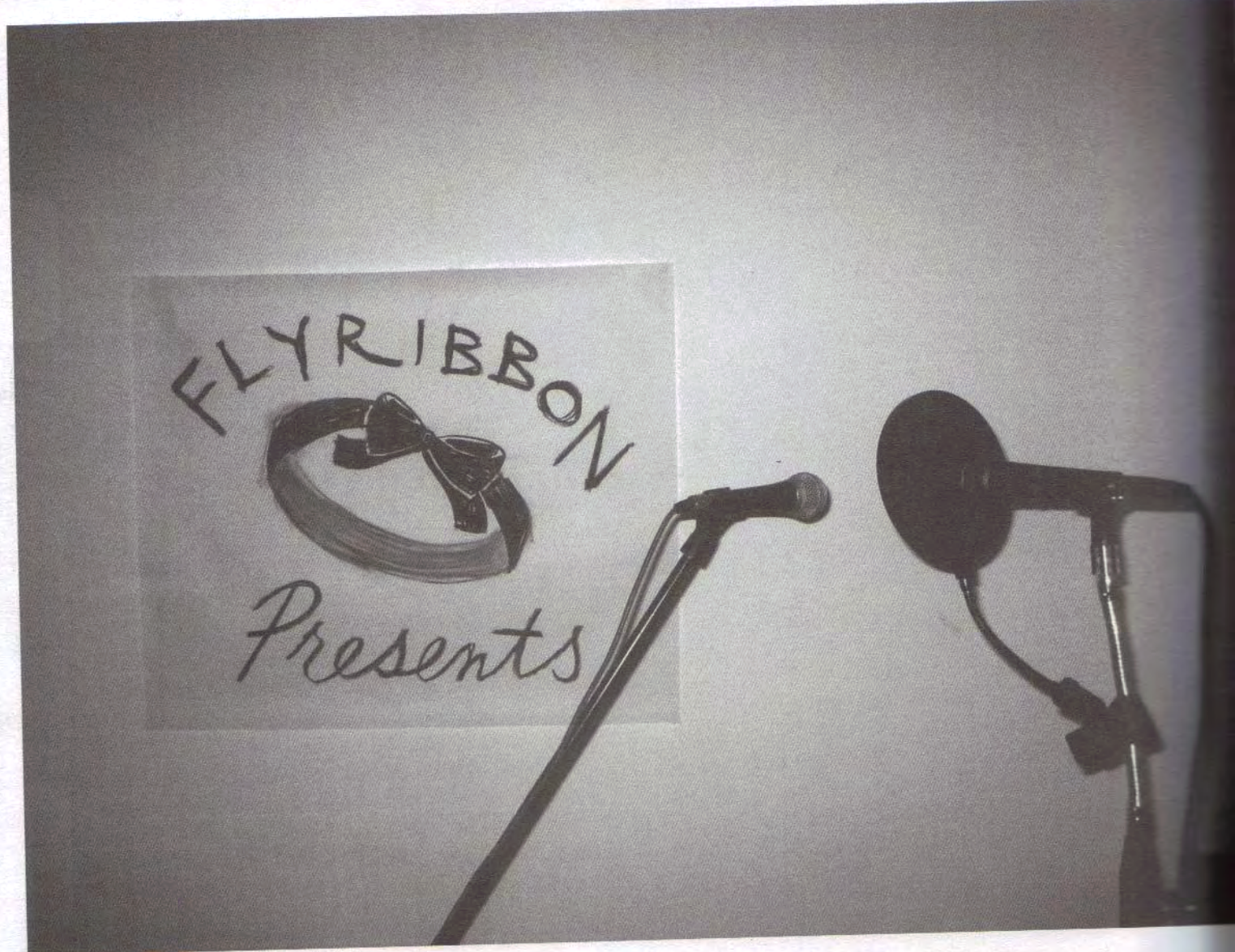




Sve je povezano

Lala Raščić

Razgovarala: Ivana Bago

Lala Rašić rođena je u Sarajevu 1977. Akademiju Likovnih Umjetnosti završila je u Zagrebu nakon čega je dvije godine boravila na Rijksakademi van Beeldenden Kunsten u Amsterdamu. Nastupala je na brojnim rezidencijama, među ostalim i na Platform Garanti, Istanbul, 2005. Izlagala na brojnim grupnim i samostalnim izložbama u zemlji i inozemstvu, a među recentnijim su 'Sve je povezano', UGBiH, Sarajevo (2007.); 'Sve je povezano', B.O.P. Galerija, Zagreb (2007.); 'No borders, Just N.E.W.S.', La Centrale Electrique, Bruxelles (2008.) i 'Land of Human Rights', Center for Contemporary Art, Graz (2008.). Prva je dobitnica nagrade Zvono za najbolju BH umjetnicu mlađe generacije.

Nakon boravka u Amsterdamu počinje eksperimentirati s radijskim formama. Forma audio-drame uskoro postaje jednim od ključnih elemenata njezinog rada koji je, prije svega, interdisciplinaran te redovito uključuje i medije videa, crteža, instalacije i izvedbe. S Lalom Rašić razgovarala sam u svibnju 2008. godine, mjesec dana nakon što je njezin novi projekt *Individualne utopije* prvi put predstavljen u Istanbulu, čija cjelovita verzija biti predstavljena u zagrebačkoj Galeriji BOP početkom lipnja 2008. godine.

Nestvarno si u Istanbulu u sklopu projekta *Art on Stage* premijerno predstavila jedan dio svog novog projekta *Individualne utopije*. Nastup, izveden u formi audio teatra uživo, realizirala si u suradnji s mostarskom grupom Vunenym. Zašto si izabrala formu audio teatra uživo i na koji način se odvijala suradnja s grupom Vunenym?

Audio teatar uživo je čest način prezentacije audio drama. Primjerice, BBC priređuje večeri kada se poznate audio drame izvede pred mnogobrojnom publikom, a nastup uključuje orkestar, sound-umjetnike, glumce itd. Meni se forma koju sam otkrila u svom istraživanju audio drame, učinila jako zanimljivom. U izvedbi *Individualnih utopija* sam zapravo svela taj često mnogobrojni i spektakularni postav na grupu od trije ljudi. Kao i u svojim prethodnim projektima, uključim sve likove, a zvučni *background* radili su Nedim Čišić i Andrijan Zovko iz grupe Vunenym. Nakon što sam im predložila suradnju pokazala scenarij koji je uključivao razrađene scene s unaprijed zadanim zvučnim efektima, oni su predložili da njihova uloga ne bude samo uloga tehničara koji puštaju zvučne efekte, već da preko muzike daju svoj kreativni doprinos, stvaraju atmosferu. Razlog zbog kojeg sam to krenula u suradnju s nekim drugim je zato što sam na neki način već prošla kroz formu klasične audio drame sa zvučnim efektima i htjela sam malo razviti to klupko kojeg sam se već uhvatila u svom radu.

