



Miloš Kosec

4'33" za Bežigradom

ob delu *Zeleni atrij mesta*, avtoric Nike van Berkel in Karmen Ponikvar

4'33" in Bežigrad

on the work *The Green Atrium of the City* by Nika van Berkel and Karmen Ponikvar



Miloš Kosec

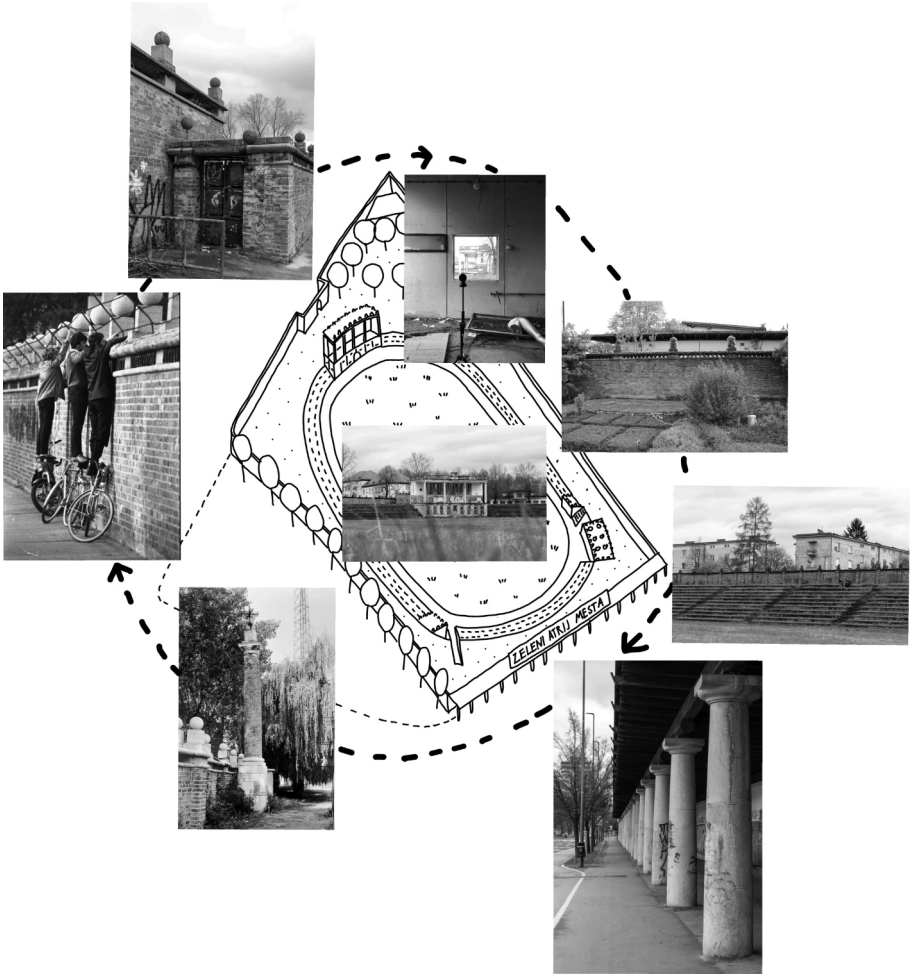
4'33" za Bežigradom

Izjava umetnic Nike van Berkel in Karmen Ponikvar *Zeleni atrij mesta*

Ljubljana vse bolj pozablja na podobo mesta, katerega glavna sestavina je kulturna identiteta, ki se odraža tudi v arhitekturi. Pri tem je ključno, da kulturna dediščina, s katero morajo imeti ljudje osebni stik, ostaja živa. Zvočni sprehod, ki združuje umetnost in arhitekturo, črpa navdih iz zgodovinske zgradbe, ki so jo po zasnovi Jožeta Plečnika začeli graditi leta 1925. Poigrava se s spomini preteklosti in jih vpleta v sedanjí čas. Preko zvočnosti in zgodovinjénja želiva tako prebivalcem kot obiskovalcem Ljubljane približati degradiran prostor stadiona, ki ga je razpadajoči čas izkrivil pod različnimi koti. Centralni stadion za Bežigradom je za javnost zaprt že od leta 2008. Namesto da bi prostor namenili javnosti, stadion propada, njegov pomen pa se vse bolj izgublja.

Stadion v svojem tihem propadanju visi v brezčasni praznini in vzbuja ideje o njegovem oživljanju. Odmevi drobcev ruševin, vej in stekla praskajo po teksturi zraka in opominjajo na nekoč družbeno aktiven prostor. Zaklenjeno Plečnikovo obzidje ustvarja napetost in vzbuja razmislek o nedostopnosti zelenega prostora.

Po večdesetletnih razpravah o Plečnikovem stadionu njegova prihodnost še vedno ni jasna. Vprašanje dostopnosti in namembnosti stadiona je postalo predmet razprav med lokalnimi skupnostmi, stroko, mestnimi oblastmi in lastnikom. V današnjem času, kjer kapital pogosto prevladuje nad vsemi drugimi vrednotami, se soočamo z izzivom komercializacije prostora in privatizacije kulturne dediščine. Prostorí, ki so nekoč služili kot simboli skupnosti in kulturnega bogastva, dandanes prehitro doživijo izbris pomena.



Ontološka zasnova imaginarnih alternativnih drugih svetov¹, v katerih sobivamo v zvenenju in poslušanju, služi kot podlaga za zvočno prostorsko domišljanje *Zelenega atrija mesta*. Pri poslušanju vzamemo neločljivost kot izhodišče za zaznavanje okolja, njegove identitete in politike.

Zeleni atrij mesta je zvočna raziskava zapuščenega prostora sredi mesta, kjer se razrašča zelena krajina in ostanki človeške dejavnosti sodelujejo s silami narave. S pomočjo njunih interakcij odkriva pripovedi iz njegovega okolja, posredno pa poslušalce vabi k razmisleku o poziciji antropocenega odnosa do ekonomike prostorov in do narave. Gre za predano poslušanje šepeta stadiona in sodelovanje z njegovimi inherentnimi energijami. Zvočni sprehod, ki presega binarno pojmovanje človeka in narave, postane pričevanje o pozabljeni pokrajini in potencialu revitalizacije. Služi kot katalizator za ponovni razvoj našega odnosa do Plečnikovega stadiona in prepoznavanje njegove vrednosti. Izzove nas, da razmislimo o novih pristopih ohranjanja kulturne dediščine ter spodbuja k aktivnemu varovanju teh dragocenih prostorov.

