



CLIENT:

Ivana Bago (DeLve)

The seventh person asked to give a commission in the Amela Frankl project “What I bear” was Ivana Bago (DeLve), who sent a mail in which she analyses and re-examines the point of the actual project. The mail is not an explicit commission. However, Ivana Bago wrote: “I think that my mail can in itself be understood as a commission depending on what the response to it is... I raise those questions that might perhaps bring about some self-examination within the project.”

So, is the mail of Ivana Bago (DeLve) a commission, or is it not? Is the artist to fulfil the commission, or not? Is there a work, or not? It is uncertain whether she will organise any kind of exhibition whatsoever and whether the seventh announcement of a project will actually lead to anything. And finally, is DeLve (Ivana Bago) taking any part in the project, or not?

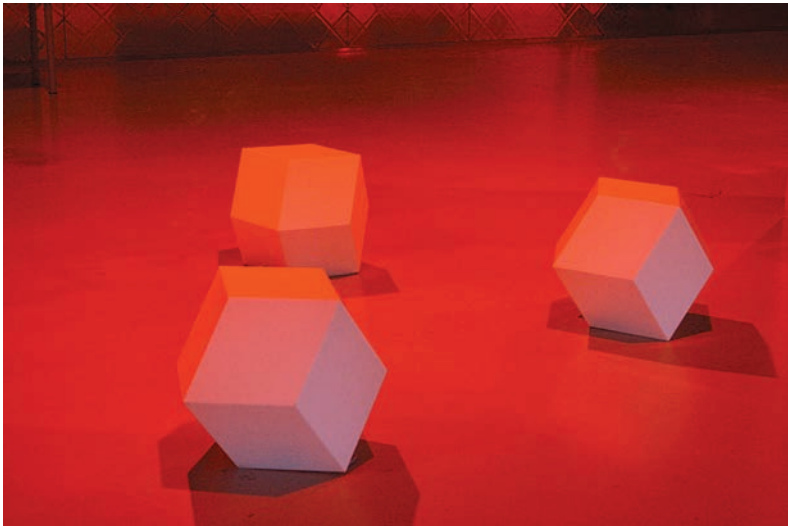
TITLE OF THE WORK:

TAILS / LETTER

Wednesday, April 4, 2012, 6 pm, Extension, Museum of Contemporary Art



7



La Gaité lyrique, Paris • PHOTO: AMANDA FRANKL

July 6, 2011

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Document: email
 From: Amela Frankl
 To: Ivana Bago and Antonija Majača (DeLve)

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Hi Ivana and Antonija,
 I'm writing to you about the *What I Bear* project, and would like to suggest that we meet and talk about your commission for the project. Let me know which day suits you.
 Cheers,
 Amela

August 28, 2011

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Document: email
 From: Amela Frankl
 To: Ivana Bago and Antonija Majača (DeLve)

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Hi Antonija and Ivana,
 I'm writing about the *What I Bear* project. In the coming period I plan to fulfil your commission, so please send me your proposal. Since you didn't reply to my mail sent to you on July 6, please inform me if you have changed your mind about collaborating.
 Cheers,
 Amela Frankl

August 29, 2011

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Document: email
 From: Institute for Duration, Location and Variables DeLve
 To: Amela Frankl
 CC: Antonija Majača (DeLve)

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Dear Amela,
 Sorry for previous silence. It's a bit difficult for us to think up a commission, for we don't know the scope of possibilities. We can see you had some talks in the context of the project with people from France. Does this mean that there is some budget with which you might be able to bring someone or perhaps collect certain writings about a given theme, for example?
 Thanks for reply and lots of greetings.
 tonja and ivana

We exchanged a few more emails, but could not manage to fix on a meeting. I proposed a live meeting with each client because I thought it more effective to talk about the commission and explain the project, to establish a direct relationship with the client, rather than by email. In the case of this commission, we did not have this chance, and during the effectuation it turned out that an initial exchange was necessary for a better understanding of our relations and positions in the project. In spite of that, or perhaps because of it, the DeLve commission led to some interesting, sometimes very intense situations, and occupied an important and needful niche in the project.

November 29, 2011

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 Document: email
 From: Ivana Bago (DeLve)
 To: Amela Frankl
 CC: Antonija Majača

Dear Amela,

Tonja is no longer in Zagreb, I am travelling soon and won't be here until January. Tomorrow I am planning to go to the Zilnik film and conversation and we might perhaps meet for a short period there, if you have maybe planned to go?

