

# Re-Imagining Audiences: Culture as a Catalyst for Change

Tijana-Ana Spasovska



In a climate of instrumentalised culture and institutional decay in North Macedonia, audience development is commonly understood in quantitative terms. Institutions prioritise numbers over depth of engagement, and state cultural policies favour populist programming. In contrast, the North Macedonian cultural organisation Kontrapunkt envisions audiences not as passive consumers, but as co-creators in an ongoing process of cultural and social transformation. As a response to prevailing state policies, Kontrapunkt emphasises sustained engagement over fleeting public attention. In ‘Re-Imagining Audiences: Culture as a Catalyst for Change’, art historian and cultural producer Tijana-Ana Spasovska outlines an activist model of audience development that values critical engagement, intellectual curiosity, and the empowerment of individuals and communities. Drawing on ideas from amongst others Bertolt Brecht, Augusto Boal, and Valie Export, she illustrates how audiences can become co-creators, thinkers, and active participants in cultural discourse.

<b>Culture as a Tool of Power: A Brief Historical Re-reading</b>	<b>2</b>
<i>Between Control and Resistance</i>	2
<i>The Crisis of Cultural Policy and Audience Development in North Macedonia</i>	2
<b>Breaking the Fourth Wall: Brecht, Beuys, Export and the Political Awakening of the Arts</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Epic Theatre and Class-Conscious Art</i>	3
<i>From Empathy to Analysis</i>	3
<b>Rehearsing the Revolution: Augusto Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed</b>	<b>3</b>
<i>Boal’s Method as a Democratic, Collective, and Transformational Process</i>	3
<b>Audience Development Beyond Numbers</b>	<b>4</b>
<i>The Legacy of British Audience Development Policies</i>	4
<i>Populism, Superficial Inclusion, and the Myth of Access</i>	4
<i>Audience as Co-Creators: Kontrapunkt’s Long-Term Approach</i>	4
<b>Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing as Resistance</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>The Absence of Intergenerational Practice in Macedonia’s Cultural Landscape</i>	5
<i>Learning Across Generations as Radical Continuity</i>	5
<b>From Spectatorship to Agency</b>	<b>5</b>
<i>Kontrapunkt’s Position as a Counter-Strategy</i>	5
<i>The Long Arc: From Manipulation to Emancipation</i>	6
<b>References</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Context</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Biography</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Colophon</b>	<b>9</b>



## Culture as a Tool of Power: A Brief Historical Re-reading

### *Between Control and Resistance*

Culture has never been neutral. It can operate as a mechanism of control when monopolised by elites, shaping narratives and aesthetics that legitimise dominance, obscure violence, and naturalise inequality. When culture serves the powerful, it moralises submission, reinforces passivity, and redirects public desire away from material change. But culture also holds the power to disrupt. When reclaimed, it becomes a site of critique, dissent, and radical imagination – a space where suppressed histories resurface, collective agency is forged, and the terms of public life are redefined. The tension between these opposing functions is not abstract; it is inscribed in how culture is produced, circulated, and engaged.

This logic of cultural control was evident throughout the history, especially in the medieval period where art and symbolic production were mostly absorbed into ecclesiastical and feudal power structures. Rather than confronting social injustice, culture was deployed to moralise suffering and promise salvation in the afterlife in exchange for obedience in the present. It deflected the political into the spiritual, consolidating hierarchy through divine imagery. The aristocracy commissioned portraits that sanctified their rule, depicting themselves with halos, in prayer, or among saints. Cultural memory was curated to obscure power's origins and sanitise its operations.

This instrumentalisation of culture extended beyond content to form. The strict division between performer and audience has long served to institutionalise passivity, turning the public into consumers rather than co-creators of meaning. This model of cultural participation mirrors broader political structures in which citizens are expected to observe, endure, and rarely intervene. By discouraging dialogue and critical engagement, cultural institutions have historically served the interests of elites, sustaining their monopoly over discourse and imagination. When culture is reduced to

spectacle, it teaches compliance. It reinforces the logic that governance, like meaning, is the domain of the few.

