

performing conflict

SPIRALS OF DIALOGUE IN LVIV



the framework - the ART PEACE PROJECT

The Art Peace Project has grown out of a number of experiments to see whether producing art or analyzing art can help to generate fresh ways of seeing oneself and the world, and thereby make a contribution to stimulating a culture of human rights. Methods used in workshops have ranged from improvisation theatre, performance, puppetry, storytelling and photography, to the critical analysis of films and novels. Included in this testing of methods has been working with professional artists. In the "art school" or "writer's retreat format" there is opportunity for ordinary people to be taken seriously as artists.

The Art Peace Project serves therefore as a forum for the exploration of ways in which the creative arts can contribute to Human Rights and Peace Education in conflict situations. Documentation and analysis of the divergent experiences of participants in the workshops provides the necessary information for ongoing improvement and experimentation.

Impact

- A multifaceted view of their own identity and collective narrative.
- Through artistic experimentation with new and different ways of being and of relating to others, a greater awareness of the need to be open to a range of possibility in daily life. With this sometimes comes a willingness to engage with utopian possibility.
- A degree of self-empowerment through describing oneself as well as redescription as a means of dealing with negative stereotyping.
- A greater capacity for self reflection and an appreciation for someone else's view.
- Experience of dealing with controversial issues, in ways which are both playful and intense.



spirals of dialogue in l'viv

The workshop '*performative conflicts*' attempted to deal with cultural, religious, ethnological and political conflicts in eastern Europe. By way of example we visited and creatively worked with conflict-laden spaces and places in L'viv, Ukraine. Thereby we aimed at using performance art as a tool for sociocultural analysis and communication in order to offer an artistic involvement with old and new conflicts in the region as well as with its performative effect on people.

After some time of intensive dialogue and input on theory and methods of peace education and the performing arts, the participants visited historically, religiously and emotionally charged places in L'viv and – after intense performance training – were asked to create a performance in reaction to one of the places, which moved them most. The performances were then presented and filmed in a safe showing setting. Afterwards, the creative and social process was reflected upon in order to understand and evaluate the effectiveness of this method of conflict prevention.

In bringing together students from Ukraine, Poland and Germany we hoped to intensify the relationship between the nations and strengthen civic engagement of students regarding this region: firstly, by introducing performing art as a tool for conflict prevention and furthermore by giving the opportunity to come to terms with everyone's conflict-laden past. This hopefully will now lead to empowerment of the participants (in their personal and social skills) who might be inspired to become 'instruments of peace' (St. Francis) themselves.



1. the group

The participants of this workshop came from Ukraine, Poland and Germany. These nations share a conflict-laden and burdensome history in their common heritage of the Holocaust and the Second World War as well as Communism – a heritage which those nations dealt with very differently and which led to conflicts in the time that followed. Those conflicts had performative effects on places, people, and on today's notion of a unifying Europe – effects that show themselves in conflicts that arise today. The workshop aimed at giving young students of those nations an open space to ponder those effects, and their own access to their national and biographical history with its conflicts, in an artistic, self-reflecting way.

The participants came from various academic disciplines and contributed to the workshop with their rich personalities and numerous talents. None of them was experienced in performance art but every one brought a specific, performative tool, such as skills in acting, photography, dancing, creative writing, painting or conceptual thinking.

According to the *Contact Hypothesis,** prejudice reduction through interpersonal meeting is most likely when it

- involves people of equal status,
- is an activity where participation in group activities is both pleasurable and understood to be meaningful,
- is supported by an authority,
- is an opportunity to formulate shared goals and
- has potential for the development of friendship.

Those criteria set the course for the recruitment process. The chosen participants – though very different in personality – shared an equal social status and performing experience as well as similar aspirations and goals connected with the workshop. Through presentations held in the beginning by a university lecturer the workshop was both integrated in and supported by broader discourses in the fields of Peace Education and Performance Studies that vouched for the meaningfulness of the process. Whether sustainable friendships were formed remains to be seen. But the potential became very clear at the heartfelt goodbyes on the last day of the workshop, and three months after the students were still in touch via social media.

