

A photograph of a city street scene. In the foreground, there is a large, dark, textured wall or barrier. Behind it, a multi-story building with several windows is visible. The ground in the foreground is wet and reflective, showing some dark patches. The overall tone is somewhat somber and urban.

# MATERIAL STRATEGIES

ARTISTIC RESEARCH SEMINAR

28.02.2019 - 01.03.2019

VEGA SCENE OSLO

**Welcome to the seminar on Material Strategies in the arts.**

**The seminar forms one part of the Artistic Research Project Material Strategies at Norwegian Theatre Academy/ Østfold University College.**

**The project is led by Professor Camilla Eeg-Tverbakk.**

In this research project we want to look into ways of practicing materiality in relation to artistic processes of creation. With reference to New Materialism's ethical call to relate to material in ways that demand another kind of listening and interaction with matter, this research project will investigate the consequences for performance practices. Questions of ethics are raised through debates about appropriation, authorship, and power. How does a materialist view affect subject formations, our relationships to our environments, and human activity?

Material Strategies investigates voice and body as material in relation to spaces, architecture and objects. How can we as artists to a greater extent listen to the agency of the material and co create with it, letting go of control and authorship? How are bodies, emotions, visions and memories shaped by things we interact with? How are performative and material practices articulating the embodied nature of memory in relations between bodies, voices, objects and spaces?

We will examine voice and sound as material, connected to transformative subject formations being shaped and reshaped in dialogue with the surroundings (space and objects). Is the voice, when materializing different traditions and techniques, connecting past and present, living and dead and animate and inanimate?

The seminar takes place at

**VEGA SCENE**

Hausmanns gate 28

0182 Oslo

**REGISTRATION FEE:**

350 NOK (2 lunches included)

For registration and payment of the participation fee

<https://vegascene.no>

For more information, please send an email to the artistic research coordinator

**Patricia Canellis**

[patricia.canellis@hiof.no](mailto:patricia.canellis@hiof.no)

A project initiated by the **Norwegian Theatre Academy - Østfold University College**

With the support of :



## DAY 1



# 28 FEB

THURSDAY 28 FEBRUARY 2019

09.30 - 17.00

09.30 - REGISTRATION

10.00 - **CAMILLA EEG-TVERBAKK**

"SETTING THE FRAME"

10.45 - **ELECTA BEHRENS & ØYSTEIN ELLE**

"YOU AND ME - AS VOCAL MATERIAL - WHERE AND HOW DO WE MEET?"

12.00 - **NIKO VALKEAPÄÄ**

13.00 - SOUP LUNCH

14.00 - **LUIS SOTELO**

"ACTS OF LISTENING"

15.00 - GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH KEY WORDS/CONCEPTS

**NIKO VALKEAPÄÄ, ØYSTEIN ELLE, LUIS SOTELO**

MODERATOR: **ELECTA BEHRENS**

16.50 - CLOSING REMARKS

17.00 - END

## DAY 2



# 01 MAR

FRIDAY 1 MARCH 2019

09.30 - 17.00

09.30 - COFFEE

10.00 - **CAMILLA EEG-TVERBAKK**

"DRAWING LINES"

10.15 - **DR. RICK DOLPHIJN**

"NECROPOLITICS AND THE ARTS: RETHINKING SOUND AND MATTER FROM THE PRESENT"

11.15 - **SIDSEL GRAFFER**

"WORLDING PERFORMATIVE MATERIALS"

12.15 - **JAKOB OREDSSON & INGVILD HOLM**

"OBJECT ORIENTED ORCHESTRA (OOO)"

13.00 - SOUP LUNCH

14.00 - **PROF. PER ROAR**

"STUMBLING MATTERS"

15.00 - **ANDREAS THIELE & SERGE VON ARX**

"MATERIALITY OF CONFLICT"

15.40 - PANEL DISCUSSION:

**RICK DOLPHIJN, PER ROAR, SIDSEL GRAFFER**

MODERATOR: **CAMILLA EEG-TVERBAKK**

16.45 - CLOSING EVENT

17.00 - END

## Bios



**Serge von Arx**, architect and professor of scenography, is the artistic director of the scenography department of the Norwegian Theatre Academy / Østfold University College. In 1997 he made his degree in architecture at the ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology). In 1998 he began his long-term collaboration with Robert Wilson on various stage, exhibition and installation design projects all over the world and since 2003 he is a regular mentor and architectural consultant at Wilson's Watermill Center on Long Island, New York. In 2001 he opened his design studio in Berlin and since 2006 he is a resident in Oslo. Serge von Arx is lecturing and implementing workshops at various international universities and other institutions and works internationally as a scenographer, designer and architect, focusing on Performative Architecture, the encounter of architecture and theatre. His research includes various international publications and curatorial engagements. He serves on the Artistic Team for the Prague Quadriennial 2015 and 2019.

