

## **Application for research at Forsøgsstationen**

### **Title of Experiment:**

“The circular self” (work title)

### **Main question(s):**

How to develop inclusion and intimacy on stage?

What are the different ways of intimacy which could be developed from forms of inclusion on stage and semi public spaces?

My artistic proposal starts by bringing concepts from my first published book “ANOTHER HOLE” on to the dance floor as 'inclusion', as the opposite way to target the problem of exclusion in Europe and Denmark and intimacy.

Our life has turned extreme individualistic, closed and homogenous. This is reflected in the aesthetics of current contemporary performances, loaded with an excess of self expression and identification, of similar modes of production of the arts, the need of branding one-self through a style, which stretch the gap between excluded and included ones, resulting in extreme homogeneous artistic works where those not alike are outside. Enhanced by a 'feel safe need' of 'identifying' with what is recognizable, radical, crafted, similar, belonging to a discursively correctness of what is institutionally accepted, results in exclusion of those representing differences in cultural logic and a lack of intimacy, as consequence of this contemporary individualisms. How could we 'present' what characterized us as human, relations of solidarity, encouragement, and empathy, instead of representing identification to a group or nation.

Another of the aims of this research is to find different ways of composing meaning on stage, as I did in “ANOTHER HOLE”, on how do we produce new meaning combining different types of language. The 4 type of language in the book could be translated on to stage as: written, spoken, visually and bodily. Language is characterized by signs of representation that functions in our society within a dominant structure of knowledge, through which power operates. How to combine types of language, that could serve other forms of relations, meanings and communication that does not operate through domination or control? Perhaps a stuttering language, or one that does not have a lineal relation to what we know but produces new questions.

“ANOTHER HOLE”, is made as a choreographic composition to produce movement in the reader. I switched some terms used by economical investors and politicians, by calling them pornographic, as: real estate, property, franchises, protect the nation, protect the family, total access, my capital, corporation, law enforcement, stock market, liberals, booming, assure, isis, sovereign, destruction, expansion, sanction, repression, regime, fortify, military, invasion, security, etc. Pornographic words becomes a normal vocabulary in the book (also possible to investigate on stage) through overabundance in the use of them by creating extensive amount of 74 subtitles all called 'Exercise...', as for ex.:

Exercise PP: Please Penetrate Me;

Exercise VV: Dildo's Solidarity. Exercise 15a: Smelly Cocks.

Exercise Www: Porno Without Control.

Exercise YYyy: A Study Of Testicles Or Testosterone? ...

Overabundance of the use of the word exercise is to put attention in how do we practice our practice and also to denounce a problem in them.

In the current research I depart from this swift of language in the book to further investigate its use on the floor. Using writings, verbal language, images and body movements. To perhaps composing them in new combinations to generate other meanings, assigning a word(s) to a body movement(s), or to the position of some objects/person in the space, so when a dance or object move the assigned word(s) appears together, or appear in another space, or delay. This could be used similarly to other elements in the space: light, images and writings... Forming new meanings in the new relations, create a new system to communicate, to engage our imagination, perhaps inspired by the film "Arrival", of a circular system of signs forming a language to be decoded.

Repetition and Overabundance in choreographic structures, and in the use of Movements, and words are important tools of work in this research.

In relation to inclusion, I am inspired by the way philosopher Jean Luc Nancy, proposing that we sleep like one another, in the sleep, one does not 'show' it self to others, waking up 'like' each other, alien to any identification, because in the return to one self from the sleep, one is able to become another. It is a 'detachment' from everything, 'relations', 'connections' or 'compositions'.

This research is a circular dispositif: it is a translation from the book 'to' the dance floor and from the dance floor 'towards' the book (addressed the book). Performing 'from' the book as a remediation, perform for the book as a new creation, from the self, to the self, becoming another.

To translate from the page into the multiple languages on the dance floor, I use three tools: Remediation, Translation and Extradisciplinarity: To "Remediate" is to pass from one art field (or media) to another, for ex. from a text to a radio program, or a dance, or from a dance performance to an opera,... This passage is possible if we use the tools we know from our discipline(s) reapplied into another, even if we do not know the new one. Brian Holmes calls it "Extradisciplinarity" (01.07). For this we need to apply also translation, in the way Walter Benjamin proposes in "The Task of the Translator", let each translation find its own afterlife, as no translation can be the same to the original, to allow active agency of both the art work and the artist, the piece, and the creators (in this case the book and choreographers/ dancers)

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#### **The names and professional background of the participants in the project:**

I have invited 3 international and well known choreographers/scenographers to work with me, one at the time. In this way I am able to have a more intense and specific research with one artists at the time while letting go of control of the result, opening up more for unexpected results. The artists are: Rebecka Stillman (Se), Maria Stiernborg and Olivia Riviera (Dk/Se).

