SYNCHRONIZING TIMES

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Between 8 and 29 June 2021, four workshop sessions created by Alexander Giesche and Aukje Verhoog took place in the Open Studios, a virtual space created by STUDIO Teatrgaleria. At the beginning of the working process two words were crucial — synchronization and efficiency; both were considered in the context of online work, its terms, possibilities, and limits connected with it.

Sessions demanded synchronizing four time zones and thirteen participants who included two members of Pracownia Kuratorska (Curatorial Workgroup) — Ada and Weronika. Other two members of PK — Zuzanna and Anna — were in the group of observers who did not actively take part in the workshop. After four sessions we decided to prepare documentation of the Open Studios sessions which finally took the shape of the file you are now looking at.

We were working on the documentation basing on the method proposed by Alexander and Aukje. During their processes they employ collective development of ideas which lets everyone take their own position towards the central problem. In regard to Open Studios' online format for both artists and participants, there appeared a need to transpose offline methods to those which could be used online.

Together with participants Alexander and Aukje created a Miro board "compost" — the place in which selected texts, pictures, articles and words were mixed together and served as a source of content for creating map of associations with the words that were central for the sessions. Compost was the place from which the world is growing. We decided to consider the whole body of materials created by participants (both on Miro and in conversations which took place during sessions) as compost. We organized the world that grew from it in the form of the

spectrum which stretches between "synchronization" and "desynchronization". On the spectrum (pages 6-13) you will find quotations from participants' conversations, as well as from books and movies; scores of exercises developed during sessions and laconic clues. On the top of the first page of the spectrum you can find the legend which explains how different elements are marked. At the bottom of the pages you can see on which quarter of the spectrum you are now. The idea was to organize the material in a nonlinear way which will follow the logic of the thematic scope that revealed itself as a dominant one throughout the sessions. Some connections become clear only post-factum — the example of that is a topic of sound that travels throughout the spectrum. If you decide to check out this path — follow turquoise Miro arrows. If you want to make your own connections — simply ignore them. You will surely realise that the question of efficiency is less visible on the spectrum than synchronization. That state reflects the dynamic of sessions during which this term took a peripheral position.

The spectrum — the core of our documentation — is preceded by a short introduction of participants. You will not see their faces or short bios. Before the first session, Aukje and Alexander requested participants introduce themselves by telling a story of an item which for them is associated with synchronization, and we used images of these items as their avatars. On the spectrum you can recognize authors of ideas and thoughts by miniatures of those avatars.

The spectrum is followed by the timetable created by us after the sessions. In the timetable, you can find information concerning the logistics of Alexander and Aukje's Open Studios', and also see the time zones from which the participants were connecting with the group, as well as the percentage of time which was spent on solving technical problems.

We hope that the documentation which grew from the working process will stimulate further inquiries in the topics of de/synchronization, efficiency and specificity of online work. We would like to express our gratitude to Alexander and Aukje for letting us be part of their Open Studios' workshop, and to participants for sharing their thoughts and ideas with us, both during the sessions and in the process of evaluation conducted by us afterwards.

Pracownia Kuratorska

Zuzanna Berendt, Anna Majewska,
Ada Ruszkiewicz, Weronika Wawryk

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I call my calendar "the agenda". I'm synchronizing with the world by making schedules. **IOANNA**

It reminds me of doing "reruns" (running while watching recordings of the virtual jogging club). Even though I wasn't joining in real time, I still felt that I'm sharing this moment with others. **IRA**

Piano is my tool of communication with both myself and the others. It's an intimate hiding place and a public Zoom stage. **ANASTASIS**

During the pandemic I developed a habit of going for walks with my friend while we were in different places. It was our way of sharing time, even though we couldn't share space. **OLA**

This pin refers to an absurd comment about the cause of the Californian wildfires, made by a politician. I like it because it shows how we can use humour as a tool of political critique. **LILA**

SECRET JEWISH SPACE LASER CORPS

We synchronize with our surroundings by touching them. Yet during the pandemic it goes the other way: we are getting desynchronized, since touching others became dangerous. **RUDA**