**Dr. Electa Behrens** is a performer and an Associate Professor with a focus on the emerging field of vocal composition for the deviser. She holds a Practice as Research PhD from Kent University (UK), an MA from Exeter University (UK) and a BA from Vassar College (USA). She has performed with companies/artists throughout Europe and the USA including Odin Teatret (DK), Richard Schechner (USA), Marina Abramovic (Serbia), Dah Theatre (Serbia), Robin Riegels (formerly of Workcenter of Jerzy Grotowski and Thomas Richards (NO) and the Centre for Performance Research (Wales). She has published in journals such as Theatre, Dance and Performance Training, the Journal of Interdisciplinary Voice Studies and has a chapter forthcoming in the book: Intercultural Acting and Actor Training (eds P. Zarrilli, T. Sasitharan and A. Kapur)

**Dr. Rick Dolphijn** is an associate professor based at Humanities, with a strong interest in contemporary philosophy and the contemporary arts. He wrote Foodscapes, Towards a Deleuzian Ethics of Consumption (Eburon/University of Chicago Press 2004) and (with Iris van der Tuin) New Materialism: Interviews and Cartographies (Open Humanities Press 2012) and is finishing his new monograph with the title The Cracks of the Contemporary; A Meditation on Art, Wounds and a Damaged Earth. He has published widely on new materialism, ecology/ecosophy and art and is interested in the developments in continental philosophy and speculative thought. His academic work has appeared in journals like Angelaki, Rhizomes, Collapse and Deleuze Studies. He edited (with Rosi Braidotti) This Deleuzian Century: Art, Activism, Life (Brill/Rodopi 2014/5) and Philosophy after Nature (2017). Most recently he published an edited volume entitled Michel Serres and the Crises of the Contemporary with Bloomsbury Academic.

**Dr. Camilla Eeg-Tverbakk** is a freelance dramaturg and Professor in Dramaturgy and Performance. She has a PhD in Theatre & Performance from Roehampton University/ London, an MA in Performance Studies from New York University, an MA in Theatre Science from University of Oslo and has studied theatre practice at École Jacques Lecoq in Paris. She has a background as performer with independent companies in Norway, as well as from curating and extensive lecturing and teaching experience. Eeg-Tverbakk was the Artistic Director of the Acting Program at NTA between 2007-11. She has published articles in magazines and periodicals, edited the book Dans i samtiden (Spartacus 2006) on Norwegian contemporary dance, co-edited the book Performance Art by Baktruppen, First Part (Kontur 2009) and Responsive Listening, Theatre Training for Contemporary Spaces (Brooklyn Arts Press 2014).

**Øystein Elle** completed his artistic doctorate "Capto Musicae» focusing on cross-disciplinary composition in 2017. Currently he holds a position as associate professor in music / voice / singing, and cross-disciplinary composition at Østfold University College. Øystein is educated at the Conservatory of Music at Agder University, (BA) and at HKU University of the Arts in Utrecht, the Netherlands. (MA)

He is active in various areas of music and the performing arts field; as a singer, composer, actor, producer and director. His work, including both his own productions and artistic co-productions has been presented in a number of countries in Europe, Asia, the United States and South America. He focuses on contemporary forms of dramaturgy, in particular music-driven performances, or "Composed Theater". Elle is a performer of "Extended Vocal Techniques" and this multi-faceted term is also central as a compositional tool in his productions.

**Sidsel Graffer**, (Mag. Art), independent scholar affiliated with Theatre Studies, University of Bergen, and Norwegian Theatre Academy, Østfold University College, Fredrikstad, where she currently teaches Scenography and edit NTA's forthcoming anthology Norwegian Theatre Academy since 1996. Graffer studied architecture at Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and Theatre Studies at University of Oslo, and has held positions as researcher, editor, educator, curator, advisor and bureaucrat. Parallel to teaching Theatre Studies, Graffer has acted as advisor to among others The Norwegian Ministry of Culture, Norwegian Directorate of Public Construction and Property and Agder Teater on matters related to theatre architecture. Publications: Performing Arts and the Young. (Vidarforlaget, 2014). An ongoing research project, Theatre Machines, Production Axes and Performative Scenography is to be completed in 2019. Graffer regularly contributes to Prague Quadrennial and International Federation for Theatre Research, IFTR, where she is a Theatre Architecture Working Group member.

