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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

INTERMEDIAl APPROPRIATION AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
FOR THE ANALYSIS OF PERFORMANCE ART IN LATVIA
IN THE PERIOD OF LATE SOCIALISM (1964-1989)

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INTRODUCTION

The importance of the subject

The doctoral dissertation *Intermedial Appropriation as a Theoretical Framework for the Analysis of Performance Art in Latvia in the Period of Late Socialism (1964-1989)* is focused on the exploration of the history and legacy of performance art in Latvia, taking into account the socio-political and cultural circumstances that determined the forms of documentation of event-based art. As a result of these circumstances, performance art was implemented in the second public sphere as a form of participatory art, where the participants were engaged in collaborative, hybrid projects leading to various new and autonomous works of art: paintings, photographs, serigraphs. These new works of art cannot be considered as mere forms of documentation, but rather as cases of intermedial appropriation, that is, examples of transformation processes, when the moving, temporal, ephemeral and transient performance was turned into a still, silent, permanent and two-dimensional image often by more than one authors. Not only artists appropriated different motifs and styles based on aesthetics, but performance art itself underwent a process of change and turned into a hybrid consisting of different overlapping media in order to emerge in the first public sphere although in a ‘camouflaged’ form such as exhibition catalogues, photographs, paintings or serigraphs. These are cases of intermedial appropriation when a new art form or medium was created due to the process of fusion of several media into a new medium with plurimedial structure.

The author of the dissertation proposes that the acts of appropriation resulted, first of all, from the restrictions imposed by the political regime to the upcoming genre of performance art, and, second, from collective, collaborative actions and participation in joint, hybrid projects. Due to the socio-political circumstances, which demanded unconditional conformity to the Soviet regime, performance artists in Latvia operated in the outskirts of cultural environment uniting in a freethinking community, where all members could creatively express themselves in a non-hierarchical relationship model. Applying this working strategy, they could excercise democratic participation – something that the political regime denied. This micro-environment and networking in the cultural periphery ensured certain creative freedom and an opportunity to avoid the indoctrination and internalization of Soviet values.

As regards the theoretical framework of intermediality, it will be the central theoretical
axis in the doctoral dissertation herein. Intermediality is a phenomenon that can be observed, when pre-existing medium-specific features have been altered due to synthesis or hybridisation, consequently allowing for the production of autonomous works of art with plurimedial structures and for exploration of new dimensions of perception and experience. The hypothetical borders between media thus become the zones of experimentation, and often the outcome of such transformational processes is unforeseeable. Parallels can be drawn with a musical art form of jazz, which, unlike the sheet music, often has loose structure and thus provides enough space for the singers and musicians to take risks and improvise. Jazz is a genre that is ‘messy’ and unpredictable, and yet self-contained. Because of the uncertainty, audiences, too, cannot rely on repetition and habit, and thus must be ready for provocation or new experience.

This doctoral dissertation will provide contribution to the existing field of knowledge on performance art in Latvia. It is important to carry out this kind of research both in terms of local significance, as well as global. Locally, performance art is an understudied subject with sporadically published sources that mostly lack discursive analysis; whereas, globally it is essential to break the stereotypes and assumptions in terms of historiography, as well as the superiority of the West and inferiority of the East – the dictate often imposed by the Western art history. It is crucial to emphasise that the art produced in the Soviet Union was heterogeneous both in terms of the countries where it was created and in terms of the artistic means. Even the official artistic doctrine – Socialist Realism – was not strictly dogmatic in its manifestations, and, in fact, underwent numerous mutations and deviations. The artists, who were eager to experiment, created works of art in the unofficial art scene or the second public sphere. None of these works were openly political or dissident in their character, yet the political opposition could be observed in micro-gestures, namely, as resistance to be part of the controlled, commissioned and censored art production system. The cultural periphery was seen as an opportunity to operate in power-free reflection zones, where the mechanisms of control, surveillance and censorship could be avoided. Although often excluded from the canon of art, these works must be recognized and appreciated, and, above all, legitimately acknowledged in the art discourse. The doctoral dissertation herein will consequently provide additional visibility to these phenomena.
Furthermore, the author of the doctoral dissertation will emphasise the performance art’s potential to serve as a catalyst for action. Since the very early manifestations of performance art along the European avant-garde trajectories, the genre of performance art has been focused on breaking the traditionally passive relationship model between an artist (performer) and audiences, integrating much more dynamic and engaging strategies in the creative process to the extent that a spectator becomes a co-author of the work of art. In this context, performance art must be seen as a very democratic, non-hierarchical platform, which is a valuable artistic instrument in order to activate (non-artist) audiences and facilitate participation. Consequently, the potential audiences and society in general are not perceived as passive consumers of popular and mass cultures, but rather as active social agents who can demonstrate agency and who are able to self-organize. This relationship model can also be seen from a broader anthropological perspective in political processes, for example, in the performative political protest entitled the Baltic Way, which was organised by the citizens of all three Baltic States on 23 August 1989, when approximately 2 million people joined their hands standing peacefully in a ‘human chain’ crossing all three Baltic States. This non-violent, symbolic gesture was a powerful expression of protest against the Soviet occupation and at the same time it manifested solidarity, agency and an ability to delegate.

The doctoral dissertation will also fill the gap in terms of the educational function to dispel the performance art’s reputation as marginal and weird art. It is crucial to take into account the fact that in politically oppressive regimes performance artists often use radical means of aesthetics, as evidenced, for example, in Chinese artist Ai Weiwei’s or Russian artist Pyotr Pavlensky’s performances. In this case it is done in order to protest against the ignorance or abuse of basic human rights in totalitarian or authoritarian regimes. Due to mass media, which often prefer shocking content to attract readers’ attention, provocative performances are highlighted more, thus contributing to the general public opinion that performance art is not valuable or aesthetically enjoyable. However, radical performance is only one genre in performance studies, and it is a small fraction from all other aesthetic, semiotic or conceptual strategies that can be employed in performance art. Hopefully, the situation is changing, since in the 58th Venice Biennale in 2019, the Lithuanian pavilion exhibited performance-based work of art Sun & Sea (Marina), which was awarded the Golden Lion for the best national participation.
It is of utmost importance to recognize performance art as a valuable, valid and legitimate artistic discipline that should be included in the curricula of higher education establishments in Latvia. It is sad that performance art is still ignored as a fertile and productive field of studies that allows to perform multi-perspectival and complex research. For example, the Department of Performance Studies at the New York City’s Tisch School of the Arts is ranked No 1 for doctoral programmes in Theatre and Performance Studies. The Department provides an opportunity to study performance art from multiple, cross-sectional perspectives: “Combining an interdisciplinary range of approaches including feminist and queer theory, critical race theory, and other modes of analysis, with an equally diverse range of research methods, Performance Studies offers graduate and undergraduate students the opportunity to explore and think critically about the world-making power of performance in theatre, performance art, dance, sound/music, visual and installation art, activism, and online, as well as in the performance of ‘everyday life’” (Tisch, NYU). The author of the doctoral dissertation hopes that eventually performance art – both as a practice and theoretical discourse – will be incorporated in the programmes of higher education establishments in Latvia, too, fulfilling its research potential and opening opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students to engage in interdisciplinary, exciting, ambitious art projects with a competitive and high academic value.

The aim and tasks of the dissertation

The aim of this doctoral dissertation is to create a new theoretical framework under which it would be possible to examine performance art and especially its documentation in a still image – painting and photography – in Latvia in the period of late socialism.

The author of the doctoral dissertation has formulated the following tasks:
1) To investigate the genealogy of performance art or proto-performance art in Latvia drawing particular attention to the symbiotic relationship between photography and performance in the 1920s and 1930s and Kārlis Padegs (1911-1940) as the first pioneer of proto-performance;
2) To examine the socio-political circumstances in the period of late socialism affecting the position and status of performance art;
3) To apply the theoretical framework of the second public sphere, in order to analyse the artistic strategies of performance artists and their companions in creating hybrid, participatory works of art;
4) To carry out a case study of the performance art pioneer Andris Grinbergs, analyzing his legacy and contribution towards creating performance art in Latvia, as well as his performative gendered identity in the context of art under the framework of gender studies;
5) To investigate the problems and theoretical dilemmas surrounding the documentation of performance art, which is characterized as ephemeral and transient art and, therefore, impossible to be reproduced or mediated;
6) To compare the differences between live and technologically mediated performances;
7) To assess the nature and problematics of reenactments of performances, questioning the paradigmatic viewpoint that performance cannot be repeated;
8) To examine the theoretical axis of intermediality, especially its application and usage in performance studies, and to apply the theoretical framework of intermediality to the documentation of performance art in Latvia;
9) To analyze the intermedial relations between performance, photography and painting, especially drawing attention to the constructedness of photography and performance, as well as to intermedial migration among painting, photography and performance;
10) To examine and compare the notion of appropriation in art in Western and Latvian art discourses;
11) To prove that performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism existed as intermedial appropriation, highlighting the argument with several illustrative case studies: the Office Group, the collaborative projects between Andris Grinbergs and photographers Atis Ieviņš and Jānis Kreicbergs, Imants Lancmanis, Maija Tabaka, Miervaldis Polis, the NSRD, as well as Ivars Mailītis and Inese Mailīte;
12) To examine the legacy of performance art in Latvia.

The chronological boundaries and research challenges of the dissertation

Although the late socialist period is often dated from Leonid Brezhnev’s accession to power in 1964 to Mikhail Gorbachev’s perestroika reforms that began in 1985, the chronological boundaries of the doctoral dissertation are set between 1964 and 1989,
the latter being the year of the fall of the Berlin Wall. In this period Latvia was incorporated as a socialist republic in the USSR, regaining its independence in 1991. In Western Europe, and especially in the United States, the socialist countries were usually referred to as ‘Communist’; however, the term ‘Communist’ was primarily applied to the political parties and their members. To discuss the political system, the term ‘socialist’ is more appropriate (Erjavec 2003: 11).

The period is challenging in terms of research, since it is a rather recent past and historiography still has many gaps. Moreover, several researchers have noticed many problematic assumptions in discussing the late socialist period. For example, Alexei Yurchak, professor in anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, points out that these assumptions include the following: socialism was ‘bad’ and ‘immoral’ and binary categories are used to describe Soviet reality as “oppression and resistance, repression and freedom, the state and the people, official economy and second economy, official culture and counterculture, totalitarian language and counterlanguage, public self and private self, truth and lie, reality and dissimulation, morality and corruption” (Yurchak 2005: 5).

Some researchers, such as Irina Uvarova and Kirill Rogov, have suggested that the Soviet culture can be divided into censored and uncensored (Yurchak 2005: 6). According to Yurchak, this terminology highlights the ambivalence of cultural production in the Soviet Union; however “it still reduces Soviet reality to a binary division between the state (censored) and the society beyond it (uncensored), failing to account for the fact that many of the cultural phenomena in socialism that were allowed, tolerated, or even promoted within the realm of the officially censored were nevertheless quite distinct from the ideological texts of the Party” (Yurchak 2005: 5). It can be argued that these binary categories originated under the conditions of the Cold War, “when the entity of ‘the Soviet bloc’ had been articulated in opposition to ‘the West’” (Yurchak 2005: 7) resulting in “many metaphors that set a sort of dichotomy between ‘us-them’, according to the dominance of the two empires: the USA and the USSR” (Banaszkiewicz, Graburn, Owsianowska 2016: 110).

If Western Europe was separated from the Soviet sphere of influence with ‘Iron Curtain’, Latvia, along with the other two Baltic States – Lithuania and Estonia –, as well as today’s Ukraine and Belarus were in the area of the Soviet Union

1 The term used by Winston Churchill in 1946.
infrastructure, where Moscow’s sphere of influence in terms of ideology, politics, economy and culture was the most evident. The so-called Satellite States – Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany – were further to the West and enjoyed greater political or economic freedom (Banaszkiewicz et al 2016: 110). Therefore, when carrying out research of the historical and political context in the previous Soviet bloc (also called ‘Eastern bloc’) countries, the heterogeneity and diversity of the region must be acknowledged to avoid superficial simplifications. Moreover, as stated by Magdalena Banaszkiewicz, associate professor in intercultural studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow, and Nelson Graburn, professor in sociocultural anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, USA, “it is very insofar significant that for many years mainly Western researchers wrote about the events happening behind the Iron Curtain. There was actually no account ‘from the inside’, which would reach wider reception” (Banaszkiewicz et al 2016: 110). Local researchers coming from East-Central Europe “constitute an interesting and important counterpoint to the research from the Anglo-Saxon perspective” (Banaszkiewicz et al 2016: 110), and such heteroglossia is crucial to achieve more objective research results examining the very complex historical and political context in the socialist period.

It must be noted, though, the socialist period has not been thoroughly examined in the art discourse locally. According to Latvian art critic Vilnis Vējis, this period “was characterised by massive control of society and personal life in which every form of expression, including creativity, had a set place” (Vējis 2010: 25), whereas Elita Ansone writes that “the Soviet era conjures up negative emotions. That is why we have done little work in relation to Socialist Realism since the restoration of Latvia’s independence in 1991” (Ansone 2009: 66). These a priori negative emotions also cause a problem in the research of art history: “In general terms, the art of Socialist Realism has been seen as something that was bad, political, commissioned, literary, natural, not really artistic – something, in short, which has nothing to do with ‘good art’” (Ansone 2009: 66). In the neighboring country Estonia a book entitled Lost Eigheities was published in 2010 by the Center of Contemporary Arts. In the foreword art historian Sirje Helme writes that “the eighties have been dealt with the least. It has been a popular notion that the eighties were a time when nothing happened; everything was stamped upon by the strict heel of stagnation and if anything was happening, it was probably a clone of the ideas and achievements of the previous decades” (Helme 2010: 5). This approach is not productive in terms of analyzing the diversity, versatility
and plurality of heterogeneous genres, movements and directions, which developed in this period beyond the dogmas of Socialist Realism – the dominant aesthetic theory and practice in the Soviet Union, which “in itself [is] increasingly hard to define” (Bužinska 2010: 26).

It cannot be denied that “the Soviet system produced tremendous suffering, repression, fear and lack of freedom” (Yurchak 2005: 8), but “what tends to get lost in the binary accounts is the crucial and seemingly paradoxical fact that, for great numbers of Soviet citizens, many of fundamental values, ideals, and realities of socialist life (such as equality, community, selflessness, altruism, friendship, ethical relations, safety, education, work, creativity, and concern for the future) were of genuine importance” (Yurchak 2005: 8). Neringa Klumbyte, professor in anthropology at the Miami University, USA, points out that “this period is also different because of gradual societal changes, such as liberalization of the social order and moves away from the revolutionary values of asceticism, collectivism, and proletarianism, that prepared people for the coming state-initiated shift toward regime liberalization in the mid- and late-1980s” (Klumbyte 2013: 3). Therefore, modern-day researchers have the challenging task to reconstruct the ethical and aesthetic complexities of socialist life, and “the challenge of such a task is to avoid a priori negative accounts of socialism without falling into the opposite extreme of romanticizing it” (Yurchak 2005: 9-10).

As regards this period in the historiography of Latvia, it is an important task for the modern-day researchers to analyze the 1960s–1980s period, because after the independence of Latvia was restored in the 1990s the research of this historical period nearly stopped and it could be explained with the hierarchy of priorities (Ivanovs 2007: 30). The historians mostly paid attention to the painful and tragic events in the history of Latvia – the occupation of Latvia, repressive politics implemented by the German and Soviet Union occupation regimes, and sovietization of Latvia; however, the 1960s-1980s period was not a research priority (Ivanovs 2007: 31). Scholars who included late socialism in their works usually associated this period with ‘stagnation’ – a time when there was relatively no change in the economy, society, or politics, whereas the revolutionary and the Stalinist periods seemed more captivating than the era of relative stability (also explained by the opening of Soviet archives and new opportunities to revisit the Soviet past) (Klumbyte 2013: 2). The situation has slightly changed since 2014, when a special Government Commission for the KGB Research was established in Latvia. In the period from 2015 to 2018 the Commission published five volumes of
scholarly articles and reports dedicated to the research of the totalitarian regime and its chief government agency – the Committee for State Security (the KGB) – based on the available archive documents.

Latvian historian Daina Bleriere explains that the subject of repressions and the manifestations of political power exercised by Moscow – the totalitarian model – is popular in Latvian post-Soviet historiography because in Latvia, as well as in Estonia and Lithuania, “the Soviet regime was forced from outside, so the anti-Communist and anti-Soviet perspective reflects not only a purely normative attitude – the Soviet regime was brutal and bad – but also a view on the Soviet regime as an outside force that had no roots in Latvia and that had failed to conquer Latvian affection. Relations between the centre (Moscow) and the periphery (Riga), as well as the relations between society and power structures are perceived as distinctly vertical, forced and asymmetric” (Bleriere 2012: 33).

In this context, it is also very problematic to use the sources written in the 1960s-1980s period, because they were ideologically biased and apologetic of the Soviet regime, since the meaning and content of the Soviet politics were interpreted as the increase of welfare, development of economics and culture, etc. When examining the history and historiography of the late Soviet period, a critically new research approach is needed, asking new questions and providing new perspectives. It can be questioned whether the late Soviet socialism can only be understood and explained in “orientalist idioms, namely, as backward, oppressive, irrational and immoral” (Klumbyte 2013: 2), or the change of paradigm is needed in order to obtain a more detailed image of this sociocultural phenomena (opposed to the cliché of a Cold War dichotomy). Since the overlooked or misunderstood phenomena need to be re-addressed and the established views must be questioned and, if possible, re-interpreted, legitimate historical revisionism must be carried out.

Research methods

This doctoral dissertation is a complex, discursive analysis of performance art as intermedial appropriation, analyzing the representational media of photography and painting as case studies. To implement this task, various factors need to be taken into account. It is not only the theoretical discourse, but also the socio-political circumstances, which need to be examined; therefore multiple research methods need
to be applied. The doctoral dissertation has also certain limitations, since the moving image is not included in the analysis. Attention is focused mostly on relations between performance (action, process, movement) and forms of documentation in still two-dimensional images, for instance, a photograph or painting, because it is a more complicated model of intermedial relations, if compared to movement registered in a moving image. Yet, the moving image can be potentially examined in future studies.

The choice of methods depends on the aim of each part of research:

1. *Qualitative analysis and data reduction* was applied when working with the theoretical segment and particularly when narrowing down the conceptual approach from documentation to intermediality;

2. *Multiperspectival, discursive analysis* was applied to produce a horizontal, polyphonic, and dynamic paradigm of critical art-historical analysis, where ‘locality’ is approached as a theoretical construction open to exchange with other (e.g., neighboring) localities, as well as cultural centers (e.g. Western art history);

3. *The critical discourse analysis* was applied to examine the socio-political circumstances in Latvia in the period of late socialism that were crucially affecting the marginal position and status of performance art as well as the methods and strategies that the artists applied in collaborative and participatory projects involving performance art, photography and painting;

4. *The case study method* was applied to build the theory inductively from case study research, in this case Andris Grinbergs and his contemporaries, who were engaged in hybrid, collaborative and participatory art projects involving photographers, painters, poets, writers, theatre directors, drama students, etc.

The qualitative analysis in this doctoral dissertation must be viewed as a dynamic and inventive process, which has been based on three mutually inclusive procedures: ‘data reduction’, ‘data display’, and ‘conclusion: drawing/verifying’ (Huberman and Miles 1994). In the context of this doctoral dissertation it is of special importance to emphasize the first procedure – data reduction. According to Michael Huberman and Matthew Miles, “with data reduction, the potential universe of data is reduced in an anticipatory way as the researcher chooses a conceptual framework, research questions, cases and instruments” (1994: 429).
Work on this doctoral dissertation was initially started with the theoretical focus on the documentation of performance art and especially on the polemic argument of the live versus the mediated, which is central in the discourse of performance studies. Among scholars, there is a tendency to regard live events as more authentic and superior sources of experience and knowledge, and there has been a certain resistance towards technologically mediated performances as objects of inquiry. So, the dilemma seemed to be evolving around the never-ending discussions of absence and presence, where performance, once performed, disappears forever, yet is also present and represented in various media that save performance art from perishing.

Moreover, several scholars (see Auslander 1999, 2006, 2009; Klich and Scheer 2011) have indicated that the polarization of the live and the mediated has been an unproductive approach in the analysis of performance art, because it excludes those performative works, which are intended to exist only in a mediated format, for example, the performative and iconic photographs of Cindy Sherman (b.1954), Yves Klein (1928-1962), and Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968). Especially nowadays, when artists often use social networking sites, such as Instagram, as platforms for their artwork (as in the case of Amalia Ulman (b.1989)), the ignorance and exclusion of mediated forms from the definition of performance art seem inadequate and conceptually not justifiable. Therefore, as a result of data selection and condensation, the initial research focus was narrowed down to the conceptual framework and theoretical axis of intermediality.

The theoretical axis of intermediality and theory in general is of utmost importance in performance studies. As indicated by Philip Auslander, theory (from Greek *theoria*) means ‘a viewing’ or ‘spectacle’, and thus it offers a way of seeing: “a theory is something like a conceptual lens, a pair of spectacles, which you use to frame and focus what you are looking at. It is a tool for discerning, deciphering, and making sense” (Auslander 2008: 10). In Auslander’s view, performance studies is a “paradigm-driven field”, by which he means that “it takes the concept of performance as both its object of inquiry and its primary analytical concept” (Auslander 2008: 10). The central question that animates the discipline, pursuant to Auslander, is: “What is performance?” When trying to answer this question, we have to be aware that “performance studies is not about discovering a single theory of performance” (Auslander 2008: 10). Instead, “every theory frames and focuses our attention on some things while leaving other things outside the frame or out of focus” (Auslander 2008: 10).
10). Consequently, theory *per se* is an integral part of performance studies: “It is the myriad of conceptual tools used to ‘see’ the performance” (Auslander 2008: 10).

As regards the theoretical framework of intermediality, it is only one conceptual tool to examine performance art; however, it will be the central theoretical axis in the doctoral dissertation herein. We can speak of intermediality when pre-existing medium-specific conventions have been altered, allowing for the exploration of new dimensions of perception and experience. The borders between media thus become the zones of experimentation where “we can test and experiment with a plethora of different strategies” (Rajewsky 2010: 65). To be brief, at all times when the properties of all respective media intersect, overlap or collide, the in-between state or intermediality occurs and intermedial phenomena emerge. In this context, media become vehicles that make the intermediality emerge.

From having reduced the data and the research focus to the conceptual framework of intermediality, the research questions were formulated and several cases examined. With the concept of intermediality as a conceptual framework, photography and painting were not examined as different media of representation or forms of documentation, but instead – as the experimentation zones of media hybridization and synthesis leading to completely new works of art. The migration of media from performance to photography and painting and the intentional borrowing among several artists involved in such hybrid works of art also highlighted another phenomenon – appropriation, which from the Latin *appropriare* translates as ‘to make one’s own’.

In the context of art, there can be two broad categories of appropriation distinguished: (1) unconscious and almost inevitable appropriation; (2) deliberate appropriation, because artists can intentionally borrow, copy or alter preexisting images and objects.

If in the 1970s several American artists engaged in the practice of appropriation quite provocatively and controversially under the conceptual framework of Postmodernism, in Latvia, though the act of borrowing did take place, it was not based on Postmodernism. At the time, when the Socialist Realism was the only official

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2 In performance studies, the concept of intermediality suggests an abstracted notion of ‘media’ as a conceptual construction of artistic means. The term ‘media’ is used in the sense of a ‘medium of articulation’, emerging in the Fluxus and happening environment in the 1970s in the West.

3 Interest in Postmodernism, though sporadic, did exist. It was especially noticeable in the experiments with photography and painting, resulting in the Hyperrealism trend in painting. As suggested by Latvian art historian Eduards Klaviņš, these trends can be
ideological model that could be applied to art, culture or architecture, any theoretical discussions and debates on Postmodernism were hardly possible, one reason being that the Soviet ideologues and censors on this side of the Iron Curtain were against any influx of ideas associated with the West. Therefore, from the methodological point of view, the same conceptual framework of appropriation could not be applied and thus the author of the dissertation came across the problem of interpretation. It was questioned, whether Western history of art should be seen as the point of departure, from which a comparative analysis with the East European case should be drawn; or whether appropriation in Soviet Latvia was a local symptom and outcome of the socio-political circumstances at the time.

The late art historian and the leading voice in the postsocialist art history writing in the region Piotr Piotrowski (2008) argues that there are three fundamental assumptions of the so-called universal (i.e. Western) history of modern art: (1) the hierarchically defined art geography (center-periphery relations); (2) the canon of works (exclusive empirical material); (3) the model of historical description in terms of the succession of styles (historical narration). The problem with an application of such an art-historical paradigm is that it typically results in oversimplification and fails to recognize the historically real significance of the local art production. Moreover, a scholar attempting an analysis of specific developments of art produced outside Western centers of modern culture must face the challenge of proposing an alternative model of interpretation. In this light, Piotrowski proposes to use the local frames of reference and adopt a state/nation specific perspective, approaching ‘locality’ in open terms (not necessarily implying a nationalist, essentialist and limited point of view). For Piotrowski, ‘locality’ should be approached as a theoretical construction open to exchange with other (e.g., neighboring) localities, as well as cultural centers (Piotrowski 2008: 4).

Following this methodological strategy, the locality of performance art in Latvia and its complex relationships with other media, including the processes of documentation and intermediality, have been analyzed in juxtaposition to Western centers of modern

defined as the mutations of late Socialist Realism, namely as the ‘Socialist Post-Modernism’ (see Kļaviņš 2009).

Piotrowski states that the persistence of this paradigm has been confirmed by such authoritative books as *Art History Since 1900. Modernism – Antimodernism – Postmodernism* (2004) that has been compiled by prominent scholars associated with the art periodical *October* (Piotrowski 2008: 4).
culture. However, following Piotrowski’s advice, the meanings have not been reduced to the range available in the West. In this alternative model of interpreting art-historical processes Piotrowski (2008: 4) recommends to apply the following procedure: (1) deconstruction of the Western inspirations, i.e., their analysis not in hierarchical (center-periphery) influence, but in functional terms aiming to determine what a given influence meant in a specific local context (hence, the long journey from the documentation of performance art in the West to the intermedial appropriation in Latvia); (2) rejection of the idea of stylistic homogeneity in favour of heterogeneity – combining styles into local, unique stylistic mutations (in the case of Latvia these mutations were determined by the socio-political circumstances); (3) recognition of the local canons and value systems, often contradicting those of Western art centers (for example, the difference between the appropriation in art in the West and in Soviet Latvia).

As a result, following Piotrowski’s instructions, the aim of this doctoral dissertation is to produce a horizontal, polyphonic, and dynamic paradigm of critical art-historical analysis. Such multiperspectival analysis demands to use the plurality of methods, and, pursuant to Danish professors Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Phillips’s suggestions, “multiperspectival work is not only permissible but positively valued in most forms of discourse analysis” (2002: 4). Jorgensen and Phillips argue that different perspectives provide different forms of knowledge about a phenomenon so that, together, they produce a broader understanding. It must be noted though that multiperspectival work is distinguished from an eclecticism based on a mishmash of disparate approaches without serious assessment of their relations with each other. Multiperspectivalism requires that one weighs the approaches up against each other, identifying what kind of (local) knowledge each approach can supply and modifying the approaches in the light of these considerations (Jorgensen, Phillips 2002: 4).

To examine the socio-political circumstances in Latvia in the late socialist period that were crucially affecting the marginal position and status of performance art as well as the methods and strategies that the artists applied in collaborative and participatory projects involving performance art, photography and painting, the author of the doctoral dissertation has applied the critical discourse analysis, which according to Jorgenson and Phillips “is intended to generate critical social research, which is research that contributes to the rectification of injustice and inequality in society” (Jorgensen, Phillips 2002: 77). Jorgenson and Phillips argue that “doing critical
discourse analysis will, then, always involve the transdisciplinary integration of different theories within a multiperspectival research framework” (Jorgensen, Phillips 2002: 86).

The socio-political circumstances in the late socialist period in Latvia manifest the everyday life saturated with ideology and state-forced collectivism that was constantly celebrated with military displays and parades. In this atmosphere, accompanied by the sense of paranoia and surveillance, artists sought for survival strategies and microenvironment, where collaborative and participatory projects could be implemented among the most trusted friends and companions. Performance art particularly attracted many creative individuals of diverse and interdisciplinary backgrounds – fashion designers, theatre actors, film students, painters, writers, poets, photographers, etc. By hybridizing into photography and painting, performance art adapted to the given social reality and managed to appear in the first public sphere to audiences, who were never aware of the original work of art. This process of metamorphosis, intermedial appropriation, demonstrates the unique symbiotic relationship between a process-based art and a fine art object without presupposing the superiority, authenticity, originality or authority of either mode. Moreover, the participatory projects enabled artists to express their creative agency in a non-hierarchic, democratic atmosphere – something that the totalitarian state denied.

To analyse this complex social reality and the effects on the art discourse, the author of the doctoral dissertation has integrated the theoretical framework of the second public sphere (unofficial, alternative, peripheral, uncensored) as alternative microenvironment that existed in parallel to the first public sphere (official, controlled, kept under surveillance by the state and permeated by censorship) as proposed by German sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas.

And the final method to mention is the case study method, which actually helped to build the theory inductively from the case study research. According to Huberman and Miles, “the case study is a research strategy which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single setting” (Huberman and Miles 2002: 8). Case studies typically combine data collection methods such as archives, interviews, questionnaires, and observations, and they can be used to accomplish various aims: to provide description, test theory, or generate theory (Huberman and Miles 2002: 9). In this doctoral dissertation the initial case study was focused on the pioneer of performance art in Latvia Andris Grinbergs (b. 1946); however, over the course of research other
contemporaries, for example, Imants Lancmanis (b. 1941) and Miervaldis Polis (b. 1948) and their art projects were added, thus the case study involves multiple cases. The case study was initially commenced to understand the key features of their activities, yet it evolved into testing the theory of documentation and eventually into generating a theory on intermedial appropriation. Therefore, all three aims of the case study were accomplished. It must be mentioned that the case study of Andris Grinbergs was also accompanied by the theoretical framework of gender studies, where his identity and particularly sexual identity has been analysed in comparison to Grinbergs’s idol American Pop artist and master of appropriation Andy Warhol.

To obtain a better understanding of the socio-political situation, as well as creative strategies employed by the respective artists within the set timeframe of the doctoral dissertation, the author carried out several informal, unstructured interviews with artists Atis Ieviņš (b. 1946), Eižens Valpēters (b. 1943), Laima Eglīte (b. 1945), Māra Brašmane (b. 1944), Henrihs Vorkals (1946-2018) and Ivars Mailītis (b. 1956). The author engaged in the email correspondence exchanging numerous emails with Andris Grinbergs in the time period from 27 October 2015 to 27 December 2017, Henrihs Vorkals in the time period from 14 June 2012 to 16 December 2012, Imants Lancmanis in the time period from 26 January 2018 to 3 February 2018, Atis Ieviņš in the time period from 19 August 2015 to 2 October 2018. Through email correspondence the author of the doctoral dissertation asked questions, specified details or missing information, as well as organised the transfer of the visual materials in a digitized format. As regards archives, the author used the institutional archives of the Contemporary Art Centre in Latvia and the Dodge Collection of the Zimmerli Art Museum in Rutgers, New Jersey, USA, as well as private archives of art collector Jānis Zuzāns and artists Atis Ieviņš, Imants Lancmanis and Ivars Mailītis.

The structure of the dissertation

The doctoral dissertation has been structured in three chapters: (1) Development of Performance Art in Latvia; (2) Documentation and Intermediality of Performance; (3) Performance Art in Latvia as Intermedial Appropriation. However, to avoid confusion with terminology, the author of the dissertation has also examined numerous terminology and vocabulary-related issues under section Terminology, where terminology related to performance art has been explained, on the one hand, and terminology and theoretical frameworks used to discuss the dichotomy of official and
non-official art in Latvia in the period of late socialism has been investigated, on the other hand.

Under the section of the terminology that is related to performance art, the author of the dissertation provides key terms and definitions of performance art, as well as analyses what performance art is not, especially drawing attention to the difference between terms ‘performance art’ and ‘performing arts’. The author of the dissertation emphasizes the plurality of terms that are used to refer to performance art clarifying the etymology of the term ‘performance art’ and explaining the historically determined circumstances that affected this kind of plurality. Since the case study of the dissertation is focused on the oeuvre of Andris Grinbergs, who was the pioneer of happenings in Latvia, the author of the dissertation draws special attention to the etymology of the term ‘happening’. Further on, the author provides the early examples of proto-performance art in the West, especially paying attention to Dadaism and the two guiding principles in Dadaist performance practice: the art of the everyday and chance. The author of the dissertation argues that based on the evidence the origins of performance art in the East European region were not the same as in Western Europe, namely, that they did not stem from Dadaism. This argument leads to another important factor – the differences between performance art in the West and the East. For the purposes of this doctoral dissertation, the author has also emphasized the parallels between performance art as artistic discipline and performance as understood in sociology, anthropology and other social sciences, paying attention to such terms as ‘cultural performance’ or ‘social performance’ viewed by Erving Goffmann, Judith Butler and Mikhail Bakhtin. Under the section on the dichotomy of official and non-official art in Latvia in the period of late socialism, the author of the dissertation looks at the challenges that art historians face when working with the material of the late socialist period. Although the official artistic doctrine in the USSR was Socialist Realism, it cannot be regarded as homogeneous and uniform practice – there were many deviations and mutations, which were not necessarily openly dissident. The author of the dissertation looks at the dichotomies of ‘official’ and ‘non-official’ art, ‘conformist’ and ‘non-conformist’ art; however, the concept of the second public sphere is suggested as a better suited alternative to replace the previously mentioned dichotomies.

It must also be mentioned that the author of the doctoral dissertation has analysed the problematics related to historiography under the section Historiography, where the
The author has compared locally published secondary sources with secondary sources published abroad. This division was necessary, since performance art is a very understudied discipline in Latvia. There are very scarce secondary sources dedicated to the history and development of performance art in Latvia that would be published locally and the ones that are published rarely have considerable discursive analysis. However, the foreign secondary sources present another challenge. The problem with these sources is that Eastern Europe and the history of performance art in this region have been largely excluded. Several respectable Western art historians base their ideas on assumptions, for example, claiming that performance art in Eastern Europe only functioned as a form of political opposition. The same problem persists in regards the question of documentation and the relationship between performance and photography. Although the phenomenon has been explored in several sources, unfortunately the practice or examples in Eastern Europe are often ignored.

The first chapter *Development of Performance Art in Latvia* is divided in three subchapters. Subchapter 1.1 *Proto-Performance Art: Early Performative Manifestations in Photography* offers insight in the symbiotic relationship between photography and performance examining the performative manifestations in Latvian photography in the 1920s and 1930s. Further on, the author has looked at the passive/active roles of the photographer and the photographic subject, as well as the outstanding painter Kārlis Padegs’s (1911-1940) life as performance. In subchapter 1.2 *The Conditions of Art Production Affecting Performance Art and its Development* the author of the dissertation examines the hierarchy of arts and the status of photography and performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism. Attention is drawn to the dissemination of information on performance art, as well as the phenomenon of Pantomime, which was defined as the Soviet Esperanto and could be considered the ‘legal’ body art. Another crucial condition that defines the performance art practice in Latvia in the period of late socialism, was the location in the geographical and cultural periphery. This factor has been contextualised arguing that periphery and found, site-specific space provided an opportunity for greater freedom in terms of the artistic expression. Since it was common for artists in Latvia in the period of late socialism to work on collaborative projects, often establishing tiny communes as, for example, it can be seen in the case of the Office Group, the Mežaparks Commune, the French Group, the Emissionists, the NSRD, the author of the dissertation investigates performance art as an instance of participatory art and ‘creative collaboration’.
Furthermore, the author of the dissertation provides the theoretical framework of the second public sphere as a useful concept for analysing the specifics of the art production in the period of late socialism. In the third subchapter 1.3 Andris Grinbergs – the Pioneer of Performance Art in Latvia in the 1970s the author provides a case study of Andris Grinbergs’s oeuvre drawing attention to the early years in his career, everyday performance and episodes of dandyism, happenings and performances, as well as gender performance, where comparison between Andris Grinbergs and Andy Warhol is drawn. Subchapter 1.3 ends with a comparison of Andris Grinbergs and other performance artists in Eastern and Central Europe in the period of late socialism.

Chapter 2 Documentation and Intermediality of Performance provides the theoretical foundations for the thesis of the dissertation, namely, that performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism existed as intermedial appropriation. This chapter is also divided in three subchapters. Subchapter 2.1 introduces the topic of the documentation of performance, examining the challenges posed by the ephemeral and transient nature of performance. The author of the dissertation also looks at the transformational processes of performance when it is reperformed, that is, the phenomenon of reenactments. Subchapter 2.2 is focused on the intermediality of performance, first of all, looking at intermediality as a useful theoretical framework and examining the problematic status of media borders. The author of the dissertation also studies the early steps towards the integration of art forms and intermediality, providing such examples as Richard Wagner, Adolphe Appia, and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who focused on the collaboration of artistic disciplines and established a precedent for the synthesis of artistic disciplines within the theatrical frame. Further on, the author of the dissertation analyses how intermediality has been theoreticized in performance art studies, highlighting the happening as the ultimate intermedium. Subchapter 2.2 ends with reflections on the challenges of intermediality and the difference between intermedia and multimedia, as well as the typology of intermediality: (1) synthetic intermediality, (2) transmedial intermediality, (3) transformational intermediality, (4) ontological intermediality. Subchapter 2.3 is dedicated to the analysis of intermedial relations between performance, photography and painting. The subchapter starts with the investigation of the concept of constructedness in photography and performance. Further on, the author of the dissertation juxtaposes the still, silent, permanent, two-dimensional photographic image versus the moving, temporal, multiple, transient performance. The comparison is followed by a study of intermedial migration among
three media: painting, photography and performance, followed by an analysis of intermedial relations between photography and painting. The subchapter’s final section is dedicated to the case study of intermedial relations between photography and painting examining the phenomenon of Hyperrealism in Latvia in the period of late socialism.

Chapter 3 *Performance Art in Latvia as Intermedial Appropriation* provides the key locally specific conclusions of the doctoral dissertation. The author of the dissertation examines intermediality in the context of performance art in Latvia and argues that the notion of intermediality did exist in the Latvian art discourse in the period of late socialism; however, it was expressed as interest in synthesis of art and science, as well as different artistic disciplines. Subchapter 3.2 is dedicated to the analysis of appropriation in art, drawing comparison between the artistic practices in the 1970s in the West and in Latvia. The author claims that although intentional borrowing is evident in both cases, in Latvia this phenomenon was locally specific and did not result from the theories on Postmodernism. Further on, the author of the dissertation argues that performance art in Latvia existed as intermedial appropriation in the period of late socialism, providing eight examples of artists and artists’ groups and their collaborative projects: the Office Group, collaboration between Andris Grinbergs and Jānis Kreicbergs, as well as Atis Ieviņš, the carnivals organised by Imants Lancmanis at the Rundāle Palace, the ‘theatre’ of Maija Tabaka, the performances and their intermedial appropriations in the oeuvre of Miervaldis Polis, the Workshop for the Restoration of Unfelt Feelings (the NSRD), and finally, the intermedial projects of Ivars Maļītis and Inese Maļīte.

At the end of the doctoral dissertation the author has provided conclusions resulting from the complex research.

**TERMINOLOGY**

*Terminology related to performance art*

*Key terms and definitions*

Performance art is a visual arts discipline,\(^5\) where an artist or several artists undertake

\(^5\) Since performance art is a visual arts discipline, it is irrelevant to describe the thematic scope or the content of performances. Similarly to any traditional art genre, the themes are unlimited starting from the explorations of identity and ending with socio-political issues.
an action or actions in front of an audience in a particular time and space. It must be
noted that the artist works with his/her own semiotic codes and systems of signs (as
opposed to the theatre practice, where the outcome is based on the interaction between
the author of the play, director and actor(s)). The action in front of the audience is
defined as ‘performance’. The audience is often ‘activated’ and engaged in shared
experience and practice. The (co)experiential and phenomenological aspect is crucial
in performance art, and it is transformed on those occasions, when performance is
technologically mediated and presented via media.

The main features of performance art are:

(1) the body of the artist as the material, form and content and the primary medium of
the work of art,⁶
(2) blurred boundaries between art and life,
(3) experiential immediacy or presence,
(4) the dematerialization of the artwork,
(5) prevalence of process and human subject over a tangible product, and
(6) prevalence of the presentational modes of action in real time over representational,
commodified objects, which means that the live presence of the artist and the real
actions of his/her body are central, though contradictory and complex, to the process
and execution of performance art.

Other key components are time, space and the relationship between performer and
audience, as well as interdisciplinarity, since performance art can employ any material
or medium across any discipline, including music, dance, literature, poetry,
architecture, fashion, design and film. According to Valie Export, an Austrian
performance artist and theoretician, “materials, objects, instruments, the methodologies
of painting and music, of the technical media and language, the physics of the body
and the psyche of the person, [are] the foundational components of performance”

Performance art can be situated in both alternative and formal locations: “in art
museums, galleries and alternative art spaces or in impromptu sites, such as cafés, bars
or the street, where the site and often unknowing audience become an integral part of

⁶ As indicated by Mexican performance artist and theoretician Guillermo Gómez-Peña,
the human body and not the stage is the real place of creativity and ‘materia prima’.
The body becomes the centre of the symbolic cosmos – a tiny model of humanity – and
a metaphor for a bigger socio-political body (Gómez-Peña 2005: 23-24).
the work’s meaning” (Coogan 2011: 10). Because performance art is a time-based practice, time, or what is called ‘duration’ in performance art, is a critical element. Durational work – generally anything over three hours – is a particular strand of practice and inevitably brings with it elements of endurance. For example, Marina Abramović in her performance The Artist is Present (2010) sat silently for 736 hours and 30 minutes with the spectators taking turns and sitting opposite her at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York.

As implied by the title of Abramović’s performance, presence is also one of the key components in performance art. “Presence within live performance describes the temporal and spatial proximity between performer and audience, a condition also defined as co-presence” (Lehmann 2006, 141-142). This definition has been most prominent in the field of phenomenology, which defines presence via the body as in Edmund Husserl’s ‘lived body’, and Maurice Merleau-Ponty’s notion of perception ‘through the body’. However, it must be noted that digital media complicate such presumptions of live presence. Screen media such as film and television (to which we may now add newer technologies such as virtual reality and smartphone) construct a liveness and media presence beyond physical proximity, as in Philip Auslander’s example, the immediacy of live television (Auslander 1999). In this sense, presence is defined not by spatial but by temporal proximity, known as telepresence.

What performance art is not

It is also important to emphasize what performance art is not. First of all, performance art is not theatre. Although artists may use strategies that are similar in theatre, for example, recitation and improvisation, there is rarely a plot or narrative. Performance art can be “spontaneous, one-off, durational, improvised or rehearsed and performed with or without scripts” (Byrne, Moran 2011: 4-5). Performances can vary in form starting from “small-scale intimate gestures to public rallies, spectacles or parades presented in solo or collaborative form” (Byrne, Moran 2011: 4-5). The most important difference from theatre is that “the visual artist is the performer, creator and director of the performance” (Byrne, Moran 2011: 4-5). Acting in performance art is also specific, since “the performance artist is not ‘acting’ in the traditional theatrical sense” (Coogan 2011: 11). To explain the “suspended in-between space” (Coogan 2011: 11) versus ‘acting’ and ‘not acting’, the anthropological term ‘liminality’ is used.

As indicated by British drama and theatre scholars Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and
Katie Normington, “some cultural critics have argued that theatre is limited by its association with commercialism and consumerism, and that its highly codified theatre practices and intimidating buildings restrict its potential to question contemporary social values” (Govan et al 2007: 7). Whereas British professor in theatre and performance studies Baz Kershaw, for instance, claims that theatre is a ‘disciplinary system’ and ‘system of cultural production’ that encourages audiences’ passive acceptance of the status quo (Kershaw 1999: 31-32). In this context, theatre becomes associated with spectacle, artificiality and showiness, and consequently remote from the concerns of daily existence. However, Govan, Nicholson and Normington also emphasize that “performance is generally seen to be wider and more eclectic in scope, extending not only to theatrical performances that take place in and outside theatre buildings, but also to the performative aspects of everyday life” (Govan et al 2007: 7).

As regards artistic practice, British professor in theatre and performance Janelle Reinelt has argued that the term ‘performance’ became associated with the avant-garde and anti-theatre, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, when it was used to denote a rejection of mimetic representation and the authority of the written script (Reinelt 2002: 2). In other words, “performance shows practitioners’ interest in exploring physicality before textuality, and in experimental ways of working that emphasise the creative freedom and spontaneity of both performers and spectators” (Govan et al 2007: 8). This strategy draws attention to the actual experiences of performers and audiences in the moment of performance where conventional boundaries between them are broken down. Theatre, by contrast, is concerned with “representational space rather than everyday places, in creating imaginary characters and fictional worlds” (Govan et al 2007: 7).

