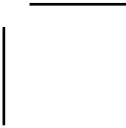


PANDA, FLYING DOCTORS and HUMAN COMPOST

- performing arts crossing borders -

by the @work network
2005 - 2011





The @work Network

Panda, Flying Doctors and Human Compost

Performing Arts Crossing Borders

Texts 2005 - 2011

This publication consists of assembled text from members of the
@work network 2005-2011

Editor: Nina Larissa Bassett

Layout: Jörn J. Burmester

Cover: Thomas Burø

Artwork on pages 57-59: Joy Harder.

Photography on pages 9, 13, 36, 43, 61: Jörn J. Burmester.

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Preface

If you find yourself some rainy Sunday staring out the window and considering: Where is my artistic work going? Have I really achieved everything? Or should I just get a proper job? I urge you to treat yourself to a couple of hours on the sofa with this publication. It is a collection of texts by a number of talented and very different artists from the independent scene in Europe, who came together in order to explore artistic practices, how performance connects with societal issues and what it means to work across many borders.

This is designed to give you some insight into the joys and challenges of creating of a cross-disciplinary network but also to provide you with food for thought, some artistic input and hopefully a laugh.

As the development of the network has been shared in two phases the introduction will also be divided in two parts.

Nina Larissa Bassett

A rainy April afternoon in Copenhagen 2011

PART I

Much more than a network – part one

The construction and organization of the

@work network

Nina Larissa Bassett, TeaterKUNST

From night ramblings to network

Way back before the dawn of time a Swedish and a British theatre practitioner met at some festival and talked through the night, as theatre practitioners do, about what would happen if a number of European theatre groups were to create performances on the subject of work. They took their nighttime ramblings seriously and started to invite others to reflect on this question, and via a chain of association the companies collected round their work idea became: Teatermaskinen (SE), Red Room Theatre (UK), Reality Research Center (FIN), TeaterKUNST (DK) and Katta I Sekken (NO).

Taking on the responsibility main producer of the project Teatermaskinen held a kick-off seminar far in the Swedish woods in August 2005. Here artists, union representatives, scholars and laymen exchanged thoughts and expressions on work for three days. This became the formal founding of the construction called @work network. The five involved companies all practiced in the independent field, and were all professional, all full of opinions – but also all had completely different aesthetics and artistic visions. Chaos loomed in the horizon of the magical setting of bright nights and deep lakes. The network quickly

became formalized when awarded support from the EU culture foundation under the project title “The Story of Work”. This funding meant that each group, regardless of organizational structure, had to contribute with a specified co-funding. Due to tragic circumstances the Norwegian company (Katta I Sekken) had to forfeit participation and made room for an exceptional formation of a German performance artists’ group, calling themselves the Berlin N@work. The bricks were in place. We now needed the mortar, the glue, the substance that would bring the network together and ensure that the participating companies would not just be working on parallel activities.



The commitments

In the wake of the EU funding were a fair number of commitments through which this ‘substance’ should manifest itself. The five participating companies committed themselves to create five performances dealing with chosen subjects of work. These subjects were open and should deal with issues in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Germany and the UK. The work was to have local roots and this was

to be guaranteed by the association of non-artistic participants – so-called reference groups. The reference groups were selected according to the groups focus point; Teatermaskinen (SE) chose to work closely with the LO union, as their subject was the workers' history, Reality Research Center (FIN) decided to look at the concept of 'the new worker', so their reference group consisted of scholars who had written books and papers on the subject, TeaterKUNST looked at the position of migrants in the Danish workplace and their reference group was the CBSI, an adult education facility for migrants, and so on.



Work work work

For the sake of the artistic development the participating companies held two big meetings in Berlin and London, and two major workshops in Sweden and Finland. These were considered development platforms and that would mix artists and artistic practices and provide the opportunity to exchange models of working. In order to keep the entire process moving smaller production meetings were held to share the accumulating knowledge of producing across borders and

of hosting cross-disciplinary, transnational events that bring artistic and non-artistic organizations together. The entire network was structured by the appointment of an artistic steering group for the project, called the flying doctors, and a producers group called... the producers. This structure suited some participants better than others, and there were often discussions voicing the desire to be less hierarchical and more inclusive. But sadly money issues put limitations on the ideals.

Coming to the end

The entire project culminated in a festival hosted by TeaterKUNST in HUSET in Magstræde in Copenhagen 2007. This was a four-day work fest bringing two years of exploration together. All companies participated and were joined by a number of reference group members, local participants and invited guests from Latvia, Lithuania, Greece, Switzerland and Germany. It contained a panel discussion, talks, a Cannibal Carnival through the streets, happenings and 16 productions - dance, live-art, theatre, music and performances - dealing with work. Despite the participating companies' completely different aesthetic backgrounds and the varied missions - some considered themselves to be strongly political, others didn't associate with this at all - the @work network managed to pull together something extraordinary. Possibly not the nighttime dream of one, huge pan-European performance but rather a platform for exchange of ideas and artistic expressions that became inclusive due to the diversity of the companies and their different agendas. It was impossible to be lulled into personal comfort zones regarding practice, audiences and opinions, because someone would always challenge you. Teatermaskinen could call for the inclusion people/ organizations who didn't have a regular access to theatre, Red Room might introduce questions about ethnic diversity, TeaterKUNST could be provoked to wave the gender flag, the Berlin Netw@rk would challenge artistic pandering or clichés and Reality Research Center may in gentle and quirky ways prevent all of us in becoming too politically correct and boring. The @work network, a title that could be considered a misnomer, was able to push and challenge the participants into stepping outside their chosen artistic frame and take up new ideas about audiences, exchange and the role of the performing arts.

Background text

The @work network – creating change together

Anders Olsson, producer; Teatermaskinen

The @work network is a network built on the collaboration between the arts, the unions, popular educationists, researchers, workers, unemployed, NGOs, activists. It is a network that works with civil society on general themes in order to create change; WORK 2004-2007, Civilisation 2007- . The network is the joint research in these matters where the stage is the arena for the exploration. It is based on collaborations transcending the borders between the arts and civil society. The network consists of the Houses in the member countries. Each House can consist of a lot of organizations. Each House can host an indefinite amount of satellites i.e. persons, organizations, groups that are part of the network.





There are a lot of stories untold. There is a lot of experience, knowledge, questions that rarely are addressed from stage. There are lots of people not accounted for on stage. The @work network is a possibility for these stories to be told, represented, explored and discussed. What can we see when we work together? What can we know? What can happen when the arts and civil society meet? What can happen when fences are brought down and we work together on common issues, common themes? What can we do when working together – when we are @work?

At the moment there are 7 Houses in the network, 7 Houses where artists, unions, activists, researchers, workers, writers, social commentators are exploring the conditions of contemporary Europe. Together we represent a vast and indefinite experience. Together we create space for other stories to take place, for other voices to challenge the normative structures and the systems of power. Together we look for other possibilities as we work together on a performance, a seminar, a carnival, a platform, a concert, an exhibition, a web-based tool. We are

the method and the loudspeakers for a better, more just world. We try. We do.
We are @work.

In this way we can oppose the status quo and create space for other worlds,
other experiences, other stories outside of the dominating agenda.
And in this way we create change.

As we sang during the carnival, Copenhagen April 2007:

We are cannibals
We are coming now
We will eat
All that is eating us
We eat work
We start consuming now

Through the ages
Man has been consumed
Fought for wages
From noon 'till noon
Now, dear work,
now comes the time of doom

So, with gratitude to the ones that went before us: we're @work – creating
change. Together.

Background text

Mails from reference groups

Monica Cuesta Beltran (DK)

I have participated in the @work network from the Danish unit, witnessing their work at international workshops, and at times giving feedback, when asked. I have among other things been at a workshop with the network in Helsinki. It was really interesting to be present during the workshops and sessions. A very heterogeneous group formed by artists from many different countries and with many different backgrounds worked all together with a process, at times a painful process, to produce an integrated work within a given topic or theme. I say painful because staying in the process can be awe inspiring if you do not see a result coming. In our society, results is what counts, isn't it? You need to have a goal, and the process is the effective way to achieve that goal. The goal is normally a product, something you know you want to create beforehand. Otherwise, what is the idea of any activity? Here I discovered the most important thing is the process of working together and posing questions. And not settling for an answer. And while doing so, reflecting on the process, in a meta-level that makes it possible to enrich the artists and to give them new ways to deal with the work. It must be awe inspiring to stay on the train, letting pass all the stations already known, deepening into unconquered territory without the certainty of ever getting somewhere. But in my engagement with the network, this is what I most appreciated, since this is what art can do for me. And the network have taught me about a new way of understanding art, which involves not only the outcome, but the process as well, with all the uncertainties, failures, successes and blood of the artist.

