

BADCO.

Responsibility for Things Seen: Tales in Negative Space

to be presented at the 54th International Art Exhibition – la Biennale di Venezia as part of the Croatian Exhibition, 2011

Curators: What, How and for Whom/WHW

Venue: Arsenale

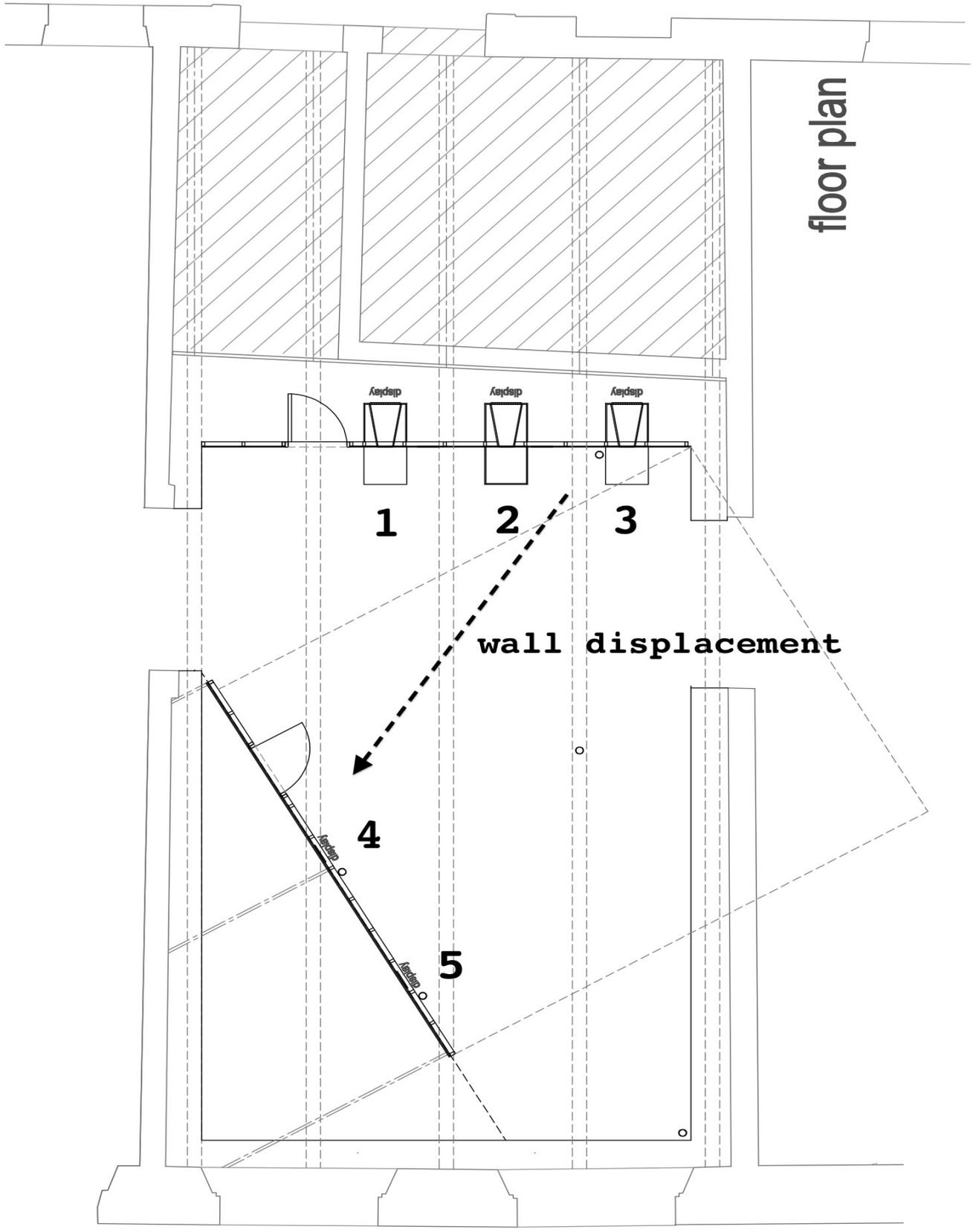
a work-in-progress

Concept:

This work starts as a spatial gesture: a letting-in of the space outside into the exhibition room. The back wall has been replicated in the space and the non-space behind the original wall now populates the exhibition room. This non-space found outside might be any number of things. Anything that can be imagined. For all we know it might be a theatre scene, a stage - and this exhibition room just a backstage. But it's not quite - it's a withdrawal of space, a double negativity: not quite this exhibition space, not quite a different place. Well, it could be anything that can be imagined, but many things more that can't. Maybe a totality of global processes outside that begs the question of how it can be represented.

