

## Which culture do we belong to?

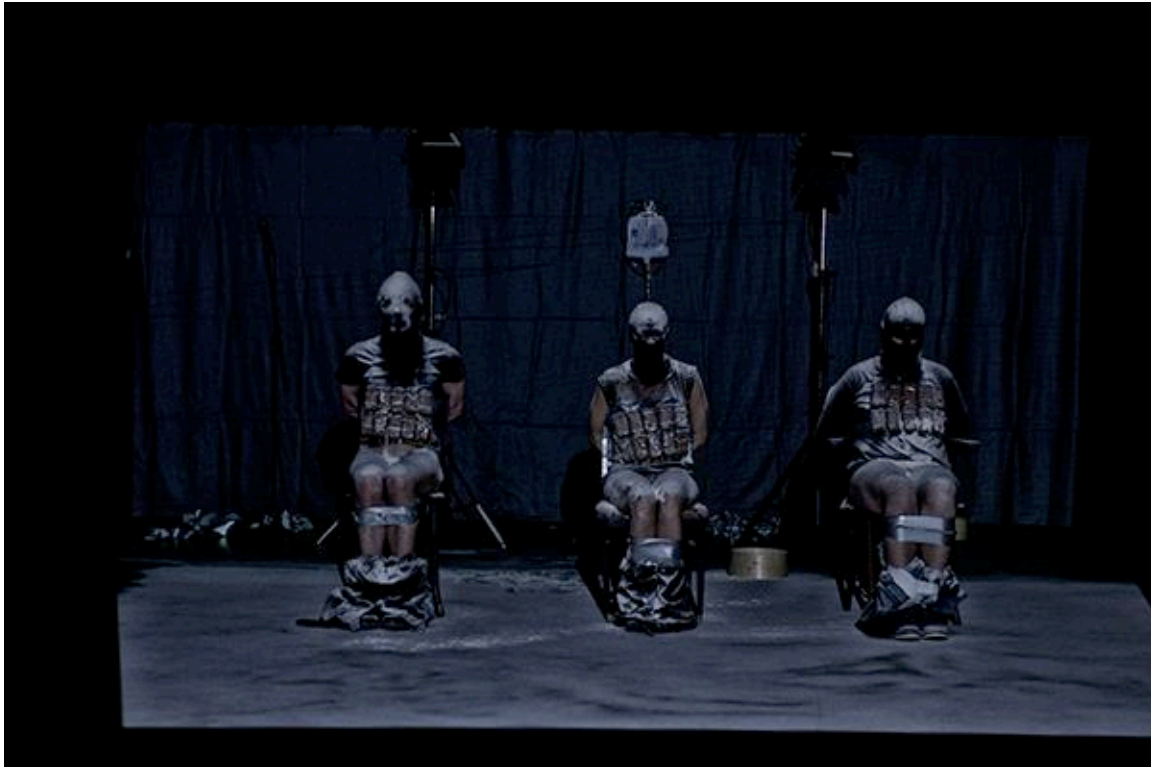


Foto: Marcandrea

The performative form of theatre is gathering momentum in its opposition to standard institutional theatrical practices and in Slovenia it still offers something fresh and unknown to the wider audience. For the most part the spectator of the performance does not seat in the darkened venue, watching the show, but takes an active part in it. Indeed, as a spectator, s/he is to an extent responsible for the way the performance unfolds. The role of the performers is to completely strip themselves bare. The role is therefore not a role; the performer is here in their own person, confronting things, today and now, in a broader or momentary sense.

This is the second time the Slovene National Theatre Drama Ljubljana has collaborated with Via Negativa, the first time being the mono-performance called MandićMachine and this time with actors from both camps, with Marko Mandić belonging to both. In the audience, at the sides of the venue and on the stage, we thus watch three performers, Marko Mandić, Katarina Stegnar and Grega Zorc, who, alongside Bojan Jablanovec are also the authors of the project Last Rehearsal for the Generation. In the role of the same Mandić, the same Stegnar and the same Zorc, the stage is simultaneously occupied by the acting opposition consisting of Boris Mihalj, Veronika Drolc and Matija Rozman. Different theatrical procedures thus converge, leading to common questions about culture today: who belongs or rather who does not belong. Besides culture itself, this is a confrontation with the present, at times also the future, and with ourselves who are idiotically and happily putting up with everything we do not want.

The performance's special mark is no doubt in that it is broadcast directly, and seen precisely at the time

of execution, one and the only time (for the time being) on the website [generalka.si](http://generalka.si). Each performance with its audience is recorded with three cameras travelling from the stand to the hands of the performers and finally into the hands of the three actors themselves. "For others to see what culture we are playing at here," as Marko Mandić has said. The spectator is here once again the voyeur of performers' tales as well as their characters, who, their hands tied and mouths gagged, sit on chairs, weighed down with explosives. Through various situations, the performers alert us to the present as well as the future we do not want, and at the same time to the total "fuck up" which the three of them would want to attain, but will not, as they tell us already at the outset. With this they draw a parallel with the present-day society that is apathetic and annoyingly smug. Having said that, these over weary and imprisoned characters get out of their chairs at the end and tie the performers in their place. The roles thus reverse, and the performers, despite being physically disempowered, will not stop screaming. There is no applause, though the audience was keen to clap and did so, to the extent it could, since they too got directions "Exit!" from a prompter from the audience who was assigned this part. The performance thus comes to a close with the audience leaving.

Over the last few years, slowly and carefully, performative elements have been entering institutions. But with the project MandićMachine and now Last Rehearsal for the Generation the performance has entered the institution completely. Indeed, this constitutes a real break within the national theatre, which ideally should not be confined to its own circles but should energize and bring freshness to established theatrical practices. Bojan Jablanovec has succeeded in merging various stories and ideas into a fluid whole with devout humour and a good treat, if I may add. Bribery certainly works.