

## **Reading out loud**

artistic research project October 2017 - May 2022

UiT, Academy of Arts in collaboration with UiB, The Art Academy

artistic reflection by Juliane Zelwies

submitted on May 6th, 2022

## **appendices**

## **The studio visit**

script for a performance

written and performed by Thorolf Thuestad and Juliane Zelwies  
Artistic Research Spring Forum 2018  
Holmsbu hotel, Norway  
13.03.2018, 14:00 - 16:00

### **props & equipment:**

1. computer, which will be used to play back
  - a) headlines / slides to guide us through the performance
  - b) to control Thorolf's sculpture
2. two loudspeakers and one projector
3. Thorolf brings one of his sculptures
4. two cups of black coffee

Thorolf's texts are **RED**

Juliane's texts are **GREEN**

slides / general instructions are **black**

### **PART 1: The introduction**

THOROLF on stage, reading to the audience. Juliane is sitting in a chair near by, but the mental spot light is strictly on Thorolf.

**01.02.2018**

**Diary – Rod, Steel.**

February 1st, 2018.

I am a steel rod. I used to be 150 cm long, but now I have been cut into smaller segments and float in the air suspended by wires. When I first came here I had already a long life behind me, from when what I am made from was ripped from the earth and distilled through fire into me. Then I waited for a long time, but not alone, with others like me, in a big warehouse. Then after a long time and a few other stops me, and a few like me ended up in the corner of a white room where I now hang in smaller bits.

I sensed what happened to my companions, how their limb was ripped apart by a coarsely toothed saw. Observed them melted together by foreign metals and chemicals, drilled holes through.

I was afraid.

Was this going to happen to me as well?

Would it hurt?

If I was cut to pieces, would I still be me?

If I to where to be joined together with another metal, would I still be me?

It didn't hurt, I have no nerves it turns out. I think I am still me even now that I joined together with silver, nitinol and God knows what else. Or maybe I only think I am me when in-fact I am different.

How can I be the same when I am different?

I like this new existence though, I float in the air, where the nitinol touches me it tickles, I feel my member bend and flex as I wobble with the movement.

I always knew off course that I would be made into something else.

I had hoped I could have become ice-skates, and gone black ice skating in Alaska.

Things don't always turn out the way you think, but this is not to bad either.

**04.10.2017**

**Diary Thuestad, Thorolf.**

October 4th 2017.

I can't remember anything. Its quite something to not remember anything, completely blank. After having done several thousands of performances, its unexpected, exiting and interesting.

I guess its the new situation I find myself in, being judged now not only on the sensual impact of the art and music I am part of, but also on the thought processes and intellectual fundament of it. I guess I have always had a somewhat distrustful relationship with the intellectualisation of art, and now I find myself in an artistic research program where the intellectualisation or at least the discourse of art is as important as the art. Hmmm.

I found myself here at Voksenåsen at the introductory seminar for the new research fellows. We are all expected to give a 20 minute presentation of our project to our new colleagues, and a few of the employees in the program. I have not done anything like this since 2001.

Before it was my turn I found it hard to pay attention to the presentations coming before, in that sense I was glad that I was quite early in presenting so at least I would be able to enjoy the presentations that came after.

I walked in front of the group and I made my presentation which, even if I cannot remember must have gone something like this:

**12.02.2018**

**Diary – Rod, Steel.**

February 12th, 2018.

Its me again, Steel, Steel Rod.

I still float in the air in the white room.

Thor complains that I lack expressiveness, that I am only able to generate empathy in my observers, in the form of pity.

(From time to time some others of the same kind of thing as he come by the white room. They look at me and then they talk about me and what I make them feel) Feel?

He says my expressive range is too limited.

He says he will make many like me as a possible solution.

Like me?

Solution to what?

What is this expressiveness?

Anyway he is wrong.

He only has eyes and ears and maybe some other primitive senses, he can not see all of me, its obvious.

He seems to believe that what he can observe through those stupid holes in his head is the whole truth.

Firstly that truth is only in that squishy lump inside his hard head, and secondly its not true.

Its not.

JULIANE enters the stage and sits on the other chair. She unfolds a piece of paper and reads:

Footnote #1: Wikipedia entry for **Stage fright**.

**Stage fright** or **performance anxiety** is the anxiety, fear or persistent phobia, which may be aroused in an individual by the requirement to perform in front of an audience.

In the context of public speaking, this may precede or accompany participation in any activity involving public self-presentation.

**Performance anxiety** has numerous manifestations: stuttering, fast heart rate, tremor in the hands and legs, sweaty hands, facial nerve tics, dry mouth, and dizziness. Those stress-induced speech disorders are only present during public speech.

Some individuals with stage fright have been able to dance, perform in public, or even to speak -such as in a play-, or sing if they cannot see the audience, or if they feel that they are presenting a character or stage persona other than themselves.

The everyday working life of an artist is often divided into many hours of private studio time and the times, when she has to be sociable. For instance, when she mingles with the art scene at exhibition openings.

Then, he has to demonstrate that he is attending the show. And she has to make sure that she leaves an impression as a loyal member of the very art scene, which consists of her colleagues, the exhibiting artist, the curator or art dealer, the collectors and so on and so forth.

In order to overcome the confusing split of being on duty while hanging out with their artist friends, many artists have created a character or stage persona.

Just to be clear: I am not thinking of the well-known eccentric figures, who are currently at the top of the ranking list. I am rather thinking of my close friends and colleagues, or of you, Thorolf and myself.

