CONVERGENCE OF PERFORMANCE ART, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND ARCHIVAL PRACTICES

PhD **Laine Kristberga**
University of Latvia, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art

Abstract

This article explores the intricate relationships between ephemeral, performative actions, their visual documentation, and their preservation within institutional and personal archives. The author will identify key archives and data repositories that contemporary art historians can access to explore this cultural heritage further. Through this dual approach – historical analysis and archival exploration/mapping – the article aims to enrich the study of genealogy of performance art in Latvia and open new pathways for understanding its formative years.

One of the key goals is to challenge and broaden the accepted timeline of performance art's origins in Latvia. While the history has traditionally been dated to the 1970s with artists like Andris Grinbergs and his contemporaries, the author argues that its roots can be traced back to the 1960s by examining the experimental work of photographers such as Gunārs Binde and Zenta Dzividzinska. These artists engaged with photography not only as a medium of representation but also as a performative process in its own right. Such early experiments, though often overlooked, suggest a more nuanced genealogy of Latvian performance art, one that is deeply interwoven with the medium of photography. Moreover, a theoretical framework will be developed to analyse the reciprocal influence between performance art and photography.

Keywords: *genealogy of performance art, experiments with photography, digital archives*

Culture Crossroads
Volume 27, 2025, https://doi.org/10.55877/cc.vol27.536

ISSN 2500-9974

CULTURE
CROSSROADS

Performance and archiving

For art historians whose work is mostly concerned with research in the field of performance art, the archive can offer a rich and multifaceted representation of the work. Sufficient contextual information, press reviews, feedback from audiences, interviews with the artists, diaries, letters, notes and other forms of information ensure that historians arrive at a more authentic understanding of the performance. Yet, the most crucial archival document is often the image – whether still or moving – because it grants visual access to the concepts, processes, and decisions that shaped the original work.

Archiving has always been a contested subject in the field of performance art. On the one hand, archiving performance art is essential for preserving cultural heritage. Archival material – still and moving images, written records, artefacts from performances – help to reconstruct the actual events and maintain the legacy of performance art. On the other hand, it can be questioned whether a document as a static and fixed form does not diminish and compromise the original intent. After all, no documentation can fully restore the live, in-the-moment experience or the immersive atmosphere, audience interaction, affective dynamics and temporal context that defined the original performance. As Matthew Reason argues:

> *We need to think about the exact relationship between seeing a documentation and seeing a performance, about what kind of knowledge of performance we can access through its representations, about the interpretations present within each act of representation and about the tension existing between documentation and the positive valuation of performative disappearance. In exploring such relationships we must consider whether we are thinking in terms of qualities of authenticity, accuracy, completeness and reliability (all particularly relevant in terms of historical research and knowledge), in terms of the evocativeness or beauty of the representation in its own right, or alternatively about emotional, artistic or social truths and appropriateness.* [Reason 2006: 2–3]

The question of shared temporal and spatial experience between the performer(s) and audiences/participants, in other words, "liveness", is a complex and contradictory issue in performance studies.[1] Witnessing a live performance is often regarded as a more authentic experience, than, for example, looking at a photograph that documents the same performance. Although the authenticity claims cannot be denied, the issues of perception, aesthetic experience and epistemological framework are open for further discussions. Since performance art as an interdisciplinary form of art is flexible and allows the integration of any other art discipline or medium

[1] Debates were first initiated by Philip Auslander and Peggy Phelan; see Phelan (1993) and Auslander (1999).

or technology, it can be paired with any of these components conceptually. Consequently, it is possible that performance can exist only in its mediatized or intermedial form, as for example, in the well-known American artist Cindy Sherman's creative practice. When performance art has been registered in the representational medium of photography in this conceptual and strategic way, performance art becomes a hybrid, which manifests both the medium-specific features of the live process and the reproduction. Although the audiences do not have access to the actual process when such hybrids works of art were made, that is, they cannot experience it simultaneously with the artist, the outcome does not deny access to aesthetic or epistemological experience.

In the context of Latvian performance art, photography has typically served as the key archival medium, since more advanced forms like film or video were prohibitively expensive and inaccessible for experimentation. Photography, by contrast, allowed for boundless creative exploration and experimentation. Given its importance, it becomes essential to develop frameworks for categorizing performance-related photography. The central research question, then, is: how can photography tied to performance art be systematically categorized?

It is possible to distinguish two modes of synergy between photography and performance. The first category is performative intervention in the medium of photography, where a photographer operates with photographic means to create the performance photographically, including, but not limited to, photomontages and collages, or photographically manipulated and processed images (performance **in** photography). The second category is performance for the camera, where performance is produced by the subject through the act of (self)representation before the camera (performance **for** photography). The second category can be divided further in two directions – documentary and tableau. The documentary approach is characterised by greater aesthetic fluidity since the camera is capturing a process, thus the resulting images can often be blurry or remind of snapshots. The tableau approach is the opposite – it has a carefully calculated and choreographed mise-en-scène, composition, the performer's body is not moving but still (as if frozen), and the overarching objective is to pose for the camera.

Subsequent sections of this article will explore how these categories manifest in the photographs of Zenta Dzividzinska and Gunārs Binde during the 1960s, as well as in the documentation and reinterpretation of Andris Grinbergs's performances by Jānis Kreicbergs and Atis Ieviņš in the 1970s. The article will also highlight the innovative photocollages created by *Pollucionisti* (*Emissionists*). Through these examples, the article will demonstrate how each artist or collective engaged with photography and event-based art practices, leading to performative interventions that transformed both the medium and the artistic discipline.

The 1960s: Zenta Dzividzinska and Gunārs Binde

The first intuitive experiments with synthesis of photography and performance in Latvia started already in the 1960s. Photographers such as Zenta Dzividzinska (1944–2011) and Gunārs Binde (b. 1933)[2] were instrumental in this trajectory. Although they never used the terminology related to performance art (it would be an anachronism in the 1960s), their attempts to distance themselves from straightforward documentary aesthetics associated with photojournalism resulted in performative interventionist strategies under both aforementioned categories: performance in photography and performance for photography. As photographers, their focus naturally gravitated toward the question of representation, emphasizing the relationship between the image and the medium itself, rather than engaging with theatrical processes as primary means of expression.[3] Their approach was intrinsically linked to the photographic process and the mechanism of the camera, making it difficult to classify these experiments as independent live performances in the traditional sense. Nevertheless, these experiments are undeniably part of the broader genealogy and history of performance art in Latvia.