This work endures as a temporal gesture: it records in images coming and going. Theatre, our line of work, always requires our presence. It cannot take place if we're not there. Imagine we miss a flight! And here we remain in our absence. In recorded images. As you will too. And in images on screens you will see the presence of your absent fellow-visitors, just as maybe you might witness the absence of your own presence. Become co-present with someone in time as you are not in space. The image is a time machine, a transport in time. It opens and forclozes the imagination of future.

This work is seeking a scopic act: the much maligned capacity of images to capture our imagination and to supplant our sociality by its simulation is commensurated by our capacity to produce ever new images, ever new configurations and ever new disfigurations of images. Here it's no different. Produce images we did, try creating images differently we did. And, yet, things don't remain quite at that. There seems to be something incomplete in images that coaxes out our action: our intent capacity to become captured, our passionate passivity of surrendering to own hijack, our engaged absorption in the intimacy of images. And it's not the sovereign enlightened viewer that we're talking about. Rather a beholder that looses her hold as she gets immersed into an image and the image looses its clarity as she starts decyphering its detail, unraveling a scene that becomes more and more unrelatable as she looks closer and closer, requiring a spiral of reading, a responsibility unsettled by the non-totalizable subject of the image.



BADco. / arsenal / croatia exhibition space

Description:

Responsibility for Things Seen: Tales in Negative Space is a specific form of "theater by other means" based on the application of analytical performative principles of BADco. to the case of the labor of images in engaging with our collective imagination.

The primary operation of the work is a suggestion of an existence of a performance space behind the doors of the room adjoining the exhibition space, and the displacement of a duplicate of the separating wall into the exhibition space. This new spatial setup becomes the analytical frame of examination of the conditions of emergence of cinematic and photographic images of the spatial transformation that gives a glimpse of insight into narratives of the future.

A door cracked open on the edge of the exhibition space (leading to a storage area visitors cannot enter) offers a glance of a theatrical staging (curtains, light changes...), suggesting an imagined space of the stage behind the door. The exhibition space holds five continuously active video displays, three set behind the wall of the adjoining room and accessible through cut-outs in the wall, and two on the displaced duplicate wall. These elements make up the integral single artwork of BADco.

The **first** (1 on the floorplan) of the three displays set behind the wall of the adjoining room shows a black and white photo-film montage of still images. The film follows the staging of the construction and displacement of the exhibition space wall set in an infinite white space, but also presents two other possible principles of spatial organization lead by ideas of parametricism and pseudomodernity. The film is accompanied by a narrative describing a mobilization of the maximum of collective imagination of the future on behalf of a maximum of individual profit in the future.

The **second** (2 on the floorplan) display shows a live-edit of two aerial shots from a high stationary camera position in the exhibition space. The first is a recording of choreographic and visual structures of pedestrian movement performed by BADco. The second, overlaid and in proportion, is a simulcast of the segment of the floor plan of the exhibition space adjoining the back of the displaced wall – a "negative" space populated by movement of the exhibition visitors. The spectator is thus observing a combination of choreographed movement of performers not present in the actual exhibition space and the inadvertent movement of the present exhibition visitors. The choreographed movement of performers is based on an analysis of focal points of the visitors' observing in the real exhibition space, possible dynamics of visitor movement, and referential displays of the space pertaining to the concerns of the artwork (the studio choreography of the first science fiction film *Le voyage dans la lune*, the films of Tomislav Gotovac, architectural plans, spatial interventions in the exhibition space, etc.)

The **third** (3 on the floorplan) display presents a live camera shot altered by software that erases on site exhibition visitors from the image when the space is more populated, and adds more previously recorded visitors to the image when the intensity of presence of visitors in the space is lower.