Another crucial difference, which must be emphasized, is that performance art is not performing arts. The performing arts refer to theatre, dance, opera and the circus. Cultural anthropologist Victor Turner made a key distinction between performance art and the performing arts when he declared performance art as ‘making, not faking’. Put simply, the artist is actually shot in the arm (Chris Burden), car windows are really smashed (Pipilotti Rist), skin is truly sunburned (Dennis Oppenheim). These are not illusions but actual bodily experiences (Coogan 2011: 11), which perhaps can be best summed up with Abramović’s quote arguing that:
“To be a performance artist, you have to hate theatre. Theatre is fake: there is a black box, you pay for a ticket, and you sit in the dark and see somebody playing somebody else’s life. The knife is not real, the blood is not real, and the emotions are not real. Performance is just the opposite: the knife is real, the blood is real, and the emotions are real. It’s a very different concept. It’s about true reality” (Wilkinson 2010).

Of course, this hatred and direct opposition to theatre echoes with the position performance artists took in the 1970s; however, over the time the form of performance art has developed and, in fact, there are many crossovers and similarities between performance art and theatre (Coogan 2011: 11). Therefore, from the point of view of contemporary understanding, this oppositional distinction is not so crucial.

The plurality of terms referring to performance art
Furthermore, there is often confusion regarding the plurality of terms referring to performance art. Because “live actions are impossible to circumscribe with limited definitions, initially artists invented different terms to describe their performative intent: happenings, Fluxus, actions, rituals, demonstrations, direct art, destruction art, event art, and body art, among others” (Stiles 1996: 680). According to Byrne and Moran, “body-based performances were also influenced by the emergence of feminist theory and critique in the 1960s and 1970s which re-evaluated traditional representations of the female body. Artists used their bodies to challenge restrictive definitions of sexuality, actively exhibiting their own naked bodies to undermine conventional notions of female nudity” (Byrne, Moran 2011: 7). Stile claims that “by about 1973, however, the stylistic range and ideological differences between these different forms have been subsumed by critics into the single category of performance art” (Stiles 1996: 680). Amelia Jones emphasizes that body art, performance art, and live art are all terms, which point to artworks that activate a body or bodies temporally – either for an audience present at the time (‘live art’) or for audiences who engage the work through representational modes such as video installation. The most important aspect in each of these modes is the creative expression of the body, which plays a central role in terms of temporality and aesthetics (Jones 2012: 14-15).
The etymology of the term ‘happening’
Since the local artists in Latvia used the term ‘happening’, its etymology must be explained. The term ‘happening’ is derived from Allan Kaprow’s (1927-2006) series of performances *18 Happenings in 6 Parts* (1959), which he performed at the Reuben Gallery in New York. In his happenings, “the artist juxtaposed a diverse group of simultaneous, polymorphic, multimedia events and actions. Casting into question boundaries between discrete art objects and everyday events and actions, the happening gave visual definitions to the interstice between art and life” (Stiles 1996: 682). According to Stiles, “already by the mid-1960s, however, as the theoretical and aesthetic aims of happenings were trivialized as popular entertainment and party games, Kaprow began to do nonaudience, nontheatrical ‘activities’, private events that required commitment on the part of participants to explore interpersonal communication” (Stiles 1996: 682). Overall, in the late 1950s and early 1960s happenings had a significant influence on the development of performance art through emphasizing the importance of chance in artistic creation, audience participation and the blurring of the boundary between the audience and the artwork (Byrne, Moran 2011: 6).

The early examples of proto-performance art
As regards the genealogy and development of performance art, Kaprow claims that “history goes back through Surrealism, Dada, Mime, the circus, carnivals, the traveling saltimbanques, all the way to medieval mystery plays and processions” (Kaprow 1993: 16). Whereas American art historian RoseLee Goldberg in her book *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*, first published in 1979, dates the beginning of performance art very precisely to 20 February 1909: the day the first Futurist Manifesto was published in *Le Figaro* newspaper. The Futurist principle of ‘dynamism’ as an expressive means, the painters’ emphasis on process rather than on things, and their emphasis upon the intuition and its power to synthesize the manifold experience of sense and memory in a coherent ‘simultaneity’ left an impact on Constructivism, Dada and Surrealism (Taylor 1968: 283). Goldberg argues that performance art, as we know it today, developed through Futurism, Constructivism, Dada, Surrealism and Bauhaus.
For example, Bauhaus (1919-1933), which was actually a school and educational programme, but later became a concept “for the radical modernization of life” (Hahn
2012: 6), integrated the motto ‘play becomes party – party becomes work – work becomes play’ in their methodology. There were four important celebrations during the course of the year: the Lantern party, the summer solstice party, the Kite festival and finally the Christmas party. Walter Gropius wrote in the Bauhaus Manifesto: “Theatre, lectures, poetry, music, costume balls. Creation of festive ceremonies in these gatherings” (Droste 2012: 37). The famous Triadic Ballet, choreographed by Oskar Schlemmer, stole the show in 1923: “It was not a ballet in the conventional sense, but a combination of dance, costume, pantomime and music; the dancers were dressed as figurines” (Droste 2012: 101). According to Bauhaus researchers, “Triadic Ballet [was] an anti-ballet, a form of ‘dance Constructivism’, which could only have been created by a painter and sculptor. The origins and vehicles of expression were no longer the human body and its movements, but instead specific figurative inventions; the disguise […] was so dominant that body and movement had to ‘incorporate’ it like a sculptural shell” (Droste 2012: 102). Apart from Schlemmer, László Moholy-Nagy and Wassily Kandinsky had also drawn attention to the aspects of theatre. Kandinsky, for example, in 1923 published the essay On Abstract Theatre Synthesis. This concept is based on the idea of Gesamtkunstwerk, a total work of art to be created through the combination of all the arts – architecture, painting, sculpture, music, dance and poetry. Kandinsky saw the Bauhaus7 as an ideal place where to achieve this aim (Droste 2012: 104).

Also, in the early 20th century the Dadaists – coming from literary, theatrical, and visual arts backgrounds – staged theatrical public events in the First World War period in Central Europe. For example, the Greatest Ever Dada Show, staged in 1919 in Zurich included speeches on abstract painting, outrageously ‘modern’ dances by African-style masked figures, and poetry readings, including a text by organizer Tristan Tzara read simultaneously (but not synchronistically) by twenty participants (Jones 2008: 154).

Walter Benjamin commented that “Dadaists attached much less importance to the sales value of their work than its uselessness for contemplative immersion” (Benjamin 1999: 231). In the visual arts, Dadaists rejected oil paintings in favour of work that was anti-

7 In the context of the doctoral dissertation herein, it must be noted that Gertrud Arndt (1903-2000), a photographer associated with the Bauhaus movement, made a series of performative forty-three self-portraits in various costumes titled Maskenporträts (Mask Portraits) in the 1930s.
commodity in its immediate, throwaway nature, but whatever the medium of artistic expression, Dadaist work sought to shock audiences into recognising how they had uncritically accepted the conventions of society. Rather than trying to create art, Dadaists wanted to make ‘anti-art’ or ‘anti-performance’ that marked their dissatisfaction with the art market and their nihilistic vision of the world acquired by living through the atrocities of the First World War (Govan et al 2007: 18-19). According to Govan, Nicholson and Normington, “in Dadaist performance, the cabaret format was particularly popular because it easily accommodated topical issues and had, therefore, a spontaneity that worked against the idea that art objects should be enduring and revered” (Govan et al 2007: 18).

**The art of the everyday and the concepts of ready-made and chance in Dadaist performance practice**

The Dadaists emphasized spontaneity both in their process of working and in their performances. The art of the everyday was conceptualised by Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968), a key Dadaist artist, whose work in Europe and North America has influenced many conceptual artists. Duchamp asked: “Can one make works which are not works of ‘art’?” (MOMA). He saw beauty in mass-manufactured items and machines rather than in more conventional artworks. One of the cornerstones of Duchamp’s legacy is based on his ‘readymades’ – a conception, in which he reframed everyday objects as works of art in order to radically question and challenge the nineteenth-century ideas that art is defined according to specific aesthetic principles, art has special ‘aura’, and great art is to be recognised and revered through aesthetic contemplation. The principles applied to the ready-made offered an ironic comment on the idealisation of the art object. One of his most well-known ready-mades was a piece entitled *Fountain,* which was actually a massproduced urinal signed by ‘R. Mutt’ (Govan et al 2007: 19). The impulse behind Duchamp’s conceptual artworks was the belief that everyday objects can be viewed as works of art because “the active agent in making a work is not the artist, but the audience’s perception” (Govan et al 2007: 20).

The principles of the ready-made and chance were also applied to Dadaist performance practice. Recently, several authors have expressed their doubt about the authorship of *Fountain.* Using the available evidence – letters, etc. – biographers and art historians argue that the pioneer of ready-mades was New York Dada artist Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, not Duchamp. Since Duchamp was very active in America, his connection with Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven was not an accident.
practice. Since the creative impulse is taken from a ‘real’ source rather than from the imagination, these principles questioned the idea that great art is dependent on the skill of the artist. For example, Tristan Tzara’s ‘paper bag’ poems were composed by drawing words randomly from a bag. Sharing sentiments with the Surrealist movement, Tzara equated spontaneity with creative freedom, arguing “everything that issues freely from ourselves without the intervention of speculative ideas, represents us” (Melzer 1980: 68). Tzara also sought to blur everyday life with the fictional realm of performance, in 1920 creating a performance entitled *La Crise du Change*. Tzara integrated ready-made setting that was abandoned by a theatre company turning it into half-salon and half-forest: “This inappropriate setting served to ‘make strange’ the activity on stage, and they hoped this juxtaposition would unsettle the audience” (Govan et al 2007: 21). The programme included music, readings and the exhibition of painting, as well as Tzara’s own performance (reading a found text) accompanied by the ringing of many bells. The audiences were outraged, since the cacophonous bell-ringing was disorientating and Tzara’s performance was, in fact, a repetition of a politician’s speech (Govan et al 2007: 21). This kind of creative strategy undermined the value of art and violated the phenomenological experience of audiences, confusing them and providing no opportunities for contemplation.

Dadaists challenged the pretensions of art and questioned the ways in which art was received and understood, thus paving the way for further creative investigations into how the practices of everyday life might be incorporated in performance, making connections between art and life. These experimentations with everyday settings have illustrated the significance of audience interaction and participation in the processes of performance, consequently redefining the role of the ‘non-artists’ in performance (Govan et al 2007: 28, 41). Dadaists, just as the Futurists and Surrealists, in their attempt to minimise the gap between art and life had forged new forms and new languages appropriate to their times, so in the 1960s they served as new foundation stones for the emerging happenings, so much so that theatre practitioner Ken Dewey recognised that “we need new methods and new techniques of articulation: ways in which people can articulate themselves” (Dewey 1995 (1965): 208).

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9 Dadaism influenced happenings on a conceptual as well as formal level. For example, chance became an important component of the performance practices of the composer John Cage (1912-1992) and choreographer Merce Cunningham (1919-2009), whose long-term collaboration began in 1942 and continued until Cage’s death in 1992.
The origins of performance art in the East European region

The instances of proto-performance art in the West mentioned above cannot be referred as the point of departure for the East European region. Art historians Amy Bryzgel and Zdenka Badovinac point out that the reiteration of the historical avant-garde was very varied in the Eastern Europe. According to Bryzgel, “across much of the East, Constructivism was a dominant trend in the early part of the twentieth century rather than the destructive and nihilistic forces of Futurism or Dada” (Bryzgel 2017: 10). Whereas Zdenka Badovinac writes: “If we [...] discount the wider European tradition, the pre-war experience of Futurists, Dadaists and Surrealists, from the context of Eastern European art, we are left with the rich tradition of Russian futurists and Constructivists, together with numerous local avant-garde movements from the beginning of the century” (Badovinac 1998: 14). These are accurate observations. If Futurism and Dada can be associated with the first performative manifestations, Constructivism was aimed at machine aesthetic with dynamic components celebrating technology and cannot be paralleled with performance art. Therefore, it is very problematic to claim that performance art in Eastern Europe ontologically resulted from the early avant-garde movements, and such universalizing generalisations should be avoided.

The differences between performance art in the West and in the East

Other differences between performance art in the West and in the East have been indicated by performance scholars Katalin Cseh-Varga and Adam Czirak. First, “Western performance or body art developed in radical opposition to the principle of imitation in the theatre on the one hand, and the marketing strategies of the visual arts on the other. In Eastern and Central Europe, however, there was no art market at all” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 10). Second, the flexibility and ephemerality of performance art helped the performance artists in the East to avoid the danger of censorship. Third, in the history of ‘Western’ performance art the non-reproducible nature of the staged body was the focal point of artistic practice, so performance documentations were disregarded as irrelevant (up to the 2000s); however, Eastern European performance art cannot be defined on the basis of the criteria of liveness. In Eastern Europe, by contrast, performance documents functioned as media and were primary manifestations of action (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 10). Fourth, “practice of Eastern European performance art [was] intimately interwoven with the structures of
public spheres, which gave the actions a political dimension and determined their aesthetics as well. Even if the performances were personal acts, they always confirmed the existence of artistic networks and demonstrated the relative freedom of communication in the niches beyond the official public sphere” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 10).

Performance in culture and social sciences
As indicated by Philip Auslander, performance studies as a field of study is an inherently interdisciplinary discipline and “open to intellectual influence from all directions” (Auslander 2008: 3). Performance studies emerged in the scientific discourse as a theoretical discipline – “as a confluence of ideas drawn from humanistic and social scientific disciplines that included theatre, anthropology (including the study of folklore and oral traditions), and sociology” (Auslander 2008: 3). For the purposes of this doctoral dissertation, it is crucial to emphasize the parallels between performance art as an artistic discipline and performance as understood in sociology, anthropology and other social sciences. As understood in the context of social sciences, performance is a process by which individuals (actors) display for others (the audiences) the meaning of their social situation. From this perspective, other terms such as ‘cultural performance’ or ‘social performance’ emerged.

One of the theoreticians writing on performance in everyday life and expanding drama as a metaphor was American sociologist Erving Goffman, who presented his theory of human behaviour as performative and published this conception in his 1959 book The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life. Here, Goffman argues that the social self is a performance in relation to others, a negotiation involving complex intersubjective cues and behaviors. The self, Goffman asserts,

“does not derive from its possessor, but from the whole scene of his action. […] A correctly staged and performed scene leads the audience to impute a self to a performed character, but this imputation–this self–is a product of a scene that comes off, and is not a cause of it. The self, then, as a performed character, is not an organic thing that has a specific location […] it is a dramatic effect arising diffusely from a scene that is presented” (Goffman 1959: 252).

Goffman approaches social life as theatre, an interplay of behaviors where players with different motives rehearse their actions, maneuver to present themselves
advantageously, and often perform at cross purposes with one another (Schechner 2013: 207). Goffmann claims that people are performing all the time whether or not they are aware of it.

Another American theoretician and philosopher Judith Butler uses Goffman’s ideas to explore issues of gender and sexuality. In her highly influential books *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies that Matter* (1993), Butler argues that one’s gender is constructed through one’s repetitive performance of gender and, therefore, the identity, especially gendered identity, is performative. Butler views the distinctions between homosexual and heterosexual and those between female and male as social constructions. Unlike Goffman, Butler emphasizes that there is no self or ontological body, which precede the performance. Instead of analyzing the actions of individuals, Butler examines performance discursively and, therefore, uses the term performativity, rather than performance. The concept of performativity has been particularly widely applied to theories of identity, human action and behavior: “Used to explain how human subjectivity is constructed, theories of performativity suggest that social identities are sustained and reimagined through the self-conscious patterning of behaviour and unconscious repetition of performative gestures and acts” (Govan et al 2007: 9).

Butler’s work of the performativity of gender has left an enormous influence on performance studies: “Performance scholars have extended Butler’s initial focus on gender and sexual identity to other identity categories, including race (see Forbes) and disability (see Sandahl), and beyond the contemporary world to historical examples (see Franko)” (Auslander 2008: 77).

Within the field of performance studies, Mikhail Bakhtin’s ideas on carnival and dialogism have also exerted considerable influence. Bakhtin derived his concept of carnival from cultural performances of the late medieval and early Renaissance periods in Europe. Pursuant to Bakhtin’s definition, “carnivals are playful subversions of the established social and political order of things, which might otherwise appear fixed. Through common practices of masquerade, the burning of effigies, the desecration of sacred objects and spaces, and excessive indulgences of the body, carnivals loosen the hold of the dominant order, breaking free – though only for a time – from law, tradition, and all that enforces normative social behavior” (Auslander 2008: 41-42).

Pursuant to Bakhtin, “because of their obvious sensuous character and their strong element of play, carnival images closely resemble certain artistic forms, namely the spectacle” (Bakhtin 1984: 7). However, the basic carnival nucleus does not belong to
the sphere of art: “It belongs to the borderline between art and life. In reality, it is life itself, but shaped according to a certain pattern of play” (Bakhtin 1984: 7). Bakhtin also emphasizes the participatory nature of carnival:

“Carnival does not know footlights, in the sense that it does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. Footlights would destroy a carnival, as the absence of footlights would destroy a theatrical performance. Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it” (Bakhtin 1984: 7).

These features – the participatory nature, the liminal space of in-between – are also very important in performance art, so a strong connection between ritualistic practices, and thus culture, on the one hand, and performance art, on the other hand, becomes evident in Bakhtin’s analysis.

Concerning the role of dialogue, Bakhtin refers to the Socratian dialogue as a prototype of the discursive mechanism for revealing the truth. From this perspective, dialogue is opposed to the ‘authoritarian word’ (avtoritarnoe slovo) in the same way as carnival is opposed to official culture (Pomorska 1984: x). The ‘authoritarian word’ does not allow any other type of speech to approach and interfere with it and excludes dialogue. Similarly, “any official culture that considers itself the only respectable model dismisses all other cultural strata as invalid or harmful” (Pomorska 1984: x). The contextual paradigms of carnival and dialogism can also be applied when examining performance art in Latvia or the region of Central and Eastern Europe in the period of late socialism, too. Under the circumstances, when the artistic freedom was restricted and subjected to ideological dogmas, performance art became the ‘in-between’ zone of relative freedom, where artists could engage in non-hierarchical dialogue.

Other terms discussed in this doctoral dissertation include intermediality and appropriation – they will be discussed thoroughly in further chapters (Chapter 2 and Chapter 3) pursuant to the theoretical segments they belong to.
Terminology and theoretical frameworks to discuss the dichotomy of official and non-official art in Latvia in the period of late socialism

The ‘official’ art of many socialist countries was Socialist Realism: “Socialist Realism replaced the heterogeneous artistic endeavors of the Russian avant-garde and became the dominant aesthetic theory and practice in the Soviet Union. Social realist art proclaimed an antiformalist politics of representation that propagated the building of socialism and the performative creation of reality not yet existent but in the making” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 2). In essence, Socialist Realism tried to “represent the Communist future with the means of traditional academic painting, combined with photographically or cinematographically inspired imagery” (Groys 2003: 59).

Although Socialist Realism had become the official doctrine in the early 1930s, in Latvia, for example, it became the official style only in the late 1940s after Latvia’s annexation to the USSR. Those artists who conformed to the doctrine, were supported by the state through the Artists’ Union and regularly received offers to carry out commissioned works. In the first decades of the Soviet period, the exhibitions were Sovietized and “collections on display at the state museum were censored, and works found objectionable were banished to the storerooms, replaced by either Socialist Realist exemplars or the traditional realist works freshly confiscated from private collections of Riga’s bourgeoisie” (Svede 2002: 191).

The art of the late socialist period in Latvia appears to be creative and experimental as proved by the heterogeneous artistic practices, media, events, etc. (see, for example, Astahovska 2012; Kļaviņš 2009). However, even if these activities were more or less tolerated by the state authorities, the political and economic control of artistic activity under the Soviet system can still be noticed. For example, those artists, who could be defined as pursuing ‘unofficial’ art, for example, performance art, were subjected to the mechanisms of oppression imposed by the art system, since the artists had to survive on the margins of the Soviet system: “Since no art market, no private galleries, no independent curators, and no revues existed that were not state funded, it was impossible to enter the usual channels of promotion” (Erjavec 2003: 21). However, the peripheral position both culturally and geographically was often preferred by the artists: “The freedom of interpretation, the plurality of perspectives and the independence from directives of artistic ideology were the most important motivating factors for underground artists to refuse to participate in centrally managed art
production and instead support themselves and their art by taking up private jobs” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 7).

Therefore, although, at least in Latvia, there were no instances of openly dissident or political art, the dichotomy between the official and the unofficial art definitely existed (although with certain fluidity). Experiments with photography and performance art practices stood further away from the official discourse. These creative practices were not supported by the state cultural institutions and often took place in the cultural and territorial periphery. Due to this outsider’s or art brut position, there was no possibility for the performance discourse to establish itself – no systematic knowledge was accumulated or produced and the information from the West was obtained sporadically and inconsistently. Consequently, it can be argued that performance art belonged to ‘subculture’ or ‘alternative culture’, where even the artists and participants themselves were unsure about the definitions of their activities, often referring to it as ‘partying’, ‘socializing’ and in the best case ‘non-art’. These tendencies and processes must be viewed in parallel with the emergence of youth culture during the 1960s and the alternative developments of the 1970s (Hyperrealism, sporadic outbursts of Conceptualism, experiments in visual arts).

To discuss the period of late socialism in the context of art history, of course, one must take into account the terminology that has been applied to discuss the official art versus the non-official. The usual terms to describe the underground scene are: “Oppositional, dissident, alternative, differently minded, parallel, non-conformist, autonomous or independent” (Eichwede 2011: 20). In the context of Russian art history it is possible to discuss ‘dissident art’ as a form of political opposition. However, in the context of Latvian art history the juxtaposition of conformism and non-conformism (or even semi-non-conformism as proposed by several Baltic art historians) has been used to explain the deviant manifestations of art, which were not in accordance of the requirements of the Socialist Realism, but paradoxically managed to exist, as, for example, the so-called Harsh Style, as well as Hyperrealism in painting. These deviances have been explained as mutations of Socialist Realism, as, for example, proposed by Latvian art historian Eduards Klaviņš. He defines these mutations as the ‘Socialist Modernism’ and ‘Socialist Post-Modernism’ (Klaviņš 2009: 103) and proposes that there are certain artworks created during the late Socialist Realism period, which possess a double code, when “the subject matter chosen by the artist may have been in line with the iconographic typology which was forced onto artists by
Socialist Realism [...] at the same time being in line with the artist’s subjective orientation toward a world of democratic images” (Kļaviņš 2009: 106). According to Kļaviņš, “the relevant historical and political context helps us to explain this double code, but it does not allow us to differentiate with full certainty between works of art that are clearly in line with political demands and those which are not. This means that the boundaries of ‘Socialist Modernism’ are frequently indistinct” (Kļaviņš 2009: 106). This double code was often difficult to decipher, because artists tended to use visual metaphors and the so-called Aesopian language. Overall, Socialist Realism as a period in the art discourse in Latvia cannot be regarded as strictly consistent and homogeneous and should rather be viewed as “a simultaneously existing, multi-layered body of stylistic trends” (Bužinska 2010: 26).

The problems of terminology related to the official and unofficial art were reviewed again by the curators of exhibition *And Others – Movements, Explorations and Artists* (2010): Irēna Bužinska, Liģa Lindenbauma, Ieva Astahovska, Vilnis Vējiš, Māra Traumane, Anita Vanaga. This exhibition addressed the question of terminology asking to reconsider what forms and manifestations of art could be included in the folder ‘official art’ and where the rest, namely, the ‘others’ mentioned in the title of the exhibition should be included? One of the curators Anita Vanaga writes in the exhibition brochure that *And Others* was intended as an event that would aspire to “to put a finger on some undervalued phenomenon that has stayed under the radar, unnoticed” (Vanaga 2010: 29). The question that consequently follows is what would be the rest, and the brochure text mentions that this could be “the ideologically controlled sphere of art” (Traumane 2010: 34) or “conventional forms of official Realism” (Bužinska 2010: 26), but not always. As the traits which help to separate the ‘others’ from those that are not like that, the curators cite “officially prohibited imagery” (Vējiš 2010: 25), “separateness and isolation” (Bužinska 2010: 26), and “a deliberate detachment” (Vanaga 2010: 29), “aesthetic principles that differed significantly from the mainstream” (Lindenbauma 2010: 33), “activities [that] were not only unofficial, they could also become illegal” (Traumane 2010: 34). As noted by art historian Alise Tīfentāle, this plurality of terms provides a foundation for further theoretical discussions, because art historians must agree on clear criteria that could characterize the ‘official art’ in Latvia during the period of Soviet rule (Tīfentāle 2011).
However, since the dialectics of conformism versus non-conformism has been overly discussed by various art historians (Jānis Borgs, Ieva Astahovska, Amy Bryzgel, Eduards Kļaviņš, to mention just a few), the author of the dissertation will refrain from further repetitions and instead will use a different theoretical axe to examine the conditions of performance art in Soviet Latvia, namely, the first and the second public sphere, which is especially productive to discuss the complex socio-political situation that affected the art and artists in the period of late socialism. It also offers another – more nuanced – perspective that can potentially replace the questionable ‘official/non-official’ terminology. As noted by Cseh-Varga and Czirak:

“The differentiation of public spheres in actually existing socialism is important not only because it enables us to question the idea of a state regarded as a ‘control freak’ and to understand the atmosphere in which given artwork was produced or presented. To reconstruct the exact functional mechanisms of public spheres in the late socialist era, we need to rethink the categorical distinctions between official and unofficial or legal and illegal” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 5).

**PRIMARY SOURCES, PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIALS AND HISTORIOGRAPHY**

*Primary sources*

For the purposes of research, the author of the doctoral dissertation carried out verbal interviews with artists Atis Ieviņš, Eižens Valpēters, Laima Eglīte, Māra Brašmane, Henrihs Vorkals and Ivars Mailītis. For printed interviews, a crucial source of information was the book *The Self: Personal Journeys to Contemporary Art: the 1960s-1980s in Soviet Latvia* published by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia in 2011 (interviews with Maija Tabaka, Imants Lancmanis, Miervaldis Polis, Anda Ārgale, Andris Grinbergs), as well as the unpublished interviews gathered for the book on nonconformist art at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (interviews with Atis Ieviņš, Māra Brašmane, Jānis Kreicbergs). A crucial source of information on the Office Group was the unpublished archive material gathered by Vilnis Vējs and Māra Traumane and stored at the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art. This valuable archive material provided access to the interviews with Eižens Valpēters, Līvija Akurātere, Juris Cīvjans, Rūta Broka, Ivars Skanstīņš, Mudīte Gaiševska. More first
person narratives were obtained from the book *Nenocenzētie. Alternatīvā kultūra Latvijā. XX gs. 60-tie un 70-tie gadi* (2010; this source is examined in more detail in *Historiography*). Here, Andris Grinbergs provides his memories of the hippy period briefly mentioning the happenings (pp. 129-133). Also, Ivars Skanstīnš provides crucial information on the Office Group and its fate (pp. 200-207), and Imants Lancmanis provides brief information on the carnivals at the Rundāle Palace (p. 238).

For the interviews with Andris Grinbergs, the author exchanged numerous emails with Andris Grinbergs in the time period from 27 October 2015 to 27 December 2017.10 Also, the press discourse was a valuable source of information. Andris Grinbergs has given interviews to journalists for such press publications as *Atmoda atpūtai* (03.03.1992), *Privātā Dzīve* (02.11.1999), *Forums* (the supplement of NRA; 13.09.2002). Grinbergs himself was also an author of press columns *Modes imperators* (The Emperor of Fashion; from 1994 to 1996), *Slavenību dzīve* (The Lives of Celebrities; the 2000s) and *Grinberga dienasgrāmata* (Grinbergs’s Diary; the 2000s) in newspaper *Vakara Zīņas*.

Also, interviews with Imants Lancmanis and Maija Tabaka became available through press discourse, namely, supplement *Nakts* (01.01.1993). This material provided valuable information regarding the carnivals organised at the Rundāle Palace. Moreover, Līga Blaua’s book *Maija Tabaka. Spēle ar dzīvi* published by Jumava in 2010 provided a first person narrative by Maija Tabaka.

It must also be noted that the recently opened KGB archives that are now publicly accessible were used to access the files of Andris Grinbergs and Jānis Kreicbergs.

*Photographic materials*

It was not easy to work with the photographic materials, since they are sporadically scattered in numerous archives, both institutional and private. In many cases, the names of photographers are unknown (e.g. Imants Lancmanis’s carnivals, the NSRD’s performances).

For photographs, the author used the Norton and Nancy Dodge Collection of Nonconformist Art from the Soviet Union provided by the Zimmerli Art Museum in Rutgers, New Jersey, USA, as well as private archives of art collector Jānis Zuzāns and artists Atis Ieviņš, Ivars Maitītis, and Imants Lancmanis.

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10 It must be noted that Andris Grinbergs was reluctant to discuss his past.


The private archive of Atis Īevis provided an insight into the experiments with the medium of photography in the period of the 1970s and 1980s. There are numerous images made as serigraphs, as well as playful collages. The raw material for these images have been the performances organized by Andris Grinbergs and his contemporaries, and therefore serve as a vivid example of intermedial appropriation.

The private archive of Atis Īevis also provided a selection of press publications concerning his art (published in the 1970s).

The private archive of Imants Lanciaņis provided all together 27 photographs of carnivals taking place at the Rundāle Palace in the period of the 1970s and 1980s. The photographers are unknown.

The private archive of Ivars Mailītis provided 28 images of Mailītis’s artistic activities that included performance or performative elements and resulted in hybrid, intermedial works of art.

The author also used the digital archive Europeana Collections (www.europeana.eu), which provided access to the images of performances of Andris Grinbergs, Miervaldis Polis and the NSRD. Another digital archive that was used for the purposes of this doctoral dissertation was the photography collection of Latvian Center for Contemporary Art (http://static.lndb.lv/lmc_photo/photo_collection.html). This archive was especially valuable in providing access to the photographs of Riga Pantomime (taken by Zenta Dzividzinska), Miervaldis Polis’s performances *The Bronze Man*, as
well as numerous images of Andris Grinbergs’s performance *The Old House* and the photographs of the NSRD’s *Walks to Bolderāja*, concerts, lectures and other performances.

Examples of appropriation were found in Jānis Kreicbergs’s photo catalogues *Atskats (Retrospective)* published by *Latvijas Fotomākslinieku savienība* (the Photoartists’ Union of Latvia) in 1989 and *Logs (Window)* published by *Latvijas PSR Fotomākslinieku savienība* (the Photoartists’ Union of the Latvian SSR) and publishing house *Liesma* in 1989, as well as in books *Latvijas fotomeistari: 100 attēli* (*Latvian Photography Masters: 100 Images*) published in 2001 by *Nacionālais apgāds* and *Padomju Latvijas fotomeistari* published in 1986 by publishing house *Liesma*.

**Historiography: local secondary sources**  
Overall, there are very scarce secondary sources dedicated to the history and development of performance art in Latvia that would be published locally. In this context, Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA) must be praised for their continuous efforts to ensure systematic research of cultural legacy from the Soviet period. These efforts include work with archival materials, re-examination and contextualization of recent past from a contemporary perspective. Although the activities of LCCA are valuable in various areas – research, exhibitions, conferences and publications – the monographs published by the LCCA, as well as their unpublished materials have been of a particularly great value for the doctoral dissertation herein.

One of the early books dedicated to performance art in Latvia is *Performance Latvijā, 1963–2009* written by Zane Matule and published in 2009 by the publishing house *Neputns*. Though it must be appreciated as one of the rare and pioneering books focusing on the history and development of performance art in Latvia, it has not been used for the doctoral dissertation herein. The book by Matule merely provides a retrospective overview mentioning the names of artists and a few excerpts from interviews, but it cannot be regarded as a serious discursive analysis.

The year 2010 was an important year in the historiography of Latvian performance art, because the exhibition *And Others – Movements, Explorations and Artists in Latvia 1960 – 1984* was curated and the book *Nenocenzētie. Alternatīvā kultūra Latvijā. XX gs. 60-tie un 70-tie gadi* (The Non-Censored. The Alternative Culture in Latvia. The
1960s and 1970s)\textsuperscript{11} was published. The latter was edited by artist Eižens Valpēters and it is a compilation of essays and memoirs characterizing the cultural and historical situation in Riga in these two decades. The first part of the voluminous book is dedicated to brief introductions of various individuals who were active at the time. They remember their contemporaries, values, sources of inspirations (music, films, books, fashion), influences, informal social gatherings in various cafeterias, exchange of ideas among like-minded young people and other seemingly unimportant details. However, all together these details provide an interesting collage of processes and events, which were the basis for establishing microenvironments and pursuing alternative lifestyle in the 1960s and 1970s. Among the many photographs and drawings, the book also contains essays by several art historians, for example, Mark Allen Svede, Māra Traumane, Ieva Astahovska, Jānis Borgs, Alise Tīfentāle and others. As already stated before, the book provides important first person narratives from the artists at the center of the doctoral dissertation herein.

As regards the exhibition \textit{And Others – Movements, Explorations and Artists in Latvia 1960 – 1984}, it was curated by the LCCA with an aim to concentrate on artists and phenomena that were excluded from the canon of art at the time. The exhibition had a team of curators (Irēna Bužinska, Līga Lindenbauma, Ieva Astahovska, Vilnis Vējš, Māra Traumane, Anita Vanaga) and can be regarded as one of the first attempts to examine the ‘non-conformist’ art of the period of late socialism. One of the curators Ieva Astahovska explains that “the otherness criterion is based more on the thinking and perception meaning and not the institutional – the movement outside defined phenomena, an experimental approach, inter-disciplinary, as well as the marking of a change in the perception of art: an art work is not a ‘painting’, a ‘graphic’, a ‘sculpture’, but, for example, an ‘object’ (the journey to the ‘installation’) or the ‘environment’ as a whole, the ‘process’ as well and the ‘reaction of the viewer’ – many criteria, which were much closer to Western post war (neo)avant-garde, than local official art criteria” (Tīfentāle 2011). The exhibition was also accompanied by a bilingual exhibition brochure with essays by the curators, where the essay \textit{Improvisations, Stagings, Performances} by Māra Traumane has provided well-articulated ideas on Andris Grinbergs’s performances and their cultural context.

\textsuperscript{11} A documentary film \textit{Kaza kāpa debesīs} (The Goat Climbed Up Into the Sky; 2019) directed by Laima Žurgina also contains interviews with the representatives of this generation.
In 2012 the LCCA published the book *Recuperating the Invisible Past*, where the editor Ieva Astahovska had compiled 25 essays, discussions and manifestos about the events and processes in socialist and Soviet bloc countries. The book was a side-project of other activities, one of them was a conference organized under the same title at the Goethe Institut in Riga in May 2011. Astahovska in her essay *Parallel Chronologies in Latvia: the New Art in the System’s Breaches. The 1970s* offers an insight in the art events and exhibitions in Latvia in the 1970s. Astahovska briefly mentions the happenings of Andris Grinbergs and discotheques-lectures organized by Hardijs Ledipš. Astahovska reinforces the idea that in the 1970s the progressive or avant-garde elements were often integrated or camouflaged under a system supportive of the dominant ideology. Astahovska emphasizes that the decade of the 1970s was a quite dynamic period in the history of Latvian art, which in fact stimulated artists to pursue new artistic quests and experiments.

An interesting phenomenon is the 2015 book *Miervaldis Polis* issued by the publishing house Neputns. The author of the book is American art historian Amy Bryzgel, who is one of the most outstanding art historians focusing on performance studies in the Central and East European region. Although the book was the first monograph dedicated to Miervaldis Polis’s oeuvre, Bryzgel was criticized by a local art historian Jānis Taurens for too vague comparisons and too frequent references to Walter Benjamin (see Taurens 2015). Although there are some minor typing mistakes, which could have been avoided during the editing process, overall the book is one of the rare sources published in Latvian where the artist’s activities in performance art have been outlined and contextualized in light with the discourse and similar processes in the West. Bryzgel traces the *Bronze Man* performances of Polis in 1987, when he walked in a custom-made bronze suit and bronze-painted face in Old Riga and stood on the pedestal resembling a bronze sculpture (or the sculptures of Lenin that were on each city and town at the time). It must be noted that in the 1970s Polis had participated in Andris Grinbergs’s performances, too, but Bryzgel does not mention this fact in her book. Essentially, Bryzgel claims that Polis created performances both as a live and body-based art and as paintings. By appropriating the motives and plots from old masters such as Leonardo da Vinci or Rembrandt, Polis constructed numerous identities and crossed the borders of time and space. Bryzgel also emphasizes the appropriation act which is evident in Polis’s work *Self-Portrait in Bronze* (1988), which is a *trompe l’œil* painting embodying the performance of the Bronze Man and
presented as a Hyperrealist painting of a photograph in snapshot aesthetics. This work has been examined in detail in the dissertation herein as an example of intermedial appropriation.

Another valuable book for the research herein is the voluminous book *The Workshop for the Restoration of Unfelt Feelings. Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš* published by the LCCA in 2016. The book is dedicated to the exploration of the artist collective The Workshop for the Restoration of Unfelt Feelings (in Latvian ‘Nebijušu sajūtu restaurācijas darbnīca’, abbreviated as the ‘NSRD’). Juris Boiko and Hardijs Lediņš were the most outstanding artists in the circle and their legacy definitely had to be acknowledged. The LCCA researchers Ieva Astahovska and Māra Žeikare have structured the book in four parts: (1) the chronology of events, which is presented as an overview of the NSRD albums, actions, video performance, exhibition and concerts from the 1970s up to the end of the lives of Lediņš and Boiko in the early 2000s; (2) the archival materials, which provide insight in the most important projects of the NSRD such as *Walks to Bolderāja, Dr Eneser’s Binocular Dance Lessons*, and the Approximate Art exhibitions; (3) essays on the NSRD by various authors such as Boriss Avramecs, Pēteris Bankovskis, Liāna Langa, Jānis Lejnieks, Ilmārs Šlāpins, Jānis Taurens and Māra Traumane, as well as (4) theoretical articles on Modernism and Postmodernism written by Lediņš and Boiko.

As regards the historiography of art exhibitions that have been dedicated to the cultural heritage of the Soviet period, art historian Alise Tīfentāle provides an overview of exhibitions in her 2011 article *Results of the Revision*, which was a review of the exhibition *And Others – Movements, Explorations and Artists in Latvia 1960 – 1984*. Tīfentāle starts the list with *The Goat Climbed Up Into the Sky* that was curated in 1993 and was dedicated to the generation of alternative youth and subcultures in the 1960s. According to Tīfentāle, the exhibitions organized thereafter have mainly focused on the reassessment of established values (Tīfentāle 2011), and, in fact, none of them has had performance art or related phenomena at the centre of their attention. These exhibitions are: *Witnesses of an Age* (State Museum of Art, 26 April–9 June 2002); *Nature. Environment. Man. 2004* (State Museum of Art, Arsenāls Exhibition Hall, 16 April–16 May 2004); *The Mythology of Sovietland* (Latvian National Museum of Art, Arsenāls Exhibition Hall, 11 April–7 September 2008); *Painting in Latvia 1950–1990* (20 May–15 August 2010); *Behind the Curtain* (Contemporary Art Centre
Out of the enlisted exhibitions, it must be noted that the exhibition *The Mythology of Sovietland* in 2008 was accompanied by a compilation of essays published in 2009. It is one of the secondary sources, where the socio-political context affecting art processes has been examined by various local authors, for example, Elita Ansone, Stella Pelše and Eduards Kļaviņš. Other secondary sources drawing attention to the socio-political circumstances affecting the development and processes of art in Latvia, also touching upon the subjects that have been important for the doctoral dissertation herein, are the *Doma* (Thought) series. For example, *Doma-1* (1991) offers an essay on Hyperrealism by Eduards Kļaviņš, whereas *Doma-6* (2000) offers an essay on ‘non-traditional art manifestations’ in Latvia from 1972 to 1984 by Ieva Kalniņa, who mentions the Office Group and its activities in theatre and film. *Doma-6* also contains another essay on Hyperrealism by Māra Traumane and an essay on the art of totalitarian and post-totalitarian society by Eduards Kļaviņš. In his essay, Kļaviņš expresses the reluctance and hesitation to turn to the examination of the art under the totalitarian regime due to the surprisingly low level of quality and simplistic propaganda topics. He asks a rhetorical question suggesting that perhaps it is better to forget this art and let the mechanism of political dictatorships turn in dust in museum collections. He later on continues that this negative temptation must be overcome as a hasty and ill-considered decision in order to be able to answer the question what the art was like in the recent past.

One of the most recent exhibitions that were organized by foundation *Mākslai vajag telpu* was in the summer of 2017 entitled *Ārup. Andris Grinbergs* (curator Ieva Kalniņa). The exhibition contained nineteen photographs from photographer Andrejs Grants’s collection *Andris Grinbergs. Portraits*. On 31 August 2017, art theoretician Kaspars Vanags curated a discussion that was dedicated to the 45th anniversary of Andris Grinbergs’s performance *The Wedding of Jesus Christ*, where photographer Māra Brašmane and the author of the dissertation also took part.12

Consequently, it can be concluded that performance art is a very understudied discipline in Latvia. The sporadically published secondary sources rarely have considerable discursive analysis. In this light, the publications written and published by

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12 The discussion’s video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbd0bAUNz5U
the author of the doctoral dissertation herein, as well as the doctoral dissertation in itself provide a valuable contribution to the field of performance studies in Latvia.

**Historiography: foreign secondary sources**

Although there are several often-quoted and highly respectable authors, such as Marvin Carlson and RoseLee Goldberg, who have published their books on performance art in numerous editions in well-known publishing houses, the problem with these sources is that the region of Central and Eastern Europe and the history of performance art in this region have been largely excluded from these books.

For example, Carlson has addressed the question of performance in social sciences, as well as performance art in his book *Performance: A Critical Introduction* published by Routledge in 1996. The author of this dissertation has not referred to this source, since Carlson is only focusing on the United States claiming that “performance art is both historically and theoretically a primarily American phenomenon” (Carlson 1996: 2). In the chapter dedicated to performance art, Carlson does not provide a critically analytical perspective on performance art, but rather provides a historical description of performance art and key artists in the USA from the 1970s to the 1980s, only briefly mentioning some artists or artist collectives from the UK. Thus, Carlson has completely ignored the region of Central and Eastern Europe, not to mention the countries that were under the Soviet rule at the time.

One of the pioneer scholars that studied performance art is the often-quoted RoseLee Goldberg. However, in her book *Performance Art: Live Art, from 1909 to the Present* published in 1979 no artists from Eastern Europe have been mentioned (apart from Russian Futurists). Even the updated and revised editions of the book entitled *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present* (2001, 2011) do not provide much information on the artists from this region, mentioning only a few artists on two pages.

Moreover, Goldberg can be criticized for claiming that performance art in the region of Central and Eastern Europe only functioned as a form of political opposition and that the ephemerality of performance art was advantageous in the countries with constant surveillance, censorship and arrest (Goldberg 2011: 214).

However, Scotland-based American art historian Amy Bryzgel in her latest book *Performance Art in Eastern Europe Since 1960* (2017) strongly disagrees with these statements. According to Bryzgel’s research, “performance offered artists in Central and Eastern Europe an arena of freedom in which to experiment, rather than
compromising a vehicle of dissident political activity” (Bryzgel 2017: 3). Performance art was appealing to artists “because of its open-endedness and its conduciveness to experimentation” (Bryzgel 2017: 3). Moreover, it provided a platform for more direct acts of expression that were limited or not possible through other art forms (Bryzgel 2017: 3). The author of this dissertation agrees with Bryzgel, since in Latvia, for example, there were no instances of openly political dissident actions. As regards the immateriality, performance art in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, including Latvia, was extensively documented, especially in photography, so there is no well-grounded reason for Goldberg to claim that immateriality was the key feature that made the artists choose this discipline.

Overall, Bryzgel is the art historian, who has extensively focused on performance art in the former Communist, socialist and Soviet countries of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe since the 1960s. In 2013 Bryzgel’s book Performing the East: Performance Art in Russia, Latvia and Poland Since 1980 was published. The book was written as case study examination of three artists. One chapter The Bronze Man and the Homeless Man: Performing Appearance in Latvia was dedicated to two performance artists in Latvia – Miervaldis Polis and Gints Gabrāns. In 2015 it was followed by a book on Miervaldis Polis exclusively already discussed above.

In her latest book Performance Art in Eastern Europe Since 1960, which is a very thorough research on performance art in the region, Bryzgel emphasizes that “performance art developed in Eastern Europe in parallel and in dialogue with practices in Western Europe and North America, despite its exclusion from the canon of that history” (Bryzgel 2017: 1), since the artists in the countries of Eastern and Central Europe did not live in an absolute information vacuum. According to Bryzgel, “artists in the East were inspired by artists they encountered from elsewhere (both East and West), yet also created their own distinct forms of creative expression, which emerged from their unique cultural surroundings. They used the art they encountered from the West as a resource, not a source” (Bryzgel 2017: 1). Yet, the book does not focus on the impact that the West European performance artists had on the performance artists (and their art) of Eastern Europe. Instead, Bryzgel, first, tries to “outline the paths of reciprocal cultural exchange between East and West as well as across the East”, and, second, explores “the various manifestations and meanings of performance art across Eastern Europe” and highlights “the diversity of artistic practice” (Bryzgel 2017: 1-2).
Bryzgel is among those authors, who have addressed the problems, challenges and aesthetics, form and content of performance art in the region of Central and Eastern Europe overall. Another important author – one of the pioneers turning attention to performance art in the region of Central and Eastern Europe – is Zdenka Badovinac. She is a Slovenian curator who in 1998 in Moderna galerija Ljubljana, Slovenia (Museum of Modern Art) curated an exhibition that was focusing on body art practices in Eastern Europe entitled *Body and The East: From the 1960s to the Present*. The exhibition was also accompanied by a catalogue published by the MIT Press. The essays compiled in this catalogue examined performance art in the following countries: Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Lithuania, Hungary, Moldova, Germany (GDR), Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia. As it can be seen, Latvia is not part of this list. However, this exhibition catalogue can be regarded as one of the first fundamental texts on performance artists in Eastern Europe and Russia.