**Ingvild Holm** is a performing artist. Her work is mostly based on ideas and contexts, and comprises of theatre, performance art, action based practices and writing. She is a research fellow at Norwegian Theatre Academy/ Østfold University College with the project SPACE AUTOMATISM; on what place and context does to live art and live art production, investigated through critical and popular traditions in object oriented forms, and with space itself as the (animated) protagonist.

**Jakob Oredsson** is an artist, architect and scenographer working within the intersection of these fields. He seeks to provoke situations, which encourage curious, open-ended encounters between work and context, perceiver and perceived, while renegotiating these notions. Through the situations it generates the work insistently challenges binary understandings of space-time, subject-object and art-context. In recent years his primary practice has been the creation of temporary public art works, often with light as medium. These works are often interventions of a temporary character, inclusive and accessible works which simultaneously exposes existing qualities and generates new conditions. In January 2018 his first permanent public art work, Double Focus, opened in Aarhus, Denmark. Oredsson has studied scenography at Norwegian Theatre Academy and architecture at The Cooper Union as well as The Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts. He is currently Assistant Professor in Scenography at Norwegian Theatre Academy/ Østfold University College.



**Prof. Per Roar** works as a choreographer-researcher and merges a socio-political interest and contextual enquiries with a somatic approach to movement. In recent years he has been engaged in collective artistic works, such as Seminarium (2012-2016) and By Carte Blanche (2016), and Are you still there? - four approaches to the journal (2013/2018). Currently he is developing a choreographic enquiry into the politics of remembrance and representation. The project draws on his interdisciplinary background that includes a BA in Choreography from Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO), an MA in Performance Studies from New York University, a Cand. Mag. in history and social sciences from the University of Oslo, and builds on his doctoral project Docudancing Griefscapes (2015) from the University of the Arts Helsinki. Per Roar is professor in choreography and Head of the MA Programme in Choreography at (KHiO).

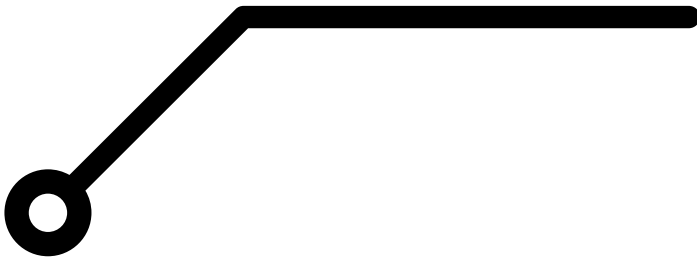
**Andreas R. Thiele** is an architect based in Berlin. He studied architecture at the Bauhaus University in Weimar, the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich and Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture de Paris-Belleville. Further he studied interior design and furniture design at the School of Art and Design, Burg Giebichenstein, Halle/ Saale. He has been a freelance architect since 1999 founding his own office for Architecture, Urban Planning and Design. He has taught at Beuth Hochschule für Technik Berlin (University of Applied Sciences), Germany and Norwegian Theatre Academy/ Østfold University College.

**Dr. Luis Sotelo-Castro** is the Canada Chair in Oral History Performance and Theatre at Concordia University. He is a Colombian artist-researcher. His practice is performance-based. He creates live environments of memory in collaboration with other artists and participants from specific communities and locations. Since 2002, he has done work with and for internally displaced people, Indigenous communities, migrants, and elderly people both in Latin America, in the United Kingdom, and in Canada. His creation-research of the last seven years has focused on exploring creative ways by which to set audiences/participants in motion/action within specific spaces. He frames their actions in space as integral to a remembrance activity. He is interested in what such activities and uses of personal memory might do for the different participants, both individually and collectively. At the Acts of Listening Lab at Concordia University, he investigates in practice and in theory listening in the context of performances in which personal narratives are disclosed.

**Niko Valkeapää** is a saami joiker, artist, poet, politician and student originally from the Finnish side of Saamiland, now living in Tromsø in Northern Norway. He has produced six albums so far and his seventh album is soon to be released. He won the award «Spellemannspris» (Norwegian Grammy), in the category Open Class in 2003 and was nominated again in 2012. He released his first book of poems in 2017 "Behind the window". He is a member of the Norwegian Saami Parliament, member of Saami Council representing Finnish Saami people and is also a student studying indigenous issues in the arctic University of Norway, University in Tromsø.

