

Katarina Zdjelar
Selected Works

More information and additional textual
and visual material can be found here:

www.katarinazdjelar.net/portfolio
www.katarinazdjelar.net



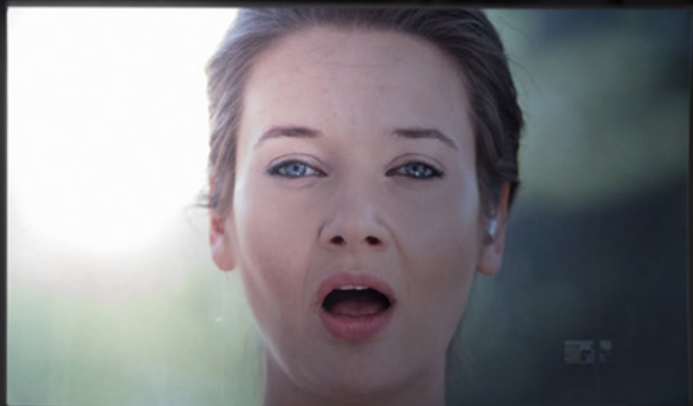
Not A Pillar Not A Pile (Dance for Dore Hoyer)

— 4 channel video installation and a floor sculpture, loop, 2017

Not A Pillar Not A Pile (Dance for Dore Hoyer) is inspired by archival documents from an all-women's dance studio founded in 1945 in post-war Dresden by Dore Hoyer, a choreographer and expressionist dancer, whose choreographies took the graphic works of artist Käthe Kollwitz as their departure point. Zdjelar's new film installation departs from this artistic meeting between Kollwitz and Hoyer as a manifestation of shared affinities with (proto)feminist pacifism, solidarity and collective transformation across the barriers of time, class and social difference. Drawing the past into the present, Zdjelar has gathered an international group of dancers and activists to create this filmic work. Their costumes and the film set bear a pattern created by women workers of Pausa textile factory in Germany, whose anti-facist resistance resonates with that of Hoyer and of Kollwitz, whose graphic works are in turn echoed in the wood cut floor panels. In the resulting film installation one body encounters another as a site of resistance and possibility, pointing to the fragile agency of collective action in the present.







AAA (Mein Herz)

— single channel video, 4'30", loop, 2016

AAA (Mein Herz) is a single-shot work showing a young woman simultaneously performing four compositions. While preserving the original style, tempo, and rhythm of the individual works, she maintains the key of the different music pieces. Silence, music, sound and words alternate and collide. The female protagonist's face and vocal chords serve as a battleground for the jerky transition between the different tracks. As if the sounds have been continuously torn out of their sockets putting an emphasis on the multiple, fragmented yet simultaneous temporalities which run the economy of her voice and of the composition. As often in Zdjelar's practice, it is the interruptions that speak, this time in the corporality of the performers voice. While her singing is as much about managing the gaps between the tracks as it is about accuracy of performance of such historically, stylistically and linguistically distinct compositions.





Untitled (A Song)

— — single channel video, 10'45", loop, 2016



As it typically happens with Katarina Zdjelar's videos, we are engaged in the placid duration of a self-enclosed and orchestrated situation. Bound by the tones and rhythms of the music or the spoken word, a temporal vacuum and a sense of expectancy are shaped, which take place in the social space of an extended in-betweenness. Zdjelar's films work as some form of backstage to the ideological imaginary of these changing, dynamic, and accelerated times of ours. The artist consistently deals with alternative chrono-geographies, denouncing the flaws of the ideological acceleration, while unearthing its unrepresented realms. (excerpt from Branko Dimitrijevic)

In her observations of the band at rest or at play, Zdjelar captures something we struggle to maintain, even in artistic practice — namely, inactivity, the freedom to inhabit an atemporal space as a necessary condition for creation, which is more than only production. Through the inactivity of waiting, through the temporary suspension of production, we stumble on “pure, disinterested play”, or more precisely “a space in which calculation and play appear to blur into each other”. It is precisely in its playful humming of possibility that *Untitled (A Song)* prompts us into action, or, more precisely, non-action, which we feel instinctively, is the only way forward, if action is to have consequence. (excerpt from a text by Lucy Cotter)