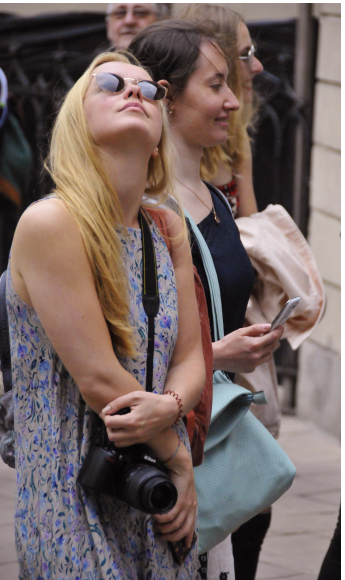


* Pettigrew, Thomas F. (1998). Intergroup Contact Theory. In: *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* pp. 49:65–85.

2. places and spaces

After taking time on the first day to get acquainted with each other, with the location and the week's program, the second day started off with an intense city tour that was guided by a Ukrainian historian. Leading us to historically, religiously and politically charged places, members of the group quickly seemed to experience it as a tour of inner spaces. After reflecting and meditating on the places and spaces they encountered, the participants formed small groups and started to draw a first concept of a possible performance that dealt with or was inspired by one of the 'spatial encounters'.










#Sociopath
Je suis
un homme
З НАМИ БОГ ТА
АВТОМАТ КАЛАШНИКОВА
#Sociopath










Не давай злодію шансу!
Трос – повністю відсутній захист. Гарантована крадіжка
Замок з ланцюгом – слабкий захист. Особливо, саморобний
U-подібний замок – хороший захист. Злодій шукатиме трос
Вело Львів
CRITICAL MASS LVIV


ЕКСКУРСІЇ
ЕКСКУРСІЇ-ТУРИСТИЧНА ЛІТЕРАТУРА
ПРАЦЮЄ ГЕНІЙ
ЗА ШТУРВАЛОМ ASS
ВИТИРАЙТЕ НОГИ!
РОСТИСЛАВ




Т. Шевченко





3. encountering performance art

A theoretical and practical introduction helped to get acquainted with the artistic methods of performance art and its basic attitude. Various exercises from the field of Theatre Pedagogy and Dance Education were used as a starting point to develop and broaden a personal approach to this art form, e.g. image theater / statue building, walking exercises, mirroring techniques, and translating text into movement. A long-duration-improv-jam then challenged the participants to trust and follow their artistic instincts and create a common narrative in using sound, movement, visuals and interaction. After training their performative skills the participants put them to use in creating a performance on their own.



























4. the performances

Inspired by the physical and / or inner space encountered in Lviv, the groups created performances that revealed their connection to it as well as the conflict(s) it evoked for them.

The following pages will give a short introduction to the performances. However it is neccessary to point out, that images and words will not be able to capture the – ephemeral, yet strong – experience that was offered by the performers.

The inaccessible and fleeting presence is constitutive of any form of performing art. But for the sake of documentation and scientific research compromises must be made.

The showing of the performances took place in the training room without external audience in order to provide a safe space for the performer, to most of whom it was the first performing experience.







»performances mark identities, bend time, reshape and adorn the body and tell stories«

(*Richard Schechner*)











ida roscher,
marie pishchyk and
marianna vozmiller

labels

The performance dealt with an inner space that was perceived by the performers while exploring the city. Confronted with situations of attribution – be it cultural (TATAR), national-historical (AUSCHWITZ) or concerning gender (SLUT HAS VAGINA) – they created a runway situation in which 'labeling' was taken quite literally. Wearing labeled shirts with the stereotypes printed on them, the performers walked the runway at a steady pace while coming closer and closer to the audience. The long duration performance created an atmosphere that was positively intrusive and strong.