But what seems to me at this moment, simply on the basis of the written correspondence and familiarity with the project from the MMA announcements (and here perhaps things might change through an actual meeting instead of just inbox and browser), the only relevant thing, is some coherent (self)reflection about the project itself. It is not at all my aim to be destructive, but the fact is that, at least the way we received it, your invitation simply does not generate any engaged response, any trajectory showing that we are really drawn into the game, for us to feel any enthusiasm and genuine desire for exchange, which is quite simply the precondition for taking part in this project. Of course, this is not how it is if one understands it almost as some military exercise, based on an economy of interests: the person giving the order has some job that they are not able or do not manage to carry out and then you, as warrior-artist move off on the assignment, at the time exercising your freedom and creativity. The commission with BLOK, come to that, shows that there is some coerciveness, which results in the end with an actually military task, but I wouldn't at all say – as you said in the text (or they did, but they didn't quote directly) – any instrumentalisation of the curators by the artist. I don't see how they are being unambiguously instrumentalised, it is not that kind of coercion, rather, that in which the idea that

someone has to have a wish is put as the demand and basic rule of game, or make an order that will enable you to “fulfil their wish”. We are capable of internalising imposed wishes, of course, only if their coercive character is concealed and not overt, as it is here. In the sense in which I can see your project only through the authenticity of that wish – with exchange, collaboration, radical opening of that which “is borne” and that “which bears” – to agree to a purely utilitarian or technicist collaboration, for want of this authenticity, would seem to me cynical and to result in some mere meeting of the form of the project, of acting out the cliché of the relation of curator as commissioning entity and artist as executor and the “creative” shifts that the artist, in the given breadth of the manoeuvring space has nevertheless managed to make. I don’t say that this is how it has been in the other executions of the project, for I have not seen the documentation and presentation, but I read this from the very descriptions, and the BLOK commission indicates a hyperbolic treatment of just this possibility of reading. Of course, it is perhaps just about my not having the imagination; in the invitation to the game, I cannot find anything intelligent, fun, useful or subversive that I would “wish for”. However, it is probably not this, for the actual launching of the imagination is simply thwarted by the questions that keep on coming back related to the articulation and point of the project.

Some of these questions are:

What I bear? – this is set up as the riddle of the project, and actually some analysis of its premises and results to date would represent a relevant step in its decoding. Like every riddle this at once invites a psychoanalytic reading. The BLOK commission with its request for scraping the skin until it bleeds again suggests such a set of givens of the project – meeting the unconscious wish of the artist? – for total denuding (of the clothing that is borne/worn) and more than that, for total surrender (revealing what is “really” borne). The description of the project is full of psychoanalytic slips – if it was partially written by the curator and not by the artist, then it must absolutely be read differently, but in principle the perspective is just inverted. The excuse for such a project of self-baring, the finding of the hidden heart of darkness within the self, is nothing more or less than the establishment of “uncommon links between the cultural and art scene of Zagreb and Paris”. Of all modifiers, just that uncommon (unheimlich?); why in these links and their establishment (as if they did not exist) would there be anything uncommon? And in what way does the project fulfil its promise of elevating this actually rather prosaic cultural and political assignment to the realm of the uncommon, the enchanted?

There was a logic in the choice of 14 curators art associations and activists, for the task, probably since they are usually the knitters of the knit of these connections, although they are here uncommon by the fact of being achieved through an invitation to the “expectations of the fulfilment of a wish”. And a wish after all is wished, longed for, not expected. The fulfilment of some plan or programme for example is expected. And it is this that shows that it is not just about the wishes of those who are doing the “commissioning”. In the repetition of the clichéd pattern of curator (on the whole all of them are curators of an association, art historians and one artist – we have to assume that they are all implicitly also activists, for those who could be primarily so defined are not present) – in the cliché, then, of curator as authority and artist as subject who at the same time submits to and resists this (parental) authority, the fulfilment of a wish is the artist’s task, while the project achieves its libidinal peak in the part of the statement that sketches out the sadomasochistic pattern more than clearly: “affirm freedom through testings”, through “the surmounting of limitations”, “improvise and yet so as to fulfil the unexpected instructions of the commissioning entity”. Perhaps this interpretation is tendentious, and the psychoanalytical tools invoked here are drawn from memory and amateurish; however, how else is one to read something that starts off as the establishment of connections between culture and arts scenes – such an intersubjective and extrovert, socio-constructive task – and closes with such an emphatic focus on the self, seeking a lost and covert pith and marrow of the artistic subject through the framework of the authority of a curatorial figure set up on one’s own initiative – for how can liberty be persecuted without authority? The curators here are fishing in the dark, for they don’t know what they are fishing for, until the artist offers to fulfil their wishes if they will let her. They let her although they have not fished for her and rapidly make up a wish that, in most of the projects completed, shows that there cannot really be any kind of authentic wish at all.

