



Experiment: Passing Place Greenland by Mobile Homes (N)

Laboratoriet at Entré Scenen, June 2011

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Photos: Jakob Edut and Barbara Simonsen

Interviews with the experiment participants

Luca Ruzza: Visual director

I administer the digital pattern or level of the performance and make an aesthetic combination with the story of the performance or rather, the entire performance. The first Passing Place (Passing Place Norway, 2010, ed.) told the story about Amundsen trying to find a way over the north with his boat, and it was more based on story-telling. And we inserted in the story a visual background in a very straight way. This time we decided to import this visual experience into the show. For the audience to enter into a special atmosphere that reflects that visual perception of things.

And in this experiment at Laboratoriet, what have you discovered in your function of the work?

Earlier, we spent a week in Italy to write the system together with Wubkje and Zoe. Because the system was designed and built for a performance that we have called *Natura Sonoris*, and David did the programming. So the purpose of that first week was to be together in a space, explain to Wubkje the possibilities of the system. We have worked two years to minimize the technical elements - now she can wear it on the wrist. So that first week was based on sharing information.

This week was very important, because here we had a chance to combine the tasks, the different personal approaches of each artist, to do something together. In a space that reacted to improvisation. We did an orchestra work, like when you have all the instruments together and try to arrive at something that has a dramaturgical and aesthetic meaning. It was very important and the place was perfect for this kind of work.

Have you done other performances that are as much cross-over as this one?

Yes, this is how we work now. David has been our collaborator for five years, I think. Zoe and I met each other in Norway and we decided to do something together, and David came in as part of Open Lab Company. He and I have a language now.

Cross-over is a very delicate word in theatre, because you cross different attitudes and languages. Of course you must have a respect for each other, but there is a problem of time when you put things together. If something goes wrong in relation to time, the value of the project disappears. It is important to work with people who are willing to be in this cross-over phase, this no man's land, this something that is not easy to define immediately. 'You do the set design, you do the music, etc.' - it's not like that. You enter into the world of the other up to a certain point, and then...

And the combination of elements here is very good. It has happened many times in the history of theatre that a hybrid has formed and created a new step of what theatre can be, but also what new audiences ask for. Young people are different, people of fifteen, eighteen years are very different from people my age. They are educated in another way. What for us is integration or a hybrid is not so for them. For them it is just natural that you work with this interactivity or visuality. And so this hybrid form is very important. Because when you separate them - like in the 'multimedia' shows where you have a background projection and a video here and so on - then it is a bit oldfashioned...

And it takes time, as you say, to arrive at the point where you are now, where you can create meaning and stories and space. You need to get through all these phases. I mean, a lot of the cross-over performances that I have seen never reach that language. It's just a question of putting some things together and thinking, isn't that fantastic...?

Yes, it is a very superficial level. But Zoe was really convinced about this approach and was able to organise these meetings so that we can find the vision, the situation, the relation etc. You have to work on it. Because when you are in production with five performers and the musicians, you have to run, you have to *do the show*. But we still need time to put things together.

During this week's work, has something been a surprise to you?

Yes. The crucial point, the element that everything hinges on, is actually the performer. She is the shaman of this. Because you can have the most incredible magical environment, complex or simple or whatever, but the shaman is the performer. If the performer gets the point, the rhythm - because actually the entire system is administered by the movement, the real movement - so if the performer gets the right place in the space, all the machinery disappears and you come to another place, another level. But if the performer doesn't find the sync with the immaterial stage the two things go in different directions, and the rhythm doesn't occur.

So it's always surprising how, when you say 'digital' it turns out to be just words. Theatre means to use a technique. Always. It can be body technique, voice technique - and this is another technique. But the focus is always the performer who turns everything into something else. Zoe and Wubkje were very good at finding very quickly the point where all these things turn into another reality.

I know what you mean. I noticed the other day when Wubkje was trying out and doing a lot of different things, and then suddenly she was standing still and did just one simple gesture with the arm. And the whole space changed completely.

When as a performer you have that knowledge - that for example this element, this movement of the arm, can affect the entire body of the show - that's really something.

What has been the best thing for you to find out this week?