Misliš i na činjenicu da su dosada tvoji radovi bili gotovo u cijelosti one-woman show?

Da, bilo bi dosljedno mom radu da sam ja izvela sama taj scenarij, sama aplicirala zvuk, sve osmislila ili odglumila pred kamerom. Međutim, mene je zanimao nastup uživo, izlazak na scenu, nisam htjela da to bude samo suhoparno stanje. Njihov posao i moj posao su se nekako preplakirali jer oni nisu radili zvučne efekte, radili su muziku i atmosferu, nadograđujući na neki način sam prvotni scenarij. Vunenym su stvarali petsto koncerata u životu, a ja nisam baš toliko puno bila na pozornici, pa ne poznajem tu dinamiku. U suradnji s njima sam skratila scenarij i prilagodila ga živoj izvedbi, savjetovali su me što bi moglo djelovati bolje, kako održati

i uspostaviti ritam. Mislim da je uspostavljanje te suradnje značilo velik napredak za mene, kao i činjenica da smo napravili jedan proizvod koji ne funkcionira samo u kontekstu vizualnih umjetnosti, nego se može gledati, usudila bih se reći, i kao samostalna predstava.

Možeš li reći nešto o samom scenariju, kako je on nastao?

Cijela suradnja s Vunenyma zapravo je rezultat spleta okolnosti pri čemu sam na kraju dobila konceptualno potpuno zaokruženu cjelinu: rad o Mostaru realiziram u suradnji s bendom iz Mostara. Ja sam, naime, i ranije namjeravala surađivati s njima, a onda sam u listopadu 2007. godine bila pozvana od strane SCCA u Sarajevu da sudjelujem u jednoj radionici u Mostaru koju je organizirala talijanska organizacija Connecting Cultures. Oni su došli s nekim projektom koji je od samog početka bio prilično nedefiniran i koji je imao za cilj pomoći Centrima za mentalno zdravlje u istočnom i zapadnom Mostaru, konkretnije pacijentima koji boluju od PTSP-a. Prije našeg dolaska, donirali su Centru za mentalno zdravlje Zapad (prema njihovoj želji) peč za keramiku, koja je tako trebala poslužiti i kao fokus radionice koju smo mi kao umjetnici tamo trebali realizirati. Međutim, ispostavilo se da nitko od nas ne zna koristiti tu peč i općenito dolazi do potpunog nesporazuma i kaosa: mi smo potpuno nepripremljeni dovedeni u situaciju da radimo s osobama s teškim psihičkim poremećajima (s tim da tamo nismo "pronašli" gotovo nijednog PTSP pacijenta, što nam je bio zadatak). U Centru su, naravno, očekivali likovnu radionicu, misleći da ćemo mi sad tamo raditi neke cvjetice od gline ili nešto slično, a mi smo tamo došli s nekim potpuno drugim ciljevima, smatrajući radionicu polazištem za realizaciju vlastitog novog umjetničkog projekta. Radionica je tako bila apsolutni fijasko, bilo je jako teško surađivati s Centrima za mentalno zdravlje Istočni i Zapadni Mostar, a tijekom cijelog procesa na površinu su isplivali veliki problemi koji još uvijek muče taj grad, ta podvojenost. Ja sam iz toga izišla definitivno oštećena i luda, trebalo mi je par tjedana da se oporavim od tih pet dana u Mostaru, ali ja sam u stvarima koje su se desile prepoznala ogroman dramatski potencijal. Već sam pred kraj radionice odlučila da od toga napravim nešto.

Budući da radim u mediju audio drame, projekt je započeo tako da sam pretočila događanja tijekom tih pet dana u jedan scenarij. Taj cijeli scenarij je dakle baziran na "replikama" događaja i ljudi koji su stvarno tamo bili, sve je pomalo karikirano, neke su stvari malo sabijene, neke su istine malo iskrivljene, imena su skoro sva promijenjena ali puno stvari se odvijalo doslovno onako kako je napisano u scenariju, osim detalja da spomenuta peć na kraju eksplodira i da frustrirani umjetnici ukradu tu peć. Istinita je čak i zadnja scena, u kojoj Connecting Cultures mene, nakon što sam im otvoreno izrazila negodovanje vezano za tu radionicu, zovu na konferenciju u Milano, a konferencija se opet zove *Art and survival* s podnaslovom "umjetnost i ljudska prava". Konferencija je zapravo bila jako interesantna, ali u kontekstu održane radionice, mislim da se opet nisu dotakli pravog problema. Ovaj projekt zapravo tematizira i taj uobičajeni neokolonijalni stav stranih organizacija koji dolaze s plemenitim namjerama i pokušavaju implementirati nerealne ciljeve uopće ne razumijevajući pravu situaciju. Jedan slučaj tijekom radionice govori sve o stanju u tom gradu: jedna pacijentica iz Centra Istok poželjela je svirati gitaru i htjela je da ju snimamo dok svira. Znali smo da u Centru Zapad imaju gitaru, pa smo tražili da nam je posude. Međutim, liječnica to nije odobrila, opravdavši to odbijanje riječima da ona ne zna te ljude u istočnom Mostaru ni kao ljude ni kao pacijente.

Toliko o "connecting cultures".

Da. Mislim, Talijani su se tu našli pred zidom, jer nisu shvatili o čemu se tu radi. Oni su se nekako namjerili na te PTSP pacijente, kojih ima više izvan institucija nego unutar njih, Mostar je pun ljudi s traumama.

Da, čini se da cijeli projekt predstavlja tipičan primjer tzv. cultural mistranslation, baš kao i još jedan, zasad nerealizirani projekt u Mostaru koji sponzorira austrijska vlada nevjerojatnim iznosom od milijun eura, a u kojem se jedan austrijski umjetnik dosjetio opkoliti Stari most robusnim metalnim konstrukcijama, kako bi podsjetio na ratne traume, umjesto da ih se, s tako lijepo obnovljenim mostom, bezočno ignorira.

No, vratimo se tvom radu. Projekt *Individualne utopije* zapravo objedinjuje pozicije i strategije na temelju kojih u posljednjih nekoliko godina gradiš svoj rad: s jedne strane, utjelovljuje tvoj sve veći interes za interdisciplinarnošću, kombiniranjem videa, teksta, audio drame, te njene izvedbe. U najavi za spomenuti nastup pisalo je da je riječ o tvom prvom nastupu pred publikom, umjesto pred kamerom. Međutim, još tvoj rad *Napuštena rukavica*, izveden u Amsterdamu 2005. godine, sadržavao je element performansa. Zanima me taj element izvedbe, prelaska iz kreiranja objekta do uloge u kojoj si istovremeno subjekt i objekt. Često se performans, vrlo pojednostavljeno, opisuje kao potreba umjetnika da se više ne skrivaju iza svog rada, nego se direktno suoče s publikom.

