

SLUM-TV

U BEOGRADU I NOVOM SADU

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Rad na *Reportaži mira* kreće uporedo sa početkom mračnog
perioda u Mathare naselju [Mathare, 25.04.2008.] /
The *Peace newsreel* gets underway at the fall of darkness
in Mathare [Mathare, 25.04.2008]

Fred Otieno, član SLUM-TVa snima *Reportažu mira*
[Mathare, 24.05.2008.] (strana 15) / Fred Otieno,
a SLUM-TV member films the *Peace newsreel*.
[Mathare, 24.05.2008] (page 15)

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SLUM-TV, ULIČNI TV U NAIROBIJU

SVE je počelo sa grupnom izložbom austrijskih umetnika u okviru projekta **Ekonomska klasa** u organizaciji *Alliance Francaise* u Nairobiju u martu 2006. godine. Različiti pogledi i stavovi grupe umetnika koji dolaze iz Beča (**Barbara Husar, Michael Lampert, Alexander Nikolić i Lukas Pusch**) i umetnika iz Nairobija, **Sama Hopkinsa**, susreli su se sa životima 500.000 stanovnika Mathare, siromašnog naselja u Nairobiju.

Rezultat je **SLUM-TV**, televizijski ulični projekat koji opisuje živote i identitete ovog grada u gradu, sa tačke koja je daleko od uobičajenog smisla zapadnjačkih sredstava informisanja i sa idejom upotrebe jeftine i osnovne tehnologije radi širenja iskustva, samo-naracije i razvoja samoodržive ekonomije.

Alexander Nikolić, umetnik poreklom iz Srbije, živi u Beču, uključen u kolektivne projekte u fizičkim i medijskim javnim prostorima, **Lukas Pusch**, umetnik iz Beča sa čvrstim političkim i kritičkim stavom i **Sam Hopkins**, umetnik iz Nairobija sa iskustvom u realizaciji participatornih radova (različitih formi i medija) u problematičnim lokalnim i prigradskim zajednicama, govore nam o rađanju i mogućem razvoju SLUM-TVa. Izložba u okviru *Alliance Francaise*, upoznavanje sa zajednicom Mathare uz pomoć Sama Hopkinsa, performans **Vienna Voodoo** Lukasa Puscha i dokumentacija **Izvođenje Vienna Voodoo** Alexandera Nikolića, sa idejom video-vodiča iz SLUM-TV projekta, datiraju iz proleća 2006. godine. Zahvaljujući kontaktu sa sportskom lokalnom omladinskom asocijacijom, *Mathare Youth Sports Association* (MYSA) i kulturnim ogrankom *Shootback*, u kome radi pet fotografa (među njima su Julius Mwelu i Fred Otienou koji su se uključili u izvođenje *Vienna Voodoo* performansa), projekat je sada spreman da počne.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:
Započela bih sa opisom istorije razvoja projekta. Kako ste se povezali sa Mathare zajednicom?

Alexander Nikolić:
Projekat *Ekonomska klasa* bio je prvi povod i način da se dođe do Nairobija. Ali sam od samog početka video ovaj projekat kao kompletni performans. Stvorili smo mogućnost da "iza zavese" realizujemo ono zbog čega smo došli. Godinama sam angažovan na radovima koji podrazumevaju duži vremenski period realizacije, koji učestvuju u proizvodnji



DJ Anthony i njegove kolege pripremaju ozvučenje za SLUM-TV [Mathare, 23.05.2008.]

DJ Anthony and his colleagues man the sound system for SLUM-TV [Mathare, 23.05.2008]

javnog prostora, pa sam i pre odlaska u Nairobi kontaktirao zanimljive ljude koji žive tamo. Sam Hopkins je bio naš prvi kontakt. Kada sam video njegov portfolio, bilo mi je jasno da želim da radim sa njim.

Uvek me je zanimalo problem arhiviranja, kako kreirati javne arhive, zatim piratski radio i TV. Znao sam da postoje radio stanice društvenih zajednica i planirao sam da radim nešto u polju medija. Zajedno sa Samom Hopkinsom pronašli smo osobu koja je sarađivala sa stanovnicima Mathare slama (slam – siromašna, prenaseljena oblast grada).

Sam Hopkins:

Moja veza sa Mathare zajednicom započela je u leto 2003. godine. Učestvovao sam u rezidenciji *Kuona Trust* (lokalna umetnička organizacija www.kuonatrust.org) koja je podrazumevala da deo učešća bude i javni rad. Slučajno sam upoznao Juliusa Mwelua, fotografa sa izraženim autorskim potencijalom i člana Omladinske sportske

asocijacije Mathare (MYSA). Preko Juliusa sam upoznao članove *Shootback* tima. Fotografinja, Amerikanka korejskog porekla, Lana Wong je formirala *Shootback* sredinom devedesetih kao odeljak za umetnost i kulturu u okviru MYSA-e. Godine 1998. objavili su *Shootback* samo-dokumentarni materijal o Mathare naselju. Danas su ovakvi projekti uobičajeni, ali mislim da je tada to bila sveža ideja i imala je snažan uticaj. U trenutku kada sam upoznao tim (5 godina kasnije) njihov uspeh je izbledeo i tim je gubio kako na motivaciji tako i na članovima. Mislio sam da bi bilo dobro istražiti mogućnosti fotografije, gde bi ona bila početna tačka a ne krajnji proizvod. Vodio sam projekat za šablon-grafite nekoliko nedelja, koji je doveo do produkcije ogromnog šablona (2-3 metra). Sa njim smo napravili grafit na zidu *Eastlight* kompleksa na rubu Mathare naselja. Vodio sam dosta umetničkih radionica za mlade i uvek sam bio oduševljen njihovom posvećenošću i pokazanim talentom.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Počevši od dokumentacije performansa Vienna Voodoo do produkcije video-vodiča u okviru SLUM-TVa da li nam možete reći nešto više o procesu stvaranja ove ulične televizije?

Lukas Pusch:

Tada sam prvi put putovao u Afriku. Pomislio sam da bi bilo dobro da iskoristim takvu poziciju. Pomislio sam: Budi šta jesi – belac, iz buržuske porodice, koji ne pomaže.

Kupio sam belo odelo i tako obučen prošetao kroz Mathare – najveće siromašno naselje u Nairobiju sa 500.000 stanovnika, koji žive bez kanalizacije, struje i vode. Želeo sam da upišem dve slike u jednu, nešto što su Polke i Kippenberger zvali *Kapitalistischer Realismus*.

Moja prva ideja je bila da napravim seriju fotografija kao deo *Vienna Voodoo* projekta. Kasnije smo Alex i ja odlučili da uključimo i video.

Tokom mog performansa, kada su me đaci videli u belom odelu, skočili su povikavši “Dobrodošli!” i “Hvala Vam što ste posetili naše odeljenje!” Dao sam deci slatkiše i dozvolio direktoru škole da mi pokaže vlažne učionice bez prozora. Posetili smo ilegalne *chang’aa* pivare na reci Nairobi, čija je alkoholna brlja često jedini izvor tečnosti i neretko dovodi do zavisnosti i stepila.

Ali došao sam u Afriku kao umetnik, a ne kao socijalni radnik. Želeo sam da pokažem dve reči u jednoj slici. Perspektiva se izmenila. Kapitalistički realizam. Realnosti su se spojile nasuprot normalnosti separacije, granica i zabranjenih zona. Meštani naselja bili su srećni kada su me videli u odelu. Nisu bili šokirani. Naprotiv, simbolizovao sam normalnost. U njihovoj realnosti svaki belac je bogat. Belo odelo odražavalo je poštovanje prema njima, a ne provokaciju. Naš pogled na Afriku ispunjen je sažaljenjem. Izgladnela deca. Rat. SIDA. Mi se ne pojavljujemo tamo izvan uloga *Samarićanin*, *Humanitarna pomoć*, *Doktori bez granica*, *Socijalni radnik*. Moj prijatelj, Herbert Langthaler, istražujući problem rasizma i imigracije došao je do zaključka da je ovakvo angažovanje dovelo ideju svedoka do kritičnog momenta.

Tokom snimanja Fred i Julius su nam rekli da su pre godinu dana učestvovali u nemačkom dokumentarnom filmu. Posle premijere



Kadar iz filma

Susedi gospodina Onyango: Gospodin Onyango

Gospodin Onyango živi u etnički izmešanom delu Mathare od 1969. godine. Tokom sukoba stanovnici su bežali iz ove oblasti jer su izgubili poverenje u svoje susede koji su pripadali drugim plemenima. Gospodin Onyango je odbio da napusti svoj dom i obrazlaže nam svoje razloge. [6 minuta, maj 2008. godina]

A still from the film

Mr. Onyango's neighbours: Mr. Onyango

Mr. Onyango has lived in an ethnically mixed part of Mathare since 1969. During the skirmishes people fled from his area as they no longer trusted their neighbours from different tribes. Mr. Onyango refused to leave his home and he tells us why. [6 minutes, May 2008]

filma bili su veoma tužni: jedna trećina učesnika umrla je u međuvremenu.

Onda smo dobili ideju da pokrenemo SLUM-TV. *Vienna Voodoo* prerastao je u kratki dokumentarni film sa brojnim intervjuima, bavio se problemima i perspektivama Mathare, postao je generalna proba za SLUM-TV.

Sam Hopkins:

Pomislio sam da je Lukas zainteresovan za kontekst/sredinu. Sigurnost je veliki problem, ali u Mathare sa ljudima iz MYSA-e uglavnom ste OK. Lokalni stanovnici su se do određene mere privikli na strance, koji lutaju naokolo i fotografišu. Odmah sam preporučio MYSA-u, Juliusa, Freda i druge članove *Shootbacka*. Performans je naišao na različite reakcije. Bio sam pomalo skeptičan. Ipak sam bio iznenađen reakcijama na koje je Lukas naišao. Bile su neverovatno različite: ljudi su se smejali kao da su razumeli besmislenost situacije, verovatno shvativši da je u suštini on performer; direktor polu-podrumske škole, koju smo posetili na spektakularan način se ulagivao ovom simbolu bogate i velike Evrope.

Dokumentujući performans, često sam uhvatio i Alexa. Kada sam kasnije posmatrao fotografije, začudio sam se u kojoj meri smo svi mi učestvovali u performansu. Naglašavanjem spektakla – belac u Mathareu, a ne samo dokumentovanjem bogatog belca, mislim da smo predstavili drugu sliku lokalnoj publici. Nije neuobičajeno da u toku posete visokih zvaničnika oni sami prošetaju kroz Mathare zarad medijskog izleta. Imao sam utisak da nas je lokalna zajednica videla na drugi način (iako nismo bili mnogo drugačiji), mada je to teško potvrditi.

Krenuvši od ovog iskustva ka SLUM-TV projektu, mislim da je moje glavno polje interesovanja postalo pitanje primarne i sekundarne publike. Pošto živim i radim u Keniji, akcenat sam stavio na primarnu publiku. SLUM-TV mora da ima smisla za MYSA-u, za članove *Shootbacka* sa kojima radimo i za publiku koja će pratiti projekcije. Postavili smo kriterijume: stvaranje mogućnosti za stanovnike Matharea da dokumentuju svoje živote, nasuprot nametnutom spoljašnjem sistemu vrednosti; značaj očuvanja dokumenta o životu u Mathare slamu; kreiranje digitalne arhive usmene istorije; organizovanje sigurnih projekcija noću – što bi bio izuzetak, pre nego praksa za Mathare. Ali duboko verujem da ne smemo da izgubimo iz vida lokalnu publiku i da odgovorimo na njihove potrebe. U suprotnom, ukoliko SLUM-TV postane još jedan slučaj kontrole sadržaja radi dobijanja interesantnog materijala za web platformu (sekundarnu publiku), onda osećam da bi projekat skrenuo u pravcu eksploatacije.

Alexander Nikolić:

Situacija i ljudi koje smo upoznali doprineli su da ovaj performans postane dokument(acija). Samu Hopkinsu, Fredu Otienu, Juliusu Mweluu i nama je postalo jasno da je rad sa medijima neizbežan za ovaj prostor. Ovde, u Mathare slamu to ima najviše smisla. Sve što me je dugo okupiralo (arhiva, mediji...) spojilo se u jedno.

Pokrenuli smo SLUM-TV. U Mathareu se za fudbal i američke blokbastere organizuju javne projekcije. Pomislili smo da je lako primeniti strategije ranih dana televizije u Evropi, gde je skoro svaka projekcija filma bila praćena emitovanjem vesti. Napravili smo i digitalnu arhivu radi očuvanja materijala i omogućili smo da se video-materijal *uploaduje*.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Do sada ste našli sredstva za opremu koju ste dali zajednici Mathare. Tu ste i boravili jedan period da biste ih uputili u procedure produkcije i distribucije. Kako planirate da razvijete SLUM-TV u budućnosti?

Alexander Nikolić:

Mislim da je budućnost otvorena. Prijatelji iz Ria (Brazil) koji su snimili film u faveli hoće da pokrenu sličan projekat. Takođe, razmišljamo o pokretanju audio-baze; jednostavnija je razmena mp3 fajlova – radio-emisija i audio-intervjua.

Lukas Pusch:

Ne možemo da kažemo kako će projekat stvarno funkcionisati... tako da planiramo sitne korake za početak: jednu tehničku radionicu; sakupljanje video-materijala od stanovnika Mathare jednom mesečno ili jednom nedeljno; javne projekcije u Mathare slamu; postavljanje na internet; eventualno povezivanje sa sličnim projektima u Brazilu ili Indiji.

Sam Hopkins:

Kao lokalnog partnera zanimaju me pre svega dugoročni planovi. Ali mislim da je razumno početi sa posmatranjem toka radionica i prvih projekcija, a ne sa petogodišnjim planom nečega što jedva da postoji. Ukoliko početak bude uspešan i ukoliko zaista postoji potencijal, onda ćemo morati da obezbedimo dodatne fondove ili da krenemo ka komercijalno-održivom TV-programu, koji bi se prodavao lokalnim televizijskim mrežama, paralelno sa javnim projekcijama.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Govorili ste o nameri da formirate, kako ste sami nazvali Kapitalistički realizam. Zanima me njegovo specifično/lokalno značenje, ali i mogućnost da se bez problema prevede u različite realnosti, ne samo u “ne-zapadnjačko” ili “ne-evropsko”. Kako bi funkcionisala ova konceptualna postavka?

Lukas Pusch:

Kapitalistischer Realismus je termin Sigmara Polkea i Gerharda Richtera iz šezdesetih i suprotstavlja se *Socijalističkom realizmu*... Kippenberger ga je takođe kasnije koristio po mom shvatanju da prikaže kapitalizam, ali bez podučavanja i moralizacije poput Brechta.

U projektu *Vienna Voodoo* pozirao sam ispred kamera u belom odelu... nisam kritikovao neke loše kapitaliste, već sam prikazao mene, nas kao deo istog sistema.

Alexander Nikolić:

U lokalnom kontekstu, Lukasov rad spaja već postojeće slojeve. Belo odelo

je uobičajena pojava u Nairobiju, jer reflektuje Sunce. Možete videti mnogo bogatih belaca u Nairobiju, ali ne i u Mathare slamu, znači funkcioniše pre svega na lokalnom nivou. Reakcija direktora škole, njegov poziv da posetimo i pregledamo njegovu školu, je dokaz da je performans funkcionisao i tamo. *Kapitalistički realizam* se može primeniti svuda. *Kapitalistički realizam* postoji sve dok postoji i *Socijalistički realizam* i bio je slika američkog načina života: reklame, muzički spotovi, Hollywood i ostala utopijska obećanja iz šezdesetih, kao i u novom veku – roboti preuzimaju poslove, nepotreban čovekov fizički rad, svet kao raj. Ja želim da *Kapitalistički realizam* pokaže ovaj raj.

Sam Hopkins:

Da budem iskren, ja nisam potpuno ubeđen ovakvom postavkom, i nisam siguran da bi trebalo. Deluje mi pomalo kao trik za publicitet koji je pomogao da se *Vienna Voodoo* prikaže nekoliko puta, ali da ima vrednost sredstva za reprezentaciju i komunikaciju sa šizofrenom prirodom realnosti gde bela odela stoje pored mrtvih, opljačkanih Kenijaca, pa nisam siguran.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Šta je subverzija i kako je umetnik sprovodi?

Lukas Pusch:

Ne postoji subverzija u umetnosti. Umetnost je buržujska. Umetnost ne može da promeni svet.

Alexander Nikolić:

Delimično se slažem sa Lukasom, ali subverzija postoji u umetnosti. Umetnost može da ima uticaj na percepciju sveta. Umetnost egzistira tamo gde normalnost ne postoji. Ali uloga umetnosti nije promena sveta.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Baveći se temom “savremeno” i postkolonijalnim teritorijama, razmišljam kako je Evropljanin konstruisao “sliku” Afrike, ne kao savremenu, već etničku, egzotičnu. Neka vrsta šik verzije, gde je Afrika veliki kontinent nastanjem crncima, sličan u svakom svom uglu, sačinjen od velikih, otvorenih prostora, gde su ljudi siromašni, ali srećni, ili nasilni bez konkretnog razloga. I retko se spominju velike metropole, lokalni život, kultura, umetnost i savremena realnost. Govorili ste o konstrukciji estetike koja bi šokirala evropsku belu publiku, koja je udaljena od svakog prototipa (takođe slike velikodušnog belca koji donosi pomoć i civilizuje siromašne, zahvalne crnce). Čini mi se da je jedan od ciljeva projekta da pokaže i drugu stranu slike Afrike kroz, kako ste spomenuli, “narativni dokument istorije”, često neizrečen ili nedokumentovan. Šta mislite o tome?

Alexander Nikolić:

Istorija je često napisana pod post-kolonijalnim uslovima. Usmena istorija je zanemarena. Vidim potencijal u razvoju naracije koja se susreće i podržava nelinearnu naraciju. Usmena istorija mora da uđe u vizuelnu kulturu. Naracija u pokretnoj slici.



