

Assessment

Originality:

We do not really like to think in terms of originality, but rather of intelligent inscription in a certain tradition. Regarding the tradition where the work of Jesper could inscribe, we think of institutional critique from 70's and 90'sff, but there are no indicators of his awareness of this, whether he wishes to inscribe there, or he refuses to inscribe there. Thus we recommend that the critical reflexion is used for a thorough contextualization of the work. The same applies for the working with witnesses: this has been a practice in the assessment of performance art for a while and for good reasons. We would like to ask the candidate to make reference to this tradition and elaborate in detail the choices he made for the assessment session on this backdrop.

Further, in the kind of field where Jesper is working, it is surprising that he makes no reference to social media, as a way of reaching out people and as well as a way of obtaining feedback; to create a dynamic. Via the critical reflection it would be useful to us to understand better why the use of social media is avoided in projects based do much on processes of communication – why this maybe is a conceptual asset of the work.

We feel Jesper tries to carve a place for his work where care and group dynamics are the main point, but without much questioning matters of hegemony or politics or institution. In the critical reflection, the opportunity should be taken to make the standpoint from which the work is been carried out more explicit and more clear. This applies also to key decisions within the work, i.e. the conscious preference for Wengraf's methodological approach to the interpretation of narrative biographical interviews in contrast to the many other possible approaches more informed by intersectionality and critical theory.

We appreciate the meta-fictional dimension of the setting of the assessment, where witnesses seem to be actors performing the last act of a long and carefully staged play, which includes us as assessment jury. The feeling of being caught inside a fictional play is strong, and it creates a kafkaesque paranoia feeling in witnesses and jury alike.

We are very much missing a testimony of people who refused to enter the play of "Competence" or any of the other experiences. We found the selection of witnesses arbitrary and unfortunately composed, with two curators, one former runner of a commercial gallery and one journalist they all seem very close to the author's own habitus. Accordingly, their accounts have proved to be partly redundant if not almost identical to the descriptions in

Jesper's own texts. The selection of witnesses thus undermines the implicit yet strong emphasis of the documented work on dealing with lots of different realities and value systems. This inhibited the assessment procedure to enfold its obviously intended originality. For more remarks on the choice of witnesses, regarding their impact on consistency, see below.

Expression:

It is a very courageous format, taking the risk of failure, playing everything to one card and one card only.

The artist expresses himself through the actions he inspires in others and through the social interactions among those others. His instructions are the main expression.

But we notice that, given the metafictional character of the work (where a form discusses itself) everything is part of the work: the actual exhibition, the participants then, the witnesses now, the school, the audience, the jury... we wonder if Jesper is aware of all the dramaturgical possibilities that this offers, because we find that many elements were not taken care of, and there were some unacceptable and unethical loops such as having the artist's live partner and collaborator of one exhibition filming the assessment. This strongly contradicts the notion of care which is mobilized strongly in the work as an overall informing concept.

Then the witnesses had of course their qualities but as well some dramaturgical failures:

The first witness was reading from a phone and didn't really know what his role was and had serious difficulties to answer questions that were not programmed. He neither did ask whether it was ok to record. Then on the next day the role of the "small audience" in the witness presentation was very unclear. In general, one had the feeling that things happened without a plan and many occurrences were left unplayed. The whole experience thus stayed superficial.

We think there are many positive possibilities to use this kind of delegation and leave things to create their own dynamics; but this did not become clear for us if Jesper was aware of this possibilities.

It is very difficult to assess the exhibitions discussed in terms of expression because of lack and poorness of material. Also, within the theme of work, some more back-stage information should have been provided - like: contracts with the volunteers, with the institutions,

agreements between artist and volunteers, instructions given to volunteers and institutions etc. (for the impact on this lack of information on consistency, see below).

The cartoon inserts in the text support the content and thematic approach, and were one of the most efficient tools to understand.

Consistency:

The approach of the assessment setting and the conceptual framing of the project are very coherent approaches to the questions raised in the work.

We think nevertheless, that even if we value very positively to have consistently kept just one way of entry to the work, the witness, the choice of witnesses was poor. One first witness had communication trouble and was a former gallerist, two witnesses were curators, out of four; and the third witness and volunteer although being a journalist, did not seem to ask herself many questions about the work.

We would have liked to have as a witness someone "from the other side" - some of the people who escorted and accompany the audience in the exhibition in Prague, and in Poland, it would have been nice to have some museum staff, some of those single mothers that were employed thanks to the grace of the artist...

Because we think the information that the witnesses delivered was very much one-sided and rather similar among them. There was no critical witness regarding the situation, no witness who refused to follow the rules. Everyone seemed to be mainly occupied with explaining the intentions of Jesper rather than manifesting their position in relation to them and reflecting on their role within them.

We think as well that a rather bad dossier and documentation of the exhibition inhibits assessment – it is a missed opportunity.

We also did not learn enough about the conditions of the collaborators: contracts, agreements which doesn't seem to be consistent with the theme "work, work", as we do not know enough about the conditions of production.

We would like to manifest some doubts we have regarding ethics:

- The co-author of the exhibition “Competence” is in the room of the assessment and is in charge of filming, recording and postproduction.
- This co-author is not explicitly enough acknowledged, it is not clear what her contributions are and what are the contributions of the candidate.
- Is it really necessary to leave collaborators in the dark about purposes and plans, without explanations, without clear directions? The desire of the artists to be fiend and friend at the same time? To be God (quote from witness, though uncritical)? To be the mastermind or spindoctor of the purpose of the overall plan?
- What about payment of the people, and working conditions, i.e. the “focus group”? Work with volunteers? if you deal with "work, work" Shouldn't you address the precariousness?
- There was as well no mention of the curators of institutions or people who invited to develop these projects, as co-responsible of the events.
- The get information or not is part of a "regime of control" >> this is a quote from a witness when she described the protocols of spectatorship.

Relevance:

How the project contributes to new insight, knowledge and/or experience in the subject area

Jesper obviously wants to be part of a tradition of post – institutional critique. He focusses on a mode of “reparative reading” (vs. paranoid reading), instigating micro – situations of repair and care. Care as opposed to mere critique. This is an interesting angle, and a very contemporary one.

The subjects he deals with are really interesting: the idea of competence, the position of the artist in society, how the artist is judged, and on what basis the competences are valued.

However, with the last stage of the presentation, the group discussion with Tom Wengraf, facilitator, we were puzzled, because it all seemed to revert to a discussion of the artist himself, the artist named Jeremy / Jesper, as if in the end the subject was not competence and the role of the artist in society, but rather the position of a particular artist within the institution of art - creative class entrepreneurship.

And in this sense we were wondering why all works made abstraction of their context, no reference to the transforming situation in post communist countries (Czech Republic, Poland) – nor to the Welfare state Norway.

Presentation and communication

The transmission is THE main problem of the work to be assessed, as it has already become clear in the other points. It is too unclear, and that does not support the appreciation and understanding of the work. We get very little information about the visuals of the installations, - not necessarily photographs, but ground floor plans, exhibition plans, sketches, drawings; we only got a poorly drafted.pdf

While we appreciate the radicality of choosing just the experience of witnesses to communicate the work, the truth is, we do not have now a clear idea of the work, and this could have been solved at not cost of radicality, with a proper documentation in the form of a book or objects or photographs, or plans, or all of it together, given to the assessment committee, not necessarily exhibited.

This inhibits a much more detailed discussion and thus in-depths reflection and appreciation of the individual projects presented, which generally (but not in each case equally) seem to be much more carefully crafted and thought through as well as conceptually thorough than the assessment session itself.