changed, and people, according to their feedback, were moved, inspired or bored (…and there is nothing bad in it).

Though, these previously stated "stations" were not as a constant.

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[63] Gaines, M. *Performativity*. Accessed May 6, 2022
http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/performativity/malik-gaines

Somewhere in the middle of this streaming series I had people who were trying to come in the room every time it was on. On the 9th streaming we did "Surya Namaskar" at the very beginning of the stream. It was a proposition of one of the people watching. She said: "I will do this movement sequence now". I've asked: "Can we join?", she replied: "Sure".

I was not really capable of leading this, but I became the one who is being watched (different than in ZOOM or other platform movement sessions), so I was pushed (by myself) to lead it, so other people could join or could observe.

I did this exercise some years ago, so I googled, found a sequence and then we started. That was the first time in my streaming history, when a person from another room influenced my being in my room directly and I felt connected. I felt that "now we are sharing the common action" and maybe we are not just two doing that (by that time, 13 people were watching). I cannot say who was doing this with us, and who was observing. But even by knowing that you are doing it with someone you don't even know, created the connection which was crucial in lockdown.
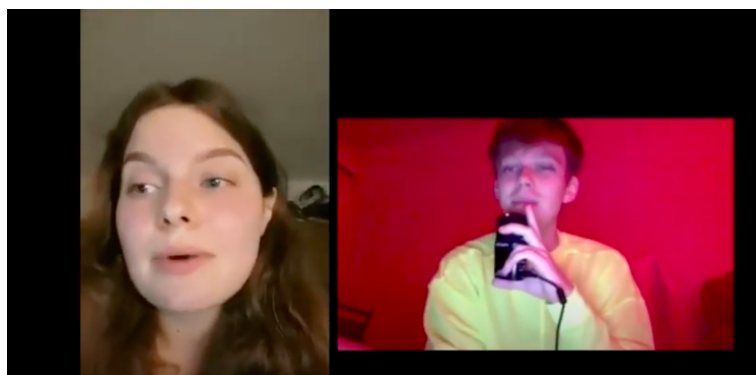
Image 8. Montage from an online streaming performance "ROOM IN 286/75"
Performance by Arnis Aleinikovas

In one stream a person typed: "I am curious about love. Do you think this being in

virtuality affects how we understand love, and if yes, how?"

Later on, when people get more familiar with the idea of this durational performance – they became more active. They were asking questions that were important to them at that time and "ROOM IN 286/75" became a small commune to share (mainly through the "chat"). I think during these sessions I realised that I like going through the process more than keeping my eyes on the result. This moment of not knowing what to do is at the same time opening a lot of doors here and now and making you feel a bit frustrated (you need to overcome this). At that moment you follow intuition, follow mind, follow fear… ant these choices are very fast and sometimes even not conscious.

Also, this practice made me trust the process more and this is imperative in the performance making. This practice is like a white paper. You put yourself or put others ("APART MENT") in free conditions, where everything is welcome, because you are streaming from your room and then you keep on observing and tuning in with these people and from them you are making a performance.

It is not the other way around. In the bachelor years I was taught that a director comes up with an idea and then everyone is working for him / her / them, but this practice shows that it can also be the other way around and it could work.

This practice was extended, while making a performance "Fragmented Realities", where the first week of the process we kept on playing, writing letters and doing funny stuff. From these "not serious", "not performative" tasks I had a chance to get to know these

people I was working with and they met each other on the human level in a first place. Only then you start creating from the material you have. Most of the time, what you already have – is a team with their own inner luggage. If you are being attentive and if you are giving them space to show up – they will.

Another thing that might be applied to a performance practice, is a dramaturgy. I kept on running from a conventional theatre, because I felt trapped in some sort of story making, framing, dramaturgy, or plan and at the end it became boring, repetitive, mechanical to me. In this practice, in the contrary, you are making dramaturgy from what you already did and then you keep on adding new levels. What is very unique about it – it might change everyday and there is a place for the change.

Having no strategy is a good strategy, because it allows you to be present in the moment and avoid the previously used strategies.

Of course, at first, I was anxious and worried because it did not have any clear structure, dramaturgy or plan. Now when I am thinking about it – it is something already installed in our thinking about making a performance. We enter the studio or the room with a more or less clear idea or structure and then we got stuck in the thinking of how to make it work.

Performance "Apart Ment" you are about to read - was the expansion of these qualities and a bigger experiment for the inner dramaturgies, which in the process became not only an online streaming performance, but also a space for a discussion about ethics, director's role and methodology.

6.2. Expansion

The principles of the "APART MENT" experiment were based in curated reality. This format is not depending that much on the spectator as it is in this so-called drama theatre. We exist within precisely framed time and space. And the only task for the performers is to be authentic, radical, and not to be afraid of going into extreme situations and / or being vulnerable and showing self.