Individualne utopije je bio prvi uvježbani performans sa scenarijem, neka ozbiljnija izvedba. *Napuštena rukavica* u Amsterdamu bila je u većoj mjeri improvizirana: ja sam sjedila pred publikom za malim miks pultom, puštala svoje audio radove, povremeno ih komentirala, itd. To je zapravo bio nastavak projekta *I Love My Voice Radio* koji sam započela kao neki eksperiment ili šalu dok sam još bila na Rijks-u i u kojem sam simulirala komercijalnu radio emisiju i puštala kompilaciju zvučnih radova svojih kolega. Razmišljajući o tome kako napraviti kompilaciju, shvatila sam da bi simulacija forme radijskog programa bila idealna. To je par puta bilo čak i emitirano na amsterdamskom Radio100, međutim rad nije bio zamišljen kao radijski program već kao audio rad s kontribucijama drugih umjetnika, bendova itd. *Napuštena rukavica* je bila audio performans, više na razini nekog zaista neformalnog eksperimenta. Ja sam već ranije bila napravila istoimeni audio *piece* koji traje 15 minuta i pustila ga u povodu otvaranja u Amsterdamu, a performans se sastojao od toga da sam kolekciju pronađenih rukavica bacala jednu po jednu na ozvučenu površinu. To je recimo bio taj neki prvi eksperiment. Što se tiče *stagea* ja sam još sa 16 godina nastupala s Ivanom Popović u Virus Teatar Michelangelo, radila sam i s Magdalenom Pederin i Ivanom Marušićem Klifom na projektu *Oko čuje uho vidi* s kojim smo imali puno zajedničkih nastupa, ali *Napuštena rukavica* je bila prvi performans u kojem sam nekako suvereno izašla pred publiku iz neke potrebe. Za mene je izlazak iz studija pred publiku logična stepenica u procesu razvoja mog rada. I očito je da to želim od 2005., od *Napuštene rukavice*. Možda se tak sada osjećam dovoljno sigurnom da to učinim, pa sam stoga odlučila izvesti *Individualne Utopije* kao performans. Možda se radilo i o potrebi da se više ne krijem iza svog rada. Zapravo, ja se ne krijem iza svog rada, uvijek sam prisutna pred kamerom u svojim video radovima. No, kao što je bitna činjenica da to jesam ja, istovremeno je bitno i da bježim od same sebe utjelovljujući različite likove. Za to će trebati još dosta rada jer, naravno, nisam ni profesionalni performer ni glumac, a sva ta znanja potrebna su za ovu vrstu izvedbe koju ja radim i koja je glumački prilično zahtjevana.

Jedan tvoj citat za mene predstavlja metaforu tvog rada: "Ja želim da nešto nestane kako bih se mogla igrati s prazninom koju je to nešto ostavilo". U *Napuštenoj rukavici* zvuk bacanja izgubljene, a zatim nađene rukavice na pod rezultat je pomalo apsurdne igre s prazninom, ne samo prikazivanja nevidljivog, nego i "ozvučavanja" nevidljivog, izgubljenog, njegova materijalizacija kroz zvuk. Iste godine nastaje i tvoj rad *Invisibles*, najprije kao serija crteža, a onda i kao video koji dokumentira tvoju izvedbu scenarija radio drame o "nevidljivima". Zašto si odlučila nadograditi rad u formi audio drame i kakvo je bilo iskustvo pisanja prvog scenarija?

Spomenula si nestajanje... Mogla bih se vratiti dalje od *Invisiblesa* i dalje od *Napuštene rukavice* i trenutka kad sam ja uopće krenula raditi narativne audio radove. To se desilo na Rijksu i ima isto tako veze s nekom iskrenošću prema samoj sebi... Kada sam došla na Rijks - mislim da sam jednostavno tamo došla premlada i s premalim iskustvom: dođeš tamo kao umjetnik u neko profesionalno okruženje, a ti zapravo ni sam nisi dovoljno zreo i ne znaš što želiš, onda se ideš k'o fol tražit, itd. Ja sam negdje shvatila da ne mogu više raditi video jer sam u jednoj godini napravila samo *Lokacije*, koje su na kraju bile potpuno kratki video materijali bez ikakvog zvuka. I za taj završni rad - ne znam iz koje pobude, iz onog trenutka kad si u studiju i radiš na nečemu, i jednostavno te pukne neki užas jer ti uopće ne znaš gdje ideš - napravila sam svoj prvi audio rad koji se zove *Hypnoaudio*. U njemu sam sažela gomilu svojih razmišljanja i preokupacija. Bila sam potpuno, potpuno, potpuno iskrena. Možda po prvi put u svom radu. U tom radu se javlja robotički glas - *text-to-speech*, kojim ja izgovaram osobne tajne, govorim isto tako o tom gubljenju samog sebe, bjezanju, jer sam tada bila u nekom čudnom mentalnom prostoru. Našla sam način da se potpuno otkrijem a istovremeno ostanem skrivena kroz taj bestjelesni glas. Kad sada razmišljam o tome, to je bio neki moment katarze, od *Hypnoaudia* se mijenja moj rad; započinjem proces koji me je polako doveo do formata i strategija s kojima trenutno radim.

U principu, smatram da zvuk i riječ puno više angažira prostor nego bilo kakav video. Također, puno više angažira posjetitelja. Zvuk je puno intimniji od videa, zahtijeva više vremena, više koncentracije, samim tim je onaj koji sluša angažiraniji od onog koji gleda - onaj tko gleda često tek letimično prelazi pogledom. Nakon toga u kratkom periodu uslijedila su tri audio rada, nakon što sam shvatila da je to nešto što mogu proizvoditi sama i što mogu dalje razvijati. To su *Are You a Loser* i *Napuštene rukavice*, u kojima sam se bavila citatima raznih formi: radio programi, forme *game-showa*, itd., u kojima ulazim u neke hibridne kombinacije i nadograđujem ih svojim sadržajem. To je strategija koja naravno nije nova, ali je meni bila jako bitna. Za sve te radove pišem scenarije kroz koje odlazim u naraciju koja mi je oduvijek bila bliska. *Invisiblesi* su proizašli iz mog stalnog bavljenja idejama gubljenja, nestajanja, mogućnostima i metodama bijega, skakanja, pokušaja stavljanja sebe izvan sistema, transcendiranja samog sebe, itd. Sama forma i fabula inspirirana je animiranim 3D filmom *The Incredibles* iz 2004., a govori o obitelji Superheroja koji svoje nadljudske moći moraju držati u tajnosti zato što su superheroji postali *personae non gratae* - ta mi je fabula bila fenomenalna, pa sam ja zamislila da postoje obitelji "nevidljivih" umjesto "nevjerojatnih", obitelji na dnu društvene lestvice, bez stvarnog društvenog statusa. Pisanje tog scenarija također je bio eksperiment, to tada nisam pisala scenarije s više likova, jednostavno sam znala da to trebam napraviti,

slično kao i s *Individualnim utopijama* i *Sve je povezano*; znam otprilike oko čega se vrti radnja i onda sjednem i pišem - *Invisiblesa* sam napisala doslovno u dva dana. Forma audio drame pojavila se kao logičan slijed mojih ranijih eksperimenata, igranja sa stereotipnim formama, medijskim, televizijskim, i radijskim... Audio drama je bila kao rođena za mene.