Poslušanje ustvarja domišljijско moč. Občutek resničnosti, ki predstavlja našo nedeljivo sedanost. Ponuja viskozno, voluminozno razsežnost, iz katere lahko ponovno premislimo okoljsko estetiko Plečnikovega stadiona.

¹ Salomé Voegelin, *Sonic Possible Worlds: Revised Edition* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

Zvočni sprehod igrivo izumlja prostor. Služi kot orodje za ustvarjanje različnih prostorskih predstav v sedanjosti, ki lahko rodijo radikalne spremembe v prihodnosti. Deluje kot glasbena intervencija, ki Plečnikovemu stadionu vdihne začasen smisel in ga oživi v njegovem resonančnem jedru. V ospredje postavlja veččutno zaznavanje prostora, s poudarkom na akustičnih karakteristikah Plečnikovega stadiona, ki s svojim resonančnim telesom odigra vlogo instrumenta – stadion ne le kot prostor, temveč kot živa zvočna entiteta.

Vstopim v zeleni atrij sredi mesta. Razprostirajoč pogled na Glorieto, ki se mogočno vzpenja v urbano krajino, vzbuja spokoj in občutek privilegija. Pri hoji skozi postanem del njega, udeleženka elastične sfere, ki se širi in prilagaja moje telo. Po nekaj minutah mirovanja v tišini začnem doživljati okolje stadiona kot neomejeno, resonančno in prepustno. V prostor padajoče mesto. Nevidne teksture gradijo senzorično okolje, ki preoblikuje tisto, kar mislim, vidim, slišim.

Transformacija.

Zvočna kompozicija, ustvarjena iz terenskih zvočnih posnetkov in dematerializacije prostora, se stadiona ne spominja po njegovih tlorisih, temveč ga doživi kot občutek časa. Kolapsirajoče površinske teksture in razmršena kompleksnost zvenijo njegovo telo.

»Vibrirajoče z vsem,
zveneče z vsem,
z vsem, iz česar je narejen, in
z vsem, kar ga obdaja.«²

Stadion je telo, »bitje-z« drugimi človeškimi in več kot človeškimi telesi, ki se dotikajo in so dotaknjena, nevidno z neločljivostjo sočasnega zvočnega obstoja. Stene, vrata, tla, stropi, flora in favna postanejo del zvočne morfologije prostora. Večslojna interaktivnost arhitekturne zgradbe in njegove krajine skozi svojo relacijsko prepletenost uprizori odgovornost in skrb. Prostorske imaginarije znotraj moralnih kulturnih meja pa nevidno in neločljivo rišejo korelacionalno in soodgovorno imaginarno prihodnost.

²Salomé Voegelin, performativno predavanje na Sound Arguments (Studio Loos, The Hague, NL, 27. maj 2024).



4'33" za Bežigradom

Panelna gradbiščna ograja v mestu običajno označuje območje povečanega hrupa. Podobno kot znak za crescendo v glasbeni partituri. Gradbiščna ograja je označevalec najbolj dinamičnih območij mesta: con, v katerih se ruši in gradi, kjer se hrup gradbenih strojev meša s hrumenjem (pogosto preusmerjenega ali zožanega) prometa in preklinjanjem pešcev in kolesarjev, ko ugotovijo, da so načasne pasove zanje ob gradbišču pozabili.

Meja med gradbiščem in mestom okrog njega je analogno tudi ločnica med sedanostjo in območjem, ki sedanosti na videz nima. Za gradbišče se nam namreč zdi, da poseduje samo ruševine preteklosti (na katero nas opominjajo rušilni stroji in kupi opek podrtih objektov) in obljubo prihodnosti (njen katekizem oznanjajo reklamni plakati računalniških vizualizacij bodočih novogradenj in srečnih, lepih in mladih družin, ki brez izjeme naseljujejo virtualne reklamne podobe na obgradbiščnih ograjah). V tem smislu je gradbiščna ograja rez med sedanostjo na eni in preteklostjo/prihodnostjo na drugi strani. Ameriški umetnik Robert Smithson je v šestdesetih letih dvajsetega stoletja ob raziskovanju opuščениh gradbišč svojega predmestja Passaic v New Jerseyju gradbišča preimenoval v »vzvratne ruševine«¹. Z njim se lahko strinjam, saj so zemeljski izkopi, štrleča armatura in v neredu razpostavljeni, še ne vgrajeni materiali zares zelo podobni starim kamnitim in opečnatim zidovom stoletij stare zgradbe, ki se počasi sesiplje proti tlom. Razlika je samo v toku časa: gradbišče na prvi pogled nima preteklosti in je usmerjeno v večno nastajanje prihodnjega sveta, ruševina pa kot da nima prihodnosti in obstaja samo kot ostanek nečesa, kar je že minilo. Ograja okrog zaščitениh,

¹ Robert Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey", v: *Ruins*, ur. Brian Dillon (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press in London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2011), 49.

»nevarnih« ruševin in okrog optimističnih gradbišč pa je podobna, pogosto celo ista. V mestih je namreč težko graditi drugače kot na ruševinah in ostankih preteklosti. Zato se zdi, da prehod preko gradbiščne ograje pomeni izstop iz sedanjosti v že zabrisan in obenem še ne rojen čas. Če prostoru odvzamemo sedanjosti, s tem pa ga začasno izločimo iz našega sveta, je v njem dovoljeno delati stvari, ki bi bile na drugi strani gradbiščne ograje nepredstavljive, celo kaznive.

