

/\ Circular 1

What connects /\ sdb events?

1. What does "sdb" mean

Apart from describing the symbols used to create the "/\" logo (slash dash backslash), there are a few other hidden meanings - the main one being the phrase "subtle distortions of basic sensibilities". In this sense, "sdb" stands for the main goals and delimitations of the collective. It would be nice to especially take note of the "subtle" part, which tries to focus attention on the fact that sdb should be inconspicuous, fragile, intangible and especially careful in the long term (trying not to attract unwanted attention, meticulously selecting which themes to address and which to avoid etc.)

1.1. Delimitations towards what? - Towards apathy and [anhedonia](#) inside of us. That means moving against passivity and unconstructive positions of all kinds. In simple terms, we'd like to feel more and in more interesting ways. Every sdb event usually has themes of its own (for example the themes of Psy-High are the topic of the second circular), but the attempt to target apathy and anhedonia is what connects it all together.

1.2. And what's the overarching goal? - To try testing and challenging what we take as granted, to expand our perception and sensitivity, to experience various states of consciousness, move beyond our own limitations and (if possible) do it together with more people at once with responsibility/accountability (the sdb experience suggests that the more people try to do this with some degree of awareness, the stronger this effect is).

2. Verticality and horizontality, partnership culture and intersubjectivity

We spend most of our lives in a horizontal-value reality, which means that our society usually puts emphasis on latitude and quantity, differentiation and propagation... so it's important to experience a rather high number of things in one's life (usually also in some advantageous sequence and manner). This horizontal approach to life is typical for cultures that live around wide plains or at the edge of some large body of water. When this approach goes wrong, it threatens to change all of reality into just a series of status symbols, activities, products, services and opinions, divided according to their utility and frequency.

In order to avoid this horizontal emptying of the world, it's nice to occasionally find the time to remind ourselves about the inverse/vertical approach (and if possible combine them in smart ways). This means that it's also important to experience a fewer number of things in deeper ways, investing every detail with meaning and story. To try interconnecting the world and giving it a common axis. The dangerous side of this approach is that it tends to emphasize some things to the extreme (freezing in a worldview and creating dogma). Vertical value systems are usually found in cultures that live around significant natural points (mountains, forests) and it invests value based on quality (the intensity and actuality of experience, rather than its utility and frequency). One can see it as a kind of idealism and a "return of magic" as an active aspiration for a "coherent/continuous authenticity/naturalness" ("as above, so below" and so on). In modern contexts, this usually means challenging the problem of the urban wasteland, be it the atmosphere of industrialisation or undifferentiated gentrification (or even the social network-infested social space).

The sdb premise is that the human species is going through a technosocial and psychospiritual crisis. We're living in an era of reality shifts - collapse or the Singularity? Or something in between? We don't even know how to start studying what's going on... Not to mention knowing how to define if all of this is heading towards an increase/decrease in the quantity/quality of life on the planet... But whatever is going on around us, apathy and anhedonia will always be big issues, because they take away our capability to be conscious

participants in these processes. Until we try to solve the smaller and more personal problems, these big social challenges will stay more or less in the background - as a reminder of why we should do something and where it's all headed in the long run.

At sdb's events, there's an ongoing project that aims at reducing the distinctions between attendee/performer/organizer, shaping the venue into an important and interesting part of the proceedings, as well as helping people to try out the art of "art perception" (an active audience as a part of the work, actively trying to overcome the inertia of taste and the limits of their previous experiences and perception models). Every participant should think hard (and decide) what participation means (and configure their approach towards reality accordingly). Some people decide to spend their time at the event/zone in creative endeavors, others decide to offer help with the programme/function of the zone and others just decide to really enjoy their stay while taking care to take everything in with higher focus and intense reflex... At first glance (and from the horizontal worldview), we're basically doing art-therapy aimed at apathy and anhedonia (a kind of damage control for our current era)... From a different point of view (vertical), we're trying to jumpstart a space for [partnership culture](#) (the reverse of [dominator culture](#)), which is an organization/cooperation principle that tries to include and respect everyone as much as possible. This creates a space of [intersubjectivity](#), which means a collective and concentrated spacetime/experience outside of everyday perceptions of objects and subjects. According to the Wiki, "In its weakest sense, intersubjectivity refers to agreement. There is intersubjectivity between people if they agree on a given set of meanings or a definition of the situation."

3. Temporary Autonomous Zone

Please read at least the basic T.A.Z. text by Hakim Bey. It's a short one. Here's a link to the sdb's Pile, where you'll find other interesting stuff as well, so click it right away (<http://pile.sdb's.cz/> just please don't spread the link around). There's also a nice [audio version](#) on YT and we're trying to always keep a few printed copies around as well.

