

Luis Guerra

Towards an Anarchistory of Actions

In November 1976, at Wenceslas Square, Prague, the Czech artist Jiri Kovanda performed the piece "Theater, I follow a previously written script to the letter. Gestures and movements have been selected so that passers-by will not suspect that they are watching a 'performance.'" Kovanda has said that his "actions" were "doing something invisible, something completely unnecessary. Something that can be done normally, something that happens all the time, in a way that is abnormal." Kovanda has said that the activity of art can change society, but only indirectly.¹ His statement could be reframed as 'producing a change through invisible forms, inexistent to the framework of intelligibility defined by those in power.'

Kovanda's work is one among other examples of art procedures with *no fixed abode*. "No fixed abode" is Odradek's answer to the Family Man, before being questioned about where *it* lives. In the short story by Kafka, which was published during Kafka's lifetime, the Family Man engages in a conversation with an indescribable figure. Within this short dialogue, requests for a name and address are presented as ways of determining existence. To both requests the figure answers with eloquence: "Odradek" first, and then "No fixed abode".²

'No fixed abode' claims to be a non-permanent space, a vanishing occurrence which, despite its nominative indeterminacy, references a locality in motion. This

self declared homelessness builds a non-stable state of 'living.'

Like the clinamen,³ the unpredictable swerve of atoms described by Lucretius in *De Rerum Natura* (Book 2, lines 216-93), 'no fixed abode' is "aspecific, beyond necessity, absolutely out of place [*hors-lieu*], unplaceable [*inesplaçable*], unfigurable: chance [*le hasard*]"⁴ Its trajectorial endurance, as the only possible *splace*,⁵ its permanent vanishing, reveals a possibility of naming without naming a series of activities which exist in an inexistent condition.

This condition of existence, no fixed abode, can be found in other artists' works, for example in those of Gordon Matta-Clark, Adrian Piper, Bas Jan Ader, Hélio Oiticica, Mladen Stiljnović, Carlos Altamirano or Elías Adasme. These *forms of action* are invisible to the norm, unnamed, occupying a nomadic and unsettled condition.

Anarchistory

But first, what is anarchistory? The concept has a dual source: in the first place the concept of *anarchitecture* coined by artist and architect Gordon Matta-Clark, and secondly the notion of anarchist-history proposed by the American anthropologist James C. Scott.

"Anarchitecture was about making space without

DIVADLO

listopad 1976
Praha, Václavské náměstí

Chovám se přesně podle předem napsaného scénáře.
Gesta a pohyby jsou voleny tak, aby nikdo z kolemjdoucích
netušil, že sleduje "představení".



Jiří Kovanda
"Theater"

I follow a previously written script to the letter. gestures and movements have been selected so that passers-by will not suspect that they are watching a "performance". November 1976

Václavské náměstí, Prague

B&W Photo and typescript on paper

29,7 x 21,3 cm

Courtesy the artist and gb agency, Paris

building it,” Gordon Matta-Clark wrote.⁶ Anarchitecture was first the name of a collective project, a New York-based artist group that mixed the concepts of anarchy and architecture as a way of grasping an interstitial territory of critical exploration.⁷ The concept itself was born from a series of informal conversations developed by the group throughout 1973. In a letter to Robert Lendenfrost, Gordon Matta-Clark wrote:

“The group that I represent, as I mentioned by telephone, are well-known young artists coming from a wide range of disciplines who have been meeting together for over a year to discuss an attitude which we loosely call ‘Anarchitecture’. This term does not imply anti-architecture, but rather is an attempt at clarifying ideas about space which are personal insights and reactions than formal socio-political statements”⁸

In March 1974, they produced an exhibition also named “Anarchitecture” at the 112 Greene Street Workshop in New York. Generally, the notion of Anarchitecture has been used to define the practice of Gordon Matta-Clark, specifically in reference to its work dealing with the “betrayal” of architecture to society. The use of this notion, anarchitecture, references the kinds of works where Matta-Clark directly confronted a conceptual and political critique of the practice of architecture.