How could it be otherwise if the object of the project of the creation of “uncommon connections” between cultural scenes is based on a wish, why would curators become involved in the game at all? Don’t precisely they have the greatest opportunities and privileges, and public moneys and at the end the duty to set up such connections. for example, MMA curator Iva Rada Janković wanted the artist to have a conversation with curator and critic Ida Biard, author of one of the most interesting of the art projects of the 70s, the Gallery of Tenants. The choice seems logical, this gallery was one of the key places for setting up connections between the Paris and Zagreb art scenes of the 70s, and of the

insistence on an area of freedom. This proposal is practically a legitimization of the project *What I bear* itself. But is it not absurd that it is just this that is the “uncommon” wish of an MMA curator? What is there uncommon in it, and is a project for testing out personal freedom through the art project the only chance for this wish of the curator to be fulfilled? As if Ida Biard lived on Mars and Amela Frankl were among the few who had access to this planet and was able to convey a message from the other end of the universe from a museum on planet Earth. Would it not have been expected that Ida Biard (who comes to Croatia anyway from time to time) should have been invited by the Museum, of its own initiative, with its own funding and programme, to an open conversation and encounter with the public, since the archives of the Gallery of Tenants is anyway a part of the permanent display of the Museum? Or make some effort herself to initiate a journey to Paris and carry out the wished interview? Why did the artist’s search for freedom result in the presentation of a project as realised, when in fact the interview did not happen? With such presuppositions that a priori make dialogue impossible, did it not all come down to it not happening, because at the end of it all, what is an Ida Biard, or Iva Rada Janković and ultimately Amela Frankl as against “artistic freedom”. I haven’t seen the documentation and I can only (with trepidation) guess about the reasons for calling the realisation of this commission Ethics of the Hero, and of the reasons for the unauthorised publication of correspondence as one more consequence of the exercise of poetic license (by chance on encountering Ida Biard, stating my regret that I didn’t take part in her guest appearance in the Museum, I found out that she had never been even informed that anything connected with this project was presented in the Museum).

Other projects show a similar powerlessness and stalemating of the commissioning entity, in the demand for putting forward the most uncommon wishes and demands, and these wishes simply continue to keep up professional interests, sometimes with a pronounced personal note, but always something utilitarian, something that you would yourself do sometime, if you had a bit more time, money and fewer commitments and so on. Thus a design theorist orders the vinyl *The Velvet Underground* with the familiar Warhol banana. In addition to the libidinal connotations again – the phallic symbol as object of desire, but let’s leave that aside – for the artist there is nothing uncommon in this commission, it does not stretch her borders, she just has to buy an LP and then makes strange the prosaic task with an imaginary dialogue with the person from whom she got the commission, renaming it Velvet Melancholy. Curator Marina Viculin wanted

to expand her collaboration with an artist whose exhibition is anyway planned for 2013; BLOK, as already stated, is the only one to have radicalised and discovered the actual libidinal and narcissistic structure of the project. The commission of Kornel Šeper certainly departs from the framework established up to then, and because of the impossibility of reading in it any “utilitarian” or trade connections (at least, not obvious ones), and by the fact that, judging from the description, a real encounter between client, artist and daughter of the writer Blaise Cendrars really did come off in Brittany. The actually achieved encounter – the intersubjectivity and not the enclosure within the self – shows the existing but blocked potential of the project, and this is seen in its different presentation – finally there is no “surplus of performativeness and meaning, experiment, search for artistic freedom and so on” that is visible in the presentations of other productions (again, only on the basis of the description on the MAA site).