Eksperimentiranje s formom audio drame nastavlja se i u radu *Sorry Wrong Number*, u kojem koristiš predloške već postojeće i popularne radio drame iz 40-ih. Ovdje je dodatno naglašena i sama dekonstrukcija forme audio-drame i procesa njenog nastanka - zvučni zapisi su podijeljeni na tri zasebna zapisa, video koji prikazuje tvoju izvedbu nema zvuka, a slika i zvuk se ne podudaraju. Opet se radi o strategijama prevođenja nevidljivog u nevidljivo, te vizualizacije same forme audio drame.

Postojala je verzija s gramofonima, a nova verzija, koja je bila prikazana prošle godine u Galeriji BOP u Zagrebu je doslovnija: audio zapisi slušaju se preko telefonske slušalice, pri čemu se možda gubi jedan sloj kompleksnosti, ali se zapravo dobiva na autentičnosti. Instalacija s gramofonima sastoji se od tri ploče s tri zapisa koji predstavljaju glavni lik Lenore Stevenson, ostale likove i zvučne efekte. Razlomljeni su da se dobije što manji sinkronicitet, cijelu priču je na taj način nemoguće sinkronizirati. Jednako tako, u single-channel verziji instalacije s telefonom, zvuk koji se sluša nije sinkroniziran s videom. To je namjerna tehnička greška koja je preuzeta iz samog narativa *Sorry Wrong Number*, gdje se cijela fabula temelji na tehničkoj grešci i neefikasnosti tehnologije, zbog čega glavna protagonistica na kraju biva ubijena.

Jesi li do te audio drame došla preko njenih filmskih ekranizacija ili si najprije čula izvornu audio dramu?

Ja tu audio dramu uopće nisam čula prije nego što sam je snimila! Našla sam scenarij dok sam istraživala povijest i formu audio drame koja me, nakon *Invisiblesa* počela jako zanimati. Počela sam istraživati i preslušavati suvremene pisce i audio drame, poglavito na BBC-u, istraživati o audio teatru uživo, o sceni koja je jako aktivna, primjerice na američkom Srednjem Zapadu, i naravno Wellsa i njegov Mercury Theatre on the Air, istraživati zlatno doba radija. U sklopu CBS-ove emisije *Suspense* bila je emitirana *Sorry Wrong Number* kao jedna od najuspješnijih radio drama te emisije. Zaintrigirao me sažetak koji sam pročitala, nakon čega sam pronašla i cijeli scenarij. Međutim, tu audio dramu nikad nisam čula prije produkcije *Sorry Wrong Number*, nisam je htjela čuti i nisam htjela gledati film, da ne bi utjecali na moju interpretaciju. Međutim, kad sam bila u New Yorku, otišla sam u Muzej televizije i filma i u njihovoj sam arhivi potražila originalnu, prvu izvedbu iz 1943. Lenoru Stevenson je glumila Agnes Moorehead, koja je također bila jedna od glumica koje su sudjelovale

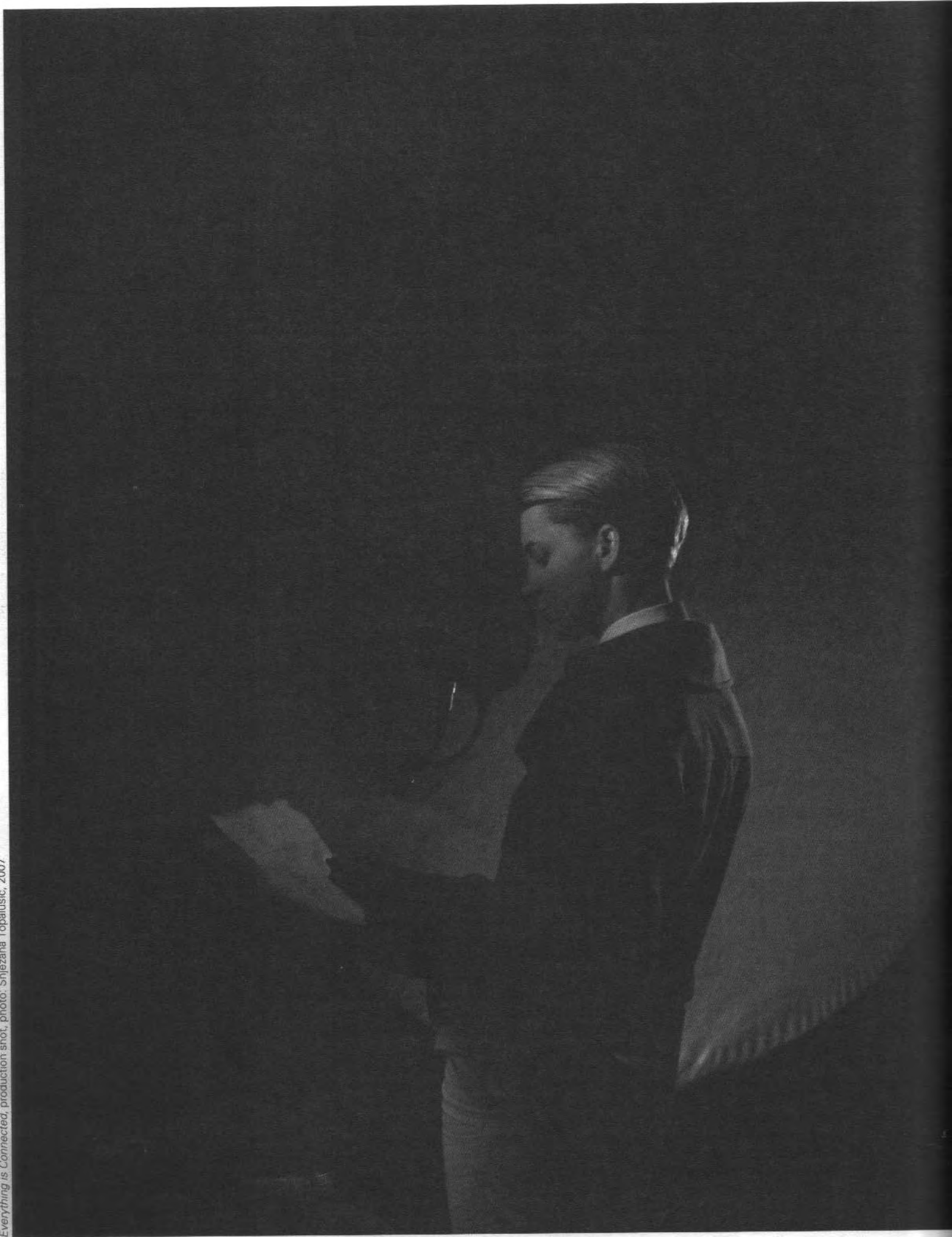
u Mercury Theatre on the Air. Čula sam tu njenu izvedbu i zapravo je smiješno da je moja izvedba bila prilično blizu Agnesinoj izvedbi. Taj scenarij je u svakom slučaju predobar. I još jedna stvar mi se desila u vezi toga. Kad je Sezgin Boynik bio prije nekoliko mjeseci u Sarajevu, išli smo zajedno na buvljak, kopali po gramofonskim pločama i on mi, među gomilom gramofonskih ploča, nađe *Sorry Wrong Number*, originalnu snimku, imam je!