The displays on the "back" of the displaced duplicate wall (displays **4** and **5**) show short film narratives live-edited through complex software operations using live feed from five cameras in the exhibition space and prerecorded material showing performers during the exhibition set up, immediately prior to and during the opening of the exhibition. Every display shows several films based on textual narratives present in the films' subtitles. The

narratives and particular camera angles suggest the exhibition visitors are the protagonists of the films, and BADco. performers are the films' extras – corresponding with Tomislav Gotovac's practice to appear as an extra or in cameo roles incorporating his performance art pieces into established film productions. One display shows live-edited moving images, and the other is a live-edit of still shots. The computer server connecting the cameras and the displays will also store the totality of the cameras' feed of the full duration of the exhibition. The shown film narratives relate to an interpretation of images that tie collective imagination into visions of the future.

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BADco. are Pravdan Devlahović, Ivana Ivković, Ana Kreitmeyer, Tomislav Medak, Goran Sergej Pristaš, Nikolina Pristaš, Lovro Rumiha and Zrinka Užbinec

Software and interactive installation: Daniel Turing

Light design: Alan Vukelić

Cinematography and still photography: Dinko Rupčić

Camera assistant: Hrvoje Franjić

Video editing: Iva Kraljević

Costumes: Silvio Vujičić

Architect: Ana Martina Bakić

Additional performer: Ivo Kušek

Architectural visualisation: Antun Sevšek

Draftsmen: Igor Pauška, Slaven Josip Delalle

Production assistant: Valentina Orešić

Modelers: Lidija Živković, Ivana Hribar, Barbara Radelj

Promotional photos: Dinko Rupčić, Ivan Kuharić

Props production: Zagreb Youth Theatre workshop

Coproduced by: BADco., Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia and Zagreb Youth Theatre.

Supported by: City Office for Culture, Education and Sports - City of Zagreb

BADco. is co-organizer of LABO21 - European Platform for Interdisciplinary Research on Artistic Methodologies, a partner project of BADco. (Zagreb), BUDA Arts Center (Kortrijk), Laboratorium (Antwerp) and University of Circus and Dance (Stockholm). With the support of the Culture Programme of the European Commission.



BADco. is a collaborative performance collective based in Zagreb, Croatia. The artistic core of the collective are Pravdan Devlahović, Ivana Ivković, Ana Kreitmeyer, Tomislav Medak, Goran Sergej Pristaš, Nikolina Pristaš, Lovro Rumiha and Zrinka Užbinec.

As a combination of four choreographers / dancers, two dramaturgs and one philosopher, plus the company production manager, since its beginning (2000), BADco. systematically focuses on the research of protocols of performing, presenting and observing by structuring its projects around diverse formal and perceptual relations and contexts. Reconfiguring established relations between performance and audience, challenging perspectival givens and architectonics of performance, problematizing of communicational structures – all of that makes BADco. an internationally significant artistic phenomenon and one of the most differentiated performance experiences.

So far the group has produced the following performances:

Man.Chair (2000), *2tri4* (2001), *Diderot's Nephew or Blood is Thicker than Water* (2001), *Solo Me* (2002), *RibCage* (2002), *Walk This Way* (2003), *Mass (for Election Day Silence)* (2003), *Deleted Messages* (2004), *Fleshdance* (2004), *memories are made of this... performance notes* (2006), *Gravidation* (2006), *Changes* (2007), *1 poor and one 0* (2008), *The League of Time* (2009), *SEMI-INTERPRETATIONS or how to explain contemporary dance to an undead hare* (2010), *Point of Convergence* (2010).

BADco's performances were presented in: Prague, Warsaw, London, Greifswald, Amsterdam, Luxemburg, Sibiu, Bergen, New York, San Diego, Berlin, Vienna, Ljubljana, Zagreb, Dubrovnik, Rijeka, Pula, Osijek, Umag, Sarajevo, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Piran, Athens, Tallin, Klaipeda, Gdansk, Liepaja, Koper, Stockholm, Podgorica, Skopje, Stuttgart, Riga, Constanta, Graz, Odessa, Istanbul, Madrid, Zadar, Berlin, Bergen, Tromso, London, Exeter, Bath, Lincoln, Ankara, Roubaix, Copenhagen, Gothenburg, Skegness, Ghent, Akçakoca, Ünye, Çamlıhemşin, Hopa, Batumi...

Contact:

Kozarčeva 28, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia

e-mail: badco@badco.hr

telephone: +385-(0)98-494059

<http://badco.hr/>