The testing grounds providing the green light for experiments became the Photo Club Riga (founded in 1962). Binde became the member of the Photo Club Riga in 1963, whereas Zenta Dzividzinska – in 1965. According to Binde, the photo club attracted photographers who wanted to distance themselves from the so-called applied photography (working as photojournalists or taking passport photos) and be recognised as creative artists [Binde 2017]. Given the lack of educational opportunities in photography, the photo club fulfilled an educational role. Binde stated: "*For us, it was an academy, where collective self-teaching [was the key pedagogical method]*" [Binde 2017]. Another source of information came from Polish, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, German, Yugoslavian, as well as English and American magazines [Binde 2017].

On the other hand, even though the photo club functioned as a platform for discussions and exchanging ideas, the photographs were captured and developed at photographers' own expense:

> *The photo club culture in the Soviet Union [...] was based on completely volunteer, self-financed, and self-commissioned activities, and the prints that circulated in the photo club exhibitions did not have any notable material value—no money exchanged hands.* [Tifentale 2022: 264]

---

[2] Accompanied by stage designer and artist Arnolds Plaudis (1927–2008).

[3] For Binde, though, the combination of theatrical and cinematographical approaches was essential in achieving a "great image".

For example, "*Dzividzinska developed most of her film and printed most of her images in a makeshift darkroom in the kitchen, on a time borrowed from school and work*" [Tifentale 2022: 264]. Binde, in his turn, had a laboratory at the Riga School of Applied Arts, because he was teaching photography as an extracurricular course (1964–1975). In fact, Dzividzinska and Binde met at this educational setting, and Binde became her friend and mentor. Yet, their friendship did not last long. To Dzividzinska it seemed that Binde grew jealous of her success in international photo exhibitions. The mutual communication became caustic, and Binde even forbade her entry at the photo laboratory, without providing any reasonable excuse, shouting: "*Go away, now we are working here!*" [Dzividzinska 2009].

However, for both Binde and Dzividzinska, one of the most meaningful friendships and artistic collaborations evolved with the artist and stage designer Arnolds Plaudis (1927–2008). It seems, Plaudis was the actual driving force behind all the performative interventions. According to Binde, "*Plaudis was a true ball of fire*" [Binde, Hirša 2024: 103]. Coming from the field of theatre,[4] Plaudis was knowledgeable in creating the stage environment, including scenery, props, spatial dynamics, lighting, costumes and other elements contributing to the overall visual impact of a theatre performance. Besides, Plaudis's outgoing personality was important:

> *[Plaudis] was like a staffage, the props for me. He never had a strong image of his own, he tuned in to the situation and the environment surrounding him [...] Plaudis's face was not animated at all, his face was not expressive, but he was someone who could create an image. He was endowed with fantasy, he could conjure up scenes with stories, he could charm everybody, come up with all kinds of tales.* [Binde, Hirša 2024: 103–104]

Dzividzinska remembers how Plaudis used all kinds of metal scraps as ready-mades in his stage design and always had some props with him, for example, a rope [Dzividzinska 2009]. Being a "*theatrically inclined [...], playful [and] mischievous* individual [Ansone 2024: 49], who also had a *toned physique and well-trained body*" [Ansone 2024: 53], Plaudis frequently became a model/participant in both Binde's and Dzividzinska's photographs that can be categorised under the category performance for photography.

Plaudis and Binde also worked as an artistic duo, creating a series of staged, constructed images with dramatic narratives where the performative aspect was central and Plaudis was "*the generator of the idea as well as the person in the photo, or*

[4] Plaudis was a stage designer "*at the Valmiera and Liepāja theatres, as well as the Riga Operetta [and] the Daile Theatre*" [Ansone 2024: 49].

'photo actor'" [Tifentale 2024: 33]. Binde always included models as co-authors for the photographic tableaus, yet he remained open to improvisation and contributions from the models as well. Binde also reflects on the co-authorship between them, denying Plaudis's creative agency and yet reaffirming his role as a philosophical catalyst and driving force behind their collaborative work:

> *What was his relation to me? A co-author? Not at all. Nor a model, at least not the way it's really understood. The director – also no... He was a philosopher by my side, a thought- and action-provoking motor. He encouraged and gave me confidence to do creative work.* [Binde 2008: 14]

Art historian Elita Ansone wonders, "*whether it is possible to view a certain part of Binde's photographic archive as part of the happening movement; [...] by assuming this focus one can hope to reveal the avant-garde side of Binde's work from the 1960s–70s*" [Ansone 2024: 49].[5] She further argues:

> *Many of Binde's photographs have come about through the synthesis of chance occurrences, spontaneous play and performative improvisations. Everyone had an important role in the playful processes of the happenings, as all were both participants and spectators. [...] The happenings were held purely for enjoyment they sparked in them, and each participant was an equal contributor to the event. Nobody else but the participants actually saw these happenings. The fact that the happenings took place in a small circle without spectators, also ensured that they could take place without censorship.* [Ansone 2024: 51]

Although the process leading to the captured image was definitely playful and can be characterised as performative improvisations, the outcome in photography was too staged to be defined as akin to performance art. Binde's approach was grounded in the combination of theatre[6] and cinema. As Binde himself notes: "*My interest was developed and strengthened through theatre and photographic stagings. I take the real and subject it to my idea*" [Binde, Hirša 2024: 91].[7] Art historian Alise Tifentale agrees, stating that "*[Binde's] method synthesizes elements of theatre, acting, and the aesthetics of cinematic framing in order to realize the artist's creative intentions*

---

[5] Ansone also points out that "*Binde's photographs have not been studied in this context*" [Ansone 2024: 49]; however, the author of this article wrote about Binde's performative experiments in her doctoral thesis in 2020 (available here: https://www.lma.lv/uploads/news/3144/files/disertacija-kristberga-pdf.pdf).

[6] Binde worked in the theatre for five years.

