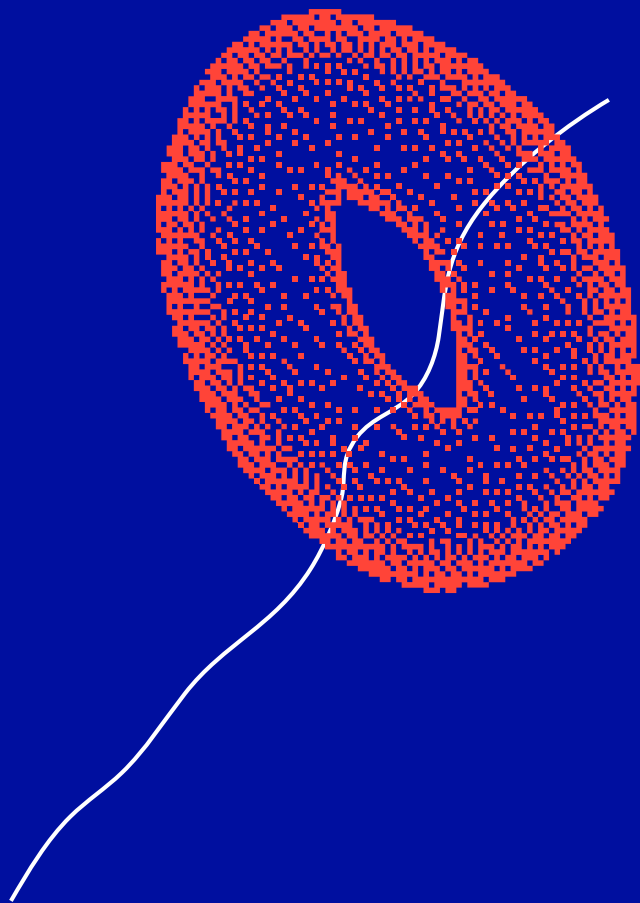


**REHEARSING FEMINIST FUTURES 2.0**

Performing Arts Platform



**THERE ARE**  
**TRANSFORMATIONS**  
There Are  
**APLENTY**  
Transformations  
Aplenty





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In our performance, there's a lot of text — montages of excerpts from the monodrama, courtesy of Kate and Gracija, references from theoretical texts, our own original texts, videos and video installations by Veronika, scenes that Jasmina acts out...

There's very little light and no music.  
There are no attractive female bodies.  
There's no swearing, no easy humor.

Our performance demands undivided attention;  
it's not always pleasant to watch. There's no illusion.

It may even seem unfinished, inappropriate,  
unnatural, messy...

That's on purpose.

It's because the key motive of this  
performance — transformation — is also such.  
Transformations are a messy affair.

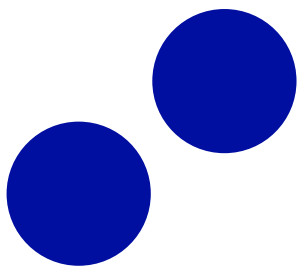
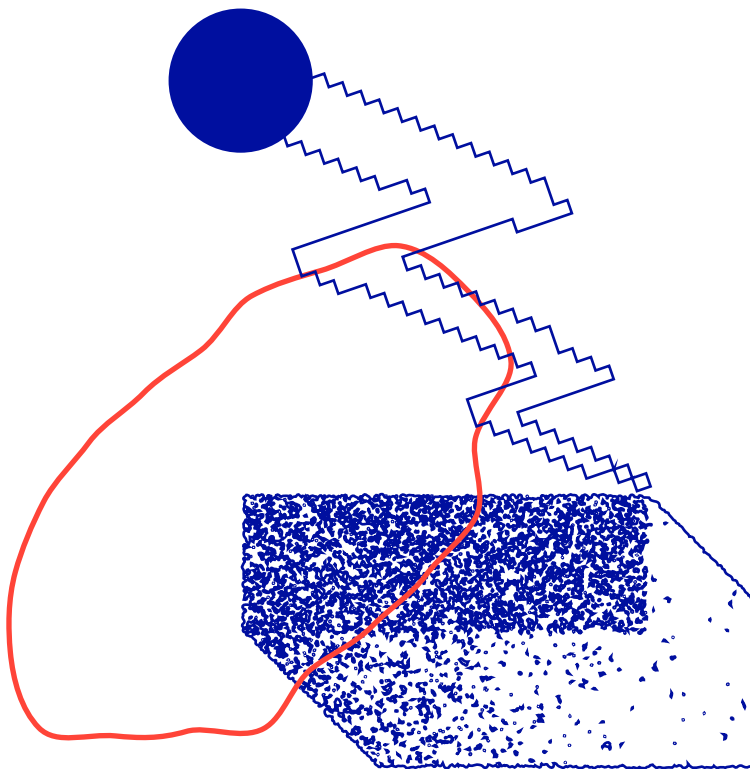
*(Pause. The girls look at the audience.)*

Our practice is transparent: we play (around) with  
what we ARE, we hide nothing on the stage, we play  
with what we have, that is, what we don't have, we  
don't embody other people, we show work.

*(Pause. The girls look at the audience.)*

**WE ARE CATS.**

\*\*\*



**IN THE SPACE OF**  
**TRANSFORMATIONS**  
In the space of  
transformations



What is it that makes us want to create a written record of the movements and speech of a few bodies on a stage? How can we talk about something seemingly as far removed from text as a performance, which, despite the multitude of (potential) renditions, each time plays out a little differently than before?

These are some of the questions that came up at the Feminist Dramaturgy Workshop with Ana Dubljevik that took place in early December 2023, a workshop designed to help us develop the configuration and content of this publication that you are now holding or reading on screen. We imagined the publication, as the title itself suggests, as an archive of experiences and thoughts on the process of creating the performance “Eleonore the Cat,” realized under the Performing Arts Platform REHEARSING FEMINIST FUTURES 2.0, which premiered in Skopje on November 27, 2023.

Through discussions and literary experiments, we realized that taking a conventional, linear approach to how we would present the ways in which our performance developed in the past few months wouldn’t fit the nature of our creative process. We wanted to convey our experiences and musings through different literary and visual forms and, with that, to explore the concept of “transformation” — both as a theme central to the performance and as a personal process that all of us who worked on the performance went through.

Here, you can find photographs and diary excerpts from our rehearsals, the self-interviews we did together, an illustration made as a reference to the source text the performance was based on, as well as a text that became a part of the final performance. You'll also

read commentary about the creative process by our collaborators, as well as short texts by some of the cultural workers who saw the performance at the Youth Cultural Center (MKC) and who were kind enough to write a thing or two about it.

What is it that makes us want to create a written record of the movements and speech of a few bodies on a stage?

In any case, we wouldn't want to suggest what you should read — and how you should read it — that's, ultimately, your own wonderful privilege as readers.

**WE WOULD MUCH RATHER HAVE YOU PARTICIPATE IN THE WORK IN FRONT OF YOU, EXPERIENCE ITS SPAN, THE UNFOLDING OF THE CREATION PROCESS — OF BOTH THE PERFORMANCE AND THIS PUBLICATION — HERE AND NOW.**

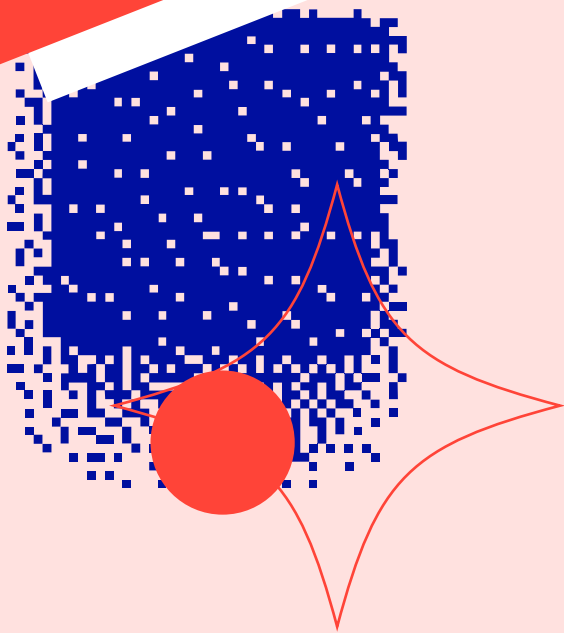
We would only suggest that you surrender to fantasy, to your own desires and fears, personal and collective utopias, and all that moves and frightens you, to open your self and, with everything you have, let "our," "other" world enter "your," "known" world and not to assume or try to control what happens next.

With this in consideration, we invite you to experience the event of art, which, we have faith, will overwhelm you to such an extent that at the end of this text publication, we will meet again changed, transformed, just as the process of creating "Eleonore the Cat" transformed us — each in her own way — too.

*Note: This introduction was inspired by the works of literary scholar Derek Attridge.*



scan to take a look



**ABOUT THE**  
**PERFORMANCE**  
About the  
performance



# ELEONORE THE CAT

After the monodrama by Caren Jess

With original works from Elfriede Jelinek, Paul B. Preciado,  
Silvia Federici, and the collective

“Wildbruch, time is slipping by, you’re rambling on, and I’m bored. I’m not some rich lady, I’m a cat, is that clear?” This is how 40-year-old real estate agent Eleonore Garazzo addresses her psychiatrist, Gerald Wildbruch, during one of their sessions. How do you imagine individual and collective transformation from the perspective of the impossibility of dialogue and the overwhelming inadequacy of words and language?

Eleonore the Cat, a monodrama by German author Caren Jess, offers a multitude of thought-provoking answers to the challenges of transformation and the act of renouncing the world in the name of radical self-identification. It is precisely these aspects of the work that are the focal point of the performance of “Eleonore the Cat,” created under the platform “Rehearsing Feminist Futures 2.0” by Tiiiit! Inc. The deceptively linear process of the transformation from human to cat, as well as the narrative development of the performance, are guided by the principle of fused contradictions. The collective explores these processes not only through the ambivalent persona of cat-woman Eleonore Garazzo but also through how they translate into the context of professional, sexual, and gender identity by adding onto the text and combining it with their and other authors’ works.

