

Kateřina Ťed

Czech, born 1977

*It took me a year to convince them to all do the same things at the same time, trying to stress how wonderful it would be to perform everyday rituals together.*¹

On Saturday, May 5, 2003, after a year’s worth of research, planning, and persuasion, 315 residents of the small Czech village of Ponetovice adhered to a “Daily Regime” organized by Kateřina Ťed as the culminating event of her project, *There Is Nothing There* [Work 41]. Video cameras rolled as residents simultaneously performed common activities such as sweeping the sidewalk, grocery shopping, bike riding, and eating an agreed-upon lunch of dumplings with tomato sauce. According to Ťed, the piece was designed to reveal something about normalcy. Paradoxically, the work also gave the townspeople something extraordinary, a day of collaboration and beauty, an opportunity to interact with their neighbors, a moment of recognition of how daily chores are routinely performed in isolation. But for one day, those same nothings were framed as a kind of dance, a choreography of daily life, at once incredibly silly but also memorable, meaningful.

Ťed’s practice continues to center around her capacity to galvanize people, in works that involve individuals such as *It Doesn’t Matter*, 2005–07, in which she cultivated art-making protocols to help her grandmother recover from a severe depression after the loss of her husband; different groups of people, such as when, as a student at the art academy, she convinced her professors to allow her family to critique the final projects of her fellow students; and whole towns, such as Ponetovice or Nořovice, a community torn asunder by the forced placement of a Hyundai plant that effectively split the town in half, geographically and psychologically (*No Light*, 2009).

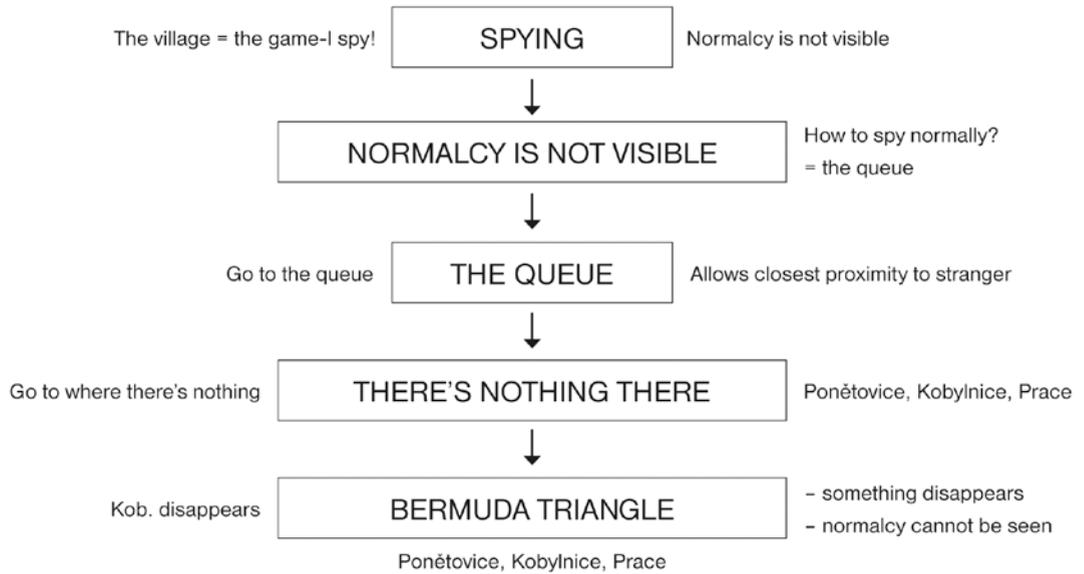
Ťed’s work can be fruitfully compared with others’, but there always seems to be a quantifiable difference. She is in league with social practitioners such as Suzanne Lacy, Tim Rollins and K.O.S., Pablo Helguera, and the collective Temporary Services, but Ťed’s public interventions often seem as much personal compulsion as social imperative. Like Ťed, Marina Abramovi spent the better part of a year

working with locals in a small Serbian village to create *Balkan Erotic Epic*, 2005, but the interactions served the work, rather than the people. By contrast, Ťed’s stated goal for her art is to identify problems and generate projects that provide solutions for the subjects of her work. The Center for Land Use Interpretation catalogs forgotten or neglected geographic regions, drawing attention to areas where human development has failed both earth and humanity, but these kinds of failures are merely jumping-off points for Ťed. A case in point: She considers *No Light* to be a piece she will work on for the rest of her life; its end is defined as the moment at which the Hyundai plant is removed from Nořovice. In this regard, Ťed could be compared with Wolfgang Laib, whose projects are set in motion and repeated throughout the artist’s life. Yet, while deeply affecting, his works remain relatively abstract in their function, while Ťed’s focus is on her projects’ beneficiaries.

In considering Ťed’s practice, art-centric associations are only useful up to a point. Ťed’s impulse to produce work stems not so much out of a desire to be an artist as a professed need to connect people. This impulse represents the end to which her work is a means. One might say that Ťed is more rightfully comparable to someone like Buckminster Fuller—a visionary and a designer of actions and social mechanisms with the goal of solving human problems such as isolation and despair. “Actually,” Ťed says, “I do not feel like an artist; I don’t know what I am, but it doesn’t matter.”²

AW

1. Francesco Garutti, “Acting as a Director: Katerina Ťed - Interview - Domus,” *Domusweb.it*, n.d., accessed November 9, 2012, <http://www.domusweb.it/en/interview/acting-as-a-director-katerina-Ťed>.
2. *Ibid.*



ACTIVITY	FINDING	INSTRUCTION
Spying	Normalcy cannot be seen	Go find a queue
Queue	Allows one to get the Stand in closest to stranger	the queue
Standing in the queue	There's nothing there	Go there!!
Go to Ponětovice	There's nothing there	Keep going!
Go to Kobylnice	There's nothing there	Keep going!
Go to Prace	There's nothing there	Look around
Looking around	Pon.-Ko.-Pr. Bemuda triangle	Keep going!
Walking and looking around	All three villages are the same!!	Record it on video!!
Recording it using a video camera	Bermuda triangle Pon.-Ko.-Pr Kobylnice disappears!	Watch video
Watching	Strangeness is multiplied normalcy	Show it!
Chart - Daily Regime	They all live the same	Show it!
Multiplied normalcy	Everyone must do normal things at the same time	Persuade them!
Recruitment, persuade towns	No one understands it	Repeat!
Systematic explanation	People will do it for me (reason)	Daily Regime action
Daily regime action →	A utopian game that can be influenced!!	