Background text

Mails from reference groups

Dr. John Callow (UK)

The @work project was a bold attempt by a number of theatre groups, working at the cutting edge of their art, to bring together artists, actors, activists and the broad base of the European Labour Movement. This enabled the TUC, Ruskin College, the WEA and the Marx Memorial Library to appear together on platforms and to cooperate in areas that have lain fallow, in some cases, since the 1960s. All in all, it represented an exciting and interesting time. It produced some memorable theatre performances not least by Sweden's TheatreMachine, with its own band, diverse range of actors and elaborate stage sets. From my own perspective, the project yielded lasting and extremely positive results, constructing alliances and personal friendships that cut across traditional political divisions on the Left which led to the establishment of extremely good and close working relationships between the Marx Library, Ruskin College, the TUC and the former officer for culture at the Swedish Lo. This year has also seen the signing of a partnership agreement between the Marx Library and Ruskin College, which was the direct fruit of the @work programme. Though it never realised all of its ambitions, at a time when "big questions" are frowned upon and few in the media ever dare to ask "how?" or "why?", @work established new benchmarks for artistic endeavour, lit up the capitals of Europe with dreams of a better tomorrow and helped to reunite the disparate cultural strands that had forged the Left in Britain.

Artistic project

Journeys to Work 2007

An inaugural @work project

Topher Campbell, Artistic Director Red Room

The Red Room

Since 1996 The Red Room has existed to creatively free the imagination from the status quo and is committed to artistically exploring social justice, human rights, equality and fairness. This has remained at the heart of the company through a change of artistic leadership from Lisa Goldman to Topher Campbell in 2006. Topher took this ambition further to place artistic innovation at the core of the programme. Productions mix live action with the recorded image and are performed in non-traditional spaces giving audiences a visceral and unique experience. Integral to the programme of work is the Reference Group; a collection of inspiring partnerships with civil agencies, artists, venues, funders and local authorities working closely together led by artists.

The Reference Group ensures the focus of the programme remains relevant to the public it serves, is resourced efficiently and reaches a wide audience. The Red Room engages and inspires the public to think differently about the society we live in and further breakdown the boundaries between performance and audience. Alongside the main Productions we present 3-4 RRPlatforms each year: one-off live events incorporating performance, film and discussion to encourage activism, forge alliances, create artistic debates and represent the views and opinions of the marginalised. Past Platforms have incorporated groundbreaking initiatives on Feminism, Gay Africa, Knife Crime and the Surveillance Culture. Most of the RRPlatforms have resulted in strong artistic and social legacies, with the formation of charities, campaign groups

and artistic collaborations created as a direct result of the event. The Red Room has won many awards and in 2010/11 alone was shortlisted for the AKA Theatre Event of the Year Award 2010 by What's on Stage, nominated for the Urban Arts Intervention Award 2010 by the City of Berlin, and nominated for the prestigious Mies Van De Rhoe Award 2011 by the European Union.

In 2003 The Red Room was awarded the Time Out Live Award and in 2011 the Architects Journal Small Projects Award.

Why Journeys to Work?

In the UK the issue of immigration and migration has the power to divide the country and bring down governments. One of the inevitable consequences of their being a divide between the living standards of those in the West and those in the developing world is that scores of people attempt to migrate to the Europe every year. Journey's To Work (JTW) wanted to get behind the headlines and look at the individual lives and experiences of those migrating. The Red Room was interested in documenting and presenting the human cost of inequality across nations and to examine what it took to, in some cases, leave all that is familiar in a homeland for the sake of a new life in a completely foreign country. We also wanted to begin to hold our government, the Labour Administration under Tony Blair, to account for how it returned some people seeking asylum to their home countries to face torture or execution.

The process

To create JTW the lead artist Topher Campbell, undertook extensive research. In doing so he formed a Reference Group. The Reference Group served as strategic ballast for the production providing useful links to individuals and organisations that in turn helped to source eyewitnesses.

The Reference Group was made up of the TUC, Refugee Council, Migrants Rights Network, Women for Refugee Women, the Catholic Church and the Marx Library. The TUC was the lead partner and provided

the company with financial backing whilst all the other partners provided resources in-kind. Financial support was also given by the Barry and Amiel Trust, the British Council and the Arts Council England. Through the Reference Group and other links we were able to source three people whose narratives provided the main content for the production. These were Jakob from Poland, Victoire from Togo and Benis from Congo.

Filming

It was decided early on in the process that the production would be led by the testimonies of those with experience of the UK immigration service. To this end each participant was interviewed extensively over a 6 months. The interviews took place in the interviewees home or at a neutral location. The films were then used unedited during the rehearsal process. A writer Nirjay Mahindru, was commissioned to weave the stories together alongside a larger critique. Also, the play was cast with three actors who each contributed their point of view about immigration in the UK. One of the actors Daniel Williams was an immigrant of Nigerian descent and had first hand experience of the then new laws governing British naturalisation. The play was rehearsed for four weeks through a mixture of improvisation, film editing and the written word. There was great concern about the work connecting with contemporary life and representing truefully the circumstances for immigrants at the time.

Another key artist and collaborator was Derek Richards. Derek is a digital artist and pioneered the use of synchronised recorded images with live performance. Although Journeys to Work was realised on a small scale Derek's involvement assured the creative integration of recorded images in an affordable way which greatly enhanced the credibility of the content of the show.

Participation during the @work festival, Huset, Copenhagen

The @work Festival at the Huset was invigorating in form and challenging in content. Bringing together companies, artists, social campaigners and the public from a diverse range of countries created a critical mass around the subjects that were explored. There were many

questions asked and some remain unresolved. For example can artist influence or change social policy? How can cross-national artists collaborate in a meaningful way? How representative were the artists of the each nations identity within the network.

What was also striking was the different national styles and how these were thrown into relief when performed alongside each other. The Red Room or British House as it became known, demonstrated a professionalism underpinned by an efficient zeal. It reflected the way in which experiment and process has been all but driven from the British arts scene in preference for productions or shows that have to be successful the first time: There is little room for error. What was also clear about the @work festival was the commitment to creating work that matters and to find a way to speak to power (people power, government power, corporate power) in a meaningful way.

Legacy

Given that there is little room for development in the British theatre context in retrospect JTW served as a developmental project for a larger, more far reaching production called UNSTATED. UNSTATED changed the emphasis from focusing on immigrant journeys to a critique of the racist overly bureaucratic and unjust system for processing immigrants once they arrived in the UK. It also further developed the use of digital technology. Another part of the legacy of JTW was to strengthen and extend the Reference Group and it's participation in critiquing the work as well as advocating for it. Significantly JTW remains a model for the way The Red Room now creates work. The productions are documentary led and rooted in the issues of the day. In this way it is hope that they act as a catalyst for change in a world where individuals and even organisations can feel disempowered.

Artistic project

Inside Berlin n@work, looking out

Jörn J. Burmester, performance artist, Berlin

Berlin n@work was a group of first six, later five performance artists based in Berlin. It operated in 2006 and 2007 as a partner in the European performance research @work network. Its most publicly visible activities were three group performances: *Redefine Work*, *Arbeit Definition 2.0* and *Arbeit Definition 2.1.*, presented in Berlin, Copenhagen, Szczecin and Bale. Members also participated in all of the workspaces and platforms of the @work network and hosted one of the first meetings in Berlin in March 2006 in Berlin.

Members of *Berlin n@work* were Florian Feigl, Janine Eisenächer, Joy Harder, Nicolas Galeazzi and the author. Initially Otmar Wagner also participated. He quit the group after the first series of performances, but joined the last one again as a guest. In November 2007, after the members had realised that the organisational form of a company as a legal body had strongly influenced their work in ways they did not agree to, *Berlin n@work* disbanded, and immediately regrouped as *Emanuelle*. *Emanuelle* is a more hybrid form of organisation that represents the Berlin artists in the framework of the @work network today and remains to be a strong base for artistic activities of its members, but avoids to maintain a legal status or corporate form.

The original aim of *Berlin n@work* was to investigate work using artistic methods and tools that would be developed in the course of the activities of the group. So throughout the existence of the group it had a double focus: There was the subject of work to investigate, and there was the development of adequate working methods for undertaking such research with means related to performance art. There also was an ongoing process of critique and re-shaping of the structure of the group itself, that tried to deal openly with internal power structures that were, at

times, quite complex. One reason for this was that it did not have an artistic director or another function that would give a person or persons in the group the authority to determine common goals or individual working subjects. All issues had to be dealt with collectively. Communication was at times difficult and insufficient. Consequently the working conditions and structures of the artists involved in the project became one central issue in the performances of the group.

The way to Redefine Work

Berlin n@work was founded by performance artists mostly from around *Performer Stammtisch*, an informal network of performance artists, still active today in Berlin (www.performerstammtisch.de), that at the time was in the process of developing. It first appeared as a group in a working demonstration held in the theatre venue *Sophiensæle* in Berlin for a meeting of the members of the *@work network*. This event featured some trademark elements that became typical for *Berlin n@work* productions. There was live action like the opening session, when all members balanced bowls of water on their heads for as long as they were able to. There were bits of performance lecture, like my text about the etymological roots for the words for work in different European languages. There were samples of Otmar Wagner's music-performance, Janine Eisenächer's interpretation of the concept of *anthropophagia*, and there were, in a joint performance by Joy Harder and Nicolas Galeazzi, the first appearances of zombies as typical workers and the three toed sloth as a model for life without work. For as little as we knew about our work about work at this time, we were sure that work as we knew it was not a good thing, and should be avoided by all means possible – which is reflected in the name *Berlin n@work*, with *n@work* open to the pronunciations „network“ and „no work“.