Eto vidiš kako je sve povezano. Htjela bih te u vezi *Sorry Wrong Number* pitati nešto što možda nije eksplicitno u tom radu. Zanima me i ta referenca na zlatno doba radija i holivudski film tog vremena, koji je, primjerice, filmskoj teoretičarki Lauri Mulvey poslužio za feminističku dekonstrukciju "muškog pogleda" koju klasični narativni film generira, te ženskih likova koji se u njemu pojavljuju kao objekti muške žudnje ili nasilja. Središnji lik ovog scenarija je osamljena žena s invaliditetom, zatvorena u prostor svog stana, koja s vanjskim svijetom komunicira jedino putem telefona, koji joj u zapletu radnje igrom "poziva na krivi broj" postaje prijenosnik informacije o njenoj vlastitoj smrti, tj. ubojstvu koje joj netko sprema. Zanima me koliko ti je zapravo u tvom radu bitna svijest o rodu? Čini mi se da se ona može iščitati i iz same činjenice da u svojim radovima stalno izводи razne identitete, kao svojevrsni statement o nepristajanju na fiksni identitet i fiksni rodni identitet.

Kroz *Invisiblesa*, kroz *Sve je povezano*, u kojem glumim pet muških likova, to je cijelo vrijeme prisutno. Poigravanje s rodnim identitetom i koncept "izvođenja" roda mi dosta bitan. Na primjer, u *Invisiblesima* jedan od likova se zove Dyke. Ja sam potpuno svjesno pristupila strategiji izvođenja muških i ženskih likova, likova djece itd. Iz istih razloga sam na neki način izabrala taj tekst u kojem je središnji lik bespomoćna žena koja računa na muškarca koji ju treba spasiti; on je uvjerava da će ona biti dobro dok ima telefon (ovdje je bitna otuđujuća uloga tehnologije), a zapravo cijela priča govori o izoliranom ženskom svijetu koji se odvija unutar kuće i gdje ona u ključnom trenutku ostaje bespomoćna. Taj muškarac ne samo da ne dolazi u pomoć, nego upravo on naručuje njeno ubojstvo.

Govorile smo o izvođenju i transgresiji roda. U radu *Sve je povezano* glumiš pet muških likova. Pročitala sam i tvoju izjavu u kojoj kažeš da je taj rad na neki način za tebe metafora tvog života i rada. Zanimljivo mi je i taj kontekst tvog povratka u Sarajevo i izvedba tog rada na materinjem jeziku za razliku od svih dotadašnjih koji su bili na engleskom. Zanima me koliko rad *Sve je povezano* proizlazi iz tvog povratka u Sarajevo i pogleda na društveno-politički kontekst u BiH?

Baza tog rada, odnosno te naracije je otmica djeteta, opet je riječ o nestajanju, sad je pitanje





jesam li ja to dijete koje je nestalo... Svi ti likovi koji su se tamo okupili da raspravljaju o tom nestanku istovremeno se uopće ne bave pronalaženjem tog djeteta, nego nešto raspredaju i ganjaju svoje interese. To je apsolutno komentar na situaciju, na neki bosanski *condition*, ili barem ono što sam uočila po povratku. Likovi su pet mafijaških šefova, od kojih se jedan bavi kvazi-čistim poslovima, drugi ima restoran, treći ima veze s novinama, odnosno vlasnik je jednih dnevnih novina, itd. Mislim da se ta hijerarhija korupcije može primijeniti na bilo koju drugu zemlju, ne samo na Bosnu i Hercegovinu, ali je radnja konkretno inspirirana lokalnim kontekstom, razrađenim kroz klasičnu krimi-priču. Taj komentar je u radu jako prikriiven, ne toliko u onome što se govori i u načinu na koji se govori, nego u formi, u kostimu i u smještaju radnje u neko drugo vrijeme, gangstersko vrijeme 30-ih i 40-ih godina. No sam scenarij je potpuno suvremen jer se govori o Internetu, mobitelima, automobilima, suvremenim detaljima. Sve je počelo iz želje da napravim jedan rad o privatnim benzinskim stanicama. Krenula sam istraživati, pretraživala sam sve napise u medijima, sve što je napisano o benzinskim stanicama: redovito su to bile priče o nekim pljačkama, napadima na radnike, itd. Kad sam, jednom prilikom, otišla fotografirati jednu benzinsku stanicu, iz nje je izišao jedan čovjek i rekao mi da izbrišem fotografije. Kada sam pitala zašto, rekao je da imaju velike probleme, da su im prije dva tjedna otete kćeri blizanke, što nigdje u novinama nije pisalo, možda to nisu ni prijavili, ne znam, ali taj događaj je postao podloga rada *Sve je povezano*.

Htjela bih ti za kraj postaviti pitanje o još jednoj ulozi koju preuzimaš, a to je uloga kustosice. Na neki način je i *I Love My Voice Radio* bio kustoski projekt, a u Zagrebu si u zadnjih nekoliko godina realizirala i projekte *Applied Gogo* i izložbu *Vokalno-verbalno* u Galeriji SC, a ove godine planiraš u suradnji s Martom Kiš izložbu pod nazivom *Boys and Their Toys*.

Pa da, stvarno, ne samo da je vezano nego...

...je sve povezano!