In the book Badovinac emphasizes the power of networking and communication in repressive political regimes: “Particularly where the Communist regime was at its most repressive, the model of avant-garde and its manner of work helped artists to create a kind of communication network. Even pre-war avant-garde movements had developed ways of connecting with each other, which helped artists to overcome their isolated and marginal position during the totalitarian period” (Badovinac 1998: 14). The author of the doctoral dissertation herein will also argue that there is no totalitarian system that can totally and absolutely paralyze human agency, especially in terms of networking and communication. Moreover, according to Badovinac “the Fluxus international movement had great significance also in the East – if nothing else, it enabled Eastern artists to make contacts with the outer world, i.e., via Mail Art” (Badovinac 1998: 14). In Latvia, too, such contacts were established and one of the key figures in this type of networking was Valdis Ābolīņš (1939-1984). His oeuvre and legacy has been examined in the book *Valdis Ābolīņš. Avangards, meilārts, jaunais kreisums un kultūras sakari aukstā kara laikā* edited by Ieva Astahovska and Antra Priede-Krievkalne and published by the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art in 2019. One of the contemporary researchers with very strong academic contribution to the field is Katalin Cseh-Varga. Her research focuses on the theory of public spheres in the former Eastern bloc, archival theory, and performative and medial spaces of the experimental art scene of the 1960s-1980s. Cseh-Varga has also extensively studied
Hungarian performance art in the late socialist period. The author of the doctoral dissertation herein has also participated in a research project curated by Cseh-Varga and Adam Czirak, which resulted in a book *Performance Art in the Second Public Sphere. Event-Based Art in Late Socialist Europe* published by Routledge in 2018. Among other Cseh-Varga’s contributions one can mention conference papers *Understanding Archives Through Performance* (2014), *Theorizing the Second Public Sphere. The Historical Layers of Alternative Publicness in Central-East-European Performance* (2014) and *Chained Bodies and Monuments of Hierarchy in Hungarian Performance Art* (2014). Cseh-Varga’s analysis and perspectives on the second public sphere have been valuable in this doctoral dissertation, too.

Other authors who have examined the history of performance art in Eastern Europe are American art historians Kristine Stiles, Claire Bishop and Mark Allan Svede. Stiles in her essay *Uncorrupted Joy: International Art Actions* (1998) looks at the Czech artists Milan Knížák and Peter Stembera, as well as the Romanian performance artist Ion Grigorescu, and the Polish artist Jerzy Beres. Svede, in his turn, has extensively written on performance art in Latvia, especially Andris Grinbergs, for example, in his 1994 conference paper *Hippies, Happenings and Homoeroticism: Latvian Performance Art’s Opening Act*, or the 2000 essay *All You Need is Lovebeads: Latvia’s Hippies Undress for Success*, or the 2004 essay *On the Verge of Snapping Latvian Nonconformist Artists and Photography*. Svede was also one of the contributors to the book *Art of the Baltics: The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression Under the Soviets, 1945-1991* published in 2002 by the Rutgers University Press. In several chapters Svede discusses the mutual reciprocity between art processes and socio-political circumstances in Latvia during the Soviet period, addressing Grinbergs’s oeuvre as well. Over his career as art and visual culture historian, Svede has changed the focus from marginal art to film, and one of the latest articles by Svede (2015) *Selfie, Sex Tape, “Snuff” Film: Andris Grinbergs’ Pašportrets* is focused on Grinbergs’s film *Pašportrets* (Self-Portrait).

Bishop, in her turn, has written a book *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship* published by Verso in 2012. In this book Bishop explores the history of participatory and socially engaged art. Although the book might seem as primarily focused on Western examples of participatory art, Bishop has actually excluded the US and included examples from Eastern Europe, Russia and South America that have been overlooked in Western art histories. Bishop’s goal was “to
demonstrate the different uses and political resonances of participatory art in different ideological contexts” (Bishop 2014: 177). Bishop argues that work produced under state socialism should be viewed in more complex terms than merely ‘implicitly political’, as is the habit with current Western approaches to the art history of Eastern bloc. Bishop claims that “the individual experiences that were the target of participatory art under communism were framed as shared privatized experiences: the construction of a collective artistic space amongst mutually trusting colleagues” (Bishop 2012: 129). According to Bishop, “artists did not regard their work as political but rather existential and apolitical, committed to ideas of freedom and the individual imagination. At the same time, they sought an expanded – one may say democratized – horizon of artistic production, in contrast to the highly regulated and hierarchical system of the official Union of Soviet Artists” (Bishop 2012: 129).

The question of documentation and the relationship between performance and photography has been explored in several sources, unfortunately often ignoring the practice or examples in the region of Central and Eastern Europe. For example, the photography magazine *Aperture* (Winter, 2015) was dedicated to exploring the critical role of live performance in visual art, taking a capacious approach in considering the intersections of the two mediums, from recording an event staged by an artist to role-playing for the camera. Among articles examining the symbiotic relationship between performance and photography (for example, by Simon Baker), there is also a conversation between RoseLee Goldberg and Roxana Marcoci, where the documentation issues are discussed. Goldberg claims: “I am not the one to say ‘You had to be there’. I wasn’t at the Battle of Waterloo either. And indeed, this applies to knowledge in all its forms. In art history, we think that we know a painting or sculpture firsthand, but most of the time we do not. What we actually see and examine in real life is a fraction of what we know from studying, from an accumulation of knowledge about the material: newspaper cuttings, writings, drawings, photographs, history books, slide projections, film, and, more rarely, actually being there” (Goldberg 2015: 47).

Furthermore, the relationship between performance and photography was also examined in the 2016 exhibition *Performing for the Camera* at the Tate Modern, London. The exhibition was accompanied by a catalogue where the issues of self-representation, shifting identities and posing were discussed. According to curator Simon Baker, the relationship between photography and performance has been symbiotic from the moment photography was invented. Again, both the exhibition and
the catalogue can be criticized for not examining the strategies employed by the artists from the region of Central and Eastern Europe and, in fact, for not paying any attention to the region overall. As indicated by Bryzgel, “for artists across Central and Eastern Europe, where the possibility to perform in public spaces varied from country to country, the camera offered a guaranteed witness to performative activity, not only enabling and facilitating artistic experiment, but also preserving it for posterity. It also opened up new venues for creativity, regardless of the limitations placed on artists and the public space” (Bryzgel 2016).

The relationship between performance and photography in the region of Central and Eastern Europe has been analyzed in the 2004 book Beyond Memory: Soviet Nonconformist Photography and Photo-related Works of Art, which that was published by The Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum and Rutgers University Press. In this valuable source various authors have examined photography and performance, for example, Ekaterina Bobrinskaya looks at photography and performance in Moscow Conceptual Art and Ekaterina Degot studies the unofficial art and the appropriation of official photography. The Baltic experimental photography has been examined in three essays, one of which On the Verge of Snapping Latvian Nonconformist Artists and Photography was written by Mark Allen Svede. The book provides a critical and thoroughly analyzed perspective of the relationship between photography and performance in the region of Central and Eastern Europe.

Another valuable source discussing not only the performative potential of photography, but also the gender aspect instrumentalised as a thematic segment is the exhibition catalogue accompanying the 1997 exhibition Gender Performance in Photography curated at the Guggenheim Museum, New York. For example, Jennifer Blessing in her essay A Rose is a Rose is a Rose. Gender Performance in Photography looks at Marcel Duchamp’s alter-ego Rrose Sélavy photographed by Man Ray, as well as Andy Warhol’s oeuvre from the point of view of gender performance. Since the author of the dissertation also examines the gender aspect in Andris Grinbergs’s oeuvre comparing him with Andy Warhol, this source was crucially contributing towards research on Warhol and gender performance in photography.

Because one of the central arguments of the doctoral dissertation herein is focused on the documentation of performance, the authors extensively studying and writing on this subject must also be mentioned. The most heated debate emerged between American theoreticians Peggy Phelan and Philip Auslander in the late 1990s, when Phelan in her
book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993), claimed that “performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance” (Phelan 1993: 146), whereas Auslander responded to this statement by questioning the grounds on which distinctions between live and mediatized performances are constructed. Moreover, Auslander followed up with other crucial essays on the documentation of performance, especially in photography, for example, *The Performativity of Performance Documentation* (2006) and *Towards a Hermeneutics of Performance Documentation* (2009).

Furthermore, British professor in Theatre and Performance Matthew Reason has extensively written on the documentation of live performance. In his book *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (2006) Reason writes that ephemerality is one of the most prominent and recurring definitions of live performance. Whereas in book *Perform, Repeat, Record: Live Art in History* (2012) American art historian Amelia Jones has addressed the question or rather the paradox of live art asking: how is it possible to make sure that the live event or ephemeral art work gets written into history? She initiates reflection on this by asking a series of other related questions addressing such issues as authenticity, memory, agency, and authorship (Jones 2012: 15).

As regards the concept of intermediality, the 2011 book *Multimedia Performance* by Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer is a valuable source in discussing the issues of liveness and re-mediation. According to Klich and Scheer, intermediality extends the historical dynamic of hybridisation and cross-disciplinary fertilization and can be both a creative and an analytic approach based on the perception that media boundaries are fluid and recognising the potential for interaction and exchange between the live and the mediated, without presupposing the authenticity or authority of either mode (Klich, Scheer 2011: 70-71).

One of the pioneers applying the concept of intermediality was American artist Hans Breder (1935-2017). In 1968 Breder founded the Intermedia Programme in the School of Art and Art History at the University of Iowa and directed it until his retirement as a Distinguished Professor in 2000. Breder’s 1995 essay *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal*, as well as the 2005 book edited together with Klaus-Peter Busse *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal* have been used as crucial sources for this dissertation. Furthermore, the 2012 book *Travels in Intermediality: Reblurring the Boundaries*
edited by Bernd Herzogenrath provides a valuable insight in the issues of intermediality arguing that today, when the proliferation of media and its technologies is rapidly and decisively transforming the humanities, the discourse of intermediality is becoming increasingly important and popular. In this book, Jens Schröter has contributed with essay *Four Models of Intermediality*, which is an attempt to structure the field and to formulate different models of intermediality: “All these models are reconstructed from relevant theoretical texts, so Schröter’s essay can be understood as a kind of meta-theoretical approach to the notion of intermediality” (Herzogenrath 2012: 3). The models provided by Schröter, as well as Irina Rajewsky are used as points of references for analyzing the cases of intermediality manifested in performance art in Latvia.
CHAPTER 1: Development of Performance Art in Latvia

1.1. Proto-Performance Art: Early Performative Manifestations in Photography

1.1.1. The performative manifestations in Latvian photography in the 1920s and 1930s

Performance art, as we know it today, emerged in Latvia in the late 1960s – early 1970s; however the first performative manifestations can be found in photography – a medium with undeniable performative potential. The relationship between photography and performance can be characterized as symbiotic both aesthetically and conceptually. As soon as the medium of photography emerged in the 19th century, the pioneering practitioners – both in Latvia and abroad – acknowledged its performative potential through the play of representations within the photographic medium, employing a myriad of creative strategies.

For example, French photographer Hippolyte Bayard’s (1801-1887) Self-Portrait as a Drowned Man in 1840, where he staged his own death and presented it in photography, is an “early example of one-time performance destined only to exist as a photograph” (Baker 2016: 19). Similarly, American photographer Fred Holland Day’s (1864-1933) The Seven Words in 1898 follow the dramatic pattern set by Bayard: “To pass himself off as convincing Jesus Christ, Day not only grew a beard, but starved himself for the crucial climatic scene” (Baker 2016: 19). These photographic self-portraits implemented as photographic tableaux were only destined to exist as photographs and not as separate performative events that, for example, could be viewed by audiences as well.

However, there were also collaborative events that were staged for the camera, for example, when photographer did not act himself, but worked directly with performers such as “actors and dancers already known for their work on theatrical stage” (Baker 2016: 67). Such were the celebrity portraiture made at the Nadar studio in Paris in the mid-19th century, for example, the stunning series of images of the mime Charles Deburau (1829-1873), whose Pierrot found himself not in the theater, nor even on the street, but instead acting out the range of his expressions – ‘surprise’, ‘laugh’, ‘pleading’, etc. Also, with the help of the camera, scenes of popular plays were restaged in the confines of the photographer’s studio to create publicity stills.

Impersonations in photography were also implemented by Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), who appeared as a woman under the name of Rrose Sélavy in the 1920s-1930s.
in the images photographed by Man Ray (1890-1976). Here, Duchamp played with his self-representation and gender identity as a role, a put-on “[appearing] in several guises, at times moth-eaten and decidedly masculine, and later, stylish and more fluent in the cues of feminine allure” (Hawkins 2015). Rose was a playful example of the so-called gender bending in portraiture.

As regards Latvia, photographers and visual artists, who used the medium of photography either on their own or in collaboration with photographers, used similar strategies as their contemporaries in Western Europe and Northern America. One of the ideas was to approach photography as a medium that could be constructed (as a photographic tableau). For example, Latvian photographer Mārtiņš Sams (1892-1941) claimed that staging or constructedness of a photograph must be invisible. According to Sams, such an effect can be achieved, if the photographer spends enough time on the field studies (observations, etc.). As a successful example of a simulated situation from his own oeuvre, Sams mentions his work Repose at Sea (1913) where the preparation works took one and a half summer to observe the fishermen’s lives (Sams 1913: 197-201). Though constructed and theatrical, such images reveal ‘life as it is’ albeit through different conceptual apparatus. In this sense, photographs do belong to the discipline of visual arts and can be interpreted as any drawing or painting, to quote Susan Sontag (Sontag 1977: 6-7).

Another example is Eduards Gaiķis’s (1881-1961) photograph, where he has organized the mise-en-scene, props, attributes and the models in a way that it suggests a reference to the popular motif of Arcadia (the 1910s, LMP). Also, the principle of photographic tableau was used for compositional studies for paintings, as it can be seen in the case of Janis Rozentāls (1866-1916). Often photographers worked directly with performers such as theatrical actors. In the 1920s and 1930s, often scenes of popular plays were restaged or actors impersonating popular characters from these plays posed for the camera to create publicity stills. For example, as indicated by Latvian art historian Eduards Kļaviņš (Kļaviņš 2014: 403), photographer Mārtiņš Lapiņš (1873-1954) photographed the popular actress Tija Banga dressed for the role of Asja in Aspazija’s

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13 This subchapter has partly resulted of the conference presentation at the International 3rd conference of Baltic Art Historians Representing Art History in the Baltic Countries: Experiences and Prospects organised by the Art Academy of Latvia, Riga, 6-8 October, 2016 (panel presentation with Katrīna Teivāne-Korpa Performative Manifestations in Latvian Photography in the 1920s and 1930s).

14 In the collection of the Latvian Museum of Photography (LMP).
play *Vaidelote* (1909, MLM\(^{15}\)). Similar photographs even earlier were taken by photographer Jānis Rieksts (1881-1970). For example, in 1896 he captured the actress Dace Akmentiņa in the role of Vanya in Mikhail Glinka’s play *A Life for the Tsar* (MLM) and in many other roles.

This kind of interdisciplinary approach resonates with the genre of tableau vivant,\(^{16}\) which was “a popular form of entertainment among the aristocracy across Europe by the end of the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) century. Participants would arrange themselves in the visualization of a well-known episode from history or literature, or in imitation of a celebrated painting” (Hibberd, Wrigley 2014: 107). If the early tableaux vivants were a parlor game, later they began to appear in theaters as well: curtains would part to reveal performers arranged to resemble a painting, or, perhaps more commonly, posed as statues, “taking on the appearance of marble” with the help of chalked or powdered skin and light-colored draperies (Simonson 2013: 108). It must be noted that other names for the use of living models to represent famous works of art were *pose plastiques* and living statuary.

The crucial aspect is that the vocabulary and aesthetics of tableau vivant – the simulated image, the arrested movement, the freezing of the body into a (living) picture or statue – actually reverberate within the photographic practices and, above all, the performative manifestations in photography in the 1920s and 1930s. In fact, it can be stated that “tableau vivant is a meeting point of several modes of representation, constituting a palimpsest or textual overlay simultaneously evocative of painting, drama and sculpture” (Peucker 2007: 30-31). Just as the *pose plastique* quoted, appropriated and parodied sculpture, the tableau vivant was the equivalent interpretation of painting in that “it recreated the painting, producing the illusion that

\(^{15}\) In the collection of the Musem of Literature and Music (MLM).

\(^{16}\) The memoirs of the Baltic German artist and historian Julius Döring (1818-1898) attest to the tradition of tableau vivant implemented in Latvia in the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) century. For example, in the memoirs dated 20 January 1847 Döring comments on tableaux vivants that were implemented appropriating a painting *The Jews Mourning in Exile* by Eduard Bendemann (1811-1889), a scene from the play *Romeo and Juliet* by William Shakespeare, a painting *Mourning Royal Couple* by Karl Friedrich Lessing (1808-1880), and others. Döring himself actively contributed to the making of these tableaux vivants, helping with the costumes and performance design. In one scene even a horse was brought indoors (Dērings 2016: 212-213).
three-dimensional living beings posed on stage are really a two-dimensional picture” (Callaway 2000: 72).

For example, the appropriation of sculpture is evident in the images of athletes captured by Roberts Johansons (1877-1959). Here, the athlete was often placed on a pedestal or platform, thus turning the salon in some kind of a stage, whereas the pose of the model often mimicked ancient Greek sculptures and a commonly accepted mode of the body representation (see, for example, Wrestler Ozols, 1912, RHNМ). Also, athletes were often given props or attributes that could be associated with the ancient Greek or Roman culture (clothing, weapons, etc.). According to Johansons’s model Matilde Ozoliņa, with whom the photographer worked around 1911: “Johansons took care of every detail. It was difficult to pose for him, yet he always tried to entertain me with conversations and made me hot tea, because it was rather cold in the salon. He treated every drapery, every detail of the pose as very crucial” (Dimenšteins 1987: 4).

This approach is also evident in Lūcija Kreicberga’s (1889-1985) photograph Perseus With the Head of Medusa (the 1930s, LMP), where a reference to a popular plot and character is included.

Whereas in the photographs from the lifestyle magazine Daile, which was issued from 1930-1933, it is the awareness of the body and the aesthetization of body and its plastics that were manifested with the help of performative elements such as the poses, choreography, costumes, etc. Often the photographic subjects or models were dancers, who were capable to exhibit the art of pose plastique. In magazine Daile, photographers often collaborated not only with dancers, but actors, too. Often these photographs included references to other cultures and appropriated the relevant imagery and style. These performative photographs can also be seen as early instances of celebrity culture, where the image played a crucial role in contributing

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17 Thus, a form of art, which can also be discussed in the framework of intermedial appropriation.

18 In the collection of the Riga History and Navigation Museum (RHNМ).

19 See, for example, the image Moving Towards Life. The Students of Beatrise Vignere’s School of Rhythm and Plastic taken by Augusts Rostoks (1888-1974), available in magazine Daile (1930), No I; or the image Plastic of Tension. The Dancer Mira Mara taken by Alfrēds Pole (1894-1975), available in magazine Daile (1931), No. I.

20 See, for example, the image Under the Chinese Parasol. Ballet-Dancer Mirdza Kalniņš by Alfrēds Pole (1894-1975), available in magazine Daile (1930), No. I.
towards the fame and stardom of these actors or dancers, thus being part of a self-
branding strategy.\footnote{See, for example, the image of Betija Tobias, who was considered to be Latvian Marlene Dietrich (photographer A. Grapmanis; magazine Daile (1933), No. 1)}

1.1.2. The passive/active roles of the photographer and the photographic subject
As regards the theoretical framework, a certain, yet not strict categorization between
the modes/concepts of performative photography can be proposed on the basis of the
passive or active roles of the photographer and the photographic subject:

(1) The first category is the performative photography where performance is
produced photographically, including but not limited to, photomontages and
collages, or photographically manipulated and processed images (active
photographer \textit{versus} passive subject);

(2) The second category is the performative photography where performance is
produced by the subject through the act of self(representation) before the
camera (passive photographer \textit{versus} active subject).

The first category is the performative photography where performance is produced
photographically, including but not limited to, photomontages and collages, or
photographically manipulated and processed images (active photographer \textit{versus}
passive subject). Here, the photographer acts similarly to a film director,
choreographing and orchestrating the mise-en-scene and photographic subject(s)
before the camera with a certain vision on his/her mind. Often the photographer
operates with photographic means to create the scene photographically, for instance, as
in photomontages and collages. In this case the element of constructedness is very
obvious, the photographer is an active creator and the resulting photograph is often
treated as a fine art object on its own. Photographer Vilis Rūdzenieks defined it as an
‘artistically deformed fact’: “Art is illusion, unreality, an artistically deformed fact and
expressiveness as opposed to the life as it is” (Rūdzenieks 1929: 5). The model in this
scenario can be active insofar as he/she implements the ideas of the photographer or at
least is contributing towards this goal. Yet, the key author of this kind of performative

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\footnote{See, for example, the image of Betija Tobias, who was considered to be Latvian Marlene Dietrich (photographer A. Grapmanis; magazine Daile (1933), No. 1)}
photography is the photographer. Of course, in self-portraits the subject and the photographer is the same person.

An interesting example of such a performative photography in the Baltic region is the photomontages by Lithuanian photographer Stanislovas Kazimieras Kosakovskis, who used photography to construct alternative realities. He acted out his fantasies by creating photomontages in 1897, where his family members had apparently visited such exotic destinations as Cairo, Mexico and Ceilon (Dobriakov 2015: 24-31). Such photomontages are examples of performance art enacted photographically by manipulating and editing the photographic image, once again attesting to the performative potential of the photographic medium.

Much later – in the 1970s – Latvian photographer Gunārs Bindē (b. 1933) worked with performative photomontages creating drama and suspense and working similarly to a film director; however, contrary to the film director, a photographer has only one shot to tell the story. Together with artist Arnolds Plaudis (1927-2008), who introduced him to the world of theatre, Bindē made a series of staged, constructed images where the performative aspect was central, for example, in the *Flight* series, where a woman can be seen flying above the earth like a supernatural character from fantasy films. Bindē always used models as co-authors for the photographic tableaus, yet he was always open to improvisation and contribution from the models as well. Therefore, these were more or less participatory, collective projects, where the photographer had the idea, sometimes even the script, but other participants contributed to the final result. Latvian photography theoretician Sergejs Daugovišs in 1985 implies that Bindē’s projects can be seen as examples of synthesized works of art, where literary, poetic, painterly, graphic, and cinematographic means are combined in creating a new type of art; yet, Daugovišs also admits that work with such techniques in the medium of photography is a challenge for a photographer, because photography is a still image and it is complicated to show movement in as dynamic way as in cinematography. According to Daugovišs, such synthesized forms are successful only on those cases, when the photographer uses the means and language of photography and does not aim to copy cinematography (Daugovišs 1985: 136-137).

The second category is the performative photography where performance is produced by the subject through the act of self(representation) before the camera (passive photographer/active subject). Here the photographer acts as a documentarist photographing the subject, who is the active participant and, contrary to the scenario
mentioned previously, is the key author of the photograph. Even, if the outcome is not very strategically planned and envisioned, with the final result achieved through a series of takes or photo sessions, it is still the subject, who determines the visuality and often the (performative) aesthetics of the particular work. In this category, performance through the act of (self)representation is staged merely for the camera, as, for example, in painter Kārlis Padeggs’s (1911-1940) case, who can be characterized as an eccentric flâneur and dandy of his time and who often put himself before the camera in various disguises.

Often, the boundaries between these two forms of performative photography cannot be strictly drawn. There can be hybrid collaborative projects, where the photographer and the subject are both active and contributing towards the meaning and aesthetics of the resulting photograph. Interestingly enough, in Daugovišs examines such collaborative projects offering to define the models as ‘photo-actors’: “The […] models in photography usually play a passive role, yet they can also engage in joint collaboration with the photographer. The photographer, operating with the elements of mise-en-scène and applying the methods of a director, becomes a partner to the model [and] captures the joint creative act [...]” (Daugovišs 1985: 137). Such hybrid collaborative projects were implemented among Andris Grinbergs and photographers Jānis Kreicbergs and Atis Ieviņš in the 1970s, and they are discussed as a case study in the following chapters of this doctoral dissertation.

1.1.3. Kārlis Padeggs: life as performance

One of the artists, who deliberately created and constructed a distinctly unusual look and lived his public life as though he were a character in a play, was Kārlis Padeggs (1911-1940). Padeggs was a very talented painter and graphic artist, yet he is also remembered for extravagant looks and mysterious personality. As a dandy of his time, he could often be seen dressed very elegantly – wearing a Spanish hat with a very wide brim, a red scarf, yellow gloves and striped trousers. Moreover, he wore make-up, which made his face look either very tanned or white, with a birth-mark on his cheek. A cigarette in a very long mouthpiece was another integral part of the dandy’s appearance. Padeggs loved to shock and provoke society, even if it was done merely through queer looks. According to Margarita Kovaļevska, a close friend of Padeggs, “he identified himself with a Spanish toreador and embodied the carnivalesque atmosphere
in the everyday life choosing eye-catching clothes and mask-like make-up” (Kovaljevska 1996: 43).

One of his contemporaries – painter Kārlis Neilis (1906-1991) – argues that these performative manifestations were part of self-promotional campaign that was not a strategy common among Latvian artists, but these games with make-up and carnivalesque role-playing made Padegs stood out:

“Padegs’s body was too gaunt and spindling, which indicated that health in this body was not very strong. Using his limitless imagination […] he tried to turn this defect […] into an intriguing, unprecedented phantom. Even in the crowds on the street everyone noticed him: a man in a black, fluttering coat. A dark brown face under a black hat. At other times the face was chalk-white and narrow. – A Spanish toreador. […] This kind of self-promotion was not favored by Latvian artists. In Western Europe, yes, especially Paris, it was necessary for every decent painter to exist” (Neilis 2006: 143).

Indeed, Padegs was an outsider (Neilis 2006: 143). Neilis even draws parallels between Padegs and Salvador Dali (1904-1989), where the Spanish Surrealist artist had his moustache as a visual branding code, whereas Padegs had his make-up (Neilis 2006: 144). Art historian Jānis Kalnačs emphasizes that the lipstick on Padegs’s lips, the fake or natural beauty mark, the powdered cheeks and shaved hair on the forehead can give rise to suspicions of belonging to sexual minorities; however, the self-image must simply be perceived as a happening that not only could attract attention, but even shock the society of his time (Kalnačs 2011: 173). Thus, Kalnačs also refers to Padegs’s queer self-representation with the terminology of performance studies, using the term ‘happening’. 22

Indeed, it can be agreed that from today’s perspective, Padegs’s personal transformations and games with alter ego can be analyzed in the framework of other theoretical paradigms like performance and queer studies in art, anthropology and gender disciplines, as well as the social deviance studies in sociology. In Padegs’s case, since he deviated from what was considered ‘normal’ due to his unconventional

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22 Since the term ‘happening’ was invented much later – in the late 1950s, when used by Allan Kaprow in the USA – it would be more appropriate to refer to Padegs’s self-representation as performative manifestations.
and eccentric looks, it is possible to acknowledge the queer\textsuperscript{23} dimension in his self-representation. According to American professor of education, Marla Morris’s definition of queerness, “strangeness is one word to describe the word *queer*” (Morris 2009: 227). Morris states that queerness can also be understood as digression from “normalized, rigid identities that adhere to the sex=gender paradigm” (Morris 2009: 228) and as a politics that “challenges the status quo, rejecting assimilation” (Morris 2009: 228). Morris claims, “to digress from dominant cultural codes is to move away from mainstream discourses” and to be queer means to undergo “a constant transformation […]. Queer identity is chameleon-like refusal to be caged into any prescribed category or role” (Morris 2009: 230).

It can be agreed that Padegs also exhibited a chameleon-like personality that was provocative, ‘strange’ and deliberately constructed for the gaze of the general public. He loved promenading along the boulevards of Riga and Wöhrmann’s Garden, because he wanted to be seen by others. This strategy also echoes with the passionate wanderer and stroller – the flâneur – so emblematic of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century French literary culture. Besides, Padegs’s attitude towards the carnivalesque element as an integral part of his everyday life that he was so keen to exhibit, can be discussed as the everyday performance, where the boundaries between art and life, as well as the ‘real’ and fictional identities are very fluid. For example, once Padegs staged a trip to Paris. He took the Paris train, waved goodbye to everybody who accompanied him only to jump off the train a few stops later (Suta 1981: 8). He was unable to afford such a trip, yet the theatrical staging and choreographing of the event, inviting the audiences to watch, can be seen as an attempt to organize an event of performative nature.

The fact that many of these performative manifestations and continuous attempts to reinvent himself were documented in photography cannot be underestimated today. Around 1930 Padegs was invited to work as a window decorator at the photo salon of Lūcija Kreicberga (1889-1985) – the only known female photographer, who had opened a photography salon in Riga after the First World War. Here, in the duration of ten years, Padegs created striking window decorations attracting the attention of the potential customers. However, the work environment and the fact that he was

\textsuperscript{23} However, the term ‘queer’ is also complex, since it can be used homophobically, that is, as a means of “[shaming] people as strange and [positioning] them as unintelligible within the discursive framework of heteronormative gender dichotomies and binary sexualities” (Luhmann 2009: 120).
surrounded by photographers (Heinrihs Bauers (1911-1945), Jānis Ozols (1901-?), Kārlis Bauls (1893-1964)) and the photographic equipment, also encouraged Padegs to pose and to perform for the camera. According to Jānis Kalnačs, Padegs loved being photographed and the numerous photo portraits are a testimony to a well-staged play, acting or appropriating roles that otherwise would not be possible to act out (Kalnačs 2011: 215). Kalnačs also emphasizes that, without doubt, posing for the camera and embodiment of different characters allowed Padegs to forget about the poverty that he was suffering from and to experiment with various impersonations – the Spanish caballero, gangster, dandy, Dracula, etc.

Due to the interest in role-playing and performative manifestations of constructed identity on an everyday basis, Padegs can be regarded as one of the first artists, who was pioneering proto-performance art in Latvia. Moreover, he saw photography as the ideal medium for registering these chameleon-like transformations, thus his creative practice resonates with the strategy of avant-garde artists in Western Europe (e.g. Marcel Duchamp24 (1887-1968)).

1.2. The Conditions of Art Production Affecting Performance Art and its Development

1.2.1. The hierarchy of arts and the status of photography and performance art

As emphasized by art critic Vilnis Vējis, “when examining Latvian art from the Soviet period, it is very hard to ignore the conditions under which it was created. In those decades, the matter of being or not being recognized, exhibited or mentioned in exhibition reviews, accepted into the Artists’ Union or even enrolling in the Academy of Art was not just about evaluating the artist. It also involved a refined system of stimuli and repressive measures which directly affected artists’ lives” (Vējis 2010: 24). If the disciplines of fine arts – painting, graphic art and sculpture – were taken very seriously, partially due to their function as ideal media to serve the tasks of propaganda, applied arts, especially pottery and textile design, environmental and interior design, stage design and restoration were less prestigious, yet allowed a greater degree of artistic freedom and an opportunity to ignore, at least partially, the ideology and its dogmas:

24 Marcel Duchamp in an interview in 1962 states: “My intention was always to get away from myself, though I knew perfectly well that I was using myself. Call it a little game between ‘I’ and ‘me’” (Blessing 1997: 19).
“Disciplines that flourished were stage design, which allowed imposing innovative formal tricks onto text material, forgetting about oneself and thinking of the plasticity of the idea; engraving, which allowed attributing material resistance to it; as well as applied art – what can you expect from a lump of clay or a ball of yarn?” (Vanaga 2010: 29).

As stated by art historian Irēna Bužinska, “throughout the Soviet period, Modernism and particularly Abstractionism were declared as some of the greatest enemies of Socialist Realism” (Bužinska 2010: 26), so it was unthinkable that these elements could be freely exploited in painting. However, for example, in the discipline of textile art Henrihs Vorkals integrated the features of Pop Art, which, of course, were only superficially based on the theoretical framework of Pop Art, since there was no consumer culture and no free speech in the Soviet Republic of Latvia and therefore no opportunity to critically engage in an openly critical and discursive reflection. Yet, a certain “parallelism of many stylistic trends” (Bužinska 2010: 26) could be noticed, because “artists did not want to limit themselves to the conventional forms of official Realism” (Bužinska 2010: 26).

Although photography was highly appreciated as a tool of propaganda in photojournalism, it was not included among the subjects or disciplines to study at the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR – photography was “categorically not considered an art form or the equal of traditional artistic media” (Lindenbauma 2010: 32). However, it was passionately pursued as an amateur activity by many members in photoclubs, among which Photo Club Riga (founded in 1962) was the most prominent and eagerly committed to creating an environment where photography could be proved and developed as an art form (Tīfentāle 2017). In fact, photography was lacking any kind of critical thought or reflection, too. Among the many books of photographic collections on a plethora of ideologically-friendly subjects, for example, Uzskatāmā aģitācija (The Obvious Propaganda, 1975, the publishing house Liesma), Laikmeta ritmi (The Rhythm of Our Time, 1981, the publishing house Liesma), Slīteres rezervāts (Slītere Reserve, 1978, the Society for Nature and Monuments Protection of Latvia), there was only one theoretical collection of essays on the topic of photography published only in 1985 entitled Latvijas fotomāksla: Vēsture un mūsdienas (Latvian Photographic Art: History and Nowadays, the publishing house Liesma). In this book one of the editors Pēteris Zeile offers an overview of the theory and criticism in
photography in Soviet Latvia. Since it is merely an overview, it cannot be regarded as a crucial example of meta-analysis. However, one of the Soviet authors writing on photography that Zeile mentions is Andris Rozenbergs. He can be regarded as one of the first authors who attempted to analyze photography discursively.

Interestingly enough, in an essay Fotogrāfija un mēs (Photography and Us) published in magazine Māksla (Art) in 1968, film director Andris Rozenbergs reflects on the discursive situation related to photography. He starts the article with the statement “There is no photography criticism in our republic” (Rozenbergs 1968: 47-48) and continues his reflection on the status of photography questioning whether photography is art or not. On the one hand, he offers the opinion of the opponents of photography saying that “photography is not and cannot be art, because it is produced by a machine, and a cold, lifeless device. A piece of iron without heart cannot perform the same what a human being, an artist can, who combines the inspiration that he has found in the depths of his soul with experience of yearly nature observations and skills that have been obtained in exhausting exercises” (Rozenbergs 1968: 47-48). On the other hand, Rozenbergs insists that “photography is art, because, although, technology is used in its creation, it has the same means of expression as painting and graphic art” (Rozenbergs 1968: 47-48). Rozenbergs ironically suggests that photography is “a monster on three stiff legs of the tripod. [As such], it has not anything sacred, and by laughing in our faces it overthrows the old commandments of aesthetics and gives rise to confusion in the friendly family of artists, aesthetes, philosophers and critics” (Rozenbergs 1968: 47-48). Rozenbergs provides an analysis of these questions finally concluding that “photography, originally being a registration of a moment from reality, can be art, too” (Rozenbergs 1968: 47-48). He claims that “most of photographs is a fusion between the documentary and artistic self-expression qualities in the most diverse proportions, being simultaneously a document (according to its origins) and a work of art (according to the produced result)” (Rozenbergs 1968: 47-48). This essay can be regarded as one of the rare attempts to critically reflect on photography and question its documentary quality and artistic potential in the period of late socialism in Latvia.

Similarly to photography, performance art could not be studied at the Academy of Art or any other educational establishment. There was no knowledge or understanding of this genre, and it was practiced rather intuitively – as a form of ‘being’ or ‘lifestyle’. Performance artists and practitioners did not object to their marginal position in the cultural and geographical periphery, since it allowed them more freedom in
experimentation and an opportunity to create depoliticised and uncensored art. For example, pantomime, which was very close to performance art as a drama genre based on non-verbal communication, was supported by the state, yet also constantly controlled by censors. Art historian Māra Traumane notes that performance art in Latvia “became ‘art’ in the institutional sense only in the late 1980s when artists finally invaded exhibition spaces and the performance documentations ended up in exhibitions and collections” (Traumane 2010: 34). The doctoral dissertation herein gives a different perspective on these processes, since the author provides evidence that performance art in its intermedial forms reached audiences in the first public space, too; however, the audiences in the 1970s were not aware of the fact that they were looking at performance art. It was due to the socio-political circumstances that performance art underwent hybridisation and appeared in other media forms – photographs, paintings and serigraphs.

Apart from the creative and social strategies that the performance artists and practitioners applied to deliberately distance themselves from the official discourse, it can also be questioned why this discipline could not be comfortable to Soviet ideologues. One of the crucial factors that can be manifested through performance art is the power of agency, and such power would be deemed threatening to the totalitarian authority and existing power structures. According to American scholar Kristine Stiles:

“The fact that someone does something – that someone can do something – that something happens rather than nothing – is more than notable. It sets action artists apart. They operate as commissures entrusted with the idea of communicating the value and image of anyone doing something. This is why performance artists are considered so dangerous. They propose that something can be done, and then they make it happen. People who make things happen present potential problems to normative behavior and values” (Stiles 1998: 283).

The agency factor is also what art historian Amy Bryzgel emphasizes in her book Performing the East (2013). Drawing on anthropologist Alexei Yurchak’s statement that “in the late socialist period, the performing of ritualized acts, of acting as if they had relevance or meaning, became increasingly important, mainly for the possibilities that those actions afforded as a consequence – for example, participating in elections, attending official meetings and parades” (Bryzgel 2013: 223), Bryzgel suggests that
the breakdown of the Soviet system began, when citizens ceased acting as if and began performing other acts instead, for example, gathering in mass demonstrations and demanding for independence (Bryzgel 2013: 223). Thus, indeed, if looked from a broader perspective, the agency and the power of ‘doing’ manifested in performance art can resonate in new types of cultural performances, as, for example, manifested in the famous demonstration The Baltic Way in 1989, consequently contributing to the collapse of the regime. Therefore, it is understandable that performance art, or any other type of art, asserting individualism or empowering agency, could be deemed politically unacceptable in the totalitarian regime of the Soviet period.

1.2.2. The dissemination of information on performance art

To trace the development of performance art in Latvia, it is also noteworthy to pay attention to the press discourse, since press alongside television, cinema and (journalistic) photography was considered one of the most powerful tools to reach masses. Thus, the term ‘happening’ in Latvian press for the first time appeared in 1968, when it was mentioned under the title Directions and Tendencies of International Drama (Literatūra un Māksla 1968: 12). In this and other press articles in the 1960s, happenings as a new trend in theatre and drama were viewed suspiciously and as a negative phenomenon that could only disappoint the Soviet audiences:

“This is a movement, which theatre can expect the least from. It is a pure game of observations, which in the best case can be assigned the meaning of some kind of a symbol. [...] Although there have been some progressive attempts, the negative character of this movement cannot be denied. It is a theater for snobs and, more than other modes of theatres, it lives from the support of shopkeepers’ world. In many works belonging to this movement decadence has been naturally combined with banality” (Literatūra un Māksla 1968: 12).

In the 1970s, though, the word ‘happening’ became a trendy colloquialism, often used incorrectly and appropriated to the events and situations that stood far from drama studies.25 Usually a ‘happening’ was attributed to an organized event, for example, music or poetry evening, where the audience became co-authors through interpreting

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25 Also, in 1978 Latvian author Marģers Zariņš released a novel entitled Mistērijas un hepeningi (Mysteries and Happenings), which ensured further assimilation of the word into the everyday communication.
the music or poetry they were listening to (Zemzare 1975). Often, happenings were interpreted as Western phenomena of Pop Art and mentioned in the context of music, for instance, trying to explain the difference between rock, bigbeat and popmusic to the Soviet audiences (Zariņš 1973). This broad scope of application reminds of Allan Kaprow’s reflections on the term claiming that ‘happening’ was chosen because it was “a neutral word that avoided reference to art, [but] then the press and some artists took up the word [leading to the situation, when] everything under the sun [was] called a ‘Happening’” (Kostelanetz 1980: 111).

On the contrary, such terms as ‘performance art’, ‘body art’ and ‘land art’ appeared in Latvian press only around the mid-1980s, and such public awareness was mostly raised through the efforts of Hardijs Lediņš, an architect by education, but also one of the progressive multimedia artists at the time. Lediņš tried to contextualize these new tendencies in art and culture under the foreign umbrella term of ‘Postmodernism’. For example, in his interview (1987) with artist Miervaldis Polis, ‘performance art’ is explained as ‘dramatographical art’, thus again suggesting the theatrical setting:

“H.L.: Only today we can start speaking of action art, performance art, land art and other manifestations characteristic to Postmodernism and emerging in Latvia. Yet, in the world it appeared much earlier – 15 or 20 years ago.

M.P.: At that time these phenomena existed, too, yet on the level of carnival. As an example, Andris Grinbergs’s naïve actions with elements of body art can be mentioned. These are facts; however they were banned from legal exposure.

H.L.: Today there are no more obstacles for such kind of art, yet it appears rarely” (Lediņš 1987: 20-21).

It is unclear why Polis refers to Grinbergs’s art as ‘naïve art’, especially since he himself was a participant in one of Grinbergs’s happenings Two Faces in 1972 (Fig. 9, 26)

26 Although the shared authorship is, indeed correct as a feature in performance art, it cannot be achieved only through passive interpretation of poetry or music. In performance art, audiences become co-authors through participation and active engagement.

27 Lediņš was also the leader of artist group The Workshop of Unprecedented Feelings (the NSRD) founded in 1982.

28 It must be noted, though, that in this interview Lediņš does not mention his own performances carried out as part of the actions of the artist group The Workshop of Unprecedented Feelings, for example, Walks To Bolderāja (since 1980), which were 7 km walks from Lediņš’s house to Bolderāja along the railway and crossing various city and suburban zones in the manner very close to the Situationists.
10, 14, pp. 7-8 in the Visual Supplement). According to Bryzgel, perhaps it can be explained with Polis’s opinion that one needs to be skilled to pursue traditional art such as painting, but one needs no skills at all to be a performance artist.

Also, it must be mentioned that from the family of the friendly socialist republics, the Polish art magazines *Project* and *Przekrój* were especially popular among Latvian reading audiences. It is particularly interesting that in Poland, for example, it was Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990), who organized his first happening in 1965. His name in relation to happenings appeared in several Polish magazines and thus might have reached Latvian audiences, too.²⁹ However, art related and lifestyle magazines reached Latvia through uncensored and camouflaged channels, so it was a rather sporadic and inconsistent means of acquiring information. Sometimes, the artists were only looking at the images in these magazines, since they did not have the command of foreign language to translate the text.

**1.2.3. Pantomime – the Soviet Esperanto and the ‘legal’ body art**

Although performance art had to adapt to various external factors and thus exist in the territorial and cultural periphery, another art form, which was also focused on the use of body and the expression of non-verbal, symbolic meaning through bodily actions, was very much supported by the Soviet regime. This art form was pantomime, and it was hugely popular in the Soviet Union. According to Bulgarian anthropologist Alexander Iliev, Soviet pantomime underwent a true boom in the 1970s. Each Soviet Republic developed its own school and created its own style. The artists in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia developed the method of choreodrama created by the Polish mime artist Henrik Tomaszewsky (1919-2001) in the 1950s and combined it with the classical and modern pantomime of the team Etienne Decroux (1898-1991) - Jean-Louis Barrault (1910-1994) - Marcel Marceau (1923-2007) (Iliev 2014: 218). Similarly to amateur photography, pantomime was also strongly promoted by the authorities as a leisure time activity and became widely accessible. Iliev argues that the Soviet Union – a multinational country – saw “pantomime as its ‘stage Esperanto’: something that unites and reaches the minds and hearts of the masses better than the mandated Russian

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²⁹ For example, articles on Tadeusz Kantor’s happenings were published in numerous periodicals at the time. In Polish: *Ty i ja* (1968, No 2), *Współczesność* (1969, No 10, p. 8), *Dialog* (1972, No 9, pp. 103-107); in French: *L’ascilla* (22.04.1967, No 16); in German: *National Zeitung* (22.10.1966).
language” (Iliev 2014: 219), and this, indeed, can be seen as political and ideological goal. As regards the amateur activities and gathering of working class people in various clubs, Russian art historian Ekaterina Degot writes that “amateur activity in art and science had always been promoted in the U.S.S.R.; workers were supposed to create in their free time. Citizens exchanged their relative loyalty to the regime for the time their mostly meaningless, poorly paid, and chaotic jobs gave them” (Degot 2004: 213). However, as indicated by Latvian art historian Alise Tīfentāle, the status of amateur activity could also provide certain privileges. Although one was restricted in terms of pursuing a professional career, this kind of amateur activity was not strictly subjected to the requirements of ideological education that was expected from professional art (Tīfentāle 2015: 68).

