

Abstaining from art

This textually - documented art performance, on which I will elaborate upon in this narrative has characteristics that relate to the movement of “neoism” or “parodistic-ism”, as a subcultural experimental direction, while the fact that I rely on the established principles of "neoism" is due to the fact that such an artistic action, meaning an art performance as presented in the work “Abstaining from Art”, is a counterpart to and has been previously performed by Stewart Home, entitled as “Art Strike” dating from the period 1990 to 1993. In essence, the artistic action is undertaken from another author, but I am exploiting exclusively the performance interpretation, i.e. our interest lies only in taking on the idea that one should not work and act, i.e. be active on an aesthetic level for a longer period of time, while the topic, concept and content that I treat and the reasons behind it are completely and diametrically different and polemicize with other aesthetic dimensions and connotations, unlike the topic that Art Strike deals with. Thus, these differences in the concepts will be presented in this text.

In this art performance, the focus is put on our abstaining from the sphere of aesthetics in the period from 2010 to 2022, a form where I do not valorize, perform, create, present, educate, nor do I commercialize in any segment of the science of beauty. I note that neither in a classic, nor in an alternative object, space or setting, have I exposed, exhibited, presented an artistic presentation, nor have I published or exhibited any cultural product, regardless of its media artistic physiognomy or culturological formation that treats and represents contents from any sphere of aesthetics. I have performed the aforementioned act over a 12-year period, and I am transforming and justifying that actualized situation of cultural presenting abstinence into a factual state with the artifact that appears as a data infiltrated into the biography. The continuity of the work is progressing with a performance activity, which illustrates that in the above-mentioned time period no work of art or product has been conceptualized, realized or produced, regardless of the fact if it belongs to aestheticized and media established foundations or to alternative media fractions (including all forms of intellectual highly valued or unprofessional cultural expressions), i.e. I have not created or have not been involved in an artistic and cultural -creative engagement that would reflect a specific aesthetic at the end of the activity and that factual situation is a reality with the argument that none of my work in any form of cultural presentation or information circulates in the aforementioned period. I am distancing myself and have not been involved in any other education with a culturological concept (such as studying, attending courses, etc.), I do not have any mentoring support from institutional educational systems, I have not been subjected to information or development that would result in intellectual progression as a position imposed by the educational system that teaches about the science of beauty, and I have developed all these driving mental functions using individual methods and practices. I am also not employed in any area or sphere of the cultural and social institutions, regardless whether they are state or private, I do not use the individual aesthetic attributes or abilities to secure a livelihood and profit from the profession of art, therefore I have not valorized aesthetics as a commercial need at all within the previously determined period of time. The twelve-year sobriety and abstinence from the above-mentioned essence, characteristics and practices in the art and culture is a period that contributes to an individual mental disconnect from the personal structures that possess aesthetic sensory

feelings whose functionality is to perceive and interpret content from the science of beauty. The rehabilitation mentioned above resulted in an epilogue of distancing from the aesthetic sensory feelings, and at the same time from the creative visionary and creative - mental aspects that were conceptualized in the previous causal intention that contributed to impose the need that the paradoxical act of distancing from aesthetics and the previously mentioned performed act of abstaining is treated as an artistically created product. The abandonment of art, followed by other cultural activities, is an act of aesthetic destructiveness of the author in the aforementioned period, however, such destructive vandalism on the part of the author results in the creation of an aestheticized aura that creates a new textually documented artistic performance, i.e. artistic work with a touch of “neoism” or “parodistic-ism”, namely the work that is being presented at the moment. **We come to the conclusion that not making art can be art in itself.** The individual rehabilitation from the dependence of the art form that I have accumulated in the aforementioned period evokes authentic states and experiences, enhanced by cathartic climaxes, of which some are of a positive character and some have had a negative epilogue. I would like to mention that I have been involved in art since 1990, and that is the beginnings in the secondary art school that has continued with all further education and profiling of personal creative upgrades, stages and art presentations until 2010, and that is the time when I decided to abstain and distance myself from art until 2022, which at the end of the previously set deadline in the distanced mirror created an art work, and with it came the formulation that suggests that the dependence is impossible to be entirely amputated. The state of rehabilitation was not caused by melancholy, apathy, or disillusionment with aesthetics, but with this work, my intention is to provoke a constellation (interrelationship) between the act of creating aesthetics and the activity of abstaining from aesthetics.