## **You and me as vocal material – where and how do we meet ?**

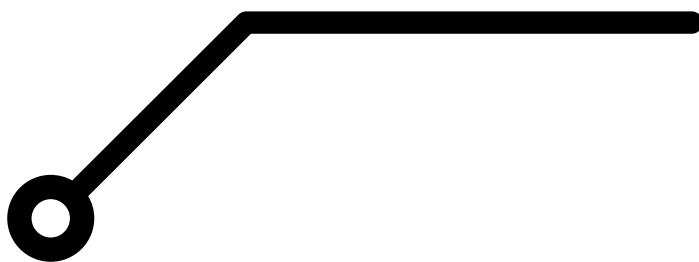
Øystein Elle - Electa Behrens



Øystein Elle and Electa Behrens are bodies and voices on stage. Together they will attempt to be present with themselves as vocal material and to entangle with the multiple others present in the space. Øystein and Electa have similar but different approaches and trainings, ranging from Bel Canto singing to classical text work, extended vocal technique to the sensuality of sound in the dark where objects and voices meet. Opening up this range of vocal material, including song, text and sound, they will look to extend the borders of materials and open up the grey areas surrounding topics such as ownership, ethics and appropriation. Relevant theory comes from OOO (object oriented ontology), OOF (object oriented feminism), aurality studies and voice studies. This presentation will include some embodied work and a reflective section.

## Acts of Listening

Luis Carlos Sotelo Castro



In this presentation I explore the act of listening to painful narratives in the context of a small group dynamic and within a social process as facilitated by a participatory sound installation called *Not Being Able to Speak is Torture* (2018). I argue for a performative approach to listening. In other words, I explore the embodied, material dimension of listening in the context of this case study.

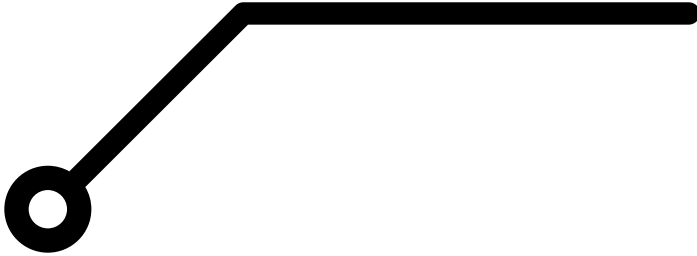
The idea that listening is performative is not new. Doyle W. Srader (2015) argues that the mode of listening that 'does something in the world', that is performative listening remains neglected as a subject of study within communication and listening studies. The same applies to the performative dimension of listening in the context of participatory oral history performance. Participatory oral history performance positions the listener as a participant within an ongoing social interaction episode framed as performance. Over the last decade or so, I have developed a series of projects exploring that idea. Listening in the context of an audio-walk, listening in the context of a performed citizenship ceremony, or listening in the context of a social dance event are examples of participatory oral history performance. Based on empirical research on my latest collaborative project, a performative sound installation titled *Not Being Able to Speak is Torture* (Sotelo, Cortes & Prophet 2018), I argue in this paper that for listening to play its performative functions, an oral history performance needs to turn audiences into participants. I describe the 'headphones verbatim' technique used to enable performers to deliver pre-recorded narratives in this case study. The headphones verbatim performances are, in turn, recorded and then mixed with sound art and played back to the listener-participants in the context of the sound installation. The installation engages refugees of Colombian origin living in Quebec as listener-participants, as well as people from diverse backgrounds. In their responses, apprehensions, fears, anxieties, and more broadly, in their performed behaviours (both physical and verbal, expressed and silenced), the performative (material) dimensions of listening in the Colombian post-conflict context become apparent.

Srader, Doyle W. 2015. "Performative Listening." *International Journal of Listening* 29 (2): 95-102.



## Necropolitics and the Arts: Rethinking Sound and Matter from the Present

dr. Rick Dolphijn



"The present... is what we are, and thereby, what already we are ceasing to be."

Deleuze and Guattari

In the first part of my presentation, I want to focus on the question "what, of art, belongs to the present?" This question arises from the fact that art has no present since, on the one hand, it does not fit into the economic, social and political realities of the day. Yet on the other hand, it always already challenges the present, offers it another history and another future.

Following the motto from Deleuze and Guattari printed above, we could say that art is never present, but rather belongs to what we are ceasing to be. Art necessarily practices a necropolitics, as it is at work within the margins of life, luring us into many ways of dying, affirmatively reading how all of these little ways of dying are proposing us a way out of the present. And thus, it is through art that another world and another human being, are being explored.