Sve je povezano. Projekt *Applied Go-Go* i izložba *Vokalno-verbalno* direktno su vezani za moj umjetnički rad i istraživanja na području rada, zvuka, glasa itd. *Applied Go-Go* je bio više radioničkog i eksperimentalnog tipa, a bavio se također radijskim formama, zvukom, crossoverom raznih disciplina. Na *Vokalno-verbalno* sam jednostavno pokazala stvari koje su mi se svidjele i koje su me inspirirale. Možda si kao umjetnica mogu priuštiti da kuriram izložbu iz tih pobuda, da jednostavno kompiliram radove i predstavim umjetnike koji su meni dobri i bitni, čiji rad cijenim. Mislim da je *Vokalno-verbalno* bila jedna jako uspješna izložba. To je bila prva prava izložba koju sam kurirala. Što se tiče *Boys and Their Toys*, to je radni naslov, mislim da ćemo promijeniti taj naslov jer nisam sigurna da će ijedan umjetnik pristati izlagati ako im se izložba zove *Boys and Their Toys* (smijeh), budući da se radi o konceptu u kojem izlažu samo muškarci. Samo dečke ćemo zvati. To će biti jedna šarena izložba koja nema previše veze s nekim mojim osobnim umjetničkim interesima, kao što je to prethodno bio slučaj s *Applied Go-Go* i *Vokalno-verbalno*.



Everything is Connected

Lala Raščić

Interviewed by: Ivana Bago

Translated from the Croatian by Anja Iveković-Martinis

Lala Raščić was born in Sarajevo in 1977. She graduated from the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb, after which she spent two years in residence at the Rijksakademie van Beeldenden Kunsten in Amsterdam. She has been invited to several residencies, including Platform Garanti, Istanbul, in 2005. Her work has been exhibited in numerous group and solo exhibitions in Croatia and abroad, the more recent ones including 'Everything is connected', UGBiH, Sarajevo (2007); 'Everything is connected', B.O.P. Gallery, Zagreb (2007); 'No Borders, Just N.E.W.S.', La Centrale Electrique, Brussels (2008); and 'Land of Human Rights', Center for Contemporary Art, Graz (2008). She is the first laureate of the Zvono award for best artist of the younger generation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first experiments with radio formats and sound began during the artist's residence at Rijksakademie in Amsterdam. Audio drama soon became one of the key elements of her work, which is, above all, interdisciplinary and includes the media of video, drawing, installation, and performance. I talked with Lala Raščić in May 2008, one month after her new project *Individual Utopias* was presented for the first time in Istanbul. The complete version of the project will be presented at the B.O.P. Gallery in Zagreb at the beginning of June 2008.

Recently in Istanbul, as part of the *Art on Stage* project, you presented for the first time a part of your new project *Individual Utopias*. The performance, conceived in the form of live audio theater, was realized in collaboration with the music band Vuneny from Mostar. Why did you choose the form of live audio theater and how did the collaboration with Vuneny develop?

Live audio theater is a common way of presenting audio drama. For instance, BBC presents evenings with well-known audio dramas performed in front of a large audience and the performance includes an orchestra, sound-artists, actors, etc. This form, which I discovered in my research on audio drama, seemed very interesting to me. In the performance of *Individual utopias* I actually reduced the often large and spectacular staging to a group of three people. As in my previous projects, I play all of the roles and the audio background was done by Nedim Čišić and Andrijan Zovko from Vuneny. After I suggested the collaboration to them and showed them the script, which included elaborated scenes with sound effects specified in advance, they suggested that their role could be more than just that of sound technicians playing effects and that they could contribute in a more creative way in creating the atmosphere. The reason why I went into collaboration with someone else in the first place was that I had, in a way already, been through the form of classical audio drama with sound effects and I wanted to unravel this ball of yarn which I had taken hold of in my work a bit further.

Are you also referring to the fact that your previous works have almost completely been one-woman shows?

Yes, it would have been consistent with my work if I had performed the script myself, applied the sound myself, recorded the whole thing or performed it in front of the camera. However, I was interested in live performance, coming out onto the stage, and I didn't want it to be only tedious reading. Their work and my work struck a balance somehow, because they didn't just do sound effects, they made music and

atmosphere, supplementing in a way the original script. Vuneny have played hundreds of concerts so far and I haven't been on stage quite so many times, so I'm not familiar with this dynamic. In collaboration with them, I cut down the script and adapted it for live performance, they gave me advice on what could function better, how to maintain and establish a rhythm. I think that establishing this collaboration meant a great progress for me, as well as the fact that we have created a product which doesn't function only in the context of visual art, but can also be viewed as an independent, I dare say, show.

Could you say something about the script, how did it develop?

The whole collaboration with Vuneny is actually the result of various circumstances, whereby in the end I got a conceptually consistent whole: a work about Mostar was realized in collaboration with a band from Mostar. Namely, I had intended to collaborate with them earlier and then in October 2007 I was invited by the SCCA in Sarajevo to participate in a summer workshop in Mostar, organized by the Italian organization Connecting Cultures. They came with a project which was quite undefined from the very start and whose aim was to help mental health centers in east and west Mostar, specifically patients suffering from PTSD. Before our arrival, they donated a kiln for baking ceramics to the Center for Mental Health West (in accordance with their wish), which was supposed to serve as the focus for a workshop which we as artists were supposed to realize there. However, it turned out that none of us knew how to use this kiln and, aside from that, total misunderstanding and chaos broke out: we were brought completely unprepared into a situation of working with persons with serious mental disorders (and we "found" almost no PTSD patients there, which was supposed to be our task). At the Center they, of course, expected an art workshop, thinking that we were going to make clay flowers or something like that, and we came with completely different goals, considering the workshop a starting point for the realization of our own new art project. So the workshop was an absolute disaster, it was very difficult to

co-operate with the Centers for mental health East and West Mostar and during the whole process serious problems were surfacing which still trouble the city – the fact that is still a divided city. I came out of all that definitely damaged and crazy, it took me a few weeks to recover from those five days in Mostar, but I recognized a huge dramatic potential in the things that happened. Even before the end of the workshop, I decided to make something out of it. Since I work in the medium of audio drama, the project started by me translating what happened during those five days into one script. The whole script was therefore based on “replicas” of the events and people who were really there, everything is a bit exaggerated, some things are a little condensed, some truths were a bit distorted, almost all of the names were changed, but many things happened literally the way it is described in the script, except the detail about the kiln exploding in the end and the artists, frustrated, stealing it. Even the last scene is true, where Connecting Cultures invites me, after I openly expressed disapproval concerning the workshop, to a conference in Milan and the name of the conference is again *Art and survival*, with the subheading: art and human rights. The conference was actually very interesting, but in the context of the workshop I think that they again didn't touch on the real problem. The project is also this common neocolonial attitude of foreign organizations, which arrive with noble intentions trying to implement unrealistic goals with a complete lack of understanding of the real situation. A single case which occurred during the workshop is enough to say everything about the situation in the city: a patient from the Center East wanted to play a guitar and she wanted us to film her while she plays. We knew that they had a guitar in the Center West, so we asked them to lend it to us. However, the doctor didn't authorize it, justifying her refusal with saying that she didn't know those people in east Mostar either as people or as patients.

So much about “connecting cultures”.

