

Kunsthal Aarhus – Call for Exhibitions 2015

Curator:

Name:
Kuba Szreder

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0048501371631

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Stalowa 47 / 10

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03-425 Warsaw

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957-069-71-90

Title of the Call:
CALL FOR UDESTILLINGSFORSLAG 2015: COLLECTIVE MAKING

Exhibition / Project

Title:
The Competences

Name(s) of exhibitors:
Jesper Alvaer and Isabela Grosseová

Short description of the project (5 lines):
One exhibition in 4 successive interventions:
Our exhibition approaches the question of art-related collaboration by transgressing and expanding the notion of artistic competence. The show addresses capacities to make and imagine while avoiding the typical regimes of object-hood and representation.

Appendices:
Project description
CV of curator and artists
Documentation of artists work, including article
Budget

The Competences

One exhibition in 4 successive interventions

A proposal by Jesper Alvaer and Isabela Grosseová

With curatorial support of Kuba Szreder

Our exhibition approaches the question of art-related collaboration by transgressing and expanding the notion of artistic competence. The show addresses capacities to make and imagine while avoiding the typical regimes of object-hood and representation. Instead of simply replicating the division between an artist and an audience, either under guise of relational aesthetics or in form of traditional viewership, our intervention aims at a radical critique of the difference of competences underpinning both of these positions.

We propose to transform rituals inherent in the traditional form of an exhibition in order to constitute a paradoxical space, where our visitors are welcome to shift between being a creative maker and a reflective viewer of artistic objects. We want a visitor to become neither a producer nor a consumer of aesthetical experience. Instead, we introduce our visitors to practically experience two fundamental stances - of creating and of contemplating - during the same visit in the Kunsthall Aarhus. We design a situation, which forces a visitor to experience his/her own resonance to the material reality and imaginary projections, both characteristic for aesthetical experience. We redirect the investments inherent in aesthetic attention, normally induced by an exhibition, to reflectively combine different modes of experience, inviting our visitors to contemplate the self-generated artistic contents, presented back to them in an aura of a discrete art object.

Thus, we propose to undermine both spatial (space of exhibiting versus space of practice) and occupational (makers versus viewers) divisions still characteristic for the art world. However, we are not interested in simply reiterating the notion of participation, which only seemingly activates a viewer as a participant, but does not question more fundamental difference between an author and an executor of an artistic script. We want a visitor to experience himself as neither a viewer nor a participant in some sort of art performance, in which our competence would be a primary object of consumption. Instead, we step back and create an opportunity for a visitor to enter into an active dialogue with his/her own competences as a maker and a viewer of art. And in order to create conditions for this unusual experience to emerge we very carefully orchestrate the process of visiting the Kunsthall.

Considering a more general socio-economic context of our work, one might say that in the micro-scale of an exhibition, we enact the conflation of consumption and production, a development characteristic for post-Fordist economy. However, the contemporary capitalism, in its drive for profit, both eradicates creative imagination and turns creativity into a commodity. Our intervention, going against these developments, is a slightly idealistic attempt to rejuvenate innate human capacities of making and contemplating. We want to occupy cracks opened by an aesthetical experience, instead of trying to commodify them.

Our project continues both artists' and curator's practical and theoretical interest in the problems of participation, division of artistic labor and in the notion of competence. Our current proposal reflectively expands on the process initiated by the artists (Jesper Alvaer and Isabela Grosseová) during their project 'Competence', commissioned by Photograph Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic, in 2015. The iteration of project at Kunsthall Aarhus will additionally hone the methods already tested in Prague and will creatively adjust previous experiments to the Aarhus context in order to develop a genuine and original contribution to Kunsthall's program.

Architecture

Our proposed exhibition plan should be considered as just an initial proposal, prone to further amendments, resulting from site visits and discussions with curatorial staff of the institution. Our aim is to enable visitors to individually experience the exhibition rooms and their particular contents. The vastness of Kunsthall's space will evoke an uncanny experience of loneliness, which will enable more thorough exploration of one's own competences. In order to do so we will need to build blends and create a footpath that will facilitate the movement of visitors, while preventing random interactions with other visitors, enabling everyone to fully experience scripted encounters on a singular basis.

Details

Every visitor experiences the visit in Kunsthall on him/herself. We estimate that it will be possible to let visitors enter into the space every ten minutes, what would create a capacity of about six visitors per hour. In case of larger interest, prior bookings will be advised. Every visitor needs to follow every stage of an exhibition in a prescribed order. In other words, in someone wants to get to the room 4, s/he needs to first go through rooms 1,2,3. It is possible to step back at every stage of the exhibition and do not go further. Every stage unfolds in another room of the Kunsthall. On every stage, visitors will go through different experiences, or asked to do small tasks, or enter into dialogues with others.

Stage 1 / Drawing

Visitors make a drawing of their hand. The visitor accepts the challenge, receive paper and pencil and sit down on one of the drawing tables available.

Unless the drawing is a 10 seconds outline of the fingers, in other words, a genuine attempt, it will be accepted and the person can be lead into the second stage of the exhibition.

A special built construction enable interactions between staff and visitor.

Aim:

This first encounter breaks down the "going to see an exhibition modus" and prepare the visitor for the following galleries, tuning the visitor as content of the exhibition as such. Was the person accustomed to draw? How was this translation of an object in 3D (hand) into a 2D representation on paper? These are just some possible articulations of unnamed but already sensitized experiences. A photograph is made while the person is having their drawing assessed in terms of resemblance between the drawing and the hand.

Stage 2 / Stories

The second stage looks more like a traditional exhibition to most visitors. 5 framed photographs hang on the walls. The images appear at first abstract, but these images are microscopic photographs of drawing on paper; how the graphite literally has been inscribed into the paper. Each of the images have a set of headphones. The visitors listen to the sound in the headphones. In no particular order, three short stories about 1-2 minutes each.

Aim:

Each story respectively introduces a theme on competence: One theme absorbs experience done in the first room, with attention to tracing, inscribing, copying, resemblance etc. Another story explore details and scale resonating with the microscopic photographs. Risk and processes leading to change of perspective is another theme, while capacity to imagine is introduced, in particular as a preparation for stage 3.

Stage 3 / Conversation

When the visitor enters the third gallery, it may seem kind of empty, apart from a normal chair. A polite voice from behind the blends (screen), will invite the visitor to have a seat, establishing contact and explain that a conversation will take place.

Aim:

The visitor engage in a conversation with the object to establish an imaginary shared environment, using as a point of departure the drawing experience in stage 1. The visitor will be surprised that she or he can in such an easy manner, develop and co-author with a person behind the screen an imaginary concrete conversation that is unscripted and open ended. After 5-10 minutes, the person behind the screen will kindly draw their attention, back to the gallery and explain the visitor how to proceed to the next and final stage of the exhibition.

Stage 4 / Image

The visitor will go to this last section of the exhibition and in this gallery there is only one single mounted frame with an image. The visitor approach the picture and realize that this is a photograph of their own drawing from the first stage, taken while their arm was put into the hole, for the staff to see if the drawing resembles the real hand. The visitor understand that the staff photographed their hand and arm with their drawing, printed it out and installed it while the person was spending time in the second or third stage.

