

The article explores the field between amateur and experimental theatre in Slovenia in the 1970s. It draws on Peter Božič's finding that the amateur, non-professional groups consisting of self-made artists who created on the edge of amateur and professional theatres played a pivotal role in the history of the Slovenian and international theatre avant-gardes. The discussion focuses on the experimental theatre groups founded by theatre amateurs in that period (e.g., the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, the Pekarna (Bakery) Theatre, the Nomenklatura (Nomenclature) group, groups founded by Tomaž Kralj, Vlado Šav, Jani Osojnik, etc.). They offered an alternative to the repertory theatres as well as to the institution of experimental theatre (in the 1970s, this was the Glej Experimental Theatre). Despite the diversity of their theatrical visions, they shared a common tendency towards not-acting. Their efforts to perform beyond representation are more closely examined by drawing on the work of Michael Kirby, who (based on examples from American stages) developed a continuum from not-acting to acting. The article analyses different categories of acting in Slovenia, which ranged from non-matrix acting through non-matrix representation, received acting and simple acting to so-called complex acting. The turn to not-acting is explored in the period between 1966 (when the first happenings took place) and the beginning of the 1980s (when the theatre innovators who sprang from the field of amateur culture started gaining acclaim, which had previously not been the case). In this, the article points out that the turn to not-acting in the Slovenian performing arts was possible precisely due to the untrained actors and theatre enthusiasts who were not active in theatre on a professional basis.

---

**Keywords:** experimental theatre, alternative theatre, amateur theatre, professional theatre, acting, 1970s, not-acting

---

**Barbara Orel** is a professor of performing arts and the head of the research group of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, University of Ljubljana. She has participated in the research projects of the Theatrical Event working group of the International Federation for Theatre Research and curated the Slovenian national theatre festivals the Week of Slovenian Drama (2006-2007) and the Maribor Theatre Festival (2008-2009).

barbara.orel@guest.arnes.si

# Amateur Theatre and the Alternative of the 1970s: The Turn to Not-Acting in the Slovenian Performing Arts<sup>1</sup>

---

Barbara Orel  
AGRFT, University of Ljubljana

---

## Introduction

The experimental theatre practices of the 1960s and 1970s show a tendency towards not-acting, that is, towards reducing the degree of acting in the characters performed. This tendency was clearly evident in the happenings and ritual forms of performing, but also present in other experimental practices relying on the avant-garde principles of the reintegration of art into life and their mutual revolutionisation. As early as in 1972, this was pointed out by Michael Kirby as he explored ways of performing beyond representation and, based on examples from American stages, developed a typology of different types of performing that open between acting and not-acting. The same can be said of experimental theatre practices in Slovenia: artistic efforts towards not-acting introduced new approaches to the representation of the characters performed and cut into the established ideas about what stage acting actually is. The purpose of this article is to examine the turn towards not-acting in the Slovenian performing arts and demonstrate that theatre enthusiasts and untrained actors who were not active in theatre on a professional basis played a pivotal role in this turn.

## The role of amateur theatre and amateur culture in socialist Yugoslavia

Let us start our rethinking of the relationship between amateur theatre and experimental performing practices with the following lucid finding by Peter Božič: “new theatre, whatever we may call it, emerges on the edge between institutional, professional and free, even amateur theatre” (92). This is the central thought of his

---

<sup>1</sup> The article was written within the research programme Theatre and Interart Studies P6-0376, which is financially supported by the Slovenian Research Agency.

essay, entitled “Alternativno gledališče”, published in the journal *Maske* in 1987. It provides an overview of the experimental theatre groups in Slovenia after World War II, more precisely, an overview of the theatre alternative active in socialist Yugoslavia in the field of amateur culture. This is also the focus of our interest: the cross-section between the alternative and amateur theatre production of the 1970s.

Peter Božič points out that a good deal of innovation in Slovenian theatre comes from groups consisting of amateurs rather than professional theatre makers. He thus provides an entirely new perspective on the theatrical alternative that had not been subject to reflection in Slovenia until that time. As found by Božič (92), among the theatres that had a significant impact on the development of Slovenian theatre, only two consisted of professional theatre makers: the Oder 57 (Stage 57) theatre and the Glej Experimental Theatre. It should be noted that Božič’s essay does not include the theatre experiments at the institutional theatres of that period, which, of course, is understandable given his research focus. At the repertory theatres, experimentation mostly took place on small stages, but could be found on large ones as well.<sup>2</sup> This was a logical consequence of the control exerted over the cultural and artistic production in socialist Yugoslavia: it was in the interest of the authorities to have an overview of all the theatrical production, including the experimental performing practices. The repertory theatres started dedicating small stages to experimentation, certainly also because experimenting was recognised as an integral part of a stable theatrical structure.<sup>3</sup>