In contemporary North Macedonia, this passive model of cultural engagement has been actively sustained through populist cultural policies and top-down programming. Success is measured by numbers – attendance figures, social media reach – rather than the depth of engagement or transformative potential. Institutions, beholden to political agendas or market logic, produce events designed to entertain rather than provoke, to distract rather than educate. The arts, stripped of their critical function, become tools of soft repression – maintaining appearances while masking the erosion of democratic participation.

Yet this is not the only possible role for culture. Against the grain of institutional control, independent cultural actors continue to insist on culture's other function: as a space of encounter, interrogation, and collective reimagining. When culture opens itself to plurality, when it invites participation and resists instrumentalisation, it regains its political edge. It becomes not just a reflection of society, but an intervention in it.

### *The Crisis of Cultural Policy and Audience Development in North Macedonia*

In the last three decades, cultural policy in North Macedonia has been marked by fragmentation, instability, and populist tendencies. Rather than fostering critical engagement or supporting long-term cultural development, policies have often been reactive, shaped by short-term political interests and electoral cycles. The prevailing logic prioritises visibility, numbers, and spectacle over sustainability, depth, and dialogue. Audience development has been reduced to a quantitative exercise: maximising attendance through mainstream programming, often at the expense of critical content and inclusive methodologies.

This instrumentalisation of culture coincides with the broader crisis of democracy in the country. The collapse of public institutions because of the high level of corruption

and clientelism, the erosion of democratic norms, and the dominance of political party interests in all spheres, including education, media, and culture, have created a cultural ecosystem that discourages confrontation and critical thinking. Ecological pollution, class polarisation, and the absence of genuine political alternatives have compounded this crisis. Cultural institutions are increasingly co-opted, frequently led by directors appointed through political patronage rather than professional merit, have largely mirrored the agendas of the ruling parties. Programming decisions have often been governed by nepotism, political party interests, or informal networks of affiliation within the local and regional scenes. This has resulted in an exclusionary system where access to institutional support, such as space, programs, or funding, is severely restricted for artists and practitioners outside these entrenched circles. Consequently, independent, critical, and socially engaged cultural practices have found it increasingly difficult to enter or influence the official cultural landscape, perpetuating a cycle of cultural stagnation, political instrumentalisation, and public disengagement.

On the other hand, at the municipal level, especially the municipalities outside the capital, the most consistently supported events have been large-scale festivals centred around local gastronomy – such as beer, wine, or traditional dishes like *pastrmajlija* (notably the 'Pastrmajlijada' festival). These festivals typically showcase performers aligned with political elites or feature turbofolk celebrities whose aesthetics and values closely mirror those in power. Whilst the renowned festivals and events globally proclaimed, like 'Struga Poetry Nights' have been degraded by mismanagement, insufficient funding and partition. In this context, critical cultural production, outside the capital has not only been marginalised but has been *systematically excluded* from public funding priorities, effectively erasing spaces for nuanced reflection, opposition, or artistic innovation.

## Breaking the Fourth Wall: Brecht, Beuys, Export and the Political Awakening of the Arts

### *Epic Theatre and Class-Conscious Art*

This climate of instrumentalised culture and institutional decay has not only shaped what is produced and presented but also how audiences are positioned – primarily as passive consumers rather than engaged participants. Yet historically, art has also served as a mechanism of awakening, resistance, and collective reimagining. Against the backdrop of cultural passivity of the audience in North Macedonia, it becomes essential to revisit artistic traditions that reject passivity and consumption, and embrace critical reflection, education and rethinking the society. In this context, the radical legacy of Bertolt Brecht, Joseph Beuys, and Valie Export offers vital insights into how art can break the fourth wall – both literally and metaphorically – and reclaim its role as a site of political activation.

Bertolt Brecht’s Epic Theatre emerged as a radical intervention into the bourgeois theatrical tradition, which often sought to produce cathartic identification and emotional escapism. Brecht fundamentally redefined theatre as a site of political education, where the audience is not pacified but activated. His work sought to foreground class conflict and social contradiction by breaking the illusion of theatrical realism and exposing the mechanics of power behind human behaviour.