Aim:

The visitors recall the experience in the other previous galleries, the drawing, stories and conversation. Understanding that time invested at each stage enabled sensitivities to do certain set of competences. Filled with this combination of experiences, resonating in this last and personal image, the visitor leaves the exhibition. Each visitor thus observe only their own image.

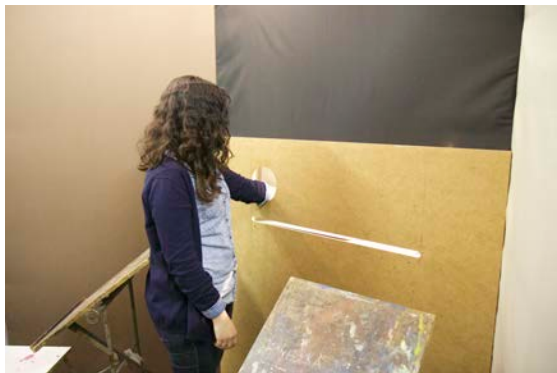
Reflective programme

For the summer 2015, we would like to propose a modest program of talks, which could be either organized around the opening of the exhibition or near the ending of the exhibition. We would like to invite prof. John Robert (Wolverhampton), a renowned Marxist theoretician of skill and deskilling in art; Stephen Wright (Paris), a prolific writer on the notion of usership; dr Marsha Bradfield (London), who in her work explores notions of dialogue and collaboration; Renee Ridgway (Amsterdam), who with her platform N.E.W.S expands notions of authorship, and dr Joe Graham (Loughborough), who discusses relationship between drawing and experience from the position of a practice-based phenomenologist.

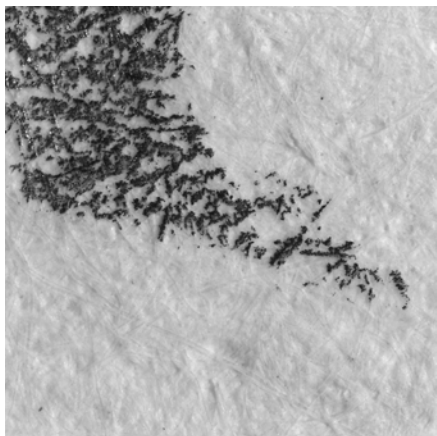
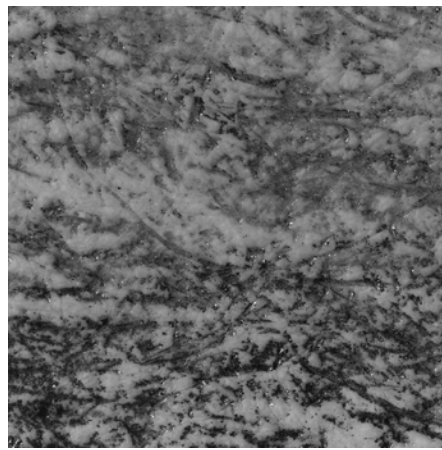
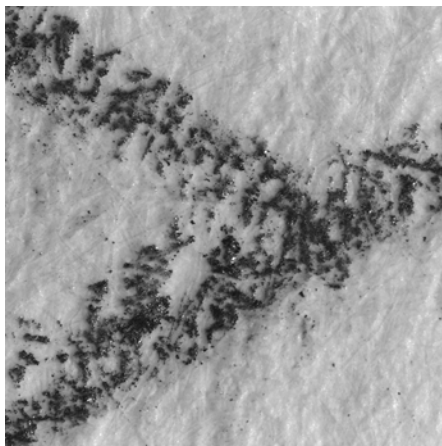
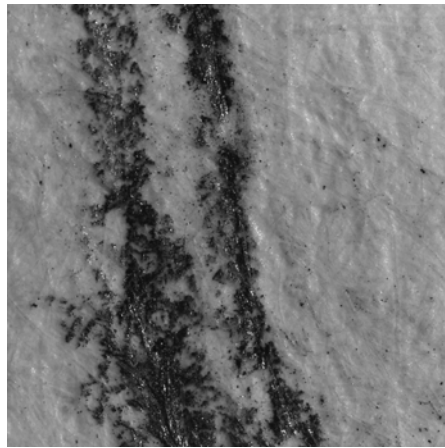
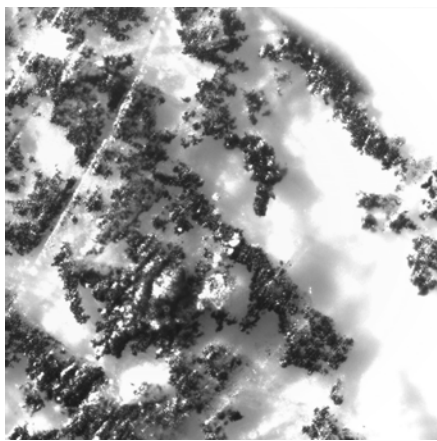
We would like to summarize a project by releasing a reflective catalogue, intersecting various contributions of different groups of participants in the project (visitors, initiators, theoreticians, partners). We will consider this catalogue as further exploration of the basic notion of 'competence', a self-reflective continuation of our intervention in the notions of authorship by means of publishing. We plan to link the editorial process to a series of events that will be organized in KHiO (in Oslo, where Jesper Alvaer is currently a PhD candidate). We will look for additional resources for public program, catalogue and further events by applying for artistic research funds in Norway.

Documentation of work / Images from project 'Competence', commissioned by Photograph Gallery in Prague, Czech Republic, in 2015.