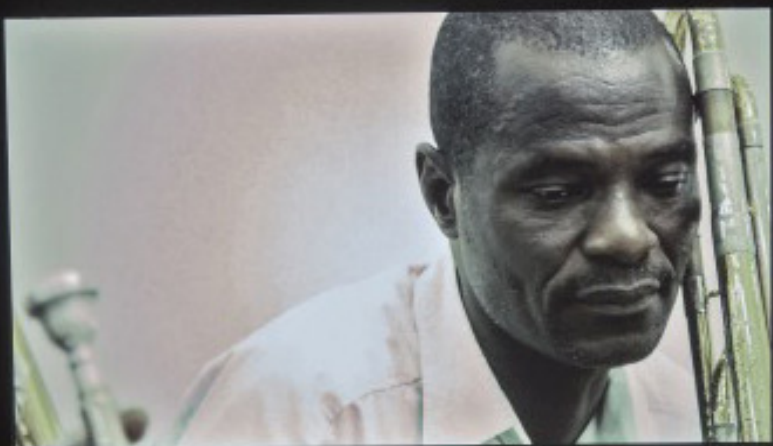


My Lifetime (Malaika)
— — single channel video, 5'37", loop, 2012



My Lifetime (Malaika) features Ghana's National Symphony Orchestra recorded in the National Theatre in Accra. The musicians play Malaika, originally a cheerful and empowering postcolonial composition that was famously performed by musical celebrities like Miriam Makeba, Harry Belafonte, Boney M. and many others. The orchestra was funded in the late 1950s when Ghana, under the leadership of Kwame Nkrumah, had become independent from the United Kingdom. Nkrumah's government introduced new cultural structures in order to establish and enforce national consciousness and accomplish the shift from colonial rule to independence.

As in Zdjelar's other works never fully comprehend a whole stage, but are only provided with some fragmented clues through details and close-ups. Again we are almost haunted by the rhythm of a temporal and social in-betweenness. It is as if we could discern traces of events that have already happened, but somehow remains and resonates with the music – an undecided waiting-room for some delayed future or possibly a suspended one.





