

In her article, the author analyses the fifty-year theatre project *Noordung::1995-2045*, which started as a continuous research project in 1995 and will, according to the conceptual predictions of its authors, conclude in 2045 in actual outer space. In particular, she focuses on two aspects of the project: the dissolution of the drama basis and the traditional theatre model founded upon it, in which Dragan Živadinov finds inspiration in Malevich's Suprematism; and the character and nature of technologically advanced substitutes that will replace deceased actresses and actors in the show through the decades and ultimately move to outer space. On the one hand, Živadinov thus continues the yearning for an ideal artificial form as felt by Kleist, Craig and Prampolini before him; while on the other, he researches and documents the ageing and disintegration of both the performance and its creators and, last but not least, the audience. The author shows that the key junction between both is the 1986 landmark project *Retrogardistic Event Baptism under Triglav* by Živadinov and the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre. The photograph of the "rebaptism" scene in this project was, namely, linked to an actual life tragedy, the death of an actress, which became the original trigger of the idea that an inanimate object can replace an actress or actor after their death.

Keywords: death, funeral, grave, gravestone, postdramatic theatre, Dragan Živadinov, visual arts, Suprematism, body, substitute, ghost, memory

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The Body and Farewell - Noordung::1995-2045

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In her article, the author analyses the fifty-year theatre project *Noordung::1995-2045*, which started as a continuous research project in 1995 and will, according to the conceptual predictions of its authors, conclude in 2045 in actual outer space. The world première of the project, based on the play *Love and Sovereignty* by Vladimir Stojsavljević, was held on 20 April 1995 at 22:00 at the Festival Hall in Ljubljana. Besides Živadinov as the author of the concept, it featured set designer Vadim Fiškin, costume designer Dunja Zupančič, dramaturg and art producer Jana Pavlič, producer Petar Jović, voice coach Mateja Dermelj and other contributors. The piece was supposed to have five reprises until 2045: one every ten years, always on the same date, at the same time, and with the same cast of 14 actresses and actors.

At the time of writing, the performance *Noordung::1995-2045* has already had two reprises. The first was in 2005 in the hydro-laboratory of the Yuri Gagarin cosmonaut training centre in Moscow's Star City. The second was in 2015 at the Cultural Centre of European Space Technologies (KSEVT) at Vitanje. The cast has already experienced death, too: Milena Grm died in 2011 and Iva Zupančič in 2018. At the KSEVT re-staging in 2015, Milena Grm was replaced by the first remote-controlled substitute. Since Milena Grm did not speak any of the lines from Stojsavljević's text in the original performance but sang a love song from Resia, the audience heard the latter in the rendition of a male choir. About four hundred spectators attended the second reprise. They were welcomed at the KSEVT entrance by Živadinov who divided them into four groups marked by black, yellow, red and blue bracelets; people without bracelets or booked seats then constituted the fifth group who also saw the show.

Since the original scenery and costumes of the show were destroyed in the 1997 fire at the SNT Drama Ljubljana Theatre Studio, where they were kept, the authors could not have staged a perfectly identical repetition of the performance even if they wanted to. However, the performance is supposed to be repeated every ten years, as actors or their technological substitutes will move along a precisely defined geometric mise-en-scène. Some collaborators have left or entered its narrow artistic core: only after the world première it was broadened by Miha Turšič, now one of the three key authors besides Živadinov and Zupančič. Despite

the seeming “persistence in the same” that is inscribed in the concept of the fifty-year project, the thing Živadinov continuously generates by the reprises of the show is actually difference.

The author of the article focuses particularly on two aspects of the project: the dissolution of the drama basis and the traditional theatre model founded on it, and the character and nature of technological substitutes that will replace deceased actresses and actors in the show and ultimately move to actual outer space. The key junction between both is the project *Retrogardistic Event Baptism under Triglav* by Živadinov and the Scipion Nasice Sisters Theatre that opened on 6 February 1986 at the Gallus Hall stage of Cankarjev dom Cultural Centre. According to its dramaturg Eda Čufer, it is a landmark in the history of contemporary Slovenian theatre due to its “adramatic” structure. Namely, this was a distinctly rhythmic, visual and musical stage spectacle that was impossible to classify as theatre or opera or ballet even though it borrowed elements from all these art forms.

The photograph of the “rebaptism” scene was linked to an actual life tragedy, the death of Deana Demšar, a member of the original cast, who died during the process. Živadinov seemed to glimpse the resurrection of the deceased actress in the detail of Kandinsky’s painting on stage which became the original trigger of the idea that an inanimate object can replace an actress or actor after their death. In the fifty-year project, the production of technological substitutes is the responsibility of Dunja Zupančič, Živadinov’s artistic and private-life partner who based the development of her own bio-mechatronic method on the pneumatic module developed by her father, mechanical engineer Janez Zupančič. On the one hand, Živadinov thus continues the yearning for an ideal artificial form as felt by Kleist, Craig and Prampolini before him; while on the other, he researches and documents the ageing and disintegration of both the performance and its creators and, last but not least, the audience.

The deficiency of the body in the fifty-year theatre project *Noordung::1995–2045* no longer concerns emotional inadequacy or performance inconsistency. Instead, it is a matter of the fundamental imperfection inscribed in every human body at its birth, namely, the fact of its mortality. To truly understand the concept of a fifty-year show, it is essential to emphasise that technological substitutes replace actresses and actors only after their death and that they preserve and transmit posthumous memories of specific people. Since their deployment in the Earth’s orbit will be permanent, the project can be read as a space cemetery and the action of deployment of technological substitutes in 2045 as a conceptualised funeral concluding with Živadinov’s suicide. His physical body will be the only one to die and be buried in space.

Even though the media have shown considerable interest in the fifty-year project from the start, little or almost no attention has been devoted to Živadinov's death itself. The author of the article compares his death and funeral plans with those of Kazimir Malevich and Marina Abramović. Their common idea is the disappearance into the unknown, which seems like an intended closure of their artistic opuses. The placement of their disused organic bodies in the void will ultimately replace the physical existence of the grave – as the last resting place in which the dead organic body would be laid, as well as as a tombstone or memorial that usually serves as a place of remembering and mourning for the deceased.