

Kludie Osickova

## text 1 – subjective reflection

Following sentences will be very subjective. For me, the main quality of the workshop was freshness. The main theme of the workshop – peripheries – is fresh. Peripheral areas, particularly the urban ones, always used to be a certain source of new positive energy for me, just like bad weather. Oppositely, nice areas and sunny weather doesn't work that well, surprisingly.

The topic of the course is very important. You can have great concept of the course, but if the topic doesn't suit, there is not much you can do. For that I really enjoyed thematizing peripheries within the course. I feel like peripheries in general somehow allow you to be „just“ human. They carry a certain element of relaxation, the imperfection within which we can rest. Maybe the world slows down a bit and is not developing as it should, but we become more aware of our mere humanity.

There is a peripheral part in Prague called „Nusle“ where I used to go for a walk when I felt shitty.



The most characteristic element for this part is a bridge called „Nuselský most“ (Nusle bridge). People used to jump from the bridge to commit a suicide. All together, approx. 300 people killed themselves there to the point when very high metal fences were installed on the sides of the bridge, and suicides ceased. The peripherality of Nusle does not lie in its location as the city centre is just a bunch of tram stops away; what makes it peripheral is its gloomy character since the story of Nusle is written largely by miserable people. There is a lot of weird cafes with 90's aesthetics, streets smell with dust and urine, houses are inhabited by criminals, alcoholics and old-time locals with their dogs whose excrements decore every sidewalk. The time seems to have stopped here at the most painful moment from which eternity has become so. Visiting this neighborhood has cultivated a certain sense of ugliness in me, the ability to appreciate what most people are ashamed of. For that, doing a peripheral course at university (city, country) where it seems like everything is clean, functioning and reasonable, naturally aroused interest in me. I am glad that our group focused on element of imperfection and vulnerability within the area we were supposed to examine. Things that don't make much sense remind me of my home. The absurdity of the area has brought it closer to my mental setting. Things that don't work, are illogical or weird, carry a certain mystery with them. You simply never know. Maybe that's why I feel like peripheries are fresh. They pull you out of the routine and remind you that blood is still flowing in your veins.

So far I haven't described much what exactly was going on in the course, as I write about some memories, associations and feelings, which this class has triggered in me. That's because I felt more like „myself“ during the course than I usually feel here during other school stuff. That's something for what I feel great about this workshop. Besides the topic and the concept of the course it was also caused by the great chemistry we had within our working group. I've met three great girls that I'll be glad to see again in the future.

Even though most of the participants did not exactly understand our intentions / which is partly our fault as we struggled to explain it appropriately / and we had to abandon two projects to finally do the fourth over the weekend (the third project could not be done due to the reconstruction of the location which was essential for it), I am proud of the outcome of our work. It was conceptual, aesthetic, and sincere. School facilities have enabled us to realize the project comfortably and with quality in terms of material. It was nice to finally see what all is available to students. Maybe I'm a little sorry that we were limited to work only at Väre and surroundings, also because this area is full of security people who do not have the slightest understanding for what is going on in art schools.

Sometimes I felt exhausted, especially because we lost a lot of time by constantly changing concepts trying to comply with AdK lecturers who were quite critical to our ideas, and didn't have so much time to realize the final one. Perhaps it is also true that although we went out well in the group as people, we were not making the most productive combination – not because we would be lazy or anything like that, but because we had troubles to make decisions and to agree on something and to do things with dispatch. That took a lot of time from us as well. But as I said, the final outcome is something I really like, I like the posters, I like the texts, and I like the projections. I like projects of other groups as well. The intervention group had a cool idea in my opinion.

## text 2 – objective summary & analysis

The urban peripheries workshop aimed to encourage students to think about the periphery as an urban, social and psychological phenomenon that appears in all areas of human life. Participants of the workshop - students from Berlin University of the Arts (Universität der Künste Berlin) and students from Aalto university School of arts, design and architecture - had the opportunity to experiment with the realization of an art project with most of its aspects and process parts: conceptualization - critical reflection - realization – presentation. UdK students had also the opportunity to try out work in a different university environment and together with Aalto students within a different approach of a particular educational system.