Inside the system there are so many things, of course, now that we are working with David - the term we use is that we are moving the system into a painting mode, a little bit as if we are painting the stage, the body is painting. So what is new in terms of the system is that instead of building a flexible and reactive structure, we look at the body as a pencil, and the pencil will be able to paint a three-dimensional drawing. I think this route is very interesting.

The second factor: To capture the movement of the performer has been for example a very long project, several years, with William Forsyth, financed by Volkswagen. Based on the principle of tracking the movements - to memorize them, to fix them, to pass them on to others. Here, because we've decided to work with a very low-key, simple technology we are actually working with tracking. Because if we don't track the movements perfectly then we can't respond. Then the whole system is useless. So this week we have been constantly changing the tracking concept. Because if you are not, unlike the Forsyth project, using incredibly sensitive and expensive equipment, you can reach the same point from the other side: increasing the capacity of your system, based on the pixels. The maximum sensitive point to use it, transform it and respond.



Those two things have been fundamental this week: Increasing the sensibility of tracking and the performer as the shaman of the performance.

What is the next thing for you to develop in this project?

The next step is to import more people into this setting. There are five performers in the project.

And we are developing this: I will be projecting of shadows for fragments of seconds but with very strong light. These shadows will not be visible on the wall, but because of the intensity it will be visible in your eyes. It's a physical reaction, like when you look at the sun for a fragment of a second and then look into something darker, the sun remains. The next step will be to work more on this physicality and the capacity of the body to build images. This we will work on, and it will be another level that will overlap what is already there.

Zoe Christiansen: Director (Mobile Homes)

Hvad har været det vigtigste, du har fået ud af den her uge?

Det vigtigste har været at få lavet den der platform mellem musikken, videoen, koreografien og ideerne. Og så har det været vigtigt at have mange folk inde og have fået feedback fra dem. Det har været rigtig okay, at det har været med næsten fra starten, at der har været åbne døre. Samtalerne om arbejdet synes jeg har været vigtige.

Jeg havde jo regnet med, at vi skulle nå at lave en platform, så det gik helt, som jeg forventede, men jeg er også rigtig glad for materialet, vi har fået lavet.

Er der noget, der har overrasket dig undervejs - positivt eller negativt?

Jeg tror egentlig, at jeg ser, der ligger flere muligheder i selve det dramaturgiske og regimæssige, end jeg havde regnet med, og det er en positiv overraskelse. For det kan godt virke så kompakt nogle gange, at man føler, man ikke helt kan få tag i det, men når vi nu har gået igennem materialet flere gange, så er det vældigt klart for mig, hvor jeg skal ind at arbejde, og hvad der skal gøres. Men det er tidskrævende, sikkert betydelig mere tidskrævende end det arbejde, vi har gjort nu med at etablere platformen. For så må du tilbage og dykke ned igen og dissekere... Men sporet begynder at blive tydeligere for os indadtil, sådan at vi har navne for de fleste ting, vi ved, hvad vi refererer til. Sprog er helt utroligt vigtigt, når man arbejder på at finde en platform sammen.

Hvad har været den bedste oplevelse i løbet af ugen?

Det har bare været rigtig skønt at få musikken på. Det var ligesom det, vi alle sammen glædede os til. Vi har arbejdet med musik før, og det var bare dejligt, at det var muligt at gøre det så hurtigt. Vi har selvfølgelig mange tanker om, hvad musikken og lydene skal blive til, men allerede det at have nogle atmosfæriske markører af de forskellige niveauer er en stor hjælp for os, også dramaturgisk. Så der er selvfølgelig også meget arbejde, nu har vi bare lagt det ind som vi intuitivt har følt. Hver del af projektet har autonome valg - musikken har, og videoen også - i den her fase, og jeg plejer ikke at bede folk for meget om meget præcise ting. Det eneste krav er sådan set, at det er meget lydhørt. Så har vi samtaler, og så bliver der selvfølgelig nogle valg. Vi er allesammen meget præcise. Så når først du er kommet ind i et område, hvor der er noget, som du synes har substans, så har vi jo alle sammen lyst til at gå ud og justere vores materiale i forhold til en struktur, som jeg så lægger ud til folk. Baseret på al den information, som jeg har fået.

Hvad har du ændret i koreografien undervejs? Er der noget, du har fundet ud af, at du skulle sætte Wubkje til og ikke sætte hende til?

