

Forsøgets titel:

Marathon: Theatrical Remembering Through Objects and Sound

Forsøgets hovedspørgsmål How do we develop the emotional visual dramaturgy of Marathon?

Kontaktoplysninger på den forsøgsansvarlige samt dennes evt. teater:

Sophie Grodin, sophiegrodin.co.uk, sophiegrodin@gmail.com, 91451565.

Jeg ansøger på vegne af performancegruppen JAMS, som jeg er en del af.

Vi arbejder både i London og i København. Derfor er denne ansøgning skrevet på engelsk.

Navne og faglig baggrund på de medvirkende i forsøget:

Sophie Grodin (DEN)

Artist website: <http://www.sophiegrodin.co.uk/>

Sophie is a collaborative performance maker working in London and Copenhagen. Through performance, she wants to bring new importance to spaces, create collective memory, and discover the outer and inner patterns we don't normally see.

She finds great pleasure in the ever-surprising nature of working collaboratively.

Alan Fielden (KR/UK)

Artist website: <http://www.alanfielden.co.uk/>

Alan Fielden is a writer, director, and performer. He was born in Seoul. In London he is part of JAMS and ROOM. In 2017 he was a finalist for the Oxford Samuel Beckett Theatre Trust Award. Plays include SUN, The Winning Crowd and 26 Nightmares. His work has been described by adults as "Ingenious" (The Independent), "[possessing] a richness of thought" (Exeunt), and "[what] one might expect from an angsty teen" (Time Out). His fiction and poetry have appeared in Minor Literatures, The Literateur, Der Grief, and Allotrope Press. In 2014 he wrote 99 plays in as many days [99plays.tumblr.com].

Malachy Orozco (IRE/USA)

Artist website: <https://soundcloud.com/malachyorozco/tracks>

Malachy works in the performing arts in a variety of capacities. In 2011, for the first time at Tate Britain, a performance work - Chaimowicz's Partial Eclipse... (1980–2006) - was integrated within the displays. Malachy was the sole performer within that piece. Malachy has also appeared at The Public Theater, the American Globe, ICA London, Queen's House Greenwich, NBC, the National Theatre of Serbia, and Chelsea Space.

Jemima Yong (SG/MAL)

Artist website: <http://jemimayong.format.com/>

Jemima Yong is a performance maker and photographer. Collaboration, experimentation and interdisciplinarity are central to her practice. Currently, Jemima plays *ROOM* and is a puppeteer on *Me & My Bird* (The Little Angel Theatre). Recently, she led on the creation of *All About My Mother*, commissioned by Esplanade Theatres in Singapore and co-ran National Art Service in London. Previously, she has worked on performance projects *Concertina for the Gods* as part of Barking Dog (London & St Petersburg) and *The Promise of Touch* as part of Motive Colloquies (Paris).

Jemima is photographer in residence at Forest Fringe and is a member of Documentation Action Research Collective.

Tidsplan for forsøget:

2-20th July 2018.

Week 1: **Sound**

Week 2: **Manipulation of objects**

Week 3: **Movement**

(See a more thorough explanation of this further down this application)

Udgangspunktet for forsøget:

Hvorfra kommer ideen til dette forsøg?

Since 2012 the four of us have worked together on the project *ROOM*, which is a performance co-narrated and co-created with 1 blindfolded audience-member at a time. It explores story telling through sound-scape and improvisation. It is new every time, and is completely dependent on the person that enters the room with us. It is site-responsive, and we have performed it together over 800 times, around the UK and in Singapore. Through this project, we got to know each other extremely well, and we developed a method of improvisation, trust, and co-creating on the spot.

Last year, Alan invited Jemima, Mal and myself to explore creating an “imaginary” and to some extent improvised theatre on stage, using the Greek myth of *Marathon* as a ‘spine’ in the piece.

Through research and development periods last year we developed a performative structure in which us as 4 performers on stage are attempting to remember a piece of the same name, ‘Marathon’, which they apparently once did. They are suggesting fragments of these ‘scenes’ to each other and struggle to remember together. This amounts to a lot of silence and spurs of activity and when they finally ‘agree’, they actually manage to recreate fragments of an ‘actual’ scene. What is important though, is that although it seems like the goal is to arrive at these ‘scenes’, it’s not actually the goal. They will never arrive to a point where they can perform the whole piece, and there isn’t a linear narrative throughout the piece.

Nothing is certain, apart from the fact that they can agree the piece was about this story, Marathon, in which a messenger ran from his general to his king to say that they have lost the war and the enemy is coming.

We are researching collective hysteria, disagreement, confusion and repair. Through the old story we can explore current questions of what is truth and what are lies, the media and patriotism.

So far we have only used language as a trigger for remembering together, but we are keen to explore how objects and sound can act as nonverbal communication, in order to trigger emotional states, and theatrical remembering.

We have only scratched the surface in regards to the use of sound and objects that we want to use. So far we have worked with space blankets (the silver/gold blankets you use after a crisis or having run a marathon), a microphone, water and, photo shoot equipment and bananas (both uneaten bananas and the banana-peels).

We want to explore how can the compositions of materials and objects on stage create emotional score? What are the visual languages of Marathon's storytelling?

Hvorfor ønsker I at undersøge netop dette spørgsmål / Hvad består forsøget i?

We are attempting to identify what affect visual stimuli have on memories and emotion in our performance. Visual stimuli can here be objects, sound, light but also movement. This is not in order to create a scientifically accurate experiment, but one that can be manipulated through performance. We are performing remembering, but we are performing a flawed memory.

We are interested in the thesis put forward by the psychologist William James in his book *What is an Emotion* (written in 1884). Here he focuses on the experience of emotions and their physical expression.

