

Insister space

Tags:

#care

#locality

#infrastructure

#programming

*This document was created by three Insister Space members—Stina Ehn, Elise Nuding, and Karina Sarkissova—to contribute to ‘Curating in Context.’ We see this document as a chance to reflect on where Insister Space is currently as an organisation and where we are going. We met and formulated an invitation for a members’ conversation around three themes that emerged as being relevant to the organisation at the present time: **care**, **curating** and **locality**. Seven members chose to participate and gathered for an online conversation on 19th April 2021. The conversation was recorded, and then transcribed and edited to form the core of this document. From *this core conversation*, we generated a further *set of questions* that were then sent to specific members to respond to via email and in one case through a *one-to-one conversation*. Also included in the document is some *background information* to give context.*

SE: We wanted to talk about themes around care, curating, and locality, and we have some conversation starters around these themes but it is also up to us where to take the conversation. So...yeah, and we can really invite differences of opinions or arguments, or also bring things up within the organization that really didn’t work. This is also the invitation—that it can be quite broad and host many things.

KUA: Yeah, I think that’s also somehow important and also with *Insister Space being a separatist organisation* it comes to what questions do we discuss and where, when it’s going out, when you have an organization like Insister Space and kind of like what

“INSISTER SPACE is an artist driven organisation, platform and network for freelance artists within the field of dance and choreography. We work collectively and

Stockholm University of the Arts, or in Swedish:
Stockholms Konstnärliga Högskola (SKH).

What is the main homogenic trait of Insister Space?
I say that it is that we all come from somewhat
middle class, primarily white, university educated
background. We have somewhat met the world
through similar lenses, posing similar questions
from a quite similar perspective.

are the internal questions that are discussed and what are the questions that we are interested in sharing with the world. Or what is relevant is this context somehow. That's also part of the point of having a separatist space, you have the space to discuss in a way that you maybe don't have at, for example, SKH. It's just an important thing to take into account.

KS: I can start with a question: do you feel that there is an infrastructure for you to be based in a locality. Like a locality, so we're not so Stockholm—or but also, if you want to speak about your Stockholm locality or your other locality you can refer to that because that's real also.

KUA: I think yes—and I think that's part of the reason that Stockholm is my locality, apart from the fact that I studied there. The reason that I am still in Stockholm is because there's an infrastructure that is not—or, at least, it's starting to come but it's not so present in Copenhagen where I'm from...like...the institutions can be more or less strong but the infrastructure is not very present somehow. So it's part of the reason I am in Stockholm, that there are several platforms, not just one of each. And what I also find intriguing with Stockholm, is that I find it has a strong infrastructure for being so on the periphery of Europe. And I think that's a part of what makes Stockholm a very interesting location. I also used to live in Berlin, and that's maybe why I'm more interested in being in Stockholm rather than Berlin—there's a closeness together with a more rooted network and understanding of dance, and a specificity that I find interesting. Someone even spotted that I'd trained in Stockholm, and that can both be something that has to do with a very specific way of training that most people go through, but I think there is also—it can be problematic but I think it's also really

continuously to question the conditions and methods of artistic work.

Our vision is to create a broad platform for professional freelance dance artists to share, collect and reorganise artistic practices. We wish to reshape the neoliberal structures in the dance-field – instead of promoting individual artists, we create supportive structures where our members can work with their own interests but in solidarity with each other.

...
INSISTER SPACE is an organisation for artists within dance, performance and choreography identifying as non-binary, cis-women, trans-women and trans-men. This target

interesting that it locates itself on a map—not just down to how we organize but down to how we move and how we think with movement. At the same time—what also makes it interesting is that it's also connecting to other points in Europe, it's not just an island. That could be one way of starting it, but now it became very about Stockholm, but I guess that's also where Insister Space started so it's also somehow our—for most of us at least—common context.

KS: It makes me also think, at the same time we are building context and...we're using an infrastructure whilst trying to be based somewhere, let's say...and usually the building of context is the non-paid labour also, of course...