Is it not symptomatic that Kornel Šeper, of all those who have taken part to date, is not a curator or critic? Doesn't this show that he is not fazed by the enforced task of fishing in the dark, catching at and letting go artistic freedom, so proclaimed, which slides between “public and private”, creativity and the filling of instructions, borders and their toppling – and the final “execution” of the freedom won within the museum building? Here I go back to the question posed earlier. If the project does not state that it deals explicitly with the artist-curator “relationship” – here presented through the libidinal dynamics of desire, the infringement of law and punishment, it is clear that it does not go wider than a simplified polarisation of the “free” artist and the art “institution” – the complex of critics, curators, museums the freelance artists' association and, while we are on about “freedom”, the culture ministry and the market; not accepting what even the first “institutional critics” of the 70s already knew – that the artist and the artist's freedom are absolutely a component part of it. Just as it creates the illusion that we are still living in times when worlds are inaccessible to each other (at least at the virtual level they are not) and travel is a romantic and special experience, so it revives the romantic myth of artists searching for their essence and their freedom.

Wouldn't it be much more interesting, at the risk of being populist and bending the need to television forms in which the wishes of the viewers are catered for – to make an open invitation and invite those who really feel a need to take part, instead of curator who already everyday works with artists, and so this does not represent for them any kind of making strange of the everyday? Why would only arts people and curators feel the need to “create

uncommon connections” between Paris and Zagreb, why would they redundantly commission works from artists whom they already plan to display, exclusively, again as if from Mars, order vinyl records that they can anyway get from Ebay; is there anyone who, unlike most curators and the cultural crème has never ever been in Paris, let alone in an “uncommon” connection with its cultural scene, and someone who, after all, just could not afford such a, or any kind of, connection with Paris? Perhaps such a someone, or someone once again entirely different, would really be capable of fulfilling the artist’s demand for “the expectation of fulfilled desire”. Perhaps this wish then and its phantasmatic strength would really endorse “freedom through trial”, would crumble all the barriers and genuinely give themselves over to the “unexpected demands of the person making the commission” and the still less expected fulfilment of their wishes? Perhaps, instead of the cliché of mannerised psychologising of the artistic subject and the imaginary sickness – artistic freedom, such a demand, such a wish would topple down irrevocably both the very concept of artistic freedom, and the very fiction of art? Perhaps it would order the artist to grant three wishes, but would break the contract, and not let her go? What would be left in this case as the booty that is “borne” from such a trip? And who would bear it? Perhaps at this moment this invitation – this desire – that I here appropriate and convey would seem relevant: “I want to give myself a rest from work, myself from myself, society from itself, society from art, I want art to have a rest from art”. (Igor Grubić) At a time when the very concept of freedom is given as a weapon of enslavement, it is clear that this concept needs rethinking and wresting from total depoliticisation. From freedom, certainly not from artistic freedom.

Wanting mere to sketch out a few questions, perhaps I have written too much.

But it seemed to me raising these questions alone has any point, as, of course, answer to the definition of a wish, that is, called upon to make a request, I can only wish for the re-examination of its premises. Through dialogue or individual reflection.

But this does not mean that I am verifying this mail as my answer to the call to take part in the project – just as the invitation to take part in the project cannot be based on one email, so the answer to the mail cannot be considered consent to collaboration. Who determines actually when collaboration has been established and whether it will be represented in the museum as being collaboration? The artist or the person who makes the commission? Does the commissioner have the right to take part in the representation of this collaboration, and if not, why not, and what kind of collaboration is it then? Does the commissioner have

the power to determine whether it has happened or not, or only the artist. At the end, then, the question that actually concerns the realisation – what are the conditions that have to be fulfilled so that the invitation for collaboration should be catalogued as “produced project” on the museum web site? I think this is a very serious question and cannot be the result of the individual free artistic decision. Just as it is clear to every artist that his/her representation cannot be blindly consigned to museological practice, I don’t see why this same artist should forget this in the case of the representation of the collaboration and collaborators in the project.

I hope that some of all these questions will have some sense for you.

Lots of best wishes,
Ivana

So the message had finally arrived. I was very surprised, cross and confused at the content and the manner of address. I needed to talk about it. The first reaction was to send it to Tihomir.