No work, of course, did not happen. The group received funding from *Hauptstadtkulturfonds*, a fund for financing cultural activities in the German capital, and thus had to produce and present work. This significantly changed the groups working mode. While before the funding investigations and the presentations of results were lead exclusively by content and interests, the funding obliged us not merely to work, but to produce

visible, measurable results that would conform with the structure of the funding, that had been awarded to make theatrical productions. Thus the source of funding shaped the result of the work before it had even begun. Or in other words: Funding channeled the permanent flow of real discussion and interaction into series of representations that fit the traditional framework of certain products of the world of art and entertainment. In order to maintain integrity, permanent subversion of its own work had to become a major element of the activities of *Berlin n@work*.

The first production: Redefine Work

Berlin n@work first worked in public during a two day, sixteen hour performance tour de force titled *Redefine work*. For this event, the *Virchowsaal*, a small venue of *Sophensæle* without theatrical seating or technical equipment, was converted into the first of the *n@work*'s signature *Thinking Spaces*, rooms designed to enhance processes of common thinking of everyone present in them. These rooms were collectively designed and built by the members of the *n@work*. In them,



collaborative questioning of positions reached in the process so far by artists and guests became the main content of the performative action. Following Florian Feigl's suggestion, the concepts of rehearsal and performance were replaced by critique and documentation: All artistic working methods were considered elements in a permanent process of critique, while any artistic product was dubbed documentation, open for further critique and so on *ad infinitum*.

The first *Thinking Space* contained several stations that were considered supportive for social thinking processes, including a small auditorium in the shape of an amphitheater for lectures and discussions, a bar for common eating and drinking, a bed with a small library and video collection for relaxed viewing, and a wooden hut containing a bath tub, named the Shareholder Valley. There was a program for each of the days, but the schedule was subject to permanent discussion and often changed *ad hoc* to give subjects additional space as needed.

In addition to the contributions of the *Berlin n@work* artists, other artists, activists and scholars were invited to contribute additional standpoints in interviews, lectures or video work to discuss work in the post-industrial society. A network meeting was also included in the performance. The idea of the free lance artist as a model for the modern day worker that became central to many of the activities of the *n@work* first appeared in an interview conducted with one of the guests.

On the second day, a crisis occurred. Two performers felt their contributions were not sufficiently respected within the context of the partly spontaneous actions, discussions and decisions, and threatened to discontinue the process. At this point, the program was interrupted for several hours, and performers, invited guests and audience gathered in a circle to discuss the situation, until a compromise was reached that allowed the process to continue. The *Thinking Space* proved able to function even in a time of severe threat. For the first time a discussion vital to its own survival had become part of a performative space the group had created.

In many ways *Redefine Work* set the stage for the later events the *n@work* initiated. It featured a combination of prepared and spontaneous elements, a mix of performance art pieces, media and debate, and it took audience participation seriously, engaging audiences not merely to function in pre in a preordained scenario, but asking them for actual contributions.

Arbeit Definition 2.0

The next documentation of the activities of *Berlin n@work* was prepared for the *@work platform* hosted by the Danish group *Teaterkunst* in April 2007, a meeting of all groups involved in the *@work network*. For the occasion *Berlin n@work* was joined by guest performer Henrik Vestergaard Friis. The group undertook the next step in their ongoing re-definition of work using their own experiences as free lance artists as a starting point. Their core argument was that the way artists' way of live in a self-controlled, but precarious mode of entrepreneur of the self had become a model for workers of many professions in the globalised post-



industrial job-market. Artists, they argued, had long been used to take care of their own education, job definitions, tools, work places, finances and self-marketing. Thus they have a head start on workers in other fields that were only beginning to multi-task their own way through the dissolution of traditional structures and securities, and were new to the blurring of work and free time, identity and marketing, making and being, friendship and exploitation, being and performing that is typical for the new working world, where work was quickly moving from dire necessity to scarce commodity. Artists, used to fighting for their chance to work at all, had inadvertently become models for the organisation of work.

Although the piece used a setting closer to classical theatrical formats than previous ones, had a timeframe approximating those of regular theatrical productions (one to two hours), and a layout that separated audience members from performers, there was still a lot of space for genuine development in the live-process of the performance. In this period the group understood the performance practice as a vital part of its research rather than public presentations of finished results. All the performance art pieces and discussions that made up the public presentations functioned as experiments in an ongoing investigation of the subject of work. This posed the challenge to develop ways to combine the furthering of knowledge vital to research with the unlimited freedom of association necessary to the artist. While this question remains far from solved in a general way, engaging the audience on a personal level was crucial in keeping the work accessible. Simply watching the the various scenarios and experiments of the groups might be fun and interesting enough, but it was the personal exchange of interpretations and opinions with audience members and the replies of the artists to these that made the motivations of the work comprehensible and integrated the presentations into the permanent feedback loop of critique and documentation.

Arbeit Definition 2.1 – business report for the years 2006/2007

How will artists work, if everyone works like an artist now?

For their final performances in the context of the @work project, *Berlin n@work* chose the form of a business report, and set out to give a detailed account of the manifold activities that the members had pursued during the course of their two years of research together.

There was a rather complex setting of installations in the large main hall of Sophiensæle including the covering of the audience tiers in white plastic dance floor, converting them into an icy mountain range. Audience was seated in chairs in the area usually used as a stage, together with a long table where the performers would begin their evening. Another important element was a small house, a descendant of the simple wooden hut in the first Berlin show, covered in semi translucent mirror film, so that its interiors could be exposed by use of a certain lighting.

Each evening the performers met an hour before the show to decide on a question they would try to find an answer to, deduced from the point where the discussion would have finished the night before. For the spectators the evening began in the foyer with the chance to participate in an artistic interview conducted by Joy Harder and Janine Eisenächer, who would ask questions about the relationship to work, that would have to be answered by performing a visual image rather than talking. In the almost completely dark theatre they were met by Otmar Wagner singing his song „No one should ever work“ inspired by a text by anarchist Bob Black, while his colleagues populated the white mountain as a flock of peacefully grazing llamas. The performance continued combining a series of more or less pre-structured discussions with visual performance pieces, using the house (dubbed the new headquarters of the *Berlin n@work*), video projections, a punch and judy show on capitalism, and also included the compost, created by all members of the group piling on top of one another and a broken washing machine that had accompanied the group throughout most of its adventures.

While the integration of comments and suggestions by audience members had been a major tool for the group for quite a while, in *Definition 2.1* they took it to a new extreme. One of the few rules they had was that any question or comment by audiences would be taken up and discussed as long as was necessary to reach a result that was satisfactory to all involved. This meant taking audience participation so seriously that the material that the group had prepared was risked in favor of an open process. About 10 minutes into



one show at *Sophiensæle* an audience member aggressively questioned the entire set up by demanding: „You are not doing anything. What did I pay eight Euros for?“ In keeping with their rule, the group dedicated the entire evening to the discussion of this remark and its implications. For several hours, much longer than the planned presentation would have lasted, group members and audience engaged in a heated debate of the merits of the open form that had been chosen for the evening (albeit not much of it had been seen by the audience at this point), the work of artists in general, what it might be worth in relation to ticket pricing and more issues. No one missed the dances, videos songs and physical performances that usually would have been presented. It was most enlightening to watch how most of the spectators when leaving the theatre were in heated debate and puzzling about what it was they had just witnessed: Was it still theatre, or something else completely? In their most complete de(con)struction of the format of the stage show to date the group also came closest to achieving its goal of using the theatre to create a truly live exploration of its subject of work.

Artistic Project

Sexy and dangerous:
Working in a process of
LURE – Exhibition of Infinite Possibilities

Pilvi Porkola, Reality Research Center

March 2007. At rehearsal we spent three hours of talking about new work and how we could work on this complicated theme and how to transform it to the stage. We were totally exhausted. It was time to do something else. One of my colleagues had music on his laptop and we decided to have a catwalk dancing session. Actors asked advices for moving. "Just walk, just look sexy and dangerous" I answered.

Few years back I directed the performance *LURE –Exhibition of Infinite Possibilities*. It was about transformation of working life, alienation and art. When I started to work with this project I had some elements for its basis already. I was leading a one year project about performance and politics at Reality Research Center with Janne Saarakkala. Furthermore Reality Research Center was part of an international collaboration @work network. @work-collective had an idea to have a festival together focusing on the topic of "Work". So we were asked to do a performance about work for the festival. The performance had a premiere at The Story of Work –festival 2007 in Copenhagen. The project is also part of my artistic research "Notes on politics, documenting and personal in performance" I've been working on in Theatre Academy, Helsinki since 2006.