Yes. I mean, the Italians found themselves facing a wall, because they didn't understand the situation. They somehow focused on the PTSD patients but there are more of PTSD patients outside of the institutions than inside them; Mostar is full of people with traumas.

It seems that the whole project represents a typical example of so-called cultural mistranslation, just like another, as yet unrealized project in Mostar, sponsored by the Austrian government in the unbelievable amount of one million euro, where an Austrian artist thought of surrounding the Old Bridge with robust metal constructions, in order to serve as a reminder of the war traumas, instead of them being, with such a nicely renovated bridge, shamelessly ignored. But let's return to your work. The project *Individual Utopias* actually brings together positions and strategies on which you have

been building your work for the last couple of years: on one hand it embodies your growing interest in interdisciplinarity, combining video, text, audio drama, and the live performance of audio drama. The announcement for the performance said that this was your first appearance in front of an audience instead of a camera. However, your work *Abandoned Glove*, realized in Amsterdam in 2005, already contained elements of performance. I'm interested in this element of performance, of the transition from creating objects to the role in which you are simultaneously subject and object. Performance is often, in a very simplified way, described as the artist's need to no longer hide behind their work, but to directly face the audience.

Individual Utopias was the first rehearsed, scripted performance, the first serious one. *Abandoned Glove* in Amsterdam was more improvised: I was sitting in front of the audience at a small mixing desk, playing my audio works, occasionally commenting them, etc. That was actually the continuation of the project *I Love My Voice Radio*, which I started as an experiment or a joke while I was still at the Rijks and in which I simulated a commercial radio show and played a compilation of sound works by my colleagues. Thinking about how to make a compilation, I realized that the simulation of the form of a radio program would be ideal. It was even broadcast a few times on Radio 100 Amsterdam, however, the work wasn't conceived as a radio program, but as an audio work with contributions by other artists, bands, etc. *Abandoned Glove* was an audio performance, more on the level of a really informal experiment. I had already made an audio piece of the same name which lasted 15 minutes and which I played at the opening in Amsterdam and the performance consisted of me throwing a collection of found gloves one by one onto a surface wired for sound. That was, let's say, a kind of first experiment. As far as the stage is concerned, I appeared with Ivana Popović in *Vinca Teatar Michelangelo* when I was 16 years old and I also worked with Magdalena Pederin and Ivan Marušić Klif on the project *The Eye Hears – The Ear Sees*, which we performed together many times, but *Abandoned Glove* was the first performance where I somehow independently stepped out in front of an audience out of a... really out of some kind of need. For me coming out of the studio and in front of an audience is a logical step in the process of the development of my work. And it's obvious that I've wanted to do it since 2005, since *Abandoned Glove*. Maybe it's only now that I feel confident enough to do it, so I decided to make *Individual Utopias* a performance. Maybe it was also a need to no longer hide behind my work. Actually, I don't hide behind my work, I'm always present in front of the camera in my video works. But, as much as it's significant that it is me who appears there, so it is also a form of running away from myself, embodying different characters. This will take a lot more work, because, of course, I'm neither a professional performer nor an actor

and this knowledge is necessary for the kind of performance that I do, which is quite demanding in terms of acting.

One quote of yours for me represents a metaphor of your work, where you wrote: "I want something to disappear, so that I can play with the emptiness which that something has left behind". In *Abandoned Glove*, the sound of throwing a lost and then found glove on the floor is the result of a somewhat absurd game with emptiness, not only of showing the invisible, but also of "giving sound" to the invisible, the lost, its materialization through sound. Your work *The Invisibles* was created the same year, first as a series of drawings and then as a video which documents your performance of the script for a radio drama about the "invisible ones". Why did you decide to supplement the work in the form of an audio drama and what was your experience in writing the first script?

You mentioned disappearing... I could go back further than *The Invisibles* and further than *Abandoned Glove* to the moment when I started making narrative audio works in the first place. It happened at the Rijks and also has to do with some kind of honesty towards myself... When I came to the Rijks – I think I just came there too young and with too little experience: you come as an artist into a professional milieu and you aren't actually mature enough and you don't know what you want and then you go searching for yourself etc. Somewhere I realized that I couldn't make video anymore, because in one year I had only made *Locations*, which in the end were very short videos without any sound. And for my final work at the Rijks I... I don't know out of which impulse, simply out of the moment when you're in your studio and working on something and this horror just hits you because you don't know at all where you're going – I made my first audio work called *Hypnoaudio*. In it I summarized a bunch of my thoughts and preoccupations. I was actually totally, totally, totally honest. Maybe for the first time in my work. The work has this robotic voice – *text-to-speech*, in which I utter personal secrets, I also speak of this losing of myself, of running away, because I was in some strange mental space at the time. I found a way to completely reveal myself and at the same time to stay hidden through this incorporeal voice. When I think about it now, it was kind of a moment of catharsis, starting with *Hypnoaudio* my work changed; I started a process which slowly brought me to the format and the strategies which I work with at the moment.

Principally, I think that sound and word engage space much more than any video. They also engage the visitor much more. Sound is... I think that it's much more intimate than video, it demands more time, more concentration, so that one who is listening is more engaged than one who is watching – the person who is watching often only glances in passing. After that, three audio works followed in a short period after I

realized that this is something that I can produce on my own and that I can develop further. These are *Are You a Loser* and *Abandoned Glove*, in which I used quotations of various forms: a radio program, the form of a game-show, etc., where I go into some hybrid combinations and build upon them with my own content. This is a strategy which of course isn't new, but is very important to me. For all those works I write scripts, in which I go into narration, which has always been close to me. *The Invisibles* was the result of, on one hand, my constant dealing with ideas of loss, disappearance, the possibilities and methods of escape, taking refuge, attempts to place oneself outside of the system, to transcend oneself, etc. The form and story-line were inspired by the 3D animated film *The Incredibles* from 2004, which tells the story of a family of superheroes who have to keep their superhuman powers a secret, because superheroes have become *personae non gratae* – I found this story fantastic, so I created a family, or families, "invisible" instead of "incredible", families on the bottom of the social scale, without any real social status. Writing this script was also an experiment, until then I hadn't written scripts with several characters, I simply knew I had to do this, like with *Individual utopias* and *Everything is connected*, I know approximately what the plot is about and then I sit down and write – I wrote *The Invisibles* literally in two days. The form of audio drama appeared as a logical continuation of my earlier experiments, of playing with stereotypical forms in the media, television and radio... the audio drama seemed to be made for me.

You continued experimenting with the form of audio drama in the work *Sorry Wrong Number*, where you used the model of an existent and popular radio drama from the 40s. The deconstruction of the form of audio drama and the process of making it is additionally emphasized here – the sound is divided into three separate recordings, the video which shows your performance is silent and the image and the sound don't correspond. Again the work deals with strategies of translation from the visible into the invisible and with the visualization of the form itself of audio drama.