Fred Otieno, James Njuguna and Saidi Hamisi snimaju u Mathare naselju. [Mathare, avgust 2007. godina]

Fred Otieno, James Njuguna and Saidi Hamisi filming in Mathare. [Mathare, August 2007]

Lukas Pusch:

Jedan od ciljeva SLUM-TVa mogao bi da bude i stvaranje usmene istorije Mathare naselja. Ostvaruje se kada meštani počnu da snimaju svoj život i da dobijaju veću pažnju.

Sam Hopkins:

Mislim da se slažem sa suštinom, ali ne i sa načinom na koji ste to rekli. Prvo, osporio bih suprotstavljanje “savremenog” sa “etničkim”. Etnički identitet još uvek ima snažnu ulogu u formiranju savremenog, urbanog identiteta Kenije, a i na celom kontinentu. Svedoci smo pobuna kojue su se desile u naselju Mathare na kraju prošle godine kada su se članovi *Mungiki* bande sukobili sa članovima rivalske *Taleban* bande kada je pobijeno mnogo ljudi. Julius je opisivao gomile mrtvih tela koje je viđao svakog dana. Članstvo u bandama je povezano sa etničkim identitetom. Pogledajte lokalnu politiku, ustrajno glasanje na osnovu pripadnosti, pogledajte ogromnu proslavu u pomen Mau Mau heroja, kao što je Dedan Kimathi, koja se organizuje samo zato što je Kimathi istog porekla kao sadašnja vlast. Ali se slažem sa tvojim zapažanjem “egzotične Afrike”, da zapadni svet razume Afriku kroz nekoliko veoma ograničenih stereotipa: siromašni i srećni, užasni ratovi, safari. Mada, podjednako je tačno da mnogi stanovnici Kenije, koji nisu

imali prilike da putuju, razumeju svet kroz podjednako ograničene stereotipe; bogati i velikodušni, bogati i surovi, itd.

I da, jedan od mojih ciljeva jeste da se pokaže lice Afrike koje ne potpada pod gore navedene stereotipe. Pošto su stereotipi često medijski proizvod, mi imamo priliku da ih izazovemo, preispitamo. Ali, takođe, mišljenja sam da ih sam gledalac projektuje na ponuđene slike. Gledanje jeste aktivan proces, pre nego pasivan prijem stimulusa koji prevodimo u podatke; ali neretko ljudi vide unapred očekivano. I tako primarna reakcija na slike Mathare naselja poseže za prethodno usvojenim stereotipima siromaštva i opasnosti. Nadam se da će sadržaj SLUM-TVa dodati sive nijanse u već postojeću crno-belu sliku. Možda i poneku boju.

Nisam siguran u kojoj meri, i da li će sam izgled SLUM-TVa odstupati od već postojećih formi reportaže. Istina je da će ih proizvoditi mladi iz Mathare slama čije se vizuelno obrazovanje razlikuje od našeg (Alexovog, Lukasovog i mog). Moramo da budemo svesni njihovih referenci, koju estetiku će pokušati da reprodukuju. Mislim da će internacionalni (američki) filmovi i televizija, pre svega muzičke televizije, snažno uticati na

vizuelni deo. Međutim, sadržaj će zavisiti od ličnih interesovanja. Mišljenja sam da se neće proizvoditi kultura u vakuumu - direktan kontakt sa svim postojećim vidovima reprezentacije postoji.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

O ovom projektu se može razgovarati i iz pozicije “umetnost novih medija”: za stanovnike Mathare naselja ste obezbedili fotoaparate, videokamere, kompjutere, opremu za audio/video produkciju i distribuciju. Sa druge strane verujem da snaga SLUM-TVa leži više u upotrebi veoma jeftinih i bazičnih tehnologija za medijaciju brzo proizvedenih samo-reprezentacija i samo-naracija, nego u teoretskoj argumentaciji novih medija. Kako vidite vašu poziciju u “miljeu novih medija”, koji se često fokusira na čistu tehnologiju i teoretski diskurs? Da li volite da vas određuju kao “umetnike novih medija”?

Alexander Nikolić:

Umetnost novih medija ne postoji.

Lukas Pusch:

Ne. SLUM-TV je socijalni medijski projekat. Nije umetnost. Ja ne verujem u socijalni romantizam Josefa Beuysa, “socijalnu skulpturu” i “svi su umetnici”.

Sam Hopkins:

Slažem se sa vama da se “novi mediji” često bave značenjima tehnologije, a ne upotrebom tehnologije. Na neki način, tehnologija podrazumeva samo-upotrebu. Mislim da smo u SLUM-TV projektu prvo odredili probleme, teme kojima bismo se bavili, a potom primenili odgovarajuću tehnologiju. Tehnologija nas vodi ka realizaciji ideje.

Ne opisujem sebe kao umetnika novih medija. Odluka koji medij koristim zavisi od rada planiranog za realizaciju. Ali novi mediji danas znače nove tehnologije, a to nisu moji radovi.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Kažete da ste umetnici zainteresovani više za proces nego za estetski produkt, uvek sa fokusom na političke slojeve prisutne u intervencijama u javnom prostoru i u kolaborativnoj praksi. Pre SLUM-TVa spomenuli smo projekte Under the bridge i Serious Pop. Da li biste mogli da mi kažete nešto više o procesu koji vas je doveo do realizacije ovih projekata?

Lukas Pusch:

Ovo se više odnosi na Alexa. Moja pozicija je nešto drugačija.

Alexander Nikolić:

Kao teoretičara, više me zanima proces. Mislim da umetničko delo mora da učini proces vidljivim. Kao umetnika, takođe me zanima i proizvod.

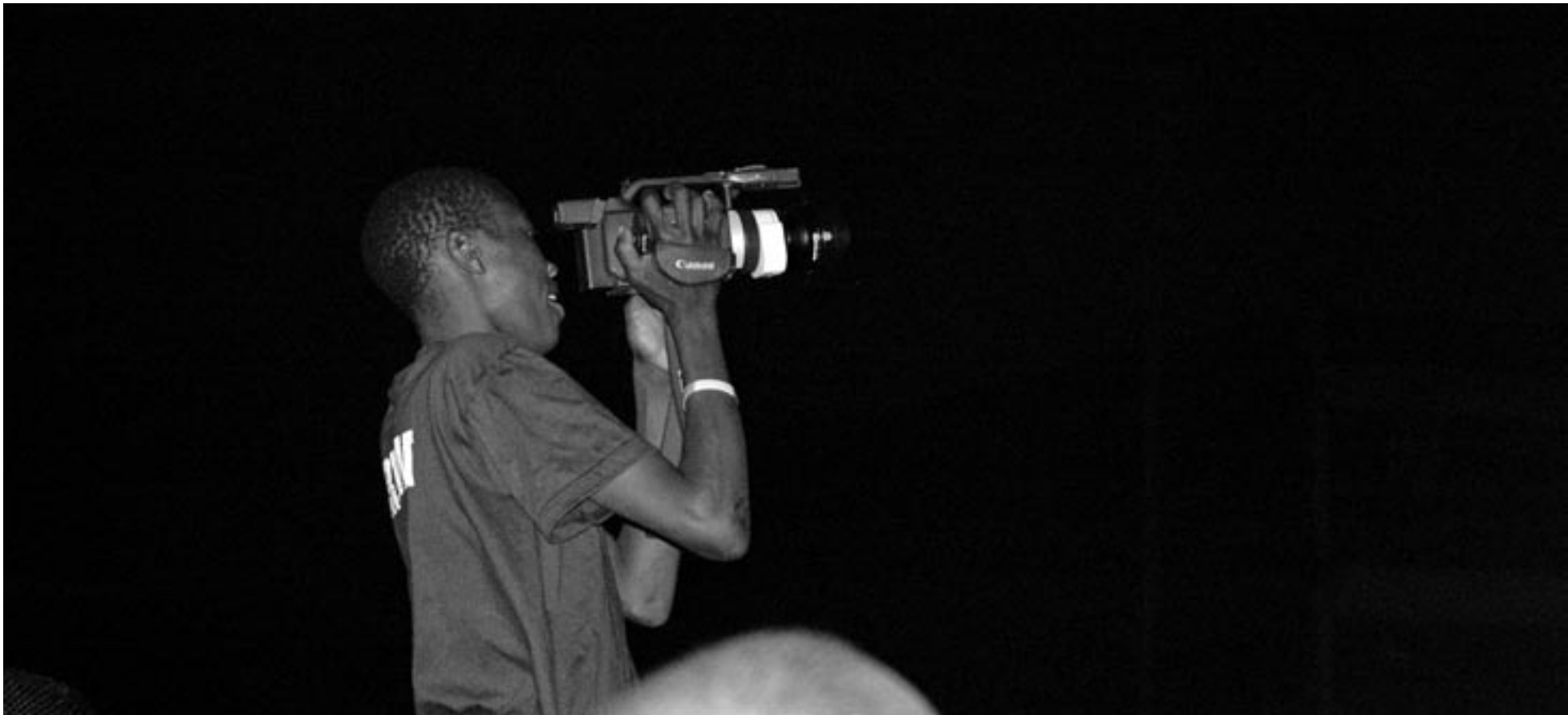
Serious Pop je bio istraživački projekat i bavio se prisvajanjem identiteta u jugoistočnoj Evropi, analizom uticaja umetnosti i muzike na pop-kulturu i formiranjem digitalne arhive na netu, sačinjene od muzike i tekstova muzičkih grupa povezanih sa raznim pokretima na pomenutoj teritoriji: muzičke grupe kao što su *Laibach*, *NSK* iz osamdesetih, ili *Darkwood Dub* iz Beograda tokom Miloševićevog režima devedesetih godina, kada su svirali ispred 100.000 demonstranata. Analizirala se uloga medija, uloga umetnika, paradoks postojanja umetnosti u uslovima (naizgled) nemogućim za njeno postojanje.

Under the bridge je serija intervencija u Beogradu tokom novembra 2004. godine. Poslednjeg dana nekoliko performansa je realizovano u ilegalnom naselju, ispod Gazele. Na tom području živi oko 2.000 ljudi, bez vode i struje i donekle postoji sličnost sa Mathare naseljem u Keniji. Jednog dana, uz dovoljnu finansijsku podršku, obezbedićemo potrebnu opremu za pokretanje ogranka SLUM-TVa u Beogradu.

Sam Hopkins:

Mene, takođe, više interesuje proces od proizvoda, ali ja verujem i u “produkciju” - ne u smislu “produkcija radi potrošnje”, već “stavljanje u formu”. Bolje sam razumeo sam proces kroz pronalaženje forme. Smatram da proces može da bude komplikovan za promišljanje i razumevanje ukoliko je bez forme.

RADNI NASLOV



Fred Otieno, član SLUM-TVa snima *Reportažu mira* [Mathare, 24.05.2008.]

Fred Otieno, a SLUM-TV member films the *Peace newsreel* [Mathare, 24.05.2008.]

POSLE godinu dana postojanja, a dve godine nakon rađanja ideje, SLUM-TV je zaista dobio na ubrzanju i postao šire priznat. Veoma uzbudljivo. Skoro svake nedelje primećujem da članovi razvijaju svoje sposobnosti, priče postaju bolje i pristižu nova sredstva.

Međutim, istovremeno sa pojavom ovakvog porasta, meni je sve teže da govorim o projektu; ne zbog gubljenja vere u ideju, već zbog konteksta “prodaje” ideje donatorima. Ove diskusije neizbežno kruže oko istih ključnih tema: “osposobljavanje mladih da uzmu pod kontrolu svoj život”, “kreiranje poslova u gradskim siromašnim prenaseljenim oblastima” i “davanje glasa ljudima koji ga nemaju”. To su izvanredni ciljevi, ali ja sam umoran od svođenja projekta na ove specifične termine.

Ovo je upozorenje ili poricanje, ili, možda, izgovor. U ovom članku neću prodavati projekat, neću Vam reći zašto je važan i neću pokušati da Vas ubedim. U stvari, uradiću suprotno, pričaću o izazovima koje treba savladati. Ovo jeste proces, a procesi podrazumevaju susretanje i prevazilaženje problema. Nadam se da ću uspeti da sagledam efekat nedavne političke krize na ulogu SLUM-TVa, osvrnuću se na svoj uticaj iz pozicije lokalnog koordinatora, i ukratko govoriti o dinamici odnosa sa učesnicima.

Početak 2008. godine bio je veoma nestabilan u Keniji. Nedavni rezultati izbora izazvali su sukob između opozicije i pozicije, činilo se da se kreće ka najgorem nasilju između različitih etničkih grupacija koji je nezabeležen još od perioda proglašenja nezavisnosti. Iz perspektive SLUM-TVa stvoren je kontekst koji nas je primorao da definišemo šta zapravo pokušavamo da uradimo. Od pozicije male, nezavisne, spontane, *grassroots*, medijske inicijative usredsređene na lokalna pitanja, odjednom smo locirani u sred najveće priče u internacionalnim medijima. Mathare, gde je i naše sedište, videlo je neke od najgorih oblika nasilja u Keniji.

Suočili smo se sa dilemom. Sa jedne strane zauzimali smo perfektnu poziciju za snimanje ekskluzivnog materijala, koji je nedostupan novinarima i za prikazivanje potpune priče o događajima u tom trenutku. Sa druge strane, svi novinari u Keniji su prikazivali nasilje, dok su priče o solidarnosti i pomoći između različitih etničkih grupa bile izostavljene.

Odluke smo saglasno donosili na sastancima koji su se održali u prvoj fazi. Od samog početka, skoro svi članovi su nepokolebljivo odlučili da će se izveštavati o događajima o kojima se, inače, nije govorilo. Iznova i iznova, članovi su govorili o “prikazivanju druge strane

priče”. Takva odluka je i donešena. Iako nismo mogli da organizujemo javne projekcije do aprila (Vlada je zabranila javna okupljanja) članovi su krenuli u prikupljanja priča o hrabrosti i uzajamnoj pomoći stanovnika slama, udaljivši se od klišeja “mahanje mačete urođenika”.

*Reportaža mira*¹ bio je krajnji rezultat. Javna projekcija organizovana je 25. maja 2008. godine i sastojala se iz priča kao što su *Susedi gospodina Onyanga* – priča o starosedeocu Matharea, koji je odbio da napusti etnički izmešan u oblast, gde su susedi izgubili međusobno poverenje, *Pričaj priču o miru* – priča o radionici na kojoj su proterani mladići pokušali da razjasne razloge takvih zbivanja. Skoro sve priče, odlukom članova, bavile su se pitanjem solidarnosti i spontanim pokušajima da se preskoči razdor u okviru zajednice. Pomagao sam im da postignu šta su namerili... da li sam?

Jedan od ključnih kriterijuma za vođenje projekta bio je da budem što više “neprimetan”. Vidim sebe kao osobu koja obezbeđuje neophodna sredstva za rad, koja otvara mogućnosti za članove; da obučavam i asistiram, ne da nadgledam i režiram. Ipak, realna opasnost po živote mladića i devojaka, ukoliko bi se našli na pogrešnom mestu u pogrešno vreme, naterala me je da preispitam svoju poziciju.

Pošto sam stariji od učesnika (uglavnom su svi u svojim ranim dvadesetim) i u poziciji inicijatora, značilo je da mi pripada velika odgovornost. Ukoliko je saglasnost cele grupe da se pokrивaju neredi, da se pride što bliže akciji, da li bi mi bilo prijatno? Da li bih dovodio članove u opasnost? Sa druge strane, svi učesnici su odrasli; čak je nekoliko članova pokrilo sukobe, snimilo ekskluzivan materijal za koje su ih strane novinarske kuće dobro platile.

Naravno, problem odgovornosti je praćen problemom odnosa moći. Koliko su “slobodne” odluke učesnika? Do kojih dimenzija nesvesno utičem na ishod sastanaka? Činjenica jeste da je saglasnost članova o pokrivanju “pozitivnih” priča odgovarala i meni. Iskreno, ovo je moj priželjkivani rezultat. Pitam se, da li sam nesvesno manipulisao učesnicima da dođu do ovakve odluke. Pa, ipak, osećao sam da sam veoma odgovorno vodio računa da budem nepristrasan na sastancima, da sam pokušavao da predstavim prednosti i mane svake moguće odluke, i da nisam dozvoljavao da moja osećanja budu primetna. Ipak, ljudi opažaju, stoga ne mogu da isključim mogućnost da sam nekako uticao na odluku grupe. Sa druge strane, da li bi cela grupa mladih, slobodoumnih muškaraca i žena dozvolila da njihove stavove poljuljaju neiskazane misli koordinatora?



Organizacija projekcije *Mir*
[Mathare 25.04.2008.]

Setting up for the *Peace* screening
[Mathare 25.04.2008]

Nemam odgovor. Pristupam sa svešću da ovo jeste mogućnost, da se trudim da budem što receptivniji i da prihvatim da je apsolutna nepristrasnost nemoguća. Takođe, čini mi se da bih se pozicionirao pomalo šticenički ukoliko bih očekivao njihovu samo-eksploataciju, pa čak iako su realno "ranjivi" u ovoj situaciji, i kao takvi mogli bi da dozvole da postanu žrtve neizbalansiranog odnosa moći. Problem eksploatacije je svojstven svim umetničkim participatornim projektima, ali mislim da je važno barem razmotriti mogućnost da i učesnici imaju svoj plan. Možda ovakva nastojanja nisu kolaboracija, već savezništvo, gde obe strane imaju uticaj na donošenje odluka i delanje u cilju promena.