In Latvia, too, a pantomime group called Riga Pantomime (Rīgas pantomīma) examined the expressive capacities of the body and transformation of the body into a plastic material. Riga Pantomime started its activities as the drama ensemble at the Construction Workers’ House of Culture. The group with great success was led by Roberts Ligers (1931-2013) and the first mime performance entitled Idea was produced already in 1961. As pointed out by Tīfentāle, in the socio-political circumstances experienced by Latvia in the period of late socialism, the genre of pantomime was a relative territory of creative freedom. Because it was situated outside the official art hierarchy, the expression of movement could be also used to express dramatic and existentially philosophical ideas, which, as Tīfentāle argues, connects pantomime of Soviet Latvia in the 1960s, even if remotely, with the art of butoh in Japan in the 1960s. For example, in 1965 Riga Pantomime had a performance entitled Hiroshima, which was accompanied by the Polish composer Krzysztof Eugeniusz Penderecki’s avant-garde musical piece Threnody to the Victims of Hiroshima (Tīfentāle 2015: 68).

On several occasions, the participants of Riga Pantomime became artists on their own. For example, Modris Tenisons (b. 1945) established and led a professional mime troupe in Kaunas, Lithuania (1966-1971) and transformed the genre into experimental theatre, whereas Ansis Rūtentāls (1949-2000) established movement theatre as part of the Students’ Theatre of the University of Latvia (leading the troupe 1978-1993), producing original interdisciplinary performance that visually interpreted global music trends (Vējš 2010: 25). However, it must be mentioned that the activities of Tenisons’s mime troupe in Kaunas were suspended after the 19-year-old Lithuanian high school
student Romas Kalanta implemented a public self-immolation act\textsuperscript{30} protesting the Soviet regime in Lithuania. His political suicide was followed by waves of protests by hippie oriented Lithuanian youth. According to Tomas Kavaliauskas, suicide by self-immolation became the most striking form of resistance of the Soviet oppression. More than ten Lithuanians and more than ten Czechs burned themselves in the name of freedom between 1968 and 1989 (Kavaliauskas 2012: 103). In this atmosphere, the Soviet authorities tried to suspend activities where young people had an opportunity to gather in groups, and Tenisons’s mime troupe was among them.

1.2.4. The cultural and geographical periphery
Since performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism was mostly practiced in cultural and geographical periphery, that is, non-traditional or alternative performance space, it is crucial to examine the notions of place and space in performance art, as well as the implications that these strategies brought. It can be questioned, whether through performative engagement with the place and space performance art became site-specific art or, more specifically, site-specific performance.

According to Emma Govan, Helen Nicholson and Katie Normington, in creating a living space or environment within the performance area, attention is drawn to the ways in which the place of a building can be transformed into a ‘space’, a continuous, moving entity capable of shifting to reflect those inhabiting it. In this context, place is seen as a static, arranged location, while space is unfixed, responsive and interactive (Govan, Nicholson, Normington 2007: 106). For example, the old, abandoned house used in Grinbergs’s performance The Old House (1977; Fig. 41-48, pp. 18-19 in the Visual Supplement) or the Rundāle Palace in its deteriorated, violated pre-renovation stage in Lancmanis’s carnivals cannot be considered a ‘fixed’ location or place, since no culture or social meaning was represented for an audience (as it would be, for example, in the event of a theatre building). Govan, Nicholson and Normington also emphasize that “by changing this fixed, organized, institutional ‘place’ into ‘space’ there is an act of liberation” (Govan et al 2007: 106). The dichotomy between an institutional or fixed place and the unfixed space in flux is also noted by American cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan: place is experienced as security, while space represents freedom (Tuan 1977: 3).

\textsuperscript{30}Such public, performative acts, which result in the author’s death can be seen as the most radical and ‘ultimate’ performance.
The practices that reinscribe the environment within performance spaces are important for the way that they renegotiate a series of performance principles. First, the relationship between the performers/audience and the space is reconstructed by utilising real artifacts from the outside and bringing them inside to the performance space. Through doing this, notions of reality/replication/identity are challenged. Second, the use of environmental space privileges a sense of space as being ‘lived in’. It is capable of being shaped by, and reflecting, human experience. And third, architectural qualities of the space are often enhanced. The performers/audience experience a sense of ‘touching’ the building (in the haptic sense), and are aware of how the space of the building itself can be viscerally experienced and reflected within the performance. This touching of space ignites a haptic relationship between the space and the inhabitants. Audience and performers ‘feel’ the space around them (Govan et al 2007: 111). This is especially relevant for the themed balls and carnivals that were organized by Imants Lancmanis at the Rundāle Palace. As a huge backdrop for performances, so dissonant with the Communist ideology of collectivism and nationalized property, the Palace served as open, haptic, site-specific space, which provided an opportunity for unprecedented communal experience and ‘living art’.

In the context of performance history, it is useful to look at Allan Kaprow’s artistic practice, where he attempted to connect art and environment organically through performance. For him, performance provided a means through which the geography and events of ‘found’ sites could be approached outside the representational terms of painting and sculpture. Kaprow’s happenings ‘for performers only’ reflected on relationships between practice and place, and so work and site, fostering unpredictable, fluid exchanges between the frame of an artwork and its various contexts (Kaye 2000: 105). According to Kaprow, where the limits and so the formal identity of the work are unclear, then “the very materials, the environment, the activity of the people in the environment, are the primary images, not the secondary ones [. . . ] there is an absolute flow between event and environment” (Kaprow and Schechner 1968: 154). Overall, happenings mark an interest in place, as Kaye suggests, such strategy “may articulate exchanges between the work of art and the places in which its meanings are defined” (Kaye 2000: 1). In such works place becomes an important element within the artistic encounter and there is recognition that a space is not empty but full of meaning. What becomes important is not just the geographical place in which the work is sited but also
the social practices, which are part of the space-making processes of the particular site (Govan et al 2007: 121).

It is, therefore, possible to claim that spatiality as an integral element of performance art can be so prevalent in certain works that it is possible to refer to these performances as ‘site-specific performances’. One of the first attempts to define such creative practice was provided by British Professor of Theatre Patrice Pavis in *Dictionary of the Theatre* (1998):

“This term refers to a staging and performance conceived on the basis of a place in the real world (ergo, outside the established theatre). A large part of the work has to do with researching a place, often an unusual one that is imbued with history or permeated with atmosphere: an airplane hangar, unused factory, city neighbourhood, house or apartment. The insertion of a classical or modern text in this ‘found space’ throws new light on it, gives it an unsuspected power and places the audience at an entirely different relationship to the text, the place and the purpose of being there. This new context provides a new situation or enunciation [...] and gives the performance an unusual setting of great charm and power” (Pavis 1998: 337-8).

The use of real world (for example, a historical palace, private apartment or abandoned building) can definitely be attributed to performance artists in Latvia, too. Indeed, all these locations had certain atmosphere established by the current or previous inhabitants, or the course of history. When using these settings/sites for an event-based work of art, new context and new dialogical relationship was established with the place. This choice of place epitomizes how community and selfhood could be exercised in the period of late socialism. Found space or site-specific space shaped the performance production in particular ways, but above all provided artists with the sense of freedom and liberation to work without ideology-imposed limitations. For performance artists in Latvia, the periphery was an alternative to institutionalized, officially recognized places. It functioned as space, which was unfixed, responsive and interactive demonstrating a sense of ‘living in’ the environment and recognizing that space is full of meaning. Here, the space-making process was as important as the work of art itself.
1.2.5. The phenomenon of participatory and collaborative art

It was common for artists in Latvia in the period of late socialism to work on collaborative projects, often establishing tiny communes as, for example, it can be seen in the case of the Office Group (Biroja grupa), the Mežaparks Commune (Mežaparka komūna), the Second French Group (Otrā franču grupa), the Emissionists (Pollucionisti), the NSRD. These were small groups of like-minded friends, who shared similar viewpoints, values and interest in art. Of course, these groups did not have any official status or recognition from the state; the artists actually preferred to remain relatively unknown to the official authorities. In this way, they could engage in experimentation that did not correspond to the Soviet nomenclature. The groups were tiny freethinking platforms, where a democratic and non-hierarchical relationship model could be implemented.

Intriguingly, participatory and collaborative practices were also common in the West. British professors of performance Deirde Heddon and Jane Milling analyse theatre and performance practices in their book Devising Performance: A Critical History (2006), especially focusing on one certain mode of production termed as ‘devising’ in the UK and Australia and ‘collaborative creation’ in the USA. According to Heddon and Milling, the idea of a performance being produced collaboratively means that all the members of the group are contributing equally to the creation of performance. Moreover, the ideology of collaborative practice implies freedom and an emphasis of

31 The Emissionists (in Latvian – ‘Pollucionisti’) were a group of contemporaries: Anda Ārgale, Māris Ārgalis, Jānis Borgs, Valdis Celms, Kirils Šmelkovs, Kārlis Kalsers, Jāzeps Baltinavietis. In 1978 they created a series named Savādotā Rīga (The Bizzared Riga; commissioned by the newspaper Literatūra un Māksla), where all members of the group walked in the streets of Riga and took photographs in various locations. The photographs were turned into playful photomontages – all together around 100 images, “which created dissonance with conventional reality” (Lindenbauma 2010: 33). According to Jānis Taurens, this series can be viewed as an example of conceptual art created in the Soviet period. But due to the fact that there was no context – no art criticism and theory that would conceptualize this art phenomenon, Taurens defines the series as “the conceptualism that did not happen” (Taurens 2014: 205).

32 This democratic participation should not be mistaken with the democratic centralism that was postulated as “democratic” in the USSR. The USSR was a highly centralised empire, with a single party permitted by the Constitution, which usually won 90% of the vote in the elections. The political power was exercised through a highly hierarchical structure, involving repressive mechanisms – the secret police, censorship, etc. Thus, “democratic” in the USSR was an Aesopian term.
methods that support intuition, spontaneity, improvisation, experimentation and innovation (Heddon, Milling 2006: 4-5).

In the West such collaborative creation practice emerged in order to reflect “an anti-establishment and antihierarchy ethos” and to address “social issues of their moment – the Vietnam War, trade unionism, racial identity, terrorism, the rise of feminism, Civil Rights, institutional violence and the Cold War” (Heddon, Milling 2006: 61), as well as “the ever-present threat of global nuclear destruction, as the arms race developed between the Soviet Union and the USA and Western Europe” (Heddon, Milling 2006: 13). In the period from the 1950s to the 1970s popular political protest began to become more visible and widespread and many of the protesters at political rallies and marches during the 1960s were young people and students. The political model desired was that of a popular participatory democracy, which would enable ‘ordinary’ people to have control over their own lives, “expressing a new force outside of existing institutions, a society apart from the state” (Cavallo 1999: 209).

In the democratic West “the ‘state’ was perceived as being bureaucratic, patriarchal, authoritarian, and repressive, and the individual as alienated” (Heddon, Milling 2006: 15). This socio-political environment was a catalyst for performance artists in West to address these issues in their performances by working on ‘collaborative creations’ and devising their performances in non-hierarchical inclusive groups. Paradoxically, for performance artists in Latvia, too, performance provided such a platform, although in a totalitarian state. However, there is one crucial difference here – performance artists in Latvia could not and did not reflect on the political issues openly, because there was no freedom of speech in the totalitarian regime and if they risked to express their political views against the USSR or the regime, they would be repressively punished. Nevertheless, working collaboratively on creative projects in non-hierarchical groups outside the system was the strategy that they applied in art creation processes similarly to the artists in the West.

Claire Bishop provides a different perspective on the phenomenon of participatory art. She argues that, from a Western European perspective, artists’ preoccupation with participation and collaboration can be contextualized by two previous historical moments: the historic avant-garde in Europe in 1917 and the so-called ‘neo’ avant-garde leading to 1968 (Bishop 2012: 3). This kind of social turn or artistic orientation towards participatory model can be explained by a shared understanding of desires to overturn the traditional relationship between the art object, the artist and the audience,
where “the artist is conceived less as an individual producer of discrete objects than as
a collaborator and producer of situations; the work of art as a finite, portable,
commodifialble product is reconceived as an ongoing or long-term project with un
unclear beginning and end; while the audience, previously conceived as a ‘viewer’ or
‘beholder’ is now repositioned as a co-producer or participant” (Bishop 2012: 2).

However, it can be questioned what were the impulses motivating such participatory
and collaborative practice in the countries under the Soviet rule, where collectivism
was an ideological requirement and state-imposed norm. Bishop states that the
participatory art of Eastern Europe and Russia from the mid 1960s to the late 1980s is
frequently marked by the desire for an increasingly subjective and privatized aesthetic
experience, and can be contextualized as shared privatized experience: the construction
of a collective artistic space amongst mutually trusting colleagues, who would not
inform on one’s semi-illegal activities, especially if nudity and gathering in groups was
involved. In an atmosphere of near constant surveillance and insecurity, participation
was an artistic and social strategy to be deployed only amongst the family members, as
well as the most trusted groups of friends (Bishop 2012: 129-130). Contrary to the
habit of Western art historians to interpret these instances of East and Central European
art as ‘implicitly political’, Bishop argues that these works of art must be viewed in
more complex terms:

“Given the saturation of everyday life with ideology, artists did not regard their
work as political but rather existential and apolitical, committed to ideas of
freedom and the individual imagination. At the same time, they sought an
expanded – one may say democratized – horizon of artistic production, in
contrast to the highly regulated and hierarchical system of the official Union of
Soviet Artists” (Bishop 2012: 129).

Moreover, generalizations about participatory art under post-war communism must be
certainly avoided, since “artistic responses to the regime vary strongly between
different Eastern European countires, in line with each region’s specific relationship to
Moscow and their distinct negotiations of its policies” (Bishop 2012: 129). Similarly,
contacts and communication between the artists in the East and West depended on
individual relationships. In Latvia, for example, crucial communication network was
established between Latvian artists and German art curator Valdis Ābolinš, who, in
fact, was born in Latvia and had emigrated with his family to Germany at a young age
in the aftermath of World War II and Latvia’s annexation to the USSR. Āboliņš was an art gallery manager and one of the early Fluxus members and had engaged in art processes with German and international avant-garde superstars such as Joseph Beuys, Wolf Vostell, Jörg Immendorff, Nam June Paik. Maintaining communication with ‘indigenous’ Latvians on the other side of the Iron Curtain, Āboliņš wrote numerous letters designed as Mail Art, as well as sent books on art history.

Taking into account the omnipresent panoptic sight of the KGB, many of these collaborative projects were implemented in both territorial and cultural periphery often fusing events from one’s private life with art, as for example, in the cases of Andris Grinbergs and Imants Lancmanis, who turned their own wedding into art projects. Participatory art projects were a means of experiencing a more authentic (because individual and self-organised) mode of collective experience than the one prescribed by the state. According to Bishop, the fact that many of these actions do not look like art is less an indication of the artist’s commitment to blurring ‘art and life’, as stipulated by early performance artists in the West, but rather “a deliberate strategy of self-protection, as well as a reaction to the state’s official military displays and socialist festivals (mass spectacle)” (Bishop 2012: 130). Against an oppressively monolithic cultural sphere, where art and artists’ role was reduced to serving an ideological and propaganda purpose, artists working collaboratively under socialism sought ways how to nurture individualism (of behavior, actions, interpretations). Bishop argues that this strategy led to a situation in which “most artists wanted nothing to do with politics – and indeed even rejected the dissident position – by choosing to operate, instead, on an existential plane: making assertions of individual freedom, even in the slightest or most silent forms” (Bishop 2012: 161). Hence, participatory, collaborative art projects in Latvia in the period of late socialism, too, can be seen as determined by the socio-political circumstances, yet they were attempts to create depoliticised art, free of ideological dogmas or political counter-arguments. It was the microenvironment, where democratic principles of freedom of expression, participation, initiative and non-hierarchical work relationships were implemented. Here, intermediality and appropriation as particular features characteristic to performance art in Latvia emerged (examined in further chapters of the doctoral dissertation herein).
1.2.6. The second public sphere as the microenvironment of art production

One of the theoretical paradigms, which can be applied to examine performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism, is the concept of public sphere. In his influential monograph The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere (Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit, 1962) German philosopher Jürgen Habermas points out that the historical, social and ideological constellations of a given situation shape and transform the structures of the public sphere. According to Habermas, there were two incarnations of the ‘public sphere’. The first arose during the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries, when the state absorbed powers and rights previously exercised by semi-public corporations, localities, and individuals (Kaiser 2011). Habermas argues that ‘public’ came to mean state-related and denoted the sphere occupied by a bureaucratic apparatus. ‘Private’, by contrast, denoted the sphere occupied by those who held no office and were for that reason excluded from any share in public authority. Habermas claims that in the late 17\textsuperscript{th} century, a ‘second public sphere’ emerged within the tension-charged field between state and society. According to Habermas, the social nature of this new ‘bourgeois public sphere’ allowed for the public articulation of previously private bourgeois family values in public settings: “The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public” (Habermas [1962] 1989: 27). Therefore, the public sphere and the private sphere can be seen as mutually inclusive social realms (Susen 2011: 43).

Focusing on Western European societies, Habermas describes the transformation from a feudalistic public sphere of representation to a rational-critical public sphere of the bourgeoisie and its negative developments in the age of mass media (Balme 2014: 5). Habermas’s notion of the public sphere refers to a forum for communication that is structured and transformed by various mechanisms, e.g., the relations of power. In the classical understanding of totalitarianism, communication channels and contents are controlled by the state and therefore no ‘autonomous public spheres’ can emerge (Habermas 1992: 454).

For the purposes of the doctoral dissertation herein, the term ‘second public sphere’ means an ‘unofficial public sphere’ and provides a productive approach to question the significance, political nature, and impact of autonomous art under ideological repression, as well as to investigate the specific conditions of art production. According to Hungarian scholar Adam Czirak, the ‘first’ public sphere or the official public sphere can be understood as the register of everyday communication that was
strongly influenced by socialist ideologies and served as the means for the realization of the Communist project. This official public sphere was kept under surveillance by the state, especially the KGB as the key surveillance instrument, and was permeated by censorship, as well as bans on writing, display and performance. Czirak argues that in regard to its hierarchical order, one could say that the first public sphere was actually not public at all (as understood by Immanuel Kant, Jürgen Habermas, or Hannah Arendt), but simply a domain where the ‘discourse police’ (Diskurspolizei) could exercise its power (Czirak 2014). According to Cseh-Varga and Czirak, “One could say that the first public sphere was held together by an ideological project, the creation of a socialist consciousness, and this orientation had a far-reaching impact on the forms and the interpretation of art, including painting, sculpture, film and theatre arts” (2018: 2).

However, as indicated by Katalin Cseh, the second public sphere or the unofficial sphere represents a social and cultural field of strategies for alternative action that existed parallel to the official and controlled publicity of late socialism. Cseh defines the second public sphere as a sphere of autonomous and uncensored action, fragmentary and open, that positions itself on the fringes of official culture – mostly underground, although sometimes visible above the ground (Cseh 2014). In this contextualization, art’s second public sphere can be understood as microenvironment or a pseudo-reality that was opposed to the absurd world of real-existing socialism and yet was interconnected to a dominant public sphere. The second public sphere, thus, has an “extremely fluid structure” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 7). As Christopher Balme indicates, “the public sphere is almost never a real space but rather a set of rules enabling debate and discussion to occur” (Balme 2014: ix).

The conception of the first and second public spheres can be applied to the analysis of performance art not only in Latvia, but in the region of Central and Eastern Europe in the period of late socialism, too, because there was not one ‘correct’ definition, mode of aesthetics or visuality of performance art that could be pinpointed as some kind of generic model that all performance artists would follow. Because performance art and artists needed to react to the restrictions imposed by the authorities – no official status of discipline, no gatherings in groups, no nudity, no indecency, etc. – performance art was constantly adapting to the socio-political circumstances and thus it was pluralistic and never fixed as a genre. Moreover, it lacked systematic and discursive analysis and was rather an intuitive practice, a form of ‘being’ or lifestyle. To distance oneself from
the dominant art doctrines, namely, Socialist Realism and aesthetic conformism, artists chose to implement their works in the second public sphere, that is, in the cultural and territorial periphery – in private apartments, abandoned buildings or in nature. This social and artistic strategy can be explained as inner emigration and attempts to avoid indoctrination, homogenization and internalization of Soviet values.

As indicated by both Czirak and Cseh (2014), the development of unofficial networks, which existed in parallel to the official sphere despite the surveillance, control and potentially adverse consequences, demonstrated that no public sphere can be closed in a totalitarian way and that no communication system can be utterly regulated. Moreover, these unofficial networks existing in the marginalized cultural situation prove that the artistic (and individual) agency cannot be absolutely silenced or paralysed, and that there was a way how to remain immune to the ideological pressure.

To avoid the adaptation to a grim model of existence and social reality requiring homogenization, collectivization and intellectual paralysis, artists and creative individuals in Soviet Latvia of the 1970s invented their own ‘survival strategies’. These personalities intended to escape the regulated atmosphere of Soviet(ized) life, even with the minor gestures of adapting to fashion and having a provocative look, or gatherings in cafes. They established their own microenvironment and immersed in alternative reality (a second public sphere) created out of books, film, music and philosophical conversations. Such gatherings, communication and socializing within the community of family, friends or youth subculture (e.g. hippies) established networks that often led to nonconformist art activities in the cultural periphery.

According to Cseh-Varga and Czirak, “the freedom of interpretation, the plurality of perspectives and the independence from directives of artistic ideology were the most important motivating factors for underground artists to refuse to participate in centrally managed art production” (Cseh-Varga, Czirak 2018: 7).

1.3. Andris Grinbergs – the Pioneer of Performance Art in Latvia

1.3.1. The early years (the 1960s)

Andris Grinbergs turned to performance art because as an interdisciplinary discipline it allowed to experiment and explore new trajectories in art. His creative strategies were also influenced by his education and professional experience, where a strong emphasis on fashion can be noticed. To obtain secondary education, Grinbergs studied fashion design at the Department of Costume Production and Modelling of the Applied Art...
School in Riga. After graduation Grinbergs worked as a fashion designer at the tailoring atelier Siluets, where he was designing and sowing women’s coats. Being a keen follower of fashion trends beyond the boundaries of the Soviet state-planned economy, Grinbergs enthusiastically examined weekly roundups on fashion, style, celebrities, music, etc., in the Polish magazine Przekrój (Grinbergs 2011: 249). Cherishing his inner necessity for eccentricity and dandyism, Grinbergs also loved vintage clothing and often visited the Central market in Riga purchasing used ‘bourgeois’ clothes, shoes and various accessories from the 1920s and 1930s. Not only Grinbergs shopped at the flea markets, he was also improvisationally creative with the limited infrastructure available to him as a fashion designer, so he creatively used second-hand materials such as parachute fabric to sew classic trench coats and wide, backless mini-dresses (Grinbergs 2011: 250). Surely, this kind of fashion celebrating individualism and extravaganzas was not intended for ‘Soviet women’ and, if ever, was only shown as avant-garde fashion pieces at the official fashion shows (Grinbergs 2011: 250).

However, creativity, improvisation and the motto ‘life as a fashion show’ later became the trademarks of Grinbergs’s art. At the end of the 1960s, when the hippie movement started to emerge in Latvia, Grinbergs became the flagman of this socially quite bullied subculture, which was often viewed – especially in press – with hostility as “a crowd of backsliders and parasites, infecting our crystal-clear society with a foreign ideology” (Borgs 1989: 9, 10). Though Grinbergs is often cited as the leader of the hippie group in Riga, he denies it, saying that he was ‘just a visual rendition’ and what mattered more to him than, for example, the hippie ideology, was the excitement about clothes and an opportunity to dress his friends (Grinbergs 2011: 254). Later, the motto ‘life is a fashion show’ remained crucial to Grinbergs as a performance artist, too: “I dressed my models and created an environment, where they could express themselves and which could to some degree ‘rip’ them out of their masks, turn them

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33 In 1988 Grinbergs graduated from the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR. His Thesis was dedicated to methodology in pedagogy.
34 The website www.hipiji.lv dates the beginning of the movement as the summer of 1968.
35 For example, artist Henrihs Vorkals (1946-2018) remembers that in Russian hippies were referred to as “truslivaja kontra” – the timid counter(culture) (Vorkals 2012).
36 Grinbergs: “[The hippie idea] emerged from the protest against the regulated Soviet life. We were young. All you need is love. There was no ideology. I guess we were basically united by sexuality and wine, and so on” (Grinbergs 2011: 254).
into live human beings, containing more than you see on an everyday basis” (Grinbergs 1992: 2).

The hippie movement in Latvia existed – at least in the beginning – without any canons or ideology, and as it is stated by the former members of this subculture: “There was curiosity and joy about this opportunity – to live one’s life differently. An opportunity to wear flamboyant clothes, walk barefoot in the streets of the city, gather at the Dome Square, sing *All you need is love*” (Borgs 1989: 9, 10). The ideas that were interwoven in the hippie subculture in the West and mainly in the USA, such as sexual liberation and opposition to nuclear weapons, resonated in Latvian hippie movement, too. For example, Grinbergs in one of the interviews in 1992 admits that “at that time there were all those instabilities with the atomic bomb, and it seemed that you lived for one day, perhaps there was no tomorrow and you had to live to the maximum” (Grinbergs 1992: 2). 37 Whereas in regard to sexual revolution Grinbergs states that nudity was a form of protest against the prevailing puritanical attitudes:

> “Sexual revolution wasn’t only self-gratification. Its essence was manifested in the protest against the system, when you didn’t belong to yourself, all your thoughts were regulated, and the only [thing] that you had was your body – you could do with it anything that you wanted” (Grinbergs 1999: 22-23).

**1.3.2. The everyday performance**

Riga in the 1970s was “a mecca for the Soviet youth counterculture” (Svede 2004: 232), which included poets, writers, artists, theatre and film enthusiasts, hippies, etc. They were a “colorful and freethinking generation, who was in search of new artistic language” (Traumane 2010: 34). To escape the dullness of the regulated and politicised Soviet everyday life, the creative youth gathered in cafes (*Kaza* or Goat being the most famous one), where they could socialize and discuss the films that they had seen or the books that they had read: “Reading saved us from the dull reality behind the door of

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37 In fact, the atomic bomb played a significant role in the emergence of body art in Japan, the USA, and elsewhere in Europe, too. The only difference is that it happened 20 years earlier than in Latvia. As noted by Kristine Stiles: “[...] the body as material in art after 1950 was deeply tied to the need to assert the primacy of human subjects over inanimate objects, and was a response to the threatened ontological condition of life itself in the aftermath of the Holocaust and the advent of the atomic age” (Stiles 1998: 228).

For the Soviet counterculture, it was essential to confront the homogenous masses of proletariat, even if it was merely manifested through fashion and provocative looks. Grinbergs championed individualism and eccentricity, for example, strolling on the most central street in Riga dressed in the clothes that he had designed. As Grinbergs notes:

“Brīvības Street used to be a promenade – people would go there to show themselves and observe others. In the evenings, I would go by tram to the marketplace on Maţisa Street, walk down to the Laima clock, stroll around for some time and return home, because there was nothing else to do” (Grinbergs 2011: 250).

Although from today’s point of view such provocative everyday manifestations might seem trivial and unimportant, in Riga in the 1970s it required a certain degree of courage to exhibit these manifestations of Western decadence and to differ from the mainstream proletarian population due to the involved risk of being arrested:

“The strolls along Brīvības Street looked like this: you would get to the city-centre, change clothes in the getaway, stride for a while and off you would go. It wasn’t like you could loiter all day long – the militia could arrest you, someone might not have liked your long hair” (Grinbergs 2011: 251).

As indicated by Latvian art historian Māra Traumane, “these poetic games of dressing, undressing, strolling and photographing acquire importance because through them the body and clothing transformed into a ‘battlefield’ between individual freedoms and social norms” (Traumane 2010: 35).

Yet, Grinbergs’s provocative strolling in the city can also be considered a form of flânerie and autobiographic ethnography. Grinbergs not only wanted to be seen, he also wanted to acquire “empirical data by being there, by strolling, looking, hearing, smelling, feeling” (Milburn 2014: 326). In this context, Grinbergs can be seen as “the flâneur, whose aimless strolling is elevated to an art form” (Coverley 2006: 57), whereas the city of Riga – “the site for political and aesthetic improvisation” (Coverley 2006: 59). Through Grinbergs’s act of walking, Riga becomes emblematic of the city as the Panopticon – the prison building designed by the English philosopher and social
theorist Jeremy Bentham in the late 18th century, which was later used by Michel Foucault as a metaphor for ‘disciplinary’ societies and their pervasive inclination to observe and normalize “by means of an omnipresent and omniscient power that subdivides itself in a regular, uninterrupted way even to the ultimate determination of the individual, of what characterizes him, of what belongs to him, of what happens to him” (Foucault 1975: 197). In this disciplinary and self-controlling mechanism, it was challenging to stand out from the crowds and deviate from the norm and normality. The act of flânerie – aimless strolling – in itself would be seen as a ‘parasitic lifestyle’ in the Soviet context, therefore Grinbergs, indeed, risked of being caught and subjected to repressive mechanisms of the USSR.

1.3.3. Happenings and performances

The hippie lifestyle got interrupted, when Grinbergs was recruited into the Soviet army. He was serving in Ukraine, close to the border of Romania. Eventually he managed to find a position as a tailor and was sewing and mending uniforms for the officers. When he returned home after his service time, Grinbergs states that he “wasn’t familiar with any art to the extent that he could create something” (Grinbergs 2011: 253). Yet, he met his future wife Inta Jaunzeme (b. 1955), a talented violinist and a model, and, according to Grinbergs, this was the time he started staging happenings, because there was “a specific mental and physical state when something can appear from nothing” (Grinbergs 2011: 256).

It is crucial that at this time Grinbergs joined the artists’ collective entitled the Office Group (1971-1974), which was founded by the graduates of the People’s Film Actors Studio: Juris Civjans, Rūta Broka, Gita Skanstiņa, Ivars Skanstiņš, Vija Zariņa. It was during the period of the Office Group, when Grinbergs organized the first staged happening The Wedding of Jesus Christ (1972) (see Fig. 4-8, pp. 5-6 in the Visual

38 Inta became a regular participant and often she was one of the central characters in these performances, yet Grinbergs never mentions Inta as the co-author.
39 The Office Group is discussed as an example of network, whose members based their creative practice on intermediality in subchapter 3.3.1.
40 The People’s Film Actors Studio was established in 1965. Materials on the Office Group and interviews with the respective artists have been carried out by art historian Vilnis Vējs. These materials have not been published and are kept at the archive of the Contemporary Art Centre in Riga.
Grinbergs, his wife, friends and photographers went to the Carnikava beach (25 km from Riga), where they engaged in an improvised wedding ritual (Skanstīņš states that the ritualistic form was borrowed from the rehearsals of the Office Group (Skanstīņš 2010: 203)). Although there is an earlier record of another Grinbergs’s happening Romeo and Juliet (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 on p. 4 in the Visual Supplement) in 1969, Grinbergs states that it was too spontaneous and improvisational, whereas The Wedding of Jesus Christ was staged and more structured (Grinbergs 2011: 128). Indeed, there were a lot of organisational and preparatory works before the happening, as attested by various props such as antique crockery, wine, candles, the metal bed, as well as costumes and various accessories such as crowns of roses and necklaces of rowans made in advance. Besides, among musicians, writers and theatre-related people, Grinbergs also invited photographers Atis Ieviņš and Māra Brašmane to document the two-day event. Grinbergs remembers:

“Everything happened in the middle of a forest. We had costumes made of linen – like in a painting by Botticelli. I got the antique bed from Mudīte [Gaiševska]. Ināra Podkalne played the violin. Eižens [Valpēters] had a shirt of a catholic clergyman. Sandrs Rīga gave the ceremonial speech…” (Grinbergs 2010: 133).

The Wedding of Jesus Christ was implemented as a non-traditional wedding of Grinbergs and Inta Jaunzeme, who “assumed the personae of Christ and Mary Magdalene” (Svede 1994), whereas the title was borrowed from the rock opera Jesus Christ Superstar, thus making the performance “more contemporary” (Grinbergs 2011: 255). According to Grinbergs, the title did not have any religious implications, because he was against religion as a dogma and violence against human free spirit, thus the iconic image of Christ served as a mere decoration (Grinbergs 2011: 255). However, the act of appropriation manifested through allegorical application of the religious

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42 There were other happenings and performances that Grinbergs implemented all in the 1970s and their titles indicate of intermedial references pointing to the source of inspiration. These are also instances of appropriation: Romeo and Juliet (1969) references Franco Zeffirelli’s one-year earlier film; Wedding of Jesus Christ (1972) – the rock-opera and album Jesus Christ Superstar; Elvira Madigan (1971) – Bo
icon and, in fact, the denigration of the symbolic value could be found blasphemous in Christian contexts and anti-ideological in atheist contexts. As Svede points out: “The Wedding of Jesus Christ was successful on a number of levels: religion made into modern spectacle within the atheistic state [...] and religion made apocryphal through joyful eroticization” (Svede 1994). Moreover, this performance and the resulting accompanying images also place Grinbergs in the history of mediatized performance art, since the image of Christ was appropriated as early as 1898, when American photographer Fred Holland Day presented himself as Christ in a photographed performance The Seven Words. Such games of representation within the photographic medium acknowledge the symbiotic relationship between photography and performance resulting in intermediality, as well as emphasize the subversion, re-invention and innovation that are integral components of appropriation in the artistic discourse.

Often describing his works as ‘living art’, Grinbergs has consistently rejected the distinction between art and quotidian existence, and from the outset he merged these traditionally separate realms (Svede 1994). Art historian Ieva Astahovska refers to this strategy as “existence in-between” – a space, which is modelled between life and art (Astahovska 2010: 245). Grinbergs refers to this extraordinary cohesion of artistic product and life process as lifestyle. Art produced as a result of such a lifestyle was not commissioned or displayed in institutionalized space, thus it was free from any ideological strictures, taboos and dogmas. It must also be noted that the idea of ‘living art’ was echoed in Grinbergs’s happenings that were connected with the real life events of Inta and Andris Grinbergs, for example, marriage, pregnancy or birth of a child resulting in such happenings as The Green Wedding (1973; Fig. 18-27, pp. 9-12 in the Visual Supplement), Creation (1973; Fig. 16, 17, p. 9 in the Visual Supplement), Easter (1975; Fig. 34, p. 15 in the Visual Supplement) and Birth (1976). Thus, intuitively, Grinbergs was following the principle of elimination of boundaries between art and life as advocated by American happening artists such as Allan Kaprow (1927-2006) or John Cage (1912-1992) viewing “everyday life itself as theatre” (Cage 1995:

This type of autobiographical performance aka living art highlights the performance of self rather than the representation of another person. Indeed, this type of performance has even been termed ‘non-acting’, as it appears to work against a masking role and to communicate with the audience (participants) in a direct manner:

“Non-acting can be understood as functioning in the tradition of the modernist avant-garde in that it is not a mimetic practice that seeks to represent a fictional character, but a reframing of reality that seeks to blur the boundaries of art and life. Furthermore, non-acting can be viewed as a performative practice that frames the everyday in a manner which reflects upon the constitution of identity itself” (Govan et al 2007: 59-60).

In The Green Wedding (1973; with the alternative title Summertime) the balance between private and public was further questioned. The green colour was the leading motif in this happening: there were green clothes for Grinbergs and his wife, and a green cab that took them from the Old Riga to the greenery in the countryside. This happening started as a post-nuptial procession through the streets of Old Riga following the official wedding ceremony of the Grinbergs couple at the State Registry Office and ended in the countryside were the panoptic sight of the KGB could be avoided and Grinbergs’s performative manifestations of sexuality and body identity could be implemented. As Grinbergs characterizes, the setting of this happening was “very romantic and hippie – the horses, swings, grass wreath, naked bodies” (Grinbergs 2011: 255).

Nudity, a self-evident norm and a form of liberation in all happenings of Grinbergs, was a prominent element of creation, too, since the totalitarian body of Homo Sovieticus needed to be freed from all the restrictions and ideological burdens. To the

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44 As indicated by Russian sociologist Lev Gudkov, “the concept ‘New Man’ or ‘Soviet Man’ appeared in the 1920s and 1930s as a postromantic version of the subject of historical changes” (Gudkov 2008: 13). The socialist society had to be built as an optimistic, classless society by the new human species – Homo Sovieticus – the positive hero that the Soviet system was supposed to produce as a result of indoctrination, collectivization, repression and social control. This new man was a significant model for mass orientations and identities. The new human type, had to be
Nudity, inspired by the hippie movement’s alternative lifestyle, was also a form of protest against prevailing puritanical attitudes: “Sexual revolution ... was a protest against the system. If you didn’t belong to yourself, all your thoughts were regulated, and the only [thing] that you had was your body – with it you could do anything you wanted” (Grinbergs 1999: 22-23). Grinbergs states that he was interested in the body in all its manifestations and as both flesh and soul and as a matrix for one’s identity:

“I find people interesting. I don’t have a typical Latvian temperament. It was interesting for me to live and understand who I am. As to the naked body, it was not like things that can be seen in magazines today. At that time the body was not a commodity yet. For us [being naked] was a liberation. They can take everything away from you, but the body belongs only to you” (Grinbergs 2011: 257).

Consequently, the combination of collective actions involving ‘indecent’, irrational behaviour and nudity, explorations of shifting and changing identity in hybrid non-ideological projects, as well as references to the Bible and Western culture was something that could only be implemented in the second public sphere – uncontrolled by the KGB’s panoptic sight and uninhabited by the Homo Sovieticus.

With his liminal sexual identity which floated between heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual trajectories, Grinbergs risked to violate the criteria of Homo Sovieticus. Therefore, his performance venues had to be transferred to a depoliticized space distanced from the Soviet reality: on Carnikava beach, in Mazirbe boat junkyard, in his own apartment. These geographically and culturally peripheral locations were partly healthy, athletic, heterosexual, optimistic, selfless, diligent and patriotic (having a Soviet, rather than a national identity). However, according to Gudkov, Levada and other contemporary Russian researchers, the Soviet system did shape a new category of human being, but this new human type was a mass, very average type, someone who had passively adapted to the existing social order by lowering the threshold or his level of needs and demands; the Homo Sovieticus was the “ordinary” man with intellectual, ethical and symbolic limitations, who knew no other models and ways of life, because he had to live under conditions of an isolated and repressed society (Gudkov 2010: 61). The Homo Sovieticus was morally and intellectually paralyzed.

Grinbergs is characterised by his contemporaries as a person with great people and communication skills, with a healthy self-esteem and brilliant organisational and management skills. He never suffered from any insecurities and did not exhibit any lack of self-confidence. He has also been criticised as someone who is difficult to work with due to self-righteousness, ego problems and overly exposed narcissism.
necessary to avoid legal repercussions, because in the Latvian SSR homosexuality was criminalized imposing a penalty for up to 5 years in prison. Moreover, the power structures could use the evidence of homosexuality to force the respective individuals to cooperate with the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR’s Committee for State Security (the KGB) (Lipša 2017).

Though Grinbergs was interrogated by the KGB in regards to his film *Self-Portrait* (1972), it did not stop him from pursuing performance art. In fact, many performances were carried out in Riga, under the nose of the Communist Party functionaries or the so-called *apparatchiks*. Such was, for example, the happening *The Old House* organized in 1977, which Svede refers to as the “structurally most complex work” by Grinbergs (Svede 1994). The happening took place in a soon-to-be-demolished building on Kirova Street in Riga and was intended as a leaving party, since it used to be home for one of the participants Māra Zirnīte. There were many participants, including the theatre director Māra Ķimele and painters Anita Kreituse and Laima Eglīte. Each of the participants was treated as a guest director and instructed to select a location or space within the dilapidated structure to implement a vision of their identity. Everyone was free to use any other participant or attribute or piece of interior and “over the course of six hours, they acted out their feelings spontaneously, incorporating dance, music, dramatic vignettes, poetry and monologues” (Svede 1994). With this happening Grinbergs attempted to create a group portrait, where all participants experienced the intimacy of shared space and by choosing a partner engaged in mutual relationships: passionate, physical, in movement or stasis, etc. (Grinbergs 2016). It was also Grinbergs’s vision of inhabitants who might have lived here before.

*The Old House* can be regarded an example of site-specific art, where all the activities were realized in an unconventional or ‘non-art’ context. According to Katalin Cseh, such “alternative, unofficial spaces [were] an essential precondition of the nonconformist art’s existence” (Cseh 2013: 1). Through emphasizing the environment and integrating the surroundings in the performance as an integral part of it, Grinbergs

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46 It can only be guessed whether the fact of Grinbergs’s (homo)sexuality was used as a repressive instrument in 1984, when Grinbergs was recruited as a KGB agent under a pseudonym ‘Peteris Petersons’ (see his agent’s file on p. 62 in the Visual Supplement).

questioned the limits of the artwork, as well as the interaction between the performers and audiences. Interestingly, for Kaprow, too, performance provided a means through which the geography and events of ‘found’ sites could be approached outside the representational terms of painting and sculpture (Kaye 2000: 105). Consequently, happenings and performances reflected on relationships between practice and place, and so work and site, facilitating fluid exchanges between the frame of an artwork and its various contexts (Kaye 2000: 105). Besides, in his seminal essay *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings* (1966) Kaprow claimed that “audiences should be eliminated entirely” (Kaprow 1995: 201) and supported the idea that all elements – people, space, the particular materials, character of the environment and time – should be integrated in performance: “A group of inactive people in the space of a Happening is just dead space” (Kaprow 1995: 201).

It must be mentioned that Grinbergs had an opportunity to exhibit his art and present himself as a Latvian performance artist in West Berlin in 1988, when the exhibition *Riga – Lettische Avantgarde* was organized. Grinbergs emphasizes that he felt a need to be ‘Western’ and to transform Homo Sovieticus into ‘somebody’: “In order for me, a Soviet person, ‘the perfect nobody’, to blend with the city, I went to a flea market, did some shopping, sewed hundreds of brooches to the jacket’s flap, bought white gloves and went to the most popular West Berlin hairdresser to have my hair styled à la Led Zeppelin” (Grinbergs 2001: 260).

In this aspect it is worth mentioning an article that the local art historian Borgs wrote in the magazine *Māksla* (Art) in 1989. According to Borgs, Grinbergs manifested himself in West Berlin as “the most exotic bird” from Latvia and the headings of German newspapers referred to Grinbergs as the “king of Riga’s hippies” (Borgs 1989: 9-10). Within the exhibition Grinbergs showed hundreds of photographs documenting hippies in Latvia in the 1960s and 1970s. Borgs also notes the negative attitude hippies had to experience during the stagnation years: “This part of youth was one of the most depressed social groups, it was viewed with hostility as a crowd of backsliders and parasites, who infect our crystal-clear society with a foreign ideology and overshadow the sunny building process [of communism]” (Borgs 1989: 9-10). Borgs praises Grinbergs as being in ‘his own element’, claiming that “finally, what had to happen twenty years ago, has happened, has been said and has been showed” (Borgs 1989: 9-10). Borgs also operates with the terminology of unofficial art, admitting that: “It is good that this idea has been expressed also by these people [like Grinbergs], from
’underground’, from ‘behind the stove’, always ‘unofficial’, denied and yet unbroken in their faith” (Borgs 1989: 9-10).

1.3.4. Gender performance: Andris Grinbergs versus Andy Warhol

According to Amy Bryzgel, performance art in the former Soviet countries was used by the artists “to address current and relevant social issues – for example, to perform identity, appearance, or gender” (Bryzgel 2013: 223). Gender performance is an interesting aspect in Grinbergs’s oeuvre as an artist. Since his sexuality has always been in flux roaming among the heterosexual, bisexual and homosexual trajectories, his queer identity constructed and manifested through fashion and style provides fertile ground for further research.

It must be noted that heterosexuality was regarded as the only ‘correct’ sexuality in the Soviet State. As stated by Latvian historian Ineta Lipša, from the so-called Soviet Baltic Republics – the Latvian SSR, the Estonian SSR and the Lithuanian SSR – in the Latvian SSR sodomy was criminalized imposing a penalty for up to 5 years in prison, whereas in the Lithuanian SSR it was up to 3 years and in the Estonian SSR – up to 2 years. According to the resolutions and decrees of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, there were different measures taken by the Latvian SSR to combat the venereal diseases and an amoral and parasitic lifestyle. As an instrument of social control, the Ministry of Health Protection and the Ministry of Interior in the Latvian SSR had set up and maintained two filing systems to keep the records of homosexuals. The records in these filing systems continuously endangered the registered homosexuals, since the officials of the state security structures could use them in order to force certain individuals to cooperate with the Committee for State Security of the Council of Ministers of the Latvian SSR (the KGB) (Lipša 2017). The atmosphere of fear and paranoia resulted in many people of the LGBT community leading a double life – the official one and the private one – since they had to adapt to the given social reality to avoid repressions. Therefore, Grinbergs had to experience especially challenging situation both in terms of creating ‘illegal art’ and belonging to an illegal sexual minority.