The workshop took a place in the area of new building of Aalto university in Otaniemi Väre. It consisted of three parts and one upcoming part - seminars with a lecturer Maiju and Aalto students during which the periphery as a phenomena was thematized; intensive workshop of Aalto students and AdK students realizing projects together in groups; reflective seminars of Aalto students after the workshop and upcoming visit of Aalto students in Berlin.

At the beginning, students presented their individual approaches to the topic, on the basis of which they were then divided into six groups, each focusing on different aspect of peripheries.

Students had at their disposal all the school equipment, a certain budget and counseling with lecturers throughout the intensive week. The concept of the project - form, scope, content - was on the choice of students, the only given and fixed direction was a theme. A number of different projects were developed, students used spaces and facilities of the Väre building, the square in front of the building, and one of the other buildings of the campus.

Some workgroups were more compact than others, and the consistency of project choices differed - some groups had been doing one project since the first day, others were changing concepts multiple times. Students had to respect different views and approaches to work within the group as well as within Aalto and UdK lecturers' teams. Aalto lecturer Maiju's approach, in my opinion, differed from the approach of UdK lecturers in that it was more supportive and motivating, and therefore encouraged the students to get their projects to finish, respected their choices and gave them more space. I believe that this approach reflects a generally understandable approach across the Finnish education system. UdK lecturers were stricter, more perfectionist and they expected students to realize their ideas within certain borders given by them. It was noticeable that UdK students were able to work with criticism / to give one and to hear some / which I see as a positive result of this approach. Sometimes during presentations I sensed a bit of a lack of sensitivity on the side of UdK students but more sincerity in an effort to provide constructive comments.

I believe that the goals of the workshop have been fulfilled, and the students have finished their work in all its aspects. The students have gone through the difficulties and the pleasures coming from working on similar projects, have heard lots of insights, opinions, and comments on their work and ideas, experienced different approaches from the lecturers and in some cases even became friends with the students of the other university. From an educational point of view, the workshop was compact, colorful, challenging and enriching. I would certainly recommend it to other students.

### text 3 – use text 1 & text 2 as raw material / creative writing

300 people killed themselves emotionally. I would certainly recommend it to other students. I haven't described much what exactly was going on, in some cases streets smell with dust and urine. Weird cafes with 90's aesthetics were able to work with criticism. The most characteristic element is a lack of sensitivity on the side of alcoholics. Excrements have heard lots of insights, opinions, and comments on their work. Urine became friends with them and together they have gone through the difficulties and the pleasures coming from working on similar projects. Nuselský most experienced reflective individual choice. Bad weather recommends.

From an educational point of view, humanity is imperfection. text 1 somehow allows you to be „just“ human. 300 insights, opinions, and comments on suicide. Cultivated aesthetics understands absurdity. I believe that pleasures encourage ideas. Peripheries decore every sidewalk of the world. Text 2 is clean.

There is no “want” in text 1 or text 2 but I want say that

I want to break free  
I want to break free  
I want to break free from your lies

You're so self satisfied I don't need you

I've got to break free **RULES NEED TO BE SOMETIMES BENT BECAUSE WE ARE ALIVE** ONLY ONCE AND AUTHORITY IS small like a small bunny **WHEN FACED TO DEATH.** THERE IS NO MEASURE OF **WHAT IS GOOD AND WHAT IS BAD** EXCEPT OUR FEELINGS RESULTING FROM SITUATIONS INFLUENCING **ONE ANOTHER.** IF WE HURT PEOPLE WE HURT PEOPLE. IF WE HURT OURSELVES WE HURT OURSELVES. ITS JUST FACTS. PAIN AND HAPPINESS ARE RANDOM THINGS RESULTING FROM RANDOM THINGS. I imagine all this being read by some voice of an old actor, calm and dramatic, depending on the sentence. I imagine these statements belong to some person whose situation I have never been in. I imagine this person is closer to truth, but no one knows if there is a truth. The person seems to be crazy and we are not sure if it's because the person knows the truth or that there is no truth. In either case he knows more than we do.

(...) the only given and fixed direction was a theme. The theme was a periphery. Periphery as a necessary opposition to central, periphery as a lead to what is absolute, what is life and death, what is our own decision, the free will whose scope and power is limited to the scale of human existence and human possibilities. Periphery as a reality, as an actual option in the illusion of freedom.

