

MATERIAL STRATEGIES WORKSHOP THROUGH OBJECTS / OR ALL THINGS ARE DIFFERENT WITH TOOTH PICKS.

By Ingvild Holm 11/8/2019.

Based on a project presentation plan for 10th. of May by Jakob Oredsson and Ingvild Holm after a two-week workshop at Trafo Artist House, Oslo 29/4 – 3/5/2019, and Blue Room, Norwegian Theatre Academy, Fredrikstad 6/5 – 10/5/2019.

The presentation plan is a workshop diary of objects, and is unchanged. It starts with the end of Thursday 9th. and moves backwards starting with the last part of the day and ending in the morning.

The report is in italic, and tells about the presentation day, starting with the beginning.

Friday 10th. of May. Presentation.

We have prepared Blue Room, which is white and approximately 30m², with the entrance, a red door in the left corner. To the right are big windows and a door to the outside that can't be opened. There are microphones that record doings, but not voices. Chairs and tables are placed right inside the door in stables. There is paper and pens, technical equipment; a table, microphones, cables and loudspeakers, a card board with words, a metal thing with wheels and a clock. Otherwise the room seems to be empty.

We're in the hall outside. Audience is there. Camilla, Jakob, Electa, Henriette, Øystein, Sidsel and me from the project is there. A specially invited guest Paulina is there. Everyone is standing except me who is sitting on the floor. Camilla welcomes everyone, tells shortly about the project and invite the audience to enter the room and arrange tables and chairs as they want to, while the project group is waiting outside. The audience go inside, close the door and arrange tables and chairs. Their activity is recorded.

After a short time, they invite us in. Right inside the door someone has put a row of chairs facing the door and not the room. Some tables are flat on the floor, only one or two are put up. The chairs are all over, and in all kinds of directions, laying and standing. Just a few of the available tables and chairs are used. I don't know if the placing was a group decision, if they dealt with it one by one, or all at the same time. I'm not sure where to put myself.

But we all tune in. Some sitting, some laying and some standing. I have a conservative urge to sit on a chair and fetch a table. I choose a chair somehow central in the room, but a little bit closer to the wall between the door and the windows. I manage to resist the table. Bags, purses, backpacks and clothes are on the floor. One or two or more people are behind me; some are too close facing me, another one (is it Electa?) is laying on the floor with her back towards me, and some are in corners quite distant. Etc.

Henriette is placed on the floor by the wall opposite the windows. She says:

- Thursday 9th. of May. Grey room. White floor. White walls. Windows, one open. Four tables. 6 chairs. Cables. Fluorescent light. Bags. Two computers.
- Salads. Water. Tooth picks. Chewing gum. Papers. Pens. Nuts. Cups.
- Pine cones. 4 human beings. Words. Memory. Images. An egg.

Camilla who forgot to bring the chewing gum we agreed on is placed close to the wall corner opposite the entrance door. She says:

- Lists. Notes on paper. Two weeks of things and objects, exercise, theory.
- Equality. Existence. Solidarity. Past. More.

Øystein is placed partly behind me close to the technical table between the entrance door and the windows. He says:

- Wednesday 8th. of May. Blue room. White floor. White walls. 2 windows. 2 doors. One closed. One table. 4 chairs. Cables. Fluorescent light. Bags. Back packs. Two computers. 4 human beings. Words. Memory. Pine cones. Thickness.

I'm on my chair with tooth picks on both sides of my four front teeth. I say:

- YouTube lectures. Karen Barad. Clocks. Quantum Physics. Atom Bomb. Thickness. Space and Time is not given. The Past is always open. The past is yet to come. Erasures make traces. Who can tell the time? Graham Harman and Slavoj Žižek. Object oriented ontology. Marxist subject oriented ontology. How it works. What it does. Art works. How it works politically. Timothy Morton. Playful seriousness. To know you don't know. Philosophy.

All things are different with tooth picks.