Dobar primer kako je uloga "bez-uticajne osobe koja obezbeđuje neophodna sredstva za rad" kompromitovana pronalazi se u kontekstu savremene reportaže. Pa ipak, dok je u prethodnom primeru moja nepristrasnost, ukoliko postoji, podsvesna, ovde se radi o veoma svesnoj odluci. Reportaža predstavlja "uradi sam" kulturu. Ovo nije tema koju su sami članovi odabrali, već tema na koju su odreagovali. Ali jedan od osnovnih kriterijuma na

početku projekta jeste ne definisati sadržaj. Sa razvijenim kontekstom, većina participatornih medijskih organizacija uslovljava tematiku projekta, na primer: HIV, studije roda, voda, higijena. Želeli smo da se udaljimo od ovih "NVO estetika" i da ponudimo članovima kvalitetan kreativni doprinos sadržaju. Pa ipak, mi im određujemo temu. Zar se ne ponašamo isto kao i NVO koje smo omalovažavali?

"Uradi sam" kultura je široka tema i obuhvata toliko aspekata života u Mathare slamu, od kućne destilacije alkohola, preko piratskih bioskopa, cipela napravljenih od starih guma, da u suštini ne ograničava članove da se bave temama koje su u njihovom interesnom polju. Krićka razlika između "uradi sam" kulture i tema kao što su HIV i voda jeste da odiše pozitivnošću i naglašava snalažljivost i oštroumnost stanovnika slama, u suprotnosti sa dokumentacijom položaja HIV bolesnika i zagađenosti vode.

Možda su ove razlike samo kozmetika, a da glavna razlika leži samo u metodologiji; na određen način smo ograničili sadržaj. Mislim da je ovakva kritika ispravna, a za odgovor nudim da je to bila praktićna

odluka. Nemamo dovoljno sredstava, što utiće na motivaciju članova jer jedva možemo da ih platimo. Dobili smo narudžbinu da napravimo seriju kratkih filmova o "uradi sam" kulturi i činilo se kao dobra solucija. Nastavili bismo sa produkcijom i bili bismo u mogućnosti da isplatimo dobre honorare učesnicima. Opet se vraćam na učinak članova, mislim da bi postojao otpor da nije bilo njihove ambicioznosti. To nije bio slučaj, i ove reportaže su proizvele najviše sadržaja do sada!

Podsvesno ili svesno, bezuslovno ili eksplicitno, mislim da se uloga koordinatora ovakvog projekta uvek susreće sa problemima moći, manipulacije i eksploatacije. Problemi su neizbežni i mora se pregovarati sa kriterijumima koje ste Vi, kao inicijator, postavili. U isto vreme, pošto se govori o "procesu", neke situacije se ne mogu predvideti i kao reakcija na promenu konteksta neki kriterijumi se, možda, moraju preformulisati. Pragmatizam, pre nego kompromis, treba prihvatiti kao korisno sredstvo za radove bazirane na procesu.

Osećam da su problemi eksploatacije pre svega prisutni u početnoj fazi. Pošto

počinje da mi ponestaje snage za nastavak uloge inicijatora, očekivani nastavak bi trebalo da traje još sledeće dve godine: nadam se da će se nivo angažovanja učesnika povećati da bi nadomestilo moje odsustvo. Prateći tu logiku, možda će se puno učešće postići tek kada u potpunosti izađem iz projekta. Do tada, nadam se da ću moći da nastavim sa dosadašnjim radom kao i do sada; napredovati, susretati se sa problemima, pronalaziti rešenja od kojih neka funkcionišu, a neka ne. Za nove probleme isprobavamo nove pristupe u rešavanju, posmatramo njihov učinak, i tako dalje. Pomalo je kao šetnja kroz pejisaž, ali unazad - okruženje postaje jasno samo kroz napredak; i povremeno se sapletete na neočekivanu neravninu zemlje. Ali do sada smo uspeli da idemo napred. Otkriveni pejisaž bio je vredan povremenog saplitanja.

1 Bio sam odsutan veći deo vremena. Moja prijateljica i koleginica, Emily Hughes, koordinator projekta od sredine januara do sredine aprila, producirala je reportažu.

“You look as fucking pasha man! Roma and Blacks are carrying your colonial K.u.K. dreams”¹



Fred Otieno priprema javnu projekciju
[Mathare, 8.10.2007.]

Fred Otieno setting up the public screening
[Mathare, 8.10.2007]

KRENIMO od početka. Puno vremena pre nego što smo bili u mogućnosti da predstavimo naš projekat SLUM –TV u Novom Sadu i Beogradu, već je postojala slika o tome. Zahvaljujući komentaru Zampa di Leone, široki krug ljudi već je mislio da zna sa čim će biti suočen, ako prisustvuju našoj prezentaciji. Ali uključivanje ove slike ne predstavlja puki oportunizam, koji karakteriše vrstu starog pežorativnog marksističkog oportunizma², već drugu mogućnost, da se otvori jedno polje, interpretira ta slika i izvedu zaključci na scenu, koja proizvodi takve kritike, poput snajperske kritike, kako je opisuje Fahim Amir³... ili jeftinu, post-adolescentSKU kritiku, koja dolazi sa bezbedne skrivene pozicije. U svakom slučaju, sasvim sam saglasan sa Fahimom Amirom da je Zampa di Leone veoma zabavan i jedan od najinteresantnijih umetničkih i kulturnih kolektiva koji uzburkuju javnost na Balkanu, ali ovde, možda po prvi put, njegov strip nije uspeo da odgovori. Istina, zabavan je i inteligentan, ali je istinit poput srpskog vica da je Srbija u Africi.

Interesantna stvar ovde nije da li je Zampa u pravu niti čak da li je zabavan. Činjenica je da u toj slici ti nedostaješ. Da, ti! Svi mi eksploatišemo situaciju da je za

teoretičare trenutno interesantna tema/ objekat život u siromašnim delovima grada, bilo u Africi ili u tvom susedstvu. Prema mnogim poznatim teoretičarima, trenutno najinteresantnija tema ili objekat kojima su posvećeni jeste život u siromašnim četvrtima u Africi ili u tvom susedstvu. I svi smo saglasni u njihovoj eksploataciji.

Volim stripove Zampa di Leone, jer je povezan sa mojom aktivističkom i umetničkom praksom na vrlo dobar način. Beogradska Gazela, gde se odvijao finalni događaj *Under the Bridge* projekta 2004. godine, zaista je predstavljao novu startnu poziciju u mom aktivizmu. Tu smo, kao umetničko udruženje Biro, koje smo osnovali Vladan i Rena Jeremić i ja, pozvali celi Beograd da nam se pridruži na Gazeli, na završnom događaju *Under the Bridge*. Uz interdisciplinarni pristup, ostvarili smo našu misiju sasvim dobro. Iako smo većinom bili ignorisani od strane umetničkog establišmenta – umetnika i kustosa i dok su se lude priče i tračevi počeli širiti - da radimo za Nemačku tajnu službu, da je naš projekat finansirao *Friedrich Naumann Stiftung* - nekoliko stotina ljudi uživalo je u našem petodnevnom projektu. Nekoliko izbeglica

i Roma pozvalo nas je u njihove privremene kuće i rekli su nam kako smo prvi Srbi ili uopšte gosti koji su ih posetili, bez ikakvog razloga. A razlogom su smatrali da su obično jedini Srbi koji ih posećuju ili socijalni radnici i socijalna pomoć, dakle ljudi koju su tu sa jasnim zadatkom i koji odlaze što je brže moguće, ukoliko uopšte i dođu... Ne tvrdim da i mi nismo imali određenu nameru: imali smo sasvim određenu nameru, da se ušunjamo u javni prostor, da istražujemo, analiziramo i pokušamo da utičemo, ukoliko se dogodi da budu otvoreni prema novoj saradnji. Na žalost, nismo bili u mogućnosti da započnemo dugotrajnu saradnju, a i naša saradnja sa Biroom, takođe, se raspala. Uprkos tome, još uvek sam pokušavao da organizujem određeni vid intervencije, zajedno sa lokalnim stanovništvom naselja na Gazeli, ali neuspešno. Bilo je lakše privući studente sa klase profesora Marine Gržinić, Eduarda Freudmanna i Cana Gülcua⁴, da rade na Gazeli, nego da pronađemo saradnike u Srbiji.

Zampa u nama verovatno bi sada rekao da je lakše napraviti novac pokretanjem pitanja promene pola ili homoseksualnosti, nego osnaživanje manjina ili koristeći buržujsko angažovanje za prava homoseksualaca, koje

je bliže pitanjima koja interesuju vodeću klasu, zbog čega bi bili uspešniji. Logično, zar ne? U redu, vidimo da je organizovanje uspešne i mirne *Gay Pride* parade u Beogradu vizuelni urbani kod, koji lako može distribuirati, kako se tvrdi, da je srpsko društvo civilizovano, deli slične kulturne kodove i predstavlja logični deo svih društava koja održavaju *Gay Pride* parade u svojim glavnim gradovima. Ipak, kao i u bogatim društvima, ovo ne rešava sve probleme i nakon parade diskriminacija bi se, naravno, nastavila, na različitim nivoima, stimulišući javni diskurs na različitim nivoima. U svakom slučaju, slika bi bila dovoljna i lako iskomunicirana.

Sa druge strane, svi se sećate da je naselje na Gazeli trebalo da nestane pre održavanja prvenstva u košarci, tako da strance ne bi ometali uznemiravajući prizori. Ukupno osamdeset industrijskih kontejnera, koji su, takođe, zagađeni kao slika na različite načine, bili su spremni da posluže kao nove privremene lokacije za smeštaj, kada smo se suočili sa erupcijom tipičnog rasističkog nezadovoljstva od strane potencijalnih novih susedstava, što je bilo orkestrirano od strane Srpske radikalne stranke da sabotira solidarnost.



ALEX NIKOLIĆ



Nadležni lokalni političari odlučili su da ostave situaciju takva kakva je. Sramota takve slike bila bi mala, a pozitivna slika čiste Gazele nevažna. U stvari, ne postoji slika; prema nevladinoj organizaciji Roma postoji oko 150 nelegalnih naselja u Beogradu, tako da smo ostavljeni, uz promišljanje Slavoj Žižeka, sa konstatacijom da ništa proizvodi nešto. U mojim očima je tada snažna situacija mogla da bude dostižna, kroz zajednički proizveden *Prostor za umetničke rezidencije*, ispod mosta, sa učešćem lokalnog stanovništva i kroz završni događaj – tradicionalnu finsku saunu na reci Savi. Instalirana od strane Seppo Renvala, poznatog finskog umetnika, koji radi sa tradicionalnom kulturom, pronađenim recikliranim snimcima i materijalom i koji je predstavljao Finsku na Venecijanskom bijenalu 1999. godine i na Sao Paolo bijenalu 2002. godine⁵. Imati ovu veliku zvezdu i veliko ime - Seppo Renvala na našoj *underground* strani umetnosti i aktivizma, imalo bi ozbiljni uticaj na srpsku

medijsku scenu⁶. Zamislite da se prostor ispod mosta pretvori u tradicionalnu finsku saunu, tokom predstavljanja *mainstream* kulturnih događaja, koji se dešavaju tokom *Nordic Balkan Switch* projekata. Uglavnom, vlasti Grada Beograda nikada nisu odgovorile na predlog našeg projekta i zbog sopstvene problematične ekonomske situacije, nisam bio u mogućnosti da nastavim takav rad, niti da tražim nove saveznike.

Razlog zašto pišem tako dugačak uvod, bez trošenja previše reči još na SLUM-TV, jeste da je početak SLUM-TVa za mene bio jasan, da bi takav projekat bio dobro primljen i potreban i u Srbiji. Iako manjine imaju sopstvene medije ili su praktično bolje upoznate sa medijskom produkcijom nego u nekim zemljama Evropske unije, slike koje nedostaju o nehumanim uslovima u kojima žive, dokazuju još jednom da je to diskriminatorско društvo sa jakim klasnim granicama, koje implementira sve

poznate fenomene, poput pretpostavke da će oni koji su ranije bili diskriminисani najverovatnije diskriminисati one koji su danas ispod njih. SLUM-TV može da bude veoma korisna i da im pruži mogućnost da preuzmu u sopstvene ruke njihovo vizuelno predstavljanje i da dokumentuju svoju egzistenciju.

SLUM-TV je donirao visoko kvalitetnu kameru, laptop poslednje generacije za montažu, pružio informacije o digitalnom video montiranju, organizovao kancelariju, javna prikazivanja, filmske festivale, priprema dve internacionalne radionice – jednu o medijskom hakiranju i internet izdavaštvu, drugu o razvoju i implementaciji samorazvojnih *open –source* softvera. U saradnji sa *subvideom*, objavljuje materijal na adresi: <http://www.slum-tv.info/> gde su lokalne produkcije, takođe, delimično dostupne, kao javna arhiva usmene istorije. Sve se dešavalo i dešava se u Mathare slamu (Nairobi, Kenija), jednom od najvećih

i najgušće naseljenih siromašnih naselja na planeti od 2006. godine.

Od sredine 2007. godine, SLUM-TV je, zavisno od političkih okolnosti, potpuno operativan na niskom tehničkom nivou. Nastojimo da mesečno finansiramo produkciju dokumentarnih filmova o aktuelnim vestima i jednu TV seriju. SLUM-TV je formirao tim od oko petnaest do dvadeset osoba, koje su plaćene za posao koji rade i video materijal koji proizvode. Tokom naredne godine želimo proširiti našu publiku distribucijom dokumentarnih filmova o aktuelnim vestima i TV seriju preko afričkih piratskih kanala i da napravimo SLUM-TV Nairobi samoodrživim. U budućnosti želimo ponuditi saradnju širom sveta i poslati poziv različitim inicijativama da koriste naše digitalne arhive i softver koji smo razvili.

Kontaktirajte nas: info@slum-tv.org

1 Komentar Dr. Agan Papića / strip Zampa di Leone sa sajta <http://www.eroticunion.org>

2 Sezkin Boynik 2006: Učiti od podzemlja [*Learning from Underground*] <http://www.modukit.com/out/kakogod/index.php?id=92>

3 Fahim Amir: "Posmatrač je ostavljen zbunjen bilo da prihvati ovu snajpersku kritiku političke i estetske distinkcije, „dispozitiv“ (Foucault) kreativnog „autora“, njegov napad na definicijske svetionike, hermetične monopoliste, heroje i heroine umetničkog sveta ili da je odbaci kao jefitino post-adolescentско izrugivanje sa bezbedne skrivene pozicije, koja izravnuje sve bitne nijanse." (<http://www.metamute.org/en/node/11500> – Mute Magazine 2008)

4 Na adresi: <http://www.beogradgazeta.net/de/index.php> možete naručiti ovu knjigu i naći više informacija o izdanjima na srpskom, engleskom i romskom; Prof. Marina Gržinić predaje na klasi za Postkonceptualnu umetničku praksu na Akademiji Umetnosti u Beču. Austrija

5 Videti: http://www.drummy.com/v2/heavysnowflakes_bios.html

6 Ovde pišem o medijskoj, a ne umetničkoj sceni, jer verujem da recepcija umetničkog sveta nije previše važna. U redu, neki članci čine život verovatno lakšim, ali generalna publika je mnogo važnija.

VELIKA KOALICIJA

“Safari
Iz Wikipedije, slobodne enciklopedije

Safari (izgovor: /sə'fari/) je vrsta kopnenog putovanja. Termin se obično odnosi na turističko putovanje u Afriku, tredicionalno zbog lova na krupnu divljač, a u modernijim vremenima zbog posmatranja i fotografisanja krupne divljači i drugih živih bića u divljini. Ova reč asocira na izvesnu temu ili stil, koji uključuje oblačenje u odeću kaki boje, posebne prsluke i opasače, takozvane safari šešire i kožu divljih živorinja, kao što je, na primer, koža leoparda.”



Deo lokalnog obezbeđenja za SLUM-TV
[Mathare, 23.05.2008.]

Part of the local security team for SLUM-TV
[Mathare, 23.05.2008]

BAŠ je bio čudan osećaj dobiti poziv za pisanje teksta o SLUM-TV od Dušice Dražić, u propratnoj dokumentaciji potpisanoj kao “autorka projekta”. Kontaktirao sam Alexa Nikolića, koji je u skladu sa onim što sam znao bio autor projekta zajedno sa Lukasom Puschom i Samom Hopkinsom. Ideja “autorstva” nije nešto što sam inače povezivao sa SLUM-TV, jer sam znao za “participativne” i “kolaborativne” premise na kojima je zasnovan, i za želju njih trojice da radije budu u ulozi “inicijatora” nego “autora”. Na kraju je sve ispalo u redu, i postao sam karika u dugačkom lancu “autorstva” – ja ću biti “autor” teksta za projekat predstavljanja projekta čiji je “autor” Dušica, koji se bavi projektom čiji su “autori” Alex i Lucas i Sam i drugi za koje možda ne znam, a koji se bazira na ideji da bi “autori” video sadržaja trebali da budu stanovnici drugog najvećeg slama (vredi pogledati: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slum>) u Keniji. Kakva sam ja onda

vrsta “autora”, i u kakvom sam odnosu sa ljudima iz Matharea, koji snimaju ove video materijale i prikazuju ih u lokalnim bioskopima i na Internetu? I koliko je bitna ova pošast “autorstva” uopšte?

U nedostatku preciznije orijentacije, uradiću ono što kao prijatelj mogu – pretražiću neke pojmove i pokušaću da napravim neke (nadam se) smislene asocijacije povezane sa temom, nikada ne ispuštajući iz vida svoju, u svakom smislu reči, “spoljnu” i ličnu poziciju u odnosu na projekat... Dobro, šta ja znam o SLUM-TVu i slamu Mathare, kako uopšte mogu da doprinesem?

Lažno obećanje je takođe stvarnost

U toku još jednog od njegovih “proletanja” kroz Beograd, pre nešto više od godinu dana, pitao sam Alexa šta je planirao u narednom periodu – to je uvek bio izvor

nekih super i neočekivanih odgovora. Da vas podsetim, Alex je čovek koji preko *belog maga* razgovara sa duhom čuvenog kustosa Haralda Szeemanna, i koji zna gde se nalazi odsečena glava Gavrila Principa, čoveka koji je atentatom na Franza Ferdinanda započeo Prvi svetski rat. On stvarno radi takve stvari. Ozbiljno.