The American anthropologist James C. Scott states that “the huge literature on state-making, contemporary and historic, pays virtually no attention to its obverse: the history of deliberate and reactive statelessness. This is the history of those who got away, and state-making cannot be understood apart from it. This is also what makes this an anarchist history”⁹ An anarchist history thus involves the history of those that through various actions or strategies have constituted procedures of State-repelling.¹⁰ An anarchist history is the history of those solely archived by the State but never subjects of it.¹¹ It is also the history of procedures and choices made by a group or individual to maintain themselves away from the State, even if that *awayness* has to be developed within the frontiers of the State. This is what James C. Scott names the “Art of not being governed”: the summation of techniques, procedures and strategies of living through which an individual or a group can stay away from the State or keep it far from themselves, ‘State’ being understood here as “*what enumerates, names and controls the parts of a situation*”.¹²

Anarchistory can thus be conceptualized as the history of the inexistent: “Generally speaking, given a world, we will call ‘proper inexistent of an object’

an element of the underlying multiple whose value of existence is minimal. Or again, an element of an apparatus which, relative to the transcendental indexing of this apparent, inexists in the world”.¹³ The inexistent is a notion developed by French philosopher Alain Badiou. The inexistent is an existence which has a low level of existence. Which is what marks its form of appearing, its intensity of appearing at a certain local site or situation. Existence, which appears in a determined world, has a specific intensity. That intensity is determined by the world where it appears. Within the world where it appears, what inexists remains uninscribed, does not belong to the parameters of measurement imposed by that world. In the case of political procedures, Alain Badiou has used the example of the undocumented immigrants – which is a group, a set, determined as such by the rules that are in place. Their indeterminacy, which names them as an existence supplementary to the existent in that world, in this case the full acknowledgment of citizenship, exposes them as an excluded form within the stipulated forms of being-there. The ‘illegal immigrant’ is a body “unknown”, with no fixed abode, homeless in its naming vis-à-vis what exists fully named ‘within’ the world. Anarchistory, as the history of those inexistent to the ruled world, is the history of what exists excluded. It is the historicizing of what cannot be named in the words of the world as such, because its existence occurs in excess of it. This is a history of those making space without building it. A history of informal forms of organization, anarchic disseminatory procedures that do not belong in any way to the situation as such; but it is also being-there, with its own form of intensity, its own ‘force-form’ - a form that forces the point, its point, inexistent before its appearance.

In this case, an anarchistory of action would in itself be a procedure, a strategy which, contrary to naming or just enumerating, will constitute spaces of trajectories, infinite sets, to avoid state management. An anarchistory will thus frame what has no frame. It will form a set of procedures that take place without any given name, unsettled and invisible to the structures of intelligibility.

The level of the everyday

James C. Scott has pointed out that infrapolitics are those practices that take place at the level of the everyday: a form of politics that refers not to the representational forms or any kind of political discourse but, on the contrary, to those activities that undermine the system through their subtractive action.¹⁴ As an example of this infrapolitical performativity, Scott proposes the activity

of poaching, illegal hunting on land owned by those in power, the State or elites. Scott argues that this action is an ordinary weapon, a weapon of the weak, which is active at an effective infrapolitical level. What is stated here is that these kinds of actions are in fact forms of struggle against private property, that is to say everyday actions in many forms that undermine the status quo. This is the level at which those with no fixed abode engage in work. They are not working as representational or mimetic forms of the everyday, but directly as weapons of the weak.

The ‘weapon of the weak’ is a form of subversive resistance in circumstances of absolute dominance. ‘Weak’ here means something that seems irrelevant to power – in fact, a form of political resistance which, conscious of its own incapacity to alter the rules of the rulers, composes its own appearing as dissemination and vanishing.

Scott has constantly pointed out the importance that these weapons have for any social and political struggle.¹⁵ These infrapolitical actions have been a very effective way of undermining the public power of the State. They can be seen for example, in the refusal to participate in public manifestations of the State, or in the invisible and noisy gatherings known as *cacerolazo*, produced by banging pots, pans, and other kitchen utensils as a way of expressing opposition to a regime; or in the private sharing of *political* jokes against the dominant rulers. All these forms involve an action of defiance which infringes the norms at the level of the everyday. It is important to show that the political struggle takes place not only in the open air of a public manifestation, but also through the infinite capacity of thousands of infrapolitical actions, concerted or not.

In the political situation at the moment, Kovanda’s actions did not directly confront the regime;¹⁶ but indirectly his actions were effective architectural performances, undermining not only the visible symbolic capital of the regime, but also its core, in the sense of by-passing the surveillance structure.