GT: Yeah, the question immediately....I started thinking about infrastructure versus context, and what both of you somehow said, thinking about ...during my time studying at SKH on the BA in Dance Performance, for example, I thought about infrastructure as something that would be...that would *be*. And now my understanding of an infrastructure is much more something that is in becoming. Not something solid that is there, but something that we constantly build. That the infrastructure and the context as a point of...as like a crossing point that is basically relations, and that the infrastructure that is material—like ok, here is a space, it holds time for a focus or da da da da, or it holds for coming together and meeting, or it holds for training, or whatever—as much as the immaterial, relational body-to-body infrastructures that might be possible—and then I started to—like, in this situation I haven't come up with the infrastructure, context kind of...and I think now it's easy for me to enter talking about Insister Space...but for me I think what is the most scary when projecting a future is to be without a

group is made from a clear point of reference, within a profession where the majority of the workers are women but where cis-men have a higher quota for work opportunities, power, resources and space. Through supporting the work of this target group, the organisation counters, shakes and challenges the norms and creates a ground for sisterhood.” —
<https://insisterspace.se/>

What can you speak about in Insister Space that you cannot speak about outside of Insister Space?

In the gatherings of INSISTER SPACE, I find myself talking about the practicalities of freelancing that I often keep to myself. Like how to put up a webpage and which funds it actually makes sense applying to. Another kind of conversation that comes up is more structural. Without a need to stay positive or affirmative, but still without falling into negative

and dismissive patterns, we can discuss the conditions and infrastructures of the field with a practicality that I seldom find outside of these gatherings. We talk about the field as something changeable, a structure that can be formed, and we discuss how we're going to do it.

context, or you know? Or somehow—like how important it is to exist in a context. Like when you graduate, or this moment when you are like, ok *this* context and the infrastructure that this existence was somehow conditioned by or made possible through is coming to an end and then there's like a threshold into another one—or I don't know, but somehow how important they are. And I do think—I don't think there is any infrastructure or context per se but there is the possibility to keep building them or to make—like I do feel a bit of agency to work within something, to expand it, to make an infrastructure, to be based in a locality.

KS: Yeah, you were talking a bit about that just now, the freelancing being different from—you are taught one thing during your studies and then you learn something else outside of that, like in your freelance life. It would be nice to hear what is the difference, some kind of thing to mention...

EN: I mean, I'm thinking about—this is not a direct answer—I'm thinking about the resonance of infrastructures that have been. So, like the example of having studied at SKH on the BA in Dance Performance, that is something that all of the founding members of Insister Space did, and many members have done, but not all members. Including me. So there's some...I feel like there's the resonance of an infrastructure that I've not been part of...that is...that like can both support or be uninteresting, like not directly relevant—not unhelpful, but not directly helpful for all situations or for all members' infrastructures. But then at the same time...I think the thing of having studied in a place is a really...it's a very—what am I trying to say?...It's a really *clear* infrastructure or context—not that they are always the same thing—and then this resonance after but...it's interesting

Insister Space was founded in 2017 by a group of dancers identifying as non-cis males studying the BA in Dance Performance at SKH. It started as a fieldwork project within their graduation studies and after graduating a non-profit

How do you give space within your locality?

First of all, this question makes me think of resources. Who has them? Who is able to share them and within what circumstances?

For instance, I think the freelance field of dance has a few individuals who have built up a certain kind of economy around their artistic work life which some choose to share with the surrounding community. In this case the locality is the freelance dance field and the "you" is this individual. "Space" is the resources like space, time, knowledge, network, money, working opportunities etc. I think it's nice and all that these individuals voluntarily share their capital, but hey I'm a socialist so I do find it problematic that the sharing is based on simple goodwill – it's basically charity. I'm not naive, I understand that this is the structure we are left with in a neo-liberal market, nevertheless do I feel suspicious towards the reliability towards a structure like that.

because I feel that the resonances of those infrastructures in all the people I know who have studied at SKH on that particular program are very present. So I don't feel at all that they've disappeared and that those infrastructures are not there any more, they are so present in the freelance life, by virtue of not being shared—like that not being a shared context between myself and those colleagues or friends. So, it's kind of like yes, those infrastructures cease to exist when one graduates, but they are also their own context somehow, the infrastructures of an education. And then how those contexts and infrastructures then affect the work, or what then is becoming in the context and/or infrastructures of Insister Space is an interesting question.