- A, idem u Afriku – rekao je. - U Keniju.
- Stvarno? Što?
- Pa, da pravim televiziju.

Onda sam se naravno nasmejao, onako kao kada se desi nešto što se i dalje savršeno uklapa u semantički poredak stvari, ali nekako ne i u svakodnevicu “zajedničke logike” kulturnih kodova koje smo programirani da koristimo... Sledećih meseci Alex i Lucas su odlazili u ogroman slam Mathare, pored Nairobija. I napravili su televiziju. Moj uvid u projekat je ostao ograničen na povremene kratke priče onda kada je Alex bio u prolazu, ili na kratku

razmenu preko Interneta. Naravno, kasnije je došao slum-tv.info, ali ja sam osećao potrebu da zadržim direktnu komunikaciju sa nekim ko je unutar projekta. Da li je možda razlog za to bilo moje oklevanje da prihvatim ovo kao još jedan “istraživački” projekat, u smislu ispitivanja kako “drugačijih kulturnih identiteta” tako i “upotrebe medija”? Definitivno ne, ne verujem u takve fraze, a ni Alex, siguran sam. I uzrok sigurno nije bio taj da sam ovo doživeo kao još jedan od “real-aktivističkih” projekata, koji postavlja “van-ideološku” infrastrukturu i proizvodnju kadrova kao jedinu premisu koja stoji u pozadini akcije, oslanjajući se na “ljudska prava” kao ne-kritičku platformu da bi se privremeno preusmerili fondovi i poslovi od “razvijenih” na one koji su “u razvoju”, proizvedeći korektne naslove i pomažući “sagorevanje” nekakvog viška resursa. Ne ne ne. To mi nikada nije palo na pamet. Što više razmišljam, sve mi se više čini da sam reagovao na sličan način

kao kada sam bio pozvan da govorim na “Parliaments of Art”, jednom od mojih prvih simpozijuma – pre “nastupa” sam se raspitivao unutar netznetz.net mreže da li postoji neko u Beču ko može da mi pozajmi safari šešir, znate onaj napravljen od trske ili čega već, onaj koji možemo videti u filmovima o “hrabrom belom čoveku koji osvaja nepoznatu divljinu”. Pošto sam bio pozvan da govorim o samoorganizaciji i pozicioniranju nezavisne kulturne scene Beča prema gradskim vlastima i javnom finansiranju, osetio sam potrebu da podvučem i performiram svoju “spoljašnju” poziciju. To, naravno, nije značilo da sam ikada mislio da postoji problem jezika ili kulturnih kodova koji bi proizvodili nerazumevanje, niti sam ikada osećao da su iskustva ove bečke mreže toliko specifična da nalažu isključivo artikulaciju iznutra, sasvim suprotno – ono što sam želeo da učinim vidljivim jeste činjenica da bilo šta što ja ili drugi gosti simpozijuma iz inostranstva mogu da kažu ili podele sa lokalnim učesnicima, da je to nešto što neće direktno uticati na nas – mi smo oni koji dolaze, razgovaraju ili “savetuju” i onda odlaze, ostavljajući netznetz.net da se bavi posledicama svih odluka koje budu donešene.

Na kraju se ispostavilo da niko nije imao safari šešir, ali sam zato pozajmio veliki i “ozbiljan” foto aparat koji mi je visio oko vrata dok sam bio za govornicom, u nadi da će to uspeti da podvuče moju “turističku” poziciju. Foto aparat jeste delovao ozbiljno. A delovao mi je i nekako teško, pogotovu za čoveka koji ima probleme sa kičmom, kao što ih imam ja...

Istu “težinu”, isto namerno izlaganje nelagodnosti verovatno je osetio i Lukas Pusch tokom svoje prve posete Mathareu. Dok sam gledao fotografije koje mi je poslao Alex, na kojima je Lukas koji hoda po ovom vrelom i vlažnom delu Nairobija u belom do grla zakopčanom sakou i crnoj leptir mašni, izvodeći svoj *Vienna Voodoo* performans, sve mi je to izgledalo kao performiranje potrebe za poštenim i preciznim izražavanjem odnosa snaga koje su ovde na delu – to definitivno nije bio pokušaj pogrešnog reprezentovanja postojećih pozicija. Niti je na bilo koji način izgledalo kao prikrivanje pozicije “outsidera” u Mathareu, već upravo naglašavanje te pozicije što je više moguće kroz oblačenje (možda čak i samo-žrtvovanje kroz znojenje do smrti), i kroz takvo predstavljanje je zadobijena pažnja i osvojeno poverenje lokalnih ljudi. Belci u leptir mašnjama i sakoima ne predstavljaju opasnost kada je u pitanju prisvajanje glasa ili statusa ljudi iz Matharea. Tamo ljudi verovatno dobro znaju da će nekakvi “iznenadni prijatelji” svakako stalno navraćati, donoseći svoje suvišne i stare stvari i prezentujući se kao oni koji su apsolutno uz njih, praveći fotografije na kojima se svi široko osmehuju uspehu i razumevanju koje njihovi projekti proizvode, trčeći nazad u svoje klimatizovane sobe kako bi pisali pohvalne izveštaje finansijerima ili bildovali svoje karijere novinara ili umetnika koji rade “na ivici”. U tom smislu, kada je SLUM-TV u pitanju, početak sa leptir mašnom i sakoom je dao projektu jasan pravac i čistu

savest – oni dolaze iz Beča i oni će se vratiti u Beč. Nema apropijacije, nema lažnog bratimljenja, nema lažne odgovornosti ... Nema lažnih obećanja.

Subaltern Subsafari

Tokom projekta *Under The Bridge*, još jedne od akcija koju je inicirao Alex Nikolić, posetio sam po nadrealno hladnom vremenu kartonsko Romsko naselje smešteno ispod beogradskog mosta

Jedna od stvari koja je pokušavala da angažuje moje malobrojne moždane ćelije u tom trenutku je bio pojam “subalternity”, koji je uspostavio Antonio Gramsci oko 1935. Kasnije se ispostavilo da se ovaj pojam prosto nameće i u razmišljanju o SLUM-TVu.

Originalni smisao termina jeste opisivanje nemogućnost komunikacije, u smislu jezika i simbola kulture u celini, između “razvijenih” kultura obrazovane manjine italijanske buržoazije i progresivnih

pretpostavci, ni jedan od njih ne može da komunicira izvan sopstvenih i posebnih kulturnih kodova). Na ovaj način se subalterni entiteti izopštavaju iz bilo kakve mogućnosti da postanu relevanti politički subjekat. Za prosečno obrazovanu osobu (po standardima i kodovima Evrope posle 1848. ili osnovnog naučno-faktoografski orijentisanog sekularnog obrazovanja kakvo je uvedeno u Sjedinjenim Državama npr - ili, pak bilo kakvog standarda sistematizovanog tradicionalnog obrazovnog sitema) ovo bi



Fred Otieno, James Njuguna and Saidi Hamisi snimaju u Mathare naselju [Mathare, avgust 2007. godina]

Fred Otieno, James Njuguna and Saidi Hamisi filming in Mathare [Mathare, August 2007]

Gazela, u društvu sa Kathrin Grasser, prijateljicom i fotografkinjom iz Beča. Kathrin je fotografisala događaj, često usmeravajući svoju kameru na srećnu gomilu ciganske dece koja su uživala u gužvi i pažnji neobične gomile ljudi koja se iznenada tamo našla. Problem se pojavio kada su deca počela da se okupljaju oko Kathrin, tražeći da okrene kameru prema njima da bi mogla da vide kako su ispala na fotografijama. Bilo je apsolutno nemoguće objasniti da je u pitanju analogna kamera koja koristi film (ista ona koju sam i ja svojevremeno pozajmio za svoj “turistički” govor u Beču), i da tu ne postoji ekran na kojem odmah mogu da vide fotke. Prosto nisu hteli da poveruju, i očigledno su mislili da Kathrin iz nekog razloga ne želi da im pokaže slike. Ova mala rasprava i nelagodnost po pitanju tehnoloških ograničenja analogne kamere predstavljala je, na određen način, značajan detalj u mom razumevanju polja zajedničkog jezika koji proizvode tehnologija i savremena kultura.

intelektualaca, i “subaltern” kulturne većine južno-italijanskih seljaka. Najprisutnija istorijska interpretacija termina kaže da ga je Gramsci uveo kako bi zamenio tradicionalne klasno-formulisane pojmove jezika marksizma i zadržao ih ispod radara fašističke cenzure u Italiji tog doba (uzimajući u obzir geopolitičku i istorijsku situaciju, izgleda da je velika većina intelektualaca koji nisu bili fašisti manje-više provodila život u zatvorima, pa tako i Gramsci).

Da se vratimo na “subalternity” – ovaj navodno kompletni izostanak zajedničkog jezika ili pretpostavka da kulturni kodovi ili simboli ne mogu biti prevedeni na “drugu stranu” rezultira isključenjem iz institucionalizovanog političkog života i kulturne komunikacije, kako u slučaju komunikacije između subaltern entiteta i “zvaničnih” predstavnika društva, tako i između samih subalternih entiteta međusobno (budući da, prema

trebalo da predstavlja Veliku prazninu, crnu rupu kulture, i pokušaj razmene bilo kakvog paketa informacija bi trebalo da podseća na vikanje na monolitne zidove ove trvdave subalternog. To bi još i podrazumevalo kompletnu nemogućnost da se utiče na proces evolucije ovih posebnih društvenih grupa, čak i nemogućnost da se posmatra i razume kakvu kulturu subalterni entiteti razvijaju, budući da sam jezik nije moguće naučiti, razumeti i primeniti izvan ovih “zatvorenih” društvenih grupa. Sada možda bolje razumete zašto su moje moždane ćelije međusobno vodile prljavi građanski rat, razmišljajući o mogućnosti da postoji pukotina u ovim pretpostavljenim odnosima, mogućnost u kojoj se subalterni ujedinjaju i dobijaju svoj glas – alatku za *blitzkrieg* protiv korumpirane politike i kulture savremenog “poretka stvari”, ako ne kroz nekakvo teorijsko i društveno postignuće, onda barem kroz samu snagu njihove brojnosti – i sama ideja bavljenja *incommunicado* entitetima – sve je to



zvučalo vrlo zavodljivo i seksi. Znete, na način na koji bi sedmogodišnji dečak kao što sam na primer bio ja, neko ko je u detinjstvu odgajen na istorijskoj fikciji i klasičnoj popularnoj literaturi, mogao da sanjari o susretanju sa granicama univerzuma u svom vernom svemirskom brodu nalik na *Millenium Falcon*, ili makar o otkrivanju preostalih tajni nepoznatih delova Zemlje.



Kadar iz filma

Chang'aa:

Čovek igra u chang'aa baru

Film prati putanju chang'aa, ilegalne pivare u Mathare, od fermentacije, preko destilacije do konzumacije u lokalnim barovima. [6 minuta, maj 2008. godina]

A still from the film

Chang'aa:

Man dancing in chang'aa bar

The film follows the trail of chang'aa, the illicit alcohol brewed in Mathare, from fermentation to distilling to consumption in local bars. [6 minutes, May 2008]



Iako mi je ovaj akt ciganske dece pomogao da razrešim nemire i sukobe između moždanih ćelija, proizveo je i razočarenje deteta koje iznenada saznaje da ne postoji više ni jedna tajna koja nije otkrivena i da se scenario u kojem će kad-tad "naleteti" na nešto misteriozno, nešto za šta nikada nismo čuli, više ne može dogoditi – ova deca su precizno znala kako digitalna kamera, ta sofisticirana alatka za generisanje znakova jezika slike, zapravo funkcioniše. Njih očigledno nije bila briga za istoriju te alatke - a zašto i bi? - i možda ih nije interesovala njena upotreba u eksplicitno političke svrhe, za sada, ali je jezik tehnologije već bio savršeno jasan i prihvaćen od strane petogodišnje ciganske dece koja žive u kartonskom naselju ispod nekog mosta u “i-dalje-u-razvoju” neuređenoj teritoriji Balkana. Ne vidim razlog da to bude drugačije u bilo kojim drugim okolnostima. Ni jedna kultura nije izolovana. Čitava filozofija može da se razvije okolo, na primer, razlike između kulture brzih ili sporih droga, rituala, izvora, implikacija i konsekvenci svega toga, ili o mogućim inicijalnim nerazumevanjima među različitim istorijskim i geopolitičkim specifikumima po tom pitanju, ali je teško,

možda čak i nemoguće, naći kulturu koja ne prepoznaje, u bilo koliko posebnom jeziku, da jeste na nekakvim drogama. Dokazano je jednako teško otkriti, čak i teoretizovati, kulturu i društvo koje nije određeno kroz neke osnovne odnose prema pojmovima posedovanja i vlasništva. I tako je otišla subaltern teritorija “nemogućnosti” da se komunicira niz Savu, jasno zamenjena onim što je stvarni problem - iako romska deca jednostavno nisu u posedu tehnologije i ne koriste je često, ona nisu lišena mogućnosti da razumeju na koji način ta tehnologija radi. U sličnom maniru, ona nisu nesposobna da razumeju razvoj savremenog društva - ona su samo rođena kao obespravljena da “uzmu učešća” u korišćenju alatki koje su prevashodno otelovljene u akumulaciji bogatsva i moći. Ona su obeležena kožom “pogrešne” boje, “pogrešnim” akcentima ili ličnim imenima. I, značajnije od svega - njima su ukradena prava na edukaciju i komunikaciju, prava koja im pripadaju. Obe stvari je savršeno moguće postići, i to su upravo stvari kojima mi se čini da se bavi SLUM-TV. Ljudima iz Matharea ne nedostaje “odgovarajući” jezik - to je zapravo isti jezik koji svi mi koristimo, ono što im nedostaje nisu reči, nego glas... I cilj SLUM-TVa nije da im pozajmi taj glas, uprkos onome što jezik *project proposala* nalaže. Stanovnici Matharea treba da sami izaberu i upotrebe svoj glas. Smatrajte SLUM-TV za neku vrstu “tehničke podrške” tu i tamo...

Holivud, Bolivud, Nolivud... Kenivud? Ne, zove se Rivervud.

Kada bolje razmislim, i u kontekstu tehnologije i kulture, možda je Gramsci na neki način bio u pravu. Iz perspektive 1935-te, kada je u knige trebalo investirati, napisati ih, štampati, objaviti, kada su na kraju trebale da budu plaćene i tako konačno pročitane, pod uslovom da ste razumeli jezik na kojem su pisane – ako se ovo stanje uzimalo kao “dato” i kao nešto što će ostati tako kako je, cela situacije je mogla da izgleda potpuno nerešiva. Ali da li je danas značajno drugačija? Nema sumnje da je kapitalizam prisutniji nego ikada. Isto kao i njegove posledice. (primedba: sve ovo prevodim posle pisanja engleske verzije - interesantno, na našem jeziku je kapitalizam, odjednom, isključivo u muškom rodu). Hajde da pogledamo kako izgleda post-kolonijalna Kenija... Umesto mnogobrojnih jezika koji su govorile često međusobno neprijateljske etničke grupe, nasleđe Britanskog istočno-afričkog protektorata je engleski jezik. Pored Swahili-ja, svojevrsnog Esperanta razvijenog kroz trgovinu sa Arapima, Persijancima, Indusima, Nemcima i Britancima, zajednički jezik je pomogao u formiranju široke i međusobno povezane sfere ekonomske i kulturne razmene. Naravno, prvenstveno u svrhu kolonizacije. Ali, sa druge strane ne treba zaboraviti da je ovo omogućilo da desetine milona ljudi počnu da komuniciraju međusobno na direktan način, bez mnogo posredovanja i prevođenja. Jezik je postao ozbiljno oružje za pružanje otpora kompromisnim i manipulativnim politikama “identiteta”, često kreiranim upravo u svrhu održavanja kolonijalnih odnosa i maskiranja onoga

što je precizno definisano kao klasni odnosi u društvu. Takođe, vesti, pozicije i mišljenja koja dolaze iz inostranstva postaju mnogo razumljiviji lokalnom stanovništvu. Ako smo uopšte ranije mogli da pominjemo subalterno, posle pojava kao što je 90-ih bila satirična TV emisija *Redykyulass* koja je na Swahiliju po prvi put u savremenoj nacionalnoj istoriji uvela pojam javne kritike vlasti, mogući odnosi snaga su nepovratno izmenjeni. Šta reći o “politikama identiteta” mnogobrojnih, isključivo jezički orijentisanih etničkih kultura? Namera ovog teksta nije da se “bavi slučajem” lokalnih jezika u sukobu sa globalnom dominacijom međunarodnog engleskog, ali to ostaje kao nešto o čemu treba diskutovati. Evo kratke primedbe Jimmyja “Jimbo” Walesa, iz intervju a koji smo radili prošle godine – projekat Wikipedia koji je inicirao 2001. godine se danas razvija na 255 različitih jezika...

“...Ne mislim da treba da pravimo izbor između očuvanja sopstvenog jezika i pridruživanja globalnoj ekonomiji. Mislim da se može i jedno i drugo - možete da zadržite lokalni jezik i lokalnu kulturu i takođe da imate mnogo ljudi koji govore engleski, tako da možete da učestvujete u globalnom biznisu i više učestvujete u globalnoj kulturi, i mislim da je za mnoge kulture moguće da imaju sistem obrazovanja na dva jezika. Neki put je to francuski u nekim delovima Afrike, ali na globalnom nivou to je sve više engleski, i mislim da je to u redu. U redu je dokle god ne pomislimo da su lokalni jezici manje važni. Samo je važno biti svestan da je u pitanju jedna praktična stvar. U ranim danima Wikipedije svi smo bili zabrinuti oko toga što je sva naša međunarodna komunikacija bila na engleskom, ali nije bilo drugog rešenja. Nismo mi napravili taj problem, takva je istorija sveta. Britanska imperija je bila prilično umešana u to. Ako imate nekoga iz Srbije i Italije i Japana i svi žele da međusobno razgovaraju, postoji samo jedna šansa – da znaju da govore engleski. To je zanimljiv problem.”