So, what are our public personas like? What do we do, when we perform? And of course, why do we perform?

For my research, this is one of the questions I am focused on at the very moment.

Recently, my former professor, who is retired for many years now, organized an artist field trip by train from Berlin to Hanover to visit an exhibition.

One of the artists was a friend of mine from former times. We studied together, and we still know each other fairly well. He is talented, hard working, successful. And I do like him.

We ran into each other already at the bakery in the train station, and I sensed that Jakob was stressed. Jakob tried to cover his nervousness by commenting the high prices of the goods in the bakery, and while I was still waiting for my coffee, he told me that he had far too much to do to spend an entire day traveling to Hanover now. But yes, he did come because of Evelyn, our former professor. And of course he looks forward to hearing what I will be doing in Norway for the next three years.

When we boarded the train, the others were already there. Jakob greeted everyone very loudly and very friendly, but then sat down behind me.

Just picture this: Everyone else already had a neighbour. Jakob and I came in last, but after his little speech at the bakery stand, he preferred to sit by himself. Surprising, but: Fine!

One last person joined and sat next to me. While I was chatting with my neighbor, Jakob received a phone call.

He very loudly responded and by doing so informed the entire waggon about the

current difficulties regarding the production of the works for his upcoming solo show.

Marianne looked at me, raised her eye brows and started to laugh. „It’s all part of the game, right?“ she asked.

Yes, he obviously wanted to brag about his upcoming show.

But I know him well enough to think he also tried to cover something by behaving that way.

I can only speculate now, but I believe he was nervous because he didn’t know everyone in the group yet. And with his behaviour he tried to create a hierarchy in which he put himself at the top.

But most importantly: He set up a shield to protect himself. To protect him from being like the others. He behaved that way to make a difference.

He made clear that this field trip was **not** a private affair. What we experienced in the train, was part of his work performance.

I told you this anecdote as an example of what I am currently working with:

The moments when manners become mannerisms.

What do we do, when we perform?

And why is it important for us to perform in such situations at all?

## **PART 2: The studio visit**

**13.03.2018, Bergen**

**Juliane Zelwies visits Thorolf Thuestad in his studio**

T: Hi! Thanks for coming!

J: Thank you! Good to see you again. How have you been?

T: Fine. I have been really busy lately. I am working on these sculptures I would like to show you. I am going to have a show in a long abandoned storefront below the asylum seeker center in the empty center of the small industrial town (now part of bergen) where I live.

J: Oh cool. When is the opening?

T+ J in studio visit mode. Thorolf will speak about his works and the research he is undertaking and Juliane will try to understand him by asking him questions.

Sometimes they understand each other well, and at other times it is clear that they have an ocean in between, which they can’t bridge (worst case scenario).

T: Would you like to have a coffee? Or water?

J: Oh yes, a coffee would be great!

T: Sure. Oh, but I don't have milk.

J: That's fine. Thanks.

While Thor is off getting coffee (T might fiddle around with the thermos or make a mess, which has to be cleaned up- or simply takes it easy and waits until Juliane is finished).

Juliane reads:

Rule # 1: An artist most likely only invites an artist to his studio, who is on his or her level in terms of success- or has shown a similar mindset.

Rule # 2: If an artist invites another artist to his studio, he trusts the other person. The invitation may be read as an offer to consolidate their professional friendship.

Rule # 3: What is spoken about in the studio, stays in the studio. No information is revealed to anyone else. Furthermore, the visiting artist will NOT be inspired by her friends' work for her own project.

Rule # 4: Critique is wanted, but needs to be delivered in a constructive way. Common practice is a spontaneous brainstorming by the visitor. Alternatively, the critique might be expressed in the form of a question, which demands an answer from the artist.

These questions also demonstrate that the visiting artist is fully invested in the thought process.

Rule # 5: The artist wants his visiting friend to feel comfortable and is therefore offering something to drink.

The standard is black coffee or water, but, depending on the time of the day, it could also be tea or beer.

While artists in Berlin sometimes also have cookies, chocolate or even cake, in Norway I was so far given fruits and nuts.

In New York I was regularly offered weed and sometimes painkillers.

And then it was suggested to go for a Pho soup or pizza later - at this tiny place down at the corner.

Thor brings the coffee.

J: Tusen takk!

T and J are talking about the commonalities between their projects. For example, they speak about their motivations for undertaking the projects, the personal angel they both have etc.

Juliane's motivation:

very personal questions and issues- I am wondering whether contemporary art has run dry these days, whether we are in the valley before the paradigm shift. I saw some exhibitions of the young hip artists and I knew that they are very much sought after these days- but I could not connect. Their work didn't touch me in any way- and I felt that I do not understand where the arts are going at the very moment.

And suddenly I felt as if I was from another generation who doesn't follow what is going on any longer. And I thought that I should either give up doing art or research properly what is going on and figure out why I still haven't solved some of the most basic questions I have towards the visual arts- even though I am part of this world for almost 15 years now.

### **PART 3: Thorolf interviews Juliane**

**T: I know that your project is about the art world, but what is it that is of interest for you there? I mean, what is the research about?**

**J:** Well, initially I wanted to cover the entire field and look at all the different aspects regarding the visual arts.

My research questions concerned the current aesthetics and by what the value of art is defined in Western societies today.  
Also the role the state plays in the funding of arts.

