

ANARCHIC BODIES: consent not to be a single being

This year's edition of the Festival for Queer Art, Culture, and Theory – Skopje Pride Weekend approaches the body as a site of anarchic resistance, collective imagination, and social transformation—an entity that refuses to be enclosed within the normative coordinates of gender, sexuality, race, and capital. Conceived as a living space of theory, performance, and experimentation, Anarchic Bodies: consent not to be a single being positions the body as an aesthetic and political subject that disrupts the colonial, heteropatriarchal, and racialized hierarchies through which life is organized and governed. Drawing on feminist, queer, Black, and decolonial thought, the Festival articulates an anti-essentialist vision of existence grounded in relationality, opacity, and incompleteness—as an invitation to think a mode of being that is not sustained by the “force of necessity” and its logics of fixed identity, separation, and controlled efficacy. Instead, the body may appear fragmented, distorted, as a refusal of transparency and stable form.

Through exhibition, performances, public lecture, and critical discussions, Skopje Pride Weekend directly addresses the cultural and political dimensions of power, challenging hegemonic norms and opposing the normalization of moral panic and exclusionary cultural politics. By foregrounding experimental and non-normative artistic practices, the Festival provides continuous support for local and regional artists and cultural workers, fostering long-term solidarity, visibility, and community resilience. The thematic framework Anarchic Bodies: consent not to be a single being rethinks the queerness of the queer body not only as opposition, but as a poetic and political force of multiplication, improvisation, and co-becoming, opening space for dissensual worlds that fracture dominant regimes of identity, property, and sovereignty.

We propose thinking queer experience through the concept of the anarchic body, as a way to displace dominant logics of sovereignty, autonomy,

individualization, and hierarchy that continue to shape not only our political imaginaries but also our embodied experience. The urgency of this concept lies in its resistance to the ongoing inscription and capture of bodies within systems of regulation, visibility, and value—in diagrams of race, gender, sexuality, class, productivity, and legibility, but also in the very assumptions of what a body is and how it should appear. Rather than a stable and authoritative form, the body emerges as something that can be broken, reflected, diffracted, displaced—as process, as trace, as relation, as a paradoxical, “non-existent” institution that calls into question every attempt at its final naming and governance.

The anarchic body is not a heroically autonomous agent, nor a sovereign container of identity or master of will. Its materiality folds and unfolds as deviation, inclination, abandon. In touch—as contingency. Refusing to be captured in form, coherence, or stability, the anarchic body does not call for a return to some originary body, but appears as something always already changing, corroding, sedimenting, transforming—as matter bearing traces of time, pressure, and relation. Rather than a purified utopia of liberation, it insists on the body as already multiple, dispersed, groundless, and unfinished—as a metastable in-formation of intensities, as a field of ruptures and emergent relations.

In this sense, the anarchic body is always in relation, never alone, never single. Rather, it is singular plural. It is not a closed substance, but being-with: a resonance of singularities in contact, in tension, in proximity. The queer body as anarchic body is bodying-towards, a body that co-appears, a body in common. It resists completion and unfolds through the arrangement of gestures, through a rhythm of interruptions, breakages, and slippages—where forms flow into one another, between the concrete and the abstract, between sensuality and the dissolution of clear boundaries. In this horizon, anarchic bodies can also be thought through the figure of the wild—not as the opposite of order, but as the absence of order, as an entropic force that constantly escapes attempts by power to regulate life. They open space for unstable ecologies of desire and embodiment, for bodies and desires that do not fit into binary and classificatory regimes, but persist at their edges, as unpredictable, hybrid, and resistant forms of life.

It is precisely here that Black, queer, trans, and decolonial thought offer crucial interventions—not new fixed identities but insurgent choreographies and lived practices that crack the very grammar of recognition, subjectivity, sovereignty, and relation. From willful and disobedient bodies, through deviant erotics and gender experiments, to “wayward” lives that move, wander, and refuse to be governed—these practices testify to everyday, persistent attempts to live otherwise, even where the conditions for doing so are minimal or violently constrained. They affirm the possibility of life as constant improvisation with given conditions, as a refusal of respectability, and as the creation of other forms of community and survival.

Through contemporary dance and performance, through bodies staged in their non-performance of political morphologies, we invite the audience to think-feel with anarchic bodies—which also means to think the political—and to perceive how they disrupt the social choreographies of capture and expose the very distribution of the sensible. They move evasively, not to illustrate an idea or fulfill a task, but to dwell in the unappropriable excess of gesture—in that strange mixture of tenderness and monstrosity, where the body becomes more than one, yet never fully yields to recognition. These bodies are not scenes of possession, but of sharing. They suspend the sovereign force of command and instead offer a different vocabulary: of listening, inclining, trembling, folding, hesitating. Of seducing the gaze into wonder, letting it wander.

It is in this sense that this year’s edition of the Festival is presented through the extraordinary performative photo-drawing by our long-time collaborator and friend Yane Calovski. The invitation extended to Calovski to create a new work in dialogue with this year’s curatorial theme is not incidental. On the one hand, the reasons for this invitation lie in Calovski’s historical contribution (together with Hristina Ivanoska) to the creation of infrastructures and platforms for presenting queer art in our local context, particularly evident through his work in press to exit project space. On the other hand, his entire oeuvre unfolds through a queer sensibility, approach, and methodology, even when his works do not explicitly address queer issues and histories: his long-standing interest in the archive as a field of instability, as an unfinished process; his subtle obsession with the sensuality of the artistic material and the history of the materials he works with, as well

as their continuous transformability; his engagement with open form and unfinished meanings; and his affinity for abandoned, discarded, rejected, and forgotten materials etc. These elements resonate strongly with what we aim to propose as a new way of thinking and performing the queer body, and bodies more broadly.

Created through a performative process of movement, reflection, and trace, this new work by Calovski resonates with the anarchy of corporeality, of queer corporeality. Working with his own body through the breaking of reflection, the artist uses a thin copper sheet as a reflective and drawing surface—a material that oxidizes, changes, and develops patina over time, like the body itself. In this unstable encounter between metal and skin, the body appears distorted, fragmented, and amorphous, as something that simultaneously disintegrates and emerges. The resulting image does not function as documentation in any stable sense. It does not capture the body, but produces a residual image, something that remains after the encounter between body, surface, and light. The body appears as reflection, but also as loss—as something that cannot be fully retrieved or stabilized. In this way, the work approaches the body as remainder, as something that persists only through traces and partial appearances. This approach opens a clear queer dimension—a refusal of fixity, clearly readable forms, and stable bodily identities, in favor of the body as process, relation, and constant transformation. In line with the theme *Anarchic Bodies*: consent not to be a single being, the work explores the plasticity, mutability, and monstrosity of bodies—not as exception, but as their condition of becoming. Forms are slippery, broken, partially recognizable: a kind of flesh that emerges, but never fully stabilizes. Between the concrete and the abstract, the body appears as process, as metamorphosis, as something erupting from the depths of a semi-transparent surface. In these ruptures, space opens for another mode of appearance—a body that refuses to be one, clear, and closed, and instead exists as reflection, trace, relation, and constant change.

Let us dance with these bodies, with their interruptions, their noise, their untamability. Not to restore a lost origin, but to consent not to be a single being. Not complete. Not alone. But incomplete, multiple, dispersed, and always in becoming. This dance is a thinking-feeling of our bodies as matter abandoned to a world without principles and ends, surrendered to the

abundance of touches, contacts, and relations, to the comings and goings of bodies—to their an-archy.

Slavcho Dimitrov
Curator of the Festival