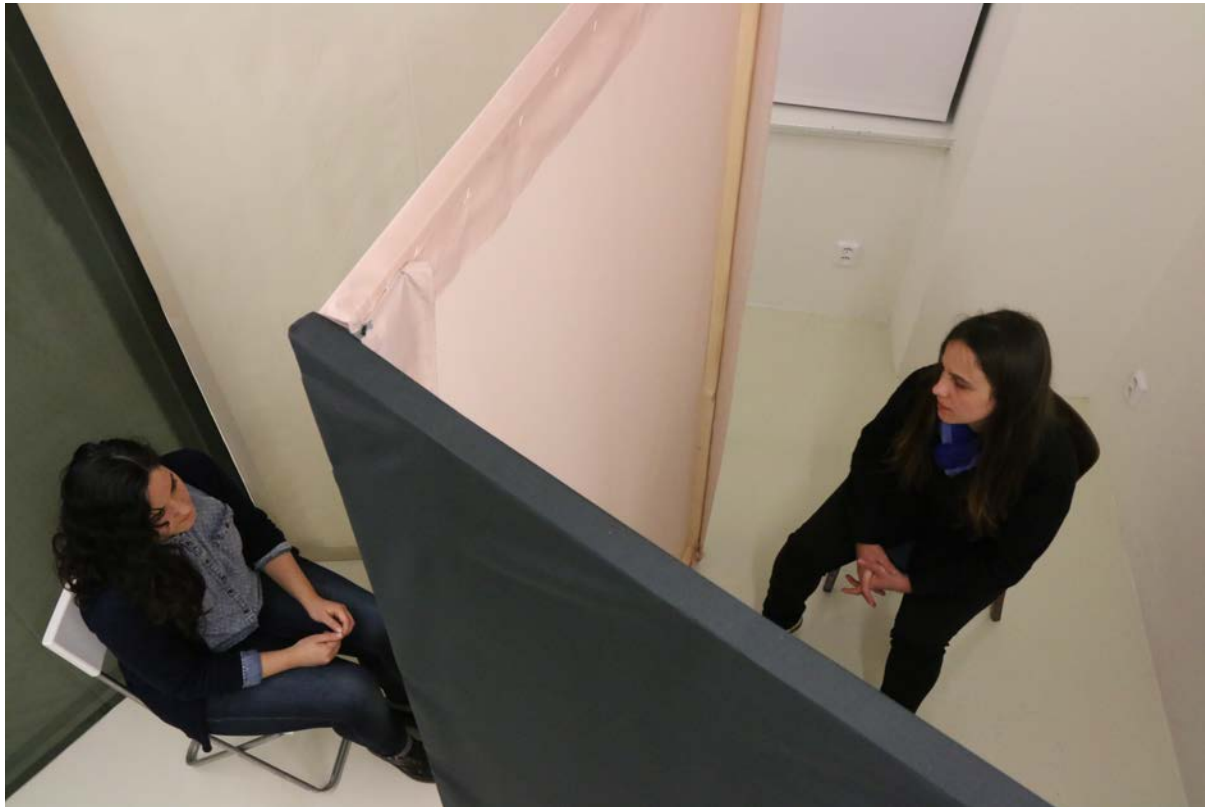
Stage 1 / Drawing



Stage 2 / Stories



Stage 3 / Conversation



Stage 4 / Image



Kuba (Jakub) Szreder, PhD

Curriculum Vitae

Born: 26.12.1977 in Poland

Marital status: Single

Education:

2015 received PhD from Loughborough University School of the Arts for practice-based dissertation under title *Politicising 'independent' curatorial practice under neoliberalism: critical responses to the structural pressures of project-making*

2003 received Master of Arts from Jagiellonian University, Department of Sociology for dissertation *Comparative analysis of the theories of culture of Pierre Bourdieu and Paul Riceour*

1996 passed A-levels exams at 3rd Lyceum in Gdańsk

Guest Lectures, Seminars, Moderations, Conferences and Papers at:

Contemporary Museum in Wrocław, CCA Bunkier Sztuki in Kraków, CCA Kronika in Bytom, CCA Zamek Ujazdowski in Warsaw, CCA in Wrocław, Chelsea College of Art in London, Courtauld Institute of Art, HMKV in Dortmund, House of Artists in Oslo, Istanbul Biennial, KHiO in Oslo, Kunsthaus Kreuzberg in Berlin, Konstfack in Stockholm, Kunstverein in Wolfsburg, Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw, National Museum for Art, Architecture and Design in Oslo, Open Forum Graz, ProQM in Berlin, Royal Institute of Art in Stockholm, Royal College of Art in London, RUM46 in Aarhus, Steirischer Herbst Festival in Graz, Wyspa Institute of Art in Gdańsk, University of Essex, University of Plymouth, Ural Biennial, Zachęta Art Gallery in Warsaw, ZHDK in Zurich

Major Curatorial Projects and Research Programmes

2015 part of artistic and curatorial team of *#Transacting*, realized with Critical Practice and Chelsea College of Art and Design in London

2012-2014 director (with Jan Sowa and Michał Kozłowski) of research program *On division and conditions of labour in Polish field of visual arts*, realized in the framework of Free/Slow University of Warsaw

2014 curator of public program of festival Warsaw Under Construction, organized by Museum of Contemporary Art in Warsaw

2014 collaborator on Martha Rosler's project *The Guide for the Perplexed*, commissioned by CCA Zamek Ujazdowski in Warsaw

2013 curator of *Virtual Economic Zone*, commissioned by Alternativa Festival in Gdańsk

2012 part of curatorial team of performative research program *Spaces and Values*, realized with Critical Practice and Chelsea College of Art and Design in London

2012 part of artistic team of Critical Practice realizing *P2P Exchange*, commissioned by Steirischer Herbst Festival in Graz

2011 curator of mobile urban intervention (with Stach Ruksza) *RUMB*, commissioned by Artboom Festival in Kraków

2011 curator of research programme and conference *Labour of the Multitudes? On political economy of social creativity* (together with Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski), realized in the framework of Free/Slow University of Warsaw

2010 curator of research programme and summit *Cultural industries and factories of knowledge: analysis and resistance* (together with Jan Sowa and Bogna Świątkowska), realized in the framework of Free/Slow University of Warsaw

2010 curator (with Markus Bader, Oliver Baurhenn, Raluca Voinea) of mobile unit and public intervention *the KNOT*, realized in Berlin, Bucharest and Warsaw, realized by raumlabor_berlin and e.cart Bucharest, commissioned by Goethe Institute and Polish Institute

2010 member of artistic and curatorial team of Critical Practice realizing public summit *Parade. Modes of Assembly and Forms of Address*, organized by Chelsea College of Art and Design in London

2009 curator of the research program *Culture! Not profit*, realized in the framework of Free/Slow University of Warsaw

2009 curator of the public art program *Money for Nothing*, commissioned by In Situ Foundation in Warsaw

2009 curator of public intervention *Disappearing* (with Bogna Świątkowska), commissioned by Fundacja Bęc Zmiana in Warsaw

2008 curator of the public art program and conference *About fences, gated communities and other more or less visible barriers*, commissioned by In Situ Foundation in Warsaw

2007 curator of the conference *Opening spaces, locating public art*, commissioned by In Situ Foundation in Warsaw

2006 - 2007 (together with Martin Kaltwasser) curator of research program, exhibitions, conferences and interventions in urban space *Industrial town futurism. 100 years anniversary of Wolfsburg and Nowa Huta*, commissioned by Kunstverein Wolfsburg and Theatre Łąźnia in Nowa Huta

2002 - 2007 part of curatorial and organizational team of electronic music festival Unsound in Kraków

2001 - 2005 producer of artistic projects at Goethe Institute in Kraków

Edited Books, Catalogues and Readers

Art field as Social Factory. On Conditions and Division of Labour in the Polish Field of Visual Arts (ed. with Michał Kozłowski and Jan Sowa), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Warszawa 2015

Joy Forever. Political Economy of Social Creativity, (ed. with Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana and MayFly Books, Warszawa, London 2014

Wieczna Radość. Ekonomia Polityczna Społecznej Kreatywności (ed. with Michał Kozłowski, Agnieszka Kurant, Jan Sowa, Krystian Szadkowski), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Warszawa 2011

The KNOT. Mobile unit for urban space exploration and public intervention (red. z Oliver Baurhenn, Markus Bader and Raluca Voinea), Jovis, Berlin, 2011

Parade. Public Modes of Assembly and Forms of Address (ed. as part of Critical Practice), CWC, London 2011

Disappearing. Users Manual (ed. with Katarzyna Chmielewska and Mateusz Kwaterko), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Warszawa 2009

Culture, not profit. Readings for Artworkers (ed. with Katarzyna Chmielewska and Tomasz Żukowski), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, Warszawa 2009

Industrial Town Futurism (ed. with Martin Kaltwasser and Ewa Majewska), Ha!art Corporation, Revolver Verlag, Kraków 2007

Selected Texts in English

Interrupting Economy [in:] Truth is Concrete. A Handbook for Artistic Strategies in Real Politics (ed. Florian Malzacher), Sternberg Press, Berlin 2014

Berlin Wire (together with Marsha Bradfield), [in:] Art Leaks Gazette, nr 1 / 2013