But to go into all these directions at once is of course not possible and I had to limit myself. As I said before, at the moment my interest and focus is on detecting and analysing the performative aspects in the everyday of visual artists. The social codes, norms, language and dynamics between the people. And then I will try to find a way to transcribe these behavioral specialties of this very culture.

**Thorolf: You told me that you have worked in an commercial art gallery before you came to Norway.**

**Juliane:** That's true. As part of my public persona as an artist I always tried to hide this piece of information as it seemed to diminish my integrity as an artist.

I was understood as working for the wrong side, one of my former mentors told me that I was now working for the enemy.

**Thorolf: Ah, I see. And how was your role understood in the gallery?**

**Juliane:** Well, I was definitely the odd ball there as well. I didn't quite fit their standards.

Originally I was employed to be the artist liaison of the two most important, but also



challenging artists the gallery was representing at the time.

Thorolf: How did that go?

Juliane: Well, they - and any of their artists later - were utterly confused when they realized that I was a practising artist, too. And they clearly didn't like it.

Thorolf: What do you mean by that?

Juliane: Well, I actually never said that I was an artist, but it always came to light at some point. I think I just appeared different than anyone else working in a gallery.

I was clearly not like one of these „gallery girls“. You know what I mean: I seemed not career-oriented, I was not there to sell their work.

There was one instance, when I was visiting one artist in his studio in preparation to write the press release for his upcoming show. And at some point he looked at me in bewilderment and asked:

„Wait a minute, have you studied art?“ And by that he didn't mean art history.

I think I simply didn't play the game everyone else in galleries plays with the artists.

I did not admire them just for their existence, and when I looked at their work I probably appeared critical without noticing it myself.

I only knew how to speak to them as an artist, but not as a gallery employee.

Thorolf: Hm.

Juliane: I think this made them uncomfortable. They were all very well established artists, millionaires.

But again, by me taking on this job, I had broken the rules.

If I would have given up doing art and then started to work for the gallery, it would have gone fine, I am sure.

But since I was still maintaining a studio, running an artist run project space and was exhibiting, I was not supposed to be there.

In hindsight I believe that they felt I had entered their private zone. It seemed almost as if I knew too much, as if I was a spy.

Thorolf: That's weird. But an interesting observation, which fits your investigation into manners and mannerisms. Do you already know how to go on with your research?

Juliane: Yes, I think I have an idea what kind of form my research may take in the next weeks.

Apart from doing interviews, I will invite any art professional to send their

observations, memories and stories to me. Also I will send out a set of questions to those who would like to be involved more deeply once a month for a year.

I sent around some postcards now. Or rather: Scratch cards. Please take one and please, get back to me!

Apart from this I am currently very much interested to follow up the arguments Pablo Helguera provides in his research he calls „the social scripts of the art world“.

Pablo Helguera believes that we all perform in order to belong. And by performing we contribute to the construction of the very art scene.

Besides he claims that -through these performative acts - we also contribute and construct the value in artworks.

Thorolf, how about you now? Shall we speak about your relationship to anthropomorphism?

I was wondering whether anthropomorphism isn't some sort of performative act or method, which we humans perform for ourselves in order to establish a relationship to the world and the things we make and surround us with?

**Part 4: Discussion with the audience, moderated by Nina Malterud.**

**Treat me like I am special. I am a rare flower.  
(or: a few remarks about the art world)**

transcript of a lecture  
written and performed by Juliane Zelwies

GLØTT Festival at the Art Academy in Tromsø, 29.11.2019

I would like us to sit closer. So closely that I don't have to speak louder than I usually would. Tusen takk.

I was not sure what and whom to expect tonight. In the end I decided that I will simply tell you a bit about myself and the questions I keep myself busy with while I work on this project. And if I am not clear to you, please interrupt and ask, OK?

My name is Juliane, Juliane Zelwies. I am one of the three **artistic research fellows** here at the art academy in Tromsø. I am originally from Berlin in Germany and my background is experimental film and media. I personally mostly use the video camera to document social situations between people, which I set up or reenact. And in those social settings I often explore something other people are experts of and I have become curious about and want to understand more. That could be a method used in family therapy or a way to develop an argument as it is done in debating societies in the anglophone world.

However, for this research project here in Tromsø, which I titled *The Reserve Elite*, I have given myself the task to explore my own field, that is the so called Art World, and to look at social situations, mainly between artists, which I don't understand or find difficult to grasp. And since I am not a sociologist, anthropologist or psychologist, I am not interested to mimic or copycat their methods or practices, but rather use this research as an opportunity to broaden my own toolbox with methods, which are meaningful to me and which result in something I would describe as artistic practice.

So: How does one explore the behavior of people working in one's own field? And how does one know whether someone's action or reaction is personal and or used consciously as a strategy to establish, maintain or develop one's own career?

To be a bit more concrete I will tell you two anecdotes, which in my understanding are quite telling. And for those, who want to stay longer, I can show a video work of 12 minutes, which is based on interviews I have done with artists in Los Angeles and shows what form the research has taken.

But let's go back to the subject itself, the starting point of what I am speaking about.

The first situation happened here, in this very room. This is a gallery space called SNERK, which is run by a group of students. In other parts of the world, art schools don't have a student run gallery as part of the academy. Most schools simply don't have space for this and if they do have a gallery, it is much more hierarchical. It might also show the final shows of the students, but would otherwise be curated by someone - who is not a

student.