Jakob who is placed more in the right opposite corner of the door, closer to the windows says:

- Fighting. Messy Heaps. Practice. Solidarity. Clowning. Talking. Politics. Physics. Planning. Presentation.
- Lunch. Strawberries, melon, orange, pear, salmon, chocolate, juice, bread, rucola, ham, cheese, tzatziki, olives, dried meat, 4 cheeses, rice crackers, coffee, dressing.

Electa is laying more or less in the middle of the room facing the window. She says:

- Walk. Colour walking. See blue. Then red. To the woods. Soft gaze. Wood things come. Letting things come to you. Into you, through you. A bench. Three human beings sitting. One human being standing. Gazing. A big view. England? Denmark? Kristiansand? Google earth. Map. Size. Online scaling tools. Colonisation. Horror. A large mansion. Congo is the size of Europe. Africa is the size of China, Europe and the American Continent together. How things appear is not what they are.

Still at the same chair, with tooth picks I say:

– Wild white anemones brought to lunch table. Blue egg.

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Henriette shows everyone the blue bird egg we found yesterday on our walk to the woods looking for colours and the world through google maps. She carries it carefully. It's small.

Camilla has moved a bit. She says:

– Tuesday 7th. of May. Blue Room. Contact microphones. Mixers. Metal wagon. Metal plate with microphone. Sunlight. Speaking. Instructions. Actions.

Øystein, still in the same spot behind me says:

– Microphone on stand. 2 chairs. 1 table. 6 human beings. One sitting on floor, leaning against wall. Papers. Pens. Loudspeakers. Cables. 6 mobile phones. Recordings. Writing. Written thoughts. Telling stories. Recording stories. Playing back. Listening. Thinking. Discussing words. Performing arts possibilities.

He plays the recording from Tuesday. Camilla is pacing the floor by the wall opposite of the door and says:

– Lunch. Salads, tomatoes, pasta, couscous, jalapenos, olives, water, coffee. Words on a cardboard sheet. 1 human kneel. Writes.

Henriette and Patricia (who is the project coordinator) fetches the papers and pens and we all go to the middle of the room and start to write words. More words. Human names on things and ideas. We didn't want to explain or show, and we don't know how to make them visible otherwise. I thought about question marks. We should have put in question marks. The Audience write words too. Or make a drawing. Electa writes a short manifest or a statement, but we don't know that until later. I write Marxism with a question mark? Then I write clowning? Clowning? Then I write OOO and draw faces inside them. I'm uncomfortable. The idea to name and not explain maybe isn't as open and ambiguous as I hoped for, but it is at least a different way of research presentation. A redoing of the done which isn't explaining. I am lost, which is good?

WE WRITE WORDS LIKE:

CO-DEPENDENCE. ROCKING. CO-CREATION. TUNING. ATTUNEMENT. ENTANGLEMENT. INTER MATERIAL VIBRATIONS. CO-EXISTENCE. WHERE THE QUESTION OF WHO IS INFLUENCING WHOM BECOMES VERY AMBIGUOUS. ETC.

We repeat the exercise to unpack our bags and back packs. Seven personal heaps are spread out in different formations on the floor at different places in the room. We make new rooms. Mine is a square. It's in order.

Back on my chair at the place in the space that I'm not very happy about, I say with the tooth picks in my teeth:

– Seven human beings. A row of tables. Chairs. Projector. Laptop. PowerPoint. Technical problems. Lecture. Relate or use. Listen. Donald Winnicott. Wordling performative materials. Materially driven encounter. Site Writing. Academic writing. Artistic reflection. We don't touch about the floor. We touch the floor. Think space.

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Electa has moved. She took my jacket and put it on. Now she is standing by the window looking out, saying:

– Relating. Destroying. About. Project. The other. Relation to the other. Exist outside and inside. Discussing. Interrupting. Filling in.

Sidsel, who is sitting in a corner reads an abstract from her lecture 'Relate or use'. She says:

– Monday 6th. of May. 4 human beings. Individual. Diffraction. Work. Time. Rocking with lap top. Interfering with technics.
– Discussing possibilities. Sofa. Arm chair. Corridor. Technician. Office. Planning. Meetings. Books. PDFs. Reading.
– Lunch. Salads, water, cucumber, pasta, paper bowls, plastic containers, olives, dressing.