The same is the case with Carlos Altamirano’s work known as *Panorama de Santiago* (1981).¹⁷ This video was produced for his participation in the 1st Video Festival organized by the Institut Français in Santiago, in Chile. The work consists of a recording of Altamirano running through the streets of Santiago, between the National Museum of Fine Arts and the National Library. The video shows the entire trajectory unedited. The images are not clear, blurred as they are by the movement of the body and the camera. The only thing that we can hear is Altamirano’s panting, because he is running, as well as a the repetition of a sentence that he is saying throughout

the running: “Carlos Altamirano, artista chileno”. The resonances of the work were evident to anyone there at the time. Chile was already nine years into a brutal dictatorship. Any form of activity against the ‘Government’ was repressed by detention, imprisonment, torture and even disappearance. Critical cultural activities were considered to be against the accepted cultural mainstream at the time and, in the same way as the artists behind the Iron Curtain, the artists in Chile had to work completely underground. The action of Altamirano did not directly engage the political situation, but his work activated a series of narratives about the condition of being a citizen in Chile at that time. The phrase that the artist repeats constantly: “Carlos Altamirano, visual artist” was a direct reference to what everybody knew they had to do if they were arrested in the streets: state your name and your profession. It was the only way of letting anyone passing by know who the person being illegally arrested by the secret police was. And of course, the fact of running through the streets was also a defiant and dangerous thing to do in those days. Altamirano’s work was not a denunciation of what was going on in Chile, at least not directly. But his action effectively exposed the situation and at the same time acted as a supplement to it, as an excess, without being seen as such. Is Altamirano’s *Panorama de Santiago* a ‘no-fixed-abode’ procedure? It is a work of art, it was performed by the artist at the moment when he himself stated his name and profession in the video; but the work also exceeded the framework of intelligibility, not only by remaining invisible to the censorship of the regime, but also because of its infrapolitical condition. It is not possible to say directly that this work of Altamirano was politically engaged or a protest or a denunciation of what the country was living through; but certainly, in its absolute simplicity, the video took the form of a splitting of the situation.

The actions of both artists, Kovanda and Altamirano, avoided direct confrontation. In other words, their actions took place at the level of the invisible, of the inexistent to the norm, to the State. By refusing to develop any kind of spectacular statement in the action which would immediately recompose and reaffirm the dialectical landscape of master-slave, negation-destruction, between power and the powerless, these actions remain unsettled, unnamed, at a vanishing point, in permanent disappearance. The subversive exercise appears without presence, through the presentation of an act of absolute withdrawal.

These infrapolitical actions work as cumulative forces which expose a critical space, permitting an act of defiance upon the skin of the State.

The subtractive

The ordinary condition of the work, its appearing without presence, constitutes what I call the subtractive operation of the action. Such works appear to make no difference to daily events. Their kind of resistance, their disguise, lies in the appearance of this in-difference. It is in this not-being- recognized that the works achieve the supplementation necessary to their own critical efficacy. Imperceptibly, what does not belong to the situation takes place outside all the rules against its appearance. There is a film called *Calle Santa Fe*, produced by the Chilean filmmaker Carmen Castillo.¹⁸ In this profound film about her own return to Chile, a return to look not only for a memory populated by her ghosts, but also for the memory of an entire dream destroyed by the coup d'état, there is a sequence: an interview, a conversation with a group of women of La Victoria, in which these women explain the forms of resistance to police brutality and repression that they created in the 1980s. One of them explained that one day, during a series of protests in the streets, each time the police and the secret police of the regime came to break up the protests, they suddenly handed out soccer balls and all the streets of La Victoria were immediately transformed by children and women playing football. This situation confused the police. After the forces of repression had left because there was nothing to fight against, all the soccer balls disappeared and “the fight started over again”! This is an example of an effective performative weapon; not only because of its obvious distractive tactic but because the strategy was sustained by an entire political subject, the *pobladores* of La Victoria. This was the body that subjectively supported the organization of a political resistance. This was – and still is today – an infrapolitical cumulative force with no fixed abode, which in this case means without a specific party or ideology. The *pobladores* knew that the situation under the dictatorship was untenable, and that the only response available to them was protest, taking to the streets – but not the main streets: the streets of their neighborhoods. It is well known today that without these thousands of infrapolitical actions, and numerous ‘anonymous’ people protesting, there would have been none of the changes that occurred at the political level. It was by these means that the dictatorship was defied, step by step, by the actions of a variety of bodies.

