

**Colour Caller | Обоен Повик
19 February 2009, 12am-1pm**

Colour Caller is a one-hour participatory performance by Verica Kovacevska, taking place simultaneously in the city of Bradford (UK) and Mala Galerija (MK). In *Colour Caller* Verica will carry out a walk in the unknown-to-her city of Bradford. The walk will start from the Museum of Colour, one of Bradford's most historic and tourist attractions, and will last from 12am to 1pm, or 11am to 12 am local time.

Two screens are featured in Mala Galerija. On one screen, a Bradford map is shown with the location of the artist, tracking her every move in real-time. On the second screen four colours are displayed, from which the audience will have to choose and click on one. Upon clicking a sound will be released corresponding to the chosen colour (e.g. when clicking on the red colour the sound "RED" or "CRVENO" will be released). Each colour will be interpreted as a direction for the artist's walk in Bradford (e.g. "RED" would be interpreted as "TURN RIGHT".) In this way, the audience will become a participant in the making of the artwork, navigating Verica through the city and controlling what she will see and experience.

Colour Caller is documented by video, which will be shown in Mala Galerija from 19 March 2009 as part of Kovacevska's solo exhibition, *Colour Caller: Live and Recorded*. By presenting a performance and a video, the audience will be able to take on the role of both participant and spectator.

Colour Caller is a complex project that explores multiple issues.

First, the performance reflects on Bradford and Skopje's history as well as their shared relation to colours and the textile industry. Bradford was a boomtown of the Industrial Revolution, and amongst the earliest industrialised settlements, rapidly becoming the "Wool Capital of the World". During this time great improvements were made in dyeing techniques in Bradford, resulting in a significant development of the textile industry. Therefore, today Bradford hosts the Museum of Colour. The museum is situated in a former cotton mill in the centre of Bradford, and includes an exhibition on technological developments in the coloration industry.

The colours chosen for this performance are not only the official colours of Bradford and Skopje, incorporated in their seals, but are also primary colours that can be combined to make a useful range of other colours.

Second, through the use of modern technology, *Colour Caller* reflects on the use and impact of technology on the individual and the society as a whole.

Today's technology not only helps to collapse the geographical borders between people and places, but also has a profound impact on the concept of the body. The physical limitations of the human body have been overcome by machines, our cognitive abilities have been extended and our possibilities to communicate have been dramatically increased by technologies such as mobile phones and the Internet. Our lives also become increasingly transparent through the use of surveillance cameras, GPS technology that allows tracking our position, and biometric technologies. As Christiane Paul notes, "*our virtual existence suggests the opposite of a unified, individual body – multiple selves inhabiting mediated realities*". *Colour Caller* highlights the power and the risks of this dichotomy by remotely showing and recording the artist's location during the performance on a virtual map. Through the use of modern technology the artist is at two places at the same time – once in reality and once virtually.

But the use of technology is not always gloomy. In *Colour Caller* it helps to create actions and interactions in real-time, opening the work to improvisation and chance; elements that we encounter in our everyday life.

Finally, *Colour Caller* explores philosophical questions related to the concept of freedom. By putting herself in the role of a pawn and surrendering to the (self-)imposed rules of the walk, the artist raises the following questions:

- Who is in control?
- Is succumbing a necessity or a choice?
- Does freedom depend on or is it limited by boundaries?
- Is freedom a reality or an illusion?

The use of bilingualism also mirrors the 'duality' of the project – two cities, two countries, two cultures, two subjects (artist and audience, walker and watcher, master and puppet), two actions, two times (live and recorded, past and present), and two worlds (real and virtual). This duality is also reflected in the identity of the artist who has spent a great deal of time outside of Macedonia, i.e. in the UK.

Colour Caller is part of The Walking Project, a series of live media performances, walks that take place in various cities around the world, normally unvisited before by the artist. In each of the works the artist designs a set of rules (based on the history, architecture, culture of and social issues within the city) determining the starting point, duration and navigation of each walk. Most walks depend on an interaction with a remote audience, located in a gallery, public or virtual space, facilitated through various means of telecommunications technology. For more information on *The Walking Project* visit: www.thewalkingproject.net.

Verica Kovacevska was born 1982, in Skopje, Macedonia. In 2004 she graduated from the University of Plymouth (UK) in BA (Hons) Visual Art with Theatre and Performance. The same year she attended the 10th Advanced Course in Visual Arts led by Jimmie Durham at the Fondazione Antonio Ratti, in Como, Italy. In 2007 she graduated from the University of Cambridge (UK) in MPhil Arts, Culture and Education, and was awarded a one-year art residency at Christ's College, University of Cambridge. She has taken part in many exhibitions, festivals and workshops in Macedonia, Great Britain, Italy, Russia, Albania, Germany, Slovenia and the United States. For more information on Verica Kovacevska visit: www.kovacevska.net.

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