Božič thus focuses on the alternative in the performing of non-professional theatre groups, and points out that, in the history of Slovenian and international avant-garde theatre companies, a pivotal role was played by non-professional groups consisting of self-made artists active on the edge of amateurism and professional theatres. As proof, he highlights the Russian theatre avant-garde along with Stanislavski and Meyerhold as well as the predecessors of the two – Alexander Tairov, Nikolai Evreinov, Malevich, Terentiev and the OBERIU group. Among the Slovenian authors, he points out Ferdo Delak as well as his Novi oder (New Stage) movement, *Tank* journal and Delavski oder (Workers’ Stage) venue, “where there were no theatre professionals of course, but both performances by Ferdo Delak on the Workers’ Stage were very successful as theatre as such and as theatre avant-garde” (92). He further mentions Mrakovo gledališče (Mrak’s Theatre) group and the beginnings of the Pekarna (Bakery) Theatre, noting that “it would have been utterly impossible for professionals

<sup>2</sup> Primož Jesenko examines this more closely in his monograph entitled *Rob v središču: Izbrana poglavja o eksperimentalnem gledališču v Sloveniji 1955–1967* (2015).

<sup>3</sup> The Slovenian National Theatre in Maribor founded its small stage as early as in 1959. The Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana opened the Komorni in eksperimentalni oder (Chamber and Experimental Stage) at Knights’ Hall at the Križanke venue in 1963; when making an extension at its own building in 1967, it also opened its own small stage, called Mala drama (Small Stage). The Ljubljana City Theatre opened its small stage, Stara Garderoba (Old Dressing Room), in 1979.

to carry out the first two successful Pekarna theatre projects," Dane Zajc's *Potohodec* (Pathwalker), directed by Lado Kralj, and both versions of *Gilgameš* (Gilgamesh), directed by Ivo Svetina (Ibid.). Otherwise, the Pekarna Theatre was mixed in its composition, with both theatre professionals and amateurs participating. Among the young authors who appeared on the scene at the transition into the 1980s, Božič points out Dragan Živadinov, a student at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television, who, even prior to his theatre direction studies, led an amateur theatre group in Vrhnika – SNG Vrhnika or Srečno novo gledališče Vrhnika (Happy New Theatre Vrhnika), as well as expressive dance groups that did not originate in professional ballet groups but dance fully professionally (Dance Theatre Ljubljana (PTL), Koreodrama).

Božič classifies the theatre alternative into three groups: 1) the alternative based on aesthetic conceptualism (the Glej Experimental Theatre, The Theatre of the Sisters of Scipion Nasice and the Red Pilot); 2) the politically engaged alternative, e.g., Pocestno gledališče Predrazpadom (the Street Theatre Before Disintegration), which continued in the Ana Monró Theatre, and theatre groups – communes (including Gledališče čez cesto (Theatre across the Road), the cultural association KUD Študent Maribor, Abadon, Odprti krog (Open Circle), Steps, Pomurski gledališki studio (Pomurje Theatre Studio)) and 3) a number of high school groups drawing their aesthetics from rock-pop and disco culture (93). Božič notes that all three groups are characterised by completely new content, defined by the "the social sensibility of an open and free theatre commune, which has given rise to an original aesthetics and a unique theatre language", and compares the new premises of the theatrical alternative with the emergence of authorial poetics in the literature of postmodernism (Ibid.). In his closing paragraph, he points out two things: that these theatre alternatives "possess all the necessary professionalism" and are "the highest aesthetic expression of the youth rock-pop culture" (95). Not only do Božič's examples testify to the problems surrounding the production, evaluation and education in "new theatre" (let us refer to it with this umbrella term), but also highlight the fact that the young authors of the innovations were often students, be it of theatre or non-theatre studies, who had been active in the field of amateur culture beforehand.

The position of amateur culture in Yugoslavia was quite unique because, in accordance with the principles of socialism, the authorities deliberately and systematically promoted a cultural activity that was to be accessible to the wider masses in order to "strengthen the socialist 'awareness' and the adherence to the new social and political order" (Vodopivec 422). As Peter Vodopivec points out, in the socialist times, culture also had to become "people's property" since, "by taking the power into its own hands", the people became "the owner of its content" (Ibid.). However, both

Yugoslav and Slovenian policies had an ambivalent attitude towards the new cultural tendencies. They were aware that “a more free and pluralistic cultural atmosphere was an important outlet for the educational and wider discontent of the people, and on the other hand, they understood that the opening of the cultural sphere threatened the monopoly of their orientational and ideological premises” (Vodopivec 356). The authorities tried to create the impression of Yugoslavia as a country of free creativity while opposing modernism and modern avant-garde movements in an authoritarian fashion since their principles did not correspond to the regime’s traditionalist views on art. Although amateur culture and consequently amateur theatre in Yugoslavia were politically well-supported, amateur theatre as non-professional production was strictly separated from professional. In Božič’s view, it was not so much about the difference in the quality of the performances, but about an ideological distinction between amateur theatre as “real”, “people’s” theatre on the one hand, and professional or “artificial” theatre on the other (92). These are the main reasons for the challenging situation faced by the theatre innovators active in the amateur culture of the so-called ‘leaden seventies’.