Ja, egentlig er der en del ting, jeg gerne vil gøre ved koreografien, ret meget, faktisk! Det her er lavet, fordi vi måtte have et vældigt klart formsprog - det har en lidt sej rytme, og jeg vil lægge meget mere kontrast og dynamik ind, det vil Wubkje også gerne, er jeg sikker på. Det bliver næste gang. Det bliver typen af dramaturgi, der beslutter, hvad jeg beder Wubkje om at gøre.

Koreografien består jo af en lang række billeder, som kan forskellige ting. Du kan bygge ovenpå dem, eller de kan eksplodere, eller de kan arbejdes på dynamisk osv., men det handler jo om, hvad man vil med helheden.

Og måske lidt mindre dans, som du sagde før?

Ja, jeg tror absolut mindre dans og mere tilstedeværelse.

Hvad er det næste for dig her efter eksperimentet? Næste udfordring, der skal løses, eller næste skridt?

Næste skridt er at lave manuskriptet. Det er et stort arbejde. Nu bliver det jo Ursulas (Andkjær Olsen, red.) tekster, baseret på dokumentarmateriale, som vi henter ind, og så kommer vi sikkert til at lave et storyboard, en slags struktur. Manuskriptet består ikke af et skrevet manuskript, men af en række billedsekvenser og noget tekst. Det er den næste store udfordring. Der skal være en ret klar ide, når vi starter igen i januar, og så er det meningen, at manuskriptet skal revideres i forhold til de erfaringer, vi gør os. Det kan være ganske skæbnesvangert at blande forskellige ting, og om man kan lave universet stort nok til at holde det.

Og når I mødes igen med den her improvisationsplatform, hvad er så det næste skridt med den?

Det er at bygge scener og bygge ud med flere mennesker i rummet. Et større rum med flere mennesker og indlægge elementer af tekst. Jeg kommer til at arbejde på nogle præcise scener, men muligvis også med en anden improvisationsplatform, der er beregnet på skuespillere og tekst. Men jeg er ikke helt sikker på, at den fungerer med vores visuelle platform. Det skulle vi gerne få til også. Men der er vi en større gruppe, og så ved man ikke helt, hvor hurtigt det går.

Egentlig er det jo ikke teknik, der interesserer dig så meget, men det at gøre det organisk?

Nej, egentlig er vi ikke specielt interesseret i teknik. Vi er interesseret i ideen om teknik, teknik som noget der præger verden, den digitale tidsalder - og vi arbejder jo ikke med teknik, bare fordi vi synes det er spændende med teknik. Jeg har ikke noget ønske om at have teknik som et hovedelement i det, vi undersøger, det er der andre, der kan gøre med større projekter. Men jeg er interesseret i, hvad det digitale kan gøre ved os som mennesker, og med hvordan vi ser på os selv som mennesker. Og det betyder, at teknikken ligger inde i selve tematikken, mere som en metafor eller som noget, der styrer de ydre rammer.



David Dalmazzo: Video programmer

During this week's work, what has been the most important thing for you in your function? What have you discovered?

For me I think it is to open that we could do something that we are expected to do. It's not yet do it. It's not really ready. But somehow I suddenly realised that we could - it's connected with graphic, sound, dance, and we could create something that really connected. And I really want to try to make the graphic sound. And continue and make the sound react also. That way we can make Wubkje's dance into play, not only the physical way. And we were talking to Zoe about how these experiences were all connected to these old stories in Latin America and Greenland.

There is a fragment in Carlos Castaneda's book *The Teachings of Don Juan*, where Don Juan teaches his students something new. They are in the mountains, and he suddenly start to play this one-corded instrument. And his playing and singing makes the apprentice start hallucinating, and he starts seeing connections between everything around him, even beyond the horizon. And it seems to him that he is seeing and hearing with only one sense, and suddenly he realises that he has only one sense and that he is in the middle of a big system that is growing and thinking. It's kind of religious, but more related to the perception. That's how we want it to dance. In a dreamy way. I really think we could go that way. The goal is to make an artistic project, but it could make you feel that there is something more connected with this practice. We are trying to make this shamanic cord and open to the perception.