To highlight the gender performance, it is productive to compare Grinbergs with Andy Warhol, who played a major role in Grinbergs’s life and creative work as an idol, role model, gay artist and a proof of living art. For Grinbergs, Warhol provided an imaginative escape into a better life. It can be said that Warhol to Grinbergs was the
same as Shirley Temple to Warhol. If this equation sounds too obscure, a little episode from Warhol’s childhood might help. When Warhol was only eight years old, he suffered from disorder of the central nervous system - St. Vitus Dance. As a result, the illness left him with large reddish-brown blotches on his face and upper body that periodically plagued him for a number of years (Collins 2001: 67). The physical appearance and bullying at school laid the grounds for his life-long insecurity and even self-hatred. It was during this illness that Warhol began to collect movie magazines and stills. Hollywood stars such as Shirley Temple, his favourite, provided him an imaginative escape into a better life, and the material for erecting a compensative, idealized self (Collins 2001: 68). For Grinbergs, in his turn, it was Warhol who provided an equally imaginative escape into a better life. Through the mythical persona of Warhol as a commercially successful artist and a gay man, Grinbergs could also project an idealized self and a dream that he could not materialize in the prevailing conditions in the East – namely, the non-existence of the art market and the strictures of the state-ideological apparatus.

One of the aspects that unite both artists is the eccentric self-dramatization and even construction of identity manifested through style and fashion. Indeed, through their, perhaps, what some scholars would deem as frivolous preoccupation with looks, they both can be characterized as dandies of their time. It must be noted, though, that in Warhol’s case the issue of personal transformation implemented through plastic surgeries, bodybuilding, constant wearing of wigs and cosmetics revealed his very low self-esteem, inferiority complex and continuous attempts to reinvent himself as somebody more handsome and attractive. Grinbergs, on the other hand, never suffered from such insecurities and lack of self-confidence, however dandyism is one of the common aspects between both. In one of the interviews Grinbergs mentions it and refers to Oscar Wilde and Andy Warhol as his idols:

“I was interested in Oscar Wilde – not as a gay person or writer, but as a dandy. I was curious about Andy Warhol as a visual image and gay person. I copied them! I didn’t know anything about Wilde at that time, but I was interested in his aristocratic style as opposed to the cult of proletariat that was present here” (Grinbergs 2011: 258).

Already from their youth, both have championed individualism and loved standing out from the crowds. Warhol, for example, during his last two years at college, in 1948 and
1949, lacquered his fingernails in a different colour almost every day and once even dyed his hair green. In 1954, when he was working in New York as a graphic artist, he liked to create a stir by doing things like slashing his expensive suits with a razor and spattering them with paint (Butin 2008: 50). As indicated by Hubertus Butin, with these performative acts, not only Warhol created a distinctly unusual look, he also specifically and demonstratively drew attention to his homosexuality and lived his public life as though he were a character in a play (Butin 2008: 50).

On the other side of the Iron Curtain, Grinbergs, too, manifested his eccentricity as the flagman of the hippie subculture in Latvia in the 1960s. He especially enjoyed practicing his fashion designer’s ideas and skills on his hippie friends. Grinbergs openly admits that he admired and copied Warhol, but by emphasizing this statement Grinbergs’s oeuvre should not be diminished or undermined in any manner, especially in the queer context. The copycat qualities were only manifested as similar gestures that Grinbergs tried to replicate or embody as an homage to Warhol. One of such gestures, for example, was exhibited as a Duchampian strategy of the ‘found people’.48

If in Warhol’s films there were no stars and the cast consisting of his friends or acquaintances played themselves, in Grinbergs’s case he addressed random people on the streets asking to participate in his happenings that often took place in his apartment at Ėnijas street 5/1. By inviting these accidentally met people to embody a different character or to adopt a different identity, Grinbergs offered them to feel like a star, thus also appropriating the famous expression ‘15 minutes of fame’ credited to Warhol in 1968.

Furthermore, with the open door policy that was also characteristic to Warhol’s studio “famously dubbed ‘the Factory’, set up as an open playground of subcultural denizens, mass-cultural divas, and ‘superstars’ of his own making somewhere in between” (Foster 2008: 105), Grinbergs, too, was trying to imitate the creative and often wild party atmosphere, where artists, poets, writers and alike could mingle. This approach in both cases located Warhol and Grinbergs in the middle of subculture or even counterculture, as Grinbergs was the flagman of the Soviet hippies in Latvia and Warhol was surrounded by, as he states, outcasts and “odds-and-ends misfits, somehow misfitting together” (Warhol 1980: 276). As Catherine Russel points out, “in

48 “I only wanted to find great people and let them be themselves and talk about what they usually talked about and I’d film them for a certain length of time and that would be the movie” (Warhol 1980: 139).
the renewed interest in Warhol’s queer aesthetics, he emerges as an ethnographer of a particular subculture – one that was obsessed with exhibitionism, stardom, and theatricality” (Russel 1999: 170).

In the 1990s and early 2000s, Grinbergs contributed to newspaper columns *The Emperor of Fashion* (Modes imperators, from 1991-1995), as well as *Grinbergs Lives* (Grinbergs dzīvo), *The Lives of Celebrities* (Slavenību dzīve) and *Grinbergs’s Diary* in newspaper *Vakara Ziņas* (around the 2000s). It can be seen as an attempt to mimic Warhol’s magazine *Interview*, which was, in fact, a gossip magazine, running “utterly superficial articles with the emphasis on fashion and lifestyle, luxury and glamour, embellished with more or less indiscreet snapshots of the rich and famous” (Butin 2008: 55) and also served “as a vehicle for Warhol’s calculated self-promotion”, affirming “his social progress to the heights of major celebrity” (Butin 2008: 55).

Surely, if Warhol constantly worked on his ‘Andy Warhol’s myth project’ employing quite aggressive branding strategies and mass media, Grinbergs did not achieve – and did not even try to achieve - the same cult figure status in the post-Soviet society. However, Grinbergs tried to copy Warhol’s outer appearances, sporting the same hairstyle as Warhol and trying to look like the glamorous, mythical cult figure he adored.

Even in terms of women, Grinbergs and Warhol had similar attitudes. If for Warhol it was Edie Sedgwick as a ‘female doppelgänger’, whose ambiguity as both femme and boyish toyed with gender (Foster 2008: 108), for Grinbergs it was his life-long partner, now ex-wife, Inta Grinberga, whom Grinbergs quotes as his muse, playing as significant role as “Monica Vitti to Michelangelo Antonioni, Giulietta Masina to Federico Fellini, Yoko Ono to John Lennon and Gala to Salvador Dali” (Grinbergs 2012). American cultural critic and professor of City University of New York Wayne Koestenbaum refers to this kind of a relationship as ‘twinship’ and a ‘homoerotics of repetition and cloning’. However, he also accentuates that it might be seen as “a play with all kinds of likenesses that are only similar enough to be subversively other” (Koestenbaum 1993). In Grinbergs’s case, though, it is questionable whether the legitimate form of kinship ascertained in a heterosexual marriage was not a form of gender performance, in order to adapt to the homophobic Soviet rule.49

49 Grinbergs talks openly on his sexuality and queerness only in the interviews after 1992.
Finally, another common aspect between both is the desire to collect. Warhol was known as a keen and even obsessive collector. He constantly scoured auction houses, antique stores, and particularly flea markets for new treasures to add to his many collections. Warhol collected Fiesta ware, World's Fair memorabilia, Art Deco silver, Native American objects and folk art. He often acquired large collections as well - Hollywood publicity stills, crime scene photographs and dental molds. In the spring of 1988, Sotheby’s Auction House sold 10 000 items from Warhol’s art collection. However, Warhol’s largest collecting project consisted of 610 cardboard boxes called *Time Capsules* accumulated over the last 13 years of his life, which consisted of daily newspapers, plane tickets, gifts, souvenirs, photographs, etc.

All of these activities reflected Warhol’s interest in Pop Art and his inspiration: consumer culture. However, they can also be read as queer archival impulse. By accumulating collections, which consequently serve as a basis for archive, queer artists can produce alternative narratives and counter-archives, producing knowledge in Foucauldian manner. As Michel Lobel states:

“In the collection objects are accumulated, ordered, and narrativized into a coherent whole, an activity that echoes the attempt to construct a stable unity out of the heterogeneous elements. [It is] a sort of playspace of the artist’s mind, a space of privacy and retreat” (Lobel 1996: 46).

Furthermore, Koestenbaum proposes through reading Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray* that collecting is, indeed, queer activity:

“Collecting is a code for homosexual activity and identity […] – the collector who, like the libertine, has no family, no social ties, no loyalties, no interior. It’s not clear whether Oscar Wilde’s Dorian Gray obsessively collects exotic musical instruments, jewels, perfumes, embroideries, and ecclesiastical vestments because he’s gay, or whether Wilde tells us about collection because he can’t mention homosexuality” (Koestenbaum 1993: 62).

However, collection can be manifested not only through objects, but also through collecting the stories of one’s life and the desire to turn one’s life into a document. This necessity for documentation is characteristic to both Grinbergs and Warhol, as they produced numerous photographs to document their lives and work. They also made films, and though Warhol was more prolific due to economic reasons – he made eighteen films from 1963 to 1964, and twenty-six in 1965 (Koestenbaum 1993: 170) -
and in Grinbergs’s account there are only three, their commitment to these forms of
documentation show how important it was for them. If we prefer to interpret it from a
psychoanalytic point of view, such a necessity can be read as a latent need for a
sensation of belonging to a group and a self-protected mechanism against a
homophobic world. For example, sociologist Pierre Bourdieu draws attention to
photography’s performativity. He argues that it creates the family unit it depicts,
gathering the group together to be preserved forever in the family snapshot, whatever
the rifts that precede and succeed it. “Photography itself,” he asserts, “is most
frequently nothing but the reproduction of the image that a group produces of its own
integration” (Tyler 1997: 123).

Queer content in the works of art, especially manifested as a homosexual desire, was
problematic for Warhol, as he had to struggle against the prejudice and stereotypes of
the Western homophobic society in general and art world in particular. This fact can be
illustrated with the subjects he chose for his artwork, as they carried not only public
meanings, but also subcultural connotations as well, which he neither expected nor
wished the general public to discern. According to Bradford Collins,

> “Warhol’s images of Marlon Brando as motorcyclist and Elvis Presley as
gunslinger, for example, carried two meanings, one of which was unavailable
to heterosexuals. Because the ‘macho’ cyclist and the cowboy with gun and
holster were standard characters in gay erotica at the time, Warhol knew that
readers of such materials would see in his works both an homage to Hollywood
and its star system and objects of desire” (Collins 2001: 54).

However, given that homosexuality was decriminalized in Latvia only in 1992, queer
content in the works of art was even more hazardous for Grinbergs. Although most of
Grinbergs’s performances have been documented in photography by a dozen of
Latvian photographers, he also produced a film under quite a Warholian title Self-
Portrait (1972). Since it contains open homosexuality and bisexuality scenes,
Grinbergs was subjecting himself to a huge threat. As indicated by art historian Mark
Allen Svede: “The risks that Soviet artists faced if they dared to express affirmative
homosexual content were horrific, including incarceration in a psychiatric prison or a
staged ‘suicide’ at the hands of KGB agents” (Svede 2002). When the film was
restored in 1996 and premiered at Anthology Film Archives in New York, filmmaker
and independent film authority Jonas Mekas proclaimed Self-Portrait (1972) as “one of
the five most sexually transgressive films ever made” (Svede 2002). Svede emphasizes that Mekas’s judgment is all the more impressive in light of his own arrest record for screening landmarks of queer cinema in the mid-1960s. According to Svede, Self-Portrait must be placed in the company of films by Warhol, Kenneth Anger, Jean Genet, and Jack Smith (Svede 2002).

As regards the differences between both artists, there is one crucial aspect that needs to be taken into account. To Warhol the question of identity, and especially that of gender identity, was one of the central subjects in his oeuvre. With his films The Chelsea Girls (1966) and the Paul Morrissey-directed trilogy of Flesh (1968), Trash (1970) and Heat (1972), as well as with his management of The Velvet Underground, the content of the band’s songs, and its performances Warhol positioned himself at the forefront of cross-dressing, in which gender identity was “conceived as an impersonation, a role, a put-on” (Blessing 1997: 70). Moreover, in 1981 Warhol appeared as a woman in a photograph Altered Image taken by Christopher Makos. In this image Warhol is seen as wearing a wig and having a make-up, namely drag attributes, and it is a homage to Marcel Duchamp, who also was photographed in drag and under a different (female) identity as Rrose Sélavy by Man Ray in the 1920s.

According to Jennifer Blessing, there can be several explanations for Warhol’s self-presentation as a woman or in the role of a woman. One of them was the manifestation of delight in high camp. The definition of camp was provided by Susan Sontag in her well-known essay Notes on Camp (1964), where she stated that camp is “Being-as-Playing-a-Role. It is the farthest extension, in sensibility, of the metaphor of life as theater” (Sontag 1964: 4). In her list of camp’s features, Sontag also states that “the most refined form of sexual attractiveness [...] consists in going against the grain of one’s sex. What is most beautiful in virile men is something feminine; what is most beautiful in feminine women is something masculine” (Sontag 1964: 4). Thus, camp through the image of dandysome provocateur\(^50\) posed some challenge to traditional masculinity by laughing at the masculine image and ridiculing strict patriarchal roles. According to Blessing, this “challenge was significantly informed by camp’s relationship with flamboyant male homosexuality” (Blessing 1997: 70). Another reason for the campy female impersonator in Warhol’s case was not so much an artistic expression, as a political act, which must be seen in the context of the

\(^{50}\) Very vividly manifested in glitter rock, which Warhol influenced.
contemporaneous gay liberation movement and especially the Stonewall Riots in 1969. Blessing emphasizes that in the 1960s and 1970s “female impersonation was against the law in some American cities, presumably because it was perceived as the domain of homosexuals” (Blessing 1997: 71), thus such gay-identified performances can also be seen as deliberate political acts.

Grinbergs, on the other hand, never recognized cross-dressing as a strategic decision in art. In his heavily documented performances, he often appears naked before the camera, but never dressed as a woman. There was, however, one regular participant in his happenings – the artist Eižens Valpēters (b. 1943), who can be credited as the first performer of cross-dressing in Latvia. There are only two photographs from the performance entitled *The Old House* (1977) taken by photographer Māra Brašmane, where Valpēters can be seen wearing a woman’s dress. In an interview with the author of this doctoral dissertation, Valpēters admits that, perhaps, it was some kind of subconscious act, when he decided to impersonate a female, because in his childhood he was once dressed as a girl in a carnival impersonating a popular girl character in opera at the time. Valpēters states that his cross-dressing performance was not in any way strategic or political and should be seen in light of carnivalistic masquerading (Valpēters 2015). However, the visibility of alternate gender presentations in Latvian photographic culture should not be undermined, especially in the context of Soviet rule and the fact that, similarly to the USA in the 1960s and 1970s, such female impersonation acts would be difficult to explain as ‘art’ to the law enforcement agents.

Despite the difference in gender aspect present or missing in the oeuvre of Warhol and Grinbergs respectively, both artists in their eagerness to work with new media at the time – photography and film – have employed quite similar strategies in creating works of art in the sense that the notion of an artist as a skilled producer is replaced with the artist as a consumer of new picture-making gadgets (Wall 1995: 42). Grinbergs claims that he started to photograph his performances as his ‘unrealized paintings’: “I could not draw well to express myself, write well or express myself well in music, yet I had ideas” (Grinbergs 1992: 2). Thus, it was more the question of organizing and managing all the stages of the processual art – or creating the necessary environment –, inviting the photographers and participants, finding the venue and accessories, setting the time, etc., as opposed to creating a work of art on his own in a studio manifesting exquisite craft skills, for example, in painting. Warhol, too, with his silk-screened images that reiterated or appropriated photo-journalism and a team of assistants around him
exhibited similar gestures, claiming that “picture-making skills were of minor importance in making significant pictorial art” (Wall 1995: 41). In this strategic choice, Warhol was, of course, following the ideas of Pop art, depicting empty, banal images and dropping all the aspects that “had been known in modern art as seriousness, expertise, and reflexiveness” (Wall 1995: 41). Consequently, it can be stated that art as a project and team-work is what characterizes Warhol’s and Grinbergs’s works best.

As regards queer aesthetics, both Warhol and Grinbergs succeeded in creating self-portraits, which require close and informed reading to peel the visible surface off layer-by-layer hoping to find the ‘real’ Andy or Andris. They both raise not only the question of identity construction, reminding that ‘the self’ is a discursive construct, but also the question of ‘doubleness’, which can be interpreted in multiple ways. It can imply the dichotomy of the public versus the real or the authentic, which in Grinbergs’s case could be the role of an obedient and conformist Soviet citizen, on the one hand, and the role of a non-conformist artist expressing himself in happenings, on the other. In terms of gender identity, it could also be a heterosexual Soviet citizen, on the one hand, and a queer artist, on the other. In one of the interviews Grinbergs also mentions this dramatic aspect of doubleness in his life and art: “Of course, I have often thought that the entire life is a theatre and all that we get depends on how good we play our roles. Where is that place where one can be real? This double life continues endlessly” (Grinbergs 1992: 2).

Thus, it can be suggested that for Grinbergs the second public sphere provided a certain asylum, which allowed him to avoid the distortion of his personality and identity, or even to prevent legal consequences and imprisonment not meeting the discriminatory ideals of the Homo Sovieticus. Performance art provided time and space, where Grinbergs could feel ‘authentic’ and ‘autonomous’ as an artist. He has repeatedly emphasised that he has always preferred the life of an outsider as opposed to being part of the Soviet art system, creating commissioned and conformist artwork and exhibiting it in the official museum or gallery space. This strategy also helped him to avoid the internalization of Soviet values, which were epitomised by the ideological construction of Homo Sovieticus.

51 Wall reminds that “the empty, the counterfeit, the functional, and the brutal” were noting new as art in 1960, as they were all tropes of avant-garde entering the art scene via Surrealism (Wall 1995: 41).
1.3.5. Andris Grinbergs in comparison to other performance artists in Central and Eastern Europe in the period of late socialism

According to Amy Bryzgel “the earliest performative activities witnessed in Eastern Europe occurred in the 1950s and 1960s, concurrent with those in Western Europe and North America” (Bryzgel 2017: 14). Although it is possible to find a common denominator for the practices of performance art in the region, these practices were heterogeneous and not uniform. According to Bryzgel and Pavlina Morganova, “performance art in East-Central Europe developed quite individually in each country, despite many networks and connections, including Fluxus, which came into the region largely because of the desire of its leader George Maciunas (of Lithuanian origin himself), to penetrate beyond the Iron Curtain” (Bryzgel, Morganova 2014: 14). Performance art in this region was not officially recognized as a legitimate art form and it developed on the outskirts of the official culture – in the second public sphere. Yet, similarly to Andris Grinbergs, this marginal position in the periphery was favored by artists as “their oasis of freedom, the only space which allowed the development of artists’ autonomous creativity, which elsewhere was under attack of the prevailing spirit of collectivism” (Badovinac 1998: 14), not to mention the repressive mechanisms of surveillance and censorship restricting the freedom of speech and creative agency.

In the region of Central and Eastern Europe, performance art was often paired with the medium of photography. Because performance artists could not implement their performances in the public space or reach wider audiences beyond their circles of friends, photography was thought the ideal medium for witnessing and archiving performance art. However, artists and their collaborators had to be careful in those countries, where the mechanism of the totalitarian regime was most repressive. These conditions determined the choice of the peripheral cultural and geographical location, even isolation, as well as the integration of photography in the entire structure and DNA of performance art.

The attitude of the Soviet ideologues towards photography was ambiguous. On the one hand, taking photographs in public space was prohibited, unless the photographer could identify himself or herself as a photojournalist. In Russia, for example, such an activity could also result in arrest, and, as Russian art historian Ekaterina Degot states, it was due to the concern of the authorities about unauthorized reproduction, especially in the foreign press (Degot 2004: 113). On the other hand, photography as a hobby and pastime activity was even supported by the Communist regime. Unless the images
were subversive, they could even be exhibited and presented to the audiences as amateur photography. According to Latvian art historian Eduards Klaviņš, “the Soviet ideological watchdogs and bureaucrats permitted this as a limited, controlled and therefore harmless pastime for the inhabitants of the ‘big zone’, on the grounds of it being a blossoming of people’s artistic ‘amateur activities’ [...] in conditions of socialism” (Klaviņš 1999: 13). However, artists and photographers alike had to be particularly careful when dealing with the topics of nudity and sexuality: “The nude artist, performer, or sitter shown in a photograph, in a film as well as in other means of expression, particularly exposing his genitals, definitely challenged a taboo of visual culture” (Piotrowski 2010: 130). Again, it could result in oppressive mechanisms applied towards either the suspension of creative activities or the artist himself or herself being interrogated and threatened at the offices of the KGB.

Similarly to Grinbergs in Latvia, in other countries in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, too, certain artists or artists’ groups in event-based art stood out. In Poland, for example, it was Tadeusz Kantor (1915-1990), who organized his first happening – an hour-long piece titled Cricotage – in 1965 and is, perhaps, best known for his 1967 Panoramic Sea Happening, which took place on the Baltic seashore, lasted for two hours and involved 1600 participants. As noted by Klara Kemp-Welch in her article Emancipation and Daydreams: Kantor’s Happenings (Kemp-Welch 2011: 143) 1965 was also the year when finally Bakhtin’s dissertation on François Rabelais was published, pinpointing two important subtexts: the carnival (and carnivalesque) and grotesque realism. Kemp-Welch indicates that Kantor shared the ambitions of carnival as defined by Bakhtin, especially in terms of the transgressive power of carnival. According to Bakhtin’s observations, the paradox of Medieval laughter was that it was “absolutely unofficial but nevertheless legalized” (Renfrew 1997: 189). For example, the invitation of a real police escort was a way to bring on board representatives of

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52 Like the photographs of Romanian artist Ion Grigorescu, which he took alone at home and which contained open nudity scenes or close-ups of his genitals.

53 The nude as a genre in Soviet photography did emerge, but it was rather a phenomenon of the late socialist period. Photographer Vilnis Folkmanis stated: “The nude is one of the hardest genres in photographic art (if not the very hardest). [...] To celebrate the beauty of the human body, the photographer must understand the difference between the naturalistic depiction of a naked body and the artistic image of this body” (Folkmanis 1967: 12). The naturalistic, ‘non-artistic’ depiction of a naked body was problematic, since it could be interpreted as pornography in accordance with the Soviet law.
official life for the purposes of its ridicule: the involvement of police undermined the authority it represented.

In Romania, which is often quoted as the most isolated country from the Eastern bloc, it was the artist Ion Grigorescu (b. 1945) in the 1970s, who incorporated action art, environmental installations and photography in his creative work. In the mid-1970s, Grigorescu organized several exhibitions at the Friedrich Schiller House in Bucharest (Stiles 1998: 308) focused on the use of photography in which the camera, as he explained, “treat[s] tools just as persons” (Grigorescu 1977: 8). Grigorescu describes his *Autophotographs* as emerging out of “a few happenings” that he considered related to his own “personality” in a context of “individual voyeurism” (Grigorescu 1977: 8).

According to American art historian Ksenia Nouril:

“In his photographic series from the 1970s, such as *Mimicry* (1975) and *Traisteni* (The Serf, 1976), Grigorescu distilled performances into still images, frequently using himself as his subject. His own body was his primary material, since it was accessible and could be freely manipulated. In powerful, abject photographs produced throughout the 1970s and into the early 1980s – including series *Box-Yoga* (1980), *Autosuperpositions* (1977), and *Homage to Bacon* (1978) – he pushes his body and mind to physical and psychological limits by contorting himself into various positions requiring significant strength and focus. Although these are still images, the dynamism of his actions reveals his keen interest in closely observing and recording movement” (Nouril n.p.).

The example of Grigorescu is important, since it brings forward certain conditions characteristic for the performance art in the late Soviet period in the region of Central and Eastern Europe: censorship over certain aesthetics and especially nudity, impossibility to perform in public space, isolation of performance artists, minimalistic gestures integrated in artwork, the camera as the only witness and audience, references to Western culture.

In Russia, and especially within the Moscow conceptualist movement in the 1970s and early 1980s, the opportunity to pair performance art with photography became highly appreciated by artists. As examined by Russian art historian Ekaterina Borbinskaya, for the conceptual artists, such as Rimma Gerlovina and Valeriy Gerlovin (a couple in real life, too) or the artist group Collective Actions, photography was seen as an ideal
instrument that allowed investigating the nature of art and the conditions of its perception while avoiding any *a priori* perspectives of consciousness:

“In conceptual performances documentation acquired a special meaning, frequently turning into an independent form of art. All conceptual performances were oriented in one way or another toward documentation – the juxtaposition of an action unfolding in physical space and time, and the immediate experience of the event with its symbolic (visual or textual) reflections. In many performances the photographs did not document the event but rather served as an invitation to the spectator to take part in a speculative ‘action-game’. Instead of reminding the spectator of the event, photographs were there to delineate the trajectory along which the consciousness of the spectator became involved in an original speculative performance” (Bobrinskaya 2004: 92).

Despite the restricted freedom of speech and the potential repressions, many artists chose the street as their performance site. For example, Czech artist Jiří Kovanda (b. 1953) produced Minimalist actions on the streets of Prague. The artist wrote notes to document the performances, yet sometimes they were also documented by the camera. The actions could be implemented on the street, because they were “barely perceptible as works of art” (Bryzgel 2016). In most cases, it was only him and his photographer, who knew about the performances. For example, in one of Kovanda’s first public actions, *xxx 19 November 1976. Prague, Václavské náměstí*, which has become an iconic image nowadays, the artist stood on the sidewalk, facing the pedestrians with his arms outstretched as if being crucified. When asked how he managed to perform for this image, Kovanda replied that it lasted only for a few seconds, long enough for his photographer Pavel Tuc to take the picture (Bryzgel 2016). Most likely, the people, who passed him by, never even noticed this minimalistic gesture.

If in Latvia, Romania or Czechoslovakia public street performances were not allowed, in Yugoslavia, for example, it was common to perform on the street without being arrested, interrogated or further persecuted by the police. For example, Croatian artist Tomislav Gotovac (1937–2010) enacted many performances in which he walked naked through the streets of Zagreb. Gotovac’s first performances were based on performative interaction with photography. In 1960 Gotovac created a
series of five photographic performances reminiscent of Cindy Sherman’s *Untitled Film Stills* series, in which he dressed up and pretended to be an actor in a French film. The happening *Showing Elle* (1962) was semi-public. It was a photographic performance on the Sljemje mountain outside of Zagreb. During this performance Gotovac removed his shirt and looked through *Elle* magazine, showing some of pages to the camera:

“In one image from the performance, the artist shows an underwear advertisement, the female model as semi-nude as the artist. Gotovac created a doubling of objectification, as he makes himself the object of the photograph in the same manner that the woman in the advertisement has been reified” (Bryzgel 2016).

The question of the public versus the private also seems to be a concurrent topic dealt by several artists in the region. A striking similarity with Grinbergs’s happenings emerge in relation to Czech artist Alex Mlynáříčik, who in 1972 organized a happening/wedding entitled *Eva’s Wedding* (Žilina, 1972), which was based on the painting *Village Wedding* (Dedinská svatba; 1946) by the Slovak artist L’udovít Fulla (1902-80). Not only this example manifests the concept of intermedial appropriation, it also reveals that the conceptual strategies employed by both artists appear to be very similar: the biblical references, the art turned into life, collaborative creation, the question of boundaries between the private and the public. Similarly to Grinbergs’s happening *The Green Wedding* (1973), a couple actually got married and the entire ceremony was organized as a theatrical/performative event. Also, the biblical references in the titles of events (Jesus Christ in Grinbergs’s happening *The Wedding of Jesus Christ* (1972) and Eva evoking the biblical Eve in *Eva’s Wedding* (1972)) seem to be echoing similar conceptions. According to Claire Bishop, Mlynáříčik’s event was both a wedding and a happening, reality and play, a wedding dress and theatrical costume, wedding photos and art documentation. Mlynáříčik framed the work as “a celebration of life and joy, hope and love. At the same time, it [became] a manifestation of the international nature of artistic creation and cooperation” (Bishop 2012: 144-145). However, both events are also essentially different, since authorship in both cases is implemented differently. Mlynáříčik acts as a director, who is choreographing the entire performative event integrating the real life couple in a work of art that he has already envisioned in advance. Although Grinbergs also acts as an
active agent and choreographs the events and the involved participants, he is also the key performer. So, in fact, Mlynárčik’s event rather corresponds to the field of theatre and performing arts overall, as opposed to performance art.

In this context certain parallels among Grinbergs and other artists in the region become evident. If Grinbergs embodied the persona of Jesus Christ in his happening *The Wedding of Jesus Christ*, Jiří Kovanda, who stood with his arms wide open on the street also appears to provide religious association with crucification; also, the bride’s name ‘Eva’ in Alex Mlynárčik’s happening *Eva’s Wedding* evokes the reference to the biblical Eve. Furthermore, it must be noted that Tomislav Gotovac in 1971 acted in Lazar Stojanović’s film *Plastic Jesus*. Although it is not Gotovac’s own performance and he is an actor in a film, it is still remarkable that the religious context – even in terms of the title – is equally appropriated in all these works. In one episode Gotovac is seen running naked in the streets of Belgrade, which would definitely not be possible in Riga. It also shows the varying degrees of censorship and panopticism in each individual country, but above all it reveals the restrictions and limitations in terms of creative agency. If the public space cannot be used as an arena for performance art, the camera ‘eye’ becomes the sublimation and substitute for imaginary audiences, hence the documentation of performance art was part of the creative act, not secondary material resulting from the performance.

Overall, when examining performance art in the region, “the unique and individual social, political and artistic circumstances” (Bryzgel, Morganova 2014: 7) in each Soviet republic must be taken into account and universalizing generalisations should be avoided. However, certain parallels can be noted. Many artists, including Grinbergs, chose photography as the key medium to document their performances. Often, the taboo subjects, such as a naked body, and the issues of identity were central in these works. A common trait can be noticed in terms of religious references used in performance art, which is an interesting departure from Socialist Realism, especially taking into account the fact that the USSR postulated itself as an atheist state. Although the first public sphere – the controlled public space – was under constant surveillance, many artists managed to use the street as the performance site and venue, even if they were minimalistic gestures captured by the lens of the camera.

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54 The film was banned due its subversive content, preventing Gotovac from graduating until 1976.
CHAPTER 2: The Documentation and Intermediality of Performance

2.1. The documentation of performance

2.1.1. The ephemeral and transient nature of performance versus the representational medium of photography

The question of the live and the mediated is central in the discourse of performance studies, since “performance studies is rooted in the fields of theatre studies, anthropology, sociology, folklore, speech, and oral interpretation, all of which take live events as their major points of reference, whether those events be aesthetic performances, cultural performances, rituals, or everyday behavior and conversations” (Auslander 2008: 105). Among scholars, there is a tendency to regard live events as more authentic and superior sources of experience and knowledge, and there has been a certain resistance towards technologically mediated performances as objects of inquiry. This polarization of the live and mediated is partly related to the nature of performance, especially in terms of such features as ephemerality, transience, disappearance, and further on authenticity, authorship, agency, memory, etc. It can be questioned whether performance, once documented and represented in other media, is still the same work of art, or it needs to be revised and addressed as something else, for example, a document of performance (photographs, videos). This problematic concern with the documentation of open-ended, event-based form of art has established one of the predominant discourses within performance studies.

The most frequently quoted theoretician supporting performance as a live event is American professor Peggy Phelan. In her book *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance* (1993), Phelan states that the ontology of performance derives from the fact that it is incapable of being reproduced: “Performance’s only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representations: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance” (Phelan 1993: 146). Six years later, another American theoretician Philip Auslander, who has now become the key theoretician arguing about the challenges of documented performance, responded to Phelan’s arguments with counterarguments and criticism in his book *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture* (1999). Here, Auslander questions the grounds on which distinctions between live and mediatized performances are constructed, highlighting the prejudices frequently involved in the privileging of the live over the non-live. Discussing popular music, theatre and television as examples, Auslander asserts that live performance is
always already embedded within industry structures of production and re-production. In the following years, Auslander provided more arguments to support this theoretical proposition. In his article *The Performativity of Performance Documentation* (2006) Auslander offers a theoretical proposition\(^{55}\) that has contributed to the paradigm change when thinking about those performances that were registered and fixed in a medium, especially in photography, but never existed as process-based art presented to audiences. According to Auslander, if we do not extend the definition of performance art and its documentation arriving at a more integrative solution, we will ultimately exclude chrestomatic performances from the history of performance art, for example, Marcel Duchamp’s photos of himself as Rrose Sélavy in the 1920s, Yves Klein’s famous *Leap Into the Void* (1960), as well as Cindy Sherman’s series of photographic self-portraits in the 1970s. Auslander argues that “it is not the initial presence of an audience that makes an event a work of performance art: it is its framing as performance through the performative act of documenting it as such [and] we cannot dismiss studio fabrications [...] from the category of performance art because they were not performed for a physically present audience” (Auslander 2006: 7). Numerous other scholars have reflected upon ephemerality – one of the most characteristic features of performance art, which defines the specific (non)materiality of this discipline. For instance, British professor in Theatre and Performance Matthew Reason in his book *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance* (2006) writes that ephemerality is one of the most prominent and recurring definitions of live performance: “More than simply being short-lived or lacking permanency, ephemerality describes how performance ceases to be at the same moment as it becomes. Ephemerality describes how performance passes as an audience watches” (Reason 2006: 1). Therefore, Reason emphasises the presence of audience as

\(^{55}\) Auslander proposes that performance documentation can be divided into two categories: the documentary and the theatrical. In the documentary category the connection between performance and document is chronologically linear and “thought to be ontological, with the event preceding and authorizing its documentation” (Auslander 2006: 1), whereas performances belonging to the theatrical category are staged solely to be photographed or filmed and have no meaningful prior existence as autonomous events presented to audiences. Consequently, the image we see records an event that has never happened except in the photograph itself, and the space of the visual or audiovisual document becomes the only space in which the performance occurs (Auslander 2006: 2). In the latter category, the document of performance is prioritised.
an integral factor in the overall artist-audience relationship model in performance art. It can, of course, be questioned, whether the perception of audience would change when experiencing the respective performance in the ‘live’ or the ‘mediated’ format. However, as indicated by Auslander, it is very rare that scholars and critics would examine “how a particular audience perceived a particular performance at a particular time and place and what that performance meant to that audience” (Auslander 2006: 6); rather, they would focus on the aesthetic and conceptual framework. However, the ephemerality is also a feature that makes performance art commodity-resistant – it is impossible (or hard) to sell or to buy it. Being a temporary act, it is not destined to exist as an object that can be collected or archived not only by individuals, but also art and cultural institutions. The non-commercial aspect and the possibility to avoid the institutionalisation of art initially seemed appealing to the pioneer performance artists in Western Europe and North America (given the anti-establishment sentiment in the 1960s and 1970s); however, there were numerous artists, for example, among the Fluxus circles, who realised that skepticism is not the answer and that documentation can, in fact, be helpful in the dissemination of information, ensuring that performance art is recognised as a genre and included in the art discourse. Thus, the idea of non-objectification and non-commodification turned out to be utopian, since performances could be commercialized by selling limited edition photographs and videos as works of art and eventually, of course, performance art was included in the curricula of West European and North American universities and was taught as another genre in the history of art.

It must be emphasised that documentation of performance art in Central and Eastern Europe, where in the late socialist period there was no art market at all, was seen differently by artists. The ephemerality of the genre was beneficial in the circumstances of constant surveillance and censorship; yet, sometimes the documentation became the motivation and goal in itself. Because the artists in this region could not perform in the public space, exercise their freedom of speech or their individual and creative agency, the document witnessing and confirming the existence of performance became crucial in order to incorporate oneself in the history of art. These documents have, indeed, become valuable for researchers helping to readdress these works from a contemporary perspective.

Photography for performance art is a crucial medium of representation because performance art has a very marginalised position in culture, thus the photographic
image becomes verification of the existence, appearance and importance of performance art. Photographs offer a validating proof that performances – transient and ephemeral – actually happened and have a potential to reach far larger audiences, beyond the circles of intimacy, companionship and friendship.

According to Reason (2006), the relationship between photography and live performance is characterised by tension due to the dual role of photography as a medium of representation: “The photograph records performance for posterity, but also fundamentally transforms it into a different artefact” (2006: 113). Thus, on the one hand, photography documents and saves the ephemeral performance art from disappearance, but, on the other hand, is told to be incapable of capturing the actual experience of the live performance. The still image will always be somebody’s interpretation and a selective construction and artistic choice. Thus, pursuant to Reason, “performance photography becomes a transformative art form in its own right [revealing] photograph as fundamentally transformative, constructed and representational medium” (Reason 2006: 114).

However, the element of constructedness in photography does not emerge only along with performance photography, since it can be illustrated through a number of crucial historical and genre-based examples. For example, the Pictorialists (started in the 1890s) intervened with the medium of photography by manipulating the aesthetics with the help of special filters, printing-processes and post-production techniques so to emulate the approach taken in painting. Whereas Dadaists and Russian Constructivists in the early 20th century focused on constructing the image in a way that it resembled abstract art. Through photomontages they showed the imaginative possibilities of creative approaches by experimenting with the technique of collage and inventing a visual rhythm, machine-like aesthetics and abstraction to photography – a medium traditionally regarded as revealing true appearance of the real world. Likewise, the concept of tableau “used to describe a painting or photograph in which characters are arranged for picturesque or dramatic effect” (Tate Modern), reveals the image as a “product of intellectual act” (Fried 2008: 146) highlighting the constructedness through careful calculation of the composition, mise-en-scène, arrangement of subjects etc.56

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56 This can also be employed as a creative strategy. For example, in the 1970s Jeff Wall began to make large format photographs, which were meticulously staged, aiming to make each of his works look like a documentary photograph. The element of
When pairing photography with the medium of performance, the question of authorship also becomes crucial since the photographed performance is reinterpreted and represented through the transformative imagination of another artist. It is possible to see the subject or content of the photographs as the work of one artist, whereas the style and aesthetics of the photograph as the work of another (Reason 2006: 163). Photographs can be presented as autonomous works of art in their own right, constructed through creative engagement with the subjects (as, indeed, is the case in Latvia). There is a symbiotic relationship between the photographer and the performance artist, where the performance artist needs the photography to represent the work beyond the performance and the photographer needs the performance art as the material and content of his/her work. In these collaborative projects the camera does not passively capture the performance; instead the photographer is engaged in a careful and considered act of representation, so it can be stated that there is multiple authorship in these projects. It is, therefore, crucial to look at these hybrid collaborative projects through the conceptual lens of intermediality, where documentation is not disregarded as secondary ‘raw material’ and less important than the actual performances.

2.1.2. Reenactments

As emphasized earlier, presence – being in the right place in the right time or the ‘here and now’ aspect – is one of the key terms in the discourse of performance art. Performance art is generally regarded as a forceful engagement with presence, a form in which the artist’s body directly encounters the spectator to raise issues around aesthetic experience and the lived experience of the body (Klich, Scheer 2011: 82). However, with the increasing interest in the documentation and intermediality of performance, the dominance of performance has been challenged. American art historian Claire Bishop, for example, claims:

“This is not a question of making nice ‘documentation’ for the work [...] but rather, enabling adequate modes of communication—be this video, exhibition, narrative, text anthologies or re-performance—that allow subsequent viewers to experience and engage with the ideas that these projects put forward” (Bishop 2014: 176).

constructedness is revealed so much so that it can be questioned whether the final works of art are photographs at all (or rather hybrids).
In this context it is important to examine those instances when artists have begun to destabilize the one-time experience of performance art by re-performing or reenacting their own or their colleagues’ works. According to Bryzgel, “reenactment denotes the redoing, restaging or re-performing of an artistic performance—meaning a live act or action by a visual artist—and is as such distinct from the repetition of a theatrical performance, choreographed dance, or scored musical performance” (Bryzgel, 2018). One of the most outstanding examples is Marina Abramović’s series of reenactments of five major works of performance art by Joseph Beuys, Bruce Naumann, and others entitled *Seven Easy Pieces*, which she performed at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York in 2005. Performed from 9 to 15 November, Abramović’s production began with her performance of Bruce Nauman’s *Body Pressure* (1974) and was followed by, in order: Vito Acconci’s *Seedbed* (1972); Valie Export’s *Action Pants: Genital Panic* (1969); Gina Pane’s *The Conditioning, first action of Self-Portrait(s)* (1973); Joseph Beuys’ *How to Explain Pictures to a Dead Hare* (1965); Marina Abramović’s *Lips of Thomas* (1975). On the final evening of 15 November, Abramović performed a new work, *Entering the Other Side* (2005). Abramović says in an interview at the time: “The fact that the pieces had really struck me deeply, but had done so only through photographs and the little documentation that one could find at that time. This has always interested me, and I have wanted to ask how would I deal with them now, in real time?” (Abramović in Thompson and Weslien 2006). This approach raises the question posed by Auslander as to “whether performance recreations based on documentation actually recreate the underlying performances or perform the documentation?” (Auslander 2006: 2). It seems that Abramović’s motivation in re-performing is grounded in epistemology – as if the reenactment of the respective performance would grant her access to knowledge or experience, which could not be obtained otherwise.

Amy Bryzgel, however, criticizes the attention *Seven Easy Pieces* (2005) has received in the discourse of art history. According to Bryzgel, *Seven Easy Pieces* was focused on the now canonical works of performance art in Western Europe and North America. Bryzgel states that “the theory of reenactments, much like that of performance art, remains restricted to a consideration of only Western European and North American performances” (Bryzgel 2018) and the reenactments of performances in or from Central and Eastern Europe are generally ignored from the academic discourse. Bryzgel mentions Amelia Jones and Adrian Heathfield’s book *Perform. Repeat.*
Record: Live Art in History (2012) as an example of such ignorance, since only one essay addresses the restaging of an action from the history of East European performance art (Bryzgel 2018).

Bryzgel also states that “the reperformance in the post-socialist period of experimental artworks from the 1960s and 1970s in Eastern Europe, has the potential to transform the meaning, reception, and significance of these acts by presenting them in a context entirely different from whence they emerged” (Bryzgel 2018). To illustrate this argument, Bryzgel provides an example of Czech artist Jiří Kovanda, who, in the 1970s, created a number of performances on the streets of Prague that were only permissible in the public space because they looked as everyday gestures, for instance, the artist was scratching his nose or brushing his hand through his hair (Bryzgel 2018). Only through the documentation of these performances, these actions were ‘legitimized’. In 2006, a young Czech artist Barbora Klímová (b. 1977) reenacted several of Kovanda’s works in the dramatically different context of the post-Communist Czech Republic. If Kovanda’s pieces remained largely invisible in the first public sphere, Klímová’s reenactments could be openly acknowledged as art, and performed as works of performance art (Bryzgel 2018). One of Klímová’s goal was “to better understand the socio-political and cultural space in which these historical performances were created in Czechoslovakia, and how that space had changed over time” (Bryzgel 2018).

Another example is provided by Estonian art historian Anu Allas, who examines the reenactment of happening Trio for Piano, originally implemented by the artist group SOUP in 1969. The group consisted of students who mostly studied architecture or design at the Estonian State Art Institute in Tallinn in the late 1960s and early 1970s and organized different events and exhibitions on the peripheries of the art world. The group was named after a poster that referred to Andy Warhol’s Campbell’s Soup Cans (1962)). According to Allas, SOUP initiated several activities that were later written into art history as examples of early Estonian performance art (Allas 2018). In 1990 SOUP’s artwork was exhibited at Tallinn Art Hall in show SOUP ’69–90, which was one of the first attempts to re-examine the recent history of Estonian art. At the opening of the exhibition in the Art Hall the group’s happening Trio for Piano was re-performed by the artists Leonhard Lapin, Ando Keskküla and Ülevi Eljand.

The initial piece (not termed as ‘happening’ yet) took place on 8 March in 1969 – the International Women’s Day, which was celebrated all over the country with various
events. According to Lapin, they had heard that pianos were being destroyed by young and radical artists all over Europe. So they, too, put the piano at the center of their activities and played on it and with it in every possible way in front of an audience of other students. For example, “Vilen Künnapu played the piano while reading an architectural drawing as a ‘score’; others painted smiling lips on the instrument and ‘made love’ to the piano before moving it to one side and breaking it into small pieces, which were thrown to the audience to take away as souvenirs” (Allas 2018). It was later stated by Lapin that every kind of destruction felt ‘creative’ in the late 1960s and under the circumstances of late Soviet society (Allas 2018).

During the opening of the SOUP’s retrospective at Tallinn Art Hall, the basic scenario of Trio for Piano was the same as in 1969: three men played on and with the piano before destroying it. However, according to Allas, there were also some significant changes:

“First, the three men were not young students any more, but established artists in their forties wearing suits and presenting themselves as classics of the hidden Soviet avant-garde. Secondly, in addition to the initial sexual connotations (making love with the piano), a stripper carrying the flag of the Estonian SSR was brought onto the stage during the happening” (Allas 2018).

Another Estonian art historian Sirje Helme, who has thoroughly examined SOUP’s activities, suggests that maybe the reenactment of Trio for Piano could be seen as the funeral of Estonian avant-garde: “A destroyed piano in the 1960s was a symbol of an outdated cultural model, but in the 1990s it had become a symbol of another tradition (the avant-garde) that belonged to the past and had to be dismissed” (Allas 2018).