At that time, the activities of amateur theatre groups were followed by the Association of Cultural Organisations of Slovenia (Zveza kulturnih organizacij Slovenije or the ZKOS). Peter Božič notes that the ZKOS rejected the performances of the highest quality, especially towards the end of the 1970s and at the beginning of the 1980s. It did not include them in their festivals, but left them in anonymity because of their “misorientation”: it reproached them for “imitation of modernism, imitation of professional and experimental theatres” (Božič 92). Thus, these groups found themselves in a “double ghetto”, unrecognised both in the amateur and professional theatre circles. In the early 1980s (cca. 1982), however, the situation markedly improved: they started being recognised by the ZKOS, and some critics also recognised them as an alternative to professional theatre (Ibid.).<sup>4</sup> The theatre makers themselves, though, did not burden themselves with whether they were active within amateur or professional culture, but freely created and implemented their ideas. Despite their diverse visions, there was a common trait to the innovators of the 1970s in terms of performing – the tendency towards not-acting. It can also be traced in such diverse performing genres as theatre stagings of literature (this could be called performance research of literature), happenings, ritual forms of theatre, performance theatre as a form between theatre and performance art, to highlight only the most characteristic forms created in Slovenia in the 1970s at the intersection of different arts and everyday life.

---

<sup>4</sup> Božič does not provide any concrete data in this connection.

## The typology of acting and not-acting

The term not-acting was employed by Michael Kirby to denote the performing that characterised the actions in various forms of performance art of the 1960s, or of restored behaviours in performance art, as put by Richard Schechner<sup>5</sup> (28). In his “On Acting and Not-Acting” study (published in *The Drama Review* in 1972), Kirby develops various categories of acting, ranging from acting in the full sense of the word to not-acting. In other words, he offers an array of different transitions that open between complex acting on the one hand and non-matrixed performing on the other. Kirby employs the term “matrix” to denote the matrix or structure of the performed character, situation, space and time. When referring to acting, Kirby has no particular acting style in mind, but aims for his acting theory – which is precisely what his study is, i.e., a contribution to acting theory – to encompass all acting styles (3). The scale of the relationships that open between acting and not-acting does not imply an evaluation system for the persuasion of the acting (6). Similarly, the relationships between the different categories of (not-)acting do not serve to determine the degree of “reality” of what is performed, but the amount, measure or degree of acting that is present in the performing of actors and performers<sup>6</sup> (3).

Kirby established the scale of the relationships between acting and not-acting in order to more closely define the various forms of performance art that could be observed on American stages in the 1960s. In his view, this decade was when the theatre in the United States underwent a comprehensive and radical change unmatched by any other landmark period in the history of American theatre (Kirby 11). He termed the changes in the way of acting the turn towards not-acting: not only was not-acting more prominent on the American stages of that time; the acting also became less complex (Ibid.). The same could be argued for the Slovenian performing arts in the late 1960s and 1970s. There was a strong tendency towards not-acting in the experimental forms of performing. The creators often expressed themselves about their way of performing in this manner, and it was also corroborated by the authors of critical and theoretical reflections.

For Kirby, not-acting is a state or type of stage presence in which the performer does nothing to imitate, pretend, or embody anyone in order to enhance the information or identification with the character that he or she performs (3–4). On the scale leading to complex acting, that is, acting in the normal, full sense of classical acting (as in

<sup>5</sup> When defining performance art as a new type of performing, Schechner uses the terms “restored behaviors” and “twice-behaved behaviors”.

<sup>6</sup> In this essay, Kirby uses both the terms “actor” and “performer”. The former is used to denote the performance of “real”, complex acting in stagings that possess the matrix of character, situation, space and time. The term “performer” is used in all other categories of performing, lower than that of complex acting. Kirby does not specifically explain the difference between the use of these two terms, but it is clearly evident from the context. In other words, the term “actor” is reserved for performing in (dramatic) theatre and the term “performer” for the all other (post-dramatic) forms of performing.

drama theatre), the following categories are listed: non-matrixed performing, non-matrixed representation, received acting and simple acting. Each of these acting categories contains several signs that empower the matrix of the actor in the space and time performed.