Za gradbiščno ograjo so zato dovoljene stvari, ki jih na običajnih javnih površinah ne bi trpeli. Ograja je tista točka, kjer se srečujejo navidezne časovnosti gradbišča, ruševine in »navadnega« vsakodnevnega sveta, ki ju obkroža. Ograja predstavlja čisto sedanjost, ki nima ne preteklosti ne prihodnosti. Je po svoji definiciji začasen objekt. Nekajmesečna ali v najslabšem primeru nekajletna bariera, nujna za varnost in dinamične procese rušenja in gradnje, brez katerih v mestih ne gre.

Vendar pa so dejanske gradbiščne ograje, kot je več kot poldrugo desetletje star niz polnih panelov okrog Plečnikovega stadiona za Bežigradom, opomnik na staro resnico, da ni bolj stalnih stvari, kot sočasni ukrepi. Ograja okrog Plečnikovega stadiona je pač daljna sorodnica sramotnih panelnih ograj in bodeče žice ob Kolpi in Sotli, ki so bile ravno tako postavljene pod evfemizmom »začasne tehnične ovire«. Njihova začasnost je trajala skoraj desetletje in bi trajala še danes, če ne bi bilo konsistentnega pritiska civilne družbe. Ograja za Bežigradom je še precej bolj trdovratna in okrog Plečnikovega kompleksa kljub glasnemu nasprotovanju civilne družbe vztraja že šestnajst let.

Če nam uspe na drugo stran ograje, se namesto običajnega, gradbiščnega hrupnega crescenda urbane simfonije znajdemo v koncertni dvorani na prostem, kjer nas s svojimi opojnimi tišinami premami skladba 4'33" ameriškega modernističnega skladatelja Johna Cagea. Pričakujemo, da bomo naleteli na brezupno propadajoč objekt kulturne dediščine, ki se ga ne da več sanirati, ali pa na gradbene stroje, ki kopljejo v nekdanko gramozno jamo, katere topografijo je Plečnik pragmatično uporabil za umestitev ugreznjenih tribun stadiona. Namesto tega doživimo avantgardni šok. Nekaj podobnega, kar je Cageu uspelo leta 1952 s svojo kratko skladbo. Partitura vključuje tri stavke, v katerih pianist sede za klavir, odpre pokrov, ga nato spet zapre, vmes pa v tišini sedi pred klaviaturo. Skladba, ki ne vsebuje niti ene note, ki pa je po drugi strani polna zvokov, kot so premikanje pokrova klavirja, vedno bolj nestrpnih šumov publike, občasnega kašlja v dvorani, proti koncu morda celo kakšnega ogorčenega vzklika ali šepetanja. Cage je s 4'33" ustvaril modernistično kontemplacijo o tišini, ki je ključna sestavina vsake glasbe. Vendar pa je obenem podčrtal tudi nezmožnost, da bi sredi življenja zares dosegli absolutno tišino. Njegova skladba je namesto skrbno izbranih in časovno določenih udarcev kladivc po klavirskih strunah postala platno malih ambientalnih zvokov, ki nas povsod obkrožajo in ki smo se jih navadili izločiti iz dožemanja našega vsakdana.



John Cage je imel s svojo skladbo 4'33" na Plečnikovem stadionu pred dobrima dvema letoma množično obiskan koncert na prostem. Maja 2022 so se do takrat že skoraj petnajst let neprehodne gradbiščne ograje, ki so do takrat strumno in odločno oddvajale prostor stadiona od mesta, vdale in za nekaj dni postale prepustne. Nasilni rez gradbiščne ograje izzveni v hipu, ko uzreš njeno hrbtno stran. Izjemna moč ločnice, ki je leto za letom vedno bolj oddvajala razsežni prostor tribun in praznine med njimi od javnega prostora ulic in trgov naokrog, s tem pa tudi iz zavesti in spominov meščanov, se je pokazala kot začasna in šibka, široka komaj nekaj milimetrov, kolikor je debel posamezni panel. Ločnica med različnimi časovnimi conami mesta, med območji, ki imajo samo sedanjost, samo preteklost ali samo prihodnost, pa se sesuje v prah.

Plečnikov stadion je prav zaradi gradbiščne ograje vsako leto bolj postajal parcela bodočega Bežigrskega športnega parka, ki je predvideval rušenje skoraj celotnega kompleksa in nato obsežno športno-poslovno gradnjo podzemnega objekta s športno tribuno, nogometnim igriščem, stolpnico in več stolpiči nad zemljo. Projekt javno-zasebnega partnerstva, ki je bil že tik pred realizacijo, bo v zgodovini Ljubljane za vedno zapisan kot verjetno najbolj nezaslišan predlog uničenja kulturne dediščine v trenutku, ko je bil Plečnikov ljubljanski opus že na seznamu UNESCO svetovne dediščine. Odprta vrata Bežigrskega stadiona so leta 2022 pokazala, da območje ni nevarna in podirajoča se stavba, ampak samo zaraščen in zanemarjen

javni športni park, ki gradbeno niti ni v slabem stanju. Stotine ljudi so na Stadionu brez posebne opreme v nekaj minutah aktivirali sedanost, tako da so sedli na preraščene tribune, se podili za žogo, predvajali glasbo, opazovali dogajanja in se nastavljali zgodnjepoletnem soncu. Vendar samo dokler lastniki niso na vratih zamenjali ključavnice in spet uveljavili zemljiškoknjižno nasilje.

Vendar pa je bilo tistih nekaj majskih in junijskih petkov dovolj, da se je v prah sesul mit o prostoru, ki ima samo ruševine in potencial, samo preteklost in prihodnost. Bežigrajski stadion za ograjo se je razkril kot vitalen, dinamičen, zanimiv in prijeten prostor skritega vrta sedanjosti. Podobno kot je modernistična kontemplacija Johna Cagea podčrtala pomen tišine v glasbi, so odprta vrata za Bežigradom podčrtala pomen prostorov, kot je Plečnikov kompleks, za življenje mesta. Za kolonadami ob Dunajski, ki poglobljeno školjko stadiona ščitijo od prometnega hrupa mestne vpadnice, pod krošnjami mogočnih dreves, ki južnim tribunam še danes omogočajo hladnejšo senco od vsake zložljive platnene strehe nogometnega stadiona, in na mehki preprogi podivjanega zelenja je vzniknila koncertna dvorana pluralnih zvokov sedanjosti, ki ne bi mogla biti bolj različna od pustinje gradbiščne mehanizacije.

