Natali Rajchinovska-Pavleska

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SEMIOTICS OF EMPTY SPACES: DIALECTICAL RUPTURE, INTERVAL, PAUSE

Key words: empty spaces, interval, pause, resistance, dialectical rupture

"I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage."
Brook Peter, *The Empty Space*, 1968

This paper aims to explore the semiotics of *empty* spaces, the function of *interval* and *pause* as a *dialectical* rupture, and a conception based on resistance to linear, mimetic, and illusionistic types of representation. The specificity of the rupture as an active space for action defines the *emptiness* as fullness, constructing meaning in/from the break, dynamics in the void, silence as a structural element of sound, and movement in stillness. Artistic methods and procedures, responding to alienation and specific social conditions at a certain historical moment, are based on an anti-materialist approach that creates spaces for active perception instead of passive contemplation. Based on the logic of the shock effect and semantic coding, artistic examples contain a connotation of empty spaces as places for generating meaning. The analyzed artistic examples cover the domain of various creative disciplines, including painting, sculpture, music, film, objects, graphics, and object photography. Their dialectical structure is based on the application of elements of abstraction with deep content meaning, convergence through the practices of non-objectivity, the act of tearing, décollage, the gesture of erasure, the empty in the void, silence, dematerialization, discrepant montage, reduction of the sign, and the concept of whiteness.

Introduction

The semiotical, philosophical-monadological, and anti-materialist approach allows for the interpretation of the construction of *empty* spaces according to the process of *reduction*, which in the overall structure of the work contains further potential for generic meaning. What is the role of the

semiotic act in the process of forming empty spaces as potential sites of meaning? According to semiologists, semiotics is a "system of signs" through which "signifying practices" are established, encompassing "formal expression," "formal language," and "representational systems" (Greimas and Courtés, 1982: 272–293). The extension of the episteme of representation to semiotics, along with the concepts of "sign," "semiotic reduction," and "transformation," enables the interpretation of articulated language as a means of producing new meanings (Greimas, 1987: vii-ix). The anti-materialist approach of the German philosopher Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716) is based on the hypothesis of the existence of a "monad," defined as a simple substance "without parts" that enters into different configurations. The monad is changeable according to internal principles, so that the changes it undergoes continue in continuity—the sequence of changes. The sequence of changes includes multiple aspects within the unit [*unité*], which is defined as simple and without parts. The internal principle as the generator of changes allows the passage "from one perception to another." Monads are incorporeal entelechies [*ἐντελέχεια*] that possess a self-sufficient [*αὐτάρκεια*] source for their internal activity [*action*] (Leibniz, 1898). Philosophically, empty space can be interpreted as a monad that enters different compositional assemblies and artistic structures, with the ability to generate perceptual action. The relationships between the "semantic content" and the "spatial aspects" are the result of a combination or determination, transformation, and possible relationship between different spaces. Determination is a function of the reader, guided by referential denotations, and they should possess general signs, specifics, signals, and information in order to be unlocked and recognized. The spaces are thematized and thus transformed into an object in itself as a place of action, instead of a representation of the place of action. Empty spaces represent an event that occurs "here" and determines the spatial aspect of the action, which is subordinated to both the theme and the event (Bal, 1997: 135-137). In the context of the construction of space, the creation of conditions for, or "the production of space," as Lefebvre writes, the desired opening of a text with a dialectical-political dimension is social space (Lefebvre, 1991: 27-40). The dialectical concepts of interruption, interval, and pause manifest themselves as semiotic, structural, compositional, formative, intra- and extra-media artistic procedures, which lead to an active perception of meaning from/in painting, film, music, graphics, and object photography.