Scissors are used to reduce, to cut off parts. During the pandemic they reminded me of a possibility to do less. They're also a sign of inevitable synchronization. When one part of scissors moves, the other one has to follow. **MONIKA**

I use the watering equipment so my plants can imbibe water whenever they want. In that way I can synchronize everyday activities with the needs of my non-human neighbours. **KASIA**

This glass is a memory of time spent with my sister, cutting wood, which made me realize that for performing certain tasks it takes synchronization to get things done. **WERONIKA**

During the pandemic my friend and I created on Zoom a COVID-19 routine of making paper cranes. According to an old story that practice heals sicknesses. **SHEENA**

For me the smartphone is a tool through which I synchronize with the world. In a way, it's a modern version of Ioanna's agenda. **EVANGELOS**

I'm a singer and due to the pandemic I couldn't perform. Yet at this time I developed an interest in the voice technology on Zoom. How do we (de)synchronize through it? **JO**

During a work trip I would often brush teeth together with my colleagues in a shared bathroom. I noticed that when we do it at the same time, we unconsciously synchronize. **ADA**

I have lots of clocks in the house and hardly any of them moves. When every clock has a different time, you can focus on your feeling of time instead of the clock time. **AUKJE**

In Switzerland there are battery charges in kiosks available. You pay a deposit and once you bring it back, you only pay for the energy that you've used. It provides an easy way to continue working. **ALEXANDER**

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synchronization
as
simultaneity

SYNCHRONIZING

"Thinking No-Ones Thoughts"
by Maaike Bleeker

How can an artwork somehow arise when no one has direct access to it? It's like looking at the sky which we all call "blue" and I don't know if your blue is my blue but at one point in life we all understand: Aaah! Blue!

multiple discovery

continuous sunset
Zoom allows us to follow the sun

teleportation

if you want to be in synch,
no one can be late

canon

it's synchronization that get things done

being in synch
means being
in harmony

the inevitability of
synchronization
(scissors)

clock time

conveyour belt

when someone
sneezes in India,
"bless you" comes
from the Netherlands

danger od being
oversynchronized
(going with anything,
a coward attitude)

shared atmosphere
(as an important condition
for shared work)

clapping

jokes

In order for humour to work, you have to be in synch — when the timing is off, it doesn't work.

synchronization
as
a connection

sometimes synchronization is motiveless — like when you meet someone in the bathroom in the morning and brush your teeth together

sharing a starting point

skin as a synchronizing tool

"Diary of Dreams"
by Joanna Rajkowska

listening to a heartbeat is a good way to get in synch with the clock time

common dreaming

listening as synchronizing

silent disco
being in two places in the same time; being with other people, but not very close to them

It only takes one person to produce speech, but it takes the cooperation to produce silence

barking dog synchronizing with the sound of an ambulance

forced synchronization: imposing human time on other species

the beauty of having to be in synch with others to make something work

synchronizing through organizing: remixes by Kutiman

coordination

the importance of rhythm in synchronization

synch requires either intimacy or shared codes
(maybe that's why online performances are awkward at times?)

SYNCHRONIZING COLOURS
PART A

Prepare a mobile device with the Zoom app and gather as many participants as possible. Go out for a walk together and look for a common colour (remember about shades, lightning and textures). A starting point can be green. If you feel lucky, you can try purple. The goal is to synchronize your Zoom view with others' so a single surface of colour is created.

phone as a device through which you synch to the world

dematerialization of synchronization

when you're tracking someone, you're synchronizing with that person (it's not a dialogue but it's still something relational)

most meetings on Zoom now are goal-oriented: is it easier to work together than to get bored together here?

How do you create a feeling of sharing space together while being mediated?

How to redefine intimacy?

