

## Notes on non-experience

### A-Z of Mala Kline

#### A

is for aquarium, the object of display par excellence, one where the audience and that which is placed on display are so very different, they cannot even breathe the same substance.

#### B

is for Brecht's *Lehrstücke*: a radical and experimental form of modernist theatre developed by Brecht and his collaborators from the 1920s to the late 1930s. The *Lehrstücke* stem from Brecht's Epic Theatre techniques but as a core principle explore the possibilities of learning through acting, playing roles, adopting postures and attitudes and hence no longer divide between actors and audience.

#### C

is for capitalist production and for the question of how an artist's practice can withstand its constant reinvention and spectral hovering above the political and economic sense of social change.

Is also for choreographer Mala Kline, who casts wild shadows of streams of thought, where the made references are sometimes well-known and sometimes disturbing and forgotten narratives and characters. It is a fictional construct and an imposition of a circular, perverse narrative upon the viewer, one which is never to be resolved. It is to be felt, inhaled and identified with – even if then suddenly again expelled from within oneself with repulsion.

#### D

is for dialogue. A dialogue set up between the notions of a stage with its borders, the performer and the audience.

#### E

is for engagement. It is with the engagement of diverse performative strategies and tactics that Mala Kline sets up an investigation into the diverse conditions, limits and possibilities of theater as a place of meeting between the performer and the public.

## F

is for fiction. You see, Mala Kline loves fiction, she also loves reality, she loves watching people, and she loves to work in the space in between the three and see what unfolds from there.

## G

is for gaze and the tactics we can employ in directing it.

## H

is for humour. If you recall, Fellini always had a little piece of paper with the words “Remember this is a funny movie!” taped onto the camera when shooting.

## I

is for imagination. Its creative potential on one hand and the freedom that comes with precision of thought and the understanding of different perspectives on the other, became Mala Kline’s obsession and influenced the way she works.

## J

is for *jouissance*, denoting "pleasure" or "enjoyment." The term has a sexual connotation lacking in the English word "enjoyment", and is therefore left untranslated in English editions of the works of Jacques Lacan. In his Seminar "The Ethics of Psychoanalysis" Lacan develops his concept of the opposition of *jouissance* and pleasure. The pleasure principle, according to Lacan, functions as a limit to enjoyment: it is the law that commands the subject to 'enjoy as little as possible'. At the same time the subject constantly attempts to transgress the prohibitions imposed on his enjoyment, to go beyond the pleasure principle. Yet the result of transgressing the pleasure principle, according to Lacan, is not more pleasure but pain, since there is only a certain amount of pleasure that the subject can bear. Beyond this limit, pleasure becomes pain, and this 'painful principle' is what Lacan calls *jouissance*.

## K

is for the key points in Kline’s work: one of them being the apparent de-mystification of the potentially grand narrative (or character). Within the contemporary condition, we are well versed in spotting the current tentatives of referencing and rebuilding of the ruins of past grandiose historical and social models. What Kline’s work though does, and in a very efficient way it seems, is the setting up of the structure of the potentially grand narrative (one which is sometimes almost somewhat clichéd - as for example the suicide of the performer or the appearance of Marlyn Monroe), but then

by twisting it and braking it down with various strategies she manages, to question our collective experience and the expectation of its resolution.

L

is for literature. Mala Kline's grandfather was the managing director of the biggest publishing company in Slovenia. She spent all her childhood in his library swallowing books. She loved fictional worlds that opened up through literature, the freedom in them and the sense that anything is possible simply because it can be imagined.

M

Is for medal. It is on the two sides of the same medal where Kline deposits fiction and reality respectively. They then keep on interchanging their positions along the performance, entering and exiting the stage and its characters. Sometimes, they even break the laws of physics and the two identical sides meet face to face. And it is here where the spectator's gaze suddenly becomes aware of itself: in Kline's work, it does not only travel, it is not only directed and framed, but is made to realise the relationship it forms with that what it is looking at and how it shapes it.

N

is for nonsense, paradox, mistake and laughter.

O

is for the origins of theatre.

P

is for philosophy. Mala Kline's studies of philosophy were a training of how she can shift between different systems of thought that make her see and understand reality in different ways.

Q

is for questions.

R

is for relations and relationships.

## S

is for souvenirisation. of bodily experience which is in the contemporary condition well embedded into mainstream social awareness. This notion also brings us back to the lack, the withdrawal of the object one needs in order to remember – the souvenir. This lack is the story, the personal account of what has taken place. A narration, which is far from a documentary stance, as it is delivered by a beholder, who was emotionally involved in an event. She or he does not have to take a documentarist's position, but is meant to be partial. This brings us back to the very core of mythmaking and its strategies. The construction of the myth is dependant upon the assemblage of personal accounts, variations which are all versions of the same event, but because of the diverse and different personal stories form a somewhat spectral entity.

## T

is for theater. It is a form of thinking in images and that's what Mala Kline does. An idea as an image on stage can be perceived, sensed, experienced with one's body not only understood with one's mind. Image on stage is a materialized thought.

## U

is for use of imagination through which man can interact with a multitude of possible and interconnected worlds.

## V

is for viewer. And a touristic viewer I am. A viewer of the hollow tenants of the spectacle that hovers around Mala Kline's work. For I have never even seen a performance by Mala Kline or met her before this day. I cannot even be named as a researcher nor a voyeur as the material accessible to me is only the scattered detritus of information, all mediated via diverse technological transfers. All that is truly important, the core of the work itself, is kept as an enigma of its original experience and as such unattainable to me.

## W

is for window. And it is a window that Mala Kline creates with her work. As she mentions in a short interview accessible on you tube: "The performance is like a window, through which they (the public) go, and on the other side they enter themselves". Mala Kline wishes to activate a possibility of travel into oneself within the members of the audience. She recognises the existence of the collective unconsciousness and wishes to tap into this "collective brain". It is with this notion of the "collective experience" that her use of recycling, filtering, cutting, pasting, cropping and the overall collage making of the historical references comes about. One

could argue that the underlying existence of the narrative (even though in a broken form) serves precisely as a hook for the audience to follow the suggested psychological travel itinerary. But do we truly need this narrative? Or does it exist as a mere guideline for us to follow? Is it perhaps put in place to shape the substructure, the skeleton upon which the witnessing of the performance, the experience itself, should in fact build up the flesh of myth?

X

is for **X**. A stage management abbreviation for 'crosses to'. (e.g. John X to the armchair)

Y

is for yelling.

Z

is for zoom. If we zoom into Mala Kline's work, we see that it exists only to be experienced, lived, loved, hated, thought, felt and effectively consumed. Her trio of focal points are the stage (and its borders with the accompanying problematic), the artist performer and the public. She then weaves carefully constructed yet intuitive webs of possibilities for the reconfigurations of the latter and the possible points of debate that arise from such. The stage is doubted, the audience's expectations questioned along with the space of communication between the two.