Painterly Reduction

When it comes to the medium of *painting*, the question of representation opens theorizing to several examples of artistic dictions. Hence, the question posed by Barbara Bolt: "Can the image transcend its structure as representation and be performative rather than representational?" The example of non-objective painting undoubtedly confirms the statement (Bolt, 2004: 4). One of the earliest reductions of representational description is manifested in the work *Suprematist Composition: White on White* (1918), by the avant-garde artist Kazimir Malevich (1879–1935), who advocated the idea

that art did not need to refer to any reality outside itself and that geometric shapes could create the illusion of movement towards infinite space. However, within the finite and limited space of the painting format, he painted a white square, slightly offset from the central axis and partially rotated. The whiteness of the square differs in degrees from the whiteness of the background and does not function as a void but as an emptiness from the usual subject of painting—the illusionistic space. But what does Malevich's whiteness contain more deeply? Is it possible that the entire history of the art of painting up to that point is captured here? Whiteness serves as a framework for free perception, yet it also embodies a distinctly focused artistic-reductive intention. Such capture-liberation is certainly the fruit of the author's imagination. Kazimir Malevich states that "the imagination knows that there is no empty space" (Malevich, 1968: 192). He states, "Everything else which attempts to express the other side of life, the practical thing, in a whole series of innumerable links in a chain of things, shows that this sphere too is powerless; there simply is no universal [...]. If only we would come to the place where we must find such a 'universal,' then we would meet before us something greater than the empty place, we would disappear in it without trace, and we would become non-existent, for we would have overcome the movement. This 'nothing' is in everything that seems tangible to us, existing in reality..." (Malevich, 1976: 60). He says, "this does not mean that in it is no gift of work," countering Objectivists' claim that "non-objectivity is an abstraction, an emptiness." According to this: "Non-objective art ... is capable of confronting man with organized registration and action and helps him out into an empty field, just as art arrived at the Suprematist city square, the empty, faceless, non-aspectual, non-objective city square" (Malevich, 1976: 244-245). Contrary to concrete materialism, emptiness is a new form of rest, the apotheosis of life (Malevich, 1976: 252-253). The empty occupation returns to the unconscious realm of art, from which it originated, and within the framework of the objectless essence in painting, all figures dissolve into nothingness. "There will be a struggle between ... sense and nonsense; ... the empty must overcome the non-empty ... things done at ease must overcome trivial things; small matters will vanquish" (Malevich, 1976: 253).

The Gesture of Tearing

The history of painting receives a new challenge with the interpretation of the work of Lucio Fontana (1899–1968), who in 1948 began with the process of tearing and break through the surface of the canvas. He declares, "All depends upon ideas, upon the cut and the gesture" (Billeter, 1977: 19). Destruction as an artistic act becomes part of the revolutionary conception of the art of painting, or as Erika Billeter states, "A new pictorial beauty grows with Fontana out of the act of destruction" (Billeter, 1977: 19). The series of works called *Spatial Conceptions* [*Concetti Spaziali*] are the result of his search for space, the representation of space that differs from the illusionistic space [*trompe l'oeil*] of painting. According to Billeter, "The painting in turn, instead of representing space, itself becomes space" (Billeter, 1977: 16).

Fontana's completely white canvases are a pretext for what follows, an approach to resolving space as a structural rather than a content component (Lucie-Smith, 1969: 122). The *spazialismo* movement in the 1930s and 1940s in Italy, according to Argan and Oliva, does not aim to reexamine tradition but rather polemically opposes it, and the painting of Lucio Fontana will be the backbone of all progressive movements in Italy thereafter (Argan and Oliva, 2002: 60).

Décollage, Destruction, Shaping

The work *TV-Dé-coll/age, no. 1* (1958–59) by Wolf Vostell (1932–1998) is made through a specific and authentic artistic procedure called *décollage*, based on the principles of cutting, tearing, and breaking through the flat surface of the representation, or, as he himself states, 'unpaste, tear off' (Vostell, 1966: 90).[1] The idea of this type of breaking through or connecting with fragments of the background content (TV monitors behind a cut canvas) is the opposite of the collage procedure, which involves building from already existing elements. The form of creation according to the principles of "destruction" is the new method of building the pictorial representation prompted by social events, the shaping of society according to the methods of destruction, and personal experience with the ruins of post-war Europe. The décollage principle is a response to the way in which mass media reported on the events after the Second World War, as he declares: "Destruction, decomposition & change were the strongest elements—I realized that constructive elements don't exist in life at all; they are all intermediate phases of destruction. Life is décollage—as the body builds up and grows, it wears out at the same time—permanent destruction" (Vostell, 1968: 4). Vostell implemented this principle in other visual works such as the film *Sun in Your Head* (1963), using a method of removing linear shots and distorting single shots. The film is part of the *Fluxfilm Anthology*, a collection of thirty-seven short films created by Fluxus artists.