Coauthors and performers:

Monika Angelevska, Gracija Atanasovska, Jasmina Vasileva,  
Veronika Kamchevska, Katerina Shekutkovska

Supporting collaborators:

Jasna Zmak, Viktorija Iliovska, Kristina Lelovac,  
Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, Ana Dubljevik

Translation from German: Katerina Shekutkovska  
Performance Rights: S. Fischer Verlag

Executive producer: Petar Antevski

Sound: Goran Moskov

Support in light design: Aleksandar Jovanovski

Video screening operator: Lea Dimitrova

Support in production of stage elements: Ceyda Ibrahim

Production: Tiiiit! Inc — Skopje, 2023

Premiere: 27.11.2023

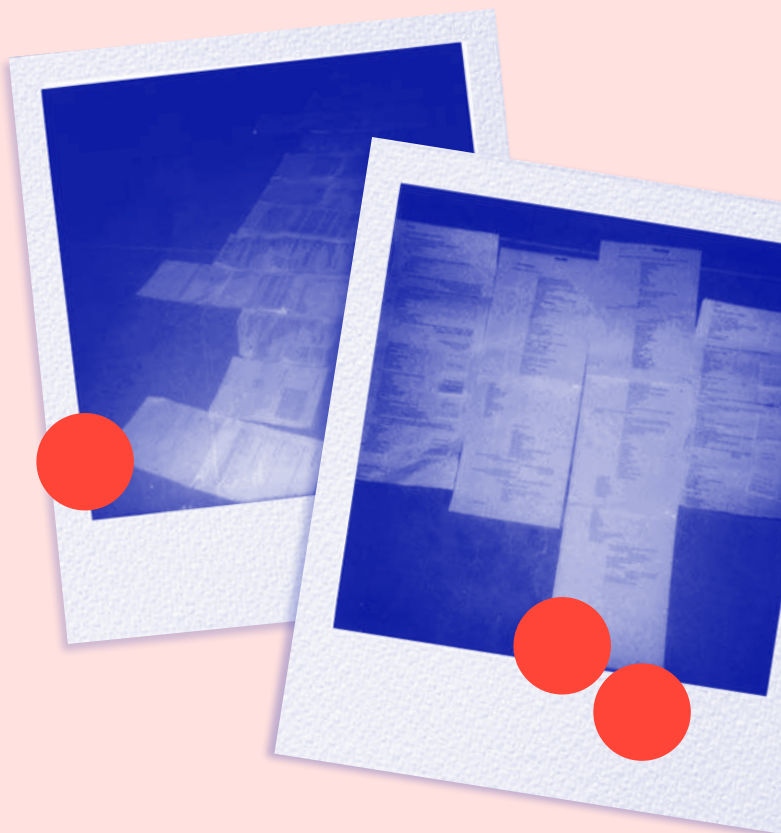
MKC (MKC Club)

SPECIAL THANKS to

Jasmina Bilalovik,

the SCS CENTAR-JADRO team,

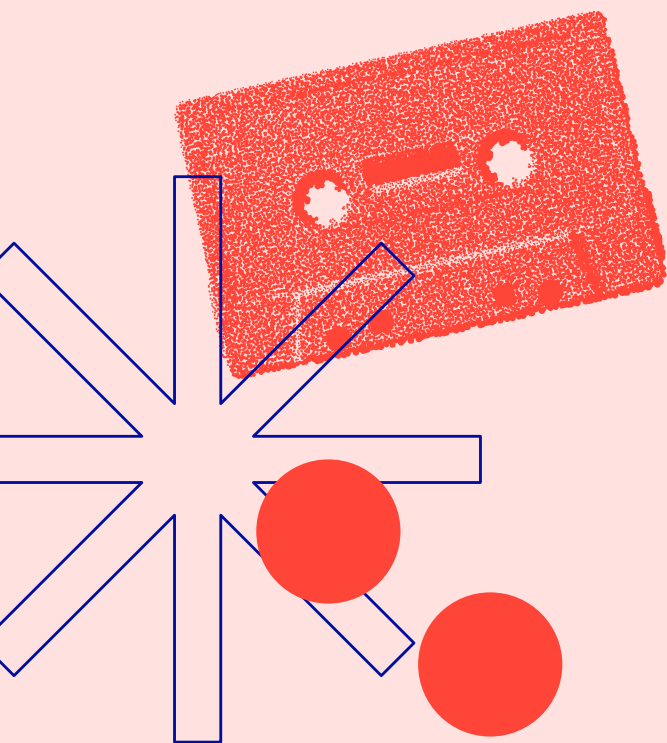
the MKC team, and Kilian, the cat.



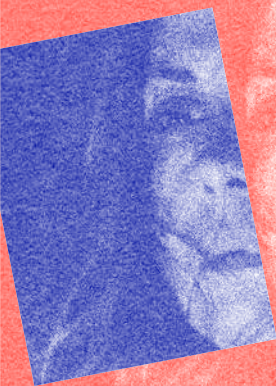
# ABOUT THE COLLECTIVE

About the  
collective

The collective comprised of Monika Angelevska, Gracija Atanasovska, Jasmina Vasileva, Veronika Kamchevska and Katerina Shekutkovska represents an interdisciplinary group of authors that merges approaches from the performing and visual arts with theory and literary studies. What their collaboration explores is how these disciplines intertwine and communicate with each other and the possibilities they offer for the transference of methods and content. The key goals of the collective are to reexamine the current questions surrounding feminism, gender, and public policies, as well as the search for non-institutional creative expression.



**DIARY OF**  
**Diary of**  
**A REHEARSAL**  
**a rehearsal**



Jasmina Jasmina  
Jasmina Jasmin  
Jasmina  
Jasmina

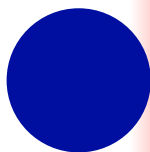
Jasmina

Afternoon rehearsal with Viki, day two.

October.

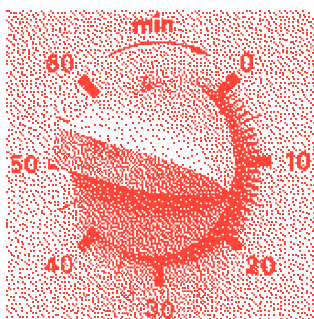
23°C

Jadro



Viki keeps repeating the term embodiment as the principle upon which we'd build the cat.

We're doing this exercise to release different points on the body on a freshly cleaned marley floor, courtesy of Bilalovik.



We work in pairs.  
We work in pairs.

First, one of us lays down in repose, passive, in a meditation of sorts, while the other is active. Then we switch roles.

The goal is to relax, or rather, to wake up the points that move

the body, like the joints, muscles, bones, spine, neck.

To do this bodywork successfully, the passive participant is not supposed to resist or help the movements; her body needs to be completely lax.

Later, after all of us have completed the exercise, Viki tells us to repeat what we did the day before, only, we're to pay special attention to those same points we worked on releasing just now.

The day before, our task was to improvise in the space around us, moving like cats, using the movements that first come to mind when we think of a cat.

I started doing the exercise, recalling the previous day and building upon that recollection with a newfound awareness of the points in my body.

Yes, I realized, I felt;  
embodiment doesn't equate to imitation.



Veronika Veronika  
eronika Veronika  
Veronika  
eronika  
Veronika

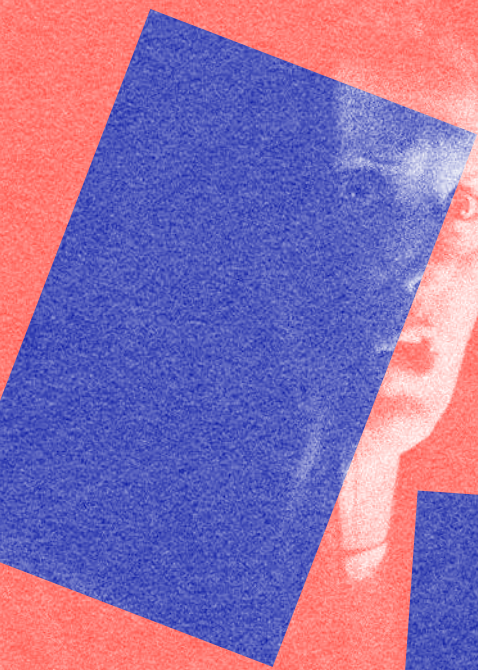


**Werecat, 27.10.2023**

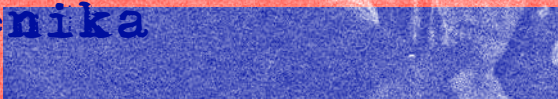
I was in the middle of flicking through recordings from the previous day, the first day of shooting with Jasmina, who'd started acting out the text. I was on the computer. All of a sudden, I saw that she was watching me more than I was watching her. Trapped in the screen, she was observing me with an intensity that you'd absolutely get when faced with a cat, the cat inside us all that we never know when or if at all will materialize. By deconstructing the video, I had a breakthrough about the character Jasmina played. I got goosebumps because I realized my gaze was a method in itself. I was looking at her through an 18-135mm zoom lens and the wide-angle lens of a phone. I tried to understand this more — I don't typically succumb to director-esque deliberations, and yet I was suddenly struck by this powerful feeling just from a video composition. Jasmina directed her own performance, and I followed her through the lens. I switched between shutter and aperture settings; I set the aperture on high to let in minimal light. We'd allow ourselves to be spontaneous in the moment — she'd act it out, I wouldn't intervene — and her rhythm was nocturne; it had the elegance of non-linear montage and monovideo. Now I understand this method of work from my perspective, and while I didn't share it with her then, I did after we finished shooting. That day, I was to be camera activa; I would then establish the video design later, digitally. Thank you for the method, Jasmina. It was getting dark outside, we had to be our own lighting directors; she was looking at the camera again, Gracija was in charge of sound. The three of us in a micro-studio we had built ourselves; this was our process; what a powerful notion.

**Let's play,**

And when I would press "Record" and say, "Let's play," we did but in our own way. Now I know why you don't switch out actors mid-way; you can maybe switch out the insects. A bee flew by, and Varancov poured champagne. Ah, I love text, you know, text that you've created in the deep of night, and we shot at night — we had to. There is no single, universal way for text to take form — there are multiple ways, and this way was good, ours, established through learning that would quickly take the shape of an art video installation. I plan to use it as a method from now on, maybe even as a principle. When the video learns it's a video, art can then be created after, if we want to see it. Until the next shoot.



Monika Monika  
onika Monika  
Monika  
onika



Monika

We were rushing on our way to Jadro with Gracija

(we're always rushing).

A few weeks ago, Kika tasked us with an exercise; each one of us was to attempt to reach within in her own way, to try to grasp at her own Eleonore The Cat. This one time, we had to reschedule because we missed the deadline, and we missed it because we were always simultaneously in another process — the process of life.

But, we were here, all of us — and I felt this subtle impatience in each one of us (in me, for sure, I could feel it quivering). *What is Eleonore the cat in the other(s) like?*

We started with our tradition of unrolling the marley floor and then sat on it, cross-legged, one by one, until we were all in one big circle.