As I already mentioned, the artistic action by Stewart Home, entitled as “Art Strike” from 1990 to 1993 was performed, I am just reproducing, reconstructing it, or expressed in a film jargon I am making a “remake”, and in terms of art, I rely on the postulates and principles of the subcultural movement “neoism” by placing emphasis only on the action or the art performance from his work, while completely changing the theme, essence and content of the concept directing it into a newly created connotation. I want to point you to the conceptual differences between the work “Art Strike” and the work “Abstaining from Art”. To achieve this, I need to note that Stewart Home himself completely takes the action and the concept, that is, the work, from the author Gustav Metzger who is the patron of the idea, but who has never managed to realize it and thus it remained within the framework of an idea. In accordance with this information, one comes to the conclusion, and the author Stewart Home himself consciously emphasizes this, that his work “Art Strike” is based on the principles of “neoism” or “parodistic-ism”, which is the same in my case. In his work “Art Strike” he argues that the act of protest is raised with the motive to cripple the culturological system, and that the refusal of labour is the main weapon of artists who fight against the aesthetic system established by the cultural institutions. But, without further explaining the pivot of Stewart Home's work, I will direct you to the main part of the concept with a quote that describes the idea whose creator or matrix is Gustav Metzger. ***In 1974, Gustav Metzger called on artists to withdraw their work for at least three years.***

The call criticizes doctrines such as “the engagement of artists with political struggle” and “the use of art for social change,” as well as “art in the service of revolution” as reactionary. Instead, it states that “artists have attacked the prevailing methods of production, distribution and consumption of art” and that “the refusal of labour is the main weapon of the workers

fighting the system.” The three years are cited as “the minimum period needed to cripple the system.”

Although the call doesn't use the words “Art Strike”, Metzger connects with the concept.

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This motive and the content for emphasizing and arguing in favour of the artistic strike are not my interest and area of research, so for the reasons stated below, I do not accept that topic and completely eliminate it from the work “Abstaining from Art”. It is not that I disagree with their views, but for my personal affinity, Gustav Metzger’s concept has a tendency that is directed and based on political activism, the manifestation and postulates of which remind me of social manifestos that initiate and carry out a protest note against the social structure, with the exception that in Metzger’s concept the aggression is directed against the artistic institutions, patrons and the constructed positions that they propagate. For our criteria, the stated strike content represents outdated doctrines, motives and conditions that have passed their time and were current in the period when Gustav Metzger created them. I will compare the authentic situations where the opponent has used methods to confront the worker with the system or the employer in the practice, identically as Gustav Metzger as an opponent recruits and activates the artist against the aesthetic regime. We know about the origins of the form of the strike and what its intentions are, so that the absorbed information and data for expressing revolt create attitudes that direct us not to denigrate it as a form of protest, but I rather reflect the position that its function in the time of existence is in a surpassed stage and I understand it as an expression of revolt that once managed to change the initiated problems, also noting that sometimes and even often the strike is characterized as a marginalized action that does not move the targeted problems forward, identically to how the “Art Strike”, as adapted and executed by Stewart Home ended and met its fate. Due to these disagreements and opposing views, an identical reconstruction of the action is required, and thus a complete deconstruction of the content and concept present in the work “Abstaining from Art”.

The main motto of Stewart Home and Gustav Metzger is the fight against the established cultural system, and as soon as the system is attacked, it means that their standards conclude that the current system is functioning incorrectly, it is moving in an unwanted direction for their criteria, and for those reasons they wish to change it by attacking it with the action of artistic strike. By performing the aforementioned act, with the intent to cause changes in the cultural constitution, it represents the striker's preoccupation directed towards the component that is characterized as the culprit of the current situation and condition. Therefore, one can conclude that the revolted person, namely the striker, does not find faults within him/her, but rather transfers the blame to other individuals. Both Stewart Home and Gustav Metzger are directed from the very beginning with the intention of changing other individuals, and thus their associated established positions. Their intention is the mental destruction and attack on the components and that manifestation might change the individuals against whom the protest was carried out with symptoms of an attack. I also believe that it might be questionable if this will change or if the attacked individuals who create the established cultural system will progress, and I claim that this engagement will certainly not change those who perform the psychological destruction, i.e. the strikers. I will present myself with the old rule; change yourself in order to change others. The mere intention of changing the positions of others will not change the imposer of positions since he/she has recorded the error in the component, and not within himself/herself, so with this conviction the imposer mentally

visualizes himself/herself as an ideal psychological complex of emotions and positions that construct authority with an aggressive act that wants to impose itself and to succeed in changing the dissenters. And in order to change, conditionally speaking the opponents, thereby tracing their path that remains only theirs, while the one who carries out the mental aggression, the striker, remains on the identical path as before with the same direction and perception of the road signs concluding that he/she (the striker) is an ideally completed and defined structure of attitudes and states. When one sets out with the intention of changing the other, the individual feelings, perceptions, senses and the mental state are closed remaining on the position that all is fine with the imposer, and further that statement suggests that there is no progress of the person and his/her psychosomatic state.