This is the unnoticed condition of the actions: their apparent resemblance to what is permitted within the conditions of a regime. And it is this apparent resemblance that constitutes its own invisibility.

Without the clues necessary to mark their difference, these procedures, invisible to the prevailing regimes

of intelligibility, infrapolitically constitute the features of a state-repelling performativity. These elements, by looking similar to the status quo, belong only to themselves. They are radically new, as excesses or deficiencies from the State’s point of view, in becoming a sedimentary or cumulative form of force. The presentation of this cumulative ‘force-form’ is the work of anarchistory.

But what is a subtractive procedure? Alain Badiou has said at a conference on Pier Paolo Pasolini’s poetry: “I name the affirmative part of negation ‘subtraction’.”¹⁹ For Badiou the main difference in this affirmative part of a negation is the fact that its coherence does not depend on the disintegration of the system. On the contrary, the new becomes “indifferent to the system’s law”. A subtractive procedure keeps the new coherence apart from the destructive or purely negative part of a negation. A subtractive procedure is thus an affirmation. But an affirmation of what? Certainly, in a sense, it is an affirmation of its own difference from and within the situation where it happens. It is an ‘affirmative negation’ of what rules the situation. The affirmation is thus a negation, but in subtractive form. The subtractive opens up a situation by affirming a possibility ‘without’ what has been confirmed as repetitive knowledge. Subtraction is in other words an affirmation of existence without, first, the dialectic negation of the place where it appears; and secondly, without the necessity of existing solely by virtue of that negative link or its recognition of its existence in terms of the prevailing rules. It is the affirmative declaration of existence that subtracts the existent from its reference to what exists as defined by the situation. This subtractive procedure effects its own instant withdrawal from the moment of its appearance. As a political example of this subtraction, Badiou recalls the notion of communism as a new state which will replace the bourgeois state, not necessarily as the result of the destruction of the old one, but as a state “which is in its very essence the process of the non-State. So we can say that in the original thought of Marx, “dictatorship of the proletariat” was a name for a State which is subtracted from all classical laws of a “normal” State. For a classical State is a form of power; but the State called “dictatorship of the proletariat” is the power of un-power, the power of the disappearance of the question of power. In any case we name as subtraction this part of negation which is oriented by the possibility of something which exists absolutely apart from what exists under the laws of what negation negates.”²⁰

A subtraction is thus a declaration of existence *without*, which is in its very essence a declaration of autonomy of definition. A declaration of an existence that does not need the recognized knowledge already set down for the definition of its own condition. Its

existence depends completely on its own declaring, even if that declaring also declares an existence in absentia, an existence in inexistence, which is an existence in a disseminatory form, in a form of absolute awayness from any limited definitions.

A subtractive procedure is one through which something inexistent to the situation declares its existence. Indifferent to the norms of the state, and independent of the destruction of that same system, the inexistent declares its presence – as in the case of the refugee collective *We Are Here*: “*We are Here* which is an organization of refugees” united in order to bring their collective struggle in the Netherlands into public discussion. “Consisting of some 225 immigrants from approximately 15 countries all around the world, their search for asylum has failed, and yet for a variety of reasons they cannot be sent back to their countries of origin.”²¹ As Yoonis Osman Nuur, one of the spokespersons of the collective, stated in an interview with the Dutch artist Jonas Staal, on being asked where the power of the group lay: “Visibility. Visibility in the sense that we stick together as a group. We are in a strategic place in the world today. We live in the capital of this country – even tourists from all over the world visit us. *We Are Here* is becoming a worldwide recognized organization. I believe in my heart that if we remain together and carry on with what we believe in, we will find a solution.”²²

“We are here” is a very strong statement. It is not only a description without a place, it is at the same time a decision.²³ It is a political definition without the necessity of recognition from the regular State. It is a demand and an address to the surroundings. “*We Are Here*” addresses an autonomous institutionality. In doing so the collective institutes a new space within the ruled political sphere, suspending its participation in the rhetorical public sphere praised by contemporary democracies. As pointed out, because of the conditions of the migration laws in The Netherlands, these people could not be expelled from the country. At least, not legally. In the majority of cases their own countries have already disappeared, have a new government, or are simply in social and political turmoil. Without the support of the state, which did not offer them political asylum, they found themselves in a legal limbo, in a *non-citizen condition*, basically in a nowhere-land, but *existing* there. The collective states: “Here in the Netherlands, our existence is structurally denied. But this does not mean that we do not exist. *We are here*. We are living on the streets or in temporary shelters. We are living in a political and legal vacuum – a vacuum that can only be filled by the recognition of our situation and our needs.”