<Iz intervju a sa Jimmy Walesom @slobodnakultura.org>

Ovde ne razgovaramo samo o govornom i pisanom jeziku simbola – slike, pokretne ili zamrznute, postaju osnovni inter-platformski jezik savremene globalne kulture. Videli smo kako je Nigerija postala najveća svetska filmska industrija za samo nekoliko godina, ako uzimamo u obzir broj objavljenih naslova – Nolivud proizvodi četiri puta više filmova od Holivuda, i duplo više od indijskog Bolivuda (da ne bude zabune, prihodi i godišnji obrt su još uvek u potpuno suprotnom redosledu). Takođe smo mogli da vidimo kako različite teorije objašnjavaju ovaj uspeh, povezujući ga sa omiljenim neo-liberalnim *memeom* devedesetih, pojmom *kulturnih industrija*. Ali, da preskočimo ovde dalju diskusiju o tome, i da se fokusiramo na perspektive koje pred sobom ima Kenija. Da li postoji neki plan koji razvijaju biznisi, ili vlada? Članak o Keniji na Wikipediji kaže:

“Film:

Iako vlasti nisu bile raspoložene da podrže kenijsku filmsku industriju, ova zemlja

nudi neke od najspektakularnijih pejzaža, i može se porediti samo sa Južnom afrikom po proizvodnji najtalentovanijih glumica i glumaca na afričkom kontinentu. Zbog nonšalantnog stava i nedostatka entuzijazma od strane vlade industrija je ostala uglavnom uspavana a značajni filmovi se proizvode retko, i u malom broju.”

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenya>

...ali na forumu naijarules.com sam pronašao ovo:

“06-23-2006, 09:10 PM

posted by: bolanle

Kenija: Menjanje Rivervuda

Amerikanci imaju Holivud, Indijci Bolivud, Nigerijci Nolivud, a Kenijci Rivervud.

Rivervud je postao sinonim za filmsku produkciju Kenije, zahvaljujući konstantnoj proizvodnji kratkih filmova, uglavnom mjuzikla i komedija.

Industrija, koja se uglavnom bavi dramom na lokalnim jezicima – većinom Kikuyu i Dholuo – sve više privlači pažnju i postaje podrška mnogim nadolazećim komičarima, na koje mainstream mediji ne gledaju blagonaklono. Ime “Riverwood” je izvedeno iz lokacije River Road, gde se pravi najveći broj filmova. Što se “wood” dela imena tiče, znate i sami.

Eksplozija fenomena Rivervuda je predstavljala grubo osveščivanje za lokalne producente, koji su izgleda ignorisali potencijal imena kao što su Machang'i, Kihenjo i Githingithia, danas prisutnih na svakom koraku.

Mnogi lokalni formalni i nepromenljivi producenti dotiranih filmova sada priznaju da je Rivervud recept za uspeh lokalne filmske industrije, i žele da ga još više profesionalizuju. U smislu rasvete, kamere, montaže, i svega ostalog...”

<http://www.naijarules.com/vb/ghanaian-movies-other-african-non-nigerian-movies-stars/16706-kenya-changing-riverwood.html>

Ne radi se samo o potencijalu za proizvodnju kritične mase video sadržaja, još važnije je razmišljati o distribuciji i o tome kako dosegnuti do publike – kako iz perspektive kreiranja ideološke kritike i kulturne politike kroz umrežavanje iskustava i stavova, tako i iz perspektive *kreativnih industrija* koja se ogleda u tržištu i brojevima.

U ovom trenutku bi trebalo da u Keniji bude oko 3.000.000 korisnika interneta i oko 7.000.000 pretplatnika mobilne telefonije – brojevi koji ne impresioniraju ako uzmemo u obzir da u Keniji ima otprilike 38 milona ljudi, ali ono što impresionira jeste vrtoglava stopa rasta, bez obzira na “nesređenu” političku situaciju. Ne treba zaboraviti ni često kolektivnu praksu korišćenja Internet veza. Lanci “piratskih” bioskopa, pored još uvek oskudnog broadband Interneta, i dalje predstavljaju verovatno najneposrediju



Publika na projekciji *Reportaže mira*
[Mathare, 25.04.2008.]

Audience at the screening of the *Peace Newsreel* [Mathare, 25.04.2008.]

i najdublju platformu za komunikaciju kroz slike. Šta se u ovom slučaju zaista komunicira?

“..ovo nisu filmovi, ovo nije bioskop, ovo je nešto drugo.”

Standardna mateijalistička tačka gledišta tumači subjekt želje jednog društva kao nešto što je uvek predstavljano kroz kulturne artefakte kao stvar koja reflektuje ono za šta se smatra da je “u nedostatku” – drugim rečima, materijalna ograničenja u posedovanju određenih dobara (često od veće simboličke nego primenjene vrednosti) i rezultirajući društveni odnosi jesu ono što najčešće nalazimo predstavljeno u savremenoj popularnoj kulturi određenog društva. To nekako vodi ka povezivanju svega ovoga sa isključivo geopolitičkim odrednicama. Prosto se nameće zaključak da se popularna kultura Sjedinjenih država, Evrope ili Japana danas bavi istraživanjem mogućnosti i implikacijama digitalnih mreža, RFID čipova, sveprisutnih tehnologija nadgledanja i praćenja, ili pitanjem “letećeg automobila” kao neispunjenog obećanja iz pedesetih, dok se kulture društava “u razvoju”, najčešće u Južnoj americi, Africi ili Aziji, uglavnom bave sa “osnovnijim” komodifikovanim objektima želje, onima za koje se smatra da su ispunjeni, “istorijski” i prevaziđeni na drugim mestima, kao što su materijalna dobra koja predstavljaju uobičajeno životno i radno okruženje u “razvijenom” delu sveta. Isto važi za

vrednosti “demokratije i ljudskih prava”, za koje se predpostavlja da su ostvarene i da predstavljaju podrazumevano stanje stvari uglavnom na severozapadu planete. Da li je ovo stvarno tako, da li ova jednostavna podela funkcioniše? U toku intervjua sa Ronaldom Lemosom, predsednikom odbora organizacije iCommons.org i direktorom Centra za tehnologiju i društvo pravne škole Fondacije Getulio Vargas u Rio de Žaneiru, ali i nekim ko ima izuzetno znanje o fenomenu nigerijske filmske industrije, on je u jednom trenutku primetio, odnoseći se na ono što je opisano kao “periferije”:

“...ove periferije mogu da budu bilo gde. Mogi da budu u Brazilu, u siromašnim zemljama, u bogatim zemljama, mogu da budu u Istočnoj Evropi, bilo gde. To nije odnos između bogatih i siromašnih, to mogu biti periferije Londona, periferije Njujorka, tržišta “piratskih snimaka”, sve stvari koje se pojavljuju na piratskim radijima, to je sve ista stvar.”

Možemo diskutovati o tome da li je u pitanju “odnos između bogatih i siromašnih” ili ne; ali je očigledno da se više ne mogu uzimati u obzir samo geopolitičke odrednice, ako je ikada i moglo da se razmišlja na taj način. A što se tiče fikcije, ili “fantastike”, nečega što nije direktan odraz postojećeg “reda stvari” unutar ili izvan postojećih geo-političkih odnosa, ili “imaginarnih budućnosti” kako bi to rekao Richard Barbrook, ne treba zaboraviti da je to moćna alatka za razvijanje potencijala

“kvantnog skoka” jednog društva, “razvijenog” ili ne. Svođenje takve alatke na “buržoasku zabavu” drastično redukuje manevarski prostor za komprimovanje vremena potrebnog za evoluciju društva kroz usvajanje nekih već “razvijenih” pozicija i mobilizaciju širih društvenih grupa oko ideje “imaginarnih budućnosti”. Alatku fikcije ne treba otuđivati od onih koji su već lišeni materijalne stvarnosti... Ovo ne znači da filmovi koji su proizvedeni u okviru SLUM-TV projekta sadrže bilo kakvu fikciju koja se ne odnosi na njihovu materijalnu stvarnost i želje da se približi onome što je kroz medije predstavljeno kao “ono kako bi budućnost trebalo da izgleda”, prikazujući slike iz života na drugim mestima. Ali ne treba zatvarati taj prostor, i “pročišćavati” druge od alatki koje smo sami upotrebljavali. Do sada, i koliko sam uspeo da vidim, filmovi govore o Mathareu danas, i nagoveštavaju Nairobi budućnosti; tu ne postoji ni jedan kadar fikcije. Ali mi se čini da klasifikovanje ovih filmova samo kao “dokumentarnih” ili “kritičkih” nije dovoljno - ne znam šta bih mogao da dodam, jer sam ih video samo nekoliko. Sam Hopkins bi trebalo da ima mnogo praktičnog iskustva u vezi svega toga, i stvarno bi ste trebali da pročitate njegov odličan tekst o SLUM-TV projektu koji se bavi imresivnim rasponom pitanja, od pozicioniranja u okviru ad-hoc zajednice formirane oko SLUM-TV do samog sadržaja filmova. I kakvi su to, na kraju, filmovi? Još jednom će nam o tome nešto reći Ronaldo:

“...Kada sam pomenuo nigerijsku filmsku industriju jednom poznatom brazilskom reditelju, rekao mi je: “Ronaldo, ovo nisu filmovi, ovo nije bioskop, ovo je nešto drugo.” Zainteresovao sam se, malo istraživao, i pronašao tekst Henri Langloisa, čoveka koji je osnovao Cinémathèque Française. On je 1969. napisao da će se prava kinematografija pojaviti tek kada periferije osvoje sredstva za proizvodnju audio-vizualnog sadržaja i budu u mogućnosti da same prikažu svoje priče, bez posredovanja. To je trenutak kada se pojavljuje prava kinematografija. Poslao sam taj tekst slavnom brazilskom reditelju, ali mi nikada nije odgovorio, pa ne znam šta sada misli o tome.”

<Iz intervjua sa Ronaldo Lemosom
@slobodnakultura.org>

Eto, tu smo – ne znamo ni mi. Ono što znam jeste da mislim da u ovom trenutku zaista nije važno kako tačno izgleda prvi ili drugi komplet SLUM-TV filmova...

Barack Obama najbolje zna...

...kako su sve stvari povezane. Pogledajte samo kako izgleda web sajt njegove kampanje. Tako da se svi nadamo da je svestan na koje načine njegov rastući uticaj može da bude shvaćen u Mathareu. Naime, Barackov otac je potomak porodice iz etničke grupe Lou – naravno da je gospodin Obama zaista pravi građanin Sjedinjenih država,

ali prezimena i dalje čine ogromnu razliku u Keniji. Pišući ovo iz post-jugoslovenskog iskustva, mislim da bih mogao da imam prilično precizan uvid u situaciju. Hajde da još jednom zavirimo u Wikipediju:

“2006. je Mathare bio oštećen u nasillju između sukobljenih bandi Talibana (ne treba ih pomešati sa islamističkom grupom istog imena), pripadnicima Luo etničke grupe, i Mungikija, koji pripadaju Kikuyu etničkoj grupi. Proizvođači ilegalnog alkoholnog pića chang’aa su tražili pomoć od Talibana, pošto su Mungiki pokušali da podignu reket na proizvodnju pića; od tada, borba između bandi je dovela do spaljivanja stotina kuća i najmanje 10 smrtnih slučajeva. Policija je ušla u slam 7. novembra 2006, vojska je došla dan kasnije, ali su mnogi stanovnici i dalje previše uplašeni da bi se vratili.

5. juna 2007. Mungiki su ubili dva policajca u Mathareu; iste noći, policija je uzvratila ubistvom 22 ljudi i hapšenjem oko 100.

Posle kontroverznih predsedničkih izbora održanih 27. decembra 2007, Luo bande su spalile više od 100 kuća.”

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathare>>

Sada smo se vratili na ekonomska pitanja Matharea. Naravno da pravi problem nije etničko ili religiozno poreklo; sve vreme se radi o posedovanju i kontrolisanju sredstava za proizvodnju i samog proizvoda rada. Ali i dalje ovi nacionalni i verski “identitarni” brendovi igraju ključnu ulogu u maskiranju pravih i materijalnih pitanja u vezi sa vlasništvom i ekspolatacijom resursa. Ovaj “delikatni balans” uspostavljen između rivalskih bandi na terenu, koji proizvodi

privremeno primirje, može navodno da bude poremećen u bilo kojem trenutku i iz bilo kojeg razloga; ali je očigledno da će se to desiti ili onda kada jedna od strana proceni da je dovoljno jaka da izbacii iz “igre” ostale, ili kada jedna strana vidi nasilje kao jedini način da se održi na svom, iz nekog razloga, ugroženom tržištu. Bilo ko od učesnika može biti kontrolisan od strane interesa koji dolaze “odozgo”, ili “spolja”. Posle neposrednog iskustva sa vrhunskom trapavošću, namernom ili ne, koju su pokazali razni pripadnici međunarodne zajednice u pristupanju problemima Balkana devedesetih, i imajući neku predstavu o konstruisanoj kompleksnosti problema oko Velike koalicije <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenya#The_grand_coalition>, nedavno ustanovljene da “pomiri” različite interese svih strana, bio bih oprezan u tvrdnji da će ljudi iz Matharea u bliskoj

budućnosti moći da uživaju u udobnosti one strane kapitalizma zasnovane na *creative industries* principima; ali kako su globalni ekonomski odnosi u najvećem previranju ikada, u ubrzanoj transformaciji ka *open-source* kapitalizmu, i ma koliko da bi trebalo da budemo svesni “svog mesta” u postojećem “redu stvari”, za većinu nas bilo kakav ishod, zaista bilo kakav, predstavlja mogućnost. Gde bi sve to trebalo da smesti objektivne SLUM-TV kamera? Tačno tamo gde su sada – dole, u prvom redu... Podignite vašu *chang’aa*, i živeli!

Sve najbolje,

vlidi.

<vladimir.jeric@slobodnakultura.org>



SLUM-TV

IN BELGRADE AND NOVI SAD

Organizers

Duška Dražić

Anonymous said:

www.anonymoussaid.org

Omladinski centar CK13

www.ck13.org

anonymous said:



SLUM-TV, STREET TV IN NAIROBI

EVERYTHING started with a collective show of Austrian artists at the *Alliance Francaise* in Nairobi in March 2006, **Economy class**. Here different perspectives and attitudes of a group of artists coming from Vienna (**Barbara Husar, Michael Lampert, Alexander Nikolić and Lukas Pusch**), and of an artist living in Nairobi, **Sam Hopkins**, meet with those of the inhabitants of Mathare, a slum of 500,000 people in Nairobi.

The result is **SLUM-TV**, a television street project which describes the lives and identities of this city in the city from a point of view which is far from the common sense of the western means of information and with the idea of using poor and basic technologies to spread training, self-narration and the development of a self-financing economy.

Alexander Nikolić, a Serbian artist living in Vienna and very familiar with the creation of collective projects in the physical and media public spaces, **Lukas Pusch**, a Viennese artist with a strong political and critical attitude, and **Sam Hopkins**, an artist living in Nairobi experienced with different participatory projects in the problematic local and suburban communities, recount the birth and the possible future developments of SLUM-TV. The exhibition at the *Alliance Francaise*, the approach to the community of Mathare with the help of Sam Hopkins, a performance entitled Vienna Voodoo of Lukas Pusch and his documentation, Making of **Vienna Voodoo** by Alexander Nikolić with the idea of making a video-guide from the SLUM-TV project, date back to the spring of 2006. Thanks to contacts with a sport local association, Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) and with a cultural subsection Shootback where 5 photographers work (among them Julius Mwelu and Fred Otieno, who formed part of the group for the making of *Vienna Voodoo*) the project is now ready to start.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:
Tell me something more about the performance and the process that brought you to the construction of a neighborhood TV in Mathare slum.

Alexander Nikolić:
The project *Economy Class* was the option to go to Nairobi, and the first reason. But i saw this project almost as a kind of complete performance, and behind the curtain, we can realise what we came for. I'm working for years with process-



Audience at the public screening
[Mathare, 8.10.2007]

Publika na javnoj projekciji
[Mathare, 8.10.2007.]

orientated works, that produce the public sphere, and so i started before going to Nairobi to get in contact with interesting people there. Sam Hopkins was our first contact, and for me it was clear, after i saw the works he did, that i want to work with that guy. I also started earlier, to think about archives, and how to make them public, also with pirate radio and tv, i have some experience. I knew that there are some community radio stations, and i wanted to work something out in the field of media. And with Sam Hopkins, we found the person who had cooperated with people from the Mathare Slum.

Sam Hopkins:
My connection to the Mathare community dates from the summer of 2003. I had a residency at Kuona Trust (a local arts organisation www.kuonatrust.org) which stipulated a certain amount of public work. By chance I met Julius Mwelu, a member of Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA) and a budding photographer. Through Julius I met the rest of the Shootback team. Shootback is a section of the Arts and Culture department of MYSA and had been created in the mid

'90's by a Korean American photographer called Lana Wong. In 1998 they published 'shootback' a self-documentary process of Mathare slums. Today, projects like these are quite common, but then I think it was still a fairly new idea and had a considerable impact. Anyway, by the time I met the team (5 years later) their former success had faded and the team was slowly dwindling in size and motivation. I thought it would be a good idea to work around the possibilities of a photo, looking at it as a starting point rather than an end product. To this aim I ran a stencil graffiti project for a couple of weeks which culminated in creating huge, (2-3 metre) stencils with which we sprayed the outside of their compound in Eastleigh, on the edge of Mathare. The original images were photos taken by the shootback members, and they developed the accompanying text as well. I have run quite a few youth art workshops and I was amazed at both the dedication and the talent displayed by these guys.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:
from the documents of the Vienna Voodoo performance and the production

of the guide video in SLUM-TV: tell me more about the process of the creation of this street tv.