As an example of non-matrixed performing, Kirby mentions stagehands or personal assistants to actors in Japanese kabuki theatre, who help the actors to change costumes and move props during the performance on stage (3). Although they do not act, they are embedded in the information structure of the performance matrix and are included in the visual representation. If the signs that contribute to the enhancement of information on the character increase (e.g., through costumes, objects, etc.), then we are dealing with so-called non-matrixed representation. In this case, the elements refer to the performer but are not “acted” by the performer: the number of the reference elements increases and they reinforce each other, so the performers are recognised by the spectators as part of the information structure of the performance (5). A good example is the actor in the role of limping Oedipus in the performance by John Perreault in New York: the limp was not acted because the performer was driven to such movement by a stick tied to his leg under his trousers. In received acting, the matrices of character, space and time are clearly established and reinforce each other, so that the persons on stage can be easily identified as actors no matter how usual their behaviour may be (Ibid.). Simple acting already includes an element or a dimension – an emotion that the performer uses to represent or embody the character (8). Unlike in simple acting (also termed by Kirby as basic or rudimentary acting, 7), in complex acting, the actor incorporates several elements into the performing, e.g., by adding speech to mime (9). Complexity, therefore, refers to acting skills and techniques.

The scale of the relationships between not-acting and complex acting is quite precisely defined. The differences between the different levels, or degrees of acting as we could put it, were small during the period considered. They might have been easily recognised only by theatre experts. In defining the individual categories, Kirby not only used examples from the performing arts, but also from film and everyday life. He even frequently resorted to examples that he himself invented. He dealt with the events (now eminent examples of happenings, performances and ritual theatrical practices) in the concluding part of his study, without taking a more defined stance in terms of the categories of the acting in the individual creations. Looking at this period from a distance in time, it is difficult to determine with certainty the degree of acting in the individual events since the documents at our disposal do not necessarily contain the records of such minute differences between the categories.

## The turn to not-acting in Slovenia

The various types of acting and not-acting, performed by either professional or untrained actors and often together with the audience, could also be noticed at Slovenian performing arts venues. The turn to not-acting started in the second half of the 1960s with the emergence of happenings and ritual forms of theatre and saw its peak in the 1970s in a variety of experimental forms of performing. The happenings by the OHO group, the first carried out in 1966, and those of the Nomenklatura group (if we only mention the true happenings carried out in Slovenia) relied on non-matrix acting and also used it in their attempt to include the audience into the performance.

As an exemplary case of non-matrix acting, and a well-documented one at that, we can point out the event or performance art piece *Zanimivo popoldne Pupilije Ferkeverk in Plinske maske* (An Interesting Afternoon of Pupilija Ferkeverk and Gas Masks), directed by Tomaž Kralj in 1971. It was carried out at the Student Cultural Centre in Belgrade (in the scope of the Second Meeting of the Student Cultural and Artistic Associations of Yugoslavia). "We witnessed a performance that we actually did not see. [...] We were the spectators who did not exist. We saw actors who were not actors", wrote critic Dušan Bjelič, who explains: "If the actors at the theatre play a part of someone else's or sometimes a part of their own lives in a fictitious space, then 'Pupilija' lives its life at a concrete place. What happens on stage is their daily lives, and we only follow them at a certain point of a certain day" ("Pupilija" u Beogradu). The non-matrix acting sprang from the concept of so-called non-translatable theatre, characterised by the fact that "its performance represents and is the simultaneous identity of the represented." (Tomaž Kralj, "Zapis") Tomaž Kralj developed untranslatable theatre in the context of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre with like-minded members of the group, which consisted of humanities students.<sup>7</sup>

The so-called meetings of the groups *Beli krog* and *Vetrnica* (Windmill), led by Vlado Šav were also based on non-matrix acting: "This is, therefore, a performance, because the people from the group do not represent anything, but are what they are" (Schuller 403). Also in this case, an essential contribution to not-acting was made by untrained actors together with the audience, the use of the performers' real names and the newly discovered or found spaces in the wild, where the meetings took place. Taking place in spaces of everyday life (mostly in parks, e.g., Tivoli in Ljubljana, on Rožnik Hill and in forests) was also so-called inspiration theatre or group inspiration theatre, developed in the *Pagadaj*, *Pagapusti* (Sotakeit, Soleaveit) group by Jani Osojnik with the help of Vlado Šav. This was a "theatre that could appear anywhere and really

<sup>7</sup> I wrote more on the untranslatable theatre of Tomaž Kralj in the study "K zgodovini performansa na Slovenskem" (296–299). Cf. also the study by Ivo Svetina "Prispevek za zgodovino gledališkega gibanja na Slovenskem – Pupilija Ferkeverk" (73–77) as well as the chapter "Tomaž Kralj in nova Pupilija" (Tomaž Kralj and New Pupilija) in his book *Gledališče Pekarna* (227–236).



could not be detected as theatre. The actors did not distinguish themselves from the passers-by, only their actions and the events were different" (Obreza 45). All these events implemented the avant-garde concept that equates art to life.

