

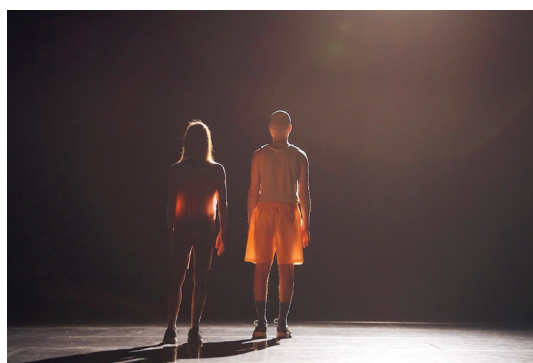
«to be real, an object»

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Silent Trio, Epilogue is the final work in a series, in which artists Christina Ciupke and Darko Dragičević engaged with the heritage of Spomenik monuments spread across the former Yugoslavia and explored the urban, once politically charged ruins of Berlin while participating in the life cycle of trees. I witnessed the work on the 3rd of November when it premiered at Tanzfabrik's Berlin autumn program. My experience of the work is that of tension, balance, the effect of time on the phenomena of how meaning takes form, and a deep sense of coherence. Now, upon starting to write, I am immediately confronted with the incoherent nature of thought. Despite this, I hope that my utterances will transmit the richness of the work. For this reason, I have deliberately left the description of the performance in the dark and utilized a play on the present and past tense.

Before entering the performance space, each member of the audience receives a cup of warm juice, courtesy of a new café opening, and a headset:

How does meaning take form? The performance of Christina Ciupke and Darko Dragičević invites my attention to fall onto the experience of time; the time needed to allow something to come into existence. The simplicity and repetitiveness of the actions performed on the vast stage, with each image concretely existing for an extended period, allows me to enter a process in which meaning gradually takes form and transforms over time. Curiously, the headset highlights this overbearing sense of transitivity; the fluid nature of who we are at each moment. More curiously, I feel no



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«SILENT TRIO, EPILOGUE»
CHRISTINA CIUPKE
& DARKO DRAGIČEVIĆ:

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isolation. Instead, I feel invited to become conscious of my own perception of sound, a deeply private process. An act of connecting to my own sensorial body bridges a tacit connection between me and the performance, bringing my attention on how experience forms, through memories, my self-identity. My body and the memorial monument become alike.

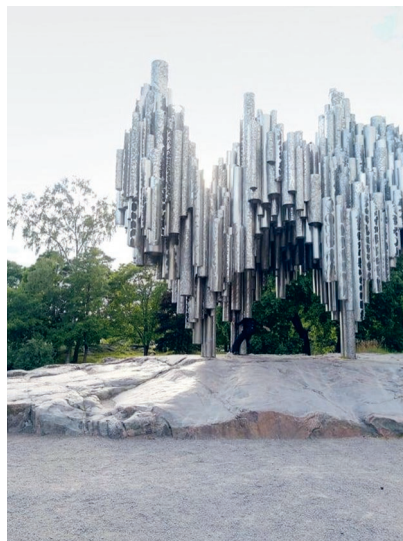
A Spomenik monument is projected. I see a seemingly huge and dark stone. The shape reminds me of a wide bowl or a strange antenna, as if it was either holding the sky or transmitting information between the sky and the earth. I am reminded of a story a friend once told me, about how human cultures understood spiritual communication as a movement of ascending and descending; and how fire signals, through the ascending smoke, were born out of the desire to communicate with the spirits and then, over time, with other humans.

For the Hopi Native North American tribe, the «universe has two basic aspects: that which is manifest and thus more «objective», and that which is beginning to manifest and is more «subjective»». (Franz, Von Marie-Louise) In other words, concrete objects are manifest and belong to the past, whereas inner images, representations and feelings are subjective and leaning towards the future. If so, do meaning and self-identity form in the meeting of the concrete past and the subjective future? The verb «to form» is derived from the Middle English «*formen*», meaning «to create, give life to». Something takes form when given an intention: a will to imagination, to exist in the physical realm. This way, meaning must take on a physical form yet it is in a constant dynamic transformation through the interaction that we have with one another.

On stage, the two bodies appear to be inseparable both from each other and from their shared environment. I experience the rootedness of the monument, and that of the performance. I am brought forth the quality of things, of mattering. I find myself connecting to something that is tacitly subdued, perhaps arising from the abstract nature of the performance and of monuments wherever. In literature, an abstract informs an idea, hinting to the multiplicity, potentiality, and the possibility for something to exist. Seeing that an abstraction excludes information by stripping the object down to what is «essential», the very core of things, the way we encounter abstraction and what it can possibly mean to us depends heavily on our past experiences. Fittingly, the word *monument* is constructed by the PIE *moneie*, meaning «to remind», and the suffix *men* «to think»; literally so, «something that reminds». «A tomb» in Old French.

This hidden multiplicity in meaning aids me to notice the elements of *balancing*: between movement and stillness, the light and the dark, the sound and the silence, the subtle and the gross, the inhale and the exhale, the contraction and the release. Does being in-between mean being in balance? Physiologically, when we stand (in balance), all possibilities of movement exist. The standing figure of the monument evokes the question of how its limit to movement creates a condition to exist in potentiality. The nature of monuments is to be in a constant *tension* between motion (erosion) and the in-ability to move (to shift in location). This brings forth the erosion of thought: not only are our bodies affected by the lived environment - so are our minds. This immense impermanence and logic are made tangible in the performance. By its simple beauty: how attentive the two performers are in their acts and being, and the allowed space and time in every moment, confronts me with a sudden fear of forgetting.

Despite there being no physical touch in the performance, I feel profoundly touched. The concreteness of the two performative bodies reminds me of something I wrote in my diary in the summer 2020: «be real. be an object.» After the performance I *perform* the act of remembering a monument that stands for a personal memory: the Sibelius monument, built by Eila Hiltunen (Passio Musicae, Helsinki, 1967). This monument, too, hangs between the tension of ascension and descension. But most prominently, it invites me to touch it, perhaps because it touches me first.



REFERENCES:
FRANZ, VON MARIE-LOUISE. «TIME: RHYTHM AND REPOSE». THAMES & HUDSON LTD. 1979

@ AINO LEHTONEN: IN THE IMAGE THE AUTHOR AND THE SIBELIUS MONUMENT.