

Summary and conclusions

Pilot study of "Collaborative filmmaking and the quest for a collective film narrative" **By Ylva Gustavsson**

This project aimed to be a preparatory pilot study before applying for funds to do a bigger research project about collaborative film making and how a sustainable collaborative process might contribute to a film narrative grown from a collective sense of storytelling where different specializations within film making is given agency to act upon individual and collective artistic impulses.

The practicebased part of this project consisted of a workshop with me and actor Camilla Larsson. We worked with an existing narrative, the original script for the theatre play, "Long day's journey in to night" by Eugene O'Neill and focused on the character of "Mary". The mother of the family. The aim for this workshop was to closely and with no hurry, study the process that takes place in the collaboration between a film director and a film actor. Both in the preparatory phase and while actually filming scenes.

We met and discussed the text on several occasions and also spent time apart reading and working individually with the text. We talked about theme and relations between characters and we fantasized together on how the dynamics in the story would play out in contemporary time. And finally we decided to place the story in a small town near the sea in contemporary Sweden. We also fantasized about what the character Mary actually did when she was off stage in the play.

Next step was working together for a couple of days with improvisations around some of the situations that the character Mary finds herself in, that is not in the play "Long day's journey in tonight". We asked ourselves what she actually did when she was absent from the play.

And so we created three scenes with Mary, that is not in the play that we filmed in an improvisatory style.

Scene 1. Mary is in another room, hearing the family drink and talk. She decides to leave.

Scene 2. Mary goes out in a public space, and after buying "drugs" at the pharmacy, she struggles with the decision, and finally takes them in a café.

Scene 3. Mary is in an altered state of mind in a park/forest and engage in her fantasies/hallucinations.

As we worked, I upheld my focus on what impulses the acting gave me. What camera movement did it bring out, what was the artistic impulses I got in the director/cinematographers position. Deliberately choosing to see my own "visions" of what was being created rather as impulses to act on, than as directing intentions.

The experiment in this work, is studying how these impulses give creative agency to the collaboration between actor and director. And the aim, for future projects, is to develop this method of collaboration between members of a film team with different specializations and to shape a film narrative together. I see this research rather as an art of inquiry than the development of a methodology.

During the time I engaged in meta studies, and by “meta” I mean the thinking, reading and writing connected to the practical work, I got inspired by Tim Ingold. Ingolds seminar on “The art of paying attention” became highly important to me. This became the anchor-point for how to approach artistic research theory. Slow and gently, softly engaging in a conversation with the practice.

Link to Tim Ingolds seminar “The art of paying attention”.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Mytf4ZSqQs>

There is an exposition at Research Catalogue that contains material from the public presentation of this project that I held at Research Week at Stockholm University of the Arts in January 2021.

Link to exposition at Research Catalogue:

<https://www.researchcatalogue.net/shared/3243a22dc56330f5f7b18fce95e2c645>

Link to my research page at uniarts.se

<https://www.uniarts.se/folk/medarbetare/ylva-gustavsson>

My previous project Collaborative Film making from 2016:

In English:

<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1167234>

In Swedish:

<http://www.diva-portal.org/smash/record.jsf?pid=diva2%3A1040543>

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