I am comparing the established performing action carried out by me, which treats the problem of stagnation, lack of doing, lack of presenting any artistic act to the myth of Sisyphus, whose constant is pushing the stone up the hill, but after a certain period of time, when it reaches a certain height, is unable to remain in the same position, much less progress and advance in the climb. The stone, identically like every previous time, rolls downhill and returns to the plain, i.e. the very beginning, thus resulting with the identical epilogue of each repeated manifestation, whereas the observer is left with the impression that Sisyphus did not push the stone at all, because he never managed to climb the hill, i.e. to achieve the goalpost. I compare this to the performance of our concept where the driving content is abstaining from art and a number of its specificities, so I come to the conclusion that abstaining from the aforementioned aesthetic components contributes to complete isolation of the individual from that domain, which gives the definition and impression that he/she does not contribute and does nothing in the sphere of art. In fact, Sisyphus is active all the time being involved in the repetitive reproduced process with his effort that is manifested by pushing the stone, identically as in the twelve-year period I have actively repeated the same performative action every day in a mannerist context of not creating an aesthetic product and non-involvement in the sphere of art in multiple perspectives. The absurdity of doing nothing (the nothingness) is a term that grows into a pivot and presents a current thematic preoccupation translated into this artistic action that I am currently presenting with this narrative, so the aforementioned context of treating the nothingness ends up as an aesthetic product, just as the story of Sisyphus from many centuries ago takes on a mythological form becoming a cultural product.

The myth of Sisyphus is an exploited theme in many cultural spheres, and it has also been researched and processed by the existentialists. Using the methods of selectivity of the author, I chose and applied it in my work to manifest and process the etymology of the term nothing, or if I formulate or simplify it, it will be the expression used most often in the text as it will be the driving force in explaining the thematic preoccupation, a term that will actualize the content and essence of this artistic concept, which is the word **nothing**.

Our intention is to analyze the conclusion that abstaining from art can be transformed and its character can mutate reaching the point of reproducing art. The continuous unproductivity of an aesthetic product by a creative person is identification with the conclusion that it signifies a longer-term process of doing nothing in the mentioned sphere. At that act, the audience or observer is initially forced to conclude, but also the factual situation shows that the artist's inactivity results in the absence of an artistic exhibit from any aesthetic medium, i.e. nothing as a constitution does not reflect any artistic product, so the audience on the author's side consciously directs itself towards that conclusion. In addition, such opinion is also supported by their senses that do not

receive any signal in the form of a creation formulated by the author. Nevertheless, with his awareness, the author, as demonstrated by many examples in the contemporary art world, possesses the control, enhanced with his authority, and can contribute to the convertibility and transformation of this absurd situation if the creator emphasizes the very abstinence from aesthetics and culture and thereby proclaims it as a driving neo-concept which elements and postulates contribute to the constitution of the aforementioned performance action as a work of art. The act of proclaiming and presenting an artistic exhibit will contribute to theorizing that the constant nothing becomes and can be reformulated into a concrete something. To what degree can the empty become full if we identify the empty with the concept of nothingness, and replace the full with the expression something. That is the virtue of the aesthetic philosophical etymology that forms the artistic freedom whose unlimited formulations, principles and methods allow the author to paraphrase and manipulate them to the extent of his intellectual imagination. Even if no aesthetic values are contained in that imaginative visualization that creates the work, through an evolutionary process the author can certainly change that constant for himself, and if he is aesthetically competent also for the audience by imposing his created criteria. I come to the conclusion that the participation of nothingness has the power to shape and make an artistic product.