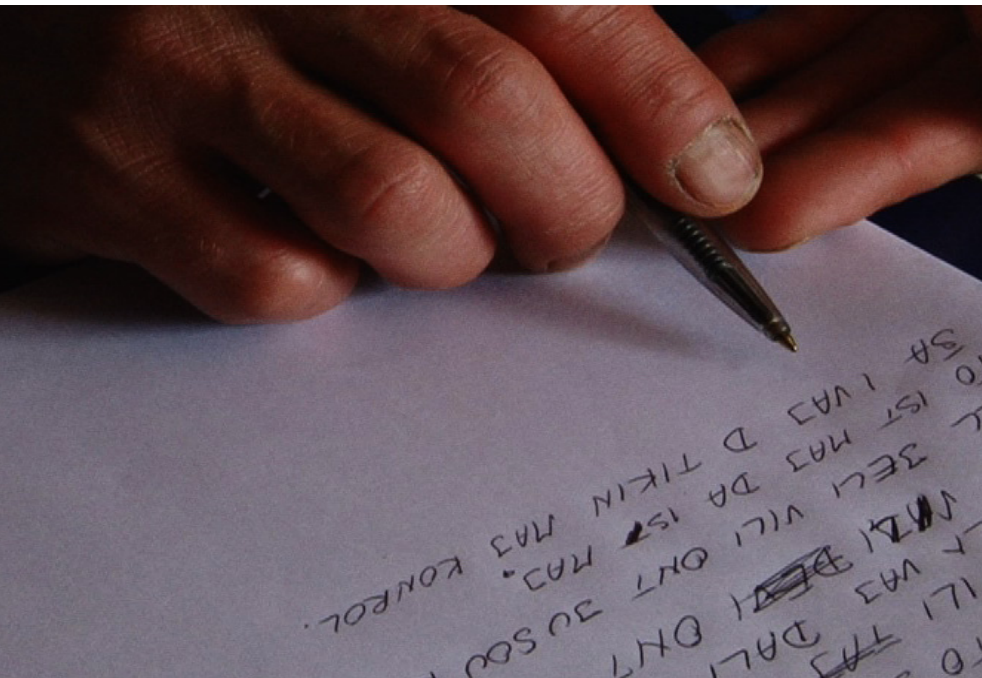
Stimme

— — single channel video, 17', loop, 2013



Stimme records a session between a voice coach and her client, in search of the client's "natural" voice. The phonetic iterations are punctuated by the two bodies touching hands—as if the young woman's body was a musical instrument to be played or experimented with by the coach. Where is voice actually located? Katarina Zdjelar is interested in those moments when the voice is perceived as personal property, while at the same time it acts as a public agency. Her work interacts with the instances when the dialectical interactions between the socio-political and the personal stage and shape the voice through the materiality of the body. Communication between the women is set as a repetition of voice games played through different parts of the body. This is mirrored in the manner in which the camera keeps returning to parts of the body coming in and out of darkness. If this is a vocal game, playing it involves a choreography of minimal muscular responses.





Shout

—single channel video, 7', 2009

Shout starts with a blank, we see no image, but hear the sound of the 1984 Tears for Fears mega hit *Shout*. Then we see an iPod, a sheet of paper and the hands of two men from Belgrade, holding pens. Over the course of the next seven minutes we witness the two attempts of deciphering the lyrics of 'Shout' as though they contained a coded message. Given that these men speak no English they phonetically transcribe what they hear, based on their own vocabulary and capacity to vocally interpret the unfamiliar. Cut off from the lingua franca of a globalized world, these two men preserve in creating something of their own, something that lies between the foreign and the familiar.





The Perfect Sound

— single channel video, 14'30", 2009



In The Perfect Sound we see a grey-haired man chanting mono-syllables, over and over, and a young man mimicking him simultaneously. The sing-song that we hear is captivatingly primal and intensely humane. What we see is an accent removal class for an immigrant conducted by a speech therapist in Birmingham (UK), a city which is paradoxically known for its strong accent. With *The Perfect Sound* Zdjelar looks at the phenomenon of cultural integration through the erasure of difference in pronunciation and the production of neutrality; obtaining the (voice) mask, which allows a misfit to shift between different modes of appearances and enables him or her to blend into the environment—to become unnoticeable. As Mladen Dolar notes in his text on this work in the catalogue for Zdjelar's participation at the Venice Biennale: "It inevitably brings to mind the tribulations of Eliza Doolittle and the haughtiness of Professor Higgins, transposed into an aseptic environment of a rarefied abstract space, with the colorful Covent Garden flower girl now replaced by a host of nameless immigrants."





Everything Is Gonna Be

— single channel video, 3'35", 2008



Revolution is the song in which John Lennon warns against the radicalisation of the late 1960s youth movements in the West, criticizing their extreme actions and closed-minded political views. It is a song that reminds us of the predominant trajectory of those in the Western middle classes who experienced a flirtatious infatuation with the radical leftist politics but have gradually abandoned their youthful enthusiasm for the tranquility of life that the very belonging to this class allows for. The singers in Zdjelar's film lethargically re-enact the humanist message of the song with a sense of a detachment. The song's soothing promise turns into something quite eerie: Everything is gonna be alright, alright, alright... One of the singers at the end of the film keeps opening his mouth in the shape of the further "alrights" even when the music fades out. Zdjelar points out again that this past future is behind us; that since this Beatles song hit the radio waves nothing has become really "alright."

