

## Episode 2 with Gigi Argyropoulou

### *Living space for the unplanned*

#### Introduction

In this episode we will be encountering Gigi Argyropoulou a researcher, curator, dramaturge, theorist, and performance maker. When this is being recorded, Gigi has just started as a post doc fellow at Malmö Theatre Academy, and I am so happy to pick her brain about her practice of creating social events, programmes, festivals, assemblies, performances, actions, interventions, and cultural projects both inside and outside institutions. When I look through her bio it reads, 'this is an expert in transformative encounters'.

I give you Gigi Argyropoulou.

#### Summary

Gigi's practice and her thoughts on the nature of transformative encounters really resonate with me. To start from the end with her mention on social architecture and the grammar of spaces that conditions us to behave in a certain way. To deal with this she has developed a practice of queering spaces in order to tilt our usual way of behaving. In her practice she insists on creating spaces without hierarchies and categorisations allowing people to discover and create relations and meaning. She mentioned how a space can create vulnerability and openness that in her opinion is the condition for transformation to happen. In my practice the ability to decode how spaces affect the beings within it is a crucial tool in creating a framework for a performative encounter and facilitating conditions for vulnerability is an important ingredient for transformation. The tilting of the view of a space can be connected to both Timothy Morton's ideas on realist magic and Jane Bennet's enchantment of the everyday. Both thinkers apply a tilted view on everyday objects that both makes us see things super clear but at the same time allows us to see beyond.

Like Maaïke Bleeker, Gigi insists on the unpredictability of a performative encounter and talks about how it cannot be planned or organised but by creating certain

conditions you may invite transformative encounters to emerge. This she says can happen by providing a landscape, rural, urban, cultural, or political and in that space create a connection to reality - at the same time you should open up for moments that happen outside of that reality to let the imagination for something new transpire. Of course, Gigi mentions time, to give time for the unexpected to happen. Talking about space and time we spoke about being present, the importance of the embodiment that grounds you to the here and now, from where the encounters happen. Even the encounters you have with your ideas, or your past or the ghosts that hunt you, like Gigi mentioned, happen through a state of presence.

To connect to the personal nature of transformation Gigi described her own transformative encounter from a performance that her fellow audiences disliked so much that they left and how this performance had in Maaïke Bleeker's terms landed with her.

Yes, transformation is both personal and relative in terms of your state of mind and particular ingredients of your experience.

This short wrap of my intimate encounter with Gigi Argyropoulou concludes this episode of Transformative Encounter.