

(s)mash-up

An interactive deconstruction/reconstruction of film material from the artistic research and film project BLOD.

A video workshop challenging the boundaries of what's mediated and what's performed, what's screen and what's space, what's narrative and what's not.

Playing around, playing with and simply playing concept and composition.

Workshop environment and framework.

There is a room with 25 iPads, each preloaded with 1 – 2 filmed scenes. Each scene is confined to one location and pre-edited as a continuous event.

There are printed scripts of each scene separately.

A three-dimensional frame and several tables are scattered in the room. 20 pussy-bow frocks in different patterns and fabrics are available to wear.

A live camera-feed of what is happening in the room goes into an editing computer, and is transformed into continuously updated sequences of new compositions (mash-ups) that are projected on one wall.

Articulations of the basic concepts of the film project BLOD (more about BLOD and its concepts at the end of this proposal) are plastered around the room.

Workshop.

The artists/researchers start the workshop with a brief presentation of the concepts of BLOD when it comes to content, conditions for collaboration and aesthetics. After explaining how the interactive components of the workshop work and once the participants get going, the researchers facilitate technically, prompt negotiations between the participants and move through conversations on the underlying concepts of the source materials and proposed methods.

During two hours the participants, in groups or individually, create their own compositions using the iPads as mosaic, choosing sections of the film scenes on them, placing them in the physical space. Participants also recreate the physical room using costumes and color, shapes and items in the room.

The room is filmed and using that live feed as well as the film files that are also distributed to the iPad, the researchers and Participants who choose to sit in, make a live edit based on impulses from the room; Picking sections of scenes someone has used in an iPad mosaic, splicing in the live-feed of movement of the room. The live edit is projected largely on a wall, looping back to the physical room impulses for participants to rearrange the mosaics of iPads (contents and relative placements) and themselves in response to the changing atmosphere in the room. On the wall, the past and the present are mixed, the filmed participants in the same frocks as the researchers/performers in the filmed scenes are mediated into co-existence across the both space and time and continuously feeding new compositions of live and preserved, spatial and visual – all to the sound of the participants' need for and researcher prompted conversation on a range from technical problem solving to ethical considerations in the creation of new meaning when taking things out of one context to create another.

Concepts and the film materials.

The artistic research and film project BLOD started in 2017 as a shared site for research by Annika Boholm and Kersti Grunditz Brennan. The project is an ongoing exploration of cinematic storytelling that challenges processes, content matter, roles/authorship and expectations of realism/naturalism and narrative logic in traditional filmmaking. The research deals with bloody trails through womanhood, with conditions for collaboration, outcome of encounters, lived experiences and aesthetics, while seriously transforming the shadows of our losses into artistic expression.

The conceptual aspect of the project – when it comes to content, conditions for collaboration and aesthetics – are condensed in a ten point manifesto.

1. Leave things implicit!
2. Show, don't tell – See, don't show!
3. No compromises!
4. Keep all rights!
5. Reveal yourself!
6. Probe and take risks!
7. Expand naturalism!
8. Protect your creative process!
9. Keep restructuring to the last cut!
10. All forms are permitted!

Doing research using these manifesto points have unveiled some questions the project has come to revolve around, especially when it comes to the compositional aspects of filmmaking:

How consequences of gaps in time and production conditions work for and against the project and how they are manifested in the composition.

How the premise of two people independently working with the two furthest apart aspects of the filmmaking process – writing and editing – then together sharing all the other creative roles – concept, acting, directing, cinematography, composing – and never compromising, is a premise that opens up fissures to friction which, as they are bridged, generate depth and complexity while leaving room for unexpected interludes.

How surrealism – e.g. interrupting a documentary naturalism by locating a hospital scene to an empty football field - works as thresholds that provide pauses/space for the senses to receive and process.

How fractures in time, space, process and aesthetics become collaborators that irritate the attention and tickle the fantasy.

The film materials that will be used in the workshop is generated from these concepts and questions and has certain qualities that open it up for (s)mash-up. It can be described through the following vision statement from the researchers:

"A lot happens off screen and beyond what is said. We come in or leave in middle of a flow, actions can be broken up, mutate. Perspectives can be shifted. Movements, relations and spatiality are not conveyed through image compositions but in the edited flow of images. Wide shots of settings can be cut against tight close-ups of details in them, without showing how they relate to each other. There are gaps for the audience to create their own connections out of spaces and action, leaving things implicit.

Everything is told through settings, actions and dialogue – no inner monologue or narration. Our collaboration is based on both of us fully believing in everything we do, never compromising. The whole creative team (Annika and Kersti) own all creative rights and therefore play all major roles and carry out all major functions.

At 50+ it's time to stop searching for subjects of sufficient weight to build a film around and to start working with our own thoughts, experiences and bodies. By using dolls, stylized costumes and non-naturalistic settings we open up what's personal to emotional ambiguity while revealing ourselves.

The material holds several narrative threads – a meta story about the filmmakers, stories of bleeding, therapy sessions with couples in crisis and layers of choreography, dream, animation and twisted moments – and reflect our permissive and very personal aesthetics. Based on each theme we choose drastic forms relating to the content. Emotional logic is more important than chronology and continuity.

The acting in BLOD - we don't become our roles, we perform the actions of the roles. Understand them through our bodies, say the lines, don't know all about them, just know the moment of conflict. Bodies that animate words and become action. The large amount of fictional material calls for a documentary selection process. The overriding storyline and dramaturgy is continuously processed through evaluations of material between the shooting periods and ultimately created in the editing. (8.) We value humor, brutality, unpredictability, ridicule, emotional expressiveness, consistent style element, rule-breaking, questioning, self-criticism without self-censorship, absurdities and intimate songs. "

By inviting the workshop participant to interact with the film material, with the space and screen, and with each other – they will hopefully be able to share some of the embodied insight, experiential queries and compositional potential that is explored through the research and film project BLOD.