Gesture of Erasure

Like Fontana, Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) painted completely white paintings in the 1950s, where the only image is the "shadow of the viewer" (Lucie-Smith, 1969: 122). After the "combined paintings" phase, Rauschenberg produced two conceptual works, one based on the concept of "erasure" (*Erased De Kooning Drawing*, 1953), the other on "assertion" (*Portrait of Iris Clert*, 1961). *Erased De Kooning Drawing* (1953) (Kosuth, 1999: 175) is one of several works through which Rauschenberg questions the limits of what can be understood as art. In this case, the "erasure" is not semantic but real, and what remains is the void that covered what was once significant—a drawing by de Kooning, which he himself gave to him. Rauschenberg requested a drawing that would be as challenging to erase as possible, preferably in ink. He spent almost a month erasing the draw-

[1] As Kaye says, "the image is produced in a degrading or destruction, rather than juxtaposition, of found materials" (Kaye, 2000: 115).

ing, leaving visible traces. Some critics interpret this gesture as a "response to abstract expressionism" (Stuckey, 1997: 41), and some as an "anti-art gesture," but in fact *appropriation* as a method and erasure as an act are a tribute to the artist, the result of his preoccupation with "adding and subtracting," conceptualizing emptiness as a manifestation of "absorption of the diversity of the physical world" (Davidson, 1997).

Into the Void

The artist Robert Morris (1931–2018) creates sculptural interventions in gallery spaces, considering them empty. His white cubic forms, *Untitled* (1966), are a reflection of the gallery environment, a simulation of an object emptied of its content. But there is no work of art without content, no matter how explicitly denied, or as Rosenberg notes: "For works to be empty of aesthetic content, it seems logical that they be produced out of raw rocks and lumber, out of stuff intended for purposes other than art, such as strips of rubber or electric bulbs, or even out of living people or animals" (Rosenberg, 1999: 221). In this way, the work is not intended to be read; it opposes readability, and as such, represents a kind of visual obstruction. According to Kaye: "In mimicking the gallery's claim to neutrality and denial of content, the plywood box defers the viewer's attention towards the dynamic operating between herself, the object, and the 'empty space' of the gallery, subverting rather than confirming the gallery's late Modernist aesthetic and ideology" (Kaye, 2000: 27).

Silence: The Music That is Not Music

The concept of silence in music was realized by the American Fluxus artist John Cage (1912–1992), who in his work titled 4'33" replaces the traditional musical score with the words "Tacet. For any instrument or instruments." The work is in three movements: 30", 2'23", and 1'40", and was first performed at the Maverick Concert Hall, Woodstock, New York, in August 1952 (Davies, 1997: 448-462). The word is repeated three times, introducing a vernacular explanation for the manner in which the work is performed. According to Liz Kotz, the score is replaced by "an autonomous, textual, and graphic object," the beginning of what she calls "post-Cagean aesthetics." The score includes linguistic and acoustic elements previously denied or unrecognized by the musical and aesthetic worlds. The subject of his musical structure is "the sphere that has always existed outside musical intentionality," formulating a "new language" different from the one that defines music. For Cage, silence is associated with the unconscious, with a space that is "far from empty" (Kocz, 2001; Robinson, 2002: 115). Experimental music for Cage means the scope of sounds, "those that are notated and those that are not." Music, in its silence, provides access to the sounds present in the environment, a concept that is prevalent in modern sculpture and architecture. He declares, "There is always something to see, something to hear. In fact, try as we may to make a silence, we cannot" (Cage, 1961: 7-8). If silence was previously a time lapse between sounds, a separator between two sounds, or a group of sounds, now silence in

musical discourse allows for a pause or a punctuation; it is part of the structure of the whole (Cage, 1961: 22-23). According to Davies, "There are at least two very different ways to view 4'33"—as consisting of a passage of absolute silence or as comprised of whatever sounds occur during the period. When musical works are played, extraneous noises are likely to intrude. Sirens howl in the distance, planes rumble overhead, people cough, and programs rustle. ... We may never experience absolute silence, yet the work might consist of just that" (Davies, 1997: 448–462).