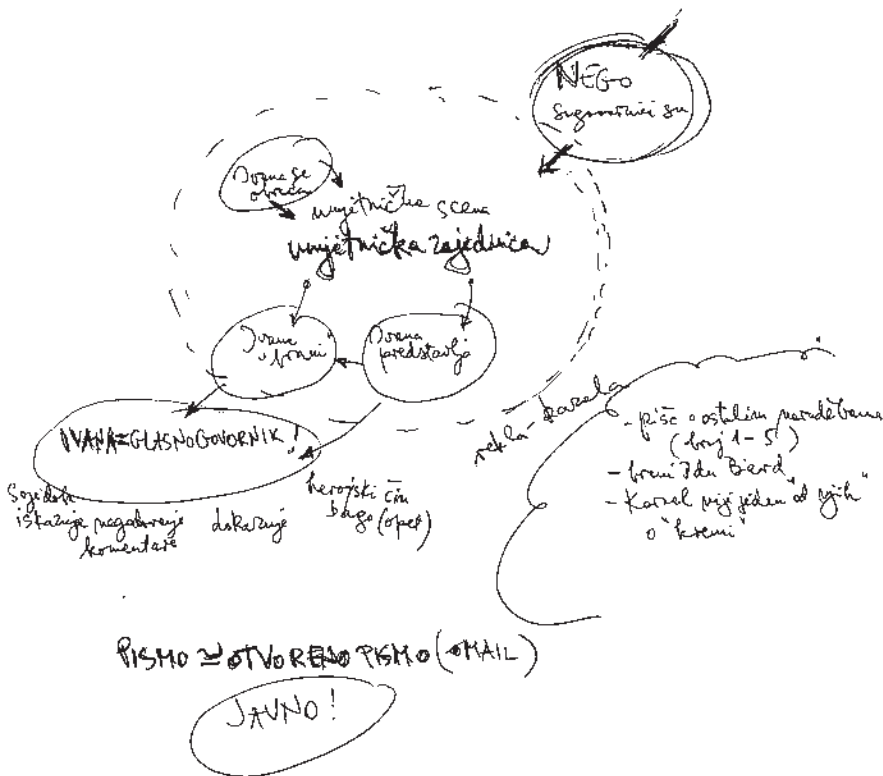
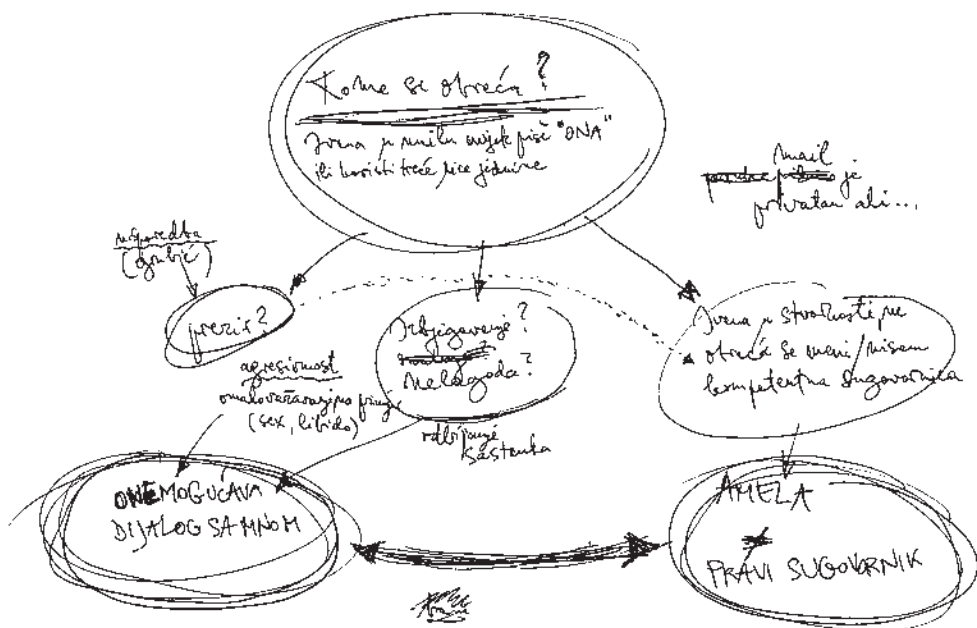
.....
Document: email
From: Tihomir Milovac
To: Amela Frankl
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(...) it's true that the fact that we institutions have it a bit cushy upsets a lot of people but I always repeat: everything has its advantages, but drawbacks as well. The remarks are interesting and we can talk about them next time we see each other. I think the text should be considered for publication at the end of the project. for sure, it will fill an important niche in the project. In fact, it's good to have this kind of reaction. See how well things fit together, and how extremely unexpectedly. Who would have thought that Bago would have instigated, unintentionally it is true, the reaction of Ida Biard. And I am really surprised that Bago doesn't see the criss-crossing that the project has, ever more present. I think that freedom doesn't need instrumentalising, the way it seems that Bago wants. Perhaps there is some manipulation in the project, which was not perhaps your intention, but precisely therefore, let's see if it can be different and if there is room for unplanned fortuity or something that we have not defined through the literature, which simply seems new forms of understanding. Bago's assertion that the commissions are part of professional obligations is not true. And if they were, I am surprised that she does not recognise the very clear psychological discipline that is developing here, the extension of selfhood to the other, the other I, the swapping of roles and so on, to mention just one dimension of the project from the position of someone