AUSCHWITZ


SLUT
HAS
VAGINA

alina tereschenko, irmina czysnik, iya baradna and karolina monzer







forgotten places

Inspired by the places that weren't meantioned in the guided tour, places that were abandoned, viewed as irrelevant or overlooked, the performers created a hommage. Filming themselves at those places they offered a personal perspective that revealed something about aspects of their own lives that seem abandoned. The audience watched the performers watching the film, adding a layer of abstraction. Sounds and movements interpreted the film and gave insight into the personal connection to the shown places.













anastasiia ivashyna
and kristina vislianska





personal jesus

Inspired by the pompously designed churches in L'viv and by the eccentric, almost encroaching behaviour of religious people in public places, the two performers explored the felt tension between personal belief and public expression of faith. In turning religious practices into acts of self-display – staging selfies in front of a church, deconstructing religious movements into choreographies, performed to *depeche modes* song *personal jesus* – the performers gave insight into the ambivalent role of religion in (post)modern identity building.







daria prokaza, marie pishchyk, markus posse and nazarii petriv

war stories

This performance was inspired by Augusto Boal's 'theatre of the oppressed', especially by the methods of 'forum theatre': trained performers act out a real story of violence or oppression that was experienced and told by a member of the audience. The fact that the performers did not experience the told situation adds a level of abstraction and alienation in order to view the conflict from a distance. In a process of simultanious dramaturgy, the audience can influence the scene by suggesting different continuations and endings.

In this case two memebers of the audience volunteered to tell a personal story involving the Crimean conflict. The performing group was inspired to create a performance dealing with this conflict by the felt absence (non-space) of the conflict throughout the guided city tour.





agnieszka kowal and paulina bielaszka

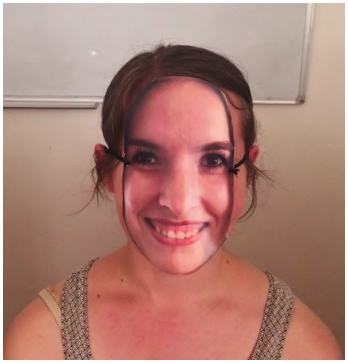
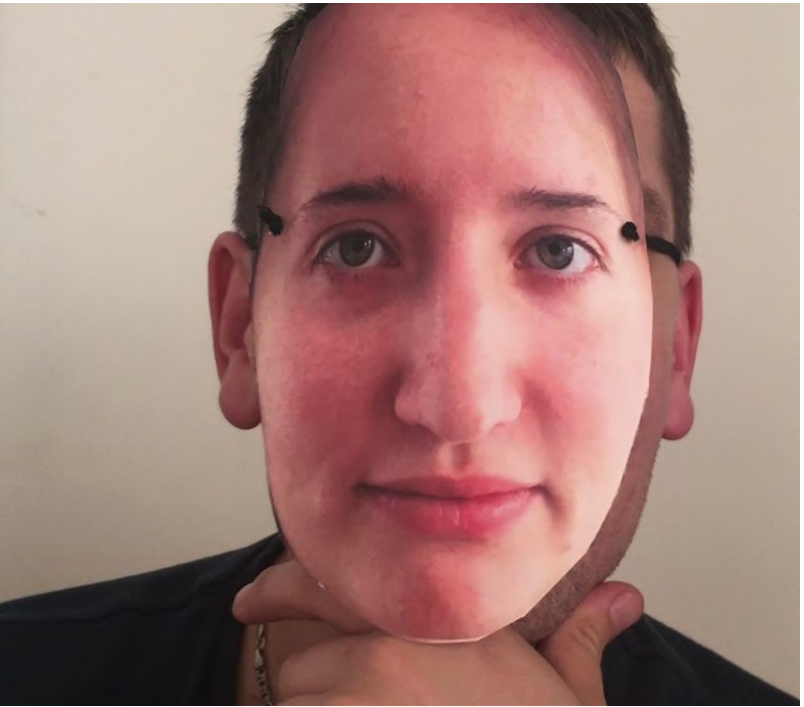