Cruel Economy of Authorship [in:] Undoing property (ed. Marysia Lewandowska and Laurel Ptak), Sternberg Press, Berlin 2013

Why are independent curators dependent [in:] Ural Biennale Reader, Ekaterinburg 2012

Subjective Bus Line [in:] Grzegorz Klaman - monograph, Instytut Sztuki Wyspa, 2010

Lee Lozano [in:] Disappearing. Users Manual (ed. by Katarzyna Chmielewska, Mateusz Kwaterko, Kuba Szreder), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, 2009

Manifesto of Committee for Radical Transformation of Culture [reprinted in:] Variant nr 37 /
2009

Commjnicate # 1 of Free/Slow University of Warsaw about the politics of Polish Culture [in:]
European Cultural Policies 2015 (Polish edition), Fundacja Bęc Zmiana, 2009

CV Isabela Grosseová

1976 - CZ

Lives and works in Oslo and Prague

Education:

2010 - 2011 HISK / Higher Institute for Fine Arts, Gent (BE)

1994 - 2001 BA and MA, Academy of Fine Arts in Prague (CZ)

Working experience:

2001 - 2005 AP Atelier, Ing. Arch. Josef Pleskot, Prague (CZ)

2005 Internship - Acconci Studio NYC (US)

2005 Artist Assistant, Sol LeWitt Studio, New York (US)

Individual exhibitions:

2014 *Competence* - Gallery Fotograf, Prague (CZ)

2011 *The belly of an Architect* - Kostka Meet factory (CZ)

2010 *Localizing ethics: Advice from the elders* - Galerie ve Sklepe, Prague (CZ)

2009 *Bootleg version of 11th International Istanbul Biennial* - Benzinka Slany (CZ)

2008 *Titled* - Meet Factory Prague (CZ)

2007 *Figure and Ground* - Bunkier Sztuki Contemporary Art Gallery Krakow (PL)

2006 *Transkultura: akt 1* - Atrium, Moravian gallery Brno (CZ)

2006 *Habitable Picture / Horizontal Remake* - BSC (CN)

2003 *Habitable Statues* - Art in General New York (USA)

2002 *Habitable Pictures* - Gallery Caesar Olomouc (CZ)

2002 *Habitable Pictures* - Foundation for Contemporary Art Prague (CZ)

Group exhibitions (selection):

2013 *ACTIVUM* - Kunstnerforbundet Oslo (NO)

Sarai Reader 09 : The Exhibition - Devi art foundation New Delhi (IN)

Virtual Economic Zone - The Wyspa Institute of Art Gdansk (PL)

2012 *The Islands of Resistance, Between the First and Second Modernity 1985 – 2012*

- The National Gallery in Prague (CZ)

Studio Бања Лука (pronounced Banja Luka) - TRANZITDISPLAY Prague (CZ)

2011 *The Visitor* - HISK Ghent (BE)

Together at last - Gallery of Emil Filla in Ústí nad Labem (CZ)

How to Begin from the Beginning - Futura Prague (CZ)

2010 *Manifesta 8 / Parallel events* - Murcia (SP)

Economics of unwanted amity - Karlin Studios Prague (CZ)

Altruism - Bonner Kunstverein Bonn (DE)

Formats of transformation - MUSA Museum auf Ahruf Vienna (AU)

2009 *Formats of transformation* - House of Arts Brno (CZ)

2008 *ITCA International Triennial of Fine Arts* - National Gallery in Prague (CZ)

Lights on - Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art Oslo (NO)

2007 *Gross Domestic Product* - City gallery Prague (CZ)

2006 *Salon of Fine Art* - Zlín (CZ)

2005 *Systems you have seen* - Architekturforum Linz (AU)

Praguebiennale 2 - Definition of the Everyday Prague (CZ)

2004 *Systems you have seen* - National Gallery in Prague (CZ)

Gemine Muse - Racconigi castle Turin (IT)

Finalists Chaluppecký Award - House of Arts Brno (CZ)

- 2003 *Youngest* - National Gallery in Prague (CZ)
Salon of Fine Art - Zlín (CZ)
2002 *Art Primeur* - Gallery CBK Dordrecht (NL)
Laboratory of contemporary Fine Arts - National Gallery in Prague (CZ)

Grants/Support:

- 2004, 2005, 2006 Grant, Foundation and Center for Contemporary Arts - Prague
2005, 2006 Grant, Linhart Foundation

Residencies:

- 2011 Tranzit - residency Wien Museumsquartier, quartier 21 (AT)
2010 Ny-Alesund Spitsbergen (NO)
2008 Egon Schiele Art Centrum Český Krumlov (CZ)
2006 Academy of Fine Arts La Esmeralda INBA México D.F. (MX)
2006 Red Gate Gallery Beijing (CN)
2006 VSC Johnson Vermont (US)
2005 SIM Reykjavik (IS)
2003 Art in General NYC (US)

Works in Collection:

National Gallery in Prague (CZ)

Texts:

- Umění spolupráce (Art of Collaboration)*, Jan Zálešák, ISBN: 978-80-87108-26-0, 2011
Is all that reality or fiction?, Eva Janáčková, Kulturní magazín UNI 8/2008
On this journey I am at home, Terezie Nekvindová, Stavba 2008
Transkultura: akt 1, a Project of J. Alvaer and I. Grosseova, Tomáš Vaněk, Umělec 1/2007
J. Alvaer & I. Grosseova, Transkultura: akt 1, Pavel Ryška, Flash Art (Cz. and Sl. ed.) 3-4/2006-2007
Salon of Fine Art, Tomáš Pospiszył, exhibition catalogue, 2006
Art of the space and space of the art, Michal Janata, era 21, 2/2005
Finalists of the J. Chalupěcký Award 2004, exhibition catalogue, Brno, ČR 2004
Schewitz, Prochaska, Gyomorey, exhibition catalogue, Linz, AT, 2004
Isabela Grosseova, Obytné umění, Lenka Lindaurová, Art & Antiques, 9/2004
Autumn Plot, David Kulhánek, exhibition catalogue, Torino, IT, 2004
Habitable Statues, Gregory Volk, New York City, USA 2003
Salon of Fine Art, Ilona Víchová, exhibition catalogue, 2003
About Minimalism with minimum of means, Rostislav Koryčánek, Architekt 7/2002
Art Primeur, Radek Váňa, exhibition catalogue, 2002
Habitable Pictures, Jiří Valoch, exhibition catalogue, Gallery Caesar, Olomouc, ČR, 2001
Isabela Grosseová shows also new problems, Lukáš Beran, MF Dnes, 17/1/2002
Paintings you can also live in, Jitka Motková, Olomoucký den 10/1/2002
Paintings to live and think through, Radek Váňa, Umělec 4/2001
Paintings you can live in, Radek Váňa, Lidové noviny 17/10/2001
Dreams about It, artist book, 1996

Jesper James Alvær / CV (N)

EMPLOYMENT:

2013-2016: Research Fellow, The Academy of Fine Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

2010:2012: Head of the MA Programme, The Academy of Fine Art, Oslo National Academy of the Arts

EDUCATION:

2012-2014: European Graduate School EGS (CAGS)

2008-2009: University of Oslo, Development Studies

1997-2004: AVU / Academy of Fine Arts Prague (MFA)