Brecht’s plays functioned not only as artistic works but as acts of class-conscious provocation, where staging, character development, and narrative structure were all designed to emphasise social critique rather than aesthetic pleasure. According to Brecht, ‘Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it’ (Brecht, 1964). The stage was no longer a space of emotional absorption, but of rational analysis, a site where audiences were invited to think critically about the world and imagine alternatives.

Brecht introduced the *Verfremdungseffekt* commonly translated as the ‘alienation effect’ – to disrupt the audience’s

emotional identification and instead provoke reflection. The use of visible lighting, non-linear narrative, songs, and direct address broke the theatrical illusion, encouraging audiences to confront the underlying social dynamics of the plot. This distancing was not aesthetic detachment, but a political act, a refusal to naturalise suffering or to anaesthetise injustice.

Artists like Joseph Beuys and Valie Export extended Brecht’s emancipatory ambition beyond the stage. Beuys, with his famous dictum that ‘everyone is an artist,’ democratised the artistic process, advocating for what he termed *social sculpture*, the idea that society itself could be shaped through participatory creative action (Beuys, 1973). His practice of using performance and teaching as artistic mediums blurred the boundaries between art, activism, and pedagogy, reclaiming art as a civic tool.

Similarly, Valie Export (building on the legacy of feminist critique) used performance art to confront the social construction of the female body, the gaze, and institutionalised patriarchy. Her radical gestures, such as *Tap and Touch Cinema*, invited public interaction to break the objectification of women and directly implicated the audience in systems of control and consent. These interventions parallel Brechtian aims: to make the invisible visible and to turn spectators into critical participants.

### *From Empathy to Analysis*

All these practices converge in their refusal of passive spectatorship and their reconfiguration of art as a form of political education. Whether through Brecht’s dialectical theatre, Beuys’s social sculpture, or Export’s feminist interventions, the goal is not simply to depict the world, but to transform it. In a time where the arts in North Macedonia are instrumentalised by state narratives or reduced to commercial populism, these models point to the potential of art to foster solidarity, deepen empathy, and offer counter-hegemonic knowledge.

The Brechtian rupture, the shift from empathy to analysis, from consumption to participation, remains central to any

vision of a more democratic, just, and reflective cultural sphere.

## Rehearsing the Revolution: Augusto Boal and the Theatre of the Oppressed

### *Boal’s Method as a Democratic, Collective, and Transformational Process*

Augusto Boal, influenced by Brecht and Paulo Freire’s *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, created Theatre of the Oppressed as a theatrical methodology for democratic participation and social change. Rejecting the passive role of the audience, Boal coined the term ‘spect-actor’ to describe the empowered participant who engages in theatrical improvisation to rehearse real-world actions (Boal, 1979). This transformation from observer to actor reconfigures theatre into a laboratory for social experimentation and collective consciousness-raising.

Boal’s techniques, including Forum Theatre, Image Theatre, and Legislative Theatre, are rooted in the belief that theatre can prefigure social revolution. Participants do not merely discuss or portray injustice; they rehearse interventions, building the courage and critical faculties needed for real-world transformation.

In contemporary North Macedonia, Boal’s methodology offers urgent relevance. It provides a framework for critical pedagogy, understood as the dialogical process of naming oppression, reclaiming agency, and collectively imagining alternatives. As Paulo Freire emphasised, ‘education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity, or it becomes the practice of freedom’ (Freire, 1970).

In this light, Theatre of the Oppressed is not just an artistic tool, but a pedagogical and political necessity. It creates spaces where the silenced can speak, where oppressed

subjects can become historical agents. This is particularly vital in contexts like North Macedonia, where state-controlled narratives dominate and alternative public spheres are systematically eroded.

Critical pedagogy, rooted in participatory learning, reflective action, and social justice, remains one of the few intellectual traditions capable of resisting authoritarian tendencies and cultivating critical democratic cultures. Boal's theatre is one of its most powerful expressions, offering a space to not only interpret the world, but to practice changing it.