The shift from non-matrix acting to non-matrix representation can be recognised in the *Teater performance* event, carried out by the theatre group of the same name at the ŠKUC Gallery in 1979: "The performance consisted of several independent scenes that were intertwined and connected into a whole. The foundation of every scene was [...] a process that rejects illusion, so that what we did was exactly what it was and nothing else"<sup>8</sup> ("Poročilo"). Such argumentation indeed seems tautological at first glance, but basically defines the very core of the mode of representation: it is about a non-matrix representation in which the reference elements refer to the performer, so it is difficult to say that the performer does not act even though they do not do anything that could be defined as acting, as Kirby would put it (5). Let's illustrate this with the scene entitled "Perpetuum mobile". In an elongated hallway, there was a large paper roll about one hundred metres long and one metre wide in the performing space. Two performers "rolled it out and cut the paper into pieces about one square metre in size. The third performer put these pieces into a pile. At the same time, the fourth and fifth performers glued these pieces back together, rolled the paper back into a roll, and gave it to the first two performers to keep on cutting" (Gregorič, "Gledališče in disko" 77). The performers did not perform this action; they just executed it. According to Tereza Gregorič, this scene criticised the ideology of industrial society, in line with which "it is necessary to act, not to speak" (Ibid.). By simply doing the action without marking it in the process of performing by means of any particular acting style or other elements of acting (e.g., speech, emotions), this message was transmitted and understandable to the audience.

While the difference between non-matrix acting and non-matrix representation is difficult to recognise, especially on the basis of historical sources, the differences between the other categories of acting are easier to see and understand even from a distance. In received acting, in which the matrix of the staged action is clearly and firmly established, we recognise as part of a fictitious story a situation that is not acted but truly carried out. A good example of this is the performance *Tako, tako!* (So, so!), based on several dramatic texts by Mirko Kovač and directed by Ljubiša Ristić (1974 at the Pekarna Theatre). In addition to professional actors, the director also included non-actors, who played cards on stage. Although this was not acted, it was effective and accepted by the audience as part of the performed action. With a mixed cast of professional actors and non-actors, Ristić was able to achieve the effect of the real: the event was performed "in a kind of supranaturalistic style", as Venó

<sup>8</sup> The creators in this group were Zemira Alajbegović, Marina Gržinić, Neven Korda, Samo Ljubešić and Dušan Mandić. In the following year (1980), the group transformed into FV 112/15; and two years later into Borghesia.

Tauber (139) praised the performance in his review. The inclusion of non-actors or persons with certain skills into the cast was an expression of the tendency towards the closeness to the real and the authentic. It was associated with the formation of a stage sensibility, which, in its distraction from the strategy of mimetic representation, employed the strategy of presentation, i.e., the display of actions as they are, without being surrounded by a veil of stage illusion.

This was also the intention of the Pupiliija Ferkeverk Theatre: We want to destroy the basic characteristics of traditional and some avant-garde theatres, which is the illusion of life to which theatre has always been subservient. The performance is no longer a play, a copy, or enactment of life, but rather a total and all-encompassing reality to which we are all committed.<sup>9</sup> When the performance *Pupiliija, papa Pupilo pa Pupilčki* (Pupiliija, Papa Pupilo and the Pupilčeks, 1969) was conceived, an audition was organised to attract collaboration candidates of all genders, ages and classes with unusual abilities, even if those were useless and uninteresting in everyday life. Among other things, Pupillija Ferkeverk – according to the text – “liked” ammonia eaters, steel handlebar smelters, transvestites, whistlers, creators of inarticulate voices, fire eaters, magicians, strippers, hairdressers, acrobats, judoists, karateists, gymnasts.<sup>10</sup> Such grandness in the range of practitioners of everyday activities was indeed not put into realisation, but they acted in the roles of themselves – as Girls and Boys, as stated on the cast list.<sup>11</sup> Although their premise initially refused imitation and intended to recreate the reality of life on stage, their appearance on the stage was marked by the intention of presenting their own selves, that is, the characters of themselves. Kirby would characterise their performance as simple acting or basic, rudimentary acting, in which the performers express their emotions and beliefs while being aware of the presence of audience. They also staged *Žlahtna plesen Pupilije Ferkeverk* (The Noble Mould of Pupiliija Ferkeverk, 1969) on the Small Stage of the Slovenian National Theatre Drama Ljubljana, in which they theatricalised their poetry: each poem “served as a dramaturgical model in which a ‘dramatic hero’, let’s say a Young Poet, had to create a certain action followed by a re-action” (Svetina, “Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk” 91). The central role was that of the poem, or its announcer – the poet – offering a new type of actor who “no longer based themselves on ‘enlivening’ themselves into the individual dramatic characters, but gave a new image to both the poems and their authors by means of their own with individual energy and presence, with movement and words” (Svetina, “Prispevek za zgodovino” 41).

