

Disclaimer

The performative installation 'Signature, Event, Context' as proposed to the transmediale.08 exhibition by Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša had been accepted for inclusion to the exhibition. In the run-up to the festival due to the curatorial and ethical convictions of Nataša Petrešin Bachelez, the guest curator of the transmediale.08 exhibition, a decision was taken with the festival direction to not include the project. However, after the exhibition opening, and following a discussion with the artists, the festival direction has agreed with the curator to re-include the project, while the curator would like to distance herself from the project. A documentation of the project is on display at the foyer of the House of World Cultures.

Der Vorschlag zu einer performativen Installation 'Signature, Event, Context' von Janez Janša, Janez Janša und Janez Janša war ursprünglich für die Ausstellung der transmediale.08 vorgesehen. In der Vorbereitung des Festivals entschied die Gastkuratorin Nataša Petrešin Bachelez gemeinsam mit der Festivalleitung, das Projekt aus kuratorischen und ethischen Gründen nicht in die Ausstellung aufzunehmen. Nach der Eröffnung der Ausstellung und in Absprache mit den Künstlern entschied die Festivalleitung das Projekt auszustellen, wobei die Kuratorin sich davon distanziert. Die Dokumentation des Projekts ist im Foyer des Haus der Kulturen der Welt zu sehen.

Signature Event Context

Conceived and performed by Janez Janša, Janez Janša and Janez Janša

In summer 2007, three Slovenian artists officially changed their names to Janez Janša. Their work focuses on the question of signature, and – more particularly – on the role of signature in public space. In their various approaches, they explore Derrida's famous statement on signature and its paradoxical relationship towards originality and repetition.

"By definition, a written signature implies the actual or empirical nonpresence of the signer. But, it will be said, it also marks and retains his having-been present in a past now, which will remain a future now, and therefore in a now, in general, in the transcendental form of nowness (maintenance). This general maintenance is somehow inscribed, stapled to the present punctuality, always evident and always singular, in the form of the signature. This is the enigmatic originality of every paraph. For the attachment to the source to occur, the absolute singularity of an event of the signature and of a form of the signature must be retained: the pure reproducibility of a pure event."

(Jacques Derrida, "Signature Event Context" in *Margins of Philosophy*, tr. Alan Bass, pp. 307-330)

On January 28th, 2008, Janez Janša, Janez Janša, and Janez Janša performed *Signature Event Context* at the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, a walking action in the corridors of the Memorial. Each one of them, equipped with a GPS device, covered a different path within the Memorial's structure this way, together assembling a common signature visible only in a virtual space (the internet). During the performance artists continuously repeated "*Jaz sem Janez Janša, Jaz sem Janez Janša, Jaz sem Janez Janša...*" ("My name is Janez Janša").*

Signature Event Context at the Holocaust Memorial puts together 3 concepts (signature, event and context) from Derrida's essay in complex relation; signature itself is an event which re-contextualizes *the site of signature*.

In his book *At Memory's Edge: After-images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture* (Yale University Press, 2000) the American scholar James E. Young writes that there is no intrinsic meaning in memorials. Instead, they derive their meaning from visitors' interactions: each visitor makes their own experience of memory at a memorial.

The structure of the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin, which invites a visitor for an individual experience – as has been stated by its architect Peter Eisenman – points to the intention of the *Signature Event Context* project. Eisenman concludes his statement with the following explanation of the experience in the Memorial:

"In this monument there is no goal, no end, no working one's way in or out. The duration of an individual's experience of it grants no further understanding, since understanding is impossible. The time of the monument, its duration from top surface to ground, is disjoined from the time of experience. In this context, there is no nostalgia, no memory of the past, only the living memory of the individual experience. Here, we can only know the past through its manifestation in the present." (Eisenman Architects, Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe, Berlin. Project text by Peter Eisenman)

In Derrida's words, walking and talking signatures by Janša, Janša and Janša are the physical manifestations of nowness via individual experience. The traces of the walking and talking signature are left only in virtual space. Memory is always already a performance of virtuality.