### **Audience Development Beyond Numbers**

#### *The Legacy of British Audience Development Policies*

The global discourse around audience development, especially as conceptualised and institutionalised in the UK during the 1990s, has played a significant role in shaping cultural policy across Europe. Originally framed as a tool to broaden access and participation, this policy framework quickly became instrumentalised as a neoliberal strategy for the quantification and marketisation of cultural value (Belfiore & Bennett, 2008). Imported and implemented in transitional or semi-peripheral contexts such as North Macedonia, this logic reduces culture to a statistical performance indicator, where audience is no longer a community of interpretation but a metric to satisfy funding bodies and justify expenditures.

This approach is deeply problematic. In its most instrumentalised form, audience development reflects a market-driven ideology, aligning culture with economic rationality rather than democratic necessity. Within this framework, the public becomes a consumer, and the value of art is equated with its ability to attract footfall, boost tourism, or generate profit. As such, audience development policies imported from Western neoliberal regimes tend to disempower cultural institutions, reorienting them toward superficial outreach rather than meaningful engagement.

Worse still, the infiltration of creative industries discourse into cultural policy has cemented this market logic at the heart of cultural programming. Under the banner of 'innovation' and 'entrepreneurship,' critical discourse has been displaced by technocratic language, obscuring the ideological violence of capitalism behind seemingly neutral terms like 'capacity building' or 'impact measurement.' As Nancy Fraser has noted, such paradigms often 'masquerade as emancipatory while reinforcing existing power structures' (Fraser, 2013).

Culture, however, cannot and must not be reduced to industry. The very notion of culture as an industry empties it of its critical, confrontational, and participatory dimensions, placing it within the logic of capital. What emerges is not a democratised cultural sphere but a privatised cultural economy, in which public institutions are coerced into public-private partnerships that serve the interests of oligarchic wealth. Far from empowering communities, this model reproduces cultural inequality, allocating resources, spaces, and visibility according to market logic rather than social justice.

In such configurations, there is no bottom-up agency. Creative industries, while promising access and innovation, largely operate through top-down structures, privileging corporate stakeholders and wealthy patrons. Cultural production becomes a domain governed by market demand and brand aesthetics, rather than community needs, historical consciousness, or social critique.

#### *Populism, Superficial Inclusion, and the Myth of Access*

Another insidious effect of the audience development model is its populist dimension, wherein inclusion is understood quantitatively rather than qualitatively. The goal becomes reaching 'as many people as possible' rather than cultivating critical publics or enabling deep cultural participation. This results in tokenistic inclusion, where marginalised groups are instrumentalised as indicators of diversity rather than active co-creators of meaning.

This myth of access is predicated on the assumption that presence equals participation, ignoring the asymmetries of voice, power, and recognition. It celebrates the democratisation of culture while systematically excluding the very voices it claims to include, reducing audiences to passive consumers of a pre-designed cultural offer. Under this logic, the function of culture is no longer to challenge, question, or transform – but to entertain and pacify.

#### *Audience as Co-Creators: Kontrapunkt's Long-Term Approach*

Against this backdrop, the work of Kontrapunkt presents a vital alternative. Rather than treating audiences as a numerical goal or a branding tool, Kontrapunkt approaches the public as co-creators in a long-term process of critical cultural production. Rooted in the values of participation, reflexivity, and horizontality, Kontrapunkt resists the commodification of culture by fostering counter-publics, spaces where cultural expression is inextricably linked to civic engagement and social critique.

Kontrapunkt's programming is not guided by metrics but by methodologies of dialogue, care, and resistance. The audience is not a 'target group,' but a community in formation, shaped through sustained relationships, shared concerns, and co-authored meaning. This approach echoes Claire Bishop's argument that the ethical and political value of participatory art lies not in its inclusiveness per se, but in its capacity to stage antagonism, difference, and contestation (Bishop, 2012).

In contexts like North Macedonia, where public discourse is often impoverished by populism, and cultural policy hijacked by party politics, such practices are not merely aesthetic interventions but acts of cultural resilience and political resistance. They reclaim culture as a commons rather than a commodity, and reaffirm its role in shaping a more egalitarian and solidary society.