9 The typescript entitled “Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk” is kept by Ivo Svetina in his private archives. A short abstract was published in: *Studentski list*, 1970, no. 8, vol. XXV.

10 The newspaper ad entitled “Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk 443 razpisuje veliko avdicijo” (Pupiliija Ferkeverk Theatre 443 is Holding a Big Audition) is printed in the monograph *Prišli so Pupilčki* (The Pupilčeks Have Arrived), p. XXIII.

11 The list of the cast only states the names of the actors, but not their roles as is normally the case.

When the Pupilčeks planned a guest performance at the Internacionalni festival studentskih kazališta or IFSK (International Student Theatre Festival) in Zagreb, dedicated to Yugoslav student theatres, they sent the festival organisers a description of their group, defining themselves as “experimental, non-literary, *non-professional*, open and live theatre”, which is “*interested in professional theatre expression (dramaturgy, directing, acting) only as the starting point of the work, which must be overpowered*” (“Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk”, italics by B. O.). The Pupilčeks obviously understood non-professionalism as a positive category and used it as their point of distinction to professional, that is, institutional, theatres. Their actions were also understood this way by Taras Kermauner. In his study “Novejše tendence v slovenskem gledališču” (published in the journal *Problemi* in 1974), he wrote that the Pupilčeks “changed the nature of theatre from culturally professional to amateur and, in a new kind of way, sacred, helped to realise the deprofessionalisation of art, its transition into the street, [...] which fitted excellently into the transformation of Slovenian traditional culture” (8). This was indeed the essence of it all: the transformation of the theatre sphere into the broader concept of the performing arts.

A decisive contribution was also made by the Pekarna, which was initially conceived as a theatre intended for the production of ritual forms of performing, but later evolved into “total theatre” or the “intermediate medium between theatre and other artistic expressions”, as its identity was defined by its founder Lado Kralj (qtd. in Svetina, *Gledališče Pekarna* 415). Class theatre and group theatre, conceived as class theatre and a theatre of a subculture with the political ambition to participate in wider society through aesthetic action, also required a special type of actor and a new approach to acting. Michael Kirby would say that the type of acting at the Pekarna is fundamentally determined by the tendency towards not-acting. In doing so, the actor’s “task is not to imitate and resemble a dramatic hero as closely as possible”, such as in the psychologically grounded acting of Stanislavski (Kralj, qtd. in Svetina, *Gledališče Pekarna* 416). Hence Kralj’s decision for the Pekarna to rely on “amateur actors who do not have the proper (academic) ‘training’ of enlivening themselves into a particular dramatic character” (Ibid.). Dane Zajc’s *Pathwalker*, directed by Lado Kralj (1972), and *Gilgamesh*, directed by Ivo Svetina (1972), were performed in this manner. Of course, actors trained at the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television also played at the Pekarna. The new theatre formed its foundations on casts consisting of professional and non-professional theatre makers.<sup>12</sup>

12 Ivo Svetina points out that this was also the case with the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre. He notes that, both in the performing of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre and the Pekarna Theatre, the students of the Academy of Theatre, Radio, Film and Television also participated (e.g., Barbara Levstik, Barbara Jakopič, Jožica Avbelj. At the time of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre, the latter was still a high school student and a member of the high school drama club, where she was – by chance? – noticed by Barbara Levstik”) (*Gledališče Pekarna* 79). The Pekarna Theatre held a similar stance on directors. According to Ivo Svetina, Lado Kralj was “convinced that, in new theatre that is inventing a new language, and above all, seeking a new social role and a dialogue with the audience, it is not important that the director has completed all relevant professional training; moreover, the ‘advantage’ of non-professional directors may be in them looking for (and discovering) what professional directors learn during their academic studies, but do not necessarily know how to put into