Glance one, glance two, glances — glances — glances.

You, me, you, you, me. Who will go first?

(We'd constantly wonder)

Jasmina suddenly stood up and said: "I'm not Eleonore the Cat!" She tried to convince us of this as she artfully arched her back, talking about her age, perimenopause, and how she couldn't bite her toenail, as she prowled about on the floor on her soft paws, as she rubbed against us, as she meowed, as — meow!

Kate opened up her notebook, adjusting her glasses, and read us a piece of herself out loud, letting us glimpse a part of her cat and its vulnerability. Weaving words one after the other, sifting through both her thoughts and the neatly filled-out pages.

I invited them to tighten the circle we'd made on the marley floor and to slowly approach its center. Close to one another, I wanted each and every one of us to put her mark, her paw if you will, on the simple piece of paper with "Good vibrations" written on it (the excerpt from the play that brought us together). I thought it would illustrate how we'd rebuild the process within the process, again, as we did every day.

Gracija shared her six pages with us and let them travel around the circle clockwise (the cadence of how much they lingered in each hand, the who, why, how, varied). I got my hands on them last — I was guarding her right side, so I defied the arrow of the clock. The moment stretched on forever — a glossary of words and definitions, shared thoughts, and bodily transformations.

Veronika asked us to open the circle so she could play with the geometry we built with our bodies, and so together, we straightened it. “Turn off the light and be quiet.” She said, Shhhhhhh... Through the play of light and shadow, she built sprawling vistas, wide horizons reflected on the big white wall. Consumerism, spending, now, here, around us... ASMR.

Kika presented her imaginary resignation:

-I'm a Cat!

-But Kristina, how do you mean a cat? Please, we're having a meeting, be professional.

-I'm a Cat!

-What does that mean? Explain it to me, please!

-I'm a Cat!

-So? Why don't you at least meow?

-I'm a Cat!

-So you want to waste your time and mine?

-I'm a Cat!

...

( T h e e n d )



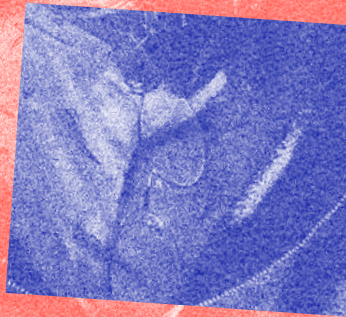
Viki gave us a look and then returned to the text in front of her. She managed to open up the first page with her right paw and unleashed the synchronicity of her body and speech. She rolled her shoulders, first one, then the other, wrapped her determined paws around the piece of paper and purred through Ms. Garazzo's words.

We are all cats here.

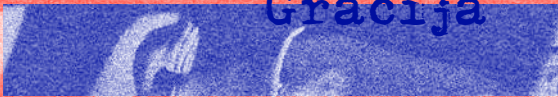
We are all cats here.

M e o w !

Monika



Gracija Graci  
Gracija Gr  
Gracija  
Gracija



Gracija

We typically scheduled our rehearsals at 5 p.m., but they rarely started then. When we held them at MKC, we dragged our feet for at least half an hour, ordering coffee, water, juice; somebody would smoke a cigarette around the sculpture of the Little Prince, and only after all these rituals were completed we would finally start rehearsal.

I have to admit  
I loved these rituals.

At the Faculty of Dramatic Arts, we were never that lucky — the cafeteria was usually closed or closing just as we'd get to rehearsal in the darkness of late autumn. There, we didn't have quite as much opportunity to drag our feet, but we'd still allow ourselves to be caught by surprise by other things that would compromise the start time we'd agreed on.

So, one cold evening in early November, we had the honor of rehearsing in front of a cat, who had picked our rehearsal room as her spot to settle down for the night.

It was initially dark when we entered the rehearsal room. Light from outside bounced back from the eyes of the cat, who couldn't have been expecting guests, but we didn't notice. Only after we turned on the lights did we see the cat sitting in a corner.

At first glance, the cat appeared feral and spooked by our loud and occasionally frowning faces.

It followed our movement warily, and whenever one of us stepped closer to her corner, she'd elegantly move away from it.

We never touched her.

The cat might have been there to remind us that we are still continuously supported, or rather — sustained — by the “untamed” — or at least borderline “untamed” — animal world, which we are an inseparable part of. To let it be known that our preconceived notion of human exceptionalism is unsustainable and that the boundaries between “species,” although sometimes daunting and seemingly insurmountable, depend on much more than just the

momentary shape of our bodies and gestures, and, in fact, have to do with something much more physically unstable, much less generically tangible, and much more poignant.

In fact, we were constantly followed by animals throughout the entire process of developing the performance — starting with the two kittens in Tiiiit!'s office during the first rehearsals, the visit from the small, curious puppy during the workshop at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts with Jasna Zmak, and culminating with the cat in the faculty's rehearsal room.

Cats are adaptable creatures, so our friend got used to our presence after a while. She might have felt (somewhat?) safe, as she stopped paying us any mind. Our play couldn't be reflected in her eyes all the time because she was asleep for certain parts, and we certainly didn't disturb her.

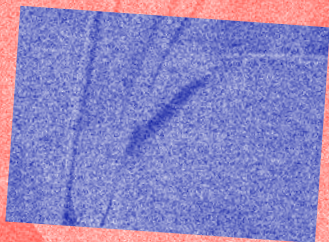
At the end of the rehearsal, we shared the leftovers from our half-eaten pastries with her and helped her get settled for the night.

It wasn't until the day after that we noticed cat vomit in a corner.

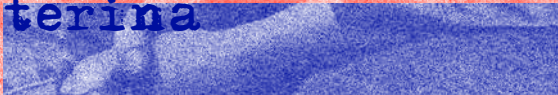
**Gracija**

in search of something that we didn't  
search for that didn't  
wished the  
Our play couldn't  
be reflected in her  
eyes all the time  
because she was  
asleep for certain  
parts, and we  
certainly didn't  
disturb her.

ate and the search



Katerina Katerina  
aterina Katerina  
Katerina  
aterina



Katerina



We have two more weeks. I can't remember whether I showered this morning. I think I might smell. Get up, coffee, then I'm on the computer, emails, where are we — I don't know. Will we be on time? I have no idea. I don't know where people get the impression that I want to chat on the phone. I'm going through the list of props: amplifier, here; shoes, here; chains, here; mic, mic cable, extension cords, light, copies for everybody, here. 5 p.m. I'm at MKC. I'm vacuuming the space where we're going to perform, so I don't think about how exhausted I am. I'm furiously pulling the hose back and forth so I don't think about how freaking nothing is going according to plan, according to what we agreed. Everyone is here, the floor is clean, and we can finally let the text unfold. Yes, we are *unfolding* it because, in our group, we don't just read the text, no, no, no; the text should also be seen; we care so much about that sacred principle that a moment later we blow it up for the thousandth time, terrorism against the written word. And then, meekly, like small children, we sit down and put the pieces of what we'd just blown up back together. Could it be that we're too small for this? There's doubt, but also this terrible strength that comes when I remember it's not only me who is searching for some kind of answer. We're all looking at the pages, notes upon notes jotted down, and comments everywhere, and I tell myself that maybe it still makes sense. I enjoy a rare moment of calm before the next wave hits, the next irritation, the next jolt I get from that often repeated sentence of "Those are the conditions we work in."

**Those are the conditions**

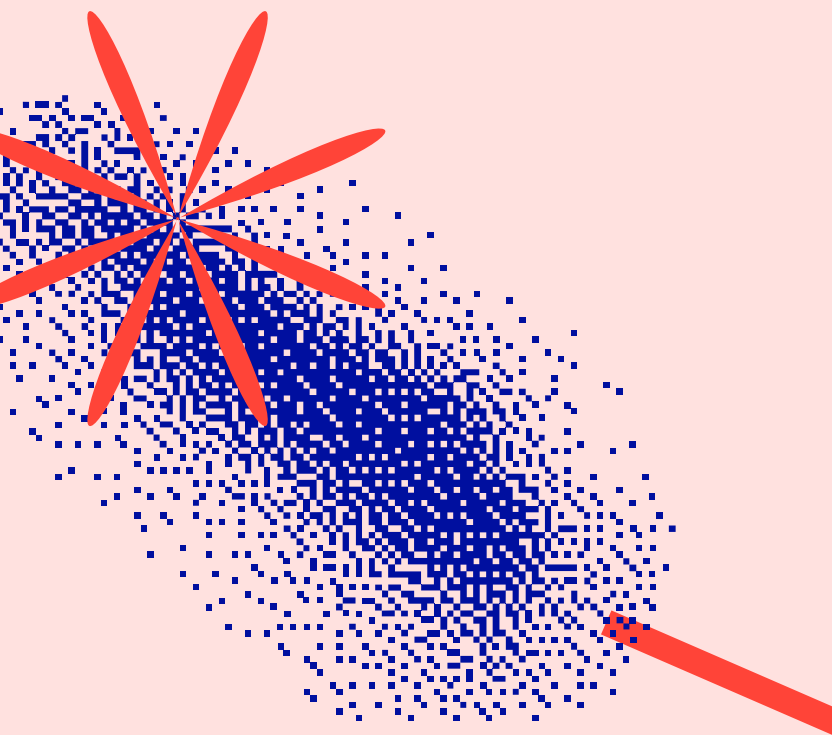
The body and the mind power through, even when the heart is broken. We're all loitering about the space that is nowhere near ready to perform in; we're imagining, we're attempting, searching on and on. We go through the scenes, one, two, three, and then all over again, always something new, always something different. We're permanently vulnerable, our wounds are permanently exposed.

**We're permanently vulnerable, our  
wounds are permanently exposed.**

I return home, and I tear the scene I wrote for the performance apart. You don't own me.

Go to hell.

**Katerina**



# SELF-INTERVIEW

## Self-interview

*This interview is inspired by the model of Self-Interview from the publication *Everybodys – Group Self-Interviews* (SelfInterviews <https://www.metteingvartsen.net/texts/interviews/everybodys-group-self-interviews/>).*

*It's an interview model in which the members of a collective ask and answer each other's questions related to the collaborative work process, the flow of the creative process, as well as their individual reflections on the acquired experiences.*

## WHERE WERE WE BEFORE THE PROCESS BEGAN?

**Monika:** In a space where I was lacking space, creative and personal. The rest were in their own spaces, so the spontaneity of the spaces in between and their gravitation somehow managed to bring us together.