Goethejev kliše, da je arhitektura zamrznjena glasba², arhitekti pogosto uporabljamo malce brezskrbno in lahkotno, da ne rečem nemarno. Na prvi pogled dobro zveni. Je najkrajša bližnjica do priložnosti, da svojo dejavnost povežemo s tisto umetnostjo, ki jo

² J. P. Eckermann, "Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life", v: *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature, Vol. IV*, prevod S. M. Fuller (Boston: Hilliard, Gray & Co., 1839), 282.

imajo vendar vsi radi. Vendar pa je glasba izmuzljiva umetnost. Prisotna je povsod okrog nas, pa jo je obenem nemogoče ujeti, zadržati in fiksirati. Definirana je kvečjemu s svojo minljivostjo. V partituro lahko zremo ure in ure, vendar pa se skladba nepreklicno konča, ko izzveni zadnja nota. Naslednja izvedba bo drugačna in nič nam ne bo povrnilo specifičnosti čustev in misli, ki smo jih doživeli ob prejšnji. Glasba je zato umetnost minljivosti. Danes jo sicer lahko s sodobnimi tehnologijami, predvajalniki in funkcijo »loop« prisilimo v nenehno ponavljanje, s čimer pa jo samo na videz vzdržujemo v večnem življenju. Še tako ljuba skladba, za katero se nam zdi, da je ne moremo preposlušati, se nam po dvajseti ali trideseti ponovitvi zazdi razvrednotena. Ključni sestavni del dobre glasbe je seveda tišina, iz katere vznikne in kamor se po izzvenu zadnjih strun tudi povrne. Tako kot ljudem, katerih življenja so kaj vredna ne kljub temu, ampak prav zato, ker v najboljšem primeru trajajo komajda stoletje, tudi glasbi minljivost podeljuje posebno vrednost. Glasba na »loop« se zato po nekaj ponovitvah navzame mrliške bledice, dokler prej tako ljub komad ne postane podoben prsteno nabuhlemu, umetno vzdrževanemu tkivu kakšnega prepariranega Lenina v mavzoleju. Zanimivo in bizarno, pa tudi srhljivo, nikakor pa ne živo, polnokrvno, vitalno in kar je še drugih podobnih fizionomskih pridevnikov. Drugače povedano: glasbo je težko zamrzniti. Z zamrznitvijo izgubi svojo osnovno lastnost efemernosti.

Arhitektura je po drugi strani umetnost stalnosti in statičnosti. Deluje in govori počasi ter premišljeno. Arhitektura je zato apolinična umetnost, glasbi pa kraljuje Dioniz. Zato bi bilo treba najprej premisliti, kakšne nevarnosti se odpirajo pred nami, ko začnemo povezovati kraljestvi dveh tako različnih grških bogov. Kot kolega na Olimpu se drug drugemu namreč spoštljivo izogibata. Da se arhitekti

tudi v naših logih lahko pri primerjavi med glasbo in arhitekturo hitro opečemo, lepo priča tudi dialog med takratnim mestnim urbanistom Janezom Koželjem in Milanom Miheličem, avtorjem nagrajene modernistične zasnove za izgradnjo Bavarskega dvora, ki je bila v novem tisočletju dokončno pospravljena v predal. Namesto nje se je v zadnjih letih na območju »severnih mestnih vrat« zgradila konfekcijska hotelska arhitektura, ki je zanikala osnovne prostorske kvalitete Miheličeve, do javnega prostora in urbanega karakterja mesta izjemno tankočutne in elegantne zasnove. Koželj je iskanje novih prostorskih rešitev za Bavarski dvor utemeljeval z mnenjem, da je Miheličev načrt za območje Bavarskega dvora »nedokončana simfonija iz sedemdesetih let«; Mihelič pa je na podžupanovo glasbeno temo ustvaril variacijo in jo razvil s crescendom: »Ta simfonija je bila popolnoma dokončana, do finala. Vse je bilo dokončno urejeno. Ampak žal so bili nekateri mestni urbanistični dirigenti, ki so prišli zatem, očitno brez posluha.«³

Zdi se mi, da moram svojo prejšnjo pripombo, da je arhitektura apolinična, glasba pa dionizična umetnost, vseeno zastaviti malo bolj odprto. V nasprotnem primeru se mi bo zgodilo, da bom namesto Goetheja zmrcvaril Nietzscheja. Idiosinkratični nemški mislec je namreč svoje prvo večje delo, *Rojstvo tragedije iz duha glasbe*, namenil ravno razmerju med obema principoma. Nietzsche, ki je bil takrat še zagret sledilec dela (in lika) Richarda Wagnerja, je ravno v skladateljevih kompleksnih glasbenih dramah videl novo sintezo umetnosti, ki je presegla tisočletja stara nasprotja med Apolonom in Dionizom. Podobno sta glasba in arhitektura morda res zelo različni

³ Maja Vardjan, "Milan Mihelič. O Bavarskem dvoru nekoč in danes, o drznih konstrukcijah in o svobodi projektiranja", *Ambient*, št. 79 (2008): 33.

umetnosti, vendar pa to ne pomeni, da druga drugo izključujeta. Nasprotno: druga brez druge ne moreta. Glasba brez prostora ne zveni; prostor je resonančni okvir, ki šele omogoči instrumentu, da zazveni in tako vznikne iz tišine.

Vprašanje, ali lahko prostor shaja brez zvoka, je na prvi pogled nekoliko bolj zagonetno. Navsezadnje poznamo gluhe sobe, ki lahko menda ljudi sčasoma spravijo ob pamet. Ravno Richard Wagner poveže prostor in čas (ki je metrum zvoka, podobno kot je prostor metrum arhitekture) v mističnem citatu svojega zadnjega dela *Parsifal*.

