

Chryssa Tsampazi

Portfolio

Statement

My work is based on speech performances and testimonial actions. It promotes the concept of intimacy with the audience where the body of the artist and those of the participants/collaborators are the subject and, simultaneously, the transmitting mechanism of the work.

I borrow terms and practices from theatre and conceptual art to turn directing into a set of simple instructions. I invite people to follow them, thus contributing, inevitably, to the final outcome.

What interests me is the deviation that takes place in the course of every work and the collective aspect of the creative experience. I endeavor for my work to have a dual status: to remain an event within the real world and, simultaneously, to create a new picture about it. To communicate the paradoxes that inhere, repressed, in daily life and to motivate experiences of pleasure, prompting the question of to what extent are we able to imagine the world and our relationships anew.

Apart from participants and viewers, third terms are oftentimes employed, such as objects and photographs.

On a Runway

Video HD, silent, 2010
Chicago
Duration: 4:34 min

The work was realized in Northerly Island Park, in Chicago. In this location just a few years prior were the grounds of Meigs Field, an airport which was dismantled by the authorities in a single night. I invited twelve people who didn't know each other, to take a walk together, in the same direction, each holding a piece of mirror. A camera recorded the group walking. As the rays of the sun were reflected by the mirrors, the movement and rhythm of each person were accentuated. The reflected light referred to some kind of code from a group whose faces were only vaguely discernible.



video monitor
Kunstverein Tiergarten, Berlin, 2012



I Got A Plan To Get Us Out Of Here

Performance, 2014
Personal Territories, OKK/Raum 29, Berlin
Duration: 120 min

This performance took place in Berlin's Wedding district. I asked local residents to take part as households in the creation of a short musical composition. The outcome would be presented at their home, to an invited audience. An experienced vocalist was to reside with each one of the three families for two weeks, with the intention of being guided by its members in creating a piece together. The groups read F. Kafka's novel Metamorphosis and studied the character of Gregor Samsa who gradually loses his place not only within society but within the family as well. Language, which was gradually being replaced by sounds, was given as an example of that composition. The title of the work, "I Got A Plan To Get Us Out Of Here" was given to the participants from the outset, to be used as a departure point. During the exhibition, the audience could wander through the open apartments and stay as long as they wished listening to these compositions.

The departure

I ordered my horse to be brought from the stables.
The servant did not understand my orders.
So I went to the stables myself, saddled my horse, and mounted.
In the distance I heard the sound of a trumpet, and I asked the servant what it meant. He knew nothing and had heard nothing. At the gate he stopped me and asked: "Where is the master going?"
"I don't know," I said, "just out of here, just out of here. Nothing else, it's the only way I can reach my goal."
"So you know your goal?" he asked. "Yes," I replied, "I've just told you. Out of here – that's my goal."

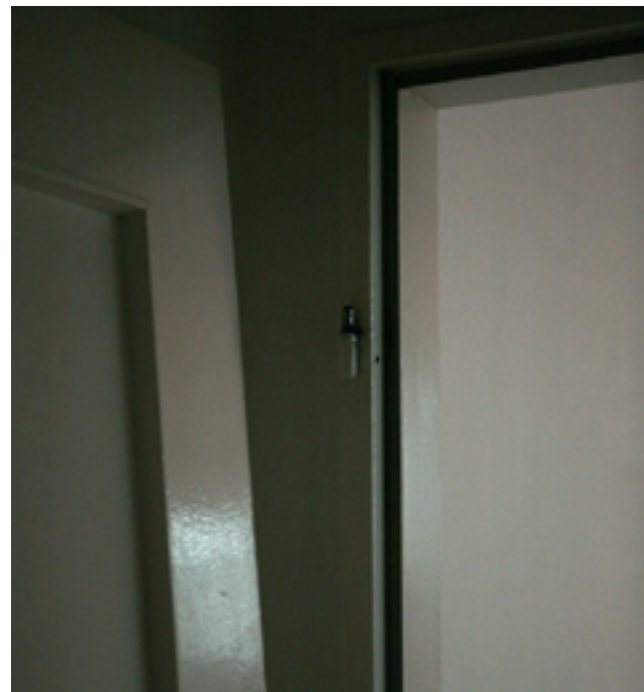
Franz Kafka



The Good Times Are Coming

Performance, sound installation, 2012
Kunstverein Tiergarten, Berlin
Duration: 120 min

The work was presented at the Kunstverein Tiergarten, in Berlin. I invited members of the Greek-German choir “Polyphonia”, based in Berlin, to do ensemble improvisations. The only direction I gave them, concerned the repetition of the following verse: “The good times are coming, they will be coming real soon / The good times are coming when they come I ll be there.” For over two hours, the duration of the performance, the choir remained locked in the manager’s office. To symbolically free access to that place, I removed all the doors along the way to the room and leaned them against the walls. The audience of the exhibition could hear the choir’s singing echo through the corridors and out into the street, through the open windows of the room, and could vaguely make out silhouettes behind the closed glass door. The condition of the choir’s incarceration in contrast to their happy message was decisive both for the process of improvisation and the listeners’ perception of the message. After the night of the performance and for the duration of the exhibition, the choir singing was heard emanating from the closed manager’s room as a sound installation.