I will pose the question of whether at the end of our existence, manifested by death, we become nothing. I have chosen this topic since the death is the greatest indicator of nothingness present as a thought among the general population. To this question I will also add the thesis that human knowledge, certain time ago, has presented the atom as the smallest structural particle of each chemical element that forms our body, and also generates everything around us. This is an outdated scientific stage that is being upgraded evolutionarily and periodically, when even smaller elementary particles, which contribute to its functionality, are being gradually discovered inside the atom. I will not list them in chronological order, nor will I explain their functions, because already the standardized elementary particles become outdated education about the factual state, and the science, as a visionary reference discovers new elements and offers assumptions about chemical particles that are impressive in their importance and which have yet to be discovered, thereby contributing to the development of the current stadium of evolution in this sphere. The above data, in turn, form a platonic thesis of thoughts and views that the disclosed and visionarily assumed structural particles have the power to deny the process of nothingness after the stage of death of an individual. With the assumption that the elementary particles that form the human body and after the death of the individual, where the matter disappears and the information remains in the particles, I emphasize that the information, in the form of an energy impulse created by the personal experiences from the entire stage of development that contains the data from the very beginning until the fateful end of the existence of the person who died; and the particles with that information continue to exist with the possibility of energetic evolution, disintegrating into the black holes somewhere in the cosmic structure, reflecting themselves as an illusionistic hologram. This visionary assumption is a superficial statement that is complex to be presented in few sentences, but that assumption is constructed from educationally accumulated scientific articles that are focusing on the topic of “the Universe as a hologram”. Nevertheless, the thought about “the Universe as a hologram” is currently based on a scientific assumption, and these hypothetical theses in no way appear as a scientific factual situation, and perhaps over time they will grow into a confirmed theory.

I would also like to turn to other assumptions. Was the cosmos, prior to its creation a single, completely diffused content that began to gather and transform itself into just one tiny point that has causally caused the big bang, and was that single something created out of nothing? The following are scientific theories supported by authentic assumptions that the current stage of the universe is an accelerated expansion, which will continue to grow with the assumption that it will decompose and dematerialize itself to the point of becoming nothing. This is a hypothetical rhetorics and thoughts that are current human preoccupations at the time when this text was written. Over time, some of them will be confirmed and established as a factual situation, and some with their inaccuracy will be understood only as human imagination, since they are based on assumptions by the primary sociological culture embedded in the contemporary individual who is treating and is being affected by the terminology of nothingness.

Philosophers have been contemplating about the concept of nothingness since before the Common Era, and it has also provoked interest in the philosophical circles in the Middle Ages and the modern period as well. There comes a stage, in my opinion, when philosophy, due to the fact that it remains an education that produces only terminological concepts and dialectical rhetoric that is rarely supported by the factual situation and the verified conclusions, and for these reasons the philosophy as a whole is overshadowed by the newly created science astronomy, which deals with the universe and which, unlike philosophy with the technological achievements it uses as an instrument to imply equivalent evidence and studies, contributes to arrive at a factually confirmed or refuted state of the targeted issue. In the science of the universe, several theories have been developed that completely deny the **nothingness**, and even the cosmic darkness that the human eye perceives as emptiness and understands as nothingness, is explained by the quantum science primarily as vacuum, later as ether and so on. ***In some regard, the vacuum and the ether are treated as synonyms by the science. In the modern quantum field theory, a completely empty vacuum is not with zero-point energy, which represents the lowest possible energy state. Proposed for the first time by Paul Dirac in 1927, the lowest energy state has constant random vacuum fluctuations that lead to the existence of short-lived virtual particles. This is somewhat reminiscent of the ideas of the early philosophical plenum and signifies that the vacuum and the nothingness are certainly not synonymous.***

<https://en-m-wikipedia-org.translate.goog/wiki/Nothing? x tr sl=en& x tr tl=mk& x tr hl=mk& x tr pto=sc>

I want to point out that the philosophy also denies the nothingness, with rare exceptions, and also the quantum science with the theory of the vacuum, or rather with the theory of the Quantum Fluctuation, leads us to that conclusion, while the scientific paper "The Universe as a Hologram" may remain an assumption since it is in the phase of a hypothetical thesis. Taken into account these considerations, one can come to the conclusion that the nothingness in the universe is only a human fiction and does not exist as a real postulate. Comparing the concepts of nothingness in the universe with the nothingness in the world of culture, one comes to the conclusion that nothingness in the artistic sphere is only a momentary apparent visual illusion that manipulates the senses of the participant or the audience. This manipulative aesthetic imagination (referring to the nothingness) does not correspond and is not able to establish complete constellation with the concept that has the authority to form and represent a concrete thing, same as the ether and the vacuum in nature. Due to the conclusion that the concept creates and makes something concrete in the form of artistic data, the formulation abstains from the nothing. The