In the beginning of the performance the audience meets a guide. The guide welcomes the audience and asks them to imagine they are in an art exhibition. He leads them to an empty hall and starts to describe paintings and statues the audience can't see. All the pieces of art are (concerning) images of new work.

The theoretical background of this artistic work was based on ideas of society as a spectacle and overloaded visibility. In the 60's, the situationist and Marxist theorist Guy Debord stated that spectacle is human communication which has become a commodity. Debord wrote: "The first stage of the economy's domination of social life brought about an evident degradation of *being* into *having* — human fulfilment was no longer equated with what one was, but with what one possessed. The present stage, in which social life has become completely dominated by the accumulated productions of the economy, is bringing about a general shift from *having* to *appearing* — all "having" must now derive its immediate prestige and its ultimate purpose from appearances."

Guy Debord's idea of the society as spectacle makes me ask: how am I part of all this. Society of overloaded visibility means images are not only in our surrounding but part of our mind as well. Working life is full of images. Work is not something that you do with your hands but it's more often communication and networking. And even more, it is supposed to be part of your identity and a fulfilment of your life.

Beside of the guide there are two guys, assistants, carrying an empty frame. The guide and assistants start to talk what they think about this exhibition and other works of art they have seen. The assistants try to describe some of works they have seen in other art galleries by acting, taking different kind of positions. Soon they go inside the frame, and their talking and stagnant positions are framed as if an installation.

Italian philosopher Paolo Virno emphasizes performativity as a core element of working life today. Human ability to communicate, verbal language, is part of work at present. Virno writes: "When "subjective" cooperation becomes the primary productive force, labor activities display a marked linguistic-communicative quality, they entail the presence of others. The monological feature of labor dies away: the relationship with others is a driving, basic element, not something accessory." In other words, communications as a part of worker's ability has modified the worker and work itself as a part of spectacle.

We followed The International Situationists' idea of framing. In the 60's situationists did a rehearsal where they took a frame and put it different places in a city and said "Look, this is art". With this act they liked to claim art is whatever you define as art. The outcomes of research of new work are stating work is not stable any more, it is part- time, mobile even blurring, not based on any physical place. So the work is more and more about how it is defined. We wanted to try to do framing to ask if the concept of new work is more and more based on idea of framing, not about the content.



The guide interviews a cardboard Karl Marx. What do you think, the guide asks, what is your favourite piece of art in this exhibition? The guide listens, Marx doesn't answer. What do you think about working life and its transformation nowadays, the guide asks? Do you have any opinions for us? The guide tells Marx about the difficulties of his personal working life. Marx listens. Marx doesn't answer.

All the performers have they own tools painted white. A white shovel, a white drill and a white keyboard. They present their tools as if they are archaeological relics. Then they start to dance with their tools. Dance is a combination of sexy cat walking and posing in different working positions. Is this how we like to have it in our working life today: trendy and hot? Afterwards performers have a chat. They talk about how they felt while dancing. They compare their jeans and talk about their salaries. Also, they talk about porn and alienation. In the end they discuss frames and framing as an act of new work.

In the end of LURE, one of performers states a definition of porn, following Finnish journalist Kaarina Hazard's idea, as an act without a context. After transformation of working life, after clear contents, stable contexts, in the world of framing and never ending varying definitions, when you work, work and work more...is the work just acts too, without contexts? Is it taking a step from sexy image to a pure act, so porn?



Artist's testimony

Panda at Work

Janne Saarakkala, Reality Research Center

Hi, I'm Panda, the embodiment of New Work.
Just dropping you some lines on my way to Paris, or was it Tokyo?
Money just flies between countries.
Fly with it, surf on it and make the best of it or else...
Drop dead, Old Worker!

With the artists...

In 2007 I got this bizarre offer to work as a PR person for a Finnish performance art group called Reality Research Centre. Complete bonkers! At the time they were researching topics of 'work' and 'political performance' with their European colleagues so frantically that they had no time drink enough cava. Imagine! Work. Political. My god, I almost died of instant boredom. Who gives a damn about politics? It is so last season. Never the less, they seemed sexy, insomniac, a little lost and exhausted by their precarious work i.e. prone to swallow my seeds ;-) So I took the job.

On the streets ...

In March 2007 we tested Helsinki dwellers their will of voting in the Parliament Election in a street performance *Don't feel like voting? - Panda Election Machine*. It was a list of multiple choice questions with the help of which we tested people if they were Old Workers that should vote, or if they were New Workers who, instead of useless voting and citizenship, should join our rank. Sadly, most of them believed in the old ghost. Street appearances continued in Copenhagen when Finnish Reality Researchers joined their international fellows of @work Network in a EU funded platform (sort of a festival) *The Story of Work* in April. As a welcoming ceremony I paraded across central Copenhagen with the Artists and some friends of mine, carrying a coffin of Old Work and following... er, a cart full

of raw meat (sic) and a Swedish Artiste doing butoh on top of it. Yummy! Anyhow, on the way I sang *The International* on the steps of LO headquarters :-P and shook my little tush ;-)) in front of the City Hall and finally buried the god damn Old Work (again) :-|| in the courtyard of Huset, where the platform took place. Why, oh why is it so hard to keep that old has-been in it's grave? It is so not bubbly.

In Limbo ...

Back in Helsinki I started a campaign to promote the RRC autumn programme. I wrote press releases, opened a blog and held a press conference. Not a single journalist came to drink my political punch! :-O I called political journalists to persuade them to meet at least the foxy Camilla Kring from Danish B-Society discussing 'time as a political tool' with hot Finnish Ph.D. Kalle Haatanen in an international panel discussion, but the journalists shyed away. I guess I wasn't real enough for their tedious taste ;-)) Luckily, the Artists came to the conclusion that getting down to their hands and knees and crawling the streets of Helsinki was the most



powerful political performance they could think of. So, they crawled. Not *against* anything, always *for* a group of people, like the victims of climate change, refugees and blah blah. Finally they crawled for the striking nurses and it became a big fat media event!

In a jacuzzi

By the end of year and the end of my assignment I took the stage in a performance called *Portrait of a New Worker*. It was almost porn! I stripped the Actors bare naked, mentally and physically. I whipped them senseless with flowers! And in the finale I was *in the nude myself*. ;-) Wow, I was a storming success! Thinking back, it was fun to mess around with the Artists, especially in a jacuzzi (mark my words, they had one in the Reality Research Centre). I almost had a genuine emotion. They'd make perfect New Workers if they wouldn't take themselves soooo seriously. I mean, why waste energy in trying to be so deep? It's no use. People are shallow. I did all my tricks to lighten them up, eventually to no avail. The Artists chose daily dreary insted of a glass of bubbly. What a joke!

Are you a new worker?

So what the hell is New Work, you might wonder. Let's make a little test! I used it in *Portrait of a New Worker*. Please answer the following eight questions "yes" or "no":

- Does work follow you home?
- Does work follow you to bed?
- Does work keep you awake at night?
- Is it hard for you to describe your occupation briefly?
- In your work, do you often have to think how to present, yourself or the stuff that you do?
- Do you have to make an effort to prove your job completed?
- While you are working are constantly haunted by the passing of time?
- Do you recognise the following sentence in your soul: "I just don't have the energy to feel any feelings"?

If you answered “yes” four times or more you are a New Worker and I am your future.

Stop producing, perform!

In the old times New Work was not even considered as work, you couldn't make a living out of it. Today this non-work pays better than Old Work. Not all New Work is paid for, though – quite the contrary. The invisible non-paid labour you need to do in order to get a paid job, some specific job or any job, is also New Work. New Work is the work you have to do in order to maintain your occupation. For example you get paid for eight hours a day, but to be worthy of it you need to do at least couple of hours extra, emergency work, to show your passion. At the best of times this results into added value i.e. economic growth. The more drudgery, the more growth obtained... if you're lucky. And you wither in your exhaustion. Actually, your life is in danger, unless you get the message: work is not supposed to be done properly.



Do not just *do* your job, perform it. If you can't perform it, outsource it. Machines and the third world slaves will carry out all necessary physical labour anyway. What is left? You yourself, your personality. You as a performance, that is your work. And when it comes off in it's full potential, you are a Work of Art, an investment.

On the road...

So, there's lot to learn from performing artists. The most advanced specimen of the day do not need a theatre, a stage, props, manuscripts nor direction or any other external designers – they are self-sufficient. They just stand up and start performing; anytime, anywhere, anyway. Prominent New Workers are not tied to families or homes, they don't do such things. They are single, swift and always on the move, just like money. They *glide* with the currencies... in the Mile High Club! ;-) Oh yes, it's very important business to have sex appeal. Never have sex, though. It's a messy waste of time. I'd rather google professionals. All you need is a little English, especially if you don't have the looks. Talk about it. Chit chat. Mingle. Flirt. Ooze. Never refuse an invitation. Never fail to be polite. Never outstay a welcome. Smile. Using a sharp tongue can be amusing but losing ones temper is a farce. Better outsource quarrels to twats. In case of confrontation stay cool, never yield, just leave – for a better audience. When you become a Work of Art you only have pick up the right invitations and appear... and the world will be your oyster. That's what I call a good performance!