How to sing together via Zoom?

one of the ideas for the workspace was to have breakfast together or to spend a day together

being a part of a virtual running club and having a rerun of a run (listening to a collective practice that has already happened)

LET'S GO FOR A WALK

Prepare a mobile device with the Zoom application. Connect with people who do not share the space with you. Leave your place while taking directions from a group of 4 people. Each one can give one direction, until it is their turn again.

while dancing on Zoom everyone seemed to be in sync, exept for myself

the practice of walking together (yet individually) while being in different spaces, setting up common goals (e.g. 10,000 steps) and sharing photos with others

The kaleidoscope is synchronized with itself,
even if for the observer it looks chaotic

glitch

Does making a move just a split second after
the others when you try to synchronize with
them give you more freedom?

synchronization needs space
when we try to synchronize,
we can't be too close to each other

resonance;
what does it mean when
we are not sharing the space
(in terms of music)

Quick now, here, now, always —
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)

"Four Quartets"
by T.S. Eliot

FOLLOW THE LEFT WINDOW

*The general idea of this task
is to mimic gestures of the
person that in the Zoom
Gallery View you see on the
left of your window. Since the
layout of windows is different
for each participant, it's
probably not the person on
your right side that's following
you. Observe the wave of
gestures — who's the trigger?*

The Mobius strip
synchronizes
the future
with the past

Time is always expressed
in numbers — if we can
reorganize numbers,
can we reorganize time?
What are the other systems
of organizing time that are
possible? What will happen
if we reorganize numbers?
Then 100% is not better than
3% anymore.

counting takes a different
amount of time depending
on the language

Complex numbers in mathematics which
don't have an order are often used to help
synchronize things

WORDS IN DURATION

*You will be given a sentence in English. Translate the sentence into your language.
Switch on your camera and your microphone. When you are ready, speak each
word of the sentence within the duration of three seconds. Person who gives
instructions does the counting.*

zoom soundscape with mics on

the feeling of running out of time, that people are waiting for me to finish during online meetings

How can we use the lag time and incorporate this limitation into a piece?

SYNCHRONIZING COLOUR TASK
PART B

So you are on a walk with others and your Zoom is on. From now on, don't focus on finding the previously assigned colour. The goal is still the same — to create a shared colour view, but now you don't know what colour you are looking for. Synchronize with what you see on your screen or decide to change the goal colour and see how others react to it.

it's really important to set the conditions & borders; then suddenly you start to feel free

tool: game structure (agree on terms and then stick to the rules)

Sometimes it means nothing and it's interesting, too. Give yourself permission to go nowhere first.

Following other participant and getting lost

GETTING LOST ON THE INTERNET

Part of the process that precedes building a shared wall of ideas (in case of the workspace: Miro wall).

The group gets the starting point phrase and then each participant individually follow their own searchflow for a certain, previously set amount of time. Once the time passes, the search stops and the results are presented.

for some participants following others' cursors that appeared on a Miro wall helped them to grasp ideas while some hid them in order to be able to concentrate

When I look at the screenshot of our faces, I have the feeling that we have synchronized in being focused

we are synchronized because we have the common goal

Does the unexpected happen
when we are synchronized
or unsynchronized?

People like to think of themselves
as points moving through time.
But I think it's probably the
opposite. We're stationary, and
time passes through us, blowing
like cold wind, stealing our heat,
leaving us chapped and frozen.

"I think of Ending Things"
by Charlie Kaufman

origami tutorials
it's hard to watch tutor's actions and
make an origami at the same time

Does synchronicity or desynchronization
demand more patience?

biological rhythms, menstrual
cycle, migration, reproduction,
infradian rhythms
why don't we think about those
rhythms in the context of work?

Zoom brings people together,
but only because they are in
different spaces

hormonal chaos

working in the same document,
but not at the same time

jetlag as an out-of-the-body experience

*being lost and anxious
due to different time zones
of meeting that are set online*

awkwardness of being early

some people find waiting nice;
they arrive early for trains or planes

Can desynchronizing with the oppressive society be a form of defiance?

Zoom performance is like throwing a message inside a bottle into the ocean, and hoping that someone will find it

weird timescape of podcasts

At one point of an online performance I say "All together now" and that's the moment when I have to take my headphones off. If I don't do that, I won't be able to synchronize because I lose count once the others unmute and start singing

dictionary definition of desynchronization: *not occurring together*

our feeling of time is desynchronized with the clock time

"Time & Free Will" by Henri Bergson

insomnia as the desynchronization of the body

CLOSE YOUR EYES FOR TWO MINUTES

During a meeting on Zoom, collectively close your eyes. Open them when you feel that two minutes passed. Did some of you manage to open their eyes at the same time?