This is a subtractive procedure, politically and

artistically. These kinds of actions, with no fixed abode, take place infrapolitically, within the conditions of the system, but remain subtracted, separated “even at the price of the impotence of naming.”²⁴ These actions exclude themselves from the situation. These actions create a space of resistance without building it.

A last artistic example of this subtractive procedure is the work of the American artist Adrian Piper. I will speak briefly here about her work *Catalysts*, which was a series of actions performed by Piper between 1972 and 1973. She said of it: “Ideally the work has no meaning or independent existence outside of its function as a medium of change. It exists only as a catalytic agent between myself and the viewer [...] Here the art-making process and end product has the immediacy of being in the same time and space continuum as the viewer.”²⁵ Within the continuum of the everyday, the action of the artist occurs in excess of the same situation without altering the general view of the ordinary: “For example, *Catalysis IV*, in which I dressed very conservatively but stuffed a large white bath towel into the sides of my mouth until my cheeks bulged to about twice their normal size, letting the rest of it hang down my front and riding the bus, subway, and Empire State Building elevator; preserving the impact and uncategorized nature of the confrontation. Not overly defining myself to viewers as artwork by performing any unusual or theatrical actions of any kind. These actions tend to define the situation in terms of the pre-established categories of “guerrilla theater,” “event,” “happening,” “street work,” etc., making disorientation and catalysis more difficult [...] For the same reason I don’t announce most of these works, as this immediately produces an audience-versus-performer separation and has the same effect psychologically as a stage surrounded by rows of chairs has physically.”²⁶ In a way, what Piper was searching for was the presentation of an absence. Which is not the presence of an absence. Because, as Piper states, her works at the time were not proposing a meaning to be fulfilled by the dialectics of performer (or art work) and viewer (or audience). She was avoiding the problem of presence as the presentation of difference, which is the building of an ideological *a priori* of its possible reception, already charged with a preconceived necessity of meaning. In Piper’s actions the presence of an absence is the appearance of an indication mark, the indication of a subtraction. When she highlights the importance of non-announcement in her works she is proposing a deregulatory performativity. The absence produced by the act here indicates the possibility of the ‘change’ she is looking for, a change which, at that moment, was political at the level of infrapolitics. The presentation of an

absence works here as a void that does not produce a new sense of what the world defines as its becoming; on the contrary, it comes as a surplus, as anarchitecture.

In *Weapons of the Weak*, Scott asks: “Can individual acts such as theft or the murder of livestock be considered resistance even though they involve no collective action and do not openly challenge the basic structure of property and domination? Can largely symbolic acts such as boycotting feasts or defaming reputations be called resistance, although they appear to make little or no dent in the distribution of resources?”²⁷ In the same sense I ask here if it is possible to affirm that acts like the performances with no fixed abode can be considered procedures of resistance, even though they do not involve direct collective action. I affirm that these actions should be considered as procedures through which the entire epistemopolitical structure existing today can be resisted, and even abandoned.²⁸ This abandonment is the effective building of operative holes within the current situation; an abandonment produced with and within architectural performativities at the level of the in-existent, infrapolitically. Examples like *We Are Here*, both in terms of art and politics, or PAH²⁹ in Spain, but also art actions as such – and not merely because of their political aims – show that a form of abandonment has already been built, a medium that is already bringing about radical infrapolitical change. Through the subtractive procedures of loss, friction and disappearance, these actions constitute a territory of abandonment, withdrawal and instability. They create spaces of anomie. Within these procedures there is a state-repelling methodology. These kinds of performances, with no fixed abode, these *acts of art*, these force-forms, develop an effective terrain of resistance to a given situation – an archive of procedures waiting to be used.