On-line...

And why perform physically at all? Performing in the World Wide Web is much easier; Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, YouTube... Keep a blog, for God's sake! It's a huge industry and all about personality; your style, your choices, your friends, your gossip. Keep it light and cool and you can fly high without working your butt off. One needs one's butt after all, to pose. Or... does one?

The possibilities of the web are not limited by flesh, they're infinite. I've seen it. I've seen things you people wouldn't even believe... All at your disposal with a little zip of electricity.

What's your problem?

Money is not your problem. Money just flies between countries. You just have fly with it. So, what is it then? It's that bag of limbs and lard that prevent you from realising your dreams, that clumsy carcass you have to maintain and satisfy. That's your problem.

I know what Paolo Virno has written: "*The living body of the worker is the platform of labor-power which, in itself, has no independent existence.*"¹ I'm sorry, Paolo, you're bald and all wrong. I am a mere idea and I have an independent existence, 24/7. I do not sleep. I don't do anything what you would consider work but I am always at work. I am... the added value. Plain potential, baby. I am the next step for human kind. What does it take? A small step to a man, a giant leap for mankind.

Cheers, mates!



¹ Paolo Virno: Grammar of the Multitude, 2004, <http://www.generation-online.org/c/fcmultitude3.htm>

PART II

Much more than a network – part two

The construction and organization of the @work network

Nina Larissa Bassett, TeaterKUNST

The second part of the network saw a change of structure, new members, another subject and new ways of working together.

Under the Greek sun

In 2007 the funding had run out but the energy to continue doing something together was still strong. The next phase was initiated in Athens, where the Greek company, Theatre Entropia, hosted a meeting for all the network members as part of the Alternative Stage Festival. No one had funding but all the original companies were represented. This was a good sign. The Athens meeting combined presenting the development and results of network to date with looking into the future. And this raised many questions: What keeps the network together? How do we organize ourselves? What to do about funding? How do we invite new members to join?

We decided to make an open thinking space about these questions and proceeded with a two-day brainstorm that included any participants in the festival who wanted to join. The first question was the most urgent. We've 'done' work – what to focus on next? After an extensive search by filling a theatre stage with a huge map of possible subjects we weeded it down to one, rather broad topic: Civilization. The next questions were connected: How to proceed with no funding and how to organize ourselves. As no funding meant no one was formally responsible for pushing things forward we decided upon a structure that meant each company could contribute according to their size, structure and capacity.



Houses

The structure of the houses was born. Each participating company became a 'house', which allowed for more open interpretations structures, as participants had found it problematic to be defined as a "company" when they didn't work like this in practice. This meant that the Berlin n@twork officially was able to dissolve and become the flat structured Emanuelle. Despite the obvious contradiction of being a 'transnational' network the houses were defined according to national residence. The network therefore consisted of a Finnish House, a Swedish House, a British House, a German House, a Danish House and a new addition; the Greek House. Furthermore the Organizational Development House (OD) was founded, the intention was to create a forum that continued the producing across borders, and shared knowledge and methods of this very unique way of working. Additionally the houses could have satellites, individuals or companies that are not able to become houses but participate by being connected to a house. Newcomers would become houses by hosting an @work platform, workshop or festival.

House and space

The next question was how to approach the selected subject artistically. TeaterKUNST (DK) proposed a simple structure and called it: Workspace. Each house could host them according to their own capacity. The workspace would be an open space, where the artists would propose and work on civilization related projects and these should be presented in a public presentation. The hosts set the agenda and decide the format of the public presentation. The ambition was to push the network participants into closer collaborative situations and to work across disciplines and favored work partners. The workspaces were kicked-off in Copenhagen February 2008.

Working hard for the money

Due to the hardworking producers the Nordic participants raised a three-year grant from Culture Point North, providing the network with some funding to continue the workspaces. That would prove a challenging for the network. An immediate inequality emerged as part of the network had some funding and others; UK, Greece, Germany and soon Latvia, had no support at all to continue. Did this compromise the idea of the network? Obviously.

Even so the Nordic participants chose to see this as an opportunity to do something for the network and found ways of hosting a series of workspaces in ways that could be more inclusive. In Finland Reality Research Center cleverly collaborated in 2009 with Lappeenranta City Theatre and later with the Baltic Circle Festival, consequently provided a little more room to maneuver and include participants from the non-funded countries. Teatermaskinen decided to build the network platforms around their own summer festival: The Resistance Festival, inviting the network to take part and take ownership of part of the festival programming. For a long time TeaterKUNST had the desire to share the huge knowledge and many resources, beyond artistic methods, contained within the network. By hosting workshops and the Performing Places seminar in April 2011 they saw a window in which to present some of many of the network members' exciting endeavors with local performing arts practitioners and others.

Background text

Producing across borders

Essi Aittamaa, Reality Research Center

The @work network has been a playground for companies and producers interested in international work. During the eight years of collaboration, we, the producers of @work network, have tested different models and practises of production. Some of them have been innovative, path finding and functional, and some of them, well, innovative.

The starting point

When the network started working together in 2005, none of us was very experienced in international collaborations or co-productions, we became professionals through praxis. The starting point of the network's activities was unusual, as the participating companies were very different, not only artistically, but also in the way they organised themselves and their administration. Some companies had an office but some worked from the artistic director's living room. While **Teatermaskinen** (SWE) had a few fulltime staff members, the **Berlin N@twork** (GER) comprised of independent performance artists who formed an organisation solely to be able to administrate EU funding. Most of the companies worked with irregular and project-based funding, and individuals worked for a small salary or completely for free. For all of us the motivation was the high artistic quality of our own company and the opportunity to engage in the unique and inspiring process, and to learn from it. In the beginning we had passion but no finances or structure.

Funding the work

From the start it became clear that we needed funding to be able to achieve the artistic goals. With great team spirit we wrote an EU application and half hoped half disbelieved that we would receive financial support. When **the Story of Work** (2005-2006) was granted EU funding we were delighted, but a bit

afraid. With many of the participants engaging in the application with financial risk, how would we be able to gather the required self-financing and handle the heavy administration? Bigger companies have in-kind financing they can use in projects, but with companies like us, there was no financing to in-kind.



We were more experienced when the Nordic companies of the @network initiated the **Civilisation Project** (2009-2011). Still, the problems with the self-financing had remained and before we accepted the funding I had to ask the funding body, The Nordic Culture Point, what were the consequences if we could not come up with sufficient amount of self financing. Being a flexible and an efficient organisation they answered quickly – the project could be done but in a smaller scale.

We managed the EU funding and it appears that we will manage the Nordic funding as well. But it takes a lot of work and a lot of determination. In most cases, funding brings you more funding and organisations like to support the

ones already being supported. Personally I think that none of this would have been possible without the EU or the Nordic support. Still, it is worth noting that most funding schemes, especially within the EU, are designed for big, regularly funded organisations, whose main activities stay similar from one year to another. And us, being different from that, faced several challenges in administrating the funding.

For us receiving international funding meant that we had to do a lot of fundraising to cover our self-financing parts. Most members of the network covered their part combining global, bilateral and regional funding sources. In addition, we have been able to build partnerships with organisations, such as labour unions, festivals and venues, and this has both helped us financially and added a new dimension to our work.

Fundraising is one of the most important, if not the most important task, a producer of the @network is responsible of and it takes big part of the producer's time. As fundraising is always a challenge, exploring and testing new creative ways of funding should be one of the key priorities of the network. It is the only way to ensure the network's survival in the future.

Creating the organisation

How to create a structure of production within companies whose own structures are so varied? When we started, there was no clear division between the artists and the producers. We were a small team of enthusiasts and we were very democratic. All of us took part in the meetings and had our say in the artistic as well as the production side of the network. Things changed when the Story of Work was granted the EU funding. Roles became clearer and from each participating company a producer and an artistic leader were named.

Producer's collaboration

While artistic leaders were in charge of the artistic direction of the process, the producers were responsible for all the production and administration within the network. This structure proved to be very efficient. As the companies were so

different, it was important to have a representative from each company in all the meetings and to be part of the decision-making. Producer meetings and artistic leader meetings were always held simultaneously at the same place, which was necessary for the sharing of information and keeping the process dynamic. The artistic leaders often reshaped the process and the produces could react to their suggestions immediately. Often long workdays consisted of a several discussions and meetings, a discussion with the producer and the artistic leader of a company, simultaneous meetings of the artistic leader - and producer groups, a joint meeting of the two groups, simultaneous meetings by the artistic leader - and producer groups and discussion with the producer and the artistic leader of a company.