Skladatelj ostarelemu Gralovemu vitezu Gurnemanzu v usta položi stavek: »Tu čas postane prostor«. ⁴ Gurnemanz mlademu Parsifalu razloži, da sta tako ostala na mestu in vendar prišla v Gralov grad. Ključno Wagnerjevo scensko orodje pri takšnem razumevanju prostora-časa, ki morda intuitivno napoveduje Einsteinovo teorijo relativnosti in z njo popolnoma spremenjeno fizikalno razmerje med časom in prostorom v 20. stoletju, je seveda glasba, ki spremeni prostor, ne da bi bilo potrebno aktivirati scensko mehanizacijo.

Prehod skozi membrano panelne ograje Bežigradskega stadiona ponudi Ljubljancu 21. stoletja podoben kvantni obrat, kot sta ga Gurnemanz in Parsifal doživela v Gralovem kraljestvu. Za Bežigradom čas postane prostor. Samo da za to ni potreben bučen wagnerjanski orkester, ampak avantgardna tišina, ki v akustični školjki Plečnikovih loopov zaokroženih tribun, v prostorskih razmerjih nagnjenih stranic in ravne sredine, v zrelih drevesih in nizkih zidcih robov kompleksa oblikuje koncertno dvorano tu in zdaj. Z drugimi besedami: Plečnikov

⁴ Richard Wagner, "Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit", *Parsifal*, 1. dejanje, 1. prizor (1882).

stadion ni izgnan iz sedanjosti, ampak je realno obstoječe zatočišče sedanjosti kljub temu, da je oblegan s hrupom motoriziranega prometa, vizualnim onesnaženjem oglasov, zanemarjenim odnosom do javnega prostora in grozečimi načrti javno-zasebnega partnerstva. Plečnikovi zidovi in tribune ustvarjajo azil sedanjosti, robove avtonomije v vedno bolj instrumentaliziranem mestu, ki ga sedanjost zanima samo, če izkazuje potencial prihodnjih donosov, preteklost pa samo, če ima dovolj kulturnega kapitala, da se jo da tržiti kot kulturno dediščino prihodnosti. Vsakdanji zvoki življenj ljudi, živali, rastlin, snovnosti arhitekture in atmosfere ter prostora postanejo znak optimistične glasbe sedanjosti, ki se tiho, a vztrajno upira poblagovljenju in instrumentalizaciji. Plečnikov stadion tukaj in zdaj je odmrznjeno mesto: ko bo panelna ograja porušena, ključavnica odžagana, vrata pa odprta, bo javnost spet lahko zasedla prostore, ki so ji bili nasilno odvzeti. Vendar pa mora takrat avantgardna Cageova simfonija pljuskniti s stadiona preko zidov in ograj naprej v mesto, ki ga obkroža.





Dr. Miloš Kosec je arhitekt, ki dela kot docent, predavatelj in raziskovalec na Fakulteti za arhitekturo v Ljubljani. Leta 2013 je diplomiral na ljubljanski Fakulteti za arhitekturo z diplomsko nalogo, za katero je prejel študentsko Plečnikovo ter študentsko Prešernovo nagrado, na londonski Univerzi Birkbeck pa je leta 2019 doktoriral iz pasivnosti v sodobni arhitekturi. Je tudi kustos in kolumnist, na preseku arhitekture in umetnosti pa deluje kot član kolektiva Nonument.

Nika van Berkel je leta 2015 zaključila študij arhitekture na Fakulteti za arhitekturo Univerze v Ljubljani z magistrsko nalogo o revitalizaciji Plečnikovega stadiona, za katero je prejela študentsko Prešernovo nagrado. Kmalu zatem se je iz Slovenije preselila na Nizozemsko, kjer ustvarja in biva. Njeno delo raziskuje meje med arhitekturo, krajino, zvokom in umetnostjo.

Karmen Ponikvar je slovenska zvočna umetnica in raziskovalka elektronske in elektroakustične glasbe. Trenutno študira zvok na Inštitutu za sonologijo v Haagu na Nizozemskem. Svoje raziskovalno delo osredotoča na mikrotonalne zvočne strukture, prostorskost zvoka in njegovo teksturo.





Miloš Kosec

4'33'' in Bežigrad

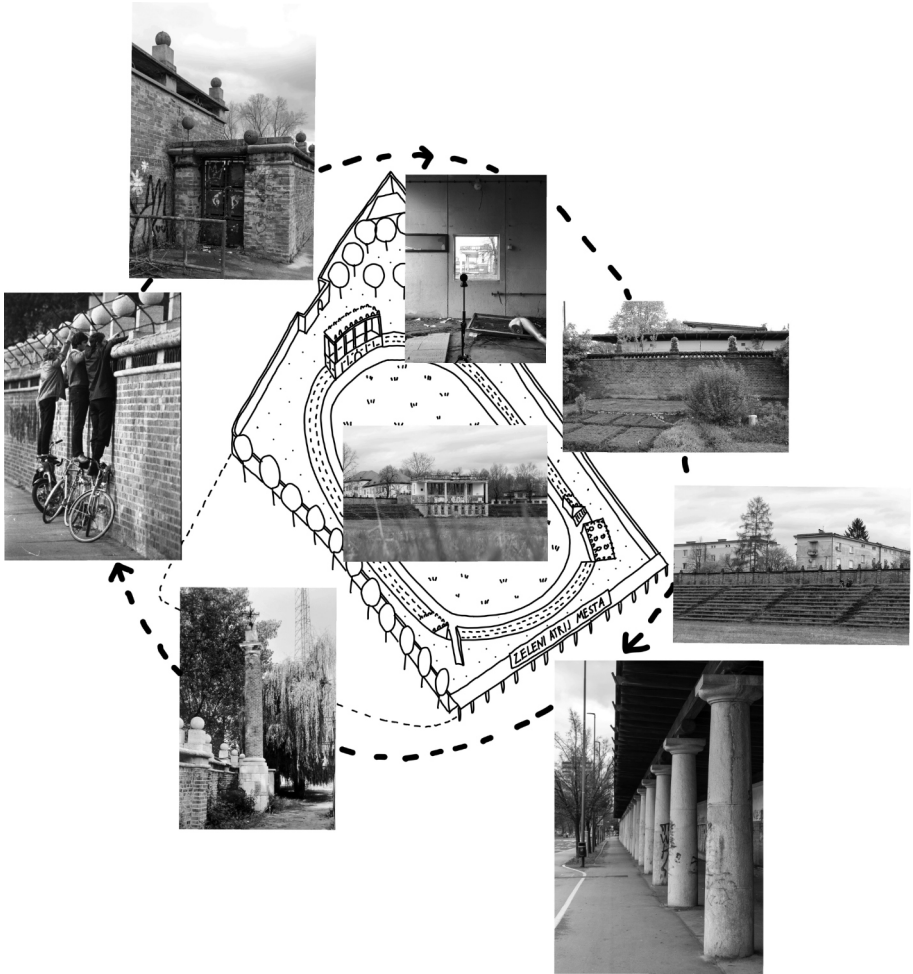
Artist statement by Nika van Berkel and Karmen Ponikvar