Notes

- 1 Guerra, Luis (2010) “Jirí Kovanda Hacer Arte con Nada”, SCRIPT #10, Buenos Aires-Madrid, <http://clubscript.blogspot.com.es/>
- 2 “Well, what’s your name?” you ask him. “Odradek” he says. “And where do you live?” “No fixed abode” he says and laughs; but it is only the kind of laughter that has no lungs behind it. It sounds rather like the rustling of fallen leaves. And that is usually the end of the conversation. Even these answers are not always forthcoming; often he stays mute for a long time, as wooden as his appearance.” Kafka, Franz (1971) “The Cares of a Family Man” in *The Complete Stories*, Schocken Books, 428.
- 3 “While atoms move by their own weight straight down Through the empty void, at quite uncertain times And uncertain places they swerve slightly from their course.” 219 [...] “That the minute swerving of atoms causes In neither place nor time determinate.” 293 Ronald Melville. “On the Nature of the Universe” (Oxford World’s Classics). iBooks.

“From that slight swerve of the elements, In no fixed line of space, in no fixed time.” 293. Lucretius. *De Rerum*

Natura. William Ellery Leonard, E. P. Dutton. 1916

- 4 Badiou, Alain (1982) *Théorie du sujet*, Éditions du Seuil, 77.
- 5 *Splace* is a neologism, as Bruno Bosteels explains in the translator’s introduction to Badiou’s *Theory of the Subject*, and is a contraction of “espace de placement”, space of placement. *Splace* is the “force in the position of the State, or of the symbolic”, and its use here refers to the possibility of revealing a “situation” or “world” in Odradek’s invisible trajectory. In Badiouian terms, at least for the Badiou of *Theory of the Subject*, it is the Family Man who states a *splace*, which is always “imperial”. Odradek is the force that unplaces the situation, the out-of-place. But, in the in-existent trajectory that Odradek seems to inhabit, there is a *splace*, an another-situation, a naming-without-name.
- 6 Attlee, James (2007) “Towards Anarchitecture: Gordon Matta-Clark And Le Corbusier”, *Tate Papers, Tate’s Online Research Journal*, Spring 3, <http://www.tate.org.uk/download/file/fid/7297>
- 7 *The Group was then formed by* Laurie Anderson, Tina Girouard, Carol Goodden, Suzanne Harris, Jene Highstein, Bernard Kirschenbaun, Richard Landry, Richard Nonas, and Gordon Matta-Clark.
- 8 Letter from Gordon Matta-Clark to Robert Lendenfrost, World Trade Center, New York, January 21, 1975, in Moure, Gloria (2006) *Gordon Matta-Clark: Works and Collected Writings*, ed. Polígrafa, Museo d’Art Contemporani de Barcelona, Spain, 369.
- 9 Scott, James C. (2009) *The Art of Not Being Governed, Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia*, Yale University Press.
- 10 Scott summarizes these strategies into four features: 1. “A society that is physically mobile, widely dispersed, and likely to fission into new and smaller units”; 2. Subsistence routines, meaning the choice of autonomous and versatile forms of subsistence that permit state-repelling conditions; 3. A “highly egalitarian social structure”; and 4. Distance from state centres, or as Scott has pointed out: “friction-of-terrain remoteness”.
- 11 “At other times, which is to say most of the time, the peasantry appeared in the historical record not so much as historical actors but as more or less anonymous contributors to statistics on conscription, taxes, labor migration, land holding, and crop production.” Scott, James C. (1985) “Normal Exploitation, Normal Resistance”, *The Weapons of the Weak*, Yale University Press.
- 12 Badiou, Alain (2003) *Saint Paul, The Foundation of the Universal*, trans. Ray Brassier, Stanford University Press, 76-77.
- 13 Badiou, Alain (2009) *Logics of Worlds*, trans. Alberto Toscano, Continuum, 322.
- 14 Scott, James C. (1990) “The Infrapolitics of Subordinate Groups”, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance, Hidden Transcripts*, Yale University Press, 183-201.
- 15 Scott, James C. (1985) *Weapons of the Weak, Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, Yale University Press, 290.
- 16 The action referred to in this text, *Theater* (1976), was produced during the ‘Normalization’ period in Czechoslovakia, after the invasion of the Warsaw Pact armies and during the Gustav Husák regime. This period was characterized by repression and the restoration of the country to the Socialist Bloc. In *Theater* (1976) what Kovanda performed was a sequence of movements that he had written as a script. The gestures were not only simple; they were ‘normal’, in the sense that these gestures were formally invisible to everyday life. Kovanda used public space like any other citizen, and started to articulate, to perform, these gestures, such as touching his nose, crossing his legs, scratching his head. As the subtitle of the work says, he “follows a previously written script to the letter. Gestures and movements have been selected so the passers-by will not suspect that they are watching a ‘performance’.” It is in this invisible, in-existent, condition that I claim there is a form of political resistance. Pavlina Morganova states that “Kovanda’s gesture is closely linked to the normalization situation.” Commenting on another action, *Untitled*, 1976, an action where Kovanda just stood in the street opening his arms, forming a kind of cross, and waited to be touched by the passers-by, she asserts: “His position ‘of being kind of crucified’ expresses that which many of his generation (not only artists) were deprived of by the totalitarian regime, though there is also something in him determined to preserve his identity despite the warped conditions. This performance was not merely an affront [to] those simply walking past, an attempt to bridge the anonymity of the city and break down the barrier that each carries.” Morganová, Pavlína (2014) *Czech Action Art, Happenings, actions, events, land art, body art and performance art behind the iron curtain*, Karolinum Press.