[7] "*For me, photography is equivalent to other art forms – music, dance, theatre, painting*" [Binde, Hirša 2024: 121].

in photography" [Tifentale 2024: 29]. According to Binde, the cinematic aesthetics was a deliberate choice:

> *Films can be staged. No one would ever reproach cinema for not being truthful enough. Why can't you have staging in photography. Photography is art to me. I don't need informative truth. Artistic truth is what's most important. Fine art photography lays no claims to being documentary. Though it remains documentary in its means of expression, it affirms my truth, my attitude towards the object and to life. The artistic image, not documentality, is what's most important.* [Binde 1967: 16]

Dzividzinska's photographs, however, reveal a closer symbiosis between photography and performance; her goal was not to produce images heavily infused with drama or theatricality. Like Binde, Dzividzinska often photographed her friends and acquaintances such as Laima Eglīte (b. 1945), Augustīns Delle (b. 1947), Anda Zaice (b. 1941),[8] and others. These individuals, born in the 1940s, represented a young, talented, and cultured generation in the 1960s, eager to experiment with artistic disciplines beyond their primary fields. For example, Laima Eglīte was a painter and a member of the *Riga Pantomime*, Augustīns Delle was a painter, whereas Anda Zaice was an actress. When Dzividzinska collaborated with them, the result was often a series of photographs marked by a fluid, unstructured process rather than any deliberate attempt to convey a specific meaning or feeling.[9] Her primary aim was to break from the aesthetic conventions prevalent in photo club culture. Often, a journey – such as a road trip or a walk – served as the central performative strategy, while on other occasions Dzividzinska and her subjects co-created carefully choreographed mise-en-scène and conceptual tableau performances specifically for the camera (performance for photography).

The outcome lacked the theatricality that was manifested in Binde's staged and highly constructed images. Instead, Dzividzinska's approach emphasized authenticity and spontaneity, capturing unfiltered expressions and interactions that conveyed a natural, unpretentious quality. Her photographs allowed the individuality of her subjects to emerge organically, often revealing subtle emotions, gestures, and relationships that might be obscured in more overtly dramatic or posed compositions. By focusing on real moments and intimate settings, her work bypassed the artificiality of traditional studio photography. In Dzividzinska's work, the concept of "non-

[8] And, of course, the already mentioned Arnolds Plaudis.

[9] This, indeed, resonates with Allan Kaprow's instructions for happenings: "*The situations for a happening should come from what you see in the real world, from real places and people rather than from the head. If you stick to imagination too much you'll end up with old art again, since art was always supposed to be made from imagination*" [Kaprow 1966].

acting" was central to her photographic approach. Unlike traditional models or actors who might perform exaggerated gestures or expressions, her subjects did not "act" in the conventional sense. Instead, they inhabited their natural state, allowing genuine emotions and unguarded moments to unfold. For example, when photographing Eglīte and Delle in a series of performative episodes for the camera, these processes seamlessly intertwined with intimate moments of motherhood, as Eglīte cared for her newborn child. This approach was rooted in Dzividzinska's desire to focus on authentic interactions and subtle gestures rather than dramatic poses or overt expressions.

As regards performance in photography, both Binde and Dzividzinska worked with this format. In fact, in 1965 their collaborative effort led to the creation of a life-size nude photogram portrait of Dzividzinska, merging embodied action with photographic technique in what can be described as a form of performance in photography. This photogram represents a synthesis between the body's physical presence and the photographic process, blurring the lines between live action and its captured image.

Binde, however, approached photography with a particular fascination for its technical possibilities. As art historian Santa Hirša observes,

> *in Binde's works, the experiments with photo technologies, optics, lights, darkness, copying, retouching, collage and other methods of taking and processing photos amount to attempts to probe the manifold technical abilities of photography. They also serve as a means to step away from the notion of photography as the literal replication of external reality* [Binde, Hirša 2024: 85].[10]

In contrast, Dzividzinska viewed photography less as a technical craft:

> *Photography was never about the cameras, lenses, filters, films, or techniques, contrary to most of the photo club members who were concerned with the sharpness, graininess, and other mechanical or chemical qualities of the photographic negative and print. For her, photography was just a tool to make images that were interesting (for a lack of better word) to herself. The images did not need to be pleasing or 'pretty'. [She was fascinated] with the various optical effects, fish-eye lenses, or distorting reflections instead of perfecting the skills to make 'good photography'.* [Tifentale 2022: 265]

[10] "*Binde would achieve unusual effects [...] by copying two negatives on top of one another. For other works, he would cut out an element from the photo, paste in a fragment from a different photo and then reshoot it as a single picture. Another important method for Binde was solarization, or tone reversal*" [Binde, Hirša 2024: 87].

In this way, while Binde sought mastery over photographic technology to explore its artistic potential, Dzividzinska used photography more intuitively and conceptually, favouring the personal and expressive over technical refinement. Their differing perspectives underscore the diverse approaches within Latvian history of performance and photography, with Binde embracing technical manipulation and theatrical drama and Dzividzinska challenging traditional – alas, patriarchal – aesthetics through experimentation and nonconformity.

The 1970s: Andris Grinbergs, Jānis Kreicbergs, Atis Ieviņš and Emissionists

During the 1970s, performance art in Latvia experienced a creative surge, spearheaded by Andris Grinbergs (b. 1946). Grinbergs ensured that his performances were meticulously documented by photographers like Jānis Kreicbergs (1939–2011), Atis Ieviņš (b. 1946), Māra Brašmane (b. 1944), among others. While Grinbergs's archive includes tableau performances staged for the camera, similarly to Binde and Dzividzinska, his overall aesthetic and conceptual strategies embraced a more fluid and documentary approach, with photographers capturing dynamic moments from happenings[11] that unfolded in real time and space.[12]

For Grinbergs, photography was the most essential medium having been a part of his performance:

> *How did I start making those photos? They are my unrealized paintings. I could not draw, write or express myself well enough in music, yet I had ideas.* [Grinbergs 1992: 2]

Grinbergs's performances were mostly photographed by Jānis Kreicbergs (1939-2011), who was a very well-known and established photographer in Latvia. Kreicbergs started his creative activities in 1958 as a freelance photographer in press periodicals *Zvaigzne*, *Dzimtenes Balss* and *Padomju Jaunatne*. In 1963, he graduated from the Moscow Institute of Journalism, whereas since 1964 he was an active member of photo club *Riga* (along with Binde and Dzividzinska). He also organized many international group shows, from which the most popular are *Sieviete* (*A Woman*, 1968) and *100 foto meistari* (*100 Photo Masters*, 1972).

In the 1970s Kreicbergs worked as a fashion photographer for *Rīgas Modes* (*Riga Fashion*), where he was introduced to Grinbergs. Starting from the mid-1970s Kreicbergs actively collaborated with Andris Grinbergs, photographing his

[11] The term used at the time.