3.1. Preparing for the unknown - There's weird stuff happening in the zone and the big news is that we can prepare for them in order to get as much out of it as possible. Unfortunately, most people (even the most enthusiastic and creative ones among us) usually always underestimate this aspect and arrive without adequate preparations (which means they don't experience nearly as much as they could have with proper prep). Preparation in this sense can mean a lot of things: From an approach that says "I'll just randomly visit this weird event I know nothing about" or "I want to experience self-reliance" and "I want to experience a few days with a clear and open head" all the way to "It's an expedition into a different reality". In case some people really do take this thing seriously, the event/zone should be able to offer a kind of ritual (based on everything from [chaos magick](#) to personal mythopoetic fancy) or performance-passage ([psychopomp](#) or symbolic gestures). Such a threshold between "the normal" and "the zone" comes handy not only because of the need for cultural detox and various forms of personal challenge/inspiration/catharsis, but it can also provide rather firm ground for the subjective approach of each participant to come into contact with the intersubjective approach of sdb's (the realization that the event = the zone). In simpler terms, even a completely random and unknowing attendee should be understood as someone who has their own relevant/ritual approach to what's going on.

3.2 Chaos - What is chaos and complexity and how can we work with them as organizers/artists? Modern society doesn't really take chaos into account and things like fractals and dynamic processes are terms that we encounter only in specialized disciplines or other fringes and undergrounds. Given the speed of how everything around us is changing (and how this process itself is accelerating all the time), attempts to handle chaos seem to be a rather important activity these days (more about this in section 4).

3.3 The right of self-definition - "Every able human being can do whatever he/she wants, as long as they don't endanger or restrict others," is a great baseline, but what does it mean without real opportunity? The temporary autonomous zone allows us to (in a controlled and careful manner) experience some of this "right of self-definition" with our own bodyminds. In order for such experiments to work and make as much sense as possible, it's important to make it accessible to almost anybody... It's also important to avoid ideology (the risk of forcing concepts too heavily) as well as asceticism (the risk of avoiding people too much).

3.4 Staying safe and coming back - Whatever we do, there will always be a number of attendees that just pass through the zone without any participation whatsoever... Given what sdb's is trying to achieve, there's always an ever-increasing risk of the tragic moment when some tourist/civilian in the zone says "It's all nice and cute, but it's not really my kind of event". In order to activate people from their default passive attitudes (regardless of their previous experiences and preparations), it's not enough to have awesome bands and other programme - we should also try offering opportunities for voluntary participatory connection (as well as mechanisms of voluntary disconnection).

4. Watch out for the "temporary" in temporary autonomous zone (the topic of liminality)

It would be best for every attendee at a sdb's event to feel that they're reaching some kind of shift in their life and reality perception. Because we're doing "distortion" that's supposed to be "subtle", we don't have to push it towards some 180 degree turns, but it's important to realize that unless it somehow touches people on a deeper level, there's no reason to do any of this. The more self-change happens to people who are active participants in it themselves (the more opportunities we offer for people to be aware of what's happening and be a part of their own change), the better. Usually, big shifts in our lives happen rather irregularly and without any warning, but there is one approach that we can use to make them more visible and workable: It's called liminality (from the word limit - threshold/border). In a liminal moment, it's important to a) realize that I'm moving from one state to another and b) try to somehow work with this realization. At the same time, it's about showing people their own limits and helping them specify their "existential coordinates" (where and when am I? What's going on? Who's around me? and so on). And as is probably already clear given the content of the previous paragraphs in this Circular, it's also important to note that the whole human species seems to be going through a liminality at the moment (towards collapse/Singularity/no idea what).

The temporary state of everything also opens up the questions of expiration, cessation, ending, forgetting, futility and death - which are on the one hand some of the strongest ideas in the fight against apathy and anhedonia, but on the other hand they're also the main reasons why people develop apathy and anhedonia (botched nihilism/relativism/existencialism/naturalism etc.).

"Temporary", at this moment (2017) also means ending the Psy-High cycle, because the fourth year will address the themes of fire (alchemically) and Prometheanism (mythopoetically), which means we're in for a very juicy liminality indeed...

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhizome_\(philosophy\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhizome_(philosophy))

<http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/socialperception14.pdf>

https://www.academia.edu/1964764/Horizontal_and_vertical_dimensions_of_individualism_and_collectivism_A_theoretical_and_measurement_refinement