The Green Atrium of the City

There is an increasing tendency in Ljubljana to forget that a core component of a city is its cultural identity, which is also reflected in its architecture. In this endeavour, it is key that cultural heritage, which people must interact with personally, remains alive. Combining art and architecture, the sound walk draws inspiration from the historical complex designed by Jože Plečnik and constructed beginning in 1925. It plays with memories of the past and weaves them into the present. We aim – through sonority and historicisation – to bring the degraded space of Plečnik's stadium, contorted and distorted by decaying time, closer to the residents and visitors of Ljubljana. Closed to the public since 2008, instead of being a dedicated space for the public, the central stadium in Ljubljana's Bežigrad district is deteriorating and increasingly losing its significance.

In its quiet decay, the stadium hovers in a timeless void, stirring thoughts of its rejuvenation. The echoes of fragments of debris, branches and glass scratch the texture of the air, reminding us of a once socially vibrant space. The locked walls of Plečnik's creation generate a sense of tension and provoke contemplation about the inaccessibility of the green space.

After decades of debate about Plečnik's stadium, its future remains uncertain. The question of the stadium's accessibility and purpose has become a topic of discussion among local communities, experts, city authorities and the owner. In today's world, where capital often dominates all other values, we face the challenge of commercialising public space and privatising cultural heritage. Spaces that once served as symbols of community and cultural wealth are now all too quickly stripped of their significance.



The ontological design of sonic possible worlds¹, where we coexist in sounding and listening, serves as the basis for the auditory spatial imagining of *The Green Atrium of the City*. In listening, we take indivisibility as the starting point for sensing the environment, its identity and its politics.

The Green Atrium of the City is a sonic exploration of an abandoned space in the middle of the city where green landscapes flourish and remnants of human activity interact with the forces of nature. Through these interactions, it uncovers stories from its environment, indirectly inviting listeners to reflect on the Anthropocene relationship to the economy of spaces and nature. It is dedicated to listening to the whispers of the stadium and engaging with its inherent energies. The sound walk, which transcends the binary notion of human and nature, becomes a testament to a forgotten landscape and the potential for revitalisation. It serves as a catalyst for redeveloping our relationship with Plečnik's stadium and recognising its value. It challenges us to consider new approaches to preserving cultural heritage and encourages active protection of these precious spaces.

Listening cultivates imaginative power. It evokes a sense of reality that signifies our indivisible present. It presents a viscous, voluminous dimension from which we can reevaluate the environmental aesthetics of Plečnik's stadium.

¹ Salomé Voegelin, *Sonic Possible Worlds: Revised Edition* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021).

The sound walk playfully (re)invents the space. It serves as a tool for creating various spatial representations in the present, which can bring about radical changes in the future. It acts as a musical intervention, breathing temporary sense into Plečnik's stadium and reviving it at its resonant core. It places a multisensory perception of space in the foreground, emphasising the acoustic characteristics of Plečnik's stadium, which, with its resonant body, plays the role of an instrument – the stadium not just as a space but as a living sonic entity.

I step into the green atrium in the middle of the city. The expansive view of the Gloriette, towering impressively over the urban landscape, evokes tranquillity and a sense of privilege. As I walk through, I become part of it, a participant in an elastic sphere that expands to accommodate my body. After a few minutes of stillness in the silence, I begin to experience the stadium's environment as boundless, resonant and permeable. The city is falling into the space. Invisible textures construct a sensory environment that reshapes what I think, see and hear.

Transformation.

Made from field recordings and the dematerialisation of the space, the sound composition does not remember the stadium by its floor plans but experiences it as a sensing of time. Collapsing surface textures and chaotic complexity resonate within its body.

“Vibrating with everything,
sounding with everything,
with everything it is made of,
and with everything that
surrounds it.”²

The stadium is a body, a “being-with” other human and more-than-human bodies, touching and being touched, invisibly with the indivisibility of simultaneous sonic existence. Walls, doors, floors, ceilings, flora and fauna become part of the sonic morphology of space. The multilayered interactivity of architectural structure and its landscape, through its relational entanglement, stages responsibility and care. Spatial imaginaries within moral and cultural boundaries invisibly and indivisibly sketch a correlational and co-responsible imaginary future.

² Salomé Voegelin, performative lecture at Sound Arguments (Studio Loos, Haag, NL, 27 May 2024).



4'33" in Bežigrad

A panel construction fence in a city often marks a zone of increased noise. It's like a crescendo symbol in a musical score. A construction fence signifies a city's most dynamic areas: zones where demolition and construction are happening, where the clamour of construction machinery combines with the rumbling of (often redirected or restricted) traffic and the grumbling of pedestrians and cyclists when they discover that temporary pathways for them to pass by the construction site have been overlooked.