## ***Intergenerational Knowledge Sharing as Resistance***

### *The Absence of Intergenerational Practice in Macedonia's Cultural Landscape*

In the contemporary cultural practice landscape of North Macedonia, intergenerational knowledge transfer is not only absent from official frameworks but is often actively neglected. Institutions responsible for cultural memory, museums, archives, educational bodies, and public cultural centres, operate in fragmented and isolated modes, rarely fostering continuity between generations of artists, theorists, and activists. This rupture is exacerbated by systemic issues: political appointments in cultural institutions, short-term 'projectism' driven by donor agendas, and an overarching climate of anti-intellectual populism that erodes historical consciousness.

The lack of structured intergenerational cultural policy has resulted in a lost opportunity to build resilience and solidarity across time. Instead of cultivating traditions of resistance and critique, the cultural sector often succumbs to short-lived trends, producing what Guy Debord once called spectacles – ephemeral experiences that offer the illusion of engagement without any structural continuity or political consequence (Debord, 1967).

### *Learning Across Generations as Radical Continuity*

In moments of historical rupture, when dominant narratives are questioned, hegemonies destabilised, and emancipatory practices take root, these fragile openings are often sustained not by institutions but by transgenerational acts of transmission. Whether oral, performative, or written, this transmission serves as a radical continuity, allowing those who come after to inherit not just the memory of struggle, but the methods, ethics, and language of resistance.

The absence of such transmission mechanisms renders every political awakening historically isolated, leaving emerging generations to 'reinvent the wheel' or worse,

to assimilate into systems they were never equipped to critique. Intergenerational knowledge-sharing does not imply a hierarchical model of 'teaching' the young, but rather a horizontal, dialogic practice in which past and present actors in the cultural field co-produce meaning. This mode of engagement is inherently political, as it refuses the capitalist logic of disposability and perpetual novelty. It instead affirms a counter-temporality, one that values endurance, repetition, and re-articulation over market-driven innovation.

In this light, the sharing of knowledge across generations functions as a strategy of resistance to the cultural amnesia imposed by authoritarian populisms and neoliberal rationalities alike. It keeps alive modes of doing and thinking that challenge the status quo, from socialist histories of cultural production to feminist practices of care and collective authorship. When such lineages are broken, these practices are not just forgotten; they are actively overwritten by the dominant systems of cultural production, whose interest lies in depoliticising the past and individualising the present.

This is particularly urgent in a context like North Macedonia, where the infrastructure of memory is precarious, and where public discourse is often saturated by revisionist nationalisms and corporate cultural agendas. Without deliberate mechanisms to protect and propagate non-dominant narratives, the few existing spaces of critical thought and cultural confrontation risk becoming isolated islands in an increasingly commodified and ideologically manipulated landscape.

Therefore, intergenerational sharing must be understood not merely as a pedagogical tool, but as a political practice of continuity, memory, and resistance. It allows us to name the system, to remember the moments when it was interrupted, and to strategise how it might be challenged again.

## **From Spectatorship to Agency**

### *Kontrapunkt's Position as a Counter-Strategy*

In this context, Kontrapunkt positions itself as a sustained counterpoint to the cultural status quo. Rather than catering to populist demands or institutional complacency, it commits to fostering critical, contemporary, and engaged culture. As a cultural and civic actor, Kontrapunkt provides an independent and inclusive space for reimagining society, grounded in theoretical inquiry, political critique, and artistic experimentation.

Kontrapunkt's model of audience development is inherently political. It does not treat the audience as a passive demographic to be reached, but as a community of co-thinkers and co-creators. In a time when democracy is hollowed out, Kontrapunkt takes on the role of a cultural shelter and an intellectual platform, offering tools for rethinking current conditions, encouraging collective reflection, and supporting audience agency as a vehicle for transformation. This is not just cultural work – it is resistance, education, and preparation for a more just and imaginative society.

At the heart of Kontrapunkt's philosophy is the belief in art as a catalyst for social change, and in intergenerational knowledge-sharing as a cultural and political necessity. In a society marked by fragmentation, not only along ethnic and religious lines, but also across generational divides, the failure to transmit knowledge and memory is a form of structural violence. It creates a vacuum that serves the interests of the corrupt and powerful, who rely on historical amnesia and social disconnection to maintain control.