I used to deliberately wear a watch that was running fast so I could be always on time and be synchronized with my schedule. But it never worked, because I knew it was fast.

an image of a melted clock

"That's Why We Broke Up" by Daniel Handler a breakup caused by problems in synchronization of two people

Anxiety caused by being out of schedule
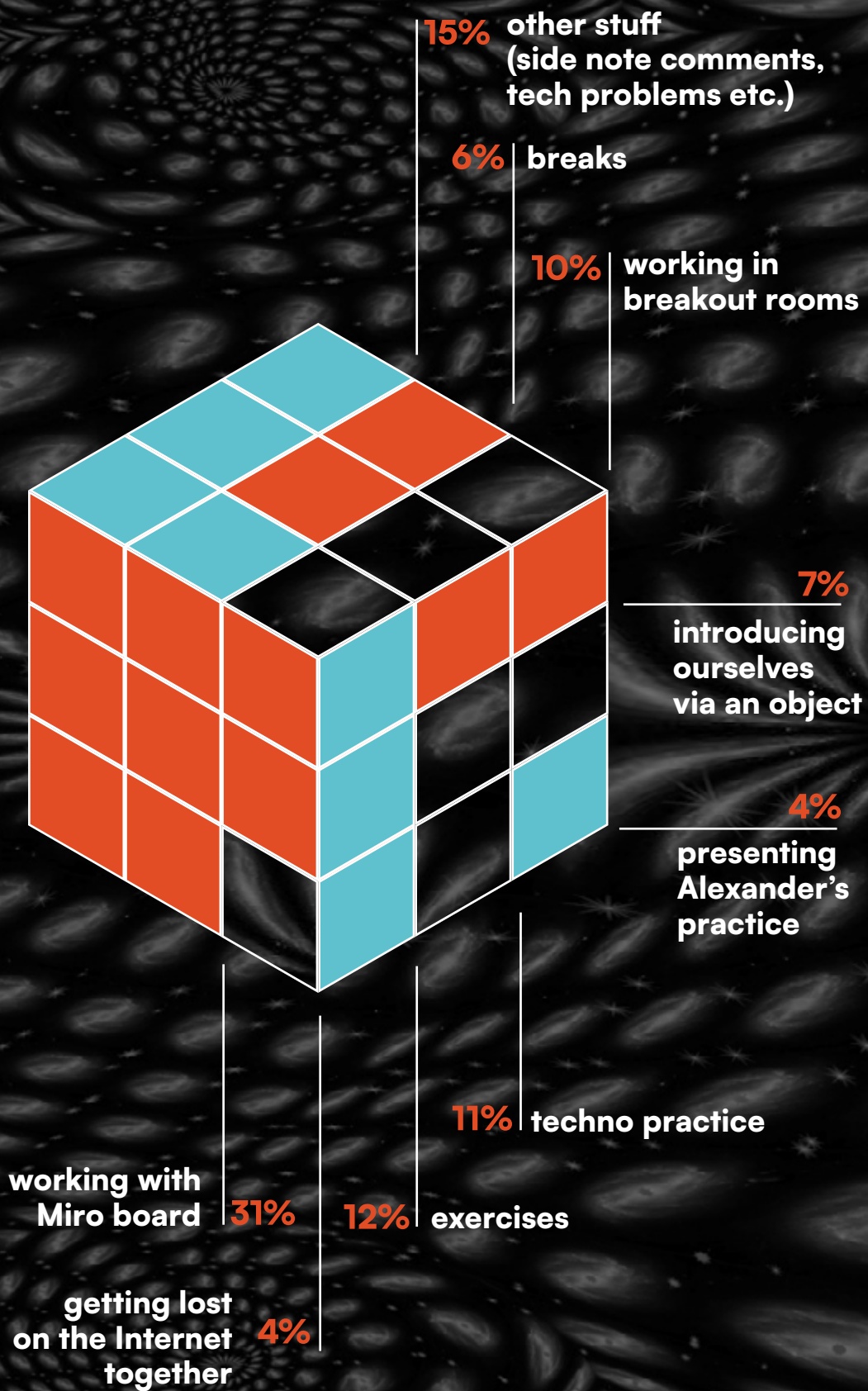
Why did NSYNC break up?