The Void – Dematerialization

The representative of the New Realists, Yves Klein (1928–1962), exhibited his first monochromes in 1950 and the series *Anthropomorphies* in 1960 (Lucie-Smith, 1969: 122; Weitemeier, 1995: 62). Klein's conceptualist attempt manifested itself through the 'exhibition' of 'nothing' in the empty gallery (the smallest gallery of Paris), Iris Clair in Paris, 10 May 1957. The original title of the project was *La spécialisation de la sensibility à l'état de matière première en sensibility picturale stabilisée* (*Specialization of Sensibility in the Raw Material State of Stabilized Pictorial Sensibility*), known as *The Void* [*Le vide*]. In his text, Klein explains what the exhibition will be about: "a space of blue sensibility within the framework of whitened walls of the gallery" (Klein, 2007: 49). The empty gallery, conceived as a 'space of pictorial sensibility,' was the target of Klein's dematerialization of his authentic color—International Klein Blue. Klein believed that the pictorial space he constructed in his monochromatic paintings could be transferred, albeit immaterially, to the gallery space (Klein, 2007: 51). The process of dematerialization does not occur through "dissolving the institutional framework of one's work," but rather through a reduction to the absence of the "material referent." Hence, Klein's emptiness is not a pure opposition to representation but a performativity in the public domain, tied "to social conventions and public ritual" (Cabanas, 2014: 128). Scandalous to the public, the empty room of the gallery space contained, according to Klein, 48 hours of experience in isolation, time spent whitewashing the walls of the interior paint with "pure white lithopane pigment blended with Klein's special varnish of alcohol, acetone, and vinyl resin." Klein's goal was not only to purify the space but also to transform it into his working studio/atelier (Klein, 2007: 51). According to Banai, "Devoid of all traditional art objects, the room had only an empty vitrine stationed in its left corner and a small table in the storefront window. Both objects were painted white 'to receive the pictorial climate of sensibility of dematerialized blue.' Only the floors were carpeted in light gray, and a sole fluorescent light illuminated the room" (Banai, 2014: 8; 76). As Klein himself stated, "The object of this attempt is to create, to establish, and to impress upon the viewing public a sensuous pictorial state within the confines of an art gallery; in other words, the creation of an environment, of a real pictorial climate, therefore one that is invisible. This invisible pictorial state within the space of the gallery must literally become what until now has been given as the best general definition of painting: 'radiance'"

(Klein, 2007: 48). Banai asserts that the room contains no people nor objects of art, but rather an absolute stillness lighted by a singular neon light (Banai, 2014: 75). For Klein, "pictorial space is, above all, the product of spiritual exercises" (Klein, 2007: 4). Just as his monochromes are said to contain a depth expressed in an authentic way: "first is nothing, then there is a deep nothing, then there is a blue depth," so too the gallery space contains a void that is filled with the depth of meaning—the confrontation with everything that can be represented as art. The void's complexity receives various critical articulations. According to Denys Riout, *The Void* is the last step in an artistic progression that began with Klein's blue monochromes of 1957, embodying the liberation of "pictorial sensibility" from the material support of the monochrome. (Riout, 2004; cited in Banai, 2017: 77). According to Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, *The Void* enacted the 'spatialization of painterly reductivism,' an avant-garde strategy previously performed by El Lissitzky in the 1920s that 'shifts the scale of the framing device: from the level of easel paintings . . . to the level of architecture itself.' (Buchloh, 1998: 92; cited in Banai, 2014: 77.) With this act of transformation in conventional exhibitions, the gallery space becomes a work of art.

