

Karolina Spaic

# Questioning the Invisible

I always make photos of my performances. Trying to fix the invisible. Where do these images come from? Who created them?

## A Persistent Spirit

Russian poet, Marina Cvetaeva

*He is the one that mixes up the cards  
And confuses arithmetic and weight.  
He is the questioner from the desk...*

Marina Cvetaeva, *The Poet*

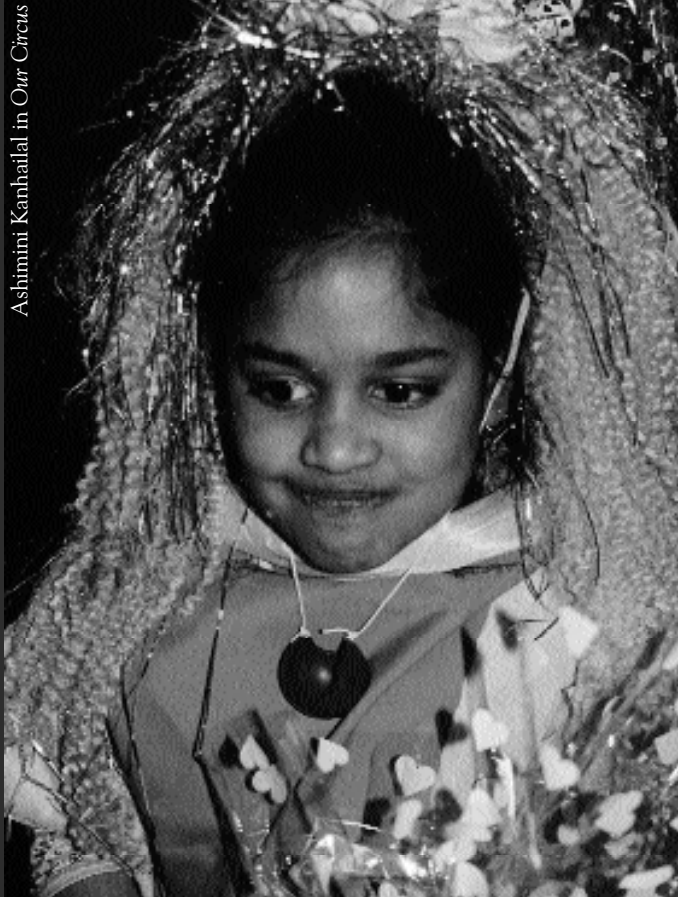
In the ecstasy of movements, the actress becomes one with the sugar lumps spread all around her. She plays Cvetaeva, a passionate Russian poet from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

I "discovered" Cvetaeva as a teenager. The power of a female spirit and the incredible capacity to love life, were her main

messages to me. Years later, imperceptibly she started to appear in my performances, again and again... First she was present only with a few lines (*My Country in the East*, 1989, *Sisters*, 1990, *What about War*, 1993), until she demanded to become the main subject of the solo by Marjo Dames called *Marina* in 1996. Finally in *Voyage* in 1997 she could express herself fully as one of the characters in the group performance. At the moment, I am preparing a new performance. I don't think of Cvetaeva this time, actually I don't want her for a moment to be there. I am searching for some new voices. But at the same time I am curious who will be more persistent this time, her or me.

## In the Beginning





Drama pedagogue,  
Ljubica Beljanski Ristic

It has always been extremely important for me to continue to work with children within theatre. The enthusiasm, power and creativity that shows up each time is my motor behind the work, and also my own experience as a child. I was thirteen years old, when I

became a member of Skozoriste, a drama studio for children. The founder was Ljubica Beljanski Ristic, a young enthusiastic woman who called herself a "drama pedagogue". With her incredible talent she guided us to write, act, direct and perform in her country and abroad. We children between ten and fourteen years old created our own world within the theatre. As always with a teacher and a pupil our roads separated in order to meet again. I left the studio to make crazy performances in unconventional spaces, I went to study theatre abroad, I came back with performances, workshops... She is always there, watching, helping, advising, encouraging and praising. In Amsterdam, on my bookshelves there is a special place for a book she gave me when I was thirteen - *Towards a Poor Theatre* by Jerzy Grotowski - when everything started...

## A Recognition

Performance visual artist, Marina Abramovic



I came to study in Holland in 1984. I had heard about Marina Abramovic already in Belgrade. There was a lot of mystery around the performance artist who moved to Amsterdam. Not everybody was happy with her radical art in Holland and some people advised me not to go to the crazy Western world. When I saw her work for the first time in 1985, I was deeply moved; conceptual, fragmented, biographical, a strong female energy. Everything that was barrelling inside wanted to break out: a strong recognition. Through the years her work changed, as life itself does. I changed, too. But the invisible connection stayed. There are moments when I had to decide to jump forward with my work, to let the work lead me over the borders that I or the world around me creates. In these moments I am consulting Marina: "What should I do?" Recently she made a movie about herself and I realised that she is almost from my mother's generation. My mother always asks me: "What is the most important thing for you in your life?" Marina always asks me: "What is the most important thing for you in your art?"

KAROLINA SPAIC (Yugoslavia/The Netherlands) was born in Belgrade in 1963. In 1988 she graduated in theatre from the High School of Arts in Utrecht, Holland. In 1991 she founded ZID Theatre in Amsterdam, where she works permanently as artistic leader and director. ZID Theatre produces physical/visual performances in unconventional locations, visual art projects and community projects for children.

Ruth Hollstegge in *Glass Effect 2*

Photos: Karolina Spaic