2002-2003: Center for Contemporary Art - CCA Kitakyushu

2000-2001: Cooper Union School of Art, New York

1995-1996: Ecole Paul Brousse, Montpellier

1991-1993: Universitetet of Oslo, Idehistorie

Individual exhibitions:

2015: Fotograf Gallery, Prague. Curator: J. Ptacek

2014: Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo. Curator: M. Stjernstedt

2011: 0047, Oslo. Space Station/Residence. Curator: S. Martens

2009: Galerie Jeleni, Prague. Curator: D. Lang

Selected group exhibitions:

2013: Henie Onstad Kunstsenter. Curator: M. Høgsberg

2013: Kunstnerforbundet, Oslo. Curator: M. Heier

2013: Devi Art Foundation, Gurgaon. Curator: Raqs Media Collective

2012: Organhouse, Chongqing, PRC. Curator: Hotel Asia Project

2012: National Gallery, Prague. Curator: J. Sevcik/E. Jeřábková

2012: tranzitdisplay, Prague. Ateliér Бања Лука (Banja Luka)

2011: Galerie Poggi & Bertoux, Paris

2011: Galerie Jocelyn Wolff, Paris. Hommage à Ján Mančuška

2011: Futura CCA, Prague. Curator: M. Ivaniškinová/M. Serranová

2010: Manifesta 8 - Eventos Paralelos, Murcia.

2010: Bonn Kunstverein. Curator: V. Havranek/S. Strsembski

2010: MUSA - Museum auf Abruf, Vienna. Curator: T. Pospiszyl

2009: Henie-Onstad Art Centre, Oslo. Curator: C. Ugelstad

2009: House of Artists, Brno. Curator: T. Pospiszyl

2008: Design District's Collins Building, Miami. Curator: D. Newman

2008: Centre of Contemporary Art, CoCA - Torun. Curator: J. Zielinska

2008: ITCA, National Gallery, Prague. Curator: M. Knížák / T. Vlček

2008: ZVON, City Gallery Prague. Curator: K. Císař

2008: Open Space – Zentrum für Kunstprojekte, Vienna. Curator: A. Nikolić

2008: Viennafair. With B. Klimova, A. Ter-Oganian, V. Ambroz

2008: Astrup Fearnley Museum, Oslo. Curator: G. Kvaran/HB. Ueland/G. Årbu.

Residencies:

2011: W17, Kunstnernes Hus, Oslo (BKH)

2010: Ny-Ålesund, Svalbard (NBK)

2009: Platform Garanti Contemporary Art Center, Istanbul (OCA)
2008: Galerija – Miroslav Kraljevic, Zagreb
2008: Egon Shiele Centrum, Cesky Krumlov

Various projects:

2013: Bergen Asssembly 2013, Chto Delat; Border Songspiel. Producer with KORO/Pikene på Broen
2013: Virtual Economic Zone, Instytut Sztuki Wyspa, Gdansk: Liquid Leveling. Curator: K. Szreder
2012: 4+4 Days in Motion Festival Prague (4+4 dny v pohybu), He who laughs; Art About the Artworld
2012: Nasjonal museet, Oslo, Panelist; How to work (more for) less: The Precarity of intellectual and creative work
2008: In Situ, Warsaw, Passengers 2; About walls, fences and other more or less visible barriers. Curator: K. Szreder

Competitions and commissions:

13: KORO/BUP, Jessheim, Akershus (realized)
11: National Tourist Routes, Gryllefjord, Troms (not realized)
10: National Tourist Routes, Atlantic Ocean Road, Møre and Romsdal (not realized)
08: KORO/NORAD, Vestbanen, Oslo (not realized)

Websites:

<http://www.reprezentacenaroda.cz/en>
<http://isbn80-7027-148-5.cz/en>
<http://www.figureandground.eu>
<http://igja.net>

Staging dislocation:

Notes on finished and unfinished work

Jesper Alvaer, Research Fellow Oslo National Academy of the Arts, Academy of Fine Arts.

One of my challenges is not being able to reveal sources before the work is done. Not being transparent while in phase of production. Not that research is secret, but opening up working situations while they are active would cancel them out.

Certain moral issues arise while working in contexts sustained in double ontologies. Being an unannounced observer, confirming others' assumptions and motivations for being in the same room. These kind of concerns surface in social contexts and subsequently as ethical questions. However, what may be effectively shared in these notes are some insights into some presuppositions common to my projects.

It seemed necessary to describe a few personal works and approaches towards a given logic of production, embedded in common formats. The projects *Employer and Employee* and *Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday* will serve as examples. Often artistic production is initiated based on a response to a call, typically from an authority entitled to ask for a work for a specific context.

Engaging in a generative process format, a contractual relationship including timelines, budget plans and expected exposure is drafted, before final delivery. *Employer and Employee* is such a project: a response to an invitation to make a specific work for the very first opening exhibition at the Center of Contemporary Art (CoCA) in the northern Polish town of Toruń. (1) Despite being the infamous birthplace of Nicolaus Copernicus, Toruń is also the location from where Radio Maryja broadcasts xenophobic, homophobic and antisemitic radio daily to millions of listeners.(2)

Several times, when he was visiting Toruń for research purposes, the responsible secretary at the CoCA Toruń showed him around and at some point after taking a taxi, explained to him a feeling that the whole town knew that she was divorced and a single mother. In the conservative Catholic context of Toruń, she described this as a *stigmatised* position. To make a long story short, below is a description of how his conceptual response to her story was communicated to the small staff in the office. We can try to imagine the following:



Employer and Employee was still a work in progress when for the first time it is presented to the leadership of the institution by the curator of the show.



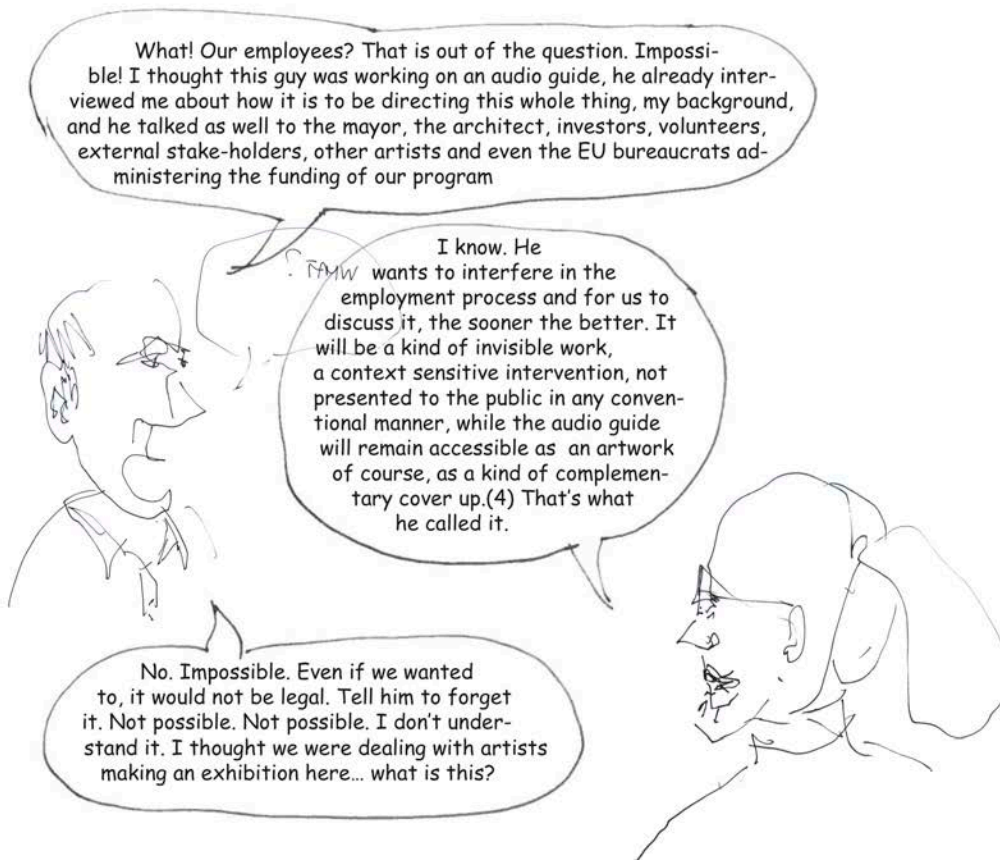
The secretary (mentioned above) is in the office of CoCA Toruń and the director is there with her, both standing and busy discussing some details. The curator is there as well, since she has her temporary office desk in the same location. The whole new building complex including the CoCA is to be opened in less than 6 months and they recently moved into these offices. A technician is finalising some network installation in the corner of the room.