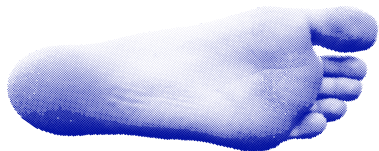
**Katerina:** All over the place. We knew each other in very different contexts: some knew each other more intimately, others had been brought together by a previous collaboration (not directly related to performance art). When we learned of the open call, we decided to give it a try with "Eleonore the Cat" because we all had a common interest in seizing new spaces not only for creative expression but also for cooperation with people who didn't necessarily come from our respective backgrounds. At the time, it seemed to me that we all needed some kind of change, whether for personal or professional reasons.

**Veronika:** In another dimension, going through postoperative healing. In a creative, conceptual process of self-care.

**Gracija:** Before the process started, I was in a rather chaotic state. My burnout from my job as a content writer was in full swing. I was finishing the last administrative obligations I had for my master's degree in Germany, and I really needed a creative challenge. When Kate reached out to me about the open call, it got me excited, happy, but also a little nervous at the same time. I kept wondering whether I would be able to adequately respond to the challenges that would emerge in the process of developing a performance — which at the time, was an unfamiliar creative territory for me. Fortunately, the idea and the expectations of not only the platform, but also of the women that were to participate in the project weren't so much about bringing a certain expertise to the

*we all needed some kind of change*

field of performance arts, as they were about our eagerness to explore contemporary ideas that we felt were lacking in our respective fields through an interdisciplinary process.



**Jasmina:** It was the start of summer and I was searching for some kind of professional challenge that would keep me busy in the autumn. Kate had just gotten back from a festival in Germany where the text had won an award and enthusiastically shared what she had discovered. Tiiiiit! Inc.'s open call went public shortly after. It seemed like a good opportunity to explore new ways to collaborate and deconstruct a monodrama. We tried our luck.

## WHY DID WE RESPOND TO THE OPEN CALL FOR INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION?

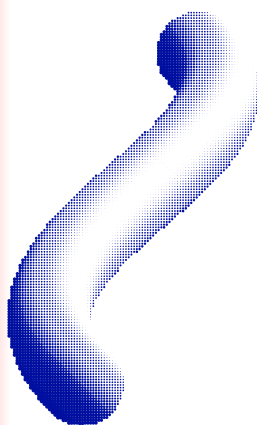
**Veronika:** Because of the proposition of creating a new original work and because, honestly, we would get the opportunity to build a performance unencumbered by positions of authority. There was also the challenge of integrating a miscellany of media and the opportunity to learn from other disciplines.

**Monika:** It was the perfect opportunity to collaborate with four other women in a space where we could build a kind of freedom together. There was also my eternal desire to get to know the others, the way they work, listen, create. At the very beginning, at those first meetings, I would imagine an infinitely large aquarium where we could all pour our worlds into, and each of us could use her fins to dive into it, discerning more about herself and the others.

**Gracija:** I responded to the call because I like new creative challenges, and because, for the longest time, I had entertained this desire to work on a project that had to do with the performing arts. I wanted to learn how to translate my literary

background into the performing context very much. I also really wanted to learn from the girls in the group because they all came with their own knowledge and skills related to stage performance in different ways.

**Katerina:** The main motivation to become a part of an interdisciplinary group was my need to exchange experiences and knowledge with people operating outside the domain of my primary profession. I had worked on theater projects several times over the years, and while they were challenging for me, they were also a great source of inspiration and learning. For me, the conceptualization of the work process as non-hierarchical and of grounding it in intensive knowledge exchange was what ultimately propelled me into starting the collaboration.



**Jasmina:** Because it was unlike my everyday work at the theater; because it held the promise of allowing me freedom in research, a way to supplement my knowledge and get acquainted with how others work. What was most attractive about Tiiiit! Inc.'s call was that it offered a support program consisting of workshops and access to outside collaborators like Jasna Zmak, Viktorija Ilioska, Biljana Tarnurovska-Kjulavkovski, and Ana Dubljevik. The financial aspect of the would-be project wasn't any less important. Adequate financial support for the realization of projects in the independent scene is practically non-existent, and in that sense, the support Tiiiit! Inc. offered, both financially and in terms of production, was a breath of fresh air and something one simply doesn't miss.

## WHAT DOES (TO BE IN A) "COLLECTIVE" MEAN TO ME?

**Katerina:** For me, a collective is a form in which the singular functions in the plural, a meeting point

between individuals who are able to create while respecting the boundaries and needs of others. What excites me the most in collective work is the possibility to imagine and try out a different kind of artistic production, one that doesn't rely on the principle of using the individual as a resource for the realization of some personal idea (using another's labor to serve "you"), but on the principles of creating a common goal that arises when you put the creative labor of different individuals in dialogue (joining labor in the interest of "us"). To be in a collective is to be in a process of deliberate and astute assessment and adaptation to the conditions we need to be capable of working together, a process that demands great responsibility, in creating a collective work, but also in how we treat others.

In this sense, it's key to search for the balance between taking up space for your own creative expression and creating the conditions to empower another's, something that requires serious consideration of a kind of original system of self-management and organization.

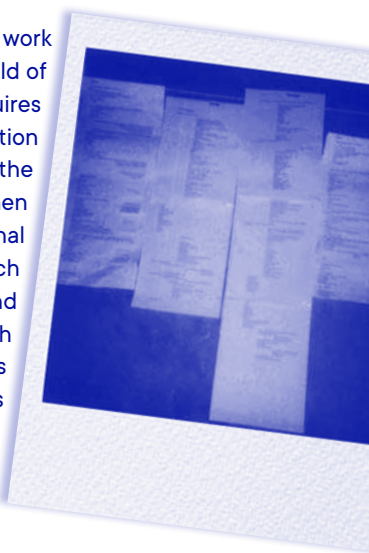
That's why I believe that a collective transcends the limits of the average creative collaboration; in my opinion, it's rooted in the interest in building a common code, a common language, a common way of working, and consequently, a common value system and worldview.

**Veronika:** To be in a collective means to build multiple relations simultaneously, so it follows that we're talking about a complex structure of cooperation. From where I'm standing, I can only confirm that becoming a collective requires the capability of planning a process, which leads me to the conclusion that, in order to deliberate on what a collective means, one first has to become a collective. Such a form of cooperation is a layered matter that usually starts from one or more professional interests, if there are such. To be in a collective, you first have to go through

a learning process so that you're able to establish this principle of transition from the individual to the collective, like we had the opportunity to. I believe that this transformation is extraordinary, regardless of whether it meets the criteria for a collective. The process of creating it itself is a unique experience, while being in it engages the individual on a completely different level, first as a human and second as a professional. From this perspective, in order for a group to become a collective, it's key that it learns this principle in the process. As I see it, creating a collective standard and value system requires serious deliberation and consideration of the different aspects of the professional and ethical nature of the human condition and then also of the intention behind the existence of such a community.

**Jasmina:** To me, the work of a collective in the field of the performing arts requires continuous transformation and adaptation to the circumstances. And then some degree of emotional competence, which includes social and personal skills with which you adapt to situations and relationships without unnecessarily pathologizing your experiences if things don't turn out the way you imagined.

**Gracija:** To me, a collective is a concept with its own gravitational pull, one that encompasses the dynamics of the constant transition from the individual to the many and from the many to the individual. To call a collaboration, a group of people brought together under the shared goal of creating (something new)—a *collective*, it needs to constantly be able to transcend its own self and remain open





to connecting with others. The collective is a dynamic of processes that cannot take place without mutual respect and responsibility. To me, respect inevitably means dealing with one's own ego and encouraging a sense of joy in the other person, joy in the novelty and authenticity she brings to the process of creation, in the boundaries she's constantly pushing, in her struggle with her insecurities,

in her bursts of creative energy. I believe that respect is undeniably tied to dealing with the feeling and the state of being responsible. When we talk about responsibility, we enter a very delicate and intricate field of interpersonal relationships and institutions, with many forces and influences that constantly shift its equilibrium. In a complex (and often fragile) network of relationships that unfolds in its own particular way, driven forward by the dynamics of a collective, it becomes something that we easily take for granted. Hence, in order to call a collective a collective, I think one should constantly return to this place; one should not allow its meaning to be diluted, to become placatory, didactic, or to be used as a means of control and domination over the group.

In short, a collective, to me, is about sharing joy and giving space to each other.

**Monika:** Building a collective identity through collective care and responsibility towards one's self and towards others. Cooperation in creating a narrative that encourages the freedom to be oneself but also fosters internal organization and coordination within the group. Freed space, shaped by mutual trust and transparency, built upon common visions and creative ideas based on individual experiences and knowledge in the sphere of diversity (interdisciplinary wealth), and



grounded in persistence and continuous care for self, you, and everything. A collective, our form of defiance.

## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM OTHER DISCIPLINES FROM OUTSIDE THE SCOPE OF OUR PRIMARY PRACTICE OR PROFESSIONAL PURSUIT?

**Monika:** I have to admit I learned a lot about the literary aspects of a performative piece. I even managed to capture the sharpness of a visual video-artist's eye and the way the text takes on a new form when translated into a new medium. The techniques and exercises that aid our attempts to nurture a collective spirit and how one can encourage the connection between mind and body so that the body can bring the written word to life. Most important of all, I finally got to know the independent scene and its challenges, simultaneously gentle and messy.

simultaneously gentle and messy

**Katerina:** For me, there is no simple answer to this question, especially since the knowledge I gained through the process interweaves the personal and the professional, what we learn from someone as the practitioner of a discipline, but also as a person with a system of values, feelings, and worldviews. But I certainly learned at least part of the others' unknown code: how to read visual language or body language (which had been completely unknown to me), the elementary principles of designing space, as well as new techniques for deliberating on and framing a scene.

**Veronika:** The entire process united the code each of us had towards work. The principles of literary praxis, interpretation, and modification. When it comes to the performance arts, I am now confident that it's possible for actors and actresses to fit into the non-narrative format of video art. Although this practice was narrative, Jasmina inadvertently taught me a new method of work consisting of play

grounded in the freedom of body and interpretation. From Monika I learned spatial planning and wise decision-making with minimal resources, although there are many other things that we all learned by sending references to each other on Viber.

I learned a lot of things


**Gracija:** I learned a lot of things. I realized that adapting a literary work for the stage is a much freer endeavor than I initially thought. Additionally, I saw how much work goes into shooting video content for a performance, but also how perfectly it can fit into the whole. I learned about the adaptability, improvisation, and challenges of the body performing on stage, but also about transforming the mise-en-scène, which is just as alive as the bodies that are part of it.