ideological essence or the concept in aesthetics contributes to isolate the nothingness, and without any idea or a concept we have actualized the author's views that it is not possible to create an aesthetic product. In my opinion, the concept possesses the driving formulation to shape an artistic product or work. The artistic product today shifts the criteria and positions with regard to the concept by being able to marginalize it, but is not able to completely omit it, and there may come a period when it will be completely rejected from the work of art. Freedom of expression has long been an exceeded phase in art, and so I try to minimize the concept as much as possible, thus influencing a change in the quantity of the plot and the physiognomy of the essence to be performed in the "sfumato" technique. Thereby the blurring initially masks the content offering a cultural mysticism that will require certain capacity and level of information on the part of the audience to be able to unmask it. In the modern era, the concept has flexible positions and postulates in the formation of its capacity with influence in monumentality or minimalism and allows the modern author to experiment with them. This statement supports our position and gives us the right to summarize that by seemingly doing nothing in the area of aesthetics, still doing nothing represents an established concept in the work and treats that issue as something concrete.

Let us make a small and brief chronology as concluded from my perspective, and treats and classifies the presence of the theme of nothingness in works of art. Kazimir Malevich and his black canvas. The audience was accustomed to a line, form and other artistic elements that were cherished and exhibited by the then current styles and directions, and Malevich with his work rejects all of that. Marcel Duchamp with the urinal is a much exploited example, as well as the example of Yves Klein who makes an exhibition with an empty gallery space. I would like to allude to the conceptualists who reject the object and the material and rely on the concept and the idea, and theorist Lucy Lippard describes this as a ***"dematerialization of the art object"***. In my opinion, the most fascinating example is the Situationist International, which gives up making art. There are many examples that I will not include because it is not the intention of this textual documented art performance. Some of the mentioned examples are established and categorized in the aesthetic fraction of anti-art and, in my opinion, their classification shows how the art of painting has gradually approached and treated the concept of nothingness.

The given examples present a reduced number of authors, who have treated consciously and most creative artists only intuitively or unconsciously the concept of nothingness in art. The authors who were involved in this aesthetic issue have contributed to different phases and movements, built on diverse principles, methods and expressive styles in which they completed evolutionary stages of the current topic. Thus, we assume that there was no constructed awareness of the term nothingness in art a hundred years ago, and that artistic issue was accepted in one sense and was received as a visualization of the exhibits offered at that time, which did not treat it with intention, and it was not officially formalized, but from today's perspective and analysis we recognize the presence of that concept. One can say that fifty years ago the terminology nothingness in art was presented in a completely different advanced associative connotation and context, unlike the previously mentioned period, and the visualization of a work with such treatment and regime is completely changed from visual and thematic aspect, although one believes that there was no awareness on the part of the author. From that period onwards until today, the understanding of the content and visualization of the aesthetic problematic of nothingness has progressed, and I believe that it will continue to evolve in the future, because there

are authors and critics who recognize and actualize the terminology of nothingness in aesthetic products. Considering the eclecticism of the art of painting directed towards other aesthetic media, a compensatory approach that shapes our multi-media art, the coherence and cooperation of which do not stop there, but rather extend toward the inter-disciplinary areas with the act of implementing information, directs them to offer cooperation with other sciences that do not belong to the aesthetic categories. This openness to perceiving offers more possibilities and options, a lot of information, conclusions, theses and thus visualizations to be supported by technical and scientific, social and psychophysical continuous progress. This current stage of inter-disciplinary compatibility offers aestheticians factual education, facilitating alternative options and possibilities for expression that achieve innovative upgrades to be applied in the consumer product, and thus concretize in the practice the creative cycles that marked the artist and his era.

This conclusion is a result and is supported by the uncompromising liberalization of art that perceives and compares specific information and accumulated files from other scientific spheres and areas without any fluctuations. I emphasize the views on the inter-disciplinary character as I recognize myself in them with the intent to justify the presence of another established sphere (astrology), which is implemented in the very concept of this work, entitled as “Abstaining from Art”. These views are not complicated to form and it suffices to analytically observe the development of the historical aesthetic cycles and stages, to conclude that art, as visible in its previous phases, is in a process of continuous progress and evolution within the aesthetic system of values, and that this cyclical epilogue and progress is also reflected in the thematic content entitled as “nothingness in art”. The chronology I have offered recommends transforming the nothingness in art both as a concept and as a concretized visualization, a change that is due to experimentation, which in itself offers new completed formulations of the aesthetic work. A certain period ago, we were not able to perceive and comprehend chemical particles as well, but thanks to the technological progress and the invention of the microscope we can not only visually perceive them, but also we are offered the opportunity to intervene on them. I compare this with “nothingness in art”, where I compare the invention of the microscope to the pivotal concept that allows all to create all undiscovered contents so that over time the essences that were previously unimaginable in the aesthetic sphere become fully acceptable cultural values.