Details of the doors in the building



I Am No Longer Myself. I Am So Much Yours.

Public intervention, 2013

3rd Thessaloniki Performance Festival / 4th Thessaloniki Biennale of Contemporary Art Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki

Duration: 120 min

This piece was presented at a performance festival taking place as part of the 3rd Biennial I of Thessaloniki. I was invited by the organisers to work with the hostel of unaccompanied, underage refugees from the social organisation ARSIS and to present a performance making use of some of its human resources. I designed two routes of 30 minutes, each from different starting points, with taxis crossing the city and arriving at the same time at the Allah Ja Imaret, the meeting point with the public. Four kids took part in the performance. Accompanied by an off-duty policeman, they took these rides in pairs towards a common destination. The taxi drivers were instructed to remain silent and neutral during the whole ride and to allow their vehicle to become a semi-private space for my guests. The conversations that took place in the taxis were not recorded. At the meeting point, the three taxis lined up among the crowd, all the doors were opened and the conversation ceased. The public could then view the work at that moment of completion: the abrupt cessation of the narration and the awkwardness of the participants from all sides. The performance remained in this still state for the last twenty minutes.



When I Am Weak You Are Strong

Public intervention, 2011

Nafpaktos

Duration: 55 min

The action took place in the city of Nafpaktos. The organisers of the international symposium on the performing arts “Communication of Crisis” invited me to devise a happening with the participation of local adolescents. After six days of workshops, the group went on an excursion through sites with which each participant had personally bonded in the past. It was a silent touring of locales, where the reason for choosing each one and its connection to every young person, remained undisclosed to the group as a whole. The work, comprised of a collection of unsaid stories, took on the form of a common secret, impossible to convey except collectively.



I'm New Here

Public intervention, 2014

Mythimna

The performance took place in the village of Mythimna on Lesbos, in the context of a collective workshop in public space, titled *Apergias Ergon* (The Labor of Work-Stop). I used the existing network of sound speakers which I found installed in the village as well as the network of the residents' trust towards the administrative authorities. Through speakers installed in the streets, the members of the community were receiving directly information, announcements and instructions by the mayor. I met the mayor personally and asked him to read out my phrases via live transmission, in regular intervals, for the duration of a week. I left the exact timing of the announcements at his disposal. For the next ten days I remained on the island and was subject to the mayor's unexpected interventions, as were the rest of the residents. One of those was the following: "ATTENTION! Emptiness between us!"



I Can't Relax In Deutschland

Performance, eighteen fishing rods, 2015
Arcadia Unbound, Funkhaus, Berlin
Duration: 4 hours

The idea for this project emerged from a series of discussions and meetings with the former director of the radio station from the DDR, who formerly worked in the Funkhaus Nalepastraße where the exhibition took place. We talked about the social organisation and the activities of the workers at that time in the building, as well as current events. I invited people applying for asylum and local fishermen to fish freely in the river in front of the large, impressive building. After the event, the fishing rods from the local fishermen along with the improvised ones from the asylum seekers were placed together as an installation inside the building for the remainder of the exhibition.



From My West To Reach All The Way To The East

Performance, audio on speakers: 3 min 37 sec, 2015

Scotty Enterprises, Project Space Festival, Berlin

Duration: 240 min

During the opening and at the last day of the exhibition, I presented a performance for which I invited people from different backgrounds to run, to pass through and by Scotty Enterprise, the gallery space, in their attempt to escape, compete, or recreate from their own realities. A sound installation was also created which was inspired by Zelda Rhiando's novel Caposcripti, that was audible in the gallery and outside on the street.



Right And Wrong Dreams

Performance, printed hats, 2015

Global Alien Anniversary – Galerie im Turm, Berlin

Duration: 50 min

I asked the members of a Greek family living in Berlin to participate. The four family members were covered with a white cloth. They wandered together through the gallery space and shared something that they dreamed of recently. The group stood a while next to the printed hats and then walked out to the public space.



By Reinventing Only

Public intervention, 2015

Musrara Mix15, Interdisciplinary art festival, Jerusalem

Two local musicians took part in the performance and occurred during the festival at different locations in the city. The performers had a yellow colored hands and softly sang sentences from the third act of Shakespeare's Hamlet for pedestrians.



Lying in My Heap of Earth I Can Naturally Dream of All Sorts of Things

Performance, 2016
Numismatic Museum, TWISTING C(R)ASH, Athens
Duration: 240 min

At different locations in and around the Numismatic Museum in Athens, a small group of performers divided into three different groups attempted to communicate by working within and around a codified vocabulary. Each group had different instructions and locations to perform at. The first group was located inside the museum and performed vocal exercises, as well as movements borrowed from the museum guardians. The second group, set up in the yard, tried to create sounds with coins they had in their pockets. The third group consisted of a single person located at the building opposite the museum. This person could move around but was not allowed to enter the museum. The performance lasted four hours and featured material from the unfinished short story “The Burrow” („Der Bau” in German) by Franz Kafka and my brother’s imagined trip to Athens.





You Know, You Are Right

HD Video, Sound, 2016, Athens

Duration: 2:38 min

I was invited to create a performance for a video. I asked two friends of mine to participate in and to sit on a seesaw, one on each end, with one instruction: they had to work out how to make the seesaw balance.