**Jasmina:** How to build everything from nothing, that everything can be adapted for stage performance, how to treat space, and how the camera can become something you play with instead of something that observes you. How important literary analysis is as the base for a performance. Most importantly, from Kika, how to always be ready to deal with new and unforeseen situations — I witnessed this with admiration; I don't know if I learned it.

**FROM THIS PERSPECTIVE,  
CAN WE DRAW ANY  
CONCLUSIONS  
REGARDING NOT  
ONLY THE AESTHETIC  
CODIFICATION OF  
OUR WORK, BUT ALSO  
ABOUT THE PROCESS OF  
CREATING A CREATIVE  
WORK, IN THIS CASE, A  
PERFORMANCE?**

**Jasmina:** I think we definitely need more time to agree on an approximate definition of our work. Now, I can only





confirm that it's, for the most part, attuned to the circumstances (spatial, technical, artistic, human) in which it was created, with the knowledge each of us had in her own respective discipline, with a willingness to experiment with the disciplines of others, and a receptiveness to feedback from external collaborators and supporting collaborators.

There's this video by interdisciplinary American artist Carrie Mae Weems that has been recently circulating on social media that I listen to on repeat and that, for me, embodies the utopia of creating a work freely, so I'll just quote it:

"I don't always know what I'm doing, I'm often lost and struggling through a process and a set of ideas and emotions that I don't always understand. Sometimes it takes me really years to really understand what I've done. That's why I think it's so important to really sort of get out of the way of the work, that, as an artist, I simply know that I need to make something, that I need to realize something, grapple with something, and I do that in terms of, in a pictorial process, and allow the work to be what it is, allowing the meaning to emerge as it emerges, and maybe five years from now I'll see something in the work that I didn't really know I was after."

**Monika:** In order to be able to talk about the aesthetic of our work (right after this performance, as a sort of end result, or closure), we first have to analyze the chronology of our creativity, ideas, and of course, the way we built our relationships with each other, which became the connective tissue of the entire process. This is, I think, where my more general conclusion about the need for greater distance that would allow us to reflect on the process as a whole stems from. However, what I have at the moment is the impression that the question of the aesthetic code of our work was uncertain, and yet underlined and bolded in each one of us from the very beginning. This was, without a doubt, due to the fact that

*I don't always know what I'm doing, I'm often*

we hadn't collaborated before, and the fact that all of us came from different backgrounds, had different professional aspirations and occupations. So this context of needing to build relationships as we built a performance and a work practice quite logically entailed needing to construct some kind of common aesthetic language too. Not only that, but I believe that each of our personal and individual aesthetics and language were also transformed through the (un)conscious building of collective(ness). We managed to build a kind of collective aesthetic code through the transformations of our own individual aesthetic languages.

**Katerina:** What essentially defined our work and the aesthetic code we wanted to build were probably the form and configuration of the fragment, of the contradictions that exist side by side, of incompleteness. I feel like this preoccupation existed in our group from the very beginning, expressed in our common desire to put together a performance that would not follow standard narrative structures but would constantly and consciously interrupt any attempt to get to a clear ending or one-sided conclusion. It would introduce an episodic element into the otherwise rather classic storyline of the monodrama itself, hence the incentive to integrate other texts, to work with different media, and to experiment with stage presence. The creative freedom, but also the ambition and gravitas of this undertaking, as well as all the challenges it entailed, were felt both in the performance and in the process: while these forms gave us endless freedom in experimentation, in the constant search for new expression, and in attempting many configurations, the consequences of the time-consuming effort to escape from a "conclusion" were also visible to me in the individual stages of the work process itself, and even in the microcosm of daily rehearsals. I associate the paradoxical open-yet-closed form of the fragment with the character of the collective. At this point, the complexity of collective work (re) affirms itself to me yet again, that is, the complexity

of finding an aesthetic code and a type of process-oriented work that, on the one hand, would not be too rigid in its structure, hierarchization, and limitations, but on the other, would still be sufficiently authoritative and intentional to allow us a respite from the uncertainty of the constant search that can sometimes lead us into a dead end.

**Veronika:** The establishment of aesthetic codification also implies the construction of a strong standard that can sometimes confine the process into the actualization of beauty as a goal in and of itself. I believe that having the nerve to create without letting the process be overtaken by a strong current of normativity means to let go of any established category that already belongs to someone or that is widely accepted as the possible and real solution reached in another authorial process. To come up with your own codification means to connect the knowledge and creative possibility of every model of participation, which is the essence at the heart of the active intellectual and intuitive ideas of the creative process. Therefore, to establish new predispositions is a strong mental and artistic undertaking that can ultimately be undone in the work itself, and to take such a risk is to dare to be self-rejected in one's own creation. This method, in my opinion, holds the property of an aesthetic category only when it happens, the beautiful expressed at the moment of statement, and then after it comes to pass, it becomes a thought category or the actualization of a simulacrum, the feasibility of countless transformations that could be a future real or virtual solution. The very connection of interdisciplinary expressions in a performative medium alludes to the ephemerality of singular authorship without losing the autonomy to participate in the creation of a creative work of art. In my view, from the very beginning of our process, we established the principle of vulnerability of each category that could be assimilated and invoked as the basis for the aestheticization of another art form.

category or the actualization of a simulacrum

From this distance, I find the aesthetics of vulnerability to be a visual accomplishment that, through self-revelation and the principle of displaying action in real time, invites the audience to participate in building the action by becoming aware of the specific relations on the stage, the interspace, and the participants themselves, who are consciously or unconsciously willing to be transformed through someone else's value system.

## WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO WORK IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF THE LOCAL INDEPENDENT CULTURE SCENE? WHAT DIFFERENCE DID WORKING UNDER THE UMBRELLA OF THE PLATFORM MAKE?

**Jasmina:** The platform, or to be more specific, the way it handled every challenge on the way, both internal and external, completely delivered on the promise of its initial open call.

I'm not unfamiliar with the work environment in the independent scene; unfortunately, I have intimate experience of what it means to not have access to space, or technical and financial support when realizing an independent project.




It's astounding how many people on your contact list you have to call, how many small services and favors to ask for, how much you have to will yourself to adapt, to somehow learn to work with the circumstances themselves, which can

seem limiting and frustrating at times.

The independent scene here also has another problem: the groups and individuals working within it can be self-contained, so the opportunities for collaboration that involves something beyond just authorship are practically non-existent.

The most significant thing that this platform



offered that made our work easier was that it filled a feedback gap during the research process by providing us access to an interdisciplinary support program and carefully managing and handling the whole scope of material that inevitably accumulates as a by-product of collective work.

Perhaps contrary to expectations and popular opinion, I won't say that the independent scene functions in opposition to the national cultural institutions. In our country, the independent scene is overall not a subcultural (and it's even less a countercultural) phenomenon relative to institutional culture. It's the opposite; what prevails is the pretense of these projects, which are often found on the repertoires of national theaters almost right after the premiere. Of course, there are exceptions, but in the absence of a definition of what an independent scene means, the two are not too different in aesthetic terms.

And yet another "unpopular opinion:" institutional culture is not the enemy of independent culture, or a drain on its resources. They represent two different perspectives of work and responsibility to the audience. What hurts both the most is an unclear national strategy when it comes to the performing arts, a shortage of personnel (not exclusively artistic) to serve the process, BASIC working conditions (workplace hygiene, heating, safety) insufficient funding, limited or inadequate access to international funds, and the poor organization of cultural workers in articulating their demands for better work conditions.

**Katerina:** Throughout the entire process of creating the performance of "Eleonore the Cat," we were given the opportunity to be part of a platform that supported us and followed the development of the project, often selflessly sharing their own knowledge and experience. In addition to the luxury of not having to be alone in the creation process, that is, of having the opportunity to talk and get feedback, I think that the fact there was a budget that covered not only our fees but also all travel production costs

was of great importance to us. Finally, the workshops with Jasna Zmak, Ana Dubljević and Viktorija Ilić, as well as the exchange with Kristina Lelovac, openly transmitted knowledge that often went beyond the scope of what we were working on. I don't doubt that these are privileges that very few members of the independent scene have or are able to enjoy. So, it's even

BASIC working conditions

more disappointing to have been faced with circumstances that, despite the excellent starting point, were able to undermine the creative process from both the outside and the inside, and made it harder to manage the work process and how resources were allocated. Still, I view this clash (which the Platform can do very little about, and yet which directly affects its work) as an incentive for seeking personal responsibility in the given circumstances which, apart from calling for compromise and placing the responsibility on others, demand that I take initiative in finding expression (again) in art and political activism. In order to inspire some kind of change, it seems to me that what we need is a clear definition and insistence on common denominators and minimum working conditions, which would take the place of the ever-increasing segmentation based on irrelevant criteria between groups and individuals within the independent scene as a whole.

**Monika:** This collaboration was, in a way, my first brush with the independent scene. What I can do from this position is share my impressions on the process from beginning to end, including the collaboration with a platform that offered very tangible and satisfactory work conditions and a solid foundation for creative freedom (that we're always asking and will ask for), which ultimately allowed us to create a performance together.

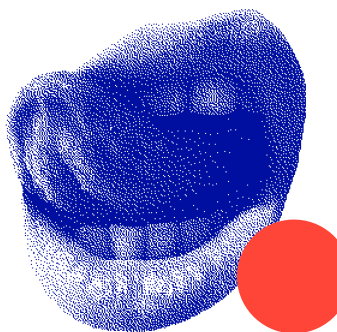
There was complete transparency from the very start, and we had direct insights into the resources that were available to us — budget, fees, production. But perhaps the most important of all, there was complete and selfless support that bolstered us through the entire process, as well as open

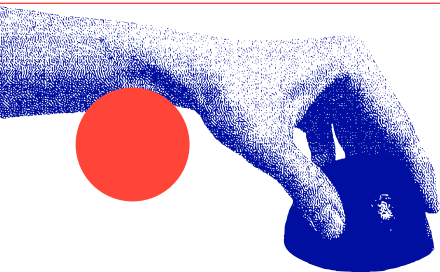


collaboration and friendship. We also had access to workshops with Jasna Zmak, Viktorija Ilioska, Ana Dubljevik, as well as a creative mini-feedback workshop with Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski, all of which I consider to have been instrumental for deciding on the direction the performance was taking in certain moments, and to how we ultimately put it together. Undoubtedly, this was all boosted by the internal, continuous collaboration with Kristina Lelovac and Viktorija Ilioska, and the tenderness and care with which they approached the transformations that we brought to life and experienced both on and off the stage. At the very end, we had the opportunity to collaborate with a team of wonderful people who helped us complete this performance and then stage it for others to see.