It is a small work group – at this point there is nobody apart from this core administration, the curator, and a board of directors. Everyone is working under pressure to get various infrastructures of the building ready and there is an even more intense focus on preparing for the very first opening exhibition, entitled *Flowers of Our Lives*, the main responsibility of our guest curator.(3) The guest curator walks over to the secretary and director. The director looks up in a welcoming manner, naturally taking the lead and asks:



How is the show proceeding?

I need to discuss the project of one of the foreign invited artists. He would like to work within the structures of the organisation, more precisely to take part in selecting our new employees. This means exhibition guards, cleaners, cloakroom, security, ticket sellers and possibly other staff. The artist mentioned a proposal for how to introduce some special criteria in selecting employees.



Meeting a temporary dead end in the office, extensive lobbying succeeded in pushing *Employer and Employee* through another channel. The intervention into the employment process of the CoCA Toruń was facilitated though members of the board, made possible under strict regulations. Engaging initially in screening processes and durational negotiations after employment interviews, they found ways to interpret and bend the juridical issues to enable the project.

The private consultant company working for the city of Toruń managing employment to the public sector, accepted legal responsibility for an overall employment procedure that resulted in 11 single household divorced mothers getting a job at the CoCA Toruń. (5) A rather high number considering all the applicants being screened initially and then interviewed for, in total, 47 mostly part-time positions.

The artist's agreement with the board of CoCA Toruń, the managing director and the curator in order to implement the project was to maintain a very low profile in terms of dissemination. *Employer and Employee* was, further, not to be formally presented for the first 4 following years, as a kind of quarantine of sorts. This to avoid legal misunderstandings, repercussions or other trouble for any of the persons involved on both sides.

New staff members employed under the particular criteria of being a single-mother by the time of employment (in addition to fulfilling the general qualifications for the job) should not be informed about the special circumstances in which they actually got their job. However, they realised early on themselves the large quantity of single-mothers within their small work force and shared interests in discussions during lunch and coffee breaks.

Employer and Employee is in practical terms still rendered by the employees themselves, in simply showing up at work, not knowing that their job constitutes a form of artistic labor, embedded within the structure of general public employment at the CoCA Toruń. The result is a dislocation of artistic production, within a non-artistic workforce. Using *Employer and Employee* as an example illustrates the importance of how information is distributed and the questions of visibility and transparency in allowing this work to come into existence.

Employer and Employee would not have been possible to carry out if the essence of the project had been announced before, during or immediately after realisation. Another point is the relation between a necessary critical dis-

tance to an observed conservative social reality and the decision to intervene in order to have an impact on this particular situation, rather than diagnosing the obvious through a critical, but merely formal installation. Care, beyond criticality.

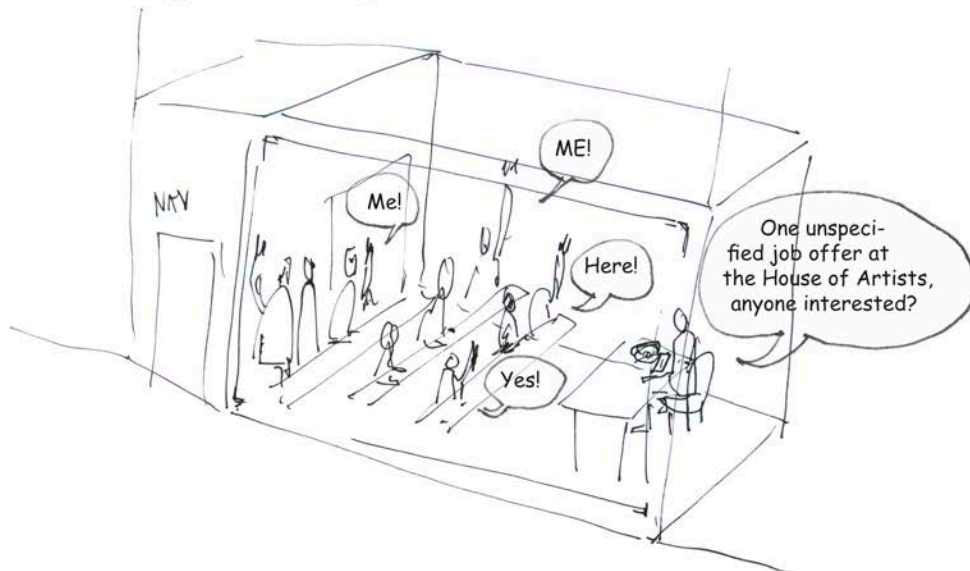
Further, what kind of validity would *Employer and Employee* translate if we choose to interpret this as a model of locating artistic labour within a non artistic work environment? An invisible employer being exposed while invisible employees (for the viewer) are performing the (invisible) work without knowing it. At the moment of writing, 5 of the 11 initially employed are still working at the CoCA Toruń. What keeps them going? When does the work end?

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

As the title suggests, this negotiated set of five successive working days was first associated with his own participation in the Oslo based international residence program, W17.

The project *Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday* set out to examine current perceptions about the type of work and logic

of production associated with artistic practices. The idea was to locate specific working experiences in relation to artistic production per se. The project was elaborated in collaboration with the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV), formally serving as supplier of temporary staff.(6)



The Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration (NAV) day job distribution centre was recently closed down due to few available jobs. The distribution centre was not widely known since state run institutions of this kind were not allowed to compete on the market with recruitment agencies like Jobzone, Addecco, Manpower etc.(7)



A systematic framework was put in place: a person would show up individually from the NAV day job distribution centre to the studio in W17, more or less every day. Not informed in detail on what the job actually would consist of, the meeting normally started by having a coffee or tea. During the first hour he would normally describe the open ended idea and a particular interest in contractual relationships. Then, more concretely about the project and the job itself; to discuss different aspects of work and to perhaps use this series of conversations if something (extra-)ordinary came out of all these meetings.