Sometimes this meant wasted time, as the produces could have discussed an issue for two hours and afterwards would have gotten information from the artistic leaders that the issue discussed was not relevant anymore. Still, looking back to the overall process, that was a minor flaw. During the Story of Work the producers were equal to the artists, we were present in each meeting and our input was crucial to the planning and implementing of the project. Our role was not only to react to the wishes of the artistic leaders; we were feeding ideas as well. As **Florian Feigl**, the producer and artist from **Emanuelle** (former Berlin N@work) stated: *“I truly see the work of a producer as a deeply artistic and even aesthetic work at the core of creative process.”*

For the producers this leg of the collaboration was a learning experience, not only of working across borders, but also in the different ways the companies tackled similar problems. As we represented companies that were artistically different and based on distant geographical locations, we were not each other's competitors. We could share our knowledge and best practises, and learn much from each other.

The need for new structures

After the Story of Work it became clear that the structure of the network had to change. What had served that project perfectly, would not work in a

changed setting. Now the needs of the artistic process had changed and we were free of the boundaries set by the EU funding. As years went by we noted that collaborations started to emerge with independent artists, not with the companies as a whole. Several tight working groups started to form and all of a sudden different projects and performances created by the @work network's members happened across Europe. Everyone noticed that the network was changing and the direction was regarded positive, instead of one big production we should encourage work in smaller, cross- and trans-national teams. It anyhow posed some serious challenges for the producers. How to organise the network's multiple small activities and how to fund them? Which parts of the activities should be financed by the network? And how should the producer's freelance time be shared between the different projects?

The birth of the houses

From the producers' perspective, an interesting idea was to create a house of its own to tackle issues concerning production. This house was named the house O.D., shortened from the house of Organisational Development. Unfortunately, it was very difficult actually to get the House O.D. working. Maybe it was created in the wrong time, as during that period some of the companies decided to work completely without a producer and most of the remaining producers had big changes in their working and private lives, that took their attention away from the network. Or maybe the idea of House O.D. was better on paper than in real life.

Tackling the practical needs

The House structure answered the needs of funding, but another structure was created to serve the content of the network's work, on both the artistic and organisational levels. The network decided to form several working groups that each focused on one relevant subject and who were free to discuss and make propositions on the issues concerning the network. This was a welcomed change, as people could choose one group or several groups depending on their interests, the work could be divided more evenly within the network and people could

tackle the issues they found interesting. Almost all of the formed six groups address production related questions:

1. Events – the groups discuss developing festivals, workspace and seminars within the network
2. Funding – the groups discuss public money and selling @work products
3. Storytelling – the groups discuss external & internal communication, marketing and finding ways of informing external parties
4. History – the groups discuss documentation of the networks projects
5. Politics – the groups discuss getting @work network engaged in cultural politics on a European level by formulating an opinion on political decisions, lobbying, attending meetings
6. Interventions - the groups discuss artistic methods & content for furthering public interventions in an @work context + development of task force the concept

This structure is relatively new and it can change when its functionality is tested in practise. Still, when I read the list I feel that the questions the House



O.D. was formed to discuss are discussed within these working groups. So maybe this was just a way of making the House O.D. work better and to engage the whole network in the organisational development.

Relatively much time has been spent discussing the structure and the key activities of the network, but this time has been extremely relevant and fruitful. A structure that functions and serves the needs of the network and its members is crucial, especially as the members and their needs are so different. The network should have the courage to replace the organisational structure that has been tried out but has not served its purpose or change the structure if it does not meet the network's and the member's needs.

Communicating in the network

In a global network communication is crucial. Individual and cultural misunderstandings happen and adequate time should be reserved to getting to know the collaborators and communicating. Sometimes this might feel like time wasted from other, more important areas of work like fundraising. However, without functioning communication it is difficult to get and keep the projects running. Communication is challenging because all the members of the @work network are extremely busy and most of them work on several projects simultaneously.

In general if participants are excited about the project they will answer emails and messages no matter how busy their schedule is. But sometimes even the most enthusiastic member of the network is impossible to reach and from the production side this can pose a serious threat to the network. If a producer needs a piece of information for a funding application or report, not obtaining it can have serious long-term implications to the whole network.

International meetings are expensive and therefore a lot of the networks communication must be done through skype, email and phone. Especially then it is good to sum up that both parties interpret the message and the meaning the same way. In most occasions communication gets easier the longer you work with

someone. Knowing someone well can also be a risk, as we tend to think that we know how the other person would think. But in real life we rarely know, and have to find it out through communication.

It is easy to make assumptions that the settings and challenges are similar in each country and participating company. This is rarely the case. Also preconceptions can easily affect ones judgement. Notion, like “the Nordic art support is good”, can make it difficult to see that the Nordic figures of art support might be substantial, but key member of a Nordic independent theatre company can still work full time with no salary. Therefore it is relevant to communicate about the participants’ work, aims, structure and financial status as openly as possible, so that everyone knows whom they are working with. This is the only way to truly join forces and to make successful collaborations happen.

Looking back

I started my text calling the @work network a playground. One might rightfully argue that this term doesn’t describe the many sides of the network, or the challenging work we all engage in to keep the projects and activities running. However, it does shed light to one important aspect of the network, and in doing so, reveals much about the network and its members. A network that allows people to play, to learn and to test new ideas has to have trust and a solid ground. What is beautiful about the @work network is that this ground isn’t based on a solid physical or financial structure, or an agenda we all need to follow. Instead it is formed of the different individuals that are the network. In the words of my colleague Florian Feigl: *“What still strikes me is how different the people, companies, organisational set-ups of the various parties involved were - and that despite all the differences in artistic practices and educational backgrounds it still became possible to work in very productive ways together.”*

Artist's testimony

Mr. Democracy's nightmare

Jussi Johnsson

To the Workspace in Copenhagen I was asked to create "an infection" that will have democracy as a subject. I invented a game. In the second morning of the Workspace I hanged a strap on my shoulder on a way beauty queens use to wear. I had been written "Mr Democracy" on the strap. At breakfast I proclaimed to all the international participants that we will have democracy during the next hour from now on and vote on issues that concern all participants. Make a wild guess what happened.

Immediately one of the participants insisted on voting on what issues will be shared with all the participants and which will be individual. Another participant proposed a vote about letting him to eat before the others from the breakfast table. I was surprised that most of participants supported this proposal. When the winner of the vote delivered all rolls to his supporters, it ended up as a privileged majority and an anti-privileged group was left with nothing. When one member of the anti-privileged side suggested a new election the majority sent her to a prison in the corner. Her supporters gathered on a demonstration in the other end of the table and demanded to set their comrade free and equal rights for everyone to have the breakfast. The majority started to send demonstrators to the prison and that broke out a war between the majority and the anti-privilege minority. Both sides started to shout slogans in each other's face and nobody was listening. "Free eggs for everyone"! Demonstrators chanted. "Death to the terrorists"! The majority responded. Egg's shells, grapes and table napkins were thrown from side to side. I got embarrassed and felt powerless in the face of happenings. "How did this happen"? I asked myself. "This is not democracy but a nightmare".

After the game I had to ask myself what is democracy after all. Series of events in the breakfast revealed how naively I had believed that

democracy is social harmony and it will be fulfilled if a majority's opinion would be chosen at a free election. I took it for granted that democracy as an idea would naturally contain something positive, calm things down and provide equality in the community. Not until after the game it occurred to me that democracy may work merely on certain conditions. On what conditions? Is it then a question about democracy as I had considered at all? Is democracy harmoni-ous only in my mind, but it is something else in social reality?



I have lived in Nordic democracy. We in Finland think that our society system is a democratic exemplary. After the Second World War the employees, the government and the employers together agreed on the terms and conditions of the employment until the end of the millennium. The election victory of the Left in the end of 60s completed the construction of our welfare state in the 70s. For thirty years class distinctions in Finland were diminished until they started to grow again at the turn of the 21st century. Equality between men and women has increased during my lifetime and human rights have been guaranteed for ethnic, language and sexual minorities. At the same time the authority of the Lutheran Church and religion has decreased in the society. I have lived my childhood and youth in the nation that has provided me free education and health care as well as many other public services in the name of social-welfare-promoting democracy. There has been a freedom of speech,

however, requiring political correctness and avoiding excessive insulting of any parties. It was the era of consensus and social justice.

The aspiration for the consensus seems to have secured peaceful development in democratic countries such as Finland until the turn of the 21st century. But something has changed. Both the Left and the Right have been tearing down the welfare state after the recessionary periods in the beginning of the 1990s and in the end of the 2000s. The state's role to maintain a social safety net has turned into a trainer of a citizen. Everyone is all on one's own in the global quartile economy where economic growth and commercial competition are absolute virtues. The issue of social responsibility is still present in many speeches but more and more people have been marginalized if they have not succeeded in the competition. This has caused a political frustration and made room for populist parties and extremists not only in Finland but in all Europe, too. At the same time the globalization has not only increased broadmindedness between different cultures and representatives of different values as it was supposed to do, but it has also created prejudice and brought hate between groups.