GT: Yeah, no I think this with education is a very...thinking about these differences in terms of both during and after but also this education versus not education that it is also...I think there is also something very particular about sharing that rhythm with a bunch of people that were chosen, but you didn't choose each other somehow, like there is a very specific thing to undergo an education that is also a lot about... I don't know if I want to talk about SKH actually [laughs]...I mean I am finding myself in a completely differently designed educational frame right now where you don't share any rhythm with anyone, but there is still a context and there is a very strong infrastructure, like that is basically what it is...I don't know...I'm also juggling these kind of comparisons with myself in terms of what they give and do not give and the differences. But I think there is also something with...like now if I am zooming out to think about Stockholm infrastructure, or context, that is like how...what for me would be an interesting project is how to make as many entrances into that as possible. Like to not have one—maybe it is not possible

organization was created to continue with the work.

Secondly, it is relevant to self-examine and to formulate a bit of self-criticism on an individual plane, which I believe this particular question is trying to call attention to (?). What privileges am I as a white, born middle-class, nordic art educated person carrying? Which of these are shareable? In this case I am the "you" in the question, the "space" is my privileges and "locality" is my surroundings – however intimate or global that sphere of that surrounding might be. So then the question is what are my privileges and how do I make them shareable? We can count out the financial privileges since I'm often unemployed and both of my parents are retired. My family background is not from academia nor art so I carry very few tips and tricks when it comes to that world. What I do have is a community of people in similar living situations which I receive support and knowledge from and I have somehow found a way of paying the rent to höjden so in that extent I have access to a physical space too. All these are shareable but I think within the super bureaucratic Sweden model it needs to be structured in some ways which I believe INSISTER SPACE tries to do. And who then does that organisational and administrative work? Well, I've been sitting on the board for two and a half years,

to have one entrance...that is... maybe, yeah, there is not like one entrance, but like very porous—like how can it become more porous so that there are many, many ways in. It is a cheese, with many, many holes, but they all come—like you all end up in the same cheese, somehow. Yeah, I don't know...

OB: It makes me think a bit about professionalism, or like, I don't know, following the money. Like what is an infrastructure and what is a context, I don't know exactly how to distinguish them, but to me infrastructure sounds a bit like, oh it's a place where it's possible to make work...somehow navigate as an artist...um...yeah, I don't know. I think it's an interesting question also now that—when the organization was started it was started by a group of dancers that were graduating from a dance education and somehow found that there were other certain things that we need to learn in order to continue to have a context together, or continue to...to relate to art and work with art within a kind of community. I don't know, it's a bit about that but then there's also a lot of Insister Space stuff that's also just like navigating the infrastructure, like the *Prequel* for example, this online group where members help each other out with tips and tricks—it's also just about navigating the system, I don't know, it's a bit contradictory somehow those two...

EN: Maybe I can bring in another of the questions we had, which I think connects really nicely to what you're bringing up here, and that is: how does care/curating feature in Insister Space's choreographic proposal—or maybe just Insister Space's proposal. Because what you're speaking to there is really in some ways about acts of care and/or curating, so trying to find tools or share tools to navigate existing infrastructures in a professional context. And I think the *Prequel* is, for me, a

The Insister Space initiative A *Choreographer's Handbook: The Prequel* is an online library that aims to gather updated information on all the work one needs to

still learning and developing strategies with a lot of help from the other board members as well as other outsiders but I believe that's the most concrete way I can give space to my locality. I don't think it counts as charity work because the resources which float through INSISTER SPACE are rarely INSISTER SPACE's own, it's in need of a dance community and relations to institutions to be able to continue to thrive – for instance the collaboration with höjden in Stockholm and Skogen in Gothenburg. Therefore I believe, in order to give space within a locality there is a need for community, communication, comradeship, solidarity, decentralization. A sharing not based on charity but instead on solidarity and equality. The volunteer aspect is also important I think; for me it makes it less of an individual based work and it becomes crucial that the workforce relies on a certain individual motivation and ethical compass.

really—I think it really is a curating a space to work against this thing of individuals in the field competing for the same resources and shifting the proposal to, hey, look at this residency, let's both apply or let's do a workshop to work on this application together, and so on...

KUA: With Insister Space everyone that's a member can pitch in and host a workshop. There's something great about that, but at the same time there's also this question of who is this group? Who are we hosting this for? Who are we? Not who do we want to be and who do we want to be for, but who are we for? And for me that's very—in having an open structure somehow—the Prequel is also extremely open, sometimes verging towards being an open call page—maybe that is something we can think about. Especially now during Covid when it's difficult to have *hoffice* and these kinds of things. It easily just becomes this open thing...and that's fine but it raises the question of who is this constellation? And why are we meeting there?