Denaturalization of Movement

According to art historian Meyer Schapiro, "abstract art is a purely aesthetic activity, unconditioned by objects and based on its own eternal laws" (Schapiro, 1968: 195). The work *Rhythm 21* (1921) by the German artist, cubist, and Dadaist Hans Richter (1888–1976) is considered the first abstract, non-narrative film. Richter was primarily a painter who focused on analyzing composition, using the canvas as a frame and outline rather than emphasizing a specific theme. The forms in the film composition are distributed according to the relationships of musical rhythms, with the intention of avoiding any presentation of a theme or narrative. Rhythm, according to Richter, is the essence of filmmaking as an associative articulation of time—the essential dimension of film—together with movement. The idea is "entering an empty room in which space does not exist." It was filmed with a micro-camera smaller than a cigarette box, with some wheels inside; the exposure was regulated with a bicycle pump. The camera is placed on a table, moving up and down along a vertical axis. The composition consists of 40-50 cardboard squares and rectangles, contrasting white and dark surfaces, creating a collage of positive and negative elements. Richter understood the function of art as a political connotation, imagining its possible revolutionary function. One of the possible ways to express revolt or resistance at that time was through the objects, elements, and facilities in the film itself. Methodologically, this meant denaturalizing the movement of objects and creating new rhizomes and networks of political satire, which for the Nazis at that time meant that it could cause revolt and rebellion among the audience, which is why one of the films was destroyed (later restored).

The Interval in Duration: Discrepant Montage

The concept of "interval" represents a potential for establishing a direct relationship, serving as an opening towards infinity by accepting the risks associated with distances and the realm of free resonances, or using indeterminacy as an alternative to the closure of the work. The theory of intervals is associated with filmmaking, where the interval as a product of experimental montage is essential for the construction of cinema images, cinema documents, and cinema poems. Cinematography, akin to montage and all other film elements, constitutes a multiplicity of cinematic intervals. The interval is found between frames, in the transition "from" one visual impulse "to" another. The interval "penetrates the fabric of relations woven into the visual machine," creating a "break" and a "pause" as an opportunity for perceptual reflection (Minh-ha, 1999: xii). One possible way to oppose representation is Lettrist dissociative strategies (Cabanas, 2014: 128). Guy Debord's film *Hurlements en faveur de Sade* (*Howls for Sade*, 1952)[2] is a film in which the essential element—the image—is absent, with sound superimposed on the white screen and silent when the screen is dark. Here the interval is open to duration; it does not remain between two frames but lasts for the entire length of the narrative. The original script, rich in content, for the film has been changed, leaving five recurring voices (quotes, everyday conversations, and interruptions with Debord's observations), and for the last twenty-four minutes, the viewer sits in darkness and silence (a collective distraction) when the screen and the cinema are in absolute darkness. The deliberate asynchrony of sound and image is the product of the discrepant montage [montage discrépant] (Cabanas, 2014: 99; 100-102; 108). Convinced of the power of his conception, Guy Debord declared, "The film will remain among the most important in the history of the reductive hypostasis of cinema through the terrorist disorganization of the discrepant [*mon film restera parmi les plus importants dans l'histoire de l'hypostase réductionnelle du cinéma par une désorganisation terroriste du discrépant*]" (Debord, 1999). Conceptually, *Hurlements* is a sound film without images that rejects the language of cinematic realism, where Debord invokes the principle of Situationist aesthetico-political strategy, *détournement* (any elements, regardless of where they are taken from, can serve in making new combinations) (Cabanas, 2014: 65; Debord and Wolman, 1981: 9).

"This Narration/My Voice" as a Concept of Originality

Milcho Manchevski's (1959) experimental short film *Untitled (The Black Film)* (1982) contains a complete reduction of visual representation, reduced to sound and narration—the speech act. According to Conor McGrady, this film refers to "the desire to make an original film work" (Мекгрејди, 2015: 450). If we take into account the film's gehalt, content, or signifiers that direct

[2] The first screening of *Hurlements* was on June 30, 1952, Cine-Club Avant-Garde 52, Musee de l'Homme.