#### **Artists bios:**

**Rebecka Stillman** (Sweden) Choreographer, dancer. Has been involved in many different choreographic projects in the past fifteen years. Sometimes as the instigator, sometimes as a collaborator and sometimes as a dancer. She received her education at the Royal Swedish Ballet School, SEAD (Salzburg), Södertörn University, Stockholm University and on the master program in choreography at DOCH in Stockholm.

Olivia Riviera (Dk/Se) is one of 11 members of DANSEatelier (a place and) a group of 11 friends working in the field of dance in Copenhagen. The initiative originates from a need for continuity, a space for sharing of knowledge, as well as social and artistic support – to basically stand together in our relationship with dance, dancing and choreography. A large part of our work consists of finding ways for how to deal with the ‘thought-action’ of rhizomatic structuring and multiple hierarchies. By insisting on togetherness and slowness we want to take steps away from individualization and loneliness whether it’s through hosting, sharing or making work. It is an ongoing organizational and creative research in collectivity, morphing with time and needs.

Sara Gebran (Vz/Dk) has a BA/MA in Urban planning at University Simón Bolívar Venezuela (1982-87), dance studies at Instituto Superior de Danza Caracas (1989-92) and a Post-Studies in The history of images and its representation at The Royal Institute of Art, Stockholm (2012-13). Based in Copenhagen, Stockholm since 1996 and currently in Lisbon. Her works are situated within performance art, between practice and theory, exploring medias as video, sound, text and digital works [www.saragebran.com](http://www.saragebran.com)

Maria Stiernborg (Se) works in the fields of performance, text and needlework. Her artistic practice involves speculative spells, scrambled coordinates, thought crowding and speed bumps as modes of resistance against a over-productive society [www.stiernborg.com](http://www.stiernborg.com)

### **Timetable for the research and project:**

The total period of work is 1.5 year. The research will lead to the final project which is to be premiered in Nov. 2020.

The research will be done in 3 residencies:

- 29 July-14 August 2019. At Forsøgsstationen (applying now)
- 2-20 Oct. 2019. At Polo Cultural Gaivotas, Lisboa 2019.
- 3-17 January 2020. At Forsøgsstationen (to be applied).
- The production period will be in July and November 2020, co-produced by Dansehallerne. Supported by Statens Kunstmuseum and Wilhelm Hansen Fonden.

### **How did the idea for this experiment emerge?**

This work is part of an ongoing investigation on power and forms of empowerment I formally began in 2014, to continue in the next 15 years, for it's a vast topic that needs a selected angel of investigation each year. Every investigation generates a different artistic work, using fictional scenarios to pose questions and visions, which leads to new questions.

The trajectory of the research on power: In 2017, I created “Remote Sensing/Cinematic Montage” working with the power of images, language, and movement generated by distant communication, with Rodrigo Sobarzo, Rebecka Stillman and Paula Caspao. This year's small ideas from this project are applied as well, and I am continuing the current work in 2018 with two of the artists. In 2014 & 2015 I invited Marie-louise Stentebjerg and Ida Larsen, to work on “The circle of Power”, a research that led us to 2 artistic proposals: one based on the power of light and enlightenment as blinding factors; the other, on the power of language, conducting thoughts and actions. From June 2017 to October 2018, I am choreographing movements on a page through text and images, a book about the relation between power, pornography, and cultural decadence (Book launch 28. Jan. 19 at Charlottenborg Kunsthall, Co-produced by Dansehallerne, Partly supported by Nordisk Kultur Fond)

### **Why do you want to investigate this specific question?**

Understanding how power works is also understanding how to empower ourself, so that we have access to a more happy life. This concept comes from my life experience which I now also found a ground support by a philosopher called Laurent Berlant, who wrote in "Cruel Optimism" a very interesting explanation for how capitalist system produces on the individuals, a level of anxiety in order to scale in life, gain more, become more according to social standardization, with the eternal hope that something will change, even if it never does...

**What is the aim of the project: what are you working with an investigation of a specific thesis/idea?**

I am interesting in understanding how power works, between individuals, between citizens and state, and with one self. My research began in 2006 and will continue until I wish to stop, probably in 10 or 15 years.

I am writing also my second book as a continuation of "ANOTHER HOLE", dealing with similar topics and the relation between power, pornography, and cultural decadence, as well with how language could be re-shaped for the purpose to help us empower ourself, propose new modes of being together, of communicating new signs and meaning.

**Are you testing an assumption (hypothesis)?**

The hypothesis is based on the questions I staged in the start of this application.