The spectator becomes our guest. He, she or they become witness of the reality already constituted in this space. Those performers would exist in that very time and space regardless if they are being observed / watched or not.

We have stated the time to begin. Everyone came to the apartment and after some technical issues that we needed to overcome we started a live streaming with two cameras in different rooms. Due to technical issues, we didn't have as many cameras as I was planning to have. Audience had two twitch links for two cameras. So, at any point they could go from one room to another, or they could watch these two rooms at once, they could interact with us via chat anonymously or with their created names.

As in ROOM 286/75 experience we did not have clear tasks or navigations on how to be in the apartment, so everyone of us were navigating ourselves individually and at the same time collectively creating some sort of short-term commune. At the very beginning one of the performers felt anxious and he needed to leave the apartment an hour after the streaming had started. The rest of the group were trying to find their own way to be in space. It was interesting to observe how the presence of cameras was changing the way we behaved. All of a sudden, being in the apartment was changing in an interesting

way and the question of "how do I behave without a camera" were appearing while we were trying to find the way to be knowing that someone was watching.

It was definitely easier with the clearly staged performative tasks that we had. We had a prepared time where we knew what would happen and others acted accordingly. For example, the composer Valtteri Alanen was playing his music. We arranged some lighting and had a small concert streaming live. The rest of us were just enjoying the music and staying in the moment, except Mara, who was mostly taking care of the dinner. So, at that moment the audience, switching the cameras, could see two different happenings – the one, which was clearly staged and rehearsed and another one – appearing here and now. Though, cooking can also be perceived as something well-rehearsed. If we would think how often we found ourselves cooking something, but every time we do it slightly different. The ingredients might change, tempo could change, the mood could change, but the ritual itself, the movement sequence of chopping, boiling the water, adding salt and pepper etc. is more or less repeating. So, again, if I am cooking and streaming it online – does the presence of the camera and the fact that someone is watching make it performative? Or it's just – something in between, which is not described as performative. Judith Butler writing on performativity says: "Performance is always an action or event that involves a number of people, objects, networks, and institutions, even when performance takes place without a stage and in the briefest of moments, gathered up and dispersed in evanescence."[64] Malik Ganes adds: "The noun performance indicates a set of disciplinary considerations in addition to action and speech, including movement, narrative, ritual, and spectacle" [65] but he adds: "In the visual art world, all performance is now being described as performative".[66]

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[64] Butler J. *Performativity*. http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/performativity/judith-butler
[65] Gaines M. *Performativity*. http://intermsofperformance.site/keywords/performativity/malik-gaines
[66] Ibid.

This is the doubt and the biggest question that was (and sill is) following me. Is it enough to just let things happen as they happen? I understand that this is perfectly fine for the research, but for the performance? Is it a *must* to try them in advance or at least have a clear sequence of them?

"I counted that with a few breaks I was watching you for five hours. And I could not imagine myself watching any performance for that long. Surprisingly it was growing every time I went in. Something has been changed, and then my mind was immediately creating scenarios what happened in the gap I was not watching you" (feedback from the viewer)
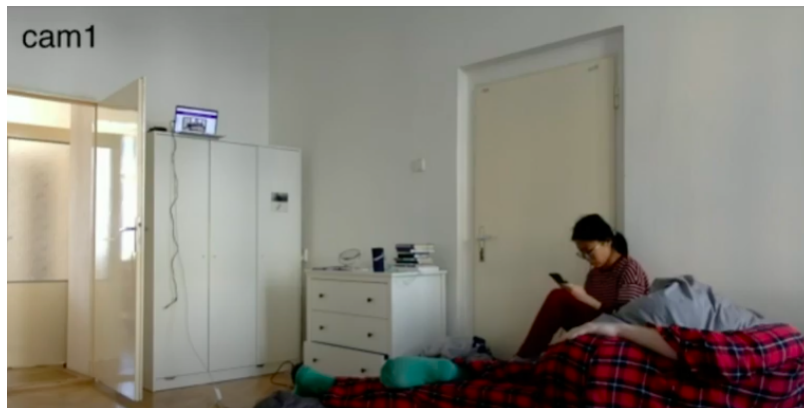

Image 9. Durational, online-streaming performance "APART MENT". Being in:
Yu-En Ping, Mara Ingea, Valtteri Alanen, Eglė Šiménaité and Arnis Aleinikovas.

When I am writing about it now, I feel that I am pushing myself somehow to judge the experience (not to describe it as "good" or "bad"), but to state if that was "working" or not. Here are two factors that makes it a bit complicated to name it in these terms. The first one - is COVID-19 situation. Back then humanity was in fear and unknown, we had curfew and we couldn't meet (a party with five people could cost you a huge money fine and maybe even a record in the police). Consequently, watching these five people living

together, sharing their presence in this context – was be so powerful and as one viewer wrote to the chat "it was reminding me of a life before that". The second one – to me it was an un-going research on performativity, so it's hard to be objective about the performance as a whole.