But this exhibition space here is used by a group of students who have been given the freedom to organize whatever they want to do, which seems quite luxurious: to be given space to experiment. On the other hand it is in fact a necessity, because Tromsø as a city isn't big enough to have an art scene that is creating an environment on its own, which gives the students the chance to mingle and learn about the **real** Art World. Or put differently: This room is as real as you can get in Tromsø - regarding contemporary art by young, emerging artists.

A few weeks ago, one of the students had a solo show here. She worked on the show for weeks, and everything was very neatly produced and presented. One could see that there was nothing random and that she had thought about everything in depth. She had opened up the gallery by having the walls folded to the side and expanded into the foyer around the staircase. Her work was very minimalist, it looked all very clean. On one of the wooden benches over there she had put a very well written press text, which gave insight into her work and a bit information about herself. Next to the text she had placed a bowl with chips and one could also get a drink there - beer, wine or water.

The situation was identical to what it would have been like in any other small gallery in any other city. People briefly looked at her work, and then, when they felt they had looked at it long enough, they gathered in small groups of three or four and were quietly chatting with each other. I had a guest visiting on that very evening, someone who knows contemporary art from within and who is not shy at all. However, she grabbed a glass of wine and then quietly said: „Now I don't feel awkward anymore, now I feel as if I have something to do, you know.“

And I did agree with her: If one did not know anyone there, one would probably have felt like an outsider to a closed club. There was an invisible threshold: The very same people, who upstairs in the kitchen speak loudly, laugh and joke and hang out with one another almost every day, were suddenly very quiet, very serious and a bit stiff.

The following day I met the exhibiting student in kitchen upstairs and asked her whether she was content with her opening.

And she said „Yes, I am. But honestly, I don't like openings very much“.

„Oh!“ I said. „Why is that?“ „Because openings **never** seem to be about the artworks, but rather a meeting place to be social“.

Hold on. Seriously? What does the internet say to this?

The Merriam Webster dictionary defines a vernissage (which is the exhibition opening) as follows:

Vernissage has its roots in the old practice of setting aside a day before an exhibition's opening for artists to varnish and put finishing touches to their paintings - a tradition that reportedly dates to at least 1809, when it was

instituted by England's Royal Academy of Arts. One famous member of the Academy, William Turner, was notorious for making major changes to his paintings on this day. English speakers originally referred to this day of finishing touches simply as "varnishing day," but sometime around 1912 we also began using the French term *vernissage* (literally, "varnishing").

Wikipedia continues as follows:

The custom of patrons and the élite of visiting the academies during the varnishing day prior to the formal opening of the exhibition gave rise to the tradition of celebrating the completion of an art work or a series of art works with friends and sponsors. In the twentieth century it became an opportunity to market the works on view to buyers and critics.

Alright. We obviously don't have an art market in Tromsø - or in Norway in general - , neither have I ever seen a collector or art critic here. But the student had her peers and teachers around. As I said before: This gallery is a testing ground. A laboratory.

But let's keep in mind what the student observed: „It's not about the work, it seems to be about the social“.

Because this made me think of Pablo Helguera. In his introduction of „Art Scenes“ he writes:

Art makes us perform.

This is not a comment on how we become motivated to make performance art. Instead, I mean to say that the social environment constructed around art leads to a particular kind of conduct among those exposed to it. This conduct is manifested in formal and informal ways - ranging from conversations and subtle social interactions to formal presentations that can be academic or simply promotional; they can be merely intuitive or highly calculated. We make art in a particular social context, it becomes enveloped in an art world, and that, in turn, influences our behavior. So, to elaborate on my initial statement: artists make art that creates an art world that makes all of us who belong to that world perform. And, as we perform, we contribute to the construction of an art scene.

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The 2nd anecdote I would like to share happened about two months ago. I was in Paris, I met an artist friend of mine and she was supposed to meet up with another friend, who wanted to check out the exhibition opening at the Galerie Lafayette. A very typical situation for us artists- you meet a friend, who meets up with another one, and you all go to an opening together. It's informal and easy going. If one likes the other one, one stays, and if one doesn't, one can simply go home. No big deal.

As you can imagine by the name, Galerie Lafayette is a prestigious private exhibition

and event space in the heart of Paris.

It turned out that the artist exhibiting there is someone I started to study with, way back when, in 1996 at the University of the Arts in Berlin.

We shared the sculpture workshop with each other, we were both very invested in casting objects with plaster at the time. We looked at each others works, we chatted and shared the shelves on which our objects had to dry. But then we both changed to other departments or schools and countries, and only a few years ago I stumbled upon her work at the Kestnergesellschaft in Hannover, and I remember that I was impressed to realize that she had made it. On Artfacts (that is a dubious website ranking artists based on the number of exhibitions they had in particular institutions over the past 10 years) she is currently ranked as one of the top 1000 artists globally.

Back to Galerie Lafayettes. I walk around and look at her works. My partner, who is also there, makes a comment about one of her works, involving one of the guards in a chitchat. As the guard also doesn't know the answer to my partners question, she suggests: „But why don't you ask the artist yourself, she is super nice- she is over there.“

I look up and she looks the same, she only wears better clothes now- and high heels. To make a long story short: Just before we want to leave, I go over to her as she seems to be standing there with close friends or even family now. A little girl leans against her - and she is stroking absentmindedly through the girls hair.

