

## Episode 7 with Erik Pold

### *Out for an adventure*

#### Introduction:

Erik is a theatre maker based in Copenhagen. He has a long experience working with participatory performances, as a performer and a maker. He worked for many years with Gob Squad in Berlin and currently he is the artistic leader of his own company Liminal. Erik works as a course leader for Conceptual Performing Arts at Malmö Theatre Academy.

#### Summary

Erik is working with game strategies as dramaturgy, treating the public space as an arena to play. I think that if you are working with interactive participatory performances, it is a brilliant strategy. And like in any game you will have to have rules and objectives for the participants, they need to have clear roles. I relate to the notion of play and in my practice, I always think about the dramaturgy as a game, I often use the treasure hunt as a model or station-based group games, with clear tasks and objectives. These game rules give a common reference and a clear framework for an encounter to happen. It is not random anymore – it is something specific and the people and places have been given purpose or roles. These roles do not involve acting as in pretending, but rather to perform a task like in the play 'hide and seek'. You either hide or you seek.

It is the 'in between', 'the liminal', 'the threshold' that interests Erik. His performative encounters happen between three agents: actors, guests and passers-by, random people that happen to be at the site of the performance. They do not always have the same role, sometimes that passers by act as performers and sometimes they are spectators, this also goes for the guests. The framework of the game creates a logic and an awareness of objective. Being aware of their role gives participants agency to take decision and as a consequence a responsibility. The ethical challenge is to create clarity, to explain the conditions for people so they willingly give into the game. The greatest challenge is the random participants, the passers by. Even though I do not work with random people or total strangers in my work, there will always be human or more-than-human agents, that will be involved in performative encounters without knowing it. How to deal with them?

Erik claims that when you are out in the public space you are as a default in a mode of interaction. The public space is not private, it is a place of interaction and if people choose to move in the public space, they can be addressed. He even claims that we are out for an adventure when we are out amongst the public. This does not apply to homeless people or people that are not on the streets out of choice. With his experience, Erik has acquired a skill for choosing good players amongst the strangers on the street.

So, to you dear listener I direct these questions: Is going into the public like an adventure to you? What do you expect to encounter? Would you be open for a game?

Anyway – as Shakespeare wrote: "All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players" so we are all constantly performing in each others' pieces and participating in performative encounters willingly and unwillingly. We just need a frame to make us aware and this is what I am trying to do with my minimal practice,

scaling down the production and giving space for people to step into the game, as does Erik with his group Liminal. With these contemplations I will leave you today.