Have you come closer to that goal this week?

Well, we are going slowly forward to create something that is a cross between the music and the graphic etc. But it takes time, of course.

How has it affected your work that the music is included now? Has it been different from what you thought it would be?

Yes, of course, it changes things. The rhythm, the dynamics. I'm a musician, I studied music, so I'm always interested in that connection. So this week we started to rehearse and compose the music, which means that the graphics change, new ideas appear.

So, just to understand the technical side: You change things between showings, but are you also able to change the graphics while you are playing and improvising together?

Yes.

In terms of tempo, clarity, amount of light etc.?

Exactly. The idea is to build a kind of instrument, and so now the music is one of the parameters. I'm controlling the size of the particles, the force inside the relations... So I was able to practise a little and realised that I have this instrument, and if the music is more granular or more dense I can make the graphics more granular or dense, or the opposite.

That's more improvisation than I thought...

Yes, there is a lot of improvisation. That's why we are working together. Of course, in the end there are cues and things that are fixed, colours, what you are going to see - but not the velocity, the amount of effect.

Has anything surprised you during the work this week?

No, not surprised as such. I feel more inspired by what we are doing. It's going in the direction that we were planning.

What has been the best thing for you this week?

The best thing is of course working with the others. I really think it's an interesting group. Zoe is a good 'cook' when it comes to choosing the right people and make them work together.

What is the next thing for you to develop or the next problem to solve?

My function now is to continue researching for the kind graphics that will fit the concept. To resolve some evident technical issues. And to find a way to send the information we have from graphics to sound. And to find a way for the musician to make that information audible in a clear, elegant way that is also helping him to compose. That's the next big step. It's not something that is done in a couple of days.



Wubkje Kindersmaa: Dancer, performer

This week of experiment, from your point of view and your function in the project, what has it given you?

For me it is very different whether I explore movements in a choreography of its own or whether it has to function together with projections and the interactive media. I can't use the dynamic that I would naturally want to use, because then the camera can't read me. So to understand what is happening with the camera is what I had to dive into. And together we are looking for what we want to transmit here and what works. And with Zoe I have been working on the themes behind it all, which is very interesting. It is a universe made up from different layers – the digital, and how the digital transforms into different universes, and what I am going through. And then together with the music.

This has been the research. For me it is to be part of their different languages. One thing is the body, the physical experience, but of course also the sensations and the images that come to me.

Has something in the work been a surprise to you?

What was really nice was when the Greenlandic woman (drum dancer Paulina Lumholt, ed.) came, and we had been working on this theme, this scene – and of course, I had started to have my own thoughts and images about it, but when she was in the space I suddenly had a very strong experience when I did the choreography. I felt it was about people freeing themselves, striving for a new future... And then she

started to talk about it and said that it was about freedom and so on. And I thought, this can't be true! I just went through that, exactly. So interesting that there was this energy in the room that gave the choreography a new meaning, another layer. It was already there in a way, but at that moment it just happened. And the others, Sven and David, felt it too. Very, very interesting.

What has been the best thing for you about this week's work?

Oh, just great to have the space and the time to really look and understand what is happening. To have the chance to really search and try different things. Because I'm in the projection and I don't see it from the outside. So to have the time and the communication, to know what is going on and how it works. Sometimes I feel that I am so calm and so slow – but I have to be in order to let everything arrive. There is much more movement than just that of the body. And for the people that are watching there is a delay, processing the information, before you can go to another one. So I have to simplify things. As dancers, movements just come and we can be in a certain state – but here I discover that it can be more simple, less, and still transmit the idea. To relate to form in another way.

What is the next task for you, or the next problem that you need to solve, as a dancer in this project?

To find out how far we can go to make the dance strong in itself. I'm not saying that it's not strong now, but I would like to explore it more. Can there be more extreme differences within the frames that we have now. There are differences, but the gap between them is not very extreme. I am very curious to find out how far it can go, from the very calm and sensing place to the acceleration. And not only acceleration in tempo, but also inside. And also how it comes across – for instance, I'll ask, what happens when I'm shaking, because for me that can be very intense, but then the projection actually erases it.

Sven Erga: Komponist og guitarist

Hvad har projektet givet dig?