[12] These were instances of *performance for photography*. Grinbergs himself created collages, too (*performance in photography*); however, much later – in the 1990s.

happenings, for example, *Dedication to Antonioni: The Red Dessert*, *The Last Liv*, *Terrorists*, *The Old House* etc. Kreicbergs quotes Grinbergs as his ideologue:

> *If Plaudis was the ideologue for Binde, Grinbergs was the ideologue for me. Grinbergs had great organizational skills. We both were looking for the moment of truth in it, not theatre. We wanted life.* [Kreicbergs 2009]

However, Kreicbergs did not join Grinbergs and his social circle merely to document the performances. In fact, together with Grinbergs they created hybrid works of art, which transformed from a process-based, one-time action into a fine art object. Kreicbergs appropriated the plots, characters and aesthetics from Grinbergs's happenings and presented the resulting images as a new and original work of art. He did so, because he never considered himself only a photographer invited to document the process-based events under a strict guidance of an authoritarian director. Instead, Kreicbergs saw performances as a collaborative project with an element of spontaneity and improvisation providing him with an opportunity to produce free creative expression:

> *It was not easy to collaborate with Grinbergs, because he was moody. But we could get on well. I liked his environment and characters; they were not empty, they had an idea in the background. But the very process was spontaneous: [the mutual interaction was very] inspiring, stimulating, provoking. I was looking for interesting plots. I was young and crazy, born revolutionist. I supported that they did something unacceptable to the regime. [...] My revolutionist spirit was manifested by implementing [artistic] agency and showing originality in my creative work. [...] During the day we worked and were busy, but [...] we felt great enthusiasm to participate in prohibited things. It was fanaticism for the sake of art. We believed that what we did would be useful for the future society. We believed that the system would collapse once, but not so soon. We thought that it would be around the year 2000. The oppression was so heavy, the [Soviet] Union so mighty, the ideology so powerful that only a few brave ones could stand against it.* [Kreicbergs 2009]

Kreicbergs captured images from Grinbergs's performances as dynamic, transient moments, unveiling an evolving approach to documentary aesthetics. His photographs do not merely record action but emphasize the fluidity and temporality of performance art. References to movements within these images – such as swinging in swings or horse riding – are conveyed not only through visual cues but also through blurred aesthetics that counter the precision and the static clarity typical of tableau formats.

Significantly, Kreicbergs applied a rigorous selection process to these images: after developing the photographs, he only showed Grinbergs the ones he deemed

successful, destroying the rest.[13] This act reveals Kreicbergs's creative agency and his role as a co-creator rather than a mere documenter. His decision-making shaped the visual record of Grinbergs's performances, dictating which images would survive and, by extension, how the performances would be remembered. Kreicbergs's choice of what constituted a great image thus had a lasting impact on the representation of Grinbergs's work, influencing future interpretations of these ephemeral events.

Yet, this process of selective preservation inherently compromises the archival integrity. By choosing only certain images, Kreicbergs not only shaped but also limited the archive, making it impossible to know which moments were omitted. This selective retention mirrors what Reason discusses regarding archival absences:

> *As it is possible to point to the sheer wealth and bulk of material in any archive, it is also necessary to acknowledge the even larger body of material not present. Indeed, it is also inherently impossible to say exactly what is missing and where the gaps might be, with such archival fallibility and emptiness inevitable.* [Reason 2006: 32]

Kreicbergs's process exemplifies the paradox of archives: they preserve, but they also omit. His selective approach reflects broader issues in archival practices where choices – whether intentional or circumstantial – shape cultural memory. This selective preservation, while preserving an intentional narrative of Grinbergs's performances, also imposes a certain erasure, where entire visual narratives may be lost. As such, Kreicbergs's decisions underscore the archive's role as a constructed and often incomplete record, inviting reflection on the gaps, biases, and subjectivities that underlie historical documentation.

Another photographer, who not only documented Grinbergs's performances, but also created new autonomous works of art using the performance documentation as raw material was Atis Ieviņš (b. 1946). From 1969 to 1974, Atis Ieviņš studied in the Textile Department at the State Art Academy of the Latvian SSR under the guidance of professor Rūdolfs Heimrāts (1926–1992). The Textile Department was known for its creative freedom, innovation and talent. In parallel, to earn a living, Ieviņš also worked as a press photographer. His interest in photography started in the late 1960s while serving in the Soviet army in Riga and fulfilling the duties of a postman and photographer. These positions secured him unlimited access to photographic resources and provided an opportunity to experiment with chemical processes in photography. After his time in the army, Ieviņš met the silk-screen specialist Aldonis Klucis (1935–2003) and started to work with serigraphy consistently

[13] From the interview with Andris Grinbergs on 25 October 2023.

producing silk-screened images in "*a range of psychedelic colour combinations*" [Svede 2004: 232]. Ieviņš emphasized the painteresque qualities over the photographic ones:

> *In special lighting conditions, a work made in silk-screen technique becomes enriched with the qualities that are not accessible to an ordinary photograph – diversity of colour combinations, self-shadow, the falling shadow, painteresque accidents and texture.* [Ieviņš 1977]

Indeed, Ieviņš himself defined his technique as painting.

By combining painting and photography, Ieviņš created a series of silkscreen prints that reinterpreted and incorporated elements from Grinbergs's performances. He colorized, cropped and superimposed the images "*reducing their straightforward documentary value in inverse proportion to a new synthetic, expressive force*" [Svede 2002: 227]. The outcome was presented as serigraphy, yet Ieviņš defined them as photo-silkscreens. The migration of performance art, which essentially is a body-based and live art, to the medium of photography and silk-screen, is an example of not only documentation of performance art, but also intermediality, since performance art is transformed and transposed to other media.[14] Furthermore, it represents a performative intervention within both photography and painting. Consequently, Ieviņš's work can be contextualized as hybrid. While he borrows documentation from processes before the camera that can be described as performance for photography (albeit documentary, not tableau style), the resulting works, along with the integration of his authorship and agency, can be characterized as performance in photography.