Art for Social Change and Critical Pedagogy, as emerging interdisciplinary fields, offer methodologies that prioritise collaboration, participation, and community-building. Drawing from practices such as Augusto Boal's Theatre of the Oppressed, Joseph Beuys' concept

of social sculpture, and Valie Export' *Tap and Touch Cinema*, Art for Social Change and Critical Pedagogy work against alienation and towards collective agency. Kontrapunkt's work adopts these approaches not as fixed models but as living methods, capable of adapting to local realities while remaining connected to broader global discourses.

Through dialogical processes, shared authorship, and non-hierarchical formats, Kontrapunkt reclaims the role of culture in repairing ruptures, especially the rupture between generations. Young people are not just the 'future audience'; they are active agents in the present. Older generations are not relics of the past but carriers of critical memory. The weaving together of these temporal strands, of past, present, and future, is both the method and the mission. In this sense, *audience development* becomes not an end goal, but a means of stitching together a fractured society, one dialogue, one event, one encounter at a time.

### *The Long Arc: From Manipulation to Emancipation*

In a landscape saturated with commercial spectacles, nationalist aesthetics, and state-sponsored populism, it is urgent to reaffirm the role of culture as an infrastructure of citizenship, a space for collective inquiry, shared knowledge, and democratic negotiation. In this sense, culture cannot be reduced to an industry, nor can its audiences be reduced to consumers. What we need instead is to reconceive audiences as communities of practice, embedded in lived social relations and capable of co-creating meaning, ethics, and futures.

This reconceptualisation requires institutions and collectives willing to resist the dominant scripts. Kontrapunkt, as one of the few organisations that deal with critical culture in North Macedonia, has long embodied this commitment. Emerging in the early 2000s with a strong emphasis on critical pedagogy, decentralisation, and public responsibility, Kontrapunkt has played a foundational role in the development of a counter-knowledge in the country. It has done so not by mimicking the models of dominant

institutions, but by rewriting the conditions of cultural participation.

Through its publishing work, translating and circulating key texts in political theory, philosophy, feminism, and critical art practices, Kontrapunkt has made accessible bodies of knowledge otherwise absent from the dominant curriculum. Its commitment to transnational dialogues is also evident in its long-standing engagement with regional and European networks, as well as its capacity to host leading international thinkers, theorists, and cultural workers. These interventions have helped reframe the 'periphery' not as a deficit, but as a site of rich local knowledge, innovation, and resistance to cultural hegemony.

The organisation has consistently invested in critical pedagogy as a mode of resistance – organising three major schools of critical thought, from which many of today's most active artists, theorists, and activists have emerged. These schools have functioned as laboratories of reflection and action, where younger generations have encountered not only new concepts but tools for collective intervention in the world. In this way, Kontrapunkt has made evident that knowledge is never neutral, and that pedagogy can either reproduce systems of inequality or serve as a radical invitation to rethink the world.

Equally important is its commitment to building alternative infrastructures for culture. In a context where both public and private spaces are becoming increasingly commercialised and inaccessible, Kontrapunkt has managed the first independent cultural centre in Skopje, Tocka, and later one of the key founding members of CSS Centar Jadro, the country's only existing model of a public-civic partnership. This model remains a unique and it is the only space accessible to non-institutional artists without rent, where cultural workers can engage, create, and critically intervene.

Kontrapunkt's work has also been marked by a commitment to horizontal collaboration, with participatory models rooted in genuine co-authorship. Whether through collaborative programming, co-curation, or community-

led initiatives, the organisation insists on dialogue over dissemination, reciprocity over representation. This approach radically challenges both the nationalist framing of cultural identity and the market-driven logic of the creative industries, offering instead a model of culture that is attuned to struggle, solidarity, and social change.

To move from manipulation to emancipation, we must recognise that culture is not a luxury or a by-product of economic development – it is a condition for democratic life. It is where the possible can be rehearsed, where histories can be re-examined, and where futures can be re-imagined. In this light, the work of Kontrapunkt is not just local or institutional – it is political, pedagogical, and necessary.