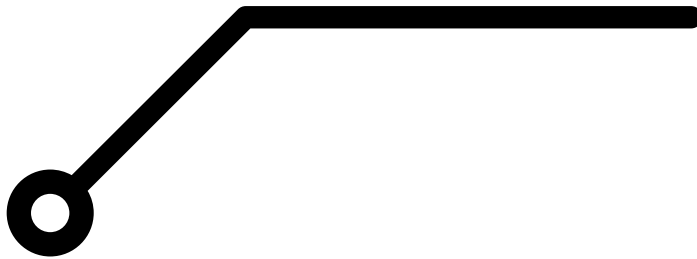
The times of crisis in which we live, the necessity of this necropolitics is more urgent than ever. Only art, and art of the highest kind, has the power to explore the margins of the present, to question the dualisms that organize it and the blindness that determine it.

Between the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the Sixth Extinction, it is through art that we need to search for different techniques and different strategies, that we can ask ourselves what life is, what death, pain and madness do to it, and how another life is possible. So, we call upon all artists, curators and activists to explore in what way the subjects and the objects of the present need to die from art... and to gain a new life immediately. The Age of the Anthropocene has to reveal itself as the Age of Art. It's our only aim at survival.

Therefore, in the second part of my presentation, I want to show this necropolitics at work. One artwork in particular will be discussed; Justin Bennett's documentary on the Kola Superdeep Borehole, commissioned by Sonic Acts as part of their Dark Ecology project. Both a film maker and a sound artist, Bennet is interested in the unknown sonic realities of the superdeep, and introduces us to Victor, former scientist at work at the Kola testing site, now, twenty-five years later, completely absorbed by this other non-human, non-organic form of life that expresses itself through the sounds of the borehole. Linking this artwork to the idea of the State, to State-science, but especially to how art belongs to the present while practicing a necropolitics of the present, my aim is to show 'how art can change the world'.

## Worlding Performative Materials

Sidsel Graffer



Performative scenography, as outlined in the ideal-typical model Meaning Oriented and Performative Scenography, rests on the spatial strategies scenographic worlding, which denotes a scenography that orchestrates situations that cannot be reduced to sets or understood as dramaturgical means, and scenographic appropriation, which denotes how a site is appropriated and included in a new scenographic artwork that stages the site/artwork relationship in distinct types: authentic inclusion, conceptual re-framing, intertextual dialogue, innovative creolization, annexing intervention, re-visiting self-referentiality, dispersing hyperevent. Scenographic appropriation is always about friction and exchange between material surfaces, but differs depending on the materials involved and from where the exchange is initiated. There seems to be three fundamentally different groups: 1) An abstract and conceptually driven encounter between non-performative materials. 2) An interactively driven encounter between technology, materials and humans (often found in interactive installations). 3) A materially driven encounter between performative materials and a given context. The focus of this paper is the relationship between the second and third category and in particular the material properties and performative behaviour of smart materials, assemblies, system and environments, their digital design and fabrication techniques, interactive processing systems and experimental and ultraperforming potential, perhaps best understood as and in no longer dichotomies, but dyads between inside and outside, natural and constructed, technical and poetic, digital and analog. Working from the hypothesis that materials have different materiality depending on the context they are produced in, presented by, introduced to or interact with, I am asking what kind of material agency scenography as context makes possible or allows to be played out. Contrary to engineer based instrumentality and autonomous presentation forms, and informed by surface theory, new materialism and performative scenography, I propose scenographic worlding as an alternative way of relating with performative materials. The presentation will draw on international research and art projects.