**A more freely examination within a topic-based framework?**

**Is there a desire to invent something?**

I don't think of inventing this every thing already exists, what i believe is in re-composing what we known to produced what we don't know, new relations and situations. A way of posing a critic to our surroundings is not by judging it only, but proposing and re-composition. Or as philosopher Irit Rogoff will say in her essay 'Smuggling' – An Embodied Criticality": ...*criticality, is a state of duality in which one is at one and the same time, both empowered and disempowered, knowing and unknowing....criticality, is a state of duality in which one is at one and the same time, both empowered and disempowered, knowing and unknowing.....the point of criticality is not to find an answer but rather to access a different mode of inhabitation... in the actual inhabitation, a shift might occur that we generate through the modalities of that occupation rather than through a judgement upon it.*

**Procedure. What theoretical and practical experience from your specific field of work do you use in the project?**

I have 15 years of theoretical experience and 28 years of practical experience in choreographing and performing.

In 2004 I started more consequently using theory as a way to enhance my practice, to understand what kind of practice I could develop. This is also one of the reasons why I was hired as head of Choreography education at Den Danske Scenekunstskolen in 2012.-2016.

I brought to the school a practice to use theory in the practice, practice theories, and theorize the practices. I organized about 18 lectures for the students, open to the public. Organized 2 international seminars on Artistic research, and 2 international conferences, one on Reflection and one with Anders Paulin called Fiction/Reality, in collaboration with Dansehallerne, DDSK and me as producer. Etc..

## **What working methods do you intend to use?**

Readings of philosophy, psychology and architecture, and Practices of vibration: physically, mentally and listening, as well as creating model scales of the real into an unreal landscape.

Besides using choreographic and writing tools, to translate from my book "ANOTHER HOLE" to the dance floor, I am working with architecture tools. Hand made color plasticine to build a 'model scale' of my new performance "A Land Where No Dragons Hide...". Modeling this last work into a new one, differently. A mirror reflecting many more mirrors, the virtual of the real. I aim to create an even more intimated work, where the audience feel addressed, included, differently than in "A Land Where No Dragons Hide..." .

Other method are:

- Fragmentation & super fragmentation
- Independency and emancipation of the parts from the whole. Agency of all parts involved.
- Construct parallel dimensions /realities
- Re-compose what we already have. Exploit all parts and re-study and re-use selected ones.

## **Describe the plan for the experiment. (studio hours needed, use of materials, external participants etc.)**

For the first research period in the studio I will need to use big objects as:

Mattress, plastic sheets hanging, light, etc. Every thing can move away each day, thou the best is to have them in the same place. We will adapt.

We need to work 8-10 hours a day starting at 10, or adapt to your proposals.

We don't need the big space, unless is available. Any of the spaces could work.

We bring our own projector. I would need some extension cables. I have my own small sound speaker too.

## **Outlook for project. Does the experiment already have a given purpose?**

The research will lead to a performance. It allows me continuity, it is an extension of the previous work, going deeper in similar topics.

## **Development of a new method?**

Each work requires a new method. That means, there are as many methods as works, since a work is composed of different constellation of people, time line, experiences, conditions and interest, so each time it needs to be re-adjust, re-thought. I could only say for certain that as general method of work, is the close relation between practice and theory I am interested in using in all my works (performance theories and philosophy). Another method is to play, to enjoy what we are doing.

## **Development of training and/or working group, or other kind of future cooperation with others?**

I wish to work with most of same artists i know and respect: Rebecka Stillman, and Olivia Riviera.

Micaela Kürh as producer.

Our training is based on meditation, tarot reading, dance warm up using vibration, and what ever new practice we need to develop, according to what the research demands.

**Onset/research for a new production?**

Yes and no, its a research leading to a new production investigating power, like the previous 10 years. Specifically in this research I am investigating inclusion and intimacy, and new forms of composing meaning with language.

**Dissemination of trial- Do you plan to show the process of experiment in some way? (Final open viewing, open rehearsal etc.) - apart from the required participation and sharing at the biannual Platform format.**

Yes, a premier in Nov. 2020. After that there are performances in Lisbon and probably in Stockholm. Using those tour opportunities to keep developing the work.

During the research period we could open up rehearsals to few invited people.

**Do you have specific desires for the dissemination of the final written report? (Event, press release, seminar, etc.)**

Yes, I am interested always to rethink the work, analyze it, give a talk/lecture etc. I'm used to do that in other projects and contexts. Last year during our premiered I organized a seminar called "Artists at Work" on the study and analyses of Bojana Kunst book with the same name.... I have written several essays for the school and for public lectures outside the school: Århus, Norway, Faro-Island, Jordan, and Stockholm.

Please let me know if you need more information.

Yours

Sara Gebran