The line between a construction site and the surrounding city is analogous to the division between the present and an area that seems to lack a present. A construction site appears to possess only the ruins of the past (of which the demolition machinery and piles of bricks from demolished buildings remind us) and the promise of the future (its catechism proclaimed by advertising posters with computer visualisations of the forthcoming new structure and invariably happy, beautiful, young families populating the virtual promotional images on the construction fences). In this sense, the construction fence represents a split between the present on one side and the past/future on the other. In the 1960s, during his exploration of abandoned construction sites in his suburban Passaic, New Jersey, American artist Robert Smithson renamed construction sites "ruins in reverse"¹. I agree with him because the excavated earth,

¹ Robert Smithson, "A Tour of the Monuments of Passaic, New Jersey", *Ruins: Documents of Contemporary Art*, ed. Brian Dillon (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press and London: Whitechapel Gallery, 2011), 49.

protruding rebar and haphazardly arranged, yet-to-be-installed materials indeed resemble the old stone and brick walls of centuries-old buildings slowly crumbling to the ground. The only difference is the flow of time: a construction site appears to have no past and is aimed at the perpetual creation of a future world, while ruins appear to have no future and exist only as a remnant of something that has already passed. The fence around protected, “dangerous” ruins and around optimistic construction sites is similar, often even the same. In cities, it’s a challenge to build upon anything other than the ruins and remains of the past. Therefore, it seems that crossing a construction fence signifies stepping out of the present into an already blurred and simultaneously unborn time. If we deprive a space of a present, thus temporarily excluding it from our world, it becomes permissible to do things that would be unimaginable, even criminal, on the other side of the construction fence.

Behind a construction fence, things are permitted that would not be allowed in ordinary public spaces. The fence is the meeting point of the apparent temporalities of the construction site, the ruins and the “normal” everyday world. The fence represents the pure present, which has neither past nor future. By definition, it is a temporary object. It is a several-month or – in the worst case – a several-year barrier required for safety and the dynamic processes of demolition and construction, processes essential to cities.

Nevertheless, actual construction fences – such as the over decade and a half set of solid panels around Plečnik's stadium in Ljubljana's Bežigrad district – are a reminder of the old truth that nothing is more permanent than a temporary solution. The fence around Bežigrad Stadium is a distant relative of the shameful panel fences and barbed wire along the Kolpa and Sotla rivers, which were also erected under the euphemism of "temporary technical barriers" against so-called illegal immigrants in 2015. Their temporariness lasted almost a decade and would continue today if it were not for the consistent pressure from civil society. The fence in Bežigrad is much more stubborn, persisting around Plečnik's complex for sixteen years despite civil society's loud opposition.

If we manage to cross to the other side of the fence, instead of the usual noisy crescendo of a construction site's urban symphony – as described by Max Newhaus in his series of works *Listen* (1966–76) – we find ourselves in an open-air concert hall, where we are enchanted by the intoxicating silences of American modernist composer John Cage's composition 4'33". We expect to encounter a hopelessly decaying cultural heritage object that can no longer be restored or construction machines digging in the former gravel pit, whose topography Plečnik pragmatically used for the stadium's sunken stands. Instead, we experience an avant-garde shock, like what Cage achieved in 1952 with his short composition. Its score includes three movements, in which the pianist sits at the piano, opens the lid, then closes it again and, in between, sits silently at the keyboard. The piece, which contains not a single note, is, on the other hand, full of sounds such as the moving of the piano lid, increasingly impatient murmurs from the audience, occasional coughing in the hall and even an indignant cry or whisper towards the end. With 4'33",

Cage created a modernist contemplation of silence, a key component of any music. At the same time, he also highlighted the impossibility of achieving absolute silence amidst life. Instead of carefully selected and timed hammer strikes on piano strings, his composition became a canvas of small ambient sounds that surround us everywhere and that we have become accustomed to excluding from our perception of everyday life.

Just over two years ago, John Cage's composition 4'33" had a well-attended outdoor "impromptu" concert at Plečnik's stadium. In May 2022, the construction fences, which had been impassable for nearly fifteen years, steadily and decisively separating the stadium from the city, gave way and became permeable for a few days. The violent separation created by the construction fence dissolved in an instant when you glimpsed its opposite side. Thus, the formidable power of the barrier, which year after year had increasingly isolated the vast space of the stands and the emptiness between them from the public space of the surrounding streets and squares – and thereby from the awareness and memories of the citizens – was shown to be temporary and weak, barely a few millimetres wide, the thickness of an individual panel. The boundary between different temporal zones of the city, between areas that have only a present, only a past or only a future, dissolved into dust.

Thanks to the construction fence, every year Plečnik's stadium was becoming closer to being the site for the future Bežigrad Sports Park, which anticipated the demolition of almost the entire structure and the subsequent construction of a massive sports-business complex with an extensive underground facility and a sports grandstand, a football pitch, a skyscraper and several lower buildings above ground.



The public-private partnership project, which was on the verge of realisation, will go down in the history of Ljubljana as probably the most outrageous proposal for the destruction of cultural heritage at a time when Plečnik's work in Ljubljana was already on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The open gates of Bežigrad Stadium in 2022 showed that the area was not a dangerous and collapsing complex but simply an overgrown and neglected public sports park that structurally was not in poor condition. Within minutes, hundreds of people activated the present at the stadium without any special equipment, by sitting on the overgrown stands, chasing a ball, playing music, observing the events and basking in the early summer sun. However, this situation lasted only until the owners replaced the lock on the gate, re-inflicting violence with the long arm of the land registry.

Nonetheless, those few Fridays in May and June were enough to dismantle the myth of a place that only has ruins and potential, only past and future. The Bežigrad Stadium behind the fence unveiled itself as a vibrant, dynamic, interesting and pleasant hidden garden of the present. Just as John Cage's modernist contemplation emphasised the significance of silence in music, the open gates at Bežigrad underscored the importance of spaces like Plečnik's complex for the life of the city. Behind the colonnades along Dunajska cesta, which shield the sunken bowl of the stadium from the traffic noises of the city's main thoroughfare, under the canopies of grand trees that still provide cooler shade to the southern stands than any retractable fabric roof of a football stadium and on the soft carpet of untamed greenery, a concert hall of the diverse sounds of the present emerged, completely different from the desert of construction machinery.