As such, these instances of performance art can also be seen as acts of appropriation, where one artist borrows the already existing artwork that was made either by another artist or the same artist (or artist group) in a different period of time. By re-creating, or in this case, repeating, restaging and reiterating a piece of performance art, a new context for the artwork is created merging different layers of time. From the contemporary perspective, in the post-socialist countries the socio-political and geopolitical circumstances have changed, and so have the market conditions, and it is precisely this change and transformation that the artists emphasize through the acts of appropriation. For the audiences, too, it is not only an opportunity to ‘turn back time’ and revisit the past, but also to re-examine the previously made artwork in a new light.
Such kind of reconceptualization requires active engagement of well-informed audiences. It must be noted that appropriation as a phenomenon in art will be thoroughly examined in Chapter 3.3 further on in the doctoral dissertation herein.

2.2. The intermediality of performance

2.2.1. The concept of intermediality as a useful interpretative framework

To avoid the polarization of the live versus the mediated and the fundamental opposition it creates, the concept of intermediality can be applied as an analytical tool. This interpretative framework extends the discussions of the live and the mediated, and as a research instrument provides a more nuanced perspective on these two seemingly different aspects. The ‘inter’ of intermediality implies a ‘between space’ – it is an ambiguous and hypothetical space, where different media do not merely co-exist in parallel, but instead overlap and hybridise. According to media theoreticians Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer:

“Intermediality can be both a creative and an analytic approach based on the perception that media boundaries are fluid and recognising the potential for interaction and exchange between the live and the mediated, without presupposing the authenticity or authority of either mode (Klich, Scheer 2011: 71)”.

The Oxford Dictionary explains the noun ‘intermediate’ as a chemical compound formed by one reaction and then taking part in another, especially during synthesis (Stevenson 2010: 913; my emphasis). Intermediate as an adjective refers to a position between two points, persons, or things; the term is also related to an intermediary, who acts between two people (Stevenson 2010: 913). As a term in comparative literature, the term consisting of both ‘intermediate’ and ‘medium’ was constructed and applied by Samuel Coleridge in an 1812 essay Lecture III: On Spenser, where he compared the 16th century author Edmund Spenser’s traditional use of medieval category with the 17th century writer William Shakespeare’s superior sense of timelessness in his work (Rayson 1936: 33).

If interrelations of various arts have been examined extensively, intermediality has become a popular concept only recently. A shift in academic research has occurred as a result of the emergence of electronic and digital media. As noted by scholars from various academic disciplines, “in the past two decades, ‘intermediality’ has proved to
be one of the most productive terms in the field of humanities generating an impressive number of publications and theoretical debates” (Pethő 2011: 19). Applying the concept of intermediality as a research axis, it is possible to study intermedial relationship in theories of literature, art history, music, communication and cultural studies, philosophy, theatre and film studies, etc. Scholars are increasingly interested in the intermedial relations between various arts and media. The examples of intermedial phenomena include, but are not limited to, filmic writing, musicalization of literature, film adaptations of literary works, novelizations, visual poetry, illuminated manuscripts, Sound Art, opera, comics, multimedia shows, multimedial computer installations, etc.

One of the best examples to characterize intermediality is cinema, since it has such a complex mediality (moving images, language, sound, etc.), which is aimed at the illusion of reality and immersive viewing. Indeed, cinema has often been termed as the ideal Gesamtkunstwerk (a total work of art, which implies the synthesis of arts). Hungarian professor Ágnes Pethő writes:

“Cinematic experience itself can be defined by the tensions of being in a state of ‘in-between’: in between reality and fantasy, in between empirical experience and conscious reflection, in between words and images, in between the different art forms and in between media. The mediality of cinema can always be perceived as intermediality, as its meanings are always generated by the media relations that weave its fabric of significations” (Pethő 2011: 293-294).

An apt metaphor of intermediality was drawn by American multi-media artist and professor Robert Paredes (1948-2005). In his essay How About the Platypus? (2004) Paredes contemplates the story of the platypus, which having been discovered, “was taken from Australia to England for the amusement and amazement of the scientific community” (Paredes 2007: 138) as an animal “fitting to no known category” (Paredes 2007: 138). Moreover, for this animal to be acknowledged ‘real’, the community of scientists had to come forth with a new category. Paredes draws a comparison between the platypus and the genre of ‘intermedia’. He suggests that in the same way that the discovery of the platypus demanded the new category ‘monotreme’, the existence of artwork resistant to classification has called forth the genre and meta-genre of
If a medium is a channel for the mediation of information and entertainment, what is intermediality? According to Swedish professor Lars Elleström, “intermediality is a result of constructed media borders being trespassed” (Elleström 2010: 27). We must take into account that “there are no media borders given by nature, but we need borders to talk about intermediality” (Elleström 2010: 27). Consequently, we construct hypothetical and relative media borders and “it is only due to our constructing borders in the first place that we are able to become aware of ways of transcending or subverting those very boundaries or of ways of highlighting their presence, of probing them, or even of dissolving them entirely” (Rajewsky 2010: 64). The borders between media thus become the zones of experimentation where “we can test and experiment with a plethora of different strategies” (Rajewsky 2010: 65). To be brief, at all times when the properties of all respective media intersect, the in-between state or intermediality occurs and intermedial phenomena emerge.
Herein, intermediality becomes a useful theoretical framework to address the medium specificity and transformations of performance art transgressing from a transient, ephemeral process into a still, two-dimensional image. The conceptual tool of intermediality allows examining the outcome as autonomous works of art as opposed to mere documentation, which is often regarded as something of secondary importance and less authentic than the actual experience.

2.2.2. The problematic status of media borders
German professor Irina O. Rajewsky proposes that it is possible to analyse the intermedial phenomena by distinguishing intermediality in the broad sense and in the narrow sense. In the broad sense, such phenomena as film adaptations of literary works, opera, multimedia shows and Sound Art manifest some kind of crossing of borders between media. Whereas in the narrow sense, it is possible to group the intermedial practices in three categories: 1) medial transposition, 2) media combination, 3) intermedial references (Rajewsky 2010: 55).
An example of medial transposition is, for instance, film adaptations of literary texts. Here medial border crossing or intermediality emerges because the given medial configuration (a text and a film) undergoes a process of transformation, where the original text is the source of the newly formed medial configuration (Rajewsky 2010: 55).
An example of *media combination* is opera, film, theatre, Sound Art installations, etc. Rajewsky states that, from a historical point of view, these media combinations have frequently resulted in the development of new forms with a plurimedial structure. For example, “dance theatre is defined by a plurimedial structure which manifests itself, not least, in the combination of theatrical and dance elements and structures” (Rajewsky 2010: 56). Moreover, recent productions “increasingly tend to involve digital and other technical media” (Rajewsky 2010: 56). Finally, an example of *intermedial references* includes references in a literary text to a specific film, film genre or, likewise, references in a film to painting, or in a painting to photography.

For the purpose of this dissertation and the case study of local examples, it is especially crucial to look at the third category – the intermedial references. Rajewsky provides an example of photorealistic painting to illustrate the basic mechanisms of intermedial references. A photorealistic painting is “a kind of painting which inevitably evokes in the viewer the impression of a photographic quality” (Rajewsky 2010: 58), yet the “painting itself can never become genuinely photographic, even though this is suggested at times by photorealistic painting” (Rajewsky 2010: 62). It is an illusion, which Rajewski defines as “the so-called ‘as if’ character” (Rajewsky 2010: 58) – it is as if we see a photograph instead of a painting.

The history of art also provides evidences of intermedial references between painting and photography the other way round. For example, Pictorialists in the late 19th century and early 20th century tried to establish their photographs as art by mimicking and imitating the look and subject of painting (Bull 2010: 123). Despite photography’s “mechanically produced origins, potential for mass reproduction, links with commerce, and apparent lack of the need for ‘artistic’ skill” (Bright 2005: 8), for Pictorialists it was crucial to prove that photography also counts as art, which can be equally exhibited in museums and galleries. To do so, they used a variety of strategies starting from the manner of exhibition and ending with the same subject matter as in the genres of traditional Academy painting of the time. For example, tableaux (images depicting elaborate and dramatically staged narratives) were a common theme of Pictorialist photography, each one meticulously constructed, with models’ positions held as if they were posing for a painter (Henry 2006: 133-138). Another strategy was the use of techniques such as gum-bichromate, which allowed manipulating the image with the brush while wet, thus creating the impression that the image was painted on a canvas.
This technique helped the Pictorialists to deny the mechanical nature, lack of ‘artistic’ skill and repetitive mass reproducibility of photography. According to Abigail Solomon-Godeau, in this way the Pictorialists offered the possibility for each print to be unique and show evidence of skilful alteration, potentially providing the photograph with what Benjamin referred to as the ‘aura’ of an original work of art (Solomon-Godeau 1991: 106-108). As a result, it was as if the spectators looked at a painting instead of a photograph.

In the case of intermedial references, it must be noted that an absolute and overall implementation of the other medial system is impossible: “What can be achieved by intermedial references is an [...] approximation to the medium referred to” (Rajewsky 2010: 62). Yet, it is this oscillating ‘in-between-ness’, something actually situated between two or more medial forms that reveals both the constructed media border and a space for experimentation. Therefore, the notion of media borders and their constructedness actually play a crucial and extremely productive role in the context of intermedial practices (Rajewsky 2010: 63).

2.2.3. Early steps towards the integration of art forms and intermediality

According to theoreticians Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer, the objective of reaching a synthesis of art forms within theatre practice has an ongoing history. These early visions by practitioners such as Richard Wagner (1813-1883), Adolphe Appia (1862-1928), and Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) focused on the collaboration of artistic disciplines and established a precedent for the synthesis of artistic disciplines within the theatrical frame. (Klich, Scheer 2011: 71). In the context and history of performance art, the untitled event (1952) organised by John Cage at the Black Mountain College is considered to be the first of the hybrid events that later became known as happenings. Therefore, it is also crucial to mention one of the theoreticians, whose writings influenced the conceptual strategies of Cage. It is Antonin Artaud (1896-1948), whose book The Theatre and its Double (Le Théâtre et son Double; 1933) was translated and published in English and consequently reached Cage and his contemporaries.

The first significant expression of integration in theatre was the Wagnerian idea of the Gesamtkunstwerk, or a total work of art, in which Richard Wagner prophetically envisioned the integration of traditional disciplines into a unified work with the aim of
intensifying the audience’s experiences of art (Klich, Scheer 2011: 20). In 1849 Wagner produced the landmark essay, *The Artwork of the Future* (Das Kuntswerk der Zukunft), in which he declared: “Artistic Man can only fully content himself by unifying every branch of Art into the common Artwork” (Millington 2001: 4). In this essay Wagner asked for a fusion or ‘totalising’ of all arts and as such can arguably be considered the first systematic effort in modern art towards such comprehensive integration (Packer, Jordan 2001: 4).

Adolphe Appia, in his turn, is regarded as the founder of contemporary notions of scenography (Palmer 2015: 31), since he developed a new dramaturgy with light at its centre. In the early 20th century he revolutionised scenography and believed that modern experience could not be adequately expressed within the rigidity of traditional disciplinary boundaries (Klich, Scheer 2011: 21). For example, Appia “recognized the power and potential of light as both a unifying and expressive force that could be modulated like music. [He] drew attention to the materiality of light, its effect upon stage space and the actor’s body within it [thus offering] a plethora of new creative possibilities” (Palmer 2015: 32). In his creative work, Appia demanded total artistic control of a director who was both visionary designer and practical stage-director. He, too, envisioned a total ‘organic’ artwork and for a synthesis of the arts in theatre and rejected the limitations of naturalism and the drama (Klich, Scheer 2011: 21). Moreover, in Appia’s later writing, as he developed his notion of ‘living art’, he identified the need for the breakdown of the audience–spectator separation and the creation of a new ‘spirit of community’ (Brandt 1998: 145). This aspect was also one of the cornerstones for performance art practitioners in the 1960s and 1970s, especially in Allan Kaprow, Dick Higgins and Hans Breder’s intermedial artwork.

Another prominent example in relation to the fusion of arts is Italian poet Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, who in collaboration with Emilio Settimelli and Bruno Corra wrote the essay *The Futurist Synthetic Theatre* (1915). Their essay articulated a theatre, which would reflect the rapid technological advances of the age and directly oppose the historical “passeist” theatre. In the age of the automobile and the aeroplane they insisted that a new type of art practice was needed to reflect the changes that the industrial revolution had initiated: a new aesthetic for a new mechanised social and industrial infrastructure (Klich, Scheer 2012: 25-26). The Futurist Theatre was to be “synthetic”, “atechnical”, “dynamic”, “simultaneous”, “autonomous”, “alogical”, and “unreal” (Marinetti 1998: 177-80). A significant aspect of their approach was that they
argued that the theatre should meet the challenges of the new art form of cinema with its “polyexpressiveness towards which all the most modern artistic researches are moving” (Marinetti 2001: 12). They declared that Futurist cinema “will be painting, architecture, sculpture, words-in-freedom, music of colours, lines, and forms, a jumble of objects and reality thrown together at random” (Marinetti 2001: 13).

Another example, which is especially crucial in the context of performance art, is the *untitled event* (1952) at the Black Mountain College organised by John Cage. Here a group of innovative artists, musicians, writers, and dancers worked together merging performance, music and dance, with the visual arts. For the famous *untitled event* in 1952 they worked across media in a distinctly performative way: Cage was delivering a lecture, his music being played by David Tudor, Merce Cunningham was dancing, and Robert Rauschenberg was playing records with photographs and movies projected onto his innovative *White Paintings* – canvases simply covered with white paint (Jones 2008: 157). Theoretician Amelia Jones claims that *the untitled event* not only accommodated the live body and the art-making process, but highlighted them – making the performative body central to the art experience. In so doing, this alternative mode of practice opened the visual arts to temporality and to the vicissitudes of interpretation: for a body in process, producing art as action rather than final product opened art to the audience in new ways (Jones 2008: 157).

This event not only evidenced the hybridisation of artistic disciplines but also epitomised the shift in emphasis from product to process and from dramatic theatre to performance (Klich, Scheer 2012: 28). In her article *Performance Art and Ritual: Bodies in Performance*, Erika Fischer-Lichte explains that the event challenged the borders between the arts, as it “dissolved the artefact into performance. Texts were recited, music was played, paintings were ‘painted over’ – the artefacts became the actions. [...] Poetry, music and the fine arts ceased to function merely as poetry, music, or fine arts – they were simultaneously realised as performance art” (Fischer-Lichte, 1997: 25).

It must be noted that Cage was strongly influenced by Antonin Artaud’s writings, especially in his book *The Theatre and Its Double* (1933). Artaud was interested in “a theatre that wakes us up: nerves and heart” (Artaud 1958 (1933): 84). He was against the narrative and text-based theatre format, where there is a strict line between the actors on the stage and the audiences. Instead, Artaud proposed that direct communication with audiences is needed and he summed it up in his conception of the
Theatre of Cruelty: “It is in order to attack the spectator’s sensibility on all sides that we advocate a revolving spectacle which, instead of making the stage and auditorium two closed worlds, without possible communication, spreads its visual and sonorous outbursts over the entire mass of the spectators” (Artaud 1958 (1933): 86). From Artaud’s point of view, theatre was in an urgent need of a new language: “It is essential to put an end to the subjugation of the theatre to the text, and to recover the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought. This language cannot be defined except by its possibilities for dynamic expression in space as opposed to the expressive possibilities of spoken dialogue. And what the theatre can still take over from speech are its possibilities for extension beyond words, for development in space, for dissociative and vibratory action upon the sensibility” (Artaud 1958 (1933): 89).

In this system, the audiences would be affected not only cognitively by following the plot and characters on the stage, but also through their sensory apparatus. Similarly to Wagner’s ideas, Artaud also called for ‘total spectacle’: “We envisage producing a spectacle where these means of direct action are used in their totality; a spectacle unafraid of going as far as necessary in the exploration of our nervous sensibility, of which the rhythms, sounds, words, resonances, and twitterings, and their united quality and surprising mixtures belong to a technique which must not be divulged” (Artaud 1958 (1933): 87). From Artaud’s perspective, theatre should be seen as a rich source for semiotic experiments with a certain “visual language of objects, movements, attitudes, and gestures, but on condition that their meanings, their physiognomies, their combinations be carried to the point of becoming signs, making a kind of alphabet out of these signs” (Artaud 1958 (1933): 90).

Artaud also provides description of what a spectacle should be like, and the eclectic combination of confusing processes happening simultaneously, can definitely be noticed as an artistic conception in Cage’s *untitled event*, too:

“Every spectacle will contain a physical and objective element, perceptible to all. Cries, groans, apparitions, surprises, theatricalities of all kinds, magic beauty of costumes taken from certain ritual models; resplendent lighting, incantational beauty of voices, the charms of harmony, rare notes of music, colors of objects, physical rhythm of movements whose crescendo and decrescendo will accord exactly with the pulsation of movements familiar to everyone, concrete appearances of new and surprising objects, masks, effigies
yards high, sudden changes of light, the physical action of light which arouses sensations of heat and cold, etc.” (Artaud 1958 (1933): 93).

These examples can be regarded as early steps towards the notion of intermediality and they illustrate the ideas that support migration, hybridisation and synthesis of art forms, genres and disciplines as expressed and implemented by prominent figures in the history of theatre and performance.

2.2.4. Theoretization of intermediality in performance art studies

The concept of intermediality was introduced in performance studies by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins (Richard Carter Higgins, 1938-1998), who in his treatise Intermedia (1966) used it to describe art that falls “between media” (Higgins 2003: 38). He proposed that the separation of artistic media into rigid categories is “absolutely irrelevant” (Higgins 2003: 38). For Higgins the happening was the ultimate ‘intermedium’, “an uncharted land that lies between collage, music and the theater” (Higgins 2003: 42). Higgins suggested that the use of intermedia was more or less universal throughout the fine arts:

“There are parallels to the happening in music, for example, in the work of such composers as Philip Corner and John Cage, who explore the intermedia between music and philosophy, or Joe Jones, whose self-playing musical instruments fall into the intermedium between music and sculpture. The constructed poems of Emmett Williams and Robert Filliou certainly constitute an intermedium between poetry and sculpture. Is it possible to speak of the use of intermedia as a huge and inclusive movement of which Dada, Futurism and Surrealism are early phases [of what] is taking place now?” (Higgins 2003: 42)
Higgins elaborated a special diagram – a visual representation of interacting and overlapping disciplines illustrating the fluidity inherent to the intermedia arts. Question marks demonstrate that other intermedia are still emerging (Higgins 2012: 72).

In his treatise, Higgins referred to Allan Kaprow – the pioneer of happenings in the USA – and his artistic practice as an example of intermedial art. Higgins especially emphasized Kaprow’s ‘evolution’ from a painter into an artist, who made his works as collages “in the sense of making work by adding or removing, replacing and substituting or altering components of a visual work” (Higgins 2003: 40). Higgins also noted that this migration from one artistic discipline to another is what eventually led Kaprow to happenings:

“Kaprow […] meditated on the relationship of the spectator and the work. He put mirrors into his things so the spectator could feel included in them. That wasn’t physical enough, so he made enveloping collages, which surrounded the spectator. These he called ‘environments’. Finally […] he began to include live people as part of the collage, and this he called a ‘happening’” (Higgins 2003: 40).

Of course, the fact that Higgins came from the Fluxus circles, cannot be underestimated, since Fluxus was “an art that totally disregarded the distinctions between artistic disciplines” (Frank 2005: 29). Many of the artists active in intermedia art forms in the 1960s took part in Fluxus, including Nam June Paik, Wolf Vostell and
Joseph Beuys, Takehisa Kosugi and Shigeko Kubota, George Maciunas and Jonas Mekas, etc. (Friedman 2005: 51). As proposed by theoreticians Rosemary Klich and Edward Scheer, in Higgins’ vision “intermediality exists as the indefinite and ambiguous space between traditionally recognized artistic media” (Klich, Scheer 2011: 72), and as such this space allowed for fusion of the boundaries of art with media that had not previously been considered art forms. Thus, intermedia could also exist between art and non-art:

“It is sometimes difficult to imagine an intermedia form before it is created, but you can think of many in theory. Imagine an intermedia form combining aspects of typesetting, cooking, pyrotechnics and farming – or an intermedia form that embraces baking, sculpture, sewing, and perfumery (Friedman 2005: 52) [...] Imagine an intermedia form comprised of 10% music, 25% architecture, 12% drawing, 18% shoemaking, 30% painting and 5% smell. What would it be like? How would it work? How would specific works appear? How would they function? How would the elements interact?” (Friedman 2005: 61).

This eclectic experimentation was also part of the Intermedia Programme in the School of Art and History of Iowa, the USA, which was launched in 1968 by German émigré artist Hans Breder. Being trained as a painter, exhibited as a sculptor and hired to teach drawing at the University of Iowa, Breder has always been a conceptual artist working in multiple modes of representation. For over three decades Breder and his students explored “liminal spaces – the boundaries between artistic and scholarly practices, between theoretical paradigms, between media, between genres, between social and political universes, between viewer and artist” (Busse 2005: 12).

The notion of liminality was appropriated from the anthropologist Victor Turner. The Latin word ‘limen’ means threshold, whereas liminality refers to the physiological, psychological and spiritual experience of threshold states, of in-between spaces, the pure consciousness of being neither here nor there. As theorized by Turner in his 1964 essay *Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in “Rites de Passage*, liminal states are ‘interstructural’. He demonstrates that during cultural rites of passage those undergoing the rituals are transitional figures that temporarily exist outside of the culturally defined rules and behaviours (Turner 1967: 93). Liminality was also the central theme and the unifying aspect for Breder both in his work as an artist and as a
Programme Director. In his article *Intermedia: Enacting the Liminal* (1995), Breder writes:

“Intermedia engages the spectator as participant. It is collaborative, conceptually grounded, performative, ritualistic, site-specific. It exists in liminal space where the interplay of two or more media propagate new ideas, new forms, new ways of seeking and being” (Breder 1995: 114).

He also expresses regret that too little from the experimental practices in the 1960s was documented: “I recall astonishing performances from the early days. Few of them were documented. We were entirely absorbed in the moment, in the work, in the experience” (Breder 1995: 118). However, a useful pedagogical strategy was to invite visiting artists. Unlike more traditional art disciplines, the “new forms of body-based and installation art dictated that the artist must be present, whether to install, perform, or contribute to the discourse around his or her work through a public presentation” (Santone 2014: 68). For example, among the visiting artists was Allan Kaprow, who contributed to the Intermedia programme in 1969 (Kaprow 1964: 37).

2.2.5. Happening – the ultimate intermedium

As stated earlier, for Higgins the happening was the ultimate ‘intermedium’, “an uncharted land that lies between collage, music and the theater” (Higgins 2003: 42). It is, therefore, essential to examine the definition and key features of a happening as provided by the key practitioner and theoretician Kaprow, as well as the conclusions provided by one of the spectators and observers in the audience – Susan Sontag.

In his book *Some Recent Happenings* (1966) Kaprow provides the definition of happening:

“A happening is an assemblage of events performed or perceived in more than one time and place. Its material environments may be constructed, taken over directly from what is available, or altered slightly; just as its activities may be invented or commonplace. A happening, unlike a stage play, may occur at a supermarket, driving along a highway, under a pile of rags, and in a friend’s kitchen, either at once or sequentially. If sequentially, time may extend to more than a year. The happening is performed according to plan but without rehearsal, audience, or repetition. It is art but seems closer to life” (Kaprow 1966: 5).
Furthermore, in another essay *Happenings Are Dead: Long Live the Happenings!* published in the same year, Kaprow provides seven rules of a happening, which also describe the fluidity inherent to intermedia arts:

“(1) The line between the happening and daily life should be kept as fluid and perhaps indistinct as possible;
(2) Themes, materials, actions, and the associations they evoke are to be gotten from anywhere except from the arts, their derivatives, and their milieu;
(3) The happening should be dispersed over several widely spaced, sometimes moving and changing, locales;
(4) Time, closely bound up with things and spaces, should be variable and independent of the convention of continuity;
(5) The composition of all materials, actions, images, and their times and spaces should be undertaken in as artless and, again, practical a way as possible;
(6) Happenings should be unrehearsed and performed by nonprofessionals, once only;
(7) It follows that there should not be (and usually cannot be) an audience or audiences to watch a happening” (Kaprow 1993: 62-64).

In his essay *Happenings in the New York Scene* (1961) Kaprow writes that “happenings are events that, put simply, happen. […] they appear to go nowhere and do not make any particular literary point. In contrast to the arts of the past, they have no structured beginning, middle or end. Their form is open-ended and fluid; nothing obvious is sought and therefore nothing is won. […] These events are essentially theatre pieces, however, unconventional” (Kaprow 1993: 16-17).

Kaprow emphasizes that, unlike in theatre, in happenings there is no separation of audience and play, and places like “old lofts, basements, vacant stores, natural surroundings, and the street” are places, where “most intense and essential happenings” have been created (Kaprow 1993: 17). Also, happenings invite one to forget about manners and participate in art wholly; therefore “a happening is rough and sudden and often feels ‘dirty’” (Kaprow 1993: 18). Another difference between a happening and a conventional theatre play, is that “a happening has no plot, no obvious ‘philosophy’, and is materialized in an improvisatory fashion, like jazz […] where we do not know exactly what is going to happen next” (Kaprow 1993: 18-19). Furthermore, for a
theatre play words are crucial—“an almost absolute medium”, whereas a happening “frequently has words, but they may or may not make literal sense” (Kaprow 1993: 19). And the third crucial difference is the involvement in chance, because in a happening chance is “a deliberately employed mode of operating that penetrates the whole composition and its character. It is the vehicle of the spontaneous” (Kaprow 1993: 19). The final difference provided by Kaprow is that a happening cannot be reproduced. Each performance is different from the previous, first of all, due to the chance and spontaneity, but also due to the physical materials used to create the environment, such as newspapers, junk, rags, old wooden crates, real trees, food, borrowed machines, etc. (Kaprow 1993: 20).

In her essay *Happenings: An Art of Radical Juxtaposition* (1962), Susan Sontag (1933-2004) also provides a difference between a happening and a conventional theatre play. She also emphasizes that happenings cannot be reproduced. If in a conventional theatre a play is based on the text, the text can be printed, bought and read; whereas the situation is completely opposite in the case of happenings: “A painter or sculptor who makes happenings does not make anything that can be purchased. One cannot buy a happening; one can only support it. It is consumed on the premises. This would seem to make happenings a form of theatre, for one can only attend a theatrical performance, but can’t take it home” (Sontag 1982: 266).

Sontag also comments on the materials used in happenings. She claims that one cannot distinguish among set, props, and costumes in a happening: “Unlike the theatre and like some modern painting, in the Happening the objects are not placed, but rather scattered about and heaped together” (Sontag 1982: 268). This chaotic mess is what defines happening as ‘environment’, and “this environment typically is messy and disorderly and crowded in the extreme, constructed of some materials which are rather fragile, such as paper and cloth, and others which are chosen for their abused, dirty, and dangerous condition” (Sontag 1982: 268).

According to Sontag, the environments grew out of a new art form called ‘assemblages’ made by Robert Rauschenberg, Allan Kaprow, and others in the middle and late 1950s. ‘Assemblages’ were hybrids of painting, collage and sculpture, where artists used “a sardonic variety of materials, mainly in the state of debris, including license plates, newspaper clippings, pieces of glass, machine parts, and the artist’s socks” (Sontag 1982: 269). According to Sontag, “from the assemblage to the whole room or ‘environment’ is only one further step” (Sontag 1982: 269). In this chain of
evolution, happening is the final step, where people are simply put into the environment and set it in motion (Sontag 1982: 269). Sontag argues that in this way conventional meanings are destroyed and new meanings or counter-meanings are created through radical juxtaposition – the ‘collage principle’, also practiced among Surrealists and Dadaists (Sontag 1982: 269).

Sontag, who had experienced happenings as a spectator in the audiences, observed that there were two striking features of happenings. First, it was the treatment of audience, and Sontag characterizes this treatment as abusive and designed to tease the audience: “The performers may sprinkle water on the audience, or fling pennies or sneeze-producing detergent powder at it. Someone may be making near-deafening noises on an oil drum, or waving an acetylene torch in the direction of the spectators. Several radios may be playing simultaneously” (Sontag 1982: 265). Second, it was the treatment of time. According to Sontag, the duration of a happening was unpredictable – it might be anywhere from ten to forty-five minutes. Sontag had noticed that often the audiences did not know when the happenings were over and had to be signalled to leave. Sontag explained the unpredictable duration as a result of the fact that happenings had no plot, no story, and therefore no element of suspense (Sontag 1982: 266).

These features characterize a happening as indefinite, fluid, open-ended, ambiguous space between traditionally recognized artistic media, and as such it is, indeed, the ultimate intermedium.

2.2.6. The challenges of intermediality and the difference between intermedia and multimedia

Mass media, multimedia, cross media, intermedia, new media, digital media – the plethora of these mutually related terms can seem very confusing when thinking about the boundaries between various media. Where do the trajectories of one media start and the other end? As indicated by Rajewsky in her essay Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: A Literary Perspective on Intermediality (2005), there is not one unifying theory of intermediality or one intermedial perspective as such – from its beginnings, ‘intermediality’ has served as an umbrella-term. Intermedial research can be conducted not only in performance and theatre discourse, but also in many other disciplines, for example, media studies, literary studies, sociology, film studies, art history, etc. (Rajewsky 2005: 44). Besides, related terms
have surfaced in the discourse about intermediality, which are themselves defined and used in a variety of ways, for example, multimediality, plurimediality, crossmediality, infra-mediality, media-convergence, media-integration, media-fusion, hybridization, and so forth. Moreover, there have been attempts to specify the notion of intermediality analysing intermediality through such epithets as transformational, discursive, synthetic, formal, transmedial, ontological, or genealogical intermediality, primary and secondary intermediality, or the so-called intermedial figuration (Rajewsky 2005: 44), and German professor Jens Schröter’s example provided below illustrates it.

According to German professor Bernd Herzogenrath, the field of intermediality is ever-expanding and heterogeneous and has grown to be one of the most vital developments within the humanities today:

“Contesting [...] the conventional and disciplinary boundaries between different arts and forms, intermediality seems to propose as its object of inquiry the entire culture of the media (literature, paintings, film, music, digital art, photography, installations, comic books, and more). Intermediality thus comprises both the links (and cross-breeds) between various art forms, and the various disciplines with which we talk about these media” (Herzogenrath 2012: 2).

Ultimately, it can be questioned whether the term ‘intermediality’ is not too slippery, the research field – too vast, and the various critical approaches – too disorientating. However, Rajewsky states that heterogeneous field of intermediality is not a potential shortcoming of any individual approach to intermediality. Quite the contrary, it is of utmost importance to specify each particular understanding of intermediality in a narrower sense and to clarify to which objects and objectives such research gains value (Rajewsky 2005: 64).

Nevertheless, even in this context it seems to be productive to clarify the difference between ‘intermedia’ and the more commonly known term ‘multimedia’. Both terms seem to have appeared in circulation around one and the same time – 1966. If ‘multimedia’ has been described as the defining medium of the twenty first century (Packer, Jordan 2001: xiii) and is “largely associated with digital systems organized around online environments, virtual reality systems and computer games” (Klich, Scheer 2011: 8), “intermedia” is deployed to signal the crossing, mixing, or overlapping of media.
For example, theoreticians Stephen Foster and Estera Milman define intermedia as “most ‘inter’ when the medium, whatever happens to be, serves as a vehicle through which a variety of ‘generic intentions’ can be processed, either consecutively, serially, or simultaneously. This is what makes a work ‘intermedia’ rather than ‘multimedia’… At its best, [intermedia] is more a question of finding a means of motorizing ideas and expectations. If the Duchamp’s *Fountain* is intermedia, it is not intermedia because it occupies a place between art and plumbing, but because it catalyzed a variety of artistic and social mechanisms” (Foster, Milman 1984: 17).

Other theoreticians, too, claim that while intermedia is often confused with multimedia, it should not be. Pursuant to Ken Friedman, “the important distinction between intermedia and multimedia is the melding of aspects of different media into one form. When different forms merge, we see an intermedia form” (Friedman 2005: 53). Furthermore, Jack Ox defines intermedia as a “combinatory structure of syntactical elements that come from more than one medium but are combined into one and are thereby transformed into a new entity. […] Intermedia is the product of interactions between independent systems in time and space” (Ox 2011: 47). Therefore, it can be suggested that the case of intermedia appears “when several individual media hybridize and grow into forms that become effective and convincing media in their own right” (Friedman 2005: 61), whereas multimedia do not necessarily hybridize.

Jens Schröter further defines the difference between intermedia and multimedia (he refers to it as ‘mixed media’). Schröter, quoting Higgins, states that in mixed media the mediated forms meeting there can at any time be regarded by the viewer as separate, while in intermedia or in intermedial forms a conceptual fusion occurs, making it impossible to view only one of its origins. Rather, it forces the viewer into perceiving them as simultaneous and inseparable (Schröter 2012: 19). This dialectical view of intermediality can be interpreted in the following way – the mixed media are only a collection of different media in one place or within one frame, but intermedia are syntheses within which the forms entering are assimilated (Schröter 2012: 19). Therefore, intermedia can definitely be equalled with the synthesis and hybridization of media occurring as a result of assimilation or fusion thereof.
2.2.7. The typology of intermediality

As it can be concluded from above, the field and discourse of intermediality is very diverse and the definitions and interpretations depend on each particular understanding of intermediality in a narrower sense. The author of the dissertation already provided three types of intermediality suggested by Rajewsky: (1) medial transposition, for example, film adaptations of literary texts, (2) media combination, for example, opera, film, theatre, which are new forms of media with a plurimedial structure, and (3) intermedial references, for example, references in a film to painting or in a painting to photography, as can be evidenced in the case of Photorealism or Hyperrealism.

However, in his article *Four Models of Intermediality*, Jens Schröter offers another typology of intermediality and attempts to provide the features of four models of intermediality: (1) synthetic intermediality, (2) formal and trans-medial intermediality, (3) transformational intermediality, (4) ontological intermediality.

According to Schröter, *synthetic intermediality refers to the combining of two or more art forms or media into a new art form or medium* (Schröter 2012: 16). In this model, intermediality is a process of a fusion of several media into a new medium – the intermedium. Schröter notes that the theoreticians writing on this type of intermediality, such as Higgins and Frank, associate this process both with some of the artistic movements of the sixties – notably happenings and Fluxus – and with the frequently formulated utopian idea that the gap between art and life could be closed by way of these new, synesthetic forms. These movements reside in the tradition of Wagner and his Zurich writings; that is, in the genealogical tradition of the artistic synthesis of a *Gesamtkunstwerk* (Schröter 2012: 16).

The second, *formal and trans-medial intermediality, assumes that aesthetic conventions manifest themselves in several media*. Schröter quotes French academic and film theoretician Jacques Aumont, who writes: “The analysis of the relationship between film and painting teaches us among other things specifically that painting is not incorporated in film as a composite form of art but that it was divided into its constituents and that film is not a synthesis of anything whatsoever at all” (Aumont 1992: 88). In Schröter’s opinion, Aumont seems to argue that the intermedial connection between painting and cinema lies in comparable, transmedial structures or forms that are indebted to their common participation in a historically given “order of the visible”, a “scopic regime”. These formal levels are separated from the material basis of the media; thus, they can be seen relatively autonomous regarding it – in this
sense they are transmedial (Schröter 2012: 21). Furthermore, according to Schröter, such aesthetic conventions as fictionality, rhythmicity, compositional strategies (of pictures, for example) could also be regarded as possible cases of such transmedial structures. Even though these terms clearly do not range on the same level, they nevertheless share a common ground in that they have already all been used in order to compare artefacts made from different media on a more abstract level (Schröter 2012: 22).

The third model of intermediality is transformational intermediality, “which refers to the representation of one medium within another medium” (Schröter 2012: 26). Pursuant to Schröter, it is questionable whether we can talk of intermediality since the artifact of a certain medium (a film) does not contain another medium (a painting) as another but instead represents it. A painting in a film or a building in a photograph are no longer paintings or buildings, but integral parts of the medium representing them – they are simply being represented. As such, for example, a photograph of a written text would not contain any intermedial relationship; it is simply a photograph that is pointing referentially to a text. In this perspective, film would not be a combined Gesamtkunstwerk, that is, a total work of art consisting of different media (or arts), since everything appearing in film has to have gone through the cinematic dispositive, thereby becoming an integral part of one and the same cinematic picture (Schröter 2012: 26).

And, finally, the fourth model is ontological intermediality, “where a medium defines its own ontology through relating itself to another medium, and raises the issue that it is not possible to define the specificity of a medium in isolation except through comparison with another medium” (Schröter 2012: 29). Whatever seems to be specific in a given medium depends ‘what others are not’, that is, it depends on the (implicit) definitions of other media that have to be used as contrasts. New media do not replace old ones, but rather attribute different positions in the system to them. This again means that the definition of the specific character of a medium requires the differential demarcation from other media. This ontological intermediality then would not be one that follows the specifics of given, already defined media; it rather precedes them, since the terms for the description of a new medium can only be borrowed from the already existing language or be composed from existing terms into neologisms. Thus, the recourse to metaphors referring to other media, such as ‘visual rhythm’, ‘writing of light’ cannot be avoided (Schröter 2012: 29).
In the conclusion of his article, Schröter echoes the ideas of other theoreticians, stating that an integral idea of intermediality can never be maintained, since the term is as varied as are the discourses in which it is being produced; thus, the list is open (Schröter 2012: 29). However, Klich and Scheer argue that the first two models outlined by Schröter operate at the level of ‘collaborative’ or ‘intertextual’ integration, and although ‘synthetic intermediality’ may achieve media integration, neither of these forms necessitates genuine complex intermixing of media. However, transformational and ontological intermediality offer more complex forms of media integration in which the nature of mediality is perceived as dynamic (Klich, Scheer 2011: 73).

For the purposes of the dissertation herein, it is important to recognise that both synthetic intermediality provided by Schröter and media combination provided by Rajewsky refer to the case of happenings and performance art overall. These are cases of intertextual integration when a new art form or medium is created due to the process of a fusion of several media into a new medium with plurimedial structure. However, in the discussion on Hyperrealism it is essential to consider the intermedial references provided by Rajewsky, which indicates the oscillating “in-between-ness” state, when the art form or medium is situated between two or more medial forms that reveal both the constructed media borders and a space for experimentation.

2.3. Intermedial relations between performance, photography and painting

2.3.1. Intermedial migration: painting-photography-performance

As noted by Valie Export, an influential Austrian performance artist and theoretician, “the concept of performance that developed around 1960 has traversed several phases of an evolutionary transformation” (Export 1992: 26). Through the so-called action painting American painter Jackson Pollock transformed the blank square of the canvas into a dynamic arena for action: “The painting was no longer the locus of painterly representation, but rather the condensate result of dynamic action, painterly action on the canvas. Thus, the unconscious (as the legacy of surrealism), as well as the process itself, the existential element, the individual, are brought into the foreground [...] the body of the painter itself enters into the painting” (Export 1992: 26-27). Export summarizes the transformations of painting after Pollock in the following five shifts:

“(1) The subject of the painter was foregrounded, no longer symbolically but literally, as person, as body, as performance. Through the example of the painter as actor, it also became formally possible to include other actors in this
dynamic process of painting, such as the naked bodies of women in executing the painting of Yves Klein;
(2) Painting became a public spectacle (Schauspiel), a painting for show. Georges Mathieu and Klein further developed this aspect of action painting in the 1950s. The arena of the painting became a stage, the process of painting a theatrical performance before an audience;
(3) New materials and methods of painting were introduced. ‘I prefer sticks, trowels, knives and dripping fluid paint or a heavy impasto with sand, broken glass, and other foreign matter added,’ claimed Pollock. A new relationship to reality was established through these new materials;
(4) While the painting became an arena, the product, a process, and the course of events a drama, the theatrical aspects of painting – the processual, the ritual, the performance characteristics – were emphasized and became absolutes;
(5) By introducing the body, the spectacle, and action into the arena of painting, in addition to new materials, the process of painting was extended into reality. Robert Rauschenberg [...] established his art precisely in this intermediate zone between art and life. Art became life, at least in the ideology of the action-event and performance” (Export 1992: 27).

Pursuant to Export, “there was a trajectory of development from painting that itself was performance, toward performance that could be multimaterial and multimedia in character and that proceeded from the body of the action-event to the person of the performance” (Export 1992: 32). This discursive enactment was accompanied by two key articles: Harold Rosenberg’s 1952 The American Action Painters and Allan Kaprow’s 1958 The Legacy of Jackson Pollock, both of which write Pollock’s body into motion as actively painting rather than consigning it to the status of an invisible origin of the work (Jones 2012: 39).
In Kaprow’s article The Legacy of Jackson Pollock he elaborated a particular reading of Pollock as explicitly performative. Kaprow noted that “[w]ith Pollock. . . the so-called dance of dripping, slashing, squeezing, daubing, and whatever else went into a work placed an almost absolute value upon a diaristic gesture” (Kaprow 1993: 3-4), which he argues established art as a process rather than a final product. Kaprow identified a new situation in which those who approach Pollock’s paintings become equally active and participating:
“I am convinced that to grasp a Pollock’s impact properly, we must be acrobats, constantly shuttling between an identification with the hands and body that flung the paint and stood ‘in’ the canvas and submission to the objective markings, allowing them to entangle and assault us. This instability is indeed far from the idea of a ‘complete’ painting. The artist, the spectator, and the outer world are much too interchangeably involved here” (Kaprow 1993: 5).

As Kaprow notes of Pollock’s works, “they ceased to become paintings and became environments [leaving us] at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street” (Kaprow 1993: 6-7). The idea of environments echoes in Kaprow’s assemblages, too. He defines them as environments, a new type of art, where “objects of every sort are materials for the new art: paint, chairs, food, electric and neon light, smoke, water, old socks, a dog, movies” (Kaprow 1993: 9). Jones argues that “through this new way of seeing and thinking about art as a process of making rather than as static object, artists and theorists began exploring various modes of foregrounding the body as visible to the making of and encounter with the work of art” (Jones 2012: 40).

Photography played a pivotal role in contributing towards the legendary status of Jackson Pollock and namely through the dissemination of photographs taken in 1950 by Hans Namuth in Pollock’s studio. The photographs were often manipulated “to make it appear as if Pollock was closer to the viewer and more engulfed in the painting itself” (Stiles 1998: 286). Hence, it is essential to recognize how action painting evolved into happenings and later body art and performance with the help of photography. The first artist, who staged live action paintings as the subject of photography and as a performance before a viewing public, was Georges Mathieu.57

57 It must be mentioned that parallels can be drawn with Latvia, where already in 1920 an artistic protest, which is known as ‘Kasparsoneide’, was organized as a fake mock-exhibition dedicated to a new style ‘Spherism’ (‘bumbisms’ in Latvian). This allegedly new style “also reflected the opposition to the emergence of ‘-isms’ in avant-garde movements, which were viewed as superficially perceived expressions of forms” (Gerharde-Upenieca 2019: 172). To discredit modern art, the defenders of traditional art, professors Jānis Tillbergs (1880-1972) and Rihards Zariņš (1869-1939) organized not only the exhibition, but also a lecture and public performance, where six students painted for an hour in front of the audiences to show that through modern art “the emerging progressive artists were only trying to hide their artistic immaturity”
He was a keen admirer of Pollock and “realized the powerful potential connection between painting, photography, performance and public” (Stiles 1998: 287). For Mathieu, the photograph was the right medium to carry the content of painting and the process of performance to the public. As other action artists, Mathieu, too, denied that his work had anything to do with performance. According to him, his public actions were efforts “to make the public participate in the creation [of a painting] itself” (Stiles 1998: 289). And even though Mathieu cannot be considered as the predecessor of happenings, he definitely can be named as a forerunner of action art (Stiles 1998: 289).

Mathieu characterized his vigorous physical enactments as a process of “revolt, risk, speed, intuition, improvisation, and excitement” (Stiles 1996: 681). His theories were published widely in art journals and popular periodicals such as *Time*, *Vogue* and *The New York Times*. According to Stiles, the widespread international reception of Mathieu’s work had a rapid impact on the subsequent development of performance art (Stiles 1996: 681). Following Mathieu’s example, Yves Klein also began to stage spectacular public events. In 1958 Klein began to direct nude female models to apply his International Klein Blue (IKB) pigment to their bodies. Pressing their painted bodies against canvas to create figurative imprints he called *Anthropomeries*, Klein implemented the women as “living brushes” (Stiles 1996: 681). The first gallery presentation of the Anthropomeries of the Blue Epoch, which took place on 9 March 1960 at *Galerie Internationale d’Art Contemporain*, caused a sensation:

“When the invited guests had taken their seats, Klein, in black dinner jacket and white tie, gave the cue, and the orchestra began the *Monotone Symphony* (this time comprising a twenty-minute-long continuous note, followed by twenty minutes of silence). As the sound permeated the room, three nude girls entered, carrying pails of blue paint. Klein proceeded to apply it to their bodies, and with an extreme concentration matched the nervous tension of the audience, directed the making of the blue imprints as if by telekinesis. The performance,

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(Šturma 1976). Much later, in 1990, an exhibition entitled *Maigāš svārstības* (Gentle Fluctuations) was organised at the Exhibition Hall *Latvija*. Artists Ieva Iltnere, Sandra Krastiņa, Jānis Mitrēvics, Ģirts Muižnieks, Edgars Vērpe and Aija Zariņa painted in front of the audiences and afterwards exhibited the completed works of art.

