

Fakta

- Forsøgets titel: The Laughing Game
- Forsøgets hovedspørgsmål (et spørgsmål): How can I transform my excising research on laughter into a solo performance - into a sounding, physical, visual and thought provoking encounter with laughter?
- Kontaktoplysninger på den forsøgsansvarlige samt dennes evt. teater.
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- Navne og faglig baggrund på de medvirkende i forsøget.
Choreographer/Performer: Antoinette Helbing
Outside Eye: Katrine Johansen
- Tidsplan for forsøget. If possible weeks 1 and 2 in 2020. If not, then the weeks 2 and 3 in 2020.

Udgangspunktet for forsøget

- Hvorfra kommer ideen til dette forsøg?

I got intrigued to research laughing artistically out of my deep fascination for laughter as a social phenomenon. We all do it – in all cultures, ages and in a vast variety of situations. But we rarely reflect on it. I want to propose a physical contemplation about this strong social tool. Playing with its astonishingly broad spectrum of attributes. It's impactful, uncontrollable, wild, soothing, resonating, relieving, and also sometimes funny - and so I aim my working process to become.

- Hvorfor ønsker I at undersøge netop dette spørgsmål?

Looking through my fascinated eyes upon laughing, I see a great artistic and physical potential in unfolding laughter as social communication, bodily state, stirring sound and sparkling sensation. I believe a thorough research can be the base into developing an aesthetic, sounding and thought provoking encounter with laughter. Laughter is full of surprises and contradictions. I'd like to welcome its uniting and including qualities, but at the same time play with laughter's proximity to exclusion and threat. Exposing the range of emotions present within laughter, its contagious force and foremost its liberating effect. Breaking with the common sense of looking at laughter as being funny, we will portray laughing as a playful but also serious game.
Hahaha.

- Hvad består forsøget i:

Skal en tese (et vedtaget postulat) undersøges? Skal en hypotese (en antagelse) undersøges? Skal der frit undersøges inden for en emnebaseret ramme? Er der et ønske om at opfinde noget?

I would like to devise an approach on a solo. So the focus will be on the inventive and creative access to the word "forsøg".

I already researched laughter together with the musician Niels Bjerg and the actor Daniel Nordback during a 4 weeks long research from November 2017 – February 2018 funded by Statens Kunstfond. During the research we stripped down laughter in its vast variety of aspects and we generated material. We dissected both the pure physicality and the sound of laughter. We visualized different constellations in the relation between laughter and power. We decomposed laughter as a physical concert. We "died of laughter". Now I'm interested in understanding, how I can use this material to make a solo work. Moreover I

would like to create additional material which connects even deeper to the topic. To the wild, absurd, anarchistic, surprising and funny aspects of laughter.

Fremgangsmåde

- Hvilke teoretiske og praktiske erfaringer inden for jeres forsøgsfelt læner I jer op af?

My main source of knowledge is the research psychologist and neuroscientist Robert Provine, from the University of Maryland, conducted when he studied over 1,200 "laughter episodes". He determined that 80% of laughter isn't a response to an intentional joke. People genuinely think they are mostly laughing at other people's jokes, but within a conversation, the person who laughs most of the time is the person who is talking. Laughter can be seen as a "social emotion" that brings us together and helps us to bond, whether or not something is actually funny. When we laugh with people, we show them that we like them, we agree with them, or that we are in same group as them.

Thus, humor and laughter are not synonyms.

As crying is an infant's primary way of communicating, laughter gains more importance the older we get. Laughter seems trivial, ephemeral, pointless, but it is never neutral – there's always a meaning to it. And yet: laughter isn't under our conscious control. We don't choose to laugh in the same way that we choose to speak.

Laughter consists of two parts - a set of gestures and the production of a sound. When we laugh, the brain pressures us to conduct both those activities simultaneously typically as rhythmic, vocalized, expiratory and involuntary actions.

In humans, laughter predates speech by perhaps millions of years. Before our human ancestors could talk with each other, laughter was a simpler method of communication.

The primary function of laughter may not be self-expression. Instead, the purpose of a laugh could be to trigger positive feelings in *other* people. Laughter can ease tension and foster a sense of group unity.

- Hvilke arbejdsmetoder har I tænkt at anvende?

As a starting point I will separate the form and the sound of laughter from the intention and social context laughter has in everyday life.

Practically I'd approach the theme in two ways: Using long durational improvisations where I research the physics and the sound of laughter over long time stretches. The aim of these improvisations is to open up for the depth of the topic. Allowing to find the odds, the unexpected and to get beyond the obvious. Besides that, I will experiment with simultaneously generating both - movements and sounds. By defining simple rules and principles I will create a practice where the content does not necessarily have to appear in exactly the same form – but the principle behind it will. I aim to sketch a physical and audible contemplation on laughter, which perpetually touches a great variety of associations and emotions related to laughter. This way of working completely "task based" permits me to engage with the core features of laughter, while it allows the potential audience to take part in my kinesthetic experience. Instead of defining the result I will let the practice form the material. I believe this practice allows me to work on a deeper level and that it creates more space for the audience due to the absence of any story telling.

Moreover I would like to analyze how much the Feldenkrais method can feed the process of movement research. I recently started to take Feldenkrais lessons, which enable me to rework terms as limitations, habits and openness. I assume this is a great base for researching places of laughter.

- Beskriv planen for forsøgets praksis. (daglig tid, brug af materialer, eksterne deltagere etc.)
I'll start at 9:00 with a warm up, which could be opened up to other participants. A 45

minutes physical practice that warms, stretches and strengthens the full body. From 10-16 I'll research the aspects that I mentioned above. As an option I could also include guided laughter session with the participants of the warm up. Which might be a fruitful practice for me. Understanding how continuous laughter influences other people and what it takes them to do so and what it gives them. As material I only need my own body and my outside eye Katrine Johansen, who just participated in a group piece that was had elements of laughter work.

Forventninger til forsøget

- Har forsøget allerede et givent formål? Eksempelvis:

Udvikling af ny metode? Udvikling af trænings/arbejdsgruppe eller anden form for fremtidig samarbejde med andre? Afsæt til en ny produktion?

I would like to make a first proposal/tryout of a short solo on the topic – as I previously said, based on the already conducted research. I imagine the solo to become about 20-30 minutes long. With no technique – so I could present it under all circumstances (site specific, theatre room, outdoors, etc.)

Formidling af forsøget

- Har I ønsker om praktisk formidling af forsøget? (afsluttende åben visning, åben arbejdsdag etc.)

An open showing would be very helpful. As we already did after our first research where we invited 10 people to share their impressions and observations. An open showing and a talk afterwards could be a very nice conclusion of the forsøg.

- Er der specifikke ønsker om formidling af den afsluttende skriftlige rapport? (event, release, seminar, etc.)

A sharing session with the people that have been involved into the project so far and people that might be interested in the process would be very nice. It could be wonderful to open a dialog on working methods.