

Dear Jewels

You have invited me to deconstruct the role of the director with you.

speculative suspicions (full of fear and trauma)

I want to tell you about our common friend Anders, the beachbum. Anders has, just like you, started a PHD recently in a wealthy Scandinavian country. His questionnaire circles around the idea of parasites. Recently he wrote me, asking if I could imagine to collaborate with him in the context of this research. One of his main desires in this endeavour was to 'give up control', he wrote. He has been professor, thus in leading positions in the academic context for some years now.

I responded to him by saying quite some things and then also mentioned that I think a good way of giving up control in a collaborative context with me, would be that I direct him. After working with him many years ago in a project investigating the mechanisms of Hysteria, I found it healthy to imagine a shift of roles. No answer to that proposition from Anders.

Anders has worked as performer before. He has been directed by Markus Öhrn as part of an exclusively male team. Maybe it is necessary to say that I appreciated the work. In this process I remember a lot of questions came up about authorship, for Anders. To whom does a work belong? Who will be recognized for making it? And who will profit from the support that an artist can receive after producing a so called successful work.

Anders was never directed by a woman. He has never been part of a project or context initiated by a woman or female defining x-multiplicity.

You told me recently that you enjoy it to work reflected by, put in motion through - the feminine gaze. Has it ever happened? If not: How come? Why have you never played & performed & worked in service of a woman?

How do you relate to inviting women to take the role of performers in a research, in which you're busy undoing the classical roles: director – interpreter / genius – muse / rational – emotional / controlled – chaotic etc.

To -Give up control- what does it mean in the context surrounding Anders? What would that mean to you? What could it mean in the relationship between men and women? What could it mean in the context of our work relationship, of our friendship? Mine and Anders? Yours and mine? How does patriarchy fuck around with our curiosity for each other in our creative work?

How are men trying to give up their positions of being in control? Is a new awareness reflected in men critically investigating century – old - systems in universities all over the world, while being paid more or less well?

Now that you are trying to deconstruct the role of the director in your PHD in Stockholm are you not making it about that same old director once again? - Meaning, are you not dedicating time and space once again, giving importance once more, to a very specific dusty old apparatus, which we could as well leave aside? And is an academic attempt to deconstruct something ever threatening to anything?

And then also: Why not make it about the work itself?

Why not stop retelling each other who we are, reaffirming our history?

Why not make a great movie instead?

Why not try sth new?

(I guess academia doesn't accept researchers who wanna make great movies)

(Though recently Antonia Baer told me that she received funding to make a work simply by describing a dream that she had dreamt)

(Do i despise academia ?)

(Do i think they are all cowards)

somebody said: I have no use for any knowledge that is not preceded by a sensation.

The director is dying

Are you scared to be a bad director ?

Recently I told my friend Stellan that I have been considering for some years now to make a porn movie. Though the desire comes and goes, the reclaiming of pleasure and eroticisms as a potentially self – defined site is an important project for my personal well being in this world. Stellan : do it !

Claire : yes maybe I'll do it one day. A brief exchange about what kind of porn is hot etc. Stellan asks me , if I would direct it. I say, I would find it strange to direct sth. that i haven't experienced by being immersed and exposed to its entire turbulent complexity. Especially when it comes to intimacy. Stellan slightly enraged: Does it mean that every director has to be a performer ? Claire : No, but that is the way i have come to make things, I make/direct things by being in them. Stellan: So would you work with a director ? Claire: I would rather do both, direct and be in my own movie. Or the director would have to work for me. Meaning being in support of what I am making, instead of imposing a phantasy on me that I find boring, fascist or that simply doesn't belong to me , themselves, or the room we are working in.

I call a performer that performs and directs simultaneously a – performauthor-. The concept of the performauthor, a word that i require to be used in future contracts, is still something that the artworld has a hard time to understand. I would say especially institutions, curators and the world wide funding apparatus are a bit slow in realizing that people can be in two places at the same time: Inside and outside, knowing and not knowing, sensing and creating a form, being seen and seeing. sensual and thinking, soft and hard, sexual and vulnerable, listening and singing, listening and speaking, fucking and being fucked, touching while being touched, moving while creating an image. Also it seems that the ones mentioned above find it somehow easier when an artwork clearly is associated with only one person. Collaborative work, aha okay yes, but then then they ask who in the group is steering the wheel.