58 Mathieu was acknowledged by Yves Klein as a mentor and also recognized by the Viennese artists, who acknowledged his performance in Vienna (2 April 1959) as significant in their move into action.
demonstrating for all to see the way in which sensuality can be sublimated in the process of artistic creation, engendered a mood of almost magical suspense. Yet as soon as the long forty minutes were over, a lively debate about the function of myth and ritual in art struck up, with Georges Mathieu and Yves Klein at its center” (Weitemeier 2001: 55).

In 1960 Klein produced Leap Into The Void, which is credited as “the most famous performance photograph of all time” (Jobey 2016). It shows the artist jumping into space from a building on a quiet street. However, the image is a manipulated photomontage – Klein made the jump on the tarpaulin held by his friends, which was later edited out. According to McKenzie, Leap Into The Void “represents the transition from one material space into another; it is also a representation of Klein’s inner-space transformed through photomontage and made manifest in outer-space” (McKenzie 2014). Klein used the photograph on the first page of his publication Dimanche - Le Journal d’un Seul Jour (Sunday - The Newspaper for Only One Day), on 27 November 1960, where he outlined his own theory for the Theatre of the Void. In this theory, theatre could no longer be synonymous with representation or spectacle: “Klein’s theatre was a spectacle enacted without actors, without stage design, without a stage, without an author and without an audience. The theatre of the future was, for Klein, an empty room: the theatre of the void” (Caron 2016).

This evolution of action-painting into action demonstrates a shift from the medium of painting to the medium of the body via the transit of photograph in North America and Western Europe. Although this process of transformation was not the same in the region of Central and Eastern Europe, it serves as a paradigmatic example in illustrating intermedial relations between performance, photography and painting.

2.3.2. The case study of intermedial relations between photography and painting: Hyperrealism in Latvia in the period of late socialism

According to the definition provided by Elita Ansone, the curator of exhibition Hyperrealism. Movement Manifestations in Latvia held at the Arsenāls Exhibition Hall from 3 March to 21 May 2017, “Hyperrealism in figurative art depicts reality in a precise and detailed manner and imitates the particularities of photography”
As noted by Mark Allen Svede, “Hyperrealism emerged within Baltic art [...] at roughly the moment realist painting was retired as the privileged idiom of Soviet visual propaganda and Brezhnev’s regime began masking its domestic entropy with superficially dynamic posterized images of cosmonauts, athletes, and the like, abstracted into angular, overlapping shapes of flat colour” (Svede 2002: 221). However, as indicated by art historian Māra Traumane, the information on Hyperrealism reached the Baltics not only from the Western information sources, but also, quite surprisingly, from Moscow, where in 1974 and 1975 USA art exhibitions were organized (Traumane 2000: 123).

In Latvia the first artist to experiment with the intermediality between photography and painting was Imants Lancmanis, who was a multi-talented artist engaged in performance art, too. Lancmanis belonged to the (Second) French Group. In Lancmanis’s hyperrealist paintings the optical qualities attainable only with a camera were emphasized: “Depth of field is fixed, captured motion is blurred, and light erases detail almost as often as illuminating it” (Svede 2002: 221). The painting that epitomizes these qualities is, for example, *Riga: Suvorova Street* (1971).

However, according to Svede, Miervaldis Polis (b. 1948), who equally tried out performance art as another genre of visual arts, can be called a true photorealistic. In his hands “hyperrealism became the vehicle for a protracted exercise in manipulated self-identity” (Svede 2002: 222). Polis was married to Līga Purmale (b. 1948) and together they got carried away with painting derived from photography. According to Māra Traumane, their interest emerged in 1973, when Polis participated in a group show that was thematically dedicated only to paintings depicting pets and animals. When one of the visitors wanted to obtain Polis’s work, he did not want to part with it, so he made another painting from a photograph. Polis admits: “And then I realised that copying is something wonderful, when no one has ideas, but only the drawing” (Traumane 2000: 128). The next impulse was from the Polish art magazine *Projekt*, which published materials on the hyperrealist exhibition in the USA in 1972. Polis liked the idea that a

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59 This subchapter was deemed as necessary by the author of the doctoral dissertation, because not only it illustrates the intermedial relations between photography and painting in Latvia in the period of late socialism, but it also draws attention to the fact that the painters in consideration, e.g. Lancmanis and Polis, were also actively engaged in performance art. It demonstrates that these multi-talented artists wanted to experiment with a myriad of disciplines, expressing themselves through various genres blurring the conceptions of autonomy of the individual arts.
miniature object could be enlarged (Traumane 2000: 129). Overall, from 1973 to 1975 Polis was interested in the imitation of the graininess of photography, low-quality photograph and enlargement possibilities. In this time period Polis made paintings from black-and-white photographs transferring the image onto cardboard with the help of the grid (Traumane 2000: 129).

Traumane also points out that Polis’s creative strategy was different from the artists pursuing Hyperrealism in the West. For example, in 1975 Polis painted a cycle Grāmata par salu (A Book About an Island). The cycle consisted of “surreal visions” (Traumane 2000: 129). Here Polis appropriated the photographic images editing and re-painting them as documents of his travels. According to Svede, this was the time when Polis “devoted his energies to a wildly inventive, highly elaborate simulationism, years before it became fashionable in Western art circles (Svede 2002: 223). Traumane also agrees that such games with the photographic images were absolutely unknown in Western Hyperrealism (Traumane 2000: 129). In the context of the doctoral dissertation herein, it also manifests the case of intermedial appropriation where images, characters and plots migrate from one medium to another in a very interdisciplinary manner crossing the boundaries of performance, photography and painting. Moreover, the “simulationism” is a very performative and theatrical feature.

As noted by Eduards Kļaviņš, Latvian hyperrealist artists Lancmanis, Bruno Vasiljevskis (1939-1990), Polis and Purmale “positioned themselves as standing apart from the traditions of Socialist Realism, although that was not always true” (Kļaviņš 2009: 108). For example, Polis’s paintings were related to the themes of Soviet upbuilding and work (Workday in a City Street, 1978; The Workday Has Begun, 1980). According to Kļaviņš, “these works of art must be attributed to mutations of Socialist Realism” (Kļaviņš 2009: 109).
CHAPTER 3: Performance art in Latvia as intermedial appropriation

3.1. The notion of intermediality expressed as interest in synthesis in Latvian art discourse

It cannot be stated that intermediality as a concept has been widely popular in Latvia in the discourse of arts. At least, there is no evidence of the term discussed or applied in art history neither as a theoretical discourse, nor as an interpretative framework. However, there is another term, which was circulating in the press discourse in the late socialist period and the critical writing in the 2000s being applied very closely to the concept of intermediality, and this term is ‘synthesis’.

The press discourse in the 1970s reveals a particular interest in the synthesis of arts, especially manifested in the weekly periodical Literatūra un Māksla (Literature and Art). As noted by art historian Stella Pelšē, who examines the phenomenon in her article on the synthesis of arts in Latvian art writing of the 1970s, “synthesis was conceived as a sort of panacea, a goal as well as a symptom or expression of the epoch” (Pelšē 2016: 76). Apart from the interest expressed in the press, there were also conferences and seminars organised to explore the notion of synthesis: “Synthesis was applied to virtually all spheres of culture, from theatre and music to architecture and visual arts” (Pelšē 2016: 76).

There was a particular strong interest in the synthesis between architecture and art, where emphasis was laid on the merging of various disciplines and forms. For example, in the article Sintēzes jēdziens un tās loma mūsdienu telpiskās vides radīšanā (The Notion of Synthesis and its Role in Creating Contemporary Spatial Environment) architect Ivars Strautmanis writes: “The notion of synthesis and its general manifestations, in fact, are nothing new or characteristic only to our century. If we look carefully, in each discipline irrespective of the style at the time or geography, we can notice a drive to trespass the traditional borders of one field, test the knowledge in relation to other phenomena and to merge various forms and approaches to obtain new results” (Strautmanis 1970: 3). In another article Par mākslas sintēzes problēmas principiem (On the Principles of the Art Synthesis Problem), art historian Taņjana Kačalova examines ‘the problem of synthesis’ in light of architecture and painting or sculpture. The article provides four key rules of synthesis. The first one is ‘organic unity’, which stipulates that there must be a unity between a building and a decorative painting. The second rule is ‘legibility’, which is defined as a quality that makes the perception of artwork possible. It is manifested as a legible form and clarity of concept.
It is also noted that not everything can be legible in a work of art and that ‘absolute legibility’ can only be achieved in the ‘primitives’ and posters. The third rule is ‘the understanding of specific features’, for example, using specific methods or understanding the effect of the chosen color palette in creating a monumental and decorative work of art. And finally, the fourth principle is ‘harmony’, which is characterized as ‘aesthetic experience’ (Kačalova 1970: np).

According to Pelše, art historian Herberes Dubins (1919-1991) was “most involved with the issues related to synthesis” (Pelše 2016: 81). In his article Dažas sintēzes problēmas šodien (A Few Problems of Synthesis Today), Dubins indicates that “there are phenomena, where each artistic component is absolutely independent, but where the character of the ‘image’ [in Latvian provided as tēls, L.K.] is revealed in a linear order of individual, mutually unrelated artistic components” (Dubins 1971: np). This, according to Dubins, is an ‘open type’ synthesis, which can be defined as conglomerate, and it is most vividly manifested, for example, in the circus art, where equestrian skills, taming of animals, acrobatics, dance, clowning and illusionist tricks are incorporated in one performance (Dubins 1971: np). In other phenomena a “new organic artistic image emerges as a result of mutual interaction among individual art disciplines, yet each artistic component is only relatively independent” (Dubins 1971: np). As examples, Dubins mentions fine arts, architecture, interior and applied arts. Finally, Dubins concludes that “there are such spheres, where the confluence and integration of various artistic components in the specific artistic image is so absolute and organic that the new synthesis becomes a completely individual [work of] art” (Dubins 1971: np). According to Dubins, this type of synthesis is evident in the art of theatre and opera. It must be noted that Dubins’s ideas, indeed, resonate with the theoretical framework of intermediality, especially the third example that he provides, where autonomous work of art is created as a result of synthesis and hybridisation of various artistic disciplines.

As regards the critical thought, art historian Ieva Kalniņa writes that the synthesis of various art forms was a characteristic feature of the 1970s-1980s period. Kalniņa states that the notion of synthesis was related to the rapid evolution of science and technologies in the postwar world (Kalniņa 2000: 102). However, according to Kalniņa, the synthesis could be characterized not only as formal incorporation or use of the approaches of one art discipline into another, it was also manifested as borrowing crucial ideas from other art disciplines (Kalniņa 2000: 111). Kalniņa provides several
examples of such synthesis, including the Office Group, which she defines as an experimental theatre collective, since, according to Kalniņa, the participants synthesized theatre and performance art. Another example is the lectures–thematic discotheques that Hardijs Lediņš started to organize in the mid-1970s (Kalniņa 2000: 114).

Art historian Ieva Astahovska also comments on the phenomenon of synthesis in kinetic art, which “developed in the border area between fine arts and applied arts” (Asthovska 2010: 30), where the keywords were “movement” – as the element that unites art, science and technology –, and also ‘environment’, which incorporated various meanings and areas – nature, urban environment, architecture, physical space and the space of perception, their aesthetic and functional issues, as well as simultaneous interaction of different areas” (Asthovska 2010: 30-31). The representatives of kinetic art got directly involved in the discussion of synthesis that was a hotly debated topic in the USSR in the 1970s and “emphasized both the importance and the synthesis of ‘physics’ and ‘poetry’ and the determination to create a new kind of the world” (Asthovska 2010: 31). Moreover, as accentuated by Astahovska, “kinetics was connected not only to the physical motion, but also to the motion of thinking: by synthesizing actual environmental objects with ideas unleashed by the imagination, the artists created both potentially feasible as well as visionary and utopian environment suggestions” (Asthovska 2010: 31). Astahovska mentions the exhibition Models by graphic artist Māris Ārgalis at the House of Knowledge (Zinību nams)60 in 1978 as a perfect illustration for the synthesis of movement and environment: “The surreal graphics that were [...] drawn on glass and positioned against a window, synthesised at least three levels of space (the illusory space of the artwork, the environment of the exhibition and the outside world)” (Asthovska 2010: 31).

As regards the idea of boundaries or the breakdown of any boundaries, which is so important in the notion of intermediality, the 1980s have been termed by Latvian art historians as the period of border trespassing and the artists working at this time – the generation of border trespassers. According to art historian Solvita Krese, the 1980s were transitional years in Latvian art world, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the

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60 The House of Knowledge (Zinību nams) was established by Soviet authorities in an orthodox cathedral (the foundation stone laid in 1876, officially opened in 1884) that was closed down and converted into a planetarium. Since the late 1990s, renovation works have been taking place and the cathedral is known as the Riga Nativity of Christ Cathedral.
information blockade was terminated and the censorship abolished. Krese refers to this period of time as the change of paradigms, when the borders were trespassed in several aspects. First, artists were looking for a new form of expression, when they started to use new media and new opportunities of form – supergraphics, video, performances, installations, etc. Second, border trespassing was evident in the content and message, using codes and various mythological and metaphoric systems. The works of art contained messages, which commented on the socio-political circumstances. Third, the artists literally started to cross borders by exhibiting their works beyond the territorial borders of the Soviet empire. In 1988 an exhibition Riga – Latvian Avant-garde was organized in West Berlin and later in Kiel and Bremen (Krese 2006: 7).

Thus, it can be stated that overall, the concepts of hybridity, synthesis and interdisciplinary practices were nothing particularly new in Latvian art scene in the 1970s and 1980s. Art historian Eduards Klaviņš writes that in the 1970s non-traditional media began to appear in the artistic environment of Latvia, and especially important was the 1972 exhibition Svetki (Celebration) with 49 participating artists showcasing installations, kinetic objects, as well as elements of Pop Art and Op Art under the disguise of design (Klaviņš 2009: 110). In the 1980s, a crucial turning point in unofficial art production in Latvia was the exhibition Daba, Vide, Cilvēks (Nature, Environment, Man) organized in 1984 in St. Peter’s Church in the heart of the Old Town, and included a number of installations, multimedia works, and pantomime shows, presented alongside more traditional artistic forms, such as paintings and prints (Bryzgel 2013: 106). Kalniņa states that this exhibition can be regarded as a programmatic history of artistic progress, since the new art movements were not seen merely as entertainment and carnival, but as full-scale disciplines that are eligible to coexist with the traditionally more prioritized ‘high art’ phenomena (Kalniņa 2000: 101).

Overall, the phenomenon of synthesis was a comfortable territory both for artists and art historians in the period of late socialism. If artists could use it as a legitimate zone

61 Stella Pelše also mentions earlier uses of synthesis in Latvian thinking and writing on art examining the creative strategies of painters Teodors Ūders (1868-1915), Jāzeps Grosvalds (1891-1920) and Jēkabs Kazaks (1895-1920) (see Pelše 2016: 77).
for experimentation, the art historians could follow the popular analytical trends coming from Moscow. As noted by Pelšė:

“The very notion of synthesis has functioned in part as an empty shell that can be filled with different contents for different agendas; while in the 1960s it served to strengthen the discourse of Socialist Realism, particularly its eclectic, composite nature, in the 1970s synthesis became more of a legitimating tool for transcending boundaries between different kinds of art and even endorsing phenomena comparable to Western artistic trends of the second half of the 20th century” (Pelšė 2016: 84).

3.2. Appropriation in art

3.2.1. Appropriation in art in the West in the 1970s

The word ‘appropriation’ derives from the Latin appropriare, which translates as ‘to make one’s own’. John C. Welchman, the professor of art history at the University of California, writes that from the broadest perspective “the term ‘appropriation’ stands for the relocation, annexation or theft of cultural properties – whether objects, ideas or notations – associated with the rise of European colonialism and global capital” (Welchman 2003: 1). In the anthropological and cultural context, appropriation is often negatively associated with the tangible and invisible damage inflicted on local communities through the advantage of dominance and power. Yet, in the globalised world, the notion of ‘advantage’ has become “increasingly difficult to fix” (Welchman 2003: 1). For example, Cuban writer Geraldo Mosquera states that in the globalised situation “all cultures ‘steal’ from one another, be it from positions of dominance or subordination” (Welchman 2003: 1).

However, in the context of art it is possible to examine appropriation from two broad perspectives, thus appropriation can be: (1) unconscious; (2) deliberate. In the first case, appropriation is almost inevitable, because, as indicated by James O. Young, “almost all artists engage in some sort of appropriation in that they borrow ideas, motifs, plots, technical devices, and so forth from other artists” (Young 2008: 4). However, appropriation can also be deliberate, because artists can intentionally borrow, copy or alter preexisting images and objects (MOMA). For example, Picasso is known for borrowing the geometrical Cubist forms from African woodcarvings. He also created new paintings through the copying or paraphrasing of an existing image from the history of art making his own variations after such famous works as Eugène
Delacroix’s *The Women of Algiers* (1954-55), Diego Velazquez’s *Las Meninas* (1957), and Édouard Manet’s *Dejeuner sur l’herbe* (1959-62) (Burgard 1991: 479). There are also other examples that belong to this practice, including the ready-mades of Marcel Duchamp from 1915, *detournement* of the Situationists, collages of Surrealists and silk-screens of Andy Warhol. All these artists were trying to question the nature or definition of art itself, as well as rebel against “the modernist notion of originality and its taboo on imitation” (McLean 2012: 179).

There are many other terms to describe the activities of borrowing in the vocabulary of art: adaptation, adoption, bricolage, cento, farrago, misprision, pastiche; however, “none conveys artistic agency as appropriation” (Ambrose 2012: 169). American artists such as Richard Prince (b. 1949), Sherrie Levine (b. 1947), Barbara Kruger (b. 1945) and Jeff Koons (b. 1955) engaged in the practice of appropriation in the 1970s quite provocatively and controversially giving rise to numerous lawsuits regarding copyright. For example, Sherrie Levine reproduced iconic and famous works of other photographers, such as Walker Evans and Edward Weston, by simply re-photographing them and exhibiting them in a gallery. As Rosalind Krauss notes, “Levine’s medium is the pirated print” (Krauss 1985: 19). In this context, appropriation as a gesture of stealing, copying, and quoting deconstructs the notion of origin, emanates the sense of *déjà vu* and is considered a very postmodern practice, since Postmodernism is “the discourse of the copy” (Krauss 1985: 19). Thus, the concepts of originality, authenticity and authorship are central in Appropriation Art.

Moreover, the appropriation artists in the West were influenced by several pivotal theoretical texts: the 1935 essay by the German philosopher Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, the 1967 essay by the French theorist Roland Barthes, *The Death of the Author*, as well as the 1985 book *The Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* by the American art critic Rosalind Krauss.

In *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* Benjamin discusses the concept of authenticity claiming that “the work of art has always been reproducible” (Benjamin 2008: 3), not only mechanically, but also as an artistic exercise.\(^6\) However,

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\(^6\) Dante, for example, indicated that following past masters was the key to one’s best original work, stating in *De vulgari eloquentia*, “The more closely we imitate great poets, the better we write”. (Dante, *De vulgari eloquentia*, ed. Pio Rajna (Hoepli 1907: 45).)
as Benjamin points out, “even with the most perfect reproduction, one thing stands out: the here and now of the work of art – its unique existence in the place where it is at this moment” (Benjamin 2008: 3). The here and now of the original or ‘the aura’ are what constitute the abstract idea of the genuineness of the work of art. Yet, mechanical reproduction diminishes the genuineness, for example, many prints can be made from a photographic plate; consequently, “the question of the genuine print has no meaning” (Benjamin 2008: 12).

Barthes, in his turn, criticizes the concepts of authority and authorship in literature arguing that a literary text should not be interpreted or explained on the basis of biographical or personal attributes of the author. Moreover, it is the reader, who gives the meaning to the text and is actively engaged in interpretation. In other words, the reader is born at the cost of the death of the Author: “The reader is the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed without any of them being lost; a text’s unity lies not in its origin but in its destination” (Barthes 1977: 148). According to Barthes, each text is a multilayered palimpsest with a plethora of meanings, and none of the ideas can be regarded as the author’s “self-expression”. He writes:

“We know that a text is not a line of words releasing […] the message of the Author-God, but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of the original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture. […] the writer can only imitate a gesture that is always anterior, never original. His only power is to mix writings, to counter the ones with the others, in such a way as never to rest on any one of them” (Barthes 1977: 146).

These influential theoretical texts and ideas were supporting Appropriation artists in the West to prove “that there was no such thing as authorship and originality, only unoriginal, endless copying” (Kuspit 2011: 240). Through deliberate borrowing and

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130). Picasso, in his turn, provided the famous quote “Good artists copy, great artists steal” (Sonvilla-Weiss 2015: 57).

64 In fact, Benjamin’s ideas echo with Andy Warhol, who famously told Art News interviewer Gene Swenson, “The reason I’m painting this way is that I want to be a machine, and I feel that whatever I do and do machine-like is what I want to do.” Warhol was referring to his newfound process of silk-screen printing images repeatedly onto a single canvas. This act of undermining any translation or evidence of the artist’s hand in favor of a mass-produced, machine-like look appealed to Warhol (Kamholz, 2013).
copying, these artists addressed such issues as agency, power, creativity and the myth of origin, thus contributing to the “longstanding debate between ‘originality’ and ‘imitation’ consistently foregrounded in academic discussion of cultural practice from the Greeks to the late nineteenth century” (Welchman 2003: 4).

3.2.2. Appropriation in art in Latvia in the 1970s

The appropriation in art in Soviet Latvia in the 1970s was different from the one in the West, and performance art has an especially rich history of the occasions, when the works of art or their motives migrated from one author or medium to another. Yet, although the act of borrowing was deliberate, this choice was not rooted in postmodern critical thinking. Rather, the acts of appropriation resulted, first of all, from the restrictions imposed by the political regime to performance art. In a system of ideological commitment and strict art hierarchies, only ‘traditional’ art disciplines, such as painting and sculpture, were considered politically correct and serious, suitable to serve the ideological purpose of the Soviet ideologues. According to Latvian art critic Vilnis Vējsp, the Soviet system discriminated not only specific individuals, but entire artistic forms by denying them the status of a professional art or ranking them low in cultural hierarchy (Vējsp 2010: 25). Performance art belonged to these genres and, consequently, existed as a hybrid ‘in-between’ of diverse media, such as photographs, silk-screen prints, and paintings. This intermediality was a result of a process of change that performance art underwent in order to adapt to external political factors. All these media were not mere forms of documentation, but intermedia – a “combinatory structure of syntactical elements that [came] from more than one medium but [were] combined into one and [were] thereby transformed into a new entity” (Ox 2011: 47). They existed in parallel echoing and reemploying each other, hybridizing and growing “into forms that [became] effective and convincing media in their own right” (Friedman 2005: 61).

Secondly, appropriation in Soviet Latvia occurred as a result of community actions and participation in joint, hybrid projects. Due to the socio-political circumstances, which demanded unconditional conformity to the social system, artists in Latvia sought ways

65 The examples will be examined in more detail in Subchapter 3.3.
66 Silk-screening is a printing technique that allows printing images repeatedly on a single canvas. The machine-like look and the lack of artist’s touch was especially appealing to Andy Warhol, who produced most of his iconic works in this technique.
how to escape the political indoctrination and apathy resulting from the suppression of creative agency. A freethinking community consisting of close acquaintances, friends and family members was one of the solutions. This microenvironment ensured that through networking in the cultural periphery it was possible to implement certain creative freedom avoiding the ideological pressure and censorship, and thus to be innovative, inventive, spontaneous and experimental. Performance art particularly attracted many creative individuals of diverse and interdisciplinary backgrounds – fashion designers, theatre actors, film students, painters, writers, poets, musicians, photographers, etc. The process of generating performance was often implemented as ‘collaborative creation’ (Heddon, Milling 2006), uniting all members in non-hierarchical creative expression and democratic participation – something that the political regime undermined. Among these circles of friends, the issues of authorship were not perceived as the violation of copyright; it was the possibility for alternative, autonomous and uncensored action that mattered most.

Photography, painting and serigraphy were not simply different media of representation or forms of documentation, but instead – the experimentation zones of media hybridization and synthesis leading to completely new, autonomous works of art. The migration of media from performance to photography and painting, as well as the intentional borrowing among several artists, who were involved in such hybrid, collaborative works of art, highlight the notion of appropriation. Contrary to the practices in the West, Latvian artists did not pursue these actions in the name of conceptual art. Although deliberate, the appropriation can rather be interpreted as organic side effect of socio-political circumstances in non-capitalist art structures.

3.3. The examples of performance art as intermedial appropriation in Latvia
The intermedial appropriation is the feature that characterizes performance art in Latvia in the late Soviet period. Not only artists appropriated different motifs and styles based on aesthetics, but performance art itself underwent a process of change and turned into a hybrid consisting of different media in order to emerge in the first public sphere although in a ‘camouflaged’ form such as exhibition catalogues, book covers, photographs, paintings or serigraphs.

All the examples presented in Subchapter 3.3 illustrate the junctures between performance art and other media/arts. It is evident that such a relationship may occur on a one-on-one basis, in which a media form or a media product is transposed to
another media form or product undergoing the process of transformation. Or, intermediality can occur in a more multimedial basis, in which a complex transposition involving several media takes place at once. The result is a new, autonomous work of art, which is different from the original and yet has not lost some of the original properties as a result of media intersection and hybridization.

3.3.1. The Office Group

One example is the Office Group (Biroja grupa, 1971–1974), which was an interdisciplinary artists’ collective founded by the graduates of the People’s Film Actors Studio established in 1965. The Group was established with an aim “to create new, independent theatre” (Skanstīņš 2010: 201), but it did not have any institutional status, formal membership or structural hierarchy. The Group obtained its name from the premises where the meetings and rehearsals were organised. It was the Office of Film Propaganda on Kirova Street 49 (currently Elizabetes Street). The Group needed new members, and Skanstīņš invited Eižens Valpēters to join. Afterwards, Valpēters also invited Mudīte Gaiševska and Andris Grinbergs to join. The Group members gathered two or three times a week in an informal atmosphere to collaboratively stage improvisational scenes (études) aiming for alternative and experimental techniques in theatre, mostly focusing on performing without any verbal communication. The corporeal activities were accompanied by poetry readings, painting, discussions on art and semiotics, as well as shared passion for Antonioni films.

The rehearsals were led by Ivars Skanstīņš, who claims that the tasks often imitated ritualistic processes and that Grinbergs got engaged in them “very naturally” (Skanstīņš 2010: 203). Skanstīņš asked the Office Group’s members to become “posters, matrjoshkas, space ships, happiness, consciousness, storm, sacrificial animals, etc.” (Skanstīņš 2010: 204). Skanstīņš quotes Valpēters in order to provide the motto and key principle of the Group: “Innovation. The quest for a new language in any art” (Skanstīņš 2010: 203). The Group had one public performance in 1971 at the Tartu Students’ Days (“We showed a ritualistic mini drama without a text” (Skanstīņš 2010: 203)).

The most important legacy of the Group would have been the experimental ‘self-portrait’ short films made in 1972. Unfortunately, through an incident with the

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67 Lectures given in 1969 by the Tartu University professor Yuri Lotman.
Committee for State Security (KGB) only two of these films survived. Due to the previous records of Andris Grinbergs’s activities, in January 1974, the KGB started to show interest in the Group’s activities: Ivars Skanstiņš received a notice to come to the KGB office for an interrogation, Juris Civjans’s film was ‘borrowed’ and never returned. In fear of repressions, Mudīte Gaiševska cut out ‘compromising’ shots from her film, and Eižens Valpēters’s film was mysteriously lost, while he was working as a renovator at the Rundāle Palace. In January 1974, the Office Group ceased its activities and gatherings.

In the history of performance art in Latvia, the Office Group stands out as one of the first artistic attempts to create a hybrid, interdisciplinary project, where creative individuals from various backgrounds could cooperate to generate a performance as collaborative creation. The element of improvisation and spontaneity was crucial in order to experiment with the narrative structure and acting techniques, whereas the non-hierarchical networking and the notion of democratic participation offered an alternative space for implementing one’s creative agency and practicing the freedom of non-regulated decisions. The Group is also important because it appropriated motives and patterns from various visual arts disciplines and theatre, as well as supported the idea that there were no strict categories among these trajectories. Consequently, such an approach resonated with the idea of intermediality proposed by Fluxus artist Dick Higgins, who in 1966 described intermedia as art that falls “between media” and proposed that the separation of artistic media into rigid categories is “absolutely irrelevant” (Higgins 2003: 38). To Higgins the happening was the ultimate ‘intermedium’, “an uncharted land that lies between collage, music and the theatre” (Higgins 2003: 42).

The Office Group was also a very influential and crucial factor in the career of Grinbergs as a performance artist, because it inspired and encouraged him to work in an interdisciplinary direction, exploring the trajectories of alternative lifestyle and broadening the traditional boundaries of arts. It was during the Office Group period (August 1972) when his first happening *The Wedding of Jesus Christ (Jēzus Kristus kāzas)* took place.
3.3.2. The collaborative projects between Andris Grinbergs and Jānis Kreicbergs

For Grinbergs, photography was the most essential medium having been a part of his performance: “How did I start making those photos? They are my unrealized paintings. I could not draw, write or express myself well enough in music, yet I had ideas” (Grinbergs 1992: 2). Grinbergs’s performances were mostly photographed by Jānis Kreicbergs (1939-2011), who was a very well-known and established photographer in Latvia. Kreicbergs started his creative activities in 1958 as a freelance photographer in press periodicals Zvaigžne, Dzimtenes Bāls and Padomju Jaunatne. In 1963 he graduated from the Moscow Institute of Journalism, whereas from 1964 he was an active member of photoclub Rīga. He also organized many international group shows, from which the most popular are Sieviete (A Woman, 1968) and 100 foto meistari (100 Photo Masters, 1972). From 1968 to 1972 he led a Division of Photography at the Committee of Cultural Relations with Latvians Abroad of the Ministry of Culture. This was a very productive period in his life, when he organized many group and solo exhibitions and established contacts with the West.68 In the 1970s Kreicbergs worked as a fashion photographer for Rīgas Modes (Riga Fashion), where he was introduced to Grinbergs. Starting from the mid-1970s Kreicbergs actively collaborated with Andris Grinbergs, photographing his happenings, for example, Dedication to Antonioni: The Red Dessert (Fig. 31-32, p. 14 in the Visual Supplement), The Last Liv (Fig. 33, p. 15 in the Visual Supplement), Terrorists (Fig. 28-30, p. 13 in the Visual Supplement), The Old House etc. Kreicbergs quotes Grinbergs as his ideologue: “If Plaudis was the ideologue for Binde, Grinbergs was the ideologue for me. Grinbergs had great organizational skills. We both were looking for the moment of truth in it, not theatre. We wanted life” (Kreicbergs 2009: n.p.).

However, Kreicbergs did not join Grinbergs and his group of followers in the second public sphere merely to document the performances. In fact, together with Grinbergs they created hybrid works of art, which transformed from a process-based, one-time action into a fine art object becoming easily transportable and adaptable. Kreicbergs appropriated the plots, characters and aesthetics from Grinbergs’s happenings and presented the resulting images as a new and original work of art. He did so, because he never considered himself only a photographer invited to document the process-based

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68 Allegedly, the privileges granted to him as a KGB agent.
events under a strict guidance of an authoritarian director. Instead, Kreicbergs saw performances as a collaborative project with an element of spontaneity and improvisation providing him with an opportunity to produce free creative expression:

“It was not easy to collaborate with Grinbergs, because he was moody. But we could get on well. I liked his environment and characters; they were not empty, they had an idea in the background. But the very process was spontaneous: [the mutual interaction was very] inspiring, stimulating, provoking. I was looking for interesting plots. I was young and crazy, born revolutionist. I supported that they did something unacceptable to the regime. […] My revolutionist spirit was manifested by implementing [artistic] agency and showing originality in my creative work. […] During the day we worked and were busy, but […] we felt great enthusiasm to participate in prohibited things. It was fanaticism for the sake of art. We believed that what we did would be useful for the future society. We believed that the system would collapse once, but not so soon. We thought that it would be around the year 2000. The oppression was so heavy, the [Soviet] Union so mighty, the ideology so powerful that only a few brave ones could stand against it (Kreicbergs 2009: n.p.).”

Kreicbergs remembers that he had a solo show in West Berlin in 1983, which mostly consisted of Grinbergs’s happening *The Old House* and some photographs from other performances: “Germans were surprised that something like that had happened [in Latvia] simultaneously with them” (Kreicbergs 2009: n.p.). Kreicbergs admits that he has sent photographs from Grinbergs’s happenings to other exhibitions, too, but “since there was the ‘erotic moment’ and shabby environment, it was not possible to circulate such images too freely” (Kreicbergs 2009: n.p.).

A new and crucial twist in the collaboration between Kreicbergs and Grinbergs is provided due to the recently opened and publicly accessible KGB archives and files. It becomes evident that Kreicbergs was recruited by the KGB as an informant as early as in 1969. As an agent he operated under a pseudonym ‘Prizma’70. His file is marked with red letters СИГНАЛЬНАЯ arranged on a diagonal from the left bottom corner (see p. 63 in the Visual Supplement). As explained on the website of the KGB archives:

69 It must be noted that Maija Tabaka was also recruited as a KGB agent in 1976. Her pseudonym was ‘Victoria’ (accessed on the website of the KGB archives: https://kgb.arhivi.lv/dokumenti/vdk/agenti/alfabetiski/113##&gid=1&pid=1)

70 Accessed on the website of the KGB archives: https://kgb.arhivi.lv/dokumenti/vdk/agenti/alfabetiski/61##&gid=1&pid=52
archives, the meaning of this term cannot be found in the available documents. It is possible that the term has been introduced in order to distinguish the agents serving in the intelligence service from those serving in the counter-intelligence service, where the latter was responsible for identifying and preventing the activities of foreign intelligence services that were directed against the USSR or vitally important national interests.71

Nevertheless, it means that for all the time when Kreicbergs was documenting and participating in collaborative projects with Grinbergs, he obtained not only raw material for his own creative work, but also information on the nature of these activities, which he later passed to the KGB. It is unknown why the KGB did not put a ban on Grinbergs’s activities, but perhaps, since the activities of Grinbergs were not politically dissident or, in fact, political in any sense, no strict measures were taken. It is also possible that Kreicbergs was granted certain privileges, for example, exhibitions abroad, to ensure at least some kind of loyalty towards the regime. As Latvian historian Daina Bleiere writes, in the stagnation period (1965-1984) “ideology became an increasingly formal ritual that was unable to mobilize masses” (Bleiere 2012: 37), and in these circumstances “the politics of the regime was not directed against the destruction of ideological opponents and dissidents, but instead it attempted to attract them with privileges” (Bleiere 2012: 37).

In the case of Kreicbergs’s appropriation of Grinbergs’s images (see pp. 23-27 in the Visual Supplement), intermediality is evident, because through the photographic lens performance art is transformed and transposed to another medium – photography. In fact, all three models proposed by Rajewsky – the medial transposition, media combination and intermedial references – are evident (Rajewsky 2010: 55). According to Schröter (Schröter 2012: 16-29), this is the case of synthetic intermediality, when several media are fused into a new medium.

3.3.3. The collaborative projects between Andris Grinbergs and Atis Ieviņš

Atis Ieviņš was a graduate of the Textile Department at the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR, where he was studying under the guidance of professor Rūdolfs Heimrāts. As noted earlier, applied arts enjoyed greater liberty in terms of artistic expression and experimentation. When studying at the State Art Academy of the

71 See for reference: https://kgb.arhivi.lv/dokumenti/vdk/kartoteku-raksturojums
Latvian SSR, Ieviņš started to experiment with the silkscreen method in textiles; however, as he notes, the experimentation with the medium of photography started much earlier – when he was doing his service in the Soviet Army. Since in the army he was responsible for artistic design and photography, he also had a little studio, where he could experiment with pseudo-solarisation, pseudo-isohelia, etc. After his time in the army, Ieviņš met the silk-screen specialist Aldonis Klucis and started to work with serigraphy consistently producing silk-screened images in “a range of psychedelic color combinations” (Svede 2004: 232). Ieviņš emphasized the painteresque qualities over the photographic ones: “In a special light conditions, a work made in silk-screen technique becomes enriched with the qualities that are not accessible to an ordinary photograph – diversity of colour combinations, self-shadow, the falling shadow, painteresque accidents and texture” (Ieviņš 1977). Indeed, Ieviņš himself defined his technique as painting, yet due to the ambiguity of the medium (a photograph that looks like a painting or vice versa) and the low status of photography and silk-screen in the hierarchy of arts, he was not treated very seriously and was enrolled at the Artists’ Union in 1978 in the unit of Plakātisti (poster creators).

It is important to note that Ieviņš was the artist around whom the Mežaparks Commune started to develop. In 1969, he was the first to get a room for rent at a house in Mežaparks – a picturesque neighbourhood in Riga with a large number of Art Nouveau and eclectic villas. Eventually other rooms in the house became spare and other artists – the friends of Ieviņš moved in (Miervaldis Paulovics, Arvīds Priedītis, Leo Preiss, Juris Dimiters, Gunārs Lūsis). The Commune was not politically or ideologically dissident, yet it can be seen as another instance of micro-environment or the second public sphere, where the communication among like-minded contemporaries was channelled and the exchange of information could happen. The Commune did not experience any serious control from authorities, except when Valdis Āboliņš visited the Commune during his visit in Riga and the KGB car was following and spying on them (Ieviņš 2017). However, no serious allegations or incriminations followed.

By merging painting and photography Ieviņš produced numerous silkscreen prints by appropriating Grinbergs’s performances. He colorized, cropped and superimposed the images “reducing their straightforward documentary value in inverse proportion to a new synthetic, expressive force” (Svede 2002: 227). The outcome was presented as serigraphy, yet Ieviņš defined them as ‘photo-silkscreens’. The migration of performance art, which essentially is a body-based and live art, to the medium of
photography and silk-screen, thus is an example of intermediality, where we can see the medial transposition, since performance art is transformed and transposed to other media, as well as media combination and intermedial references, namely, all three forms of intermediality proposed by Rajewsky. The serigraphy experiments of Ieviņš (see pp. 28-31 in the Visual Supplement) confirm once again that performance art by definition is an intermedial form of art, especially, if it is paired with another medium and undergoes a process of hybridization. Intermediality, thus, is an inherent and integral part of performance art.

3.3.4. The carnivals organised by Imants Lancmanis at the Rundāle Palace

Another example of intermediality and appropriation that resulted in a collaborative performance project involved the artist Imants Lancmanis, his family and friends. Lancmanis was a graduate of the Department of Painting at the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR. In 1972 he began to work as a Deputy Director of the Rundāle Palace Museum established in a baroque palace built in 1736 suffering serious damage in 1919 during the Latvian War of Independence, as well as through the Soviet period. The restoration works of the venue became the lifetime project and passion of Lancmanis. However, the palace was not only a place of work, it was also a playground to implement immersive site-specific and ‘total art’ projects, where experimental and carnivalesque collaborative creations could be organised in the manner reminiscent of the Bauhaus motto “play becomes party – party becomes work – work becomes play” (Droste 2012: 37).

Between 1971 and 1984 Lancmanis and his friends organised 12 themed balls and carnivals, devoted to different topics, such as the Roman Empire, Rococo period, the UFO, the 1905 Revolution, etc. These events required that different motives and styles were appropriated either from a certain culture, aesthetics or historical events and personae. Lancmanis quotes the ball entitled The Roman Empire Collapse Ball as one of the most complex events at the Rundāle Palace. According to him, it was the event where “everyone, who was present, participated” (Lancmanis 2010: 238), so there were no boundaries between the audiences and the performers, and the participants were engaged in an active space-making process. The fact that even historically accurate crockery was made to ensure as authentic aesthetic experience as possible illustrates that the slightest detail was carefully calculated in these balls. Being a combination of so many mutually related elements, these process-based events were
properly choreographed multimedia works of art, hybrid environments with staged ceremonies and rituals, costumes, props, scenography, lighting, and music, which were aimed at entangling spectators in multi-sensory experiences and creating a surreal, alternative reality made as a stark contrast to the dull and obedient world of Homo Sovieticus.

It is striking that similarly to the wedding/happening of the Grinbergs couple, Imants Lancmanis and his bride Ieva Šmite also had a wedding/happening, which took place at the Rundāle Palace as one of the first illegal balls in May 1971. The carnivalesque event with scrupulous care for the detail was held at the Rundāle Palace some months after the official marriage ceremony. It stretched out over three days and each participant was free to play any character they wanted. Similarly to Grinbergs’s wedding, here, too, the participants were dressed up in costumes, for example, the Lancmanis couple wore the attire from the Rococo period. Though similarities with Grinbergs’s happening are really striking, Lancmanis himself states that Grinbergs’s event was a specially planned happening, a work of art, whereas in their case it was essentially a beautifully designed and presented wedding. During the same interview, though, he admits that it was performance, despite the fact that they were not aware of the term at the time:

“There is no need to look at foreign magazines or to know that it is called performance. It is interesting to do it here in Latvia and only then to find out that the same has been happening in the rest of the world. It was performance and we felt inspired by it. We perceived it as a motion picture, as a process. We did it in great style” (Lancmanis 2011: 178).

By creating such large-scale interdisciplinary and site-specific works involving each production stage such as research, preparation as well as improvisation, Lancmanis performatively re-invented and de-contextualized an architectural structure:

“Rundāle interested me as an opportunity to ‘re-create’ a world which no longer exists, actually this is what I wish to do in my paintings as well: to conjure up a world that either is no longer there or has never existed, except in my mind; to make it so tangible and detailed that people would believe such a world could exist. Rundāle gives you a chance to ‘re-create’ the palace, the environment and

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72 Thus predating Grinbergs’s happening The Green Wedding (1973) for two years.
park in total; every room you enter takes you to a different era. That’s what I like about Rundāle – the huge installation that it has become. That is indeed the right word. It is a large, but very consistent and conceptually-directed installation. That is at the foundation of what I like about it, that people say that Rundāle is a living palace” (Lancmanis 2011: 176-177).

As a director of an institution, Lancmanis was responsible for the restoration works of the Palace, but as an artist, he used the site as an environment to create a parallel world, where, by wearing masks and costumes of different historical personae and periods, he, his family and friends could, paradoxically, drop the masks of Homo Sovieticus. Grinbergs had a very similar approach: “I dressed my models and created an environment, where they could express themselves and which could to some degree ‘rip’ them out of their masks, turn them into live human beings, containing more than you see on an everyday basis” (Grinbergs 1992: 2). These artistic strategies echo with the ideas of carnival proposed by Bakhtin. In his book on Dostoevsky, Bakhtin notes that “In carnival [...] the new mode of man’s relation to man is elaborated” (Bakhtin 1963: 164). Krystyna Pomorska argues that “one of the essential aspects of this relation is the ‘unmasking’ and disclosing of the unvarnished truth under the veil of false claims and arbitrary ranks” (Pomorska 1964: x). For artists living and working in Latvia in the period of late socialism, performance art provided the liminal in-between space, where the ‘unmasking’ and disclosure of truth were made possible. In the case of Lancmanis, intermedial appropriation becomes evident, too (see pp. 32-40 in the Visual Supplement), since a new work of art with plurimedial structure is created, borrowing (appropriating) the aesthetic principles, ideas and conceptions from other historical periods or fictional/paranormal realms, as, for instance, in the event of the themed ball thematically dedicated to the UFOs (unidentified flying objects). This type of intermediality is open to numerous media hybridizations, since the options are limitless: starting from the found or site-specific space – the Rundāle Palace – and ending with the paintings and photographs as medial configurations with a representational and documentary character at the same time.

73 Thus also echoing with Grinbergs’s conception of the ‘living art’.
74 Lancmanis held the position of a director at the Rundāle Palace Museum from 1976 to 2018.
3.3.5. The Theatre of Madame Tabaka

The painter Maija Tabaka (b. 1939) is an important figure, who needs to be discussed in the framework of intermedial appropriation. First of all, it must be mentioned that she was part of the microenvironment or the second public sphere where both Imants Lancmanis and Andris Grinbergs were also actively engaged.\(^{75}\)

In the 1960s, Maija Tabaka was a young, emerging artist, who was also known as a free-thinking individual preferring eccentric looks. According to Jānis Borgs, “she could not go unnoticed” (Borgs 2014: 114) in the dull societal and environmental background. Borgs refers to Tabaka as an “exotic flower” – an exceptionally beautiful and elegant woman wearing “silk dresses and shawls, large hats, expressive make-up and bright red-coloured lips, contrasting with black hair” (Borgs 2004: 114). In the Soviet period, this kind of a dandy-like attitude was a form of a silent protest and identity expressed in an aristocratic lifestyle and appearance to provoke the conservative society (Borgs 2014: 115).