Øystein has moved to somewhere in front of the technical table. He says:

– 4 human beings. Corridor. Waiting. Sofa. Passing. Reading Deleuze and Research Methodologies by Anna Hickey-Moody. Affect is the effect of an action. Breathing and thinking.

Camilla is walking in circles by the outer areas of the room close to the walls. She says:

– 4 human beings walk fast in the woods. My story. Mixing memories. A native guide. Cat. Trees. Stones. Bench. Sister Islands. Sign with figure. Pacing. Tuning in. Chatting. Relaxing. Enjoying. The right tempo. What it does. To know where you are. Or be lost. Feeling. Pick one point. Fog. Sea. Sailing. Orientation. Water.

Henriette has moved to the middle of the room. She is standing and says:

– Friday 3rd. of May. Eating and Tøyen Torg. Oslo. Apple, pistachio and carrot soup, fish soup, Thai taste, cauliflower and couscous with pistachio. Waiting. Bowls. Lemon tart. Apple tart. Coffee and water and words. Table. Methods. Anthologies. NTA collective. Pens. Notebooks. Future.

Jakob is still in the corner close to the door that can't be opened by the windows. He is sitting leaned towards the wall, but stands up and says:

– Ann Merete Otterstad. 8 books. 1 Deleuze and Affect. Stage/ space and Trafo. 4 big molton curtains, two windows, a piano, plastic Ikea chairs, ghetto blaster, old wooden floor. Scratches. Lines. Listen. Thick air. Thick history. High ceilings.

– Colleagues in the hall. Coffee cups. Leftovers from 1st of May. Twist Chocolate. Fruit. Cake. Zoom sound recorder and several sets of headphones.

Henriette walks over to Camilla and stands beside her and says:

– Nine human beings in a circle. Ann Merete. Massage. Offering bodies in space.
– Food oriented object presentations. Everyday object presentations. The objects. Scarf. Hair gel. Potato peeler device. Self-knitted potholders.

Henriette moves away from Camilla who starts to retell Ann Merete's comments to our presentation of the project. She uses verbatim headphone, which means to listen to Ann Merete from a recording (File 022) that we don't hear and retelling it at the same time. She stands in the same area as before, close to the back wall opposite the door, close to the left corner. She listens and talk for about 10 – 15 minutes.

Ann Merete commented that we put meaning into everything which is a main reason why we don't do it now.

Camilla says:

– Text. Reading. Recording memory. Speaking it. Weaving. Appearance is War by Timothy Morton. Talking. Recording.

Electa is with Øystein by the technical table. She says:

– Thursday 2nd. of May. Text by Umberto Eco. Beauty and ugliness. Art. Culture. Language. Definitions. 7 human beings. Time. Reading time: five minutes. Record by memory. 7 mobile phones. Pen and paper. Writing from recording. Hearing sounds in space. Memory and body. Writing. Sound, word, sound.

We redo a sound-writing exercise. We are in front of the technical table, to the middle of the room in a circle more or less. Electa says:

– Lunch. 3 human beings and Trafo. Walk and Tøyen Torg. Café. Coffee. Words. Diffraction. – 2 human beings and Yoga and Trafo.

Jakob is standing straight in his usual corner and says:

– Wednesday 1st. of May. Collective cooking. 5 human beings. At 1 home. Prosecco. Flag. A Moving Hammer. Aprons on bodies. Shrimps. Bread. Mayonnaise. Melon. Avocado. Fish soup with fish, shrimp fond, fish fond, red pepper, fennel, garlic, chili, tomato paste. Boxed white wine. Coffee. Cake.

I'm still on the same chair with tooth picks between my teeth and I say:

– The how is the what. Collective memory. A small collective of 5 humans. And a big one. Workers day downtown. The march. 10 300 humans. Brass bands, marching bands, choirs, and

people, and politics, and sounds, and banners, and time frames, and food, and history, and colours, and horses, and fights, and Royal Park, and grass, and trees, and birds, and solidarity. The whole is always less than the sum of its parts.

All things are different with tooth picks.

