

The article focuses on the phenomena, developments and potentials of small arts (*Kleinkunst*) in the Slovenian space. Small arts are a form of artistic response that, through diverse performance genres – such as cabaret, new burlesque, improvisational theatre, stand-up, interventions in public space, contemporary circus, drag, queer and LGBTQI+ stage events – provides a social commentary on the existing traditionalist, heteronormative, patriarchal and capitalist society. The article elaborates the term small arts and its artistic and social elements and tries to identify it concretely in the local space. This broad umbrella term is characterised by the heterogeneity of its themes and aesthetics. In Slovenia, it has an even more specific undertone and position, as its development and influence are hampered by a small population. When selecting the creators of small arts, the author focused mainly on those working in the sphere of the non-governmental sector, who create continuously, have artistic credibility and are not market-oriented.

Keywords: alternative theatre, queer, LGBTQI+, small arts, *Kleinkunst*

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Formats and Potentials of Local Small Arts (Kleinkunst)

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This article deals with the phenomena, developments and potentials of small arts (*Kleinkunst*) in the Slovenian space. This art genre always deals with the environment in which it operates, in the sense of a constant reflection and critique of the prevailing social and cultural-artistic phenomena of the time. Small arts are a form of artistic response that comments on the existing traditionalist, heteronormative, patriarchal and capitalist society through various performance genres – such as cabaret, new burlesque, improvisational theatre, stand-up, public space interventions, contemporary circus and drag, queer and LGBTQI+ performance events. However, the extremely diverse principles of small arts do not primarily aim to challenge or counter mainstream production in principle (at best, they are “inspired” by it) but rather to create and sustain alternative spaces of independent artistic expression – in terms of content, formats, space and duration. Small arts self-reflexively resist the domination of a profitable and populist society, but at the same time, ironically, they also reflect and even relate to or contrast with it (i.e., with convention in the broadest sense). Another specific feature of small arts is that they are usually conceived according to the principle of collective authorship, thus providing a practical rather than merely declarative commentary on the subversion of the entrenched hierarchical system of creation within performance practice.

The article outlines the concept of small arts, its artistic and social elements and attempts to identify it concretely in the local space. It is a broad generic term, characterised by the heterogeneity of its themes and aesthetics, and has an even more specific undertone and position in Slovenia, where the small population hinders its development and influence. In selecting small arts practitioners in Slovenia, the article focuses primarily on those who work in the non-governmental sector, who create continuously, have artistic credibility and are not market-oriented. Small arts is a fully equal segment of the entire artistic polygon, and although this is clear to the small arts practitioners, this fact must nevertheless be emphasised again and again in the broader public discourse.