The tendency towards not-acting was also strongly represented at a special programme section, so-called literary evenings of contemporary Slovenian writers. As Lado Kralj explains, “these are not traditional evenings but some kind of happenings” (qtd. in Svetina, *Gledališče Pekarna* 416). These were literary performances that might be denoted as performance research of literature nowadays.<sup>13</sup> *Večer Marka Švabiča ali “Predavanje o slovenski paranoji”* (The Marko Švabič Evening or “A Lecture on Slovenian Paranoia”) (1973), for example, took up the form of a lecture. The writer introduced himself to the audience as a lecturer “standing at the lectern in an ascetic pose with a microphone and a glass of water and lecturing on ‘Slovenian paranoia’”, which turns out to be but his creation process (Ibid.). The presentation of Svetina’s book *Heliks in Tibija* (Helix and Tibia), however, was performed “not only as a literary ‘event’, but as a small performance with all the elements of dilettante theatre,” as stated by the author (Ibid. 418). There were two students from Bežigrad Grammar School or its theatre group; the participants also included Ivo Svetina, Dušan Rogelj and Marko Slodnjak (then editor of the ŠKUC publishing programme, in the scope of which Svetina’s book had been published). This was *Tiskovna konferenca* (The Press Conference), as the event’s title communicated. Was this performance research of literature about non-matrix acting, non-matrix representation, received acting or simple acting? Based on the written documents, the category or level of acting is difficult to determine, undoubtedly because the authors of the literary texts also performed in these pieces of performance research. This makes the determination of the relationship between the acted and the not-acted even more complex.

## Conclusion

The different levels of acting that lead from not-acting to complex acting in terms of acting in the usual, full sense of the word (non-matrix acting, non-matrix representation, received acting and simple acting) should of course not be understood as value judgements, but as different degrees of acting present in individual creations. In experimental forms of performing, they have been used (along with other elements) to create a new quality of the stage event. In fact, it was about establishing

---

practice” (Ibid. 75).

13 The following events were performed: *Večer Lojzeta Kovačiča* (The Lojze Kovačič Evening, 1972); *Večer Daneta Zajca* (The Dane Zajc Evening, 1972, directed by Ivo Svetina); *Večer Marka Švabiča ali “Predavanje o slovenski paranoji”* (The Marko Švabič Evening or “A Lecture on Slovenian Paranoia”, 1973, directed by Lado Kralj); the literary evening of Matjaž Kocbek entitled *Smrt po smrti po bogu. (Literarno doživetje s toplim bifejem, žonglerjem, pesmicami, drobovino in zelnatimi glavami)* (Death After Death After God. (A Literary Experience with a Hot Buffet, a Juggler, Songs, Offal and Heads of Cabbage), also 1973); *Happening Iva Svetine ali “Tiskovna konferenca”* (The Ivo Svetina Happening or “The Press Conference”, 1973 in the direction of the author at the publication of his book *Heliks in Tibija*); *Večer Ferdinanda Miklavca* (The Ferdinand Miklavc Evening, 1973); *Vaša partijska ljubezen, očetje! Herojska smrt življenja ...* (Your Party Love, Fathers! A Heroic Death of Life ..., 1976, in the direction of the author at the publication of his eponymous book). The *Repertoar slovenskih gledališč 1972–1977* (The Repertoire of the Slovenian Theatres 1972–1977) index does not state the directors in two cases.

a new performing paradigm that broke with the theatre tradition and led to a broader understanding of performing in the scope of the performing arts and performance art.

A significant contribution to the creation of the new performing paradigm in Slovenia was made by the turn to not-acting. It took place in the second half of the 1960s and throughout the 1970s, in happenings, ritual forms of theatre, early forms of performance art, intermediate forms between theatre and performance art; all these were created in dialogue with literature, fashion, street theatre, puppet theatre and various artistic disciplines, and they all moved on the edge of the field of aesthetics and everyday life. In Slovenia, the tendency to not-acting was also represented at the alternative theatre venues later in the 1980s and in the ensuing decades. However, the turn to not-acting took place in the 1970s, more precisely, from 1966 (when the first happenings were made) to the early 1980s, when the efforts of theatre innovators originating in the field of amateur culture began to receive recognition, which they had previously not been given. Untrained actors played a key role in the performing of not-acting. Many of them came from amateur culture, and perhaps even more of them were theatre enthusiasts who were not active in amateur culture. It is difficult and also pointless to establish differences between these two groups, as they all worked together towards a common goal: to create performances that paved the way to a new understanding of performing.