Tabaka herself refers to such performative manifestations as the ‘theatre of life’:

“The dullness of the life in the 1960s was unbelievable. The streets of Riga were dominated by the insanity of standardization. I wanted to stand out. [...] Once I wanted to provoke the people on the streets, I put on my redington coat and a bowler hat from the 1920s [...] and walked down the former Lenin Street\(^{76}\) [...]. Everyone looked back at me, and that was the friendliest attitude. The reaction of many people was shockingly hostile: I was verbally abused, men whistled, others run after me, some spat on me. [...] The normal society could not stand those, who were different. [...] They allegedly embodied something Western, thus threatening the homogenously faultless society. [...] It can be said that it was the theatre of life” (Blaua 2010: 49).

Due to the extravagant non-Soviet looks and a free-thinking mindset, as well as overly

\(^{75}\) Maija Tabaka and Imants Lancmanis also belonged to the so-called Second French Group (along with Bruno Vasiljevskis, Jānis Krievs, Ieva Šmite (Lancmane) and Juris Pudāns). This group was established in the 1960s by art students who avidly studied French painting, literature, and culture. According to Lancmanis, “first and foremost, it was a chance to reject the robust reality of Soviet life” (Lancmanis 2004: 108).

\(^{76}\) Now Brīvības Street – the central street in Riga.
Western features in her artwork, Tabaka was excluded from the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR in 1961. According to Lancmanis, “her work *Pineapple Eaters* had annoyed instructors not just by the subject and unusually bright colouring but, first of all, by the mood created by the bizarre characters” (Lancmanis 2004: 107). This style echoed with the Surrealists and was not acceptable to the Soviet ideologues and censors.

In the summer of 1965 Tabaka went to the Rundāle Palace to paint the park and the palace. She was also accompanied by Lancmanis’s sister Lauma Lancmane. Tabaka remembers that the huge, empty castle with unique artefacts, vases, furniture and interiors became a site for imagination and a stage for improvisations. Tabaka recalls how she and Lauma Lancmane were living in one room and sharing a huge bed that was meant for six persons. They were listening to the music of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Joseph Haydn. Tabaka had a nightdress sent by her aunts in America, which “looked like from the paintings of the previous century” (Meistere 1993: 26) and she could imagine herself as an authentic inhabitant of the palace. This kind of environment provided a striking contrast to the dull Soviet reality, where everyone had to wear the same clothes and buy the same furniture.

Another episode that Tabaka recalls is the time when Imants Lancmanis arrived with a big eel for dinner: “We had a feeling for a real celebration. And, in order to enjoy it to the utmost, we put silver crockery on the table – even a king does not eat at such a table!” (Meistere 1993: 26). Together they organised improvised historical dinners imagining how it could have happen in reality, but in fact projecting these visions from the plots and scenarios seen in paintings. This was the beginning of the unofficial themed balls and carnivals – events of participatory and site-specific art at the Rundāle Palace. According to Tabaka, it was, indeed, performance art: “Perhaps, it was the first real avant-garde. […] It was also the time, when all those Fluxus movements started to appear in the West. Our activities, too, could be considered as certain Fluxus moments, happenings” (Meistere 1993: 26).

When the first ball was organized in 1971 as a continuation of the official marriage ceremony between Imants Lancmanis and Ieva Lancmane, the event was documented not only in photographs, but it also appeared in a large-scale painting made from a photograph in 1974 by Maija Tabaka entitled *Wedding at Rundāle*. This painting was

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77 Tabaka enrolled as a a student at the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR again in 1965.
also crucial in Tabaka’s own development as an artist, since she considers it “the beginning of [her] art theatre, system of images and autonomy that was referred to as *The Theatre Of Madame Tabaka*” (original emphasis, Blua 2010: 85). As a new work of art, which had borrowed elements from the event-based art and photography, this painting is an outstanding example of intermedial appropriation.

Pursuant to Lancmanis, “Maija Tabaka could get some inspiration from the art of happenings because it required a subject – process that progresses in time and has some conception, even if absurd” (Lancmanis 2004: 109). Tabaka’s paintings manifest performativity, because she used models and staged the paintings as *tableaux-vivants*. This method, indeed, resonates with the idea of photo-actors proposed by Daugovišs in 1985, when reflecting on the cooperation between a model and a photographer in the example of photographer Gunārs Binde. Tabaka comments on the cooperation between her and her models:

> “When me and the model start working, it can look like a session of hypnosis. [I say something like] Now you imagine that you are.... It is a story and it is very cold now... You are completely alone in a dark summer night... You are crying, but the apple tree is blooming above you... The success of the painting depends on the model a lot. If we work with the image together, the working process is smooth. However, in order to embody a certain image, one must understand what I’m doing. [The model must be] intelligent and cannot impose anything” (Blua 2010: 85-86).

One of Tabaka’s most favourite models was the actress Regīna Razuma, whom Tabaka characterizes as Latvian femme-fatale: “Latvian variant of Greta Garbo and Merilin Monroe” (Blua 2010: 90). However, both Lancmanis and Grinbergs have also appeared in Tabaka’s paintings as models. Tabaka refers to all of these individuals as the actors of her theatre: “In my theatre there are stars and extras and without them the story of the painting would not be possible. There are actors who walk from one painting to another and there are actors who have played an outstanding role in one or two works, but I would like to have them in more. [...] It is a weird theatre, where they are taking part in. The theatre of passions of life” (Blua 2010: 95-96).

As an attractive and contradictory character, who similarly to Tabaka was passionate about fashion and eccentric looks, Grinbergs inspired Tabaka and consequently he has appeared in several paintings as one of the actors in her theatre. Tabaka characterizes
Grinbergs as a ‘special personality’, whom she holds in high regard:

“In my [performative] theatre of the 1970s, [Grinbergs] was like a star of the future with all his unrest and fantasies. Andris was a big artist. At that time we knew very little of the body art, which was popular in America and elsewhere in the world, but Andris seriously was engaged in the body art. He knew how to play and manipulate with his body!” (Blaua 2010: 99).

This migration of characters from the real life prototypes to paintings, where they had to play a certain role, as well as the painting Wedding at Rundāle show that Tabaka’s oeuvre can also be examined through the perspective of intermedial appropriation (see pp. 41-42 in the Visual Supplement). In fact, this theoretical approach is productive in outlining the performative elements so integral in Tabaka’s paintings, which so far have not been seriously examined in Latvian art discourse.

3.3.6. Miervaldis Polis – the illusionist

Another interesting case study for the discussion of intermediality is the artist Miervaldis Polis, who in the 1980s was active both as a painter and as a performance artist (see pp. 43-47 in the Visual Supplement). The oeuvre of Polis has been extensively examined by Amy Bryzgel, and she states that it was around the time of the Nature, Environment, Man exhibition in 1984 when “the artist began creating spontaneous performances with his friends in cafés and artist hangouts in Riga” (Bryzgel 2013: 108).

Polis was among the participants of the performances that Grinbergs organized in the 1970s, so comparatively quite late – in August 1987 – Polis had his own first performance The Bronze Man, when he painted his face, hair and hands bronze, and was also wearing a bronze suit. In this outfit and make-up he walked around Riga – through the city center to the Old Town. At the Philharmonic Square he got up on an empty pedestal in front of the Small Guildhall and stood there for a few minutes resembling “a living, breathing statue” (Bryzgel 2013: 111) and thus also echoing other Western artists, for example, Gilbert and George, who had performed and pretended to be “living sculptures” in their performance Singing Sculpture (1969) intended as the critique of the elitist art world.

The 1987 performance of the Bronze Man would be followed by several others; however, for the purposes of this doctoral dissertation it is important to draw attention
to another work of art that resulted out of these performances, namely, the photorealistic painting *Self-Portrait in Bronze* (1988), which Polis made after the photograph from his own performance, thus re-appropriating his own work. This painting reveals intermedial appropriation in numerous directions. First, there is a combination of several media – painting, photography, performance, sculpture, and, second, there is a case of intermedial references proposed by Rajewsky, since the photorealistic painting looks ‘as if’ a photograph, yet, it is not. Again, the concept of intermediality proves to be a more productive theoretical framework than a mere documentation, because documentation would only emphasize the result – the photograph or the painting. On the contrary, intermediality manifests the plethora of media with indistinct borders that are mutually overlapping and hybridizing. As a result, a new work of art is created, and a more thorough analysis is needed to explain the complexity of such a work. By applying the framework of intermedial appropriation, it is possible to analyse the elements of sculpture, performance and painting and photograph, without disregarding or ignoring any of them.

Furthermore, Polis is an especially interesting case study in the discussion of intermedial appropriation, since as a painter he was interested in creating illusion and enthusiastically engaged himself in painting in photorealistic and trompe l’œil manner. He also wrote a manifesto on Photorealism (or Hyperrealism, as it was termed in Latvia) reflecting on the artistic methods applied by Leonardo da Vinci and Johannes Vermeer (Polis 1983: 6-9). Polis declaration “I am painting a photograph” (Traumane 2000: 130) manifests his interest in the synthesis of a photographic image and the principles of painting, which is another example of artwork that can be productively examined within the framework of intermedial appropriation. Borrowing the visuality and aesthetics of photography and transposing it to painting, in the 1970s Polis made numerous paintings, where with the help of mimesis and illusionism he attempted “to convince the viewer, at least momentarily, of the veracity of his images, mainly by using the technique of trompe l’oeil” (Bryzgel 2013: 128).

According to Bryzgel, the photorealistic paintings, where Polis inserted his self-portrait into pictures from pages of an actual guidebook about Venice, or later in the Island of Colossi series, where the figure of artist was accompanied by giant ruins of colossi, modelled on the artist’s own finger, are the first examples of Polis’s oeuvre, where the performative elements become apparent. These series are followed by similarly performative insertions in the canon of art history, for example, where Polis inserts his
own figure in Caravaggio’s painting *Judith Beheading Holofernes* (1598–1599). Working in this technique, Polis appropriates the painting of Caravaggio and inserts his own persona as if reacting to the dramatic event, thus constructing an identity through the play of representations. If the theoretical axis of intermedial appropriation is applied to the analysis of this kind of artwork, it becomes possible to notice the hybridity of such media combination, namely, one can see performance within painting and painting within performance without hierarchically positioning one discipline over the other.

### 3.3.7. The NSRD

Another example to be discussed in terms of intermediality is the artists’ collective *The Workshop of Restoration of Unfelt Feelings* (NSRD; Nebijušu sajūtu restaurācijas darbnīca), who actively pursued performance art in the 1980s, albeit from a different perspective than Grinbergs (see pp. 48-57 in the Visual Supplement). As stated by Māra Traumane, “the interest of the NSRD in the environment, perception, atmosphere and technologies contrasts with the anthropocentricity of the 1970s happenings” (Traumane 2010: 35). Indeed, it can be stated that the NSRD’s creative strategies were more conceptually orientated because of the theoretical framework they provided alongside their artistic projects.

As opposed to Grinbergs, performances of the NSRD were intentionally intermedial, the key participants Hardijs Lediņš and Juris Boiko describing it also as “a kind of lifestyle somewhere between Zen Buddhism and California high-tech philosophy, avant-garde in terms of interests and postmodernist in terms of stylistics” (Astahovska, Žeikare 2016: 11). To pursue this lifestyle, the NSRD “drew their inspiration and creative opportunities from contemporary music and architecture, creative fields that were more open to experimentation, and studies of the internationally topical movements and theories of avant-garde, Postmodernism and New Wave” (Traumane 2010: 35). The NSRD organised discos, lectures, actions, video performances, multimedia exhibitions and concerts, expanding “the boundaries of understanding what art is [and creating] a new kind of art – uncertain, ambiguous, unconventional, ironic and paradoxical, and with blurry boundaries in time and space” (Astahovska, Žeikare 2016: 11).
and also by mastering new technologies – they were the first to use video and computer technologies in their projects (Mazvērsīte, Traumane).

In the 1970s, Juris Boiko and Hardijs Ledinš started their creative ‘home’ experiments, being inspired by avant-garde – Anton Webern’s and Erik Satie’s music, as well as progressive trends of art rock and new jazz. Ledinš also founded the home recording ‘studio’ Seque. The Seque records’ first step had been ‘the prepared piano’, however numerous later Seque tape records feature a wide range of instruments: a piano, a saxophone, a hornlet, a trumpet, a trumpet horn, bells, a globe of the Earth, a dog’s voice (milk, bone), a two-stringed board, glassworks, a triangle, synthesizer sound, etc. (Mazvērsīte, Traumane). These experiments definitely resonate with John Cage’s post-war avant-garde experiments in terms of the indeterminacy in music, electroacoustic music and non-standard use of musical instruments. Later, the philosophy of Cage and Zen Buddhism were also appropriated in the first performances that the group carried out.

Among these performances one can mention Walks to Bolderāja (1980-1987), Dr Eneser’s Binocular Dance Lessons (1987) and Approximate Art (1987). Walks to Bolderāja were 8 km long ritualistic walks along a railway line, when a group of friends gathered and simply walked to the isolated, peripheral Riga port region Bolderāja. The action was guided by several rules: light and darkness had to interchange during the walk, the walks took place once per year, every time in a different month and they were documented in photographs, paintings, or audio and later also video recordings (Mazvērsīte, Traumane). These ritualistic practices resonate with the way archaeologists and anthropologists view art – instead of images and objects that are offered as “things” to view in gallery-based locations, art is rather seen as symbolic expressions of meanings and values. The audiences become participants and co-authors and art creates sites of activity for shared interaction and experiences. The latter aspect is an integral feature of performance art.

In a conversation with Normunds Lācis published in 1988 in the magazine Avots (Spring), Hardijs Ledinš provides the following description of these ritualised walks/happenings:

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78 The moving image has not been the focus of the doctoral dissertation herein. It is the task of future researchers to explore this trajectory.
79 Although sometimes the walks took place twice a year.
“The walk along the Bolderāja railway tracks is an event that brings together spiritual and physical qualities. In fact, Bolderāja is a somewhat horrible place and should not be worthwhile visiting. But the actual fact that we are going there is very significant – we leave the house so as to experience the exchange of darkness and the light on our journey: either early in the morning when it is still dark outside… then along the way somewhere on the Spilve marshes the sun raises. Or vice versa. We walk in the evening when the sun sets. The light being replaced by the dark is one of the most powerful impressions. The other one being that we walk through every possible nature, through the city, across level crossings, then through the forest, then across vast fields and in the end arrive at an industrial area. It is not a hike, rather a ritual because it has been performed once a year since 1980, and besides, these processions never take place on the same month of the year. When our limit of 12 months has been exhausted, a new regularity will be conceived. Happenings and rituals take place along the way, for that reason it is not just a hike, and everyone who has ever taken part in it recognises that. It is also not just a hike because we have our own anthem” (Lediņš 1988: 71-73).

As instances of media hybridization these performances can be viewed in the framework of intermedial appropriation, where event-based and process-based art is the point of departure for a series of other resulting artwork: photographs, paintings, video recording and film.

In the early 1980s, the NSRD carried out several hybrid projects, where performance and Land Art were combined: 1m x 1m x 1m (1980), Mediator (1982), Pārcelšanās (Moving Over) (1982), Līnija Kurzemē (A Line in Courland) (1983). For example, A Line in Courland very much echoes with the performative work by Western land artist Richard Long entitled A Line Made by Walking (1967). Long photographed the line in grass that resulted due to his walk backwards and forwards. The image thus shows his physical interventions with the landscape, but cannot be regarded as a mere documentation and proof or evidence of the fact that the line in the grass was made. Instead, the photograph is performative, because it results of performative and conceptual actions. By applying the theoretical framework of intermedial appropriation, both the photographs of Long and the NSRD can be examined as
instances of hybrid media combinations, where the borders of performance art cross the borders of conceptual art and photography resulting in a new work of art. Moreover, the NSRD also contributed to intermediality not only practically, but also theoretically. In this context, the concept of Approximate Art, which was coined in 1987 and aimed at blurring “boundaries between music, video, performance, text, different genres and the desire to create new forms of artistic expression” (Astahovska, Žeikare 2016: 211), must be mentioned as the first theoretical basis, which addresses the question of intermediality in Latvian art discourse. Besides, Approximate Art supports the idea that the boundaries of art can be fused with media that had not previously been considered art forms. Thus, Approximate Art, similarly to intermedia, can also exist in a quite postmodern and eclectic “in-between” state oscillating between art and non-art. Hardijs Lediņš writes:

“The boundaries between different art genres are very blurred, they cannot be defined, just like the boundaries between different cultures. The question often arises – is it art or is it already not art? This indicates the presence of approximation in art processes” (Lediņš 1988: 71-73).

According to Mazvērsīte and Traumane, the idea of approximation crystallized through interaction with a computer, as comparison of the exact abilities of scientific equipment and approximate ones of human beings. The concept was implemented in practice at The First Exhibition of Approximate Art in 1987 at the House of Knowledge and another exhibition A Mole in a Hole: NSRD Meets Bräunungsstudio Malaria that took place in 1988 at the Museum of Foreign Art (Aizrobežu mākslas muzejs). In these exhibitions the space was transformed into an environmental installation, where piles of video monitors were playing video works by the NSRD and DJs took their turns at the tape-recorder mixer. A programme of performances and musicians’ actions spanned for several days (Mazvērsīte, Traumane). Because the NSRD were among those few artist groups in Latvia that worked extensively with a plethora of media and also produced a theoretical foundation for their artistic approach, they definitely cannot be disregarded from the discussion of intermedial

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80 Video material is available on YouTube channel. Please see: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D2lcMSYQgPk (browsed on 04.10.2019)

81 The NSRD, similarly to Grinbergs, participated in the exhibition Riga – Lettische Avantgarde in Berlin and Kiel in 1988-1989; however, after this project the group underwent a crisis and disintegrated.
appropriation. The integrative strategies employed by the NSRD facilitated hybridization not only between art and non-art, but also art and science, as well as art and technologies.

3.3.8. Ivars Mailītis and Inese Mailīte

Given the fact that in Latvian performance art history there were several instances of couples who were performing together – Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, as well as Imants Lancmanis and Ieva Lancmane, it is very interesting that in the 1980s there was another couple who performed together integrating in performances not only themselves but also their children – Ivars Mailītis (b. 1956) and Inese Mailīte (b. 1959). Both artists graduated from the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR. Ivars Mailītis graduated from the Department of Decorative Applied Arts in 1983, whereas Inese Mailīte – from the Department of Textiles in 1987. Both actively pursued their interest in the medium of installation.

Although Ivars Mailītis and Inese Mailīte did not appropriate any existing works or motives from other artists, they re-appropriated their own work – the textile installation objects combined with performance – and presented them as new works of art in a variety of media (see pp. 57-60 in the Visual Supplement). Their artwork can definitely be defined as intermedial, since the media of installation, performance, photography, video and film were often integrated within the boundaries of one work. Ivars Mailītis is mostly known for numerous architectonic projects, for example, Russian pavilion Expo '92 in Seville, Spain, the Baltic pavilion Expo '93 in Daejeon, South Korea and also Latvian pavilion Expo 2010 in Shanghai. He is also known for the visual conceptions and stage design solutions for the National Song and Dance Festival; however, he and his wife were also actively engaged in the genre of performance art. According to Mailītis, performance allowed to establish a direct contact with audiences. Such elements as the posture, form, relationships and attitude could be more efficiently showcased with the help of performance (Mailītis 2015).

One of the first performances created by Mailītis was The Orange Helicopter Action, which took place in 1983 in the framework of Art Days in Riga. Its duration was only 20-30 seconds and it consisted of several media or intermedia: the artists, two objects arranged in an installation, and the environment, where the installation was located.

82 The video documentations of the NSRD actions – performances were exhibited in exhibition Krājums II (Collection II; 2010) at the Contemporary Art Centre kim?.
The artists were seated in an orange helicopter, which was hung on a wire cable stretching from one building to another and was the symbol of the good. Another object – a black dirigible – was the symbol of the bad and it had tooth powder sealed and attached to it. The action was focused on the collision between these two objects/symbols when they were released each from its own side and when they met in the middle of the wire cable. According to Mailītis, in terms of conception this performance was rather political. It was based on the idea that all the people in Soviet Latvia – both the deported and the “imported” – shared the same territory and circumstances. In this situation the encounter or collision was unavoidable (Mailītis 2015).

The idea about deportations (Larsen 1992: 28-29) also resonated in the long-term project *People as Banners* (1988-1992). It was implemented as an intermedial work integrating installation, performance, photography, video, film and textile sculptures. The work was based on the anthropocentric and humanist idea that an individual is the key value. If the individual is lifted up on a spear as a banner, the work becomes symbolical and conceptual – especially under the circumstances of Soviet state of affairs. In the performative photographs Ivars, Inese and their two sons were naked, and pursuant to Mailītis, the naked body was also intended as a political connotation, which could be interpreted in various ways. First, being naked means to be unprotected and vulnerable. Second, being naked means that you are literally naked, because in the socialist system there was a deficit of clothes and even food (Mailītis 2015).

There are four intermedial variants of *People as Banners*, where the media of installation and performance have been documented in video or film.83 The first was filmed on a video camera by Zigurds Vidiņš. Mailītis states that it was a “real happening, without any plot” (Mailītis 2015) and the participants of Theatre Studio No 8 took part in it. The second variant was implemented by Rolands Laķis, who made two films, which were often broadcasted on the Baltic televisions. This variant is also accompanied by photographs taken by photographer Valts Kleins during the shooting process. In these photographs Inese Mailīte can be seen naked hanging from the ceilings and being tied with black ropes. The third variant was a short film *Balls of*

83 Although these are instances of intermediality between performance art and a moving image (the focus in this doctoral dissertation is only on a still image), it is only photography that is available to view and access from these works. It is unknown where the films and videos are stored at the moment, in what state and quality and whether they can be restored for contemporary audiences.
*Yarn* (1991), which was intended as a calendar of events existing before the writing. Ivars Mailītis was the director and Dāvis Śīmanis was the key cameraman. The soundtrack of the film was created with music composed by Mārtiņš Brauns and choir *Sindi putnu dārzs* (Sindi Birds’ Garden). The film was shot for four days in the pavilion of cinema. The aim of this film was strategic, because the film could be exhibited in all those shows where the project *People as Banners* was taken and demonstrated. And the fourth variant was created separately as a conceptual work *The End of the World* (1992). It was implemented as a film, which was accompanied by complex video graphics by Valdis Poikāns. There were participants of the Theatre Studio No 8, who were carrying special objects/constructions resembling banners. When these constructions were folded, geometrical relationships were established between the object and the human body (Mailītis 2015). This project-based complex work with plurimedial structure, which integrates performance among other media – installations, objects, environments, film, video, photography – is a crucial example of intermediality and re-appropriation in the history of Latvian performance art in the period of late socialism.
CONCLUSIONS

1. Performance art in Latvia in the late socialist period was implemented as live performance, i.e., it was a form of art that was based on process and simultaneous physical presence of the performer(s) and audiences/participants (sometimes also referred to as ‘co-presence’). As such, performance art can be characterised as moving, temporal, ephemeral, transient. However, as the history of performance art in Latvia proves, there have been several cases, when performance art was mediatized and transferred to still, permanent and two-dimensional representational media, such as photographs, paintings and serigraphs. It is possible to view all these cases as separate and mutually unrelated; however, it is not a productive approach in historical research. When applying the theoretical and analytical framework of intermediality, not only the connections and metamorphosis between the diverse forms of art become evident, but also the social connections between individual artists emerge. Thus, through the concept of intermediality, it is possible to examine the medium-specific processes related to hybridisation and synthesis, as well as social networks, where artists operated in the period of late socialism in Latvia. Intermediality as an integrative and pragmatic methodological approach, consequently, provides a broader, yet also more nuanced field of studies.

2. The question of shared temporal and spatial experience between the performer(s) and audiences/participants, in other words, ‘liveness’, is a complex and contradictory issue in performance studies. Witnessing live performance is often regarded as more authentic experience, than, for example, looking at a photograph that documents the same performance. Although the authenticity claims cannot be denied, the issues of perception, aesthetic experience and epistemological framework are open for further discussions. Since performance art as an interdisciplinary form of art is flexible and allows the integration of any other art discipline or medium or technology, it can be paired with any of these components conceptually. Consequently, it is possible that performance can exist only in its mediatized – alas intermedial – form, as for example, in the well-known American artist Cindy Sherman’s creative practice. When performance art has been registered in the representational medium of photography in this conceptual and strategic way, performance art becomes a hybrid, which manifests both the medium-specific features of the
live process and the reproduction. Although the audiences do not have access to the actual process when such hybrids works of art were made, that is, they cannot experience it simultaneously with the artist, the outcome does not deny access to aesthetic or epistemological experience. This premise invites to apply the theoretical framework of intermediality and thus allows viewing mediatized performance as an autonomous work of art, without presupposing the superiority, authenticity, originality or authority of either mode.

3. Often, when performance art is paired with a representational medium, more than one artist can be engaged in the creative process, thus the question of authorship of such a hybrid work of art becomes important. In accordance with the legislative and ethical framework of copyright, all the persons, who are involved in the creation and production of the work of art, must be adequately referenced; however, as the research of the history of performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism proves, there have been cases, when the component of performance art and artist(s) has been omitted and not mentioned at all. This phenomenon can be explained with various factors. Due to the social, historical and political circumstances in the period of late socialism performance art could only exist in the cultural and geographical periphery, where it was implemented among close circles of friends and family members. This micro-environment, also called the second-public sphere, allowed creating art that was not controlled or censored by the soviet ideologues. Moreover, it allowed establishing a community where democratic principles of freedom of expression, participation, initiative and non-hierarchical work relationships could be implemented in power-free reflection zones. Consequently, on those occasions, when performance art was mediatized in a representational medium – a photograph, a painting or a serigraph – it was often presented as an autonomous work of art. The authors of the representational media chose to keep silent about the ontologically first performative event and the involved persons, since it could attract unwanted attention and intervention from the Committee for State Security (KGB). This strategy is thus subjected to the mechanism of fear (and survival) imposed by the totalitarian regime and is historically, socially and politically specific. Paradoxically, because these instances in the history of performance art in Latvia exist, it also shows that the regime was unable to silence the artists’ creative expression, individualism and
4. The question of authorship in the history of performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism can be further dissected and analysed in more detail. The mode of creative production, where small networks were involved, provided an opportunity for artists to work collaboratively, thus, it was common that ideas, motifs, patterns and sometimes the entire work of art as ‘raw material’ were borrowed to create new works of art. The phenomenon, which reveals migration from one discipline or medium to another via several authors, can be analysed in the framework of intermedial appropriation. Moreover, it marks certain parallels between the artistic practices in North America and Latvia in the same time period. Borrowing of ideas in the form of creative impulses cannot be controlled in creative practices. It is an organic and natural process, whereby inspiration can come from other authors or works of art. However, when an entire work of art is deliberately borrowed and exhibited as the borrower’s own work, it can be seen as the act of stealing implemented in a very outspoken, provocative manner. In North America, such practice was pursued by such artists as Richard Prince, Sherrie Levine, Barbara Kruger. This artistic strategy can be defined as conceptual art, where the authors deconstruct the notion of origin in a postmodern *déjà vu* gesture and thus question the very concept of original and authorship. In the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic in the period of late socialism similar phenomenon emerged. For example, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs photographed the performances of Andris Grinbergs and later presented the photographs as his own works with different titles; photographer Atis Ieviņš engaged in similar practices, yet he synthesized the photographs obtained from Grinbergs’s performances in serigraphs. However, in contrast to North America, where the act of borrowing was implemented as postmodern and conceptual art, the artists in Latvia pursued this artistic strategy, because they created art in joint, hybrid projects among the circles of friends. Here, the issues of authorship were not perceived as the violation of copyright; it was the possibility for alternative, autonomous and uncensored action that mattered most. Moreover, as the research of history of performance art in Latvia shows, it was possible that intermedial appropriation occurred in the creative practice of one and the same author. For example, Miervaldis Polis re-appropriated a photograph from his own performance *The
Bronze Man in Riga (1987) and created a painting Self-Portrait in Bronze (1988); whereas Ivars Mailītis and Inese Mailīte re-appropriated their work People as Banners (1988-1992) in four intermedial variants.

5. Performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism was pluralistic and never fixed as a genre. Moreover, it lacked systematic and discursive analysis and was rather an intuitive practice, a form of ‘being’ or lifestyle. However, performance art manifested itself as a catalyst for experimentation and cross-fertilization of new, previously untested ideas, which were synthesised in one work of art – performance – creatively integrating elements from other disciplines and media. Although it was not openly demonstrated due to the cultural and geographical periphery and marginal positioning in the art structures at the time, performance art challenged the conventions of traditional forms of visual art, and, in fact, offered new perspectives and vocabulary to think about art beyond the historically established and autonomous disciplines. This legacy should not be underestimated, especially given the restrictions and limitations imposed by the totalitarian regime at the time.

6. Performance art in Latvia in the period of late socialism emerged in parallel with similar creative practices and experiments in North America and Western Europe (more broadly – the West). It is important to recognize the political dimension expressed through resistance in performance art both in Latvia and in the West. If in Latvia under the repressive circumstances of the totalitarian regime political resistance was expressed as an attempt to alienate oneself from the planned, commissioned and censored art production structures, thus providing an opportunity to create de-politicised art and exercise one’s creative agency, in the West resistance was expressed through creating immaterial art, which did not need the gallery or museum walls or a permission of authority to be exhibited. This resistance was aimed at the critique of capitalist art structures, patriarchal art institutions and art market in general. It resonated with the anti-establishment sentiment and disillusionment with democracy in the late 1960s and 1970s. Thus, it can be stated that performance artists both in Latvia and the West, although operating in different political and economic regimes, were motivated by antagonistic impulses.

7. The geographical and cultural periphery, which the performance artists used for their works, epitomize how community and selfhood could be exercised in the
period of late socialism in Latvia. Found space or site-specific space shaped the performance production in particular ways, but above all provided artists with the sense of freedom and liberation to work without ideology-imposed limitations. For performance artists, the periphery was an alternative to institutionalized, officially recognized and controlled places. It functioned as space, which was unfixed, responsive and interactive demonstrating a sense of ‘living in’ the environment and recognizing that space is full of meaning.

8. The basis of the performance genre in Latvia is formed by Andris Grinbergs’s oeuvre. Grinbergs can be credited with 20 performances organised in the period of late socialism. Through his innovativeness and creative spirit, he epitomizes a new type of artist-producer in the history of Latvian art. Being inspired and creatively interweaving and appropriating elements from fashion and hippie subculture, as well as incorporating contemporary social and political events in his art, Grinbergs’s écriture was that of a bricoleur – a craftsman, who creatively used materials left over from other projects to construct new artefacts. In his performances Grinbergs focused on actual, authentic experiences, which he contrasted to the mimetic representation in theatre. By allowing enough space for improvisation and unscripted turn of events, he concentrated on ‘lived experience’, where the human body became the vessel of meaning. Besides, the format allowed exploring the experience of both the performer and the audiences/participants. Thus, it can be argued that Grinbergs’s performances were phenomenologically orientated. Moreover, the hippie subculture as an alternative lifestyle with a great dose of creativity manifested through fashion, as well as with its ideas based on sexual liberation and the threat of annihilation due to the atomic bomb played a crucial role for Grinbergs. Eventually it led him to body-based and anthropocentric art, which, in its turn, became an instrument to explore his own identity especially in terms of sexuality, which was always in flux between heterosexual, homosexual and bisexual trajectories. His performances through their interdisciplinary nature and taboo subjects, nudity, biblical references and quotes to Western culture were a serious departure from Socialist Realism, the dominant art discourse at the time.

9. The carnivals or themed balls organized by Imants Lancmanis at the Rundāle Palace also belong to the history of performance art in Latvia. Given that the
Rundāle Palace was in a deteriorated state due to negligence, Lancmanis not only led the renovation works of the Palace as a historically and culturally significant object, but also brought new life to it by inhabiting it and organising large-scale performative events. Since the Palace was the centre of the action, it can be argued that Lancmanis created site-specific performances, where due to the plurality of media and their synthesis, a total work of art – Wagnerian Gesamtkunstwerk – was created. By appropriating various historical periods and personae as sources of inspiration and adjusting the Palace to the needs of each performative event, a newly formed plurimedial configuration was achieved, thus also creating new modes of representation, experience and perception.

10. Although performance art could not develop efficiently as an autonomous discipline due to the lack of systematic epistemological approach in gathering, discussing and analysing knowledge related to this paradigm-changing discipline, in Latvia in the period of late socialism there were critical attempts, at least, in the discourse of press, to explain and understand art phenomena, which resulted in synthesis or hybridisation. The analytical frameworks provided by authors during the late socialist period, in fact, resonate with the concept of intermediality (and intermedial appropriation), as proposed by the author of the doctoral dissertation herein. It is unfortunate that due to the restrictions imposed by the political regime performance art remained hidden and peripheral and thus unavailable as a source of inquiry for the authors at the time. Moreover, only one case of theoretical treatise provided by the artists themselves can be mentioned – the Manifest on Approximate Art produced by the NSRD. Regrettfully, other Latvian artists engaged in performance art have not produced any theoretical reflections on the discipline they were pursuing (confirming once again that performance art was seen as intuitive practice). If compared to the performance artists in the West, Northern America particularly, where Allan Kaprow and Dick Higgins and others wrote extensively on their artistic strategies or performance-related art specifically, Latvian artists mostly reflect on their creative practice in interviews after the collapse of the regime. These circumstances, among the others mentioned above, have led to the situation, where there is very little material to be studied that would contribute to the contextual research of performance art in Latvia in
the period of late socialism.
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THE LIST OF FIGURES OF THE VISUAL SUPPLEMENT

1. DOCUMENTATION OF HAPPENINGS ORGANIZED BY ANDRIS GRINBERGS:

Figure 1. *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo un Džuljeta), 1969, photographer Māra Brašmane. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 2. *Romeo and Juliet* (Romeo un Džuljeta), 1969, photographer Māra Brašmane. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.


Figure 4. *The Wedding of Jesus Christ* (Jēzus Kristus kāzas), 1972, photographer Māra Brašmane. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 5. *The Wedding of Jesus Christ* (Jēzus Kristus kāzas), 1972, photographer Māra Brašmane. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 6. *The Wedding of Jesus Christ* (Jēzus Kristus kāzas), 1972, photographer Māra Brašmane. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 7. *The Wedding of Jesus Christ* (Jēzus Kristus kāzas), 1972, photographer Māra Brašmane. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.


Figure 9. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 10. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 11. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 12. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 13. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 14. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 15. *Two Faces* (Divas sejas), 1972, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.
Figure 16. *Creation* (Rādišana), 1973, photographers Jānis Kreicbergs and Uldis Briedis. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 17. *Creation* (Rādišana), 1973, photographers Jānis Kreicbergs and Uldis Briedis. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.


Figure 19. *The Green Wedding* (Zaļās kāzas; alternative title Summertime), 1973, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.


Figure 28. *Terrorists* (Teroristi), 1974, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.


Figure 31. *Dedication to Antonioni also The Red Desert* (Veltūjums Antonioni; also Sarkanais tuksnesis), 1974, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.
Figure 32. *Dedication to Antonioni* also *The Red Desert* (Veltījums Antonioni; also Sarkanais tuksnesis), 1974, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 33. *The Last Liv* (Pēdējā lībiete), 1974, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 34. *Easter* (Lieldienas) 1975, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 35. *The City of Wives* (Sievu pilsēta), 1975, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 36. *Winter* (Ziema), 1976, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.


Figure 38. *Touch* (Pieskāriens), 1976, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.


Figure 40. *Touch* (Pieskāriens), 1976, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 41. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Māra Brašmane. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 42. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 43. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 44. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 45. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 46. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.

Figure 47. *The Old House* (Vecā māja), 1977, photographer Jānis Kreicbergs. Jānis Zuzāns’s private archive. Courtesy: Jānis Zuzāns.
2. EXAMPLES OF INTERMEDIAl APPROPRIATION

2.1. JĀNIS KREICBERGS

The images from the documentation of performances are juxtaposed to the appropriated and synthesised images – new works of art – to demonstrate the cases of intermedial appropriation, hence the repetition of images from the documentation section.
2.2. ATIS IEVIŅŠ


Figure 60. *Cave Paintings* (Alu zīmējumi), 1973/1974, photographer Atis ieviņš. Atis ieviņš’s private archive. Courtesy: Atis ieviņš.


2.3. IMANTS LANCMANIS

Figure 63. *Wedding at Rundāle* (Kāzas Rundālē), 1971. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 64. *The Light Costume Ball with Hats* (Vieglā parka kostīmu balle ar cepurēm), 1973. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.


Figure 67. *The Ball of Rags* (Skrandu balle), 1974. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 68. *The Roman Empire Collapse Ball* (Balle Romas impērijas sabrukuma laikmetā), 1976. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 69. *The Roman Empire Collapse Ball* (Balle Romas impērijas sabrukuma laikmetā), 1976. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 70. *The Roman Empire Collapse Ball* (Balle Romas impērijas sabrukuma laikmetā), 1976. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.
Figure 71. *The Roman Empire Collapse Ball* (Balle Romas impērijas sabrukuma laikmetā), 1976. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 72. *The Roman Empire Collapse Ball* (Balle Romas impērijas sabrukuma laikmetā), 1976. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 73. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 74. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 75. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 76. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 77. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 78. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 79. *The Arabian Nights also Scheherazade Tales* (Tūkstots un vienas nakts pasakas; also Šeherezades pasakas), 1977. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 80. *Disco Ball* (Disko balle), 1979. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 81. *The Ball in the Court of Burgundy in 1431* (Balle Burgundijas galmā 1431. gadā), 1981. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 82. *The Ball at the Rundāle Palace in 1908* (Balle Rundāles pilī 1908. gadā), 1984. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

Figure 83. *The Ball at the Rundāle Palace in 1908* (Balle Rundāles pilī 1908. gadā), 1984. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

2.4. MAIJA TABAKA

Figure 63. Documentation of Imants Lancmanis’s carnival/wedding *Wedding at Rundāle* (Kāzas Rundālē), 1971. Imants Lancmanis’s private archive. Courtesy: Imants Lancmanis.

2.5. MIERVALDIS POLIS

Figure 85. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 86. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 87. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 88. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 89. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 90. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 91. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 92. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 93. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 94. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 95. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 96. *The Bronze Man in Riga* (Bronzas cilvēks Rīgā), 1987. Performance documentation in photography. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 97. Painting *Self-Portrait in Bronze* (Pašportrets bronzā), 1988.

2.6. THE NSRD

Figure 98. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), November 1980. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 99. Hardijs Lediņš, the 1980s. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.
Figure 100. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), January 1982. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 101. *A Line in Courland* (Līnija Kurzemē), 1983. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 102. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), December 1985. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 103. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), December 1985. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 104. The exhibition of Approximate Art in the former Planetarium, currently the Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 105. The exhibition of Approximate Art in the former Planetarium, currently the Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 106. The exhibition of Approximate Art in the former Planetarium, currently the Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 107. The exhibition of Approximate Art in the former Planetarium, currently the Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 108. The exhibition of Approximate Art in the former Planetarium, currently the Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 109. The exhibition of Approximate Art in the former Planetarium, currently the Nativity of Christ Cathedral in Riga, 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 110. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 111. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 112. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 113. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 114. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

Figure 115. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.
Figure 116. *Walk to Bolderāja* (Gājiens uz Bolderāju), May 1987. Archive of LCCA. Courtesy: LCCA.

**2.7. IVARS MAILĪTIS AND INESE MAILĪTE**


Figure 120. The shooting process of the film *Balls of Yarn* (Kamols), 1991, photographer Vals Kleins. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.

Figure 121. The shooting process of the film *Balls of Yarn* (Kamols), 1991, photographer Vals Kleins. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.

Figure 122. Framing from the film *Balls of Yarn* (Kamols), 1991. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.

Figure 123. Press clipping with *People As Banners* (Cilvēki kā karogi), 1988-1992. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.


Figure 125. Press clipping with *People As Banners* (Cilvēki kā karogi), 1988-1992. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.

Figure 126. Performance in group show *Pārmija* (Shunt) in gallery Jāņa sēta, 1990, photographer Jānis Deinats. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.

Figure 127. Festival *Bildes*, 1988. Ivars Mailītis’s private archive. Courtesy: Ivars Mailītis.

**2.8. THE KGB FILES OF ANDRIS GRINBERGS AND JĀNIS KREICBERGS**

Figure 128. The KGB file of Andris Grinbergs. Available from kgb.arhivi.lv

Figure 129. The KGB file of Jānis Kreicbergs. Available from kgb.arhivi.lv
ANNEX NO 1
The list of Andris Grinbergs’s performances (compiled by Mark Allen Svede; available from the Dodge collection of the Jane Voorhees Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, USA; updated by the author of doctoral dissertation)

1) *Romeo and Juliet* (1969)
Location: Riga Brethren Cemetery, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Aija Valeine, Ivars Priede [two others]
Documentation: Māra Brašmane

2) *Elvīra Madigana* (1971)
Location: Mežaparks, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Jaunzeme, Juris Senčuks, Eižens Valpēters, Niks Korogodins, Maija Korogodina
Documentation: Atis Ieviņš

3) *Wedding of Jesus Christ* (24-25 August, 1972)
Location: Carnikava, seaside, Latvia
Documentation: Māra Brašmane & Atis Ieviņš

4) *Two Faces* (1972)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ēnu Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Eižens Valpēters, Miervaldis Polis, Liga Purmale
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

5) *Creation* [Radīšana] (1973)
Location: Liepāja (Uldis Briedis’s home and seaside), Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Uldis Briedis, Jānis Kreicbergs
Documentation: Uldis Briedis & Jānis Kreicbergs

6) *The Green Wedding* (1973) [alternative title *Summertime*]
Location: Old Riga and countryside, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Jānis Kreicbergs, Jānis Sējāns, Irēne Birnbauma, Ingūna un Alfriīds, Ināra Podkalne, Ināra Eglīte
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs & Atis Ieviņš

7) *Improvisation With Blouse* (1973)
Location: Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Mārtiņš Brauns, Klīfs, Pits, Silva Zute
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs
[held in conjunction with photography exhibition by Kreicbergs]
8) **Two** (1974)
Location: Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Līga Purmale, Miervaldis Polis, Eižens Valpēters
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

8) **Terrorists** (1974)
Location: Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, [a female poet] and [a male artist]
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

9) **Dedication to Antonioni also The Red Desert** (1974)
Location: seaside, Vecāķi/Vecdaugava, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Ināra Eglīte, Anita Kreituse, Agris Pilsums
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

10) **The Last Liv** (1974)
Location: home of Katrīne Krāsone, Košrags, Latvia
Participants: Inta Grinberga, Katrīne Krāsone [referred to elsewhere as Karvona-Kača-Katrīne]
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

11) **The Guest** (1974)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Ināra Eglīte, Helēna Hofmāne, Agris Pilsums, Irēne Birmauma, Jānis Sējāns
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

12) **Easter** (1975)
Location: Jūrmala, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, [another female] and [another male]
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

13) **The City of Wives** (1975)
Location: Latvia
Participants: Inta Grinberga, Mudīte Gaiševska, Ināra Eglīte, Solvita Sējāne, Laima Eglīte, Ingūna Galviņa, Anita Kreituse, Līga Purmale
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

14) **Winter** (1976)
Location: Old Riga and countryside
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Mudīte Gaiševska, Eižens Valpēters
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs
15) Touch (1976)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ģūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia, mural by Anita Kreituse
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Krists Grinbergs (newborn), Anita Kreituse, Po
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

16) The Old House (1977)
Location: now a demolished house (hotel Monika at the moment)
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Džonītis, Inta Grinberga, Laima Eglīte, Mudīte Gaiševska, Anita Kreituse, Māra Ķimele, Po, Eižens Valpēters, Iraklijs, Māra Zirnīte, Leonards Laganovskis, Ingvars Leitis; documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

17) Angels (1977)
Location: Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, [another female]
Documentation: Jānis Kreicbergs

Location: Home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Riga, Latvia
Participants: the “model” Brunis (a teacher) and others, including Andris Grinbergs, Dzintars (a craftsman) and Mudīte Gaiševska; musical interpretation by Inta Grinberga
Documentation: Andrejs Grants

19) The Author and Others (1989)
Location: Staatlichen Kunsthalle Berlin; (West)Berlin
Participants: the “author” Andris Grinbergs and various Berliners, most significantly Silvia (an educator)
Documentation: photos by Manfred M. Sackmann; video by a private Berlin television station

20) The Bed (between 1988 and 1990)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ģūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: a solitary woman
Documentation: [?]

21) Attics and Pigeons (1990)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ģūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, many others, including previously unknown persons
Documentation: [?]

22) White on White (1990)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ģūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, many others, including previously unknown persons
Documentation: [?]
23) *Black on Black* (1990)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, many others, including previously unknown persons
Documentation: [?]

24) *Dessert* (1991)
Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Gatis Brikavs, and others
Documentation: Jānis Deinats [?]

Location: home of Andris Grinbergs and Inta Grinberga, Ūnijas Street, Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs and [?]; documentation: [?]

26) *Mirror* (1992)
Location: Riga, Latvia
Participants: Andris Grinbergs, Inta Grinberga, Una and [another male]
Documentation: Jānis Deinats

Location: Riga, Latvia
Participants: more than one hundred of Riga residents, predominantly younger and male
Documentation: Andris Grinbergs