From the feedback I have collected (it was mainly teachers, other students that were watching it from Academy of Performing Arts in Prague, some of my friends and colleagues) made me realise that it was working in one or another way. Everyone who was watching managed to find their own way to tune with the streaming and / or find something interesting for them. Some of them were focusing on us, some of them were curious how does it work in terms of technology. We had on average 4 viewers during the night, some of them were calling it "addictive" – which to me shows the potential of this experiment.

6.3. Ethics

This experiment also opened up a discussion on ethics and methodology. It opened up and highlighted some questions that appeared after and during the process. What is the director's role in this type of experiment and could be any methodology applied?

Not so long ago together with another theatre director we had a discussion about the director's role in making a performance. To be more precise, we were questioning if the director should take care of the performers (meaning, to do a psychologist's work and try to get to know them as people better, navigate their state) or not. He, back then, was saying that the director should create a performance and not really focus on performers /

human beings individually, while I was holding the other side – saying that the director needs to be in tune with performers and not to see them only as performers.

I feel that doing this or other type of art experiments – it requires a lot of psychological sync with the people you are in. Different people are forming content differently (I can only imagine now doing an "Apart Ment" experiment with other people – it would be completely different performance). While knowing people you are working with, you can predict (which is not necessarily true) the outcome. The energy dynamics is imperative, and every human / non-human being is bringing in the room something you need to understand. That was my thought. Though, I feel you can apply this only when you are making a clearly planned, structured performance. Working with an experiment – you cannot take care of everything or predict how things will go.

The goal of "APART MENT" experiment was complex, and it appeared on different levels. First of all, I was checking if this type of experiment could happen at all (meaning, if the performer could stay in the presence of being, not performing in front of the camera for 24 hours). Secondly, if this performance could reach the audience and create any added value. Moreover, if we (being inside) could describe and define performative action from not performative one. I assume that during this type of experiments you cannot count all the risks or to prepare every performer for what could possibly happen. In an ideal scenario, there is one way – to know the people you are working with very well, so you could navigate well in any extreme situation, but in the bigger picture – it's a very rare chance that you will know everyone you are working with very well. Unless it is a collective, but… again "personality change can happen, and it usually happens

gradually"[67]). Accordingly, during the 24 hours streaming experiment anything could happen (and I am not counting technical issues).

One of my performers, as he stated later in the letter to me, had an "adulterated honest panic-attack". He needed to leave the apartment in the beginning of the streaming for a few hours and then he asked me to leave the apartment for good the next day. I stated at the very beginning that if anyone has any issues during the streaming – can leave. I clearly understood that we were not creating any characters and I was not sure how every-one would deal with the camera presence for 24 hours. Reasons, of course, were personal, but in the already mentioned letter that I received, was "lack of feeling safe, lack of the instructions and navigations".

Later on, the discussion on methodology was transferred to another level and it was opened up in the feedback session with the tutors and teachers in the Academy of Performing Arts. Back then we also had different approaches on how the director should navigate this experiment or could help the performers to prepare for it, but the closing thought was that is almost impossible to be fully prepared for the experiment. It is different from performing in a theatre frame. In this case, the one could never know how it could turn out or what impulses could be given by those who are watching (this performance was streaming on twitch, where people anonymously could tell you different, and most of the time, not very pleasant things).

I assume that it's going both ways. Meaning, the director, or the one, who is proposing this type of experience – should be clear of "what is it about" and "why we are doing it", he / she / they should partly take the responsibility for the ones, who are participating, try

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[67] Soto, C. 2016, *'Personality Can Change Over A Lifetime, And Usually For The Better'.* Accessed May 6, 2022
https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/06/30/484053435/personality-can-change-over-a-lifetime-and-usually-for-the-better?t=1644609645788

to prepare them in the best way he / she / they can at that very given moment. And the performer, who's agreeing to participate – needs to be aware that during an experiment - pretty much anything could happen. Especially in this performance – experiment, where the we were seeking for the state of the "me performing" and "me being".

7. Final word

It wasn't easy, but it was worth it.

These recent years have been like jumping around different obstacles and forgetting what you really want to explore and exploring what you can explore at the moment instead. COVID-19 pandemic that I described as a catastrophe in the very beginning of this thesis has changed our habits, the way we are with ourselves and others.

Now, reflecting to my study years and the works that were created during that time, I can say that I was variating in between theatre performance (the one that needs to be rehearsed - "PULSE" and "Fragmented Realities") and the performance that is happening on a real time and is a present experience both for the performer and the audience at the same time ("ROOM in 286/75", "Apart Ment"). The final master work that was presented at the end of November, 2021 - "REST" – was a try-out combining both of these qualities. Rehearsing and curating the installation in a physical space but keeping the elbow-room for the movement quality to appear in the present time (though, rehearsing and practising it in advance).