There is no time any more for expertise in the multi-cultural, pluralistic and hurried modern world. Despite that, perceptions and decisions have to be made fast. That is why I often hear: "I think that..." instead of "I know that..." when somebody begins giving reasons for one's decision. In the first case a decision-making process is mostly based on feelings whereas the latter one is based on knowledge. The consensus has been criticized for being incapable to perform social reforms and structural economic changes. Moreover, it has been claimed not to study things from different viewpoints in an interactive and pluralistic way. Isn't it just the other way round? The consensus means a dialogue between different interest groups and listening to opinions of an opposite side as well as ending up to a common decision. So, is it too complicated, time-consuming and undramatic today? It feels better to tell straight out your feelings and attitudes on the internet or in the media and it is desirable to do it fast, simplifying and provocatively.

In the next morning of the Workspace the infection was performed by Mr Anaconda who excited participants to hedonistic anarchism. I liked his performance entertaining and his role sexier and more tempting than my own. If the consensus makes democracy boring, Mr Anaconda did not make it with anarchism. According to him anarchism is an answer to the rhythm in our time. It's chic, trendy and expressive. It will satisfy individual's hopes and needs better than democracy. Being an anarchist you can make your voice heard at least for a while.



Artistic project

“Please, feed the birds” and other experiments of art

Pilvi Porkola

CIVILISATION VIRUS at Baltic Circle, Helsinki 20.-22.11.2009

For second workspace 2009 we gathered to Helsinki to spend four intensive days as a part of Baltic Circle Festival programme. Under the theme “Civilisation” we had five other titles (from Lappeenranta workspace): Language, History, Architects, Domination and Sacred. Beside Civilisation as our main content we used an idea of virus as a method; so to spread, explore, copy, infect and act toward unknown. Because the schedule was tight again, only four days for working together, we asked if people have already some concrete ideas they like to work on. Also we welcomed all methods participants like to rethink and develop from other @work workspaces and performances.

The main idea for Civilisation Virus workspace was to make artistic research in action and to work in public to destruct the gap between rehearsal time and show time. We decided to call all acts as interventions, not performances as such. Furthermore we preferred ideas with a light structure, easy to join, participation, one-to-one experiments and playful concepts. Also I liked to underline the idea of an experiment instead of a complete performance. This means you just try your first ideas and see if they work or not, and then try another idea next night. The process was important itself.

We had three different locations for working: an entrance hall of Media Center Lume on Friday, a seminar room and a lobby in the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma on Saturday and the lobby of Q-theatre on Sunday. So, everyday we changed the place for working. Also we had 3

different contexts; at first night we had our interventions before another show at Lume and the second day action took part beside museum's daily routines in Kiasma. The last day we had an independent "showtime" at Q-theatre, which was also informed on Baltic Circle program. Consequently we had different audiences; people who didn't know we are there and people who came to see us as a performance (part of the festival's programme).

We worked in six groups. Every group chose their working methods. For example the language group ended up to practices as birds and do what the birds do to explore the borderline where humans and animals meet – consciousness and civilization. They wanted attention with they own rules, they were "stars in an era of chicken flu", ready to infect people by being slow. A little sign in front of the nest says: please feed the birds. In Civilisation Virus blog, a blog for working (<http://civilisation.blogit.fi/>), the bird group wrote they like people to feed them with bread crumbs or compliments. Also they stated: there are no mistakes in the bird world.



“Birds are stranger. The eyes! They sing. They don’t have hands or front paws. The feathers!!!! The wings! For gods sake: they can fly! They are further removed from humans than mammals, but less than snakes or insects. They have feathers. And beaks. Birds know no guilt.”

Architect group had an interest to create spaces homier and cosy. At Lume Center they had small party for tea; flurry mats and pillows and a jigsaw puzzle. In Kiasma they used a tent both outside and inside the building, people could go there and see some old movies from laptop. And the last day they took a kitchen to bake buns. They invited spectators to join in and to have a comment on what’s going on and suggest alternative ways to make the space more cosy and inviting.

My task was to host and to support groups in their work and to create a dramaturgy for the last day’s session. I documented the sessions by filming but feel sorry I didn’t write more. So many things and ideas were going on and our concepts for documenting need to be improved. To make artistic research is not easy; it means to tolerate uncertainty of a process without seeing always where it takes you. It means to accept unfinished project without clear outcomes. It means testing, failing, frustrating and testing again. For performers it means not only to make a process for a process (instead of a process for the performance) but also a different relationship to audience.

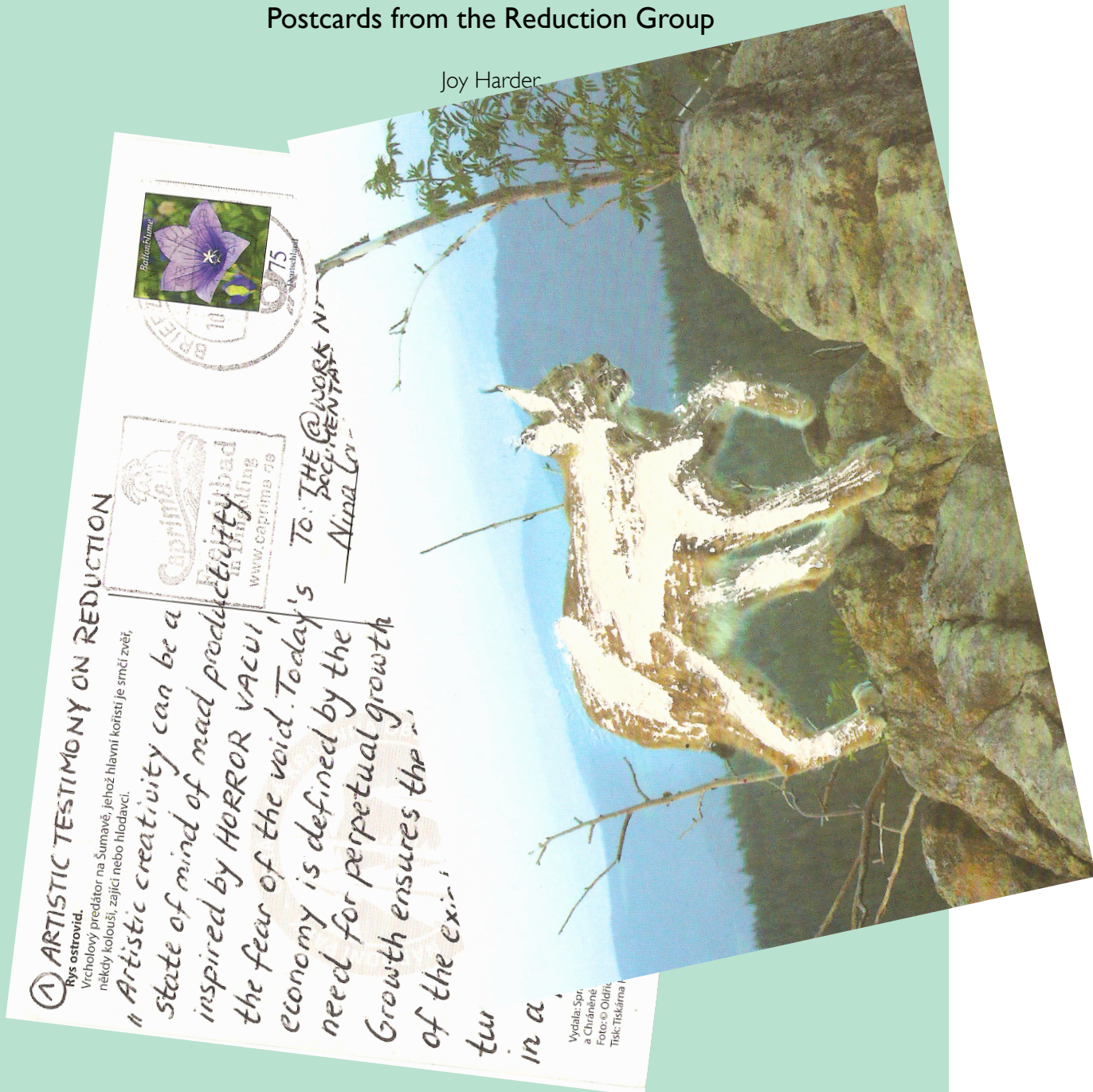
I think a civilisation virus workspace was an important step as a part of @worknetwork project, because it produced a huge variation of ways of working and offered different kinds of directions to go on. After Helsinki workshop people started an Intervention Group and I’m very much looking forward where does it takes us.

Reality Research Center (FIN), Teatermaskinen (SWE), TeaterKUNST (DEN), Emanuelle (GER), Theatre Entropia (GR), The Red Room (UK), Teatro Meia Volta (POR) Dirty Deal Teatro (LAT) ja COYOTL/YOURNAL (Int)

Artist's testimony

Postcards from the Reduction Group

Joy Harder





2.