Det har jo betydet, at jeg har fået lov til at spille guitar igen, og det er vældig sjovt. Jeg har tidligere været guitarist i mange år, og så lagde jeg det på hylden. Jeg har arbejdet med musik og lyd til "almindeligt" teater, til Nationalteatret i Oslo, og så har der ikke været så meget lejlighed til at gøre den slags. Så jeg har fået genoptaget guitarspillet, selvfølgelig, og gennem samarbejdet med gruppen har jeg fået lov til at konstruere et elektronisk instrument, som integrerer – hvor guitaren bliver et elektronisk instrument.

Gennem projektet er jeg kommet til at tænke nyt om, hvordan jeg laver musik. Fordi når man arbejder med computere, er tendensen meget at kvantisere og lave helt nøjagtigt ens takter, så man spiller metronomisk. Men fordi vi arbejder med en grønlandsk tematik, så har jeg opløst den her metronomiske måde at spille på. Og det var ret sjovt, for vi havde besøg af Paulina (Lumholt, red.), som kom ind på det her med, at trommen og sangen tilhører to helt forskellige sfærer. Og de hænger ikke sammen. Det var en sjov opdagelse, fordi jeg på forhånd har arbejdet efter de samme principper.

Så det med Paulina og den grønlandske musik var en af overraskelserne i denne uge. Har der været andre?

Der er sket så meget. Jeg er jo forbløffet over David og Luccas videoarbejde. Jeg er meget glad for at være med, for jeg synes, det er så dygtige folk.

Det er jo første gang, I har sat musik til videoprojektionerne og dansen. Er der noget, der har virket anderledes, end du havde regnet med på forhånd?

Ja, egentlig alt, fordi det er så nyt et projekt for mig. Det har været at gå ind i en helt ny setting, en helt ny verden, og bare være så åben som mulig. Jeg har selvfølgelig min musikalske ballast med mig.

Hvad har været det bedste ved arbejdet i denne uge?

Jeg har selv sat stor pris på at få lov til at udvikle mere på instrumentet. I løbet af ugen har jeg opdaget en masse nye muligheder og har måttet kaste mig ud i dem. Jeg føler, at instrumentet nu er mere solidt, og metodikken skal blive klarere. Vi har så meget materiale – vi har sikkert lavet en hel performance på tre dage – men man må forkaste en masse for at være i en bestemt verden.

Hvad er den næste opgave, der skal løses?

Jo, nu bliver det at tage hjem til Oslo og kikke på videooptagelser og simpelthen begynde at rydde op, at tage ud og forenkle og gøre tingene renere. Jeg tror, mit arbejde meget kommer til at handle om at minimalisere. Det har været maksimalt her, så nu må der struktur til. F.eks. kan et tema, der har været meget kort, blive meget langt og omvendt. Så det bliver kompositionsarbejde.

Inden næste gang, I skal arbejde sammen, laver du så stadig rammer? Der skal stadig være plads til improvisation?

Ja, det jeg gør helt teknisk er at lave en del optagelser, hvor jeg genindspiller ting, lægger lyd på videoen igen for at se, hvordan det virker. Og jeg kommer til at have en del optagelser med i tasken til næste gang, men også guitaren. Så der er på en måde mange lag: du samler dig selv, og så spiller du dig selv i næste øjeblik. Det er nærmest sådan et skyggespil med lyd. Jeg synes, det er meget interessant.

Især i starten af ugen synes jeg, at det var meget tydeligt i musikken med de flere lag, og det synes jeg var enormt flot. Nu her til sidst var det meget det hele på én gang, som du nævnte. Men de tydelige lag virkede utroligt smukt, også fordi der var flere lag i hendes billede. F.eks. havde et af stykkerne en undertone, der lød ligesom blæst. Og den gik helt vildt godt i spænd med nordlysbilledet, det var et meget konkret rum. Meget flot.

Det er jo faktisk tit det, der er problemet med improviseret musik, at det er improviseret! Det kommer, og så er det borte igen som vinden. Jeg er helt desperat i forhold til at optage det hele, for ellers glemmer man det, og så er det væk. De gyldne øjeblikke er væk. Men det er fantastisk at få lov til at improvisere, og så kunne gøre det sammen med sådan et hold. Det føles virkelig godt.