Lukas Pusch:
It was my first time in Africa. So i thought it might be good to deal with this situation. I thought: just be what you are. A white middle european person with a bourgeois family background who is not helping.

So i bought a white tuxedo and went with it through Mathare. The biggest slum from Nairobi with about 500 000 habitants, mostly living without sewage, canalisation, electricity or water. I wanted to bring two images into one. Something that Polke or Kippenberger called "Kapitalistischer Realismus".

My first idea was just a series of photos which has been part of my Vienna Voodoo project. Later Alex and me had the idea to combine it with a video.

During my performance school classes jumped up singing "welcome!" and "thank you for visiting our class!" when they saw me with the white tuxedo. I gave out

candy and let the school's director show me the damp, windowless classrooms. We visited illegal chang'aa brewers on the Nairobi River, whose alcohol-like muck is often the only water source in the slums leading to consumption and blindness for many. But i came to Africa as an artist not as an social worker.

I wanted to show two worlds in one picture. The perspectives change. Capitalist Realism. Realities join together, when normally they would be separated by border fences and restricted areas. The inhabitants of the slum were happy when they saw me in a suit. They weren't shocked. On the contrary, I symbolized normality for them. In their reality every white person is rich. For them the nice suit was more an expression of respect than a provocation. Our view of Africa is at the most a compassionate one. Starving children. War. AIDS. We don't appear there, except as Samaritans, Humanitarian Aid workers or Aerzte ohne Grenzen (Doctors without borders). Social workers. A friend of mine Herbert Langthaler, who has worked a lot on racism and immigration found that this work brought the idea of whiteness to the point.

During the filming Fred and Julius told us that they participated in a German documentary a year ago. After the premiere of the movie they where very sad: one third of the other participatants had already died.

So we got the idea to found SLUM-TV. In this way what began as Making of Vienna Voodoo, developed with numerous interviews to a small documentary about the problems and perspectives in Mathare and a first general test for SLUM-TV.

Sam Hopkins:

I thought it might be the context/ environment that Lukas was interested in. Also, security in these areas is a very real concern but in Mathare, with guys from MYSA, you are generally OK. The local population also have become accustomed to a certain extent to foreigners wandering around taking photos. Hence I recommended, MYSA, Julius, Fred and the other guys from Shootback. The performance itself I think had mixed reactions. I was slightly skeptical. Nevertheless I was surprised at the reactions he received, which were incredibly diverse. They ranged from people laughing, seeming to get the absurdity of the situation, possibly understanding that he was, in essence, a performer, to those such as the headmaster of the semi-subterranean school that we went to, who fawned over this symbol of European wealth and grandeur in quite a spectacular fashion. Being two photographers, often I caught Alex in a shot, and looking back on the images I was struck by the extent to which we were all performing really. I think this added a crucial dynamic to the performance. By highlighting the spectacle of the rich white man in Mathare, rather than just documenting the rich white

man in Mathare I think we presented a different image to the local audience. It is not uncommon for visiting dignitaries to wonder around Mathare on a press jaunt. However I had the impression that the local audience did perceive us as different (even if maybe we're not that different), although it is difficult to confirm this.

So, developing from this experience onto SLUM-TV, I think what I am most interested in is the issue of primary and secondary audience. Living and working in Kenya, my focus is on the former. First and foremost I think SLUM-TV has to make sense to MYSA, to the Shootback members who we are working with and also to the audience who will be watching it. We have our criteria and these are various; creating the possibility for the people of Mathare to document their own lives, rather than have it imposed on them by an outsider with his own established set of values, an interest in preserving some document of life in Mathare, of committing to digital archive some of the oral history from the valley, establishing safe screenings, in public space, at night, which is the exception rather than the rule in Mathare. But, I strongly feel that we should not lose site of the local audience, and, to a large extent, respond to their demand. Otherwise, if it becomes a case of us controlling content because it is more interesting for the web platform (secondary audience) then I feel the project begins to stray into areas of exploitation.

Alexander Nikolić:

All these situations and also the people we met and who made this performance possible in that way it happend, and was documented, like Sam Hopkins, Fred Otienu and Julius Mwelu, we realized, that to work with media, in this space, is inevitable. Here in Mathare it makes most sense. All that i had in mind, working with archives and media, came together here, and we invented SLUM-TV. More as an archive, and as a production of Newsreels than a neighborhood TV, as the people there watch TV in forms of public viewing. They watch English soccer and American blockbusters, we thought its easy to apply strategies from the early days of TV in Europe, where almost every broadcast or screening in the cinema, was accompanied with a newsreel, and to add it up, with the digital archive, where it won't be lost, and in future, when mobile phones will have better cameras, videos could be uploaded from everywhere

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Until now, you found the support to bring equipment to the Mathare community and stay there a period to share with them skills and procedures of productions and distribution. How do you plan to develop SLUM-TV in the future?

Alexander Nikolić:

I think, the future is open. Friends from Rio, Brazil, who did a film in a favela in Rio, want to start up a similar project and also to use our database, so i guess, in

future it can be that SLUM-TV is the link between projects, who work similar to us. Also it's the same, or even easier to host mp3 files than video files, so it can function also as database to exchange radio shows, or audio interviews.

Lukas Pusch:

We can not say how the project will really work... so we first plan some little steps. One technical workshop. Just some video material from the people in Mathare... maybe once a month or a week... shown on some public screenings in Mathare... and later we ll put it on the internet... and maybe connect it with other similar projects in Brazil or India.

Sam Hopkins:

Being the local partner I am particularly interested in its long-term prospects. But I think, rather than develop a five year plan for something we are barely beginning it is perhaps sensible first to see how the workshop and the first few screenings go. If it is successful, and if there is potential, then I suppose we will have to try and source more funds, or look towards a commercially viable tv program which we sell to local networks, as well as screening in the public space/s. I think I have covered the second two parts to this question earlier on.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

You talk about the intention to form something that you call "Capitalism realism". Something that interests me for its specific/ local meaning (read: the Mathare context), but also in my mind something that could be without problem transposed to different realities, not necessarily "not occidental" or "not European". How does this construction of a concept work?

Lukas Pusch:

"Kapitalistischer Realismus" is a term founded by Sigmar Polke and Gerhard Richter in the early 60's in opposition to "Socialist Realism" and Kippenberger also used it later My understanding of it is to show capitalism as it is... but without teaching and moralising like Brecht.

In the Vienna Voodoo project I was posing in the white tuxedo in front of the camera... so I did not criticise some bad capitalists but showed even me and us as a part of the system.

Alexander Nikolić:

In the local context, Lukas' work, brings together the layers which exist there. A white suit is normal in Nairobi, as it reflects the sun. You can see many rich, white people in Nairobi, but not in Mathare, so in a way, it functions also locally. The school director who saw Lukas, and how he invited us to visit, almost inspect his school, was a proof that his performance worked out also there. So Capitalist Realism works everywhere. Capitalist Realism exists as long as Socialist Realism exists and was earlier the image of the American way of live. Advertisment, music videos, Hollywood, and all other utopian promises, like in the 60's that in the year 2000, robots would

take over work, no human would have to do physical work anymore, the world will be a paradise. I want capitalist realism to show this paradise.

Sam Hopkins:

To be honest, I am not entirely convinced by this, and I am not even sure I am meant to be. It seems a bit like a gimmick, which probably helped to shift a few editions of Vienna Voodoo but whether it has worth as a tool to represent and communicate the schizophrenic nature of



A still from the film
Nancy's story:
Nancy

During the troubles, Nancy, 7 months pregnant, was evicted from her home. She was left with no food or shelter. Two months later SLUM-TV went to find out from the people of Mathare how we could have let this happen, and why. [6 minutes, May 2008]

Kadar iz filma
Nancy-na priča:
Nancy

Tokom sukoba, Nancy, u sedmom mesecu trudnoće, izbačena je iz svog doma. Ostala je bez hrane i skloništa. Posle dva meseca SLUM-TV je otišao da sazna od stanovnika Matharea kako i zašto smo dozvolili da se to desi. [6 minuta, maj 2008. godina]

a reality where tuxedos can stand by dead Kenyans being robbed, I am not sure.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:
What is the subversion and how could an artist manage it?

Lukas Pusch:

There is no subversion in arts. Art is bourgeois. Arts can not change the world.

Alexander Nikolić:

I agree in parts with Lukas, except there is subversion in art. Art can have a impact on peoples perception of the world. Art can exist where it normally can't exist. It's not the function of art to change the world.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:
Researching on the topic of “contemporary” and postcolonial areas, I started to reflect on how we

Europeans constructed an “image” of Africa that is always not contemporary but more “ethnic” “exotic”. A kind of radical chic vision where Africa is a big, black-people populated continent: similar in every single corner, basically made by big open and natural spaces, where the people are poor but happy, or violent without any reason (see the category “ethnic wars”). And often nothing is mentioned that could reference the big metropolis and its local life and cultural or artistic and contemporary realities. You also talked about the construction of an aesthetic that could shock the European white audience, and that in a way is far from every kind of prototype (also the one of the white and generous man that provide help and civilize the black, poor and grateful man). I think that one of the goals of this project is also to show, in a way, another face of what from outside we imagine as Africa. And also something that you mentioned as “narrative of documenting history” that normally is unspoken or undocumented. What do you think about?

Alexander Nikolić:

History is often written under post-colonial conditions. Oral history is often a source which is forgotten. I see the potential, that a form of narration will be developed, which encounters and supports a form of non-linear narration. Oral history has to enter the visual culture. Storytelling in the moving image.

Lukas Pusch:

One goal of SLUM-TV might be something like a oral history of the slum. When the people in Mathare start filming their lives in Mathare. Live there is getting more attention.

Sam Hopkins:

I think I agree with the essence of what you are saying, just not the way you are saying it. Firstly, I would contest your opposition of 'contemporary' with 'ethnicistic'. Ethnicity is still an incredibly formative factor in contemporary, urban identity in Kenya and in the continent as a whole. Witness the riots in Mathare at the end of last year where *Mungiki* gang members clashed with rival *Taleban* gang members and slaughtered many people.

Julius described seeing piles of dead bodies every day. Gang membership is along ethnic lines. Look at local politics, at the insistent voting by ethnicity, look at the huge recent commemoration of Mau Mau heroes such as Dedan Kimathi, which takes place now purely because he was of the same ethnicity as the present government. But I do agree with what you are saying about the exotic, that the western world can only really understand Africa through a few, very limited, stereotypes; poor and happy, poverty-ridden, gruesome wars, safari. Although, it is equally true that many Kenyans, who have not had the opportunity to travel, understand the rest of the world through equally limiting stereotypes; rich and generous, rich and cruel, etc.

And yes, for me certainly, one of the goals is to show a face of Africa that does not conform to the aforementioned stereotypes. And inasmuch as stereotypes are a product of media, then we have a chance at challenging them. But, I also feel that the viewer often projects stereotypes onto the images themselves. Seeing can be a very active process, rather than just the passive reception of stimuli which we then convert into data. To a large extent people see what they think they are going to see. So, a knee-jerk reaction when they see images of Mathare is going to be to grab for some previously assimilated stereotypes of poverty and danger. Hopefully when our content proves this not to be all of the picture, that actually a lot of people have a real laugh in the slum, it might add shades of grey to their black and white picture. Maybe even some colour.

Understanding aesthetic in this context as the way the newsreels will actually look, I am not sure the extent to which we can distance ourselves from prototypes. It is true; the producers of these newsreels will be young people from Mathare, guys who have had a different visual education from Alex, Lukas and myself for example. But we have to think about what their references are? And what aesthetic they will try to recreate? I think international (American) films and TV, particularly music tv, will strongly inform their visual aesthetic. Whilst of course they will appropriate what appeals to them as individuals, and the content is vastly

different, I think we should not think that they are producing culture in a vacuum. They are linked to all the established prototypes of representation.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

Another point of view in which this project could be discussed and presented is the “new media art” point of view: you’ll provide to the Mathare people cameras, videocameras, computers and such, equipments for the audio/video production and distribution. I think SLUM-TV power resides, on the other side, in the use of really cheap and basic technology as medium to construct a fast self-representation and self-narration, more than every kind of new media theoretical argumentation. What do you think about the fact of being involved in this “new media” milieu, often focused more on pure technology and theoretical disquisitions? And do you like to be mentioned as “new media artist”?

Alexander Nikolić:

There is no New Media art. New media art doesn't exist.

Lukas Pusch:

No. SLUM-TV is a social media project. Not art. I don't believe in social romantics of Josef Beuys “soziale plastik”-stuff and everybody is an artist.

Sam Hopkins:

I agree with you in that 'new media' is often more about the technology than it is about the use of that technology. The technology precedes the use for it, in a way. I think the difference here is that we identified some concerns, some issues we wanted to work with in Mathare, and applied the appropriate technology. In this case the technology succeeds the idea.

I do not generally describe myself as a new media artist. I vary the media I use tremendously in response to the work I am doing. But, new media has come to mean new technology, which does not represent me.

Lucrezia Cippitelli:

You say that you're an artist more interested in process than in the production of aesthetic products, always

focused on political layers through public space interventions and collaborative practices. Before SLUM-TV I just mention Under the bridge and Serious Pop. Can you talk me more about the process that bring you to construct and realize this projects?

Lukas Pusch:

This is may be true for Alex. I've a different position on that. *Serious pop* and *Under the bridge* will tell you something.

Alexander Nikolić:

As a theoretical person i'm more interested in the process. I think the art piece has to make the process visible. As an artist i'm also interested in the product.

Serious Pop was a research project, which researched appropriation in South-East Europe, a kind of analysis of the impact of Art and music on popular culture, linked with establishing a digital archive on the net, with music and lyrics from different music groups, who were linked to several different movements. Groups like *Laibach*, *NSK* earlier in the 80's, or *Darkwood Dub* from Belgrade in the 90's, who played in front of 100000 people, on demonstrations against the Milosevic Regime in Serbia. The role of media, and the role of the artist, if the situation changes. Also to analyse that paradoxical situation that sometimes you have Fine Art, where it is not possible.

Under the bridge, was a series of interventions in Belgrade, November 2004, which ended on the last day with a few performances next to an illegal settlement,. As around 2000 people live there, without energy and water it can be seen as a similar area to Mathare. I guess one day, if we find more money, we can provide them with cameras too, and there will be a Belgrade division of SLUM-TV.

Sam Hopkins:

I too am more interested in process rather than product, but I still believe in 'producing'. Not in the sense of producing for consumption but more in the sense of putting into form. I find that by finding a form for various process-led projects I have engaged in, I have better understood the. Processes can be very difficult to envisage and understand if they are formless.

WORKING TITLE

AFTER a year of existence and more than two years since the idea was born, SLUM-TV has really gained momentum and become more established. This is very exciting. Almost every week, I see the members developing their abilities, I see the stories getting better and I see our resources expand.

However, at the same time as this growth is occurring, I find it increasingly hard to talk about the project. This is not due to me losing faith in the idea, but because the context I am presenting it in is mainly that of pitching the idea to funders. And these discussions invariably revolve around the same key themes; 'empowerment of the youth', 'job creation in the urban slums' and 'giving a voice to the voiceless'. These are admirable goals but I am tired of reducing the project to these specific terms.

So this is either a warning or maybe a disclaimer, or perhaps an excuse. In this article I am not going to sell the project, I am not going to tell you why it is so important and I am not going to try and convince you. Actually, I am going to do the opposite and talk about some of the challenges that we have to negotiate. This is a process, and processes involve encountering and negotiating challenges. What I hope to do here is look at how the recent political crisis affected the role of SLUM-TV, reflect on what impact my position as local coordinator has had, and briefly address the dynamic of my relationship with the participants.

The beginning of 2008 was a very unstable period in Kenya. The recent election results had been contested by the opposition and the country seemed to be descending into the worst inter-ethnic violence that it had experienced since independence. From the perspective of SLUM-TV this was a context that forced us to address what we were really trying to do. From being a small grassroots media initiative, focusing on local concerns, we were suddenly located in the middle of the biggest story in the international press. Mathare, where we are based, saw some of the worst violence in Kenya.

Thus we were faced with a dilemma. On the one hand, we were perfectly placed to get footage and material that would be simply impossible for other journalists, and thus tell a more full story of what was happening. On the other hand, every other journalist in Kenya was focusing on the violence, and the stories of solidarity



Sam Hopkins setting up the screening
[Mathare, 8.10.2007]

Sam Hopkins priprema projekciju
[Mathare, 8.10.2007]

and assistance between different ethnic groups were not being told.

We make our decisions on a consensus basis and had several meetings during this stage. From the very beginning, almost all the members were adamant about representing the stories that were not being represented. Again and again members talked about 'telling the other half of the story'. So this is what we set out to do. Although we could not hold screenings until April (public gatherings had been banned by the government) the members set about covering stories, which moved beyond the 'machete-wielding native' cliché, and looked at the courage and mutual assistance of everyday people in the slums.

The result of this was our *Peace Newsreel*¹, which we screened on Friday May 25th containing stories such as *Mr. Onyango's Neighbors* about an old resident of Mathare who refused to leave an ethnically mixed area where neighbors no longer trusted one another and *Tell Tale for Peace* about a workshop in which young men who were swept up in the violence tried to address why this happened. Almost all the stories focused on issues of solidarity and grassroots efforts to heal rifts within the community, as had

been the decision taken by the members. I had only been there to help them achieve what they decided... or had I?

One of my key criteria for running the project has always been to be as 'invisible' as possible. I see my role as that of a facilitator, someone who is there to make things possible for the members; to train and offer assistance but not to manage or direct. However, the very real danger of death for these young men and women if they got caught in the wrong place made me critically re-evaluate this position. Being older than the participants (they are predominantly in their early 20's) and actually being an initiator meant that I was in a very real position of responsibility. If the consensus of the group had been to go and cover the troubles, to get as close to the action as possible, would I have been comfortable? Would I have been placing the members in danger? On the other hand, the members are all adults, and in fact, a couple of them did go and cover the clashes and got exclusive material which earned them a lot of money from foreign news bureaus.