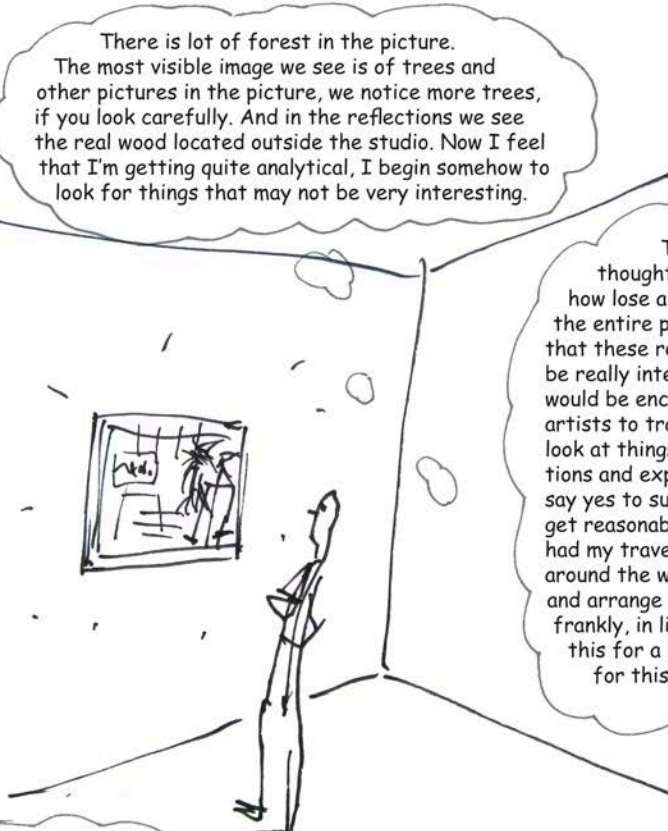
So, they talked, associated and articulated experience. Just sitting in that room. Apart from written notes, no documentation was done and they followed no schematic approach. Each meeting depended on that unique person and his own mood as well. If people did not like to talk after a few hours, then they wrote some poems, made drawings or just coloured some white sheets of paper. Basically, a group of random people hired to discuss understandings of work articulated in their own words. Overall, this resulted in 42 in-depth conversations with a variety of people over a period of 4 months. After their 4 hours, they each received their payment in cash.(9)

Later, six conversations stood out for him as special after absorbing the 42 meetings. One photographic image was then conceived with a photographer for each of these, as a kind of extension of that particular conversation. The images depicted specific geographic locations functioning as a reference points, as a continuation of the conversations, translated into another modality.(10) The same people were contacted again and asked if they would be interested to continue the work from last time. To see "their" image, based on the previous conversation. This was almost a year later but the people hired at first all remembered well the previous conversations and accepted the proposal to continue "the job".

So, six people were individually hired in again, but this time to visit an exhibition. To see their own image, now hanging in a gallery. The exhibition was in Paris, so in order to see the particular image from the conversation, the task was to fly to Paris and "certify the image", to use the terminology applied in the gallery context.(11) Thus, the display of the photographs in the exhibition was adapted to accommodate these individual visits, one at the time, changing images accordingly within a period of time of six weeks. Nobody had seen the images beforehand and the task was simply to travel alone, stay in a hotel, go to the gallery and see their specific photograph. Then reflect on their travel experience and finally hand in a report of their thoughts and their experience on return to Oslo.




A few excerpts from the Paris reports:



There is lot of forest in the picture. The most visible image we see is of trees and other pictures in the picture, we notice more trees, if you look carefully. And in the reflections we see the real wood located outside the studio. Now I feel that I'm getting quite analytical, I begin somehow to look for things that may not be very interesting.

The next thought is that I somehow lose a little respect for the entire project. But the idea that these reflections of mine would be really interesting, maybe I then would be encouraged by many other artists to travel around the world to look at things, to declare my abstractions and experiences. I would gladly say yes to such a job, because I did get reasonably well paid for it and had my travel costs covered. Travel around the world and look at things and arrange my abstractions. So, frankly, in light of possibly doing this for a living, I could vouch for this as work anyway.

My spontaneous thought immediately afterwards, when I'm on my way out again is that this is certainly not work.



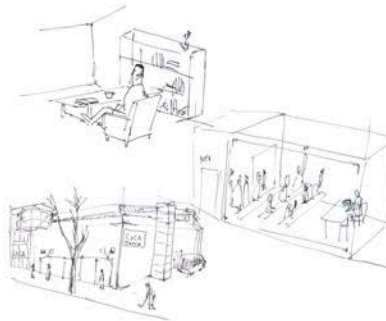
Now I go very slowly out and away from the gallery. Relaxed, very relaxed. Now I have somehow done the job.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday may cast confusion in terms of locating the artwork. Is it in the image?

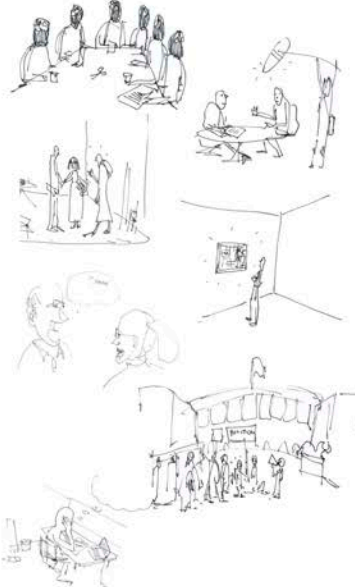
Or is it rather in the subjective experience of the person travelling, in the report? Or is it perhaps taking place in the reader as the story unfolds?

Notions of delegation, imagination and care may be foregrounded in the descriptions above. Delegation of performance in *Employer and Employee* takes place without consent and without obvious impact. Delegated authority and responsibility presented in *Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday* was given form by reflecting aesthetically without being trained to do so and having to report on it. It is not a question of doing it well, succeeding, failing or performing. Whatever the outcome, to what degree is it rich or limited in articulation? What are their capacities to imagine? Why is that so? How is the travel experience communicated at home, over dinner, in the pub with friends?

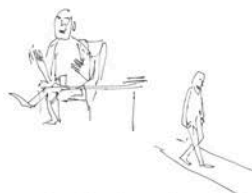
Exploring modes of engagement within employment may be described as intermodal decentering.⁽¹²⁾ Travelling to Paris to observe one single image, as in *Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday*, involved a radical departure from most of the workers' ordinary life situations. Doing extraordinary work tasks abroad and articulating these. First from conversation to image. Then from image to journey; and finally from travelling experience to report on reflection.



• Ordinary world experience before employment • Giving necessary information • Connecting employment to daily reality • Instructing employment toward art-making



• Extraordinary world experience • Work-oriented decentering techniques • Recognizing the imaginary reality



• Recollecting and reporting on affective reality • Habitual world experience challenged

Working methodically with material from one modality to another, these transitions constitute a common framework, or pattern illustrated in the centre of this page. As well in the following described case studies, we find a setup for open-ended engagement, presented as possible sites for production. Common for these work-related case studies or proposals below, are their particular dislocation and limited information, making them difficult to describe.

Partly because they are in the making and not really «cases» to be studied from a distance or the outside. Partly because full transparency would make these situations vulnerable. Partly because the nature of the research remains uncertain, indicating a displacement from artistic practice to artistic research practice. Under these circumstances, to what degree is it possible to avoid being project-formatted, predictable and ultimately delusive?