When performance art intersects with a representational medium, multiple artists are often involved, raising complex questions around authorship of such hybrid works. During the late socialist period, performance art in Latvia could only thrive on the cultural and geographic periphery, among close circles of friends and family, allowing artists to create without direct oversight or censorship from Soviet authorities. This intimate environment fostered artistic freedom, but when performance was later documented in forms like photography, painting, or serigraphy, these records were often presented as independent artworks. Artists frequently chose not to reference the original performative act or the people involved, as acknowledging them could risk unwanted scrutiny from the Committee for State Security (KGB). This omission reflects the era's mechanisms of fear and self-preservation under a totalitarian regime, situating these works in a specific historical, social, and political context. Ironically,

[14] See more on this in: Kristberga, Laine (2018). Performance art in Latvia as intermedial appropriation. In: K. Cseh-Varga, A. Czirak (eds.). *Performance Art in the Second Public Sphere: Event-Based Art in Late Socialist Europe*. London: Routledge, pp. 138–150.

these examples of performance art underscore the regime's inability to fully silence artists' creativity, individuality, and initiative.

As regards performance in photography in the 1970s, an outstanding example can be seen in the project undertaken by the artist group known as *Emissionists*.[15] In 1978 they created a series titled *Savādotā Rīga* (*The Bizarred Riga*) that was commissioned by the newspaper *Literatūra un Māksla* (*Literature and Art*). In this one-off project, all members of the group walked in the streets of Riga, photographing a variety of locations that captured the essence of the urban environment. Afterwards the photographs were turned into playful photomontages – all together around 100 images, which could be seen as critique of socialist reality in which they lived. In these manipulated images, *Emissionists* highlighted the absurdities and contradictions of daily life under a regime that often suppressed individual expression and creativity. They utilized photography not just as a means of documentation but as a creative tool that enhanced the performative aspects of their work. By using photomontage and absurdity as a subversive approach, *Emissionists* created layered narratives that challenged linear storytelling and the objective truth of photojournalism. This technique not only emphasizes the playful aspect of their artwork but also questions the authenticity of the photographic medium. By doing so, they challenged the audience's preconceived notions of what art should be and how it should function.

Art critic Jānis Taurens has pointed out that this series can be considered an early example of conceptual art produced during the Soviet period. However, he also notes a significant limitation: the lack of a critical framework or theoretical context within which to situate this art phenomenon. As a result, Taurens refers to the series as "*the conceptualism that did not happen*", suggesting that, despite its innovative approach, the absence of art criticism and theory at the time hindered its recognition and potential impact on the art world [Taurens 2014: 205]. Nevertheless, the absence of open discourse in the 1970s does not diminish the significance of their work from today's perspective. The series *Bizarred Riga* should be situated within the broader history of experimental practices that synthesized photography and performative interventions in Latvia.

Moreover, the previously discussed examples – Dzividzinska, Binde, Grinbergs, Kreicbergs, Ieviņš, and *Emissionists* – each represent a pursuit of artistic concepts distinct from mainstream conventions and established traditions, reflecting innovations in their respective practices. For Dzividzinska and Binde, the quest lay in pushing the boundaries of photography itself. They experimented with style, representation, and meaning, treating photography not merely as a medium for

[15] Emissionists (in Latvian – Pollucionisti) were a group of contemporaries: Anda Ārgale, Māris Ārgalis, Jānis Borgs, Valdis Celms, Kirils Šmeļkovs, Kārlis Kalsers, Jāzeps Baltinavietis.

documentation but as a language of expression with its own aesthetic and conceptual potential. Grinbergs's contribution marks a departure into a new artistic discipline altogether: performance art. He reshaped the boundaries of art by emphasizing the artist's body, presence, and transient actions as integral components of the artwork. For Kreicbergs, the pursuit was one of authenticity and realness, as he prioritized capturing genuine, unstaged moments over artificial compositions. Kreicbergs's approach elevated the documentary image to something experiential, where the focus was on preserving the essence of an authentic moment. Ieviņš, on the other hand, explored the potential of photography as a hybrid medium. By synthesizing and manipulating photographic images through techniques like silkscreen and layering, he disrupted the straightforward documentary function of photography, turning it into a medium of expressive, synthetic force. His work embodied a quest to integrate different artistic forms, blending elements of painting, photography, and performance to create new, layered meanings and expand the scope of visual storytelling. For *Emissionists*, the photographic image became a vehicle for subtle social critique, highlighting the potential of manipulated photography as a tool to challenge and question socialist reality. Through photographic experimentation and event-based practices, each of these artists contributed to the genealogy of performance art in the 1960s–1970s in Latvia.

Access and (re)interpretation of archives

Working with photographic materials related to the history of performance art in Latvia presents significant challenges, as these materials are often sporadically scattered across numerous archives, both institutional and private. Contemporary art historians delving into this field encounter various obstacles that complicate their research efforts. One major issue is the incomplete digitization of photographic archives and collections. While some institutions have made strides toward digitizing their materials, such as the Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art (LCCA), many archives remain largely inaccessible in physical form. This situation is exacerbated by the fact that numerous private archives have not been disclosed to the public, further limiting access to essential visual documentation.[16] Moreover, the absence of a centralized database for these photographic images poses a significant hurdle. Instead of being housed in a single, easily navigable repository, these materials are dispersed across multiple websites and institutions. As a result, researchers must possess a detailed knowledge of where to find specific images, which can be time-consuming and frustrating. This fragmentation not only hampers the ability to conduct

[16] For example, photography archives by photographers Māra Brašmane and Jānis Kreicbergs.

comprehensive research but also impedes the broader understanding of performance art's evolution and significance in Latvia. Without a cohesive system for accessing and cataloguing these photographic materials, the rich narrative of Latvia's performance art history risks being overlooked or underrepresented in academic discourse.

As regards digital platforms and open-access data repositories, the LCCA[17] offers access to its collection digitally via its website.[18] According to the website, "*the collection of the LCCA is one of the most significant resources for researching contemporary art in Latvia*" [LCCA]. Art historians "*can access the digitized collection and a vast trove of information on artists, exhibitions and processes in art and culture from the 1960s to the present day*" [LCCA]. For example, if we type in the search box the name of Andris Grinbergs, 18 images are offered. As soon as a user presses on the selected image, the system transfers the user to the website of National Library of Latvia, where it is possible to download the image and to see all the respective metadata, such as the title, author(s), the year the work was created, the owner or keeper of the original photograph.[19] The LCCA collection[20] provides access to the photographs related to event-based art, for example, there are 23 photographs from the series of the *Bizarred Riga*, 53 images from Andris Grinbergs's performances (defined as "actions"), and 19 images by Zenta Dzividzinska. Thus, for example, the collection of images related to Andris Grinbergs's woks is a bit wider at the website of the National Library Latvia than in the digital collection of the LCCA.