KS: In school, when I studied choreography in Amsterdam, there was this strong monumental identity to individualism. If you were an artist, you needed to be an individual, which means that in the non-chosen group that you're a part of, you need to do something different than the others. And this doing different then means to multiply individuality within that group. But then to also build hierarchies from that, and those hierarchies are built on what the market is buying at the moment, within your work—which means your gender, your interest, your representation and your political choices. And I think in a way, to refer to a structure like Insister Space is a way to refer to the non-individuality. Like, I don't always feel like I need to make

know and do in order to work within the freelance field of dance and choreography. It proposes solidarity instead of competition, and wishes to underscore the point that there is a lot of work and knowledge that is required to even get into the studio.

“hoffice” is an Insister Space initiative so-named because it started off as a combination of ‘home’ and ‘office’ but has since expanded to happen in a variety of spaces. The basic idea is to meet up and do administrative work together. Sometimes a hoffice session may be organised around a

choices alone, I can grab someone. There's a wish for some transparency and there's a wish to share and to be a resource for others, not only to be an individual. And then you grab whatever you can access in the moment, like KUA, last week I asked you about a fund that I knew that you've been applying for. In this village, I got to know that and then that becomes a resource for me. And there's no question about the border of that resource. I feel kind of rich within that space somehow.

specific application, so that everyone works on their applications separately, but together.

GT: We did this festival at **Weld** in 2018. In that moment we decided that it wouldn't be curated, in the sense that we asked everyone who wanted to be a part of it, then we said that if it turns out that there are too many who want to take part, if it comes to that, that it won't be possible then there's already a paradox inherent to this non-selection. But we said that if it happens, we'll do a lottery. And then it turned out that everyone who was interested could be part of the festival. One thing that's in the back of my head that comes up when we talk about selection and power is that Insister Space is open for everyone within the separatist frame to apply to. But there's so many different structures at play. Like when we send out an invitation for the festival, who responds to it? Even in an invitation there's already an implied selection.

Weld is a venue for dance and choreography in Stockholm.

EN: Yes, my first thought when you were describing that festival process was who was able to already have something to show? People who somehow had the time and resources and support, to just even have started something, even if it was not finished work...

SE: I'm thinking of **the residency at Skogen**. Where it's not like you need to have a finished piece or something you want to share with an audience already but you come with—yeah, a

What have you recently learned from Insister Space?

I recently learned (again), to feel the importance of community, and always “check the temperature” if needed. That means, ask questions like where are we at? Where, and how, are we working, and are we in this togetherness on a fruitful path right now? I recently experienced that through sharing our practices next to each other, an unknown sum of materials can manifest something that is impossible to imagine. Lately, I learned the importance of laughter in comradeship.

proposal or an idea and then you can work around it with your Insister Space colleagues during this residency. But then of course, also to say that this particular residency is not paid, so who can take part? There are many things there as well...

OB: I think this was a bit my point in the beginning, because somehow, building a context is possible if you have other—like there’s something naive about the whole organisation from the beginning. And I don’t mean naive in a bad sense, like I think it’s a good thing. Because it’s like, let’s put our efforts into creating something communal rather than competing. But we’re not proposing a new system, we’re still about how can we work together to navigate this system that is about competing. And then it becomes about who has one another’s backs. There’s always this thing of following the resources or the infrastructure.

GT: Yes, I think Insister Space is much more micro-political than an infrastructure. It’s much more interpersonal, as you say OB. For it to be, like, utopian and epic there would be a festival for finished works, a production residency, workshops of sharing practice...then it would be this and this and this, because none of the formats would be for all the members but together they make a lot of things possible. And then there’s money for everything and also money for the people making the thing possible, those organising it.

OB: Yes and it is like—even though it’s very limited to a particular group and context that joins or finds the organisation...But it’s bigger than a friend group, which I think is interesting. To be stuck in these discussions which can be problematic, but I need to deal with it beyond the people I would have dinner with. I guess context also happens in workshops and when making pieces but I feel like Insister Space

Insister Space has had residencies at Skogen, Gothenburg in 2018 and 2019. The plan was to have a follow-up residency in 2020 followed by a mini-festival in 2021. The 2020 residency was postponed multiple times due to the Covid-19 pandemic and took place in May 2021. A group of Insister Space members formed a working group to organise and administer the residency (this has been unpaid labour), with a call-out to members for expressions of interest in taking part.

needs these kind of discussions—I wouldn't have them otherwise and I think they're important.