*I'm sitting in front of the window
being terribly bored
I wish I was two dogs
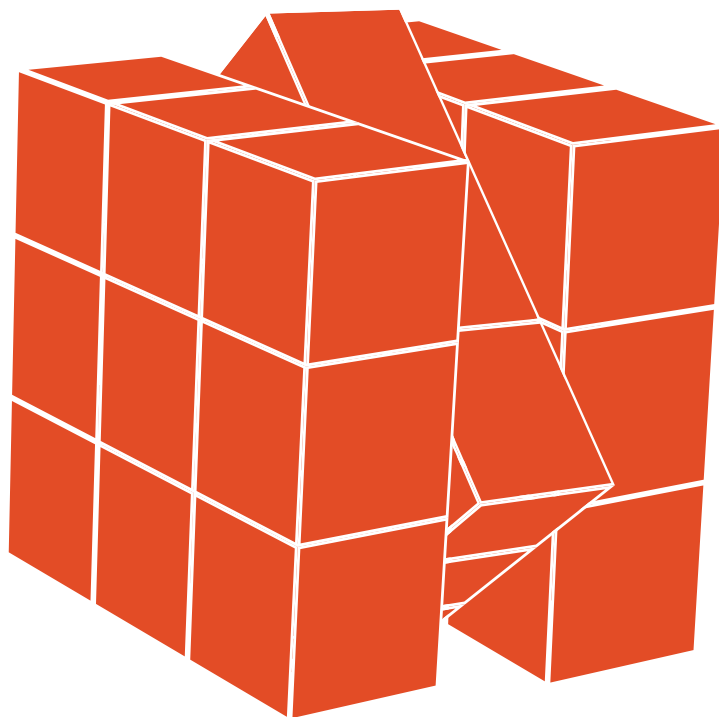so we could play together*

(απο)συντονίζομαι

(de)tune

desynchronized
experience of pandemic:
essential workers and
artists living together
during COVID-19

DESYNCHRONIZING

15% other stuff
(side note comments,
tech problems etc.)

6% breaks

10% working in
breakout rooms

7%
introducing
ourselves
via an object

4%
presenting
Alexander's
practice

11% techno practice

working with
Miro board **31%**   **12%** exercises

getting lost
on the Internet
together   **4%**

7 AM · **1 PM** · **2 PM** · **5 PM**

#1 MEETING

opening
Zoom etiquette
round of names

techno practice

introducing
ourselves
via an object

break

opening our eyes
excercise

presenting
Alexander's
artistic practice
and ideas for the
workspace

summing up

#2 MEETING

breakout rooms
techno practice

talk:
Zoom soundscape

Miro Wall:
introduction

getting lost
on the Internet

presenting research
results: part 1

break

presenting research
results: part 2

homework:
selecting 3 ideas

#3 MEETING

entree

techno practice

moving selected
ideas to compost

worldbuilding
part 1

break

worldbuilding
part 2

worldbuilding
part 3

counting to 100
with eyes closed

introduction to
performative
action

performative action:
breakout rooms

performative action:
presentation of ideas

#4 MEETING

entree

techno practice

breakout rooms:
developing ideas

presenting
final ideas

testing ideas:
#1 counting to
20 in different
languages with
no overlapping

#2 What happened
across the globe
5 secs ago?

#3 Zoom domino

going outside

#4: walk with
directions

#5: synchronizing
to the colour

going back home
wrap up

10 AM · **4 PM** · **5 PM** · **8 PM**

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Pracownia Kuratorska is a collective of five independent curators, producers and researchers who create transdisciplinary projects combining art, activism, science and new humanities. In the years 2018-2020 they worked on the series of artistic-research residencies "Biopolis". Currently, PK co-creates the feminist project "KASSIA. Songs of Care" in cooperation with kainkollektiv and Women's Museum in Istanbul.

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