But, I view this process as a complete transformation. So what that means is that, like any other transformation, this one also became messy at times. Our creative work was in fact taking place in circumstances that are singular within the independent scene. The

uncertainty surrounding the question of whether and how far any cooperation with (potential) external collaborators and institutions could go was evident. I can say that I felt, to an extent, the insecurity often experienced from within the independent scene, and also resignation (and even surrender) to the dysfunctional micro-dynamics of this organism. Yet, at the same time, I would feel the desire to fight the fight for better conditions within the independent scene that has been going on for so long that it seems at times like its embers are always stoked, in wait for better wind and a better season. But I believe that those very same conditions and circumstances in which the independent scene exists might be the very thing that encourages independent artists to be even more persistent in their actions, organization, and struggle.





**Gracija:** It was my first time working in the independent performing art scene. Yet, I found that some of the experiences are comparable to expe-

riences from other independent sectors in culture (like my native literary scene). So taking this into account, I can confidently say that when it comes to funding, institutional support, as well as technical and expert support, the independent culture scene in Macedonia as a whole is pretty much left to fend for itself.

The challenges we faced at the beginning stages of the development of the performance were related to finding a space to perform in, and then a space where we could hold regular rehearsals once we finally secured it. Another challenge was the fact that we had to do many things on our own in this space, so we often had to improvise — sometimes because of the lack of staff, other times due to the institutions we collaborated with being unaccommodating or poorly organized.

Here, I don't want to imply that nothing is right in the Macedonian independent scene. On the contrary. There are people, collectives, organizations, and institutions that counter-balance the chaos that makes working as a part of this scene challenging. And, of course, crucial for any creative process, there are friendly ties that imply there's a willingness to jump in at the last minute and help whenever a particular role or expertise is needed, something that makes all the difference when you're in an uncertain work environment.

This is where I think the Rehearsing Feminist Futures 2.0 platform, which supported us in realizing this performance, fits in. I'm certain that our project's development process would have been much more difficult and uncertain had we not had the help of Kika Lelovac and Viki Ilioska, our supporting collaborators, who assembled a team of extraordinary women — Jasna Zmak, Ana Dubljevik,

Biljana Tanurovska Kjulavkovski — with whom we had workshops throughout the entire process. So I think what's essential when we're creating something as a collective is to know to seek help when necessary (and to trust that we'll receive it) and to support each other when we become disheartened and when the road ahead seems hard (while, in fact, that's just one of those moments when the desire to create something new and beautiful transforms into anxiety). We had all this, and it was something completely different from how things in the independent scene usually unfold.

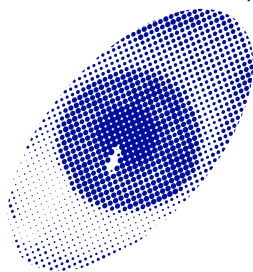
**Veronika:** As an author that comes from the independent-dependent scene, I'm always ready to participate in creating the conditions in which things could work. I believe and I know that things can be different, much different, and that's precisely what Tiiiit! Inc.'s Platform does. 'Independent scene' doesn't mean there's less effort, it means there's a commitment towards the idea to create something autonomously. I know that the circumstances can be a constraint, but never an obstacle. The support we got in the process was transparent, honest, and unconditional. I was most happy about the fact that we had, or I had, endless creative freedom, technical assistance, and constant communication that was invaluable to our work. Working with Tiiiit! Inc. demonstrated that a platform like this is sorely needed, one that cheers and encourages, stimulates creativity, connects authors from different disciplines and creates opportunities for future collaboration for many other creative projects. It's what any scene needs.



## WHAT DID THIS PROCESS TRANSFORM IN US?

**Katerina:** The biggest change I feel has to do with the opportunities for this type of collective work in the current state of the cultural scene in Skopje. For me, the whole process was a hot slap to the face that made me aware of the rigid conditions in which people work in the independent scene, and which have a direct impact not only on the quality, but more importantly, on the way we create and build relationships with each other. I think that the main change that I feel in myself after experiencing this process is that I now have a better, clearer definition in terms of the conditions in which I want to work or think that a certain activity should be realized, and the extent to which I consider personal sacrifice due to external circumstances to be justified. For me, the creation of a different practice in art begins with being relentless in breaking the typical and widely accepted matrix of exploitation because that is the only type of practice that allows us to keep our word and to put being human at the center of our preoccupation.

**Monika:** First and foremost, it transformed a part of me; it tamed and quieted this fear I have — of the weight of space between ME and another's gaze. This was a step I never thought I'd take, so, for me, this personal win is where all the branches of this collaboration (both internal and external) converge. And yet, it also changed my gaze, and some, perhaps, naive, hopeful expectations I had about the process by default, based on the nature of the open call itself, that it would manifest into the freedom we all seem to search for. I think the key will always be mutual respect, solidarity, and empathy, but also understanding the challenges and seeing the circumstances for what they are. So maybe we can start there to finally hug each other in our mutual fight for a better feminist future.



**Gracija:** This process changed a lot in me. Part of it had to do with my relationship with work and with practicing greater discipline and committing myself more to the evolution of creative ideas. It gave me a new perspective on how collective work can look like — it showed me how challenging it can be, how susceptible to conflict, but also that, in order for the collective to work, we have to respect and listen to each other, above all. I realized that ideas — like humans — need space to evolve, make mistakes, be genius, but also be accountable for their own actions and the relationships they build with others. I also value the realization that a creative process, in its principle, can always arise out of a dead-end, if we allow enough room for the flow of ideas, but at the same time know when to say that's it, to know when to put a stop. And one of the most important things that changed within me is a kind of liberation when it comes to my presence on stage. This process gave me the opportunity to examine and push my own limits of how much and in what way I can be present on stage. I realized that a performance space, which is often a space of exposure and vulnerability, can also transform into a space of power, when we manage to reconnect with our experience of pleasure and play in the story that we have been creating for months.

solidarity and empathy

**Veronika:** I wouldn't say changed, but improved. A way of creating new methods. That makes change inevitable on its own. It happened spontaneously.

**Jasmina:** My relationship with my body and stage presence, above all. After reading "Eleonore the Cat", the first impulse I had, that came from my learned practice of preparing a role, was to plan everything in detail and urgently start intensive physical exercise to get my body in prime condition, with a particular fixation on "I was biting my toenails, ALL OF THEM". Fortunately, our non-standard approach offered me the freedom to attempt new, unconventional

methods of how something can be presented from a variety of practices. The support I got from Viktorija Ilioska also held a lot of significance for me, as well as our quest after what it means to “embody,” without structure, without an end goal or result, to allow the interpretation to happen to you in a state of constant transformation.

The ease with which Monika and Gracija took to the stage for the first time ever and performed their “work,” intuitively playing with text, and props, and space while remaining aware of each and every one of us on the stage irrevocably changed how I perceive what it means to be totally, unassumingly, unencumbered, yet meaningfully present on stage. The stage doesn’t need a body that has undergone a regime of intensive physical exercise, only a body that accepts itself and knows how to be present.

## IF WE COULD SINGLE OUT ONE THING THAT EXCEEDED OUR EXPECTATIONS IN A POSITIVE WAY, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

**Gracija:** To be honest, everything exceeded my expectations, which is my reason for diving into something new without even knowing what to expect. I’m happy I got to witness and experience the alchemy of creating our final work — despite the numerous challenges. I loved and valued being able to work with our supporting collaborators Kika Lelovac and Viktorija Ilioska, as well as the opportunity to learn from the girls who were part of my collective in the process, and I was ecstatic to observe the buzz the performance created, which only shows that there is interest for something new and experimental within our scene.

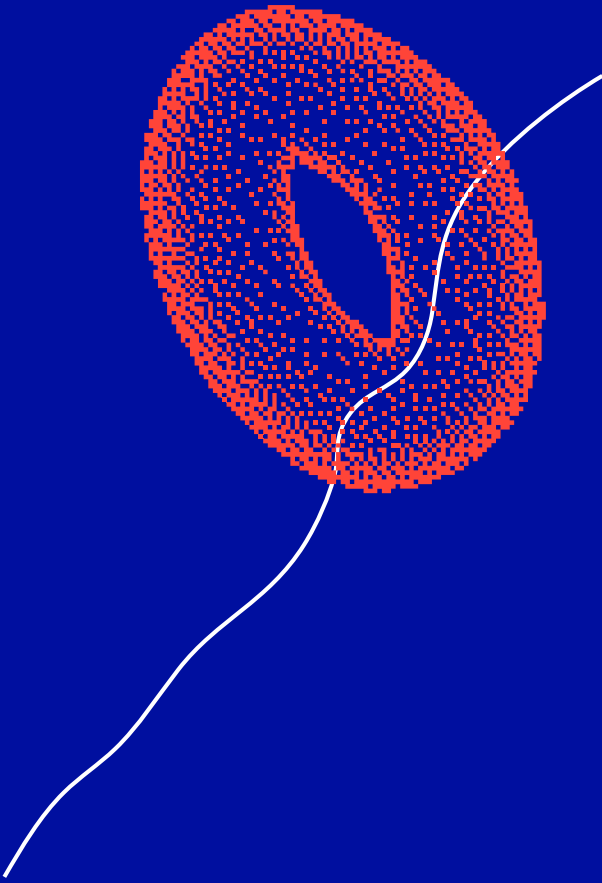
**Veronika:** The ability to find solutions for the functioning of each segment in the process.

**Katerina:** I was very pleasantly surprised by the feedback process with Kika Lelovac and Viki Ilioska. In my view, their role was key in our ability to find



my toenails, ALL OF THEM





**A MANIFESTO  
FOR/OF CHANGE/  
ELEVATE YOUR  
VIBRATIONS**

A manifesto  
for/of change/  
elevate your  
vibrations



I was dreaming.

There are transformations aplenty. If we were to stop at only one definition, we would be fooling ourselves.

Wandering through the grass,  
I hear insects, humming, buzzing,  
I push my face into knee-high  
grass,  
It tickles me.

Transformations are points, pauses, processes within processes, marking places from where One could reconsider evolution

The trembling spores in the ground  
They give me  
Good vibrations,  
They lift me up  
Vertebra by vertebra;

A being is not its appearance. The desire to greedily rub your face against the thorns in the garden is stronger than reason.

.  
The garden is calling for play.  
Hairballs roll across the stalks of grass.