Another valuable yet somewhat outdated online resource in terms of design and navigation is www.meandrs.lv (a network of museum collections created in 2010). This site provides access to numerous artworks, including 115 photographs by Binde, 77 by Dzividzinska, and 16 by Atis Ieviņš, all held by the Latvian National Museum of Art. Notably, no works by Kreicbergs or *Emissionists* are currently catalogued on the site. Although the website's update history is unclear, it offers essential details for each piece, such as the date, dimensions, and photographic technique. The images are available for download, albeit in relatively low resolution – sufficient for research purposes. A particularly interesting point of cataloguing concerns Dzividzinska's

[17] Moreover, the LCCA stores a digitally accessible archival material of unpublished interviews with artists involved in performance art or related genres, such as pantomime. Since many of these artists have passed away over the years, the interviews as primary sources are of utmost importance for art historians. Although the activities of LCCA are valuable in various areas – research, exhibitions, conferences and publications – the monographs published by the LCCA, as well as their unpublished materials are of a particularly great value for the researchers focusing on the history of performance art in Latvia.

[18] https://lcca.lv/en/digital-collection/

[19] The collection of the LCCA is also paired with the EUROPEANA network, which provides access to Europe's digital cultural heritage.

[20] Metadata list: https://dom.lndb.lv/data/obj/761846.html

performative works alongside Laima Eglīte and Augustīns Delle, which have been identified under the *Riga Pantomime* series. These photographs, however, are autonomous works, independent of rehearsals or pantomime performances, and merit examination as distinct pieces within Dzividzinska's oeuvre, reflecting the performative experimental practices she pioneered.

The Digital Library of Latvia (www.digitalabiblioteka.lv) offers further opportunities to explore photographic images documenting the history of Latvian performance art. According to the website, the National Library of Latvia curates digital content from over 500 partner collections across Latvia and internationally. If, for example, we type the name of Andris Grinbergs (also spelled as Andris Grīnbergs in Latvian), 3558 entries are found.[21] This might seem like an enormous corpus of documents; however, only some of the available entries concern actually performance artist Andris Grinbergs. The researcher must refine the selection by pressing "avoid synonyms". As a result, the number of entries is reduced to 936. A unique finding among these is an image of Andris Grinbergs and Anna Romanovska.[22] In 2020, Anna Romanovska defended her doctoral thesis *A Subdued Palette of Subversion: Artistic Expression, Creativity, and Family Coping Strategies in Soviet Latvia* at the University of Toronto. In one of the subchapters, she also refers to Andris Grinbergs, providing details about how they met and sharing her first impression of him:

> *I met Andris Grinbergs on a train heading for Jūrmala. We sit across from each other on the stiff wooden seats. He looks at me and quickly turns his gaze towards the window. I do the same. For a while we scan each other with short quick glimpses and try very hard not to stare. We pretend to be indifferent to strangers. I am fascinated, smitten, head over heels, dizzy with a sudden crush for this artwork of a man. I can't pretend not to be smitten by Andris for much longer. Finally, we talk. [...] He just looks at me with his large, dreamy and seductive eyes. 'Try out my freedom playfully. It's safe; I have a playground,' I think Andris is telling me. And soon enough I find myself participating in his world.* [Romanovska 2020: 79–80]

This excerpt from Romanovska's thesis, which is a fragment of her memories, provides another piece of the puzzle in the genealogy of Latvian performance art. Along with the digitally available image on the website of the Digital Library, the history can be further reconstructed as a coherent narrative. However, this

[21] There are 149 entries under the name of Zenta Dzividzinska. See further: https://digitalabiblioteka.lv/?col=1549393

[22] https://digitalabiblioteka.lv/?id=oai:the.european.library.DOM:1149243&q=andris%20grinbergs&syn=1&of=15-876

information would hold little significance if the author of the article were unaware of Romanovska's identity and her connection to Grinbergs.[23]

Another digitally accessible and internationally recognized source is the Russian Art and Soviet Nonconformist Art Collection at the Zimmerli Art Museum, Rutgers University, which is one of the most extensive and important collections of unofficial or nonconformist Soviet art created between the 1950s and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. It was largely due to the efforts of art historian Mark Allen Svede, who as a Latvian–American, made several trips to Latvia at the request of Norton Dodge (1927–2011) to acquire selected artists' works and bring them back to the United States. The Russian Art and Soviet Nonconformist Art Collection includes 3 images by Binde, [24] 31 by Andris Grinbergs (3 unavailable[25]), 40 by Dzividzinska, [26] and 21 by Ieviņš. [27] The catalogue provides sufficient bibliographic details for research; however, dates for some photographs are missing or broadly attributed to a decade, which can challenge the precise reconstruction of an artist's timeline.

However, the most comprehensive understanding of any archive is achievable only through access to the full collection, rather than to individually or institutionally selected images. Full collections provide a richer, more nuanced insight into the scope of an artist's work, revealing the subtleties of their creative evolution, stylistic variations, and experimental phases that selective viewing can obscure. For instance, following art historian Alise Tifentale's decision in summer 2021, her mother Zenta Dzividzinska's archive is currently housed and curated at the National Library of Latvia (NLL),[28] offering a structured resource for researchers, though accessibility may still depend on institutional permissions. As Līga Goldberga accentuates, "*The transfer of the archive to the NLL opens up new possibilities for interpretation and research, including on the circulation of the archive over different periods of time and integration into the art discourse*" [Goldberga 2022].[29] In contrast, Andris Grinbergs's extensive collection containing 392 works has entered the private collection of Jānis Zuzāns and is accessible by appointment through *Zuzeum*, Zuzāns's art center in Riga.[30] Atis Ieviņš's archive remains under his personal care, and can be accessed

[23] Romanovska's doctoral thesis was brought to the attention of the author of the article by Baņuta Rubess, a Latvian-born Canadian researcher.

[24] https://zimmerli.emuseum.com/search/Gunars%20Binde

[25] https://zimmerli.emuseum.com/search/andris%20grinbergs

[26] https://zimmerli.emuseum.com/search/zenta%20dzividzinska/objects/images?page=2

[27] https://zimmerli.emuseum.com/search/atis%20ievi%C5%86%C5%A1/objects/images?page=1

[28] At the art repository of Konrāds Ubāns Art Reading Room.