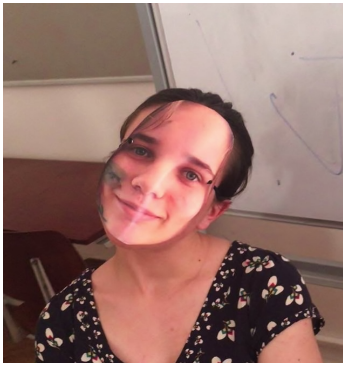
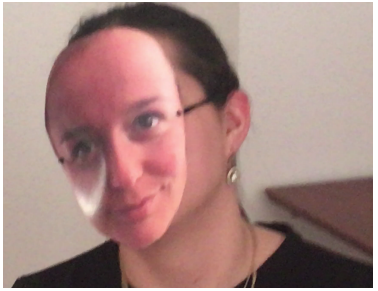
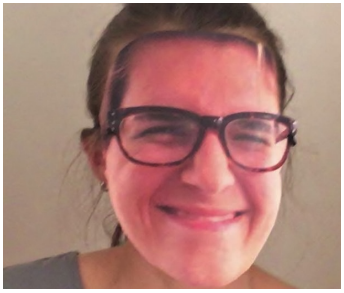


places / spaces / faces

Prior to the performance the performers took pictures of all participants, printed them life-sized and turned them into masks. During the performance, every participant was asked to sit on stage, wearing a mask of a different person and having an improvised conversation in one's mother tongue. The conversation was filmed by both performers who also filmed themselves while filming the others, adding another layer of self-reflection to the performance. Even though different languages were spoken, the conversation was surprisingly coherent and the masks seemed to melt into the body wearing it, thus questioning the singularity of (national) identity.



5. reflecting through / on art



"Learning occurs when we reflect on experience." (Gordon Mitchell)

Reflection played an important role during the entire process. Every day the participants were asked to take some time at the end of a workshop phase to put in writing / painting what they experienced and how they felt. In addition, several reflecting methods gave an opportunity on the last day to ponder the effect and the aesthetic mode of the performances as well as the holistic effect of the workshop as a group process. This intense reflection hopefully helped to understand and deepen the experience.









6. building relationships

In addition to the workshop the spare time spent together was a crucial part of the intercultural encounter and group process. The local participants were eager and proud to introduce us to their favourite spots in town and helped organize transportation and meals, thus giving us a great example for Ukrainian hospitality. Hopefully the relationships built in these days will remain.




quiche with eggplants & sheep cheese
panna cotta
Tiramisu
Bacon Club Sandwich
quiche with spinach & mushrooms







academic reflection



In order to establish new methods of conflict management / peace building and to evaluate their effectiveness, they need to be tried out and tested as well as scientifically researched. The workshop offers plenty of data: many pictures were taken, videos were shot, log books of the participants private reflection process were copied and audio-interviews were conducted. Based on that data a PhD-project, rooted in the field of peace education and pedagogics, will investigate the importance of reflection for adult learning processes. Since it will involve another course of interviews in one year's time, it will also give indications regarding the sustainability of workshops such as this.





image sources: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flickr_-_boellstiftung_-_Diktierger%C3%A4t.jpg,
https://www.pexels.com/photo/close-up-of-multi-colored-pencils-256405/


FOREVER
Stay

thank you

agnieszka kowal

alina tereschenko

anastasiia ivashyna

daria prokaza

ida roscher

irmina czysnik

iya baradna

karolina monzer

kateryna marunyak

kristina vislianska

marianna vozmiller

marie pishchyk

markus posse

nazarii petriv

paulina bielaszka

lecturers and organizers

Nathalie Dickscheid is a theologian, performer and specialised in theatre pedagogics. She works as a research assistant and lecturer for Religious Education at the University of Hamburg. In her PhD-Project she reflects on the synergies between Theology and contemporary theatre.

Prof. Dr. Gordon Mitchell is a Professor for Religious Education and Intercultural Studies at the University of Hamburg. His research and teaching explores the role of the creative arts in human rights and peace education.

Valentyna Iziumska studied Education at the University of Hamburg and has specialised in methods of intercultural learning and arts-based-learning. In her PhD-Project she explores the importance of reflection in adult learning situations such as this ART PEACE PROJECT.



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