.  
I'm now touching  
A Fir tree;  
The pins are so hard and  
delicate,  
Resin is seeping out of my ears,  
Everything is so beautiful.

.  
We already contain the airy cells of bird bones, the rudiments of thought from the ends of cat tails, the tender love of bonobo monkeys, the hardness of nails from turtle shells, the raw love of snowfall, the firm defiance of snowdrops and the first hyacinths, the butterfly wings in our shoulder blades.

•  
Only red is missing.  
The berries and flowers  
everything is  
yellow or  
blue  
or  
grey  
or grey  
ey.

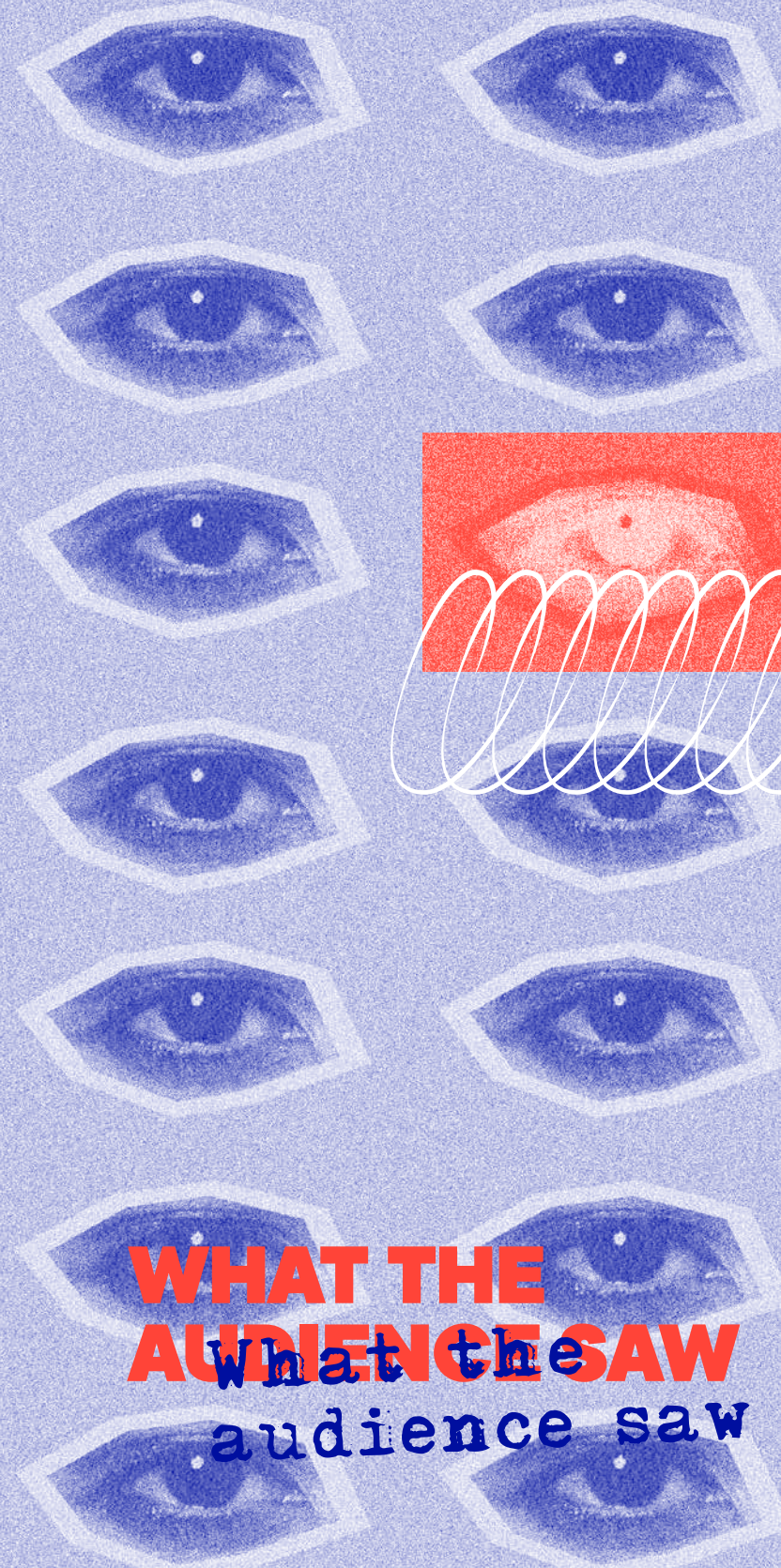
•  
•  
•  
I love this sound.

•  
Everything is as it should be,  
And everything could be something else.

•  
Change is all around us, in us. It is the  
foundation of life.

Funny  
How quickly the clouds  
Pass.

\* The text — part of the “Eleonore the Cat” performance — is an amalgamation of an original work by Gracija Atanasovska and parts taken either verbatim or adapted from the monodrama “Eleonore the Cat” by Caren Jess.



**WHAT THE**  
**AUDIENCE SAW**  
What the  
audience saw

“Eleonore the Cat” is a performance that speaks to me on several levels, of which I’ll single out three: performativity, the work process through which the performance is realized, and the third is related to the problem question that the performance works on.

They are all intertwined, in dialogue with each other and with me, and they are constituted through transformation, which is in itself a problem question.

The first perspective, or performativity is brought into being through its own transformation from one discipline to another, softening their borders and rules, i.e. the canonical principles that are known to us, and in which we’re comfortable, to pull us out of this comfort zone while it transforms itself from a theater piece into a “lecture performance,” and then transforms back, only to change course to more closely resemble a dance performance, and then a visual performance, an installation, and so on. It cuts through the norms of the modernistic disciplinary fields of performativity to encroach on the intersection, conquering the liminal field in between where it then proceeds to build the field of the performative.

The second perspective has to do with how it’s performed or who performs it and what was the work process through which what we are able to observe in the performance itself came to be. This perspective is also related to the transformation, which morphs the vertical of production, as it’s not something that would be possible to produce through any clear-cut, determined, and already familiar process, work task, and role. That the performance had to undergo this transformation is evident on the stage.

The process unfolds through a collective sharing based on feminist principles, that is — the redistribution of power and roles, the reassessment of roles and designated responsibilities, the redefining of canonized skills or knowledge that the scene is marked with (everyone’s on stage, there isn’t someone in the lead role while another is on the periphery as determined by the text, there is no director who decides what happens, as the canons of theatrical production typically prescribe, etc.) (Do you have to be small, fast, and agile to be Eleonore the Cat, or are not all cats the same? Or, do you have to be a performer



to be on stage, or can a collectively created stage allow for the development of different kinds of performing roles?) All of the performers interact with each other on stage, each with her own particularities, complementing each other

as authors, one who is an actress, two others who work with literary and theoretical texts, and the remaining two with scenography and visual materials. In the process, they unite their particularities, in such a way that no one person's individual "characteristics" stand out, but are, instead, intertwined and complement each other, and this process is contained in the collaboration itself, which is what allows for the extension of knowledge and roles through collective distribution, on and off stage.

And the third perspective is related to the problem question of this performance, as much a part of the text as any of the other interwoven references, and that is the issue of transformation. In it, we converge or move, we become something else unknown or unknowable. As such, transformation is never pleasant; no matter how much it is desired, it is always accompanied by mistrust, misunderstanding, disapproval from others, lack of support, and a failure to understand our need to step out of the position we are in. And that is why transformation is always hard, painful, and inconvenient, even when it's desired. This performance talks about gender, professional, stage, societal, production-related, collaborative, personal, sexual, feminist, and other types of transformations, all of which are hardly talked about on our performing arts stage. Thus, embodying these three perspectives of dialogue, this performance speaks to me about all of these transformations and more, and also about the courage of this collective to go through them, while performing, working and problematizing.

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**Biljana Tanurovska  
Kjulavkovski, cultural worker,  
curator, and researcher**

“Eleonore the Cat” is an exceptional opportunity to see women on stage, as part of a collective performance, that are different in all but one thing. They are different in their expressions, they look different, they have different professions, different pursuits, but in one thing they are the same... they are all going through a transformation in which they discard everything familiar to them. And it’s not just them. The very space in which the performance unfolds — the lights, the props used, the video art that plays in the background, the space of the stage itself — in which actions and timelines continuously overlap — all of this is different from what we usually get to see. The light does not conceal, but emphasize the differences in their physical appearance. The props are not just objects for them to fill their hands with, but dramaturgical connections. Instead of aiming for clarity and image precision, the videos playing on the screen overwhelm the space. I can’t wait to see where it goes next.

### **Simona Spirovska, actress**

The choice to stage a monodrama with a multitude of co-author voices and select quotations is multifaceted. The performance opens primarily interested in bodily transformation, but with the introduction starting with Preciado (whose text is coincidentally but appropriately titled “Can the Monster Speak?”), it expands its interest to include identity transformations as well. Eleonore is not only a cat in her corporeality, but she’s also a new identity in the making, which we discover through her inner monologue in therapy and the way she thinks about herself and her position, about her mother, her work, and her current worldview. Preciado writes about the body in transition as a mysterious and exotic place that the colonizer (psychoanalysis) tries to conquer; a remote wilderness to be tamed or a landscape to be framed within a set of predetermined boundaries. The co-authors point out that the “multiplication of voices and bodies in the performance can be interpreted from a queer perspective,” hence their decision to leave excerpts from Preciado’s text to be read and performed by the audience.

In fact, the entire monodrama can be interpreted as a story of queer transformation. Eleonore's transformation into a cat is a radical act that the therapist isn't able to cope with. The story focuses on an identity in search of a way out of the frame of the scientific and moral categories. But really, why a cat? Wildbruch does not reach a conclusion in the monodrama. He simply exits the story without answering this question and tells Eleonore to contact him if she ever needs him (Eleonore, of course, never contacts him again). This reflects Wildbruch's inability to deal with such a radically alien act, in the sense that he isn't able to successfully pathologize Eleonore's transformation and declare it unnatural because the framework in which he is taught to work, one where he presides over passive objects of observation, simply doesn't work here.

\*\*\*

What I found most interesting in the analysis of this performance and the monodrama as its basis is the exploration of the existing epistemological apparatus and the potential of language to pathologize diversity as "abnormal" and "unnatural" just because it doesn't fit the hetero-patriarchal, binary, and reproductive logic.