I say: Hi Marianne. I don't know if you remember me, I am Juliane, we started to study together in Berlin at the UdK. I just wanted to say hi.

She looks at me and says: „**How funny!**“

And then she turns away. She simply continues to speak to the others. A man approaches us, introduces himself to me, shakes my hand. I do the same in return. And then I am just very confused. Shall I leave now? Then she turns back to me: „**Are you living in Paris now?**“ She asks. „No, I say, I am just here for a few weeks“. „**Ha**“, she says, and turns away again. I stand there, unable to move. How does one react to such a situation?

A friend of mine suggested that I just have tapped her on the shoulder, saying goodbye with something like: *Call me next week, will you?*

Another friend was wondering about the amount of adrenaline she had in her blood, yet another one was suggesting that she was on cocaine. My supervisor felt sorry for me. Honestly, I don't care whether she was on drugs or not. All I can say is that situations like this are most often not as extreme as this one, but they are common. Don't get me wrong, I don't complain and I don't want to start a movement asking for change. I am still busy trying to understand where such an attitude derives from and what the meaning of it is.

Originally I thought that behavior like this are the bitter fruits which grow because of the existing hierarchies among the people in the arts. The wealthy collectors elite, who forces their attitude onto us artists. But I am not sure anymore. I actually think its much more complex and it starts earlier. It starts already here, in spaces like this one- when there is no curator or art critic around. And of course it is different in different countries. In the

US something like this would probably not happen as they simply can't afford arrogance like this. It goes too much against their culture. This was a very Central European example.

I will stop here for now and those who want to go to the next presentation have the chance to very politely leave the room. If someone wants to know how I incorporate these issues I just spoke about in my work, is very welcome to stay. I have a 12 minutes long film I can show you now.

## The Funnies

Pablo Helguera, Walter Scott, Olav Westphalen and Juliane Zelwies

EXHIBITION March 27, 2021 – April 30, 2021, BEGINNING March 26 at 7 pm

Online-artist talk March 27, 7 pm (CET).



© Pablo Helguera

SCOTTY is pleased to present the exhibition *The Funnies* which opens on March 26, 2021 with cartoons, comics, posters and drawings by the artists Pablo Helguera (New York), Walter Scott (Montreal / Toronto), Olav Westphalen (Stockholm) and Juliane Zelwies (Berlin).

The cartoons are as light as they would be on the last page of the Sunday papers. However, the protagonists in the cartoons at SCOTTY are all seasoned players in the art world and provide an insight into the social interactions of their working environment at exhibition openings, art fairs, in the studio or in the pub. Witty, sometimes absurd, but always true. An antidote for bleak times.

If the current measures allow, the exhibition will be open to visitors during the regular opening times by appointment (link for registration on the website) in compliance with the standard hygiene measures. Please check the website for updates. The exhibition can also be seen through the storefront window at SCOTTY (Oranienstrasse 46) or online at: @scottyspaceberlin (Instagram) or ScottyProjectSpaceBerlin (Facebook).

An online artist talk with the participating artists will take place on March 27, 21 at 7:00 p.m (CET), the link will be provided on our website.

Öffnungszeiten / opening hours  
Do – Fr 15 – 19 Uhr, Sa 14 – 18 Uhr  
Thu – Fri 3 – 7 pm, Sat 2 pm – 6 pm

SCOTTY  
Oranienstrasse 46  
10969 Berlin

U8 Moritzplatz  
Bus M 29  
www.scotty-berlin.de



**about the exhibiting artists:**

**Pablo Helguera** is a New York-based artist working with installation, sculpture, photography, drawing, and socially engaged art and performance. His work covers a variety of topics including history, pedagogy, sociolinguistics, ethnography, memory, and the absurd, in widely varying formats including lecture, museum display, musical performance, and written fiction.

His work as an educator has usually intersected his interest as an artist, making his work often reflects on issues of interpretation, dialogue, and the role of contemporary culture in a global reality. Helguera has exhibited or performed at venues such as the Museo de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid; ICA Boston; RCA London; 8th Havana Biennial, PERFORMA 05, Havana; Shedhalle, Zurich; MoMA P.S.1, New York; Brooklyn Museum; IFA Galerie, Bonn; Tokyo Metropolitan Art Museum, Tokyo; MALBA museum in Buenos Aires, Ex-Teresa Espacio Alternativo in Mexico City, The Bronx Museum, Artist Space, and Sculpture Center, amongst many others. His work has been reviewed in Art in America, Artforum, The New York Times, ArtNews, amongst others. From 2007 to 2020 he was Director of Adult and Academic Programs at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. He currently is an Assistant Professor at the College of Performing Arts at the New School.

**Olav Westphalen** is a German-American artist whose practice frequently takes the form of games, entertainment or cartoons. His activities aim at the cultural blind spots of the contexts he inhabits. He plays both sides of the HI-LO divide, producing mass-media comedy and cartoons while showing in museums and galleries such as The Whitney Museum, ICA London, The Swiss Institute NY, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, Brandenburgischer Kunstverein, Museum Fridericianum and others. His work is collected by the Dallas Museum, Centre Pompidou, Moderna Museet, MoMA, New York etc. Books include: "Helden und Geschichten," Carlsen, 2009; "Ü," with Dan Graham, OCA, 2009; "24 Artworks," Shelf, 2010, Dysfunctional Comedy, Sternberg Press, 2016. Currently, he is a professor of Drawing at Hochschule für Künste, Bremen. He lives in Stockholm, Sweden.