doing the commissioning. I would not want to talk about desire in the way that Bago defines it. Her definition of desire is extremely political in the sense of freedom as political issue. Perhaps just the opposite, it's about walking on the verge, which always seems more interesting to me than clear definitions. Bago might say, curators are fishing in muddy water. I always prefer muddy to clear water, a complex to a simple psychological picture, inhibition and un-freedom to being free myself at someone else's expense. One has to pay attention to all of this, and about Bago's remarks while we work on, and I would recommend that her letter be a part of the project, as she sought, precisely because the project is more important to you than your ego and libido, as Bago puts it.

Cheers,
Tihomir

Tihomir's comments bucked me up, but I needed a bit of time and distance. Almost three months of rather intense work on the letter, on my feelings. A long and uneasy process of questioning was necessary for me to take up a viewpoint and find a way to complete the artwork.



1. poba težakih stvari i događaja i veliki
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 (sve ovise o odgovoru na mail.)

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 2. ne odgovorim na mail
 3. u odgovoru na mail
 4. u odgovoru na mail

⇔
 IDEM

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 i odgovor na jedan paradržan

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 ili ne

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Iskrenje novčić

ispunjavati su odviše mistički paradoksi

1. nema instance nije u materijalnom svijetu log paradoksa
2. pomoran da je u autu u ovom svijetu odgovoriti
3. mistički paradoksa je na početku materijalnog svijeta

3. funkcije program delve-a i funkcije
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 (glava) → inim paradržan

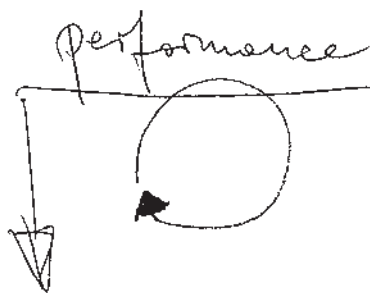
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- vladati sobom

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 3. funkcionalno
 4. paradržan
 5. funkcionalno
 6. participativno



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red sa samom sobom pre saradnja evocija

January 1, 2021

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Document: email
From: Amela Frankl
To: Ivana Bago DeLve
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Ivana,
In your mail you write you would like, before deciding on your commission, to talk about the project, which for you is unintelligible and problematic. Naturally, I shall be happy to answer all your questions and anything unclear related to the project.
I am in Zagreb and it would be great if we could meet as soon as possible because I am travelling at the end of the month.
Cheers,
Amela

January 13, 2012

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Document: email
From: Ivana Bago DeLve
To: Amela Frankl
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Dear Amela,
I hope you are well in the New Year. I fact I have no questions other than those I asked and partially answered from my own point of view in the email itself. We can certainly meet, although I have now got several deadlines and it isn't exactly a good period, and just at the end of the month I shall have more time. I think that my mail in itself could be understood as a commission, depending on what the answer to it was. Because it is not that I am now looking for any explanations and answers that might lead me to make a commission. Simply I ask these questions that might potentially bring about some self-examination in the project. I think that in any case it will be great to meet if we both manage, because I would love to talk with you, but actually I am certain I shan't have any commission per se, I am saying that because I know that it is important for you to go on with the planning of the project.
Best wishes,
Ivana

Ivana did not think it necessary to talk anymore about the letter. I went on working on the commission, found an approach, and conceived a performative work at the end of March.