## Bibliography

- Bjelić, Dušan. "Pupilija' u Beogradu" [Pupilija in Belgrade]. The source of the newspaper article can not be identified. It is part of the documentation of Tomaž Kralj, kept by the Slovenian Theatre Institute.
- Božič, Peter. "Alternativno gledališče" [Alternative Theatre]. *Maske*, vol. 3, no. 8–9, 1987, pp. 92–95.
- "Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk" [Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre]. Typescript. Private archives of Ivo Svetina. (A short abstract was published in: *Studentski list*, 1970, no. 8, vol. XXV.)
- Gregorič, Tereza. "Gledališče in disko: FV 112/15" [Theatre and Disco: FV 112/15]. *Gledališka alternativa sedemdesetih in osemdesetih* [The Theatre Alternative of the 1970s and the 1980s], ed. Nina Šorak, Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za Gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, 2012, pp. 73–91.
- . *Gledališče in disko: FV 112/15* [Theatre and Disco: FV 112/15]. Thesis. Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za Gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, 2013.
- Jesenko, Primož. *Rob v središču: Izbrana poglavja o eksperimentalnem gledališču v Sloveniji 1955–1967* [The Edge at the Centre: Selected Chapters on Experimental Theatre in Slovenia 1955–1967]. Slovenski gledališki inštitut, 2015.
- Kermauner, Taras. "Novejše tendence v slovenskem gledališču" [Recent Tendencies in the Slovenian Theatre]. *Problemi*, vol. 12, no. 2–3, 1974, pp. 134–135.
- Kirby, Michael. "On Acting and Not-Acting." *The Drama Review*, vol. 16, no. 1, 1972, pp. 3–15.
- Kralj, Tomaž. "Zapis ob predstavi *Zanimivo popoldne Pupilije Ferkeverk*" [Writings on the performance *An Interesting Afternoon of Pupilija Ferkeverk*]. [The document does not have a title. It was created in April 1971.] The typescript is kept by the Slovenian Theatre Institute.
- Obreza, Ana. "V iskanju esencialnega: gledališki momenti Janija Osojnika." [In Search of the Essential: The Theatre Moments of Jani Osojnik] *Gledališka alternativa sedemdesetih in osemdesetih* [The Theatre Alternative of the 1970s and the 1980s], ed. Nina Šorak, Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo, 2012, pp. 39–59.
- Orel, Barbara. "K zgodovini performansa na Slovenskem. Eksperimentalne gledališke prakse v obdobju 1966–1986 [To the History of Performance Art in Slovenia: Experimental Theatre Practices 1966–1986]". *Dinamika sprememb v slovenskem gledališču 20. stoletja* [The Dynamics of Change in the 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Slovenian Theatre], eds. Barbara Sušec Michieli, Blaž Lukan and Maja Šorli, Univerza v Ljubljani, Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo and Maska, 2010, pp. 271–327.

“Poročilo o delu gledališke skupine ‘Teater performance’ za leto 1979/80” [Report on the Work of the ‘Teater performance’ Theatre Group for the year 1979/80]. Written on behalf of the group by Marina Gržinić on 1 December 1980. The document is kept in the private archives of Neven Korda.

Schechner, Richard. *Performance Studies: An Introduction*. Routledge, 2013.

Schuller, Aleksandra. “Vlado Šav in aktivna kultura” [Vlado Šav and Active Culture]. *Annales*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2011, pp. 397–412.

Svetina, Ivo. “Gledališče Pupilije Ferkeverk ali vprašanje rituala” [The Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre or the Issue of Ritual]” *Literarni modernizem v ‘svinčenih’ letih* [Literary Modernism in the ‘Leaden’ Years], ed. Gašper Troha, Študentska založba and Društvo Slovenska matica, 2008, pp. 79–99.

—. “Prispevek za zgodovino gledališkega gibanja na Slovenskem – Pupilija Ferkeverk” [A Contribution to the History of the Theatre Movement in Slovenia – Pupilija Ferkeverk]. *Prišli so Pupilčki. 40 let Gledališča Pupilije Ferkeverk* [The Pupilčeks Have Arrived. 40 Years of the Pupilija Ferkeverk Theatre], eds. Aldo Milohnič and Ivo Svetina, Maska and Slovenski gledališki muzej, 2009, pp. 27–77.

—. *Gledališče Pekarna (1971–1978). Rojstvo gledališča iz duha svobode: pričevanje* [The Pekarna Theatre (1971–1978). The Birth of Theatre out of the Spirit of Freedom: A Testimony]. Mestno gledališče ljubljansko, 2016. Knjižnica MGL, p. 167.

Taufer, Veno. *Odrom ob rob* [Stage Commentary]. Državna založba Slovenije, 1977.

Vodopivec, Peter. *Od Pohlinove slovnice do samostojne države. Slovenska zgodovina od konca 18. stoletja do konca 20. stoletja* [From Pohlin’s Grammar to the Independent State. The Slovenian History from the End of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century till the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century]. Založba Modrijan, 2007.

*Translated by Urška Zajec*