There was a version with record players, but the new version, which was shown last year at the B.O.P. Gallery in Zagreb, is more literal: the audio recordings are listened to through a telephone receiver, which maybe makes the work lose a layer of complexity, but it actually gains in authenticity. The installation with record players consists of three LP records with three recordings which represent the main character, Lenora Stevenson, the other characters, and the sound effects. They are broken up, so that the synchronicity is minimal; this way, the whole story is impossible to synchronize. Equally so, in the single-channel version of the installation, with the telephone, the sound heard is not synchronized with the video. This is a deliberate technical error taken from the narrative of *Sorry*

Wrong Number, where the whole story-line is based on a technical error and the inefficiency of technology, which brings about the murder of the main protagonist in the end.

Did you find out about this audio drama through its film adaptations or did you hear the original audio drama first?

I didn't hear the audio drama at all before recording it! I found the script while I was researching the history and form of audio drama, which started to interest me a lot after *The Invisibles*. I began researching and listening to contemporary writers and audio dramas, especially by the BBC, researching live audio theater, a scene which is very active, for example, in the American Midwest, and of course Wells and his Mercury Theater on the Air, researching the golden age of radio. *Sorry Wrong Number* was broadcast as part of the CBS show *Suspense* and was one of the show's most successful radio dramas. I was intrigued by the summary that I had read and afterwards I found the whole script. But I never heard the audio drama before the production of *Sorry Wrong Number*, I didn't want to hear it or to see the film, so that they wouldn't influence my interpretation. However, when I was in New York, I went to the Television and Film Museum and looked in their archive for the original, first performance from 1943. Lenora Stevenson was played by the actress Agnes Moorehead, who also participated in Mercury Theater on the Air. I heard this performance of hers and it's actually funny that my performance was quite close to Agnes's. The script is fantastic in any case. And another thing happened to me concerning this. When Sezgin Boynik was in Sarajevo a few months ago, we went to the flea market together, we were digging through LP records, and then, in a pile of records, he found *Sorry Wrong Number*, the original recording, I have it here!

TYou see how everything's connected. Concerning *Sorry Wrong Number* I would like to ask you something which perhaps isn't explicit in the work. I'm also interested in the reference to the golden age of radio and the Hollywood cinema of the time, which film theorist Laura Mulvey, for instance, used for the feminist deconstruction of the "male gaze" which the classical narrative film generates and of the female characters who appear in it as objects of male desire or violence. The central character of this script is a lonely, physically disabled woman, closed up in the space of her apartment, who communicates with the outside world only through the telephone, which, through the game of "dialing a wrong number", transmits information about her own death, that is, about the murder which someone is planning for her. How important was the consciousness of gender for you in the work? It seems to me that it can be understood from the fact that in your works you always perform various identities; like a statement of sorts that you

don't accept a fixed identity, also a fixed gender identity.

In *The Invisibles*, in *Everything is connected*, where I play five male characters, it's present all the time. Playing with gender identity and the concept of "performing" gender is quite important to me. In *The Invisibles*, for instance, one of the characters is called Dyke. I approached the strategy of performing male as well as female characters and characters of children etc. consciously. I chose this text for the same reasons, where the central character is this helpless woman who counts on a man who is supposed to save her; he convinces her that she'll be fine while she has a telephone (the alienating role of technology is also important here) – the whole story actually tells of the isolated female world, which takes place inside the house and where she actually remains helpless in the key moment. This man not only doesn't come to help, but actually orders her murder.

We talked about performing and transgressing gender. In the work *Everything is Connected* you play 5 male characters. I read your statement where you say that for you this work is in some way a metaphor of your life and work. I also find interesting the context of your return to Sarajevo and the performance of the work in your native language, unlike the previous ones which were in English. To what extent is the work *Everything is Connected* a result of your return to Sarajevo and a look at the socio-political context in BiH?

The basis of this work, that is of the narration, is the kidnapping of a child; again it's about disappearing, now the question is whether I am this child which has disappeared... All of the characters have gathered there to discuss this disappearance and at the same time they don't try to find the child at all, they just ramble on and go after their own interests. It is absolutely a comment on the situation, on some kind of 'Bosnian condition', or at least that which I noticed after returning. The characters are five mafia bosses, one who runs a quasi-legitimate business, the second owns a restaurant, the third has connections with the newspapers, that is, he is the owner of a daily paper, etc. – I think that this hierarchy of corruption can actually be applied to any other country, not just Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the plot was specifically inspired by the local context, elaborated through a classical crime story. This comment is very disguised in the work, not so much in what is said and the way it is said, but disguised in the form, in the costumes and by situating the plot into another time, the gangster era of the 30s and 40s. But the script itself is completely contemporary, because it mentions the Internet, cell phones, cars, contemporary details. It all began with my wish to make a work about gas stations. I started researching and I searched through all of the articles in the media, everything that was written about gas stations: it was



Everything is Connected, video still, camera: I. Slipčević, 2007



Individual Utopias, live in Istanbul, photo: Derya Demir, 2008



Sorry, Wrong Number, video still, camera: I. Slipčević, 2006

regularly stories about robberies, attacks on workers, etc. When I went to take photographs of a gas station once, a man came out and told me to erase the photographs. When I asked why, he said that they had big problems, that their twin daughters had been kidnapped two weeks earlier, which wasn't in the papers at all, maybe they didn't even report it, I don't know, but this event became the basis for the work *Everything is Connected*.

For the end, I would like to ask a question about another role which you assume and this is the role of curator. In a way, *I Love My Voice Radio* was already a curatorial project and in the last few years in Zagreb you have realized the project *Applied Go-Go* and the exhibition *Vocal-Verbal* in the SC Gallery and this year you're planning an exhibition titled *Boys and Their Toys* in collaboration with Marta Kiš.

Well yes, really, this is not just connected, but...

...everything is connected!

Everything is connected. The project *Applied Go-Go* and the exhibition *Vocal-Verbal* are directly linked to my artistic work and research in the field of work, sound, voice, etc. *Applied Go-Go* was more of the workshop and experimental type and it also dealt with radio forms, sound, crossovers of various disciplines. In *Vocal-Verbal*, I simply showed things that I liked and which inspired me. Maybe as an artist I can afford to curate an exhibition out of such impulses, to simply compile works and present artists who I consider good and important, whose work I respect. I think that *Vocal-Verbal* was a very successful exhibition. It was the first real exhibition that I curated. Concerning *Boys and Their Toys*, it's just a working title, I think we'll probably change it, because I'm not sure any artists will agree to exhibit if their exhibition is called *Boys and Their Toys* (laughs), since the concept includes only male artists. We'll only invite boys. It will be a colorful exhibition which won't have much to do with my personal artistic interests, unlike *Applied Go-Go* and *Vocal-Verbal*.