Goethe's idea that architecture is frozen music² is often used somewhat carelessly and lightly, not to say negligently. Initially, the concept is appealing. It's the shortest route to an opportunity to connect our architecture with an art form that everyone loves. However, music is an elusive art. It is present all around us, yet impossible to capture, hold and fixate. It is defined only by its transience. We can gaze at a score for hours on end, but the composition irrevocably ends when the last note fades away. The next performance will be different, and nothing will return to us the specific emotions and thoughts we experienced with the previous one. Therefore, music is the art of transience. Today, with modern technologies, music-playing devices and the "loop" function, we can force music into constant repetition, thereby seemingly maintaining it in a state of eternal life. Even the most beloved piece, which we feel we cannot listen to enough, seems devalued after the twentieth or thirtieth repetition. The key component of good music is, of course, silence, from which it emerges and to which it returns after the last strings fade. Just as to people whose lives are valuable not despite but precisely because they last barely a century at best, transience gives music a special value. After a few repetitions, music on a "loop" thus takes on a mortuary pallor until the once-beloved tune resembles artificially maintained tissue akin to a preserved Lenin in a mausoleum. Interesting and bizarre but also eerie, it is in no way lively, full-blooded, vital or any other similar physiognomic adjective. In other words, freezing music is difficult. By freezing it, it loses its fundamental quality of ephemerality.

² J. P. Eckermann, "Conversations with Goethe in the Last Years of His Life", *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature*, Vol. IV, trans. S. M. Fuller (Boston: Hilliard, Gray & Co., 1839), 282.

Architecture, on the other hand, is the art of permanence and stability. It operates and speaks slowly and deliberately. Architecture is an Apollonian art, whereas music is Dionysian. Therefore, we should first consider the dangers that arise when we begin to connect the realms of these two vastly different Greek gods. As colleagues on Olympus, they respectfully avoid each other. Indeed, in our discourse, architects can quickly burn themselves when comparing music and architecture, as demonstrated by the dialogue between the then-city planner Janez Koželj and Milan Mihelič, the author of the award-winning modernist design for the construction of Ljubljana's Bavarski dvor, which was finally shelved in the new millennium. Instead, in recent years, the area around the "northern city gates" has seen the construction of ready-made hotel architecture, which denies the basic spatial qualities of Mihelič's design – a design highly sensitive and elegant to the public space and urban character of the city. Koželj justified the search for new spatial solutions for Bavarski dvor by stating that Mihelič's plan for the area was an "unfinished symphony from the seventies". Mihelič, in response to the deputy mayor's musical theme, developed a variation and crescendo: "This symphony was completely composed, up to the finale. Everything was definitively arranged. But unfortunately, some subsequent urbanistic conductors who arrived seemed tone-deaf."³

I feel I must reframe my earlier comment – that architecture is Apollonian, and music is Dionysian – more openly. Otherwise, I might end up distorting Nietzsche instead of Goethe. The idiosyncratic German philosopher focused his first major work, *The Birth of*

³ Maja Vardjan, "Milan Mihelič: On Bavarski dvor yesterday and today, bold constructions and the freedom of urban planning", *Ambient* no. 79 (2008): 33.

Tragedy from the Spirit of Music, precisely on exploring the relationship between these two principles. Nietzsche, who was then an enthusiastic follower of Richard Wagner's work (and persona), perceived in the composer's complex musical dramas a new synthesis of art that surpassed the age-old dichotomy between Apollo and Dionysus. While music and architecture may indeed represent very different forms of art, it does not mean they mutually exclude one another. Quite the opposite: each relies on the other. Music cannot exist without space; space provides the resonant framework that allows instruments to sound and emerge from silence.

The question of whether space can exist without sound is initially somewhat more enigmatic. After all, we know of soundproof rooms that are said to drive individuals crazy. Richard Wagner intertwines space and time (which is the rhythmic structure of sound, much like how space is the structure of architecture) in a mystical quote from his final work, *Parsifal*. The composer impresses upon Gurnemanz, the elderly Knight of the Grail, the phrase "here, time becomes space".⁴ Gurnemanz then explains to young Parsifal how they are simultaneously in one place and within the Grail Castle. Wagner's crucial tool in this understanding of space-time, which perhaps intuitively forecast Einstein's theory of relativity and the twentieth century's thoroughly changed physical relationship between time and space, is undoubtedly music, capable of altering space without needing to employ scenographic mechanisms.

⁴ Richard Wagner, "Zum Raum wird hier die Zeit", *Parsifal*, Act 1, Scene 1 (1882). <https://www.monsalvat.no/parsifal-libretto-act1.htm>

Passing through the membrane of the panel fence at Bežigrad Stadium offers the twenty-first-century Ljubljana resident a quantum shift akin to what Gurnemanz and Parsifal experienced in the Grail Kingdom. In Bežigrad, time becomes space. Yet, unlike the noisy Wagnerian orchestra, this transformation occurs in avant-garde silence. Within the acoustic shell of Plečnik's looped terraces, in the spatial relationships of inclined sides and flat centres, amid mature trees and the low edges of the complex's walls, a concert hall is formed here and now. In other words, Plečnik's stadium is not expelled from the present; it remains a realistically existing refuge for the present, despite being besieged by the noise of motorised traffic, the visual pollution from advertisements, the neglect of public space and the looming plans of public-private partnerships. Plečnik's walls and terraces create a sanctuary for the present, edges of autonomy in an increasingly instrumentalised city, in which the present is interested only if it shows potential for future returns and the past only if it possesses enough cultural capital to market it as cultural heritage of the future. The everyday sounds of people, animals, plants, the materiality of architecture and atmosphere, and space itself become signs of the optimistic music of the present, quietly yet persistently resisting commodification and instrumentalisation. Bežigrad Stadium here and now is a thawed city: when the panel fence is demolished, the lock sawed off, and the gates opened, the public will reclaim the spaces that were vehemently taken from them. However, at that time, Cage's avant-garde symphony will have to burst out from the stadium, over the walls and fences, and into the surrounding city.





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Nika van Berkel graduated from the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Ljubljana in 2015 with a master's thesis on the revitalisation of Plečnik's stadium, for which she received the Prešeren Student Award. Shortly after, she moved from Slovenia to the Netherlands, where she works and lives. Her work explores the boundaries between architecture, landscape, sound and art.

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on the work *The Green Atrium of the City* by Nika van Berkel and Karmen Ponikvar

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