In resisting the instrumentalisation of the arts, in refusing the commodification of knowledge, and in reasserting the right to participate in culture as a form of citizenship, organisations like Kontrapunkt mark the contours of a radical cultural legacy. One that does not seek applause, but change. One that does not cultivate dependency, but agency. One that reminds us, always, that another world is possible – if we have the courage to build it, together.

# REFERENCES

Belfiore, E., & Bennett, O. (2008). *The Social Impact of the Arts: An Intellectual History*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Benjamin, W. (1940). ‘Theses on the Philosophy of History’. In: H. Arendt, H. (ed.) Zohn, H. (trans.) (1969) *Illuminations*. Schocken Books.

Beuys, J. (1973). ‘I Am Searching for Field Character.’ In: Staeck, K. and Steidl, G. (eds.) (1997) *Joseph Beuys in America*. Edition Staeck.

Bishop, C. (2012). *Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship*. Verso Books.

Boal, A. (1979). *Theatre of the Oppressed*. Pluto Press.

Brecht, B. (1964). *Brecht on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic*. Hill and Wang.

Debord, G. (1967). *The Society of the Spectacle*. Buchet-Chastel.

Export, V. (1989). ‘Aspects of Feminist Actionism in Austria’. In: Raven, A., Frueh, J., & Langer, C. (eds.) (1991). *Feminist Art Criticism*. Routledge.

Fraser, N. (2013). *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis*. Verso Books.

Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Herder & Herder.

Goldberg, R. (2001). *Performance Art: From Futurism to the Present*. Thames & Hudson.



## CONTEXT

This text is one of the pilot studies of *Re-Imagine Europe: New Perspectives for Action*. In these contributions we explore and reflect on artistic practices and experimental approaches in the cultural field that can engage and activate audiences and communities to address ecological, social, and political challenges. The pilot studies provide an overview of practices of cultural organisations that can serve as models, recipes, or tools for transformation for current and future generations of cultural workers and artists.

*Re-Imagine Europe: New Perspectives for Action* (2023–2027) is a four-year transnational co-creation and circulation project of fourteen interdisciplinary art organisations across Europe. The project aims to equip and empower young Europeans through artistic practices to better withstand societal challenges triggered by rapid climate change.

The Re-Imagine Europe partnership is a collaboration of: Paradiso<sup>(NL)</sup>, Sonic Acts<sup>(NL)</sup>, Elevate Festival<sup>(AT)</sup>, INA grm<sup>(FR)</sup>, A4<sup>(SK)</sup>, Borealis<sup>(NO)</sup>, KONTEJNER<sup>(HR)</sup>, BEK<sup>(NO)</sup>, RUPERT<sup>(LT)</sup>, Disruption Network Lab<sup>(DE)</sup>, Semibreve<sup>(PT)</sup>, Parco Arte Vivente<sup>(IT)</sup>, Kontrapunkt<sup>(MK)</sup> and Radio Web MACBA<sup>(ES)</sup>.

## BIOGRAPHY

**Tijana-Ana Spasovska<sup>(MK)</sup>** is an art historian working as a project and program coordinator at Kontrapunkt and the CRIC festival for critical culture. She studied at the UNESCO Chair in Cultural Policy and Management Master program at Belgrade University and attended the GIOCA – Innovation and Organisation of Culture and the Arts Master program at the University of Bologna. During her bachelor studies at the University of St. Cyril and Methodius, Tijana-Ana was on an Erasmus Exchange program at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, while being an active member of the student association of archaeology AXIOS – Skopje. From 2021 until 2022 she was part of the managing board of Kooperativa – Regional Platform for Culture, and since 2024 she is part of the managing board of Jadro – Association of independent culture scene. Her fields of interest are audience development, horizontal forms of management, cultural landscapes and cultural activism.

Author	Tijana-Ana Spasovska
Editor	Iskra Geshoska
Photo	Natasha Geleva
Copy editor	Arie Altena
Publisher	Paradiso Press 2025
Graphic Design	Henri Kutsar
CC	Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) <a href="https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0">creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0</a>

↳ [re-imagine-europe.eu](https://re-imagine-europe.eu)

*Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.*