meaning, which is the verbal narration, the author's statement in the first person undoubtedly confirms the imperative for originality. If we look at the film as a whole (image, sound, duration, and space), or film language, it is necessary to take into account the history of the disappearance of the image in the film, the negation of the visual, or the annulment of one of the basic components—the image. The flickering effect and the black screen are shown here in extension; the absence of the image announces the presence of another concept, directing the attention of the perceiver to the meaning generated through speech, without excluding the position of speech in relation to the black image. Speech is not just any speech, but the speech of the author, precisely in this film. The black image, abstract in its morphology, is here filled with meaning—a negation of the institutional and social form of cinema/film, thus hinting at a dialectical reflection on the part of the author, probably about the wear and tear of the medium even in its experimental form: "That is not original either. Even Godard used to put black and speak behind it" (Манчевски, 2015: 441). But the question remains open whether the search for 'originality' is the final destination of this concept, and despite the fact that it is denotatively argued, there is still a suggestion that through the research of film forms, there is an infinitely open field of possibilities. Counting on the open citation form (Warhol, Godard), appropriation, incorporation, and layering of concepts, they are organized in this way and receive a new semantic component—written through Manchevski's film language. The application of montage here is in the function of superimposing sound on the black image (in the technical sense), while the effect of interruption can be located in the relations between image movement and speech time (in the semiotic sense). The movement is completely reduced due to the absence of redundant prescriptivity; the movement is hypothetical—driven by the narration that has a kind of linear form, while time is compressed through the form of speech, in which personal experiences are retold whose duration has a broader subjective and historical time frame than that of the film duration. Punctuation is especially subtly woven into the part that describes the author's first film academic experience. Understood through Gilbert Cohen's terminology, this part (segment of the whole speech) provides a semantic density, isolating cut-off parts of reality shaped into an autonomous rhetorical figure. On the other hand, a certain analepsis is achieved by introducing a series of external references from the past, which in this example serves to shape the communicative driver in the film, the meaning that is developed/generated further.

Reduction of the Sign

Graphic Map *Nothing* (1991), a silkscreen print by Dušan Perčinkov (1939), is a developed concept of the objectless, where completely empty or partially empty pages repeat the absence of the object. The first sheet contains only an internal frame, the second contains a frame in disappearance—a dashed line ending in infinity, the third contains a grouping of dots (one, two, three, four)—positions in the right imaginary corner of the successive modular frames within the sheet, the fourth

sheet contains fully outlined modular frames, whose shape is an echo of the format that gathers them, numbered in the upper right corner, the fifth sheet is a reduction of part of these internal formats outlined with a dashed line, the sixth contains the same frames outlined in the fifth, with numbering in the lower left corner of each of them, except in the last row, and the seventh sheet contains five horizontal frames in which a raster of vertical lines and marking with an "x" is developed. This work raises the question of a metaphysical nature, according to Petrovski, about what the maximum absorption of space on a limited surface such as the graphic sheet/format means (Петровски, 2003: 32; 124-125).

The Concept of Whiteness: Artistic Statement

In the project *Shadows of the Common* (2023) by Stojan Pavleski (1976), the photographic medium has the function of registering the almost abandoned spaces of the official higher education institutions for the distribution of knowledge, hunting the emptiness "of contexts" whose presumed purpose is continuous knowledge acquisition. In this project, the artifact scenography shows the creative dynamics' abandonment and emptiness. The photograph can capture the transience of time; it can register situations that we often fail to see in the right (Campany, 2008: 12). The lens frames not only certain spaces, but it is also a kind of framework for thinking about the deep differences between what we "see" and what we "perceive" by seeing (Campany, 2008: 21). Photographic frames are conceived according to compositional consistency and balance of the scenic spaces covered (single artistic viewing), but they are also part of the bigger artistic whole (total artistic structure), interconnected through a marking methodology (white spots). The intervention over the photographic medium through an artistic procedure of marking/adding achromatic (white, discolored) positions in a circular form is a method of "marking" through which the "gnawing" of the higher education system are shown as an organism of unsustainability of the production of knowledge. White spots are not merely 'nothing' because of their "whiteness;" rather, they engage the viewer directly, ensnaring the observer in the very concept of "nothing," as Didi-Huberman explains while discussing whiteness as a method of marking within the fine arts. They are not visible in the sense of an object depicted or outlined, nor are they invisible because they attract attention. They are a material phenomenon, the reality itself, an essential and massive component of the pictorial presentation of the work. They are as visual as the reality in/of the image they cover. They are not an abstraction but the representation itself. White positions intensify beyond their marked positions, deploying something else beyond their borders; they communicate with the viewer along other paths. They cover the 'nothing out there' with the 'nothing from over there.' The whitenesses are an "artistic statement," as the American critic and philosopher Arthur Danto (1924–2013) has said (Danto, 1981: 133), a "letter" of the art text; they write exactly those unrecorded, imperceptible things, the very systemic degradation that we completely im-