**Walter Scott** b. 1985, is an interdisciplinary artist working across comics, drawing, video, performance and sculpture. His comic series, Wendy, chronicles the continuing misadventures of a young artist in a satirical version of the contemporary art world. Wendy has been featured in Canadian Art, Art in America, and published online on the New Yorker. Recent exhibitions include The Scrawled Heel of the Real, Ashley (Berlin), and The Pathos Of Mandy, at the ISCP, New York. Walter was recently an artist-in-residence, at the ISCP, in Brooklyn, New York. His new graphic novel, Wendy, Master of Art, is now available from Drawn & Quarterly.

In her audio and video installations, short films, and lecture performances, **Juliane Zelwies** explores the psychology of social interaction, particularly with regard to (human) communication. Visually at home in the ambiguous borderland between documentary and dramatisation, much of her work relies on an exchange with expert groups and individuals, with whom she looks into the construction and deconstruction of narratives. From 2017 – 2020 Juliane has been artistic research fellow at the art academy in Tromsø, Norway. Her video works are distributed by arsenal distribution - Institute for Film and Video Art, Berlin. Her latest work, a script entitled *artistic research*, has been published by Argobooks, Berlin.

Öffnungszeiten / opening hours

Do – Fr 15 – 19 Uhr, Sa 14 – 18 Uhr

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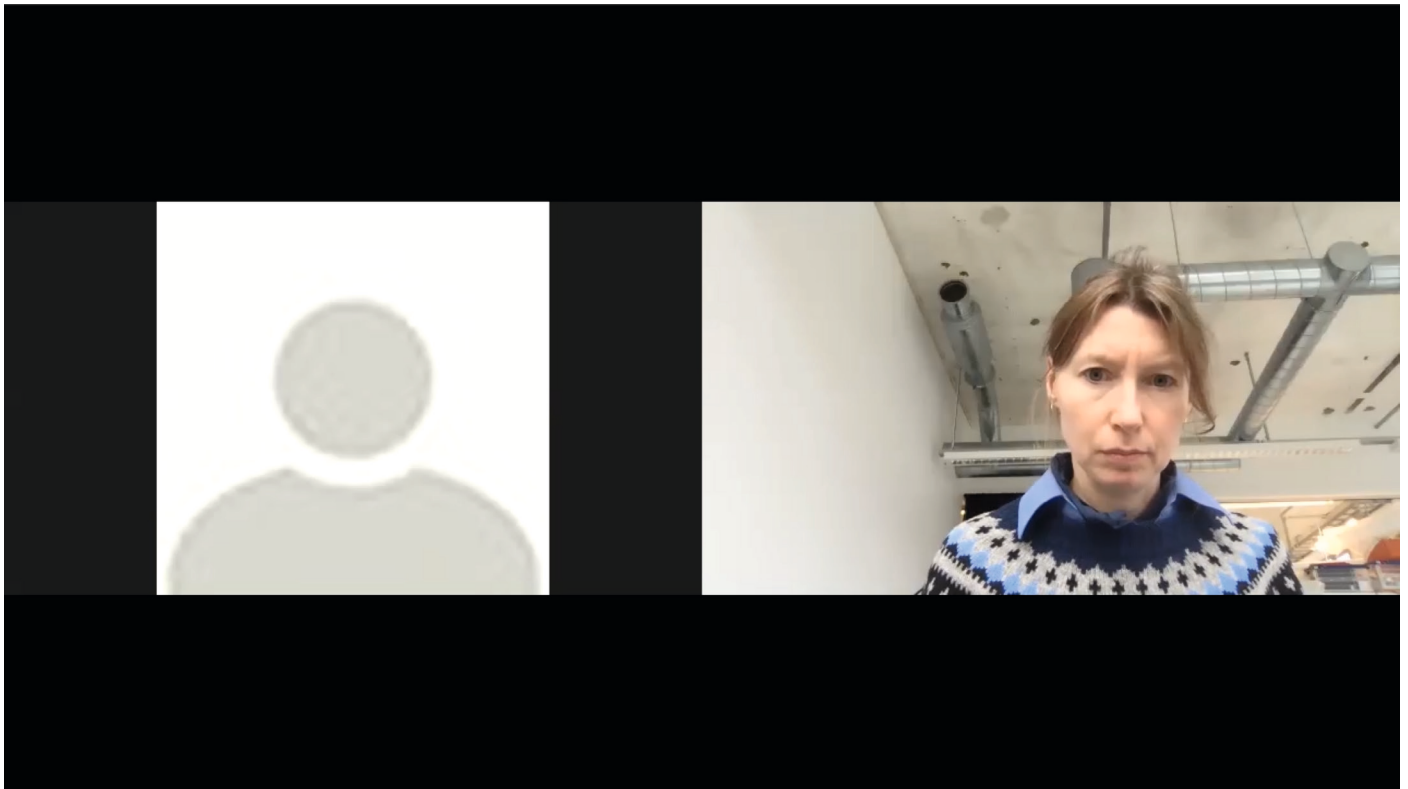
**An interview with myself**  
**(sketch to discuss possible formats for my reflection)**

appendix 6d

Juliane Zelwies, UiT The Arctic University of Norway, Academy of Arts  
presented at the Artistic Research Forum at NTNU in 10/2020

**Please click on the link below to view the video:**

<https://vimeo.com/467823612/b7be760cf1>



video still: *An interview with myself*, 2020, 19:41 minutes

**Diku:** Juliane, in what way has the project developed or changed during the fellowship period? What have been the important choices and turning points?