At the same time, language has the potential to create resistance to this pathologization. At one point, we learn what Eleonore thinks about "the power of language to create images, or construct reality," which Wildbruch skeptically finds to be just an interesting philosophical way of thinking. For him, Eleonore is just another psychoanalytic object, but for us, the audience, she is a subject that we follow and understand in her transformation. In the performance, we experience her identities on three different levels: the first is gestural, which is largely built through physical improvisation; the second is psychological, constructed as an internal monologue in conversation with the therapist; and the third is a video-confession that represents Eleonore's identity before the

transformation process has begun. Two of the performers alternately establish Wildbruch's voice as a distant echo of the regime from which Eleonore is searching for a way out. Eleonore also finds a literal exit towards the end of the play, when we watch her sneak out (and take us with her) through the cat flap that leads from the room into the garden.

To this I would also add that if the future means imagining feminist utopias, constructing identities by wallowing in a garden full of wildflowers and clumps of wool, rolling around in the moonlight and gazing at passing clouds, then that is a future worth rehearsing.

### ***Darko Aleksovski, artist***


There is no practical way to tell the world, or at least your immediate environment that you've decided to stop participating in the collective farce we call "normal." There is no way to control the reactions of the world to those kinds of decisions, especially not when we need to fight to protect ourselves from its attempts to control us.

I have yet to meet a person who didn't have to fight the world so she can live according to her own decree, led by her own desires, to maintain the right to be the sole authority of her own wellbeing.

**All of us who know that our inner worlds are more strange and wondrous than what we see around us also know how absurd it is to find that when you allow yourself to transform into your freest and most truthful form, the world looks at you with disbelief, anger, and sometimes even disgust or derision.**


But, the performance "Eleonore the Cat" and the interventions made by the collective in the original text (for the purposes of their performance) helped validate my choice to stop entertaining those reactions. I experienced





their insistence on the messiness of transformation as permission to rely on the comedy I often find in that process and, even more importantly, to remain dignified and confident in the discomfort, awkwardness, and clumsiness that mark the early stages of the transformation process. To stop talking in plural when I'm talking about myself, and to even stop talking altogether — and simply be. To let the only rebellion against the “normal” be my liberated, reborn body.

***Klelija Zivkovic,  
transdisciplinary designer***



Very adequately and functionally selected material to fit the research, process, and effect of the performance “Eleonore the Cat”, especially the monodrama itself, which openly and brazenly asserts the topic of conscious, self-willed transformation as a response to the transformations cruelly imposed by life. The part that comments on the prejudice towards acting (theatrical) transformations is particularly interesting. What should an actress who plays a cat look like? Does she have to be young, petite, supple, energetic, and endlessly sprightly? Would the transformation be perceived as unsuccessful if she didn't have these pre-enforced attributes? Certainly not — first of all, there are also old, big, clumsy, and lazy cats out there. As a proud mother of three and grandmother of sixteen, I can attest to that. But that's not even important. Because to transform doesn't mean that you have to physically change. Transformation happens within — in feelings, in the senses, in thoughts; in the way we perceive ourselves, others, the world; in the way we act and react — and not in tails, whiskers, or ears.

***Aleksandra Boshkovska,  
actress and theater scholar***

I perceive my cat as not always awake; in the collective body, maybe even unconscious. The performance raised many questions for me: why is it that women so often opt out of public and loud disagreements and of speaking their mind? Why do I allow myself to fade into the opinions of the general public; why do I confine myself in things



# MUSINGS BY THE SUPPORTING COLLABORATORS OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS

Musings by the  
supporting  
collaborators of  
the creative process

*The garden is calling for play.*

We were dreaming of finding each other, of finding each in the other.

As we were heading to the garden, comrade Angela said — Collectives are the places where we find reservoirs of hope and optimism.

We feared we were in search of something that didn't exist. We wished the search would create it.

Our palms were wide open. Our hearts full.

We didn't know we'd fall in love at first sight. We didn't know anything; it was our first time.

We only made sure that, when we  
fell, we fell into each other's arms.  
Still, sometimes it hurt.  
We healed together.

Then, at last, when we saw *hairballs rolling through the stalks of grass*, comrade Angela said — Collectives are the places where we find reservoirs of hope and optimism.

\* "It is in collectivities that we find reservoirs of hope and optimism." Angela Y. Davis, *Freedom is a Constant Struggle*

***Kristina Lelovac, actress,  
performer and curator***

I *caught* them at the beginning, somewhere between the text and the stage. That's how we worked too, between conversations and movement, on the table, beside the table, on stage. In three languages, maybe four, between Serbo-Croatian, Macedonian, and English. I offered psychodrama, which helped us orient ourselves in the relations that were just beginning to blossom, and then the relations between and inside of them, between and in the source material. Working with the girls reminded me how delicate every collaboration is, how much attention every process demands, how fragile creativity is, and how special it is to be a collective.

## **Jasna Zmak, writer, dramatist and psychodrama therapist**

On October 5th, I sent the girls my first email to schedule a meeting and to announce the work schedule. I finished the email with a quote from Octavia E. Butler:

We can,

Each of us,

Do the impossible

As Long as we can convince ourselves

**That it has been done before.\***

A minute after sending the email, it already seemed pretentious, and I wondered why I felt the need to send them that exact quote. Now, after two months spent together, I know that we first had to convince ourselves of the existence of the collective in order to do the impossible. Collectives are a rare occurrence in our scene, precisely because of the conditions we have to endure, conditions that are much more likely to divide us, tear us apart, leave us on our own. Eleonore the cat wanted to escape them, thereby defying norms and standards so she could leave *them* on their own.

To accept to work in a collective requires a different type of closeness, of proximity, which, in the end, taught us how

to fall in love with the dirt under our fingers instead of the finished product. To lean into the pleasure of the hours passed in research on how to put the artistic work to work.

\* Octavia E. Butler, *Parable of the Talents*

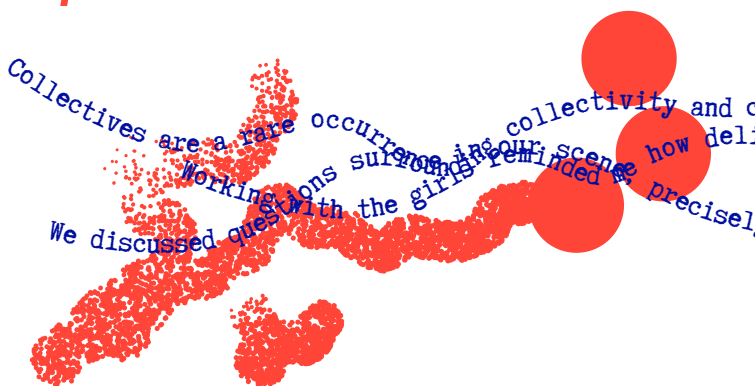
## **Viktorija Ilioska, choreographer and performer**

Seven days after the premiere, we spent a couple of days reflecting on the individual experiences concerning the collective creative process. We discussed questions surrounding collectivity and collaboration, we went through the methodologies of work, we searched for the values distilled in the work process and in the performance itself, and we thought about how, through the process of writing, we could open up to the audience everything that existed in the background of the performance, all the while daydreaming about the creation of this publication.

The questions that remained in my memory contain these words: differences, care, negotiations, work, inspiration, fatigue, learning, transformation.

When you touch the covers of this publication, you'll feel soft and gentle fur under your fingers.

## **Ana Dubljevik, performer and author in the field of dance, choreography and performance**



# MUSINGS BY COLLABORATORS

## Musings by collaborators

I often think about the production models that can work for independent theater production in Macedonia. In my work, I don't adhere to any strictly defined rules, allowing myself to experiment with, transform, and adapt the way I work. In my imagined production lab, "Eleonore the Cat" equated to discovering radium, it helped me uncover new perspectives on the authenticity of contemporary theater creation.

**The performer is within each of us!**

And even though most of the members of the team of co-authors and co-performers didn't have experience in performing, their honesty and commitment washed over everybody involved in the process like radiation, creating the core of a theater troupe able to work together unconditionally. There's no specific equation to this production model, but when there is chemistry, theater is like magic!

***Petar Antevski, producer***



Working on "Eleonore the Cat" is definitely one of the experiences I'll always remember. Not only because it was developed by a team of women, but also because of the skills of the video artist Veronika, who was able to make an art installation using an ordinary projector and a few sheets of Plexiglass. Although I joined the process at the very end, I have to say I learned a lot from it, and now I'm even more motivated to experiment and learn about the possibilities of creating video, as well as the different ways in which it can be presented. I'm really glad that I got to work with such wonderful people and I hope we get to work together again.

***Lea Dimitrova, video-editor***

At the very beginning I didn't exactly know how we would approach the performance. The challenge was great, and there was a lot of uncertainty up until the point where the performance actually started to take shape. The technicalities changed a lot, and thanks to all of those who worked on this project, the changes went into a positive direction. This was definitely a positive experience, in which there were a lot of lessons to be learned and new worldviews to experience, so I am thankful I got to be a part of the team.

**Goran Moskov,  
sound designer**

Collaborating with the girls was an enriching journey. It allowed me to use my creativity and technical skills to contribute to the visual telling of their story, which in the end became ours, collective.

Together, we created unforgettable experiences for the audience, and our synergy transcended the realm of the visual to contribute to the broader mission of promoting feminist values and fostering meaningful conversations through immersive artistic experiences.

**Ceyda Ibrahim,  
scenographer**

For a team to be creative, the first thing it needs to do is establish common ground between the members that allows them to feel free. While I joined the team at the last moment, and the atmosphere was already established; you could feel the zeal of creativity bordering on tension, a consequence of the impending premiere date and the desire for everything to go according to plan — which eventually it did.

**Aleksandar Jovanovski,  
theater director**

# ABOUT THE PLATFORM “REHEARSING FEMINIST FUTURES”

## About the Platform “Rehearsing Feminist Futures”

With the goal of supporting the fragile independent scene and contributing to the affirmation, feminist education, and development of local production in the field of contemporary performing arts, in 2021, Tiiiit! Inc. established the **Performing Arts Platform Rehearsing Feminist Futures**, under which through a process based on solidarity, support, and collective learning and collaboration, the Platform produced the authorial feminist performances “Shame”, by actress Angela Stojanovska, and “Jovano, Jovanke”, by dancer and choreographer Jovana Zajkova.

The development of the performance of “Eleonore The Cat”, realized through a system of constant and comprehensive support in the creative process and the production, was part of the Platform’s program for 2023, titled Rehearsing Feminist Futures 2.0.

The program was realized in collaboration with the Kultrening Programme established by LOKOMOTIVA — Centre for New Initiatives in Arts and Culture and International Theatre Festival MOT.

Its goal was to incentivize collective authorship in the field of the contemporary performing arts and to affirm association and community as a way, unique to the





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