March 27, 2012

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Document: email
From: Amela Frankl
To: Ivana Bago DeLve
CC: Tihomir Milovac
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Hi Ivana,
I'm writing in connection with the *What I Bear* project.
I wasn't able to answer your questions posed in the mail that were supposed to serve the purpose of self-examination within the project. The problem is that in your mail you adopted the position not of client but of curator. You're analysing, criticising, writing about the work and yet, as you mentioned yourself, you haven't actually seen it. I think that for a minimum of collaboration and dialogue you ought after all to have seen it. For this reason your questions and the analysis of the project are to me unfounded.
I wanted to inform you that next week I'm presenting the commission within which I shall read your mail, the only possible basis for any possible production of a work.
I would be happy if we saw each other in the Extension.
Cheers,
Amela



April 4, 2012

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COMMISSION NO 7: ? • TITLE OF THE WORK: Tails / Letter

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Document: email
From: Ivana Bago DeLve
To: Amela Frankl
CC: Tihomir Milovac, Museum of Contemporary Art
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Hi Amela,

Thanks for the info and the invite to the presentation of the project. I'm sorry you think my questions and analyses unfounded. The PR and the announcement of the project are a part of it too, an important part for me, and this was what I analysed, an articulation of the project through the available documentation on the internet and the mailing lists.

I also analysed the role that collaborators you've invited into the project have in the actually production and presentation of the project on examples that we known to me, never mind that I had not "seen" them. I held it against you that you published the correspondence with Ida Biard without permission, and that you did not inform her that you would have a presentation of the project, and that the clients – not all, I believe, but certainly in a few cases known to me – don't have the chance of an insight into a dialogue about the manner in which the commission will be presented. If you, in this case of Ida Biard, were to put yourself in a different position and think that, for example, you're called upon to have a solo show, and that at that exhibition the curator, without your knowledge, shows your correspondence, doesn't inform you of the date of the opening of the exhibition or sends an announcement without consultation with you and your associates, I dare say you would think it not very OK. You probably wouldn't have to see the exhibition to conclude that.

I'm also sorry you think I did not exhibit "a minimum of collaboration and dialogue". I put a lot of time and energy, as well as goodwill, into the mail I wrote you, in spite of writing it critically. You replied to it to me more than a month later, just suggesting we meet, and I didn't receive from you any kind of written trace of any viewpoint of yours.

I was also concerned to express my criticism of the project and my opinion about it openly, clearly, in direct and written communication with you, instead of practising what is so common among us, that form of "oral criticism behind somebody's back". Did I show more collaboration and dialogue than those who won't say anything directly bad about your work, perhaps will pretend to like it, but will be happy to badmouth it to other people? From those of whose possible oral criticism or commentaries you won't have any written trace that you'll be able to use for the project? Who likes your project, who just pretends to like it, and who just keeps silent? Why is the only answer to some criticism a counter-attack that it is unfounded, wrongly posed and shows no readiness for collaboration and dialogue. You were unable to answer my questions and analyses, and then foist this incapacity onto me.

I pointed out the positive potentials of the project, in which I emphasised that when collaboration and dialogue are really established, then it might truly have a point. In my case, this dialogue was such that you just told me you were producing the project, coldly and as a fait accompli that didn't open up any chance for that collaboration and dialogue on the basis of blaming me for having a lack of them. In addition to reading me a lesson about how I comport myself and how I should have done. As an invited client surely I can choose how to comport myself and what I am going to commission. I really gave you the chance to understand my ambivalent email in whatever way you wanted, and everything else depended on the "answer to it", which meant some kind of my giving up on the role of client as someone who gives orders and controls the situation, and everything else was up to you and your feeling of responsibility, respect and collaboration – among other things, regarding me. I think your decision to read my mail as one of the possible foundations for the production of the work interesting, and it might have been an interesting performance, and I am sorry you didn't inform me in a different manner. Although it stays in the form of a monologue, for at the end it's only me who's writing now and expressing my opinion, while you keep silent and at the same time complain of lack of dialogue.

I'm also sorry that the Museum of Contemporary Art after that faux pas with Ida Biard because of which she made a formal complaint to that institution, and now they are having to deal with her complaint, repeated the error reading private mails without permission and the use of names without confirmation that they are taking part. If you or someone from the Museum had asked me if I was taking part in the project, I would have answered. At the end, this announcement came out in fact as some kind of interesting coincidence, that has no connection with your project, but has with another one, and so I'll after all be able to use it.