GT: I think—this is a simplification—but I think friendship is the infrastructure that proposes continuity or another temporality than the project or workshop or course. You can have continuous conversations about stuff with your friends. And as you say, Insister Space is bigger than a friendship circle or at least it has more clusters. So to think about how it stretches in time, that it offers another temporality—it's not based on friendship but on being colleagues and wanting to meet each other. One phrasing that I really like is 'how do we work with the colleagues that we're not in the same project as?' There's a collective of colleagues...

EN: Maybe it's about the colleagueship not being tied to a particular piece of work, as in a particular project or employment...and it's not tied to these people being the ones that you might have dinner with.

KUA: Yes, But I was thinking about what you said GT, about weighting the administrative work equally—like in terms of hourly pay—or in relation to also the artistic work and I was thinking a bit about being part of Interim or the work of *Interim*, which is somehow dealing with similar questions, but from a different position, and how glad I am that it's not the same organization. I think it's really great that there are several organizations occupied with the same questions but from very different entry-points somehow. Also because Interim are not the only ones working with this. There is also *SMartSE*, which is a cooperative. To think along these questions without Insister Space having the same responsibility for employing everyone or something like that. And there was something about the

What can you speak about in Insister Space that you cannot speak about outside of insister space?

I do not think the organisation creates room for specific topic or issue that cannot be brought up elsewhere in the dance field. With my dance colleagues there are many things I can speak about that I don't speak about in other contexts like with my family and friends that are not involved with dance. There are common experiences, a language and interests arising from the weird material that dance is.

It is important for me to meet colleagues and talk about matters relating to dance and performance, INSISTER SPACE makes up occasions that are meant for this, which I appreciate allot. A freelance life can easily become lonely since the systems you need to navigate through between projects are often very individualised. I think the context of dance and performance is specifically relying on a strong context, on-going conversations and occasions to meet up in groups to talk, share and develop knowledge. I experience that INSISTER SPACE create continuity and a specific sticky path where I get to understand my work and artistic processes through a longer perspective in time. This help me frame my freelance life and artistic processes in a meaningful way, it gives me new insights and help me to be self-critical. I guess this need exist for many writers and visual artists as well, but I guess it

question of care and curating, I'm jumping back in time now, I hope it's ok, it took some time to formulate. GT was talking about the festival that Insister Space was hosting and the process, from lottery to everyone can show—the questions of who decides and not. And I think it's very important that curation is way more than a selection process and I think KS and I were very confronted with this in the process of PIM, Para-Institutional Models. We were coming in as programmers, and it was so clear how different it was from curating something. I mean there is of course always a framework that you relate to, and you also engage somehow in an existing infrastructure. But it was so clear that it, because often curating can somehow be limited to being the selection of who and what is shown—and of course it's really much more. That is the interesting part of having a non-selection-curation. What kind of framework do you need to create? What kind of context do you need to create around that work? Even if that is very broad or general. I was not in Sweden at that time, but when I read the program and I didn't find it general. I found it particular. Also in terms of how do you put a program up? How do you put out a callout? All of that is part of the curational process that affects who responds to the call. And then also the importance of it *not* being an open call sometimes. As a freelancer, I am so sick of open calls. On one hand I can see the necessity somehow, but at the same time it lacks the ongoing conversation. Maybe it can become a conversation, but it has a root in—again—this super-selection process that for me, as a freelance artist, is the way that I engage with my work through putting it into these frames...curation comes from care, and somehow to put the care aspect forward and the frame-making forward instead of the selection process—that is what I find very interesting in what GT was talking about...and also start to show these different

Interim is a Swedish employment cooperative for artists.

SMartSE: A cooperative production house for freelance artists that exists in 40 cities across 9 European countries.

Para-Institutional Models (PIM) is an art project exploring modes of operation for a contemporary art institution, with a focus on the Nordic countries. Insister Space is a member of PIM.

is worth mentioning that dance is an art form that relies (maybe in a higher degree than some other art forms) on oral and bodily transmission and exchange.