[29] Goldberga herself currently works on the doctoral thesis that focuses on Zenta Dzividzinska's archive.

[30] www.zuzeum.com

by approaching Ieviņš individually. In the case of Jānis Kreicbergs, his collection is held privately by his family, with no established public access. However, the absence of a formal archival structure may pose challenges in ensuring its preservation and accessibility to researchers.

Although referencing Michel Foucault and his work *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) might seem overly common in discussions of archives, it is important to recall that, from a Foucauldian perspective, the archive is far more than a physical repository of texts or documents. For Foucault, the "archive" is an abstract concept closely related to his notion of "discursive formations" – the rules and structures that make certain statements possible while excluding others:

> *By the archive, I mean first of all the mass of things spoken in a culture, preserved, valorised, re-used, repeated and transformed. In brief, this whole verbal mass that has been produced by men, invested in their techniques and in their institutions, and woven into their existence and their history* [Foucault 2014: 20].

According to this view, the archive is not merely a passive collection of material but an active, living entity that shapes the limits of knowledge, identity, and memory within a culture. By establishing what is to be included or excluded, remembered or forgotten, those in positions of authority – whether individuals or institutions – can shape discourses and, by extension, exert control over knowledge and cultural narratives. The Foucauldian archive, then, is as much about the silences and absences as it is about what is present. These decisions define the visibility and legitimacy of certain ideas, beliefs, or events while relegating others to obscurity.

When applied to photographic archives, such as those of Latvian artist Zenta Dzividzinska, Foucault's ideas illuminate how power and institutional practices intersect with memory and cultural representation. Some images from Dzividzinska's archives have been celebrated as significant cultural artifacts,[31] while others have been misinterpreted, dismissed, or entirely overlooked. This selective recognition is not always the result of overt political decisions but can also stem from subtler factors such as limited human resources in memory institutions, lack of in-depth research, or historical biases that shape curatorial practices.

A compelling instance of merging curatorial and archival practices is the exhibition *Sophie Thun: I Don't Remember a Thing, Entering the Elusive Estate of ZDZ* (*Sofija Tuna: Es neko neatceros, ienākot ZDZ izvairīgajā arhīvā*), curated by Zane Onckule. [32] This exhibition created a dialogue between artist Sophie Thun (b. 1985) and the legacy of the late Latvian artist Zenta Dzividzinska, specifically through

[31] The photo series "House Near the River" (late 1960s–early 1970s) or images with the *Riga Pantomime* group (1964–1965).

[32] https://kim.lv/en/dont-remember-thing-entering-elusive-estate-zdz/

Dzividzinska's archive. Thun's engagement extended beyond simply displaying her own work; she printed new images directly from Dzividzinska's negatives, interpreting them rather than merely reproducing them. As art historian Alise Tifentale notes, "*Thun's involvement [was] more than printing – she rather interpreted Dzividzinska's negatives*" [Tifentale 2023: 51].

According to Līga Goldberga, the materials for the exhibition included a diverse array of objects contained within thirteen boxes. These boxes held photographic prints, photocopies, books, newspaper clippings, Dzividzinska's design sketches, personal notes, family photographs, correspondence, small memorabilia, and even a makeup box, whose scent evoked a sensory bridge to Dzividzinska's era [Goldberga 2022]. The 13 boxes with photographic prints "*pointed to the invisibility of Dzividzinska's work, as most of her images had never been printed, or printed only in the format of a contact sheet, and very few images had been exhibited during her lifetime*" [Tifentale 2023: 51]. Following the exhibition, the archive, which was subsequently transferred to a library, was expanded with additional materials such as notebooks, documents, a manuscript, and personal items like her parents' prayer books, broadening the scope of Dzividzinska's *photographer's archive* to encompass her lived experiences and memories [Goldberga 2022]. Goldberga highlights the essential role of the archivist or curator in preserving the vitality of the archive, stating,

> *In order for the archive not to experience its social death, there must be someone that would be able to define the meaning of both the representations in the photos and the meaning of the other objects – whether it be personal memories, an aspect from the history of photography, or a reference to contemporary art* [Goldberga 2022].

This exhibition underscores how archival material, when accessed through performative interventions like Thun's, reveals layered dimensions of both archive and photography. An archive, traditionally viewed as a static repository, can become a living entity when artists or curators engage with it creatively, activating its latent narratives. Photography itself is uniquely positioned within this dynamic; as an indexical medium, it both records and transcends a singular moment in time. Thun's approach of reprinting Dzividzinska's negatives illustrates how a performative re-engagement with archival materials can blur authorship and temporal boundaries, transforming the photographic archive into a collaborative, even multi-generational artwork. This intervention transforms the archive from a static repository into an active conversation, where contemporary artists interpret, manipulate, and even redefine historical works. Consequently, the exhibition *Sophie Thun: I Don't Remember a Thing, Entering the Elusive Estate of ZDZ* emphasizes that archives, when approached through the performative lens of reinterpretation and appropriation, embody a fluid, evolving relationship with history.

Conclusion

Examining the intersection of performance art, photography, and archives underscores the essential role that capturing, preserving, and reinterpreting ephemeral artistic processes plays in historical analysis, especially as the time between the original performance and its analysis increases. Performance art, inherently transient, relies heavily on photography and archival practices to bridge the divide between the fleeting live event and its enduring historical memory. Photography serves as both a documentation tool and a creative extension of performance, providing a material trace that invites reinterpretation over time. When analysing processes before the camera, on the one hand, and the resulting two-dimensional images, on the other hand, one must consider both the performative dynamics unfolding in real time and the aesthetic captured in the final image. This dual focus allows for an understanding of how live, embodied actions are translated into static visual compositions, revealing the intentionality, spontaneity, or experimental choices made by the artist in bridging performance with photographic representation.

It is also essential to highlight the aspect of authorship in photography and performance. Some photographers, such as Zenta Dzividzinska and Gunārs Binde, were both behind and in front of the camera, directing the gaze toward photographic subjects while also becoming subjects themselves.[33] In contrast, in the collaborations among Andris Grinbergs, Jānis Kreicbergs, and Atis Ieviņš, the photographers consistently remained behind the camera, whereas *Emissionists* fully embraced the creative process – first of all, engaging in the psychogeographical walk in Riga and, secondly, creating a photo montage that added new layers of meaning through performative interventions in the medium of photography.