We all, included the audience have a conversation about the phrase of Timothy Morton; the whole is always less than the sum of its parts. We do it for maybe 10 – 15 minutes. We are spread out but facing each other.

Øystein is on a chair somewhere in the middle. He says:

- Lunch. Sausage in thin potato bread. Falafel sandwich. Avocado.
- 1 Trafo. 7 human beings. Coffee cups. Bags. Back packs. Dust.
- Couples. Stories about accidents. Recordings. I-phones. Headphones Verbatim. Word for word. Chairs. Audience.

Thin potato bread is something Norwegians like to have around their sausage, especially on a celebration day as first of May.

Camilla has moved to the right in front of the windows. She brings out an object and says:

- Potato peeler device. Old and new, small and large, self-knitted grytekluter. Hard bread, paper bag. Avocado. Tabasco. Fisherman's Friend in Tin box. Circle of human beings. Stories about these things. Questions. Listening. Listening and speaking stick.

Henriette is in the centre moving her body in a small dance. She says:

- Tuesday 30th of April. Circle of dancing humans. Circle dance battle. Remembering names. Memory of names. Grandparents. Colombian Music. Ghetto Blaster. Collective memory. Magnhild. Carl. Nita. Rachel. Arthur

We do Arthur, which is to lift our shoulders one at a time. Arthur, the rhythm. We do him twice, at least twice. Arthur. Henriette says:

- Stories about encounters with doctors. Couples. Memorize. Stories retold from memory. Two bodies. Chairs. Audience.

I tell Henriette's encounter with a doctor by memory. Henriette is standing beside me. She smiles, even though I do it without tooth picks.

Electa is somewhere saying:

- Lunch at Botanical Garden. Farm House café. Sandwiches. Juice. Water. Spring. Flowers. Sun. Plates. Cuing.
- Bodies. Exercises. Awareness. Movement.
- Couples of bodies. Movement. Filling spaces.

Jakob sits by the wall in his usual place close to the window and the door that can't be opened, and far from the entrance. He says:

– Monday 29th. of April. Spoken text. Performing text. Memory. Row of chairs. Audience. Listening. Speaking words.

Camilla stands in the middle of the room quoting parts of Timothy Morton by heart. Then:

- Lunch. Tøyen Torg. Turkish restaurant. Mediterranean salad. Lentil soup. Water. Take away salad. Shrimp salad. Meze. Sharing. MORE.
- Spending time. No verbal communication. 2 hours. Together. Using different access modes. Ways of grasping the room. Thinking. Tasting. Touching. Tuning. Feeling time. Being together. Being with. Windows. Floor. Curtains. Dust. Sound of touching floor. Words on wall. Red chair. Piano. Sinking into. Blanket. Sleeping. Thinking space. Waves. Rocking. Warm wind. MORE.
- Meditation. Rocking. Moving. Small dance. Following the breath. Circle of human beings. MORE.
- The gaze. The soft gaze.
- Explaining. Summarizing. Introducing. MORE.

Jakob puts 4 A4 papers on the wall with the words thinking, tasting, touching, tuning. We do it for 20 full minutes, in our own ways, without talking, using other access modes. Trying to listen together to a room and a situation who talk very very low and ambiguous. Which is hard. We feel the time. At least I do. Time passes by really slow.

Øystein play the sound recording from when the audience arranged the room.

We have a brake.

Then, according to presentation plan we should have re-organized the room in a circle of tables and chairs. Straiten it up for the discussion that was now going to happen between us, the special guest and the audience. But by a sudden decision, based on lack of energy, we don't do it, even though the situation needed the new energy, look and structure. This is pure dramaturgical.

So, we come back from the brake, and we don't reorganize. Camilla gives an introduction to the discussion who starts off with time in relation to the work we've done. We discuss ok, the special guest Paulina is happy to comment, and some of the audience say nice and relevant things too. I am still on my chair but have changed my situation by putting up the conservative table too. A change from doing to explaining. The more academic posture of table and chair, pen and paper doesn't inspire me to talk theory as I hoped for. And I don't have my tooth picks.

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