I feel that your question is hinting at the fact that the organisation is women and trans-separatist. It is an aspect about the organisation that I am finding hard to justify at the moment. In my experience the organisations members meet up to share and discuss art and matters relating to working with art, not to have political discussions and work to abolish sexism in the arts. I have not participated in discussions on how to defend ourselves against patriarchy, or sexual violence or any other question related to gender equality matters more specifically.

However I do think there is a specific listening and caring vibe in the INSISTER SPACE meetings and events, which I think can be related to the exclusion of cis-men. It is a type of room and group constellation I am used to being in. Sometimes I wonder if it just has to do with the comfort and ease of a homogenous group. Of course it is easier to be with like-minded or similar people, but I guess the relevant question for me at the moment is what is most relevant for the art that we are making, for the distribution and mediation of dance in society. I think we could benefit from the awkwardness or insecurity that can come from having to explain

aspects of it. It is related to taste, but it is also not related to taste. It is related to opinions but it is also not related to opinions in terms what work gets selected. Yeah, a few free-flying thoughts...there is something that works against this curation as free-selection, at the same time as I also find it very...I hate the word problematic because it's so over-used but there is also something like, ok, the organization is open, so everyone can join but not everyone can join, yet technically everyone can. But in practice, that is not the case. This is about how information is being spread, what is the network, what is the relevance, who has the resources to engage in that...and that is not something that should stop it from happening, but it is an interesting question, especially when you have an initiative that has these non-curatorial practices and I'm not even thinking only about performances—I'm also thinking about the daily training that Insister Space has been hosting...there are other things that have gone through this way of thinking.

EN: Yeah, I was thinking about how an open call is...open is almost a meaningless word and there's all sorts of things going on in any open call situation that create framings, that create certain directions that the selection process may take. And I'm thinking about the fact that Insister Space is not an open organization, we are a separatist organization...

OB: Can I comment on this? I thought it was interesting when KUA said that the curatorial proposal was like an ongoing conversation. I just was thinking about being involved in this group that has been planning, or curating a residency, and this year it was supposed to be a mini-festival at Skogen. And I think that with the repeated postponement due to the pandemic there has been an ongoing conversation—not just within the

something to someone that can not instantly relate or understand.

group that is planning this particular thing at Skogen but maybe in Insister Space more broadly as an organization there is also some kind of ongoing conversation about how the different things that happen also speak to one another, or that there is a continuity that is hard to create in another freelance infrastructures. I thought that was very nice, like also maybe to ask what kind of works are produced in that context, or if work seeps through that structure of an ongoing conversation—like what does that do to the art?

GT: I think this is interesting in terms of all these things that we open for the members. There is so much implied in anything. There is so much implied in one particular studio—if it's a dance studio, how does it look? What is possible there? What can be produced there? What can be produced in a residency? What can be moved around? What cannot be moved around? What leaves traces? Which kind of traces? All these architectures somehow choreograph already the possible. As said, there is something interesting with “here is a festival”, “here is this thing at Skogen”...it gathers things. You phrase your own work or practice around that call, but it is about everything that is possible when we build that temporary structure, everything that somehow is possible there, and then you build another one, and you build another one. But it can be something continuous, something that is plastic, that is being rebuilt. But this work also implies continuity that Insister Space both has and doesn't have. Because there are constantly new people. The organisation is not static in any form. The member group, the board...You know nothing is static, everything is moving. The repetition that a practice implies is something to hold on to, to measure that difference, but when everything is moving around or you want to keep moving around in the structure...Many different

LS: At a recent members' meeting, while discussing the organisation's separatism, we came to talk about whether Insister Space is a group or not. Like, is it an exclusive group which uses a common language and ground and where certain attention is directed to how it speaks of itself to an outside, making itself available for everyone to feel comfortable enough to join? Or is it rather a continuous movement which people connect and disconnect to alternately and therefore producing different kinds of language use, frames and fronts? Usually Insister Space works out like this: a few members might propose something; others make it happen; some more people join while others drop out; someone re-change the original proposal and so on. It makes me think of this plasticity-concept; giving form and being formed... Such an ongoing moving structure is not completely bug-free

paradoxes comes with Insister Space and I find that those frictions holds a lot of potential, and sometimes I don't think we find enough time to stay with them. It is not about unifying or simplifying, but to keep it more and more plural in terms of everything in the structures, in the aesthetics, in the group in the blah blah blah...sorry for going everywhere in the same breath.