Archives, especially when activated through performative and curatorial interventions, evolve from static collections into dynamic sites of engagement. Such interventions turn archives into "living repositories", where each encounter can revive, redefine, and expand the understanding of the original work. For archives to serve these roles effectively, they must be digitally accessible, navigable, and thoughtfully designed to invite discovery. However, a pressing challenge arises with inaccessible archives, particularly those that remain private or restricted following an artist's death. Ensuring these materials reach broader audiences and scholars requires innovative strategies, including collaborations with contemporary artists who can bring fresh perspectives through performative or interpretive appropriations.

Additionally, in-depth research is vital for uncovering nuances and aspects of archival material that might otherwise be overlooked. Increased funding for

[33] Here, tensions emerge regarding the male gaze and the objectification of female subjects in Binde's case.

the humanities and social sciences is essential in this regard, as under-resourced memory institutions would benefit from partnerships with research institutions to ensure robust, high-quality scholarship. Only through these collaborative efforts can archives achieve their full potential, facilitating a fluid and interactive understanding of performance art and its place within a broader cultural memory.

Sources

Ansone, E. (2024). Instances of Happenings in Gunārs Binde's Art. In: A. Binde, A. Muraško, E. Ramza (eds.). *Binde. 100-10*. Gunars Binde Foundation, pp. 43–58.

Auslander, P. (1999). *Liveness: Performance in a Mediatized Culture*. London: Routledge.

Binde, G., Hirša, S. (2024). Conversation of Gunārs Binde with critic Santa Hirša. Father's home in the evening after the rain. In: A. Binde, A. Muraško, E. Ramza (eds.). *Binde. 100-10*. Gunars Binde Foundation, pp. 59–137.

Binde, G. (2017). *Gunārs Binde: Tikko tev viss ir pieejams, tu esi iznīcināts*. Interview by Laima Vainiņa. FotoKvartāls. Available: https://fotokvartals.lv/2017/10/17/gunars-binde-tikko-tev-viss-ir-pieejams-tu-esi-iznicinats/ (viewed 11.05.2024)

Binde, G. (2008). Par Arnoldu. *Foto Kvartāls*, No. 6 (14), p. 14.

Binde, G. (1967). Saruna ar Gunāru Bindi. Interview by A. Skalbergs. *Liesma*, No. 2, p. 16.

Dzividzinska, Z. (2009). Interview by Anda Kļaviņa; unpublished. Stored at the digital archives of Latvian Centre for Performance Art.

Foucault, M. (2014). *The Cambridge Foucault Lexicon*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Goldberga, L. (2022). ZDZ pūdera smarža: jauns posms Zentas Dzividzinskas arhīva biogrāfijā. *Fotokvartāls*. Available: https://fotokvartals.lv/2022/07/15/zdz-pudera-smarza-jauns-posms-zentas-dzividzinskas-arhiva-biografija/ (viewed 27.10.2024)

Grinbergs, A. (1992). Interview by Una Meistere. *Atmoda Atpūtai*, 3 March, p. 2.

Ieviņš, A. (2017). Personal interview with Laine Kristberga. Transcribed and stored at Kristberga's personal archive.

Ieviņš, A. (1977). Intervija ar Ati Ieviņu. *Padomju Jaunatne*, 4 March, p. 4.

Kaprow, A. (1966). *Some Recent Happenings*. New York: A Great Bear Pamphlet.

Kreicbergs, J. (2009). Interview by Anda Kļaviņa; unpublished. Stored at the digital archives of Latvian Centre for Performance Art.

Kristberga, L. (2018). Performance art in Latvia as intermedial appropriation. In: K. Cseh-Varga, A. Czirak (eds.). *Performance Art in the Second Public Sphere: Event-Based Art in Late Socialist Europe*. Routledge, pp. 138–150.

Phelan, P. (1993). *Unmarked: The Politics of Performance*. London: Routledge.

Reason, M. (2006). *Documentation, Disappearance and the Representation of Live Performance*. Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Romanovska, A. (2020). *A Subdued Palette of Subversion: Artistic Expression, Creativity, and Family Coping Strategies in Soviet Latvia*. Doctoral Thesis, University of Toronto.

Svede, M. A. (2004). On the Verge of Snapping Latvian Nonconformist Artists and Photography. In: D. Neumaier (ed.). *Beyond Memory: Soviet Nonconformist Photography and Photo-related Works of Art.* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

Svede, M. A. (2002). Many Easels, Some Abandoned: Latvian Art After Socialist Realism. In: A. Rosenfeld, Norton T. Dodge (eds.). *Art of the Baltics: The Struggle for Freedom of Artistic Expression Under the Soviets, 1945–1991*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press.

Taurens, J. (2014). *Konceptuālisms Latvijā: domāšanas priekšnosacījumi*. Riga: Neputns.

Tifentale, A. (2024). How a Photographer Became an Artist. In: A. Binde, A. Muraško, E. Ramza (eds.) *Binde. 100-10*. Gunars Binde Foundation, pp. 26–51.

Tifentale, A. (2023). Completing an Unfinished Sentence: On the Collaboration between Sophie Thun and the Archive of Zenta Dzividzinska. In: C. Müller, T. Scheid (eds.). *Sophie Thun. Trails and Tributes* (ex. cat.). Hildesheim: Kunstverein Hildesheim and Verlag für moderne Kunst.

Tifentale, A. (2022). Sophie Thun Interprets Zenta Dzividzinska's Negatives: A Case Study of Exploring and Re-evaluation of a Private Photo Archive. In: *Proceedings of the National Library of Latvia 9 (XXIX). Mapping Methods and Materials: Photographic Heritage in Cultural and Art-historical Research*, pp. 254–275.

Laine Kristberga is an expert of the Latvian Council of Science, researcher and head of the Arts Department at the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia. Laine is also Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education Sciences and Psychology at the University of Latvia and a visiting lecturer at the Art Academy of Latvia. Laine Kristberga runs the non-governmental cultural organisation "Latvian Centre for Performance Art", as well as is director and curator of the annual Riga Performance Art Festival "Starptelpa". Laine regularly publishes scholarly publications, her research interests relate to the history and political aspects of event-based art in Latvia and the region, especially during the Cold War period.

The article has been supported by project "Cultural and creative ecosystem of Latvia as a resource of resilience and sustainability" / CERS (No. VPP-MM-LKRVA-2023/1-0001) that is funded by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia in the framework of the State Research Programme "Latvian Culture – a Resource for National Development" (2023–2026).