perceptibly walk by, and by not noticing it, we participate in its degradation. Hence, the starting point of this project is the observation, the noticing, the registration of processes, and the attempt to keep the perceptive power of art before the institutions that maintain its intelligibility in the status quo become extinct. All this results in aesthetic retention and a creative attitude that refuses to be subject to permanent registers, despite its necessary institutional mediation.

Conclusion

Kazimir Malevich's theoretical texts are explicit about his work being based on the essential principles of *non-objectivity*. According to him, if "emptiness" is all that society and criticism see in "new art," and artists are declared "parasites, speculators, forgers, people occupying themselves with utter trivialities, who palm society off with a fake instead of producing the genuine things," then they fail to realize that "art has only begun to express the production which is the essence of art, and criticism … does not know in fact how it should assess faceless pictures and despairs too. In old works objects have become non-objective, i.e., not concrete but abstract images" (Malevich, 1976: 252-253). Resisting the concept of art as an isolated phenomenon, Vostell relocated *décollage* from artistic procedures to a means of action in public space, on the streets in the 1950s and 1960s. As a result, various events, Fluxfests, were organized in which Fluxus artists participated: John Cage, Nam June Paik, George Maciunas, Joseph Beuys, and others. Vostell was responsible for the Fluxus events in Germany when some of the Fluxus artists, George Maciunas and Dick Higgins, left Europe in the first half of the 1960s (Thompson, 2002: 15; Smith, 1998: 58-59). Vostell's spatially specific practices, his *décollage happenings*, tested the morphology, the boundaries, and the very notion of the artwork as artistic. The work becomes an interchangeable element between practice and place, work and site, i.e., the variability of contexts of occurrence (Kaye, 2000: 105; Sankartal, 2002: 132). Vostell's happenings are an effort "to erase in order to see and let others see clearly frames of reference for experiencing the present" (Vostell, 1966: 40 cited in Kaye, 2000: 116). According to John Cage, unintentional sounds attract attention: "Where it is realized that sounds occur whether intended or not, one turns in the direction of those he does not intend" (Cage, 1961: 8). He believed that "duration is the only characteristic of sound that is measurable in terms of silence; therefore, any valid structure involving sounds and silences should be based, not as occidentally traditional, on frequency, but rightly on duration" (Cage, 1961: 13). According to Davis, Cage's title, interpreted in the standard way, draws attention to the piece's duration, to its temporal boundaries. … 4'33" is a temporal artwork; it has a fixed duration (Davies, 1997: 448–462). Duration and silence as a pause are part of "composition as a process" (Cage, 1961: 18). His creative intention is contained in the statement, "I wanted to show that doing something that is not music is music" (Kostelanetz, 1988: 46). According to Banai, "Klein was among a generation of artists whose interest in dismantling the autonomy of art led to a critique of the art institu-