GT: How does the working group imagine the end of this conversation, that is the text?

SE: You mean the document we will send to SKH? We will keep it as an ongoing dialogue, with these branch questions coming out...somehow it will be a document gathering these things, but we don't know yet how.

KS: Yeah I think we have different interests also and ideas of what this could be. I'm curious how to use this structure as a structure within itself without an outside. I'm curious how to ask questions and curate the questions further somehow. Is there anything else anyone wants to say before we finish? We don't want to take up too much time, even though everything always starts when it needs to end.

KUA: It's good to know that it will not end even though it ends now. It doesn't feel so fragile to leave it here.

though. In case of a crisis for example: someone gets hurt. Who is then...?

SE: Who's responsible?

LS: Yes. Who takes on the responsibility; management and clear out consequences. How to deal with such an event and prevent it from happening again? And even in such a fungus-structure the problem remains: who feels safe enough to join; taking part, making changes or questioning the temporary structures and so on?

SE: If you work continuously with some specific people or in a group, then you need to deal with your relations to those people in the long run. So if the premise is that the organisation in itself is the thing that is continuous, then it's also easier to drop out and leave the responsibilities and workload on someone else. And, as you say, with people always shifting, how can we all learn from previous events or issues that happened within the organisation?

LS: Yes, that is tricky. If we make space for an evaluation for example after a certain project, what happens with the result? Outspokenly the organisation follows a kind of "if this method

question from severe events: what lessons are learned working with Insister Space? I don't know, is it important to learn anything from this organisational work? Maybe Insister Space is not a place for learning, haha.

SE: Haha. Not a place to become better..?

LS: I mean, some activities within Insister Space do offer practicing of certain skills which are beneficial on an individual level. Members have practiced work tasks they might not have done or dare to do on their own. And that provides some learning yes, like calling 'important' people, doing admin work, having a chance to host workshops...

SE: But I'm wondering then, because sure, Insister Space is micro-political and not aiming to change the big structures, but is the organisation there in order to create opportunities for the members as individuals to make careers?

LS: Yes, this is the issue I find disgusting haha. I don't think the organisation should work neither as a marketing platform highlighting individuals nor as a business school – that's what I

doesn't work, make up another"-approach. Makes the work within the organisation fast but sure, there are issues regarding continuity and duration. Meditation and documentation. In the end, looking into the blobby organisation, at individuals' contributions and responsibilities, it always comes down to that **no one gets paid for the ongoing work tasks**. Many are already stressed; have a lot to do in their work life outside Insister Space; already doing precarious, unpaid work.

SE: And of course you need to take a paid job even though you planned to work with Insister Space.

LS: Yes, which causes disruptions. How much responsibility can you ask from these already exhausted workers? Back to your question about learning important lessons... If we remove the by sharing tips & tricks prohibit the inequality and competition of only a few knowing how to crack the code of working as a freelance dancer or choreographer. This seems then more like a collective practice of learning which directly threatens the selfish ego-model.

SE: Ye, I'm thinking of this wish of wanting to reach everyone. And of course we should dream big but

meant with Insister Space not being a place to learn, like *only* improving your freelance skills. However, sure you do benefit from a certain ability to handle administrative work as a freelancer, even though that work is precisely the kind of work Insister Space have tried to bid defiance to proposing the collegial relations between freelancers. At least we can prevent this kind of work from being lonely and 'invisible' and direct way. The sort of work which needs to be done on the behalf of the organisation and further ideological or political activism is trickier to practically deal with. It becomes again this *added* workload, which, no matter how important and crucial it is – for the organisation, the dance field, the whole society – seems to be difficult to include organically and practically to the members' activities. The organisation needs to continue looking into that work though. I mean, there is so much promising strength in the organisation's collectiveness, it sure is able to shoulder the otherwise lonely individual's responsibility in the neo-lib world.

Another way of organising work among such busy freelancers is decentralizing methods where we try to even out the work loads related to the organisation between the members. The method also concerns distributing resources between us like residencies, hosting workshops, sharing the camera or the projector...

