

The ReVisionists

A participatory performance proposal

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At the base of this performance is a famous photograph taken at the Three Kings Hotel in Basel, Switzerland. In this photograph, we see Herzl (Theodore Binyamin Ze'ev Herzl, born in Budapest, 1860), the father of modern zionism and visionary of the Jewish state, leaning on the hotel's balcony and gazing at a point away from the camera, in a thoughtful expression. As Herzl had an exceptional political talent and a very developed theatrical sense (being himself a play writer as well as a journalist - the Paris correspondent and later the literature editor of the liberal Vienna newspaper Neue Freie Presse) one can safely assume that this picture was carefully thought of and planned just as any other detail in Herzl's campaign that was a huge one-man manifestation of skillful dramaturgy and an outstanding mise-en-scene.



The photo of Herzl leaning on the balcony of the Three Kings Hotel in Basel, was taken in 1897, during the days of the first Zionist congress and is identified with Herzl's famous words: "In Basel habe ich den Judenstaat gegründet" (in Basel I have founded the Jewish state), known to both jews and non-jews worldwide. In the "reVisionists" we would like to re-think the vision.

The vision of a jewish state is one of the few utopian ideas that have been realized and haven't yet collapsed. at least officially.

for us, as israelis living outside of their country this photo, where Herzl, the ultimate european gentleman is dreaming about palestine and a new liberated society, speaks about a series of problems of distance and about an idea and its concretization.

In his diary Herzl writes: “all human deeds are originated in dreams, and they shall ended up as dreams”

It is a tragic thing to say, but one cannot escape the its prophetic quality.

In “The Revisionists” we reconstruct the iconic picture as a studio set, depicting the Three Kings Hotel balcony and the view of the Rhein as a decor for the action of visioning. We ask people (audience, visitors, fellow artists) to complete it, by replacing Herzl. Whoever takes Herzl's place, is offered a black beard and a coat, is requested to imitate Herzl's body posture, to fix the gaze in the same direction and to contemplate, or in other words to re-think the vision, until being replaced by another re-visionist.

The re-visionists is a participatory performance. It hasn't a fixed duration and is designed as an ongoing event that happens in parallel to other happenings (for example, during an opening or in the midst of an exhibition space).

* The reVisionists was shown as solo exhibition at “marks blond project space” in Bern, switzerland. the guard took place during the opening evening and later on, the photographs of the posing Herzls were on display throughout the exhibition week.
(this is an optional structure, others can be developed according to the actual conditions)

Equipment and technical requirements

The ReVisionists is very flexible in terms of space and duration, still, there are basic time and space requirements in order for it to be effective.

duration:

The performance functions like a guard. the empty position of the missing Herzl should be always occupied by a re-visionist. thus, the performance should take several hours, for example, throughout an evening, an opening event etc.

important remark: the performance is not a show where the public is supposed to sit and watch, it is more of an a personal experience of each of the re-visionists. of course that viewers may hang around and watch, but it's not a performance in the theatrical sense.

space:

can be varied from a room to a booth. the minimal requirements would be 2 walls in 90 degrees from each other, 3 meters long each.

a preferable space would be a closed space with 3 blank walls, a window in the 4th one, and a side door. (see illustration)

materials:

plywood (for building the decor – the balcony fence)

paint – for painting the decor (wall and plywood)

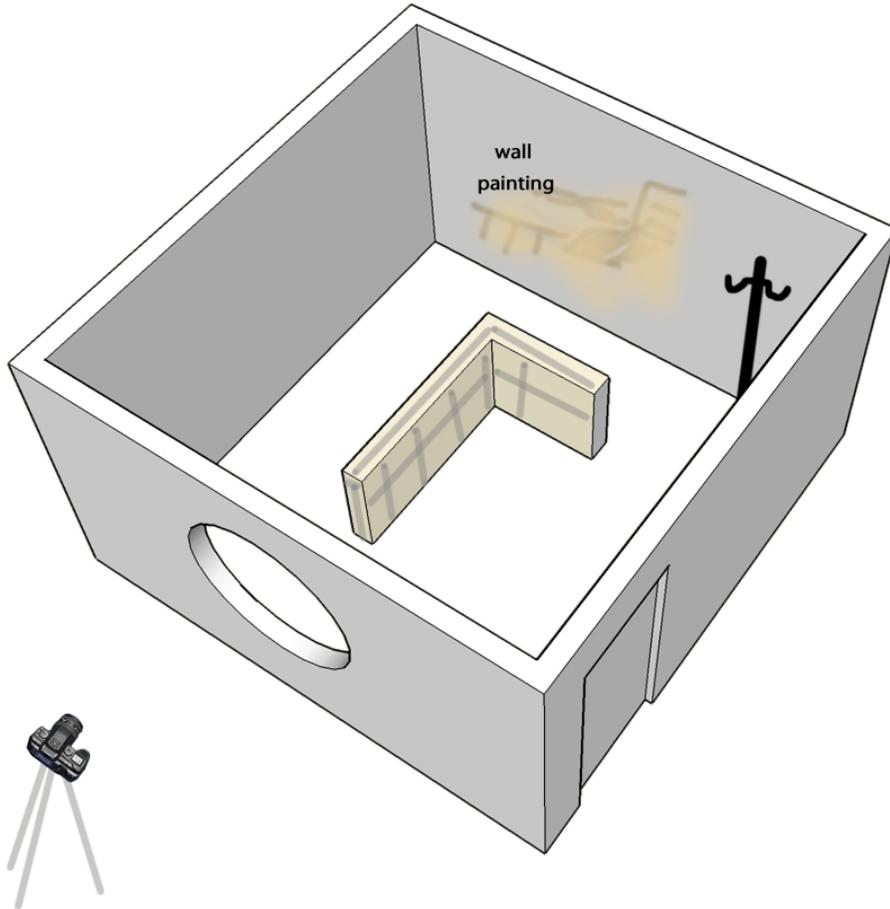
tools (basic carpentry tools)

props:

long black coat

artificial beard

illustration: schematic view of a closed space / booth option:



note: the space can also be defined by partial walls/ dividers or other architectonic elements, depending on the given situation. in terms of structure it is completely adaptable and site specific.