All of my previous stated works have a clear connecting-link. Despite the form or a space where it was presented in, my main focus was on healing, human beings, their inner worlds and experience through the movement and somatic. These processes were linked to the "Inner dramaturgies" and taking out the importance of individual's inner state, instead of creating a performance using the outside tools. In the very beginning I quoted Thomas R. Egnew, who described healing as "an intensely personal, subjective experience". This is why the performances that are being created based on healing qualities (such as somatic movement or inner dramaturgies) – are always changing and

they barely cannot be replayed that easily. Every time you start working with new people – you cannot know where it will lead you. This is why it is imperative to stay in the presence and create from the very present point, while deeply listening to the material and constructing it accordingly.

The healing processes were and still are very important to me personally, so with all the artistic work, I first of all have tried to open some space for other bodies to heal. Or at least to rest. I was reaching out to people to open up and was inviting them to stay transparent. The material that they were sharing with me, during PULSE, Fragmented Realities creative processes or workshop series that were held in 2019 and later in 2021 with more than a hundred of teenagers - will never be shared in the same way again. This is why working with inner dramaturgies, collecting them and making a performance out of it, is always a new experience, which exists in this particular time and circumnstances. The tools that are being applied also vary, depending on the different age, beliefs, experiences etc. For example, the performance "Fragmented Realities" and the performance "Simulation 2062" that we did with teenagers in Kaunas in 2022 are completely different performances in terms of the content and are slightly different in the tools that were applied. The language is imperative, because non-professionals might not use the same language as professional artists for example. Though, the main strategy that I was using in all of the performances and creative processes – was listening and staying with the material without any pre-judgement. I was letting the material influence me and show me the way. This is why, using inner dramaturgies – first of all, you are collecting and forming the content. "Inner dramaturgies" gave me the direction to explore with a focused lens. Only when you have one, you conceptualise it and start thinking in terms of the topics that you made a decision to use.

In terms of the audience, I would like to propose (whenever you'll be watching any performance) try to tune in with your body-mind set, instead of only intellectualising it. We all were children. We were curious and were jumping in and out a situation without judgement on ourselves or others. I think audience (which is mostly mature) on the inner-side level needs to remember these qualities.

I still believe that vulnerability and transparency (not only in the contemporary performance) is a great tool to use

During all of these processes, learning about bodies, human beings was pretty much in the same interest area as performance making itself. Performance became a space and a tool for transcendency.

Nothing is ever finished. That something is finished, done, or ended is a figment of the mind. That something is finished propagates an idea of right and wrong, devaluing the infinite variety, possibility, and manner of experience and reality.

Again, healing is "an intensely personal, subjective experience involving a reconciliation of the meaning an individual ascribes to distressing events with his or her perception of wholeness as a person".[68]

Take care.

Care as something you take from others

Something you learn how to get.[69]

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[68] Egnew Thomas R. 2005, '*The Meaning Of Healing: Transcending Suffering'.* Accessed May 6, 2022
https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1466870/
[69] Daniel Victoria for performance PULSE (2021, DISK theatre production)

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9. Image Credits

Image 1: Table from Thomas R. Egnew, EdD, LICSW book *"The Meaning Of Healing: Transcending Suffering";*

Image 2: Moment from a workshop lead by Viktorija Ambrazaitė in Kaunas, 2019. Participants: Rokas Lažaunykas, Emilija Dedelaitė, Skaistė Grašytė, Arvydas Šaučiūnas, Rugilė Tamošauskaitė, by Arnis Aleinikovas.

Image 3: Director Arnis Aleinikovas and performers Lara Hereu and Yu-En Ping in *PULSE* rehearsal by Josef Vesely;

Image 3: *APART MENT* live streaming, second camera. Being in: Mara Ingea, Yu-En Ping, Arnis Aleinikovas by Cristina Maldonado;

Image 4: Screenshot from an online streaming performance "*Fragmented Realities*". Performers: Jachym Sura, Alžbeta Novakova, Sai Sai by Arnis Aleinikovas;

Image 5: Montage of the participants by Arnis Aleinikovas;

Image 6: Screenshot from an online streaming performance "*ROOM IN 286/75*", by Arnis Aleinikovas;

Image 7: Screenshot from an online streaming performance "*ROOM IN 286/75*", by Arnis Aleinikovas

Image 8: Dominyka Budinavičiūtė and Arnis Aleinikovas. Montage from "*ROOM IN 286/75*", by Arnis Aleinikovas

Image 9: Yu-En Ping, Mara Ingea and Arnis Aleinikovas from "*APART MENT*", by Arnis Aleinikovas.