SE: In the organisation, there are members both freelancing but also who are in school. And with that I'm thinking of when one

In a few of the shorter projects or one-time events that Insister Space has been involved in or organised, there has been economic compensation. The ongoing activity, for example the organisation's board work, is done on a voluntary basis.

when looking at who's in the organisation, it's obvious that Insister Space isn't doing that. But at least the organisation is proposing something else than what already is. As in what it's like to be a freelancer.

LS: Exactly. The fact that Insister Space reaches mainly white art educated dancers and choreographers from more or less same schools has been something that has been talked a lot about, and still is, but yet, honestly, we have problems finding practical solutions. The discussions, reading groups and meetings often end in the same questions about how to reach out. That kind of marketing-work as well as the self-examination regarding identity differs a bit to the usual problematizations which concern the individual artist's work (their artistry or office related working tasks) – which are activities that benefit the current members in a much more

SE: I was thinking about when you're in a dancer's education, you're not foremost creating your own artistic works. At least during my education, it was so much more about training the skills of a dancer. Those aren't necessarily different skills from artistic skills, but we had very few classes in how to make pieces or works in comparison to the dance

has a need for a community or something that's not only yourself that feels meaningful to feed into. What makes it worth putting in those extra hours, because it gives you something back that you otherwise don't have. As in context and colleagues. For me, that need has been very clear since graduating from my education and not having peers around me in the same way.

...

tests, I never become the Artist but instead always becomes the Listener, the Therapist, the Nurse... and my reaction is always like "That *is* the dancer!"

SE: It's like when you're in school you train to become a dancer but then you graduate and become a dance artist. There's a gap there, between dance education and how the market functions for freelance artists.

LS: Yes, there's a tricky gap there. I remember at one of my first meetings with Insister Space, we were talking about the organisation being the thing you occupy yourself with in between jobs. A way of working with dance when you're not engaged in a project or production.

SE: Insister Space has created these formats for showing and working one's own projects, like the festival at Weld, the Choreographer's Prequel FB group. What about making a Dancer's Prequel?

training. And when we had our own projects, it was very research based, to create an art piece was secondary. It wasn't like people I was in school with weren't interested in creating, but yeah, it was not the focus of the education.

LS: Lately I have realised that defining myself as an Artist is not primarily what I'm interested in and that has been quite a relieving insight. I work *with* artistic practices, not necessarily creating them. When I was studying dance I think the overall but unspoken understanding was that dancers wanted to do their own work. Some do, but it also becomes a requirement because of the dance field: there are few dancer-jobs and very few grants that are explicitly addressed to dancers. And perhaps a certain hierarchy is still existing too between the genius artist and the "robot-dancer". Of course it's much more complex. It's funny, whenever I do these kinds of "what-profession-should-I-do-when-I-grow-up"

SE: It's sensitive since it's often on a very interpersonal level, but still with such clear hierarchies and power dynamics between the choreographer/project leader/employer and the dancer/employee. When searching for dance jobs, one's always at someone else's arena. And I feel

LS: I myself could definitely use some tips & tricks on how to get jobs as a dancer. Until now it has really been thanks to social arrangements... I mean friends.

SE: If Insister Space is about making things more available, these things are really hidden. Because it's so precarious to get those jobs.

LS: Yes, and really sensitive. and language around it. Rather than giving criticism towards someone else's work, mentoring here would shift towards a sort of dancer-perspective, like, how do I do your idea? Sort of working with how we talk about work that isn't yours and isn't mine but is something in between or both.

like this sensitivity makes it really difficult to talk about, like I don't even do it with my closest friend-colleagues.

LS: It's almost as if you are 'threatening' someone else's chance to be hired if you are asking about tips. I also feel as if I'm failing as a dancer if I don't know these strategies yet on my own. If I'm taking a workshop with a choreographer, I feel a lot of conflicting feelings. The hierarchies in the room makes it difficult to engage in the work and I feel pressured in a not so giving way that I need to be... "good". I think these things should be talked about even if I feel myself blushing even thinking about it! Forever internalising the Good-Girl...

To give an example of up-coming practical activities which might happen within Insister Space, I really want to try this idea named *At Issue: Mentoring*. The proposal is "mentoring" as an activity concerning both the developing of art practices and stuff as well as the communication


At Issue has been a workshop format within Insister Space. Previously it has consisted of morning classes and study circles.

These conversations featured the INSISTER SPACE members:

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*Gry Tingskog
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*plus 3 members who
have chosen to remain
anonymous.*

curating
in 
context



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