Strongly related to this issue of responsibility is, of course, an issue of power relations. How 'free' are the decisions of the participants here? To what extent am

I unwittingly influencing the outcome of the meetings? The fact that the consensus of the members was to cover the 'positive' stories to some extent concerned me. Being honest, this is the outcome I would have preferred. I began to wonder if I had, subconsciously, manipulated the participants into this decision. Yet I felt that I had been scrupulously careful to be impartial in meetings, to try and represent the pros and cons of both approaches and to not let my feelings be known. However, humans are perceptive and I cannot rule out the possibility that I affected the decision of the group. On the other hand, would a whole group of young, free thinking men and women have their opinions swayed by the unexpressed thoughts of the coordinator?

I do not really have an answer to this. My approach is to be aware that this could be the case, to be as sensitive as possible and also to accept that absolute impartiality as probably impossible. Also, although the members are quite 'vulnerable' in this situation, and could be the victims of an unbalanced power relationship, I think it is also slightly patronizing to expect self-exploitation from them. These issues of exploitation are intrinsic to many artist-led participatory projects but I think

it is important to at least the consider the thought that participants have an agenda as well. Perhaps these endeavors are not so much collaborations as alliances, where both parties have a certain amount of agency for decision and change making.

Another good illustration of how this 'non-influential facilitator' role has been compromised is the context of the present newsreel. However, whilst in this previous example my impartiality, if at all, had been subconscious, here it was a very conscious decision. The newsreel has the theme of DIY culture. This is not a theme that the members chose, but one that they have responded to. However, one of our main criteria at the outset of the project was not to define content. Within the development context, most participatory media initiatives stipulate what the projects should be about e.g. HIV, Gender mainstreaming, Water, Sanitation. We wanted to distance ourselves from these 'NGO aesthetics' and to give the members proper creative input into the content. Yet, here we are providing

a theme. Are we not acting in the same way as the NGO's that we scorned?

DIY culture is such a broad theme and encompasses so many facets of life in Mathare, from home-brewed alcohol to pirate cinemas to shoes made from old tires, that it does not really restrict what the members want to work on. Secondly, a critical difference between DIY culture and issues such as HIV and Water is that this has a positive feel to it and highlights the resourcefulness and ingenuity of people in the slum, as opposed to documenting the plight of HIV patients and the pollution of the water.

But perhaps these differences are cosmetic and the key issue is that of methodology; that we had somehow restricted the content. I think this is a valid criticism, and responding to this I should start by first stating that this was a very practical decision. We are short of funds, and that really affects the motivation of the members as we can barely pay them.

We received a commission to make a series of short films about DIY culture and it seemed a good solution. This way we would be able to carry on production and pay the members a good fee. And again, returning to this issue of the agency of the participants, I think there would have been a sense of reluctance if they had not been keen. This was not the case at all and this newsreel has generated the most content so far!

So, whether it is subconscious or conscious, implicit or explicit, I think the role of a coordinator in a project like this is always going to face issues of power, manipulation and exploitation. These are unavoidable and have to be negotiated in relation to criteria that you, as initiators, establish. At the same time, being a work in progress, some situations cannot be anticipated and these criteria may have to be reformed in response to changes in the context. Pragmatism, rather than a compromise should be seen as a very useful tool for process-based work.

I also feel these issues of exploitation are particularly prevalent at the initial stages of participatory work. As I begin to slowly withdraw from my capacity as initiator, a process that I anticipate will take place over the next two years; the level of the engagement of the members will hopefully increase to fill this absence. Following this logic, perhaps participation can only be fully achieved when I have actually stepped out of the project. Until then, I hope I can continue as I have until now; making some progress, encountering problems, finding solutions, some of which work, some of which do not. For those new problematic situations, we try new approaches, see if these work, and so on. It is a bit like walking backwards through a landscape, things become clear only as you progress, and occasionally you trip on an unanticipated patch of uneven ground. But so far we have managed to carry on going forward, and the landscape that is revealed has been worth the occasional stumble.

¹ I was actually away for most of this period and a friend and colleague, Emily Hughes who coordinated the project from mid January to mid April, produced

“You look as fucking pasha man! Roma and Blacks are carrying your colonial K.u.K. dreams”¹

LET'S start with the beginning. Long before we have the opportunity to present our Project SLUM-TV in Novi Sad and Belgrade, an image is already there. Thanks to Zampa di Leone a broader spectrum of people, already believe to know, what they will have to deal with if they attend our presentations. But the inclusion of this image, is not pure opportunism characterized with the old Marxist pejorative², more another opportunity to open the field, interpret that image, and draw conclusions on the scene, which produces such a critique, like Fahim Amir³ describes it as, either a sniper-like critique ... or a cheap post-adolescent one, from the safe position of the hideout. Anyway, i totally agree with Fahim Amir, that Zampa di Leone is very funny and one of the most interesting art and cultural jamming collectives on the Balkan, but here, maybe for the first time, his comic fails Yes it is funny and intelligent, but it is as true as the Serbian joke that Serbia is in Africa. The

interesting thing here, is not whether Zampa is right or not, or even funny, the thing is that in that image you are missing. Yes you! We are all together exploiting that for theoreticians fancy subjects/objects living in the slums, either in Africa or in your neighbourhood.According to many famous theoreticians the most fancy subjects or objects are living in the slums, in Africa or your neighbourhood, and we are all complicit in exploiting them I love Zampa's strip as he connected my activist and artistic practice in a very good way. Belgrade *Gazela*, where the final event of *Under the Bridge* 2004 happened, was indeed a kind of a new starting point of my activism. There we, as the artist collective Biro, founded by Vladan and Rena Jeremic and myself, invited the whole of Belgrade to join us at *Gazela* for the final event of *Under the Bridge*. With an interdisciplinary approach, we accomplished our mission quite well. Although we were mostly ignored by the established fine artists and curators, and

crazy stories and gossip was spread, that we work for the German Secret Service, as our project was sponsored by the *Friedrich Naumann Stiftung*, a few hundred people enjoyed our 5 day project. A few refugees and Roma invited us into their temporary houses, and they told us, how we were the first Serbians and other people to visit them, without any reason. With reason they meant, that usually the only Serbs visiting them, are either social workers and first-aid services, so people who are there with a clear agenda, and leave as fast as they can, if they come at all.. I don't state here, that we didn't have any agenda: we had an explicit agenda, and our agenda was to sneak into public space, to research, to analyse and to intervene and if it happens to be open for new collaborations. Unfortunately, we were not able to start a longer term cooperation and also our cooperation on Biro broke apart, I still tried to organize an intervention together with locals from the *Gazela* settlement but without any luck. It was easier to attract

Students from the class of Prof. Marina Gržinić, Eduard Freudmann and Can Gülcü⁴, to work with or at the *Gazela*, than to find allies in Serbia.

The Zampa in ourselves would probably say here, that its easier to make money with transgender and homosexual issues than with the empowerment of minorities, or that bourgeois engagement for homosexual rights is closer to the issues of the leading class and therefore more successful. Logical no? Ok, we see, organizing an a successful and peaceful Gay Pride Parade in Belgrade is a visual urban code, which easily would be distributed as one proof, that the Serbian society is a civilized one, which shares similar cultural codes and is a logical part of all the societies which can hold Gay Pride Parades in their capitals. Yet, as in the rich countries, it would not solve all problems, and after the parade, discrimination would of course go on, on different levels, but stimulate the public



ALEX NIKOLIĆ



discourse on different levels. Anyway, the image would be a sufficient one and could be easily communicated.

On the other side, all of you remember, that the *Gazela* settlement should have disappeared, before the Basketball championship was held, so no foreign visitor could be distracted by its disturbing appearance. 80 industrial containers, who are also contaminated as an image in various ways, were already prepared, to serve as new temporary housing locations, when we faced an eruption of typical racist resentment by the potential

new neighbours, orchestrated by the Serbian radical party SRS to sabotage solidarity. The local politicians in charge decided to leave the situation as it was. The shame of having such an image was small and the positive image of a clean *Gazela* would be unimportant. In a way, there is no image; according to Roma NGO's there are 150 illegal settlements in Belgrade, so we are left, speaking with Slavoj Žižek, with the nothing which generates something. In my eyes then, a powerful situation was achievable for us, and that was a commonly generated Artist in Residency Space under the bridge, with

the anticipation of the local inhabitants, and as the final event, a traditional Finish sauna on the river Sava. Installed by Seppo Renval, a well-known Finish artist, who works with traditional culture, recycled found footage and material and who represented Finland at the Venice (1999) and at the São Paulo (2002) Biennials⁵. Having this big shot and big name of Seppo Renval on our underground side of Art and Activism, would have had a serious impact in Serbian media scene⁶. Imagine that space under the bridge, turned into a traditional finish sauna, during the mainstream representational

culture events, which happened during the *Nordic Balkan switch* period. Well the City of Belgrade never even replied to our project proposal, and due to my own problematic economic al situation, it was not possible to continue such work or search for new allies.

The reason, why I write such a long introduction, without losing too many words on SLUM-TV yet, is that since the beginning of SLUM-TV for me it has been clear, that such a project would have been also well-received and needed in Serbia. Although, minorities have their own media, or are practically better involved in the media production than in some EU countries, the missing images of their inhuman living conditions, prove once again, that its a discriminatory society with strong class borders, implementing all known phenomena, such as those who have been formerly discriminated against are most likely to discriminate against the ones who are below them. SLUM-TV could serve there very well, and provide them with an option to take their visual representation into their own hands and to document their existence.

SLUM-TV donated a 3-chip high quality camera, one fancy laptop for editing, provided an introduction into digital video editing, organised an office, organised public screenings, film-festivals, is preparing two international workshops, one on media-hacking and internet-publishing, the second on the development and implementation of a self-developed open-source software, in cooperation with subvideo, is publishing on: <http://www.slum-tv.info/> where the local production is also available in parts as the public archive of oral-history. All happened and happening in Mathare, Nairobi, Kenya, one of the biggest and most densely populated slums on earth, from 2006.

Since mid 2007, SLUM-TV is, depending on the political circumstances, fully operational, low-tech style. We try to finance a monthly production of one newsreel and one sit-com. SLUM-TV formed a team of between 15 – 20 persons, who are also paid to work and produce. In the next year, we want to broaden our audience by distributing newsreels and sit-coms over African Pirate Channels, and make SLUM-TV Nairobi self-sustainable. In the future we want to offer cooperation worldwide, invite different initiatives to make use of our digital archive and of the software we developed.

contact us: info@slum-tv.org

1 Comment by Dr. Agan Papic/ strip by Zampa di Leone from <http://www.eroticunion.org>
 2 Sezgin Boynik 2006: Learning from Underground <http://www.modukit.com/out/kakogod/index.php?id=92>
 3 Fahim Amir: "The viewer is left clueless as to whether to embrace this sniper-like critique of the politics of aesthetic distinction, the „dispositiv" (Foucault) of the creative „author", its attacks on the definitorial light-towers, hermeneutic monopolists, heroes and heroines of the art-world or to reject it as cheap post-adolescent pillorying from the safe position of the hideout, that levels all nuances that matter." (<http://www.metamute.org/en/node/11500> – Mute Magazine 2008)

4 You can order their book at: <http://www.beogradgazela.net/de/index.php> also find informations there about the release of the book in Serbian, English and Romansh; Prof. Marina Gržinić teaches at the class of post-conceptual Art Practices at the Academy of Fine Art Vienna, Austria.
 5 See: http://www.drummy.com/v2/heavysnowflakes_bios.html
 6 I write here media scene and not art scene, as I believe that the reception of the Art World is not too important. Ok, some articles make life probably easier, but the general audience is much more important

THE GRAND COALITION

“Safari
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A safari (pronounced /səˈfari/) is an overland journey. It usually refers to a trip by tourists to Africa, traditionally for a big-game hunt and in more modern times to watch and photograph big game and other wildlife as a safari holiday. There is a certain theme or style associated with the word, which includes khaki clothing, belted bush jackets, pith helmets or slouch hats, and animal skins—like leopard’s skin.”

IT felt weird when I got the invitation to write about Slum-TV, from Dušica Dražić, in accompanying documentation being signed as the author of the project. I contacted Alex Nikolić, who alongside Lukas Pusch and Sam Hopkins was the author of the project as I was aware of. The notion of the “the author” was not something I connected immediately with this project as such, as I knew about it’s “participatory” and “collaborative” premises and the aim of the three of them to be “the initiators” rather than “authors”. At the end everything was fine, and I became one of the elements of this long “authorship” chain - I am “the author” of the text for the project of presenting the project whose “author” is Dušica regarding the project whose “authors” are Alex and Lukas and Sam and others I may not know of, project itself being that the “authors” of the video content should be the residents of the slum (worth visiting: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slum>) somewhere in Kenya. So what kind of “author” am I, and how do I relate as “the author” towards “the authors” in Mathare, where they record stuff on video and present it in local cinemas and online? What my position regarding all this could possibly be? And who cares, really, for this “authorship” disease anyway?

In the lack of a more articulate orientation, I’ll do what as a friend I could - will perform the search around some keywords and try to make some hopefully meaningful associations around the project, never slipping from my mind the awareness of my, in all senses of the word, personal and “external” position on the subject... So what do I know about Slum-TV and the slum of Mathare, what could I possibly contribute?

A fake promise is also a reality

During yet another of his stormings trough Belgrade a little more than a year ago I asked Alex about his plans for the next period - always a source of delightful and unexpected answers. To remind you, Alex is a kind of person who talks trough the medium with the famous late curator Harald Szeemann, and who knows where the severed head of Gavrilo Princip, a man whose assassination on Franz Ferdinand started the First World War, lies hidden. He is really doing that stuff. No kidding.

- Oh, I go to Africa - he said. - To Kenya.
- Really? What for?
- Well, to make television - was his short answer.



A drunk man at the DIY screening
[Mathare, 23.05.2008]

Pijanac na “Uradi sam” projekciji
[Mathare, 23.05.2008.]

Then I off course smiled, as one does encountering something which looks perfectly fine in the semantical order of things, but doesn't quite fit in the everydayness of what is considered as “a common logic” of the cultural codes we are programmed to use... During the months to follow, Alex and Lukas went to Nairobi’s vast slum of Mathare. And they made some television. My insight into the project remained to be limited to these small windows of communication when Alex was passing by, or to the short snippets of online communication. Of course, later came slum-tv.info, but somehow I preferred to retain this more direct communication with somebody who is actually inside the project. Was this a consequence of my hesitation to accept what I might have considered as another “research” project, both regarding the “different cultural identities” and “the use of media”? No, definitely not. I don’t believe in any of those memes, and I know Alex better than that. And it wasn’t for I could feel that it was another of “real activism” projects, placing “non ideological” infrastructure and capacity building as the only premise behind the action, relying on “human rights” as a non-critical platform to temporary allocate

funds and labour from “developed” to “developing”, making a kosher headlines and helping burning some surplus of resources. No no no. Never crossed my mind. The more I think, more and more it appears that I reacted in the similar way to what I did when being the invited speaker in “Parliaments of Art”, one of my first symposiums ever - ahead of my talk, I asked around netznetz.net network if there is somebody in Vienna to borrow me a pith helmet, a safari hat, you know, the straw-made one we could see in “brave-white-men-conquering-the-wild-and-unknown” kind of movies. Being invited to talk about self-organization and positioning of independent cultural scene of Vienna towards the city authorities and public funding, I felt the need to underline and perform my “external” position. Not because I ever thought that there is the problem of the language, or cultural codes, that will be a point of misunderstanding and miscommunication, or that I felt that the experiences of this Viennese network are so unique that it all demands to be articulated exclusively from the inside - quite the contrary. What I wanted to make perfectly clear is that whatever I, or other foreign guests of the symposium will say or share with the local people, will not affect

us directly - we come, we talk and “advice”, and then we go back, leaving netznetz.net people to deal with the consequences of whatever decision they made.

At the end, I couldn't find a pith helmet - but I borrowed a big professional camera to have it hanging around my neck while I was at the podium, hopefully making my “tourist” position clear. It felt very solid. And heavy, for the bad back sort of guy like I am...

The same “weight”, the same deliberate exposure to uneasiness I imagine felt Lukas Pusch during his first visit to Mathare. Watching the photos Alex provided of Lukas walking around this hot and humid part of Nairobi in white buttoned-up tuxedo and black bow tie, doing his “Vienna Voodoo” performance, it did look like performing the need to be straightforward about what was happening there - it obviously was no attempt to false represent any positions. Not covering in any way their origin of “outsiders” to Mathare, even underlining it as much as possible trough the clothing (and possibly committing a sort of self-sacrifice by sweating to death), both the attention and the confidence of the



The judges announcing the winner of the Mtaa Film Festival, a competition between young filmmakers in Nairobi, hosted by SLUM-TV

Žiri objavljuje pobjednika Mtaa filmskog festivala, takmičenje mladih filmskih autora u Najrobiju u organizaciji SLUM-TVa

local people was won. White people in bow ties and tuxedos present no danger to appropriate the voice of the people of Mathare. It was one time too many, I presume, that some “sudden friends” came there bringing their surpluses and leftovers, presenting themselves as “the one” with the local people, taking smiling photos showing the success of understanding and recognizing their “projects” achieved, and rushing back to their air-conditioned hotel rooms to write praising reports to the funders or to boost their careers of journalists or artists “working on the edge”. But, maybe more important, the start with bow tie and tuxedo gave the project the peace of mind and a clear conscience - they came from Vienna, and they will be back to Vienna. No appropriation, no false comradeship, no fake responsibility... No fake promises.