Here is a quote from the book, *Repetitions in Performance*, in which the author, Eirini Kartsaki discusses this:

“Usually, James suggests, one would think of that we first perceive a change inside or outside of us and we *then feel* that change in the body. However, the opposite actually occurs, according to his research. James offers an example of an encounter with a bear. When we see a bear, we first respond physically to it (for example, run away) and then we think of this physical response and we *feel* fear. In other words, we first run away and then get scared, that is, we are frightened *because* we run away. The bodily change is felt the moment it occurs, but our emotion occurs in belated time, after we perceive what is happening to us and our bodies.”
(Kartsaki, p. 27)

Instead of the starting point of ‘remembering’ a scene through language, we want to find out how to start with sound, objects and movement, and thereby have the visual language as the starting point.

For example we want to explore situations like the following three:

The first experiment is through **sound**: A performer creates a sound (either through an instrument on stage, tapping on the floor, manipulating an object to make a sound) and the emotional change that occurs in one performer will bring them to 'remember' a moment. This could potentially open up for an exciting array of possibilities in our improvisation.

The second is the **manipulation of objects**: The objects we currently are working mostly with are space blankets, as mentioned. How many ways can these be used and what are their properties as a meaning-making, memory-evoking and sound-creating object?
How do these act as a stand in for language in the act of remembering a scene?

The third is **movement** to evoke memory:

Going back to William James, we want to experiment with both literal and abstract movement to 'draw' moments in time and space. We want to see if we can develop a fluid performance method in which ideas spring from movement, and a negotiation can take place through this movement and not necessarily spoken word. How do you negotiate an emotional state through movement?

Fremgangsmåde:

We all come from a performance art background, but have all trained at a theatre school that had its focus on experimental methods and devising practices. We have worked collaboratively, both together, and with other collaborators, the last 7-8 years.

Therefore we practice performance making that is collaborative, and we use methods from theatre groups and makers such as Goat Island, Forced Entertainment, Pina Bausch and Tim Crouch and Jonathan Burrows. In our process, we use a method of creating small performance fragments as a result of task-based directions that we give each other. These are based on the research we are currently working with, and we therefore specify the tasks we give each other to fit a current topic. We then respond to these tasks through improvised performance. We then collect these moments, and develop a kind of performance-collage.

We are each performing and developing the material, but Alan holds the 'steering-wheel' and will point us back on track if we diverge too far from the emotional and idea-core that we started out with.

We are also inspired by the language manipulation and meaning-making or lack thereof as used by Samuel Beckett and Gertrude Stein.

Planen for forsøget:

Week 1: Sound:

We are planning to work from 10am to 6pm every day throughout the 3 weeks. The last hour of the day is an evaluation of the day where we will write down what we have learned and found. This will go into the final report.

For this first week, we are inviting a percussionist artist to work with us, Greta Eacott. She's based in Copenhagen and has graduated from the Danish Music Conservatory. She has studied and specialised in sound and silence, and the very tangible and tactile response the audience gets from experiencing improvised music.

We are also inviting the Swedish vocal-artist Lo Ersare (based in Denmark) to work with us to explore improvisation in sound, in layering, and in reading the space with sound.

We will bring in more instruments to see what this does to have them in the rehearsal room with us.

Week 2: Manipulation of objects

This week we are continuing to work with space blankets as material, as these have a life of their own! When moving them, they tend to stay in the shape you left them, but as gravity pulls them towards the ground, they tend to take up new shapes. Air and wind also affects their movements.

If possible, we would also like to work with a smoke machine, as we are interested in the change of states this creates.

This week we will also open our rehearsal space up for anyone who is interested as well as a few invited guests. They are invited to observe our rehearsal, but we will also engage in dialogues about how they read certain of our experiments.

We will show fragments of performance.

We are planning to do this on 2 days, half day each.

Week 3: Movement

Here we are working with methods by the choreographer Jonathan Burrows who experiment with repetition to create a language and expectation through movement (and also sometimes with sound). We will meet him in London in May for a one-day session, and we will here continue the work we started with him. See the video link below of one of his pieces.

We will also try and stretch out the movement patterns we have been working with and see what happens if they are repeated, and what that does to the performers way of reading each other.

We will experiment with movement as a tool for remembering and to create visual and emotional changes on stage.

Forventninger til forsøget

This Forsøg we will use as a time and space where we might be able to create new methods of performing, to strengthen the material that we have begun making, and to help us get closer to a final piece that we then will perform in London in September 2018 (this is confirmed) and hopefully also in Denmark.

We are very excited about the material that we have begun making, and we are even more excited about the thought of having this time in Copenhagen so that we can use the external collaborators such as Greta and Lo, whilst here. If this collaboration goes well, they might end up performing in the final piece.

In terms of our other expectations and wishes with this Forsøg, I feel they have been described in the sections above.

Formidling

As mentioned, we would like to do open days of showing performative fragments and our rehearsal methods on open work days.

If we are ready, we would like to perform a work-in-progress in the second or last week.

We will be documenting our work with text, images and video, that we will collate and share after the Forsøg has ended.

Our final report will be a collection of all of the above.

Please call Sophie on 91451565 or email at Sophiegrodin@gmail.com if there are any questions at all. I live in Copenhagen and can come to a meeting or answer questions if you have any.
We look forward to hearing from you!

All the best
Sophie and JAMS

Images from work in progress in London (Photos Helen Murray)





Links:

A rehearsal video from November 2017 (before we started using space blankets):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MQ6u85Wbzc>

Jonathan Burrows: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9IqPdwpdshA>

Greta Eacott: <https://gboporchestra.bandcamp.com/album/punctuations-in-space-ot04-2016>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QZX8qTuDhU>

Lo Ersare (improvisation) <https://soundcloud.com/theartofescapism/mono-sene>

More videos and images can be found on our individual websites.