I hope that the other collaborators in the project will demonstrate greater well-foundedness, more engagement, more readiness for a minimum of collaboration and dialogue and more of everything that I am not. I also hope that they won't be among those whom this collaboration will put out of sorts and take away their energy, but will cheer and encourage them. Although I know naturally that at the end of it all the most important person is you and it's most important of all how you feel, and I hope that you feel great and are satisfied. I also wish you a lot of success in future work.

Sincerely,
Ivana.

April 10, 2012

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Document: email
From: Amela Frankl
To: Ivana Bago DeLve
CC: Tihomir Milovac Museum of Contemporary Art
.....

I respect the energy you have put into the criticism you sent and proposed it as a basis for self-examination in the project. I understand that you based it on the elements that are most important for you, materials from the mailing list, PR, announcements of projects and comments you heard from other participants.

Carefully analysing everything you wrote, I found some interesting commentaries and the occasional useful question, but as a whole I concluded that I was unable to respond to your critique of the project, as I wrote to you in the mail of March 27, 2012, because you hadn't seen the work. Mailing, PR and hearsay comments are not a sound enough basis for a serious process of self-examination.

Still, I adopted and complied with your manner of taking part in the project and I replied to your commission clearly and openly, just as is expected from me, in the work, on April 4, 2012, in the Extension.

Cheers,
Amela.

.....
Document: email
From: Ivana Bago DeLve
To: Amela Frankl
CC: Tihomir Milovac Museum of Contemporary Art
.....

Amela,
It was your work and the manner the museum presented it to the public that was hearsay.

How is it possible for a museum to send an announcement in which it is asked whether someone is taking part or not (without it being an agreed-on concept that all are OK with)? While naturally I am automatically taking part for there is my name and people who read that have no clue that this is the first time I have seen this announcement but nevertheless call me and ask what it's about, for example. Not to mention that there is also the name of the association that is not my private property and that also can't be dragged about in some mailing lists just as someone fancies. That kind of institution would have to sign contracts with all participants for absolutely any kind of collaboration, and yet here in the official mailing lists of the museum some kind of circus announcement is being sent – on the basis of what - some of my correspondence with you, you who have no official position in the museum.

Probably the Museum of Contemporary Art which is the producer of your project should have sent every collaborator, before calling them that, an official invite to the project and then have signed a contract, if you're really doing it in the Museum of Contemporary Art and not in some café. That, for me, is hearsay. In this manner you and the museum could be sued by anyone whom it occurs to for unauthorised use of names, correspondence and everything else, which I would, if I had the time, and if I didn't have enough obligations or fun in life, do, if I needed to prove my point. For me it was all at a personal level entertaining even, although in principle I can't stand such things. Had you called me properly, written some kind of usual email, proposed some date, asked whether they suited me, asked me what I think about your proposal for it is taken for granted that I want to be present at my commission and to be at least formally asked about any view of mine about it, and so on, it would all have been ok, indeed, it would have been super, and I would have come to your performance and happily have taken part in the discussion. And if the museum had addressed me and sent me the announcement before it went out on the list, it would also have been fine. But you – and the museum, which was as if it had no connection with it, did not utter a peep – with your attitude to me as COLLABORATOR – forget now the content of that collaboration – behaved simply unprofessionally and impudently.

But neither you nor Tihomir understood that the ethics of collaboration was one of the main points of my critique – in my first and last mail – then it would have been better if I had done nothing to begin with. I, as collaborator, exit discontentedly from your collaborative project, which is based on the satisfaction of collaborators' wishes, and you are satisfied with that? OK. That's clear to me, for the project, as I wrote to you, is speciously collaborative, and in fact extremely egocentric – with collaboration leading to personal freedom and others' frustration – that could well be its slogan.

Congratulations, then, once again, on the work produced, and thanks for this reply. There's no need for further responses to my mails – I apologise for writing once more, but there, I can't help myself – actually, please don't reply, for I can see that the only direction in which your answers head is to confirm that everything you have done is lovely and marvellous and everything I have done is unfounded.

Please also, since I became a collaborator of the project without my explicit confirmation that I was in fact taking part, after the event draw up a contract with me with an appropriate royalty that you will suggest for my contribution, intellectual and emotional. If you plan to publish my mail in the catalogue, as Tihomir once suggested to me, I shall agree only on condition that the whole of our correspondence – including this email – is released, together with the announcement of the project.

Thank you, sincerely,

Ivana.