# OBJECT ORIENTED ORCHESTRA (OOO)

Jakob

Oredsson

Ingvild Holm

- Or is it a Composition for Things? A Thing Song? A Thing Composition?
- Or Objects? Like in Ongoing Objects, Song by Objects, or Object Song?
- Is Object more intellectual, loaded with art and philosophy, and Thing more common, like in absolutely everything?
- I'm thinking Object as in Object Oriented Ontology, like the OOO! That's everything too.
- The title itself is an Object.
- Yes, I'd say that Object is an Object, Oriented is an Object, Orchestra is an Object and (OOO) is an Object.
- Then this text is an Object and our presentation is an Object. Or a Thing? Right?
- Right.
- OOOers mean that their philosophy has a closer relationship with aesthetics than with any other fields.
- Of course it has.
- But it's a Big Dialogue, like in a Thing Dialogue we are all a part of when Equal Things Sings.
- Or when Equal Objects Sings.
- It's beautiful.
- A Dialogue Between Things, Objects in Dialogue, or maybe the preposition is between, or with? Or for?
- But it isn't them and us remember, we're in it together.
- Yes, together. In every situation, every light, every particle.
- All Objects must be given equal attention. Human, non-human, real or fictional.
- Let's call it a talk, a Talk with Objects.
- Talk with Things?
- Or Objects Talk Together.
- Things talk. Thing Talk?
- A Talk between Objects? A Talk between Things?
- Maybe it's a Conversation, an Object Conversation, between everything in this brand new Black Box at Vega Scene.
- What about Vega Tech Thing Talk? More specific. Or Vega Thing Talk? Or Theatre Objects Talk, which includes us?
- I love that.
- Feelings are also Objects.
- What about orientation, like Object Orientation?
- We listen, touch and feel.
- It's an Object Orchestra!
- Yes! The Object Oriented Orchestra, as in OOO, Object Oriented Ontology.
- That's a good steal.
- Or share, I'd say, which is a good Thing. Or Object.
- It's magic.
- Not really.
- Are they real? Or are they sensual? These Objects.
- I don't know, it is what it is. They are what they are.
- And we want to sort of say hello to this specific space, and make It say hello back, as if Vega Things say hello.
- But it does more, and I still think that Talk sounds nice with Thing like: Thing-talk, with a hyphen maybe?
- Hyphens and sounds are Objects too.
- They are.
- And not just in a duality of space and time, but in a quadruplicity...
- Yes, not at all a monologue, but a dialogue, or a choir?
- Yes, it sings OOO, from the depths of itself and philosophical thinking.
- And the ethics.
- The OOOchestra is per se not invented by man, it is itself, per se.
- OOO. OOO. OOO.
- It sings in a choir of Things? The Object song.



## **Materiality of Conflict**

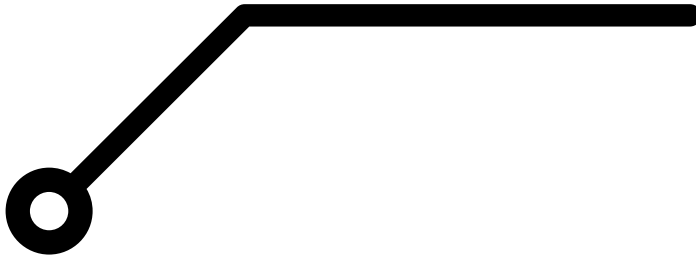
Serge von Arx/Andreas Thiele

"The Dictionary of Materials", or the Material Library, is a key component in the education of scenographers at Norwegian Theatre Academy. Any space where human activity and interaction takes place is defined by materials. Any material is subject to various processes of decay, intrinsic caused by a material's chemical and physical composition, as well as exogenous by natural or anthropogenic forces. Different time scales apply to those categories of decay: those immediately visible to the human eye (or perceivable to our senses in general), those we can cognitively acknowledge by their changing states of existence, and those we are unable to sense, but scientific understanding and logic conclusion can predict.

"Materiality of Conflict" is a research project funded by "Emergence Europe" in connection with the workshop series "Our Gruesome Cultural Heritage", investigating scenographic deconstruction of national mythologies. The endeavor focuses on materialized traces of previous human frictions and their agency toward future developments. Traces are the consequences of intended or coincidental collisions of materials, or results of inner processes. They easily give rise to interpretations and serve as factual proof for further political agendas, turning them into triggers and catalyst while trying to maintain a level of innocence, being irrevocable memories of the past. "Materiality of Conflict" inquires accordant strategies and substantiates distinct cases of concrete material probes.

## Stumbling Matters

Professor Per Roar



Stumbling Matters comes out of an artistic research enquiry into the politics of remembrance and representation. Departing from concerns emerging in Docudancing Griefscapes, his doctoral research at the University of the Arts Helsinki (2015), Per Roar explores in Stumbling Matters the affective and social choreography embedded in the art project "stumbling blocks" or "stolpersteine", instigated by the visual artist Günther Demnig in remembrance of the Holocaust.

In his neighbourhood in Oslo, Per Roar is literally stumbling upon these blocks in the midst of his everyday life. He questions what they are producing and what the encounters with them perform. In the void between his everyday life, the committed atrocities, and the individuals that would have remained unknown and forgotten if not for being named on the stolpersteine, the material objects perform a stumbling matter.