Rebecca Solnit begins her book Men explain things to me with an anecdote of a party, where some dude is coming towards her to ask her what she's doing in her life. She then tells him whats she's currently thinking about. He interrupts her and for 10 minutes the dude doesn't stop monologuing about a book he read until she tells him that she is actually the author of that book.

Recently a woman came towards me whom i now unfairly call the bitch from Frankfurt. She addressed me after a performance. I have collaborated on that performance with a choreographer Fabrice Mazliah, whom I adore. Fabrice invited me to collaborate with him in his 'manufactured series' which asks: How do we make objects, and how do these objects then make us in return? He asked me with which object I would like to make a Duett and it was quite quickly clear to me that I needed to work with Dolores, a sexdoll that shares my approximate weight and height, which I had aquired in 2019 for a solo that I made. I had unfinished business to sort out with Dolores. The work that emerged from our extended encounter in Frankfurt is called FULL BODY FRONTAL. To me it is a reflection on abuse and sexual violence. All my artistic research is in this work, all my practices, my strategies of thinking, my knowledge, my choreographic material, my voice, my composition, my biography, my body. It is a very personal work, my works usually are. I perform the piece as an author. After the show the bitch from Frankfurt comes up to me and asks : DID HE FORCE YOU INTO THE NUDITY?

And by saying this sentence takes away all my agency, my authorship in the work.

Did she think I was doing this for fun ? Did she think i was a dancer doing steps ? Did she think I was doing this because it was a cool art piece?

In collaborations with men and wo - men . I have been miscredited a millions of times These things make me question my generosity and dedication. If I offer so much , if i give so much into a collaboration and am discredited simultaneously, what am I really given in return? This is my most urgent question to any work, I will agree to do, to any person, to any director, I will work with. What will I learn from you? What are we learning together ? What do you offer? And also if you already know that you can't offer anything and you rather wanna profit from my experience and from what I already know, can you let me know me beforehand and credit the state of affairs accurately on your website?

Performing can be seen as serious play. Being inside of serious play doesn't necessarily require a person on the outside to have an overview, to control, create order or push and pull into different directions. Performers are sensitive beings that will do their work if you let them. If you want to kill the director, the one that is distant and not a risk, I'm right here by your side. If I want to kill the actress, the passive one that drinks in her loge and wants to be discovered, will you be by mine?

Note to Uniarts: thank you for calling me collaborator in your contract instead of performer.

Dear Jewels, I feel satisfied that Sigmund isn't joining the Party and that Chantal will be there. I trust you. I trust myself. I think we somehow always come wounded into a work. In my eyes your research is so incredibly entangled with patriarchy and I am sorry about that. I love performing. I can do incredible things with it, now (that I'm grown up) I loved how you put yourself at risk in our last collaboration in Austria. There was much beauty in the score we were working on. I think you had to struggle a lot back then with the director Steffi and the other directors that worked in the Stadttheater Graz and the directors that wrote about Phädra. I am curious to find out where you are now.

You have mentioned to me that you find it interesting how performers negotiate consent in relationship to live directing. You told me you find the strategies that performers come up with to deal with the directives you give, interesting: How resistance towards you and your desire manifests in their bodies in a non-verbal way, through their play, through their choice making. I told you that I think that this is what women have done for ages. While men were creating and imposing hierarchy and structures through language and violence, women were subverting, undoing and resisting in non-verbal ways. Women still do it, partly to have equal chances in life and work, partly to stay alive, partly to have the life they want to have. I promise you I am very good at it. You will manipulate me and I will manipulate you in return. This shall be our game. I also promise you, and even more so, that I will tell you how I think and feel, very clearly, very verbally, for a ride on the wheel of consent.

With much love and respect I thank you for your invitation
Claire