tion as an ideological space" (Banai, 2017: 77). At a specific moment for French society (the Algerian War), Klein intended to address the anxiety surrounding the political situation in the country, exposing the audience to uncertainty (Banai, 2017: 77). Thierry de Duve writes about the impossibility of appropriating Klein's immaterial art:"After Beuys, after Warhol, the Klein case shows a third type of congruence between the aesthetic field and that of the political economy. […] With Klein it is forged by the assimilation of artistic values to value plain and simple, that is, to exchange value, and thus by means of the artist's identification with the capitalist, the dealer, and the owner of the mass production. In this equation of values, price is the middle term... The price is only the expression of exchange value. No one has succeeded, like Kline, under the names of pictorial sensibility (asking price) and the pure exchange value of a work of art as a commodity" (De Duve, 1989: 72-90). The twentieth-century avant-garde, as Léger describes it, has a "distrust of the communicative model of dialogue" (as we saw earlier in Guy Debord) and therefore "resorts to various […] anti-discursive means to radicalize artistic production: shock, defamiliarization, and abstraction" (Léger, 2012: 58). Debord employed a critical refusal of language (both visual and verbal) and *détournement* as "a procedure of quotation and reuse of an original element in a new context so as to reclaim a different and noncommodified meaning" (Cabanas, 2014: 108-110). Manchevski's work suggests that if one looks at speech in isolation, it is evident that there is a certain logomorphism, which seems to communicate some known historical facts but nevertheless generates complete meaning only if considered as part of a whole, in relation to the remaining elements and signs. The difference between "place" and "space" is a matter of structure. The concept of "space" is defined as a position between "focalization" and "place" as a topological category, a location where events occur. The story is recognized by the manner of presentation, and places, viewed in relation to the perception of them (authorial, representative), are named "spaces" (Bal: 1997, 132-133). According to conceptualist theorists Lucy Lippard and John Chandler, "the time spent looking at an 'empty' work, or one with a minimum of action, seems infinitely longer than action-and-detail-filled time" (Lippard and Chandler, 1999: 47). According to the Soviet montage theorist Vsevolod Pudovkin (1893–1953), pauses in montage spaces are crucial for developing active perception. Pudovkin inquires: "How do you capture—how do you convey that complete and deep feeling of real processes...? [...] I realized that a person who observes, studies, and absorbs changes in his perception of the real spatial and temporal relations brings the distant closer to himself and retains the fast. [...] By focusing on a detail of a process, I relatively slow down the speed of that detail in my perception." (Pudovkin, 1978: 174). Regarding pauses, Mike Bal believes that "such sections disrupt the flow of time and function" (Bal, 1997: 111). Pauses can also appear in a form accessible to perception with the indication "to see," a pause that signifies "the passage of time," the pause not as a break, but as a "scene" (Bal, 1997: 109). The interval interrupts the "uniform sequence of surfaces," signifying "a temporal pause, distance, stand-

still, or gap between different states," placing itself "on the threshold of representation and communication" (Minh-ha, 1999: xii-xiii). The term "interval" appears in ancient Chinese writing, denoting a time interval that should be used wisely, metaphorically expressed through the description of the manifestation of "moonlight" as a moment for the transformation of sleep into awakening (Minh-ha, 1999: xiii-xiv). This concept of the interval invites a deeper exploration of how pauses in various forms of communication can lead to new insights and understanding. By reflecting on these moments, one can appreciate the intricate connections between time, perception, and the unfolding of experiences. The considered artistic realizations using the semiotic model of dialectical interruption, interval, and pause are an opportunity to perceive the transformative potential of art through the concept of emptiness as a space for creative exploration.

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Натали Рајчиновска-Павлеска

Семиотика на празните простори: Дијалектички прекин, интервал, пауза
(Резиме)

Овој труд има за цел да ги истражи семиотиката на *ūразниūе* простори, функцијата на *инūервалоū* и *ūаузаūа* како дијалектички прекин и концепција заснована на отпорот кон линеарните, миметичките и илузионистички видови на репрезентација. Спецификата на *ūрекиноū* како активен простор за делување ја дефинира *ūразнинаūа* како исполнетост, конструира значење во/од паузата, динамика во празното, тишина како структурен елемент на звукот, движење во мирувањето. Како резултат на одговорот на отуѓеноста и состојбите во општествениот домен во одреден историски миг, уметничките методи и постапки се темелат на антиматеријалистички пристап во создавањето на простори за активна перцепција наместо пасивна контемплација. Втемелени на логиката на ефектот на шок и семантичко кодирање, уметничките примери содржат

конотација на празните простори како места за генерирање на значењето. Анализираните уметнички примери го опфаќаат доменот на различните креативни дисциплини, меѓу кои се: сликарството, скулптурата, музиката, филмот, објектите, графиката и објект-фотографијата. Нивната дијалектичка структура се темели на примена на елементи на апстракција со длабоко содржинско значење, конвергенција низ практиките на беспредметното, чинот на кинење, деколажот, гестот на бришење, празното во празнината, тишината, дематеријализацијата, дискпрепантната монтажа, редукција на знакот и концептот на белина.

Клучни зборови: празни простори, интервал, пауза, отпор, дијалектички прекин