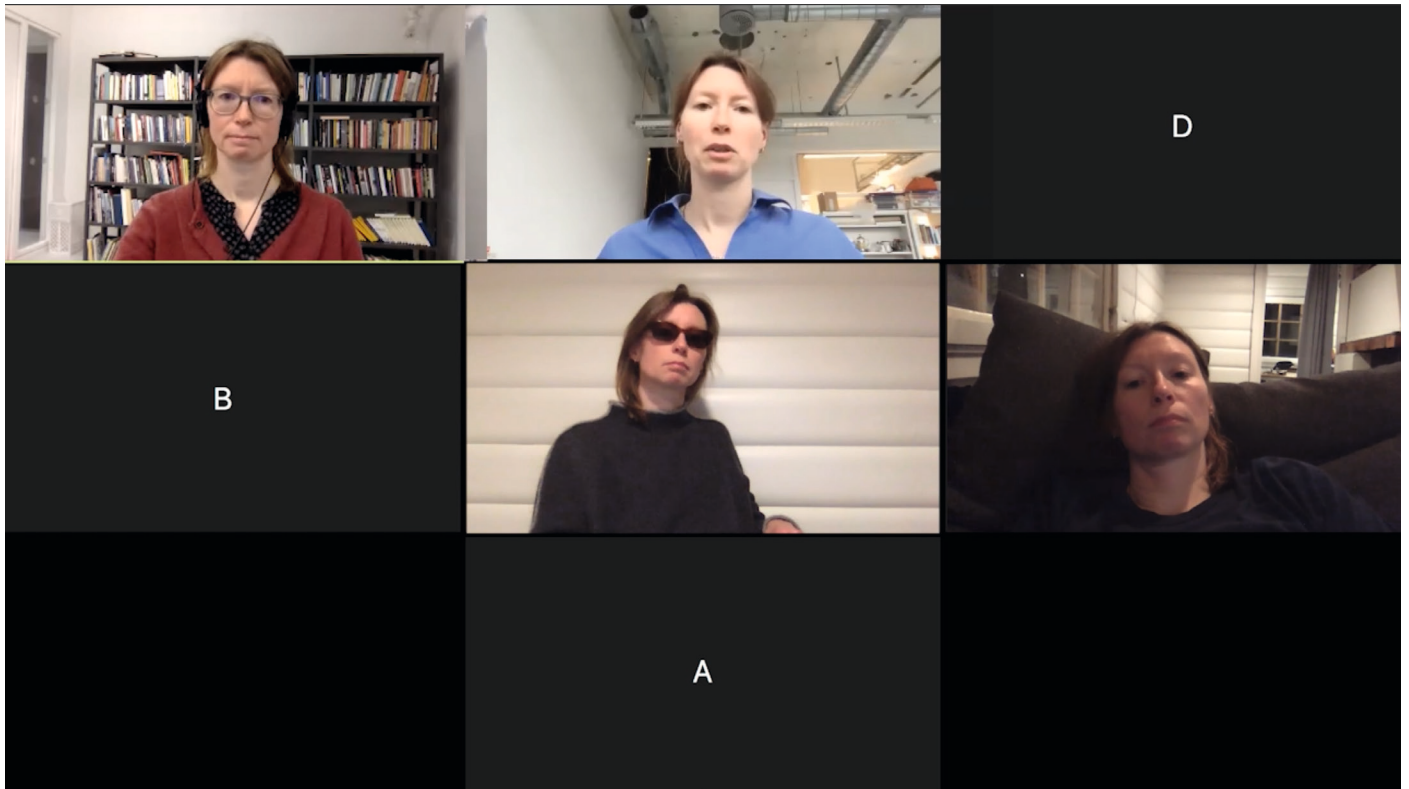
Juliane: In my 2nd year I narrowed down my very broad interest to a rather specific issue. Initially I tried to include all agents or players, who are part and parcel of our western art worlds in my research, but then it became clear that I am first and foremost interested in artists, who do not belong to the top 1.000 globally, but are as well educated as those, who are visibly more successful. In other words, my interest changed from „The Artist, The Market and The Public“ to a group of artists I started to refer to as „The Reserve Elite“. And within this rather specific group of artists, which at the same time is in the majority, I look at situations when the communication seems to break down as I believe that these are the moments when our culture reveals something about itself.

**Diku:** I see. How do you recognize, describe and note your thoughts and reflection during the last phase up to a finished artistic result?

Juliane: A productive metaphor was to think of the project as a hall of mirrors, in which I placed myself together with my research questions. The project is as much about others as it is about myself. And since interviews, discussions and conversations were my main sources to collect information, it seemed most natural to mirror this process in the form of a series of interviews I conduct with myself.

**An interview with myself**  
(sketch to discuss possible formats for my reflection)

appendix 6d



video still: *An interview with myself*, 2020, 19:41 minutes

**Diku:** What do you expect the Assessment committee to focus on in your final assessment? What do you want them to discover in your final assessment?

