Every new project is like a game. You need some rules to play it – a game without rules is chaos. You need partners – even in a computer game you do not play just by yourself, but against the machine. You need joy – playing without having fun makes no sense.

This time, the initial setting of the game was a bit more complicated than usual: it had to happen on Venice International University's campus on the island of San Servolo, inside the physical limit of the island's walls; it had to follow the logic of the academic institution; the place was familiar somewhat, but most of the actors have been total strangers to us before we started setting up the images… Last but not least, everything had to happen fast – really fast.

The challenge was there, and a new game had to be invented.

The island has had many faces in the past – let's add another one for a while, mix the layers of the past, imagine a "virtual San Servolo" and map it over the area surrounded by the island's brick walls… The academic institution has its own structure, complex and precise – let's mix it up as well, and try to reinvent it from scratch.

The limits are there, and what can you do within them? The Venice "water syndrome" comes into play: a mixture of discipline and chaos. You can enjoy the endlessly changing pattern of the waves in the lagoon, but every drop is following the logic of the underlying currents; watching the sunset from the pier sends your mind over the horizon, but the timetable of the vaporetto sets up the rhythm of your day. You put yourself together, and start the game.

It's been an extremely intensive week – or was it even less than that? Selecting locations around the island, spending the nights discussing the possible settings for each picture, collecting all the props and arranging the scenes – the whirlpool of the game took over everything else. Sometimes, when beginning to shoot one side of the panorama, we didn't really know how its other side was going to end – but the underlying logic of the entire game kept everything in place.

Displacement: that's been the basic rule of the game. Swapping places moved the situations not only in space – each new location transferred the participants to another level, into the space of the game. The actors were free to reenact their everyday activity in a different way, to play their own selves in an ideal classicist world where the grass is green, the sun is shining, and every gesture is full of meaning.

It's been a give-and-take process, as the game worked both ways – we offered the stage and the setting, and the actors offered their own interpretations of the roles. Improvising together was the best part of it – and we are so grateful to all the students, teachers, researchers and staff members who joined in and had fun together. For the two of us, VIU Life is one of the funniest projects we've done till now – and if some of this playful mood, some of the joy we all had in the process of making it has come back from the space of the game to the real life of the University, and stayed there, that will make the picture complete…

Boris Missirkov, Georgi Bogdanov