17 Carlos Altamirano is a Chilean artist (1954). *Panorama Santiago* is a video produced for the 1stVideo Festival at the Institut Français in Santiago, Chile, 1981. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WAEYBUoxGvQ>

18 *Calle Santa Fe*, directed by Carmen Castillo. 2007.

19 Badiou, Alain (2014) “Destruction, Negation, Subtraction. On Pier Paolo Pasolini” in *The Age of the Poets, and others writings on Twentieth-Century Poetry and Prose*, trans. Bruno Bosteels, Verso, 82-92.

20 Ibid.

21 <http://newworldsummit.eu/academy-year/we-are-here/>

22 I became aware of We are Here through the work of Jonas Staal who, in partnership with the art platform BAK, developed the project *The New World Academy*. As he himself explains, this *New World Academy* is “A new academy that invites political organizations invested in the progressive political project to share with artists and students their views on the role of art and culture in political struggles. Together, they engage in critical thinking through concrete examples of transformative politics and develop collaborative projects that question and challenge the various frameworks of justice and existing models of representation. *NWA* proposes new critical alliances between art and progressive politics, so as to confront the democratic deficit in our current politics, economy, and culture”. One of the political organizations invited to participate in this project was We Are Here.

23 Badiou, Alain (2014) “Drawing: On Wallace Stevens” in *The Age of the Poets*, trans. Bruno Bosteels, Verso Books, 75-82.

24 Badiou, Alain (2006) *Briefings on Existence, A Short Treatise on Transitory Ontology*, trans. and edited by Norman Madarasz, State University of New York.

25 Piper, Adrian “Talking to Myself, Autobiography of an Art Object”, January 1971, in Bowles, John P. (2011) *Adrian Piper: Race, Gender, Embodiment*, Duke University Press.

26 Ibid.

27 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak, Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, Yale University Press, 1985, 290.

28 The epistemopolitical structure here involves the entire apparatus of hidden rules governing the performative belonging to which social life, as the common background of existence, appears to correspond. Epistemopolitical regimes are the forms through which a form of existence is referenced or sustained by models of archival determinism: “the material and phantasmatic apparatuses which connect state, civil society, capital, bureaucracy, cultural power and architectural education”, historicism, biographism, semantic policing, or basically the custodial forms that maintain the status quo unchanged.

29 PAH is the Platform for People Affected by Mortgages. It started in Barcelona as a grassroots movement with the aim of stopping the evictions produced particularly during the global economic breakdown. The aim of the platform has always been to provide support, practical and emotional, to those affected by the mortgages. The practices of the PAH have always involved civil disobedience and direct action. One of its founders, Ada Colau, has been elected democratically as Mayor of Barcelona. The PAH has won the National Human Rights Prize awarded by the Asociación Pro Derechos Humanos de España, in 2013. The PAH has been an example of a new form of politics in Spain, particularly because its cause transcends the lines between left and right, working on an egalitarian platform where housing is considered a shared problem and a human right.

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