Juliane: Both humour and taking chances have been important keystones, mostly as methods to widen the scope of my artistic practice. While humour and self-irony make it possible to address the unspeakable, risks come with the danger of failure or conflict. I learnt that conflict is a painful, yet powerful tool to see one's own project in a different light. I have, however, not yet resolved how such insights and findings could be shared with an audience in a non-didactic, yet meaningful way. Another question addresses ethical dilemmas, which come into play if the artistic process collides with ethics guidelines, we shall comply with though the guidelines are written for other fields of study.

**Diku:** Juliane, thank you very much for the interview!

Juliane: Thank you!

jun 7

## A CHORUS OF MANY TRUTHS

anmeldelse, tromsø, 2021

**Review** of the exhibition *Reading out loud* – Juliane Zelwies, Tromsø Kunstforening, 12.03 – 18.04.2021.

Written by [Marion Bouvier](#)

All photos by Tromsø Kunstforening / Vsevolod Kovalevskij.

*«Reading out loud», or reading to hear one's own story from an outsider's perspective. Using film installation and script writing as her medium, Juliane Zelwies attempts to explore the construction and deconstruction of narratives. Underneath it all lies the question of whether there is one universal truth, or whether there can only be as many truths as there are individuals.*

The exhibition is composed of two rooms and presents works by Juliane Zelwies, who is an artistic research fellow at the Academy of Art, The Arctic University of Norway and The University of Bergen. In the first one, binders containing scripts and labeled with different character names are scattered on a large table; on the far wall, the video installation «The Cloud» (2021) consisting of four screens, plays a looped video of changing skies. In the second room, a semi-circular wooden bench invites the viewer to sit facing the two-channel video installation, where the eponymous video, *Reading out loud* (2021) is playing on loop.

### **An art seminar gone adrift**

The film shows a group of readers sitting down reading from the same script as the one scattered on the tables in the first room. The story we are told is

about an art symposium, situated at Utøya, where a group of artistic researchers is gathered to discuss their artistic practices. During the seminar an unexpected happening brings about an irreconcilable rift amongst its participants. This happens when a performance artist accuses everyone of racism, leaving the rest of the group to wonder whether the accusation was real or part of a performative experiment.

The “readers” are placed on a stage that is visibly a theater stage. They frequently look into the camera while reading the script, breaking the fourth wall and reminding us that this is not a film, and forcing us to keep a critical distance to the material. The readers are not actors, they do not wear costumes nor do they act while reading.

As we listen to the story unfolding, we do get to feel the effect Utøya has on the participants of the seminar, how its unspoken presence pervades their mental space. We also feel the subtle ways in which artists interact both as a community and as individual people with one another, which is an essential aspect of Zelwies’s Ph.D-research. In a revealing reminder of her interest in artists communities, Zelwies also chose her readers from the local community of artists and cultural workers of Tromsø. As they read about the small community that formed and broke during the seminar on Utøya, it is almost like the two groups – one in Tromsø, one on Utøya – speak to each other. But one group does not get to reply, and a discussion never comes to being, just like no conversation could take place after the performance artist staged his coup: Zelwies indeed mentioned in her artist talk that the performance artist who staged the «coup» during the seminar refused to further address the events afterwards. As all the participants went back to their respective cities, Zelwies was left only with her own memories of what had happened.

### **Truth as a collection of gathered memories**

Yet, *Reading out loud* is not about Utøya, nor is it about this particular seminar. It’s about subjectivity, the profound uniqueness of experience, and human connection despite and through the chasms of subjective narratives. It is the story of the artist’s recollection of the seminar. It’s her memory of it, staged and read, by strangers.



In a guided tour of the exhibition, Juliane Zelwies mentioned that some of the other participants to the seminar were angered when reading her script, saying that she *remembered wrong*, that this was not how things had taken place. Other real-life participants didn't have such strong feelings or were even amused by the work.

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I am reading Melissa Febos's *Abandon Me* (2017) at the same time as I'm writing this review. Parts of the book are about the author's relationship with her father, and she writes; «When he reads this he will blanch at my inaccuracies. (...) But there is no one true version of any story. Some parts we share and some are ours alone. Here is mine.» I can imagine Zelwies's seminar colleagues «blanching at (her) inaccuracies,» as she recalled their words differently than what they remembered saying. Time probably also added a layer of inaccuracy, as memories fade and the brain recreates part of the story to fit one's narrative.

### **A deeply personal work**

Juliane Zelwies's story is hers only, and co-exists with as many stories as there were participants to the seminar she depicts. Together they form the mosaic that is the closest to objective truth. Like archeologists discovering remnants of the past, we only get to observe and analyse a piece of the whole. We will never have before our eyes the complexity of the scene as it played out in the past, but we get to bring our own story into the picture, through interpreting and imagining the rest of the story. From audience, either reading the scripts on the table or sitting on the semi-circular benches facing the readers on the two screens – as if we're part of their reading circle, we become actors in Zelwies's drama. And from actor in her real-life drama, Zelwies becomes her own story's viewer.

And that is precisely what is so interesting about *Reading out loud*. In the fragments of the artist's recollections, we side with her as she tries to establish connections with her fellow artists, feels closeness and loneliness as people come in and out of her sight. In that sense, *Reading out loud* feels like a deeply personal work, much more than the rather austere form of the exhibition could let us think when first entering the gallery space. The only thing I missed is a reflection around actual racism in art circles and society. It is impossible to understand from the work whether the accusation of racism was grounded in reality or not, and although that episode forms the dynamic crux of the work, the topic of racism itself quickly fades away.

<https://www.hakapik.no/home/2021/6/7/a-chorus-of-many-truths>