Subaltern Subsafari

It happened that during the *Under The Bridge* project, another of actions initiated by Alex, I visited surreally cold surroundings of a cardboard Roma settlement below the Belgrade's Gazela bridge together with Kathrin Grasser, the

friend and photographer from Vienna. She did a series of photos of the event and the scenery, often pointing the camera at the merry bunch of Gipsy kids enjoying the happening and the attention. The problem arose when the kids started to gather around Kathrin, demanding that she flip her camera over so they could see the pics. It wasn't possible to explain that she used an analogue, film-based camera (the same one I borrowed for my “tourist” talk in Vienna), and that there is no display on which they could see the shots immediately. They refused to believe, and apparently felt that Kathrin, for some reason, did not want them to see the images. This small dispute and discontent over the technology limitations of the analogue camera was somehow a very significant detail in my understanding of the scope of the common language provided by contemporary culture and technology. One of the things fighting for attention of my undernumbered brain cells at the period was the notion of “subalternity”, as coined by Antonio Gramsci around 1935. And later it became very “sticky” when thinking about Slum-TV to consider this term. Originally, it was meant to describe the inability to communicate, in the terms

of language of symbols and culture in general, between “developed” culture of both educated minority of Italian bourgeoisie and progressive intellectuals, and “subaltern” cultural majority of Southern Italian peasants. The usual historical interpretation is that the term itself was being introduced by Gramsci to replace the traditional class-related terms of the language of Marxism, so it would be below the radar of fascist censorship of Italy at the time (considering the geopolitical and historical situation, looks like that a vast majority of non-fascist cultural actors more or less lived in prisons at the time, so was Gramsci). This alleged complete lack of common, shared knowledge, or the presumption that any cultural codes or symbols could not possibly be translated to “the other side”, results with the exclusion from institutionalized political life and cultural communication, both in the case of communication between subaltern entities and the “official” representatives of the society and between different subalternities themselves (as each of them presumably couldn't communicate outside its distinctive cultural codes), thus effectively placing the subaltern entities outside of any possibility to

become a relevant political subject. For the average educated person (by the standards and codes of post-1848 Europe, or mandatory elementary scientific facts-oriented and secular education as introduced in post-colonial United States, for example - but also by any standards of any systematized traditional educational system), it should present a Big Void, a cultural black hole, and trying to exchange any package of information should resemble shouting at the monolithic wall of this fortress of subalternity... Furthermore, it meant the complete inability to influence the process of evolution of those distinctive social groups and to even observe and understand what culture subaltern entities developed, as the language was not possible to be learned and applied outside of within a particular subalternity. Now you may understand better why my brain cells were fighting a dirty civil war between each other - just thinking about the possibility to find a crack in this presumed condition, uniting subalternities and providing them with a voice, a tool to blitzkrieg the corrupted politics and culture of contemporary 'order of things', if not by any theoretical and social achievement then by the sheer



Screening of one of the films produced as part of the Mtaa film festival [Mathare, 19.05.2008]

Projekcija filma snimljenog u okviru Mtaa filmskog festivala [Mathare 19.05.2008.]

power of numbers - or just the idea itself of dealing with “incommunicado” entities - it all sounded very seductive and sexy. You know, in a way like 7 year old boy like myself, raised on historical fiction of classic popular culture, could daydream of the possibility of encountering the new boundaries of the Universe in his trusty Millennium Falcon-like spaceship, or at least discovering the remaining secrets of unknown parts of the Earth.

But this act of Gipsy kids helped settling my brain cells civil unrests, albeight slightly bringing the disappointment of a kid who suddenly learns that there are no secrets left to be discovered, and that the stroke of luck of bumping onto something mysterious and never heard of will never happen – the kids knew exactly how digital cameras, that sophisticated tool to generate the signs of the language of images, work. They obviously did not care for the history of the tool - why should they? - and they might not be interested or able to use it in any explicitly political way, yet, but the language of the technology was perfectly understood and accepted by 5 year old Roma kids living in a cardboard settlement under one bridge in “developing” and messy area of Balkans. I see no reason for this to be

different under any other circumstances. No culture is isolated. There can be a whole philosophy developed around if one society built, for example, the culture of slow or fast drugs and related rituals, and the sources, implications and consequences of that, or about the possible initial misunderstandings between various different historical and geopolitical specificums; but it is hard if not impossible to find the culture which does not recognize, in however distinctive language, that it is on drugs. Equally hard proved to be to discover, even to theoretize, on the culture of the society not based on some fundamental relations towards the notions of ownership or property. So there goes the subaltern territory of “impossibility” to communicate down the Sava river, clearly replaced by what really is a problem - the Roma kids just were not in the possession and widespread use of the technology, they were in no way deprived of understanding how it works. In a similar manner, they are not unable to understand the development of contemporary society - they are just born deprived of the tools to “take part” in it, the tools mainly embodied in the accumulated wealth and power. They were being tagged by the “wrong” skin colour, accent or personal names. But,

most important of all - they were being robbed of their entitled right to education and communication. Both things are perfectly possible to be achieved, and those two things are exactly what I think Slum-TV is working with. The people of Mathare are in no lack of the “proper” language - as a matter of fact, it is the same language we all use; it is not the words that they don't have, but the voice... And it is not the aim of Slum-TV to give them one, despite what the language of project proposals might say. People of Mathare shall and will choose and use their voice themselves. Consider Slum-TV a little “technical” help here and there...

Hollywood, Bollywood, Nollywood... Kennywood? No, it's Riverwood.

Speaking of technology and culture, and on a second thought, maybe Gramsci was right, in a way. From the perspective of 1935, when books had to be invested in, written, printed, published, distributed, paid for, and finally they could be read, If one knew to read in languages - considering this state as a permanent order of things, the situation might have appeared to be desperately unsolvable. But is anything really different now? And no doubt that

today capitalism is stronger then ever. So are the consequences of it. Let's look at post-colonial Kenya... Instead of dozens of languages spoken by too-often mutually hostile ethnicities, the legacy of what was known as British East Africa Protectorate is the English language. Alongside Swahili, Esperanto of it's kind developed trough the trade with Arabs, Persians, Indians, Germans and Britts, it did help forming the wide and interconnected sphere for economical and cultural exchange. First to serve for the purposes of colonization, off course. On the other hand, let us not forget that this provided tens of millions of people to start talking between themselves without much mediation and interpretation. The language became the strong tool to resist the manipulated and corrupted politics of identities, often designed to maintain colonial relations and to smoke-screen what was precisely defined as class relationships within the society. Also, the news, positions and viewpoints from abroad became much more transparent to the local people. If we ever could discuss subalternities before, after the likes of “Redykyulass” satirical national TV show on Swahili during 90's, introducing the public critique of the current government for the first time in contemporary political history, the possible power relations are changed irrevocably. What to think of the “identity” politics of the myriad of distinctive language-oriented ethnical cultures? It is not the aim of this text to “raise the case” of local languages VS global dominance of international English, but it surely remains an issue to be discussed. Here's the short remark by Jimmy “Jimbo” Wales, from the interview we did last year - the project of Wikipedia he initiated in 2001 is running on 255 languages at the moment...

“...I don't think we have to make a choice between preserving your own language or joining the global economy. I think you can do both - you can maintain local language and local culture but also have a lot of people speaking English, so you can do business internationally and participating more in global culture, and I think that it seems to be quite possible for lots of cultures to receive education, which is in two languages. Sometimes it's French in some parts of Africa, but increasingly around the world it's English, and I think that's fine. It's fine as long as we don't imagine that local languages are less important. It's just important to know that this is a practical matter. In the early days of Wikipedia we used to be very concerned about the problem that all of our international communication was in English, but there's no other solution. It's not the problem of our making, it's the history of the world. The British Empire had a lot to do with it. If you have a Serbian and Italian and the Japanese and they all want to speak to each other, there's only one hope - that they'll speak English. It's an interesting problem.”

<From the interview with Jimmy Wales @slobodnakultura.org>

And it is not just the spoken and written language of symbols that is at the table



Audience at the screening of the *Peace Newsreel* [Mathare, 25.04.2008]

Publika na projekciji *Reportaže mira* [Mathare, 25.04.2008.]

- images, moving or still, became the essential cross-platform language of contemporary culture worldwide. We could witness Nigeria becoming the world's largest movie industry in the matter of years, considering the number of titles, Nollywood producing four times more films than Hollywood, twice as much as Bollywood (note: the income and annual turnover are in quite the opposite order, still). We could witness, as well, a lot of theories interpreting this success, connecting it with installing the favorite neo-liberal cultural meme of 90's, the principles of *creative industries*. Not to discuss the issue further here, let's focus on the perspectives of Kenya. Is there any agenda outlined by businesses and government? Wikipedia entry on Kenya says:

"Film:

Although the government has not been very supportive of the film industry in Kenya, the country offers some of the most spectacular sceneries and can only be compared to South Africa in regard to producing some of the most talented actors and actresses on the African continent. Due to the nonchalant attitude and lack of enthusiasm exhibited by the government, the industry has remained considerably dormant whereby notable

movies shot in the country have been few and far between."

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenya>>

...but on the forum of naijarules.com I found this:

*"06-23-2006, 09:10 PM
posted by: bolanle*

*Kenya: Changing Riverwood
Americans have Hollywood, Indians Bollywood, Nigerians Nollywood and Kenyans Riverwood. Riverwood has become synonymous with film production in Kenya, thanks to its constant supply of short films, mainly musicals and comedies.*

This industry, which deals mainly with drama in local languages - mostly Kikuyu and Dholuo - is increasingly attracting attention and has become an outlet for many upcoming comedians, who would be frowned at by the mainstream media. Riverwood is derived from River Road, where most of the films are made. As for "wood," you know where.

The Riverwood explosion comes as a rude awakening to local formal filmmakers, who appear to have ignored the potential

in the likes of Machang'i, Kihenjo and Githingithia - now household names.

Many of the local formal and invariably donor-funded movie makers, have conceded that Riverwood is the way to go for the local film industry and want to inject more professionalism into it. We are talking of lighting, shooting, editing and so on...."

<<http://www.naijarules.com/vb/ghanaian-movies-other-african-non-nigerian-movies-stars/16706-kenya-changing-riverwood.html>>

It is not just about the potential to produce a certain critical mass of video content, even more important should be how to distribute it and reach the audience – both from the perspective of creating the ideological critique and cultural politics by networking the experiences and opinions, and from the *creative industries* perspective of market and numbers.

So, there should be more than 3.000.000 of internet users and 7.000.000 of mobile phone subscribers in Kenya as we speak - not really impressive numbers if we consider that there are around 38 million of people, but what is impressive is the stellar rate of it's growth, despite the

turmoil of daily politics - and don't forget the collective manner in which a lot of the internet connections are being used. The chains of "pirate" cinemas, besides the (still scarce) broadband Internet, remain to present maybe the most intermediate and deepest-penetrating platform for communicating trough the images. What is actually being communicated here?

"...this is not movies, this is not cinema, this is something else."

A common materialistic standpoint reads that the subject of the desire of one society is always being represented in cultural artifacts trough reflecting precisely that which is perceived as "in the lack of" – in other words, the material scarcity of certain (quite often of a more symbolic than utilitarian value) goods, and related social relations, is what we see being represented most frequently in popular contemporary culture of the certain society. Somehow this claim seems to navigate towards connecting this with exclusively geo-political circumstances (maybe even making a full circle by producing "identities" again?). Then, from there it leads to conclusion that the popular culture of United States, Europe



Audience at the DIY screening
[Mathare, 23.05.2008]

Publika na “Uradi sam” projekciji
[Mathare, 23.05.2008.]



A still from the film
Telltale for peace:
Members of the peace initiative

Young men who took part in the violence came together for a workshop for peace. They discussed why they had been swept up in the violence, and how they could prevent this ever happening again. [4 minutes, May 2008]

Kadar iz filma
Pričaj priču za mir:
Članovi pokreta za mir

Mladići koji su učestvovali u nasilju održali su radionicu za mir. Razgovarali su o razlozima njihovog mobilisanja i kako bi se moglo sprečiti ponavljanje sličnih događaja. [4 minuta, maj 2008. godina]

or Japan is very busy nowadays exploring the possibilities and implications of digital networks, RFID chips, omnipresent surveillance technologies, or dealing with the case of “missing flying cars”, as the unfulfilled promise from 50’s, and that the culture of “underdeveloped” societies of, say, Latin America of Africa or Asia, would mainly deal with more “basic” commodified objects of desire, those which are already being considered fulfilled, “historical” and digested elsewhere, like the material goods presenting the usual living and working set of resources in the “developed” part of the world. And the same goes for “the values of democracy and human rights”, presumably achieved and considered as default condition mainly in the North West of the planet. Is it really like that, is this simple division working? Doing the interview with Ronaldo Lemos, the chairman of the board of iCommons.org and the director of the Center for Technology & Society at the Fundação Getulio Vargas Law School in Rio de Janeiro, but also somebody who has tremendous knowledge about Nigerian movie industry phenomenon, he at one point said, referring to what is described as “the peripheries”:

“...these peripheries can be everywhere. They can be in Brazil, in poor countries, in rich countries, they can be in Eastern Europe, anywhere, it’s not a thing about poor and rich, it can be the peripheries of London, the peripheries of New York, the mix tape markets, all the things that are

emerging out of the pirate radios, it’s the same thing.”

We may argue about if it is “a thing about poor and rich” or not, but obviously using just the traditional geo-political determinants is not working anymore, if it ever did. Even further, the fiction unrelated to the existing “order of things” outside or within the current social and geo-political relations, “the imaginary futures” as Richard Barbrook would say, should present the strong tool bearing the potential of “quantum leap” of one society, developed or not. Restricting such a tool to “bourgeois amusement” dramatically reduces the maneuvering space to compress the necessary time for the evolution of society by appropriating already “developed” positions, and to mobilize wider social groups around the idea of “imaginary futures”. We should not estrange the tool of fiction from those already deprived of material reality... This is not to say that the movies produced around Slum-TV project contain any fiction unrelated with their daily material practices and their desires to approach to what they learned trough the media about “how the future should look like”, being presented trough the images of life elsewhere. It is to keep the gateway open and not “purging” the others out of tools we had the opportunity to use ourselves. So far and as much as I could have seen, Slum-TV movies do speak exactly about Mathare today and hint about the Nairobi of tomorrow; there is no single frame of fiction there. I feel that saying just

“documentary” or “critical” will not do them justice, and I don’t know what I could say more on that particular subject, as I have seen just a few. Sam Hopkins should have a lot of the actual hands-on experience on the matter, and you really should read his excellent text about the project, revealing the impressive range of concerns, from the issues of positioning within Slum-TV’s ad-hoc community to the very content of the movies. And what kind of movies those could be? Let Ronaldo speak again:

“...When I mentioned the Nigerian movie industry to a very well known movie maker in Brazil, he told me “Ronaldo, this is not movies, this is not cinema, this is something else”. I was intrigued, I researched and I found an article by the founder of the Cinémathèque Française, a guy named Henri Langlois. He wrote in 1969 that the true cinema would only emerge when the peripheries would appropriate the means of producing audiovisual content and were able to tell their own stories unmediated. This is the time when the true cinema will emerge. And I sent this article to this famous Brazilian director and he never wrote back to me, so I don’t know what he thinks.”

<From the interview with Ronaldo Lemos
@slobodnakultura.org>

And there we are – we don’t know. What I know is that I do think that this particular fact about how the first and second reel

of Slum-TV movies exactly looks like is not that important right now...

Barack Obama knows best...

...how everything is connected. Just look at his campaign's web site. So we all hope he is aware of how his growing influence might be viewed from inside Mathare. See, Barack's father was the descendant of a family coming from the Luo ethnic group – off course that Mr. Obama is really a genuine resident of the United States, but family names still make all the difference in Kenya. Writing this from post-Yugoslav experience, I think I could have a pretty accurate insight into the situation myself. Lets peek into the Wikipedia once again:

“In 2006, Mathare was damaged by violence between rival gangs the Taliban (not to be confused with the Islamist group of the same name), a Luo group, and the Mungiki, a Kikuyu group. Brewers of

an illegal alcoholic drink, chang'aa, asked the Taliban for help after the Mungiki tried to raise their taxes on the drink; since then, fighting between the two has led to the burning of hundreds of homes and at least 10 deaths. Police entered the slum on November 7, 2006, and the military arrived a day later, but many residents who fled are still afraid to return.

On June 5, 2007, the Mungiki murdered two police officers in Mathare; the same night, police retaliated by killing 22 people and detaining around 100.

Following the controversial presidential elections that took place on December 27, 2007, Luo gangs burned more than 100 homes.”

<<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mathare>>

And now we are back to the economy of Mathare. Off course that it is not about the ethnic or religious origins, really; it is

about being in possession and control over the means of production and the products of work. But still those “identitary” brands of a nation or a confession play a crucial role in obscuring the real and material issues of ownership and exploitation of resources. The “fine balance” of established positions between the gangs on the field producing temporary standstill could allegedly be upset at any time, by any reason; but obviously it will happen either when one of the actors will decide that it is strong enough to push out the others, or if one entity views the escalation of violence as the only way to survive on it's, for some reason, declining market. Any of them possibly being controlled or influenced by the interests from “above”, or “outside”. Having the eyewitness experience of the supreme awkwardness, be it deliberate or not, of the different actors of the international community interfering at Balkans since 1990's, and having some vague idea about the artificial complexity in the articulation of the issues behind

a Grand Coalition <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenya#The_grand_coalition>, established just recently to “reconcile” different interests from all sides, I would be very cautious to claim that the people of Mathare will contemplate their affairs from the cosines of the *creative industries* side of the capitalism anytime soon; but as economical relations on the global level are in the largest turmoil ever, speeding towards open-source capitalism, as much as we should be aware of “our place” in “the order of things”, for the most of us anything, really anything is possible. Where does that leave the lenses of SLUM-TV cameras? Exactly where they are, down at the forefront... Raise your chang'aa and say cheers, everybody!

All the best,
vlidi.
<vladimir.jeric@slobodnakultura.org>



**Gostovanje SLUM-TV-a u Beogradu
i Novom Sadu podržali su**
ERSTE Stiftung, Austrijski kulturni forum
i Dom omladine Beograd.

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