2007-The Group

The **QWORK NETWORK** Group is formed during a lunch break in Athens. Its content is turned into a motto:
It used to be...

70

142

FOR NETWORK
CULTIVATION GROUP

Bartholins and

1356 June 15, 1970

Denmark

...here xx , or here x , or here xx and go either way!
 ...process: $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E$
 ...one thing and then be
 ...need to raise CHANGE
 ... xx

100



③ WORKS OF THE REDUCTION GROUP:

- 1 Birke (Blätter, männl. u. weibl. Blüten)
- 2 Linde (Blätter und Blüten)
- 3 Douglasföhre (männl. u. weibl. Blüten)
- 4 Kirsche (Blätter u. Blüten)
- 5 Ahorn (Samen)
- 6 Kiefer (Knospen der neuen Triebe)
- 7 Buche (Blätter u. Früchte)
- 8 Weißtanne (junge Triebe)

• 2007 (HEL)

- Joy's Choice ... reducing Jörn's chesthair.
- Marx Dialogue ... reducing dialogue.
- Can you even come without a spectacle? ... reducing a festival subtitle.

• 2008 (CPH)

- THERE IS NO WAY TO SUGAR COAT THIS BITTER PILL ... reducing bitterness.

• 2010 (HEL)

- Birds ... reducing interaction/psychology.

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Nachdruck verboten
Verlag
1991

Artist's testimony

The newcomer

Krista Jansone, Artistic Director, Dirty Deal

When Nina send me mail and can I write my testimony as a @work network newcomer - I said „Yes!” - afterwards I try to write and it was unbelievable hard, and all that I wrote seemed to be wrong and superficial and I deleted it, then again and again... and I was delaying deadline

[my, dear reader, can you recognize yourself in that kind of situation ;)]

[From my letter to my dear Nina Larissa Bassett:
*„About text - its dammn hard! I try to write few times, but in the end I deleted....and write again - and deleted!
And the after the week again.
Sorry, for delay, I'm not good in writing such texts.
But now I think I'm close to answer on the question about @work and me - Krista - the newcomer! I'm on the right way ..."]*

So I decided to keep it simple, you know what @work network – it's about:

- People
- Inspiration
- Friendship
- Passion
- Art
- Strong and unstoppable will to perform
- Meeting
- Talking, discussing, fighting...loving, disagreeing, sharing, deciding... new impressions, new revelations...
- ... all of those word are important if I think about @work network, but you know what's the keyword- it's "WORK"

- we all love our WORK
- all that I get and give being a part of @work network helps me to do my WORK better
- and there won't be @work network without all the people who put WORK in it- to create network and to keep it alive.

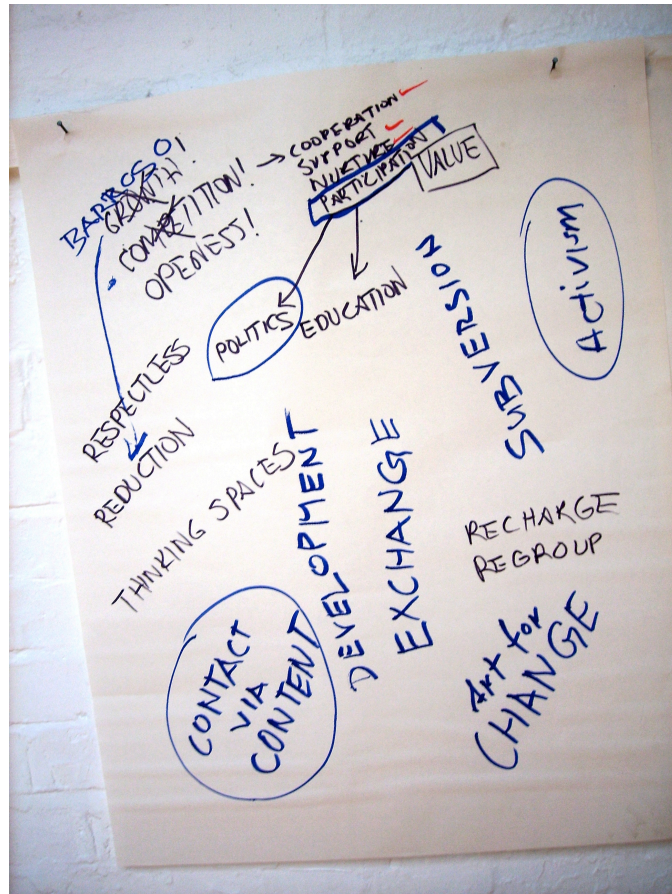
I'm glad to WORK together and thanks' for opportunity to WORK together with you in this netWORK!

All the best,

Krista Jansone

Newcomer from Riga, Latvia, "Dirty Deal Teatro"

•



Artist's testimony and last word

Working with the others

Brain fragments of the past six years with @work

Nina Larissa Bassett, TeaterKUNST

I'm sitting on a bus. Stockholm is disappearing behind me. Its gorgeous summer and am so happy I chose to stay in the city a couple of days. Feel very cosmopolitan in my white, flowing dress and golden sandals. But the bus seems to go on forever. For several hours there is nothing but trees surrounding me. Seem less romantic now. Then the bus stops and the driver nods: this is my stop. Stop? It's a crossroads in the middle of nowhere. Gingerly I step out. The only animate thing for miles is a very large man with dreadlocks and a fierce expression. He is the director of Teatermaskinen, my new colleague...

The seminar is being held in an old school with outdoor toilets, big bubbling pots of food and dusty children jumping in the lake. My gold sandals are becoming out of place. I look around for a familiar face. Say hello to a tall German with a close shaven head and heavy army coat and boots. Looks at my feet. He hates me...

Sitting on a panel for the first time with my new @work colleagues. They all seem so prepared with interesting, quirky artistic angles on work. I've no idea what I'm doing. I just have a video with three women in different stages of life talking about their relationship to work...

I am holding up my computer in the air, waving it about frantically because I just dropped out of our second Skype conference. The last thing I heard was Jörn disagreeing with the plan that Anders had spent 5 minutes presenting...

Topher arranged a very impressive meeting in London. We met these super cool theatres and organizations. All so engaged and informed. We're relaxing in a piano bar now and the discussions continue. Really loud music. Nirjay is speaking but I don't hear half of what he's saying...

I'm calling Anders. No reply.
I'm calling Anders. No reply.
I'm calling Anders. No reply...

I'm the last one to arrive. The Berlin n@twork have arranged 72hour performance in Sophiensaele and included our meeting in it. God knows what I have to say in this context. The flying doctors are all men besides me, and sometimes I get the distinct feeling that whatever I say it needs to be repeated by one of the others before it gets approved. Otmar comes and lies across the table whilst we are talking. This results in a discussion...



I must remember English isn't her first language and she's not intending to be rude. I must remember he's unfunded and can't give a clear answer. I must remember they are arranging a festival and won't take the phone. I must remember she's young and is doing this for the first time. I must remember he's British and has high political ideals. I must remember he's not on Facebook. I must remember he's a vegetarian. I must remember she hates sharing rooms. I must remember he's going to change everything last minute. I must remember he is going to want documentation. I really

must remember not to spam people. I must remember he's a late sleeper. I must remember they get the floor messy. I must remember she's in South Africa. I must remember to listen. I must remember to call him! I must remember to call her! I must remember to confirm the booking of her ticket. I must remember this moment. I must remember not to turn into Panda. I must remember what he said. I must remember she's worked really hard. I must remember never to invite him again. I must remember to thank her. I must remember to include this in my next piece. I must remember how much I've learned...

Now we really must stop discussing and do something. I'm all for the democratic idea that everyone must have their say but somehow there are a few alpha-males who always need to set their own agenda. Janne is so wonderfully diplomatic in this heat. He listens and calmly proposes something we all can relate to...

This is a totally amazing experience!

I'm building a home with Topher, Janne P. and Erica in the Technical Institute in Helsinki. I think Layla is around somewhere in a cage being a sterile woman and my son has joined the Birds group and is running about outside with Joy, Janne, Jonna and Jörn. We're totally out of place in this cold, flashy environment but people come and sit with us and have tea and discuss what makes them feel at home. Two girls almost missed the show they came to see. People's answers are quite touching: "My computer. A mess. Taking my shoes off. My friends. Softness and warmth"...

I'm furious and behave like an idiot!

I really like the way the Berlin netw@rk think.
 I really like the way Reality Research Center communicate with audiences.
 I really like the way Teatermaskinen include their community.
 I really like the way Red Room are so engaged.
 I really like the way Dirty Deal is organized.
 I really like the way Entropia is so mobile.



The @work network 2011

@work network: www.atworknetwork.org

Reality Research: Center www.todellisuus.fi

Teatermaskinen: www.teatermaskinen.com

Red Room Theatre: www.theredroom.org.uk

Theatre Entropia: www.theatre-entropia.gr

TeaterKUNST: www.teaterkunst.dk

Emanuelle: www.Performerstammtisch.de

Dirty Deal: www.dirtydeal.lv