Often descriptions of methodological approach seems to be misleading in terms of being mis-recognised as topical frameworks.

The main focus is therefore rather to emphasise common grammar and aesthetic mechanisms, paying attention to inner perspectives and lived experiences. Central are how these situations are intended and influenced by the context and forums in which they eventually will be exposed and experienced.

Notes on unfinished work case study A: Anonymous work group

Developing a capacity to imagine things together as adults, or to take part in forming ideas or concepts is directly employed in this anonymous work group. Members of the group responded incognito to an anonymous ad in the main newspapers in Oslo.

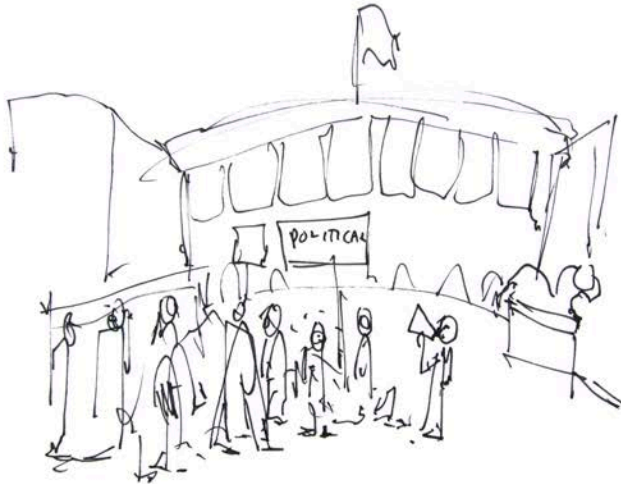
For the last 8 months, this work-group has been meeting on a 4 to 6 weeks frequency, providing a continuous concrete feedback and developing a reflection on an artwork not yet made.

The individual members of the group are offered payment for their effort to engage. The intention is to keep this discussion group ongoing until the last phase of the formal quest in the project *Work, work*.⁽¹³⁾ This group main target is to challenge the typical artistic practice accompanied by a complimentary critical reflection, being constitutive components in



the Norwegian Artistic Research Programme.⁽¹⁴⁾ Will it prove productive to reverse reflection in which employment constitutes a significant role? If so, what kind authority does this question of co-authored research formally imply if when presented anonymously for assessment?

Notes on unfinished work case study B: Political membership



Mother, Dear Mother is a title of a research exhibition held at House of Artists in Oslo.⁽¹⁵⁾ The work presented was based on systematically becoming a member of every major political party in Norway. This involved being engaged in social and political

activities in the respective parties, both prior to and after the national election in 2013.

Mother, Dear Mother encapsulated an attempt to describe emotional experiences of a nation undergoing a political shift with a special focus on transformation of work. Through taking part in activities based on assumptions of a shared political commitment, spread out on the political spectrum, a sense of personal dishonesty developed, in not sharing project-driven motivations in the nomination of political representation and collective work undertaken in various political organisations. The entire exhibition is currently being configured into a film.

Notes on unfinished work case study C: Delegated autonomy

Employing two students with non-artistic bachelors to obtain a Master in Fine Art. Who is trained to produce and entitled artistic authorship? Is it possible to pay someone to undertake such an artistic process? If so, at what point do the employed (current MFA students) gain authentic ownership of the work, since interpretational efforts are central in all delegated work tasks?



From a sense of alienation in making someone else's art as a job, to developing a personal ownership and possible autonomy including forms of negotiated resistance along the way. Currently operational and not published in detail to protect the students as workers and the case study in itself for not being interrupted. The engaged students are reporting on a regular basis both their experience as process and how they actually imagine their work to develop. Expected graduation will be in 2016 and afterwards the complete archive will be made accessible to the public.

Notes on unfinished work case study D: Dismissed competence

Dismissed competence is a series of narrative inquiries in form of interviews. The study includes a group of older people who all studied to become professional artists in a national art academy, but abandoned their profession and never pursued a career as artists. One focus is on how this particular competence may have leaked into other activities.

Another focus is to locate epistemological layers, not chronologically but through practicing an improvised emotional archeology. This happens through language in addressing the experience of hosting personal and specialised competence never applied. How can competence be identified, articulated and described alternatively to the obvious narration the subjects already settled with? Outcome of these mutually constructed and repeated interviews will be made presentable and in some cases in collaboration with the interviewees themselves. (16)



NOTES:

- (1) http://www.csw.torun.pl/?set_language=en&cl=en
- (2) <http://www.radiomaryja.pl>
- (3) <http://www.csw.torun.pl/exhibitions/exhibitions-db/flowers-of-our-lives>
- (4) Elastic Medium As a Wave:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4VNFWy-1c1eY0VIZWpWdVJNb00/edit?usp=sharing>
- (5) <http://www.klgates.com/pl/>
- (6) <https://www.nav.no/en/Home>
- (7) <http://tv.nrk.no/serie/nasjonalgalleriet/MKTF03002511/28-11-2011#t=16m17s>
- (8) The video work *Konkret* (links) was as well elaborated from these 42 sessions, commissioned by Henie Onstad Kunstsenter (HOK) Oslo for the exhibition *Arbeidstid* (2013) curated by Milena Hoegsberg, including the related publication *Living Labor*.
part 1: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4VNFWy-1c1eNkIndmluY2R6WDQ/edit?usp=sharing>
part 2: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B4VNFWy-1c1eblVJSmpjYjVDdDQ/>

[edit?usp=sharing](#)

- (9) In collaboration with Eline Mugaas, a series of 6 photographs.
- (10) Exhibition NORSK; <http://www.galerie-poggi-bertoux.com/en/expositions/presentationarchive/88/norsk-une-scene-artistique-norvegienne-contemporaine>
- (11) Intermodal decentering was developed by Paolo Knill and Herbert Eberhart. It was invented within the frame of education to create a structure where art making could unfold its capacities in a restricted amount of time.
<http://www.egs.edu/arts-health-society/about/>
- (13) http://artistic-research.no/?page_id=2490
- (14) <http://artistic-research.no/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Art-and-qualification.pdf>
- (15) <http://www.kunstnerneshus.no/kunst/jesper-alvaer-2/>
- (16) Research exhibition is being prepared in collaboration with Isabela Grosseova and Jiří Ptáček for Prague Fotograf Gallery, January 2015. <http://www.fotografgallery.cz/vystavy/2014/00/?lang=en>

COMPETENCES / Budget / Costs of exhibition

Internal costs of Kunsthalle (received estimates)	1	35000	35000
Costs of interior architecture (blends, wood panels, etc.)	1	20000	20000
Wages of dialogue partners (nr of days x wage / day)	70	800	56000
Honoraries of Artists	2	20000	40000
Honorary of Curator	1	20000	20000
Flights (3 vists)	9	2000	18000
Hotels (2 rooms, prep. visit 3 days, building 7 days, finisage and dismantling 3 days)	26	300	7800
Per diems for visits	39	80	3120
			199920

Public programme (potentially financed from research funding of KHiO)

Flights of speakers	5	2000	10000
Honoraries of speakers	5	2000	10000
Hospitality	1	4000	4000
Hotels of speakers	10	400	4000
Printing seminar materials	1	3000	3000
			31000

Potential publication will be edited and funded from Norwegian research funds in 2016